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### ***The Hopi Snake Dance***

*This article concludes the series of three articles by Mr. Roosevelt about his Arizona experiences of last summer. Pictures illustrating this article will be found in the department "Current Events Pictorially Treated."—THE EDITORS.*

ON our trip we not only traversed the domains of two totally different and very interesting and advanced Indian tribes, but we also met all sorts and conditions of white men. One of the latter, by the way, related an anecdote which delighted me because of its unexpected racial implications. The narrator was a Mormon, the son of an English immigrant. He had visited Belgium as a missionary. While there he went to a theatre to hear an American Negro minstrel troupe; and, happening to meet one of the minstrels in the street, he hailed him with "Halloo, Sam!" to which the pleased and astonished minstrel cordially responded: "Well, for de Lawd's sake! Who'd expect to see a white man in this country?"

I did not happen to run across any Mormons at the snake-dance; but it seemed to me that almost every other class of Americans was represented—tourists, traders, cattlemen, farmers, government officials, politicians, cowboys, scientists, philanthropists, all kinds of men and women. We were especially glad to meet the assistant commissioner of Indian affairs, Mr. Abbot, one of the most useful public servants in Uncle Sam's employ. Mr. Hubbell, whose courtesy toward us was unwearied, met us; and we owed our comfortable quarters to the kindness of the Indian agent and his assistant. As I rode in I was accosted by Miss Natalie Curtis, who has done so very much to give to Indian culture its proper position. Miss Curtis's purpose has been to preserve and perpetuate all the cultural development to which the Indian has already attained—in art, music, poetry, or manufacture—and, moreover, to endeavor to secure the further development and adaptation of this Indian culture so as to make it, what it can undoubtedly be made, an important constituent element in our national cultural development.

Among the others at the snake-dance was Geoffrey O'Hara, whom Secretary of the Interior Lane has wisely appointed instructor of native Indian music. Mr. O'Hara's purpose is to perpetuate and develop the wealth of Indian music and poetry—and ultimately the rhythmical dancing that goes with the music and poetry. The Indian children already know most of the poetry, with its peculiarly baffling rhythm. Mr. O'Hara wishes to appoint special Indian instructors of this music, carefully chosen, in the schools; as he said: "If the Navajo can bring with him into civilization the ability to preserve his striking and bewildering rhythm, he will have done in music what Thorpe, the Olympic champion, did in athletics." Miss Curtis and Mr. O'Hara represent the effort to perpetuate Indian art in the life of the Indian to-day, not only for his sake, but for our own. This side of Indian life is entirely unrevealed to most white men; and there is urgent need from the standpoint of the white man himself of a proper appreciation of

native art. Such appreciation may mean much toward helping the development of an original American art for our whole people.

No white visitor to Walpi was quite as interesting as an Indian visitor, a Navajo who was the owner and chauffeur of the motor in which Mr. Hubbell had driven to Walpi. He was an excellent example of the Indian who ought to be given the chance to go to a non-reservation school—a class not perhaps as yet relatively very large, but which will grow steadily larger. He had gone to such a school; and at the close of his course had entered the machine-shops of the Santa Fé and Northeastern Railway—I think that was the name of the road—staying there four years, joining the local union, going out with the other men when they struck, and having in all ways precisely the experience of the average skilled mechanic. Then he returned to the reservation, where he is now a prosperous merchant, running two stores; and he purchased his automobile as a matter of convenience and of economy in time, so as to get quickly from one store to the other, as they are far apart. He is not a Christian, nor is his wife; but his children have been baptized in the Catholic Church. Of course, such a prosperous career is exceptional for an Indian, as it would be exceptional for a white man; but there were Hopi Indians whom we met at the dance, both storekeepers and farmers, whose success had been almost as great. Among both the Navajos and Hopis the progress has been marked during the last thirty or forty years, and is more rapid now than ever before, and careers such as those just mentioned will in their essence be repeated again and again by members of both tribes in the near future. The Hopis are so far advanced that most of them can now fully profit by non-reservation schools. For large sections of the Navajos the advance must be slower. For these the agency school is the best school, and their industrial training should primarily be such as will fit them for work in their own homes, and for making these homes cleaner and better.

