

Savages on Western Stretches of Amazon

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GUAQUI, Bolivia.—During my travels on the high plateau of the Andes, I have heard many strange stories about the vast unexplored country that slopes down to the Amazon valley. In coming across Lake Titicaca I traveled with an American railroad contractor who is building a line through the heart of Bolivia. He has been taking a vacation of two or three months, and has just returned from a gold prospecting tour in the regions of the Madre de Dios, one of the high tributaries of the Amazon. The Madre de Dios rises on the outer slope of the great mountain wall that skirts the northern side of Lake Titicaca. It flows in a winding course into the Beni, and on into the Mamore and Madeira, coming out through the latter stream into the Amazon below the city of Manaus. The region where it rises is wild, and much of that through which it flows is known only to the Indians. Mr. Avant traveled on foot down the river. He started out from Curco, at an altitude of over two miles above sea level, with a guide, an interpreter and eight Indians, and he descended to regions that are less than a half mile above the sea. The mountains he crossed were more than 15,000 feet high, and his way led from the glaciers and perpetual snow down into a tropical jungle, with crocodiles, boas, constrictors, palm trees and rubber.

Animal Life of Region.
As we sat in the rude hotel here at Guaquí this morning Mr. Avant told me something of the animal life of that region. He says that the country swarms with game. The woods are full of wild turkeys, that look like peacocks, each bird having a topknot of very bright plumage. The flesh is excellent, and it tastes like our wild turkey. Another bird of the same species is called the pabogil. This is twice as big as the largest American turkey, and its flesh tastes about the same.

I asked as to wild beasts, and Mr. Avant replied that he saw droves of peccaries, or wild hogs, and also tapirs and jaguars. The jaguars come around the camp at night, and were now and then to be seen as the party made its way through the woods. Much of the journey was along the banks of the streams and the party did not lack for fish. Whenever they wanted a fish dinner all they had to do was to explode a dynamite cap in the water, and a moment later the surface would be covered with dead fish. From one such explosion they took out 300 pounds. Some of the fish were as long as your arm and were of a delicious flavor. Among other inhabitants of the streams were alligators of various kinds. One had no scales and its enormous head was more like that of a fish than of an alligator. The skin was of a bluish cast, with a few specks here and there. These reptiles are said to be dangerous and the natives would not go into the waters where they live.

Indians Not Friendly to Foreigners

In talking of the Indians Mr. Avant said that the most of them are not friendly to foreigners. They are savages, who dress almost altogether in bark, and their chief weapons are bows and arrows tipped with poison. Some of the tribes are supposed to be cannibals and all are in a very low state of civilization.

It was at Lima that I met Mr. W. Bell Taylor of Boston, who had just come down from the coal mines in the high Andes near Cerro de Pasco and had a chat with him about an expedition he had recently made from Ambato, Ecuador, down the eastern slope of the Andes into the Amazon valley. His trip took three months, and during this time he traveled on foot and in canoes for more than 1,400 miles through the wilds. It took him nine days to reach Canelos, on the Rio Robanazo, during which time he walked and had men to carry his cargo. Each of the cargoes carried seventy-five pounds. The whole way was through the jungle. At Canelos the party took canoes and floated down one of the Amazon tributaries to the mouth of the Ucayali, which is one of the sources of the Amazon. The Ucayali flows into the Marañon, and the latter goes down into the main stream. Mr. Taylor visited Iquitos, the chief rubber port of the upper Amazon, and then came back overland through Peru. He describes Iquitos as a city of 25,000 inhabitants and as one of high prices. It cost him \$5 a day there for his food alone.

Savages Are Head Hunters

Among the most interesting stories told me by Mr. Taylor were those about the Jivaro Indians. These savages are head hunters who kill their enemies and preserve their heads as trophies of war. I have seen many of these heads during my travels and have made photographs of them. I was once offered a head for \$100 in gold, but refused it for fear that the ghost of the dead man might haunt me for the rest of my life. This head was about as big as my fist. The bones of the skull had been removed and the skin so carefully shrunken that none of the features was lost. The skin of the face was black and the long hair which hung down from the skull was of the same raven hue. The nose was almost beak-like in shape, and the lips were sewed together with long cotton strands that hung down like a macramé fringe.

