Indians of Mexico for many hundred years have used in ceremonies a small cactus whose Aztec name was peyotl. Peyote is the modern name by which it is known in the United States. The plant, if eaten, has an effect not quite like that of any other known. Taken in small quantities, it removes all feeling of hunger, weariness or pain. In large quantities, it produces visions, beautiful or terrifying. Because of this, the Mexican Indians looked upon peyote as something godlike. Because people who ate it did not feel hunger, some Indians regarded it as the first of all foods. Because it gave visions, they felt it was a messenger from the spirits or perhaps a spirit itself. At their ceremonies, they did honor to it and they also ate it, fresh or dried, or they drank it, ground up and mixed with water.

Peyote was introduced among United States Indians about 1890, by some of the raiding tribes which ranged into Mexico. Since then, the use of the plant has spread, both in connection with ceremony and, more recently, as a narcotic for private use. Peyote is not included among the noxious drugs whose use is regulated by the Federal Food and Drugs Act. Any Indian is therefore, free to use it unless prevented by some state regulation or some rule made by his own tribal government. Much concern has been felt on this subject by friends of the Indian and some information on the plant may therefore be of interest.

Peyote is a root, about the size and shape of a turnip, with a small, prickly crown two or three inches across and an inch or so high, which is all that shows above ground. In summer, it has pink blossoms, with a tiny red fruit. It is a perennial and, if pulled up, does not grow again, so the Indians who use it generally take only the top which they slice off and dry. The dried, brown tops look like mushrooms or even buttons and for this reason dried peyote used to be called mescal buttons. The name is a mistake, however, for mescal is the Mexican name of the century plant, a cactus of a different family from peyote, and with different effects when eaten.

Scientists are still discussing and studying peyote. It does not grow in Europe and the first Spaniards who came to Mexico in the sixteenth century had never seen it. All the written history we have from that time comes from the Spaniards and we cannot always tell whether they are describing peyote or some other plant with intoxicating effects, for the Mexican Indians had several. American scientists learned about the plant about 1880. So far they have found only one kind, though it looks different as it grows older. The botanical name they have given it is Lophophora williamsii.

As far as we know, peyote grows only in Mexico and in that part of Texas which is just across the border. It is thickest in the Rio Grande Valley and most of the supplies now come from there. Indians from many parts of Mexico went to get it but it was those of the north, near the Rio Grande, who knew it best and one old Spanish writer says that they discovered it. No one is sure, now, just who these northern tribes were nor what ceremonies they had but it was probably through them that news of the powerful plant was spread. If we follow its story from Mexico up through the United States, we shall see it used by many different tribes, of different languages and religions. Each has fitted peyote into its own ceremonies, using its own costumes, its own dances, and its own prayers. But the aim of all is to bring man nearer to the forces of nature and thus to keep order and happiness in his own mind and order in the coming of rain and crops.
The people furthest to the south who are known to use peyote, are the Huiches, who live in the mountains some four hundred miles northwest of Mexico City and speak a language related to that of the Aztecs. They are farmers and hunters and the two things of first importance in their lives have always been the corn and the deer. These two foods which kept them alive, they looked upon as holy and especially the deer which, they felt, made the corn grow and made the rain fall. Their legend said that the deer once turned into a peyote plant so that they might have this help else and when they go to hunt for peyote they always see it first as a deer.

They go a long way to hunt for it and their journey, with all the ceremonies that follow, takes three or four months. They make the journey in October, after harvest. Its purpose is to bring rain for the next year and, unless the pilgrimage is made and fresh peyote brought, there will be no rain nor corn. Any man who wishes may go on the pilgrimage and thus get the blessing far himself, his family and his village. For the four or five months of the journey and ceremonies, he must live away from women and must go without salt or bathing.

Their native-made straw hats decorated with feathers and squirrel tails, the pilgrims start out, single file, for their two-hundred-and-fifty mile walk, and every night they stop at an appointed place and hold ceremonies. When they reach the peyote country, they gather the plant tops for three days, slicing all they want and eating them green. They say that, while living on them this way, they feel neither hunger nor fatigue and a white explorer who tried peyote when he was exhausted, agrees that it has this effect. (Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico, 178-9)

The pilgrims return at last with faces painted in honor of the god of fire, for peyote belongs to him as well as to the deer. They sacrifice oxen in his temple, which is a round hut of stone with a thatched roof and there they hang their strings of dried peyote heads. But all this is only the first part of the ceremony which will honor deer, corn and peyote, the three great foods. Corn is already harvested, peyote is brought but now the pilgrims must kill a number of deer, barbecue their meat and hang it, dried, in the temple. It may take months to do all this and, meantime, the pilgrims live in the temple, fasting and praying before every hunt. This is the time of year when they eat peyote for, after the ceremonies are over, they rarely touch it.

Toward January, the deer meat is ready and then the pilgrims have one more duty. They must clear the temple field and each man must clear his own field, ready for planting in the spring. Then the planters and hunters will have done all that they can do to appeal to the forces of nature and to honor their three great foods. They paint their faces again with fire symbols, in yellow paint made of a root that grows in the peyote country. Their wives grind up the dried heads of the plant and mix them with water brought from the same sacred place for on this great occasion peyote is drunk in the form of tea. Then pilgrims and wives pray in the temple till midnight, asking for rain and feed and, afterward, dance for twenty four hours while the medicine man sings rain-bringing songs. During this time, all drink peyote tea, which gives strength to the people for dancing and to the medicine man for singing.

