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STRANGE MANHOOD RITES IN ANGOLA

Boys in Portuguese East Africa Go Through Secret Ritual; Description

How boys attain manhood among tribes of Angola (Portuguese West Africa) only through enduring secret ceremonies imposing several restraints and physical suffering is described in the July issue of Field Museum News, the monthly bulletin published for the thousands of members of Field Museum of Natural History. The article is by Wilfrid D. Hambly, assistant curator of African ethnology, who as leader of the recent Frederick H. Rawson-Field Museum Ethnological Expedition to West Africa, witnessed the strange rites. "When at Cangamba in the far east of Angola, my attention was called to a large enclosure built of brushwood in such a way that the interior was entirely screened from passers-by," writes Mr. Hambly. "It was for the boys' initiation ceremonies, which are held only once in four years. With some difficulty I obtained admittance, chiefly because I was able to prove I was not a government official.

First Stage

"The first stage in the initiation proceeding is the approach of a group of young boys to the elders of the village asking that such initiation may take place. The ceremony is essential as a prelude to marriage; moreover, the uninitiated boy is regarded as a child who cannot be a companion of the initiated.

"On entering the enclosure I found five boys apparently varying in age from 12 to 17 years. Each had to make a mask painted black and white. Usually the boys live in the enclosure for two months. Each has to spend 14 days lying continuously on his back in a small cage built from branches of trees. The long seclusion is marked by semi-starvation and flogging; in fact, there are frequent deaths among the boys. The message sent to the parents of a boy who has died under this treatment has a touch of pathos. The wooden food platter used by the deceased is sent to the parents after it has been perforated so as to suggest that it will be of no further use.

"About the time of my departure from Cangamba all the newly initiated boys were presented at a feast. Four expert drummers played continuously almost to the point of my exhaustion and their own. Everyone knows that these weird figures are the boys who disappeared for initiation some eight weeks ago, but everyone pretends that the village has been visited by the spirits of the dead. The garbed figures dance wildly about here and there, dispersing groups of women and girls who run screaming to the bush."

Several of the initiation costumes were obtained for the museum by Mr. Hambly.

Automobiles Stolen in U. S. in One Year

More than \$24,000,000 of insured automobiles were stolen in 1929 according to a study made by a government committee. This seems to be a pretty good argument in favor of automobile insurance.

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