Of course, the advance in any given case is apt to be both fitful and one-sided—the marvel is that it is not more so. Moreover, the advance is sometimes taking place when there seems dishearteningly little evidence of it. I have never respected any men or women more than some of the missionaries and their wives—there were examples on the Navajo reservation—who bravely and uncomplainingly labor for righteousness, although knowing that the visible fruits of their labor will probably be gathered by others in a later generation. These missionaries may fail to make many converts at the moment, and yet they may unconsciously produce such an effect that the men and women who themselves remain heathen are rather pleased to have their children become Christians. I have in mind, as illustrating just what I mean, one missionary family on the Navajo reservation whom it was an inspiration to meet; and, by the way, the Christian Navajo interpreter at their mission, with his pretty wife and children, gave fine proof of what the right education can do for the Indian.

Among those at the snake-dance was a Franciscan priest, who has done much good work on the Navajo reservation. He has attained great influence with the Navajos because of his work for their practical betterment. He doesn't try to convert the adults; but he has worked with much success among the children. Like every competent judge I met, he strongly protested against opening or cutting down the Navajo reservation. I heartily agree with him. Such an act would be a cruel wrong, and would benefit only a few wealthy cattle and sheep men.

There has apparently been more missionary success among the adult Hopis than among the adult Navajos; at any rate, I came across a Baptist congregation of some thirty members, and from information given me I am convinced that these converts stood in all ways ahead of their heathen brethren. Exceptional qualities of courage, hard-headed common sense, sympathy, and understanding are needed by the missionary who is to do really first-class work; even more

exceptional than are the qualities needed by the head of a white congregation under present conditions. The most marked successes have been won by men, themselves of lofty and broad-minded spirituality, who have respected the advances already made by the Indian toward a higher spiritual life, and instead of condemning these advances have made use of them in bringing his soul to a loftier level. One very important service rendered by the missionaries is their warfare on what is evil among the white men on the reservations; they are most potent allies in warring against drink and sexual immorality, two of the greatest curses with which the Indian has to contend. The missionary is always the foe of the white man of loose life, and of the white man who sells whiskey. Many of the missionaries, including all who do most good, are active in protecting the rights of each Indian to his land. Like the rest of us, the missionary needs to keep in mind the fact that the Indian criminal is on the whole more dangerous to the well-meaning Indian than any outsider can at present be; for there are as wide differences of character and conduct among Indians as among whites, and there is the same need in the one case as in the other of treating each individual according to his conduct—and of persuading the people of his own class and color thus to treat him.

Several times we walked up the precipitous cliff trails to the mesa top, and visited the three villages thereon. We were received with friendly courtesy—perhaps partly because we endeavored to show good manners ourselves, which, I am sorry to say, is not invariably the case with tourists. The houses were colored red or white; and the houses individually, and the villages as villages, compared favorably with the average dwelling or village in many of the southern portions of Mediterranean Europe. Contrary to what we had seen in the Hopi village near Tuba, most of the houses were scrupulously clean; although the condition of the streets—while not worse than in the Mediterranean villages above referred to—showed urgent need of a crusade for sanitation and elementary hygiene. The men and women were well dressed, in clothes quite as picturesque and quite as near our own garb as the dress of many European peasants of a good type; aside, of course, from the priests and young men who were preparing for the ceremonial dance, and who were clad, or unclad, according to the ancient ritual. There were several rooms in each house; and the furniture included stoves, sewing-machines, chairs, window-panes of glass, and sometimes window-curtains. There were wagons in one or two of the squares, for a wagon road has been built to one end of the mesa; and we saw donkeys laden with fagots or water—another south European analogy.

Altogether, the predominant impression made by the sight of the ordinary life—not the strange heathen ceremonies—was that of a reasonably advanced, and still advancing, semi-civilization; not savagery at all. There is big room for improvement; but so there is among whites; and while the improvement should be along the lines of gradual assimilation to the life of the best whites, it should unquestionably be so shaped as to preserve and develop the very real element of native culture possessed by these Indians—which, as I have already said, if thus preserved and developed, may in the end become an important contribution to American cultural life. Ultimately I hope the Indian will be absorbed into the white population, on a full equality; as was true, for instance, of the Indians who served in my own regiment, the Rough Riders; as is true on the Navajo reservation itself of two of the best men thereon, both in government employ, both partly of northern Indian blood, and both indistinguishable from the most upright and efficient of the men of pure white blood.

