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A STUDY IN MAGIC AND RELIGION

THIRD EDITION

PART V
SPIRITS OF THE CORN
AND OF THE WILD
VOL. I



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SPIRITS OF THE CORN
AND OF THE WILD

BY

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PREFACE

IN the last part of this work we examined the figure of the Dying and Reviving God as it appears in the Oriental religions of classical antiquity. With the present instalment of *The Golden Bough* we pursue the same theme in other religions and among other races. Passing from the East to Europe we begin with the religion of ancient Greece, which embodies the now familiar conception in two typical examples, the vine-god Dionysus and the corn-goddess Persephone, with her mother and duplicate Demeter. Both of these Greek divinities are personifications of cultivated plants, and a consideration of them naturally leads us on to investigate similar personifications elsewhere. Now of all the plants which men have artificially reared for the sake of food the cereals are on the whole the most important ; therefore it is natural that the religion of primitive agricultural communities should be deeply coloured by the principal occupation of their lives, the care of the corn. Hence the frequency with which the figures of the Corn-mother and Corn-maiden, answering to the Demeter and Persephone of ancient Greece, meet us in other parts of the world, and not least of all on the harvest-fields of modern Europe. But edible roots as well as cereals have been cultivated by many races, especially in the tropical regions, as a subsidiary or even as a principal means of subsistence ; and accordingly they too enter largely into the religious ideas of the peoples who live by them. Yet in the case of the roots, such as yams, taro, and potatoes,

the conception of the Dying and Reviving God appears to figure less prominently than in the case of the cereals, perhaps for the simple reason that while the growth and decay of the one sort of fruit go on above ground for all to see, the similar processes of the other are hidden under ground and therefore strike the popular imagination less forcibly.

Having surveyed the variations of our main theme among the agricultural races of mankind, we prosecute the enquiry among savages who remain more or less completely in the hunting, fishing, and pastoral stages of society. The same motive which leads the primitive husbandman to adore the corn or the roots, induces the primitive hunter, fowler, fisher, or herdsman to adore the beasts, birds, or fishes which furnish him with the means of subsistence. To him the conception of the death of these worshipful beings is naturally presented with singular force and distinctness; since it is no figurative or allegorical death, no poetical embroidery thrown over the skeleton, but the real death, the naked skeleton, that constantly thrusts itself importunately on his attention. And strange as it may seem to us civilised men, the notion of the immortality and even of the resurrection of the lower animals appears to be almost as familiar to the savage and to be accepted by him with nearly as unwavering a faith as the obvious fact of their death and destruction. For the most part he assumes as a matter of course that the souls of dead animals survive their decease; hence much of the thought of the savage hunter is devoted to the problem of how he can best appease the naturally incensed ghosts of his victims so as to prevent them from doing him a mischief. This refusal of the savage to recognise in death a final cessation of the vital process, this unquestioning faith in the unbroken continuity of all life, is a fact that has not yet received the attention which it seems to merit from enquirers into the constitution of the human mind as well as into the history of religion. In the following pages I have collected

examples of this curious faith; I must leave it to others to appraise them.

Thus on the whole we are concerned in these volumes with the reverence or worship paid by men to the natural resources from which they draw their nutriment, both vegetable and animal. That they should invest these resources with an atmosphere of wonder and awe, often indeed with a halo of divinity, is no matter for surprise. The circle of human knowledge, illuminated by the pale cold light of reason, is so infinitesimally small, the dark regions of human ignorance which lie beyond that luminous ring are so immeasurably vast, that imagination is fain to step up to the border line and send the warm, richly coloured beams of her fairy lantern streaming out into the darkness; and so, peering into the gloom, she is apt to mistake the shadowy reflections of her own figure for real beings moving in the abyss. In short, few men are sensible of the sharp line that divides the known from the unknown; to most men it is a hazy borderland where perception and conception melt indissolubly into one. Hence to the savage the ghosts of dead animals and men, with which his imagination peoples the void, are hardly less real than the solid shapes which the living animals and men present to his senses; and his thoughts and activities are nearly as much absorbed by the one as by the other. Of him it may be said with perhaps even greater truth than of his civilised brother, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

But having said so much in this book of the misty glory which the human imagination sheds round the hard material realities of the food supply, I am unwilling to leave my readers under the impression, natural but erroneous, that man has created most of his gods out of his belly. That is not so, at least that is not my reading of the history of religion. Among the visible, tangible, perceptible elements by which he is surrounded—and it is only of these that I

presume to speak—there are others than the merely nutritious which have exerted a powerful influence in touching his imagination and stimulating his energies, and so have contributed to build up the complex fabric of religion. To the preservation of the species the reproductive faculties are no less essential than the nutritive ; and with them we enter on a very different sphere of thought and feeling, to wit, the relation of the sexes to each other, with all the depths of tenderness and all the intricate problems which that mysterious relation involves. The study of the various forms, some gross and palpable, some subtle and elusive, in which the sexual instinct has moulded the religious consciousness of our race, is one of the most interesting, as it is one of the most difficult and delicate tasks, which await the future historian of religion.

But the influence which the sexes exert on each other, intimate and profound as it has been and must always be, is far indeed from exhausting the forces of attraction by which mankind are bound together in society. The need of mutual protection, the economic advantages of co-operation, the contagion of example, the communication of knowledge, the great ideas that radiate from great minds, like shafts of light from high towers,—these and many other things combine to draw men into communities, to drill them into regiments, and to set them marching on the road of progress with a concentrated force to which the loose skirmishers of mere anarchy and individualism can never hope to oppose a permanent resistance. Hence when we consider how intimately humanity depends on society for many of the boons which it prizes most highly, we shall probably admit that of all the forces open to our observation which have shaped human destiny the influence of man on man is by far the greatest. If that is so, it seems to follow that among the beings, real or imaginary, which the religious imagination has clothed with the attributes of divinity, human spirits are

likely to play a more important part than the spirits of plants, animals, or inanimate objects. I believe that a careful examination of the evidence, which has still to be undertaken, will confirm this conclusion; and that if we could strictly interrogate the phantoms which the human mind has conjured up out of the depths of its bottomless ignorance and enshrined as deities in the dim light of temples, we should find that the majority of them have been nothing but the ghosts of dead men. However, to say this is necessarily to anticipate the result of future research; and if in saying it I have ventured to make a prediction, which like all predictions is liable to be falsified by the event, I have done so only from a fear lest, without some such warning, the numerous facts recorded in these volumes might lend themselves to an exaggerated estimate of their own importance and hence to a misinterpretation and distortion of history.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE, *4th May 1912.*

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CHAPTER I

DIONYSUS

IN the preceding part of this work we saw that in antiquity the civilised nations of western Asia and Egypt pictured to themselves the changes of the seasons, and particularly the annual growth and decay of vegetation, as episodes in the life of gods, whose mournful death and happy resurrection they celebrated with dramatic rites of alternate lamentation and rejoicing. But if the celebration was in form dramatic, it was in substance magical ; that is to say, it was intended, on the principles of sympathetic magic, to ensure the vernal regeneration of plants and the multiplication of animals, which had seemed to be menaced by the inroads of winter. In the ancient world, however, such ideas and such rites were by no means confined to the Oriental peoples of Babylon and Syria, of Phrygia and Egypt ; they were not a product peculiar to the religious mysticism of the dreamy East, but were shared by the races of livelier fancy and more mercurial temperament who inhabited the shores and islands of the Aegean. We need not, with some enquirers in ancient and modern times, suppose that these Western peoples borrowed from the older civilisation of the Orient the conception of the Dying and Reviving God, together with the solemn ritual, in which that conception was dramatically set forth before the eyes of the worshippers. More probably the resemblance which may be traced in this respect between the religions of the East and the West is no more than what we commonly, though incorrectly, call a fortuitous coincidence, the effect of

Death and resurrection of Oriental gods of vegetation.

The Dying and Reviving god of vegetation in ancient Greece.

similar causes acting alike on the similar constitution of the human mind in different countries and under different skies. The Greek had no need to journey into far countries to learn the vicissitudes of the seasons, to mark the fleeting beauty of the damask rose, the transient glory of the golden corn, the passing splendour of the purple grapes. Year by year in his own beautiful land he beheld, with natural regret, the bright pomp of summer fading into the gloom and stagnation of winter, and year by year he hailed with natural delight the outburst of fresh life in spring. Accustomed to personify the forces of nature, to tinge her cold abstractions with the warm hues of imagination, to clothe her naked realities with the gorgeous drapery of a mythic fancy, he fashioned for himself a train of gods and goddesses, of spirits and elves, out of the shifting panorama of the seasons, and followed the annual fluctuations of their fortunes with alternate emotions of cheerfulness and dejection, of gladness and sorrow, which found their natural expression in alternate rites of rejoicing and lamentation, of revelry and A consideration of some of the Greek divinities who thus died and rose again from the dead may furnish us with a series of companion pictures to set side by side with the sad figures of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. We begin with Dionysus.

Dionysus, the god of the vine, originally a Thracian deity.

The god Dionysus or Bacchus is best known to us as a personification of the vine and of the exhilaration produced by the juice of the grape.¹ His ecstatic worship, characterised by wild dances, thrilling music, and tipsy excess, appears to

¹ On Dionysus in general, see L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,⁴ i. 659 sqq.; Fr. Lenormant, *s.v.* "Bacchus," in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 591 sqq.; Voigt and Thraemer, *s.v.* "Dionysus," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. rom. Mythologie*, i. 1029 sqq.; E. Rohde, *Psyche*³ (Tubingen and Leipsic, 1903), ii. 1 sqq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 363 sqq.; Kern, *s.v.* "Dionysus," in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*,

v. 1010 sqq.; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 258 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 85 sqq. The epithet *Bromios* bestowed on Dionysus, and his identification with the Thracian and Phrygian deity Sabazius, have been adduced as evidence that Dionysus was a god of beer or of other cereal intoxicants before he became a god of wine. See W. Headlam, in *Classical Review*, xv. (1901) p. 23; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 414-426.

have originated among the rude tribes of Thrace, who were notoriously addicted to drunkenness.¹ Its mystic doctrines and extravagant rites were essentially foreign to the clear intelligence and sober temperament of the Greek race. Yet appealing as it did to that love of mystery and that proneness to revert to savagery which seem to be innate in most men, the religion spread like wildfire through Greece until the god whom Homer hardly deigned to notice had become the most popular figure of the pantheon. The resemblance which his story and his ceremonies present to those of Osiris have led some enquirers both in ancient and modern times to hold that Dionysus was merely a disguised Osiris, imported directly from Egypt into Greece.² But the great preponderance of evidence points to his Thracian origin, and the similarity of the two worships is sufficiently explained by the similarity of the ideas and customs on which they were founded.

While the vine with its clusters was the most characteristic manifestation of Dionysus, he was also a god of trees in general. Thus we are told that almost all the Greeks sacrificed to "Dionysus of the tree."³ In Boeotia one of his titles was "Dionysus in the tree."⁴ His image was often merely an upright post, without arms, but draped in a mantle, with a bearded mask to represent the head, and with leafy boughs projecting from the head or body to shew the nature of the deity.⁵ On a vase his rude effigy is depicted appearing out of a low tree or bush.⁶ At Magnesia on the Maeander an image of Dionysus is said to have been found in a plane-tree, which had been broken by the

Dionysus
a god of
trees, es-
pecially of
fruit-trees.

¹ Plato, *Laws*, i. p. 637 E; Theopompus, cited by Athenaeus, x. 60, p. 442 E F; Suidas, s.v. κατασκεδάσειν; compare Xenophon, *Anabasis*, vii. 3. 32. For the evidence of the Thracian origin of Dionysus, see the writers cited in the preceding note, especially Dr. L. R. Farnell, *op. cit.* v. 85 sqq. Compare W. Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 10 sqq.

² Herodotus, ii. 49; Diodorus Siculus, i. 97. 4; P. Foucart, *Le Culte de Dionysos en Attique* (Paris, 1904), pp. 9 sqq., 159 sqq. (*Mémoires de*

l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, xxxvii.).

³ Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* v. 3: Διονύσω δὲ δένδρῳ τῶν πάντων, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, Ἕλληνας θύουσιν.

⁴ Hesychius, s.v. Ἐνδένδρος.

⁵ See the pictures of his images, drawn from ancient vases, in C. Bötticher's *Baumkultus der Hellenen* (Berlin, 1856), plates 42, 43, 43 A, 43 B, 44; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 361, 626 sq.

⁶ Daremberg et Saglio, *op. cit.* i. 626.

wind.¹ He was the patron of cultivated trees ;² prayers were offered to him that he would make the trees grow ;³ and he was especially honoured by husbandmen, chiefly fruit-growers, who set up an image of him, in the shape of a natural tree-stump, in their orchards.⁴ He was said to have discovered all tree-fruits, amongst which apples and figs are particularly mentioned ;⁵ and he was referred to as "well-fruited," "he of the green fruit," and "making the fruit to grow."⁶ One of his titles was "teeming" or "bursting" (as of sap or blossoms) ;⁷ and there was a Flowery Dionysus in Attica and at Patrae in Achaia.⁸ The Athenians sacrificed to him for the prosperity of the fruits of the land.⁹ Amongst the trees particularly sacred to him, in addition to the vine, was the pine-tree.¹⁰ The Delphic oracle commanded the Corinthians to worship a particular pine-tree "equally with the god," so they made two images of Dionysus out of it, with red faces and gilt bodies.¹¹ In art a wand, tipped with a pine-cone, is commonly carried by the god or his worshippers.¹² Again, the ivy and the fig-tree were especially associated with him. In the Attic township of Acharnae there was a Dionysus Ivy ;¹³ at Lacedaemon there was a Fig Dionysus ; and in Naxos, where figs were called *meilicha*, there was a Dionysus Meilichios, the face of whose image was made of fig-wood.¹⁴

¹ P. Wendland und O. Kern, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie und Religion* (Berlin, 1895), pp. 79 *sqq.* ; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), No. 856.

² Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30.

³ Pindar, quoted by Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35.

⁴ Maximus Tyrius, *Dissertat.* viii. 1.

⁵ Athenaeus, iii. chs. 14 and 23, pp. 78 c. 82 d.

⁶ *Orphica*, Hymn l. 4. liiii. 8.

⁷ Aelian, *Var. Hist.* iii. 41 ; Hesychius, *s.v.* Φλέω[s]. Compare Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* v. 8. 3.

⁸ Pausanias, i. 31. 4 ; *id.* vii. 21. 6.

⁹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 636, vol. ii. p. 435, τῶν καρπῶν τῶν ἐν τῇ χώρῃ.

However, the words may equally well refer to the cereal crops.

¹⁰ Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* v. 3.

¹¹ Pausanias, ii. 2. 6 *sq.* Pausanias does not mention the kind of tree ; but from Euripides, *Bacchae*, 1064 *sqq.*, and Philostratus, *Imag.* i. 17 (18), we may infer that it was a pine, though Theocritus (xxvi. 11) speaks of it as a mastich-tree.

¹² Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, ii. pll. xxxii. *sqq.* ; A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, i. figures 489, 491, 492, 495. Compare F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 623 ; Ch. F. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus* (Königsberg, 1829), p. 700.

¹³ Pausanias, i. 31. 6.

¹⁴ Athenaeus, iii. 14, p. 78 c.

Further, there are indications, few but significant, that Dionysus was conceived as a deity of agriculture and the corn. He is spoken of as himself doing the work of a husbandman: ¹ he is reported to have been the first to yoke oxen to the plough, which before had been dragged by hand alone; and some people found in this tradition the clue to the bovine shape in which, as we shall see, the god was often supposed to present himself to his worshippers. Thus guiding the ploughshare and scattering the seed as he went, Dionysus is said to have eased the labour of the husbandman. ² Further, we are told that in the land of the Bisaltae, a Thracian tribe, there was a great and fair sanctuary of Dionysus, where at his festival a bright light shone forth at night as a token of an abundant harvest vouchsafed by the deity; but if the crops were to fail that year, the mystic light was not seen, darkness brooded over the sanctuary as at other times. ³ Moreover, among the emblems of Dionysus was the winnowing-fan, that is the large open shovel-shaped basket, which down to modern times has been used by farmers to separate the grain from the chaff by tossing the corn in the air. This simple agricultural instrument figured in the mystic rites of Dionysus; indeed the god is traditionally said to have been placed at birth in a winnowing-fan as in a cradle: in art he is represented as an infant so cradled; and from these traditions and representations he derived the epithet of *Liknites*, that is, "He of the Winnowing-fan." ⁴

Dionysus as a god of agriculture and the corn.

The winnowing-fan as an emblem of Dionysus.

At first sight this symbolism might be explained very simply and naturally by supposing that the divine

Use of the winnowing-fan to cradle infants.

¹ Himerius, *Orat.* i. 10, *Διονύσου γεωργεί.*

² Diodorus Siculus, iii. 64. 1-3, iv. 4. 1 *sq.* On the agricultural aspect of Dionysus, see L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 123 *sq.*

³ [Aristotle,] *Mirab. Auscult.* 122 (p. 842 A, ed. Im. Bekker, Berlin edition).

⁴ Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35. The literary and monumental evidence as to the winnowing-fan in the myth and ritual of Dionysus has been collected

and admirably interpreted by Miss J. E. Harrison in her article "Mystica Vannus Iacchi," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxiii. (1903) pp. 292-324. Compare her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* ² (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 517 *sqq.* I must refer the reader to these works for full details on the subject. In the passage of Servius referred to the reading is somewhat uncertain; in his critical edition G. Thilo reads *λικμητήν* and *λικμός* instead of the usual *λικνιτήν* and *λικνόβ.* But the variation does not affect the meaning.

infant cradled in the winnowing-fan was identified with the corn which it is the function of the instrument to winnow and sift. Yet against this identification it may be urged with reason that the use of a winnowing-fan as a cradle was not peculiar to Dionysus; it was a regular practice with the ancient Greeks to place their infants in winnowing-fans as an omen of wealth and fertility for the future life of the children.¹ Customs of the same sort have been observed, apparently for similar reasons, by other peoples in other lands. For example, in Java it is or used to be customary to place every child at birth in a bamboo basket like the sieve or winnowing-basket which Javanese farmers use for separating the rice from the chaff.² It is the midwife who places the child in the basket, and as she does so she suddenly knocks with the palms of both hands on the basket in order that the child may not be timid and fearful. Then she addresses the child thus: "Cry not, for Njaŕ-among and Kaki-among" (two spirits) "are watching over you." Next she addresses these two spirits, saying, "Bring not your grandchild to the road, lest he be trampled by a horse; bring him not to the bank of the river, lest he fall into the river." The object of the ceremony is said to be that these two spirits should always and everywhere guard the child.³ On the first anniversary of a child's birthday the Chinese of Foo-Chow set the little one in a large bamboo sieve, such as farmers employ in winnowing grain, and in the sieve they place along with the child a variety of articles, such as fruits, gold or silver ornaments, a set of money-scales, books, a pencil, pen, ink, paper, and so on, and they draw omens of the child's future career from the object which it first handles and plays with. Thus, if the infant first grasps the money-scale, he will be wealthy; if he seizes on a book, he will be learned, and so forth.⁴ In the Bilaspore district

¹ Ἐν γὰρ λείκροις τὸ παλαιὸν κατεκόμιζον τὰ βρέφη πλοῦτον καὶ καρποδὸς οἰωνίζομενοι, Scholiast on Callimachus, ἔ. 48 (*Callimachea*, edidit O. Schneider, Lipsic, 1870-1873, vol. i. p. 109).

² T. S. Raffles, *History of Java* (London, 1817), i. 323; C. F. Winter, "Instellingen, Gewoontenen Gebruiken der Javanen te Soerakarta," *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indië*, Vijfde Jaargang,

Eerste Deel (1843), p. 695; P. J. Veth, *Java* (Haarlem, 1875-1884), i. 639.

³ C. Poensen, "Iets over de kleeding der Javanen," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendeling-genootschap*, xx. (1876) pp. 279 sq.

⁴ Rev. J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, edited and revised by the Rev. Paxton Hood (London, 1868), pp. 90 sq.

of India it is customary for well-to-do people to place a newborn infant in a winnowing-fan filled with rice and afterwards to give the grain to the nurse in attendance.¹ In Upper Egypt a newly-born babe is immediately laid upon a corn-sieve and corn is scattered around it; moreover, on the seventh day after birth the infant is carried on a sieve through the whole house, while the midwife scatters wheat, barley, pease and salt. The intention of these ceremonies is said to be to avert evil spirits from the child,² and a like motive is assigned by other peoples for the practice of placing newborn infants in a winnowing-basket or corn-sieve. For example, in the Punjaub, when several children of a family have died in succession, a new baby will sometimes be put at birth into an old winnowing-basket (*chhaj*) along with the sweepings of the house, and so dragged out into the yard; such a child may, like Dionysus, in after life be known by the name of Winnowing-basket (*Chhajju*) or Draggèd (*Ghasitâ*).³ The object of treating the child in this way seems to be to save its life by deceiving the spirits, who are supposed to have carried off its elder brothers and sisters; these malevolent beings are on the look-out for the new baby, but they will never think of raking for it in the dust-bin, that being the last place where they would expect to find the hope of the family. The same may perhaps be the intention of a ceremony observed by the Gaolis of the Deccan. As soon as a child is born, it is bathed and then placed on a sieve for a few minutes. On the fifth day the sieve, with a lime and *pan* leaves on it, is removed outside the house and then, after the worship of Chetti has been performed, the sieve is thrown away on the

The winnowing-fan sometimes intended to avert evil spirits from children.

¹ Rev. E. M. Gordon, "Some Notes concerning the People of Mungli Tahsil, Bilaspur District," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, lxxi., Part iii. (Calcutta, 1903) p. 74; *id.*, *Indian Folk Tales* (London, 1908), p. 41.

² C. B. Klunzinger, *Bilder aus Oberägypten* (Stuttgart, 1877), pp. 181, 182; *id.*, *Upper Egypt, its People and Products* (London, 1878), pp. 185, 186.

³ R. C. Temple, "Opprobrious

Names," *Indian Antiquary*, x. (1881) pp. 331 *sq.* Compare H. A. Rose, "Hindu Birth Observances in the Punjab," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) p. 234. See also *Panjab Notes and Queries*, vol. iii. August 1886, § 768, pp. 184 *sq.*: "The winnowing fan in which a newly-born child is laid, is used on the fifth day for the worship of Satwâf. This makes it impure, and it is henceforward used only for the house-sweepings."

road.¹ Again, the same notion of rescuing the child from dangerous spirits comes out very clearly in a similar custom observed by the natives of Laos, a province of Siam. These people "believe that an infant is the child, not of its parents, but of the spirits, and in this belief they go through the following formalities. As soon as an infant is born it is bathed and dressed, laid upon a rice-sieve, and placed—by the grandmother if present, if not, by the next near female relative—at the head of the stairs or of the ladder leading to the house. The person performing this duty calls out in a loud tone to the spirits to come and take the child away to-day, or for ever after to let it alone; at the same moment she stamps violently on the floor to frighten the child, or give it a jerk, and make it cry. If it does not cry this is regarded as an evil omen. If, on the other hand, it follows the ordinary laws of nature and begins to exercise its vocal organs, it is supposed to have a happy and prosperous life before it. Sometimes the spirits do come and take the infant away, *i.e.* it dies before it is twenty-four hours old, but, to prevent such a calamity, strings are tied round its wrists on the first night after its birth, and if it sickens or is feeble the spirit-doctors are called in to prescribe certain offerings to be made to keep away the very spirits who, only a few hours previously, were ceremoniously called upon to come and carry the child off. On the day after its birth the child is regarded as being the property no longer of the spirits, who could have taken it if they had wanted it, but of the parents, who forthwith sell it to some relation for a nominal sum—an eighth or a quarter of a rupee perhaps. This again is a further guarantee against molestation by the spirits, who apparently are regarded as honest folk that would not stoop to take what has been bought and paid for."²

Use of the winnowing-fan to avert evil from children in India, Madagascar, and China.

A like intention of averting evil in some shape from a child is assigned in other cases of the same custom. Thus in Travancore, "if an infant is observed to distort its limbs as if in pain, it is supposed to be under the pressure of some one who has stooped over it, to relieve which the mother

¹ Lieut.-Colonel Gunthorpe, "On the Ghosi or Gadil Gaolis of the Decan," *Society of Bombay*, i. 45.

² C. Bock, *Temples and Elephants* (London, 1884), pp. 258 sq.

places it with a nut-cracker on a winnowing fan and shakes it three or four times.”¹ Again, among the Tanala people of Madagascar almost all children born in the unlucky month of Faosa are buried alive in the forest. But if the parents resolve to let the child live, they must call in the aid of a diviner, who performs a ceremony for averting the threatened ill-luck. The child is placed in a winnowing-fan along with certain herbs. Further, the diviner takes herbs of the same sort, a worn-out spade, and an axe, fastens them to the father’s spear, and sets the spear up in the ground. Then the child is bathed in water which has been medicated with some of the same herbs. Finally the diviner says: “The worn-out spade to the grandchild; may it (the child) not despoil its father, may it not despoil its mother, may it not despoil the children; let it be good.” This ceremony, we are told, “puts an end to the child’s evil days, and the father gets the spear to put away all evil. The child then joins its father and mother; its evil days are averted, and the water and the other things are buried, for they account them evil.”² Similarly the ancient Greeks used to bury, or throw into the sea, or deposit at cross-roads, the things that had been used in ceremonies of purification, no doubt because the things were supposed to be tainted by the evil which had been transferred to them in the rites.³ Another example of the use of a winnowing fan in what may be called a purificatory ceremony is furnished by the practice of the Chinese of Foo-Chow. A lad who is suffering from small-pox is made to squat in a large winnowing sieve. On his head is placed a piece of red cloth, and on the cloth are laid some parched beans, which are then allowed to roll off. As the name for beans, pronounced in the local dialect, is identical with the common name for small-pox, and as moreover the scars left by the pustules are thought to resemble beans, it appears to be imagined that just as the beans roll off the boy’s head, so will the pustules vanish from his body without leaving a

¹ S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London, 1883), p. 213.

² J. Richardson, “Tanala Customs, Superstitions, and Beliefs,” *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine*,

Reprint of the First Four Numbers (Antananarivo, 1885), pp. 226 sq.

³ Pausanias, ii. 31. 8; K. F. Hermann, *Lehrbuch der gottesdienstlichen Alterthümer der Griechen*² (Heidelberg, 1858), pp. 132 sq., § 23, 25.

Karen
ceremony
of fanning
away evils
from
children.

trace behind.¹ Thus the cure depends on the principle of homoeopathic magic. Perhaps on the same principle a winnowing-fan is employed in the ceremony from a notion that it will help to waft or fan away the disease like chaff from the grain. We may compare a purificatory ceremony observed by the Karens of Burma at the naming of a newborn child. Amongst these people "children are supposed to come into the world defiled, and unless that defilement is removed, they will be unfortunate, and unsuccessful in their undertakings. An Elder takes a thin splint of bamboo, and, tying a noose at one end, he fans it down the child's arm, saying :

*' Fan away ill luck, fan away ill success :
Fan away inability, fan away unskilfulness :
Fan away slow growth, fan away difficulty of growth :
Fan away stuntedness, fan away puniness :
Fan away drowsiness, fan away stupidity :
Fan away debasedness, fan away wretchedness :
Fan away the whole completely.'*

"The Elder now changes his motion and fans up the child's arm, saying :

*' Fan on power, fan on influence :
Fan on the paddy bin, fan on the paddy barn :
Fan on followers, fan on dependants :
Fan on good things, fan on appropriate things.'*"²

Among the reasons for the use of the winnowing-fan in birth-rites may have been the wish to avert evils and to promote fertility and growth.

Thus in some of the foregoing instances the employment of the winnowing-fan may have been suggested by the proper use of the implement as a means of separating the corn from the chaff, the same operation being extended by analogy to rid men of evils of various sorts which would otherwise adhere to them like husks to the grain. It was in this way that the ancients explained the use of the winnowing-fan in the mysteries.³ But one motive, and perhaps the original one,

¹ Rev. J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, edited and revised by the Rev. Paxton Hood (London, 1868), pp. 114 sq. The beans used in the ceremony had previously been placed before an image of the goddess of small-pox.

² Rev. F. Mason, D.D., "Physical Character of the Karens," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New

Series, No. cxxxi. (Calcutta, 1866), pp. 9 sq.

³ Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166 : " *Et vannus Iacchi . . . Mystica autem Bacchi ideo ait, quod Liberi patris sacra ad purgationem animae pertinebant : ea sic homines ejus mysteriis purgabantur, sicut vannis frumenta purgantur.*"

for setting a newborn child in a winnowing-fan and surrounding it with corn was probably the wish to communicate to the infant, on the principle of sympathetic magic, the fertility and especially the power of growth possessed by the grain. This was in substance the explanation which W. Mannhardt gave of the custom.¹ He rightly insisted on the analogy which many peoples, and in particular the ancient Greeks, have traced between the sowing of seed and the begetting of children,² and he confirmed his view of the function of the winnowing-fan in these ceremonies by aptly comparing a German custom of sowing barley or flax seed over weakly and stunted children in the belief that this will make them grow with the growth of the barley or the flax.³ An Esthonian mode of accomplishing the same object is to set the child in the middle of a plot of ground where a sower is sowing hemp and to leave the little one there till the sowing is finished ; after that they imagine that the child will shoot up in stature like the hemp which has just been sown.⁴

With the foregoing evidence before us of a widespread custom of placing newborn children in winnowing-fans we clearly cannot argue that Dionysus must necessarily have been a god of the corn because Greek tradition and Greek art represent him as an infant cradled in a winnowing-fan. The argument would prove too much, for it would apply equally to all the infants that have been so cradled in all parts of the world. We cannot even press the argument drawn from the surname "He of the Winnowing-fan" which was borne by Dionysus, since we have seen that similar names are borne for similar reasons in India by persons who have no claim whatever to be regarded as deities of the corn. Yet when all necessary deductions have been made on this score, the association of Dionysus with the winnowing-fan appears to be too intimate to be explained away as a mere reminiscence of a practice to which every Greek baby, whether

Use of the winnowing-fan in the rites of Dionysus.

¹ W. Mannhardt, "Kind und Korn," *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 351-374.

² W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 351 sqq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 372, citing A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volks- aberglaube*² (Berlin, 1869), p. 339, §543;

L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg* (Oldenburg, 1867), i. 81.

⁴ Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehesten abergläubische Gebräuche* (St. Petersburg, 1854), p. 61. This custom is also cited by Mannhardt (*l.c.*).

human or divine, had to submit. That practice would hardly account either for the use of the winnowing-fan in the mysteries or for the appearance of the implement, filled with fruitage of various kinds, on the monuments which set forth the ritual of Dionysus.¹ This last emblem points plainly to a conception of the god as a personification of the fruits of the earth in general; and as if to emphasise the idea of fecundity conveyed by such a symbol there sometimes appears among the fruits in the winnowing-fan an effigy of the male organ of generation. The prominent place which that effigy occupied in the worship of Dionysus² hints broadly, if it does not strictly prove, that to the Greek mind the god stood for the powers of fertility in general, animal as well as vegetable. In the thought of the ancients no sharp line of distinction divided the fertility of animals from the fertility of plants; rather the two ideas met and blended in a nebulous haze. We need not wonder, therefore, that the same coarse but expressive emblem figured conspicuously in the ritual of Father Liber, the Italian counterpart of Dionysus, who in return for the homage paid to the symbol of his creative energy was believed to foster the growth of the crops and to guard the fields against the powers of evil.³

Myth of the death and resurrection of Dionysus.

Like the other gods of vegetation whom we considered in the last volume, Dionysus was believed to have died a violent death, but to have been brought to life again; and his sufferings, death, and resurrection were enacted in his sacred rites. His tragic story is thus told by the poet Nonnus. Zeus in the form of a serpent visited Persephone, and she bore him Zagreus, that is, Dionysus, a horned infant. Scarcely was he born, when the babe mounted the throne of his father Zeus and mimicked the great god by brandishing the lightning in his tiny hand. But he did not occupy the throne long; for the treacherous Titans, their faces whitened with chalk, attacked him with knives while he was looking

¹ Miss J. E. Harrison, "Mystica Vannus Iacchi," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxiii. (1903) pp. 296 sqq.; *id.*, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*,² pp. 518 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) p. 243.

² Herodotus, ii. 48, 49; Clement of

Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 34, pp. 29-30, ed. Potter; Dittenberger, *Sylogé Inscriptionum Græcarum*,³ No. 19, vol. i. p. 32; M. P. Nilsson, *Studia de Dionysiis Atticis* (Lund, 1900), pp. 90 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. 125, 195, 205.

³ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 21.

at himself in a mirror. For a time he evaded their assaults by turning himself into various shapes, assuming the likeness successively of Zeus and Cronus, of a young man, of a lion, a horse, and a serpent. Finally, in the form of a bull, he was cut to pieces by the murderous knives of his enemies.¹ His Cretan myth, as related by Firmicus Maternus, ran thus. He was said to have been the bastard son of Jupiter, a Cretan king. Going abroad, Jupiter transferred the throne and sceptre to the youthful Dionysus, but, knowing that his wife Juno cherished a jealous dislike of the child, he entrusted Dionysus to the care of guards upon whose fidelity he believed he could rely. Juno, however, bribed the guards, and amusing the child with rattles and a cunningly-wrought looking-glass lured him into an ambush, where her satellites, the Titans, rushed upon him, cut him limb from limb, boiled his body with various herbs, and ate it. But his sister Minerva, who had shared in the deed, kept his heart and gave it to Jupiter on his return, revealing to him the whole history of the crime. In his rage, Jupiter put the Titans to death by torture, and, to soothe his grief for the loss of his son, made an image in which he enclosed the child's heart, and then built a temple in his honour.² In this version a Euhemeristic turn has been given to the myth by representing Jupiter and Juno (Zeus and Hera) as a king and queen of Crete. The guards referred to are the mythical Curetes who danced a war-dance round the infant Dionysus, as they are said to have done round the infant Zeus.³ Very noteworthy is the legend, recorded both by Nonnus and Firmicus, that in his infancy Dionysus occupied for a short time the throne of his father Zeus. So Proclus tells us that "Dionysus was the last king of the gods appointed by Zeus. For his father set him on the kingly throne, and placed in his hand the sceptre, and made him king of all the gods of the world"⁴ Such traditions point to a custom of temporarily investing the king's son with the royal dignity as a preliminary to sacrificing him instead of his father. •

Legend that the infant Dionysus occupied for a short time the throne of his father Zeus.

¹ Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 155-205.

² Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.

³ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17. Compare Ch. A. Lobeck,

Aglaophamus, pp. IIII sqq.

⁴ Proclus on Plato, *Cratylus*, p. 59, quoted by E. Abel, *Orphica*, p. 228. Compare Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, pp. 552 sq.

Pomegranates were supposed to have sprung from the blood of Dionysus, as anemones from the blood of Adonis and violets from the blood of Attis: hence women refrained from eating seeds of pomegranates at the festival of the Thesmophoria.¹ According to some, the severed limbs of Dionysus were pieced together, at the command of Zeus, by Apollo, who buried them on Parnassus.² The grave of Dionysus was shewn in the Delphic temple beside a golden statue of Apollo.³ However, according to another account, the grave of Dionysus was at Thebes, where he is said to have been torn in pieces.⁴ Thus far the resurrection of the slain god is not mentioned, but in other versions of the myth it is variously related. According to one version, which represented Dionysus as a son of Zeus and Demeter, his mother pieced together his mangled limbs and made him young again.⁵ In others it is simply said that shortly after his burial he rose from the dead and ascended up to heaven;⁶ or that Zeus raised him up as he lay mortally wounded;⁷ or that Zeus swallowed the heart of Dionysus and then begat him afresh by Semele,⁸ who in the common legend figures as mother of Dionysus. Or, again, the heart was pounded up and given in a portion to Semele, who thereby conceived him.⁹

Turning from the myth to the ritual, we find that the Cretans celebrated a biennial¹⁰ festival at which the passion

¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 19. Compare *id.* ii. 22; Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* vii. p. 280, ed. H. Rabe.

² Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 18; Proclus on Plato's *Timaeus*, iii. p. 200 D, quoted by Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 562, and by Abel, *Orphica*, p. 234. Others said that the mangled body was pieced together, not by Apollo but by Rhea (Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30).

³ Ch. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, pp. 572 *sqq.* See *The Dying God*, p. 3. For a conjectural restoration of the temple, based on ancient authorities and an examination of the scanty remains, see an article by J. H. Middleton, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 282 *sqq.* The ruins of the temple have now been completely excavated

by the French.

⁴ S. Clemens Romanus, *Recognitiones*, x. 24 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. col. 1434).

⁵ Diodorus Siculus, iii. 62.

⁶ Macrobius, *Comment. in Somm. Scip.* i. 12. 12; *Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres Romae nuper reperti* (commonly referred to as *Mythographi Vaticani*), ed. G. H. Bode (Cellis, 1834), iii. 12. 5, p. 246; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iv. 17 (vol. i. p. 286, ed. P. Koetschau).

⁷ Himerius, *Orat.* ix. 4.

⁸ Proclus, *Hymn to Minerva*, quoted by Ch. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 561; *Orphica*, ed. E. Abel, p. 235.

⁹ Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 167.

¹⁰ The festivals of Dionysus were biennial in many places. See G. F.

of Dionysus was represented in every detail. All that he had done or suffered in his last moments was enacted before the eyes of his worshippers, who tore a live bull to pieces with their teeth and roamed the woods with frantic shouts. In front of them was carried a casket supposed to contain the sacred heart of Dionysus, and to the wild music of flutes and cymbals they mimicked the rattles by which the infant god had been lured to his doom.¹ Where the resurrection formed part of the myth, it also was acted at the rites,² and it even appears that a general doctrine of resurrection, or at least of immortality, was inculcated on the worshippers; for Plutarch, writing to console his wife on the death of their infant daughter, comforts her with the thought of the immortality of the soul as taught by tradition and revealed in the mysteries of Dionysus.³ A different form of the myth of the death and resurrection of Dionysus is that he descended into Hades to bring up his mother Semele from the dead.⁴ The local Argive tradition was that he went down through the Alcyonian lake; and his return from the lower world, in other words his resurrection, was annually celebrated on the spot by the Argives, who summoned him from the water by trumpet blasts, while they threw a lamb into the lake as an offering to the warder of the dead.⁵ Whether this was a spring festival does not appear, but the Lydians certainly celebrated the advent of Dionysus in spring; the god was supposed to bring the season with him.⁶ Deities of vegetation, who are

Death and resurrection of Dionysus represented in his rites

Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*,⁴ ii. 524 sqq. (The terms for the festival were *τρεισηπτις*, *τρεισηπτικός*, both terms of the series being included in the numeration, in accordance with the ancient mode of reckoning.) Perhaps the festivals were formerly annual and the period was afterwards lengthened, as has happened with other festivals. See W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 172, 175, 491, 533 sq., 598. Some of the festivals of Dionysus, however, were annual. Dr. Farnell has conjectured that the biennial period in many Greek festivals is to be explained by "the original shifting of land-cultivation which is frequent in early society owing to the backwardness of

the agricultural processes; and which would certainly be consecrated by a special ritual attached to the god of the soil." See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. 180 sq.

¹ Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.

² *Mythographi Vaticani*, ed. G. H. Rode, iii. 12. 5, p. 246.

³ Plutarch, *Consol. ad uxorem*, 10. Compare *id.*, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; *id.*, *De E Delphico*, 9; *id.*, *De esu carnis*, i. 7.

⁴ Pausanias, ii. 31. 2 and 37. 5; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 3.

⁵ Pausanias, ii. 37. 5 sq.; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; *id.*, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 6. 2.

⁶ Himerius, *Orat.* iii. 6, xiv. 7.

supposed to pass a certain portion of each year under ground, naturally come to be regarded as gods of the lower world or of the dead. Both Dionysus and Osiris were so conceived.¹

Dionysus represented in the form of a bull.

A feature in the mythical character of Dionysus, which at first sight appears inconsistent with his nature as a deity of vegetation, is that he was often conceived and represented in animal shape, especially in the form, or at least with the horns, of a bull. Thus he is spoken of as "cow-born," "bull," "bull-shaped," "bull-faced," "bull-browed," "bull-horned," "horn-bearing," "two-horned," "horned."² He was believed to appear, at least occasionally, as a bull.³ His images were often, as at Cyzicus, made in bull shape,⁴ or with bull horns;⁵ and he was painted with horns.⁶ Types of the horned Dionysus are found amongst the surviving monuments of antiquity.⁷ On one statuette he appears clad in a bull's hide, the head, horns, and hoofs hanging down behind.⁸ Again, he is represented as a child with clusters of grapes round his brow, and a calf's head, with sprouting horns, attached to the back of his head.⁹ On a red-figured vase the god is portrayed as a calf-headed child seated on a woman's lap.¹⁰ The people of Cynaetha in north-western Arcadia held a festival of Dionysus in winter, when men,

¹ For Dionysus in this capacity see F. Lenormant in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 632. For Osiris, see *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 344 sq.

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; *id.*, *Quaest. Graec.* 36; Athenaeus, xi. 51, p. 476 A; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 16; *Orphica*, Hymn xxx. vv. 3, 4, xlv. 1, lii. 2, liii. 8; Euripides, *Bacchae*, 99; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 357; Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 31; Lucian, *Bacchus*, 2. The title *Ἐλφαιώρνης* applied to Dionysus (*Iliadic Hymns*, xxxiv. 2; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, iii. 17; Dionysius, *Perieg.* 576; *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 371. 57) is etymologically equivalent to the Sanscrit *varsabha*, "a bull," as I was informed by my lamented friend the late R. A. Neil of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

³ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 920 sqq., 1017; Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 197 sqq.

⁴ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; Athenaeus, xi. 51, p. 476 A.

⁵ Diodorus Siculus, iii. 64. 2, iv. 4. 2; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30.

⁶ Diodorus Siculus, iii. 64. 2; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 209, 1236; Philostratus, *Imagines*, i. 14 (15).

⁷ Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmaler der alten Kunst*, ii. pl. xxxiii.; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 619 sq., 631; W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 1149 sqq.; F. Imhoof-Blumer, "Coin-types of some Kilikian Cities," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) p. 165.

⁸ F. G. Welcker, *Alle Denkmaler* (Gottingen, 1849-1864), v. taf. 2.

⁹ *Archaeologische Zeitung*, ix. (1851) pl. xxxiii., with Gerhard's remarks, pp. 371-373.

¹⁰ *Gazette Archéologique*, v. (1879) pl. 3.

who had greased their bodies with oil for the occasion, used to pick out a bull from the herd and carry it to the sanctuary of the god. Dionysus was supposed to inspire their choice of the particular bull,¹ which probably represented the deity himself; for at his festivals he was believed to appear in bull form. The women of Elis hailed him as a bull, and prayed him to come with his bull's foot. They sang, "Come hither, Dionysus, to thy holy temple by the sea; come with the Graces to thy temple, rushing with thy bull's foot, O goodly bull, O goodly bull!"² The Bacchanals of Thrace wore horns in imitation of their god.³ According to the myth, it was in the shape of a bull that he was torn to pieces by the Titans;⁴ and the Cretans, when they acted the sufferings and death of Dionysus, tore a live bull to pieces with their teeth.⁵ Indeed, the rending and devouring of live bulls and calves appear to have been a regular feature of the Dionysiac rites.⁶ When we consider the practice of portraying the god as a bull or with some of the features of the animal, the belief that he appeared in bull form to his worshippers at the sacred rites, and the legend that in bull form he had been torn in pieces, we cannot doubt that in rending and devouring a live bull at his festival the worshippers of Dionysus believed themselves to be killing the god, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood.

Another animal whose form Dionysus assumed was the goat. One of his names was "Kid."⁷ At Athens and at Hermion he was worshipped under the title of "the one of the Black Goatskin," and a legend ran that on a certain occasion he had appeared clad in the skin from which he took the title.⁸ In the wine-growing district of Phlius, where in autumn the plain is still thickly mantled with the red and

Dionysus
as a goat.

¹ Pausanias, viii. 19. 2.

² Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae*, 36; *id.*, *Isis et Ovis*, 35.

³ J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 1236.

⁴ Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 205.

⁵ Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.

⁶ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 735 *sqq.*; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 357.

⁷ Hesychius, *s.v.* "Ἐριφος ὁ Διόνυσος,

on which there is a marginal gloss ὁ μικρὸς ἀλλ', ὃ ἐν τῷ ἔαρι φαινόμενος, ἦγον ὁ πρῶμος; Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* Ἀκρῶρεια.

⁸ Pausanias, ii. 35. 1; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 146; *Etymologicum Magnum*, *s.v.* Ἀπατούρεια, p. 118. 54 *sqq.*; Suidas, *s.vv.* Ἀπατούρεια ἀνὰ μελαναίγυδα Διόνυσον; Nonnus, *Dionys.* xxvii. 302. Compare Conon, *Narrat.* 39, where for Μελανθίδη we should perhaps read Μελαναίγυδι.

golden foliage of the fading vines, there stood of old a bronze image of a goat, which the husbandmen plastered with gold-leaf as a means of protecting their vines against blight.¹ The image probably represented the vine-god himself. To save him from the wrath of Hera, his father Zeus changed the youthful Dionysus into a kid;² and when the gods fled to Egypt to escape the fury of Typhon, Dionysus was turned into a goat.³ Hence when his worshippers rent in pieces a live goat and devoured it raw,⁴ they must have believed that they were eating the body and blood of the god.

Live goats rent and devoured by his worshippers.

Custom of rending and devouring animals and men as a religious rite. Ceremonial cannibalism among the Indians of British Columbia.

The custom of tearing in pieces the bodies of animals and of men and then devouring them raw has been practised as a religious rite by savages in modern times. We need not therefore dismiss as a fable the testimony of antiquity to the observance of similar rites among the frenzied worshippers of Bacchus. An English missionary to the Coast Indians of British Columbia has thus described a scene like the cannibal orgies of the Bacchanals. After mentioning that an old chief had ordered a female slave to be dragged to the beach, murdered, and thrown into the water, he proceeds as follows: "I did not see the murder, but, immediately after, I saw crowds of people running out of those houses near to where the corpse was thrown, and forming themselves into groups at a good distance away. This I learnt was from fear of what was to follow. Presently two bands of furious wretches appeared, each headed by a man in a state of nudity. They gave vent to the most unearthly sounds, and the two naked men made themselves look as unearthly as possible, proceeding in a creeping kind of stoop, and stepping like two proud horses, at the same time

¹ Pausanias, ii. 13. 6. On their return from Troy the Greeks are said to have found goats and an image of Dionysus in a cave of Euboea (Pausanias, i. 23. 1).

² Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 4. 3.

³ Ovid, *Metam.* v. 329; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 28; *Mythographi Vaticani*, ed. G. H. Bode, i. 86, p. 29.

⁴ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, v. 19. Compare Suidas, s.v. αλγίσειν.

As fawns appear to have been also torn in pieces at the rites of Dionysus (Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. νεβρίσειν; Harpocration, s.v. νεβρίζων), it is probable that the fawn was another of the god's embodiments. But of this there seems no direct evidence. Fawn-skins were worn both by the god and his worshippers (Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30). Similarly the female Bacchanals wore goat-skins (Hesychius, s.v. τραγηφόροι).

shooting forward each arm alternately, which they held out at full length for a little time in the most defiant manner. Besides this, the continual jerking their heads back, causing their long black hair to twist about, added much to their savage appearance. For some time they pretended to be seeking the body, and the instant they came where it lay they commenced screaming and rushing round it like so many angry wolves. Finally they seized it, dragged it out of the water, and laid it on the beach, where I was told the naked men would commence tearing it to pieces with their teeth. The two bands of men immediately surrounded them, and so hid their horrid work. In a few minutes the crowd broke into two, when each of the naked cannibals appeared with half of the body in his hands. Separating a few yards, they commenced, amid horrid yells, their still more horrid feast. The sight was too terrible to behold. I left the gallery with a depressed heart. I may mention that the two bands of savages just alluded to belong to that class which the whites term 'medicine-men.' The same writer informs us that at the winter ceremonials of these Indians "the cannibal, on such occasions, is generally supplied with two, three, or four human bodies, which he tears to pieces before his audience. Several persons, either from bravado or as a charm, present their arms for him to bite. I have seen several whom he has bitten, and I hear two have died from the effects." And when corpses were not forthcoming, these cannibals apparently seized and devoured living people. Mr. Duncan has seen hundreds of the Tsimshian Indians sitting in their canocs which they had just pushed off from the shore in order to escape being torn to pieces by a party of prowling cannibals. Others of these Indians contented themselves with tearing dogs to pieces, while their attendants kept up a growling noise, or a whoop, "which was seconded by a screeching noise made from an instrument which they believe to be the abode of a spirit."¹

¹ Mr. Duncan, quoted by Commander R. C. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (London, 1862), pp. 284-288. The instrument which made the screeching sound

was no doubt a bull-roarer, a flat piece of stick whirled at the end of a string so as to produce a droning or screaming note according to the speed of revolution. Such instruments are used by

Religious societies of Cannibals and Dog-eaters among the Indians of British Columbia.

Mr. Duncan's account of these savage rites has been fully borne out by later observation. Among the Kwakiutl Indians the Cannibals (*Hamatsas*) are the highest in rank of the Secret Societies. They devour corpses, bite pieces out of living people, and formerly ate slaves who had been killed for the purpose. But when their fury has subsided, they are obliged to pay compensation to the persons whom they have bitten and to the owners of slaves whom they have killed. The indemnity consists sometimes of blankets, sometimes of canoes. In the latter case the tariff is fixed: one bite, one canoe. For some time after eating human flesh the cannibal has to observe a great many rules, which regulate his eating and drinking, his going out and his coming in, his clothing and his intercourse with his wife.¹ Similar customs prevail among other tribes of the same coast, such as the Bella Coola, the Tsimshian, the Niska, and the Nootka. In the Nootka tribe members of the Panther Society tear dogs to pieces and devour them. They wear masks armed with canine teeth.² So among the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands there is one religion of cannibalism and another of dog-eating. The cannibals in a state of frenzy, real or pretended, bite flesh out of the extended arms of their fellow villagers. When they issue forth with cries of *Hop-pop* to observe this solemn rite, all who are of a different religious persuasion make haste to get out of their way; but men of the cannibal creed and of stout hearts will resolutely hold out their arms to be

the Koskimo Indians of the same region at their cannibal and other rites. See Fr. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895* (Washington, 1897), pp. 610, 611.

¹ Fr. Boas, *op. cit.* pp. 437-443, 527 sq., 536, 537 sq., 579, 664; *id.*, in "Fifth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1889*, pp. 54-56 (separate reprint); *id.*, in "Sixth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1890*, pp. 62, 65 sq. (separate reprint). As to the rules observed after the

eating of human flesh, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 188-190.

² Fr. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895* (Washington, 1897), pp. 649 sq., 658 sq.; *id.*, in "Sixth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1890*, p. 51; (separate reprint); *id.*, "Seventh Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1891*, pp. 10 sq. (separate reprint); *id.*, "Tenth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1895*, p. 58 (separate reprint).

bitten. The sect of dog-eaters cut or tear dogs to pieces and devour some of the flesh ; but they have to pay for the dogs which they consume in their religious enthusiasm.¹ In the performance of these savage rites the frenzied actors are believed to be inspired by a Cannibal Spirit and a Dog-eating Spirit respectively.² Again, in Morocco there is an order of saints known as Isowa or Aysawa, followers of Mohammed ben Isa or Aysa of Mequinez, whose tomb is at Fez. Every year on their founder's birthday they assemble at his shrine or elsewhere and holding each other's hands dance a frantic dance round a fire. " While the mad dance is still proceeding, a sudden rush is made from the sanctuary, and the dancers, like men delirious, speed away to a place where live goats are tethered in readiness. At sight of these animals the fury of the savage and excited crowd reaches its height. In a few minutes the wretched animals are cut, or rather torn to pieces, and an orgy takes place over the raw and quivering flesh. When they seem satiated, the Emkaddim, who is generally on horseback, and carries a long stick, forms a sort of procession, preceded by wild music, if such discordant sounds will bear the name. Words can do no justice to the frightful scene which now ensues. The naked savages—for on these occasions a scanty piece of cotton is all their clothing—with their long black hair, ordinarily worn in plaits, tossed about by the rapid to-and-fro movements of the head, with faces and hands reeking with blood, and uttering loud cries resembling the bleating of goats, again enter the town. The place is now at their mercy, and the people avoid them as much as possible by shutting themselves up in their houses. A Christian or a Jew would run great risk of losing his life if either were found in the street. Goats are pushed out from the doors, and these the fanatics tear immediately to pieces with their hands, and then dispute over the morsels of

Live goats
rent in
pieces and
devoured
by fanatics
in
Morocco.

¹ G. M. Dawson, *Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands, 1878* (Montreal, 1880), pp. 125 B, 128 B.

² J. R. Swanton, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (Leyden and New York, 1905), pp. 156, 160 sq., 170 sq., 181 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American*

Museum of Natural History). For details as to the practice of these savage rites among the Indian coast tribes of British Columbia, see my *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), iii. pp. 501, 511 sq., 515 sq., 519, 521, 526, 535 sq., 537, 539 sq., 542 sq., 544, 545.

bleeding flesh, as though they were ravenous wolves instead of men. Snakes also are thrown to them as tests of their divine frenzy, and these share the fate of the goats. Sometimes a luckless dog, straying as dogs will stray in a tumult, is seized on. Then the laymen, should any be at hand, will try to prevent the desecration of pious mouths. But the fanatics sometimes prevail, and the unclean animal, abhorred by the mussulman, is torn in pieces and devoured, or pretended to be devoured, with indiscriminating rage.”¹

Later mis-interpretations of the custom of killing a god in animal form.

The custom of killing a god in animal form, which we shall examine more in detail further on, belongs to a very early stage of human culture, and is apt in later times to be misunderstood. The advance of thought tends to strip the old animal and plant gods of their bestial and vegetable husk, and to leave their human attributes (which are always the kernel of the conception) as the final and sole residuum. In other words, animal and plant gods tend to become purely anthropomorphic. When they have become wholly or nearly so, the animals and plants which were at first the deities themselves, still retain a vague and ill-understood connexion with the anthropomorphic gods who have been developed out of them. The origin of the relationship between the deity and the animal or plant having been forgotten, various stories are invented to explain it. These explanations may follow one of two lines . . . as they are based on the habitual or on the exceptional treatment of the sacred animal or plant. The sacred animal was habitually spared, and only exceptionally slain ; and accordingly the myth might be devised to explain either why it was spared or why it was killed. Devised for the former purpose, the myth would tell of some service rendered to the deity by the animal ; devised for the latter purpose, the myth would tell of some injury inflicted by the animal on the god. The reason given for sacrificing goats to Dionysus exemplifies a myth of the latter sort. They were sacri-

¹ A. Leared, *Morocco and the Moors* (London, 1876), pp. 267-269. Compare Budgett Meakin, *The Moors* (London, 1902), pp. 331 sq. The same order of fanatics also exists

and holds similar orgies in Algeria, especially at the town of Tlemcen. See E. Doutté, *Les Aïssidoua à Tlemcen* (Châlons-sur-Marne, 1900), p. 13.

ficed to him, it was said, because they injured the vine.¹ Now the goat, as we have seen, was originally an embodiment of the god himself. But when the god had divested himself of his animal character and had become essentially anthropomorphic, the killing of the goat in his worship came to be regarded no longer as a slaying of the deity himself, but as a sacrifice offered to him; and since some reason had to be assigned why the goat in particular should be sacrificed, it was alleged that this was a punishment inflicted on the goat for injuring the vine, the object of the god's especial care. Thus we have the strange spectacle of a god sacrificed to himself on the ground that he is his own enemy. And as the deity is supposed to partake of the victim offered to him, it follows that, when the victim is the god's old self, the god eats of his own flesh. Hence the goat-god Dionysus is represented as eating raw goat's blood;² and the bull-god Dionysus is called "eater of bulls."³ On the analogy of these instances we may conjecture that wherever a deity is described as the eater of a particular animal, the animal in question was originally nothing but the deity himself.⁴ Later on we shall find that some savages propitiate dead bears and whales by offering them portions of their own bodies.⁵

All this, however, does not explain why a deity of vegetation should appear in animal form. But the consideration of that point had better be deferred till we have

Human sacrifices in the worship of Dionysus.

¹ Varro, *Rerum rusticarum*, i. 2. 19; Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 376-381, with the comments of Servius on the passage and on *Aen.* iii. 118; Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 353 sqq.; *id.*, *Metamorph.* xv. 114 sq.; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30.

² Euripides, *Bacchae*, 138 sq.: ἀγρεύων αἷμα τραγοκτόνον, ἠμοφάγον χάριν.

³ Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 357.

⁴ Hera αἰγοφάγος at Sparta, Pausanias, iii. 15. 9; Hesychius, *s.v.* αἰγοφάγος (compare the representation of Hera clad in a goat's skin, with the animal's head and horns over her head, Muller-Wieseler, *Denkmaler der alten Kunst*, i. No. 229 B; and the similar representation of the Lanuvian Juno, W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 605 sq.); Zeus

αἰγοφάγος, *Etymologium Magnum*, *s.v.* αἰγοφάγος, p. 27. 52 (compare Scholiast on Oppianus, *Halieut.* iii. 10; L. Stephani, in *Compte-Rendu de la Commission Impériale Archéologique pour l'année 1869* (St. Petersburg, 1870), pp. 16-18); Apollo ὄσοφάγος at Elis, Athenaeus, viii. 36, p. 346 B; Artemis κειροφάγος in Samos, Hesychius, *s.v.* κειροφάγος; compare *id.*, *s.v.* κριοφάγος. Divine titles derived from killing animals are probably to be similarly explained, as Dionysus αἰγόβολος (Pausanias, ix. 8. 2); Rhea or Hecate κνωσσοφαγῆς (J. Tzetzes, *Scholion on Lycophron*, 77); Apollo λυκοκτόνος (Sophocles, *Electra*, 6); Apollo σαυροκτόνος (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxiv. 70).

⁵ See below, vol. ii. pp. 184, 194, 196, 197 sq., 233.

discussed the character and attributes of Demeter. Meantime it remains to mention that in some places, instead of an animal, a human being was torn in pieces at the rites of Dionysus. This was the practice in Chios and Tenedos;¹ and at Potniae in Boeotia the tradition ran that it had been formerly the custom to sacrifice to the goat-smiting Dionysus a child, for whom a goat was afterwards substituted.² At Orchomenus, as we have seen, the human victim was taken from the women of an old royal family.³ As the slain bull or goat represented the slain god, so, we may suppose, the human victim also represented him.

The legendary deaths of Pentheus and Lycurgus may be reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing divine kings in the character of Dionysus.

The legends of the deaths of Pentheus and Lycurgus, two kings who are said to have been torn to pieces, the one by Bacchanals, the other by horses, for their opposition to the rites of Dionysus, may be, as I have already suggested,⁴ distorted reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing divine kings in the character of Dionysus and of dispersing the fragments of their broken bodies over the fields for the purpose of fertilising them. In regard to Lycurgus, king of the Thracian tribe of the Edonians, it is expressly said that his subjects at the bidding of an oracle caused him to be rent in pieces by horses for the purpose of restoring the fertility of the ground after a period of barrenness and dearth.⁵ There is no improbability in the tradition. We have seen that in Africa and other parts of the world kings or chiefs have often been put to death by their people for similar reasons.⁶ Further, it is significant that King Iphigeneia is said to have slain his own son Dryas with an axe in a fit of madness, mistaking him for a vine-branch.⁷ Have we not in this tradition a reminiscence of a custom of sacrificing the king's son in place of the father? Similarly Athamas, a King of Thessaly or Boeotia, is said to have been doomed by an oracle to be sacrificed at the altar in order to remove the curse of barrenness which afflicted his country; however, he contrived to evade the sentence and in a fit of madness killed his own son Learchus, mistaking him for a wild beast.

¹ Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 55.

² Pausanias, ix. 8. 2.

³ See *The Dying God*, pp. 163 sq.

⁴ *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 332 sq.

⁵ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 1.

⁶ *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 344, 345, 346, 352, 354: 366 sq.

⁷ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 1.

That this legend was not a mere myth is made probable by a custom observed at Alus down to historical times: the eldest male scion of the royal house was regularly sacrificed in due form to Laphystian Zeus if he ever set foot within the town-hall.¹ The close resemblance between the legends of King Athamas and King Lycurgus furnishes a ground for believing both legends to be based on a real custom of sacrificing either the king himself or one of his sons for the good of the country; and the story that the king's son Dryas perished because his frenzied father mistook him for a vine-branch fits in well with the theory that the victim in these sacrifices represented the vine-god Dionysus. It is probably no mere coincidence that Dionysus himself is said to have been torn in pieces at Thebes,² the very place where according to legend the same fate befell king Pentheus at the hands of the frenzied votaries of the vine-god.³

The theory that in prehistoric times Greek and Thracian kings or their sons may have been dismembered in the character of the vine-god or the corn-god for the purpose of fertilising the earth or quickening the vines has received of late years some confirmation from the discovery that down to the present time in Thrace, the original home of Dionysus, a drama is still annually performed which reproduces with remarkable fidelity some of the most striking traits in the Dionysiac myth and ritual.⁴ In a former part of this work I have already called attention to this interesting survival of paganism among a Christian peasantry;⁵ but it seems desirable and appropriate in this place to draw out somewhat

Survival of
Dionysiac
rites
among the
modern
Thracian
peasantry.

¹ Herodotus, vii. 197; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 9. 1 sq.; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 257; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 21; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 1-5. See *The Dying God*, pp. 161-163.

² Clemens Romanus, *Recognitiones*, x. 24 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. col. 1434).

³ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 43 sqq., 1043 sqq.; Theocritus, *Idyl.* xxvi.; Pausanias, ii. 2. 7. Strictly speaking, the murder of Pentheus is said to have been perpetrated not at Thebes, of which he was king, but on Mount Cithaeron.

⁴ See Mr. R. M. Dawkins, "The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxvi. (1906) pp. 191-206. Mr. Dawkins describes the ceremonies partly from his own observation, partly from an account of them published by Mr. G. M. Vizyenos in a Greek periodical *Θρακική Ἐπερησις*, of which only one number was published at Athens in 1897. From his personal observations Mr. Dawkins was able to confirm the accuracy of Mr. Vizyenos's account.

⁵ *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 333 sq.

more fully the parallelism between the modern drama and the ancient worship.

Drama annually performed at the Carnival in the villages round Viza, an old Thracian capital.

The drama, which may reasonably be regarded as a direct descendant of the Dionysiac rites, is annually performed at the Carnival in all the Christian villages which cluster round Viza, the ancient Bizya, a town of Thrace situated about midway between Adrianople and Constantinople. In antiquity the city was the capital of the Thracian tribe of the Asti; the kings had their palace there,¹ probably in the acropolis, of which some fine walls are still standing. Inscriptions preserved in the modern town record the names of some of these old kings.² The date of the celebration is Cheese Monday, as it is locally called, which is the Monday of the last week of Carnival. At Viza itself the mummerly has been shorn of some of its ancient features, but these have been kept up at the villages and have been particularly observed and recorded at the village of St. George (Haghios Gheorgios). It is to the drama as acted at that village that the following description specially applies. The principal parts in the drama are taken by two men disguised in goatskins. Each of them wears a headdress made of a complete goatskin, which is stuffed so as to rise a foot or more like a shako over his head, while the skin falls over the face, forming a mask with holes cut for the eyes and mouth. Their shoulders are thickly padded with hay to protect them from the blows which used to be rained very liberally on their backs. Fawnskins on their shoulders and goatskins on their legs are or used to be part of their equipment, and another indispensable part of it is a number of sheep-bells tied round their waists. One of the two skin-clad actors carries a bow and the other a wooden effigy of the male organ of generation. Both these actors must be married men. According to Mr. Vizyenos, they are chosen for periods of four years. Two unmarried boys dressed as girls and sometimes called brides also take part in the play; and a man disguised as an old woman in rags carries a mock baby in a basket; the brat is supposed to be a seven-months' child born out of wedlock and begotten by an unknown

The actors in the drama

¹ Strabo, vii. frag. 48; Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* Βίζυη.

² R. M. Dawkins, *op. cit.* p. 192.

father. The basket in which the hopeful infant is paraded bears the ancient name of the winnowing-fan (*likni*, contracted from *liknon*) and the babe itself receives the very title "He of the Winnowing-fan" (*Liknites*) which in antiquity was applied to Dionysus. Two other actors, clad in rags with blackened faces and armed with stout saplings, play the parts of a gypsy-man and his wife; others personate policemen armed with swords and whips; and the troupe is completed by a man who discourses music on a bagpipe.

Such are the masqueraders. The morning of the day on which they perform their little drama is spent by them going from door to door collecting bread, eggs, or money. At every door the two skin-clad maskers knock, the boys disguised as girls dance, and the gypsy man and wife enact an obscene pantomime on the straw-heap before the house. When every house in the village has been thus visited, the troop takes up position on the open space before the village church, where the whole population has already mustered to witness the performance. After a dance hand in hand, in which all the actors take part, the two skin-clad maskers withdraw and leave the field to the gypsies, who now pretend to forge a ploughshare, the man making believe to hammer the share and his wife to work the bellows. At this point the old woman's baby is supposed to grow up at a great pace, to develop a huge appetite for meat and drink, and to clamour for a wife. One of the skin-clad men now pursues one of the two pretended brides, and a mock marriage is celebrated between the couple. After these nuptials have been performed with a parody of a real wedding, the mock bridegroom is shot by his comrade with the bow and falls down on his face like dead. His slayer thereupon feigns to skin him with a knife; but the dead man's wife laments over her deceased husband with loud cries, throwing herself across his prostrate body. In this lamentation the slayer himself and all the other actors join in: a Christian funeral service is burlesqued; and the pretended corpse is lifted up as if to be carried to the grave. At this point, however, the dead man disconcerts the preparations for his burial by suddenly coming to life

The ceremonies include the forging of a ploughshare, a mock marriage, and a pretence of death and resurrection.

again and getting up. So ends the drama of death and resurrection.

The ceremonies also include a simulation of ploughing and sowing by skin-clad men, accompanied by prayers for good crops.

The next act opens with a repetition of the pretence of forging a ploughshare, but this time the gypsy man hammers on a real share. When the implement is supposed to have been fashioned, a real plough is brought forward, the mockery appears to cease, the two boys dressed as girls are yoked to the plough and drag it twice round the village square contrary to the way of the sun. One of the two skin-clad men walks at the tail of the plough, the other guides it in front, and a third man follows in the rear scattering seed from a basket. After the two rounds have been completed, the gypsy and his wife are yoked to the plough, and drag it a third time round the square, the two skin-clad men still playing the part of ploughmen. At Viza the plough is drawn by the skin-clad men themselves. While the plough is going its rounds, followed by the sower sowing the seed, the people pray aloud, saying, "May wheat be ten piastres the bushel! Rye five piastres the bushel! Amen, O God, that the poor may eat! Yea, O God, that poor folk be filled!" This ends the performance. The evening is spent in feasting on the proceeds of the house-to-house visitation which took place in the morning.¹

Kindred ceremony performed by a masked and skin-clad man who is called a king.

A kindred festival is observed on the same day of the Carnival at Kosti, a place in the extreme north of Thrace, near the Black Sea. There a man dressed in sheepskins or goatskins, with a mask on his face, bells round his neck, and a broom in his hand, goes round the village collecting food and presents. He is addressed as a king and escorted with music. With him go boys dressed as girls, and another boy, not so disguised, who carries wine in a wooden bottle and gives of it to every householder to drink in a cup, receiving a gift in return. The king then mounts a two-wheeled cart and is drawn to the church. He carries seed in his hand, and at the church two bands of men, one of married men and the other of unmarried men, try each in turn to induce the king to throw the seed on them. Finally he casts it on the ground in front of the church. The ceremony ends with

¹ R. M. Dawkins, "The Modern Dionysus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of xxvi. (1906) pp. 193-201.

striking the king of his clothes and flinging him into the river, after which he resumes his usual dress.¹

In these ceremonies, still annually held, at and near an old capital of Thracian kings, the points of similarity to the ritual of the ancient Thracian deity Dionysus are sufficiently obvious.² The goatskins in which the principal actors are disguised remind us of the identification of Dionysus with a goat: the infant, cradled in a winnowing-fan and taking its name from the implement, answers exactly to the traditions and the monuments which represent the infant Dionysus as similarly cradled and similarly named: the pretence that the baby is a seven-months' child born out of wedlock and begotten by an unknown father tallies precisely with the legend that Dionysus was born prematurely in the seventh month as the offspring of an intrigue between a mortal woman and a mysterious divine father:³ the same coarse symbol of reproductive energy which characterised the ancient ritual of Dionysus figures conspicuously in the modern drama: the annual mock marriage of the goatskin-clad mummer with the pretended bride may be compared with the annual pretence of marrying Dionysus to the Queen of Athens: and the simulated slaughter and resurrection of the same goatskin-clad actor may be compared with the traditional slaughter and resurrection of the god himself. Further, the ceremony of ploughing, in which after his resurrection the goatskin-clad mummer takes a prominent part, fits in well not only with the legend that Dionysus was the first to yoke oxen to the plough, but also with the symbolism of the winnowing-fan in his worship; while the prayers for plentiful crops which accompany the ploughing accord with the omens of an abundant harvest which were drawn of old from the mystic light seen to illumine by night one of his ancient sanctuaries in Thrace. Lastly, in the ceremony as observed at Kosti the giving of wine by the king's

Analogy
of these
modern
Thracian
ceremonies
to the
ancient
rites of
Dionysus.

¹ R. M. Dawkins, *op. cit.* pp. 201 sq.

² They have been clearly indicated by Mr. R. M. Dawkins, *op. cit.* pp. 203 sqq. Compare W. Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 15 sqq., who fully recognises the

connexion of the modern Thracian ceremonies with the ancient rites of Dionysus.

³ Lucian, *Dialogi Deorum*, ix. 2; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 4. 4. According to the latter writer Dionysus was born in the sixth month.

attendant is an act worthy of the wine-god : the throwing of seed by the king can only be interpreted, like the ploughing, as a charm to promote the fertility of the ground ; and the royal title borne by the principal masker harmonises well with the theory that the part of the god of the corn and the wine was of old sustained by the Thracian kings who reigned at Bisya.

The modern Thracian celebration seems to correspond most closely to the ancient Athenian festival of the Anthesteria.

If we ask, To what ancient festival of Dionysus does the modern celebration of the Carnival in Thrace most nearly correspond? the answer can be hardly doubtful. The Thracian drama of the mock marriage of the goatskin-clad mummer, his mimic death and resurrection, and his subsequent ploughing, corresponds both in date and in character most nearly to the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria, which was celebrated at Athens during three days in early spring, towards the end of February or the beginning of March. Thus the date of the Anthesteria could not fall far from, and it might sometimes actually coincide with, the last week of the Carnival, the date of the Thracian celebration. While the details of the festival of the Anthesteria are obscure, its general character is well known. It was a festival both of wine-drinking and of the dead, whose souls were supposed to revisit the city and to go about the streets, just as in modern Europe and in many other parts of the world the ghosts of the departed are still believed to return to their old homes on one day of the year and to be entertained by their relatives at a solemn Feast of All Souls.¹ But the Dionysiac nature of the festival was revealed not merely by the opening of the wine-vats and the wassailing which went on throughout the city among freemen and slaves alike ; on the second day of the festival the marriage of Dionysus with the Queen of Athens was celebrated with great solemnity at the Bucolium or Ox-stall.²

¹ As to such festivals of All Souls see *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 301-318.

² The passages of ancient authors which refer to the Anthesteria are collected by Professor Martin P. Nilsson, *Studiæ Dionysiis Atticis* (Lund, 1900), pp. 148 *sqq.* As to the festival, which has been much discussed of late years, see

August Mommsen, *Heortologie* (Leipzig, 1864), pp. 345 *sqq.* ; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 384 *sqq.* ; G. F. Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer*⁴ (Berlin, 1902), ii. 516 *sqq.* ; E. Rohde, *Psyche*³ (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1903), i. 236 *sqq.* ; Martin P. Nilsson, *op. cit.* pp. 115 *sqq.* ; P. Foucart, *Le Culte de*

It has been suggested with much probability¹ that at this sacred marriage in the Ox-stall the god was represented wholly or partly in bovine shape, whether by an image or by an actor dressed in the hide and wearing the horns of a bull; for, as we have seen, Dionysus was often supposed to assume the form of a bull and to present himself in that guise to his worshippers. If this conjecture should prove to be correct—though a demonstration of it can hardly be expected—the sacred marriage of the Queen to the Bull-god at Athens would be parallel to the sacred marriage of the Queen to the Bull-god at Cnossus, according to the interpretation which I have suggested of the myth of Pasiphae and the Minotaur;² only whereas the bull-god at Cnossus, if I am right, stood for the Sun, the bull-god at Athens stood for the powers of vegetation, especially the corn and the vines. It would not be surprising that among a cattle-breeding people in early days the bull, regarded as a type of strength and reproductive energy, should be employed to symbolise and represent more than one of the great powers of nature. If Dionysus did indeed figure as a bull at his marriage, it is not improbable that on that occasion his representative, whether a real bull or a man dressed in a bull's hide, took part in a ceremony of ploughing; for we have seen that the invention of yoking oxen to the plough was ascribed to Dionysus, and we know that the Athenians performed a sacred ceremony of ploughing, which went by the name of the Ox-yoked Ploughing and took place in a field or other open piece of ground at the foot of the Acropolis.³ It is a reasonable conjecture that the field of the Ox-yoked Ploughing may have adjoined the building called the Ox-stall in which the marriage of Dionysus with the Queen was solemnised;⁴ for

Dionysus en Attique (Paris, 1904), pp. 107 sqq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*² (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 32 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 214 sqq. As to the marriage of Dionysus to the Queen of Athens, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 136 sq.

¹ By Professor U. von Wilamowitz-

Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen* (Berlin, 1893), ii. 42; and afterwards by Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*,² p. 536.

² *The Dying God*, p. 71.

³ Plutarch, *Conjugalia Praecepta*, 42.

⁴ Miss J. E. Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London, 1890), pp. 166 sq.

that building is known to have been near the Prytaneum or Town-Hall on the northern slope of the Acropolis.¹

Theory that the rites of the Anthesteria comprised a drama of the violent death and resurrection of Dionysus.

Thus on the whole the ancient festival of the Anthesteria, so far as its features are preserved by tradition or can be restored by the use of reasonable conjecture, presents several important analogies to the modern Thracian Carnival in respect of wine-drinking, a mock marriage of actors, and a ceremony of ploughing. The resemblance between the ancient and the modern ritual would be still closer if some eminent modern scholars, who wrote before the discovery of the Thracian Carnival, and whose judgment was therefore not biased by its analogy to the Athenian festival, are right in holding that another important feature of the Anthesteria was the dramatic death and resurrection of Dionysus.² They point out that at the marriage of Dionysus fourteen Sacred Women officiated at fourteen altars;³ that the number of the Titans, who tore Dionysus in pieces, was fourteen, namely seven male and seven female;⁴ and that Osiris, a god who in some respects corresponded closely to Dionysus, is said to have been rent by Typhon into fourteen fragments.⁵ Hence they conjecture that at Athens the body of Dionysus was dramatically broken into fourteen fragments, one for each of the fourteen altars, and that it was afterwards dramatically pieced together and restored to life by the fourteen Sacred Women, just as the broken body of Osiris was pieced together by a company of gods and goddesses and restored to life by his sister Isis.⁶ The conjecture is ingenious and plausible, but with our existing sources of information it must remain a conjecture and

¹ Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 3. As to the situation of the Prytaneum see my note on Pausanias, i. 18. 3 (vol. ii. p. 172).

² August Mommsen, *Heortologie*, pp. 371 sqq.; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, pp. 398 sqq.; P. Foucart, *Le Culte de Dionysos en Attique*, pp. 138 sqq.

³ Demosthenes, *Contra Neaer.* 73, pp. 1369 sq.; Julius Pollux, viii. 108; *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 227, s.v. *γεραιραι*; Hesychius, s.v. *γεραιραι*.

⁴ Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*,

p. 505.

⁵ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18, 42.

⁶ The resurrection of Osiris is not described by Plutarch in his treatise *Isis et Osiris*, which is still our principal source for the myth of the god; but it is fortunately recorded in native Egyptian writings. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 274. P. Foucart supposes that the resurrection of Dionysus was enacted at the Anthesteria; August Mommsen prefers to suppose that it was enacted in the following month at the Lesser Mysteries.

nothing more. Could it be established, it would forge another strong link in the chain of evidence which binds the modern Thracian Carnival to the ancient Athenian Anthesteria; for in that case the drama of the divine death and resurrection would have to be added to the other features which these two festivals of spring possess in common, and we should have to confess that Greece had what we may call its Good Friday and its Easter Sunday long before the events took place in Judea which diffused these two annual commemorations of the Dying and Reviving God over a great part of the civilised world. From so simple a beginning may flow consequences so far-reaching and impressive; for in the light of the rude Thracian ceremony we may surmise that the high tragedy of the death and resurrection of Dionysus originated in a rustic mummers' play acted by ploughmen for the purpose of fertilising the brown earth which they turned up with the gleaming share in sunshiny days of spring, as they followed the slow-paced oxen down the long furrows in the fallow field. Later on we shall see that a play of the same sort is still acted, or was acted down to recent years, by English yokels on Plough Monday.

But before we pass from the tragic myth and ritual of Dionysus to the sweeter story and milder worship of Demeter and Persephone, the true Greek deities of the corn, it is fair to admit that the legends of human sacrifice, which have left so dark a stain on the memory of the old Thracian god, may have been nothing more than mere misinterpretations of a sacrificial ritual in which an animal victim was treated as a human being. For example, at Tenedos the new-born calf sacrificed to Dionysus was shod in buskins, and the mother cow was tended like a woman in child-bed.¹ At Rome a she-goat was sacrificed to Vedijovis as if it were a human victim.² Yet on the other hand it is equally possible, and perhaps more probable, that these curious rites were themselves mitigations of an older and ruder custom of sacrificing human beings, and that the later pretence of

Legends of human sacrifice in the worship of Dionysus may be mere misinterpretations of ritual.

¹ Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, 1894), pp. 300 sqq.
xii. 34. Compare W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*² (London,

² Aulus Gellius, v. 12. 12.

treating the sacrificial victims as if they were human beings was merely part of a pious and merciful fraud, which palmed off on the deity less precious victims than living men and women. This interpretation is supported by the undoubted cases in which animals have been substituted for human victims.¹ On the whole we may conclude that neither the polished manners of a later age, nor the glamour which Greek poetry and art threw over the figure of Dionysus, sufficed to conceal or erase the deep lines of savagery and cruelty imprinted on the features of this barbarous deity.

¹ See *The Dying God*, p. 166 note ¹, and below, p. 249.

CHAPTER II

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

DIONYSUS was not the only Greek deity whose tragic story and ritual appear to reflect the decay and revival of vegetation. In another form and with a different application the old tale reappears in the myth of Demeter and Persephone. Substantially their myth is identical with the Syrian one of Aphrodite (Astarte) and Adonis, the Phrygian one of Cybele and Attis, and the Egyptian one of Isis and Osiris. In the Greek fable, as in its Asiatic and Egyptian counterparts, a goddess mourns the loss of a loved one, who personifies the vegetation, more especially the corn, which dies in winter to revive in spring; only whereas the Oriental imagination figured the loved and lost one as a dead lover or a dead husband lamented by his leman or his wife, Greek fancy embodied the same idea in the tenderer and purer form of a dead daughter bewailed by her sorrowing mother.

Demeter and Persephone as Greek personifications of the decay and revival of vegetation.

The oldest literary document which narrates the myth of Demeter and Persephone is the beautiful Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, which critics assign to the seventh century before our era.¹ The object of the poem is to explain the origin of the Eleusinian mysteries, and the complete silence of the poet as to Athens and the Athenians, who in after ages took a conspicuous part in the festival, renders it probable that the hymn was composed in the far off time when Eleusis was still a petty independent state, and before the stately procession of the Mysteries had begun to defile, in

The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.

¹ R. Foerster, *Der Raub und die Rückkehr der Persephone* (Stuttgart, 1874), pp. 37-39; *The Homeric Hymns*, edited by T. W. Allen and E. E. Sikes (London, 1904), pp. 10 sq.

A later date—the age of the Pisistratids—is assigned to the hymn by A. Baumeister (*Hymni Homerici*, Leipsic, 1860, p. 280).

bright September days, over the low chain of barren rocky hills which divides the flat Eleusinian cornland from the more spacious olive-clad expanse of the Athenian plain. Be that as it may, the hymn reveals to us the conception which the writer entertained of the character and functions of the two goddesses: their natural shapes stand out sharply enough under the thin veil of poetical imagery. The youthful Persephone, so runs the tale, was gathering roses and lilies, crocuses and violets, hyacinths and narcissuses in a lush meadow, when the earth gaped and Pluto, lord of the Dead, issuing from the abyss carried her off on his golden car to be his bride and queen in the gloomy subterranean world. Her sorrowing mother Demeter, with her yellow tresses veiled in a dark mourning mantle, sought her over land and sea, and learning from the Sun her daughter's fate she withdrew in high dudgeon from the gods and took up her abode at Eleusis, where she presented herself to the king's daughters in the guise of an old woman, sitting sadly under the shadow of an olive tree beside the Maiden's Well, to which the damsels had come to draw water in bronze pitchers for their father's house. In her wrath at her bereavement the goddess suffered not the seed to grow in the earth but kept it hidden under ground, and she vowed that never would she set foot on Olympus and never would she let the corn sprout till her lost daughter should be restored to her. Vainly the oxen dragged the ploughs to and fro in the fields; vainly the sower dropped the barley seed in the brown furrows; nothing came up from the parched and crumbling soil. Even the Rarian plain near Eleusis, which was wont to wave with yellow harvests, lay bare and fallow.¹ Mankind would have perished of hunger and the gods would have been robbed of the sacrifices which were their due, if Zeus in alarm had not commanded Pluto to disgorge his prey, to restore his bride Persephone to her mother Demeter. The grim lord of the Dead smiled and obeyed, but before he sent back his queen to the upper air on a golden car, he gave her the seed of a pomegranate to eat, which ensured that she would return to him. But Zeus stipulated that henceforth Persephone should spend two thirds of every

The rape
of Per-
sephone.

The
wrath of
Demeter.

¹ *Hymn to Demeter*, 1 *sqq.*, 302 *sqq.*, 330 *sqq.*, 349 *sqq.*, 414 *sqq.*, 450 *sqq.*

year with her mother and the gods in the upper world and one third of the year with her husband in the nether world, from which she was to return year by year when the earth was gay with spring flowers. Gladly the daughter then returned to the sunshine, gladly her mother received her and fell upon her neck ; and in her joy at recovering the lost one Demeter made the corn to sprout from the clods of the ploughed fields and all the broad earth to be heavy with leaves and blossoms. And straightway she went and shewed this happy sight to the princes of Eleusis, to Triptolemus, Eumolpus, Diocles, and to the king Celeus himself, and moreover she revealed to them her sacred rites and mysteries. Blessed, says the poet, is the mortal man who has seen these things, but he who has had no share of them in life will never be happy in death when he has descended into the darkness of the grave. So the two goddesses departed to dwell in bliss with the gods on Olympus ; and the bard ends the hymn with a pious prayer to Demeter and Persephone that they would be pleased to grant him a livelihood in return for his song.¹

The return
of Per-
sephone.

It has been generally recognised, and indeed it seems scarcely open to doubt, that the main theme which the poet set before himself in composing this hymn was to describe the traditional foundation of the Eleusinian mysteries by the goddess Demeter. The whole poem leads up to the transformation scene in which the bare leafless expanse of the Eleusinian plain is suddenly turned, at the will of the goddess, into a vast sheet of ruddy corn ; the beneficent deity takes the princes of Eleusis, shews them what she has done, teaches them her mystic rites, and vanishes with her daughter to heaven. The revelation of the mysteries is the triumphal close of the piece. This conclusion is confirmed by a more minute examination of the poem, which proves that the poet has given, not merely a general account of the foundation of the mysteries, but also in more or less veiled

‘ : ‘ mythical explanations of the origin of particular rites which we have good reason to believe formed essential

The aim
of the
Homeric
*Hymn to
Demeter*
is to ex-
plain the
traditional
foundation
of the
Eleusinian
mysteries
by
Demeter.

¹ *Hymn to Demeter*, 310 sqq. With the myth as set forth in the Homeric hymn may be compared the accounts

of Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca*, i. 5) and Ovid (*Fasti*, iv. 425-618; *Metamorphoses*, v. 385 sqq.).

features of the festival. Amongst the rites as to which the poet thus drops significant hints are the preliminary fast of the candidates for initiation, the torchlight procession, the all-night vigil, the sitting of the candidates, veiled and in silence, on stools covered with sheepskins, the use of scurrilous language, the breaking of ribald jests, and the solemn communion with the divinity by participation in a draught of barley-water from a holy chalice.¹

Revelation
of a reaped
ear of corn
the crown-
ing act
of the
mysteries.

But there is yet another and a deeper secret of the mysteries which the author of the poem appears to have divulged under cover of his narrative. He tells us how, as soon as she had transformed the barren brown expanse of the Eleusinian plain into a field of golden grain, she gladdened the eyes of Triptolemus and the other Eleusinian princes by shewing them the growing or standing corn. When we compare this part of the story with the statement of a Christian writer of the second century, Hippolytus, that the very heart of the mysteries consisted in shewing to the initiated a reaped ear of corn,² we can hardly doubt that

¹ *Hymn to Demeter*, 47-50, 191-211, 292-295, with the notes of Messrs. Allen and Sikes in their edition of the Homeric Hymns (London, 1904). As to representations of the candidates for initiation seated on stools draped with sheepskins, see L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 237 sqq., with plate xva. On a well-known marble vase there figured the stool is covered with a lion's skin and one of the candidate's feet rests on a ram's skull or horns; but in two other examples of the same scene the ram's fleece is placed on the seat (Farnell, *op. cit.* p. 240 note ^a), just as it is said to have been placed on Demeter's stool in the Homeric hymn. As to the form of communion in the Eleusinian mysteries, see Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* 21, p. 18 ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, v. 26; L. R. Farnell, *op. cit.* iii. 185 sq., 195 sq. For discussions of the ancient evidence bearing on the Eleusinian mysteries it may suffice to refer to Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus* (Königsberg, 1829), pp. 3 sqq.; G. F. Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer*,¹

ii. 387 sqq.; Aug. Mommsen, *Heortologie* (Leipzig, 1864), pp. 222 sqq.; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 204 sqq.; P. Foucart, *Recherches sur l'Origine et la Nature des Mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris, 1895) (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, xxxv.); *id.*, *Les grands Mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris, 1900) (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, xxxvii.); F. Lenormant and E. Pottier, s.v. "Eleusinia," in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, ii. 544 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 126 sqq.

² Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, v. 8, p. 162, ed. L. Duncker et F. G. Schneidewin (Göttingen, 1859). The word which the poet uses to express the revelation (*δειξε*, *Hymn to Demeter*, verse 474) is a technical one in the mysteries; the full phrase was *δεικνύσαι τὰ τερά*. See Plutarch, *Alibiades*, 22; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, vi. 3. 6; Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 6; Lysias, *Contra Andocidem*, 51; Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 51.

the poet of the hymn was well acquainted with this solemn rite, and that he deliberately intended to explain its origin in precisely the same way as he explained other rites of the mysteries, namely by representing Demeter as having set the example of performing the ceremony in her own person. Thus myth and ritual mutually explain and confirm each other. The poet of the seventh century before our era gives us the myth—he could not without sacrilege have revealed the ritual: the Christian father reveals the ritual, and his revelation accords perfectly with the veiled hint of the old poet. On the whole, then, we may, with many modern scholars, confidently accept the statement of the learned Christian father Clement of Alexandria, that the myth of Demeter and Persephone was acted as a sacred drama in the mysteries of Eleusis.¹

But if the myth was acted as a part, perhaps as the principal part, of the most famous and solemn religious rites of ancient Greece, we have still to enquire, What was, after all, stripped of later accretions, the original kernel of the myth which appears to later ages surrounded and transfigured by an aureole of awe and mystery, lit up by some of the most brilliant rays of Grecian literature and art? If we follow the indications given by our oldest literary authority on the subject, the author of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, the riddle is not hard to read; the figures of the two goddesses, the mother and the daughter, resolve themselves into personifications of the corn.² At least this appears to be fairly certain for the daughter Persephone.

Demeter and Persephone personifications of the corn.

¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 12, p. 12 ed. Potter: *Δηῶ δὲ καὶ Κόρη δράμα ἤδη ἐγενέσθην μυστικόν· καὶ τὴν πλάνην καὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν καὶ τὸ πένθος αὐτῶν Ἐλευσίς δαδουχεῖ.* Compare F. Lenormant, s.v. "Eleusinia," in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iii. 578: "Que le drame mystique des aventures de Déméter et de Coré constituât le spectacle essentiel de l'initiation, c'est ce dont il nous semble impossible de douter." A similar view is expressed by G. F. Schoemann (*Griechische Alterthümer*,⁴ ii. 402); Preller-Robert (*Griechische Mytho-*

logie, i. 793); P. Foucart (*Recherches sur l'Origine et la Nature des Mystères d'Eleusis*, Paris, 1895, pp. 43 sqq.; *id.*, *Les Grands Mystères d'Eleusis*, Paris, 1900, p. 137); E. Rohde (*Psyche*,³ i. 289); and L. R. Farnell (*The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 134, 173 sqq.).

² On Demeter and Proserpine as goddesses of the corn, see L. Pieller. *Demeter und Persephone* (Hamburg 1837), pp. 315 sqq.; and especially W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 202 sqq.

Persephone the seed sown in autumn and sprouting in spring.

Demeter the old corn of last year.

The view that Demeter was the Earth goddess is implicitly rejected by the author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.

The goddess who spends three or, according to another version of the myth, six months of every year with the dead under ground and the remainder of the year with the living above ground;¹ in whose absence the barley seed is hidden in the earth and the fields lie bare and fallow; on whose return in spring to the upper world the corn shoots up from the clods and the earth is heavy with leaves and blossoms—this goddess can surely be nothing else than a mythical embodiment of the vegetation, and particularly of the corn, which is buried under the soil for some months of every winter and comes to life again, as from the grave, in the sprouting cornstalks and the opening flowers and foliage of every spring. No other reasonable and probable explanation of Persephone seems possible.² And if the daughter goddess was a personification of the young corn of the present year, may not the mother goddess be a personification of the old corn of last year, which has given birth to the new crops? The only alternative to this view of Demeter would seem to be to suppose that she is a personification of the earth, from whose broad bosom the corn and all other plants spring up, and of which accordingly they may appropriately enough be regarded as the daughters. This view of the original nature of Demeter has indeed been taken by some writers, both ancient and modern,³ and it is

¹ According to the author of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (verses 398 sqq., 445 sqq.) and Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca*, i. 5. 3) the time which Persephone had to spend under ground was one third of the year; according to Ovid (*Fasti*, iv. 613 sq.; *Metamorphoses*, v. 564 sqq.) and Hyginus (*Fabulae*, 146) it was one half.

² This view of the myth of Persephone is, for example, accepted and clearly stated by L. Preller (*Demeter und Persephone*, pp. 128 sq.).

³ See, for example, Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 17. 3: "*Frugum substantiam volunt Proserpinam dicere, quia fruges hominibus cum seri coeperint prosunt. Terram ipsam Cererem nominant, nomen hoc a gerendis fructibus mutuati*"; L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, p. 128, "*Der Erdboden wird Demeter,*

die Vegetation Persephone." François Lenormant, again, held that Demeter was originally a personification of the earth regarded as divine, but he admitted that from the time of the Homeric poems downwards she was sharply distinguished from Ge, the earth-goddess proper. See Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, s.v. "Ceres," ii. 1022 sq. Some light might be thrown on the question whether Demeter was an Earth Goddess or a Corn Goddess, if we could be sure of the etymology of her name, which has been variously explained as "Earth Mother" (Δῆ μήτηρ equivalent to Γῆ μήτηρ) and as "Barley Mother" (from an alleged Cretan word δηαλ "barley": see *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. Δηώ, pp. 263 sq.). The former etymology has been the most popular; the latter

one which can be reasonably maintained. But it appears to have been rejected by the author of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, for he not only distinguishes Demeter from the personified Earth but places the two in the sharpest opposition to each other. He tells us that it was Earth who, in accordance with the will of Zeus and to please Pluto, lured Persephone to her doom by causing the narcissuses to grow which tempted the young goddess to stray far beyond the reach of help in the lush meadow.¹ Thus Demeter of the hymn, far from being identical with the Earth-goddess, must have regarded that divinity as her worst enemy, since it was to her insidious wiles that she owed the loss of her daughter. But if the Demeter of the hymn cannot have been a personification of the earth, the only alternative apparently is to conclude that she was a personification of the corn.

With this conclusion all the indications of the hymn-writer seem to harmonise. He certainly represents Demeter as the goddess by whose power and at whose pleasure the corn either grows or remains hidden in the ground; and to what deity can such powers be so fittingly ascribed as to the goddess of the corn? He calls Demeter yellow and tells how her yellow tresses flowed down on her shoulders;² could any colour be more appropriate with which to paint the divinity of the yellow grain? The same identification of Demeter with the ripe, the yellow corn is made even more clearly by a still older poet, Homer himself, or at all events the author of the fifth book of the *Iliad*. There we read: "And even as the wind carries the chaff about the sacred threshing-floors, when men are

The Yellow Demeter, the goddess who sifts the ripe grain from the chaff at the threshing-floor.

is maintained by W. Mannhardt. See L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, pp. 317, 366 sqq.; F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, i. 385 sqq.; Preller-Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*, i. 747 note⁶; Kern, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, iv. 2713; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 281 sqq. But my learned friend the Rev. Professor J. H. Moulton informs me that both etymologies are open to serious philological objections, and that

no satisfactory derivation of the first syllable of Demeter's name has yet been proposed. Accordingly I prefer to base no argument on an analysis of the name, and to rest my interpretation of the goddess entirely on her myth, ritual, and representations in art. Etymology is at the best a very slippery ground on which to rear mythological theories.

¹ *Hymn to Demeter*, 8 sqq.

² *Hymn to Demeter*, 279, 302.

winnowing, what time yellow Demeter sifts the corn from the chaff on the hurrying blast, so that the heaps of chaff grow white below, so were the Achacans whitened above by the cloud of dust which the hoofs of the horses spurned to the brazen heaven."¹ Here the yellow Demeter who sifts the grain from the chaff at the threshing-floor can hardly be any other than the goddess of the yellow corn; she cannot be the Earth-goddess, for what has the Earth-goddess to do with the grain and the chaff blown about a threshing-floor? With this interpretation it agrees that elsewhere Homer speaks of men eating "Demeter's corn";² and still more definitely Hesiod speaks of "the annual store of food, which the earth bears, Demeter's corn,"³ thus distinguishing the goddess of the corn from the earth which bears it. Still more clearly does a later Greek poet personify the corn as Demeter when, in allusion to the time of the corn-reaping, he says that then "the sturdy swains cleave Demeter limb from limb."⁴ And just as the ripe or yellow corn was personified as the Yellow Demeter, so the unripe or green corn was personified as the Green Demeter. In that character the goddess had sanctuaries at Athens and other places; sacrifices were appropriately offered to Green Demeter in spring when the earth was growing green with the fresh vegetation, and the victims included sows big with young,⁵ which no doubt were intended not merely to symbolise but magically to promote the abundance of the crops.

The Green Demeter the goddess of the green corn.

The cereals called "Demeter's fruits."

In Greek the various kinds of corn were called by the general name of "Demeter's fruits,"⁶ just as in Latin they were called the "fruits or gifts of Ceres,"⁷ an expression

¹ Homer, *Iliad*, v. 499-504.

² *Iliad*, xiii. 322, xxi. 76.

³ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 31 sq.

⁴ Quoted by Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 66.

⁵ Pausanias, i. 22. 3 with my note; Dittenbeiger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 615; J. de Protet et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, Fasciculus I. (Leipzig, 1896) p. 49; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; Scholiast on Sophocles, *Oedipus Colon*. 1600; L. R. Farnell,

The Cults of the Greek States, iii. 312 sq.

⁶ Herodotus, i. 193, iv. 198; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, vi. 3. 6; Aelian, *Historia Animalium*, xvii. 16; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; *Geoponica*, i. 12. 36; *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Leutsch et Schneidewin, Appendix iv. 20 (vol. i. p. 439).

⁷ *Cerealia* in Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxiii. 1; *Cerealia munera* and *Cerealia dona* in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xi. 121 sq.

which survives in the English word cereals. Tradition ran that before Demeter's time men neither cultivated corn nor tilled the ground, but roamed the mountains and woods in search of the wild fruits which the earth produced spontaneously from her womb for their subsistence. The tradition clearly implies not only that Demeter was the goddess of the corn, but that she was different from and younger than the goddess of the Earth, since it is expressly affirmed that before Demeter's time the earth existed and supplied mankind with nourishment in the shape of wild herbs, grasses, flowers and fruits.¹

In ancient art Demeter and Persephone are characterised as goddesses of the corn by the crowns of corn which they wear on their heads and by the stalks of corn which they hold in their hands.² Theocritus describes a smiling image of Demeter standing by a heap of yellow grain on a threshing-floor and grasping sheaves of barley and poppies in both her hands.³ Indeed corn and poppies singly or together were a frequent symbol of the goddess, as we learn not only from the testimony of ancient writers⁴ but from many existing monuments of classical art.⁵ The naturalness of the symbol

Corn and poppies as symbols of Demeter.

¹ Libanius, ed. J. J. Reiske, vol. iv. p. 367, *Corinth. Oratio*: Οὐκ ἀθις ἡμῶν ἀκαρπος ἢ γῆ δοκεῖ γεγενῆσθαι; οὐ πάλιν ὁ πρὸ Δήμητρος εἶναι βίος; καὶ τοὶ καὶ πρὸ Δήμητρος αἱ γεωργίαι μὲν οὐκ ἦσαν· οὐδὲ ἄροτοι, αὐτόφυτοι δὲ βοτάναι καὶ πῦραι· καὶ πολλὰ εἶχεν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀνθρώπων αὐτοσχέδια ἀνθή ἢ γῆ ὠδίνουσα καὶ κούουσα πρὸ τῶν ἡμέρων τὰ ἄγρια. Ἐπλανῶντο μὲν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἀλλήλους· ἄλση καὶ θρη περιήσαν, ζητοῦντες αὐτόματον τροφήν. In this passage, which no doubt represents the common Greek view on the subject, the earth is plainly personified (ὠδίνουσα καὶ κούουσα), which points the antithesis between her and the goddess of the corn. Diodorus Siculus also says (v. 68) that corn grew wild with the other plants before Demeter taught men to cultivate it and to sow the seed.

² Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 616; Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 5; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; *Anthologia Palatina*,

vi. 104. 8; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 235; J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, iii. (Leipzig, 1873-1878) pp. 420, 421, 453, 479, 480, 502, 505, 507, 514, 522, 523, 524, 525 sq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 217 sqq., 220 sq., 222, 226, 232, 233, 237, 260, 265, 268, 269 sq., 271.

³ Theocritus, *Idyl.* vii. 155 sqq. That the sheaves which the goddess grasped were of barley is proved by verses 31-34 of the poem.

⁴ Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 5; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, p. 56, ed. C. Lang; Virgil, *Georg.* i. 212, with the comment of Servius.

⁵ See the references to the works of Overbeck and Farnell above. For example, a fine statue at Copenhagen, in the style of the age of Phidias, represents Demeter holding poppies and ears of corn in her left hand. See Farnell, *op. cit.* iii. 268, with plate xxviii.

can be doubted by no one who has seen—and who has not seen?—a field of yellow corn bespangled thick with scarlet poppies; and we need not resort to the shifts of an ancient mythologist, who explained the symbolism of the poppy in Demeter's hand by comparing the globular shape of the poppy to the roundness of our globe, the unevenness of its edges to hills and valleys, and the hollow interior of the scarlet flower to the caves and dens of the earth.¹ If only students would study the little black and white books of men less and the great rainbow-tinted book of nature more; if they would more frequently exchange the heavy air and the dim light of libraries for the freshness and the sunshine of the open sky; if they would oftener unbend their minds by rural walks between fields of waving corn, beside rivers rippling by under grey willows, or down green lanes, where the hedges are white with the hawthorn bloom or red with wild roses, they might sometimes learn more about primitive religion than can be gathered from many dusty volumes, in which wire-drawn theories are set forth with all the tedious parade of learning.

Persephone portrayed as the young corn sprouting from the ground.

Nowhere, perhaps, in the monuments of Greek art is the character of Persephone as a personification of the young corn sprouting in spring portrayed more gracefully and more truly than on a coin of Lampsacus of the fourth century before our era. On it we see the goddess in the very act of rising from the earth. "Her face is upraised; in her hand are three ears of corn, and others together with grapes are springing behind her shoulder. Complete is here the identification of the goddess and her attribute: she is embowered amid the ears of growing corn, and like it half buried in the ground. She does not make the corn and vine grow, but she *is* the corn and vine growing, and returning again to the face of the earth after lying hidden in its depths. Certainly the artist who designed this beautiful figure thoroughly understood Hellenic religion."²

As the goddess who first bestowed corn on mankind and taught them to sow and cultivate it,³ Demeter was

¹ Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, p. 56 ed. C. Lang.

² Percy Gardner, *Types of Greek*

Coins (Cambridge, 1883), p. 174, with plate x. No. 25.

³ Diodorus Siculus, v. 68. 1.

naturally invoked and propitiated by farmers before they undertook the various operations of the agricultural year. In autumn, when he heard the sonorous trumpeting of the cranes, as they winged their way southward in vast flocks high overhead, the Greek husbandman knew that the rains were near and that the time of ploughing was at hand; but before he put his hand to the plough he prayed to Underground Zeus and to Holy Demeter for a heavy crop of Demeter's sacred corn. Then he guided the ox-drawn plough down the field, turning up the brown earth with the share, while a swain followed close behind with a hoe, who covered up the seed as fast as it fell to protect it from the voracious birds that fluttered and twittered at the plough-tail.¹ But while the ordinary Greek farmer took the signal for ploughing from the clangour of the cranes, Hesiod and other writers who aimed at greater exactness laid it down as a rule that the ploughing should begin with the autumnal setting of the Pleiades in the morning, which in Hesiod's time fell on the twenty-sixth of October.² The month in which the Pleiades set in the morning was generally recognised by the Greeks as the month of sowing; it corresponded apparently in part to our October, in part to

Demeter invoked and propitiated by Greek farmers before the autumnal sowing.

¹ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 448-474; Epictetus, *Dissertationes*, iii. 21. 12. For the autumnal migration and clangour of the cranes as the signal for sowing, see Aristophanes, *Birds*, 711; compare Theognis, 1197 sqq. But the Greeks also ploughed in spring (Hesiod, *op. cit.* 462; Xenophon, *Oeconom.* 16); indeed they ploughed thrice in the year (Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, vii. 13. 6). At the approach of autumn the cranes of northern Europe collect about rivers and lakes, and after much trumpeting set out in enormous bands on their southward journey to the tropical regions of Africa and India. In early spring they return northward, and their flocks may be descried passing at a marvellous height overhead or halting to rest in the meadows beside some broad river. The bird emits its trumpet-like note both on the ground and on the wing. See Alfred Newton, *Dictionary of Birds* (London, 1893-

1896), pp. 110 sq.

² Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 sq., 615-617; Aratus, *Phaenomena*, 254-267; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 241 sq. According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 49) wheat, barley, and all other cereals were sown in Greece and Asia from the time of the autumn setting of the Pleiades. This date for ploughing and sowing is confirmed by Hippocrates and other medical writers. See W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,³ i. 234. Latin writers prescribe the same date for the sowing of wheat. See Virgil, *Georg.* i. 219-226; Columella, *De re rustica*, ii. 8; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 223-226. In Columella's time the Pleiades, he tells us (*l.c.*), set in the morning of October 24th of the Julian calendar, which would correspond to the October 16th of our reckoning.

Boeotian festival of mourning for the descent of Persephone at the autumnal sowing.

our November. The Athenians called it Pyanepsion; the Boeotians named it significantly Damatrius, that is, Demeter's month, and they celebrated a feast of mourning because, says Plutarch, who as a Boeotian speaks with authority on such a matter, Demeter was then in mourning for the descent of Persephone.¹ Is it possible to express more clearly the true original nature of Persephone as the corn-seed which has just been buried in the earth? The obvious, the almost inevitable conclusion did not escape Plutarch. He tells us that the mournful rites which were held at the time of the autumn sowing nominally commemorated the actions of deities, but that the real sadness was for the fruits of the earth, some of which at that season dropped of themselves and vanished from the trees, while others in the shape of seed were committed with anxious thoughts to the ground by men, who scraped the earth and then huddled it up over the seed, just as if they were burying and mourning for the dead.² Surely this interpretation of the custom and of the myth of Persephone is not only beautiful but true.

Thank-offerings of ripe grain presented by Greek farmers to Demeter after the harvest. Theocritus's

And just as the Greek husbandman prayed to the Corn Goddess when he committed the seed, with anxious forebodings, to the furrows, so after he had reaped the harvest and brought back the yellow sheaves with rejoicing to the threshing-floor, he paid the bountiful goddess her dues in the form of a thank-offering of golden grain. Theocritus has painted for us in glowing colours a picture of a

¹ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 69.

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 70. Similarly Cornutus says that "Hades is fabled to have carried off Demeter's daughter because the seed vanishes for a time under the earth," and he mentions that a festival of Demeter was celebrated at the time of sowing (*Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, pp. 54, 55 ed. C. Lang). In a fragment of a Greek calendar which is preserved in the Louvre "the ascent (*ἀναβόσις*) of the goddess" is dated the seventh day of the month Dios, and "the descent or setting (*δύσις*) of the goddess" is dated the fourth day of the month Hephæstius, a month which seems to be other-

wise unknown. See W. Frochner, *Musée Nationale du Louvre, Les Inscriptions Grecques* (Paris, 1880), pp. 50 *sq.* Greek inscriptions found at Mantinea refer to a worship of Demeter and Persephone, who are known to have had a sanctuary there (Pausanias, viii. 9. 2). The people of Mantinea celebrated "mysteries of the goddess" and a festival called the *koragia*, which seems to have represented the return of Persephone from the lower world. See W. Immerwahr, *Die Kulte und Mythen Arkadiens* (Leipzig, 1891), pp. 100 *sq.*; S. Reinach, *Traité d'Épigraphie Grecque* (Paris, 1885), pp. 141 *sqq.*; Hesychius, *s.v.* *κοράγειν*.

rustic harvest-home, as it fell on a bright autumn day some two thousand years ago in the little Greek island of Cos.¹ The poet tells us how he went with two friends from the city to attend a festival given by farmers, who were offering first-fruits to Demeter from the store of barley with which she had filled their barns. The day was warm, indeed so hot that the very lizards, which love to bask and run about in the sun, were slumbering in the crevices of the stone-walls, and not a lark soared carolling into the blue vault of heaven. Yet despite the great heat there were everywhere signs of autumn. "All things," says the poet, "smelt of summer, but smelt of autumn too." Indeed the day was really autumnal; for a goat-herd who met the friends on their way to the rural merry-making, asked them whether they were bound for the treading of the grapes in the wine-presses. And when they had reached their destination and reclined at ease in the dappled shade of over-arching poplars and elms, with the babble of a neighbouring fountain, the buzz of the cicadas, the hum of bees, and the cooing of doves in their ears, the ripe apples and pears rolled in the grass at their feet and the branches of the wild-plum trees were bowed down to the earth with the weight of their purple fruit. So couched on soft beds of fragrant lentisk they passed the sultry hours singing ditties alternately, while a rustic image of Demeter, to whom the honours of the day were paid, stood smiling beside a heap of yellow grain on the threshing-floor, with corn-stalks and poppies in her hands.

descrip-
tion of
a harvest-
home in
Cos.

In this description the time of year when the harvest-home was celebrated is clearly marked. Apart from the mention of the ripe apples, pears, and plums, the reference to the treading of the grapes is decisive. The Greeks gather and press the grapes in the first half of October,² and accordingly it is to this date that the harvest-festival described by Theocritus must be assigned. At the present

The
harvest-
home de-
scribed by
Theocritus
fell in
autumn.

¹ Theocritus, *Idyl.* vii.

² In ancient Greece the vintage seems to have fallen somewhat earlier; for Hesiod bids the husbandman gather the ripe clusters at the time when

Arcturus is a morning star, which in the poet's age was on the 18th of September. See Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 609 sqq.; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 247.

day in Greece the maize-harvest immediately precedes the vintage, the grain being reaped and garnered at the end of September. Travelling in rural districts of Argolis and Arcadia at that time of the year you pass from time to time piles of the orange-coloured cobs laid up ready to be shelled, or again heaps of the yellow grain beside the pods. But maize was unknown to the ancient Greeks, who, like their modern descendants, reaped their wheat and barley crops much earlier in the summer, usually from the end of April till June.¹ However, we may conclude that the day immortalised by Theocritus was one of those autumn days of great heat and effulgent beauty which in Greece may occur at any time up to the very verge of winter. I remember such a day at Panopeus on the borders of Phocis and Bocotia. It was the first of November, yet the sun shone in cloudless splendour and the heat was so great, that when I had examined the magnificent remains of ancient Greek fortification-walls which crown the summit of the hill, it was delicious to repose on a grassy slope in the shade of some fine holly-oaks and to inhale the sweet scent of the wild thyme, which perfumed all the air. But it was summer's farewell. Next morning the weather had completely changed. A grey November sky lowered sadly overhead, and grey mists hung like winding-sheets on the lower slopes of the barren mountains which shut in the fatal plain of Chaeronea.

The Greeks seem to have deferred the offering of first-fruits till the autumn in order to propitiate the Corn Goddess at the moment of ploughing and sowing, when

Thus we may infer that in the rural districts of ancient Greece farmers offered their first-fruits of the barley harvest to Demeter in autumn about the time when the grapes were being trodden in the wine-presses and the ripe apples and pears littered the ground in the orchards. At first sight the lateness of the festival in the year is surprising; for in the lowlands of Greece at the present day barley is reaped at the end of April and wheat in May,² and in antiquity the time of harvest would seem not to have been very different, for Hesiod bids the husbandman put the sickle to the corn at the morning rising of the Pleiades,³ which in his time

¹ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 190 note ².

² See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second

³ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 sq.

took place on the eleventh of May.¹ But if the harvest was reaped in spring or early summer, why defer the offerings of corn to the Corn Goddess until the middle of autumn? The reason for the delay is not, so far as I am aware, explained by any ancient author, and accordingly it must remain for us a matter of conjecture. I surmise that the reason may have been a calculation on the part of the practical farmer that the best time to propitiate the Corn Goddess was not after harvest, when he had got all that was to be got out of her, but immediately before ploughing and sowing, when he had everything to hope from her good-will and everything to fear from her displeasure. When he had reaped his corn, and the sheaves had been safely garnered in his barns, he might, so to say, snap his fingers at the Corn Goddess. What could she do for him on the bare stubble-field which lay scorched and baking under the fierce rays of the sun all the long rainless summer through? But matters wore a very different aspect when, with the shortening and cooling of the days, he began to scan the sky for clouds² and to listen for the cries of the cranes as they flew southward, heralding by their trumpet-like notes the approach of the autumnal rains. Then he knew that the time had come to break up the ground that it might receive the seed and be fertilised by the refreshing water of heaven; then he bethought him of the Corn Goddess once more and brought forth from the grange a share of the harvested corn with which to woo her favour and induce her to quicken the grain which he was about to commit to the earth. On this theory the Greek offering of first-fruits was prompted not so much by gratitude for past favours as by a shrewd eye to favours to come, and perhaps this interpretation of the custom does no serious injustice to the cool phlegmatic temper of the bucolic mind, which is more apt to be moved by considerations of profit than by sentiment. At all events the reasons suggested for delaying the harvest-festival accord perfectly with the natural conditions and seasons of farming in Greece. For in that country the summer is practically rainless, and during the

her help
was
urgently
needed.

¹ L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 242.

² Compare Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*,

17, ἐπειδὴν γὰρ ὁ μετοπωρινὸς χρόνος ἔλθῃ, πάντες που οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀποβλέπουσιν, ὅποτε βρέξας τὴν γῆν ἀφήσει αὐτοὺς σπελεῖν.

long months of heat and drought the cultivation of the two ancient cereals, barley and wheat, is at a standstill. The first rains of autumn fall about the middle of October,¹ and that was the Greek farmer's great time for ploughing and sowing.² Hence we should expect him to make his offering of first-fruits to the Corn Goddess shortly before he ploughed and sowed, and this expectation is entirely confirmed by the date which we have inferred for the offering from the evidence of Theocritus. Thus the sacrifice of barley to Demeter in the autumn would seem to have been not so much a thank-offering as a bribe judiciously administered to her at the very moment of all the year when her services were most urgently wanted.

The festival of the *Proerosia* ("Before the Ploughing") held at Eleusis in honour of Demeter.

When with the progress of civilisation a number of petty agricultural communities have merged into a single state dependent for its subsistence mainly on the cultivation of the ground, it commonly happens that, though every farmer continues to perform for himself the simple old rites designed to ensure the blessing of the gods on his crops, the government undertakes to celebrate similar, though more stately and elaborate, rites on behalf of the whole people, lest the neglect of public worship should draw down on the country the wrath of the offended deities. Hence it comes about that, for all their pomp and splendour, the national festivals of such states are often merely magnified and embellished copies of homely rites and uncouth observances carried out by rustics in the open fields, in barns, and on threshing-floors. In ancient Egypt the religion of Isis and Osiris furnishes examples of solemnities which have been thus raised from the humble rank of rural festivities to the dignity of national celebrations;³ and in ancient Greece a like development may be traced in the religion of Demeter. If the Greek ploughman prayed to Demeter and Underground Zeus for a good crop before he put his hand to the plough in autumn, the authorities of the Athenian state celebrated about the same time and for the same purpose a public festival in honour of Demeter at Eleusis.

¹ August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, p. 193.

² See above, pp. 44 *sqq.*

³ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 283 *sqq.*

It was called the Proerosia, which signifies "Before the Ploughing"; and as the festival was dedicated to her, Demeter herself bore the name of Proerosia. Tradition ran that once on a time the whole world was desolated by a famine, and that to remedy the evil the Pythian oracle bade the Athenians offer the sacrifice of the Proerosia on behalf of all men. They did so, and the famine ceased accordingly. Hence to testify their gratitude for the deliverance people sent the first-fruits of their harvest from all quarters to Athens.¹

But the exact date at which the Proerosia or Festival before Ploughing took place is somewhat uncertain, and enquirers are divided in opinion as to whether it fell before or after the Great Mysteries, which began on the fifteenth or sixteenth of Boedromion, a month corresponding roughly to our September. Another name for the festival was Proarcturia, that is, "Before Arcturus,"² which points to a date either before the middle of September, when Arcturus is a morning star, or before the end of October, when Arcturus is an evening star.³ In favour of the earlier date it may be said, first, that the morning phase of Arcturus was well known and much observed, because it marked the middle of autumn, whereas little use was made of the evening phase of Arcturus for the purpose of dating;⁴ and, second, that in an official Athenian inscription the Festival before Ploughing (*Proerosia*) is mentioned immediately before the Great Mys-

The *Proerosia* seems to have been held before the ploughing in October but after the Great Mysteries in September.

¹ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Knights*, 720; Suidas, *s.v.* ερπεσιώνη and προηροσία; *Etymologicum Magnum*, Hesychius, and Photius, *Lexicon*, *s.v.* προηρόσια; Plutarch, *Septem Sapientum Convivium*, 15; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 521, line 29, and No. 628; Aug. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 192 sqq. The inscriptions prove that the Proerosia was held at Eleusis and that it was distinct from the Great Mysteries, being mentioned separately from them. Some of the ancients accounted for the origin of the festival by a universal plague instead of a universal famine. But this version of the story no doubt arose from the common confusion be-

tween the similar Greek words for plague and famine (λοιμός and λιμός). That in the original version famine and not plague must have been alleged as the reason for instituting the Proerosia, appears plainly from the reference of the name to ploughing, from the dedication of the festival to Demeter, and from the offerings of first-fruits; for these circumstances, though quite appropriate to ceremonies designed to stay or avert dearth and famine, would be quite inappropriate in the case of a plague.

² Hesychius, *s.v.* προηρόσια.

³ August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, p. 194.

⁴ August Mommsen, *l.c.*

teries.¹ On the other hand, in favour of the later date, it may be said that as the autumnal rains in Greece set in about the middle of October, the latter part of that month would be a more suitable time for a ceremony at the opening of ploughing than the middle of September, when the soil is still parched with the summer drought ; and, second, that this date is confirmed by a Greek inscription of the fourth or third century B.C., found at Eleusis, in which the Festival before Ploughing is apparently mentioned in the month of Pyanepsion immediately before the festival of the Pyanepsia, which was held on the seventh day of that month.² It is difficult to decide between these conflicting arguments, but on the whole I incline, not without hesitation, to agree with some eminent modern authorities in placing the Festival before Ploughing in Pyanepsion (October) after the Mysteries, rather than in Boedromion (September) before the Mysteries.³ However, we must bear in mind that as the Attic months, like the Greek months generally, were lunar,⁴ their position in the solar year necessarily varied from year to year, and though these variations were periodically corrected by intercalation, nevertheless the beginning of each Attic month sometimes diverged by several weeks from the beginning of the corresponding month to which we equate it.⁵ From this it follows that the Great Mysteries, which were always dated by the calendar month, must have annually shifted their place somewhat in the solar year ; whereas the Festival before Ploughing, if it was indeed dated either by the morning or by the evening phase of Arcturus, must have occupied a fixed place in the solar year. Hence it appears to be not impossible that the Great Mysteries, oscillating to and fro with the inconstant moon,

However, the date of the Great Mysteries, being determined by the lunar calendar, must have fluctuated in the solar year ; whereas the date of the *Proerosia*, being determined by observation of Arcturus, must have been fixed.

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 521, lines 29 sqq.

² Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 628.

³ The view that the Festival before Ploughing (*Proerosia*) fell in Pyanepsion is accepted by W. Mannhardt and W. Dittenberger. See W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), pp. 238 sq. ; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 258 ; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² note ² on Inscr. No. 628 (vol. ii. pp.

423 sq.). The view that the Festival before Ploughing fell in Boedromion is maintained by August Mommsen. See his *Hecortologie* (Leipsic, 1864), pp. 218 sqq. ; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 192 sqq.

⁴ See below, p. 82.

⁵ L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 292 sq. ; compare August Mommsen, *Chronologie* (Leipsic, 1883), pp. 58 sq.

may sometimes have fallen before and sometimes after the Festival before Ploughing, which apparently always remained true to the constant star. At least this possibility, which seems to have been overlooked by previous enquirers, deserves to be taken into account. It is a corollary from the shifting dates of the lunar months that the official Greek calendar, in spite of its appearance of exactness, really furnished the ancient farmer with little trustworthy guidance as to the proper seasons for conducting the various operations of agriculture; and he was well advised in trusting to various natural timekeepers, such as the rising and setting of the constellations, the arrival and departure of the migratory birds, the flowering of certain plants,¹ the ripening of fruits, and the setting in of the rains, rather than to the fallacious indications of the public calendar. It is by natural timekeepers, and not by calendar months, that Hesiod determines the seasons of the farmer's year in the poem which is the oldest existing treatise on husbandry.²

Just as the ploughman's prayer to Demeter, before he drove the share through the clods of the field, was taken up and reverberated, so to say, with a great volume of sound in the public prayers which the Athenian state annually offered to the goddess before the ploughing on behalf of the whole world, so the simple first-fruits of barley, presented to the rustic Demeter under the dappled shade of rustling poplars and elms on the threshing-floor in Cos, were repeated year by year on a grander scale in the first-fruits of the barley and wheat harvest, which were presented to the Corn Mother and the Corn Maiden at Eleusis, not merely by every husbandman in Attica, but by all the allies and subjects of Athens far and near, and even by many free Greek communities beyond the sea. The reason why year by year these offerings of grain poured from far countries into the public granaries at Eleusis, was

Offerings of the first-fruits of the barley and wheat to Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis.

¹ For example, Theophrastus notes that squills flowered thrice a year, and that each flowering marked the time for one of the three ploughings. See Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, vii. 13. 6.

² Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 sqq.

The poet indeed refers (*vv.* 765 sqq.) to days of the month as proper times for engaging in certain tasks; but such references are always simply to days of the lunar month and apply equally to every month; they are never to days as dates in the solar year.

the widespread belief that the gift of corn had been first bestowed by Demeter on the Athenians and afterwards disseminated by them among all mankind through the agency of Triptolemus, who travelled over the world in his dragon-drawn car teaching all peoples to plough the earth and to sow the seed.¹ In the fifth century before our era the legend was celebrated by Sophocles in a play called *Triptolemus*, in which he represented Demeter instructing the hero to carry the seed of the fruits which she had bestowed on men to all the coasts of Southern Italy,² from which we may infer that the cities of Magna Graecia were among the number of those that sent the thank-offering of barley and wheat every year to Athens. Again, in the fourth century before our era Xenophon represents Callias, the braggart Eleusinian Torchbearer, addressing the Lacedaemonians in a set speech, in which he declared that "Our ancestor Triptolemus is said to have bestowed the seed of Demeter's corn on the Peloponese before any other land. How then," he asked with pathetic earnestness, "can it be right that you should come to ravage the corn of the men from whom you received the seed?"³ Again, writing in the fourth century before our era Isocrates relates with a swell of patriotic pride how, in her search for her lost daughter Persephone, the goddess Demeter came to Attica and gave to the ancestors of the Athenians the two greatest of all gifts, the gift of the corn and the gift of the mysteries, of which the one reclaimed men from the life of beasts and the other held out hopes to them of a blissful eternity beyond the grave. The antiquity of the tradition, the orator proceeds to say, was no reason for rejecting it, but quite the contrary it furnished a strong argument in its favour, for what many affirmed and all had heard might be accepted as trustworthy. "And moreover," he adds, "we are not driven to rest our case merely on the venerable age of the tradition we can appeal to stronger evidence in its support. For most of the cities send us every year the first-fruits of the corn as a memorial of that ancient benefit, and when any of

Isocrates
on the
offerings of
first-fruits
at Eleusis.

¹ See below, p. 72.

² Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* i. 12. 2.

³ Xenophon, *Historia Graeca*, vi. 3. 6.

them have failed to do so the Pythian priestess has commanded them to send the due portions of the fruits and to act towards our city according to ancestral custom. Can anything be supported by stronger evidence than by the oracle of god, the assent of many Greeks, and the harmony of ancient legend with the deeds of to-day?"¹

This testimony of Isocrates to the antiquity both of the legend and of the custom might perhaps have been set aside, or at least disparaged, as the empty bombast of a wordy rhetorician, if it had not happened by good chance to be amply confirmed by an official decree of the Athenian people passed in the century before Isocrates wrote. The decree was found inscribed on a stone at Eleusis and is dated by scholars in the latter half of the fifth century before our era, sometime between 446 and 420 B.C.² It deals with the first-fruits of barley and wheat which were offered to the Two Goddesses, that is, to Demeter and Persephone, not only by the Athenians and their allies but by the Greeks in general. It prescribes the exact amount of barley and wheat which was to be offered by the Athenians and their allies, and it directs the highest officials at Eleusis, namely the Hierophant and the Torchbearer, to exhort the other Greeks at the mysteries to offer likewise of the first-fruits of the corn. The authority alleged in the decree for requiring or inviting offerings of first-fruits alike from Athenians and from foreigners is ancestral custom and the bidding of the Delphic oracle. The Senate is further enjoined to send commissioners, so far as it could be done, to all Greek cities whatsoever, exhorting, though not commanding, them to send the first-fruits in compliance with ancestral custom and the bidding of the Delphic oracle, and the state officials are directed to receive the offerings from such states in the same manner as the offerings of the Athenians and their allies. Instructions are also given for the building of three subterranean granaries at Eleusis, where the contributions of grain from Attica were to be stored. The best of the corn

Athenian
decree con-
cerning
the offer-
ings of
first-fruits
at Eleusis.

¹ Isocrates, *Panegyric*, 6 sq.

pp. 33 sqq.); E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, Part ii. (Cambridge, 1905) No. 9, pp. 22 sqq.

² Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 20 (vol. i.

was to be offered in sacrifice as the Eumolpids might direct : oxen were to be bought and sacrificed, with gilt horns, not only to the two Goddesses but also to the God (Pluto), Triptolemus, Eubulus, and Athena ; and the remainder of the grain was to be sold and with the produce votive offerings were to be dedicated with inscriptions setting forth that they had been dedicated from the offerings of first-fruits, and recording the names of all the Greeks who sent the offerings to Eleusis. The decree ends with a prayer that all who comply with these injunctions or exhortations and render their dues to the city of Athens and to the Two Goddesses, may enjoy prosperity together with good and abundant crops. Writing in the second century of our era, under the Roman empire, the rhetorician Aristides records the custom which the Greeks observed of sending year by year the first-fruits of the harvest to Athens in gratitude for the corn, but he speaks of the practice as a thing of the past.¹

Even after foreign states ceased to send first-fruits of the corn to Eleusis, they continued to acknowledge the benefit which the Athenians had conferred on mankind by diffusing among them Demeter's gift of the corn.

We may suspect that the tribute of corn ceased to flow from far countries to Athens, when, with her falling fortunes and decaying empire, her proud galleys had ceased to carry the terror of the Athenian arms into distant seas. But if the homage was no longer paid in the substantial shape of cargoes of grain, it continued down to the latest days of paganism to be paid in the cheaper form of gratitude for that inestimable benefit, which the Athenians claimed to have received from the Corn Goddess and to have liberally communicated to the rest of mankind. Even the Sicilians, who, inhabiting a fertile corn-growing island, worshipped Demeter and Persephone above all the gods and claimed to have been the first to receive the gift of the corn from the Corn Goddess,² nevertheless freely acknowledged that the Athenians had spread, though they had not originated, the useful discovery among the nations. Thus the patriotic Sicilian historian Diodorus, while giving the precedence to his fellow-

¹ Aristides, *Panathen. and Eleusin.*, vol. i. pp. 167 sq., 417 ed. G. Dindorf (Leipsic, 1829).

² Diodorus Siculus, v. 2 and 4 ; Cicero, *In C. Verrem*, act. ii. bk. iv. chapters 48 sq. Both writers mention that the whole of Sicily was deemed

sacred to Demeter and Persephone, and that corn was said to have grown in the island before it appeared anywhere else. In support of the latter claim Diodorus Siculus (v. 2. 4) asserts that wheat grew wild in many parts of Sicily.

countrymen, strives to be just to the Athenian pretensions in the following passage.¹ "Mythologists," says he, "relate that Demeter, unable to find her daughter, lit torches at the craters of Etna² and roamed over many parts of the world. Those people who received her best she rewarded by giving them in return the fruit of the wheat; and because the Athenians welcomed her most kindly of all, she bestowed the fruit of the wheat on them next after the Sicilians. Wherefore that people honoured the goddess more than any other folk by magnificent sacrifices and the mysteries at Eleusis, which for their extreme antiquity and sanctity have become famous among all men. From the Athenians many others received the boon of the corn and shared the seed with their neighbours, till they filled the whole inhabited earth with it. But as the people of Sicily, on account of the intimate relation in which they stood to Demeter and the Maiden, were the first to participate in the newly discovered corn, they appointed sacrifices and popular festivities in honour of each of the two goddesses, naming the celebrations after them and signifying the nature of the boons they had received by the dates of the festivals. For they celebrated the bringing home of the Maiden at the time when the corn was ripe, performing the sacrifice and holding the festivity with all the solemnity and zeal that might be reasonably expected of men who desired to testify their gratitude for so signal a gift bestowed on them before all the rest of mankind. But the sacrifice to Demeter they assigned to the time when the sowing of the corn begins; and for ten days they hold a popular festivity which bears the name of the goddess, and is remarkable as well for the

Testimony
of the
Sicilian
historian
Diodorus.

¹ Diodorus Siculus, v. 4.

² This legend, which is mentioned also by Cicero (*In C. Verrem*, act. ii. bk. iv. ch. 48), was no doubt told to explain the use of torches in the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone. The author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* tells us (verses 47 sq.) that Demeter searched for her lost daughter for nine days with burning torches in her hands, but he does not say that the torches were kindled at the flames of

Etna. In art Demeter and Persephone and their attendants were often represented with torches in their hands. See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) plates xiii., xv. a, xvi., xvii., xviii., xix., xx., xxi. a, xxv., xxvii. b. Perhaps the legend of the torchlight search for Persephone and the use of the torches in the mysteries may have originated in a custom of carrying fire about the fields as a charm to secure sunshine for the corn. See *The Golden Bough*,² iii. 313.

magnificence of its pomp as for the costumes then worn in imitation of the olden time. During these days it is customary for people to rail at each other in foul language, because when Demeter was mourning for the rape of the Maiden she laughed at a ribald jest."¹ Thus despite his natural prepossession in favour of his native land, Diodorus bears testimony both to the special blessing bestowed on the Athenians by the Corn Goddess, and to the generosity with which they had imparted the blessing to others, until it gradually spread to the ends of the earth. Again, Cicero, addressing a Roman audience, enumerates among the benefits which Athens was believed to have conferred on the world, the gift of the corn and its origin in Attic soil; and the cursory manner in which he alludes to it seems to prove that the tradition was familiar to his hearers.² Four centuries later the rhetorician Himerius speaks of Demeter's gift of the corn and the mysteries to the Athenians as the source of the first and greatest service rendered by their city to mankind;³ so ancient, widespread, and persistent was the legend which ascribed the origin of the corn to the goddess Demeter and associated it with the institution of the Eleusinian mysteries. No wonder that the Delphic oracle called Athens "the Metropolis of the Corn."⁴

Testimony
of Cicero
and
Himerius.

The
Sicilians
seem to
have
associated
Demeter
with the
seed-corn
and Per-
sephone
with the
ripe ears.

From the passage of Diodorus which I have quoted we learn that the Sicilians celebrated the festival of Demeter at the beginning of sowing, and the festival of Persephone at harvest. This proves that they associated, if they did not identify, the Mother Goddess with the seed-corn and the Daughter Goddess with the ripe ears. Could any association or identification be more easy and obvious to people who personified the processes of nature under the form of

¹ The words which I have translated "the bringing home of the Maiden" (τῆς Κόρης τὴν καταγωγὴν) are explained with great probability by Professor M. P. Nilsson as referring to the bringing of the ripe corn to the barn or the threshing-floor (*Griechische Feste*, Leipsic, 1906, pp. 356 *sq.*). This interpretation accords perfectly with a well-attested sense of *καταγωγή* and its cognate verb *κατάγειν*, and is preferable to the other

possible interpretation "the bringing down," which would refer to the descent of Persephone into the nether world; for such a descent is hardly appropriate to a harvest festival.

² Cicero, *Pro L. Flacco*, 26.

³ Himerius, *Orat.* ii. 5.

⁴ *Μητρόπολις τῶν καρπῶν*, Aristides, *Panathen.* vol. i. p. 168 ed. G. Dindorf (Leipzig, 1829).

anthropomorphic deities? As the seed brings forth the ripe ear, so the Corn Mother Demeter gave birth to the Corn Daughter Persephone. It is true that difficulties arise when we attempt to analyse this seemingly simple conception. How, for example, are we to divide exactly the two persons of the divinity? At what precise moment does the seed cease to be the Corn Mother and begins to burgeon out into the Corn Daughter? And how far can we identify the material substance of the barley and wheat with the divine bodies of the Two Goddesses? Questions of this sort probably gave little concern to the sturdy swains who ploughed, sowed, and reaped the fat fields of Sicily. We cannot imagine that their night's rest was disturbed by uneasy meditations on these knotty problems. It would hardly be strange if the muzzy mind of the Sicilian bumpkin, who looked with blind devotion to the Two Goddesses for his daily bread, totally failed to distinguish Demeter from the seed and Persephone from the ripe sheaves, and if he accepted implicitly the doctrine of the real presence of the divinities in the corn without discriminating too curiously between the material and the spiritual properties of the barley or the wheat. And if he had been closely questioned by a rigid logician as to the exact distinction to be drawn between the two persons of the godhead who together represented for him the annual vicissitudes of the cereals, Hodge might have scratched his head and confessed that it puzzled him to say where precisely the one goddess ended and the other began, or why the seed buried in the ground should figure at one time as the dead daughter Persephone descending into the nether world, and at another as the living Mother Demeter about to give birth to next year's crop. Theological subtleties like these have posed longer heads than are commonly to be found on bucolic shoulders.

Difficulty of distinguishing between Demeter and Persephone as personifications of different aspects of the corn

The time of year at which the first-fruits were offered to Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis is not explicitly mentioned by ancient authorities, and accordingly no inference can be drawn from the date of the offering as to its religious significance. It is true that at the Eleusinian mysteries the Hierophant and Torchbearer publicly exhorted the Greeks in general, as distinguished from the Athenians

The time of the year when the first-fruits of the corn were offered to Demeter and Persephone at

Eleusis is
not known.

and their allies, to offer the first-fruits in accordance with ancestral custom and the bidding of the Delphic oracle.¹ But there is nothing to shew that the offerings were made immediately after the exhortation. Nor does any ancient authority support the view of a modern scholar that the offering of the first-fruits, or a portion of them, took place at the Festival before Ploughing (*Proerosia*),² though that festival would no doubt be an eminently appropriate occasion for propitiating with such offerings the goddess on whose bounty the next year's crop was believed to depend.

The
Festival
of the
Threshing-
floor
(*Halaa*)
at Eleusis.

On the other hand, we are positively told that the first-fruits were carried to Eleusis to be used at the Festival of the Threshing-floor (*Halaa*).³ But the statement, cursorily reported by writers of no very high authority, cannot be implicitly relied upon; and even if it could, we should hardly be justified in inferring from it that all the first-fruits of the corn were offered to Demeter and Persephone at this

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 20, lines 25 sqq.; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. (Cambridge, 1905) No. 9, lines 25 sqq., *κελεύτω δὲ καὶ ὁ ἱεροφάντης καὶ ὁ δαδούχος μυστηρίοις ἀπάρχεσθαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας τοῦ καρποῦ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὴν μαντεῖαν τὴν ἐν Δελφῶν*. By coupling *μυστηρίοις* with *ἀπάρχεσθαι* instead of with *κελεύτω*, Miss J. E. Harrison understands the offering instead of the exhortation to have been made at the mysteries (*Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition, p. 155, "Let the Hierophant and the Torch-bearer command that at the mysteries the Hellenes should offer first-fruits of their crops," etc.). This interpretation is no doubt grammatically permissible, but the context seems to plead strongly, if not to be absolutely decisive, in favour of the other. It is to be observed that the exhortation was addressed not to the Athenians and their allies (who were compelled to make the offering) but only to the other Greeks, who might make it or not as they pleased; and the amount of such voluntary contributions was probably small compared to that of the compulsory contributions,

as to the date of which nothing is said. That the proclamation to the Greeks in general was an exhortation (*κελεύτω*), not a command, is clearly shewn by the words of the decree a few lines lower down, where commissioners are directed to go to all Greek states exhorting but not commanding them to offer the first-fruits (*ἐκέλευσεν δὲ μὴ ἐπιτάττοντας, κελείοντας δὲ ἀπάρχεσθαι ἐὰν βούλωνται κατὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὴν μαντεῖαν ἐν Δελφῶν*). The Athenians could not command free and independent states to make such offerings, still less could they prescribe the exact date when the offerings were to be made. All that they could and did do was, taking advantage of the great assembly of Greeks from all quarters at the mysteries, to invite or exhort, by the mouth of the great priestly functionaries, the foreigners to contribute.

² August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Allertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 192 sqq.

³ Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, ix. 534, p. 772; Im. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, i. 384 sq., s.v. Ἁλῶα. Compare O. Rubensohn, *Die Mysterienheiligtümer in Eleusis und Samothrake* (Berlin, 1892), p. 116.

festival. Be that as it may, the Festival of the Threshing-floor was intimately connected with the worship both of Demeter and of Dionysus, and accordingly it deserves our attention. It is said to have been sacred to both these deities;¹ and while the name seems to connect it rather with the Corn Goddess than with the Wine God, we are yet informed that it was held by the Athenians on the occasion of the pruning of the vines and the tasting of the stored-up wine.² The festival is frequently mentioned in Eleusinian inscriptions, from some of which we gather that it included sacrifices to the two goddesses and a so-called Ancestral Contest, as to the nature of which we have no information.³ We may suppose that the festival or some part of it was celebrated on the Sacred Threshing-floor of Triptolemus at Eleusis;⁴ for as Triptolemus was the hero who is said to have diffused the knowledge of the corn all over the world, nothing could be more natural than that the Festival of the Threshing-floor should be held on the sacred threshing-floor which bore his name. As for Demeter, we have already seen how intimate was her association with the threshing-floor and the operation of threshing; according to Homer, she is the yellow goddess who parts the yellow grain from the white chaff at the threshing, and in Cos her image with the corn-stalks and the poppies

¹ Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, ix. 534, p. 772; im. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, i. 384 sq., s.v. Ἀλώα.

² *Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 279 sq. (scholium on *Dialog. Meretr.* vii. 4).

³ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² Nos. 192, 246, 587, 640; Ἐφημερίς Ἀρχαιολογική, 1884, coll. 135 sq. The passages of inscriptions and of ancient authors which refer to the festival are collected by Dr. L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 315 sq. For a discussion of the evidence see August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 359 sqq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 145 sqq.

⁴ The threshing-floor of Triptolemus

at Eleusis (Pausanias, i. 38. 6) is no doubt identical with the Sacred Threshing-floor mentioned in the great Eleusinian inscription of 329 B.C. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, line 234). We read of a hierophant who, contrary to ancestral custom, sacrificed a victim on the hearth in the Hall at Eleusis during the Festival of the Threshing-floor, "it being unlawful to sacrifice victims on that day" (Demosthenes, *Contra Neaeram*, 116, pp. 1384 sq.), but from such an unlawful act no inference can be drawn as to the place where the festival was held. That the festival probably had special reference to the threshing-floor of Triptolemus has already been pointed out by O. Rubensohn (*Die Mysterienheiligtümer in Eleusis und Samothrake*, Berlin, 1892, p. 118).

Date of
the Festival
of the
Threshing-
floor
(*Haloo*) at
Eleusis.

in her hands stood on the threshing-floor.¹ The festival lasted one day, and no victims might be sacrificed at it ;² but special use was made, as we have seen, of the first-fruits of the corn. With regard to the dating of the festival we are informed that it fell in the month Poseideon, which corresponds roughly to our December, and as the date rests on the high authority of the ancient Athenian antiquary Philochorus,³ and is, moreover, indirectly confirmed by inscriptional evidence,⁴ we are bound to accept it. But it is certainly surprising to find a Festival of the Threshing-floor held so late in the year, long after the threshing, which in Greece usually takes place not later than midsummer, though on high ground in Crete it is sometimes prolonged till near the end of August.⁵ We seem bound to conclude that the Festival of the Threshing-floor was quite distinct from the actual threshing of the corn.⁶ It is said to have included certain mystic rites performed by women alone, who feasted and quaffed wine, while they broke filthy jests on each other and exhibited cakes baked in the form of the male and female organs of generation.⁷ If the latter particulars are correctly reported we may suppose that these indecencies, like certain obscenities which seem to have formed part of the Great Mysteries at Eleusis,⁸ were no mere wanton outbursts of licentious passion, but were deliberately practised as rites calculated to promote the fertility of the ground by means of homoeopathic or imitative magic. A like association of

¹ See above, pp. 41 sq., 43. Maximus Tyrius observes (*Dissertat.* xxx. 5) that husbandmen were the first to celebrate sacred rites in honour of Demeter at the threshing-floor.

² See above, p. 61, note 4.

³ Harpocration, s.v. 'Αλωα (vol. i. p. 24, ed. G. Dindorf).

⁴ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, lines 124, 144, with the editor's notes; August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, p. 360.

⁵ So I am informed by my friend Professor J. L. Myres, who speaks from personal observation.

⁶ This is recognised by Professor M. P. Nilsson. See his *Studia de Dionysiis Atticis* (Lund, 1900), pp

95 sqq., and his *Griechische Feste*, p. 329. To explain the lateness of the festival, Miss J. E. Harrison suggests that "the shift of date is due to Dionysos. The rival festivals of Dionysos were in mid-winter. He possessed himself of the festivals of Demeter, took over her threshing-floor and compelled the anomaly of a winter threshing festival" (*Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition, p. 147).

⁷ Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* vii. 4 (*Scholias in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe, Leipzig, 1906, pp. 279-281).

⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 15 and 20, pp. 13 and 17 ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 25-27, 35, 39.

what we might call indecency with rites intended to promote the growth of the crops meets us in the Thesmophoria, a festival of Demeter celebrated by women alone, at which the character of the goddess as a source of fertility comes out clearly in the custom of mixing the remains of the sacrificial pigs with the seed-corn in order to obtain a plentiful crop. We shall return to this festival later on.¹

Other festivals held at Eleusis in honour of Demeter and Persephone were known as the Green Festival and the Festival of the Cornstalks.² Of the manner of their celebration we know nothing except that they comprised sacrifices, which were offered to Demeter and Persephone. But their names suffice to connect the two festivals with the green and the standing corn. We have seen that Demeter herself bore the title of Green, and that sacrifices were offered to her under that title which plainly aimed at promoting fertility.³ Among the many epithets applied to Demeter which mark her relation to the corn may further be mentioned "Wheat-lover,"⁴ "She of the Corn,"⁵ "Sheaf-bearer,"⁶ "She of the Threshing-floor,"⁷ "She of the Winnowing-fan,"⁸ "Nurse of the Corn-ears,"⁹ "Crowned with Ears of Corn,"¹⁰ "She of the Seed,"¹¹ "She of the Green Fruits,"¹² "Heavy with Summer Fruits,"¹³ "Fruit-bearer,"¹⁴

The Green Festival and the Festival of the Cornstalks at Eleusis.

Epithets of Demeter referring to the corn.

¹ See below, p. 116; vol. ii. pp. 17 sqq.

² Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 640; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), No. 135, p. 145. To be exact, while the inscription definitely mentions the sacrifices to Demeter and Persephone at the Green Festival, it does not record the deities to whom the sacrifice at the Festival of the Cornstalks (τὴν τῶν Καλαμαίων θυσίαν) was offered. But mentioned as it is in immediate connexion with the sacrifices to Demeter and Persephone at the Green Festival, we may fairly suppose that the sacrifice at the Festival of the Cornstalks was also offered to these goddesses.

³ See above, p. 42.

⁴ *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 36. 1 sq.

⁵ Polemo, cited by Athenaeus, iii. 9, p. 416 B.

⁶ Nonnus, *Dionys.* xvii. 153. The Athenians sacrificed to her under this title (Eustathius, on Homer, *Iliad*, xviii. 553, p. 1162).

⁷ Theocritus, *Idyl.* vii. 155; *Orphica*, xl. 5.

⁸ *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 98. 1.

⁹ *Orphica*, xl. 3.

¹⁰ *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 104. 8.

¹¹ *Orphica*, xl. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Orphica*, xl. 18.

¹⁴ This title she shared with Persephone at Tegea (Pausanias, viii. 53. 7), and under it she received annual sacrifices at Ephesus (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 655). It was applied to her also at Epidaurus (Ἐφημ. Ἀρχ., 1883, col. 153) and at Athens (Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 382), and appears to have been a common title of the goddess. See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 318 note³⁰.

"She of the Great Loaf," and "She of the Great Barley Loaf."¹ Of these epithets it may be remarked that though all of them are quite appropriate to a Corn Goddess, some of them would scarcely be applicable to an Earth Goddess and therefore they add weight to the other arguments which turn the scale in favour of the corn as the fundamental attribute of Demeter.

Belief in ancient and modern times that the corn-crops depend on possession of an image of Demeter.

How deeply implanted in the mind of the ancient Greeks was this faith in Demeter as goddess of the corn may be judged by the circumstance that the faith actually persisted among their Christian descendants at her old sanctuary of Eleusis down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. For when the English traveller Dodwell revisited Eleusis, the inhabitants lamented to him the loss of a colossal image of Demeter, which was carried off by Clarke in 1802 and presented to the University of Cambridge, where it still remains. "In my first journey to Greece," says Dodwell, "this protecting deity was in its full glory, situated in the centre of a threshing-floor, amongst the ruins of her temple. The villagers were impressed with a persuasion that their rich harvests were the effect of her bounty, and since her removal, their abundance, as they assured me, has disappeared."² Thus we see the Corn Goddess Demeter

¹ Polemo, cited by Athenaeus, iii. 73, p. 109 A B, x. 9. p. 416 C.

² E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece* (London, 1819), i. 583. E. D. Clarke found the image "on the side of the road, immediately before entering the village, and in the midst of a heap of dung, buried as high as the neck, a little beyond the farther extremity of the pavement of the temple. Yet even this degrading situation had not been assigned to it wholly independent of its antient history. The inhabitants of the small village which is now situated among the ruins of Eleusis still regarded this statue with a very high degree of superstitious veneration. They attributed to its presence the fertility of their land; and it was for this reason that they heaped around it the manure intended for their fields. They believed that the loss of it would

be followed by no less a calamity than the failure of their annual harvests; and they pointed to the ears of bearded wheat, upon the sculptured ornaments upon the head of the figure, as a never-failing indication of the produce of the soil." When the statue was about to be removed, a general murmur ran among the people, the women joining in the clamour. "They had been always," they said, "famous for their corn; and the fertility of the land would cease when the statue was removed." See E. D. Clarke, *Travels in various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa*, iii. (London, 1814) pp. 772-774, 787 sq. Compare J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 80, who tells us that "the statue was regularly crowned with flowers in the avowed hope of obtaining good harvests."

standing on the threshing-floor of Eleusis and dispensing corn to her worshippers in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, precisely as her image stood and dispensed corn to her worshippers on the threshing-floor of Cos in the days of Theocritus. And just as the people of Eleusis last century attributed the diminution of their harvests to the loss of the image of Demeter, so in antiquity the Sicilians, a corn-growing people devoted to the worship of the two Corn Goddesses, lamented that the crops of many towns had perished because the unscrupulous Roman governor Verres had impiously carried off the image of Demeter from her famous temple at Henna.¹ Could we ask for a clearer proof that Demeter was indeed the goddess of the corn than this belief, held by the Greeks down to modern times, that the corn-crops depended on her presence and bounty and perished when her image was removed?

In a former part of this work I followed an eminent French scholar in concluding, from various indications, that part of the religious drama performed in the mysteries of Eleusis may have been a marriage between the sky-god Zeus and the corn-goddess Demeter, represented by the hierophant and the priestess of the goddess respectively.² The conclusion is arrived at by combining a number of passages, all more or less vague and indefinite, of late Christian writers; hence it must remain to some extent uncertain and cannot at the best lay claim to more than a fair degree of probability. It may be, as Professor W. Ridgeway holds, that this dramatic marriage of the god and goddess was an innovation foisted into the Eleusinian Mysteries in that great welter of religions which followed the meeting of the East and the West in the later ages of antiquity.³ If a marriage of Zeus and Demeter did indeed form an important feature of the Mysteries in the fifth century before our era, it is certainly remarkable, as Professor Ridgeway has justly pointed out, that no mention of Zeus

Sacred
marriage
of Zeus
and
Demeter
at Eleusis

¹ Cicero, *In C. Verrem*, act. ii. lib. iv. 51.

² *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 138 sq.

³ This view was expressed by my

friend Professor Ridgeway in a paper which I had the advantage of hearing him read at Cambridge in the early part of 1911. Compare *The Athenæum*, No. 4360, May 20th, 1911, p. 576.

occurs in the public decree of that century which regulates the offerings of first-fruits and the sacrifices to be made to the gods and goddesses of Eleusis.¹ At the same time we must bear in mind that, if the evidence for the ritual marriage of Zeus and Demeter is late and doubtful, the evidence for the myth is ancient and indubitable. The story was known to Homer, for in the list of beauties to whom he makes Zeus, in a burst of candour, confess that he had lost his too susceptible heart, there occurs the name of "the fair-haired Queen Demeter";² and in another passage the poet represents the jealous god smiting with a thunderbolt the favoured lover with whom the goddess had forgotten her dignity among the furrows of a fallow field.³ Moreover, according to one tradition, Dionysus himself was the offspring of the intrigue between Zeus and Demeter.⁴ Thus there is no intrinsic improbability in the view that one or other of these unedifying incidents in the backstairs chronicle of Olympus should have formed part of the sacred peep-show in the Eleusinian Mysteries. But it seems just possible that the marriage to which the Christian writers allude with malicious joy may after all have been of a more regular and orthodox pattern. We are positively told that the rape of Persephone was acted at the Mysteries;⁵ may that scene not have been followed by another representing the solemnisation of her nuptials with her ravisher and husband Pluto? It is to be remembered that Pluto was sometimes known as a god of fertility under the title of Subterranean Zeus. It was to him under that title as well as to Demeter, that the Greek ploughman prayed at the . . . of the . . . ;⁶ and the people of Myconus used to sacrifice to Subterranean Zeus and Subterranean Earth for the prosperity of the crops on the twelfth day of the month Lenacon.⁷ Thus it may be that the Zeus whose marriage was dramatically represented at the Mysteries was not the sky-god Zeus, but his

Homer on the love of Zeus for Demeter.

Zeus the Sky God may have been confused with Subterranean Zeus, that is, Pluto.

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 20; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. (Cambridge, 1905) No. 9, pp. 22 sq. See above, pp. 55 sq.

² Homer, *Iliad*, xiv. 326.

³ Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 125 sqq.

⁴ Diodorus Siculus, iii. 62. 6.

⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* 12, p. 12, ed. Potter.

⁶ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 465 sqq.

⁷ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 615, lines 25 sq.; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 714; J. de Protet et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, No. 4.

brother Zeus of the Underworld, and that the writers who refer to the ceremony have confused the two brothers. This view, if it could be established, would dispose of the difficulty raised by the absence of the name of Zeus in the decree which prescribes the offerings to be made to the gods of Eleusis; for although in that decree Pluto is not mentioned under the name of Subterranean Zeus, he is clearly referred to, as the editors of the inscription have seen, under the vague title of "the God," while his consort Persephone is similarly referred to under the title of "the Goddess," and it is ordained that perfect victims shall be sacrificed to both of them. However, if we thus dispose of one difficulty, it must be confessed that in doing so we raise another. For if the bridegroom in the Sacred Marriage at Eleusis was not the sky-god Zeus, but the earth-god Pluto, we seem driven to suppose that, contrary to the opinion of the reverend Christian scholars, the bride was his lawful wife Persephone and not his sister and mother-in-law Demeter. In short, on the hypothesis which I have suggested we are compelled to conclude that the ancient busybodies who lifted the veil from the mystic marriage were mistaken as to the person both of the divine bridegroom and of the divine bride. In regard to the bridegroom I have conjectured that they may have confused the two brothers, Zeus of the Upper World and Zeus of the Lower World. In regard to the bride, can any reason be suggested for confounding the persons of the mother and daughter? On the view here taken of the nature of Demeter and Persephone nothing could be easier than to confuse them with each other, for both of them were mythical embodiments of the corn, the mother Demeter standing for the old corn of last year and the daughter Persephone standing for the new corn of this year. In point of fact Greek artists, both of the archaic and of later periods, frequently represent the Mother and Daughter side by side in forms which resemble each other so closely that eminent modern experts have sometimes differed from each other on the question, which is Demeter and which is Persephone; indeed in some cases it might be quite impossible to distinguish the two if it were not for the inscriptions attached to the

Demeter may have been confused with Persephone; in art the types of the two goddesses are often very similar.

figures.¹ The ancient sculptors, vase-painters, and engravers must have had some good reason for portraying the two goddesses in types which are almost indistinguishable from each other; and what better reason could they have had than the knowledge that the two persons of the godhead were one in substance, that they stood merely for two different aspects of the same simple natural phenomenon, the growth of the corn? Thus it is easy to understand why Demeter and Persephone may have been confused in ritual as well as in art, why in particular the part of the divine bride in a Sacred Marriage may sometimes have been assigned to the Mother and sometimes to the Daughter. But all this, I fully admit, is a mere speculation, and I only put it forward as such. We possess far too little information as to a Sacred Marriage in the Eleusinian Mysteries to be justified in speaking with confidence on so obscure a subject.