Thus the first day of the feast, the peyote day, passes in constant dancing. The next day is deer day, when the people feast on the dried deer meat and a mildly intoxicating liquor made not from peyote but from corn. This corn beer or cider is an old Mexican drink, and so are others made from the century plant or other kinds of cactus. It was a regular thing at some of the ceremonies, for people to drink these liquors and even to be intoxicated but it was only at certain times with certain rules. Since the old rules are being forgotten, more and more of the ceremonies end in drinking. The Huiches drink with their feast of meat on deer day. The third day is corn day, when the pilgrims bring to the temple perfect e
of colored corn. These are shelled and roasted and at last everyone is permitted to eat roasted corn, forbidden up to now.

After the feast, most of the peyote is gone. A little still hangs in the temple, to bring rain, some has been sold or given away and some pilgrims may still have a few dried heads to eat for stimulus on long and tiring journeys and as a cure for snakebite. But there is no wholesale use of peyote until the next year. Two neighbor tribes of the Huichol, the Cuara and Topehuana, speak languages related to them and use peyote in the same way.

Further north, near the locality where the peyote grows most freely, are the Tarahumare, again a mountain tribe and again with language related to the Aztec. In old days they were, not farmers but hunters and now, instead of hunting, they keep sheep and goats, as do the Navajo further north. Their ceremonies, therefore, are not for rain but health and life of people and flocks. But because peyote gives energy, they feel that it will help to drive away disease and cause living beings to multiply.

They, too, make a peyote journey. The pilgrims are gone a month altogether, walking single file under the lead of a medicine man. But they are not such a ceremonious people as the Huichol; they have no restrictions and no ritual on the way. The Tarahumare have long been Christians and when they come to the peyote fields, one writer says that they erect a cross and place peyote before it, so that it will tell them how to find the almost invisible plants. It is also reported that they dance for two nights around what are, to them, two holy symbols, The Indian fire and The Christian cross. By day, they pick the peyote, taking only the heads while the plants they say, sing, to guide them. While picking, they eat only green peyote and some take so much as to be intoxicated by it.

At home they hold a ceremony. It is much simpler than that of the farming Huichols and, it honors the cross as well as peyote. The Tarahumare are outdoor people who have given little thought to housebuilding and they have no temples. Instead, they use a clean swept courtyard which, at present, always holds three crosses. For the peyote ceremony, the fire is made in a special way, with sticks pointing east and west. The medicine man sits by the fire while, before him, a peyote plant rests on a cross, marked on the ground, to mean the world. He places a gourd over it and against the gourd rests the stick which is his musical instrument. It is notched all along its length and he plays it by rattling another stick up and down the notches. He has men and women assistants who, once, were all dressed in white blankets while the men carried deer hoof rattles. They dance all night, first the men and then the women, while the medicine man sings health-bringing songs. But before they begin dancing, they offer incense to the Christian cross.

Toward morning, they take peyote. It is in liquid form, the dried plant heads having been ground up and soaked in water as at the Huichol ceremony. After grinding, the woman's stone slab is washed and every drop of the water saved to be drunk since it is too sacred to throw away. Each person takes only one sip and after this they take no more throughout the year. Peyote is too sacred and powerful for the average man to eat. It belongs to the medicine man who sells it now and then and uses it in his cures.

After the sip of peyote comes the curing of the sick people. They do not eat peyote but, instead, are cured by the medicine man, through its power. He takes the musical stick on which he has played all night, waves it over their heads and toward the rising sun. Sometimes he marks a cross on the body of the invalid. The ceremony finishes, like that of the Huichol, with a great feast of deer meat and the ancient beer made from corn.

Through the rest of the year, peyote is used, by the Tarahumare, only when the medicine man holds a curing ceremony. There are special peyote medicine men and when they cure, they must have a courtyard with crosses, a feast, corn beer and a sacrifice of a cow. People must dance the old Tarahumare form of dance and
Perhaps a more modern Christian one. At such a curing ceremony, the people dance all day, then they eat a little peyote and the medicine man sings all night. Meanwhile his audience may feast and perhaps grow intoxicated but not on peyote. Their drink, as with the Huichols, is native corn beer. For the rest of the year, like the Huichols, they do not use the plant much. The medicine man keeps it for his curing and people, if they are not too poor, try to buy a little to use for journeys and scorpion bites. But a root costs a whole sheep and few people can afford it.

With the Tarahumare, as well as Huichols, Cora and Tepehuane, peyote is used in the same general way. Their ceremony means a pilgrimage and a night of dancing with, perhaps, a long preparation. The ceremony is held in honor of peyote but not much peyote is taken. They drink a little in the form of tea and, if they get drunk, it is on beer. Their real time for eating peyote is during the preparation for the ceremony, when they take it green whenever they like. In eating it this way, what they want is not visions but energy for hunting and dancing. Eating a little every day, seems not to hurt them but they occasionally take too much and grow violent or dizzy. For the rest of the year, they scarcely take it at all.

None of these ceremonies is like the ones now held in the United States. The people just described are all somewhat related in language and all but the Tarahumare are farmers. But the people who brought peyote across the border were hunters and fighters, with language and customs entirely different from the Mexican Indians. And they began to spread the peyote religion not much more than fifty years ago.

