

west, north, and south, and twice diagonally. The chant was renewed; it grew slower; the rattles were rattled more slowly; then the singing stopped and all was over.

At the end of the ceremony I thanked my hosts and asked if there was anything I could do to show my appreciation of the courtesy they had shown me. They asked if I could send them some cowrie shells, which they use as decorations for the dance. I told them I would send them a sackful. They shook hands cordially with all of us, and we left. I have never seen a wilder or, in its way, more impressive spectacle than that of these chanting, swaying, red-skinned medicine-men, their lithe bodies naked, unconcernedly handling the death that glides and strikes while they held their mystic worship in the gray twilight of the kiva. The ritual and the soul-needs is met, and the symbolism and the dark savagery, were all relics of an ages-vanished past, survivals of an elder world.

The snake dance itself took place in the afternoon at five o'clock. There were many hundreds of onlookers, almost as many whites as Indians, and most of the Indian spectators were in white man's dress, in strong contrast to the dancers. The antelope priests entered first and ranged themselves by a tree-like bundle of cottonwood branches against the wall of buildings to one side of the open place where the dance takes place; the other side is the cliff edge. The snakes, in a bag, were stowed by the bundle of cottonwood branches. Young girls stood near the big pillar of stone with sacred meal to scatter at the foot of the pillar after the snakes had been thrown down there and taken away. Then the snake priests entered in their fringed leather kilts and eagle plume head-dress, fox skins hung at the backs of their girdles, their bodies were splashed and streaked with white, and on each of them the upper part of the face was painted black and the lower part white. Chanting, stepping in rhythm to the chant, and on one particular stone slab stamping hard as a signal to the underworld, they circled the empty space, and for some minutes danced opposite the line of antelope priests. Then, in couples, one of each couple seizing and carrying in his mouth a snake, they began to circle the space again. The leading couple consisted of one man who had his arm across the shoulder of another, while this second man held in his teeth, by the upper middle of its body, a rattlesnake four feet long, the flat, ace-of-clubs-shaped head and curving neck of the snake being almost against the man's face. Rattlesnakes, ribbon-snake, all were carried in the same way. One man carried at the same time two small side winder rattlesnakes in his mouth. After a while each snake was thrown on the rock and soon again picked up and held in his hand, while a new snake was held in the mouth. Finally, each man carried a bundle of snakes in his hand,