A visiting clergyman from the Episcopal Cathedral at Fond du Lac took me into one of the houses to look at the pottery. The grandmother of the house was the pottery-maker, and, entirely unhelped from without and with no incentive of material reward, but purely to gratify

her own innate artistic feeling, she had developed the art of pottery-making to a very unusual degree; it was really beautiful pottery. On the walls, as in most of the other houses, were picture-cards and photographs, including those of her children and grandchildren, singly and grouped with their schoolmates. Two of her daughters and half a dozen grandchildren were present, and it was evident that the family life was gentle and attractive. The grandfather was not a Christian, but "he is one of the best old men I ever knew, and I must say that I admire and owe him much, if I am a parson," said my companion. The Hopis are monogamous, and the women are well treated; the man tills the fields and weaves, and may often be seen bringing in fire-wood; and the fondness of both father and mother for their children is very evident.

Many well-informed and well-meaning men are apt to protest against the effort to keep and develop what is best in the Indian's own historic life as incompatible with making him an American citizen, and speak of those of opposite views as wishing to preserve the Indians only as national bric-à-brac. This is not so. We believe in fitting him for citizenship as rapidly as possible. But where he cannot be pushed ahead rapidly we believe in making progress slowly, and in all cases where it is possible we hope to keep for him and for us what was best in his old culture. As eminently practical men as Mr. Frissell, the head of Hampton Institute (an educational model for white, red, and black men alike), and Mr. Valentine, the late commissioner of Indian affairs, have agreed with Miss Curtis in drawing up a scheme for the payment from private sources of a number of high-grade, specially fitted educational experts, whose duty it should be to correlate all the agencies, public and private, that are working for Indian education, and also to make this education, not a mechanical impress from without, but a drawing out of the qualities that are within. The Indians themselves must be used in such education; many of their old men can speak as sincerely, as fervently, and as eloquently of duty as any white teacher, and these old men are the very teachers best fitted to perpetuate the Indian poetry and music. The effort should be to develop the existing art—whether in silver-making, pottery-making, blanket and basket weaving, or lace-knitting—and not to replace it by servile and mechanical copying. This is only to apply to the Indian a principle which ought to be recognized among all our people. A great art must be living, must spring from the soul of the people; if it represents merely a copying, an imitation, and if it is confined to a small caste, it cannot be great.

Of course all Indians should not be forced into the same mould. Some can be made farmers; others mechanics; yet others have the soul of the artist. Let us try to give each his chance to develop what is best in him. Moreover, let us be wary of interfering overmuch with either his work or his play. It is mere tyranny, for instance, to stop all Indian dances. Some which are obscene, or which are dangerous on other grounds, must be prohibited. Others should be permitted, and many of them encouraged. Nothing that tells for the joy of life, in any community, should be lightly touched.

A few Indians may be able to turn themselves into ordinary citizens in a dozen years. Give these exceptional Indians every chance; but remember that the majority must change gradually, and that it will take generations to make the change complete. Help them to make it in such fashion that when the change is accomplished we shall find that the original and valuable elements in the Indian culture have been retained, so that the new citizens come with full hands into the great field of American life, and contribute to that life something of marked value to all of us, something which it would be a misfortune to all of us to have destroyed.

As an example, take the case of these Hopi mesa towns, perched in such boldly picturesque fashion on high, sheer-walled rock ridges. Many good people wish to force the Hopis to desert these towns, and live in isolated families in nice tin-roofed houses on the plains below. I