No one, Indian or white, knows which tribe really brought peyote to the United States but there were four who might have done so: the Mescalero Apache, the Tonkawa (now almost gone), the Kiowa and Comanche. These were all wandering people and in old days, they camped sometimes in northern Mexico, just where the peyote grows, and sometimes in the United States. Many Indians say it was the Mescalero Apache who first used the plant and that it was thus they get their name. But they cannot have used it always for the Apache, long ago, came from the north where no peyote grows. The Comanche, too, came from the north but about the others, we know less. All three tribes veil their origin and that of the ceremony in poetic words, just as every other people does. They have their stories telling how the peyote plant spoke to some member of the tribe who was in trouble; told him that everything would be well and gave directions for holding the ceremony.

A vision of this sort was already part of their belief. These warrior people had many legends telling how their young men had gone out on the hills, fasting and waiting for a vision from the spirits. At last there would come to them an animal or a plant, perhaps even the sun or the morning star, and would promise them help and power for the future. These fighting men did not ask for rain nor health for flocks. What they wanted was bravery and endurance, to overcome their enemies and survive their own hard life. They had long been asking the spirits for these gifts but, about 1890, when the peyote religion began to spread, they had special need of them. At this time the Mescalero, Kiowa and Comanche were settled in Oklahoma. Their children were going to white schools, learning new trades and changing their way of life from war to peace. The object of their peyote meeting was to sit together in the ancient tipi, singing the ancient songs, turning their thoughts toward peace and understanding and, through the eating of peyote, making themselves specially sensitive to the prayers which asked for these things.

They worked out a ceremony which used the old forms of their people but was different. They met in a tipi which had always been their dwelling place in former times. They smoked tobacco which was the ancient way of approaching the spirits; it was, in fact, their incense and many believed that a prayer accompanied by tobacco was never refused. They used the rattle, the eagle bone, whistle and the eagle feather fan of their other ceremonies. Instead of having a medicine man to
sing, like the Mexican Indians, they all sang in turn, often songs composed by themselves, for they were democratic people, who thought that power-bringing songs came to all. But they did not dance as in some of their ancient ceremonies. Instead, they sat motionless around a peyote plant placed on a moon-shaped mound of earth. Men were asked to keep their thoughts on that plant which had once appeared in a vision and promised an end of trouble. Meantime, they might take the plant into themselves by eating the dried heads, with appropriate ceremony. The end of this communion was unity and peace.

We will describe one of the earliest meetings, of the kind still held by Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho and many others. (Mooney)

This meeting does not begin with a pilgrimage. The Indians buy their peyote from Texas, perhaps by mail through the Comanche are still proud of getting theirs direct from Mexico, but, to all of them, the important part is not getting the peyote but the meeting itself. For this meeting, the women build a tipi in the old Plains style, facing east. For seats around the edges, they pile desert sage or hay mixed with sage. The men appear about nine in the evening, painted and dressed in their old Indian regalia. The Comanche, at least, have a rule that each must take a bath in running water and spend the afternoon in meditation. One man has been elected leader, but he is not a priest; he is only the man who has most responsibility and shows the others what to do. He chooses another man who will care for the fire since a fire in the center of the tipi is one of the most ancient of Indian customs. The fire is made and sometimes there is a rule that its sticks must lie east and west. Around the sage of the tipi there are piles of sage, or sage mixed with hay.

The men do not enter the tipi directly. With the leader ahead, they walk around it from right to left, just as the hands of a clock go. They enter in order and seat themselves with the leader opposite the door, which is where the host of a tent always used to sit. The fire-tender sits beside the door to its north. The leader himself generally scrubs up earth from the floor and makes a mound which serves as an altar. It stands between the leader and the fire and is shaped like a crescent moon, with its horns to the east. There is a tradition that such a moon-shaped mound was used in old Kiowa ceremonies. On it the leader lays one peyote head, perhaps a specially large one or perhaps one that has been carried for a long time and has seemed to work wonders. He does not place under the peyote a cloth, plate or anything from modern life. Instead he rests it on sage twigs, in the form of a cross, or, sometimes, feathers. Sometimes he draws a line from the top of the peyote along the top of the mound or toward the door - a line which is to draw the worshipper's thoughts to the powerful plant.

The meeting begins with smoking after the ancient manner, for smoke has always been considered an offering to the spirits and, in former days it was used only on ceremonial occasions. Plains Indians used to have a clay pipe and Indian-grown tobacco but now they use cigarettes, as the Mexican Indians do, with store tobacco. But they never roll it in papers; they use corn husks or oak leaves which were the old wrappings for cigarettes when the Indians first invented them. Next the leader sanctifies himself, by chewing a little of the wild sage and rubbing it over his face and chest. He makes a long prayer and sets one peyote and then distributes it to all the others. As the cloth, full of dried peyote heads is passed around from right to left, each man takes four. They are very tough, almost like wood and he has to chew them to softness before he can swallow them. When a man has chewed the peyote, he takes out the pulp and rolls it into a ball in his hand. Then he stretches his hand to the fire and the peyote alter four times, an old ceremonial gesture. The fourth time, he swallows the ball rubbing his throat to help down the bitter taste. He must eat all four in this way, as rapidly as he can.

