

Paintings and wood-block prints had fostered a culture of feminine celebrity that in the 1860s and 1870s coexisted and competed with photographic portraits.<sup>76</sup> Both exploited the techniques of mass reproduction to express changing feminine cultural ideals, but photographs allowed women a greater role in their self-presentation. In the pictorial realm, male publishers and artists made decisions about who was portrayed and how, but a photographic subject could choose the occasion as well as her dress, props, and pose. One young woman identified as Kumeji stands in a studio next to a pillar draped with a fashionable checked tablecloth. She holds in her hands an open album of photographic cartes de visite (fig. 2.24) Another asserts her individuality by wearing her kimono in combination with a kind of bow tied around her neck. In her eyes, this was no doubt a fashionable sartorial touch, but for Western viewers who wanted to see Japanese women in authentic attire, her efforts many have appeared incongruous. In this respect the new realism of the camera sometimes served to widen rather than narrow the cultural gap between Japan and the West.

2.24 Kumeji, 1871-73. Carte de visite. Photographer unknown. LNHS.



## CHAPTER X

### LOVE MAKING AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EROTIC LIFE

IN the course of this inquiry we have been gradually approaching our main interest, and taking an increasingly detailed view of native love making. At first we merely made a general survey of the social organization and economic activities of the natives, in so far as they affect the relative positions of man and woman in the community. We studied their associations and their diversions, in private and in public, at work and at play, in magical and religious pursuits, as well as in everyday life.

Then coming nearer to our special subject we followed the typical progress of courtship, and found it leading to marriage and parenthood. In the last chapter we described certain customs which enrich and diversify the normal course of courtship.

In this chapter it will be necessary to observe the dalliance of lovers at still closer quarters. We have to learn the nature of their love interest and of the bonds which unite them.

Throughout my exposition, I have always attempted not only to state the norm, but to indicate the exceptions, to trace what might be called the amplitude of deviation, the margin within which people usually try, and sometimes succeed in circumventing the strict rule. As we proceed now to the study of more intimate behaviour, the elasticity of the rules becomes greater, and it grows more imperative to give a dynamic description of how a rule or an institution works, rather than how,

in native theory, law and morality is supposed or desired to work.

In general, as the ethnographer moves away from the big fundamental, well-defined institutions—such as family, marriage, kinship organization, the clan, exogamy, the rules of courtship—towards the manifold details of personal life, his methods of observation must become more complex and his results less reliable. This cannot be remedied and, for our comfort, it may be remembered that, even in the most exact fields of human thought and experience, a theoretical result can only be verified within certain limits. The most exact of human observations is only approximate, and all that even the chemist or physicist can do is to state the limits within which his error is encompassed. When investigating integral institutions, such as marriage or the family, the ethnographer should, if he be doing competent and intensive field-work, rely on observation rather than on what the native informants tell him. But when dealing with the subtler phases of behaviour, this rule cannot, unfortunately, always be followed. In the study of sexual attraction and the growth of a passion, direct observation is always difficult, and at times impossible, and a great deal of information has to be collected from confidences and gossip.

The ethnographer must be alert to all that happens round him. He must patiently win his way into village life and make such personal friendships as encourage spontaneous confidences and the repetition of intimate gossip. He must check *ad hoc* statements by remarks dropped in more unguarded moments, explicating the implied and estimating the importance of reservations and reticences. For these are everywhere apt to be more illuminating than direct affirmations, and are especially so among these natives, whose keen sense of delicacy makes the roundabout and allusive way the natural approach to such subjects. It is possible to force them into

speaking directly, but this always produces an artificial and false mental attitude, and exclusive reliance on such a method would lead to results which lack entirely the colour of real life.

Thus in the most delicate subjects the ethnographer is bound to a large extent to depend on hearsay. Yet if he resides for a long time among the natives, speaks their language and makes close personal acquaintances, he will be provided with sufficiently useful information. His material will be certainly better than if it had been obtained through the mechanical pumping of informants by the question-and-answer method at so many sticks of tobacco an hour.

Love is a passion to the Melanesian as to the European, and torments mind and body to a greater or lesser extent ; it leads to many an *impasse*, scandal, or tragedy ; more rarely, it illuminates life and makes the heart expand and overflow with joy. " Out of a full heart the mouth speaketh," and the cold ethnographer must industriously jot down confidences poured out under the stress of strong personal emotion. Also the gossip of those not directly affected by the event, yet sufficiently interested in it to talk, especially if it be untoward—*puisqu'il y a quelque chose dans les malheurs de nos amis qui ne nous déplaît pas*—is scarcely less valuable material for the investigator.

Spontaneous outpourings and village gossip dictated by genuine interest, records of past tragedies, and stories of erotic adventure, have yielded most of the raw material for the descriptions given in this chapter. And the direct knowledge of personal histories and interests made it possible for me to get a true perspective, to look at matters from the native point of view. I was even often able to go behind the explicit statements of the natives, observing, as sometimes happened, that their actions and feelings belied their words, and following up the clue thus given me.

The reader will remember the misadventures of Bagido'u, one of my best friends and informants (see pl. 64, and ch. vi, sec. 1), the animosities and quarrels between Namwana Guya'u and Mitakata (see pl. 3 and ch. i, sec. 2), the boasting Gomaya and his relations to Ilamweria (see pl. 39 and ch. vii, sec. 4). It would have been impossible for me to ascertain the rules of custom and the moral ideas of the natives without the subjective out-pourings of these friends of mine.

Side by side with such live material, I naturally always endeavoured to collect objective "documents": records of historical events, samples of tradition, folk-lore and magic. Thus my general impressions, and strong but somewhat vague intuitions, were constantly checked and confirmed by data drawn from every sphere of tribal life. In fact, chronologically, the "documents" are usually obtained first, but their real comprehension can be gained only from the knowledge of real life.

The reader interested in methodology will realize that this exposition by cumulative versions—passing from institutions through the general record of a life history to the detailed and intimate analysis which follows—does justice not only to the nature of the material, but also to the manner of its collection.

After this digression on the method of collecting data and of their presentation, let us return once more to a Trobriand village and approach a group of young people playing in the moonlight, in festive mood and dress; let us try to see them as they see each other; follow up their attractions and repulsions. So far we have kept at a discreet distance from the intimate behaviour, the motives and feelings of lovers. More especially we have never attempted to spy upon their passionate caresses. Now we must try to reconstruct the history of a personal intrigue, to understand the first impressions made by beauty and charm, and to follow the development of a passion to its end.

## I

## EROTIC ATTRACTION

What is it that makes the boys look with entranced attention at one among a group of girls, moving rhythmically in a game or carrying baskets at harvest; or that fascinates the girls in one of the dancers who lead the ring of swift runners in a *kaydebu* dance? (See pl. 65.) Is it possible for us to find out why a member of either sex is almost universally rejected and why another is sought after; why one category is labelled as plain or unattractive and the other as fascinating and beautiful? The European observer soon finds that his standard of personal charm does not essentially differ from that of the natives, when he has once become accustomed to the physical type and to the mannerisms of the Melanesians. Thus, for instance, the girl on plate 66 is universally regarded as a beauty, the one on plate 67 as a plain woman; and with this opinion the reader will not disagree. And yet the latter is a well-built woman and of a pronounced Melanesian type. But it would be perhaps difficult and certainly useless to convey native standards of beauty by means of European phrases and comparisons. Fortunately there are a number of native expressions, descriptions and categories which furnish some sort of objective material, and together with the ethnographer's commentary, may convey a fairly adequate idea of the Trobriander's ideal of beauty.

It must be understood that the problem of erotic charm with which we are now engaged, is different from that discussed in chapter iv, which was concerned with the motives which lead a Trobriand man or woman to enter upon matrimony. In this connection, we found that personal preference, though a powerful inducement to marriage, was only one among others, some social, some economic and some domestic. And even in the matter of personal

preference, the erotic motive is not exclusive. A man or woman of mature age will choose a domestic partner quite different from the paramour who occupied the best part of his or her youth. Marriage is often determined by the attraction of character and personality rather than by sexual adaptation or erotic seduction. This fact, which has been already mentioned, I found confirmed in many concrete cases and in a hundred details. Only in the passing intrigues is simple bodily charm the principal attraction. Let us return then to our imaginary pair and try to find out what it is that they see in each other, as lovers.

When treating of love in fiction or anthropology, it is easier and more pleasant to imagine objects really worthy of admiration. In the Trobriands it would not be difficult to find them, even for one equipped with European taste and Nordic race prejudices; for, within a considerable variety of types, there are to be found men and women with regular delicate features, well-built lithe bodies, clear skins, and that personal charm which predisposes us towards a man, a nationality, or a race.

Verbal descriptions of a racial type are always weak and unconvincing. They may be couched in anthropometric terms and backed by numerical data, but these give little help to the imagination and could only stimulate a physical anthropologist. It is better for the reader to look at pictures, in this book and in other works where the Trobrianders have been described,<sup>1</sup> and to hear what the natives themselves have to say on the subject of beauty and its opposite.

The natives are never at a loss when asked what elements go to the making of personal beauty in man or woman. The subject is not only interesting to

<sup>1</sup> As, for instance, in C. G. Seligman, op. cit., and in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. For comparative anthropometric data concerning Melanesians and Papuans, cf. "A Classification of the Natives of British New Guinea", *Journ. R. Anthropol. Inst.*, vol. xxxix, 1909, by C. G. Seligman.

them as to all other human beings, but it is surrounded by a rich folk-lore and therefore commands an extensive vocabulary. Many of their legends and songs have been specially composed to exalt some famous dancer or singer, and in such texts there are descriptions of ornament and dress, and expressive phrases referring to personal appearance. The charms used in beauty magic give instructive indications of the Trobriander's desires and ideals as do also the laments for the dead, and descriptions of the blissful life in Tuma, the land of the departed.

But although the renown and tradition of famous beauties is handed down for generations with rich descriptive details, it is difficult for the ethnographer to find a living model for his inquiry. Whenever I asked any of the old, and therefore expert, connoisseurs of beauty whether any living woman could match the radiant divinities drawn from their own and their father's memories, the answer was always in the negative. The Golden Age of real beauty seems to be quite over!

## 2

## REPULSION BY UGLINESS, AGE, AND DISEASE

Let us approach the ideal of beauty by way of its negation, and see what, for the native, makes a person ugly and repulsive, and therefore impossible from the erotic standpoint. Deformity and disease in mind or body, old age and albinism, all, according to native statements, put a person beyond the pale of erotic interest. The expressions *migila gaga* (his face bad), or *tomigaga* (ugly man, literally man—face—ugly) are frequently in use, and often with the added comment: "No one would sleep with such an one."

Malformations are rare, and I myself cannot recall a single hunchback or congenitally deformed person. Through accident men may lose a limb:



*kaykela ipwase* (his leg has rotted away); *yamala ipwase* (his arm has rotted away); but the most frequent congenital defect is that of speech, which the natives describe by the same word, *tonagowa*, as is applied to idiocy and feeble-mindedness.

The bad or repulsive characters of folk-lore are also endowed with bodily deformities or abnormalities. *Dōkonikan*, the most prominent ogre of Kiriwinian folk-lore, has several rows of teeth and cannot speak properly. Women covered with hair and men with disgusting bodies figure in some fairy tales.

As regards disease: sores, ulcers, and skin eruptions are naturally held to be specially repulsive from the viewpoint of erotic contact. Also to be so afflicted is the usual punishment for breaking certain taboos. Indeed, a number of such taboos are only observed by young men, and have no other *raison d'être* than to prevent their skins from being covered with sores. They might be called specific beauty taboos. Thus, it is dangerous to eat fish which is not quite fresh, or fish which has a very strong flavour. Some kinds of fish are covered with unseemly scales or spots, and these also are forbidden to young men and women. Young people must abstain from yams or fish which have been cut with a sharp instrument. Similar taboos have to be kept by men about to sail on an overseas expedition; they will say that they must only eat "good fish" so that their faces may be beautiful.<sup>1</sup>

The unpleasant disease, tropical ring-worm, covering the skin with perpetually peeling scales, and very prevalent among Melanesians, is said to be a definite drawback, and persons with this disease would not be reckoned among the beauties even if their faces were fine. But it does not seem to form a positive bar to love-making, any more than to other pursuits. On the other hand, this repulsive and contagious affliction is a real inconvenience to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, p. 336.

the field-worker, who has constantly to deal with afflicted natives and takes a long time to become accustomed to it.

Old age is felt to be a serious handicap in affairs of gallantry. The contrast between repulsive old age and attractive youth is brought out clearly in myth. A hero, who is unsuccessful because of his elderly appearance, becomes rejuvenated and gets everything that he wants. First the marks scored upon him by the hand of time are ruthlessly enumerated: a wrinkled skin, white hair, and toothless jaws. Then the magical change is described: his rounded face, the smooth full lines of his body, his sleek, glossy skin, the thick black hair covering his head, the beautiful black teeth shining between vermilion lips. Now he can win the favours of desirable women, and impose his wishes on men and Fate. Such pictures are drawn in two of the chief myths of the *kula* (the ceremonial exchange), which plays such a great part in tribal life, and shows so many psychological affinities to their erotic interests. Similar pictures are also to be found in the myth of rejuvenation, in the ideas of the natives concerning a future life, and in one or two fairy tales.<sup>1</sup>

Obesity is extremely rare, and in its more pronounced forms is classed as a disease. Baldness is not infrequent. It is considered a blemish, and a certain amount of criticism is contained in the word *tokulubakana* (bald man, literally man-occiput empty-space). To a Kiriwinian, however, it is not so fatal as it is to his European contemporary, for wigs are still used in that happy island (pl. 68). Either a narrow band of hair is tied just above the forehead—a sort of fuzzy wreath—or a wig covering the whole head is worn. The wig is made by sewing tufts of hair on to a skull cap made of plaited fibre or string. The hair is easily obtained, for

<sup>1</sup> For the *kula* myth cf. *Argonauts*, pp. 307-10 and 322-4, and *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, 1926.

mourning customs demand that every member of the afflicted community, with the exception of the deceased's clansmen, shall shave off his beautiful mop of hair.

Cutting off the hair is not the only mourning custom which aims at the reduction of personal charm. The transformation in appearance imposed by mourning embodies, to a certain extent, the native idea of what is ugly. The shaven head, the body blackened with a thick layer of mixed grease and charcoal, colourless and purposely soiled dress, no ornaments and no scents—these are the outward signs of bereavement. The transformation undergone by a woman in mourning is shown in the frontispiece, where two girls, equally pretty under normal conditions, can be contrasted. In fact, the idea that the chief mourner, especially the widow, should be made ugly so that she may not attract other men, is explicitly stated by natives, and is also implied in the whole scheme of mortuary proceedings, apart from the alteration in appearance (see ch. vi).

The essential conditions of personal charm are now obvious: normal bodily build, health, absence of mental and functional disorders, strong growth of hair, sound teeth, and a smooth skin—all signs of vigour and of a good constitution.

But an important caution must here be entered. Natives speak with such horror about the various forms of ugliness, and repulsion is so clearly discernible in their behaviour that there is no temptation to doubt their word. In fact, in games and amusements, an albino, an idiot, or a man afflicted with skin disease is so completely left out of the fun that his loneliness and isolation wake pity even in the frigid heart of an ethnographer. Thus observation fully confirmed the verbal proposition in which all the natives are agreed, that all such people are absolutely debarred from sexual intercourse and that they have to resort to solitary means

of satisfaction. Nevertheless, I began to doubt its validity, when, in the course of my field-work, this very proposition was adduced as proof, with many illustrative examples, that a woman can have children without sexual intercourse (see ch. vii, 3 and 4). Tilapo'i (to quote cases already mentioned) had one child, Kurayana as many as six; while a few albino girls have been blessed with numerous offspring; yet: "No man would approach them, they are so repulsive" was made the major premise of the syllogism—though many of my informants must have known better!

The more thorough research which followed my realization of this discrepancy revealed the astonishing fact that strong and, no doubt, genuine physical repulsion does not prevent a Melanesian from the sexual act. This probably has some connection with their manner of carrying out this physiological activity. I was able to ascertain that the ugliest and most repulsive people have, not only sporadic, but regular intercourse. Orato'u, a *tonagowa*—meaning in this case, not an idiot but one afflicted with defective speech and a repulsively deformed face—can always obtain favours from the village beauties of Omarakana, the residence of the paramount chief, whose henchman he is and whose wives he is said to know intimately enough. The albino seen on pl. 38 has had several notorious love affairs. In most of the villages where I worked I could mention a few old and thoroughly repulsive women who were able, especially if they or their husbands were of high rank, to obtain young and attractive boys as lovers.

When I discussed this with my friend, the late Billy Hancock of Gusaweta—a trader of exceptional intelligence and one of the finest men I have known—he told me that he had long ago arrived at the same conclusion independently, and quoted from memory a number of striking instances, in some of which the women were repugnant, as he said, "far beyond

the toleration of a drunken sailor." He also mentioned the experience of a medical officer, especially appointed in the Trobriands for the treatment of venereal disease. This official was once baffled by finding all the boys in a community afflicted with very virulent and obviously recent gonorrhœa, while all the women to be considered in this connection were as yet quite healthy. Finally he obtained a confession from one of his patients that he and his companions had copulated among others with a woman so old, decrepit, and ugly, that the medical officer had thankfully and unhesitatingly omitted her in his several inspections. It was found that she was the source of infection, and that she had for a long time been active in persuading boys to copulation. The boys, on discovery, tried to belittle the fact and to present the whole matter as a joke, but they were in reality rather mortified. The attitude of my informants when I confronted them with such and similar facts was also "ambivalent". They had to admit that some people will copulate with repulsive women, but they treated it simply as the sign that such people are of unsound mind.