believe that this would be a mistake from the standpoint of the Indians—not to mention depriving our country of something as notable and as attractive as the castles that have helped make the Rhine beautiful and famous. Let the effort be to insist on cleanliness and sanitation in the villages as they are, and especially to train the Indians themselves to insist thereon; and to make it easier for them to get water. In insisting on cleanliness, remember that we preach a realizable ideal; our own ancestors lived in villages as filthy not three centuries ago. The breezy coolness of the rocky mesa top and the magnificent outlook would make it to me personally a far more attractive dwelling-place than the hot, dusty plains. Moreover, the present Hopi house, with its thick roof, is cooler and pleasanter than a tin-roofed house. I believe it would be far wiser gradually to develop the Hopi house itself, making it more commodious and convenient, rather than to abandon it and plant the Indian in a brand-new government-built house, precisely like some ten million other cheap houses. The Hopi architecture is a product of its own environment; it is as picturesque as anything of the kind which our art students travel to Spain in order to study. Therefore let us keep it. The Hopi architecture can be kept, adopted, and developed just as we have kept, adapted, and developed the Mission architecture of the Southwest—with the results seen in beautiful Leland Stanford University. The University of New Mexico is, most wisely, modelled on these pueblo buildings; and the architect, has done admirable work of the kind by adapting Indian architectural ideas in some of his California houses. The Hopi is himself already thus developing his house; as I have said, he has put in glass windows and larger doors; he is furnishing it; he is making it continually more livable. Give him a chance to utilize his own inherent sense of beauty in making over his own village for himself. Give him a chance to lead his own life as he ought to; and realize that he has something to teach us as well as to learn from us. The Hopi of the younger generation, at least in some of the towns, is changing rapidly; and it is safe to leave it to him to decide where he will build and keep his house.

I cannot so much as touch on the absorbingly interesting questions of the Hopi spiritual and religious life, and of the amount of deference that can properly be paid to one side of this life. The snake-dance and antelope-dance, which we had come to see, are not only interesting as relics of an almost inconceivably remote and savage past—analogous to the past wherein our own ancestors once dwelt—but also represent a mystic symbolism which has in it elements that are ennobling and not debasing. These dances are prayers or invocations for rain, the crowning blessing in this dry land. The rain is adored and invoked both as male and female; the gentle steady downpour is the female, the storm with lightning the male. The lightning-stick is “strong medicine,” and is used in all these religious ceremonies. The snakes, the brothers of men, as are all living things in the Hopi creed, are besought to tell the beings of the underworld man’s need of water.

As a former great chief at Washington I was admitted to the sacred room, or one-roomed house, the kiva, in which the chosen snake priests had for a fortnight been getting ready for the sacred dance. Very few white men have been thus admitted, and never unless it is known that they will treat with courtesy and respect what the Indians revere. Entrance to the house, which was sunk in the rock, was through a hole in the roof, down a ladder across whose top hung a cord from which fluttered three eagle plumes and dangled three small animal skins. Below was a room perhaps fifteen feet by twenty-five. One end of it, occupying perhaps a third of its length, was raised a foot above the rest, and the ladder led down to this raised part. Against the rear wall of this raised part or dais lay thirty odd rattlesnakes, most of them in a twined heap in one corner, but a dozen by themselves scattered along the wall. There was also a pot containing several striped ribbon-snakes, too lively to be left at large. Eight or ten priests, some old, some young,

sat on the floor in the lower and larger two-thirds of the room, and greeted me with grave courtesy; they spread a blanket on the edge of the dais, and I sat down, with my back to the snakes and about eight feet from them; a little behind and to one side of me sat a priest with a kind of fan or brush made of two or three wing-plumes of an eagle, who kept quiet guard over his serpent wards. At the farther end of the room was the altar; the rude picture of a coyote was painted on the floor, and on the four sides of this coyote picture were paintings of snakes; on three sides it was hemmed in by lightning-sticks, or thunder-sticks, standing upright in little clay cups, and on the fourth side by eagle plumes held similarly erect. Some of the priests were smoking—for pleasure, not ceremonially—and they were working at parts of the ceremonial dress. One had a cast rattlesnake skin which he was chewing, to limber it up, just as Sioux squaws used to chew buckskin. Another was fixing a leather apron with pendent thongs; he stood up and tried it on. All were scantily clad, in breech-clouts or short kilts or loin flaps; their naked, copper-red bodies, lithe and sinewy, shone, and each had been splashed in two or three places with a blotch or streak of white paint. One spoke English and translated freely; I was careful not to betray too much curiosity or touch on any matter which they might be reluctant to discuss. The snakes behind me never rattled or showed any signs of anger; the translator volunteered the remark that they were peaceable because they had been given medicine—whatever that might mean, supposing the statement to be true according to the sense in which the words are accepted by plainsmen. But several of them were active in the sluggish rattlesnake fashion. One glided sinuously toward me; when he was a yard away, I pointed him out to the watcher with the eagle feathers; the watcher quietly extended the feathers and stroked and pushed the snake's head back, until it finally turned and crawled back to the wall. Half a dozen times different snakes thus crawled out toward me and were turned back, without their ever displaying a symptom of irritation. One snake got past the watcher and moved slowly past me about six inches away, whereupon the priest on my left leaned across me and checked its advance by throwing pinches of dust in its face until the watcher turned round with his feather sceptre. Every move was made without hurry and with quiet unconcern; neither snake nor man, at any time, showed a trace of worry or anger; all, human beings and reptiles, were in an atmosphere of quiet peacefulness. When I rose to say good-by, I thanked my hosts for their courtesy; they were pleased, and two or three shook hands with me.