¹ See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907), p. 259, "It was long before the mother could be distinguished from the daughter by any organic difference of form or by any expressive trait of countenance. On the more ancient vases and terracottas they appear rather as twin-sisters, almost as if the inarticulate artist were aware of their original identity of substance. And even among the monuments of the transitional period it is difficult to find any representation of the goddesses in characters at once clear and impressive. We miss this even in the beautiful vase of Hieron in the British Museum, where the divine pair are seen with Triptolemos; the style is delicate and stately, and there is a certain impression of inner tranquil life in the group, but without the aid of the inscriptions the mother would not be known from the daughter"; *id.*, vol. iii. 274, "But it would be wrong to give the impression that the numismatic artists of this period were always careful to distinguish—in such a manner as the above works indicate—between mother and daughter. The old idea of their unity of substance still seemed to linger as an art-tradition: the very type we have just been examining appears on a fourth-century coin

of Hermione, and must have been used here to designate Demeter Chthonia who was there the only form that the corn-goddess assumed. And even at Metapontum, where coin-engraving was long a great art, a youthful head crowned with corn, which in its own right and on account of its resemblance to the masterpiece of Euainetos could claim the name of Kore [Persephone], is actually inscribed 'Damater.'" Compare J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, iii. (Leipzig, 1873-1878), p. 453. In regard, for example, to the famous Eleusinian bas-relief, one of the most beautiful monuments of ancient religious art, which seems to represent Demeter giving the corn-stalks to Triptolemus, while Persephone crowns his head, there has been much divergence of opinion among the learned as to which of the goddesses is Demeter and which Persephone. See J. Overbeck, *op. cit.* iii. 427 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *op. cit.* iii. 263 *sq.* On the close resemblance of the artistic types of Demeter and Persephone see further E. Gerhard, *Gesammelte akademische Abhandlungen* (Berlin, 1866-1868), ii. 357 *sqq.*; F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 2, s.v. "Ceres," p. 1049.

One thing, however, which we may say with a fair degree of probability is that, if such a marriage did take place at Eleusis, no date in the agricultural year could well have been more appropriate for it than the date at which the Mysteries actually fell, namely about the middle of September. The long Greek summer is practically rainless and in the fervent heat and unbroken drought all nature languishes. The river-beds are dry, the fields parched. The farmer awaits impatiently the setting-in of the autumnal rains, which begin in October and mark the great season for ploughing and sowing. What time could be fitter for celebrating the union of the Corn Goddess with her husband the Earth God or perhaps rather with her paramour the Sky God, who will soon descend in fertilising showers to quicken the seed in the furrows? Such embraces of the divine powers or their human representatives might well be deemed, on the principles of homocopathic or imitative magic, indispensable to the growth of the crops. At least similar ideas have been entertained and similar customs have been practised by many peoples;¹ and in the legend of Demeter's love-adventure among the furrows of the thrice-fallow² we seem to catch a glimpse of rude rites of the same sort performed in the fields at sowing-time by Greek ploughmen for the sake of ensuring the growth of the seed which they were about to commit to the bosom of the naked earth. In this connexion a statement of ancient writers as to the rites of Eleusis receives fresh significance. We are told that at these rites the worshippers looked up to the sky and cried "Rain!" and then looked down at the earth and cried "Conceive!"³ Nothing could be more appropriate at a marriage of the Sky God and the Earth or Corn Goddess than such invocations to the heaven to pour down rain and to the earth or the corn to conceive seed under the fertilising shower; in Greece no time could well be more suitable for

The date of the Eleusinian Mysteries in September would have been a very appropriate time for a Sacred Marriage of the Sky God with the Corn Goddess or the Earth Goddess.

¹ *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 97 sqq.

² Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 125 sqq.

³ Proclus, on Plato, *Timaeus*, p. 293 C, quoted by L. F. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 357, where Lobeck's emendation of *θε, κύε*

for *θε, τοκίε* (*Agiaophamus*, p. 782) may be accepted as certain, confirmed as it is by Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, v. 7, p. 146, ed. Duncker and Schneidewin (Göttingen, 1859), τὸ μέγα καὶ ἀρρητον Ἐλευσινίων μυστήριον θε κύε.

the utterance of such prayers than just at the date when the Great Mysteries of Eleusis were celebrated, at the end of the long drought of summer and before the first rains of autumn.

The Eleusinian games distinct from the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Different both from the Great Mysteries and the offerings of first-fruits at Eleusis were the games which were celebrated there on a great scale once in every four years and on a less scale once in every two years.¹ That the games were distinct from the Mysteries is proved by their periods, which were quadriennial and biennial respectively, whereas the Mysteries were celebrated annually. Moreover, in Greek epigraphy, our most authentic evidence in such matters, the games and the Mysteries are clearly distinguished from each other by being mentioned separately in the same inscription.² But like the Mysteries the games seem to have been very ancient; for the Parian Chronicler, who wrote in the year 264 B.C., assigns the foundation of the Eleusinian games to the reign of Pandion, the son of Cecrops. However, he represents them as of later origin than the Eleusinian Mysteries, which according to him were instituted by Eumolpus in the reign of Erechtheus, after Demeter had planted corn in Attica and Triptolemus had sown seed in the Rarian plain at Eleusis.³ This testimony to the superior antiquity of the Mysteries is in harmony with our most ancient authority on the rites of Eleusis, the author of the *Hymn to Demeter*, who describes the origin of the Eleusinian Mysteries, but makes no reference or allusion to the Eleusinian Games. However, the great age of the games is again vouched for at a much

The Eleusinian games of later origin than the Eleusinian Mysteries.

¹ As to the Eleusinian games see August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, pp. 179-204; P. Foucart, *Les Grands Mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris, 1900), pp. 143-147; P. Stengel, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. coll. 2330 sqq. The quadriennial celebration of the Eleusinian Games is mentioned by Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens*, 54), and in the great Eleusinian inscription of 329 B.C., which is also our only authority for the biennial celebration of the games. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Grae-*

carum,² No. 587, lines 258 sqq. The regular and official name of the games was simply *Eleusinia* (τὰ Ἐλευσίνια), a name which late writers applied incorrectly to the Mysteries. See August Mommsen, *op. cit.* pp. 179 sqq.; Dittenberger, *op. cit.* No. 587, note 171.

² Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 246, lines 25 sqq.; *id.* No. 587, lines 244 sq., 258 sqq.

³ *Marmor Parium*, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, i. 544 sq.

later date by the rhetorician Aristides, who even declares that they were the oldest of all Greek games.¹ With regard to the nature and meaning of the games our information is extremely scanty, but an old scholiast on Pindar tells us that they were celebrated in honour of Demeter and Persephone as a thank-offering at the conclusion of the corn-harvest.² His testimony is confirmed by that of the rhetorician Aristides, who mentions the institution of the Eleusinian games in immediate connexion with the offerings of the first-fruits of the corn, which many Greek states sent to Athens;³ and from an inscription dated about the close of the third century before our era we learn that at the Great Eleusinian Games sacrifices were offered to Demeter and Persephone.⁴ Further, we gather from an official Athenian inscription of 329 B.C. that both the Great and the Lesser Games included athletic and musical contests, a horse-race, and a competition which bore the name of the Ancestral or Hereditary Contest, and which accordingly may well have formed the original kernel of the games.⁵ Unfortunately nothing is known about this Ancestral Contest. We might be tempted to identify it with the Ancestral Contest included in the Eleusinian Festival of the Threshing-floor,⁶ which was probably held

The
Eleusinian
games
sacred to
Demeter
and Per-
sephone.

¹ Aristides, *Panathen.* and *Eleusin.* vol. i. pp. 168, 417, ed. G. Dindorf.

² Schol. on Pindar, *Olymp.* ix. 150, p. 228, ed. Aug. Boeckh.

³ Aristides, *ll. cc.*

⁴ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 246, lines 25 *sgg.* The editor rightly points out that the Great Eleusinian Games are identical with the games celebrated every fourth year, which are mentioned in the decree of 329 B.C. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, lines 260 *sq.*).

⁵ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, lines 259 *sgg.* From other Attic inscriptions we learn that the Eleusinian games comprised a long foot-race, a race in armour, and a pancratium. See Dittenberger, *op. cit.* No. 587 note ¹⁷¹ (vol. ii. p. 313). The Great Eleusinian Games also included the pentathlum (Dittenberger,

op. cit. No. 678, line 2). The pancratium included wrestling and boxing; the pentathlum included a foot-race, leaping, throwing the quoit, throwing the spear, and wrestling. See W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Third Edition, s.vv. "Pancratium" and "Pentathlon."

⁶ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 246, lines 46 *sgg.*; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 609. See above, p. 61. The identification lies all the nearer to hand because the inscription records a decree in honour of a man who had sacrificed to Demeter and Persephone at the Great Eleusinian Games, and a provision is contained in the decree that the honour should be proclaimed "at the Ancestral Contest of the Festival of the Threshing-floor." The same Ancestral Contest at the Festival of the Threshing-floor is mentioned in

Triptole-
mus, the
mythical
hero of
the corn.

on the Sacred Threshing-floor of Triptolemus at Eleusis.¹ If the identification could be proved, we should have another confirmation of the tradition which connects the games with Demeter and the corn; for according to the prevalent tradition it was to Triptolemus that Demeter first revealed the secret of the corn, and it was he whom she sent out as an itinerant missionary to impart the beneficent discovery of the cereals to all mankind and to teach them to sow the seed.² On monuments of art, especially in vase-paintings, he is constantly represented along with Demeter in this capacity, holding corn-stalks in his hand and sitting in his car, which is sometimes winged and sometimes drawn by dragons, and from which he is said to have sowed the seed down on the whole world as he sped through the air.³ At Eleusis victims bought with the first-fruits of the wheat and barley were sacrificed to him as well as to Demeter and Persephone.⁴ In short, if we may judge from the combined testimony of Greek literature and art, Triptolemus was the corn-hero first and foremost. Even beyond the limits of the Greek world, all men, we are told, founded sanctuaries and erected altars in his honour because he had bestowed on them the gift of the corn.⁵ His very name has been plausibly explained both in ancient and modern times as "Thrice-ploughed" with reference to the Greek custom of

another Eleusinian inscription, which records honours decreed to a man who had sacrificed to Demeter and Persephone at the Festival of the Threshing-floor. See 'Εφημερίς Ἀρχαιολογική, 1884, coll. 135 sq.

¹ See above, p. 61.

² Diodorus Siculus, v. 68; Arrian, *Indic.* 7; Lucian, *Somnium*, 15; *id.*, *Philopseudes*, 3; Plato, *Laws*, vi. 22, p. 782; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 5. 2; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, p. 53, ed. C. Lang; Pausanias, i. 14. 2, vii. 18. 2, viii. 4. 1; Aristides, *Eleusina*. vol. i. pp. 416 sq., ed. G. Dindorf; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 147, 259, 277; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 549 sqq.; *id.*, *Metamorph.* v. 645 sqq.; Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 19. See also above, p. 54. As to Triptolemus, see L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone* (Hamburg, 1837), pp. 282 sqq.; *id.*,

Griechische Mythologie,⁴ i. 769 sqq.

³ C. Strube, *Studien über den Bilderkreis von Eleusis* (Leipzig, 1870), pp. 4 sqq.; J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, iii. (Leipzig, 1873-1880), pp. 530 sqq.; A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des classischen Alterthums*, iii. 1855 sqq. That Triptolemus sowed the earth with corn from his car is mentioned by Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 5. 2; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, pp. 53 sq., ed. C. Lang; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 147; and Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 19.

⁴ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 20, lines 37 sqq.; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. (Cambridge, 1905), No. 9, p. 24.

⁵ Arrian, *Epicteti Dissertationes*, i. 4. 30.

ploughing the land thrice a year,¹ and the derivation is said to be on philological principles free from objection.² In fact it would seem as if Triptolemus, like Demeter and Persephone themselves, were a purely mythical being, an embodiment of the conception of the first sower. At all events in the local Eleusinian legend, according to an eminent scholar, who has paid special attention to Attic genealogy, "Triptolemus does not, like his comrade Eumolpus or other founders of Eleusinian priestly families, continue his kind, but without leaving offspring who might perpetuate his priestly office, he is removed from the scene of his beneficent activity. As he appeared, so he vanishes again from the legend, after he has fulfilled his divine mission."³

However, there is no sufficient ground for identifying the Ancestral Contest of the Eleusinian games with the Ancestral Contest of the Threshing-festival at Eleusis, and accordingly the connexion of the games with the corn-harvest and with the corn-hero Triptolemus must so far remain uncertain. But a clear trace of such a connexion may be seen in the custom of giving to the victors in the Eleusinian games with measures of barley; in the official Athenian inscription of 329 B.C., which contains the accounts of the superintendents of Eleusis and the Treasurers of the Two Goddesses, the amounts of corn handed over by these officers to the priests and priestesses for the purposes of the games is exactly specified.⁴ This of itself is sufficient to prove that the

Prizes of barley given to victors in the Eleusinian games.

¹ Scholiast on Homer, *Iliad*, xviii. 483; L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, p. 286; F. A. Paley on Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 460. The custom of ploughing the land thrice is alluded to by Homer (*Iliad*, xviii. 542, *Odyssey*, v. 127) and Hesiod (*Theogony*, 971), and is expressly mentioned by Theophrastus (*Historia Plantarum*, vii. 13. 6).

² So I am informed by my learned friend the Rev. Professor J. H. Moulton.

³ J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie* (Berlin, 1889), pp. 138 *sq.* However, the Eleusinian Torchbearer Callias apparently claimed to be descended from Triptolemus, for in a speech addressed to the Lacedaemonians he is

said by Xenophon (*Hellenica*, vi. 3. 6) to have spoken of Triptolemus as "our ancestor" (*ὁ ἡμέτερος πρόγονος*). See above, p. 54. But it is possible that Callias was here speaking, not as a direct descendant of Triptolemus, but merely as an Athenian, who naturally ranked Triptolemus among the most illustrious of the ancestral heroes of his people. Even if he intended to claim actual descent from the hero, this would prove nothing as to the historical character of Triptolemus, for many Greek families boasted of being descended from gods.

⁴ The prize of barley is mentioned by the Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* ix. 150. The Scholiast on Aristides (vol. iii. pp. 55, 56, ed. G. Dindorf) men-

Eleusinian games were closely connected with the worship of Demeter and Persephone. The grain thus distributed in prizes was probably reaped on the Rarian plain near Eleusis, where according to the legend Triptolemus sowed the first corn.¹ Certainly we know that the barley grown on that plain was used in sacrifices and for the baking of the sacrificial cakes,² from which we may reasonably infer that the prizes of barley, to which no doubt a certain sanctity attached in the popular mind, were brought from the same holy fields. So sacred was the Rarian plain that no dead body was allowed to defile it. When such a pollution accidentally took place, it was expiated by the sacrifice of a pig,³ the usual victim employed in Greek purificatory rites.

The Eleusinian games primarily concerned with Demeter and Persephone. The Ancestral Contest in the games may have been originally a contest between the reapers to finish reaping.

Thus, so far as the scanty evidence at our disposal permits us to judge, the Eleusinian games, like the Eleusinian Mysteries, would seem to have been primarily concerned with Demeter and Persephone as goddesses of the corn. At least that is expressly affirmed by the old scholiast on Pindar and it is borne out by the practice of rewarding the victors with measures of barley. Perhaps the Ancestral Contest, which may well have formed the original nucleus of the games, was a contest between the reapers on the sacred Rarian plain to see who should finish his allotted task before his fellows. For success in such a contest no prize could be more appropriate than a measure of the sacred barley which the victorious reaper had just cut on the barley-field. In the sequel we shall see that similar contests between reapers have been common on the harvest fields of modern Europe, and it will appear that such competitions are not purely

tions ears of corn as the prize without specifying the kind of corn. In the official Athenian inscription of 329 B.C., though the amount of corn distributed in prizes both at the quadriennial and at the biennial games is stated, we are not told whether the corn was barley or wheat. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, lines 259 *sqq.* According to Aristides (*Eleusin.* vol. i. p. 417, ed. G. Dindorf, compare p. 168) the prize consisted of the corn which had first appeared at Eleusis.

¹ *Marmor Parium*, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, i. 544. That the Rarian plain was the first to be sown and the first to bear crops is affirmed by Pausanias (i. 38. 6).

² Pausanias, i. 38. 6.

³ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, lines 119 *sq.* In the same inscription, a few lines lower down, mention is made of two pigs which were used in purifying the sanctuary at Eleusis. On the pig in Greek purificatory rites, see my notes on Pausanias, ii. 31. 8 and v. 16. 8.

athletic ; their aim is not simply to demonstrate the superior strength, activity, and skill of the victors ; it is to secure for the particular farm the possession of the blooming young Corn-maiden of the present year, conceived as the embodiment of the vigorous grain, and to pass on to laggard neighbours the aged Corn-mother of the past year, conceived as an embodiment of the effete and outworn energies of the corn.¹ May it not have been so at Eleusis ? may not the reapers have vied with each other for possession of the young corn-spirit Persephone and for avoidance of the old corn-spirit Demeter ? may not the prize of barley, which rewarded the victor in the Ancestral Contest, have been supposed to house in the ripe ears no less a personage than the Corn-maiden Persephone herself ? And if there is any truth in these conjectures (for conjectures they are and nothing more), we may hazard a guess as to the other Ancestral Contest which took place at the Eleusinian Festival of the Threshing-floor. Perhaps it in like manner was originally a competition between threshers on the sacred threshing-floor of Triptolemus to determine who should finish threshing his allotted quantity of corn before the rest. Such competitions have also been common, as we shall see presently, on the threshing-floors of modern Europe, and their motive again has not been simple emulation between sturdy swains for the reward of strength and dexterity ; it has been a dread of being burdened with the aged and outworn spirit of the corn conceived as present in the bundle of corn-stalks which receives the last stroke at threshing.² We know that effigies of Demeter with corn and poppies in her hands stood on Greek threshing-floors.³ Perhaps at the conclusion of the threshing these effigies, as representatives of the old Corn-spirit, were passed on to neighbours who had not yet finished threshing the corn. At least the supposition is in harmony with modern customs observed on the threshing-floor.

The Ancestral Contest in the Festival of the Threshing-floor may have been originally a contest between the threshers to finish threshing.

It is possible that the Eleusinian games were no more than a popular merrymaking celebrated at the close of the harvest. This view of their character might be supported by modern analogies ; for in some parts of Germany it has been

Games at harvest festivals in modern Europe.

¹ See below, pp. 140 *sqq.*, 155 *sqq.*, 164 *sqq.*, compare 218 *sqq.*

² See below, pp. 147 *sqq.*, 221 *sq.*, 223 *sq.*

³ See above, p. 43.

customary for the harvesters, when their work is done, to engage in athletic competitions of various kinds, which have at first sight no very obvious connexion with the business of harvesting. For example, at Besbau near Luckau great cakes were baked at the harvest-festival, and the labourers, both men and women, ran races for them. He or she who reached them first received not only a cake, but a handkerchief or the like as a prize. Again, at Bergkirchen, when the harvest was over, a garland was hung up and the harvesters rode at it on horseback and tried to bring it down with a stab or a blow as they galloped past. He who succeeded in bringing it down was proclaimed King. Again, in the villages near Fürstenwald at harvest the young men used to fetch a fir-tree from the wood, peel the trunk, and set it up like a mast in the middle of the village. A handkerchief and other prizes were fastened to the top of the pole and the men clambered up for them.¹ Among the peasantry of Silesia, we are told, the harvest-home broadened out into a popular festival, in which athletic sports figured prominently. Thus, for example, at Järischau, in the Strehlitz district, a scythe, a rake, a flail, and a hay-fork or pitchfork were fastened to the top of a smooth pole and awarded as prizes, in order of merit, to the men who displayed most agility in climbing the pole. Younger men amused themselves with running in sacks, high jumps, and so forth. At Prauss, near Nimptsch, the girls ran a race in a field for aprons as prizes. In the central parts of Silesia a favourite amusement at harvest was a race between girls for a garland of leaves or flowers.² Yet it seems probable that all such sports at harvest were in origin not mere pastimes, but that they were serious attempts to secure in one way or another the help and blessing of the corn-spirit. Thus in some parts of Prussia, at the close of the rye-harvest, a few sheaves used to be left standing in the field after all the rest of the rye had been carted home. These sheaves were then made up into the shape of a man and dressed out in masculine costume, and all the young women were obliged to run a race, of which the corn-man

¹ A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Nord-deutsche Sagen, Marchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), pp. 398, 399, 400.

² P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipsic, 1903-1906), ii. 70 *sg.*

was the goal. She who won the race led off the dancing in the evening.¹ Here the aim of the foot-race among the young women is clearly to secure the corn-spirit embodied in the last sheaf left standing on the field; for, as we shall see later on, the last sheaf is commonly supposed to harbour the corn-spirit and is treated accordingly like a man or a woman.²

If the Ancestral Contest at the Eleusinian games was, as I have conjectured, a contest between the reapers on the sacred barley-field, we should have to suppose that the games were celebrated at barley-harvest, which in the lowlands of Greece falls in May or even at the end of April. This theory is in harmony with the evidence of the scholiast on Pindar, who tells us that the Eleusinian games were celebrated after the corn-harvest.³ No other ancient authority, so far as I am aware, mentions at what time of the year these games were held. Modern authorities, arguing from certain slight and to some extent conjectural data, have variously assigned them to Metageitnion (August) and to Boedromion (September), and those who assign them to Boedromion (September) are divided in opinion as to whether they preceded or followed the Mysteries.⁴ However, the evidence is far too slender and uncertain to allow of any conclusions being based on it.

Date
of the
Eleusinian
games
uncertain.

But there is a serious difficulty in the way of connecting the Eleusinian games with the goddesses of the corn. How is the quadriennial or the biennial period of the games to be reconciled with the annual growth of the crops? Year by year the barley and the wheat are sown and reaped; how

Why
should
games
intended to
promote
the annual
growth of
the crops
be held
only every
second or
fourth
year?

¹ A. Kuhn, *Markische Sagen und Märcchen* (Berlin, 1843), pp. 341 sq.

² See below, pp. 133 sqq.

³ Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* ix. 150, p. 228, ed. Aug. Boeckh.

⁴ The games are assigned to Metageitnion by P. Stengel (*Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. 2. coll. 2331 sq.) and to Boedromion by August Mommsen and W. Dittenberger. The last-mentioned scholar supposes that the games immediately followed the Mysteries, and August Mommsen formerly thought so too, but he afterwards changed his

view and preferred to suppose that the games preceded the Mysteries. See Aug. Mommsen, *Heortologie* (Leipsic, 1864), p. 263; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 182 sqq.; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, note ¹⁷¹ (vol. ii. pp. 313 sq.). The dating of the games in Metageitnion or in the early part of Boedromion depends on little more than a series of conjectures, particularly the conjectural restoration of an inscription and the conjectural dating of a certain sacrifice to Democracy.

then could the games, held only every fourth or every second year, have been regarded as thank-offerings for the annual harvest? On this view of their nature, which is the one taken by the old scholiast on Pindar, though the harvest was received at the hands of the Corn Goddess punctually every year, men thanked her for her bounty only every second year or even only every fourth year. What were her feelings likely to be in the blank years when she got no thanks and no games? She might naturally resent such negligence and ingratitude and punish them by forbidding the seed to sprout, just as she did at Eleusis when she mourned the loss of her daughter. In short, men could hardly expect to reap crops in years in which they offered nothing to the Corn Goddess. That would indeed appear to be the view generally taken by the ancient Greeks; for we have seen that year by year they presented the first-fruits of the barley and the wheat to Demeter, not merely in the solemn state ritual of Eleusis, but also in rustic festivals held by farmers on their threshing-floors. The pious Greek husbandman would no doubt have been shocked and horrified at a proposal to pay the Corn Goddess her dues only every second or fourth year. "No offerings, no crops," he would say to himself, and would anticipate nothing but dearth and famine in any year when he failed to satisfy the just and lawful demands of the divinity on whose good pleasure he believed the growth of the corn to be directly dependent. Accordingly we may regard it as highly probable that from the very beginning of settled and regular agriculture in Greece men annually propitiated the deities of the corn with a ritual of some sort, and rendered them their dues in the shape of offerings of the ripe barley and wheat. Now we know that the Mysteries of Eleusis were celebrated every year, and accordingly, if I am right in interpreting them as essentially a dramatic representation of the annual vicissitudes of the corn performed for the purpose of quickening the seed, it becomes probable that in some form or another they were annually held at Eleusis long before the practice arose of celebrating games there every fourth or every second year. In short, the Eleusinian mysteries were in all prob-

The
Eleusinian
Mysteries
probably
much older
than the
Eleusinian
games.

ability far older than the Eleusinian games. How old they were we cannot even guess. But when we consider that the cultivation of barley and wheat, the two cereals specially associated with Demeter, appears to have been practised in prehistoric Europe from the Stone Age onwards,¹ we shall be disposed to admit that the annual performance of religious or magical rites at Eleusis for the purpose of ensuring good crops, whether by propitiating the Corn Goddess with offerings of first-fruits or by dramatically representing the sowing and the growth of the corn in mythical form, probably dates from an extremely remote antiquity.

But in order to clear our ideas on this subject it is desirable to ascertain, if possible, the reason for holding the Eleusinian games at intervals of two or four years. The reason for holding a harvest festival and thanksgiving every year is obvious enough; but why hold games only every second or every fourth year? The reason for such limitations is by no means obvious on the face of them, especially if the growth of the crops is deemed dependent on the celebration. In order to find an answer to this question it may be well at the outset to confine our attention to the Great Eleusinian Games, which were celebrated only every fourth year. That these were the principal games appears not only from their name, but from the testimony of Aristotle, or at least of the author of *The Constitution of Athens*, who notices only the quadriennial or, as in accordance with Greek idiom he calls it, the penteteric celebration of the games.² Now the custom of holding games at intervals of

Quadriennial period of many of the great games of Greece.

¹ A. de Candolle, *Origin of Cultivated Plants* (London, 1884), pp. 354 sq., 367 sqq.; R. Munro, *The Lake-dwellings of Europe* (London, Paris, and Melbourne, 1890), pp. 497 sqq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strasburg, 1901), pp. 8 sqq.; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte* (Jena, 1906-1907), ii. 185 sqq.; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* (Strasburg, 1905-1907), i. 254 sqq., 273 sq., 276 sqq., ii. 640 sqq.; M. Much, *Die Heimat der Indogermanen* (Jena and Berlin, 1904), pp. 221 sqq.; T. E. Peet, *The Stone and Bronze Ages in Italy and Sicily*

(Oxford, 1909), p. 362.

² Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 54, where the quadriennial (penteteric) festival of the Eleusinian Games is mentioned along with the quadriennial festivals of the Panathenaica, the Delia, the Brauronia, and the Heraclaea. The biennial (trieteric) festival of the Eleusinian Games is mentioned only in the inscription of 329 B.C. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 587, lines 259 sq.). As to the identity of the Great Eleusinian Games with the quadriennial games see Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, No. 246 note², No. 587 note¹⁷¹.

four years was very common in Greece; to take only a few conspicuous examples the Olympic games at Olympia, the Pythian games at Delphi, the Panathenaic games at Athens, and the Eleutherian games at Plataea¹ were all celebrated at quadriennial or, as the Greeks called them, penteteric periods; and at a later time when Augustus instituted, or rather renewed on a more splendid scale, the games at Actium to commemorate his great victory, he followed a well-established Greek precedent by ordaining that they should be quadriennial.² Still later the emperor Hadrian instituted quadriennial games at Mantinea in honour of his dead favourite Antinous.³ But in regard to the two greatest of all the Greek games, the Olympian and the Pythian, I have shewn reasons for thinking that they were originally celebrated at intervals of eight instead of four years; certainly this is attested for the Pythian games,⁴ and the mode of calculating the Olympiads by alternate periods of fifty and forty-nine lunar months,⁵ which added together make up eight solar years, seems to prove that the Olympic cycle of four years was really based on a cycle of eight years, from which it is natural to infer that in the beginning the Olympic, like the Pythian, games may have been octennial instead of quadriennial.⁶ Now we know from the testimony of the ancients themselves that the Greeks instituted the eight-years' cycle for the purpose of harmonising solar and lunar time.⁷ They regulated their calendar primarily by observation of the moon rather than of the sun; their months were lunar, and their ordinary year consisted of twelve lunar

Old octennial period of the Pythian and probably of the Olympian games.

The octennial cycle was instituted by the Greeks at a very early era for the purpose of harmonising solar and lunar time.

¹ As to the Plataean games see Plutarch, *Aristides*, 21; Pausanias, ix. 2. 6.

² Strabo, vii. 7. 6, p. 325; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 18; Dio Cassius, li. 1; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, s.v. "Actia."

³ Pausanias, viii. 9. 8.

⁴ Scholiast on Pindar, *Pyth.*, Argument, p. 298, ed. Aug. Boeckh; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 6. According to the scholiast on Pindar (*l.c.*) the change from the octennial to the quadriennial period was occasioned by the nymphs of Parnassus bringing

ripe fruits in their hands to Apollo, after he had slain the dragon at Delphi.

⁵ Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* iii. 35 (20), p. 98, ed. Aug. Boeckh. Compare Boeckh's commentary on Pindar (vol. iii. p. 138 of his edition); L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 366 sq., ii. 605 sqq.

⁶ See *The Dying God*, chapter ii. § 4, "Octennial Tenure of the Kingship," especially pp. 68 sq., 80, 89 sq.

⁷ Geminus *Elementa Astronomiae*, viii. 25 sqq., pp. 110 sqq., ed. C. Manitius (Leipsic, 1898); Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 2-6.

months. But the solar year of three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter days exceeds the lunar year of twelve lunar months or three hundred and fifty-four days by eleven and a quarter days, so that in eight solar years the excess amounts to ninety days or roughly three lunar months. Accordingly the Greeks equated eight solar years to eight lunar years of twelve months each by intercalating three lunar months of thirty days each in the octennial cycle; they intercalated one lunar month in the third year of the cycle, a second lunar month in the fifth year, and a third lunar month in the eighth year.¹ In this way they, so to say, made the sun and moon keep time together by reckoning ninety-nine lunar months as equivalent to eight solar years; so that if, for example, the full moon coincided with the summer solstice in one year, it coincided with it again after the revolution of the eight years' cycle, but not before. The equation was indeed not quite exact, and in order to render it so the Greeks afterwards found themselves obliged, first, to intercalate three days every sixteen years, and, next, to omit one intercalary month in every period of one hundred and sixty years.² But these corrections were doubtless refinements of a later age; they may have been due to the astronomer Eudoxus of Cnidus, or to Cleostratus of Tenedos, who were variously, but incorrectly, supposed to have instituted the octennial cycle.³ There are strong grounds for holding that in its simplest form the octennial cycle of ninety-nine lunar months dates from an extremely remote antiquity in Greece; that it was in fact, as a well-informed Greek writer tell us,⁴ the first systematic attempt to bring solar and the lunar time into harmony. Indeed, if the

¹ Geminus, *l.c.*

² Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiæ*, viii. 36-41.

³ Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 5. As Eudoxus flourished in the fourth century B.C., some sixty or seventy years after Meton, who introduced the nineteen years' cycle to remedy the defects of the octennial cycle, the claim of Eudoxus to have instituted the latter cycle may at once be put out of court. The claim of Cleostratus, who seems to have lived in the sixth

or fifth century B.C., cannot be dismissed so summarily; but for the reasons given in the text he can hardly have done more than suggest corrections or improvements of the ancient octennial cycle.

⁴ Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiæ*, viii. 27. With far less probability Censorinus (*De die natali*, xviii. 2-4) supposes that the octennial cycle was produced by the successive duplication of biennial and quadriennial cycles. See below, pp. 86 sq.

Olympiads were calculated, as they appear to have been, on the eight years' cycle, this of itself suffices to place the origin of the cycle not later than 776 B.C., the year with which the reckoning by Olympiads begins. And when we bear in mind the very remote period from which, judged by the wonderful remains of Mycenae, Tiryns, Cnossus and other cities, civilisation in Greek lands appears to date, it seems reasonable to suppose that the octennial cycle, based as it was on very simple observations, for which nothing but good eyes and almost no astronomical knowledge was necessary,¹ may have been handed down among the inhabitants of these countries from ages that preceded by many centuries, possibly by thousands of years, the great period of Greek literature and art. The supposition is confirmed by the traces which the octennial cycle has left of itself in certain ancient Greek customs and superstitions, particularly by the evidence which points to the conclusion that at two of the oldest seats of monarchy in Greece, namely Cnossus and Sparta, the king's tenure of office was formerly limited to eight years.²

The motive for instituting the eight years' cycle was religious, not practical or scientific.

We are informed, and may readily believe, that the motive which led the Greeks to adopt the eight years' cycle was religious rather than practical or scientific: their aim was not so much to ensure the punctual despatch of business or to solve an abstract problem in astronomy, as to ascertain the exact days on which they ought to sacrifice to the gods. For the Greeks regularly employed lunar months in their reckonings,³ and accordingly if they had dated their religious festivals simply by the number of the month and the day of

¹ L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 605.

² *The Dying God*, pp. 58 sqq. Speaking of the octennial cycle Censorinus observes that "*Ob hoc in Graecia multae religiones hoc intervallo temporis summa caerimonia coluntur*" (*De die natali*, xviii. 6). Compare L. Ideler, *op. cit.* ii. 605 sq.; G. F. Unger, "Zeitrechnung der Griechen und Römer," in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i.² 732 sq. The great age and

the wide diffusion of the octennial cycle in Greece are rightly maintained by A. Schmidt (*Handbuch der griechischen Chronologie*, Jena, 1888, pp. 61 sqq.), who suggests that the cycle may have owed something to the astronomy of the Egyptians, with whom the inhabitants of Greece are known to have had relations from a very early time.

³ Aratus, *Phaenomena*, 733 sqq.; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 255 sq.

the month, the excess of eleven and a quarter days of the solar over the lunar year would have had the effect of causing the festivals gradually to revolve throughout the whole circle of the seasons, so that in time ceremonies which properly belonged to winter would come to be held in summer, and on the contrary ceremonies which were only appropriate to summer would come to be held in winter. To avoid this anomaly, and to ensure that festivals dated by lunar months should fall at fixed or nearly fixed points in the solar year, the Greeks adopted the octennial cycle by the simple expedient of intercalating three lunar months in every period of eight years. In doing so they acted, as one of their writers justly pointed out, on a principle precisely the reverse of that followed by the ancient Egyptians, who deliberately regulated their religious festivals by a purely lunar calendar for the purpose of allowing them gradually to revolve throughout the whole circle of the seasons.¹

Thus at an early stage of culture the regulation of the calendar is largely an affair of religion: it is a means of maintaining the established relations between gods and men on a satisfactory footing; and in public opinion the great evil of a disordered calendar is not so much that it disturbs and disarranges the ordinary course of business and the various transactions of civil life, as that it endangers the welfare or even the existence both of individuals and of the community by interrupting their normal intercourse with those divine powers on whose favour men believe themselves to be absolutely dependent. Hence in states which take this view of the deep religious import of the calendar its superintendence is naturally entrusted to priests rather than to astronomers, because the science of astronomy is regarded merely as ancillary to the deeper mysteries of theology. For example, at Rome the method of determining the months and regulating the festivals was a secret which the pontiffs for ages jealously guarded from the profane vulgar; and in consequence of their ignorance and incapacity the calendar fell into confusion and the festivals were celebrated out of their natural seasons, until the greatest of all the Roman pontiffs, Julius Caesar, remedied the confusion and

In early times the regulation of the calendar is largely an affair of religion.

¹ Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiae*, viii. 15-45.

placed the calendar of the civilised world on the firm foundation on which, with little change, it stands to this day.¹

The quadriennial period of games and festivals in Greece was probably arrived at by bisecting an older octennial period.

On the whole, then, it appears probable that the octennial cycle, based on considerations of religion and on elementary observations of the two great luminaries, dated from a very remote period among the ancient Greeks; if they did not bring it with them when they migrated southwards from the oakwoods and beechwoods of Central Europe, they may well have taken it over from their civilised predecessors of different blood and different language whom they found leading a settled agricultural life on the lands about the Aegæan Sea. Now we have seen reasons to hold that the two most famous of the great Greek games, the Pythian and the Olympian, were both based on the ancient cycle of eight years, and that the quadriennial period at which they were regularly celebrated in historical times was arrived at by a subdivision of the older octennial cycle. It is hardly rash, therefore, to conjecture that the quadriennial period in general, regarded as the normal period for the celebration of great games and festivals, was originally founded on elementary religious and astronomical considerations of the same kind, that is, on a somewhat crude attempt to harmonise the discrepancies of solar and lunar time and thereby to ensure the continued favour of the gods. It is, indeed, certain or probable that some of these quadriennial festivals were celebrated in honour of the dead;² but there seems to be nothing in the beliefs or customs of the ancient Greeks concerning the dead which would suggest a quadriennial period as an appropriate one for propitiating the ghosts of the departed. At first sight it is different with the octennial period; for according to Pindar, the souls of the dead who had been purged of their guilt by an abode of eight years in the nether world were born again on earth in the ninth year as glorious kings, athletes, and sages.³ Now if this belief in the reincarnation of the dead after eight years were

¹ Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i. 15. 9 *sqq.*; Livy, ix. 46. 5; Valerius Maximus, ii. 5. 2; Cicero, *Pro Muraena*, xi. 25; *id.*, *De legibus*, ii. 12. 29; Suetonius, *Divus Iulius*, 40; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 59.

² See *The Dying God*, pp. 92 *sqq.*

³ Plato, *Meno*, p. 81 A-C; Pindar, ed. Aug. Boeckh, vol. iii. pp. 623 *sq.*, Frag. 98. See further *The Dying God*, pp. 69 *sq.*

primitive, it might certainly furnish an excellent reason for honouring the ghosts of great men at their graves every eight years in order to facilitate their rebirth into the world. Yet the period of eight years thus rigidly applied to the life of disembodied spirits appears too arbitrary and conventional to be really primitive, and we may suspect that in this application it was nothing but an inference drawn from the old octennial cycle, which had been instituted for the purpose of reconciling solar and lunar time. If that was so, it will follow that the quadriennial period of funeral games was, like the similar period of other religious festivals, obtained through the bisection of the octennial cycle, and hence that it was ultimately derived from astronomical considerations rather than from any beliefs touching a quadriennial revolution in the state of the dead. Yet in historical times it may well have happened that these considerations were forgotten, and that games and festivals were instituted at quadriennial intervals, for example at Plataea¹ in honour of the slain, at Actium to commemorate the great victory, and at Mantinea in honour of Antinous,² without any conscious reference to the sun and moon, and merely because that period had from time immemorial been regarded as the proper and normal one for the celebration of certain solemn religious rites.

If we enquire why the Greeks so often bisected the old octennial period into two quadriennial periods for purposes of religion, the answer can only be conjectural, for no positive information appears to be given us on the subject by ancient writers. Perhaps they thought that eight years was too long a time to elapse between the solemn services, and that it was desirable to propitiate the deities at shorter intervals. But it is possible that political as well as religious motives may have operated to produce the change. We have seen reason to think that at two of the oldest seats of monarchy in Greece, namely Cnossus and Sparta, kings formerly held office for periods of eight years only, after which their sovereignty either terminated or had to be formally renewed. Now with the gradual growth of that democratic

The reasons for bisecting the old octennial period into two quadriennial periods may have been partly religious, partly political.

¹ Plutarch, *Aristides*, 21; Pausanias, ix. 2. 6.

² See above, p. 80.

sentiment, which ultimately dominated Greek political life, men would become more and more jealous of the kingly power and would seek to restrict it within narrower limits, and one of the most obvious means of doing so was to shorten the king's tenure of office. We know that this was done at Athens, where the dynasty of the Medontids was reduced from the rank of monarchs for life to that of magistrates holding office for ten years only.¹ It is possible that elsewhere the king's reign was cut down from eight years to four years; and if I am right in my explanation of the origin of the Olympic games this political revolution actually took place at Olympia, where the victors in the chariot-race would seem at first to have personated the Sun-god and perhaps held office in the capacity of divine kings during the intervals between successive celebrations of the games.² If at Olympia and elsewhere the games were of old primarily contests in which the king had personally to take part for the purpose of attesting his bodily vigour and therefore his capacity for office, the repetition of the test at intervals of four instead of eight years might be regarded as furnishing a better guarantee of the maintenance of the king's efficiency and thereby of the general welfare, which in primitive society is often supposed to be sympathetically bound up with the health and strength of the king.

The biennial period of some Greek games may have been obtained by bisecting the quadriennial period.

But while many of the great Greek games were celebrated at intervals of four years, others, such as the Nemean and the Isthmian, were celebrated at intervals of two years only; and just as the quadriennial period seems to have been arrived at through a bisection of the octennial period, so we may surmise that the biennial period was produced by a bisection of the quadriennial period. This was the view which the admirable modern chronologer L. Ideler took of the origin of the quadriennial and biennial festivals respectively,³ and it appears far more probable than the contrary opinion of the ancient chronologer Censorinus, that the quadriennial period was reached by doubling the biennial, and the octennial period by doubling

¹ Pausanias, iv. 5. 10; compare Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, iii. 1; G. Gilbert, *Handbuch der griechischen Staatsalterthümer*, i.² (Leipsic, 1893) pp. 122 sq.

² See *The Dying God*, pp. 89-92.

³ L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 606 sq.

the quadriennial.¹ The theory of Censorinus was that the Greeks started with a biennial cycle of twelve and thirteen lunar months alternately in successive years for the purpose of harmonising solar and lunar time.² But as the cycle so produced exceeds the true solar time by seven and a half days,³ the discrepancy which it leaves between the two great celestial clocks, the sun and moon, was too glaring to escape the observation even of simple farmers, who would soon have been painfully sensible that the times were out of joint, if they had attempted to regulate the various operations of the agricultural year by reference to so very inaccurate an almanac. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Greeks ever made much use of a biennial cycle of this sort.

Now to apply these conclusions to the Eleusinian games, which furnished the starting-point for the preceding discussion. Whatever the origin and meaning of these games may have been, we may surmise that the quadriennial and biennial periods at which they were held were originally derived from astronomical considerations, and that they had nothing to do directly either with the agricultural cycle, which is annual, nor with the worship of the dead, which can scarcely be said to have any cycle at all, unless indeed it be an annual one. In other words, neither the needs of husbandry nor the superstitions relating to ghosts furnish any natural explanation of the quadriennial and biennial periods of the Eleusinian games, and to discover such an explanation we are obliged to fall back on astronomy or, to be more exact, on that blend of astronomy with religion which appears to be mainly responsible for such Greek festivals as exceed a year in their period. To admit this is not to decide the question whether the Eleusinian games were agricultural or funereal in character; but it is implicitly to acknowledge that the games were of later origin than the annual ceremonies, including the Great Mysteries, which were designed to propitiate the deities of the corn for the very simple and practical purpose of ensuring good crops within the year. For it cannot but be that men

Application of the foregoing conclusion to the Eleusinian games.

¹ Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii.

^{2-4.}

² Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 2.

³ L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 270.

observed and laid their account with the annual changes of the seasons, especially as manifested by the growth and maturity of the crops, long before they attempted to reconcile the discrepancies of solar and lunar time by a series of observations extending over several years.

Varro on
the rites of
Eleusis.

On the whole, then, if, ignoring theories, we adhere to the evidence of the ancients themselves in regard to the rites of Eleusis, including under that general term the Great Mysteries, the games, the Festival before Ploughing (*proerosia*), the Festival of the Threshing-floor, the Green Festival, the Festival of the Cornstalks, and the offerings of first-fruits, we shall probably incline to agree with the most learned of ancient antiquaries, the Roman Varro, who, to quote Augustine's report of his opinion, "interpreted the whole of the Eleusinian mysteries as relating to the corn which Ceres (Demeter) had discovered, and to Proserpine (Persephone), whom Pluto had carried off from her. And Proserpine herself, he said, signifies the fecundity of the seeds, the failure of which at a certain time had caused the earth to mourn for barrenness, and therefore had given rise to the opinion that the daughter of Ceres, that is, fecundity itself, had been ravished by Pluto and detained in the nether world; and when the dearth had been publicly mourned and fecundity had returned once more, there was gladness at the return of Proserpine and solemn rites were instituted accordingly. After that he says," continues Augustine, reporting Varro, "that many things were taught in her mysteries which had no reference but to the discovery of the corn."¹

The close
resem-
blance
between
the artistic
types of
Demeter
and Per-
sephone.

Thus far I have for the most part assumed an identity of nature between Demeter and Persephone, the divine mother and daughter personifying the corn in its double aspect of the seed-corn of last year and the ripe ears of this, and I pointed out that this view of the substantial unity of mother and daughter is borne out by their portraits

¹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 20. "In Cereris autem sacris praedicantur illa Eleusinia, quae apud Athenienses nobilissima fuerunt. De quibus iste [Varro] nihil interpretatur, nisi quod attinet ad frumentum, quod

Ceres invenit, et ad Proserpinam, quam rapiente Orco perdidit. Et hanc ipsam dicit significare foecunditatem seminum. . . . Dicit deinde multa in mysteriis ejus tradi, quae nisi ad fugum inventionem non pertineant."

in Greek art, which are often so alike as to be indistinguishable. Such a close resemblance between the artistic types of Demeter and Persephone militates decidedly against the view that the two goddesses are mythical embodiments of two things so different and so easily distinguishable from each other as the earth and the vegetation which springs from it. Had Greek artists accepted that view of Demeter and Persephone, they could surely have devised types of them which would have brought out the deep distinction between the goddesses. That they were capable of doing so is proved by the simple fact that they regularly represented the Earth Goddess by a type which differed widely both from that of Demeter and from that of Persephone.¹ Not only so, but they sometimes set the two types of the Earth Goddess and the Corn Goddess (Demeter) side by side as if on purpose to demonstrate their difference. Thus at Patrae there was a sanctuary of Demeter, in which she and Persephone were portrayed standing, while Earth was represented by a seated image;² and on a vase-painting the Earth Goddess is seen appropriately emerging from the ground with a horn of plenty and an infant in her uplifted arms, while Demeter and Persephone, scarcely distinguishable from each other, stand at full height behind her, looking down at her half-buried figure, and Triptolemus in his wheeled car sits directly above her.³ In this instructive picture, accordingly, we see grouped together the principal personages in the myth of the corn: the Earth Goddess, the two Goddesses of the old and the new corn, and the hero who is said to have been sent forth by the Corn Goddess to sow the seed broadcast over the earth. Such representations seem to prove that the artists clearly distinguished Demeter from the Earth Goddess.⁴ And if Demeter did

militates against the theory that the two goddesses personified two things so different as the earth and the corn.

¹ A. Baumeister, *Denkmaler des classischen Altertums*, i. 577 sq.; Drexler, s.v. "Gaia," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, i. 1574 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) p. 27.

² Pausanias, vii. 21. 11. At Athens there was a sanctuary of Earth the Nursing-Mother and of Green Demeter (Pausanias, i. 22. 3), but we

do not know how the goddesses were represented.

³ L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 256 with plate xxi. b.

⁴ The distinction between Demeter (Ceres) and the Earth Goddess is clearly marked by Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 673 sq.:

"*Officium commune Ceres et Terra
tuentur;
Haec praebet causam frugibus,
illa locum.*"

not personify the earth, can there be any reasonable doubt that, like her daughter, she personified the corn which was so commonly called by her name from the time of Homer downwards? The essential identity of mother and daughter is suggested, not only by the close resemblance of their artistic types, but also by the official title of "the Two Goddesses" which was regularly applied to them in the great sanctuary at Eleusis without any specification of their individual attributes and titles,¹ as if their separate individualities had almost merged in a single divine substance.²

As goddesses of the corn Demeter and Persephone came to be associated with the ideas of death and resurrection.

Surveying the evidence as a whole, we may say that from the myth of Demeter and Persephone, from their ritual, from their representations in art, from the titles which they bore, from the offerings of first-fruits which were presented to them, and from the names applied to the cereals, we are fairly entitled to conclude that in the mind of the ordinary Greek the two goddesses were essentially personifications of the corn, and that in this germ the whole efflorescence of their religion finds implicitly its explanation. But to maintain this is not to deny that in the long course of religious evolution high moral and spiritual conceptions were grafted on this simple original stock and blossomed out into fairer flowers than the bloom of the barley and the wheat. Above all, the thought of the seed buried in the earth in order to spring up to new and higher life readily suggested a comparison with human destiny, and strengthened the hope that for man too the grave may be but the beginning of a better and happier existence in some brighter world unknown. This simple and natural reflection seems perfectly sufficient to explain the association of the Corn Goddess at Eleusis with the mystery of death and the hope of a blissful immortality. For that the ancients regarded initiation in

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² Nos. 20, 408, 411, 587, 646, 647, 652, 720, 789. Compare the expression *διώδυμοι θέαι* applied to them by Euripides, *Phoenissae*, 683, with the Scholiast's note.

² The substantial identity of Demeter and Persephone has been recognised by some modern scholars, though their interpretations of the

myth do not altogether agree with the one adopted in the text. See F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Gotterlehre* (Göttingen, 1857-1862), ii. 532; L. Preller, in Pauly's *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vi. 106 sq.; F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 2. pp. 1047 sqq.

the Eleusinian mysteries as a key to unlock the gates of Paradise appears to be proved by the allusions which well-informed writers among them drop to the happiness in store for the initiated hereafter.¹ No doubt it is easy for us to discern the flimsiness of the logical foundation on which such high hopes were built.² But drowning men clutch at straws, and we need not wonder that the Greeks, like ourselves, with death before them and a great love of life in their hearts, should not have stopped to weigh with too nice a hand the arguments that told for and against the prospect of human immortality. The reasoning that satisfied Saint Paul³ and has brought comfort to untold thousands of sorrowing Christians, standing by the deathbed or the open grave of their loved ones, was good enough to pass muster with ancient pagans, when they too bowed their heads under the burden of grief, and, with the taper of life burning low in the socket, looked forward into the darkness of the unknown. Therefore we do no indignity to the myth of Demeter and Persephone—one of the few myths in which the sunshine and clarity of the Greek genius are crossed by the shadow and mystery of death—when we trace its origin to some of the most familiar, yet eternally affecting aspects of nature, to the melancholy gloom and decay of autumn and to the freshness, the brightness, and the verdure of spring.

¹ *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 480 sqq.; Pindar, quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* iii. 3. 17, p. 518, ed. Potter; Sophocles, quoted by Plutarch, *De audiendis poetis*, 4; Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 6; Cicero, *De legibus*, ii. 14. 36; Aristides, *Eleusin.* vol. i. p. 421, ed. G. Dindorf.

² A learned German professor has thought it worth while to break the

poor butterfly argument on the wheel of his inflexible logic. The cruel act, while it proves the hardness of the professor's head, says little for his knowledge of human nature, which does not always act in strict accordance with the impulse of the syllogistic machinery. See Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*³ (Tubingen and Leipsic, 1903), i. 290 sqq.

³ 1 Corinthians xv. 35 sqq.

CHAPTER III

MAGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GAMES IN PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE

Games played as magical ceremonies to promote the growth of the crops.

IN the preceding chapter we saw that among the rites of Eleusis were comprised certain athletic sports, such as foot-races, horse-races, leaping, wrestling, and boxing, the victors in which were rewarded with measures of barley distributed among them by the priests.¹ These sports the ancients themselves associated with the worship of Demeter and Persephone, the goddesses of the corn, and strange as such an association may seem to us, it is not without its analogy among the harvest customs of modern European peasantry.² But to discover clear cases of games practised for the express purpose of promoting the growth of the crops, we must turn to more primitive agricultural communities than the Athenians of classical antiquity or the peoples of modern Europe. Such communities may be found at the present day among the savage tribes of Borneo and New Guinea, who subsist mainly by tilling the ground. Among them we take the Kayans or Bahaus of central Borneo as typical. They are essentially an agricultural people, and devote themselves mainly to the cultivation of rice, which furnishes their staple food; all other products of the ground are of subordinate importance. Hence agriculture, we are told, dominates the whole life of these tribes: their year is the year of the cultivation of the rice, and they divide it into various periods which are determined by the conditions necessary for the tilling of the fields and the manipulation

The Kayans of central Borneo, a primitive agricultural people.

¹ See above, p. 71, with the footnote ⁵.

² See above, pp. 74 *sqq.*

of the rice. "In tribes whose thoughts are so much engrossed by agriculture it is no wonder that they associate with it their ideas of the powers which rule them for good or evil. The spirit-world stands in close connexion with the agriculture of the Bahaus; without the consent of the spirits no work in the fields may be undertaken. Moreover, all the great popular festivals coincide with the different periods of the cultivation of the rice. As the people are in an unusual state of affluence after harvest, all family festivals which require a large outlay are for practical reasons deferred till the New Year festival at the end of harvest. The two mighty spirits Amei Awi and his wife Buring Une, who, according to the belief of the Kayans, live in a world under ground, dominate the whole of the tillage and determine the issue of the harvest in great measure by the behaviour of the owner of the land, not so much by his moral conduct, as by the offerings he has made to the spirits and the attention he has paid to their warnings. An important part in agriculture falls to the chief: at the festivals he has, in the name of the whole tribe, to see to it that the prescribed conjurations are carried out by the priestesses. All religious ceremonies required for the cultivation of the ground take place in a small rice-field specially set apart for that purpose, called *luma lali*: here the chief's family ushers in every fresh operation in the cultivation of the rice, such as sowing, hoeing, and reaping: the solemn actions there performed have a symbolical significance."¹

The sacred rice-fields (*luma lali*) on which all religious ceremonies requisite for agriculture are performed.

Not only the chief's family among the Kayans has such a consecrated field; every family possesses one of its own. These little fields are never cultivated for the sake of their produce: they serve only as the scene of religious ceremonies and of those symbolical operations of agriculture which are afterwards performed in earnest on the real rice-fields.² For example, at the festival before sowing a priestess sows some rice on the consecrated field of the chief's family and then calls on a number of young men and girls to complete the work; the young men then dig holes in the ground with digging-sticks, and the girls come behind them and

Ceremonies observed at the sowing festival.

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 156 sq.

² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 164.

plant the rice-seed in the holes. Afterwards the priestesses lay offerings of food, wrapt in banana-leaves, here and there on the holy field, while they croon prayers to the spirits in soft tones, which are half drowned in the clashing music of the gongs. On another day women gather all kinds of edible leaves in their gardens and fields, boil them in water, and then sprinkle the water on the consecrated rice-field. But on that and other days of the festival the people attend also to their own wants, banqueting on a favourite species of rice and other dainties. The ceremonies connected with sowing last several weeks, and during this time certain taboos have to be observed by the people. Thus on the first day of the festival the whole population, except the very old and the very young, must refrain from bathing; after that there follows a period of rest for eight nights, during which the people may neither work nor hold intercourse with their neighbours. On the tenth day the prohibition to bathe is again enforced; and during the eight following days the great rice-field of the village, where the real crops are raised, is sowed.¹ The reason for excluding strangers from the village at these times is a religious one. It is a fear lest the presence of strangers might frighten the spirits or put them in a bad humour, and so defeat the object of the ceremony; for, while the religious ceremonies which accompany the cultivation of the rice differ somewhat from each other in different tribes, the ideas at the bottom of them, we are told, are everywhere the same: the aim always is to appease and propitiate the souls of the rice and the other spirits by sacrifices of all sorts.²

Taboos
observed
at the
sowing
festival.

Games
played at
the sowing
festival.

However, during this obligatory period of seclusion and rest the Kayans employ themselves in various pursuits, which, though at first sight they might seem to serve no other purpose than that of recreation, have really in the minds of the people a much deeper significance. For

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 164-167.

² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 163. The motive assigned for the exclusion of strangers at the sowing festival applies equally to all religious rites. "In all religious observances," says Dr. Nieuwenhuis, "the Kayans fear

the presence of strangers, because these latter might frighten and annoy the spirits which are invoked." On the periods of seclusion and quiet observed in connexion with agriculture by the Kayans of Sarawak, see W. H. Furness, *Home-life of Borneo Head-hunters* (Philadelphia, 1902), pp. 160 sqq.

example, at this time the men often play at spinning tops. The tops are smooth, flat pieces of wood weighing several pounds. Each man tries to spin his own top so that it knocks down those of his neighbours and continues itself to revolve triumphantly. New tops are commonly carved for the festival. The older men sometimes use heavy tops of iron-wood. Again, every evening the young men assemble in the open space before the chief's house and engage in contests of strength and agility, while the women watch them from the long gallery or verandah of the house. Another popular pastime during the festival of sowing is a masquerade. It takes place on the evening of the tenth day, the day on which, for the second time, the people are forbidden to bathe. The scene of the performance is again the open space in front of the chief's house. As the day draws towards evening, the villagers begin to assemble in the gallery or verandah of the house in order to secure good places for viewing the masquerade. All the maskers at these ceremonies represent evil spirits. The men wear ugly wooden masks on their faces, and their bodies are swathed in masses of slit banana leaves so as to imitate the hideous faces and hairy bodies of the demons. The young women wear on their heads cylindrical baskets, which conceal their real features, while they exhibit to the spectators grotesque human faces formed by stitches on pieces of white cotton, which are fastened to the baskets. On the occasion when Dr. Nieuwenhuis witnessed the ceremony, the first to appear on the scene were some men wearing wooden masks and helmets and so thickly wrapt in banana leaves that they looked like moving masses of green foliage. They danced silently, keeping time to the beat of the gongs. They were followed by other figures, some of whom executed wurdances; but the weight of their leafy envelope was such that they soon grew tired, and though they leaped high, they uttered none of the wild war-whoops which usually accompany these martial exercises. When darkness fell the dances ceased and were replaced by a little drama representing a boar brought to bay by a pack of hounds. The part of the boar was played by an actor wearing a wooden boar's head mask, who ran about on all fours and

Masquerade at the sowing festival.

grunted in a life-like manner, while the hounds, acted by young men, snarled, yelped, and made dashes at him. The play was watched with lively interest and peals of laughter by the spectators. Later in the evening eight disguised girls danced, one behind the other, with slow steps and waving arms, to the glimmering light of torches and the strains of a sort of jew's harp.¹

Rites at
hoeing.

The rites which accompany the sowing of the fields are no sooner over than those which usher in the hoeing begin. Like the sowing ceremonies, they are inaugurated by a priestess, who hoes the sacred field round about a sacrificial stage and then calls upon other people to complete the work. After that the holy field is again sprinkled with a decoction of herbs.²

The Kayan
New Year
festival.

But the crowning point of the Kayan year is the New Year festival. The harvest has then been fully housed : abundance reigns in every family, and for eight days the people, dressed out in all their finery, give themselves up to mirth and jollity. The festival was witnessed by the Dutch explorer Dr. Nieuwenhuis. To lure the good spirits from the spirit land baskets filled with precious objects were set out before the windows, and the priestesses made long speeches, in which they invited these beneficent beings to come to the chief's house and to stay there during the whole of the ceremonies. Two days afterwards one of the priestesses harangued the spirits for three-quarters of an hour, telling them who the Kayans were, from whom the chief's family was descended, what the tribe was doing, and what were its wishes, not forgetting to implore the vengeance of the spirits on the Batang-Lupars, the hereditary foes of the Kayans. The harangue was couched in rhyming verse and delivered in sing-song tones. Five days later eight priestesses ascended a sacrificial stage, on which food was daily set forth for the spirits. There they joined hands and crooned another long address to the spirits, marking the time with their hands. Then a basket containing offerings of food was handed up to them, and one of the priestesses opened it and invited the spirits to enter the basket. When they were supposed to have done so, the lid

Offerings
and ad-
dresses to
the spirits.

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 167-169.

² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 169.

was shut down on them, and the basket with the spirits in it was conveyed into the chief's house. As the priestesses in the performance of the sacred ceremonies might not touch the ground, planks were cut from a fruit-tree and laid on the ground for them to step on. But the great feature of the New Year festival is the sacrifice of pigs, of which the spiritual essence is appropriately offered to the spirits, while their material substance is consumed by the worshippers. In carrying out this highly satisfactory arrangement, while the live pigs lay tethered in a row on the ground, the priestesses danced solemnly round a sacrificial stage, each of them arrayed in a war-mantle of panther-skin and wearing a war-cap on her head, and on either side two priests armed with swords executed war dances for the purpose of scaring away evil spirits. By their gesticulations the priestesses indicated to the powers above that the pigs were intended for their benefit. One of them, a fat but dignified lady, dancing composedly, seemed by her courteous gestures to invite the souls of the pigs to ascend up to heaven; but others, not content with this too ideal offering, rushed at the pigs, seized the smallest of them by the hind legs, and exerting all their strength danced with the squealing porker to and from the sacrificial stage. In the evening, before darkness fell, the animals were slaughtered and their livers examined for omens: if the under side of the liver was pale, the omen was good; but if it was dark, the omen was evil. On the last day of the festival one of the chief priestesses, in martial array, danced round the sacrificial stage, making passes with her old sword as if she would heave the whole structure heavenward; while others stabbed with spears at the foul fiends that might be hovering in the air, intent on disturbing the sacred ministers at their holy work.¹

Sacrifice
of pigs.

"Thus," says Dr. Nieuwenhuis, reviewing the agricultural rites which he witnessed among the Kayans on the Mendalam river, "every fresh operation on the rice-field was ushered in by religious and culinary ceremonies, during which the community had always to observe taboos for several nights and to play certain definite games. As we saw, spinning-top games

Dr. Nieuwenhuis on the games played by the Kayans in connexion with agriculture.

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 171-182.

and masquerades were played during the sowing festival: at the first bringing in of the rice the people pelted each other with clay pellets discharged from small pea-shooters, but in former times sham fights took place with wooden swords; while during the New Year festival the men contend with each other in wrestling, high leaps, long leaps, and running. The women also fight each other with great glee, using bamboo vessels full of water for their principal weapons."¹

Serious
religious
or magical
signifi-
cance of
the games

What is the meaning of the sports and pastimes which custom prescribes to the Kayans on these occasions? Are they mere diversions meant to while away the tedium of the holidays? or have they a serious, perhaps a religious or magical significance? To this question it will be well to let Dr. Nieuwenhuis give his answer. "The Kayans on the Mendalam river," he says, "enjoy tolerably regular harvests, and their agricultural festivals accordingly take place every year; whereas the Kayans on the Mahakam river, on account of the frequent failure of the harvests, can celebrate a New Year's festival only once in every two or three years. Yet although these festivities are celebrated more regularly on the Mendalam river, they are followed on the Mahakam river with livelier interest, and the meaning of all ceremonies and games can also be traced much better there. On the Mendalam river I came to the false conclusion that the popular games which take place at the festivals are undertaken quite arbitrarily at the seasons of sowing and harvest; but on the Mahakam river, on the contrary, I observed that even the masquerade at the sowing festival is invested with as deep a significance as any of the ceremonies performed by the priestesses."²

"The influence of religious worship, which dominates the whole life of the Dyak tribes, manifests itself also in their games. This holds good chiefly of pastimes in which all adults take part together, mostly on definite occasions; it is less applicable to more individual pastimes which are not restricted to any special season. Pastimes of the former sort are very rarely indulged in at ordinary times, and properly speaking they attain their full significance only on

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 169 sq.

² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 163 sq.

the occasion of the agricultural festivals which bear a strictly religious stamp. Even then the recreations are not left to choice, but definite games belong to definite festivals; thus at the sowing festivals other amusements are in vogue than at the little harvest festival or the great harvest festival at the beginning of the reaping, and at the New Year festival. . . . Is this connexion between festivals and games merely an accidental one, or is it based on a real affinity? The latter seems to me the more probable view, for in the case of one of the most important games played by men I was able to prove directly a religious significance; and although I failed to do so in the case of the others, I conjecture, nevertheless, that a religious idea lies at the bottom of all other games which are connected with definite festivals."¹

If the reader should entertain any doubt on the subject, and should suspect that in arriving at this conclusion the Dutch traveller gave the reins to his fancy rather than followed the real opinion of the people, these doubts and suspicions will probably be dispelled by comparing the similar games which another primitive agricultural people avowedly play for the purpose of ensuring good crops. The people in question are the Kai of German New Guinea, who inhabit the rugged, densely wooded mountains inland from Finsch Harbour. They subsist mainly on the produce of the taro and yams which they cultivate in their fields, though the more inland people also make much use of sweet potatoes. All their crops are root crops. No patch of ground is cultivated for more than a year at a time. As soon as it has yielded a crop, it is deserted for another and is quickly overgrown with rank weeds, bamboos, and bushes. In six or eight years, when the undergrowth has died out under the shadow of the taller trees which have shot up, the land may again be cleared and brought under cultivation. Thus the area of cultivation shifts from year to year; and the villages are not much more permanent; for in the damp tropical climate the wooden houses soon rot and fall into

The Kai,
an agri-
cultural
people of
German
New
Guinea.

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, ii. 130 *sq.* The game as to the religious significance of which Dr. Nieuwenhuis has no doubt is the masquerade performed by the Kayans

of the Mahakam river, where disguised men personate spirits and pretend to draw home the souls of the rice from the far countries to which they may have wandered. See below, pp 186 *sq.*

Super-
stitious
practices
observed
by the Kai
for the
good of
the crops.

ruins, and when this happens the site of the village is changed.¹ To procure good crops of the taro and yams, on which they depend for their subsistence, the Kai resort to many superstitious practices. For example, in order to make the yams strike deep roots, they touch the shoots with the bone of a wild animal that has been killed in the recesses of a cave, imagining that just as the creature penetrated deep into the earth, so the shoots that have been touched with its bone will descend deep into the ground. And in order that the taro may bear large and heavy fruit, they place the shoots, before planting them, on a large and heavy block of stone, believing that the stone will communicate its valuable properties of size and weight to the future fruit. Moreover, great use is made of spells and incantations to promote the growth of the crops, and all persons who utter such magical formulas for this purpose have to abstain from eating certain foods until the plants have sprouted and give promise of a good crop. For example, they may not eat young bamboo shoots, which are a favourite article of diet with the people. The reason is that the young shoots are covered with fine prickles, which cause itching and irritation of the skin ; from which the Kai infer that if an enchanter of field fruits were to eat bamboo shoots, the contagion of their prickles would be conveyed through him to the fruits and would manifest itself in a pungent disagreeable flavour. For a similar reason no charmer of the crops who knows his business would dream of eating crabs, because he is well aware that if he were to do so the leaves and stalks of the plants would be dashed in pieces by a pelting rain, just like the long thin brittle legs of a dead crab. Again, were such an enchanter to eat any of the edible kinds of locusts, it seems obvious to the Kai that locusts would devour the crops over which the imprudent wizard had recited his spells. Above all, people who are concerned in planting fields must on no account eat pork ; because pigs, whether wild or tame, are the most deadly enemies of the crops, which they grub up and destroy ; from which it follows, as surely as the night does the day, that if you eat pork while

¹ Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der *Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) pp. 3, Kaileute," in R. Neuhaus, *Deutsch* 9 sq., 12 sq.

you are at work on the farm, your fields will be devastated by inroads of pigs.¹

However, these precautions are not the only measures which the Kai people adopt for the benefit of the yams and the taro. "In the opinion of the natives various games are important for a proper growth of the field-fruits; hence these games may only be played in the time after the work on the fields has been done. Thus to swing on a long Spanish reed fastened to a branch of a tree is thought to have a good effect on the newly planted yams. Therefore swinging is practised by old and young, by men and women. No one who has an interest in the growth of his crop in the field leaves the swing idle. As they swing to and fro they sing swing-songs. These songs often contain only the names of the kinds of yams that have been planted, together with the joyous harvest-cry repeated with variations, 'I have found a fine fruit!' In leaping from the swing, they cry '*Kakulili!*' By calling out the name of the yams they think to draw their shoots upwards out of the ground. A small bow with a string, on which a wooden flag adorned with a feather is made to slide down (the Kai call the instrument *tawatawa*), may only be used when the yams are beginning to wind up about their props. The tender shoots are then touched with the bow, while a song is sung which is afterwards often repeated in the village. It runs thus: '*Mama gelo, gelowaineja, gelowaineja; kiki tambai, kiki tambai.*' The meaning of the words is unknown. The intention is to cause a strong upward growth of the plants. In order that the foliage of the yams may sprout luxuriantly and grow green and spread, the Kai people play cat's cradle. Each of the intricate figures has a definite meaning and a name to match: for example 'the flock of pigeons' (*Hulua*), 'the Star,' 'the Flying Fox,' 'the Sago-palm Fan,' 'the Araucaria,' 'the Lizard and the Dog,' 'the Pig,' 'the Sentinel-box in the Fields,' 'the Rat's Nest,' 'the Wasp's Nest in the Bamboo-thicket,' 'the Kangaroo,' 'the Spider's Web,' 'the Little Children,' 'the Canoe,' 'Rain and Sunshine,' 'the Pig's Pitfall,' 'the Fish-spawn,' 'the Two Cousins, Kewâ and Imbiâwâ, carrying their dead Mother to the

Games played by the Kai people to promote the growth of the yams and taro.

¹ Ch. Keysser, *op. cit.* pp. 123-125.

Grave,' etc. By spinning large native acorns or a sort of wild fig they think that they foster the growth of the newly-planted taro ; the plants will 'turn about and broaden.' The game must therefore only be played at the time when the taro is planted. The same holds good of spearing at the stalks of taro leaves with the ribs of sago leaves used as miniature spears. This is done when the taro leaves have unfolded themselves, but when the plants have not yet set any tubers. A single leaf is cut from a number of stems, and these leaves are brought into the village. The game is played by two partners, who sit down opposite to each other at a distance of three or four paces. A number of taro stalks lie beside each. He who has speared all his adversary's stalks first is victor ; then they change stalks and the game begins again. By piercing the leaves they think that they incite the plants to set tubers. Almost more remarkable than the limitation of these games to the time when work on the fields is going forward is the custom of the Kai people which only permits the tales of the olden time or popular legends to be told at the time when the newly planted fruits are budding and sprouting."¹ At the end of every such tale the Kai story-teller mentions the names of the various kinds of yams and adds, "Shoots (for the new planting) and fruits (to eat) in abundance!" "From their words we see that the Kai legends are only told for a quite definite purpose, namely, to promote the welfare of the yams planted in the field. By reviving the memory of the ancient beings, to whom the origin of the field-fruits is referred, they imagine that they influence the growth of the fruits for good. When the planting is over, and especially when the young plants begin to sprout, the telling of legends comes to an end. In the villages it is always only a few old men who as good story-tellers can hold the attention of their hearers."²

Tales and legends told by the Kai to cause the fruits of the earth to thrive.

Thus among these New Guinea people games are played and

Thus with these New Guinea people the playing of certain games and the recital of certain legends are alike magical in their intention ; they are charms practised to ensure good crops. Both sets of charms appear to be based on the principles of sympathetic magic. In playing the

¹ Ch. Keysser, *op. cit.* iii. 125 *sq.*

² Ch. Keysser, *op. cit.* iii. 161.

games the players perform acts which are supposed to mimic or at all events to stimulate the corresponding processes in the plants: by swinging high in the air they make the plants grow high; by playing cat's cradle they cause the leaves of the yams to spread and the stalks to intertwine, even as the players spread their hands and twine the string about their fingers; by spinning fruits they make the taro plants to turn and broaden; and by spearing the taro leaves they induce the plants to set tubers.¹ In telling the legends the story-tellers mention the names of the powerful beings who first created the fruits of the earth, and the mere mention of their names avails, on the principle of the magical equivalence of names and persons or things, to reproduce the effect.² The recitation of tales as a charm to promote the growth of the crops is not peculiar to the Kai. It is practised also by the Bukaua, another tribe of German New Guinea, who inhabit the coast of Huon Gulf, not far from the Kai. These people tell stories in the evening at the time when the yams and taro are ripe, and the stories always end with a prayer to the ancestral spirits, invoked under various more or less fanciful designations, such as "a man" or "a cricket," that they would be pleased to cause countless shoots to sprout, the great tubers to swell, the sugar-cane to

stories told
as charms
to ensure
good crops.

¹ On the principles of homoeopathic or imitative magic, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 52 sqq. The Esquimaux play cat's cradle as a charm to catch the sun in the meshes of the string and so prevent him from sinking below the horizon in winter. See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 316 sq. Cat's cradle is played as a game by savages in many parts of the world, including the Torres Straits Islands, the Andaman Islands, Africa, and America. See A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (London and New York, 1898), pp. 224-232; Miss Kathleen Haddon, *Cat's Cradles from Many Lands* (London, 1911). For example, the Indians of North-western Brazil play many games of cat's cradle, each of which has its special name, such as the Bow, the Moon, the Pleiades, the Armadillo, the Spider, the Caterpillar, and the Guts of the Tapir. See Th.

Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern* (Berlin, 1909-1910), i. 120, 123, 252, 253, ii. 127, 131. Finding the game played as a magical rite to stay the sun or promote the growth of the crops among peoples so distant from each other as the Esquimaux and the natives of New Guinea, we may reasonably surmise that it has been put to similar uses by many other peoples, though civilised observers have commonly seen in it nothing more than a pastime. Probably many games have thus originated in magical rites. When their old serious meaning was forgotten, they continued to be practised simply for the amusement they afforded the players. Another such game seems to be the "Tug of War." See *The Golden Bough*,² iii. 95.

² See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 318 sqq.

thrive, and the bananas to hang in long clusters. "From this we see," says the missionary who reports the custom, "that the object of telling the stories is to prove to the ancestors, whose spirits are believed to be present at the recitation of the tales which they either invented or inherited, that people always remember them ; for which reason they ought to be favourable to their descendants, and above all to bestow their blessings on the shoots which are ready to be planted or on the plants already in the ground." As the story-teller utters the prayer, he looks towards the house in which the young shoots ready for planting or the ripe fruits are deposited.¹

The Yabim of German New Guinea also tell tales on purpose to obtain abundant crops.

Similarly, the Yabim, a neighbouring tribe of German New Guinea, at the entrance to Huon Gulf, tell tales for the purpose of obtaining a plentiful harvest of yams, taro, sugar-cane, and bananas.² They subsist chiefly by the fruits of the earth which they cultivate, and among which taro, yams, and sugar-cane supply them with their staple food.³ In their agricultural labours they believe themselves to be largely dependent on the spirits of their dead, the *balum*, as they call them. Before they plant the first taro in a newly cleared field they invoke the souls of the dead to make the plants grow and prosper ; and to propitiate these powerful spirits they bring valuable objects, such as boar's tusks and dog's teeth, into the field, in order that the ghosts may deck themselves with the souls of these ornaments, while at the same time they minister to the grosser appetites of the disembodied spirits by offering them a savoury mess of taro porridge. Later in the season they whirl bull-roarers in the fields and call out the names of the dead, believing that this makes the crops to thrive.⁴

Specimens of Yabim tales told as charms to procure a good harvest.

But besides the prayers which they address to the spirits of the dead for the sake of procuring an abundant harvest, the Yabim utter spells for the same purpose, and these spells sometimes take the form, not of a command, but of a narrative. Here, for instance, is one of their spells : "Once upon a time a man laboured in his field and complained that he had no

¹ Stefan Lehner, "Bukaua," in R. Neuhaus, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) pp. 478 sq.

² See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 386.

³ H. Zahn, "Die Jabim," in R. Neuhaus, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) p. 290.

⁴ H. Zahn, *op. cit.* pp. 332 sq.

taro shoots. Then came two doves flying from Poum. They had devoured much taro, and they perched on a tree in the field, and during the night they vomited all the taro up. Thus the man got so many taro shoots that he was even able to sell some of them to other people." Or, again, if the taro will not bud, the Yabim will have recourse to the following spell: "A muraena lay at ebb-tide on the shore. It seemed to be at its last gasp. Then the tide flowed on, and the muraena came to life again and plunged into the deep water." This spell is pronounced over twigs of a certain tree (*kalelong*), while the enchanter smites the ground with them. After that the taro is sure to bud.¹ Apparently the mere recitation of such simple tales is thought to produce the same effect as a direct appeal, whether in the shape of a prayer or a command, addressed to the spirits. Such incantations may be called narrative spells to distinguish them from the more familiar imperative spells, in which the enchanter expresses his wishes in the form of direct commands. Much use seems to be made of such narrative spells among the natives of this part of German New Guinea. For example, among the Bukaua, who attribute practically boundless powers to sorcerers in every department of life and nature, the spells by which these wizards attempt to work their will assume one of two forms: either they are requests made to the ancestors, or they are short narratives, addressed to nobody in particular, which the sorcerer mutters while he is performing his magical rites.² It is true, that here the distinction is drawn between narratives and requests rather than between narratives and commands; but the difference of a request from a command, though great in theory, may be very slight in practice; so that prayer and spell, in the ordinary sense of the words, may melt into each other almost imperceptibly. Even the priest or the enchanter who utters the one may be hardly conscious of the hairbreadth that divides it from the other. In regard to narrative spells, it seems probable that they have been used much more extensively among mankind than the evidence at our disposal per-

Such tales
may be
called
narrative
spells.

¹ H. Zahn, *op. cit.* p. 333.

² Stefan Lehner, "Bukaua," in R.

Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) p. 448.

mits us positively to affirm ; in particular we may conjecture that many ancient narratives, which we have been accustomed to treat as mere myths, used to be regularly recited in magical rites as spells for the purpose of actually producing events like those which they describe.

Use of the bull-roarer to quicken the fruits of the earth.

The use of the bull-roarer to quicken the fruits of the earth is not peculiar to the Yabim. On the other side of New Guinea the instrument is employed for the same purpose by the natives of Kiwai, an island at the mouth of the Fly River. They think that by whirling bull-roarers they produce good crops of yams, sweet potatoes, and bananas ; and in accordance with this belief they call the implement "the mother of yams."¹ Similarly in Mabuig, an island in Torres Straits, the bull-roarer is looked upon as an instrument that can be used to promote the growth of garden produce, such as yams and sweet potatoes ; certain spirits were supposed to march round the gardens at night with bull-roarers for this purpose.² Indeed a fertilising or prolific virtue appears to be attributed to the instrument by savages who are totally ignorant of agriculture. Thus among the Dieri of central Australia, when a young man had undergone the painful initiatory ceremony of having a number of gashes cut in his back, he used to be given a bull-roarer, whereupon it was believed that he became inspired by the spirits of the men of old, and that by whirling it, when he went in search of game before his wounds were healed, he had power to cause a good harvest of lizards, snakes, and other reptiles. On the other hand, the Dieri thought that if a woman were to see a bull-roarer that had been used at the initiatory ceremonies and to learn its secret, the tribe would ever afterwards be destitute of snakes, lizards, and other such food.³ It may

¹ A. C. Haddon, in *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. (Cambridge, 1904) pp. 218, 219. Compare *id.*, *Head-hunters, Black, White, and Brown* (London, 1901) p. 104.

² A. C. Haddon, in *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. (Cambridge, 1904) pp. 346 sq.

³ A. W. Howitt, "The Dieri and other kindred Tribes of Central Australia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891) p. 83 ; *id.*, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), p. 660. The first, I believe, to point out the fertilising power ascribed to the bull-roarer by some savages was Dr. A. C. Haddon. See his essay,

very well be that a similar power to fertilise or multiply edible plants and animals has been ascribed to the bull-roarer by many other peoples who employ the implement in their mysteries.

Further, it is to be observed that just as the Kai of New Guinea swing to and fro on reeds suspended from the branches of trees in order to promote the growth of the crops, in like manner Lettish peasants in Russia devote their leisure to swinging in spring and early summer for the express purpose of making the flax grow as high as they swing in the air.¹ And we may suspect that wherever swinging is practised as a ceremony at certain times of the year, particularly in spring and at harvest, the pastime is not so much a mere popular recreation as a magical rite designed to promote the growth of the crops.²

Swinging as an agricultural charm.

With these examples before us we need not hesitate to believe that Dr. Nieuwenhuis is right when he attributes a deep religious or magical significance to the games which the Kayans or Bahaus of central Borneo play at their various agricultural festivals.

It remains to point out how far the religious or magical practices of these primitive agricultural peoples of Borneo and New Guinea appear to illustrate by analogy the original nature of the rites of Eleusis. So far as we can recompose, from the broken fragments of tradition, a picture of the religious and political condition of the Eleusinian people in the olden time, it appears to tally fairly well with the picture which Dr. Nieuwenhuis has drawn for us of the Kayans or Bahaus at the present day in the forests of central Borneo. Here as there we see a petty agricultural community ruled by hereditary chiefs who, while they unite religious to civil authority, being bound to preside over the numerous ceremonies performed for the good of

Analogy of the Kayans of Borneo to the Greeks of Eleusis in the early time.

"The Bull-roarer," in *The Study of Man* (London and New York, 1898), pp. 277-327. In this work Dr. Haddon recognises the general principle of the possible derivation of many games from magical rites. As to the bull-roarer compare my paper "On some Ceremonies of the Central Australian Tribes," in the *Report of the Austral-*

asian Association for the Advancement of Science for the year 1900 (Melbourne, 1901), pp. 313-322.

¹ J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1841), ii. 25.

² For the evidence see *The Dying God*, pp. 277-285.

the crops,¹ nevertheless lead simple patriarchal lives and are so little raised in outward dignity above their fellows that their daughters do not deem it beneath them to fetch water for the household from the village well.² Here as there we see a people whose whole religion is dominated and coloured by the main occupation of their lives; who believe that the growth of the crops, on which they depend for their subsistence, is at the mercy of two powerful spirits, a divine husband and his wife, dwelling in a subterranean world; and who accordingly offer sacrifices and perform ceremonies in order to ensure the favour of these mighty beings and so to obtain abundant harvests. If we knew more about the Rarian plain at Eleusis,³ we might discover that it was the scene of many religious ceremonies like those which are performed on the little consecrated rice-fields (the *luma lali*) of the Kayans, where the various operations of the agricultural year are performed in miniature by members of the chief's family before the corresponding operations may be performed on a larger scale by common folk on their fields. Certainly we know that the Rarian plain witnessed one such ceremony in the year. It was a solemn ceremony of ploughing, one of the three Sacred Ploughings which took place annually in various parts of Attica.⁴ Probably the rite formed part of the *Proerosia* or Festival before *Πρωερωσία*, which was intended to ensure a plentiful crop.⁵ Further, it appears that the priests who guided the sacred slow-paced oxen as they dragged the plough down the furrows of the Rarian Plain, were drawn from the old priestly family of Bouzygai or "Ox-yokers," whose eponymous ancestor is said to have been the first man to yoke oxen and to plough the fields. As they performed this time-honoured ceremony, the priests uttered many quaint curses against all churls who should refuse to lend fire or water to neighbours, or to shew the way to wanderers, or who should

The Sacred
Ploughing
at Eleusis.

¹ On the Kayan chiefs and their religious duties, see A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 58-60.

² See above, p. 36.

³ See above, p. 74.

⁴ Plutarch, *Præcepta Conjugalia*, 42. Another of these Sacred Plough-

ings was performed at Scirum, and the third at the foot of the Acropolis at Athens; for in this passage of Plutarch we must, with the latest editor, read *ὑπὸ πύλων* for the *ὑπὸ πύλων* of the manuscripts.

⁵ See above, pp. 50 sqq.

leave a corpse unburied.¹ If we had a complete list of the execrations fulminated by the holy ploughmen on these occasions, we might find that some of them were levelled at the impious wretches who failed to keep all the rules of the Sabbath, as we may call those periods of enforced rest and seclusion which the Kayans of Borneo and other primitive agricultural peoples observe for the good of the crops.²

¹ *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. Βουζυγία, p. 206, lines 47 sqq.; Im. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca* (Berlin, 1814-1821), i. 221; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 199; Hesychius, s.v. Βουζύγης· καθίστατο δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ὁ τοῖς ἱεροῦς ἀρτότοις ἐπιτελῶν Βουζύγης; *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. E. L. Leutsch und F. G. Schneidewin (Göttingen, 1839-1851), i. 388, Βουζύγης· ἐπιτῶν πολλὰ ἀρτότων. Ὁ γὰρ Βουζύγης Ἀθήνησι ὁ τὸν ἱερὸν ἀρτότον ἐπιτελῶν * * ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἀρᾶται καὶ τοῖς μὴ κοινωνοῦσι κατὰ τὸν βίον ὕδατος ἢ πυρὸς ἢ μὴ ὑποφαινοῦσι ὀδὸν πλανωμένοις; Scholiast on Sophocles, *Antigone*, 255, λόγος δὲ ὅτι Βουζύγης Ἀθήνησι καθήρσατο τοῖς περιορῶσιν ἄταφον σῶμα. The Sacred Ploughing at the foot of the Acropolis was specially called *bouzygiotis* (Plutarch, *Præcepta Conjugalia*, 42). Compare J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie* (Berlin, 1889) pp. 136 sqq.

² Such Sabbaths are very commonly and very strictly observed in connexion with the crops by the agricultural hill tribes of Assam. The native name for such a Sabbath is *genna*. See T. C. Hodson, "The *Genna* amongst the Tribes of Assam," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) pp. 94 sq.: "Communal tabus are observed by the whole village. . . . Those which are of regular occurrence are for the most part connected with the crops. Even where irrigated terraces are made, the rice plant is much affected by deficiencies of rain and excess of sun. Before the crop is sown, the village is tabu or *genna*. The gates are closed and the friend without has to stay outside, while the stranger that is within the gates remains till all is ended. The festival is marked among some tribes by an outburst of licentiousness, for, so long

as the crops remain ungarnered, the slightest incontinence might ruin all. An omen of the prosperity of the crops is taken by a mock contest, the girls pulling against the men. In some villages the *gennas* last for ten days, but the tenth day is the crowning day of all. The men cook, and eat apart from the women during this time, and the food tabus are strictly enforced. From the conclusion of the initial crop *genna* to the commencement of the *genna* which ushers in the harvest-time, all trade, all fishing, all hunting, all cutting grass and felling trees is forbidden. Those tribes which specialise in cloth-weaving, salt-making or pottery-making are forbidden the exercise of these minor but valuable industries. Drums and bugles are silent all the while. . . . Between the initial crop *genna* and the harvest-home, some tribes interpose a *genna* day which depends on the appearance of the first blade of rice. All celebrate the commencement of the gathering of the crops by a *genna*, which lasts at least two days. It is mainly a repetition of the initial *genna* and, just as the first seed was sown by the *gennabura*, the religious head of the village, so he is obliged to cut the first ear of rice before any one else may begin." On such occasions among the Kabuis, in spite of the licence accorded to the people generally, the strictest chastity is required of the religious head of the village who initiates the sowing and the reaping, and his diet is extremely limited; for example, he may not eat dogs or tomatoes. See T. C. Hodson, "The Native Tribes of Manipur," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxi. (1901) pp. 306 sq.; and for more details, *id.*, *The Naga Tribes of Mani-*

The connexion of the Eleusinian games with agriculture, attested by the ancients, is confirmed by modern savage analogies.

Further, when we see that many primitive peoples practise what we call games but what they regard in all seriousness as solemn rites for the good of the crops, we may be the more inclined to accept the view of the ancients, who associated the Eleusinian games directly with the worship of Demeter and Persephone, the Corn Goddesses.¹ One of the contests at the Eleusinian games was in leaping,² and we know that even in modern Europe to this day leaping or dancing high is practised as a charm to make the crops grow tall.³ Again, the bull-roarer was swung so as to produce a humming sound at the Greek mysteries;⁴ and when we find the same simple instrument whirled by savages in New Guinea for the sake of ensuring good crops, we may reasonably conjecture that it was whirled with a like intention by the rude forefathers of the Greeks among the cornfields of Eleusis. If that were so—though the conjecture is hardly susceptible of demonstration—it would go some way to confirm the theory that the

pur (London, 1911), pp. 168 *sqq.* The resemblance of some of these customs to those of the Kayans of Borneo is obvious. We may conjecture that the "tug of war" which takes place between the sexes on several of these Sabbaths was originally a magical ceremony to ensure good crops rather than merely a mode of divination to forecast the coming harvest. Magic regularly dwindles into divination before it degenerates into a simple game. At one of these taboo periods the men set up an effigy of a man and throw pointed bamboos at it. He who hits the figure in the head will kill an enemy; he who hits it in the belly will have plenty of food. See T. C. Hodson, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) p. 95; *id.*, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur*, p. 171. Here also we probably have an old magical ceremony passing through a phase of divination before it reaches the last stage of decay. On Sabbaths observed in connexion with agriculture in Borneo and Assam, see further Hutton Webster, *Rest Days, a Sociological Study*, pp. 11 *sqq.* (*University Studies*, Lincoln, Nebraska,

vol. xi. Nos. 1-2, January-April, 1911).

¹ See above, p. 71.

² See above, p. 71 note⁵.

³ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 137-139.

⁴ See the old Greek scholiast on Clement of Alexandria, quoted by Chr. Aug. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus* (Konigsberg, 1829), p. 700; Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London, 1884), p. 39. It is true that the bull-roarer seems to have been associated with the rites of Dionysus rather than of Demeter; perhaps the sound of it was thought to mimic the bellowing of the god in his character of a bull. But the worship of Dionysus was from an early time associated with that of Demeter in the Eleusinian mysteries; and the god himself, as we have seen, had agricultural affinities. See above, p. 5. An annual festival of swinging (which, as we have seen, is still practised both in New Guinea and Russia for the good of the crops) was held by the Athenians in antiquity and was believed to have originated in the worship of Dionysus. See *The Dying God*, p. 281 *sq.*

Eleusinian mysteries were in their origin nothing more than simple rustic ceremonies designed to make the farmer's fields to wave with yellow corn. And in the practice of the Kayans, whose worship of the rice offers many analogies to the Eleusinian worship of the corn, may we not detect a hint of the origin of that rule of secrecy which always characterised the Eleusinian mysteries? May it not have been that, just as the Kayans exclude strangers from their villages while they are engaged in the celebration of religious rites, lest the presence of these intruders should frighten or annoy the shy and touchy spirits who are invoked at these times, so the old Eleusinians may have debarred foreigners from participation in their most solemn ceremonies, lest the coy goddesses of the corn should take fright or offence at the sight of strange faces and so refuse to bestow on men their annual blessing? The admission of foreigners to the privilege of initiation in the mysteries was probably a late innovation introduced at a time when the fame of their sanctity had spread far and wide, and when the old magical meaning of the ritual had long been obscured, if not forgotten.

Lastly, it may be suggested that in the masked dances and dramatic performances, which form a conspicuous and popular feature of the Sowing Festival among the Kayans,¹ we have the savage counterpart of that drama of divine death and resurrection which appears to have figured so prominently in the mysteries of Eleusis.² If my interpretation of that solemn drama is correct, it represented in mythical guise the various stages in the growth of the corn for the purpose of magically fostering the natural processes which it simulated. In like manner among the Kava and Koba Indians of North-western Brazil, who subsist chiefly by the cultivation of manioc, dances or rather pantomimes are performed by masked men, who represent spirits or demons of fertility, and by imitating the act of procreation are believed to stimulate the growth of plants as well as to quicken the wombs of women and to promote the multiplication of animals. Coarse and grotesque as these dramatic performances may seem to us, they convey no suggestion of

The sacred drama of the Eleusinian mysteries compared to the masked dances of agricultural savages.

¹ See above, pp. 95 *sq.*, and below, pp. 186 *sq.*

² See above, p. 39.

indecenty to the minds either of the actors or of the spectators, who regard them in all seriousness as rites destined to confer the blessing of fruitfulness on the inhabitants of the village, on their plantations, and on the whole realm of nature.¹ However, we possess so little exact information as to the rites of Eleusis that all attempts to elucidate them by the ritual of savages must necessarily be conjectural. Yet the candid reader may be willing to grant that conjectures supported by analogies like the foregoing do not exceed the limits of a reasonable hypothesis.

¹ Th. Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern* (Berlin, 1909-1910), i. 137-140, ii. 193-196. As to the cultivation of manioc among these Indians see *id.* ii. 202 *sqq.*

CHAPTER IV

WOMAN'S PART IN PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE

IF Demeter was indeed a personification of the corn, it is natural to ask, why did the Greeks personify the corn as a goddess rather than a god? why did they ascribe the origin of agriculture to a female rather than to a male power? They conceived the spirit of the vine as masculine; why did they conceive the spirit of the barley and wheat as feminine? To this it has been answered that the personification of the corn as feminine, or at all events the ascription of the discovery of agriculture to a goddess, was suggested by the prominent part which women take in primitive agriculture.¹ The theory illustrates a recent tendency of mythologists to explain many myths as reflections of primitive society rather than as personifications of nature. For that reason, apart from its intrinsic interest, the theory deserves to be briefly considered.

Theory that the personification of corn as feminine was suggested by the part played by women in primitive agriculture.

Before the invention of the plough, which can hardly be worked without resort to the labour of men, it was and still is customary in many parts of the world to break up the soil for cultivation with hoes, and among not a few savage peoples to this day the task of hoeing the ground and sowing the seed devolves mainly or entirely upon the women, while the men take little or no part in cultivation beyond clearing the land by felling the forest trees and burning the fallen timber and brushwood which encumber the soil. Thus, for example, among the Zulus, "when a piece of land has been selected for cultivation, the task of clearing it

Among many savage tribes the labour of hoeing the ground and sowing the seed devolves on women.

¹ F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion* (London, 1896), p. 240; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* (Strasburg, 1905-1907), i. 251 sqq.

Agricultural work done by women among the Zulus and other tribes of South Africa.

belongs to the men. If the ground be much encumbered, this becomes a laborious undertaking, for their axe is very small, and when a large tree has to be encountered, they can only lop the branches; fire is employed when it is needful to remove the trunk. The reader will therefore not be surprised that the people usually avoid bush-land, though they seem to be aware of its superior fertility. As a general rule the men take no further share in the labour of cultivation; and, as the site chosen is seldom much encumbered and frequently bears nothing but grass, their part of the work is very slight. The women are the real labourers; for (except in some particular cases) the entire business of digging, planting, and weeding devolves on them; and, if we regard the assagai and shield as symbolical of the man, the hoe may be looked upon as emblematic of the woman. . . . With this rude and heavy instrument the woman digs, plants, and weeds her garden. Digging and sowing are generally one operation, which is thus performed; the seed is first scattered on the ground, when the soil is dug or picked up with the hoe, to the depth of three or four inches, the larger roots and tufts of grass being gathered out, but all the rest left in or on the ground."¹ A special term of contempt is applied to any Zulu man, who, deprived of the services of his wife and family, is compelled by hard necessity to handle the hoe himself.² Similarly among the Baronga of Delagoa Bay, "when the rains begin to fall, sometimes as early as September but generally later, they hasten to sow. With her hoe in her hands, the mistress of the field walks with little steps; every time she lifts a clod of earth well broken up, and in the hole thus made she plants three or four grains of maize and covers them up. If she has not finished clearing all the patch of the bush which she contemplated, she proceeds to turn up again the fields she tilled last year. The crop will be less abundant than in virgin soil, but they plant three or four years successively in the

¹ Rev. J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London, 1857), pp. 17 sq. Speaking of the Zulus another writer observes: "In gardening, the men clear the land, if need be, and sometimes fence it in;

the women plant, weed, and harvest" (Rev. L. Grout, *Zulu-land*, Philadelphia, N.D., p. 110).

² A. Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe* (Paris, 1847), ii. 225.

same field before it is exhausted. As for enriching the soil with manure, they never think of it." ¹ Among the Barotsé, who cultivate millet, maize, and peas to a small extent and in a rudimentary fashion, women alone are occupied with the field-work, and their only implement is a spade or hoe. ² Of the Matabelé we are told that "most of the hard work is performed by the women; the whole of the cultivation is done by them. They plough with short spades of native manufacture; they sow the fields, and they clear them of weeds." ³ Among the Awemba, to the west of Lake Tanganyika, the bulk of the work in the plantations falls on the women; in particular the men refuse to hoe the ground. They have a saying, "Is not each male child born for the axe and each female child for the hoe?" ⁴

The natives of the Tanganyika plateau "cultivate the banana, and have a curious custom connected with it. No man is permitted to sow; but when the hole is prepared a little girl is carried to the spot on a man's shoulders. She first throws into the hole a sherd of broken pottery, and then scatters the seed over it." ⁵ The reason of the latter practice has been explained by more recent observers of these natives. "Young children, it may here be noted, are often employed to administer drugs, remedies, even the Poison Ordeal, and to sow the first seeds. Such acts, the natives say, must be performed by chaste and innocent hands, lest a contaminated touch should destroy the potency of the medicine or of the seedlings planted. It used to be a very common sight upon the islands of Lake Bangweolo to watch how a Bisa woman would solve the problem of her own moral unfitness by carrying her baby-girl to the banana-plot, and inserting seedlings in the tiny hands for dropping into the holes already prepared." ⁶ Similarly among the people of the Lower Congo "women must remain chaste while planting pumpkin and calabash seeds, they are not allowed to touch any pig-meat, and they must wash their

Chastity
required in
the sowers
of seed.

¹ H. A. Junod, *Les Ba-Ronga* (Neuchâtel, 1908), pp. 195 sq.

² L. Declé, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), p. 85.

³ L. Declé, *op. cit.* p. 160.

⁴ C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The*

Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia (London, 1911), p. 302.

⁵ L. Declé, *op. cit.* p. 295.

⁶ C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Nigeria* (London, 1911), p. 179.

hands before touching the seeds. If a woman does not observe all these rules, she must not plant the seeds, or the crop will be bad; she may make the holes, and her baby girl, or another who has obeyed the restrictions, can drop in the seeds and cover them over."¹ We can now perhaps understand why Attic matrons had to observe strict chastity when they celebrated the festival of the Thesmophoria.² In Attica that festival was held in honour of Demeter in the month of Pyanepsion, corresponding to October,³ the season of the autumn sowing; and the rites included certain ceremonies which bore directly on the quickening of the seed.⁴ We may conjecture that the rule of chastity imposed on matrons at this festival was a relic of a time when they too, like many savage women down to the present time, discharged the important duty of sowing the seed and were bound for that reason to observe strict continence, lest any impurity on their part should defile the seed and prevent it from bearing fruit.

Woman's part in agriculture among the Caffres of South Africa in general.

Of the Caffres of South Africa in general we read that "agriculture is mainly the work of the women, for in olden days the men were occupied in hunting and fighting. The women do but scratch the land with hoes, sometimes using long-handled instruments, as in Zululand, and sometimes short-handled ones, as above the Zambesi. When the ground is thus prepared, the women scatter the seed, throwing it over the soil quite at random. They know the time to sow by the position of the constellations, chiefly by that of the Pleiades. They date their new year from the time they can see this constellation just before sunrise."⁵ In Basutoland, where

¹ Rev. J. H. Weeks, "Notes on some Customs of the Lower Congo People," *Folk-lore*, xx. (1909) p. 311.

² In order to guard against any breach of the rule they strewed *Agnus castus* and other plants, which were esteemed anaphrodisiacs, under their beds. See Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica*, i. 134 (135), vol. i. p. 130, ed. C. Sprengel (Leipsic, 1829-1830); Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxiv. 59; Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, ix. 26; Hesychius, s.v. κλέωπον; Scholiast on Theocritus, iv. 25; Scholiast on Nicander, *Ther.* 70 sq.

³ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Thes-*

mophor. 80; Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 30; Aug. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 310 sq. That Pyanepsion was the month of sowing is mentioned by Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris*, 69). See above, pp. 45 sq.

⁴ See below, vol. ii. p. 17 sq.

⁵ Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kaffir* (London, 1904), p. 323. Compare B. Ankermann, "L'Ethnographie actuelle de l'Afrique méridionale," *Anthropos*, i. (1906) pp. 575 sq. As to the use of the Pleiades to determine the time of sowing, see note at the end of the volume, "The Pleiades in Primitive Calendars."

the women also till the fields, though the lands of chiefs are dug and sowed by men, an attempt is made to determine the time of sowing by observation of the moon, but the people generally find themselves out in their reckoning, and after much dispute are forced to fall back upon the state of the weather and of vegetation as better evidence of the season of sowing. Intelligent chiefs rectify the calendar at the summer solstice, which they call the summer-house of the sun.¹

Among the Nandi of British East Africa "the rough work of clearing the bush for plantations is performed by the men, after which nearly all work in connexion with them is done by the women. The men, however, assist in sowing the seed, and in harvesting some of the crops. As a rule trees are not felled, but the bark is stripped off for about four feet from the ground and the trees are then left to die. The planting is mostly, if not entirely, done during the first half of the *Kiptamo* moon (February), which is the first month of the year, and when the *Iwat-kut* moon rises (March) all seed should be in the ground. The chief medicine man is consulted before the planting operations begin, but the Nandi know by the arrival in the fields of the guinea-fowl, whose song is supposed to be, *O-kol, o-kol; mi-i tokoch* (Plant, plant; there is luck in it), that the planting season is at hand. When the first seed is sown, salt is mixed with it, and the sower sings mournfully: *Ak o-siek-u o-chok-chi* (And grow quickly), as he sows. After fresh ground has been cleared, elusine grain is planted. This crop is generally repeated the second year, after which millet is sown, and finally sweet potatoes or some other product. Most fields are allowed to lie fallow every fourth or fifth year. The Nandi manure their plantations with turf ashes. . . . The elusine crops are harvested by both men and women. All other crops are reaped by the women only, who are at times assisted by the children. The corn is pounded and winnowed by the women and girls."² Among

Agricultural work done by women among the Nandi and other tribes of Central and Western Africa.

¹ Rev. E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), pp. 143 (with plate), pp. 162-165.

² A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 19. However, among the Bantu Kavirondo, an essentially agricultural

people of British East Africa, both men and women work in the fields with large iron hoes. See Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1904), ii. 738.

the Suk and En-jemusi of British East Africa it is the women who cultivate the fields and milk the cows.¹ Among the Wadowe of German East Africa the men clear the forest and break up the hard ground, but the women sow and reap the crops.² So among the Wanyamwezi, who are an essentially agricultural people, to the south of Lake Victoria Nyanza, the men cut down the bush and hoe the hard ground, but leave the rest of the labour of weeding, sowing, and reaping to the women.³ The Baganda of Central Africa subsist chiefly on bananas, and among them "the garden and its cultivation have always been the woman's department. Princesses and peasant women alike looked upon cultivation as their special work; the garden with its produce was essentially the wife's domain, and she would under no circumstances allow her husband to do any digging or sowing in it. No woman would remain with a man who did not give her a garden and a hoe to dig it with; if these were denied her, she would seek an early opportunity to escape from her husband and return to her relations to complain of her treatment, and to obtain justice or a divorce. When a man married he sought a plot of land for his wife in order that she might settle to work and provide food for the household. . . . In initial clearing of the land it was customary for the husband to take part; he cut down the tall grass and shrubs, and so left the ground ready for his wife to begin her digging. The grass and the trees she heaped up and burned, reserving only so much as she needed for firewood. A hoe was the only implement used in cultivation; the blade was heart-shaped with a prong at the base, by which it was fastened to the handle. The hoe-handle was never more than two feet long, so that a woman had to stoop when using it."⁴ In Kiziba, a district immediately to the south of Uganda, the tilling of the soil is exclusively the work of the women. They turn up the soil with hoes, make holes in the ground with digging-sticks or their fingers, and drop a few seeds into

Agricultural work of women among the Baganda.

¹ M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk* (Oxford, 1911), p. 33.

² F. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 36.

³ F. Stuhlmann, *op. cit.* p. 75.

⁴ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 426, 427; compare pp. 5, 38, 91 sq., 93, 94, 95, 268.

each hole.¹ Among the Niam-Niam of Central Africa "the men most studiously devote themselves to their hunting, and leave the culture of the soil to be carried on exclusively by the women";² and among the Monbuttoo of the same region in like manner, "whilst the women attend to the tillage of the soil and the gathering of the harvest, the men, unless they are absent either for war or hunting, spend the entire day in idleness."³ As to the Bangala of the Upper Congo we read that "large farms were made around the towns. The men did the clearing of the bush, felling the trees, and cutting down the undergrowth; the women worked with them, heaping up the grass and brushwood ready for burning, and helping generally. As a rule the women did the hoeing, planting, and weeding, but the men did not so despise this work as never to do it." In this tribe "the food belonged to the woman who cultivated the farm, and while she supplied her husband with the vegetable food, he had to supply the fish and meat and share them with his wife or wives."⁴ Amongst the Tofoke, a tribe of the Congo State on the equator, all the field labour, except the clearing away of the forest, is performed by the women. They dig the soil with a hoe and plant maize and manioc. A field is used only once.⁵ So with the Ba-Mbala, a Bantu tribe between the rivers Inzia and Kwilu, the men clear the ground for cultivation, but all the rest of the work of tillage falls to the women, whose only tool is an iron hoe. Fresh ground is cleared for cultivation every year.⁶ The Mpongwe of the Gaboon, in West Africa, cultivate manioc (cassava), maize, yams, plantains, sweet potatoes, and ground nuts. When new clearings have to be made in the forest, the men cut down and burn the trees, and the women put in the crop. The only tool they use is a dibble, with which they turn up a sod, put in a seed, and cover it

Agricultural work of women on the Congo.

¹ H. Rehse, *Kiziba, Land und Leute* (Stuttgart, 1910), p. 53.

² G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*³ (London, 1878), i. 281.

³ G. Schweinfurth, *op. cit.* ii. 40.

⁴ Rev. J. H. Weeks, "Anthropological Notes on the Bangala of the Upper Congo River," *Journal of the*

Royal Anthropological Institute, xxxix. (1909) pp. 117, 128.

⁵ E. Torday, "Der Tofoke," *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xli. (1911) p. 198.

⁶ E. Torday and T. A. Joyce, "Notes on the Ethnography of the Ba-Mbala," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) p. 405.

over.¹ Among the Ashira of the same region the cultivation of the soil is in the hands of the women.²

Agricultural work done by women among the Indian tribes of South America.

A similar division of labour between men and women prevails among many primitive agricultural tribes of Indians in South America. "In the interior of the villages," says an eminent authority on aboriginal South America, "the man often absents himself to hunt or to go into the heart of the forest in search of the honey of the wild bees, and he always goes alone. He fells the trees in the places where he wishes to make a field for cultivation, he fashions his weapons, he digs out his canoe, while the woman rears the children, makes the garments, busies herself with the interior, cultivates the field, gathers the fruits, collects the roots, and prepares the food. Such is, generally at least, the respective condition of the two sexes among almost all the Americans. The Peruvians alone had already, in their semi-civilised state, partially modified these customs; for among them the man shared the toils of the other sex or took on himself the most laborious tasks."³ Thus, to take examples, among the Caribs of the West Indies the men used to fell the trees and leave the fallen trunks to cumber the ground, burning off only the smaller boughs. Then the women came and planted manioc, potatoes, yams, and bananas wherever they found room among the tree-trunks. In digging the ground to receive the seed or the shoots they did not use hoes but simply pointed sticks. The men, we are told, would rather have died of hunger than undertake such agricultural labours.⁴ Again, the staple vegetable food of the Indians of British Guiana is cassava bread, made from the roots of the manioc or cassava plant, which the Indians cultivate in clearings of the forest. The men fell the trees, cut down the undergrowth, and in dry weather set fire to the fallen lumber, thus creating open patches in the forest which are covered with white ashes. When the rains

¹ P. B. du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa* (London, 1861), p. 22.

² P. B. du Chaillu, *op. cit.* p. 417.

³ A. D'Orbigny, *L'Homme Américain (de l'Amérique Méridionale)* (Paris, 1839), i. 198 sq.

⁴ Le Sieur de la Borde, "Relation de l'Origine, Mœurs, Coustumes, Religion, Guerres et Voyages des Caraïbes Sauvages des Isles Antilles de l'Amérique," pp. 21-23, in *Recueil de divers Voyages faits en Afrique et en l'Amérique* (Paris, 1684).

set in, the women repair to these clearings, heavily laden with baskets full of cassava sticks to be used as cuttings. These they insert at irregular intervals in the soil, and so the field is formed. While the cassava is growing, the women do just as much weeding as is necessary to prevent the cultivated plants from being choked by the rank growth of the tropical vegetation, and in doing so they plant bananas, pumpkin seeds, yams, sweet potatoes, sugar-cane, red and yellow peppers, and so forth, wherever there is room for them. At last in the ninth or tenth month, when the seeds appearing on the straggling branches of the cassava plants announce that the roots are ripe, the women cut down the plants and dig up the roots, not all at once, but as they are required. These roots they afterwards peel, scrape, and bake into cassava bread.¹

In like manner the cassava or manioc plant is cultivated generally among all the Indian tribes of tropical South America, wherever the plant will grow; and the cultivation of it is altogether in the hands of the women, who insert the sticks in the ground after the fashion already described.² For example, among the tribes of the Uaupes River, in the upper valley of the Amazon, who are an agricultural people with settled abodes, "the men cut down the trees and brushwood, which, after they have lain some months to dry, are burnt; and the mandiocca is then planted by the women, together with little patches of cane, sweet potatoes, and various fruits. The women also dig up the mandiocca, and prepare from it the bread which is their main subsistence. . . . The bread is made fresh every day, as when it gets cold and dry it is far less palatable. The women thus have plenty to do, for every other day at least they have to go to the field, often a mile or two distant, to fetch the root, and every day to grate, prepare, and bake the bread; as it forms by far the greater part of their food, and they often pass days without eating anything else, especially

Cultivation of manioc by women among the Indian tribes of tropical South America.

¹ E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), pp. 250 *sqq.*, 260 *sqq.*

² C. F. Phil. v. Martius, *Zur Ethnographie Amerika's, zumal Brasiliens* (Leipsic, 1867), pp. 486-489. On the

economic importance of the manioc or cassava plant in the life of the South American Indians, see further E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. (Oxford, 1892) pp. 310 *sqq.*, 312 *sq.*

when the men are engaged in clearing the forest."¹ Among the Tupirambas, a tribe of Brazilian Indians, the wives "had something more than their due share of labour, but they were not treated with brutality, and their condition was on the whole happy. They set and dug the mandioc; they sowed and gathered the maize. An odd superstition prevailed, that if a sort of earth-almond, which the Portuguese call *amendoens*, was planted by the men, it would not grow."² Similar accounts appear to apply to the Brazilian Indians in general: the men occupy themselves with hunting, war, and the manufacture of their weapons, while the women plant and reap the crops, and search for fruits in the forest;³ above all they cultivate the manioc, scraping the soil clear of weeds with pointed sticks and inserting the shoots in the earth.⁴ Similarly among the Indians of Peru, who cultivate maize in clearings of the forest, the cultivation of the fields is left to the women, while the men hunt with bows and arrows and blowguns in the woods, often remaining away from home for weeks or even months together.⁵

A similar distribution of labour between the sexes prevails among some savage tribes in other parts of the world. Thus among the Lhoosai of south-eastern India the men employ themselves chiefly in hunting or in making forays on their weaker neighbours, but they clear the ground and help to carry home the harvest. However, the main burden of the bodily labour by which life is supported falls on the women; they fetch water, hew wood, cultivate the ground,

Agricultural work done by women among savage tribes in India, New Guinea, and New Britain.

¹ A. R. Wallace, *Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro* (London, 1889), pp. 336, 337 (*The Minerva Library*). Mr. Wallace's account of the agriculture of these tribes is entirely confirmed by the observations of a recent explorer in north-western Brazil. See Th. Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern* (Berlin, 1909-1910), ii. 202-209; *id.*, "Frauenarbeit bei den Indianern Nordwest-Brasiliens," *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxxviii. (1908) pp. 172-174. This writer tells us (*Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, ii. 203) that these Indians determine the time

for planting by observing certain constellations, especially the Pleiades. The rainy season begins when the Pleiades have disappeared below the horizon. See Note at end of the volume.

² R. Southey, *History of Brazil*, vol. i. Second Edition (London, 1822), p. 253.

³ J. B. von Spix und C. F. Ph. von Martius, *Reise in Brasilien* (Munich, 1823-1831), i. 381.

⁴ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens* (Berlin, 1894), p. 214.

⁵ J. J. von Tschudi, *Peru* (St. Gallen, 1846), ii. 214.

and help to reap the crops.¹ Among the Miris of Assam almost the whole of the field work is done by the women. They cultivate a patch of ground for two successive years, then suffer it to lie fallow for four or five. But they are deterred by superstitious fear from breaking new ground so long as the fallow suffices for their needs; they dread to offend the spirits of the woods by needlessly felling the trees. They raise crops of rice, maize, millet, yams, and sweet potatoes. But they seldom possess any implement adapted solely for tillage; they have never taken to the plough nor even to a hoe. They use their long straight swords to clear, cut, and dig with.² Among the Korwas, a savage hill tribe of Bengal, the men hunt with bows and arrows, while the women till the fields, dig for wild roots, or cull wild vegetables. Their principal crop is pulse (*Cajanus Indicus*).³ Among the Papuans of Ayambori, near Doreh in Dutch New Guinea, it is the men who lay out the fields by felling and burning the trees and brushwood in the forest, and it is they who enclose the fields with fences, but it is the women who sow and reap them and carry home the produce in sacks on their backs. They cultivate rice, millet, and bananas.⁴ So among the natives of Kaimani Bay in Dutch New Guinea the men occupy themselves only with fishing and hunting, while all the field work falls on the women.⁵ In the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain, when the natives have decided to convert a piece of grass-land into a plantation, the men cut down the long grass, burn it, dig up the soil with sharp-pointed sticks, and enclose the land with a fence of saplings. Then the women plant the banana shoots, weed the ground, and in the intervals between the bananas insert slips of yams, sweet potatoes, sugar-cane, or ginger. When the produce is ripe, they carry it to the village. Thus the bulk of the labour of cultivation devolves on the women.⁶

¹ Captain T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870), p. 255.

² E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 33.

³ E. T. Dalton, *op. cit.* pp. 226, 227.

⁴ *Nieuw Guinea, ethnographisch en natuurkundig onderzocht en beschreven* (Amsterdam, 1862), p. 159.

⁵ *Op. cit.* p. 119; H. von Rosenberg, *Der Malayische Archipel* (Leipsic, 1878), p. 433.

⁶ P. A. Kleintitschen, *Die Küstenbewohner der Gazellehalbinsel* (Hilftrup

Division of agricultural work between men and women in the Indian Archipelago.

Among some peoples of the Indian Archipelago, after the land has been cleared for cultivation by the men, the work of planting and sowing is divided between men and women, the men digging holes in the ground with pointed sticks, and the women following them, putting the seeds or shoots into the holes, and then huddling the earth over them; for savages seldom sow broadcast, they laboriously dig holes and insert the seed in them. This division of agricultural labour between the sexes is adopted by various tribes of Celebes, Ceram, Borneo, Nias, and New Guinea.¹ Sometimes the custom of entrusting the sowing of the seed to women appears to be influenced by superstitious as well as economic considerations. Thus among the Indians of the Orinoco, who with an infinitude of pains cleared the jungle for cultivation by cutting down the forest trees with their stone axes, burning the fallen lumber, and breaking up the ground with wooden instruments hardened in the fire, the task of sowing the maize and planting the roots was performed by the women alone; and when the Spanish missionaries expostulated with the men for not helping their wives in this toilsome duty, they received for answer that as women knew how to conceive seed and bear children, so the seeds and roots planted by them bore fruit far more abundantly than if they had been planted by male hands.²

Among savages who have not learned to till the ground the task of collecting the vegetable

Even among savages who have not yet learned to cultivate any plants the task of collecting the edible seeds and digging up the edible roots of wild plants appears to devolve mainly on women, while the men contribute their share to the common food supply by hunting and fishing, for which their superior strength, agility, and courage especi-

bei Munster, preface dated Christmas, 1906), pp. 60 sq.; G. Brown, D.D., *Melanesians and Polynesians* (London, 1910), pp. 324 sq.

¹ A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschappelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, xxxix. (1895) pp. 132, 134; J. Boot, "Korte schets der noordkust van Ceram," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893) p. 672; E. H. Gomes,

Seventeen Years among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo (London, 1911), p. 46; E. Modigliani, *Un Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), pp. 590 sq.; K. Vetter, *Komm heruber und hilf uns!* Heft 2 (Barmen, 1898), pp. 6 sq.; Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) pp. 14, 85.

² J. Gumilla, *Histoire Naturelle, Civile et Géographique de l'Orénoque* (Avignon, 1758), ii. 166 sqq., 183 sqq. Compare *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 139 sqq.

ally qualify them. For example, among the Indians of California, who were entirely ignorant of agriculture, the general division of labour between the sexes in the search for food was that the men killed the game and caught the salmon, while the women dug the roots and brought in most of the vegetable food, though the men helped them to gather acorns, nuts, and berries.¹ Among the Indians of San Juan Capistrano in California, while the men passed their time in fowling, fishing, dancing, and lounging, "the women were obliged to gather seeds in the fields, prepare them for cooking, and to perform all the meanest offices, as well as the most laborious. It was painful in the extreme, to behold them, with their infants hanging upon their shoulders, groping about in search of herbs or seeds, and exposed as they frequently were to the inclemency of the weather."² Yet these rude savages possessed a calendar containing directions as to the seasons for collecting the different seeds and produce of the earth. The calendar consisted of lunar months corrected by observation of the solstices, "for at the conclusion of the moon in December, that is, at the conjunction, they calculated the return of the sun from the tropic of Capricorn; and another year commenced, the Indian saying 'the sun has arrived at his home.' . . . They observed with greater attention and celebrated with more pomp, the sun's arrival at the tropic of Capricorn than they did his reaching the tropic of Cancer, for the reason, that, as they were situated ten degrees from the latter, they were pleased at the sun's approach towards them; for it returned to ripen their fruits and seeds, to give warmth to the atmosphere, and enliven again the fields with beauty and increase." However, the knowledge of the calendar was limited to the *puplem* or general council of the tribe, who sent criers to make proclamation when the time had come to go forth and gather the seeds and other produce of the earth. In their calculations they were assisted by a *pul* or

table food in the form of wild seeds and roots generally devolves on women. Examples furnished by the Californian Indians.

¹ S. Powers, *Tribes of California* (Washington, 1877), p. 23.

² Father Geronimo Boscana, "Chinichinich," in [A. Robinson's] *Life in California* (New York, 1846), p. 287. Elsewhere the same well-informed

writer observes of these Indians that "they neither cultivated the ground, nor planted any kind of grain; but lived upon the wild seeds of the field, the fruits of the forest, and upon the abundance of game" (*op. cit.* p. 285).

astrologer, who observed the aspect of the moon.¹ When we consider that these rude Californian savages, destitute alike of agriculture and of the other arts of civilised life, yet succeeded in forming for themselves a calendar based on observation both of the moon and of the sun, we need not hesitate to ascribe to the immeasurably more advanced Greeks at the dawn of history the knowledge of a somewhat more elaborate calendar founded on a cycle of eight solar years.²

Among the aborigines of Australia the women provided the vegetable food, while the men hunted.

Among the equally rude aborigines of Australia, to whom agriculture in every form was totally unknown, the division of labour between the sexes in regard to the collection of food appears to have been similar. While the men hunted game, the labour of gathering and preparing the vegetable food fell chiefly to the women. Thus with regard to the Encounter Bay tribe of South Australia we are told that while the men busied themselves, according to the season, either with fishing or with hunting emus, opossums, kangaroos, and so forth, the women and children searched for roots and plants.³ Again, among the natives of Western Australia "it is generally considered the province of women to dig roots, and for this purpose they carry a long, pointed stick, which is held in the right hand, and driven firmly into the ground, where it is shaken, so as to loosen the earth, which is scooped up and thrown out with the fingers of the left hand, and in this manner they dig with great rapidity. But the labour, in proportion to the amount obtained, is great. To get a yam about half an inch in circumference and a foot in length, they have to dig a hole above a foot square and two feet in depth; a considerable portion of the time of the women and children is, therefore, passed in this employment. If the men are absent upon any expedition, the females are left in charge of one who is

¹ Father Geronimo Boscana, *op. cit.* pp. 302-305. As to the *pyrami*, see *id.* p. 264. The writer says that criers informed the people "when to cultivate their fields" (p. 302). But taken along with his express statement that they "neither cultivated the ground, nor planted any kind of grain" (p. 285, see above, p. 125 note ²), this expres-

sion "to cultivate their fields" must be understood loosely to denote merely the gathering of the wild seeds and fruits.

² See above, pp. 81 *sq.*

³ H. E. A. Meyer, "Manners and Customs of the Encounter Bay Tribe," in *Native Tribes of South Australia* (Adelaide, 1879), pp. 191 *sq.*

old or sick ; and in traversing the bush you often stumble on a large party of them, scattered about in the forest, digging roots and collecting the different species of fungus."¹ In fertile districts, where the yams which the aborigines use as food grow abundantly, the ground may sometimes be seen riddled with holes made by the women in their search for these edible roots. Thus to quote Sir George Grey : " We now crossed the dry bed of a stream, and from that emerged upon a tract of light fertile soil, quite overrun with *warran* [yam] plants, the root of which is a favourite article of food with the natives. This was the first time we had yet seen this plant on our journey, and now for three and a half consecutive miles we traversed a fertile piece of land, literally perforated with the holes the natives had made to dig this root ; indeed we could with difficulty walk across it on that account, whilst this tract extended east and west as far as we could see."² Again, in the valley of the Lower Murray River a kind of yam (*Microseris Forsteri*) grew plentifully and was easily found in the spring and early summer, when the roots were dug up out of the earth by the women and children. The root is small and of a sweetish taste and grows throughout the greater part of Australia outside the tropics ; on the alpine pastures of the high Australian mountains it attains to a much larger size and furnishes a not unpalatable food.³ But the women gather edible herbs and seeds as well as roots ; and at evening they may be seen trooping in to the camp, each with a great bundle of sow-thistles, dandelions, or trefoil on her head,⁴ or carrying wooden vessels filled with seeds, which they afterwards grind up between stones and knead into a paste with water or bake into cakes.⁵ Among the aborigines of central Victoria, while the men hunted, the women dug up edible

¹ (Sir) George Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia* (London, 1841), ii. 292 sq. The women also collect the nuts from the palms in the month of March (*id.* ii. 296).

² (Sir) George Grey, *op. cit.* ii. 12. The yam referred to is a species of *Dioscorea*, like the sweet potato.

³ R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines*

of Victoria (Melbourne, 1878), i. 209.

⁴ P. Beveridge, "Of the Aborigines inhabiting the Great Lacustrine and Riverine Depression of the Lower Murray, Lower Murrumbidgee, Lower Lachlan, and Lower Darling," *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales for 1883*, vol. xvii. (Sydney, 1884) p. 36.

⁵ R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, i. 214.

roots and gathered succulent vegetables, such as the young tops of the *munya*, the sow-thistle, and several kinds of fig-marigold. The implement which they used to dig up roots with was a pole seven or eight feet long, hardened in the fire and pointed at the end, which also served them as a weapon both of defence and of offence.¹ Among the tribes of Central Australia the principal vegetable food is the seed of a species of *Claytonia*, called by white men *munyeru*, which the women gather in large quantities and winnow by pouring the little black seeds from one vessel to another so as to let the wind blow the loose husks away.²

The digging of the earth for wild fruits may have led to the origin of agriculture.

In these customs observed by savages who are totally ignorant of agriculture we may perhaps detect some of the steps by which mankind have advanced from the enjoyment of the wild fruits of the earth to the systematic cultivation of plants. For an effect of digging up the earth in the search for roots has probably been in many cases to enrich and fertilise the soil and so to increase the crop of roots or herbs; and such an increase would naturally attract the natives in larger numbers and enable them to subsist for longer periods on the spot without being compelled by the speedy exhaustion of the crop to shift their quarters and wander away in search of fresh supplies. Moreover, the winnowing of the seeds on ground which had thus been turned up by the digging; sticks of the women would naturally contribute to the same result. For though savages at the level of the Californian Indians and the aborigines of Australia have no idea of using seeds for any purpose but that of immediate consumption, and it has never occurred to them to incur a temporary loss for the sake of a future gain by sowing them in the ground, yet it is almost certain that in the process of winnowing the seeds as a preparation for eating them many of the grains must have escaped and, being wafted by the wind, have fallen on the upturned soil and borne fruit. Thus by the operations of turning up the ground and winnowing the seed, though neither operation

¹ W. Stanbridge, "Some Particulars of the General Characteristics, Astronomy, and Mythology of the Tribes in the Central Part of Victoria, South Australia," *Transactions of the Ethno-*

logical Society of London, N.S., i. (1861) p. 291.

² Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 22.

aimed at anything beyond satisfying the immediate pangs of hunger, savage man or rather savage woman was unconsciously preparing for the whole community a future and more abundant store of food, which would enable them to multiply and to abandon the old migratory and wasteful manner of life for a more settled and economic mode of existence. So curiously sometimes does man, aiming his shafts at a near but petty mark, hit a greater and more distant target.

On the whole, then, it appears highly probable that as a consequence of a certain natural division of labour between the sexes women have contributed more than men towards the greatest advance in economic history, namely, the transition from a nomadic to a settled life, from a natural to an artificial basis of subsistence.

The discovery of agriculture due mainly to women.

Among the Aryan peoples of Europe the old practice of hoeing the ground as a preparation for sowing appears to have been generally replaced at a very remote period by the far more effective process of ploughing;¹ and as the labour of ploughing practically necessitates the employment of masculine strength, it is hardly to be expected that in Europe many traces should remain of the important part formerly played by women in primitive agriculture. However, we are told that among the Iberians of Spain and the Athamanes of Epirus the women tilled the ground,² and that among the ancient Germans the care of the fields was left to the women and old men.³ But these indications of an age when the cultivation of the ground was committed mainly to feminine hands are few and slight; and if the Greek conception of Demeter as a goddess of corn and agriculture really dates from such an age and was directly suggested by such a division of labour between the sexes, it

Women as agricultural labourers among the Aryans of Europe

The Greek conception of the Corn Goddess probably originated in a simple personification of the corn.

¹ O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strasburg, 1901), pp. 6 sqq., 630 sqq.; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*³ (Jena, 1905-1907), ii. 201 sqq.; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen*, i. 251 sqq., 263, 274. The use of oxen to draw the plough is very ancient in Europe. On the rocks at Bohuslan in Sweden there is carved a rude representation

of a plough drawn by oxen and guided by a ploughman: it is believed to date from the Bronze Age. See H. Hirt, *op. cit.* i. 286.

² Strabo, iii. 4. 17, p. 165; Heracides Ponticus, "De rebus publicis," 33, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 219.

³ Tacitus, *Germania*, 15.

seems clear that its origin must be sought at a period far back in the history of the Aryan race, perhaps long before the segregation of the Greeks from the common stock and their formation into a separate people. It may be so, but to me I confess that this derivation of the conception appears somewhat far-fetched and improbable; and I prefer to suppose that the idea of the corn as feminine was suggested to the Greek mind, not by the position of women in remote prehistoric ages, but by a direct observation of nature, the teeming head of corn appearing to the primitive fancy to resemble the teeming womb of a woman, and the ripe ear on the stalk being likened to a child borne in the arms or on the back of its mother. At least we know that similar sights suggest similar ideas to some of the agricultural negroes of West Africa. Thus the Hos of Togoland, who plant maize in February and reap it in July, say that the maize is an image of a mother; when the cobs are forming, the mother is binding the infant on her back, but in July she sinks her head and dies and the child is taken away from her, to be afterwards multiplied at the next sowing.¹ When the rude aborigines of Western Australia observe that a seed-bearing plant has flowered, they call it the Mother of So-and-so, naming the particular kind of plant, and they will not allow it to be dug up.² Apparently they think that respect and regard are due to the plant as to a mother and her child. Such simple and natural comparisons, which may occur to men in any age and country, suffice to explain the Greek personification of the corn as mother and daughter, and we need not cast about for more recondite theories. Be that as it may, the conception of the corn as a woman and a mother was certainly not peculiar to the ancient Greeks, but has been shared by them with many other races, as will appear abundantly from the instances which I shall cite in the following chapter.

¹ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), p. 313.

² (Sir) G. Grey, *Journals of Two*

Expeditions of Discovery in North-west and Western Australia (London, 1841), ii. 292.

CHAPTER V

THE CORN-MOTHER AND THE CORN-MAIDEN IN NORTHERN EUROPE

It has been argued by W. Mannhardt that the first part of Demeter's name is derived from an alleged Cretan word *deai*, "barley," and that accordingly Demeter means neither more nor less than "Barley-mother" or "Corn-mother";¹ for the root of the word seems to have been applied to different kinds of grain by different branches of the Aryans.² As Crete appears to have been one of the most ancient seats of the worship of Demeter,³ it would not be surprising if her name were of Cretan origin. But the etymology is open to serious objections,⁴ and it is safer therefore to lay no stress on it. Be that as it may, we have found independent reasons for identifying Demeter as the Corn-mother, and of the two species of corn associated with her in Greek

Suggested derivation of the name Demeter.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 292 sqq. See above, p. 40, note³.

² O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strasburg, 1901), pp. 11, 289; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*² (Jena, 1890), pp. 409, 422; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*³ (Jena, 1905-1907), ii. 188 sq. Compare V. Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustiere in ihrem Uebergang aus Asien*⁷ (Berlin, 1902), pp. 58 sq.

³ Hesiod, *Theog.* 969 sqq.; F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 2, p. 1029; Kern, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopadie*

der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, iv. 2, coll. 2720 sq.

⁴ My friend Professor J. H. Moulton tells me that there is great doubt as to the existence of a word *δηαλ*, "barley" (*Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 264, lines 12 sq.), and that the common form of Demeter's name, *Dēmāter* (except in Ionic and Attic) is inconsistent with *η* in the supposed Cretan form. "Finally if *δηαλ* = *ζεαλ*, you are bound to regard her as a Cretan goddess, or as arising in some other area where the dialect changed Indogermanic *y* into *δ* and not *ζ*: since Ionic and Attic have *ζ*, the two crucial letters of the name tell different tales" (Professor J. H. Moulton, in a letter to me, dated 19 December 1903).

religion, namely barley and wheat, the barley has perhaps the better claim to be her original element; for not only would it seem to have been the staple food of the Greeks in the Homeric age, but there are grounds for believing that it is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, cereal cultivated by the Aryan race. Certainly the use of barley in the religious ritual of the ancient Hindoos as well as of the ancient Greeks furnishes a strong argument in favour of the great antiquity of its cultivation, which is known to have been practised by the lake-dwellers of the Stone Age in Europe.¹

Analogies to the Corn-mother or Barley-mother of ancient Greece have been collected in great abundance by W. Mannhardt from the folk-lore of modern Europe. The following may serve as specimens.

The Corn-mother among the Germans and the Slavs.

In Germany the corn is very commonly personified under the name of the Corn-mother. Thus in spring, when the corn waves in the wind, the peasants say, "There comes the Corn-mother," or "The Corn-mother is running over the field," or "The Corn-mother is going through the corn."² When children wish to go into the fields to pull the blue corn-flowers or the red poppies, they are told not to do so, because the Corn-mother is sitting in the corn and will catch them.³ Or again she is called, according to the crop, the Rye-mother or the Pea-mother, and children are warned against straying in the rye or among the peas by threats of the Rye-mother or the Pea-mother. In Norway also the Pea-mother is said to sit among the peas.⁴ Similar expressions are current among the Slavs. The Poles and

¹ A. Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*² (Gütersloh, 1886), pp. 68 sq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, pp. 11, 12, 289; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*,³ ii. 189, 191, 197 sq.; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* (Strasburg, 1905-1907), i. 276 sqq. In the oldest Vedic ritual barley and not rice is the cereal chiefly employed. See H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), p. 353. For evidence that barley was cultivated in Europe by the lake-dwellers of the Stone Age, see A. de Candolle, *Origin*

of Cultivated Plants (London, 1884), pp. 368, 369; R. Munro, *The Lake-dwellings of Europe* (London, Paris, and Melbourne, 1890), pp. 497 sq. According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 72) barley was the oldest of all foods.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), p. 296. Compare O. Hartung, "Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 150.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), p. 297.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 297 sq.

Czechs warn children against the Corn-mother who sits in the corn. Or they call her the old Corn-woman, and say that she sits in the corn and strangles the children who tread it down.¹ The Lithuanians say, "The Old Rye-woman sits in the corn."² Again the Corn-mother is believed to make the crop grow. Thus in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg it is sometimes said, "It will be a good year for flax; the Flax-mother has been seen." At Dinkelsbühl, in Bavaria, down to the latter part of the nineteenth century, people believed that when the crops on a particular farm compared unfavourably with those of the neighbourhood, the reason was that the Corn-mother had punished the farmer for his sins.³ In a village of Styria it is said that the Corn-mother, in the shape of a female puppet made out of the last sheaf of corn and dressed in white, may be seen at midnight in the corn-fields, which she fertilises by passing through them; but if she is angry with a farmer, she withers up all his corn.⁴

Further, the Corn-mother plays an important part in harvest customs. She is believed to be present in the handful of corn which is left standing last on the field; and with the cutting of this last handful she is caught, or driven away, or killed. In the first of these cases, the last sheaf is carried joyfully home and honoured as a divine being. It is placed in the barn, and at threshing the corn-spirit appears again.⁵ In the Hanoverian district of Hadeln the reapers stand round the last sheaf and beat it with sticks in order to drive the Corn-mother out of it. They call to each other, "There she is! hit her! Take care she doesn't catch you!" The beating goes on till the grain is completely threshed out; then the Corn-mother is believed to be driven away.⁶ In the neighbourhood of Danzig the person who cuts the last ears of corn makes them into a doll, which is called the Corn-mother or the Old Woman and is brought home on the last waggon.⁷ In some parts

The Corn-mother in the last sheaf.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 299. Compare R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde* (Brunswick, 1896), p. 281.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 300.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische*

Forschungen, p. 310.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 310 sq. Compare O. Hartung, *l.c.*

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 316.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 316.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 316 sq.

of Holstein the last sheaf is dressed in woman's clothes and called the Corn-mother. It is carried home on the last waggon, and then thoroughly drenched with water. The drenching with water is doubtless a rain-charm.¹ In the district of Bruck in Styria the last sheaf, called the Corn-mother, is made up into the shape of a woman by the oldest married woman in the village, of an age from fifty to fifty-five years. The finest ears are plucked out of it and made into a wreath, which, twined with flowers, is carried on her head by the prettiest girl of the village to the farmer or squire, while the Corn-mother is laid down in the barn to keep off the mice.² In other villages of the same district the Corn-mother, at the close of harvest, is carried by two lads at the top of a pole. They march behind the girl who wears the wreath to the squire's house, and while he receives the wreath and hangs it up in the hall, the Corn-mother is placed on the top of a pile of wood, where she is the centre of the harvest supper and dance. Afterwards she is hung up in the barn and remains there till the threshing is over. The man who gives the last stroke at the threshing is called the son of the Corn-mother; he is tied up in the Corn-mother, beaten, and carried through the village. The wreath is dedicated in church on the following Sunday; and on Easter Eve the grain is rubbed out of it by a seven-years-old girl and scattered amongst the young corn. At Christmas the straw of the wreath is placed in the manger to make the cattle thrive.³ Here the fertilising power of the Corn-mother is plainly brought out by scattering the seed taken from her body (for the wreath is made out of the Corn-mother) among the new corn; and her influence over animal life is indicated by placing the straw in the manger. At Westerhüsen, in Saxony, the last corn cut is made in the shape of a woman decked with ribbons and cloth. It is fastened to a pole and brought home on the last waggon. One of the people in the waggon keeps waving the pole, so that the figure moves as if alive. It is placed on the threshing-floor, and stays there till the threshing is done.⁴

Fertilising
power of
the Corn-
mother.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 317. As to such rain-charms see *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 195-197.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische*

Forschungen, p. 317.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 317 sq.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 318.

Amongst the Slavs also the last sheaf is known as the Rye-mother, the Wheat-mother, the Oats-mother, the Barley-mother, and so on, according to the crop. In the district of Tarnow, Galicia, the wreath made out of the last stalks is called the Wheat-mother, Rye-mother, or Pea-mother. It is placed on a girl's head and kept till spring, when some of the grain is mixed with the seed-corn.¹ Here again the fertilising power of the Corn-mother is indicated. In France, also, in the neighbourhood of Auxerre, the last sheaf goes by the name of the Mother of the Wheat, Mother of the Barley, Mother of the Rye, or Mother of the Oats. They leave it standing in the field till the last waggon is about to wend homewards. Then they make a puppet out of it, dress it with clothes belonging to the farmer, and adorn it with a crown and a blue or white scarf. A branch of a tree is stuck in the breast of the puppet, which is now called the Ceres. At the dance in the evening the Ceres is set in the middle of the floor, and the reaper who reaped fastest dances round it with the prettiest girl for his partner. After the dance a pyre is made. All the girls, each wearing a wreath, strip the puppet, pull it to pieces, and place it on the pyre, along with the flowers with which it was adorned. Then the girl who was the first to finish reaping sets fire to the pile, and all pray that Ceres may give a fruitful year. Here, as Mannhardt observes, the old custom has remained intact, though the name Ceres is a bit of schoolmaster's learning.² In Upper Brittany the last sheaf is always made into human shape; but if the farmer is a married man, it is made double and consists of a little corn-puppet placed inside of a large one. This is called the Mother-sheaf. It is delivered to the farmer's wife, who unties it and gives drink-money in return.³

The Corn-mother in the last sheaf among the Slavs and in France.

Sometimes the last sheaf is called, not the Corn-mother, but the Harvest-mother or the Great Mother. In the province of Osnabrück, Hanover, it is called the Harvest-mother; it is made up in female form, and then the reapers dance about with it. In some parts of Westphalia the last sheaf at the rye-harvest is made especially heavy by fastening

The Harvest-mother or the Great Mother in the last sheaf.

¹ *Ibid.*

² W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 318
19.

³ P. Sébillot, *Coutumes populaires de la Haute-Bretagne* (Paris, 1886), p. 306.

stones in it. They bring it home on the last waggon and call it the Great Mother, though they do not fashion it into any special shape. In the district of Erfurt a very heavy sheaf, not necessarily the last, is called the Great Mother, and is carried on the last waggon to the barn, where all hands lift it down amid a fire of jokes.¹

The Grand-mother in the last sheaf.

Sometimes again the last sheaf is called the Grandmother, and is adorned with flowers, ribbons, and a woman's apron. In East Prussia, at the rye or wheat harvest, the reapers call out to the woman who binds the last sheaf, "You are getting the Old Grandmother." In the neighbourhood of Meissen the men and women servants strive who shall get the last sheaf, called the Grandmother. Whoever gets it will be married in the next year, but his or her spouse will be old; if a girl gets it, she will marry a widower; if a man gets it, he will marry an old crone. In Silesia the Grandmother—a huge bundle made up of three or four sheaves by the person who tied the last sheaf—was formerly fashioned into a rude likeness of the human form.² In the neighbourhood of Belfast the last sheaf sometimes goes by the name of the Granny. It is not cut in the usual way, but all the reapers throw their sickles at it and try to bring it down. It is plaited and kept till the (next?) autumn. Whoever gets it will marry in the course of the year.³

The Old Woman or the Old Man in the last sheaf.

Oftener the last sheaf is called the Old Woman or the Old Man. In Germany it is frequently shaped and dressed as a woman, and the person who cuts it or binds it is said to "get the Old Woman."⁴ At Altisheim, in Swabia, when all the corn of a farm has been cut except a single strip, all the reapers stand in a row before the strip; each cuts his share rapidly, and he who gives the last cut "has the Old Woman."⁵ When the sheaves are being set up in heaps, the person who gets hold of the Old Woman, which is the largest and thickest of all the sheaves, is jeered at by the rest, who call out to him, "He has the Old Woman and must keep her."⁶ The woman who binds the last sheaf is

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 319.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 320.

³ *Ibid.* p. 321.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 321, 323, 325 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 323; F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie* (Munich, 1848-1855), ii. p. 219, § 403.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 325.

sometimes herself called the Old Woman, and it is said that she will be married in the next year.¹ In Neusaass, West Prussia, both the last sheaf—which is dressed up in jacket, hat, and ribbons—and the woman who binds it are called the Old Woman. Together they are brought home on the last waggon and are drenched with water.² In various parts of North Germany the last sheaf at harvest is made up into a human effigy and called “the Old Man”; and the woman who bound it is said “to have the Old Man.”³ At Hornkampe, near Tiegenhof (West Prussia), when a man or woman lags behind the rest in binding the corn, the other reapers dress up the last sheaf in the form of a man or woman, and this figure goes by the laggard’s name, as “the old Michael,” “the idle Trine.” It is brought home on the last waggon, and, as it nears the house, the bystanders call out to the laggard, “You have got the Old Woman and must keep her.”⁴ In Brandenburg, the young folks on the harvest-field race towards a sheaf and jump over it. The last to jump over it has to carry a straw puppet, adorned with ribbons, to the farmer and deliver it to him while he recites some verses. Of the person who thus carries the puppet it is said that “he has the Old Man.” Probably the puppet is or used to be made out of the last corn cut.⁵ In many districts of Saxony the last sheaf used to be adorned with ribbons and set upright so as to look like a man. It was then known as “the Old Man,” and the young women brought it back in procession to the farm, singing as they went, “Now we are bringing the Old Man.”⁶

In West Prussia, when the last rye is being raked together, the women and girls hurry with the work, for none of them likes to be the last and to get “the Old Man,” that is, a puppet made out of the last sheaf, which must be carried before the other reapers by the person who was the last

The Old Man or the Old Woman in the last sheaf.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 323.

² *Ibid.*

³ A. Kuhn and W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), pp. 396 sq., 399; K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Meklenburg* (Vienna, 1879-1880), ii. 309, § 1494.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 323 sq.

⁵ H. Prahm, “Glaube und Brauch in der Mark Brandenburg,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, i. (1891) pp. 186 sq.

⁶ K. Haupt, *Sagenbuch der Lausitz* (Leipsic, 1862-1863), i. p. 233, No. 277 note.

to finish.¹ In Silesia the last sheaf is called the Old Woman or the Old Man and is the theme of many jests; it is made unusually large and is sometimes weighted with a stone. At Girlachsdorf, near Reichenbach, when this heavy sheaf is lifted into the waggon, they say, "That is the Old Man whom we sought for so long."² Among the Germans of West Bohemia the man who cuts the last corn is said to "have the Old Man." In former times it used to be customary to put a wreath on his head and to play all kinds of pranks with him, and at the harvest supper he was given the largest portion.³ At Wolletz in Westphalia the last sheaf at harvest is called the Old Man, and being made up into the likeness of a man and decorated with flowers it is presented to the farmer, who in return prepares a feast for the reapers. About Unna, in Westphalia, the last sheaf at harvest is made unusually large, and stones are inserted to increase its weight. It is called *de greaute meaur* the (Great Mother), and when it is brought home on the waggon water is thrown on the harvesters who accompany it.⁴ Among the Wends the man or woman who binds the last sheaf at wheat harvest is said to "have the Old Man." A puppet is made out of the wheaten straw and ears in the likeness of a man and decked with flowers. The person who bound the last sheaf must carry the Old Man home, while the rest laugh and jeer at him. The puppet is hung up in the farmhouse and remains till a new Old Man is made at the next harvest.⁵ At the close of the harvest the Arabs of Moab bury the last sheaf in a grave in the corn-field, saying as they do so, "We are burying the Old Man," or "The Old Man is dead."⁶

Identifica-
tion of the
harvester
with the
corn-spirit.

In some of these customs, as Mannhardt has remarked, the person who is called by the same name as the last sheaf and sits beside it on the last waggon is obviously identified

¹ R. Krause, *Sitten, Gebräuche und Aberglauben in Westpreussen* (Berlin, preface dated March 1904), p. 51.

² P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipzig, 1903-1906), ii. 65 sqq.

³ A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube im deutschen Westböhmen* (Prague, 1905), p. 189.

⁴ A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (Leipzig, 1859), ii. 184, §§ 512 b, 514.

⁵ W. von Schulenburg, *Wendisches Volksthum* (Berlin, 1882), p. 147.

⁶ A. Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au pays de Moab* (Paris, 1908), pp. 252 sq.

with it ; he or she represents the corn-spirit which has been caught in the last sheaf ; in other words, the corn-spirit is represented in duplicate, by a human being and by a sheaf.¹ The identification of the person with the sheaf is made still clearer by the custom of wrapping up in the last sheaf the person who cuts or binds it. Thus at Hermsdorf in Silesia it used to be the regular practice to tie up in the last sheaf the woman who had bound it.² At Weiden, in Bavaria, it is the cutter, not the binder, of the last sheaf who is tied up in it.³ Here the person wrapt up in the corn represents the corn-spirit, exactly as a person wrapt in branches or leaves represents the tree-spirit.⁴

The last sheaf, designated as the Old Woman, is often distinguished from the other sheaves by its size and weight. Thus in some villages of West Prussia the Old Woman is made twice as long and thick as a common sheaf, and a stone is fastened in the middle of it. Sometimes it is made so heavy that a man can barely lift it.⁵ At Alt-Pillau, in Samland, eight or nine sheaves are often tied together to make the Old Woman, and the man who sets it up grumbles at its weight.⁶ At Itzgrund, in Saxe-Coburg, the last sheaf, called the Old Woman, is made large with the express intention of thereby securing a good crop next year.⁷ Thus the custom of making the last sheaf unusually large or heavy is a charm, working by sympathetic magic, to ensure a large and heavy crop at the following harvest. In Denmark also the last sheaf is made larger than the others, and is called the Old Rye-woman or the Old Barley-woman. No one likes to bind it, because whoever does so will be sure, they think, to marry an old man or an old woman. Sometimes the last wheat-sheaf, called the Old Wheat-woman, is made up in human shape, with head,

The last sheaf made unusually large and heavy.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 324.

² *Ibid.* p. 320.

³ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 325.

⁴ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 74 sqq.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 324.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 324 sq.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 325. The author of *Die*

gestriegelte Rockenphilosophie (Chemnitz, 1759) mentions (p. 891) the German superstition that the last sheaf should be made large in order that all the sheaves next year may be of the same size ; but he says nothing as to the shape or name of the sheaf. Compare A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube im deutschen Westböhmen* (Prague, 1905), p. 188.

arms, and legs, and being dressed in clothes is carried home on the last waggon, while the harvesters sit beside it drinking and huzzaing.¹ Of the person who binds the last sheaf it is said, "She or he is the Old Rye-woman."²

The Carlin
and the
Maiden in
Scotland.

In Scotland, when the last corn was cut after Hallowmas, the female figure made out of it was sometimes called the Carlin or Carline, that is, the Old Woman. But if cut before Hallowmas, it was called the Maiden; if cut after sunset, it was called the Witch, being supposed to bring bad luck.³ Among the Highlanders of Scotland the last corn cut at harvest is known either as the Old Wife (*Cailleach*) or as the Maiden; on the whole the former name seems to prevail in the western and the latter in the central and eastern districts. Of the Maiden we shall speak presently; here we are dealing with the Old Wife. The following general account of the custom is given by a careful and well-informed enquirer, the Rev. J. G. Campbell, minister of the remote Hebridean island of Tiree: "The Harvest Old Wife (*a Chailleach*).—In harvest, there was a struggle to escape from being the last done with the shearing,⁴ and when tillage in common existed, instances were known of a ridge being left unshorn (no person would claim it) because of it being behind the rest. The fear entertained was that of having the 'famine of the farm' (*gort a bhaile*), in the shape of an imaginary old woman (*cailleach*), to feed till next harvest. Much emulation and amusement arose from the fear of this old woman. . . . The first done made a doll of some blades of corn, which was called the 'old wife,' and sent it to his nearest neighbour. He in turn, when ready, passed it to another still less expeditious, and the person it last remained with had 'the old woman' to keep for that year."⁵

The Old
Wife
(*Cailleach*)
in the last

To illustrate the custom by examples, in Bernera, on the west of Lewis, the harvest rejoicing goes by the name of the Old Wife (*Cailleach*) from the last sheaf

¹ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 327.

² *Ibid.* p. 328.

³ J. Jamieson, *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, New Edition (Paisley, 1879-1882), iii. 206, *s.v.*

"Maiden,"; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 326.

⁴ That is, with the reaping.

⁵ Rev. J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1900), pp. 243 *sq.*

cut, whether in a township, farm, or croft. Where there are a number of crofts beside each other, there is always great rivalry as to who shall first finish reaping, and so have the Old Wife before his neighbours. Some people even go out on a clear night to reap their fields after their neighbours have retired to rest, in order that they may have the Old Wife first. More *habits*, however, usually prevail, and as each finishes his own fields he goes to the help of another, till the whole crop is cut. The reaping is still done with the sickle. When the corn has been cut on all the crofts, the last sheaf is dressed up to look as like an old woman as possible. She wears a white cap, a dress, an apron, and a little shawl over the shoulders fastened with a sprig of heather. The apron is tucked up to form a pocket, which is stuffed with bread and cheese. A sickle, stuck in the string of the apron at the back, completes her equipment. This costume and outfit mean that the Old Wife is ready to bear a hand in the work of harvesting. At the feast which follows, the Old Wife is placed at the head of the table, and as the whisky goes round each of the company drinks to her, saying, "Here's to the one that has helped us with the harvest." When the table has been cleared away and dancing begins, one of the lads leads out the Old Wife and dances with her; and if the night is fine the party will sometimes go out and march in a body to a considerable distance, singing harvest-songs, while one of them carries the Old Wife on his back. When the Harvest-Home is over, the Old Wife is shorn of her gear and used for ordinary purposes.¹ In the island of Islay the last corn cut also goes by the name of the Old Wife (*Cailleach*), and when she has done her duty at harvest she is hung up on the wall and stays there till the time comes to plough the fields for the next year's crop. Then she is taken down, and on the first day when the men go to plough she is divided among them by the mistress of the house. They take her in their pockets and give her to the horses to eat when they reach the field. This is supposed to secure good luck for the next harvest, and is understood to be the proper end of the Old

sheaf at
harvest in
the islands
of Lewis
and Islay.

¹ R. C. Maclagan, "Notes on folk-lore objects collected in Argyleshire," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895) pp. 149 sq.

The Old Wife at harvest in Argyleshire.

Wife.¹ In Kintyre also the name of the Old Wife is given to the last corn cut.² On the shores of the beautiful Loch Awe, a long sheet of water, winding among soft green hills, above which the giant Ben Cruachan towers bold and rugged on the north, the harvest custom is somewhat different. The name of the Old Wife (*Cailleach*) is here bestowed, not on the last corn cut, but on the reaper who is the last to finish. He bears it as a term of reproach, and is not privileged to reap the last ears left standing. On the contrary, these are cut by the reaper who was the first to finish his *spagh* or strip (literally "claw"), and out of them is fashioned the Maiden, which is afterwards hung up, according to one statement, "for the purpose of preventing the death of horses in spring."³ In the north-east of Scotland "the one who took the last of the grain from the field to the stackyard was called the 'winter.' Each one did what could be done to avoid being the last on the field, and when there were several on the field there was a race to get off. The unfortunate 'winter' was the subject of a good deal of teasing, and was dressed up in all the old clothes that could be gathered about the farm, and placed on the 'bink' to eat his supper."⁴ So in Caithness the person who cuts the last sheaf is called Winter and retains the name till the next harvest.⁵

The reaper of the last sheaf called the Winter.

