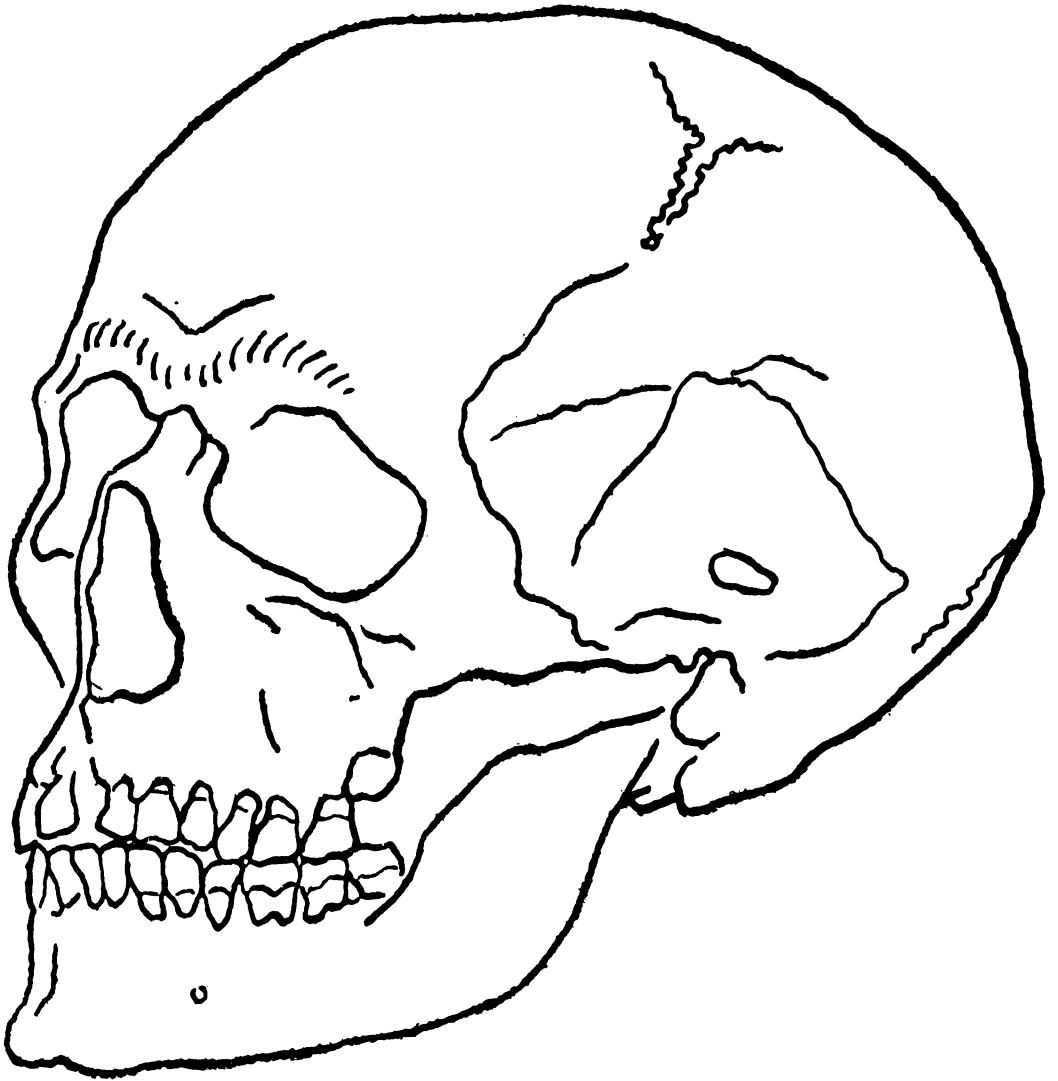


Reconstruction from the skull of a Neolithic man
about thirty-five years of age

By *D. Emerson Chapman*
of the Morven Institute of Archaeological Research



OTHER MEN'S LIVES

A STUDY OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

By

SIR GEORGE DUNBAR, Bt.

THE SCIENTIFIC BOOK CLUB

121 CHARING CROSS ROAD

LONDON, W.C.2

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*First published in 1938 by
Nicholson and Watson Ltd.
7 Paternoster Row, E.C.4*

Printed in Great Britain by T. and A. CONSTABLE LTD.
at the University Press, Edinburgh

To
ALEXANDER KEILLER

P R E F A C E

WHEN Man first appeared upon this earth, a rational being, he had nothing but his hands and his wits to grapple with the problem of how to live from day to day. There was no store of previous human experience on which he could draw, and not a single one of the material advantages which in our modern civilization we take for granted. There was no property to inherit and no security for the present and the future other than that which his own initiative could give him. He started at scratch under a considerable physical handicap as regards the more dangerous animals around him. When and how reason led him to produce fire at will is, of course, a matter of pure speculation. All that can be said is that no other living creature has ever done so.

The earliest identifiable human beings have left behind them only fragmentary and tantalizing traces of the way in which they lived. But as scientific research digs deeper into the buried oblivion of the past, increasing knowledge adds to our respect for these prehistoric people. More certain records appear when resourceful races began to add greater amenities to life, and this eventually carries the story to the point at which—in the more progressive parts of the Old World at least—the prehistoric period comes to an end.

The influence of Western civilization is widening every year, and lessening the number of peoples who still survive in various stages of primitive existence. Putting it in very

general terms they represent how our forefathers lived two thousand and more years ago.

Scientific research into a past so remote that nothing but stone and, under favourable conditions, bone could survive, is limited to the description of the skulls and other bones, and the types of flint implements that belonged to the earliest men yet discovered. But the oldest known sepulchres have disclosed one fact not of a material kind about the people who were buried there. If analogy with existing primitive practice and the laws of evidence go for anything, these people undoubtedly believed in a life beyond the grave. And it may here be said that among the most archaic tribes existing today we find a natural religion which is centred, as certain Australian aborigines state it, upon "Our Father, who dwells eternal in the sky."

This book starts with the earliest men, who were hunters. It goes on to those later races who took to farming and eventually learnt to use metal instead of stone implements, both in the Old World and the New.

In the rest of the book an attempt has been made to picture the lives of three primitive peoples living in widely contrasting circumstances in modern times. One, the Tasmanians, have died out. The second, the North American Indians, are fast becoming absorbed by western civilization. The third, on the borders of Tibet, still live their own lives in the seclusion of their wooded hills.

In regard to the account of the Tibetan border tribes a personal explanation should be made. The facts stated about them were all gathered by the writer during an

PREFACE

acquaintance which extended in all over more than four years. Before circumstances made it possible to enter a considerable tract of the country these tribes were practically unknown. The description now given is based on detailed notes of observation that were scrupulously written up at the time; and no statement was taken as satisfactory until it had been corroborated by three evidences sufficiently distant from each other to make any kind of collusion impossible.

One other explanation is necessary. The word primitive is used throughout the book to cover all uncivilized peoples, that is to say those amongst whom some form of writing and the production of literary records are unknown. This seemed preferable to referring to the primitive cultures of food-gatherers, the primary cultures of food-producers and the secondary cultures which rank just below the oldest forms of civilization.

For most valuable and generous help in the first two chapters, the writer wishes to express his deep gratitude to Mr. Alexander Keiller; and he takes this opportunity to thank Miss Doris Chapman—not only for her artistic contribution—and Mr. Stuart Piggott, of the Morven Institute of Archaeological Research, Avebury; and also Dr. A. T. Hopwood of the British Museum. To Mr. Anthony Brown he is indebted for his illustrations, which add so much interest to the book.

The different authorities whom the writer has consulted and to whose works and researches he is widely indebted are noted in the text, and are here generally acknowledged.

G. D.

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The stait of man dois change and vary,
Now sound, now seik, now blithe, now sary,
Now dansand mery, now like to dee ;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

Lament for the Makaris.

CHAPTER ONE

Man the Hunter

THE story begins in the dim mists of a measureless past, when there appeared on the earth a being superior to the existing animal world in the possession of reason and the power of speech, the inventive faculty to make tools, and to whom fire could be a servant and not an unconquerable fear.

Natural history explains how, from the simplest forms of life, more complicated creatures were progressively evolved. Life reached its highest expression in Man. Each new living thing was fitted by nature for its surroundings, but if conditions altered this very specialization could prove fatal to an animal that might perhaps require hundreds of generations to become adapted to the change. An example of this is to be seen in the fate of the mammoth after the Ice Age ended about eight thousand years ago. The herds of heavily coated beasts might follow the arctic weather northwards, but they had lost the pine woods which gave them their vital forage in winter, and became extinct.

Man has no powerful natural weapons such as claws and tusks, nor the protection of fur; neither has he the inherited and consequently conservative instincts of the animal to find food and shelter. He has instead the gift of reasoning thought and in Man mind has triumphed

over matter. He could defend himself by making weapons which he steadily improved, coming in time to master the animal world, while he filled his larder with game. By suitable clothing he could adapt himself to any climate. So Man survived and the woolly rhinoceros and the cave bear, the cave lion and the sabre-tooth tiger¹—his formidable enemies in the alternating temperatures and humidity of Europe in the Old Stone Age—perished in their turn. More than this, Man through the ages has brought himself, by the chain of linked thought, on the one hand to the heights of eastern philosophy and on the other to the materialistic plane of western civilization.

Primitive peoples live the simplest of lives; and they are classified, in contrast to civilized nations, as the lowest races of mankind. But it is unjustifiable to assume that this implies degradation, stupidity, sloth or brutality. To quote the highest authority, Sir James Frazer: "I know of no savages who can properly be described as degraded except such as have been corrupted by contact with civilization, learning the vices without acquiring the virtues of the higher race."²

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST.—The archaeologist and the anthropologist both study mankind. The field anthropologist goes among surviving primitive peoples. When he gets to understand what they say and gains their friendship and confidence he is able to learn their religion and

¹ The sabre-tooth tiger, *Smilodon neogoeus*, lived also in America. The best-known reconstruction of the animal is reproduced from the picture by Charles R. Knight in the American Natural History Museum.

² *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. I. (ed. 1910), p. 343.

customs. As T. H. Harrison said, in describing his work in the New Hebrides: "The way to be liked is to keep your promise, to laugh, to tell a story, eat widely and well, show yourself physically an equal, be interested in their arts and in their pigs, observe scrupulously their own tabus and good manners and pat the children's heads."¹ To which the present writer would add drinking wisely and well when the local brew goes the round in the family gourd.

Gramophones and magic-lanterns cannot possibly be carried about in really difficult country. But among dog-lovers a well-mannered terrier with one or two good tricks is always a passport to friendship, a clever bit of conjuring has been known to relieve an awkward situation, and even a set of dentures have made as useful an impression in actual fact as Captain Good's false teeth in *King Solomon's Mines*.

The anthropologist has to collect independent evidence in widely scattered villages, and the best source of information is usually that retiring individual the priest of the community. This takes a considerable time, but the facts are all there to be recorded in the fullest possible notes, written up daily.

There is, however, one difficulty which is becoming greater year by year. Apart from the moral influences of commercial exploitation upon a primitive people, increasing contact with western civilization noticeably affects tribal customs,² even though it may not lead, as it did in Tasmania, to the extinction of a most interesting race.

¹ "Living in Espiritu Santo," *The Geographical Journal*, Sept. 1936.

² For an example see the chapter on "Cultural Changes in Tribal Life" in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, ed. by Dr. I. Schapera (London, 1937).

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST.—Far different and infinitely harder is the task of the archaeologist. The people he studies have disappeared beneath the ground and he has to recall them “from under the feet of the years.” The scene of his labours is at best a cave, perhaps the foot of a cliff, a river valley, open rolling downs, or the fields of an English farm. Unlike the anthropologist, the only indication an archaeologist may have of his people is a mound, and he is uncommonly lucky if he finds its contents intact.

He is in fact a detective searching for clues from which to reconstruct the conditions of life, the types of industry, the religious beliefs, sometimes even the cause of death of men and women who lived thousands of years ago. He gets these clues in rock-shelters and caves, in the burial mounds known as barrows, and in the ditches and remains of prehistoric villages that are now hidden underground. The aeroplane can show the archaeologist traces of otherwise invisible earthwork, a great help in field-observation.¹ But the most important work in archaeology is done by digging.

Methodical research in England began upon a stricken field. Many a barrow in the English counties had been wrecked in ploughing or clumsily opened and ransacked before General Pitt-Rivers, during the last decade of the nineteenth century, began the new era of scientific field-work.

The heavy spade of the amateur has given place to the light trowel of the expert. Those who work on a “dig”

¹ See *Wessex from the Air*, O. G. S. Crawford and Alexander Keiller (Oxford, 1928).

sweep aside the loosened soil with nothing harder than a housemaid's broom, or use a soft brush, and may even blow it away with bellows to save the buried and often brittle objects from damage. All fragments of pottery and bone splinters are collected and carefully pieced together, and specimens are washed and treated with preservatives if necessary before the finds are catalogued. The reconstruction of the animal and vegetable life of the time is made by the scientists called in to identify the bones of animals, the species of snail (an excellent indicator of the climate), the wood which the prehistoric people burnt to charcoal, and in fact any object which can throw light upon conditions in the remote past.¹

PREHISTORIC ART.—It is seldom that field-work meets with a dramatic and instant reward, and none has been more striking than a discovery made in 1879 near Santander in northern Spain. In digging out a fox that had gone to ground a cave was disclosed which had been hidden by a small landslide. Shortly afterwards Don Marcelino de Sautuola, a local landowner interested in archaeology, visited the cave, taking with him his little girl aged five. De Sautuola crept into a low rock chamber near the entrance and began to dig in the soil on the rock floor. The child got restless and taking a candle looked up at the ceiling.

A moment later her father was startled by a cry of "Bull, bull." Then he saw that the roof close above his

¹ *The Progress of Early Man* (How and Why Series), Stuart Piggott (London, 1935).

head was covered with paintings of animals in red and black—bison with lowered heads, boar at the gallop, buck, hinds and horses—amazingly lifelike and some of almost natural size.

The famous cave of Altamira had been discovered. Nearly sixty years later, in a Moravian cave, Dr. Karl Absolon found the drawing of three bison fighting which has been described as the greatest dramatic record of Stone Age art. These wonderful studies of animal life were made, it may be fifteen thousand years ago or even more, in the golden age of prehistoric art.

Caves with suitable walls are only to be found in limestone districts, and what might perhaps be called the prehistoric equivalents to the Sistine chapel are almost all in Western Europe. There are many examples of Old Stone Age cave art in Africa, and it is also found in Palestine, but no rock-paintings have as yet been discovered in England.

On the floors of some of these caves, the oldest studios in the world, has been found the outfit of those long-forgotten artists—stoppered bone paint-tubes, crayons of red ochre and the palettes they used. The brushes, made no doubt from the hair of some long-coated animal, have naturally perished, but we know from chemical analysis how they got their range of colours. Oxide of iron mixed with clay or earth gave ochres ranging from chocolate to light red, violet, and from orange to yellow. Blue-black was made by powdering oxide of manganese, and the less permanent true black from burnt bones. White, made of calcined marl, was occasionally used by prehistoric

artists.¹ Animal fat was their medium. The absence of blue and green may be due to the use of vegetable colours which have not survived the drip of water through the limestone.

The practical impossibility of painting a picture by torchlight in the depths of a cave—the bison and the sand-sketches of trout at Niaux are about half a mile inside the hill—was overcome by using stone lamps with oil fat and a moss wick.

Nor were the arts limited to painting. With stone tools closely resembling the equipment of a modern sculptor² the later phases of the Old Stone Age have bequeathed to posterity stone and ivory statuettes and sculptured friezes which show a highly skilled technique. There are examples, such as a grouse carved on a spear-thrower and thin bone silhouettes of animals, which would delight any owner, prehistoric or civilized. While their engravings of mammoths are much more lifelike than the specimen found in the Siberian ice in perfect condition and now exhibited stuffed in the Leningrad museum.

As to the human form in sculpture, the exaggerated “Venus” figures, which may have been a fertility cult, are more striking than beautiful judged by western standards today. In grotesque art, two heads made of pulverized burnt mammoth bone—one smiling and comic, the other ugly and swollen as if by disease—have been found at Vestonice (Westernitz) in Czechoslovakia.

¹ *Fossil Man in Spain*, H. Obermaier (The Hispanic Society of America ; Oxford University Press, 1924).

² “The Rock Shelter at Cap Blanc,” D. Emerson Chapman and Alexander Keiller, *Antiquity*, June 1936.

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It was at this prolific site that Dr. Karl Absolon dug up in 1936 the only example as yet discovered of true Old Stone Age portraiture. This, the oldest known reproduction of a human face, is as Hyperion to the satyr which at one time man of the Old Stone Age was believed to resemble. The mammoth ivory head is about two inches in length and has been described as a very noble, fine animated face with a long big nose, arched ridges over the eyes and a long chin. Sir Arthur Keith, who is of opinion that the head is that of a woman, emphasizes its interest to all who are of European stock, for in his words it is a portrait of one of the white Caucasian pioneers who began to colonize Europe in the later phases of the Ice Age.¹

THE ICE AGE.—The finest animal paintings of prehistoric art look so modern that it is difficult to bear in mind the enormous difference between Europe then and now. In a continent which had neither farms, vineyards, nor cities, savages to whom metal was unknown had not even learnt to scratch the soil with a pointed stick and sow their crops. For most of the Old Stone Age the summers were short and hot, the winters long and terribly severe on the windswept steppes. Huge beasts long extinct, and the musk ox, the reindeer and the arctic fox since driven towards the polar regions, then roamed the country.

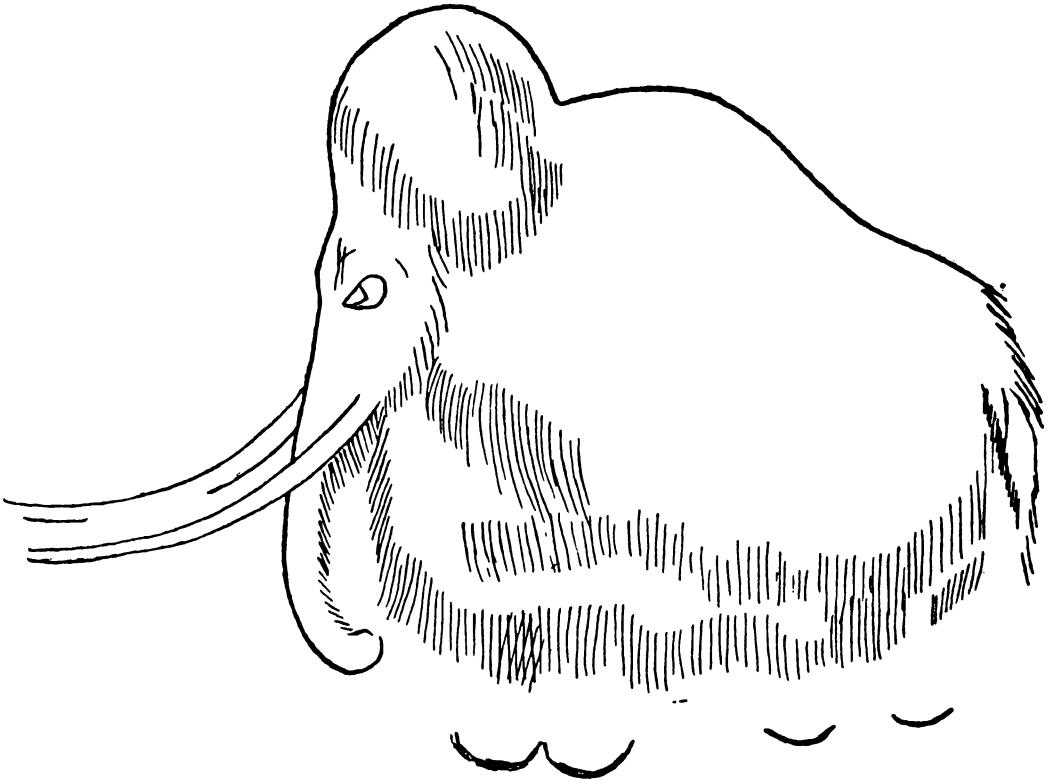
Of all the extinct animals none is more striking than the prehistoric elephant known as the mammoth.² About

¹ *Illustrated London News*, 2nd Oct. 1937. Art. by Dr. K. Absolon, with introductory note by Sir Arthur Keith.

² See *The Mammoth*, Basset Digby (London, 1926).

MAN THE HUNTER

fifteen feet in length and standing as high as twelve to thirteen feet at the shoulder, he was covered with black and rust-brown hair—in places nearly twenty inches long—and a thick woolly undercoat, to add to his enormous bulk. No living thing could have appeared more dangerous, with



1. *Mammoth Engraving on Rock* (after Breuil)

curved tusks sometimes ten feet in length on either side of a waving trunk. Yet this awe-inspiring beast lumbered peacefully along munching branches of pine, fir or willow, and browsing upon the wild thyme, poppies and buttercups on his path.

In an unrecognizable outline map of Northern Europe during the Ice Age the British Isles were part of the

continent, and later on became by slow degrees a peninsula running northwards from about the present coasts of Holland and Belgium, before our group of islands was formed.

The climate of course varied as the ice-cap spread, or contracted towards its centre in the Baltic basin. The ice is thought to have been in places nearly two miles in depth, though the layer over the present site of Edinburgh may not have been more than a thousand feet thick. At the height of the glacial epoch the extreme southern limit of the main mass of ice ran—in terms of modern geography—roughly from the estuary of the Severn to the mouth of the Thames, across Germany and along the southern boundary of Czechoslovakia. There was an outlier of ice on the Pyrenees, and the far larger Alpine mass came down to within twenty-five miles of what are now the winter resorts of the Riviera.

Europe outside its ice-fields had the climate of northern Siberia today. In the intervals when the ice receded the temperature became warm enough for rhododendrons to flourish on the valley slopes above the Inn. As far south as Kenya the movements of ice in Europe gave to another home of early Man its long alternating periods of heavy and light rainfall; and the last glacial epoch is known to have affected the earth's climate as far as the Peruvian Andes and southern Australia.

With the definite close of the Ice Age the old order came to an end. The climate rapidly became much warmer in north-western Europe, and it was far milder in what are now the British Isles about six thousand years ago than

it is today. The old animal life and vegetation disappeared; and the earliest men to live in Europe went with them.

THE EARLIEST MEN.—The cradle of the human race may have been to the east of Mesopotamia, but traces of what are held to be the earliest representatives of mankind are scattered as widely as North China, Kenya and south-east England. Peking Man is conjectured to be the remote ancestor of the modern Mongolian. The human remains found in Kenya suggest that the earliest Africans may not have been of true negro type. The first Europeans apparently merged into a new type when the Old Stone Age came to an end. They seem to have been unable to survive successive invasions of more highly developed peoples who overran the continent from the East.

It is within the bounds of possibility that New Caledonia and Australia were originally discovered and occupied by a negroid race before the close of the Old Stone period. But until post-glacial times man does not seem to have appeared in America.

The bones of the people who lived in the Old Stone Age are very rarely found, and then almost always in disconcerting fragments. Consequently it has been impossible to collect anything approaching a series of measurements of any one type like those on which the average physical characteristics of an existing people would be calculated. The reconstruction and classification of what may be human beings of very low physical development and mentality is therefore entirely a matter of scientific opinion. But it is possible that man as fully developed as he is today existed

in a past so remote as to have seemed incredible before the recent discoveries were made. How many hundreds of thousand years ago Man first appeared upon the earth must remain pure guess-work. There is no reliable geological clock to measure the vague immensity of the past. Geologists can give us a comparative time scale, in the order of successive developments of animal and vegetable life, and that is all.

LIFE IN THE OLD STONE AGE.—The earliest human inhabitants of a very thinly populated Europe lived in rock-shelters under overhanging cliffs, at the mouth of caves, and in the skin or thatch tents of their open settlements. Primitive man had learnt to avoid fever-ridden marshes, the damp depths of a cave (we know from his bones that he suffered from rheumatism), and a camping-ground in forests infested by ferocious beasts. The favourite residential site was near water, on the sunny side of a valley with a clear view of a good place for game and the line of approach of any dangerous animals.

His only means of supporting life was by hunting and fishing, helped out with eggs and insects, honey, fruit and berries. The methods of the earliest hunters were primitive even for a primitive race. They stalked, and presumably trapped, the game they needed. But, like the aboriginal negroes of Malaya until recent years, they had no dogs to take with them when they went out hunting and gnaw the bones round the fireside at night. That any animals could be tamed and made use of does not seem from the evidence available to have occurred to men until a com-

paratively recent date. The type of horse then to be found from central Sweden, through middle Europe and eastwards to Mongolia, remained apparently for many thousands of years as untamed as that great earth-shaking beast the elephant.

Traces of what these ancient hunters ate are to be found beside the domestic hearths round which mankind has gathered since the human race first faced the problems of existence. A favourite food of the earliest Europeans was cave bear cub. Wild horses and reindeer, mammoth, rhinoceros and bison were also hunted, while the inhabitants of Sicily in those days seem greatly to have enjoyed eating hippopotamus. Remains of all these animals with the exception of the hippopotamus, but with the addition of the great Irish deer, have been found in a cave in South Wales.

From one solitary find in Croatia it is possible to infer that man in the Old Stone Age may have eaten human flesh. But this no more establishes a case for cannibalism than isolated instances among starving Eskimos or what took place on the raft after the wreck of the *Medusa*. The weight of the evidence is against Stone Age cannibalism.

TOOLS.—Flint implements, being imperishable, are far more common than human remains. They were made by the earliest men in two different ways. One group struck off large flakes of flint, obsidian (a glassy form of lava) or other hard rock with another stone as a hammer; and used these flakes as tools. This is known as “flake-culture.” The other group made their tools as a sculptor

shapes a block of marble, by chipping a lump of hard stone down to an implement with a lasting and most useful edge. This technique is called "core-culture."

With this, the earliest handicraft, Man, infinite in faculty, started on his way from hunter to farmer, to learn the use of metal, to gather into cities, to trade with distant lands, and to seek the inspiration of the great religions which have so profoundly influenced the human race. A progress which illustrates the best and truest tendency of men, both spiritually and materially, to rise to higher things. A hundred and fifty years ago came the last of these industrial revolutions—the age of machinery—a development which has brought rather mixed blessings to the mass of the people concerned.

The characteristic feature of civilization today is greater speed—by land, sea and air, and a nerve-straining speeding-up in the factories. The rude forefather of the tool-designer in twentieth-century mass production turned out at his leisure the limited requirements of a Stone Age community; and modern experiments have demonstrated that a serviceable 1-inch scraper can be made in five minutes. His work-bench was a fallen tree, his feet and a piece of rock served for his vice when he needed one. But there can be no question of the skill of his craftsmanship. Flint spear-heads have been found as beautifully made as any a medieval armourer could fashion in metal, although as weapons they were, of course, much more brittle.

Man from the earliest time must have realized the simplest uses of wood. It may not have been long before

he could make fire with two sticks, the method which has been followed in Hindu religious rites from Vedic times. His arrow-straighteners and pictures of hunting scenes tell us that before the end of the Old Stone Age he had learnt the use of the bow. The bow was a great invention and an immense improvement on the spear-thrower as a propellant. It was, it may be said, never used by the aborigines of Tasmania and Australia. The blow-pipe, still used by the backward Sakais of Malaya and by the Boro of the Amazon forests, is only possible where suitable bamboo, reeds or palm are to be found.

Such perishable things as fire-sticks and wooden clubs could not be expected to survive, but a wooden spear-point hardened by fire, and belonging to the period, has been found at Clacton.

The first stone implements had no haft, being shaped instead to fit comfortably into a man's hand. The idea of a handle was a later improvement. Domestic equipment consisted of flint knives to cut up the joints, scrapers to prepare skins for clothing, drills and saws. But some at least of the most primitive utensils, awkward though they seem, could usefully serve their purposes today.

There are amazing instances of the way primitive man could use his flints in the unexpected field of surgery. Trephination, in which a modern surgeon employs the most delicate steel instruments, was undoubtedly performed in the more advanced period of the Stone Ages with a flint implement. The most skilful examples on a living person show that a series of small holes were drilled in the skull and the necessary bone removed.

The use of bone and ivory brought about a great change in the tool industry. It meant an entirely different technique, and a number of new implements were added to those that could be made of stone. Life must have seemed easier in various ways with the advantages of such things as spoons and needles, harpoons, and what are believed to be fish-hooks.

The use of spoons in the Old Stone Age was not proved until Dr. Absolon found a number of them at Vestonice. One of the spoons carved from a rhinoceros shoulder-blade is a foot long. Others were made from the bones or ivory of the mammoth, and one specimen, which may have been a sort of shovel, from the lower jaw of a horse. These domestic utensils were all carefully finished and polished.

In attempting to get some idea of the everyday life of prehistoric man from such material as good luck added to scientific skill may discover, one fact must always be borne in mind. Because something that these remote people might well have used has not been found, it by no means follows that they did not make it of some perishable substance such as wood.

This is clearly brought out by one of the most important discoveries yet made.¹ Primitive peoples use bundles of sticks, or notches in wood for counting just as a ghillie on a Highland salmon river will keep a tally of the number of fish killed. But if Dr. Absolon had not unearthed similar records on bone we would not know, as we do now, how Old Stone Age man did his arithmetic.

A heavy spear-head of stag horn was found on which

¹ See *Illustrated London News*, 2nd Oct. 1937.

were cut ten notches in groups of five. While a wolf's bone seven inches in length was scored in a similar way. On this, the first series of notches numbers twenty-five, all about equal in length in groups of five. Then comes one long cut and above it a series of thirty notches. The reason for the group of five system is obvious, and it is not only primitive people who find their fingers useful in counting.

WEAPONS.—As striking an illustration as any of the development and the apparently inevitable trend of civilization since those early times is seen by comparing primitive weapons with present-day armaments. Scientific progress has mechanized warfare, and our modern specialists in destruction can even threaten distant cities and their inhabitants with wholesale catastrophe.

Civilized man in a well-ordered State, unless he shoots game, associates lethal weapons with government forces in uniform. To primitive man his weapons are one of his means of livelihood. He may even be seen turning his sword into a ploughshare at seed-time. The earliest men had no specialized implements of war, and it is not unreasonable to look upon a collection of Old Stone Age weapons as the prehistoric equivalent to the gunroom of a country-house.

The only comparatively long-range arm within the scope of earliest man was the stone-shoot, a defensive weapon now used by primitive hill tribes. This adaptation of a game-trap is a shower of rocks let loose upon an enemy from a platform at the top of a cliff.

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

Improvement in the earliest prehistoric weapons began when the stone-axe was given a helve, lance-heads were fitted to shafts, the range was further lengthened by using spear-throwers, and bows and arrows were invented. To give an idea of the range of this last weapon the Tibetan border tribes use bamboo long-bows, cane "strings" and bamboo-shafted arrows whose effective range is normally about one hundred and eighty yards, although the present writer has seen one carry seventy yards further.

On the analogy of surviving primitive tribes two types of arrow may have been used, a long-range sharply pointed all-wood missile and one with a heavy more effective head carrying a shorter distance. Prehistoric men at one time used bone arrow-heads, as primitive peoples sometimes do now, but speaking generally flint or some other hard stone formed the arrow-head until it was eventually superseded by metal. It is not impossible that early man poisoned the tips of his arrows.

THE DAY'S WORK.—In contrast to the complicated and helpless dependence inevitable under modern civilized conditions a primitive community is, and always has been, made up of self-supporting individuals living a free life—though a hard one—by their direct personal efforts.

Apart from the priest, the stone implement maker or the smith and the potter, specialized trades and professions find no place in primitive society. The priesthood alone is a close profession for which special qualifications are required. A modern expert in tattooing, for

example, plies his charcoal-point in his spare time, payment being made in food or labour.

Division of work in primitive tribes is made between the sexes, and it may be taken that in the Old Stone Age, while the men went off to kill game and visit their fish- and animal-traps, the women stayed at home to attend to their domestic duties. In some places flints were mined, but the earliest men developed no other industry. The advance of the food-gathering hunter to the food-producing cultivator of the New Stone Age is shown by the appearance of stone querns for milling flour.

CLOTHING.—Man, the hunter, protected himself against the weather with the skins of the animals he killed and which his womenfolk came eventually to sew into garments with modern-looking bodkins of bone. This may not have been the one form of clothing when man was only a hunter. Women may have made themselves skirts of leaves as is the custom, for example, in some primitive communities across the north-east frontier of India. But the earliest-known pictures of human beings show the women in long gowns (presumably of skins) with exaggerated waists and apparently sleeves puffed out at the elbow. The costume of the men—in a spirited hunting scene—is simply a hat, and what are possibly anklets not unlike those worn by the South African Bushmen.

Their pleasure in pretty things found its outlet in a variety of ornaments. Personal adornment began with shells and reindeer or wolves' teeth strung on necklaces. As time went on fashions became more elaborate and,

judging from the finds, highly polished ivory beads must have been much worn. Pendants carved out of ivory in the shape of an antelope, a fish and a small beetle, bracelets cut from the hollow base of a mammoth's tusk, and an ivory ring have been recovered from the cave earth in which they were buried.

MEANING OF STONE AGE ART.—The art of painting in prehistoric times reached its zenith in the masterpieces of the later artists of the Old Stone Age, animal studies of amazing realism. The work of these forgotten artists has, in the impulse which inspired it, a certain affinity with the altar-pieces of medieval Europe, for both are an appeal from human weakness to a higher power. But while the motive of the Flemish and Italian masters was devotional, when they painted their Holy Families and saints, the motive of the Stone Age artists was the merchant traffic of magic; and magic, which rests upon the universal feeling of good and ill luck, does not come within the definition of religion.¹ By painting representations of the prospective quarry, sometimes with arrows in its flanks, it was hoped to give the hunter control over the animal he pursued.

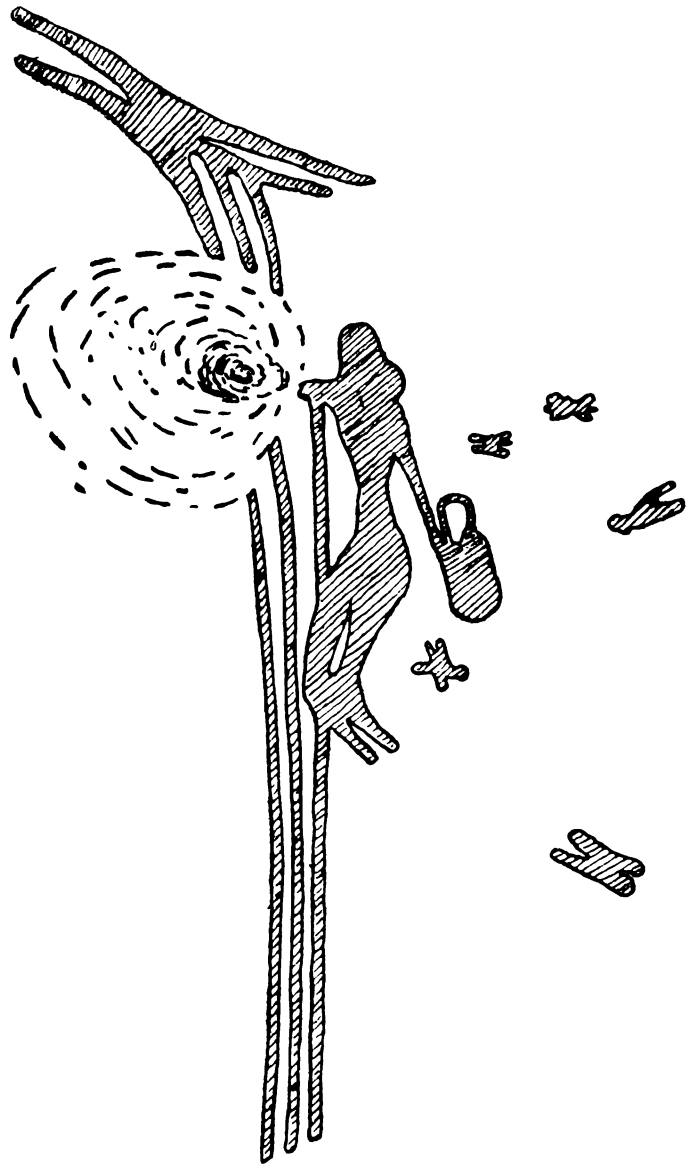
Where the Stone Age painters failed, in the pictures known to us, was in their attempts to draw the human

¹ Subjectively religion is the knowledge and consciousness of dependence upon one or more transcendental, personal Powers, to which man stands in a reciprocal relation. Objectively religion is the sum of the outward actions in which it is expressed and made manifest, as prayer, sacrifice, sacraments, liturgy, ascetic practices and so on. (*The Origin and Growth of Religion*, Father W. Schmidt, tr. Professor H. J. Rose, p. 2. London, 1931.)

figure. But they made up for a lack of artistic beauty by the vividness of such scenes as taking wild honey and hunting the deer.

These prehistoric people stand out amid the shadows "bright vital energies, not dim dead men" when we see their joys and their sorrows in pictures of girls dancing in a ring and a leader dying in battle, and find within a little sepulchre the hundreds of shells carefully packed round the mortal remains of a child.

Towards the end of the Old Stone Age we find in Spain a new and inferior technique in the fine arts. The temptation to turn out quantity instead of quality proved too strong, and carefully detailed drawing



2. *Girl taking Honey.* (Wall-painting in red after Obermaier)

was replaced by a sketchy impressionist style. Conventional signs were known to the early artists, but by the

close of the period animal life and men and women (practically the only subjects) were represented either by geometrical designs or by forms as simple as a figure in Euclid.

SIGN LANGUAGE.—This artistic loss is balanced by a most interesting gain on the intellectual side. No one could mistake an exact representation of a stag for anything else. But it needed the effort of abstract thinking to recognize the animal in a symbol like a Y. A number of other signs were invented, some that might be taken for ancient Iberian and Runic, others were dots in different patterns. The spoken language of these prehistoric men is as dead as the beasts they hunted, but their indecipherable signs stand today as the earliest attempts at writing—without an alphabet.

Man, unlike the animal world, is a user of signs; whether it be to throw a branch across a track or to flash a red light at a street crossing. The first important advance made by primitive people is to mark their property by engraving what amount to initials on their personal belongings, or they may show ownership of cattle by cutting distinguishing patterns in their ears. Messages may be sent from one community to another in the form of grain, salt and a broken weapon, or a pebble, chillies and charcoal as signs of friendship or anger. From the silent message—the representation of an idea and the symbol of property—the sign becomes associated with a special sound; the process which enables us to read aloud.

The stage reached by the Stone Age men must remain

a question to which there is no answer. Nor does any prehistoric Rosetta Stone exist to give us the key to their symbols. More than this, the similarity of some of the earliest signs to tattoo-marks and other designs of primitive peoples today offers no solution, for a sign may be used in many lands without having a universal meaning. The New Stone Age inhabitants of Egypt had a sign system about 7000 B.C., long before the appearance of hieroglyphics, the picture-writing of the priests. But more than five thousand years elapsed before the Semitic alphabet was evolved in the Sinai peninsula.

There is, however, one sign whose meaning is unmistakable. This is the imprint in red or black of mutilated hands, some with no more than the stumps of the fingers left. From the number of examples in painted caves of France and Spain it would seem that this form of mutilation was a custom in some parts at least of old Stone Age Europe. Nor is it confined to those districts or to that prehistoric period. From the direct testimony of the red hand it was known in Ancient Egypt, Babylon and Mexico. It has been found among existing primitive peoples from North and South America and Africa to the Pacific islands, Australia and New Guinea. In North America, for instance, finger amputation is an act of mourning in the Crow tribe. Until the British Government in India put an end to it this mutilation, now surviving in a symbolic form, was common among the Dravidians of the south.¹

To us the idea of mutilation is horrible. But it cannot

¹ For mimic finger sacrifices see *The Dying God* ("Golden Bough," Part IV.), Sir J. G. Frazer, p. 219.

be taken for granted that this custom of Stone Age man is merely a sign of wanton cruelty. While it would be rash to assume that a prehistoric race had the same reason for this practice as existing backward tribes, it is worth considering the modern inner meaning of what is still so widespread. Throughout the world, in our own day, at any rate, amputation of the fingers is definitely a form of religious sacrifice, differing altogether from those magical rites which renew the union with totemic ancestors. For it is the offering of a part of the worshipper's own body to the Supreme Being, and might indeed be called the ritual of the praying hands.

EVIDENCE OF RELIGION.—A more certain light is thrown upon the religious beliefs of prehistoric man by the discoveries of the early sepulchres made within the last thirty years. The most famous of these, found at La Chapelle aux Saintes and Le Moustier in southern France, in 1907 and 1909, disclosed the burial rites of the earliest known inhabitants of Europe. The bodies had been buried with their personal possessions round them. In these instances they were flint implements, in others of later date and a different race there were necklaces of shells and deers' teeth. Another interesting feature is the contracted position in which the dead were laid, with their knees drawn up to the chin. These burial rites continued through the New Stone Age with its pottery bowls that once held offerings of food; they are exemplified in the grave-goods of ancient Egypt; and they still survive among primitive races today. Together with this evidence of religious beliefs the custom

testifies to the prehistoric right to own property, without which individual freedom is impossible.

A description of tribal burials on the Tibetan border as known to the writer may be given to illustrate this similarity. The corpse is buried in a lying position, knees to chin with a grave-cloth, a bead necklace and a brass plate or pot. A little hut is built over the grave and a man's weapons would be hung beside it. Fresh food is brought daily for just under a week, and grain is left there, and a fire is lit for a length of time which may be as much as a year.

From a Western standpoint these tribes with their animist beliefs to which certain practices of imitative magic are added, rise no higher than Caliban upon his island. But they are intensely practical people to whom religion is an essential part of their lives, and these burial customs are no empty ritual. They are convinced of the reality of a future life and, with intercourse between communities and the interchange of ideas restricted, the writer only met one agnostic in over four years. To them life after death is a comprehensive belief. The spirit of the animal or fowl killed during the funeral ceremonies is told to accompany the dead person. Extending this belief in a future state to inanimate things, the food left at the graveside is for him to eat, and his belongings are for his use in the spirit world where he has gone, never, they hope, to return.

To come back to prehistoric man. Any myths he may have eventually evolved and handed down from father to son, about the sun and the moon and of gods and men living together on the earth, are gone beyond recall. But there remains the striking resemblance between the most

ancient known burial customs and those still followed by primitive peoples. Within the limits of our knowledge there can only be one reasonable explanation, that a belief in a future life beyond the grave is as old as the dawning hopes and fears of Man.

This brings us to the point, how did religion take shape and on what lines did it develop? This must remain a matter of pure conjecture, but something may be said about the theories that have been put forward to account, at successive stages, for facts as they became known.

In his book on dreams J. W. Dunne gives it as his opinion that the idea of a soul originated in the mind of primitive man as the result of observation in his dreams, that in dreams he left his sleeping body in one universe and went wandering off into another, and that without this experience the idea of a soul would never have occurred to mankind.¹

But the theory thus expressed does not meet the crux of the whole matter—the existence of a Supreme Being—for, in the best established examples that primitive people have been found to provide, dreams of the spirit world are about dead relatives or, more noticeably, the special supernatural guardian of the dreamer.

The “classic theory” on the origin of religion was launched in 1872 by (Sir) Edward Tylor, the apostle of animism. This term is used so widely that it can include the ancient Greek view of the relation of soul and body and the materialist Sankhya philosophy of India. But in practice and as regards primitive races it may be briefly

¹ *An Experiment with Time* (London, 3rd Ed.), p. 25.

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defined as the doctrine that all things animate and inanimate are endowed with reason, intelligence and volition.

As Tylor stated his theory, primitive man, faced with the phenomena of death, illness, ecstasy and sleep, saw the body more or less abandoned by life, and therefore isolated and by itself. Figures in dreams and appearances in visions seemed to present this incorporeal principle, the soul, in isolation. From this rose the conception of the soul and its existence after death, which in turn led to the tendance of the dead. On the analogy of personal experience and belief there grew up the idea that animals, plants and everything else consisted of a material body possessing a soul. Man claimed relationship with the whole world of Nature; the seeds of animism had been sown in good ground.

With ancestor-worship, where the object of devotion no longer had an earthly body, primitive thought moved on to the conception of pure spirits. These spirits could take possession of individual bodies not their own, and it was held that illness and death were due to the entry of some such spirit into the human body. More than this; the various parts of the animal world appeared to primitive man as animated by such spirits and their phenomena as due to them. In this way, and by this reasoning, arose the worship of Nature in its various forms, a development which culminated in the deification, not of a concrete individual, but of a whole species.

From this was developed the higher polytheism of the half-civilized and civilized races. These gods personified the forces of nature and presided over particular stages and functions of human life. In the pantheon of Vedic

India there were Dyaus, god of the sky, coupled with Prithivi the earth, Indra the storm god whose image was carried in the van of battle, Vishnu, personification of the swift-moving sun, and, to name one other, Siva "the auspicious," whose symbols were

"The organs of birth and the circlet of bones,
And the light loves carved on the temple stones."

Monotheism, according to Tylor's theory, arises in one of the three following ways. It may be by raising to divine primacy one of the gods of polytheism itself, who may be either the primeval ancestor or one of the native deities. Alternatively a sort of pantheon may be formed arranged on the model of an earthly political constitution, where the commonalty are crowds of human souls and other tribes of world-pervading spirits, the aristocracy are great polytheistic gods, and the King is the Supreme Deity. Or a doctrine is evolved in which the universe is animated by one greatest all-pervading divinity, who with all his perfections may be too far above the material world to concern himself with the petty race of men.¹

Tylor, with his immense industry in the collection of facts, his amazing gift of systematization and his genius as an ethnologist, had built up his animistic theory before even a suspicion had arisen that the most primitive secluded peoples still surviving in different parts of the world believe in a Supreme Being. The first of these discoveries was made among the tribes of south-eastern Australia by

¹ *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* (London, 2nd Ed., 1873), Vol. I. pp. 424-430, etc. ; Vol. II. pp. 1-20, 100-104, 334-336, etc.

A. W. Howitt, who published the results of his investigations—that these peoples had genuine native high gods—between 1884 and 1904.

In 1898 Andrew Lang challenged the established theory of animism as the seed of religion. In his view, as soon as man had the idea of “making” things, he might conjecture as to a Maker of things which he himself had not made, and could not make. He would regard this unknown Maker as a magnified non-natural man. This conception being given, his power would be recognized and fancy would clothe one who had made such useful things with certain other moral attributes, as of Fatherhood, goodness and regard for the ethics of his children; these ethics having been developed naturally in the evolution of social life.¹

Lang explained the subsequent degeneration of religion by “the attractions which animism, when once developed, possessed for the naughty, natural man, ‘the old Adam.’ A moral creator in need of no gifts, and opposed to lust and mischief, will not help a man with love-spells, or with malevolent ‘sendings’ of disease by witchcraft, will not favour one man above his neighbour, or one tribe above its rivals, as a reward for sacrifice he does not accept, or as constrained by charms which do not touch his omnipotence. Ghosts and ghost-gods on the other hand, in need of food and blood, afraid of spells and binding charms, are a corrupt, but, to man a useful constituency. Man being what he is, man was certain to ‘go a-whoring’ after practically useful ghosts, ghost-gods, and fetishes which he

¹ *The Making of Religion*, 3rd (New York) Ed. as quoted in *The Origin and Growth of Religion*.

could keep in his wallet or 'medicine-bag.' For these he was sure, in the long run, first to neglect his idea of his Creator; next perhaps to reckon Him as only one, if the highest, of the venal rabble of spirits or deities, and to sacrifice to Him, as to them." ¹

Father Schmidt, after citing a considerable list of investigators of animism between 1885 and 1930, sums up his own conclusions as follows: "We see that animism, which Tylor had supposed nearly universal, is limited both in itself and its geographical distribution . . . there are likewise limits in time. It has been found possible to establish that the matrilineal agricultural culture is especially the carrier of animism, which is aroused and cultivated there especially in the men's secret societies, with their ghosts, skull-worship and masked dances, and later in connexion with head-hunting and bloody sacrifices, human and other.

"From this it appears that animism does indeed find its ultimate origins partly in the primitive culture, which has already some idea of a soul; but that its full development does not take place till comparatively late. This alone shows that it cannot be the origin of religion, for it is these same primitive cultures which have developed religion in the form of a clear and decided ethical monotheism. What has taken place is that this monotheism, under the influence of animism . . . has often been thrust into the background . . . the figure of the Supreme Being is obscured and often quite disappears." ²

¹ *The Making of Religion* (2nd Ed., London, 1900), p. 257.

² *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 84, 85.

To end this rather lengthy summary upon what is after all a subject of supreme and speculative interest, one more view of the matter may be given.

In *Das Gebet*, F. Heiler makes the following remarks¹:

“It has been suggested, and not without some reason, that both these writers [Andrew Lang and Father Schmidt] have idealized the savages and the primitive Being of their belief alike, Lang owing to his prejudice in favour of the romantic, Schmidt from a theological predisposition to the theory of primitive monotheism. Be that as it may, the facts prove quite plainly that these ‘high gods’ occupy a place of their own in the religious conceptions of savages, and owe their genesis neither to belief in spirits nor to ancestor-worship. . . . In the overwhelming majority of savage peoples the Supreme Being is more than a first cause, creator, institutor and legislator of long ago; he is also the maintainer of his work, a god of destiny and the guardian of his own commands.”

Heiler goes on to say, “Offerings of first fruits, which are distributed over the whole world, and are stated to be the only form of sacrifice known among [the] extremely backward Pygmy peoples, are considered . . . by many modern investigators (as Brinton and Father W. Schmidt) to be the primitive form of offering. It is certain that they arise from other motives and ideas than the ordinary gift-sacrifices, intended to feed or at any rate to please a superior being. The offerings of first fruits are nothing else than expressions of veneration, acknowledgment and

¹ From the translation of extracts given in *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 206, 207. *Das Gebet* was published in Munich in 1918.

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thanksgiving. . . . The pious worshipper testifies, by offering the first fruits, that he owes his meat and drink to the bounty of the deity; he recognizes his entire dependence upon superior powers, and their complete suzerainty over that which he possesses.”

He concludes his account with these words: “Thus we get the view of . . . a vista, historical and philosophical, utterly different from the traditional theories of the genesis of the idea of God. Primitive man, when he prayed, did not turn to a plurality of spiritual beings, but to the One God, the First Father, the Lord of Heaven and earth.”

Books on the Old Stone Age (Paleolithic)—

Ancient Hunters, W. J. Sollas (2nd Ed., London, 1915).

L'Art Préhistorique, R. de Sainte-Périer (Paris, 1932), a handbook with first-class illustrations.

CHAPTER TWO

Man the Farmer

THE gradual shrinking of the ice-fields brought much warmer weather and this turned gradually into the present European climate, pessimistically described by scientists as probably the second stage of an interglacial period. At the same time the violent world changes of climate, due to movements of the enormous ice-caps on both sides of the Atlantic, came to an end. Under new conditions great tracts of forest grew up in Europe. Instead of the formidable though picturesque beasts of earlier times there appeared the animal life we see today.

But the supreme expression of the Old Stone culture in Europe degenerated altogether and merged into new and inferior types of industry where art simply did not exist. One of these, which produced in some places remarkable miniature flint implements, flourished round the shores of the Mediterranean and spread northwards to Kincardineshire and eastward to the Crimea. Similar tools were made in Africa. This "pigmy" pattern is also found in India, Australia and America, but the people who made them were not necessarily of the same stock or period as the inhabitants of the Mediterranean countries during the Middle Stone Age. In Northern Europe the men of this period made heavy stone-axes to fell the trees of the forests in which they lived.

There is a sidelight upon the people who made these pigmy implements in the suggestion that one use for them may have been tattooing. But modern primitive customs make it seem at least as probable that if flints were used as "beautifiers" it was for cicatrization.

The transitional age gave us the oldest known boat in north-western Europe—a dug-out of Scottish fir found near Perth, a vestige of fibre fishing-net at Viborg, the first traces of pottery and the appearance of dogs in the homes of men.¹

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION.—For a length of time vaguely estimated at a quarter of a million to half a million years Man had made only minor improvements in his standard of living. He neither exploited the fruits of the earth nor made any use of animals, unless this was the object of what might be halts on some representations of horses. With a total lack of enterprise, still shown by a few secluded peoples, he relied on the hazardous uncertainties of hunting and the gathering of other food in its season. But about six thousand years ago men came to realize that Nature could yield greater benefits.

Where agriculture began remains an unsolved riddle. Wheat may first have been grown in Afghanistan and north-western China, barley in Persia and south-eastern Asia. But the unknown communities who found that crops of cereals could be raised by cultivating certain wild mountain grasses planted the seeds from which grew the

¹ See *The Mesolithic Settlement of Northern Europe*, J. G. D. Clarke (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 109, 110, 152, 153, 49, 51, 124.

historic civilizations of both East and West. However poor may have been the first attempts to gather a harvest, the discovery was revolutionary in its economic effects. Swift summed up the value of agriculture when he wrote, "whoever could make two ears of corn to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind than the whole race of politicians put together."

The industry developed, food supplies became more certain, and the farming communities began to increase rapidly in numbers under new and more favourable conditions. Flax was grown to make into such things as clothing and fishing-nets, where only skin garments and fish spearing, and possibly basket-traps, had been known before. Wild animals were attracted by the farm produce, some of them soon grew quite tame, and the farmers of the New Stone Age started keeping and breeding livestock for food. The next step was to use animals for ploughing and as a means of transport.

Modern commercial organization with its steamer fleets makes us forget a problem of existence which Dr. Nansen has forcibly pointed out in his *Eskimo Life*. "The good things of life are very unequally divided in this world. To some existence is so easy that they need only plant a bread-fruit tree in their youth, and their whole life is provided for. Others, again, seem to be denied everything except the strength to battle for life; they must laboriously wring from hostile Nature every mouthful of their sustenance." A primitive existence involves very few necessities, but with the growth of ideas and require-

ments in the New Stone Age the advantage of making up local deficiencies by exchange became apparent. So trading began.

The earliest developments and inventions were all for the benefit of humanity, and the intercourse of commerce, when it started, further extended human progress. Men who live amongst their flocks and herds and by tilling the soil are not the people that delight in war. It was recorded of an Indian Empire in existence more than two thousand years ago that "the husbandmen, being exempt from fighting, devote the whole of their time to tillage; nor would an enemy coming upon a husbandman at work in his land do him any harm." We have travelled a long road since the days of the Mauryas, but Shakespeare summed up the philosophy of the man who lives by the land in the words of Corin: "I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck."

Raiding, clan feuds, invasion have, in the nature of things, been inevitable since the human race began to increase and men took to lifting other folk's cattle or migrated to settle in new homes. This has been strongly in evidence from the Bronze Age onwards. There were times when religion brought not peace but a sword. But it has been the development of the commercial instinct into a spirit of aggressive competition which has led mankind, through a succession of wars, to what has at last become the threat of universal ruin to an interlocked civilized world.

With all our kitchen utensils it is hard to realize the household difficulties of a Stone Age family when there was no such thing as earthenware. It is reasonable to suppose that prehistoric men in very early days strengthened basket-work bowls by smearing the outside with clay, and the idea of earthenware may have started when some such basket was accidentally burnt. Whenever it came the introduction of pottery was a striking advance towards civilization. It brought new amenities to the home; it gave rise to an artistic renaissance founded on the decoration of earthenware; and it marks the first use of chemical change by fire, a knowledge which was enlarged by the working of metals. The evolution of a wheel from the primitive expedient of log-rolling was a later cultural development, and the potter's wheel did not appear as an application of this principle to the earthenware industry until the Age of bronze.

Man in the New Stone Age did not altogether abandon the caves of his predecessors. As an improvement upon the earliest houses, which were merely wattle and daub huts evolved from wind-shelters, stone was used not only in masonry, but as seats and tables and to pave the village street. When bricks began to be made in Syria or Mesopotamia, rather more than five thousand years ago, there came the earliest freedom of expression in architecture; and by copying the barrel roof of the reed hut the principle of the true arch was discovered.

The feature generally associated with the New Stone Age is the new technique in implement making, which came in the latter part of the period. Flints were still

flaked into tools for common everyday use. But by using grindstones, highly polished hard green stone tools were turned out in the form of hammer-axes and an implement that may have been used as a ploughshare. It is possible that the green stone was in imitation of the copper implements which were then being introduced from the more civilized parts of the world.

This is the stage at which carpentry began. The firs and spruce in which Europe abounded were cut into planks not only for houses but to make seaworthy craft to replace the primitive canoes of hollowed-out tree-trunks, and the skin coracles still to be seen on the Teifi river in Wales.