On the afternoon of the following day, August 20, the antelope priests—the men of the antelope clan—held their dance. The snake priests took part. It was held in the middle of Walpi village, round a big, rugged column of rock, a dozen feet high, which juts out of the smooth surface. The antelope-dancers came in first, clad in kilts, with fox skins behind; otherwise naked, painted with white splashes and streaks, and their hair washed with the juice of the yucca root. Their leader's kilt was white; he wore a garland and anklets of cottonwood leaves, and sprinkled water from a sacred vessel to the four corners of heaven. Another leader carried the sacred bow and a bull-roarer, and they moved to its loud moaning sound. The snake priests were similarly clad, but their kirtles were of leather; eagle plumes were in their long hair, and under their knees they carried rattles made of tortoise-shell. In two lines they danced opposite each other, keeping time to the rhythm of their monotonous chanting.

On the top of the column were half a dozen Hopi young men, clad in ordinary white man's clothing. Archie joined these, and entered into conversation with them. They spoke English; they had been at non-reservation schools; they were doing well as farmers and citizens. One and all they asserted that, in order to prosper in after life, it was necessary for the Indian to get away to a non-reservation school; that merely to go to an agency school was not enough in

any community which was on the highroad of progress; and that they intended to send their own children for a couple of years to an agency school and then to a non-reservation school. They looked at the ceremonial religious dances of their fathers precisely as the whites did; they were in effect Christians, although not connected with any specific church. They represented substantial success in the effort to raise the Indian to the level of the white man. In their case it was not necessary to push them toward forgetfulness of their past. They were travelling away from it naturally, and of their own accord. As their type becomes dominant the snake-dance and antelope-dance will disappear, the Hopi religious myths will become memories, and the Hopis will live in villages on the mesa tops, or scattered out on the plains, as their several inclinations point, just as if they were so many white men. It is to be hoped that the art, the music, the poetry of their elders will be preserved during the change coming over the younger generation.

On my return from this dance I met two of the best Indian agents in the entire service. The first was Mr. Parquette, a Wisconsin man, himself part Indian by blood. The other was Mr. Shelton, who has done more for the Navajos than any other living man. He has sternly put down the criminal element exactly as he has toiled for and raised the decent Indians and protected them against criminal whites; moreover, he has actually reformed these Indian criminals, so that they are now themselves decent people and his fast friends; while the mass of the Indians recognize him as their leader who has rendered them incalculable services. He has got the Indians themselves to put an absolute stop to gambling, whiskey-drinking, and sexual immorality. His annual agricultural fair is one of the features of Navajo life, and is of far-reaching educational value. Yet this exceptionally upright and efficient public servant, who has done such great and lasting good to the Indians, was for years the object of attack by certain Eastern philanthropic associations, simply because he warred against Indian criminals who were no more entitled to sympathy than the members of the Whyo gang in New York City. Messrs. Shelton and Parquette explained to me the cruel wrong that would be done to the Navajos if their reservation was thrown open or cut down. It is desert country. It cannot be utilized in small tracts, for in many parts the water is so scanty that hundreds, and in places even thousands, of acres must go to the support of any family. The Indians need it all; they are steadily improving as agriculturists and stock-growers; few small settlers could come in even if the reservation were thrown open; the movement to open it, and to ruin the Indians, is merely in the interest of a few needy adventurers and of a few wealthy men who wish to increase their already large fortunes, and who have much political influence.