The Hag (*wrach*) at harvest in North Pembroke-shire.

Usages of the same sort are reported from Wales. Thus in North Pembrokeshire a tuft of the last corn cut, from six to twelve inches long, is plaited and goes by the name of the Hag (*wrach*); and quaint old customs used to be practised with it within the memory of many persons still alive. Great was the excitement among the reapers when the last patch of standing corn was reached. All in turn threw their sickles at it, and the one who succeeded in cutting it received a jug of home-brewed ale. The Hag (*wrach*) was then hurriedly made and taken to a neighbouring farm, where the reapers were still busy at their work. This was generally done by the ploughman; but he had to be very

¹ R. C. Maclagan, *op. cit.* p. 151.

² R. C. Maclagan, *op. cit.* p. 149.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 151 sq.

⁴ Rev. Walter Gregor, *Notes on the*

Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland (London, 1881), p. 182.

⁵ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth* (London, 1893), p. 141.

careful not to be observed by his neighbours, for if they saw him coming and had the least suspicion of his errand they would soon make him retrace his steps. Creeping stealthily up behind a fence he waited till the foreman of his neighbour's reapers was just opposite him and within easy reach. Then he suddenly threw the Hag over the fence and, if possible, upon the foreman's sickle, crying out

*"Boreu y codais i,
Hwyr y dilynais i,
Ar ei gwar hi."*

On that he took to his heels and made off as fast as he could run, and he was a lucky man if he escaped without being caught or cut by the flying sickles which the infuriated reapers hurled after him. In other cases the Hag was brought home to the farmhouse by one of the reapers. He did his best to bring it home dry and without being observed; but he was apt to be roughly handled by the people of the house, if they suspected his errand. Sometimes they stripped him of most of his clothes, sometimes they would drench him with water which had been carefully stored in buckets and pans for the purpose. If, however, he succeeded in bringing the Hag in dry and unobserved, the master of the house had to pay him a small fine; or sometimes a jug of beer "from the cask next to the wall," which seems to have commonly held the best beer, would be demanded by the bearer. The Hag was then carefully hung on a nail in the hall or elsewhere and kept there all the year. The custom of bringing in the Hag (*wrach*) into the house and hanging it up still exists in some farms of North Pembrokeshire, but the ancient ceremonies which have just been described are now discontinued.¹

Similar customs at harvest were observed in South

¹ D. Jenkin Evans, in an article entitled "The Harvest Customs of Pembrokeshire," *Pembroke County Guardian*, 7th December 1895. In a letter to me, dated 23 February 1901, Mr. E. S. Hartland was so good as to correct the Welsh words in the text. He tells me that they mean literally, "I rose early, I pursued late on her neck," and he adds: "The idea seems

to be that the man has pursued the Hag or Corn-spirit to a later refuge, namely, his neighbour's field not yet completely reaped, and now he leaves her for the other reapers to catch. The proper form of the Welsh word for Hag is *Gwrach*. That is the radical from *gwr*, man; *gwrach*, woman. *Wrach* is the 'middle mutation.'"

The Hag
(*wrach*) at
harvest in
South
Pembroke-
shire.

Pembrokeshire within living memory. In that part of the country there used to be a competition between neighbouring farms to see which would finish reaping first. The foreman of the reapers planned so as to finish the reaping in a corner of the field out of sight of the people on the next farm. There, with the last handful of corn cut, he would make two Old Women or Hags (*wrachs*). One of them he would send by a lad or other messenger to be laid secretly in the field where the neighbours were still at work cutting their corn. The messenger would disguise himself to look like a stranger, and jumping the fence and creeping through the corn he would lay the Hag (*wrach*) in a place where the reapers in reaping would be sure to find it. Having done so he fled for dear life, for were the reapers to catch him they would shut him up in a dark room and not let him out till he had cleaned all the muddy boots, shoes, and clogs in the house. The second Hag (*wrach*) was sent or taken by the foreman of the reapers to his master's farmhouse. Generally he tried to pop into the house unseen and lay the Hag on the kitchen table; but if the people of the farm caught him before he laid it down, they used to drench him with water. If a foreman succeeded in getting both the Hags (*wrachs*) laid safe in their proper quarters, one at home, the other on a neighbour's farm, without interruption, it was deemed a great honour.¹ In County Antrim, down to some years ago, when the sickle was finally expelled by the reaping machine, the few stalks of corn left standing last on the field were plaited together; then the reapers, blindfolded, threw their sickles at the plaited corn, and whoever happened to cut it through took it home with him and put it over his door. This bunch of corn was called the Carley²—probably the same word as Carlin.

The Carley
at harvest
in Antrim.

The Old
Woman
(the Baba)
at harvest
among
Slavonic
peoples.

Similar customs are observed by Slavonic peoples. Thus in Poland the last sheaf is commonly called the Baba, that is, the Old Woman. "In the last sheaf," it is said, "sits the Baba." The sheaf itself is also called the Baba, and is

¹ M. S. Clark, "An old South Pembrokeshire Harvest Custom," *Folk-lore*, xv. (1904) pp. 194-196.

² Communicated by my friend Professor W. Ridgeway.

sometimes composed of twelve smaller sheaves lashed together.¹ In some parts of Bohemia the Baba, made out of the last sheaf, has the figure of a woman with a great straw hat. It is carried home on the last harvest-waggon and delivered, along with a garland, to the farmer by two girls. In binding the sheaves the women strive not to be last, for she who binds the last sheaf will have a child next year.² The last sheaf is tied up with others into a large bundle, and a green branch is stuck on the top of it.³ Sometimes the harvesters call out to the woman who binds the last sheaf, "She has the Baba," or "She is the Baba." She has then to make a puppet, sometimes in female, sometimes in male form, out of the corn; the puppet is occasionally dressed with clothes, often with flowers and ribbons only. The cutter of the last stalks, as well as the binder of the last sheaf, was also called Baba; and a doll, called the Harvest-woman, was made out of the last sheaf and adorned with ribbons. The oldest reaper had to dance, first with this doll, and then with the farmer's wife.⁴ In the district of Cracow, when a man binds the last sheaf, they say, "The Grandfather is sitting in it"; when a woman binds it, they say, "The Baba is sitting in it," and the woman herself is wrapt up in the sheaf, so that only her head projects out of it. Thus encased in the sheaf, she is carried on the last harvest-waggon to the house, where she is drenched with water by the whole family. She remains in the sheaf till the dance is over, and for a year she retains the name of Baba.⁵

In Lithuania the name for the last sheaf is Boba (Old Woman), answering to the Polish name Baba. The Boba is said to sit in the corn which is left standing last.⁶ The person who binds the last sheaf or digs the last potato is the subject of much banter, and receives and long retains the name of the Old Rye-woman or the Old Potato-woman.⁷ The last sheaf—the Boba—is made into the form of a woman, carried solemnly through the village on the last harvest-waggon, and drenched with water at the farmer's house; then every one dances with it.⁸

The Old
Woman
(the Baba)
at harvest
in Lithu-
ania.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 328.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 329.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 330.

⁶ *Ibid.*

² W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 238.

⁷ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 331.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 328 sq.

⁸ *Ibid.*

The Corn-queen and the Harvest-queen.

In Russia also the last sheaf is often shaped and dressed as a woman, and carried with dance and song to the farmhouse. Out of the last sheaf the Bulgarians make a doll which they call the Corn-queen or Corn-mother ; it is dressed in a woman's shirt, carried round the village, and then thrown into the river in order to secure plenty of rain and dew for the next year's crop. Or it is burned and the ashes strewn on the fields, doubtless to fertilise them.¹ The name Queen, as applied to the last sheaf, has its origin in central and northern Europe. Thus, in the Salzburg district of Austria, at the end of the harvest a great procession takes place, in which a Queen of the Corn-ears (*Ährenkönigin*) is drawn along in a little carriage by young fellows.² The custom of the Harvest Queen appears to have been common in England. Brand quotes from Hutchinson's *History of Northumberland* the following : " I have seen, in some places, an image apparelled in great finery, crowned with flowers, a sheaf of corn placed under her arm, and a scycle in her hand, carried out of the village in the morning of the conclusive reaping day, with music and much clamour of the reapers, into the field, where it stands fixed on a pole all day, and when the reaping is done, is brought home in like manner. This they call the Harvest Queen, and it represents the Roman Ceres."³ Again, the traveller Dr. E. D. Clarke tells us that " even in the town of Cambridge, and centre of our University, such curious remains of antient customs may be noticed, in different seasons of the year, which pass without observation. The custom of blowing horns upon the first of May (Old Style) is derived from a festival in honour of Diana. At the *Hawkie*, as it is called, or Harvest Home, I have seen a clown dressed in woman's clothes, having his face painted, his head decorated with ears of corn, and bearing about him other symbols of Ceres, carried in a waggon, with great pomp and loud shouts, through the streets, the horses being covered with white sheets : and when I inquired the meaning of the ceremony, was answered by the people that they were drawing the Morgay (MHTHP TH)

¹ *Ibid.* p. 332.

² Th. Vernaleken, *Mythen und Brauche des Volkes in Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1859), p. 310.

³ Hutchinson, *History of Northumberland*, ii. *ad finem*, 17, quoted by J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, ii. 20, Bohn's edition.

or Harvest Queen.”¹ Milton must have been familiar with the custom of the Harvest Queen, for in *Paradise Lost*² he says :—

“ Adam the while
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flow'rs a garland to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labours crown,
As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.”

Often customs of this sort are practised, not on the harvest-field but on the threshing-floor. The spirit of the corn, fleeing before the reapers as they cut down the ripe grain, quits the reaped corn and takes refuge in the barn, where it appears in the last sheaf threshed, either to perish under the blows of the flail or to flee thence to the still unthreshed corn of a neighbouring farm.³ Thus the last corn to be threshed is called the Mother-Corn or the Old Woman. Sometimes the person who gives the last stroke with the flail is called the Old Woman, and is wrapt in the straw of the last sheaf, or has a bundle of straw fastened on his back. Whether wrapt in the straw or carrying it on his back, he is carted through the village amid general laughter. In some districts of Bavaria, Thüringen, and elsewhere, the man who threshes the last sheaf is said to have the Old Woman or the Old Corn-woman; he is tied up in straw, carried or carted about the village, and set down at last

The corn-spirit as the Old Woman or Old Man at threshing.

¹ E. D. Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa*, Part ii., Section First, Second Edition (London, 1813), p. 229. Perhaps *Morgay* (which Clarke absurdly explains as *μυττήρ γῆ*) is a mistake for *Hawkie* or *Hockey*. The waggon in which the last corn was brought from the harvest field was called the *hockey* cart or *hock* cart. In a poem called “The Hock-cart or Harvest Home” Herick has described the joyous return of the laden cart drawn by horses swathed in white sheets and attended by a merry crowd, some of whom kissed or stroked the sheaves, while others pranked them with oak leaves. See further J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 22 sq., Bohn’s edition. The name *Hockey* or *Hawkie* is no doubt the same with the German

hökkelmei, *horkelmei*, or *harkelmei*, which in Westphalia is applied to a green bush or tree set up in the field at the end of harvest and brought home in the last waggon-load; the man who carries it into the farmhouse is sometimes drenched with water. See A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebrauche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (Leipsic, 1859), ii. 178-180, §§ 494-497. The word is thought to be derived from the Low German *hokk* (plural *hokken*), “a heap of sheaves.” See Joseph Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, iii. (London, 1902) p. 190, s.v. “Hockey,” from which it appears that in England the word has been in use in Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk.

² Book ix. lines 838-842.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 333 sq.

on the dunghill, or taken to the threshing-floor of a neighbouring farmer who has not finished his threshing.¹ In Poland the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is called Baba (Old Woman); he is wrapt in corn and wheeled through the village.² Sometimes in Lithuania the last sheaf is not threshed, but is fashioned into female shape and carried to the barn of a neighbour who has not finished his threshing.³

The man who gives the last stroke at threshing is called the Corn-fool, the Oats-fool, etc.

At Chorinchen, near Neustadt, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is said to "get the Old Man."⁴ In various parts of Austrian Silesia he is called the corn-fool, the oats-fool, and so forth according to the crop, and retains the name till the next kind of grain has been reaped. Sometimes he is called the *Klöppel* or mallet. He is much ridiculed and in the Bennisch district he is dressed out in the threshing-implements and obliged to carry them about the farmyard to the amusement of his fellows. In Dobischwald the man who gives the last stroke at threshing has to carry a log or puppet of wood wrapt in straw to a neighbour who has not yet finished his threshing. There he throws his burden into the barn, crying, "There you have the Mallet (*Klöppel*)," and makes off as fast as he can. If they catch him, they tie the puppet on his back, and he is known as the Mallet (*Klöppel*) for the whole of the year; he may be the Corn-mallet or the Wheat-mallet or so forth according to the particular crop.⁵

The man who gives the last stroke at threshing is said to get the Old Woman or the Old Man.

About Berneck, in Upper Franken, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing runs away. If the others catch him, he gets "the Old Woman," that is, the largest dumpling, which elsewhere is baked in human shape. The custom of setting a dumpling baked in the form of an old woman before the man who has given the last stroke at threshing is also observed in various parts of Middle Franken. Sometimes the excised genitals of a calf are served up to him at table.⁶ At Langenbielau in Silesia the last sheaf, which

¹ *Ibid.* p. 334.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 334.

³ *Ibid.* p. 336.

⁴ A. Kuhn and W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Marchen und Gebrauche* (Leipsic, 1848), p. 397.

⁵ A. Peter, *Volksthümliches aus Österreichisch-Schlesien* (Troppau, 1865-1867), ii. 270.

⁶ *Bavaria Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iii. (Munich, 1865) pp. 344, 969.

is called "the Old Man," is threshed separately and the corn ground into meal and baked into a loaf. This loaf is believed to possess healing virtue and to bring a blessing; hence none but members of the family may partake of it. At Wittichenau, in the district of Hoyerswerda (Silesia), when the threshing is ended, some of the straw of "the Old Man" is carried to a neighbour who has not yet finished his threshing, and the bearer is rewarded with a gratuity.¹ Among the Germans of the Falkenauer district in West Bohemia the man who gives the last stroke at threshing gets "the Old Man," a hideous scarecrow, tied on his back. If threshing is still proceeding at another farm, he may go thither and rid himself of his burden, but must take care not to be caught. In this way a farmer who is behind-hand with his threshing may receive several such scarecrows, and so become the target for many gibes. Among the Germans of the Planer district in West Bohemia, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is himself called "the Old Man." Similarly at flax-dressing in Silberberg (West Bohemia), the woman who is the last to finish her task is said to get the Old Man, and a cake baked in human form is served up to her at supper.² The Wends of Saxony say of the man who gives the last stroke at threshing that "he has struck the Old Man" (*wón je stareho bíl*), and he is obliged to carry a straw puppet to a neighbour, who has not yet finished his threshing, where he throws the puppet unobserved over the fence.³ In some parts of Sweden, when a stranger woman appears on the threshing-floor, a flail is put round her body, stalks of corn are wound round her neck, a crown of ears is placed on her head, and the threshers call out, "Behold the Corn-woman." Here the stranger woman, thus suddenly appearing, is taken to be the corn-spirit who has just been expelled by the flails from the corn-stalks.⁴ In other cases the farmer's wife represents the corn-spirit. Thus in the Commune of Saligné, Canton de Poiret (Vendée), the farmer's wife,

The Corn-woman at threshing.

¹ P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipzig, 1903-1906), ii. 67.

² A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube im deutschen Westböhmen*

(Prague, 1905), pp. 193, 194, 197.

³ R. Wuttke, *Sächsische Volkskunde*² (Dresden, 1901), p. 360.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 336.

along with the last sheaf, is tied up in a sheet, placed on a litter, and carried to the threshing machine, under which she is shoved. Then the woman is drawn out and the sheaf is threshed by itself, but the woman is tossed in the sheet, as if she were being winnowed.¹ It would be impossible to express more clearly the identification of the woman with the corn than by this graphic imitation of threshing and winnowing her. Mitigated forms of the custom are observed in various places. Thus among the Germans of Schüttarschen in West Bohemia it was customary at the close of the threshing to "throttle" the farmer's wife by squeezing her neck between the arms of a flail till she consented to bake a special kind of cake called a *dreschala* (from *dreschen*, "to thresh").² A similar custom of "throttling" the farmer's wife at the threshing is practised in some parts of Bavaria, only there the pressure is applied by means of a straw rope instead of a flail.³

The corn-spirit as a child at harvest.

In these customs the spirit of the ripe corn is regarded as old, or at least as of mature age. Hence the names of Mother, Grandmother, Old Woman, and so forth. But in other cases the corn-spirit is conceived as young. Thus at Saldern, near Wolfenbuttel, when the rye has been reaped, three sheaves are tied together with a rope so as to make a puppet with the corn ears for a head. This puppet is called the Maiden or the Corn-maiden (*Kornjunfer*).⁴ Sometimes the corn-spirit is conceived as a child who is separated from its mother by the stroke of the sickle. This last view appears in the Polish custom of calling out to the man who cuts the last handful of corn, "You have cut the navel-string."⁵ In some districts of West Prussia the figure made out of the last sheaf is called the Bastard, and a boy is wrapt up in it. The woman who binds the last sheaf and represents the Corn-mother is told that she is about to be brought to bed; she cries like a woman in travail, and an old woman in the character of

¹ *Ibid.* p. 336; W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 612.

² A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube im deutschen Westböhmen* (Prague, 1905), p. 194.

³ E. H. Meyer, *Bairisches Volksleben*

(Strasburg, 1900), p. 437.

⁴ A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (Leipsic, 1859), ii. 184 sq., § 515.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen* (Berlin, 1868), p. 23.

grandmother acts as midwife. At last a cry is raised that the child is born; whereupon the boy who is tied up in the sheaf whimpers and squalls like an infant. The grandmother wraps a sack, in imitation of swaddling bands, round the pretended baby, who is carried joyfully to the barn, lest he should catch cold in the open air.¹ In other parts of North Germany the last sheaf, or the puppet made out of it, is called the Child, the Harvest-Child, and so on, and they call out to the woman who binds the last sheaf, "you are getting the child."²

In the north of England, particularly in the counties of Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire, the last corn cut on the field at harvest is or used to be variously known as the *mell* or the *kirn*, of which *kern* and *churn* are merely local or dialectical variations. The corn so cut is either plaited or made up into a doll-like figure, which goes by the name of the mell-doll or the kirn-doll, or the kirn-baby, and is brought home with rejoicings at the end of the harvest.³ In the North Riding of Yorkshire the last sheaf gathered in is called the Mell-sheaf, and the expression "We've gotten wer mell" is as much as to say "The Harvest is finished." Formerly a Mell-doll was made out of a sheaf of corn decked with flowers and wrapped in such of the reapers' garments as could be spared. It was carried with music and dancing to the scene of the harvest-supper, which was called the mell-supper.⁴ In the north of Yorkshire

The last corn cut called the *mell*, the *kirn*, or the *churn* in various parts of England.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *l.c.*

² W. Mannhardt, *l.c.*

³ Joseph Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, vol. i. (London, 1898) p. 605 *s.v.* "Churn"; *id.*, vol. iii. (London, 1902) p. 453 *s.v.* "Kirn"; *id.* vol. iv. (London, 1903) pp. 82 *sq.* Sir James Murray, editor of the *New English Dictionary*, kindly informs me that the popular etymology which identifies *kern* or *kirn* in this sense with *corn* is entirely mistaken; and that "baby" or "babbie" in the same phrase means only "doll," not "infant." He writes, "*Kirn-babbie* does not mean 'corn-baby,' but merely *kirn-doll*, *harvest-home doll*. *Bab*, *babbie* was even in my youth the regular name for 'doll' in the district,

as it was formerly in England; the only woman who sold dolls in Hawick early in the [nineteenth] century, and whose toy-shop all bairns knew, was known as 'Betty o' the Babs,' Betty of the dolls."

⁴ W. Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England* (London, 1879), pp. 88 *sq.*; M. C. F. Morris, *Yorkshire Folk-talk*, pp. 212-214. Compare F. Grose, *Provincial Glossary* (London, 1811), *s.v.* "Mell-supper"; J. Bland, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 27 *sqq.*, Bohn's edition; *The Denham Tracts*, edited by Dr. James Hardy (London, 1892-1895), ii. 2 *sq.* The sheaf out of which the Mell-doll was made was no doubt the Mell-sheaf, though this is not expressly said. Dr.

the mell-sheaf "was frequently made of such dimensions as to be a heavy load for a man, and, within a few years comparatively, was proposed as the prize to be won in a race of old women. In other cases it was carefully preserved and set up in some conspicuous place in the farmhouse."¹ Where the last sheaf of corn cut was called the *kirn* or *kern* instead of the *mell*, the customs concerned with it seem to have been essentially similar. Thus we are told that in the north it was common for the reapers, on the last day of the reaping, "to have a contention for superiority in quickness of dispatch, groups of three or four taking each a ridge, and striving which should soonest get to its termination. In Scotland, this was called a *kemping*, which simply means a striving. In the north of England, it was a *mell*. . . . As the reapers went on during the last day, they took care to leave a good handful of the grain uncut, but laid down flat, and covered over; and, when the field was done, the 'bonnicst lass' was allowed to cut this final handful, which was presently dressed up with various sewings, tyings, and trimmings, like a doll, and hailed as a *Corn Baby*. It was brought home in triumph, with music of fiddles and bagpipes, was set up conspicuously that night at supper, and was usually preserved in the farmer's parlour for the remainder of the year. The bonny lass who cut this handful of grain was deemed the *Harst Queen*."² To cut the last portion of standing corn in the harvest field was known as "to get the *kirn*" or "to win the *kirn*"; and as soon as this was done the reapers let the neighbours know that the harvest was finished by giving three cheers, which was

Joseph Wright, editor of *The English Dialect Dictionary*, kindly informs me that the word *mell* is well known in these senses in all the northern counties of England down to Cheshire. He tells me that the proposals to connect *mell* with "meal" or with "maiden" (through a form like the German *Madel*) are inadmissible.

¹ Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, vol. iv. (London, 1903) s.v. "Mell," p. 83.

² R. Chambers, *The Book of Days* (Edinburgh, 1886), ii. 377 sq. The

expression "Corn Baby" used by the writer is probably his interpretation of the correct expression *kirn* or *kern* baby. See above, p. 151, note³. It is not clear whether the account refers to England or Scotland. Compare F. Grose, *Provincial Glossary* (London 1811), s.v. "Kern-baby," "an image dressed up with corn, carried before the reapers to their mell-supper, or harvest home"; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 20; W. Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, p. 87.

called "to cry or shout the kirn."¹ Where the last handful of standing corn was called the *churn*, the stalks were roughly plaited together, and the reapers threw their sickles at it till some one cut it through, which was called "cutting the churn." The severed churn (that is, the plaited corn) was then placed over the kitchen door or over the hob in the chimney for good luck, and as a charm against witchcraft.² In Kent the Ivy Girl is, or used to be, "a figure composed of some of the best corn the field produces, and made as well as they can into a human shape; this is afterwards curiously dressed by the women, and adorned with paper trimmings, cut to resemble a cap, ruffles, handkerchief, etc., of the finest lace. It is brought home with the last load of corn from the field upon the waggon, and they suppose entitles them to a supper at the expense of the employer."³

The *churn* cut by throwing sickles at it

In some parts of Scotland, as well as in the north of England, the last handful of corn cut on the harvest-field was called the *kirn*, and the person who carried it off was said "to win the kirn." It was then dressed up like a child's doll and went by the name of the kirn-baby, the kirn-doll, or the Maiden.⁴ In Berwickshire down to about the middle of the nineteenth century there was an eager competition among the reapers to cut the last bunch of standing corn. They gathered round it at a little distance and threw their sickles in turn at it, and the man who succeeded in cutting it through gave it to the girl he preferred. She made the corn so cut into a kirn-dolly and dressed it, and the doll was then taken to the farmhouse and hung up there till the next harvest, when its place was taken by the new kirn-dolly.⁵ At Spottiswoode (Westruther Parish) in Berwickshire the reaping of the last corn at harvest was called "cutting the Queen" almost as often as "cutting the kirn." The mode of cutting it was not by throwing sickles. One of the reapers consented to be blindfolded, and having been given a sickle in his hand

The last corn cut called the *kirn* in some parts of Scotland.

The *kirn* cut by reapers blindfold

¹ Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, iii. (London, 1902) s.v. "Kirn," p. 453.

² Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, i. (London, 1898) p. 605.

³ J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii.

21 sq.

⁴ J. Jamieson, *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, New Edition (Paisley, 1879-1882), iii. 42 sq., s.v. "Kirn."

⁵ Mrs. A. B. Gomme, "A Berwickshire Kirn-dolly," *Folk-lore*, xii. (1901) p. 215.

and turned twice or thrice about by his fellows, he was bidden to go and cut the kirn. His groping about and making wild strokes in the air with his sickle excited much hilarity. When he had tired himself out in vain and given up the task as hopeless, another reaper was blindfolded and pursued the quest, and so on, one after the other, till at last the kirn was cut. The successful reaper was tossed up in the air with three cheers by his brother harvesters. To decorate the room in which the kirn-supper was held at Spottiswoode as well as the granary, where the dancing took place, two women made kirn-dollies or Queens every year; and many of these rustic effigies of the corn-spirit might be seen hanging up together.¹ At Lanfine in Ayrshire, down to near the end of the nineteenth century, the last bunch of standing corn at harvest was, occasionally at least, plaited together, and the reapers tried to cut it by throwing their sickles at it; when they failed in the attempt, a woman has been known to run in and sever the stalks at a blow. In Dumfriesshire also, within living memory, it used to be customary to cut the last standing corn by throwing the sickles at it.²

The *churn* in Ireland cut by throwing the sickles at it.

In the north of Ireland the harvest customs were similar, but there, as in some parts of England, the last patch of standing corn bore the name of the *churn*, a dialectical variation of *kirn*. "The custom of 'Winning the Churn' was prevalent all through the counties of Down and Antrim fifty years ago. It was carried out at the end of the harvest, or reaping the grain, on each farm or holding, were it small or large. Oats are the main crop of the district, but the custom was the same for other kinds of grain. When the reapers had nearly finished the last field a handful of the best-grown stalks was selected, carefully plaited as it stood, and fastened at the top just under the ears to keep the plait in place. Then when all the corn was cut from about this, which was known as *The Churn*, and the sheaves about it had been removed to some distance, the reapers stood in a group about ten yards off it, and each

¹ Mrs. A. B. Gomme, "Harvest Customs," *Folk-lore*, xiii. (1902) p. 178.

² J. G. Frazer, "Notes on Harvest Customs," *Folk-lore*, vii. (1889) p. 48.

whirled his sickle at the *Churn* till one lucky one succeeded in cutting it down, when he was cheered on his achievement. This person had then the right of presenting it to the master or mistress of the farm, who gave the reaper a shilling." A supper and a dance of the reapers in the farmhouse often concluded the day. The *Churn*, trimmed and adorned with ribbons, was hung up on a wall in the farmhouse and carefully preserved. It was no uncommon sight to see six or even twelve or more such *Churns* decorating the walls of a farmhouse in County Down or Antrim.¹

In some parts of the Highlands of Scotland the last handful of corn that is cut by the reapers on any particular farm is called the Maiden, or in Gaelic *Maidhdeanbuain*, literally "the shorn Maiden." Superstitions attach to the winning of the Maiden. If it is got by a young person, they think it an omen that he or she will be married before another harvest. For that or other reasons there is a strife between the reapers as to who shall get the Maiden, and they resort to various stratagems for the purpose of securing it. One of them, for example, will often leave a handful of corn uncut and cover it up with earth to hide it from the other reapers, till all the rest of the corn on the field is cut down. Several may try to play the same trick, and the one who is coolest and holds out longest obtains the coveted distinction. When it has been cut, the Maiden is dressed with ribbons into a sort of doll and affixed to a wall of the farmhouse. In the north of Scotland the Maiden is carefully preserved till Yule morning, when it is divided among the cattle "to make them thrive all the year round."² In the island of Mull and some parts of the mainland of Argyleshire the last handful of corn cut is called the Maiden (*Maighdean-Bhuana*). Near Ardrishaig, in Argyleshire, the

The last corn cut called the Maiden in the Highlands of Scotland.

¹ (Rev.) H. W. Lett, "Winning the Churn (Ulster)," *Folk-lore*, xvi. (1905) p. 185. My friend Miss Welsh, formerly Principal of Gilton College, Cambridge, told me (30th May 1901) that she remembers the custom of the *churn* being observed in the north of Ireland; the reapers cut the last handful of standing corn (called the *churn*) by throwing their sickles at it, and the

corn so cut was taken home and kept for some time.

² J. Jamieson, *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, New Edition (Paisley, 1879-1882), iii. 206, s.v. "Maiden." An old Scottish name for the Maiden (*autumnalis nymphula*) was *Rapegyrne*. See Fordun, *Scotichron.* ii. 418, quoted by J. Jamieson, *op. cit.* iii. 624, s.v. "Rapegyrne."

Maiden is made up in a fanciful three-cornered shape, decorated with ribbons, and hung from a nail on the wall.¹

The cutting of the Maiden at harvest in Argyleshire.

The following account of the Maiden was obtained in the summer of 1897 from the manager of a farm near Kilmartin in Argyleshire: "The *Mhaighdean-Bhuana*, or *Reaping Maiden*, was the last sheaf of oats to be cut on a croft or farm. Before the reaping-machine and binder took the place of the sickle and the scythe, the young reapers of both sexes, when they neared the end of the last rig or field, used to manœuvre to gain possession of the *Mhaighdean-Bhuana*. The individual who was fortunate enough to obtain it was *ex officio* entitled to be the King or the Queen of the Harvest-Home festival. The sheaf so designated was carefully preserved and kept intact until the day they began leading home the corn. A tuft of it was then given to each of the horses, as they started from the corn-field with their first load. The rest of it was neatly made up, and hung in some conspicuous corner of the farmhouse, where it remained till it was replaced by a younger sister next season. On the first day of ploughing a tuft of it was given (as on the first day of leading home the corn) as a *Sainnseal* or handsel for luck to the horses. The *Mhaighdean-Bhuana* so preserved and used was a symbol that the harvest had been duly secured, and that the spring work had been properly inaugurated. It was also believed to be a protection against fairies and witchcraft."²

The cutting of the Maiden at harvest in Perthshire.

In the parish of Longforgan, situated at the south-eastern corner of Perthshire, it used to be customary to give what was called the Maiden Feast at the end of the harvest. The last handful of corn reaped on the field was called the Maiden, and things were generally so arranged that it fell into the hands of a pretty girl. It was then decked out with ribbons and brought home in triumph to the music of bagpipes and fiddles. In the evening the reapers danced and made merry. Afterwards the Maiden was dressed out, generally in the

¹ R. C. Maclagan, in *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895) pp. 149, 151.

² Rev. M. MacPhail (Free Church Manse, Kilmartin, Lochgilphead), "Folk-lore from the Hebrides," *Folk-lore*, xi. (1900) p. 441. That the Maiden,

hung up in the house, is thought to keep out witches till the next harvest is mentioned also by the Rev. J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1900), p. 20. So with the *churn* (above, p. 153)

form of a cross, and hung up, with the date attached to it, in a conspicuous part of the house.¹ In the neighbourhood of Balquhider, Perthshire, the last handful of corn is cut by the youngest girl on the field, and is made into the rude form of a female doll, clad in a paper dress, and decked with ribbons. It is called the Maiden, and is kept in the farmhouse, generally above the chimney, for a good while, sometimes till the Maiden of the next year is brought in. The writer of this book witnessed the ceremony of cutting the Maiden at Balquhider in September 1888.² A lady friend³ informed me that as a young girl she cut the Maiden several times at the request of the reapers in the neighbourhood of Perth. The name of the Maiden was given to the last handful of standing corn; a reaper held the top of the bunch while she cut it. Afterwards the bunch was plaited, decked with ribbons, and hung up in a conspicuous place on the wall of the kitchen till the next Maiden was brought in. The harvest-supper in this neighbourhood was also called the Maiden; the reapers danced at it.

In the Highland district of Lochaber dancing and merry-making on the last night of harvest used to be universal and are still generally observed. Here, we are told, the festivity without the Maiden would be like a wedding without the bride. The Maiden is carried home with tumultuous rejoicing, and after being suitably decorated is hung up in the barn, where the dancing usually takes place. When supper is over, one of the company, generally the oldest man present, drinks a glass of whisky, after turning to the suspended sheaf and saying, "Here's to the Maiden." The company follow his example, each in turn drinking to the Maiden. Then the dancing begins.⁴ On some farms on the Gareloch, in Dumbartonshire, about the year 1830, the last handful of standing corn was called the Maiden. It was divided in two, plaited, and then cut with the sickle by a girl, who, it was

The Maiden at harvest in Lochaber.

The cutting of the Maiden at harvest on the Gareloch in Dumbartonshire.

¹ Sir John Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xix. (Edinburgh, 1797), pp. 550 sq. Compare Miss E. J. Guthrie, *Old Scottish Customs* (London and Glasgow, 1885), pp. 130 sq.

² *Folk-lore Journal*, vi. (1888) pp. 268 sq.

³ The late Mrs. Macalister, wife of Professor Alexander Macalister, Cambridge. Her recollections referred especially to the neighbourhood of Glen Faig, some ten or twelve miles to the south of Perth.

⁴ Rev. James Macdonald, *Religion and Myth* (London, 1893), pp. 141 sq.

thought, would be lucky and would soon be married. When it was cut the reapers gathered together and threw their sickles in the air. The Maiden was dressed with ribbons and hung in the kitchen near the roof, where it was kept for several years with the date attached. Sometimes five or six Maidens might be seen hanging at oncè on hooks. The harvest-supper was called the Kirn.¹ In other farms on the Gareloch the last handful of corn was called the Maidenhead or the Head ; it was neatly plaited, sometimes decked with ribbons, and hung in the kitchen for a year, when the grain was given to the poultry.²

The cutting of the *lyack* sheaf at harvest in Aberdeenshire.

In the north-east of Aberdeenshire the customs connected with the last corn cut at harvest have been carefully collected and recorded by the late Rev. Walter Gregor of Pitsligo. His account runs as follows : " The last sheaf cut is the object of much care : the manner of cutting it, binding it, and carrying it to the house varies a little in the different districts. The following customs have been reported to me by people who have seen them or who have practised them, and some of the customs have now disappeared. The information comes from the parishes of Pitsligo, Aberdour, and Tyrie, situated in the north-east corner of the county of Aberdeen, but the customs are not limited to these parishes.

" Some particulars relating to the sheaf may be noted as always the same ; thus (*a*) it is cut and gathered by the youngest person present in the field, the person who is supposed to be the purest ; (*b*) the sheaf is not allowed to touch the ground ; (*c*) it is made up and carried in triumph to the house ; (*d*) it occupies a conspicuous place in the festivals which follow the end of the reaping ; (*e*) it is kept till Christmas morning, and is then given to one or more of the horses or to the cattle of the farm.

The *cliyack* sheaf cut by the youngest girl and not allowed to touch the ground.

" Before the introduction of the scythe, the corn was cut by the sickle or *heuck*, a kind of curved sickle. The last sheaf was shorn or cut by the youngest girl present. As the corn might not touch the ground, the master or 'gued-

¹ From information supplied by Archie Leitch, late gardener to my father at Rowmore, Garelochhead. The Kirn was the name of the harvest festivity in the south of Scotland also.

See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ii. 184 (first edition); *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. Norton, ii. 325 sq.

² Communicated by the late Mr. Macfarlane of Faslane, Gareloch.

man' sat down, placed the band on his knees, and received thereupon each handful as it was cut. The sheaf was bound, dressed as a woman, and when it had been brought to the house, it was placed in some part of the kitchen, where everybody could see it during the meal which followed the end of the reaping. This sheaf was called the *cljack* sheaf.¹

"The manner of receiving and binding the last sheaf is not always the same. Here is another: three persons hold the band in their hands, one of them at each end, while the third holds the knot in the middle. Each handful of corn is placed so that the cut end is turned to the breast of those who support the ears on the opposite side. When all is cut, the youngest boy ties the knot. Two other bands are fastened to the sheaf, one near the cut end, the other near the ears. The sheaf is carried to the house by those who have helped to cut or bind it (Aberdour).

"Since the introduction of the scythe, it is the youngest boy who cuts the last sheaf; my informant (a woman) told me that when he was not strong enough to wield the scythe, his hand was guided by another. The youngest girl gathers it. When it is bound with three bands, it is cut straight, and it is not allowed to touch the ground. The youngest girls carry it to the house. My informant (a woman) told me that she had seen it decked and placed at the head of the bed. Formerly, and still sometimes, there was always a bed in the kitchen (Tyrrie).

"The corn is not allowed to fall on the ground: the young girls who gather it take it by the ear and convey it handful by handful, till the whole sheaf is cut. A woman who 'has lost a feather of her wing,' as an old woman put it to me, may not touch it. Sometimes also they merely put the two hands round the sheaf (New Deer).

"Generally a feast and dance follow when all the wheat is cut. This feast and dance bear the name of *cljack* or

The *cljack*
feast or
"meal and
ale."

¹ A slightly different mode of making up the *cljack* sheaf is described by the Rev. Walter Gregor elsewhere (*Notes on the Folk-lore of the North-east of Scotland*, London, 1881, pp. 181 sq.): "The *cljack* sheaf was cut by the maidens on the harvest field. On no account was it allowed to touch the

ground. One of the maidens seated herself on the ground, and over her knees was the band of the sheaf laid. Each of the maidens cut a handful, or more if necessary, and laid it on the band. The sheaf was then bound, still lying over the maiden's knees, and dressed up in woman's clothing."

'meal and ale.' However, some people do not give 'meal and ale' till all the cut corn has been got in: then the feast is called 'the Winter,' and they say that a farmer 'has the Winter' when all his sheaves have been carried home.

"At this feast two things are indispensable: a cheese called the *clyack-kebback* and 'meal and ale.'

"The cheese *clyack-kebback* must be cut by the master of the house. The first slice is larger than the rest; it is known by the name of 'the *kanave's faang*,'—the young man's big slice—and is generally the share of the herd boy (Tyrie).

"The dish called 'meal and ale' is made as follows. You take a suitable vessel, whether an earthenware pot or a milk-bowl, if the crockery is scanty; but if on the contrary the family is well off, they use other special utensils. In each dish ale is poured and treacle is added to sweeten it. Then oatmeal is mixed with the sweetened ale till the whole is of a sufficient consistency. The cook adds whisky to the mixture in such proportion as she thinks fit. In each plate is put a ring. To allow the meal time to be completely absorbed, the dish is prepared on the morning of the feast. At the moment of the feast the dish or dishes containing the strong and savoury mixture are set on the middle of the table. But it is not served up till the end. Six or seven persons generally have a plate to themselves. Each of them plunges his spoon into the plate as fast as possible in the hope of getting the ring; for he who is lucky enough to get it will be married within the year. Meantime some of the stuff is swallowed, but often in the struggle some of it is spilt on the table or the floor.

The *clyack* sheaf in the dance.

"In some districts there used to be and still is dancing in the evening of the feast. 'The sheaf' figured in the dances. It was dressed as a girl and carried on the back of the mistress of the house to the barn or granary which served as a ballroom. The mistress danced a reel with 'the sheaf' on her back.

The *clyack* sheaf given to a mare in foal or to a cow in calf.

"The woman who gave me this account had been a witness of what she described when she was a girl. The sheaf was afterwards carefully stored till the first day of Christmas, when it was given to eat to a mare in foal, if there was one on the farm, or, if there was not, to the oldest

cow in calf. Elsewhere the sheaf was divided between all the cows and their calves or between all the horses and the cattle of the farm. (Related by an eye-witness.)"¹

In these Aberdeenshire customs the sanctity attributed to the last corn cut at harvest is clearly manifested, not merely by the ceremony with which it is treated on the field, in the house, and in the barn, but also by the great care taken to prevent it from touching the ground or being handled by any unchaste person. The reason why the youngest person on the field, whether a girl or a boy, is chosen to cut the last standing corn and sometimes to carry it to the house is no doubt a calculation that the younger the person the more likely is he or she to be sexually pure. We have seen that for this reason some negroes entrust the sowing of the seed to very young girls,² and later on we shall meet with more evidence in Africa of the notion that the corn may be handled only by the pure.³ And in the gruel of oat-meal and ale, which the harvesters sup with spoons as an indispensable part of the harvest supper, have we not the Scotch equivalent of the gruel of barley-meal and water, flavoured with pennyroyal, which the initiates at Eleusis drank as a solemn form of communion with the Barley Goddess Demeter?⁴ May not that mystic sacrament have

Sanctity attributed to the *elyack* sheaf.

The sacrament of barley-meal and water at Eleusis.

¹ W. Gregor, "Quelques coutumes du Nord-est du Comté d'Aberdeen," *Revue des Traditions populaires*, iii. (October, 1888) pp. 484-487 (wrong pagination; should be 532-535). This account, translated into French by M. Loys Brueyre from the author's English and translated by me back from French into English, is fuller than the account given by the same writer in his *Notes on the Folk-lore of the North-east of Scotland* (London, 1881), pp. 181-183. I have translated "*une jument ayant son poulain*" by "a mare in foal," and "*la plus ancienne vache ayant son veau*" by "the oldest cow in calf," because in the author's *Notes on the Folk-lore of the North-east of Scotland* (p. 182) we read that the last sheaf was "carefully preserved till Christmas or New Year morning. On that morning it was given to a mare in foal," etc. Otherwise the French words might

naturally be understood of a mare with its foal and a cow with its calf.

² See above, pp. 115 *sq.*

³ See below, vol. ii. p. 110.

⁴ The drinking of the draught (called the *κυκεών*) as a solemn rite in the Eleusinian mysteries is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* 21, p. 18, ed. Potter) and Arnobius (*Adversus Nationes*, v. 26). The composition of the draught is revealed by the author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (verses 206-211), where he represents Demeter herself partaking of the sacred cup. That the compound was a kind of thick gruel, half-solid, half-liquid, is mentioned by Eustathius (on Homer, *Iliad*, xi. 638, p. 870). Compare Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 155 *sqq.*

originated in a simple harvest supper held by Eleusinian farmers at the end of the reaping?

According to a briefer account of the Aberdeenshire custom, "the last sheaf cut, or 'maiden,' is carried home in merry procession by the harvesters. It is then presented to the mistress of the house, who dresses it up to be preserved till the first mare foals. The maiden is then taken down and presented to the mare as its first food. The neglect of this would have untoward effects upon the foal, and disastrous consequences upon farm operations generally for the season."¹ In Fifeshire the last handful of corn, known as the Maiden, is cut by a young girl and made into the rude figure of a doll, tied with ribbons, by which it is hung on the wall of the farm-kitchen till the next spring.² The custom of cutting the Maiden at harvest was also observed in Inverness-shire and Sutherlandshire.³

The corn-
spirit as a
bride.

A somewhat maturer but still youthful age is assigned to the corn-spirit by the appellations of Bride, Oats-bride, and Wheat-bride, which in Germany are sometimes bestowed both on the last sheaf and on the woman who binds it.⁴ At wheat-harvest near Müglitz, in Moravia, a small portion of the wheat is left standing after all the rest has been reaped. This remnant is then cut, amid the rejoicing of the reapers, by a young girl who wears a wreath of wheaten ears on her head and goes by the name of the Wheat-bride. It is supposed that she will be a real bride that same year.⁵

¹ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth* (London, 1893), pp. 140 sq., from MS. notes of Miss J. Ligertwood.

² *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) p. 51; *The Quarterly Review*, clxxii. (1891) p. 195.

³ As to Inverness-shire my old friend Mr. Hugh E. Cameron, formerly of Glen Moriston, Inverness-shire, wrote to me many years ago: "As a boy, I remember the last bit of corn cut was taken home, and neatly tied up with a ribbon, and then stuck up on the wall above the kitchen fire-place, and there it often remained till the 'maiden' of the following year took its place. There was no ceremony about it, beyond often a struggle as to who would get, or cut, the last sheaf to

select the 'maiden' from" (*The Folk-lore Journal*, vii. 1889, pp. 50 sq.). As to Sutherlandshire my mother was told by a servant, Isabella Ross, that in that county "they hang up the 'maiden' generally over the mantel-piece (chimney-piece) till the next harvest. They have always a kirn, whipped cream, with often a ring in it, and sometimes meal sprinkled over it. The girls must all be dressed in lilac prints, they all dance, and at twelve o'clock they eat potatoes and herrings" (*op. cit.* pp. 53 sq.).

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen* (Berlin, 1868), p. 30.

⁵ W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen im Mahren* (Vienna and Olmütz, 1893), p. 327.

In the upland valley of Alpach, in North Tyrol, the person who brings the last sheaf into the granary is said to have the Wheat-bride or the Rye-bride according to the crop, and is received with great demonstrations of respect and rejoicing. The people of the farm go out to meet him, bells are rung, and refreshments offered to him on a tray.¹ In Austrian Silesia a girl is chosen to be the Wheat-bride, and much honour is paid to her at the harvest-festival.² Near Roslin and Stonchaven, in Scotland, the last handful of corn cut "got the name of 'the bride,' and she was placed over the *bress* or chimney-piece; she had a ribbon tied below her numerous *ears*, and another round her waist."³

Sometimes the idea implied by the name of Bride is worked out more fully by representing the productive powers of vegetation as bride and bridegroom. Thus in the Vorharz an Oats-man and an Oats-woman, swathed in straw, dance at the harvest feast.⁴ In South Saxony an Oats-bridegroom and an Oats-bride figure together at the harvest celebration. The Oats-bridegroom is a man completely wrapt in oats-straw; the Oats-bride is a man dressed in woman's clothes, but not wrapt in straw. They are drawn in a waggon to the ale-house, where the dance takes place. At the beginning of the dance the dancers pluck the bunches of oats one by one from the Oats-bridegroom, while he struggles to keep them, till at last he is completely stript of them and stands bare, exposed to the laughter and jests of the company.⁵ In Austrian Silesia the ceremony of "the Wheat-bride" is celebrated by the young people at the end of the harvest. The woman who bound the last sheaf plays the part of the Wheat-bride, wearing the harvest-crown of wheat ears and flowers on her head. Thus adorned, standing beside her Bridegroom in a waggon and attended by bridesmaids, she is drawn by a pair of oxen, in full imitation of a marriage

The corn-spirit as Bride and Bridegroom.

¹ J. E. Waldfreund, "Volksgeläufige und Abergeläube in Tirol und dem Salzburger Gebirg," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, iii. (1855) p. 340.

² Th. Vernaleken, *Mythen und Bräuche des Volkes in Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1859), p. 310.

³ Mr. R. Matheson, in *The Folklore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 49, 50.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen* (Berlin, 1868), p. 30.

⁵ E. Sommer, *Sagen, Marchen und Gebrauche aus Sachsen und Thüringen* (Halle, 1846), pp. 160 sq.; W. Mannhardt, *l.c.*

procession, to the tavern, where the dancing is kept up till morning. Somewhat later in the season the wedding of the Oats-bride is celebrated with the like rustic pomp. About Neisse, in Silesia, an Oats-king and an Oats-queen, dressed up quaintly as a bridal pair, are seated on a harrow and drawn by oxen into the village.¹

The corn-spirit in the double form of the Old Wife and the Maiden simultaneously at harvest in the Highlands of Scotland.

In these last instances the corn-spirit is personified in double form as male and female. But sometimes the spirit appears in a double female form as both old and young, corresponding exactly to the Greek Demeter and Persephone, if my interpretation of these goddesses is right. We have seen that in Scotland, especially among the Gaelic-speaking population, the last corn cut is sometimes called the Old Wife and sometimes the Maiden. Now there are parts of Scotland in which both an Old Wife (*Cailleach*) and a Maiden are cut at harvest. As the accounts of this custom are not quite clear and consistent, it may be well to give them first in the words of the original authorities. Thus the late Sheriff Alexander Nicolson tells us that there is a Gaelic proverb, "A balk (*léum-iochd*) in autumn is better than a sheaf the more"; and he explains it by saying that a *léum-iochd* or balk "is a strip of a corn-field left fallow. The fear of being left with the last sheaf of the harvest, called the *cailleach*, or *gobhar bhacach*, always led to an exciting competition among the reapers in the last field. The reaper who came on a *léum-iochd* would of course be glad to have so much the less to cut."² In further explanation of the proverb the writer adds:

"The customs as to the *Cailleach* and *Maighdean-bhuana* seem to have varied somewhat. Two reapers were usually set to each rig, and according to one account, the man who was first done got the *Maighdean-bhuana* or 'Reaping-Maiden,' while the man who was last got the *Cailleach* or 'old woman.' The latter term is used in Argyleshire; the term *Gobhar-bhacach*, the lame goat, is used in Skye.

"According to what appears to be the better version, the

¹ W. Mannhardt, *l.c.*; E. Peter, *Volksthümliches aus Österreichisch-Schlesien* (Troppau, 1865-1867), ii. 269.

² Alexander Nicolson, *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases, based on Macintosh's Collection* (Edinburgh and London, 1881), p. 248

competition to avoid the *Cailleach* was not between reapers but between neighbouring crofters, and the man who got his harvest done first sent a handful of corn called the *Cailleach* to his neighbour, who passed it on, till it landed with him who was latest. That man's penalty was to provide for the dearth of the township, *gort a' bhaile*, in the ensuing season.

"The *Maighdean-bhuana*, again, was the last cut handful of oats, on a croft or farm, and was an object of lively competition among the reapers. It was tastefully tied up with ribbons, generally dressed like a doll, and then hung up on a nail till spring. On the first day of ploughing it was solemnly taken down, and given as a *Sainnseal* (or handsel) to the horses for luck. It was meant as a symbol that the harvest had been secured, and to ward off the fairies, representatives of the ethereal and unsubstantial, till the time came to provide for a new crop."¹ Again, the Rev. Mr. Campbell of Kilchrenan, on Loch Awe, furnished Dr. R. C. Maclagan with the following account of the Highland customs at harvest. The recollections of Mrs. MacCorquodale, then resident at Kilchrenan, refer to the customs practised about the middle of the nineteenth century in the wild and gloomy valley of Glencoe, infamous in history for the treacherous massacre perpetrated there by the Government troops in 1692. "Mrs. MacCorquodale says that the rivalry was for the Maiden, and for the privilege she gave of sending the *Cailleach* to the next neighbour. The Maiden was represented by the last stalks reaped; the *Cailleach* by a handful taken at random from the field, perhaps the last rig of the reaper last to finish. The *Cailleach* was not dressed but carried after binding to the neighbour's field. The Maiden was cut in the following manner. All the reapers gathered round her and kept a short distance from her. They then threw their hooks [sickles] at her. The person successful in cutting her down in this manner was the man whose possession she became. Mrs. MacCorquodale understood that the man of a township who got the *Cailleach* finally was supposed to be doomed to poverty for his want of energy. (Gaelic: *treubhantas*—valour.)

¹ A. Nicolson, *op. cit.* pp. 415 sq.

“A sample of the toast to the Cailleach at the harvest entertainment was as follows: ‘The Cailleach is with . . . and is now with (me) since I was the last. I drink to her health. Since she assisted me in harvest, it is likely that it is with me she will abide during the winter.’ In explaining the above toast Mr. Campbell says that it signifies that the Cailleach is always with agriculturists. ‘She has been with others before and is now with me (the proposer of the toast). Though I did my best to avoid her I welcome her as my assistant, and am prepared to entertain her during the winter.’ Another form of the toast was as follows: ‘To your health, good wife, who for harvest has come to help us, and if I live I’ll try to support you when winter comes.’

“John MacCorquodale, Kilchrenan, says that at Crianlarich in Strath Fillan, they make a Cailleach of sticks and a turnip, old clothes and a pipe. In this case the effigy passed in succession to seven farms, which he mentioned, and finally settled with an innkeeper. The list suggested that the upper farms stood a bad chance, and perhaps that a prosperous innkeeper could more easily bear up against the reproach and loss (?) of supporting the Cailleach.

“Duncan MacIntyre, Kilchrenan, says that in one case where the last field to be reaped was the most fertile land on the farm, the corn first cut in it, which was taken near the edge, was reserved to make a Cailleach, should the owner be so happy as to be able to pass her on to his neighbour. The last blades cut were generally in the middle or best part of the field. These in any event became the Maiden.” Lastly, Dr. Maclagan observes that “having directed the attention of Miss Kerr, Port Charlotte, Islay, to the practice of having two different bunches on the mainland of Argyll, she informs me that in Islay and Kintyre the last handful is the Cailleach, and they have no Maiden. The same is the custom in Bernara and other parts of the Western Isles, while in Mull the last handful is the Maiden, and they have no Cailleach. In North Uist the habit still prevails of putting the Cailleach over-night among the standing corn of lazy crofters.”¹

The general rule to which these various accounts point

¹ R. C. Maclagan, “Corn-maiden in Argyllshire,” *Folk-lore*, vii. (1896) pp. 78 *sq.*

seems to be that, where both a Maiden and an Old Wife (*Cailleach*) are fashioned out of the reaped corn at harvest, the Maiden is always made out of the last stalks left standing, and is kept by the farmer on whose land it was cut ; while the Old Wife is made out of other stalks, sometimes out of the first stalks cut, and is regularly passed on to a laggard farmer who happens to be still reaping after his brisker neighbour has cut all his corn. Thus while each farmer keeps his own Maiden, as the embodiment of the young and fruitful spirit of the corn, he passes on the Old Wife as soon as he can to a neighbour, and so the old lady may make the round of all the farms in the district before she finds a place in which to lay her venerable head. The farmer with whom she finally takes up her abode is of course the one who has been the last of all the countryside to finish reaping his crops, and thus the distinction of entertaining her is rather an invidious one. Similarly we saw that in Pembrokeshire, where the last corn cut is called, not the Maiden, but the Hag, she is passed on hastily to a neighbour who is still at work in his fields and who receives his aged visitor with anything but a transport of joy. If the Old Wife represents the corn-spirit of the past year, as she probably does wherever she is contrasted with and opposed to a Maiden, it is natural enough that her faded charms should have less attractions for the husbandman than the buxom form of her daughter, who may be expected to become in her turn the mother of the golden grain when the revolving year has brought round another autumn. The same desire to get rid of the effete Mother of the Corn by palming her off on other people comes out clearly in some of the customs observed at the close of threshing, particularly in the practice of passing on a hideous straw puppet to a neighbour farmer who is still threshing his corn.¹

In these customs the Old Wife represents the old corn of last year, and the Maiden the new corn of this year.

The harvest customs just described are strikingly analogous to the spring customs which we reviewed in the first part of this work. (1) As in the spring customs the tree-spirit is represented both by a tree and by a person,² so in

Analogy of the harvest customs to the spring customs of Europe.

¹ See above, p. 149, where, however, the corn-spirit is conceived as an Old Man.

² See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 73 sqq.

the harvest customs the corn-spirit is represented both by the last sheaf and by the person who cuts or binds or threshes it. The equivalence of the person to the sheaf is shewn by giving him or her the same name as the sheaf; by wrapping him or her in it; and by the rule observed in some places, that when the sheaf is called the Mother, it must be made up into human shape by the oldest married woman, but that when it is called the Maiden, it must be cut by the youngest girl.¹ Here the age of the personal representative of the corn-spirit corresponds with that of the supposed age of the corn-spirit, just as the human victims offered by the Mexicans to promote the growth of the maize varied with the age of the maize.² For in the Mexican, as in the European, custom the human beings were probably representatives of the corn-spirit rather than victims offered to it. (2) Again, the same fertilising influence which the tree-spirit is supposed to exert over vegetation, cattle, and even women³ is ascribed to the corn-spirit. Thus, its supposed influence on vegetation is shewn by the practice of taking some of the grain of the last sheaf (in which the corn-spirit is regularly supposed to be present), and scattering it among the young corn in spring or mixing it with the seed-corn.⁴ Its influence on animals is shewn by giving the last sheaf to a mare in foal, to a cow in calf, and to horses at the first ploughing.⁵ Lastly, its influence on women is indicated by the custom of delivering the Mother-sheaf, made into the likeness of a pregnant woman, to the farmer's wife;⁶ by the belief that the woman who binds the last sheaf will have a child next year;⁷ perhaps, too, by the idea that the person who gets it will soon be married.⁸

The spring and harvest customs of Europe are parts of a primitive heathen ritual.

Plainly, therefore, these spring and harvest customs are based on the same ancient modes of thought, and form parts of the same primitive heathendom, which was doubtless practised by our forefathers long before the dawn of history.

¹ Above, pp. 134, 137, 138 *sq.*, 142, 145, 147, 148, 149.

² See below, pp. 237 *sq.*

³ *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 47 *sqq.*

⁴ Above, pp. 134, 135.

⁵ Above, pp. 141, 155, 156, 158, 160 *sq.*, 162, 165.

⁶ See above, p. 135.

⁷ Above, p. 145. Compare A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (Leipsic, 1859), ii. p. 185, § 516.

⁸ Above, pp. 136, 139, 155, 157 *sq.*, 162; compare p. 160.

Amongst the marks of a primitive ritual we may note the following :—

1. No special class of persons is set apart for the performance of the rites ; in other words, there are no priests. The rites may be performed by any one, as occasion demands.

Marks of a primitive ritual.

2. No special places are set apart for the performance of the rites ; in other words, there are no temples. The rites may be performed anywhere, as occasion demands.

3. Spirits, not gods, are recognised. (a) As distinguished from gods, spirits are restricted in their operations to definite departments of nature. Their names are general, not proper. Their attributes are generic, rather than individual ; in other words, there is an indefinite number of spirits of each class, and the individuals of a class are all much alike ; they have no definitely marked individuality ; no accepted traditions are current as to their origin, life, adventures, and character. (b) On the other hand gods, as distinguished from spirits, are not restricted to definite departments of nature. It is true that there is generally some one department over which they preside as their special province ; but they are not rigorously confined to it ; they can exert their power for good or evil in many other spheres of nature and life. Again, they bear individual or proper names, such as Demeter, Persephone, Dionysus ; and their individual characters and histories are fixed by current myths and the representations of art.

4. The rites are magical rather than propitiatory. In other words, the desired objects are attained, not by propitiating the favour of divine beings through sacrifice, prayer, and praise, but by ceremonies which, as I have already explained,¹ are believed to influence the course of nature directly through a physical sympathy or resemblance between the rite and the effect which it is the intention of the rite to produce.

Judged by these tests, the spring and harvest customs of our European peasantry deserve to rank as primitive. For no special class of persons and no special places are set exclusively apart for their performance ; they may be performed by any one, master or man, mistress or maid, boy or

Reasons for regarding the spring and harvest customs of modern

¹ *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 220 sqq.

Europe as
a primitive
ritual.

girl ; they are practised, not in temples or churches, but in the woods and meadows, beside brooks, in barns, on harvest fields and cottage floors. The supernatural beings whose existence is taken for granted in them are spirits rather than deities : their functions are limited to certain well-defined departments of nature : their names are general, like the Barley-mother, the Old Woman, the Maiden, not proper names like Demeter, Persephone, Dionysus. Their generic attributes are known, but their individual histories and characters are not the subject of myths. For they exist in classes rather than as individuals, and the members of each class are indistinguishable. For example, every farm has its Corn-mother, or its Old Woman, or its Maiden ; but every Corn-mother is much like every other Corn-mother, and so with the Old Women and Maidens. Lastly, in these harvest, as in the spring customs, the ritual is magical rather than propitiatory. This is shewn by throwing the Corn-mother into the river in order to secure rain and dew for the crops ;¹ by making the Old Woman heavy in order to get a heavy crop next year ;² by strewing grain from the last sheaf amongst the young crops in spring ;³ and by giving the last sheaf to the cattle to make them thrive.⁴

¹ Above, p. 146. The common custom of wetting the last sheaf and its bearer is no doubt also a rain-charm ; indeed the intention to procure rain or make the corn grow is sometimes avowed. See above, pp.

134, 137, 143, 144, 145 ; *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 195-197.

² Above, pp. 135 *sq.*, 138, 139, 152.

³ Above, p. 134.

⁴ Above, pp. 134, 155, 158, 161.

CHAPTER VI

THE CORN-MOTHER IN MANY LANDS

§ 1. *The Corn-mother in America*

EUROPEAN peoples, ancient and modern, have not been singular in personifying the corn as a mother goddess. The same simple idea has suggested itself to other agricultural races in distant parts of the world, and has been applied by them to other indigenous cereals than barley and wheat. If Europe has its Wheat-mother and its Barley-mother, America has its Maize-mother and the East Indies their Rice-mother. These personifications I will now illustrate, beginning with the American personification of the maize.

The Corn-mother in many lands.

We have seen that among European peoples it is a common custom to keep the plaited corn-stalks of the last sheaf, or the puppet which is formed out of them, in the farm-house from harvest to harvest.¹ The intention no doubt is, or rather originally was, by preserving the representative of the corn-spirit to maintain the spirit itself in life and activity throughout the year, in order that the corn may grow and the crops be good. This interpretation of the custom is at all events rendered highly probable by a similar custom observed by the ancient Peruvians, and thus described by the old Spanish historian Acosta:—"They take a certain portion of the most fruitful of the maize that grows in their farms, the which they put in a certain granary which they do call *Pirua*, with certain ceremonies, watching three nights; they put this maize in the richest garments they have, and being thus wrapped and dressed, they worship this *Pirua*, and hold

The Maize-mother among the Peruvian Indians.

¹ Above, pp. 136, 138, 140, 143, W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158; pp. 7, 26.

it in great veneration, saying it is the mother of the maize of their inheritances, and that by this means the maize augments and is preserved. In this month [the sixth month, answering to May] they make a particular sacrifice, and the witches demand of this *Pirua* if it hath strength sufficient to continue until the next year; and if it answers no, then they carry this maize to the farm to burn, whence they brought it, according to every man's power; then they make another *Pirua*, with the same ceremonies, saying that they renew it, to the end the seed of maize may not perish, and if it answers that it hath force sufficient to last longer, they leave it until the next year. This foolish vanity continueth to this day, and it is very common amongst the Indians to have these *Piruas*.”¹

In this description of the custom there seems to be some error. Probably it was the dressed-up bunch of maize, not the granary (*Pirua*), which was worshipped by the Peruvians and regarded as the Mother of the Maize. This is confirmed by what we know of the Peruvian custom from another source. The Peruvians, we are told, believed all useful plants to be animated by a divine being who causes their growth. According to the particular plant, these divine beings were called the Maize-mother (*Zaramama*), the Quinoa-mother (*Quinoa-mama*), the Coca-mother (*Coca-mama*), and the Potato-mother (*Axo-mama*). Figures of these divine mothers were made respectively of ears of maize and leaves of the quinoa and coca plants; they were dressed in women's clothes and worshipped. Thus the Maize-mother was represented by a puppet made of stalks of maize dressed in full female attire; and the Indians believed that “as mother, it had the power of producing and giving birth to much maize.”² Probably, therefore, Acosta mis-

The Maize-mother, the Quinoa-mother, the Coca-mother, and the Potato-mother among the Peruvian Indians.

¹ J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v. ch. 28, vol. ii. p. 374 (Hakluyt Society, London, 1880). In quoting the passage I have modernised the spelling. The original Spanish text of Acosta's work was reprinted in a convenient form at Madrid in 1894. See vol. ii. p. 117 of that edition.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische*

Forschungen, pp. 342 sq. Mannhardt's authority is a Spanish tract (*Carta pastoral de exortacion e instruccion contra las idolatrias de los Indios del arzobispado de Lima*) by Pedro de Villagomez, Archbishop of Lima, published at Lima in 1649, and communicated to Mannhardt by J. J. v. Tschudi. The *Carta Pastoral* itself seems to be partly based on an earlier

understood his informant, and the Mother of the Maize which he describes was not the granary (*Pirua*), but the bunch of maize dressed in rich vestments. The Peruvian Mother of the Maize, like the harvest-Maiden at Balquhiddy, was kept for a year in order that by her means the corn might grow and multiply. But lest her strength might not suffice to last

work, the *Extirpacion de la Idolatria del Piru. Dirigido al Rey N.S. en Su real consejo de Indias, por el Padre Pablo Joseph de Arriaga de la Compañia de Jesus* (Lima, 1621). A copy of this work is possessed by the British Museum, where I consulted it. The writer explains (p. 16) that the Maize-mothers (*Zaramamas*) are of three sorts, namely (1) those which are made of maize stalks, dressed up like women, (2) those which are carved of stone in the likeness of cobs of maize, and (3) those which consist simply of fruitful stalks of maize or of two maize-cobs naturally joined together. These last, the writer tells us, were the principal *Zaramamas*, and were revered by the natives as Mothers of the Maize. Similarly, when two potatoes were found growing together the Indians called them Potato-mothers (*Axomamas*) and kept them in order to get a good crop of potatoes. As Arriaga's work is rare, it may be well to give his account of the Maize-mothers, Coca-mothers, and Potato-mothers in his own words. He says (p. 16): "*Zaramamas, son de tres maneras, y son las que se quantan entre las cosas halladas en los pueblos. La primera es una como muñeca hecha de cañas de maiz, vestida como muger con su anaco, y licilla, y sus topos de plata, y entienden, que como madre tiene virtud de engendrar, y parir mucho maiz. Este modo tienen tambien Cocamamas para aumento de la coca. Otras son de piedra labradas como choclos, o mazorcas de maiz, con sus granos relevados, y de estas suelen tener muchas en lugar de Conopas [household gods]. Otras son algunas cañas fertiles de maiz, que con la fertilidad de la tierra dieron muchas mazorcas, y grandes, o quando salen dos mazorcas juntas, y estas son las principales, Zaramamas, y assi las reverencian*

*como a madres del maiz, a estas llaman tambien Huantaysara, o Ayrihuayzara. A este tercer genero no le dan la adoracion que a Huaca, ni Conopa, sino que le tienen supersticiosamente como una cosa sagrada, y colgando estas cañas con muchos choclos de unos ramos de sauce bailen con ellas el bayle, que llaman Ayrihua, y acabado el bayle, las queman, y sacrifican a Libiac para que les de buena cosecha. Con la misma supersticion guardan las mazorcas del maiz, que salen muy pintadas, que llaman Micsazara, o Mantayzara, o Caullazara, y otros que llaman Piruazara, que son otras mazorcas en que van subiendo los granos no derechos sino haciendo caracol. Estas Micsazara, o Piruazara, ponen supersticiosamente en los montones de maiz, y en las Piruas (que son donde guardan el maiz) para que se las guarde, y el dia de las exhibiciones se junta tanto de estas mazorcas, que tienen bien que comer las mulas. La misma supersticion tienen con las que llaman Axomamas, que son quando salen algunas papas juntas, y las guardan para tener buena cosecha de papas." The exhibiciones here referred to are the occasions when the Indians brought forth their idols and other relics of superstition and delivered them to the ecclesiastical visitors. At Tarija in Bolivia, down to the present time, a cross is set up at harvest in the maize-fields, and on it all maize-spadices growing as twins are hung. They are called Pachamamas (Earth-mothers) and are thought to bring good harvests. See Baron E. Nordenskiöld, "Travels on the Boundaries of Bolivia and Argentina," *The Geographical Journal*, xxi. (1903) pp. 517, 518. Compare E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America* (Oxford, 1892), i. 414 sq.*

till the next harvest, she was asked in the course of the year how she felt, and if she answered that she felt weak, she was burned and a fresh Mother of the Maize made, "to the end the seed of maize may not perish." Here, it may be observed, we have a strong confirmation of the explanation already given of the custom of killing the god, both periodically and occasionally. The Mother of the Maize was allowed, as a rule, to live through a year, that being the period during which her strength might reasonably be supposed to last unimpaired; but on any symptom of her strength failing she was put to death, and a fresh and vigorous Mother of the Maize took her place, lest the maize which depended on her for its existence should languish and decay.

Customs of
the ancient
Mexicans
at the
maize-
harvest.

Hardly less clearly does the same train of thought come out in the harvest customs formerly observed by the Zapotecs of Mexico. At harvest the priests, attended by the nobles and people, went in procession to the maize fields, where they picked out the largest and finest sheaf. This they took with great ceremony to the town or village, and placed it in the temple upon an altar adorned with wild flowers. After sacrificing to the harvest god, the priests carefully wrapped up the sheaf in fine linen and kept it till seed-time. Then the priests and nobles met again at the temple, one of them bringing the skin of a wild beast, elaborately ornamented, in which the linen cloth containing the sheaf was enveloped. The sheaf was then carried once more in procession to the field from which it had been taken. Here a small cavity or subterranean chamber had been prepared, in which the precious sheaf was deposited, wrapt in its various envelopes. After sacrifice had been offered to the gods of the fields for an abundant crop the chamber was closed and covered over with earth. Immediately thereafter the sowing began. Finally, when the time of harvest drew near, the buried sheaf was solemnly disinterred by the priests, who distributed the grain to all who asked for it. The packets of grain so distributed were carefully preserved as talismans till the harvest.¹ In these ceremonies, which continued to be annually cele-

¹ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859), iii. 40 *sqq.* Compare *id.*, iii. 505 *sq.*; E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 419 *sq.*

brated long after the Spanish conquest, the intention of keeping the finest sheaf buried in the maize field from seed-time to harvest was undoubtedly to quicken the growth of the maize.

A fuller and to some extent different account of the ancient Mexican worship of the maize has been given us by the Franciscan monk Bernardino de Sahagun, who arrived in Mexico in 1529, only eight years after its conquest by the Spaniards, and devoted the remaining sixty-one years of his long life to labouring among the Indians for their moral and spiritual good. Uniting the curiosity of a scientific enquirer to the zeal of a missionary, and adorning both qualities with the humanity and benevolence of a good man, he obtained from the oldest and most learned of the Indians accounts of their ancient customs and beliefs, and embodied them in a work which, for combined interest of matter and fulness of detail, has perhaps never been equalled in the records of aboriginal peoples brought into contact with European civilisation. This great document, after lying neglected in the dust of Spanish archives for centuries, was discovered and published almost simultaneously in Mexico and England in the first half of the nineteenth century. It exists in the double form of an Aztec text and a Spanish translation, both due to Sahagun himself. Only the Spanish version has hitherto been published in full, but the original Aztec text, to judge by the few extracts of it which have been edited and translated, appears to furnish much more ample details on many points, and in the interest of learning it is greatly to be desired that a complete edition and translation of it should be given to the world.

Sahagun's account of the ancient Mexican religion.

Fortunately, among the sections of this great work which have been edited and translated from the Aztec original into German by Professor Eduard Seler of Berlin is a long one describing the religious festivals of the ancient Mexican calendar.¹ From it we learn some valuable particulars as to

Sahagun's description of the Mexican Maize-goddess and her festival.

¹ E. Seler, "Alt mexikanische Studien, ii.," *Veröffentlichungen aus dem königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde*, vi. (Berlin, 1899) 2/4 Hft., pp. 67 sqq. Another chapter of Sahagun's work, describing the costumes

of the Mexican gods, has been edited and translated into German by Professor E. Seler in the same series of publications ("Alt mexikanische Studien," *Veröffentlichungen aus dem königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde*,

the worship of the Maize-goddess and the ceremonies observed by the Mexicans for the purpose of ensuring a good crop of maize. The festival was the fourth of the Aztec year, and went by the name of the Great Vigil. It fell on a date which corresponds to the seventh of April. The name of the Maize-goddess was Chicome couatl, and the Mexicans conceived and represented her in the form of a woman, red in face and arms and legs, wearing a paper crown dyed vermilion, and clad in garments of the hue of ripe cherries. No doubt the red colour of the goddess and her garments referred to the deep orange hue of the ripe maize; it was like the yellow hair of the Greek corn-goddess Demeter. She was supposed to make all kinds of maize, beans, and vegetables to grow. On the day of the festival the Mexicans sent out to the maize-fields and fetched from every field a plant of maize, which they brought to their houses and greeted as their maize-gods, setting them up in their dwellings, clothing them in garments, and placing food before them. And after sunset they carried the maize-plants to the temple of the Maize-goddess, where they snatched them from one another and fought and struck each other with them. Further, at this festival they brought to the temple of the Maize-goddess the maize-cobs which were to be used in the sowing. The cobs were carried by three maidens in bundles of seven wrapt in red paper. One of the girls was small with short hair, another was older with long hair hanging down, and the third was full-grown with her hair wound round her head. Red feathers were gummed to the arms and legs of the three maidens and their faces were painted, probably to resemble the red Maize-goddess, whom they may be supposed to have personated at various stages of the growth of the corn. The maize-cobs which they brought to the temple of the Maize-goddess were called by the name of the Maize-god Cinteotl, and they were afterwards deposited in the granary

i. 4 (Berlin, 1890) pp. 117 *sqq.*. Sahagun's work as a whole is known to me only in the excellent French translation of Messrs. D. Jourdanet and R. Simeon (*Histoire Générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne par le*

R. P. Fray Bernardino de Sahagun, Paris, 1880). As to the life and character of Sahagun see M. R. Simeon's introduction to the translation, pp. vii. *sqq.*

and kept there as "the heart of the granary" till the sowing time came round, when they were used as seed.¹

The eastern Indians of North America, who subsisted to a large extent by the cultivation of maize, generally conceived the spirit of the maize as a woman, and supposed that the plant itself had sprung originally from the blood drops or the dead body of the Corn Woman. In the sacred formulas of the Cherokee the corn is sometimes invoked as "the Old Woman," and one of their myths relates how a hunter saw a fair woman issue from a single green stalk of corn.² The Iroquois believe the Spirit of the Corn, the Spirit of Beans, and the Spirit of Squashes to be three sisters clad in the leaves of their respective plants, very fond of each other, and delighting to dwell together. This divine trinity is known by the name of *De-o-ha'-ko*, which means "Our Life" or "Our Supporters." The three persons of the trinity have no individual names, and are never mentioned separately except by means of description. The Indians have a legend that of old the corn was easily cultivated, yielded abundantly, and had a grain exceedingly rich in oil, till the Evil One, envious of this good gift of the Great Spirit to man, went forth into the fields and blighted them. And still, when the wind rustles in the corn, the pious Indian fancies he hears the Spirit of the Corn bemoaning her blighted fruitfulness.³ The Huichol Indians of Mexico imagine maize to be a little girl, who may sometimes be heard weeping in the fields; so afraid is she of the wild beasts that eat the corn.⁴

The Corn-mother among the North American Indians.

¹ B. de Sahagun, Aztec text of book ii., translated by Professor E. Seler, "Alt mexikanische Studien, ii." *Von Hentlichun. n aus dem koniglichen Museum fur Volkerkunde*, vi. 2/4 Heft (Berlin, 1899), pp. 188-194. The account of the ceremonies given in the Spanish version of Sahagun's work is a good deal more summary. See B. de Sahagun, *Histoire Générale des choses de la Nouvelle Espagne* (Paris, 1880), pp. 94-96.

² J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report*

of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I. (Washington, 1900) pp. 423, 432. See further *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 296 sq.

³ L. H. Morgan, *League of the Iroquois* (Rochester, 1851), pp. 161 sq., 199. According to the Iroquois the corn plant sprang from the bosom of the mother of the Great Spirit after her burial (L. H. Morgan, *op. cit.* p. 199 note 1).

⁴ C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), ii. 280.

§ 2. *The Mother-cotton in the Punjaub*

The
Mother-
cotton in
the
Punjaub.

In the Punjaub, to the east of the Jumna, when the cotton boles begin to burst, it is usual to select the largest plant in the field, sprinkle it with butter-milk and rice-water, and then bind to it pieces of cotton taken from the other plants of the field. This selected plant is called Sirdar or *Bhogaldal*, that is "mother-cotton," from *bhogla*, a name sometimes given to a large cotton-pod, and *dal* (for *daiya*), "a mother," and after it has been saluted, prayers are offered that the other plants may resemble it in the richness of their produce.¹

§ 3. *The Barley Bride among the Berbers*

The Barley
Bride
among the
Berbers.

The conception of the corn-spirit as a bride seems to come out clearly in a ceremony still practised by the Berbers near Tangier, in Morocco. When the women assemble in the fields to weed the green barley or reap the crops, they take with them a straw figure dressed like a woman, and set it up among the corn. Suddenly a group of horsemen from a neighbouring village gallops up and carries off the straw puppet amid the screams and cries of the women. However, the ravished effigy is rescued by another band of mounted men, and after a struggle it remains, more or less dishevelled, in the hands of the women. That this pretended abduction is a mimic marriage appears from a Berber custom in accordance with which, at a real wedding, the bridegroom carries off his seemingly unwilling bride on horseback, while she screams and pretends to summon her friends to her rescue. No fixed date is appointed for the simulated abduction of the straw woman from the barley-field, the time depends upon the state of the crops, but the day and hour are made public before the event. Each village used to practise this mimic contest for possession of the straw woman, who probably represents the Barley Bride, but nowadays the custom is growing obsolete.²

¹ H. M. Elliot, *Supplemental Glossary of Terms used in the North-Western Provinces*, edited by J. Beames (London, 1869), i. 254.

² W. B. Harris, "The Berbers of Morocco," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvii. (1898) p. 68.

An earlier account of what seems to be the same practice runs as follows: "There is a curious custom which seems to be a relic of their pagan masters, who made this and the adjoining regions of North Africa the main granary of their Latin empire. When the young corn has sprung up, which it does about the middle of February, the women of the villages make up the figure of a female, the size of a very large doll, which they dress in the gaudiest fashion they can contrive, covering it with ornaments to which all in the village contribute something; and they give it a tall, peaked head-dress. This image they carry in procession round their fields, screaming and singing a peculiar ditty. The doll is borne by the foremost woman, who must yield it to any one who is quick enough to take the lead of her, which is the cause of much racing and squabbling. The men also have a similar custom, which they perform on horseback. They call the image Mata. These ceremonies are said by the people to bring good luck. Their efficacy ought to be great, for you frequently see crowds of men engaged in their performances running and galloping recklessly over the young crops of wheat and barley. Such customs are directly opposed to the faith of Islam, and I never met with a Moor who could in any way enlighten me as to their origin. The Berber tribes, the most ancient race now remaining in these regions, to which they give the name, are the only ones which retain this antique usage, and it is viewed by the Arabs and dwellers in the town as a remnant of idolatry."¹ We may conjecture that this gaudily dressed effigy of a female, which the Berber women carry about their fields when the corn is sprouting, represents the Corn-mother, and that the procession is designed to promote the growth of the crops by imparting to them the quickening influence of the goddess. We can therefore understand why there should be a competition among the women for the possession of the effigy; each woman probably hopes to secure for herself and her crops a larger measure of fertility by appropriating the image of the Corn-mother. The competition on horseback among the men is no doubt to be

Another account of the Barley Bride among the Berbers.

Competitions for the possession of the image that represents the Corn-mother.

¹ Sir John Drummond Hay, *Western Animals* (1844), p. 9, quoted in *Folklore*, vii. (1896) pp. 306 sq.

explained similarly ; they, too, race with each other in their eagerness to possess themselves of an effigy, perhaps of a male power of the corn, by whose help they expect to procure a heavy crop. Such contests for possession of the corn-spirit embodied in the corn-stalks are common, as we have seen, among the reapers on the harvest fields of Europe. Perhaps they help to explain some of the contests in the Eleusinian games, among which horse-races as well as foot-races were included.¹

§ 4. *The Rice-mother in the East Indies*

Comparison of the European ritual of the corn with the Indonesian ritual of the rice.

If the reader still feels any doubts as to the meaning of the harvest customs which have been practised within living memory by European peasants, these doubts may perhaps be dispelled by comparing the customs observed at the rice-harvest by the Malays and Dyaks of the East Indies. For these Eastern peoples have not, like our peasantry, advanced beyond the intellectual stage at which the customs originated ; their theory and their practice are still in unison ; for them the quaint rites which in Europe have long dwindled into mere fossils, the pastime of clowns and the puzzle of the learned, are still living realities of which they can render an intelligible and truthful account. Hence a study of their beliefs and usages concerning the rice may throw some light on the true meaning of the ritual of the corn in ancient Greece and modern Europe.

The Indonesian ritual of the rice is based on the belief that the rice is animated by a soul.

Now the whole of the ritual which the Malays and Dyaks observe in connexion with the rice is founded on the simple conception of the rice as animated by a soul like that which these people attribute to mankind. They explain the phenomena of reproduction, growth, decay and death in the rice on the same principles on which they explain the corresponding phenomena in human beings. They imagine that in the fibres of the plant, as in the body of a man, there is a certain vital element, which is so far independent of the plant that it may for a time be completely separated from it without fatal effects, though if its absence be prolonged beyond certain limits the plant will wither and

¹ See above, pp. 70 *seqq.*

die. This vital yet separable element is what, for the want of a better word, we must call the soul of a plant, just as a similar vital and separable element is commonly supposed to constitute the soul of man; and on this theory or myth of the plant-soul is built the whole worship of the cereals, just as on the theory or myth of the human soul is built the whole worship of the dead,—a towering superstructure reared on a slender and precarious foundation.

The strict parallelism between the Indonesian ideas about the soul of man and the soul of rice is well brought out by Mr. R. J. Wilkinson in the following passage: "The spirit of life,—which, according to the ancient Indonesian belief, existed in all things, even in what we should now consider inanimate objects—is known as the *sēmangat*. It was not a 'soul' in the modern English sense, since it was not the exclusive possession of mankind, its separation from the body did not necessarily mean death, and its nature may possibly not have been considered immortal. At the present day, if a Malay feels faint, he will describe his condition by saying that his 'spirit of life' is weak or is 'flying' from his body; he sometimes appeals to it to return: 'Hither, hither, bird of my soul.' Or again, if a Malay lover wishes to influence the mind of a girl, he may seek to obtain control of her *sēmangat*, for he believes that this spirit of active and vigorous life must quit the body when the body sleeps and so be liable to capture by the use of magic arts. It is, however, in the ceremonies connected with the so-called 'spirit of the rice-crops' that the peculiar characteristics of the *sēmangat* come out most clearly. The Malay considers it essential that the spirit of life should not depart from the rice intended for next year's sowing as otherwise the dead seed would fail to produce any crop whatever. He, therefore, approaches the standing rice-crops at harvest-time in a deprecatory manner; he addresses them in endearing terms; he offers propitiatory sacrifices; he fears that he may scare away the timorous 'bird of life' by the sight of a weapon or the least sign of violence. He must reap the seed-rice, but he does it with a knife of peculiar shape, such that the cruel blade is hidden away beneath the reaper's fingers and does not alarm the 'soul of the rice.' When once the seed-rice

Parallelism
between
the human
soul and
the rice-
soul.

has been harvested, more expeditious reaping-tools may be employed, since it is clearly unnecessary to retain the spirit of life in grain that is only intended for the cooking-pot. Similar rites attend all the processes of rice-cultivation—the sowing and the planting-out as well as the harvest,—for at each of these stages there is a risk that the vitality of the crop may be ruined if the bird of life is scared away. In the language used by the high-priests of these very ancient ceremonies we constantly find references to Sri (the Hindu Goddess of the Crops), to the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and to Adam who, according to Moslem tradition, was the first planter of cereals;—many of these references only represent the attempts of the conservative Malays to make their old religions harmonize with later beliefs. Beneath successive layers of religious veneer, we see the animism of the old Indonesians, the theory of a bird-spirit of life, and the characteristic view that the best protection against evil lies in gentleness and courtesy to all animate and inanimate things.”¹

The soul-stuff of rice.

“It is a familiar fact,” says another eminent authority on the East Indies, “that the Indonesian imagines rice to be animated, to be provided with ‘soul-stuff.’ Since rice is everywhere cultivated in the Indian Archipelago, and with some exceptions is the staple food, we need not wonder that the Indonesian conceives the rice to be not merely animated in the ordinary sense but to be possessed of a soul-stuff which in strength and dignity ranks with that of man. Thus the Bataks apply the same word *tondi* to the soul-stuff of rice and the soul-stuff of human beings. Whereas the Dyaks of Poelopetak give the name of *gana* to the soul-stuff of things, animals, and plants, they give the name of *hambaruan* to the soul-stuff of rice as well as of

¹ R. J. Wilkinson (of the Civil Service of the Federated Malay States), *Malay Beliefs* (London and Leyden, 1906), pp. 49-51. On the conception of the soul as a bird, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 33 sqq. The Toradjas of Central Celebes think that the soul of the rice is embodied in a pretty little blue bird, which builds its nest in the rice-field when the ears are

forming and vanishes after harvest. Hence no one may drive away, much less kill, these birds; to do so would not only injure the crop, the sacrilegious wretch himself would suffer from sickness, which might end in blindness. See A. C. Kruyt, “De Rijstmoeder in den Indischen Archipel,” p. 374 (see the full reference in the next note).

man. So also the inhabitants of Halmahera call the soul-stuff of things and plants *giki* and *duhutu*, but in men and food they recognise a *gurumi*. Of the Javanese, Malays, Macassars, Buginese, and the inhabitants of the island of Buru we know that they ascribe a *sumat*,¹ *sumangat*, or *sēmangat* to rice as well as to men. So it is with the Toradjas of Central Celebes; while they manifestly conceive all things and plants as animated, they attribute a *tanoana* or soul-stuff only to men, animals, and rice. It need hardly be said that this custom originates in the very high value that is set on rice."¹

Believing the rice to be animated by a soul like that of a man, the Indonesians naturally treat it with the deference and the consideration which they shew to their fellows. Thus they behave towards the rice in bloom as they behave towards a pregnant woman; they abstain from firing guns or making loud noises in the field, lest they should so frighten the soul of the rice that it would miscarry and bear no grain; and for the same reason they will not talk of corpses or demons in the rice-fields. Moreover, they feed the blooming rice with foods of various kinds which are believed to be wholesome for women with child; but when the rice-ears are just beginning to form, they are looked upon as infants, and women go through the fields feeding them with rice-pap as if they were human babes.² In such natural and obvious comparisons of the breeding plant to a breeding woman, and of the young grain to a young child, is to be sought the origin of the kindred Greek

Rice treated by the Indonesians as if it were a woman.

¹ A. C. Kruyt, "De Rijstmoeder in den Indischen Archipel," *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks, v. part 4 (Amsterdam, 1903), pp. 361 sq. This essay (pp. 361-411) contains a valuable collection of facts relating to what the writer calls the Rice-mother in the East Indies. But it is to be observed that while all the Indonesian peoples seem to treat a certain portion of the rice at harvest with superstitious respect and ceremony, only a part of them actually call it "the Rice-mother." Mr. Kruyt prefers to speak of "soul-

stuff" rather than of "a soul," because, according to him, in living beings the animating principle is conceived, not as a tiny being confined to a single part of the body, but as a sort of fluid or ether diffused through every part of the body. See his work, *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel* (The Hague, 1906), pp. 1 sqq. In the latter work (pp. 145-150) the writer gives a more summary account of the Indonesian theory of the rice-soul.

² See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 28 sq.; A. C. Kruyt, "De Rijstmoeder," *op. cit.* pp. 363 sq., 370 sqq.

conception of the Corn-mother and the Corn-daughter, Demeter and Persephone, and we need not go further afield to search for it in a primitive division of labour between the sexes.¹ But if the timorous feminine soul of the rice can be frightened into a miscarriage even by loud noises, it is easy to imagine what her feelings must be at harvest, when people are under the sad necessity of cutting down the rice with the knife. At so critical a season every precaution must be used to render the necessary surgical operation of reaping as inconspicuous and as painless as possible. For that reason, as we have seen,² the reaping of the seed-rice is done with knives of a peculiar pattern, such that the blades are hidden in the reapers' hands and do not frighten the rice-spirit till the very last moment, when her head is swept off almost before she is aware; and from a like delicate motive the reapers at work in the fields employ a special form of speech, which the rice-spirit cannot be expected to understand, so that she has no warning or inkling of what is going forward till the heads of rice are safely deposited in the basket.³

The
Kayans
of Borneo,
their treat-
ment of
the soul of
the rice.

Among the Indonesian peoples who thus personify the rice we may take the Kayans or Bahaus of Central Borneo as typical. As we have already seen, they are essentially an agricultural people devoted to the cultivation of rice, which furnishes their staple food; their religion is deeply coloured by this main occupation of their lives, and it presents many analogies to the Eleusinian worship of the corn-goddesses Demeter and Persephone.⁴ And just as the Greeks regarded corn as a gift of the goddess Demeter, so the Kayans believe that rice, maize, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and all the other products of the earth which they cultivate, were originally created for their benefit by the spirits.⁵

Instru-
ments used
by the
Kayans for
the pur-
pose of

In order to secure and detain the volatile soul of the rice the Kayans resort to a number of devices. Among the instruments employed for this purpose are a miniature ladder, a spatula, and a basket containing hooks, thorns, and

¹ See above, pp. 113 *sqq.*

² See above, p. 181.

³ See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 411 *sq.*; A. C. Kruyt, "De

Rijstmoeder," *op. cit.* p. 372.

⁴ See above, pp. 92 *sqq.*

⁵ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 157 *sq.*

cords. With the spatula the priestess strokes the soul of the rice down the little ladder into the basket, where it is naturally held fast by the hooks, the thorn, and the cord; and having thus captured and imprisoned the soul she conveys it into the rice-granary. Sometimes a bamboo box and a net are used for the same purpose. And in order to ensure a good harvest for the following year it is necessary not only to detain the soul of all the grains of rice which are safely stored in the granary, but also to attract and recover the soul of all the rice that has been lost through falling to the earth or being eaten by deer, apes, and pigs. For this purpose instruments of various sorts have been invented by the priests. One, for example, is a bamboo vessel provided with four hooks made from the wood of a fruit-tree, by means of which the absent rice-soul may be hooked and drawn back into the vessel, which is then hung up in the house. Sometimes two hands carved out of the wood of a fruit-tree are used for the same purpose. And every time that a Kayan housewife fetches rice from the granary for the use of her household, she must propitiate the souls of the rice in the granary, lest they should be angry at being robbed of their substance. To keep them in good humour a bundle of shavings of a fruit-tree and a little basket are always hung in the granary. An egg and a small vessel containing the juice of sugar-cane are attached as offerings to the bundle of shavings, and the basket contains a sacred mat, which is used at fetching the rice. When the housewife comes to fetch rice from the granary, she pours juice of the sugar-cane on the egg, takes the sacred mat from the basket, spreads it on the ground, lays a stalk of rice on it, and explains to the souls of the rice the object of her coming. Then she kneels before the mat, mutters some prayers or spells, eats a single grain from the rice-stalk, and having restored the various objects to their proper place, departs from the granary with the requisite amount of rice, satisfied that she has discharged her religious duty to the spirits of the rice. At harvest the spirits of the rice are propitiated with offerings of food and water, which are carried by children to the rice-fields. At evening the first rice-stalks which have been cut are solemnly

catching
and detain-
ing the
soul of
the rice.

Cere-
monies
performed
by Kayan
housewives
at fetching
rice from
the barn.

brought home in a consecrated basket to the beating of a gong, and all cats and dogs are driven from the house before the basket with its precious contents is brought in.¹

Mas-
querade
performed
by the
Kayans
before
sowing for
the purpose
of attract-
ing the
soul of
the rice.

Among the Kayans of the Mahakam river in Central Borneo the sowing of the rice is immediately preceded by a performance of masked men, which is intended to attract the soul or rather souls of the rice and so to make sure that the harvest will be a good one. The performers represent spirits; for, believing that spirits are mightier than men, the Kayans imagine that they can acquire and exert super-human power by imitating the form and actions of spirits.² To support their assumed character they wear grotesque masks with goggle eyes, great teeth, huge ears, and beards of white goat's hair, while their bodies are so thickly wrapt up in shredded banana-leaves that to the spectator they present the appearance of unwieldy masses of green foliage. The leader of the band carries a long wooden hook or rather crook, the shaft of which is partly whittled into loose fluttering shavings. These disguises they don at a little distance from the village, then dropping down the river in boats they land and march in procession to an open space among the houses, where the people, dressed out in all their finery, are waiting to witness the performance. Here the maskers range themselves in a circle and dance for some time under the burning rays of the midday sun, waving their arms, shaking and turning their heads, and executing a variety of steps to the sound of a gong, which is beaten according to a rigidly prescribed rhythm. After the dance they form a line, one behind the other, to fetch the vagrant soul of the rice from far countries. At the head of the procession marches the leader holding high his crook and behind him follow all the other masked men in their leafy costume, each holding his fellow by the hand. As he strides along, the leader makes a motion with his crook as if he were hooking something and drawing it to himself, and the gesture is imitated by all his followers. What

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 118-121. Compare *id.*, *In Centraal Borneo* (Leyden, 1900), i. 154 *sqq.*

the masked dances and pantomimes of many savage tribes. If that is so, it shews how deeply the principle of imitative magic has influenced savage religion.

² A similar belief probably explains

he is thus catching are the souls of the rice, which sometimes wander far away, and by drawing them home to the village he is believed to ensure that the seed of the rice which is about to be sown will produce a plentiful harvest. As the spirits are thought not to possess the power of speech, the actors who personate them may not utter a word, else they would run the risk of falling down dead. The great field of the chief is sown by representatives of all the families, both free and slaves, on the day after the masquerade. On the same day the free families sacrifice on their fields and begin their sowing on one or other of the following days. Every family sets up in its field a sacrificial stage or altar, with which the sowers must remain in connexion during the time of sowing. Therefore no stranger may pass between them and the stage; indeed the Kayans are not allowed to have anything to do with strangers in the fields; above all they may not speak with them. If such a thing should accidentally happen, the sowing must cease for that day. At the sowing festival, but at no other time, Kayan men of the Mahakam river, like their brethren of the Mendalam river, amuse themselves with spinning tops. For nine days before the masquerade takes place the people are bound to observe certain taboos: no stranger may enter the village: no villager may pass the night out of his own house: they may not hunt, nor pluck fruits, nor fish with the casting-net or the drag-net.¹ In this tribe the proper day for sowing is officially determined by a priest from an observation of the sun setting behind the hills in a line with two stones which the priest has set up, one behind the other. However, the official day often does not coincide with the actual day of sowing.²

The masquerade thus performed by the Kayans of the Mahakam river before sowing the rice is an instructive example of a religious or rather magical drama acted for the express purpose of ensuring a good crop. As such it may be compared to the drama of Demeter and Persephone,

Comparison of the Kayan masquerade with the Eleusinian drama.

¹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 322-330. Compare *id.*, *In Centraal Borneo*, i. 185 sq. As to the masquerades performed and the taboos

observed at the sowing season by the Kayans of the Mendalam river, see above, pp. 94 sqq.

² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 317.

the Corn-mother and the Corn-maiden, which was annually played at the Eleusinian mysteries shortly before the autumnal sowing of the corn. If my interpretation of these mysteries is correct, the intention of the Greek and of the Kayan drama was one and the same.

Securing
the soul of
the rice
among the
Dyaks of
Northern
Borneo.

At harvest the Dyaks of Northern Borneo have a special feast, the object of which is "to secure the soul of the rice, which if not so detained, the produce of their farms would speedily rot and decay. At sowing time, a little of the principle of life of the rice, which at every harvest is secured by their priests, is planted with their other seeds, and is thus propagated and communicated." The mode of securing the soul of the rice varies in different tribes. In the Quop district the ceremony is performed by the chief priest alone, first in the long broad verandah of the common house and afterwards in each separate family apartment. As a preparation for the ceremony a bamboo altar, decorated with green boughs and red and white streamers, is erected in the verandah, and presents a very gay appearance. Here the people, old and young, assemble, the priestesses dressed in gorgeous array and the elder men wearing bright-coloured jackets and trousers of purple, yellow, or scarlet hue, while the young men and lads beat gongs and drums. When the priest, with a bundle of charms in either hand, is observed to be gazing earnestly in the air at something invisible to common eyes, the band strikes up with redoubled energy, and the elderly men in the gay breeches begin to shriek and revolve round the altar in the dance. Suddenly the priest starts up and makes a rush at the invisible object; men run to him with white cloths, and as he shakes his charms over the cloths a few grains of rice fall into them. These grains are the soul of the rice; they are carefully folded up in the cloths and laid at the foot of the altar. The same performance is afterwards repeated in every family apartment. In some tribes the soul of the rice is secured at midnight. Outside the village a lofty altar is erected in an open space surrounded by the stately forms of the tropical palms. Huge bonfires cast a ruddy glow over the scene and light up the dusky but picturesque forms of the Dyaks as they move in slow and solemn dance round the altar, some

bearing lighted tapers in their hands, others brass salvers with offerings of rice, others covered baskets, of which the contents are hidden from all but the initiated. The corner-posts of the altar are lofty bamboos, whose leafy tops are yet green and rustle in the wind; and from one of them a long narrow streamer of white cloth hangs down. Suddenly elders and priests rush at this streamer, seize the end of it, and amid the crashing music of drums and gongs and the yells of the spectators begin dancing and swaying themselves backwards and forwards, and to and fro. A priest or elder mounts the altar amid the shouts of the bystanders and shakes the tall bamboos violently; and in the midst of all this excitement and hubbub small stones, bunches of hair, and grains of rice fall at the feet of the dancers, and are carefully picked up by watchful attendants. These grains are the soul of the rice. The ceremony ends with several of the oldest priestesses falling, or pretending to fall, senseless to the ground, where, till they come to themselves, their heads are supported and their faces fanned by their younger colleagues. At the end of the harvest, when the year's crop has been garnered, another feast is held. A pig and fowls are killed, and for four days gongs are beaten and dancing kept up. For eight days the village is tabooed and no stranger may enter it. At this festival the ceremony of catching the soul of the rice is repeated to prevent the crop from rotting; and the soul so obtained is mixed with the seed-rice of the next year.¹

The same need of securing the soul of the rice, if the crop is to thrive, is keenly felt by the Karens of Burma. When a rice-field does not flourish, they suppose that the soul (*kelah*) of the rice is in some way detained from the rice. If the soul cannot be called back, the crop will fail. The following formula is used in recalling the *kelah* (soul) of the rice: "O come, rice-*kelah*, come! Come to the field. Come to the rice. With seed of each gender, come. Come from the river Kho, come from the river Kaw; from the place where they meet, come. Come from the West, come from

Recalling
the soul of
the rice
among the
Karens of
Burma.

¹ Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*² (London, 1863), i. 187, 192 *sqq.*; W. Chalmers,

quoted in H. Ling Roth's *Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (London, 1896), i. 412-414.

the East. From the throat of the bird, from the maw of the ape, from the throat of the elephant. Come from the sources of rivers and their mouths. Come from the country of the Shan and Burman. From the distant kingdoms come. From all granaries come. O rice-*kelah*, come to the rice."¹

Securing
the soul of
the rice
in various
parts of
Burma.

Among the Taungthu of Upper Burma it is customary, when all the rice-fields have been reaped, to make a trail of unhusked rice (paddy) and husks all the way from the fields to the farm-house in order to guide the spirit or butterfly, as they call it, of the rice home to the granary. Care is taken that there should be no break in the trail, and the butterfly of the rice is invited with loud cries to come to the house. Were the spirit of the rice not secured in this manner, next year's harvest would be bad.² Similarly among the Cherokee Indians of North America "care was always taken to keep a clean trail from the field to the house, so that the corn might be encouraged to stay at home and not go wandering elsewhere," and "seven ears from the last year's crop were always put carefully aside, in order to *attract the corn*, until the new crop was ripened."³ In Hsa Mông Hkam, a native state of Upper Burma, when two men work rice-fields in partnership, they take particular care as to the division of the grain between them. Each partner has a basket made, of which both top and bottom are carefully closed with wood to prevent the butterfly spirit of the rice from escaping; for if it were to flutter away, the next year's crop would be but poor.⁴ Among the Talaings of Lower Burma "the last sheaf is larger than the rest; it is brought home separately, usually if not invariably on the morning after the remainder of the harvest has been carted to the threshing-floor. The cultivators drive out in their bullock-cart, taking with them a woman's comb, a looking-glass, and a woman's skirt. The sheaf is dressed in the skirt, and apparently the form is gone through of presenting

¹ Rev. E. B. Cross, "On the Karens," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, iv. (1854) p. 309.

² (Sir) J. G. Scott and J. P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and of the Shan States* (Rangoon, 1900-1901), Part i. vol. i. p. 559.

³ J. Mooney, "Myths of the

Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) p. 423. Compare *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 296 sq.

⁴ (Sir) J. G. Scott and J. P. Hardiman, *op. cit.* Part ii. vol. i. p. 172.

it with the glass and comb. It is then brought home in triumph, the people decking the cart with their silk kerchiefs, and cheering and singing the whole way. On their arrival home they celebrate the occasion with a feast. Strictly speaking the sheaf should be kept apart from the rest of the harvest; owing, however, to the high price of paddy it often finds its way to the threshing-floor. Even when this is not the case it is rarely tended so carefully as it is said to have been in former days, and if not threshed with the remaining crop is apt to be eaten by the cattle. So far as I could ascertain it had never been the custom to keep it throughout the year; but on the first ploughing of the ensuing season there was some ceremony in connection with it. The name of the sheaf was *Bonmagyi*; at first I was inclined to fancy that this was a contraction of *thelinbon magyi*, 'the old woman of the threshing-floor.' There are, however, various reasons for discarding this derivation, and I am unable to suggest any other."¹ In this custom the personification of the last sheaf of rice as a woman comes out clearly in the practice of dressing it up in female attire.

The Corn-mother of our European peasants has her match in the Rice-mother of the Minangkabauers of Sumatra. The Minangkabauers definitely attribute a soul to rice, and will sometimes assert that rice pounded in the usual way tastes better than rice ground in a mill, because in the mill the body of the rice was so bruised and battered that the soul has fled from it. Like the Javanese they think that the rice is under the special guardianship of a female spirit called Saning Sari, who is conceived as so closely knit up with the plant that the rice often goes by her name, as with the Romans the corn might be called Ceres. In particular Saning Sari is represented by certain stalks or grains called *indoea padi*, that is, literally, "Mother of Rice," a name that is often given to the guardian spirit herself. This so-called Mother of Rice is the occasion of a number of ceremonies observed at the planting and harvesting of the rice as well as during its preservation in the barn.

The Rice-mother among the Minangkabauers of Sumatra.

¹ From a letter written to me by Mr. J. S. Furnivall and dated Pegu Club, Rangoon, 6/6 (*sic*). Mr.

Furnivall adds that in Upper Burma the custom of the *Bonmagyi* sheaf is unknown.

The Rice-mother among the Minangkabauers of Sumatra.

When the seed of the rice is about to be sown in the nursery or bedding-out ground, where under the wet system of cultivation it is regularly allowed to sprout before being transplanted to the fields, the best grains are picked out to form the Rice-mother. These are then sown in the middle of the bed, and the common seed is planted round about them. The state of the Rice-mother is supposed to exert the greatest influence on the growth of the rice; if she droops or pines away, the harvest will be bad in consequence. The woman who sows the Rice-mother in the nursery lets her hair hang loose and afterwards bathes, as a means of ensuring an abundant harvest. When the time comes to transplant the rice from the nursery to the field, the Rice-mother receives a special place either in the middle or in a corner of the field, and a prayer or charm is uttered as follows: "Saning Sari, may a measure of rice come from a stalk of rice and a basketful from a root; may you be frightened neither by lightning nor by passers-by! Sunshine make you glad; with the storm may you be at peace; and may rain serve to wash your face!" While the rice is growing, the particular plant which was thus treated as the Rice-mother is lost sight of; but before harvest another Rice-mother is found. When the crop is ripe for cutting, the oldest woman of the family or a sorcerer goes out to look for her. The first stalks seen to bend under a passing breeze are the Rice-mother, and they are tied together but not cut until the first-fruits of the field have been carried home to serve as a festal meal for the family and their friends, nay even for the domestic animals; since it is Saning Sari's pleasure that the beasts also should partake of her good gifts. After the meal has been eaten, the Rice-mother is fetched home by persons in gay attire, who carry her very carefully under an umbrella in a neatly worked bag to the barn, where a place in the middle is assigned to her. Every one believes that she takes care of the rice in the barn and even multiplies it not uncommonly.¹

¹ J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië*, xxxix. (1890) pp.

63-65. In the charm recited at sowing the Rice-mother in the bed, I have translated the Dutch word *stoel* as "root," but I am not sure of its precise meaning in this connexion. It is

When the Tomori of Central Celebes are about to plant the rice, they bury in the field some betel as an offering to the spirits who cause the rice to grow. Over the spot where the offering is buried a small floor of wood is laid, and the family sits on it and consumes betel together as a sort of silent prayer or charm to ensure the growth of the crop. The rice that is planted round this spot is the last to be reaped at harvest. At the commencement of the reaping the stalks of this patch of rice are tied together into a sheaf, which is called "the Mother of the Rice" (*ineno pae*), and offerings in the shape of rice, fowl's liver, eggs, and other things are laid down before it. When all the rest of the rice in the field has been reaped, "the Mother of the Rice" is cut down and carried with due honour to the rice-barn, where it is laid on the floor, and all the other sheaves are piled upon it. The Tomori, we are told, regard the Mother of the Rice as a special offering made to the rice-spirit Omonga, who dwells in the moon. If that spirit is not treated with proper respect, for example if the people who fetch rice from the barn are not decently clad, he is angry and punishes the offenders by eating up twice as much rice in the barn as they have taken out of it; some people have heard him smacking his lips in the barn, as he devoured the rice. On the other hand the Toradjas of Central Celebes, who also practise the custom of the Rice-mother at harvest, regard her as the actual mother of the whole harvest, and therefore keep her carefully, lest in her absence the garnered store of rice should all melt away and disappear.¹ Among the Tomori, as among other Indonesian peoples, reapers at work in the field make use of special words which differ from the terms in ordinary use; the reason for adopting this peculiar form of speech at reaping appears to be, as I have already pointed out, a fear of alarming the timid soul of the rice by revealing the fate in store for it.² To the same

The Rice-mother among the Tomori of Celebes.

Special words used at reaping among the Tomori.

doubtless identical with the English agricultural term "to stool," which is said of a number of stalks sprouting from a single seed, as I learn from my friend Professor W. Somerville of Oxford.

¹ A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnographische aanteekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlv. (1900) pp. 227, 230 *sq.*

² See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 411 *sq.*

Riddles
and stories
in con-
nexion with
the rice.

motive is perhaps to be ascribed the practice observed by the Tomori of asking each other riddles at harvest.¹ Similarly among the Alfoors or Toradjas of Poso, in Central Celebes, while the people are watching the crops in the fields they amuse themselves with asking each other riddles and telling stories, and when any one guesses a riddle aright, the whole company cries out, "Let our rice come up, let fat ears come up both in the lowlands and on the heights." But all the time between harvest and the laying out of new fields the asking of riddles and the telling of stories is strictly forbidden.² Thus among these people it seems that the asking of riddles is for some reason regarded as a charm which may make or mar the crops.

The Rice-
mother
among the
Toradjas
of Celebes.

Among some of the Toradjas of Celebes the ceremony of cutting and bringing home the Mother of the Rice is observed as follows. When the crop is ripe in the fields, the Mother of the Rice (*anrong pãre*) must be fetched before the rest of the harvest is reaped. The ceremony is performed on a lucky day by a woman, who knows the rites. For three days previously she observes certain precautions to prevent the soul (*soemangãna ãse*) of the rice from escaping out of the field, as it might be apt to do, if it got wind that the reapers with their cruel knives were so soon to crop the ripe ears. With this view she ties up a handful of standing stalks of the rice into a bunch in each corner of the field, while she recites an invocation to the spirits of the rice, bidding them gather in the field from the four quarters of the heaven. As a further precaution she stops the sluices, lest with the outrush of the water from the rice-field the sly soul of the rice should make good its escape. And she ties knots in the leaves of the rice-plants, all to hinder the soul of the rice from running away. This she does in the afternoon of three successive days. On the morning of the fourth day she comes again to the field, sits down in a corner of it, and kisses the rice three times, again inviting the souls of the rice to come thither and assuring them of her affection and care. Then

¹ A. C. Kruijt, *op. cit.* p. 228.

elijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer,"
Mededeelingen van wege het Nederland-

² A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander
aangaande het geestelijk en maatschap-

sche Zendinggenootschap, xxxix. (1895)
pp. 142 *sg.*

she cuts the bunch of rice-stalks which she had tied together on one of the previous days. The stalks in the bunch must be nine in number, and their leaves must be cut with them, not thrown away. As she cuts, she may not look about her, nor cry out, nor speak to any one, nor be spoken to; but she says to the rice, "The prophet reaps you. I take you, but you diminish not; I hold you in my hand and you increase. You are the links of my soul, the support of my body, my blessing, my salvation. There is no God but God." Then she passes to another corner of the field to cut the bunch of standing rice in it with the same ceremony; but before coming to it she stops half way to pluck another bunch of five stalks in like manner. Thus from the four sides of the field she collects in all fifty-six stalks of rice, which together make up the Mother of the Rice (*ânrong pâre*). Then in a corner of the field she makes a little stage and lays the Mother of the Rice on it, with the ears turned towards the standing rice and the cut stalks towards the dyke which encloses the field. After that she binds the fifty-six stalks of the Rice-mother into a sheaf with the bark of a particular kind of tree. As she does so, she says, "The prophet binds you into a sheaf; the angel increases you; the *awâlli* cares for you. We loved and cared for each other." Then, after anointing the sheaf and fumigating it with incense, she lays it on the little stage. On this stage she had previously placed several kinds of rice, betel, one or more eggs, sweetmeats, and young coconuts, all as offerings to the Mother of the Rice, who, if she did not receive these attentions, would be offended and visit people with sickness or even vanish away altogether. Sometimes on large farms a fowl is killed and its blood deposited in the half of a coco-nut on the stage. The standing rice round about the stage is the last of the whole field to be reaped. When it has been cut, it is bound up with the Mother of the Rice into a single sheaf and carried home. Any body may carry the sheaf, but in doing so he or she must take care not to let it fall, or the Rice-mother would be angry and might disappear.¹

¹ G. Maan, "Eenige mededeelingen omtrent de zeden en gewoonten der Toerateya ten opzichte van den rijstbouw," *Tijdschrift voor Indische*

The rice personified as a young woman among the Bataks of Sumatra.

Among the Battas or Bataks of Sumatra the rice appears to be personified as a young unmarried woman rather than as a mother. On the first day of reaping the crop only a few ears of rice are plucked and made up into a little sheaf. After that the reaping may begin, and while it is going forward offerings of rice and betel are presented in the middle of the field to the spirit of the rice, who is personified under the name of Miss Dajang. The offering is accompanied by a common meal shared by the reapers. When all the rice has been reaped, threshed and garnered, the little sheaf which was first cut is brought in and laid on the top of the heap in the granary, together with an egg or a stone, which is supposed to watch over the rice.¹ Though we are not told, we may assume that the personified spirit of the rice is supposed to be present in the first sheaf cut and in that form to keep guard over the rice in the granary. Another writer, who has independently described the customs of the Karo-Bataks at the rice-harvest, tells us that the largest sheaf, which is usually the one first made up, is regarded as the seat of the rice-soul and is treated exactly like a person; at the trampling of the paddy to separate the grain from the husks the sheaf in question is specially entrusted to a girl who has a lucky name, and whose parents are both alive.²

Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde, xlvii. (1903) pp. 330-337. The writer dates his article from Tanneteya (in Celebes?), but otherwise gives no indication of the geographical position of the people he describes. A similar omission is common with Dutch writers on the geography and ethnology of the East Indies, who too often appear to assume that the uncouth names of these barbarous tribes and obscure hamlets are as familiar to European readers as Amsterdam or the Hague. The Toerateyas whose customs Mr. Maan describes in this article are the inland inhabitants of Celebes. Their name Toerateyas or Toradjas signifies simply "inlanders" and is applied to them by their neighbours who live nearer the sea; it is not a name used by the people themselves. The Toradjas include many tribes and the particular tribe whose

usages in regard to the Rice-mother are described in the text is probably not one of those whose customs and beliefs have been described by Mr. A. C. Kruijt in many valuable papers. See above, p. 183 note¹, and *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 109 note¹.

¹ M. Joustra, "Het leven, de zeden en gewoonten der Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlvii. (1902) pp. 425 sq.

² J. H. Neumann, "Iets over den landbouw bij de Karo-Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlvii. (1902) pp. 380 sq. As to the employment in ritual of young people whose parents are both alive, see *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 413 sqq.

In Mandeling, a district of Sumatra, contrary to what seems to be the usual practice, the spirit of the rice is personified as a male instead of as a female and is called the Rajah or King of the Rice. He is supposed to be immanent in certain rice-plants, which are recognised by their peculiar formation, such as a concealment of the ears in the sheath, an unusual arrangement of the leaves, or a stunted growth. When one or more such plants have been discovered in the field, they are sprinkled with lime-juice, and the spirits are invoked by name and informed that they are expected at home and that all is ready for their reception. Then the King of the Rice is plucked with the hand and seven neighbouring rice-stalks cut with a knife. He and his seven companions are then carefully brought home; the bearer may not speak a word, and the children in the house may make no noise till the King of the Rice has been safely lodged in the granary and tethered, for greater security, with a grass rope to one of the posts. As soon as that is done, the doors are shut to prevent the spirits of the rice from escaping. The person who fetches the King of the Rice from the field should prepare himself for the important duty by eating a hearty meal, for it would be an omen of a bad harvest if he presented himself before the King of the Rice with an empty stomach. For the same reason the sower of rice should sow the seed on a full stomach, in order that the ears which spring from the seed may be full also.¹

The King
of the
Rice in
Mandeling.

Again, just as in Scotland the old and the young spirit of the corn are represented as an Old Wife (*Cailleach*) and a Maiden respectively, so in the Malay Peninsula we find both the Rice-mother and her child represented by different sheaves or bundles of ears on the harvest-field. The following directions for obtaining both are translated from a native Malay work on the cultivation of rice: "When the rice is

The Rice-
mother and
the Rice-
child at
harvest in
the Malay
Peninsula.

¹ A. L. van Hasselt, "Nota, betreffende de rijstcultuur in de Residentie Tapanoeli," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxvi. (1893) pp. 526-529; Th. A. L. Heyting, "Beschrijving der Onderafdeeling Groot-mandeling en Batangnata," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch*

Aardrijkskundig Genootschap, Tweede Serie, xiv. (1897) pp. 290 sq. As to the rule of sowing seed on a full stomach, which is a simple case of homoeopathic or imitative magic, see further *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 136.

The Rice-mother and the Rice-child at harvest in the Malay Peninsula.

ripe all over, one must first take the 'soul' out of all the plots of one's field. You choose the spot where the rice is best and where it is 'female' (that is to say, where the bunch of stalks is big) and where there are seven joints in the stalk. You begin with a bunch of this kind and clip seven stems to be the 'soul of the rice'; and then you clip yet another handful to be the 'mother-seed' for the following year. The 'soul' is wrapped in a white cloth tied with a cord of *tërapi* bark, and made into the shape of a little child in swaddling clothes, and put into the small basket. The 'mother-seed' is put into another basket, and both are fumigated with benzoin, and then the two baskets are piled the one on the other and taken home, and put into the *kěpuk* (the receptacle in which rice is stored)."¹ The ceremony of cutting and bringing home the Soul of the Rice was witnessed by Mr. W. W. Skeat at Chodoi in Selangor on the twenty-eighth of January 1897. The particular bunch or sheaf which was to serve as the Mother of the Rice-soul had previously been sought and identified by means of the markings or shape of the ears. From this sheaf an aged sorceress, with much solemnity, cut a little bundle of seven ears, anointed them with oil, tied them round with parti-coloured thread, fumigated them with incense, and having wrapt them in a white cloth deposited them in a little oval-shaped basket. These seven ears were the infant Soul of the Rice and the little basket was its cradle. It was carried home to the farmer's house by another woman, who held up an umbrella to screen the tender infant from the hot rays of the sun. Arrived at the house the Rice-child was welcomed by the women of the family, and laid, cradle and all, on a new sleeping-mat with pillows at the head. After that the farmer's wife was instructed to observe certain rules of taboo for three days, the rules being in many respects identical with those which have to be observed for three days after the birth of a real child. For example, perfect quiet must be observed, as in a house where a baby has just been born; a light was placed near the head of the Rice-child's bed and might not go out at night, while the fire on the hearth had to be kept

¹ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), pp. 225 sq.

up both day and night till the three days were over; hair might not be cut; and money, rice, salt, oil, and so forth were forbidden to go out of the house, though of course these valuable articles were quite free to come in. Something of the same tender care which is thus bestowed on the newly-born Rice-child is naturally extended also to its parent, the sheaf from whose body it was taken. This sheaf, which remains standing in the field after the Rice-soul has been carried home and put to bed, is treated as a newly-made mother; that is to say, young shoots of trees are pounded together and scattered broadcast every evening for three successive days, and when the three days are up you take the pulp of a coco-nut and what are called "goat-flowers," mix them up, eat them with a little sugar, and spit some of the mixture out among the rice. So after a real birth the young shoots of the jack-fruit, the rose-apple, certain kinds of banana, and the thin pulp of young coco-nuts are mixed with dried fish, salt, acid, prawn-condiment, and the like dainties to form a sort of salad, which is administered to mother and child for three successive days. The last sheaf is reaped by the farmer's wife, who carries it back to the house, where it is threshed and mixed with the Rice-soul. The farmer then takes the Rice-soul and its basket and deposits it, together with the product of the last sheaf, in the big circular rice-bin used by the Malays. Some grains from the Rice-soul are mixed with the seed which is to be sown in the following year.¹ In this Rice-mother and Rice-child of the Malay Peninsula we may see the counterpart and in a sense the prototype of the Demeter and Persephone of ancient Greece.

Once more, the European custom of representing the corn-spirit in the double form of bride and bridegroom² has its parallel in a ceremony observed at the rice-harvest in Java. Before the reapers begin to cut the rice, the priest or sorcerer picks out a number of ears of rice, which are tied together, smeared with ointment, and adorned with flowers. Thus decked out, the ears are called the *padi-pèngantèn*, that is, the Rice-bride and the Rice-bridegroom; their wedding feast is celebrated, and the cutting of the rice begins im-

The Rice-bride and the Rice-bridegroom at harvest in Java.

¹ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, pp. 235-249.

² See above, pp. 163 sq.

mediately afterwards. Later on, when the rice is being got in, a bridal chamber is partitioned off in the barn, and furnished with a new mat, a lamp, and all kinds of toilet articles. Sheaves of rice, to represent the wedding guests, are placed beside the Rice-bride and the Rice-bridegroom. Not till this has been done may the whole harvest be housed in the barn. And for the first forty days after the rice has been housed, no one may enter the barn, for fear of disturbing the newly-wedded pair.¹

Another
account
of the
Javanese
custom.

Another account of the Javanese custom runs as follows. When the rice at harvest is to be brought home, two handfuls of common unhusked rice (paddy) are tied together into a sheaf, and two handfuls of a special kind of rice (*kleefrijst*) are tied up into another sheaf; then the two sheaves are fastened together in a bundle which goes by the name of "the bridal pair" (*pén-gantenan*). The special rice is the bridegroom, the common rice is the bride. At the barn "the bridal pair" is received on a winnowing-fan by a wizard, who removes them from the fan and lays them on the floor with a couch of *kloewih* leaves under them "in order that the rice may increase," and beside them he places a *kěmiri* nut, tamarind pips, and a top and string as playthings with which the young couple may divert themselves. The bride is called Emboq Sri and the bridegroom Sadana, and the wizard addresses them by name, saying: "Emboq Sri and Sadana, I have now brought you home and I have prepared a place for you. May you sleep agreeably in this agreeable place! Emboq Sri and Sadana, you have been received by So-and-So (the owner), let So-

¹ P. J. Veth, *Java* (Haarlem, 1875-1884), i. 524-526. The ceremony has also been described by Miss Augusta de Wit (*Facts and Fancies about Java*, Singapore, 1898, pp. 229-241), who lays stress on the extreme importance of the rice-harvest for the Javanese. The whole island of Java, she tells us, "is one vast rice-field. Rice on the swampy plains, rice on the rising ground, rice on the slopes, rice on the very summits of the hills. From the sod under one's feet to the verge of the horizon, everything has one and the

same colour, the bluish-green of the young, or the gold of the ripened rice. The natives are all, without exception, tillers of the soil, who reckon their lives by seasons of planting and reaping, whose happiness or misery is synonymous with the abundance or the dearth of the precious grain. And the great national feast is the harvest home, with its crowning ceremony of the Wedding of the Rice" (*op. cit.* pp. 229 *sq.*). I have to thank my friend Dr. A. C. Haddon for directing my attention to Miss de Wit's book.

and-So lead a life free from care. May Emboq Sri's luck continue in this very agreeable place!"¹

The same idea of the rice-spirit as a husband and wife meets us also in the harvest customs of Bali and Lombok, two islands which lie immediately to the east of Java. "The inhabitants of Lombok," we are told, "think of the rice-plant as animated by a soul. They regard it as one with a divinity and treat it with the distinction and honour that are shewn to a very important person. But as it is impossible to treat all the rice-stalks in a field ceremoniously, the native, feeling the need of a visible and tangible representative of the rice-deity and taking a part for the whole, picks out some stalks and conceives them as the visible abode of the rice-soul, to which he can pay his homage and from which he hopes to derive advantage. These few stalks, the foremost among their many peers, form what is called the *ninin pantun* by the people of Bali and the *inan paré* by the Sassaks" of Lombok.² The name *inan paré* is sometimes translated Rice-mother, but the more correct translation is said to be "the principal rice." The stalks of which this "principal rice" consists are the first nine shoots which the husbandman himself takes with his own hands from the nursery or bedding-out ground and plants at the upper end of the rice-field beside the inlet of the irrigation water. They are planted with great care in a definite order, one of them in the middle and the other eight in a circle about it. When the whole field has been planted, an offering, which usually consists of rice in many forms, is made to "the principal rice" (*inan paré*). When the rice-stalks begin to swell the rice is said to be pregnant, and the "principal rice" is treated with the delicate attentions which are paid to a woman with child. Thus rice-pap and eggs are laid down beside it, and sour fruits are often presented to it, because pregnant women are believed to long for sour fruit. More-

The rice-spirit as husband and wife in Bali and Lombok.

¹ A. C. Kruijt, "Gebruiken bij den rijstooft in enkele streken op Oost-Java," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, xlvii. (1903) pp. 132-134. Compare *id.*, "De rijst-moeder in den Indischen Archipel," *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van*

Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks, v. part 4 (Amsterdam, 1903), pp. 398 *sqq.*

² J. C. van Eerde, "Gebruiken bij den rijstbouw en rijstooft op Lombok," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xlv. (1902) pp. 563-565 note.

The Rice-spirit as husband and wife in Ball and Lombok.

over the fertilisation of the rice by the irrigation water is compared to the union of the goddess Batari Sri with her husband Ida Batara (Vishnu), who is identified with the flowing water. Some people sprinkle the pregnant rice with water in which cooling drugs have been infused or with water which has stood on a holy grave, in order that the ears may fill out well. When the time of harvest has come, the owner of the field himself makes a beginning by cutting "the principal rice" (*inan paré* or *ninin pantun*) with his own hands and binding it into two sheaves, each composed of one hundred and eight stalks with their leaves attached to them. One of the sheaves represents a man and the other a woman, and they are called "husband and wife" (*istri kakung*). The male sheaf is wound about with thread so that none of the leaves are visible, whereas the female sheaf has its leaves bent over and tied so as to resemble the roll of a woman's hair. Sometimes, for further distinction, a necklace of rice-straw is tied round the female sheaf. The two sheaves are then fastened together and tied to a branch of a tree, which is stuck in the ground at the inlet of the irrigation water. There they remain while all the rest of the rice is being reaped. Sometimes, instead of being tied to a bough, they are laid on a little bamboo altar. The reapers at their work take great care to let no grains of rice fall on the ground, otherwise the Rice-goddess would grieve and weep at being parted from her sisters, who are carried to the barn. If any portion of the field remains unreaped at nightfall, the reapers make loops in the leaves of some of the standing stalks to prevent the evil spirits from proceeding with the harvest during the hours of darkness, or, according to another account, lest the Rice-goddess should go astray. When the rice is brought home from the field, the two sheaves representing the husband and wife are carried by a woman on her head, and are the last of all to be deposited in the barn. There they are laid to rest on a small erection or on a cushion of rice-straw along with three lumps of *nasi*, which are regarded as the attendants or watchers of the bridal pair. The whole arrangement, we are informed, has for its object to induce the rice to increase and multiply in the granary,

so that the owner may get more out of it than he put in. Hence when the people of Bali bring the two sheaves, the husband and wife, into the barn, they say, "Increase ye and multiply without ceasing." When a woman fetches rice from the granary for the use of her household, she has to observe a number of rules, all of which are clearly dictated by respect for the spirit of the rice. She should not enter the barn in the dark or at noon, perhaps because the spirit may then be supposed to be sleeping. She must enter with her right foot first. She must be decently clad with her breasts covered. She must not chew betel, and she would do well to rinse her mouth before repairing to the barn, just as she would do if she waited on a person of distinction or on a divinity. No sick or menstruous woman may enter the barn, and there must be no talking in it, just as there must be no talking when shelled rice is being scooped up. When all the rice in the barn has been used up, the two sheaves representing the husband and wife remain in the empty building till they have gradually disappeared or been devoured by mice. The pinch of hunger sometimes drives individuals to eat up the rice of these two sheaves, but the wretches who do so are viewed with disgust by their fellows and branded as pigs and dogs. Nobody would ever sell these holy sheaves with the rest of their profane brethren.¹

The same notion of the propagation of the rice by a male and female power finds expression amongst the Szis of Upper Burma. When the paddy, that is, the rice with the husks still on it, has been dried and piled in a heap for threshing, all the friends of the household are invited to the threshing-floor, and food and drink are brought out. The heap of paddy is divided and one half spread out for threshing, while the other half is left piled up. On the pile food and spirits are set, and one of the elders, addressing "the father and mother of the paddy-plant," prays for plenteous harvests in future, and begs that the seed may bear many fold. Then the whole party eat, drink, and make merry. This ceremony at the threshing-floor is the

The Father
and
Mother
of the Rice
among the
Szis of
Burma.

¹ J. C. van Eerde, "Gebruiken bij den rijstbouw en rijstooft op Lombok,"

Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde, xlv. (1902) pp. 563-573.

only occasion when these people invoke "the father and mother of the paddy."¹

§ 5. *The Spirit of the Corn embodied in Human Beings*

The spirit of the corn sometimes thought to be embodied in men or women.

Thus the theory which recognises in the European Corn-mother, Corn-maiden, and so forth, the embodiment in vegetable form of the animating spirit of the crops is amply confirmed by the evidence of peoples in other parts of the world, who, because they have lagged behind the European races in mental development, retain for that very reason a keener sense of the original motives for observing those rustic rites which among ourselves have sunk to the level of meaningless survivals. The reader may, however, remember that according to Mannhardt, whose theory I am expounding, the spirit of the corn manifests itself not merely in vegetable but also in human form; the person who cuts the last sheaf or gives the last stroke at threshing passes for a temporary embodiment of the corn-spirit, just as much as the bunch of corn which he reaps or threshes. Now in the parallels which have been hitherto adduced from the customs of peoples outside Europe the spirit of the crops appears only in vegetable form. It remains, therefore, to prove that other races besides our European peasantry have conceived the spirit of the crops as incorporate in or represented by living men and women. Such a proof, I may remind the reader, is germane to the theme of this book; for the more instances we discover of human beings representing in themselves the life or animating spirit of plants, the less difficulty will be felt at classing amongst them the King of the Wood at Nemi.

The Old Woman who Never Dies, the goddess of the crops among the Mandans and Minnetarees.

The Mandans and Minnetarees of North America used to hold a festival in spring which they called the corn-medicine festival of the women. They thought that a certain Old Woman who Never Dies made the crops to grow, and that, living somewhere in the south, she sent the migratory waterfowl in spring as her tokens and representatives. Each sort of bird represented a special kind of crop cultivated by

¹ (Sir) J. G. Scott and J. P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part i. vol. i. (Rangoon, 1900) p. 426.

the Indians: the wild goose stood for the maize, the wild swan for the gourds, and the wild duck for the beans. So when the feathered messengers of the Old Woman began to arrive in spring the Indians celebrated the corn-medicine festival of the women. Scaffolds were set up, on which the people hung dried meat and other things by way of offerings to the Old Woman; and on a certain day the old women of the tribe, as representatives of the Old Woman who Never Dies, assembled at the scaffolds each bearing in her hand an ear of maize fastened to a stick. They first planted these sticks in the ground, then danced round the scaffolds, and finally took up the sticks again in their arms. Meanwhile old men beat drums and shook rattles as a musical accompaniment to the performance of the old women. Further, young women came and put dried flesh into the mouths of the old women, for which they received in return a grain of the consecrated maize to eat. Three or four grains of the holy corn were also placed in the dishes of the young women, to be afterwards carefully mixed with the seed-corn, which they were supposed to fertilise. The dried flesh hung on the scaffold belonged to the old women, because they represented the Old Woman who Never Dies. A similar corn-medicine festival was held in autumn for the purpose of attracting the herds of buffaloes and securing a supply of meat. At that time every woman carried in her arms an uprooted plant of maize. They gave the name of the Old Woman who Never Dies both to the maize and to those birds which they regarded as symbols of the fruits of the earth, and they prayed to them in autumn saying, "Mother, have pity on us! send us not the bitter cold too soon, lest we have not meat enough! let not all the game depart, that we may have something for the winter!" In autumn, when the birds were flying south, the Indians thought that they were going home to the Old Woman and taking to her the offerings that had been hung up on the scaffolds, especially the dried meat, which she ate.¹ Here then we have the spirit or divinity of the corn conceived as an Old Woman and represented in bodily form by old women, who in their

¹ Maximilian, Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-America* (Coblenz, 1839-1841), ii. 182 sq.

capacity of representatives receive some at least of the offerings which are intended for her.

Miami
myth of
the Corn-
spirit in
the form
of a
broken-
down
old man.

The Miamis, another tribe of North American Indians, tell a tale in which the spirit of the corn figures as a broken-down old man. They say that corn, that is, maize, first grew in heaven, and that the Good Spirit commanded it to go down and dwell with men on earth. At first it was reluctant to do so, but the Good Spirit prevailed on it to go by promising that men would treat it well in return for the benefit they derived from it. "So corn came down from heaven to benefit the Indian, and this is the reason why they esteem it, and are bound to take good care of it, and to nurture it, and not raise more than they actually require, for their own consumption." But once a whole town of the Miamis was severely punished for failing in respect for the corn. They had raised a great crop and stored much of it under ground, and much of it they packed for immediate use in bags. But the corn was so plentiful that much of it still remained on the stalks, and the young men grew reckless and played with the shelled cobs, throwing them at each other, and at last they even broke the cobs from the growing stalks and pelted each other with them too. But a judgment soon followed on such wicked conduct. For when the hunters went out to hunt, though the deer seemed to abound, they could kill nothing. So the corn was gone and they could get no meat, and the people were hungry. Well, one of the hunters, roaming by himself in the woods to find something to eat for his aged father, came upon a small lodge in the wilderness where a decrepit old man was lying with his back to the fire. Now the old man was no other than the Spirit of the Corn. He said to the young hunter, "My grandson, the Indians have afflicted me much, and reduced me to the sad state in which you see me. In the side of the lodge you will find a small kettle. Take it and eat, and when you have satisfied your hunger, I will speak to you." But the kettle was full of such fine sweet corn as the hunter had never in his life seen before. When he had eaten his fill, the old man resumed the thread of his discourse, saying, "Your people have wantonly abused and reduced me to the state you now see me in: my back-bone

is broken in many places; it was the foolish young men of your town who did me this evil, for I am Mondamin, or corn, that came down from heaven. In their play they threw corn-cobs and corn-ears at one another, treating me with contempt. I am the corn-spirit whom they have injured. That is why you experience bad luck and famine. I am the cause; you feel my just resentment, therefore your people are punished. Other Indians do not treat me so. They respect me, and so it is well with them. Had you no elders to check the youths at their wanton sport? You are an eye-witness of my sufferings. They are the effect of what you did to my body." With that he groaned and covered himself up. So the young hunter returned and reported what he had seen and heard; and since then the Indians have been very careful not to play with corn in the ear.¹

In some parts of India the harvest-goddess Gauri is represented at once by an unmarried girl and by a bundle of wild balsam plants, which is made up into the figure of a woman and dressed as such with mask, garments, and ornaments. Both the human and the vegetable representative of the goddess are worshipped, and the intention of the whole ceremony appears to be to ensure a good crop of rice.²

The harvest-goddess Gauri represented by a girl and a bundle of plants.

§ 6. *The Double Personification of the Corn as Mother and Daughter*

Compared with the Corn-mother of Germany and the harvest-Maiden of Scotland, the Demeter and Persephone of Greece are late products of religious growth. Yet as members of the Aryan family the Greeks must at one time or another have observed harvest customs like those which are still practised by Celts, Teutons, and Slavs, and which, far beyond the limits of the Aryan world, have been practised by the Indians of Peru, the Dyaks of Borneo, and many other natives of the East Indies—a

Analogy of Demeter and Persephone to the Corn-mother, the Harvest-maiden, and similar figures in the harvest customs of modern European peasantry.

¹ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States*, v. (Philadelphia, 1856) pp. 193-195.

² B. A. Gupte, "Harvest Festivals

in honour of Gauri and Ganesh," *Indian Antiquary*, xxxv. (1906) p. 61. For details see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 77 sq.

The rustic analogues of Demeter and Persephone.

sufficient proof that the ideas on which these customs rest are not confined to any one race, but naturally suggest themselves to all untutored peoples engaged in agriculture. It is probable, therefore, that Demeter and Persephone, those stately and beautiful figures of Greek mythology, grew out of the same simple beliefs and practices which still prevail among our modern peasantry, and that they were represented by rude dolls made out of the yellow sheaves on many a harvest-field long before their breathing images were wrought in bronze and marble by the master hands of Phidias and Praxiteles. A reminiscence of that olden time—a scent, so to say, of the harvest-field—lingered to the last in the title of the Maiden (*Kore*) by which Persephone was commonly known. Thus if the prototype of Demeter is the Corn-mother of Germany, the prototype of Persephone is the harvest-Maiden, which, autumn after autumn, is still made from the last sheaf on the Braes of Balquhiddy. Indeed, if we knew more about the peasant-farmers of ancient Greece, we should probably find that even in classical times they continued annually to fashion their Corn-mothers (Demeters) and Maidens (Persephones) out of the ripe corn on the harvest-fields.¹ But unfortunately the Demeter and Persephone whom we know were the denizens of towns, the majestic inhabitants of lordly temples; it was for such divinities alone that the refined writers of antiquity had eyes; the uncouth rites performed by rustics amongst the corn were beneath their notice. Even if they noticed them, they probably never dreamed of any connexion between the puppet of corn-stalks on the sunny stubble-field and the marble divinity in the shady coolness of the temple. Still the writings even of these town-bred and cultured persons afford us an occasional glimpse of a Demeter as rude as the rudest that a remote German village can shew. Thus the story that Iasion begat a child Plutus ("wealth," "abundance") by Demeter on a thrice-ploughed field,² may

¹ It is possible that the image of Demeter with corn and poppies in her hands, which Theocritus (vii. 155 *sqq.*) describes as standing on a rustic threshing-floor (see above, p. 47), may have been a Corn-mother or a Corn-maiden

of the kind described in the text. The suggestion was made to me by my learned and esteemed friend Dr. W. H. D. Rouse.

² Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 125 *sqq.*; Hesiod, *Theog.* 969 *sqq.*

be compared with the West Prussian custom of the mock birth of a child on the harvest-field.¹ In this Prussian custom the pretended mother represents the Corn-mother (*Żytmiamatka*); the pretended child represents the Corn-baby, and the whole ceremony is a charm to ensure a crop next year.² The custom and the legend alike point to an older practice of performing, among the sprouting crops in spring or the stubble in autumn, one of those real or mimic acts of procreation by which, as we have seen, primitive man often seeks to infuse his own vigorous life into the languid or decaying energies of nature.³ Another glimpse of the savage under the civilised Demeter will be afforded farther on, when we come to deal with another aspect of these agricultural divinities.

The reader may have observed that in modern folk-customs the corn-spirit is generally represented either by a Corn-mother (Old Woman, etc.) or by a Maiden (Harvest-child, etc.), not both by a Corn-mother and by a Maiden. Why then did the Greeks represent the corn both as a mother and a daughter?

In the Breton custom the mother-sheaf—a large figure made out of the last sheaf with a small corn-doll inside of it—clearly represents both the Corn-mother and the Corn-daughter, the latter still unborn.⁴ Again, in the Prussian custom just referred to, the woman who plays the part of Corn-mother represents the ripe grain; the child appears to represent next year's corn, which may be regarded, naturally enough, as the child of this year's corn, since it is from the seed of this year's harvest that next year's crop will spring. Further, we have seen that among the Malays of the Peninsula

Why did the Greeks personify the corn as a mother and a daughter?

Demeter was perhaps the ripe crop and Persephone the seed-corn.

¹ See above, pp. 150 sq.

² It is possible that a ceremony performed in a Cyprian worship of Ariadne may have been of this nature: at a certain annual sacrifice a young man lay down and mimicked a woman in child-bed. See Plutarch, *Theseus*, 20: ἐν δὴ τῇ θυσίᾳ τοῦ Γορπιαίου μηρὸς ἰσταμένον δευτέρᾳ κατακλιόμενον τινα τῶν νεανίσκων φθέγγεσθαι καὶ ποιεῖν ἅπερ ὠδινοῦσαι γυναῖκες. We have already seen grounds for regarding Ariadne as a goddess or spirit of vegetation. See *The Magic Art and the*

Evolution of Kings, ii. 138. Amongst the Minnetarees in North America, the Prince of Neuwied saw a tall strong woman pretend to bring up a stalk of maize out of her stomach; the object of the ceremony was to secure a good crop of maize in the following year. See Maximilian, Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-America* (Coblenz, 1839-1841), ii. 269.

³ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 97 sqq.

⁴ See above, p. 135.

and sometimes among the Highlanders of Scotland the spirit of the grain is represented in double female form, both as old and young, by means of ears taken alike from the ripe crop : in Scotland the old spirit of the corn appears as the Carline or *Cailleach*, the young spirit as the Maiden ; while among the Malays of the Peninsula the two spirits of the rice are definitely related to each other as mother and child.¹ Judged by these analogies Demeter would be the ripe crop of this year ; Persephone would be the seed-corn taken from it and sown in autumn, to reappear in spring.² The descent of Persephone into the lower world would thus be a mythical expression for the sowing of the seed ; her reappearance in spring would signify the sprouting of the young corn. In this way the Persephone of one year becomes the Demeter of the next, and this may very well have been the original form of the myth. But when with the advance of religious thought the corn came to be personified, no longer as a being that went through the whole cycle of birth, growth, reproduction, and death within a year, but as an immortal goddess, consistency required that one of the two personifications, the mother or the daughter, should be sacrificed. However, the double conception of the corn as mother and daughter may have been too old and too deeply rooted in the popular mind to be eradicated by logic, and so room had to be found in the reformed myth both for mother and daughter. This was done by assigning to Persephone the character of the corn sown in autumn and sprouting in spring, while Demeter was left to play the somewhat vague part of the heavy mother of the corn, who laments its annual disappearance underground, and rejoices over its reappearance in spring. Thus instead of a regular succession of divine beings, each living a year and then giving birth to her successor, the reformed myth exhibits the conception of two divine and immortal beings, one of whom annually disappears into and reappears from the ground, while the other has little to do but to weep and rejoice at the appropriate seasons.⁸

¹ See above, pp. 140 *sqq.*, 155 *sqq.*, 164 *sqq.*, 197 *sqq.*

² However, the Sicilians seem on the contrary to have regarded Demeter as the seed-corn and Persephone as the

ripe crop. See above, pp. 57, 58 *sq.*

⁸ According to Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, iv. 8) the Romans imagined a whole series of distinct deities, mostly goddesses, who took charge of the corn

This theory of the double personification of the corn in Greek myth assumes that both personifications (Demeter and Persephone) are original. But if we suppose that the Greek myth started with a single personification, the after-growth of a second personification may perhaps be explained as follows. On looking over the harvest customs which have been passed under review, it may be noticed that they involve two distinct conceptions of the corn-spirit. For whereas in some of the customs the corn-spirit is treated as immanent in the corn, in others it is regarded as external to it. Thus when a particular sheaf is called by the name of the corn-spirit, and is dressed in clothes and handled with reverence,¹ the spirit is clearly regarded as immanent in the corn. But when the spirit is said to make the crops grow by passing through them, or to blight the grain of those against whom she has a grudge,² she is apparently conceived as distinct from, though exercising power over, the corn. Conceived in the latter way the corn-spirit is in a fair way to become a deity of the corn, if she has not become so already. Of these two conceptions, that of the corn-spirit as immanent in the corn is doubtless the older, since the view of nature as animated by indwelling spirits appears to have generally preceded the view of it as controlled by external deities; to put it shortly, animism precedes deism. In the harvest customs of our European peasantry the corn-spirit seems to be conceived now as immanent in the corn and now as external to it. In Greek mythology, on the other hand, Demeter is viewed rather as the deity of the corn than as the spirit immanent in it.³ The process of thought which leads

Or the Greeks may have started with the personification of the corn as a single goddess, and the conception of a second goddess may have been a later development.

at all its various stages from the time when it was committed to the ground to the time when it was lodged in the granary. Such a multiplication of mythical beings to account for the process of growth is probably later rather than early.

¹ In some places it was customary to kneel down before the last sheaf, in others to kiss it. See W. Mannhardt, *Korndämonen*, p. 26; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 339. The custom of kneeling and bowing before the last corn is said to have been observed, at least occasionally, in

England. See *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1888) p. 270; and Herrick's evidence, above, p. 147, note¹. The Malay sorceress who cut the seven ears of rice to form the Rice-child kissed the ears after she had cut them (W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 241).

² Above, pp. 132 sq.

³ Even in one of the oldest documents, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Demeter is represented as the goddess who controls the growth of the corn rather than as the spirit who is immanent in it. See above, pp. 36 sq.

Duplica-
tion of
deities as
a con-
sequence
of the
anthropo-
morphic
tendency.

to the change from the one mode of conception to the other is anthropomorphism, or the gradual investment of the immanent spirits with more and more of the attributes of humanity. As men emerge from savagery the tendency to humanise their divinities gains strength; and the more human these become the wider is the breach which severs them from the natural objects of which they were at first merely the animating spirits or souls. But in the progress upwards from savagery men of the same generation do not march abreast; and though the new anthropomorphic gods may satisfy the religious wants of the more developed intelligences, the backward members of the community will cling by preference to the old animistic notions. Now when the spirit of any natural object such as the corn has been invested with human qualities, detached from the object, and converted into a deity controlling it, the object itself is, by the withdrawal of its spirit, left inanimate; it becomes, so to say, a spiritual vacuum. But the popular fancy, intolerant of such a vacuum, in other words, unable to conceive anything as inanimate, immediately creates a fresh mythical being, with which it peoples the vacant object. Thus the same natural object comes to be represented in mythology by two distinct beings: first by the old spirit now separated from it and raised to the rank of a deity; second, by the new spirit, freshly created by the popular fancy to supply the place vacated by the old spirit on its elevation to a higher sphere. For example, in Japanese religion the solar character of *Ama-terasu*, the great goddess of the Sun, has become obscured, and accordingly the people have personified the sun afresh under the name of *Nichi-rin sama*, "sun-wheeling personage," and *O tentō sama*, "august-heaven-path-personage"; to the lower class of Japanese at the present day, especially to women and children, *O tentō sama* is the actual sun, sexless, mythless, and unencumbered by any formal worship, yet looked up to as a moral being who rewards the good, punishes the wicked, and enforces oaths made in his name.¹ In such cases the problem for mythology is, having got two distinct personifications of the same object, what to do with them? How are their relations to each other

Example
of such
duplication
in Japan,
where there
are two
distinct
deities of
the sun.

¹ W. G. Aston, *Shinto* (London, 1905), p. 127.

to be adjusted, and room found for both in the mythological system? When the old spirit or new deity is conceived as creating or producing the object in question, the problem is easily solved. Since the object is believed to be produced by the old spirit, and animated by the new one, the latter, as the soul of the object, must also owe its existence to the former; thus the old spirit will stand to the new one as producer to produced, that is, in mythology, as parent to child, and if both spirits are conceived as female, their relation will be that of mother and daughter. In this way, starting from a single personification of the corn as female, mythic fancy might in time reach a double personification of it as mother and daughter. It would be very rash to affirm that this was the way in which the myth of Demeter and Persephone actually took shape; but it seems a legitimate conjecture that the reduplication of deities, of which Demeter and Persephone furnish an example, may sometimes have arisen in the way indicated. For example, among the pairs of deities dealt with in a former part of this work, it has been shewn that there are grounds for regarding both Isis and her companion god Osiris as personifications of the corn.¹ On the hypothesis just suggested, Isis would be the old corn-spirit, and Osiris would be the newer one, whose relationship to the old spirit was variously explained as that of brother, husband, and son;² for of course mythology would always be free to account for the coexistence of the two divinities in more ways than one. It must not, however, be forgotten that this proposed explanation of such pairs of deities as Demeter and Persephone or Isis and Osiris is purely conjectural, and is only given for what it is worth.

Perhaps the Greek personification of the corn as a mother and a daughter (Demeter and Persephone) is a case of such a mythical duplication.

¹ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 323 *sqq.*, 330 *sqq.*, 346 *sqq.*

² A. Pauly, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, v. (Stuttgart, 1849) p. 1011.

CHAPTER VII

LITYERSES

§ 1. *Songs of the Corn Reapers*

Death and resurrection a leading incident in the myth of Persephone, as in the myths of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and Dionysus.

IN the preceding pages an attempt has been made to shew that in the Corn-mother and Harvest-maiden of Northern Europe we have the prototypes of Demeter and Persephone. But an essential feature is still wanting to complete the resemblance. A leading incident in the Greek myth is the death and resurrection of Persephone; it is this incident which, coupled with the nature of the goddess as a deity of vegetation, links the myth with the cults of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and Dionysus; and it is in virtue of this incident that the myth finds a place in our discussion of the Dying God. It remains, therefore, to see whether the conception of the annual death and resurrection of a god, which figures so prominently in these great Greek and Oriental worships, has not also its origin or its analogy in the rustic rites observed by reapers and vine-dressers amongst the corn-shocks and the vines.

Popular harvest and vintage customs in ancient Egypt, Syria, and Phrygia.

Our general ignorance of the popular superstitions and customs of the ancients has already been confessed. But the obscurity which thus hangs over the first beginnings of ancient religion is fortunately dissipated to some extent in the present case. The worships of Osiris, Adonis, and Attis had their respective seats, as we have seen, in Egypt, Syria, and Phrygia; and in each of these countries certain harvest and vintage customs are known to have been observed, the resemblance of which to each other and to the national rites struck the ancients themselves, and, compared with the

harvest customs of modern peasants and barbarians, seems to throw some light on the origin of the rites in question.

It has been already mentioned, on the authority of Diodorus, that in ancient Egypt the reapers were wont to lament over the first sheaf cut, invoking Isis as the goddess to whom they owed the discovery of corn.¹ To the plaintive song or cry sung or uttered by Egyptian reapers the Greeks gave the name of Maneros, and explained the name by a story that Maneros, the only son of the first Egyptian king, invented agriculture, and, dying an untimely death, was thus lamented by the people.² It appears, however, that the name Maneros is due to a misunderstanding of the formula *mââ-ne-hra*, "Come to the house," which has been discovered in various Egyptian writings, for example in the dirge of Isis in the Book of the Dead.³ Hence we may suppose that the cry *mââ-ne-hra* was chanted by the reapers over the cut corn as a dirge for the death of the corn-spirit (Isis or Osiris) and a prayer for its return. As the cry was raised over the first ears reaped, it would seem that the corn-spirit was believed by the Egyptians to be present in the first corn cut and to die under the sickle. We have seen that in the Malay Peninsula and Java the first ears of rice are taken to represent either the Soul of the Rice or the Rice-bride and the Rice-bridegroom.⁴ In parts of Russia the first sheaf is treated much in the same way that the last sheaf is treated elsewhere. It is reaped by the mistress herself, taken home and set in the place of honour near the holy pictures; afterwards it is threshed separately, and some of its grain is mixed with the next year's seed-corn.⁵ In Aberdeenshire, while the last corn cut was generally used to make the *cljack* sheaf,⁶ it was sometimes, though rarely, the first corn

Maneros,
a plaintive
song of
Egyptian
reapers.

¹ Diodorus Siculus, i. 14, ἐτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν κατὰ τὸν θερισμὸν τοῦς πρῶτους ἀμηθέντας στάχους θέντας τοῦς ἀνθρώπους κόπτεσθαι πηλοῖον τοῦ δράγματος καὶ τὴν Ἴσιν ἀνακαλεῖσθαι κτλ. For θέντας we should perhaps read σύνθεντας, which is supported by the following δράγματος.

² Herodotus, ii. 79; Julius Pollux, iv. 54; Pausanias, ix. 29. 7; Athenæus, iv. 11, p. 620 A.

³ H. Brugsch, *Die Adonisklage und*

das Linoslied (Berlin, 1852), p. 24. According to another interpretation, however, Maneros is the Egyptian *manurosh*, "Let us be merry." See Lauth, "Über den ägyptischen Maneros," *Sitzungsberichte der königl. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1869, ii. 163-194.

⁴ Above, pp. 197 sqq.

⁵ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People* (London, 1872), pp. 249 sq.

⁶ See above, pp. 158 sq.

cut that was dressed up as a woman and carried home with ceremony.¹

Linus or Ailinus, a plaintive song sung at the vintage in Phoenicia.

In Phoenicia and Western Asia a plaintive song, like that chanted by the Egyptian corn-reapers, was sung at the vintage and probably (to judge by analogy) also at harvest. This Phoenician song was called by the Greeks Linus or Ailinus and explained, like Maneros, as a lament for the death of a youth named Linus.² According to one story Linus was brought up by a shepherd, but torn to pieces by his dogs.³ But, like Maneros, the name Linus or Ailinus appears to have originated in a verbal misunderstanding, and to be nothing more than the cry *ai lanu*, that is "Woe to us," which the Phoenicians probably uttered in mourning for Adonis; ⁴ at least Sappho seems to have regarded Adonis and Linus as equivalent.⁵

Bormus, a plaintive song sung by Mariandynian reapers in Bithynia.

In Bithynia a like mournful ditty, called Bormus or Borimus, was chanted by Mariandynian reapers. Bormus was said to have been a handsome youth, the son of King Upias or of a wealthy and distinguished man. One summer day, watching the reapers at work in his fields, he went to fetch them a drink of water and was never heard of more. So the reapers sought for him, calling him in plaintive strains, which they continued to chant at harvest ever afterwards.⁶

§ 2. Killing the Corn-spirit

Lityerses, a song sung at

In Phrygia the corresponding song, sung by harvesters both at reaping and at threshing, was called Lityerses.