After stone came metal, with the discovery of its use by some accidental smelting of ore, which may have happened as far back as seven thousand years ago. The first metal to be worked was copper, and the more cultured inhabitants of the Mediterranean littoral had brought it into use long before the backward parts of Europe knew of its existence. In some places bronze was being manufactured by the hardening alloy of tin while other parts of the inhabited world were still in the New Stone Age. Minerals are only found in certain localities, Spain for example being rich in copper and Bohemia in tin, and the demand for metal sent the earliest merchant adventurers far afield. In the north, and until the beginning of the Bronze Age, there was a brisk trade in amber from the Baltic, which filtered up the river valleys and reached Italy over the Brenner Pass.

Iron is found in many places, yet although it was smelted in Mesopotamia at least five thousand years ago, it

did not begin to supersede bronze till about 1400 B.C. In fact the earliest-known Egyptian iron weapon is, as Sir William Flinders Petrie records, a halberd blade of the reign of Rameses II, dating about 1200 B.C.¹ But the dawn of civilization as we understand it had come long before the beginning of the Iron Age. Twenty centuries earlier progressive communities had gathered from their villages to found the first cities, the second of the three economic movements which have in turn so profoundly affected the lives of men.

Nothing, of course, is known about the beginnings of social organization, which in process of time developed into the only two forms of government that man's experience has evolved. But conditions among existing uncivilized peoples are at least suggestive.

The primitive unit is the family, in which descent may be recognized through the male or the female line. In its simplest form a primitive community consents to the leadership of some strong personality, but the shouts of the largest mob can settle any important matter, guided it may be by the subsequent confirmation of an omen. The most carefully safeguarded government of a primitive people—the Iroquois confederacy with its supreme council, a system midway between monarchy and democracy—would not have been possible under the conditions that there is reason to believe existed in Europe during the Old Stone Age.

The urban revolution produced the second form of government. The first type is personal. Founded on the

¹ See Art. "Antiquity of the Use of Iron," by G. P. Phillips, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 26 (1924).

individual, the clan and the tribe, it is a purely social organization which fulfils the requirements of hunters and primitive farmers. The second form is political and based upon territory and property; it functions through the township, the district and a central administration.

Within the cities that had risen over five thousand years ago on the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates, the Helmund and the Indus, there were gathered far more varied interests than the older communities had known. Government had become a difficult problem which could only be solved by the establishment of an official administration recognized by the people themselves.

In the earliest cities whose history is recorded, with the new stability of order enforced by kingship, religion was elaborated and literature fostered, industries were developed, transport by land and sea was improved, foreign trade expanded, and what had become national interests and increasing territory were protected by organized fighting forces.

Mankind had reached the parting of the ways. There were now two main groups, the civilized and the primitive, a classification which has lasted from that day to this, although the definition of civilization has become rather obscure in an age of internal combustion engines and poison gas.

The civilized world was confined to clearly marked centres in a zone extending from the eastern Mediterranean and the Lower Nile to the Indus, while Europe was inhabited by the backward peoples of the New Stone Age. The civilizing influences came from the East and were

brought to Europe by three different races. These were slim, long-headed men from Central Asia, of what is called the Mediterranean type, and the round-headed sturdy Asiatic highlanders known as the Alpine race, who were followed by the Nordic stock, tall long-headed men from southern Siberia.

These migrating peoples took some time to make their way across Europe and life was most primitive in the west of the continent. Britain, where the use of iron came in gradually with successive waves of invaders, was a land of what we would call savages when the Buddhist emperor Asoka Maurya in the third century B.C. ruled a peaceful and far from uncivilized India under a bureaucratic system of central and provincial governments.

Civilization became general in Europe after the extension of the Roman Empire, and was developed in the ensuing centuries by the influence of the Christian religion. The arrival of the Roman legions about nineteen hundred years ago ended the prehistoric period in Britain. The written history of this country began with the despatches and reports of Roman generals and administrators starting with the Commentaries of C. Julius Caesar. For all we know of prehistoric Britain we are indebted to the archaeologist. He cannot date racial movements and invasions nor give with any certainty the reasons for the decay of important settlements, events which his researches disclose. But he unearths incontrovertible evidence of prehistoric life, and the care and skill of his operations show the chronological sequence and even the relative duration of the different cultures.

The hub of life in Britain of the New Stone Age lay upon the high rolling downs of north Wiltshire; later the foreign trade which came to the Dorset coast drew the population southwards. From about Avebury the oldest highways in this country ran along the hill-tops to the Severn, the Wash and the English Channel, roads that can still be traced here and there.¹ As the New Stone Age drew towards its close men were setting up at Avebury—now the home of the Morven Institute of Archaeological Research—the most impressive megalithic monument in the world.

WINDMILL HILL SETTLEMENT.—Above Avebury rises Windmill Hill, the most celebrated of British New Stone settlements, where excavation was begun by Alexander Keiller in 1925. Where the settlers on Windmill Hill originally came from is not known. They may have been of Nordic stock, although their movements cannot be traced further to the East than the Rhine. They came to their home in Britain peace-loving farmers with a relatively high standard of culture. Round their huts or skin shelters they dug with antler picks concentric circles of ditches (which they used as dumps for rubbish), broken at intervals by causeways. The low ramparts they threw up would have been useless, without stockading, against an enemy, but the smooth walls of puddled chalk were an effective protection against wolves.

Agriculture was still at a very primitive stage. The

¹ See *The Green Roads of England*, R. Hippisley Cox (London, 1914)

plough had not come in as yet, and the fields were laboriously got ready for sowing with hoes. Wheat was grown and the grain ground to flour in querns. Livestock consisted of small long-horned oxen, pigs and sheep or goats. The primitive peoples amongst whom the writer has lived are very fond of their domestic animals, one tribe having the saying: "In three years a dog is as wise as a man"; a care of animals reflected on Windmill Hill, where cattle were expertly killed with "humane killers" made of flint. Their breed of dog was in form not unlike a modern greyhound. The domestic cat had not made its appearance, and there is no evidence that fowls were kept at the settlement. There are indications that flax may possibly have been spun and woven into cloth.

In trying to reconstruct the life of a prehistoric race it must, however, be remembered that the failure to find such perishable things as textiles and chicken-bones is no proof that an open-air people had neither cloth nor fowl-runs four thousand years ago. Underground chambers in the dry climate of Egypt can give a far more detailed account of how man lived in the distant past.

Windmill Hill ware was greatly superior to the "flower pot" and "bucket" pottery of the Bronze Age which followed the unexplained disappearance of this New Stone culture. The earthenware, which was possibly made by the women of the settlement, was thin and well-fired with a smooth surface decorated with simple line and punch-marked designs. The utensils had rounded bases, and were in some cases provided with small handles or lugs. It has been suggested that this early pottery was derived

from leather models whose rims were stiffened by withy hoops. "Windmill Hill" pottery has been found in other



3. *Windmill Hill and Peterborough Earthenware*

parts of the British Isles, and as far north as Caithness and the Orkneys.

VILLAGE COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING.—The New Stone Age brought in settled community life. Men still lived to some extent in caves, possibly in some cases as a temporary residence at certain times of the year, as the trans-border Pathans habitually do to this day. But the more progressive tribes had learnt to live in villages provided with pits for storing food and workshops for making flint implements, and protected by the collective defence of earthworks and stockades. The villagers were beginning to put up two-roomed corridor houses, made of beams, wattle and daub. A two-storied house built towards the end of the period has been found in Wurtemberg, in which the attic was apparently used as a bedroom. A reconstruction of this house¹ shows a type almost similar in appearance to the Abor dwelling on page 237 of this book.

¹ Illustration given in *The Aryans*, V. Gordon Childe (London, 1926).

In East-Central Europe men had reached the stage of cultivating wheat, barley, beans and apples. Their stock included cattle and pigs, sheep and goats, and they kept dogs. A small breed of horse has been found, and it is possible that, before metal was known in Europe and bits could be made, the animals were controlled by using strips of hide, or pieces of rope. From the remains found and the prehistoric engravings that have come down to us, the horse of the period, which was certainly used extensively for food, was rather small in size and heavily built, with a large head and a rough shaggy mane and tail. The modern equivalent is the recently extinct tarpan, the wild horse of the South Russian steppes, and the surviving Mongolian wild pony known as Przewalski's horse.¹

During the latter part of the New Stone Age farm-houses were being built in Central Europe with living, sleeping and kitchen quarters of the bungalow type and byres, all built round three sides of a courtyard—a layout on the lines of a modern continental farm. But to emphasize the unequal advance of civilization, it should be remembered that long before this period (which was roughly between 2600 and 1800 B.C.) the two-storied red brick houses of Mohenjo Daro on the Indus were built with a pipe drainage system from bathrooms and closets to drains in the street, and rubbish shoots in the walls led down to outside refuse-bins.²

The peaceful conditions enjoyed by the settlers on

¹ Art. "The Evolution of the Domestic Horse," Dr. Max Hilzheimer, *Antiquity*, June 1935.

² *Mohenjo Daro and the Indus Civilization*, Sir John Marshall (London, 1929).

Windmill Hill do not reflect a universal state of affairs throughout the New Stone Age in Europe. Racial migrations and lesser movements of people finding new homes caused restlessness and disturbance on the continent. These are reflected in a growing specialization of weapons for use in war. The excavation of a Nordic settlement on the Isar¹ tells the story of a prehistoric fight with almost the vividness of an eyewitness account. Here, on a hill-top, stood the village fortified with three rings of trenches with stockade works between them. The place was stormed and burnt, and its desperate defence can be seen in the sling-stones, the used arrow-heads and the number of broken human bones in the ditches.

Another type of house in the New Stone Age was protected by water from attack, a method we are accustomed to associate with medieval strongholds. It also had obvious sanitary advantages. Piles were sunk off the shore of a lake—at one site as many as fifty thousand have been found—and the houses built upon stout wooden platforms. In the earlier lake settlements, which were closest to land, a narrow causeway that could be quickly destroyed acted instead of a drawbridge. No graves of these people have been discovered.

Pile dwellings were first built on the Swiss and Italian lakes. They did not appear in Britain until after the introduction of metal, and Glastonbury, which is the best known in the country, dates from the Iron Age. Primitive peoples who have settled beside lagoons and lakes, as in Borneo, still live in this type of village.

¹ *The Danube in Prehistory*, V. Gordon Childe (Oxford, 1929), p. 127.

MEGALITHS.—During the period covered by the general description New Stone Age the value of stone as a permanent monument was realized, its most important use being to commemorate the dead. In the East, pillar and holed - stone cults came into existence perhaps seven thousand years ago. In Western Europe they may have begun as early as 2500 B.C., although the finest megalithic monuments were set up later.

The motive which inspired these stupendous undertakings first found expression in the simplest forms. Wood soon decays, boulders were an obvious improvement, and with the first stone circles (not always upright) megalithic culture began. From chambered cairns only a few feet high to hold a body, the earliest impulse to plan monuments to the dead on a colossal scale brought in the Megalithic period. Nearly four thousand years ago prehistoric man set up the great circle, the mile-long avenue, and the Sanctuary at Avebury; Stonehenge was built with its trilithons more than twenty feet in height; and the bewildering lines of avenues were laid out at Carnac.

A higher culture, expressing itself in colossal forms of architecture, built the pyramids of Egypt as tombs for the royal house, and in India Buddhism left its most imposing monuments in domes of brick and stone known as stupas, to mark holy places and to enshrine sacred relics. The largest stupa is bigger than any Egyptian pyramid except two.¹

It is impossible within the limited space of this book

¹ Present height of the largest Gizeh pyramid (date about 2800 B.C.) is 450 feet. The height of the Anuradhapura stupa (built about the first century B.C.) is 250 feet.

to describe the different stone cults of primitive peoples in detail. They range in variety from the ancient ancestral statues over thirty feet high and burial platforms of Easter Island,¹ to the hidden "male and female" stones on which the welfare of the Naga villages on the Assam-Burma border is still held to depend.²

But in this account of prehistoric times something should be said of one of the most prominent megalithic monuments in England. As one may see in a cathedral the additions of successive periods, so Stonehenge represents the work of centuries. It consists of five circles: a ring of earthwork broken by causeways; an outer circle of the intensely hard stones known as sarsens, with lintels, the blocks averaging twenty-six tons; an inner blue-stone circle; a horse-shoe of five great sarsen trilithons, jointed and mortised with amazing skill; and an inner oval of blue-stones. There are also big single stones. Its avenue was discovered by air photography in 1921. The green sandstone was brought eight miles, and the pink sarsens eighteen from the downs which supplied Avebury. The blue-stones came from Pembrokeshire, one hundred and forty-five miles distant in an air line, but they are believed to have been carried by water round the coast and taken inland up the Salisbury Avon.

¹ See *The Mystery of Easter Island*, Mrs. S. Routledge (London, 1919), pp. 165-302. Easter Island presents another point of interest. For Austric, the most widely spread language in the world, is traced from this island to Madagascar and from New Zealand to the Punjab and the Madras Presidency, where it is the oldest of the five basic languages of India (*Indian Census Report*, 1911, Vol. I. p. 524).

² See *The Angami Nagas*, J. H. Hutton (London, 1921).

In its earliest form Stonehenge would seem to have been a simple ring of sarsens. The monument as we see it today is probably contemporary with the avenue and may, it is conjectured, have been reconstructed some time about 1500 B.C., approximately at the end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze period in Britain.

While it is impossible to foretell what research may bring to light at Avebury, the only purpose as yet discovered for stone circles is sepulchral. We have no record of the beliefs regarding a future life current in Britain and Brittany three thousand five hundred years ago, such as the priests of Ancient Egypt bequeathed to us, from about 2700 B.C. in the Pyramid Texts of the "Book of the Dead." But although what is held by existing backward peoples cannot be taken as a certain guide, man's attitude towards the dead in successive phases of religious development is interesting as an indication.

The most archaic surviving tribes—such as the Central African Pygmies, primitive Algonkins of North America and the South-East Australians—believe in a Supreme Being. He is "Father" and creator of the first ancestral pair, but is dreaded as the sender of an early death as a punishment. The dead, who are generally buried, very rarely cremated, are given some of their possessions for their use in the next world; the germs, to quote Sir James Frazer, of a regular worship of the dead. They are more loved than feared, and their bones in some instances, as by the Andamanese, may be carried about as precious relics by the relatives.

A further religious development is met with both in Australia and Africa in what is called the "boomerang culture." In place of a pair of tribal ancestors, there is a single figure, the First Father—the first mortal man who, having risen from the dead, is equated with the moon, which wanes and disappears, but also is seen again anew. Generally speaking the First Father and the Supreme Being are merged into a single figure—who is chief god and creator, and also the tribal father. This is the point at which idols are first used in worship, being the image of the First Father of the community. There is, however, at this stage no cult of the individual dead, who are buried perhaps in the so-called niche-grave, a pit dug in the ground with a side chamber in it.

But when the hunters and food gatherers begin to exploit Nature a higher economic standard is reached—the stage, in fact, originated by the New Stone people. We find amongst certain modern primitive tribes of this more advanced culture a great change in the religious outlook. The primal pair, or the First Father, no longer are worshipped, but a varying number of dead ancestors, or even other dead persons; though it must be noted that there is not a single religion which consists of ancestor worship alone. It is at this stage that primitive religion is found to branch out into complicated patrilineal and matrilineal cultures, with ancestral totem-animals and magical fertility rites. Animism has become a dominating force. The tendency of these successive developments is to thrust the primitive high god further and further into the background.

Where ancestor and hero-worship thrive the funeral rites and the grave itself occupy a place of the greatest importance. Although what may be called the populace are buried under simple barrows, sepulchral chambers are built above the bodies of the most important members of the community. The customary food and drink are laid on the grave, while at the same time the tendency is to increase the value of the personal possessions offered. The entire property of the deceased may be laid in his grave or on his pyre, a practice which led, in eastern countries, to the past horrors of wholesale butchery of slaves and holocausts of wives.

The object of all offerings at a grave is to satisfy the dead man's requirements in his future life; while to safeguard the community from his return and the greatly feared evil influence of his spirit, the bones may be broken, the body tied up in a bundle and the grave weighted with large stones.¹

That, shortly, describes primitive beliefs and practices within historic times as regards the dead, and death is the phase of religion emphasized in megalithic monuments. As Sir James Frazer has said: "We cannot investigate the beliefs of prehistoric ages directly, but the comparative method of research may furnish us with the means of studying them indirectly; it may hold up to us a mirror in which, if we do not see the originals, we may perhaps contemplate their reflections."²

Totemism has been mentioned in the above review of

¹ *The Origin and Growth of Religion, passim.*

² *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead* (ed. 1913), p. 5.

religious development, and it may here be noted that the three great ruling races in particular, the Indo-Europeans, the Hamito-Semites and the Ural-Altaics, had originally no totemism. They merely acquired it here and there on their many travels, mostly in decidedly weakened forms.¹ As a living institution, totemism has not been found in any part of Northern Africa, Europe or Asia with the single exception of India and perhaps parts of Siberia.²

To come back to megalithic monuments. "If Stonehenge," to quote R. S. Newall,³ "represents a development of the chambered cairn, it may be supposed that by the time it was built ancestor-worship had taken a more prominent part in religion than mere offerings and worship at the actual grave and that this development demanded a building which whilst retaining its sepulchral character should be greatly increased in size. . . . If the Druids ever had any connexion with Stonehenge they may have put up some addition to augment or bolster up their hocus-pocus at a monument whose use in their time would have long been forgotten."

A most interesting series of offerings to the dead has been found at Carnac, which was a centre of western trade. The finds range from rough stone implements of the Middle Stone period to hammered gold head-bands made in the age of metal. The results of scientific research would have been even more striking had there not existed

¹ *Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 113, 114.

² *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. IV. p. 12 and Vol. I. pp. 85, 86.

³ Art. "Stonehenge," *Antiquity*, March 1929.

at one time in France a private company for the exploitation of gold from melted down treasure rifled from the megalithic tombs.

PROGRESS IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN.—The ancient history of Britain can be seen in the excavations made by Dr. Mortimer Wheeler and Colonel C. D. Drew, in Dorset, mainly at the great hill fortress of Maiden Castle. Here have been brought to light a fortified Stone Age settlement of about 2000 B.C., an Iron Age town dating from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D., and Roman Durnovaria which succeeded it.

These Stone Age defences at Dorchester were more than mere parapets of earth and chalk. They appear to have risen to the strength and height of stone walls, akin to the Mediterranean type of fortification; an illuminating contrast to the lack of defensive works on the north Wiltshire downs. Within the outer works of Maiden Castle are places where iron was smelted and worked in the Metal Age which eventually reached Britain.

KIEV.—It is not possible in this short survey of pre-historic Europe to attempt to detail its almost infinite variety of peoples and how they lived. But the stages on the road to civilization reached during the latest Stone Age can perhaps best be illustrated by a description of the most important New Stone site in Russia, the settlement at Kiev.¹

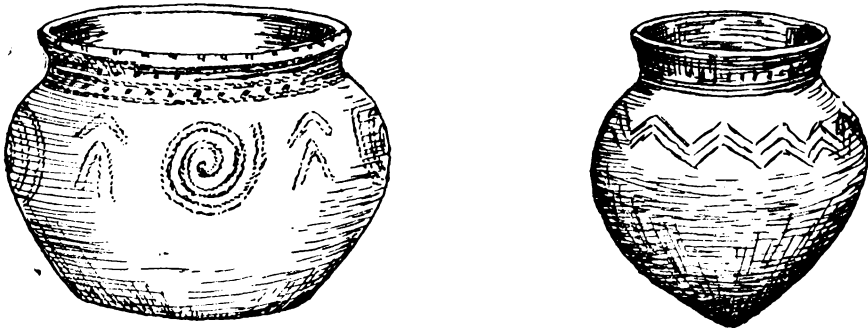
¹ See *Scythians and Greeks*, E. H. Minns (Camb. Univ. Press, 1913), Ch. VII.

Mammoth hunters had lived on the lower slopes above the Dnieper during the Old Stone Age, but the more progressive race of the later period, when they settled in these parts, occupied the tableland above. This Nordic people, nomadic and pastoral in origin, might perhaps be considered to be the section of Indo-Europeans who eventually became the Slavs. Their earliest dwellings were simple dug-outs cut in the hillside. But as the settlement took the form of a regular village, houses were built, and these are much more numerous. A house was made by digging a round or oblong pit, sometimes five and a half yards across and eighteen inches deep. In the middle of this a hole was dug to a maximum depth of five feet, and eight feet across, with steps leading down to a hearth in the face of the excavations, a hole being provided for the smoke to escape. Round the outer shallow pit walls were erected of wattle and daub and the whole covered with a roof.

It was the insanitary custom to throw the remains of food into the central pit, and traces of shell-fish, and the bones of deer, wild boar, beaver and more rarely those of horses and cows have been found. They seem to have kept tortoises as pets. Handmills and spindle-whorls show that the people raised crops and that spinning and possibly a simple kind of weaving were known. Implements and weapons were either well-turned deer and elk horns or roughly shaped flints. They made very few arrow-heads. Perforated battle-axes of stone, and later of copper, found in their highly characteristic graves have given birth to theories on the movements of what are known

as the "Battle Axe folk" extending from Mesopotamia to the Baltic.¹

The progressive improvement in the Kiev pottery is striking. The earliest attempts produced nothing better than badly baked, almost shapeless, vessels made of any sort of earth. But although the potter's wheel seems to have been unknown, the community, making use of a mixture of clayey sand and powdered shells, turned out as time went on large graceful pots decorated with dot and



4. *Kiev Earthenware*

line markings. Later still—possibly about 2000 B.C.—they made earthenware of all sizes in a great variety of shapes with leaf and line designs in brown, black, cream, white and yellow. These vessels are found in considerable quantities in a peculiar type of building for which southern Russia of the period is remarkable.

These structures of wattle and fired clay were open on at least one side and were either whitewashed, coloured red or painted in bands of red and white. There are no hearths or other signs of habitation in these buildings, and

¹ See *The Dawn of Civilization*, V. Gordon Childe (London, 1925), and *Our Early Ancestors*, Burkitt, pp. 154-157.

their purpose is obvious in the urns full of human ashes discovered at those sites which have not been wrecked by ploughing. Other indications of their religious ceremonies survive in white and red clay female statuettes, in the remains of half-cooked corn and in emblems like a pectoral cross (a common design amongst primitive peoples), which in this case may be meant for human figures.

The funeral urns and the remains of partly burnt bodies show that cremation was a recognized custom, though burial, especially of some leader, under a great mound, the body being contracted and left with a few personal possessions, was much more usual. In fact the outstanding characteristic of the South Russian people from the Volga to the Caucasus in the New Stone Age and even later is the red ochre colouring of their buried bones. It seems certain that this was smeared thickly on the bodies before burial, and it has been suggested that these people were accustomed to paint themselves with red ochre—or, rarely, with whitish yellow—and accordingly wished to appear in the spirit world as they had lived on earth.

Red ochre burials were common in Western Europe in the Stone Age, though only two have as yet been found in Britain. The same colour is seen on the painted pebbles of the intermediate period between the Old and New Stone Ages. These are flat, oval and about two inches wide; marked, usually with red and black lines. Their use has been variously guessed as money, counting boards and totemic symbols. Totemism, it may here be said, should not be considered to have come at the beginning of human culture, but to be a later and widespread, though not

a universal development.¹ The most interesting conjecture as to the meaning of these painted stones elaborates the theory that the markings represent numbers and alphabetical characters, identifying the most important with the sun-god, a serpent, a tree and an eye.² We shall meet with similar pebbles when we come to the aborigines of Tasmania.

Southern Russia, which passed through the megalithic phase of huge stone monuments in which ochre graves were still customary, became the scene of an advance to a level of civilization far beyond a study of primitive culture. It has been put forward³ that the first European centre for the distribution of copper is to be found in southern Russia, where the great mineral resources of the Caucasus were accessible. However that may be, copper began to be substituted for stone implements very early in this corner of Europe, and gold and silver ornaments and vessels, introduced perhaps from Mesopotamia, comparatively soon made their appearance.

Another advance of the greatest value is marked by the discovery in a Kuban valley tomb dating from the Copper Age of the earliest continental example of a wheeled vehicle, in the shape of a clay model. The first attempt to improve upon pack transport was probably to fasten the tips of two poles together and drag this V-shaped contrivance along the ground.⁴ Next came the sled on runners, the means

¹ See *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 113-115.

² "Les galets coloriés du Mas d'Azil," E. Piette, with an album of coloured illustrations, *L'Anthropologie*, Vol. 7 (Paris, 1896).

³ *Dawn of European Civilization*, Childe.

⁴ For the evolution of wheeled traffic chiefly in England see "Sleds, Carts and Waggons," by Cyril Fox, *Antiquity*, June 1931.

very likely used to bring the great sarsen stones to the circle and avenue at Avebury. Finally man got the idea of a wheel. While wheels were unknown in Britain until the Iron Age, which dates from about 500 B.C. in this country, the Kuban waggon comes nearer in time to the chariots made in Ur about 3000 B.C. and the ox-carts used at Mohenjo Daro at about the same period. The citizens of Mohenjo Daro had elephants and camels in their stables, but they kept no horses.

Horses were known in Assyria as far back as the third millennium, to be used later to create what then became the two most important arms of the military forces, cavalry and war chariots.¹ In the eighteenth century B.C. horses appear on Egyptian monuments. They had been brought to the country, it is believed, by the wandering Aryan tribes whose shepherd kings were the Hyksos rulers of Egypt. It was the Aryans who must have brought horses into Mesopotamia, from the north; and they certainly had these animals with them when they poured through the north-western passes to the conquest of northern India more than three thousand years ago.

But it is impossible to say when or where horses were first tamed and used. Nor can an equestrian statue ever be erected to the benefactor who discovered that the best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse.

Conditions in Africa and Asia are not favourable for wide systematic research. Traces of men dating from most remote times have been discovered in these continents, but

¹ For the evolution of the types of horse for riding and draught purposes see Dr. Hilzheimer's article in *Antiquity*, June 1935.

prehistoric finds are rare and disconnected. Western Europe alone has yielded a continuous record of human progress from the primitive hunter up to the present phase of civilization.

Authorities on the New Stone Age (Neolithic), excluding America :

The Personality of Britain, Cyril Fox (2nd Ed., Cardiff, 1933).

Archaeology in England and Wales, T. W. Kendrick and C. F. C. Hawkes (London, 1932).

Our Early Ancestors, M. C. Burkitt (Cambridge, 1926).

NOTE.—*The Horse in Britain*. It is not at all certain that the horse ever became extinct in Britain, and it is possible that the Exmoor and New Forest ponies are descended from the original stock, which stood about 13·2 hands. The earliest animals brought into the country, about the end of the Bronze Age, were small. It was not until the second century B.C. that a type more suitable for riding was imported from Gaul, having come originally from southern Europe. When Julius Caesar invaded Britain in 55 B.C. he noted the British chariot horses to be hardy and fast, like modern Celtic ponies. It is doubtful if the British type of animal gained materially in size until the Saxons and Danes introduced stallions from the Continent. (See *Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse*, W. Ridgeway, Cambridge, 1905, and *The Horse and its Relations*, R. Lydekker, London, 1912.)

CHAPTER THREE

Prehistoric Man in North America

As far as is known Man came comparatively late in prehistoric time to America and Australia. The theories on the first appearance of the human race in Australia will be referred to in the next chapter. But it may here be said that there is no comparison between the cultural states of the peoples of the Americas and of Australia when these continents were discovered by European seamen. Australia, as the Dutch found it in the seventeenth century and the Englishman, Captain James Cook, a hundred years or more later, was inhabited by extremely primitive tribes of hunters and food-gatherers. In the Americas the soldier-adventurers of Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries found tribes many of whom were, as in Australia, totemic, although this fact was not known until much later. But here the comparison ends.

When the Americas were discovered they were populated from north to south, with the possible exception of Greenland. The inhabitants had become completely acclimatized, and they had so adjusted their ways of living on the coast and among the mountains, in the desert lands, the deep forests and the open prairies, that they had evolved no less than twenty-three distinct archaeological cultural centres, some of great vitality. The more progressive communities had carried the arts of metallurgy, architecture

and sculpture to a high level of excellence. Among the more primitive peoples agriculture, pottery, the finer types of basketry and cloth-weaving, and the working of the softer metals had been developed. In comparing this with the way in which these amenities of life spread through the Old World, it must be remembered that prehistoric America never experienced the successive waves of more cultured races which had come from the East to Europe.

While one school of thought holds that the culture of the Pacific islands was brought over to America or at least is responsible for some of the cultural features of the New World,¹ there is a weight of opinion against the theory of cultural influence, by what is called diffusion, from across the Pacific. The argument based on similarities between such things as the houses and carved poles, mantles and "forts" to be seen in north-west America and in New Zealand, fish-hooks of the Pacific coast and of Oceania, and the stone and bone clubs occurring from British Columbia to the Argentine and among the Maoris, does not necessarily imply a relationship between these groups of peoples. There is evidence in two or three cases which shows that daring adventurers from eastern Polynesia may certainly have succeeded in rare and amazing instances in crossing the ocean to South America.² But this is not held, from the point of view as here quoted, to affect the conclusion that the cultural development of the New World was in no way due to outside influences.

¹ Summarized in *The American Indian*, C. Wissler (New York, 1922), pp. 389 *et seq.*

² *The American Aborigines*, ed. Diamond Jenness (Toronto, 1933), Ch. VIII. : by Roland B. Dixon of Harvard University.

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

Mexico and Peru had reached a high state of civilization, while possessing many of the fundamental traits common to the wilder folk in the marginal areas of both continents. As Wissler describes it, New World culture before the days of Columbus was "a kind of pyramid whose base is as broad as the two Americas and whose apex rests over middle America." In great tracts of country from west to east of North America there lived tribes that were respectively fishermen, bison hunters and farmers. These are the people with which this book has to do—men living primitive forms of existence—not with the higher standards of Mexico and the south.

In two respects aboriginal America was remarkable. The wheel was quite unknown there before 1492. Nor was there a single horse in America until Spanish explorers brought theirs with them.¹

What makes the absence of this animal surprising is the fact that the horse was undoubtedly evolved in North America. From the type of animal found at the end of the Pliocene period came the true horse of the lower Pleistocene. Horses and that oriental beast of burden, the camel, abounded in those days, and the horse is found from Mexico to Alaska, where it was certainly living after the Ice Age ended.² It is thought that the extinction of the horse in America may have been caused by some poisonous fly like the tze-tze.

¹ Art. "Influence of the Horse in Plains Culture," C. Wissler, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 16 (1914).

² *The Age of Mammals*, H. F. Osborn (New York, 1910).

PREHISTORIC MAN IN NORTH AMERICA

PREHISTORIC MAN.—The study of prehistoric man in America began in 1846 when a human pelvic bone was discovered at Natchez, Mississippi. This aroused the first storm of discussion over man's antiquity in America. But the bone was in undoubted association with the remains of extinct animals and what was of essential importance in the same state of mineralization.¹ Since then scientific research in the United States has unearthed many interesting finds. But while fossil remains give the geologist satisfactory information about other forms of life, Man in the New World presents a difficult problem to the archaeologist. This is hardly surprising as the prehistoric period in America only ended with the fifteenth century.

It would appear as certain as such a conclusion can be that America was peopled by migrants from Asia, where nearly related types to the aborigines now live. But it is not to be inferred that the New World native is a direct descendant of the Asiatic Mongolian. It would seem that somewhere in the distant past the Asiatic wing of the generalized type diverged into strains one of which is now Mongolian and one American.² It must be added that scientific evidence regarding the Mongoloids of Asia is much less precise than that available about the American Indians, whose aquiline noses may well mean a non-Mongoloid strain,³ while their straight black hair indicates an affinity with the Mongolian.

¹ Art. "An Outline of the Problem of Man's Antiquity in North America," E. B. Howard, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 38 (1936).

² *The American Indian*, Wissler (ed. 1922), pp. 324, 325.

³ *The American Aborigines*, Ch. IV. on Racial Types, by E. A. Hooton, Harvard University.

When the first discoverers of America arrived there is perhaps even more arguable than their origin. But, comparing the New Stone Age culture in Europe with the archaeological finds in America, it is seen that they have fifty-four stone implements and thirty-one other objective elements in common, and strong likenesses in lesser details. To quote one authoritative opinion on a distinctly vexed question. "The only conclusion that now seems warranted is that man did not reach the American continent until some time after, but probably incidental to, the general disruption caused by the last ice-retreat, and that he came as the bearer of the partially developed Neolithic culture somewhere between 5000 and 10,000 years ago."¹ On one point at least there is considerable evidence—that man had reached America before the extinction of the mammoth.²

Wherever may have been the starting-point of the first men to enter North America it is generally believed that they came by some Bering Sea route, possibly, to begin with, in small waves or groups. By the beginning of post-glacial times it would have been possible to reach the great plains of North America, in Howard's words "through ever-widening corridors of the receding ice-sheet on one side and the mountain glaciers on the other."

It would seem that there were four glacial stages in North America. The southern limit of ice, as indicated upon a modern map, is held to have run eastward from Seattle towards the hundredth degree of longitude, turned

¹ *The American Aborigines*, Ch. III., by N. C. Nelson, of the American Museum of Natural History.

² *The Age of Mammals*, Osborn, pp. 494-496 ; and see Art. "Mammoth Traditions," W. D. Strong, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 23 (1931).

south to include St. Louis and Cincinnati and then inclined northwards to reach the coast about New York. The whole country north of this line was not, of course, entirely covered with ice at the same time. As to the maximum thickness of the cap, the ice-sheet over what is now Keewatin is estimated to have reached a depth of eighteen thousand feet.

Below the southern limit of ice there extended a belt of country with the plants and animals now found in the northern tundras, and these probably included vast herds of caribou. To the south, deciduous forests grew in the east, and in the west there were plains and deserts, each with their characteristic forms of life.¹

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS.—These first adventurers from the Old World to the New are pictured as a hunting people, probably narrow-headed with various non-Indian characteristics, but still recognizable as American Indians. For, as Howard points out, up to the present no human skeleton remains have been found in North America which differ from the Indian in the way that the earliest man discovered in Europe differs from the type which characterizes the end of the Old Stone Age.

Wissler has given the probable traits of the original emigrants from the Old World in the summary "the fire-drill; stone-chipping; twisting of string; the bow, throwing-stick, harpoon; simple basketry and nets; hunting complexes; cooking with stones in vessels of wood, bark or

¹ *The American Aborigines*, Ch. I., by W. A. Johnston, Geological Survey of Canada.

skin; body-painting and perhaps tattooing; and domestication of the dog.”

As the only identification of the Old and New Worlds is found in the Eskimo, human contact between the two continents may be taken as very remote. The Eskimo were later settlers. They first appeared in Alaska and then spread along the Arctic coast, and there is no existing proof that, like this race, the first immigrants were adapted to an arctic environment.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES.—Isolated from the civilized world until the sixteenth century, the first inhabitants of America slowly developed their own forms of culture. When the New World was discovered some stone tools were actually in use at the most advanced metallic centres. In more backward places the people only had implements like those of the European New Stone Age. Speaking generally Western hardware gradually replaced stone and copper as white traders penetrated the country or their goods reached the interior by exchange.¹ But the Nootka Indians on Vancouver Island, highly cultured though they were in many ways, were still using stone tools at the end of last century.

Consequently there are in America none of the definite stages of progress that are to be found in Europe, and the difficulties in assigning relative “dates” to archaeological finds can be considerable. In this connexion something should be said about the thickness of the cultural deposits

¹ See *Habitat, Economy and Society*, C. Daryll Forde (London, 1934), pp. 69-95.

of North America. The greatest depth of debris found in the Ozarks and other caves is believed to be not much more than forty feet. This record is exceeded in the Old World not only by the greater thickness of the strictly corresponding New Stone Age and later cultural deposits of recent geological date, but by remains of the Old Stone Age for which no counterpart has as yet been found in America.

To take two of the most important Old World examples. In Russian Turkestan the stratified rubbish at the Anau Kurgan sites measured one hundred and seventy feet, of which forty-five feet were of New Stone Age and the remainder later prehistoric accumulations. While, as regards the Old Stone Age deposits a depth of fifty-five feet was found at the Castillo cave in Spain. As Nelson remarks: "Clearly the Old World was formerly ahead of the New as regards the quantity of production, or else it had a very much earlier start."¹ On the other hand, the New World redresses the balance of the Old in the information it gives about stone implements.

While a most interesting technique of the Old World was evolved by the "Battle Axe" people, with their perforated axes of stone and copper, the New World had a peculiar device of its own. This was to make a groove in the head of the implement (usually an axe) in which to fasten the handle. This method was followed by the inhabitants of the eastern Maize and Bison areas and by the Pueblos. It is rarely met with further south.²

¹ *The American Aborigines*, pp. 106-108.

² *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), p. 123.

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The ways of making stone implements must obviously depend on the materials available, whether it be by chipping or flaking, abrading or pecking, grinding or polishing. The Nootka people shaped the great cedar trees they needed for house pillars, totem poles and their sea-going dug-out canoes, with stone and elk-horn chisels and stone mallets, weighing several pounds. Their technique for turning hard stone pebbles into flat blades is known as "pecking." Parallel grooves were battered in the pebble to be shaped with a long very hard oval stone. The ridges thus formed were then pecked away, and so the process continued until the tool was more or less shaped, when it was finished off by grinding on a suitable stone.

On the subject of stone tools an interesting discovery was made in British Columbia. In prehistoric times two types of men lived on that coast. One was, like the existing Indian today, very broad headed; the other, with very narrow faces and heads, no longer exists. They have left behind them stone cairns (taken to be contemporary) in which little but their bones are found, and enormous clam and cockle-shell heaps—some from a mile to two miles long and nine feet deep—that are now buried in dense forest, and certainly date from many hundreds of years ago, in some cases perhaps even thousands. The interest lies in the fact that the builders of the shell heaps practised trephining, a custom now unknown, and one which recalls the surgical operations of Stone Age Europe.¹

Archaeological interest in North America centres largely

¹ *Indians of Canada*, Diamond Jenness (National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, 1932), pp. 220, 225-227.

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on its flint workings and its copper mines. Prehistoric quarries have been found where flint, chalcedony, jasper, quartz and obsidian were mined to get the materials for tools.

Outside the regions of more advanced culture—although free copper was gathered in many places west of Hudson Bay and in Alaska—the only copper workings seem to have been in the neighbourhood of Lake Superior. Here stone hammers weighing as much as twenty-six pounds have been found in the ancient pits, and at one place a wooden shovel, a bowl and a ladder have been recovered.

Virgin copper was extracted by heat, by breaking and by the useful method of wedging which was used by the people of the Pacific coast to split their huge cedar trunks. In one pit, which was twenty-six feet deep, a mass of copper weighing six tons had been worked out and raised on an incline of logs by wedging. Most of the supporting timbers and wedges were still in place when the site was opened.¹

Copper was simply beaten into shape in what are now the United States. There is no evidence of casting, or even of beating in dies. In Wisconsin the discovery of copper duplicates of the most important stone tools parallels the way in which metal implements gradually replaced stone in Europe. Near the North American copper mines there are found occasional experiments in new designs of metal tools, suggesting that the copper-working art had begun to develop on fresh lines.

¹ *The Stone Age in North America*, W. K. Moorehead, 2 vols. (Boston, New York, London, 1911).

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The Delaware valley and the Susquehanna were ideal places for early man. The climate was not severe, game abounded in the forests, nuts and herbs were plentiful and the rivers teemed with fish. In southern New York and throughout New Jersey and Delaware chipped and polished implements have been found which are taken to have been made by the most ancient people who lived in these parts. Roughly made axes and ornaments of different kinds are common, but gouges are rare and adzes hardly ever found. There is a small amount of copper. Moorehead believes it to be "beyond question" that man lived in the Delaware valley from three to four thousand years ago. At Lamoka, in the State of New York, Parker discovered a stratified refuse-heap left by two distinct peoples, the lower deposits by a long-headed tribe to whom pottery was unknown, and the upper by a round-headed tribe that used earthenware. He estimated the antiquity of the heap at from two to four thousand years, which, Miss Jenness observes, is very much greater than a reasonable estimate for any site yet discovered in eastern Canada.¹

In Kansas and Iowa the tools range from large notched hatchets, typical of the bison country, small almost square hand-axes, and yellow chert and jasper hide-scrapers down to minute arrow-heads. This type of arrow-head, which is reminiscent of the transitional stone period in Europe, is found in Texas, together with roughly made implements of different kinds and hardly any earthenware.

Of the open sites that have been excavated the most famous, from the standpoint of stone technique, was found

¹ *Indians of Canada*, p. 224.

rather more than ten years ago at Folsom in New Mexico. Under twelve feet of re-stratified deposits thirty skeletons of an extinct bison were discovered together with a score of spear-heads to which the name "Folsom points" has been given. These thin, beautifully flaked, leaf-shaped points, with longitudinal grooving along each face, are characteristic of a people living on the eastern side of the Rockies; and the workmanship is judged to be even finer than the best "laurel-leaf" spear-heads of the Old Stone Age in Europe.¹

A curiously varied collection of animal remains was found in 1930 in the Conkling cave of New Mexico. Here, under a layer of naturally cemented sand, called a sandstone seal, and fourteen feet below the level of the valley outside the cave, parts of human skeletons and the bones of camel, horse, ground sloth, antelope, wolf and Californian condor were unearthed. The human remains included a narrow-headed skull.

THE OZARK CULTURE.—In the moist climate of Arkansas amazing discoveries of perishable objects have been made. Here were the homes of the Ozark bluff-dwellers, an ancient people who hunted and farmed.²

Their favourite meat-food was venison and turkey; and they also ate bear, elk, bison and turtle. The split bones in their refuse-heaps show that, like the prehistoric folk of Europe, they appreciated the marrow.

¹ E. B. Howard in *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 16, Art. quoted above.

² Art. "The Ozark Bluff-dwellers," M. R. Harrington, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 26 (1924).

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In these kitchen middens a great variety of what in other circumstances would be looked upon as rubbish has been found. A typical collection would include such unexpected things as cane-basket splints, corn cobs, acorn and nut-shells, wild grape stems, bark and Indian hemp in various stages of preparation, bits of woven bags and mats, and even feathers.

The weapons used in hunting were short cane-shafted spears with heavy flint heads. This weapon was projected from a spear-thrower. A complete wooden spear-thrower was found to measure nineteen inches in length. At one end there was a projection to take the butt of the spear and at the other a transverse peg as a handle. This differs in



5. *Spear-thrower* (after Harrington)

detail from the harpoon throwing-sticks used by the Eskimo,¹ and indeed from all spear-throwers hitherto known except an Aztec type found in the ruins of the city of Mexico.

Quantities of fish scales have been found but no fish-hooks, nor, from the account of the excavations,² does it appear that cane fish-traps were used. There are nets of Indian hemp (which might have been for catching rabbits) but no sinkers.

Their axe-heads were large oval chipped blades of flint, the tip of the blade being thrust through a hole in

¹ *The Ammassalik Eskimo*, ed. by William Thalbitzer (Copenhagen, 1914), Pt. I. pp. 46 and 434-450.

² M. R. Harrington in *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 26.

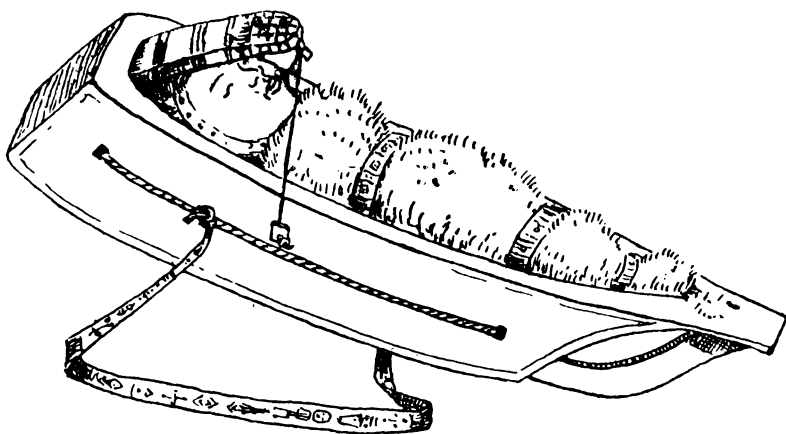
the shaft and tightened with small wooden wedges. These details may indicate how Old Stone Age man in the continents we know he inhabited helved his implements. In this connexion it may be added that the American flint spear-heads were fitted into a slot in the shaft and bound with fibre or thongs of hide. Other tools included rough flint scrapers and awls of bone, antler-horn and wood.

The Ozark people grew a great deal of Indian corn, from the quantities of cobs they left behind them, beans and sunflowers. The corn was prepared with stone grinders and with a flat hand-stone. In addition to primitive digging-sticks about two feet long, a hoe was unearthed in good preservation. The blade is a perforated mussel-shell bound to its wooden handle with bark thongs and string.

The small amount of pottery is considered to have come late in the history of the settlement. Gourds were grown instead, to make into bottles, cups and dishes, and a basket water-bottle lined with pitch was discovered. Basket-work was common, of the coiled type similar to that made by the Chitimacha Indians of Louisiana.

For the dress of Stone Age man in Europe we are indebted to the work of contemporary artists. In the Colorado Valley, whatever the antiquity of its culture may be, the very clothing of the bluff-dwellers has come down to us. The people wore no hats, they had deerskin and feather robes, and a semi-mummified body was found with tanned deerskin leggings and moccasins. Ornaments were not common, but they had large beads made of the core of a conch shell. This is found no nearer than the Gulf of Mexico, and is the only sign of trade with distant places.

An interesting find was an artificially flattened skull; and it is stated that two more specimens were dug up by local archaeologists. This custom has continued into modern times. Father Gravier, S.J., when he explored from Illinois to the mouth of the Mississippi in 1700, made a note during his travels that "the mothers are careful to compress the heads of their children, while in the cradle, to make them flat."¹ Catlin gives a detailed



6. *Chinook Cradle* (after Catlin)

description of the way this was done by the Chinooks of the lower part of the Columbia river when he visited them more than a hundred and thirty years later. The babies were wrapped up in rabbit skins and kept in wooden cradles like small canoes, with the front of their skulls tightly pressed against a board, until the deformity became permanent, a matter of from three to eight weeks. Catlin was convinced that this had no bad effect on their intelligence.²

¹ *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, ed. R. G. Thwaites (Cleveland, 1896), Vol. LXV. pp. 130-131.

² *The North American Indians*, George Catlin (ed. Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. II. pp. 125-126.

The practice is one that was followed by the Coast Salish, Nootka and Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia.¹

The only vestiges of cave art were some angular markings scratched on rock, and the one figure of a man roughly painted in red on the wall of a shelter.

In the miscellaneous gear collected at Ozark there was not a single pipe. But it is stated that some local archaeologists found a specimen engraved with fine zig-zag lines in a cavern yielding typical bluff-dwellers' stone-work.

One find of considerable interest was a stick painted white and peculiarly carved. It might be rash to connect it with the *batons de commandement* of the Old Stone Age in Europe, as there are no clues to the use of either.

More certain are the remains of a medicine bag or sacred bundle found where there was evidence of a burial. In the woven bag of Indian hemp were a small handful of charms, two beaver teeth, the beak of a bird and some worked bits of calcite.

The dead were buried in holes like their storage pits between the rocks of the shelters or between fallen rocks and the back wall. The graves were lined with grass and a robe of deerskin, feathers or fibre was put down on which the corpse was laid. It was then covered with matting or grass, a layer of sticks, dust, ashes and fragments of rock, and sometimes big slabs of stone. This and the contracted position of the body, with the knees drawn up to the chin, betray the fears of the mourners that the soul might return to harm them. The dead were buried without any attempt at orientation, but the corpse was

¹ *Indians of Canada*, p. 150, footnote.

laid on its side. Double and triple burials were found, and a few cases of cremated remains. In very dry spots the bodies were in a mummified condition and well preserved, unless they had been attacked by rats. A child was found buried on its cradle-board, and another was covered with a cradle even although it had quite outgrown it.

It seems quite certain that the Ozark remains that have been described all belong to one culture. It is considered that their age is more than merely pre-Colonial but very much more remote.

In the first place, the traces of another and later culture which is itself pre-Colonial lay above the Ozark remains. The second argument for antiquity is based on the nature of the remains themselves. Most known archaic peoples of North America, those of the extreme north-west and the Pacific coast excepted, have progressed beyond the primitive chipped-axe stage which is itself similar to the types used in Europe during the Old Stone Age. Again, the spear-thrower with its short javelin had been completely superseded by the more effective bow and arrow in what has become the United States, when America was discovered. No grooved axes or even fragments of them were found among the Ozark remains, and the excavators were greatly impressed by the appearance of age that was obvious in the implements discovered.

PREHISTORIC BURIALS.—Contracted burials have been found in other places that are on historical and archaeological grounds of undoubted prehistoric age. In Kentucky there were no personal possessions found in burials of this type,

which are the most common. In a grave where the body was partly flexed there were bits of broken pottery and two bone awls. A corpse found fully extended had been given beads made from the bones of some bird.¹ Cremation was the custom in parts of the continent in prehistoric times, as in southern Arizona and the lower reaches of the San Francisco; but not apparently in New Mexico. The mound builders either burnt or buried their dead. The idea of cremation was, it is believed, to secure immortality by smoke and fire.

THE RED PAINT PEOPLE.—Finally we come to the examples found in New Brunswick and Maine of the red ochre cult which is so strongly represented in prehistoric Europe. There is no colour so universally popular as red. This can be seen in examples as widely contrasted as the prehistoric settlers in Kiev with their iron oxides, and the red bark colouring lavishly used by the secluded peoples now living up the Congo river.² It is equally evident among the North American Indians in historic times. Red is their sacred colour, usually symbolic of strength and success, and this was used for painting the face and body for the war-path and for decorating the war-pony and the lance.³

As regards the New Brunswick example and archaeo-

¹ Art. "Prehistoric Village Sites," W. S. Webb, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 30 (1928).

² See the well-illustrated account of the Bambala, *Annales du Musée du Congo Belge*, Tome II. Fascicule 2, E. Torday and T. A. Joyce (Brussels, 1922).

³ The Cheyenne Song of the Red Paint is given in the *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part 2. "The Ghost-Dance Religion," J. Mooney, p. 1037.

logical discoveries generally in the Maritime provinces of Canada, it must be said that none of the remains hitherto excavated bears any indications of great antiquity, nor is there any certain proof that Algonkin or any other tribes had occupied this region more than a century or two before the European discovery of America.

The grave found at Red Bank, New Brunswick, contained burnt human bones and a number of stone implements deeply stained with red ochre. But while the implements in no way resembled those of the Maine discovery, knobbed gouges, plummets, adze blades and long slate spear points of the Maine "red paint" type—but without any traces of red ochre—have been found in various parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and in circumstances that do not indicate great antiquity. This has led to the conclusion that these specimens should not be regarded as the work of a distinct people but as local variants from the more usual Algonkin forms.¹

It is impossible to say what were the magical attributes which the "Red Paint People" of America attached to red ochre. It is generally supposed that prehistoric Europeans covered their dead with red ochre so that the soul-bodies should appear in the spirit world as their mortal bodies had been seen on earth.

The culture of the Red Paint people is considered by Moorehead to be very much older than that of the existing Algonkin tribes still represented in Maine. There are no traces of grooved axes, soapstone dishes or pipes. Only a few arrow-heads have been found, mostly made of slate.

¹ *Indians of Canada*, p. 222.

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The stone tools, gouges, knives and spear-heads that have been discovered lay in masses of brilliant red and occasionally yellow ochre.

The plummets which were discovered were from one to seven inches long, weighed up to over four pounds, and ranged from rough pebbles to grooved polished "effigies." These latter are thought to represent a whale or a porpoise. It may be said here that in an Algonkin confederacy which had its centre in what is now Maine, one of the fourteen totem clans was named after the Sturgeon.¹ Besides these "Red Paint" symbols there were slender ornamental stones fifteen and three-quarter inches in length and others that were paddle-shaped. These emblematic stones used in some long-forgotten ritual were all perforated, and the holes showed the polish given by the thongs which carried them.²

With a touch of Nature that links the Old World with the New in the cult of the Red Ochre, this attempt to describe prehistoric man is ended.

Authorities on the Stone Age in North America (Neolithic):—

The Stone Age in North America, W. K. Moorehead, 2 vols. (Boston, New York, London, 1911).

The American Aborigines (Fifth Pacific Science Congress), ed. by Diamond Jenness (Toronto, 1933).

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 45, 46, and *Ancient Society*, L. H. Morgan (London, 1877), p. 174.

² This account of "The Red People of Maine" is taken from the Art. by W. K. Moorehead in *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 15 (1913).

CHAPTER FOUR

A Link with the Past

WE have now reached the point where we leave the graves of prehistory for men and women working out a primitive existence in this modern world of ours.

Looking back at the course of civilization through the centuries one is struck by the unequal distribution of those benefits that cultural progress can give. It is seen that the power and money of the dominant classes, whether feudal and military or modern and financial, secure for their possessors all the luxuries of the age, in terrible contrast to the dependent position and the poverty of the mass of the population. There is actually, in the standards of living, a far wider gulf between Disraeli's "Two Nations"—the rich and poor of a civilized country—than there was in Europe between the conditions of life in the New Stone and Bronze Ages.

Among primitive races a community really has all its interests in common. The means of existence may be limited to the barest necessities, but they are at least equally open to all. As an illustration of this from the writer's experience, there was no distinction between the type and amenities of the headman's house and that of the youngest and least-important married couple in the many villages he visited.

Speaking in general terms, civilization has been due to

the greater enterprise of some races and the accessibility to new ideas, or remoteness from outside influences of less resourceful peoples. To descend to detail. Primitive people are obliged to be handy men in all the work of their daily life. They have neither the inclination nor the time to devote themselves to experiment or specialization. The jibe that an expert is one who gets to know more and more about less and less may be true in a way. Yet it is the modern specialist in such sciences as agricultural research and medicine who has made the best material contributions to human welfare.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TASMANIANS.—An amazing example of lack of initiative in human beings survived until comparatively recently in the Tasmanians who carried into the nineteenth century the life of the Old Stone Age. Not that they were wanting in sense, intelligence and considerable powers of memory. Although the Rev. Mr. Horton looked upon them as “a race of beings altogether distinct from ourselves and amongst the inferior species of irrational animals,”¹ they were quite the reverse on the testimony of Englishmen sympathetic enough to learn one of their dialects before the white man’s civilization completed the work the white man’s bullet had begun.

While in the course of discovery and the expansion of the white races, naturally fierce and warlike tribes—such as the North American Indians—have been encountered, the word savage can give rather a mistaken impression of primitive races in general. Secluded and normally peace-

¹ *The Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, J. Bonwick (London, 1870), p. 100.

able peoples can hardly be expected not to resist wholesale intrusion and a display of force. The real test is their customary relationship with their neighbours, and many "savages" are found to be the reverse of truculent, living, in ordinary circumstances, at peace with surrounding tribes.

The Tasmanians were not cannibals, and consequently did not raid neighbouring communities for victims. Nor, where about eight thousand people possessed a country nearly as big as Scotland, was there any cause for friction on account of shortage of hunting-grounds. They seem to have been by nature a peaceful race. Anderson, the first man to describe them, called them "mild and cheerful, without reserve or jealousy of strangers,"¹ an opinion which is supported by later unprejudiced writers.

Then the white colonists came in 1803 and, driven from their hunting-grounds, dispossessed groups began to encroach on their neighbours and tribal warfare began. The aborigines had not been at first generally hostile to Europeans. But "the lawless convicts . . . and the sealers . . . from the earliest periods acted with the greatest inhumanity towards the black natives, particularly in seizing their women . . . and these outrages, it is evident, first excited, what they were naturally calculated to produce in the minds of savages, the strongest feelings of hatred and revenge. . . ." ²

The tribes united in a desperate and reckless struggle

¹ *Cook's Third Voyage*, Book I. Ch. VI. p. 45 (ed. London, 1785).

² Extract from Minutes of Executive Committee in "Colonies and Slaves" (H. of C. Papers 1831, Vol. XIX. pp. 15, 16).

for life and independence, but the war of 1825 to 1833, with its murders of settlers and their families and battues of the Blacks, could only have one ending. The Tasmanians stood about as much chance as the dodo, and so the oldest country was turned into the newest colony of a growing empire. In 1833 the numerous tribes into which the aborigines of Van Diemen's Land were divided had been reduced to one hundred and twelve souls¹ imprisoned on an island in Bass's Strait. The last survivor, a woman, died in 1876.