Mr. Robinson, the superintendent of irrigation, in protesting against opening the reservation, dwelt upon the vital need of getting from Congress sufficient money to enable the engineers to develop water by digging wells, preserving springs, and making flood reservoirs. The lack of water is the curse of this desert reservation. The welfare of the Indians depends on the further development of the water-supply.

That night fires flared from the villages on the top of the mesa. Before there was a hint of dawn we heard the voice of the crier summoning the runners to get ready for the snake-dance; and we rose and made our way to the mesa top. The "yellow line," as the Hopis call it, was in the east, and dawn was beautiful, as we stood on the summit and watched the women and children in their ceremonial finery, looking from the housetops and cliff edges for the return of the racers. On this occasion they dropped their civilized clothes. The children were painted and naked save for kilts; and they wore feathers and green corn leaves in their hair. The women wore the old-style clothing; many of them were in their white bridal dresses, which in this queer tribe are woven by the bridegroom and his male kinsfolk for the bride's trousseau. The returning racers

ran at speed up the precipitous paths to the mesa, although it was the close of a six-mile run. Most of them, including the winner, wore only a breech-clout and were decked with feathers. I should like to have entered that easy-breathing winner in a Marathon contest! Many of the little boys ran the concluding mile or so with them; and the little girls made a pretty spectacle as they received the little boys much as the women and elder girls greeted the men. Then came the corn-scramble, or mock-fight over the corn; and then in each house a feast was set, especially for the children.

At noon, thanks to Mr. Hubbell, and to the fact that I was an ex-President, we were admitted to the sacred kiva—the one-roomed temple-house which I had already visited—while the snake priests performed the ceremony of washing the snakes. Very few white men have ever seen this ceremony. The sight was the most interesting of our entire trip.

There were twenty Indians in the kiva, all stripped to their breech-clouts; only about ten actually took part in handling the snakes, or in any of the ceremonies except the rhythmic chant, in which all joined. Eighty or a hundred snakes, half of them rattlers, the others bull-snakes or ribbon-snakes, lay singly or in tangled groups against the wall at the raised end of the room. They were quiet and in no way nervous or excited. Two men stood at this end of the room. Two more stood at the other end, where the altar was; there was some sand about the altar, and the eagle feathers we had previously seen there had been removed, but the upright thunder-sticks remained. The other Indians were squatted in the middle of the room, and half a dozen of them were in the immediate neighborhood of a very big, ornamented wooden bowl of water, placed on certain white-painted symbols on the floor. Two of these Indians held sacred rattles, and there was a small bowl of sacred meal beside them. There was some seemingly ceremonial pipe-smoking.

After some minutes of silence, one of the squatting priests, who seemed to be the leader, and who had already puffed smoke toward the bowl, began a low prayer, at the same time holding and manipulating in his fingers a pinch of the sacred meal. The others once and again during this prayer uttered in unison a single word or exclamation—a kind of selah or amen. At the end he threw the meal into the bowl of water; he had already put some in at the outset of the prayer. Then he began a rhythmic chant, in which all the others joined, the rattles being shaken and the hands moved in harmony with the rhythm. The chant consisted seemingly of a few words repeated over and over again. It was a strange scene, in the half-light of the ancient temple-room. The copper-red bodies of the priests swayed, and their strongly marked faces, hitherto changeless, gained a certain quiet intensity of emotion. The chanting grew in fervor; yet it remained curiously calm throughout (except for a moment at a time, about which I shall speak later). Then the two men who stood near the snakes stooped over, and each picked up a handful of them, these first handfuls being all rattlesnakes. It was done in tranquil, matter-of-fact fashion, and the snakes behaved with equally tranquil unconcern. All was quiet save for the chanting. The snakes were handed to two of the men squatting round the bowl, who received them as if they had been harmless, holding them by the middle of the body, or at least well away from the head. This was repeated until half a dozen of the squatting priests held each three or four poisonous serpents in his hands. The chanting continued, in strongly accented but monotonous rhythm, while the rattles were shaken, and the snakes moved up and down or shaken, in unison with it. Then suddenly the chant quickened and rose to a scream, and the snakes were all plunged into the great bowl of water, a writhing tangle of snakes and hands. Immediately afterward they were withdrawn, as suddenly as they had been plunged in, and were hurled half across the room, to the floor, on and around the altar. They were hurled from a distance of a dozen feet, with sufficient