Now the leader sanctifies the things which are to be used in the meeting. These are the gourd rattle which will accompany the singing, a fan made of eagle feathers such as the Kiowa and other Indians of the Plains have always used in their dances, a tall staff and an old Indian drum, made of a jar containing a little water and with a buckskin tied over the top. In the flaps of buckskin that
fall down the sides of the jar are wrapped walnuts or pebbles and the rope passes around these as it does around the pegs of a modern drum so that it can be tightened. To sanctify the drum with its drumstick, the rattle, fan, and stick, the leader lays some cedar sprigs on the fire in the shape of a cross and then passes the articles through the smoke. This completes the preliminary services and now the singing begins.

The leader shakes the rattle and sings four songs while the man at his right drums for him. They are the regular opening songs in the old Kiowa style where most of the words can no longer be understood, but some are in other Indian languages. When he has finished, he hands the rattle to the man at his right while he, himself, takes the drum. Four songs are sung again and then the rattle and drum pass on, this time to the leader's left. Thus they go around the circle, with two people engaged at a time, one drumming and one singing. When they have finished, the singer takes the drum and a new man sings. He uses any song he knows, generally about the clouds, the wind or some natural force. The songs of the Plains rarely have many words and a great deal must be understood between the lines. One song used by the Kiowa means only, "I am taking a journey" but the singer thinks of the country as he travels over it. Another has no understandable words, but the singer thinks of himself as holding the sun, the moon and fire. No song must be repeated and if a man knows nothing that has not been sung, he sits and prays. If there are twenty-five or thirty men present, the rattle and drum will go twice around before midnight.

Midnight is the time for drinking water and, though the men grow very thirsty with the singing, none may drink before that time. When the rattle reaches the leader, some time after midnight, he sings the water song. This is the signal for the fire tender to fetch water but he must get it from a running stream or a spring not a well. He sets the water before the fire and then purifies himself after going out. Purification is with cedar smoke, just as with the instruments. The leader puts a cross of it on the fire and the fire tender passes his hands through the smoke and then all over his body and above the water. Then he makes a cigarette, smokes and goes to the leader who smokes and makes a long prayer. He asks for blessing on the fire tender, on all present and on all the world, and especially, at this midnight water ceremony, he speaks of water and rain.

Before the water can be drunk, there is a ceremony of honoring the eagle who is, says the Kiowa, "a great chief and takes water before man." The leader has a whistle made of a hollow eagle bone, such as many Plains Indians use in ceremonies. He dips the whistle into the bucket of water, making a cross and then blows upon it. Then he dips the eagle feather fan into the water and sprinkles himself and the others as a bird sprinkles with its bill. The motion means, to the worshipers, both the eagle and the falling of rain. Then the leader drinks from the bucket without using a cup, as men drank from streams in the beginning. He passes the bucket to the drummer on his right and then it comes back to him and around to the left, in the same manner as the drum and rattle. Only the fire tender, at the door, is left out and the bucket must go all around again, past some who have already drunk, to let him drink last. When he has drunk, he sets it outside.

Now the leader must complete the midnight ceremony. He goes out alone with the eagle bone whistle and blows it four times; first east, then south, then west and then north. Selecting the four directions, from which rain and winds come is another ancient custom and the leader, in doing it, turns to the left, just as the procession does when it enters the tipi. When he returns, any one who wishes may go out but only one at a time. Meantime the singing inside continues, the drum and rattle still passing to the left and so it goes on until daylight.

This is a time of solemn concentration. All sit upright, never leaning over, with their eyes and their thoughts fixed upon the peyote. But it is not the plant itself of which they are thinking. Their minds are upon the message of peace and goodwill and kindness which the plant, their legends say, sprang out of the earth to give to the Indians. Some can fix their thoughts upon this without eating more peyote but some take as many as thirty, forty or sixty heads. One Kiowa ate nine
It is at this time that visions come but only, the Indians say, to beginners. Those who are accustomed to peyote can control their thoughts so that all they feel is a deeper understanding of the kindness and brotherliness for which all are praying. They find such a sense of peace that it remains with them. But no one becomes unconscious. Every man must be ready to take the drum or the rattle when his turn comes and to sing a song perhaps of his own composing. Perhaps someone hands him a cigarette, in the old ceremonial manner, asking for his prayers and then he must pray aloud. Or perhaps he himself needs prayers and asks them from the company. The writer, who attended a ceremony of this sort among the Kickapoo, can testify to the solemnity and sobriety which obtained all through the meeting.

Sometimes, after midnight, there is a curing ceremony, when men ask, not for peace and understanding but for relief from bodily ills. It will be remembered that the Mexican Indians cure at their dances and that this is accomplished as much by faith and ceremonial gestures as by eating the peyote. This is the case with most of the northern meetings. If it is one of the men present who wishes a cure, he passes a cigarette to the leader or some member and asks his prayers. If it is a woman, she enters and sits by the door, near her husband or brother. She eats a few peyote heads while the members pray for her and concentrate on thoughts of her well being. If a child is sick, its mother hands it in to its father who hands it to the leader. The leader prays and passes the child four times above the fire where cedar wood is burning.