As W. J. Sollas puts it in *Ancient Hunters*: "It is a sad story, and we can only hope that the replacement of a people with a cranial capacity of only about 1200 c.c. by one with a capacity of nearly one-third greater may prove ultimately of advantage in the evolution of mankind."

The ill-starred contact between white men and Tasmanians, which ended in the custody of the surviving women by unmarried convicts, gave no opportunity for a study of this primitive people in their natural surroundings. But some light has been thrown on their daily lives by a few reliable witnesses.

The Tasmanians were a dark-skinned, well-proportioned race, many of them, according to Backhouse, with fine expressive features. Their height (as recorded) ran from about five feet two inches to over six feet. They had dark eyes, rather wide noses and black hair that was either short and woolly or worn in long ringlets heavily smeared with grease and ochre. "Compared with the negro," Count

¹ *Aborigines of Tasmania*, H. Ling Roth (2nd Ed., Halifax, 1899), pp. 164, 165.

Paul de Strzelecki said of them,¹ "he is swifter in his movements and his gait more graceful. His agility, adroitness and flexibility, when running, climbing or stalking his prey, are more fully displayed; and when beheld in the posture of striking, or throwing his spear, his attitude leaves nothing to be desired in point of manly grace."

Although everyone must be a native of some country or other, nineteenth-century racial feeling, sweeping every colour and culture—even age-old eastern civilization—into its definition, brought the word to imply a black man of almost unspeakable inferiority to ourselves. Yet the Tasmanian Blacks, who lived in the most primitive state imaginable, and consequently presented an extreme case, were in their own way highly competent, for they excelled in woodcraft, which was their business in life. The missionary, James Backhouse, who was four years in the country and knew them well, has said of them: "It would not be more erroneous for one of these people to look upon an Englishwoman as defective in capacity because she could neither dive into the deep and bring up any [shell] fish, nor ascend the lofty gum trees to catch opossums for her family, than it would be for an Englishwoman to look upon the Tasmanian as defective in capacity, because she could neither sew, nor read, nor perform the duties of domestic life."²

¹ *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (London, 1845) quoted in *Aborigines of Tasmania*, p. 16. James Ross confirms this impression and mentions their "charming air of independence."

² Quoted by Bonwick in *Daily Life*. There is evidence that trees two hundred feet high were climbed by Tasmanian women even when dressed (see *Aborigines of Tasmania*, pp. 98-101, where this way of catching opossums is given at length).

A man from the New Stone Age settlement of Kiev would undoubtedly have thought the inhabitants of the island a singularly backward people. But he would have found a common bond in their custom of smearing their dark skins with a mixture of red ochre and grease. They may have done this as a protection against insects, as the primitive tribes of the Bahr-el-Ghazal cover their bare bodies with ash. On the other hand, there may have been a deeper meaning.

If one excepts the plaited waist-belts of the men, the garters and bracelets of the women and the kangaroo and opossum skins worn in cold or wet weather, the Tasmanians went about entirely naked. Both sexes—it would seem with the idea of making themselves more attractive to each other—scarred parallel lines on their shoulders, chests and thighs. More ornamental, from our point of view, were their shell necklaces and the chaplets of clematis, the scented flowers and the wreaths of bright scarlet berries which men as well as women wore in their hair.

Tasmania is a wooded island, with a coastline broken by deep inlets and a number of islets. On the western side mountains rise to a height of five thousand feet, whose slopes under a heavy rainfall are densely covered with forests of evergreens and beeches. Eastward lie the drier plateaus and plains where there is more open country, and the eucalyptus-gums and fern trees grow. An abundance of animal life made it possible for the people of the island to gain their livelihood in the most primitive way known to man.

THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE.—Remote from a world of progress and conflict the Tasmanians had stood still, content “to wend through the wildwood and wade the highways wet.” They were food-gatherers and hunters, whose spears and throwing-clubs were not to be compared with the prehistoric Stone Age equipment of bows, spear-throwers and slings.

Tasmanian spears were staves fifteen to eighteen feet long, straightened by hand and jaw, with the wooden point hardened by fire and sharpened with a stone scraper. Intended primarily for hunting, the spear could be thrown with great effect up to forty and even sixty yards. But the question of range was not of vital importance where there were no dangerous beasts to face. Incidentally, none of the animals which man has domesticated existed on the island. Without dogs the Tasmanians closed in upon the kangaroos, or stampeded their quarry towards hunters armed with bows and spears by setting fire to the undergrowth. The miscellaneous bag included opossums, bandicoots, wombats and the emu, which is now extinct in Tasmania. They were very fond of cygnet, and they also ate seals and the meat of stranded whales.

Birds' eggs (especially swan and sooty petrels), reptiles, ants and grubs were collected, and shell-fish from oysters to periwinkles, the women diving for large ear-shells, which they knocked off the rocks with wooden chisels. Shell-fish were also collected by dragging the river mud with oval string baskets. The arrival on the coast of the tribes from the interior to get their shell-fish was made an occasion for a festive gathering.

Scale-fish seem from the available evidence to have been taboo, a prohibition which also extended to wallaby under varying conditions.

The idea of cultivating anything never entered their heads. Their vegetable food included young fern, bulrush roots, kangaroo apples, wild cherries and sea-wrack. For bread they ate a mushroom growth which is said to have tasted rather like rice when it was roasted. The Tas-



7. *Tasmanian Shelter* (after Peron)

manians found these under the ground—like truffles—although it was quite beyond the ability of a white man to detect them. Their usual drink was water, but they also liked a fermented liquor made of the rather treacly juice of a eucalyptus tree.

There were no permanent settlements in the country, the nearest approach being the temporary occupation of a cave. Families sheltered mostly in what was little better than a bivouac of sheet-bark, or under branches that looked “like a tea-cup broken in half.” The only improvement

on this was a beehive hut with a framework of wattle, a reed-thatched roof and a small door. This type of dwelling was found on the western coast. It was built to hold from twenty to thirty people, and might be lived in for as much as six months at a time.

What is known of the Tasmanians rests largely upon the statements of none too observant officials in charge of them on their way to extinction, and the recollections of missionaries and farm settlers, bushrangers and convicts. It is not surprising that the evidence is unsatisfactory, and frequently conflicting. This is noticeably the case on the vexed question of whether the Tasmanians could make fire, and if so how they produced it. But there are "circumstantial accounts of stick and groove fire-making apparatus by two settlers well advanced in years, who carry us back to the early part of the century when the natives were still roaming about the country, before they were wholly robbed of it, and at a time when they had been little in touch with Australians and Europeans."¹

The custom may not have been common, for it was a usual practice to carry about a "fire-stick." This was either a lighted bit of honeysuckle or grass tree, or a spongy substance from a stringy bark which was wrapped up tightly at one end and would retain fire till all was burnt.

Some of the most interesting and dramatically told folklore of primitive peoples tells of the coming of fire. The Tasmanian story of its origin as recorded by Milligan, who was put in charge of them in 1847, is as follows: "My

¹ *Aborigines of Tasmania*, H. Ling Roth, Appendix H. See also pp. 83, 84.

father, my grandfather, all of them lived a long time ago, all over the country; they had no fire. Two black fellows came, they slept at the foot of a hill—a hill in my own country. On the summit of a hill they were seen by my fathers, my countrymen, on the top of a hill they were seen standing: they threw fire like a star—it fell among the black men, my countrymen. They were frightened—they fled away, all of them; after a while they returned—they hastened and made a fire—a fire with wood; no more was fire lost in our land. The two black fellows are in the clouds: in the clear night, you see them like two stars.”¹

Primitive races sometimes show considerable ingenuity in preparing food, comparable with the English gypsy recipe for baking a hedgehog. But without cooking utensils of any kind the Tasmanian method was particularly rough and ready. Nothing could be boiled, everything had to be roasted—in a diet as varied as acacia seeds in their pods and kangaroo-rats. An animal was thrown on the fire without skinning. When its coat was well singed, the carcass was taken out, cut open and cleaned with a sharp flint and what was left of the fur removed. After another short spell on the fire the meat would be taken off and eaten half-burnt and partly raw. Shell-fish were thrown into the hot embers.

In the poverty of their domestic gear the Tasmanians at the beginning of the nineteenth century were in the same state of bare existence as the earliest Stone Age men. They carried water in the leaves of a tough seaweed—the

¹ Castor and Pollux (*Aborigines of Tasmania*, p. 85).

women knotted net bags of reed-fibre, the men chipped crude stone implements with which they could shape their wooden hunting weapons—and that was all.

STONE TOOLS.—Flint is not found in Tasmania, and the aborigines had to use a fine-grained sandstone. This is a more difficult substance to shape, nor is it found in convenient lumps, so a comparison with prehistoric workmanship is hardly fair. The Tasmanians rough-hewed a piece of sandstone by chipping at it always in the same direction, as many of the Old and New Stone Age scrapers were made, but they only dressed the stone carefully on one side. No Tasmanian implement was made to take a shaft or handle. A large “hatchet” might have a seven-inch base and weigh about two pounds, stone knives were from one and a half to four inches across.¹

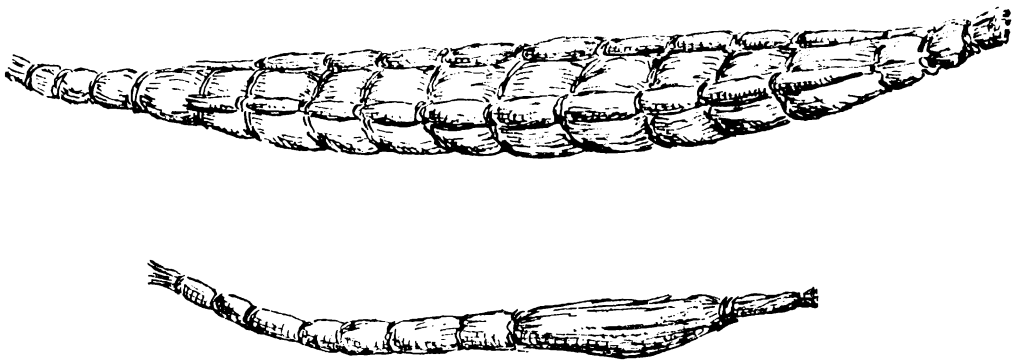
The commonest tool was the scraper; and its usefulness can be judged by the fact that Sir Edward Tylor sent one to his butcher, who reported that he could flay a carcass with it without damaging the skin by accidental cuts.² The Tasmanians put stone tools to a variety of uses. A small notched scraper smoothed their spears; a hatchet was used to cut the sinews of an animal and to smash its marrow bones upon a round stone plate used as an anvil; and a quoit-like stone four to six inches across was used by the women to cut notches in the trees when they were catching opossum.

¹ *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 33 (1931), has a well-documented and illustrated article on Tasmanian stone implements by W. D. Hambly.

² *Ancient Hunters*, Sollas, p. 93.

RAFTS.—But, uninspired by progressive ideas as the Tasmanians undoubtedly were, they could construct rafts that were seaworthy enough to have given rise to interesting speculation by modern scientists.

The simplest form of Tasmanian “boat” (which, on the dubious evidence of an ex-convict interviewed by Bonwick, was two hours’ work) consisted of three strips of tree-bark fastened together. This made a canoe-shaped



8. *Tasmanian Bark Rafts* (after Ling Roth)

raft about eight feet long and three feet wide, tapering towards the two ends which were tied up. It generally took three or four people, but could apparently carry up to six. A better craft was made of a couple of tree-stems laid about six feet apart, to which a platform of timber about thirty feet long and covered with wicker-work was lashed. These rafts held up to ten people and, worked by poles as paddles, could be sent surprisingly fast through smooth water. It may be said that while Tasmanian men were not always good swimmers, the women were fearless and magnificent divers.

Supported by the fact that rafts are known to have lived

through a stormy channel crossing of three miles, Sollas gives in *Ancient Hunters*¹ the most favoured theory of the origin of the Tasmanian people. It is suggested that they were descended from what was once a widespread, very primitive negroid race. These people, on this hypothesis, would have come along the Andaman-Malacca line to New Caledonia, Australia and Tasmania. This must have happened after the land sank to form the channels breaking the original chain of mountains into the existing line of islands; the barrier of water which accounts for the differences between the animals of Australia and Asia. Man, as Sollas points out, must have possessed some special means to enter Australia unaccompanied by other animals, and it is this which gives the rafts of the Tasmanians their importance in the argument.

Later, so it is thought, Australia was invaded by a New Stone Age people, a superior race to the Tasmanians, and whom we now call the Australian aborigines. The Tasmanians were exterminated as a race in Australia, but they were not followed across the Bass Straits to Tasmania. In primitive warfare the women are rather captured than killed, and their absorption by their conquerors might account for the similarity between some Australian and Tasmanian customs. What may be considered as traces of an original occupation of Australia by the Tasmanians include coroberies, fire legends and the curious belief that ants can restore a dead man to life,² which are common to both

¹ pp. 103, 104.

² Disenchantment by means of stinging ants to drive away the demon of disease is recorded of the Apabai Indians of South America. "Golden Bough," Part II. *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, Frazer (3rd Ed., London, 1911), p. 105.

racés. The theory also explains the fact that while features of the Tasmanians—such as their woolly hair and the characteristic shape of the skull—are found among the Australians, neither the lank curly hair, hafted ground stone implements, boomerangs nor shields of the Australian aborigines are found among the Tasmanians.¹

The Australian natives,² while living in groups of one or more families under a headman, have a definite idea of clanship and a number of clans form a tribe. Its chieftains are the collective headmen of the local groups, and the outstanding personality among them naturally takes the lead, although sometimes the chiefship of the tribe goes by inheritance. In addition to this there is in Australia the link of totemism. Each totem group also has its headman; and in tribal councils the chief speaks first and is followed by the heads of totems. It should, however, be noted that the South-East Australians, who form the oldest stratum of the native population, have either no totemism, or fragments acquired at a later date.

THE SOCIAL UNIT.—The Tasmanians had no such system of government, nor apparently the bond of totemism, which gives a member of, say, the Australian Crow totem a warm welcome by brother Crows in a strange tribe far from his own people. In Tasmania the unit was the family

¹ For the detailed opinions of leading savants as to the origin of the Tasmanians see *Aborigines of Tasmania*, H. Ling Roth, pp. 221-228.

² *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, B. Spencer and F. G. Gillen (London, 1899); and *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, A. W. Howitt (1904). A concise account is to be found in the more accessible *Ancient Hunters* (Sollas), pp. 205-286.

and its head the man with the strongest character. The wandering groups only combined to meet a great emergency, when fires were lit to summon them by their smoke to the gathering.

There does not seem to have been much in the way of law beyond the normal respect for recognized hunting areas. Davies¹ has described one way in which justice was administered. "If an offence is committed against the tribe, the delinquent has to stand while a certain number of spears are, at the same time, thrown at him; these, from the unerring aim with which they are thrown, he can seldom altogether avoid; although from the quickness of his sight he will frequently escape unhurt; he moves not from his place, avoiding the spears merely from the contortions of his body." A milder form of punishment was to put the offender "upon the low branch of a tree, point at and jeer at him"—the same idea as the English stocks and pillory.

The number of wives to one husband appears to have ranged from one to three. As with other nudist peoples the moral standard was high, and the women decent in behaviour. The men, by most accounts, were inconsiderate husbands who ill-treated their hard-working wives. But life, even for the women, was not all drudgery. The general impression remains of a cheery, good-humoured people whose simple pleasures lay in the enjoyment of a hearty meal, a good song and dancing for hours round the camp fire at night.

¹ *Tasmanian Journal of Science* (Launceston and London), 1846, quoted by H. Ling Roth, *Aborigines of Tasmania*, p. 59.

DANCES.—The Tasmanians' "song and dance" is known as a "corrobory," which is actually an Australian word. Davies, who saw the Kangaroo dance, thus described it. "In this the party (I have seen as many as ninety joined in one corrobory) commence walking round the fire slowly, singing in a low monotonous tone. After this has continued for some time, they begin to get excited, singing in a higher key, walking faster, striking their hands upon the ground and springing high in the air. By degrees their walk becomes a run, then solitary leaps, a series; their singing perfect shrieking; they close upon the fire, the women piling fresh branches upon it. Still leaping in a circle, and striking the ground with their hands at every bound, they will spring a clear five feet high, so near to the fire, so completely in the flames, that you fancy they must be burnt. Excited to frenzy, they sing, shriek and jump until their frames can stand it no longer."

In the Emu dance they kept one hand behind them and alternately put the other one to the ground and raised it above their heads, as they passed slowly round the fire, imitating the motion of an emu's head when feeding. In the Thunder and Lightning dance they moved their feet rapidly and stamped hard upon the ground.¹

Whatever Davies may have thought, the Tasmanians were a musical people. La Billardière, who knew the country in the last ten years of the eighteenth century, said that they attempted "more than once to charm us by songs, with the modulation of which I was singularly struck, from the great analogy of the tunes to those of Arabs in Asia

¹ Backhouse in his *Narrative*, p. 82, quoted by H. Ling Roth.

Minor. Several times, two of them sung the same tune together but always one a third above the other, forming a concord with the greatest correctness." ¹ The orchestral accompaniment at a corrobory consisted of kangaroo-rugs so rolled that they sounded like muffled drums when struck with the palm of the hand, and short dried sticks, with which the players kept excellent time.

So little is known about the Tasmanians that it cannot be said whether they had or had not developed the sociological system we call totemism, which is the belief of certain peoples that their families and clans stand in a definite blood relationship to particular kinds of animals. Scientific investigation would have been, in any case, impossible at the time. The unhappy remnant of the aborigines had been deported prisoners for about forty years when the first theories on totemism were published by John Ferguson McLennan.

The mimicry of the Tasmanian corrobories may have been simple imitative magic, to enable the hunter to get mastery over his quarry or to increase the stock of game.² But there is nothing to show that they did not perform totemic animal dances such as are known in New South Wales and Western Equatorial Africa that are part of the initiation ceremony into a totem.

Whatever underlying intention there may have been, the Tasmanians in the corrobories that were seen were obviously

¹ *Account of a Voyage in Search of La Pérouse, 1791-1793*, 2 vols, (London, 1800), Vol. II. Ch. X. p. 50 ; quoted by H. Ling Roth, pp. 134, 135.

² *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer, Vol. I. p. 573, describes the Kangaroo dance in north-western Australia, with its red-ochred performers.

out to enjoy themselves. They sang and danced, laughed and joked; and when the dance ended with a loud shout, the hot and exhausted performers would plunge for a swim into a near-by lagoon. As to their behaviour when dancing, an eyewitness recorded that "though their exhibition in a state of nudity must necessarily offend the eye of a European, there is not the slightest action or gesture that would offend the modesty of the most scrupulous."

The most interesting point about the corrobory is that we see in these dances the germ of the modern theatre. This, the simplest form of dramatic expression, developed among progressive peoples into religious plays. As an advance upon the open-air dancing of Vedic India, touring companies were acting scenes from the life of Krishna in the village halls at least a hundred and fifty years before the Christian era; and the Indian theatre was firmly established in the fifth century A.D. by its greatest dramatist, Kalidasa. In England the pre-Reformation Mystery plays led on to Shakespeare.

CURES OF DISEASE.—Very little is known about their medicines and cures for diseases. Primitive people living a hard open-air life are, generally speaking, vigorous and healthy, and, apart from a few rough-and-ready remedies, charms and the propitiation of some angry spirit, the guiding principles are nature cure and the survival of the fittest. If a Tasmanian fell sick and could not go on with his family group as they moved from day to day, he would be left to fend for himself, with a supply of food and some leaves of a plant (known as "Pig-faces" by the colonists) used as a purgative.

The favourite remedy for any disease seems to have been to make cuts in the patients' legs and body, and "let the pain out" by bleeding. After all, we had not got much further than that when Charles II lay dying. Another cure was the liberal application of wood-ashes. They also relied on the bones and ashes of relations and friends as charms. These relics were kept in small skin bags, and were often worn by healthy people to ward off sickness and an untimely death.

This appeal to the supernatural to cure disease was seen in another form by Backhouse at the Flinders Island Settlement. "One of the women died. The men formed a pile of logs and at sunset placed the body of the woman upon it. They then placed their sick people around it, at a short distance. On A. Cottrel inquiring the reason of this, they told him that the dead woman would come in the night and take the 'devil' out of them." The Tasmanians, so it is said, believed that no one was completely dead until the sun went down.

BURIALS.—The dead were either burnt, or the corpse was put inside a hollow tree and lightly covered with stones and loose earth. There is a certain amount of evidence that it was a custom to bury in a standing position.

The French expedition of 1802 under Captain Baudin made the interesting discovery on the east coast of the island of three Tasmanian graves close to running water. They are described as bark tents supported on poles, each covering a large flattened cone of fine grass which was kept in place by eight wands crossing at the top and firmly

secured to the ground. Inside a shallow round hole were the charred remains and ashes of a human body. On pieces of the bark forming the tent lines had been cut in pattern like the scars with which the Tasmanians marked themselves.¹

RELIGION.—Until their confidence really is gained, primitive people are naturally shy of talking about their religion to strangers who are so unlike themselves, however human and friendly the white visitor may seem. In Tasmania contact with the tribes began with mistrust and became a war of extermination after some blacks had been executed for killing some whites. Almost all we know about them was collected after the surviving handful had been transported from their native haunts and were in the midst of alien influences. Small wonder that what has been written, especially about their religion, is vague, meagre and contradictory.

One thing is quite certain, and that is the wildness of the assertion that “Druidical rites were not unknown in Tasmania” and that “Circles have been recognised in Van Diemen’s Land.” Even if there had been on the island any aboriginal circles of stone or wood—and none have been discovered—the remark would merely have reflected a mental confusion shown in such expressions as “a Cromlech or Druidical temple” to describe the megalithic monuments set up in Britain more than three thousand

¹ *Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes*, F. Peron et L. Freycinet (2nd Ed., Paris, 1824), 4 vols. and Atlas, quoted in *Aborigines of Tasmania*, pp. 116-118.

years ago. Nor was there the slightest sign of the "women in black attire like Furies" and the inhuman rites that horrified the Romans when they invaded Anglesea.

The Tasmanians were as backward in culture as the men of the Old Stone Age, and it would not have been surprising (had conditions been different) if it had been found that they held beliefs similar to those of the oldest surviving races with whom acquaintance has been made in more recent times and in happier circumstances. These primitive people—the South-East Australians, the Asiatic Pygmies, the Bushmen, the oldest Arctic peoples, the central Californians with their Supreme Being "like fire," the Tierra del Fuegians with theirs "like air"—clearly acknowledge and worship their one God. They call him "Father," usually with other attributes, as "creator," "primeval" and the "master above."¹ A. W. Howitt, it may be said, found out that the most archaic Australian aborigines worshipped "Our Father who dwells eternal in the sky" when he visited the Kurnai tribe and was initiated into their secret rites.²

That Tasmanians when questioned were reluctant to confide their inmost thoughts to their white gaolers and to the missionaries is not a conclusive proof that they had little or no religious belief. While the statement "we may distrust all accounts of their ideas of a Supreme Being or of a future life. These were mere echoes of what they had been told by catechists and teachers" needs qualification.

¹ *Origin and Growth of Religion*, Schmidt, pp. 86-88, 190-192, 267-269.

² *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, A. W. Howitt (London, 1904), pp. 490, 492.

A primitive secluded community has been known to reproduce an echo of what looks remarkably like Christian teaching by a pioneer missionary priest,¹ quite distinct from the tribal belief in spirits and a future life.

Most writers who refer to the subject agree in conceding some religious belief to them, but the conclusions vary considerably. Bishop Nixon could find "no trace of any religious usage or even sentiment, unless indeed we may call by that name the dread of a malignant spirit." Bonwick (unsupported by any recorded fact) believed the sun to be an object of superstitious feeling though not of worship, and that the Tasmanians held the moon in respect as perhaps remotely connected with child-birth.²

To come to the fragments of more definite evidence, the most interesting detail that might perhaps have had a supernatural significance, has been supplied by Backhouse.³ "One day we noticed a woman arranging several stones that were flat, oval and about two inches wide, and marked in various directions with black and red lines. These we learnt represented absent friends and one larger than the rest, a corpulent woman on Flinders Island, known as Mother Brown."

From the description, these stones were exactly like the painted pebbles belonging to the close of the Old Stone Age, found in the cave of Mas d'Azil in France. The Tasmanian stones have disappeared, not even a drawing of them is believed to exist, and their meaning presents as

¹ *Abors and Galongs*, "Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal," Vol. V., G. Dunbar (Calcutta, 1914), p. 63.

² *Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians*, pp. 190, 192.

³ *Narrative*, p. 104, quoted by Sollas in *Ancient Hunters*, pp. 95, 96.

insoluble a problem as the prehistoric pebbles. Bonwick's theory of "communing with friends lost in the Black War" is no more than speculation. Nor does it seem likely that the Tasmanian stones can have had the same meaning as the Australian churingas, which are slabs of stone or wood from a few inches to five feet long, incised or painted, in red ochre or charcoal, with a totemic sign.¹

There is no good evidence that the Tasmanians left food and personal possessions with their dead for use in the spirit world. But their belief in life after death may be shown in their known reluctance to mention a dead person by name. Like children they feared the dark, and the "ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night." A single good spirit is mentioned as ruling by day; and Jeffreys adds that he is believed "to be the giver of every good."² The statement that they avoided their burial-places does not seem to accord with their archaic culture, nor does it altogether agree with their known custom of carrying about bone relics of their dead relatives.

The nearest approach to a religious rite is given by West.³ "A gentleman, on guard during the black war, watched a small group in the gaol yard round their night fires. One of them raised his hands, and moved them

¹ See *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, Spencer and Gillen; and *The Belief in Immortality*, Sir J. G. Frazer (London, 1913), Vol. I. p. 96 *et seq.*

² Lieut. Ch. Jeffreys, *Van Dieman's Land* (London, 1820), p. 124, quoted by Ling Roth.

³ *History of Tasmania* (2 vols., Launceston, 1852), Vol. I. p. 87. H. Ling Roth considers that "Vol. I. pp. 1-98 contains the best account of the aborigines which had appeared so far."

slowly in a horizontal direction; and spreading as if forming an imaginary fan or quarter circle: he turned his head from side to side, raising one eye to the sky, where an eagle-hawk was soaring. The action was accompanied by words, repeated with unusual emotion; at length they all rose up together, and uttered loud cries. The whole action had the appearance of an incantation." Perhaps it was the lament of men once free and happy, and this seems more likely than the reading of an omen given by the bird totem of a clan.¹ The only recorded comment is that the bird could hardly have been an eagle-hawk. No one cared enough to find out what the incident could mean.

There were apparently no signs of the sacrificial altars to avert disaster that are set up by tribes worshipping the spirits of Nature. But Milligan, in his account of their beliefs, describes this form of polytheism without any of its rites and safeguards. "They believed in guardian angels or spirits, and in a plurality of powerful but generally evil-disposed beings, inhabiting crevices and caverns of rocky mountains, and making temporary abode in hollow trees and solitary valleys; of these a few were supposed to be of great power, while to the majority were imputed much of the nature and attributes of the goblins and elves of our native land. The aborigines were extremely superstitious, believing most implicitly in the return of the spirits of their departed friends and relations to bless or injure them, as the case might be." As to their reluctance to mention the names of the dead, this is found among primitive peoples

¹ For bird-totem omens see *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer, Vol. I. pp. 22, 23.

from Siberia to Australia and from Paraguay to Borneo.¹ The dominating idea is fear of the ghost, a feeling that has been known to cause uneasiness to the occupant of a "haunted room" in this country.

Milligan does not put forward any definite evidence in the shape of Tasmanian customs, rites or folklore to support his statement. But it must be remembered that when he wrote it in 1854 there was no such thing as the scientific study of primitive beliefs and customs. Tylor, whatever may have more recently been discovered to modify his theories, was to anthropology what Pitt-Rivers was to archaeology, and he did not give his *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* to the world until 1872, only four years before the death of Truganini, the last of the Tasmanians.

Aborigines of Tasmania, 2nd Ed., 1899, H. Ling Roth (Halifax, 1899), with preface by E. B. Tylor, gives by far the best account of these people. It is to be regretted that only 225 copies of this edition and 200 of the 1st (1890) edition of Dr. Roth's were published. There is a collection of Tasmanian stone implements, etc., in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford.

¹ For a review of the tribes amongst whom the names of the dead are taboo see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, "Golden Bough," Part II., Frazer (3rd Ed., London, 1911), pp. 349-374.

CHAPTER FIVE

In North America

A POPULAR idea of the Red Indian pictures the race in their past untrammelled freedom as war-whooping horsemen, with eagle-feathered head-dresses, tomahawks and scalping knives, whose more peaceful moments were spent smoking silently in their buffalo robes outside gaily painted wigwams surrounded by their squaws. Apart from the inadequacy of such a description as applied to any North American Indian, the contrast between groups of tribes may be wide and is in some cases fundamental.

The difficulty in describing the Tasmanians is due to the rapidity of their extinction as a race, their habits and beliefs almost as unknown as they were when colonization of their country began. The North American Indian tribes still, for the most part, exist even if, to quote an earlier saying of their own, they "are fast travelling to the shades of their fathers towards the setting sun."

Their numbers in the United States and Canada fell from an estimated total of about one and one-sixth million in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to little over four hundred thousand in 1906-1907.¹ There are about one hundred and seventy tribes in the whole of America north of Mexico, but most of them now have a varying

¹ "Aboriginal Population of America North of Mexico," J. Mooney, *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, Vol. 80 (1928).

admixture of either white or negro blood. In some, like the Iroquoian Wyandots of Oklahoma and the Hurons of Lorette near Quebec, there is no pure-bred stock surviving.

The difficulty as regards aboriginal man in North America is accordingly found in the nature and extent of his contact with Western civilization and the political, economic and religious influences that have followed. This is, in fact, a modern instance of the impact of a superior culture on a country inhabited by a primitive race. The other way in which material progress can be made is by diffusion, the infiltration not of invaders and settlers but of ideas, which does not apply to America.

What actually happened in prehistoric times when the germs of civilization were carried westwards across Europe to the British Isles is a matter of conjecture and inference. But the Roman occupation gave civilization, within the protected territory of Britain, to a people capable of absorbing the new progressive ideas to their own advantage. The fate of the Tasmanians is one example which shows the reverse of the medal. The North American Indian may be said to stand midway between these two results.

Before coming down to fuller detail, two remarks may be quoted which indicate the divergent effects of Western contact upon the Indian tribes. One is by a Jesuit missionary at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the other is the comment of an artist about two hundred years later.

Referring to the tribes of New France, Father Jouvency, S.J., recorded: "Before pots, kettles and other vessels of the sort were brought to them from France, they used receptacles of closely joined bark." George Catlin, alluding

in 1832 to a religious practice in fasts, sacrifices and feasts of the then secluded Blackfoot Indians, added: "This curious custom has principally been done away with along the frontier, where white men laugh at the Indian for the observance of so ridiculous and useless a form."

To take the material advantages first. These have been admirably summed up by Miss Jenness in her *Indians of Canada*: "Europeans put an end to war, the blood-feud, infanticide and the abandonment of the aged and sick. They equipped the Indians with better tools and weapons, taught them to build more comfortable homes, and introduced agriculture and stock raising to replace the vanished game." The work of Christian missions, Western education and the inclusion of all Indians within the Union living on their allotments as full citizens of the United States all lie outside the study of a primitive people.

The second part of the story does not make such pleasant reading. There was the unsympathetic, intolerant attitude so often taken up by civilized people towards primitive races, which did much to weaken the religious beliefs of the Indians whose taboos were habitually disregarded. The social organization of the hunting tribes was seriously affected by contact with the fur traders who, appraising the native not by his character and social standing but by his success in getting pelts, undermined the prestige of the men in authority and often appointed new chiefs, who were practically their dependents. Worse still, the moral fibre of the people was ruined by the "white man's fire water," the whisky and brandy which they got at the trading posts. This fatal period lasted from the

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seventeenth century until the middle of the nineteenth, and was finally stopped by government prohibition.

Another evil result to a primitive people of contact with the white races is the introduction of new diseases against which they have consequently developed no immunity. As among other aborigines the deadliest of these epidemics was smallpox. It began its devastating course in Canada, on the lower St. Lawrence, in 1635. In sixty-five years it had spread over half the continent, and continued to decimate the tribes periodically until the second half of the nineteenth century.

In addition to these destructive influences there was the economic factor introduced by the diminution of the food resources of the hunting and fishing tribes. The disappearance of the bison will be referred to later, but it may here be said that the canneries established at the mouths of the great salmon rivers of the Pacific coast largely deprived the local Indians of their staple food.

None of the tribes from west to east was any longer self-contained and self-supporting, and "all alike found themselves inextricably emmeshed in the economic system forced upon them from without. One by one they ceded their territories to the invaders, and wherever European colonization was proceeding, submitted to confinement on narrow reserves. The needs of the colonists then became their needs also, and in place of their former self-sufficiency, they were reduced to purchasing most of the necessities of life at European stores." ¹

Referring to the Canadian Indians Miss Jenness

¹ *Indians of Canada*, pp. 256, 257.

remarks: "Some tribes have been wrecked beyond the possibility of salvage; others, after the first disasters, have courageously stopped the leaks and are beginning the voyage afresh; and many are still struggling, with the breakers looming not far ahead."

To describe the life of the North American Indian as nearly as possible in his natural state it is best to refer, when this can be done, to pioneer travellers among the tribes. In dealing with religion and magic rites the works of more recent and scientific authorities are necessary. But there is one feature of the higher culture which the tribes as far west as the Rocky Mountains took from the European and made their own, and that is the horse.

THE HORSE IN NORTH AMERICA.—In the prehistoric period, that is to say before the coming of Columbus, there were no large animals in North America that could be loaded up with baggage or ridden. Horses and oxen did not exist, the caribou was not to be compared with the reindeer, and, superb as the hunting Indian was to prove as a horseman, even he never attempted to break in the bison. The only draught animal was the dog, and instead of riding everyone walked.

In the matter of horses the Spaniards were to America what the Aryan invaders were to India. Expeditions, like that of de Soto, crossed the Atlantic well equipped with horses and even cattle and hogs.¹ It is conjectured that

¹ An account of de Soto's wanderings in Georgia and Alabama in 1540 is given by D. M. Andrews in *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 19 (1917). See also *Nineteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1900), pp. 23-29, 191-201.

horses abandoned by de Soto's men in 1541 may have been the origin of the wild horses found later to the west of the lower Mississippi. However that may be, this importation of horses into the New World marks the beginning of their cultural influence on the tribes.

The Pawnees, who were known to have had horses between 1600 and 1682, have a story that the first ever seen by the tribe came into a village and allowed itself to be handled, obviously a domesticated horse that had broken loose; and two of the names for horses are "mysterious dog" and "elk-dog." While the Spanish settlements in New Mexico were well supplied with horses and the cavalier class of colonist brought horses to New England as early as 1629, the French imported one solitary animal in 1647, and did not send their first cargo of horses from Europe until 1665.

Ten years later James Adair described the horse furniture of the Choctaw and other southern Indians. A rope served for a bridle, and the saddles were made of wood and green buffalo hide. It was noted that they mounted from the off-side. Even the saddles made by the Iroquois of New York were of this same Western type. It is suggested¹ that the dominant traits of horse culture among all the south Atlantic Indians came from across the Mississippi, or at least indirectly from the same source. But some tribes were much later in securing horses than others. La Vérendrye found in 1738-1739 that among the Mandans

¹ Art. "Influence of the Horse in Plains Culture," C. Wissler, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 16 (1914), from which source much of this detail is taken.

of the Upper Missouri "women and dogs carry all the baggage, the men are burdened only with their arms, they make the dogs carry wood for their fires." Two years later they apparently had some horses and by 1793 they were hunting bison on horseback. The use of horses had spread rapidly if erratically northward, keeping to the east of the Rocky Mountains, from the Spanish settlements of the south-west and Mexico.

It may here be said that the Spaniards drew their carts and their ploughs with oxen and used horses and mules for pack transport and riding. This accounts for the horse complex and absence of carts among the aborigines.

OTHER TRANSPORT.—As regards dog transport, sledges were used as far south as the Iroquois and Ojibway country. Maximilian, Prince of Wied, who visited the Mandans between 1832 and 1834, described their sledges as two thin boards nine to ten feet long fitted with straps and pulled by men or by black, white or spotted dogs. Further north the dogs looked more like wolves.¹ In spring and summer dogs were used to carry packs and to drag tent-poles, a practice which covered the whole of the Caribou and Bison areas and extended into the inland parts of the Salmon districts.

When the whole social unit went off on hunting expeditions the movement might be described as a modified form of migration. The Blackfoot and Teton Dakota tribes, for instance, had permanent winter camping-places

¹ *Travels in the Interior of North America*, Maximilian, Prince of Wied (Neuwied, Brit. Mus. Catalogue) (London, 1843).

which they left in the spring and came back to in the autumn. It is thought that this was the practice before the horse era, and it is believed that semi-agricultural tribes such as the Pawnee and Osage were accustomed even in pre-Columbian times to plant their fields and then set off on a great hunt. The tribes of the pampas in the south did not use even dog traction.¹

Transport by water has habitually been by canoes of bark or skins on a wood framework. The best found inland are the birch bark canoes of the Ojibway, the most primitive the skin coracles used for crossing rivers in the Bison area.

THE CALUMET.—Smoking is infinitely more closely associated with the lives of the people than riding, for the pipe has been intimately connected from time immemorial with the mythology and ritual of nearly every tribe, east and west. That tobacco is indigenous to America has been disputed on the theory that it was an importation from Africa. Botanical evidence does, however, exist to support the American origin of the tobaccos as used by man. The plant may have come originally from the interior of Brazil.²

In any case, historical facts attest to its use in the New World in pre-Columbian times. The Spaniards saw tobacco being chewed on the coast of South America in 1502, and as the Americas were opened up and explored

¹ *The American Indian*, C. Wissler, also his Art. quoted above.

² Art "Aboriginal Tobaccos," W. A. Setchell, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 23 (1921). See also Art. "Words for Tobacco in American Indian Languages," R. B. Dixon, in the same volume.

it became obvious that tobacco smoking was a universal habit of very long standing.

The tobacco plant was brought to Spain in 1558; the seeds presented to Catherine de Medici by the French ambassador to Portugal, Jean Nicot, gave us the word nicotine; and Drake, contracting the habit from the Indians of California in 1579, gave a smoking outfit to Sir Walter Raleigh, who brought tobacco to England.

The description given in 1535 by Oviedo of Salamanca of the unusual form of pipe then used in San Domingo was "a small hollow wooden tube, shaped like a Y, the two points of which were inserted in the nose of the smoker, while the other end was held into the smoke of burning tobacco, in order to inhale the fumes."

Catlin, when he visited the Blackfoot tribe in 1832, described the typical pipe of one of their chiefs. "In his hand he holds a very beautiful pipe, the stem of which is four or five feet long, and two inches wide, curiously wound with braids of the porcupine quills of various colours; and the bowl of the pipe ingeniously carved by himself from a piece of red steatite procured on the headwaters of the Mississippi." ¹

The ordinary ceremonial pipe of the prairie tribes, as noted by James Mooney, is made of red stone now known as catlinite, which comes from the famous pipestone quarry in Minnesota in the old country of the Sioux. Besides the stone pipe there are also in use pipes of clay and bone, as well as cigarettes, but as a rule no ceremonial character attaches to them.

¹ *The North American Indians*, G. Catlin (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I. p. 35.

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A reference to ceremonial smoking was made by the Jesuit Mission working in Lower Canada and Louisiana between 1720 and 1736. They recorded that the American Indians "fill one of their calumets with tobacco and, holding the fire in one hand, they advance all together before the chief and smoke it: they direct the first puff towards the Heavens, the second towards the Earth and the others around the horizon." ¹

In the ceremonial smoking of the Sioux, the pipe is passed round the circle of councillors, each of whom draws on it once or twice and then passes it on. As each receives the pipe he offers it first to the sun, holding the bowl up towards the sky with the words "Grandfather, smoke," then to the earth, the fire and perhaps to the cardinal points of the compass in turn.

The ceremonial pipes of the Red Indian tribes are surrounded with every circumstance of solemnity. It is instanced ² of one of the Buffalo clans of the Omaha that a special individual who knows the ritual alone may clean the pipe bowl and fill it, while he recites the ancient words used on the occasion. As no one else may hear the secret formula the lodge is emptied while this duty is performed.

As an emblem of peace the ceremonial pipe used to be carried by every bearer of a friendly message from one tribe to another; and no treaty could be ratified without this symbol of peace and truth, the act of smoking having the solemnity and binding character of an oath.

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. LXVIII. p. 159.

² Owen Dorsey in *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), pp. 221-224.

To the individual American Indian his personal pipe is the portable altar of his religion.

The Sioux explanation of the origin of the sacred pipe and what it means to them is given in this legend. "In olden days the tribe was always at war, not only with other tribes, but also among themselves. On one occasion two young men were out hunting when they saw a young woman approaching them with folded arms. Seeing that she was not of their own tribe, one proposed to the other that they kill her, but he refused and urged that they wait until they learned what she wanted.

"The first speaker, however, was about to kill her as she drew near, when she suddenly stooped down and took from around her ankle something resembling an anklet, which she waved about her head. The motion was so rapid that it seemed as though a cloud encircled her for a few moments, when she ceased and the snake which she had taken from off her ankle glided away through the grass. But the young warrior who had thought to kill her had disappeared, swept from the face of the earth.

"Turning now to his companion she said: 'To you I come as a friend and helper. Your people have been killing each other. I bring you a pipe which is a token of peace, and no one who kills a member of his own tribe must be allowed to smoke it.'

"She returned with him to his village, where the women prepared for her reception a large tipi,¹ to which the chiefs of the tribes came to listen to her instructions.

¹ The typical Indian tent made of a cone of poles covered with bark or skins.

She taught them to be at peace with one another, if they would be happy, and when they listened to her words and accepted her teachings, she gave them the sacred medicine pipe to smoke thenceforth in their councils as a perpetual reminder of the peace covenant of the Lakota.

“Her mission now ended, she said she must leave them, and although they begged her earnestly to stay with them, she could not tarry longer, but disappeared as suddenly and mysteriously as she had come.”¹

ABORIGINAL DIVISIONS OF THE CONTINENT.—Aboriginal North America was divided by Nature into what were practically six large countries whose inhabitants, under dissimilar conditions, lived their lives.

In the north the immense Caribou country extended from the Bering Strait to the mouth of the St. Lawrence, the land of the Canadian Indians, with an arctic fringe of Eskimo settlements. Inland from the Pacific coast was the Salmon area, with its mountains and glaciers, and its isleted bays, where the red cedar still grows in the forests and the rivers are alive with salmon. South of this and stretching further inland, came the Wild Seed area. Eastwards of the Rocky Mountains the great Bison area formed the heart of the continent, where huge herds of bison roamed the open prairies. From the border of the grass lands to the Atlantic coast stretched the eastern Maize area. This was once primeval forest from Labrador to the Gulf of Mexico, and its name is derived from the

¹ J. Mooney in *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1892-1893), Part II. pp. 1062, 1063.

characteristically New World cereal cultivated by its aboriginal inhabitants. To the south lay the area of intensive cultivation and higher civilization extending through Central America into the northern parts of the southern continent.

THE PEOPLE.—The North American Indians are brown-skinned with a distinctly reddish tinge, deepening in some tribes to a very dark brown. Their hair is black and straight, and their eyes are brown. The finest specimens of their manhood perhaps belong to the Iroquoian, Algonkian and Muskogian groups, this last numbering among its tribes the hardest fighters of a naturally warlike race.

George Catlin, who travelled through the tribal country between 1832 and 1839 painting their portraits, described the Crows, who were noticeably tall, “as really a handsome and well-formed set of men as can be seen in any part of the world. There is a sort of ease and grace added to their dignity of manners which gives them the air of gentlemen at once. Most of them were over six feet high, and very many have cultivated their natural hair to such a length that it sweeps the ground as they walk. They usually oil their hair with a profusion of bears’ grease. This extraordinary length of hair among the Crows is confined to the men alone. The fashion of long hair amongst the men prevails throughout all the western and north-western tribes, after passing the Saco and Foxes; and the Pawnees of the Platte, who, with two or three other tribes only, are in the habit of shaving nearly the whole head.”

The men of the Mandan tribe used to dress their hair

in flattened bunches that were painted red. Their women, unlike those of other tribes who kept their hair rather short in contrast to their menfolk, wore two long plaits.

The aborigines of British Columbia, tribes such as the Nootka, had the characteristic broad face, narrow nose and dark-brown skin of the American Indian. But among them curiously mixed groups of other types—long-faced and hook-nosed, and broad-faced and snub-nosed—were to be found.

FACE AND BODY PAINTING.—All the aborigines of North America (with the exception of the Eskimo) painted their faces and bodies. Red was the favourite colour, but others, both vegetable and mineral, were used. The widest range in colour-scheme seems to have been reached by the Piegan, the southern tribe of the Blackfoot confederacy, which was the strongest and most aggressive "nation" on the Canadian plains about the middle of the eighteenth century. The Piegan used dark red, vermilion, deep and light yellow, dark blue and sky blue, green, white lead colour and charcoal.

No special colours or designs to distinguish clans and tribes are recorded, but Swanton mentions that at one time the Creek Indians are said to have shown their township by the way they painted their faces. They certainly displayed badges of rank in paint. A town councillor painted one cheek black and the other red, and less important dignitaries had four stripes of alternate red and yellow from the cheek-bones to the lower angle of the jaws.¹

¹ *Forty-second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1928), John R. Swanton, p. 308.

The eastern Indians painted themselves with distinctive designs to indicate their totems, and had other devices for valour in battle. In some tribes black proclaimed the return of a war party without casualties to count, while in others it was a sign of mourning.

Father F. G. Bressani, S.J., wrote a graphic account of the way the Algonkins and Hurons of Canada decorated themselves in the middle of the seventeenth century. "They paint their faces in various styles, and on sundry occasions; and many, their whole bodies—some superficially and temporarily, others permanently. The former paint themselves, now black, now red, now various colours: these appear artistically bearded, those seem to wear spectacles; some have the whole face striped with various colours, others, only half—but all shining with oil and grease, which they mix in their colours. Black they commonly take from the bottom of the pots; the other colours are of various earths, as lake, or are derived from certain roots, which yield a very fine scarlet colour: and they paint themselves so well that some, at first sight, have supposed certain Barbarians to be clothed, who were perfectly naked—their clothes consisting only of paint."

Father Bressani went on to say that the "temporary" painting was not especially barbarous, as it served as a protection in winter; in war it made the warriors look more formidable and concealed age and extreme youth. But he added that these Indians also painted the prisoners they were about to burn as a sacrifice to the god of war. They painted their dead in the same manner.

Then he adds: "And as painting themselves is peculiar

to the men, so it is the custom of men, and not of women, to wear even in war little mirrors about their necks, or in the small pouches in which they carry the tobacco which they smoke perpetually—at the assemblies everywhere.”¹

TATTOOING.—The permanent painting to which the Jesuit missionary referred was of course tattooing. This was very rarely seen among the plains' Indians and only among a few tribes in eastern Canada, but was chiefly found in northern Canada, among the Iroquois and the Creek Indians and on the Pacific coast, especially in the Haida tribe.² The Creek Indians used it to record war honours that carried special rank.

To take another extract from Father Bressani's letter. He noticed that those who tattooed themselves, “do so with extreme pain—using for this purpose, needles, sharp awls or piercing thorns, with which they perforate, or have others perforate, the skin. Thus they form on the face, the neck, the breast, or some other part of the body, some animal or monster—for instance, an Eagle, a Serpent, a Dragon . . . and then, tracing over the fresh and bloody design some powdered charcoal, or other black-colouring matter, which becomes mixed with the blood and penetrates within these perforations, they imprint indelibly upon the living skin the designed figures.” It should be added that the usual method, when using an awl, was to draw a thread of sinew covered with charcoal, soot or pigment under the skin.

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXXVIII. (1652-1663) pp. 249, 251.

² *Indians of Canada*, pp. 79-81.

The Haida and the Tahltan of the Pacific coast and the Iroquois of Ontario tattooed by tapping a bone awl with a light mallet, rather like the method of the Tibetan border people who are described later. Cree women were usually tattooed in one or two lines from the corners of the mouth towards the angle of the lower jaws. Their menfolk had a great variety of lines and figures marked on their bodies with a number of needles of different sizes set in a frame. To drown the suppressed groans of the sufferer a number of hawk bells were fixed to the frame and the tattooing was accompanied by singing. It took three days to complete the design, and finely powdered willow-charcoal was rubbed in to make it permanent. While in contrast to this elaborate method the Naskapi of Labrador rubbed the colour into small cuts made with a flint, which may strengthen the conjecture that the prehistoric pigmy flints may sometimes have been used for this purpose.

DRESS.—Put as shortly as possible, native costume can be summarized as “tailored” clothing of skins in Canada and along the north of the United States, robes in the centre of the country from east to west, textile garments in the south and, unlike the rest of the continent, almost complete indifference as to what they wore on the Pacific coast.

It is surprising that these western people, justly celebrated for their decorative art of former days, and who lived in large well-designed bungalow houses, were content to go about, in the summer months at least, in the costume or lack of it of a Solomon Islander. The men wore deerskin loin-cloths and the women aprons of

bark fibre. In rainy weather the people of most villages threw heavy waterproof capes or blankets of cedar-bark matting over their shoulders. But, as a set-off to the rest of their attire, their sea-cloaks were made of sea-otter skins that would be worth a fortune today. With the exception of communities in touch with the tribes of the interior who wore moccasins, the people of the Pacific coast went barefooted. But they wore rather attractively decorated conical hats made of basket-work.

The clothes of the aborigines in general make a striking contrast. A hundred years ago Catlin described the typical native costume of the Blackfoot to the east of the Rocky Mountains in the Bison area. "The dress consists of a shirt or tunic, made of two deerskins finely dressed, and so placed together with the necks of the skins downwards, and the skins of the hind-legs stitched together, the seams running down on each arm, from the neck to the knuckles of the hand; this seam is covered with a band of two inches in width, of very beautiful embroidery of porcupine quills, and suspended from the under edge of this, from the shoulders to the hands, is a fringe of the locks of black hair, which he has taken from the heads of victims slain by his own hand in battle. The leggings are made also of the same material; and down the outer side of the leg, from the hips to the feet, extends also a similar band or belt of the same width; and wrought in the same manner, with porcupine quills, and fringed with scalp locks."

Among the hunting tribes the women were usually dressed with great taste. They wore clothes of deer or goat-skins from chin to feet, dresses that were often trimmed

with ermine and ornamented with elaborate designs in porcupine quills and beads.

CHARACTER.—Tribal and individual religious sense and other influences upon character must obviously vary in a widespread people. But the North American Indian possesses certain characteristics on which it is possible to generalize. The extreme cruelty for which the race as a whole was notorious—not only towards an enemy but in certain religious rites—was the reflection of the tremendous value that was placed on personal courage. It was to the proof of this high courage and steadfast endurance that the whole life of an American Indian was subjected. To this ideal were added a fine natural courtesy, innate pride and a subtle code of honour. He had an inbred feeling for dignified and elaborate ritual and a great liking for songs, dances and oratory.

In their intercourse with each other, primitive people, like any civilized community, have their own codes of good manners. Among the North American Indians these conventions are rigidly observed, and their infraction by white men used to cause strong and indignant comment. It was thought, for instance, to be a mark of grave discourtesy for anyone to pass between the fire and those sitting round it in a lodge.

Reserve in front of strangers of an alien race is not unnatural in anyone; and those white men who are best qualified to speak have described the home life of the North American Indians as full of jokes and laughter and story-telling.

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Perhaps his view of social life was most accurately shown in the North American Indian definition of rich and poor. These words did not mean temporal possessions but reputation and mental and moral qualities. As it was said, a man might own many horses, but if he had no war-record and no good name he was poor indeed. But the North American Indian has rather changed his standpoint in recent times.

DWELLINGS.—In the eastern agricultural area the Iroquois of the Lake Erie, Lower St. Lawrence and other districts, were found by the early explorers to live in permanent settlements. There were as many as eighty to a hundred and fifty houses in the largest villages or rather towns, for their communal houses might hold as many as twenty families, and the whole population number three thousand souls. Until the "terrific career" of the Iroquois made the fortification of the settlements less vital, their villages were surrounded by stockades, sometimes in a triple ring, set up on low mounds.

The houses were built of bark boards fastened on a framework of wooden poles and rafters. A single house was generally from fifty to a hundred and thirty feet long by about sixteen wide, with partitions at intervals to form apartments for two families, one on each side of the fire. The houses had two doors, one at each end, and over one of these doors was carved the totem device or crest of the head of the family.¹

¹ *League of the Iroquois*, L. H. Morgan, pp. 313-319, quoted by Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 6, 7.

The houses in a town of the Creek confederacy were planned on a much more elaborate scale. Swanton records that the dwellings of the Upper Creeks consisted of four buildings making a hollow square, with a small compound in the middle. An important family, or rather the head woman of the house, would own all four; a poorer household would occupy a single building. In the former instance the arrangements would be these: the first block the kitchen, with the winter living-rooms next to them; the second the summer lodgings and a reception room; the third, of two storeys, was the granary and fruit and vegetable storeroom, with the meeting hall above it—the other half of the house being an open saddle room below and the chief's summer reception room above; the fourth building would be the warehouse, where customers and traders were received.

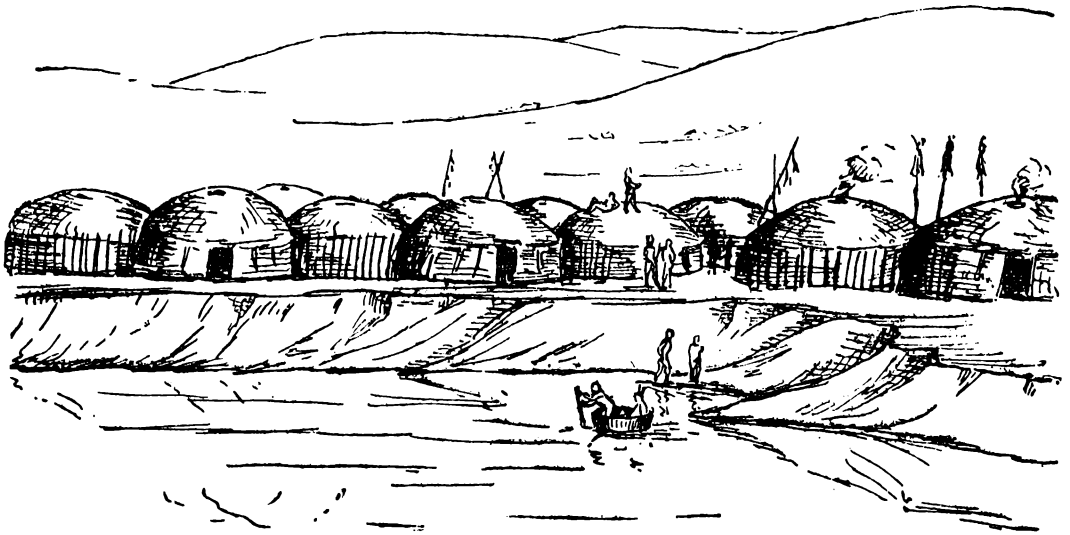
Residences had need to be large, as a typical Creek household consisted of the husband and wife, their children, one or more sons-in-law, some grandchildren, some old or dependent members of the same clan group and possibly some slaves. The Creeks at one time burnt their prisoners at the stake. Later on they became naturally absorbed in the community, as there was no slave system among the Indians of the south-east; but the example of slavery among the whites tended in the end to discourage this principle.¹

In the Florida swamps the people drove in piles and built roofed open huts upon platforms.

¹ *Forty-second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1924-1925), pp. 172, 173, 167.

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The Caddoan and Siouan tribes of the Bison area, who cultivated a certain amount of maize, lived in what are known as "earth lodges." These were round and conical-roofed, with the framework of the house thatched and protected by an outside layer of turf. Maximilian, Prince



9. *Mandan Village* (based on Catlin)

of Wied, who visited the Mandans of the Siouan group in 1833, gave the following account¹ of one of these communities of this tribe that once lived along the Missouri river from

¹ *Travels in the Interior of North America*, Maximilian, Prince of Wied (London, 1843), pp. 342-345.

its upper reaches to the Ohio, and then up that river to the east of the present city of Cincinnati. But by 1830 they had been reduced to two villages, and these were wiped out in 1838 by the ravages of smallpox and subsequent attack by the Sioux.

