

or so with them; and the little girls made a pretty spectacle as they received the little boys much as the women and elder girls greeted the men. Then come the corn scramble, or mock-fight over the corn; and then in each house a feast was set, especially for the children.

At noon, thanks to Mr. Hubbell, and to the fact that I was an ex-President, we were admitted to the sacred kiva—the one-roomed temple-house which I had already visited—while the snake priest performed the ceremony of washing the snakes. Very few white men have ever seen this ceremony. The sight was the most interesting of our entire trip.

There were twenty Indians in the kiva, all stripped to their breech-clouts; only about ten actually took part in handling the snakes, or in any of the ceremonies except the rhythmic chant, in which all joined. Eighty or a hundred snakes, half of them rattlers, the others bull-snakes or ribbon-snakes, lay singly or in tangled groups against the wall at the raised end of the room. They were quiet and in no way nervous or excited. Two men stood at this end of the room. Two more stood at the other end, where the altar was; there was some sand about the altar, and the eagle feathers we had previously seen there had been removed, but the upright thunder-sticks remained. The other Indians were squatted in the middle of the room, and half a dozen of them were in the immediate neighborhood of a very big ornamented wooden bowl of water, placed on certain white painted symbols on the floor. Two of these Indians held sacred rattles, and there was a small bowl of sacred meat beside them. There was some seemingly ceremonial pipe-smoking.

After some minutes of silence, one of the squatting priests, who seemed to be the leader, and who had already puffed smoke toward the bowl, began a low prayer, at the same time holding and manipulating in his fingers a pinch of the sacred meal. The others once again during this prayer uttered in unison a single word or exclamation—a kind of *selah* or *amen*. At the end he threw the meal into the bowl of water; he had already put some in at the outset of the prayer. Then he began a rhythmic chant, in which all the others joined, the rattles being shaken and the hands moved in harmony with the rhythm. The chant consisted seemingly of a few words repeated over and over again. It was a strange scene, in the half light of the ancient temple-room. The copper-red bodies of the priests swayed, and their strongly marked faces, hitherto changeless gained a certain quiet intensity of emotion. The chanting grew in fervor; yet it remained curiously calm throughout (except for a moment at a time, about which I shall speak later). Then the two men who stood near the snakes stooped over, and each picked up a handful of them, these first handfuls being all rattlesnakes. It was