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Professor A. C. HADDON gave a verbal abstract of the following paper, and illustrated his remarks by the exhibition of a series of specimens from New Guinea :—

The NATIVES of MOWAT, DAUDAI, NEW GUINEA.

By EDWARD BEARDMORE.

(Communicated by J. G. FRAZER, ESQ., M.A.)

KATAU is the original or proper name of this place as well as of the river. [See Map, Pl. x. in the current volume of this *Journal*].

“Mowat,” which has been altered I fancy by surveyors to “Mowatta,” belongs properly to a place on the coast some 30 miles east from here, which is still known as “Old Mowat,” whence the forefathers of these people were driven by the hostility and constant raids made on them by more powerful tribes from Kiwai and Paramoa (Bampton Island). Finding the proprietors of this district friendly disposed, they arranged to settle part at Tura Tura, three miles distant, and the remainder here. Gradually interests became severed, and now each people regards the other as a distinct tribe.

The Mowat tribe is divided into different clans each having its own totem, the animal being held sacred and the flesh not partaken of by the members of that clan. A representation of the totem is not cut on any part of either men or women, but the latter have some mark made to denote the clan.

They have not the custom of a man changing his name at any time or for any reason whatever.

The coastwomen wear a band of grass from the waist downwards between the thighs, and fastened again to a band on stomach.

Bushwomen wear grass petticoats from the hips to a little above the knees. Coastmen wear anything or nothing. Bushmen wear a band of rattan cane round the waist with leaves suspended behind.

No ceremonies are observed at birth, the mother is neither secluded, nor regarded as unclean, nor does she observe any rules as to diet, nor have to undergo any ceremony before being re-admitted to society. The *couvade* is not practised.

The child is named by the father with one name only, according to his fancy, without any regard to his tribe or family.

There is no ceremony like baptism, nor any god-parents. There are no special observances in regard to infants whose elder brothers or sisters have died previously. Children are not killed at birth.

The children do not take the name of either parents, clan or tribe, but they belong to the father's tribe. In the case of twins the mother's brother adopts one child, but without any ceremony.

On the lads arriving at puberty, a feast is held and the lads' health drunk in an intoxicating liquor *komata* [*kava*] obtained from a plant grown locally. There are no rites at which a boy is supposed to be killed, nor are the lads forbidden to see women for a certain time. The only practice is that the youths remain in the men's house for two days to deck themselves with a view to attract the favourable notice of the women. The seclusion is not, so far as I can learn, compulsory but more from vanity, and to consider how the best effect can be produced.

During babyhood the ear-lobes and nasal septum are bored and distended from time to time as the child is growing. I cannot ascertain any reason further than it is a custom handed down; it prevails amongst all the tribes.

On approaching womanhood a Λ -shaped cicatrice is made on the chest to prevent the breasts dropping. When a brother spears his first dugong or turtle, marks are made on some part of the body of the women. No ceremonies accompany these operations. Only the women are scarred.

[There appears to be also some clan mark.]

No ceremony is held on girls arriving at puberty except a feast at which no *komata* is drunk. Neither at her first nor at any subsequent menstruation is a woman secluded, or has she to obey any rules. They bathe until the courses are passed. They believe the moon's changes to be the cause of menstruation. It is believed in the event of a man having connection with a woman during menstruation that slow death ensues after relation with another woman.

There appears to be no restriction as to marriage within or without the same tribe or clan. Adultery is commonly though not openly practised. I cannot find out for a certainty what are the forbidden degrees of consanguinity in relation to marriage, but as far as practicable the members of one family or descendents of one forefather, however remote, may not intermarry. Polygamy, but not polyandry, is practised: their reason for this custom is that the women do the principal part of the work in procuring vegetable or fish food. Marriage is arranged by the respective parents when the children are