A village of about three hundred houses of round clay huts huddled together was built in an irregular circle, about one hundred and fifty yards or more in diameter, within the remains of an old stockade reinforced with four clay and fascine-work bastions. In the middle of the village was an open space fifty yards across, on the edge of which stood the Medicine Lodge, the house in which the young Mandan warriors annually submitted to the most dreadful tortures. By it was a tall mast bearing aloft an effigy made of skins with a wooden head painted black and wearing a fur cap and feathers. This, it may be said in parenthesis, was extraordinarily like the tutelary guardian figures dressed in black and fastened to the tops of poles seen by the present writer in the northern Abor villages on the Tibetan border and within the sphere of Lamaistic influences. The German explorer took the figure he saw to represent "an evil spirit," but it had been asserted by Captain Lewis and Clark in 1804 that "the whole religion of the Mandans consists in the belief of one Great Spirit presiding over their destinies, or in the nature of a good genius."¹ Sir James Frazer is of opinion that "strictly speaking the ceremonies which the Mandans performed were not totemic."²

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer, Vol. III. p. 400.

² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

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Opening the skin screen across the doorway of a house the visitor found himself in a spacious and cleanly room. The roof was supported on rafters resting on a number of stout upright posts set round the wall. In the centre of the earth floor was a circular sunk hearth on which a small fire was burning. A hole in the roof, ingeniously screened from the weather, let out the smoke. Chimneys were unknown in aboriginal house construction. Not even the skilled architects of Mexico and Peru hit on the idea, which it is believed was introduced into the New World by the Spaniards.¹ Each house could accommodate from twenty to forty inmates.

The occupants sat round in a wide circle on low seats of peeled osier covered with bison or bear-skin. Hanging from the walls, or laid beside them, were the personal belongings of the inmates, leather wallets, travelling bags of painted parchment and such gear as horse furniture. The beds standing by the wall were square boxes of skins or parchment roomy enough for several people and supplied with blankets and skin rugs.

The horses were stabled in a special compartment of these winter huts, where they were given their evening feed of maize after they were brought back from grazing on the prairie.

To emphasize the contrasts in the aboriginal settlements of North America the Pueblo village of Acoma in New Mexico as it was in 1540 may be taken as an example.²

¹ *The American Indian*, C. Wissler (ed. 1922), p. 115.

² *Forty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1929-1930), p. 24.

It consisted of about two hundred houses from two to four storeys high. For it was the custom of these Pueblo Indians to live in many-storeyed communal houses built of stone or adobe, or even cut into the face of a stone cliff. Acoma was found to be situated on an almost inaccessible *mesa* (flat-topped hill) nearly four hundred feet high, with irrigated corn-fields and cisterns at the summit. The people wore cotton, deerskin and buffalo-hide garments, they had many turquoise ornaments and their livestock included domesticated turkeys.

The most characteristic dwelling of the North American Indian is none of the huts already described, but the tent known from New England through the old bison country to Oregon and Washington and in the Canadian plains as the *tipi*, and which is still used. This shelter is frequently called a "wigwam" by novelists, which is inaccurate and confusing, as *wigwam* is the Algonkin name for an oval bark-covered house.

A *tipi* consists of a tripod of main poles supporting other long sticks and forming a cone. This was covered in the hunting areas—with which it is most definitely associated—with skins, and in other places with birch bark. Nowadays the covering is of cloth. The Eskimo are not brought within the scope of this book, but it may be said that their tents have a similar pole framework; in their case the covering is of reindeer skins, with the smooth side, which is outwards, smeared with blubber to make it weather-proof.

Anyone who has carried his own shelter-tent, or improvised one when water is reached for the night, must

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appreciate the camping arrangements of the Indian tribes. Only the covering was carried; the women cut the poles in the woods. In an hour about fifteen people could lie down under shelter on skins or matting, their heads resting on their personal baggage underneath, with a comfortable



10. *Crow Indian Tipis* (based on Catlin)

fire and adjustable cowls in the roof to take away the smoke. Camp could be struck and the party on the move within a few minutes.¹

The most common shape of a North American Indian dwelling is round, and the explanation given by a Pawnee priest is this: "If you go on a high hill and look around you will see the sky touching the earth on every side, and

¹ From description of Indians of eastern Canada, *Indians of Canada* pp. 87-90.

within this circular enclosure the people dwell." The lodges of men were made on the same plan "to represent the circle which Father Heaven has made for the dwelling-place of all the people."¹ The circular form of the Mandan villages has already been noticed, and in many tribes the camps were laid out in the same way, the *tipis* forming a great ring in which each clan had its allotted place.

WOMEN AND COMMUNITY LIFE.—The status which women held among the tribes was peculiar. From the Iroquois in the north to the Pueblos in the south and quite irrespective of the hunting or agricultural character of the tribes, matrilineal institutions (*i.e.* the rule of descent and inheritance through the mother) and even considerable authority of women existed in many parts of the country. The mother was the pivot of the family system, and Lewis H. Morgan considers that the observed tendency to use the same relationship term for father and uncle dates from a time when there was no ready means of knowing who was the true father.

Wives were customarily obtained by giving presents to the father. It is doubtful if any tribes entirely discouraged polygamy, but it was common only in the Yukon basin and on the plains. When found among the Creek Indians (who would usually marry own sisters) a separate establishment for each was sometimes kept up. Poor men only had one wife, but, as Catlin found,² a Plains chief might have as

¹ *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. X., "North American," H. P. Alexander (Boston, Massachusetts, 1916), p. 80.

² *The North American Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 133-135.

many as fourteen. Girls were married off as early as eleven and twelve. Divorce was rare, especially after the birth of children. If a woman suffered habitual ill-treatment from her husband, her relatives would take her away for a time.

But, taking Indian married life generally, close companionship developed a mutual affection between husband and wife, a bond which was strengthened by the deep affection for children which characterized the race.

When we think of savage customs, particularly those dealing with marriage, it is well to bear in mind Morgan's observations in the rather extreme case of Hawaiian consanguinity and the criticism made on it by the American missionaries in 1820. He says of these people: "They were living no doubt respectably and modestly for savages under customs and usages which to them had the force of laws. It is probable that they were living as virtuously in their faithful observance as these excellent missionaries were in the performance of their own."¹ These remarks, made on a plurality system of marriage which included brothers and sisters, apply equally to polygamy amongst North American Indians and polyandry where it occurs in the Himalaya.

With certain notable exceptions North American Indian women seem always to have had a life of continuous hard work. Father Biard, S.J., an explorer in the Bison country between 1612 and 1614, said of them²: "The women transport the game from the place where it has fallen; they

¹ *Ancient Society*, L. H. Morgan (ed. London, 1877), p. 414.

² *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. II. pp. 76-77.

are the hewers of wood and drawers of water; they make and repair the household utensils; they prepare food; they skin the game and prepare the hides like fullers; they sew garments; they catch fish and gather shell-fish for food; often they even hunt; they make the canoes and skiffs of marvellous rapidity out of bark; they set up the tents wherever and whenever they stop for the night—in short, the men concern themselves with nothing but the more laborious hunting and the waging of war.” It sounds rather like a day in the life of a Tasmanian woman.

The Mandan men hunted; the women did all the farm work and Catlin saw them digging up the ground with buffalo shoulder-blades. The maize, dried meat and pemmican were packed tightly with grass in store-pits about six feet deep where the food remained in perfect preservation during the winter. They dried a species of turnip which was pounded into meal and cooked with dried meat and corn. In addition they collected quantities of berries and wild plums. But bison meat, in days when herds were numerous, was of course their main diet.

The Iroquois provide another example of the division of labour in the great farming communities. The men fished in summer and hunted deer and other game in winter. The women worked on the broad fields of the village and gathered the grain into big granaries and the store-pits which the French named *caches*. The highly cultivated staple native cereal was maize, which was up to the modern standard, and differed entirely from those of the Old World.

In the northern half of the eastern Maize area maple sugar was cultivated and, to quote Wissler, “Practically

every essential detail of the process now in use was developed by the Indians of this area before 1492." Tobacco and cotton were also grown, especially in the southern districts, and the aborigines cultivated Jerusalem artichokes and pumpkins.¹ In the far north vegetable foods were scarcer, and in the extreme south hunting was poor, but where conditions were favourable the system gave a well-balanced diet. Acorns were the most characteristic food on the uplands of the Wild Seed area of central and southern California; while the agricultural peoples of eastern Canada could harvest enough maize and other produce to last them until the next crop ripened.

Maize, in the best known existing varieties, was cultivated in pre-Columbian times as it is grown today. But from the Great Lakes, through the Bison area, and also in Florida, the tribes relied greatly on another staple cereal, the wild rice of the marshes.²

In contrast to the high farming which gave the people of the eastern Maize area such plenteous harvests, the wild rice crop does not, strictly speaking, represent agriculture at all. The systematic cultivation of irrigated rice fields has been known in Eastern countries of the Old World from time immemorial. The dry cultivation of rice by a primitive hill people will be described later. But the wild rice industry of North America stands out as the modern instance of the transition from food-gathering to food

¹ *The American Indian*, C. Wissler (ed. 1922), p. 15, gives a list of plants cultivated before 1492.

² This account of wild rice cultivation is taken from *Nineteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1900), Part II. pp. 1019-1126.

production. Its importance can be realized from the fact that for two full centuries up to 1825, ten thousand Ojibway Indians drew upon wild rice for their supplies of food. Its collection has survived in places into the twentieth century.

The wild rice was collected in the autumn, generally by women, who took their canoes through the thick growth in the lakes and streams and knocked the grain into the boats with sticks. A few weeks earlier they had gone out, tied the rice stalks up into bunches and left them to ripen, a practice which the Dakota Indians are known to have followed in 1697. The rice plants were weeded when necessary to prevent them from being choked by the coarse water grass.

How long ago the discovery was made that the crop could be increased by sowing it is impossible to say. Perrot, who died in 1718 at the age of seventy-four, stated that the Assiniboine Indians were accustomed to sow rice on the west and north-west of Lake Winnipeg; and the Ojibways of Georgian Bay are recorded to have said¹ that their forefathers used to throw into the water a few seeds of the wild rice, wrapped in mud, to supply new plants for the succeeding year.

It was noticed in 1820 that the rice was dried on platforms—of cedar slabs is one example—three feet from the ground over a slow fire, and that this took from one to three days. This was done by women. Apart from the fire it reminds one of the old drying sheds on an Indian tea garden. The grain was threshed by treading it out, or with flails.

¹ *Indians of Canada*, p. 42, footnote.

Rice tracts were held by families for definite periods in the same way as the land where maize was grown. But, as an Indian chief said: "Our people always divide everything when want comes to the door."

A complete contrast to the usual position of women is seen in the Hopi tribe of Pueblo Indians, an agricultural totemic people whose hunting has never risen higher than village beats for deer, but mainly for rabbits. Game was killed by men and boys with throwing-sticks and bows and arrows, but the bag made in a long day by a large party has been known to total one rabbit.¹ Their small secluded communities live, hardly disturbed by the white man's civilization, in the desert country of north-west Arizona, where they grow maize on alluvial flats that are drenched by the summer floods. The fields belonging to the different clans are definitely allocated to the women. The mother of each family owns several fields from which she parcels out land to her daughters when they marry; and her female relatives are her heiresses on her death. The chieftainess of the clan deals with all disputes over landed property. The system is absolute matriarchy.² The women leave the farming of the scattered fields to their husbands and confine their attention to their irrigated gardens, and to gathering peaches, wild berries and nuts.

BISON HUNTING.—Although there are tribes of Pueblo Indians whose one great industry was farming, and groups

¹ Art. "The Hopi in relation to their Plant Environment," W. Hough, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 10 (1897).

² See *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer, Vol. III. pp. 195-215; and *Habitat, Economy and Society*, Forde, pp. 220-245.

on the Pacific coast dependent for their livelihood on fishing and the gathering of nuts and berries, most of the North American Indians used to hunt.

Not much more than a century ago Catlin could speak of the "almost countless numbers" of bison, though even then he could foresee their extermination by the white and red races, in the improvidence of wholesale slaughter. In the three years 1872 to 1874 white hunters killed over three million of the southern herd, which was wiped out to the last calf in 1880. The building of the North Pacific Railway completed the destruction of the northern herd three years later, and the bison of North America had been reduced to the state of the European representatives outside the Caucasus. The *Report of the United States National Museum* in 1887 estimated the total of live bison in the whole continent of North America at 1019. Only 85 of these were living wild in the United States and 465 were being preserved in parks and zoological gardens. The balance was made up by the two herds of wood bison in the north of Alberta and in the north-west territory. This separate species, once so numerous, is now becoming merged with the plains bison by cross breeding. The surviving herds of bison are now under strict government supervision.

The bison is a heavily built short-horn, with a long and shaggy black mane. A bull frequently scales two thousand pounds, but the cow is a much smaller beast. In August and September the bison used to gather on the prairies in herds of almost incredible size.

Before horses were brought to America it was none too

easy for the hunters to get on terms with their quarry by surrounding a herd. After the bison had been located, small parties went out and got round them and the dried-up grass might be fired on the windward side. The bison were then killed with arrows, stones and clubs. It is thought likely that the "pound" method of capture, which was always followed in winter, was also used in summer, before the North American Indians acquired the mobility of mounted men.

"Pound" hunting, which the Assiniboine Indians brought to a fine art, was on the lines of an elephant *keddah* in India, except where the pound was made at the foot of a cliff over which the bison could be driven, to crash into the enclosure below. In the plains the procedure was to put up a circular corral of logs and brushwood from five to eight feet high and about a hundred yards in circumference. A gap several yards wide was left in the stockade, and here a log causeway was made which inclined upwards to give a four-foot drop at the entrance to the corral. The causeway was fenced with wings between which the bison could be driven up, and so into the enclosure, when the gap was closed.

It was a difficult matter for men on foot to stampede a herd into a pound. When bison were reported to be near one, an experienced hunter went out, after certain rites had been performed, as a decoy, wearing a buffalo skin with the head as a mask. He had then to attract the notice of the herd and, moving slowly in the direction of the pound, draw the animals towards it. In this he would be helped by a number of energetic men edging them in the required

direction. As soon as the herd reached the wide mouth of the converging walls of brushwood, the full strength of the band of hunters rose from their hiding-places and helped to corral the animals.

When horses were brought to America, and came into the possession of the tribes, it became the chief amusement as well as the occupation of the people in the Bison area to hunt the animals on horseback. There was always a source of supply by lassoing the small, wiry, wild horses of European stock which in those days had become plentiful in the country.¹

The North American Indian used neither bit nor bridle. He had instead a short halter with a most effective noose round the animal's lower jaw. This method of control strengthens the idea that prehistoric man in Europe may possibly have used horses long before metal came in, and adds interest to the sculptured horses of early Magdalenian age in the rock-shelter near Les Eyzies in France. In that remarkable frieze there are incisions on one of the horse's heads, which definitely suggests a halter. The North American Indians' custom of painting their horses red is paralleled in the traces of ochre on the head and neck of the prehistoric sculptures when first uncovered.²

Out hunting the heavy wood and raw-hide saddles of Spanish design were discarded, and light pad saddles of soft hide stuffed with hair were used instead.

When after bison the hunter rode in nothing but his

¹ *Habitat, Economy and Society*, Forde, pp. 45-55.

² Art. "The Rock Shelter at Cap Blanc," D. Emerson Chapman and Alexander Keiller, *Antiquity*, June 1936.

long fringed trousers, carrying his bow and arrows and a heavy whip, with his thirty to forty foot lasso trailing behind. The horses were trained to gallop up on the off-side of the quarry without the aid of the rope rein, so that the riders could shoot towards the left.

Bows were made of either horn or wood. The best horn was that of the mountain sheep, which was split, steamed, bound up and backed with sinew, and so made very strong and springy. Bows of juniper or ash, backed with sinew, were also powerful weapons and were made from three feet to four feet six inches in length.

The early arrows were not feathered. The arrow-makers used to shave up a number of fine shavings along the shaft and leave them there to steady the flight. Turkey and buzzard were the best feathers as blood does not affect them. Hawk and eagle feathers were used for ceremonial arrows. Originally only two feathers were fitted to the arrow, the third came later. The Cheyenne bow-strings were originally of a milk-weed bark, and later of twisted hair. But after the women had learnt to use sinew-thread for sewing, a woman suggested to her husband that the great tendon under the shoulder-blade of a bull bison would make a good bow-string. So this last improvement was made.¹

Until the fur-traders brought steel to the tribes, arrow-heads were either of bone or flint. Later in the nineteenth century, when muskets could be bought from the traders who penetrated west of the Mississippi, small hunting

¹ *The Cheyenne Indian*, G. B. Grinnell (Yale Univ. Press, 1923), Vol. I. pp. 178-184.

parties became the rule instead of the large bands of earlier days. But individual pursuit of bison was never allowed, for the tribal custom was communal hunting by organized bands of related families.

HUNTING IN CANADA.—What is now Canada was a paradise of game in pre-Colonial times. The eastern forest area abounded in moose and woodland caribou; in the plains there were great herds of bison and antelope; the high ground in the west was the home of sheep, goats and mountain caribou; while moose and deer were numerous on the Pacific coast. In the northern districts east of the Mackenzie river there were a certain number of musk-oxen and immense herds of caribou. Swans, geese and duck, grouse and ptarmigan made the country their nesting-ground.

Big game, birds (waterfowl especially) and fish like the salmon all have their seasonal movements and migrations; and these naturally influenced the lives and the social organization of the tribes who lived by hunting and fishing, and had to be frequently on the move to avoid starvation. These hardships, the accidents inseparable from this mode of existence, and numerous blood-feuds combined to keep the population low.

In winter moose were run down on snow-shoes and speared. Bears were attacked in their dens, but it was not easy to get on terms with them in summer, and a bear, the most formidable of animals when wounded, must have been uncommonly dangerous to face with a stone, a bone-pointed arrow or a spear as the weapon.

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Most Indians hunted with dogs, to bring the quarry to bay, but their original breed, as seen in the northern districts, was of a poor type, not even strong enough to drag sledges as a team.

Considerable reliance was placed on trigger-traps and snares, not only to catch rabbits, hares, grouse and ptarmigan, but also caribou and moose.¹

FISHING.—On the western side of the Rocky Mountains fishing—especially for salmon—was the equivalent to bison-hunting on the prairies. Fishermen in canoes used hook and line, dams were built at the mouths of tidal rivers, but by far the most important catches were made when the fish came up from the sea to spawn in the higher reaches of the rivers. The various species seek the fresh water at different times between March and September, and at the height of a run the narrows of a big river are, without exaggeration, packed with salmon.

Here the Indians of British Columbia were able to spear and gaff the fish with ease. But the general and more satisfactory method was to build stout weirs of logs and stones and set osier basket traps in the gaps.² The baskets were similar in form and material to the fish traps set in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries by the hill tribes of the Tibetan border. To supplement a diet mainly consisting of smoked and dried fish, the people—on the banks of the Nass especially—caught candle-fish in large bag nets and extracted oil by boiling them.

¹ See *Indians of Canada*, pp. 40-59.

² *Habitat, Economy and Society*, Forde, pp. 77-80.

WHALING.—Whaling, as the men of Vancouver hunted the huge animal, called for greater skill and courage than it took to cut a bull bison out of a herd and bring it down. The position of chief harpooner in a Nootka village was hereditary, and involved a number of prohibitions as to food and behaviour. Before the fishing began in April he prepared for it by going into retreat at a special shrine of his whaling ancestors. With reference to the religious side of this dangerous occupation, the personal guardian spirits of the fishermen on this coast were found in canoes, paddles and water animals. The supernatural help of these guardians was obtained, as is believed by many North American Indian tribes, by the performance of certain ceremonials.¹ The chief harpooner then painted his body red, wrapped himself in a sea-otter skin, picked his crews of seven or eight, and led the whaling fleet of canoes out to sea.

The whaling harpoon head had a triangular shell point and barbs of antler mounted on a heavy yew shaft, from which the head became detached when the animal was struck, as in the case of the Eskimo harpoons. A considerable length of whale sinew was fastened to the head, and along this line a number of inflated seal-skins were tied at intervals.

The canoe was skilfully manœuvred to avoid a fatal blow from the thrashing tail until the harpooner in the bows was within striking distance of his whale. When the harpoon got home and the animal began its flurry the line was cast off from the canoe, and the whole fleet followed

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer, Vol. III. pp. 370-372, 412.

up to attack the whale when it rose again to the surface, to be pierced by a number of harpoons. The trailing lines of big seal-skin bladders prevented the whale from diving, and eventually, unless it had succeeded in escaping before being seriously wounded, the exhausted animal could be approached, killed and towed to land.¹

Early reports of primitive Eskimo whaling are almost similar. Crews of ten or twelve men went out in their flat-bottomed, skin-covered boats. They took, however, the precaution of wearing long, frock-like, water-tight and inflated seal-skin garments, in case the boat upset. The whale was attacked with lances, or tent-poles with knife-heads, to which were fastened half a dozen seal-skin floats.²

PRODUCTION OF FIRE.—The vital importance of fire is emphasized among primitive peoples by their attitude towards it and by their Promethean legends. When the writer lit a hurricane lantern in a village where nothing resembling this camp requisite had ever been seen before, the people treated it as a great and powerful spirit. The dignified North American Indian ritual of the calumet is bound up with the element of fire. So before we come to the preparation of food, something may be said about the legendary coming of fire and how it was produced by the North American Indians in prehistoric times.

The explanation of the possession of fire as told by the Ute Indians is a good example of the animal stories

¹ *Habitat, Economy and Society*, Forde, p. 77.

² *The Ammassalik Eskimo*, First Part, p. 403 and footnote, quoting Eskimo evidence and Glahn's report of 1784.

told all over the continent. It should be said, in the first place, that the coyote (prairie wolf), who is the hero of the legend, figures in the tales of a number of the tribes. This animal is actually a small cowardly creature, and in many stories he shows up rather badly, but he is all the same a mighty magician.

“Long, long ago the Coyote was chief, and at that time the animals had no fire, although the rocks used to get very hot. But once a small bit of burnt rush borne by the winds was found by the Coyote and then he knew that there was such a thing as fire. He made a head-dress of fibre bark, summoned the animals to a council, and sent the birds as scouts to find the Flame Country.

“The Humming Bird discovered it and, led by the Coyote, the animals visited the fire people, who feasted them royally and gave a dance in their honour. As they danced Coyote came gradually nearer and nearer to the flame, until suddenly he took off his bark wig, and with it seized the fire. On this, he and his party took to their heels hotly pursued by the outraged guardians of the flame.

“As they went Coyote passed the fire to Eagle, Eagle to Humming Bird, Humming Bird to Hawkmoth, Hawkmoth to Chicken Hawk, Chicken Hawk back to Humming Bird who gave it again to Coyote. But Coyote was hard-pressed and he hid in a cavern where he carefully fed the one tiny spark that still remained alive. ‘Then the fire people, to kill the fire that had escaped, made rain and snow to come and fill the valleys. But led by the Rabbit, Coyote sought shelter in a cave where there was dry sage-

bush. Coyote took a stem of the sage-bush and made a hole in it and filled it with 'coals.' With this he went home, and summoned all his people who were left.

"Then he took the stick, made a hole in it with an arrow point and whittled a piece of hard grease-wood. After this he bored the sage-bush with the grease-wood point, gathered up the fragments and put them in dry grass. Blowing on this he soon had a fire. 'This dry pine-nuts will be burned hereafter,' he said. 'Dry cedar will also be burned. Take fire into all the tents. I shall throw away the rocks. There will be fire in every house.'"¹

An account of pre-Columbian methods of producing fire is given by the Jesuit Father le Jeune, who was on the St. Lawrence in 1634. "For wick they use the skin of an eagle's thigh, covered with down, which takes fire very easily. They strike together two metallic stones, just as we do with a piece of flint and iron or steel; in place of matches they use a little piece of tinder, a dry and rotten wood which burns easily and continuously until it is consumed. When they have lighted it they put it into pulverized cedar bark and, by gently blowing, this bark takes fire.

"They have still another kind of fuse, they twist a little cedar stick and this friction causes fire, which lights some tinder; but as I have never seen them use this fuse, which is more familiar to the Hurons than the Montagnais, I will say no more about it."² A sound view for an anthropologist to take. In point of fact the necessary

¹ *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. X. pp. 140-141.

² *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. VI. p. 217.

sparks were struck by hitting bits of iron pyrites together, or fire was started by the friction of pieces of wood, throughout the continent until traders brought in iron and steel.

PREPARATION OF FOOD.—In his account of New France, written between 1610 and 1613, Father Joseph Jouvency, S.J., described the aboriginal way of cooking meat. “They used receptacles of closely joined bark; but because they could not place them with safety over the flames, they devised the following way of cooking meat: They cast a large number of flint stones into the fire until they had become red-hot. Then they would drag these hot stones one after another into a vessel full of cold water and meat. In this manner the water was heated and the meat cooked more quickly and more easily than one would suppose.”¹

George Catlin may be said to have been in at the death of this primitive way of cooking. “There is [he wrote] a very curious custom amongst the Assinneboins, from which they have taken their name; a name given them by their neighbours (the Ojibways) from a singular mode of boiling their meat. When they kill meat, a hole is dug in the ground about the size of a common pot, and a piece of the raw hide of the animal, as taken from the back, is put over the hole, and then pressed down with the hands close around the sides and filled with water. The meat to be boiled is then put in this hole.”

Catlin, after describing the hot-stone method that Father Jouvency had noticed two hundred and twenty

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. I. pp. 283-285.

years earlier, goes on to say: "This custom is a very awkward and tedious one, and used only as an ingenious means of boiling their meat, by a tribe who were too rude and ignorant to construct a kettle or pot. The traders have recently supplied the people with pots; and even long before that, the Mandans had instructed them in the secret of manufacturing very good and serviceable earthen pots; which together have entirely done away with the custom, excepting at public festivals; where they seem like others of the human family, to take pleasure in cherishing and perpetuating their ancient customs." ¹

In the Bison area "buffalo" meat—in those days when herds were plentiful—was boiled, roasted, stewed or smoked. Some of the Siouan tribes ate dog-flesh. A popular dish was pemmican (bison meat dried very hard) and marrow fat, which had the appearance of tallow, and is said to have tasted like excellent butter. The usual Indian custom was to eat two meals a day. Pemmican was prepared by cutting the meat across the grain in alternate layers of lean and fat, the strips being about half an inch thick. Neither salt nor smoke were used in the process, and the meat was cured by drying it in the sun for several days.²

In the heart of the continent, about the Great Lakes, the head waters of the Chipaway and Wisconsin rivers, southwards in the Bison area, and also in the swamps of Florida, where wild rice grew in quantities, this cereal, which is peculiarly rich in starch and sugar, was a highly prized form of food.

¹ *The North American Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 61, 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

The traveller, Radisson,¹ who was in the country between 1652 and 1684—before the western Indian had learnt to distrust the white man—has described a Dakota friendship feast in which rice apparently constituted the banquet. “Our songs being finished, we began our teeth to work. We had there a kind of rice much like oats . . . and that is their food for the most part of the winter, and [they] do dresse it thus: for each man a handfull of that they putt in the pott that swells so much that it can suffice a man.”

The American Indians have always been fond of soup and they used to thicken it with rice. Neil, an early eighteenth-century visitor to Dakota, especially commended the game broth and rice. Another favourite dish made by the Indian women consisted of wild rice, corn and fish all boiled together. They also ate their rice plain boiled, with maple sugar. The Indians may not have thought out as many ways of cooking rice as O. Henry declares are known in Charleston, S.C., but they knew enough to give a pleasant variation to their diet.

The people of the northern Pacific coast cultivated nothing except an unidentified plant whose leaves were mixed with lime and chewed as betel-nut is used in India. Their harvest came from the sea and the rivers, which gave them salmon, halibut and cod, herring and candle-fish, porpoises, seals and sea-otters, whale’s meat, shell-fish and seaweed.

They hunted in the forest not primarily for food, but to get the materials they needed, wool and skins, horns

¹ These details of cooking wild rice are taken from *Nineteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1900), pp. 1019-1126.

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and sinews of animals. Fish were kippered by the women, who split them and dried them in racks over a fire, and it is not easy to find anything better than kippered salmon. This diet was balanced with berries and roots, which were thought so important that the tracts of land where these grew well were as strictly reserved by different households as game areas are kept by a hunting people.¹

¹ *Habitat, Economy and Society*, pp. 80, 81.

CHAPTER SIX

In North America

HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRIES AND THE ARTS.—Tribal ideas of the necessities of life naturally varied enormously in the different economic areas of the country. The industries of the Cheyenne, for instance, were few and simple. As Grinnell puts it, "in modern times, that is to say after (they) had left the Missouri river and moved out on to the plains and had begun to give less attention to agriculture and to devote themselves more and more to the pursuit of the buffalo, this animal furnished a very large proportion of the articles that they possessed, except such tools as were made of stone, or of stone and wood."¹

They knew nothing of weaving, the nearest approach being seen in the crossed strands of raw hide in their snowshoes. The tanning of hides, which was a part of the women's duties, was consequently their most important industry. The implements used in more primitive times were slate or sharp quartzite scrapers, or the cannon bone of a buffalo; adze-like skin-thinners of flint fastened with sinew to elk-horn handles, which were looked on as heirlooms by the woman; and handled spoke-shaves of bone. These details give an indication of the way implements were used by the hunting peoples of prehistoric Europe.

The Cheyenne usually made their cooking spoons and

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. p. 172.

ladles from the horns of buffalo and mountain sheep, but they sometimes used wood or the shell of a tortoise. In earlier times, before they came down to the plains, they presumably used birch bark. Bowls were of oak or poplar, and only rarely ornamented. Vessels for water were made of the paunch of a bison, and these were still in use as recently as 1870.

The native bead industry of the Cheyenne, which turned out small glass-like charms resembling lizards, was kept strictly secret, and how these were made is no longer known. Their primitive necklaces were of elk or deer teeth and the vertebrae of fish.

The tribe never adopted cooking baskets as used by more westerly communities. They boiled water in the hot-stone way already described. But in very early times they used stone vessels, which were clumsy and heavy. Some time in the past an advance was made by the substitution of earthenware. This industry died out in the middle of the nineteenth century when traders arrived in their country with metal pots.

Pots, made from a mixture of pounded stone and clay, were worked out of a single lump of clay, and not coiled. A flattened bent stick was used to hollow out and shape the mass, the clay taken out being added to the top of the vessel to make it bigger. The ware was originally ornamented by pressing a string of twisted grass into the plastic clay. Later a string of twisted sinew was found to give better results. The colour of the vessels, white, red or blue, depended on the clay used to make them.

They did not always fire their pottery. Platters and

dishes, not being used for cooking, could be kept from cracking by applying grease until the clay was saturated. Sometimes pots were put into a dry-kiln. To fire their earthenware the Cheyenne women put it under a bonfire of dry bark and left it there until the vessels were red-hot.¹

These were the industries of a hunting people.

Where so many different cultures are involved, it is only possible to describe in very general terms the main industries of aboriginal North America.

No industry is more primitive than the use of twigs and other material to make into nets, basket-work and matting. Even the Tasmanians, with ideas of human comfort rising no higher than the level of Old Stone Age man, had some knowledge of it. The only peoples in North America who had no basketry were the skin experts in the eastern Eskimo settlements and certain hunting tribes in the Bison area.

There are two ways of making basket-work. It can either be woven or coiled. The Ojibway wove soft bags of elm bark as fine in workmanship and as beautiful as those made by some of the tribes of British Columbia, or the bags of the Nez Percé Indians in the United States, that circulated among the Blackfoot.²

Coiled basketry was most highly developed in California, where the Pomo baskets are ranked among the finest in the whole world.³ This technique extended eastward up to the edge of the plains, and extended south to include the Navajo and Apache tribes. The close texture was essential

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 170-246.

² *Indians of Canada*, p. 214.

³ *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), p. 50.

for cooking where baskets were used in boiling, as the vessels had to be water-tight. In the pottery region of the Pueblo, or Village, Indians and to the south, the basket-work becomes coarser and more open.

In design the shallow wicker-work and coiled trays of the Hopi in the North American desert are remarkable for the elaborate patterns representing animals and mythological characters which are worked on them. Bright red, green, yellow and other dyes were got from various minerals to colour the rabbit brush and yucca strips with which they are made.¹

After basketry comes the weaving of spun or twisted materials into cloth.

In the textile art the fibres were wool, bast and cotton. In western Canada the hair of the mountain goat and of a specially bred dog were used. In the Bison area, buffalo hair was spun. Willow bark in the north, cedar bark on the Pacific slopes, basswood about the Great Lakes and eastward, Indian hemp in the south-east, all yielded suitable fibres. Cotton does not seem to have been cultivated in what is now the great cotton belt. But it was certainly grown in the Puebla country and to the south, that is to say by the most progressive peoples. In Canada, in the Bison and Salmon areas and in the most northerly districts of the eastern Maize area, where skin clothing was made, sinew fibre was of the greatest importance.

As to spinning, the spindle-whorl was known in pre-Columbian times. It was used in the south and as far north as the Colorado river, and along the coast of British

¹ *Habitat, Economy and Society*, p. 239.

Columbia. Everywhere else bast and sinew thread were given their final twist by rolling under the palm of the hand on the leg. As in pottery, so in spinning, the New World was handicapped by its ignorance of the wheel, and with cotton or wool a stick or spindle had to be used instead, the spindle resting in a bowl, on the ground, or simply held in the hands.

There were two forms of New World weaving. In the loom the fabric is built upwards. In the "finger" process the warp threads are hung loosely on a frame and the material built downwards. Speaking generally, the Pueblo Indians and the peoples to the south of them use the loom, and finger-weaving is the practice in the Salmon and the eastern Maize areas. The surviving Pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico, and the Navajo still weave and have for a long time used the wool of their domestic sheep. In the southern parts of the eastern Maize area there seems to have been a certain amount of tapestry and double cloth made in pre-Columbian times. Woven feather-work was common, and painted cloth is mentioned by early observers. Buffalo hair-weaving was characteristic far up into the Mississippi valley.¹

At the time when America was discovered, pottery was made throughout what are now the United States, with the exception of a belt through the Bison area down to the Gulf of Mexico and in the far west. It was only found in a fringe along the existing southern boundary of Canada and the pottery that was made was never painted.

In the south-western and eastern districts of North

¹ *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), pp. 42-65.

American pottery was as a rule made by the coil method of rolling out slender rods of clay to suitable lengths and then building up the vessel spirally. Elsewhere it was made more or less as already mentioned, in describing Cheyenne industry. Catlin said of the Mandan earthenware, when he visited the upper Missouri: "Earthen dishes or bowls are manufactured by the women in great quantities and moulded into a thousand forms and tastes. They are made from a tough black clay and baked in kilns, and are nearly equal in hardness to our own manufacture of pottery, though they have not yet got the art of glazing. They make them so strong and serviceable, however, that they hang them over the fire as we do our iron pots, and boil their meat in them with complete success."¹ The principle of glaze was not understood in pre-Columbian America, although in the Pueblo districts a true glaze was used for decoration.

The aborigines of south-western North America had an excellent idea of the value of colour to ornament their ware. The paints used were both vegetable and mineral, the reds and yellows being from iron, black from the juices of plants.

In form the most remarkable examples of earthenware were the effigy-bowls like human heads in the Mississippi valley, in the North Atlantic area the Algonkin pointed-bottomed jars, and inland the square-topped pots of the Iroquois.²

Among industries there must be included their primitive

¹ *The North American Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 131, 132.

² *The American Indian*, Wissler (ed. 1922), pp. 66-75.

equivalent to the Mint of a civilized country. While blankets eventually became the symptom of wealth on the Pacific coast, discs and beads known as "wampum" were, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, manufactured from clam and other shells by the coastal tribes from the Maritime provinces of Canada southwards. They were also made on the Pacific coast. In the east they had three uses, symbolic, ornamental and monetary. In the sixteenth century there were two varieties of beads in eastern Canada, where white beads typified goodwill and prosperity and purple denoted war, disaster and death. But the shell beads had their widespread recognized value as a medium of exchange, though there were, of course, other articles from canoes downwards, which were used in intertribal trade.

Wampum was carried in strings, or woven into belts and sashes, a normal early eighteenth-century belt containing eleven strands, each with about a hundred and eighty beads. When trading loose beads might be used, or strings measured by the fathom.

In pre-Columbian times this currency had a limited output. But the coming of white traders and the introduction of iron tools multiplied the production of shell currency enormously. On the eastern side of the continent it spread eastward to the Mississippi river in the United States and to the Great Lakes in Canada. On the Pacific coast shell beads became a recognized currency among the Californian Indians in the south and the Kutchen of the Yukon district in the far north. To give an idea of value, one string of haiqua-shells in British Columbia was taken as worth a beaver skin.

Then, about the beginning of the nineteenth century, the fur-traders substituted a cheaper porcelain bead for the native shell and the currency became worthless.¹

Finally, there is the decorative art which is to be seen in the industries of aboriginal North America.

Catlin's eye of a painter was fascinated at the outset of his travels by the artistic technique of the Crow Indians in the treatment of bison hide. As he described their lodges: "They oftentimes dress the skins of which it is composed almost as white as linen, and beautifully garnish them with porcupine quills, and paint and ornament them in such a variety of ways as render them exceedingly picturesque." One of these lodges, of which he made a picture, was about twenty-five feet high, large enough to seat forty men, and highly ornamented and fringed with scalp locks. These decorations were usually painted in blocks of geometrical designs. Family *tipis* frequently had recorded on them pictographs showing the exploits of their owner. His bison hide robe might be ornamented in the same way.²

Decorative designing as it was, and in some cases is still, employed in aboriginal North America is a wide and intricate subject and can only be touched upon here.

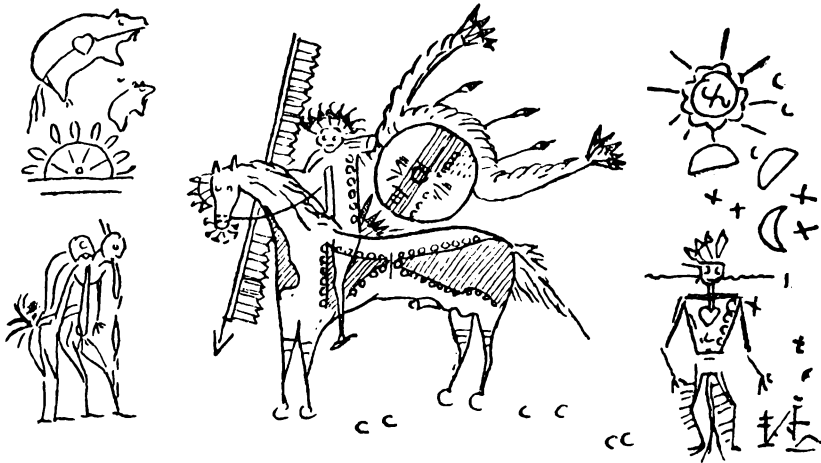
The noticeable feature is the geometric character of the designs. Weaving technique in basketry and textiles is practically limited to rectangular patterns and arrangements of squares, and these are followed in the decoration used

¹ Based on *Indians of Canada*, pp. 79, 113, 114, 139.

² *The North American Indians*, Vol. I. p. 50. The detail on a Mandan chief's robe is shown in colour facing p. 166 (pls. 39-42) of Vol. I.

on their earthenware by the aboriginal potters of Arizona and New Mexico.

The Navajo, who were once hunters and food-gatherers and have become in historical times the only truly pastoral people of America, are believed only comparatively recently to have taken to weaving. The earliest-known blankets



11. *Designs on a Pawnee Medicine-man's Robe*
(after Catlin)

were striped, and their designs were undoubtedly copied from aboriginal models.

The bead and quilt ornamentation of the Bison area, where pottery when it was made was not decorated, consists of small rectangles, lines and triangles.

These lines and triangles bring us to the last point that can be referred to on this subject, the symbols used in aboriginal art. As expressed in basketry and bead-work, some of these designs are of the simplest; \equiv stands for a dragon-fly among the Dakota Indians. The exact form of the swastika is a true symbol and is called "whirling logs"

by the Navajo. The Arapaho, who are still holding their own in Montana, Wyoming and Oklahoma, often select designs which represent personal and individual interests.¹

This primitive heraldry has a deeper meaning in the totemic clans, as among the Delaware Indians, who painted a turkey-foot and other signs on their doors to show the tribal subdivision to which they belonged. The Western Tinnehs (Dénés) used to tattoo figured animals on their breasts and arms. These "had generally a totemic significance," the animals being generally totem animals revealed in dreams.

But it was in the far west that the aboriginal heraldry was most highly elaborated. The totem clans of the North Pacific coast carved or painted their crests—an eagle, a salmon, a grizzly bearskin or whatever it might be—on their houses, their canoes, their shields, on their household utensils and even put them on their blankets. Their helmets and their hats were shaped, too, in likeness of a crest. Some families were too poor to show a crest, and some individuals were rich enough to sport any they pleased. In Kwakiutl heraldry the lowest carving on a totem pole was the crest the owner had in right from his *father*, those above it he impaled, if the expression may be used for a crest, by marriage.²

In the course of her review of the art developed by the coastal tribes, Miss Jenness makes the following comments: "While it is quite common to find a high conventionalization

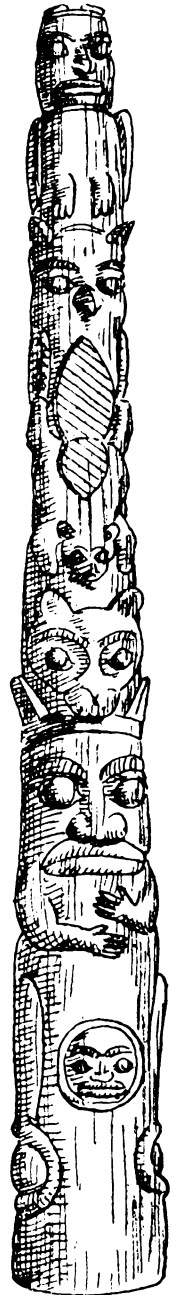
¹ *The American Indian*, Wissler (ed. 1922), pp. 97-101.

² See *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 40, 353, 267-270, 331 and footnote.

of realistic art in different parts of the world, these conventionalizations have nowhere taken exactly the same form, or developed the same peculiar style, as among the Indians of British Columbia. It was a style that originated long before any Europeans touched these shores, for we can discern it on the stone mortars and whale-bone (not baleen) clubs that have been recovered from prehistoric shell-heaps."

After discussing the local artistic tradition that, no matter if the design were on a dish or a house-pole, certain significant parts of each figure must be represented, whether they would normally be visible or not, she goes on to say: "Limitations of space in the field that he is decorating, and a strong desire for symmetry and balance, will make him distort the different elements in a figure, and rearrange them without regard to their proper anatomical positions. He may place the tail of an animal above its head, the wings of a bird beside its legs."

As Miss Jenness points out, this extraordinary style of art is full of conventional signs. Circles represent joints, eyes may be indicated by rounded rectangles, and these half-geometric patterns are used to fill up what would otherwise be blank spaces. The totemic beliefs of the sculptor-artists are reflected in their treatment of animals, that are often



12. *North Pacific Coast Totem Pole*

shown as human beings with the addition of fixed symbols. In the human figure the ears are in line with the eyes, the ears above the head denote an animal. A long protruding tongue may be the only sign of a grizzly bear, while two large incisor teeth and a flat tail proclaim the beaver.

To summarize this expression of art from the Western standpoint: "The huge totem-poles and house-posts will impress us by their savage dignity; silver bracelets and slate dishes delight us by the delicacy of their engravings. But the grotesqueness of the figures . . . soon wearies us; and the conventionalization is too involved, the symbolism too obscure and too far removed from our trends of thought for us to assimilate this exotic style of art."¹

Nothing in artistic expression could be further removed from the totemic designs of the Pacific coast than those by which the Winnebago of Wisconsin represent the totem animals from which their clans are named. The tribe is of Siouan stock and separated from the main body by migration possibly about three hundred years ago.

In its domestic form their art survives in their porcupine quill-work and woven bags. But in earlier times, and up to the eighteenth century, the Winnebago made these effigy designs in earthwork. Some of their simple linear mounds challenge, by the scale on which they were made, the megalithic achievements of the Old World, while in form, though not in purpose, the effigies call to mind the figures on the English downs. Most of them have been destroyed within the last two or three centuries, but there are still in existence some of the Winnebago effigy mounds,

¹ *Indians of Canada*, pp. 209-212.

about a dozen excavated designs known as *intaglios* and a few of their huge linear, club and kidney-shaped earthworks.

The surviving effigy mounds represent a bird, the bear, lynx and mink totems and were built near the clan settlements as property marks. There is some uncertainty about the wolf, but no representations of any other of their twelve clans have ever been found. Of these effigies all except the bird belong to the lower of the two social divisions of the tribe. The turtle, which is not a clan but plays a prominent part in their mythology, has also been found.

Except from the point of view of size the most striking of these ancient monuments are the two "Man" mounds. The figure of the Greenfield Man is 214 feet long, the head being 30 feet, the body 100 and the legs 84 feet in length. The head faces south and the indicated movement of the figure is towards the west. The head is ornamented with two horn-like projections which give an odd expression to the whole figure. All the lines of this most remarkable effigy are gracefully curved and executed with much care.

The *intaglio* earthworks, which are shallow excavations with a bank along the cutting line, are believed to represent the Water-spirit clan, and are thought to have been kept full of water.

Unless, as has been conjectured, some of the long narrow mounds are snake effigies, this type of earth monument is not even the primitive expression of art in its crudest form. As a matter of fact their purpose is unknown, and the statements of local Indians that some of them were put up for defence is considered improbable. The biggest

of these linear mounds is 900 feet long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and is understood to be about 20 feet wide.¹

THE FAMILY.—Whatever view a government may take of the relative importance of the family and the state, the family is the basis on which human society rests. On the highly controversial point of the inception of family life, the conclusions of a leading European authority on the subject of comparative religion may be quoted: “The form of the pre-totemic family, and therefore of the earliest human family we can hope to know anything about through ethnology, is neither general promiscuity nor group-marriage, neither of which, according to the verdict of the leading modern ethnologists, ever existed at all. Nor is it . . . a horde, in which an old male possesses all the females himself and drives the young males out. On the contrary, it is a clear, fully developed marriage in the proper sense, which is monogamous among a large number of these peoples, moderately polygamous among a few.”²

Against this must be set the views held by the most illustrious savants of two continents, Sir James Frazer, who gave his conclusions in 1910, and Lewis H. Morgan, who had recorded his some thirty years before. The former maintains as “a reasonable hypothesis that at least a large part of mankind has passed through the stage of group marriage from a still lower stage of sexual pro-

¹ *Thirty-seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1923), pp. 76-103.

² *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (1931), W. Schmidt (p. 115), who gives the list and attitudes of these authors in his *Ursprung der Gottesidee* (2nd Ed.), Vol. I. pp. 215-236.

miscuity." The latter supports his belief in original promiscuous intercourse with the following arguments: "The lessening volume of the skull and its increasing animal characteristics as we recede from civilized to savage man. . . . Were it possible to reach this earliest representative of the species, we must descend very far below the lowest savage now living upon the earth. The ruder flint implements found over parts of the earth's surface, and not used by existing savages, attest the extreme rudeness of his condition after he had emerged from his primitive habitat, and commenced as a fisherman, his spread over continental areas. It is with respect to this primitive savage, and with respect to him alone, that promiscuity may be inferred. . . . It may be remarked that the consanguine family and the Malayan system of consanguinity presuppose antecedent promiscuity." ¹

Without presuming to make the slightest comment upon any of the above theories, it must be said that each successive scientific pronouncement can be reached only on the evidence available at the time, and is consequently always liable to revision. On the one hand Dr. Eugene Dubois, the discoverer of the "Ape-Man" in Java in 1890-91, now regards *Pithecanthropus erectus* as a gibbon-like primate, and has explained the reasons for revising his opinion in numerous papers published by the Royal Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam. On the other hand, there is certainly one series of very rudely shaped flints, which were held twenty years ago to have been formed by

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. IV. pp. 151-152 (etc.). *Ancient Society*, Morgan (ed. London, 1877), pp. 500-501 (etc.).

natural causes, that are now accepted as having been made by man.

The way in which the family is continued from one generation to the next is subject to certain conditions. By the laws of the Catholic Church, for example, blood relations to the second and third degree (that is to say, first and second cousins) require, on account of the deterioration possible by "in and in breeding," a dispensation to marry, and a general "Table of Affinity" is to be found in the Church of England Prayer Book.

Primitive races also have their impediments. Aboriginal North America followed the widespread, though not invariable, rule forbidding the marriage of close relations, which is held to include the group to which an individual belongs. This is the law of exogamy, and it is common both to tribes tracing their descent to recognized human ancestors and to those groups whose members believe they are descended from various animals, plants or even artificial objects. These are always referred to as totems, whether they are found in Australia, Santa Cruz or South Africa. But the name is taken from the Ojibway word *ototeman*, meaning "his brother-sister kin," and it has come to mean, in its widest sense, a tutelary guardian, a crest, and the personal fetish or medicine.¹

The majority of the North American Indians are or were totemic, but the system was not apparently universal among the hunting tribes of the western prairies and it was

¹ *Handbook of the American Indians North of Mexico*, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington, 1907), Part II. pp. 787-790.

quite unknown to the most primitive of all, the Indians of central California. On this Sir James Frazer remarks: "We seem driven to conclude that among the Indians of North America totemism marks a degree of social and intellectual progress to which the more backward members of the Redskin family have not yet attained."¹

An example of the consanguinity rules followed in the more primitive stage of society is seen in the Cheyenne Indians, amongst whom no traces of totemism have been discovered. The clans of this tribe are said by tradition to come from three original divisions that subsequently developed into ten groups. Two of these divisions possibly, though not certainly, had a common ancestor. Inter-marriage within a group was forbidden. Descent was at first through the female line, and the children consequently belonged to their mother's group. Each group once had its own taboos, ceremonies and special medicines, but many of these, in the invasion of Western civilization, have become neglected and even forgotten, and it is stated that descent now goes through the male line. To this day, however, there survives a prejudice against the marriage of relatives, however distant, of the same group.²

Totemism flourished in the eastern Maize area and in the south. What is known about the spiritual influences of totemism will be referred to in another chapter, but the more or less general belief of a totem clan, that they were descended from their totem, controlled their marriage laws. In the eyes of an Iroquois, every member of his own totem

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 2, 3.

² *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 2, 88-96.

clan, in whatever tribe he might be found, was as much his brother or his sister as if they had been born of the same mother.¹

This general rule of impediment among totem groups was at one time more strictly defined by the Iroquois. The clans were classified in two divisions. Members of the Wolf, Bear, Beaver and Turtle clans could not marry among themselves; they could only marry someone in the other division, one of the Deer, Snipe, Heron or Hawk. Under the original as well as modern regulation, the husband and wife were of different clans and the children belonged to the clan of their mother. This gave the father a divided interest, his natural love for his own children and his attachment to his sisters' family, who alone could be his heirs.

But it was not the bare fact of matrilinear organization which gave the Iroquois women the position they held and the privileges they enjoyed. It was the important place that agriculture held in the economic life of a people who left the entire cultivation of the fields and the provision of the greater part of the food supply to the women.

Women had great influence in other parts of the continent, notably among the Pueblos, who were divided into totem clans, and the more primitive hunters of the prairie, the Cheyenne, who had not developed the system. Their property rights under the Pueblo form of matriarchy have been mentioned. Among the Cheyenne, women were, in Grinnell's words, "the final authority in the camp. If in later days the women did not take part in councils,

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. p. 10.

they nevertheless exercised on the men of their families an influence that can hardly be overestimated." In olden days they would accompany a war expedition, and although they went as camp followers there are many stories of their bravery in personal combat on the field.¹

Tribal family customs varied to a certain extent, but the following account, taken from Grinnell's *Cheyenne Indians*, gives a good idea of family life.

Arrival at the age of puberty was the first important event in a girl's life. She bathed, her body was painted red, she sat before a fire of sweet grass, juniper needles and white sage, and she went into formal seclusion for four days. Among other prohibitions was the regulation not to eat boiled meat.

Cheyenne girls and young women always wore, and generally still wear, a protective rope girdle, which it was the custom to respect under pain of death.

Old-time courtship, from the standpoint of a modern civilized community, was extraordinarily reticent. The would-be lover waited about for the girl he fancied and when she passed him would try to attract her attention. If she felt drawn towards him she would stop and talk for a little on general topics. In later times youths became bolder, waited for the girl of their choice and, if she were willing, wrapped his blanket round her and talked with her for some time. A young man had little chance of taking a maiden's fancy until he had seen his first fight.

Courting might go on for any length of time from one to five years before the suitor, through an intermediary,

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 156, 157.

asked for parental consent to the marriage. The girl's father frequently consulted her brother and even some other relations. When this was granted, a conventional exchange of horses between the two families was made.

Before this point was reached the young man would give presents, preferably horses captured on an expedition, to his future father-in-law; the classic example being the seventy horses given by Beaver Claws in the middle of the last century for Elk River's daughter.

When the actual consent was given, the bride in all her finery rode at the head of a procession to the lodge of her future father-in-law. Here she dismounted and was carried, as is to be seen in Scotland, through the door so as not to set her foot on the threshold.

The girl's mother provided the lodge for the newly married pair, with its beds, back-rests and cooking and eating utensils, while other presents were made by relations on each side. After which the mother would say to her daughter, "Daughter, there is your lodge; it is your home; go and live in it."

The connexion between a young married Cheyenne couple and their parents was closer with the girl's parents than with the boy's. The husband would supply his "in-laws" with meat, but he rarely went to their lodge and avoided and never spoke to his mother-in-law. This particular taboo, which is found as far afield as the Australian aborigines,¹ was not universal in North America.

After marriage, in order, as the Cheyenne used to say, that the couple might get used to each other, the girl

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. I. p. 285 (footnote), etc.

might, if she wished, claim the protection of her girdle for as long as a fortnight. Marital self-control was, it is said, looked upon as a great virtue, and it was long the custom that a woman should not have a second child until her first-born was about ten years old. Notwithstanding this, a Cheyenne named Half Bear had four wives and more than thirty children; and families were sometimes quite up to the average of British standards in the Victorian era.

As mothers do all over the world, they told their children bedtime stories. They were usually about little animals, such as this: "This is what a little skunk says: 'After the sun goes down I wander from place to place, looking for something to eat. If I find a trail, I follow it, and follow it, looking for something to eat; and I never stop until daylight. When daylight begins to come I look about for a place to lie down. I stop looking for food and lie down for the day. All day long I lie there with my little skin feet and my little long face.'"

From childhood a boy was taught that his chief duty in life was to be a brave warrior, and because he might be killed in his first fight he was always treated with great consideration. When he was about twelve years old his grandfather would teach him the rules of conduct he must follow—to know how to obey, not to be quarrelsome or misbehave in camp, to rise early and to look after the horses under his charge and see that they had water. He was told that when he grew older it was his duty to support his mother and his sisters, to keep his weapons in good order and never to boast of what he might do. Parents had little or no belief in corporal punishment and relied

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

on appeals to the feelings of pride, shame and self-respect of their children.

Practical training began with riding and instruction in the theory of bison-running and where the quarry should be hit. The boy would be taken on his first hunt any time after he was twelve.

In contrast, it may be remarked, the physical and mental training of the Iroquois youth was deliberately Spartan in method, to teach the boys to stand torture.

The Cheyenne women are renowned among all western tribes for their chastity. Girls were brought up with the greatest care. Their mothers, aunts and grandmothers constantly dinned into them warnings against a hasty and foolish marriage. As they grew older they began to draw water and bring in the wood. They were taught to cut moccasins and how to work in quills and beads. Later they learnt cooking, and before they were old enough to marry how to dress hides.

In Canada children were brought up on similar lines, but to harden the rising generation the tribes on the western coast made the lads bathe daily in cold water, winter and summer alike, and whipped them with cedar boughs when they came out. The Sarcee Indians of Alberta, whose name means "Not Good" and who have almost died out within the last half-century through tuberculosis, were equally stern. The elderly man who supervised the boys' training kept a bathing hole open for them all winter, or made them roll naked in the snow. When the tribe moved camp, they might be kept back for two or three hours and then made to race all the way

to the new settlement, as a means of finding out who would eventually make the best scouts. The Indians of northern Canada, who had a rigorous climate to contend with, were of course easier in the upbringing of their children.

