

PAPUAN GHOST HOUSES.

Unique Collection Just Acquired by Museum of Natural History.

Dr. Hermon C. Bumpus, director of the American Museum of Natural History, announced the other day that in the new west wing of the museum, just completed, there would soon be placed on exhibition a unique collection of objects of exceptional ethnological interest, valued at \$10,000, recently acquired, which had been gathered by Professor Eugene Schroeder, in the Bismarck Archipelago, in the South Seas.

Many of the objects in the collection are becoming scarce by reason of the intercourse of the natives with European and American traders. The native inhabitants of the archipelago are cannibals. They belong to the Papuan race, and wear little clothing, usually a band about the hips, and often not even that. Their ear ornaments are so heavy sometimes that they draw the lobe of the ear down to the shoulders. They are also accustomed to pierce the nose to wear ornaments of bone.

Ghost, or "taboo," houses are scattered through the islands, as the Papuans believe that departed spirits take part in the events of the day. In a typical ghost house the framework consists of posts and rafters of wooden or bamboo poles, the roof and sides being thatched with grass, and only one side is partly closed. The "malagans," or idols, are kept in these ghost houses.

Dr. Charles W. Mead, of the department of anthropology of the museum, said that these malagans represented evil spirits or devils, and

PAPUAN DEATH DRUM.



ORNAMENT FROM A PAPUAN GHOST HOUSE.

their propitiation was the only religion of the people. A ceremonial dance at stated times was performed about the ghost houses. Women were seldom allowed to take part in it. There was another mystic ceremony, known as the "ini" dance, performed by men, who went through certain rites to the accompaniment of barbarous songs, notes of the pan pipes and the din of shell trumpets and drums. From witnessing this ceremony women were prohibited under penalty of death.

The largest malagan in the museum's collection is nine feet four inches high, and looks as if it were composed of many figures and slatlike pieces joined together. Like the others, however, it was carved from a single log.

The motives of the carvings are the human figure, animals, birds and fishes, all distorted or conventionalized. The colors used in decoration are red, black and white.

The most highly prized object in the collection is an ancient death drum, or "nunut." This rare specimen is carved from a log of some hard, dark wood, probably a species of palm. Each of its three tongues produces a note of a different pitch from the others. This instrument in olden times was used only on the death of a chief, and the discord caused by its tones was believed to be "spirit voices." One explorer, however, has maintained that the sound resembles the braying of an ass.

The instrument was held by the player between his knees. He caused the three tongues to vibrate by drawing over them the palm of his hand, which had previously been covered with some resinous substance.

Among other characteristic objects of the region is a wooden dance drum carved from a log of palm wood. The handle is considerably above the centre. When the drum is grasped by the left hand it hangs at an angle that brings the head in convenient position to be reached by the right hand. The head of the drum is of snake skin, and is usually beaten with the fingers. On the lower end of the drum is a form of decoration common to most of the islands of the South Seas. Depressions of the carved designs are filled with lime.



PAPUAN MEN WEAR BOARS' TUSKS IN THEIR NOSES AND FEATHERS IN THEIR HAIR.

—National Geographic Magazine.

The shanks of the shark hooks used by the natives are fashioned of wood and the curved points are made from the shells of large mollusks. An axelike implement in the collection has a blade made from a large shell. Two pieces of wood, hollowed out to receive the upper end of the shell blade, were bound together and to the handle by a thong made from a creeping plant. These shell blades are used in making canoes.

Trumpets used by the natives are made from the shell of a triton, a hole being made in one of the upper whorls for the mouthpiece. The sound can be heard half a mile, and is used to signal the approach of a vessel. The shell trumpet is the favorite musical instrument at all native gatherings and feasts.

Native knives in the collection are made with

wooden handles and blades of obsidian, or volcanic glass. There is an elaborately carved dagger made from the leg bone of a cassowary, a pan pipe of reeds and a lime gourd and spatula for holding and mixing the shell lime which is chewed with the betel. The decoration on the gourd has been burned in.

A REVISED VERSION.

A poet who has been known to tell the truth recounts this story of his little daughter.