¹ W. Gregor, "Quelques coutumes du Nord-est du comté d'Aberdeen," *Revue des Traditions populaires*, iii. (1888) p. 487 (should be 535).

² Homer, *Iliad*, xviii. 570; Herodotus, ii. 79; Pausanias, ix. 29. 6-9; Conon, *Narrat.* 19. For the form Ailinus see Suidas, s.v.; Euripides, *Orestes*, 1395; Sophocles, *Ajax*, 627. Compare Moschus, *Idyl.* iii. 1; Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo*, 20. See Greve, s.v. "Linus," in W. II. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griech. und rom. Mythologie*, ii. 2053 sqq.

³ Conon, *Narrat.* 19.

⁴ F. C. Movers, *Die Phönizier*, i. (Bonn, 1841), p. 246; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), p. 281. In Hebrew the expression would be *oi lanu* (אֵל לָנוּ), which occurs in 1 Samuel, iv. 7 and 8; Jeremiah, iv. 13, vi. 4. However, the connexion of the Linus song with the lament for Adonis is regarded by Baudissin as very doubtful. See W. W. Graf Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun* (Leipzig, 1911), p. 360, note ³.

⁵ Pausanias, ix. 29. 8.

⁶ Julius Pollux, iv. 54; Athenaeus, xiv. 11, pp. 619 F-620 A; Hesychius, s.v. Βώρμιον and Μαρνανδυνός θήριος.

According to one story, Lityerses was a bastard son of Midas, King of Phrygia, and dwelt at Celaenae. He used to reap the corn, and had an enormous appetite. When a stranger happened to enter the corn-field or to pass by it, Lityerses gave him plenty to eat and drink, then took him to the corn-fields on the banks of the Maeander and compelled him to reap along with him. Lastly, it was his custom to wrap the stranger in a sheaf, cut off his head with a sickle, and carry away his body, swathed in the corn stalks. But at last Hercules undertook to reap with him, cut off his head with the sickle, and threw his body into the river.¹ As Hercules is reported to have slain Lityerses in the same way that Lityerses slew others (as Theseus treated Sinis and Sciron), we may infer that Lityerses used to throw the bodies of his victims into the river. According to another version of the story, Lityerses, a son of Midas, was wont to challenge people to a reaping match with him, and if he vanquished them he used to thrash them; but one day he met with a stronger reaper, who slew him.²

reaping
and
threshing
in Phrygia.
Legend of
Lityerses.

There are some grounds for supposing that in these stories of Lityerses we have the description of a Phrygian harvest custom in accordance with which certain persons, especially strangers passing the harvest field, were regularly regarded as embodiments of the corn-spirit, and as such were seized by the reapers, wrapt in sheaves, and beheaded, their bodies, bound up in the corn-stalks, being afterwards thrown into water as a rain-charm. The grounds for this supposition are, first, the resemblance of the Lityerses story to the harvest customs of European peasantry, and, second, the frequency of human sacrifices offered by savage races to

The
story of
Lityerses
seems to
reflect
an old
Phrygian
harvest
custom of
killing
strangers
as embodi-
ments of
the corn-
spirit.

¹ The story was told by Sositheus in his play of *Daphnis*. His verses have been preserved in the tract of an anonymous writer. See *Scriptores rerum mirabilium Graeci*, ed. A. Westermann (Brunswick, 1839), pp. 220 sq.; also Athenaeus, x. 8, p. 415 B; Scholiast on Theocritus, x. 41; Photius, *Lexicon*, Suidas, and Hesychius, s.v. "Lityerses"; Apostolius, *Centur.* x. 74; Servius, on Virgil, *Bucol.* viii. 68. Photius mentions the

sickle with which Lityerses beheaded his victims. Servius calls Lityerses a king and says that Hercules cut off his head with the sickle that had been given him to reap with. Lityerses is the subject of a special study by W. Mannhardt (*Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 1 sqq.), whom I follow. Compare O. Crusius, s.v. "Lityerses," in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griech. und rom. Mythologie*, ii. 2065 sqq.

² Julius Pollux, iv. 54.

promote the fertility of the fields. We will examine these grounds successively, beginning with the former.

In comparing the story with the harvest customs of Europe,¹ three points deserve special attention, namely: I. the reaping match and the binding of persons in the sheaves; II. the killing of the corn-spirit or his representatives; III. the treatment of visitors to the harvest field or of strangers passing it.

Contests among reapers, binders, and threshers in order not to be the last at their work.

I. In regard to the first head, we have seen that in modern Europe the person who cuts or binds or threshes the last sheaf is often exposed to rough treatment at the hands of his fellow-labourers. For example, he is bound up in the last sheaf, and, thus encased, is carried or carted about, beaten, drenched with water, thrown on a dunghill, and so forth. Or, if he is spared this horseplay, he is at least the subject of ridicule or is thought to be destined to suffer some misfortune in the course of the year. Hence the harvesters are naturally reluctant to give the last cut at reaping or the last stroke at threshing or to bind the last sheaf, and towards the close of the work this reluctance produces an emulation among the labourers, each striving to finish his task as fast as possible, in order that he may escape the invidious distinction of being last.² For example, in the neighbourhood of Danzig, when the winter corn is cut and mostly bound up in sheaves, the portion which still remains to be bound is divided amongst the women binders, each of whom receives a swath of equal length to bind. A crowd of reapers, children, and idlers gather round to witness the contest, and at the word, "Seize the Old Man," the women fall to work, all binding their allotted swaths as hard as they can. The spectators watch them narrowly, and the woman who cannot keep pace with the rest and consequently binds the last sheaf has to carry

¹ In this comparison I closely follow W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 18 *sqq.*

² Compare above, pp. 134, 136, 137 *sq.*, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147 *sq.*, 149, 164 *sq.* On the other hand, the last sheaf is sometimes an object of desire and emulation. See above, pp. 136, 141, 153, 154 *sq.*, 156, 162 note³, 165. It is so at

Balquhider also (*Folk-lore Journal*, vi. 269); and it was formerly so on the Gareloch, Dumbartonshire, where there was a competition for the honour of cutting it, and handfuls of standing corn used to be hidden under sheaves in order that the last to be uncovered should form the Maiden.—(From the information of Archie Leitch. See pp. 157 *sq.*)

the Old Man (that is, the last sheaf made up in the form of a man) to the farmhouse and deliver it to the farmer with the words, "Here I bring you the Old Man." At the supper which follows, the Old Man is placed at the table and receives an abundant portion of food, which, as he cannot eat it, falls to the share of the woman who carried him. Afterwards the Old Man is placed in the yard and all the people dance round him. Or the woman who bound the last sheaf dances for a good while with the Old Man, while the rest form a ring round them; afterwards they all, one after the other, dance a single round with him. Further, the woman who bound the last sheaf goes herself by the name of the Old Man till the next harvest, and is often mocked with the cry, "Here comes the Old Man."¹ In the Mittelmark district of Prussia, when the rye has been reaped, and the last sheaves are about to be tied up, the binders stand in two rows facing each other, every woman with her sheaf and her straw rope before her. At a given signal they all tie up their sheaves, and the one who is the last to finish is ridiculed by the rest. Not only so, but her sheaf is made up into human shape and called the Old Man, and she must carry it home to the farmyard, where the harvesters dance in a circle round her and it. Then they take the Old Man to the farmer and deliver it to him with the words, "We bring the Old Man to the Master. He may keep him till he gets a new one." After that the Old Man is set up against a tree, where he remains for a long time, the butt of many jests.² At Aschbach in Bavaria, when the reaping is nearly finished, the reapers say, "Now, we will drive out the Old Man." Each of them sets himself to reap a patch of corn as fast as he can; he who cuts the last handful or the last stalk is greeted by the rest with an exulting cry, "You have the Old Man." Sometimes a black mask is fastened on the reaper's face and he is dressed in woman's clothes; or if the reaper is a woman, she is dressed in man's clothes. A dance follows. At the supper the Old Man gets twice as large a portion of food as the others. The proceedings are similar at threshing; the person who gives the last stroke is

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 19 sq.

² A. Kuhn, *Markische Sagen und Marchen* (Berlin, 1843), p. 342.

said to have the Old Man. At the supper given to the threshers he has to eat out of the cream-ladle and to drink a great deal. Moreover, he is quizzed and teased in all sorts of ways till he frees himself from further annoyance by treating the others to brandy or beer.¹

Custom of
wrapping
up in
corn-stalks
the last
reaper,
binder, or
thresher.

These examples illustrate the contests in reaping, threshing, and binding which take place amongst the harvesters, from their unwillingness to suffer the ridicule and discomfort incurred by the one who happens to finish his work last. It will be remembered that the person who is last at reaping, binding, or threshing, is regarded as the representative of the corn-spirit,² and this idea is more fully expressed by binding him or her in corn-stalks. The latter custom has been already illustrated, but a few more instances may be added. At Kloxin, near Stettin, the harvesters call out to the woman who binds the last sheaf, "You have the Old Man, and must keep him." The Old Man is a great bundle of corn decked with flowers and ribbons, and fashioned into a rude semblance of the human form. It is fastened on a rake or strapped on a horse, and brought with music to the village. In delivering the Old Man to the farmer, the woman says:—

*"Here, dear Sir, is the Old Man.
He can stay no longer on the field,
He can hide himself no longer,
He must come into the village.
Ladies and gentlemen, pray be so kind
As to give the Old Man a present."*

As late as the first half of the nineteenth century the custom was to tie up the woman herself in pease-straw, and bring her with music to the farmhouse, where the harvesters danced with her till the pease-straw fell off.³ In other villages round Stettin, when the last harvest-waggon is being loaded, there is a regular race amongst the women, each striving not to be last. For she who places the last sheaf on the waggon is called the Old Man, and is completely

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 20; F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie* (Munich, 1848-1855), ii. p. 217, § 397; A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche*

aus Thüringen (Vienna, 1878), p. 222, § 69.

² Above, pp. 167 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 22.

swathed in corn-stalks ; she is also decked with flowers, and flowers and a helmet of straw are placed on her head. In solemn procession she carries the harvest-crown to the squire, over whose head she holds it while she utters a string of good wishes. At the dance which follows, the Old Man has the right to choose his, or rather her, partner ; it is an honour to dance with him.¹ At Blankenfelde, in the district of Potsdam, the woman who binds the last sheaf at the rye-harvest is saluted with the cry, "You have the Old Man." A woman is then tied up in the last sheaf in such a way that only her head is left free ; her hair also is covered with a cap made of rye-stalks, adorned with ribbons and flowers. She is called the Harvest-man, and must keep dancing in front of the last harvest-waggon till it reaches the squire's house, where she receives a present and is released from her envelope of corn.² At Gommern, near Magdeburg, the reaper who cuts the last ears of corn is often wrapt up in corn-stalks so completely that it is hard to see whether there is a man in the bundle or not. Thus wrapt up he is taken by another stalwart reaper on his back, and carried round the field amidst the joyous cries of the harvesters.³ At Neuhausen, near Merseburg, the person who binds the last sheaf is wrapt in ears of oats and saluted as the Oats-man, whereupon the others dance round him.⁴ At Bric, Isle de France, the farmer himself is tied up in the *first* sheaf.⁵ At the harvest-home at Udvarhely, Transylvania, a person is encased in corn-stalks, and wears on his head a crown made out of the last ears cut. On reaching the village he is soused with water over and over.⁶ At Dingelstedt, in the district of Erfurt, down to the first half of the nineteenth century it was the custom to tie up a man in the last sheaf. He was called the Old Man, and was brought home on the last waggon, amid huzzas and music. On reaching the farm-yard he was rolled round the barn and drenched with water.⁷ At Nördlingen in Bavaria the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is wrapt in straw and rolled on the threshing-

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 22.

² *Ibid.* pp. 22 sq.

³ *Ibid.* p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 23 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 24.

floor.¹ In some parts of Oberpfalz, Bavaria, he is said to "get the Old Man," is wrapt in straw, and carried to a neighbour who has not yet finished his threshing.² In Silesia the woman who binds the last sheaf has to submit to a good deal of horse-play. She is pushed, knocked down, and tied up in the sheaf, after which she is called the corn-puppet (*Kornpöpel*).³ In Thüringen a sausage is stuck in the last sheaf at threshing, and thrown, with the sheaf, on the threshing-floor. It is called the *Barrenwurst* or *Basenwurst*, and is eaten by all the threshers. After they have eaten it a man is encased in pease-straw, and thus attired is led through the village.⁴

The corn-spirit, driven out of the last corn, lives in the barn during the winter.

Similar ideas as to the last corn in India.

"In all these cases the idea is that the spirit of the corn—the Old Man of vegetation—is driven out of the corn last cut or last threshed, and lives in the barn during the winter. At sowing-time he goes out again to the fields to resume his activity as animating force among the sprouting corn."⁵

Ideas of the same sort appear to attach to the last corn in India. At Hoshangábád, in Central India, when the reaping is nearly done, a patch of corn, about a rood in extent, is left standing in the cultivator's last field, and the reapers rest a little. Then they rush at this remnant, tear it up, and cast it into the air, shouting victory to one or other of the local gods, according to their religious persuasion. A sheaf is made out of this corn, tied to a bamboo, set up in the last harvest cart, and carried home in triumph. Here it is fastened up in the threshing-floor or attached to a tree or to the cattle-shed, where its services are held to be essential for the purpose of averting the evil-eye.⁶ A like custom prevails in the eastern districts of the North-Western Provinces of India. Sometimes a little patch is left untilled as a refuge for the field-spirit; sometimes it is sown, and when the corn of this patch has been reaped with a rush and a shout, it is presented to the

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 24 sq.

² *Ibid.* p. 25.

³ P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipsic, 1903-1906), ii. 65.

⁴ A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebrauche aus Thüringen* (Vienna, 1878), p. 223, § 70.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 25 sq.

⁶ C. A. Elliot, *Hoshangábád Settlement Report*, p. 178, quoted in *Panjab Notes and Queries*, iii. §§ 8, 168 (October and December, 1885); W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), ii. 306.

priest, who offers it to the local gods or bestows it on a beggar.¹

II. Passing to the second point of comparison between the Lityerses story and European harvest customs, we have now to see that in the latter the corn-spirit is often believed to be killed at reaping or threshing. In the Romsdal and other parts of Norway, when the haymaking is over, the people say that "the Old Hay-man has been killed." In some parts of Bavaria the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is said to have killed the Corn-man, the Oats-man, or the Wheat-man, according to the crop.² In the Canton of Tillot, in Lothringen, at threshing the last corn the men keep time with their flails, calling out as they thresh, "We are killing the Old Woman! We are killing the Old Woman!" If there is an old woman in the house she is warned to save herself, or she will be struck dead.³ Near Ragnit, in Lithuania, the last handful of corn is left standing by itself, with the words, "The Old Woman (*Boba*) is sitting in there." Then a young reaper whets his scythe, and, with a strong sweep, cuts down the handful. It is now said of him that "he has cut off the Boba's head"; and he receives a gratuity from the farmer and a jugful of water over his head from the farmer's wife.⁴ According to another account, every Lithuanian reaper makes haste to finish his task; for the Old Rye-woman lives in the last stalks, and whoever cuts the last stalks kills the Old Rye-woman, and by killing her he brings trouble on himself.⁵ In Wilkischken, in the district of Tilsit, the man who cuts the last corn goes by the name of "the killer of the Rye-woman."⁶ In Lithuania, again, the corn-spirit is believed to be killed at threshing as well as at reaping. When only a single pile of corn remains to be threshed, all the threshers suddenly step back a few paces, as if at the word of command. Then they fall to work, plying their flails with the utmost rapidity and vehemence, till they come to the last bundle. Upon this they fling themselves with almost frantic fury, straining every nerve, and raining blows on it till the word "Halt!" rings out

The corn-spirit supposed to be killed at reaping or threshing.

¹ W. Crooke, *op. cit.* ii. 306 sq.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.* p. 334.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 330.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 331.

sharply from the leader. The man whose flail is the last to fall after the command to stop has been given is immediately surrounded by all the rest, crying out that "he has struck the Old Rye-woman dead." He has to expiate the deed by treating them to brandy; and, like the man who cuts the last corn, he is known as "the killer of the Old Rye-woman."¹ Sometimes in Lithuania the slain corn-spirit was represented by a puppet. Thus a female figure was made out of corn-stalks, dressed in clothes, and placed on the threshing-floor, under the heap of corn which was to be threshed last. Whoever thereafter gave the last stroke at threshing "struck the Old Woman dead."² We have already met with examples of burning the figure which represents the corn-spirit.³ In the East Riding of Yorkshire a custom called "burning the Old Witch" is observed on the last day of harvest. A small sheaf of corn is burnt on the field in a fire of stubble; peas are parched at the fire and eaten with a liberal allowance of ale; and the lads and lasses romp about the flames and amuse themselves by blackening each other's faces.⁴ Sometimes, again, the corn-spirit is represented by a man, who lies down under the last corn; it is threshed upon his body, and the people say that "the Old Man is being beaten to death."⁵ We saw that sometimes the farmer's wife is thrust, together with the last sheaf, under the threshing-machine, as if to thresh her, and that afterwards a pretence is made of winnowing her.⁶ At Volders, in the Tyrol, husks of corn are stuck behind the neck of the man who gives the last stroke at threshing, and he is throttled with a straw garland. If he is tall, it is believed that the corn will be tall next year. Then he is tied on a bundle and flung into the river.⁷ In Carinthia, the thresher who gave the last stroke, and the person who

Corn-spirit represented by a man, who is threshed.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 335.

² *Ibid.* p. 335.

³ Above, pp. 135, 146.

⁴ J. Nicholson, *Folk-lore of East Yorkshire* (London, Hull, and Driffield, 1890), p. 28, supplemented by a letter of the author's addressed to Mr. E. S. Hartland and dated 33 Leicester Street, Hull, 11th September,

1890. I have to thank Mr. E. S. Hartland for calling my attention to the custom and allowing me to see Mr. Nicholson's letter.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen*, p. 26.

⁶ Above, pp. 149 sq.

⁷ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 50.

untied the last sheaf on the threshing-floor, are bound hand and foot with straw bands, and crowns of straw are placed on their heads. Then they are tied, face to face, on a sledge, dragged through the village, and flung into a brook.¹ The custom of throwing the representative of the corn-spirit into a stream, like that of drenching him with water, is, as usual, a rain-charm.²

III. Thus far the representatives of the corn-spirit have generally been the man or woman who cuts, binds, or threshes the last corn. We now come to the cases in which the corn-spirit is represented either by a stranger passing the harvest-field (as in the Lityerses tale), or by a visitor entering it for the first time. All over Germany it is customary for the reapers or threshers to lay hold of passing strangers and bind them with a rope made of corn-stalks, till they pay a forfeit; and when the farmer himself or one of his guests enters the field or the threshing-floor for the first time, he is treated in the same way. Sometimes the rope is only tied round his arm or his feet or his neck.³ But sometimes he is regularly swathed in corn. Thus at Solör in Norway, whoever enters the field, be he the master or a stranger, is tied up in a sheaf and must pay a ransom. In the neighbourhood of Soest, when the farmer visits the flax-pullers for the first time, he is completely enveloped in flax. Passers-by are also surrounded by the women, tied up in flax, and compelled to stand brandy.⁴ At Nördlingen strangers are caught with straw ropes and tied up in a sheaf till they pay a forfeit.⁵ Among the Germans of Haselberg, in West Bohemia, as soon as a farmer had given the last corn to be threshed on the threshing-floor, he was swathed in it and had to redeem

Corn-spirit represented by a stranger or a visitor to the harvest-field, who is treated accordingly.

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 50 sq.

² See above, pp. 146, 170 note¹; *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 195 sqq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 32 sqq. Compare K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche aus Meklenburg* (Vienna, 1879-1880), ii. 296 sq.; P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipsic, 1903-1906), ii. 62 sq.; A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube im*

deutschen Westböhmen (Prague, 1905), p. 193; A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen* (Vienna, 1878), p. 221, § 61; R. Krause, *Sitten, Gebräuche und Aberglauben in Westpreussen* (Berlin, preface dated March, 1904), p. 51; *Revue des Traditions populaires*, iii. (1888) p. 598.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 35 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 36.

himself by a present of cakes.¹ In Anhalt, when the proprietor or one of his family, the steward, or even a stranger enters the harvest-field for the first time after the reaping has begun, the wife of the chief reaper ties a rope twisted of corn-ears, or a nosegay made of corn-ears and flowers, to his arm, and he is obliged to ransom himself by the payment of a fine.² In the canton of Putanges, in Normandy, a pretence of tying up the owner of the land in the last sheaf of wheat is still practised, or at least was still practised some quarter of a century ago. The task falls to the women alone. They throw themselves on the proprietor, seize him by the arms, the legs, and the body, throw him to the ground, and stretch him on the last sheaf. Then a show is made of binding him, and the conditions to be observed at the harvest-supper are dictated to him. When he has accepted them, he is released and allowed to get up.³ At Brie, Isle de France, when any one who does not belong to the farm passes by the harvest-field, the reapers give chase. If they catch him, they bind him in a sheaf and bite him, one after the other, in the forehead, crying, "You shall carry the key of the field."⁴ "To have the key" is an expression used by harvesters elsewhere in the sense of to cut or bind or thresh the last sheaf;⁵ hence, it is equivalent to the phrases "You have the Old Man," "You are the Old Man," which are addressed to the cutter, binder, or thresher of the last sheaf. Therefore, when a stranger, as at Brie, is tied up in a sheaf and told that he will "carry the key of the field," it is as much as to say that he is the Old Man, that is, an embodiment of the corn-spirit. In hop-picking, if a well-dressed stranger passes the hop-yard, he is seized by the women, tumbled into the bin, covered with leaves, and not released till he has paid a fine.⁶ In some parts of Scotland,

¹ A. John, *Sitte, Brauch, und Volksglaube im deutschen Westböhmen*, (Prague, 1905), p. 194.

² O. Hartung, "Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 153.

³ J. Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1883-1887), ii. 240 sq.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 36.

⁵ For the evidence, see *ibid.* p. 36, note 2. The "key" in the European custom is probably intended to serve the same purpose as the "knot" in the Cingalese custom, as to which see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 308 sq.

⁶ From a letter written to me by Colonel Henry Wilson, of Farnborough Lodge, Farnborough, Kent. The letter is dated 21st March, 1901.

particularly in the counties of Fife and Kinross, down to recent times the reapers used to seize and dump, as it was called, any stranger who happened to visit or pass by the harvest field. The custom was to lay hold of the stranger by his ankles and armpits, lift him up, and bring the lower part of his person into violent contact with the ground. Women as well as men were liable to be thus treated. The practice of interposing a sheaf between the sufferer and the ground is said to be a modern refinement.¹ Comparing this custom with the one practised at Putanges in Normandy, which has just been described, we may conjecture that in Scotland the "dumping" of strangers on the harvest-field was originally a preliminary to wrapping them up in sheaves of corn.

Ceremonies of a somewhat similar kind are performed by the Tarahumare Indians of Mexico not only at harvest but also at hoeing and ploughing. "When the work of hoeing and weeding is finished, the workers seize the master of the field, and, tying his arms crosswise behind him, load all the implements, that is to say, the hoes, upon his back, fastening them with ropes. Then they form two single columns, the landlord in the middle between them, and all facing the house. Thus they start homeward. Simultaneously the two men at the heads of the columns begin to run rapidly forward some thirty yards, cross each other, then turn back, run along the two columns, cross each other again at the rear and take their places each at the end of his row. As they pass each other ahead and in the rear of the columns they beat their mouths with the hollow of their hands and yell. As soon as they reach their places at the foot, the next pair in front of the columns starts off, running in the same way, and thus pair after pair performs the tour, the procession all the time advancing toward the house. A short distance in front of it they come to a halt, and are met by two young men who carry red handkerchiefs tied to sticks like flags. The father of the family, still tied up and loaded with the hoes, steps forward alone and kneels down in front of his house-door. The flag-bearers wave their banners over him, and the women of the household come out and kneel on

Ceremonies of the Tarahumare Indians at hoeing, ploughing, and harvest.

¹ "Notes on Harvest Customs," *The Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 52 sq.

their left knees, first toward the east, and after a little while toward each of the other cardinal points, west, south, and north. In conclusion the flags are waved in front of the house. The father then rises and the people untie him, whereupon he first salutes the women with the usual greeting, ' *Kwira!* ' or ' *Kwirevó!* ' Now they all go into the house, and the man makes a short speech thanking them all for the assistance they have given him, for how could he have gotten through his work without them? They have provided him with a year's life (that is, with the wherewithal to sustain it), and now he is going to give them tesvino. He gives a drinking-gourd full to each one in the assembly, and appoints one man among them to distribute more to all. The same ceremony is performed after the ploughing and after the harvesting. On the first occasion the tied man may be made to carry the yoke of the oxen, on the second he does not carry anything."¹ The meaning of these Mexican ceremonies is not clear. Perhaps the custom of tying up the farmer at hoeing, ploughing, and reaping is a form of expiation or apology offered to the spirits of the earth, who are naturally disturbed by agricultural operations.² When the Yabim of Simbang in German New Guinea see that the taro plants in their fields are putting forth leaves, they offer sacrifice of sago-broth and pork to the spirits of the former owners of the land, in order that they may be kindly disposed and not do harm but let the fruits ripen.³ Similarly when the Alfoors or Toradjas of Central Celebes are planting a new field, they offer rice, eggs, and so forth to the souls of the former owners of the land, hoping that, mollified by these offerings, the souls will make the crops to grow and thrive.⁴ However, this explanation of the Mexican ceremonies at hoeing, ploughing, and reaping is purely conjectural. In these ceremonies there is no evidence that, as in the parallel European customs, the farmer is identified

¹ C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), i. 214 sq.

² Compare *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 75 sq.

³ K. Vetter, *Komm herüber und hilf uns!* Heft 2 (Barmen, 1898), p. 7.

⁴ A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschap-

pelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xxxix. (1895) p. 137. As to the influence which the spirits of the dead are thought to exercise on the growth of the crops, see above, pp. 103 sq., and below, vol. ii. pp. 109 sqq.

with the corn-spirit, since he is not wrapt up in the sheaves.

Be that as it may, the evidence adduced above suffices to prove that, like the ancient Lityerses, modern European reapers have been wont to lay hold of a passing stranger and tie him up in a sheaf. It is not to be expected that they should complete the parallel by cutting off his head ; but if they do not take such a strong step, their language and gestures are at least indicative of a desire to do so. For instance, in Mecklenburg on the first day of reaping, if the master or mistress or a stranger enters the field, or merely passes by it, all the mowers face towards him and sharpen their scythes, clashing their whet-stones against them in unison, as if they were making ready to mow. Then the woman who leads the mowers steps up to him and ties a band round his left arm. He must ransom himself by payment of a forfeit.¹ Near Ratzeburg, when the master or other person of mark enters the field or passes by it, all the harvesters stop work and march towards him in a body, the men with their scythes in front. On meeting him they form up in line, men and women. The men stick the poles of their scythes in the ground, as they do in whetting them ; then they take off their caps and hang them on the scythes, while their leader stands forward and makes a speech. When he has done, they all whet their scythes in measured time very loudly, after which they put on their caps. Two of the women binders then come forward ; one of them ties the master or stranger (as the case may be) with corn-ears or with a silken band ; the other delivers a rhyming address. The following are specimens of the speeches made by the reaper on these occasions. In some parts of Pomerania every passer-by is stopped, his way being barred with a corn-rope. The reapers form a circle round him and sharpen their scythes, while their leader says :—

Pretence
made by
the reapers
of killing
some one
with their
scythes.

*“ The men are ready,
The scythes are bent,
The corn is great and small,
The gentleman must be mowed.”*

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 39.

Then the process of whetting the scythes is repeated.¹ At Ramin, in the district of Stettin, the stranger, standing encircled by the reapers, is thus addressed :—

“ *We’ll stroke the gentleman
With our naked sword,
Wherewith we shear meadows and fields.
We shear princes and lords.
Labourers are often athirst ;
If the gentleman will stand beer and brandy
The joke will soon be over.
But, if our prayer he does not like,
The sword has a right to strike.*”²

That in these customs the whetting of the scythes is really meant as a preliminary to mowing appears from the following variation of the preceding customs. In the district of Lüneburg, when any one enters the harvest-field, he is asked whether he will engage a good fellow. If he says yes, the harvesters mow some swaths, yelling and screaming, and then ask him for drink-money.³

Pretence
made by
threshers
of choking
a person
with their
flails.

On the threshing-floor strangers are also regarded as embodiments of the corn-spirit, and are treated accordingly. At Wiedingharde in Schleswig when a stranger comes to the threshing-floor he is asked, “ Shall I teach you the flail-dance ? ” If he says yes, they put the arms of the threshing-flail round his neck as if he were a sheaf of corn, and press them together so tight that he is nearly choked.⁴ In some parishes of Wermland (Sweden), when a stranger enters the threshing-floor where the threshers are at work, they say that “ they will teach him the threshing-song.” Then they put a flail round his neck and a straw rope about his body. Also, as we have seen, if a stranger woman enters the threshing-floor, the threshers put a flail round her body and a wreath of corn-stalks round her neck, and call out, “ See the Corn-woman ! See ! that is how the Corn-maiden looks ! ”⁵

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 39 sq.

² *Ibid.* p. 40. For the speeches made by the woman who binds the stranger or the master, see *ibid.* p. 41 ; C. Lemke, *Volksthümliches in Ostpreussen* (Mohrungen, 1884-1887), i. 23 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 41 sq.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 42. See also above, p. 150.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 42. See above, p. 149. In Thüringen a being called the Rush-cutter (*Binsenschneider*)

In these customs, observed both on the harvest-field and on the threshing-floor, a passing stranger is regarded as a personification of the corn, in other words, as the corn-spirit ; and a show is made of treating him like the corn by mowing, binding, and threshing him. If the reader still doubts whether European peasants can really regard a passing stranger in this light, the following custom should set his doubts at rest. During the madder-harvest in the Dutch province of Zealand a stranger passing by a field, where the people are digging the madder-roots, will sometimes call out to them *Koortspillers* (a term of reproach). Upon this, two of the fleetest runners make after him, and, if they catch him, they bring him back to the madder-field and bury him in the earth up to his middle at least, jeering at him the while ; then they ease nature before his face.¹

Custom observed at the madder-harvest in Zealand.

This last act is to be explained as follows. The spirit of the corn and of other cultivated plants is sometimes conceived, not as immanent in the plant, but as its owner ; hence the cutting of the corn at harvest, the digging of the roots, and the gathering of fruit from the fruit-trees are each and all of them acts of spoliation, which strip him of his property and reduce him to poverty. Hence he is often known as "the Poor Man" or "the Poor Woman." Thus in the neighbourhood of Eisenach a small sheaf is sometimes left standing on the field for "the Poor Old Woman."² At Marksuhl, near Eisenach, the puppet formed out of the last sheaf is itself called "the Poor Woman." At Alt Lest in Silesia the man who binds the last sheaf is called the Beggar-man.³ In a village near Roeskilde, in Zealand (Denmark), old-fashioned peasants sometimes make up the last sheaf into a rude puppet, which is called the Rye-beggar.⁴ In Southern Schonen the sheaf which is bound last is called the Beggar ;

The spirit of the corn conceived as poor and robbed by the reapers.

used to be much dreaded. On the morning of St. John's Day he was wont to walk through the fields with sickles tied to his ankles cutting avenues in the corn as he walked. To detect him, seven bundles of brushwood were silently threshed with the flail on the threshing-floor, and the stranger who appeared at the door of the barn during the threshing was the Rush-cutter. See A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und*

Gebrauche aus Thuringen (Vienna, 1878), p. 221. With the *Binsenschnneider* compare the *Bilschnneider* and *Biberschnneider* (F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, Munich, 1848-1855, ii. pp. 210 sq., §§ 372-378).

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 47 sq.

² W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 48.

³ W. Mannhardt, *l.c.*

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 48 sq.

Some of
the corn
left on the
harvest-
field for the
corn-spirit.

it is made bigger than the rest and is sometimes dressed in clothes. In the district of Olmütz the last sheaf is called the Beggar ; it is given to an old woman, who must carry it home, limping on one foot.¹ Sometimes a little of the crop is left on the field for the spirit, under other names than "the Poor Old Woman." Thus at Szagmanten, a village of the Tilsit district, the last sheaf was left standing on the field "for the Old Rye-woman."² In Neftenbach (Canton of Zurich) the first three ears of corn reaped are thrown away on the field "to satisfy the Corn-mother and to make the next year's crop abundant."³ At Kupferberg, in Bavaria, some corn is left standing on the field when the rest has been cut. Of this corn left standing they say that "it belongs to the Old Woman," to whom it is dedicated in the following words :—

*"We give it to the Old Woman;
She shall keep it.
Next year may she be to us
As kind as this time she has been."*⁴

These words clearly shew that the Old Woman for whom the corn is left on the field is not a real personage, poor and hungry, but the mythical Old Woman who makes the corn to grow. At Schüttarschen, in West Bohemia, after the crop has been reaped, a few stalks are left standing and a garland is attached to them. "That belongs to the Wood-woman," they say, and offer a prayer. In this way the Wood-woman, we are told, has enough to live on through the winter and the corn will thrive the better next year. The same thing is done for all the different kinds of corn-crop.⁵ So in Thüringen, when the after-grass (*Grummet*) is being got in, a little heap is left lying on the field ; it belongs to "the Little Wood-woman" in return for the blessing she has bestowed.⁶ In the Frankenwald of Bavaria three handfuls of flax were left on the field "for the Wood-woman."⁷

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 49. *glaube im deutschen Westböhmen* (Prague, 1905), p. 189.

² *Ibid.* p. 337.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 337 sq.

⁵ A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volks-*

⁶ A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen* (Vienna, 1878), p. 224, § 74.

⁷ *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern* (Munich, 1860-1867), iii. 343 sq.

At Lindau in Anhalt the reapers used to leave some stalks standing in the last corner of the last field for "the Corn-woman to eat."¹ In some parts of Silesia it was till lately the custom to leave a few corn-stalks standing in the field, "in order that the next harvest should not fail."² In Russia it is customary to leave patches of unreaped corn in the fields and to place bread and salt on the ground near them. "These ears are eventually knotted together, and the ceremony is called 'the plaiting of the beard of Volos,' and it is supposed that after it has been performed no wizard or other evilly-disposed person will be able to hurt the produce of the fields. The unreaped patch is looked upon as tabooed; and it is believed that if any one meddles with it he will shrivel up, and become twisted like the interwoven ears. Similar customs are kept up in various parts of Russia. Near Kursk and Voroneje, for instance, a patch of rye is usually left in honour of the Prophet Elijah, and in another district one of oats is consecrated to St. Nicholas. As it is well known that both the Saint and the Prophet have succeeded to the place once held in the estimation of the Russian people by Perun, it seems probable that Volos really was, in ancient times, one of the names of the thunder-god."³ In the north-east of Scotland a few stalks were sometimes left unreaped on the field for the benefit of "the aul' man."⁴ Here "the aul' man" is probably the equivalent of the harvest Old Man of Germany.⁵ Among the Mohammedans of Zanzibar it is customary at sowing a field to reserve a certain portion of it for the guardian spirits, who at harvest are invited, to the tuck of drum, to come and take their share; tiny huts are also built in which food is deposited for their use.⁶ In the island of Nias, to prevent the depredations of wandering spirits among the rice at harvest, a miniature field is dedicated

¹ *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 154.

² P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch, und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipsic, 1903-1906), ii. 64, § 419.

³ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, Second Edition (London, 1872), pp. 251 *sq.* As to Perun, the old Slavonic thunder-god, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution*

of Kings, ii. 365.

⁴ Rev. Walter Gregor, *Notes on the Folk-lore of the North-east of Scotland* (London, 1881), p. 182.

⁵ See above, pp. 136 *sqq.*

⁶ A. Germain, "Note zur Zanzibar et la Côte Orientale d'Afrique," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), Vème Série, xvi. (1868) p. 555.

Little fields
or gardens
cultivated
for spirits
or gods.

to them and in it are sown all the plants that grow in the real fields.¹ The Hos, a Ewe tribe of negroes in Togoland, observe a similar custom for a similar reason. At the entrance to their yam-fields the traveller may see on both sides of the path small mounds on which yams, stock-yams, beans, and maize are planted and appear to flourish with more than usual luxuriance. These little gardens, tended with peculiar care, are dedicated to the "guardian gods" of the owner of the land; there he cultivates for their benefit the same plants which he cultivates for his own use in the fields; and the notion is that the "guardian gods" will content themselves with eating the fruits which grow in their little private preserves and will not poach on the crops which are destined for human use.²

Hence
perhaps
we may
explain the
dedication
of sacred
fields and
the offering
of first-
fruits to
gods and
spirits.

These customs suggest that the little sacred rice-fields on which the Kayans of Borneo perform the various operations of husbandry in mimicry before they address themselves to the real labours of the field,³ may be dedicated to the spirits of the rice to compensate them for the loss they sustain by allowing men to cultivate all the rest of the land for their own benefit. Perhaps the Rarian plain at Eleusis⁴ was a spiritual preserve of the same kind set apart for the exclusive use of the corn-goddesses Demeter and Persephone. It may even be that the law which forbade the Hebrews to reap the corners and gather the gleanings of the harvest-fields and to strip the

¹ E. Modigliani, *Un Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), p. 593.

² J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), p. 303. In the Central Provinces of India "sometimes the oldest man in the house cuts the first five bundles of the crop and they are afterwards left in the fields for the birds to eat. And at the end of harvest the last one or two sheaves are left standing in the field and any one who likes can cut and carry them away. In some localities the last sheaves are left standing in the field and are known as *barhona*, or the giver of increase. Then all the labourers rush together at this last patch of corn and tear it up by the roots; everybody seizes as much as he can [and] keeps it, the master having

no share in this patch. After the *barhona* has been torn up all the labourers fall on their faces to the ground and worship the field" (A. E. Nelson, *Central Provinces Gazetteers, Bilaspur District*, vol. A, 1910, p. 75). This quotation was kindly sent to me by Mr. W. Crooke; I have not seen the original. It seems to shew that in the Central Provinces the last corn is left standing on the field as a portion for the corn-spirit, and that he is believed to be immanent in it; hence the name of "the giver of increase" bestowed on it, and the eagerness with which other people, though not the owner of the land, seek to appropriate it.

³ See above, pp. 93 *sq.*

⁴ See above, pp. 36, 74.

vines of their last grapes¹ was originally intended for the benefit, not of the human poor, but of the poor spirits of the corn and the vine, who had just been despoiled by the reapers and the vintagers, and who, if some provision were not made for their subsistence, would naturally die of hunger before another year came round. In providing for their wants the prudent husbandman was really consulting his own interests; for how could he expect to reap wheat and barley and to gather grapes next year if he suffered the spirits of the corn and of the vine to perish of famine in the meantime? This train of thought may possibly explain the wide-spread custom of offering the first-fruits of the crops to gods or spirits:² such offerings may have been originally not so much an expression of gratitude for benefits received as a means of enabling the benefactors to continue their benefactions in time to come. Primitive man has generally a shrewd eye to the main chance: he is more prone to provide for the future than to sentimentalise over the past.

Thus when the spirit of vegetation is conceived as a being who is robbed of his store and impoverished by the harvesters, it is natural that his representative—the passing stranger—should upbraid them; and it is equally natural that they should seek to disable him from pursuing them and recapturing the stolen property. Now, it is an old superstition that by easing nature on the spot where a robbery is committed, the robbers secure themselves, for a certain time, against interruption.³ Hence when madder-diggers resort to this proceeding in presence of the stranger whom they have caught and buried in the field, we may infer that they consider themselves robbers and him as the person robbed. Regarded as such, he must be the natural owner of the madder-roots, that is, their spirit or demon; and this conception is carried out by

Passing
strangers
treated as
the spirit
of the
madder-
roots.

¹ Leviticus, xix. 9 *sq.*, xxiii. 22; Deuteronomy, xxiv. 19-21.

² See above, pp. 46 *sq.*, 53 *sqq.*, and below, vol. ii. pp. 109 *sqq.*

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 49 *sq.*; A. Wuttke,

*Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*² (Berlin, 1869), p. 254, § 400; M. Töppen, *Aberglaube aus Masuren*³ (Danzig, 1867), p. 57. The same belief is held and acted upon in Japan (L. Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, London, 1904, ii. 603).

burying him, like the madder-roots, in the ground.¹ The Greeks, it may be observed, were quite familiar with the idea that a passing stranger may be a god. Homer says that the gods in the likeness of foreigners roam up and down cities.² Once in Poso, a district of Celebes, when a new missionary entered a house where a number of people were gathered round a sick man, one of them addressed the new-comer in these words: "Well, sir, as we had never seen you before, and you came suddenly in, while we sat here by ourselves, we thought it was a spirit."³

Killing
of the
personal
representative
of the
corn-spirit.

Thus in these harvest-customs of modern Europe the person who cuts, binds, or threshes the last corn is treated as an embodiment of the corn-spirit by being wrapt up in sheaves, killed in mimicry by agricultural implements, and thrown into the water.⁴ These coincidences with the Lityerses story seem to prove that the latter is a genuine description of an old Phrygian harvest-custom. But since in the modern parallels the killing of the personal representative of the corn-spirit is necessarily omitted or at most enacted only in mimicry, it is desirable to shew that in rude society human beings have been commonly killed as an agricultural ceremony to promote the fertility of the fields. The following examples will make this plain.

§ 3. *Human Sacrifices for the Crops*

Human
sacrifices
for the
crops in
South and
Central
America.

The Indians of Guayaquil, in Ecuador, used to sacrifice human blood and the hearts of men when they sowed their fields.⁵ The people of Cañar (now Cuenca in Ecuador) used to sacrifice a hundred children annually at harvest. The kings of Quito, the Incas of Peru, and for a long time the Spaniards were unable to suppress the bloody rite.⁶ At a

¹ The explanation of the custom is W. Mannhardt's (*Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 49).

² *Odyssey*, xvii. 485 sqq. Compare Plato, *Sophist*, p. 216 A.

³ A. C. Kruijt, "Mijne eerste ervaringen te Poso," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendeling-genootschap*, xxxvi. (1892) p. 402.

⁴ For throwing him into the water,

see p. 225.

⁵ Cieza de Leon, *Travels*, translated by C. R. Markham, p. 203 (Hakluyt Society, London, 1864).

⁶ Juan de Velasco, *Histoire du Royaume de Quito*, i. (Paris, 1840) pp. 121 sq. (Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages, Relations et Mémoires Originaux pour servir à l'Histoire de la Découverte de l'Amérique*, vol. xviii.).

Mexican harvest-festival, when the first-fruits of the season were offered to the sun, a criminal was placed between two immense stones, balanced opposite each other, and was crushed by them as they fell together. His remains were buried, and a feast and dance followed. This sacrifice was known as "the meeting of the stones."¹ "Tlaloc was worshipped in Mexico as the god of the thunder and the storm which precedes the fertilising rain; elsewhere his wife Xochiquetzal, who at Tlaxcallan was called Matlalcuéyé or the Lady of the Blue Petticoats, shared these honours, and it was to her that many countries in Central America particularly paid their devotions. Every year, at the time when the cobs of the still green and milky maize are about to coagulate and ripen, they used to sacrifice to the goddess four young girls, chosen among the noblest families of the country; they were decked out in festal attire, crowned with flowers, and conveyed in rich palanquins to the brink of the hallowed waters, where the sacrifice was to be offered. The priests, clad in long floating robes, their heads encircled with feather crowns, marched in front of the litters carrying censers with burning incense. The town of Elopango, celebrated for its temple, was near the lake of the same name, the etymology of which refers to the sheaves of tender maize (*elotl*, 'sheaf of tender maize'). It was dedicated to the goddess Xochiquetzal, to whom the young victims were offered by being hurled from the top of a rock into the abyss. At the moment of consummating this inhuman rite, the priests addressed themselves in turn to the four virgins in order to banish the fear of death from their minds. They drew for them a bright picture of the delights they were about to enjoy in the company of the gods, and advised them not to forget the earth which they had left behind, but to entreat the divinity, to whom they despatched them, to bless the forthcoming harvest."² We have seen that the ancient Mexicans also sacrificed human beings at all the

¹ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859), i. 274; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (London, 1875-1876), ii. 340.

² Brasseur de Bourbourg, "Aperçus d'un voyage dans les États de San-Salvador et de Guatemala," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), IVème Série, xiii. (1857) pp. 278 sq.

various stages in the growth of the maize, the age of the victims corresponding to the age of the corn; for they sacrificed new-born babes at sowing, older children when the grain had sprouted, and so on till it was fully ripe, when they sacrificed old men.¹ No doubt the correspondence between the ages of the victims and the state of the corn was supposed to enhance the efficacy of the sacrifice.

Human
sacrifices
for the
crops
among the
Pawnees.

The Pawnees annually sacrificed a human victim in spring when they sowed their fields. The sacrifice was believed to have been enjoined on them by the Morning Star, or by a certain bird which the Morning Star had sent to them as its messenger. The bird was stuffed and preserved as a powerful talisman. They thought that an omission of this sacrifice would be followed by the total failure of the crops of maize, beans, and pumpkins. The victim was a captive of either sex. He was clad in the gayest and most costly attire, was fattened on the choicest food, and carefully kept in ignorance of his doom. When he was fat enough, they bound him to a cross in the presence of the multitude, danced a solemn dance, then cleft his head with a tomahawk and shot him with arrows. According to one trader, the squaws then cut pieces of flesh from the victim's body, with which they greased their hoes; but this was denied by another trader who had been present at the ceremony. Immediately after the sacrifice the people proceeded to plant their fields. A particular account has been preserved of the sacrifice of a Sioux girl by the Pawnees in April 1837 or 1838. The girl was fourteen or fifteen years old and had been kept for six months and well treated. Two days before the sacrifice she was led from wigwam to wigwam, accompanied by the whole council of chiefs and warriors. At each lodge she received a small billet of wood and a little paint, which she handed to the warrior next to her. In this way she called at every wigwam, receiving at each the same present of wood and paint. On the twenty-second of April she was taken out to be sacrificed, attended by the warriors, each of whom carried two pieces of wood

¹ Herrera, quoted by A. Bastian, *Die Culturlander des alten Amerika* (Berlin, 1878), ii. 379 sq. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 338 sq.

which he had received from her hands. Her body having been painted half red and half black, she was attached to a sort of gibbet and roasted for some time over a slow fire, then shot to death with arrows. The chief sacrificer next tore out her heart and devoured it. While her flesh was still warm it was cut in small pieces from the bones, put in little baskets, and taken to a neighbouring corn-field. There the head chief took a piece of the flesh from a basket and squeezed a drop of blood upon the newly-deposited grains of corn. His example was followed by the rest, till all the seed had been sprinkled with the blood; it was then covered up with earth. According to one account the body of the victim was reduced to a kind of paste, which was rubbed or sprinkled not only on the maize but also on the potatoes, the beans, and other seeds to fertilise them. By this sacrifice they hoped to obtain plentiful crops.¹

A West African queen used to sacrifice a man and woman in the month of March. They were killed with spades and hoes, and their bodies buried in the middle of a field which had just been tilled.² At Lagos in Guinea it was the custom annually to impale a young girl alive soon after the spring equinox in order to secure good crops. Along with her were sacrificed sheep and goats, which, with yams, heads of maize, and plantains, were hung on stakes on each side of her. The victims were bred up for the purpose in the king's seraglio, and their minds had been so powerfully wrought upon by the fetish men that they went cheerfully to

Human sacrifices for the crops in Africa.

¹ E. James, *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains* (London, 1823), ii. 80 sq.; H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), v. 77 sqq.; J. De Smet, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xi. (1838) pp. 493 sq.; *id.*, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xv. (1843) pp. 277-279; *id.*, *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses*, Nouvelle Edition (Paris and Brussels, 1873), pp. 121 sqq. The accounts by Schoolcraft and De Smet of the sacrifice of the Sioux girl are independent and supplement each other. According to De Smet, who wrote from the descriptions of four eye-witnesses, the procession from hut to hut for the purpose

of collecting wood took place on the morning of the sacrifice. Another description of the sacrifice is given by Mr. G. B. Grinnell from the recollection of an eye-witness (*Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-tales*, New York, 1889, pp. 362-369). According to this last account the victim was shot with arrows and afterwards burnt. Before the body was consumed in the fire a man pulled out the arrows, cut open the breast of the victim, and having smeared his face with the blood ran away as fast as he could.

² J. B. Labat, *Relation historique de l'Ethiopie occidentale* (Paris, 1732), i. 380.

their fate.¹ A similar sacrifice used to be annually offered at Benin, in Guinea.² The Marimos, a Bechuana tribe, sacrifice a human being for the crops. The victim chosen is generally a short, stout man. He is seized by violence or intoxicated and taken to the fields, where he is killed amongst the wheat to serve as "seed" (so they phrase it). After his blood has coagulated in the sun, it is burned along with the frontal bone, the flesh attached to it, and the brain; the ashes are then scattered over the ground to fertilise it. The rest of the body is eaten.³ The Wamegi of the Usagara hills in German East Africa used to offer human sacrifices of a peculiar kind once a year about the time of harvest, which was also the time of sowing; for the Wamegi have two crops annually, one in September and one in February. The festival was usually held in September or October. The victim was a girl who had attained the age of puberty. She was taken to a hill where the festival was to be celebrated, and there she was crushed to death between two branches.⁴ The sacrifice was not performed in the fields, and my informant could not ascertain its object, but we may conjecture that it was to ensure good crops in the following year.

Human sacrifices for the crops in the Philippines.

The Bagobos of Mindanao, one of the Philippine Islands, offer a human sacrifice before they sow their rice. The victim is a slave, who is hewn to pieces in the forest.⁵ The natives of Bontoc, a province in the interior of Luzon, one of the Philippine Islands, are passionate head-hunters. Their principal seasons for head-hunting are the times of planting and reaping the rice. In order that the crop may turn out well, every farm must get at least one human head at planting and one at sowing. The head-hunters go out in twos or threes, lie in wait for the victim,

¹ John Adams, *Sketches taken during Ten Voyages in Africa between the years 1786 and 1800* (London, N.D.), p. 25.

² P. Bouche, *La Côte des Esclaves* (Paris, 1885), p. 132.

³ T. Arbousset et F. Dumas, *Voyage d'exploration au Nord-est de la Colonie du Cap de Bonne-Espérance* (Paris, 1842), pp. 117 sq. The

custom has probably long been obsolete.

⁴ From information given me by my friend the Rev. John Roscoe, who resided for some time among the Wamegi and suppressed the sacrifice in 1886.

⁵ F. Blumentritt, "Das Stromgebiet des Rio Grande de Mindanao," *Petermanns Mitteilungen*, xxxvii. (1891) p. 110.

whether man or woman, cut off his or her head, hands, and feet, and bring them back in haste to the village, where they are received with great rejoicings. The skulls are at first exposed on the branches of two or three dead trees which stand in an open space of every village surrounded by large stones which serve as seats. The people then dance round them and feast and get drunk. When the flesh has decayed from the head, the man who cut it off takes it home and preserves it as a relic, while his companions do the same with the hands and the feet.¹ Similar customs are observed by the Apoyaos, another tribe in the interior of Luzon.²

The Wild Wa, an agricultural tribe on the north-eastern frontier of Upper Burma, still hunt for human heads as a means of promoting the welfare of the crops. The Wa regards his skulls as a protection against the powers of evil. "Without a skull his crops would fail; without a skull his kine might die; without a skull the father and mother spirits would be shamed and might be enraged; if there were no protecting skull the other spirits, who are all malignant, might gain entrance and kill the inhabitants, or drink all the liquor." The Wa country is a series of mountain ranges shelving rapidly down to narrow valleys from two to five thousand feet deep. The villages are all perched high on the slopes, some just under the crest of the ridge, some lower down on a small projecting spur of flat ground. Industrious cultivation has cleared away the jungle, and the villages stand out conspicuously in the landscape as yellowish-brown blotches on the hill-sides. Each village is fortified by an earthen rampart so thickly overgrown with cactuses and other shrubs as to be impenetrable. The only entrance is through a narrow, low, and winding tunnel, the floor of which, for additional security, is thickly studded with pegs to wound the feet of enemies who might attempt to force a way in. The Wa depend for their subsistence mainly on their crops of

Human sacrifices for the crops among the Wild Wa of Burma.

¹ A. Schadenberg, "Beitrage zur Kenntniss der im Innern Nordluzons lebenden Stämme," *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 1888, p. (39) (bound with *Zeitschrift*

für Ethnologie, xx. 1888).

² Schadenberg, in *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 1889, p. (681) (bound with *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xvi. 1889).

buckwheat, beans, and maize ; rice they cultivate only to distil a strong spirituous liquor from it. They had need be industrious, for no field can be reached without a climb up or down the steep mountain-side. Sometimes the rice-fields lie three thousand feet or more below the village, and they require constant attention. But the chief crop raised by the Wa is the poppy, from which they make opium. In February and March the hill-tops for miles are white with the blossom, and you may travel for days through nothing but fields of poppies. Then, too, is the proper season for head-hunting. It opens in March and lasts through April. Parties of head-hunters at that time go forth to prowl for human prey. As a rule they will not behead people of a neighbouring village nor even of any village on the same range of hills. To find victims they go to the next range or at any rate to a distance, and the farther the better, for the heads of strangers are preferred. The reason is that the ghosts of strangers, being unfamiliar with the country, are much less likely to stray away from their skulls ; hence they make more vigilant sentinels than the ghosts of people better acquainted with the neighbourhood, who are apt to go off duty without waiting for the tedious formality of relieving guard. When head-hunters return to a village with human heads, the rejoicing is uproarious. Then the great drum is beaten frantically, and its deep hollow boom resounding far and wide through the hills announces to the neighbourhood the glad tidings of murder successfully perpetrated. Then the barrels, or rather the bamboos, of rice-spirit are tapped, and while the genial stream flows and the women and children dance and sing for glee, the men drink themselves blind and mad drunk. The ghastly head, which forms the centre of all this rejoicing, is first taken to the spirit-house, a small shed which usually stands on the highest point of the village site. There, wrapt in grass or leaves, it is hung up in a basket to ripen and bleach. When all the flesh and sinews have mouldered away and nothing remains but the blanched and grinning skull, it is put to rest in the village Golgotha. This is an avenue of huge old trees, whose interlacing boughs form a verdant archway overhead and, with the

dense undergrowth, cast a deep shadow on the ground below. Every village has such an avenue stretching along the hill-side sometimes for a long distance, or even till it meets the avenue of the neighbouring village. In the solemn gloom of this verdurous canopy is the Place of Skulls. On one side of the avenue stands a row of wooden posts, usually mere trunks of trees with the bark peeled off, but sometimes rudely carved and painted with designs in red and black. A little below the top of each post is cut a niche, and in front of the niche is a ledge. On this ledge the skull is deposited, sometimes so that it is in full view of passers-by in the avenue, sometimes so that it only grins at them through a slit. Most villages count their skulls by tens or twenties, but some of them have hundreds of these trophies, especially when the avenue forms an unbroken continuity of shade between the villages. The old skulls ensure peace to the village, but at least one new one should be taken every year, that the rice may grow green far down in the depths of the valley, that the maize may tinge with its golden hue the steep mountain-sides, and that the hill-tops may be white for miles and miles with the bloom of the poppy.¹

The Shans of Indo-China still believe in the efficacy of human sacrifice to procure a good harvest, though they act on the belief less than some other tribes of this region. Their practice now is to poison somebody at the state festival, which is generally held at some time between March and May.² Among the Lhota Naga, one of the many savage tribes who inhabit the deep rugged labyrinthine glens which wind into the mountains from the rich valley of Brahmapootra,³ it used to be a common custom to chop off the heads, hands, and feet of people they met with, and then to stick up the severed extremities in their fields to ensure a good crop of grain. They bore no

Human sacrifices for the crops among the Shans of Indo-China and the Nagas and other tribes of India.

¹ (Sir) J. G. Scott and J. P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* (Rangoon, 1900-1901), Part i. vol. i. pp. 493-509.

² Col. R. G. Woodthorpe, "Some Account of the Shans and Hill Tribes of the States on the Mekong," *Journal*

of the Anthropological Institute, xxvi. (1897) p. 24.

³ For a general description of the country and the tribes see L. A. Waddell, "The Tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, lxix. Part iii. (Calcutta, 1901), pp. 1-127.

ill-will whatever to the persons upon whom they operated in this unceremonious fashion. Once they flayed a boy alive, carved him in pieces, and distributed the flesh among all the villagers, who put it into their corn-bins to avert bad luck and ensure plentiful crops of grain. The Angami, another tribe of the same region, used also to relieve casual passers-by of their heads, hands, and feet, with the same excellent intention.¹ The hill tribe Kudulu, near Vizagapatam in the Madras Presidency, offered human sacrifices to the god Jankari for the purpose of obtaining good crops. The ceremony was generally performed on the Sunday before or after the Pongal feast. For the most part the victim was purchased, and until the time for the sacrifice came he was free to wander about the village, to eat and drink what he liked, and even to lie with any woman he met. On the appointed day he was carried before the idol drunk; and when one of the villagers had cut a hole in his stomach and smeared the blood on the idol, the crowds from the neighbouring villages rushed upon him and hacked him to pieces. All who were fortunate enough to secure morsels of his flesh carried them away and presented them to their village idols.² The Gonds of India, a Dravidian race, kidnapped Brahman boys, and kept them as victims to be sacrificed on various occasions. At sowing and reaping, after a triumphal procession, one of the lads was slain by being punctured with a poisoned arrow. His blood was then sprinkled over the ; ' . ' field or the ripe crop, and his flesh was devoured.³ The Oraons or Uraons of Chota Nagpur worship a goddess called Anna Kuari, who can give good crops and make a man rich, but to induce her to do so it is necessary to offer human sacrifices. In spite of the vigilance of the British Government these sacrifices are said to be still secretly perpetrated. The victims are poor waifs and strays whose disappearance attracts no notice. April and May are the months when the catchpoles are out on the prowl. At that time strangers will not go about the

¹ Miss G. M. Godden, "Naga and other Frontier Tribes of North-Eastern India," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvii. (1898) pp. 9 sq., 38 sq.

² *North Indian Notes and Queries*, i. p. 4, § 15 (April 1891).

³ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. pp. 127 sq., § 721 (May 1885).

country alone, and parents will not let their children enter the jungle or herd the cattle. When a catchpole has found a victim, he cuts his throat and carries away the upper part of the ring finger and the nose. The goddess takes up her abode in the house of any man who has offered her a sacrifice, and from that time his fields yield a double harvest. The form she assumes in the house is that of a small child. When the householder brings in his unhusked rice, he takes the goddess and rolls her over the heap to double its size. But she soon grows restless and can only be pacified with the blood of fresh human victims.¹

But the best known case of human sacrifices, systematically offered to ensure good crops, is supplied by the Khonds or Kandhs, another Dravidian race in Bengal. Our knowledge of them is derived from the accounts written by British officers who, about the middle of the nineteenth century, were engaged in putting them down.² The sacrifices were offered to the Earth Goddess, Tari Pennu or Bera Pennu, and were believed to ensure good crops and immunity from all disease and accidents. In particular, they were considered necessary in the cultivation of turmeric, the Khonds arguing that the turmeric could not have a deep red colour without the shedding of blood.³ The victim or Meriah, as he was called, was acceptable to the goddess only if he had been purchased, or had been born a victim—that is, the son of a victim father, or had been devoted as a child by his father or guardian. Khonds in distress often sold their children for victims, “considering the beatification of their souls certain, and their death, for the benefit of mankind, the most honourable possible.” A man of the Panua tribe was once seen to load a Khond with curses, and finally to spit in his face, because the Khond had sold for a victim his own child, whom the Panua had wished to

Human sacrifices for the crops among the Khonds.

¹ Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., “Religion and Customs of the Uraons,” *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. i. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1906), pp. 141 sq.

² Major S. C. Macpherson, *Memoirs of Service in India* (London, 1865), pp. 113-131; Major-General John Campbell, *Wild Tribes of Khondistan* (London, 1864), pp. 52-58, etc.

Compare Mgr. Neyret, Bishop of Vizagapatam, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxiii. (1851) pp. 402-404; E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes on Southern India* (Madras, 1906), pp. 510-519; *id.*, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), iii. 371-385.

³ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 56.

marry. A party of Khonds, who saw this, immediately pressed forward to comfort the seller of his child, saying, "Your child has died that all the world may live, and the Earth Goddess herself will wipe that spittle from your face."¹ The victims were often kept for years before they were sacrificed. Being regarded as consecrated beings, they were treated with extreme affection, mingled with deference, and were welcomed wherever they went. A Meriah youth, on attaining maturity, was generally given a wife, who was herself usually a Meriah or victim; and with her he received a portion of land and farm-stock. Their offspring were also victims. Human sacrifices were offered to the Earth Goddess by tribes, branches of tribes, or villages, both at periodical festivals and on extraordinary occasions. The periodical sacrifices were generally so arranged by tribes and divisions of tribes that each head of a family was enabled, at least once a year, to procure a shred of flesh for his fields, generally about the time when his chief crop was laid down.²

Cere-
monies
preliminary
to the
sacrifice.

The mode of performing these tribal sacrifices was as follows. Ten or twelve days before the sacrifice, the victim was devoted by cutting off his hair, which, until then, had been kept unshorn. Crowds of men and women assembled to witness the sacrifice; none might be excluded, since the sacrifice was declared to be for all mankind. It was preceded by several days of wild revelry and gross debauchery.³ On the day before the sacrifice the victim, dressed in a new garment, was led forth from the village in solemn procession, with music and dancing, to the Meriah grove, a clump of high forest trees standing a little way from the village and untouched by the axe. There they tied him to a post, which was sometimes placed between two plants of the sankissar shrub. He was then anointed with oil, ghee, and turmeric, and adorned with flowers; and "a species of reverence, which it is not easy to distinguish from adoration," was paid to him throughout the day. A great struggle now arose to obtain the smallest relic from his person; a particle of the

¹ S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* pp. 117 sq.; J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 112.
115 sq.

³ S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* pp.

² S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* pp. 117 sq.

turmeric paste with which he was smeared, or a drop of his spittle, was esteemed of sovereign virtue, especially by the women.¹ The crowd danced round the post to music, and, addressing the earth, said, "O God, we offer this sacrifice to you; give us good crops, seasons, and health"; then speaking to the victim they said, "We bought you with a price, and did not seize you; now we sacrifice you according to custom, and no sin rests with us."²

On the last morning the orgies, which had been scarcely interrupted during the night, were resumed, and continued till noon, when they ceased, and the assembly proceeded to consummate the sacrifice. The victim was again anointed with oil, and each person touched the anointed part, and wiped the oil on his own head. In some places they took the victim in procession round the village, from door to door, where some plucked hair from his head, and others begged for a drop of his spittle, with which they anointed their heads.³ As the victim might not be bound nor make any show of resistance, the bones of his arms and, if necessary, his legs were broken; but often this precaution was rendered unnecessary by stupefying him with opium.⁴ The mode of putting him to death varied in different places. One of the commonest modes seems to have been strangulation, or squeezing to death. The branch of a green tree was cleft several feet down the middle; the victim's neck (in other places, his chest) was inserted in the cleft, which the priest, aided by his assistants, strove with all his force to close.⁵ Then he wounded the victim slightly with his axe, whereupon the crowd rushed at the wretch and hewed the flesh from the bones, leaving the head and bowels untouched. Sometimes he was cut up alive.⁶ In Chinna Kimedya he was dragged along the fields, surrounded by the crowd, who, avoiding his head and intestines, hacked the flesh from his body with their knives till he died.⁷ Another very common mode of

Consum-
nation
of the
sacrifice

¹ S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 118.

² J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 54 sq.

³ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 55, 112.

⁴ S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 119; J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 113.

⁵ S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 127. Instead of the branch of a green tree,

Campbell mentions two strong planks or bamboos (p. 57) or a slit bamboo (p. 182).

⁶ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 56, 58, 120.

⁷ E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 288, quoting Colonel Campbell's *Report*.

sacrifice in the same district was to fasten the victim to the proboscis of a wooden elephant, which revolved on a stout post, and, as it whirled round, the crowd cut the flesh from the victim while life remained. In some villages Major Campbell found as many as fourteen of these wooden elephants, which had been used at sacrifices.¹ In one district the victim was put to death slowly by fire. A low stage was formed, sloping on either side like a roof; upon it they laid the victim, his limbs wound round with cords to confine his struggles. Fires were then lighted and hot brands applied, to make him roll up and down the slopes of the stage as long as possible; for the more tears he shed the more abundant would be the supply of rain. Next day the body was cut to pieces.²

Flesh of
the victim
used to
fertilise the
fields.

The flesh cut from the victim was instantly taken home by the persons who had been deputed by each village to bring it. To secure its rapid arrival, it was sometimes forwarded by relays of men, and conveyed with postal fleetness fifty or sixty miles.³ In each village all who stayed at home fasted rigidly until the flesh arrived. The bearer deposited it in the place of public assembly, where it was received by the priest and the heads of families. The priest divided it into two portions, one of which he offered to the Earth Goddess by burying it in a hole in the ground with his back turned, and without looking. Then each man added a little earth to bury it, and the priest poured water on the spot from a hill gourd. The other portion of flesh he divided into as many shares as there were heads of houses present. Each head of a house rolled his shred of flesh in leaves, and buried it in his favourite field, placing it in the earth behind his back without looking.⁴ In some

¹ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 126. The elephant represented the Earth Goddess herself, who was here conceived in elephant-form (Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 51, 126). In the hill tracts of Goomsur she was represented in peacock-form, and the post to which the victim was bound bore the effigy of a peacock (Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 54).

² S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 130. In Mexico also the tears of the human victims were sometimes regarded as an

omen of rain (B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des Choses de la Nouvelle Espagne*, traduite par D. Jourdanet et R. Simeon, Paris, 1880, bk. ii. ch. 20, p. 86).

³ E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 288, referring to Colonel Campbell's Report.

⁴ S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 129. Compare J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 55, 58, 113, 121, 137.

places each man carried his portion of flesh to the stream which watered his fields, and there hung it on a pole.¹ For three days thereafter no house was swept; and, in one district, strict silence was observed, no fire might be given out, no wood cut, and no strangers received. The remains of the human victim (namely, the head, bowels, and bones) were watched by strong parties the night after the sacrifice; and next morning they were burned, along with a whole sheep, on a funeral pile. The ashes were scattered over the fields, laid as paste over the houses and granaries, or mixed with the new corn to preserve it from insects.² Sometimes, however, the head and bones were buried, not burnt.³ After the suppression of the human sacrifices, inferior victims were substituted in some places; for instance, in the capital of Chinna Kimedya a goat took the place of a human victim.⁴ Others sacrifice a buffalo. They tie it to a wooden post in a sacred grove, dance wildly round it with brandished knives, then, falling on the living animal, hack it to shreds and tatters in a few minutes, fighting and struggling with each other for every particle of flesh. As soon as a man has secured a piece he makes off with it at full speed to bury it in his fields, according to ancient custom, before the sun has set, and as some of them have far to go they must run very fast. All the women throw clods of earth at the rapidly retreating figures of the men, some of them taking very good aim. Soon the sacred grove, so lately a scene of tumult, is silent and deserted except for a few people who remain to guard all that is left of the buffalo, to wit, the head, the bones, and the stomach, which are burned with ceremony at the foot of the stake.⁵

In these Khond sacrifices the Meriahs are represented by our authorities as victims offered to propitiate the Earth Goddess. But from the treatment of the victims both before and after death it appears that the custom cannot be explained as merely a propitiatory sacrifice. A part of the flesh certainly was offered to the Earth Goddess, but the

In these Khond sacrifices the human victims appear to have been regarded as divine.

¹ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 182.

⁴ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 187.

² S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 128; E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 288.

⁵ E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), iii. 381-385.

³ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 55, 182.

rest was buried by each householder in his fields, and the ashes of the other parts of the body were scattered over the fields, laid as paste on the granaries, or mixed with the new corn. These latter customs imply that to the body of the Meriah there was ascribed a direct or intrinsic power of making the crops to grow, quite independent of the indirect efficacy which it might have as an offering to secure the good-will of the deity. In other words, the flesh and ashes of the victim were believed to be endowed with a magical or physical power of fertilising the land. The same intrinsic power was ascribed to the blood and tears of the Meriah, his blood causing the redness of the turmeric and his tears producing rain ; for it can hardly be doubted that, originally at least, the tears were supposed to bring down the rain, not merely to prognosticate it. Similarly the custom of pouring water on the buried flesh of the Meriah was no doubt a rain-charm. Again, magical power as an attribute of the Meriah appears in the sovereign virtue believed to reside in anything that came from his person, as his hair or spittle. The ascription of such power to the Meriah indicates that he was much more than a mere man sacrificed to propitiate a deity. Once more, the extreme reverence paid him points to the same conclusion. Major Campbell speaks of the Meriah as "being regarded as something more than mortal,"¹ and Major Macpherson says, "A species of reverence, which it is not easy to distinguish from adoration, is paid to him."² In short, the Meriah seems to have been regarded as divine. As such, he may originally have represented the Earth Goddess or, perhaps, a deity of vegetation ; though in later times he came to be regarded rather as a victim offered to a deity than as himself an incarnate god. This later view of the Meriah as a victim rather than a divinity may perhaps have received undue emphasis from the European writers who have described the Khond religion. Habituated to the later idea of sacrifice as an offering made to a god for the purpose of conciliating his favour, European observers are apt to interpret all religious slaughter in this sense, and to suppose that wherever such slaughter takes place, there must necessarily be a deity to whom the carnage is believed by

¹ J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 112.

² S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 118.

the slayers to be acceptable. Thus their preconceived ideas may unconsciously colour and warp their descriptions of savage rites.

The same custom of killing the representative of a god, of which strong traces appear in the Khond sacrifices, may perhaps be detected in some of the other human sacrifices described above. Thus the ashes of the slaughtered Marimo were scattered over the fields; the blood of the Brahman lad was put on the crop and field; the flesh of the slain Naga was stowed in the corn-bin; and the blood of the Sioux girl was allowed to trickle on the seed.¹ Again, the identification of the victim with the corn, in other words, the view that he is an embodiment or spirit of the corn, is brought out in the pains which seem to be taken to secure a physical correspondence between him and the natural object which he embodies or represents. Thus the Mexicans killed young victims for the young corn and old ones for the ripe corn; the Marimos sacrifice, as "seed," a short, fat man, the shortness of his stature corresponding to that of the young corn, his fatness to the condition which it is desired that the crops may attain; and the Pawnees fattened their victims probably with the same view. Again, the identification of the victim with the corn comes out in the African custom of killing him with spades and hoes, and the Mexican custom of grinding him, like corn, between two stones.

Traces of an identification of the human victim with the god in other sacrifices.

One more point in these savage customs deserves to be noted. The Pawnee chief devoured the heart of the Sioux girl, and the Marimos and Gonds ate the victim's flesh. If, as we suppose, the victim was regarded as divine, it follows that in eating his flesh his worshippers believed themselves to be partaking of the body of their god.

§ 4. *The Corn-spirit slain in his Human Representatives*

The barbarous rites just described offer analogies to the harvest customs of Europe. Thus the fertilising virtue ascribed to the corn-spirit is shewn equally in the savage custom of mixing the victim's blood or ashes with the seed-corn and the European custom of mixing the grain from

Analogy of these barbarous rites to the harvest customs of Europe.

¹ Above, pp. 239, 240, 244.

the last sheaf with the young corn in spring.¹ Again, the identification of the person with the corn appears alike in the savage custom of adapting the age and stature of the victim to the age and stature, whether actual or expected, of the crop; in the Scotch and Styrian rules that when the corn-spirit is conceived as the Maiden the last corn shall be cut by a young maiden, but when it is conceived as the Corn-mother it shall be cut by an old woman;² in the Lothringian warning given to old women to save themselves when the Old Woman is being killed, that is, when the last corn is being threshed;³ and in the Tyrolese expectation that if the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is tall, the next year's corn will be tall also.⁴ Further, the same identification is implied in the savage custom of killing the representative of the corn-spirit with hoes or spades or by grinding him between stones, and in the European custom of pretending to kill him with the scythe or the flail. Once more the Khond custom of pouring water on the buried flesh of the victim is parallel to the European customs of pouring water on the personal representative of the corn-spirit or plunging him into a stream.⁵ Both the Khond and the European customs are rain-charms.

Human
representa-
tive of the
corn-spirit
slain on the
harvest-
field.

To return now to the Lityerses story. It has been shewn that in rude society human beings have been commonly killed to promote the growth of the crops. There is therefore no improbability in the supposition that they may once have been killed for a like purpose in Phrygia and Europe; and when Phrygian legend and European folk-custom, closely agreeing with each other, point to the conclusion that men were so slain, we are bound, provisionally at least, to accept the conclusion. Further, both the Lityerses story and European harvest-customs agree in indicating that the victim was put to death as a representative of the corn-spirit, and this indication is in harmony with the view which some savages appear to take of the victim slain to make the crops flourish. On the whole, then, we may fairly suppose that both in Phrygia and in Europe the representative of

¹ Above, p. 134.

² Above, pp. 134, 157 *sqq.*

³ Above, p. 223.

⁴ Above, p. 224.

⁵ Above, p. 170, with the references in note ¹; *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 195-197.

the corn-spirit was annually killed upon the harvest-field. Grounds have been already shewn for believing that similarly in Europe the representative of the tree-spirit was annually slain. The proofs of these two remarkable and closely connected customs are entirely independent of each other. Their coincidence seems to furnish fresh presumption in favour of both.

To the question, How was the representative of the corn-spirit chosen? one answer has been already given. Both the Lityerses story and European folk-custom shew that passing strangers were regarded as manifestations of the corn-spirit escaping from the cut or threshed corn, and as such were seized and slain. But this is not the only answer which the evidence suggests. According to the Phrygian legend the victims of Lityerses were not simply passing strangers, but persons whom he had vanquished in a reaping contest and afterwards wrapt up in corn-sheaves and beheaded.¹ This suggests that the representative of the corn-spirit may have been selected by means of a competition on the harvest-field, in which the vanquished competitor was compelled to accept the fatal honour. The supposition is countenanced by European harvest-customs. We have seen that in Europe there is sometimes a contest amongst the reapers to avoid being last, and that the person who is vanquished in this competition, that is, who cuts the last corn, is often roughly handled. It is true we have not found that a pretence is made of killing him; but on the other hand we have found that a pretence is made of killing the man who gives the last stroke at threshing, that is, who is vanquished in the threshing contest.² Now, since it is in the character of representative of the corn-spirit that the thresher of the last corn is slain in mimicry, and since the same representative character attaches (as we have seen) to the cutter and binder as well as to the thresher of the last corn, and since the same repugnance is evinced by harvesters to be last in any one of these labours, we may conjecture that a pretence has been commonly made of killing the reaper and binder as well as the thresher of the last corn, and that in ancient times this killing was actually

The victim who represented the corn-spirit may have been a passing stranger or the reaper, binder, or thresher of the last corn.

¹ See above, p. 217.

² Above, p. 224.

carried out. This conjecture is corroborated by the common superstition that whoever cuts the last corn must die soon.¹ Sometimes it is thought that the person who binds the last sheaf on the field will die in the course of next year.² The reason for fixing on the reaper, binder, or thresher of the last corn as the representative of the corn-spirit may be this. The corn-spirit is supposed to lurk as long as he can in the corn, retreating before the reapers, the binders, and the threshers at their work. But when he is forcibly expelled from his refuge in the last corn cut or the last sheaf bound or the last grain threshed, he necessarily assumes some other form than that of the corn-stalks which had hitherto been his garment or body. And what form can the expelled corn-spirit assume more naturally than that of the person who stands nearest to the corn from which he (the corn-spirit) has just been expelled? But the person in question is necessarily the reaper, binder, or thresher of the last corn. He or she, therefore, is seized and treated as the corn-spirit himself.

Perhaps the victim annually sacrificed in the character of the corn-spirit may have been the king himself.

Thus the person who was killed on the harvest-field as the representative of the corn-spirit may have been either a passing stranger or the harvester who was last at reaping, binding, or threshing. But there is a third possibility, to which ancient legend and modern folk-custom alike point. Lityerses not only put strangers to death; he was himself slain, and apparently in the same way as he had slain others, namely, by being wrapt in a corn-sheaf, beheaded, and cast into the river; and it is implied that this happened to Lityerses on his own land.³ Similarly in modern harvest-customs the pretence of killing appears to be carried out quite as often on the person of the master (farmer or squire) as on that of strangers.⁴ Now when we remember that Lityerses was said to have been a son of the King of Phrygia, and that in one account he is himself called a king, and when we combine with this the tradition that he was put to death, apparently as a representative of the corn-spirit, we are led to conjecture that we have here another

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, p. 5.

² H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste* (Hanover, 1878), p. 98.

³ Above, p. 217. It is not expressly said that he was wrapt in a sheaf.

⁴ Above, pp. 225 sq., 229 sq.

trace of the custom of annually slaying one of those divine or priestly kings who are known to have held ghostly sway in many parts of Western Asia and particularly in Phrygia. The custom appears, as we have seen,¹ to have been so far modified in places that the king's son was slain in the king's stead. Of the custom thus modified the story of Lityerses would be, in one version at least, a reminiscence.

Turning now to the relation of the Phrygian Lityerses to the Phrygian Attis, it may be remembered that at Pessinus—the seat of a priestly kingship—the high-priest appears to have been annually slain in the character of Attis, a god of vegetation, and that Attis was described by an ancient authority as “a reaped ear of corn.”² Thus Attis, as an embodiment of the corn-spirit, annually slain in the person of his representative, might be thought to be ultimately identical with Lityerses, the latter being simply the rustic prototype out of which the state religion of Attis was developed. It may have been so; but, on the other hand, the analogy of European folk-custom warns us that amongst the same people two distinct deities of vegetation may have their separate personal representatives, both of whom are slain in the character of gods at different times of the year. For in Europe, as we have seen, it appears that one man was commonly slain in the character of the tree-spirit in spring, and another in the character of the corn-spirit in autumn. It may have been so in Phrygia also. Attis was especially a tree-god, and his connexion with corn may have been only such an extension of the power of a tree-spirit as is indicated in customs like the Harvest-May.³ Again, the representative of Attis appears to have been slain in spring; whereas Lityerses must have been slain in summer or autumn, according to the time of the harvest in Phrygia.⁴ On the whole, then, while we are not justified in regarding Lityerses as the prototype of Attis, the two may be regarded as parallel products of the same religious idea, and may have stood to each other as in Europe the Old Man of harvest

Relation of Lityerses to Attis : both may have been originally corn-spirits, or the one a corn-spirit and the other a tree-spirit

¹ See *The Dying God*, pp. 160 sqq.

² See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 231 sqq., 239 sq.

³ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 47 sqq.

⁴ I do not know when the corn is reaped in Phrygia; but the high upland character of the country makes it likely that harvest is later there than on the coasts of the Mediterranean.

Human
representa-
tives both
of Lityerses
and Attis
annually
slain.

stands to the Wild Man, the Leaf Man, and so forth, of spring. Both were spirits or deities of vegetation, and the personal representatives of both were annually slain. But whereas the Attis worship became elevated into the dignity of a State religion and spread to Italy, the rites of Lityerses seem never to have passed the limits of their native Phrygia, and always retained their character of rustic ceremonies performed by peasants on the harvest-field. At most a few villages may have clubbed together, as amongst the Khonds, to procure a human victim to be slain as representative of the corn-spirit for their common benefit. Such victims may have been drawn from the families of priestly kings or kinglets, which would account for the legendary character of Lityerses as the son of a Phrygian king or as himself a king. When villages did not so club together, each village or farm may have procured its own representative of the corn-spirit by dooming to death either a passing stranger or the harvester who cut, bound, or threshed the last sheaf. Perhaps in the olden time the practice of head-hunting as a means of promoting the growth of the corn may have been as common among the rude inhabitants of Europe and Western Asia as it still is, or was till lately, among the primitive agricultural tribes of Assam, Burma, the Philippine Islands, and the Indian Archipelago.¹ It is hardly necessary to add that in Phrygia, as in Europe, the old barbarous custom of killing a man on the harvest-field or the threshing-floor had doubtless passed into a mere pretence long before the classical era,

¹ See above, pp. 240 *sqq.*; and *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 247-249. As to head-hunting in British Borneo see H. L. Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (London, 1896), ii. 140 *sqq.*; in Central Celebes, see A. C. Kruijt, "Het koppensnellen der Toradja's van Midden-Celebes, en zijne Beteekenis," *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks*, iii. part 2 (Amsterdam, 1899), pp. 147-229; among the Igorot of Bontoc in Luzon, see A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manilla, 1905), pp. 172 *sqq.*; among the Naga tribes of Assam, see Miss G. M. Godden, "Naga and other

Frontier Tribes of North-East India," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvii. (1898) pp. 12-17. It must not, however, be thought that among these tribes the custom of procuring human heads is practised merely as a means to ensure the growth of the crops; it is apparently supposed to exert a salutary influence on the whole life of the people by providing them with guardian spirits in the shape of the ghosts of the men to whom in their lifetime the heads belonged. The Scythians of Central Europe in antiquity set great store on the heads of the enemies whom they had slain in war. See Herodotus iv. 64 *sq.*

and was probably regarded by the reapers and threshers themselves as no more than a rough jest which the license of a harvest-home permitted them to play off on a passing stranger, a comrade, or even on their master himself.¹

I have dwelt on the Lityerses song at length because it affords so many points of comparison with European and savage folk-custom. The other harvest songs of Western Asia and Egypt, to which attention has been called above,² may now be dismissed much more briefly. The similarity of the Bithynian Bormus³ to the Phrygian Lityerses helps to bear out the interpretation which has been given of the latter. Bormus, whose death or rather disappearance was annually mourned by the reapers in a plaintive song, was, like Lityerses, a king's son or at least the son of a wealthy and distinguished man. The reapers whom he watched were at work on his own fields, and he disappeared in going to fetch water for them; according to one version of the story he was carried off by the nymphs, doubtless the nymphs of the spring or pool or river whither he went to draw water.⁴ Viewed in the light of the Lityerses story and of European folk-custom, this disappearance of Bormus may be a reminiscence of the custom of binding the farmer himself in a corn-sheaf and throwing him into the water. The mournful strain which the reapers sang was probably a lamentation over the death of the corn-spirit, slain either in the cut corn or in the person of a human representative; and the call which they addressed to him may have been a prayer that he might return in fresh vigour next year.

Similarity
of the
Bithynian
Bormus
to the
Phrygian
Attis.

The Phoenician Linus song was sung at the vintage, at least in the west of Asia Minor, as we learn from Homer; and this, combined with the legend of Syleus, suggests that in ancient times passing strangers were handled by vintagers and vine-diggers in much the same way as they are said to have been handled by the reaper Lityerses. The Lydian

The
Phoenician
Linus song
at the
vintage.

¹ There are traces in Greece itself of an old custom of sacrificing human victims to promote the fertility of the earth. See Pausanias, vii. 19. 3 *sq.* compared with vii. 20. 1; *id.*, viii. 53. 3; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the*

Greek States, ii. (Oxford, 1896) p. 455; and *The Dying God*, pp. 161 *sq.*

² Above, pp. 215 *sq.*

³ Above, p. 216.

⁴ Hesychius, s.v. Βόρμος.

Syleus, so ran the legend, compelled passers-by to dig for him in his vineyard, till Hercules came and killed him and dug up his vines by the roots.¹ This seems to be the outline of a legend like that of Lityerses; but neither ancient writers nor modern folk-custom enable us to fill in the details.² But, further, the Linus song was probably sung also by Phoenician reapers, for Herodotus compares it to the Maneros song, which, as we have seen, was a lament raised by Egyptian reapers over the cut corn. Further, Linus was identified with Adonis, and Adonis has some claims to be regarded as especially a corn-deity.³ Thus the Linus lament, as sung at harvest, would be identical with the Adonis lament; each would be the lamentation raised by reapers over the dead spirit of the corn. But whereas Adonis, like Attis, grew into a stately figure of mythology, adored and mourned in splendid cities far beyond the limits of his Phoenician home, Linus appears to have remained a simple ditty sung by reapers and vintagers among the corn-sheaves and the vines. The analogy of Lityerses and of folk-custom, both European and savage, suggests that in Phoenicia the slain corn-spirit—the dead Adonis—may formerly have been represented by a human victim; and this suggestion is possibly supported by the Harran legend that Tammuz (Adonis) was slain by his cruel lord, who ground his bones in a mill and scattered them to the wind. For in Mexico, as we have seen, the human victim at harvest was crushed between two stones; and both in Africa and India the ashes or other remains of the victim were scattered over the fields.⁴ But the Harran legend may be only a mythical way of expressing the grinding of corn in the mill and the scattering of the seed. It seems worth suggesting that the mock king who was annually killed at the Babylonian festival of the Sacaea on the sixteenth day of the month Lous may have represented Tammuz himself. For the historian Berosus, who records the festival and its date, probably used the Macedonian

Linus identified with Adonis, who may have been annually represented by a human victim.

¹ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, ii. 6. 3.

² The scurrilities exchanged both in ancient and modern times between vine-dressers, vintagers, and passers-by seem to belong to a different category. See W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische*

Forschungen, pp. 53 sq.

³ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 188 sqq.

⁴ Above, pp. 236 sq., 240, 243, 244, 248 sq.

calendar, since he dedicated his history to Antiochus Soter ; and in his day the Macedonian month Lous appears to have corresponded to the Babylonian month Tammuz.¹ If this conjecture is right, the view that the mock king at the Sacaea was slain in the character of a god would be established. But to this point we shall return later on.

There is a good deal more evidence that in Egypt the slain corn-spirit—the dead Osiris—was represented by a human victim, whom the reapers slew on the harvest-field, mourning his death in a dirge, to which the Greeks, through a verbal misunderstanding, gave the name of Maneros.² For the legend of Busiris seems to preserve a reminiscence of human sacrifices once offered by the Egyptians in connexion with the worship of Osiris. Busiris was said to have been an Egyptian king who sacrificed all strangers on the altar of Zeus. The origin of the custom was traced to a dearth which afflicted the land of Egypt for nine years. A Cyprian seer informed Busiris that the dearth would cease if a man were annually sacrificed to Zeus. So Busiris instituted the sacrifice. But when Hercules came to Egypt, and was being dragged to the altar to be sacrificed, he burst his bonds and slew Busiris and his son.³ Here then is a legend that in Egypt a human victim was annually sacrificed to prevent

The corn-spirit in Egypt (Osiris) annually represented by a human victim.

¹ The probable correspondence of the months, which supplies so welcome a confirmation of the conjecture in the text, was pointed out to me by my friend W. Robertson Smith, who furnished me with the following note: "In the Syro-Macedonian calendar Lous represents Ab, not Tammuz. Was it different in Babylon? I think it was, and one month different, at least in the early times of the Greek monarchy in Asia. For we know from a Babylonian observation in the *Almagest* (*Adler*, i. 396) that in 229 B.C. Xanthicus began on February 26. It was therefore the month before the equinoctial moon, not Nisan but Adar, and consequently Lous answered to the lunar month Tammuz."

² Above, p. 215.

³ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, ii. 5. 11; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 1396; Plutarch, *Parall.* 38.

Herodotus (ii. 45) discredits the idea that the Egyptians ever offered human sacrifices. But his authority is not to be weighed against that of Manetho (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 73), who affirms that they did. See further Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London and New York, 1911), i. 210 *sqq.*, who says (pp. 210, 212): "There is abundant proof for the statement that the Egyptians offered up sacrifices of human beings, and that, in common with many African tribes at the present day, their customs in dealing with vanquished enemies were bloodthirsty and savage. . . . The passages from Egyptian works quoted earlier in this chapter prove that human sacrifices were offered up at Heliopolis as well as at Têtu, or Busiris, and the rumour of such sacrifices has found expression in the works of Greek writers."

the failure of the crops, and a belief is implied that an omission of the sacrifice would have entailed a recurrence of that infertility which it was the object of the sacrifice to prevent. So the Pawnees, as we have seen, believed that an omission of the human sacrifice at planting would have been followed by a total failure of their crops. The name Busiris was in reality the name of a city, *pe-Asar*, "the house of Osiris,"¹ the city being so called because it contained the grave of Osiris. Indeed some high modern authorities believe that Busiris was the original home of Osiris, from which his worship spread to other parts of Egypt.² The human sacrifices were said to have been offered at his grave, and the victims were red-haired men, whose ashes were scattered abroad by means of winnowing-fans.³ This tradition of human sacrifices offered at the tomb of Osiris is confirmed by the evidence of the monuments; for "we find in the temple of Dendereh a human figure with a hare's head and pierced with knives, tied to a stake before Osiris Khenti-Amentiu, and Horus is shown in a Ptolemaic sculpture at Karnak killing a bound hare-headed figure before the bier of Osiris, who is represented in the form of Harpocrates. That these figures are really human beings with the head of an animal fastened on is proved by another sculpture at Dendereh, where a kneeling man has the hawk's head and wings over his head and shoulders, and in another place a priest has the jackal's head on his shoulders, his own head appearing through the disguise. Besides, Diodorus tells us that the Egyptian kings in former times had worn on their heads the fore-part of a lion, or of a bull, or of a dragon,

¹ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, i. (Stuttgart, 1884), § 57, p. 68.

² E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*,² i. 2 (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1909), p. 97; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient Classique, Les Origines* (Paris, 1895), pp. 129 *sqq.* Both these eminent historians have abandoned their former theory that Osiris was the Sun-god. Professor E. Meyer now speaks of Osiris as "the great vegetation god" and, on the same page, as "an earth-god" (*op. cit.*

i. 2, p. 70). I am happy to find the view of the nature of Osiris, which I advocated many years ago, supported by the authority of so distinguished an Oriental scholar. Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge holds that Busiris was the oldest shrine of Osiris in the north of Egypt, but that it was less ancient than his shrine at Abydos in the south. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London and New York, 1911), ii. 1.

³ Diodorus Siculus, i. 88; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 73, compare 30, 33.

showing that this method of disguise or transformation was a well-known custom.”¹

In the light of the foregoing discussion the Egyptian tradition of Busiris admits of a consistent and fairly probable explanation. Osiris, the corn-spirit, was annually represented at harvest by a stranger, whose red hair made him a suitable representative of the ripe corn. This man, in his representative character, was slain on the harvest-field, and mourned by the reapers, who prayed at the same time that the corn-spirit might revive and return (*mââ-ne-rha*, Maneros) with renewed vigour in the following year. Finally, the victim, or some part of him, was burned, and the ashes scattered by winnowing-fans over the fields to fertilise them. Here the choice of the victim on the ground of his resemblance to the corn which he was to represent agrees with the Mexican and African customs already described.² Similarly the woman who died in the character of the Corn-mother at the Mexican midsummer sacrifice had her face painted red and yellow in token of the colours of the corn, and she wore a pasteboard mitre surmounted by waving plumes in imitation of the tassel of the maize.³ On the other hand, at the festival of the Goddess of the White Maize the Mexicans sacrificed lepers.⁴ The Romans sacrificed red-haired puppies in spring to avert the supposed blighting influence of the Dog-star, believing that the crops would thus grow ripe and ruddy.⁵ The heathen of Harran offered to the sun, moon, and planets human victims who were chosen on the ground of their supposed resemblance to the heavenly bodies to which they were sacrificed; for example, the priests, clothed in red and smeared with blood, offered a red-haired, red-cheeked man to “the red planet

Assimilation of human victims to the corn which they represent.

¹ Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), p. 30, referring to Mariette, *Dendereh*, iv. plates xxxi., lvi., and lxxx. The passage of Diodorus Siculus referred to is i. 62. 4. As to masks of animals worn by Egyptian men and women in religious rites see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 133; *The Dying God*, p. 72.

² Above, pp. 237 sq., 240, 251.

³ E. J. Payne, *History of the New*

World called America, i. (Oxford, 1892) p. 422.

⁴ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859), iii. 535.

⁵ Festus, s.v. *Catulalaria*, p. 45 ed. C. O. Müller. Compare *id.*, s.v. *Rutilae canes*, p. 285; Columella, *De re rustica*, x. 342 sq.; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 905 sqq.; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 14.

Mars" in a temple which was painted red and draped with red hangings.¹ These and the like cases of assimilating the victim to the god, or to the natural phenomenon which he represents, are based ultimately on the principle of homoeopathic or imitative magic, the notion being that the object aimed at will be most readily attained by means of a sacrifice which resembles the effect that it is designed to bring about.

Remains of victims scattered over the fields to fertilise them.

Again, the scattering of the Egyptian victim's ashes over the fields resembles the Marimo and Khond custom,² and the use of : . . . for the purpose is another hint of his identification with the corn. So in Vendée a pretence is made of threshing and winnowing the farmer's wife, regarded as an embodiment of the corn-spirit; in Mexico the victim was ground between stones; and in Africa he was slain with spades and hoes.³ The story that the fragments of Osiris's body were scattered up and down the land, and buried by Isis on the spots where they lay,⁴ may very well be a reminiscence of a custom, like that observed by the Khonds, of dividing the human victim in pieces and burying the pieces, often at intervals of many miles from each other, in the fields.⁵ However, it is possible that the story of the dismemberment of Osiris, like the similar story told of Tammuz, may have been simply a mythical expression for the scattering of the seed. Once more, the legend that the body of Osiris enclosed in a coffer was thrown by Typhon into the Nile, perhaps points to a custom of casting the body of the victim, or at least a portion of it, into the Nile as a rain-charm, or rather to make the river rise. For a similar purpose Phrygian reapers seem to have flung the headless bodies of their victims, wrapt in corn-sheaves, into a river, and the Khonds poured water on the buried flesh of the human victim. Probably when Osiris ceased to be represented by a human victim, an image of him was annually thrown into the Nile, just as the effigy of his Syrian counter-

¹ D. Chwolohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus* (St. Petersburg, 1856), ii. 388 sq. Compare *ibid.*, pp. 384 sq., 386 sq., 391, 393, 395, 397. For other instances of the assimilation of the victim to the god, see H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin,

1894), pp. 77 sq., 357-359.

² Above, pp. 240, 249.

³ Above, pp. 149 sq., 237 sq., 239.

⁴ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18.

⁵ See above, p. 248; and compare *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 331 sqq.

part, Adonis, used to be cast into the sea at Alexandria. Or water may have been simply poured over it, as on the monument already mentioned¹ a priest is seen pouring water over the body of Osiris, from which corn-stalks are sprouting. The accompanying legend, "This is Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the returning waters," bears out the view that at the mysteries of Osiris a charm to make rain fall or the river rise was regularly wrought by pouring water on his effigy or flinging it into the Nile.

It may be objected that the red-haired victims were slain as representatives, not of Osiris, but of his enemy Typhon; for the victims were called Typhonian, and red was the colour of Typhon, black the colour of Osiris.² The answer to this objection must be reserved for the present. Meantime it may be pointed out that if Osiris is often represented on the monuments as black, he is still more commonly depicted as green,³ appropriately enough for a corn-god, who may be conceived as black while the seed is under ground, but as green after it has sprouted. So the Greeks recognised both a Green and a Black Demeter,⁴ and sacrificed to the Green Demeter in spring with mirth and gladness.⁵

Thus, if I am right, the key to the mysteries of Osiris is furnished by the melancholy cry of the Egyptian reapers, which down to Roman times could be heard year after year sounding across the fields, announcing the death of the corn-spirit, the rustic prototype of Osiris. Similar cries, as we have seen, were also heard on all the harvest-fields of Western Asia. By the ancients they are spoken of as songs; but to judge from the analysis of the names Linus and Maneros, they probably consisted only of a few words uttered in a prolonged musical note which could be heard for a great distance. Such sonorous and long-drawn cries, raised by a number of strong voices in concert, must have had a striking effect, and could hardly fail to arrest the attention

The black and green Osiris like the black and green Demeter.

The key to the mysteries of Osiris furnished by the lamentations of the reapers for the annual death of the corn-spirit.

¹ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 323. 1878), iii. 81.

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 22, 30, 31, 33, 73.

³ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (ed.

⁴ Pausanias, i. 22. 3, viii. 5. 8, viii. 42. i.

⁵ Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28. See above, p. 42.

of any wayfarer who happened to be within hearing. The sounds, repeated again and again, could probably be distinguished with tolerable ease even at a distance; but to a Greek traveller in Asia or Egypt the foreign words would commonly convey no meaning, and he might take them, not unnaturally, for the name of some one (Maneros, Linus, Lityerses, Bormus) upon whom the reapers were calling. And if his journey led him through more countries than one, as Bithynia and Phrygia, or Phoenicia and Egypt, while the corn was being reaped, he would have an opportunity of comparing the various harvest cries of the different peoples. Thus we can readily understand why these harvest cries were so often noted and compared with each other by the Greeks. Whereas, if they had been regular songs, they could not have been heard at such distances, and therefore could not have attracted the attention of so many travellers; and, moreover, even if the wayfarer were within hearing of them, he could not so easily have picked out the words.

"Crying
the neck"
at harvest
in Devon-
shire.

Down to recent times Devonshire reapers uttered cries of the same sort, and performed on the field a ceremony exactly analogous to that in which, if I am not mistaken, the rites of Osiris originated. The cry and the ceremony are thus described by an observer who wrote in the first half of the nineteenth century. "After the wheat is all cut, on most farms in the north of Devon, the harvest people have a custom of 'crying the neck.' I believe that this practice is seldom omitted on any large farm in that part of the country. It is done in this way. An old man, or some one else well acquainted with the ceremonies used on the occasion (when the labourers are reaping the last field of wheat), goes round to the shocks and sheaves, and picks out a little bundle of all the best ears he can find; this bundle he ties up very neat and trim, and plats and arranges the straws very tastefully. This is called 'the neck' of wheat, or wheaten-ears. After the field is cut out, and the pitcher once more circulated, the reapers, binders, and the women stand round in a circle. The person with 'the neck' stands in the centre, grasping it with both his hands. He first stoops and holds it near the ground, and all the men forming the ring take off their hats, stooping and holding them

with both hands towards the ground. They then all begin at once in a very loud and harmonious tone to cry 'The neck!' at the same time slowly raising themselves upright, and elevating their arms and hats above their heads; the person with 'the neck' also raising it on high. This is done three times. They then change their cry to 'Wee yen!'—'Way yen!'—which they sound in the same prolonged and slow manner as before, with singular harmony and effect, three times. This last cry is accompanied by the same movements of the body and arms as in crying 'the neck.' . . . After having thus repeated 'the neck' three times, and 'wee yen,' or 'way yen' as often, they all burst out into a kind of loud and joyous laugh, flinging up their hats and caps into the air, capering about and perhaps kissing the girls. One of them then gets 'the neck' and runs as hard as he can down to the farmhouse, where the dairymaid, or one of the young female domestics, stands at the door prepared with a pail of water. If he who holds 'the neck' can manage to get into the house, in any way unseen, or openly, by any other way than the door at which the girl stands with the pail of water, then he may lawfully kiss her; but, if otherwise, he is regularly soused with the contents of the bucket. On a fine still autumn evening the 'crying of the neck' has a wonderful effect at a distance, far finer than that of the Turkish muezzin, which Lord Byron extolled so much, and which he says is preferable to all the bells in Christendom. I have once or twice heard upwards of twenty men cry it, and sometimes joined by an equal number of female voices. About three years back, on some high grounds, where our people were harvesting, I heard six or seven 'necks' cried in one night, although I know that some of them were four miles off. They are heard through the quiet evening air at a considerable distance sometimes."¹ Again, Mrs. Bray tells how, travelling in Devonshire, "she saw a party of reapers standing in a circle on a rising ground, holding their sickles aloft. One in the middle held up some ears of corn tied together with flowers, and the party shouted three times (what she writes as) 'Arnack, arnack, arnack, we *haven*, we *haven*, we *haven*.' They went

¹ W. Hone, *Every-day Book* (London, N.D.), ii. coll. 1170 sq.

home, accompanied by women and children carrying boughs of flowers, shouting and singing. The manservant who attended Mrs. Bray said 'it was only the people making their games, as they always did, *to the spirit of harvest.*'"¹ Here, as Miss Burne remarks, "'arnack, we haven!' is obviously in the Devon dialect, 'a neck (or nack)! we have un!'" "The neck" is generally hung up in the farmhouse, where it sometimes remains for two or three years.² A similar custom is still observed in some parts of Cornwall, as I was told by my lamented friend J. H. Middleton. "The last sheaf is decked with ribbons. Two strong-voiced men are chosen and placed (one with the sheaf) on opposite sides of a valley. One shouts, 'I've gotten it.' The other shouts, 'What hast gotten?' The first answers, 'I'se gotten the neck.'"³

Other accounts of cutting and crying "the neck" in Devonshire.

Another account of this old custom, written at Truro in 1839, runs thus: "Now, when all the corn was cut at Heligan, the farming men and maidens come in front of the house, and bring with them a small sheaf of corn, the last that has been cut, and this is adorned with ribbons and flowers, and one part is tied quite tight, so as to look like a neck. Then they cry out 'Our (my) side, my side,' as loud as they can; then the dairymaid gives the neck to the head farming-man. He takes it, and says, very loudly three times, 'I have him, I have him, I have him.' Then another farming-man shouts very loudly, 'What have ye? what have ye? what have ye?' Then the first says, 'A neck, a neck, a neck.' And when he has said this, all the people make a very great shouting. This they do three times, and after one famous shout go away and eat supper, and dance, and sing songs."⁴ According to another account, "all went out to the field when the last corn was cut, the 'neck' was tied with ribbons and plaited, and they danced round it, and carried it to the great kitchen, where by-and-by the supper

¹ Miss C. S. Burne and Miss G. F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore* (London, 1883), pp. 372 *sq.*, referring to Mrs. Bray's *Traditions of Devon*, i. 330.

² W. Hone, *op. cit.* ii. 1172.

³ The Rev. Sydney Cooper, of 80 Gloucester Street, Cirencester, wrote to me (4th February 1893) that his

wife remembers the "neck" being kept on the mantelpiece of the parlour in a Cornish farmhouse; it generally stayed there throughout the year.

⁴ "Old Harvest Customs in Devon and Cornwall," *Folk-lore*, i. (1890) p. 280.

was. The words were as given in the previous account, and 'Hip, hip, hack, heck, I have 'ee, I have 'ee, I have 'ee.' It was hung up in the hall." Another account relates that one of the men rushed from the field with the last sheaf, while the rest pursued him with vessels of water, which they tried to throw over the sheaf before it could be brought into the barn.¹

Similar customs appear to have been formerly observed in Pembrokeshire, as appears from the following account, in which, however, nothing is said of the sonorous cries raised by the reapers when their work was done: "At harvest-time, in South Pembrokeshire, the last ears of corn left standing in the field were tied together, and the harvesters then tried to cut this neck by throwing their hatchets at it. What happened afterwards appears to have varied somewhat. I have been told by one old man that the one who got possession of the neck would carry it over into some neighbouring field, leave it there, and take to his heels as fast as he could; for, if caught, he had a rough time of it. The men who caught him would shut him up in a barn without food, or belabour him soundly, or perhaps shoe him, as it was called, beating the soles of his feet with rods—a very severe and much-dreaded punishment. On my grandfather's farm the man used to make for the house as fast as possible, and try to carry in the neck. The maids were on the look-out for him, and did their best to drench him with water. If they succeeded, they got the present of half-a-crown, which my grandfather always gave, and which was considered a very liberal present indeed. If the man was successful in dodging the maids, and getting the neck into the house without receiving the wetting, the half-crown became his. The neck was then hung up, and kept until the following year, at any rate, like the bunches of flowers or boughs gathered at the St. Jean, in the south of France. Sometimes the necks of many successive years were to be found hanging up together. In these two ways of disposing of the neck one sees the embodiment, no doubt, of the two ways of looking at the corn-spirit, as good (to be kept) or as bad (to be passed on to the neighbour)." ²

Cutting
"the neck"
in Pem-
brokeshire

¹ *Ibid.*

² Frances Hoggan, M.D., "The Neck Feast," *Folk-lore*, iv. (1893) p. 123. In Pembrokeshire the last sheaf

Cutting
"the neck"
in Shrop-
shire.

In the foregoing customs a particular bunch of ears, generally the last left standing,¹ is conceived as the neck of the corn-spirit, who is consequently beheaded when the bunch is cut down. Similarly in Shropshire the name "neck," or "the gander's neck," used to be commonly given to the last handful of ears left standing in the middle of the field when all the rest of the corn was cut. It was plaited together, and the reapers, standing ten or twenty paces off, threw their sickles at it. Whoever cut it through was said to have cut off the gander's neck. The "neck" was taken to the farmer's wife, who was supposed to keep it in the house for good luck till the next harvest came round.² Near Trèves, the man who reaps the last standing corn "cuts the goat's neck off."³ At Faslane, on the Gareloch (Dumbartonshire), the last handful of standing corn was sometimes called the "head."⁴ At Aurich, in East Friesland, the man who reaps the last corn "cuts the hare's tail off."⁵ In mowing down the last corner of a field French reapers sometimes call out, "We have the cat by the tail."⁶ In Bresse (Bourgogne) the last sheaf represented the fox. Beside it a score of ears were left standing to form the tail, and each reaper, going back some paces, threw his sickle at it. He who succeeded in severing it "cut off the fox's tail," and a cry of "*You cou cou!*" was raised in his honour.⁷ These examples leave no room to doubt the meaning of the Devonshire and Cornish expression "the neck," as applied to the last sheaf. The corn-spirit is conceived in human or animal form, and the last standing corn is part of its body—its neck, its head, or its tail. Sometimes, as we have seen, the last corn is regarded as the navel-string.⁸ Lastly, the Devonshire custom of drenching with water the person who brings in "the neck" is a rain-charm, such as we have had many examples of. Its parallel

Why the
last corn
cut is
called "the
neck."

of corn seems to have been commonly known as "the Hag" (*wrack*) rather than as "the Neck." See above, pp. 142-144.

¹ J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 20 (Bohn's edition); Miss C. S. Burne and Miss G. F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 371.

² Burne and Jackson, *l.c.*

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 185.

⁴ See above, p. 158.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 185.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Revue des Traditions populaires*, ii. (1887) p. 500.

⁸ Above, p. 150.

in the mysteries of Osiris was the custom of pouring water on the image of Osiris or on the person who represented him.

In Germany cries of *Waul!* or *Wol!* or *Wöld!* are sometimes raised by the reapers at cutting the last corn. Thus in some places the last patch of standing rye was called the *Waul*-rye; a stick decked with flowers was inserted in it, and the ears were fastened to the stick. Then all the reapers took off their hats and cried thrice, "*Waul! Waul! Waul!*" Sometimes they accompanied the cry by clashing with their whetstones on their scythes.¹

Cries of the reapers in Germany.

¹ E. Meier, in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde*, i. (1853) pp. 170-173; U. Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche bei Ackerbau und Viehzucht* (Breslau, 1884), pp. 166-169; H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste* (Hanover, 1878), pp. 104 sq.; A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Marchen aus Westfalen* (Leipsic, 1859), ii. pp. 177 sq., §§ 491, 492; A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Marchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), p. 395, § 97; K. Lynker, *Deutsche Sagen und Sitten in hessischen Gauen* (Cassel and Gottingen, 1860), p. 256, § 340

CHAPTER VIII

THE CORN-SPIRIT AS AN ANIMAL

§ I. *Animal Embodiments of the Corn-spirit*

The corn-spirit as an animal.

IN some of the examples which I have cited to establish the meaning of the term "neck" as applied to the last sheaf, the corn-spirit appears in animal form as a gander, a goat, a hare, a cat, and a fox. This introduces us to a new aspect of the corn-spirit, which we must now examine. By doing so we shall not only have fresh examples of killing the god, but may hope also to clear up some points which remain obscure in the myths and worship of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Dionysus, Demeter, and Virbius.

The corn-spirit in the form of an animal is supposed to be present in the last corn cut or threshed, and to be caught or killed by the reaper or thresher.

Amongst the many animals whose forms the corn-spirit is supposed to take are the wolf, dog, hare, fox, cock, goose, quail, cat, goat, cow (ox, bull), pig, and horse. In one or other of these shapes the corn-spirit is often believed to be present in the corn, and to be caught or killed in the last sheaf. As the corn is being cut the animal flees before the reapers, and if a reaper is taken ill on the field, he is supposed to have stumbled unwittingly on the corn-spirit, who has thus punished the profane intruder. It is said "the Rye-wolf has got hold of him," "the Harvest-goat has given him a push." The person who cuts the last corn or binds the last sheaf gets the name of the animal, as the Rye-wolf, the Rye-sow, the Oats-goat, and so forth, and retains the name sometimes for a year. Also the animal is frequently represented by a puppet made out of the last sheaf or of wood, flowers, and so on, which is carried home amid rejoicings on the last harvest-waggon. Even where the last sheaf is not made up in animal shape, it is often called the Rye-wolf, the Hare, Goat, and so forth.

Generally each kind of crop is supposed to have its special animal, which is caught in the last sheaf, and called the Rye-wolf, the Barley-wolf, the Oats-wolf, the Pea-wolf, or the Potato-wolf, according to the crop ; but sometimes the figure of the animal is only made up once for all at getting in the last crop of the whole harvest. Sometimes the creature is believed to be killed by the last stroke of the sickle or scythe. But oftener it is thought to live so long as there is corn still unthreshed, and to be caught in the last sheaf threshed. Hence the man who gives the last stroke with the flail is told that he has got the Corn-sow, the Threshing-dog, or the like. When the threshing is finished, a puppet is made in the form of the animal, and this is carried by the thresher of the last sheaf to a neighbouring farm, where the threshing is still going on. This again shews that the corn-spirit is believed to live wherever the corn is still being threshed. Sometimes the thresher of the last sheaf himself represents the animal ; and if the people of the next farm, who are still threshing, catch him, they treat him like the animal he represents, by shutting him up in the pig-sty, calling him with the cries commonly addressed to pigs, and so forth.¹ These general statements will now be illustrated by examples.

§ 2. *The Corn-spirit as a Wolf or a Dog*

We begin with the corn-spirit conceived as a wolf or a dog. This conception is common in France, Germany, and Slavonic countries. Thus, when the wind sets the corn in wave-like motion the peasants often say, "The Wolf is going over, or through, the corn," "the Rye-wolf is rushing over the field," "the Wolf is in the corn," "the mad Dog is in the corn," "the big Dog is there."² When children wish to go into the corn-fields to pluck ears

The corn spirit as a wolf or a dog, supposed to run through the corn

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen* (Berlin, 1868), pp. 1-6.

² W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*² (Danzig, 1866), pp. 6 sqq. ; *id.*, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), pp. 318 sq. ; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 103 ; A. Witzchel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen* (Vienna, 1878), p. 213 ;

O. Hartung, "Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 150 ; W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren* (Vienna and Olmutz, 1893), p. 327 ; P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipsic, 1903-1906), ii. 60.

or gather the blue corn-flowers, they are warned not to do so, for "the big Dog sits in the corn," or "the Wolf sits in the corn, and will tear you in pieces," "the Wolf will eat you." The wolf against whom the children are warned is not a common wolf, for he is often spoken of as the Corn-wolf, Rye-wolf, or the like; thus they say, "The Rye-wolf will come and eat you up, children," "the Rye-wolf will carry you off," and so forth.¹ Still he has all the outward appearance of a wolf. For in the neighbourhood of Feilenhof (East Prussia), when a wolf was seen running through a field, the peasants used to watch whether he carried his tail in the air or dragged it on the ground. If he dragged it on the ground, they went after him, and thanked him for bringing them a blessing, and even set tit-bits before him. But if he carried his tail high, they cursed him and tried to kill him. Here the wolf is the corn-spirit whose fertilising power is in his tail.²

The corn-spirit as a dog at reaping and threshing.

Both dog and wolf appear as embodiments of the corn-spirit in harvest-customs. Thus in some parts of Silesia the person who cuts or binds the last sheaf is called the Wheat-dog or the Peas-pug.³ But it is in the harvest-customs of the north-east of France that the idea of the Corn-dog comes out most clearly. Thus when a harvester, through sickness, weariness, or laziness, cannot or will not keep up with the reaper in front of him, they say, "The White Dog passed near him," "he has the White Bitch," or "the White Bitch has bitten him."⁴ In the Vosges the Harvest-May is called the "Dog of the harvest,"⁵ and the person who cuts the last handful of hay or wheat is said to "kill the Dog."⁶ About Lons-le-Saulnier, in the Jura, the last sheaf is called the Bitch. In the neighbourhood of Verdun the regular expression for finishing the reaping is, "They are going to kill the Dog"; and at Epinal they say, according to the crop, "We will kill the Wheat-dog, or the Rye-dog, or the Potato-

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 10 sqq.; *id.*, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 319.

² W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 14 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 104; P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in*

Schlesien, ii. 64.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 104.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 104 sq. On the Harvest-May, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 47 sq.

⁶ L. F. Sauv e, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges* (Paris, 1889), p. 191.

dog.”¹ In Lorraine it is said of the man who cuts the last corn, “He is killing the Dog of the harvest.”² At Dux, in the Tyrol, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is said to “strike down the Dog”;³ and at Ahne-bergen, near Stade, he is called, according to the crop, Corn-pug, Rye-pug, Wheat-pug.⁴

So with the wolf. In Silesia, when the reapers gather round the last patch of standing corn to reap it they are said to be about “to catch the Wolf.”⁵ In various parts of Mecklenburg, where the belief in the Corn-wolf is particularly prevalent, every one fears to cut the last corn, because they say that the Wolf is sitting in it; hence every reaper exerts himself to the utmost in order not to be the last, and every woman similarly fears to bind the last sheaf because “the Wolf is in it.” So both among the reapers and the binders there is a competition not to be the last to finish.⁶ And in Germany generally it appears to be a common saying that “the Wolf sits in the last sheaf.”⁷ In some places they call out to the reaper, “Beware of the Wolf”; or they say, “He is chasing the Wolf out of the corn.”⁸ In Mecklenburg the last bunch of standing corn is itself commonly called the Wolf, and the man who reaps it “has the Wolf,” the animal being described as the Rye-wolf, the Wheat-wolf, the Barley-wolf, and so on according to the particular crop. The reaper of the last corn is himself called Wolf or the Rye-wolf, if the crop is rye, and in many parts of Mecklenburg he has to support the character by pretending to bite the other harvesters or by howling like a wolf.⁹ The last sheaf of corn is also called the Wolf or the Rye-wolf or the Oats-wolf according to the crop, and of the woman who binds it they say, “The Wolf is biting her,” “She has the Wolf,” “She must fetch the Wolf” (out of the corn). Moreover, she

The corn-
spirit as a
wolf at
reaping.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 105.

² *Ibid.* p. 30.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 30, 105.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 105 sq.

⁵ P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipzig, 1903-1906), ii. 64.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 33, 39; K. Bartsch, *Sagen, Marchen und Gebrauche aus*

Meklenburg (Vienna, 1879-1880), ii. p. 309, § 1496, p. 310, §§ 1497, 1498.

⁷ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 320.

⁸ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² p. 33.

⁹ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 33 sq.; K. Bartsch, *op. cit.* ii. p. 309, § 1496, p. 310, §§ 1497, 1500, 1501.

herself is called Wolf; they cry out to her, "Thou art the Wolf," and she has to bear the name for a whole year; sometimes, according to the crop, she is called the Rye-wolf or the Potato-wolf.¹ In the island of Rügen not only is the woman who binds the last sheaf called Wolf, but when she comes home she bites the lady of the house and the stewardess, for which she receives a large piece of meat. Yet nobody likes to be the Wolf. The same woman may be Rye-wolf, Wheat-wolf, and Oats-wolf, if she happens to bind the last sheaf of rye, wheat, and oats.² At Buir, in the district of Cologne, it was formerly the custom to give to the last sheaf the shape of a wolf. It was kept in the barn till all the corn was threshed. Then it was brought to the farmer and he had to sprinkle it with beer or brandy.³ At Brunshaupten in Mecklenburg the young woman who bound the last sheaf of wheat used to take a handful of stalks out of it and make "the Wheat-wolf" with them; it was the figure of a wolf about two feet long and half a foot high, the legs of the animal being represented by stiff stalks and its tail and mane by wheat-ears. This Wheat-wolf she carried back at the head of the harvesters to the village, where it was set up on a high place in the parlour of the farm and remained there for a long time.⁴ In many places the sheaf called the Wolf is made up in human form and dressed in clothes. This indicates a confusion of ideas between the corn-spirit conceived in human and in animal form. Generally the Wolf is brought home on the last waggon with joyful cries. Hence the last waggon-load itself receives the name of the Wolf.⁵

Again, the Wolf is supposed to hide himself amongst the cut corn in the granary, until he is driven out of the last bundle by the strokes of the flail. Hence at Wanzleben, near Magdeburg, after the threshing the peasants go in procession, leading by a chain a man who is enveloped in the

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 33, 34.

² W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² p. 38; *id.*, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 320.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 34 sq.

⁴ K. Bartsch, *op. cit.* ii. p. 311, § 1505.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*,² pp. 35-37; K. Bartsch, *op. cit.* ii. p. 309, § 1496, p. 310, §§ 1499, 1501, p. 311, §§ 1506, 1507.

threshed-out straw and is called the Wolf.¹ He represents the corn-spirit who has been caught escaping from the threshed corn. In the district of Treves it is believed that the Corn-wolf is killed at threshing. The men thresh the last sheaf till it is reduced to chopped straw. In this way they think that the Corn-wolf, who was lurking in the last sheaf, has been certainly killed.²

The corn-spirit as a wolf killed at threshing.

In France also the Corn-wolf appears at harvest. Thus they call out to the reaper of the last corn, "You will catch the Wolf." Near Chambéry they form a ring round the last standing corn, and cry, "The Wolf is in there." In Finisterre, when the reaping draws near an end, the harvesters cry, "There is the Wolf; we will catch him." Each takes a swath to reap, and he who finishes first calls out, "I've caught the Wolf."³ In Guyenne, when the last corn has been reaped, they lead a wether all round the field. It is called "the Wolf of the field." Its horns are decked with a wreath of flowers and corn-ears, and its neck and body are also encircled with garlands and ribbons. All the reapers march, singing, behind it. Then it is killed on the field. In this part of France the last sheaf is called the *le wether*, which, in the patois, means a wether. Hence the killing of the wether represents the death of the corn-spirit, considered as present in the last sheaf; but two different conceptions of the corn-spirit—as a wolf and as a wether—are mixed up together.⁴

The corn-wolf at harvest in France.

The corn-wolf killed on the harvest-field.

Sometimes it appears to be thought that the Wolf, caught in the last corn, lives during the winter in the farmhouse, ready to renew his activity as corn-spirit in the spring. Hence at midwinter, when the lengthening days begin to herald the approach of spring, the Wolf makes his appearance once more. In Poland a man, with a wolf's skin thrown over his head, is led about at Christmas; or a stuffed wolf is carried about by persons who collect money.⁵ There are facts which point to an old custom of leading about a man enveloped in leaves and called the Wolf, while his conductors collected money.⁶

The corn-wolf at midwinter

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 321.

² *Ibid.* pp. 321 sq.

³ *Ibid.* p. 320.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 320 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 322.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 323.

§ 3. *The Corn-spirit as a Cock*

The corn-spirit as a cock at harvest.

Another form which the corn-spirit often assumes is that of a cock. In Austria children are warned against straying in the corn-fields, because the Corn-cock sits there, and will peck their eyes out.¹ In North Germany they say that "the Cock sits in the last sheaf"; and at cutting the last corn the reapers cry, "Now we will chase out the Cock." When it is cut they say, "We have caught the Cock."² At Braller, in Transylvania, when the reapers come to the last patch of corn, they cry, "Here we shall catch the Cock."³ At Fürstenwalde, when the last sheaf is about to be bound, the master releases a cock, which he has brought in a basket, and lets it run over the field. All the harvesters chase it till they catch it. Elsewhere the harvesters all try to seize the last corn cut; he who succeeds in grasping it must crow, and is called Cock.⁴ Among the Wends it is or used to be customary for the farmer to hide a live cock under the last sheaf as it lay on the field; and when the corn was being gathered up, the harvester who lighted upon this sheaf had a right to keep the cock, provided he could catch it. This formed the close of the harvest-festival and was known as "the Cock-catching," and the beer which was served out to the reapers at this time went by the name of "Cock-beer."⁵ The last sheaf is called Cock, Cock-sheaf, Harvest-cock, Harvest-hen, Autumn-hen. A distinction is made between a Wheat-cock, Bean-cock, and so on, according to the crop.⁶ At Wünschensuhl, in Thüringen, the last sheaf is made into the shape of a cock, and called the Harvest-cock.⁷ A figure of a cock, made of wood, pasteboard, ears of corn,

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen*, p. 13.

² W. Mannhardt, *l.c.*; J. H. Schmitz, *Sitten und Sagen, Lieder, Sprüchwörter und Rathsel des Eifler Volkes* (Treves, 1856-1858), i. 95; A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), p. 398.

³ G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1880), p. 21.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen*, p. 13. Compare A. Kuhn and W. Schwartz, *l.c.*

⁵ K. Haupt, *Sagenbuch der Lausitz* (Leipsic, 1862-1863), i. p. 232, No. 277 note.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen*, p. 13.

⁷ A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen* (Vienna, 1878), p. 220.

or flowers, is borne in front of the harvest-waggon, especially in Westphalia, where the cock carries in his beak fruits of the earth of all kinds. Sometimes the image of the cock is fastened to the top of a May-tree on the last harvest-waggon. Elsewhere a live cock, or a figure of one, is attached to a harvest-crown and carried on a pole. In Galicia and elsewhere this live cock is fastened to the garland of corn-ears or flowers, which the leader of the women-reapers carries on her head as she marches in front of the harvest procession.¹ In Silesia a live cock is presented to the master on a plate. The harvest-supper is called Harvest-cock, Stubble-cock, etc., and a chief dish at it, at least in some places, is a cock.² If a waggoner upsets a harvest-waggon, it is said that "he has spilt the Harvest cock," and he loses the cock, that is, the harvest-supper.³ The harvest-waggon, with the figure of the cock on it, is driven round the farmhouse before it is taken to the barn. Then the cock is nailed over or at the side of the house-door, or on the gable, and remains there till next harvest.⁴ In East Friesland the person who gives the last stroke at threshing is called the Clucking-hen, and grain is strewed before him as if he were a hen.⁵

Again, the corn-spirit is killed in the form of a cock. In parts of Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Picardy the reapers place a live cock in the corn which is to be cut last, and chase it over the field, or bury it up to the neck in the ground; afterwards they strike off its head with a sickle or scythe.⁶ In many parts of Westphalia, when the harvesters bring the wooden cock to the farmer, he gives them a live

The corn-spirit killed in the form of a live cock.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, pp. 13 sq.; J. H. Schmitz, *Sitten und Sagen, Lieder, Spruchwörter und Räthsel des Eifler Volkes* (Trevés, 1856-1858), i. 95; A. Kuhn, *Sagen, Gebräuche und Märchen aus Westfalen* (Leipzig 1859), ii. 180 sq.; H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntefeste* (Hanover, 1878), p. 110.

² W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, p. 14; H. Pfannenschmid, *op. cit.* pp. 111, 419 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, p. 15. So in Shropshire, where the corn-spirit is conceived in the form of a gander (see above, p. 268), the

expression for overthrowing a load at harvest is "to lose the goose," and the penalty used to be the loss of the goose at the harvest-supper (C. S. Buine and G. F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, London, 1883, p. 375); and in some parts of England the harvest-supper was called the Harvest Gosling, or the Inning Goose (J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 23, 26, Bohn's edition).

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, p. 14.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 15.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 30.

cock, which they kill with whips or sticks, or behead with an old sword, or throw into the barn to the girls, or give to the mistress to cook. If the harvest-cock has not been spilt—that is, if no waggon has been upset—the harvesters have the right to kill the farmyard cock by throwing stones at it or beheading it. Where this custom has fallen into disuse, it is still common for the farmer's wife to make cockie-leekie for the harvesters, and to shew them the head of the cock which has been killed for the soup.¹ In the neighbourhood of Klausenburg, Transylvania, a cock is buried on the harvest-field in the earth, so that only its head appears. A young man then takes a scythe and cuts off the cock's head at a single sweep. If he fails to do this, he is called the Red Cock for a whole year, and people fear that next year's crop will be bad.² Near Udvarhely, in Transylvania, a live cock is bound up in the last sheaf and killed with a spit. It is then skinned. The flesh is thrown away, but the skin and feathers are kept till next year; and in spring the grain from the last sheaf is mixed with the feathers of the cock and scattered on the field which is to be tilled.³ Nothing could set in a clearer light the identification of the cock with the spirit of the corn. By being tied up in the last sheaf and killed, the cock is identified with the corn, and its death with the cutting of the corn. By keeping its feathers till spring, then mixing them with the seed-corn taken from the very sheaf in which the bird had been bound, and scattering the feathers together with the seed over the field, the identity of the bird with the corn is again emphasised, and its quickening and fertilising power, as an embodiment of the corn-spirit, is intimated in the plainest manner. Thus the corn-spirit, in the form of a cock, is killed at harvest, but rises to fresh life and activity in spring. Again, the equivalence of the cock to the corn is expressed, hardly less plainly, in the custom of burying the bird in the ground, and cutting off its head (like the ears of corn) with the scythe.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, p. 15.

² *Ibid.* pp. 15 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen*, p. 15; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 30.

§ 4. *The Corn-spirit as a Hare*

Another common embodiment of the corn-spirit is the hare.¹ In Galloway the reaping of the last standing corn is called "cutting the Hare." The mode of cutting it is as follows. When the rest of the corn has been reaped, a handful is left standing to form the Hare. It is divided into three parts and plaited, and the ears are tied in a knot. The reapers then retire a few yards and each throws his or her sickle in turn at the Hare to cut it down. It must be cut below the knot, and the reapers continue to throw their sickles at it, one after the other, until one of them succeeds in severing the stalks below the knot. The Hare is then carried home and given to a maidservant in the kitchen, who places it over the kitchen-door on the inside. Sometimes the Hare used to be thus kept till the next harvest. In the parish of Minnigaff, when the Hare was cut, the unmarried reapers ran home with all speed, and the one who arrived first was the first to be married.² In Southern Ayrshire the last corn cut is also called the Hare, and the mode of cutting it seems to be the same as in Galloway; at least in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock the last corn left standing in the middle of the field is plaited, and the reapers used to try to cut it by throwing their sickles at it. When cut, it was carried home and hung up over the door.³ In the Vosges Mountains the person who cuts the last handful of hay or wheat is sometimes said to have caught the Hare; he is congratulated by his comrades and has the honour of carrying the nosegay or the small fir-tree decorated with ribbons which marks the conclusion of the harvest.⁴ In Germany also one of the names for the last sheaf is the Hare.⁵ Thus in some parts of Anhalt, when the corn has been reaped and only a few stalks are left standing, they say, "The Hare will soon come," or the reapers cry to each other, "Look how the Hare comes

The corn-spirit as a hare at harvest.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen*, p. 1.

² W. Gregor, "Preliminary Report on Folklore in Galloway, Scotland," *Report of the British Association for 1896*, p. 623.

³ *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 47 sq.

⁴ L. F. Sauv , *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges* (Paris, 1889), p. 191.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen*, p. 3.

jumping out.”¹ In East Prussia they say that the Hare sits in the last patch of standing corn, and must be chased out by the last reaper. The reapers hurry with their work, each being anxious not to have “to chase out the Hare”; for the man who does so, that is, who cuts the last corn, is much laughed at.² At Birk, in Transylvania, when the reapers come to the last patch, they cry out, “We have the Hare.”³ At Aurich, as we have seen,⁴ an expression for cutting the last corn is “to cut off the Hare’s tail.” “He is killing the Hare” is commonly said of the man who cuts the last corn in Germany, Sweden, Holland, France, and Italy.⁵ In Norway the man who is thus said to “kill the Hare” must give “hare’s blood” in the form of brandy, to his fellows to drink.⁶ In Lesbos, when the reapers are at work in two neighbouring fields, each party tries to finish first in order to drive the Hare into their neighbour’s field; the reapers who succeed in doing so believe that next year the crop will be better. A small sheaf of corn is made up and kept beside the holy picture till next harvest.⁷

The corn-spirit as a hare killed in the last corn cut.

§ 5. *The Corn-spirit as a Cat*

Again, the corn-spirit sometimes takes the form of a cat. Near Kiel children are warned not to go into the corn-fields because “the Cat sits there.” In the Eisenach Oberland they are told “the Corn-cat will come and fetch you,” “the Corn-cat goes in the corn.” In some parts of Silesia at mowing the last corn they say, “The Cat is caught”; and at threshing, the man who gives the last stroke is called the Cat. In the neighbourhood of Lyons the last sheaf and the harvest-supper are both called the Cat. About Vesoul when they cut the last corn they say, “We have the Cat by the tail.” At Briançon, in Dauphiné, at the beginning of reaping, a

The corn-spirit as a cat sitting in the corn.

The corn-spirit as a cat at reaping and threshing.

¹ O. Hartung, “Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 154.

² C. Lemke, *Volksthümliches in Ostpreussen* (Mohrungen, 1884-1887), i. 24.

³ G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1880), p. 21.

⁴ Above, p. 268.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 29.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 29 sq.; *id.*, *Die Kornadamonen*, p. 5.

⁷ Georgeakis et Pineau, *Folk-lore de Lesbos* (Paris, 1894), p. 310.

cat is decked out with ribbons, flowers, and ears of corn. It is called the Cat of the ball-skin (*le chat de peau de balle*). If a reaper is wounded at his work, they make the cat lick the wound. At the close of the reaping the cat is again decked out with ribbons and ears of corn; then they dance and make merry. When the dance is over the girls solemnly strip the cat of its finery. At Grüneberg, in Silesia, the reaper who cuts the last corn goes by the name of the Tom-cat. He is enveloped in rye-stalks and green withes, and is furnished with a long plaited tail. Sometimes as a companion he has a man similarly dressed, who is called the (female) Cat. Their duty is to run after people whom they see and to beat them with a long stick. Near Amiens the expression for finishing the harvest is, "They are going to kill the Cat"; and when the last corn is cut they kill a cat in the farmyard. At threshing, in some parts of France, a live cat is placed under the last bundle of corn to be threshed, and is struck dead with the flails. Then on Sunday it is roasted and eaten as a holiday dish.¹ In the Vosges Mountains the close of haymaking or harvest is called "catching the cat," "killing the dog," or more rarely "catching the hare." The cat, the dog, or the hare is said to be fat or lean according as the crop is good or bad. The man who cuts the last handful of hay or of wheat is said to catch the cat or the hare or to kill the dog. He is congratulated by his comrades and has the honour of carrying the nosegay or rather the small fir-tree decked with ribbons which marks the end of the haymaking or of the harvest.² In Franche-Comté also the close of harvest is called "catching or killing the cat."³

The corn-spirit as a cat killed at reaping and threshing.

§ 6. *The Corn-spirit as a Goat*

Further, the corn-spirit often appears in the form of a goat. In some parts of Prussia, when the corn bends before

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 172-174; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 30; P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipzig, 1903-

1906), ii. 64, 65.

² L. F. Sauv , *Le Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges* (Paris, 1889), p. 191.

³ Ch. Beauquier, *Les Mois en Franche-Comt * (Paris, 1900), p. 102.

The corn-spirit as a goat running through the corn or sitting in it.

The corn-goat at reaping and binding the corn

the wind, they say, "The Goats are chasing each other," "the wind is driving the Goats through the corn," "the Goats are browsing there," and they expect a very good harvest. Again they say, "The Oats-goat is sitting in the oats-field," "the Corn-goat is sitting in the rye-field."¹ Children are warned not to go into the corn-fields to pluck the blue corn-flowers, or amongst the beans to pluck pods, because the Rye-goat, the Corn-goat, the Oats-goat, or the Bean-goat is sitting or lying there, and will carry them away or kill them.² When a harvester is taken sick or lags behind his fellows at their work, they call out, "The Harvest-goat has pushed him," "he has been pushed by the Corn-goat."³ In the neighbourhood of Braunsberg (East Prussia) at binding the oats every harvester makes haste "lest the Corn-goat push him." At Oefoten, in Norway, each reaper has his allotted patch to reap. When a reaper in the middle has not finished reaping his piece after his neighbours have finished theirs, they say of him, "He remains on the island." And if the laggard is a man, they imitate the cry with which they call a he-goat; if a woman, the cry with which they call a she-goat.⁴ Near Straubing, in Lower Bavaria, it is said of the man who cuts the last corn that "he has the Corn-goat, or the Wheat-goat, or the Oats-goat," according to the crop. Moreover, two horns are set up on the last heap of corn, and it is called "the horned Goat." At Kretzburg, East Prussia, they call out to the woman who is binding the last sheaf, "The Goat is sitting in the sheaf."⁵ At Gablingen, in Swabia, when the last field of oats upon a farm is being reaped, the reapers carve a goat out of wood, ears of oats are inserted in its nostrils and mouth, and it is adorned with garlands of flowers. It is set up on the field and called the Oats-goat. When the reaping approaches an end, each reaper hastens to finish his piece first; he who is the last to finish gets the Oats-goat.⁶ Again, the last sheaf is itself called the Goat. Thus, in the valley of the Wiesent, Bavaria, the last sheaf bound on the field is called the Goat,

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 155 sq.

² *Ibid.* pp. 157 sq.

³ *Ibid.* p. 159.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 161 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 162.

⁶ F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie* (Munich, 1848-1855), ii. pp. 232 sq., § 426; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 162.

and they have a proverb, "The field must bear a goat."¹ At Spachbrücken, in Hesse, the last handful of corn which is cut is called the Goat, and the man who cuts it is much ridiculed.² At Dürrenbüchig and about Mosbach in Baden the last sheaf is also called the Goat.³ Sometimes the last sheaf is made up in the form of a goat, and they say, "The Goat is sitting in it."⁴ Again, the person who cuts or binds the last sheaf is called the Goat. Thus, in parts of Mecklenburg they call out to the woman who binds the last sheaf, "You are the Harvest-goat." Near Uelzen, in Hanover, the harvest festival begins with "the bringing of the Harvest-goat"; that is, the woman who bound the last sheaf is wrapt in straw, crowned with a harvest-wreath, and brought in a wheelbarrow to the village, where a round dance takes place. About Luneburg, also, the woman who binds the last corn is decked with a crown of corn-ears and is called the Corn-goat.⁵ At Münzesheim in Baden the reaper who cuts the last handful of corn or oats is called the Corn-goat or the Oats-goat.⁶ In the Canton St. Gall, Switzerland, the person who cuts the last handful of corn on the field, or drives the last harvest-waggon to the barn, is called the Corn-goat or the Rye-goat, or simply the Goat.⁷ In the Canton Thurgau he is called Corn-goat; like a goat he has a bell hung round his neck, is led in triumph, and drenched with liquor. In parts of Styria, also, the man who cuts the last corn is called Corn-goat, Oats-goat, or the like. As a rule, the man who thus gets the name of Corn-goat has to bear it a whole year till the next harvest.⁸

According to one view, the corn-spirit, who has been caught in the form of a goat or otherwise, lives in the farmhouse or barn over winter. Thus, each farm has its own embodiment of the corn-spirit. But, according to another view, the corn-spirit is the genius or deity, not of the corn

The corn-spirit as the Cripple Goat in Skye.

¹ F. Panzer, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 228 sq., § 422; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 163; *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iii. (Munich, 1865) p. 344.

² W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 163.

³ E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 428.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 164.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 164.

⁶ E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 428.

⁷ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 164 sq.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 165

of one farm only, but of all the corn. Hence when the corn on one farm is all cut, he flees to another where there is still corn left standing. This idea is brought out in a harvest-custom which was formerly observed in Skye. The farmer who first finished reaping sent a man or woman with a sheaf to a neighbour, farmer who had not finished; the latter in his turn, when he had finished, sent on the sheaf to his neighbour who was still reaping; and so the sheaf made the round of the farms till all the corn was cut. The sheaf was called the *goabbir bhacagh*, that is, the Cripple Goat.¹ The custom appears not to be extinct at the present day, for it was reported from Skye only a few years ago. We are told that when the crofters and small farmers are cutting down their corn, each tries his best to finish before his neighbour. The first to finish goes to his neighbour's field and makes up at one end of it a bundle of sheaves in a fanciful shape which goes by the name of the *gobhar bhacach* or *Lame Goat*. As each man in succession finishes reaping his field, he proceeds to set up a lame goat of this sort in his neighbour's field where there is still corn standing. No one likes to have the *Lame Goat* put in his field, "not from any ill-luck it brings, but because it is humiliating to have it standing there visible to all neighbours and passers-by, and of course he cannot retaliate."² The corn-spirit was probably thus represented as lame because he had been crippled by the cutting of the corn. We have seen that sometimes the old woman who brings home the last sheaf must limp on one foot.³ In the Böhmer Wald mountains, between Bohemia and Bavaria, when two peasants are driving home their corn together, they race against each other to see who shall get home first. The village boys mark the loser in the race, and at night they come and erect on the roof of his house the *Oats-goat*, which is a colossal figure of a goat made of straw.⁴

But sometimes the corn-spirit, in the form of a goat, is

¹ J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 24, Bohn's edition, quoting *The Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1795, p. 124; W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 165.

² R. C. Maclagan, "Notes on folk-

lore objects collected in Argyleshire," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895) p. 151, from information given by Mrs. C. Nicholson.

³ Above, p. 232.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 165.

believed to be slain on the harvest-field by the sickle or scythe. Thus, in the neighbourhood of Bernkastel, on the Moselle, the reapers determine by lot the order in which they shall follow each other. The first is called the fore-reaper, the last the tail-bearer. If a reaper overtakes the man in front he reaps past him, bending round so as to leave the slower reaper in a patch by himself. This patch is called the Goat; and the man for whom "the Goat is cut" in this way, is laughed and jeered at by his fellows for the rest of the day. When the tail-bearer cuts the last ears of corn, it is said, "He is cutting the Goat's neck off."¹ In the neighbourhood of Grenoble, before the end of the reaping, a live goat is adorned with flowers and ribbons and allowed to run about the field. The reapers chase it and try to catch it. When it is caught, the farmer's wife holds it fast while the farmer cuts off its head. The goat's flesh serves to furnish the harvest-supper. A piece of the flesh is pickled and kept till the next harvest, when another goat is killed. Then all the harvesters eat of the flesh. On the same day the skin of the goat is made into a cloak, which the farmer, who works with his men, must always wear at harvest-time if rain or bad weather sets in. But if a reaper gets pains in his back, the farmer gives him the goat-skin to wear.² The reason for this seems to be that the pains in the back, being inflicted by the corn-spirit, can also be healed by it. Similarly, we saw that elsewhere, when a reaper is wounded at reaping, a cat, as the representative of the corn-spirit, is made to lick the wound.³ Esthonian reapers in the island of Mon think that the man who cuts the first ears of corn at harvest will get pains in his back,⁴ probably because the corn-spirit is believed to resent especially the first wound; and, in order to escape pains in the back, Saxon reapers in Transylvania gird their loins with the first handful of ears which they cut.⁵ Here, again, the corn-spirit is applied to for healing or pro-

The corn-spirit killed as a goat on the harvest-field.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 166; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 185.

² W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 166.

³ Above, p. 281.

⁴ J. B. Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen*

Gesellschaft zu Dorpat, vii. Heft 2 (Dorpat, 1872), p. 107.

⁵ G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebrauche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1880), p. 19. Compare W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 482 sqq.

tection, but in his original vegetable form, not in the form of a goat or a cat.

The corn-spirit in the form of a goat supposed to lurk among the corn in the barn, till he is expelled by the flail at threshing.

Further, the corn-spirit under the form of a goat is sometimes conceived as lurking among the cut corn in the barn, till he is driven from it by the threshing-flail. Thus in Baden the last sheaf to be threshed is called the Corn-goat, the Spelt-goat, or the Oats-goat according to the kind of grain.¹ Again, near Marktl, in Upper Bavaria, the sheaves are called Straw-goats or simply Goats. They are laid in a great heap on the open field and threshed by two rows of men standing opposite each other, who, as they ply their flails, sing a song in which they say that they see the Straw-goat amongst the corn-stalks. The last Goat, that is, the last sheaf, is adorned with a wreath of violets and other flowers and with cakes strung together. It is placed right in the middle of the heap. Some of the threshers rush at it and tear the best of it out; others lay on with their flails so recklessly that heads are sometimes broken. In threshing this last sheaf, each man casts up to the man opposite him the misdeeds of which he has been guilty throughout the year.² At Oberinntal, in the Tyrol, the last thresher is called Goat.³ So at Haselberg, in West Bohemia, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing oats is called the Oats-goat.⁴ At Tettngang, in Württemberg, the thresher who gives the last stroke to the last bundle of corn before it is turned goes by the name of the He-goat, and it is said, "He has driven the He-goat away." The person who, after the bundle has been turned, gives the last stroke of all, is called the She-goat.⁵ In this custom it is implied that the corn is inhabited by a pair of corn-spirits, male and female.

The corn-spirit in the form of a goat passed on to a neighbour

Further, the corn-spirit, captured in the form of a goat at threshing, is passed on to a neighbour whose threshing is not yet finished. In Franche Comté, as soon as the threshing is over, the young people set up a straw figure of a goat on the

¹ E. L. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 436.

² F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. pp. 225 sqq., § 421; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 167 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 168.

⁴ A. John, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube im deutschen Westböhmen* (Prague, 1905), p. 194.

⁵ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben* (Stuttgart, 1852), p. 445, § 162; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 168.

farmyard of a neighbour who is still threshing. He must give them wine or money in return. At Ellwangen, in Würtemberg, the effigy of a goat is made out of the last bundle of corn at threshing; four sticks form its legs, and two its horns. The man who gives the last stroke with the flail must carry the Goat to the barn of a neighbour who is still threshing and throw it down on the floor; if he is caught in the act, they tie the goat on his back.¹ A similar custom is observed at Indersdorf, in Upper Bavaria; the man who throws the straw Goat into the neighbour's barn imitates the bleating of a goat; if they catch him, they blacken his face and tie the Goat on his back.² At Zabern, in Alsace, when a farmer is a week or more behind his neighbours with his threshing, they set a real stuffed goat or fox before his door.³

who has not finished his threshing.

Sometimes the spirit of the corn in goat form is believed to be killed at threshing. In the district of Traunstein, Upper Bavaria, they think that the Oats-goat is in the last sheaf of oats. He is represented by an old rake set up on end, with an old pot for a head. The children are then told to kill the Oats-goat.⁴ Elsewhere, however, the corn-spirit in the form of a goat is apparently thought to live in the field throughout the winter. Hence at Wannefeld near Gardelegen, and also between Calbe and Salzwedel, in the Altmark, the last stalks used to be left uncut on the harvest-field with the words, "That shall the He-goat keep!" Evidently the last corn was here left as a provision for the corn-spirit, lest, robbed of all his substance, he should die of hunger. A stranger passing a harvest-field is sometimes taken for the Corn-goat escaping in human shape from the cut or threshed grain. Thus, when a stranger passes a harvest-field, all the labourers stop and shout as with one voice, "He-goat! He-goat!" At rape-seed threshing in Schleswig, which is generally done on the field, the same cry is raised if the stranger does not take off his hat.⁵

The corn-spirit in goat form killed at threshing.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 169.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 170.

² F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. pp. 224 sq., § 420; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 169.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 170. As to the custom of leaving a little corn on the field for the subsistence of the corn-spirit, see above, pp. 231 sqq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 169.

Old Prussian custom of killing a goat at sowing.

At sowing their winter corn the old Prussians used to kill a goat, consume its flesh with many superstitious ceremonies, and hang the skin on a high pole near an oak and a large stone. There it remained till harvest, when a great bunch of corn and herbs was fastened to the pole above the goat-skin. Then, after a prayer had been offered by a peasant who acted as priest (*Weidulut*), the young folks joined hands and danced round the oak and the pole. Afterwards they scrambled for the bunch of corn, and the priest distributed the herbs with a sparing hand. Then he placed the goat-skin on the large stone, sat down on it, and preached to the people about the history of their forefathers and their old heathen customs and beliefs.¹ The goat-skin thus suspended on the field from sowing time to harvest perhaps represents the corn-spirit superintending the growth of the corn. The Tomori of Central Celebes imagine that the spirits which cause rice to grow have the form of great goats with long hair and long lips.²

§ 7. *The Corn-spirit as a Bull, Cow, or Ox*

The corn-spirit in the form of a bull running through the corn or lying in it.

Another form which the corn-spirit often assumes is that of a bull, cow, or ox. When the wind sweeps over the corn they say at Conitz, in West Prussia, "The Steer is running in the corn";³ when the corn is thick and strong in one spot, they say in some parts of East Prussia, "The Bull is lying in the corn." When a harvester has overstrained and lamed himself, they say in the Graudenz district of West Prussia, "The Bull pushed him"; in Lothringen they say, "He has the Bull." The meaning of both expressions is that he has unwittingly lighted upon the divine corn-spirit, who has punished the profane intruder with lameness.⁴ So near Chambéry when a reaper wounds himself with his sickle, it is said that he has "the wound of the Ox."⁵ In

The corn-spirit as a bull, ox, or cow at harvest.

¹ M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae* (Berlin, 1871), pp 23 sq. ; W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 394 sq.

² A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische aantekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche*

Zendinggenootschap, xlv. (1900) p 241.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 58.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 62.

the district of Bunzlau (Silesia) the last sheaf is sometimes made into the shape of a horned ox, stuffed with tow and wrapt in corn-ears. This figure is called the Old Man. In some parts of Bohemia the last sheaf is made up in human form and called the Buffalo-bull.¹ These cases shew a confusion of the human with the animal shape of the corn-spirit. The confusion is like that of killing a wether under the name of a wolf.² In the Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland, the last sheaf, if it is a large one, is called the Cow.³ All over Swabia the last bundle of corn on the field is called the Cow; the man who cuts the last ears "has the Cow," and is himself called Cow or Barley-cow or Oats-cow, according to the crop; at the harvest-supper he gets a nosegay of flowers and corn-ears and a more liberal allowance of drink than the rest. But he is teased and laughed at; so no one likes to be the Cow.⁴ The Cow was sometimes represented by the figure of a woman made out of ears of corn and corn-flowers. It was carried to the farmhouse by the man who had cut the last handful of corn. The children ran after him and the neighbours turned out to laugh at him, till the farmer took the Cow from him.⁵ Here again the confusion between the human and the animal form of the corn-spirit is apparent. In various parts of Switzerland the reaper who cuts the last ears of corn is called Wheat-cow, Corn-cow, Oats-cow, or Corn-steer, and is the butt of many a joke.⁶ In some parts of East Prussia, when a few ears of corn have been left standing by inadvertence on the last swath, the foremost reaper seizes them and cries, "Bull! Bull!"⁷ On the other hand, in the district of Rosenheim, Upper Bavaria, when a farmer is later of getting in his harvest than his neighbours, they set up on his land a Straw-bull, as it is called. This is a gigantic figure of a bull made of stubble on a framework of wood and adorned with flowers and leaves. Attached to it is a label on which are scrawled

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 59.

² Above, p. 275.

³ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 59.

⁴ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebrauche aus Schwaben* (Stuttgart, 1852), pp. 440 sq., §§ 151, 152, 153; F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen*

Mythologie, ii. p. 234, § 428; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 59.

⁵ F. Panzer, *op. cit.* ii. p. 233, § 427; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 59.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 59 sq.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 58.

doggerel verses in ridicule of the man on whose land the Straw-bull is set up.¹

The corn-spirit in the form of a bull or ox killed at the close of the reaping.

Again, the corn-spirit in the form of a bull or ox is killed on the harvest-field at the close of the reaping. At Pouilly, near Dijon, when the last ears of corn are about to be cut, an ox adorned with ribbons, flowers, and ears of corn is led all round the field, followed by the whole troop of reapers dancing. Then a man disguised as the Devil cuts the last ears of corn and immediately slaughters the ox. Part of the flesh of the animal is eaten at the harvest-supper; part is pickled and kept till the first day of sowing in spring. At Pont à Mousson and elsewhere on the evening of the last day of reaping, a calf adorned with flowers and ears of corn is led thrice round the farmyard, being allured by a bait or driven by men with sticks, or conducted by the farmer's wife with a rope. The calf chosen for this ceremony is the calf which was born first on the farm in the spring of the year. It is followed by all the reapers with their tools. Then it is allowed to run free; the reapers chase it, and whoever catches it is called King of the Calf. Lastly, it is solemnly killed; at Lunéville the man who acts as butcher is the Jewish merchant of the village.²

The corn-spirit as a bull or cow at threshing.

Sometimes again the corn-spirit hides himself amongst the cut corn in the barn to reappear in bull or cow form at threshing. Thus at Wurmlingen, in Thuringen, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is called the Cow, or rather the Barley-cow, Oats-cow, Peas-cow, or the like, according to the crop. He is entirely enveloped in straw; his head is surmounted by sticks in imitation of horns, and two lads lead him by ropes to the well to drink. On the way thither he must low like a cow, and for a long time afterwards he goes by the name of the Cow.³ At Obermedlingen, in Swabia, when the threshing draws near an end, each man is careful to avoid giving the last stroke. He who does give it "gets the Cow," which is a straw figure dressed in an old ragged petticoat, hood, and stockings. It is tied on his back

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 58 sq.

³ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, pp. 444 sq., § 162; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 61.

² *Ibid.* p. 60.

with a straw-rope ; his face is blackened, and being bound with straw-ropes to a wheelbarrow he is wheeled round the village.¹ Here, again, we meet with that confusion between the human and animal shape of the corn-spirit which we have noted in other customs. In Canton Schaffhausen the man who threshes the last corn is called the Cow ; in Canton Thurgau, the Corn-bull ; in Canton Zurich, the Thresher-cow. In the last-mentioned district he is wrapt in straw and bound to one of the trees in the orchard.² At Arad, in Hungary, the man who gives the last stroke at threshing is enveloped in straw and a cow's hide with the horns attached to it.³ At Pessnitz, in the district of Dresden, the man who gives the last stroke with the flail is called Bull. He must make a straw-man and set it up before a neighbour's window.⁴ Here, apparently, as in so many cases, the corn-spirit is passed on to a neighbour who has not finished threshing. So at Herbrechtingen, in Thüringen, the effigy of a ragged old woman is flung into the barn of the farmer who is last with his threshing. The man who throws it in cries, "There is the Cow for you." If the threshers catch him they detain him over night and punish him by keeping him from the harvest-supper.⁵ In these latter customs the confusion between the human and the animal shape of the corn-spirit meets us again.

Further, the corn-spirit in bull form is sometimes believed to be killed at threshing. At Auxerre, in threshing the last bundle of corn, they call out twelve times, "We are killing the Bull." In the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, where a butcher kills an ox on the field immediately after the close of the reaping, it is said of the man who gives the last stroke at threshing that "he has killed the Bull."⁶ At Chambéry the last sheaf is called the sheaf of the Young Ox, and a race takes place to it in which all the reapers join. When the last stroke is given at threshing they say that "the Ox is killed"; and immediately thereupon

The corn-spirit in the form of a bull supposed to be killed at threshing.

¹ F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. p. 233, § 427.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 61 sq.

³ *Ibid.* p. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 62.

⁵ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, pp. 445 sq., § 163.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 60.

a real ox is slaughtered by the reaper who cut the last corn. The flesh of the ox is eaten by the threshers at supper.¹

The corn-spirit as a calf at harvest or in spring.