Mr. Taylor told me the story of how these heads are cured, as he got it from the natives. He says it is a drying process. After killing a man they cut his head off close to the shoulders and as soon as they reach camp they open it and take out the bones of the skull. The skin of the head is then sewed together from the crown to the base of the neck. It is now a kind of bag. This is filled with hot sand, but is kept as far as possible in its original shape. It is pressed inward during the drying, the sand being changed from time to time, until the head is reduced to one-fourth or one-fifth the original size. Before beginning the curing, the skin is padded with the juice of the huito, a fruit that looks much like an avocado pear. This juice is a leather preserver. It is smeared over the head inside and out. As the head grows smaller a stone of the shape of a small skull is inserted and the skin is worked down upon it. This stone regulates the size of the head when it is cured. It is taken out before the skin has grown too hard, but after its features are fixed. The head is then hung up over the fireplace and allowed to cure in the smoke.

Are Good Looking People

Mr. Taylor describes the Jivaro Indians as a well made good looking people. He says they are polygamists, some of them having seven or eight wives. They multiply rapidly, but the population is kept down by feuds, during which one family will lay for another and shoot any of its members on sight. In order to be ready to defend themselves they sleep in a sitting posture, each brave having his spear between his knees. While visiting one tribe Mr. Taylor saw three Jivaros who had just come in from the hunt. They were thin and gaunt. They described a raid that had just been made on their family, during which all had been killed but themselves. Mr. Taylor took a canoe and went with a priest to the place of the killing. There were women and children and old men lying on the ground. The heads of all had been cut off, and the captives were probably curing them as I have described.



Cannibals who live near the source of the Amazon

Another interesting thing about the Indians of the upper Amazon," said Mr. Taylor, "is their use of the blowgun and the poisoned arrow. This is common among most of the tribes between the Napo and the Marañon. Their guns are long tubes just large enough around for the arrows, which are wrapped with cotton at the ends to make them fit close. The arrows are small, not more than a foot or a foot and a half in length, and not much thicker than a wooden toothpick. The poison is so deadly that it will kill almost anything that the arrow goes into. It comes from Brazil. The Indians can send these arrows from forty to fifty feet at a shot, and they can hit a monkey or a bird in a high tree. For their fighting they use spears much like those of the Indians of the middle ages. There is a Spaniard who makes these spears and sells them to the Indians for rubber. Some of the tribes poison their spears with a venom which they make from a certain plant mixed with the juice from dead bodies in a state of putrefaction. The poison is put up in earthenware jars, or in joints of bamboo, and it forms an article of commerce among the Indians. It is also used on the arrows, and that for the killing of game. It does not injure the meat.

Use Poisoned Arrows

The Jivaro Indians are superstitious. They have witch doctors, who make a drink called hahuasa from the root and leaves of a shrub, boiled into a tea. This stuff is something like opium, and it makes one see visions and dream dreams. Mr. Taylor tried it. Shortly after he had drunk, spots came in front of his eyes, and a little later he saw pictures of spirits. The witch doctors told him to concentrate his mind on his family. He did so and saw snakes, but a little later his family actually appeared before his mind's eye, and that far more real than in any dream he had ever experienced.

