

WHERE WIVES ARE CHEAP.

Beauty Bartered for Bread, Calico and Jackknives in the Antipodes.

A Boston naturalist, Sherman Denton, now of the United States Fish Commission, went to New Guinea a few years ago to assist his father in his scientific work. The elder Denton died there, and the son returned in 1884 to this country. But having eyes that could see, he kept a faithful account of what he saw in a land as yet untraced but by very few white men. He has now published some of the incidents and observations of his travel in a book, "Incidents of a Collector's Rambles in Australia," which makes most fascinating reading. The Boston Globe, which has seen advance proofs of the book, gives some of its contents. His stay among the Papuans occupies about a quarter of the volume.

Mr. Denton traveled with his father and younger brother. During his stay with the Papuans he was most of the time alone with his brother among them. He tells a most interesting story of his experiences in the village of Narinuma, in the interior of New Guinea. There dwell the Coyara people, an idyllic tribe, who had never before seen white men.

Narinuma is a village of some sixteen houses, besides five tree houses some sixty feet from the ground. The tree houses are well built, and the thatch of bamboo ladders extend from the ground to the level of the platform of the house. These houses are used by the natives to defend themselves from their enemies in case of attack.

The village looked clean, and the houses tasty and comfortable. One house, larger and stronger than the rest, was the visitor's house or hotel, of which was one in every town. Here strangers are sheltered and fed free of charge. The largest and the best house in every town is for the stranger.

There were, with snouts half as long as their bodies and covered with long brown bristles, roamed at will about the village. A small species of dingo-like dog, which neither barked nor bit, but only howled, was the occupant with nearly every owner of the house. There was only one cat at Narinuma, which Lohier, the chief, had obtained in trade from some of the coast tribes, and the animal was a great pet.

Early in the morning the ground about the houses would be swept by the women, and was as hard and clean as a table. The Papuan women are finely featured, and many of the children are truly handsome. Age, however, is merciless to the women, and when the old crones sit in the sun kneading clay, or beating balls into shapely pots or dishes, their heads shaven with fragments of bottle glass and every bone of their emaciated bodies showing through their wrinkled skins, they are venerable pictures of ugliness.

The old chief, Lohier, was the most interesting man in the village. He was 50 years old, stout and broad-shouldered, and so well covered was his body with scars from the many battles in which he had fought that by placing his hand upon him in the darkest night Mr. Denton became sure of his identity. Lohier's face was dark, but his look was intelligent; his manner was that of a born gentleman, modest and unassuming.

One day, after the two brothers had been in Narinuma a good while and had learned enough of the language to talk freely, Lohier came to their country by his actions that he had something important to say. He began by asking if they liked the Coyara men and their country. When told that the white men had been treated very kindly, and that the Coyara country was as fertile and as beautiful as any they had seen, he seemed pleased. Then the conversation took this course:

"Is it warm and comfortable at America as at Narinuma?"

"Not always; sometimes it is very cold."

"Are white people any happier than Coyaras?"

"Perhaps not so happy. Their land is not so productive and they have to work very hard."

"Are white men very numerous?"

"Yes."

"Are white women as handsome as white men?"

"Some of them."

"Do they wear the same kind of clothes?"

"No; they wear petticoats."

"Do white men have one wife, or many?"

"One wife."

"Have you a wife in America?"

"No."

"How do you like the Coyara girls?"

"Some of them are very handsome and pleasing."

"Would you like to get married in New Guinea?"

"Well, that depends on circumstances."

"Have you seen any Coyara girls as handsome as the girls in America?"

"Yes, some fully as handsome."

"How much do you pay for a wife in America?"

"Some are very expensive and others very cheap. Generally the expense comes after they are married. The parents of some girls are so anxious to dispose of their daughters that they buy husbands for them."

The chief laughed and rolled on the ground.

"How do the girls of Narinuma please you?"

"They were very sociable."

"Would you marry any you have seen here?"

"Hardly. You see, Lohier, we came a long, long distance to get to Narinuma, and as we are very rich and very good-looking, we ought to have the best of the country afforded us."