Just before dawn, comes the final ceremony, the bringing of food and water. Women do not usually come to peyote meetings of this old fashioned sort. They expect their husbands to pray for them while they remain outside in the camp preparing dishes of the old Indian foods. These are four. Water first because, say the Indians, it was the first thing created, then corn, then meat, then fruit. At most meetings, the foods are prepared as they used to be before the white man came. The water is hominy or parched corn cooked in sweetened water; the meat is dried and mixed with fruit as it used to be for winter storage. Some meetings always use deer meat but, since that is now so hard to get, they take beef instead. All must be prepared without salt, for so the Indians always prepared their food on sacred occasions.

Just before dawn, the food is brought by the wife or sister of one of the members and the leader tells the fire tender to look out for her coming. The fire tender listens at the door and, when he hears her, through the darkness he tells the leader. Instantly the men who have the gourd and rattle pass them to the leader and these sing the dawn songs. Meantime, the other men sometimes rise and brush out the tipi with branches for, say the Kiowa, "the great sun comes just like a great soldier or an inspector and if everything is not clean, he don't like to see it."

The woman enters when she hears the first dawn song and sets the four dishes in a row, between the door and the fire and the fire tender gives her a cigarette in ceremonial greeting. She smokes and gives it to the leader as messengers always used to do. The leader, after smoking, makes a long prayer for her, for all present and for the world. Then the woman makes the circle of the tipi, in the same direction that all must use, and goes out.

Sometimes there are other dawn ceremonies, with the blowing of the eagle whistle imitating the daylight cries of animals, or a special prayer. When they are over, the drum and rattle go back to the men who had them when the food arrived and the singing continues until the leader's turn comes again. The leader sings four special closing songs and the meeting is over. But before the men may eat, everything is done ceremoniously. The leader, or the drummer at his right, unites the head of the drum and passes both around the circle, followed by the rattle, the eagle feather fan and staff. Each man, as these sacred things come into his hands, holds them for a moment, partaking of their power. He gives the drum a few taps then he has himself with the drumstick which has accompanied the music all night. Fig-
nally he dips the drumstick into the water at the bottom of the drum and sloshes
the drops from its end, meantime wishing to be a powerful drummer. When the rattle
comes to him, he shakes it a time or two, wishing to be a good singer and rattler
and, in the same way, he wishes with each of the other objects. Finally, the ob-
jects reach the firetender at the door who sets them outside.

At last, the ceremonial breakfast may be eaten. The man on the south of the
door, opposite the fireman, first helps himself and so they take turns around the
circle. When the leader's turn comes, he pours out a small offering to the earth
and to fire, saying: "only take and eat a little." Then he tells the firetender
to put the food outside. He does so and goes out himself, the men all following
in regular order. Outside, their wives are already cooking for a social midday
dinner and the men lie under the trees, smoking, talking and singing until it is
ready. The dinner is not part of the real ceremony and anyone may attend but the
food served there must be without salt, which is the old method of fasting.

We have described every step of the Kiowa ceremony to show how deeply each of
its acts is embedded in the traditions of the Indians who use it. Every article,
number and direction, belongs to the ancient customs. So does the idea of visions
coming from a plant to help man in his struggles and tell him of a ceremony. It
is the use of peyote itself that may be new, for the Indians of the Plains, in for-
ter times, used no intoxicant. Their method of getting visions was to go without
food until they were exhausted, even to torture themselves. In olden times, each
man did this alone and the second of the new ideas which peyote has brought is that
of sitting in company to receive visions.

But these ideas, once they had been brought across the border, spread like
wildfire through the reservations. It was a time of change for most Indians and
the Ghost dance and the Shaker religion were spreading at nearly the same time.
The Shaker religion is Christian while the Ghost dance meant a return to the most
ancient Indian ways and the help of Indian ancestors. Peyote, too, meant a keeping
of the old ways but in a spirit which was the same as that of Christianity; a spirit
of brotherhood for all men.

In 1890, there were only four tribes north of the Rio Grande who held peyote
meetings; only eight who had heard of peyote. In the next thirty-four years, there
were thirty more. The religion spread to every tribe in Oklahoma, to some in Ne-
braska and Wisconsin, as far north as the Chippewa on the Canadian border and as
west as the Utes, in Utah. There was one thing that bound together the tribes who
took it up. They were Indians of the Plains, belonging mostly to the two great
language families of the Siouan and the Algonkian. They were people whose religion
often centered about the coming of a vision to each man or who at least found vis-
ions important. Therefore, when a man of these tribes heard of the peyote religion
he did not simply learn it as a lesson and go home to teach his people. He had a
vision showing the way in which his own meeting was to be conducted.

Thus the Arapaho and others made an extra mound in the tipi which stood for t
earth and a mark along the top of the mound which held the peyote and which was to
guide men's thoughts to the plant. The Delaware made a "peyote road" through the
tipi. Some tribes added extra ceremonies besides those of midnight and dawn and
gave more duties to the firetender and drummer.

All of them made much of curing and, in fact, the peyote cures are one of the
chief reasons which converts give for taking up the religion. Every group tells of
people who have recovered from tuberculosis and other serious troubles. The Dela-
ware took up the religion first because they had heard of its power to cure and
when people testify at the Comanche meetings, it is generally curing of which they
speak. Many leaders have made curing and telling about it the most important part
of the ceremony.