growing up, or in infancy and by exchange, thus:—if a man has sisters and no brother he can exchange a sister for a wife, but in the case of both brothers and sisters in a family the eldest brother exchanges the eldest sister, and the brothers as they are old enough share equally, but if the numbers are unequal the elder takes the preference. It sometimes happens that a man has no sister and he cannot obtain a wife. Sometimes a wife is procured by purchase. It may also happen that a woman will have the man of her choice in spite of all laws to the contrary. The wife goes to the husband's house. The chief of Mowat has several wives in his house at one village with whom he sleeps and spends part of the day, and also at the other village with whom he spends the remainder of the day when not hunting or gardening. (N.B. Mowat is composed of two contiguous villages.) There are no particular customs practised during the night before marriage. At marriage a fight takes place between the friends of the man on the one side, and those of the woman on the other, but it ends without injury to anyone. The couple usually spend a week by themselves away from the village after the fight. The bride is not veiled, nor are there any bridesmaids or best men. The man cohabits with his wife immediately after marriage; he does not visit her by stealth. There are no customs requiring or permitting connection of the wife with other persons either before or after marriage. There are no occasions on which men have to abstain from cohabiting with women.

[This statement probably requires modification.]

Men do not exchange wives. A widow becomes the wife of the deceased husband's brother. A man may not look at nor speak to his mother-in-law.

They do not believe in a natural death, but attribute even the decease of an old man to the agency of some enemy known or unknown. Venereal diseases are traced back to one man who was chafed on the penis with a rope whilst harpooning dugong. The wound grew into a sore and the disease spread. They endeavour to cure swellings or fractures by cutting the affected part, and internal pains by the laying on of hands by certain old men of the tribe. There are no burial ceremonies: the dead are buried. The spirit of the departed is not feared and there are no superstitions about the bones of the dead. The relatives of the deceased do not observe any special rules after the death, nor are those who have handled the corpse regarded as unclean. Mourners cover themselves with mud and wear a long train of grass from the neck down to and dragging on the ground.

Murder is sometimes avenged by the relatives of the

murdered person, but they are not bound to do so. No instance is known of a man committing murder amongst the people of his own village or of a neighbouring village. No compensation is paid for homicide. A murderer is not regarded as unclean.

Any small patch of land becomes the property of the person only during cultivation: when a man dies the property is equally divided amongst the children, but the girls retain their share only until marriage when the eldest brother takes possession. The youngest child never takes precedence.

Fire is obtained by the friction of wood: there are no ceremonies or superstitions connected with it. Eguon, described as a large bat, is fabled to have introduced fire to Mowat. A legend goes, that a tribe once inhabited Double Island, [Nalgi] (near Nagir) one of whose members showed fire to come from the left hand between the thumb and forefinger, whereupon dissention arose and the people were all transformed into animals, birds, reptiles, fish (including dugong and turtle). Eguon found his way to Mowat, the others to different places in the Straits and New Guinea. There appears to have been some friendly arrangement amongst the snakes, whereby some took to the land and others to the water.

Everything is eaten without regard to persons or occasions, except the flesh of the porpoise. The porpoise is no more sacred than anything else; souls of the departed having it as a totem enter into it only in the same way as souls of others go into other animals. I was positively assured there was no reason for abstaining from porpoise flesh. Men, women and children eat together. Food is eaten anyhow as to position, often whilst walking about; cannibalism is not practised. The blood of animals is used after being cooked; the sight of blood is never avoided. They never fast. The penis of great warriors slain in battle is cut off and supposed to possess virtue. The finger nails of the right hand only are scraped and the scrapings mixed with the food of the victors. The vulva of women slain is cut off and worn. All the above are for the purpose of increasing the strength and ferocity of those who use them.

A man whose wife is pregnant must not spear turtle or dugong or go forward in a canoe or boat whilst another is in the act of doing so. No ceremonies are performed by the men or women before, during, or after fishing or hunting, nor for the purpose of appeasing the spirits of the animals or fish caught. The bones of the back of the turtle are kept during the hunting or spearing season—that is, during the months of October and November, when they are coupling. At

the close of the season the bones are thrown away and a high festival held of dancing and feasting.