This was one more of the several cases in which I found how strongly convention (ideals of behaviour) obsesses the mind of the natives, but only on the surface and controlling their statements rather than their behaviour. Things about which he would not like even to speak, much less admit to having done, a native simply denies with consistency and vigour, although he is perfectly aware that they do happen, perhaps even under his own roof. *Tout comme chez nous!*

3

BEAUTY OF THE HUMAN FACE AND BODY

Vigour, vitality, and strength, a well proportioned body, a smooth and properly pigmented, but not too dark skin are the basis of physical beauty for

3] BEAUTY OF FACE AND BODY

the native. In all the phases of village life I have seen admiration drawn and held by a graceful, agile and well-balanced person. The same generalization can be inductively drawn from what we shall say here of the native canons of perfection in form and colour, bodily smell, quality of voice, and grace of movement.

Since the natives have an extended view of each other's bodies, there is no artificial barrier to their æsthetic interest in them; nor are the various elements in erotic fascination placed in the false perspective which makes our full European clothing the instrument of artificial modesty as well as of disguised allurements, so that an estimation of erotic values is difficult and complex, and is based on fashions in dress as well as on the appreciation of physical beauty. With this advantage over us, it is a notable fact that their main erotic interest is focussed on the human head and face. In the formulæ of beauty magic, in the vocabulary of human attractions, as well as in the arsenal of ornament and decoration, the human face—eyes, mouth, nose, teeth, and hair—takes precedence. It must be observed that the head plays an important part in magic as an object for admiration, and not as the seat of the erotic emotions, for these are placed in the lower part of the belly. For the rest of the body, the breasts in the woman and build and size in the man are most important, with the colour and the quality of their skins. In certain magical formulæ, all the limbs and portions of the human torso are enumerated, besides the features of the face and head. In others, however, only the latter are mentioned.

The outline of the face is very important; it should be full and well rounded. The phrases *imiliyapila* (like the full moon); *imilibwata* (like the round moon); *kalububovatu* (its roundness), appear frequently in magical formulæ. The forehead must be small and smooth. The word *talisalisa* (to

smooth) recurs in beauty charms. Full cheeks, a chin neither protruding nor too small, a complete absence of hair on the face, but the scalp hair descending well on to the forehead, are all *desiderata* of beauty.

Cosmetics are used on the face more than on any other part of the body. Facial painting (*soba*) is done in black, red, and white (pl. 76). For the red, either a compound of betel nut and lime is used or red ochre. Certain forms of clay, sometimes mixed with crushed coral, were formerly used to produce white; but nowadays European white lead has taken the place of this, though red is still usually made with native pigments. Black can be put on, either with simple charred coco-nut fibre or some other form of charcoal, or else with a mixture of this and an aromatic oil, prepared by cutting aromatic wood into small pieces and boiling it in coco-nut oil. The wood preferred in this preparation is called *sayaku*, and it is, I think, sandal wood imported from the eastern islands (Woodlark and Marshall Bennet). A similar though less appreciated wood, *kadikoko*, is found in the Trobriands and can be used for the same purpose. The strongly scented mixture is kept in coco-nut oil bottles and used for the tracing of fine lines on the face. The natives make a clear distinction between decorative painting (*soba*), which enhances their beauty, and smothering themselves in soot (*koulo*) in order to extinguish all their attractions in sign of mourning.

Having indicated the general character of facial beauty, let us proceed to the details. The eyes, as we know, are to the natives the gateways of erotic desire (ch. vii, 1); they are also, in themselves, a centre of erotic interest. Biting off the eyelashes, the custom of *mitakuku* as it is called, plays an important part in love-making. The expression *agu mitakuku* ("my bitten-off eyelashes") is a term of endearment. The eyes are frequently referred to

in the magic of beauty: *mitayari* (shining eyes); *mitubwoyili* (lovely eyes); *mitapwa'i* (bright eyes). Eyes should be shining, but they should be small. On this point the natives are quite decided. Large eyes, *puyna-puyna*, are ugly. There is no special beauty treatment for the eyes, except, of course, shaving the eyebrows which, together with the biting off of eyelashes, leaves them singularly naked to European taste. Neither is any magic specifically devoted to their lustre and other charms.

Next to the eyes, the mouth is, perhaps, the most important feature. It plays a conspicuous part in love making, and its beauty is highly esteemed in native æsthetics. It should be very full, but well cut. Protruding lips (*ka'uwala'u wadola*) are considered as unattractive as pinched or thin ones (*kaywoya wadola*). Very ugly, I was told, is a hanging lower lip. There is a special magic of beauty associated with the mouth. It is the magic of *talo*, the red paint made of betel-nut, which is used to redden the lips.

The nose should be full and fleshy, but not too large. A nose, which the natives call *kapatata*, that is long, narrow and sharp, in short aquiline, is ugly. A beautiful nose is called *kabulitoto* (standing up nose), for too flat a one is also a serious blemish, and men or women so handicapped are called *tonapa'i* or *namapa'i* according to sex. A nose-stick used to be considered æsthetically indispensable, but it is now gradually going out of fashion, and there is no magic associated with this ornament or its organ.

The ears must be neither too small nor too large—a safe rule to follow for all parts of the body, whether in the Trobriands or elsewhere. Ears that stand out from the head (*tiginaya*) are distinctly ugly. Every ear must be pierced at the lobe and ornamented with ear-rings. The hole is made early in childhood by placing on the ear a turtle shell ring which has been cut and the ends sharpened, so that

PSYCHOLOGY OF EROTIC LIFE [Ch. X

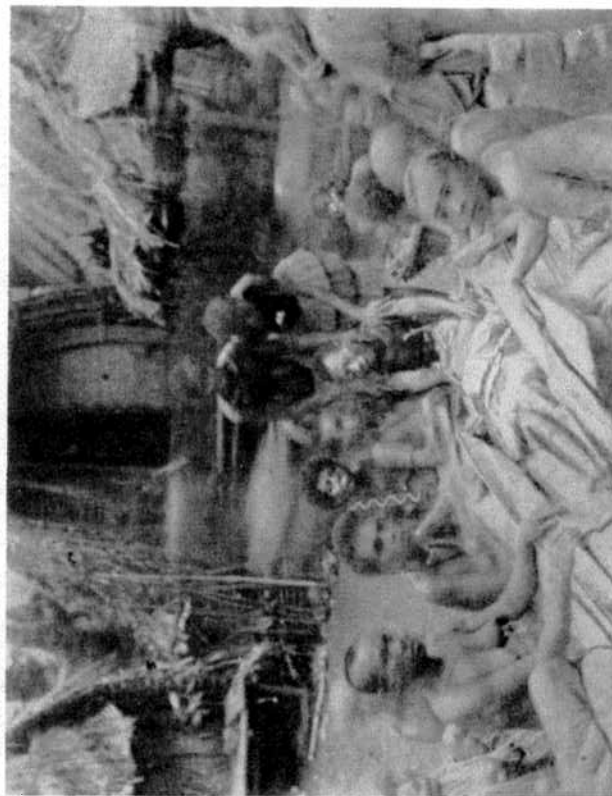
the points gradually work their way through the gristle. The resultant small hole is then gradually enlarged until a considerable opening surrounded by a pendulous ring is formed in the lobe. This is filled with ear-rings of turtle shell and other ornaments, especially red discs made of spondylus shell. Such treatment of the ear is *de rigueur*, otherwise a man or woman would be said to have *tegibwalodila* (ears like a bush pig).

Teeth, in order to be really attractive, have to be blackened (*kudubwa'u*: literally black teeth, or *gigiremutu*: an expression for the process). This blackening is done by placing a piece of a special mangrove root against the teeth overnight and repeating the process over a long period. The majority of the Trobrianders do not, however, blacken their teeth.

Hair in its proper place is considered a great beauty, but, as we know, it must not be allowed to grow anywhere except on the scalp. Eyebrows are shaved off, the beard is never allowed to grow except by old men "who do not wish to have anything to do with women". Hair is never pulled out; it is always shaved, in the old days with obsidian, at present with bottle glass. The hair on the head is admired when it is very full, and then it is allowed to grow into a thick mop of which almost every hair radiates from the scalp, in the manner so characteristic of Melanesia.

The natives distinguish black, light and grey hair (*yabwabwa'u*, *yadidaydaya* and *yasoso'u*). The albino is called *topwaka'u*, "man with white hair", or *tososo'u*, "man with grey hair". They further classify it as straight-to-wavy (*yasinare'i* or *yasisiye'i*) curly (*yasusaybulu*); thick and moppy (*yamtumwatu*); tangled and almost matted (*yakulupaki* or *yatutuya*). The two middle qualities are considered beautiful; but the straight-to-wavy and the matted kinds are not. As to the trimming and dressing of it, the really typical Melanesian mop, *gugwapo'u*, is

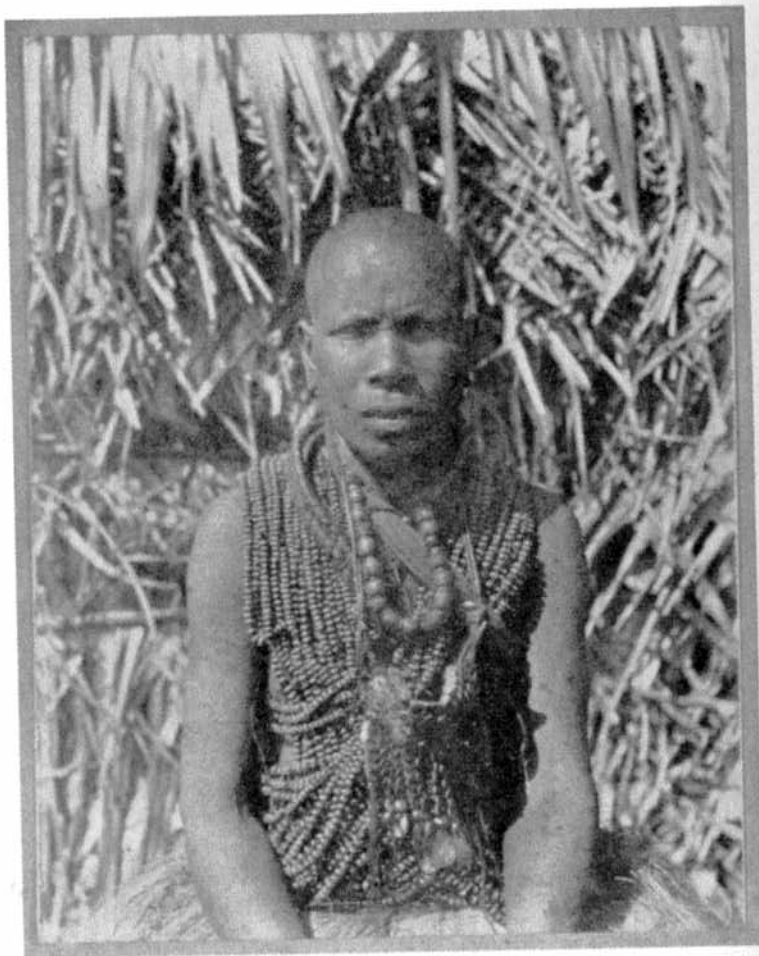
PLATE 33



BODY, AFTER FIRST EXHUMATION

The picture, taken at sunset, needed long exposure, hence many of the figures are blurred. The corpse shows signs of decomposition; the ligatures of the legs can be clearly seen. Toyadala, the widower, is holding the corpse. [Ch. VI, 3]

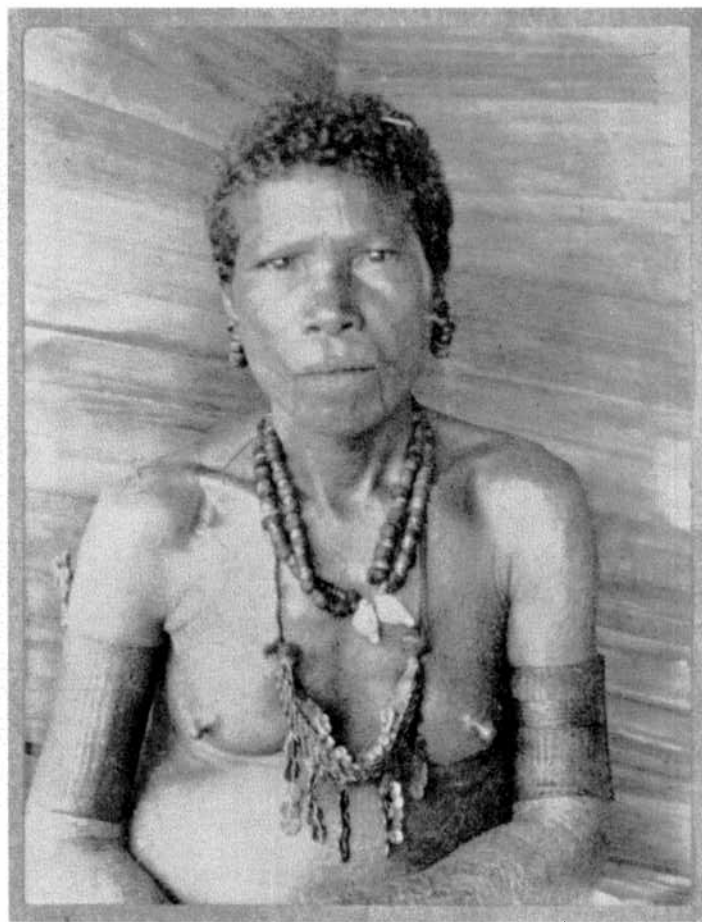




## WIDOW IN FULL MOURNING

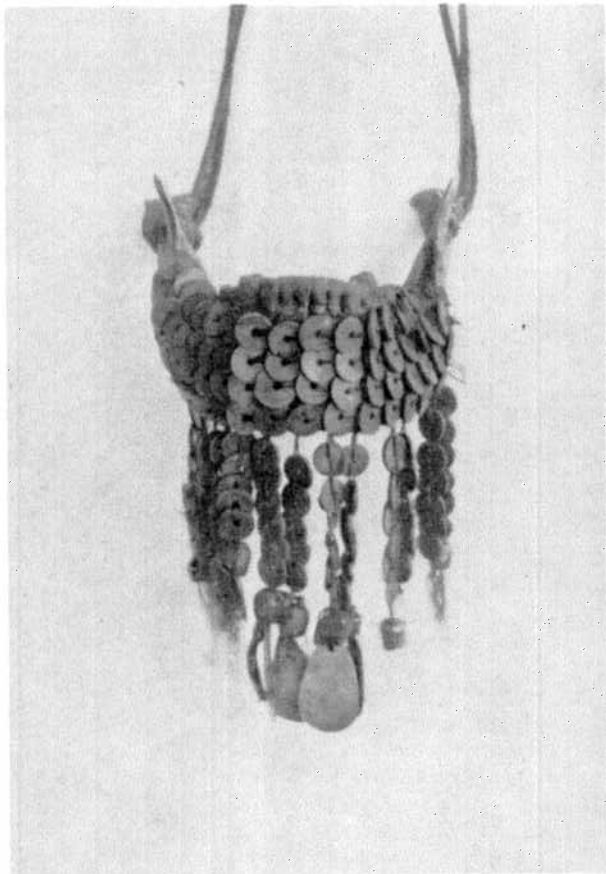
*The breast is covered with black beads (seeds of an unidentified plant); she wears a necklace of balls from her husband's hair, another of rope, yet another of his calico, and, on top of all, the jaw-bone. Her head is completely shaved and her face blackened.*

[Cb. VI, 3]