Another element of the religion developed as peyote spread. It was introduced
by leaders who had been to white schools and given serious thought to Christianity. These men used the old Indian approach to the divine through tobacco incense and song, but added the Christian symbols of the cross, the Bible and the Lord's prayer. When a religion passes from one people to another, it is impossible that it should keep exactly the same form. The Roman people, when they learned Christianity from the Hebrews and others, unconsciously put into it some of their ideas of soldierly organization and magnificent ceremony. The Britons of the north learned it from the Romans and added to it their idea of the holy tree, which they worshipped when the sun turned back from the south. It is now our Christmas tree. The Indians, as they came back from boarding school, brought the idea of Christianity to the peyote meeting. To them, tobacco incense, the gourd rattle, the eagle feathers and peyote, were all holy, as the tree had been to the Britons. They did not give those symbols up for others which had, for them, no sacred associations. Instead, some of them laid the Bible on the crescent shaped mound beside the peyote plant and recited the Lord's prayer with the prayers for rain and health. There are now many peyote meetings which are Christian in feeling and we may take as an example that of one branch of the Winnebago, which we describe from an unpublished account by Miss Frances Bemore, filed at the Smithsonian Institution.

The Winnebago have the usual crescent shaped altar, holding one peyote head on a cross of sage twigs with a Bible beside it. In front of it they have a heart marked on the earth with a fire at the center of it and a cross marked through the fire. At one side is a little mound called the earth mound, such as many peyote ceremonies use. The ceremony is like the older ones with songs composed by the members in Winnebago and sung in ancient Indian rhythm, to the accompaniment of the rattle and drum. But their subject is not earth, fire or the morning star but God and his Son. These are some of them:

God, I thank you for all you have done for me
Through Jesus' name

God's Son says:
Get up and follow me
Jesus said;
Thou shalt enter into the kingdom of God.

God, through what you have done for us,
We obtain strength from you.
You have given us our holy religion
So we will have strength to live a good life.

The Winnebago have the usual midnight ceremony with the blowing of eagle whistles but they explain it:

"All the animals and birds in heaven started the song of praising God. This was brought down to earth and the part taken by the birds is represented by the whistle."

After the midnight ceremony the branch we are describing baptizes those who wish to enter the new religion and recites the Lord's Prayer. When the water is brought in the morning, they sing:

Whoever asks me for water,
I will give the water of life.
If I give him water,
He will never thirst again.

The prayers which are made are addressed to God and ask for strength to live a life of peace, goodwill and brotherly kindness.
There are many Christian peyote meetings of this sort, among them those of the Sauk and Fox, Kansas Prairie Potawatomee, Oklahoma Kickapoo, Northern Arapaho, Menomini and one branch of the Delaware. Their meetings are sometimes like a religious revival meeting among the whites, where the leader preaches and the members rise to confess their sins. Some tribes identify peyote with the Holy Ghost, or they call it Jesus' brother. Jesus, they say, came to the whites but his message was brought to the Indians by peyote. They have a right to hear the gospel of brotherly love from their own native plant and to carry it out in their own way. Thus there are two forms of the Native American Church, one which uses only the old Indian religion and one which combines the use of the old sacred things with Christianity. Often one tribe is split, like the Delaware, one branch old Indian, one Christian.

It is the practice of brotherly love, of peace, goodwill and quiet, moral living, which forms the peyote creed. To gain the state of mind where this is possible is the purpose of all peyote meetings, whether they use the Christian symbols or not. The Indians feel that the plant, the Creator's special gift to them, speak directly to them when they eat it, together, in this solemn manner. It is a form of communication which cannot be explained. "To know about peyote," they say "you must take peyote." As Dr. Petrullo interprets one Delaware leader:

"By concentrating on peyote and on the ills that afflict mankind, by proper show of humility and desire to learn to walk on the road, one can learn to know peyote and its teachings. The ideal peyote conduct is equanimity, respect for neighbors, peaceful disposition, forgiveness, a reverent attitude toward the spiritual world."

With this general belief, the peyote users have organized into a church, which is incorporated under the name of the Native American Church in the state of Oklahoma. In 1935 it had 10,000 members. In Nebraska, they elect a president every year, have a secretary, treasurer, committees and send out missionaries who ambition is to reach every tribe of Indians. Such missions have already established a few branches in New Mexico. There are some tribes who have felt that peyote was not in harmony with their old customs. These are generally not people of the Plains but Indians who made their contact with the spirits in other ways than by lonely fasting and visions for each man. The people of the Pueblos had a series of beautiful ceremonies in which all the people of a village joined to pray for rain and well being, with them, no man went out alone to ask for help and their tradition was that the ceremonies which would bring them health and crops had been given them at the beginning of the world. Most of them felt that no new ceremony was needed and they have opposed the introduction of peyote. Further to the west are two other groups of farming Indians, the Paono and Mohave who speak different languages still. These people believed in the visions that gave men power and they do so still. But the Pagagos told the writer about peyote. "That is too easy a way to get a vision. Visions come only through hardship." And the Mohave, further to the west say: "Visions come direct from the spirits. No man needs to eat anything."