The ground is lightly tilled with hoes. There are no customs or superstitions in reference to agriculture.

There are no ceremonies observed before going to war nor any rules of conduct observed by the warriors or by those left at home.

There is no form of government, but there is one chief to each tribe. The chieftainship is hereditary if the eldest son is old enough to rule, otherwise it is elective.

There are no special forms of oaths or ordeals, neither are there any ceremonies at the making of friendships, peace, etc.

They salute one another by bending the tips of the fingers of the right hand, each hooking the hand or fingers of the other, and then withdrawing quickly. They can only count up to two. They do not count on fingers or toes, nor do their numerals show that they are borrowed from the custom of counting on their fingers. Pebbles or sticks are not used in counting.

They have no method of sending messages or of making records by notching sticks, painting or by knotting cords.

Time is measured by the sun, and the time of day by its position; but they reckon by nights. Only those who live on the sea-shore reckon by the phases of the moon or by the changes of the tide, springs and neaps. The year is determined by the planting and gathering of yams, taro, sweet potatoes, by the coupling time of the turtle and the change of the monsoons. They do not recognize a lunar year or months. There are no ceremonies for the old and new year, nor are there any time-keepers.

During the South-East Monsoon dances are indulged in nightly, but with little preparation as to dress, and are looked upon principally as rehearsals of the great dances which take place during the North-West season when little else is thought of. During the latter Monsoon dances, consisting perhaps, of only one or two variations in step, are continued the whole night, whilst a great part of the day is spent in adorning themselves with a result that is really gorgeous. The decorations consist of grass, green leaves, white feathers, plumage from the cassowary, a fibre made from cocoa-nut leaves, etc. The foliage of the croton, after use, is always put into the ground to grow for future use (I lately saw a New Guinea head-dress on one of the performers in a comic opera). The dances are for amusement and emulation; one party, a boat's crew, pit themselves against another as to which can keep

up the longest. None of their dances are imitations of animals, nor are they of a religious nature.

Sorcery is unknown [this is very doubtful]; but Găbia, the chief, is said to have the power of affecting the growth of crops for good or bad, also of coaxing the dugong and turtle to come from all parts and allow themselves to be taken (*"Năgai malkai"* used to make good luck with the dugong; *"sibo malkai"* used to make good luck with the turtle). There are no religious or political associations: they do not worship or show respect to any of the heavenly bodies. No reliable information could be gathered about the stars, but star myths do exist which differ from those of the neighbouring islands.

Sacrifices are never offered.

They have no objection to telling their own names or those of the chiefs or to mentioning the name of the dead. The names of persons are never changed.

Sodomy is regularly indulged in, as too great increase of population is undesired amongst the younger portion of the married people. Owing to the existence of disease the boys suffer very much for a long time, and some never recover.

One of the disguises used during the North-West festivities is an imitation of a crocodile's head placed over that of one of the performers; to put it on at times other than those appointed is supposed to result in slow but sure death. [I procured one of these at Mowat, and it is now in the Ethnological Museum at Oxford.—A.C.H.]

A curious custom is that of beating the small boys lightly with sticks during December, to make them grow strong and hardy.

Canoes are made at Kiwai and Paramoa (Bampton Island) but not, I am assured, up the Maikūsa Baxter River, where the people are cannibals and deadly enemies to all the others this side of their country. Payments are made to suit the purchaser, *sometimes in advance*, but usually by three instalments of shell ornaments (or in recent times of trade, such as tobacco, tomahawks, and calico). The unadorned canoes, with but a single flimsy outrigger, are transferred from one village to another until the destination is reached; each party receiving the canoe being responsible for the payment by the next. The builders, or rather diggers-out, usually deliver at Mowat, from thence the canoe travels to Saibai, then to Mabruāg and from there to Bădu, Moa, and ultimately say to Muralūg or Năgir. In the case of evasion of payment a row ensues between the immediate parties and the delinquent is injured invisibly [by sorcery] in some way at the instigation of the sufferer.