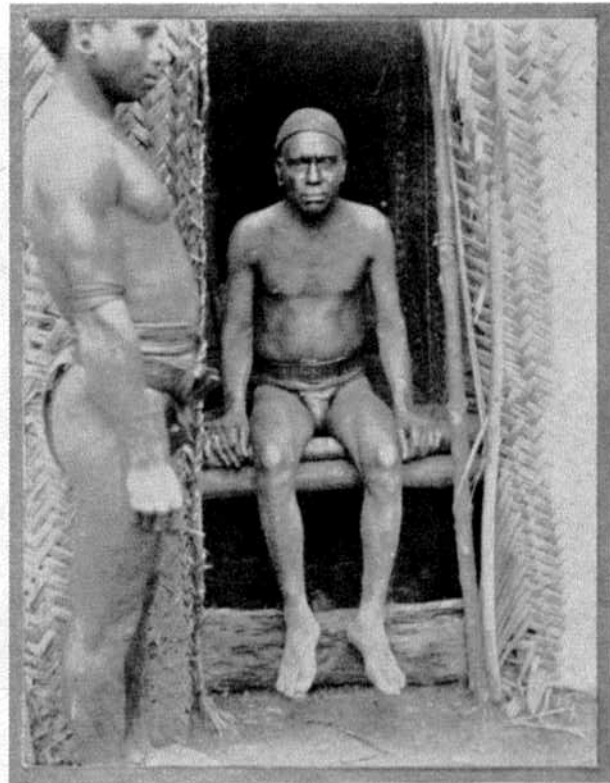


## WIDOW IN HALF MOURNING

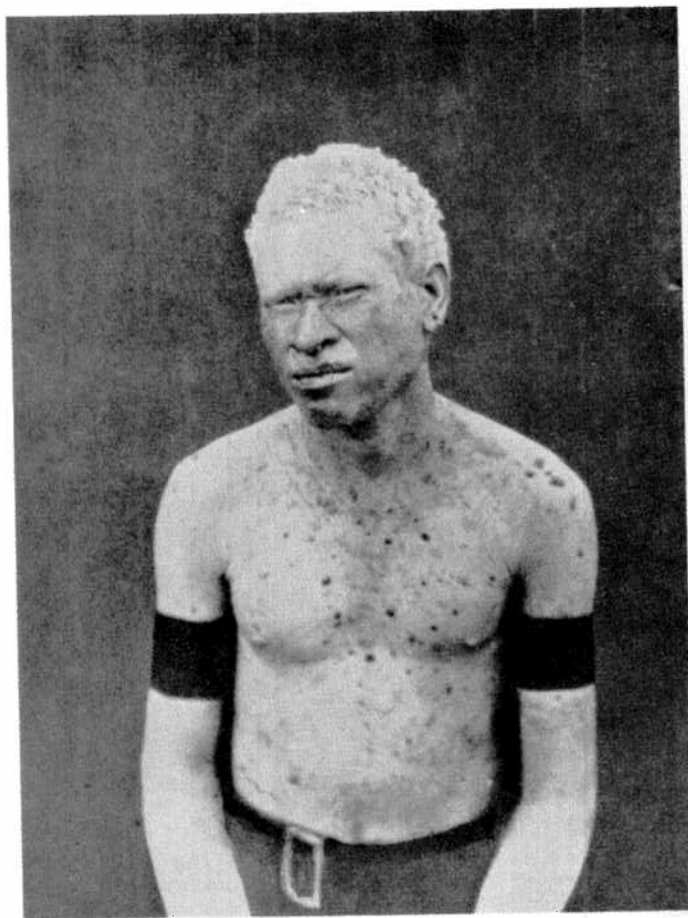
*The same woman as in the previous picture, now wearing only one necklace and the jaw-bone; the hair is partly grown, she is no longer blackened and there is a sprig of aromatic herbs in her right armpit. (She was married a few months later.)* [Cb. VI, 3]



A DECORATED JAW-BONE  
*It is the same as shown on plates 34 and 35.*  
 [Cb. VI, 3]



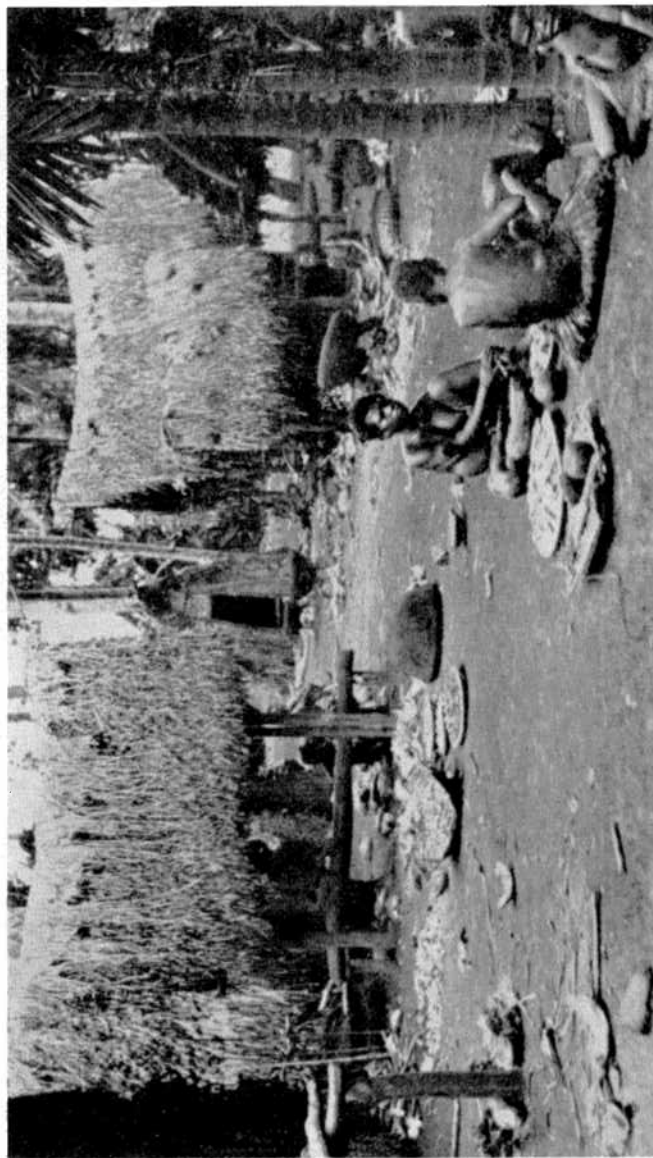
TOMWAYA LAKWABULO THE SEER  
*Seated on the doorstep of his house, his widower's cap (made of basket work) covering his shaven head. He shows the characteristic expression which heralds the approach of a trance.*  
 [Cb. VII, 2 ; also cb. XII, 5]



ALBINO

*The difference in pigmentation between this and a normal Melanesian can best be gauged by comparing the contrast between skin and brown armband in this picture with the complete fusion of the two tints on any other man. [Ch. VII, 3; also ch. X, 2]*

PLATE 39



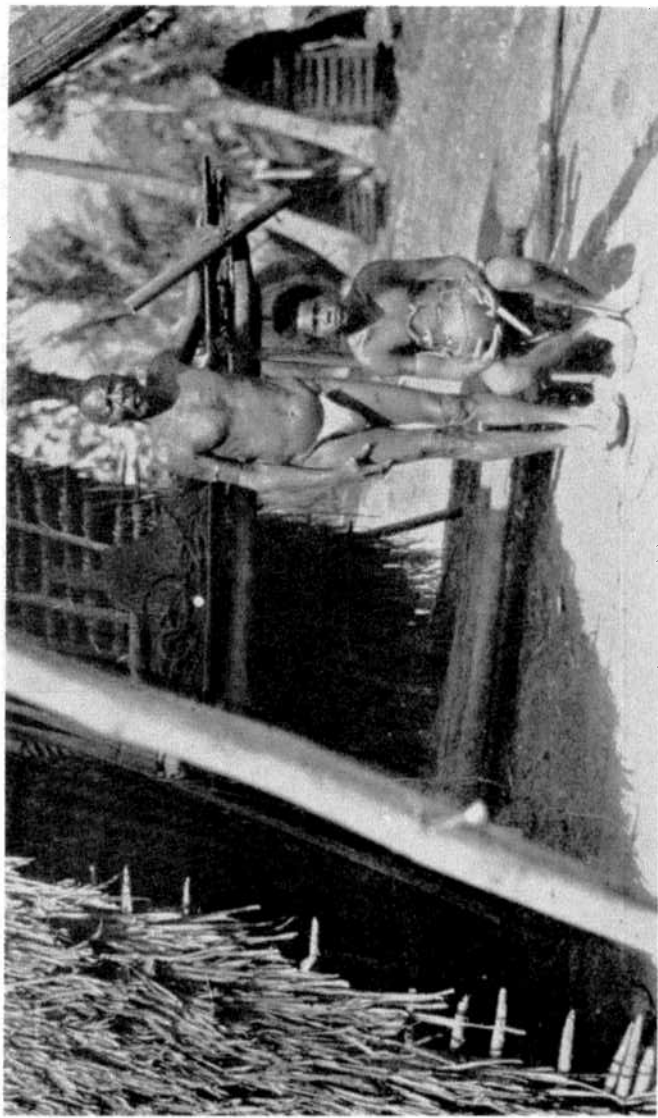
AN UNMARRIED MOTHER

*Ilamweria in the centre of a typical street between the row of store-houses (right), and dwellings (left). The large pots are prepared for the communal cookery. [Ch. VII, 4; also ch. X, intro.]*



TWO BROTHERS

*The similarity between Namwana Guya 'u and Yabukwa 'u is so striking that it can be seen here in spite of the fact that one of them is shaven in mourning. This picture also shows the transformation in appearance produced by mourning. [Ch. VII, 6]*



FATHER AND SON

*The chief To ulana, a bamboo pipe in hand, stands in front of his house; his son Dripapa, holding his father's lime gourd, is seated at his feet. [Ch. VII, 6; I, 2]*

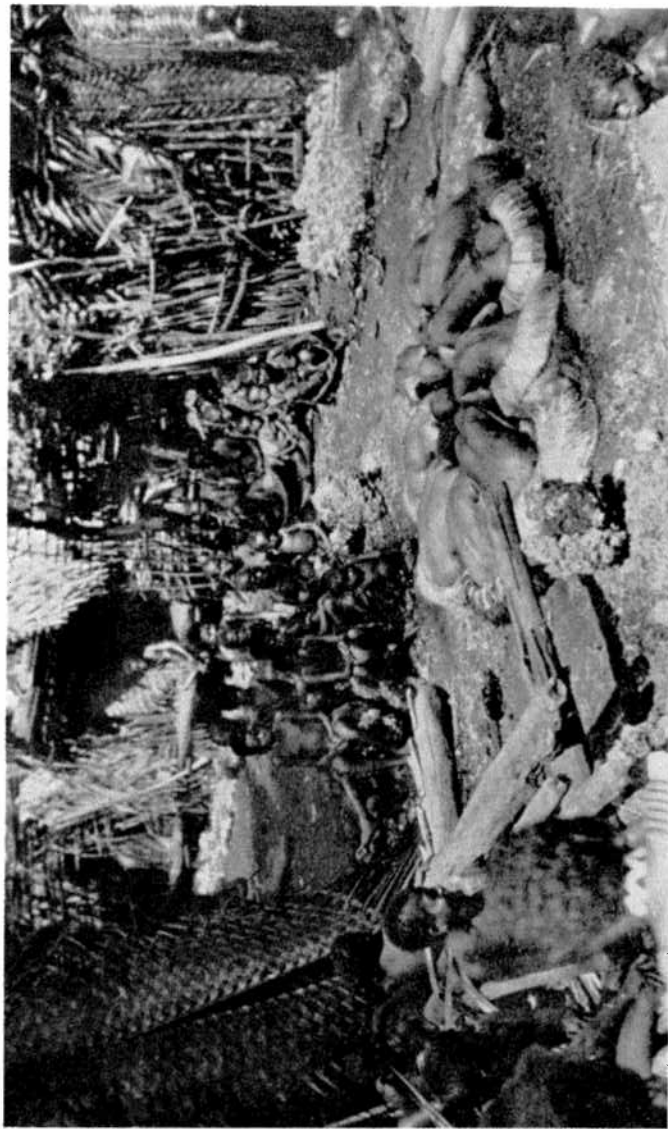




THE PREGNANCY CLOAK

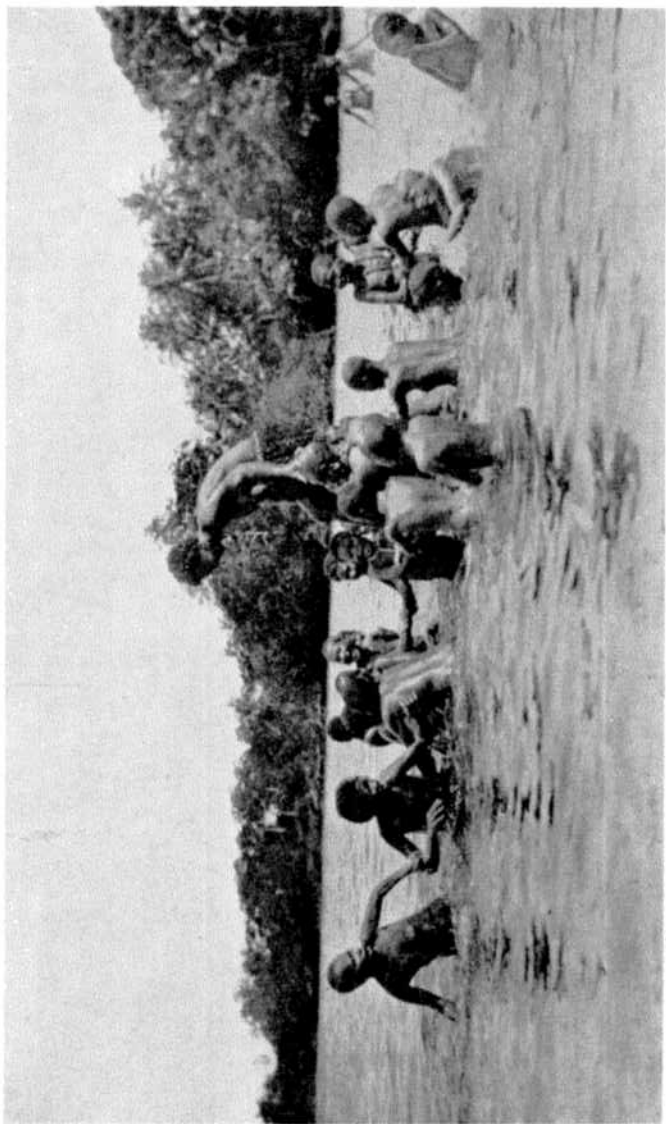
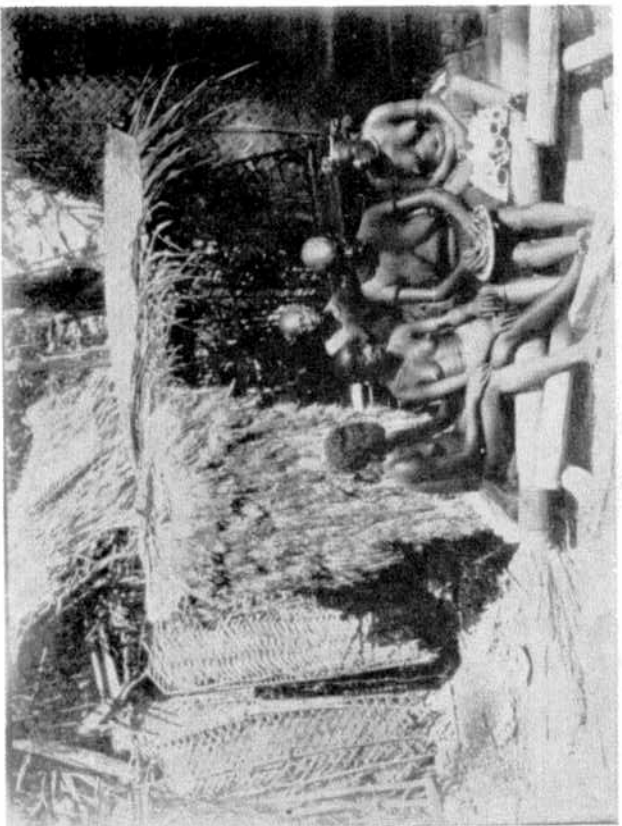
*Photograph taken at a first pregnancy ceremony. Note the mat on which the woman is standing, the basket with magic herbs at her feet (left) and the crown of hibiscus flowers; also the remarkably clear colour of her skin in contrast to her black hair.*