Throughout Canada children were not only carefully taught the duties they would have to perform when they grew up, but they were also given sound moral and religious instruction, a training which was particularly highly systematized by the western bands of Carrier Indians, who had absorbed much of the culture of the coastal tribes of British Columbia.¹

GAMES.—Games and sports were as great a feature of social life and as popular among children as they are in any civilized country. In summer boys and girls were nearly always in the water and grew up into the strong swimmers who so greatly impressed Catlin on his travels. Making models of villages, animals and human figures in mud and clay was another amusement. When the winters were hard everyone went sliding or tobogganing and the boys spun tops to see how long or how far they could whip them on the ice. When the thaw came in spring, tops and whips were thrown into the water; for it was believed, by a people who are not naturally hairy, that hairs would grow on the body if winter games were played in summer.²

Animal games were great favourites. Boys and girls played at bears by going into the thickets to gather fruit,

¹ *Indians of Canada*, pp. 152, 153, 325, 326.

² *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. p. 315.

while the one chosen to be the bear came out of hiding on the prowl for a child. The game ended after he was surrounded and killed and cut up in pretence. Sham fights were naturally very popular with little boys; and, "all against all" kicking matches were played with great vigour under definite rules.

Catlin gives a spirited account of a sham fight by the boys of a Mandan village. Several hundred of them, between the ages of seven and fifteen, were divided into two companies, each under an experienced warrior who acted as instructor. The weapons were toy bows and arrows and little wooden knives. The "troops" were naked, but on the tops of their heads tufts of grass were fastened to represent scalps.

Feint attacks, retirements and other manœuvres ended in a bow-and-arrow battle at close quarters. Anyone hit in a vital place by an arrow-stalk had to fall, while his successful adversary rushed forward and took his grass scalp. The sham fight lasted for about an hour, and was followed by a mock scalp dance.

One of the Sioux games might be described as hockey, with flattened balls stuffed with hair, on a ground that might be anything from two hundred yards to a quarter of a mile long, with goal-posts (or mounds) twenty to thirty yards apart. Curved sticks were used. The players, whose numbers had to be equal, sometimes turned it into polo by mounting their horses.¹

Before a hoop game Catlin was amazed at the heavy betting upon the result. For, like another horse-loving

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 325, 326.

race, the Indo-Aryans, the North American Indians were desperate gamblers, prepared to stake their highly prized arrows, their horses, even their personal liberty on the result. How far back into the past gambling was prevalent cannot be said. That games were played in distant pre-historic times has been proved by the discovery of one or more raw-hide netted hoops in the cliff-dwellings of Colorado. Games with open or netted hoops up to about eighteen inches across were played all over the continent. The netted hoop was used in what is best described as darts with a rolling target, with a dozen or fifteen players a side. Lacrosse originated on the eastern side of the continent from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, and tribes of the Maritime provinces of Canada played an indigenous form of football.

WARFARE.—The practical exercises in tactics (one can hardly call them full-dress manœuvres) of the boys and the bow-and-arrow competitions of the youth of a tribe—that might have taken place on any village green of medieval England—all show how fighting instincts were fostered.

But there are widespread traditions, according to Grinnell, “of a golden age when war was unknown and universal peace prevailed. All strangers met in friendship and parted on good terms.”

Human nature being what it is, there were doubtless armed brawls and skirmishes due to passing feuds or a collision out hunting. But, from these old traditions, it would seem that the normal feeling between neighbouring communities in prehistoric North America may have been

as peaceful as there are grounds for believing conditions were in Europe for most of the Old Stone Age, and in the south of Britain in even later times.

Before horses were introduced into North America worldly possessions were, it would seem, more or less evenly distributed among the Plains Indians. But the coming of the horse, with the usefulness, the mobility and the power which it gave, provided a strong incentive to possess as many of these animals as possible. Horse stealing became a regular profession,¹ and war, as Napoleon described it, *une belle occupation*.

The North American Indians from early in the seventeenth century took sides with unrestrained ferocity in the overseas struggles between the French and the English, which led to the British Colonial expansion in North America. As Macaulay pictured world-war in the eighteenth century, in order that Frederick the Great might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America.

Whatever may have been the prehistoric attitude of the aborigines towards each other, it is hardly surprising that by the nineteenth century intertribal fighting was prevalent among the Plains Indians. Grinnell, whose long acquaintance with the Cheyenne people began in 1890, was able to collect trustworthy reminiscences of the oldest members of the tribe. These memories went back to 1820 and carried with them traditions of still earlier times.

How the Cheyenne lived under continuous active service conditions is illustrated by one of these recorded

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 1-3.

memories: "Of the early days north of the Missouri, when the Cheyenne were constantly in fear of the Hohe, it is related that early each evening the crier went about the camp and called out, directing the women to put moccasins on the children so that if during the night they were attacked and had to run out, they would not be obliged to go bare-foot. Near by they had places selected to which they could run in case of an attack, and all about the camp were breastworks or places of defence, where young men watched all night to warn the people if an attack was threatened. These young men were armed with bows and a few had lances, but they had no guns." Standing All Night, who died in 1869 when he may have been over a hundred years old but had an exceptionally trustworthy recollection of tribal lore to the end, stated that in his time the Cheyenne had horses but very few guns.¹ Catlin recorded a hundred years ago that the scalping knives and axes known as tomahawks, having metal blades, were of civilized manufacture made expressly for tribal use, and were imported in tens of thousands to be sold at an enormous price.²

Revenge in a blood feud with the taking of an enemy's scalp was one reason for going on the war-path. A more common motive was for remounts. The Plains Indian horsemen never became horse-breeders. Either they stole horses or they captured the wild descendants of the animals brought from overseas.

Their weapons were the bow and arrow, and in some tribes a lance described by Catlin in the eighteen-thirties

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 47, 48.

² *The North American Indians*, Vol. I. p. 265.

as twelve or fourteen feet in length with a polished steel blade. The same observer says that a hundred arrows were carried in their quivers, and credits the Mandans with a discharge of fifteen to twenty a minute when mounted. For defence they had round arrow-proof shields of raw-hide made from the skin of a bison's neck.

There were rites to be performed before "the pipe was carried to war." Offerings of eagles' tail feathers, blankets or cloth were offered to the medicine arrows in the arrow-lodge, the pipe was smoked by the volunteer members of the party, who might also fast for several days, or go with a priest to the sweat-lodge to pray. These aboriginal equivalents to a Turkish bath are bound up with tribal religion and will be referred to again.

During an expedition various taboos were enforced, such as the prohibition that the leader could not skin or cut up any animal that had been killed.¹

In intertribal warfare, when a whole tribe broke camp and took the field *en masse*, the medicine arrows and the sacred hat went with them into battle. A similar custom is seen in the Indo-Aryan custom of carrying before their armies an effigy of Indra, a practice that had its counterpart in Europe when the consecrated colours of a regiment were taken into action.

Tactics hardly ever rose to pitched battles. Cunning and the element of surprise took their place. A raiding party, out to cut loose the enemy's horses and drive them off, only fought if they were discovered in the act, or pursued. The work of taking the horses was usually done

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. p. 14.

in pairs. This operation was, of course, carried out on foot. An enemy pursuing the raiders would be lured into an ambush by a handful of well-mounted men.

A man might even seek adventure alone. A popular Pawnee war-song, said to have been composed by a warrior out on the war-path by himself, has been translated:

O great expanse of the blue sky; see me roaming here.
I trust in you, protect me!
Again on the war-path, lonely.¹

In their fighting what is known as the "coup" played the most prominent part, and many prayers were said in the arrow-lodge by a young warrior intent on making his first achievement. A coup was to touch an enemy, like the first spear in pig-sticking, and the reward of his weapons and his horse reminds one of the customs of the tourney and feudal warfare. A woman might paint on her left arm a red stripe for any coup her husband had counted. A youth became a man by killing his enemy and by counting a coup. A scalp was taken merely as a trophy, and it meant one foe the less. The coup was the important matter to the Plains Indians, although the man so touched might escape altogether.²

Though the North American Indian faith and worship were closely bound up with their tribal dances, one of the old-time scalp dances—the triumph after a successful expedition—can most fitly end this description of their form of warfare.

There would be a scalp dance if the party came back

¹ *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), p. 151.

² *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 29, etc.

with their faces blackened to show that all had returned safely, or that the dead had counted a coup before they fell.

The scalp dance took place in the evening in the centre of the village, where a bonfire was lighted. The whole assembly came with their faces and the upper part of their bodies painted black or red. The dance, which was accompanied by singers and drummers, began when a line of young women danced out into the middle of a line of youths, came round and took their partners' arm in what was called "the sweethearts' dance." When this was over, they formed up again in lines facing each other.

In the next figure the "half-men half-women" took the floor. These were men belonging to one particular group of the tribe who had assumed women's ways and acted as match-makers between young men and girls. They danced in front of the drummers, waving poles on which scalps were tied; old men and women also with scalp-poles danced opposite to them. Some of these old people, dressed like the enemies who had been killed, acted as clowns.

A "match-making dance" of youths, girls and the match-makers, was followed by another performance with the scalps, the men and women of the village dancing in a ring around the fire.

Towards morning the gathering came to an end, with the whole community stooping and prancing like galloping bulls and singing as the circle swung round.¹

¹ From the account given by the half-breed George Bent (1843-1918), *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 39-44.

CHAPTER SEVEN

In North America

THERE were at the time of the Spanish invasion at least two established forms of organized government in North America. One of these was the Aztec Confederation of autonomous Mexican tribes,¹ the other was the Iroquois Confederacy.

On what is now the southern borderland of the United States were the Pueblos, a number of independent village groups and separate villages. North of this zone lived the less settled Apache, Ute and Navajo, with their own tribal organizations. In the centre of the country the Pawnee group held together in a bond of mutual interests. Further west tribal alliances were more informal. Along the eastern side of the continent from the present Gulf States up to Virginia there was close intertribal co-operation, which reached its highest expression among the Iroquois.

The impossibility of describing the political groups of North America in general terms may be gathered from the fact that, leaving out the Eskimo (whose only unit is the family), there were in earlier times fifty-five distinct linguistic stocks, and more than two thousand tribal designations.² There is consequently a variety of social systems ranging upwards from promiscuously formed bands.

¹ See *Ancient Society* (ed. 1877), pp. 186-214.

² *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), pp. 403-412, 159.

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

Bands were a most suitable form of community for a hunting tribe, and they were also to be found in the Salmon area. The nucleus consisted of the leader and his immediate relations, who were joined by any companionable outsiders who cared to share their fortunes. The number of groups in a tribe might vary, individual members would come and go, but the band stood as a distinct economic and social unit in the tribe.

The sense of tribal unity was kept alive by the gathering of the bands during the summer for the great bison hunts which then took place. During the winter the bands occupied their recognized hunting-grounds.

The bands were known by nicknames, some of which, such as the Blackfoot They Don't Laugh, Liars and Skunks, it can only be hoped did not describe the characters of their members. It was customary for people of a group to add its name to their own and look upon themselves as a band of brothers. The western prairie tribes, such as the Blackfoot, were not, it is thought, totemic,¹ and this figurative kinship tended to become actual by intermarriage, which was kept outside forbidden blood relationships. The men generally had only one wife, though a leader might perhaps have several. The main point was that the children belonged to the father's marriage group, in contrast to the normal though not invariable rule of totem tribes that the children belong to the clan of their mother.² Among the Shawnees, for instance, descent is now in the male line though there are traces of earlier matrilinear descent.

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 1-3 and footnotes.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

The leadership of the whole tribe might remain for some generations in the family at the head of some powerful band, but whoever dominated the tribe could only do so with the support and approval of the other chiefs of these groups.

In the Cheyenne tribe there was a council of forty-four elective chiefs. Four of these formed an inner council which was empowered to elect one of their number as head chief. This procedure ended in 1835. But the tribe still possess the forty-four "invitation sticks," which were kept with the sacred arrows and were sent round to convene a council. In all Cheyenne councils dealing with other tribes one member represented the alien people and argued their case for them.¹

The tribal organization of the Pawnee Indians was based on the village communities representing subdivisions of the tribe. Each village had its name, its shrine with the sacred objects, its priests in charge of ritual and ceremonies connected with these objects, its hereditary chiefs and its council of chiefs and leading men. The head chief settled disputes, and each chief had his personal herald to maintain the dignity of his position. Two forces held the tribe together—common faith and worship, and the tribal council of the chiefs of the different villages. War parties were organized by individuals and made up of volunteers, but the village chief was responsible for the defence of his village.²

¹ *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington, 1907), Part I. p. 253.

² *Ibid.*, Part II. p. 215.

The Creek Confederacy of Alabama and Georgia included five tribes originally—a sixth, the Natchez, being admitted after that tribe had been driven from their settlements on the lower Mississippi by the French in 1730. Until their removal to the Indian territory west of that river, a hundred years ago, the confederacy consisted of about fifty “towns,” ranging in size from about twenty to two hundred houses. The most interesting and remarkable feature of the Creek system was the division of its clans and towns into two classes, or “fires” as they described themselves, the Red who were “military” and the White who were “civil”; the insignia of these “fires” being respectively red and white poles.

A town had for its ruler a chief, elected for life from one particular totem clan in the community. The succession was matrilinear and subject to the suitability of the heir-apparent. The chief was theoretically the president of the council, and its spokesman; and while there were no constitutional safeguards, Swanton says that there is no record of the *miko* (town chief) taking important action without conferring with his council.

Bartram, who explored the country in 1774, has described the chief's duties: “He has the disposal of the corn and fruits”—farming was on a communal and not a family system—“and gives audience to ambassadors, deputies and strangers . . . receives presents, etc. He alone has the privilege of giving a public feast to the whole town, consisting of barbecued bear or fat bulls or steers, which he must kill himself, and this is called the king's feast. And when he intends to give this frolic, after a

successful hunt, he sends messengers to prepare the village; they display the king's standard in front and at one corner of his house, and hoist a flag in the public square, beat drums about the town, and the inhabitants dress and paint themselves, for there is dancing and frolicking all that night."¹

We now come to the social organization of the fishing peoples of the Pacific coast. The country in which they lived, riven by deep inlets like the Norwegian fjords, bounded on the east by high mountains and on the west by an ocean fringed with long strings of islands, made intercommunication very difficult. Even short journeys along the mainland were best made by water. Consequently the outlook of the isolated communities classified by language and customs as one "tribe" could not help being parochial. Tribal instinct did not exist, much less any system of government or ideas of statesmanship. Moreover even the village, which might reasonably have been expected to form a compact, self-governing society, might be divided by clan or family feuds.

The ruling power was an aristocracy of wealth, and the three estates were the nobles, the commoners and the slaves.

The unit was a "house," that is to say a group of families claiming descent from a common ancestor, which contained all three social grades and lived in a solid cedar-built dwelling, in some cases several hundred feet long by

¹ Details about the Creek Indians from *Forty-second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1928), by John R. Swanton, pp. 249, 250, 278-280.

fifty or sixty feet wide. Two or more houses formed a clan, and by migration and intermarriage, clans came to be distributed over several villages.

The nobles boasting descent from the mythical founder of the house were graded in rank from the head (and richest) chief, who was the ruler of the village. Each position carried with a title privileges which ranged from fishing rights and the use of a particular crest or design down to the exclusive performance of a certain dance, or song. The dignity of a title, in a society barricaded with tradition, etiquette and display, depended largely on the magnificence of the feasts given by previous holders. It was therefore possible for a comparative upstart, by accumulating wealth and buying the support of his kinsmen, to revive a dormant title and raise himself above his fellow-nobles.

Commoners were often the poor relations of noble kinsmen.

The slaves were generally prisoners of war, or the families and descendants of slaves who had intermarried. While they were as a rule well treated, they possessed no rights or prospects. Their owners could kill them. This indeed might happen during the funeral ceremonies of their masters, or when a house was being built a slave's body might be buried under the main post. They were also liable to be killed in the rites of those Kwakiutl and Tsimshian secret societies that were actually cannibal.¹

On the eastern side of the continent, in the Maize

¹ Account of tribes of British Columbia taken from *Indians of Canada*, pp. 93-95, 140-148, 338.

area, a fully organized and systematic government was created in the Iroquois Confederacy of the "Five Nations," the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga and the Seneca tribes, to which the Tuscarora were admitted some time between 1712 and 1722.¹ These tribes were related but unfriendly to each other, until the confederacy was founded by the traditional and almost mythical Da-gar-no-we-dah an Ondega and Hayonwanthah, the wise chief whom we know as Haiawatha.

According to native tradition the league may have come into being about the middle of the fifteenth century. It reached the height of its power about a hundred and fifty years later. Its dominion then extended over the greater part of the present states of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, with parts of Canada up to the north of Lake Ontario. The traditional home of the tribes was the lower valley of the St. Lawrence. But when the Iroquois were first discovered by the Dutch in 1609, New York had become the hereditary country of the Nations, "the centre of their power, and the seat of their council fires. Here amid the silence of the virgin forests were their villages, their fields of maize and tobacco, their fishing- and hunting-grounds, and the burial-places of their fathers. The Long House, to which they likened their confederacy, opened its eastern door upon the beautiful Hudson river and its western on the roar of Niagara."²

Lewis H. Morgan says of this system of government

¹ This account of the Iroquois is mainly taken from "Government Institutions of the Iroquois," L. H. Morgan, *Researches of the New York State Archaeological Association* (Rochester, N.Y., 1928).

² *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. p. 5.

that "it exhibited a stronger and higher nationality of character than any other Indian race, a wider range of projects, more stability of purpose and more wisdom in legislation."

The Iroquois were ruthless in their methods, as the extermination of the Huron confederate tribes in 1649 bears witness, when the Jesuit Fathers, who had worked among them for thirty-five years with a devotion and sacrifice almost unparalleled in the history of the continent, were martyred. But of the political power of the confederacy there is no doubt. In the opinion of Lewis H. Morgan the Iroquois alliance with the English forms the chief fact in American history down to 1763. The whirligig of time has brought its revenges and "the Long House of the Iroquois has fallen; but not from the enemy against whom it was erected."

That enemy was found in their neighbours after the Iroquois came to New York. It was to fight for their own survival that the confederacy originally was formed. It was cemented by a common language and the brotherhood of totemism; it was kept alive by the statecraft which had inspired its carefully balanced constitution.

IROQUOIS CONSTITUTION.—There was no recognized official head, either hereditary or elective. Authority lay in the great central council, an oligarchy above the separate oligarchies of the tribes, each of which was independent in matters of local self-government. The supreme council consisted of forty-eight permanent seats distributed among the five, and later the six tribes. Two other seats were

held once only by the two traditional founders and for ever after remained vacant.

The sachems (chiefs) who held these seats were drawn from the totem clans of which the confederacy was composed. When the league was formed there appear to have been only three clans, the Bear, the Wolf and the Turtle (tortoise) which were found in each of the tribes. The Iroquois were accustomed to absorb into the tribe prisoners of war who were not sacrificed. These were adopted into families, given Iroquoian wives and taken into full citizenship in a society that knew no class distinctions other than the matrilineal qualifications for a sachemship.¹ The additional clans which appeared later were possibly formed by this intermarriage with captives,² a form of expansion which long ago had added a fourth to the three classes into which the Aryan conquerors of India were originally divided, before the system began to multiply its castes.

The sachems who held these seats were equal in rank, authority and privilege. The office was hereditary under certain safeguards and laws of descent. Descent being through the female line among the Iroquois the sachemship was inherited not by the sachem's son but by his brother, or the son of a sister, a law which classed the father and his children in different clans. Infancy did not debar an heir, in whose interests a guardian might be appointed until the boy reached years of discretion. But there was no rule of primogeniture apparently. Any brother, or sister's son,

¹ *Indians of Canada*, p. 139.

² *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 7-9.

might succeed, but he had to be elected or "raised up" to the office from among the eligible kinsmen by the council of all the other sachems. The rule of heredity was absolute, subject to election, and once a sachemship had been assigned to a particular totem clan that clan held a council seat unless and until the clan became extinct. A tribal council could depose an unworthy representative and nominate a kinsman to fill his place.

Each sachem had a military adviser who was subject to these rules and was "raised up" and invested with his title in the same way. In war the sachem was subordinate to the war chief. The qualification for supreme military command was individual ability, and it was customary to appoint two commanders with equal powers. The sachems of the confederacy were also sachems in their own tribe, and they with the tribal chief formed the council of each tribe.

Councils were held round the central council fire at Onondaga, and it was here that foreign envoys were received. The supreme council had not the power to convene itself, and had to be assembled at the instance of one of the tribal councils. It had no visible existence when it was not in session.

The central council was open to the orators of the people during the discussion of public business, but the council alone could give a decision. No sachem could express an opinion without previously agreeing with the sachems of his group as to what that opinion should be. He was not there to represent himself. There was no voting. A decision had to be unanimous, and it may be

remarked that there was no word for "majority" in the language. If there were a single dissentient the motion had to be dropped and the council fire was "raked up."

Such was the government of the Iroquois Confederacy, a people who could neither read nor write, and supported themselves entirely by fishing, hunting and farming throughout a history of almost incessant warfare. All that remains of their former greatness, save a lasting memory, is the wampum circle with its fifty pendant strings of short "pipe-stem" beads, one for each sachem, that was entrusted to the Mohawk nation when the confederacy was founded, and is now in alien hands.

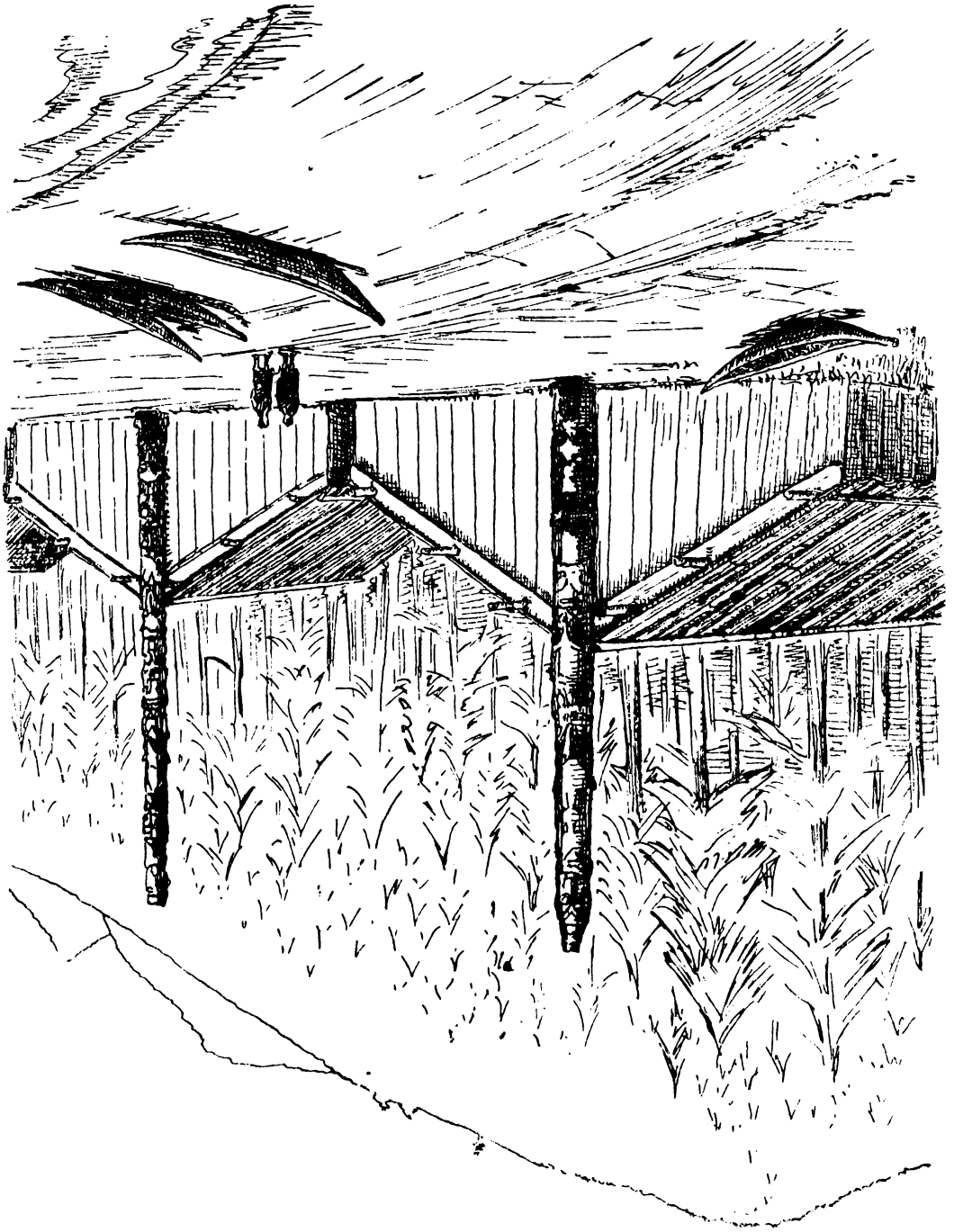
For the end of Redskin independence was inevitable in the expansion of civilized dominion. The policy proclaimed in 1763 has led peaceably to the present situation in Canada, that "the vestiges of the tribes that remain are of stronger stock as the years go by."¹ But in the United States, to "concentration" into reservations is attributed most of the later Indian wars.²

To sum up the plan of government of the American aborigines. It commenced with the clan, a body of blood relations having a common name, and ended with the confederacy, the latter being the highest point to which their governmental institutions attained. It gave for the organic series: first the clan; second the phratry, which Sir James Frazer defines as an exogamous division intermediate between the tribe and the clan, and in many cases

¹ *Annual Report, Dept. Indian Affairs, 1926-1927* (Ottawa, 1927), pp. 7-19.

² *Massacres of the Mountains*, J. P. Dunn (London, ed. 1886), p. 19.

13. Pacific Coast Township



originally a totem clan which has undergone subdivision; third the tribe, an assembly of clans all speaking the same dialect; and fourth a confederacy of tribes speaking dialects of the same stock language.¹

In practice this presented, between the shores of the Pacific and the Atlantic, many forms of society. They ranged from the Athabaskan Ten'a of Alaska, whose democracy envisaged neither master nor guide, up to the League of the Iroquois whose ultimate aim it was, by federation of all the tribes, to end war altogether and bring in a reign of universal peace.

LAW AND ORDER.—To members of a modern civilized nation, in which offences are multiplied by Acts and Regulations to an extent which its citizens find it difficult to comprehend, a primitive people does not appear to have a criminal, let alone a civil code at all. They know none of the complications of life which make a great deal of our legislation reasonable and necessary. At the same time, those who have lived among secluded races could not fail to notice that crime as we understand it hardly exists. In primitive community life nothing can be hidden, everything is open, and public opinion is in itself a law which few are reckless enough to defy.

Among the primitive peoples of North America the Iroquois system of social control was the most formal. Witches, for example, could be tried before the council, which was a regularly constituted body. The council could

¹ See *Ancient Society*, p. 66; and *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. I. pp. 55, 56.

also intervene to mediate in cases of murder when the criminal was subject to the law of immediate revenge by the injured family, unless a peace token was offered. The course of justice after murder, in other words revenge in satisfaction—to be followed by retaliation—was liable to create a blood-feud.

On the North Pacific coast gifts of property or slaves were the usual compensation to an injured party without any definite judicial procedure. When it was a case of a life for a life, the act of vengeance closed the incident.

Down south it seems that personal action and a life for a life were the rule, but elsewhere more formal procedure was customary. The Algonkin-speaking tribes of the Ohio and St. Lawrence invoked the responsibility the individual owed to the community. Here we find a formal procedure which was in effect a trial conducted by the chief and the shaman, who is the medicine-man as distinct from the priest. In cases of murder the friends and relatives of the deceased would be persuaded if possible to accept compensation. If they refused to listen the prisoner was executed.¹

How the hunting tribes maintained law and order is told by Grinnell in *The Cheyenne Indians*.²

He begins by saying that theft was unknown. A horse might be borrowed so frequently as to cause a quarrel, when the aggrieved owner dealt summarily with the offender. In a serious quarrel between prominent members of the tribe, the disputants would be summoned before the

¹ *The American Indian*, pp. 175-183.

² Vol. I. pp. 349-358.

council, who decided the case and made an award. If any person was accidentally killed the council would decide what compensation was due to the relatives.

Grinnell states that infringement of the rights of others was unusual, and murder exceedingly rare. Speaking generally, conformity to the rules of conduct established by custom and enforced by the chiefs was insisted on and infractions were severely punished. Offenders would be beaten, or their property destroyed, their lodge-poles broken, or their horses killed.

There was no such thing as a legal death penalty. If a murderer escaped the vengeance of his victim's relatives by flight, the chief would try to arrange for the payment of compensation by the offender's family to settle the case, but the slayer could never regain his standing in the tribe. If he returned to his own community he might not eat in the same lodge as other people, nor use their cups or dishes. No one would smoke with him, no woman would consent to live with him.

Before leaving the subject of judicial procedure something should be said about the forms of oath taken in North America. Wissler instances a Blackfoot woman facing the sun in the presence of a tribal priest and saying: "May I never set my foot into another snow if . . ."; and a Dakota Indian, challenged as to his war record, touching a knife-point held by a referee and making a similar pledge.¹ The pipe is used among the prairie tribes as a supreme test of truth amounting to an ordeal. The accused person is offered the sacred pipe, and if he accepts

¹ *The American Indian*, p. 182.

and smokes it, he is at once declared innocent. No Indian would dare to smoke it if he were guilty.¹

PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE.—The gradual increase in the personal possessions of primitive people may be traced in the opening chapters of this book. Property grew in amount and became of greater value when wandering groups began to settle. Unfortunately, with the accumulation of this world's goods which became appreciable with civilization there crept in with greater and greater insistence that dominating force the greed of gain.

In primitive society much of what we call property, such as land, does not belong to the individual but to the community, or group of kinspeople as a whole. If they build tenement houses the ownership is shared by its occupants. Personal possessions are relatively few and some of these may be allotted to their dead owner at his funeral.

On the other hand, primitive people may have an invisible asset that falls to the heir, in the form of the ownership of rituals for ceremonies, ceremonial songs, the priesthood under certain safeguards, the chieftainship, or various arts and trades. In Great Britain there still exists a parallel among the King's subjects in such untaxable forms as a seat in the House of Lords and certain rights and privileges at the coronation of the Sovereign. But, unlike the honours enjoyed at Westminster, some of the hereditary rights belonging to social groups in the north-

¹ J. Mooney in *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1896), Part II. p. 1063.

western tribes of Canada might apparently be sold or conveyed at will.¹

The simplest division of property on the death of its owner was to be found in the hunting tribes. Among the Cheyenne all his possessions not placed beside his dead body were given away to people who were not his relations, and this included his lodge, as soon as the corpse was taken to its resting-place on a platform or underground. If a man left a widow and a growing family they went to some close relation, and in course of time by gifts a new home was made for them. The widow often married again.²

In contrast to what may fairly be described as disinheritance the custom of the Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands and part of the northern coast of British Columbia may be given as an example. Sir James Frazer says of these people: "Physically and mentally the Haidas are reputed the finest Indians of the north-west coast. Unfortunately intercourse with the whites has deeply demoralized this gifted race and they are now wasted by vice and disease."³ Wealth, which came to consist of blankets in their currency and are the usual units of value in the north-west, determined political power. Blankets would be given away at a ceremonial feast known as a potlach (from the Nootka *patshatl*, a gift) by an ambitious man, when failure of heirs made election to a chieftainship necessary. But no chief mourner would ever have dreamt

¹ *The American Indian*, p. 185 ; and *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 302, 303.

² *The Cheyenne Indians*, Grinnell, Vol. II. pp. 162, 163.

³ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. p. 280.

of distributing all the family possessions on the death of the head of a house.

In the Haida tribe the succession to property, like the normal succession to chieftainship, runs through the female line under a system of exogamy. The Raven and Eagle groups, only, appear to be totemic.¹ The brother of the deceased inherits his property. Should there be no brother it falls to a nephew, or the sister, or, failing all these, the mother. Occasionally some distant male relative may be adopted as a new son by the mother, and be made heir to the property. The wife may in some cases get a small share. As soon as the body has been enclosed in the coffin-box, and not before, the brother or other heir takes possession. When it can be amicably arranged, he also inherits the wife of the dead man, but should he be already married, the nephew or other relative on whom the succession would next devolve is supposed to marry the relict. Should there be no relative to marry her, she may be married again to some other man.² Children take their family name and their jealously guarded crests, commemorating events in the early history of the family, from their mother.³

Speaking generally of the customs in the different social areas, inheritance of personal property and privileges are recognized in both male and female descent. In the matter of privileges, the usual precautions to ensure that a competent man filled a hereditary position is illustrated by the practice of the Iroquois which has already been described.

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. p. 281.

² *Ibid.*, p. 305.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 283 *et seq.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

In North America

IN the last three chapters an attempt has been made to describe the material side of life in aboriginal North America. The widely distributed inhabitants of this vast country had to adapt themselves to extremely varied conditions from north to south, from east to west. The consequent differences in their solutions of the problem of existence make it hard to realize their common origin far back in the Stone Ages. Europe owed its prehistoric progress to successive waves of migration from the East. The Americas in a huge water-tight compartment had to work out their own development.

In this isolation we find, to turn to South America, that copper-welding, cutting tools from an alloy of gold, silver and copper, the enema syringe, elastic rings and hollow rubber balls, with other minor inventions—not to speak of the recognized values of their own quinine and potatoes—were new to the European discoverers of the continent.

The close resemblance between certain objects found both in America and across the Pacific are in their way as interesting as the purely American characteristics. There are, however, no assured grounds for the theory that certain things came from New Zealand because they are similar, any more than that the irrigation systems on the

Peruvian coast and in south-west North America came from Oceania. These and other parallels might fairly be taken as showing how much the whole human race has in common when tackling the problems of life.

A belief in a Supreme Being is so world-wide, whether it be seen in the "Central Reality" of philosophic Hinduism or in the High God of a savage Pygmy tribe, that its occurrence in America is only to be expected.

What does seem remarkable is the development of totemism to furnish yet another example of that social and semi-religious system which is found as widespread as India and Samoa, Africa and Australia.

The oldest existing religion is the belief in a Supreme Being of perfect goodness and absolute power, who is immortal and the creator of all things. In its simplest form this—the basis of religion—is to be found among the most remote and archaic peoples. In northern Asia it is the belief of the Samoyeds and the Ainu, in Africa it is held by the secluded Negrillo peoples and in Australia by the oldest of its aboriginal tribes. It is held in North America, to give one example, by the most primitive Algonkins, and in South America by the Tierra del Fuegians.

Referring strictly to North America, far more comprehensive beliefs than this, with a correspondingly elaborate ritual, are to be found, and in addition to the priest there is the *shaman* with his powers of healing and prophecy. We see a strong faith in magic as well as religion. The aboriginal beliefs in general varied from the monotheism of the plains to practical polytheism under the influence of their conception of the forces of nature

and some mysterious power behind it. Beyond their efforts to obtain the blessings of the omnipotent Being, the American Indians with the exception of one group do not seem to have given thought to the ethical problem of good and evil. But the mythology of the Iroquois describes the battle between these two powers and the victory of the spirit of good, who could not, however, undo the mischief of the spirits of evil.

Father C. L'Allemant, S.J., Superior of the Mission of the Canadas, writing from Quebec early in the seventeenth century, came to the conclusion that the Indians "believe that there is One who made all, but they do not render him homage." On the other hand, Father P. Le Jeune, who was also a missionary of the Society, recorded in 1636 that the Hurons "have recourse to the sky in almost all their necessities, and respect the great bodies in it above all creatures. Their prayer ran: 'O Sky, here is what I offer thee in sacrifice; have pity on me; assist me.'"¹

Rather more than two centuries later we come to the observations of the Belgian, Father De Smet, S.J.,² who worked for many years among the Indians, and of whom it is recorded that "in 1868 it was alone through his great influence that the hostile Sioux, who had declared war to the death with the white race and were spreading terror over the upper Missouri and Yellow Stone districts," were induced to enter into a treaty with the United States Government. He was in fact in North America what

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. X. pp. 159, 161.

² *Life, Letters and Travels of Father De Smet* (New York, 1905), 4 vols. Quotations from Vol. III. pp. 939, 1064.

Dr. Theodore Pennell of the Afghan Medical Mission became a quarter of a century later across the North-West Frontier of India, a power for good through the respect and trust which he inspired.

Father De Smet tells us: "The sun is honoured and worshipped by the greater number of the Indian tribes as the author of light and heat. The Assiniboins consider it likewise to be the favourite residence of the Master of Life. They evidence a great respect and veneration for the sun but rarely address it [in prayer]." As regards the Plains Indians of the upper Missouri, he wrote: "All these Indians believe in the existence of a Great Spirit, the Creator of all things, and this appears to be an inherent, original and inborn idea. They do not, however, embody it; it is a spirit. The name of this spirit is Wakan Tankah, or Great Medicine. The word 'medicine' in this case has no reference to the use of drugs, but means all that is incomprehensible, supernatural, all-powerful; everything that cannot be explained by ordinary means, or that is above their comprehension."

While the Cheyenne believe in mysterious powers called Maiyun, who control the affairs of men and whose favour they could win by personal sacrifice and torture, they also believe in a Supreme Being, Heammawihio, the Wise One and Creator, who lives up above. He, first of all spirits, was addressed in prayer, when man looked upwards and said, "I am poor and in need. Help me." To him also the first smoke was offered. Next to the creator comes the spirit of earth, who dwells underground, and is called the owner of it. As the Cheyenne say, "The great power

put the earth here and must have put us on it. Without the earth nothing could live. There could be no animals or plants. The Father of Life taught us this." So the spirit of earth, who is equally well-disposed and friendly, is prayed to and offered the smoke.¹

This brings us to the outstanding feature of the North American Indian religion, the universal belief that by prayer, ceremonial purification and fasting, the suppliant (particularly at the age of adolescence) could gain through a vision a supernatural protector, or more than natural powers.

Some of the American Indian prayers are most striking, and it would be difficult to find an invocation of a primitive race more beautiful than the Navajo Night Chant. The following lines are taken from one of the English translations.

In Tse 'gihi
 In the house made of the dawn,
 In the house of the evening twilight,
 In the house of the dark cloud,
 In the house of the he-rain,
 In the house of the dark mist,
 In the house of the she-rain,
 In the house of the pollen,
 In the house of the grasshoppers,
 Where the dark mist curtains the doorway
 The path to which is on the rainbow,
 Where the zig-zag lightning stands high on top,
 Where the he-rain stands high on top;
 O Male Divinity,
 With your moccasins of dark cloud, come to us.²

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 88, 89.

² *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. VI. p. 143, quoted in *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 27 (1925), p. 50.

Supplication in a different form was noticed as early as 1540 when the Pueblo village of Acoma was visited, and the people found unfriendly—as today they are aloof on the natural pedestal upon which they still live. “At a spring which was in the plain near Acuco they had a cross two palms high and as thick as a finger, made of wood with a square twig for its cross-piece and many little sticks decorated with feathers around it, and numerous withered flowers.”¹ The European missionaries were, of course, mistaken in seeing traces of Christianity in the world-wide emblem of a cross. The site of the altar and the feathers they noticed may well have been the visible signs of a rain-making ceremony, of prayers and magic like that of their Zuni neighbours to the west.²

But there was one form of sacrifice over which no such mistake could have been made. To ensure a good harvest of maize the Pawnee tribe used to strengthen their yearly cycle of ceremonies by human sacrifice. This horrible rite is centred on the idea that one should die so that the rest might live, which the Arab conquerors stamped out in Egypt, and which did not end among the primitive tribes of Orissa until 1854, when the persistent efforts of the Government of India succeeded in substituting animals for the human sacrifices offered to increase the fertility of the fields.

It is known that the Cheyenne believed to a limited extent in the supernatural powers of certain animals for

¹ *Forty-seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology* (1929-1930), p. 24.

² For the rites of the Zuni Frog clan and Rain Priests see *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 232-236.

good or evil. It was held by these hunters that if they prayed to the bison, through the skull at the entrance to the Sweat Lodge, that the herds would give easy hunting. Sometimes a bull-bison would talk to them in a language few could understand.

The mule-deer could be helpful, but on the other hand it might shoot the arrows of disease at a man. The power of the antelope was for the good of men and it was lucky to dream of one. In the olden times beavers were revered to some extent and not often killed, and no Cheyenne woman would handle a beaver skin. Respect was shown, too, for wolves and coyotes. So much so that if a wolf or a coyote were killed by a member of a war party, any man who understood the wolf language would turn and go home.

All birds of prey possessed power in whatever had to do with fighting. Consequently their feathers were tied to shields; a war-bonnet of grey-eagle feathers would keep a man from being hit by an arrow or bullets; and the stuffed skin of a raven tied to a warrior's scalp-lock would talk to him and warn him of danger.

They believed, too, that they could obtain certain attributes from the animal world. The feathers of little



14. *Cheyenne Dream Shield*(after Grinnell)

prairie owls enabled their wearer to see in the dark and move silently at night, and some men painted a dragon-fly on their bodies to make them quick and active in a fight.¹

There was the same idea in the amulets and charms which members of these hunting tribes were accustomed to wear from childhood. To ensure a long life a man would wear a stone arrow-head in his hair, or about his neck, usually with a little deerskin bundle attached, in which there would be some medicine, generally a part of some plant. The custom of wearing a stone arrow-head was founded on a general belief in the lasting character of stone; and of course amulets were taken into battle.

The round shield of toughened bull hide was an extremely important part of a warrior's equipment, and in course of time the protection of specified shields was believed to be miraculous. These were the Indian dream shields. They could give immunity not only in the case of a mortal enemy, but against the elements, for there were shields sacred to thunder and lightning. Other shields had the power to give the attributes of certain animals and birds to those who followed the prescribed ceremonies.

The Cheyenne dream shields were of two kinds, the group shields of different associations and the less effective personal shields, which were made and painted in accordance with a man's own dream. There were taboos and regulations attached to miraculous shields which the owners had to keep. One was the rule against eating the heart of any

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 103-111, give a number of other instances.

animal, a taboo that, it is stated, was removed by eating some of the dry powdered heart of an enemy.¹

The ceremonial eating of a foeman's heart, boiled sometimes with sacred corn, is attributed to a certain number of tribes. But apart from this, and the cannibal societies of the Pacific coast, cannibalism was not a feature in North America. It is, however, recorded that on several occasions the Mohawk cruelly sacrificed a prisoner to their war-god Aireskoi and cut up the body to be eaten in their villages, although cannibalism was strictly prohibited by the laws of the Iroquois Confederacy.²

Apart from the taboos regarding killing and eating in a totemic tribe, there were an extraordinary number of taboos affecting every phase of social life throughout the continent, prohibitions which were observed for fear of giving offence to the supernatural world.

Grinnell gives some of the taboos observed by the Cheyenne Indians. It was, for instance, unlucky when on the war-path to point at a wolf with a knife, which is thought to be on account of the supernatural power of the wolf and its generally friendly character.

The prohibitions for women in respect to birds are interesting as a comparison with the taboos referred to later which were noticed on the Tibetan border. The Cheyenne women feared to touch a golden speckle-tailed eagle, believing that if they did so patches of paler colour would appear on their own hands and body. They thought, too, that to touch a grey eagle turned them grey. Some

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 195, 199, 200.

² *Indians of Canada*, p. 305.

women, perhaps all Cheyenne women, might not burn owl feathers or they would become deaf. To cure them, they would hear again if the doctors took owl feathers from their ears.

In the next stage of general economic progress, which was made in the eastern Maize area, on the north-west coast and in the south, totemism is found, and it was also adopted by certain tribes in the Bison area. Beyond its social side this system embodied Nature worship and personal guardian spirits. But that intimate and life-long bond established in dreams between the man (and to a lesser degree the woman) and the *manitou* did not necessarily detract from the realization of the supremacy of the Great Spirit.¹ The Pawnee Tirawa, to take a definite example, is intangible, omnipotent and kindly, and he pervades the universe. "Nothing is undertaken without a prayer to the Father."²

On the material side totemism established under the principles of exogamy its own rules of impediments to marriage, and it quickened the artistic sense of its followers to reach its highest achievement in the huge carved and painted totem-poles of the Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands. On the religious side all that it could mean to the aborigines of North America is not so obvious. There are, in fact, regrettable gaps in the information that has been gathered which even the enlightened efforts of the United States Government cannot now recall. But we

¹ See *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 373, 374, 379, 382, 383.

² *Journal of American Folklore* (Lancaster and New York), Vol. VI. p. 113.

have the evidence of native customs and beliefs given by such men as J. N. B. Hewitt, an Iroquois; the Rev. William Jones, a Sauk-Fox Algonkin; the Rev. Peter Jones, an Ojibway; George Bent, the son of Colonel William Bent and Owl Woman, who was a Cheyenne; and the well-known ethnologist, Henry Schoolcraft, whose wife was of Irish-Ojibway descent, in addition to outside authorities.

The religious importance of totemism in North America lies in the fact that this was the gateway through which, in dreams and in visions, its followers entered the supernatural world.

The North American Indian believed that every man and every animal had a soul. The followers of totemism, who equally attributed life and intelligence to the animate and inanimate world, believed that a spirit active in their interests resided in their totems, that is to say, in the hereditary clan totems and in the personal totems acquired by the individual. These two classes of totem appear to have had at least this much in common—that it was customary, though not the invariable rule, that if the totem were an animal, injury to it was avoided and it was not killed and eaten. If the totem were part of an animal, that part only could not be eaten.¹ The personal totem strongly influenced a person's character. The antelope spirit, for instance, was held to make a man a genuine pacifist. Besides these spirits there were also in the realm of Nature-spirits a number of evil *manitous*, who could appear as giants and grotesque monsters.

The way in which an Algonkin obtained his personal

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 52, 370, 449-451, etc.

guardian is quoted by Sir James Frazer from Francis Parkman's *The Jesuits in North America*. "At the age of fourteen or fifteen, the Indian boy blackens his face, retires to some solitary place, and remains for days without food. Superstitious expectancy and the exhaustion of abstinence rarely fail of their results. His sleep is haunted by visions, and the form which first or most often appears is that of his guardian *manitou*—a beast, a bird, a fish, a serpent, or some other object, animate or inanimate. An eagle or a bear is the vision of a destined warrior; a wolf of a successful hunter; while a serpent foreshadows the future medicine-man, or according to others, portends disaster. The young Indian thenceforth wears about his person the object revealed in his dream, or some portion of it—as a bone, a feather, a snakeskin, or a tuft of hair. This, in the modern language of the forest and prairie, is known as his 'medicine.' The Indian yields to it a sort of worship, propitiates it with offerings of tobacco, thanks it in prosperity, and upbraids it in disaster. If his medicine fails to bring the desired success, he will sometimes discard it and adopt another. The superstition now becomes mere fetish-worship, since the Indian regards the mysterious object which he carries about with him rather as an embodiment than as a representative of a supernatural power."¹

North America might well be called the home of Secret Societies, but before referring to these associations of men, or of women, a word should be said about the form of purification prescribed for the candidate. This

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 373, 374.

IN NORTH AMERICA

was the vapour-bath, and what is known as the Sweat Lodge was a feature of every village (Eskimo settlements excepted) in what are now Canada and the United States, whether the community were totemic or not. This lodge is closely made, to keep in the steam, and it is filled with vapour by throwing water on heated stones.

The inner meaning of the vapour-bath as explained by



15. *Sweat Lodge* (after Catlin)

Schoolcraft refers to initiation in the Ojibway Society of the Shamans—the Grand Medicine Society—which had its equivalent in other tribes. After the candidate had been taught by his preceptor the songs and incantations he would have to know and the magical or medicinal uses of herbs, plants and trees, he purified himself in the Sweat Lodge for four days before his initiation. The rules

mentioned here apply equally to women joining the Society.

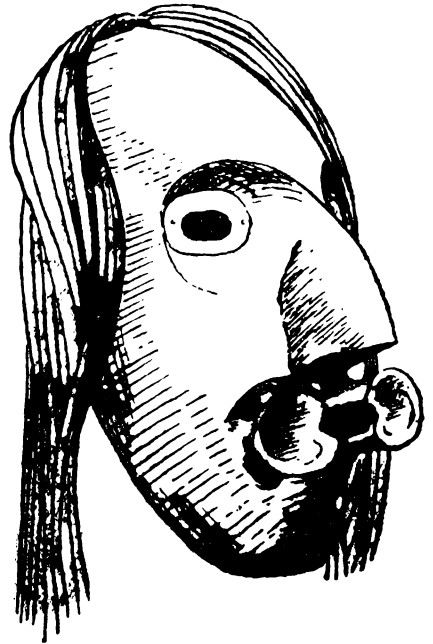
In Schoolcraft's words: "In all ceremonies, prophetic or medico-magical, great reliance is placed on the vapor-bath. . . . It is entered with sacred feelings, and is deemed a great means of purification. Secret arts are here often disclosed between *Medais* (shamans) of high power, which could not be imparted in other places, or positions, believed to be less subject to the influence of sanctifying power. . . . Vapor baths are not a matter of luxury or sensuality among the Indians of North America; their use belongs to the Medicine rite. They are prohibited to the vulgar, and not authorised, and are used in consecrated cases, and according to prescribed forms, which must not be departed from."¹

The initiation ceremonies of the Grand Medicine Society were performed publicly in a large, partly roofed enclosure of poles and branches, but only the initiated could understand the ritual. Put shortly, the priests held up their medicine bags (which contained with their medicine the symbol of the Society, a sacred white shell) and pretended to shoot the candidate, who fell apparently dead. He was brought back to life by the touch of the medicine bags. This mimic death and return to life was the essential part of the ceremony which centred upon the part played by the sacred white shell. Sir James Frazer in his summary says that when the candidate is apparently lifeless one of these shells falls from his mouth. Then, when he begins to show signs of life, the head priest puts

¹ Quoted (from *Indian Tribes of the United States*, v. (Philadelphia, 1856), pp. 423 *et seq.*) on p. 486 of *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III.

the shell back again and once more the initiate becomes as if dead. When he is finally restored, he aims his new medicine bag, which contains his own sacred shell, at everyone in the lodge in turn, and they too fall seemingly lifeless, to be restored in a similar way.¹

The large number of societies among totem and non-totem tribes range upwards from the informality of the organized bands of small boys well named Mosquitoes to the Soldier Societies of the plains, warriors who policed the camps and had the casting vote for peace or war, and to the grim Cannibal Societies of the Kwakiutl of north-western America. One group of societies, found only in the Bison area—among the Blackfeet in the north, the Gros Ventre, the Mandans and the more southerly Hidatsa—is of special interest for its distinctive idea of grading its members by age.²



16. *Iroquois Mask of reddened wood with Scalp*

The most spectacular ceremonies of the societies were their dances, which were mystery plays telling how the patron spirit had been acquired.

An early description of a dance is recorded by the Prince of Wied, who saw one given by request in 1833. It took place on a bright moonlight night.

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 487, 488.

² *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), p. 382.

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

“About twenty Omahas joined in it; the principal dancer, a tall man, wore on his head an immense feather cap, like those of the Camacans of Brazil, but larger and of less elaborate workmanship, composed of long tail and wing feathers of owls and birds of prey; in his hand he held his bow and arrows. The upper part of his body was covered only with a whitish skin, which fell over the right shoulder and breast, and was adorned with bunches of feathers; his arms, face and the uncovered parts of his body were painted with white stripes and spots. His trousers were marked with dark cross stripes, and trimmed at the ankles with a great quantity of fringe. He also wore an apron. He had a savage and martial appearance, to which his athletic figure greatly contributed. Another man, who was younger, of a very muscular frame—the upper part of whose body was naked but painted white—had in his hand a war club, striped with white, ornamented at the handle with the skin of a polecat. He wore on his head a feather cap, like that already described. These two men, and several youths and boys, formed a line, opposite to which other Indians sat down in a row; in the middle of which row the drum was beat in quick time. Several men beat time with war clubs hung with bells; and the whole company (most of whom were painted white) sang ‘Hi! Hi! Hi!’ or ‘Hey! Hey! Hey!’ etc., sometimes shouting aloud.

“The manner of the dance was thus: bending their bodies forward, they leaped up with both feet at once, not rising high from the ground, and stamped loudly, while the drum beat in quick time, and their arms were rattled

and occasionally lifted up into the air. Thus they leaped opposite to each other with great exertion, for about an hour.”¹

The ritual connected with the Sun Dance of the Plains Indians throws a light upon the religious beliefs and practices of those hunting people. Its performance almost coincided with the summer bison hunt when the whole tribe gathered together from their winter quarters and camped in a great circle, with the lodges of the different groups three or four deep. This was the occasion for religious ceremonies, when medicine bundles were opened and transferred, and when also purely social dances took place. The chief actors were men and women who had either made vows to gain requests that had been supernaturally granted, or those who wished to make them.

From beginning to end the ceremonies of the Sun Dance, which lasted for eight days, were packed with symbolism. When the camp circle was formed the “lone *tipi*” or “morning star” was pitched in the centre of the open space. This *tipi* represented the place in the mountains where the originator of the ceremony went in his distress and fasted until the rites were revealed to him. The altar, which was made by those taking part in the dance, might be a plain bison skull, or elaborately decorated with sticks and sand paintings. This was the spring of fertilization. The lodge itself represented the earth, the home of man. The wide camp circle served to represent the Corona Borealis, “the camp circle of the gods above,”

¹ *Travels in the Interior of North America*, pp. 131, 132.

and was a reminder of the veneration due to the cardinal points, the four corners of the sky.

The setting up of the central pole was an important ceremony. It was painted in bands of red and black and symbolized heaven and earth; before it was raised a bundle of brush, the hide of a newly killed bull-bison, cloth and other offerings were fastened to it. The fork high up on the pole represented the nest of the Thunder Bird, and the Cheyenne say that, in earlier times, from this was suspended alive an enemy captured in war.

In the meanwhile the whole camp would be kept busy with these preparations, and with killing bison and preparing the tongues for food.

The preliminary rites before the actual dance were held in the sacred *tipi*, where the maker of the vow and his—or her—associates were instructed by the priests. Here, too, the customary ornaments were got ready and the series of eight songs, which were the drama on which all the ritual depended, were rehearsed. None of the warriors taking part in the dance ate or drank during the ceremony, for both physically and mentally the entire observance was a tremendous test of endurance.

The dancers were painted and decked with sage or willow leaves for their public performance. The inward meaning of the ceremony was that those taking part collectively overcame an enemy, generally the sun, and by their "medicine" compelled the Thunder Bird to release the rain. The outward and visible form of the dance consisted of circling round the sacred pole staring at the sun, or looking at the offerings above their heads. As

regards the men, the dance culminated in the self-torture of having thrust into their breasts or back skewers attached by cords to a pole, and dancing and tearing against these bonds until the flesh gave way.¹ Grinnell states that the pole-swinging survived in some places until 1880.²

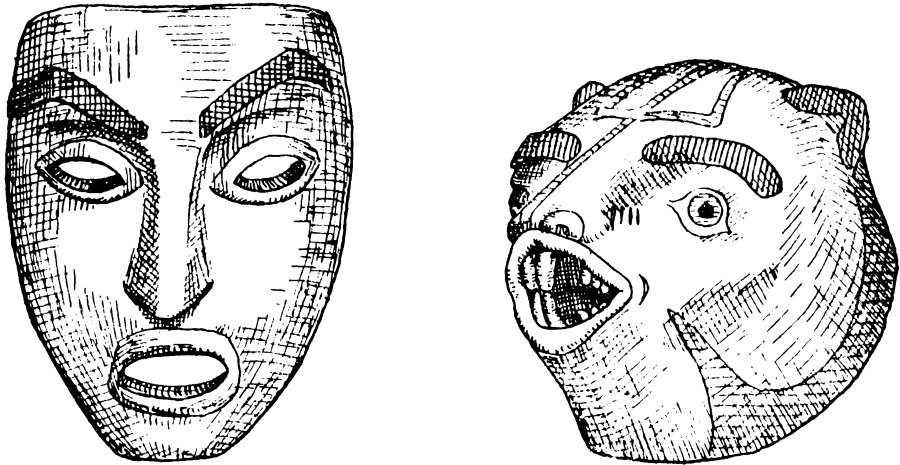
What we call drama, with the impersonation of characters and something in the way of stage setting, was only to be found on the Pacific coast and in those tribes of the interior who were influenced by those communities. The Indians spent months in rehearsal, special song-writers would be engaged and experienced craftsmen prepared the properties, which were afterwards secretly destroyed. A mistake by a performer in a ritual song was taken very seriously.

In these performances of the totem tribes on the Pacific coast of Canada and Alaska totemic badges and crests were greatly in evidence, and the spirit-mask of a shaman was believed to give inspiration to its wearer. There were hundreds of masks used, some of animals such as the beaver, while others featured the Thunder Bird or, carved in wood and adorned with designs, would represent the moon, the stars, the rainbow, the kingfisher, the blossom of the salmonberry bush and so on, to exemplify their myths. In the Hunger and Famine Dance of the Shuswap of British Columbia the chief actor appeared almost naked and painted like a skeleton to represent famine, which was

¹ "The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians: its Development and Diffusion," L. Spier. *Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 16, Part 7 (New York, 1921); and *Handbook of the American Indians North of Mexico* (Washington, 1907), Part II. pp. 649-652.