There are no facts as to how much peyote is used outside of actual religious services. The general idea when it was first introduced in the north was that it was eaten only at the meeting, as a help in prayer, but there is so strong a feeling about the curing powers of peyote that many Indians of the Plains buy and take it whenever they can get it, "as the white man takes aspirin." There are several towns in the Rio Grande valley, both on the American and the Mexican sides which specialize in picking and selling the plant heads. The principal one is Laredo, Texas which supplies most of the peyote used from Iowa north to the Canadian border and also many in Oklahoma. The price for dried heads (1934) was from $2.50 to 5.00 a thousand in large quantities and 6.00 a thousand in small quantities. Some Indians make their purchases by mail, some make trips with automobile and trailer to collect the heads themselves or buy them on the spot.

With the use of peyote spreading, both in religious services and outside them,
there is great interest among both Indians and whites as to the exact effects of taking it. On this, scientists are not yet agreed. Those who have analyzed peyote say that it is a complicated drug, made up of several substances, including two whose action on the body is still unknown. Even those whose action is known may have a very different effect when taken all together, as in peyote, than when taken separately. Morphine, for instance, is a much more powerful medicine than peyote and it also is made up of several substances. Generally, when taken all together, these induce sleep but there are people on whom some of the substances have an exciting effect and morphine keeps these people awake. Therefore a good deal of study is needed before we can be sure how peyote will affect different people and how much they can take.

When white American doctors and chemists first heard about peyote about 1890 several of them ate it as an experiment and had other people eat it. Among those were Dr. D. W. Prentiss of the Division of Chemistry for the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Dr. Francis P. Morgen of the Department of Materia Medica and Therapeutics of the Columbia University; two German scientists, Dr. Lewin of Berlin and Dr. Arthur Heft of Leipzig and the doctors of the Instituto Nacional in Mexico City, the English psychologists, Doctors Weir Mitchell and Harlecock Ellis. Studies of peyote have been written in English, French, German and Spanish and the sum of them all is that there is yet no definite proof that peyote, taken infrequently in small quantities, is harmful. The two American doctors first mentioned, who published a pamphlet under the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1896 made the statement that as to habit forming or bad after effects "the evidence is negative." That is, there is no proof either way. In 1913, the Instituto Medico Nacional of Mexico City wrote Mr. Moomy: "The experiments conducted...do not confirm the popular alarm as to the effects of peyote." In 1927 Dr. Rouhiere, in France, summed up the evidence on peyote to that time:

a. Peyote is only feebly intoxicating and then only with a very heavy dose.

b. Its physiological action produces a tonic sedative and a stimulant of the nervous system.

c. Since the use of peyote does not produce intoxication in the ordinary sense and is not habit forming, it can hardly be included under the group of narcotics included under the Geneva convention of February 1925.

The first effects of peyote were described by Drs. Prentiss and Morgen as follows:

It has a very disagreeable, bitter taste and, when first eaten, may produce nausea and even vomiting. Then comes a period of mental excitement which may last for twenty four hours. There is a slight loss of power of accommodation of the eyes and depression of the muscular system, with, sometimes a slight loss of feeling in the skin. The state is one of psychological contentment, with no desire to commit violence.

It is during the state of psychological contentment that the peyote visions occur due to one particular substance, mesalina. Many experimenters have reported beautifulClouds and rainbows of changing colors, or glorified colors added to the sights around them. Others have had visions which were frightening or merely strange.

All these were people who had not taken peyote before and who were doing it as an experiment, not with a religious motive. They took what the Indians would consider only a little - from ten to thirty five grains - while the regular peyote users say there is no effect at all with less than thirty grains and many of them take four and five times that amount. But they do not take it as an experiment and they are not afraid. The members of the Native American Church say that they come
to fix their thoughts on the good life and to feel the desire for it through their whole being. When thoughts are controlled, in this way, they say, wild visions, either beautiful or unbeautiful, do not come. Joe Washington, a Delaware quoted by Dr. Patrullo says: "When you have visions, peyote is really exposing what is in your mind. It proves that your thoughts are not on God." (Diabolical Root, page 66) Mr. Mooney who attended so many Kiowa meetings said that the Indians did not have evil visions and that the reason some white experimenters had them was that they were afraid and expected nightmare. (Mascan Buttons, James Mooney, page 26) Dr. Patrullo says that the effects of peyote depend on your own character and it intensifies any feeling you already have. (Diabolical Root, page 137)

The sort of experience for which the members of the Native American Church strive at a peyote meeting are the following:

"I have pity for everyone. Peyote was put here for the people to use so they can study life, have good thoughts, live right." (A Delaware quoted by Patrullo, page 47)

"Again I prayed to God. I bowed my head and closed my eyes and began to speak. I said many things that I would, timidly, never have spoken about. As I prayed I was aware of something above." (Crashing Thunder, page 110) "I eat the peyote so my soul may go up to God." (Menomini, Safford 306)

Peyote, according to these statements, puts the user into a state where his impressions are very vivid but they are emotional rather than intellectual. Neil Mitchell, the English experimenter, said that he felt a consciousness of mental power with absolute control of every faculty, but when he tried some brain work he was less good than usual. The body, meantime, acts much as always, without either staggering or unconsciousness. We have seen that the Mexican Indians, who take a little at a time, gain extra energy which enables them to dance all night. The members of the Native American Church take much more at a time and do not try to think about. But each man must be alert to sing or drum when his turn comes and to pray aloud when asked. They all have appetite for breakfast in the morning and a large dinner at noon.