We have seen that sometimes the young corn-spirit, whose task it is to quicken the corn of the coming year, is believed to be born as a Corn-baby on the harvest-field.² Similarly in Berry the young corn-spirit is sometimes supposed to be born on the field in calf form; for when a binder has not rope enough to bind all the corn in sheaves, he puts aside the wheat that remains over and imitates the lowing of a cow. The meaning is that "the sheaf has given birth to a calf."³ In Puy-de-Dôme when a binder cannot keep up with the reaper whom he or she follows, they say "He (or she) is giving birth to the Calf."⁴ In some parts of Prussia, in similar circumstances, they call out to the woman, "The Bull is coming," and imitate the bellowing of a bull.⁵ In these cases the woman is conceived as the Corn-cow or old corn-spirit, while the supposed calf is the Corn-calf or young corn-spirit. In some parts of Austria a mythical calf (*Muhkälbchen*) is believed to be seen amongst the sprouting corn in spring and to push the children; when the corn waves in the wind they say, "The Calf is going about." Clearly, as Mannhardt observes, this calf of the spring-time is the same animal which is afterwards believed to be killed at reaping.⁶

§ 8. *The Corn-spirit as a Horse or Mare*

The corn-spirit as a horse or mare running through the corn. "Crying the Mare" in Hertfordshire and Shropshire.

Sometimes the corn-spirit appears in the shape of a horse or mare. Between Kalw and Stuttgart, when the corn bends before the wind, they say, "There runs the Horse."⁷ At Bohlingen, near Radolfzell in Baden, the last sheaf of oats is called the Oats-stallion.⁸ In Hertfordshire, at the end of the reaping, there is or used to be observed a ceremony called "crying the Mare." The last blades of corn left standing on the field are tied together and called the Mare.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 62.

² Above, pp. 150 *sq.*

³ Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France* (Paris, 1875), ii. 135.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische*

Forschungen, p. 62: "Il fait le veau."

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 63.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 167.

⁸ E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasbourg, 1900), p. 428.

The reapers stand at a distance and throw their sickles at it; he who cuts it through "has the prize, with acclamations and good cheer." After it is cut the reapers cry thrice with a loud voice, "I have her!" Others answer thrice, "What have you?"—"A Mare! a Mare! a Mare!"—"Whose is she?" is next asked thrice. "A. B.'s," naming the owner thrice. "Whither will you send her?"—"To C. D.," naming some neighbour who has not reaped all his corn.¹ In this custom the corn-spirit in the form of a mare is passed on from a farm where the corn is all cut to another farm where it is still standing, and where therefore the corn-spirit may be supposed naturally to take refuge. In Shropshire the custom is similar. "Crying, calling, or shouting the mare is a ceremony performed by the men of that farm which is the first in any parish or district to finish the harvest. The object of it is to make known their own prowess, and to taunt the laggards by a pretended offer of the 'owd mar' [old mare] to help out their 'chem' [team]. All the men assemble (the wooden harvest-bottle being of course one of the company) in the stackyard, or, better, on the highest ground on the farm, and there shout the following dialogue, preceding it by a grand 'Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!'

"'I 'ave 'er, I 'ave 'er, I 'ave 'er!'

"'Whad 'ast thee, whad 'ast thee, whad 'ast thee?'

"'A mar'! a mar'! a mar'!'

"'Whose is 'er, whose is 'er, whose is 'er?'

"'Maister A.'s, Maister A.'s, Maister A.'s!' (naming the farmer whose harvest is finished).

"'W'eer sha't the' send 'er? w'eer sha't the' send 'er? w'cer sha't the' send 'er?'

"'To Maister B.'s, to Maister B.'s, to Maister B.'s' (naming one whose harvest is *not* finished).

"'Uth a hip, hip, hip, hurrah!' (in chorus)."

The farmer who finishes his harvest last, and who therefore cannot send the Mare to any one else, is said "to keep her all winter." The mocking offer of the Mare was sometimes responded to by a mocking acceptance of her help. Thus an old man told an enquirer, "While we wun at supper, a mon cumm'd wi' a autar [halter] to fatch

¹ J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 24, Bohn's edition.

her away." But at one place (Longnor, near Leebotwood), down to about 1850, the Mare used really to be sent, "The head man of the farmer who had finished harvest first was mounted on the best horse of the team—the leader—both horse and man being adorned with ribbons, streamers, etc. Thus arrayed, a boy on foot led the pair in triumph to the :: : . . . , farmhouses. Sometimes the man who took the 'mare' received, as well as plenty of harvest-ale, some rather rough, though good-humoured, treatment, coming back minus his decorations, and so on."¹

The corn-
spirit as a
horse in
France.

In the neighbourhood of Lille the idea of the corn-spirit in horse form is clearly preserved. When a harvester grows weary at his work, it is said, "He has the fatigue of the Horse." The first sheaf, called the "Cross of the Horse," is placed on a cross of boxwood in the barn, and the youngest horse on the farm must tread on it. The reapers dance round the last blades of corn, crying, "See the remains of the Horse." The sheaf made out of these last blades is given to the youngest horse of the parish (*commune*) to eat. This youngest horse of the parish clearly represents, as Mannhardt says, the corn-spirit of the following year, the Corn-foal, which absorbs the spirit of the old Corn-horse by eating the last corn cut; for, as usual, the old corn-spirit takes his final refuge in the last sheaf. The thresher of the last sheaf is said to "beat the Horse."² Again, a trace of the horse-shaped corn-spirit is reported from Berry. The harvesters there are accustomed to take a noonday nap in the field. This is called "seeing the Horse." The leader or "King" of the harvesters gives the signal for going to sleep. If he delays giving the signal, one of the harvesters will begin to neigh like a horse, the rest imitate him, and then they all go "to see the Horse."³

¹ C. F. Burne and G. F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore* (London, 1883), pp. 373 sq.

² W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 167. We may compare the Scotch custom of giving the last sheaf to a horse or mare to eat. See above, pp. 141, 156, 158, 160 sq., 162

³ Laisnel de la Salle, *Croyances et*

Légendes du Centre de la France (Paris, 1875), ii. 133; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 167 sq. We have seen (above, p. 267) that in South Pembrokeshire the man who cut the "Neck" used to be "shod," that is, to have the soles of his feet severely beaten with sods. Perhaps he was thus treated as representing the corn-spirit in the form of a horse.

§ 9. *The Corn-spirit as a Bird*

Sometimes the corn-spirit assumes the form of a bird. Thus among the Saxons of the Bistritz district in Transylvania there is a saying that the quail is sitting in the last standing stalks on the harvest-field, and all the reapers rush at these stalks in order, as they say, to catch the quail.¹ Exactly the same expression is used by reapers in Austrian Silesia when they are about to cut the last standing corn, whatever the kind of grain may be.² In the Bocage of Normandy, when the reapers have come to the last ears of the last rig, they surround them for the purpose of catching the quail, which is supposed to have taken refuge there. They run about the corn crying, "Mind the Quail!" and make believe to grab at the bird amid shouts and laughter.³ Connected with this identification of the corn-spirit with a quail is probably the belief that the cry of the bird in spring is prophetic of the price of corn in the autumn; in Germany they say that corn will sell at as many gulden a bushel as the quail uttered its cry over the fields in spring. Similar notions are drawn from the note of the bird in central and western France, in Switzerland and in Tuscany.⁴ Perhaps one reason for identifying the quail with the corn-spirit is that the bird lays its eggs on the ground, without making much of a nest.⁵ Similarly the Toradjas of Central Celebes think that the soul of the rice is embodied in a pretty little blue bird which builds its nest in the rice-field at the time when the rice is beginning to germinate, and which disappears again after the harvest. Thus both the place and the time of the appearance of the bird suggest to the natives the notion that the blue bird is the rice incarnate. And like the note of the quail in Europe the note of this

The corn spirit as a quail.

The rice-spirit as a blue bird.

¹ G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1880), p. 21.

² A. Peter, *Volksthümliches aus Österreichisch-Schlesien* (Göppau, 1865-1867), ii. 268.

³ J. Lecoeur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1883-1887), ii. 240.

⁴ A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*² (Berlin, 1869), p. 189, § 277; Chr. Schneller, *Marchen und Sagen aus Walschtirol* (Innsbruck, 1867), p. 238; Rev. Ch. Swainson, *The Folk Lore and Provincial Names of British Birds* (London, 1886), p. 173.

⁵ Alfred Newton, *Dictionary of Birds*, New Edition (London, 1893-1896), p. 755.

little bird in Celebes is believed to prognosticate the state of the harvest, foretelling whether the rice will be abundant or scarce. Nobody may drive the bird away; to do so would not merely injure the rice, it would hurt the eyes of the sacrilegious person and might even strike him blind. In Minahassa, a district in the north of Celebes, a similar though less definite belief attaches to a sort of small quail which loves to haunt the rice-fields before the rice is reaped; and when the Galelareeze of Halmahera hear a certain kind of bird, which they call *togè*, croaking among the rice in ear, they say that the bird is putting the grain into the rice, so they will not kill it.¹

The rice-spirit as a quail.

§ 10. *The Corn-spirit as a Fox*

The corn-spirit as a fox running through the corn or sitting in it.

Another animal whose shape the corn-spirit is sometimes thought to assume is the fox. The conception is recorded at various places in Germany and France. Thus at Nordlingen in Bavaria, when the corn waves to and fro in the wind, they say, "The fox goes through the corn," and at Usingen in Nassau they say, "The foxes are marching through the corn." At Ravensberg, in Westphalia, and at Steinau, in Kurhessen, children are warned against straying in the corn, "because the Fox is there." At Campe, near Stade, when they are about to cut the last corn, they call out to the reaper, "The Fox is sitting there, hold him fast!" In the Department of the Moselle they say, "Watch whether the Fox comes out." In Bourbonnais the expression is, 'You will catch the Fox.' When a reaper wounds himself or is sick at reaping, they say in the Lower Loire that "He has the Fox." In Côte-d'or they say, "He has killed the Fox." At Louhans, in Sàone-et-Loire, when the reapers are cutting the last corn they leave a handful standing and throw their sickles at it. He who hits it is called the Fox, and two girls deck his bonnet with flowers.

The corn-spirit as a fox at reaping the last corn.

¹ A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische aantekeningen omtrent de Tohoengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, xlv. (1900) pp. 228, 229; *id.*, "De rijstmoeder in den

Indischen Archipel," *Verlagen en Mededeelingen van der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks, v., part 3 (Amsterdam, 1903), pp. 374 sq.

n the evening there is a dance, at which the Fox dances with all the girls. The supper which follows is also called the Fox; they say, "We have eaten the Fox," meaning that they have partaken of the harvest-supper. In the Canton of Zurich the last sheaf is called the Fox. At Burggen, in Ain, they cry out, "The Fox is sitting in the last sheaf," and having made the figure of an animal out of white cloth and some ears of the last corn, they dub it the Fox and throw it into the house of a neighbour who has not yet gotten all his harvest.¹ In Poitou, when the corn is being reaped in a district, all the reapers strive to finish as quickly as possible in order that they may send "the Fox" to the fields of a farmer who has not yet garnered his sheaves. The man who cuts the last handful of standing corn is said to "have the Fox." This last handful is carried to the farmer's house and occupies a place on the table during the harvest-supper; and the custom is to drench it with water. After that it is set up on the chimney-piece and remains here the whole year.² At threshing, also, in Sâone-et-Loire, the last sheaf is called the Fox; in Lot they say, "We are going to beat the Fox"; and at Zabern in Alsace they set a stuffed fox before the door of the threshing-floor of a neighbour who has not finished his threshing.³ With his conception of the fox as an embodiment of the corn-spirit may possibly be connected an old custom, observed in Holstein and Westphalia, of carrying a dead or living fox from house to house in spring; the intention of the custom was perhaps to diffuse the refreshing and invigorating influence of the reawakened spirit of vegetation.⁴ In Japan the rice-god Inari is represented as an elderly man with a long beard riding on a white fox, and the fox is always associated with this deity. In front of his shrines may usually be seen a pair of foxes carved in wood or stone.⁵

The corn-spirit as a fox at threshing.

The Japanese rice-god associated with the fox.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 109 note ².

² L. Pineau, *Folk-lore du Poitou* Paris, 1892, pp. 500 sq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 109 sq., note ².

⁴ J. F. L. Woeste, *Völküberlieferungen in der Grafschaft Mark* (Iserohn, 1848), p. 27; W. Mannhardt,

Mythologische Forschungen, p. 110 note.

⁵ I. Scadio Hearn, *Glances of Unfamiliar Japan* (London, 1894), ii. 312 sqq.; W. G. Aston, *Shinto* (London, 1905), pp. 162 sq. At the festival of the Roman corn-goddess Ceres, celebrated on the nineteenth of April, foxes were allowed to run about with burning torches tied to their tails,

§ 11. *The Corn-spirit as a Pig (Boar or Sow)*

The corn-spirit as a boar rushing through the corn.

The corn-spirit as a boar or sow at reaping.

The corn-spirit as a sow at threshing.

The last animal embodiment of the corn-spirit which we shall notice is the pig (boar or sow). In Thüringen, when the wind sets the young corn in motion, they sometimes say, "The Boar is rushing through the corn."¹ Amongst the Esthonians of the island of Oesel the last sheaf is called the Rye-boar, and the man who gets it is saluted with a cry of "You have the Rye-boar on your back!" In reply he strikes up a song, in which he prays for plenty.² At Kohlerwinkel, near Augsburg, at the close of the harvest, the last bunch of standing corn is cut down, stalk by stalk, by all the reapers in turn. He who cuts the last stalk "gets the Sow," and is laughed at.³ In other Swabian villages also the man who cuts the last corn "has the Sow," or "häs the Rye-sow."⁴ In the Traunstein district, Upper Bavaria, the man who cuts the last handful of rye or wheat "has the Sow," and is called Sow-driver.⁵ At Bollingen, near Radolfzell in Baden, the last sheaf is called the Rye-sow or the Wheat-sow, according to the crop; and at Röhrenbach in Baden the person who brings the last armful for the last sheaf is called the Corn-sow or the Oats-sow. And in the south-east of Baden the thresher who gives the last stroke at threshing, or is the last to hang up his flail on the wall, is called the Sow or the Rye-sow.⁶ At Friedingen, in Swabia, the thresher who gives the last stroke is called Sow—Barley-sow, Corn-sow, or the like, and is due to the crop.

and the custom was explained as a punishment inflicted on foxes because a fox had once in this way burned down the crops (Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 679 sqq.). Samson is said to have burned the crops of the Philistines in a similar fashion (Judges xv. 4 sq.). Whether the custom and the tradition are connected with the idea of the fox as an embodiment of the corn-spirit is doubtful. Compare W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 108 sq.; W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (London, 1899), pp. 77-79.

¹ A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen* (Vienna,

1878), p. 213, § 4. So at Klepzig, in Anhalt (*Zeitschrift des Vereins zur Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 150).

² J. B. Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. Heft 2 (Dorpat, 1872), p. 107; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 187.

³ A. Birlinger, *Aus Schwaben* (Wiesbaden, 1874), ii. 328.

⁴ F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie* (Munich, 1848-1855), ii. pp. 223, 224, §§ 417, 419.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 112.

⁶ E. L. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), pp. 428, 436.

At Onstmettingen the man who gives the last stroke at threshing "has the Sow"; he is often bound up in a sheaf and dragged by a rope along the ground.¹ And, generally, in Swabia the man who gives the last stroke with the flail is called Sow. He may, however, rid himself of this invidious distinction by passing on to a neighbour the straw-rope, which is the badge of his position as Sow. So he goes to a house and throws the straw-rope into it, crying, "There, I bring you the Sow." All the inmates give chase; and if they catch him they beat him, shut him up for several hours in the pig-sty, and oblige him to take the "Sow" away again.² In various parts of Upper Bavaria the man who gives the last stroke at threshing must "carry the Pig"—that is, either a straw effigy of a pig or merely a bundle of straw-ropes. This he carries to a farm where the threshing is not finished, and throws it into the barn. If the threshers catch him they handle him roughly, beating him, or dirtying his face, throwing him into filth, binding the Sow on his back, and so on; if the bearer of the Sow is a woman they cut off her hair. At the harvest supper or dinner the man who "carried the Pig" gets one or more dumplings made in the form of pigs; sometimes he gets a large dumpling and a number of small ones, all in pig form, the large one being called the sow and the small ones the sucking-pigs. Sometimes he has the right to be the first to put his hand into the dish and take out as many small dumplings ("sucking-pigs") as he can, while the other threshers strike at his hand with spoons or sticks. When the dumplings are served up by the maid-servant, all the people at table cry "Süz, süz, süz!" that being the cry used in calling pigs. Sometimes after dinner the man who "carried the Pig" has his face blackened, and is set on a cart and drawn round the village by his fellows, followed by a crowd crying "Süz, süz, süz!" as if they were calling swine. Sometimes, after being wheeled round the village, he is flung on the dunghill.³

¹ E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben* (Stuttgart, 1852), p. 445, § 162.

Schwaben (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1861-1862), ii. p. 425, § 379.

³ F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. pp. 221-224, §§ 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 418.

² A. Birlinger, *Volksthumliches aus*

The corn-spirit as a pig at sowing.

Again, the corn-spirit in the form of a pig plays his part at sowing-time as well as at harvest. At Neuautz, in Courland, when barley is sown for the first time in the year, the farmer's wife boils the chine of a pig along with the tail, and brings it to the sower on the field. He eats of it, but cuts off the tail and sticks it in the field; it is believed that the ears of corn will then grow as long as the tail.¹ Here the pig is the corn-spirit, whose fertilising power is sometimes supposed to lie especially in his tail.² As a pig he is put in the ground at sowing-time, and as a pig he reappears amongst the ripe corn at harvest. For amongst the neighbouring Esthonians, as we have seen,³ the last sheaf is called the Rye-boar. Somewhat similar customs are observed in Germany. In the Salza district, near Meiningen, a certain bone in the pig is called "the Jew on the winnowing-fan." The flesh of this bone is boiled on Shrove Tuesday, but the bone is put amongst the ashes which the neighbours exchange as presents on St. Peter's Day (the twenty-second of February), and then mix with the seed-corn.⁴ In the whole of Hesse, Meiningen, and other districts, people eat pea-soup with dried pig-ribs on Ash Wednesday or Candlemas. The ribs are then collected and hung in the room till sowing-time, when they are inserted in the sown field or in the seed-bag amongst the flax seed. This is thought to be an infallible specific against earth-fleas and moles, and to cause the flax to grow well and tall.⁵ In many parts of White Russia people eat a roast lamb or sucking-pig at Easter, and then throw the bones backwards upon the fields, to preserve the corn from hail.⁶

The corn-spirit embodied in the Yule Boar of Scandinavia.

But the idea of the corn-spirit as embodied in pig form is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the Scandinavian custom of the Yule Boar. In Sweden and Denmark at Yule (Christmas) it is the custom to bake a loaf in the form of a boar-pig. This is called the Yule Boar. The corn of

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 186 sq.

² Above, p. 272; compare 268.

³ Above, p. 298.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 187.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 187 sq.; A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen*, pp. 189,

218; W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche* (Marburg, 1888), p. 35.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 188; W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People* (London, 1872), p. 220.

the last sheaf is often used to make it. All through Yule the Yule Boar stands on the table. Often it is kept till the sowing-time in spring, when part of it is mixed with the seed-corn and part given to the ploughmen and plough-horses or plough-oxen to eat, in the expectation of a good harvest.¹ In this custom the corn-spirit, immanent in the last sheaf, appears at midwinter in the form of a boar made from the corn of the last sheaf; and his quickening influence on the corn is shewn by mixing part of the Yule Boar with the seed-corn, and giving part of it to the ploughman and his cattle to eat. Similarly we saw that the Corn-wolf makes his appearance at midwinter, the time when the year begins to verge towards spring.² We may conjecture that the Yule straw, which Swedish peasants turn to various superstitious uses, comes, in part at least, from the sheaf out of which the Yule Boar is made. The Yule straw is long rye-straw, a portion of which is always set apart for this season. It is strewn over the floor at Christmas, and the peasants attribute many virtues to it. For example, they think that some of it scattered on the ground will make a barren field productive. Again, the peasant at Christmas seats himself on a log; and his eldest son or daughter, or the mother herself, if the children are not old enough, places a wisp of the Yule straw on his knee. From this he draws out single straws, and throws them, one by one, up to the ceiling; and as many as lodge in the rafters, so many will be the sheaves of rye he will have to thresh at harvest.³ Again, it is only the Yule straw which may be used in binding the fruit-trees as a charm to fertilise them.⁴ These uses of the Yule straw shew that it is believed to possess fertilising virtues analogous to those ascribed to the Yule Boar; we may therefore fairly conjecture that the Yule straw is

The Yule
straw in
Sweden.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 197 sq.; F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 491; J. Jamieson, *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, New Edition (Paisley, 1879-1882), vol. iii. pp. 206 sq., s.v. "Maiden"; Arv. Aug. Afzelius, *Volkssagen und Volkslieder aus Schwedens älterer und neuerer Zeit*, übersetzt von F. H.

Ungewitter (Leipsic, 1842), i. 9.

² Above, p. 275.

³ L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden* (London, 1870), pp. 169 sq., 182. On Christmas night children sleep on a bed of the Yule straw (*ibid.* p. 177).

⁴ U. Jahn, *Die deutschen Opfergebräuche* (Breslau, 1884), p. 215. Compare *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 17, 27 sq.

made from the same sheaf as the Yule Boar. Formerly a real boar was sacrificed at Christmas,¹ and apparently also a man in the character of the Yule Boar. This, at least, may perhaps be inferred from a Christmas custom still observed in Sweden. A man is wrapt up in a skin, and carries a wisp of straw in his mouth, so that the projecting straws look like the bristles of a boar. A knife is brought, and an old woman, with her face blackened, pretends to sacrifice him.²

The Christmas Boar among the Esthonians

On Christmas Eve in some parts of the Esthonian island of Oesel they bake a long cake with the two ends turned up. It is called the Christmas Boar, and stands on the table till the morning of New Year's Day, when it is distributed among the cattle. In other parts of the island the Christmas Boar is not a cake but a little pig born in March, which the housewife fattens secretly, often without the knowledge of the other members of the family. On Christmas Eve the little pig is secretly killed, then roasted in the oven, and set on the table standing on all fours, where it remains in this posture for several days. In other parts of the island, again, though the Christmas cake has neither the name nor the shape of a boar, it is kept till the New Year, when half of it is divided among all the members and all the quadrupeds of the family. The other half of the cake is kept till sowing-time comes round, when it is similarly distributed in the morning among human beings and beasts.³ In other parts of Esthonia, again, the Christmas Boar, as it is called, is baked of the first rye cut at harvest; it has a conical shape and a cross is impressed on it with a pig's bone or a key, or three dints are made in it with a buckle or a piece of charcoal. It stands with a light beside it on the table all through the festal season. On New Year's Day and Epiphany, before sunrise, a little of the cake is crumbled with salt and given to the cattle. The rest is kept till the day when the cattle are driven out to pasture for the first time in spring. It is then put in the

¹ A. A. Afzelius, *op. cit.* i. 31.

² A. A. Afzelius, *op. cit.* i. 9; L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, pp. 181, 185.

³ J. B. Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. Heft 2 (Dorpat, 1872), pp. 55 sq.

herdsman's bag, and at evening is divided among the cattle to guard them from magic and harm. In some places the Christmas Boar is partaken of by farm-servants and cattle at the time of the barley sowing, for the purpose of thereby producing a heavier crop.¹

§ 12. *On the Animal Embodiments of the Corn-spirit*

So much for the animal embodiments of the corn-spirit as they are presented to us in the folk-customs of Northern Europe. These customs bring out clearly the sacramental character of the harvest-supper. The corn-spirit is conceived as embodied in an animal; this divine animal is slain, and its flesh and blood are partaken of by the harvesters. Thus, the cock, the goose, the hare, the cat, the goat, and the ox are eaten sacramentally by the harvesters, and the pig is eaten sacramentally by ploughmen in spring.² Again, as a substitute for the real flesh of the divine being, bread or dumplings are made in his image and eaten sacramentally; thus, pig-shaped dumplings are eaten by the harvesters, and loaves made in boar-shape (the Yule Boar) are eaten in spring by the ploughman and his cattle.

Sacramental character of the harvest-supper.

The reader has probably remarked the complete parallelism between the conceptions of the corn-spirit in human and in animal form. The parallel may be here briefly resumed. When the corn waves in the wind it is said either that the Corn-mother or that the Corn-wolf, etc., is passing through the corn. Children are warned against straying in corn-fields either because the Corn-mother or because the Corn-wolf, etc., is there. In the last corn cut or the last sheaf threshed either the Corn-mother or the Corn-wolf, etc., is supposed to be present. The last sheaf is itself called either the Corn-mother or the Corn-wolf, etc., and is made up in the shape either of a woman or of a wolf, etc. The person who cuts, binds, or threshes the last sheaf is called either the Old Woman or the Wolf, etc., according to

Parallelism between the conceptions of the corn-spirit in human and animal forms.

¹ F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äussern Leben der Ehsten* (St. Petersburg, 1876), pp. 344, 485.

² Above, pp. 277 sq., 280, 281, 285,

290, 300, 301. In regard to the hare, the substitution of brandy for hare's blood is probably modern.

the name bestowed on the sheaf itself. As in some places a sheaf made in human form and called the Maiden, the Mother of the Maize, etc., is kept from one harvest to the next in order to secure a continuance of the corn-spirit's blessing; so in some places the Harvest-cock and in others the flesh of the goat is kept for a similar purpose from one harvest to the next. As in some places the grain taken from the Corn-mother is mixed with the seed-corn in spring to make the crop abundant; so in some places the feathers of the cock, and in Sweden the Yule Boar, are kept till spring and mixed with the seed-corn for a like purpose. As part of the Corn-mother or Maiden is given to the cattle at Christmas or to the horses at the first ploughing, so part of the Yule Boar is given to the ploughing horses or oxen in spring. Lastly, the death of the corn-spirit is represented by killing or pretending to kill either his human or his animal representative; and the worshippers partake sacramentally either of the actual body and blood of the representative of the divinity, or of bread made in his likeness.

The reason why the corn-spirit is thought to take the forms of so many animals may be that wild creatures are commonly penned by the advance of the reapers into the last patch of standing corn, which is usually regarded as the last refuge of the corn-spirit.

Other animal forms assumed by the corn-spirit are the stag, roe, sheep, bear, ass, mouse, stork, swan, and kite.¹ If it is asked why the corn-spirit should be thought to appear in the form of an animal and of so many different animals, we may reply that to primitive man the simple appearance of an animal or bird among the corn is probably enough to suggest a mysterious link between the creature and the corn; and when we remember that in the old days, before fields were fenced in, all kinds of animals must have been free to roam over them, we need not wonder that the corn-spirit should have been identified even with large animals like the horse and cow, which nowadays could not, except by a rare accident, be found straying in an English corn-field. This explanation applies with peculiar force to the very common case in which the animal embodiment of the corn-spirit is believed to lurk in the last standing corn. For at harvest a number of wild animals, such as hares, rabbits, and partridges, are commonly driven by the progress of the reaping into the last patch of standing corn, and make their escape from it as it is being cut down. So

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen* (Berlin, 1868), p. 1.

regularly does this happen that reapers and others often stand round the last patch of corn armed with sticks or guns, with which they kill the animals as they dart out of their last refuge among the stalks. Now, primitive man, to whom magical changes of shape seem perfectly credible, finds it most natural that the spirit of the corn, driven from his home in the ripe grain, should make his escape in the form of the animal which is seen to rush out of the last patch of corn as it falls under the scythe of the reaper. Thus the identification of the corn-spirit with an animal is .. . to the identification of him with a passing stranger. As the sudden appearance of a stranger near the harvest-field or threshing-floor is, to the primitive mind, enough to identify him as the spirit of the corn escaping from the cut or threshed corn, so the sudden appearance of an animal issuing from the cut corn is enough to identify it with the corn-spirit escaping from his ruined home. The two identifications are so analogous that they can hardly be dissociated in any attempt to explain them. Those who look to some other principle than the one here suggested for the explanation of the latter identification are bound to shew that their theory covers the former identification also.

NOTE

THE PLEIADES IN PRIMITIVE CALENDARS

THE constellation of the Pleiades plays an important part in the calendar of primitive peoples, both in the northern and in the southern hemisphere; indeed for reasons which at first sight are not obvious savages appear to have paid more attention to this constellation than to any other group of stars in the sky, and in particular they have commonly timed the various operations of the agricultural year by observation of its heliacal rising or setting. Some evidence on the subject was adduced by the late Dr. Richard Andree,¹ but much more exists, and it may be worth while to put certain of the facts together.

Importance of the Pleiades in primitive calendars.

In the first place it deserves to be noticed that great attention has been paid to the Pleiades by savages in the southern hemisphere who do not till the ground, and who therefore lack that incentive to observe the stars which is possessed by peoples in the agricultural stage of society; for we can scarcely doubt that in early ages the practical need of ascertaining the proper seasons for sowing and planting has done more than mere speculative curiosity to foster a knowledge of astronomy by compelling savages to scrutinise the great celestial clock for indications of the time of year. Now amongst the rudest of savages known to us are the Australian aborigines, none of whom in their native state ever practised agriculture. Yet we are told that "they do, according to their manner, worship the hosts of heaven, and believe particular constellations rule natural causes. For such they have names, and sing and dance to gain the favour of the Pleiades (*Mormodellick*), the constellation worshipped by one body as the giver of rain; but if it should be deferred, instead of blessings curses are apt to be bestowed upon it."² According to a writer, whose evidence on

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the Australian aborigines.

¹ R. Andree, "Die Pleiaden im Mythos und in ihrer Beziehung zum Jahresbeginn und Landbau," *Globus*, Jähr. (1893) pp. 362-366.

² Mr. McKellar, quoted by the Rev.

W. Ridley, "Report on Australian Languages and Traditions," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, ii. (1873) p. 279; *id.*, *Kamilaroi* (Sydney, 1875), p. 138. Mr. McKellar's evidence was

other matters of Australian beliefs⁴ is open to grave doubt, some of the aborigines of New South Wales denied that the sun is the source of heat, because he shines also in winter when the weather is cold; the real cause of warm weather they held to be the Pleiades, because as the summer heat increases, that constellation rises higher and higher in the sky, reaching its greatest elevation in the height of summer, and gradually sinking again in autumn as the days grow cooler, till in winter it is either barely visible or lost to view altogether.¹ Another writer, who was well acquainted with the natives of Victoria in the early days of the colony and whose testimony can be relied upon, tells us that an old chief of the Spring Creek tribe "taught the young people the names of the favourite planets and constellations, as indications of the seasons. For example, when Canopus is a very little above the horizon in the east at daybreak, the season for emu eggs has come; when the Pleiades are visible in the east an hour before sunrise, the time for visiting friends and neighbouring tribes is at hand."²

Again, the Abipones of Paraguay, who neither sowed nor reaped,³ nevertheless regarded the Pleiades as an image of their ancestor. As that constellation is invisible in the sky of South America for several months every year, the Abipones believed that their ancestor was then sick, and they were dreadfully afraid that he would die. But when the constellation reappeared in the month of May, they saluted the return of their ancestor with joyous shouts and the glad music of flutes and horns, and they congratulated him on his recovery from sickness. Next day they all went out to collect wild honey, from which they brewed a favourite beverage. Then at sunset they feasted and kept up the revelry all night by the

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the Indians of Paraguay and Brazil.

given before a Select Committee of the Legislative Council of Victoria in 1858; from which we may perhaps infer that his statement refers especially to the tribes of Victoria or at all events of south-eastern Australia. It seems to be a common belief among the aborigines of central and south-eastern Australia that the Pleiades are women who once lived on earth but afterwards went up into the sky. See W. E. Stanbridge, in *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, N.S. i. (1861) p. 302; P. Beveridge, "Of the Aborigines inhabiting the great Lacustrine and Riverine Depression of the Lower Murray," etc., *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, xvii. (Sydney, 1884) p. 61; Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899) p. 566; *id.*, *Northern Tribes*

of Central Australia (London, 1904), p. 628; A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 429 *sq.* Some tribes of Victoria believed that the Pleiades were originally a queen and six of her attendants, but that the Crow (Waa) fell in love with the queen and ran away with her, and that since then the Pleiades have been only six in number. See James Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, 1881), p. 100.

¹ J. Manning, "Notes on the Aborigines of New Holland," *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, xvi. (Sydney, 1883) p. 168.

² James Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 75.

³ M. Dobrizhoffer, *Historia de Abiponibus* (Vienna, 1784), ii. 118.

light of torches, while a sorceress, who presided at the festivity, shook her rattle and danced. But the proceedings were perfectly decorous; the sexes did not mix with each other.¹ The Mocobis of Paraguay also looked upon the Pleiades as their father and creator.² The Guaycurus of the Gran Chaco used to rejoice greatly at the reappearance of the Pleiades. On this occasion they held a festival at which men and women, boys and girls all beat each other soundly, believing that this brought them health, abundance, and victory over their enemies.³ Amongst the Lengua Indians of Paraguay at the present day the rising of the Pleiades is connected with the beginning of spring, and feasts are held at this time, generally of a markedly immoral character.⁴ The Guaranis of Paraguay knew the time of sowing by observation of the Pleiades;⁵ they are said to have revered the constellation and to have dated the beginning of their year from the rising of the constellation in May.⁶ The Tapuiyas, formerly a numerous and warlike tribe of Brazil, hailed the rising of the Pleiades with great respect, and worshipped the constellation with songs and dances.⁷ The Indians of north-western Brazil, an agricultural people who subsist mainly by the cultivation of manioc, determine the time for their various field labours by the position of certain constellations, especially the Pleiades; when that constellation has sunk beneath the horizon, the regular, heavy rains set in.⁸ The Omagua Indians of Brazil ascribe to the Pleiades a special influence on human destiny.⁹ A Brazilian name for the Pleiades is *Cyiuce*, that is, "Mother of those who are thirsty." The constellation, we are told, "is known to the Indians of the whole of Brazil and appears to be even worshipped by some tribes in Matto Grosso. In the valley of the Amazon a number of popular sayings are current about it. Thus they say that in the first days of its appearance in the firmament, while it is still low, the birds and especially the towels sleep on the lower branches or perches, and that just as it rises so do they; that it brings much cold and rain; that when the constellation vanishes, the serpents lose their venom; that the reeds

¹ M. Dobrizhoffer, *op. cit.* ii. 77 sq., 101-105.

² Pedro de Angelis, *Coleccion de Obras y Documentos relativos a la Historia antigua y moderna de las Provincias del Rio de la Plata* (Buenos Ayres, 1836-1837), iv. 15.

³ P. Lozano, *Descripcion chorographico del terreno, rios, arboles, y animales del Gran Chaco* (Cordova, 1733), p. 67.

⁴ W. Barbrooke Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land* (London, 1911), p. 139.

⁵ Pedro de Angelis, *op. cit.* iv. 14.

⁶ Th. Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, iii. (Leipsic, 1862) p. 418, referring to Maicgrav de Liebstadt, *Hist. rerum naturalium Brasil.* (Amsterdam, 1648), viii. 5 and 12.

⁷ M. Dobrizhoffer, *Historia de Abiponibus*, ii. 104.

⁸ Th. Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern* (Berlin, 1909-1910), ii. 203.

⁹ C. F. Phil. v. Martius, *Zur Ethnographie Amerika's, zumal Brasiliens* (Leipsic, 1867), p. 441.

used in making arrows must be cut before the appearance of the Pleiades, else they will be worm-eaten. According to the legend the Pleiades disappear in May and reappear in June. Their reappearance coincides with the renewal of vegetation and of animal life. Hence the legend relates that everything which appears before the constellation is renewed, that is, the appearance of the Pleiades, marks the beginning of spring."¹ The Indians of the Orinoco called the Pleiades *Ucasu* or *Cacasau*, according to their dialect, and they dated the beginning of their year from the time when these stars are visible in the east after sunset.²

Attention
paid to the
Pleiades by
the Indians
of Peru and
Mexico.

By the Indians of Peru "the Pleiades were called *Collca* (the maize-heap): in this constellation the Peruvians both of the sierra and the coast beheld the prototype of their cherished stores of corn. It made their maize to grow, and was worshipped accordingly."³ When the Pleiades appeared above the horizon on or about Corpus Christi Day, these Indians celebrated their chief festival of the year and adored the constellation "in order that the maize might not dry up."⁴ Adjoining the great temple of the Sun at Cuzco there was a cloister with halls opening off it. One of these halls was dedicated to the Moon, and another to the planet Venus, the Pleiades, and all the other stars. The Incas venerated the Pleiades because of their curious position and the symmetry of their shape.⁵ The tribes of Vera Cruz, on the coast of Mexico, dated the beginning of their year from the heliacal setting of the Pleiades, which in the latitude of Vera Cruz (19° N.) in the year 1519 fell on the first of May of the Gregorian calendar.⁶ The Aztecs appear to have attached great importance to the Pleiades, for they timed the most solemn and impressive of all their religious ceremonies so as to coincide with the moment when that constellation was in the middle of the sky at midnight. The ceremony consisted in kindling a sacred new fire on the breast of a human victim on the last night of a great period of fifty-two years. They expected that at the close of one of these periods the stars would cease to revolve and the world itself would come to an end. Hence, when the critical moment approached,

¹ Carl Teschauer, S.J., "Mythen und alte Volkssagen aus Brasilien," *Anthropos*, i. (1906) p. 736.

² J. Gumilla, *Histoire Naturelle et Civile et Géographique de l'Orenoque* (Avignon, 1758), iii. 254 sq.

³ E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. (Oxford, 1892) p. 492.

⁴ P. J. de Arriaga, *Extirpacion de la Idolatria del Piru* (Lima, 1621), pp. 11, 29 sq. According to Arriaga, the Peruvian name for the Pleiades is *Oncoy*.

⁵ Garcilasso de la Vega, *First Part of the Royal Commentaries of the Yucas*, translated by (Sir) Clements R. Markham (London, 1869-1871, Hakluyt Society), i. 275. Compare J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (London, 1880, Hakluyt Society), ii. 304.

⁶ E. Selser, *All-Mexikanische Studien*, ii. (Berlin, 1899) pp. 166 sq., referring to Petrus Martyr, *De nuper sub D. Carolo repertis insulis* (Basileae, 1521), p. 15.

the priests watched from the top of a mountain the movement of the stars, and especially of the Pleiades, with the utmost anxiety. When that constellation was seen to cross the meridian, great was the joy; for they knew that the world was respited for another fifty-two years. Immediately the bravest and handsomest of the captives was thrown down on his back; a board of dry wood was placed on his breast, and one of the priests made fire by twirling a stick between his hands on the board. As soon as the flame burst forth, the breast of the victim was cut open, his heart was torn out, and together with the rest of his body was thrown into the fire. Runners carried the new fire at full speed to all parts of the kingdom to rekindle the cold hearths; for every fire throughout the country had been extinguished as a preparation for this solemn rite.¹

The Blackfeet Indians of North America "know and observe the Pleiades, and regulate their most important feast by those stars. About the first and the last days of the occultation of the Pleiades there is a sacred feast among the Blackfeet. The mode of observance is national, the whole of the tribe turning out for the celebration of its rites, which include two sacred vigils, the solemn blessing and planting of the seed. It is the opening of the agricultural season. . . . In all highly religious feasts the calumet, or pipe, is always presented towards the Pleiades, with invocation for life-giving goods. The women swear by the Pleiades as the men do by the sun or the morning star." At the general meeting of the nation there is a dance of warriors, which is supposed to represent the dance of the seven young men who are identified with the Pleiades. For the Indians say that the seven stars of the constellation were seven brothers, who guarded by night the field of sacred seed and danced round it to keep themselves awake during the long hours of darkness.² According to another legend told by the Blackfeet, the Pleiades are six children, who were so ashamed because they had no little yellow hides of buffalo calves that they wandered away on the plains and were at last taken up into the sky. "They are not seen during the moon, when the buffalo calves are yellow (spring, the time of their shame), but, every year, when the calves turn brown (autumn), the lost children can be seen in the sky every night."³ This version of the myth, it will be observed, recognises

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the North American Indians.

¹ B. de Sahagun, *Histoire Générale des choses de la Nouvelle Espagne* (Paris, 1880), pp. 288 sq., 489 sqq.; A. de Herrera, *General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. J. Stevens (London, 1725-1726), iii. 222; F. S. Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, translated by C. Cullen (London, 1807), i. 315 sq.; J. G. Muller, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Urreligionen* (Biele, 1867), pp. 519 sq.;

H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (London, 1875-1876), iii. 393-395.

² Jean l'Heureux, "Ethnological Notes on the Astronomical Customs and Religious Ideas of the Chokitapia or Blackfeet Indians," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886) pp. 301-303.

³ Walter McClintock, *The Old North Trail* (London, 1910), p. 490.

only six stars in the constellation, and many savages apparently see no more, which speaks ill for the keenness of their vision; since among ourselves persons endowed with unusually good sight are able, I understand, to discern seven. Among the Pueblo Indians of Tusayan, an ancient province of Arizona, the culmination of the Pleiades is often used to determine the proper time for beginning a sacred nocturnal rite, especially an invocation addressed to the six deities who are believed to rule the six quarters of the world. The writer who records this fact adds: "I cannot explain its significance, and why of all stellar objects this minute cluster of stars of a low magnitude is more important than other stellar groups is not clear to me."¹ If the Pueblo Indians see only six stars in the cluster, as to which I cannot speak, it might seem to them a reason for assigning one of the stars to each of the six quarters, namely, north, south, east, west, above, and below.

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the Polynesians.

The Society Islanders in the South Pacific divided the year into two seasons, which they determined by observation of the Pleiades. "The first they called *Matarii i nia*, Pleiades above. It commenced when, in the evening, these stars appeared on or near the horizon; and the half year, during which, immediately after sunset, they were seen above the horizon, was called *Matarii i nia*. The other season commenced when, at sunset, the stars were invisible, and continued until at that hour they appeared again above the horizon. This season was called *Matarii i raro*, Pleiades below."² In the Hervey Islands of the South Pacific it is said that the constellation was originally a single star, which was shattered into six fragments by the god Tane. "This cluster of little stars is appropriately named Mata-riki or *little-eyes*, on account of their brightness. It is also designated Tau-ono, or *the-six*, on account of the apparent number of the fragments; the presence of the seventh star not having been detected by the unassisted native eye."³ Among these islanders the arrival of the new year was indicated by the appearance of the constellation on the eastern horizon just after sunset, that is, about the middle of December. "Hence the idolatrous worship paid to this beautiful cluster of stars in many of the South Sea Islands. The Pleiades were worshipped at Danger Island, and at the Penrhyns, down to the introduction of Christianity in 1857. In many islands extravagant joy is still manifested at the rising of this constellation out of the ocean."⁴ For example, in Manahiki or Humphrey's Island, South Pacific, "when the constellation Pleiades was seen there was unusual joy all over the month, and expressed by singing, dancing,

¹ J. Walter Fewkes, "The Tusayan New Fire Ceremony," *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History*, xxvi. (1895) p. 453.

² Rev. W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London,

1832-1836), i. 87.

³ Rev. W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific* (London, 1876), p. 43.

⁴ Rev. W. W. Gill, *op. cit.* p. 317, compare p. 44.

and blowing-shell trumpets.”¹ So the Maoris of New Zealand, another Polynesian people of the South Pacific, divided the year into moons and determined the first moon by the rising of the Pleiades, which they called *Matariki*.² Indeed throughout Polynesia the rising of the Pleiades (variously known as Matariki, Mataliki, Matalii, Makalii, etc.) seems to have marked the beginning of the year.³

Among some of the Melanesians also the Pleiades occupy an important position in the calendar. “The Banks’ islanders and Northern New Hebrides people content themselves with distinguishing the Pleiades, by which the approach of yam harvest is marked.”⁴ “Amongst the constellations, the Pleiades and Orion’s belt seem to be those which are most familiar to the natives of Bougainville Straits. The former, which they speak of as possessing six stars, they name *Vuhu*; the latter *Matatala*. They have also names for a few other stars. As in the case of many other savage races, the Pleiades is a constellation of great significance with the inhabitants of these straits. The Treasury Islanders hold a great feast towards the end of October, to celebrate, as far as I could learn, the approaching appearance of the constellation above the eastern horizon soon after sunset. Probably, as in many of the Pacific Islands, this event marks the beginning of their year. I learned from Mr. Stephens that, in Ugi, where of all the constellations the Pleiades alone receives a name, the natives are guided by it in selecting the times for planting and taking up the yams.”⁵

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the Melanesians.

The natives of the Torres Straits islands observe the appearance of the Pleiades (*Usiam*) on the horizon at sunset; and when they see it, they say that the new yam time has come.⁶ The Kai and the Bukaua, two agricultural tribes of German New Guinea, also determine the season of their labour in the fields by observation of the Pleiades: the Kai say that the time for such labours is when the Pleiades are visible above the horizon at night.⁷ In some districts of northern Celebes the rice-fields are similarly prepared for cultivation when the Pleiades are seen at a certain height above the

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the natives of New Guinea and the Indian Archipelago.

¹ G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), p. 279.

² F. Shortland, *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders*, Second Edition (London, 1856), p. 219.

³ *The United States Exploring Expedition, Ethnography and Philology*, by Horatio Hale (Philadelphia, 1846), p. 170; E. Tregear, *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (Wellington, N.Z., 1891), p. 226.

⁴ Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 348.

In the island of Florida the Pleiades are called *togo ni samu*, “the company of maidens” (*op. cit.* p. 349).

⁵ H. B. Guppy, *The Solomon Islands and their Natives* (London, 1887), p. 56.

⁶ A. C. Haddon, “Legends from Torres Straits,” *Folk-lore*, i. (1890) p. 195. We may conjecture that the “new yam time” means the time for planting yams.

⁷ R. Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 159, 431 sq.

horizon.¹ As to the Dyaks of Sarawak we read that "the Pleiades themselves tell them when to farm; and according to their position in the heavens, morning and evening, do they cut down the forest, burn, plant, and reap. The Malays are obliged to follow their example, or their lunar year would soon render their farming operations unprofitable."² When the season for clearing fresh land in the forest approaches, a wise man is appointed to go out before dawn and watch for the Pleiades. As soon as the constellation is seen to rise while it is yet dark, they know that the time has come to begin. But not until the Pleiades are at the zenith before dawn do the Dyaks think it desirable to burn the fallen timber and to sow the rice.³ However, the Kenyahs and Kayans, two other tribes of Sarawak, determine the agricultural seasons by observation of the sun rather than of the stars; and for this purpose they have devised certain simple but ingenious mechanisms. The Kenyahs measure the length of the shadow cast by an upright pole at noon; and the Kayans let in a beam of light through a hole in the roof and measure the distance from the point immediately below the hole to the place where the light reaches the floor.⁴ But the Kayans of the Mahakam river, in Dutch Borneo, determine the time for sowing by observing when the sun sets in a line with two upright stones.⁵ In Bali, an island to the east of Java, the appearance of the Pleiades at sunset in March marks the end of the year.⁶ The Pleiades and

¹ A. F. van Sprceuwenberg, "Een blik op de Minahassa," *Tijdschrift voor Neerlands Indië*, Vierde Deel (Batavia, 1845), p. 316; J. G. F. Riedel, "De landschappen Holontalo, Limoeto, Bone, Boalemo, et Kattinggola, of Andagile," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xix. (1869) p. 140; *id.*, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, iii. (1871) p. 404.

² Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, Second Edition (London, 1863), i. 214. Compare H. Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), p. 251.

³ Dr. Charles Hose, "Various Modes of computing the Time for Planting among the Races of Borneo," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 42 (Singapore, 1905), pp. 1 sq. Compare Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak* (London, 1866), i. 59; Rev. J. Perham, "Sea Dyak Religion," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 10 (Singapore, 1883), p. 229.

⁴ Dr. Charles Hose, *op. cit.* p. 4.

Compare *id.*, "The Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiii. (1894) pp. 168 sq., where the writer tells us that the Kayans and many other races in Borneo sow the rice when the Pleiades appear just above the horizon at daybreak, though the Kayans more usually determine the time for sowing by observation of the sun. As to the Kayan mode of determining the time for sowing by the length of shadow cast by an upright pole, see also W. Kükenthal, *Forschungsreise in den Molukken und in Borneo* (Frankfort, 1896), pp. 292 sq. Some Dyaks employ a species of sun-dial for dating the twelve months of the year. See II. E. D. Engelhaard, "Aanteekeningen betreffende de Kindjin Dajaks in het Landschap Baloengan," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxix. (1897) pp. 484-486.

⁵ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 160.

⁶ F. K. Ginzler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. (Leipsic, 1906) p. 424.

Orion are the only constellations which the people of Bali observe for the purpose of correcting their lunar calendar by intercalation. For example, they bring the lunar year into harmony with the solar by prolonging the month Asada until the Pleiades are visible at sunset.¹ The natives of Nias, an island to the south of Sumatra, pay little heed to the stars, but they have names for the Morning Star and for the Pleiades; and when the Pleiades appear in the sky, the people assemble to till their fields, for they think that to do so before the rising of the constellation would be useless.² In some districts of Sumatra "much confusion in regard to the period of sowing is said to have arisen from a very extraordinary cause. Anciently, say the natives, it was regulated by the stars, and particularly by the appearance (heliacal rising) of the *bintang baniak* or Pleiades; but after the introduction of the Mahometan religion, they were induced to follow the returns of the *puāsa* or great annual fast, and forgot their old rules. The consequence of this was obvious; for the lunar year of the *hejrah* being eleven days short of the sidereal or solar year, the order of the seasons was soon inverted; and it is only astonishing that its inaptness to the purposes of agriculture should not have been immediately discovered."³ The Battas or Bataks of central Sumatra date the various operations of the agricultural year by the positions of Orion and the Pleiades. When the Pleiades rise before the sun at the beginning of July, the Achinese of northern Sumatra know that the time has come to sow the rice.⁴

Scattered and fragmentary as these notices are, they suffice to shew that the Pleiades have received much attention from savages in the tropical regions of the world from Brazil in the east to Sumatra in the west. Far to the north of the tropics the rude Kamchatkans are said to know only three constellations, the Great Bear, the Pleiades, and three stars in Orion.⁵ When we pass to Africa we again find the Pleiades employed by tribes in various parts of the continent to mark the seasons of the agricultural year. We have seen that the Caffres of South Africa date their new year from the rising of the Pleiades just before sunrise and fix the time for sowing by observation of that constellation.⁶ "They calculate

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the natives of Africa.

¹ R. Friederich, "Voorloopig Verslag van het eiland Bali," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxiii. (1849) p. 49.

² J. T. Nieuwenhuis en H. C. B. von Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het eiland Nias en deszelfs Bewoners," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (Batavia, 1863) p. 119.

³ W. Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, Third Edition (London, 1811), p. 71.

⁴ F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. (Leipzig, 1906) p. 428.

⁵ S. Krascheninnikow, *Beschreibung des Landes Kamtschatka* (Lemgo, 1766), p. 217. The three stars are probably the Belt.

⁶ See above, vol. i. p. 116.

only twelve lunar months for the year, for which they have descriptive names, and this results in frequent confusion and difference of opinion as to which month it really is. The confusion is always rectified by the first appearance of Pleiades just before sunrise, and a fresh start is made and things go on smoothly till once more the moons get out of place, and reference has again to be made to the stars."¹ According to another authority on the Bantu tribes of South Africa, "the rising of the Pleiades shortly after sunset was regarded as indicating the planting season. To this constellation, as well as to several of the prominent stars and planets, they gave expressive names. They formed no theories concerning the nature of the heavenly bodies and their motions, and were not given to thinking of such things."² The Amazulu call the Pleiades *Isilimela*, which means "The digging-for (stars)," because when the Pleiades appear the people begin to dig. They say that "*Isilimela* (the Pleiades) dies, and is not seen. It is not seen in winter; and at last, when the winter is coming to an end, it begins to appear—one of its stars first, and then three, until going on increasing it becomes a cluster of stars, and is perfectly clear when the sun is about to rise. And we say *Isilimela* is renewed, and the year is renewed, and so we begin to dig."³ The Bechuanas "are directed by the position of certain stars in the heavens, that the time has arrived, in the revolving year, when particular roots can be dug up for use, or when they may commence their labours of the field. This is their *likhakologo* (turnings or revolvings), or what we should call the spring time of the year. The Pleiades they call *selemela*, which may be translated 'cultivator,' or the precursor of agriculture, from *lemela*, the relative verb to cultivate *for*; and *se*, a pronominal prefix, distinguishing them as the actors. Thus, when this constellation assumes a certain position in the heavens, it is the signal to commence cultivating their fields and gardens."⁴ Among some of these South African tribes the period of seclusion observed by lads after circumcision comes to an end with the appearance of the Pleiades, and accordingly the youths are said to long as ardently for the rising of the constellation as Mohammedans for the rising of the moon which will put an end to the fast of Ramadan.⁵ The Hottentots date the seasons of the

¹ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), pp. 194 sq. Compare J. Sechefo, "The Twelve Lunar Months among the Basuto," *Anthropos*, iv. (1909) p. 931.

² G. McCall Theal, *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, vii. (1901) p. 418. Compare G. Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*

(London, 1827), ii. 359.

³ Rev. H. Callaway, *The Religious System of the Amazulu*, Part iii. (London, etc., 1870), p. 397.

⁴ R. Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, 1842), pp. 337 sq.

⁵ Stephen Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria* (London, 1833), p. 273.

year by the rising and setting of the Pleiades.¹ An early Moravian missionary settled among the Hottentots, reports that "at the return of the Pleiades these natives celebrate an anniversary; as soon as these stars appear above the eastern horizon mothers will lift their little ones on their arms, and running up to elevated spots, will show to them those friendly stars, and teach them to stretch their little hands towards them. The people of a kraal will assemble to dance and to sing according to the old custom of their ancestors. The chorus always sings: 'O Tiqua, our Father above our heads, give rain to us, that the fruits (bulbs, etc.), *uientjes*, may ripen, and that we may have plenty of food, send us a good year.'"² With some tribes of British Central Africa the rising of the Pleiades early in the evening is the signal for the hoeing to begin.³ To the Masai of East Africa the appearance of the Pleiades in the west is the sign of the beginning of the rainy season, which takes its name from the constellation.⁴ In Masailand the Pleiades are above the horizon from September till about the seventeenth of May; and the people, as they express it themselves, "know whether it will rain or not according to the appearance or non-appearance of the six stars, called The Pleiades, which follow after one another like cattle. When the month which the Masai call 'Of the Pleiades'⁵ arrives, and the Pleiades are no longer visible, they know that the rains are over. For the Pleiades set in that month and are not seen again until the season of showers has come to an end:⁶ it is then that they reappear."⁷ The only other groups of stars for which the Masai appear to have names are Orion's sword and Orion's belt.⁸ The Nandi of British East Africa have a special name (*Koremerik*) for the Pleiades, "and it is by the appearance or non-appearance of these stars that the Nandi know whether they may expect a good or a bad harvest."⁹ The Kikuyu of the same region say that "the Pleiades is the mark in the heavens to show the people when to plant their crops; they plant when this constellation is in a certain position early in the night."¹⁰ In Sierra Leone "the proper time

¹ Gustav Fritsch, *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika's* (Breslau, 1872), p. 340.

² Theophilus Hahn, *Tsun-Goam, the Supreme Being of the Khoi-Khoi* (London, 1881), p. 43, quoting the Moravian missionary George Schmidt, who was sent out to the Cape of Good Hope in 1737.

³ H. S. Stannus, "Notes on some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 289.

⁴ M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1904), pp. 155, 198.

⁶ May. ⁸ June-August.

⁷ A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 275, compare p. 333. The "season of showers" seems to be a name for the dry season (June, July, August), when rain falls only occasionally; it is thus distinguished from the rainy season of winter, which begins after the reappearance of the Pleiades in September.

⁸ A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. 275 sq.

⁹ A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 100.

¹⁰ C. W. Hobley, "Further Researches into Kikuyu and Kamba

Attention paid to the Pleiades by the Greeks and Romans.

for preparing the plantations is shewn by the particular situation in which the Pleiades, called by the Bulloms *a-warrang*, the only stars which they observe or distinguish by peculiar names, are to be seen at sunset."¹ We have seen that ancient Greek farmers reaped their corn when the Pleiades rose at sunrise in May, and that they ploughed their fields when the constellation set at sunrise in November.² The interval between the two dates is about six months. Both the Greeks and the Romans dated the beginning of summer from the heliacal rising of the Pleiades and the beginning of winter from their heliacal setting.³ Pliny regarded the autumnal setting of the Pleiades as the proper season for sowing the corn, particularly the wheat and the barley, and he tells us that in Greece and Asia all the crops were sown at the setting of that constellation.⁴

The widespread association of the Pleiades with agriculture seems to be based on the coincidence of their rising or setting with the commencement of the rainy season.

So widespread over the world has been and is the association of the Pleiades with agriculture, especially with the sowing or planting of the crops. The reason for the association seems to be the coincidence of the rising or setting of the constellation with the commencement of the rainy season; since men must very soon have learned that the best, if not the only, season to sow and plant is the time of year when the newly-planted seeds or roots will be quickened by abundant showers. The same association of the Pleiades with rain seems sufficient to explain their importance even for savages who do not till the ground; for ignorant though such races are, they yet can hardly fail to observe that wild fruits grow more plentifully, and therefore that they themselves have more to eat after a heavy fall of rain than after a long drought. In point of fact we saw that some of the Australian aborigines, who are wholly ignorant of agriculture, look on the Pleiades as the givers of rain, and curse the constellation if its appearance is not followed by the expected showers.⁵ On the other side of the world, and at the opposite end of the scale of culture, the civilised Greeks similarly supposed that the autumnal setting of the Pleiades was the cause of the rains which followed it; and the astronomical writer Geminus thought it worth while to argue against the supposition, pointing out that the vicissitudes of the weather and of the seasons, though they may coincide with the risings and settings of the constellations, are not produced by them,

Religious Beliefs and Customs," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xli. (1911) p. 442.

¹ Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone* (London, 1803), p. 48.

² Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 sq., 615 sqq. See above, pp. 45, 48.

³ Aratus, *Phaenomena*, 264-267; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 123, 125, xviii. 280, "*Vergiliae privatim attinent ad*

fructus, ut quarum exortu aestas incipiat, occasu hiems, semestri spatio intra se messes vindemiasque et omnium maturitatem complexae." Compare I. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 241 sq. Pliny dated the rising of the Pleiades on the 10th of May and their setting on the 11th of November (*Nat. Hist.* ii. 123, 125).

⁴ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 49 and 223.

⁵ See above, p. 307.

the stars being too distant from the earth to exercise any appreciable influence on our atmosphere. Hence, he says, though the constellations serve as the signals, they must not be regarded as the causes, of atmospheric changes; and he aptly illustrates the distinction by a reference to beacon-fires, which are the signals, but not the causes, of war.¹

¹ Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiae*, xvii. 10 *sqq.* If "the sweet influences of the Pleiades" in the Authorised Version of the English Bible were an exact translation of the corresponding Hebrew words in Job xxxviii. 31, we should naturally explain the "sweet influences" by the belief that the autumnal setting of the constellation is the cause of rain. But the rendering of the

words is doubtful; it is not even certain that the constellation referred to is the Pleiades. See the commentaries of A. B. Davidson and Professor A. S. Peak on the passage. The Revised English Version translates the words in question "the cluster of the Pleiades." Compare H. Grimme, *Das israelitische Pfingstfest und der Plejadenkult* (Paderborn, 1907), pp. 61 *sqq.*

END OF VOL. I

THE GOLDEN BOUGH
A STUDY IN MAGIC AND RELIGION

THIRD EDITION

PART V
SPIRITS OF THE CORN
AND OF THE WILD
VOL. II



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SPIRITS OF THE CORN
AND OF THE WILD

BY

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CHAPTER IX

ANCIENT DEITIES OF VEGETATION AS ANIMALS

§ I. *Dionysus, the Goat and the Bull*

HOWEVER we may explain it, the fact remains that in peasant folk-lore the corn-spirit is very commonly conceived and represented in animal form. May not this fact explain the relation in which certain animals stood to the ancient deities of vegetation, Dionysus, Demeter, Adonis, Attis, and Osiris?

Ancient deities of vegetation as animals

To begin with Dionysus. We have seen that he was represented sometimes as a goat and sometimes as a bull.¹ As a goat he can hardly be separated from the minor divinities, the Pans, Satyrs, and Silenuses, all of whom are closely associated with him and are represented more or less completely in the form of goats. Thus, Pan was regularly portrayed in sculpture and painting with the face and legs of a goat.² The Satyrs were depicted with pointed goat-ears, and sometimes with sprouting horns and short tails.³ They were sometimes spoken of simply as goats;⁴ and in the drama their parts were played by men dressed in goatskins.⁵ Silenus is represented in art clad in a goat-skin.⁶ Further, the Fauns, the Italian counterpart of the Greek Pans and Satyrs, are described as being half goats, with goat-feet and goat-horns.⁷ Again, all these minor

Dionysus as a goat: his association with the Pans, Satyrs, and Silenuses, who have been interpreted as semi-goat-shaped deities of the woods.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 16 sqq.

² Herodotus, ii. 46; L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,⁴ i. (Berlin, 1894), pp. 745 sq.; K. Wernicke, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1407 sqq.

³ L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,³

i. 600; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 138.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 139.

⁵ Julius Pollux, iv. 118.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 142 sq.

⁷ Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 361, iii. 312, v. 101; *id.*, *Heroides*, iv. 49.

goat-formed divinities partake more or less clearly of the character of woodland deities. Thus, Pan was called by the Arcadians the Lord of the Wood.¹ The Silenuses associated with the tree-nymphs.² The Fauns are expressly designated as woodland deities;³ and their character as such is still further brought out by their association, or even identification, with Silvanus and the Silvanuses, who, as their name of itself indicates, are spirits of the woods.⁴ Lastly, the association of the Satyrs with the Silenuses, Fauns, and Silvanuses,⁵ proves that the Satyrs also were woodland deities. These goat-formed spirits of the woods have their counterparts in the folk-lore of Northern Europe. Thus, the Russian wood-spirits, called *Ljeschie* (from *ljes*, "wood") are believed to appear partly in human shape, but with the horns, ears, and legs of goats. The *Ljeschi* can alter his stature at pleasure; when he walks in the wood he is as tall as the trees; when he walks in the meadows he is no higher than the grass. Some of the *Ljeschie* are spirits of the corn as well as of the wood; before harvest they are as tall as the corn-stalks, but after it they shrink to the height of the stubble.⁶ This brings out—what we have remarked before—the close connexion between tree-spirits and corn-spirits, and shews how easily the former may melt into the latter. Similarly the Fauns, though wood-spirits, were believed to foster the growth of the crops.⁷ We have already seen how often the corn-spirit is represented in folk-custom as a goat.⁸ On the whole, then, as Mannhardt argues,⁹

¹ Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 22. 3.

² Homer, *Hymn to Aphrodite*, 262 sqq.

³ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xii. 3; Ovid, *Metam.* vi. 392; *id.*, *Fasti*, iii. 303, 309; Gloss. Isid. Mart. Cap. ii. 167, cited by W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 113.

⁴ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xii. 3; Martianus Capella, ii. 167; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, xv. 23; Aurelius Victor, *Origogentis Romanae*, iv. 6.

⁵ Servius on Virgil, *Ecl.* vi. 14; Ovid, *Metam.* vi. 392 sq.; Martianus Capella, ii. 167.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 138 sq.; *id.*, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 145.

⁷ Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 10.

⁸ Above, vol. i. pp. 281 sqq.

⁹ *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, ch. iii. pp. 113-211. In the text I have allowed my former exposition of Mannhardt's theory as to ancient semi-goat-shaped spirits of vegetation to stand as before, but I have done so with hesitation, because the evidence adduced in its favour appears to me insufficient to permit us to speak with any confidence on the subject. Pan may have been, as W. H. Roscher and L. R. Farnell think, nothing more than a herdsman's god, the semi-human, semi-beastial representative of goats in particular. See W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1405 sq.; L. R.

the Pans, Satyrs, and Fauns perhaps belong to a widely diffused class of wood-spirits conceived in goat-form. The fondness of goats for straying in woods and nibbling the bark of trees, to which indeed they are most destructive, is an obvious and perhaps sufficient reason why wood-spirits should so often be supposed to take the form of goats. The inconsistency of a god of vegetation subsisting upon the vegetation which he personifies is not one to strike the primitive mind. Such inconsistencies arise when the deity, ceasing to be immanent in the vegetation, comes to be regarded as its owner or lord; for the idea of owning the vegetation naturally leads to that of subsisting on it. We have already seen that the corn-spirit, originally conceived as immanent in the corn, afterwards comes to be regarded as its owner, who lives on it and is reduced to poverty and want by being deprived of it.¹

Thus the representation of wood-spirits in the form of goats appears to be both widespread and, to the primitive mind, natural. Therefore when we find, as we have done, that Dionysus—a tree-god—is sometimes represented in goat-form,² we can hardly avoid concluding that this representation is simply a part of his proper character as a tree-god and is not to be explained by the fusion of two distinct and independent worships, in one of which he originally appeared as a tree-god and in the other as a goat. If such a fusion took place in the case of Dionysus, it must equally have taken place in the case of the Pans and Satyrs of Greece, the Fauns of Italy, and the *Ljeschie* of Russia. That such a fusion of two wholly disconnected worships should have occurred once is possible; that it should have occurred twice independently is improbable; that it should have occurred thrice independently is so unlikely as to be practically incredible.

Wood-spirits in the form of goats.

Dionysus was also figured, as we have seen,³ in the shape of a bull. After what has gone before we are naturally led to expect that his bull form must have been only another

The bull as an embodiment of Dionysus

Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 431 *sqq.* And the Satyrs and Silenuses seem to have more affinity with horses than with goats. See W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon*

der griech. und röm. Mythologie, iv. 444 *sqq.*

¹ Above, vol. i. pp. 231 *sqq.*

² Above, vol. i. pp. 17 *sq.*

³ Above, vol. i. pp. 16 *sq.*

seems to be another expression of his character as a god of vegetation.

expression for his character as a deity of vegetation, especially as the bull is a common embodiment of the corn-spirit in Northern Europe;¹ and the close association of Dionysus with Demeter and Persephone in the mysteries of Eleusis shews that he had at least strong agricultural affinities. The other possible explanation of the bull-shaped Dionysus would be that the conception of him as a bull was originally entirely distinct from the conception of him as a deity of vegetation, and that the fusion of the two conceptions was due to some such circumstance as the union of two tribes, one of which had previously worshipped a bull-god and the other a tree-god. This appears to be the view taken by Mr. Andrew Lang, who suggests that the bull-formed Dionysus "had either been developed out of, or had succeeded to, the worship of a bull-totem."² Of course this is possible. But it is not yet certain that the Aryans ever had totemism.³ On the other hand, it is quite certain that many Aryan peoples have conceived deities of vegetation as embodied in animal forms. Therefore when we find amongst an Aryan people like the Greeks a deity of vegetation represented as an animal, the presumption must be in favour of explaining this by a principle which is certainly known to have influenced the Aryan race rather than by one which is not certainly known to have done so. In the present state of our knowledge, therefore, it is safer to regard the bull form of Dionysus as being, like his goat form, an expression of his proper character as a deity of vegetation.

The *bouphonia*, an Athenian sacrifice of an ox to Zeus Polieus.

The probability of this view will be somewhat increased if it can be shewn that in other rites than those of Dionysus the ancients slew an ox as a representative of the spirit of vegetation. This they appear to have done in the Athenian sacrifice known as "the murder of the ox" (*bouphonia*). It took place about the end of June or beginning of July, that is, about the time when the threshing is nearly over in Attica. According to tradition the sacrifice was instituted to procure a cessation of drought and dearth which had

¹ Above, vol. i. pp. 288 *sqq.*

Religion,² ii. 252.

³ Compare *Totemism and Exogamy*,

² A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and* iv. 12 *sqq.*

afflicted the land. The ritual was as follows. Barley mixed with wheat, or cakes made of them, were laid upon the bronze altar of Zeus Polieus on the Acropolis. Oxen were driven round the altar, and the ox which went up to the altar and ate the offering on it was sacrificed. The axe and knife with which the beast was slain had been previously wetted with water brought by maidens called "water-carriers." The weapons were then sharpened and handed to the butchers, one of whom felled the ox with the axe and another cut its throat with the knife. As soon as he had felled the ox, the former threw the axe from him and fled; and the man who cut the beast's throat apparently imitated his example. Meantime the ox was skinned and all present partook of its flesh. Then the hide was stuffed with straw and sewed up; next the stuffed animal was set on its feet and yoked to a plough as if it were ploughing. A trial then took place in an ancient law-court presided over by the King (as he was called) to determine who had murdered the ox. The maidens who had brought the water accused the men who had sharpened the axe and knife; the men who had sharpened the axe and knife blamed the men who had handed these implements to the butchers; the men who had handed the implements to the butchers blamed the butchers; and the butchers laid the blame on the axe and knife, which were accordingly found guilty, condemned and cast into the sea.¹

The name of this sacrifice,—“the *murder* of the ox,”²—

¹ Pausanias, i. 24. 4; *id.*, i. 28. 10; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 29 sq.; Aelian, *Var. Hist.* viii. 3; Scholia on Aristophanes, *Peace*, 419, and *Clouds*, 985; Hesychius, Suidas, and *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. βούφονια; Suidas, s.v. θάωλων; Im. Bekker's *Anecdota Graeca* (Berlin, 1814-1821), p. 238, s.v. Διαιβόλια. The date of the sacrifice (14th Scirophorion) is given by the Scholiast on Aristophanes and the *Etymologicum Magnum*; and this date corresponds, according to W. Mannhardt (*Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 68), with the close of the threshing in Attica. No writer mentions the trial of both the axe and the knife. Pausanias speaks of the trial of the axe, Porphyry and Aelian of the trial of the knife. But

from Porphyry's description it is clear that the slaughter was carried out by two men, one wielding an axe and the other a knife, and that the former laid the blame on the latter. Perhaps the knife alone was condemned. That the King (as to whom see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 44 sq.) presided at the trial of all lifeless objects, is mentioned by Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens*, 57) and Julius Pollux (viii. 90, compare viii. 120).

² The real import of the name *bouphonia* was first perceived by W. Robertson Smith. See his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 304 sqq. In Cos also an ox specially chosen was sacrificed to Zeus Polieus. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum*

The ox sacrificed at the *bouphonia* appears to have embodied the corn-spirit

the pains taken by each person who had a hand in the slaughter to lay the blame on some one else, together with the formal trial and punishment of the axe or knife or both, prove that the ox was here regarded not merely as a victim offered to a god, but as itself a sacred creature, the slaughter of which was sacrilege or murder. This is borne out by a statement of Varro that to kill an ox was formerly a capital crime in Attica.¹ The mode of selecting the victim suggests that the ox which tasted the corn was viewed as the corn-deity taking possession of his own. This interpretation is supported by the following custom. In Beauce, in the district of Orleans, on the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of April they make a straw-man called "the great *mondard*." For they say that the old *mondard* is now dead and it is necessary to make a new one. The straw-man is carried in solemn procession up and down the village and at last is placed upon the oldest apple-tree. There he remains till the apples are gathered, when he is taken down and thrown into the water, or he is burned and his ashes cast into water. But the person who plucks the first fruit from the tree succeeds to the title of "the great *mondard*."² Here the straw figure, called "the great *mondard*" and placed on the oldest apple-tree in spring, represents the spirit of the tree, who, dead in winter, revives when the apple-blossoms appear on the boughs. Thus the person who plucks the first fruit from the tree and thereby receives the name of "the great *mondard*" must be regarded as a representative of the tree-spirit. Primitive peoples are usually reluctant to taste the annual first-fruits of any crop, until some ceremony has been performed which makes it safe and pious for them to do so.

Graecarum,² No. 616; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 716; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, iii. pp. 357 sqq., No. 3636; J. de Protte et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae et Titulis collectae*, Fasciculus i. (Leipsic, 1896) pp. 19 sqq., No. 5; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 17-21. A month Bouphonion, corresponding to the Attic Boedromion (September), occurred in the calendars of Delos and

Tenos. See E. Bischoff, "De fastis Graecorum antiquioribus," in *Leipziger Studien für classische Philologie*, vii. (Leipsic, 1884) p. 414.

¹ Varro, *De re rustica*, ii. 5. 4. Compare Columella, *De re rustica*, vi. praef. § 7. Perhaps, however, Varro's statement may be merely an inference drawn from the ritual of the *bouphonia* and the legend told to explain it.

² W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 409.

The reason of this reluctance appears to be a belief that the first-fruits either belong to or actually contain a divinity. Therefore when a man or animal is seen boldly to appropriate the sacred first-fruits, he or it is naturally regarded as the divinity himself in human or animal form taking possession of his own. The time of the Athenian sacrifice, which fell about the close of the threshing, suggests that the wheat and barley laid upon the altar were a harvest offering; and the sacramental character of the subsequent repast—all partaking of the flesh of the divine animal—would make it parallel to the harvest-suppers of modern Europe, in which, as we have seen, the flesh of the animal who stands for the corn-spirit is eaten by the harvesters. Again, the tradition that the sacrifice was instituted in order to put an end to drought and famine is in favour of taking it as a harvest festival. The resurrection of the corn-spirit, enacted by setting up the stuffed ox and yoking it to the plough, may be compared with the resurrection of the tree-spirit in the person of his representative, the Wild Man.¹

Still more clearly, perhaps, does the identification of the corn-spirit with an ox come out in the sacrificial ritual which the Greeks of Magnesia on the Maeander observed in honour of Zeus Sosipolis, a god whose title of Sosipolis ("Saviour of the City") marks him as the equivalent of Zeus Polieus ("Zeus of the City"). The details of the ritual are happily preserved in an inscription, which records a decree of the council and of the people for the regulation of the whole proceedings. Every year at a festival in the month of Heraeon the magistrates bought the finest bull that could be had for money, and at the new moon of the month of Cronion, at the time when the sowing was about to begin, they and the priests dedicated the animal to Zeus Sosipolis, while solemn prayers were offered by the voice of a sacred herald for the welfare of the city, of the land, and of the people, for peace and wealth, for the corn-crops and all other fruits, and for the cattle. Thereafter the sacred animal was kept throughout the winter, its keep being undertaken by a contractor, who was bound by law to drive the bull to the market and there collect contributions for its

Sacrifice of
an ox to
Zeus Sosi-
polis at
Magnesia
on the
Maeander.

¹ See *The Dying God*, p. 208.

maintenance from all the hucksters and in particular from the corn-chandlers ; and a prospect was held out to such as contributed that it would go well with them. Finally, after having been thus maintained at the public cost for some months, the bull was led forth with great pomp and sacrificed in the market-place on the twelfth day of the month Artemision, which is believed to have been equivalent to the Attic month of Thargelion and to the English month of May, the season when the corn is reaped in the Greek lowlands. In the procession which attended the animal to the place of sacrifice the senators, the priests, the magistrates, the young people, and the victors in the games all bore a part, and at the head of the procession were borne the images of the Twelve Gods attired in festal array, while a fluteplayer, a piper, and a harper discoursed solemn music.¹ Now in the bull, which was thus dedicated at the time of sowing and kept at the cost of the pious, and especially of corn-chandlers, to be finally sacrificed at harvest, it is reasonable to see an embodiment of the corn-spirit. Regarded as such the animal was consecrated when the seed was committed to the earth ; it was fed and kept all the time the corn was growing in order that by its beneficent energies it might foster that growth ; and at last, to complete the parallel, when the corn was reaped the animal was slain, the cutting of the stalks being regarded as the death of the corn-spirit.² Similarly we have seen that in the harvest-fields and on the threshing-floors of modern Europe the corn-spirit is often conceived in the form of a bull, an ox, or a calf, which is supposed to be killed at reaping or threshing ; and,

The bull so sacrificed seems to have been regarded as an embodiment of the corn-spirit.

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*² (Leipsic, 1898-1901), vol. ii. pp. 246-248, No. 553. As to the identification of the Magnesian month Artemision with the Attic month Thargelion (May), see Dittenberger, *op. cit.* ii. p. 242, No. 552 note ⁴. It is interesting to observe that at Magnesia the sowing took place in Cronion, the month of Cronus, a god whom the ancients regularly identified with Saturn, the Italian god of sowing. In Samos, Perinthus, and Patmos, however, the month Cronion seems to have been equivalent to the

Attic Scirophorion, a month corresponding to June or July, which could never have been a season of sowing in the hot rainless summers of Greece. See E. Bischoff, "De fastis Graecorum antiquioribus," in *Leipziger Studien für classische Philologie*, vii. (1884) p. 400 ; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 645 note ¹⁴, vol. ii. p. 449.

² In thus interpreting the sacrifice of the bull at Magnesia I follow the excellent exposition of Professor M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 23-27.

further, we saw that the conception is sometimes carried out in practice by slaughtering a real ox or a real calf on the harvest-field. Thus the parallelism between the ancient Greek and the modern European idea of the corn-spirit embodied in the form of a bull appears to be very close.

On the interpretation which I have adopted of the sacrifices offered to Zeus Polieus and Zeus Sosipolis the corn-spirit is conceived as a male, not as a female, as Zeus, not as Demeter or Persephone. In this there is no inconsistency. At the stage of thought which the Greeks had reached long before the dawn of history they supposed the processes of reproduction in nature to be carried on by a male and a female principle in conjunction; they did not believe, like some backward savages, that the female principle alone suffices for that purpose, and that the aid of the male principle is superfluous. Hence, as we have seen, they imagined that the goddesses of the corn, the mother Demeter and the daughter Persephone, had each her male partner with whom she united for the production of the crops. The partner of Demeter was Zeus, the partner of Persephone was his brother Pluto, the Subterranean Zeus, as he was called; and reasons have been shewn for thinking that the marriage of one or other of these divine pairs was solemnised at Eleusis as part of the Great Mysteries in order to promote the growth of the corn.¹

The Greek conception of the corn-spirit as both male and female

The ox appears as a representative of the corn-spirit in other parts of the world. At Great Bassam, in Guinea, two oxen are slain annually to procure a good harvest. If the sacrifice is to be effectual, it is necessary that the oxen should weep. So all the women of the village sit in front of the beasts, chanting, "The ox will weep; yes, he will weep!" From time to time one of the women walks round the beasts, throwing manioc meal or palm wine upon them, especially into their eyes. When tears roll down from the eyes of the oxen, the people dance, singing, "The ox weeps! the ox weeps!" Then two men seize the tails of the beasts and cut them off at one blow. It is believed that a great misfortune will happen in the course of the year if the tails are not severed at one blow. The oxen are after-

The ox as a representative of the corn-spirit at Great Bassam in Guinea.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 36 *sq.*, 65 *sqq.*

wards killed, and their flesh is eaten by the chiefs.¹ Here the tears of the oxen, like those of the human victims amongst the Khonds and the Aztecs,² are probably a rain-charm. We have already seen that the virtue of the corn-spirit, embodied in animal form, is sometimes supposed to reside in the tail, and that the last handful of corn is sometimes conceived as the tail of the corn spirit.³ In the Mithraic religion this conception is graphically set forth in some of the numerous sculptures which represent Mithras kneeling on the back of a bull and plunging a knife into its flank; for on certain of these monuments the tail of the bull ends in three stalks of corn, and in one of them corn-stalks instead of blood are seen issuing from the wound inflicted by the knife.⁴ Such representations certainly suggest that the bull, whose sacrifice appears to have formed a leading feature in the Mithraic ritual, was conceived, in one at least of its aspects, as an incarnation of the corn-spirit.

The ox as a personification of the corn-spirit in China.

Still more clearly does the ox appear as a personification of the corn-spirit in a ceremony which is observed in all the provinces and districts of China to welcome the approach of spring. On the first day of spring, usually on the third or fourth of February, which is also the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the governor or prefect of the city goes in procession to the east gate of the city, and sacrifices to the Divine Husbandman, who is represented with a bull's head on the body of a man. A large effigy of an ox, cow, or buffalo has been prepared for the occasion, and stands outside of the east gate, with agricultural implements beside it. The figure is made of differently-coloured pieces of paper pasted on a framework either by a blind man or according to the directions of a necromancer. The colours of the paper prognosticate the character of the coming year; if red prevails, there will be many fires; if white, there will be floods and rain; and so with the other colours. The

¹ H. Hecquard, *Reise an die Küste und in das Innere von West-Afrika* (Leipsic, 1854), pp. 41-43.

² See above, vol. i. p. 248.

³ Above, vol. i. pp. 268, 272.

⁴ Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monu-*

ments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra (Brussels, 1896-1899), ii. figures 18, 19, 20, 59 (p. 228, corn-stalks issuing from wound), 67, 70, 78, 87, 105, 143, 168, 215, also plates v. and vi.

mandarins walk slowly round the ox, beating it severely at each step with rods of various hues. It is filled with five kinds of grain, which pour forth when the effigy is broken by the blows of the rods. The paper fragments are then set on fire, and a scramble takes place for the burning fragments, because the people believe that whoever gets one of them is sure to be fortunate throughout the year. A live buffalo is next killed, and its flesh is divided among the mandarins. According to one account, the effigy of the ox is made of clay, and, after being beaten by the governor, is stoned by the people till they break it in pieces, "from which they expect an abundant year."¹ But the ceremony varies somewhat in the different provinces. According to another account the effigy of the cow, made of earthenware, with gilded horns, is borne in procession, and is of such colossal dimensions that forty or fifty men can hardly carry it. Behind this monstrous cow walks a boy with one foot shod and the other bare, personifying the Genius of Industry. He beats the effigy with a rod, as if to drive it forward. A great many little clay cows are afterwards taken out of the large one and distributed among the people. Both the big cow and the little ones are then broken in pieces, and the people take the sherds home with them in order to grind them to powder and strew the powder on their fields, for they think thus to secure a plentiful harvest.² In the cities nearest to Weihaiwei, in northern China, the ceremony of "the Beginning of Spring" is a moveable feast, which falls usually in the first moon. The local magistrate and his attendants go in procession to the eastern suburbs of the city to "meet the Spring." A great pasteboard effigy of an ox is carried in the procession, together with another pasteboard image of a man called Mang-Shen, "who represents either the

¹ *China Review*, i. (July 1872 to June 1873, Hongkong), pp. 62, 154, 162, 203 sq.; Rev. J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, ed. Paxton Hood (London, 1868), pp. 375 sq.; Rev. J. H. Gray, *China* (London, 1878), ii. 115 sq.

² *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, March 14, 1890, quoted by J. D. E. Schmeltz, "Das Pflugfest in China," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, xi. (1898) p. 79. With this account

the one given by S. W. Williams (*The Middle Kingdom* (New York and London, 1848, ii. 109) substantially agrees. In many districts, according to the *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, the Genius of Spring is represented at this festival by a boy of blameless character, clad in green. As to the custom of going with one foot bare and the other shod, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 311-313.

typical ox-driver or ploughman or the god of Agriculture." On the return of the procession to the magistrate's court, that dignitary himself and his principal colleagues beat and prod the pasteboard ox with wands, after which the effigy is burned along with the image of its attendant. The colours and apparel of the two effigies correspond with the forecasts of the Chinese almanack. Thus if the head of the ox is yellow, the summer will be very hot; if it is green, the spring will be sickly; if it is red, there will be a drought; if it is black, there will be much rain; if it is white, there will be high winds. If Mang-Shen wears a hat, the year will be dry; if he is bareheaded, it will be rainy; and so on with the other articles of his apparel. Besides the pasteboard ox a miniature ox made of clay is also supposed to be provided.¹ In Chinese the ceremony is called indifferently "beating the ox" and "beating the spring," which seems to prove that the ox is identified with the vernal energies of nature. We may suppose that originally the ox which figures in the rite was a living animal, but ever since the beginning of our era, when the custom first appears in history, it has been an effigy of terra-cotta or pasteboard. To this day the Chinese calendar devotes a page to a picture of "the ox of spring" with Mang, the tutelary genius of spring, standing beside it and grasping a willow-bough, with which he is about to beat the animal for the purpose of stimulating its reproductive virtue.² In one form of this Chinese custom the corn-spirit appears to be plainly represented by the corn-filled ox, whose fragments may therefore be supposed to bring fertility with them. We may compare the Silesian custom of burning the effigy of Death, scrambling for the burning fragments, and burying them in the fields to secure a good crop, and the Florentine custom of sawing the Old Woman and scrambling for the dried fruits with which she was filled.³ Both these customs, like their Chinese counterpart, are observed in spring.

The practice of beating an earthenware or pasteboard

¹ R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (London, 1910), pp. 180-182.

² Ed. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan, Essai de Monographie d'un Culte*

Chinois (Paris, 1910), p. 500 (*Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'Études*, vol. xxi.).

³ See *The Dying God*, pp. 240 sq., 250.

image of an ox in spring is not confined to China proper, but seems to be widely spread in the east of Asia; for example, it has been recorded at Kashgar and in Annam. Thus a French traveller has described how at Kashgar, on the third of February 1892, a mandarin, clad in his finest robes and borne in a magnificent palanquin, conducted solemnly through the streets the pasteboard image of an ox, 'a sacred animal devoted to the deity of spring who gives life to the fields. It is thus carried to some distance outside of the town on the eastern side. The official who acts as pontiff ceremoniously offers food and libations to it in order to obtain a fruitful year, and next day it is demolished by the lashes of a whip.'¹ Again, in Annam, every year at the approach of spring the Department of Rites publishes instructions to the provincial governors as to the manner in which the festival of the inauguration of spring is to be celebrated. Among the indispensable features of the festival are the figures of an ox and its warder made of terra-cotta. The attitudes of the two and the colours to be applied to them are carefully prescribed every year in the Chinese calendar. Popular opinion attributes to the colour of the ox and the accoutrement of its warder, who is called Mang Than, a certain influence on the crops of the year: a green, yellow, and black buffalo prognosticates an abundant harvest: a red or white buffalo foretells wretched crops and great droughts or hurricanes. If Mang Than is represented wearing a large hat, the year will be rainy; if on the other hand

The ox as a personification of the corn-spirit in Kashgar and Annam.

¹ J. L. Dutreuil de Rhins, *Mission Scientifique dans la Haute Asie, 1890-1895*, i. (Paris, 1897) pp. 95 sq. After describing the ceremony as he witnessed it at Kashgar, the writer adds: "Probably the ox was at first a living animal which they sacrificed and distributed the flesh to the bystanders. At the present day the official who acts as pontiff has a number of small pasteboard oxen made, which he sends to the notables in order that they may participate intimately in the sacrifice, which is more than symbolical. The reason for carrying the ox a long distance is that as much as possible of the territory may be sanctified by the

passage of the sacred animal, and that as many people as possible may share in the sacrifice, at least with their eyes and good wishes. The procession, which begins very early in the morning, moves eastward, that is, toward the quarter where, the winter being now over, the first sun of spring may be expected to appear, whose divinity the ceremony is intended to render propitious. It is needless to insist on the analogy between this Chinese festival and our Carnival, at which, about the same season, a fat ox is led about. Both festivals have their origin in the same conceptions of ancient natural religion."

he is bareheaded, long barren droughts are to be feared. Nay, the public credulity goes so far as to draw good or evil omens from the cheerfulness or ill humour which may be detected on the features of the Warder of the Ox. Having been duly prepared in accordance with the directions of the almanack, the ox and its warder are carried in procession, followed by the mandarins and the people, to the altar of Spring, which is usually to be found in every provincial capital. There the provincial governor offers fruits, flowers, and incense to the Genius of Spring (*Xuan Quan*), and gold and silver paper money are burnt on the altar in profusion. Lastly the ox and his warder are buried in a spot which has been indicated by a geomancer.¹ It is interesting to observe that the three colours of the ox which are taken to prognosticate good crops, to wit, green, yellow, and black, are precisely the colours which the ancients attributed to Demeter, the goddess of the corn.²

Annual inauguration of ploughing by the Chinese emperor.

The great importance which the Chinese attach to the performance of rites for the fertility of the ground is proved by an ancient custom which is, or was till lately, observed every year in spring. On an appointed day the emperor himself, attended by the highest dignitaries of the state, guides with his own hand the ox-drawn plough down several furrows and scatters the seed in a sacred field, or "field of God," as it is called, the produce of which is afterwards examined from time to time with anxious care by the Governor of Peking, who draws omens from the appearance of the ears; it is a very happy omen if he should chance to find thirteen ears growing on one stalk. To prepare himself for the celebration of this solemn rite the emperor is expected to fast and remain continent for three days previously, and the princes and mandarins who accompany him to the field are bound to observe similar restrictions. The corn grown on the holy field which has thus been ploughed by the imperial hands is collected in yellow sacks and stored in a special granary to be used by the emperor in certain solemn sacrifices which he offers to the god

¹ Colonel E. Diguët, *Les Annamites, Société, Coutumes, Religions* (Paris, 1906), pp. 250-253.

² See above, vol. i. pp. 41 sq., and below, pp. 21 sq.

Chan Ti and to his own ancestors. In the provinces of China the season of 春祭 is similarly inaugurated by the provincial governors as representatives of the emperor.¹

The sacred field, or "field of God," in which the emperor of China thus ceremonially opens the ploughing for the year, and of which the produce is employed in sacrifice, reminds us of the Rarian plain at Eleusis, in which a sacred ploughing similarly took place every year, and of which the produce was in like manner devoted to sacrifice.² Further, it recalls the little sacred rice-fields on which the Kayans of central Borneo inaugurate the various operations of the agricultural year by performing them in miniature.³ As I have already pointed out, all such consecrated enclosures were probably in origin what we may call spiritual preserves, that is, patches of ground which men set apart for the exclusive use of the corn-spirit to console him for the depredations they committed on all the rest of his domains. Again, the rule of fasting and continence observed by the Emperor of China and his august colleagues before they put their hands to the plough resembles the similar customs of abstinence practised by many savages as a preparation for engaging in the various labours of the field.⁴

Analogy of the Chinese custom to the agricultural rites at Eleusis and elsewhere.

¹ Du Halde, *The General History of China*, Third Edition (London, 1741), ii. 120-122; Huc, *L'Empire Chinois*⁶ (Paris, 1879), ii. 338-343; Rev. J. H. Gray, *China* (London, 1878), ii. 116-118. Compare *The Sacred Books of China*, translated by James Legge, Part iii., *The Li Ki* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvii., Oxford, 1885), pp. 254 sq.: "In this month [the first month of spring] the son of Heaven on the first day prays to God for a good year; and afterwards, the day of the first conjunction of the sun and moon having been chosen, with the handle and share of the plough in the carriage, placed between the man-arms who is its third occupant and the driver, he conducts his three ducal ministers, his nine high ministers, the feudal princes and his Great officers, all with their own hands to plough the field of God. The son of Heaven turns up three furrows, each of the

ducal ministers five, and the other ministers and feudal princes nine. When they return, he takes in his hand a cup in the great chamber, all the others being in attendance on him and the Great officers, and says, 'Drink this cup of comfort after your toil.' In this month the vapours of heaven descend and those of the earth ascend. Heaven and earth are in harmonious co-operation. All plants bud and grow." Here the selection of a day in spring when sun and moon are in conjunction is significant. Such conjunctions are regarded as marriages of the great luminaries and therefore as the proper seasons for the celebration of rites designed to promote fertility. See *The Dying God*, p. 73.

² See above, pp. 74, 108.

³ See above, p. 93.

⁴ See above, pp. 94, 109; *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 105 sqq.

The rending of live animals in the rites of Dionysus.

On the whole we may perhaps conclude that both as a goat and as a bull Dionysus was essentially a god of vegetation. The Chinese and European customs which I have cited¹ may perhaps shed light on the custom of rending a live bull or goat at the rites of Dionysus. The animal was torn in fragments, as the Khond victim was cut in pieces, in order that the worshippers might each secure a portion of the life-giving and fertilising influence of the god. The flesh was eaten raw as a sacrament, and we may conjecture that some of it was taken home to be buried in the fields, or otherwise employed so as to convey to the fruits of the earth the quickening influence of the god of vegetation. The resurrection of Dionysus, related in his myth, may have been enacted in his rites by stuffing and setting up the slain ox, as was done at the Athenian *bouphonia*.

§ 2. Demeter, the Pig and the Horse

Association of the pig with Demeter.

Passing next to the corn-goddess Demeter, and remembering that in European folk-lore the pig is a common embodiment of the corn-spirit,² we may now ask whether the pig, which was so closely associated with Demeter, may not have been originally the goddess herself in animal form? The pig was sacred to her;³ in art she was portrayed carrying or accompanied by a pig;⁴ and the pig was regularly sacrificed in her mysteries, the reason assigned being that the pig injures the corn and is therefore an enemy of the goddess.⁵ But after an animal has been conceived as a god, or a god as an animal, it sometimes happens, as we have seen, that the god sloughs off his animal form and becomes purely anthropomorphic; and that then the animal, which at first had been slain in the character of the god, comes to be viewed as a victim offered

¹ As to the European customs, see above, p. 12.

² See above, vol. i. pp. 298 *sqq.*

³ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 747.

⁴ J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunst-mythologie*, Besonderer Theil, ii. (Leipzig, 1873-1878), p. 493; Müller-

Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, ii. pl. viii. 94.

⁵ Hyginus, *Fab.* 277; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 23; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 747; *id.*, on *Frogs*, 338; *id.*, on *Peace*, 374; Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 380; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* x. 16.

to the god on the ground of its hostility to the deity; in short, the god is sacrificed to himself on the ground that he is his own enemy. This happened to Dionysus,¹ and it may have happened to Demeter also. And in fact the rites of one of her festivals, the Thesmophoria, bear out the view that originally the pig was an embodiment of the corn-goddess herself, either Demeter or her daughter and double Persephone. The Attic Thesmophoria was an autumn festival, celebrated by women alone in October,² and appears to have represented with mourning rites the descent of Persephone (or Demeter)³ into the lower world, and with joy her return from the dead.⁴ Hence the name Descent or Ascent variously applied to the first, and the name *Kalligeneia* (fair-born) applied to the third day of the festival. Now from an old scholium on Lucian⁵ we learn some details about the mode of celebrating the Thesmophoria, which shed important light on the part of the festival called the Descent or the Ascent. The scholiast tells us that it was customary at the Thesmophoria to throw pigs, cakes of dough, and branches of pine-trees into "the chasms of Demeter and Persephone," which appear to have been sacred caverns or vaults.⁶ In these caverns or vaults

Pigs in the ritual of the Thesmophoria.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 22 sq.

² As to the Thesmophoria see my article "Thesmophoria" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, vol. xxiii. 295 sqq.; August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 308 sqq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*² (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 120 sqq.; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 313 sqq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 75 sqq. At Thebes and in Delos the Thesmophoria was held in summer, in the month of Metageitnion (August). See Xenophon, *Hellenica*, v. 2. 29; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, pp. 316 sq.

³ Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. *σθήνια*, speaks of the ascent of *Demeter* from the lower world; and Clement of Alexandria speaks of both Demeter and Persephone as having been engulfed in the chasm (*Protrept.* ii. 17). The original equivalence of Demeter and Persephone

must be borne steadily in mind.

⁴ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 69; Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. *σθήνια*.

⁶ E. Rohde, "Unedirte Lucianscholien, die attischen Thesmophorien und Haloen betreffend," *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F., xxv. (1870) p. 548; *Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 275 sq. Two passages of classical writers (Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17, and Pausanias, ix. 8. 1) refer to the rites described by the scholiast on Lucian, and had been rightly interpreted by Chr. A. Lobeck (*Aglaophamus*, pp. 827 sqq.) before the discovery of the scholia.

⁶ The scholiast speaks of them as *megara* and *adyta*. The name *megara* is thought to be derived from a Phoenician word meaning "cavern," "subterranean chasm," the Hebrew מְעָרָה. See F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier* (Bonn, 1841), i. 220. In Greek usage the *megara* were properly sub-

there were said to be serpents, which guarded the caverns and consumed most of the flesh of the pigs and dough-cakes which were thrown in. Afterwards—apparently at the next annual festival¹—the decayed remains of the pigs, the cakes, and the pine-branches were fetched by women called “drawers,” who, after observing rules of ceremonial purity for three days, descended into the caverns, and, frightening away the serpents by clapping their hands, brought up the remains and placed them on the altar. Whoever got a piece of the decayed flesh and cakes, and sowed it with the seed-corn in his field, was believed to be sure of a good crop. With the feeding of the serpents in the vaults by the women we may compare an ancient Italian ritual. At Lanuvium a serpent lived in a sacred cave within a grove of Juno. On certain appointed days a number of holy maidens, with their eyes bandaged, entered the grove carrying cakes of barley in their hands. Led, as it was believed, by the divine spirit, they walked straight to the serpent’s den and offered him the cakes. If they were chaste, the serpent ate the cakes, the parents of the girls rejoiced, and farmers prognosticated an abundant harvest. But if the girls were unchaste, the serpent left the cakes untasted, and ants came and crumbled the rejected viands and so removed them bit by bit from the sacred grove, thereby purifying the hallowed spot from the stain it had contracted by the presence of a defiled maiden.²

The sacred
serpent at
Lanuvium.

To explain the rude and ancient ritual of the Thesmo-

terrean vaults or chasms sacred to the gods. See Hesychius, quoted by Movers, *l.c.* (the passage does not appear in M. Schmidt’s minor edition of Hesychius); Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 6; and my note on Pausanias, ii. 2. 1.

¹ We infer this from Pausanias, ix. 8. 1, though the passage is incomplete and apparently corrupt. For *ἐν Δωδώνη* Lobeck (*Aglaophamus*, pp. 829 *sq.*) proposed to read *ἀναδύναι* or *ἀναδοθήαι*. At the spring and autumn festivals of Isis at Tithorea geese and goats were thrown into the *adyton* and left there till the following festival, when the remains were removed and buried at a

certain spot a little way from the temple. See Pausanias, x. 32. 14. This analogy supports the view that the pigs thrown into the caverns at the Thesmophoria were left there till the next festival.

² Aelian, *De natura animalium*, xi. 16; Propertius, v. 8. 3-14. The feeding of the serpent is represented on a Roman coin of about 64 B.C.; on the obverse of the coin appears the head of Juno Caprotina. See E. Babelon, *Monnaies de la République Romaine* (Paris, 1886), ii. 402. A common type of Greek art represents a woman feeding a serpent out of a saucer. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 75.

phoria the following legend was told. At the moment when Pluto carried off Persephone, a swineherd called Eubuleus chanced to be herding his swine on the spot, and his herd was engulfed in the chasm down which Pluto vanished with Persephone. Accordingly at the Thesmophoria pigs were annually thrown into caverns to commemorate the disappearance of the swine of Eubuleus.¹ It follows from this that the casting of the pigs into the vaults at the Thesmophoria formed part of the dramatic representation of Persephone's descent into the lower world; and as no image of Persephone appears to have been thrown in, we may infer that the descent of the pigs was not so much an accompaniment of her descent as the descent itself, in short, that the pigs were Persephone. Afterwards when Persephone or Demeter (for the two are equivalent) took on human form, a reason had to be found for the custom of throwing pigs into caverns at her festival; and this was done by saying that when Pluto carried off Persephone, there happened to be some swine browsing near, which were swallowed up along with her. The story is obviously a forced and awkward attempt to bridge over the gulf between the old conception of the corn-spirit as a pig and the new conception of her as an anthropomorphic goddess. A trace of the older conception survived in the legend that when the sad mother was searching for traces of the vanished Persephone, the footprints of the lost one were obliterated by the footprints of a pig;² originally, we may conjecture, the footprints of the pig were the footprints of Persephone and of Demeter herself. A consciousness of the intimate connexion of the pig with the corn lurks in the legend that the swineherd Eubuleus was a brother of Triptolemus, to whom Demeter first imparted the secret of the corn. Indeed, according to one version of the story, Eubuleus himself received, jointly with his brother Triptolemus, the gift of the corn from Demeter as a reward for revealing to her the fate of Persephone.³ Further, it is to be noted that at the Thesmophoria

Legend told to explain the ritual of the Thesmophoria.

¹ *Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe, pp. 275 sq.

² Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 461-466, upon which Gierig remarks, "*Sues melius*

poeta omisisset in hac narratione." Such is the wisdom of the commentator.

³ Pausanias, i. 14. 3.

the women appear to have eaten swine's flesh.¹ The meal, if I am right, must have been a solemn sacrament or communion, the worshippers partaking of the body of the god.

Analogy of the Thesmophoria to the folk-customs of Northern Europe.

As thus explained, the Thesmophoria has its analogies in the folk-customs of Northern Europe which have been already described. Just as at the Thesmophoria—an autumn festival in honour of the corn-goddess—swine's flesh was partly eaten, partly kept in caverns till the following year, when it was taken up to be sown with the seed-corn in the fields for the purpose of securing a good crop; so in the neighbourhood of Grenoble the goat killed on the harvest-field is partly eaten at the harvest-supper, partly pickled and kept till the next harvest;² so at Pouilly the ox killed on the harvest-field is partly eaten by the harvesters, partly pickled and kept till the first day of sowing in spring,³ probably to be then mixed with the seed, or eaten by the ploughmen, or both; so at Udvarhely the feathers of the cock which is killed in the last sheaf at harvest are kept till spring, and then sown with the seed on the field;⁴ so in Hesse and Meiningen the flesh of pigs is eaten on Ash Wednesday or Candlemas, and the bones are kept till sowing-time, when they are put into the field sown or mixed with the seed in the bag;⁵ so, lastly, the corn from the last sheaf is kept till Christmas, made into the Yule Boar, and afterwards broken and mixed with the seed-corn at sowing in spring.⁶ Thus, to put it generally, the corn-spirit is killed in animal form in autumn; part of his flesh is eaten as a sacrament by his worshippers; and part of it is kept till next sowing-time or harvest as a pledge and security for the continuance or renewal of the corn-spirit's energies. Whether in the interval between autumn and spring he is conceived as dead, or whether, like the ox in the *bouphonia*, he is supposed to come to life again immediately after being killed, is not clear. At the Thesmophoria, according to Clement and Pausanias, as emended by Lobeck,⁷ the pigs

¹ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 338.

² Above, vol. i. p. 285.

³ Above, vol. i. p. 290.

⁴ Above, vol. i. p. 278.

⁵ Above, vol. i. p. 300.

⁶ Above, vol. i. pp. 300 sq.

⁷ In Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17, for *μεγαρίζοντες χοίρους ἐκβάλλουσι* Lobeck (*Aglaophamus*, p. 831) would read *μεγάρους ζώντας χοίρους ἐμβάλλουσι*. For his emendation of Pausanias, see above, p. 18 note ¹.

were thrown in alive, and were supposed to reappear at the festival of the following year. Here, therefore, if we accept Lobeck's emendations, the corn-spirit is conceived as alive throughout the year; he lives and works under ground, but is brought up each autumn to be renewed and then replaced in his subterranean abode.¹

If persons of fastidious taste should object that the Greeks never could have conceived Demeter and Persephone to be embodied in the form of pigs, it may be answered that in the cave of Phigalia in Arcadia the Black Demeter was portrayed with the head and mane of a horse on the body of a woman.² Between the portrait of a goddess as a pig, and the portrait of her as a woman with a horse's head, there is little to choose in respect of barbarism. The legend told of the Phigalian Demeter indicates that the horse was one of the animal forms assumed in ancient Greece, as in modern Europe,³ by the corn-spirit. It was said that in her search for her daughter, Demeter assumed the form of a mare to escape the addresses of Poseidon, and that, offended at his impotency, she withdrew in dudgeon to a cave not far from Phigalia in the highlands of Western Arcadia. The very cavern, now turned into a little Christian chapel with its holy pictures, is still shewn to the curious traveller far down the side of that profound ravine through which the brawling Neda winds under overhanging woods to the sea. There, robed in black, she tarried so long that the fruits of the earth were perishing, and mankind would have died of famine if Pan had not soothed the angry goddess and persuaded her to quit the cave. In memory of this event, the Phigalians set up an image of the Black Demeter in the cave; it represented a woman dressed in a long robe, with the head and mane of a horse.⁴ The Black Demeter, in whose absence the fruits

The horse-headed Demeter of Phigalia.

¹ It is worth nothing that in Crete, which was an ancient seat of Demeter worship (see above, vol. i. p. 131), the pig was esteemed very sacred and was not eaten (Athenaeus, ix. 18, pp. 375 F-376 A). This would not exclude the possibility of its being eaten sacramentally, as at the Thesmophoria.

² Pausanias, viii. 42.

³ Above, vol. i. pp. 292 sqq.

⁴ Pausanias, viii. 25 and 42. At the sanctuary of the Mistress (that is, of Persephone) in Arcadia many terracotta statuettes have been found which represent draped women with the heads of cows or sheep. They are probably votive images of Demeter or Persephone, for the ritual of the sanctuary prescribed the offering of images (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No.

of the earth perish, is plainly a mythical expression for the bare wintry earth stripped of its summer mantle of green.

§ 3. *Attis, Adonis, and the Pig*

Attis and
the pig.

Passing now to Attis and Adonis, we may note a few facts which seem to shew that these deities of vegetation had also, like other deities of the same class, their animal embodiments. The worshippers of Attis abstained from eating the flesh of swine.¹ This appears to indicate that the pig was regarded as an embodiment of Attis. And the legend that Attis was killed by a boar² points in the same direction. For after the examples of the goat Dionysus and the pig Demeter it may almost be laid down as a rule that an animal which is said to have injured a god was originally the god himself. Perhaps the cry of "Hyes Attes! Hyes Attes!"³ which was raised by the worshippers of Attis, may be neither more nor less than "Pig Attis! Pig Attis!"—*hyes* being possibly a Phrygian form of the Greek *hῆς*, "a pig."⁴

Adonis and
the boar.

In regard to Adonis, his connexion with the boar was not always explained by the story that he had been killed by the animal.⁵ According to another story, a boar rent with his tusk the bark of the tree in which the infant Adonis was born.⁶ According to yet another story, he perished at the

939, vol. ii. pp. 803 sq.). See P. Ferdrizet, "Terres-cuites de Lycosoura, et mythologie arcadienne," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, xxiii. (1899) p. 635; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 347 sq. On the Phigalian Demeter, see W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 244 sqq. I well remember how on a summer afternoon I sat at the mouth of the shallow cave, watching the play of sunshine on the lofty wooded sides of the ravine and listening to the murmur of the stream.

¹ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 221. On the position of the pig in ancient Oriental and particularly Semitic religion, see F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. (Bonn, 1841), pp. 218 sqq.

² *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 220.

³ Demosthenes, *De corona*, p. 313.

⁴ The suggestion was made to me in conversation by my lamented friend, the late R. A. Neil of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

⁵ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 8; and to the authorities there cited add Athenaeus, ii. 80, p. 69 B; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 5. 3, § 8; Aristides, *Apolo- logia*, II, p. 107, ed. J. Rendel Harris (Cambridge, 1891); Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 44; Propercius, iii. 4 (5). 53 sq., ed. F. A. Paley; Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* i. 17; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi. 7; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 9; Macrobius, *Saturnal.* i. 21. 4. See further W. W. Graf Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 142 sqq.

⁶ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 186.

hands of Hephaestus on Mount Lebanon while he was hunting wild boars.¹ These variations in the legend serve to shew that, while the connexion of the boar with Adonis was certain, the reason of the connexion was not understood, and that consequently different stories were devised to explain it. Certainly the pig ranked as a sacred animal among the Syrians. At the great religious metropolis of Hierapolis on the Euphrates pigs were neither sacrificed nor eaten, and if a man touched a pig he was unclean for the rest of the day. Some people said this was because the pigs were unclean; others said it was because the pigs were sacred.² This difference of opinion points to a hazy state of religious thought in which the ideas of sanctity and uncleanness are not yet sharply distinguished, both being blent in a sort of vaporous solution to which we give the name of taboo. It is quite consistent with this that the pig should have been held to be an embodiment of the divine Adonis, and the analogies of Dionysus and Demeter make it probable that the story of the hostility of the animal to the god was only a late misapprehension of the old view of the god as embodied in a pig. The rule that pigs were not sacrificed or eaten by worshippers of Attis and presumably of Adonis, does not exclude the possibility that in these rituals the pig was slain on solemn occasions as a representative of the god and consumed sacramentally by the worshippers. Indeed, the sacramental killing and eating of an animal implies that the animal is sacred, and that, as a general rule, it is spared.³

Ambiguous position of pigs at Hierapolis.

The attitude of the Jews to the pig was as ambiguous as that of the heathen Syrians towards the same animal. The Greeks could not decide whether the Jews worshipped swine or abominated them.⁴ On the one hand they might not eat swine; but on the other hand they might not kill them. And if the former rule speaks for the uncleanness, the latter

Attitude of the Jews to the pig.

¹ W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London, 1855), p. 44.

² Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 54.

³ The heathen Harranians sacrificed swine once a year and ate the flesh (En-Nedim, in D. Chwolsohn's *Die Sabier und der Ssabismus*, St. Petersburg, 1856, ii. 42). My friend W.

Robertson Smith conjectured that the wild boars annually sacrificed in Cyprus on 2nd April (Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 45) represented Adonis himself. See his *Religion of the Semites*,³ pp. 290 *sq.*, 411.

⁴ Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 5.

speaks still more strongly for the sanctity of the animal. For whereas both rules may, and one rule must, be explained on the supposition that the pig was sacred; neither rule must, and one rule cannot, be explained on the supposition that the pig was unclean. If, therefore, we prefer the former supposition, we must conclude that, originally at least, the pig was revered rather than abhorred by the Israelites. We are confirmed in this opinion by observing that down to the time of Isaiah some of the Jews used to meet secretly in gardens to eat the flesh of swine and mice as a religious rite.¹ Doubtless this was a very ancient ceremony, dating from a time when both the pig and the mouse were venerated as divine, and when their flesh was partaken of sacramentally on rare and solemn occasions as the body and blood of gods. And in general it may be said that all so-called unclean animals were originally sacred; the reason for not eating them was that they were divine.

§ 4. *Osiris, the Pig and the Bull*

Attitude of
the ancient
Egyptians
to the pig.

In ancient Egypt, within historical times, the pig occupied the same dubious position as in Syria and Palestine, though at first sight its uncleanness is more prominent than its sanctity. The Egyptians are generally said by Greek writers to have abhorred the pig as a foul and loathsome animal.² If a man so much as touched a pig in passing, he stepped into the river with all his clothes on, to wash off the taint.³ To drink pig's milk was believed to cause leprosy to the drinker.⁴ Swineherds, though natives of Egypt, were forbidden to enter any temple, and they were the only men who were thus excluded. No one would give his daughter in marriage to a swineherd, or marry a swineherd's daughter; the swineherds married among themselves.⁵

¹ Isaiah lxx. 3, lxxvi. 3, 17. Compare R. H. Kennett, *The Composition of the Book of Isaiah in the Light of History and Archaeology* (London, 1910) p. 61, who suggests that the eating of the mouse as a sacrament may have been derived from the Greek worship of the Mouse Apollo (Apollo Smintheus). As to the Mouse Apollo

see below, pp. 282 *sq.*

² Herodotus, ii. 47; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* x. 16. Josephus merely says that the Egyptian priests abstained from the flesh of swine (*Contra Apionem*, ii. 13).

³ Herodotus, *l.c.*

⁴ Plutarch and Aelian, *ll. cc.*

⁵ Herodotus, *l.c.* At Castabus in

Yet once a year the Egyptians sacrificed pigs to the moon and to Osiris, and not only sacrificed them, but ate of their flesh, though on any other day of the year they would neither sacrifice them nor taste of their flesh. Those who were too poor to offer a pig on this day baked cakes of dough, and offered them instead.¹ This can hardly be explained except by the supposition that the pig was a sacred animal which was eaten sacramentally by his worshippers once a year.

Annual sacrifice of pigs to Osiris and the moon.

The view that in Egypt the pig was sacred is borne out by the very facts which, to moderns, might seem to prove the contrary. Thus the Egyptians thought, as we have seen, that to drink pig's milk produced leprosy. But exactly analogous views are held by savages about the animals and plants which they deem most sacred. Thus in the island of Wetar (between New Guinea and Celebes) people believe themselves to be variously descended from wild pigs, serpents, crocodiles, turtles, dogs, and eels; a man may not eat an animal of the kind from which he is descended; if he does so, he will become a leper, and go mad.² Amongst the Omaha Indians of North America men whose totem is the elk, believe that if they ate the flesh of the male elk they would break out in boils and white spots in different parts of their bodies.³ In the same tribe men whose totem is the red maize, think that if they ate red maize they would have running sores all round

Belief that the eating of a sacred animal causes skin disease, especially leprosy.

Chersonese there was a sacred precinct of Hemithea, which no one might approach who had touched or eaten of a pig (Diodorus Siculus, v. 62. 5).

¹ Herodotus, ii. 47 sq.; Aelian and Plutarch, *ll. cc.* Herodotus distinguishes the sacrifice to the moon from that to Osiris. According to him, at the sacrifice to the moon, the extremity of the pig's tail, together with the spleen and the caul, was covered with fat and burned; the rest of the flesh was eaten. On the evening (not the eve, see H. Stein's note on the passage) of the festival the sacrifice to Osiris took place. Each man slew a pig before his door, then gave it to the swineherd, from whom he had bought it, to take away.

² J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluit- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), pp. 432, 452.

³ Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 225; Miss A. C. Fletcher and F. la Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1911), p. 144. According to the latter writers, any breach of a clan taboo among the Omahas was supposed to be punished either by the breaking out of sores or white spots on the body of the offender or by his hair turning white.

their mouths.¹ The Bush negroes of Surinam, who practise totemism, believe that if they ate the *capiai* (an animal like a pig) it would give them leprosy; ² perhaps the *capiai* is one of their totems. The Syrians, in antiquity, who esteemed fish sacred, thought that if they ate fish their bodies would break out in ulcers, and their feet and stomach would swell up.³ The Nyanja-speaking tribes of Central Angoniland, in British Central Africa, believe that if a person eats his totemic animal, his body will break out in spots. The cure for this eruption of the skin is to bathe the body in a decoction made from the bone of the animal, the eating of which caused the malady.⁴ The Wagogo of German East Africa imagine that the sin of eating the totemic animal is visited not on the sinner himself but on his innocent kinsfolk. Thus when they see a child with a scald head, they say at once that its father has been eating his totem and that is why the poor child has scabs on its pate.⁵ Among the Wahehe, another tribe of German East Africa, a man who suffers from scab or other skin disease will often set the trouble down to his having unwittingly partaken of his totemic animal.⁶ Similarly among the Waheia, another tribe of the same region, if a man kills or eats the totemic animal of his clan, he is supposed to suffer from an eruption of the skin.⁷ In like manner the Bantu tribes of Kavirondo, in Central Africa, hold that the eating of the totem produces a severe cutaneous eruption, which can however be cured by mixing an extract of certain herbs with the fat of a black ox and rubbing the body of the sufferer all over with the mixture.⁸ The Chasas of Orissa believe that if they were to injure their totemic animal, they

¹ Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, *op. cit.* p. 231.

² J. Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1883), p. 59.

³ Plutarch, *De superstitione*, 10; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, iv. 15. As to the sanctity of fish among the Syrians, see also Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 473 sq.; Diodorus Siculus, ii. 4.

⁴ R. Sutherland Rattray, *Some Folklore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja* (London, 1907), pp. 174 sq.

⁵ Rev. H. Cole, "Notes on the

Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 307, compare p. 317.

⁶ E. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe* (Berlin, 1908), p. 42.

⁷ J. Kohler, "Das Banturecht in Ostafrika," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, xv. (1902) pp. 2, 3.

⁸ C. W. Hobley, "Anthropological Studies in Kavirondo and Nandi," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiii. (1903) p. 347.

would be attacked by leprosy and their line would die out.¹ These examples prove that the eating of a sacred animal is often believed to produce leprosy or other skin-diseases; so far, therefore, they support the view that the pig must have been sacred in Egypt, since the effect of drinking its milk was believed to be leprosy. Such fancies may perhaps have been sometimes suggested by the observation that the eating of semi-putrid flesh, to which some savages are addicted, is apt to be followed by eruptions on the skin. Indeed, many modern authorities attribute leprosy to this cause, particularly to the eating of half rotten fish.² It seems not impossible that the abhorrence which the Hebrews entertained of leprosy, and the pains which they took to seclude lepers from the community, may have been based on religious as well as on purely sanitary grounds; they may have imagined that the disfigurement of the sufferers was a penalty which they had incurred by some infraction of taboo. Certainly we read in the Old Testament of cases of leprosy which the historian regarded as the direct consequence of sin.³

Again, the rule that, after touching a pig, a man had to wash himself and his clothes, also favours the view of the sanctity of the pig. For it is a common belief that the effect of contact with a sacred object must be removed, by washing or otherwise, before a man is free to mingle with his fellows. Thus the Jews wash their hands after reading the sacred scriptures. Before coming forth from the tabernacle after the sin-offering, the high priest had to wash himself, and put off the garments which he had worn in the holy place.⁴ It was a rule of Greek ritual that, in offering an expiatory sacrifice, the sacrificer should not touch the sacrifice, and that, after the offering was made, he must wash his body and his clothes in a river or spring before he could enter a city or his own house.⁵ The Parjas, a small tribe of

Mere contact with a sacred object is deemed dangerous and calls for purification as a sort of disinfectant.

¹ *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey*, II. *Draft Articles on Uriya Castes* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 16.

² C. Creighton, *s.v.* "Leprosy," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iii. col. 2766.

³ 2 Kings v. 27; 2 Chronicles xxvi. 16-21.

⁴ Leviticus xvi. 23 *sq.*

⁵ Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 44. For this and the Jewish examples I am indebted to my friend W. Robertson Smith. Compare his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 351, 426, 450 *sq.*

the Central Provinces in India, are divided into clans which have for their respective totems the tiger, the tortoise, the goat, a big lizard, a dove, and so on. If a man accidentally kills his totemic animal, "the earthen cooking-pots of his household are thrown away, the clothes are washed, and the house is purified with water in which the bark of the mango or *jamun* tree (*Eugenia jambolana*) has been steeped. This is in sign of mourning, as it is thought that such an act will bring misfortune."¹ If a Chadwar of the Central Provinces who has the pig for his totem should even see a pig killed by somebody else, he will throw away the household crockery and clean the house as if on the death of a member of his family.² The Polynesians felt strongly the need of ridding themselves of the sacred contagion, if it may be so called, which they caught by touching sacred objects. Various ceremonies were performed for the purpose of removing this contagion. We have seen, for example, how in Tonga a man who happened to touch a sacred chief, or anything personally belonging to him, had to perform a certain ceremony before he could feed himself with his hands; otherwise it was believed that he would swell up and die, or at least be afflicted with scrofula or some other disease.³ We have seen, too, what fatal effects are supposed to follow, and do actually follow, from contact with a sacred object in New Zealand.⁴ In short, primitive man believes that what is sacred is dangerous; it is pervaded by a sort of electrical sanctity which communicates a shock to, even if it does not kill, whatever comes in contact with it. Hence the savage is unwilling to touch or even to see that which he deems peculiarly holy. Thus Bechuanas, of the Crocodile clan, think it "hateful and unlucky" to meet or see a crocodile; the sight is thought to cause inflammation of the eyes. Yet the crocodile is their most sacred object; they call it their father, swear by it, and celebrate it in their festivals.⁵ The goat is the sacred animal of the Madenassana

¹ *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey*, VII. *Draft Articles on Forest Tribes* (Allahabad, 1911), p. 97.

² *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey*, I. *Draft Articles on Hindu-stani Castes* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 32.

³ See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 133 sq.

⁴ *Op. cit.* pp. 134-136.

⁵ E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), p. 211; D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South*

Bushmen; yet "to look upon it would be to render the man for the time impure, as well as to cause him undefined uneasiness."¹ The Elk clan, among the Omaha Indians, believe that even to touch the male elk would be followed by an eruption of boils and white spots on the body.² Members of the Reptile clan in the same tribe think that if one of them touches or smells a snake, it will make his hair white.³ In Samoa people whose god was a butterfly believed that if they caught a butterfly it would strike them dead.⁴ Again, in Samoa the reddish-seared leaves of the banana-tree were commonly used as plates for handing food; but if any member of the Wild Pigeon family had used banana leaves for this purpose, it was supposed that he would suffer from rheumatic swellings or an eruption all over the body like chicken-pox.⁵ The Mori clan of the Bhils in Central India worship the peacock as their totem and make offerings of grain to it; yet members of the clan believe that were they even to set foot on the tracks of a peacock they would afterwards suffer from some disease, and if a woman sees a peacock she must veil her face and look away.⁶ Thus the primitive mind seems to conceive of holiness as a sort of dangerous virus, which a prudent man will shun as far as possible, and of which, if he should chance to be infected by it, he will carefully disinfect himself by some form of ceremonial purification.

In the light of these parallels the beliefs and customs of the Egyptians touching the pig are probably to be explained as based upon an opinion of the extreme sanctity rather than of the extreme uncleanness of the animal; or rather, to put it more correctly, they imply that the animal was looked on, not simply as a filthy and disgusting creature, but as a being endowed with high supernatural powers, and that as

Thus the pig was probably at first a sacred animal with the Egyptians, and may have been re-

Africa (London, 1857), p. 255; John Mackenzie, *Ten Years north of the Orange River* (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 135 note. See further *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 372.

¹ J. Mackenzie, *l.c.*

² Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 225.

³ *Ibid.* p. 275.

⁴ G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), p. 76.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 70.

⁶ Captain C. Eckford Luard, in *Census of India, 1901*, vol. xix. *Central India*, Part i. (Lucknow, 1902) pp. 299 sq.; also *Census of India, 1901*, vol. i. *Ethnographic Appendices* (Calcutta, 1903), p. 163.

garded as an embodiment of the corn-god Osiris, though at a later time he was looked on as an embodiment of Typhon, the enemy of Osiris.

such it was regarded with that primitive sentiment of religious awe and fear in which the feelings of reverence and abhorrence are almost equally blended. The ancients themselves seem to have been aware that there was another side to the horror with which swine seemed to inspire the Egyptians. For the Greek astronomer and mathematician Eudoxus, who resided fourteen months in Egypt and conversed with the priests,¹ was of opinion that the Egyptians spared the pig, not out of abhorrence, but from a regard to its utility in agriculture; for, according to him, when the Nile had subsided, herds of swine were turned loose over the fields to tread the seed down into the moist earth.² But when a being is thus the object of mixed and implicitly contradictory feelings, he may be said to occupy a position of unstable equilibrium. In course of time one of the contradictory feelings is likely to prevail over the other, and accordingly; as the feeling which finally predominates is that of reverence or abhorrence, the being who is the object of it will rise into a god or sink into a devil. The latter, on the whole, was the fate of the pig in Egypt. For in historical times the fear and horror of the pig seem certainly to have outweighed the reverence and worship of which he may once have been the object, and of which, even in his fallen state, he never quite lost trace. He came to be looked on as an embodiment of Set or Typhon, the Egyptian devil and enemy of Osiris. For it was in the shape of a black pig that Typhon injured the eye of the god Horus, who burned him and instituted the sacrifice of the pig, the sun-god Ra having declared the beast abominable.³ Again, the story that Typhon was hunting a boar when he discovered and mangled the body of Osiris, and that this was the reason why pigs were sacrificed once a year,⁴ is clearly a modernised version of an older story that Osiris, like Adonis and Attis, was slain

¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, viii. 8.

² Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* x. 16. The story is repeated by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 168.

³ E. Lefébure, *Le Mythe Osirien*, Première Partie, *Les yeux d'Horus* (Paris, 1874), p. 44; *The Book of the Dead*, English translation by E. A.

Wallis Budge (London, 1901), ii. 336 sq., chapter cxii.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), i. 496 sq.; *id.*, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London and New York, 1911), i. 62 sq.

⁴ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8. E. Lefébure (*op. cit.* p. 46) recognises that in this story the boar is Typhon himself.

or mangled by a boar, or by Typhon in the form of a boar. Thus, the annual sacrifice of a pig to Osiris might naturally be interpreted as vengeance inflicted on the hostile animal that had slain or mangled the god. But, in the first place, when an animal is thus killed as a solemn sacrifice once and once only in the year, it generally or always means that the animal is divine, that he is spared and respected the rest of the year as a god and slain, when he is slain, also in the character of a god.¹ In the second place, the examples of Dionysus and Demeter, if not of Attis and Adonis, have taught us that the animal which is sacrificed to a god on the ground that he is the god's enemy may have been, and probably was, originally the god himself. Therefore, the annual sacrifice of a pig to Osiris, coupled with the alleged hostility of the animal to the god, tends to shew, first, that originally the pig was a god, and, second, that he was Osiris. At a later age, when Osiris became anthropomorphic and his original relation to the pig had been forgotten, the animal was first distinguished from him, and afterwards opposed as an enemy to him by mythologists who could think of no reason for killing a beast in connexion with the worship of a god except that the beast was the god's enemy; or, as Plutarch puts it, not that which is dear to the gods, but that which is the contrary, is fit to be sacrificed.² At this later stage the havoc which a wild boar notoriously makes amongst the corn would supply a plausible reason for regarding him as the foe of the corn-spirit, though originally, if I am right, the very freedom with which the boar ranged at will through the corn led people to identify him with the corn-spirit, to whom he was afterwards opposed as an enemy.

The havoc wrought by wild boars in the corn is a reason for regarding them as foes of the corn-god.

As the depredations committed by wild swine on the growing crops in countries where these creatures abound are necessarily unfamiliar to most English readers, it may be well to illustrate them by examples. Thus, for instance, in Palestine the wild boar "is eagerly chased and destroyed on account of the frightful ravages it makes among the

Evidence of the depredations committed by wild boars on the crops.

¹ This important principle was first recognised by W. Robertson Smith. See his article, "Sacrifice," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xxi.

137 sq. Compare his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 373, 410 sq.

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 31.

crops. Not only does it devour any fruits within reach, but in a single night a party of wild boars will uproot a whole field, and destroy the husbandman's hopes for the year. The places they love to frequent are the reedy marshes and thickets by rivers and lakes, and they swarm in the thickets all along the banks of the Jordan from Jericho to the Lake of Gennesaret. From these fastnesses, whence neither dog nor man can dislodge them, they make nightly forays upon the corn-fields and root-crops of the villagers, returning at daybreak to their coverts. About Jericho they are especially destructive, and when the barley crop is ripening, the husbandmen have to keep nightly watch to drive them away. Their presence can always be detected by the crashing noise they make in forcing their way through the thickets, when the men fire, guided by the sound."¹ Wild pigs are the special enemies of the crops in South Africa; the fences constructed by the Zulus round their gardens are mainly designed to guard against the devastating depredations of these brutes, though porcupines, baboons, hippopotamuses, and elephants also make havoc of the ripe grain. Sometimes small huts are erected on platforms in the gardens, and in these huts watchers are set to scare away the nocturnal invaders.² So in British Central Africa sentinels are posted day and night in huts raised on platforms to protect the maize fields from the inroads of baboons and of wild pigs, which are still more destructive than the baboons, for they grub up the plants as well as devour the grain; and the watchers drum continually on any metal they have at hand to keep the marauders at bay.³ In the island of Nias whole fields are sometimes trampled down by these pests between sunset and sunrise. Often the stillness of the serene equatorial night is broken by the strident cries of the watchers of the fields; the sound goes echoing through the wooded valleys for a long time, and here and there a dull grunting tells that the efforts of the sentinels have not been in vain.⁴

¹ H. B. Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible*, Ninth Edition (London, 1898), pp. 54 sq.

² Rev. J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London, 1857), pp. 18-20.

³ Miss A. Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa* (London, 1906), pp. 182 sq.

⁴ E. Modigliano, *Un Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), pp. 524 sq., 601.

In Northern Luzon, of the Philippine Archipelago, the rice-fields are similarly exposed to the depredations of wild hogs, and watchers remain on guard day and night in outlooks, sometimes in commodious structures of stone erected for the purpose, who burn fires at night to frighten the animals away.¹ At the beginning of their annual agricultural labours the Banars of Cambodia pray to Yang-Seri that he would be pleased to give them plenty of rice and to prevent the wild boars from eating it up.² In Gayo-land, a district of Sumatra, the worst enemies of the rice crops are wild swine and field mice; the whole of the harvest is sometimes destroyed by their inroads.³ Among the Kai of German New Guinea people who are engaged in the labour of the fields will on no account eat pork. The reason is that pigs, both wild and tame, are the most dangerous foes of the crops; therefore it seems clear to the mind of the Kai that if a field labourer were to eat pork, the flesh of the dead pig in his stomach would attract the living pigs into the field.⁴ Perhaps this superstition, based on the principle of sympathetic magic, may explain the aversion to pork which was entertained by some of the agricultural peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean in antiquity.

To people thus familiarised with the ravages of wild boars among the ripe crops the idea might naturally present itself that the animal is either the enemy of the corn-god or perhaps the corn-god himself come in person to enjoy his own despite all the efforts of mankind to keep him out of his rights. Hence we can understand how an agricultural people like the ancient Egyptians may have identified the wild boar either with their corn-god Osiris or with his enemy Typhon. The view which identifies the pig with Osiris derives not a little support from the sacrifice of pigs to him on the very day on which, according to tradition, Osiris himself was killed;⁵ for thus the killing

The ravages of wild boars among the crops help us to understand the ambiguous attitude of the ancient Egyptians to swine.

¹ A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot*, (Manilla, 1905), pp. 100, 102.

² A. Bastian, "Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Gebirgs-stämme in Kambodia," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, i. (1866) p. 44.

³ G. Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Gayöland en zijne Bewoners* (Batavia, 1903), p.

348.

⁴ Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhaus, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, 1911), p. 125.

⁵ E. Lefébure, *Le Mythe Osirien*, Première Partie, *Les yeux d'Horus* (Paris, 1874), pp. 48 sq.

of the pig was the annual representation of the killing of Osiris, just as the throwing of the pigs into the caverns at the Thesmophoria was an annual representation of the descent of Persephone into the lower world; and both customs are parallel to the European practice of killing a goat, cock, and so forth, at harvest as a representative of the corn-spirit.

Egyptian sacrifices of red oxen and red-haired men.

Again, the theory that the pig, originally Osiris himself, afterwards came to be regarded as an embodiment of his enemy Typhon, is supported by the similar relation of red-haired men and red oxen to Typhon. For in regard to the red-haired men who were burned and whose ashes were scattered with winnowing-fans, we have seen fair grounds for believing that originally, like the red-haired puppies killed at Rome in spring, they were representatives of the corn-spirit himself, that is, of Osiris, and were slain for the express purpose of making the corn turn red or golden.¹ Yet at a later time these men were explained to be representatives, not of Osiris, but of his enemy Typhon,² and the killing of them was regarded as an act of vengeance inflicted on the enemy of the god. Similarly, the red oxen sacrificed by the Egyptians were said to be offered on the ground of their resemblance to Typhon;³ though it is more likely that originally they were slain on the ground of their resemblance to the corn-spirit Osiris. We have seen that the ox is a common representative of the corn-spirit and is slain as such on the harvest-field.

Osiris identified with the sacred bulls Apis and Mnevis.

Osiris was regularly identified with the bull Apis of Memphis and the bull Mnevis of Heliopolis.⁴ But it is hard

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 261 *sq.*; *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 331, 338.

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 33, 73; Diodorus Siculus, i. 88.

³ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 31; Diodorus Siculus, i. 88. Compare Herodotus, ii. 38.

⁴ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 20, 29, 33, 43; Strabo, xvii. i. 31; Diodorus Siculus, i. 21, 85; Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*,⁵ i. 55 *sqq.* On Apis and Mnevis, see also Herodotus, ii. 153, with A. Wiedemann's comment, iii. 27 *sq.*; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 14. 7; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 184 *sqq.*;

Solinus, xxxii. 17-21; Cicero, *De natura deorum*, i. 29; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, xviii. 5; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xi. 10 *sq.*; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* viii. 1. 3; *id.*, *Isis et Osiris*, 5, 35; Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, iii. 13. 1 *sq.*; Pausanias, i. 18. 4, vii. 22. 3 *sq.*; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig, 1903-1905), Nos. 56, 90 (vol. i. pp. 98, 106, 159). Both Apis and Mnevis were black bulls, but Apis had certain white spots. See A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter* (Münster i. W., 1890), pp. 95, 99-101. When Apis died, pious people used to put on

to say whether these bulls were embodiments of him as the corn-spirit, as the red oxen appear to have been, or whether they were not in origin entirely distinct deities who came to be fused with Osiris at a later time. The universality of the worship of these two bulls¹ seems to put them on a different footing from the ordinary sacred animals whose worships were purely local. Hence if the latter were evolved from totems, as they may have been, some other origin would have to be found for the worship of Apis and Mnevis. If these bulls were not originally embodiments of the corn-god Osiris, they may possibly be descendants of the sacred cattle worshipped by a pastoral people.² If this were so, ancient Egypt would exhibit a stratification of three great types of religion or superstition corresponding to three great stages of society. Totemism, which may be roughly described as a species of superstitious respect paid to wild animals and plants by many tribes in the hunting stage of society, would be represented by the worship of the local sacred animals; the worship of cattle, which belongs to society in the pastoral stage, would be represented by the cults of Apis and Mnevis; and the worship of cultivated plants, which is peculiar to society in the agricultural stage, would be represented by the religion of Osiris and Isis. The Egyptian reverence for cows, which were never killed,³ might belong either to the second or the third of these stages. The consecration of cows to Isis, who was portrayed with cow's horns⁴ and may have been supposed to be incarnate in the animals, would indicate that they, like the red oxen, were embodiments of the corn-spirit. However, this identification of Isis with the cow, like that of Osiris with the bulls Apis and Mnevis, may be only an effect of

Stratification of three great types of religion or superstition in ancient Egypt.

mourning and to fast, drinking only water and eating only vegetables, for seventy days till the burial. See A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin, 1905), pp. 170 sq.

¹ Diodorus Siculus, i. 21.

² On the religious reverence of pastoral peoples for their cattle, and the possible derivation of the Apis and Isis-Hathor worship from the pastoral stage of society, see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 296 sqq.

³ Herodotus, ii. 41.

⁴ Herodotus, ii. 41, with A. Wiedemann's commentary; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 19; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London and New York, 1911), i. 8. In his commentary on the passage of Herodotus Prof. Wiedemann observes (p. 188) that "the Egyptian name of the Isis-cow is *hes-t* and is one of the few cases in which the name of the sacred animal coincides with that of the deity."

syncretism. But whatever the original relation of Apis to Osiris may have been, there is one fact about the former which ought not to be passed over in a disquisition on the custom of killing a god. Although the bull Apis was worshipped as a god with much pomp and profound reverence, he was not suffered to live beyond a certain length of time which was prescribed by the sacred books, and on the expiry of which he was drowned in a holy spring.¹ The limit, according to Plutarch, was twenty-five years;² but it cannot always have been enforced, for the tombs of the Apis bulls have been discovered in modern times, and from the inscriptions on them it appears that in the twenty-second dynasty two of the holy steers lived more than twenty-six years.³

On the stratification of religions corresponding to certain social types.

To prevent misunderstandings it may be well to add that what I have just said as to the stratification of three great types of religion or superstition corresponding to three great types of society is not meant to sketch, even in outline, the evolution of religion as a whole. I by no means wish to suggest that the reverence for wild animals and plants, the reverence for domestic cattle, and the reverence for cultivated plants are the only forms of religion or superstition which prevail at the corresponding stages of social development; all that I desire to convey is that they are characteristic of these stages respectively. The elements which make up any religious system are far too numerous and their interaction far too complex to be adequately summed up in a few simple formulas. To mention only a single factor of which I have taken no account in indicating roughly a certain correspondence between the strata of religion and of society, the fear of the spirits of the dead appears to have been one of the most powerful factors,

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 184; Solinus, xxxii. 18; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 14. 7. The spring or well in which he was drowned was perhaps the one from which his drinking-water was procured; he might not drink the water of the Nile (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 5).

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 56.

³ G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*⁴ (Paris, 1886), p. 31. Compare Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*,⁵ i. 56. It

has been conjectured that the period of twenty-five years was determined by astronomical considerations, that being a period which harmonises the phases of the moon with the days of the Egyptian year. See L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 182 sq.; F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 180 sq.

perhaps, indeed, the most powerful of all, in shaping the course of religious evolution at every stage of social development from the lowest to the highest; and for that very reason it is not specially characteristic of any one form of society. And the three types of religion or superstition which I have selected as characteristic of three stages of society are far from being strictly limited each to its corresponding step in the social ladder. For example, although totemism, or a particular species of reverence paid by groups of men to wild animals and plants, probably always originated in the hunting stage of society, it has by no means been confined to that primitive phase of human development but has often survived not only into the pastoral but into the agricultural stage, as we may see for example by the case of many tribes in Africa, India, and America; and it seems likely that a similar overlapping of the various strata takes place in every instance. In short, we cannot really dissect the history of mankind as it were with a knife into a series of neat sections each sharply marked off from all the rest by a texture and colour of its own; we may indeed do so theoretically for the convenience of exposition, but practically the textures interlace, the colours melt and run into each other by insensible gradations that defy the edge of the finest instrument of analysis which we can apply to them. It is a mere truism to say that the abstract generalisations of science can never adequately comprehend all the particulars of concrete reality. The facts of nature will always burst the narrow bonds of human theories.

Before quitting this part of our subject it may be well to illustrate by one or two examples the reverence which primitive pastoral tribes pay to their cattle, since, as I have just indicated, the worship of sacred bulls by the ancient Egyptians, like the modern Hindoo worship of cows, may very well have been directly derived from a similar respect paid by their remote ancestors to their cattle. A good instance is supplied by the Dinka, a large cattle-breeding tribe, or rather nation, of the White Nile. "Every idea and thought of the Dinka," says Schweinfurth, "is how to acquire and maintain cattle: a kind of reverence would

Reverence
of the
Dinka for
their cattle

seem to be paid to them ; even their offal is considered of high importance ; the dung, which is burnt to ashes for sleeping in and for smearing their persons, and the urine, which is used for washing and as a substitute for salt, are their daily requisites. It must be owned that it is hard to reconcile this latter usage with our ideas of cleanliness. A cow is never slaughtered, but when sick it is segregated from the rest, and carefully tended in the large huts built for the purpose. Only those that die naturally or by an accident are used as food. All this, which exists among most of the pastoral tribes of Africa, may perchance appear to be a lingering remnant of an exploded cattle-worship ; but I may draw attention to the fact that the Dinka are by no means disinclined to partake of any feast of their flesh, provided that the slaughtered animal was not their own property. It is thus more the delight of actual possession, than any superstitious estimate, that makes the cow to them an object of reverence. Indescribable is the grief when either death or rapine has robbed a Dinka of his cattle. He is prepared to redeem their loss by the heaviest sacrifices, for they are dearer to him than wife or child. A dead cow is not, however, wantonly buried ; the negro is not sentimental enough for that ; such an occurrence is soon bruited abroad, and the neighbours institute a carousal, which is quite an epoch in their monotonous life. The bereaved owner himself is, however, too much afflicted at the loss to be able to touch a morsel of the carcass of his departed beast. Not unfrequently in their sorrow the Dinka remain for days silent and abstracted, as though their trouble were too heavy for them to bear.”¹ A rich Dinka will sometimes keep a favourite ox and treat it with such marks of respect that an observer has compared the animal to the Apis of the ancient Egyptians. “Here and there,” we are told, “beside the hut of a wealthy negro is set up a great withered tree. From its boughs hang vessels containing food and perhaps trophies of war ; to its trunk is fastened the great drum (*Noqara*), which summons to war or to the dance. To this tree, separated from the rest of the cattle,

¹ G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, Third Edition (London, 1878), l. 59 sq.

is tethered a great fat ox. It is of a white colour passing into a slaty grey on the shoulders and legs: its long horns are artificially bent to opposite sides and adorned with bunches of hair: the tuft of the tail is cut off. This is the *makwi*, the Apis of the negro. His master, who has singled him out from his youth for his colour and certain marks, has cherished and reared him in order that he may one day be his pride in the eyes of the village. He has gelded him, adorned him, trained him to walk at the head of the herd, to dance, and to fight. His *makwi* is always an object of his tenderest attention; he never fails to bring him a bundle of the finest herbs; if he can procure a bell, he hangs it round the animal's neck; and at evening, if he has milk or *meriṣa* enough for guests, the drum is beaten to summon the youth to come and dance round the deified ox."¹

Again, speaking of the Nuehr, another pastoral tribe of the Upper Nile, a traveller tells us that "as among the Dinka, so among the Nuehr-negroes the cattle enjoy a respect, indeed we may say a veneration, which reminds us of the animal worship of the ancient Egyptians, especially of that of the holy steer Apis, though the respect may be grounded on the simple fact that cattle are the only possession of these negroes. The largest and handsomest bull is the leader of the herd; he is decked with bunches of hair and small bells, marked out from the rest in every way, and regarded as the guardian genius of the herd as well as of the family. His loss is the greatest misfortune that can befall his owner. At night his master drives the animal round the herd, couched about the smoky fire, and sings of his beauty and courage, while the bull signifies his contentment by a complacent lowing. To him his master every morning commits the herd, in order that he may guide them to the best pastures and guard them from danger; in him he reveres his ideal of all that is beautiful and strong; nay he designates him by the same name which he applies to his own dim conception of a Supreme Being, *Nyeledit*, and to the thunder."²

Reverence
of the
Nuehr for
their cattle

¹ E. de Pruyssenaere, *Reisen und Forschungen im Gebiete des Weissen und Blauen Nil* (Gotha, 1877), pp. 22 sq. (*Petermann's Mittheilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No. 50).

² Ernst Marno, *Reisen im Gebiete des Blauen und Weissen Nil* (Vienna, 1874), p. 343. The name *Nyeledit* is explained by the writer to mean "very great and mighty." It is probably

§ 5. *Virbius and the Horse*

The tradition that Virbius had been killed in the character of Hippolytus by horses, and the custom of excluding horses from the sacred Arician grove, may point to the conclusion that the horse was regarded as an embodiment of Virbius and was annually sacrificed in the grove.

Similarly at Athens the goat was usually

We are now in a position to hazard a conjecture as to the meaning of the tradition that Virbius, the first of the divine Kings of the Wood at Aricia, had been killed in the character of Hippolytus by horses.¹ Having found, first, that spirits of the corn are not infrequently represented in the form of horses ;² and, second, that the animal which in later legends is said to have injured the god was sometimes originally the god himself, we may conjecture that the horses by which Virbius or Hippolytus was said to have been slain were really embodiments of him as a deity of vegetation. The myth that he had been killed by horses was probably invented to explain certain features in his worship, amongst others the custom of excluding horses from his sacred grove. For myth changes while custom remains constant ; men continue to do what their fathers did before them, though the reasons on which their fathers acted have been long forgotten. The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice. In the case before us we may be sure that the myth is more modern than the custom and by no means represents the original reason for excluding horses from the grove. From their exclusion it might be inferred that horses could not be the sacred animals or embodiments of the god of the grove. But the inference would be rash. The goat was at one time a sacred animal or embodiment of Athena, as may be inferred from the practice of representing the goddess clad in a goat-skin (*aegis*). Yet the goat was

equivalent to *Nyalich*, which Dr. C. G. Seligmann gives as a synonym for Denglit, the high god of the Dinka. According to Dr. Seligmann, *Nyalich* is the locative of a word meaning "above" and, literally translated, signifies, "in the above." See C. G. Seligmann, *s.v.* "Dinka," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by J. Hastings, D.D., vol. iv. (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 707. The Sakalava of Ampasimene, in Madagascar, are said to worship a black bull which is kept in a sacred enclosure in the island of Nosy

Be. On the death of the sacred bull another is substituted for it. See A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), pp. 247 sq., quoting J. Carol, *Chez les Hova* (Paris, 1898), pp. 418 sq. But as the Sakalava are not, so far as I know, mainly or exclusively a pastoral people, this example of bull-worship does not strictly belong to the class illustrated in the text.

¹ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 19 sqq.

² See above, vol. i. pp. 292-294.

neither sacrificed to her as a rule, nor allowed to enter her great sanctuary, the Acropolis at Athens. The reason alleged for this was that the goat injured the olive, the sacred tree of Athena.¹ So far, therefore, the relation of the goat of Athena is parallel to the relation of the horse to Virbius, both animals being excluded from the sanctuary on the ground of injury done by them to the god. But from Varro we learn that there was an exception to the rule which excluded the goat from the Acropolis. Once a year, he says, the goat was driven on to the Acropolis for a necessary sacrifice.² Now, as has been remarked before, when an animal is sacrificed once and once only in the year, it is probably slain, not as a victim offered to the god, but as a representative of the god himself. Therefore we may infer that if a goat was sacrificed on the Acropolis once a year, it was sacrificed in the character of Athena herself;³ and it may be conjectured that the skin of the sacrificed animal was placed on the statue of the goddess and formed the *aegis*, which would thus be renewed annually. Similarly at Thebes in Egypt rams were sacred and were not sacrificed. But on one day in the year a ram was killed, and its skin was placed on the statue of the god Ammon.⁴ Now, if we knew the ritual of the Arician grove better, we might find that the rule of excluding horses from it, like the rule of excluding goats from the Acropolis at Athens, was subject to an annual exception, a horse being once a year taken into the grove and sacrificed as an embodiment of the god Virbius.⁵ By the usual misunderstanding the horse

excluded from the Acropolis but was admitted once a year for a necessary sacrifice.

¹ Athenaeus, xiii. 51, p. 587 A; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 204. Compare W. Robertson Smith, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, article "Sacrifice," vol. xxi. p. 135.

² Varro, *De agri cultura*, i. 2. 19 sq.: "*hoc nomine etiam Athenis in arcem non inigi, praeterquam semel ad necessarium sacrificium.*" By *semel* Varro probably means once a year.

³ The force of this inference is greatly weakened, if not destroyed, by a fact which I had overlooked when I wrote this book originally. A goat was sacrificed to Brauronia Artemis at her festival called the Brauronia (Hesychius,

s.v. Βραυρωνίως; compare Im. Bekker's *Anecdota Graeca*, p. 445, lines 6 sqq.). As the Brauronia Artemis had a sanctuary on the Acropolis of Athens (Pausanias, i. 23. 7), it seems probable that the goat sacrificed once a year on the Acropolis was sacrificed to her and not to Athena. (Note to Second Edition of *The Golden Bough*.)

⁴ Herodotus, ii. 42.

⁵ It is worth noting that Hippolytus, with whom Virbius was identified, is said to have dedicated horses to Aesculapius, who had raised him from the dead (Pausanias, ii. 27. 4).

thus killed would come in time to be regarded as an enemy offered up in sacrifice to the god whom he had injured, like the pig which was sacrificed to Demeter and Osiris or the goat which was sacrificed to Dionysus, and possibly to Athena. It is so easy for a writer to record a rule without noticing an exception that we need not wonder at finding the rule of the Arician grove recorded without any mention of an exception such as I suppose. If we had had only the statements of Athenaeus and Pliny, we should have known only the rule which forbade the sacrifice of goats to Athena and excluded them from the Acropolis, without being aware of the important exception which the fortunate preservation of Varro's work has revealed to us.

Annual
sacrifice of
a horse at
Rome in
October.

The conjecture that once a year a horse may have been sacrificed in the Arician grove as a representative of the deity of the grove derives some support from the similar sacrifice of a horse which took place once a year at Rome. On the fifteenth of October in each year a chariot-race was run on the Field of Mars. Stabbed with a spear, the right-hand horse of the victorious team was then sacrificed to Mars for the purpose of ensuring good crops, and its head was cut off and adorned with a string of loaves. Thereupon the inhabitants of two wards—the Sacred Way and the Subura—contended with each other who should get the head. If the people of the Sacred Way got it, they fastened it to a wall of the king's house; if the people of the Subura got it, they fastened it to the Mamilian tower. The horse's tail was cut off and carried to the king's house with such speed that the blood dripped on the hearth of the house.¹ Further, it appears that the blood of the horse was caught and preserved till the twenty-first of April, when the Vestal virgins mixed it with the blood of the unborn calves which had been sacrificed six days before. The mixture was then distributed to shepherds, and used by them for fumigating their flocks.²

¹ Festus, ed. C. O. Müller, pp. 178, 179, 220; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 97; Polybius, xii. 4 B. The sacrifice is referred to by Julian, *Orat.* v. p. 176 D (p. 228 ed. F. C. Hertlein). It is the subject of a valuable essay by

W. Mannhardt, whose conclusions I summarise in the text. See W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 156-201.

² Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 731 *sqq.*, compare 629 *sqq.*; Propertius, v. 1. 19 *sq.*

In this ceremony the decoration of the horse's head¹ with a string of loaves, and the alleged object of the sacrifice, namely, to procure a good harvest, seem to indicate that the horse was killed as one of those animal representatives of the corn-spirit of which we have found so many examples. The custom of cutting off the horse's tail is like the African custom of cutting off the tails of the oxen and sacrificing them to obtain a good crop.² In both the Roman and the African custom the animal apparently stands for the corn-spirit, and its fructifying power is supposed to reside especially in its tail. The latter idea occurs, as we have seen, in European folk-lore.³ Again, the practice of fumigating the cattle in spring with the blood of the horse may be compared with the practice of giving the Old Wife, the Maiden, or the *dyack* sheaf as fodder to the horses in spring or the cattle at Christmas, and giving the Yule Boar to the ploughing oxen or horses to eat in spring.⁴ All these usages aim at ensuring the blessing of the corn-spirit on the homestead and its inmates and storing it up for another year.

The horse so sacrificed seems to have embodied the corn-spirit.

The Roman sacrifice of the October horse, as it was called, carries us back to the early days when the Subura, afterwards a low and squalid quarter of the great metropolis, was still a separate village, whose inhabitants engaged in a friendly contest on the harvest-field with their neighbours of Rome, then a little rural town. The Field of Mars on which the ceremony took place lay beside the Tiber, and formed part of the king's domain down to the abolition of the monarchy. For tradition ran that at the time when the last of the kings was driven from Rome, the corn stood ripe for the sickle on the crown lands beside the river; but no one would eat the accursed grain and it was flung into the river in such heaps that, the water being low with the summer heat, it formed the nucleus of an island.⁵

Archaic character of the sacrifice and its analogies in the harvest customs of Northern Europe.

¹ The Huzuls of the Carpathians attribute a special virtue to a horse's head. They think that fastened on a pole and set up in a garden it protects the cabbages from caterpillars. See R. F. Kaindl, *Die Huzulen* (Vienna, 1894), p. 102. At the close of the rice-harvest the Garos of Assam celebrate a festival in which the effigy of a horse plays an

important part. When the festival is over, the body of the horse is thrown into a stream, but the head is preserved for another year. See Note at the end of the volume.

² Above, pp. 9 *sq.*

³ Above, vol. i. pp. 268, 272.

⁴ Above, vol. i. pp. 141, 155, 156, 158, 160 *sq.*, 301. ⁵ Livy, ii. 5.

