

Fig. 2

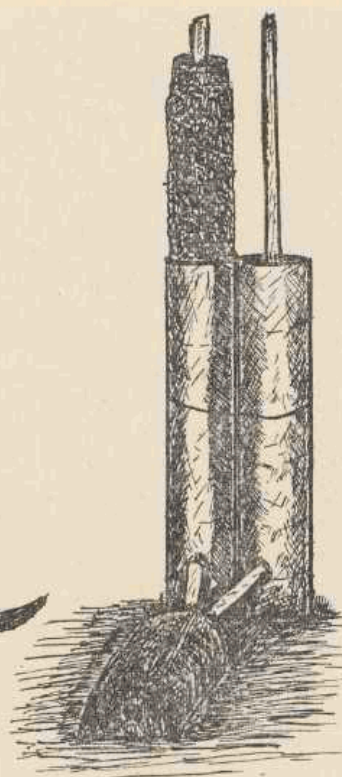


Fig. 3

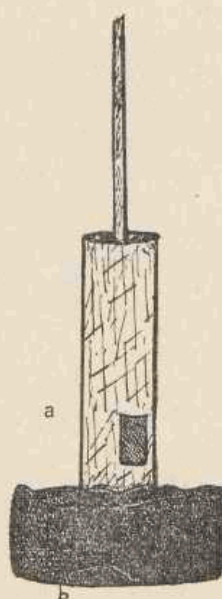


Fig. 4

Fig. 2 A piston-head from the forge of an Abor tribal blacksmith in the North-East Frontier. The feathers operate as a washer

Fig. 3 A primitive version of the piston bellows from the Garo Hills of Central Assam. The cylinders are lengths of bamboo, the piston head is replaced by bark cloth wound round the shaft; and there is an air collection chamber of clay at the base

Fig. 4 With astonishing ingenuity the Khasi blacksmiths have incorporated a flap valve into the piston head: *a*) a length of bamboo with a flap valve; *b*) fur fitting exactly into the cylinder

narrow bamboo cylinders have a shaft wrapped around with barkcloth for most of their length. Incidentally the Garo tribe are probably the only people of South-East Asia who still manufacture barkcloth: beaten out into sheets for bedding, and this in spite of their living within easy reach of the Plains of Assam: complete with a bus service.

In complete contrast, the Khasi people of the same range of mountains have an almost bewildering variety of techniques for their craft of metallurgy. Alone among the tribes of South-East Asia they once had their own deposits of iron ore, and time was when they had a thriving export of their products to the Brahmaputra Valley. With the opening-up of the Plains, with the mushroom growth of the tea industry, as well as the exhaustion of their ore, those days were past. But not so the enthusiasm of the Khasis for their traditional craft.