The wooden harpoon used in killing dugong and turtle is got and worked into shape about Mabruäg, Moa and Bădu and sent in the same manner as canoes to New Guinea, *via* Saibai. [This is slightly erroneous as the dugong spears are, so far as I could learn, entirely made in Muralög.—A.C.H.]

The Story of Sidor: The first cause of Death.

Sidor, a Daudai native, had a wife named Si'garu, who one day caught some fish which she ate up all by herself leaving only the bones for her husband: he asked the reason of it and said he could not eat bones.

That night both went to sleep with their heads on one pillow and during the night Sidor's spirit entered into a kangaroo, then into a pig, next into a cassowary and after passing through a wild duck and a snake eventually found its way into a crowned (or goura) pigeon, which flew to the top of a high tree.

When Si'garu got up next morning she could not find her husband, but at last looking up into the tree and recognised him. She procured a stone tomahawk and after warming it at the fire she attempted to cut down the tree but found the wood too hard. During the South-East trade or dry season the tree remained standing and through a blow from the South and one from the East, but a Nor-West storm blew it down and it was eventually carried by the tide to Dībri, the dwelling place of Meuri, Sidor's brother. Sidor remained in that portion of the tree which lay close to Meuri's house, the other end of the tree was burned to ashes.

Every morning Nanātara, the wife of Meuri, went to sit in a hole in the tree with her back close to where Sidor was hidden for the purpose of covering her head with ashes. Sidor took advantage of her position and committed a digital assault, which caused her to conceive. In due course the usual signs became apparent which her husband noticed and made inquiries about; all he could learn was that it was probably done by some spirit. Meuri said, "wait until night." A high tide during the night washed the trunk enclosing Sidor still closer to the house, then Meuri cut up the tree into very small pieces. In the morning taking his stone club he questioned the small pieces of wood about the state of his wife, soon Sidor was discovered, whom he accused of the treachery and called on him to come and fight to see who was the best man. Sidor struck Meuri with a stone club behind the shoulder but did not kill him. Meuri after lying on the ground a short time got up and asked why Sidor had not killed him right out. Taking his stone club

he struck Sidor on the head just behind the ear killing him instantly.

Sidor called out to Si'garu saying he was dead. His spirit then came out leaving his bones with Meuri at Dibri. Sidor's spirit went to a sand-bank and waited for the birds which came from all quarters, and which asked if it was a man on the sand. Sidor sent a message by the birds to Si'garu to tell her to take his bones home to Kiwai. Instead of delivering the message as directed, they gave it to Umo and A'hau, mother and grandmother respectively to Sidor. They, on asking for Sidor's whereabouts, learned he had gone to Vigoë (Boigu or Talbot Island) in a dugong.

On his arrival at Vigoë, Sidor left the dugong and entered a house occupied by some Vigoë men. He then sent a message by a cockatoo, telling Umo and A'hau not to look for him as he would return to his family after a stay of seven months. They, however, became impatient, and taking his skull filled it with water and went to look for him.

Umo and A'hau arrived at Vigoë when he was dancing with a number of kindred spirits, but not recognising him he was pointed out to them by some Vigoë men. His female relatives astonished Sidor by offering him a drink of water from the skull; on asking what it was, he was informed that it was his own skull. Sidor took the skull and threw it away, telling Umo and A'hau that through their action in looking for him all men must die, which would not otherwise have happened and everyone would have lived for ever. He bade them good-bye saying he was going to Wibo—the abode of spirits—and disappeared.

NOTES *on* MR. BEARDMORE'S PAPER.

By ALFRED C. HADDON.

Mr. J. G. Frazer having provided me before I left home, with several copies of his "Questions," I gave one to my friend, Mr. Beardmore, when I visited him at Mowat, in August, 1888. Mr. Beardmore had resided for some time at Mowat, and had very friendly relations with the natives. His account has the additional value of being the first description we possess of any of the customs of the inhabitants of that portion of New Guinea which is known as Daudai. So far as I am aware Wyatt Gill and d'Albertis are the only travellers who have given us any in-