The horse sacrifice was thus an old autumn custom observed upon the king's corn-fields at the end of the harvest. The tail and blood of the horse, as the chief parts of the corn-spirit's representative, were taken to the king's house and kept there; just as in Germany the harvest-cock is nailed on the gable or over the door of the farmhouse; and as the last sheaf, in the form of the Maiden, is carried home and kept over the fireplace in the Highlands of Scotland. Thus the blessing of the corn-spirit was brought to the king's house and hearth and, through them, to the community of which he was the head. Similarly in the spring and autumn customs of Northern Europe the Maypole is sometimes set up in front of the house of the mayor or burgo-master, and the last sheaf at harvest is brought to him as the head of the village. But while the tail and blood fell to the king, the neighbouring village of the Subura, which no doubt once had a similar ceremony of its own, was gratified by being allowed to compete for the prize of the horse's head. The Mamilian tower, to which the Suburans nailed the horse's head when they succeeded in carrying it off, appears to have been a peel-tower or keep of the old Mamilian family, the magnates of the village.¹ The ceremony thus performed on the king's fields and at his house on behalf of the whole town and of the neighbouring village presupposes a time when each township performed a similar ceremony on its own fields. In the rural districts of Latium the villages may have continued to observe the custom, each on its own land, long after the Roman hamlets had merged their separate harvest-homes in the common celebration on the king's lands. There is no intrinsic improbability in the supposition that the sacred grove of Aricia, like the Field of Mars at Rome, may have been the scene of a common harvest celebration, at which a horse was sacrificed with the same rude rites on behalf of the neighbouring villages. The horse would represent the fructifying spirit both of the tree and of the corn, for the two ideas melt into each other, as we see in customs like the Harvest-May.

However, it should be borne in mind that the evidence for thus interpreting the relation of horses to Virbius is

¹ Festus, ed. C. O. Müller, pp. 130, 131.

exceedingly slender, and that the custom of excluding horses from the sacred Arician grove may have been based on some other superstitious motive which entirely escapes us. At the city of Ialysus in Rhodes there was a sanctuary of Alectronea, one of the daughters of the Sun, into which no horse, ass, mule, or beast of burden of any kind might enter. Any person who broke the law by introducing one of these animals into the holy precinct, had to purify the place by a sacrifice; and the same atonement had to be made by any man who brought shoes or any portion of a pig within the sacred boundaries. And whoever drove or suffered his sheep to stray into the precinct was obliged to pay a fine of one obol for every sheep that set foot in it.¹ The reasons for these prohibitions are quite unknown; and the taboo on horses is particularly remarkable, since the Rhodians were in the habit of offering a chariot and horses every year to the Sun, the father of Alectronea,² doubtless in order that he might ride on them through the sky. Did they think that it was not for the daughter of the Sun to meddle with horses, which were the peculiar property of her father? The conjecture may perhaps be supported by an analogy drawn from West Africa. The Ewe negroes of the Slave Coast conceive the Rain-god Nyikplä as a man who rides a horse, and who may be seen galloping on it through the sky in the form of a shooting star. Hence in the town of Angla, where he generally resides when he is at home, no person may appear on horseback in the streets, that being apparently regarded as an impious usurpation of the style of the deity. In former days even Europeans were forbidden to ride on horseback in Angla; and missionaries who attempted to set the local prejudice at defiance have been pelted with sticks and dirt by the outraged natives.³ Another deity who suffered not horses to enter his sacred

Other examples of the exclusion of horses from sanctuaries.

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 560 (vol. ii. pp. 259-261); Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), No. 434, pp. 323 sq.; P. Cauer, *Delectus Inscriptionum Graecarum propter dialectum memorabilium*² (Leipzig, 1883), No. 177, pp. 117 sq. As to Alectronea or Alectryonea, daughter of the Sun,

see Diodorus Siculus, v. 65. 5.

² Festus, s.v. "October equus," p. 181 ed. C. O. Müller. See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 315.

³ G. Zündel, "Land und Volk der Eweer auf der Slavenküste in Westafrika," *Zeitschrift für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, xii. (1877) pp. 415 sq.

place was Rakelimalaza, a Malagasy god whose name signifies "renowned, although diminutive." His residence was a village situated on the top of a hill about seven miles east of Tananarivo. But horses were not the only animal or thing to which this fastidious being entertained a rooted aversion. "Within the limits of the ground which is considered sacred, and which embraces a wide circumference in the immediate vicinity of the idol's residence, it is strictly forbidden to bring, or to suffer to come, certain animals and certain objects, which are carefully specified by the keepers of the idol. Things thus forbidden are called *fady*; a term of similar import with the well-known tabu of the South Sea Islands. Every idol has its own particular *fady*. The things prohibited by Rakelimalaza are, guns, gunpowder, pigs, onions, sifotra (a shell-fish resembling a snail), sitry (a small animal resembling the young crocodile), striped or spotted robes, anything of a black colour, goats, horses, meat distributed at funerals or at the *tangena*, and cats and owls. Its keepers are forbidden to enter any house where there is a corpse; and in crossing a river they are not permitted to say, 'Carry me,' otherwise they place themselves in danger of being seized by the crocodiles; and in war they must not talk, or they are in danger of being shot."¹ To attempt to discover the particular reasons for all these numerous and varied taboos would obviously be futile; many of them may be based on accidental circumstances which for us are lost past recovery. But it may be worth while to observe that a variety of taboos was enforced at other ancient Greek shrines besides the sanctuary of Alectrona at Ialysus. For example, no person was allowed to enter the sanctuary of the Mistress at Lycosura in Arcadia clad in black, purple, or flowered vestments, or wearing shoes or a ring, or with his or her hair plaited or covered, or carrying flowers in his hand;² and no pomegranates might be brought into the sanctuary, though all other fruits of the orchard were free to enter.³ These instances may warn us against the danger of

¹ Rev. W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, preface dated 1838), p. 803.

² i. 402 sq.

³ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscript-*

tionum Graecarum,² No. 939 (vol. ii. p. 803).
³ Pausanias, viii. 37. 7.

arguing too confidently in favour of any one of the many possible reasons which may have moved the old Latins to exclude horses from the sacred Arician grove. The domain of primitive superstition, in spite of the encroachments of science, is indeed still to a great extent a trackless wilderness, a tangled maze, in the gloomy recesses of which the forlorn explorer may wander for ever without a light and without a clue.

Uncertainty as to the reason for excluding horses from the Arician grove.

CHAPTER X

EATING THE GOD

§ 1. *The Sacrament of First-Fruits*

Custom of eating the new corn sacramentally as the body of the corn-spirit.

Loaves baked of the new corn in human shape and eaten.

WE have now seen that the corn-spirit is represented sometimes in human, sometimes in animal form, and that in both cases he is killed in the person of his representative and eaten sacramentally. To find examples of actually killing the human representative of the corn-spirit we had naturally to go to savage races; but the harvest-suppers of our European peasants have furnished unmistakable examples of the sacramental eating of animals as representatives of the corn-spirit. But further, as might have been anticipated, the new corn is itself eaten sacramentally, that is, as the body of the corn-spirit. In Wermland, Sweden, the farmer's wife uses the grain of the last sheaf to bake a loaf in the shape of a little girl; this loaf is divided amongst the whole household and eaten by them.¹ Here the loaf represents the corn-spirit conceived as a maiden; just as in Scotland the corn-spirit is similarly conceived and represented by the last sheaf made up in the form of a woman and bearing the name of the Maiden. As usual, the corn-spirit is believed to reside in the last sheaf; and to eat a loaf made from the last sheaf is, therefore, to eat the corn-spirit itself. Similarly at La Palisse, in France, a man made of dough is hung upon the fir-tree which is carried on the last harvest-waggon. The tree and the dough-man are taken to the mayor's house and kept there till the vintage is over. Then the close of the harvest is celebrated by a

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), p. 179.

feast at which the mayor breaks the dough-man in pieces and gives the pieces to the people to eat.¹

In these examples the corn-spirit is represented and eaten in human shape. In other cases, though the new corn is not baked in loaves of human shape, still the solemn ceremonies with which it is eaten suffice to indicate that it is partaken of sacramentally, that is, as the body of the corn-spirit. For example, the following ceremonies used to be observed by Lithuanian peasants at eating the new corn. About the time of the autumn sowing, when all the corn had been got in and the threshing had begun, each farmer held a festival called Sabarios, that is, "the mixing or throwing together." He took nine good handfuls of each kind of crop—wheat, barley, oats, flax, beans, lentils, and the rest ; and each handful he divided into three parts. The twenty-seven portions of each grain were then thrown on a heap and all mixed up together. The grain used had to be that which was first threshed and winnowed and which had been set aside and kept for this purpose. A part of the grain thus mixed was employed to bake little loaves, one for each of the household ; the rest was mixed with more barley or oats and made into beer. The first beer brewed from this mixture was for the drinking of the farmer, his wife, and children ; the second brew was for the servants. The beer being ready, the farmer chose an evening when no stranger was expected. Then he knelt down before the barrel of beer, drew a jugful of the liquor and poured it on the bung of the barrel, saying, "O fruitful earth, make rye and barley and all kinds of corn to flourish." Next he took the jug to the parlour, where his wife and children awaited him. On the floor of the parlour lay bound a black or white or speckled (not a red) cock and a hen of the same colour and of the same brood, which must have been hatched within the year. Then the farmer knelt down, with the jug in his hand, and thanked God for the harvest and prayed for a good crop next year. Next all lifted up their hands and said, "O God, and thou, O earth, we give you this cock and hen as

Old Lithuanian ritual at eating the new corn.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme* (Berlin, 1875), p. 205. It is

not said that the dough-man is made of the new corn ; but probably this is, or once was, the case.

a free-will offering." With that the farmer killed the fowls with the blows of a wooden spoon, for he might not cut their heads off. After the first prayer and after killing each of the birds he poured out a third of the beer. Then his wife boiled the fowls in a new pot which had never been used before. After that, a bushel was set, bottom upwards, on the floor, and on it were placed the little loaves mentioned above and the boiled fowls. Next the new beer was fetched, together with a ladle and three mugs, none of which was used except on this occasion. When the farmer had ladled the beer into the mugs, the family knelt down round the bushel. The father then uttered a prayer and drank off the three mugs of beer. The rest followed his example. Then the loaves and the flesh of the fowls were eaten, after which the beer went round again, till every one had emptied each of the three mugs nine times. None of the food should remain over; but if anything did happen to be left, it was consumed next morning with the same ceremonies. The bones were given to the dog to eat; if he did not eat them all up, the remains were buried under the dung in the cattle-stall. This ceremony was observed at the beginning of December. On the day on which it took place no bad word might be spoken.¹

Modern European ceremonies at eating the new corn or new potatoes.

Such was the custom about two hundred years or more ago. At the present day in Lithuania, when new potatoes or loaves made from the new corn are being eaten, all the people at table pull each other's hair.² The meaning of this last custom is obscure, but a similar custom was certainly observed by the heathen Lithuanians at their solemn sacri-

¹ M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae oder Preussische Schaubühne, im wörtlichen Auszuge aus dem Manuscript herausgegeben* von Dr. William Pierson (Berlin, 1871), pp. 60-64; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), pp. 249 *sqq.* Mathaeus Praetorius, the author to whom we owe the account in the text, compiled a detailed description of old Lithuanian manners and customs in the latter part of the seventeenth century at the village of Niebudzen, of which he was Protestant pastor.

The work, which seems to have occupied him for many years and to have been finished about 1698, exists in manuscript but has never been published in full. Only excerpts from it have been printed by Dr. W. Pierson. Praetorius was born at Memel about 1635 and died in 1707. In the later years of his life he incurred a good deal of odium by joining the Catholic Church.

² A. Bezenberger, *Litauische Forschungen* (Göttingen, 1882), p. 89.

fices.¹ Many of the Esthonians of the island of Oesel will not eat bread baked of the new corn till they have first taken a bite at a piece of iron.² The iron is here plainly a charm, intended to render harmless the spirit that is in the corn.³ In Sutherlandshire at the present day, when the new potatoes are dug all the family must taste them, otherwise "the spirits in them [the potatoes] take offence, and the potatoes would not keep."⁴ In one part of Yorkshire it is still customary for the clergyman to cut the first corn; and my informant believes that the corn so cut is used to make the communion bread.⁵ If the latter part of the custom is correctly reported (and analogy is all in its favour), it shews how the Christian communion has absorbed within itself a sacrament which is doubtless far older than Christianity.

Among the heathen Cheremiss on the left bank of the Volga, when the first bread baked from the new corn is to be eaten, the villagers assemble in the house of the oldest inhabitant, the eastern door is opened, and all pray with their faces towards it. Then the sorcerer or priest gives to each of them a mug of beer, which they drain; next he cuts and hands to every person a morsel of the loaf, which they partake of. Finally, the young people go to the elders and bowing down to the earth before them say, "We pray God that you may live, and that God may let us pray next year for new corn." The rest of the day is passed in mirth and dancing. The whole ceremony, observes the writer who has described it, looks almost like a caricature of the Eucharist.⁶ According to another account, each Cheremiss householder on this occasion, after bathing, places some of each kind of grain, together with malt, cakes, and drink, in a vessel, which he holds up to the sun, at the same time thanking the gods for the good things which they have bestowed upon him.⁷

Ceremony
of the
heathen
Cheremiss
at eating
the new
corn.

¹ Simon Grunau, *Preussischer Chronik*, herausgegeben von Dr. M. Perlbach, i. (Leipsic, 1876) p. 91.

² J. B. Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. Heft 2 (Dorpat, 1872), p. 108.

³ On iron as a charm against spirits, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 232 sqq.

⁴ *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889)

p. 54.

⁵ Communicated by the Rev. J. J. C. Yarborough, of Chislehurst, Kent. See *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) p. 50.

⁶ Von Haxthausen, *Studien über die innern Zustände, das Volksleben und insbesondere die ländliche Einrichtungen Russlands*, i. 448 sq.

⁷ J. G. Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des Russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1776), p. 37.

But this part of the ceremony is a sacrifice rather than a sacrament of the new corn.

Ceremony
of the Ainu
at eating
the new
millet.

The Ainu or Ainu of Japan are said to distinguish various kinds of millet as male and female respectively, and these kinds, taken together, are called "the divine husband and wife cereal" (*Umurek haru kamui*). "Therefore before millet is pounded and made into cakes for general eating, the old men have a few made for themselves first to worship. When they are ready they pray to them very earnestly and say:— 'O thou cereal deity, we worship thee. Thou hast grown very well this year, and thy flavour will be sweet. Thou art good. The goddess of fire will be glad, and we also shall rejoice greatly. O thou god, O thou divine cereal, do thou nourish the people. I now partake of thee. I worship thee and give thee thanks.' After having thus prayed, they, the worshippers, take a cake and eat it, and from this time the people may all partake of the new millet. And so with many gestures of homage and words of prayer this kind of food is dedicated to the well-being of the Ainu. No doubt the cereal offering is regarded as a tribute paid to god, but that god is no other than the seed itself; and it is only a god in so far as it is beneficial to the human body."¹

Ceremonies
of the
Melanes-
ians of Reef
Island at
eating the
new bread-
fruits and
yams.

The natives of the Reef Islands in Melanesia describe as follows the ceremonies which they observe at eating new fruits: "When the fruit of trees that are eatable, such as bread-fruit, or *ninas* (nuts) is nearly ripe, about a month before the time that people eat it, they all go together into the bush. They must all go together for this 'holy eating,' and when they return they all assemble in one place, and no one will be absent; they sit down and cook bread-fruit. While it is being cooked no one will eat beforehand, but they set it in order and cook it with reverence, and with the belief that the spirit has granted that food to them and they return thanks to him for it. When it is cooked a certain man takes a bread-fruit and climbs up a tree, and all the people stand on the ground and they all look up, and when he has reached the top they shout out, and when they have shouted they call out, 'This is the bread-fruit of the whole

¹ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), pp. 204, 206.

land'; then he throws down the bread-fruit and they pick it up and shout out again and give thanks, for they think that the spirit who protects the fruit will hear. Their thoughts are thus also with regard to the yam, there is no difference, it is all the same; they think that a spirit gives them food, and the people assemble together and thank the spirit. In every island they think that there is a spirit presiding over food."¹

At Bourail, in New Caledonia, the eating of the first yams of the season is a solemn ceremony. The women may take no part in it; indeed for five days previously they may not even shew themselves on any pretext, and must hide in the forest. But the men of other tribes are invited to share in the festivity. On the day of the ceremony seven or eight yams are dug up with the greatest precaution, wrapt in leaves, and carried before the great wooden images, ten or twelve feet high, rudely carved in human form and painted black, red, and white, which represent the ancestors of the tribe. Special pots, only used on these occasions, are then disinterred by boys, who cook the new yams in them, eat them, and afterwards bury the pots in the places where they found them. Thereupon the chief or the oldest man mounts a ladder and addresses the crowd in a long and voluble harangue, telling them how their forefathers always respected the feast of the first yams, and exhorting the young men of the tribe to do the same in the time to come. After that, turning towards the ancestral images, he prays them to give a good crop of yams every year to the people and their descendants, adjuring them to remember how, while they were still on earth, they always ate to their heart's content, and beseeching them to reflect that their sons and grandsons naturally desire to do the same. When the orator has finished his discourse, and his hearers have signified their approval of his eloquence by a loud grunt, the new yams are dressed and eaten, each family cooking them in a pot of its own.²

Ceremony
of the New
Caledon-
ians at eat-
ing the first
yams.

¹ "Native Stories from Santa Cruz and Reef Islands," translated by the Rev. W. O'Ferrall, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiv. (1904) p. 230.

² Glaumont, "La culture de l'igname et du taro en Nouvelle-Calédonie," *L'Anthropologie*, viii. (1897) pp. 43-45.

Ceremonies
observed at
eating the
new rice in
Buru and
Celebes.

At the close of the rice harvest in the East Indian island of Buru, each clan (*fenna*) meets at a common sacramental meal, to which every member of the clan is bound to contribute a little of the new rice. This meal is called "eating the soul of the rice," a name which clearly indicates the sacramental character of the repast. Some of the rice is also set apart and offered to the spirits.¹ Amongst the Alfoors of Minahassa, in the north of Celebes, the priest sows the first rice-seed and plucks the first ripe rice in each field. This rice he roasts and grinds into meal, and gives some of it to each of the household.² Shortly before the rice-harvest in Bolang Mongondo, another district of Celebes, an offering is made of a small pig or a fowl. Then the priest plucks a little rice, first on his own field and next on those of his neighbours. All the rice thus plucked by him he dries along with his own, and then gives it back to the respective owners, who have it ground and boiled. When it is boiled the women take it back, with an egg, to the priest, who offers the egg in sacrifice and returns the rice to the women. Of this rice every member of the family, down to the youngest child, must partake. After this ceremony every one is free to get in his rice.³

Ceremonies
observed at
eating the
new rice in
Ceram and
Borneo.

On the north coast of Ceram every owner of a rice-field begins planting by making six holes in the middle of the field and depositing rice-seed in them. When the crop is ripe, the rice which has sprouted from these six holes must be the first to be reaped and the first to be eaten by the owner at the common harvest-feast of the village. When all the owners of the fields have thus partaken of the rice that was first planted and first reaped in their fields, the other villagers may help themselves to rice out of the pot. Not till this feast has been held may the owners of rice-fields sell their rice.⁴ Among the Kayans of Central Borneo, who, as

¹ G. A. Wilken, "Bijdragen tot de kennis der Alfoeren van het eiland Boeroe," p. 26 (*Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* vol. xxxviii., Batavia, 1875).

² P. N. Wilken, "Bijdragen tot de kennis van de zeden en gewoonten der Alfoeren in de Minahassa," *Mededeelin-*

gen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap, vii. (1863) p. 127.

³ N. P. Wilken en J. A. Schwarz, "Allerlei over het land en volk van Bolaang Mongondou," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, xi. (1867) pp. 369 sq.

⁴ J. Boot, "Korte schets der noordkust van Ceram," *Tiidschrift van het*

we have seen, believe rice to be animated by a soul,¹ before a family partakes of the new rice at harvest, a priestess must touch the face and breast of every person with a magical instrument (*kahe parei*) consisting of the husk of a certain fruit adorned with strings of beads. After this ceremony has been performed on every member of the family, he or she eats a few grains of the new rice and drinks a little water. When all have complied with this ritual, the feast begins.²

Amongst the Burghers or Badagas, a tribe of the Neilgherry Hills in Southern India, the first handful of seed is sown and the first sheaf reaped by a Curumbar—a man of a different tribe, the members of which the Burghers regard as sorcerers. The grain contained in the first sheaf “is that day reduced to meal, made into cakes, and, being offered as a first-fruit oblation, is, together with the remainder of the sacrificed animal, partaken of by the Burgher and the whole of his family, as the meat of a federal offering and sacrifice.”³ Amongst the Coorgs of Southern India the man who is to cut the first sheaf of rice at harvest is chosen by an astrologer. At sunset the whole household takes a hot bath and then goes to the rice-field, where the chosen reaper cuts an armful of rice with a new sickle, and distributes two or more stalks to all present. Then all return to the threshing-floor. A bundle of leaves is adorned with a stalk of rice and fastened to the post in the centre of the threshing-floor. Enough of the new rice is now threshed, cleaned, and ground to provide flour for the dough-cakes which each member of the household is to eat. Then they go to the door of the house, where the mistress washes the feet of the sheaf-cutter, and presents to him, and after him to all the rest, a brass vessel full of milk, honey, and sugar, from which each person takes a draught. Next the man who cut the sheaf kneads a cake of rice-meal, plantains, milk, honey, seven new rice corns, seven pieces

Ceremonies
observed at
eating the
new rice in
India.

Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap, Tweede Serie, x. (1893) pp. 671 sq.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 184 sqq.

² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *In Centraal Borneo* (Leyden, 1900), i. 156; *id.*, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-

1907), i. 117 sq. In the latter passage “*ist jeder*” is a misprint for “*isst jeder*”; the Dutch original is “*eet ieder*.”

³ H. Harkness, *Description of a Singular Aboriginal Race inhabiting the Summit of the Neilgherry Hills* (London, 1832), pp. 56 sq.

of coco-nut, and so on. Every one receives a little of this cake on an Ashvatha leaf, and eats it. The ceremony is then over and the sheaf-cutter mixes with the company. When he was engaged in cutting the rice no one might touch him.¹ Among the Hindoos of Southern India the eating of the new rice is the occasion of a family festival called Pongol. The new rice is boiled in a new pot on a fire which is kindled at noon on the day when, according to Hindoo astrologers, the sun enters the tropic of Capricorn. The boiling of the pot is watched with great anxiety by the whole family, for as the milk boils, so will the coming year be. If the milk boils rapidly, the year will be prosperous; but it will be the reverse if the milk boils slowly. Some of the new boiled rice is offered to the image of Gaṇeṣa; then every one partakes of it.² In some parts of Northern India the festival of the new crop is known as *Navan*, that is, "new grain." When the crop is ripe, the owner takes the omens, goes to the field, plucks five or six ears of barley in the spring crop and one of the millets in the autumn harvest. This is brought home, parched, and mixed with coarse sugar, butter, and curds. Some of it is thrown on the fire in the name of the village gods and deceased ancestors; the rest is eaten by the family.³ At Gilgit, in the Hindoo Koosh, before wheat-harvest begins, a member of every household gathers a handful of ears of corn secretly at dusk. A few of the ears are hung up over the door of the house, and the rest are roasted next morning, and eaten steeped in milk. The day is spent in rejoicings, and next morning the harvest begins.⁴

Ceremonies observed by the Chams at ploughing, sowing, reaping, and eating the new rice.

The Chams of Binh-Thuan, in Indo-China, may not reap the rice-harvest until they have offered the first-fruits to Po-Nagar, the goddess of agriculture, and have consumed them sacramentally. These first-fruits are gathered from certain sacred fields called *Hamou-Klêk-Laoa* or "fields of

¹ Ch. E. Gover, *The Folk-songs of Southern India* (London, 1872), pp. 105 *sqq.*; "Coorg Folklore," *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 302 *sqq.*

² Gover, "The Pongol Festival in Southern India," *Journal of the Royal*

Asiatic Society, N.S., v. (1871) pp. 91 *sqq.*

³ From notes sent to me by my friend Mr. W. Crooke.

⁴ Major J. Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh* (Calcutta, 1880), p. 103.

secret tillage," which are both sown and reaped with peculiar ceremonies. Apparently the tilling of the earth is considered a crime which must be perpetrated secretly and afterwards atoned for. On a lucky day in June, at the first cock-crow, two men lead the buffaloes and the plough to the sacred field, round which they draw three furrows in profound silence and then retire. Afterwards at dawn the owner of the land comes lounging by, as if by the merest chance. At sight of the furrows he stops, pretends to be much surprised, and cries out, "Who has been secretly ploughing my field this night?" Hastening home, he kills a kid or some fowls, cooks the victuals, and prepares five quids of betel, some candles, a flask of oil, and lustral water of three different sorts. With these offerings and the plough drawn by the buffaloes, he returns to the field, where he lights the candles and spreading out the victuals worships Po-Nagar and the other deities, saying: "I know not who has secretly ploughed my field this night. Pardon, ye gods, those who have done this wrong. Accept these offerings. Bless us. Suffer us to proceed with this work." Then, speaking in the name of the deities, he gives the reassuring answer, "All right. Plough away!" With the lustral water he washes or sprinkles the buffaloes, the yoke, and the plough. The oil serves to anoint the plough and to pour libations on the ground. The five quids of betel are buried in the field. Thereupon the owner sows a handful of rice on the three furrows that have been traced, and eats the victuals with his people. After all these rites have been duly performed, he may plough and sow his land as he likes. When the rice has grown high enough in this "field of secret tillage" to hide pigeons, offerings of ducks, eggs, and fowls are made to the deities; and fresh offerings, which generally consist of five plates of rice, two boiled fowls, a bottle of spirits, and five quids of betel, are made to Po-Nagar and the rest at the time when the rice is in bloom. Finally, when the rice in "the field of secret tillage" is ripe, it has to be reaped before any of the rest. Offerings of food, such as boiled fowls, plates of rice, cakes, and so forth, are spread out on the field; a candle is lit, and a priest or, in his absence, the owner prays to the

guardian deities to come and partake of the food set before them. After that the owner of the land cuts three stalks of rice with a sickle in the middle of the field, then he cuts three handfuls at the side, and places the whole in a napkin. These are the first-fruits offered to Po-Nagar, the goddess of agriculture. On being taken home the rice from the three handfuls is husked, pounded in a mortar, and presented to the goddess with these words: "Taste, O goddess, these first-fruits which have just been reaped." This rice is afterwards eaten, while the straw and husks are burned. Having eaten the first-fruits of the rice, the owner takes the three stalks cut in the middle of the field, passes them through the smoke of the precious eagle-wood, and hangs them up in his house, where they remain till the next sowing-time comes round. The grain from these three stalks will form the seed of the three furrows in "the field of secret tillage." Not till these ceremonies have been performed is the proprietor at liberty to reap the rest of that field and all the others.¹

Ceremony
at eating
the new
yams at
Onitsha on
the Niger.

The ceremony of eating the new yams at Onitsha, on the Niger, is thus described: "Each headman brought out six yams, and cut down young branches of palm-leaves and placed them before his gate, roasted three of the yams, and got some kola-nuts and fish. After the yam is roasted, the *Libia*, or country doctor, takes the yam, scrapes it into a sort of meal, and divides it into halves; he then takes one piece, and places it on the lips of the person who is going to eat the new yam. The eater then blows up the steam from the hot yam, and afterwards pokes the whole into his mouth, and says, 'I thank God for being permitted to eat the new yam'; he then begins to chew it heartily, with fish likewise."²

Ceremonies
at eating
the new
yams
among
the Ewe
negroes of
Togoland.

Among the Ewe negroes of West Africa the eating of the new yams is the greatest festival of the year; it usually falls at the beginning of September, and its character is predominantly religious. We possess a native account of the festival

¹ E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leurs religions," *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, xxiv. (1891) pp. 272-274.

² S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*

(London, 1859), pp. 287 sq. Mr. Taylor's information is repeated in *West African Countries and Peoples*, by J. Africanus B. Horton (London, 1868), pp. 180 sq.

as it is celebrated by the tribe of the Hos in Togoland. When the yams are ripe and ready to be dug up and brought home, two days are devoted to cleansing the town of all ills, whether spiritual or material, as a solemn preparation for the ensuing celebration. When these rites of purification, which will be described in a later part of this work, have been accomplished, then, in the words of the native account, "the people make ready to eat the new yams. And the manner of making ready consists in going to the fields and digging the yams. However, they do not bring them home but lay them down somewhere on the way. The reason why they do not bring them home is that the people have not yet been on the place where they sacrifice to the deity. When they wish to go thither, the way to the sacrificial place of Agbasia must first be cleared of grass. Afterwards the people come with their drums, which they beat loudly. When they are come to the place of sacrifice, they first raise two great mounds of earth, and they bring to the place of sacrifice palm wine, uncooked and cooked yams, and meal mixed with oil. First of all the uncooked yams are cut in two through the middle, and then this prayer is offered : ' Agbasia, thou art he who has given the yams ; therefore here is thine own ! We thank thee sincerely. May the eating of the yams be a great joy, and may no quarrel intervene ! ' Thereupon they lay down on the ground yams mixed with oil and not mixed with oil. In doing so they say to Agbasia, ' He who eats not the white yams, to him belong the yams mixed with oil ; and he who eats not the yams mixed with oil, to him belong the white yams. ' They do the same with the meal that is mixed with oil and with the meal that is not mixed with oil. Thereby they say : ' Here we bring thee all that thou hast given us. Eat thereof what thou pleasest ! ' After that they pour palm wine into one pot and water into another, and say, ' When one has eaten, one drinks water. ' Thereby the drums sound, songs are sung, and the priest says : ' Our father Agbasia, we pray thee, let us hear no more evil but good only ! When women are with child, let them bear twins and triplets, that we may increase and multiply ! When the time for sowing the yams comes again, make it to rain upon them even more than hitherto, in order that we

Ceremonies
at eating
the new
yams
among
the Ewe
negroes of
Togoland.

may come again and thank thee more sincerely than hitherto !' Thereupon the priest pours water on one of the mounds, makes a paste with it, and calls the people thither. Then he dips his finger in the slime and smears it on their brows, temples, and breasts, saying, ' This is the slime of Agbasia, wherewith I smear you, that ye may remain in life.' After that they disperse and go home." Further, the prayers and offerings of the individual peasants on the occasion of the yam festival are described as follows. " In the evening, when the town is swept clean, the people go to the fields to fetch yams, which, however, they may not yet bring into the town and therefore they hide them in the forest. As soon as the high priest quits the town next morning to go to the sacrificial place of his god, the women set out to fetch the yams which they had deposited. Now they begin to cook. Many people kill fowls or goats, and others buy fish for the festival. When the yams are sodden, a little is broken off, mixed with oil, and laid, together with uncooked yams, on the ground at the entrance to the homestead. Thereby the house-father says : ' That belongs to all those (gods) who abide at the fence.' He does the same under the door of the house and says : ' That belongs to all those (gods) who dwell with me.' Then he goes to the loom, and brings it its offering, and says : ' That belongs to all the " Artificers " who have helped me in weaving.' After that he lays all his charms on a mat spread in the house, and brings them also their offering, and speaks with them.

" Another account describes the priestly functions of the house-father still more fully. Every house-father takes a raw piece of yam and goes with it to his loom (*agbati*) and prays : ' May the Artificers take this yam and eat ! When they practise their art, may it prosper !' Again he takes a raw yam and goes with it under the house-door and prays : ' O my guardian-spirit (*aklama*) and all ye gods who pay heed to this house, come and eat yams ! When I also eat of them, may I remain healthy and nowhere feel pain ! May my housemates all remain healthy !' After he has invoked their protection on his family, he takes a cooked yam, crumbles it on a stone, and mixes it with red oil. With this mixture he goes again to the loom and prays

as before. But even that is not the end of the worship of the Artificers. He again crumbles a cooked yam, but this time he does not mix it with red oil ; he goes to the entrance of the homestead and prays again to the loom : ' He among the Artificers who does not relish yams mixed with oil, let him come and take the white yam and eat it ! ' From there he goes again under the house-door and prays : ' He of my guardian gods and he of the watchers of the house who likes not yams mixed with oil, let him come and take the white yam from my hand and eat ! ' From the house-door he steps into the midst of the chamber and says : ' He who relishes not the yams mixed with oil, may eat the white ; he who relishes not the white may eat the red ; and he who relishes not the red may eat the uncooked ! ' With this prayer he has completed his duties as house-priest. Just as the weaver prays to his loom, so the hunter prays to his musket, the smith to his hammer and anvil, and the carpenter to his plane and saw.

" Now, while the free people begin to cook the yams so soon as the priest has left the town, the slaves of the Earth Gods, the *Tròkluwo*, must first as children perform their duties to the priest of their gods. Each of these children receives from his parents on the morning of the Yam Festival two pieces of yam, which he brings to the priest of his god. The priest cuts off a small piece of the yam and divides the piece again into four pieces. The child kneels before him and lolls out his tongue. Holding two of these pieces of yam in his hands, the priest utters a prayer over the child and touches his tongue five times with the pieces of yam. Then the child stretches his hands out, each of which the priest touches five times with the same pieces of yam and prays as before. Then he touches both feet of the child five times and prays for the third time. He takes half of the cowry-shells which the child has brought, fastens them on a string, and hangs it round the child's neck. Thereby the child gets leave to eat new yams.

" After all these preparations the yams are pounded into a mash, and every one calls his brother, that he may eat with him. When the meal is over, the people are called together to amuse themselves and to drink palm wine. In

the afternoon every one bathes, puts on a new garment, and girds himself with a new loin-cloth." ¹

Festival
of the
new yams
among the
Ashantees
in Septem-
ber.

The Ashantees celebrate the festival of the new yams early in September; until it is over none of the people may taste of the new yams. "The Yam Custom," we are told, "is like the Saturnalia; neither theft, intrigue, nor assault are punishable during the continuance, but the grossest liberty prevails, and each sex abandons itself to its passions." An eye-witness has described the scene at Coomassie, the capital: "The next morning the King ordered a large quantity of rum to be poured into brass pans, in various parts of the town; the crowd pressing around, and drinking like hogs; freemen and slaves, women and children, striking, kicking, and trampling each other under foot, pushed head foremost into the pans, and spilling much more than they drank. In less than an hour, excepting the principal men, not a sober person was to be seen, parties of four, reeling and rolling under the weight of another, whom they affected to be carrying home; strings of women covered with red paint, hand in hand, falling down like rows of cards; the commonest mechanics and slaves furiously declaiming on state palavers; the most discordant music, the most obscene songs, children of both sexes prostrate in insensibility. All wore their handsomest cloths, which they trailed after them to a great length, in a drunken emulation of extravagance and dirtiness." About a hundred persons, mostly culprits reserved for the purpose, used to be sacrificed at this festival in Coomassie. All the chiefs killed several slaves that their blood might flow into the hole from which the new yam was taken. Such as could not afford to kill slaves took the head of a slave who had already been sacrificed and placed it in

¹ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 304-310, 340; compare *id.* pp. 435, 480, 768. The "slaves of the Earth-gods" are children whom women have obtained through prayers offered to Agbasia, the greatest of the Earth-gods. When such a child is born, it is regarded as the slave of Agbasia; and the mother dedicates it to the service of the god, as in similar circumstances Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel i.). If

the child is a girl, she is married to the priest's son; if it is a boy, he serves the priest until his mother has given birth to a girl whom she exchanges for the boy. See J. Spieth, *op. cit.* pp. 448-450. In all such cases the original idea probably was that the child has been begotten in the woman by the god and therefore belongs to him as to his father, in the literal sense of the word.

the hole. About ten days after these ceremonies the whole of the royal household ate new yams for the first time in the market-place, the King himself being in attendance. Next day he and his captains set off before sunrise to perform their annual ablutions in the river Dah; almost all the inhabitants of the capital followed him, so that the streets appeared to be deserted. The following day the King, attended by his suite, washed in the marsh at the south-east end of the town and laved the water not only over himself but also over the chairs, stools, gold and silver plate, and the articles of furniture which were set aside for his special use.¹ From another account it appears that the King of Ashantee must eat the new yams before any of his subjects was at liberty to do so.² Similarly in the West African kingdom of Assinie, which forms part of the French possessions of Senegal, the king must eat the new yams eight full days before the people may taste them.³

A second festival of yams used to be celebrated at Coomassie in December, when the king or a fetish priest consecrated the new yams before they could be eaten by common folk. On one of the days of this December celebration all the laws were suspended, and every man might do what seemed good in his own eyes: he might even, contrary to custom, look at the king's wives, to the number of several hundreds, when they returned with the king and his suite from washing in the fetish water of Tana. All that day drinking went on, and the noise and uproar were prolonged far into the night. Early in the morning a human victim was sacrificed: the first man found near the gates of the palace was seized, butchered, and cut in pieces, and the executioners danced with the bleeding fragments of the victim in their hands or fastened round their necks. Before he ate of the new yams the king washed himself in fetish water brought from distant springs, and the chiefs performed similar ablutions.⁴ In

Festival of
the new
yams at
Coomassie
and Benin

¹ T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, New Edition (London, 1873), pp. 226-229.

² A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast* (London, 1887), pp. 229 sq.

³ J. C. Reichenbach, "Etude sur le royaume d'Assinie," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), vii.ème Série, xi. (1890) p. 349.

⁴ Ramseyer and Kühne, *Four Years in Ashantee* (London, 1875), pp.

Benin the new yams might not be eaten until the king had performed certain ceremonies, among which one is said to have been a pretence of making a yam to grow in a pot. Dancing, merrymaking, and farces or plays formed part of the festival; the city was crowded with people, and they indulged in a regular orgie.¹

Ceremonies
observed
by the
Nandi at
eating the
new eleu-
sine grain.

Among the Nandi of British East Africa, when the eleusine grain is ripening in autumn, every woman who owns a cornfield goes out into it with her daughters, and they all pluck some of the ripe grain. Each of the women then fixes one grain in her necklace and chews another, which she rubs on her forehead, throat, and breast. No mark of joy escapes them; sorrowfully they cut a basketful of the new corn, and carrying it home place it in the loft to dry. As the ceiling is of wickerwork, a good deal of the grain drops through the crevices and falls into the fire, where it explodes with a crackling noise. The people make no attempt to prevent this waste; for they regard the crackling of the grain in the fire as a sign that the souls of the dead are partaking of it. A few days later porridge is made from the new grain and served up with milk at the evening meal. All the members of the family take some of the porridge and dab it on the walls and roofs of the huts; also they put a little in their mouths and spit it out towards the east and on the outside of the huts. Then, holding up some of the grain in his hand, the head of the family prays to God for health and strength, and likewise for milk, and everybody present repeats the words of the prayer after him.² Amongst the Baganda, when the beans were ripe, a woman would call her eldest son to eat some of the first which she cooked; if she neglected to do so, it was believed that she would incur the displeasure of the gods and fall ill. After the meal her husband jumped over her, and the beans might thereafter be eaten by all.³

Amongst the Caffres of Natal and Zululand, no one may eat of the new fruits till after a festival which marks

147-151; E. Perregaux, *Chez les Achanti* (Neuchatel, 1906), pp. 158-160.

² A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), pp. 46 sq.

¹ H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin* (Halifax, England, 1903), pp. 76 sq.

³ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 428.

the beginning of the Caffre year and falls at the end of December or the beginning of January. All the people assemble at the king's kraal, where they feast and dance. Before they separate the "dedication of the people" takes place. Various fruits of the earth, as corn, mealies, and pumpkins, mixed with the flesh of a sacrificed animal and with "medicine," are boiled in great pots, and a little of this food is placed in each man's mouth by the king himself. After thus partaking of the sanctified fruits, a man is himself sanctified for the whole year, and may immediately get in his crops.¹ It is believed that if any man were to partake of the new fruits before the festival, he would die;² if he were detected, he would be put to death, or at least all his cattle would be taken from him.³ The holiness of the new fruits is well marked by the rule that they must be cooked in a special pot which is used only for this purpose, and on a new fire kindled by a magician through the friction of two sticks which are called "husband and wife." These sticks are prepared by the sorcerers from the wood of the *Uzwai* tree and belong exclusively to the chief. The "wife" is the shorter of the two. When the magician has kindled the new fire on which the new fruits are to be cooked, he hands the fire-sticks back to the chief, for no other hand may touch them; and they are then put away till they are required next season. The sticks are regarded as in a measure sacred, and no one, except the chief's personal servant, may go to the side of the hut where they are kept. No pot but the one used for the preparation of this feast may be set on a fire made by the friction of the "husband and wife." When the feast is over, the fire is carefully extinguished, and the pot is put away with the fire-sticks, where it remains untouched for another year.⁴

Festival of the new fruits among the Caffres of Natal and Zululand.

A remarkable feature of the festival, as it is observed at

¹ F. Speckmann, *Die Hermannsburg Mission in Afrika* (Hermannsburg, 1876), pp. 150 sq.

² L. Grout, *Zulu-land* (Philadelphia, N.D.), p. 161.

³ (*South African Folk-lore Journal*, i. (1879) p. 135; Rev. H. Callaway,

Religious System of the Amazulu, Part iii. p. 389 note.

⁴ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), pp. 216 sq. On the conception of the two fire-sticks as husband and wife, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 208 sqq.

Dance of the Zulu king at the festival.

Licentious character of the festival.

The festival as celebrated by the Pondos.

Bull-fights and games.

the court of the Zulu king, is a dance performed by the king himself in a mantle of grass or, .., to another account, of herbs and corn-leaves. This mantle is afterwards burnt and its ashes are scattered and trodden into the ground by cattle.¹ Further, it is worthy of notice that the festival is described as a saturnalia, and we are told that "a great deal of noise and dancing goes on, and people are not supposed to be responsible for what they say or do."² Thus, for example, among the Pondos the festival includes a period of license, during the continuance of which the chief abdicates his functions and any crime may be committed with impunity. The description of the Pondo festival comprises so many interesting features that I will reproduce it entire. "When a Pondo chief is to hold the feast of first-fruits, some of his people procure a ripe plant of the gourd family, pumpkin or calabash, from another tribe. This is cooked; the inside cleaned out, and the rind made ready for use as a vessel. It is then presented to the chief with much ceremony. The first-fruits are now brought forward, and a sacrifice, generally a young bull, is offered, after which the feast commences. The chief issues certain orders for the conduct of the proceedings, tastes the fruits which are served in the gourd-dish with which he has been presented, and then abdicates all his functions while the festival lasts. The cattle from all the neighbouring villages are collected in the vicinity, and now they are brought together, and the bulls incited to fight to determine which is to be king among them for the next year. The young people engage in games and dances, feats of strength and running. After these are over the whole community give themselves over to disorder, debauchery, and riot. In their bull-fights and games they but did honour to the powers of nature, and now, as they eat and drink, the same powers are honoured in another form and by other rites. There is no one in authority to keep order, and every man does what seems good in his

¹ J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal* (London, 1857), p. 27; N. Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (London, 1836), ii. 293;

Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafirs* (London, 1904), pp. 270, 271.

² J. Macdonald, *op. cit.* p. 189.

own eyes. Should a man stab his neighbour he escapes all punishment, and so too with all other crimes against the person, property, and morality. People are even permitted to abuse the chief to his face, an offence which at any other time would meet with summary vengeance and an unceremonious dispatch to join the ancestors. While the feast continues, a deafening noise is kept up by drumming, shouting, hand-clapping, and every kind of instrument that can be made to emit sound. Men advance to the chief and explain their origin, and also the object they hold sacred, by imitating the sounds and movements of their most sacred animal. This is the person's totem. Others imitate the gurgling made by an enemy when stabbed in the throat. Those who adopt this latter emblem are known as 'children of the spear.' When the ceremonies, revels, and mummeries are ended, the chief repairs to his accustomed place, and sitting down there, by that act resumes his kingly functions. He calls the bravest of his braves before him, who is immediately clothed and decorated with skins of animals suggestive of courage and strategy. He performs a dance amid the frenzied shouting of the multitude, after which the chief declares the festival at an end and harvest commenced."¹ Another writer, speaking of the Zulu festival of first-fruits as it was celebrated in the time of the ferocious despot Chaka, says that "at this period the chiefs are allowed to converse unreservedly with the king, speaking with great freedom, and in some measure to be dictatorial."² Again, another traveller, who visited the Zulus in the reign of King Panda, tells us that "in spite of the practice of the most absolute despotism there are three days in the year when the nation in its turn has the right to call the king to a severe account for his acts. It is at the general assembly of the warriors, when the maize is ripe, that the lively discussions take place and the questions are put to which the king must answer at once in a manner satisfactory to the people. I have then seen

License accorded to chiefs and others at this festival among the Zulus.

¹ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth* (London, 1893), pp. 136-138, from manuscript notes furnished by J. Sutton. Mr. Macdonald has described the custom more briefly in

his *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), p. 189.

² N. Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (London, 1836), ii. 292.

Traces of an annual abdication of Zulu kings, perhaps of a custom of burning them and scattering their ashes.

simple warriors come leaping from the ranks, assume the style of fluent and excessively energetic orators, and not only confront the fiery glare of Panda, but even attack him before everybody, blame his acts, call them infamous and base, compel him to vindicate his conduct, and then refute his vindication by dissecting it and exposing its falsehood, finally proceeding to haughty threats and winding up the harangue with a gesture of contempt."¹ Such liberties taken with the despotic Zulu kings seem to point to a time when they too, like the Pondo chiefs, abdicated or were deposed during the festival. Perhaps we may even go a step further. We have seen that on this occasion the Zulu king dances in a mantle of grass or of herbs and corn-leaves, which is afterwards burnt and the ashes scattered and trodden into the ground. This custom seems clearly intended to promote the fertility of the earth, and in earlier times the same end may have been compassed by burning the king himself and dispersing his ashes; for we have seen that a Bechuana tribe, of the same Bantu stock as the Zulus, were wont to sacrifice a human victim for the good of the crops and to scatter his ashes over the ground.² In this connexion it should be borne in mind that we have found independent evidence of a custom of putting the Zulu king to death whenever his bodily strength began to fail.³

¹ A. Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe* (Paris, 1847), ii. 237.

² Above, vol. i. p. 240.

³ See *The Dying God*, pp. 36 sq. On the Zulu festival of fist-fruits see also T. Arbousset et F. Daumas, *Voyage d'Exploration au Nord-Est de la Colonie du Cap de Bonne Espérance* (Paris, 1843), pp. 308 sq.; G. Fritsch, *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrikas* (Breslau, 1872), p. 143. Fritsch mentions that after executing a grotesque dance in the presence of the assembled multitude the king gives formal permission to eat of the new fruits by dashing a gourd or calabash to the ground. This ceremony of breaking the calabash is mentioned also by J. Shooter (*Kafirs of Natal*, p.

27), L. Grout (*Zulu-land*, p. 162), and Mr. Dudley Kidd (*The Essential Kafir*, p. 271). According to this last writer the calabash is filled with boiled specimens of the new fruits, and the king sprinkles the people with the cooked food, frequently spitting it out on them. Mr. Grout tells us (*l.c.*) that at the ceremony a bull is killed and its gall drunk by the king and the people. In killing it the warriors must use nothing but their naked hands. The flesh of the bull is given to the boys to eat what they like and burn the rest; the men may not taste it. See L. Grout, *op. cit.* p. 161. According to Shooter, two bulls are killed; the first is black, the second of another colour. The boys who eat the beef of the black bull may not

Among the Bechuanas it is a rule that before they partake of the new crops they must purify themselves. The purification takes place at the commencement of the new year on a day in January which is fixed by the chief. It begins in the great kraal of the tribe, where all the adult males assemble. Each of them takes in his hand leaves of a gourd called by the natives *lerotse* (described as something between a pumpkin and a vegetable marrow); and having crushed the leaves he anoints with the expressed juice his big toes and his navel; many people indeed apply the juice to all the joints of their body, but the better-informed say that this is a vulgar departure from ancient custom. After this ceremony in the great kraal every man goes home to his own kraal, assembles all the members of his family, men, women, and children, and smears them all with the juice of the *lerotse* leaves. Some of the leaves are also pounded, mixed with milk in a large wooden dish, and given to the dogs to lap up. Then the porridge plate of each member of the family is rubbed with the *lerotse* leaves. When this purification has been completed, but not before, the people are free to eat of the new crops. On the night after the purification every man was bound, as a matter of ritual, to sleep with his chief wife. If she had been unfaithful to him during the past year, it was incumbent on her to confess her sin before she fulfilled her part of the ceremony. Having confessed she was purified by a medicine-man, who fumigated her with the smoke produced by burning a bean plant. Thereupon husband and wife cut each other slightly under the navel, and each of them rubbed his or her blood, mixed with "medicine," into the other's wound. That completed the purification of the woman, and the pair might now proceed with the rest of the rite. Should a married man be from home at the time when the annual purification

Ceremonies
observed
by the
Bechuanas
before eat-
ing the new
fruits.

drink till the next morning, else the king would be defeated in war or visited with some personal misfortune. See Shooter, *op. cit.* pp. 26 sq. According to another account the sacrifice of the bull, performed by the warriors of a particular regiment with their bare hands, takes place several weeks before the festival of first-fruits, and

"the strength of the bull is supposed to enter into the king, thereby prolonging his health and strength." See D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and Amatongas*² (Edinburgh, 1875), p. 91. For a general account of the Caffre festival of first-fruits, see Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir* (London, 1904), pp. 270-272.

ceremony is performed, he is thought to be in a very sad plight; indeed his chances of surviving for another year are supposed to be small. On his return home, he dare not enter his own house, for he would pollute it, and if even his shadow were to fall on one of his children, the child would die. He must wait till his wife comes to him and brings him a calabash of water to drink, which is a sign that she has waited for his return to perform the rite of purification together. But if she does not bring the water, he knows that in his absence she has performed the rite with some other man, and it becomes necessary to purge her by means of fumigation and blood-letting, as described before. But even when that purgation is completed, husband and wife may not indulge in connubial intercourse for the rest of the year, that is, until the next annual purification has taken place. The Bechuanas think that "any breach of this rule will be punished with supernatural penalties—the husband, wife, or child will die."¹

Ceremonies
observed
by the
Matabele
at eating
the new
fruits.

Among the Matabele, another Bantu tribe of South Africa, no one might partake of the new fruits till the king had first tasted of them; any one who was known to have broken the law was instantly put to death. On this occasion the regiments assembled at Bulawayo, the capital, and danced in a great semicircle before the king, who occasionally joined in the dance. When he did so, the medicine-men and their satellites, armed with thorn-bushes, rushed about among the dancers and incited them to fresh

¹ Rev. W. C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Totemism of the Becwana," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 311-313. It is very remarkable that among several Bantu tribes the cohabitation of husband and wife is enjoined as a religious or magical rite on a variety of solemn occasions, such as after the death of a son or daughter, the circumcision of a child, the first menstruation of a daughter, the occupation of a new house or of a new village, etc. For examples see C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 58, 59, 60, 65, 67, 69, 74; H. A. Junod, "Les Conceptions physiologiques des Bantou

Sud-Africains et leurs tabous," *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, i. (1910) p. 148; Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 48, 144, 357, 363, 378, 428, etc.; *id.*, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 59, 61. Among the Baganda the act of stepping or leaping over a woman is regarded as equivalent to cohabitation with her, and is accepted as a ritual substitute for it (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 357 note). The ideas on which this custom of ceremonial cohabitation is based are by no means clear.

efforts by a vigorous application of the thorns to the bodies of such as seemed to flag. The king's wives also sang and danced before him in long lines, holding the marriage ring in their right hands and green boughs in their left. On the third day of the festival hundreds of oxen were sacrificed: the flesh and blood of the black or sacred cattle were converted into charms; while the carcasses of the rest were cut up and distributed among the people, who feasted upon them. The fourth day was specially set apart for the ceremony of the first-fruits. In the morning all the people went down to the river to wash, and on their return a witch-doctor or medicine-man took a dish of the new vegetables and corn; mixed with charms, and scattered the contents by handfuls among the crowd, who seized and ate them. After that the people were free to eat the new crops. According to one account, this festival of first-fruits was held at the first full moon which followed the summer solstice (the twenty-first of December in the southern hemisphere); according to another account, it took place a few days after the full moon of February, which marked the beginning of the Matabele year.¹

The Ovambo or, as they call themselves, the Ovakuan-jama, of South-West Africa, may not partake of the new fruits of the *omungo* tree, which ripen in February and from which an intoxicating beverage is extracted, until certain ceremonies have been performed. Among other things husband and wife mutually offer each other one of the fruits, make white strokes with chalk each on the brow, cheeks, and nose of the other, and accompany the action with the formal expression of good wishes. If this ceremony, which seems to mark the beginning of the New Year, were omitted, they believe that they would be attacked by a painful disease of the knee-joints which would cripple them.²

Ceremony observed by the Ovambo at eating the new fruits.

The Bororo Indians of Brazil think that it would be certain death to eat the new maize before it has been blessed

¹ Ch. Croonenberghs, S.J., "La fête de la Grande Danse dans le haut Zambeze," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xiv. (1882) pp. 230-234; L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), pp. 157 sq. The two

accounts supplement each other. I have combined features from both in the text.

² H. Tönjes, *Ovamboland, Land, Leute, Mission* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 200 sq.

Ceremony observed by the Bororo Indians before eating the new maize.

by the medicine-man. The ceremony of blessing it is as follows. The half-ripe husk is washed and placed before the medicine-man, who by dancing and singing for several hours, and by incessant smoking, works himself up into a state of ecstasy, whereupon he bites into the husk, trembling in every limb and uttering shrieks from time to time. A similar ceremony is performed whenever a large animal or a large fish is killed. The Bororo are firmly persuaded that were any man to touch unconsecrated maize or meat, before the ceremony had been completed, he and his whole tribe would perish.¹

The *busk* or festival of first-fruits among the Creek Indians of North America.

Amongst the Creek Indians of North America, the *busk* or festival of first-fruits was the chief ceremony of the year.² It was held in July or August, when the corn was ripe, and marked the end of the old year and the beginning of the new one. Before it took place, none of the Indians would eat or even handle any part of the new harvest. Sometimes each town had its own *busk*; sometimes several towns united to hold one in common. Before celebrating the *busk*, the people provided themselves with new clothes and new household utensils and furniture; they collected their old clothes and rubbish, together with all the remaining grain and other old provisions, cast them together in one

¹ V. Frič and P. Radin, "Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) p. 392.

² The ceremony is described independently by James Adair, *History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), pp. 96-111; W. Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (London, 1792), pp. 507 sq.; A. Hodgson, *Letters from North America* (London, 1824), i. 131 sq.; B. Hawkins, "Sketch of the Creek Country," in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, iii. (Savannah, 1848) pp. 75-78; A. A. McGillivray, in H. R. Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), v. 267 sq.; F. G. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians* (Philadelphia, 1909), pp. 112-131. The fullest descriptions are those

of Adair and Speck. In the text I have chiefly followed Adair, our oldest authority. A similar ceremony was observed by the Cherokees. See the description (from an unpublished MS. of J. H. Payne, author of *Home, Sweet Home*) in "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians, by William Bartram, 1789, with prefatory and supplementary notes by E. G. Squier," *Transactions of the American Ethnological Society*, vol. iii. Part i. (1853) p. 75. The Indians of Alabama also held a great festival at their harvest in July. They passed the day fasting, lit a new fire, purged themselves, and offered the first-fruits to their *Manitoo*: the ceremony ended with a religious dance. See Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), ii. 54. These Indians of Alabama were probably either the Creeks or the Cherokees.

common heap, and consumed them with fire.¹ As a preparation for the ceremony, all the fires in the village were extinguished, and the ashes swept clean away. In particular, the hearth or altar of the temple was dug up and the ashes carried out. Then the chief priest put some roots of the button-snake plant, with some green tobacco leaves and a little of the new fruits, at the bottom of the fireplace, which he afterwards commanded to be covered up with white clay, and wetted over with clean water. A thick arbour of green branches of young trees was then made over the altar.² Meanwhile the women at home were cleaning out their houses, renewing the old hearths, and scouring all the cooking vessels that they might be ready to receive the new fire and the new fruits.³ The public or sacred square was carefully swept of even the smallest crumbs of previous feasts, "for fear of polluting the first-fruit offerings." Also every vessel that had contained or had been used about any food during the expiring year was removed from the temple before sunset. Then all the men who were not known to have violated the law of the first-fruit offering and that of marriage during the year were summoned by a crier to enter the holy square and observe a solemn fast. But the women (except six old ones), the children, and all who had not attained the rank of warriors were forbidden to enter the square. Sentinels were also posted at the corners of the square to keep out all persons deemed impure and all animals. A strict fast was then observed for two nights and a day, the devotees drinking a bitter decoction of button-snake root "in order to vomit and purge their sinful bodies." That the people outside the square might also be purified, one of the old men laid down a quantity of green tobacco at a corner of the square; this was carried off by an old woman and distributed to the people without, who chewed and swallowed it "in order to afflict their souls." During this general fast, the women, children, and men of

Fast and
purgator

¹ W. Bartram, *Travels*, p. 507.

² So amongst the Cherokees, according to J. H. Payne, an arbour of green boughs was made in the sacred square; then "a beautiful bushy-topped shade-tree was cut down close to the roots, and planted in the very centre of the

sacred square. Every man then provided himself with a green bough."

³ So Adair. Bartram, on the other hand, as we have seen, says that the people provided themselves with new household utensils.

New fire
made by
friction.

weak constitution were allowed to eat after mid-day, but not before. On the morning when the fast ended, the women brought a quantity of the old year's food to the outside of the sacred square. These provisions were then fetched in and set before the famished multitude, but all traces of them had to be removed before noon. When the sun was declining from the meridian, all the people were commanded by the voice of a crier to stay within doors, to do no bad act, and to be sure to extinguish and throw away every spark of the old fire. Universal silence now reigned. Then the high priest made the new fire by the friction of two pieces of wood, and placed it on the altar under the green arbour. This new fire was believed to atone for all past crimes except murder. Next a basket of new fruits was brought; the high priest took out a little of each sort of fruit, rubbed it with bear's oil, and offered it, together with some flesh, "to the bountiful holy spirit of fire, as a first-fruit offering, and an annual oblation for sin." He also consecrated the sacred emetics (the button-snake root and the cassina or black-drink) by pouring a little of them into the fire. The persons who had remained outside now approached, without entering, the sacred square; and the chief priest thereupon made a speech, exhorting the people to observe their old rites and customs, announcing that the new divine fire had purged away the sins of the past year, and earnestly warning the women that, if any of them had not extinguished the old fire, or had contracted any impurity, they must forthwith depart, "lest the divine fire should spoil both them and the people." Some of the new fire was then set down outside the holy square; the women carried it home joyfully, and laid it on their unpolluted hearths. When several towns had united to celebrate the festival, the new fire might thus be carried for several miles. The new fruits were then dressed on the new fires and eaten with bear's oil, which was deemed indispensable. At one point of the festival the men rubbed the new corn between their hands, then on their faces and breasts.¹ During the festival which followed, the warriors, dressed in their wild martial array, their heads covered with white down and carrying white

¹ B. Hawkins, "Sketch," etc., p. 76.

feathers in their hands, danced round the sacred arbour, under which burned the new fire. The ceremonies lasted eight days, during which the strictest continence was practised. Towards the conclusion of the festival the warriors fought a mock battle; then the men and women together, in three circles, danced round the sacred fire. Lastly, all the people smeared themselves with white clay and bathed in running water. They came out of the water believing that no evil could now befall them for what they had done amiss in the past. So they departed in joy and peace.

Ceremonies of the same general type are still annually observed by the Yuchi Indians of Oklahoma, who belong to the Creek nation but speak a different language. The rites are said to have been instituted by the Sun. They are solemnised in the public square, and are timed so as to coincide with the ripening of the corn, which usually takes place about the middle or early part of July. Continence and abstinence from salt are prescribed during their celebration, and all the men must fast for twelve hours before they take the emetic. A sacred new fire is kindled by striking two stones against each other, after which all the males are scarified or scratched by an official on the arm or breast, so as to let blood flow and drip on the ground of the public square. This bleeding of the men is said to be symbolical of the origin of the Yuchi people; for the first Yuchi sprang from some drops of blood which the mother of the Sun let fall on earth at one of her monthly periods. Hence the Yuchi call themselves the Children of the Sun. The solemn rite of scratching is followed by the no less solemn rite of vomiting. This also was instituted by the Sun. He taught the Indians to steep the button-snake root and the red root in water and to drink the decoction, in order that they might vomit and so purify their bodies against sickness during the ensuing year. They think that if they did not thus purge themselves before eating the new corn, they would fall sick. The chief of the town is charged with the solemn duty of preparing the nauseous concoction, and he is assisted by four boys who have been initiated into the mysteries. The pots containing the stuff are decorated on the rim with a pattern representing the sun, and they stand east of the fire near

Festival
the new
fruits
among t
Yuchi
Indians.

the middle of the public square. The order of drinking is regulated by the rank of the drinkers. When the sun is about the zenith, the four noblest come forward, face eastward, and gulp down the vile but salutary potion; then they retire to their places and await the usual results. When they feel the inward workings of the draught, they step out of the square and discharge the contents of their stomachs in a place set apart for the purpose. They are followed by another party of four, and that by another, and so on, till all the men have thus purged themselves. The rite is repeated several times. When it is over, they all go to water and wash off the paint with which they were adorned; then returning to their places in the square they feast on the new corn. After a rest of some hours the men engage in ball play, not as a mere recreation but as a matter of ritual. Sides are chosen; every player is equipped with two rackets, and the aim of each side is to drive the ball through their opponents' goal, which consists of two uprights and a cross-piece. The two goals stand east and west of each other. During the following night dancing is kept up, and a general laxity, degenerating into debauchery, prevails; but parents and elders wink at the excesses of the young folk. Among the dances are some in which the dancers mimic the motions and cries of their totemic animals, such as ducks, buzzards, rabbits, fish, buffaloes, chickens, and owls.¹

Game of
ball.

Green Corn
Dance
among the
Seminole
Indians.

To this day, also, the remnant of the Seminole Indians of Florida, a people of the same stock as the Creeks,² hold an annual purification and festival called the Green Corn Dance, at which the new corn is eaten. On the evening of the first day of the festival they quaff a nauseous "Black Drink," as it is called, which acts both as an emetic and a purgative; they believe that he who does not drink of this liquor cannot safely eat the new green corn, and besides that he will be sick at some time in the year. While the liquor is being drunk, the dancing begins, and the medicine-men join in it. Next day they eat of the green corn; the following

¹ F. G. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians* (Philadelphia, 1909), pp. 86-89, 105-107, 112-131.

Naturvölker, iii. (Leipsic, 1862) p. 42; A. S. Gatschet, *A Migration Legend of the Creek Indians*, i. (Philadelphia, 1884) pp. 66 sqq.; *Totemism and Exogamy*, iii. 167.

² Th. Waitz, *Anthropologie der*

day they fast, probably from fear of polluting the sacred food in their stomachs by contact with common food ; but the third day they hold a great feast.¹ Further, the Natchez Indians, another tribe of the same stock, who used to inhabit a district on the lower course and eastern bank of the Mississippi, ate the new corn sacramentally at a great festival which has been fully described by Du Pratz, the French historian of Louisiana. As his work is probably not easily accessible to many of my readers, I shall perhaps consult their convenience by extracting his description entire. The Natchez, he tells us, began their year in March and divided it into thirteen moons. Their sixth moon, which answered to our August, was the Mulberry Moon, and the seventh was the moon of Maize or Great Corn. "This feast is beyond dispute the most solemn of all. It principally consists in eating in common, and in a religious manner, of new corn, which had been sown expressly with that design, with suitable ceremonies. This corn is sown upon a spot of ground never before cultivated ; which ground is dressed and prepared by the warriors alone, who also are the only persons that sow the corn, weed it, reap it, and gather it. When this corn is near ripe, the warriors fix on a place proper for the general feast, and close adjoining to that they form a round granary, the bottom and sides of which are of cane ; this they fill with the corn, and when they have finished the harvest, and covered the granary, they acquaint the Great Sun,² who appoints the day for the general feast. Some days before the feast, they build huts for the Great Sun, and for all the other families, round the granary, that of the Great Sun being raised upon a mound of earth about two feet high. On the feast-day the whole nation set out from their village at sun-rising, leaving behind only the aged and infirm that are not able to travel, and a few warriors, who are to carry the Great Sun on a litter upon their shoulders.

Festival
of the
new corn
among the
Natchez
Indians.

¹ C. MacCauley, "Seminole Indians of Florida," *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1887), pp. 522 sq.

were called Suns and were connected with the head chief or Great Sun, who bore on his breast an image of the sun and claimed to be descended from the luminary. See Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), i. 42.

² That is, the grand chief of the nation. All the chiefs of the Natchez

The seat of this litter is covered with several deer-skins, and to its four sides are fastened four bars which cross each other, and are supported by eight men, who at every hundred paces transfer their burden to eight other men, and thus successively transport it to the place where the feast is celebrated, which may be near two miles from the village. About nine o'clock the Great Sun comes out of his hut dressed in the ornaments of his dignity, and being placed in his litter, which has a canopy at the head formed of flowers, he is carried in a few minutes to the sacred granary, shouts of joy re-echoing on all sides. Before he alights he makes the tour of the whole place deliberately, and when he comes before the corn, he salutes it thrice with the words *hoo, hoo, hoo*, lengthened and pronounced respectfully. The salutation is repeated by the whole nation, who pronounce the word *hoo* nine times distinctly, and at the ninth time he alights and places himself on his throne.

New fire
made by
friction.

“Immediately after they light a fire by rubbing two pieces of wood violently against each other, and when everything is prepared for dressing the corn, the chief of war, accompanied by the warriors belonging to each family, presents himself before the throne, and addresses the Sun in these words, ‘Speak, for I hear thee.’ The sovereign then rises up, bows towards the four quarters of the world, and advancing to the granary, lifts his eyes and hands to heaven, and says, ‘Give us corn’: upon which the great chief of war, the princes and princesses, and all the men, thank him separately by pronouncing the word *hoo*. The corn is then distributed, first to the female Suns, and then to all the women, who run with it to their huts, and dress it with the utmost dispatch. When the corn is dressed in all the huts, a plate of it is put into the hands of the Great Sun, who presents it to the four quarters of the world, and then says to the chief of war, ‘Eat’; upon this signal the warriors begin to eat in all the huts; after them the boys of whatever age, excepting those who are on the breast; and last of all the women. When the warriors have finished their repast, they form themselves into two choirs before the huts, and sing war songs for half an hour; after which the chief of war, and all the warriors in succession, recount their brave

exploits, and mention, in a boasting manner, the number of enemies they have slain. The youths are next allowed to harangue, and each tells in the best manner he can, not what he has done, but what he intends to do; and if his discourse merits approbation, he is answered by a general *hoo*; if not, the warriors hang down their heads and are silent.

“This great solemnity is concluded with a general dance Torchlight dance. by torch-light. Upwards of two hundred torches of dried canes, each of the thickness of a child, are lighted round the place, where the men and women often continue dancing till daylight; and the following is the disposition of their dance. A man places himself on the ground with a pot covered with a deer-skin, in the manner of a drum, to beat time to the dancers; round him the women form themselves into a circle, not joining hands, but at some distance from each other; and they are inclosed by the men in another circle, who have in each hand a chichicois, or calabash, with a stick thrust through it to serve for a handle. When the dance begins, the women move round the men in the centre, from left to right, and the men contrariwise from right to left, and they sometimes narrow and sometimes widen their circles. In this manner the dance continues without intermission the whole night, new performers successively taking the place of those who are wearied and fatigued.

“Next morning no person is seen abroad before the Game of ball. Great Sun comes out of his hut, which is generally about nine o'clock, and then upon a signal made by the drum, the warriors make their appearance distinguished into two troops, by the feathers which they wear on their heads. One of these troops is headed by the Great Sun, and the other by the chief of war, who begin a new diversion by tossing a ball of deer-skin stuffed with Spanish beard from the one to the other. The warriors quickly take part in the sport, and a violent contest ensues which of the two parties shall drive the ball to the hut of the opposite chief. The diversion generally lasts two hours, and the victors are allowed to wear the feathers of superiority till the following year, or till the next time they play at the ball. After this the warriors perform the war dance; and last of all they go and bathe;

an exercise which they are very fond of when they are heated or fatigued.

"The rest of that day is employed as the preceding ; for the feast holds as long as any of the corn remains. When it is all eat up, the Great Sun is carried back in his litter, and they all return to the village, after which he sends the warriors to hunt both for themselves and him."¹

Ceremonies
observed
by the
Salish and
Tinneh
Indians
before they
eat the first
wild berries
or roots of
the season.

Even tribes which do not till the ground sometimes observe analogous ceremonies when they gather the first wild fruits or dig the first roots of the season. Thus among the Salish and Tinneh Indians of North-West America, "before the young people eat the first berries or roots of the season, they always addressed the fruit or plant, and begged for its favour and aid. In some tribes regular First-fruit ceremonies were annually held at the time of picking the wild fruit or gathering the roots, and also among the salmon-eating tribes when the run of the 'sockeye' salmon began. These ceremonies were not so much thanksgivings, as performances to ensure a plentiful crop or supply of the particular object desired, for if they were not properly and reverently carried out there was danger of giving offence to the 'spirits' of the objects, and being deprived of them." For example, these Indians are fond of the young shoots or suckers of the wild raspberry, and they observe the following ceremony at gathering the first of them in season. "When the shoots are ready to pick, that is, when they are about six or eight inches above the ground, the chief, or directing elder of the community, instructs his wife or his

¹ Le Page Du Pratz, *History of Louisiana, or of the western parts of Virginia and Carolina*, translated from the French, New Edition (London, 1774), pp. 338-341. See also J. R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley* (Washington, 1911), pp. 110 *sqq.*, where the passage of Du Pratz is translated in full from the original French. From Mr. Swanton's translation it appears that the English version of Du Pratz, which I have quoted in the text, is a good deal abridged. On the festival of first-fruits among the Natchez see also *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, Nouvelle Édi-

tion, vii. (Paris, 1781) p. 19; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), vi. 183; De Tonti, "Relation de la Louisiane et du Mississippi," *Recueil de Voyages au Nord*, v. (Amsterdam, 1734) p. 122; Le Petit, "Relation des Natchez," *ibid.* ix. 13 *sq.* (reprint of the account in the *Lettres édifiantes* cited above); Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), i. 43. According to Charlevoix, Le Petit, and Bossu the festival fell in July. For Chateaubriand's description of the custom, see below, pp. 135 *sqq.*

daughters to pluck a small bundle of these and prepare them for eating. This they do, using a new pot or kettle for cooking them in. In the meantime all the settlement comes together to take part in the ceremony. They stand in a great circle, the presiding chief, elder, or medicine-man as the case may be, and his assistants being in their midst. Whoever is conducting the ceremony now silently invokes the spirit of the plants, the tenor of his prayer being that it will be propitious to them and grant them a good supply of the suckers. While the invocation is being made all in the circle must keep their eyes reverently closed, this being an essential part in all such ceremonies, the non-observance of which would anger the spirits and cause them to withhold the favours sought. To ensure this being strictly done, the assisting elders are armed with long wands with which they strike any person found opening his eyes during the prayer. After this part of the ceremony is over the cooked suckers are handed to the presiding officer in a newly carved dish, and a small portion is given to each person present, who reverently and decorously eats it. This brings the ceremony to a close. Later, when the berries of this plant are ripe, a second and similar ceremony takes place." ¹

The Thompson Indians of British Columbia cook and eat the sunflower root (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*, Nutt.), but they used to regard it as a mysterious being, and observed a number of taboos in connexion with it; for example, women who were engaged in digging or cooking the root must practise continence, and no man might come near the oven where the women were baking the root. When young people ate the first berries, roots, or other products of the season, they addressed a prayer to the Sunflower-Root as follows: "I inform thee that I intend to eat thee. Mayest thou always help me to ascend, so that I may always be able to reach the tops of mountains, and may I never be clumsy! I ask this from thee, Sunflower-Root. Thou art the greatest of all in mystery." To omit this prayer would make the eater lazy and cause him to sleep long in the

Ceremonies
observed
by the
Thompson
Indians
before they
eat the first
wild berries
or roots of
the season.

¹ C. Hill-Tout, *The Far West, the Home of the Salish and Déné* (London, 1907), pp. 168-170.

morning. Again, when the first tobacco of the season was gathered and smoked for the first time, the inhabitants of each lodge among the Thompson Indians observed the following ceremony. An elderly man assembled all the inmates, often outside the lodge and generally after sunset, and caused all the adult men and women, who were in the habit of smoking, to sit down in a circle, while he stood in the middle. Sometimes he made a long speech to the people, but as a rule he simply said, "Be it known to you that we will cut up the chief," meaning by the chief the tobacco. So saying he cut up some of the tobacco, and after mixing it with bearberry leaves he filled a large pipe, lighted it, and handed it to each person, following the sun's course. Everybody took one whiff, and holding up his or her hands, the palms close together, blew the smoke downwards between the fingers and over the breast; and as the smoke descended, he crossed his hands on his breast, and rubbing his chest and shoulders with both hands, as if he were rubbing the smoke in, he prayed: "Lengthen my breath, chief, so that I may never be sick, and so that I may not die for a long time to come." By the chief he meant the tobacco. When every one had had his whiff, the tobacco was cut up small and a piece given to each person.¹

The ceremonies observed by savages at eating the first fruits of any crop seem to be based on the idea that the plant or tree is animated by a spirit, who must be propitiated before it is safe to partake of the fruit.

These customs of the Thompson and other Indian tribes of North-West America are instructive, because they clearly indicate the motive, or at least one of the motives, which underlies the ceremonies observed at eating the first fruits of the season. That motive in the case of these Indians is simply a belief that the plant itself is animated by a conscious and more or less powerful spirit, who must be propitiated before the people can safely partake of the fruits or roots which are supposed to be part of his body. Now if this is true of wild fruits and roots, we may infer with some probability that it is also true of cultivated fruits and roots, such as yams, and in particular that it holds good of the cereals, such as wheat, barley, oats, rice, and maize. In all cases it seems reasonable to infer that the scruples which

¹ J. Teit, *The Thompson Indians of the American Museum of Natural British Columbia*, p. 349 (*The Jesup History*, April, 1900).
North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of

savages manifest at eating the first fruits of any crop, and the ceremonies which they observe before they overcome their scruples, are due at least in large measure to a notion that the plant or tree is animated by a spirit or even a deity, whose leave must be obtained, or whose favour must be sought before it is possible to partake with safety of the new crop. This indeed is plainly affirmed of the Aino : they call the millet "the divine cereal," "the cereal deity," and they pray to and worship him before they will eat of the cakes made from the new millet.¹ And even where the indwelling divinity of the first fruits is not expressly affirmed, it appears to be implied both by the solemn preparations made for eating them and by the danger supposed to be incurred by persons who venture to partake of them without observing the prescribed ritual. In all such cases, accordingly, we may not improperly describe the eating of the new fruits as a sacrament or communion with a deity, or at all events with a powerful spirit.

Among the usages which point to this conclusion are the custom of employing either new or specially reserved vessels to hold the new fruits,² and the practice of purifying the persons of the communicants and even the houses and streets of the whole town, before it is lawful to engage in the solemn act of communion with the divinity.³ Of all the modes of purification adopted on these occasions none perhaps brings out the sacramental virtue of the rite so clearly as the Creek and Seminole practice of taking a purgative before swallowing the new corn. The intention is thereby to prevent the sacred food from being polluted by contact with common food in the stomach of the eater. For the same reason Catholics partake of the Eucharist fasting ; and among the pastoral Masai of Eastern Africa the young warriors, who live on meat and milk exclusively, are obliged to eat nothing but milk for so many days and then nothing but meat for so many more, and before they pass from the one food to the other they must make sure that none of the old food remains in their stomachs ; this they do by swallowing a very powerful

The sanctity of the new fruits indicated in various ways.

Care taken to prevent the contact of sacred and profane food in the stomach of the eater.

¹ See above, p. 52.

² See above, pp. 50, 53, 65, 66, 72, 81.

³ See above, pp. 59, 60, 63, 69 *sq.*, 71, 73, 75 *sq.*, 82.

Contact between certain foods in the stomach of the eater forbidden.

purgative and emetic.¹ Similarly, among the Suk, a tribe of British East Africa, no one may partake of meat and milk on the same day, and if he has chewed raw millet he is forbidden to drink milk for seven days.² Among the Wataturu, another people of Eastern Africa akin to the Masai, a warrior who had eaten antelope's flesh might not drink of milk on the same day.³ Similarly among the Central Esquimaux the rules prohibiting contact between venison and the flesh of marine animals are very strict. The Esquimaux themselves say that the goddess Sedna dislikes the deer, and therefore they may not bring that animal into contact with her favourites, the sea beasts. Hence the meat of the whale, the seal, or the walrus may not be eaten on the same day with venison. Both sorts of meat may not even lie on the floor of the hut or behind the lamps at the same time. If a man who has eaten venison in the morning happens to enter a hut in which the flesh of seal is being cooked, he is allowed to eat venison on the bed, but it must be wrapt up before being carried into the hut, and he must take care to keep clear of the floor. Before changing from one food to the other the Esquimaux must wash themselves.⁴ Again, just as the Esquimaux think that their

¹ Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land* (London, 1885), p. 430; P. Reichard, *Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipsic, 1892), p. 288; O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle* (Berlin, 1894), p. 162; M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1904), p. 33; M. Weiss, *Die Völkerstämme im Norden Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Berlin, 1910), p. 380. However, the motive which underlies the taboo appears to be a fear of injuring by sympathetic magic the cows from which the milk is drawn. See my essay "Folk-lore in the Old Testament," in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), pp. 164 sq. According to Reichard the warriors may partake of honey both with meat and with milk. Thomson does not mention honey and speaks of a purgative only. The periods during which meat and milk are alternately consumed vary, according to Reichard, from twelve to fifteen days. We may conjecture, therefore, that two of them,

making up a complete cycle, correspond to a lunar month, with reference to which the diet is perhaps determined.

² M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk, their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1911), p. 9. In both cases the motive, as with the Masai, is probably a fear of injuring the cattle, and especially of causing the cows to lose their milk. This is confirmed by other taboos of the same sort observed by the Suk. Thus they think that to eat the flesh of a certain forest pig would cause the cattle of the eater to run dry, and that if a rich man ate fish his cows would give no milk. See M. W. H. Beech, *op. cit.* p. 10.

³ O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle* (Berlin, 1894), p. 171.

⁴ Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 595; *id.*, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural*

goddess would be offended if venison met seal or whale or walrus meat in the eater's stomach, so the Melanesians of Florida, one of the Solomon Islands, believe that if a man who has eaten pork or fish or shell-fish or the flesh of a certain sort of cuscus were to enter a garden immediately afterwards, the ghosts who preside over the garden and cause the fruits to grow would be angry and the crop would consequently suffer; but three or four days after partaking of such victuals, when the food has quite left his stomach, he may enter the garden without offence to the ghosts or injury to the crop.¹ In like manner the ancient Greeks, of whose intellectual kinship with savages like the Esquimaux and the Melanesians we have already met with many proofs, laid it down as a rule that a man who had partaken of the black ram offered to Pelops at Olympia might not enter into the temple of Zeus, and that persons who had sacrificed to Telephus at Pergamus might not go up to the temple of Aesculapius until they had washed themselves,² just as the Esquimaux who have eaten venison must wash before they may partake of seal or whale or walrus meat. Again, at Lindus in Rhodes there was a sanctuary of some god or hero unknown into which no one who had partaken of goat's flesh or peas-pudding might enter for three days, and no one who had eaten cheese might enter for one day.³ The prescribed interval was probably calculated to allow the obnoxious food to pass out of the body of the eater before he entered into the presence of the deity, who for some reason or other cherished an antipathy to these particular viands. At Castabus in the Carian Chersonese there was a sanctuary of Hemithea, which no one might approach who had either eaten pork or touched a pig.⁴

In some of the festivals which we have examined, as

History, vol. xv. part i. (New York, 1901) pp. 122-124. For more details see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 208 sqq.

¹ Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 134.

² Pausanias, v. 13. 3. We may assume, though Pausanias does not expressly say so, that persons who sacrificed to Telephus partook of the sacrifice.

³ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 576 (vol. ii. p. 267); Ch. Michel, *Revue d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 723, p. 622. Further, no one who had suffered a domestic bereavement might enter the sanctuary for forty days. Hence the pollution of death was clearly deemed more virulent, or at all events more lasting, than the pollution of food.

⁴ Diodorus Siculus, v. 62. 5.

The sacrament of first-fruits sometimes combined with a sacrifice of them to gods or spirits.

in the Cheremiss, Buru, Cham, Ewe, and Creek ceremonies, the sacrament of first-fruits is combined with a sacrifice or presentation of them to gods or spirits,¹ and in course of time the sacrifice of first-fruits tends to throw the sacrament into the shade, if not to supersede it. The mere fact of offering the first-fruits to the gods or spirits comes now to be thought a sufficient preparation for eating the new corn ; the higher powers having received their share, man is free to enjoy the rest. This mode of viewing the new fruits implies that they are regarded no longer as themselves instinct with divine life, but merely as a gift bestowed by the gods upon man, who is bound to express his gratitude and homage to his divine benefactors by returning to them a portion of their bounty. More examples of the sacrifice, as distinct from sacrament, of first-fruits will be given presently.²

§ 2. *Eating the God among the Aztecs*

Aztec custom of eating sacramentally a dough image of the god Huitzilopochtli or Vitzilipuztli as a mode of communion with the deity.

The custom of eating bread sacramentally as the body of a god was practised by the Aztecs before the discovery and conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. Twice a year, in May and December, an image of the great Mexican god Huitzilopochtli or Vitzilipuztli was made of dough, then broken in pieces, and solemnly eaten by his worshippers. The May ceremony is thus described by the historian Acosta : " The Mexicans in the month of May made their principal feast to their god Vitzilipuztli, and two days before this feast, the virgins whereof I have spoken (the which were shut up and secluded in the same temple and were as it were religious women) did mingle a quantity of the seed of beets with roasted maize, and then they did mould it with honey, making an idol of that paste in bigness like to that of wood, putting instead of eyes grains of green glass, of blue or white ; and for teeth grains of maize set forth with all the ornament and furniture that I have said. This being finished, all the noblemen came and brought it an exquisite and rich garment, like unto that of the idol, wherewith they did attire it. Being thus clad and deckt, they did set it in an azured chair and in a litter to carry it on their shoulders.

¹ See above, pp. 51 *sq.*, 54, 58, 60 *sq.*, 64, 74. ² See below, pp. 109 *sqq.*

The morning of this feast being come, an hour before day all the maidens came forth attired in white, with new ornaments, the which that day were called the Sisters of their god Vitzilipuztli, they came crowned with garlands of maize roasted and parched, being like unto azahar or the flower of orange; and about their necks they had great chains of the same, which went bauldrickwise under their left arm. Their cheeks were dyed with vermilion, their arms from the elbow to the wrist were covered with red parrots' feathers." Young men, dressed in red robes and crowned like the virgins with maize, then carried the idol in its litter to the foot of the great pyramid-shaped temple, up the steep and narrow steps of which it was drawn to the music of flutes, trumpets, cornets, and drums. "While they mounted up the idol all the people stood in the court with much reverence and fear. Being mounted to the top, and that they had placed it in a little lodge of roses which they held ready, presently came the young men, which strewed many flowers of sundry kinds, wherewith they filled the temple both within and without. This done, all the virgins came out of their convent, bringing pieces of paste compounded of beets and roasted maize, which was of the same paste whereof their idol was made and compounded, and they were of the fashion of great bones. They delivered them to the young men, who carried them up and laid them at the idol's feet, wherewith they filled the whole place that it could receive no more. They called these morsels of paste the flesh and bones of Vitzilipuztli. Having laid abroad these bones, presently came all the ancients of the temple, priests, Levites, and all the rest of the ministers, according to their dignities and antiquities (for herein there was a strict order amongst them) one after another, with their veils of diverse colours and works, every one according to his dignity and office, having garlands upon their heads and chains of flowers about their necks; after them came their gods and goddesses whom they worshipped, of diverse figures, attired in the same livery; then putting themselves in order about those morsels and pieces of paste, they used certain ceremonies with singing and dancing. By means whereof they were blessed and consecrated for the flesh and bones of this idol. This

ceremony and blessing (whereby they were taken for the flesh and bones of the idol) being ended, they honoured those pieces in the same sort as their god.

Eating the
flesh and
bones of
the god
Vitzilipuztli
sacra-
mentally.

“ Then come forth the sacrificers, who began the sacrifice of men in the manner as hath been spoken, and that day they did sacrifice a greater number than at any other time, for that it was the most solemn feast they observed. The sacrifices being ended, all the young men and maids came out of the temple attired as before, and being placed in order and rank, one directly against another, they danced by drums, the which sounded in praise of the feast, and of the idol which they did celebrate. To which song all the most ancient and greatest noblemen did answer dancing about them, making a great circle, as their use is, the young men and maids remaining always in the midst. All the city came to this goodly spectacle, and there was a commandment very strictly observed throughout all the land, that the day of the feast of the idol of Vitzilipuztli they should eat no other meat but this paste, with honey, whereof the idol was made. And this should be eaten at the point of day, and they should drink no water nor any other thing till after noon : they held it for an ill sign, yea, for sacrilege to do the contrary : but after the ceremonies ended, it was lawful for them to eat anything. During the time of this ceremony they hid the water from their little children, admonishing all such as had the use of reason not to drink any water ; which, if they did, the anger of God would come upon them, and they should die, which they did observe very carefully and strictly. The ceremonies, dancing, and sacrifice ended, they went to unclothe themselves, and the priests and superiors of the temple took the idol of paste, which they spoiled of all the ornaments it had, and made many pieces, as well of the idol itself as of the truncheons which they consecrated, and then they gave them to the people in manner of a communion, beginning with the greater, and continuing unto the rest, both men, women, and little children, who received it with such tears, fear, and reverence as it was an admirable thing, saying that they did eat the flesh and bones of God, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sick folks demanded

thereof for them, and carried it with great reverence and veneration."¹

From this interesting passage we learn that the ancient Mexicans, even before the arrival of Christian missionaries, were fully acquainted with the theological doctrine of transubstantiation and acted upon it in the solemn rites of their religion. They believed that by consecrating bread their priests could turn it into the very body of their god, so that all who thereupon partook of the consecrated bread entered into a mystic communion with the deity by receiving a portion of his divine substance into themselves. The doctrine of transubstantiation, or the magical conversion of bread into flesh, was also familiar to the Aryans of ancient India long before the spread and even the rise of Christianity. The Brahmans taught that the rice-cakes offered in sacrifice were substitutes for human beings, and that they were actually converted into the real bodies of men by the manipulation of the priest. We read that "when it (the rice-cake) still consists of rice-meal, it is the hair. When he pours water on it, it becomes skin. When he mixes it, it becomes flesh: for then it becomes consistent; and consistent also is the flesh. When it is baked, it becomes bone: for then it becomes somewhat hard; and hard is the bone. And when he is about to take it off (the fire) and sprinkles it with butter, he changes it into marrow. This is the completeness which they call the fivefold animal sacrifice."² These remarkable transformations, daily wrought by the priest, on the rice-wafer, were, however, nothing at all to those which the gods themselves accomplished when

The doctrine of transubstantiation or the magical conversion of bread into flesh recognised by the ancient Aztecs and Brahmans.

¹ J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v. ch. 24, vol. ii. pp. 356-360 (Hakluyt Society, London, 1880). I have modernised the old translator's spelling. Acosta's authority, which he followed without acknowledgment, was an anonymous writer of about the middle of the sixteenth century, whose manuscript, written in Spanish, was found in the library of the Franciscan monastery at Mexico in 1856. A French translation of it has been published. See *Manuscrit Ramirez, Histoire de l'Origine*

des Indiens qui habitent la Nouvelle-Espagne selon leurs traditions, publié par D. Charnay (Paris, 1903), pp. 149-154. Acosta's description is followed by A. de Herrera (*General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens (London, 1725-1726), iii. 213-215).

² *The Satapatha-Brâhmana*, translated by J. Eggeling, Part i. (Oxford, 1882) p. 51 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xii.).

they first instituted the rite. For the horse and the ox which they sacrificed became a *bos gaurus* and a gayal respectively ; the sheep was turned into a camel ; and the goat was converted into a remarkable species of deer, enriched with eight legs, which slew lions and elephants.¹ On the whole it would seem that neither the ancient Hindoos nor the ancient Mexicans had much to learn from the most refined mysteries of Catholic theology.

The sacred food not to be defiled by contact with common food.

Now, too, we can perfectly understand why on the day of their solemn communion with the deity the Mexicans refused to eat any other food than the consecrated bread which they revered as the very flesh and bones of their God, and why up till noon they might drink nothing at all, not even water. They feared no doubt to defile the portion of God in their stomachs by contact with common things. A similar pious fear led the Creek and Seminole Indians, as we saw, to adopt the more thoroughgoing expedient of rinsing out their insides by a strong purgative before they dared to partake of the sacrament of first-fruits.² We can now also conjecture the reason why Zulu boys, after eating the flesh of the black bull at the feast of first-fruits, are forbidden to drink anything till the next day.³

Aztec custom of killing the god Huitzilopochtli in effigy and eating him afterwards.

At the festival of the winter solstice in December the Aztecs killed their god Huitzilopochtli in effigy first and ate him afterwards. As a preparation for this solemn ceremony an image of the deity in the likeness of a man was fashioned out of seeds of various sorts, which were kneaded into a dough with the blood of children. The bones of the god were represented by pieces of acacia wood. This image was placed on the chief altar of the temple, and on the day of the festival the king offered incense to it. Early next day it was taken down and set on its feet in a great hall. Then a priest, who bore the name and acted the part of the god Quetzalcoatl, took a flint-tipped dart and hurled it into the breast of the dough-image, piercing it through and through. This was called "killing the god Huitzilopochtli so that his body might be eaten." One of the priests cut out the heart of the image and gave it to the king to eat. The rest of

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 51 *sq.*, with the translator's note.

² See above, pp. 73 *sqq.*

³ Above, p. 68, note ².

the image was divided into minute pieces, of which every man great and small, down to the male children in the cradle, received one to eat. But no woman might taste a morsel. The ceremony was called *teoqualo*, that is, "god is eaten."¹

At another festival the Mexicans made little images like men, which stood for the cloud-capped mountains. These images were moulded of a paste of various seeds and were dressed in paper ornaments. Some people fashioned five, others ten, others as many as fifteen of them. Having been made, they were placed in the oratory of each house and worshipped. Four times in the course of the night offerings of food were brought to them in tiny vessels; and people sang and played the flute before them through all the hours of darkness. At break of day the priests stabbed the images with a weaver's instrument, cut off their heads, and tore out their hearts, which they presented to the master of the house on a green saucer. The bodies of the images were then eaten by all the family, especially by the servants, "in order that by eating them they might be preserved from certain distempers, to which those persons who were negligent of worship to those deities conceived themselves to be subject."² In some cities of Mexico, as in Tlacopan and Coyohuacan, an idol was fashioned out of grains of various kinds, and the warriors ate it in the belief that the sacred food would increase their forces fourfold when they marched to the fight.³ At certain festivals held thrice a year in Nicaragua all the men, beginning with the priests and chiefs, drew blood from their tongues and genital organs with sharp knives of flint, allowed it to drip on some

Mexican custom of eating images of dough.

¹ H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (London, 1875-1876), iii. 297-300 (after Torquemada); F. S. Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, translated by Ch. Cullen (London, 1807), i. 309 *sqq.*; B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, traduite et annotée par D. Jourdanet et R. Siméon (Paris, 1880), pp. 203 *sq.*; J. G. Müller, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Urreligionen* (Bâle, 1867), p. 605; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859),

iii. 531-534.

² F. S. Clavigero, *op. cit.* i. 311; B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 74, 156 *sq.*; J. G. Müller, *op. cit.* p. 606; H. H. Bancroft, *op. cit.* iii. 316; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 535. This festival took place on the last day of 16th month (which extended from 23rd December to 11th January). At another festival the Mexicans made the semblance of a bone out of paste and ate it sacramentally as the bone of the god. See Sahagun, *op. cit.* p. 33.

³ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 539.

sheaves of maize, and then ate the bloody grain as a blessed food.¹

Mexican custom of eating a man as a human embodiment of the god Tetzcatlipoca.

But the Mexicans did not always content themselves with eating their gods in the outward and visible shape of bread or grain; it was not even enough that this material vehicle of the divine life should be kneaded and fortified with human blood. They craved, as it seems, after a closer union with the living god, and attained it by devouring the flesh of a real man, who, after he had paraded for a time in the trappings and received the honours of a god, was slaughtered and eaten by his cannibal worshippers. The deity thus consumed in effigy was Tetzcatlipoca, and the man chosen to represent him and die in his stead was a young captive of handsome person and illustrious birth. During his captivity the youth thus doomed to play the fatal part of divinity was allowed to range the streets of Mexico freely, escorted by a distinguished train, who paid him as much respect as if he had been indeed the god himself instead of only his living image. Twenty days before the festival at which the tragic mockery was to end, that he might taste all the joys of this transient world to which he must soon bid farewell, he received in marriage four women, from whom he parted only when he took his place in the last solemn procession. Arrived at the foot of the sacred pyramid on the top of which he was to die, the sacrificers saluted him and led him up the long staircase. On the summit five of them seized him and held him down on his back upon the sacrificial stone, while the high priest, after bowing to the god he was about to kill, cut open his breast and tore out the throbbing heart with the accustomed rites. But instead of being kicked down the staircase and sent rolling from step to step like the corpses of common victims, the body of the dead god was carried respectfully down, and his flesh, chopped up small, was distributed among the priests and nobles as a blessed food. The head, being severed from the trunk, was preserved in a sacred place along with the

¹ G. F. de Oviedo, *Histoire du Nicaragua* (Paris, 1840), p. 219. Oviedo's account is borrowed by A. de Herrera (*General History of the vast*

Continent and Islands of America, translated by Capt. John Stevens, iii. 301).

white and grinning skulls of all the other victims who had lived and died in the character of the god Tetzcatlipoca.¹

The custom of entering into communion with a god by eating of his effigy survived till lately among the Huichol Indians of Mexico. In a narrow valley, at the foot of a beetling crag of red rock, they have a small thatched temple of the God of fire, and here down to recent years stood a small image of the deity in human form roughly carved out of solidified volcanic ash. The idol was very dirty and smeared with blood, and in his right side was a hole, which owed its existence to the piety and devotion of his worshippers. For they believed that the power of healing and a knowledge of mysteries could be acquired by eating a little of the god's holy body, and accordingly shamans, or medicine-men, who desired to lay in a stock of these accomplishments, so useful in the exercise of their profession, were wont to repair to the temple, where, having deposited an offering of food or a votive bowl, they scraped off with their finger-nails some particles of the god's body and swallowed them. After engaging in this form of communion with the deity they had to abstain from salt and from all carnal converse with their wives for five months.² Again, the Malas, a caste of pariahs in Southern India, communicate with the goddess Sunkalamma by eating her effigy. The communion takes place at marriage. An image of the goddess in the form of a truncated cone is made out of rice and green gram cooked together, and it is decorated with a nose jewel, garlands, and other religious symbols. Offerings of rice, frankincense, camphor, and a coco-nut are then made to the image, and a ram or he-goat is sacrificed. After the sacrifice has been presented, all the persons assembled prostrate themselves in silence before the image, then they break it in pieces, and distributing the pieces among themselves they swallow them. In this way they are, no doubt, believed to absorb the divine

Com-
munion
with a god
by eating
of his effigy
among the
Huichol
Indians of
Mexico
and the
Malas of
Southern
India.

¹ J. de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14, vol. ii. pp. 259 sqq. (Madrid, 1723); Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 510-512.

² C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), ii. 166-171. When Mr. Lumholtz revisited the temple in 1898, the idol had disappeared. It

has probably been since replaced by another. The custom of abstaining both from salt and from women as a mode of ceremonial purification is common among savage and barbarous peoples. See above, p. 75 (as to the Yuchi Indians), and *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 224 sqq.

Catholic custom of eating effigies of the Madonna.

essence of the goddess whose broken body has just passed into their stomachs.¹ In Europe the Catholic Church has resorted to similar means for enabling the pious to enjoy the ineffable privilege of eating the persons of the Infant God and his Mother. For this purpose images of the Madonna are printed on some soluble and harmless substance and sold in sheets like postage stamps. The worshipper buys as many of these sacred emblems as he has occasion for, and affixing one or more of them to his food swallows the bolus. The practice is not confined to the poor and ignorant. In his youth Count von Hoensbroech and his devout mother used thus to consume portions of God and his Mother with their meals.²

§ 3. *Many Manii at Aricia*

Loaves called *Maniae* baked at Aricia.

Woollen effigies dedicated at Rome to Mania, the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, at the Compitalia.

We are now able to suggest an explanation of the proverb "There are many Manii at Aricia."³ Certain loaves made in the shape of men were called by the Romans *maniae*, and it appears that this kind of loaf was especially made at Aricia.⁴ Now, Mania, the name of one of these loaves, was also the name of the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts,⁵ to whom woollen effigies of men and women were dedicated at the festival of the Compitalia. These effigies were hung at the doors of all the houses in Rome; one effigy was hung up for every free person in the house, and one effigy, of a different kind, for every slave. The reason was that on this day the ghosts of the dead were believed to be going about, and it was hoped that, either out of good nature or through simple inadvertence, they would carry off the effigies at the door instead of the living people

¹ E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), iv. 357 sq.

² Graf Paul von Hoensbroech, *14 Jahre Jesuit* (Leipsic, 1909-1910), i. 25 sq. The practice was officially sanctioned by a decree of the Inquisition, 29th July 1903.

³ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 22.

⁴ Festus, ed. C. O. Müller, pp.

128, 129, 145. The reading of the last passage is, however, uncertain ("*et Ariciae genus panni fieri; quod manici + appelletur*").

⁵ Varro, *De lingua latina*, ix. 61; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, iii. 41; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 7. 35; Festus, p. 128, ed. C. O. Müller. Festus speaks of the mother or grandmother of the *larvae*; the other writers speak of the mother of the *lares*.

in the house. According to tradition, these woollen figures were substitutes for a former custom of sacrificing human beings.¹ Upon data so fragmentary and uncertain, it is impossible to build with confidence; but it seems worth suggesting that the loaves in human form, which appear to have been baked at Aricia, were sacramental bread, and that in the old days, when the divine King of the Wood was annually slain, loaves were made in his image, like the paste figures of the gods in Mexico, India, and Europe, and were eaten sacramentally by his worshippers.² The Mexican sacraments in honour of Huitzilopochtli were also accompanied by the sacrifice of human victims. The tradition that the founder of the sacred grove at Aricia was a man named Manius, from whom many Manii were descended, would thus be an etymological myth invented to

The loaves at Aricia perhaps sacramental bread made in the likeness of the King of the Wood.

¹ Macrobius, *l.c.*; Festus, pp. 121, 239, ed. C. O. Müller. The effigies hung up for the slaves were called *pilae*, not *maniae*. *Pilae* was also the name given to the straw-men which were thrown to the bulls to gore in the arena. See Martial, *Epigr.* ii. 43. 5 *sq.*; Asconius, *In Cornel.* p. 55, ed. Kiessling and Schoell.

² The ancients were at least familiar with the practice of sacrificing images made of dough or other materials as substitutes for the animals themselves. It was a recognised principle that when an animal could not be easily obtained for sacrifice, it was lawful to offer an image of it made of bread or wax. See Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 116; compare Pausanias, x. 18. 5. Poor people who could not afford to sacrifice real animals offered dough images of them (Suidas, *s.v.* βούς ἔβδομος; compare Hesychius, *s.v.* βούς, ἔβδομος βούς). Hence bakers made a regular business of baking cakes in the likeness of all the animals which were sacrificed to the gods (Proculus, quoted and emended by Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 1079). When Cyzicus was besieged by Mithridates and the people could not procure a black cow to sacrifice at the rites of Persephone, they made a cow of dough and placed it at the altar (Plutarch,

Lucullus, 10). In a Boeotian sacrifice to Hercules, in place of the ram which was the proper victim, an apple was regularly substituted, four chips being stuck in it to represent legs and two to represent horns (Julius Pollux, i. 30 *sq.*). The Athenians are said to have once offered to Hercules a similar substitute for an ox (Zenobius, *Cent.* v. 22). And the Locrians, being at a loss for an ox to sacrifice, made one out of figs and sticks, and offered it instead of the animal (Zenobius, *Cent.* v. 5). At the Athenian festival of the Diasia cakes shaped like animals were sacrificed (Schol. on Thucydides, i. 126, p. 36, ed. Didot). We have seen above (p. 25) that the poorer Egyptians offered cakes of dough instead of pigs. The Cheremiss of Russia sometimes offer cakes in the shape of horses instead of the real animals. See P. v. Stenin, "Ein neuer Beitrag zur Ethnographie der Tscheremissen," *Globus*, lviii. (1890) pp. 203 *sq.* Similarly a North-American Indian dreamed that a sacrifice of twenty elans was necessary for the recovery of a sick girl; but the elans could not be procured, and the girl's parents were allowed to sacrifice twenty loaves instead. See *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 11 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

explain the name *maniae* as applied to these sacramental loaves. A dim recollection of the original connexion of the loaves with human sacrifices may perhaps be traced in the story that the effigies dedicated to Mania at the Compitalia were substitutes for human victims. The story itself, however, is probably devoid of foundation, since the practice of putting up dummies to divert the attention of ghosts or demons from living people is not uncommon. As the practice is both widely spread and very characteristic of the manner of thought of primitive man, who tries in a thousand ways to outwit the malice of spiritual beings, I may be pardoned for devoting a few pages to its illustration, even though in doing so I diverge somewhat from the strict line of argument. I would ask the reader to observe that the vicarious use of images, with which we are here concerned, differs wholly in principle from the sympathetic use of them which we examined before;¹ and that while the sympathetic use belongs purely to magic, the vicarious use falls within the domain of religion.

Practice of putting up dummies to divert the attention of ghosts or demons from living people.

Tibetan custom of putting effigies at the doors of houses to deceive demons.

The Tibetans stand in fear of innumerable earth-demons, all of whom are under the authority of Old Mother Khön-ma. This goddess, who may be compared to the Roman Mania, the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, is dressed in golden-yellow robes, holds a golden noose in her hand, and rides on a ram. In order to bar the dwelling-house against the foul fiends, of whom Old Mother Khön-ma is mistress, an elaborate structure somewhat resembling a chandelier is fixed above the door on the outside of the house. It contains a ram's skull, a variety of precious objects such as gold-leaf, silver, and turquoise, also some dry food, such as rice, wheat, and pulse, and finally images or pictures of a man, a woman, and a house. "The object of these figures of a man, wife, and house is to deceive the demons should they still come in spite of this offering, and to mislead them into the belief that the foregoing pictures are the inmates of the house, so that they may wreak their wrath on these bits of wood and so save the real human occupants." When all is ready, a priest prays to Old Mother Khön-ma that she would be pleased to accept these dainty offerings and to close the open

¹ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 55 sqq.

doors of the earth, in order that the demons may not come forth to infest and injure the household.¹

Further, it is often supposed that the spirits of persons who have recently departed this life are apt to carry off with them to the world of the dead the souls of their surviving relations. Hence the savage resorts to the device of making up of dummies or effigies which he puts in the way of the ghost, hoping that the dull-witted spirit will mistake them for real people and so leave the survivors in peace. Hence in Tahiti the priest who performed the funeral rites used to lay some slips of plantain leaf-stalk on the breast and under the arms of the corpse, saying, "There are your family, there is your child, there is your wife, there is your father, and there is your mother. Be satisfied yonder (that is, in the world of spirits). Look not towards those who are left in the world." This ceremony, we are told, was designed "to impart contentment to the departed, and to prevent the spirit from repairing to the places of his former resort, and so distressing the survivors."² When the Galelareese bury a corpse, they bury with it the stem of a banana-tree for company, in order that the dead person may not seek a companion among the living. Just as the coffin is being lowered into the earth, one of the bystanders steps up and throws a young banana-tree into the grave, saying, "Friend, you must miss your companions of this earth; here, take this as a comrade."³ In the Banks Islands, Melanesia, the ghost of a woman who has died in childbed cannot go away to Panoi or ghost-land if her child lives, for she cannot leave the baby behind. Hence to bilk her ghost they tie up a piece of banana-trunk loosely in leaves and lay it on her bosom in the grave. So away she goes, thinking she has her baby with her, and as she goes the banana-stalk keeps slipping about in the leaves, and she fancies it is the child stirring at her breast. Thus she is happy, till she comes to ghost-land and finds she has been deceived; for a baby of banana-stalk cannot pass

Effigies
buried with
the dead in
order to de-
ceive their
ghosts.

¹ L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet* (London, 1895), pp. 484-486.

² W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1832-1836), i. 402.

³ M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1895) p. 539.

muster among the ghosts. So back she comes tearing in grief and rage to look for the child ; but meantime the infant has been artfully removed to another house, where the dead mother cannot find it, though she looks for it everywhere.¹ In the Pelew Islands, when a woman has died in child-bed, her spirit comes and cries, "Give me the child!" So to beguile her they bury the stem of a young banana-tree with her body, cutting it short and laying it between her right arm and her breast.² The same device is adopted for the same purpose in the island of Timor.³ In like circumstances negroes of the Niger Delta force a piece of the stem of a plantain into the womb of the dead mother, in order to make her think that she has her babe with her and so to prevent her spirit from coming back to claim the living child.⁴ Among the Yorubas of West Africa, when one of twins dies, the mother carries about, along with the surviving child, a small wooden figure roughly fashioned in human shape and of the sex of the dead twin. This figure is intended not merely to keep the live child from pining for its lost comrade, but also to give the spirit of the dead child something into which it can enter without disturbing its little brother or sister.⁵ Among the Tschwi of West Africa a lady observed a sickly child with an image beside it which she took for a doll. But it was no doll, it was an effigy of the child's dead twin which was being kept near the survivor as a habitation for the little ghost, lest it should wander homeless and, feeling lonely, call its companion away after it along the dark road of death.⁶

At Onitsha, a town on the left bank of the Niger, a missionary once met a funeral procession which he describes as very singular. The real body had already been buried in the house, but a piece of wood in the form of a

Fictitious burials to divert the attention of demons from the real burials.

¹ Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melan- sians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 275.

² J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), i. 9.

³ W. M. Donselaar, "Aanteekeningen over het eiland Saleijer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, i. (1857) p. 290.

⁴ Le Comte C. N. de Cardi, "Juj laws and customs in the Niger Delta," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. (1899) p. 58.

⁵ A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1894), p. 80.

⁶ Miss Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 473.

sofa and covered up was being borne by two persons on their heads, attended by a procession of six men and six women. The men carried cutlasses and the women clapped their hands as they passed along each street, crying, "This is the dead body of him that is dead, and is gone into the world of spirits." Meantime the rest of the villagers had to keep indoors.¹ The sham corpse was probably intended as a lure to draw away prowling demons from the real body. So among the Angoni, who inhabit the western bank of Lake Nyassa, there is a common belief that demons hover about the dying and dead before burial in order to snatch away their souls to join their own evil order. Guns are fired and drums are beaten to repel these spiritual foes, but a surer way of baulking their machinations is to have a mock funeral and so mislead and confound them. A sham corpse is made up out of anything that comes to hand, and it is treated exactly as if it were what it pretends to be. This lay figure is then carried some distance to a grave, followed by a great crowd weeping and wailing as if their hearts would break, while the rub-a-dub of drums and the discharge of guns add to the uproar. Meantime the real corpse is being interred as quietly and stealthily as possible near the house. Thus the demons are baffled; for when the dummy corpse has been laid in the earth with every mark of respect, and the noisy crowd has dispersed, the fiends swoop down on the mock grave only to find a bundle of rushes or some such trash in it; but the true grave they do not know and cannot find.² Similarly among the Bakundu of the Cameroons two graves are always made, one in the hut of the deceased and another somewhere else, and no one knows where the corpse is really buried. The custom is apparently intended to guard the knowledge of the real grave from demons, who might make an ill use of the body, if not of the soul, of the departed.³ In like manner the Kamilaroi tribe of Australia are reported to make two graves, a real

¹ S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger* (London, 1859), pp. 250 sq.

² J. Macdonald, "East Central African Customs," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxii. (1893)

pp. 114 sq.; *id.*, *Myth and Religion* (London, 1893), pp. 155 sq. (from MS. notes of Dr. Elmslie).

³ B. Schwarz, *Kamerun* (Leipsic, 1886), pp. 256 sq.; E. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, xiii. 68 sq.

one and an empty one, for the purpose of cheating a malevolent spirit called Krooben.¹ So, too, some of the Nagas of Assam dig two graves, a sham grave made conspicuous on purpose to attract the notice of the evil spirits, and the real grave made inconspicuous to escape their attention: a figure is set up over the false grave.² Isis is said to have made many false graves of the dead Osiris in Egypt in order that his foe Typhon might not be able to find the true one.³ In Bombay, if a person dies on an unlucky day, a dough figure of a man is carried on the bier with him and burnt with his corpse. This is supposed to hinder a second death from occurring in the family,⁴ probably because the demons are thought to take the dough figure instead of a real person.

Effigies used to cure or prevent sickness by deluding the demons of disease or inducing them to accept the effigies instead of the persons.

Again, effigies are often employed as a means of preventing or curing sickness; the demons of disease either mistake the effigies for living people or are persuaded or compelled to enter them, leaving the real men and women well and whole.⁵ Thus the Alfoors of Minahassa, in Celebes, will sometimes transport a sick man to another house, while they leave on his bed a dummy made up of a pillow and clothes. This dummy the demon is supposed to mistake for the sick man, who consequently recovers.⁶ Cure or prevention of this sort seems to find especial favour with the Dyaks of Borneo. Thus, when an epidemic is raging among them, the Dyaks of the Katoengouw river set up wooden images at their doors in the hope that the demons of the plague may be deluded into carrying off the effigies instead of the people.⁷ Among the Oloh Ngadju of Borneo, when a sick man is supposed to be suffering from the assaults of a ghost, puppets of dough or rice-meal are made and thrown under

¹ J. Fraser, "The Aborigines of New South Wales," *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, xvi. (1882) p. 229; A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), p. 467.

² This I learned from Dr. Burton Brown (formerly of 3 Via Venti Setembri, Rome), who lived for some time among the Nagas.

³ Strabo, xvii. 1. 23, p. 803; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18.

⁴ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 39, § 240 (December 1884).

⁵ Some examples of this vicarious use of images as substitutes for the sick have been given in an earlier part of this work. See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 62 *sq.*

⁶ N. Graafland, *De Minahassa*, (Rotterdam, 1869), i. 326.

⁷ P. J. Veth, *Borneo's Westers-Afdeeling* (Zaltbommel, 1854-56), ii. 309.

the house as substitutes for the patient, who thus rids himself of the ghost. So if a man has been attacked by a crocodile and has contrived to escape, he makes a puppet of dough or meal and casts it into the water as a vicarious offering; otherwise the water-god, who is conceived in the shape of a crocodile, might be angry.¹ In certain of the western districts of Borneo if a man is taken suddenly and violently sick, the physician, who in this part of the world is generally an old woman, fashions a wooden image and brings it seven times into contact with the sufferer's head, while she says: "This image serves to take the place of the sick man; sickness, pass over into the image." Then, with some rice, salt, and tobacco in a little basket, the substitute is carried to the spot where the evil spirit is supposed to have entered into the man. There it is set upright on the ground, after the physician has invoked the spirit as follows: "O devil, here is an image which stands instead of the sick man. Release the soul of the sick man and plague the image, for it is indeed prettier and better than he." Similar substitutes are used almost daily by these Dyaks for the purpose of drawing off evil influences from anybody's person. Thus, when an Ot Danom baby will not stop squalling, its maternal grandmother takes a large leaf, fashions it into a puppet to represent the child, and presses it against the infant's body. Having thus decanted the spirit, so to speak, from the baby into the puppet, she pierces the effigy with little arrows from a blow-gun, thereby killing the spirit that had vexed her child.² Similarly in the island of Dama, between New Guinea and Celebes, where sickness is ascribed to the agency of demons, the doctor makes a doll of palm-leaf and lays it, together with some betel, rice, and half of an empty egg-shell, on the patient's head. Lured by this bait the demon quits the sufferer's body and enters the palm-leaf doll, which the wily doctor thereupon promptly decapitates. This may

¹ F. Grabowsky, "Ueber verschiedene weniger bekannte Opfer bei den Oloh Ngadju in Borneo," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, i. (1888) pp. 132 sq.

Borneo's Westerafdeeling," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897) pp. 60 sq. For another mode in which these same Dyaks seek to heal sickness by means of an image, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 55 sq.

² E. L. M. Kühr, "Schetsen uit

reasonably be supposed to make an end of the demon and of the sickness together.¹ A Dyak sorcerer, being called in to prescribe for a little boy who suffered from a disorder of the stomach, constructed two effigies of the boy and his mother out of bundles of clothes and offered them, together with some of the parents' finery, to the devil who was plaguing the child; it was hoped that the demon would take the effigies and leave the boy.² Batta magicians can conjure the demon of disease out of the patient's body into an image made out of a banana-tree with a human face and wrapt up in magic herbs; the image is then hurriedly removed and thrown away or buried beyond the boundaries of the village.³ Sometimes the image, dressed as a man or a woman according to the sex of the patient, is deposited at a cross-road or other thoroughfare, in the hope that some passer-by, seeing it, may start and cry out, "Ah! So-and-So is dead"; for such an exclamation is supposed to delude the demon of disease into a belief that he has accomplished his fell purpose, so he takes himself off and leaves the sufferer to get well.⁴ The Mai Darat, a Sakai tribe of the Malay Peninsula, attribute all kinds of diseases to the agency of spirits which they call *nyani*; fortunately, however, the magician can induce these maleficent beings to come out of the sick person and take up their abode in rude figures of grass, which are hung up outside the houses in little bell-shaped shrines decorated with peeled sticks.⁵

Effigies used to divert the attention of demons in Nias and various parts of Asia.

In the island of Nias people fear that the spirits of murdered infants may come and cause women with child to miscarry. To divert the unwelcome attention of these sprites from a pregnant woman an elaborate mechanism has been contrived. A potent idol called Fangola is set up beside her bed to guard her slumbers during the hours of darkness from

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluit- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), p. 465.

² H. Ling Roth, "Low's Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) p. 117.

³ B. Hagen, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Battareligion," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxviii. (1883) p. 531.

⁴ M. Joustra, "Het leven, de zeden en gewoonten der Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendinggenootschap*, xlv. (1902) pp. 413 sq.

⁵ N. Annandale and H. C. Robinson, "Some Preliminary Results of an Expedition to the Malay Peninsula," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 416.

the evil things that might harm her; another idol, connected with the first by a chain of palm-leaves, is erected in the large room of the house; and lastly a small banana-tree is planted in front of the second idol. The notion is that the sprites, scared away by the watchful Fangola from the sleeping woman, will scramble along the chain of palm-leaves to the other idol, and then, beholding the banana-tree, will mistake it for the woman they were looking for, and so pounce upon it instead of her.¹ In Bhutan, when the Lamas make noisy music to drive away the demon who is causing disease, little models of animals are fashioned of flour and butter and the evil spirit is implored to enter these models, which are then burnt.² So in Tibet, when a man is very ill and all other remedies have failed, his friends will sometimes, as a last resort, offer an image of him with some of his clothes to the Lord of Death, beseeching that august personage to accept the image and spare the man.³ A Burmese mode of curing a sick man is to bury a small effigy of him in a tiny coffin, after which he ought certainly to recover.⁴ In Siam, when a person is dangerously ill, the magician models a small image of him in clay and carrying it away to a solitary place recites charms over it which compel the malady to pass from the sick man into the image. The sorcerer then buries the image, and the sufferer is made whole.⁵ So, too, in Cambodia the doctor fashions a rude effigy of his patient in clay and deposits it in some lonely spot, where the ghost or demon takes it instead of the man.⁶ The same ideas and the same practices prevail much further to the north among the tribes on the lower course of the River Amoor. When a Goldi or a Gilyak shaman has cast out the devil that caused disease, an abode has to be provided for the homeless devil, and this is done by making

¹ Fr. Kramer, "Der Götzendienst der Niasser," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890) p. 489.

² A. Bastian, *Die Völkerstämme am Brahmaputra* (Berlin, 1883), p. 73.

³ Sarat Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (London, 1902), p. 134.

⁴ Shway Yoe, *The Burman* (London,

1882), ii. 138.

⁵ Pallegoix, *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam* (Paris, 1854), ii. 48 sq. Compare A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien* (Leipzig and Jena, 1866-1871), iii. 293, 486; E. Young, *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe* (Westminster, 1898), p. 121.

⁶ J. Moura, *Le Royaume du Cambodge* (Paris, 1883), i. 176.

a wooden idol in human form of which the ejected demon takes possession.¹

Effigies used to divert ghostly and other evil influence from people in China.

The Chinese of Amoy make great use of cheap effigies as means of diverting ghostly and other evil influence from people. These effigies are kept in stock and sold in the shops which purvey counterfeit paper money and other spurious wares for the use of simple-minded ghosts and gods, who accept them in all good faith instead of the genuine articles. Nothing could well be cruder than the puppets that are employed to relieve sufferers from the many ills which flesh is heir to. They are composed of two bamboo splinters fastened together crosswise with a piece of paper pasted on one side to represent a human body. Two other shreds of paper, supposed to stand for boots, distinguish the effigy of a man from the effigy of a woman. Armed with one of these "substitutes for a person," as they are called, you may set fortune at defiance. If a member of your family, for example, is ailing, or has suffered any evil whatever, or even is merely threatened by misfortune, all that you have to do is to send for one of these puppets, pass it all over his body while you recite an appropriate spell, and then burn the puppet. The maleficent influence is thus elicited from the person of the sufferer and destroyed once for all. If your child has tumbled into one of those open sewers which yawn for the unwary in the streets, you need only fish him out, pass the puppet over his filthy little body, and say: "This contact (of the substitute) with the front of the body brings purity and prosperity, and the contact with the back gives power to eat till an old, old, old age; the contact with the left side establishes well-being for years and years, and the contact with the right side bestows longevity; happy fate, come! ill fate, be transferred to the substitute!" So saying you burn the substitute, by choice near the unsavoury spot where the accident happened; and if you are a careful man you will fetch a pail of water and wash the ashes away. Moreover, the child's head should be shaven quite clean; but if the sufferer was an adult, it is enough to lay bare with the razor

¹ A. Woldt, "Die Kultus-Gegenstände der Golden und Giljaken," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, i. (1888) pp. 102 sq.

a small patch on his scalp to let out the evil influence.¹ In Corea effigies are employed on much the same principle for the purpose of prolonging life. On the fourteenth and the fifteenth day of the first month all men and women born under the Jen or "Man" star make certain straw images dressed in clothes and containing a number of the copper cash which form the currency of the country. Strictly speaking, there should be as many cash in the image as the person whom it represents has lived years; but the rule is not strictly observed. These images are placed on the path outside the house, and the poor people seize them and tear them up in order to get the cash which they contain. The destruction of the image is supposed to save the person represented from death for ten years. Accordingly the ceremony need only be performed once in ten years, though some people from excess of caution appear to observe it annually.²

The Abchases of the Caucasus believe that sickness is sometimes caused by Mother Earth. So in order to appease her and redeem the life of the sick man, an innocent maiden will make a puppet in human form, richly clad, and bury it in the earth, saying, "Instead of the sick man, play and delight yourself with this."³ The Ewe negroes of Togoland, in West Africa, think that the spirits of all living people come from heaven, where they live in the intervals between their incarnations. Life in Amedzowe, as they call that heavenly region, which lies a little to the east of the town of Ho, is very like life on earth. There are fields there and wildernesses and forests. Also there are all kinds of food, such as yams and maize and likewise stock-yams, not to speak of cotton; in fact, all these things came from heaven just as men themselves did. Moreover, everybody has his spiritual mother in heaven and his spiritual aunt, also his spiritual uncle, his spiritual grandfather, and

Effigies used as substitutes to save the lives of people among the Abchases of the Caucasus and the Ewe negroes of West Africa.

¹ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, vi. (Leyden, 1910) pp. 1103 sq.; for a description of the effigies or "substitutes for a person" see *id.*, vol. v. (Leyden, 1907) p. 920. Can the monkish and clerical tonsure have been originally designed

in like manner to let out the evil influence through the top of the head?

² T. Watters, "Some Corean Customs and Notions," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895) pp. 82 sq.

³ N. v. Seidlitz, "Die Abchassen," *Globus*, lxxvi. (1894) p. 54.

so on, just as on earth. Now the spirits in heaven are apt to resent it when one of their number quits them to go and be born as a child on earth; and sometimes they will pursue the truant and carry him back to the celestial country, and that is what we call death. Little children are most commonly fetched away by their mother in heaven; for she wearies for them and comes and lays an invisible hand on the child, and it sickens and dies. If you hear a child whimpering of nights, you may be sure that its mother from heaven has laid her hand on it and is drawing it away to herself. If the child grows very sick and its earthly mother fears that it will die, she will mould two figures of clay, a man and a woman, and offer them in exchange to the heavenly mother, saying, "O thou bearer and mother of children! instead of the child that has gone away from thee we bring thee here in exchange these clay men. Take them and withdraw thy hand from the child in this visible world." Grown-up people also, when they fall sick, will sometimes make images of clay and offer them as substitutes to the messengers who have come from heaven to fetch them away. These images are deposited with other offerings, such as cowry-shells and a musket, by the roadside; and if the messengers accept them instead of the sick man, he recovers.¹ During an epidemic of small-pox the Ewe negroes will sometimes clear a space outside of the town, where they erect a number of low mounds and cover them with as many little clay figures as there are people in the place. Pots of food and water are also set out for the refreshment of the spirit of small-pox who, it is hoped, will take the clay figures and spare the living folk; and to make assurance doubly sure the road into the town is barricaded against him.²

Among the Nishga Indians of British Columbia when

¹ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe - Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 502-506, 512, 513, 838, 848, 910. It is a disputed point in Ewe theology whether there are many spiritual mothers in heaven or only one. Some say that there are as many spiritual mothers as there are individual men and women; others doubt this and say that there is only

one spiritual mother, and that she is the wife of God (*Mawu*) and gave birth to all spirits that live in heaven, both men and women.

² G. Binetsch, "Beantwortung mehrerer Fragen über unser Ewe-Volk und seine Anschauungen," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xxxviii. (1906) p. 37.

a medicine-man dreams a dream which portends death to somebody, he informs the person whose life is threatened, and together they concert measures to avert the evil omen. The man whose life is at stake has a small wooden figure called a *shigiyadsqu* made as like himself as the skill of the wood-carver will allow, and this he hangs round his neck by a string so that the figure lies exactly over his heart. In this position he wears it long enough to allow the heat of his body to be imparted to it, generally for about four days. On the fourth day the medicine-man comes to the house, arrayed in his bearskin and other insignia of office and bringing with him a wisp of teased bark and a toy canoe made of cedar-bark. Thus equipped, he sings a doleful ditty, the death-song of the tribe. Then he washes the man over the region of the heart with the wisp of bark dipped in water, places the wisp, together with the wooden image, in the canoe, and after again singing the death-chant, commits image, wisp, and canoe to the flames, where they are all consumed. The death-chant is now changed to a song of joy, and the man who was lately in fear of his life joins in. He may well be gay, for has he not given death the slip by devoting to destruction, not merely a wisp saturated with the dangerous defilement of his body, but also a substitute made in his own likeness and impregnated with his very heart's warmth? ¹

Effigies used as substitutes to save the lives of people among the Nishga Indians.

With these examples before us we may fairly conclude that the woollen effigies, which at the festival of the Compitalia might be seen hanging at the doors of all the houses in ancient Rome, were not substitutes for human victims who had formerly been sacrificed at this season, but rather vicarious offerings presented to the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, in the hope that on her rounds through the city she would accept or mistake the effigies for the inmates of the house and so spare the living for another year. It is possible that the puppets made of rushes, which in the month of May the pontiffs and Vestal Virgins annually threw into the Tiber from the old Sublician bridge at Rome,²

Hence the woollen effigies hung out at the Compitalia in Rome were probably offered as substitutes for living persons to the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts.

¹ *The Illustrated Missionary News*, April 1st, 1891, pp. 59 sq.

² As to the custom see Varro, *De lingua latina*, v. 45; Ovid, *Fasti*, v. 621 sqq.; Dionysius Halicarnasensis,

Antiquit. Roman. i. 38; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 32 and 86. For various explanations which have been proposed, see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,³ ii. 134 sqq.; W. Mann-

had originally the same significance ; that is, they may have been designed to purge the city from demoniac influence by diverting the attention of the demons from human beings to the puppets and then toppling the whole uncanny crew, neck and crop, into the river, which would soon sweep them far out to sea. In precisely the same way the natives of Old Calabar used periodically to rid their town of the devils which infested it by luring the unwary demons into a number of lamentable scarecrows, which they afterwards flung into the river.¹ This interpretation of the Roman custom is supported to some extent by the evidence of Plutarch, who speaks of the ceremony as "the greatest of purifications."² However, other explanations of the rite have been proposed : indeed these puppets of rushes have been a standing puzzle to Roman antiquaries in ancient and modern times.

hardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 265 sqq. ; *Journal of Philology*, xiv. (1885) p. 156 note ; R. von Ihering, *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer*, pp. 430-434 ; W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (London, 1899), pp. 111 sqq. ; *id.*, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (London, 1911), pp.

54 sq., 321 sqq. ; G. Wissowa, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur römischen Religions- und Stadtgeschichte* (Munich, 1904), pp. 211-229. The ceremony was observed on the fifteenth of May.

¹ See *The Golden Bough*, Second Edition, iii. 107.

² Plutarch, *Quaest. Roman.* 86.

CHAPTER XI

THE SACRIFICE OF FIRST-FRUITS

IN the preceding chapter we saw that primitive peoples often partake of the new corn and the new fruits sacramentally, because they suppose them to be instinct with a divine spirit or life. At a later age, when the fruits of the earth are conceived as created rather than as animated by a divinity, the new fruits are no longer partaken of sacramentally as the body and blood of a god ; but a portion of them is offered to the divine beings who are believed to have produced them. Originally, perhaps, offerings of first-fruits were supposed to be necessary for the subsistence of the divinities, who without them must have died of hunger ;¹ but in after times they seem to be looked on rather in the light of a tribute or mark of homage rendered by man to the gods for the good gifts they have bestowed on him. Sometimes the first-fruits are presented to the king, perhaps in his character of a god ; very often they are made over to the spirits of the human dead, who are sometimes thought to have it in their power to give or withhold the crops. Till the first-fruits have been offered to the deity, the dead, or the king, people are not at liberty to eat of the new crops. But, as it is not always possible to draw a sharp line between the sacrament and the sacrifice of first-fruits, it may be well to round off this part of the subject by giving some examples of the latter.

The sacrifice of first fruits to gods is probably later than the custom of partaking of them sacramentally.

First-fruits sometimes presented to the king and often to the dead.

The Ovambo or Ovakuanjama of South-West Africa stand in great fear of the spirits of the dead, who are believed to exercise a powerful influence over the living ; in particular the spirits of dead chiefs can give or withhold rain, a matter of vital importance in the parched region of

Sacrifice of first-fruits among the Ovambo of South-West Africa.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 231 *seqq.*

Ovamboland. Accordingly the people pay great respect to the spirits of the departed, and they hold a thanksgiving festival in their honour at the close of the harvest. When the new corn has been reaped and ground, a portion of it is made into porridge and carried to the quarters of the principal wife. Here all the inhabitants of the kraal assemble; the head of the family takes some of the porridge, dips it in melted fat, and throws it to the east, saying, "Take it, ye spirits of the East!" Then he does the same towards the west, saying, "Take it, ye spirits of the West!" This is regarded as a thank-offering presented to the spirits of the dead for not visiting the people with sickness while they were cultivating the fields, and especially for sending the rain.¹

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
South
Africa.

Among the Basutos, when the corn has been threshed and winnowed, it is left in a heap on the threshing-floor. Before it can be touched a religious ceremony must be performed. The persons to whom the corn belongs bring a new vessel to the spot, in which they boil some of the grain. When it is boiled they throw a few handfuls of it on the heap of corn, saying, "Thank you, gods; give us bread to-morrow also!" When this is done the rest is eaten, and the provision for the year is considered pure and fit to eat.² Here the sacrifice of the first-fruits to the gods is the prominent idea, which comes out again in the custom of leaving in the threshing-floor a little hollow filled with grain, as a thank-offering to these powerful beings.³ Still the Basutos retain a lively sense of the sanctity of the corn in itself; for, so long as it is exposed to view, all defiled persons are carefully kept from it. If it is necessary to employ a defiled person in carrying home the harvest, he remains at some distance while the sacks are being filled, and only approaches to place them upon the draught oxen. As soon as the load is deposited at the dwelling he retires, and under no pretext may he help to pour the corn into the baskets in which it is kept.⁴ The Makalaka worship a god called Shumpaoli,

¹ H. Tönjes, *Ovamboland, Land, Leute, Mission* (Berlin, 1911), p. 195.

² Rev E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), pp. 251 sq.

³ *Ibid.* p. 252.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 252 sq. In the southern

province of Ceylon "the threshers behave as if they were in a temple of the gods when they put the corn into the bags." See C. J. R. Le Mesurier, "Customs and Superstitions connected with the Cultivation of Rice in the

whose image is to be found in the enclosure outside of their huts. The image consists of the head of an axe, a stone from the river, and a twig or long stalk of grass planted between them in the ground. About this god they scatter the first-fruits of their harvest, and when they brew beer they pour some of it on him.¹ Of the Bantu tribes of South Africa in general we are told that they might not eat of the new crops till the chief gave them leave to do so. When the millet was ripe he appointed a general assembly of the people at his residence, which was known as the Great Place; he then performed certain rites, and in particular he offered a small quantity of the fresh grain to the spirits of his ancestors, either by laying it on their graves or by casting it into a stream. After that he granted the people permission to gather and eat the new corn.²

Among the Maraves or Zimbabwes, a tribe of the Upper Zambezi, bordering on the Portuguese territory, it is the custom that first-fruits of all produce must be offered to the spirits of the dead (*muzimos*), to whom they attribute all the good and ill that befall them. Every year at harvest-time the offerings are brought to these mighty beings. Small portions of all kinds of fruits, together with cooked fowls and *pombe* (the native intoxicant), are carried in procession, with songs, dances, and the beating of drums, to the burial-ground, which is always situated in a grove or a wilderness and is esteemed a sacred place; no tree may be felled and no animal killed on the holy ground, for the natives believe that a spirit of the dead is present in everything within the precincts.³ Among the Yaos of British Central Africa "offerings are made to the spirit world or to *mulungu* as the great agency in the affairs of human life. Outside the village, or beside the head-man's hut, may often be seen a rough shed. In this are placed the first-fruits of the new crop, green maize, beans, pumpkins, peas, etc., as a thankoffering from the villagers for their harvest. This is described as *kulomba*

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
Central
Africa.

Southern Province of Ceylon," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xvii. (1885), p. 371.

¹ L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), p. 173.

² G. McCall Theal, *Records of South-*

Eastern Africa, vii. (1901) p. 397.

³ "Der Muata Cazembe und die Völkerstämme der Maravis, Chevas, Muembas, Lundas und andere von Süd-Afrika," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde* (Berlin), vi. (1856) pp. 272, 273.

mulungu, to worship *mulungu*.”¹ By *mulungu* the Yaos mean primarily and strictly the soul of a dead person, which is believed to influence the lives and fortunes of the survivors, and therefore needs to be honoured and propitiated; but they employ the word in an extended sense to signify the aggregate of the spirits of all the dead, and missionaries have adopted it as the nearest equivalent for the word God.² Among the Winamwanga, a tribe of north-eastern Rhodesia, between Lake Nyassa and Lake Tanganyika, it is customary to offer the first beer and the first flour made from the new harvest of millet to the spirits of the dead. The head of the family pours out some beer and a small quantity of the new flour in a heap on the floor of his own house, after which he prays to the spirits of his forefathers, thanks them for the harvest, and invites them to come and partake of it with the family. The priest performs the same ceremony at the shrine for the whole village. The householder or the priest speaks to the spirits as if they were sitting around him. Thus he may say, “O ye great spirits, fathers in the spirit world, mothers in the spirit world, and all ye others, bless us now. Here is the food, and here is the offering, call ye all of you each other.” Then after summoning the dead by their names he may go on: “Come all of you and partake of this offering. Ye great spirits, all things of this earth were known to you while yet ye were here. Take care of this your family, and of all these your children. May we ever go in our ways in prosperity. Oh! ye great spirits, give to us food and all the produce of the land. Drive ye away all illnesses from your family, ye great spirits; every evil spirit put far away from us, and whatever might seek to hurt us may it fly away on the wind. Cause ye us to abide in peace.”³ Among the Yombe of Northern Rhodesia, to the west of Lake Tanganyika, no one is allowed to partake of the new fruits until certain cere-

¹ Rev. A. Hetherwick, “Some Animistic Beliefs among the Yaos of British Central Africa,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 94 sq.

³ Dr. J. A. Chisholm, “Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Winamwanga and Wiwa,” *Journal of the African Society*, vol. ix. No. 36 (July 1910), pp. 366 sq. Among the Winamwanga, as among the Maraves, the human soul or spirit is called *musimu* (*op. cit.* p. 363).

² Rev. A. Hetherwick, *op. cit.* pp. 91-94.

monies have been performed. Escorted by a band of drummers, his medicine-men, and the village elders, the chief ascends the Kalanga Mountain until he reaches the hollow fastness which in former days his forefathers held against the marauding Angoni. Here the grandfather of the present chief lies buried. Before his tomb a bull is slain, and pots of freshly-brewed beer and porridge made from the first-fruits are deposited before the shrine. The ground is then carefully cleaned of weeds, and the blood of the bull is sprinkled on the freshly-turned-up soil and on the rafters of the little hut. After offering the customary prayers in thanksgiving for the harvest, and beseeching the spirits to partake with them of the first-fruits, the procession retires. On their return to the village, the carcase of the bull is divided, all partake of the fresh porridge and beer awaiting them, and the day closes with beer-drinking and dancing.¹

The A-Kamba of British East Africa offer first-fruits to the spirits of their dead before anybody may eat of the new crop. Sometimes these offerings are piled on the graves of chiefs and left there along with the meat of a goat which has been sacrificed. Sometimes the offerings are made in a cleared place under the sacred wild fig tree (*munbo*) of the village; for the A-Kamba think that the spirits of the dead (*aiimu*) dwell in wild fig trees, and they build miniature huts at the foot of the trees for the accommodation of the ghosts. The clearing under the wild fig tree of the village is called the Place of Prayer (*ithembo*). When any crop is ripe, all the inhabitants of the district assemble, and a very old man and woman, chosen for the purpose, leave the crowd and go to the Place of Prayer, where they call aloud to the spirits of the dead and ask leave to eat the crop. The people then dance, and during the dance one of the women is sure to be seized with a fit of shaking and to cry aloud, which is deemed the answer of the spirits to the people's prayer.² Amongst the Baganda a man used to offer the first-fruits of a new garden to his god, imploring the blessing of the deity on the future

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
East Africa

¹ C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), pp. 294 sq.

² C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 66, 85 sq.

crops.¹ Among the Dinka of the White Nile no member of a family may eat the new fruits until the father or mother has scattered some of them over the courtyard of the house in order to ensure the blessing of God.² When the millet is ripe, the Nubas of Jebel-Nuba, a range of mountains in the eastern Sudan, observe the following ceremony. Every group of villages is presided over by a sacred pontiff called a *cogiour* or *codjour*, who is believed to act under the inspiration of a spirit named Laro. So when it is known that the grain is ready to be cut, a drum is beaten, the pontiff mounts his horse and, attended by all the elderly men and women, repairs to his fields, while the rest of the people betake themselves to their own farms. There the people whose eldest child is a boy break five ears of corn, and those whose eldest child is a girl break four. But young unmarried people break five or four ears according as they desire to have a boy or a girl for their first-born. All then return to the village and place the ears they have gathered on the hedge which serves as an enclosure. When the beat of the drum and multitudinous cries of joy announce the return of the pontiff, the people take the gathered ears and advance to meet him. He rides at the head of a cavalcade composed of all the men who have horses. After that, attended by the elders, he retires to his house, while the rest of the people deposit the ears of corn in the cave of Laro, the being who inspires the holy pontiff. Feasting, drinking, and horse-races conclude the ceremony. At the races the young folk amuse themselves by flinging stalks of millet before the horses to make them shy and throw their riders.³

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 428.

² *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, lx. (1888) p. 57. The account is extracted from the letter of a Catholic priest, himself a Dinka. The name of God, according to him, is *Den-dit*, meaning "Great Rain." The form of the name agrees closely, and the interpretation of it agrees exactly, with the results of Dr. C. G. Seligmann's independent enquiries, according to which the name of the Dinka God is *Dengdit*, "Great Rain," the word

for rain being *deng*. See Dr. C. G. Seligmann, in Dr. J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, s.v. "Dinka," vol. iv. (Edinburgh, 1911) p. 707.

³ "Coutumes étranges des indigènes du Djebel-Nouba (Afrique centrale), notes communiquées par les missionnaires de Vérone," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xiv. (1882) p. 459. As to the Nubas and their pontiff see further Stanislas Carceri, "Djebel-Nouba," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xv. (1883) pp. 448-452.

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
West
Africa.

The Igbiras, a pagan tribe at the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, bury their dead in their houses and have great faith in the power of the ghosts, whose guidance and protection they seek to ensure by periodical offerings of goats and cocks. Also they offer the first-fruits of their crops to the dead, hanging bunches of the new grain over the burial-places in their huts. The Igbiras also celebrate the festival of the new yams with great pomp. It is their New Year's Day. Sacrifices of fowls and goats are offered, and wine and oil are freely poured out. The king takes a prominent part in the feast.¹ Among the Cross River natives, in the lower valley of the Niger, the eating of the new yams is an occasion of great rejoicing, but no one may partake of them until a portion has been ceremonially offered to the deities. The festival is not held simultaneously but separately for each village according to the state of the crops. High and low, old and young, men, women, and children dance to music on these joyful occasions.² The Matse tribe of Ewe negroes in Togoland worship the Earth at the times when they dig the ripe yams in September, when they reap the ripe maize in November, and when they burn the grass in February. The place where they offer sacrifices to the Earth goddess is called "the Wood of our Mother." In the month of November the hunters, led by the Chief Huntsman and the High Priest, repair to the maize-fields, where they gather cobs of the ripe grain. Some of these they deposit, with prayers, in the sacrificial place in the wood, but they keep the finest cobs for themselves. After this sacrifice of the new corn to the Earth goddess everybody is free to get in his maize.³ Amongst the Hos, another Ewe tribe of Togoland, when a man is about to dig up his yam crop, he first of all digs up two yams which he had planted for the goddess Mawu Sodza. These he holds up to her and prays, saying, "O Mawu Sodza, thou ship full of yams, give to me, and I will give to you ; pass me over, and I will pass you over. Here are thy yams, which I have dug for thee. When I dig mine, grant that I may have plenty."

¹ A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Up the Niger* (London, 1892), pp. 141 sq.

(London, 1905), pp. 266 sq.

³ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 795 sq.

² Ch. Partridge, *Cross River Natives*

Thereupon he begins to dig the crop.¹ Among the Bassari, another tribe of Togoland, no man may eat of the new yams until the people have paid a tribute of the first-fruits to the king. At such times long files of men, women, and children may be seen wending their way to the capital to render to the king his dues. But the king himself may not partake of the new yams until he has offered a portion of them, along with ten white fowls, to the fetish.² Before the Adeli of the Slave Coast may eat of the new yams, the owner of each farm must bring the first yams of his field to the fetish priest, who offers them to the fetish, after which he declares that the harvest may take place. The festival, accompanied by shooting and dancing, lasts several days; it generally falls in August.³

First-fruits offered to kings in Madagascar and Burma.

Among the Betsileo of Madagascar the king used to receive first-fruits of all the crops, such as rice, maize, manioc, beans, and sweet potatoes: indeed this tribute of first-fruits formed a large part of his revenue.⁴ The Hovas of Madagascar present the first sheaves of the new grain to the sovereign. The sheaves are carried in procession to the palace from time to time as the grain ripens.⁵ So in Burma, when the *pangati* fruits ripen, some of them used to be taken to the king's palace that he might eat of them; no one might partake of them before the king.⁶ It has been suggested that the modern system of taxation may be directly derived from the ancient obligation of paying first-fruits to a sacred pontiff or king.⁷

Sacrifices of first-fruits in Assam and other parts of India.

Every year, when they gather their first crops, the Kochs of Assam offer some of the first-fruits to their ancestors, calling to them by name and clapping their hands.⁸ Before they harvest any of their crops, the Garos, another people of Assam, deem it necessary to sacrifice the first-fruits of the

¹ J. Spieth, *op. cit.* p. 344. As to the goddess Mawu Sodza, see *ibid.* pp. 424 sq.

² H. Klose, *Togo unter deutscher Flagge* (Berlin, 1899), p. 504.

³ L. Conradt, "Das Hinterland der deutschen Kolonie Togo," *Petermanns Mittheilungen*, xlii. (1896) p. 18.

⁴ G. A. Shaw, "The Betsileo," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, Reprint of the First Four Numbers* (Antananarivo, 1885), p. 346.

⁵ J. Cameron, "On the Early Inhabitants of Madagascar," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, Reprint of the First Four Numbers* (Antananarivo, 1885), p. 263.

⁶ A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. (Leipsic, 1866), p. 105.

⁷ A. van Gennepe, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), p. 97.

⁸ E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 91.

crops to the gods. Thus, for example, they gather some ears of rice or millet, pound them between two stones, and offer them up on a piece of plantain stem.¹ In August, when the rice ripens, the Hos of Bengal offer the first-fruits of the harvest to Sing Bonga, who dwells in the sun. Along with the new rice a white cock is sacrificed; and till the sacrifice has been offered no one may eat the new rice.² Among the Oraons of Bengal no one will partake of the new rice until some of it has been offered to the ancestors. A handful of it is cooked and spread on the ground, and a pot of rice-beer is brewed and some of the beer also spilt on the ground. Before drinking every one dips his finger in his cup and lets fall some drops in honour of the ancestors. Further, a whity grey fowl is killed, and the eldest of the family, addressing the ancestral spirits, says, "O old mothers and fathers, you have always been so good to us on these days. Here we are rejoicing: we cannot forget you: come and rejoice with us."³ In Ladakh the peasants offer the first two or three handfuls of the wheat-crop to the spirit who presides over agriculture. These offerings they attach to the tops of the pillars which support the roofs of their houses; and thus the bands of straw and ears of wheat form a primitive sort of capital. Rams' horns are sometimes added to this decoration.⁴ In the Himalayan districts of the North-Western provinces of India the fields and boundaries are under the protection of a beneficent local deity named Kshetral or Bhumiya. Every village possesses a small temple sacred to him. When a crop is sown, a handful of grain is sprinkled over a stone in the corner of the field nearest to the temple, in order that the god may protect the growing crop from hail, blight, and the ravages of wild beasts; and at harvest he receives the first-fruits in order that he may save the garnered grain from the inroads of rats and insects.⁵ Among the hill tribes near

¹ Major A. Playfair, *The Garos* (London, 1909), p. 94.

² E. T. Dalton, *op. cit.* p. 198; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Ethnographic Glossary* (Calcutta, 1891-1892), ii. 104.

³ Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., *Religion and Customs of the Oraons* (Calcutta, 1906), p. 137 (*Memoirs of the Asiatic Society*

of Bengal, vol. i. No. 9).

⁴ *North Indian Notes and Queries*, i. 57, No. 428, quoting Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*, i. 317 sq.

⁵ E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, ii. (Allahabad, 1884) p. 825. As to Bhumiya see further

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits
among hill
tribes of
India.

Rajamahall, in India, when the *kosarane* grain is being reaped in November or early in December, a festival is held as a thanksgiving before the new grain is eaten. On a day appointed by the chief a goat is sacrificed by two men to a god called Chitariah Gossaih, after which the chief himself sacrifices a fowl. Then the vassals repair to their fields, offer thanksgiving, make an oblation to Kull Gossaih (who is described as the Ceres of these mountaineers), and then return to their houses to eat of the new *kosarane*. As soon as the inhabitants have assembled at the chief's house—the men sitting on one side and the women on the other—a hog, a measure of *kosarane*, and a pot of spirits are presented to the chief, who in return blesses his vassals, and exhorts them to industry and good behaviour; “after which, making a libation in the names of all their gods, and of their dead, he drinks, and also throws a little of the *kosarane* away, repeating the same pious exclamations.” Drinking and festivity then begin, and are kept up for several days. The same tribes have another festival at reaping the Indian corn in August or September. Every man repairs to his fields with a hog, a goat, or a fowl, which he sacrifices to Kull Gossaih. Then, having feasted, he returns home, where another repast is prepared. On this day it is customary for every family in the village to distribute to every house a little of what they have prepared for their feast. Should any person eat of the new *kosarane* or the new Indian corn before the festival and public thanksgiving at the reaping of these crops, the chief fines him a white cock, which is sacrificed to Chitariah.¹ In the Central Provinces of India the first grain of the season is commonly offered to the god Bhimsen or Bhim Deo.² When the new rice crop is ripe, the Gadbas, a primitive tribe of the Central Provinces, cook the first-fruits and serve them to the cattle in new bamboo baskets; after that the men themselves

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in the
Central
Provinces
of India.

W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 105-107, who observes (pp. 106 sq.): “To illustrate the close connection between this worship of Bhūmīya as the soil godling with that of the sainted dead, it may be noted that in some places the shrine of Bhūmīya is identified with the

Jathera, which is the ancestral mound, sacred to the common ancestor of the village or tribe.”

¹ Thomas Shaw, “The Inhabitants of the Hills near Rajamahall,” *Asiatic Researches*, iv. (London, 1807) pp. 56 sq.

² *Panjab Notes and Queries*, i. p. 60, ¶ 502 (February 1884).

partake of the new rice.¹ The Nahals, a forest tribe of the same region, worship the forest god Jharkhandi in the month of Chait, and until this rite has been performed they may not use the leaves or fruits of the *Butea frondosa*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, and mango trees. When the god is worshipped, they collect branches and leaves of these trees and offer cooked food to them: after that they begin to use the new leaves, fruit, and timber.² Again, when the Mannewars, another forest tribe of the Central Provinces, pick the flowers of the *mahua* tree (*Bassia latifolia*), they worship the tree and offer it some of the liquor distilled from the new flowers, along with a fowl and a goat.³ The principal festivals of the Parjas, a small tribe of the Central Provinces, are the feast of new vegetation in July, the feast of the new rice in August or September, and the feast of the new mango crop in April or May. At these feasts the new season's crop is eaten, and offerings of them are presented to the ancestors of the family, who are worshipped on these occasions.⁴ In the Punjab, when sugar-cane is planted, a woman puts on a necklace and walks round the field, winding thread on a spindle;⁵ and when the sugar-cane is cut the first-fruits are offered on an altar, which is built close to the press and is sacred to the sugar-cane god. Afterwards the first-fruits are given to Brahmins. Also, when the women begin to pick the cotton, they go round the field eating rice-milk, the first mouthful of which they spit upon the field toward the west; and the first cotton picked is exchanged at the village shop for its weight in salt, which is prayed over and kept in the house till the picking is finished.⁶

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in the
Punjab.

Among the ancient Hindoos the first-fruits were sacrificed

¹ *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey*, iii. *Draft Articles on Forest Tribes* (Allahabad, 1907) p. 45.

² *Op. cit.* iii. 73.

³ *Op. cit.* v. (Allahabad, 1911) p. 66.

⁴ *Op. cit.* vii. (Allahabad, 1911) p. 102.

⁵ The practice is curiously unlike the custom of ancient Italy, in most parts of which women were forbidden by law to walk on the highroads twirling a spindle, because this was supposed to

injure the crops (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 28). The purpose of the Indian custom may be to ward off evil influences from the field, as Mr. W. Crooke suggests (*Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, ii. 305, "This forms a sacred circle which repels evil influence from the crop"). Compare *The Magic Art and Evolution of Kings*, i. 113 sq.

⁶ D. C. J. Ibbetson, *Outlines of Punjab Ethnography* (Calcutta, 1883), p. 119.

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits
among the
ancient
Hindoos.

to the gods at the beginning of harvest, generally at the new or the full moon. There were two harvests in the year; the barley was reaped in spring and the rice in autumn. From the new grain, whether barley or rice, a sacrificial cake was prepared and set forth on twelve potsherds for the two great gods Indra and Agni; a pap or gruel of boiled grain, sodden either in water or milk, was offered to the Visve Devah, that is, to the common mob of deities; and a cake on one potsherd was presented to Heaven and Earth. The origin of these sacrifices of first-fruits was explained by the following myth. They say that the gods and their powerful rivals the Asuras once strove with each other for the mastery. In this strife the Asuras defiled, both by magic and by poison, the plants on which men and beasts subsist; for thus they hoped to get the better of the gods. Therefore neither man nor beast could eat food, and for lack of it they well nigh perished. When the gods heard of it, they said one to the other, "Come let us rid the plants of the defilement," and they did so by means of the sacrifice. But they could not agree as to which of them should receive the sacrifices, so to decide this delicate question they ran a race, and Indra and Agni came in first; that is why the cake is offered to them on twelve potsherds, while the common mob of the gods have to put up with a simple pap or gruel. To this day, therefore, he who offers the first-fruits to the gods does it either because no one will then be able to defile the plants, neither by magic nor yet by poison; or perhaps he does it because the gods did so before him. Be that as it may,¹ certain it is that he thereby renders both kinds of plants wholesome and innocuous, both the plants which men eat and the plants on which cattle graze; that indeed is the reason why the sacrificer sacrifices the first-fruits. And the priest's fee for the sacrifice is the first-born calf of the season, which is, as it were, the first-fruit of the cattle.¹

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
Burma and
Corea.

The Kachins of Upper Burma worship the spirit (*nat*) of the earth every year before they sow their crops. The worship is performed by the chief on behalf of all the

¹ *The Satapatha Brâhmana*, trans- (Oxford, 1882), pp. 369-373 (*Sacred*
lated by Julius Eggeling, Part i. *Books of the East*, vol. xii.).

villagers, who contribute their offerings. The priest afterwards determines by exorcism which particular household shall start sowing first in order that the crop may be a good one. Then the household on which the lot has fallen goes out and sows its fields. When the crop is ripe, it may not be reaped until the household which was the first to sow its fields has gathered the first-fruits and offered them to its own domestic spirits (*nats*). This is usually done before the crop is quite ripe, in order that the reaping of the other crops may not be delayed.¹ The Chins, another people of Upper Burma, eat the first-fruits of their corn as a religious rite, but before doing so they offer some of the new corn or vegetables to their dead ancestors. They also offer the first-fruits to the goddess Pok Klai, a single glance of whose eyes is enough to give them a plentiful harvest of rice.² Among the Thay of Indo-China the first-fruits of the rice are offered at harvest to the guardian spirit of the family before the household may partake of the new crop. The guardian spirit of the family is the last ancestor who died; he mounts guard until he is relieved by his successor; his shrine is a corner of the house screened off by a low trellis of bamboo. But besides the first-fruits offered him at harvest this guardian spirit receives some of the parched grain in spring, at the time when the first thunder of the season is heard to mutter. The grain which is presented to him on this occasion was plucked from the crop before the rice was quite ripe, and it has been carefully kept to be offered to him when the first peal of thunder in spring announces the reviving energies of nature. When all is ready, the rice is served up together with fish, which have been caught for the purpose, on a table set in the corner which is sacred to the guardian spirit. A priest drones out a long invitation to the spirit to come and feast with his children; then the family sits down to table and consumes the offerings. At the close of the banquet the daughter-in-law of the deceased ancestor hangs up a basket containing

¹ (Sir) J. G. Scott and J. P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part i. vol. i. (Rangoon, 1900), pp. 425 sq.

