

can lids) that some of the men carried around. They were happily ditching their old can lids into the fire and finishing a new flute.

I sat against the side of the cave, talking to “Herbert” as well as I could, marveling to him about the utility of these flutes. I asked him who had invented the flute. He said that it was a man called “Trepite” who came through there very often.

“Is he one of you?” I asked.

He said, “Yes, he is a man from here.”

“The flute is very clever,” I said. “I am starting to understand.”

He said, “That is how we know to make flutes.”

“How?” I said.

He said, “We play the flute to teach how to make a flute.”

I took this to mean that the flute could be used to teach someone else how to make a flute. I found this quite amazing, that the device could perpetuate itself in this way.

“Does it teach anything else?” I said.

“Oh, how to walk the area,” he said. “And how to raise children.”

“Really?” I said. It occurred to me that they could use the flutes to describe a whole landscape, to transfer a map from one man’s mind to another.

I wondered that I had not seen them eating at all. I asked him what they did for food.