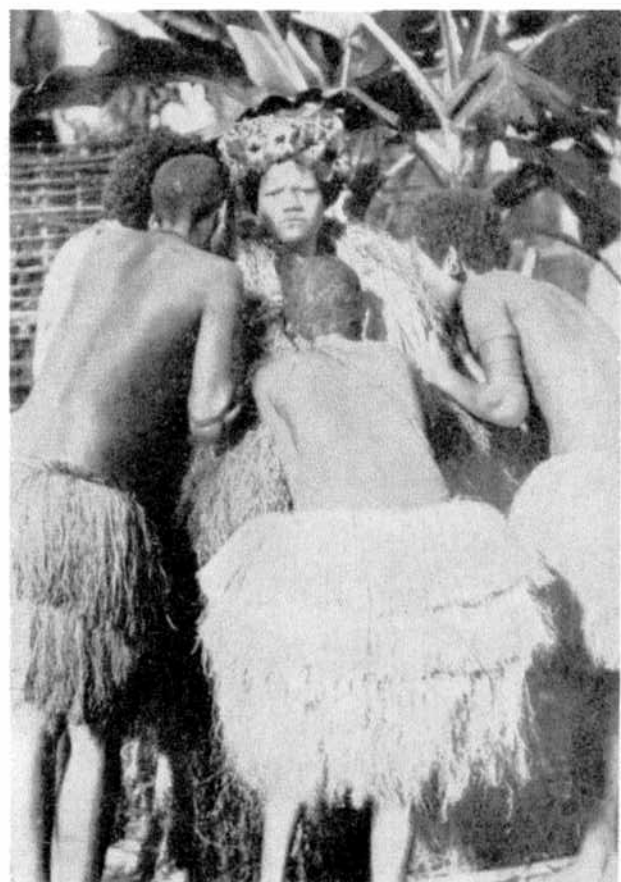
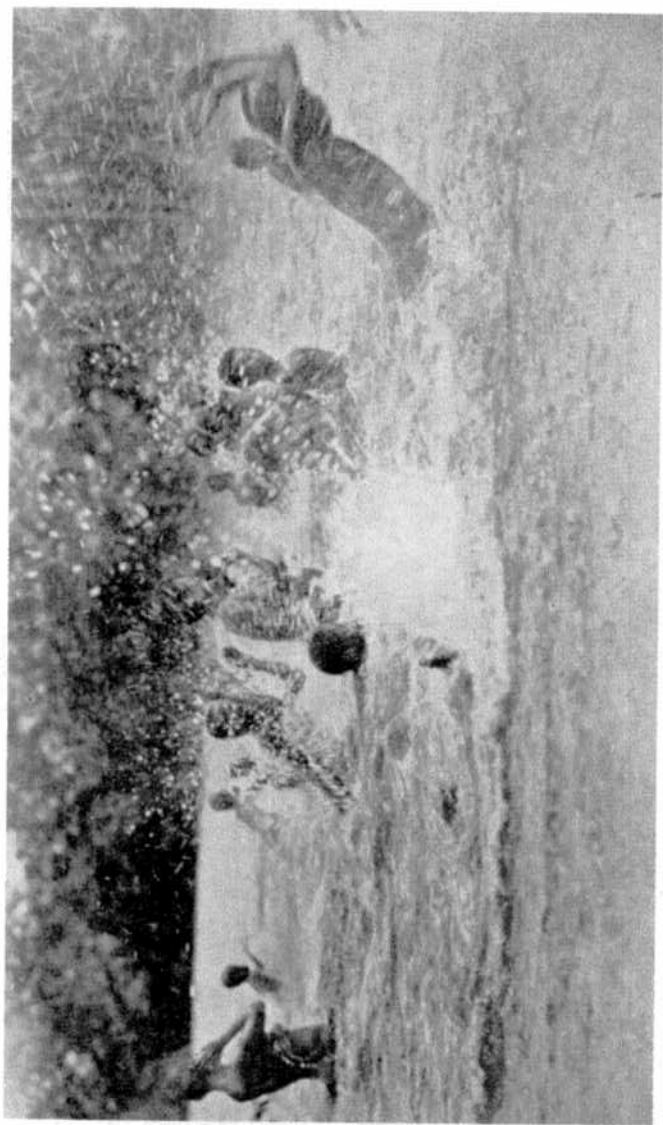
[Ch. VIII, 1 and 4]



FIRST CHARMING OF THE PREGNANCY ROBES  
*The breath carrying the words has to enter the robe, so the women bend over and place their mouths close to the fibre. [Ch. VIII, 1]*

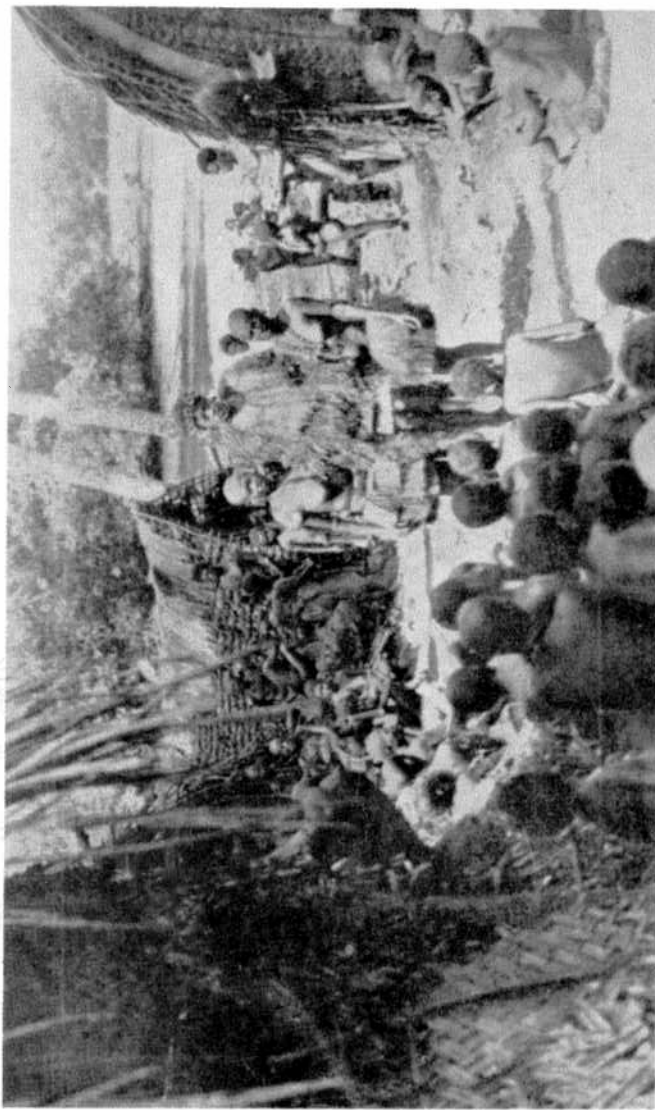




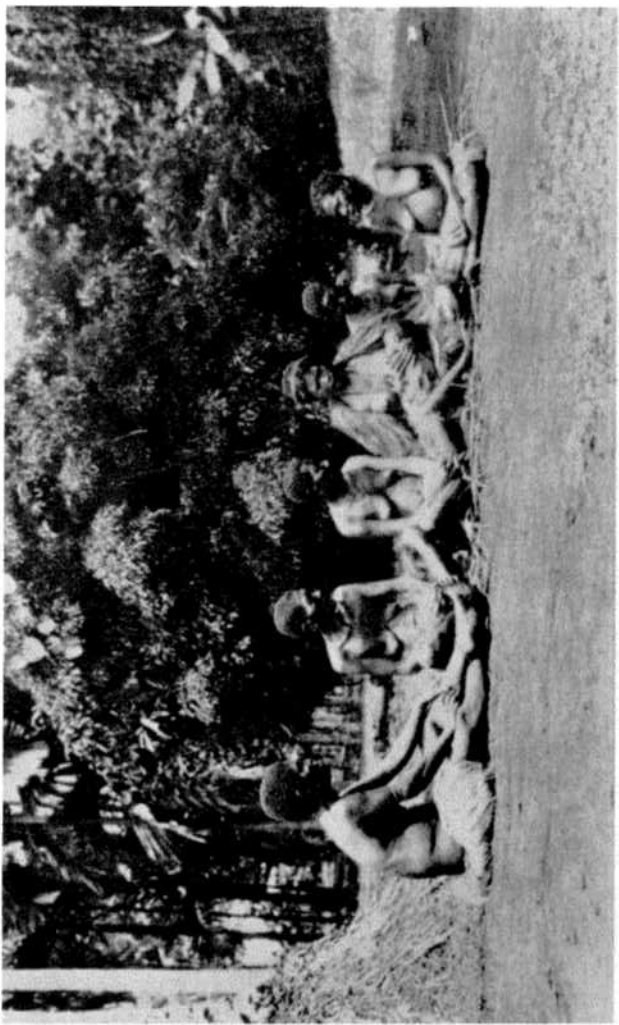
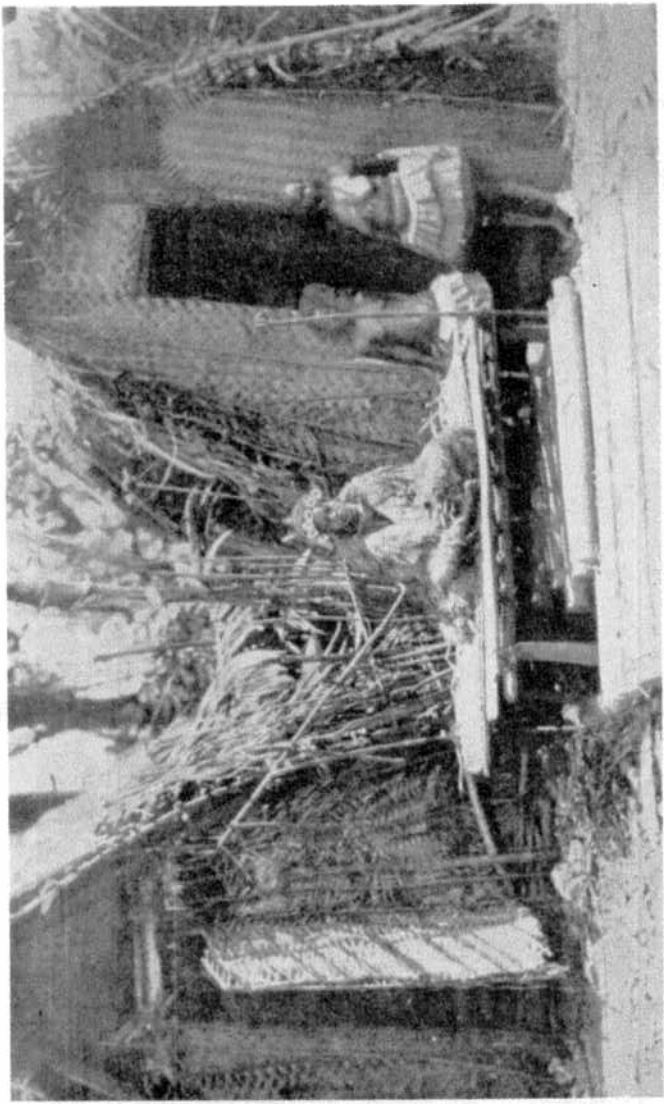




GUARDED FROM CONTACT WITH EARTH—  
[*Ch. VIII, 2*]



RETURN TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE  
[*Ch. VIII, 2*]



I S I

b s s

s h s s I



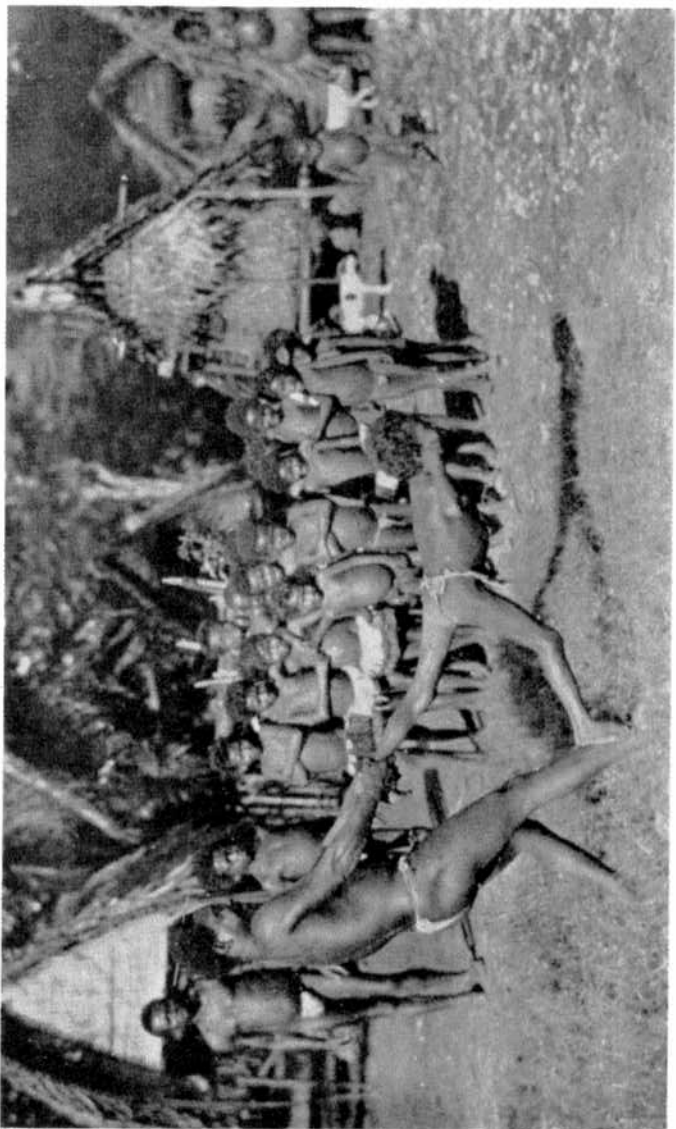
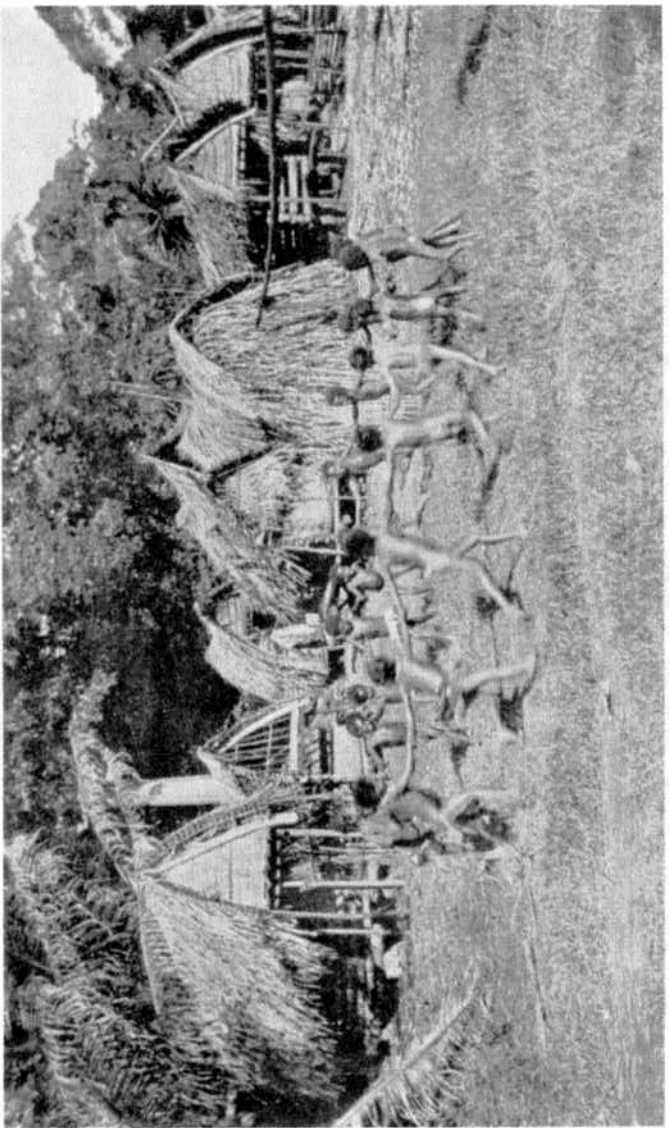
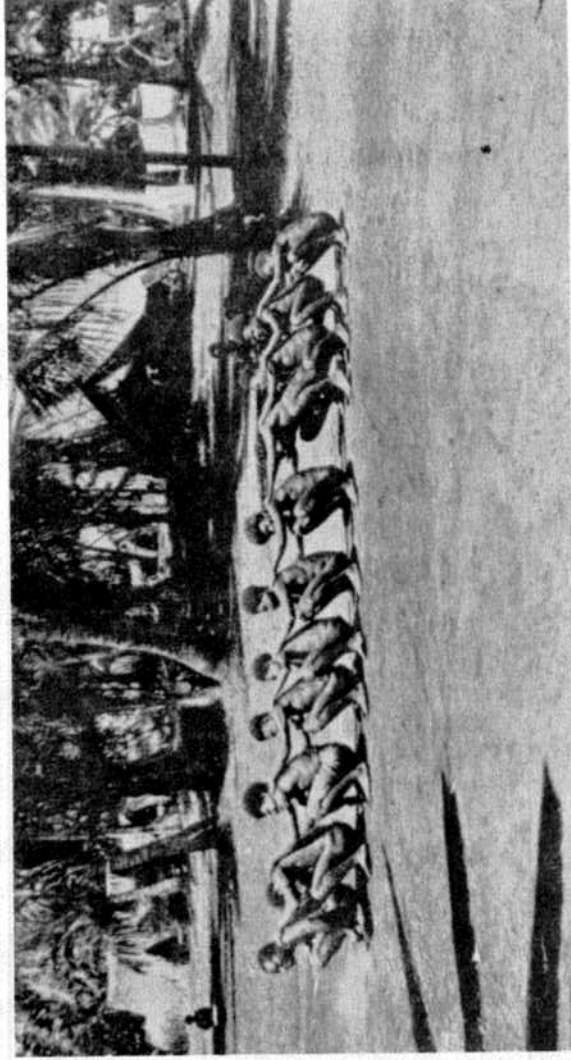