Region Full of Queer People

Another most interesting man with whom I have talked about the Indians of the eastern Andes is a German explorer named Kroehle, who spent three years in traveling among them. He had a camera with him, and I was able to get some prints from his negatives. Some of these I dare not publish, for the figures are entirely nude, being especially interesting from an ethnological standpoint. Mr. Kroehle was twice wounded with poisoned arrows, and he had some narrow escapes from the head hunters in the neighborhood of the River Napo. He describes the Napo region as full of queer people. Some of the Indians there have in the lobes of their ears plates of wood or metal, as big around as the bottom of an average tumbler. The holes for them are gradually enlarged by inserting bits of grass and twigs until they grow and become so stretched that they will hold the great ear plugs. The same custom prevails in Burma and in other parts of the orient. On the highlands of East Central Africa I have seen ear lobes so stretched that when the plugs were taken out they hung down from the ears like straps, and their owners would fasten them over the tops of the ear in order that they might not catch in the branches as they passed through the forest.

Believe in Two Gods

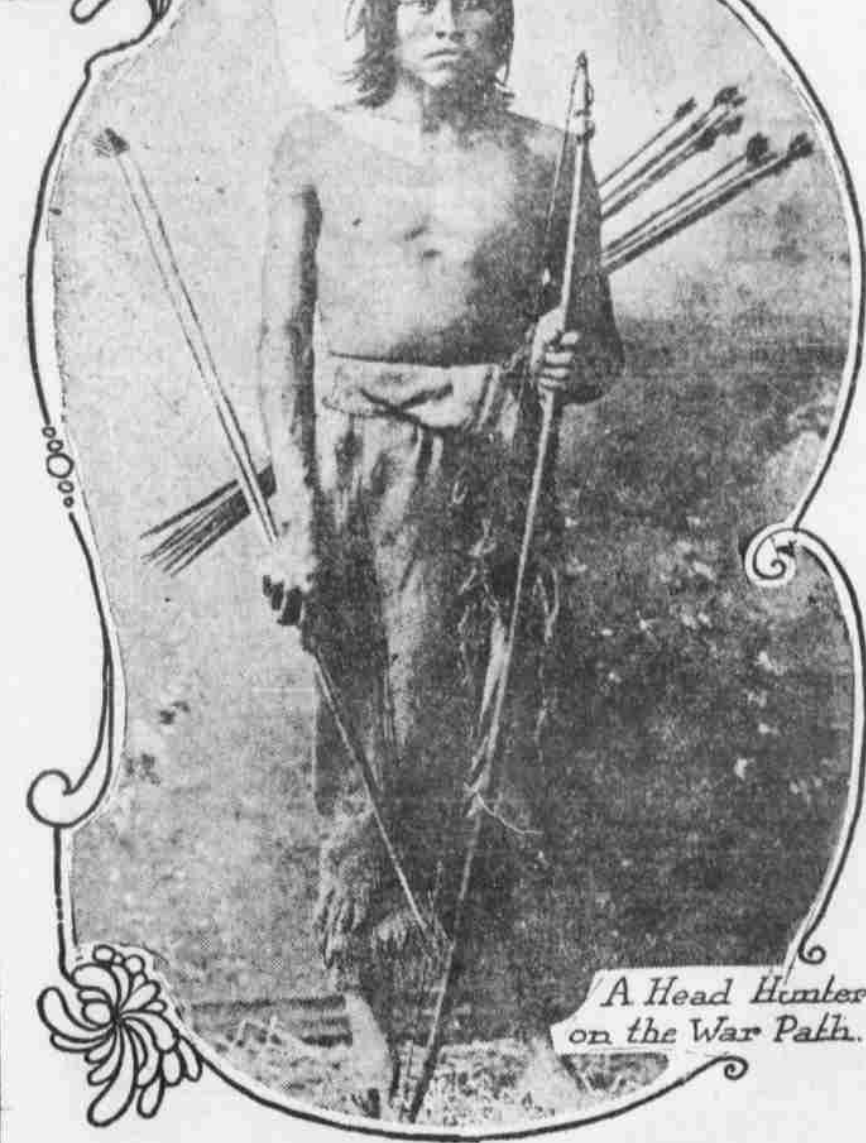
Some of the Indian tribes believe in two gods, one evil and one good. These two spirits fight for the control of mankind. Sometimes one conquers and sometimes the other. Others, such as the Conibos, are sun worshippers, as were the Incas at the time Pizarro came, while others believe that the spirits of good people return to earth after death and live in jaguars and monkeys, while those of the bad go into reptiles and parrots. Nearly every tribe has its witch doctors, and all are honeycombed with superstition.