² *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. p. 211.

a figure of their mythology. In another of the dances of this tribe, hunters dressed as if they were travelling on



17. *Pacific Coast Masks*

snow-shoes in hard weather scattered swan's down, probably to imitate the snow, whose song they sang.

One of the most remarkable of the Pacific coast mystery plays was the Bella Coola representation of the return of spring. Actors, chosen because they were small, wearing different masks represented local shrubs and trees; two old women took the part of midwives; the South Wind, arrayed as a good-looking youth, was the doctor who beat off attacks from the life-destroying North Wind. Mother Nature herself was a large wooden figure seated in the middle of the room just behind a fire. She gave birth first to the willow, a lively sprite who danced round the fire and then disappeared behind a curtain. The gooseberry followed him, then the nettle, grass, the black cottonwood, the aspen and a procession of two or three hundred more plants, all in the order of their sprouting.

Much of the elaborate stage setting which was seen in the nineteenth century was due to the advantages of iron tools, hinges and pulleys which Western civilization brought to the coast. A people eager for novelty were changing the appearance of their performances and even the characters in their plays as early as the days of George Vancouver, who paid his first visit to the island which bears his name in 1792 and who died in 1798.¹

MEDICINE-MEN.—The *shaman* or medicine-man of North America, except among the Eskimo and the Alaskan-Canadian tribes, does not double his functions with those of the priest. The distinction between their respective duties is most sharply drawn where ritualism is highly developed.²

The qualifications necessary in a *shaman* appear to have been the number of guardians he obtained by dreams when he was fasting in retreat, who were believed to help him in his supernatural feats, and gave him powers ranging from striking his enemies with sickness or death, or curing his own people of disease, down to the successful solution of a love-affair.

He impressed his audiences by enchantments which recall the feats of Pharaoh's magicians. These manifestations of his power varied in different parts of North America. Something similar to the mango trick (a most baffling performance when seen in a drawing-room in

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. p. 509; and *Indians of Canada*, pp. 201-204.

² *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), p. 200.

India) was common among the Navajo, the Pawnees and their neighbours. In the Bison area the *shaman* would plunge his hand into boiling water and he was accustomed to handle fire. Grinnell was told how Owl Friend, who had exceptional powers, enabled members of the Wolf Soldier band to dance in the fire without burning themselves or their clothing.¹ The *shamans* of the eastern tribes and among the Pueblos gave exhibitions of sword-swallowing; and from the central Algonkin territory northwards a form of rope-tying trick was performed.²

CURES FOR DISEASE.—A race living so close to nature thoroughly appreciated the medicinal properties of plants. These were infused and either taken internally, used as a liniment or applied as cold-water poultices.³ There were also horse doctors who had their own special medicines. In the Cheyenne tribe, at least, women doctors were as usual as men.

But since disease is believed to be due to supernatural as well as obvious natural causes, the art of healing required also the employment of spiritual power invoked by the use of charms and amulets to drive the demons away, and incantations and prayers to win the help of kindly spirits. Even in the choice of medicinal plants to give to a patient, reliance was placed on the advice that would come to the doctor in dreams. On the other side of the picture, the Elk and Red Maize totem clans of the Omahas believed

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. p. 78.

² *The American Indian* (ed. 1922), p. 201.

³ For a list of plants and their uses see *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II pp. 169-191.

respectively that to eat any part of a male elk or to eat red maize would give boils and sores.¹

The Plains Indians had no hesitation in dismembering a dead enemy, but, as instanced by the Cheyenne, their doctors would never amputate as much as a finger. The amputation of a finger was reserved as a sign of mourning, and then only done by the wife, mother and the sisters of a dead man.² Doctors were skilful in setting a broken leg, and in treating arrow and gun-shot wounds. In the case of a wound causing loss of blood, rattles made from gourds formed part of the aboriginal treatment.³ In the Cannibal secret societies of North-West America, rattles carved to represent skulls were used by hereditary attendants called Healers to calm the unbridled ecstasies of fury to which the cannibals were liable.⁴

DEATH AND BURIAL.—All primitive races are puzzled by the stark inescapable fact of death, and many are their solutions to the problem.

The Cheyenne Indians say that “when Heammawihio first made people he made them to live. When they died they were to be dead for only four nights, and then they would live again. After a little time the Creator found that this would not do. It would have made people too brave and they would have done too much killing. That is why, now, people die for ever. If it had continued as at first, people would have been like the bald eagle. You may

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. I. p. 17.

² *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. p. 161.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁴ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. pp. 522, 543.

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

go out and kill a bald eagle, and take home and use his feathers, and in four days, if you go back to the place where you killed him, you will again find the bald eagle on or near its nest.”¹

Against this account of the direct dealings of the Creator with mankind may be set the drama of the wind and the stars in which the Pawnee tells how death came into the world.

Before the beginning of man the Supreme Being sent down the giant Lightning to encircle the earth. Lightning took with him the sack Tornado, which Bright Star, who orders the elements, had given to him. And in the sack he carried the constellations which Morning Star is wont to drive before him. When Lightning had explored the earth he was ready to set free the stars, to encamp them in their order.

Here they would have stayed, but for a certain star, Fool Coyote. The star was called Fool Coyote because he deceives the coyotes, who howl at him, mistaking him for the Morning Star who follows behind. Now Fool Coyote was jealous of Bright Star, so he set upon the earth a wolf who stole the Tornado sack of Lightning. Wolf then released the beings that were in the sack. But these, when they saw the wolf and not their master Lightning, slew the animal. And ever since then the earth has been the abode of warfare and of death.²

The explanation given by the Montagnais Indians of Canada comes nearer to the Book of Genesis. They

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. p. 90.

² *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. X. p. 180

believed that "a certain Savage had received from Messou [the restorer of the world, after its destruction by a flood] the gift of immortality in a little package, with a strict injunction not to open it; while he kept it closed he was immortal, but his wife, being curious and incredulous, wished to see what was inside this present; and having opened it, it all flew away, and since then the savages have been subject to death."¹

The souls of the dead were believed by the North American Indians to go up to the camp among the stars, where they would live as they had done on earth. Yet a dead man could return, a belief shown in the account of the Ojibway chief who came back to earth for the gun which he required and had been forgotten.² At the same time the spirits of men might wander through the world at times to be a warning of death to the man (but not to the woman) who saw the "shadow." The most gruesome of these ghostly visitants were the bands of the scalped men.

Burial rites as they were carried out at the beginning of the seventeenth century in what was then New France were described by Father Joseph Jouvency, S.J.: "They think that the soul flies out through the smoke-hole (of the lodge) and in order that it may not linger . . . they beat the walls of the wigwam with a club. They believe it to be immortal. That it may not thereafter perish with hunger they bury with the body a large quantity of provisions, also garments, pots and various utensils. Relatives

¹ Father P. Jouvency, writing in 1634: *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. VI. pp. 157, 159.

² *Primitive Culture* (ed. 1903), Vol. I. p. 479 *et seq.*, quoting Schoolcraft.

of the chiefs are raised a little from the ground and upon them they place poles in the form of a pyramid. They add a bow, arrows, shield and other insignia of war; but upon the tombs of the women they place necklaces and collars. . . . On the third day the funeral is held. A funeral feast is provided. . . . The corpse, wrapped in beaver skins . . . with his limbs bent and tightly pressed against his body . . . is borne out on the shoulders of the relatives. . . . They indulge their grief throughout an entire year.”¹

Catlin gives the funeral rites of the Mandans more fully. He adds to the offerings for the dead man's use pipe and tobacco—and the flint and steel that the people of Acadia would not have possessed. He also mentions that the corpse was placed upon its platform with the feet towards the rising sun.

He goes on to say that, later, the bleached bones were buried, and the skulls were set out on the prairie in circles of a hundred heads eight or nine inches apart. Under each skull a bunch of sage was kept, and often renewed. In the centre of the ring a mound was made, about three feet high, where there were laid a male and female bison skull, and a twenty-foot pole was set up. This mast, to quote Catlin's expression, “supported many curious articles of mystery and superstition which they suppose have the power of guarding and protecting this sacred arrangement.” A wife knew which was the skull of her husband or her child and often came with food as an offering to her dead.²

¹ *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, Vol. I. (for 1610-1613), pp. 261-265.

² *The North American Indians*, Vol. I. pp. 101-103.

Up to two or more generations ago, in the Cheyenne tribe, if the dead man owned horses his best horse was saddled and bridled and shot near the grave. Sometimes several horses were so killed. If the body was put in a tree or on a scaffold, instead of being buried, the horses were shot under the platform.

On the death of an important person, an old man sang over the dead an old-time song, and prayed to the Great Spirit, the Creator of mankind. This ceremony, still performed, is a funeral service, lasting but a few minutes, that is held before the body is taken from the lodge in which it lies.¹

FOLKLORE.—Every race has stories which tell of the creation of the world and of how the animals became what they are now, and how man was taught to use to advantage the fruits of the earth. Among the North American Indians animals, as might be expected, play a leading part.

The Paiute Indians consist of small bands with no recognized chiefs and hardly any coherence who are included in the Californian tribes of Snakes and Diggers. Their story of the beginning of things is this.

At first the world was all water, and so it remained for a long time. Then the water began to go down and at last Kura'ngwa (Mount Grant) emerged from the water. There was fire on its top, and when the wind blew hard the water dashed over the fire and would have extinguished it. But the sage hen nestled down over it and fanned away the water with her wings. The heat scorched the feathers

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 160-161.

on the breast of the sage hen and they remain black to this day. Afterwards the Paiute got their first fire from the mountain through the help of the rabbit who is a great wonder-worker—"same as a god." As the water subsided other mountains appeared, until at last the earth was left as it is now.¹

The following story of darkness and light comes from British Columbia. The Black Bear and the Chipmunk once contended against each other, the Black Bear for darkness, the Chipmunk for light. And the Bear cried "Lipa, lipa, lipa," and the Chipmunk "Ma'a, ma'a, ma'a." The Bear, finding that the Chipmunk was his equal in the possession of magic powers, got furiously angry and would have killed his adversary. But the Chipmunk was too quick for him, and ran into his hole just as the Bear made a dash for him. The Bear scratched the Chipmunk when he was going into his hole, and that is why there are stripes on the Chipmunk's back. But if the Bear had managed to kill the Chipmunk we should have been for ever in darkness, instead of a day and night as we have now.²

Stars, especially the Milky Way, are associated with the dead by North American Indians. This may perhaps be why there is an established taboo forbidding anyone to point at any particular star, at the risk of losing at least a part of the finger.³

The Katos who live on the Pacific coast have a delightful story to explain how the sun and the moon and the

¹ *Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1896), Part II., "The Ghost Dance Religion," J. Mooney, pp. 1050, 1051.

² *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. XXVII. (1914) p. 1.

³ Taboo given in *The Cheyenne Indians*, p. 125.

stars came to be set in the firmament of heaven. Coyote dreamt of the sun in the east. So with three mice as his companions he set out, and came at last to the lodge where two old women had bound the sun with thongs to the floor. While the old women were asleep, the mice came and nibbled the bonds holding the sun and set him free. Coyote picked up the sun and ran for it as the old women woke from their sleep. They pursued Coyote, but he turned them into stone. Then from the sun he had stolen he made all the heavenly bodies, and as he fashioned them he said, "Moon, Sun, fly into the sky. Stars become many in it. In the morning you shall come up. You shall go around the world. In the east you shall rise again in the morning. You shall give light."¹

In Blackfoot folklore the Morning Star is the herald of the Sun. The Star-that-stands-still (the North Star) is different from all the other stars. It never moves, the others all walk round it. It is a hole in the sky—the one through which the Feather Maiden was first drawn up, and through which she gazed after she had dug up the forbidden turnip that grew near the house of the Spider Man. The light of the Star-that-stands-still is the brightness from the home of the Sun God shining through.²

"At one time Heammawihio was with the people on the earth. He it was who taught them to make stone arrow points and knives of stone and bone . . . to put the arrow points on shafts, and showed them how to make a bow. . . . He told them that . . . all the animals that are

¹ *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. X. pp. 230, 231.

² *Ibid.*, p. 95. The story of the Feather Maiden is given on p. 94.

on the earth were for them to kill and subsist on. They made their fire as he taught them, with two sticks rubbed together till the fire started, and also by knocking together two hard stones. . . . He showed them the corn, and told them to plant, and cultivate and eat it.”¹

The character of a people can, it is felt, be read in their folklore, and the dignity and poetic fancy of the Iroquois stand out in their stories.

Ga-oh is the Iroquoian Wind Giant, at the entrance to whose abode are a Bear and a Panther, a Moose and a Fawn. When the north wind blows strong the Iroquois say, “The Bear is prowling in the sky.” If the west wind is violent, “The Panther is whining.” When the east wind comes chilling with its rain, “The Moose is spreading his breath.” And when the south wind sighs softly, “The Fawn is returning to its doe.”

In one of their stories of the heavens the Iroquois tell of the Pleiades, whom they call the Dancing Stars. Long ago they were a group of brothers, who were awakened in the night by the sound of singing, to which they began to dance. As they danced the voices grew fainter, and the brothers followed the sound of the singing. And so they were led gradually up into the sky, where the pitying moon turned them into a cluster of stars and bade them dance for ten days in every year over the Red Man's council-house, when it was the season of his New Year.

But one of the dancing brothers, hearing the weeping of his mother, looked behind him; and immediately he fell to earth with such force that he was buried in the ground.

¹ *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II. pp. 89-91.

IN NORTH AMERICA

For a whole year the mother mourned over her son's grave. Then there came from it a tiny shoot, which grew into a tree that towered towards the heavens. And so the Pine was born, tallest of trees, the guide of the forest, the watcher of the skies.¹

Indians of Canada (Canadian Government publication, Ottawa, 1932), Diamond Jenness.

The North American Indian (Oxford University Press, New York, 1st Ed., 1917, 2nd Ed., 1922), Clark Wissler.

Totemism and Exogamy (London, 1910), Sir James Frazer, O.M., Vols. III., IV.

The North American Indians, 2 vols. (Edition Edinburgh, 1926), George Catlin.

The Cheyenne Indians, 2 vols. (Yale University Press, 1923), George Bird Grinnell.

The number of valuable publications on the North American Indians is so large that no representative list of authorities can be attempted.

¹ *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. X. pp. 23, 26, 27.

CHAPTER NINE

On the Tibetan Border

It would be difficult to find more tremendous inhabited country than the home of the Abors and their neighbours. A close succession of thickly wooded mountains, their sides as steep as the roof or the walls of a house, rise higher and higher northwards to the Main Snowy Range. Up to the furthest limits of the Indian monsoon these highlands are drenched under very nearly the most torrential rainfall in the world. Only Cherrapunji, on the opposite side of the Assam valley, with its highest achievement of 905 inches for the year, 366 inches for one month (July) and 41 inches in twenty-four hours, can have a wetter record.

One of the greatest rivers in Asia thunders in its deep-cut gorges on the long journey from Tibet, through a labyrinth of mountains echoing with streams, down to the wide expanse of the Assam valley and out into the Bay of Bengal.

The razor-edged foothills are covered with dense subtropical forest, where orchids grow on the branches above, and the thick undergrowth is infested with leeches. But on the few existing paths, which go up and down like a bad enteric fever chart, an occasional clearing can give a memorable view. The Brahmaputra is fifteen hundred feet or more sheer below the path, a winding ribbon of jade between grey jutting rocks and flecked with the foam of

its rapids. Looking up the valley, great spurs—some wooded and others cleared of trees—come down on either bank like huge interlaced fingers. Far to the north, beyond the belts of rhododendron trees and the pines above them, a high faint line of snow peaks towers over the stupendous precipices that guard the entrances to Tibet.

Midway between the foothills and the Main Snowy Range there is a narrow zone of open valleys, where flourishing villages are set amidst their fields. This is the heart of the tribal country. It is beyond the influence of Assam with its Indian and Western forms of civilization, and it lies too far south to be affected by the religious ideas and customs of Tibet.

APPEARANCE OF THE PEOPLE.—The tribes fall into two groups, the Daflas and Galongs to the west and on the east the Abors and Mishmis. The Daflas, most of the Mishmi people and the Abors in settled Tibetan territory have far lower standards of living than their fortunate neighbours who occupy the fertile valleys. Through the Abor country in the centre the Brahmaputra twists in almost incredible turns. More than once between Assam and Tibet it was found to flow towards every point of the compass within an air-line measurement of under eight miles. This is the river which the Assamese call the Dihang, the Abors the Siang and the Tibetans the Tsangpo.

In addition to these tribes there was discovered an alien community forming one of those mysterious racial outliers of the Indian border. One of the best-known examples of these is the town of Kaniguram on the North-West Frontier,

where the people speak a language which is certainly not Pushtu and who say they are descended from the Greeks of Alexander's army.

The origin of the Milang people in the Abor country could not be traced. The Abors look on them as foreigners. Their religion seemed to be their neighbour's type of animism, as far as could be judged from hearsay evidence. The girls wear the characteristic Abor girdle, but this perhaps may have been adopted in recent times. The short vocabulary of their language, which the writer was able to make, was quite unlike the language or the dialects spoken around them, and more nearly resembled, if the comparison may justifiably be made, the language spoken in Bhotan.

To return to the hill tribes in general. These people are more or less alike in appearance, although a knowledge of the Abor language would not carry a visitor far, even in a Galong village.

As a race they are shorter than the average Englishman, but well built and sturdy. They very rarely run or seem to hurry, but their leisurely-looking stride is uncommonly deceptive. Compared with street-bred people, their physical fitness is little short of incredible. They have straight black hair, very dark eyes, and the colour of their skin varies from almost black to the softest olive. Their features are distinctly Mongoloid. But a Galong girl, with her healthy olive complexion, regular oval features and a slightly aquiline nose, her black braided hair parted in the centre and drawn back from her forehead, can look remarkably attractive. The men of that tribe wear their hair trimmed

more or less like ours. While none of these people cut themselves as an aid to beauty, or as a religious observance, with knives and lances, the Abors—both men and women—do not add to their personal appearance by shaving their heads to a height of about two and a half inches above the ears, leaving a carefully trimmed cap of hair on the crown.¹

In the villages near the Assam border the practice of tattooing is dying out, nor is it customary amongst the clans of the north who are, to some extent, in touch with Tibetans. But among the entirely secluded communities tattooing is general. The whole race is singularly inartistic, and the tattoo designs rise no higher than straight lines and angles.

Father Krick, in his account of his visit to an Abor village near the plains in 1853, attributed the cross and chevron-like marks to Christian origin. The X is the emblem of the Kar-gyu-pa Lamaist order (founded in the eleventh century), and Franciscan Fathers were preaching Christianity in Tibet seven hundred years ago.² But it is highly unsafe to see in this universal and elementary symbol even the most shadowy indication of a link between Abors, Tibetans and Christian missionaries. It would be equally unjustifiable to claim affinity between Abors and Nagas because the Abor chevrons are like the *ak* marks of the successful Naga head-hunter. Whatever meaning to themselves the tattoo designs of the Abors might once have had, they have none today.

¹ For Abor anthropometrical tables and seriations by J. Coggin Brown and S. W. Kemp, see *Abors and Galongs*, Dunbar, pp. 88-91.

² See *Buddhism of Tibet*, L. A. Waddell (London, 1895), pp. 420-422.

Children are tattooed at the age of ten and upwards. There are no professional tattooists, but there is usually someone in the village whose work is satisfactory. A cane stalk is stripped of all its thorns except one, and this is held to the skin and tapped with a piece of stick. Charcoal is worked into the holes thus made, which gives a design in lightish blue, and this is said to last a lifetime. Men are generally tattooed on the forehead, women round their mouths, on their chests and the calves of their legs.

It is a slow process. About four days' work is put in at a stretch for three successive years. Payment is made in rice, which may be estimated at the equivalent to fourpence for each sitting, or by working for a day on the artist's allotment. The person tattooed is forbidden to eat any meat (other than birds) or drink rice beer while the tattooing is being done. Rice, fish, salt and a little relish is the recognized diet, and water may be only sparingly drunk. These precautions are to prevent fever, and consequently come within the system of prohibition we call taboo.

Men and women wear ear ornaments of cane or metal, so boys and girls have their ears pierced when they are quite young.

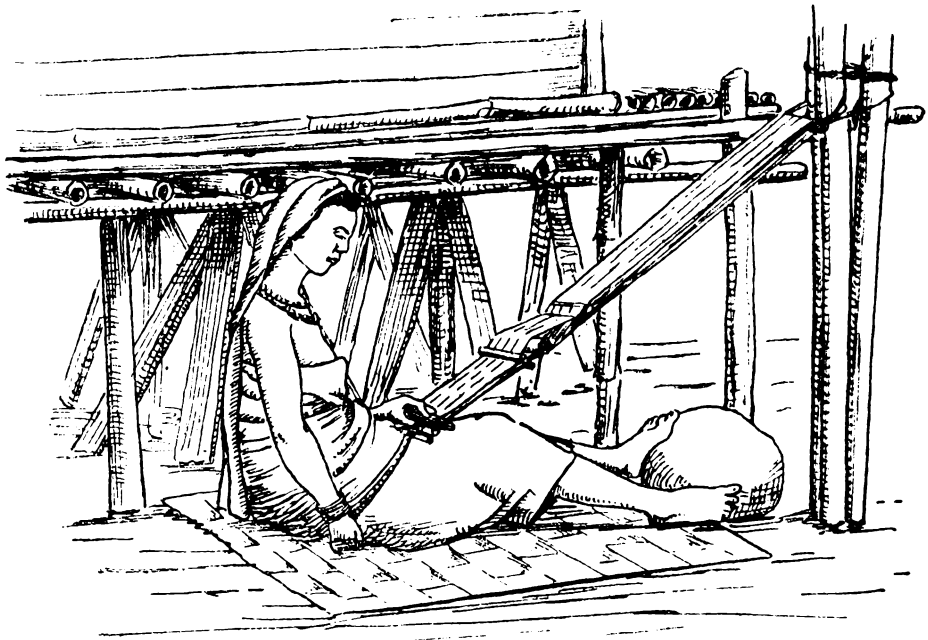
None of the tribes paint their bodies. But on high days and when there is a dance in the village the girls daub their cheeks with lime. The explanation that the streaks mean that these girls are of a marriageable age was borne out by observation.

They have none of the rites—not essentially totemic—of tooth-extraction that are found from China to Peru, nor

ON THE TIBETAN BORDER

do they mutilate themselves, or scar their bodies with tribal badges like the Australian aborigines.¹ The only disfiguring custom is found among the Galong women, who wear extremely tight anklets, usually of brass. They are none too loose when first put on as children, and since they are never taken off, except as a mark of disgrace, the women have hideously misshapen ankles.

DRESS.—In the wilder parts of the Dafla country there is still to be seen the primitive costume of the tribes in the



18. *Abor Weaving*

short, sleeveless skin coats and fibre loin-cloths of the men and the cane hoop skirts and plaited breast-bands of the

¹ *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. I. pp. 28-29, 567-569; Vol. IV. pp. 180-197.

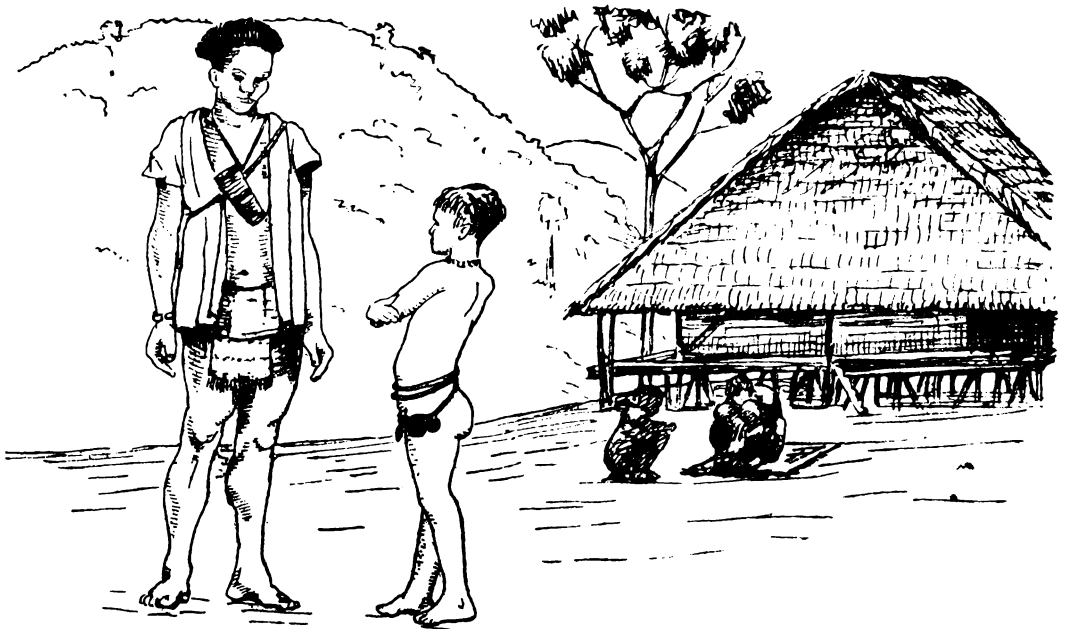
women. Amongst the Abors and Galongs clothes come under two categories, those that are made locally by the women and those imported from Tibet or—in the foothills—from the plains of Assam. Weaving appears to be unknown in the Dafla villages. But the Galongs and the majority of the Abors have borrowed the loom, spinner and cotton teaser from the plains and, as cotton is grown extensively in the more fertile districts, the women make lengths of fabric about a foot wide, and rough cotton rugs. The thread is either dyed red, black, yellow, blue or green, and worked into patterns of bands and lines in two colours, or is left white.

The costume of the men is simple and sensible. The short coat is universal whether home-made or imported, and is either of skins, the fluffy rug material or plain cotton. The men of two villages away in the north wear good blue serge coats imported from Tibet. The cotton or fibre loin-cloths, which all the men wear, are fastened to cane waist-belts, to which they tie the deer, takin or lizard-skin satchels and purses they use as pockets. A small crooked knife is hung from the neck in a basket-work sheath.

This is how one generally sees them, slipping along a path, smoking their acrid tobacco, with stout sticks in their hands, long knives for cutting the jungle swinging from their waists, and their dogs ahead of them. In heavy rain they go about in nothing but a fibre sporran, and sometimes use a plantain leaf as an umbrella.

Out hunting, or in their rare outbreaks of fighting, the men wear hats of hide or helmets of very closely woven cane that are sword-proof and have been found to hold

water. In the bravery of his head-dress, the Abor breaks away to some extent from the uniformity that characterizes most of his clothing, equipment and personal possessions. For he wears on his helmet tufts of dyed hair, boars' tusks, or the beaks and the gay feathers of the hornbill. When going on a journey, the hillmen take their food in rucksacks



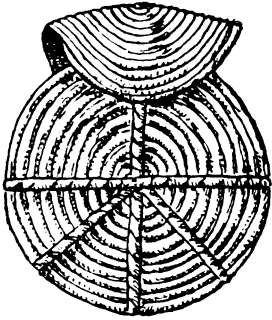
19. *Abor Man and small Girl*

with a water-tight covering of sago-palm fibre dyed black, in imitation of the much rarer bearskin.

Their ornaments are heavy brass bracelets of local manufacture, and their most valued beads are strings of blue and green porcelain from Tibet.

Women wear two gaily coloured cloths, one as a skirt to the knee, the other a smaller one round the upper part

of the body, and a girdle of metal plates called a *beyop*. A girl as soon as she can toddle goes about with a disc or two at her loins, or perhaps some metal charm. After a few years she is given a *beyop*, the jangling girdle which every Abor and Galong maid and woman wears next her skin until the birth of her first child.



20. *Beyop Disc*

The mythical origin of the *beyop* is that a spirit, Gingor-Shingor, fell in love with a woman, and whenever he came to visit her he gave her one of these discs. When a child was born she took off the girdle and never wore it again; and that is how they first were worn and why they are discarded on the birth of a woman's first-born. The number of discs, which are graduated in size, vary from nine down to two.

Over their skirts the married women of all these tribes wear finely woven black-and-white patterned cane belts studded with brass discs. In the extreme north of the Abor country proper, unmarried girls may be seen in nothing more than a couple of *beyop* discs.

The men's dress is drab and dirty. But the women are not only cleaner in their appearance but they look really picturesque in their gaily coloured clothes, with an array of bead necklaces and brass, or black cane, bracelets.

Nothing definite is known about their origin. There are two possible alternatives. Either they were driven into the hills from the Assam valley, or they came across the Main Snowy Range into the country they now occupy.

Everything points to a migration from Central Asia. No signs of totemism have been discovered, so if the tribes are of the same stock as the Yakuts of Central Asia, they must have migrated southwards before these tribes adopted the totemism which has been attributed to them by at least one traveller. But the people are distinctly Mongoloid, and systematic investigation through the country tends to the conclusion that they originally came from the north.

In trying to trace back their history, one is confronted with the invariable difficulty with primitive people, that they are completely illiterate. The explanation they give for this disability is interesting, but there is a suspicion that it may be of alien, perhaps Tibetan, origin. Long ago, so the story runs, the Supreme Being wrote down his precepts to give to man. For the dwellers on the plain he engraved them on a flat stone. For the people of the hills he prepared a smooth skin with the writing on it. But (with characteristic improvidence) the hillman to whom this was entrusted, losing his way home and running out of food, ate the skin. So the hillmen lost their chance of learning the alphabet and how to read and write.

A more unusual difficulty lies in the fact that there is no indigenous art in the country, in wood or metal, in pottery or stone. This closes a line of approach that is of the greatest value in tracing the migrations of prehistoric races. Nor have the hillmen any peculiar instruments, like the bull-roarers of the Eskimo and the North American Indians, from which conclusions might be drawn. While the fact that out of a considerable list of words only sixteen (admittedly in common use) were found to be practically

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the same in Abor and Tibetan, is hardly the evidence—even if the difficulty about religion is ignored—upon which a racial connexion within historical times could be claimed.

Only one possible source remains, the folklore of the people. It is not easy for us, living in a civilized country, with our bookshelves and reference libraries readily accessible, to realize the immense value of folklore, in its widest sense, to an illiterate race. These legends and traditions not only perpetuate much of their religion, but some of them tell the early history of the tribe and in other ways take the place of the text-books used in our schools. This importance of folk-tales is illustrated by the author of *Indians of Canada*, who tells us: “In British Columbia men used [them] as public records, citing them to prove their claims to various rights and privileges, such as that of painting certain emblems on their houses. On the plains men validated their sacred medicine bundles by the legends attached to them, and in the east they established the claims of their bands to certain hunting and fishing territories.” Incidentally, their untutored minds succeeded in evolving a kind of perpetual copyright, for Miss Jenness goes on to say: “There were many tales so closely interwoven with the social and religious life of the British Columbia and Plains Indians that they were considered personal property, and although known to other individuals might be recited only by their owners or at certain definite times and places.”

To get back to the Asiatic highlanders, the hillmen, who are naturally acute and have excellent memories, hand down family traditions, learnt word for word, from father

to son, but this has been found only in most exceptional cases to go back more than about two hundred years, or six generations. But the *mirus* (priests), who confine their lore to religious rites and tribal mythology, have told the present writer more than one myth which throws a light on this question, among a number of legends that are obviously more recent.¹

One of these myths is as follows. Whilst gods and men were living together on the earth there was much distress because there was no water, and gods and men alike were lean and thin. But it was noticed with a good deal of wonder that the rat was always sleek and fat. So one day a man followed the rat and tracked it to a big stone. There was a crack in the stone through which the rat disappeared. The man stayed and watched. When the rat came out again it was all wet and licking its lips. The man could not even get his hand down to the water, so he went back and told what he had seen. But when the men came to break the stone and get the water out for themselves they found that it was so hard that it broke the tools they had with them. So the god Debo-Kombu took his bow and shot at the stone with an arrow, and a trickle of water came welling out of the rock. And that is why Debo-Kombu is worshipped with his bow and his arrow to this

¹ The best-known example of oral transmission is seen in the Four Vedas, the most ancient Indo-Aryan literature. These books must have been completed before 800 B.C. and possibly very much earlier. The oldest of them is as long as the surviving poems of Homer. Yet, even after non-pictographic writing was introduced into India (perhaps as early as 700 B.C.), the Vedas continued to be learnt by heart and were transmitted orally with infallible accuracy by the schools of Vedic study down to the present day.

day. But no more than a tiny flow of water came out from the stone. Then the god Nurupur took an axe and broke the stone, and the water gushed out freely over the thirsty earth. And he, too, is worshipped for ever in the water he gave to gods and men.

This story could hardly have originated in a country where water is everywhere to drink. To offer what is only pure conjecture, the legend might even go so far back as to refer to the drying-up of what were once the fertile plains of Central Asia. The beginning of this desiccation further west may, it is thought, have driven the Aryans over the passes of the Hindu Kush into Afghanistan and down into the plains of India over three thousand years ago.

So much for climatic conditions. Another legend gives the tribesmen a home quite unlike their present surroundings. "In those days, when gods and men lived together, a quarrel arose for the possession of the rich plains. The gods said it belonged to them, but this the men disputed. At last it was agreed that the decision should rest on the proof of a sign. The fertile country should belong to whoever could cook a stone. So mortals and immortals took stones and earth in their hands. First of all the gods tried to cook the stones. But fierce though they made the fire the stones remained stones still. But the men cheated the gods¹ and obtained the sign by a trick. They hid an egg amidst the clay and stones; and this they roasted and showed to the gods. So the gods went away from the

¹ A Tibetan example of a spirit deceived by mortals is given by Frazer on pp. 96, 97, *The Spirits of Corn and Wild*, Vol. II. ("Golden Bough," Part IV. 3rd Ed., 1912), where a hostile female spirit is outwitted by images made to represent her intended human victims.

pleasant land of the plains to dwell for ever in the high hills and deep forests of the uplands.”

Although in Abor mythology the creation of men and animals took place in the hills they now live in, the event was invariably said by the southern and central communities to have happened far to the north of their own village.¹ But in the villages in the extreme north, where the story of creation was equally known, the place was said to lie a little to the south—that is to say, down river.

The point of this is the indication it may be taken to give of one of the comparatively recent tribal movements about which satisfactory evidence has been collected. The oldest villages are what are now the large purely Abor communities on the Brahmaputra in the centre of the tribal territory. Considerable inquiry in Abor and Galong villages made it evident that from these parent settlements of unknown date and conjectural origin new colonies of Galongs as well as Abors were made. The earliest movements were to the east and west and northwards to the Main Snowy Range. The occupation of the less fertile regions to the south was in full swing about a hundred and fifty years ago, but there is no evidence as to when it started.

In the most fertile parts of the country, which can best support a comparatively large population, the number of houses in an Abor or Galong village may run to a couple of hundred or more. But the hillmen are stay-at-home people, and it is very doubtful if any of them see more than two or three thousand other human beings in the whole

¹ For the story of creation see pp. 264, 265.

of their lives. The extent of their hunting-grounds and their extravagant method of farming keep the villages far enough apart to kill all real tribal feeling. Almost every community is sufficient to itself, and if a man is asked, he says "I am of such-and-such a village" and does not mention his clan or tribe.

VILLAGES.—In a village not far from the Assam border and built in about 1891, one of the original colonists described how new settlements are founded when the overpopulation of a village makes this necessary. Ten men, the inmates of five houses, left their homes with their women-folk after the harvest was cut to find a suitable site, leaving all their goods and chattels behind them. This most probably took place early in December when the springs are at their lowest, and the question of a good and sufficient water supply could best be settled.

A perennial spring was found on a high spur, which is the favourite site. Here a long hut was put up in which they all lived until the spur had been cleared, and they had built five houses for themselves. Into these the founders of the new village moved and brought all their belongings from their old homes. Reports were favourable, and ten more families came in during the following year. As the village grew in size its inhabitants began to plant jack trees in and around it, for this is their favourite fruit, stringy though a stranger finds it. The groves of citron and orange trees which grow well on the foothills were planted later.

Usually a village can be seen miles away upon the spur of a mountain. But if it is hidden by the forest the first



21. *A Galong Village*

indication is the loud barking of dogs, before the thatched roofs of the granaries appear among the jack fruit trees. A steep ascent leads up to the village. If it has any defences, the palisade works and rows of the short, sharp bamboo splinters used as obstacles are usually only put up in the direction of the community from whom hostilities may be feared.

Houses are always raised off the ground on posts, or in the north on stone walls, which is in imitation of Tibetan masonry. They are plank or bamboo-built structures with open platforms in front of the main entrance. The roof is thatched with cane leaf that lasts about three years. There are no windows, and the eaves come down very low to keep the rain from driving through the walls.

The houses vary greatly in size. The wilder Mishmis to the east, who live in very broken country where suitable sites are not so easy to find, may have a dozen families under one roof, and some of their dwellings have been seen three hundred feet long. In the western country the Daflas build houses for two or three families, divided up inside into single rooms. The squat Abor and Galong houses are built for single families and this gives their villages a greater appearance of size. In the powerful Minyong clan of Abors, near relations build their houses almost touching each other in orderly lines, which gives an appearance of streets to their villages. Otherwise the houses are built haphazard. As a rough census estimate, one may calculate on two able-bodied men to a single family house, excluding any slaves, who "live in."

The Galongs divide off the living-room to give the

women special accommodation. An Abor house has only one room, generally measuring about thirty feet by twenty-four. There are two doors, one in front and one at the back, reached by the notched logs that do duty as ladders. The only light comes from the fire flickering on a square stone and earth hearth, and the only ventilation is when a door is opened for someone to go in or out. The head of the house always sits and sleeps between the door and the fire, and about the room are the chunks of wood which are used as chairs by day and pillows at night. The movable possessions of the family are kept on trays hanging from the roof. On the walls there are nearly always a few heads of deer or cattle, trophies of the chase or relics of some feast. A long passage runs down one side of the house leading over the pig-sties which provide a peculiar but effective form of sanitation.

In every Abor and Galong village there is a barrack for the young men and often a dormitory for the unmarried girls, in which they sleep but do not cook. The barrack is a noticeably long building with a number of doors and is usually in a central position. Here guests are entertained and councils are held. Women are not allowed into the barrack, but there is no corresponding self-denying ordinance as regards the unmarried quarters. Dafla and Mishmi villages have neither.

WATER SUPPLY.—Somewhere about the middle of the cluster of houses is the equivalent to the village pump. The hillmen are most particular about their water, and the plumbing by which the village is supplied with water is

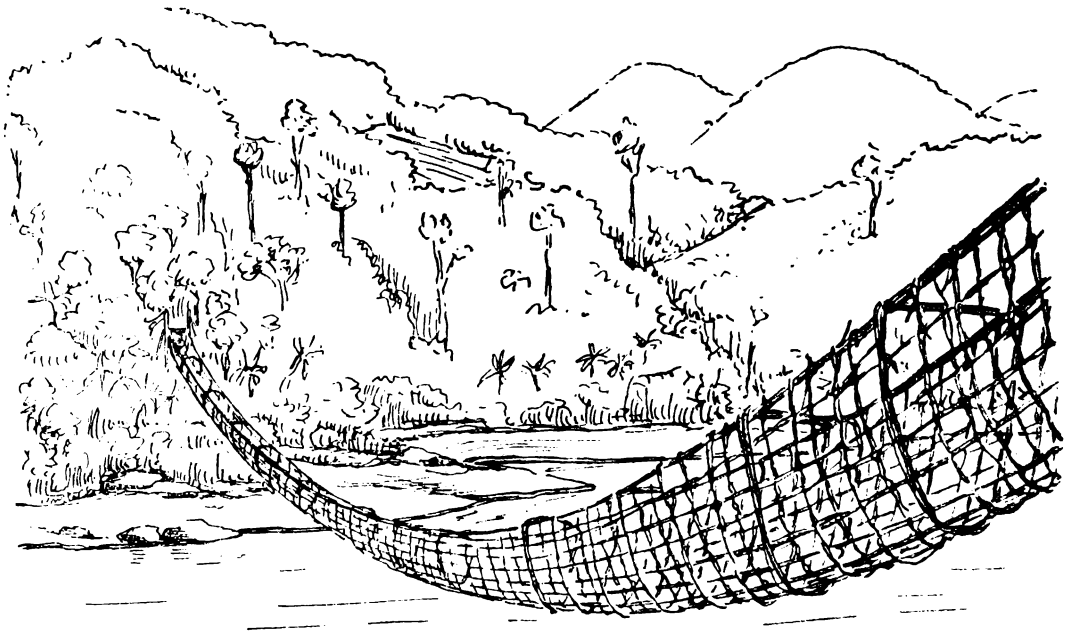
sometimes astonishing. They use bamboo piping and long wooden ducts supported on trestles, and two or three hundred yards of pipe-line is quite usual. The longest aqueduct which the writer saw measured a little over a thousand yards, and it gave a plentiful supply to a large village. The spring was a hundred feet up the face of a cliff, down which the water was brought in lengths of bamboo cut as nearly into spirals as straight and rigid lengths of natural tubing could be arranged. Along the lower ground the water was carried in two ducts, and this, as the writer found when arranging for a satisfactory flow through a much shorter pipe-line, is not as easy a matter as it may seem.

BRIDGES.—One of the most interesting things about a primitive people is the way they solve practical difficulties of life such as these, their resources limited to the forest around them, a sword, a knife and their native wits. Yet with an outfit which would have driven Robinson Crusoe to despair, the Abors of the main valley construct bridges over the Brahmaputra.

About two hundred men, collected from all the villages that will use the bridge, come down in the winter (when the river is not swollen with snow water) to build it. The two main cables of split cane are made on the more convenient bank, secured to suitable trees and then floated across to the other side, where they are pulled taut with much labour and fastened in the same way. The tubular open-work twig body of the bridge, the closer-woven foot-way (if any) and the supporting hoops—to strengthen the

bridge and keep it from closing in upon the passenger—are then tied on to the suspension cables.

An old bridge, sagging almost to the water and only able to take one man at a time because the twig body is breaking up—incidentally the first that the writer went over—is not too good an experience. But a new one, glistening



22. *Abor Bridge*

yellow in the sun, is a fine sight and a pleasure to cross, and the feelings of the man who first thought of making one are to be envied. But even the best bridges sway considerably at the centre and in windy weather may become impassable. The hillmen cross an averagely good bridge with intervals of about forty yards between them, singing as they go. If the bridge is new, or a short one over a

tributary, they may close up a little. They always keep carefully in step, which makes the bridge swing a good deal, but is said to put less strain on the structure.

The work which one of these bridges entails may be judged from the detailed measurements of one of them. The length of the bridge from entrance to entrance was 717 feet and the incline approaches about 34 feet; a total of 786 feet. The supports on the two banks were eight and ten stout logs, which were about 21 feet long. The bridge was anchored on either side by thirty strands of split canes fastened to growing trees, live bamboos and rocks. The open tube of the bridge itself was a framework of thirty ropes of split cane varying from 20 to 50 feet in length, and from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch in diameter. These cane ropes, which were tied with an ordinary knot, ran lengthways from $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 1 foot apart. There were fifty-nine hoops, made of four strands of whole cane, and these were put on at intervals ranging from 3 to 23 feet. The suspension cables (which are one's only stay on a badly worn bridge) consisted of six strands of split cane twisted together. These were never less than 4 feet 6 inches or more than 6 feet 6 inches above the footway. Ten struts of bamboo at varying intervals were placed transversely to separate the two suspension cables. The height of the bridge above winter river-level was found to be 50 feet at the centre and 130 feet at the entrances, which made quite a stiff climb of the second half of the crossing.¹

The Abors in more than one of the villages responsible

¹ The writer was indebted to Captain J. O'Neil, I.M.S., for these exact measurements.

for this bridge insisted that they only took three weeks to build it. They certainly are hard workers, but even with all the canes collected, cut and stacked beforehand, it was difficult to look at this stupendous piece of work and believe them. This bridge was in the south of the country. The longest one used by the writer was many marches to the north and measured 780 feet of footway from entrance to entrance.

A bridge has to be so much repaired as to be practically remade every ten years, and the tribesmen would only cut one down as a last resort. They have an ingenious way of defending them when at war with people on the opposite bank. Several stout fibre ropes are tied to the middle of the bridge, and the loose ends are taken into the cover of the forest on their own side a little way downstream. These tribesmen rarely move about at night, and even if they did the movement of the ropes, as the bridge jerked up and down while it was being crossed, would betray an enemy. Should a hostile party attempt to cross, the ropes would be jerked violently enough to make the passage impossible.

Where there are no bridges the main river is crossed (at some distance from a rapid) on rafts of bamboos or plantain stalks. These take from two to eight people and are worked over with bamboo poles.

Among the great gorges and towering precipices under the Main Snowy Range the aids for the traveller are not so good. There are tubular cane bridges across the Brahmaputra, but the galleries provided when the path breaks off abruptly at the face of a cliff do not fill a stranger to them with gratitude. The galleries are thin, slippery tree-trunks rather sketchily tied to projecting bits of stone along the

wall of rock. The traveller, handicapped by a heavy swinging rucksack, negotiates this facing inwards, with only an occasional crevice or bush as a handhold and a sheer drop of a thousand feet or more below him.

The Mishmi bridges, although none of any length were seen by the writer, are in his opinion the worst rope bridges between Kashmir and the Burmese border. They consist of three cane ropes, which are provided with two loops, a large one as a seat and a small one as a head rest. The traveller stands on the little platform on the edge of the chasm, fastens his rucksack to the bigger loop into which he then creeps, sits down and slides rapidly down to the centre of the bridge. He then works the rest of his passage by throwing his legs over the cables and hauling himself up the incline to the landing-stage. There are light ropes tied to the loops in case the next man to use it finds the carrier on the wrong side. The only redeeming feature of the bridge is the impossibility of looking down into the gulf below. In Tibet bridges made on the same principle, and known as a *bring*, are fitted with a rope and pulley by which the traveller can pull himself over with less effort.

The borderland of south-eastern Tibet, as the present writer holds it in his memory, differs in no way from Service's description of the Yukon:

It's the cussedest land I know,
 From the big dizzy mountains that screen it
 To the deep death-like valleys below.
 Some say God was tired when he made it;
 Some say it's a fine land to shun;
 Maybe: but there's some as would trade it
 For no land on earth—and I'm one.

As for its inhabitants, opinions have varied to an extent reminiscent of a race of far lower culture, the extinct Tasmanians. An Indian historian wrote several hundred years ago of these hill-tribes in general, "This evil-disposed race of mountaineers are many degrees removed from the line of humanity and are destitute of the characteristic properties of a man." Lieutenant MacGregor, the first British officer to come to this frontier, reported the tribesmen he saw in 1789 to be "men of excellent understanding and pleasant manners."

Subsequent raids into British territory, and more than one mismanaged attempt by the local government at a punitive expedition, created the unfounded impression that the Abors in particular were a formidable fighting race. Abor, by the way, is Assamese for "un-friend," the native name for the tribe, should they happen to use it, is Abuit. After a strong expeditionary force went through the foothills twenty-six years ago against a powerful group of Minyong villages, wide exploration for a time became possible. The country since then has been closed.

One cannot, as Burke said, indict a nation. Some clans are quicker in quarrel than others, and those living in wild inhospitable country are of poorer physique, and the men especially are much dirtier in their persons, than the occupiers of easier land to cultivate. In the writer's opinion these hill people are characteristically honest and hard-working, cheerful and kindly in their family life; and he left behind him in the Galong and Abor tribes more than one real friend whose character and qualities as men he remembers with respect.

CHAPTER TEN

On the Tibetan Border

It has already been mentioned that there is no genuine feeling of tribal cohesion in the country. Villages that are offshoots of some large community, or whose inhabitants are related more or less habitually by intermarriage, may be to all intents allies. But each village forms, in its isolation, a small self-contained democracy of a direct type, which is naturally quite unlike government under a parliamentary system.

In the Abor and Galong country, where society is in a slightly more advanced state than among the Daflas and Mishmis, the community consists of headmen, the priest, the smith, the groups of families, the young men and the slaves.

HEADMEN.—The headman is chosen by the voice of the male members of the community, although it should be said that in a secluded Dafla village a strong-minded old lady was met who ruled her people, and kept them well in hand. The headship is not hereditary, and the main qualifications are generally age and experience to guide the village in its dealings with its neighbours and to select and divide up its own fields. He should also be well enough off to entertain visitors. An unusually young headman means the possession of exceptional force of character.

It is personality and a persuasive tongue that rule, and unless the headman can carry public opinion with him he is superseded by someone who more nearly represents prevailing ideas. In an extreme instance a village has been known to choose a headman from somewhere else.

The strongest personality met among the Abor communities in the foothills once described how an ambitious villager canvasses for election. He has to be quite well off to do it. The campaign opens with a feast to the village, when much *apong* (local beer) is provided and a mithan (tame *bos frontalis*) is killed. About a year later the candidate gives another feast, at which a supporter gets up and makes a laudatory speech. The enthusiasm born of *apong* is calculated to assure the election of the would-be headman, who then gives a third feast if he can afford it. My friend Dutem described this as quite a usual custom—in other villages than his own.

The only village council at which the writer was present strongly reminded him of a rather lively meeting in Hyde Park. The headman spoke loudly and vehemently for a considerable time, with little or no interruption. The speakers who followed were not such practised orators and they were severely heckled. There is no voting on these occasions, and it was gathered that it is the custom to get the opinion of the meeting by the shouts of the largest mob. Doubtful matters are, however, settled by casting lots. When a question arises which affects the common interests of a group of villages, the headmen concerned meet and talk the business over. But the village is the true unit, and not the clan, still less the entire tribe,

although, of course, blood relationship creates a certain amount of sympathy.

PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES.—The Abor *mirus*, as the priests are called in that language, are either men or women. Among the Galongs and Mishmis they are invariably men.

The tribesmen whom we are considering all come under the wide category of animists, as Tylor defined it. They believe in the continued existence of the soul of man after death, in an equal belief that the animal kingdom and all material things also have souls and a future life. There is a vague belief in an all-powerful and all-loving supreme spirit who seems generally to be regarded as bi-sexual. Some of the minor spirits, under certain conditions, are credited with kindnesses to mankind.

But the most important part of the tribesman's religion, and which intimately affects his everyday life, is his fear of the demons with whom he has peopled the world of nature around him. These have to be pacified in many different ways by a *miru*, and it is this which gives him and his office such great importance. In addition to making sacrifice, taking omens, visiting the sick, organizing various rites and semi-religious dances on these and other occasions, he keeps the mythical legends alive in the community.

Besides this, the Galong *mirus* are believed to possess the power of causing a person's death. He makes a platform in a tree, and on this he sits and curses the man who has done the village some great wrong. Dutem, whose

word always proved reliable, instanced several cases in which this method had succeeded. One of them, where the victim had been an Assamese shopkeeper on the frontier detected in swindling the hillmen, it was possible to check later. It may have been a coincidence, but the man had undoubtedly died unexpectedly shortly afterwards.

Priestesses are not uncommon in at least two of the Abor clans, and the writer had an interview with one of them when she was on her way to visit a village where there happened to be no *miru* and which was suffering from a bad epidemic of dysentery. She had only been proclaimed as a *miru* a couple of months before by the priests of her own community, having, she said, the qualifications necessary for her calling. One of these could be easily seen in her remarkable round brown eyes, which the Abors call "deer's eyes" and believe to be a sign of communion with the supernatural. The other essential is the power of falling into a convulsive frenzy which might be described as an epileptic fit, but which the hillmen hold to be a paroxysm of inspiration.

Abor *mirus* can be recognized both by the number of their necklaces and by their unusual ornaments, and this priestess was no exception. She wore a skirt but no upper garment, being quite well clothed instead in necklaces of long beads, green, yellow and blue in colour, with bunches of smaller round jingling bells on them, two large fluffy pink tassels that hung from her earrings, and a couple of old copper Tibetan bells about two inches long.

She was full of her new importance, and obviously pleased to see the interest shown in her calling. But a

child of twelve could not be expected to answer many questions about the ritual and folklore of her people and, as she was anxious to show what she could do, she offered to perform one of her religious dances with her three girl companions. The other girls stood in line to one side, and the little priestess began by shuffling round in a circle, her knees and feet close together, waving her arms gracefully and swaying slightly from side to side. She danced for a little, and then sang an invocation to the spirits of the river. The girls with her took up the chorus, taking parts really beautifully. Then she circled round again, stopped and sang another verse, with the chorus as before. And so the dance went on.

It was a cool, bright day, the sun was throwing dappled shadows on the grass under the trees and one seemed in fancy to have gone back two thousand years and more, watching a dance in some Greek village and listening to the choruses that perhaps are lost or, it may be, still survive in Gregorian music.

Among the Abors the nearest relation, a male being preferred, of a deceased *miru*, who possesses the required qualifications is proclaimed in his stead. The dead *miru's* own children are of course looked on as the nearest heirs, and the next in succession can apparently be his sister's son.

The Galongs do not seem to recognize a definite hereditary claim. But as priesthood with them can only go to someone who is well versed in both rituals and legends, the mantle of the prophet falls almost automatically on a near relative. There is a great deal of prestige and influence attached to the office, although there is surprisingly

little material gain. The Galong *mirus* do not wear distinctive ornaments, as in the Abor country. But since it is customary for grateful patients to give necklaces to the *mirus* on recovery from a severe illness, the Galong priests can sometimes be recognized by a noticeable number of these thank-offerings.

THE SMITH.—Almost every village of any size has its smithy. No raw minerals are worked, no ore is smelted, and the smiths rely entirely on imported metal.

There is certainly iron in these hills. When the writer was in the western Galong country he followed up a stream through a rock passage about three-quarters of a mile long, varying from four to twenty feet across, with the trees arching and interlacing their boughs a hundred and fifty feet overhead. In this rather remarkable feature there was every evidence of iron in considerable quantities.

These hillmen give us a modern illustration of the advance of a prehistoric people from their New Stone culture to metal. The first stage, as regards the Stone Age communities, was when they got hold of a few metal implements, and copied them in stone. The tribes of the Assam Tibetan border today use no stone implements, and consequently represent what may be taken as the second stage of prehistoric progress in the use of metals.

The hillmen in the north obtain (with other goods) metal articles of various kinds from Tibet in exchange for pelts and deer's horns. The more southerly communities import iron rods from Assam. The material to be used by the smiths gets distributed in the course of trade through

the country. Other metals are imported, but for all practical purposes the tribesmen are in the Iron Age.

By making castings with wax and clay moulds the smiths show some skill in working up the imported metal into knives of different sizes, swords, spears and arrow-heads, pipes, charms, brass bracelets and girdle discs, and *beyop* plates. The bellows are made of cylinders of large bamboos. There is no idea of a hereditary craft, nor any form of monopoly. Some communities specialize in either swords, *beyop* plates, or bracelets, which gives them a widespread reputation. Only a few craftsmen can, however, turn out this comparatively high-class work.

The best swords in the country come from Tibet. Most of these are kept by the northern communities, who copy them to barter with people further south. When the writer arrived at one of these northern villages, the headman, who was also the smith, appeared blackened with smoke from his forge. Swords are straight, single-edged and without a point. Those ordinarily made by the tribes are shorter than the Tibetan pattern and average about two feet six inches in length. The value of the weapon depends on the number of welding lines on the blade.

Considering the extent to which primitive peoples can use the materials they have at hand to create beautiful designs, the lack of artistic sense in these hill tribes is remarkable, and they appear to have little or no originality in evolving new forms. An intensely practical people, engineering in the construction of bridges and aqueducts is more in their line.

Their highest form of craftsmanship is seen in some of

the brass bracelets which it is the fashion for both sexes to wear. The best are deeply and clearly cut in what may be described as arabesque patterns, some not at all unlike geometric designs of the Old Stone Age.

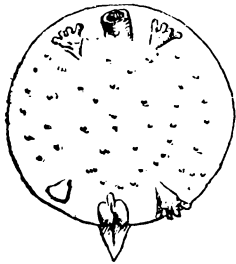
A very important part of the smith's business is making *beyops*. These are sometimes of brass, but far more commonly are made of broken pieces of *dankis*, which are large bowls imported in quantities from Tibet, and composed of a brittle grey alloy with a high proportion of antimony.