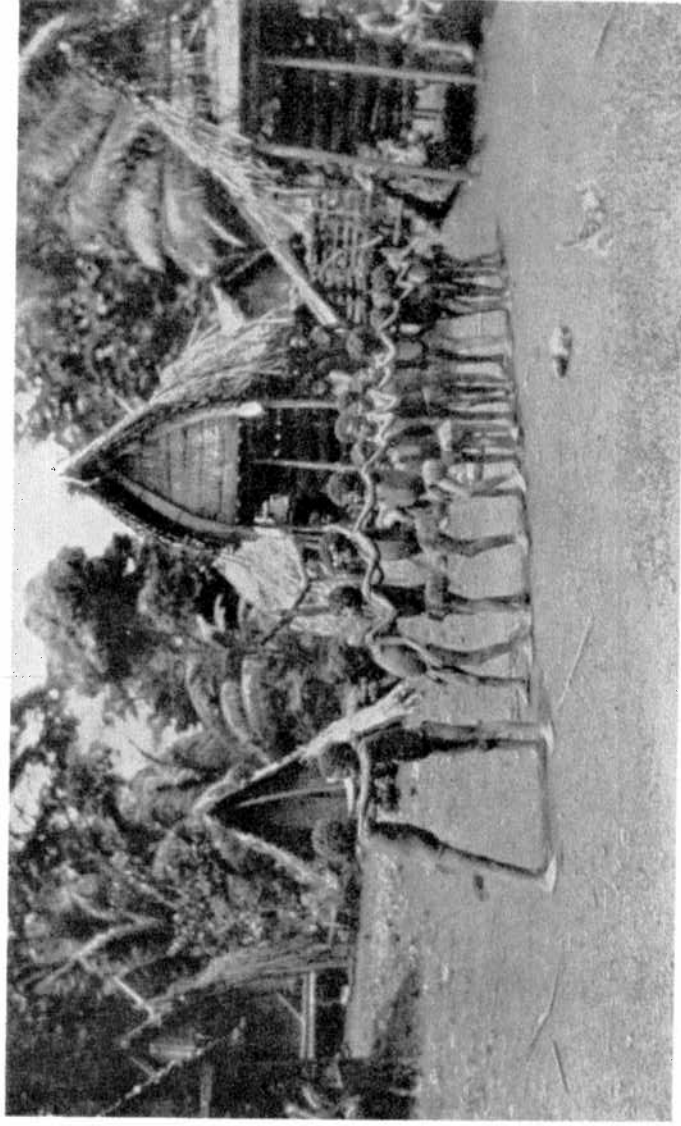


PLATE 54

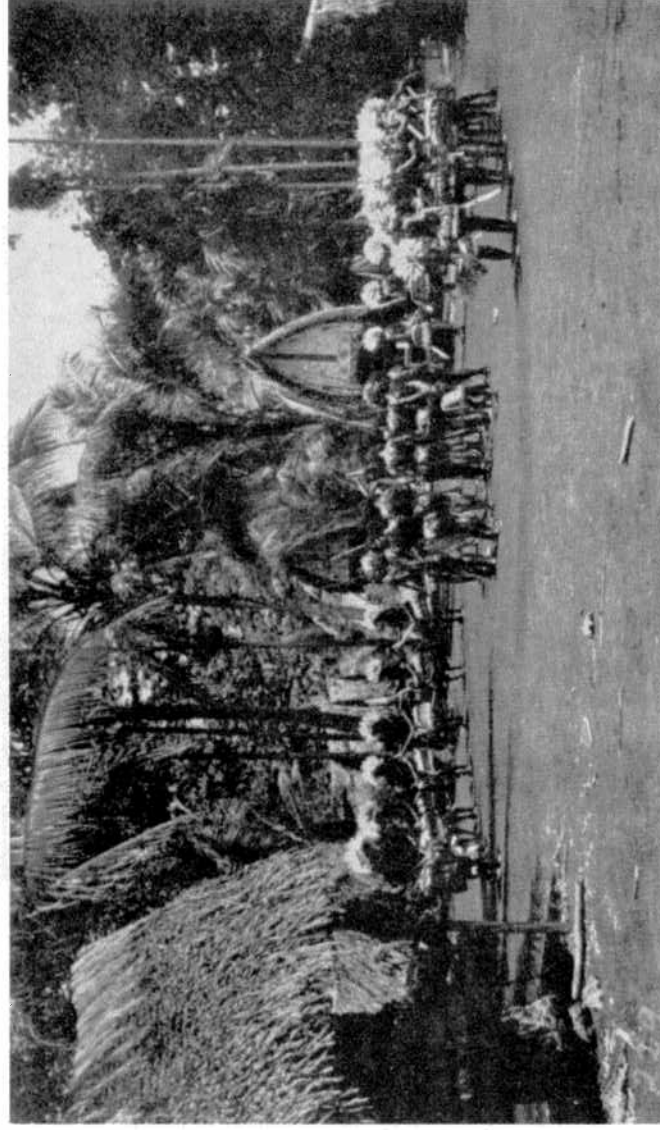


RATS  
[Ch. IX, 1]

PLATE 55

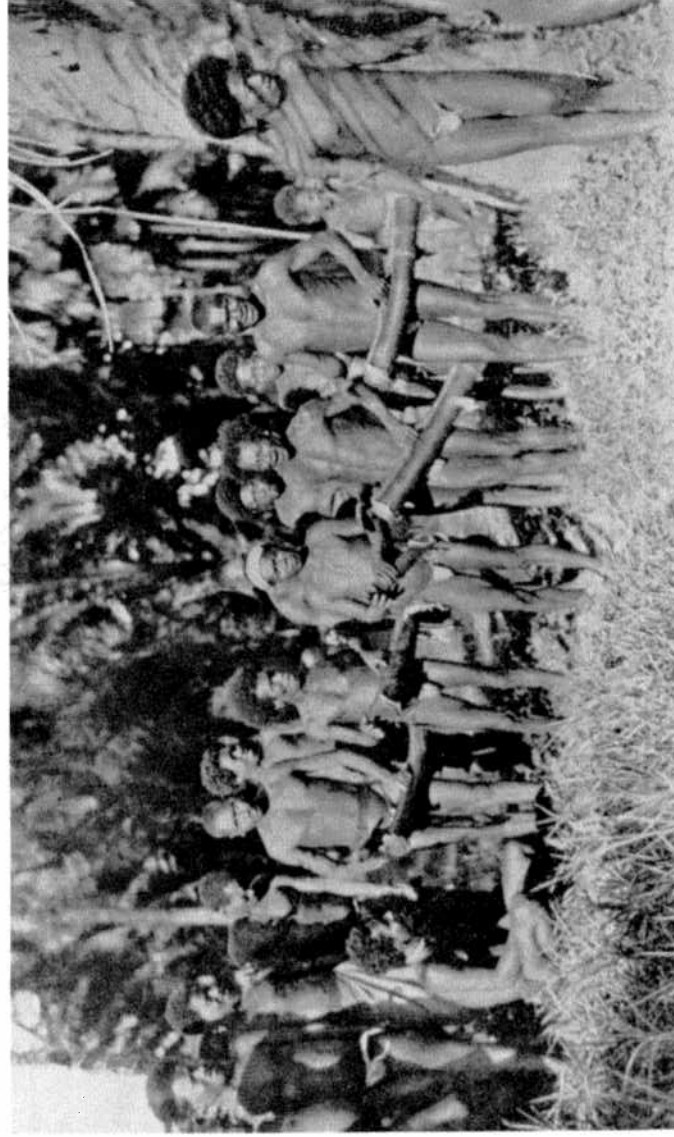


THE FISHING OF KUBOYA  
[Ch. IX, 1]



A CEREMONIAL DANCING DEMONSTRATION

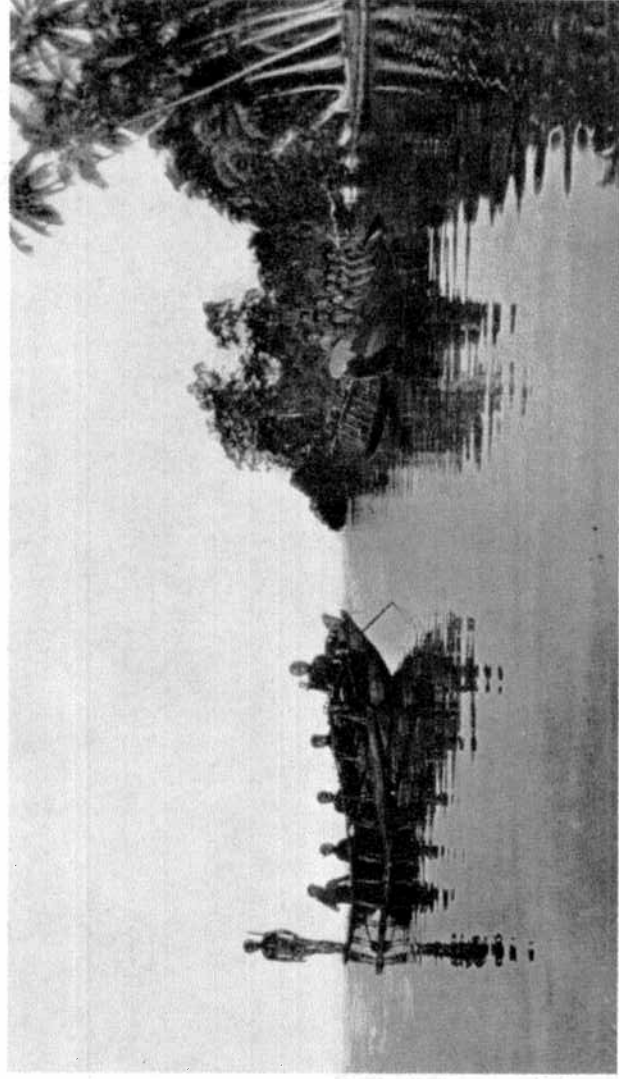
*Dancers from Omarakana instructing the village of Lilita in the Rogayewo, a slow dance performed by men wearing fibre skirts, and holding pandanus streamers in their hands. Most of the spectators were watching from a shady spot behind the camera. [Ch. IX, 3]*



THE UL-ATILE OF KWAYBWAGA

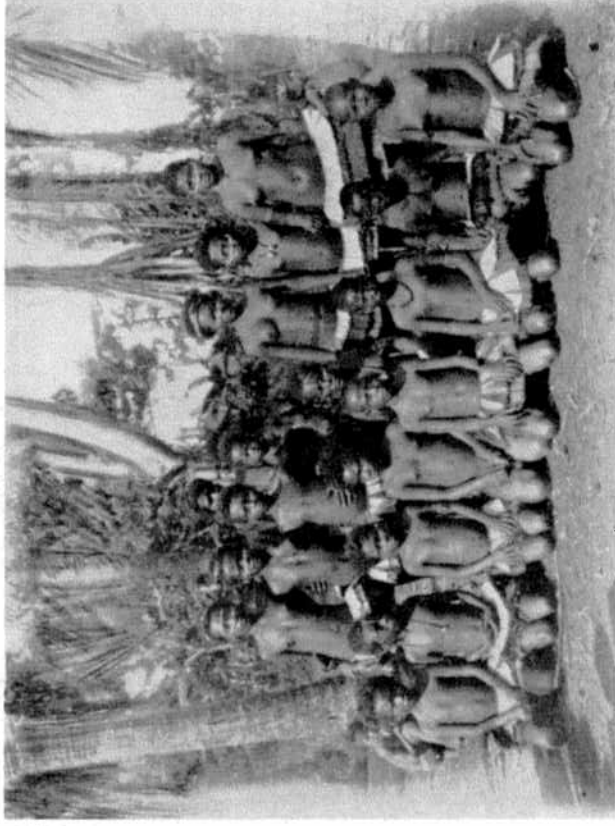
*More especially the singers and dancers from that village, photographed as they were going to start a kariborn unusually early because of the foregoing festivity. They do not represent the pick of Melanesian good looks. [Ch. IX, 6; also ch. III, 3]*

PLATE 60



ULATILE ON THE LAGOON  
[*Ch. IX, 6*]

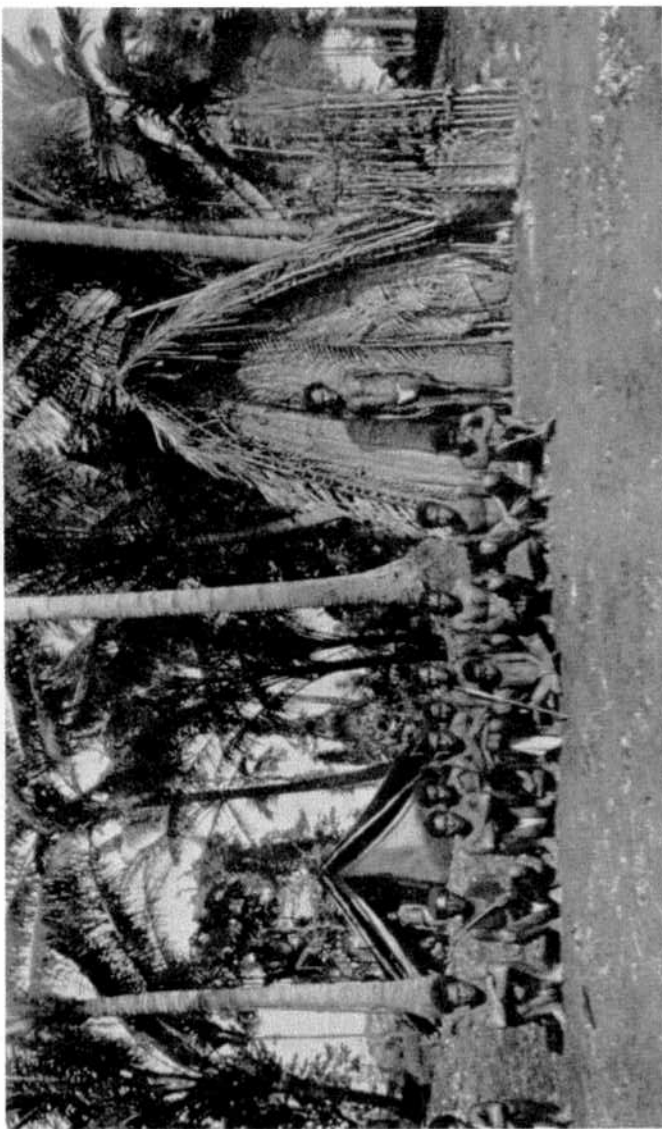
PLATE 61



GIRLS DECORATED FOR A KATUYAUSI OR HARVEST VISIT  
[*Ch. IX, 3 and 7; also ch. III, 3*]







## BAGIDO'U

The hair apparent is standing at the door of his house; squatting in front of him are some well-known figures; on the right Ortao'u the "court clown"; then Ulo Kadala, and Tokubakiki (holding child). In the background the Ethnographer's tent. [Ch. X intro.; also ch. VI, 1]

## 3] BEAUTY OF FACE AND BODY

the favourite mode. When it is cut round the sides and back and left long on top, giving the head an elongated cylindrical form, it is called *bobobu*. Sometimes when a man comes out of mourning, the hair is allowed to grow in the middle of the head, while the edges are kept shaved; this is called *takwadoya*. Hair which is growing after mourning is called *sayva'u* while it is still short. Persons of rank in mourning have the privilege of leaving some hair at the back of the head near the nape of the neck (pl. 25). This grows into long strands which are plaited sometimes and are called *saysuya* (literally, "ringlets").

Body hair (*unu'unu*—a word also given to the growth on yam tubers, on the backs of leaves and so forth) is regarded as ugly and is kept shaven. Only in myth and in fairy tale do certain people appear who are covered with *unu'unu*; to the natives a grotesque and at the same time a perverse characteristic.

Hair dressing plays a great part in the personal toilet. Trimming is done by means of a sharpened mussel shell (*kaniku*) and the hair is cut off in tufts against a piece of wood. It is combed or teased with a long-pronged wooden comb (*sinata*); and one of the most important types of beauty magic is done over the comb. We have seen that teasing out the hair (*pulupulu*, *waypulu* or *waynoku*) is the centre of certain festivals (*kayasa*), which are really organized solely for the display of this beauty. Nails are cut and trimmed with sharpened mussel shell.

A slim, straight, tall body is much admired in a man. *Kaysaki*, like a "swift long canoe", *kuytubo*, like a rounded tree, are both terms of praise, of which the latter shows that emaciation is not an asset. *Kaylobu*—well adorned, well trimmed—expresses the same idea. All three words occur in the lament of a widow for her young husband.

In women, also, a slim body without excessive abdominal development is considered desirable.



*Kaygumita* (slim), *nasasaka* (small-bellied), are words of praise. *Napopoma* (pot-bellied), *nasoka* (with the body like a globe-fish), on the contrary, express disapproval.

A woman's breasts are of special importance. The same word *nunu* is used to describe the female breast, the nipple in man or woman, the central portion of the male chest, and milk. There are a number of partly metaphorical, partly specific expressions to describe the æsthetic appearance of the female breasts. *Nutaviya* (like the *taviya*, a small round fruit) describes a full, round, firm formation; and *nupiyakwa*, a word the etymology of which I was unable to trace, has the same connotation. *Nupipisiga* or *nupisiga* is applied to small, undeveloped, girlish breasts, which are considered less attractive than the first category. For flabby breasts the word *nusawewo* is used, a compound of the specific prefix *nu* and the word *sawewo*, to hang limply down, as, for instance, a ripe fruit hangs. Another apt simile is contained in the word *nukay-bwibwi*, in which long, thin, pendant breasts are compared to the aerial roots of the pandanus tree. Breasts wrinkled and flabby with age are called *pwanunu*, the prefix *pwa* meaning deterioration and *nunu* being the specific noun. The meaning of this word has become extended to describe wrinkled skin in general.