² Rev. G. Whitehead, "Notes on the Chins of Burma," *Indian Antiquary*, xxxvi. (1907) p. 207.

rice and fish for his use in the corner, after which she closes the shrine for another year.¹ In Corea the first-fruits of all the crops used to be offered to the king with religious pomp, and he received almost divine honours from his subjects.² This suggests that, as I have already conjectured, the common practice of presenting the first-fruits to kings is founded on a belief in their divinity.

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
the East
Indies.

In the island of Tjumba, East Indies, a festival is held after harvest. Vessels filled with rice are presented as a thankoffering to the gods. Then the sacred stone at the foot of a palm-tree is sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed animal; and rice, with some of the flesh, is laid on the stone for the gods. The palm-tree is hung with lances and shields.³ The Dyaks of Borneo hold a feast of first-fruits when the paddy or unhusked rice is ripe. The priestesses, accompanied by a gong and drum, go in procession to the farms and gather several bunches of the ripe paddy. These are brought back to the village, washed in coco-nut water, and laid round a bamboo altar, which at the harvest festivals is erected in the common room of the largest house. The altar is gaily decorated with white and red streamers, and is hung with the sweet-smelling blossom of the areca palm. The feast lasts two days, during which the village is tabooed; no one may leave it. Only fowls are killed, and dancing and gong-beating go on day and night. When the festival is over the people are free to get in their crops.⁴ The pounding of the new paddy is the occasion of a harvest festival which is celebrated all over Celebes. The religious ceremonies which accompany the feast were witnessed by Dr. B. F. Matthes in July 1857. Two mats were spread on the ground, each with a pillow on it. On one of the pillows were placed a man's clothes and a sword, on the other a woman's clothes. These were seemingly intended to represent the deceased ancestors. Rice and water were deposited before the two dummy figures, which were also sprinkled with the new paddy. Moreover, dishes of rice were set

¹ A. Bourlet, "Les Thay," *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) pp. 627-629.

² Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corle* (Paris, 1874), i. p. xxiv.

³ Fr. Junghuhn, *Die Battaländer*

auf Sumatra (Berlin, 1847), ii. 312.

⁴ Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*² (London, 1863), i. 191.

down for the rest of the family and the slaves of the deceased. This was the end of the ceremony.¹ In Minahassa, a district of Celebes, the people have a festival of "eating the new rice." Fowls or pigs are killed; some of the flesh, with rice and palm-wine, is set apart for the gods, and then the eating and drinking begin.² The people of Kobi and Sariputi, two villages on the north-east coast of Ceram, offer the first-fruits of the paddy, in the form of cooked rice, with tobacco and other things, to their ancestors as a token of gratitude. The ceremony is called "feeding the dead."³ In the Tenimber and Timor-laut Islands, East Indies, the first-fruits of the paddy, along with live fowls and pigs, are offered to the *matmate*. The *matmate* are the spirits of their ancestors, which are worshipped as guardian-spirits or household gods. They are supposed to enter the house through an opening in the roof, and to take up their abode temporarily in their skulls, or in images of wood or ivory, in order to partake of the offerings and to help the family. They also assume the form of birds, pigs, crocodiles, turtles, sharks, and so forth.⁴ In Amboyna, after the rice or other harvest has been gathered in, some of the new fruits are offered to the gods, and till this is done, the priests may by no means eat of them. A portion of the new rice, or whatever it may be, is boiled, and milk of the coco-nut is poured on it, mixed with Indian saffron. It is then taken to the place of sacrifice and offered to the god. Some people also pour out oil before the deity; and if any of the oil is left over, they take it home as a holy and priceless treasure, wherewith they smear the forehead and breast of sick people and whole people, in the firm conviction that the oil confers all kinds of blessings.⁵ In the Kei Islands, to the south-west of New Guinea, the first-fruits are offered to Lir majoran, the god of husbandry, when the harvest is ripe.⁶ After the rice has

¹ B. F. Matthes, *Beknopt Verslag mijner reizen in de Binnenlanden van Celebes, in de jaren 1857 en 1861*, p. 5 (*Verzameling van Berigten betreffende de Bijbelverspreiding*, Nos. 96-99).

² N. Graafland, *De Minahassa* (Rotterdam, 1869), i. 165.

³ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en*

kroesharige rassen tusschen Seebes en Papua (The Hague, 1886), p. 107.

⁴ Riedel, *op. cit.*, pp. 281, 296 sq.

⁵ Fr. Valentyn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien* (Dordrecht and Amsterdam, 1724-1726), iii. 10.

⁶ C. M. Pleyte, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Kei-Eilanden," *Tijd-*

been reaped, the people of Nias deck the images of their ancestors with wreaths, and offer to them the first dishful of boiled rice, while they thank them for the blessings they have bestowed on the family.¹ The Irayas and Catalangans of Luzon, tribes of the Malay stock, but of mixed blood, worship chiefly the souls of their ancestors under the name of *anitos*, to whom they offer the first-fruits of the harvest. The *anitos* are household deities; some of them reside in pots in the corners of the houses; and miniature houses, standing near the family dwelling, are especially sacred to them.² When the Bagobos of the Philippines have got in their harvest of rice or maize, they will neither eat of it nor sell so much as a grain till they have made a pretence of feeding all their agricultural implements.³

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
New
Guinea

The Bukua of German New Guinea think that the spirits of their dead have power to make the fruits of the earth to grow. Accordingly when they have cleared a patch in the forest for cultivation and are planting their crops, they take particular care to plant slips near the tree-stumps which have been left standing in the field, because the spirits of their long dead ancestors are supposed to perch on them. While they plant, they call out the names of the dead, praying them to guard the field, so that their children, the living, may have food to eat and not suffer hunger. And similarly, when they plant stones shaped like taro bulbs in the ground, which are supposed to produce a fine crop of taro, they pray to their forefathers to grant them an abundance of the fruits. When the crops are ripe, the people fetch bundles of taro, clusters of bananas, sugar-canes, and vegetables from the fields and bring them back solemnly to the village; a feast is prepared and a portion of the new fruits, along with tobacco, betel, and dog's flesh, is put in a coco-nut shell and set on a scaffold in the house of the owner of the field, while he prays to the spirits of

schrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap, Tweede Serie, x. (1893) p. 801.

¹ Fr. Kramer, "Der Götzendienst der Niasser," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890) p. 482.

² C. Semper, *Die Philippinen und ihre Bewohner* (Würzburg, 1869), p. 56.

³ F. Blumentritt, "Das Stromgebiet des Rio Grande de Mindano," *Petermanns Mittheilungen*, xxxvii. (1891) p. 111.

his forefathers, saying, "Ye who have guarded our field as we asked you to do, there is something for you; now look on us favourably also for the time to come." Afterwards, while the people are feasting, the owner privily stirs the contents of the coco-nut shell with his finger, and then calls the attention of the others to it as a proof that the spirits have partaken of the offering provided for them. Finally the food remaining in the shell is consumed by the banqueters.¹

In certain tribes of Fiji "the first-fruits of the yam harvest are presented to the ancestors in the Nanga [sacred enclosure] with great ceremony before the bulk of the crop is dug for the people's use, and no man may taste of the new yams until the presentation has been made. The yams thus offered are piled in the Great Nanga, and are allowed to rot there. If any one were impiously bold enough to appropriate them to his own use, he would be smitten with madness. The mission teacher before mentioned told me that, when he visited the Nanga he saw among the weeds with which it was overgrown, numerous yam vines which had sprung up out of the piles of decayed offerings. Great feasts are made at the presentations of the first-fruits, which are times of public rejoicing, and the Nanga itself is frequently spoken of as the *Mbaki*, or Harvest."² In other parts of Fiji the practice with regard to the first-fruits seems to have been different, for we are told by another observer that "the first-fruits of the yams, which are always presented at the principal temple of the district, become the property of the priests, and form their revenue, although the pretence of their being required for the use of the god is generally kept up."³ In Tana, Lorimer of the New Hebrides, the general name for gods appeared to be *aremha*, which meant "a dead man." The spirits of departed ancestors were among the gods of the people. Chiefs who reached an advanced age were deified after their death, addressed by name, and prayed to on various occasions. They were supposed to preside especially over the growth of the yams and fruit-trees. The first-fruits

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
Fiji and
the New
Hebrides.

¹ Stefan Lehner, "Bukaua," in R. Neuhauss's *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) pp. 434-436.

² Rev. Lorimer Fison, "The Nanga, or Sacred Stone Enclosure, of Waini-

mala, Fiji," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiv. (1885) p. 27.

³ J. E. Erskine, *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific* (London, 1853), p. 252.

were presented to them. A little of the new fruit was laid on a stone, or on a shelving branch of the tree, or on a rude temporary altar, made of a few sticks lashed together with strips of bark, in the form of a table, with its four feet stuck in the ground. All being quiet, the chief acted as high priest, and prayed aloud as follows: "Compassionate father! here is some food for you; eat it; be kind to us on account of it." Then all the people shouted. This took place about noon, and afterwards the assembled people feasted and danced till midnight or morning.¹

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in the
Solomon
Islands.

In Florida, one of the Solomon Islands, the canarium nut is much used in the native cookery, but formerly none might be eaten till the sacrifice of the first-fruits had been offered to the ghosts of the dead. This was done on behalf of a whole village by a man who inherited a knowledge of the way in which the sacrifice should be offered, and who accordingly had authority to open the season. When he saw that the time had come, he raised a shout early in the morning, then climbed a tree, cracked the nuts, ate some himself, and put some on the stones in his sacred place for the particular ghost whom he worshipped. Then all the people might gather the nuts for themselves. The chief offered food, in which the new nuts were mixed, on the stones of the village sanctuary; and every man who revered a ghost of his own did the same in his private sanctuary.² This sacrifice of first-fruits was witnessed by Mr. Woodford at the village of Aola, in the neighbouring island of Guadalcanar. The canarium nuts, or Solomon Island almonds, had been ripe for a week, and Mr. Woodford had expressed a wish to taste them, but he was told that this was quite impossible till the offering to the ghost had been made. As a native put it, "Devil he eat first; all man he eat behind." All the inhabitants of the village adjourned to the sea-shore in groups of ten or twelve to perform the sacrifice. The party to which Mr. Woodford attached himself swept a space clean beneath the spreading branches of a *Barringtonia*, and there constructed half-a-dozen tiny altars, each about six inches square, out of dry sticks. On these altars they laid

¹ G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), pp. 318 sq.

² Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), pp. 132 sq.

offerings of yams, taros, bananas, and a little flesh ; and a few of the nuts were skinned and set up on sticks round about the altars. Fire was then made by the friction of wood, for matches might not be used for this purpose, though probably every man had a box of them in his bag. With the sacred flame thus produced the altars were kindled and the offerings consumed. When this was done, the women produced large flat cakes baked of a paste of pounded nuts, and these were eaten by all.¹ In Saa, another of the Solomon Islands, when the yams are ripe, the people fetch some from each garden to offer to the ghosts. Early in the morning all the male members of a family assemble at the sanctuary of the particular ancestral ghosts whom they revere. One of them goes with a yam into the holy place and cries with a loud voice to the ghosts, "This is yours to eat," and with that he sets the yam beside the skull which is in the sanctuary. The others call quietly upon all the ancestors and present their yams, which are many in number, because one from each garden is given to each of the ghosts. Moreover, if any man has a relic of the dead at home, such as a head, or bones, or hair, he takes back a yam to his house and places it beside the head or whatever it may be. In the same island, as in Florida, the new canarium nuts may not be eaten until the first-fruits have been offered to the ghosts. Moreover, the first flying-fish of the season must be sacrificed to these spirits of the dead before the living are allowed to partake of the fish. The ghosts to whom the flying-fish are offered have the form of sharks. Some of them have sanctuaries ashore, where images of sharks are set up ; and the flying-fish are laid before these images. Other shark-ghosts have no place on shore ; so the fish offered to them are taken out to sea and shredded into the water, while the names of the ghosts are called out.²

In some of the Kingsmill Islands the god most commonly worshipped was called Tubuériki. He was represented by a flat coral stone, of irregular shape, about three feet

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in the
Kingsmill
Islands.

¹ C. M. Woodford, *A Naturalist among the Head-hunters, being an Account of Three Visits to the Solomon Islands* (London, 1890), pp. 26-28.

² Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 138.

long by eighteen inches wide, set up on end in the open air. Leaves of the coco-nut palm were tied about it, considerably increasing its size and height. The leaves were changed every month, that they might be always fresh. The worship paid to the god consisted in repeating prayers before the stone, and laying beside it a portion of the food prepared by the people for their own use. This they did at their daily meals, at festivals, and whenever they specially wished to propitiate the deity. The first-fruits of the season were always offered to him. Every family of distinction had one of these stones which was considered rather in the light of a family altar than as an idol.¹

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in the
Tonga
Islands.

In the Tonga Islands the first-fruits of the year were offered with solemn ceremony to the sacred chief Tootonga, who was regarded as divine. The ceremony generally took place about October, and the people believed that if the rite were neglected the vengeance of the gods would fall in a signal manner upon them. The following is a description of the festival as it was celebrated in the days when a European flag rarely floated among the islands of the Pacific: "*Inachi*. This word means, literally, a share or portion of anything that is to be or has been distributed out: but in the sense here mentioned it means that portion of the fruits of the earth, and other eatables, which is offered to the gods in the person of the divine chief Tootonga, which allotment is made once a year, just before the yams in general are arrived at a state of maturity; those which are used in this ceremony being of a kind which admit of being planted sooner than others, and, consequently, they are the first fruits of the yam season. The object of this offering is to insure the protection of the gods, that their favour may be extended to the welfare of the nation generally, and in particular to the productions of the earth, of which yams are the most important.

"The time for planting most kinds of yams is about the latter end of July, but the species called *caho-caho*, which is always used in this ceremony, is put in the ground about a month before, when, on each plantation, there is a small

¹ Horatio Hale, *United States Exploring Expedition, Ethnography and Philology* (Philadelphia, 1846), p 97.

piece of land chosen and fenced in, for the purpose of growing a couple of yams of the above description. As soon as they have arrived at a state of maturity, the *How* [the King] sends a messenger to Tootonga, stating that the yams for the *inachi* are fit to be taken up, and requesting that he would appoint a day for the ceremony : he generally fixes on the tenth day afterwards, reckoning the following day for the first. There are no particular preparations made till the day before the ceremony : at night, however, the sound of the conch is heard occasionally in different parts of the islands, and as the day of the ceremony approaches it becomes more frequent, so that the people of almost every plantation sound the conch three or four times, which, breaking in upon the silence of the night, has a pleasing effect, particularly at Vavaoo, where the number of woods and hills send back repeated echoes, adding greatly to the effect. The day before the ceremony, the yams are dug up, and ornamented with a kind of ribbons prepared from the inner membrane of the leaf of a species of pandanus, and dyed red ; when thus prepared, it is called *mellecoola* and is wrapped round the yam, beginning at one end, and running round spirally to the other, when it is brought back in the opposite direction, the turns crossing each other in a very neat manner. As the ceremony is always performed at the island where Tootonga chooses to reside, the distant islands must make these preparations two or three days beforehand, that the yams, etc., may be sent in time to Vavaoo, where we will suppose the affair is to take place. The ninth day then is employed in preparing and collecting the yams and other provisions, such as fish, cava root, and *mahoa*, and getting ready mats, *gnatoo*, and bundles of *mellecoola* : but the yams only are to be carried in the procession about to be described. . . .

“The sun has scarcely set when the sound of the conch begins again to echo through the island, increasing as the night advances. At the Mooa [capital], and all the plantations, the voices of men and women are heard singing *Nófo óoofa tegger gnaobe, óoofa gnaobe*, ‘Rest thou, doing no work ; thou shalt not work.’ This increases till midnight, men generally singing the first part of the sentence, and

the women the last, to produce a more pleasing effect: it then subsides for three or four hours, and again increases as the sun rises. Nobody, however, is seen stirring out in the public roads till about eight o'clock, when the people from all quarters of the island are seen advancing towards the Mooa, and canoes from all the other islands are landing their men; so that all the inhabitants of Tonga seem approaching by sea and land, singing and sounding the conch. At the Mooa itself the universal bustle of preparation is seen and heard; and the different processions entering from various quarters, of men and women, all dressed up in new *gnatoos*, ornamented with red ribbons and wreaths of flowers, and the men armed with spears and clubs, betoken the importance of the ceremony about to be performed. Each party brings in its yams in a basket, which is carried in the arms with great care, by the principal vassal of the chief to whom the plantation may belong. The baskets are deposited in the *maldi*¹ (in the *Mooa*), and some of them begin to employ themselves in slinging the yams, each upon the centre of a pole about eight or nine feet long, and four inches diameter. The proceedings are regulated by attending matabooles.² The yams being all slung, each pole is carried by two men upon their shoulders, one walking before the other, and the yam hanging between them, ornamented with red ribbons. The procession begins to move towards the grave of the last Tooitonga (which is generally in the or the grave of one of his family will do), the men advancing in a single line, every two bearing a yam, with a slow and measured pace, sinking at every step, as if their burden were of immense weight. In the meantime the chiefs and matabooles are seated in a semicircle before the grave, with their heads bowed down, and their hands clasped before them." The procession then marched round the grave twice or thrice in a great circle, the conchs blowing and the men singing. Next the yams, still suspended from the poles, were de-

The first-fruits of the yams deposited on the grave of the last Tooitonga (divine chief).

¹ The *maldi* is "a piece of ground, generally before a large house, or chief's grave, where public ceremonies are principally held" (W. Mariner,

Tonga Islands, Vocabulary).

² The *mataboole* is "a rank next below chiefs or nobles" (*ibid.*).

posited before the grave, and their bearers sat down beside them. One of the *matabooles* of Tootonga, seating himself before the grave, a little in advance of the men, now addressed the gods generally, and afterwards particularly, mentioning the late Tootonga, and the names of several others. He thanked them for their divine bounty in favouring the land with the prospect of so good a harvest, and prayed that their beneficence might be continued in future. When he had finished, the men rose and resumed their loads, and after parading two or three times before the grave, marched back to the *maldi* the same way they came, singing and blowing the conchs as before. The chiefs and *matabooles* soon followed to the same place, where the yams had been again deposited and loosened from the poles, though they still retained their ornaments. Here the company sat down in a great circle, presided over by Tootonga, while the king and other great chiefs retired into the background among the mass of the people. Then the other articles that formed part of the *inachi* were brought forward, consisting of dried fish, mats, etc., which, with the yams, were divided into shares by one of the *matabooles* of Tootonga. About a fourth was allotted to the gods, and appropriated by the priests; about a half fell to the king; and the remainder belonged to Tootonga. The materials of the *inachi* having been carried away, the company set themselves to drink *cava*. Some *cava* root was brought and prepared; a large quantity of provisions, perhaps a hundred and fifty baskets-full, was set forth, and a small part of it was distributed to be eaten with the *cava*. While the infusion was preparing, a *mataboole* made a speech to the people, saying that, as they had performed this important ceremony, the gods would protect them and grant them long lives, if only they continued to observe the religious rites and to pay due respect to the chiefs. When the *cava* was all drunk, the circle separated, and the provisions were shared out to each chief according to his rank. The day concluded with wrestling, boxing, and so forth, and then the night dances began. When these were ended, the people went home perfectly assured of the protection of the gods. At this ceremony, we are informed, the quantity

of provisions distributed was incredible, and the people looked upon it as a very heavy tribute.¹

Signifi-
cance of the
presenta-
tion of first-
fruits to the
divine chief
at the grave
of his pre-
decessor.

In this Tongan festival the solemn presentation of the first-fruits to the divine chief at the grave of his predecessor is highly significant: it confirms the conclusion which we have already reached, that wherever the first-fruits are paid to the chief, it is rather in his religious than in his civil capacity that he receives them. It is true that the king of Tonga received a large share of the first-fruits, indeed a larger share than was allotted to the divine chief; but it is very noticeable that while the division of the first-fruits was taking place under the presidency of the divine chief, the king and the other great chiefs retired from the scene and mingled with the mass of the people, as if to indicate that as mere laymen they had no right to participate in a religious rite of such deep solemnity.

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits in
Samoa and
other parts
of Poly-
nesia.

The Samoans used to present the first-fruits to the spirits (*aitus*) and chiefs.² For example, a family whose god was in the form of an eel presented the first-fruits of their taro plantations to the eel.³ In Tahiti "the first fish taken periodically on their shores, together with a number of kinds regarded as sacred, were conveyed to the altar. The first-fruits of their orchards and gardens were also *taumaha*, or offered, with a portion of their live stock, which consisted of pigs, dogs, and fowls, as it was supposed death would be inflicted on the owner or the occupant of the land, from which the god should not receive such acknowledgment."⁴ In Huahine, one of the Society Islands, the first-fruits were presented to the god Tani. A poor person was expected to bring two of the earliest fruits gathered, of whatever kind; a *raatira* had to bring ten, and chiefs and princes had to bring more, according to their rank and riches. They carried the fruits to the temple, where they threw them down on the ground, with the words, "Here,

¹ W. Mariner, *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, Second Edition (London, 1818), ii. 78, 196-203. As to the divine chief Tootonga see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 21.

² Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the*

United States Exploring Expedition, New Edition (New York, 1851), ii. 133.

³ G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 70 sq.

⁴ W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1832-1836), i. 350.

Tani, I have brought you something to eat.”¹ The chief gods of the Easter Islanders were Make-Make and Haua. To these they offered the first of all the produce of the ground.² Amongst the Maoris the offering of the first-fruits of the sweet potatoes to Pani, son of Rongo, the god of sweet potatoes, was a solemn religious ceremony. The crop of sweet potatoes (*kumara*) was sacred, and all persons engaged in its cultivation were also sacred or tabooed; they might not quit the place nor undertake any other work.³

It has been affirmed that the old Prussians offered the first-fruits of their crops and of their fishing to the god Curcho, but doubt rests on the statement.⁴ We have seen that the Athenians and other Greek peoples offered the first-fruits of the wheat and barley harvests to Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis.⁵ The Troezenians sacrificed the first-fruits to Poseidon, whom they worshipped as the guardian deity of their city.⁶ In Attica the first-fruits of the vintage were presented to Icarus and Erigone.⁷ The Romans sacrificed the first ears of corn to Ceres, and the first of the new wine to Liber; and until the priests had offered these sacrifices, the people might not eat the new corn nor drink the new wine.⁸ In various parts of ancient Italy the vintage was solemnly inaugurated by the priests. At Rome the duty devolved on the Flamen Dialis, who sacrificed a lamb to Jupiter and then gathered the first grapes over the entrails of the victim. Till this ceremony had been performed, the new wine might not be brought into the city.⁹

Sacrifices of first-fruits among the old Prussians, Greeks, and Romans.

The Thompson River Indians of British Columbia used

¹ D. Tyerman and G. Bennet, *Journal of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1831), i. 284.

² Geiseler, *Die Oster-Insel* (Berlin, 1883), p. 31.

³ E. Tregear, “The Maoris of New Zealand,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890) p. 110; R. Taylor, *Te Ika A Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, Second Edition (London, 1870), pp. 165 sq.; *Old New Zealand*, by a Pakeha Maori (London, 1884), pp. 103 sq.

⁴ Chr. Hartknoch, *Alt und neues Preussen* (Frankfort and Leipsic, 1684),

p. 161; *id.*, *Dissertationes historicae de variis rebus Prussicis*, p. 163 (appended to his edition of P. de Dusbürg’s *Chronicon Prussiae*, Frankfort and Leipsic, 1679). Compare W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndamonen* (Berlin, 1868), p. 27.

⁵ See above, vol. i. pp. 53 sqq.

⁶ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 6.

⁷ Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 130.

⁸ Festus, s.v. “Sacrima,” p. 319, ed. C. O. Müller; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 8.

⁹ Varro, *De lingua Latina*, vi. 16, ed. C. O. Müller.

Sacrifices
of first-
fruits
among the
Indians of
America.

to offer the first berries of the season to the earth, or more generally to the mountains. The offering was made by an old grey-haired person, who danced and held out the fruit towards the mountain-tops. The rest of the people painted their faces red and danced for some time.¹ The Okanaken Indians of British Columbia "observed first-fruits ceremonies. When the first berries or roots were ripe, the chief would send out his wife or eldest daughter to gather a portion. The whole community would then come together, and prayers would be offered to those spirits of the sky who were supposed to preside over the operations of nature, portions of the fruit or roots would be distributed to all present, after which any one was free to gather all he or she desired; but no one would think of picking a berry or digging a root until after the feast had been held."² When the ears of maize were formed, the Quiches of Central America gathered the first-fruits and carried them to the priests; moreover, they baked loaves or cakes, which they offered to the idol who guarded their fields, but afterwards these cakes were given to the poor or the infirm to eat.³ It was the custom of the Arkansas Indians to offer the first-fruits of the ripe maize and melons to the Master of Life; even children would die of hunger rather than touch the new fruits before this offering had been made. Some of the new maize, melons, and other fruits were minced up with the carcase of a dog in the presence of the old men, who alone were privileged to assist at this solemn rite. Then, after performing certain ceremonies, the old men began to dance, and some young girls, wound up to a pitch of frenzy, threw themselves on the offering and bolted it in an instant. Thereupon the old men seized the damsels and ducked them in the river Arkansas, which had a sobering influence on the minds of the devotees.⁴ From this account we may perhaps infer that in eating the new

¹ James Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, p. 345 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, April, 1900).

² C. Hill Tout, "Report on the Ethnology of the Okanaken of British Columbia," *Journal of the R. Anthropol-*

logical Institute, xli. (1911) p. 132.

³ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859), ii. 566.

⁴ *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, i. (Paris and Lyons, 1826) p. 386.

fruits the girls were believed to be inspired by the Master of Life, who thus consumed the offering by deputy. The chief solemnity of the Natchez, an Indian tribe on the Lower Mississippi, was the Harvest Festival or the Festival of New Fire. An early account of this ceremony has been already submitted to the reader,¹ but it may not be amiss to add here for comparison the later description by Chateaubriand, which differs from the other in some particulars, and lays stress on the sacrifice rather than on the sacrament of first-fruits. According to Chateaubriand, then, when the time for the festival drew near, a crier went through the villages calling upon the people to prepare new vessels and new garments, to wash their houses, and to burn the old grain, the old garments, and the old utensils in a common fire. He also proclaimed an amnesty to criminals. Next day he appeared again, commanding the people to fast for three days, to abstain from all pleasures, and to make use of the medicine of purification. Thereupon all the people took some drops extracted from a root which they called the "root of blood." It was a kind of plantain and distilled a red liquor which acted as a violent emetic. During their three days' fast the people kept silence. At the end of it the crier proclaimed that the festival would begin on the following day. So next morning, as soon as it began to grow light in the sky, the people streamed from all quarters towards the temple of the Sun. The temple was a large building with two doors, one opening to the east, the other to the west. On this morning the eastern door of the temple stood open. Facing the eastern door was an altar, placed so as to catch the first beams of the rising sun. An image of a *chouchouacha* (a small marsupial) stood upon the altar; on its right was an image of a rattlesnake, on its left an image of a marmoset. Before these images a fire of oak-bark burned perpetually. Once a year only, on the eve of the Harvest Festival, was the sacred flame suffered to die out. To the right of the altar, on the morning of this holy day, stood the great chief, who took his title and traced his descent from the Sun. To the left of the altar stood his wife. Round them were grouped, according to

Chateaubriand's description of the harvest festival among the Natchez.

¹ Above, pp. 77 *sqq.*

their ranks, the war chiefs, the sachems, the heralds, and the young braves. In front of the altar were piled bundles of dry reeds, stacked in concentric rings.

The high priest, standing on the threshold of the temple, kept his eyes fixed on the eastern horizon. Before presiding at the festival he had to plunge thrice into the Mississippi. In his hands he held two pieces of dry wood which he kept rubbing slowly against each other, muttering magic words. At his side two acolytes held two cups filled with a kind of black sherbet. All the women, their backs turned to the east, each leaning with one hand on her rude mattock and supporting her infant with the other, stood in a great semicircle at the gate of the temple. Profound silence reigned throughout the multitude while the priest watched attentively the growing light in the east. As soon as the diffused light of dawn began to be shot with beams of fire, he quickened the motion of the two pieces of wood which he held in his hands; and at the moment when the upper edge of the sun's disc appeared above the horizon, fire flashed from the wood and was caught in tinder. At the same instant the women outside the temple faced round and held up their infants and their mattocks to the rising sun.

The great chief and his wife now drank the black liquor. The priests kindled the circle of dried reeds; fire was set to the heap of oak-bark on the altar, and from this sacred flame all the hearths of the village were rekindled. No sooner were the circles of reeds consumed than the chief's wife came from the temple and placing herself at the head of the women marched in procession to the harvest-fields, whither the men were not allowed to follow them. They went to gather the first sheaves of maize, and returned to the temple bearing them on their heads. Some of the sheaves they presented to the high priest, who laid them on the altar. Others they used to bake the unleavened bread which was to be eaten in the evening. The eastern door of the sanctuary was now closed, and the western door was opened.

When day began to decline, the multitude assembled once more at the temple, this time at its western gate, where they formed a great crescent, with the horns turned towards

the west. The unleavened bread was held up and presented to the setting sun, and a priest struck up a hymn in praise of his descending light. When darkness had fallen the whole plain twinkled with fires, round which the people feasted ; and the sounds of music and revelry broke the silence of night.¹

¹ Chateaubriand, *Voyage en Amérique*, pp. 130-136 (Michel Lévy, Paris, 1870).

CHAPTER XII

HOMOEOPATHIC MAGIC OF A FLESH DIET

Custom of killing and eating the corn-spirits sacramentally.

THE practice of killing a god has now been traced amongst peoples who have reached the agricultural stage of society. We have seen that the spirit of the corn, or of other cultivated plants, is commonly represented either in human or in animal form, and that in some places a custom has prevailed of killing annually either the human or the animal representative of the god. One reason for thus killing the corn-spirit in the person of his representative has been given implicitly in an earlier part of this work : we may suppose that the intention was to guard him or her (for the corn-spirit is often feminine) from the enfeeblement of old age by transferring the spirit, while still hale and hearty, to the person of a youthful and vigorous successor. Apart from the desirability of renewing his divine energies, the death of the corn-spirit may have been deemed inevitable under the sickles or the knives of the reapers, and his worshippers may accordingly have felt bound to acquiesce in the sad necessity.¹

Belief of the savage that by eating an animal or man he acquires the qualities of that animal or man.

But, further, we have found a widespread custom of eating the god sacramentally, either in the shape of the man or animal who represents the god, or in the shape of bread made in human or animal form. The reasons for thus partaking of the body of the god are, from the primitive standpoint, simple enough. The savage commonly believes that by eating the flesh of an animal or man he acquires not only the physical, but even the moral and intellectual qualities which were characteristic of that animal or man ; so when the creature is deemed divine, our simple savage naturally expects to

¹ See *The Dying God*, pp. 9 sqq.

absorb a portion of its divinity along with its material substance. It may be well to illustrate by instances this common faith in the acquisition of virtues or vices of many kinds through the medium of animal food, even when there is no pretence that the viands consist of the body or blood of a god. The doctrine forms part of the widely ramified system of sympathetic or homoeopathic magic.

Thus, for example, the Creeks, Cherokee, and kindred tribes of North American Indians "believe that nature is possess of such a property, as to transfuse into men and animals the qualities, either of the food they use, or of those objects that are presented to their senses; he who feeds on venison is, according to their physical system, swifter and more sagacious than the man who lives on the flesh of the clumsy bear, or helpless dunghill fowls, the slow-footed tame cattle, or the heavy wallowing swine. This is the reason that several of their old men recommend, and say, that formerly their greatest chieftains observed a constant rule in their diet, and seldom ate of any animal of a gross quality, or heavy motion of body, fancying it conveyed a dullness through the whole system, and disabled them from exerting themselves with proper vigour in their martial, civil, and religious duties."¹ The Zaparo Indians of Ecuador "will, unless from necessity, in most cases not eat any heavy meats, such as tapir and peccary, but confine themselves to birds, monkeys, deer, fish, etc., principally because they argue that the heavier meats make them unwieldy, like the animals who supply the flesh, impeding their agility, and unfitting them for the chase."² Similarly some of the Brazilian Indians would eat no beast, bird, or fish that ran, flew, or swam slowly, lest by partaking of its flesh they should lose their agility and be unable to escape from their enemies.³ The Caribs abstained from the flesh of pigs lest it should cause them to have small eyes

Beliefs of the American Indians as to the homoeopathic magic of the flesh of animals.

¹ James Adair, *History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), p. 133.

² Alfred Simson, *Travels in the Wilds of Ecuador* (London, 1887), p. 168; *id.*, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vii. (1878) p. 503.

³ A. Thevet, *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique, autrement nommée Amerique* (Antwerp, 1558), p. 55; *id.*, *La Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris, 1575), ii. pp. 929, [963], 940 [974]; J. Lerijs, *Historia Navigationis in Brasiliam, quae et America dicitur* (1586), pp. 126 *sq.*

like pigs; and they refused to partake of tortoises from a fear that if they did so they would become heavy and stupid like the animal.¹ Among the Fans of West Africa men in the prime of life never eat tortoises for a similar reason; they imagine that if they did so, their vigour and fleetness of foot would be gone. But old men may eat tortoises freely, because having already lost the power of running they can take no harm from the flesh of the slow-footed creature.² Some of the Chiriguanos of eastern Bolivia would not touch the flesh of the vicuña, because they imagined that if they ate it they would become woolly like the vicuña.³ On the other hand the Abipones of Paraguay ate the flesh of jaguars in order to acquire the courage of the beast; ⁴ indeed the number of jaguars which they consumed for this object is said to have been very great, and with a like intent they eagerly devoured the flesh of bulls, stags, boars, and ant-bears, being persuaded that by frequently partaking of such food they increased their strength, activity, and courage. On the other hand they all abhorred the thought of eating hens, eggs, sheep, fish, and tortoises, because they believed that these tender viands begot sloth and listlessness in their bodies and cowardice in their minds.⁵ The Thompson Indians of British Columbia would not eat the heart of the fool-hen, nor would they allow their dogs to devour the bird, lest they should grow foolish like the bird.⁶

Bushman
believes as
to the
homoeo-
pathic
magic of
the flesh of
animals

While many savages thus fear to eat the flesh of slow-footed animals lest they should themselves become slow-footed, the Bushmen of South Africa purposely ate the flesh of such creatures, and the reason which they gave for doing so exhibits a curious refinement of savage philosophy. They imagined that the game which they pursued would be influenced sympathetically by the food in the body of the

¹ Rochefort, *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles Antilles*, Seconde Edition (Rotterdam, 1665), p. 465.

² C. Cuny, "De Libreville au Cameroun," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), vii. Série, xvii. (1896) p. 342.

³ R. Southey, *History of Brasil*, ii. (London, 1817) p. 373; *id.*, iii. (London, 1819) p. 164.

⁴ P. Lozano, *Descripcion Chorographica del Gran Chaco* (Cordova, 1733), p. 90.

⁵ M. Dobrizhoffer, *Historia de Abiponibus* (Vienna, 1784), i. 289 sq.

⁶ J. Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, p. 348 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, April, 1900).

hunter, so that if he had eaten of swift-footed animals, the quarry would be swift-footed also and would escape him ; whereas if he had eaten of slow-footed animals, the quarry would also be slow-footed, and he would be able to overtake and kill it. For that reason hunters of gemsbok particularly avoided eating the flesh of the swift and agile springbok ; indeed they would not even touch it with their hands, because they believed the springbok to be a very lively creature which did not go to sleep at night, and they thought that if they ate springbok, the gemsbok which they hunted would likewise not be willing to go to sleep, even at night. How, then, could they catch it ?¹

Certain tribes on the Upper Zambesi believe in transmigra- tion, and every man in his lifetime chooses the kind of animal whose body he wishes at death to enter. He then performs an initiatory rite, which consists in swallowing the maggots bred in the putrid carcase of the animal of his choice ; thenceforth he partakes of that animal's nature. And on the occasion of a calamity, while the women are giving themselves up to lamentation, you will see one man writhing on the ground like a boa constrictor or a crocodile, another howling and leaping like a panther, a third baying like a jackal, roaring like a lion, or quaking like a hippopotamus, all of them imitating the characters of the various animals to perfection.² Clearly these people imagine that the soul or vital essence of the animal is manifested in the maggots bred in its decaying carcase ; hence they imagine that by swallowing the maggots they imbue themselves with the very life and spirit of the creature which they desire to become. The Namaquas abstain from eating the flesh of hares, because they think it would make them faint-hearted as a hare. But they eat the flesh of the lion, or drink the blood of the leopard or lion, to get the courage and strength of these beasts.³ The Bushmen will not give their children a jackal's heart to eat, lest it should make them timid like the jackal ;

Other African beliefs as to the homoeopathic magic of the flesh of animals.

¹ W. H. I. Bleek and C. L. Lloyd, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London, 1911), pp. 271-275.

² A. Bertrand, *The Kingdom of the Barotsi, Upper Zambesia* (London, 1899), p. 277, quoting the description

given by the French missionary M. Coillard.

³ Theophilus Hahn, *Tsuni-|| Goam, the Supreme Being of the K'hoi-K'hoi* (London, 1881), p. 106.

but they give them a leopard's heart to eat to make them brave like the leopard.¹ When a Wagogo man of German East Africa kills a lion, he eats the heart in order to become brave like a lion; but he thinks that to eat the heart of a hen would make him timid.² Among the Ja-luo, a tribe of Nilotic negroes, young men eat the flesh of leopards in order to make themselves fierce in war.³ The flesh of the lion and also that of the spotted leopard are sometimes cooked and eaten by native warriors in South-Eastern Africa, who hope thereby to become as brave as lions.⁴ When a Zulu army assembles to go forth to battle, the warriors eat slices of meat which is smeared with a powder made of the dried flesh of various animals, such as the leopard, lion, elephant, snakes, and so on; for thus it is thought that the soldiers will acquire the bravery and other warlike qualities of these animals. Sometimes if a Zulu has killed a wild beast, for instance a leopard, he will give his children the blood to drink, and will roast the heart for them to eat, expecting that they will thus grow up brave and daring men. But others say that this is dangerous, because it is apt to produce courage without prudence, and to make a man rush heedlessly on his death.⁵ Among the Wabondei of Eastern Africa the heart of a lion or leopard is eaten with the intention of making the eater strong and brave.⁶ In British Central Africa aspirants after courage consume the flesh and especially the hearts of lions, while lecherous persons eat the testicles of goats.⁷ Among the Suk of British East Africa the fat and heart of a lion are sometimes given to children to eat in order that they may become strong; but they are not allowed to know what they are eating.⁸ Arab women

¹ W. H. I. Bleek and L. C. Lloyd, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London, 1911), p. 373.

² Rev. H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 318.

³ Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, Second Edition (London, 1904), ii. 787.

⁴ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), p. 174; *id.*, in *Journal of the*

Anthropological Institute, xix. (1890) p. 282.

⁵ Rev. H. Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, p. 438, note 16.

⁶ O. Baumann, *Usambara und seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin, 1891), p. 128.

⁷ Sir H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (London, 1897), p. 438; J. Buchanan, *The Shire Highlands*, p. 138.

⁸ M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk, their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1911), p. 11.

in North Africa give their male children a piece of a lion's heart to eat to make them fearless.¹ The flesh of an elephant is thought by the Ewe-speaking peoples of West Africa to make the eater strong.² Before they go forth to fight, Wajagga warriors drink a magical potion, which often consists of shavings of the horn and hide of a rhinoceros mixed with beer; this is supposed to impart to them the strength and force of the animal.³ When a serious disease has attacked a Zulu kraal, the medicine-man takes the bone of a very old dog, or the bone of an old cow, bull, or other very old animal, and administers it to the healthy as well as to the sick people, in order that they may live to be as old as the animal of whose bone they have partaken.⁴ So to restore the aged Aeson to youth, the witch Medea infused into his veins a decoction of the liver of the long-lived deer and the head of a crow that had outlived nine generations of men.⁵ In antiquity the flesh of deer and crows was eaten for other purposes than that of prolonging life. As deer were supposed not to suffer from fever, some women used to taste venison every morning, and it is said that in consequence they lived to a great age without ever being attacked by a fever; only the venison lost all its virtue if the animal had been killed by more blows than one.⁶ Again, ancient diviners sought to imbue themselves with the spirit of prophecy by swallowing vital portions of birds and beasts of omen; for example, they thought that by eating the hearts of crows or moles or hawks they took into their bodies, along with the flesh, the prophetic soul of the creature.⁷

Ancient beliefs as to the homoeopathic magic of the flesh of animals.

¹ J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London, 1857), p. 399.

² A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), p. 99.

³ M. Merker, *Rechtsverhältnisse und Sitten der Wadschagga* (Gotha, 1902), p. 38 (*Petermanns Mitteilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No. 138).

⁴ Rev. H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus* (Natal and London, 1868), p. 175 note.

⁵ Ovid, *Metam.* vii. 271 sqq. As to the supposed longevity of deer and crows, see L. Stephani, in *Compte*

Rendu de la Commission Archéologique (St. Petersburg), 1863, pp. 140 sqq., and my note on Pausanias, viii. 10. 10.

⁶ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 119.

⁷ Porphyry, *De Abstinencia*, ii. 48: οἱ γούν ζώων μαντικῶν ψυχὰς δέξασθαι βουλόμενοι εἰς αὐτοῦς, τὰ κυριώτατα μόρια καταπίοντες, οἷον καρδίας κοράκων ἢ ἀσπαλάκων ἡιεράκων, ἔχουσι παρῖουσαν τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ χρηματίζουσαν ὡς θεὸν καὶ εἰσιούσαν εἰς αὐτοῦς ἅμα τῇ ἐνθέσει τῇ τοῦ σώματος. Pliny also mentions the custom of eating the heart of a mole, raw and palpitating, as a means of acquiring skill in divination (*Nat. Hist.* xxx. 19).

Beliefs of the Dyaks and Aino as to the homoeopathic magic of the flesh of animals.

Among the Dyaks of North-West Borneo young men and warriors may not eat venison, because it would make them as timid as deer; but the women and very old men are free to eat it.¹ However, among the Kayans of the same region, who share the same view as to the ill effect of eating venison, men will partake of the dangerous viand provided it is cooked in the open air, for then the timid spirit of the animal is supposed to escape at once into the jungle and not to enter into the eater.² The Aino of Japan think that the otter is a very forgetful animal, and they often call a person with a bad memory an "otter head." Therefore it is a rule with them that "the otter's head must not lightly be used as an article of food, for unless people are very careful they will, if they eat it, become as forgetful as that creature. And hence it happens that when an otter has been killed the people do not usually eat the head. But if they are seized with a very strong desire for a feast of otter's head, they may partake thereof, providing proper precautions are taken. When eating it the people must take their swords, knives, axes, bows and arrows, tobacco-boxes and pipes, trays, cups, garden tools, and everything they possess, tie them up in bundles with carrying slings, and sit with them attached to their heads while in the act of eating. This feast may be partaken of in this way, and no other. If this method be carefully adhered to, there will be no danger of forgetting; where a thing has been placed, otherwise loss of memory will be the result."³ On the other hand the Aino believe that the heart of the water-ousel is exceedingly wise, and that in speech the bird is most eloquent. Therefore whenever he is killed, he should be at once torn open and his heart wrenched out and swallowed before it has time to grow cold or suffer damage of any kind. If a man swallows it thus, he will become very fluent and wise, and will be able to argue down all his adversaries.⁴ In Northern India people fancy that if you eat the eyeballs

¹ Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, Second Edition (London, 1863), i. 186, 206.

² W. H. Furness, *Home-life of Borneo Head-hunters* (Philadelphia, 1902), p. 71; compare *id.*, pp. 166 sq.

³ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), pp. 511-513.

⁴ Rev. J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* p. 337.

of an owl you will be able like an owl to see in the dark.¹

When the Kansas Indians were going to war, a feast used to be held in the chief's hut, and the principal dish was dog's flesh, because, said the Indians, the animal who is so brave that he will let himself be cut in pieces in defence of his master, must needs inspire valour.² On extraordinary occasions the bravest warriors of the Dacotas used to perform a dance at which they devoured the livers of dogs raw and warm in order thereby to acquire the sagacity and bravery of the dog. The animals were thrown to them alive, killed, and cut open; then the livers were extracted, cut into strips, and hung on a pole. Each dancer grabbed at a strip of liver with his teeth and chewed and swallowed it as he danced: he might not touch it with his hands, only the medicine-man enjoyed that privilege. Women did not join in the dance.³ Men of the Buru and Aru Islands, East Indies, eat the flesh of dogs in order to be bold and nimble in war.⁴ Amongst the Papuans of the Port Moresby and Motumotu districts, New Guinea, young lads eat strong pig, wallaby, and large fish, in order to acquire the strength of the animal or fish.⁵ Some of the natives of Northern Australia fancy that by eating the flesh of the kangaroo or emu they are enabled to jump or run faster than before.⁶ The Miris of Assam prize tiger's flesh as food for men; it gives them strength and courage. But "it is not suited for women; it would make them too strong-minded."⁷ In Corea the bones of tigers fetch a higher price than those of leopards as a means of inspiring courage. A Chinaman in Seoul bought and ate a whole tiger to make himself brave and fierce.⁸ The special seat of courage, ... to the Chinese, is the gall-bladder;

Beliefs as to the homoeopathic magic of the flesh of dogs, tigers, etc.

¹ W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 279.

² Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), i. 112.

³ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States*, ii. (Philadelphia, 1853) pp. 79 sq.

⁴ J. G. F. Riedel, *De stuik-en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en*

Papua (The Hague, 1886), pp. 10, 262.

⁵ James Chalmers, *Pioneering in New Guinea* (London, 1887), p. 166.

⁶ *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895) p. 179.

⁷ E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 33.

⁸ *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S., viii. (1886) p. 307.

so they sometimes procure the gall-bladders of tigers and bears, and eat the bile in the belief that it will give them courage.¹ Again, the Similkameen Indians of British Columbia imagine that to eat the heart of a bear inspires courage.²

Beliefs as to the homoeopathic magic of the flesh of wolves, bears, and serpents.

In Norse legend, Ingiald, son of King Aunund, was timid in his youth, but after eating the heart of a wolf he became very bold; Hialto gained strength and courage by eating the heart of a bear and drinking its blood;³ and when Sigurd killed the dragon Fafnir and tasted his heart's blood, he acquired thereby a knowledge of the language of birds.⁴ The belief that the language of birds or of animals in general can be learned by eating some part of a serpent appears to be ancient and wide-spread. Democritus is reported to have said that serpents were generated from the mixed blood of certain birds, and that therefore whoever ate a serpent would understand the bird language.⁵ The Arabs in antiquity were supposed to be able to draw omens from birds because they had gained a knowledge of the bird language by eating either the heart or liver of a serpent; and the people of Paraka in India are said to have learned the language of animals in general by the same means.⁶ Saxo Grammaticus relates how Rollo acquired all knowledge, including an understanding of the speech of animals, both wild and tame, by eating of a black serpent.⁷ In Norway, Sweden, and Jutland down to the nineteenth century the flesh of a white snake was thought to confer supernatural wisdom on the eater;⁸ it is a German and Bohemian superstition that whoever eats serpent's flesh understands the language of animals.⁹ Notions of the same sort, based

¹ J. Henderson, "The Medicine and Medical Practice of the Chinese," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, i. (Shanghai, 1865) pp. 35 sq. Compare Mrs. Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours* (London, 1898), i. 79.

² Mrs. S. S. Allison, "Account of the Similkameen Indians of British Columbia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) p. 313.

³ P. E. Müller on Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica* (Copenhagen, 1839-1858), vol. ii. p. 60.

⁴ *Die Edda*, übersetzt von K. Simrock⁸ (Stuttgart, 1882), pp. 180, 309.

⁵ Pliny, *Hist. Natur.* x. 137, xxix. 72.

⁶ Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, i. 20, iii. 9.

⁷ Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica*, ed. P. E. Müller (Copenhagen, 1839-1858), i. 193 sq.

⁸ P. E. Müller, note in his edition of Saxo Grammaticus, vol. ii. p. 146.

⁹ A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*² (Berlin, 1869), p. 110, § 153; J. V. Grohmann, *Aberglauben*

no doubt on a belief in the extraordinary wisdom or subtlety of the serpent, often meet us in popular tales and traditions.¹

In Morocco lethargic patients are given ants to swallow, and to eat lion's flesh will make a coward brave ;² but people abstain from eating the hearts of fowls, lest thereby they should be rendered timid.³ When a child is late in learning to speak, the Turks of Central Asia will give it the tongues of certain birds to eat.⁴ A North American Indian thought that brandy must be a decoction of hearts and tongues, "because," said he, "after drinking it I fear nothing, and I talk wonderfully."⁵ In Java there is a tiny earthworm which now and then utters a shrill sound like that of the alarm of a small clock. Hence when a public dancing girl has screamed herself hoarse in the exercise of her calling, the leader of the troop makes her eat some of these worms, in the belief that thus she will regain her voice and will, after swallowing them, be able to scream as shrilly as ever.⁶ The people of Darfur, in Central Africa, think that the liver is the seat of the soul, and that a man may enlarge his soul by eating the liver of an animal. "Whenever an animal is killed its

Various beliefs as to the homœopathic magic of the flesh of animals

und Gebräuche aus Bohmen und Mähren (Prague and Leipsic, 1864), p. 230, § 1658.

¹ Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, No. 17 ; *id.*, *Deutsche Sagen*² (Berlin, 1865-1866), No. 132 (vol. i. pp. 174-176) ; A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), p. 154 ; A. Waldau, *Bohmisches Märchenbuch* (Prague, 1860), pp. 13 *sqq.* ; Von Alpenburg, *Mythen und Sagen Tirols* (Zurich, 1857), pp. 302 *sqq.* ; W. von Schulenburg, *Wendische Volkssagen und Gebräuche aus dem Spreewald* (Leipsic, 1880), p. 96 ; P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne* (Paris, 1882), ii. 224 ; W. Grant Stewart, *The Popular Superstitions and Festive Amusements of the Highlanders of Scotland*, New Edition (London, 1851), pp. 53, 56 ; J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, New Edition (Paisley and London, 1890), No. 47, vol. ii. pp. 377 *sqq.* ; E. Prym und A. Socin, *Syrische Sagen und Märchen* (Göttingen, 1881), pp. 150 *sq.*

On the serpent in relation to the acquisition by men of the language of animals, see further my article, "The Language of Animals," *The Archaeological Review*, i. (1888) pp. 166 *sqq.* Sometimes serpents have been thought to impart a knowledge of the language of animals voluntarily by licking the ears of the seer. See Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 9. 11 *sq.* ; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, iii. 4.

² A. Leared, *Morocco and the Moors* (London, 1876), p. 281.

³ M. Quedenfeldt, "Aberglaube und halb-religiöse Bruderschaft bei den Marokkanern," *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, 1886*, p. 682 (bound up with the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xviii. 1886).

⁴ H. Vambery, *Das Türkenvolk* (Leipsic, 1885), p. 218.

⁵ Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), vi. 8.

⁶ P. J. Veth, "De leer der Signatuur," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, vii. (1894) pp. 140 *sq.*

liver is taken out and eaten, but the people are most careful not to touch it with their hands, as it is considered sacred ; it is cut up in small pieces and eaten raw, the bits being conveyed to the mouth on the point of a knife, or the sharp point of a stick. Any one who may accidentally touch the liver is strictly forbidden to partake of it, which prohibition is regarded as a great misfortune for him." Women are not allowed to eat liver, because they have no soul.¹

The flesh and blood, but especially the hearts, of dead men eaten or drunk for the sake of acquiring the good qualities of the dead.

Again, the flesh and blood of dead men are commonly eaten and drunk to inspire bravery, wisdom, or other qualities for which the men themselves were remarkable, or which are supposed to have their special seat in the particular part eaten. Thus among the mountain tribes of South-Eastern Africa there are ceremonies by which the youths are formed into guilds or lodges, and among the rites of initiation there is one which is intended to infuse courage, intelligence, and other qualities into the novices. Whenever an enemy who has behaved with conspicuous bravery is killed, his liver, which is considered the seat of valour ; his ears, which are supposed to be the seat of intelligence ; the skin of his forehead, which is regarded as the seat of perseverance ; his testicles, which are held to be the seat of strength ; and other members, which are viewed as the seat of other virtues, are cut from his body and baked to cinders. The ashes are carefully kept in the horn of a bull, and, during the ceremonies observed at circumcision, are mixed with other ingredients into a kind of paste, which is administered by the tribal priest to the youths. By this means the strength, valour, intelligence, and other virtues of the slain are believed to be imparted to the eaters.² When Basutos of the mountains have killed a very brave foe, they immediately cut out his heart and eat it, because this is supposed to give them his courage and strength in battle. At the close of the war the man who has slain such a foe is called before the chief and

¹ R. W. Felkin, "Notes on the For Tribe of Central Africa," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, xiii. (1884-1886) p. 218.

² Rev. J. Macdonald, "Manners, Customs, etc., of the South African

Tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891) p. 116 ; *id.*, *Light in Africa* (London, 1890), p. 212. Compare Rev. E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), pp. 257 sq. ; Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir* (London, 1904), p. 309.

gets from the doctor a medicine which he chews with his food. The third day after this he must wash his body in running water, and at the expiry of ten days he may return to his wives and children.¹ So an Ovambo warrior in battle will tear out the heart of his slain foe in the belief that by eating it he can acquire the bravery of the dead man.² A similar belief and practice prevail among some of the tribes of British Central Africa, notably among the Angoni. These tribes also mutilate the dead and reduce the severed parts to ashes. Afterwards the ashes are stirred into a broth or gruel, "which must be 'lapped' up with the hand and thrown into the mouth, but not eaten as ordinary food is taken, to give the soldiers courage, perseverance, fortitude, strategy, patience and wisdom."³ In former times whenever a Nandi warrior killed an enemy he used to eat a morsel of the dead man's heart to make himself brave.⁴ The Wagogo of German East Africa do the same thing for the same purpose.⁵ When Sir Charles M'Carthy was killed by the Ashantees in 1824, it is said that his heart was devoured by the chiefs of the Ashantee army, who hoped by this means to imbibe his courage. His flesh was dried and parcelled out among the lower officers for the same purpose, and his bones were long kept at Coomassie as national fetishes.⁶ The Amazons of Dahomey used to eat the hearts of foes remarkable for their bravery, in order that some of the intrepidity which animated them might be transfused into the eaters. In former days, if report may be trusted, the hearts of enemies who enjoyed a reputation for sagacity were also eaten, for the Ewe-speaking negro of these regions holds that the heart is the seat of the intellect as well as of courage.⁷ Among the Yoruba-speaking negroes of the Slave Coast the

¹ Rev. J. Macdonald, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891). p. 138; *id.*, *Light in Africa*, p. 220.

² H. Schinz, *Deutsch Südwest-Afrika* (Oldenburg and Leipsic, preface dated 1891), p. 320.

³ J. Macdonald, "East Central African Customs," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxii. (1893) p. 111. Compare J. Buchanan, *The Shire Highlands*, p. 138; Sir H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*

(London, 1897), p. 438.

⁴ A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 27.

⁵ Rev. H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 318.

⁶ Rev. J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), pp. 167 sq.

⁷ A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), pp. 99 sq.

priests of Ogun, the war-god, usually take out the hearts of human victims, which are then dried, crumbled to powder, mixed with rum, and sold to aspirants after courage, who swallow the mixture in the belief that they thereby absorb the manly virtue of which the heart is supposed to be the seat.¹ Similarly, Indians of the Orinoco region used to toast the hearts of their enemies, grind them to powder, and then drink the powder in a liquid in order to be brave and valiant the next time they went forth to fight.² The Nauras Indians of New Granada ate the hearts of Spaniards when they had the opportunity, hoping thereby to make themselves as dauntless as the dreaded Castilian chivalry.³ The Sioux Indians of North America used to reduce to powder the heart of a valiant enemy and swallow the powder, hoping thus to appropriate the dead man's valour.⁴ The Muskoghees also thought that to eat the heart of a foe would "communicate and give greater heart against the enemy. They also think that the vigorous faculties of the mind are derived from the brain, on which account, I have seen some of their heroes drink out of a human skull; they imagine, they only imbibe the good qualities it formerly contained."⁵ For a similar reason in Uganda a priest used to drink beer out of the skull of a dead king in order that he might be possessed by the king's spirit.⁶ Among the Esquimaux of Bering Strait, when young men had slain an enemy for the first time in war, they were wont to drink some of the blood and to eat a small piece of the heart of their victim in order to increase their bravery.⁷ In some tribes of North-Western Australia, when a man dies who had been a great warrior or hunter,

¹ A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1894), p. 69.

² A. Caulin, *Historia Coro-graphica natural y evangelica dela Nueva Andalusia* (1779), p. 98.

³ A. de Herrera, *General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. J. Stevens (London, 1725-1726), vi. 187.

⁴ F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1850-1851), iv. 382.

⁵ James Adair, *History of the*

American Indians (London, 1775), p. 135.

⁶ Rev. J. Roscoe, "Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxi. (1901) pp. 129 sq.; *id.*, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 45.

⁷ E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1899) p. 328.

his friends cut out the fat about his heart and eat it, because they believe that it imparts to them the courage and cunning of the deceased.¹

But while the human heart is thus commonly eaten for the sake of imbuing the eater with the qualities of its original owner, it is not, as we have already seen, the only part of the body which is consumed for this purpose. Thus in New Caledonia the victors in a fight used to eat the bodies of the slain, "not, as might be supposed, from a taste for human flesh, but in order to assimilate part of the bravery which the deceased was supposed to possess."² Among the tribes about Maryborough in Queensland, when a man was killed in a ceremonial fight, it was customary for his friends to skin and eat him, in order that his warlike virtues might pass into the eaters.³ Warriors of the Theddora and Ngarigo tribes in South-Eastern Australia used to eat the hands and feet of their slain enemies, believing that in this way they acquired some of the qualities and courage of the dead.⁴ In the Dieri tribe of Central Australia, when a man had been condemned and killed by a properly constituted party of executioners, the weapons with which the deed was done were washed in a small wooden vessel, and the bloody mixture was administered to all the slayers in a prescribed manner, while they lay down on their backs and the elders poured it into their mouths. This was believed to give them double strength, courage, and great nerve for any future enterprise.⁵ The Kamilaroi of New South Wales ate the liver as well as the heart of a brave man to get his courage.⁶ In Tonquin also there is a popular superstition that the liver of a brave man makes brave any who partake of it. Hence when a Catholic missionary was beheaded in Tonquin in 1837, the executioner cut out the liver of his victim and ate part of

Other parts than the heart are eaten for the purpose of acquiring the virtues of the deceased.

¹ E. Clement, "Ethnographical Notes on the Western Australian Aborigines," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, xvi. (1904) p. 8.

² O. Opigez, "Aperçu général sur la Nouvelle-Calédonie," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), vii. Série, vii. (1886) p. 433.

³ A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of*

South-East Australia (London, 1904), p. 753.

⁴ A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.* p. 752.

⁵ S. Gason, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895) p. 172.

⁶ Rev. W. Ridley, *Kamilaroi* (Sydney, 1875), p. 160.

it, while a soldier attempted to devour another part of it raw.¹ With a like intent the Chinese swallow the bile of notorious bandits who have been executed.² The Dyaks of Sarawak used to eat the palms of the hands and the flesh of the knees of the slain in order to steady their own hands and strengthen their own knees.³ The Tolalaki, notorious head-hunters of Central Celebes, drink the blood and eat the brains of their victims that they may become brave.⁴ The Italones of the Philippine Islands drink the blood of their slain enemies, and eat part of the back of their heads and of their entrails raw to acquire their courage. For the same reason the Efugaos, another tribe of the Philippines, suck the brains of their foes.⁵ In like manner the Kai of German New Guinea eat the brains of the enemies they kill in order to acquire their strength.⁶ Among the Kimbunda of Western Africa, when a new king succeeds to the throne, a brave prisoner of war is killed in order that the king and nobles may eat his flesh, and so acquire his strength and courage.⁷ The notorious Zulu chief Matuana drank the gall of thirty chiefs, whose people he had destroyed, in the belief that it would make him strong.⁸ It is a Zulu fancy that by eating the centre of the forehead and the eyebrow of an enemy they acquire the power of looking steadfastly at a foe.⁹ In Tud or Warrior Island, Torres Straits, men would drink the sweat of renowned warriors, and eat the scrapings from

¹ *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xi. (Lyons, 1838-1839) p. 258.

² J. Henderson, "The Medicine and Medical Practice of the Chinese," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, i. (Shanghai, 1865) pp. 35 sq.

³ A. C. Kruyt, "Het koppensnellen der Toradja's van Midden-Celebes, en zijne Betekenis," *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks, iii. (Amsterdam, 1899) p. 201.

⁴ N. Adriani en A. C. Kruijt, "Van Posso naar Mori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendingenootschap*, xlv. (1900) p. 162.

⁵ F. Blumentritt, "Der Ahnencultus

und die relig.ösen Anschauungen der Malaien des Philippinen-Archipels," *Mittheilungen der Wiener Geograph. Gesellschaft*, 1882, p. 154; *id.*, *Versuch einer Ethnographie der Philippinen* (Gotha, 1882), p. 32 (*Petermann's Mittheilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No. 67).

⁶ Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhauss's *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) p. 131.

⁷ L. Magyar, *Reisen in Sud-Afrika in den Jahren 1849-1857* (Buda-Pesth and Leipsic, 1859), pp. 273-276.

⁸ Rev. J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal* (London, 1857), p. 216.

⁹ Rev. H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions and Histories of the Zulus* (Natal and London, 1868), p. 163 note.

their finger-nails which had become coated and sodden with human blood. This was done "to make strong and like stone; no afraid."¹ In Nagir, another island of Torres Straits, in order to infuse courage into boys a warrior used to take the eye and tongue of a man whom he had killed, and after mincing them and mixing them with his urine he administered the compound to the boy, who received it with shut eyes and open mouth seated between the warrior's legs.² Before every warlike expedition the people of Minahassa in Celebes used to take the locks of hair of a slain foe and dabble them in boiling water to extract the courage; this infusion of bravery was then drunk by the warriors.³ In New Zealand "the chief was an *atua* [god], but there were powerful and powerless gods; each naturally sought to make himself one of the former; the plan therefore adopted was to incorporate the spirits of others with their own; thus, when a warrior slew a chief, he immediately gouged out his eyes and swallowed them, the *atua tonga*, or divinity, being supposed to reside in that organ; thus he not only killed the body, but also possessed himself of the soul of his enemy, and consequently the more chiefs he slew the greater did his divinity become."⁴

Even without absorbing any part of a man's bodily substance it is sometimes thought possible to acquire his moral virtues through simple contact with his bones. Thus among the Toradjas of Central Celebes, when a youth is being circumcised he is made to sit on the skull of a slain foe in order to make him brave in war;⁵ and

Moral virtues of the dead acquired through simple contact with their bones.

¹ A. C. Haddon, "The Ethnography of the Western Tribe of Torres Straits," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890) p. 414, compare p. 312; *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. (Cambridge, 1904) p. 301.

² A. C. Haddon, *op. cit.* p. 420; *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. (Cambridge, 1904) pp. 301 sq.

³ S. J. Hickson, *A Naturalist in North Celebes* (London, 1889), p. 216.

⁴ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui, or*

New Zealand and its Inhabitants, Second Edition (London, 1870), p. 352. Compare *ibid.* p. 173; W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1831-1836), i. 358; J. Dumont D'Urville, *Voyage autour du Monde et à la recherche de la Pérouse sur la corvette Astrolabe* (Paris, 1832-1833), ii. 547; E. Tregear, "The Maoris of New Zealand," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890) p. 108.

⁵ A. C. Kruyt, "Het koppensnelen der Toradja's van Midden-Celebes,

when Scanderbeg, Prince of Epirus, was dead, the Turks, who had often felt the force of his arm in battle, are said to have imagined that by wearing a piece of his bones near their heart they should be animated with a strength and valour like his.¹ A peculiar form of communion with the dead is practised by the Gallas of Eastern Africa. They think that food from the house of a dead man, especially food that he liked, or that he cooked for himself, contains a portion of his life or soul. If at the funeral feast a man eats some of that food, he fancies that he has thereby absorbed some of the life or soul of the departed, a portion of his spirit, intelligence, or courage.²

Savages sometimes seek to form a covenant of friendship with their dead foes by drinking their blood.

Strange as it may seem to us, one motive which induces a savage warrior to eat the flesh or drink the blood of the foe whom he has slain appears to be a wish to form an indissoluble covenant of friendship and brotherhood with his victim. For it is a widespread belief among savages that by transfusing a little of their blood into each other's bodies two men become kinsmen and allies; the same blood now circulating in the veins of both, neither can injure the other without at the same time injuring himself; the two have therefore given each other the strongest bond, the best possible hostages, for their good behaviour.³ Acting on this theory, the primitive warrior seeks to convert his slain foe into the firmest of friends by imbibing the dead man's blood or swallowing his flesh. That at all events appears to be the idea at the root of the following customs. When an Arawak Indian of British Guiana has murdered another, he repairs on the third night to the grave of his victim, and pressing a pointed stick through the corpse he licks off and swallows any blood that he finds adhering to the stick. For he believes that if he did not taste his victim's blood, he would go mad and die; whereas by swallowing the blood he averts any ill consequences that might flow to him from the

en zijne Beteekenis," *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks*, iii. (Amsterdam, 1899) p. 166.

¹ *The Spectator*, No. 316, March 3, 1712; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. lxvii.

² Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die geistige Cultur der Danakil, Galla und Somäl* (Berlin, 1896), p. 56.

³ For examples of the blood-covenant see H. C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant* (London, 1887). The custom is particularly common in Africa.

murder.¹ The belief and practice of the Nandi are similar: "To the present day, when a person of another tribe has been slain by a Nandi, the blood must be carefully washed off the spear or sword into a cup made of grass, and drunk by the slayer. If this is not done it is thought that the man will become frenzied."² So among the tribes of the Lower Niger "it is customary and necessary for the executioner to lick the blood that is on the blade"; moreover, "the custom of licking the blood off the blade of a sword by which a man has been killed in war is common to all these tribes, and the explanation given me by the Ibo, which is generally accepted, is, that if this was not done, the act of killing would so affect the strikers as to cause them to run amok among their own people; because the sight and smell of blood render them absolutely senseless as well as regardless of all consequences. And this licking the blood is the only sure remedy, and the only way in which they can recover themselves."³ Among the Shans executioners believe that they would soon fall ill and die if they did not taste the blood of their victims.⁴

The most probable explanation of these practices seems to be that a manslayer is thought to be driven mad by the ghost of his victim, who takes possession of his murderer's body and causes him to demean himself in a frantic manner; whereas, as soon as the slayer has tasted the blood of the slain, he becomes a blood-brother of his victim, whose ghost accordingly will do him no harm.⁵ This hypothesis is strongly confirmed by the reason alleged for

Blood-covenant formed by manslayers with the ghosts of their victims.

¹ Rev. J. H. Bernau, *Missionary Labours in British Guiana* (London, 1847), pp. 57 sq.; R. Schomburgk, *Reisen in Britisch-Guiana* (Leipsic, 1847-1848), ii. 497.

² A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 27.

³ A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London, 1906), pp. 180, 181 sq.

⁴ Mrs. Leslie Milne, *Shans at Home* (London, 1910), p. 192.

⁵ The Kukis of north-eastern India believe that the ghost of an animal as well as of a man will haunt its slayer and drive him mad unless he performs

a ceremony called *ai*. For example, a man who has killed a tiger must dress himself up as a woman, put flints into the tiger's mouth, and eat eggs himself, after which he makes a speech to the tiger and gives it three cuts over the head with a sword. During this performance the principal performer must keep perfectly grave. Should he accidentally laugh, he says, "The porcupine laughed," referring to a real porcupine which he carries in his arms for the purpose. See Lieut.-Colonel J. Shakespeare, "The Kuki-Lushai Clans," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxix. (1909) pp. 380 sq.

a similar custom formerly observed by the Maoris. When a warrior had slain his foe in combat, he tasted his blood, believing that this preserved him from the avenging spirit of his victim; for they imagined that "the moment a slayer had tasted the blood of the slain, the dead man became a part of his being and placed him under the protection of the *atua* or guardian-spirit of the deceased."¹ In the light of these facts we can now explain the opinion, still widely held in Calabria, that if a murderer is to escape, he must suck his victim's blood from the reeking blade of the dagger with which he did the deed;² and, further, we can see at least a glimmering of reason, however misapplied, in the confidence cherished by the Botocudos of Brazil, that if only they ate a morsel of the flesh of their enemies, the arrows of the fellow tribesmen of the slain would not be able to hit them.³ Indeed the evidence which I have just adduced suggests that the intention of forming a blood-covenant with the dead may have been a common motive for the cannibalism which has been so often practised by savage victors on the bodies of their victims.⁴ If that was so, it would to some extent mitigate the horror with which such a practice is naturally viewed by civilised observers; since it would reveal the cannibal feast, no longer in the lurid light of a brutal outburst of blind rage and hatred against the vanquished, but in the milder aspect of a solemn rite designed to wipe out the memory of past hostilities and to establish a permanent relation of friendship and good fellowship with the dead.

Com-
munion
with the
dead by
swallowing
their ashes.

Another mode of entering into communion with the dead by means of their bodily relics is to grind their bones to powder or to burn them to ashes, and then to swallow the powder or the ashes mixed with food or drink. This method of absorbing the virtues or appropriating the souls

¹ J. Dumont D'Urville, *Voyage autour du Monde et à la recherche de la Pérouse* (Paris, 1832-1833), iii. 305.

² Vincenzo Dorsa, *La Tradizione greco-latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore*

(Cosenza, 1884), p. 138.

³ F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1850-1851), iv. 382.

⁴ Some of the evidence has already been cited by me in *Psyche's Task*, pp. 56-58.

of deceased kinsfolk has been practised by a number of Indian tribes of South America. Thus the Tarianas, Tucanos, and other tribes in the valley of the Amazon, about a month after the funeral, disinter the corpse, which is then much decomposed, and put it in a great pan or oven over the fire till all the volatile parts are driven off with a most horrible stench, leaving only a black carbonaceous paste. This paste is then pounded into a fine powder, and being mixed in several large vats of the native beer, the liquor is drunk by the assembled company until all is consumed. They believe that thus the virtues of the deceased are transmitted to the drinkers.¹ Similarly among the Xomanas and Passes of the Rio Negro and Japura River in Brazil, it was customary to burn the bones of the dead and mingle the ashes in their drink; "for they fancied, that by this means they received into their own bodies the spirits of their deceased friends."² We may suppose that a similar motive underlies the custom wherever it has been observed by the Indians of South America, even when this particular motive is not expressly alleged by our authorities. For example, the Retoroños, Pechuyos, and Guarayos of eastern Bolivia "manifested their feeling for the dead by a remarkable custom: when the body had mouldered they dug up the bones, reduced them to powder, and mingling it with maize, composed a sort of cake, which they considered it the strongest mark of friendship to offer and partake. Some of the first missionaries were regaled with this family bread, before they knew what they were eating."³ Again, in the province of Coro, in north-western Venezuela, when a chief died, they lamented him in the night, celebrating his actions; then they parched his body at the fire, and reducing it to powder drank it up in their liquor, deeming this act the highest honour they could pay him.⁴ The Tauraré Indians of the Rio Enivra burn their dead, keep their ashes in hollow reeds, and eat a portion of the ashes with every

¹ A. R. Wallace, *Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, Second Edition (London, 1889), ch. xvii. pp. 346 sq.

² R. Southey, *History of Brazil*, iii. (London, 1819) p. 722.

³ R. Southey, *op. cit.* iii. 204.

⁴ A. de Herrera, *The General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens (London, 1725-1726), iv. 45.

meal.¹ So in antiquity Artemisia expressed her love and grief for her dead husband Mausolus by powdering his ashes and drinking them in water.² It is said that Mwamba, a recent king or chief of the Wemba in Northern Rhodesia, having detected one of his wives in an intrigue with another man, caused the guilty pair to be burned alive, while he watched their tortures from a raised seat. "Shortly after this, however, he would seem to have been stricken with remorse and the dread of Nemesis. The presiding witch-doctor was therefore ordered to collect the ashes of the twain, and decoct therefrom a potion, which was administered to the king to avert the avenging furies of evil spirits of the murdered pair, which might otherwise have hounded him into a fit of madness."³ By drinking the ashes of his victims the king sought to identify himself with them and so to protect himself against their angry ghosts, just as we have seen that manslayers seek to protect themselves against the ghosts of their victims by drinking their blood.⁴

Savages attempt to inoculate themselves with moral and other virtues by

Just as the savage thinks that he can swallow the moral and other virtues in the shape of food, so he fondly imagines that he can inoculate himself with them. Here in Europe we as yet inoculate only against disease; in Basutoland they have learned the art of inoculating not

¹ A. Reich und F. Stegelmann, "Bei den Indianern des Urubamba und des Envira," *Globus*, lxxxiii. (1903) p. 137. On similar custom practised by the American Indians see further De la Borde, *Relation de l'Origine, Mœurs, Coustumes, Religion, Guerres et Voyages des Caraïbes Sauvages*, p. 37 (forming part of the *Recueil de divers Voyages faits en Afrique et en l'Amérique*, Paris, 1684); J. F. Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages Américains* (Paris, 1724), ii. 444-446; A. N. Cabeça de Vaca, *Relation et Naufrages* (Paris, 1837), p. 109 (in Ternaux Compans' *Voyages, Relations et Mémoires originaux pour servir à l'Histoire de la Découverte de l'Amérique*); R. Southey, *History of Brazil*, i. (Second Edition, London, 1822), Supplemental Notes, p. xxxvi.; F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris,

1850-1851), iv. 380; J. G. Müller *Geschichte der amerikanischen Urreligionen* (Bâle, 1867), pp. 289 sq.; H. A. Coudreau, *La France Équinoxiale* (Paris, 1887), ii. 173; Theodor Koch, "Die Anthropophagie der sudamerikanischen Indianer," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, xii. (1899) pp. 78-110; Th. Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern* (Berlin, 1909-1910), ii. 152. Some Indians of Guiana rubbed their limbs with water in which the ashes of their dead were mingled. See A. Biet, *Voyage de la France Équinoxiale en l'Isle de Cayenne* (Paris, 1664), p. 392.

² Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, x. 18; Valerius Maximus, iv. 6. 5.

³ C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), p. 55.

⁴ See above, p. 154 sqq.

merely against disease but against moral evil and public calamity, against wild beasts and winter cold. For example, if an epidemic is raging, if public affairs go ill, or war threatens to break out, the chief, with paternal solicitude, seeks to guard his people against the evils that menace them by inoculating them with his own hand. Armed with a lancet, he makes a slight incision in the temples of each one, and rubs into the wound a pinch of magic powder which has been carefully compounded of the ashes of certain plants and animals. The plants and animals whose ashes compose this sovereign medicine are always symbolical; in other words, they are supposed to be imbued with the virtues which the chief desires to impart to his people. They consist, for example, of plants whose foliage withstands the rigours of winter; mimosas, whose thorns present an impenetrable barrier to all animals of the deer kind; the claws or a few hairs from the mane of a lion, the bravest of beasts; the tuft of hair round the root of the horns of a bull, which is the emblem of strength and fecundity; the skin of a serpent; the feathers of a kite or a hawk.¹ So when the Barotsé wish to be swift of foot, to cripple the fleeing game, and to ensure an abundant catch, they scarify their arms and legs and rub into the wounds a powder made of the burnt bones of various beasts and birds.² Among some tribes of South-Eastern Africa the same magic powder which is made from various parts of slain foes, and is eaten by boys at circumcision,³ is used to inoculate the fighting-men in time of war. The medicine-man makes an incision in the forehead of each warrior, and puts the powder into the cut, thus infusing strength and courage for the battle.⁴ Among some Caffre tribes the powdered charcoal with which the warriors are thus inoculated in various parts of their bodies is procured by burning the flesh of a live ox with a certain kind of

making cuts in their bodies and inserting in the cuts the ashes of animals and plants which they suppose to be endowed with the virtues in question.

¹ Rev. E. Casalis, *The Basutos*, (London, 1861), pp. 256 sq.

² E. Holub, *Sieben Jahre in Süd Afrika* (Vienna, 1881), ii. 361.

³ See above, p. 148.

⁴ J. Macdonald, "Manners, Cus-

toms, etc., of South African Tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xx. (1891) p. 133. The Barolong, a Bechuana tribe, observe a custom of this sort. See W. Joest, "Bei den Barolong," *Das Ausland*, 16th June 1884, p. 464.

wood or roots, to which magic virtue is attributed.¹ The Basutos think that they can render themselves invulnerable by inoculation,² and the Zulus imagine that they can protect themselves against snake-bite by similar means. But the saving virtue of the inoculation is not permanent; like vaccination, it has to be periodically renewed. Hence every year, about October, Zulu men, women, and children have a small piece of skin cut from the back of the left hand, and the poison of a snake, mixed with spittle, is rubbed into the wound. No snake will ever approach a man who has thus been inoculated; and what is even more curious, if the shadow of an inoculated man should touch the shadow of a man who has not been inoculated, the latter will fall down as if he had been shot, overcome by the poison transmitted through the shadow: so exceedingly virulent is the virus.³ Among the Jukos, a tribe of the Benue River in Northern Nigeria, before a hunter goes forth to hunt elephants, he makes four cuts in his left arm and rubs in "medicine"; this helps him to see the beast next day.⁴

The Zulus think they can inoculate themselves with celestial power.

Again, the Zulus know how to inoculate themselves not merely with moral virtue, but even with celestial power. For you must know that the Zulus have heaven-herds or sky-herds, who drive away clouds big with hail and lightning, just as herdsmen drive cattle before them. These heaven-herds are in sympathy with the heaven. For when the heaven is about to be darkened, and before the clouds appear or the thunder mutters, the heart of the heaven-herd feels it coming, for it is hot within him and he is excited by anger. When the sky begins to be overcast, he too grows dark like it; when it thunders, he frowns, that his face may be black as the scowl of the angry heaven. Now the way in which he thus becomes sympathetic with all the changing moods of the inconstant heaven is this: he eats the heaven and scarifies himself with it. And the way

¹ Col. Maclean, *A Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs* (Cape Town, 1866), p. 82.

² Father Porte, "Les reminiscences d'un missionnaire du Basutoland," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) p. 149.

³ Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood*

(London, 1906), p. 70, compare p. 43.

⁴ Lieut. H. Pope-Hennessy, "Notes on the Jukos and other Tribes of the Middle Benue," *Anthropological Reviews and Miscellanea*, p. (30); appended to *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxx. (1900).

in which he eats the heaven and scarifies himself with it is as follows. When a bullock is struck by lightning, the wizard takes its flesh and puts it in a sherd and eats it while it is hot, mixed with medicine ; and thus he eats the heaven by eating the flesh, which came from the beast, which was struck by the lightning, which came down from the heaven. And in like manner he scarifies himself with the heaven, for he makes cuts in his body and rubs in medicine mixed with the flesh of a bullock that was struck by lightning.¹ In some Caffre tribes, when an animal or a man has been struck by lightning, the priest comes straightway and vaccinates every person in the kraal, apparently as a sort of insurance against lightning. He sets to work by tying a number of charms round the neck of every man and woman in the village, in order that they may have power to dig the dead man's grave ; for in these tribes beasts and men alike that have been struck by lightning are always buried, and the flesh is never eaten. Next a sacrificial beast is killed and a fire kindled, in which certain magic woods or roots are burned to charcoal, and then ground to powder. The priest thereupon makes incisions in various parts of the bodies of each inmate of the kraal, and rubs a portion of the powdered charcoal into the cuts ; the rest of the powder he mixes with sour milk, and gives to them all to drink. From the time the lightning strikes the kraal until this ceremony has been performed, the people are obliged to abstain entirely from the use of milk. Their heads are then shaved. Should a house have been struck by lightning it must be abandoned, with everything in it. Until all these rites have been performed, none of the people may leave the kraal or have any intercourse whatever with others ; but when the ceremonies have been duly performed, the people are pronounced clean, and may again associate with their neighbours. However, for some months afterwards none of the live stock of the kraal and few other things belonging to it are allowed to pass into other hands, whether by way of sale or of gift.² Hence it would appear that all persons in a

Some
Caffres
inoculate
themselves
against
lightning.

¹ Rev. H. Callaway, *Religious Kafr Laws and Customs* (Cape Town, 1866), pp. 83 sq.

² Col. Maclean, *A Compendium of*

village which has been struck by lightning are supposed to be infected with a dangerous virus, which they might communicate to their neighbours; and the vaccination is intended to disinfect them as well as to protect them against the recurrence of a like calamity. Young Carib warriors used to be inoculated for the purpose of making them brave and hardy. Some time before the ceremony the lad who was to be operated on caught a bird of prey of a particular sort and kept it in captivity till the day appointed. When the time was come and friends had assembled to witness the ceremony, the father of the boy seized the bird by its legs and crushed its head by beating it on the head of his son, who dared not wince under the rain of blows that nearly stunned him. Next the father bruised and pounded the bird's flesh, and steeped it in water together with a certain spice; after which he scored and slashed his son's body in all directions, washed his wounds with the decoction, and gave him the bird's heart to eat, in order, as it was said, that he might be the braver for it.¹

Some savages attempt to acquire the physical and mental qualities of the dead by anointing themselves with their remains.

It is not always deemed necessary either that the mystical substance should be swallowed by the communicant, or that he should receive it by the more painful process of scarification and inoculation. Sometimes it is thought enough merely to smear or anoint him with it. Among some of the Australian blacks it used to be a common practice to kill a man, cut out his caul-fat, and rub themselves with it, in the belief that all the qualities, both physical and mental, which had distinguished the original owner of the fat, were thus communicated by its means to the person who greased himself with it.² The Kamilaroi tribe of New South Wales sometimes deposited their dead on the forks of trees, and lighting fires underneath caught the fat as it dropped; for they hoped with

¹ Du Tertre, *Histoire generale des Isles de S. Christophe, de la Guadeloupe, de la Martinique et autres dans l'Amerique* (Paris, 1654), pp. 417 sq.; *id.*, *Histoire generale des Antilles* (Paris, 1667-1671), ii. 377; Rochefort, *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des*

*Iles Antilles*² (Rotterdam, 1665), p. 556.

² R. Brough Smith, *Aborigines of Victoria* (Melbourne and London, 1878), i. p. xxix., ii. 313; A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 367 sqq.

the droppings to acquire the strength and courage of the deceased.¹ The Wollaroi, another tribe of New South Wales, used to place the dead on a stage, and the mourners sat under it and rubbed their bodies with the juices of putrefaction which exuded from the rotten body, believing that this made them strong. Others collected these juices in vessels, and the young men rubbed the stinking liquid into their persons in order to acquire the good qualities of the departed.² Wherever a like custom has been practised, as it has been, for example, by some of the natives of New Guinea, Timor Laut, and Madagascar,³ we may conjecture that the motive has been similar. Again, the negroes of Southern Guinea regard the brain as the seat of wisdom, and think it a pity that, when a wise man dies, his brain and his wisdom should go to waste together. So they sever his head from his body and hang it up over a mass of chalk, which, as the head decays, receives the drippings of brain and wisdom. Any one who applies the precious dripping to his forehead is supposed to absorb thereby the intelligence of the dead.⁴ Among the Beku, a tribe of dwarfs attached to the Fans in West Africa, the great charm for success in hunting is procured by killing a man and afterwards, when the corpse has begun to moulder in the grave, detaching the head from the body. The brain, heart, eyes and hairs of the body are then removed and mixed, according to a secret formula, with special incantations. When the compound is dry, the hunter rubs himself

¹ Rev. W. Ridley, *Kamilaroi* (Sydney, 1875), p. 160.

² A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 467, 468.

³ J. Chalmers and W. W. Gill, *Work and Adventure in New Guinea* (London, 1885), pp. 130, 265, 308; J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), p. 308; Rev. J. Sibree, *The Great African Island* (London, 1880), p. 241. Other or the same peoples sometimes drink the juices of the decaying bodies of their kinsfolk, doubtless for a similar reason. See *Reports of the Cambridge Anthro-*

logical Expedition to Torres Straits, vi. (Cambridge, 1906) p. 159; J. Chalmers and W. Gill, *op. cit.* pp. 27, 265; Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, New Edition (New York, 1851), ii. 139; J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* p. 267; A. Bastian, *Indonesien*, ii. (Berlin, 1885) p. 95; *id.*, *Die Volker des Ostlichen Asien*, v. (Jena, 1869) p. 91; P. J. Veth, *Borneo's Westerafdeeling* (Zaltbommel, 1854-1856), ii. 270; J. Jacobs, *Eenigen Tijd onder de Baliërs* (Batavia, 1883), p. 53.

⁴ Rev. J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), p. 394.

with it "in order to acquire a dash of the higher power with which people are endowed in the other life, and in particular their invisibility."¹ Among the Digger Indians of California, when a man died, it was customary to burn the body to ashes, mix the ashes with a thick resinous gum extracted from a pine-tree, and then smear the gum on the head of the mourner, where it was allowed to remain till it gradually wore away.² The motive for the custom is not mentioned, but it was probably, like the motive for the parallel custom of swallowing the ashes of the dead, a desire to participate in the powers and virtues of the departed. At a certain stage of the ceremonies by which, in the Andaman Islands, a boy is initiated into manhood, the chief takes the carcass of a boar and presses it heavily down on the shoulders, back, and limbs of the young man as he sits, silent and motionless, on the ground. This is done to make him brave and strong. Afterwards the animal is cut up, and its melted fat is poured over the novice, and rubbed into his body.³ The Arabs of Eastern Africa believe that an unguent of lion's fat inspires a man with boldness, and makes the wild beasts flee in terror before him.⁴ In the forests of North-western Brazil there lives a small falcon with a red beak which is so sharp-sighted that it can detect even a worm on the ground from a considerable height. When a Koba Indian has killed one of these birds, he pokes out its eyes and allows the fluid to drip into his own, believing that in this way they will be sharp-sighted like those of the falcon.⁵ Most of the Baperis, or Malekootos, a Bechuana tribe of South Africa, revere or, as they say, sing the porcupine, which seems to be their totem, as the sun is the totem of some members of the tribe, and a species of ape the totem of others. Those of them who have the porcupine for their totem swear by the animal, and lament if any one injures it.

The juices of animals are sometimes similarly applied for the same purpose.

¹ Mgr. Le Roy, "Les Pygmées," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xxix. (1897) p. 210.

² "Mourning for the Dead among the Digger Indians," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, iii. (1874) p. 530.

³ E. H. Man, *Aboriginal Inhabit-*

ants of the Andaman Islands, p. 66.

⁴ Jerome Becker, *La Vie en Afrique* (Paris and Brussels, 1887), ii. 366.

⁵ Th. Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern* (Berlin, 1909-1910), ii. 153.

When a porcupine has been killed, they religiously gather up its bristles, spit on them, and rub their eyebrows with them, saying, "They have slain our brother, our master, one of ourselves, him whom we sing." They would fear to die if they ate of its flesh. Nevertheless they esteem it wholesome for an infant of the clan to rub into his joints certain portions of the paunch of the animal mixed with the sap of some plants to which they ascribe an occult virtue.¹ So at the solemn ceremony which is observed by the Central Australian tribes for the purpose of multiplying kangaroos, men of the kangaroo totem not only eat a little kangaroo flesh as a sacrament, but also have their bodies anointed with kangaroo fat. Doubtless the intention alike of the eating and of the anointing is to impart to the man the qualities of his totem animal, and thus to enable him to perform the ceremonies for the multiplication of the breed.²

In ancient Mexico the priests of the god Tezcatlipoca, before they engaged in religious rites which tried the nerve, used to smear their bodies with a magic ointment, which had the effect of banishing all fear, so that they would confront wild beasts in their dens or slaughter people in sacrifice with the utmost indifference. The ointment which had this marvellous property was compounded of the ashes of venomous reptiles and insects, such as spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and vipers, which were brayed up in a mortar along with living specimens of the same creatures, tobacco, soot, and the ashes of black caterpillars. This precious substance was then set before the god in little pots, because they said it was his victuals; therefore they called it a divine food. And when the priests had besmeared them-

Magical
ointment
used by
Mexican
priests.

¹ T. Arrousset et F. Daumas, *Voyage d'Exploration au Nord-est de la Colonie du Cap de Bonne-Espérance* (Paris, 1842), pp. 349 sq.

² Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), pp. 204 sq. Men of other totem clans also partake of their totems sacramentally at these *Intichiuma* ceremonies (Spencer and Gillen, *op. cit.* pp. 202-206). As to the *Intichiuma* ceremonies, see *The Magic Art and the*

Evolution of Kings, i. 85 sqq. Another Central Australian mode of communicating qualities by external application is seen in the custom of beating boys on the calves of their legs with the leg-bone of an eagle-hawk; strength is supposed to pass thereby from the bone into the boy's leg. See Spencer and Gillen, *op. cit.* p. 472; *Report on the Work of the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia*, Part iv. (London and Melbourne, 1896), p. 180.

selves with it, they were ready to discharge the duties of their holy office by butchering their fellow men in the human shambles without one qualm of fear or one visiting of compassion. Moreover, an unction of this ointment was deemed a sovereign remedy for sickness and disease; hence they named it "the divine physic"; and sick people came from all quarters to the priests, as to their saviours, to have their ailing parts anointed with the divine physic and to be made whole.¹

Qualities of a person, animal, or thing imparted by fumigation.

Sometimes the valuable qualities of an animal or of a person may be imparted to another by the more delicate and ethereal process of fumigation. This refined mode of cultivating the moral virtues is or used to be practised by the Caffres of South Africa. Thus in former times as soon as a baby was born, some dirt was scraped from the forearm and other parts of the father's body and mixed with special medicines. The mixture was then made to smoulder and the baby was fumigated or "washed" in the smoke. This ceremony was deemed of great importance, being the established way of communicating to the child a portion of the ancestral spirit (*itongo*) through the physical medium of the father's dirt, to which the spirit naturally adheres. But while the dirt was endowed with this spiritual potency, the moral character of the infant depended in a large measure on the nature of the medicines with which the dirt was compounded, and accordingly much thought and skill were devoted to their selection and preparation. Foremost among the ingredients was a meteorite, burnt to a cinder and ground to powder. The effect of this powder, well mixed with the dirt, and introduced into the orifices of the child's body by means of smoke, is to close the anterior fontanelle of the baby's skull, to strengthen the bones of that important part of his person, to communicate vigour to his mind and courage to his disposition, and in general to brace and harden his whole system with the strength and hardness of the

¹ *Manuscrit Ramirez, Histoire de l'Origine des Indiens qui habitent la Nouvelle Espagne selon leurs traditions*, publié par D. Charnay (Paris, 1903), pp. 171-173; J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (Hak-

luyt Society, London, 1880), ii. 364-367; E. Seler, *Allmexikanische Studien*, ii. (Berlin, 1899), pp. 43 sq. (*Veröffentlichungen aus dem königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde*).

meteorite. Other ingredients which have a most beneficial effect are the powdered whiskers of a leopard, the claws of a lion, and the skin of a salamander. The mode of administering the medicine is as follows. You set fire to the compound, and while it smoulders, you hold the infant, wrapt up in a blanket, over the burning mass so as to compel it to inhale the smoke. To make sure of producing the desired effect, some of the powdered medicine is mixed with the baby's food.¹ In like manner by holding the smouldering feather of a vulture under a baby's nose you render the child valiant and brave like a vulture, and if you do the same with a peacock's feather, your offspring will be, like a peacock, impavid and never dismayed by thunder or other terrible noises.²

It is now easy to understand why a savage should desire to partake of the flesh of an animal or man whom he regards as divine. By eating the body of the god he shares in the god's attributes and powers. And when the god is a corn-god, the corn is his proper body ; when he is a vine-god, the juice of the grape is his blood ; and so by eating the bread and drinking the wine the worshipper partakes of the real body and blood of his god. Thus the drinking of wine in the rites of a vine-god like Dionysus is not an act of revelry, it is a solemn sacrament.³ Yet a time comes when reasonable men find it hard to understand how any one in his senses can suppose that by eating bread or drinking wine he consumes the body or blood of a deity. "When we call corn Ceres and wine Bacchus," says Cicero, "we use a common figure of speech ; but do you imagine that anybody is so insane as to believe that the thing he feeds upon is a god ?"⁴ In writing thus the Roman philosopher little foresaw that in Rome itself, and in the countries which have derived their creed from her, the belief which he here stigmatises as insane was destined to persist for thousands of years,

The savage custom of eating a god.

Cicero on transubstantiation.

¹ Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood* (London, 1906), pp. 12 sq.

² Dudley Kidd, *op. cit.* pp. 20 sq.

³ On the custom of eating a god, see also a paper by Felix Liebrecht, "Der aufgegessene Gott," *Zur Volkskunde* (Heilbronn, 1879), pp. 436-439; and

especially W. R. Smith, article "Sacrifice," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, vol. xxi. pp. 137 sq. On wine as the blood of a god, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 248 sqq.

⁴ Cicero, *De natura deorum*, iii. 16. 41.

as a cardinal doctrine of religion, among peoples who pride themselves on their religious enlightenment by comparison with the blind superstitions of pagan antiquity. So little can even the greatest minds of one generation foresee the devious track which the religious faith of mankind will pursue in after ages.

CHAPTER XIII

KILLING THE DIVINE ANIMAL

§ I. *Killing the Sacred Buzzard*

IN the preceding chapters we saw that many communities which have progressed so far as to subsist mainly by agriculture have been in the habit of killing and eating their farinaceous deities either in their proper form of corn, rice, and so forth, or in the borrowed shapes of animals and men. It remains to shew that hunting and pastoral tribes, as well as agricultural peoples, have been in the habit of killing the beings whom they worship. Among the worshipful beings or gods, if indeed they deserve to be dignified by that name, whom hunters and shepherds adore and kill are animals pure and simple, not animals regarded as embodiments of other supernatural beings. Our first example is drawn from the Indians of California, who living in a fertile country¹ under a serene and temperate sky, nevertheless rank near the bottom of the savage scale. Where a stretch of iron-bound coast breaks the long line of level sands that receive the rollers of the Pacific, there stood in former days, not far from the brink of the great cliffs, the white mission-house of San Juan Capistrano. Among the monks who here exercised over a handful of wretched Indians the austere discipline of Catholic Spain, there was a certain Father Geronimo Boscana who has bequeathed to us a precious record of the customs and superstitions of his savage flock. Thus he tells us that the

Hunting and pastoral tribes, as well as agricultural peoples, have been in the habit of killing and eating the beings whom they worship.

The Californian Indians used solemnly to kill the great buzzard which they adored; but they believed that though they slew it annually, it always came to life again.

¹ This does not refer to the Californian peninsula, which is an arid and treeless wilderness of rock and sand.

Acagchemem tribe adored the great buzzard, and that once a year they celebrated a great festival called *Panes* or bird-feast in its honour. The day selected for the festival was made known to the public on the evening before its celebration and preparations were at once made for the erection of a special temple (*vanquech*), which seems to have been a circular or oval enclosure of stakes with the stuffed skin of a coyote or prairie-wolf set up on a hurdle to represent the god Chinigchinich. When the temple was ready, the bird was carried into it in solemn procession and laid on an altar erected for the purpose. Then all the young women, whether married or single, began to run to and fro, as if distracted, some in one direction and some in another, while the elders of both sexes remained silent spectators of the scene, and the captains, tricked out in paint and feathers, danced round their adored bird. These ceremonies being concluded, they seized upon the bird and carried it to the principal temple, all the assembly uniting in the grand display, and the captains dancing and singing at the head of the procession. Arrived at the temple, they killed the bird without losing a drop of its blood. The skin was removed entire and preserved with the feathers as a relic or for the purpose of making the festal garment or *paelt*. The carcass was buried in a hole in the temple, and the old women gathered round the grave weeping and moaning bitterly, while they threw various kinds of seeds or pieces of food on it, crying out, "Why did you run away? Would you not have been better with us? you would have made *pinole* (a kind of gruel) as we do, and if you had not run away, you would not have become a *Panes*," and so on. When this ceremony was concluded, the dancing was resumed and kept up for three days and nights. They said that the *Panes* was a woman who had run off to the mountains and there been changed into a bird by the god Chinigchinich. They believed that though they sacrificed the bird annually, she came to life again and returned to her home in the mountains. Moreover they thought that "as often as the bird was killed, it became multiplied; because every year all the different Capitanes celebrated the same feast of *Panes*, and were firm in the

opinion that the birds sacrificed were but one and the same female."¹

The unity in multiplicity thus postulated by the Californians is very noticeable and helps to explain their motive for killing the divine bird. The notion of the life of a species as distinct from that of an individual, easy and obvious as it seems to us, appears to be one which the Californian savage cannot grasp. He is unable to conceive the life of the species otherwise than as an individual life, and therefore as exposed to the same dangers and calamities which menace and finally destroy the life of the individual. Apparently he imagines that a species left to itself will grow old and die like an individual, and that therefore some step must be taken to

Perhaps they hoped by the sacrifice of the individual bird to preserve the species

¹ Father Geronimo Boscana, "Chinichinich; a historical account of the origin, customs, and traditions of the Indians at the missionary establishment of St. Juan Capistrano, Alta California," appended to Alfred Robinson's *Life in California* (New York, 1846), pp. 291 sq.; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii. 168. The mission station of San Juan Capistrano is described by R. H. Dana (*Two Years before the Mast*, chaps. xviii. and xxiv.). A favourable picture of the missions is drawn by G. H. von Langsdorf (*Reise um die Welt*, Frankfurt, 1812, ii. pp. 134 sqq.), by Duflos de Mofras ("Fragment d'un Voyage en Californie," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), ii. Série, xix. (1843) pp. 9-13), and by a writer (H. H.) in *The Century Magazine*, May, 1883, pp. 2-18. But the severe discipline of the Spanish monks is noticed by other travellers. We are told that the Indians laboured during the day in the fields to support their Spanish masters, were driven to church twice or thrice a day to hear service in a language which they did not understand, and at night were shut up in crowded and comfortless barracks, without windows and without beds. When the monks desired to make new proselytes, or rather to capture new slaves, they called in the aid of the soldiery, who attacked the Indian villages by night, lassoed the fugitives,

and dragged them back at their horses' tails to slavery in the missions. See O. von Kotzebue, *Reise um die Welt* (Weimar, 1830), ii. 42 sqq.; F. W. Beechey, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait* (London, 1831), ii. chap. i.; A. Schabelski, "Voyage aux colonies russes de l'Amérique," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), ii. Série, iv. (1835) pp. 216-218. A poet has described with prosaic accuracy the pastoral crook by which these good shepherds brought back their strayed lambs to the spiritual fold:—

"Six horses sprang across the level ground
As six dragoons in open order dashed;
Above their heads the lassos circled round,
In every eye a pious fervour flashed;
They charged the camp, and in one moment more
They lassoed six and reconverted four."
(Bret Harte, *Friar Pedro's Ride*.)

In the verses inscribed *The Angelus*, heard at the *Mission Dolores*, 1868, and beginning

"Bells of the Past, whose long-forgotten music
Still fills the wide expanse,"

the same poet shews that he is not insensible to the poetical side of those old Spanish missions, which have long passed away.

save from extinction the particular species which he regards as divine. The only means he can think of to avert the catastrophe is to kill a member of the species in whose veins the tide of life is still running strong, and has not yet stagnated among the fens of old age. The life thus diverted from one channel will flow, he fancies, more freshly and freely in a new one; in other words, the slain animal will revive and enter on a new term of life with all the spring and energy of youth. To us this reasoning is transparently absurd, but so too is the custom. If a better explanation, that is, one more consonant with the facts and with the principles of savage thought, can be given of the custom, I will willingly withdraw the one here proposed. A similar confusion, it may be noted, between the individual life and the life of the species was made by the Samoans. Each family had for its god a particular species of animal; yet the death of one of these animals, for example an owl, was not the death of the god, "he was supposed to be yet alive, and incarnate in all the owls in existence."¹

§ 2. *Killing the Sacred Ram*

Ancient
Egyptian
sacrifice of
a ram at
the festival
of Ammon.

The rude Californian rite which we have just considered has a close parallel in the religion of ancient Egypt. The Thebans and all other Egyptians who worshipped the Theban god Ammon held rams to be sacred, and would not sacrifice them. But once a year at the festival of Ammon they killed a ram, skinned it, and clothed the image of the god in the skin. Then they mourned over the ram and buried it in a sacred tomb. The custom was explained by a story that Zeus had once exhibited himself to Hercules clad in the fleece and wearing the head of a ram.² Of course the ram in this case was simply the beast-god of Thebes, as the wolf was the beast-god of Lycopolis, and the goat was the beast-god of Mendes. In other words, the ram was Ammon himself. On the monuments, it is true, Ammon appears in semi-human form with the body of a man and the head of a

¹ G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), p. 21. Compare *id.*, pp. 26, 61.

² Herodotus, ii. 42. The custom has been already referred to above, p. 41.

ram.¹ But this only shews that he was in the usual chrysalis state through which beast-gods regularly pass before they emerge as full-blown anthropomorphic gods. The ram, therefore, was killed, not as a sacrifice to Ammon, but as the god himself, whose identity with the beast is plainly shewn by the custom of clothing his image in the skin of the slain ram. The reason for thus killing the ram-god annually may have been that which I have assigned for the general custom of killing a god and for the special Californian custom of killing the divine buzzard. As applied to Egypt, this explanation is supported by the analogy of the bull-god Apis, who was not suffered to outlive a certain term of years.² The intention of thus putting a limit to the life of the human god was, as I have argued, to secure him from the weakness and frailty of age. The same reasoning would explain the custom—probably an older one—of putting the beast-god to death annually, as was done with the ram of Thebes.

One point in the Theban ritual—the application of the skin to the image of the god—deserves particular attention. If the god was at first the living ram, his representation by an image must have originated later. But how did it originate? One answer to this question is perhaps furnished by the practice of preserving the skin of the animal which is slain as divine. The Californians, as we have seen, preserved the skin of the buzzard; and the skin of the goat, which is killed on the harvest-field as a representative of the corn-spirit, is kept for various superstitious purposes.³ The skin in fact was kept as a token or memorial of the god, or rather as containing in it a part of the divine life, and it had only to be stuffed or stretched upon a frame to become a regular image of him. At first an image of this kind would be renewed annually,⁴ the new image being provided by the

Use of the skin of the sacrificed animal.

¹ Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*,² i. 2 (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1909), p. 73 § 180. Compare Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 1 sqq.

² Above, p. 36.

³ Above, p. 170; vol. i. p. 285.

⁴ The Italmens of Kamtchatka, at

the close of the fishing season, used to make the figure of a wolf out of grass. This figure they carefully kept the whole year, believing that it wedded with their maidens and prevented them from giving birth to twins; for twins were esteemed a great misfortune. See G. W. Steller, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka* (Frankfort and

skin of the slain animal. But from annual images to permanent images the transition is easy. We have seen that the older custom of cutting a new May-tree every year was superseded by the practice of maintaining a permanent May-pole, which was, however, annually decked with fresh leaves and flowers, and even surmounted each year by a fresh young tree.¹ Similarly when the stuffed skin, as a representative of the god, was replaced by a permanent image of him in wood, stone, or metal, the permanent image was annually clad in the fresh skin of the slain animal. When this stage had been reached, the custom of killing the ram came naturally to be interpreted as a sacrifice offered to the image, and was explained by a story like that of Ammon and Hercules.

§ 3. *Killing the Sacred Serpent*

The sacred serpent of Issapoo in Fernando Po.

West Africa appears to furnish another example of the annual killing of a sacred animal and the preservation of its skin. The negroes of Issapoo, in the island of Fernando Po, regard the cobra-capella as their guardian deity, who can do them good or ill, bestow riches or inflict disease and death. The skin of one of these reptiles is hung tail downwards from a branch of the highest tree in the public square, and the placing of it on the tree is an annual ceremony. As soon as the ceremony is over, all children born within the past year are carried out and their hands made to touch the tail of the serpent's skin.² The latter custom is clearly a way of placing the infants under the protection of the tribal god. Similarly in Senegambia a python is expected to visit every child of the Python clan within eight days after birth;³ and the Psylli, a Snake clan of ancient Africa, used to expose

Leipzig, 1774), pp. 327 sq. According to Chr. Hartknoch (*Dissertat. histor. de variis rebus Prussicis*, p. 163; *All- und neues Preussen*, Frankfort and Leipzig, 1684, p. 161) the image of the old Prussian god Curcho was annually renewed. But see W. Mannhardt, *Die Korndämonen* (Berlin, 1868), p. 27.

¹ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. ii. pp. 70 sq.

² T. J. Hutchinson, *Impressions of Western Africa* (London, 1858), pp. 196 sq. The writer does not expressly state that a serpent is killed annually, but his statement implies it.

³ Dr. Tautain, "Notes sur les croyances et pratiques religieuses des Bannamas," *Revue d'Ethnographie*, iii. (1885) p. 397. Compare *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 543 sq.

their infants to snakes in the belief that the snakes would not harm true-born children of the clan.¹

§ 4. *Killing the Sacred Turtles*

In the Californian, Egyptian, and Fernando Po customs the animal slain may perhaps have been at some time or other a totem, but this is very doubtful.² At all events, in all three cases the worship of the animal seems to have no relation to agriculture, and may therefore be presumed to date from the hunting or pastoral stage of society. The same may be said of the following custom, though the people who practise it—the Zuni Indians of New Mexico—are now settled in walled villages or towns of a peculiar type, and practise agriculture and the arts of pottery and weaving. But the Zuni custom is marked by certain features which appear to place it in a somewhat different class from the preceding cases. It may be well therefore to describe it at full length in the words of an eye-witness.

The killing of sacred turtles by the Zuni Indians.

“With midsummer the heat became intense. My brother [*i.e.* adopted Indian brother] and I sat, day after day, in the cool under-rooms of our house,—the latter [*sic*] busy with his quaint forge and crude appliances, working Mexican coins over into bangles, girdles, ear-rings, buttons, and what not, for savage ornament. Though his tools were wonderfully rude, the work he turned out by dint of combined patience and ingenuity was remarkably beautiful. One day as I sat watching him, a procession of fifty men went hastily

¹ Varro in Priscian, x. 32, vol. i. p. 524, ed. Keil; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 14. Pliny's statement is to be corrected by Varro's.

² When I wrote *The Golden Bough* originally I said that in these three cases “the animal slain probably is, or once was, a totem.” But this seems to me less probable now than it did then. In regard to the Californian custom in particular, there appears to be no good evidence that within the area now occupied by the United States totemism was practised by any tribes to the west of the Rocky Mountains. See H. Hale, *United States Exploring Expe-*

dition, Ethnography and Philology (Philadelphia, 1846), p. 199; George Gibbs, in *Contributions to North American Ethnology* (Washington, 1877), i. 184; S. Powers, *Tribes of California* (Washington, 1877), p. 5; A. S. Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians of South-western Oregon* (Washington, 1890), vol. i. p. cvi. “California and Oregon seem never to have had any gentes or phratries” (A. S. Gatschet in a letter to me, dated November 5th, 1888). Beyond the very doubtful case cited in the text, I know of no evidence that totemism exists in Fernando Po.

down the hill, and off westward over the plain. They were solemnly led by a painted and shell-bedecked priest, and followed by the torch-bearing Shu-lu-wit-si, or God of Fire. After they had vanished, I asked old brother what it all meant.

“ ‘They are going,’ said he, ‘to the city of the Ka-ka and the home of our others.’

The return
of the pro-
cession
with the
turtles.

“ Four days after, towards sunset, costumed and masked in the beautiful paraphernalia of the Ka-k’ok-shi, or ‘Good Dance,’ they returned in file up the same pathway, each bearing in his arms a basket filled with living, squirming turtles, which he regarded and carried as tenderly as a mother would her infant. Some of the wretched reptiles were carefully wrapped in soft blankets, their heads and fore-feet protruding,—and, mounted on the backs of the plume-bedecked pilgrims, made ludicrous but solemn caricatures of little children in the same position. While I was at supper upstairs that evening, the governor’s brother-in-law came in. He was welcomed by the family as if a messenger from heaven. He bore in his tremulous fingers one of the much abused and rebellious turtles. Paint still adhered to his hands and bare feet, which led me to infer that he had formed one of the sacred embassy.

“ ‘So you went to Ka-thlu-el-lon, did you?’ I asked.

“ ‘E’e,’ replied the weary man, in a voice husky with long chanting, as he sank, almost exhausted, on a roll of skins which had been placed for him, and tenderly laid the turtle on the floor. No sooner did the creature find itself at liberty than it made off as fast as its lame legs would take it. Of one accord, the family forsook dish, spoon, and drinking-cup, and grabbing from a sacred meal-bowl whole handfuls of the contents, hurriedly followed the turtle about the room, into dark corners, around water-jars, behind the grinding-troughs, and out into the middle of the floor again, praying and scattering meal on its back as they went. At last, strange to say, it approached the foot-sore man who had brought it.

“ ‘Ha!’ he exclaimed with emotion; ‘see it comes to me again; ah, what great favours the fathers of all grant me this day,’ and, passing his hand gently over the sprawling

animal, he inhaled from his palm deeply and long, at the same time invoking the favour of the gods. Then he leaned his chin upon his hand, and with large, wistful eyes regarded his ugly captive as it sprawled about, blinking its meal-bedimmed eyes, and clawing the smooth floor in memory of its native element. At this juncture I ventured a question :

“ ‘Why do you not let him go, or give him some water?’ ”

“Slowly the man turned his eyes toward me, an odd mixture of pain, indignation, and pity on his face, while the worshipful family stared at me with holy horror.

“ ‘Poor younger brother!’ he said at last, ‘know you not how precious it is? It die? It will *not* die; I tell you, it cannot die.’ ”

“ ‘But it will die if you don’t feed it and give it water.’ ”

“ ‘I tell you it *cannot* die; it will only change houses to-morrow, and go back to the home of its brothers. Ah, well! How should *you* know?’ he mused. Turning to the blinded turtle again: ‘Ah! my poor dear lost child or parent, my sister or brother to have been! Who knows which? Maybe my own great-grandfather or mother!’ And with this he fell to weeping most pathetically, and, tremulous with sobs, which were echoed by the women and children, he buried his face in his hands. Filled with sympathy for his grief, however mistaken, I raised the turtle to my lips and kissed its cold shell; then depositing it on the floor, hastily left the grief-stricken family to their sorrows. Next day, with prayers and tender beseechings, plumes, and offerings, the poor turtle was killed, and its flesh and bones were removed and deposited in the little river, that it might ‘return once more to eternal life among its comrades in the dark waters of the lake of the dead.’ The shell, carefully scraped and dried, was made into a dance-rattle, and, covered by a piece of buckskin, it still hangs from the smoke-stained rafters of my brother’s house. Once a Navajo tried to buy it for a ladle; loaded with indignant reproaches, he was turned out of the house. Were any one to venture the suggestion that the turtle no longer lived, his remark would cause a flood of tears, and he would be

The turtle addressed as a dead relative.

The turtle killed.

reminded that it had only 'changed houses and gone to live for ever in the home of "our lost others."'"¹

In this custom is expressed a belief in the transmigration of human souls into turtles.

In this custom we find expressed in the clearest way a belief in the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of turtles.² The theory of transmigration is held by the Moqui Indians, who belong to the same race as the Zunis. The Moquis are divided into totem clans—the Bear clan, Deer clan, Wolf clan, Hare clan, and so on; they believe that the ancestors of the clans were bears, deer, wolves, hares, and so forth; and that at death the members of each clan become bears, deer, and so on according to the particular clan to which they belonged.³ The Zuni are also divided into clans, the totems of which agree closely with those of the Moquis, and one of their totems is the turtle.⁴ Thus their belief in transmigration into the turtle is probably one of the regular articles of their totem faith.⁵ What then is the meaning of killing a turtle in which the soul of a kinsman is believed to be present? Apparently the object is to keep up a communication with the other world in which the souls of the departed are believed to be assembled in the form of turtles. It is a common belief that the spirits of the dead return occasionally to their old homes; and accordingly the unseen visitors are welcomed and feasted by the living, and then sent upon their way.⁶ In the Zuni ceremony the dead are fetched home in the form of turtles, and the killing of the turtles is the way of sending back the souls to the spirit-

¹ Frank H. Cushing, "My Adventures in Zuñi," *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, May 1883, pp. 45 sq.

² Mr. Cushing, indeed, while he admits that the ancestors of the Zuni may have believed in transmigration, says, "Their belief, to-day, however, relative to the future life is spiritualistic." But the expressions in the text seem to leave no room for doubting that the transmigration into turtles is a living article of Zuni faith.

³ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), iv. 86. On the totem clans of the Moquis, see J. G. Bourke, *Snake-Dance of the Moquis of Arizona* (London, 1884), pp. 116 sq., 334 sqq.

⁴ For this information I am indebted to the kindness of the late Captain J. G. Bourke, 3rd Cavalry, U.S. Army, author of the work mentioned in the preceding note. In his letter Captain Bourke gave a list of fourteen totem clans of Zuni, which he received on the 20th of May 1881 from Pedro Dino (?), Governor of Zuni.

⁵ It should be observed, however, that Mr. Cushing omits to say whether or not the persons who performed the ceremony described by him had the turtle for their totem. If they had not, the ceremony need not have had anything to do with totemism.

⁶ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 301-318.

land. Thus the general explanation given above of the custom of killing a god seems inapplicable to the Zuni custom, the true meaning of which is somewhat obscure. Nor is the obscurity which hangs over the subject entirely dissipated by a later and fuller account which we possess of the ceremony. From it we learn that the ceremony forms part of the elaborate ritual which these Indians observe at the midsummer solstice for the purpose of ensuring an abundant supply of rain for the crops. Envoys are despatched to bring "their otherselves, the tortoises," from the sacred lake Kothluwalawa, to which the souls of the dead are believed to repair. When the creatures have thus been solemnly brought to Zuni, they are placed in a bowl of water and dances are performed beside them by men in costume, who personate gods and goddesses. "After the ceremonial the tortoises are taken home by those who caught them and are hung by their necks to the rafters till morning, when they are thrown into pots of boiling water. The eggs are considered a great delicacy. The meat is seldom touched except as a medicine, which is curative for cutaneous diseases. Part of the meat is deposited in the river with *kóhakwa* (white shell beads) and turquoise beads as offerings to Council of the Gods."¹ This account at all events confirms the inference that the tortoises are supposed to be reincarnations of the human dead, for they are called the "otherselves" of the Zuni; indeed, what else should they be than the souls of the dead in the bodies of tortoises seeing that they come from the haunted lake? As the principal object of the prayers uttered and of the dances performed at these midsummer ceremonies appears to be to procure rain for the crops, it may be that the intention of bringing the tortoises to Zuni and dancing before them is to intercede with the ancestral spirits, incarnate in the animals, that they may be pleased to exert their power over the waters of heaven for the benefit of their living descendants.

From a later account it appears that the custom is a mode of interceding with the ancestral spirits for rain.

¹ Mrs. Matilda Coxe Stevenson, *can Ethnology* (Washington, 1904), pp. "The Zuni Indians," *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ameri-* 148-162.

§ 5. *Killing the Sacred Bear*

Ambiguous attitude of the Aino towards the bear.

Doubt also hangs at first sight over the meaning of the bear-sacrifice offered by the Aino or Ainu, a primitive people who are found in the Japanese island of Yezo or Yesso, as well as in Saghalien and the southern of the Kurile Islands. It is not quite easy to define the attitude of the Aino towards the bear. On the one hand they give it the name of *kamui* or "god"; but as they apply the same word to strangers,¹ it may mean no more than a being supposed to be endowed with superhuman, or at all events extraordinary, powers.² Again, it is said that "the bear is their chief divinity";³ "in the religion of the Aino the bear plays a chief part";⁴ "amongst the animals it is especially the bear which receives an idolatrous veneration";⁵ "they worship it after their fashion"; "there is no doubt that this wild beast inspires more of the feeling which prompts worship than the inanimate forces of nature, and the Aino may be distinguished as bear-worshippers."⁶ Yet, on the other hand, they kill the bear whenever they can;⁷ "in bygone years the Aino considered bear-hunting the most

¹ B. Scheube, "Der Baerencultus und die Baerenfeste der Ainos," *Mittheilungen der deutschen Gesellschaft b. S. und S. Ostasiens* (Yokohama), Heft xxii. p. 45.

² We are told that the Aino have gods for almost every conceivable object, and that the word *kamui* "has various shades of meaning, which vary if used before or after another word, and according to the object to which it is applied." "When the term *kamui* is applied to good objects, it expresses the quality of usefulness, beneficence, or of being exalted or divine. When applied to supposed evil gods, it indicates that which is most to be feared and dreaded. When applied to devils, reptiles, and evil diseases, it signifies what is most hateful, abominable, and repulsive. When applied as a prefix to animals, fish or fowl, it represents the greatest or fiercest, or the most useful for food or clothing. When applied to persons,

it is sometimes expressive of goodness, but more often is a mere title of respect and reverence." See the Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Aino of Japan* (London, 1892), pp. 245-251; *id.*, *The Aino and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), pp. 581 *sq.* Thus the Aino *kamui* appears to mean nearly the same as the Dacotan *wakan*, as to which see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 225, note.

³ W. Martin Wood, "The Hairy Men of Yesso," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, N.S., iv. (1866) p. 36.

⁴ J. J. Rein, *Japan* (Leipsic, 1881-1886), i. 446.

⁵ H. von Siebold, *Ethnologische Studien über die Aino auf der Insel Yesso* (Berlin, 1881), p. 26.

⁶ Miss Isabella L. Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (new edition, 1885), p. 275.

⁷ W. Martin Wood, *l.c.*

manly and useful way in which a person could possibly spend his time";¹ "the men spend the autumn, winter, and spring in hunting deer and bears. Part of their tribute or taxes is paid in skins, and they subsist on the dried meat";² bear's flesh is indeed one of their staple foods; they eat it both fresh and salted;³ and the skins of bears furnish them with clothing.⁴ In fact, the worship of which writers on this subject speak appears to be paid chiefly to the dead animal. Thus, although they kill a bear whenever they can, "in the process of dissecting the carcass they endeavour to conciliate the deity, whose representative they have slain, by making elaborate obeisances and deprecatory salutations";⁵ "when a bear has been killed the Ainu sit down and admire it, make their salaams to it, worship it, and offer presents of *inao*";⁶ "when a bear is trapped or wounded by an arrow, the hunters go through an apologetic or propitiatory ceremony."⁷ The skulls of slain bears receive a place of honour in their huts, or are set up on sacred posts outside the huts, and are treated with much respect: libations of millet beer, and of *sake*, an intoxicating liquor, are offered to them; and they are addressed as "divine preservers" (*akoshiratki kamui*), or "precious divinities."⁸ The skulls of foxes are also fastened to the sacred posts outside the huts; they are regarded as charms against evil spirits, and are consulted as oracles.⁹ Yet it is expressly said, "The live fox is revered just as little as the bear; rather they avoid it as much as possible, considering it a wily animal."¹⁰ The bear can hardly, therefore, be

¹ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, p. 471.

² Miss I. L. Bird, *op. cit.* p. 269.

³ B. Scheube, *Die Ainos*, p. 4 (reprinted from *Mittheilungen d. deutsch. Gesell. b. S. und S. Ostasiens*, Yokohama).

⁴ B. Scheube, "Baerencultus," etc., p. 45; W. Joest, in *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 1882, p. 188.

⁵ W. Martin Wood, *l.c.*

⁶ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), pp. 476 sq. As to the *inao* see below,

p. 186, note.

⁷ Miss I. L. Bird, *op. cit.* p. 277.

⁸ B. Scheube, *Die Ainos*, p. 15; H. von Siebold, *op. cit.* p. 26; W. Martin Wood, *l.c.*; J. J. Rein, *Japan*, i. 447; Von Brandt, "The Ainos and Japanese," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, iii. (1874) p. 134; Miss Bird, *op. cit.* pp. 275, 276; Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 495 sq.

⁹ B. Scheube, *Die Ainos*, pp. 15, 16; Von Brandt, *l.c.*; Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 352-354, 504 sq.

¹⁰ B. Scheube, *Die Ainos*, p. 16.

described as a sacred animal of the Aino, nor yet as a totem; for they do not call themselves bears, and they kill and eat the animal freely. However, they have a legend of a woman who had a son by a bear; and many of them who dwell in the mountains pride themselves on being descended from a bear. Such people are called "Descendants of the bear" (*Kimun Kamui sanikiri*), and in the pride of their heart they will say, "As for me, I am a child of the god of the mountains; I am descended from the divine one who rules in the mountains," meaning by "the god of the mountains" no other than the bear.¹ It is therefore possible that, as our principal authority, the Rev. J. Batchelor, believes, the bear may have been the totem of an Aino clan; but even if that were so it would not explain the respect shewn for the animal by the whole Aino people.

Aino custom of catching a bear cub, rearing it for several years, and killing it at a solemn festival.

But it is the bear-festival of the Aino which concerns us here. Towards the end of winter a bear cub is caught and brought into the village. If it is very small, it is suckled by an Aino woman, but should there be no woman able to suckle it, the little animal is fed from the hand or the mouth. If it cries loudly and long for its mother, as it is apt to do, its owner will take it to his bosom and let it sleep with him for a few nights, thus dispelling its fears and sense of loneliness. During the day it plays about in the hut with the children and is treated with great affection. But when the cub grows big enough to pain people by hugging or scratching them, he is shut up in a strong wooden cage, where he stays generally for two or three years, fed on fish and millet porridge, till it is time for him to be killed and eaten.² But "it is a peculiarly striking fact that the young bear is not kept merely to furnish a good meal; rather he is regarded and

¹ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 8-10. E. Reclus (*Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, vii. 755) mentions a (Japanese?) legend which attributes the hairiness of the Ainos to the suckling of their first ancestor by a bear. But in the absence of other evidence this is no proof of totemism.

und die Baerenfeste der Ainos," p. 45; Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 483-485. Mr. Batchelor formerly doubted or denied that the Aino women suckle the bear cubs (*The Ainu of Japan*, p. 173); but since then he has repeatedly seen them do it. Once, while he was preaching, a cub was being passed round among all the young women present and suckled by each in turn.

² B. Scheube, "Der Baerencultus

honoured as a fetish, or even as a sort of higher being."¹ In Yezo the festival is generally celebrated in September or October. Before it takes place the Aino apologise to their gods, alleging that they have treated the bear kindly as long as they could, now they can feed him no longer, and are obliged to kill him. A man who gives a bear-feast invites his relations and friends; in a small village nearly the whole community takes part in the feast; indeed, guests from distant villages are invited and generally come, allured by the prospect of getting drunk for nothing. The form of invitation runs somewhat as follows: "I, so and so, am about to sacrifice the dear little divine thing who resides among the mountains. My friends and masters, come ye to the feast; we will then unite in the great pleasure of sending the god away. Come."² When all the people are assembled in front of the cage, an orator chosen for the purpose addresses the bear and tells it that they are about to send it forth to its ancestors. He craves pardon for what they are about to do to it, hopes it will not be angry, and comforts it by assuring the animal that many of the sacred whittled sticks (*inao*) and plenty of cakes and wine will be sent with it on the long journey. One speech of this sort which Mr. Batchelor heard ran as follows: "O thou divine one, thou wast sent into the world for us to hunt. O thou precious little divinity, we worship thee; pray hear our prayer. We have nourished thee and brought thee up with a deal of pains and trouble, all because we love thee so. Now, as thou hast grown big, we are about to send thee to thy father and mother. When thou comest to them please speak well of us, and tell them how kind we have been; please come to us again and we will sacrifice thee." Having been secured with ropes, the bear is then let out of the cage and assailed with a shower of blunt arrows in order to rouse it to fury. When it has spent itself in vain struggles, it is tied up to a stake, gagged and strangled, its neck being placed between two poles, which are then violently compressed, all the people eagerly helping to squeeze the

¹ J. J. Rein, *Japan* (Leipsic, 1881-1886), i. 447.

und die Baerenfeste der Ainos," p. 45; Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 485 sq.

² B. Scheube, "Der Baerencultus

animal to death. An arrow is also discharged into the beast's heart by a good marksman, but so as not to shed blood, for they think that it would be very unlucky if any of the blood were to drip on the ground. However, the men sometimes drink the warm blood of the bear "that the courage and other virtues it possesses may pass into them"; and sometimes they besmear themselves and their clothes with the blood in order to ensure success in hunting. When the animal has been strangled to death, it is skinned and its head is cut off and set in the east window of the house, where a piece of its own flesh is placed under its snout, together with a cup of its own meat boiled, some millet dumplings, and dried fish. Prayers are then addressed to the dead animal; amongst other things it is sometimes invited, after going away to its father and mother, to return into the world in order that it may again be reared for sacrifice. When the bear is supposed to have finished eating its own flesh, the man who presides at the feast takes the cup containing the boiled meat, salutes it, and divides the contents between all the company present: every person, young and old alike, must taste a little. The cup is called "the cup of offering" because it has just been offered to the dead bear. When the rest of the flesh has been cooked, it is shared out in like manner among all the people, everybody partaking of at least a morsel; not to partake of the feast would be equivalent to excommunication, it would be to place the recreant outside the pale of Aino fellowship. Formerly every particle of the bear, except the bones, had to be eaten up at the banquet, but this rule is now relaxed. The head, on being detached from the skin, is set up on a long pole beside the sacred wands (*inao*) outside of the house, where it remains till nothing but the bare white skull is left. Skulls so set up are worshipped not only at the time of the festival, but very often as long as they last. The Aino assured Mr. Batchelor that they really do believe the spirits of the worshipful animals to reside in the skulls; that is why they address them as "divine preservers" and "precious divinities."¹

¹ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 486-496. The killing of the bear is described somewhat differently by Miss I. L. Bird

The ceremony of killing the bear was witnessed by Dr. B. Scheube on the tenth of August at Kunnui, which is a village on Volcano Bay in the island of Yezo or Yesso. As his description of the rite contains some interesting particulars not mentioned in the foregoing account, it may be worth while to summarise it.¹

Dr. Scheube's description of the Aino custom of killing of a bear ceremonially.

On entering the hut he found about thirty Aino present, men, women, and children, all dressed in their best. The master of the house first offered a libation on the fireplace to the god of the fire, and the guests followed his example. Then a libation was offered to the house-god in his sacred corner of the hut. Meanwhile the housewife, who had nursed the bear, sat by herself, silent and sad, bursting now and then into tears. Her grief was obviously unaffected, and it deepened as the festival went on. Next, the master of the house and some of the guests went out of the hut and offered libations before the bear's cage. A few drops were presented to the bear in a saucer, which he at once upset. Then the women and girls danced round the cage, their faces turned towards it, their knees slightly bent, rising and hopping on their toes. As they danced they clapped their hands and sang a monotonous song. The housewife and a few old women, who might have nursed many bears, danced tearfully, stretching out their arms to the bear, and addressing it in terms of endearment. The young folks were less affected; they laughed as well as sang. Disturbed by the noise, the bear began to rush about his cage and howl lamentably. Next libations were offered at the *inao* (*inabos*) or sacred wands which stand outside of an Aino hut. These wands are about a couple of feet high, and are whittled at the top into spiral shavings.² Five new wands with bamboo

(*Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, New Edition, 1885, pp. 276 *sq.*), but she did not witness the ceremony. She tells us that at Usu, on Volcano Bay, when the bear is being killed, the Aino shout, "We kill you, O bear! Come back soon into an Aino." According to Dr. Siebold, a very respectable authority, the bear's own heart is frequently offered to the dead beast to assure him that he is still in life (*Ethnologische Studien über die Aino auf*

der Insel Yesso, p. 26). This, however, is denied by Dr. Scheube, who says that the heart is eaten ("Baerencultus," p. 50 note). The custom may vary in different places.

¹ B. Scheube, "Der Baerencultus und die Baerenfeste der Ainos," *Mittheilungen der deutschen Gesellschaft b. S. und S. Ostasiens* (Yokohama), Heft xxii. pp. 46 *sqq.*

² B. Scheube, "Baerencultus," etc., p. 46; *id.*, *Die Ainos*, p. 15; Miss I.

leaves attached to them had been set up for the festival. This is regularly done when a bear is killed; the leaves mean that the animal may come to life again. Then the bear was let out of his cage, a rope was thrown round his neck, and he was led about in the neighbourhood of the hut. While this was being done the men, headed by a chief, shot at the beast with arrows tipped with wooden buttons. Dr. Scheube had to do so also. Then the bear was taken before the sacred wands, a stick was put in his mouth, nine men knelt on him and pressed his neck against a beam. In five minutes the animal had expired without uttering a sound. Meantime the women and girls had taken post behind the men, where they danced, lamenting, and beating the men who were killing the bear. The bear's carcass was next placed on the mat before the sacred wands; and a sword and quiver, taken from the wands, were hung round the beast's neck. Being a she-bear, it was also adorned with a necklace and ear-rings. Then food and drink were offered to it, in the shape of millet-broth, millet-cakes, and a pot of *sake*. The men now sat down on mats before the dead bear, offered libations to it, and drank deep. Meanwhile the women and girls had laid aside all marks of sorrow, and

L. Bird, *op. cit.* pp. 273 *sq.* As to these whittled wands (*inao*), which are so conspicuous about the Aino huts, see the Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 89-95. He remarks (p. 92): "I have often insisted both in my lectures and also in my writings that the Ainu do not worship their *inao*, but that they make them as offerings to the deities, and set them up as signs showing reverence towards them. This, I must now remark, is true but in part, for while some of the ordinary or less important kinds are not worshipped, there are several others which are. Those *not* worshipped may almost always be regarded as offerings and charms pure and simple, while those which *are* worshipped must generally be regarded as messengers sent to the higher deities." On the whole Mr. Batchelor would describe the *inao* as fetishes of various degrees of power. See further P. Labbé, *Un*

bagne Russe, l'Isle de Sakhaline (Paris, 1903), pp. 194 *sq.*, who compares the use of these whittled sticks to the use of holy candles among Roman Catholics. In Borneo the search for camphor is attended by many superstitions; among other things, when the searchers have found a tree which promises to yield much camphor "they plant near their hut a stake, whereof the outer surface has been cut into curled shavings and tufts down the sides and at the top" (W. H. Furness, *Home-life of Borneo Head-hunters*, Philadelphia, 1902, p. 168). According to some ancient authorities, the old Italians worshipped peeled sticks as gods or as the images of gods; however, the statement seems no better than an etymological guess to explain the word *delubrum*. See Festus, *s.v.* "Delubrum," p. 73, ed. C. O. Müller; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 225.

danced merrily, none more merrily than the old women. When the mirth was at its height two young Aino, who had let the bear out of his cage, mounted the roof of the hut and threw cakes of millet among the company, who all scrambled for them without distinction of age or sex. The bear was next skinned and disembowelled, and the trunk severed from the head, to which the skin was left, hanging. The blood, caught in cups, was eagerly swallowed by the men. None of the women or children appeared to drink the blood, though custom did not forbid them to do so. The liver was cut in small pieces and eaten raw, with salt, the women and children getting their share. The flesh and the rest of the vitals were taken into the house to be kept till the next day but one, and then to be divided among the persons who had been present at the feast. Blood and liver were offered to Dr. Scheube. While the bear was being disembowelled, the women and girls danced the same dance which they had danced at the beginning—not, however, round the cage, but in front of the sacred wands. At this dance the old women, who had been merry a moment before, again shed tears freely. After the brain had been extracted from the bear's head and swallowed with salt, the skull, detached from the skin, was hung on a pole beside the sacred wands. The stick with which the bear had been gagged was also fastened to the pole, and so were the sword and quiver which had been hung on the carcase. The latter were removed in about an hour, but the rest remained standing. The whole company, men and women, danced noisily before the pole; and another drinking-bout, in which the women joined, closed the festival.

Perhaps the first published account of the bear-feast of the Aino is one which was given to the world by a Japanese writer in 1652. It has been translated into French and runs thus: "When they find a young bear, they bring it home, and the wife suckles it. When it is grown they feed it with fish and fowl and kill it in winter for the sake of the liver, which they esteem an antidote to poison, the worms, colic, and disorders of the stomach. It is of a very bitter taste, and is good for nothing if the bear has been killed in summer. This butchery begins in the first Japanese month.

Early
Japanese
account of
the Aino
festival of
the bear.

For this purpose they put the animal's head between two long poles, which are squeezed together by fifty or sixty people, both men and women. When the bear is dead they eat his flesh, keep the liver as a medicine, and sell the skin, which is black and commonly six feet long, but the longest measure twelve feet. As soon as he is skinned, the persons who nourished the beast begin to bewail him ; afterwards they make little cakes to regale those who helped them."¹

The custom
of rearing
and killing
bears
among the
Aino of
Saghalien.

The Aino of Saghalien rear bear cubs and kill them with similar ceremonies. We are told that they do not look upon the bear as a god but only as a messenger whom they despatch with various commissions to the god of the forest. The animal is kept for about two years in a cage, and then killed at a festival, which always takes place in winter and at night. The day before the sacrifice is devoted to lamentation, old women relieving each other in the duty of weeping and groaning in front of the bear's cage. Then about the middle of the night or very early in the morning an orator makes a long speech to the beast, reminding him how they have taken care of him, and fed him well, and bathed him in the river, and made him warm and comfortable. "Now," he proceeds, "we are holding a great festival in your honour. Be not afraid. We will not hurt you. We will only kill you and send you to the god of the forest who loves you. We are about to offer you a good dinner, the best you have ever eaten among us, and we will all weep for you together. The Aino who will kill you is the best shot among us. There he is, he weeps and asks your forgiveness ; you will feel almost nothing, it will be done so quickly. We cannot feed you always, as you will understand. We have done enough for you ; it is now your turn to sacrifice yourself for us. You will ask God to send us, for the winter, plenty of otters and sables, and for the summer, seals and fish in abundance. Do not forget our messages, we love you much, and our children will never forget you." When the bear has partaken of his last meal amid the

¹ "Ieso-Ki, ou description de l'île d'Iesso, avec une notice sur la révolte de Samsay-in, composée par l'inter-

prète Kannemon," printed in Malte-Brun's *Annales des Voyages*, xxiv. (Paris, 1814) p. 154.

general emotion of the spectators, the old women weeping afresh and the men uttering stifled cries, he is strapped, not without difficulty and danger, and being let out of the cage is led on leash or dragged, according to the state of his temper, thrice round his cage, then round his master's house, and lastly round the house of the orator. Thereupon he is tied up to a tree, which is decked with sacred whitened sticks (*inao*) of the usual sort; and the orator again addresses him in a long harangue, which sometimes lasts till the day is beginning to break. "Remember," he cries, "remember! I remind you of your whole life and of the services we have rendered you. It is now for you to do your duty. Do not forget what I have asked of you. You will tell the gods to give us riches, that our hunters may return from the forest laden with rare furs and animals good to eat; that our fishers may find troops of seals on the shore and in the sea, and that their nets may crack under the weight of the fish. We have no hope but in you. The evil spirits laugh at us, and too often they are unfavourable and hostile to us, but they will bow before you. We have given you food and joy and health; now we kill you in order that you may in return send riches to us and to our children." To this discourse the bear, more and more surly and agitated, listens without conviction; round and round the tree he paces and howls lamentably, till, just as the first beams of the rising sun light up the scene, an archer speeds an arrow to his heart. No sooner has he done so, than the marksman throws away his bow and flings himself on the ground, and the old men and women do the same, weeping and sobbing. Then they offer the dead beast a repast of rice and wild potatoes, and having spoken to him in terms of pity and thanked him for what he has done and suffered, they cut off his head and paws and keep them as sacred things. A banquet on the flesh and blood of the bear follows. Women were formerly excluded from it, but now they share with the men. The blood is drunk warm by all present; the flesh is boiled, custom forbids it to be roasted. And as the relics of the bear may not enter the house by the door, and Aino houses in Saghalien have no windows, a man gets up on the roof and lets the flesh, the head, and the skin down through

the smoke-hole. Rice and wild potatoes are then offered to the head, and a pipe, tobacco, and matches are considerably placed beside it. Custom requires that the guests should eat up the whole animal before they depart: the use of salt and pepper at the meal is forbidden; and no morsel of the flesh may be given to the dogs. When the banquet is over, the head is carried away into the depth of the forest and deposited on a heap of bears' skulls, the bleached and mouldering relics of similar festivals in the past.¹

Bear-
festivals of
the Gilyaks.

The Gilyaks, a Tunguzian people of Eastern Siberia,² hold a bear-festival of the same sort once a year in January. "The bear is the object of the most refined solicitude of an entire village and plays the chief part in their religious ceremonies."³ An old she-bear is shot and her cub is reared, but not suckled, in the village. When the bear is big enough he is taken from his cage and dragged through the village. But first they lead him to the bank of the river, for this is believed to ensure abundance of fish to each family. He is then taken into every house in the village, where fish, brandy, and so forth are offered to him. Some people prostrate themselves before the beast. His entrance into a house is supposed to bring a blessing; and if he snuffs at the food offered to him, this also is a blessing. Nevertheless they tease and worry, poke and tickle the animal continually, so that he is surly and snappish.⁴ After being thus taken to

¹ P. Labbé, *Un Baigne Russe, l'Isle de Sakhaline* (Paris, 1903), pp. 227, 232-258. The Gilyaks of Saghalien similarly keep and sacrifice bears; but the ceremonies are simpler, and they treat the animals with less respect than the Aino. See P. Labbé, *op. cit.* pp. 261-267.

² They inhabit the banks of the lower Amoor and the north of Saghalien. See E. G. Ravenstein, *The Russians on the Amur* (London, 1861), p. 389.

³ "Notes on the River Amur and the Adjacent Districts," translated from the Russian, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, xxviii. (1858) p. 396.

⁴ Compare the custom of pinching a frog before cutting off his head; see

The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings, ii. 86. In Japan sorceresses bury a dog in the earth, tease him, then cut off his head and put it in a box to be used in magic. See A. Bastian, *Die Culturlander des alten Amerika* (Berlin, 1878), i. 475 note, who adds "wie im ostindischen Archipelago die Schutzseele gereizt wird." He probably refers to the Batta *Panghulu-balang*. See H. von Rosenberg, *Der Malayische Archipel* (Leipzig, 1878), pp. 59 sq.; W. Ködding, "Die Batakschen Götter," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, xii. (1885) pp. 478 sq.; J. B. Neumann, "Het Pane-en Bila-stroomgebied op het eiland Sumatra," in *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, dl. iii. (1886) Afdeeling,

every house, he is tied to a peg and shot dead with arrows. His head is then cut off, decked with shavings, and placed on the table where the feast is set out. Here they beg pardon of the beast and worship him. Then his flesh is roasted and eaten in special vessels of wood finely carved. They do not eat the flesh raw nor drink the blood, as the Aino do. The brain and entrails are eaten last; and the skull, still decked with shavings, is placed on a tree near the house. Then the people sing and both sexes dance in ranks, as bears.¹

One of these bear-festivals was witnessed by the Russian traveller L. von Schrenck and his companions at the Gilyak village of Tebaçh in January 1856. From his detailed report of the ceremony we may gather some particulars which are not noticed in the briefer accounts which I have just summarised. The bear, he tells us, plays a great part in the life of all the peoples inhabiting the region of the Amoor and Siberia as far as Kamtchatka, but among none of them is his importance greater than among the Gilyaks. The immense size which the animal attains in the valley of the Amoor, his ferocity whetted by hunger, and the frequency of his appearance, all combine to make him the most dreaded beast of prey in the country. No wonder, therefore, that the fancy of the Gilyaks is busied with him and surrounds him, both in life and in death, with a sort of halo of superstitious fear. Thus, for example, it is thought that if a Gilyak falls in combat with a bear, his soul transmigrates into the body of the beast. Nevertheless his flesh has an irresistible attraction for the Gilyak palate, especially when the animal has been kept in captivity for some time and fattened on fish, which gives the flesh, in the opinion of the Gilyaks, a peculiarly delicious flavour. But in order to

L. von Schrenck's description of a bear-festival among the Gilyaks of the Amoor

meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 2, p. 306; Van Dijk, in *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxviii. (1895) pp. 307 sq.

¹ W. Joest, in B. Scheube, *Die Ainos*, p. 17; J. Deniker, "Les Ghiliaks d'après les derniers renseignements," *Revue d'Ethnographie*, ii. (1883) pp. 307 sq. (on the authority

of Mr. Seeland); *Internationales Archiv für Ethnologie*, i. (1888) p. 102 (on the authority of Captain Jacobsen); *Archiv für Anthropologie*, xxvi. (1900) p. 796 (abstract of a Russian work on the Gilyaks by Dr. Seland or Seeland). What exactly is meant by "dancing as bears" ("*tanzen beide Geschlechter Reigentänze, wie Bären*," Joest, *l.c.*) does not appear.

enjoy this dainty with impunity they deem it needful to perform a long series of ceremonies, of which the intention is to delude the living bear by a show of respect, and to appease the anger of the dead animal by the homage paid to his departed spirit. The marks of respect begin as soon as the beast is captured. He is brought home in triumph and kept in a cage, where all the villagers take it in turns to feed him. For although he may have been captured or purchased by one man, he belongs in a manner to the whole village. His flesh will furnish a common feast, and hence all must contribute to support him in his life. His diet consists exclusively of raw or dried fish, water, and a sort of porridge compounded of powdered fish-skins, train-oil, and whortle-berries. The length of time he is kept in captivity depends on his age. Old bears are kept only a few months; cubs are kept till they are full-grown. A thick layer of fat on the captive bear gives the signal for the festival, which is always held in winter, generally in December but sometimes in January or February. At the festival witnessed by the Russian travellers, which lasted a good many days, three bears were killed and eaten. More than once the animals were led about in procession and compelled to enter every house in the village, where they were fed as a mark of honour, and to shew that they were welcome guests. But before the beasts set out on this round of visits, the Gilyaks played at skipping-rope in presence, and perhaps, as L. von Schrenck inclined to believe, in honour of the animals. The night before they were killed, the three bears were led by moonlight a long way on the ice of the frozen river. That night no one in the village might sleep. Next day, after the animals had been again led down the steep bank to the river, and conducted thrice round the hole in the ice from which the women of the village drew their water, they were taken to an appointed place not far from the village, and shot to death with arrows. The place of sacrifice or execution was marked as holy by being surrounded with whittled sticks, from the tops of which shavings hung in curls. Such sticks are with the Gilyaks, as with the Aino, the regular symbols that accompany all religious ceremonies. Before the bears

Bears led
in proces-
sion about
the village.

Slaughter
of the
bears.

received the fatal shafts from two young men chosen for the purpose, the boys were allowed to discharge their small but not always harmless arrows at the beasts. As soon as the carcasses had been cut up, the skins with the heads attached to them were set up in a wooden cage in such a way as to make it appear that the animals had entered the cage and were looking out of it. The blood which flowed from the bears on the spot where they were killed was immediately covered up with snow, to prevent any one from accidentally treading on it, a thing which was strictly tabooed.

When the house has been arranged and decorated for their reception, the skins of the bears, with their heads attached to them, are brought into it, not however by the door, but through a window, and then hung on a sort of scaffold opposite the hearth on which the flesh is to be cooked. This ceremony of bringing the bears' skins into the house by the window was not witnessed by the Russian travellers, who only learned of it at second hand. They were told that when the thin disc of fish-skin, which is the substitute for a pane of glass in the window, has been replaced after the passage of the bear-skins, a figure of a toad made of birch bark is affixed to it on the outside, while inside the house a figure of a bear dressed in Gilyak costume is set on the bench of honour. The meaning of this part of the ceremony, as it is conjecturally interpreted by Von Schrenck, may be as follows. The toad is a creature that has a very evil reputation with the Gilyaks, and accordingly they attempt to lay upon it, as on a scapegoat, the guilt of the slaughter of the worshipful bear. Hence its effigy is excluded from the house and has to remain outside at the window, a witness of its own misdeeds; whereas the bear is brought into the house and treated as an honoured guest, for fish and flesh are laid before it, and its effigy, dressed in Gilyak costume, is seated on the bench of honour.

Treatment
of the bears
skins.

The boiling of the bears' flesh among the Gilyaks is done only by the oldest men, whose high privilege it is; women and children, young men and boys have no part in it. The task is performed slowly and deliberately, with a certain solemnity. On the occasion described by the Russian travellers the kettle was first of all surrounded with

Treatment
of the bears
flesh.

a thick wreath of shavings, and then filled with snow, for the use of water to cook bear's flesh is forbidden. Meanwhile a large wooden trough, richly adorned with arabesques and carvings of all sorts, was hung immediately under the snouts of the bears ; on one side of the trough was carved in relief a bear, on the other side a toad. When the carcasses were being cut up, each leg was laid on the ground in front of the bears, as if to ask their leave, before being placed in the kettle ; and the boiled flesh was fished out of the kettle with an iron hook, and set in the trough before the bears, in order that they might be the first to taste of their own flesh. As fast, too, as the fat was cut in strips it was hung up in front of the bears, and afterwards laid in a small wooden trough on the ground before them. Last of all the inner organs of the beasts were cut up and placed in small vessels. At the same time the women made bandages out of parti-coloured rags, and after sunset these bandages were tied round the bears' snouts just below the eyes "in order to dry the tears that flowed from them." To each bandage, just below the eyes, was attached a figure of a toad cut out of birch bark. The meaning of this appears to be, as Von Schrenck conjectured, as follows. With the carving of his inner organs, the heart, liver, and so forth, the bear sees that his fate is sealed, and sheds some natural tears at his hard lot. These tears trickle down his snout over the figure of the toad, which the poor deluded bear accordingly regards as the author of all the mischief. For he cannot blame the Gilyaks, who have treated him so kindly. Have they not received him as a guest in their house, set him on the seat of honour, given him of their best, and done nothing but with his knowledge and permission? Finally, have not their women shewn him the last delicate mark of attention by drying the tears that flow from his eyes and trickle down his nose? Surely then he cannot think that these kindly folk have done him any harm ; it was all the fault of the unprincipled toad.

Banquet on
the bears'
flesh.

Whatever may be thought of this explanation, as soon as the ceremony of wiping away poor bruin's tears had been performed, the assembled Gilyaks set to work in earnest to devour his flesh. The broth obtained by boiling the meat

had already been partaken of. The wooden bowls, platters, and spoons out of which the Gilyaks eat the broth and flesh of the bears on these occasions are always made specially for the purpose at the festival and only then; they are elaborately ornamented with carved figures of bears and other devices that refer to the animal or the festival, and the people have a strong superstitious scruple against parting with them. While the festival lasts, no salt may be used in cooking the bear's flesh or indeed any other food; and no flesh of any kind may be roasted, for the bear would hear the hissing and sputtering of the roasting flesh, and would be very angry. After the bones had been picked clean they were put back in the kettle in which the flesh had been boiled. And when the festal meal was over, an old man took his stand at the door of the house with a branch of fir in his hand, with which, as the people passed out, he gave a light blow to every one who had eaten of the bear's flesh or fat, perhaps as a punishment for their treatment of the worshipful animal. In the afternoon of the same day the women performed a strange dance. Only one woman danced at a time, throwing the upper part of her body into the oddest postures, while she held in her hands a branch of fir or a kind of wooden castanets. The other women meanwhile played an accompaniment in a peculiar rhythm by drumming on the beams of the house with clubs. The dance reminded one of the Russian travellers of the bear-dance which he had seen danced by the women of Kamtchatka. Von Schrenck believes, though he has not positive evidence, that after the fat and flesh of the bear have been consumed, his skull is cleft with an axe, and the brain taken out and eaten. Then the bones and the skull are solemnly carried out by the oldest people to a place in the forest not far from the village. There all the bones except the skull are buried. After that a young tree is felled a few inches above the ground, its stump cleft, and the skull wedged into the cleft. When the grass grows over the spot, the skull disappears from view, and that is the end of the bear.¹

Dance of
the women.

Disposal of
the skull
and bones
of the bear.

¹ L. von Schrenck, *Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-lande* (St. Petersburg, 1891), iii. 696-731.

Mr. L. Sternberg's description of the bear-festivals of the Gilyaks.

Another description of the bear-festivals of the Gilyaks has been given us by Mr. Leo Sternberg.¹ It agrees substantially with the foregoing accounts, but a few particulars in it may be noted. According to Mr. Sternberg, the festival is usually held in honour of a deceased relation: the next of kin either buys or catches a bear cub and nurtures it for two or three years till it is ready for the sacrifice. Only certain distinguished guests (*Narch-en*) are privileged to partake of the bear's flesh, but the host and members of his clan eat a broth made from the flesh; great quantities of this broth are prepared and consumed on the occasion. The guests of honour (*Narch-en*) must belong to the clan into which the host's daughters and the other women of his clan are married: one of these guests, usually the host's son-in-law, is entrusted with the duty of shooting the bear dead with an arrow. The skin, head, and flesh of the slain bear are brought into the house not through the door but through the smoke-hole; a quiver full of arrows is laid under the head and beside it are deposited tobacco, sugar, and other food. The soul of the bear is supposed to carry off the souls of these things with it on the far journey. A special vessel is used for cooking the bear's flesh, and the fire must be kindled by a sacred apparatus of flint and steel, which belongs to the clan and is handed down from generation to generation, but which is never used to light fires except on these solemn occasions. Of all the many viands cooked for the consumption of the assembled people a portion is placed in a special vessel and set before the bear's head: this is called "feeding the head." After the bear has been killed, dogs are sacrificed in couples of male and female. Before being throttled, they are fed and invited to go to their lord on the highest mountain, to change their skins, and to return next year in the form of bears. The soul of the dead bear departs to the same lord, who is also lord of the primaeval forest; it goes away laden with the offerings that have been made to it, and attended by the souls of the dogs and also by the souls of the sacred whittled sticks, which figure prominently at the festival.

¹ L. Sternberg, "Die Religion der Giljaken," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. (1905) pp. 260-274.

The Goldi, neighbours of the Gilyaks, treat the bear in much the same way. They hunt and kill it; but sometimes they capture a live bear and keep him in a cage, feeding him well and calling him their son and brother. Then at a great festival he is taken from his cage, paraded about with marked consideration, and afterwards killed and eaten. "The skull, jaw-bones, and ears are then suspended on a tree, as an antidote against evil spirits; but the flesh is eaten and much relished, for they believe that all who partake of it acquire a zest for the chase, and become courageous."¹

Bear-festivals of the Goldi.

The Orotchis, another Tunguzian people of the region of the Amoor, hold bear-festivals of the same general character. Any one who catches a bear cub considers it his bounden duty to rear it in a cage for about three years, in order at the end of that time to kill it publicly and eat the flesh with his friends. The feasts being public, though organised by individuals, the people try to have one in each Orotchi village every year in turn. When the bear is taken out of his cage, he is led about by means of ropes to all the huts, accompanied by people armed with lances, bows, and arrows. At each hut the bear and bear-leaders are treated to something good to eat and drink. This goes on for several days until all the huts, not only in that village but also in the next, have been visited. The days are given up to sport and noisy jollity. Then the bear is tied to a tree or wooden pillar and shot to death by the arrows of the crowd, after which its flesh is roasted and eaten. Among the Orotchis of the Tundja River women take part in the bear-feasts, while among the Orotchis of the River Vi the women will not even touch bear's flesh.²

Bear-festivals of the Orotchis.