A man who wants some *beyop* plates for his family takes his own metal and, if possible, his own wax to the smith, who casts them according to his wishes. The plates are made in graduated sizes, from about three and a half inches in diameter downwards. The metal is melted down and pulled into a long wire. This is then coiled round into a flat disc. Melted metal is poured over it and the surface planed off neatly. A smaller disc is then welded on to the rim as a loop, so that the wearer can run a string through it to make up her girdle. The *beyop* plate is finished off with a pattern of lines through the centre, usually making a plain cross. The symbol of a circle surrounding a cross is the simplest form of the Wheel of Life as seen ornamenting the *dankis*.

Charms are made in various shapes and sizes, but these are the limitations of their art, which is confined to metal work. They cannot paint, they do not carve in stone, horn or bone, and wood they will have none of, though their country is almost invisible for the trees. Consequently, although the hillmen depend a good deal upon hunting, no representations of their quarry have been found

in any form. Their imitative magic is more direct. They have not the artistic inspiration of those Western Australian aborigines between whose vividly coloured rock paintings—described as totem portraits—and the far higher type of Stone Age art in Europe Sir James Frazer has drawn a striking comparison.¹ Perhaps it may be the absence in the hillmen of the inspiring urge of totemism.

Only three likenesses of any living thing were seen in the country, and almost every Abor and Galong village of any size was visited. All three were flat objects in metal.



23. *Tortoise
in copper*

Two were circular bronze charms in the form of tortoises, about three inches across. All the animal's anatomical details were carefully reproduced, and the flat disc-like bodies were raised on their legs about a quarter-inch from the ground. The charms were of considerable age, and there is no proof and a certain amount of doubt as

to whether they were made in the country.

The third example is the only known attempt to copy Western ideas. A smith in a village near the plains found a tailor's advertisement torn from an English newspaper. He reproduced in cast-iron the figure of a man in a lounge suit, and the result was singularly unfortunate. But the caricature of a white man's face and figure was certainly not meant as deliberate satire.²

There is one other industry which brings trade between

¹ *Totemica*, Sir James Frazer (London, 1937), pp. 150, 151.

² For a collection of what might be considered as primitive artistic satires on Western people see *The Savage Hits Back*, Professor J. E. Lips (London, 1937).

otherwise isolated communities. In the open and prosperous centre of the country there are Galong and Abor villages where pottery is extensively made, and bartered with neighbouring clans. The Galong earthenware is of grey clay, that made by the Abors is red. As the tribes had not learnt the use of the potter's wheel up to the time when the country was closed, the ware was found to be coarse and rough. The pots are kneaded and beaten out with a stone and stick before they are fired. Everything else made by the tribesmen comes under the heading of purely household industries.

FAMILY LIFE.—These primitive people are seen at their best in their family life. The position and influence of women is remarkable in spite of the fact that they do not inherit property. The general affection and care of children throughout the hills is manifest, and the hardest manual labour is done by the men. Their womenkind undertake the task of weeding the fields when the crops are about two feet high; and at harvest-time lines of women strip off the grain into conical baskets slung on the right thigh.

But more often than not the women are to be found at home, where they cook the dinner and brew the beer, spin and weave, and in southern parts of the country work pretty designs in bands on their skirts, plait mats of screw-pine leaves, and make open-work baskets. Out on the fields the father of the family will cheerfully mind the baby if necessary, and small girls in the village may be seen ordering their younger brothers and sisters about in the usual manner. Elder girls carry the little ones about, occasionally

straddling them on their hip, but generally pick-a-back in the cloth they wind round the upper part of their bodies.

There is not much difference in the way children amuse themselves all the world over. Small Abor boys play at soldiers fighting hand to hand with little wooden swords, spears and shields. They have no catapults, but they use peashooters with berries for peas, and shoot with toy bows and arrows. When there is sickness in the village the children play at doctors, or rather *mirus*, with great zest, making small imitations of the copper heirlooms which their elders bring out for funerals. Cat's-cradle has been seen in some southern villages, knot tricks are known, and the game of knuckle-bones played with pebbles is very popular.

EDUCATION.—When a boy is nine or ten his father begins his education by telling him the past history of his people. The bias of the national historian may be betrayed in the Abor version of the occupation of the country. “Abors, Galongs and Mishmis [their neighbours on either side] all came from the stone of creation in the north and settled down together in the wide part of the [Brahmaputra] valley. But suddenly the Abors drew their swords and frightened the Mishmis to their wild hills and the Galongs away to the west.”

The story of creation, as universally believed by these hillmen, is this. Long ago a huge rock fell from the sky and came to earth in the main valley in the north of the country. This rock was hollow. Out of the rock came Pedong the Rain, then all the different animals, and, last

of all, the first men, women and children. The Stone of Creation was soft when it came down although it is hard rock now, and the footprints of the animals and the first of the human race are there to this day. Strewn round the rocks are the pebbles the children bit and played with; and because the rocks were so soft in those days, the marks of their teeth and tiny fingers are still to be seen.

The Abors call the first man Nibo Yasi. A grandson of the Rain, he was the "father of all flesh" and the first of singers and dancers. From Pedong the lesser spirits who haunt the world are also descended. Nibo's younger brother invented cloth-weaving and went away north to become the first Tibetan.

Boys are taught a little at a time, not being told more until the previous lesson is word perfect, and in this way a knowledge of their ancestry that would otherwise be lost is kept alive in the tribes. There is no special religious teaching, but the rising generation pick up as much as is necessary for them to know by watching the various ceremonies.

Their arithmetic is simple. Four fingers and a thumb make 5, both hands spread out are 10, and the number 20 is shown by slightly lowering both hands, fingers apart, towards the feet. The numerals consequently run up to 10, and then through 10+1, 10+2, up to "two tens," and so on to 100. Very few hillmen can realize higher numbers than these. Lorrain¹ gives *li-yinko* for 1000, but it was

¹ *Dictionary of the Abor-Miri Language*, J. H. Lorrain (Shillong, 1910), which refers only to the dialects spoken by the foothill settlements that are in touch with Assam.

invariably found to be used quite indiscriminately for any number much above 100, and might perhaps be better translated as any "astronomical" figure. For a sum involving higher numbers than 20, the hillmen use short sticks for their calculations, tied up in bundles of five.

The settlements nearest the plains have borrowed from Assam the "group of four" method for small amounts, counting the joints and tip of the finger with the thumb, up to 32. But this way of counting was not seen in the interior.

Distances, it may here be said, are measured either as "a day's journey" or by pointing to the position the sun will be in when the destination is reached.

The earth is believed to be a disc with mountains on it, while round the rim there flows a great river. The sun disappears daily under the earth beyond the Dafla country and rises again next day east of the Mishmi hills. The Tibetans live in the far north, and south of the tribal country is a flat plain on which, amongst its other inhabitants, are two small tribes of white men.

Astronomy in the minds of the hillmen is bound up with their religious beliefs. There are several versions of their explanation, none of them varying on the essential point, for the origin of the sun and moon, and the most detailed of these come more suitably into the description of their religion. But the simplest story, as told in an Abor village, is that there were two suns, and that a god, to lessen the scorching heat, took his bow and shot an arrow at one of them and killed it. So its blazing light faded into the pale fire of the moon.

The more intelligent hillmen have their definite ideas of astronomy. The great difficulty was to combine a clear night with the presence of a man who was interested in the subject. There are names for a number of the larger stars and planets; and the Milky Way is described as "the meeting of the rain and the cold weather," as it is straight overhead in September. Most interesting of all is their identification of Orion's Belt as the bow and quiver of the Archer god.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.—Perhaps the best part of the day for the children is when the head of the family gets back in the evening from hunting or from the fields, and settles down on his little log seat beside the hearth. His wife has put away her loom for the night, the firelight flickers on the faces of the children gathered round it, and almost everyone is smoking. The time has come for the most primitive Children's Hour in the world.

The tales that are told are nearly all about animals, and, without making any comparison, are in the vein of Kipling's *Just-So Stories*. A particularly interesting Abor story is "How the Elephant came to look like an Elephant." This animal is not to be found in the country today, though they are fairly common west and east, in the Dafla and Mishmi hills. Two wild elephants were on one occasion seen by the writer just outside the gorge of the Brahmaputra, and some teeth were dug up about eighteen miles inside the hills; but that is all.

This is the story. "There was once a stupid young elephant who so annoyed his mother that one day she hit

him in the face with an axe. She tried all she could to get it out, but it stuck there and she had to leave it. The axe didn't seem to hurt the elephant, and after a time the handle grew and grew until it became the trunk he now finds so handy. But the young elephant remained as stupid and clumsy as ever. And once, when they were cleaning rice together, Mother Elephant picked up the two winnowing fans, one in each hand, and smacked him hard over the head with them. She smacked him so hard that they stuck there too, and became the large flapping ears he has had ever since. But even this did not make him better, and one day when he had been unusually tiresome and provoking his mother threw the tongs at him. They stuck too, and presently became his tusks.

“This was more than the young elephant could stand, so he went away to live by himself. He walked so far that his feet and what had been his hands (until the way became so bad that he had to scramble on all-fours) got swollen enormously. And they have stayed that size. Podgy, like wooden rice pounders.”

Then the Abor father winds up with: “Now if you are all very good and not stupid and clumsy like that young elephant, I'll take you some day to see the enormous marks of the elephant's enormous feet.”

Another story is about the monkeys, who swing in troops high up in the trees, breaking the stillness of the forest as they crash along the branches. “Long ago men and monkeys were almost alike, neither wore clothes and both had bows and arrows. At first they lived peacefully together, but afterwards they fought. One day, when the

monkeys were trying to catch fish by throwing stones at them from the branches above a pool, the men came up unnoticed. First they took the monkeys' bows and knotted and tied the cane strings so that they were useless. Then they took the fish the monkeys had already caught and put them in their satchels. After that they rushed at the monkeys with their swords. The startled monkeys ran to their weapons but found that they were useless, for the strings were too short for the bows. Many of the monkeys were killed and the rest ran away. But the men followed them and called out saying that they wanted to make peace. And at last the monkeys came back again.

“The terms of peace were that the monkeys should no longer live in houses, as they had before, but in trees; and the men burnt all their houses. After this they all gathered for a feast, the men and the monkeys that had not been killed. The feast was held in the trunk of an enormous hollow tree for which the men had made a huge door of great strong branches. Presently everyone started singing, and while this was going on the men said they had to go and get the food. But when all the men were safely outside they shut the big strong door and fastened it and then set fire to the tree. The monkeys could not get out and were burnt to death. All but one, that escaped with its face all black and burnt. That is why monkeys nowadays have no weapons, nor any houses, and why their faces are all black.”

Some of the children's stories might not be thought quite suitable for broadcasting, but before leaving the Abor family circle one more tale may be told. Unlike the

two given above, it takes its hearers into the supernatural world, among the spirits of the water and the air.

There were two stars, brother and sister, who married and had a son. He died and fell from the sky, as a shooting star, into the water and was carried down with the stream. Now one of the water spirits had set a trap for fish, and in this the star was caught. The water spirit took it out and ate it. Then the bat, who is the usual intermediary and tale-bearer both in Abor and Galong stories, told the stars what had happened to their son. So there was war between the stars and the dwellers in the water. The fishes and the frogs came out of the water and began to climb up the rocks towards the stars—very slowly, for they kept sliding and falling back into the water. Presently the stars began to shoot their arrows at them, and the frogs and the fishes tried to shelter behind the rocks and stones as the arrows went by. But they could not cover themselves altogether, and the arrows speeding past gashed and grazed them on either side. And this gave to the fish the gills they have to this day.

MUSIC.—The hillmen are a musical race. They sing choruses rather like our chanties as they climb the steep forest tracks or cross their bridges. The dancing of the village girls, which can be most impressive, is religious in character and will be described later. Their best music is heard in part-singing, and is not accompanied by the two musical instruments that are made in the country, the gourd-pipe and what might be called the Abor harp. They make no percussion instruments themselves, and the drums,

gongs and cymbals occasionally seen throughout the hills are imported from Tibet.

The most usual instrument is the gourd-pipe. Its body is of one of the small bulbous gourds with hollow pipe-like stems which, when cut lengthways, are used as beer ladles. The stem is nine to ten inches long. Four reeds are thrust into the bulb of the gourd, three of them in a line and at right angles to the fourth, which is nearer the stem. The hollow reeds have respectively three, five, five and seven notches cut in them. The notes produced are like those of a chanter.

The Abor harp is a bamboo splinter with its centre cut into a tongue, and two pieces of thin fibre. It is played by twisting one string round the first joint of the forefinger of the left hand until the bamboo slip almost touches the finger. The convex side of the "harp" is then put against the teeth and the second string pulled with the right hand. This must be done in short jerks and in exact prolongation of the bamboo slip. The vibration of the bamboo tongue makes the music.

GIRLS AND MARRIAGE.—Infant marriage is unknown. But some remarks of a Dafla headman led the writer to infer that intercourse between the sexes begins at the earliest possible age. Before a girl definitely decides upon the man she would like to marry, what we would call misconduct with the young men of the village is not considered wrong. There seems to be no objection to her favouring any lads of her own group, but the birth of a child if the father is within that group is strongly depre-

cated. In one Abor village it was learnt that the custom is for the man to marry the first girl who has a child by him, provided that there is no consanguinity bar. He is under no obligation or contract as regards any other girl with whom he may have consorted, and the birth of a child to any of them is not considered a disgrace that would hinder their subsequent marriage.

The choice of a girl from a group (clan section) with which a man is permitted to marry can be wide enough in a village of any size. The headmen of two of the biggest villages in the whole Abor country told the writer that their communities contained respectively sixteen and twenty sections of the clan to which they themselves belonged. In the powerful Abor clan occupying the most northerly area that is not influenced by Tibet, and whose actual villages are smaller than those further south, thirty-nine clan sections in all were enumerated. Proportionately fewer sections were found among the Galongs, but in that tribe more or less similar conditions exist.

It has been said that a man cannot marry a blood relation of his own group. In technical language the Galongs, Abors and Mishmis are exogamous; and although it was not possible to go thoroughly into the matter in the Dafla country, there is good reason to believe that the same practice is followed by that tribe. A man chooses his wife from his mother's people, who are usually of his own clan, but even intertribal marriages are known to occur. A man may not marry his sister (being of the same blood) nor his mother. If his mother has a married brother he can marry a daughter of the marriage.

When he marries, a man incurs the obligation to provide, from among his immediate relations, a wife for some member of his bride's family. This arrangement is due to the comparative scarcity of women and is rigidly enforced by communities in which men are in a marked majority. By exchanging brides and so maintaining the proportion of the two sexes, the plurality of husbands known as polyandry, which is common amongst certain hill peoples, is avoided.

In villages where the poverty of the country makes existence terribly hard, one wife is practically the invariable rule. Where conditions are easier, two wives are not unusual, and there is nothing to prevent a man marrying two sisters simultaneously. There are different words for "first" and "second" wife in Abor, and another word is the general term for "wife." But no word was found for a third one. The usual reply to an inquiry on this subject was that two were as many as a man could possibly afford.

When a man takes a fancy to a girl he visits her in the girls' dormitory, if there is one, or else at her parents' house. The presence of the other girls in the dormitory, or the family in her own home, apparently causes no embarrassment, but it gives rise to the observance of some etiquette. If the girl feels kindly disposed, she simply remains quiet when her visitor enters. If, on the other hand, he is unwelcome, she makes up the fire into a blaze, gives the youth a drink of millet beer and sends him away.

As soon as a girl definitely decides upon her future husband, the successful suitor gets her parents' consent to the match through his nearest relations, who act as inter-

mediaries. From then onwards a girl ceases all promiscuous intercourse and her only visitor is the man to whom she is engaged.

As an engagement token the girl may wear a thin cane loop at her throat, or the couple may break a long bead, each keeping half. When the contract is made, the man is not only expected to give the girl's father occasional presents of fish and game, but he undertakes to pay him compensation for the loss of his daughter's services. This payment, which is made in instalments, may take almost any form, from cattle, Tibetan bowls or swords to squirrel skins. Until this is fully paid up, the two live with and work for their own parents however long the time may be and irrespective of the birth of any children. It is, moreover, the custom for the bridegroom to work for a season on his father-in-law's fields before the couple set up for themselves. Either party can break the engagement, but the girl would do so at the risk of being sold into slavery by an angry parent.

When an Abor couple are in a position to start their married life together, the villagers build a house for them as a wedding-present; and if the bridegroom can afford it he gives a house-warming party at which there is unusually heavy drinking. No special religious rites in connexion with marriage have been discovered.

An Abor woman who is expecting a baby must not eat Doric pheasant, for it is believed that its meat causes spots and markings on the child. This unfortunate result can be avoided by sacrificing one of these birds. Other communities prohibit different birds as well. Nor may a

woman in this condition kill a snake or a frog, for the baby might be born with a darting snake-like tongue or crooked limbs. Were she to drink water from the leaves of the wild potato plant the child would have defective eyesight. For this the Abors affirm there is no antidote. Twins are very rare, and considered extremely unlucky. As double fruit, especially plantains, are supposed to bring them, all double fruit is shunned by both sexes until age makes the precaution unnecessary. The arrival of twins is said to be foreshadowed if the expectant mother dreams that she has been given two knives. Mortality is heavy in child-birth.¹

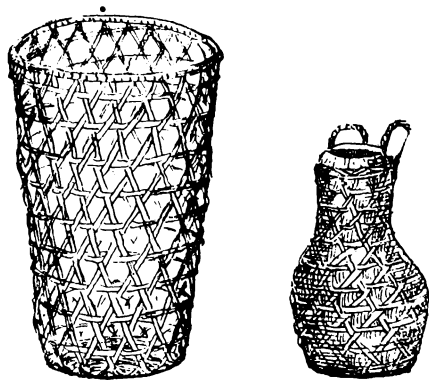
The hillmen always strongly denied that they practised infanticide. On the one hand they live in a country where expansion is still quite feasible, and fairly large families are an asset in the heavy task of cultivation. But it is remarkable, if these unanimous statements are true, that only three cases of what might be called deformity were seen throughout the country. Two were perfectly well-developed women dwarfs. The other was a headman with six toes whose arithmetic, it was felt, could hardly be trusted.

On the day a child is born, well-to-do Abor parents give a feast to all the village children. There are no religious ceremonies at child-birth beyond the ritual offering of a fowl by the mother. She does this at the end of her purification ceremonies, which last for periods varying up to ten days in the different tribes. For three days after her baby is born the mother is not allowed to cook or even touch the fireplace.

¹ Details of birth practices are given in *Abors and Galongs*, Dunbar, pp. 57, 58.

Either parent can name the child, but it is usually done by the father. The question of names was only closely examined in the Abor country, and naming customs are known to vary. In the most important Abor clan genealogical research showed that the same prefix to what may be termed the surname is handed down from father to son. To give an example of this custom, Dutem of Ledum was descended from Dudi through Duyur, Dusi, Dugan and Dugong. All Abor men have two names, their birth-name as above and the name by which they are commonly called. For instance, Derang's son Dering was always known as Taring. The same rule appears to apply to women.

GOODS AND CHATTELS.—Household possessions can be divided into two groups, the purely domestic gear and the articles that pass as currency throughout the country.



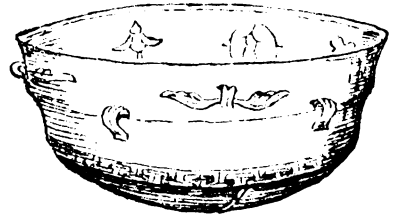
24. *Basket and wicker-covered Gourd*

The first group include the modern brassware obtained from Assam, looms and spinning gear, sections of bamboo for holding water, earthenware of a crude kind, mats (usually of screw-pine) and cane basket-work of various descriptions and generally very well made. The highest forms

of wealth are slaves, cattle and the greatly prized Tibetan bowls. These are followed in value as currency by gongs, bells and other Tibetan copper work, and necklaces of old porcelain beads. It is impossible to convert the tribal

currency into our money. In the country itself demand and supply, size and workmanship, and the prevalent ideas in different localities all cause variations in the exchange value of any article. The value of a gong is assessed not by its diameter but by the depth of metal at right angles to the face.

The Tibetan bowls (*dankis*) are small copies in inferior metal of the great copper cauldrons in which tea is brewed on high days in the great square at Lhasa. Even those that are poor imitations are infinitely superior in craftsmanship and much bigger than anything the tribal smiths can make. The bowls are cast and usually measure $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter at the mouth (narrowing to about 15 inches) by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth. The outside of the rim is provided with cleats for carrying the bowl, which are a great convenience to the hillmen when he wants to "spend" one in a country where anything at all large must be taken on a man's back. Round the inside of the bowl there are eight, or sometimes seven, Tibetan symbols: the Wheel of Life, the White Umbrella, the Fish, the Pot of Treasure, the Lotus, the Conch Shell, the (so-called) Noose of Love and the Armorial Flag of Victory.



25. *Danki*

SLAVES.—Slavery is admittedly human bondage. But its conditions vary enormously. They do not necessarily imply the horrors and misery that could exist into the nineteenth century under Western civilization. As Daryll

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

Forde remarks,¹ on the Yoruba State to the south-west of the Niger, its large slave population, ranging from domestics and cultivators up to high State officials, seems to have been contented and relatively secure until the European slave-trade led to the development of raiding for their capture and the cruelties involved in export. So wholesale were the demands of the slave-trade that there were imported from Africa between 1680 and 1786 into the British American and West Indian colonies alone, a total of 2,130,000 negroes,² the survivors of the journey to the coast. This gives an annual average exceeding by 2500 the present population of the county of Rutland. Nor does the system as seen among primitive peoples at the present day possibly inflict cruelty in any way comparable with the unspeakable conditions of technically free women and children in the coal mines of Great Britain before Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, came to their rescue in 1842.

Throughout the Galong and Abor tribes, slaves are well looked after. They live in the house and they feed with the family, from whom they may be quite indistinguishable to the visitor. It by no means follows that a man wearing bracelets is a free man and a man without them is a slave. A capable and energetic slave has an assured position, he is listened to and his advice may be followed. In fact, on one occasion the leading spirit of the "reception committee" on the writer's arrival in a village was found later to be a slave in the headman's house.

¹ *Habitat, Economy and Society*, p. 160.

² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Art. "Slavery."

There are two kinds of slave, temporary and permanent. Anyone who has become a slave through inability to pay a fine inflicted for some offence can be freed by the subsequent payment of the amount due. This seems to be the only form of emancipation. Otherwise the rule, "Once a slave, always a slave," appears to hold good.

To turn to the preponderating majority, those in permanent slavery. A male slave has a right to a wife, and if there is no suitable girl in his owner's household, the master is under the strict obligation to buy one for him. The children of a slave marriage are slaves and the property of their master. The intermarriage of free people and slaves is against custom, and if, as has been said, it can take place, would only occur among the poorest of the community. The evidence on this point is unsatisfactory, and if the practice exists the act of marriage might be presumed to free the slave. Moreover, the marriage settlement received by a bride's father is on a sliding scale payable by instalments, and can be so small that it is hardly conceivable that a man too poor to get a free girl for himself could compensate the owner of the slave girl he wanted to marry. Nor would a father be at all likely to give his daughter to a slave husband. But it is possible that a man wooing *in forma pauperis* might remain free himself and become as it were supernumerary to the establishment in which his wife still remains a slave. This is, however, pure speculation based on what is known of tribal conditions.

The master of the house has the power of life and death over his slaves. The killing of a slave in sudden

anger has been known, in exceedingly rare instances, to occur, to the strong disapproval of the community, which does not, however, consider it to be a punishable offence. It was said in the Galong country that the way of inflicting capital punishment on a hopelessly refractory slave would be to hang him. No instances were given, and this extreme measure was said to be hardly if ever taken, for, as someone remarked: "Why destroy a belonging that could be exchanged for good value in a distant village." If a slave is habitually lazy or runs away, he is beaten or put in the stock. The most careful inquiry failed to elicit any evidence, direct or indirect, that slaves are, or ever have been, sacrificed to the war-god or any other spirit.

Slaves are made, though infrequently, in what may be called course of law, when a crime has been committed and the offender is unable to pay the fine imposed on him, or when a girl refuses to fulfil a contract of marriage. A far more prolific source is the birth of children to slaves.

A foreign element is brought into the villages by importation. Very occasionally in the past successful raiding parties carried off some Assamese children from hamlets near the foothills, but the numbers were never appreciable. The regular slave-trade has always been far more certain and productive. Both Galongs and Abors get slaves from one of the poorer Dafla clans whose members are said habitually to sell their children. The Abors also get slaves from the wilder of the Mishmi communities. While prisoners taken in war are sometimes sent south by the tribes on the slopes of the Main Snowy Range to the Galongs and Abors.

MORALITY AND TRIBAL LAW.—The accepted moral standard before marriage is certainly an easy one, and it becomes almost startlingly lax in the north. But married people, especially so far as the wives are concerned, remain very faithful to each other. Adultery is rare, though not of course unknown. Both among the Galongs and Abors discrimination is shown in awarding punishment for this offence. If it is found that the man pestered and tempted the woman, he is judged the guilty party and heavily fined in livestock, Tibetan bowls or other valuables, the injured husband receiving the damages. If the offender is too poor to pay a suitable amount, he is sold into slavery to meet the fine. If the woman is held to blame, she is liable to be publicly punished in what these communities consider an appropriate manner, or beaten and placed in permanent servitude. Persons guilty of habitual misconduct are sold into slavery. The Mishmi code appears to be similar.

The Daflas are said to punish a case of illicit intercourse between a free girl and a slave by driving a stake through the man's body and throwing him into the river; but there is not the necessary corroboration for this statement. Divorce, except in cases of adultery, is unknown. For if a union is going to be barren this will become obvious during the lengthy engagement, which the man would then break off.

In the Galong and Abor tribes the sentence for murder is a heavy fine made over to the murdered man's relations as compensation, or slavery in default of payment. In the Mishmi villages the "life for a life" idea of justice, with its

resulting blood-feuds, is general. But it seems that even the more primitive Abors do not favour personal revenge, although possibly a feud between two communities, about which close inquiry was made, was due to his village taking up the cause of the murdered man.

The people in these hills are strikingly honest. The writer never experienced even a petty case of pilfering, although safe opportunities were endless. The one form of stealing noticed was cattle-lifting, an offence which no highlander should judge too harshly. If a cattle reiver is caught, he is fined in proportion to the number of beasts he was driving off. If he is unable to pay this at once, he is kept a prisoner until it is paid or, so it was said in the Galong country, for a period of about ten years. In one of the largest Galong villages the writer saw a man who was imprisoned for cattle-stealing. His foot was thrust into a short log like a movable stock, which was fastened to his wrist by a rope; the usual method of confining prisoners.

If the prisoner is not caught, but his identity is strongly suspected, the aggrieved owner takes matters into his own hands. He and his friends go over to the presumed offender's village, and seizing a favourable opportunity, satisfy the local idea of justice by seizing any personal property of the suspect's he can find, or even an inmate of his house. If, as in practice usually happens, some entirely innocent person suffers, it rests with the latter to adjust the balance at the expense of the original offender.

Village trials take the form of ordeals, and there are recognized places outside the group of houses where these

are held. The whole community need not be present. The accuser challenges the accused to get an egg out of a bamboo tube of water boiling on the fire. A screen is allowed to guard the face. If the accused's hand is scalded he is held to be guilty.

Affirmation is commonly made by pointing to the sky and stamping on the ground, to call both these elements to witness. Another form of attestation that has been frequently seen is to eat a little earth, point to the sun and say: "May the earth swallow me and the sun burn me if I lie." The most solemn form of oath is to swear by the sun and the earth, lay hold of the horn of a mithan and say: "May this animal's horn pierce me if I am false."

By the tribal laws of inheritance the eldest son gets two-thirds of his father's property and the youngest son the remainder. The other sons are left nothing and may have to depend upon their more fortunate brothers. If they are grown-up and married they have, of course, their own houses, and a share in the fields and the hunting rights of the community. Daughters inherit nothing at all, at least in theory. If there are no sons, the nearest male relation is considered the heir and consequently performs the funeral ceremonies of the deceased head of the family. It appears that the heir takes over the responsibility of supporting the widow or widows.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

On the Tibetan Border

AGRICULTURE under a system of family freeholds is in these hills what industrialism under capitalist control is in England, the main occupation and support of the population. The tribes have flocks and herds, but they are in no sense a pastoral people like the Poba nomads over the main range to the north. Every community has its hunting area, as skins are needed for clothing, as well as the meat for food. In the poorer parts of the country the people rely to a far greater extent upon hunting, but the hill people, low though their standards of living in the wilder hills may be, cannot be classed as merely hunters and food-collectors. Crops consequently vary in quantity and quality, from the great agricultural prosperity of the main Galong valley to the miserable attempts at raising a harvest in the northern Mishmi glens.

FARMING.—The foothill settlements have to some extent adopted Assamese methods. Some of the Galong farms have the appearance, in an open, rolling valley, of permanent holdings, with their substantial wooded cattle fences about five feet high. But with these exceptions the tribes sow their crops broadcast in clearings they make in the forest with infinite labour; only to move on to fresh woods when these fields degenerate. For

the system followed is not one of rotation of crops but of forest.

The headman decides on the tract to turn into fields, preferably along the top of a spur. The wide flat-topped spur owned by the largest northern Abor community was seen to be cleared of trees—an area roughly estimated at four miles by three—only a part being under cultivation at the time. Farming is not attempted at a greater height than about five thousand five hundred feet, and sometimes, as in the Mishmi country, patches of cultivation are seen on an incredibly steep hillside. Men of the village turn out chiefly with large knives, axes being scarce, to cut the undergrowth, fell the trees and get rid of everything except the fallen trunks by burning. This is how fields are also made in the Naga hills, and writers on Assam call the method “jhuming” and the fields “jhums.” The Abor word for a “jhum” is *a-rik*.

The family allotments are then portioned off and divided from each other by charred logs, which are the usual foot-paths through the fields. If a family is unable to work its own land, an arrangement is made with some other household, who work the plot instead, giving a proportion of the crop as rent; or labourers may be hired on a food wage.

The number of years that a clearing is farmed can vary considerably. It has been noticed that an *a-rik* is not nearly so clean in its second year, in spite of industrious weeding. The seasons that a site is cultivated before it is abandoned may be from one to five; three being the usual period. On the deserted fields creepers and saplings kill

the grasses which cannot grow in the shade, and so by re-forestation they become ready to be cultivated once more. Within the radius of a group of large villages the old clearing may be used again in four or five years, but abandoned fields have been seen near small communities that must have been twenty years old.

The ground when cleared is scratched to the depth of a few inches with long knives or pointed sticks. The grain is then sown. However steep the ground, terracing is unknown, and there is no wet rice cultivation nearer than the Pemako valley of south-eastern Tibet to the north and the plain of Assam to the south. Rice, millet and job's tears are all sown broadcast together. The only exceptions anywhere seen were that the Abor villagers in touch with Assam dibbled in their rice in clumps by hand, and in the south Galong country separate fields of maize are grown.

These are the only agricultural improvements made by the tribes on their own primitive methods. With the importation of metal from Tibet and the introduction of the loom from Assam, this completes the contribution made by neighbours of a higher culture to a secluded and backward race. It may perhaps be taken to illustrate one of the ways in which a prehistoric people assimilated more advanced ideas. The other way in which an advance in culture was made in the New Stone period and the early ages of metal was by racial migration; and Britain experienced both methods. The tribes south of Tibet, however, happen to live in country which no civilized race would be tempted to annex.

To return to tribal farming. Rice is the staple Abor and Galong cereal, millet and Indian corn that of the Mishmis. The Daflas, at least so they told the writer, grow about five times as much millet (from which incidentally they also brew their hill beer) as they do rice. There are two rice crops from an early and late sowing, and the harvests are gathered in about May and October. Millet and job's tears ripen more slowly and the second millet crop is not ready till December. Chillies, cucumbers and pumpkins are grown in quantities in the southern districts and a certain amount of black dal and pepper.

The fields are protected if necessary from the herds of village cattle by building stout fences round them, provided with stiles, which are strongly made sloping ladders. Birds are scared by setting up bamboo poles, to which lines are tied with bunches of leaves to swing in the wind. Jungle fowl are kept off the crops by putting lines of fresh plantain leaves round them. The Mishmis use bird scares on lines that are not unlike the tin protectors on the telephone wires across a grouse moor. Small huts are built on the fields at harvest time for the owners to live in if the village is some distance away.

After the grain has been stripped from the stalks by hand the straw is cut and burnt. The grain goes to the granaries grouped outside every village for storage until required. The granaries are like thatched dovecots perched on posts about eight feet high, with big wooden discs about half-way up to keep out the rats.

Besides food-stuffs the hillmen grow cotton, and this was found almost the whole way up the main valley. The

time for sowing it in the southern districts is April, and it is picked in October. Wax for the smith's moulds is collected in May and June.

The tobacco crop is of considerable importance as the people are inveterate smokers. They light their pipes with quartz, or other crystals, and iron, catching the spark on cotton fluff. This outfit is carried in an oblong leather pouch with the hair outside to keep the contents dry. Under the pouch an iron striker is fitted.

It is to this smoking requisite that the writer owes the first folklore he heard in these hills. It was translated to him sentence by sentence by the British official who had taken him on this trip. We were sitting beside a fire in a Dafla village while the headman filled his corn-cob pipe to join the "tobacco parliament." But instead of lighting up he kept his pouch in his hand and told the following story:

"Very long ago Fire fought Water, and all the green things living in the forest, to whom Water was life, helped their friend against Fire, the enemy. So Fire got the worst of it and ran away, while Water rose steadily out of its bed in the valley and followed Fire all the time steadily up the mountain side. Presently Fire reached the top of the mountain and flickered there. It could go no further. Water had risen and risen and covered all the low hills and filled all the glens. And now it was lapping against the topmost peak where Fire had taken refuge. Then, just as Water began to break over the very top of the mountain, and it seemed that Fire must be drowned and die, it darted as a last refuge into a stone." As he said this the headman

struck his crystal and iron sharply together and a spark flashed out. "There," he said, "it is—in the stone for ever—the servant of man."

All the communities own herds of mithan (small domesticated short-horned cattle) and a number of pigs and tame jungle fowl (bantams), not as a common stock but as personal property. The southern Galongs also keep herds of red cattle, a very good stamp of beast similar to those seen in the plains. Goats are hardly ever seen in the Abor country, but they are plentiful in Dafla and Galong villages. None of the tribes milk their cattle. They use them for purposes of exchange, and mithan are eaten at ceremonial feasts.

HUNTING.—The hunting-grounds of a village are defined by natural features, and hold a great variety of animal life. Monkeys (including the langur), tiger, bear, leopard, sambhur and barking deer, pig, serow, otters, a most interesting series of squirrels, rats and bats are found either in the foothills or further north. Along the Main Snowy Range takin are met with in herds of thirty or more as low as ten thousand feet in June.

Birds are found in great variety, but the traveller misses the song-birds of the English countryside. There are jungle fowl, khalij pheasants and hill partridges, hawks and greater and lesser hornbills. Snakes and land crustacea are plentiful. Fish swarm in the rivers and fresh-water prawns in the streams.

With the exception of tigers that are trapped only, and birds that are, of course, snared, animals are not only

trapped but are hunted by large parties armed with bows and arrows, and the quarry is systematically driven. Dogs are regularly used in hunting and are highly valued not only for this purpose but as companions. The breed is like a very big smooth-haired terrier, the Abor dogs being black and white and the Dafla reddish-yellow and white.

There are various kinds of trap. Wild pig especially are taken in pits four to six feet deep with sharp stakes at the bottom. The mouth of the trap is covered with branches and leaves. A favourite trap in the Dafla country, and one used by the Nagas not only for game but in inter-village warfare, is the spear-trap, which is let off by a pull on the cane rope set across a game run. A typical Dafla trap would have a haft about three feet six inches long, fitted with a broad head of poisonous bamboo well hardened and sharpened in the fire. Rat traps are flat stones supported on sticks over the bait. Birds are taken in a noose bow-trap, and are baited with berries or bunches of ripe corn. Trapping is mostly done when there is little or no work for the men in the fields.

A party going out hunting often use a simple form of divination, requiring no *miru*, to see if the expedition will be successful.

One of the men gets thirty-six small stones and, while he shakes them in his hands, breathes on them and wishes the expedition success. The "fortune" of the trip is then read by trickling out little piles of pebbles haphazard, first in three heaps and then, by taking stones from these, in three lines of three heaps each. Success or failure is seen in the numbers remaining in certain combinations of heaps,

the first pile—at the top left-hand corner—representing the prospective bag. The number of rows of stones was found to vary in the different villages. The method, which was carefully noted,¹ is not only highly complicated, but was thought at the time to be as open to cheating as any game of patience. Nevertheless an ultimate combination of two stones in the “bag” and three in the heap immediately below it is firmly believed to be ill-omened enough to cancel the expedition for the day.

After a party has gone out hunting it is believed that ill-fortune will come if beer is brewed or game cooked by the women of the household. This is an interesting parallel to the tabooed acts given by Frazer² prohibiting the wife from eating flesh during the absence of her husband. Ill-luck is warded off, that is to say, the spirit of evil fortune is driven away, by waving about the branches of a tree. This, it is said, need not necessarily be done by a *miru*.

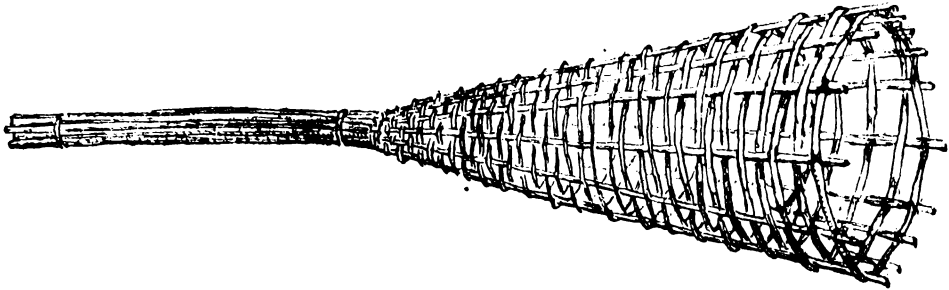
When a hunting party goes out its members sometimes follow what is an invariable custom before a raiding expedition, and shoot arrows at a special tree near the village.³ When the party returns, the bag, with the exception of tigers which are never eaten, is laid out on short stakes run into the ground close together for this purpose. The game is then distributed and taken into the village to be used as food. When an animal is killed with poisoned arrows, the flesh round the wound is cut out at once, and the rest of the carcase can be safely eaten.

¹ *Abors and Galongs*, pp. 46, 73.

² “Golden Bough” Part II. Ch. IV. Section 6.

³ For a parallel custom see “The Golden Bough,” *Magic Art*, Vol. II. p. 11.

In the rapid streams of the Dafla, Galong, Abor and Mishmi hills fish are caught by building dams either of plantain stems or strong hurdle-work into which are fixed conical baskets, from two feet six inches to four feet across at the mouth, which, of course, face upstream. The fish are driven into the baskets and the rush of water prevents



26. *Fish Trap*

them from finding their way out. In the big rivers where dams would be impossible, especially on the higher reaches of the Brahmaputra, large baskets are hung out in the water on cane lines at the end of big bamboos. Only in the Abor settlements in the Assam valley itself are casting nets made and used. They were never seen in the hills.

The writer was shown an amusing way of making a respectable catch of prawns when he was out with a party of Abors. As in nearly all the pursuits of a primitive people, the forest supplied the necessary outfit. We began by hunting for fat white grubs in the stems of fallen plantains. When enough of these had been collected, we went down to a woodland stream where the bottom of the pools were thick with brown fallen leaves. Along the banks there were bushes growing, which the Abors call *ko-i*. This is a most useful shrub, which is used in religious rites.

On this occasion one of its broad leaves made a landing net, and the stalk and fibres of another were soon turned into the equivalent to a rod, line and several casts all in one. A grub was tied with a slip-knot to the end of each long tough fibre. The grubs were then allowed to sink gently to the bottom of a likely pool. Whenever a prawn came jerkily out of its lair and fastened on to a grub, it had to be lifted through the water and into the air very slowly and carefully. If there was the slightest jerk the prawn let go before the landing leaf could be slipped under it with the left hand.

There is in Abor folklore a story of hunting and fishing which refers back to the first man on the earth.

“After the creation Nibu the father of all flesh and Robo the father of all spirits one day set their traps in the river. Robo set his facing upstream, but Nibu put the mouths of his baskets facing down the current. After a little Nibu came back and saw that while his traps were (not unnaturally) quite empty, Robo’s were already full of fish. So Nibu lifted Robo’s traps, emptied them, secured the catch in his own and went away. Next day when the two hunters came together to look at their traps Robo was much surprised to find that his own were empty and Nibu’s full of fish. But he said nothing.

“Then they went on and set their *egom* traps.¹ Robo set his on the ground, Nibu on the branch of a tree. During the night Nibu went round the traps to see what luck had befallen them. He found that Robo had caught a barking

¹ A trap set in a game run, with a suspended stone which falls when the animal comes against a thin cane string.

deer, but in his own trap there was only a hornbill. So he exchanged the contents of the two traps. Next day, when Robo saw what was in his trap he exclaimed, 'How can a hornbill be caught in a trap on the ground?' And Nibu said, 'Quite easily, if he goes there to look for food.' Then Robo said angrily: 'Anyway, deer cannot be caught up a tree.' To which Nibu replied: 'Oh yes, he can, if he is looking for fruit.' At that Robo got very angry indeed and went away furious. And from that day to this the spirits of Robo have haunted the children of Nibu."

PREPARATION OF FOOD.—Goats and pigs are killed by strangulation between two sticks thrust into the ground and pressed inwards. Mithan have a rope tied round their necks, and they are then driven up to a kind of scaffolding or under the branches of a tree where the hillmen haul upon the rope until the beast dies by hanging.

The Galongs have a legend which tells of six spirit descendants from Jimi the Supreme Being,¹ who lived on the earth and ate their meat raw. Then came two brothers, Riki and Rimi. Riki continued to eat raw meat after the fashion of spirits, but Rimi burnt the flesh before he ate it. He then took the name of Tani, which is the general name, certainly through a considerable part of the hills, for "human being."

The art of cooking meat as practised today shows no improvement upon the earliest experiment. Birds, goats and pigs are cut up, skewered, thrust into the fire unplucked

¹ Jimi-Jimiang is one of the Abor names for God the All-Loving, with a dual personality male and female.

and unskinned until they are practically charred, and then eaten. This is no better than the Tasmanian way of preparing food, and like that most primitive race, the hillmen always roast their eggs. Some of the Dafla communities, not having a large number of domestic animals, supplement their local supplies of mithan, pig and goat by bringing up dried buffalo meat from the plains. The writer was not greatly impressed by the way in which this meat had been preserved.

The staple food of the Galongs and Abors is rice with some relish, fresh meat and dried fish. They also make what may be described as scones of rice or maize.

Except in an eastern kitchen it is rarely possible to get rice satisfactorily boiled. But no one could eat more beautifully cooked rice than that prepared in picnic fashion by these men of the hills. They fill lengths of big bamboo with water, and into these they put the rice securely done up in neat plantain-leaf packets. The bamboos are then inclined over a fire, the rims resting upon a greenwood stick supported on trestles. The bamboos are turned, and when the fire has charred them all round the rice is taken out soft and dry with the grains all separate.

In the most fertile valleys the hillmen might be able, with reasonable economy, to store enough grain to keep them comfortably going from one harvest to the next. But the average village invariably runs short of supplies some time during the year, and its food has to be eked out with anything edible that can be found in the forest. They eat different kinds of insects, especially cinnamon

beetles (except the head, which they say is poisonous), and locusts when they appear in the southern hills are greatly enjoyed. Wild berries and plantains, wild mangoes, potatoes and other roots are gathered. They also collect quantities of fungi, some of which are certainly poisonous, but are safe to eat after they have been boiled several times.

In the extreme north the country is desperate and there are no suitable spurs upon which fields of any size could be cleared. Not even a hillman driven by semi-starvation can make a field out of forest canted almost straight up and down. Where anything like a reasonable slope is to be found, the villagers clear it and scratch up something in the way of cultivation. It is impossible to call rice the staple food of these people, as they live for about half the year on anything they can get. The red pith of a palm-like tree is pounded up and strained a number of times in water. This forms meal which is made up into bread. The wretched miserable-looking people eke out their supplies with jack fruit (if they can grow it), edible roots and fern leaves, and like the unfortunate Tudor prisoners in King's Bench, "wysh to fyll thyr guts with catts, ratts, myse or froggs." Normally speaking, the hillmen eat two meals a day, morning and evening, and refresh the inner man between-whiles with frequent drinks of *apong*, which is their beer.

Apong can be extremely good, and a first-rate brew taken cold and tasting not unlike a light hock is most refreshing at the end of a stiff climb. On the other hand, it can be—and too often is—almost unspeakably nauseating.

Nor is *apong* improved by the Mishmi and Dafla habit of drinking it lukewarm.

A funnel is made of a bamboo frame and plantain-leaf lining. This is filled with millet seed and hot water poured on the grain, which is then fermented. The liquid is "cleared" with rice charcoal by the Abors, which destroys the pleasant light amber colour of the Dafla *apong*. The Mishmi brand is coffee-coloured. After boiling the grain, and letting it ferment, the liquid is drained through a sieve, the first brew being the best and strongest. *Apong*, which is not nearly so potent as Naga rice beer, is drunk by everyone at every possible opportunity, the hillmen sharing Mr. Jorrocks' opinion of a dinner-party cheese that children can take any quantity of it.

WARFARE.—The view taken of hostilities by a primitive people is naturally poles apart from the attitude of civilized nations. Even the ruler of Afghanistan, to take a state which in 1885 may be described as midway between these two levels of culture, looked with calm indifference upon the Russian attack on Panjdeh, an incident which excited the strongest feeling in England, where frontiers are regarded in the light of international law as immune from border skirmishes.

But although there is no elaborate intertribal or inter-village code to be considered on the Tibetan borderland, there are usages which, so far as could be gathered, it is thought ill to neglect. Hostilities are not an affair of clans, still less of tribes. No bonfires are lit, no fiery cross goes round, to summon a mass levy of warriors through the

country. Even in the extreme case of a British expedition, only the men of the villages directly implicated have been found to take the field. The writer knows two instances of fighting between villages of two different clans, and hostilities between two belonging to the same clan, both within the same tribe. In neither of these cases did any other community take part.

DECLARATION OF WAR.—In the most unusual event of the people of a village becoming exasperated with their neighbours to the point of fighting them, the procedure runs on these lines. The village headman and elders call a meeting at which the case is put to the men at great length.

After the decision to fight is made, the next step is to forecast the probable success or failure of the undertaking. A civilized General Staff calculate the relative chances of victory or defeat by the probable effectiveness of their plans, the efficiency and speed of their concentration movements, and the range and power of the Air Arm. The Abor reaches his reassuring conclusions by the post-mortem behaviour of a fowl. A headman of the most warlike clan, the Minyong Abors, gave a detailed description of the way this augury is taken by them before going on a raid.

Some of the fighting men go out, some little way from the village, and first of all make a stand in which they place their spears, the heads pointing in the direction of the enemy's village. In front of this they put up two lines of fencing in a V-shape leading towards a long wide-mouthed basket. A jungle cock is then killed as an offering

ON THE TIBETAN BORDER

to the Spirit of War, the bird sacrificed acting as the medium through which Piang answers his votaries.

One of the warriors holds the cock by the head, another holding its tail. The bird is then beheaded and, with the words "If we are to win may the body of the cock enter the basket," the headless body is thrown on the ground between the fences and sprinkled with a powder of maize and roasted grains of rice. If the cock dashes into the basket, the omen is favourable and the fight is on. If the issue proves successful, fowls, pigs and other animals are sacrificed to the Spirit of War, while the prisoners (children if they can capture them) are kept as slaves.

If, on the other hand, the cock fails to go into the basket, and the omens are therefore unfavourable, the party take a few steps in the enemy's direction and then go back to their own village in silence and spend the night in the young men's barrack. The other villagers avoid meeting their eyes, for it is believed that on such an occasion "if four eyes are together" then the people of the village who looked will die of a discharge of blood from the mouth. The other residents in the barrack also take care to keep away from them. It has been stated that a year must elapse before the War augury can be taken again.

Nothing was ever said as to what happens if the omens are favourable and the war fails to go according to plan. This ceremony is the only one of any importance which is not arranged by the Abor *miru*, nor need he be present when the augury is taken.

The Galong communities are mostly prosperous, strong in numbers and contented with their lot. But before

entrance to a quarrel there is a recognized ritual to be performed. First, they make an image of Peka, as they call their war spirit, of cane leaves on a bamboo frame. On this a helmet is placed. The *miru* calls upon Peka to give the warriors power and lust for battle. A fowl is sacrificed to a small image, or a pig to a large one, and the blood is smeared on the helmet and body.

The Daflas, who are poverty-stricken and more ready to fight, kill a fowl and draw deductions of success or failure from the red or white colour of its liver.

Inter-village hostilities are extremely rare, and the writer saw none of these preliminaries himself. But he took the ordinary precaution of getting villagers to talk on the subject in places some distance apart for corroboration of the original statements.

The most careful investigation failed to discover any evidence as to human sacrifices, either as an obsolete or present practice, and a time of war or severe famine would have been a likely occasion for them. The only case met with in folklore occurs in the story of the coming of death into the world, and not in the legend telling of the origin of sacrifice. The universal denial of human sacrifice was not due to a reluctance to admit to killing people. That seems reasonably established by the fact that the recognized power of the master to hang incorrigible slaves, and the death-dealing magic attributed to the Galong *mirus*, were incidentally learnt during the inquiry into the sacrifices to the spirits of war.

SYMBOLS OF WAR AND PEACE.—A favourable augury

would be immediately followed by a declaration of war, in the shape of certain conventional symbols tied up in a basket. Chillies and charcoal mean, "My mind has been burnt like charcoal; my thoughts are like these chillies." Or a stone *and* charcoal, or all three, may be sent. The cartel of defiance may be taken to the enemy village, or fastened to a stick set up in the middle of the path where it will be seen by those for whom it is intended. It was learnt in one Abor village that a bent sword-blade used to mean war, but has now reversed its meaning.

The most important messages are usually sent by symbols, and when the declaration of war is made peaceful demonstrations are sent to any village whose attitude could possibly be at all doubtful. Similar peaceful messages have been received by the writer, and the explanations of the symbols given by the headmen who brought them were most dramatically given. Broken weapons, a bent spear-head or a sword turned as nearly as possible into a sickle are obvious. A single round pebble with no other symbol is said to be "the heart of the giver, clear of reproach." An old metal charm "being made of an element of the earth bears witness to the straightness and truth of the mind and words of the messenger." The strongest message of friendship is apparently a stone with rice or salt, the latter possibly because salt is sometimes none too plentiful in the villages.

A form of proclamation that does not involve the complete breaking-off of friendly relations is sometimes to be seen in the warnings to cattle thieves erected on the path from the offenders' village. These signboards are made of

cane and bamboo. A stick represents the thief, who is shown in a miniature stock of the pattern put on cattle thieves when they are caught. The signboard bristles with slips of miniature arrows and shows the feelings and intentions of the aggrieved owner of the cattle.

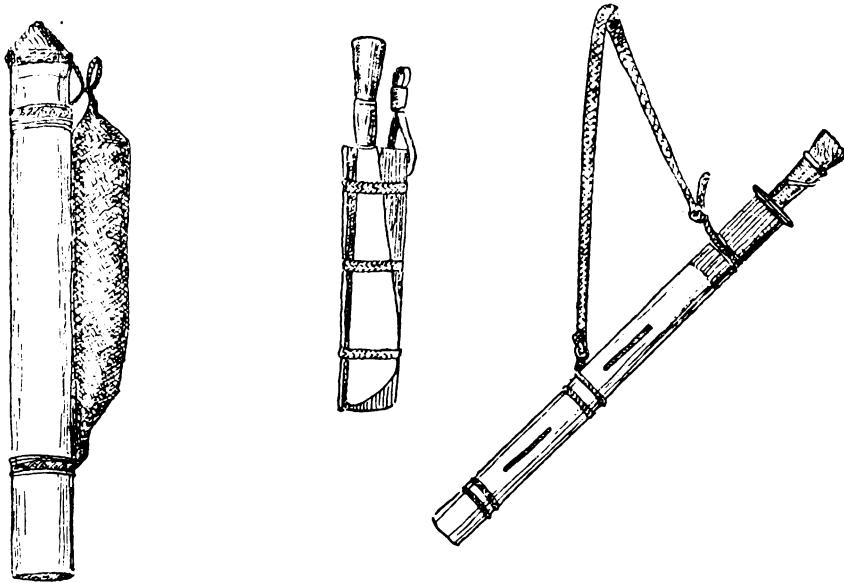
While on this subject, sign language is often used for less formal "notes" in the shape of leaves and slips of bamboo. Important events are shouted from hill to hill, and go rapidly through the country. One item of news which the writer was able to check was sent along a soundtrack of at least three hundred miles in five different languages from Naga to Abor within three days.

A primitive hunting race, where the men habitually go about with bow and arrows, a spear, a long knife, and perhaps a sword as well, has no elaborate preparation to make for war. Although inter-village raids have been mentioned, this form of tactics plays a very small part in their hostilities. Consequently, the villages may not be fortified at all, though they are frequently built on sites that are naturally strong and require only a little artificial improvement. No village that was visited had an all-round defensive perimeter. The strongest defences seen in the Abor and Mishmi hills were lengths of bamboo stockades with a fortified gateway and portcullis, *chevaux de frise*, belts of short bamboo stake obstacles, or three lines of stockade work and trenches—in every case only in the direction from which a possible enemy would come.

Although they are not a warlike people, the men make a brave show in their fighting kit. The soft cotton coats many of them wear are exchanged for the protection of

stout deerskin, and big oblong shields of cane or hide. On their heads are finely woven cane sword-proof helmets in shape like those in steel which were used in the Great War, only without the brim. A touch of colour is given by tufts of hair dyed red or the brilliant feathers of some bird. Sometimes the tufts of hair are long enough to fall to their shoulders. Armlets of cane, and a metal disc worn at the back of the neck, complete their protection against sword-cut, spear-thrust or a flight of arrows. Rations are carried in the usual big black rucksack.

Crossbows are never used. The tribesmen rely on weapons of far greater range than the small crossbows of



27. *Quiver, Long Knife and Sword*

the fighting tribes on the Burmese border. Their bamboo longbows are effective up to at least a hundred and eighty yards. The strings are of cane. The arrows, always carried in a bamboo case fitted with a lid, are of two kinds. The

simplest are bamboo slips, sometimes a poisonous variety of bamboo, with the points hardened in the fire. The iron-headed arrows are fastened to the shaft with fine cane splicing, and the shaft is deeply notched near the head so that the arrow may break off short in the wound. Stone arrow-heads are never used, nor have any ancient specimens been found. The Daflas, in particular, occasionally use arrows with beautifully made bone-heads. Cane leaf is always used to fletch the arrows, but never spirally, nor are the heads twisted to give spin. Iron-tipped arrows are generally poisoned, as a rule with croton, sometimes with a mixture of croton and aconite. The antidote for a poisoned arrow is to wash the wound first and then apply a mixture of fowl's droppings and opium—which is not easy to get, but is grown in the southern hills. Aconite has to be imported from the north, or from the Mishmi hills.

In addition to a sword, the tribal equipment includes spears. They are primarily used as Alpine stocks and, unlike the short deadly javelins of the Nagas, are never thrown. The spear-head mounted on a shaft seven to eight feet long is very small, and is ornamented with a tuft of hair dyed red. Finally, it is not unusual to carry a bundle of short sharp bamboo splinters to use as quick practical obstacles to delay an enemy.

There are a very few guns in the country. Such as are to be found are old British muskets in the south, those of the most northerly clans are Tibetan prong guns.

Their strategy is apparently based on one of the alternatives in Sir Mark Sykes' skit on an old Field Service Manual, the case of battle contact on the march with both

armies halted. The young men of the village may open the campaign by making a raid or two in the hope of capturing some slaves, when the fighting is hardly distinguishable from an armed brawl. But the major operations of the war consist in blocking paths with immensely thick barriers of felled trees and thickly packed brushwood, and in defending the approaches to the village with stone-shoots, the pit-traps used for pig game, and short stockades.

To oppose the advance of a British column, the tribesmen will build stockades of immense size and strength. One that was encountered by a punitive expedition was two thousand yards long, ten feet high, loopholed and shell proof; and it had the additional advantage of being admirably sited. But as it is not their nature to close with an enemy and fight hand to hand, they could not be expected to stand against disciplined troops commanded by men who understand irregular warfare. They soon abandon their carefully chosen positions and fall back upon occasional rushes of swordsmen from the jungle and sniping with arrows.