Firm, well-developed breasts are admirable in a woman. Adolescent girls massage (*i'uwoli*) their breasts, which then may also be called *nu'ulawolu* (literally, massaged breasts). When a lover prefers his girl with small breasts, he will say, *yöku tage kuwoli nunum*; *kwunupisiga* ("Do not thou massage thy breasts, remain with girlish breasts").

Returning to physical beauty in general, it has already been mentioned that smoothness of skin and a full brown colour are much sought after. In magical formulæ, smooth objects with a pleasant surface are often mentioned in this connection:

fish without scales, trees with smooth bark, smooth, rounded shells. As to the colour, dark brown is decidedly a disadvantage. In the magic of washing and in other beauty formulæ, a desirable skin is compared with white flowers, moonlight, and the morning star. Pregnancy magic has already given us an example of this ideal of bodily perfection. But deficient pigmentation is not admired; and the insipid, pale yellowish-brown which is sometimes found, is as unpleasant to the Trobriander as to the European. Albinos, with their flaxen hair and long golden body fluff, their enormous freckles, as if something dirty and brown had been splashed over them, produce an unpleasant impression on European and native alike (pl. 38).

## 4

## THE CARE OF THE BODY

The main care of the body is directed to cleanliness. The natives have an extreme sensitiveness to smell and to bodily dirt. *Kakaya* (bathing, or washing all over with plenty of water) is the first act in all ceremonial ornamentation, and is a frequent one at other times. The natives often rinse their hands and wash their faces, such minor ablutions being called *wini*. Washing before a grand toilet is always followed by anointing (*putuma*) with coco-nut oil, which gives a fine lustre to the skin and is also a strong and lasting deodorizer. If possible, some perfume is added to the oil: pandanus flower, *gayewo*, the aromatic *butia* blossom, and other scented flowers and herbs according to the season, are used for this purpose; as is the aromatic paint, *sayaku*, which has already been mentioned.

Dried and bleached leaves are the material for native dress, the men using the pandanus—or, to produce a garment of a finer quality, the areca

palm—and the women, banana leaves (see pl. 69). Their dress is of the slightest, especially for men, who only wear a pubic leaf. This is a narrow band which covers the pubic regions, the lower part of the abdomen, and the back up to the first lumbar vertebræ. The band is attached, front and back, to a belt. Usually above this support the man wears another ornamental belt, made sometimes of valuable material. The pubic leaf is very carefully adjusted, so that the limited area which modesty demands should be hidden remains always precisely and carefully covered. Men very seldom take off their pubic leaf, except in the intimacy of their sleeping place. Only when fishing or bathing with other men is it removed. The word *yavi-* (pubic leaf) takes the same suffixed possessive pronouns as are only otherwise used with parts of the human body (*yavigu*, my leaf; *yavim*, thy leaf; *yavila*, his leaf; and so on). This gives a grammatical expression to the intimate union of this garment with the male body.

Women wear skirts made of narrow strips of vegetable fibre, variously prepared and coloured. A full description of the technology of Trobriand "models" and of feminine psychology in the always important matter of dress would lead to a voluminous dissertation. To be brief: women wear an underskirt and a top skirt. At home and among intimate friends and when at work, the top skirt is taken off, and only the petticoat remains (see pls. 9, 18, 21). This is usually shabby and always scanty; but it adequately fulfils all the demands of modesty. The overskirts are full and sometimes very thick. At ordinary seasons and for ordinary purposes they are not artificially stained and show only their natural rich gold-and-silver colour of dried coco-nut or banana leaf. In times of mourning and during menstruation, slightly longer skirts are worn. For bathing or during rain, coco-nut fibre is preferred to other materials. The greatest variety of colour

and form is seen in the gala skirts worn during harvest and at festivities (pls. 13, 61, 69). These display radiant combinations of colour, all the range of materials available and great ingenuity in "cut". The word for the female garment is *doba*, also used with affixes of nearest possession. In its compound form it changes some of its vowels, as *dabegu*, my skirt, *dabem*, *dabela*, and so forth.

The more important ornaments have already been mentioned incidentally. The natives adorn themselves with wreaths of aromatic blossom; put flowers, especially the red hibiscus, in their hair, and aromatic herbs or long leaves and streamers into their armlets. Necklaces of shell and wild banana seed are worn, and armlets on the upper arm. All men and women wear ear-rings and belts.

The body, as distinguished from the face, is very seldom painted, and no tattoo markings are ever visible. I am told that girls at the time of their first menstruation are tattooed round the vagina. This tattooing is called *ki'uki'u*, and is done, according to my informants, for æsthetic purposes. Also men and women burn marks on their forearms, as an adornment.

One more personal charm must be mentioned—the voice. The good singer is only second in renown to the good dancer. The power of a beautiful voice is known and praised far and wide, and many instances of seduction by song are quoted. Perhaps the most notorious is that of Mokadayu, whose success with the fair sex culminated in an incestuous liaison with his own sister, one of the most beautiful girls in the village.<sup>1</sup>

As a background to Trobriand ideals of beauty, it may be interesting to hear the natives' comments on other racial types. Though other natives are generally considered less attractive than one's own tribe, distinctions are made and degrees of ugliness

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Sex and Repression*, 1927, part ii, ch. iv, and ch. xiv, 3, of this work, where the story of Mokadayu is given

gradated. The pure Papuan type from the Papuan Gulf and from the northern coast, who are now frequently seen in the Trobriands with white men, are undoubtedly classed as the least attractive. Their ugliness is chiefly ascribed to their dark skin; it is, in fact, much darker than the Trobriander's, and has a characteristic chocolate tinge. Their pronouncedly frizzy hair and their strange manner of dressing it in plaits and fringes is also regarded as very unbecoming. Unattractive, too, are their prominent thin lips and their large, aquiline, almost Jewish noses, set in a long narrow face. These criticisms were made to me on the occasion of a series of dances performed by Papuan Gulf natives who had been employed on one of the plantations. Their dancing was genuinely admired, but not their physical appearance. The Dobuans with their dark skin, their thick-set build, and their short necks, are often made fun of by the Trobrianders. The more distant natives from the Eastern Archipelagos, the Southern Massim, receive much higher marks for beauty. In spite of the fact that they are more distant strangers to the Trobrianders than are the Dobuans, the natives realize that they are racially akin and say: "They are like us, fine looking."

Europeans, the natives frankly say, are not good-looking. The straight hair "coming round the heads of women like threads of *im*" (coarse pandanus fibre used for making strings); the nose, "sharp like an axe blade"; the thin lips; the big eyes, "like water puddles"; the white skin with spots on it like those of an albino—all these the natives say (and no doubt feel) are ugly. It is only fair to observe, in justice to their good manners and personal urbanity, that they were quick to add that the Ethnographer was a meritorious exception to the rule. They always told me that I looked much more like a Melanesian than like an ordinary white man. They even fortified this compliment

by specific documentation: thick lips, small eyes, absence of any sharp outline in the nose, were credited to me as assets. The only points on which they were discreet and honest enough not to compliment me were my forehead and my hair. I am afraid, however, that the Trobrianders are more polite than truthful, and it must be remembered that personal praise is by right of custom always repaid with a suitable gift of tobacco or betel-nut, which, rather than æsthetic conviction, may have been the motive of the compliment (see, however, pl. 68).

It is clear, then, that the Trobrianders prefer their own racial type, and that this is not mere parochial conceit, since they make reasoned distinctions between other types and give praise where it is due. Thus the Southern Massim they regard as their equals; and are even ready to admit that the Eastern portion of the Northern Massim, the natives of Woodlark Island and the Marshall Bennet group, are their superiors in personal appearance. I may add that, in common with all strangers, I was less susceptible at first to individual differences and more impressed by the general type. But with greater familiarity, I also came to feel that too dark or too yellow a skin, too straight or too frizzy hair, a mouth as thin as that of a European, or an aquiline nose were features unpleasant in a Melanesian. At the same time I became able to appreciate beauty within the racial type and *de facto* always knew more or less who would be attractive to a native, and who not. Even the artificial transformations—shiny black teeth in thick vermilion lips, graceful scrolls painted in three colours over the face, flaming hibiscus blossoms in the thick black mop of hair, golden brown skins, glossy with coco-nut oil—ceased to impress me as mere grotesque masquerade, and I saw them as becoming adjuvants to personal beauty. After all, it takes us some time to become

accustomed to the changing fashions of our own race and to detect beauty where at first we were only able to see caricature.

I still remember the feeling of slight surprise at the formula of beauty with which the old chief To'uluwa started my first discussion of the subject:

"*Migila*            *bubowatu* ; *matala*            *kuvikekita* ;  
 "Face his (hers) rounded; eye his (hers) small ;  
*kafulula*            *kaykekita* ; *kudula*            *sene*  
 nose his (hers) small ; tooth his (hers) very  
*kobwabwa'u* ; *kulula*            *sene* *kobubowatu*."  
 blackened ; hair his (hers) very rounded off."

This terse sentence roughly summarizes the results of our study, and gives an approximate standard of personal beauty. It presents a blend of cultural values, biological impulses and racial preferences. The point of view can be understood by a European ; that is, if he can maintain the feeling of human or biological solidarity across racial and cultural differences, and a sufficient mental plasticity to become thoroughly familiar with the cultural and aesthetic standards of another people.

5

THE COURSE OF AN INTRIGUE

To understand the effect of personal charm on the native, it may be helpful to present a typical Trobriand love affair against the background of Western romance.

Love is precipitated with them, as with us, by the first shock received from beauty and personality ; but a world of customary and cultural differences divides the after-effects of this. The initial barriers preventing a rapid sexual intimacy between two people in love, which are so characteristic of all higher civilizations, for us endow the beloved with inestimable virtues and enclose him or her

in an aura of holy and mysterious desirability. In men whose creative imagination is developed beyond their practical sense of the realities, such passionate attachments may lead simply to day-dreaming and excessive shyness in the romantic relation, or to such outpourings as we find in *Vita Nuova* or Petrarch's Sonnets. This shy, self-centred adoration, this extreme creative exaltation of the eternal-feminine—of the Beatrice or Gretchen leading man into the presence of God—is a real type of Western romance, standardized in some of the highest works of art, but existing also in many not gifted with the power of self-expression. The reaction against this same artificially-fostered mystery and the consequent idealization of woman, is seen with opposite results in the invective and indictment of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

The man in the street, who sustains the same shock, does not write sonnets, but none the less he surrounds the object of his serious affection with a more temperate exaltation and worship. At the same time his emotion finds practical expression, and he seeks every opportunity for closer acquaintance. If liking ripens into mutual love, the affair will follow the customary course of courtship, engagement, and marriage. A man and woman may be driven by natural passion to the final consummation, athwart all social or moral rules, but it is none the less true that real love leads men and women of our culture, not to the direct satisfaction of the sexual urge, but to a gradual blending of sensuous elements with the general spiritual attraction. Personal intimacy in a full common life, legally sanctioned, is the direct goal of our romantic ideology, and the rest, including sexual relations, follows as a tacit implication.

Let us turn to an average Melanesian youth attracted by a girl who is not put beyond his reach by the taboos of kinship, social standing, or too great a difference in personal charm. In him, also, the

first impression produces an æsthetic and sensuous reaction which transforms its cause into something desirable, valuable, and worthy of strenuous effort. But the feeling of mystery, the desire to worship at a distance or merely to be admitted into her presence, is not there. The Trobriand boy has had many sexual experiences with girls of the same type as his new ideal; and, from childhood, the attraction of beauty and direct erotic approach have been intimately associated in his experience. He has not to stumble upon the final fulfilment of erotic desire, he immediately anticipates it. All the customs, arrangements, and codes of behaviour dictate simple, direct approach, as we shall see in the following description.

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon Trobriand courtship by the customs in other Melanesian communities, where sexual freedom is much more restricted, and where the gradual approach and something of romantic love exist. In the nearest ethnographic region to the south, the Amphletts, and in the next one to this, which is inhabited by the Dobuan tribe, prenuptial intercourse is regarded as reprehensible, and custom does not encourage the free mixing of children in erotic games nor open untrammelled intercourse between boys and girls, nor institutions such as the *bukumatula* (bachelors' and girls' house). From a limited experience in the Amphletts, I received the impression that pre-nuptial intercourse hardly exists at all, and in Dobu it is certainly much more restricted than in the Trobriands. Correlated with this, we find a number of arrangements which allow of a prolonged courtship and which are symptomatic of a love not specifically directed towards sexual intercourse. I was told that both districts have love songs and that the boys court by playing on pan-pipes or on a jews'-harp; also that boys and girls meet at games and in amusements for the sake of personal acquaintance and social intercourse

only. During the later stages of courtship and before marriage, a boy is allowed to visit his betrothed at her parents' house, but there is no cohabitation, and only conversation and caresses pass between them. A similar state of affairs exists with the Western Papuo-Melanesian tribes, among several of whom I conducted more or less prolonged investigations. These data, however, I submit with caution, and they are in no way comparable to my observations among the Trobrianders. They are based entirely on statements obtained from informants *ad hoc*, and not on the spontaneous material which comes to hand with long residence in a country.<sup>1</sup>

The love-sick Trobriander, however, taught by custom to be direct in amorous pursuits, proceeds at once to the approved methods of approach.

The simplest of these is direct personal solicitation. From previous descriptions of sexual licence, we know that there are numerous opportunities for a boy to express his desire, or for a girl to induce him to do so (see ch. ix). This is perfectly easy within the same village community. When the two belong to different villages, certain festivals bring them together; they can speak to each other, and indulge in the preliminaries of love during games and dances, and in crowds; also they can arrange a future meeting. After that, by the *ulatile* and *katuyausi* customs, the meetings can be repeated, or one of the lovers may move to the other's village.

Another method is that of solicitation by an intermediary (*kaykivi*). This is used when the two communities are distant and, owing to the season, no personal approach is possible. A mutual friend, male or female, is begged to express the boy's admiration and to arrange for a rendezvous. The *kaykivi* is not, as a rule, lightly set in motion, for

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the Western Papuo-Melanesians, see my monograph on "The Natives of Mailu", in *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia*, 1915, pp. 559-64, and the references there given to Professor Seligman, *op. cit.*



its failure, if this becomes public, draws down considerable ridicule on the solicitor. But if direct approach and the *kaykivi* are both for some reason impossible, the lover uses the most powerful way of wooing, that of magic, as the first step in his attack. It is sufficient to say in this place that almost all final success in love is attributed to magic, that both men and women believe in it deeply and trust it completely, and that, because of this psychological attitude, it is very efficacious. But a full account of love magic will be given in the following chapter.

Thus there is nothing roundabout in a Trobriand wooing; nor do they seek full personal relations, with sexual possession only as a consequence. Simply and directly a meeting is asked for with the avowed intention of sexual gratification. If the invitation is accepted, the satisfaction of the boy's desire eliminates the romantic frame of mind, the craving for the unattainable and mysterious. If he is rejected, there is not much room for personal tragedy, for he is accustomed from childhood to have his sexual impulses thwarted by some girls, and he knows that another intrigue cures this type of ill surely and swiftly.

## 6

## CASES OF PERSONAL ATTACHMENT

Though the social code does not favour romance, romantic elements and imaginative personal attachments are not altogether absent in Trobriand courtship and marriage. This will become clear if we review the three phases of the love life of an individual discussed in chapter iii. In the easy erotic play of children, sympathies and antipathies arise, and personal preferences declare themselves. Such early sympathetic attractions sometimes strike quite deep. From several of my friends I learned that their marriage had its roots in a childish affection. Tokulubakiki and his wife knew and liked one

another as children. Toyodala, whom I saw in despair after his wife's death, had been a friend of hers in childhood (see ch. vi, sec. 4). Similar conclusions can be drawn from observation of children and stories of their behaviour. In a small way they try to win, to impress, and to catch the imagination of their playmates. Thus even at this stage some elements of romance are mixed with the direct sexuality of their playing.

At the second stage, when boys and girls amuse themselves freely with love-making, personal preferences are even more pronounced. They change frequently, but their imagination and feelings are unquestionably engaged for the time being. It is not difficult to overhear boys discussing the beautiful girls by whom they are attracted. One boy will praise his fancy while another disputes her supremacy; and, in this argument, the amorous yearnings of each will find expression.

As to concrete instances, it was rather difficult for me to collect any circumstantial data either about children or adolescent boys or girls. But at the later stage, where attraction ripens into desire for marriage and matters are treated much more seriously, I had several opportunities for observation. The case of Mekala'i, a boy temporarily in my service, has already been mentioned (see ch. iv, sec. 2). He was seriously in love with Bodulela, of whom it was notorious that she slept with her step-father. The boy was very deeply attached to her, and though there was no chance for him to possess her in the immediate future, and he was not even allowed to visit her, for months he nourished hopes and plans for ultimately winning her. He was also obviously concerned to appear before her as a man of importance and influence. Another boy, Monakewo, had a liaison with Dabugera, who belonged to the highest rank. He often bewailed his low rank, which he knew would prevent his marriage with her (see ch. iv, sec. 1). This

disability he tried to write off by personal achievement. He boasted of his fine voice, his skill in dancing, his many abilities—some of which really existed—and how Dabugera valued these. When for a few days she was unfaithful to him, he would be evidently mortified; and on each of these occasions he wanted to persuade me to sail away from the island and take him with me, at the same time dwelling in imagination on how greatly she would be impressed by this decisive step, and on the fine presents he would bring back to her.