Altogether, the Indians of the eastern Amazon are comparatively few.

They are largely scattered, and many of them are rather nomadic. Prof. Orton, one of the best authorities on the Amazon, estimates that there are not more than 40,000 people living along that river and the Marañon, and there are probably less than 100,000 on the eastern slopes of the Andes. The Royal Geographical society of Lima, Peru, recently estimated the number of savages in those regions as something like 150,000, dividing them into tribes that range in size from a few hundred to 2,000 to 3,000, the largest being the Huichos, which are put at 20,000, and after that the Ticunas, numbering 15,000. Enock fixes his estimate at 100,000 or more, and classifies the Indians into 112 tribes, a large number of which have but a few members.

Inferior to American Indians

None of these tribes is equal to the best type of the North American Indian. The most of them are short, and they vary in color from red to black. Nearly all have high cheek bones and all have long, straight black hair and black eyes.



A Head Hunter on the War Path

Some are very muscular, and a few are brave.

The majority, however, are cowardly and so afraid of the whites that they have been practically enslaved by them in the work of rubber gathering. Some of the tribes wear no clothes whatever. Others have clothes of bark cloth, and some wear short skirts made of the bark of a tree. Not a few make beautiful hammocks, also exquisite feather work formed of the bright-colored plumage of the birds of the Amazon valley. Several of the tribes are musical. The Aguarunas have flutes of reed or bone and a kind of violin with three strings. They also have drums of tree trunks which they use for sending their wireless messages from one savage settlement to another.

None of the tribes associate with any other tribe.

There is no union of government, and the chiefs are generally chosen for their superior ferocity and strength. Their languages differ widely, and there is no method of writing. Some of the savages count on their fingers, and express the higher numbers by movements of the fingers; but all are in a low state of civilization and are sinking lower by the vices and habits brought in by the whites.

FRATTLER OF THE KIDDIES

Grandma—You never saw your Uncle John. He's a great big six-footer.
Small Willie—But, grandma, I can't see what any man wants with more than two feet.

Johnny was sent to the cellar to draw a pitcher of elder.

When he got back the guest commended him. "You must have

easy to do as to wish to do.

A little girl's brother set a trap to catch birds. The little girl knew that it was wrong, cruel, against the laws of kindness and altogether inexcusable. She went at first, then her mother noticed that she had become cheerful again, and she was asked the cause.
"What else?" inquired her mother.
"I prayed that the trap would not catch any little birds."
"What else?"
"When I went out and kicked the old trap all to pieces."

The Sunday school teacher was making a review of the Bible lessons.

"Who was the wisest man, James?"
"Solomon." "That's right. Now, Frank, who was the strongest man?" "Jonah."
"Wrong. What reason have you for believing Jonah to be the strongest man?"
"Cause the whale couldn't hold him after it got him down."

Mrs. Emily P. Bishop, author of "Seventy Years Young," tells this little story to illustrate the fact that it is as

good judgment to have filled the pitcher so accurately in the dark without running it over.
"Aw, that ain't hard," replied Johnny.
"Ye see, when the elder got up to the first joint of my thumb, I stopped."

Small Elmer (after the slipper exercise)

"Well, I'm glad I ain't a girl anyway. His Mother—Why are you glad?
Small Elmer—Cause I'd be ashamed to grow up into a big woman and punish innocent little boys like me.
A schoolboy was given a sum to do. When it was done he took it to the teacher, who looked at it and said: "This answer is wrong by 2 cents. Go back to your seat and do it correctly."
"If you please, sir," said the youngster, fishing in his pocket. "I'd rather pay the difference."

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