There are various statements as to how the peyote user feels next day. Some white experimenters reported tiredness (Lumh.17z) or a severe headache (Neil Mitchell). A visitor to the Mexican Huichol (Diguet) said that, for two days after their all night dance, they were relaxed and did little but this might follow any celebration. The members of the Native American Church hold a big dinner the next day but some of them direct their members to spend the rest of the time in quiet meditation. Mooney saw a twelve year old boy eat six peyotes and sit through a ceremony without any after effects than sleepiness. A very old man took part all night and was ready for a long interview next morning. Quenah Parker, the Comanche chief, left immediately after an all night session to attend to some strenuous business. A peyote meeting does not seem to leave its members unfit for work.

But the question of most importance for everyone is how peyote makes men feel not only on the day after the meeting but all the time, in daily life. We have the statement made by scientists that there is, so far, no proof that it is habit forming. That is, a man who had begun to take it could give it up and not be ill nor even uncomfortable. That must certainly be the case with the Mexican Indians for they only use it during part of the year and for the rest of the time go completely without. Peyote is said by many who use it to take away desire for alcohol and for women. That is true during the meeting and for a little while after but the Mexican Indians grow drunk on corn liquor after their peyote feast and some northern observers report that peyote users have to strive as hard as other men to control themselves where liquor and women are concerned.

But the Native American Church does not rely only on the unconscious influen
Peyote. It has a rule against drinking and often the desire for right living which comes to birth in church members makes them give up liquor of their own accord. We quote the statement of a Winnipeg. This Indian had felt misplaced and unsatisfied all his life. He had been drifting from woman to woman and drinking.

"After that, whenever I heard of a peyote meeting, I went to it...It is the only holy thing that I have become aware of in my life." (Crashing Thunder p. 195)

"Before I joined the peyote I went about in a most pitiable condition and now I am living happily and my wife has a fine baby." (Ibid. page 203)

At a trial held at Menomini, Wisconsin, where a peyote leader had been accused of importing drugs, the witnesses testified that peyote helped them to lead better lives and to forsake alcoholic drinks.

"We boys, before we got this peyote, was regular drunkards; so when I was drunk, I was lying on the road somewhere sometimes and I got no home nor nothing. Before I got this, I did wrong and everything else. Now, since I got this peyote, it stopped me from drinking and now, since I used this peyote, I have been sober and today I am sober yet...I see a good and a bad when I eat that peyote. When I eat that peyote then it teaches me my heart; I knew anything that is right and that is wrong. That is the way peyote works for good and works for God and that is how we worship." (Thomas Wittenberg, Menomini, Wis. Quoted in Sefford, page 306)

Since this material was compiled, the use of peyote has spread. It would seem, from the incomplete statistics at hand that, with the spread, the religious element as often lost in importance. Even among the Plains tribes, with whom this new type of vision filled such a definite lack, peyote is now sometimes taken by individuals, without a church ceremony. Indians who feel a general malaise, a distrust of white doctors and sense of frustration in life, have been known to eat the "buttons" regularly, day after day. Even if the drug was not very strong, such constant use would be deleterious. As one white doctor remarked: "Even aspirin would be harmful in large constant doses."

Residents of New Mexico are interested in the fact that branches of the Native American Church have been organized in Taos, New Mexico and in some Navaho communities. These are people who did not believe in the individual vision and with whom peyote does not fill such an obvious psychological lack. A majority among both the Los and Navaho hes, so far, objected to the introduction of the cult. Taos, an old established theocracy, fined the "church" members and had them arrested. However, the case had no standing in federal court and the peyote users have continued their practices. The Navaho council also made a ruling against the use of peyote by government policemen and other employees cannot enforce it, since there is no federal law to back them up.

It is understandable, that a "church" which announces itself as purely Indian and closed to whites, has a powerful appeal in this time of transition. If the puebs so organized used the plant sparingly and enforced the rules of sobriety and industry which were made by the early peyote churches, there might not be too much for alarm. The real danger lies in an unregulated use of peyote by individuals, without church sanction. Yet the coma induced is probably no worse and no lasting than a drunken stupor. The remedy for both is the same and not a quick one easy one. The Indian must be helped out of his sense of frustration. He must find scope for worthwhile activities which will make it a waste of time to go fleetingly into coma. White men with good jobs and happy, interesting lives are not inked. Frustrated white men sometimes are.

The Indian, at present, has cause for feeling frustrated and confused. His position into modern life which, for years, has gone slowly and haltingly, has suddenly speeded up. Changing economic conditions and more job opportunities, all, a world war, have catapulted him into a situation which he finds hard to
meet. He wants cars, radios, modern clothes and a well paid job. Yet, to get these things, he must often abandon the old way of life, with its leisure, its close contact of kin and its religious attitudes. Few young people and their parents can take part in this shift without strain. It is small wonder that many release and seek comfort in a beatitude obtained without effort.

It may be wise to forbid or restrict the use of peyote. Yet such action merely treats the symptoms of a disease, without attacking the cause. The real cure can be made only by placing Indians in a position to function adequately in the modern world. Government can help in this by improving and enlarging the education it offers and which the Indian is now ready to take. Yet much responsibility rests on the private citizen. In many places, there is discrimination against Indians, in employment, the matter of service in hotels and restaurants - above all, in the matter of the vote. While this attitude holds, the Indian often feels hopelessly inferior. Only the strong survive this handicap, while the weaker or the mere oppressed seek solace in peyote, in liquor or other means of escape.

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