The other form of defence which is used by the Abors and Mishmis is the stone-shoot. This consists of a line of bamboo platforms loaded with boulders and held in position by ropes which are cut when the enemy passes underneath along the path which the shoots command. They are made at the top of high cliffs, the undergrowth being cut and any trees that are in the way being felled to give the stones a clear run. A shower of rocks crashing down about a thousand feet sounds formidable, but they are likely to miss the path altogether. Stone-shoots set at a height of

about a hundred feet or less are much more likely to be effective.

A "war," which may be more accurately described as a double blockade, is simply military and commercial stalemate. Eventually all concerned become tired of it, and peace is made between the villages. There appeared to be no difference between the way peace was made between two Abor villages of different clans in recent years and the ending of hostilities between two communities of one and the same clan three generations earlier.

The procedure is this. A sapling is planted on the path midway between the two villages as a meeting-place. On the appointed day a party of men from each side go out carrying Tibetan bowls, and driving cattle with them. When the parties meet they exchange cattle and bowls, and then sit down facing each other with the tree between them to talk the matter over. This probably takes some time, as they are great talkers when interested or excited. Then someone makes the suggestion that they might have a meal together. The cattle are killed, fires are lit and the meat is cooked in the bowls, which is not the usual way of preparing it. A huge feast follows, washed down with quantities of *apong*. At the end everyone swears eternal friendship; and they have not been known to break their word.

With regard to their idea of what is, or is not, an act of treachery, this should be said. A stranger has nothing to fear if he is invited into a village. He will be courteously received and he, on his part, is expected to observe what are their canons of behaviour. But if the visitor should

say that he wishes to come to any particular village and he is told that there is sickness there, or any other excuse is made, he must take the hint and stay away. No hillman will give a direct refusal; the nearest approach is to look down and scratch the ground with his toes.

Speaking generally, the native guides who take the traveller from one village to another are the primitive equivalent to a passport. Their presence reassures a community altogether unused to odd-looking strangers. They are also a guarantee to the traveller, which makes his progress, as regards human beings, infinitely safer than a walk on an English road—if statistics mean anything—unless something untoward happens and the guides bolt.

CHAPTER TWELVE

On the Tibetan Border

NOTHING about the people, from the foothills up to Tibet, is so impressive as the extent to which their beliefs influence their daily lives. No undertakings of any importance are begun without the appropriate religious rites. A stranger straight from a Western city with its own rigid conventions and ways would watch an Abor carefully fastening a fowl's head to a stick beside a stream with a lofty contempt for his childishness. Nevertheless, the hillman would have his own good reason for what he was doing.

As Sir James Frazer points out in *The Belief in Immortality*, when commenting upon the people of New Guinea: "We may lay it down as a well-established truth that savages in general, so far as they are known to us, have certain more or less definite theories, whether we call them religious or philosophical, by which they regulate their conduct and judged by which their acts, however absurd they may seem to the civilized man, are really both rational and intelligible." Primitive man may often hold, and indeed be seen to act upon, beliefs that are logically inconsistent with one another, but "calmly to acquiesce in inconsistent and even contradictory conclusions . . . is the tendency of the human mind in general, not of the savage mind in particular . . . and to observe such contradictions in practice the philosopher need not quit his own study."

The mythology of the Abors and kindred tribes in its references to the earliest days when gods and men lived together upon the earth, shows the spirits as kindly and beneficent. How the spirits gave water to men in a time of great scarcity, and how one of the suns was turned into the moon, are cases in point.

The Galongs tell how Tani, who differed from the gods by cooking his food, went in search of a wife. He searched all through the world, but could find no woman with whom to mate. So he made a likeness of one, of leaves on a bamboo frame just as images of some spirits are made to this day. From this image was born the leech that drew its life by sucking the blood of the man. But still Tani had no wife. In his despair he tried to find a mate among the creatures of the forest. But he could find no companion there, and none bore him any children. Amongst other creatures Tani mated with the *pajak*. But one day, while they were preparing their food, the bird fouled it. Tani got very angry, and the bird flew away and he never saw her again. Then the search for a wife went on until at last Tani went to the Sun, who gave him Mumsi, the first woman, to be his wife.

The course of events which may be said to parallel our Book of Genesis may be carried on by an Abor legend. Very long ago the earth was all flat with the river running through the centre of it. But one day it began to rain very hard and the rain would not stop. It went on raining until the river rose and covered the whole country. All the people, and the animals that were not drowned, drifted about on anything that would float. At last it stopped

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raining, the water drained away, and there was dry land again. But the water had run off so quickly that the fish from the river were all stranded on the ground. Then Shile Shido took the land on either side of the river in his two hands, as a man might lift his blanket. In this way he made the high mountains on either side of the river, to shut it in for all time, so that there could never be another such flood. When the land was made steep, the fish all fell back into the water and came to life again.

In this type of legend there is no cause for human fear. Man is shown as living on almost equal terms with spirits who only intervened in order to help him. More than this, we see the working of a Supreme Being. It took the combined efforts of Debo-Kombu the Archer god and the spirit Nurupur with his axe to bring water to thirsty men. But the omnipotent Spirit could turn the plain into mountains by raising the earth with his hands.

The next stage in the development of the tribal religion as it is seen in their mythology is the coming of death into the world.

The legend, as told by the Galongs, is in continuation of their version of the story of two suns, how one was killed and became the moon, and the surviving sun left the sky.

When the Sun went and hid under the earth the land was plunged in darkness. Everyone was much afraid and men went to ask the Sun to appear again. But the Sun was angry and hid below the earth. Now there was a bird with a long tail perching on the Sun as he lay sulking just below the rim of the world; and the bird talked to the

men. The Sun heard the talking and he called out, "Who is that talking?", and out of curiosity rose to look. He saw the men who had come to petition him sitting on the ground, and they implored him to return and give his light again. The Sun thought for a little, then he spoke. He said: "If you will give me a daughter of the gods to eat, then I will return and give my light again." The men said they would certainly find one, and went back towards their homes. But the Bat came flying after them and told them: "It is a daughter of men that the Sun wants, not a daughter of the gods." So the men took one of their daughters and brought her to the Sun. And he devoured her and arose in his strength to give light and warmth to the land. But from that day death has come into the world to destroy the children of men; for before that they, like the gods, were immortal.

An interesting detail in this legend is the part played by the animal world, as messengers between gods and men. In this case there are two, the long-tailed bird and the more usual bat. Tribes in other parts of the world tell of different animals used as intermediaries in the fatal negotiations which brought death to mankind. There is the vivid narrative told by the Zulus. In it the Old Old One sent the chameleon to men with the word "Let not men die," but that dawdling creature was outpaced by the lizard carrying the message of death. The Bantu story involves the unlucky chameleon, the sceptical thrush and the silent frog with equally disastrous results.

A second point in the explanations of the origin of death emerges in the number of instances of some human

mistake about the divine message. The situation is, however, reversed in West Africa where a dog goes to the deity with a message from men that they want to live. The genuine messenger is, however, forestalled by the officious frog with the unauthorized request (which is given priority) that "when men die they would like not to come to life again."¹

In the Galong legend death follows as the unanticipated result of their own act following the message of an intermediary. In the mythology of the Diegueno Indians an irresistible story imputes the disaster equally to themselves and their singularly ill-chosen adviser. The Supreme Being gave men the choice of three things. They could live for ever, or die for a time only, or die for good and all. But while they were hotly debating the merits and disadvantages of these alternatives the fly gave them the fatal advice: "O you men! What are you talking so much about? Tell him you want to die for ever." And so it befell. This is why the fly rubs his hands together. He is begging forgiveness of the people for these words.²

The tribal legends were never given in a logical series of mythical events. They would be told spontaneously in explanation of some fact that the narrator was surprised that the present writer did not seem to know; and they were heard repeated haphazard in scattered villages of the Galong and Abor tribes. But when the whole collection, with its different versions of the same story, is examined, the series falls into a pattern which illustrates the develop-

¹ See *The Belief in Immortality*, Frazer (1913), Vol. I. pp. 59-81.

² *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. X. p. 180.

ment of the supernatural conditions which the hillmen believe exist today.

The stories about evilly disposed spirits obviously refer to the time when men had become mortal. Supernatural beings who were now wholly superior to mankind and could do them harm had to be propitiated. The origin of the rites of sacrifice, now the keynote of their religion, appears in the following Galong legend.

When gods and men lived no longer together but apart, the immortals on the high hills and mankind in the plain below, it happened that a man was seized by the spirits and held by them a prisoner. To buy back his liberty the men offered fowls and pigs and cattle, taking their offerings to the mountains where the immortals lived. These offerings the gods said they would take in exchange for the man, and the people returned to their homes. But in the evening, instead of the captive, the fowls and pigs and cattle came wandering back. Again the offerings were taken up to the gods, and once more their gifts came back. The gods remained angry and held the man a prisoner. So the men went up for the third time, and said: "We have twice given you that which you asked, but each time you have driven them back to us, and still you will not release our brother." And the gods said: "How can we give you back your brother. Your offerings do not come to us. They go straight back to you. So we cannot set our prisoner free." Then the men answered: "If what we give to you we give with life, then of a truth it returns to us. So we will kill the offerings that their spirits may go to you and return to us no more." So the first sacrifices were made

and the captive was restored. And from that day the spirit of the creature sacrificed has, in death, gone out to the gods.

One of the versions of the sun and moon story ends with a threat to mankind. There were two suns, brothers, who took it in turn to shine for twelve hours. There was always bright, burning day and never the coolness of night when men might sleep. But the frog shot one of the suns with an arrow and killed the scorching fire that was in it, so that now it has no warmth. And the splinters made by the arrow became the stars. In revenge both the suns now shoot their arrows down upon the earth, and bring death to men in sunstroke and moonstroke. But the frog, to escape the divine anger, hides in the water. So it is beside a stream or flowing river that men who fear the moonstroke of madness set up the head of a fowl upon a stick.

What could happen to the children of men, if one of the supernatural world were roused to wrath, is seen in the fate of the inhabitants of Kojam Koja.

In these days there is only a plant called *kojam koja*, but long ago it was the name of a flourishing village. Here there lived a headman who said one day that the villagers should hold a festival for the gods. So the people of the village went out, and turned the course of a stream to get the fish in it. Now the son of Nipong¹ was in this stream, and he, with every other living thing the people of Kojam Koja caught, was taken back to the village and eaten at the feast. A bat carried the news of this to Nipong, who called

¹ Abor name for the forest spirit to whom the souls of women and hunters go at death.

on all the powers of water to rise and destroy Kojam Kojam. He also sent two huge snakes to undermine a cliff at the foot of which the village was built. So Kojam Kojam was blotted out and all its inhabitants were buried in the ruins. But the heads of the people have sprung up as chestnut trees, and their other parts as the thick and the slender bamboos, and the short straight plant known as *kojam koja*. The hearts of the people became ginger and onion roots.

Tribal mythology is handed down from one generation to the next by the *mirus* with scrupulous care; and the legends show the development of the religion that is practised today. Its believers live surrounded by Nature on its most colossal scale, and everywhere they see spirits that smite with disease and take life from all things that have breath. In sickness and in health, on the fields at seed-time, when hunting in the forest, in the agonies of death and in the burial rites that follow, the one hope is that the *miru* may appease the spirits of the unseen world.

Yet, through all this, there persists the feeling, it cannot be called a universal definite belief, that, above the spirits with whom the hillmen have to do, there does exist a Supreme Being, one of whose names literally translated means "All-loving."

In practice the religion of the people amounts to a watchful struggle against threatening demons. Robinson has described the Mikir religion in a passage written nearly a hundred years ago which equally applies to the hillmen on the north side of the Assam valley today: "Propitiatory offerings have constantly to be made to evil spirits whose names and numbers are indefinite. They are demons of

the higher hills, of the streams . . . and some are household devils . . . worshipped by way of disarming their malice. . . . The list may be increased at any time.”¹ The possibility of having to add to the contingent of spirits demanding propitiation is illustrated by the reply of an Abor when he was asked about the water-god: “Oh yes,” he said, “of course there is a spirit in the water, but I have not yet made offerings to him.”

The evidence is against the existence of totemism. There are clan or group names that coincide with nouns, such as Otter and Rucksack, but these were found in an exhaustive inquiry to be so few that the conclusion was reached that it must be fortuitous. In support of this it may be said that while the best authorities do not hold the Blackfoot Indians to be totemic, their clan names include Black Elks, Worm People and Black Patched Moccasins.² No sacred stones or sticks, no semblance of initiation ceremonies or rites associated with totemism, were seen or heard of anywhere. Less important is the fact that the extremely rare confidences about dreams never referred to animals. Finally there are the rules prohibiting the eating of various forms of food. In this connexion the French Protestant missionary, M. Maurice Leenhardt, with great experience of New Caledonia, has said of its people, “the totemic system is seldom thrust upon the attention of the observer except in the refusal of tabooed foods.”³ Nothing could be more generally inclusive than

¹ *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, W. Robinson (Calcutta, 1841).

² *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. III. footnote to p. 84.

³ *Totemica*, p. 261.

the diet of these hillmen, irrespective of tribe and clan, as it was spoken about, seen or hospitably offered. The flesh of the tiger only is thought uneatable. The taboos were found to be of universal application and dependent solely on certain events.

While on this subject, a remarkable statement was made by an Abor. The course of the inquiry is given to show what the seeker after truth may occasionally meet with. Joter was one of those disreputable yet likeable people who can be met anywhere. Nor was he always strictly sober, an unusual failing in an Abor. But he was a mine of information, and his facts and his stories (although he was not, of course, a *miru*) had always been corroborated in other villages. One day he casually said: "You know there is a group of people descended from the frog spirit (Tatig Uyu). They are forbidden," he continued, "to eat the edible frog (a favourite dish in the hills), and they all have the prefix 'Tig' to their names." He gave several examples (from unnamed villages), and among them Tigshor, the father of Tigor, whose son was Tigjir.

This was an unexpected piece of information. Inquiries into names to find totem origin were not yielding any such evidence, and this was the first definite trace met with after a year's acquaintance with the southern Abors. The Galong legend of the first man's search for a wife among the animals had ended in failure, and the accepted account of creation was against totem origin. But here was a straightforward story of animal descent, as clear as anything to be found in Frazer. There was, too, a remarkable similarity in ritual between an Abor sacrificing a fowl's

head by the water to the frog spirit and a Pueblo Indian of the Frog totem clan throwing bunches of feathers into a pool of water. Even if one was to avoid moonstroke and the other to prevent drought, Joter's statement was encouraging.

Happening to know Tigior as a man of Riu across the river, the writer pursued the inquiry when he next saw Madu, the headman of that village, a most reliable man. Madu (a Minyong Abor himself) said that Tigior was an Abor of the Pasi clan and the Paiyang group, there being four Pasi groups in Riu. His nearest relations were as stated. It appeared that neither group nor family had any known peculiarities, nor unusual restrictions as to diet so far as Madu knew; and in answer to a leading question Madu said that he had never heard of any "frog" people in Riu such as had been described.

The past movements of the Pasi clan down the valley were known to the writer, and no traces of totemism were ever found among them. They believe in the same traditional origin from the Stone of Creation as everyone else. Paiyang, as far as the writer is aware, has no meaning in the language, nor has Pasi. But *pasi* (or *pashi*), with the addition of *ke-om* or *ko-nyok*, is the word for an ant with a particularly virulent bite.

In the face of this conflicting evidence there was one possible explanation. The Pasis cited by Joter may have had madness in the family, or been afraid of it as in other instances. This might easily lead them to sacrifice to the spirit that could make them insane. Though the difficulty then arose that the rule in cases of illness is that the flesh

of the creature whose sacrifice has brought about a successful cure may not be eaten for a certain period; in this instance it should apparently have been fowl. That the "frog" group did not marry among themselves simply followed the custom of a race that practises exogamy. The fact that they bore a prefix which happened to form part of the word for frog is no stranger than the coincidences to be seen sometimes in English surnames. Even if Joter was for once led away by his undoubted sense of humour, he could hardly have evolved totemism out of his inner consciousness, and there must have been some grounds for what he said. At any rate, neither the frog people nor anything like them were ever heard of elsewhere.

GUARDING THE VILLAGE.—A most important feature in community life is the village system of defence against evil spirits which is based in a natural way on their experience and practice in mundane affairs. Certain conventional signs are used to warn a neighbour off; and the natural and supernatural worlds may be seen to meet, from our standpoint, in the quarantine arrangements made when a near-by village is suffering from an infectious malady. What may be described as imitation stockades are set up along the path, bristling with miniature arrows to keep away the spirit of disease.

What seem to the stranger to be most inadequate precautions against a wandering spirit they consider satisfactory. It is suggested, on as much as is known of their mentality, that the grounds for their belief may perhaps be explained on the following lines. As their mythology

shows, an attack by a supernatural being is thought of in the form of the most formidable offensive weapon they know, the straight flight of an arrow, and that this represents the movement of the unseen world. Like an enemy from another village he would approach, in that precipitous country of almost impenetrable undergrowth and forest, unsuspected and then from cover loose off his arrows. The tactical advantage of an outflanking movement does not appear to have been grasped by the hillmen, and consequently would not be attributed to the spirits. A direct hostile attack can be met by a short defensive work, and the straight flight of an arrow—they have no boomerangs—can be stopped and do no harm.

The visit of a white man to a village entails careful and elaborate precautions, which is a good and sufficient reason for giving due notice. Among the Abor and Galong tribes one or more archways are erected over the path. These are made of branches, lengths of cane and bamboo decorated with fresh green leaves, or of plantain stalks. On the arch there are bits of a fowl, a dismembered pig or, in one clan, a dog, displayed as a sacrifice, with the blood smeared over the archway. There may also be a short flimsy palisade for the visitor to go round. Just beyond the arch nearest the village stands a group who combine the responsibilities of an entertainment committee with the functions of an exorcist. The headman, the *miru*, some of the village elders and a woman with a large gourd of *apong*, make up the party.

The headman steps forward and presents the visitor with three, or sometimes five, eggs fastened one above the

other in basket-work. Eggs are customary offerings to spirits, and this completes the rites that must be observed to prevent any demon entering the village with the stranger. The *apong* is now passed round, and the villagers feel that they can safely receive their guest. When he leaves, the young men throw plantain stalks after him to ensure the expulsion of any evil spirits that may have crept in despite all precautions.¹

RELIGION AND FARMING.—The rites that have to do with the production of food illustrate what Clodd has described as “a vital connexion between man and earth the mother. Hunger as the primal imperative need brought his wits into play; and hence a body of magical rites as one among other devices to obtain the meat which perisheth.”²

The rain-maker, who plays so important a part in agriculture in some parts of the world, would have singularly little to do in these hills. But the writer, during his first visit across the border, was told by the Daflas, when he fired a couple of shots, that this would certainly bring rain. They may have been afraid of something strange and obviously dangerous, although later in the day a deputation earnestly made the impossible request that the destructive devil might be taken across the river to talk to some disagreeable neighbours. But the fact remains that clouds

¹ For other examples of taboos on intercourse with strangers see “The Golden Bough,” Part II., *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, Sir James Frazer, Ch. III. Section 1.

² *Quarterly Review*, July 1911, Art. “Primitive Man on his own origin.”

came over a clear blue sky before nightfall, and on the following day the rain came down in torrents.

No special ceremonies for the prevention of rain were noticed. But the Galongs are prepared to act vigorously if the weather should be so bad as to threaten the crops. The *miru* mounts a high platform set on four big bamboo poles, and remains there for perhaps six days making incantation to change the weather. But if it is thought that the adverse conditions are due to some malicious individual in a neighbouring village, the *miru* invokes the spirits, "I point So-and-So out to you. Do what you will with him." This formula is believed to be so effective in extreme cases as to cause the death of the person against whom it is directed.

It was noticed that the emblem set up when the forest is being cleared for fields distinctly resembles those seen in Tibet to frighten away demons.

The Abors make use of two different rites while the fields are being sown. In one an animal, if possible a mithan which is provided by a joint arrangement in the community, is sacrificed and eaten. The blood mixed with powdered rice is poured into a small hole dug in the fields as an oblation to Earth, the mother. A fowl and an egg are also offered. The fowl itself is eaten, but the skin is stuck on a pole, head upwards, and the egg is tied in a basket underneath.

The second ceremony is more elaborate in its setting. A small circle of bamboos about a foot high is made in the village. This has a wicket-gate with side posts about two feet six inches in height, and on each of these posts two leaves of a special kind of tree (*tan* in Abor) are fixed. A

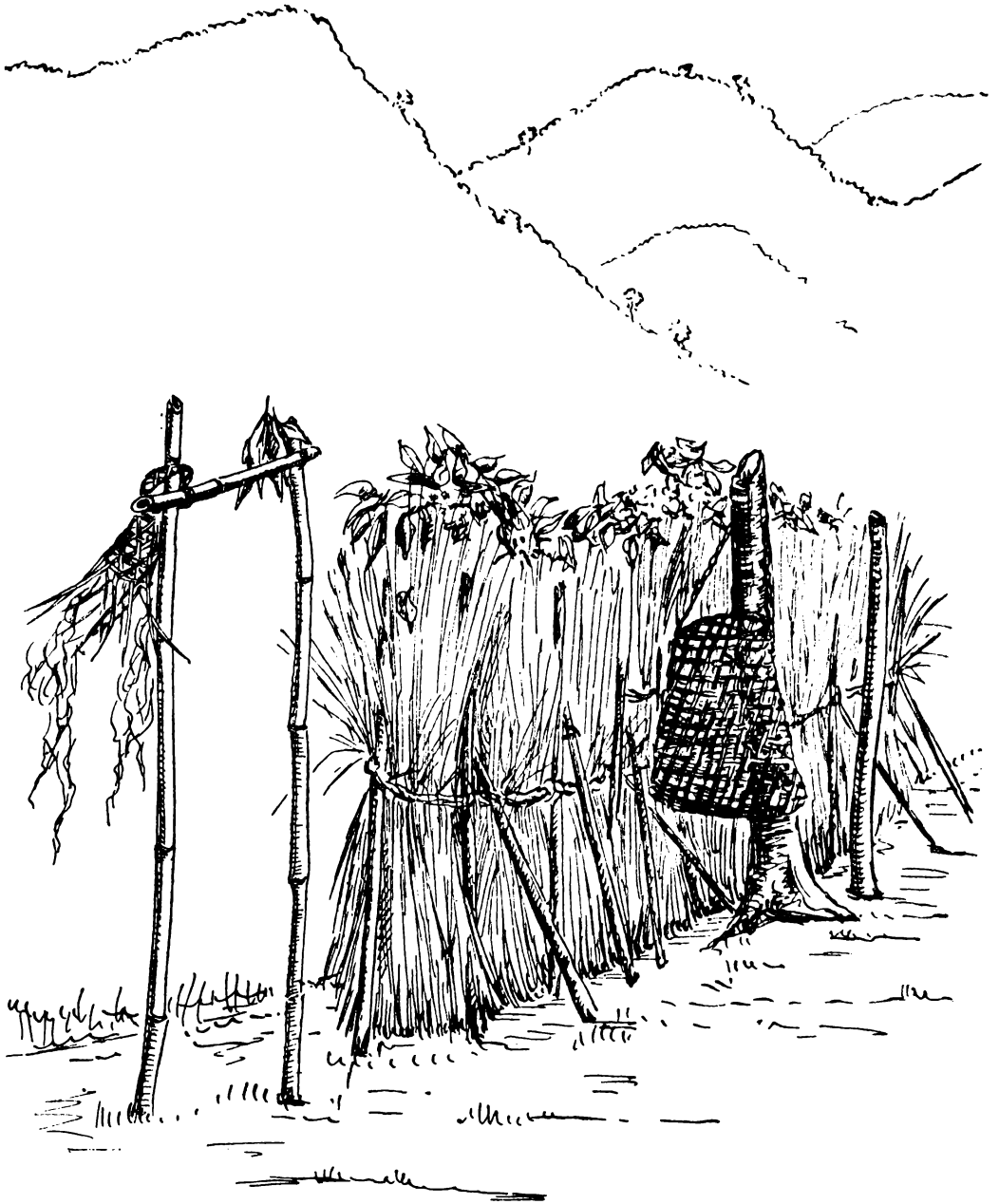
pig is then strangled. Some of the blood is sprinkled on the bamboo circle, while the animal is roasted and eaten. When a sowing is over, the Abors have been seen to carry out another ceremony. This takes place somewhere between the fields and the village. A mithan, a fowl (white, if possible) and three eggs are offered up. The mithan and the fowl are killed and the blood sprinkled on the ground. A tall bamboo is set up, and the heads of the mithan and fowl are fastened on sticks and bound close together against the bamboo mast, while the eggs are fastened underneath in a basket. The fowl and mithan are afterwards taken back to the village and eaten. This is described as the sacrifice to the spirits of earth and sky.

Some little time before harvest, when the rice crop is about a foot high, a sacrificial rite is sometimes performed to *Ali Ango Uyu*, the spirit of the rice-grain crops. Six wands are partly peeled leaving the bark curling over, and put in the ground in two rows of three. Powdered rice is then sprinkled over them, and the body of a cock and some raw ginger completes the sacrifice.

After harvest the Abors are believed to sprinkle *apong* and powdered rice round the groups of granaries, but the writer has not seen this ceremony. It was explained that the rite is a form of tribute or thanksgiving to Doing Anggong, the spirit of the sky, the husband, and Kine Dene, the spirit of the earth, the mother; an idea that parallels Ovid's description of the marriage of earth and sky. The villagers kill a pig at the same time, and eat it, not as part of a religious ceremony, but simply to celebrate their harvest home.

The harvest rites through the length and breadth of these hills are prompted by similar beliefs. In the Galong country, for instance, the sun-god is worshipped in the way already described, for all that is grown is under his hand, and he is regarded as the most powerful spirit of the fields. Long fence-like altars are set up when the harvest is over to two of the minor spirits who watch over the farmer.

If swine fever, or some other epidemic, attacks the pigs in a village, it is attributed to the malevolence of *Petpum*, a spirit who is exorcized by a ceremony which is called *Eg Agam*, *eg* meaning a pig and *agam* an observance. As seen in the north Abor country, when a village council decide to take this step, some youths, acting as criers, go round announcing it loudly for the following day. Next morning three villagers chosen for the duty provide themselves with a stick apiece, to which an egg is tied and a small basket holding millet seed and ginger is bound. Followed by the criers, the pig men then make a house-to-house visitation, grunting and squeaking in deadly earnest as they go. When the procession reaches the door of a house, the owner puts food, *apong* and ginger in the pig's trough, which the exorcizers devour, while they keep up a realistic imitation of the animal. They then go inside, eat something and drink with the family. In a village of any size the visits have to be cut rather short, as the party must go to every house in the place before nightfall. When the round of the village is over, the pig men go down to some neighbouring stream and throw the sticks into the water. The next three days are observed as *agam*, when no one in the village husks rice or goes to the fields.



28. Harvest Altars

Although not so dramatic an example of imitative magic as the *Eg Agam*, their yearly cattle festival—the *Asho Agam*—is an interesting ceremony. Its object is to give security to their stock and to increase the herds. On the day fixed for the *agam* to begin, the villagers assemble at the young men's barrack with *apong* and rice which they eat and drink there. For the next five days the men of the village are busy repairing and building-up the cattle fences used throughout the country to keep the herds from straying on to the fields from the forest where they feed. These fences are strengthened as if to prevent the inroads of an enormous number of huge beasts. During this period no woman may go to the fields. Should she break this prohibition it is believed that the cattle belonging to her own household will break through the fences and destroy the crops. On the sixth day of the *agam* the men make an extravagant number of cattle ropes of cane fibre. On the seventh day, and following days if necessary, the cattle are all rounded up and brought to the village. The calves are then marked by cutting oblongs and circles in patterns out of their ears to distinguish ownership among the different groups. The number of combinations are limited, but, going through the Abor country, about forty different marks in all were collected.

RELIGIOUS DANCES.—The most dramatic way in which the community joins in any religious ceremony is, unquestionably, a village dance. The writer had no opportunity, when in the Mishmi hills, of seeing one of their spectacular dances, but Lieut.-Colonel L. A. Bethell gave

him an account of one at which he was present. It was conducted by the headman and not by the community priest. But as the same form and rhythm were met with in another part of the hills during the observance of funeral rites, this dance may be taken to be at least semi-religious in character.

The headman wore a tiara of shells about four inches broad, the shells being sewn on in vertical lines. He also wore a magnificent cross-belt of boars' tusks, all picked specimens, sewn on very close together. At his buttocks he carried a Tibetan drum about eight inches long, on which were fastened tiny rattles and small brass plates. He held another drum in his left hand and a short length of bamboo in his right. Two men danced with him, one carrying a "tom-tom" and the other a Tibetan drum.

The dance took place by a bonfire round which the rest of the village formed a wide circle. It began by the headman singing two verses of a song, the chorus repeating the last two lines.

Unlike the ringing and rather plaintive Abor music, the Mishmi song from the description seems to have had the harsh, unmelodious but strongly rhythmic characteristics of much of our own present dance music.

The Mishmi song went on for about a quarter of an hour and then, at no apparent signal, the three performers broke into a dance which they kept up incessantly for nearly an hour and a half. At first all three danced in line, backwards and forwards; then one behind the other in front of the fire. A slight change of rhythm was noticed during the progress of the dance, which was conducted through-

out with a bent knee, the performers prancing and springing in time to the music; the feet were not kept together.

Father Krick, who was eventually murdered near the Mishmi-Tibetan border with another French missionary, described in *Les Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* for 1854 a funeral dance which he saw in the "Michemi" hills. A priest fantastically bedecked with tiger's teeth, many coloured plumes, bells and shells, executed a wild dance to exorcize the evil spirits; then all fires were extinguished and a new light was struck by a man suspended by his feet from a beam in the ceiling; "he did not touch the ground," the explanation being that this was to indicate that the light came from heaven.¹

Dances whose definite object is to cure a sick person do not need many performers. But a special appeal by a community to the supernatural world, when it takes the form of a dance, is most striking. The writer has taken from his diary the following impressions of one of these ceremonies.

By the time the village was reached, the loud roar of the rapids below had grown quite faint, and the evening wind blowing strongly through the gorge had sunk to a breeze. At the village it looked as if the entire population of one hundred and sixty houses—men, women and children—were out on the clearing by the granaries. Eggs were presented, and an old and loudly protesting fowl with its legs tied together was laid on the ground as a special gift to the stranger within the gates. After *apong* had been

¹ Quoted by Sir James Frazer in "The Golden Bough," Part VII., *Balder the Beautiful*, p. 5.

handed round, the headman led the way to the dancing-ground.

Darkness had fallen, there was no moon and only a faint light from the stars. The villagers had made a big bonfire which lit up the clearing with its background of tall rustling trees, and some of the men had torches. There was light enough to see the crowd—children squatting in front snuggled up in their fluffy little blankets, and behind them rows of men and women. Most of the men had on their white blanket coats, the women wearing their black-and-yellow skirts and body cloths, the uniform colour combination of their community.

A *miru*, followed by about forty girls, came into the wide circle. He had on all his necklaces of large blue porcelain beads with the little bells attached. In one hand he held a copper Tibetan bell and he had a drawn sword in the other. The girls were wearing their usual clothes, and their cheeks were covered with white lime.

The *miru* walked to the middle of the ground, and the girls made a ring round him, facing inwards. They held their arms straight out from the shoulder and gripped the arms of the girls next to them. Then the circle of dancers began to sway round clockwise, adopting what is practically the "lady's step" in a Highland reel; and the *miru* began to chant with excellent rhythm an invocation to the spirits of water. The girls kept perfect time to his singing, their *beyops* clanking under their skirts as they swung round.

The *miru* stopped singing as abruptly as he had begun, and the dancers took up the chorus in their clear young voices. The notes of the song rose and fell in an air that

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was sad and haunting, but went with a wonderful swing. The *miru* sang again three times, to the different water spirits, and each time was followed by the chorus that echoed in the darkness of the trees. The dancing circle went round without stopping, and when one girl got tired another came out from the crowd to take her place.

The dance lasted about an hour. But the hundreds of faces lit up by the flickering light and those fresh ringing voices will always remain an unfading memory.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

On the Tibetan Border

WHILE the religious beliefs of a primitive people are intimately interwoven with their everyday life, their conceptions of disease, death and the hereafter naturally form the most important part of their religion. Robert Louis Stevenson, discussing in one of his Essays the mental attitude of "the respectable married man with an umbrella," remarks that "he may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death." Nor does primitive man think of death in the abstract. The people whom the writer is attempting to describe believe the shadow of disease, and death when it comes, to be the direct intervention of some spirit; "caught by him" is a common expression they use when talking of a sick man; that some spirit has shot his arrow is another.

If anyone falls sick while a clearing is being made to turn into fields, it is believed that the spirit who dwells in the forest—Nipong of the Abors—is angry because of the destruction of his home, and a pig must be sacrificed. Tylor gives an interesting parallel in Cato's instructions to the woodmen for thinning a sacred grove. "Be thou god or goddess to whom this grove is sacred, permit me by the expiation of this pig . . ." ¹

¹ *Primitive Culture* (ed. 1903), Vol. II. p. 227.

OTHER MEN'S LIVES

It is thought that not only the Supreme Being, but certain of the spirits in the subordinate posts of nature who deal directly with mankind, may be looked upon as bi-sexual. Some are undoubtedly associated and spoken of in pairs—such as the Abor Epom and Nipong, who show their respective interest in the affairs of mortals of the sex with which they are generally associated. The illnesses and death of men in general are attributed to Epom. The death and all diseases of women are due to Nipong and, because that spirit lives in the forest, a man who meets his death out hunting is said to have fallen a victim to this spirit. The crab spirit is placated to avoid bowel troubles, the frog spirit to keep away madness, the arrows of Debo-Kombu are supposed to cause dropsy.

In cases of mild illness the demons of disease are exorcized by the waving of boughs. If the sickness is causing some anxiety, the *miru* is called in, branches are set up about the house, and cane symbols and eggs are tied to one of the posts.

When a man falls seriously ill, the ritual is much more elaborate. The taboo as to food for two or three days usual in such cases is observed by the household. An altar consisting of four poles wrapped round with leaves is set up to form a square. Near this the animal sacrifice is made. If fowls are offered to the Abor Epom for a man, they are not used for food, but any other animal, such as a mithan, is strangled and eaten. There is the same ceremony for a woman, but the correct sacrifice—in this case, to Nipong—is a good-sized pig. This is the first part of the rite.

The second act takes place in the forest, where an altar of two uprights connected by horizontal poles is erected. It was learnt from one source that a basket containing nuts and plantain and bamboo leaves is fastened to the altar, but this has not been seen or confirmed elsewhere. A black hen is brought out, and to one of its legs are tied threads of different colours and to the other are fastened strips of *ko-i* leaf. The hen is then thrust through the bars of the altar and allowed to escape among the trees.¹ It is set free with the following words: "O Nipong, I have marked and dedicated this hen for you. Take it and cure the sick one." If the fowl is not seen again the augury is considered hopeful as Nipong must have accepted the sacrifice, but if it comes back to the village the omens are unfavourable to recovery.²

After releasing the hen, a dog or a bitch is killed and the carcase hung from the top bar of the altar. The spirit of this animal is formally handed over to Nipong, the sacrifice is covered with a shield of leaves on a bamboo frame and the party goes home to await the omen of the fowl.

It has been said that it is not absolutely necessary that the ceremony should be performed by a *miru*. But it is thought better to have one, and it has been noticed that a village in which there happens not to be a priest at the time will call one in from a considerable distance.

At the same time appeal is made to Boki and Bogo together, who seem to be kindly disposed spirits inclined to counteract the malevolences of Epom and Nipong.

¹ Compare Leviticus xiv.

² See description of first sacrifice on pp. 313, 314.

A shrine is made of the special bamboo used for religious ceremonies and sticks of cane. A cock (preferably white) is killed and fastened head upwards between the two bamboos; and a single egg in a small basket is tied to each of these uprights. The *miru* is then given his fees in the necklaces thrown over his head by unmarried girls of the village. After this he chants the names of the spirit in invocation and the girls and small boys take up the chorus and dance. No musical instruments are played. During the next three days the *miru* and his attendants visit the houses of the girls who gave him the necklaces, and singing and dancing may go on for two days more.

There does not seem to be in the Galong tribe the definite setting apart of certain animals, or fowls of a specified colour, to be found among the Abors. Consequently the Galong rites begin by the taking of omens to learn the nature of the sacrifice the angry spirit demands. The *miru* shreds one end of a bamboo stick and ties to it a feather or a tuft of fur. He then asks Yule, their spirit of sickness and death, if this is acceptable, and if he will, in exchange for the fowl or the beast, cure the invalid. The *miru* then announces whether the proposed sacrifice will please the deity.

Another form of divination is for the *miru* to take an egg in his hand and say, "If you want a pig" (or a fowl or a mithan as the case may be), "let there be a sign in the egg." Or he may put a cooked egg in his mouth, chew it up and swallow it; the omen being found in the odd or even fragments of egg left in his mouth.

In practice these methods amount to a kind of religious

auction. A fowl may first be offered up with no effect. Then the more expensive goat, pig and, in the case of a wealthy patient, a mithan follow in succession. Before each sacrifice the *miru* makes an image, about three feet nine inches in height, of leaves on a bamboo framework. It is given a cane helmet, and leaves are arranged on it to represent clothing. After the ceremony, the animal sacrificed is eaten by the *miru* and the sick person's family.

Although no spirit is thought to live in a charm known as the *merang*, this ornament is believed in some way to influence bowel troubles such as dysentery. *Merangs* are copper discs averaging perhaps five inches in diameter with a handle-like piece of projecting metal giving them the appearance of an ancient Greek or Roman mirror. It invariably has two small holes on the circumference furthest from the "handle," but the Abors always denied that *merangs* are worn as talismans round the neck. As they say, they are obviously very old, and have belonged to their people from time immemorial. The *merang* itself is not used to cure the sick. A replica is made of bamboo on which a fowl, killed as a sacrifice, is laid, and then covered with earth.

When an Abor woman falls ill, a copper scarab-like charm may be hung round her neck; and the water in which this has been stood is looked upon as a cure for fever and is administered to both sexes.

Rubber trees, which are now very scarce in the hills, are cut down to drive away the angry spirit during an epidemic of sickness, and if this fails the village is moved to another site.

Dances, altars and the ministrations of the *miru* are

naturally the means most in evidence when there is sickness to cure. But medicine as we understand it is not entirely neglected.

The most serious diseases are the epidemics of smallpox and dysentery that ravage the country from time to time, and these seem to fall most heavily upon the more thickly populated districts. Villages where these illnesses are rife are systematically put in quarantine. The nearest communities erect barricades of bamboo and *chevaux de frise* bristling with arrows pointing towards the stricken village, whose inhabitants are confined to their own fields and hunting-grounds; a practical combination of religious belief and medical practice. An extremely bitter wild orange is given for dysentery, and if the disease becomes general the water supply may be suspected. For fever, especially in children, necklaces of what is probably cinnamon wood are hung round the patient's neck.

The health and physique of the communities in the more fertile parts of the country are very good. The deaths from smallpox and dysentery are balanced in time by the fact that the inhabitants of these valleys are prolific, and the number of really old people testifies to a good duration of life.

In the wilder hills of the north and in the hills nearest to Assam the people are for the most part sickly and degenerate. In the north goitre is appalling, and dirty habits breed the most hideous itch. In the foothills enlarged spleens among the children, tuberculous disease in different forms and a chronic type of conjunctivitis are common. Venereal disease is found in communities

that are in touch with the plains. It is quite unknown elsewhere.

Speaking generally, the treatment of disease, apart from implicit faith in religious rites, consists of Nature cure reinforced by a firm belief in *apong* as a universal remedy from childhood to old age.

These remedies, such as they are, do not sound particularly promising, but the writer must confess that the only time he sent for the doctor in a hill village the treatment was entirely effective. It was a case of prolonged and violent headache, there was no more aspirin, and as a last resort the Dafla headman was asked if he knew any remedy for bad pains in the head. He said it would not be difficult to cure, in fact he would send his mother along at once. The old lady proved to be amazingly skilful at massage, and the tips of her fingers soon drove the headache completely away.

Besides specific diseases, there is another danger from the supernatural world that it is believed may or may not prove fatal. It is said and feared throughout the hills that there is in the forest a spirit who lives in the holok, a tree whose great trunk is often hollow with age. The Daflas describe him as an old old man with a long white beard, which is something practically unknown in a noticeably hairless race. This demon of the woods is believed to take human shape and, coming in the form of a kinsman from another village, lure some unfortunate away into the darkness of the forest. So when anyone is missing and cannot be accounted for, the men of the village go out with swords, bows and arrows to look for him. They go to the holok

tree and say, "O holok tree, give us back our brother and we will make you a sacrifice." To compel the holok to urge the spirit that dwells in it to restore its victim, they hack the tree with their swords and shoot arrows into its branches. Then they go home and wait for the wanderer. If the man comes back, a mithan or a pig is killed and eaten at a sacrificial feast. Hope is not abandoned, so it is said, for about two months.

The spirits that have been described either attack mortals out in the woods or in the fields, and those whose interference with human affairs is believed to be incessant are, they hope, kept out of the villages by recognized rites. But however successful these ceremonies might be, there are other spirits who can penetrate the defences and obstinately haunt their homes. Nor does it seem that the long chains of cane over the houses of newly married couples are put there with any certainty of keeping them away.

Yet it must not be thought that a continual struggle against the unbridled forces of Nature and the supernatural powers with which they fill it, makes the people gloomy and introspective. A more indomitably light-hearted and cheerful race, taking them all in all, could hardly be found anywhere.

On the borders of the Galong country a man called Yango offered his services as guide. He made a delightful companion and became the best friend the writer ever made in the hills. Once water gave out altogether when crossing a difficult little range, things did not always turn out as expected, but nothing could wipe out his rather

deprecating smile. He had only one visible trouble. Whenever we set out for a few days an infuriated wife would follow Yango and tell him all she thought of this desertion of his family and neglect of his allotment—a painful scene to which no reference was made afterwards.

The time to say good-bye was the opportunity to give Yango something personal for remembrance. Nothing seemed more suitable than the electric torch which had so often lighted up a bad path at night. Sealed refills had been procured specially from Assam; and before making the presentation, he was shown how to put them in. Yango refused the torch with almost exaggerated horror. “No, no,” he said. “I have one devil in my house already.”

DEATH AND FUNERAL RITES.—To primitive peoples death does not seem natural. That is the reason for the many legends explaining why human beings do not live for ever on earth. They feel they must, as Sir James Frazer remarks, reconcile their theory of immortality with the practice of mortality. Then, when death comes, it is attributed to some particular spirit who takes the soul of the one who is dead to himself. It is on a genuine fear that the soul of the dead man may return that the funeral rites and mourning ceremonies of the hill tribes are based.

This clearly expressed fear of the dead and the religious quarantine and prohibitions as to food that go with it are widely spread among primitive peoples. It is not a matter of racial affinity, nor of environment. No two races present a greater contrast in the conditions of their lives than the hill tribes of the Tibetan border and the Eskimo. Yet the

same principles are seen in their burial rites and in their prohibitions as to food during the period of mourning.¹

As to the actual ceremonies. When a death takes place, families owning the charm known as a *merang* dig it up from its place of security underground and show it to the nearest relations. Copies of the charm are made of bamboo before the original is buried again.

The nearest heir gives a feast to the mourners, the funeral baked meats being according to the means of the family. If well-to-do this would be a mithan; less prominent households provide pork, some of the meat being ceremoniously set aside for the one who is dead. In the cases of very poor people and slaves a fowl is killed but not eaten. Quite reliable informants in one of the Abor clans said that their custom was to kill a pig near the burial ground and a fowl at home. The pig's liver would be burnt and four bits of the animal's meat set on sticks near the grave, with the fowl.

But whatever creature may be killed, whether it be eaten or not, there is one part of the ceremony which never varies. This is the adjuration made to the soul of the dead person: "We have given you an animal, so trouble us no more." These words betray the very real fear of the ghost's return that prompts the ceremonies scrupulously followed until it is thought that enough time has elapsed for this danger to be over. The attentions paid to the departed soul consequently become less and less until they cease altogether.

¹ *The Ammassalik Eskimo*, Ed. W. Thalbitzer (Copenhagen, 1914), Part I. pp. 75-80. For world examples from New Zealand to North America see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 138-145.

Not more than three days ever elapse between death and burial. For ten days no one in the household eats any form of game, wild potatoes or pumpkins; and whoever carries the body to the burial ground is forbidden to enter the house for a week after the funeral. The Daflas have the greatest horror of being buried away from home, but there did not appear to be the same prejudice among the more easterly tribes.

Only in what we call natural death is time allowed to elapse before the funeral. Those who die of an infectious disease are of course buried without any delay, and when death comes untimely to anyone instant measures are taken to protect the community from the anger of the spirit world.

When a trunk bridge was being made near the largest Abor village in the north, a man was killed by a falling tree. This village stood among its fields on the edge of a flat-topped spur which sloped sharply from the houses down to the stream where the accident took place. That night the whole village suddenly broke into points of light, as if it were full of fireflies. A minute later the writer, looking from the far side of the little glen, realized that a mass of wildly excited people with torches were coming down the opposite slope. As they neared the stream the shouts rang louder through the darkness, and the twinkling lights that had clustered and separated on the hillside drew closer together. It was some little time before the noisy crowd made their way home again up the hill.

What had happened was explained next day. On account of this fatal accident the village had turned out to

drive away the evil spirit that had taken one of their number. It was, they said, a risky business, so everyone had sticks to beat the air with, and they threw up ashes and earth and shouted to keep all demons away. They had taken the dead man down to the stream and buried him there with some of his personal things. During this conversation the legend of the loss of immortality was heard for the first time. The Abor word for a spirit is *u-yu*, and as the story was told of the coming of death one could almost hear the beating of his wings.

There was no other reason given for the noisy demonstration of the night before than self-defence against the direct attack of an angry spirit. But a curious explanation of shadow-fighting with sticks at a funeral, which may or may not have a bearing on the point, comes from Sumatra. "When the Karo-Bataks have buried somebody and are filling in the grave, a sorceress runs about beating the air with a stick. This she does in order to drive away the souls of the survivors, for if one of these souls happened to slip into the grave and to be covered up with earth, its owner would die." ¹

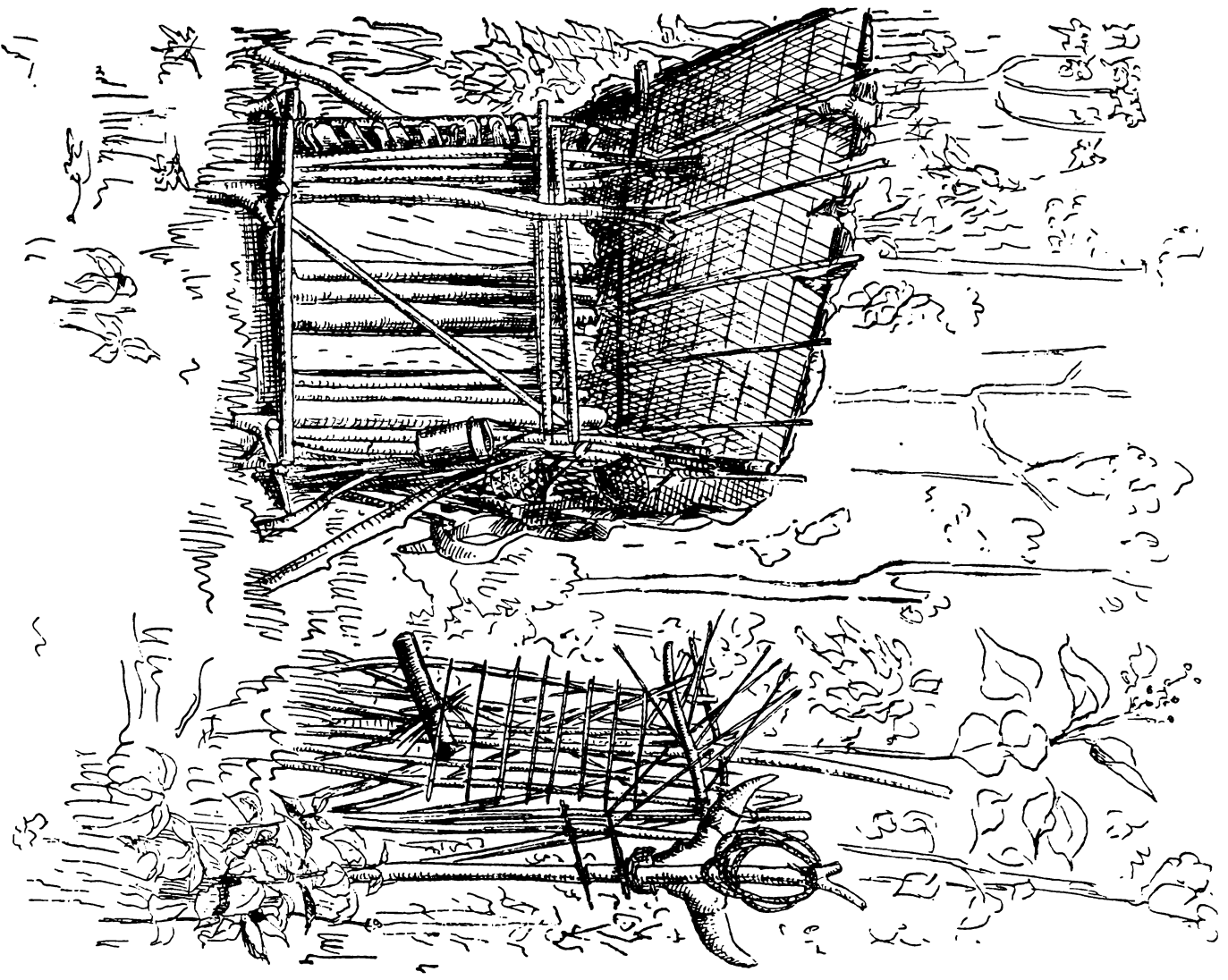
The dead are buried, the only rare exceptions being enemies killed in a fight, who may be thrown into the river. The corpses are laid in their graves in the same contracted position customary in prehistoric times, and surviving among other modern primitive races. To make sure of this before rigor sets in, it is not uncommon to force the knees of the dying up to their chins. Bodies are buried with their faces to the south, heads towards the west.

¹ *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, Frazer, p. 52.

After the grave is dug it is lined with leafy branches and floored with wood, upon which the body is laid wrapped in a grave-cloth. Beside it are placed a bead necklace and a brass plate or an earthenware bowl. A pent-roof is made over the body and on this the earth is thrown. Above the grave a little hut is built, and about it are hung some of the possessions of the one who has died.

Outside an Abor village below the Main Snowy Range, there was the most magnificent memorial of this kind that was seen in the country. Close to the grave-hut stood a solidly built screen eight feet high and eighteen feet long on which were hung an impressive array of weapons and battle-harness, the heads of a number of wild boar, monkeys, takin and mithan. More interesting even than the five takin heads were two trophies displayed beside the weapons. These were gourds obviously representing human heads with holes cut for the eyes and mouth. These, it was said, showed that the dead chief had killed two men of another clan in battle. It was stated that one other clan of Abors had the same custom. Nothing approaching head-hunting occurs in any of these tribes, and no other explanation than a trophy of war was given.

Mishmi funeral rites are only to some extent similar. It is said, but the writer, who only paid one short visit to their hills, has no corroboration for the statement, that in some parts of their country headmen are cremated and slaves thrown into the river. A grave was seen which consisted of a mound surrounded by a bamboo palisade about six feet high on which were hanging two old bird-skins and a plantain leaf-bag.



29. Hunter's Grave

The ceremonies following burial are bound up with the universally held belief that the unseen world is peopled with the souls of men and the spirits not only of animals but of the inanimate offerings that are placed by the grave. The spirits of the animals eaten by human beings in their lifetime accompany the dead person's spirit at death. Fear lest the ghost of the departed may return with the spirit who took that life away is the impulse that prompts the hillman to satisfy its needs in food and drink, in weapons and personal possessions.

So the little house is built, *apong* and rice are left there, and a fire is kept up as long as the hut remains in good repair, which for a headman may be for a year or more. Fresh food is brought for five or six days, after that it is seen that there is rice by the grave for about twelve months.

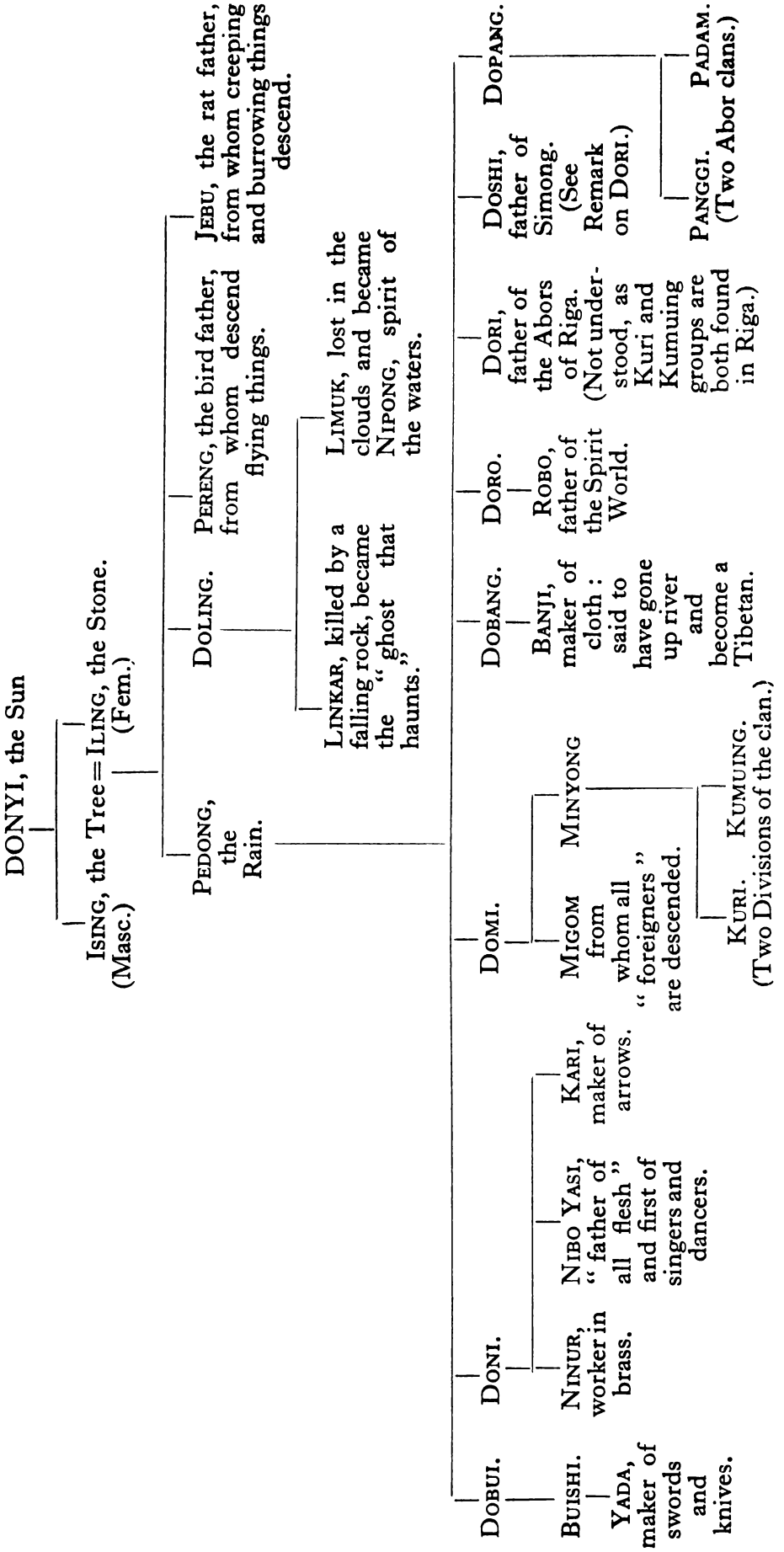
Although the souls of the dead go to the spirit who deprived them of life, it is not held that they stay with that spirit for ever. It is believed that if anyone who is dead is seen in a dream it means that the departed soul has left that spirit and gone to some higher deity.¹ No hillman was ever heard to say that this could bring the soul to the Supreme Being; and as direct leading questions suggesting the hoped-for reply are always valueless, this is all that can be said on the matter.

Here we leave these unspoilt children of Nature to their present vivid fears and vague hopes for the future, at the mercy of the spirits with whom they have peopled the world in which they live.

¹ See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II. p. 23 (ed. 1903).

GENEALOGICAL TABLE

To show ideas of creation as explained by the Minyong clan of Abors.



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