Up started Lohier with a whoop and a yell that echoed through the town and was off.

The two brothers had a laugh at his curious questionings and at the manner he left them, but, thinking no more about it, went on with their work.

For several days the chief was not to be seen. He had gone away, to be back soon.

One afternoon, as the two white men were preparing their dinner, they heard tittering and giggling. Looking up they saw Lohier in the midst of a group of girls, some twenty in number. A broad smile lighted up the chief's dusky face, and many of the girls, of great beauty, were laughing and peering at the white men over each other's shoulders. They all wore flowers in their hair and bands of green leaves around their arms and ankles. Each maiden had on her best petticoat, and some wore necklaces of dogs' teeth and feather ribbons.

The chief came forward and addressed the strangers; he had been a long way, had visited the largest towns in the country and had brought back with him the most beautiful women belonging to the tribe. He hoped each of the brothers would select one that pleased him, marry her and settle down among the Coyaras, easily buy a nice garden, all the men in Narinuma would help them build a house, where the white men and their children could live and be happy. The parents of some of the girls had come too, and were standing in the background.

An Offering to His Country.

During the war, at a time of great depression, it is said, writes Charles Dudley Warner, in *Harper's Magazine*, that a public meeting was called in Oneida county, New York, for the purpose of stimulating the war spirit. It was a matter of general notoriety at that time that there was a de-

aided political disagreement between Roscoe Conkling and his nephew, Morris Miller, and they warmly opposed each other's views and measures. The meeting was a very fervent one, and in the course of it great enthusiasm was aroused for the more vigorous prosecution of the war. The speakers vied with each other in their devotion and self-sacrifices. One speaker offered to contribute a large sum of money, another and another offered an increased amount. An aged man arose and with a broken voice declared that he had no money to give, but that he had a young son whom he would dedicate to the services of his country. Another father arose and with tears in his eyes pledged the same sacrifice.

The enthusiasm was at its height, and the house was carried away by the spirit of self-surrender, when Mr. Miller arose and eloquently expressed his devotion to the cause. "I have," he said, in thrilling tones, "no money to give, but I offer to my country my uncle, Roscoe Conkling!" There was dead silence for a moment, and then suppressed laughter, and then a roar that shook the house. Business was resumed, the speaking went on, other pledges were made. But every now and then somebody would break out in a titter, "He offers his uncle, Roscoe Conkling," and the fancy would tickle somebody else, until the whole house was convulsed again and again with merriment.

Great Caesar's Fall.

A Scotch minister was sorely kept under by his "better half," who placed him and his friends on very short allowance, says the *Scottish American*. On one occasion he had a visit from an old acquaintance, and after patiently waiting for his wife's departure, she at length, as he thought, retired for the night. She had no sooner left than the hen-pecked husband exultantly exclaimed:

"I am determined to be Caesar in my own house!" and at the same time rang the bell and ordered refreshments.

Just as he and his friend were beginning to enjoy themselves "my lady" (who had overheard her unfortunate lord's boastful ejaculations) popped her head in at the door and said firmly: "Caesar, come to bed."

Bronze Cannons for Smokeless Powder.

From the Berlin Volkszeitung.

The trial of smokeless powder by the field artillery of the Twelfth Saxon corps recently in its maneuvers before the king of Saxony, at Zeithain-Roderau, was perhaps the most conclusive yet attempted. After several hours of cannonading, the air over the battle ground was perfectly clear. Not even a puff of smoke showed itself. The new powder, however, requires bronze cannon and all the steel guns will have to go.

Where He Drew the Line.

From the *Clothier and Furnisher*.

"Kind lady! Here is an old silk hat of my husband's which you are welcome to," Tramp: "No, thank you, madame. I have got down pretty low, but I am not quite so degraded as to wear a silk hat with a sack coat."

Large Salaries.

London's new democratic government isn't given to overmuch economy. The chairman of the new council has been voted a \$12,000 salary; the deputy chairman \$10,000, and none of the department heads receives less than \$10,000 a year.

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