There are also cases on record where a man wants to marry a girl, does not at first succeed, but after a long period of yearning, wins his first choice. Sayabiya, a rather good-looking girl, had a lover from her own village, Yalaka, whom she was going to marry. Tomeda, a handsome man from Kasana'i, famous for his strength, his efficiency in gardening and his skill in dancing, made an impression on her and finally persuaded her to marry him. On my first visit to the Trobriands, I used to see a great deal of both of them, and found her one of the really attractive women, and him a very good informant. When I returned, two years later, he was living alone, for she had gone back to her former lover and married him (see ch. v, sec. 1). Magic, of course, was blamed, but unquestionably it was a return to the first love. My friend Tomeda was extremely depressed for a long time, and used often to speak to me about his lost lady with obvious longing. I left the district and did not see him for some six months, but a few days before sailing from the Trobriands I met him, painted and adorned on his way to another village—obviously in the rôle of a hopeful suitor, a *to'ulatile*. When I chaffed him, he confessed smiling that he had a new girl whom he was hoping to marry soon.

Another tangled amour was that of Yobukwa'u, a son of the chief To'uluwa (see ch. iv, sec. 1,

and ch. v, sec. 5). His sweetheart, Ilaka'ise, was married, for reasons of state, to his father, as the youngest of some twenty-four wives. After this the young man took another girl, Isepuna, whom he meant to marry. But he was unable to withstand the proximity of his former sweetheart, and it became notorious throughout Omarakana, the chief's residence, that he slept regularly with his father's youngest wife. This deeply offended his betrothed. At the same time Yobukwa'u's younger brother, Kalogusa, returned from a year's service on an overseas plantation. He was struck by his elder brother's betrothed, Isepuna, and an attachment sprang up between them. The situation was very difficult, for it is an extremely bad thing to take away a brother's betrothed from him. But love was stronger than moral considerations. Isepuna broke with Yobukwa'u and became engaged to Kalogusa. They were married a few months after my arrival in Omarakana. It may be added that in the meantime, Yobukwa'u married a very unattractive girl, Losa, but gossip has it that he and Ilaka'isi are still lovers.

Almost identical was the story of Gilayviyaka, an elder brother of Yobukwa'u (see ch. v, sec. 5). He also had slept with Nabwoyuma before her marriage to his father. Subsequently he married Bulubwaloga, a really attractive lightly pigmented brown-haired woman from Yalumugwa, to whom he was deeply attached. This, however, did not prevent his nightly visits to Nabwoyuma. His wife did not relish these, and spied on him; and he was caught one night *in flagrante delicto*, with the result that a very big public scandal quite overwhelmed him. He had to leave the village for some time, and his wife returned to her people. During my stay in the village, a couple of years after the event, he made several attempts to get his wife back, and was obviously feeling his loss keenly. On my last return to the Trobriands, I learned that he had

signed on as a plantation hand, come home after a year, and died a few months before my arrival. The hopeless attachment of Ulo Kadala has already been mentioned (ch. iv, sec. 1). One case at least of suicide because of an unhappy love affair has been given to me by the natives.<sup>1</sup>

In these examples we find elements of what we ourselves mean by love: imagination and an attempt to woo the heart through the imagination rather than by a direct appeal to the senses; steadfast preference, and repeated attempts at possession. In many of them, there is a pronounced appreciation of the personality loved and of its power to enrich life or leave it empty. These elements certainly appear in unfamiliar combinations and in a perspective strange to us. The attitude to sex is different, and therefore certain characteristic elements of the Western sentiment are absent. A platonic attachment would be impossible. Above all most of the personal initiative in wooing is replaced to a considerable extent by the practice of magic. Such generalizations can only be approximate, but the facts given in this chapter and incidentally throughout the book, will enable the careful reader to gauge the differences between love and love making in the Trobriands and in our culture.

## 7

## THE COMMERCIAL ASPECT OF LOVE

There is an interesting side to Trobriand love that might either escape the attention of the superficial observer, or give rise to many misunderstandings. In the course of every love affair the man has constantly to give small presents to the woman. To the natives the need of one-sided payment is self-evident. This custom implies that sexual intercourse, even where there is mutual

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Crime and Custom*, p. 95.

attachment, is a service rendered by the female to the male. As such it has to be repaid in accordance with the rule of reciprocity or give-and-take, which pervades tribal life, so that every gift, every service and every favour must be paid by something of equivalent value. The reward for sexual favours is called *buwa*, and the word is used with the suffix of nearest possession (*buwagu buwam, buwala*, etc.). This is perhaps merely a grammatical archaism. If not, it expresses an extremely close relation between the gift and both the giver and the receiver: in other words, that the gift is an essential part of the transaction, as indeed it is.

This rule is by no means logical or self-evident. Considering the great freedom of women and their equality with men in all matters, especially that of sex, considering also that the natives fully realize that women are as inclined to intercourse as men, one would expect the sexual relation to be regarded as an exchange of services in itself reciprocal. But custom, arbitrary and inconsequent here as elsewhere, decrees that it is a service from women to men, and men have to pay.

As to the size and nature of the gift, this varies with the type of sexual relationship. As we have seen, even small boys, imitating their elders in every detail, will give their sweethearts some small gift: a pinch of tobacco, a shell, or simply a blossom. Boys of riper years have to give a more substantial present: half a stick of tobacco, a betel-nut or two, and, from time to time, a turtle-shell ring, a shell disc, or even an armlet. Otherwise a girl would object: *Gala buwam, apayki*, "You have no payment to give me—I refuse." And his reputation for meanness would spread, and interfere with his future conquests. In the later and more permanent intrigues, especially when they grow towards marriage, it is usual to give substantial presents from time to time rather than small gifts every morning.

When marriage is concluded, payment for sexual intercourse becomes the complicated family affair described in chapter v, in which husband and wife, their household and the wife's family, father and children, children and maternal uncle are all involved. The personal account between husband and wife consists in her offering him permanent sexual accommodation, which he repays by all he gives to the children in love, care, and goods. The children, as we know, are regarded as legally hers, and not his. The early cares he bestows on the children, their education, and even his love for them are accounted for by this obligation. "The payment for sleeping with the mother," "the payment for sexual services of the mother" and similar phrases are repeated when the subject is discussed. Thus the commercial aspect of love also, and very definitely, obtains in marriage.<sup>1</sup>

It must, however, be clearly understood that the word "commercial" is merely used to describe the give-and-take principle in erotic relations, and that this principle is here, as in all other social relations, but one, and that not the most significant, aspect of them. Above all, it would be entirely erroneous to draw any parallel with forms of prostitution in higher cultures. The essence of prostitution is that payment is the woman's motive for surrender. In the Trobriands, love-making is as spontaneous on the part of the girl as on the part of the boy. The gift is a custom, not a motive. The institution is much more akin to our custom of giving presents to a fiancée or to someone whom we merely admire than to the institution of purely commercialized sexual services, which are the essence of prostitution.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Argonauts*, pp. 177, 178, where I have *incorrectly* classed the father's gifts to his children as "free gifts". The rectification of this error will be found in *Crime and Custom*, pp. 40, 41.

One more question intimately concerned with the problem of personal attraction remains to be discussed. Love strives not only for possession but for monopoly; hence the strong emotional reaction of jealousy. It has been affirmed by several ethnographers of tribes with great sexual freedom, that jealousy does not exist among them. In support of this, nothing more is adduced than the simple fact of licence. But the connection between licence and the absence of jealousy is by no means self-evident.

In the Trobriands, in spite of considerable licence, jealousy certainly exists. A man who desires a girl will not easily give way to a rival, as the frequent quarrels and fights occasioned by sexual rivalry bear witness. Nor will a man who has established some rights over a woman, whether of marriage or of engagement, or merely of a liaison, tolerate any infringement of these. There exists among them, in fact, both the jealousy of passion and that colder type based on ambition, power, and possession. As we know, relations within the *bukumatula* (bachelors' and unmarried girls' house) are subject to a definite code, and the infringement of individual rights is deeply resented and considered reprehensible. As we also know, adultery is a grave offence, punishable even by death. Among young boys and girls serious enmities and fights have been known to arise from one encroaching on the preserves of another, and even among children, fights are occasioned by jealousy.

This passion, however, is, as are all others, susceptible to social influence. When custom demands that a man should surrender his sweetheart, and this can be honourably done, he will submit. This happens, as we know, in the case of visiting *kula* strangers, and of youths who are guests in a village

where a death has recently occurred. Also, there are occasions, less readily condoned, where girls go on a *katayausi* or steal out of the village to meet an *ulatile* party.

I was impressed by what might be called the reverse side of jealousy. The way in which boys would complain to me about such custom-sanctioned defection; the way in which they dwelt on the subject and described it with apparent depression, but not without some morbid curiosity; and the insistence with which they would return to it; gave me the impression that there was for them some element of pleasurable excitement in the situation. Whether jealousy among the Trobrianders is an emotion with two almost directly contradictory feeling-tones which alternate, the one strongly unpleasant, and the other somewhat pleasurable and sexually stimulating, it is difficult to say. But one or two facts as to the relation between native women and white men throw additional light on the subject.

Thus it is a notorious fact that Sinakadi, an important but impecunious chief of Sinaketa, prostitutes his wives to white men. He is old now, and is said to have married a young girl specially for this purpose; but he began the practice long ago, according to common report, even before a government station was established on the Trobriands. One of his sons, now a young man, is doing exactly the same thing. A white trader told me that he knew a native who seemed very much attached to and extremely jealous of his comely young wife. This native used to procure girls for the trader. On one occasion when he was unable to find anyone else, he brought his wife, and waited for her on the doorstep. Such facts throw an interesting side-light on the working of jealousy in these natives.

The social, cultural, and directly emotional motives in jealousy will be more easily isolated by

distinguishing its several types with their corresponding sanctions. In the first place there is jealousy which springs from infringement of rights rather than from thwarted instincts or wounded feeling. The taboo on the chief's wives is an example, and in former times was extremely strict. Even in the case of a very old man, who was neither attached to his young wives nor even living with them, adultery would constitute a capital offence. The misconduct of To'uluwa's wives with his sons, a case in point already quoted, and the adultery of the wife of M'tabalu, would never have been condoned in the old days. But even the wife of a commoner, if caught *in flagrante*, might have been killed with her lover. This kind of jealousy, arising from purely social considerations, is also expressed in the close watch kept over the widow by the dead man's relatives.

In the second place there is the jealous resentment of infidelities which interfere with a permanent relation. This emotional reaction is present, together with the social one, in the concrete instances quoted in the foregoing paragraph.

Finally there is the pure sexual jealousy from thwarted impulse or desire which will impel a man or a boy to violent and vindictive actions.

## 9

## BEAUTY, COLOUR, AND SCENT IN LOVE-MAKING

We know by now how a Trobriand girl and boy are first attracted to each other, how they come together, how their intrigue develops, leading to separation or marriage; but we know little as yet of the way in which two lovers spend their time together and enjoy each other's presence.

In this as in all other aspects of Melanesian tribal life, custom and convention dictate to a large extent even the details of behaviour. Individual deviations always exist, but they fall within a relatively narrow



range ; much narrower unquestionably than at our own culture level. A lover does not expect from his or her partner the improvisation of a love rhapsody, but rather a properly executed repetition of traditional routine. The places in which it is desirable to make love, the manner of making it, the very types of caress, are defined by tradition. Independent informants would describe exactly the same procedure almost in the same words.

The word *kwakwadu* is a technical term which signifies something like "amorous transactions" or "being together for purposes of love". It would be easier perhaps to express it in German, as *erotisches Beisammensein*, or by the American colloquialism "petting party" or "petting session". English speech habits are, unfortunately, refractory to stereotyped terminology, except in matters of morality. The *kwakwadu* has a wide meaning. It signifies a collective excursion, or party of several couples setting out on a love picnic; the being together of two people who are in love with each other—a sort of erotic *tête-à-tête*; the caresses and approaches before the final union. It is never used euphemistically to designate the sexual act. At a collective picnic some of the games described in the previous chapter are first played in common, and afterwards the lovers seek solitude two by two. We shall attempt to reconstruct the behaviour of a pair who have left such a party, or else started off alone in order to enjoy each other's company in some favourite spot.

The scrub surrounding the village, which is periodically cut for gardens, grows in a dense underbush and does not everywhere offer a desirable resting place. Here and there, however, a large tree, such as the *butia*, is left behind for the sake of its perfumed flowers, or there may be a group of pandanus trees. Pleasant shady places, too, can be found under an old tree in one of the groves which often mark the site of a deserted village, whose fruit

trees, coco-nut-palms, and big banyans make an oasis within the stunted tropical undergrowth of recent cultivation. On the coral ridge (*raybwag*) many spots invite a picnic party. Cavities and hollows in the coral, rocks of queer or attractive shape, giant trees, thickets of fern, flowering hibiscus make the *raybwag* a mysterious and attractive region. Especially delightful is the part which overlooks the open sea towards the east, towards the islands of Kitava, Iwa, and Gawa. The roar of the breakers on the fringing reef, the dazzling sand and foam and the blue sea, provide the favourite surroundings for native love making, and also constitute the scene in which the mythical drama of incestuous love has been laid by native imagination (see ch. xiv).

In such places the lovers enjoy the scent and colour of the flowers, they watch the birds and insects, and go down to the beach to bathe. In the heat of the day, or during the hot seasons, they search for shady spots on the coral ridge, for water-holes and for bathing places. As the cool of the evening approaches they warm themselves on the hot sand, or kindle a fire, or find shelter in some nook among the coral rocks. They amuse themselves by collecting shells and picking flowers or scented herbs, to adorn themselves. Also they smoke tobacco, chew betel-nut, and, when they are thirsty, look for a coco-nut-palm, the green nut of which yields a cooling drink. They inspect each other's hair for lice and eat them—a practice disgusting to us and ill-associated with love making, but to the natives a natural and pleasant occupation between two who are fond of each other, and a favourite pastime with children (pl. 70). On the other hand, they would never eat heavy food on such occasions and especially would never carry it with them from the village. To them the idea of European boys and girls going out for a picnic with a knapsack full of eatables is as disgusting and

indecent as their *kwakwadu* would be to a Puritan in our society (see also ch. iii, sec. 4).

All such pleasures—the enjoyment of landscape, of colour and scent in the open air, of wide views and of intimate corners of nature—are essential features in their love making. For hours, sometimes for days, lovers will go out together gathering fruits and berries for food and enjoying each other's company in beautiful surroundings. I made a point of confirming these particulars from a number of concrete instances; for, in connection with the question of romantic love already discussed, I was interested to know whether love making had direct satisfaction only for its object, or whether it embraced a wider sensory and æsthetic enjoyment. Many of the pleasures which enter into general games, amusements, and festivities, also form part of personal *kwakwadu*.

Of course, love is not made only in the open air; there are also special occasions for bringing lovers together in the village. In chapter iii, the special institution of the *bukumatula* and the more provisional arrangements of younger people have been mentioned. In the village, however, privacy is almost impossible except at night, and the activities of lovers are much more curtailed. They lie next to each other on a bunk and talk, and when they are tired of this, proceed to make love.

THE CONVERSATION OF TWO LOVERS

It is not easy to reconstruct personal conversations which in their nature take place under very intimate conditions and without witnesses. A question couched in such general terms as "What do a boy and a girl talk to each other about at a *kwakwadu*?" is likely to be answered by a grin, or, if the man is familiar with the ethnographer, by the standard reply

to all difficult questions: *Tonagowa yoku*, "you fool"; in other words, "Don't ask silly questions."

From the spontaneous confidences of some of my friends, however, I obtained some glimpses into what passes during these *tête-à-têtes*. A boy would often repeat, for the sake of impressing me or just to give me some definite news, what a girl told him and what he replied, or vice versa. There is no doubt that the Trobriand lover boasts freely to his sweetheart and expects a sympathetic listener and an enthusiastic response. I have already mentioned how Monakewo used to tell me of the great impression he had made on Dabugera and how greatly she admired his exploits and virtues. Mekala'i was equally certain that Bodulela was deeply impressed by any achievements which he related to her. Gomaya, a young chief of Sinaketa and an incurable braggart, would tell me how his betrothed, to whom he was plighted in infancy, would wonder at his stories of personal excellence, of magical knowledge and of overseas adventure. In fact, whenever a Trobriander went into details about his love affairs, the impression made on his mistress would never be absent from his account, and would be related to me, in native fashion, as fragments of an actual conversation.

Gossip about other people's business, and especially about their love affairs, is also a common subject of conversation between two lovers; and on many occasions much of it ultimately came my way, in that a boy would repeat what he had heard from his sweetheart. For the rest, they talk of what they are doing at that moment, the beauties of nature, and of the things they like or do not like. Sometimes, too, a boy will vaunt his exploits in those pursuits in which women do not usually participate, such as *kula* expeditions, fishing, bird-snaring, or hunting.