violence to overturn the erect thunder-sticks. That the snakes should have been quiet and inoffensive under the influence of the slow movements and atmosphere of calm that had hitherto obtained was understandable; but the unexpected violence of the bathing, and then of the way in which they were hurled to the floor, together with the sudden screaming intensity of the chant, ought to have upset the nerves of every snake there. However, it did not. The snakes woke to an interest in life, it is true, writhed themselves free of one another and of the upset lightning-sticks, and began to glide rapidly in every direction. But only one showed symptoms of anger, and these were not marked. The two standing Indians at this end of the room herded the snakes with their eagle feathers, gently brushing and stroking them back as they squirmed toward us, or toward the singing, sitting priests.

The process was repeated until all the snakes, venomous and non-venomous alike, had been suddenly bathed and then hurled on the floor, filling the other end of the room with a wriggling, somewhat excited serpent population, which was actively, but not in any way nervously, shepherded by the two Indians stationed for that purpose. These men were, like the others, clad only in a breech-clout, but they moved about among the snakes, barelegged and barefooted, with no touch of concern. One or two of the rattlers became vicious under the strain, and coiled and struck. I thought I saw one of the two shepherding watchers struck in the hand by a recalcitrant sidewinder which refused to be soothed by the feathers, and which he finally picked up; but, if so, the man gave no sign and his placidity remained unruffled. Most of the snakes showed no anger at all; it seemed to me extraordinary that they were not all of them maddened.

When the snakes had all been washed, the leading priest again prayed. Afterward he once more scattered meal in the bowl, in lines east, west, north, and south, and twice diagonally. The chant was renewed; it grew slower; the rattles were rattled more slowly; then the singing stopped and all was over.

At the end of the ceremony I thanked my hosts and asked if there was anything I could do to show my appreciation of the courtesy they had shown me. They asked if I could send them some cowry shells, which they use as decorations for the dance. I told them I would send them a sackful. They shook hands cordially with all of us, and we left. I have never seen a wilder or, in its way, more impressive spectacle than that of these chanting, swaying, red-skinned medicine-men, their lithe bodies naked, unconcernedly handling the death that glides and strikes, while they held their mystic worship in the gray twilight of the kiva. The ritual and the soul-needs it met, and the symbolism and the dark savagery, were all relics of an ages-vanished past, survivals of an elder world.

The snake-dance itself took place in the afternoon at five o'clock. There were many hundreds of onlookers, almost as many whites as Indians, and most of the Indian spectators were in white man's dress, in strong contrast to the dancers. The antelope priests entered first and ranged themselves by a tree-like bundle of cottonwood branches against the wall of buildings to one side of the open place where the dance takes place; the other side is the cliff edge. The snakes, in a bag, were stowed by the bundle of cottonwood branches. Young girls stood near the big pillar of stone with sacred meal to scatter at the foot of the pillar after the snakes had been thrown down there and taken away. Then the snake priests entered in their fringed leather kilts and eagle-plume head-dresses; fox skins hung at the backs of their girdles, their bodies were splashed and streaked with white, and on each of them the upper part of the face was painted black and the lower part white. Chanting, and stepping in rhythm to the chant, and on one particular stone slab stamping hard as a signal to the underworld, they circled the empty space