Her mother overheard her expounding the origin of the sex to her family of dolls.

"You see, children," she said, "Adam was a man all alone and was very lonely, so God put him to sleep, took his brains out, and made a nice lady of them."—Illustrated Bits.



PAPUAN WOMEN ROLL THEIR CURLS WITH MUD AND WEAR MANY EARRINGS.

—National Geographic Magazine.

MEXICAN BELL RINGERS.

More than Two Thousand in Chief City Alone.

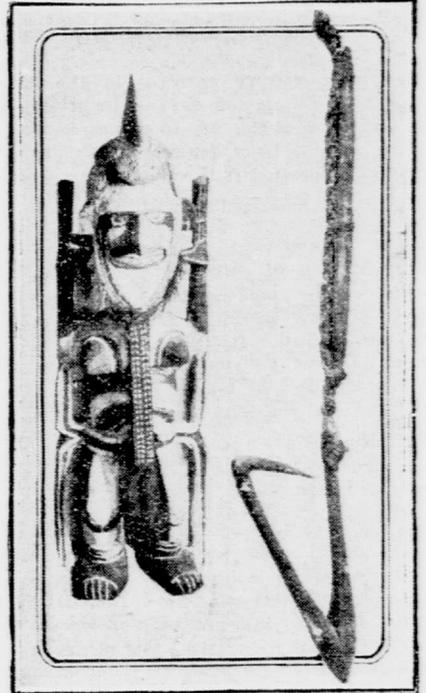
Mexico City, Mexico, Aug. 8.—It takes a great army of men to keep the church bells going in Mexico. It is estimated that in this city alone there are more than two thousand bell ringers. This is the number regularly employed. On days of religious celebrations the number is augmented, as the ringing of the bells must be kept up almost constantly through the day and night on such occasions. One of the most striking features of Mexican life to the casual visitor is the noise of the church bells. Every little hamlet and many of the ranches in the country have one or more Catholic churches, and each is equipped with one or more bell towers. The great cathedral which stands near the National Palace in this city has sixteen of these towers.

In some towns the constant ringing of the church bells is prohibited by the local authorities. The sounding of the bells is permitted once or twice every hour. Some churches toll the quarter hours and others toll every five minutes. Most of the churches in this city toll the quarter, half and hours.

The profession of bell ringing is looked on by the lower classes as being honorable and distinguished. The bell ringers are revered as being an adjunct to the clergy. The bell ringers themselves are usually proud of their work. In many cases this place in a church is handed down from father to son through generation after generation.

The towers of the large cathedrals are spa-

IDOL FROM A PAPUAN GHOST HOUSE.



PAPUAN FISH HOOK.

rious, and are frequently fitted with rooms which are occupied by the bell ringers and their families. Here, far above the noise of the traffic of the streets below, the faithful tollers of the bells live a peaceful life, seemingly unmindful of the crashing noise which constantly resounds about their very heads. They are away from the other noises of the city, but are in the midst of the bell clangings, which go on all through the days and nights.

"How can you sleep, with all this noise about you?" was recently asked the wife of a bell ringer in one of the cathedral towers.

"It is not the noise of the bells that I mind," she replied. "I hear their ringing without knowing it, but it is the clanging of the streetcar gongs in the street below that disturbs my slumbers."

All of the church bell ringing in Mexico is done by hand. Some of the bells are of ponderous size and great weight. To operate them requires the exercise of powerful muscles and much bodily strength. The use of clockwork or electrical machinery to operate the many bells in the great cathedral in this city has been considered from time to time, but the preponderance of sentiment of the church authorities has been against such an innovation.

The bell ringers are divided into day and night shifts. They are required to toll the hours with precision. It is not necessary to carry a watch in Mexico unless one is travelling in the country, out of sound of the church bells. At any hour, day or night, a person can learn the time by listening to the tolling of the bells.

Many of the bells which hang in the church towers of Mexico were brought from Spain in the early days of Spanish rule. Some of them contain large amounts of precious metals, which give them a clear, rich tone. The bell ringers take great pride in their bells, and much care and attention are given to keeping them well burnished and their parts oiled and always in a state of good repair.

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