Thus a love affair may be set in a rich context of general interest, both as regards mutual activity and

conversation; but this varies with the intelligence and the personality of the partners. Ambitious, imaginative people would not be content with mere sensuous pleasure; but the obtuse and limited would proceed no doubt, directly to the cruder stages—the usual caresses and the sexual act.

## II

## EROTIC APPROACHES

The place occupied by the kiss in South Sea communities is of general and perennial interest. It is a widely prevalent opinion that kissing is not practised outside the Indo-European horizon. Students of anthropology, as well as frequenters of comic opera, know that even in such high civilizations as those of China and Japan the kiss as a gesture in the art of love is unknown. A European shudders at the idea of such cultural deficiency. For his comfort, it may be said at once that things are not so black as they look.

To get at the facts and to see these in their right perspective, the question must first be put more precisely. If we ask whether lip-activities play any part in love making, the answer is that they certainly do. As we shall see, both in the preliminary caresses and in the later stages, the mouth is busy. On the other hand, if we define kissing more precisely as a prolonged pressing of mouth against mouth with slight intermittent movements—and I think that all competent authorities would agree with such a definition and with the proposition that this is the main erotic preliminary in Europe and the United States—then the kiss is not used in Trobriand love making. Certainly it never forms a self-contained independent source of pleasure, nor is it a definite preliminary stage of love making, as is the case with us. This caress was never spontaneously mentioned by the natives, and, to direct inquiries, I always received a negative answer. The natives

know, however, that white people “will sit, will press mouth against mouth—they are pleased with it”. But they regard it as a rather insipid and silly form of amusement.

Kissing in the narrow sense is also absent as a cultural symbol, whether as a greeting, an expression of affection, or a magical or ritual act. The rubbing of noses (*vayauli*) as an act of greeting is rare, and never done except between very near relatives; it is said that parents and children or husband and wife would thus celebrate their reunion after long separation. A mother who is constantly petting her small child, will frequently touch it with her cheek or her lips; she will breathe upon it, or, putting her open mouth against its skin, caress it gently. But the exact technique of kissing is not used between mother and child, and in no form is it so conspicuous with them as with us.

The absence of kissing in the narrower sense brings us to a deeper difference in love making. The natives, I am convinced, never indulge in erotic caresses as a self-sufficient activity; that is, as a stage in love making which covers a long period of time before full bodily union is accomplished. This is a local and not a racial character, for I am equally convinced (see above) that among other Melanesians, in Dobu and probably among the Motu, in the Sinaugolo and Mailu tribes, engaged couples do meet, lie together, and caress each other without cohabitation.

The comparison, however, cannot be satisfactory, for my knowledge of the latter tribes is much less complete than in the case of the Trobriands, and so I can only suggest a subject for further research. It is extremely important to know whether the nature of preliminary love is correlated with the level of culture, or with the social regulation of it—above all, with the moral restrictions condemning pre-nuptial intercourse.

We have spoken rather fully about kissing, to

satisfy a general curiosity on this point. Let us now observe the behaviour of two lovers alone on their bunk in the *bukumatula*, or in a secluded spot in the *raybwag* or jungle. A mat is usually spread on the boards or on the earth, and, when they are sure of not being observed, skirt and pubic leaf are removed. They may at first sit or lie side by side, caressing each other, their hands roaming over the surface of the skin. Sometimes they will lie close together, their arms and legs enlaced. In such a position they may talk for a long time, confessing their love with endearing phrases, or teasing each other (*katudabuma*). So near to each other, they will rub noses. But though there is a good deal of nose-rubbing, cheek is also rubbed against cheek, and mouth against mouth. Gradually the caress becomes more passionate, and then the mouth is predominantly active; the tongue is sucked, and tongue is rubbed against tongue; they suck each other's lower lips, and the lips will be bitten till blood comes; the saliva is allowed to flow from mouth to mouth. The teeth are used freely, to bite the cheek, to snap at the nose and chin. Or the lovers plunge their hands into the thick mop of each other's hair and tease it or even tear it. In the formulæ of love magic, which here as elsewhere abound in over-graphic exaggeration, the expressions, "drink my blood" and "pull out my hair" are frequently used (see next chapter). This sentence, volunteered by a girl's sweetheart, describes his erotic passion:

*Binunu vivila dubilibaloda, bigadi;*  
She sucks woman lower lip (ours), she bites;  
*tagiyu bimwam.*  
we spit, she drinks.

Erotic scratches are an even more direct way of hurting and of drawing blood. We have already spoken of these as the conventional invitation of a girl to a boy. We also described their place in

tribal festivities (ch. ix, sec. 5). But they are also a part of intimate love making, and a mutual expression of passion:

*Tayobobu, tavayauli, takenu deli;*  
We embrace, we rub noses, we lie together;  
*bikimali vivila otubwaloda, ovilavada*  
she scratches woman on back (ours), on shoulders  
(ours);  
*sene bwoyna, tanukwali, bitagwalayda*  
very much good, we know, she loves us  
*senela.*  
very much indeed.

On the whole, I think that in the rough usage of passion the woman is the more active. I have seen far larger scratches and marks on men than on women; and only women may actually lacerate their lovers as in the case mentioned in chapter ix, section 5. The scratching is carried even into the passionate phases of intercourse. It is a great jest in the Trobriands to look at the back of a man or a girl for the hall-marks of success in amorous life. Nor have I ever seen a comely girl or boy without some traces of *kimali* in the proper places. Subject to general rules of good taste and specific taboo (see ch. xiii), the *kimali* marks are a favourite subject for jokes; but there is also much secret pride in their possession.

Another element in love making, for which the average European would show even less understanding than for the *kimali*, is the *mitakuku*, the biting off of eyelashes. As far as I could judge from descriptions and demonstrations, a lover will tenderly or passionately bend over his mistress's eyes and bite off the tip of her eyelashes. This, I was told, is done in orgasm as well as in the less passionate preliminary stages. I was never quite able to grasp either the mechanism or the sensuous value of this caress. I have no doubt, however, as to its reality, for I have not seen one boy or girl in the Trobriands

with the long eyelashes to which they are entitled by nature. In any case, it shows that the eye to them is an object of active bodily interest. Still less enthusiasm will probably be felt by the romantic European towards the already mentioned custom of catching each other's lice and eating them. To the natives, however, it is a pastime, which, while pleasant in itself, also establishes an exquisite sense of intimacy.

12

THE ACT OF SEX

The following is a condensed description of the whole process of love making, with several characteristic incidents, given me by my friend Monakewo :

*Takwakwadu* : *dakova, kadiyaguma,*  
 We make love : our fire, our lime gourd,  
*kaditapwaki* : *kada gala, mwasila. Bitala,*  
 our tobacco ; food (ours) no, shame. We go,  
*tala kaytala ka'i kayviava ; tasisu,*  
 we go (for) one (wood) tree tree big ; we sit,  
*takakakutu ; taluki vivila :*  
 we louse and eat ; we tell to woman :  
 " *takayta.*" *Biwokwo,*  
 " we copulate " (let us copulate). It is finished,  
*bitala ovalu ; ovalu tala obukumatula,*  
 we go to village ; in village we go to bachelors'  
 house,  
*takenu tabigatona. Kidama kadumwaleta,*  
 we lie, we chatter. Supposing we are alone,  
*taliku yavida, biliku dabela*  
 we undo pubic leaf ours she undoes skirt (hers)  
*tamasisi.*  
 we sleep.

This may be freely rendered : " When we go on a love making expedition we light our fire ; we take

our lime gourd (and chew betel-nut), we take our tobacco (and smoke it). Food we do not take, we would be ashamed to do so. We walk, we arrive at a large tree, we sit down, we search each other's heads and consume the lice, we tell the woman that we want to copulate. After it is over we return to the village. In the village we go to the bachelors' house, lie down, and chatter. When we are alone he takes off the pubic leaf, she takes off her fibre skirt : we go to sleep."

With regard to the act itself, perhaps the most noteworthy feature is the position.

The woman lies on her back, the legs spread and raised, and the knees flexed. The man kneels against her buttocks, her legs resting on his hips. The more usual position, however, is for the man to squat in front of the woman and, with his hands resting on the ground, to move towards her or, taking hold of her legs, to pull her towards him. When the sexual organs are close to each other the insertion takes place. Again the woman may stretch her legs and place them directly on the man's hips, with his arms outside them, but the far more usual position is with her legs embracing the man's arms, and resting on the elbows.

An interesting text gives the description of both methods :

*Kidama vivila sitana ikanupwagega ;*  
 Supposing woman a little bit she lies open-  
 (legged) ;  
*kaykela bima ogipomada.*  
 legs hers it comes on our hips.  
*Kidama ikanupwagega senela,*  
 Supposing she lies open (-legged) very much indeed,  
*ikanubeyaya, kaykela bima o*  
 she lies right open, leg hers it comes on  
*mitutugu kaylavasi.*  
 end mine elbow.

Which may be rendered :



"When the woman opens her legs only a little, her legs come (i.e. rest) on my hips; when she lies with legs spread out very much, lies right open, her legs rest on my elbows."

Congress is sometimes effected in a reclining position. Lying side by side, with the lower limbs pressed against each other, the woman places her upper leg on top of the man, and the insertion is made. This mode, which is less popular, is used at night in the *bukumatula* (bachelors' house). It is less noisy, as the natives say, and requires less space; and is done in order not to wake up the other inmates of the house (see ch. iii, sec. 4).

No other positions are used. Above all, the natives despise the European position and consider it unpractical and improper. The natives, of course, know it, because white men frequently cohabit with native women, some even being married to them. But, as they say: "The man overlies heavily the woman; he presses her heavily downwards, she cannot respond (*ibilamapu*)."

Altogether the natives are certain that white men do not know how to carry out intercourse effectively. As a matter of fact, it is one of the special accomplishments of native cook-boys and servants who have been for some time in the employ of white traders, planters, or officials, to imitate the copulatory methods of their masters. In the Trobriands, Gomaya was perhaps the best actor in this respect. He still remembered a famous Greek buccaneer (Nicholas Minister was the name he went by among other beachcombers), who had lived in the islands even before the establishment of the government station. Gomaya's performance consisted in the imitation of a very clumsy reclining position, and in the execution of a few sketchy and flabby movements. In this the brevity and lack of vigour of the European performance were caricatured. Indeed, to the native idea, the white man achieves orgasm far too quickly; and there seems to be no doubt

that the Melanesian takes a much longer time and employs a much greater amount of mechanical energy to reach the same result. This, together with the handicap of the unfamiliar position, probably accounts for the complaints of white men that native girls are not responsive. Many a white informant has spoken to me about perhaps the only word in the native language which he ever learned, *kubilabala* ("move on horizontally"), repeated to him with some intensity during the sexual act. This verb defines the horizontal motion during sexual intercourse, which should be mutual. The noun *bilabala*, originally means a horizontally lying log; and *bala* as a root or prefix, conveys a general sense of the horizontal. But the verb, *bilabala*, does not convey the immobility of a log; on the contrary, it gives the idea of horizontal motion. The natives regard the squatting position as more advantageous, both because the man is freer to move than when kneeling, and because the woman is less hampered in her responsive movements—*bilamapu*—a compound of *bila*, from *bala*, horizontal, and *mapu*, repay or respond. Also in the squatting position the man can perform the treading motion (*mtumuta*), which is a useful dynamic element in successful copulation. Another word, *korikikila*, implies at the same time rubbing and pushing, a copulatory motion.

As the act proceeds and the movements become more energetic, the man, I was told, waits until the woman is ready for orgasm. Then he presses his face to the woman's, embraces her body and raises it towards him, she putting her arms round him at the same time and, as a rule, digging her nails into his skin. The expression for orgasm is *ipipisi momona* = the seminal fluid discharges. The word *momona* signifies both the male and female discharge; as we know, the natives do not make any sharp distinction between male semen and the glandular secretions of a woman, at least, not as

regards their respective functions. The same expression *ipisi momona* is also applied to (male or female) nocturnal pollution. The word for onanistic ejaculation is *isulumomoni*, "it boils over sexual fluid." Male masturbation is called *ikivayli kwila*—"he manipulates penis"; female masturbation is described in concrete phrases and has no specific name.

An interesting personal account was given to me by Monakewo and illustrates some of the points just mentioned. It was hardly discreet of him to speak of his mistress by name; but the ethnographer's love for the concrete instance may excuse my not emending it.

*Bamasisi deli Dabugera ; bayobobu,*  
I sleep together Dabugera ; I embrace,  
*bavakayla, bavayauli. Tanunu dubilibaloda,*  
I hug all length, I rub noses. We suck lower lips  
ours,  
*pela bi'ubugwalayda ; mayela tanunu ;*  
because we feel excited ; tongue his we suck ;  
*tagadi kabulula ; tagadi kala gabula ; tagadi*  
we bite nose his ; we bite his chin ; we bite  
*kimwala ; takabi posigala,*  
jaw (cheek) his ; we take hold (caress) armpit his,  
*visiyala. Bilivala minana : " O didakwani,*  
groin his. She says this woman : " O it itches,  
*lubaygu, senela ; kworikikila*  
lover mine, very much indeed ; rub and push  
*tuvayla, bilukwali wowogu—*  
again, it feels pleasant body mine—  
*kwopinaviyaka, nanakwa bipipisi*  
do it vigorously, quick (so that) it squirts  
*momona :— kwalimtumutu tuvayla bilukwali*  
sexual fluid :— tread again it feels pleasant  
*wowogu.*  
body mine.

*Free Translation*

" When I sleep with Dabugera I embrace her, I hug her with my whole body, I rub noses with her. We suck each other's lower lip, so that we are stirred to passion. We suck each other's tongues, we bite each other's noses, we bite each other's chins, we bite cheeks and caress the armpit and the groin. Then she will say : ' O my lover, it itches very much . . . push on again, my whole body melts with pleasure . . . do it vigorously, be quick, so that the fluids may discharge . . . tread on again, my body feels so pleasant.' "

The same informant gave me the following samples of a conversation which would occur after the act, when the two rested in each other's arms :

" *Kayne tombwaylim yaygu ?* "  
" Whether sweetheart thine I ? "  
" *Mtage ! nabwayligu yoku— sene*  
" Yes ! sweetheart mine thou— very much  
*magigu ; tuta, tuta, bitakayta ; sene*  
desire mine ; time, time, we copulate ; very much  
*migimbwayligu migim tabuda !* "  
face yours beloved by me face thine cross-cousins ! "  
" *Gala magigu bukuyousi nata vivila*  
" No desire mine you get hold one woman  
*nava'u ; yoku wala, yaygu.* "  
new woman ; thou indeed, I. "

" Am I thy sweetheart ? " " Yes, thou art my sweetheart ; I love thee very much ; always, always we shall cohabit. I love thy face very much ; it is that of a cross-cousin (the right woman for me). " " I do not desire that thou shouldst take a new woman ; just thou and I. "

I was informed that sexual relations between married people would be on the same lines, but, from the following text, it is clear that passion ebbs with time.

*Vigilava'u*            *imasisisi*            *kwaytanidesi*  
 Married newly        they sleep            single one  
*kabasi* ;            *bimugo*            *vayva'i*            *bikwaybogwo*,  
 bed theirs ;        it matures        matrimony        it is old,  
*kwayta kabala*,    *kwayta kabada*.    *Bisala'u*  
 one        bed her, one        bed ours. It is energetic  
*uwasi*,            *magisi*            *bikaytasi*,            *bikenusi*  
 body theirs,        desire theirs        they copulate,        they lie  
*deli*            *bikamitakukusi*            *bivayaulasi*,  
 together        they bite eyelashes        they rub noses,  
*bigedasi*.  
 they bite.

“ Newly married people sleep together in one bed. When matrimony has matured, when it has become old, she sleeps in one bed, and we (i.e. the husband) sleep in another. When they feel sexually vigorous they want to cohabit ; then they lie together, they bite their eyelashes, they rub their noses, they bite each other.”

Here my informant, Tokulubakiki, a married man, tries to convey the idea that even long-married persons can behave at times as lovers.

In conclusion,<sup>1</sup> I should like to draw the attention of the reader to the data supplied by Dr W. E. Roth and other informants concerning the sexual life of the aborigines of Australia.<sup>2</sup> The subject is of considerable importance as the mechanism is very characteristic of the whole nature of erotic approach. The manner in which the Queensland aborigines copulate closely resembles that described in this chapter. In both regions the act can be so carried out that there is the minimum of bodily contact. I think that this to a

<sup>1</sup> Compare also what has been said about native ideas concerning the anatomy and physiology of procreation and the psycho-physiological mechanism of falling in love, chapter vii.

<sup>2</sup> Dr W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West Central Queensland Aborigines*, 1897, and H. Basedow, in *J.R.A.I.*, 1927, on "Subincision and Kindred Rites of the Australian Aboriginal," pp. 151-156.

great extent accounts for the indiscriminating way in which young and handsome boys will sometimes fornicate with old and repulsive women. On the other hand, where love exists, the man can bend over the woman or the woman raise herself to meet him and contact can be as full and intimate as is desired.