and for some minutes danced opposite the line of antelope priests. Then, in couples, one of each couple seizing and carrying in his mouth a snake, they began to circle the space again. The leading couple consisted of one man who had his arm across the shoulder of another, while this second man held in his teeth, by the upper middle of its body, a rattlesnake four feet long, the flat, ace-of-clubs-shaped head and curving neck of the snake being almost against the man's face. Rattlesnakes, bull-snakes, ribbon-snakes, all were carried in the same way. One man carried at the same time two small sidewinder rattlesnakes in his mouth. After a while each snake was thrown on the rock and soon again picked up and held in the hand, while a new snake was held in the mouth. Finally, each man carried a bundle of snakes in his hand, all so held as to leave the head free, so that the snake could strike if it wished. Most of the snakes showed no anger or resentment. But occasionally one, usually a small sidewinder, half coiled or rattled when thrown down; and in picking these up much caution was shown, the Indian stroking the snake with his eagle feathers and trying to soothe it and get it to straighten out; and if it refused to be soothed, he did his best to grasp it just back of the head; and when he had it in his hand, he continued to stroke the body with the feathers, obviously to quiet it. But whether it were angry or not, he always in the end grasped and lifted it—besides keeping it from crawling among the spectators. Several times I saw the snakes strike at the men who were carrying them, and twice I was sure they struck home—once a man's wrist, once his finger. Neither man paid any attention or seemed to suffer in any way. I saw no man struck in the face; but several of my friends had at previous dances seen men so struck. In one case the man soon showed that he was in much pain, although he continued to dance, and he was badly sick for days; in the other cases no bad result whatever followed.

At last all the snakes were in the hands of the dancers. Then all were thrown at the foot of the natural stone pillar, and immediately, with a yell, the dancers leaped in, seized, each of them, several snakes, and rushed away, east, west, north, and south, dashing over the edge of the cliff and jumping like goats down the precipitous trails. At the foot of the cliff, or on the plain, they dropped the snakes, and then returned to purify themselves by drinking and washing from pails of dark sacred water—medicine water—brought by the women. It was a strange and most interesting ceremony all through.

I do not think any adequate explanation of the immunity of the dancers has been advanced. Perhaps there are several explanations. These desert rattlesnakes are not nearly as poisonous as the huge diamond-backs of Florida and Texas; their poison is rarely fatal. The dancers are sometimes bitten; usually they show no effects, but, as above said, in one instance the bitten man was very sick for several days. It has been said that the fangs are extracted; but even in this case the poison would be loose in the snake's mouth and might get in the skin through the wounds made by the other teeth; and I noticed that when any snake, usually a small sidewinder, showed anger and either rattled or coiled, much caution was shown in handling it, and every effort made to avoid being bitten. It is also asserted that the snakes show the quiet and placid indifference they do because they are drugged, and one priest told me they are given "medicine"; but I have no idea whether this is true. Nor do I know whether the priests themselves take medicine. I believe that one element in the matter is that the snake priests either naturally possess or develop the same calm power over these serpents that certain men have over bees; the latter power, the existence of which is so well known, has never received the attention and study it deserves. An occasional white man has such power with snakes. There was near my ranch on the Little Missouri, twenty-five years ago, a man who had this power. He was a rather shiftless, ignorant man, of a common frontier type, who failed at about everything, and I think he was

himself surprised when he found that he could pick up and handle rattlesnakes with impunity. There was no deception about it. I would take him off on horseback, and when I found a rattler he would quietly pick it up by the thick part of the body and put it in a sack. He sometimes made movements with his hands before picking up a coiled rattler; but when he had several in a bag he would simply put his hand in, take hold of a snake anywhere, and draw it out. I can understand the snakes being soothed and quieted by the matter-of-fact calm and fearlessness of the priests for most of the time; but why the rattlers were not all maddened by the treatment they received at the washing in the kiva, and again when thrown on the dance rock, I cannot understand.

That night we motored across the desert with Mr. Hubbell to his house and store at Ganado, sixty miles away, and from Ganado we motored to Gallup, and our holiday was at an end. Mr. Hubbell is an Indian trader. His Ganado house, right out in the bare desert, is very comfortable and very attractive, and he treats all comers with an open-handed hospitality inherited from pioneer days. He has great influence among the Navajos, and his services to them have been of much value. Every ounce of his influence has been successfully exerted to put a stop to gambling and drinking; his business has been so managed as to be an important factor in the material and moral betterment of the Indians with whom he has dealt. And he has been the able champion of their rights wherever these rights have been menaced from any outside source.

Arizona and New Mexico hold a wealth of attraction for the archæologist, the anthropologist, and the lover of what is strange and striking and beautiful in nature. More and more they will attract visitors and students and holiday-makers. That part of northern Arizona which we traversed is of such extraordinary interest that it should be made more accessible by means of a government-built motor road from Gallup to the Grand Canyon; a road from which branch roads, as good as those of Switzerland, would gradually be built to such points as the Hopi villages and the neighborhood of the Natural Bridge.