In the treatment of the captive bear by these tribes there are features which can hardly be distinguished from worship. Such, for example, are the prayers offered to it both alive and dead; the offerings of food, including portions of its

Respect shown by all these tribes for the bears which they kill and eat.

¹ E. G. Ravenstein, *The Russians on the Amur* (London, 1861), pp. 379 sq.; T. W. Atkinson, *Travels in the Regions of the Upper and Lower Amoor* (London, 1860), pp. 482 sq.

² E. H. Fraser, "The Fish-skin Tartars," *Journal of the China Branch*

of the Royal Asiatic Society for the year 1891-1892, New Series, xxvi. 36-39. L. von Schrenck describes a bear-feast which he witnessed in 1855 among the Oltscha (*Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-lande*, iii. 723-728). The Oltscha are probably the same as the Orotchis.

own flesh, laid before the animal's skull ; and the Gilyak custom of leading the living beast on to the ice of the river in order to ensure a supply of fish, and of conducting him from house to house in order that every family may receive his blessing, just as in Europe a May-tree or a personal representative of the tree-spirit used to be taken from door to door in spring for the sake of diffusing among all and sundry the fresh energies of reviving nature.¹ Again, the solemn participation in his flesh and blood, and particularly the Aino custom of sharing the contents of the cup which had been consecrated by being set before the dead beast, are strongly suggestive of a sacrament, and the suggestion is confirmed by the Gilyak practice of reserving special vessels to hold the flesh and cooking it on a fire kindled by a sacred apparatus which is never employed except on these religious occasions. Indeed our principal authority on Aino religion, the Rev. John Batchelor, frankly describes as worship the ceremonious respect which the Aino pay to the bear,² and he affirms that the animal is undoubtedly one of their gods.³ Certainly the Aino appear to apply their name for god (*kamu*) freely to the bear ; but, as Mr. Batchelor himself points out,⁴ that word is used with many different shades of meaning and is applied to a great variety of objects, so that from its application to the bear we cannot safely argue that the animal is actually regarded as a deity. Indeed we are expressly told that the Aino of Saghalien do not consider the bear to be a god but only a messenger to the gods, and the message with which they charge the animal at its death bears out the statement.⁵ Apparently the Gilyaks also look on the bear in the light of an envoy despatched with presents to the Lord of the Mountain, on whom the welfare of the people depends. At the same time they treat the animal as a being of a higher order than man, in fact as a minor deity, whose presence in the village, so long as he is kept and fed, diffuses blessings, especially by keeping at bay the swarms of evil spirits who are constantly lying in wait for

¹ *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 59 sqq.

² Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 492, 493, 495, 496.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 482. Mr. Batchelor says "totem gods."

⁴ *Op. cit.* pp. 580 sqq.

⁵ See above, pp. 188 sq.

people, stealing their goods and destroying their bodies by sickness and disease. Moreover, by partaking of the flesh, blood, or broth of the bear, the Gilyaks, the Aino, and the Goldi are all of opinion that they acquire some portion of the animal's mighty powers, particularly his courage and strength. No wonder, therefore, that they should treat so great a benefactor with marks of the highest respect and affection.¹

Some light may be thrown on the ambiguous attitude of the Aino to bears by comparing the similar treatment which they accord to other creatures. For example, they regard the eagle-owl as a good deity who by his hooting warns men of threatened evil and defends them against it; hence he is loved, trusted, and devoutly worshipped as a divine mediator between men and the Creator. The various names applied to him are significant both of his divinity and of his mediatorship. Whenever an opportunity offers, one of these divine birds is captured and kept in a cage, where he is greeted with the endearing titles of "Beloved god" and "Dear little divinity." Nevertheless the time comes when the dear little divinity is throttled and sent away in his capacity of mediator to take a message to the superior gods or to the Creator himself. The following is the form of prayer addressed to the eagle-owl when it is about to be sacrificed: "Beloved deity, we have brought you up because we loved you, and now we are about to send you to your father. We herewith offer you food, *inao*, wine, and cakes; take them to your parent, and he will be very pleased. When you come to him say, 'I have lived a long time among the Ainu, where an Ainu father and an Ainu mother reared me. I now come to thee. I have brought a variety of good things. I saw while living in Ainu-land a

Similar respect shewn by the Aino for the eagle-owls which they keep in cages and kill.

¹ This account of the attitude of the Gilyaks to the bear, and of their reasons for holding the festival, is the one given by Mr. Leo Sternberg. See his articles, "Die Religion der Giljaken," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. (1905) pp. 273 sq., 456-458. He speaks of the bear as a minor deity ("Er selbst ist ja eine Gottheit, wenn auch eine kleine"). Mr. Sternberg and Mr.

Batchelor, two of the best-informed writers on the subject, agree in denying that the slaughter of the bear at the festival is a sacrifice to the gods. See L. Sternberg, *op. cit.* p. 457; Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folklore*, p. 482. As to the belief of the Gilyaks in evil spirits, which menace and destroy the life of man, see L. Sternberg, *op. cit.* pp. 460 sqq.

great deal of distress. I observed that some of the people were possessed by demons, some were wounded by wild animals, some were hurt by landslides, others suffered shipwreck, and many were attacked by disease. The people are in great straits. My father, hear me, and hasten to look upon the Ainu and help them.' If you do this, your father will help us."¹

Similar respect shewn by the Ainu for the eagles and hawks which they keep in cages and kill.

Again, the Ainu keep eagles in cages, worship them as divinities, and ask them to defend the people from evil. Yet they offer the bird in sacrifice, and when they are about to do so they pray to him, saying: "O precious divinity, O thou divine bird, pray listen to my words. Thou dost not belong to this world, for thy home is with the Creator and his golden eagles. This being so, I present thee with these *inao* and cakes and other precious things. Do thou ride upon the *inao* and ascend to thy home in the glorious heavens. When thou arrivest, assemble the deities of thy own kind together and thank them for us for having governed the world. Do thou come again, I beseech thee, and rule over us. O my precious one, go thou quietly."² Once more, the Ainu revere hawks, keep them in cages, and offer them in sacrifice. At the time of killing one of them the following prayer should be addressed to the bird: "O divine hawk, thou art an expert hunter, please cause thy cleverness to descend on me." If a hawk is well treated in captivity and prayed to after this fashion when he is about to be killed, he will surely send help to the hunter.³

Advantages which the Ainu hopes to reap from slaughtering the worshipful animals.

Thus the Ainu hopes to profit in various ways by slaughtering the creatures, which, nevertheless, he treats as divine. He expects them to carry messages for him to their kindred or to the gods in the upper world; he hopes to partake of their virtues by imbibing parts of their bodies or in other ways; and apparently he looks forward to their bodily resurrection in this world, which will enable him again to catch and kill them, and again to reap all the benefits which he has already derived from their slaughter. For in the prayers addressed to the worshipful bear and the

¹ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore*, pp. 410-415.

432 sq.

³ Rev. J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* p.

² Rev. J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* pp. 438.

worshipful eagle before they are knocked on the head the creatures are invited to come again,¹ which seems clearly to point to a faith in their future resurrection. If any doubt could exist on this head, it would be dispelled by the evidence of Mr. Batchelor, who tells us that the Aino "are firmly convinced that the spirits of birds and animals killed in hunting or offered in sacrifice come and live again upon the earth clothed with a body; and they believe, further, that they appear here for the special benefit of men, particularly Ainu hunters."² The Aino, Mr. Batchelor tells us, "confessedly slays and eats the beast that another may come in its place and be treated in like manner"; and at the time of sacrificing the creatures "prayers are said to them which form a request that they will come again and furnish viands for another feast, as if it were an honour to them to be thus killed and eaten, and a pleasure as well. Indeed such is the people's idea."³ These last observations, as the context shews, refer especially to the sacrifice of bears.

Thus among the benefits which the Aino anticipates from the slaughter of the worshipful animals not the least substantial is that of gorging himself on their flesh and blood, both on the present and on many a similar occasion hereafter; and that pleasing prospect again is derived from his firm faith in the spiritual immortality and bodily resurrection of the dead animals. A like faith is shared by many savage hunters in many parts of the world and has given rise to a variety of quaint customs, some of which will be described presently. Meantime it is not unimportant to observe that the solemn festivals at which the Aino, the Gilyaks, and other tribes slaughter the tame caged bears with demonstrations of respect and sorrow, are probably nothing but an extension or glorification of similar rites which the hunter performs over any wild bear which he chances to kill in the forest. Indeed with regard to the Gilyaks we are expressly informed that this is the case. If we would understand the meaning of the Gilyak ritual, says Mr. Sternberg, "we must above all remember that the bear-festivals are not, as is usually but

The bear-festivals of these tribes are probably nothing but an extension of the similar rites which the hunter performs over any wild bear which he kills in the forest.

¹ See above, pp. 183, 184, 196.

their Folk-lore, p. 479.

³ Rev. J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* pp.

² Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and* 481, 482.

falsely assumed, celebrated only at the killing of a house-bear but are held on every occasion when a Gilyak succeeds in slaughtering a bear in the chase. It is true that in such cases the festival assumes less imposing dimensions, but in its essence it remains the same. When the head and skin of a bear killed in the forest are brought into the village, they are accorded a triumphal reception with music and solemn ceremonial. The head is laid on a consecrated scaffold, fed, and treated with offerings, just as at the killing of a house-bear; and the guests of honour (*Narch-en*) are also assembled. So, too, dogs are sacrificed, and the bones of the bear are preserved in the same place and with the same marks of respect as the bones of a house-bear. Hence the great winter festival is only an extension of the rite which is observed at the slaughter of every bear."¹

The apparent contradiction in the behaviour of these tribes to bears is not so great as it seems to us at first sight. Savage logic.

Thus the apparent contradiction in the practice of these tribes, who venerate and almost deify the animals which they habitually hunt, kill, and eat, is not so flagrant as at first sight it appears to us: the people have reasons, and some very practical reasons, for acting as they do. For the savage is by no means so illogical and unpractical as to superficial observers he is apt to seem; he has thought deeply on the questions which immediately concern him, he reasons about them, and though his conclusions often diverge very widely from ours, we ought not to deny him the credit of patient and prolonged meditation on some fundamental problems of human existence. In the present case, if he treats bears in general as creatures wholly subservient to human needs and yet singles out certain individuals of the species for homage which almost amounts to deification, we must not hastily set him down as irrational and inconsistent, but must endeavour to place ourselves at his point of view, to see things as he sees them, and to divest ourselves of the prepossessions which tinge so deeply our own views of the world. If we do so, we shall probably discover that, however absurd his conduct may appear to us, the savage nevertheless generally acts on a train of reasoning which seems to him in harmony with the

¹ L. Sternberg, "Die Religion der Giljaken," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. (1905) p. 272.

facts of his limited experience. This I propose to illustrate in the following chapter, where I shall attempt to shew that the solemn ceremonial of the bear-festival among the Ainos and other tribes of north-eastern Asia is only a particularly striking example of the respect which on the principles of his rude philosophy the savage habitually pays to the animals which he kills and eats,

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROPITIATION OF WILD ANIMALS BY HUNTERS

The savage believes that animals, like men, are endowed with souls which survive the death of their bodies.

The American Indians draw no sharp distinction between animals and men.

THE explanation of life by the theory of an indwelling and practically immortal soul is one which the savage does not confine to human beings but extends to the animate creation in general. In so doing he is more liberal and perhaps more logical than the civilised man, who commonly denies to animals that privilege of immortality which he claims for himself. The savage is not so proud ; he commonly believes that animals are endowed with feelings and intelligence like those of men, and that, like men, they possess souls which survive the death of their bodies either to wander about as disembodied spirits or to be born again in animal form. Thus, for example, we are told that the Indian of Guiana does not see "any sharp line of distinction, such as we see, between man and other animals, between one kind of animal and another, or between animals—man included—and inanimate objects. On the contrary, to the Indian, all objects, animate and inanimate, seem exactly of the same nature except that they differ in the accident of bodily form. Every object in the whole world is a being, consisting of a body and spirit, and differs from every other object in no respect except that of bodily form, and in the greater or less degree of brute power and brute cunning consequent on the difference of bodily form and bodily habits."¹ Similarly we read that "in Cherokee mythology, as in that of Indian tribes generally, there is no essential difference between men and animals. In the primal genesis period they seem to be completely undifferentiated, and we

¹ E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 350.

find all creatures alike living and working together in harmony and mutual helpfulness until man, by his aggressiveness and disregard for the rights of the others, provokes their hostility, when insects, birds, fishes, reptiles, and fourfooted beasts join forces against him. Henceforth their lives are apart, but the difference is always one of degree only. The animals, like the people, are organized into tribes and have like them their chiefs and townhouses, their councils and ballplays, and the same hereafter in the Darkening land of Usunhiyi. Man is still the paramount power, and hunts and slaughters the others as his own necessities compel, but is obliged to satisfy the animal tribes in every instance, very much as a murder is compounded for, according to the Indian system, by 'covering the bones of the dead' with presents for the bereaved relatives."¹ To the same effect another observer of the North American Indians writes: "I have often reflected on the curious connexion which appears to subsist in the mind of an Indian between man and the brute creation, and found much matter in it for curious observation. Although they consider themselves superior to all other animals and are very proud of that superiority; although they believe that the beasts of the forest, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the waters, were created by the Almighty Being for the use of man; yet it seems as if they ascribe the difference between themselves and the brute kind, and the dominion which they have over them, more to their superior bodily strength and dexterity than to their immortal souls. All beings endowed by the Creator with the power of volition and self-motion, they view in a manner as a great society of which they are the head, whom they are appointed, indeed, to govern, but between whom and themselves intimate ties of connexion and relationship may exist, or at least did exist in the beginning of time. They are, in fact, according to their opinions, only the first among equals, the legitimate hereditary sovereigns of the whole animated race, of which they are themselves a constituent part. Hence, in their languages, those inflections of their nouns which we call *genders*, are not, as with us,

¹ J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) p. 261.

descriptive of the *masculine* and *feminine* species, but of the *animate* and *inanimate* kinds. Indeed, they go so far as to include trees and plants within the first of these descriptions. All animated nature, in whatever degree, is in their eyes a great whole, from which they have not yet ventured to separate themselves. They do not exclude other animals from their world of spirits, the place to which they expect to go after death."¹ Even Chinese authors "have roundly avowed themselves altogether unable to discover any real difference between men and animals," and they have drawn out the parallelism between the two in some detail.²

Some savages apparently fail to distinguish clearly even the bodies of animals from the bodies of men.

But it is not merely between the mental and spiritual nature of man and the animals that the savage traces a close resemblance; even the distinction of their bodily form appears sometimes to elude his dull apprehension. An unusually intelligent Bushman questioned by a missionary "could not state any difference between a man and a brute—he did not know but a buffalo might shoot with bows and arrows as well as a man, if it had them."³ In the opinion of the Gilyak, "the form and size of an animal are merely a sort of appearance. Every animal is in point of fact a real being like man, nay a Gilyak such as himself, but endowed with reason and strength which often surpass those of mere men."⁴ Nor is it merely that in the mental fog the savage takes beasts for men; he seems to be nearly as ready to take himself and his fellows for beasts. When the Russians first landed on one of the Alaskan islands the people took them for cuttle-fish, "on account of the buttons on their clothes."⁵ We have seen how some savages identify themselves with animals of various sorts by eating the maggots bred in the rotting carcasses of the beasts, and how thereafter, when occasion serves, they behave in their adopted

¹ Rev. John Heckewelder, "An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the neighbouring States," *Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. i. (Philadelphia, 1819) pp. 247 sq.

² J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iv. (Leyden, 1901) pp. 157 sq.

³ John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, being a Narrative of a Second Journey in the Interior of that Country* (London, 1822), ii. 34.

⁴ L. Sternberg, "Die Religion der Giljaken," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. (1905) p. 248.

⁵ I. Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, p. 145.

characters by wriggling, roaring, barking, or grunting, according as they happen to be boa-constrictors, lions, jackals, or hippopotamuses.¹ In the island of Mabuig men of the Sam, that is, the Cassowary, totem think that cassowaries are men or nearly so. "Sam he all same as relation, he belong same family," is the account they give of their kinship with the creature. Conversely they hold that they themselves are cassowaries, or at all events that they possess some of the qualities of the long-legged bird. When a Cassowary man went forth to reap laurels on the field of battle, he used to reflect with satisfaction on the length of his lower limbs: "My leg is long and thin, I can run and not feel tired; my legs will go quickly and the grass will not entangle them."² Omaha Indians believe that between a man and the creature which is his guardian spirit there subsists so close a bond that the man acquires the powers and qualities, the virtues and defects of the animal. Thus if a man has seen a bear in that vision at puberty which determines an Indian's guardian spirit, he will be apt to be wounded in battle, because the bear is a slow and clumsy animal and easily trapped. If he has dreamed of an eagle, he will be able to see into the future and foretell coming events, because the eagle's vision is keen and piercing.³ Similarly, the Thompson Indians of British Columbia imagined that every man partook of the nature of the animal which was his guardian spirit; for example, a man who had the grisly bear for his protector would prove a much fiercer warrior than one who had only a crow, a coyote, or a fox for his guardian spirit. And before they set out on the war-path these Indians used to perform a mimic battle, in which each man, tricked out with paint and feathers, imitated the sounds of the animal that was his guardian spirit, grunting and whooping in character.⁴ The

¹ Above, p. 141.

² A. C. Haddon, "The Ethnography of the Western Tribe of Torres Straits," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890) p. 393; *id.*, *Head-hunters* (London, 1901), p. 133; *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v.

(Cambridge, 1904) p. 166.

³ Miss Alice C. Fletcher, *The Import of the Totem, a Study from the Omaha Tribe*, p. 6 (paper read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, August 1897).

⁴ James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," p. 356 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*,

Bororos, a tribe of Indians in the heart of Brazil, will have it that they are parrots of a gorgeous red plumage which live in the Brazilian forest. It is not merely that their souls will pass into these birds at death, but they themselves are actually identical with them in their life, and accordingly they treat the parrots as they might treat their fellow-tribesmen, keeping them in captivity, refusing to eat their flesh, and mourning for them when they die. However, they kill the wild birds for their feathers, and, though they will not kill, they pluck the tame ones to deck their own naked brown bodies with the gaudy plumage of their feathered brethren.¹

Hence the savage attempts to propitiate the animals which he kills and the other members of the species.

Thus to the savage, who regards all living creatures as practically on a footing of equality with man, the act of killing and eating an animal must wear a very different aspect from that which the same act presents to us, who regard the intelligence of animals as far inferior to our own and deny them the possession of immortal souls. Hence on the principles of his rude philosophy the primitive hunter who slays an animal believes himself exposed to the vengeance either of its disembodied spirit or of all the other animals of the same species, whom he considers as knit together, like men, by the ties of kin and the obligations of the blood feud, and therefore as bound to resent the injury done to one of their number. Accordingly the savage makes it a rule to spare the life of those animals which he has no pressing motive for killing, at least such fierce and dangerous animals as are likely to exact a bloody vengeance for the slaughter of one of their kind. Crocodiles are animals of this sort. They are only found in hot countries, where, as a rule, food is abundant and primitive man has therefore little reason to kill them for the sake of their tough and unpalatable flesh.² Hence it is a custom with some savages

Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, April 1900).

¹ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 352 sq., 512. The Chambio Indians of Central Brazil kept birds of the same species in captivity and used their brilliant feathers to cover enormous head-dresses or masks, some six feet high, which were worn by dancers in certain mystic

dances. The masks were guarded in a special hut of each village, and no woman might see them under pain of death. See F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1850-1851), i. 436 sq., 440, 449-451.

² However, many savages hunt the crocodile for the sake of its flesh, which some of them even regard as a delicacy. See H. von Wissmann, *My*

to spare crocodiles, or rather only to kill them in obedience to the law of blood feud, that is, as a retaliation for the slaughter of men by crocodiles. For example, the Dyaks of Borneo will not kill a crocodile unless a crocodile has first killed a man. "For why, say they, should they commit an act of aggression, when he and his kindred can so easily repay them? But should the alligator take a human life, revenge becomes a sacred duty of the living relatives, who will trap the man-eater in the spirit of an officer of justice pursuing a criminal. Others, even then, hang back, reluctant to embroil themselves in a quarrel which does not concern them. The man-eating alligator is supposed to be pursued by a righteous Nemesis; and whenever one is caught they have a profound conviction that it must be the guilty one, or his accomplice."¹

Scruples entertained by the Dyaks as to the killing of crocodiles.

When a Dyak has made up his mind to take vengeance on the crocodiles for the death of a kinsman, he calls in the help of a Pangareran, a man whose business it is to charm and catch crocodiles and to make them do his will. While he is engaged in the discharge of his pro-

Ceremonies observed by the Dyaks at killing a crocodile.

Second Journey through Equatorial Africa, from the Congo to the Zambesi (London, 1891), p. 298; Ch. Partidge, *Cross River Natives* (London, 1905), p. 149; A. F. Mocler-Ferryman, *Up the Niger* (London, 1892), p. 222; Captain G. Burrows, *The Land of the Pigmies* (London, 1898), p. 247; R. E. Dennett, "Bavili Notes," *Folklore*, xvi. (1905) p. 399; J. Halkin, *Quelques Peuplades du district de l'Uellé, I. Les Ababua* (Liège, 1907), p. 33; H. Reynolds, "Notes on the Azandé Tribe of the Congo," *Journal of the African Society*, No. xi. (April, 1904) p. 242; Brard, "Der Victoria-Nyansa," *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, xliiii. (1897) p. 78; A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), p. 209; G. Kurze, "Sitten und Gebräuche der Lengua-Indianer," *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xxiii. (1905) p. 30; W. Barbrooke Grubb, *An unknown People in an unknown Land* (London, 1911), pp. 82 sq.; *Census of India, 1901*, vol. xxvi., *Travancore* (Trivandrum, 1903), p.

353; Max Krieger, *Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, N.D.), p. 163; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), p. 770; W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), p. 94; N. W. Thomas, *Natives of Australia* (London, 1906), p. 106. In antiquity some of the Egyptians worshipped crocodiles, but others killed and ate them. See Herodotus, ii. 69; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 50; Aelian, *De natura animalium*, x. 21.

¹ Rev. J. Perham, "Sea Dyak Religion," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 10 (Singapore, 1883), p. 221. Compare C. Hupe, "Korte verhandeling over de godsdienst zeden, enz. der Dajakkers," *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indië*, 1846, dl. iii. 160; S. Müller, *Reizen en onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel* (Amsterdam, 1857), i. 238; M. T. H. Peelaer, *Ethnographische Beschrijving der Dajaks* (Zalt-Bommel, 1870), p. 7.

fessional duties the crocodile-catcher has to observe a number of odd rules. He may not go to anybody and may not even pass in front of a window, because he is unclean. He may not himself cook anything nor come near a fire. If he would eat fruit, he may not peel or husk it himself, but must get others to do it for him. He may not even chew his food, but is obliged to swallow it unchewed. A little hut is made for him on the bank of the river, where he uses divination by means of the figure of a crocodile drawn on a piece of bamboo for the purpose of determining whether his undertaking will prosper. The boat in which he embarks to catch the wicked man-eating crocodile must be painted yellow and red, and in the middle of it lances are erected with the points upward. Then the man of skill casts lots to discover whether the hook is to be baited with pork, or venison, or the flesh of a dog or an ass. In throwing the baited hook into the water he calls out: "Ye crocodiles who are up stream, come down; and ye crocodiles who are down stream, come up; for I will give you all good food, as sweet as sugar and as fat as coco-nut. I will give you a pretty and beautiful necklace. When you have got it, keep it in your neck and body, for this food is very *pahuni*," which means that it would be sinful not to eat it. If a crocodile bites at the hook, the crocodile-catcher bawls out, "Choose a place for yourself where you will lie; for many men are come to see you. They are come joyfully and exultingly, and they give you a knife, a lance, and a shroud." If the crocodile is a female, he addresses her as "Princess"; if it is a male, he calls it "Prince." The enchanter, who is generally a cunning Malay, must continue his operations till he catches a crocodile in which traces are to be found shewing that the animal has indeed devoured a human being. Then the death of the man is atoned for, and in order not to offend the water-spirits a cat is sacrificed to the crocodiles. The heads of the dead crocodiles are fastened on stakes beside the river, where in time they bleach white and stand out sharply against the green background of the forest.¹ While the captured crocodile is being hauled in to the bank, the

¹ F. Grabowsky, "Die Theogonie *nationales Archiv für Ethnographie, der Dajaken auf Borneo*," *Inter-* v. (1892) pp. 119 *sq.*

subtle Dyaks speak softly to him and beguile him into offering no resistance ; but once they have him fast, with arms and legs securely pinioned, they howl at him and deride him for his credulity, while they rip up the belly of the infuriated and struggling brute to find the evidence of his guilt in the shape of human remains. On one occasion Rajah Brooke of Sarawak was present at a discussion among a party of Dyaks as to how they ought to treat a captured crocodile. One side maintained that it was proper to bestow all praise and honour on the kingly beast, since he was himself a rajah among animals and was now brought there to meet the rajah ; in short, they held that praise and flattery were agreeable to him and would put him on his best behaviour. The other side fully admitted that on this occasion rajah met rajah ; yet with prudent foresight they pointed to the dangerous consequences which might flow from establishing a precedent such as their adversaries contended for. If once a captured crocodile, said they, were praised and honoured, the other crocodiles, on hearing of it, would be puffed up with pride and ambition, and being seized with a desire to emulate the glory of their fellow would enter on a career of man-eating as the road likely to lead them by the shortest cut to the temple of fame.¹

The Minangkabauers of Sumatra have also a great respect for crocodiles. Their celebrated law-giver Kaŕoemangoengan was indeed born again in the form of a crocodile ; and thus his descendants, including the rajah of Indrapoera and his family, are more or less distant cousins of the crocodiles, and enjoy the help and protection of the creatures in many ways, for example when they go on a journey. The respect entertained for the animals is also attested by the ceremonies observed in some places when a crocodile has been caught. A crowd of women then performs certain dances which closely resemble the dances performed when somebody has died. Moreover, it is a rule with the

Ceremonies observed by the Minangkabauers of Sumatra at killing a crocodile.

¹ H. Ling Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (London, 1896), i. 447 sq. Compare E. H. Gomes, *Seventeen years among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo* (London, 1911), pp. 56-60. Similarly the Kenyahs, Kayans, and Ibans, three tribes of Sarawak, will not kill crocodiles except in revenge

for the death of one of their people. See C. Hose and W. MacDougall, "The Relations between Men and Animals in Sarawak," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxi. (1901) pp. 186, 190, 199, compare *ib.* pp. 193 sq.

Minangkabauers that no cooking-pot may be washed in a river; to do so would be like offering the crocodiles the leavings of your food, and they would very naturally resent it. For the same reason in washing up the dinner or supper plates you must be careful not to make a splashing, or the crocodiles would hear it and take umbrage.¹

Belief in the kinship of men with crocodiles among the Malays.

Among the Malays of Patani Bay, in Siam, there is a family whose members may not kill a crocodile nor even be present when one of these ferocious reptiles is captured. The reason alleged for this forbearance is that the family claim kindred with a woman named Betimor, who was drowned in the river and afterwards turned into a crocodile. After her transformation she appeared to her father in a dream and told him what had become of her; so he went down to the river and made offerings to her of rice and wax tapers. There is a shrine on the spot where the woman was transformed into a crocodile, and any one may dedicate offerings there and pray to Toh Sri Lam; for so she has been called ever since her metamorphosis. Members of the crocodile family call on her for help in sickness and other misfortunes, and they will do so on behalf of other people for a proper consideration. Rice and wax tapers are the usual offerings.² In many islands of the Indian Archipelago, including Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Timor, and Ceram, this belief in a kinship of men with crocodiles assumes a peculiar form. The people imagine that women are often delivered of a child and a crocodile at the same birth, and that when this happens, the midwife carries the crocodile twin carefully down to the river and places it in the water. The family in which such a birth is thought to have happened, constantly put victuals into the river for their amphibious relation; and in particular the human twin, so long as he lives, goes down to the river at stated seasons to do his duty by his crocodile brother or sister; and if he were to fail to do so, it is the universal opinion

¹ J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch - Indië*, xxxix. (1890) pp. 75 sq.

² Nelson Annandale, "Primitive Beliefs and Customs of the Patani Fishermen," *Fasciculi Malayenses, Anthropology*, i. (April, 1903) pp 76-78.

that he would be visited with sickness or death for his unnatural conduct. Large parties of these crocodile people periodically go out in a boat furnished with great plenty of provisions and all kinds of music, and they row backwards and forwards, with the music playing, in places where crocodiles do most abound. As they do so they sing and weep by turns, each of them invoking his animal kinsfolk, till the snout of one of the brutes bobbs up from the water, whereupon the music stops, and food, betel, and tobacco are thrown into the river. By these delicate attentions they hope to recommend themselves to the formidable creatures.¹

The crocodiles about the island of Damba in the Victoria Nyanza were sacred and might not be molested in any way. Hence they multiplied and became dangerous; people made offerings to them in the hope of being spared by the monsters when they crossed in the ferries. From time to time batches of men were brought down to the beach and sacrificed to the crocodiles. Their arms and legs were broken so that they could not stir from the spot; then they were laid out in a row on the shore, and the crocodiles came and dragged them into the water. On the island there was a temple dedicated to the crocodiles, and here an inspired medium resided who gave oracular responses. Under the influence of the spirit he wagged his head from side to side, opening his jaws and snapping them together, just as a crocodile does.² No doubt the spirit which possessed him in these moments of fine frenzy was supposed to be that of a crocodile. Similarly in other parts of Uganda men were inspired by the ghosts or spirits of lions, leopards, and serpents, and in that state of exaltation they uttered oracles, roaring like a lion, growling like a leopard, or grovelling and wriggling like a serpent, according to the nature of the spirit by which they were possessed.³ Crocodiles abound in the Albert Nyanza Lake and its tributaries. In many places they are extremely dangerous,

Crocodiles
respected
in Africa.

¹ *Voyages of Captain James Cook round the World* (London, 1809), ii. 316-319.

² Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*

(London, 1911), p. 336.

³ Rev. J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* pp. 318, 322, 335.

but the Alur tribe of that region only hunt them when they have dragged away a man; and they think that any one who has taken away a crocodile's eggs must be on his guard when he walks near the bank of the river, for the crocodiles will try to avenge the injury by seizing him.¹ In general the Foulahs of Senegambia dare not kill a crocodile from fear of provoking the vengeance of the relations and friends of the murdered reptile; but if the sorcerer gives his consent and passes his word that he will guarantee them against the vengeance of the family of the deceased, they will pluck up courage to attack one of the brutes.²

Crocodiles
respected in
Madagas-
car.

Like the Dyaks, the natives of Madagascar never kill a crocodile "except in retaliation for one of their friends who has been destroyed by a crocodile. They believe that the wanton destruction of one of these reptiles will be followed by the loss of human life, in accordance with the principle of *lex talionis*." The people who live near the lake Itasy in Madagascar make a yearly proclamation to the crocodiles, announcing that they will revenge the death of some of their friends by killing as many crocodiles in return, and warning all well-disposed crocodiles to keep out of the way, as they have no quarrel with them, but only with their evil-minded relations who have taken human life.³ Various tribes of Madagascar believe themselves to be descended from crocodiles, and accordingly they view the scaly reptile as, to all intents and purposes, a man and a brother. If one of the animals should so far forget himself as to devour one of his human kinsfolk, the chief of the tribe, or in his absence an old man familiar with the tribal customs, repairs at the head of the people to the edge of the water, and summons the family of the culprit to deliver him up to the arm of justice. A hook is then baited and cast into the river or lake. Next day the guilty brother, or one of his family, is dragged ashore, and after his crime has been clearly brought home to him by a strict interrogation, he is sentenced to death and executed. The claims of justice being thus satisfied and the majesty of

¹ Fr. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha occidentale* (Paris, 1846), pp. 84 sq.
ins Herz von Afrika (Berlin, 1894), pp.
510 sq.

² J. Sibree, *The Great African Island* (London, 1880), p. 269.

³ A. Raffanel, *Voyage dans l'Afrique*

the law fully vindicated, the deceased crocodile is lamented and buried like a kinsman; a mound is raised over his relics and a stone marks the place of his head.¹ The Malagasy, indeed, regard the crocodile with superstitious veneration as the king of the waters and supreme in his own element. When they are about to cross a river they pronounce a solemn oath, or enter into an engagement to acknowledge his sovereignty over the waters. An aged native has been known to covenant with the crocodiles for nearly half an hour before plunging into the stream. After that he lifted up his voice and addressed the animal, urging him to do him no harm, since he had never hurt the crocodile; assuring him that he had never made war on any of his fellows, but on the contrary had always entertained the highest veneration for him; and adding that if he wantonly attacked him, vengeance would follow sooner or later; while if the crocodile devoured him, his relations and all his race would declare war against the beast. This harangue occupied another quarter of an hour, after which the orator dashed fearlessly into the stream.²

Again, the tiger is another of those dangerous beasts whom the savage prefers to leave alone, lest by killing one of the species he should excite the hostility of the rest. No consideration will induce a Sumatran to catch or wound a tiger except in self-defence or immediately after a tiger has destroyed a friend or relation. When a European has set traps for tigers, the people of the neighbourhood have been known to go by night to the place and explain to the animals that the traps are not set by them nor with their consent.³ If it is necessary to kill a tiger which has wrought much harm in the village, the Minangkabauers of Sumatra try to catch him alive in order to beg for his forgiveness before despatching him, and in ordinary life they will not speak evil of him or do anything that might displease him. For example, they will not use a path that has been untrodden for more than a year, because the tiger has chosen

Tigers
respected in
Sumatra.

¹ Father Abinal, "Croyances fabuleuses des Malgaches," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xii. (1880) p. 527; A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), pp. 283 sq.

² W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, N.D.), i. 57 sq.

³ W. Marsden, *History of Sumatra* (London, 1811), p. 292.

that path for himself, and would deem it a mark of disrespect were any one else to use it. Again, persons journeying by night will not walk one behind the other, nor keep looking about them, for the tiger would think that this betrayed fear of him, and his feelings would be hurt by the suspicion. Neither will they travel bareheaded, for that also would be disrespectful to the tiger; nor will they knock off the glowing end of a firebrand, for the flying sparks are like the tiger's glistening eyes, and he would treat this as an attempt to mimic him.¹ The population of Mandeling, a district on the west coast of Sumatra, is divided into clans, one of which claims to be descended from a tiger. It is believed that the animal will not attack or rend the members of this clan, because they are his kinsmen. When members of the clan come upon the tracks of a tiger, they enclose them with three little sticks as a mark of homage; and when a tiger has been shot, the women of the clan are bound to offer betel to the dead beast.² The Battas of Sumatra seldom kill a tiger except from motives of revenge, observing the rule an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, or, as they express it, "He who owes gold must pay in gold; he who owes breath (that is, life) must pay with breath." Nor can the beast be attacked without some ceremony; only weapons that have proved themselves able to kill may be used for the purpose. When the tiger has been killed, they bring the carcass to the village, set offerings before it, and burn incense over it, praying the spirit of the tiger to quit its material envelope and enter the incense pot. As soon as the soul may be supposed to have complied with this request, a speaker explains to the spirits in general the reasons for killing the tiger, and begs them to set forth these reasons to the departed soul of the beast, lest the latter should be angry and the people should suffer in consequence. Then they dance round the dead body of the tiger till they can dance no longer, after which they skin the carcass and

Ceremonies
at killing
tigers in
Sumatra
and
Bengal.

¹ J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië*, xxxix. (1890) pp. 74, 75 sq.

² H. Ris, "De onderafdeeling Mandailing Oeloe en Pahantan en hare Bevolking," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië*, xlvi. (1896) pp. 472 sq.

bury it.¹ The inhabitants of the hills near Rajamahall, in Bengal, believe that if any man kills a tiger without divine orders, either he or one of his relations will be devoured by a tiger. Hence they are very averse to killing a tiger, unless one of their kinsfolk has been carried off by one of the beasts. In that case they go out for the purpose of hunting and slaying a tiger; and when they have succeeded they lay their bows and arrows on the carcase and invoke God, declaring that they slew the animal in retaliation for the loss of a kinsman. Vengeance having been thus taken, they swear not to attack another tiger except under similar provocation.² The natives of Cochin China have a great respect for the tiger, whom they regard as a terrible divinity. Yet they set traps for him and leave no stone unturned to catch him. Once he is ensnared, they offer him their excuses and condolences for the painful position in which he finds himself.³

The Indians of Carolina would not molest snakes when they came upon them, but would pass by on the other side of the path, believing that if they were to kill a serpent, the reptile's kindred would destroy some of their brethren, friends, or relations in return.⁴ So the Seminole Indians spared the rattlesnake, because they feared that the soul of the dead rattlesnake would incite its kinsfolk to take vengeance. Once when a rattlesnake appeared in their camp they entreated an English traveller to rid them of the creature. When he had killed it, they were glad but tried to scratch him as a means of appeasing the spirit of the dead snake.⁵ Soon after the Iowas began to build their village near the mouth of Wolf River, a lad came into the village and reported that he had seen a rattlesnake on a hill not far off. A medicine-man immediately repaired to the spot, and finding the snake made it presents of tobacco and other things which he had brought with him for the purpose. He also

Snakes, especially rattlesnakes, respected by the North American Indians.

¹ G. G. Batten, *Glimpses of the Eastern Archipelago* (Singapore, 1894), p. 86.

² Th. Shaw, "On the Inhabitants of the Hills near Rajamahall," *Asiatic Researches*, Fourth Edition, iv. (London, 1807) p. 37.

³ *Annales de l'Association de la Pro-*

pagation de la Foi, v. (1831) pp. 363 sq.

⁴ J. Bricknell, *The Natural History of North Carolina* (Dublin, 1737), p. 368.

⁵ W. Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, etc. (London, 1792) pp. 258-261.

had a long talk with the animal, and on returning to his people told them that now they might travel about in safety, for peace had been made with the snakes.¹ The Delaware Indians also paid great respect to the rattlesnake, whom they called their grandfather, and they would on no account destroy one of the reptiles. They said that the rattlesnake guarded them and gave them notice of impending danger by his rattle, and that if they were to kill a rattlesnake, the rest of the species would soon hear of it and bite the Indians in revenge.² The Potawatomi Indians highly venerated the rattlesnake for a similar reason, being grateful to it for the timely warning which it often gave of the approach of an enemy. Yet a young man who desired to obtain a rattle would have no hesitation in killing one of the snakes for the purpose; but he apologised profusely to the creature for the liberty he took with it, explaining that he required the rattle for the adornment of his person, and that no disrespect was intended to the snake; and in proof of his good will he would leave a piece of tobacco beside the carcase.³ The Cherokee regard the rattlesnake as the chief of the snake tribe and fear and respect him accordingly. Few Cherokee will venture to kill a rattlesnake, unless they cannot help it, and even then they must atone for the crime by craving pardon of the snake's ghost either in their own person or through the mediation of a priest, according to a set formula. If these precautions are neglected, the kinsfolk of the dead snake will send one of their number as an avenger of blood, who will track down the murderer and sting him to death. It is absolutely necessary to cut off the snake's head and bury it deep in the earth and to hide the body in a hollow log; for if the remains were exposed to the weather, the other snakes would be so angry that they would send torrents of rain and all the streams would overflow their banks. If a Cherokee dreams of being bitten by a snake,

¹ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), iii. 273.

² Rev. John Heckewelder, "An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania and

the neighbouring States," *Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society*, i. (Philadelphia, 1819) p. 245.

³ W. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River* (London, 1825), i. 127.

he must be treated in exactly the same way as if he had been really bitten; for they think that he has actually been bitten by the ghost of a snake, and that if the proper remedies were not applied to the hurt, the place would swell and ulcerate, though possibly not for years afterwards.¹ Once when an Englishman attempted to kill a rattlesnake, a party of Ojibway Indians, with whom he was travelling, begged him to desist, and endeavoured to appease the snake, addressing it in turns as grandfather, smoking over it, and beseeching it to take care of their families in their absence, and to open the heart of the British Agent so that he should fill their canoe with rum. A storm which overtook them next day on Lake Huron was attributed by them to the wrath of the insulted rattlesnake, and they sought to mollify him by throwing dogs as sacrifices to him into the waves.² The Kekchi Indians of Guatemala will not throw serpents or scorpions into the fire, lest the other creatures of the same species should punish them for the outrage.³

In Kiziba, a district of Central Africa, to the west of Lake Victoria Nyanza, if a woman accidentally kills a snake with her hoe while she is working in the field, she hastens in great agitation to the snake-priest and hands him over the hoe, together with two strings of cowries and an ox-hide, begging him to appease the angry spirit of the slain serpent. In this application she is accompanied and supported by all the villagers, who share her fears and anxiety. Accordingly the priest beats his drum as a sign that no woman of the village is to work in the fields till further notice. Next he wraps the dead serpent in a piece of the ox-hide and buries it solemnly. On the following day he performs a ceremony of purification for the slaughter of the reptile. He compounds a medicine out of the guts of a leopard or hyaena and earth or mud dissolved in water, and with this mixture he disinfects all the houses in the village, beginning with

Ceremonies
observed in
Kiziba at
the killing
of a snake

¹ J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) pp. 294-296. Compare *id.*, pp. 456-458; J. Adair, *History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), pp. 237 sq.

² Henry, *Travels*, pp. 176-179, quoted by J. Mooney, *op. cit.* pp. 457 sq.

³ C. Sapper, "Die Gebräuche und religiösen Anschauungen der Kekchi-Indianer," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, viii. (1895) p. 204.

the house of the woman who killed the serpent. Next he proceeds to the fields, where all the women of the village have collected their hoes. These he purifies by dipping them in the fluid and then twirling them about so as to make the drops of water fly off. From that moment the danger incurred by the slaughter of the reptile is averted. The spirit of the serpent is appeased, and the women may resume their usual labours in the fields.¹

Ceremonies
observed
by the
North
American
Indians
and others
at the
killing of
a wolf.

When the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia have slain a wolf they lay the carcase on a blanket and take out the heart, of which every person who helped to kill the beast must eat four morsels. Then they wail over the body, saying, "Woe! our great friend!" After that they cover the carcase with a blanket and bury it. A bow or gun that killed a wolf is regarded as unlucky, and the owner gives it away. These Indians believe that the slaying of a wolf produces a scarcity of game.² When the Tinneh Indians of Central Alaska have killed a wolf or a wolverine, the carcase is brought into the camp or village with great pomp. The people go forth to meet it, saying, "The chief is coming." Then the body is carried into a hut and propped up in a sitting posture; and the medicine-man spreads before it a copious banquet, to which every family in the village has contributed of its best. When the dead animal is supposed to have satisfied his hunger, the men consume the remains of the feast, but no woman is allowed to participate in what has been thus offered to the wolf or the wolverine.³ No ordinary Cherokee dares to kill a wolf, if he can possibly help it; for he believes that the kindred of the slain beast would surely avenge its death, and that the weapon with which the deed had been done would be quite useless for the future, unless it were cleaned and exorcised by a medicine-man. However, certain persons who know the proper rites of atonement for such a crime can kill wolves with impunity, and they are sometimes hired to do so by people who have suffered from the raids of the

¹ H. Rehse, *Kiziba, Land und Leute* (Stuttgart, 1910), pp. 130 sq.

² Fr. Boas, in *Eleventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 9 sq. (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for*

³ Rev. J. Jetté, "On the Medicine-men of the Ten'a," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) p. 158.

wolves on their cattle or fish-traps. The professional wolf-killer prays to the animal whom he has bereaved of life, and seeks to avert the vengeance of the other wolves by laying the blame of the slaughter on the people of another settlement. To purify the gun which has perpetrated the murder, he unscrews the barrel, inserts into it seven small sour-wood rods which have been heated in the fire, and then allows the barrel and its contents to lie in a running stream till morning.¹ When the Chuckchees of north-eastern Siberia have killed a wolf, they hold a festival, at which they cry, "Wolf, be not angry with us. It was not we who killed you, it was the Russians who destroyed you."² In ancient Athens any man who killed a wolf had to bury it by subscription.³

In Jebel-Nuba, a district of the eastern Sudan, it is forbidden to touch the nests or remove the young of a species of black birds, resembling our blackbirds, because the people believe that the parent birds would avenge the wrong by causing a stormy wind to blow, which would destroy the harvest.⁴ Some of the Sudanese negroes of Upper Egypt regard the great black raven (*Corvus umbrinus*) as their uncle and exact pecuniary compensation or blood-money from any one who has been so rash as to slay their sable relative. Having satisfied their scruples on that head, they give the bird a solemn burial, carrying the corpse to the graveyard on a bier with flags and shouts of *la ill Allah*, just as if they were interring one of their kinsfolk.⁵ The Palenques of South America are very careful to spare harmless animals which are not good for food; because they believe that any injury inflicted on such creatures would entail the sickness or death of their own children.⁶

Certain
birds
respected

But the savage clearly cannot afford to spare all animals. He must either eat some of them or starve, and when the question thus comes to be whether he or the animal must

¹ J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) p. 265.

² T. de Pauly, *Description Ethnographique des Peuples de la Russie* (St. Petersburg, 1862), *Peuples de la Sibirie Orientale*, p. 7.

³ Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonaut.* ii. 124.

⁴ "Coutumes étranges des indigènes

du Djebel - Nouba," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xiv. (1882) p. 458.

⁵ C. B. Klunzinger, *Upper Egypt* (London, 1878), pp. 402 sq.

⁶ Caulin, *Historia Coro-graphica natural y evangelica dela Nueva Andalucia*, p. 96: "Reusan mucho matar qualquier animal no comestible que no sea nocibo," etc. Here *reusan* appears to be a misprint for *recusan*.

Apologies offered by savages to the animals which they are obliged to kill.

Propitiation of slain bears by Kamtchatkans, Ostiaks, Koryak, Finns, and Lapps.

perish, he is forced to overcome his superstitious scruples and take the life of the beast. At the same time he does all he can to appease his victims and their kinsfolk. Even in the act of killing them he testifies his respect for them, endeavours to excuse or even conceal his share in procuring their death, and promises that their remains will be honourably treated. By thus robbing death of its terrors he hopes to reconcile his victims to their fate and to induce their fellows to come and be killed also. For example, it was a principle with the Kamtchatkans never to kill a land or sea animal without first making excuses to it and begging that the animal would not take it ill. Also they offered it cedar-nuts and so forth, to make it think that it was not a victim but a guest at a feast. They believed that this hindered other animals of the same species from growing shy. For instance, after they had killed a bear and feasted on its flesh, the host would bring the bear's head before the company, wrap it in grass, and present it with a variety of trifles. Then he would lay the blame of the bear's death on the Russians, and bid the beast wreak his wrath upon them. Also he would ask the bear to inform the other bears how well he had been treated, that they too might come without fear. Seals, sea-lions, and other animals were treated by the Kamtchatkans with the same ceremonious respect. Moreover, they used to insert sprigs of a plant resembling bear's wort in the mouths of the animals they killed; after which they would exhort the grinning skulls to have no fear but to go and tell it to their fellows, that they also might come and be caught and so partake of this splendid hospitality.¹ When the Ostiaks have hunted and killed a bear, they cut off its head and hang it on a tree. Then they gather round in a circle and pay it divine honours. Next they run towards the carcase uttering lamentations and saying, "Who killed you? It was the Russians. Who cut off your head? It was a Russian axe. Who skinned you? It was a knife made by a Russian." They explain, too, that the feathers which sped the arrow on its flight came from the wing of a strange bird, and that they did nothing but let the arrow go.

¹ G. W. Steller, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka* (Frankfort and Leipsic, 1774), pp. 85, 280, 331.

They do all this because they believe that the wandering ghost of the slain bear would attack them on the first opportunity, if they did not thus appease it.¹ Or they stuff the skin of the slain bear with hay; and after celebrating their victory with songs of mockery and insult, after spitting on and kicking it, they set it up on its hind legs, "and then, for a considerable time, they bestow on it all the veneration due to a guardian god."² When a party of Koryak have killed a bear or a wolf, they skin the beast and dress one of themselves in the skin. Then they dance round the skin-clad man, saying that it was not they who killed the animal, but some one else, generally a Russian. When they kill a fox they skin it, wrap the body in grass, and bid him go tell his companions how hospitably he has been received, and how he has received a new cloak instead of his old one.³ A fuller account of the Koryak ceremonies is given by a more recent writer. He tells us that when a dead bear is brought to the house, the women come out to meet it dancing with firebrands. The bear-skin is taken off along with the head; and one of the women puts on the skin, dances in it, and entreats the bear not to be angry, but to be kind to the people. At the same time they offer meat on a wooden platter to the dead beast, saying, "Eat, friend." Afterwards a ceremony is performed for the purpose of sending the dead bear, or rather his spirit, away back to his home. He is provided with provisions for the journey in the shape of puddings or reindeer-flesh packed in a grass bag. His skin is stuffed with grass and carried round the house, after which he is supposed to depart towards the rising sun. The intention of the ceremonies is to protect the people from the wrath of the slain bear and his kinsfolk, and so to ensure success in future bear-hunts.⁴ The Finns used to try to

¹ *Voyages au Nord* (Amsterdam, 1727), viii. 41, 416; P. S. Pallas, *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1771-1776), iii. 64; J. G. Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1776), p. 83.

² A. Erman, *Travels in Siberia* (London, 1848), ii. 43. For the veneration of the polar bear by the

Samoyedes, who nevertheless kill and eat it, see *ibid.* pp. 54 sq.

³ A. Bastian, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1860), iii. 26.

⁴ W. Jochelson, *The Koryak* (Leyden and New York, 1908), pp. 88 sq. (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. vi., *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*).

persuade a slain bear that he had not been killed by them, but had fallen from a tree, or met his death in some other way;¹ moreover, they held a funeral festival in his honour, at the close of which bards expatiated on the homage that had been paid to him, urging him to report to the other bears the high consideration with which he had been treated, in order that they also, following his example, might come and be slain.² When the Lapps had succeeded in killing a bear with impunity, they thanked him for not hurting them and for not breaking the clubs and spears which had given him his death wounds; and they prayed that he would not visit his death upon them by sending storms or in any other way. His flesh then furnished a feast.³

Propitiation of slain bears by the North American Indians.

The reverence of hunters for the bear whom they regularly kill and eat may thus be traced all along the northern region of the Old World, from Bering's Straits to Lapland. It reappears in similar forms in North America. With the American Indians a bear hunt was an important event for which they prepared by long fasts and purgations. Before setting out they offered expiatory sacrifices to the souls of bears slain in previous hunts, and besought them to be favourable to the hunters. When a bear was killed the hunter lit his pipe, and putting the mouth of it between the bear's lips, blew into the bowl, filling the beast's mouth with smoke. Then he begged the bear not to be angry at having been killed, and not to thwart him afterwards in the chase. The carcase was roasted whole and eaten; not a morsel of the flesh might be left over. The head, painted red and blue, was hung on a post and addressed by orators, who heaped praise on the dead beast.⁴ When men of the Bear clan in the Ottawa tribe killed a bear, they made him a feast of his own flesh, and addressed him thus: "Cherish us no grudge because we

¹ Max Buch, *Die Wotjäken* (Stuttgart, 1882), p. 139.

² A. Featherman, *Social History of the Races of Mankind, Fourth Division, Dravido-Turanians*, etc. (London, 1891) p. 422.

³ J. Scheffer, *Lapponia* (Frankfort, 1673), pp. 233 sq. The Lapps "have still an elaborate ceremony in hunting

the bear. They pray and chant to his carcase, and for several days worship before eating it" (E. Rae, *The White Sea Peninsula* (London, 1881), p. 276).

⁴ Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), v. 173 sq.; Chateaubriand, *Voyage en Amérique*, pp. 172-181 (Paris, Michel Lévy, 1870).

have killed you. You have sense ; you see that our children are hungry. They love you and wish to take you into their bodies. Is it not glorious to be eaten by the children of a chief?"¹ Amongst the Nootka Indians of British Columbia, when a bear had been killed, it was brought in and seated before the head chief in an upright posture, with a chief's bonnet, wrought in figures, on its head, and its fur powdered over with white down. A tray of provisions was then set before it, and it was invited by words and gestures to eat. After that the animal was skinned, boiled, and eaten.² The Assiniboins pray to the bear and offer sacrifices to it of tobacco, belts, and other valuable objects. Moreover, they hold feasts in its honour, that they may win the beast's favour and live safe and sound. The bear's head is often kept in camp for several days mounted in some suitable position and decked with scraps of scarlet cloth, necklaces, collars, and coloured feathers. They offer the pipe to it, and pray that they may be able to kill all the bears they meet, without harm to themselves, for the purpose of anointing themselves with his fine grease and banqueting on his tender flesh.³ The Ojibways will not suffer dogs to eat the flesh or gnaw the bones of a bear, and they throw all the waste portions into the fire. They think that if the flesh were desecrated, they would have no luck in hunting bears thereafter.⁴ A trader of the eighteenth century has described the endearments which a party of Ojibways lavished on a she-bear which he had just killed. They took her head in their hands, stroked it and kissed it, and begged a thousand pardons for her violent death ; they called her their relation and grandmother, and begged her not to lay the fault at their door, for indeed it was an Englishman who had killed

¹ *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, vi. (Paris, 1781) p. 171. L. H. Morgan states that the names of the Ottawa totem clans had not been obtained (*Ancient Society*, London, 1877, p. 167). From the *Lettres édifiantes*, vi. 168-171, he might have learned the names of the Hare, Carp, and Bear clans, to which may be added the Gull clan, as I learn from an extract from *The Canadian Journal* (Toronto) for March 1858, quoted in

The Academy, 27th September 1884, p. 203.

² *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt*, p. 117 (Middletown, 1820), p. 133 (Edinburgh, 1824).

³ De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries* (New York, 1863), p. 139.

⁴ A. P. Reid, "Religious Belief of the Ojibois Indians," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, iii. (1874) p. 111.

her. Having severed the head from the body, they adorned it with all the trinkets they could muster and set it up on a scaffold in the lodge. Next day pipes were lit and tobacco smoke blown into the nostrils of the dead bear, and the trader was invited to pay this mark of respect to the animal as an atonement for having taken her life. Before they feasted on the bear's flesh, an orator made a speech in which he deplored the sad necessity under which they laboured of destroying their friends the bears; for how otherwise could they subsist?¹ Some of the Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands, off the north-western coast of America, used to mark the skins of bears, otters, and other animals with four red crosses in a line, by way of propitiating the spirit of the beast they had killed.² When the Thompson Indians of British Columbia were about to hunt bears, they would sometimes address the animal and ask it to come and be shot. They prayed the grisly bear not to be angry with the hunter, nor to fight him, but rather to have pity on him and to deliver himself up to his mercies. The man who intended to hunt the grisly bear had to be chaste for some time before he set out on his dangerous adventure. When he had killed a bear, he and his companions painted their faces in alternate perpendicular stripes of black and red, and sang the bear song. Sometimes the hunter also prayed, thanking the beast for letting itself be killed so easily, and begging that its mate might share the same fate. After they had eaten the flesh of the bear's head, they tied the skull to the top of a small tree, as high as they could reach, and left it there. Having done so, they painted their faces with alternate stripes of red and black as before; for if they failed to observe this ceremony, the bears would be offended, and the hunters would not be able to kill any more. To place the heads of bears or any large beasts on trees or stones was a mark of respect to the animals.³ The Lillooet and Shuswap Indians

¹ Henry's *Travels*, pp. 143-145, quoted by J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900), pp. 446 *sp.*

² A. Mackenzie, "Descriptive notes

on certain implements, weapons, etc., from Graham Island, Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C.," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ix. (1891) section ii. p. 58.

³ James Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, p. 347 (*The Jesuit*

of the same region used to observe similar ceremonies at the killing of a bear.¹

A like respect is testified for other dangerous creatures by the hunters who regularly trap and kill them. When Caffre hunters are in the act of showering spears on an elephant, they call out, "Don't kill us, great captain; don't strike or tread upon us, mighty chief."² When he is dead they make their excuses to him, pretending that his death was a pure accident. As a mark of respect they bury his trunk with much solemn ceremony; for they say that "the elephant is a great lord; his trunk is his hand."³ Before the Amaxosa Caffres attack an elephant they shout to the animal and beg him to pardon them for the slaughter they are about to perpetrate, professing great submission to his person and explaining clearly the need they have of his tusks to enable them to procure beads and supply their wants. When they have killed him they bury in the ground, along with the end of his trunk, a few of the articles they have obtained for the ivory, thus hoping to avert some mishap that would otherwise befall them.⁴ Among the Wanyamwezi of Central Africa, when hunters have killed an elephant, they bury his legs on the spot where he fell and then cover the place with stones. The burial is supposed to appease the spirit of the dead elephant and to ensure the success of the hunters in future undertakings.⁵ When the Baganda have killed an elephant, they extract the nerve from the tusk and bury it, taking care to mark the place of the burial. For they think that the ghost of the dead elephant attaches itself to the nerve, and that if a

Propitiation of slain elephants in Africa.

North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, April 1900). The Thompson Indians used to be known as the Couteau or Knife Indians.

¹ J. Teit, *The Lilloet Indians* (Leyden and New York, 1906), p. 279 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*); *id.*, *The Shuswap* (Leyden and New York, 1909), pp. 602 sq. (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*).

² Stephen Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria* (London, 1833),

p. 138.

³ L. Alberti, *De Kaffers aan de Zuidkust van Afrika* (Amsterdam, 1810), p. 95. Alberti's information is repeated by H. Lichtenstein (*Reisen im südlichen Afrika*, Berlin, 1811-1812, i. 412) and by Cowper Rose (*Four Years in Southern Africa*, London, 1829, p. 155). The burial of the trunk is also mentioned by Kay, *l.c.*

⁴ J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal* (London, 1857), p. 215.

⁵ Fr. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 87.

hunter were to step over the nerve, the elephant's ghost would cause him to be killed by an elephant the next time he went forth to hunt the beasts.¹

Propitiation of lions in Africa.

In Latuka, a district of the Upper Nile, lions are much respected, and are only killed when they prove very troublesome and dangerous. There used to be in this region a Lion-chief, as he was called, who professed to have all lions under his control, and who actually kept several tame lions about his house. Whenever a lion was accidentally caught in a trap near the station of the Egyptian Government, this man would regularly present himself and demand the release of the noble animal. The favour was always granted, and planks were let down into the pit to enable the imprisoned lion to clamber up and escape.² Amongst some tribes of Eastern Africa, when a lion is killed, the carcass is brought before the king, who does homage to it by prostrating himself on the ground and rubbing his face on the muzzle of the beast.³

Propitiation of slain leopards in Africa.

In some parts of Western Africa if a negro kills a leopard he is bound fast and brought before the chiefs for having killed one of their peers. The man defends himself on the plea that the leopard is chief of the forest and therefore a stranger. He is then set at liberty and rewarded. But the dead leopard, adorned with a chief's bonnet, is set up in the village, where nightly dances are held in its honour.⁴ The leopard is held in great veneration by the Igaras of the Niger. They call it "father" (*atta*), though they do not object to kill the animal in the chase. When a dead leopard is brought into Idah, the capital, it is dressed up in white and borne on the heads of four men from house to house, amidst singing and beating of drums. Each householder gives a present of cowries or cloth to the owner of the leopard, and at last the carcass is buried with great ceremony and firing of guns. Should these rites be neglected, the people imagine that the spirit of the dead leopard will punish them.⁵ Among the Ewe negroes of Togoland

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 447

² Fr. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 785.

³ J. Becker, *La Vie en Afrique* (Paris

and Brussels, 1887), ii. 298 sq., 305.

⁴ A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste* (Jena, 1874-1875), ii. 243.

⁵ A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Up the Niger* (London, 1892), p. 309.

“hunters who had killed buffaloes, leopards, or wild black swine observed in Agome for nine days the same, or very similar, ceremonies as are customary at the death of a woman, in order to prevent the soul of the slain beasts from avenging itself on them, a custom which is the less surprising because the mourning customs themselves are based on the fear of spirits, namely the spirits of the dead. The natives ascribe to the souls of these dangerous animals the power of killing the man who shot them, or of so blinding and enchanting him that in the chase he confuses animals and men and so incurs serious mishaps.”¹ The quaint ceremonies which these negroes observe for the purpose of avoiding the imaginary perils have been described by a German missionary. The leopard and the wild buffalo, he tells us, are believed to be animated by malignant souls which not only do the hunter a mischief while they still occupy the bodies of the living creatures, but even after death, in their disembodied state, continue to haunt and plague their slayer, sometimes egging on a serpent or a leopard to sting or bite him, sometimes blinding him so that he shoots a man for an animal, or cannot find his way home and goes groping about in the wilderness till he perishes miserably. If a man thus blinded and crazed should make his way back to the town, he is banished for life and sold into slavery; his house and plantation are razed to the ground; and his nearest relations are often given as bail into the hands of strangers. It is therefore a very serious matter indeed for a hunter to incur the wrath of a leopard’s ghost, and it is quite natural that he should take all reasonable measures to guard himself against so threatening a calamity. Hence as soon as he has killed a leopard, he hurries back to the town and brings word of it to the other men who have slain leopards on former occasions, and who now assist him with their advice and experience. The first thing they do is to put a stalk of grass in his mouth as a sign that he may not speak.

¹ Lieut. Herold, “Bericht betreffend religiöse Anschauungen und Gebrauche der deutschen Ewe-Neger,” *Mitteilungen von Forschungsreisenden und*

Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten, v. Heft 4 (Berlin, 1892), p. 156.

Then they repair to the place where the leopard lies dead in the forest, and inform the animal of the reasons why he has been shot, namely, because he has stolen sheep, fowls, and pigs, and has killed men. Next the drums are beaten and the people assemble in the open square of the town. The dead leopard meanwhile has been fastened to a pole, and with his eyes bandaged and his face upturned to heaven, is solemnly carried about the town and set down before the houses of the principal folk, who reward the hero and his comrades with presents. After the procession has gone the round, the leopard is tied to a tree, and the hunters paint the slayer with red and white so as to make him look like a leopard, except that the leopard's spots are only painted on the left side of his body; a basket painted in the same colours is clapped on his head, and magical strings of cowries are tied round his hands and feet. Thus attired, he and the other heroes who have killed leopards crawl about on all fours and roar like leopards when anybody comes near them. In his left hand every man grasps a bow for the slaughter of innocent cocks and hens, and with his right he grabbles about in the earth like an animal seeking what it may devour. None of them may speak, they may only roar, but they do that in a masterly manner. At the head of this imposing procession go two men armed with a thick cudgel and a spear respectively; and the rear is brought up by a third man, who is privileged to walk upright on his hind legs. This favoured person is the cook, whose office it is to dress the fowls which the human leopards purloin in the course of their pilgrimage; indeed for nineteen days they are privileged, no doubt in their character of leopards, to rob the hen-roosts with impunity. In the afternoon the carcase of the leopard is taken down, skinned, and cut up. The titbits are sent to the chief and the other dignitaries, who eat them; and the remainder of the flesh is consumed by the common folk. The skin, the teeth, the head, and the claws belong to the hunter who killed the beast. But for nineteen days thereafter the slayer of the leopard must retain his peculiar costume: he may eat only warm-blooded animals and food seasoned with salt: he may not eat anything seasoned with pepper; and on no account

may he taste fish, because they are cold-blooded creatures. A general feast, of which all the male inhabitants of the town partake, winds up the proceedings at the close of the nineteen days. A feature of the festivities is a dramatic representation of a leopard-hunt, which is carried out in every detail amid great excitement. If only all these ceremonies are strictly observed, the hunter need have no fear at all of being plagued by the leopard's ghost.¹

The Baganda greatly fear the ghosts of buffaloes which they have killed, and they always appease these dangerous spirits. On no account will they bring the head of a slain buffalo into a village or into a garden of plantains: they always eat the flesh of the head in the open country. Afterwards they place the skull in a small hut built for the purpose, where they pour out beer as an offering and pray to the ghost to stay where he is and not to harm them.² Oddly enough the Baganda also dread the ghosts of sheep, which they believe would haunt and kill the butcher if they saw him give the fatal stroke. Hence when a man is about to slaughter a sheep, he gets another man to divert its attention, and coming up behind the unsuspecting animal he stuns it with the blow of an axe-handle; then, before it can recover consciousness, he adroitly cuts its throat. In this way the ghost of the sheep is bamboozled and will not haunt the butcher. Moreover, when a sheep dies in a house, the housewife may not say bluntly to her husband, "The sheep is dead," or its ghost, touched to the quick, would certainly make her fall ill and might even kill her. She must put a finer point on the painful truth by saying, "I am unable to untie such and such a sheep." Her husband understands her, but the ghost of the animal does not, or at all events he does not resent so delicate an allusion to its melancholy decease.³ Even the ghost of a fowl may haunt a Muganda

Propitiation of slain buffaloes and sheep in Uganda.

¹ H. Spieth, "Jagdgebräuche in Avatime," *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, ix. (1890) pp. 18-20. Compare H. Klose, *Togo unter deutscher Flagge* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 145-147. The ceremonies observed after the slaughter of a wild buffalo are of the same general character with variations in detail.

² Rev. J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 54; *id.*, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 289, 448.

³ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 288 *sq.* Another curious notion which the Baganda have

woman and make her ill, if she has accidentally killed it with her hoe and flung away the body in the long grass instead of carrying it to her husband and confessing her fault.¹

Propitiation of dead whales among the Koryak.

Another formidable beast whose life the savage hunter takes with joy, yet with fear and trembling, is the whale. After the slaughter of a whale the maritime Koryak of north-eastern Siberia hold a communal festival, the essential part of which "is based on the conception that the whale killed has come on a visit to the village; that it is staying for some time, during which it is treated with great respect; that it then returns to the sea to repeat its visit the following year; that it will induce its relatives to come along, telling them of the hospitable reception that has been accorded to it. According to the Koryak ideas, the whales, like all other animals, constitute one tribe, or rather family, of related individuals, who live in villages like the Koryak. They avenge the murder of one of their number, and are grateful for kindnesses that they may have received."² As large whales are now rarely seen in the bays of the Okhotsk Sea, the Koryak at the present time generally celebrate the festival for a white whale. One such festival was witnessed by Mr. W. Jochelson, at the village of Kuel, in October 1900. A white whale had been caught in the nets, and as the sea was partially frozen, the carcass had to be brought ashore in a sledge. When it was seen nearing the beach, a number of women, arrayed in their long embroidered dancing-coats, went forth to meet and welcome it, carrying lighted fire-brands in their hands. To carry burning fire-brands from the hearth is the ancient Koryak fashion of greeting an honoured guest. Strictly speaking, the women who go forth to welcome a whale to the house should wear masks of sedge-grass on their faces as well as dancing-coats on their bodies, and should carry sacrificial alder branches as well as fire-

about sheep is that they give health to cattle and prevent them from being struck by lightning. Hence a sheep is often herded with cows to serve as a sort of lightning-conductor. See J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* p. 421.

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* pp. 423 sq. Further, "if a man's dog died in the house, his wife dared not touch it,

because she feared its ghost; she would call her husband to take it away" (*op. cit.* p. 425).

² W. Jochelson, *The Koryak* (London and New York, 1908), p. 66 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. vi., *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*).

brands in their hands, but on the present occasion the women dispensed with the use of masks. They danced, shaking their heads, moving their shoulders, and swinging their whole bodies with arms outstretched, now squatting, now rising and singing, "Ah! a guest has come." In spite of the cold and the wind the sweat dripped from them, so violently did they dance, and they sang and screamed till they were hoarse. When the sledge with its burden had reached the shore, one of the women pronounced an incantation over the whale's head, and then thrust alder branches and sacrificial grass into its mouth. Next they muffled its head in a hood, apparently to prevent the creature from witnessing the painful spectacle of its own dissection. After that the men cut up the carcase, and the women collected the blood in pails. Two seals, which had also been killed, were included in the festivities which followed. The heads of all three animals were cut off and placed on the roof of the house. Next day the festival began. In the morning the women plaited travelling bags of grass for the use of the whale, and made grass masks. In the evening, the people having assembled in a large underground house, some boiled pieces of the white whale were placed in a grass bag and set before a wooden image of a white whale, so that the animal, or its departed spirit, was thus apparently supposed to be regaled with portions of its own body; for the white whale and the seals were treated as honoured guests at the banquet. To keep up the pretence, the people were silent or spoke only in whispers for fear of wakening the guests before the time. At last the preparations were complete: fresh faggots piled on the hearth sent up a blaze, illumining with an unsteady light the smoke-blackened walls of the vast underground dwelling, which a moment before had been shrouded in darkness; and the long silence was broken by the joyful cries of the women, "Here dear guests have come!" "Visit us often!" "When you go back to the sea, tell your friends to call on us also, we will prepare just as nice food for them as for you." With these words they pointed to puddings set out temptingly on the boards. Next the host took a piece of the fat of the white whale and threw it into the fire, saying, "We are burning it in the fire for thee!" Then he went to the domestic shrine,

placed lumps of fat before the rude effigies of the guardian spirits, and smeared fat on their mouths. The appetites of the higher powers having thus been satisfied, the people set to and partook of the good things provided for them, including the flesh of the white whale and the seals. Lastly, two old men practised divination by means of the shoulder-blade of a seal to discover whether the white whale would go back to the sea and call his fellows to come and be caught like himself. In order to extract this information from the bone burning coals were piled on it, and the resulting cracks were carefully scrutinised. To the delight of all present the omens proved favourable: a long transverse crack indicated the sea to which the spirit of the white whale would soon depart. Four days later the departure actually took place. It was a bright sunshiny wintry morning: the frost was keen; and for more than a mile seaward the beach was covered with blocks of ice. In the great underground dwelling, where the feast had been held, the hearth had been turned into something like an altar. On it lay the heads of the white whale and the seals, and beside them travelling-bags of grass filled with puddings, which the souls of the animals were to take with them on their long journey. Beside the hearth knelt two women, their faces covered with grass masks and their heads bent over the bags, mumbling an incantation. The sunlight streamed down on them through the smoke-hole overhead, but spread only a dim twilight through the remoter recesses of the vast subterranean chamber. The masks worn by the women were intended to guard them against the spirit of the white whale, which was supposed to be hovering invisible in the air. The incantation over, the women rose from their knees and doffed their masks. A careful examination of a pudding, which had been offered in sacrifice to the white whale, now revealed the joyful intelligence that the spirit of the whale had accepted the sacrifice and was about to return to the sea. All that remained, therefore, to do was to speed him on his way. For that purpose two men ascended the roof, let down thongs through the smoke-hole, and hauled up the heads of the white whale and of the seals together with the travelling-bags of provisions. That concluded the despatch of the

souls of the dead animals to their home in the great waters.¹

When the inhabitants of the Isle of St. Mary, to the north of Madagascar, go a-whaling, they single out the young whales for attack and "humbly beg the mother's pardon, stating the necessity that drives them to kill her progeny, and requesting that she will be pleased to go below while the deed is doing, that her maternal feelings may not be outraged by witnessing what must cause her so much uneasiness."² An Ajumba hunter having killed a female hippopotamus on Lake Azyingo in West Africa, the animal was decapitated and its quarters and bowels removed. Then the hunter, naked, stepped into the hollow of the ribs, and kneeling down in the bloody pool washed his whole body with the blood and excretions of the animal, while he prayed to the soul of the hippopotamus not to bear him a grudge for having killed her and so blighted her hopes of future maternity; and he further entreated the ghost not to stir up other hippopotamuses to avenge her death by butting at and capsizing his canoe.³ The ounce, a leopard-like creature, is dreaded for its depredations by the Indians of Brazil. When they have caught one of these animals in a snare, they kill it and carry the body home to the village. There the women deck the carcass with feathers of many colours, put bracelets on its legs, and weep over it, saying, "I pray thee not to take vengeance on our little ones for having been caught and killed through thine own ignorance. For it was not we who deceived thee, it was thyself. Our husbands only set the trap to catch animals that are good to eat: they never thought to take thee in it. Therefore, let not thy soul counsel thy fellows to avenge thy death on our little ones!"⁴ When the Yuracares Indians of Bolivia have killed great apes in their tropical forests, they bring the bodies home, set them out in a row on palm leaves with their heads

Propitiation of whales, hippopotamuses, ounces, and apes.

¹ W. Jochelson, *The Koryak* (Leyden and New York, 1908), pp. 66-76 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. vi., *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*).

² Captain W. F. W. Owen, *Narrative of Voyages to explore the Shores of*

Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar (London, 1833), i. 170.

³ Rev. R. H. Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (London, 1904), p. 204.

⁴ A. Thevet, *La Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris, 1575), ii. 936 [970] sq.

all looking one way, sprinkle them with chicha, and say, "We love you, since we have brought you home." They imagine that the performance of this ceremony is very gratifying to the other apes in the woods.¹ Before they leave a temporary camp in the forest, where they have killed a tapir and dried the meat on a babracot, the Indians of Guiana invariably destroy this babracot, saying that should a tapir passing that way find traces of the slaughter of one of his kind, he would come by night on the next occasion when Indians slept at that place, and, taking a man, would babracot him in revenge.²

Propitia-
tion of dead
eagles.

When a Blackfoot Indian has caught eagles in a trap and killed them, he takes them home to a special lodge, called the eagles' lodge, which has been prepared for their reception outside of the camp. Here he sets the birds in a row on the ground, and propping up their heads on a stick, puts a piece of dried meat in each of their mouths in order that the spirits of the dead eagles may go and tell the other eagles how well they are being treated by the Indians.³ So when Indian hunters of the Orinoco region have killed an animal, they open its mouth and pour into it a few drops of the liquor they generally carry with them, in order that the soul of the dead beast may inform its fellows of the welcome it has met with, and that they too, cheered by the prospect of the same kind reception, may come with alacrity to be killed.⁴ A Cherokee hunter who has killed an eagle stands over the dead bird and prays it not to avenge itself on his tribe, because it is not he but a Spaniard who has done the cruel deed.⁵ When a Teton Indian is on a journey and he meets a grey spider or a spider with yellow legs, he kills it, because some evil would befall him if he did not. But he is very careful not to let the spider know that he kills it, for if the spider knew, his soul would go and tell the other spiders, and one of them

Deceiving
the ghosts
of spiders.

¹ A. d'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique Méridionale*, iii. (Paris and Strasbourg, 1844) p. 202.

² E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 352.

³ G. B. Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales* (London, 1893), p. 240.

⁴ A. Caulin, *Historia Coro-graphica*

natural y evangelica de la Nueva Andalucía Guayana y Vertientes del Rio Orinoco (1779), p. 97.

⁵ J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) p. 282.

would be sure to avenge the death of his relation. So in crushing the insect, the Indian says, "O Grandfather Spider, the Thunder-beings kill you." And the spider is crushed at once and believes what is told him. His soul probably runs and tells the other spiders that the Thunder-beings have killed him; but no harm comes of that. For what can grey or yellow-legged spiders do to the Thunder-beings? ¹

But it is not merely dangerous creatures with whom the savage desires to keep on good terms. It is true that the respect which he pays to wild beasts is in some measure proportioned to their strength and ferocity. Thus the savage Stiens of Cambodia, believing that all animals have souls which roam about after their death, beg an animal's pardon when they kill it, lest its soul should come and torment them. Also they offer it sacrifices, but these sacrifices are proportioned to the size and strength of the animal. The ceremonies observed at the death of an elephant are conducted with much pomp and last seven days.² Similar distinctions are drawn by North American Indians. "The bear, the buffalo, and the beaver are manidos [divinities] which furnish food. The bear is formidable, and good to eat. They render ceremonies to him, begging him to allow himself to be eaten, although they know he has no fancy for it. We kill you, but you are not annihilated. His head and paws are objects of homage. . . . Other animals are treated similarly from similar reasons. . . . Many of the animal manidos, not being dangerous, are often treated with contempt—the terrapin, the weasel, polecat, etc."³ The distinction is instructive. Animals which are feared, or are good to eat, or both, are treated with ceremonious respect; those which are neither formidable nor good to eat are despised. We have had examples of reverence paid to animals which are both feared and eaten. It remains to prove that similar respect is shewn

The ceremonies of propitiation offered to slain animals vary with the more or less dangerous character of the creature.

Animals which, without being feared, are valued for their flesh or their skin, are also treated with respect.

¹ J. Owen Dorsey, "Teton Folklore Notes," *Journal of American Folklore*, ii. (1889) p. 134; *id.*, "A Study of Siouan Cults," *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1894), p. 479.

² H. Mouhot, *Travels in the Central*

Parts of Indo-China (London, 1864), i. 252; J. Moura, *Le Royaume du Cambodge* (Paris, 1883), i. 422.

³ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), v. 420.

to animals which, without being feared, are either eaten or valued for their skins.

Respect
shewn to
dead
sables.

When Siberian sable-hunters have caught a sable, no one is allowed to see it, and they think that if good or evil be spoken of the captured sable no more sables will be caught. A hunter has been known to express his belief that the sables could hear what was said of them as far off as Moscow. He said that the chief reason why the sable hunt was now so unproductive was that some live sables had been sent to Moscow. There they had been viewed with astonishment as strange animals, and the sables cannot abide that. Another, though minor, cause of the diminished take of sables was, he alleged, that the world is now much worse than it used to be, so that nowadays a hunter will sometimes hide the sable which he has got instead of putting it into the common stock. This also, said he, the sables cannot abide.¹ A Russian traveller happening once to enter a Gilyak hut in the absence of the owner, observed a freshly killed sable hanging on the wall. Seeing him look at it, the housewife in consternation hastened to muffle the animal in a fur cap, after which it was taken down, wrapt in birch bark, and put away out of sight. Despite the high price he offered for it, the traveller's efforts to buy the animal were unavailing. It was bad enough, they told him, that he, a stranger, had seen the dead sable in its skin, but far worse consequences for the future catch of sables would follow if they were to sell him the animal entire.² Alaskan hunters preserve the bones of sables and beavers out of reach of the dogs for a year and then bury them carefully, "lest the spirits who look after the beavers and sables should consider that they are regarded with contempt, and hence no more should be killed or trapped."³ The Shuswap Indians of British Columbia think that if they did not throw beaver-bones into the river, the beavers would not go into the traps any more, and that the same thing would happen were a dog to eat the flesh or gnaw the bone of a beaver.⁴ Carrier Indians

Bones of
sables and
beavers
kept out of
reach of
dogs, lest
the spirits
of the dead
animals
should be
offended.

¹ J. G. Gmelin, *Reise durch Sibirien* (Göttingen, 1751-1752), ii. 278.

² L. von Schrenck, *Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-lande*, iii. 564.

³ W. Dall, *Alaska and its Resources*

(London, 1870), p. 89; *id.*, in *The Yukon Territory* (London, 1898), p. 89.

⁴ Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p.

who have trapped martens or beavers take care to keep them from the dogs; for if a dog were to touch these animals the Indians believe that the other martens or beavers would not suffer themselves to be caught.¹ A missionary who fell in with an old Carrier Indian asked him what luck he had in the chase. "Oh, don't speak to me about it," replied the Indian; "there are beavers in plenty. I caught one myself immediately after my arrival here, but unluckily a dog got hold of it. You know that after that it has been impossible for me to catch another." "Nonsense," said the missionary; "set your traps as if nothing had happened, and you will see." "That would be useless," answered the Indian in a tone of despair, "quite useless. You don't know the ways of the beaver. If a dog merely touches a beaver, all the other beavers are angry at the owner of the dog and always keep away from his traps." It was in vain that the missionary tried to laugh or argue him out of his persuasion; the man persisted in abandoning his snares and giving up the hunt, because, as he asserted, the beavers were angry with him.² A French traveller, observing that the Indians of Louisiana did not give the bones of beavers and otters to their dogs, enquired the reason. They told him there was a spirit in the woods who would tell the other beavers and otters, and that after that they would catch no more animals of these species.³ The Canadian Indians were equally particular not to let their dogs gnaw the bones, or at least certain of the bones, of beavers. They took the greatest pains to collect and preserve these bones, and, when the beaver had been caught in a net, they threw them into the river. To a Jesuit who argued that the beavers could not possibly know what became of their bones, the Indians replied, "You know nothing about catching beavers and yet you will be prating about it. Before the beaver is stone dead, his soul

92 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*).

¹ A. G. Morice, "Notes, archaeological, industrial, and sociological, on the Western Dénés," *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, iv. (1892-93) p. 108.

² A. G. Morice, *Au pays de l'Ours Noir, chez les sauvages de la Colombie Britannique* (Paris and Lyons, 1897), p. 71.

³ L. Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane* (Paris, 1683), pp. 97 sq.

takes a turn in the hut of the man who is killing him and makes a careful note of what is done with his bones. If the bones are given to the dogs, the other beavers would get word of it and would not let themselves be caught. Whereas, if their bones are thrown into the fire or a river, they are quite satisfied; and it is particularly gratifying to the net which caught them."¹ Before hunting the beaver they offered a solemn prayer to the Great Beaver, and presented him with tobacco; and when the chase was over, an orator pronounced a funeral oration over the dead beavers. He praised their spirit and wisdom. "You will hear no more," said he, "the voice of the chieftains who commanded you and whom you chose from among all the warrior beavers to give you laws. Your language, which the medicine-men understand perfectly, will be heard no more at the bottom of the lake. You will fight no more battles with the otters, your cruel foes. No, beavers! But your skins shall serve to buy arms; we will carry your smoked hams to our children; we will keep the dogs from eating your bones, which are so hard."²

The elan, deer, and elk were treated by the American Indians with the same punctilious respect, and for the same

¹ *Relations des Jésuites*, 1634, p. 24 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858). Nets are regarded by the Indians as living creatures who not only think and feel but also eat, speak, and marry wives. See F. Gabriel Sagard, *Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, p. 256 (pp. 178 sq. of the reprint, Librairie Tross, Paris, 1865); S. Hearne, *Journey to the Northern Ocean* (London, 1795), pp. 329 sq.; *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 109; *ibid.* 1639, p. 95; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), v. 225; Chateaubriand, *Voyage en Amérique*, pp. 140 sqq. The Hebrews sacrificed and burned incense to their nets (Habakkuk i. 16). In some of the mountain villages of Annam the people, who are great hunters, sacrifice fowls, rice, incense, and gilt paper to their nets at the festival of the New Year. See Le R. P. Cadrière, "Coutumes populaires de la

vallée du Nguôn-So'n," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, ii. (Hanoi, 1902) p. 381. When a net has caught little or nothing, the Ewe negroes think that it must be hungry; so they call in the help of a priest, who commonly feeds the hungry net by sprinkling maize-flour and fish, moistened with palm oil, on its meshes. See G. Hartter, "Der Fischfang im Evheland," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xxxviii. (1906) p. 55.

² Chateaubriand, *Voyage en Amérique*, pp. 175, 178 (Paris, Michel Lévy Frères, 1870). They will not let the blood of beavers fall on the ground, or their luck in hunting them would be gone (*Relations des Jésuites*, 1633, p. 21). Compare the rule about not allowing the blood of kings to fall on the ground. See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 241 sqq.

reason. Their bones might not be given to the dogs nor thrown into the fire, nor might their fat be dropped upon the fire, because the souls of the dead animals were believed to see what was done to their bodies and to tell it to the other beasts, living and dead. Hence, if their bodies were ill-used, the animals of that species would not allow themselves to be taken, neither in this world nor in the world to come.¹ The houses of the Indians of Honduras were encumbered with the bones of deer, the Indians believing that if they threw the bones away, the other deer could not be taken.² Among the Chiquites of Paraguay a sick man would be asked by the medicine-man whether he had not thrown away some of the flesh of the deer or turtle, and if he answered yes, the medicine-man would say, "That is what is killing you. The soul of the deer or turtle has entered into your body to avenge the wrong you did it."³ Before the Tzentaes of Southern Mexico and the Kekchis of Guatemala venture to skin a deer which they have killed, they lift up its head and burn copal before it as an offering; otherwise a certain being named Tzultacca would be angry and send them no more game.⁴ Cherokee hunters ask pardon of the deer they kill. If they failed to do so, they think that the Little Deer, the chief of the deer tribe, who can never die or be wounded, would track the hunter to his home by the blood-drops on the ground and would put the spirit of rheumatism into him. Sometimes the hunter, on starting for home, lights a fire in the trail behind him to prevent the Little Deer from pursuing him.⁵ Before they

Deer, elk, and elan treated by the American Indians with ceremonious respect.

¹ L. Hennepin, *Nouveau voyage d'un pais plus grand que l'Europe* (Utrecht, 1698), pp. 141 sq.; *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 109; F. Gabriel Sagard, *Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, p. 255 (p. 178 of the reprint, Libraire Tross, Paris, 1865). Not quite consistently the Canadian Indians used to kill every elan they could overtake in the chase, lest any should escape to warn their fellows (Sagard, *l.c.*).

² A. de Herrera, *General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens (London, 1725-1726), iv. 142.

³ *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, Nou-

velle Édition, viii. (Paris, 1781) p. 339.

⁴ C. Sapper, "Die Gebräuche und religiösen Anschauungen der Kekch-Indianer," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, viii. (1895) pp. 195 sq.

⁵ J. Mooney, "Cherokee Theory and Practice of Medicine," *American Journal of Folk-lore*, iii. (1890) pp. 45 sq.; *id.*, "Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees," *Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1891), pp. 320 sq., 347; *id.*, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) pp. 263 sq.

went out to hunt for deer, antelope, or elk the Apaches used to resort to sacred caves, where the medicine-men propitiated with prayer and sacrifice the animal gods whose progeny they intended to destroy.¹ The Indians of Louisiana bewailed bitterly the death of the buffaloes which they were about to kill. More than two hundred of them at a time have been seen shedding crocodile tears over the approaching slaughter of the animals, while they marched in solemn procession, headed by an old man who waved a pocket-handkerchief at the end of a stick as an oriflamme, and by a woman who strutted proudly along, bearing on her back a large kettle which had been recently abstracted from the baggage of some French explorers.² The Thompson Indians of British Columbia cherished many superstitious beliefs and observed many superstitious practices in regard to deer. When a deer was killed, they said that the rest of the deer would be well pleased if the hunters butchered the animal nicely and cleanly. To waste venison displeased the animals, who after that would not allow themselves to be shot by the hunter. If a hunter was overburdened and had to leave some of the venison behind, the other deer were better pleased if he hung it up on a tree than if he let it lie on the ground. The guts were gathered and put where the blood had been spilt in butchering the beast, and the whole was covered up with a few fir-boughs. In laying the boughs on the blood and guts the man told the deer not to grieve for the death of their friend and not to take it ill that he had left some of the body behind, for he had done his best to cover it. If he did not cover it, they thought the deer would be sorry or angry and would spoil his luck in the chase. When the head of a deer had to be left behind, they commonly placed it on the branch of a tree, that it might not be contaminated by dogs and women. For the same reason they burned the bones of the slain deer, lest they should be touched by women or gnawed by dogs. And venison was never brought into a hut by the common door, because that door was used by women; it was taken in

¹ J. G. Bourke, "Religion of the Apache Indians," *Folk-lore*, ii. (1891) p. 438.

² L. Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane* (Paris, 1683), pp. 80 sq.

through a hole made in the back of the hut. No hunter would give a deer's head to a man who was the first or second of a family, for that would make the rest of the deer very shy and hard to shoot. And in telling his friends of his bag he would generally call a buck a doe, and a doe he would call a fawn, and a fawn he would call a hare. This he did that he might not seem to the deer to brag.¹ The Lillooet Indians of British Columbia threw the bones of animals, particularly those of the deer and the beaver, into the water, in order that the dogs should not defile or eat them and thereby offend the animals. When the hunter committed the bones to the water he generally prayed to the dead animal, saying, "See! I treat you respectfully. Nothing shall defile you. Have pity on me, so I may kill more of you! May I be successful in hunting and trapping!"² The Canadian Indians would not eat the embryos of the elk, unless at the close of the hunting season; otherwise the mother-elks would be shy and refuse to be caught.³

Indians of the Lower Fraser River regard the porcupine as their elder brother. Hence when a hunter kills one of these creatures he asks his elder brother's pardon and does not eat of the flesh till the next day.⁴ The Sioux will not stick an awl or needle into a turtle, for they are sure that, if they were to do so, the turtle would punish them at some future time.⁵ Some of the North American Indians believed that each sort of animal had its patron or genius who watched over and preserved it. An Indian girl having once picked up a dead mouse, her father snatched the little creature from her and tenderly caressed and fondled it. Being asked why he did so, he said that it was to appease the genius of mice, in order that he might not torment his daughter for eating the

Porcupines, turtles, and mice treated by American Indians with ceremonial respect.

¹ James Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, pp. 346 sq. (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, April 1900).

² James Teit, *The Lillooet Indians* (Leyden and New York, 1906), pp. 281 sq. (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*).

³ *Relations des Jesuites*, 1634, p. 26 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

⁴ Fr. Boas, in "Ninth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1894*, pp. 459 sq.

⁵ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), iii. 230.

mouse. With that he handed the mouse to the girl and she ate it.¹

Dead foxes, turtles, deer, and pigs treated with ceremonious respect.

When the Koryak have killed a fox, they take the body home and lay it down near the fire, saying, "Let the guest warm himself. When he feels warm, we will free him from his overcoat." So when the frozen carcass is thawed, they skin it and wrap long strips of grass round about it. Then the animal's mouth is filled with fish-roe, and the mistress of the house gashes the flesh and puts more roe or dried meat into the gashes, making believe that the gashes are the fox's pockets, which she thus fills with provisions. Then the carcass is carried out of the house, and the people say, "Go and tell your friends that it is good to visit yonder house. 'Instead of my old coat, they gave me a new one still warmer and with longer hair. I have eaten my fill, and had my pockets well stored. You, too, go and visit them.'" The natives think that if they neglected to observe this ceremonial they would have no luck in hunting foxes.² When a Ewe hunter of Togoland has killed an antelope of a particular kind (*Antelope leucoryx*), he erects an enclosure of branches, within which he places the lower jawbones of all the animals he has shot. Then he pours palm-wine and sprinkles meal on the bones, saying, "Ye lower jawbones of beasts, ye are now come home. Here is food, here is drink. Therefore lead your comrades (that is, the living beasts of the forest) hither also."³ In the Timor-laut islands of the Indian Archipelago the skulls of all the turtles which a fisherman has caught are hung up under his house. Before he goes out to catch another, he addresses himself to the skull of the last turtle that he killed, and having inserted betel between its jaws, he prays the spirit of the dead animal to entice its kinsfolk in the sea to come and be caught.⁴ In the Poso district of central Cēlebes hunters keep the jawbones of deer and wild pigs which they have killed and hang them up in their houses near the fire. Then they say

¹ Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), v. 443.

² W. Bogaras, *The Chuckchee* (Leyden and New York, 1904-1909), p. 409 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. vii., *Memoir of the*

American Museum of Natural History).

³ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 389 sq.

⁴ J. A. Jacobsen, *Reisen in die Inselwelt des Banda-Meer* (Berlin, 1896), p. 234.

to the jawbones, "Ye cry after your comrades, that your grandfathers, or nephews, or children may not go away." Their notion is that the souls of the dead deer and pigs tarry near their jawbones and attract the souls of living deer and pigs, which are thus drawn into the toils of the hunter.¹ Thus in all these cases the wily savage employs dead animals as decoys to lure living animals to their doom.

The Lengua Indians of the Gran Chaco love to hunt the ostrich, but when they have killed one of these birds and are bringing home the carcase to the village, they take steps to outwit the resentful ghost of their victim. They think that when the first natural shock of death is passed, the ghost of the ostrich pulls himself together and makes after his body. Acting on this sage calculation, the Indians pluck feathers from the breast of the bird and strew them at intervals along the track. At every bunch of feathers the ghost stops to consider, "Is this the whole of my body or only a part of it?" The doubt gives him pause, and when at last he has made up his mind fully at all the bunches, and has further wasted valuable time by the zigzag course which he invariably pursues in going from one to another, the hunters are safe at home, and the bilked ghost may stalk in vain round about the village, which he is too timid to enter.²

Ghost of
ostrich
outwitted.

The Esquimaux of the Hudson Bay region believe that the reindeer are controlled by a great spirit who resides in a large cave near the end of Cape Chidley. The outward form of the spirit is that of a huge white bear. He obtains and controls the spirit of every reindeer that is slain or dies, and it depends on his good will whether the people shall have a supply of reindeer or not. The sorcerer intercedes with this great spirit and prevails on him to send the deer to the hungry Esquimaux. He informs the spirit that the people have in no way offended him, since he, the sorcerer, has taken great care that the whole of the meat was eaten up,

Esquimaux
propitiation of the
spirit who
controls
reindeer.

¹ A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschappelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendingenootschap*, xli. (1897) pp. 4 sq.

² W. Barbrooke Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land* (London, 1911), pp. 125 sq.

and that last spring, when the does were returning to him to drop their young, none of the little or embryo fawns were devoured by the dogs. After long incantations the magician announces that the patron of the deer condescends to supply the Esquimaux with the spirits of the animals in a material form, and that soon there will be plenty in the land. He charges the people to fall on and slay and thereby win the approval of the spirit, who loves to see good folk enjoying themselves, knowing that so long as the Esquimaux refrain from feeding their dogs with the unborn young, the spirits of the dead reindeer will return again to his watchful care. The dogs are not allowed to taste the flesh, and until the supply is plentiful they may not gnaw the leg-bones, lest the guardian of the deer should take offence and send no more of the animals. If, unfortunately, a dog should get at the meat, a piece of his tail is cut off or his ear is cropped to let the blood flow.¹ Again, the Central Esquimaux hold that sea-mammals, particularly whales, ground-seals, and common seals, sprang from the severed fingers of the goddess Sedna, and that therefore an Esquimau must make atonement for every such animal that he kills. When a seal is brought into the hut, the woman must stop working till it has been cut up. After the capture of a ground seal, walrus, or whale they must rest for three days. Not all sorts of work, however, are forbidden, for they may mend articles made of sealskin, but they may not make anything new. For example, an old tent cover may be enlarged in order to build a larger hut, but it is not allowed to make a new one. Working on new deerskins is strictly forbidden. No skins of this kind obtained in summer may be prepared before the ice has formed and the first seal has been caught with the harpoon. Later on, as soon as the first walrus has been taken, the work must again stop until autumn comes round. Hence all families are eager to finish the work on deerskins as fast as possible, for until that is done the walrus season may not begin.² The Greenlanders are careful not to

Cere-
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of sea-
beasts by
the Esqui-
maux.

¹ L. M. Turner, "Ethnology of the Ungava District, Hudson Bay Territory," *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1894), pp. 200 sq.

² Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 595; *id.*, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of*

fracture the heads of seals or throw them into the sea, but pile them in a heap before the door, that the souls of the seals may not be enraged and scare their brethren from the coast.¹

The Esquimaux about Bering Strait believe that the souls of dead sea-beasts, such as seals, walrus, and whales, remain attached to their bladders, and that by returning the bladders to the sea they can cause the souls to be reincarnated in fresh bodies and so multiply the game which the hunters pursue and kill. Acting on this belief every hunter carefully removes and preserves the bladders of all the sea-beasts that he kills; and at a solemn festival held once a year in winter these bladders, containing the souls of all the sea-beasts that have been killed throughout the year, are honoured with dances and offerings of food in the public assembly-room, after which they are taken out on the ice and thrust through holes into the water; for the simple Esquimaux imagine that the souls of the animals, in high good humour at the kind treatment they have experienced, will thereafter be born again as seals, walrus, and whales, and in that form will flock willingly to be again speared, harpooned, or otherwise done to death by the hunters. The ceremonies observed at these annual festivals of reincarnation are elaborate. The assembly-room or dancing-house (*kashim*, *kassigim*, or *kassigit*), in which the festival is held, consists of a spacious semi-subterranean chamber entered by a tunnel, which leads down to a large round cellar under the floor of the house. From the cellar you ascend into the assembly-room through a hole in the floor. Wooden benches run round the apartment, which is lit by lamps. An opening in the roof serves at once as a window and a chimney. Unmarried men sleep in the assembly-room at all times; they have no other home. The festival is commonly held in December, but it may fall as late as January. It lasts several days. When the time is come

Annual ceremony of returning the bladders of the sea-beasts to the sea in order that the animals may come to life again.

the American Museum of Natural History, xv. (1901) pp. 119 *sqq.* As to the antagonism which these Esquimaux suppose to exist between marine and terrestrial animals, see above, p. 84; and with regard to the taboos

observed by these Esquimaux after the slaughter of sea-beasts, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 205 *sqq.*

¹ D. Crantz, *History of Greenland* (London, 1767), i. 216.

to celebrate it, each hunter brings into the assembly-room the inflated bladders of all the seals, walrus, and whales that he has killed during the year. These are tied by the necks in bunches and hung up on seal spears, which are stuck in a row in the wall some six or eight feet above the floor. Here food and water are offered to them, or rather to the spirits of the animals which are supposed to be present in the bladders; and the spirits signify their acceptance of the offering by causing the bladders to swing to and fro, a movement which is really produced by a man sitting in a dark corner, who pulls a string attached to the bladders. Further, the bladders are fumigated with torches of wild parsnip stalks, the aromatic smoke and red flames of which are believed to be well-pleasing to the souls of the animals dangling in the bladders. Moreover to amuse the souls men execute curious dances before them to the music of drums. First the dancers move slowly with a jerky action from side to side; then they gallop obliquely with arms tossed up and down; and lastly they hop and jump, always keeping perfect time to the beat of the drums. The dance is supposed to imitate the movements of seals and walrus; and again the spirits signify their pleasure by making the bladders swing backwards and forwards. During the continuance of the festival no loud noises may be made in the assembly-room for fear of alarming the souls of the animals in the bladders; if any person makes a noise by accident, all the men present raise a chorus of cries in imitation of the notes of the eider duck to let the souls of the animals think that the unseemly disturbance proceeds from the birds and not from the people. Further, so long as the festival lasts, no wood may be cut with an iron axe in the village, the men must keep rigidly apart from the women, and no female above the age of puberty may come near the bladders suspended in the assembly-room, the reason assigned being that such women are unclean and might offend the sensitive souls of the sea-beasts in the bladders. But immature girls, being untainted by the pollution which attaches to adult women, may go about the bladders freely. The last and crowning scene of the festival takes place at night or just at sunrise. The spears

with the bladders attached to them are passed out by the shaman into the open air through the smoke-hole in the roof. When all are outside, a huge torch of wild parsnip stalks is lighted; the chief shaman takes it on his shoulder, and runs with it as fast as he can across the snow and out on the ice. Behind him troop all the men carrying each his spear with the bladders of the sea-beasts dangling and flapping from it; and in the rear race the women, children, and old men, howling, screaming and making a great uproar. In the darkness the lurid flame of the torch shoots high into the air, casting a red glare over the snowy landscape and lighting up the swarm of fantastic, fur-clad figures that stream along in wild excitement. Arrived at a hole, which had been cut on purpose in the sea-ice, the shaman plants his burning torch beside it in the snow, and every man as he comes up rips open his bladders and thrusts them, one after the other, into the water under the ice. This ends the ceremony. The souls of the dead seals, walrus, and whales, are now ready to be born again in the depths of the sea. So all the people return contented to the village. At St. Michael the men who have thrust the bladders under the ice are obliged on their return to leap through a fire of wild parsnip stalks, probably as a mode of ceremonial purification; for after the dance and the offering of food at the festival the chief shaman passes a lighted torch of parsnip stalks round the assembly-room and the dancers, for the express purpose of purifying them and averting any evil influence that might bring sickness or ill luck on the hunters.¹

For like reasons, a tribe which depends for its subsistence, chiefly or in part, upon fishing is careful to treat the fish with every mark of honour and respect. The Indians of Peru "worshipped the whale for its monstrous greatness. Besides this ordinary system of worship, which prevailed

Fish treated with respect by fishing tribes.

¹ E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1899), pp. 379-393, 437. Compare A. Woldt, *Captain Jacobsen's Reise an der Nordwestküste Americas 1881-1883* (Leipsic, 1884), pp. 289-

291. In the text the ceremony has been described mainly as it was witnessed by Mr. E. W. Nelson at Kushunuk, near Cape Vancouver, in December, 1879. As might have been expected, the ritual varies in details at different places.

The Peruvian Indians worshipped the various sorts of fish which they caught.

Fish treated with respect by the North American Indians.

throughout the coast, the people of different provinces adored the fish that they caught in greatest abundance ; for they said that the first fish that was made in the world above (for so they named Heaven) gave birth to all other fish of that species, and took care to send them plenty of its children to sustain their tribe. For this reason they worshipped sardines in one region, where they killed more of them than of any other fish ; in others, the skate ; in others, the dogfish ; in others, the golden fish for its beauty ; in others, the crawfish ; in others, for want of larger gods, the crabs, where they had no other fish, or where they knew not how to catch and kill them. In short, they had whatever fish was most serviceable to them as their gods."¹ The Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia think that when a salmon is killed its soul returns to the salmon country. Hence they take care to throw the bones and offal into the sea, in order that the soul may reanimate them at the resurrection of the salmon. Whereas if they burned the bones the soul would be lost, and so it would be quite impossible for that salmon to rise from the dead.² In like manner the Ottawa Indians of Canada, believing that the souls of dead fish passed into other bodies of fish, never burned fish bones, for fear of displeasing the souls of the fish, who would come no more to the nets.³ The Hurons also refrained from throwing fish bones into the fire, lest the souls of the fish should go and warn the other fish not to let themselves be caught, since the Hurons would burn their bones. Moreover, they had men who preached to the fish and persuaded them to come and be caught. A good preacher was much sought after, for they thought that the exhortations of a clever man had a great effect in drawing the fish to the nets. In the Huron fishing village where the French missionary Sagard stayed, the preacher to the

¹ Garcilasso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, translated by C. R. Markham, First Part, bk. i. ch. 10, vol. i. pp. 49 sq. (Hakluyt Society, London, 1869-1871). Compare *id.*, vol. ii. p. 148.

² Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 61 sq. (separate reprint from the *Report*

of the British Association for 1890); *id.*, *Kwakiutl Texts*, ii. pp. 303 sq., 305 sq., 307, 317 (*Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, December, 1902).

³ *Relations des Jésuites*, 1667, p. 12 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

fish prided himself very much on his eloquence, which was of a florid order. Every evening after supper, having seen that all the people were in their places and that a strict silence was observed, he preached to the fish. His text was that the Hurons did not burn fish bones. "Then enlarging on this theme with extraordinary unction, he exhorted and conjured and invited and implored the fish to come and be caught and to be of good courage and to fear nothing, for it was all to serve their friends who honoured them and did not burn their bones."¹ At Bogadjim in German New Guinea an enchanter is employed to lure the fish to their doom. He stands in a canoe on the beach with a decorated fish-basket beside him, and commands the fish to come from all quarters to Bogadjim.² When the Aino have killed a sword-fish, they thank the fish for allowing himself to be caught and invite him to come again.³ Among the Nootka Indians of British Columbia it was formerly a rule that any person who had partaken of bear's flesh must rigidly abstain from eating any kind of fish for a term of two months. The motive for the abstinence was not any consideration for the health of the eater, but "a superstitious belief, that should any of their people after tasting bear's flesh, eat of fresh salmon, cod, etc., the fish, though at ever so great a distance off, would come to the knowledge of it, and be so much offended thereat, as not to allow themselves to be taken by any of the inhabitants."⁴ The disappearance of herring from the sea about Heligoland in 1530 was attributed by the fishermen to the misconduct of two lads who had whipped a freshly-caught herring and then flung it back into the sea.⁵ A similar disappearance of the herrings from the Moray Firth, in the reign of Queen Anne, was set down by some people to a breach of the Sabbath which had been committed by the fishermen, while others opined that it was due to a quarrel

Herring respected by European fishermen.

¹ F. Gabriel Sagard, *Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, pp. 255 sqq. (pp. 178 sqq. of the reprint, Librairie Tross, Paris, 1865).

² B. Hagen, *Unter den Papuas* (Wiesbaden, 1899), p. 270.

³ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Aino and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), pp.

529 sq.

⁴ *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt* (Middletown, 1820), p. 116.

⁵ M. J. Schleiden, *Das Salz* (Leipsic, 1875), p. 47. For this reference I am indebted to my late friend W. Robertson Smith.

in which blood had been spilt in the sea.¹ For Scotch fishermen are persuaded that if blood be drawn in a quarrel on the coast where herring are being caught, the shoal will at once take its departure and not return for that season at least. West Highland fishermen believe that every shoal of herring has its leader which it follows wherever he goes. This leader is twice as big as an ordinary herring, and the fishermen call it the king of herring. When they chance to catch it in their nets they put it back carefully into the sea; for they would esteem it petty treason to destroy the royal fish.² The natives of the Duke of York Island annually decorate a canoe with flowers and ferns, lade it, or are supposed to lade it, with shell-money, and set it adrift to compensate the fish for their fellows who have been caught and eaten.³ When the Tarahumares of Mexico are preparing to poison the waters of a river for the purpose of stupefying and catching the fish, they take the precaution of first making offerings to the Master of the Fish by way of payment for the fish of which they are about to bereave him. The offerings consist of axes, hats, blankets, girdles, pouches, and especially knives and strings of beads, which are hung to a cross or a horizontal bar set up in the middle of the river. However, the Master of the Fish, who is thought to be the oldest fish, does not long enjoy these good things; for next morning the owners of the various articles remove them from the river and appropriate them to their usual secular purposes.⁴ It is especially necessary to treat the first fish caught with consideration in order to conciliate the rest of the fish, whose conduct may be supposed to be influenced by the reception given to those of their kind which were the first to be taken. Accordingly the Maoris always put back into the sea the first fish caught, "with a prayer that it may tempt other fish to come and be caught."⁵ Among the Baganda "the first fish taken were

Compensation made to fish for catching them.

¹ Hugh Miller, *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland*, ch. xvii. pp. 256 sq. (Edinburgh, 1889).

² M. Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. (London, 1809) p. 620.

³ W. Powell, *Wanderings in a Wild Country* (London, 1883), pp. 66 sq.

⁴ C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), i. 403.

⁵ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, Second Edition (London, 1870), p.

treated ceremonially: some the fisherman took to the god Mukasa; the remainder his wife cooked, and he and she both partook of them, and he afterwards jumped over her."¹

Still more stringent are the precautions taken when the fish are the first of the season. On salmon rivers, when the fish begin to run up the stream in spring, they are received with much deference by tribes who, like the Indians of the Pacific Coast of North America, subsist largely upon a fish diet. To some of these tribes the salmon is what corn is to the European, rice to the Chinese, and seals to the Esquimaux. Plenty of salmon means abundance in the camp and joy at the domestic hearth; failure of the salmon for a single season means famine and desolation, silence in the village, and sad hearts about the fire.² Accordingly in British Columbia the Indians used to go out to meet the first fish as they came up the river: "They paid court to them, and would address them thus: 'You fish, you fish; you are all chiefs, you are; you are all chiefs.'"³ Amongst the Thlinket or Tlingit of Alaska the first halibut of the season is carefully handled and addressed as a chief, and a festival is given in his honour, after which the fishing goes on.⁴ Among the tribes of the Lower Fraser River when the first sockeye-salmon of the season has been caught, the fisherman carries it to the chief of his tribe, who delivers it to his wife. She prays, saying to the salmon, "Who has brought you here to make us happy? We are thankful to your chief for sending you." When she has cut and roasted the salmon according to certain prescribed rules, the whole tribe is invited and partakes of the fish, after they have purified themselves by drinking a decoction of certain plants which is regarded as a medicine for cleansing the people. But widowers, widows, menstruous women, and youths may not eat of this particular salmon. Even later, when the fish have become plentiful and these ceremonies are dispensed with, the same classes of

Cere-
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treatment
of the first
fish of the
season.

200; A. S. Thomson, *The Story of New Zealand* (London, 1859), i. 202; E. Tregear, "The Maoris of New Zealand," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890) p. 109.

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 395.

² A. G. Morice, *Au pays de l'Ours Noir* (Paris and Lyons, 1897), p. 28.

³ Sir John Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*⁴ (London, 1882), p. 277, quoting *Mellahkallah*, p. 96.

⁴ W. Dall, *Alaska and its Resources* (London, 1870), p. 413.

persons are not allowed to eat fresh salmon, though they may partake of the dried fish. The sockeye-salmon must always be looked after carefully. Its bones have to be thrown into the river, after which the fish will revive and return to its chief in the west. Whereas if the fish are not treated with consideration, they will take their revenge, and the careless fisherman will be unlucky.¹ Among the Songish or Lkungèn tribe of Vancouver Island it is a rule that on the day when the first salmon have been caught, the children must stand on the beach waiting for the boats to return. They stretch out their little arms and the salmon are heaped on them, the heads of the fish being always kept in the direction in which the salmon are swimming, else they would cease to run up the river. So the children carry them and lay them on a grassy place, carefully keeping the heads of the salmon turned in the same direction. Round the fish are placed four flat stones, on which the plant hog's wort (*Peucedanum leiocarpum*, Nutt.), red paint, and bulrushes are burnt as an offering to the salmon. When the salmon have been roasted each of the children receives one, which he or she is obliged to eat, leaving nothing over. But grown people are not allowed to eat the fish for several days. The bones of the salmon that the children have eaten may not touch the ground. They are kept in dishes, and on the fourth day an old woman, who pretends to be lame, gathers them in a huge basket and throws them into the sea.² The Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia observe certain ceremonies when the first olachen fish of the season are caught. The fish are roasted on an instrument of elder-berry wood, and the man who roasts them must wear his travelling dress, mittens, cape, and so forth. While this is being done the Indians pray that plenty of olachen may come to their fishing-ground. The fire may not be blown up, and in eating the fish they

¹ Fr. Boas, in "Ninth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada," *Report of the British Association for 1894*, p. 461. Compare J. Teit, *The Lillooet Indians* (Leyden and New York, 1906), pp. 280 sq. (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*); C. Hill Tout, in *Journal of*

the Anthropological Institute, xxxv. (1905) p. 140; *id.*, *The Far West, the Home of the Salish and Déné* (London, 1907), pp. 170-172.

² Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 16 sq. (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*).

may not cool it by blowing nor break a single bone. Everything must be neat and clean, and the rakes used for catching the fish must be kept hidden in the house.¹ In spring, when the winds blow soft from the south and the salmon begin to run up the Klamath river, the Karoks of California dance for salmon, to ensure a good catch. One of the Indians, called the Kareya or God-man, retires to the mountains and fasts for ten days. On his return the people flee, while he goes to the river, takes the first salmon of the catch, eats some of it, and with the rest kindles the sacred fire in the sweating-house. "No Indian may take a salmon before this dance is held, nor for ten days after it, even if his family are starving." The Karoks also believe that a fisherman will take no salmon if the poles of which his spearing-booth is made were gathered on the river-side, where the salmon might have seen them. The poles must be brought from the top of the highest mountain. The fisherman will also labour in vain if he uses the same poles a second year in booths or weirs, "because the old salmon will have told the young ones about them."² Among the Indians of the Columbia River, "when the salmon make their first appearance in the river, they are never allowed to be cut crosswise, nor boiled, but roasted; nor are they allowed to be sold without the heart being first taken out, nor to be kept over night, but must be all consumed or eaten the day they are taken out of the water. All these rules are observed for about ten days."³ They think that if the heart of a fish were eaten by a stranger at the beginning of the season, they would catch no more fish. Hence, they roast and eat the hearts themselves.⁴ There is a favourite fish of the Aino which appears in their rivers about May and June. They prepare for the fishing by observing rules of ceremonial purity, and when they have gone out to fish, the women at

¹ *Id.*, in *Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 51 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1889*).

² Stephen Powers, *Tribes of California* (Washington, 1877), pp. 31 *sq.*

³ Alex. Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia*

River (London, 1849), p. 97.

⁴ Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, New Edition (New York, 1851), iv. 324, v. 119, where it is said, "a dog must never be permitted to eat the heart of a salmon; and in order to prevent this, they cut the heart of the fish out before they sell it."

home must keep strict silence or the fish would hear them and disappear. When the first fish is caught he is brought home and passed through a small opening at the end of the hut, but not through the door; for if he were passed through the door, "the other fish would certainly see him and disappear."¹ This may partly explain the custom observed by other savages of bringing game in certain cases into their huts, not by the door, but by the window, the smoke-hole, or by a special opening at the back of the hut.²

Some savages preserve the bones of the animals they kill in order that the animals may come to life again.

With some savages a special reason for respecting the bones of game, and generally of the animals which they eat, is a belief that, if the bones are preserved, they will in course of time be re clothed with flesh, and thus the animal will come to life again. It is, therefore, clearly for the interest of the hunter to leave the bones intact, since to destroy them would be to diminish the future supply of game. Many of the Minnetaree Indians "believe that the bones of those bisons which they have slain and divested of flesh rise again clothed with renewed flesh, and quickened with life, and become fat, and fit for slaughter the succeeding June."³ Hence on the western prairies of America, the skulls of buffaloes may be seen arranged in circles and symmetrical piles, awaiting the resurrection.⁴ After feasting on a dog, the Dacotas carefully collect the bones, scrape, wash, and bury them, "partly, as it is said, to testify to the dog-species, that in feasting upon one of their number no disrespect was meant to the species itself, and partly also from

¹ H. C. St. John, "The Ainos," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, ii. (1873) p. 253; *id.*, *Notes and Sketches from the Wild Coasts of Nippon*, pp. 27 sq. Similarly it is a rule with the Aino to bring the flesh of bears and other game into the house, not by the door, but by the window or the smoke-hole. See Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), p. 123; P. Labbé, *Un Bagne Russe* (Paris, 1903), pp. 255 sq.

² *Archiv für Anthropologie*, xxvi. (1900) p. 796 (as to the Gilyak of the Amoor); J. Scheffer, *Laponnia* (Frankfort, 1873), pp. 242 sq.; C. Leemius, *De Lapponibus Finmarchiae eorumque lingua, vita, et religione pris-*

tina commentatio (Copenhagen, 1767), p. 503; *Revue d'Ethnographie*, ii. (1883) pp. 308 sq.; *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vii. (1878) p. 207; Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," in *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 595; *id.*, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, xv. (1901) p. 148; A. G. Morice, in *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, iv. (1892-93) p. 108.

³ E. James, *Expédition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains* (London, 1823), i. 257.

⁴ D. G. Brinton, *Myths of the New World*² (New York, 1876), p. 278.

a belief that the bones of the animal will rise and reproduce another."¹ Among the Esquimaux of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, when a boy has killed his first seal, his mother gathers all the bones and throws them into a seal-hole. They think that these bones will become seals which the boy will catch in later life.² The Yuracares Indians of Bolivia are at great pains to collect all the bones of the beasts, birds, and fishes which they eat, and to throw them into a stream, bury them in the depths of the forest, or burn them in the fire, "in order that the animals of the sort killed may not be angry and may allow themselves to be killed again."³ In sacrificing an animal the Lapps regularly put aside the bones, eyes, ears, heart, lungs, sexual parts (if the animal was a male), and a morsel of flesh from each limb. Then, after eating the remainder of the flesh, they laid the bones and the rest in anatomical order in a coffin and buried them with the usual rites, believing that the god to whom the animal was sacrificed would reclothe the bones with flesh and restore the animal to life in Jabme-Aimo, the subterranean world of the dead. Sometimes, as after feasting on a bear, they seem to have contented themselves with thus burying the bones.⁴ Thus the Lapps expected the resurrection of the slain animal to take place in another world, resembling in this respect the Kamtchatkans, who believed that every creature, down to the smallest fly, would rise from the dead and live underground.⁵ On the other hand, the North American Indians looked for the resurrection of the animals in the present world. The habit, observed especially by Mongolian peoples, of stuffing the skin of a sacrificed

¹ W. H. Keating, *Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River* (London, 1825), i. 452.

² Fr. Boas, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, xv. (1901) p. 161.

³ A. d'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique Méridionale*, iii. (Paris and Strasburg, 1844) p. 201. However, in this case a belief in the resurrection of the animals is not expressly affirmed, and the practice of burning the bones seems inconsistent with it.

⁴ E. J. Jessen, *De Finnorum Lap-*

ponumque Norwegicorum religione pagana tractatus singularis, pp. 46 sq., 52 sq., 65 (bound with C. Leem's *De Lapponibus Finmarchiae eorumque lingua, vita et religione pristina commentatio*, Copenhagen, 1767). Compare Leem's work, pp. 418-420, 428 sq.; J. Acerbi, *Travels through Sweden, Finland, and Lapland* (London, 1802), ii. 302.

⁵ G. W. Steller, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka* (Frankfort and Leipsic, 1774), p. 269; S. Krascheninnikow, *Beschreibung des Landes Kamtschatka* (Lemgo, 1766), p. 246.

animal, or stretching it on a framework,¹ points rather to a belief in a resurrection of the latter sort. The objection commonly entertained by primitive peoples to break the bones of the animals which they have eaten or sacrificed²

¹ See A. Erman, referred to above, p. 223; J. G. Gmelin, *Reise durch Sibirien* (Göttingen, 1751-1752), i. 274, ii. 182 sq., 214; H. Vambéry, *Das Türkenvolk* (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 118 sq. When a fox, the sacred animal of the Conchucos in Peru, had been killed, its skin was stuffed and set up (A. Bastian, *Die Culturländer des alten Amerika*, i. 443). Compare the *bouphonia*, above, pp. 4 sqq.

² At the annual sacrifice of the White Dog, the Iroquois were careful to strangle the animal without shedding its blood or breaking its bones; the dog was afterwards burned (L. H. Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, Rochester, 1851, p. 210). It is a rule with some of the Australian blacks that in killing the native bear they may not break his bones. They say that the native bear once stole all the water of the river, and that if they were to break his bones or take off his skin before roasting him, he would do so again (R. Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, i. 447 sqq.). Some of the Queensland aborigines believe that if the bones or skulls of dugong were not put away in a heap or otherwise preserved, no more dugong would be caught (W. E. Roth, *North Queensland Ethnography*, Bulletin No. 5, Brisbane, 1903, p. 27). When the Tartars whom Carpini visited killed animals for eating, they might not break their bones but burned them with fire (Carpini, *Historia Mongalorum* (Paris, 1838), cap. iii. § i. 2, p. 620). North American Indians might not break the bones of the animals which they ate at feasts (Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, vi. 72). In the war feast held by Indian warriors after leaving home, a whole animal was cooked and had to be all eaten. No bone of it might be broken. After being stripped of the flesh the bones were hung on a tree (*Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, London, 1830,

p. 287). On St. Olaf's Day (29th July) the Karels of Finland kill a lamb, without using a knife, and roast it whole. None of its bones may be broken. The lamb has not been shorn since spring. Some of the flesh is placed in a corner of the room for the house-spirits, some is deposited on the field and beside the birch-trees which are destined to be used as May-trees next year (W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 160 sq., note). Some of the Esquimaux in skinning a deer are careful not to break a single bone, and they will not break the bones of deer while walrus are being hunted (Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), pp. 595 sq.). The Innuitt (Esquimaux) of Point Barrow, Alaska, carefully preserve unbroken the bones of the seals which they have caught and return them to the sea, either leaving them in an ice-crack far out from the land or dropping them through a hole in the ice. By doing so they think they secure good fortune in the pursuit of seals (*Report of the International Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska* (Washington, 1885), p. 40). In this last custom the idea probably is that the bones will be re clothed with flesh and the seals come to life again. The Mosquito Indians of Central America carefully preserved the bones of deer and the shells of eggs, lest the deer or chickens should die or disappear (H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, i. 741). In Syria at the present time people offer a sacrifice for a boy when he is seven days old, and they will not break a bone of the victim, "because they fear that if a bone of the sacrifice should be broken, the child's bones would be broken, too" (S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, Chicago, etc., 1902, p. 178). This last may be a later misinterpretation of the old custom. For West African cases of refusal to break the

may be based either on a belief in the resurrection of the animals, or on a fear of intimidating other creatures of the same species and offending the ghosts of the slain animals. The reluctance of North American Indians and Esquimaux to let dogs gnaw the bones of animals¹ is perhaps only a precaution to prevent the bones from being broken.

We have already seen that some rude races believe in a resurrection of men² as well as of beasts, and it is quite natural that people who entertain such a belief should take care of the bones of their dead in order that the original owners of the bones may have them to hand at the critical moment. Hence in the Mexican territories of Guazacualco and Yluta, where the Indians thought that the dead would rise again, the bones of the departed were deposited in baskets and hung up on trees, that their spirits might not be obliged to grub in the earth for them at the resurrection.³

Some savages preserve or destroy the bones of men in order to assist or prevent their resurrection.

bones of sacrificial victims, see J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 458, 466, 480, 527, 712, 796, 824. Amongst the Narrinyeri of South Australia, when an animal was being cut up, the bystanders used to leap and yell as often as a bone was broken, thinking that if they did not do so their own bones would rot within them (A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, p. 763).

¹ *Relations des Jésuites*, 1634, p. 25 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858); A. Mackenzie, *Voyages through the Continent of America* (London, 1801), p. civ.; J. Dunn, *History of the Oregon Territory* (London, 1844), p. 99; F. Whymper, in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, xxxviii. (1868) p. 228; *id.*, in *Transactions of the Ethnological Society*, N.S., vii. (1869) p. 174; A. P. Reid, "Religious Belief of the Ojibois Indians," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, iii. (1874) p. 111; Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 596; *id.*, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, xv. (1901) p. 123; E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual*

Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part i. (Washington, 1899) pp. 438 sq. For more examples see above, pp. 225, 238 sqq., 242 sq., 246. After a meal the Indians of Costa Rica gather all the bones carefully and either burn them or put them out of reach of the dogs. See W. M. Gabb, *On the Indian Tribes and Languages of Costa Rica* (read before the American Philosophical Society, 20th Aug. 1875), p. 520 (Philadelphia, 1875). The custom of burning the bones to prevent the dogs getting them does not necessarily contradict the view suggested in the text. It may be a way of transmitting the bones to the spirit-land. The aborigines of Australia burn the bones of the animals which they eat, but for a different reason; they think that if an enemy got hold of the bones and burned them with charms, it would cause the death of the person who had eaten the animal (*Native Tribes of South Australia*, Adelaide, 1879, pp. 24, 196).

² See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 279 sqq.

³ A. de Herrera, *General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens (London, 1725-1726), iv. 126.

On the other hand, the Luritcha tribe of Central Australia, who eat their enemies, take steps to prevent their coming to life again, which might prove very inconvenient, by destroying the bones and especially the skulls of the bodies on which they have banqueted.¹

Unquestioning faith of savages in the immortality of animals.

The savage faith in human immortality is commonly supposed to be deduced from a primitive theory of dreams.

The preceding review of customs observed by savages for the conciliation and multiplication of animals which they hunt and kill, is fitted to impress us with a lively sense of the unquestioning faith which primitive man reposes in the immortality of the lower creatures. He appears to assume as an axiom too obvious to be disputed that beasts, birds, and fishes have souls like his own, which survive the death of their bodies and can be reborn in other bodies to be again killed and eaten by the hunter. The whole series of customs described in the foregoing pages—customs which are apt to strike the civilised reader as quaint and absurd—rests on this fundamental assumption. A consideration of them suggests a doubt whether the current explanation of the savage belief in human immortality is adequate to account for all the facts. That belief is commonly deduced from a primitive theory of dreams. The savage, it is said, fails to distinguish the visions of sleep from the realities of waking life, and accordingly when he has dreamed of his dead friends he necessarily concludes that they have not wholly perished, but that their spirits continue to exist in some place and some form, though in the ordinary course of events they elude the perceptions of his senses. On this theory the conceptions, whether gross or refined, whether repulsive or beautiful, which savages and perhaps civilised men have formed of the state of the departed, would seem to be no more than elaborate hypotheses constructed to account for appearances in dreams; these towering structures, for all their radiant or gloomy grandeur, for all the massy strength and solidity with which they present themselves to the imagination of many, may turn out on inspection to be mere visionary castles built of clouds and vapour, which a breath of reason suffices to melt into air.

¹ Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 475.

But even if we grant for the sake of argument that this theory offers a ready explanation of the widespread belief in human immortality, it is less easy to see how the theory accounts for the corresponding belief of so many races in the immortality of the lower animals. In his dreams the savage recognises the images of his departed friends by those familiar traits of feature, voice, and gesture which characterised them in life. But can we suppose that he recognises dead beasts, birds, and fishes in like manner? that their images come before him in sleep with all the particular features, the minute individual differences, which distinguished them in life from their fellows, so that when he sees them he can say to himself, for example, "This is the very tiger that I speared yesterday; his carcase is dead, but his spirit must be still alive"; or, "That is the very salmon I caught and ate this morning; I certainly killed his body, but clearly I have not succeeded in destroying his soul"? No doubt it is possible that the savage has arrived at his theory of animal immortality by some such process of reasoning, but the supposition seems at least more far-fetched and improbable than in the case of human immortality. And if we admit the insufficiency of the explanation in the one case, we seem bound to admit it, though perhaps in a less degree, in the other case also. In short, we conclude that the theory of dreams appears to be hardly enough by itself to account for the widespread belief in the immortality of men and animals; dreams have probably done much to confirm that belief, but would they suffice to originate it? We may reasonably doubt it.

But can a theory of dreams account for the savage belief in the immortality of animals?

Accordingly we are driven to cast about for some more adequate explanation of this prevalent and deeply rooted persuasion. In search of such an explanation perhaps we need go no further than the sense of life which every man feels in his own breast.¹ We have seen that to the savage death presents itself not as a natural necessity but as a lamentable accident or crime that cuts short an existence which, but for it, might have lasted for ever.² Thus arguing apparently from his own sensations he conceives of life as an indestructible

Apparently the savage conceives life as an indestructible form of energy.

¹ For this suggestion I am indebted to a hint thrown out in conversation by my friend Professor G. F. Stout.

² See *The Dying God*, p. 1.

Analogy of the conception to the modern scientific conception of the conservation of energy.

kind of energy, which when it disappears in one form must necessarily reappear in another, though in the new form it need not be immediately perceptible by us; in other words, he infers that death does not destroy the vital principle nor even the conscious personality, but that it merely transforms both of them into other shapes, which are not the less real because they commonly elude the evidence of our senses. If I am right in thus interpreting the thought of primitive man, the savage view of the nature of life singularly resembles the modern scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy. According to that doctrine, no material energy ever perishes or is even diminished; when it seems to suffer diminution or extinction, all that happens is that a portion or the whole of it has been transmuted into other shapes which, though qualitatively different from, are quantitatively equivalent to, the energy in its original form. In short, if we listen to science, nothing in the physical world is ever lost, but all things are perpetually changing: the sum of energy in the universe is constant and invariable, though it undergoes ceaseless transformations.¹ A similar theory of the indestructibility of energy is implicitly applied by the savage to explain the phenomena of life and death, and logically enough he does not limit the application to human beings but extends it to the lower animals. Therein he shews himself a better reasoner than his civilised brother, who commonly embraces with avidity the doctrine of human immortality but rejects with scorn, as derogatory to human dignity, the idea that animals have immortal souls. And when he attempts to confirm his own cherished belief in a life after death by appealing to similar beliefs among savages and inferring from them a natural instinct of immortality, it is well to

¹ The principle of the conservation of energy is clearly stated and illustrated by Balfour Stewart in his book *The Conservation of Energy*, Fourth Edition (London, 1877). The writer does not countenance the view that life is a form of energy distinct from and independent of physical and chemical forces; he regards a living being simply as a very delicately constructed

machine in which the natural forces are in a state of unstable equilibrium. To avoid misapprehension it may be well to add that I do not pretend to argue either for or against the theory of life which appears to be implicitly adopted by the savage; my aim is simply to explain, not to justify or condemn, the mental attitude of primitive man towards these profound problems.

remind him that, if he stands by that appeal, he must, like the savage, consistently extend the privilege of immortality to the despised lower animals; for surely it is improper for him to pick and choose his evidence so as to suit his prepossessions, accepting those parts of the savage creed which tally with his own and rejecting those which do not. On logical and scientific grounds he seems bound to believe either more or less: he must hold that men and animals are alike immortal or that neither of them is so.

We have seen that many savages look forward to a joyful resurrection of men and beasts, if only a proper care is taken of their skeletons; the same old bones, they imagine, will do duty over again in the next life, when they have been decently clad in a new garment of flesh. This quaint fancy is reflected in many popular tales; not uncommonly the animal or man in the story comes to life lame of a limb, because one of his bones has been eaten, broken, or lost.¹ In a Magyar tale, the hero is cut in pieces, but the serpent-king lays the bones together in their proper order, and washes them with water, whereupon the hero revives. His shoulder-blade, however, has been lost, so the serpent-king supplies its place with one of gold and ivory.² Such stories, as Mannhardt has seen, explain why Pythagoras, who claimed to have lived many lives, one after the other, was said to have exhibited his golden leg as a proof of his supernatural pretensions.³ Doubtless he explained that at one of his resurrections a leg had been broken or mislaid, and that he had replaced it, like Miss Kilmansegg, with one of gold. Similarly, when the murdered Pelops was restored to life, the shoulder which Demeter had eaten was made good with one of ivory,⁴ which was publicly exhibited

The resurrection of the body in tales and legends.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen* (Berlin, 1858), pp. 57-74; *id.*, *Baumkultus*, p. 116; C. L. Rochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Brauch* (Berlin, 1867), i. 219 *sqq.*; J. Curtin, *Myths and Folk-lore of Ireland* (London, N.D.), pp. 45 *sq.*; E. Cosquin, *Contes populaires de Lorraine* (Paris, N.D.), ii. 25; E. S. Hartland, "The Physicians of Myddfai," *Archaeological Review*, i.

(1888) pp. 30 *sq.* In folk-tales, as in primitive custom, the blood is sometimes not allowed to fall on the ground. See E. Cosquin, *l.c.*

² W. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*, p. 66.

³ Jamblichus, *Vita Pythag.* 92, 135, 140; Porphyry, *Vita Pythag.* 28.

⁴ Pindar, *Olymp.* i. 37 *sqq.*, with the Scholiast.

at Elis down to historical times.¹ The story that one of the members of the mangled Osiris was eaten by fish, and that, when Isis collected his scattered limbs, she replaced the missing member with one of wood,² may perhaps belong to the same circle of beliefs.

The sinew of the thigh regularly cut out and thrown away by some American Indians.

There is a certain rule observed by savage hunters and fishers which, enigmatical at first sight, may possibly be explained by this savage belief in resurrection. A traveller in America in the early part of the nineteenth century was told by a half-breed Choctaw that the Indians "had an obscure story, somewhat resembling that of Jacob wrestling with an angel; and that the full-blooded Indians always separate the sinew which shrank, and that it is never seen in the venison exposed for sale; he did not know what they did with it. His elder brother, whom I afterwards met, told me that they eat it as a rarity; but I have also heard, though on less respectable authority, that they refrain from it, like the ancient Jews. A gentleman, who had lived on the Indian frontier, or in the nation, for ten or fifteen years, told me that he had often been surprised that the Indians always detached this sinew; but it had never occurred to him to inquire the reason."³ James Adair, who knew the Indians of the South-Eastern States intimately, and whose absurd theories appear not to have distorted his view of the facts, observes that "when in the woods, the Indians cut a small piece out of the lower part of the thighs of the deer they kill, lengthways and pretty deep. Among the great number of venison-hams they bring to our trading-houses, I do not remember to have observed one without it. . . . And I have been assured by a gentleman of character, who is now an inhabitant of South Carolina, and well acquainted with the customs of the northern Indians, that they also cut a piece out of the thigh of every deer they kill, and throw it away; and reckon it such a dangerous pollution to eat it as to occasion sickness and other misfortunes of sundry kinds, especially by spoiling their guns from shooting with proper force and direction."⁴

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 34.

² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18. This is one of the sacred stories which the pious Herodotus (ii. 48) concealed and the pious Plutarch divulged.

³ Adam Hodgson, *Letters from North America* (London, 1824), i. 244.

⁴ J. Adair, *History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), pp. 137 sq. This writer, animated by a curious

In more recent times the statement of Adair's informant has been confirmed by a French missionary, who has also published the "obscure story" to which the English traveller Hodgson refers. The Loucheux and Hare-skin Indians who roam the bleak steppes and forests that stretch from Hudson's Bay to the Rocky Mountains, and northward to the frozen sea, are forbidden by custom to eat the sinew of the legs of animals. To explain this custom they tell the following "sacred story." Once upon a time a man found a burrow of porcupines, and going down into it after the porcupines he lost his way in the darkness, till a kind giant called "He who sees before and behind" released him by cleaving open the earth. So the man, whose name was "Fireless and Homeless," lived with the kind giant, and the giant hunted elans and beavers for him, and carried him about in the sheath of his flint knife. "But know, my son," said the giant, "that he who uses the sky as his head is angry with me, and has sworn my destruction. If he slays me the clouds will be tinged with my blood; they will be red with it, probably." Then he gave the man an axe made of the tooth of a gigantic beaver, and went forth to meet his foe. But from under the ice the man heard a dull muffled sound. It was a whale which was making this noise because it was naked and cold. Warned by the man, the giant went toward the whale, which took human shape, and rushed upon the giant. It was the wicked giant, the kind giant's enemy. The two struggled together for a long time, till the kind giant cried, "Oh, my son! cut, cut the sinew of the leg." The man cut the sinew, and the wicked giant fell down and was slain. That is why the Indians do not eat the sinew of the leg. Afterwards, one day the sky suddenly flushed a fiery red, so Fireless and Homeless knew that the kind giant was no more, and he wept.¹

Story told
by the
Indians to
explain the
custom.

though not uncommon passion for discovering the ten lost tribes of Israel, imagined that he detected the missing Hebrews disguised under the red skins and beardless faces of the American Indians.

¹ É. Petitot, *Monographie des Dènd-Dinajie* (Paris, 1876), pp. 77, 81 sq. ;

id., *Traditions indiennes du Canada Nord-ouest* (Paris, 1886), pp. 132 sqq., compare pp. 41, 76, 213, 264. The story is told in a briefer form, though without any reference to the custom, by another French missionary. See the letter of Mgr. Tache, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxiv. (1852) pp. 336 sq.

The custom of cutting out the sinew of the thigh in animals seems to be based on the principle of sympathetic magic.

This myth, it is almost needless to observe, does not really explain the custom. People do not usually observe a custom because on a particular occasion a mythical being is said to have acted in a certain way. But, on the contrary, they very often invent myths to explain why they practise certain customs. Dismissing, therefore, the story of Fireless and Homeless as a myth invented to explain why the Indians abstain from eating a particular sinew, it may be suggested¹ that the original reason for observing the custom was a belief that the sinew in question was necessary to reproduction, and that deprived of it the slain animals could not come to life again and stock the steppes and prairies either of the present world or of the spirit land. We have seen that the resurrection of animals is a common article of savage faith, and that when the Lapps bury the skeleton of the male bear in the hope of its resurrection they are careful to bury the genital parts along with it. However, subsequent enquiries make it probable that the Indian practice of cutting out the hamstring of deer has no other object than that of preventing eaters of venison from going lame. Among the Cherokee, we are told, "on killing a deer the hunter always makes an incision in the hind quarter and removes the hamstring, because this tendon, when severed, draws up into the flesh; ergo, any one who should unfortunately partake of the hamstring would find his limbs drawn up in the same manner."² Thus the superstition

¹ The first part of this suggestion is due to my friend W. Robertson Smith. See his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*² (London, 1894), p. 380, note I. The Faleshas, a Jewish sect of Abyssinia, after killing an animal for food, "carefully remove the vein from the thighs with its surrounding flesh." See Halévy, "Travels in Abyssinia," in *Publications of the Society of Hebrew Literature*, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 220. Caffre men will not eat the sinew of the thigh; "it is carefully cut out and sent to the principal boy at the kraal, who with his companions consider it as their right." See Col. Maclean, *Kafir Laws and Customs* (Cape Town, 1866), p. 151. Gallas who pride themselves on their descent will

not eat the flesh of the biceps; the reasons assigned for the custom are inconsistent and unsatisfactory. See Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die materielle Cultur der Dandkil, Galla und Somäl* (Berlin, 1893), p. 154. When the Bushmen kill a hare, they cut out a sinew of the thigh and will not eat it, alleging as their reason that the hare was once a man, and that this particular sinew is still human flesh. See W. H. I. Bleek and L. C. Lloyd, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London, 1911), pp. xxxix., 60 sq., 63.

² J. Mooney, "Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees," *Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1891), p. 323. Compare *id.*,

seems to rest on the common principle of homoeopathic or imitative magic, that an eater infects himself with the qualities of the animal of whose flesh he partakes. Many instances of the application of that principle have met us already.¹

But some hunters hamstring the game for a different purpose; they hope thereby to prevent the dead beast or its ghost from getting up and running away. This is the motive alleged for the practice by Kouï hunters in Laos; they think that the spells which they utter in the chase may lose their magical virtue, and that the slaughtered animal may consequently come to life again and escape. To prevent that catastrophe they therefore hamstring the beast as soon as they have butchered it.² When an Esquimau of Alaska has killed a fox, he carefully cuts the tendons of all the animal's legs in order to prevent the ghost from reanimating the body and walking about.³ But hamstringing the carcass is not the only measure which the prudent savage adopts for the sake of disabling the ghost of his victim. In old days, when the Aino went out hunting and killed a fox first, they took care to tie its mouth up tightly in order to prevent the ghost of the animal from sallying forth and warning its fellows against the approach of the hunter.⁴ The Gilyaks of the Amoor River put out the eyes of the seals they have killed, lest the ghosts of the slain animals should know their slayers and avenge their death by spoiling the seal-hunt.⁵ The custom of putting out the eyes of slaughtered animals appears to be not uncommon among primitive peoples, and we may suspect that even where a different reason is alleged for it, the true

Some hunters hamstring the dead game in order to lame the ghosts of the animals.

Some savages put out the eyes of dead game in order perhaps to blind the ghosts of the animals.

"Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1900) pp. 267, 447. In the last of these passages the writer quotes Buttrick, *Antiquities*, p. 12, as follows: "The Indians never used to eat a certain sinew in the thigh. . . . Some say that if they eat of the sinew they will have cramp in it on attempting to run. It is said that once a woman had cramp in that sinew, and therefore none must eat it."

¹ See above, pp. 138 sqq.

² É. Aymonier, *Notes sur le Laos* (Saigon, 1885), p. 23.

³ E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1899) p. 423.

⁴ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Aino and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), p. 504.

⁵ L. von Schrenck, *Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-Lande*, iii. 546.

original motive was to blind the dangerous ghost of the injured creature, and so to incapacitate it for retaliating on the slayer. Thus, when a Samoyed has killed a wild reindeer, one of the first things he does is to cut out the eyes and throw them away "in order to ensure a good bag in future"; and he buries the eyes in some place where no woman or adult girl is likely to step over them, since that also would spoil his luck in the chase.¹ Among the tribes of South-east Africa hunters pluck out the right eye of any animal they have killed and pour a charmed medicine into the empty socket.² Among the Thompson Indians of British Columbia a man whose daughter has just arrived at puberty may not hunt or trap for a month, or he will have no luck. Moreover, he should cut off the head of the first grouse he snares, pluck out the eyes, and insert two small roots of the *Zygadenus elegans* Pursch. in the orbits and another in its mouth, and having done so he ought to hang up the bird's head above his pillow. If he neglects these precautions, he will not be able to snare any more grouse or other small game.³ No doubt the ceremonial pollution contracted by his daughter at this critical period of her life is supposed to infect the hunter and render him unacceptable to the game;⁴ hence it seems a mere elementary dictate of prudence to hoodwink the grouse effectually by putting out their eyes. Sometimes, perhaps, the cutting out of the eyes of fierce and powerful animals may be a rational, not a superstitious, precaution. Thus the Kamtchatkans, who stab with knives the eyes of slain bears before they cut the carcasses up, allege as their reason for doing so that bears which seem to be dead

¹ P. S. Pallas, *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des Russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1771-1776), iii. 70.

² Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), p. 171.

³ J. Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, p. 317 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, April, 1900).

⁴ So among the Esquimaux of

Bering Strait a girl at puberty is considered unclean. "A peculiar atmosphere is supposed to surround her at this time, and if a young man should come near enough for it to touch him it would render him visible to every animal he might hunt, so that his success as a hunter would be gone." See E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1899) p. 291.

of their wounds will sometimes revive and kill their would-be killers.¹

It appears to be a common custom with savage hunters to cut out the tongues of the animals which they kill. On the analogy of the foregoing customs we may conjecture that the removal of the tongues is sometimes a precaution to prevent the ghosts of the creatures from telling their sad fate to their sympathising comrades, the living animals of the same sort, who would naturally be frightened, and so keep out of the hunter's way. Thus, for example, Omaha hunters remove the tongue of a slain buffalo through an opening made in the animal's throat. The tongues thus removed are sacred and may not touch any tool or metal except when they are boiling in the kettles at the sacred tent. They are eaten as sacred food.² Indian bear-hunters cut out what they call the bear's little tongue (a fleshy mass under the real tongue) and keep it for good luck in hunting or burn it to determine, from its crackling and so on, whether the soul of the slain bear is angry with them or not.³ In folk-tales the hero commonly cuts out the tongue of the wild beast which he has slain and preserves it as a token. The incident serves to shew that the custom was a common one, since folk-tales reflect with accuracy the customs and beliefs of a primitive age.⁴ On the other hand, the

The custom of cutting out the tongues of dead animals may sometimes be intended to prevent their ghosts from telling tales.

¹ P. Dobell, *Travels in Kamtchatka and Siberia* (London, 1830), i. 19.

² Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), pp. 289 sq.

³ J. G. Kohl, *Kitschi-Gami* (Bremen, 1859), ii. 251 sq.; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, v. 173; Chateaubriand, *Voyage en Amérique*, pp. 179 sq., 184.

⁴ For examples of the incident, see J. F. Bladé, *Contes populaires recueillis en Agenais* (Paris, 1874), pp. 12, 14; G. W. Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse* (Edinburgh, 1859), pp. 133 sq. ("Shortshanks"); Aug. Schleicher, *Litauische Märchen* (Weimar, 1857), p. 58; Sepp, *Altbayerischer Sagenschatz* (Munich, 1876), p. 114; R. Köhler, on L. Gonzenbach's *Sicilianische Märchen* (Leipsic, 1870), ii. 230;

Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 13. 3; Schol. on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonaut.* i. 517; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 53; J. C. Poestion, *Lapplandische Märchen* (Vienna, 1886), pp. 231 sq.; A. F. Chamberlain, in *Eighth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 35 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1802*); I. V. Zingerle, *Kinder und Hausmärchen aus Tirol*² (Gera, 1870), No. 25, p. 127; A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), p. 342; S. Grundtvig, *Dänische Volksmärchen*, übersetzt von W. Leo (Leipsic, 1878), p. 289; A. Leskien und K. Brugmann, *Litauische Volkslieder und Märchen* (Strasburg, 1882), pp. 405 sq., 409 sq.; A. und A. Schott, *Walachische Märchen* (Stuttgart and Tübingen), No. 10,

Tongues of animals cut out in order to confer super-human knowledge or power on their possessors.

tongues of certain animals, as the otter and the eagle, are torn out and sometimes worn round their necks by Thlinket and Haida shamans as a means of conferring superhuman knowledge and power on their possessors.¹ In particular, an otter's tongue is supposed to convey a knowledge of "the language of all inanimate objects, of birds, animals, and other living creatures" to the shaman, who wears it in a little bag hung round his neck.² When a Galla priest sacrifices an animal and decides that the omens are favourable, he cuts out the tongue, sticks his thumb through it, and so flays the animal.³ In certain cases Gallas cut out the tongues of oxen and wear them on their heads as tokens.⁴ In Bohemia a fox's tongue is worn as an amulet to make a timid person bold;⁵ in Oldenburg and Belgium it is a remedy for erysipelas.⁶ In Bohemia the tongue of a male snake, if cut from the living animal on St. George's Eve and placed under a person's tongue, will confer the gift of eloquence.⁷ The Homeric Greeks cut out the tongues of sacrificial victims and burned them.⁸ According to some accounts, the tongues of the victims were assigned by the Greeks to Hermes, as the god of speech, or to his human representatives the heralds.⁹

p. 142; Chr. Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Walschtirol* (Innsbruck, 1867), No. 39, pp. 116 sq.; G. Basile, *Pentamerone*, übertragen von F. Liebrecht (Breslau, 1846), i. 99; P. Sébillot, *Contes Populaires de la Haute-Bretagne* (Paris, 1885), No. 11, p. 80; E. Cosquin, *Contes Populaires de Lorraine* (Paris, n.d.), i. p. 61; J. Haltrich, *Deutsche Volksmärchen aus dem Sachsenlande in Siebenbürgen*⁴ (Vienna and Hermannstadt, 1885), No. 24, pp. 104 sqq.; Grimm, *Household Tales*, No. 60. The incident often occurs in the type of tale analysed by Mr. E. S. Hartland in his *Legend of Perseus* (vol. i. pp. 12, 17, 18, etc.; vol. iii. pp. 6, 7, 8, etc.).

¹ Fr. Boas, in *Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 58 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1889*); *id.*, in *Journal of American Folk-lore*, i. (1888) p. 218.

² See W. H. Dall, "Masks and Labrets," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington,

1884), pp. 111 sq. Compare *id.*, *Alaska and its Resources* (London, 1870), p. 425; Ivan Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, p. 176.

³ Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die Geistige Cultur der Dandkil Galla und Somäl* (Berlin, 1896), p. 47.

⁴ Ph. Paulitschke, *op. cit.* p. 156; *id.*, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die materielle Cultur*, etc. (Berlin, 1893), p. 226.

⁵ J. V. Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebrauche aus Böhmen und Mähren* (Prague and Leipsic, 1864), p. 54, § 354.

⁶ L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg* (Oldenburg, 1867), ii. 94, § 381; E. Monseur, in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xxxi. (1895) pp. 297 sq.

⁷ J. V. Grohmann, *op. cit.* p. 81, § 576.

⁸ Homer, *Od.* iii. 332, 341.

⁹ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 1110; Athenaeus, i. 28, p. 16 B;

On the principles of sympathetic magic we might expect that heralds should taste the tongues of sacrificial victims to strengthen their voices, or to acquire the gift of tongues.¹

The conjecture that the practice of cutting out the tongues of dead animals may sometimes be a precaution to prevent their ghosts from telling tales, is to some extent confirmed by a ceremony which the Bechuanas used to observe after a battle. It was customary with them on these occasions to sacrifice a fine black ox, called the expiatory victim (*pekou*), cut off the tip of its tongue, and extract one of its eyes together with a piece of the hamstring and a piece of the principal tendon of the shoulder; and the severed parts were afterwards carefully fried, along with some medicinal herbs, in a horn by a medicine-man. The reasons for thus mutilating the animal were explained by a native to two French missionaries. "If we cut out and purify the victim's tongue," said he, "the motive is to induce the guardian deities to prevent the enemy from speaking ill of us. We ask also that the sinews of their feet and hands may fail them in the battle; and that their eyes may not cast a covetous look on our herds."² In this custom the sacrificial ox appears to be treated as the ceremonial equivalent of the enemy; accordingly by cutting out its tongue you obviously prevent your enemy from cursing you, for how can he curse you if he has no tongue? Similarly, by hamstringing the beast you ensure that the legs and arms of your adversary will fail him in the battle, and by gouging out the ox's eye you make perfectly certain that the foe will never be able to cast a longing eye on your fat beeves. Thus for all practical purposes the mutilation of the ox is quite as effective as the mutilation of the enemy's dead, which is sometimes practised by savages from similar superstitious motives. For example, on the return from a field of battle the Baganda used to cut up one or two of the enemy's dead, scoop out the eyes, cut off the ears, and lay the limbs on the road taken by the returning army "to

Bechuana custom of mutilating a sacrificial ox in order to inflict corresponding mutilations on the enemy.

Mutilation of the corpses of enemies or other dangerous persons for the purpose of maiming their ghosts.

Paroemiographi Graeci, ed. Leutsch et Schneidewin, i. 415, No. 100.

¹ See further H. Gaidoz, "Les Langues coupées," *Mélusine*, iii. (1886-87) coll. 303-307; E. Monseur, *loc. cit.*

² T. Arbousset et F. Daumas, *Relation d'un Voyage d'Exploration au Nord-est de la Colonie du Cap de Bonne-Espérance* (Paris, 1842), pp. 562-564.

prevent evil following them."¹ The nature of the evil which the Baganda warriors feared to incur if they did not mutilate the dead in this fashion, is not mentioned, but we may conjecture that by gouging out the eyes and ears of their slain foes they hoped to make their angry ghosts blind and deaf; or perhaps, upon the principles of homoeopathic magic, they counted on maiming their living foes in like manner. Some of the aborigines of Australia cut off the thumbs of their dead enemies in order that their ghosts may not be able to throw spears.² Other Australian tribes burn off the thumb nails of their own dead to prevent the poor ghost from scratching a way for himself out of the grave.³ When the Tupi Indians of Brazil killed and ate a prisoner, "the thumb was cut off because of its use in archery, an art concerning which they were singularly superstitious; what was done with it does not appear, except that it was not eaten like the rest."⁴ Perhaps these Indians, like the Australians, thought by this mutilation to disarm the dangerous ghost of their victim. When any bad man died, the Esquimaux of Bering Strait used to cut the sinews of his arms and legs, "in order to prevent the shade from returning to the body and causing it to walk at night as a ghoul."⁵ In Travancore the ghosts of men who have been hanged for murder are particularly dreaded; so in order to incapacitate them from roaming about and attacking people, it used to be customary to slice off a criminal's heels with a sword or hamstringing him at the moment when he swung free from the ladder.⁶ The Omaha Indians used to slit the soles of a man who had been killed by lightning in order to prevent his ghost from walking.⁷ Among the Awemba of

Disabling
the ghost
by mutilat-
ing his
dead body.

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 60. This custom appears not to be mentioned by the writer in his book *The Baganda* (London, 1911).

² A. Oldfield, "On the Aborigines of Australia," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, N.S. iii. (1865) p. 287.

³ E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race* (Melbourne and London, 1886), i. 348, 381.

⁴ R. Southey, *History of Brazil*, vol. i. Second Edition (London, 1822), p. 231.

⁵ E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, part i. (Washington, 1899) p. 423.

⁶ Rev. S. Mateer, *The Land of Charity* (London, 1871), pp. 203 sq.

⁷ Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "A Study of Siouan Cults," *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1894), p. 420.

Northern Rhodesia murderers often inflicted shocking mutilations on the bodies of their victims. "This was done, it is said, to prevent the spirit of the murdered person from exacting vengeance, and even if only the joint of the first or the little finger were cut off, such mutilation would suffice for this purpose."¹ These examples suggest that many other mutilations which savages practise on their dead enemies may spring, not from the blind fury of hatred, but from a cool calculation of the best mode of protecting themselves against the very natural resentment of the ghosts; by mutilating the corpse they apparently hope to maim the ghost and so to render him incapable of harming them. At all events it appears that in certain circumstances some savages treat the dead bodies of men and beasts much alike, by hamstringing them in order to prevent their ghosts from getting up and walking. So consistent and impartial is the primitive philosopher in his attitude to the spirit world.

¹ C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), p. 126.

CHAPTER XV

THE PROPITIATION OF VERMIN BY FARMERS

§ 1. *The Enemies of the Crops*

Propitia-
tion of the
vermin
which infest
crops and
cattle in
Europe.

BESIDES the animals which primitive man dreads for their strength and ferocity, and those which he reveres on account of the benefits which he expects from them, there is another class of creatures which he sometimes deems it necessary to conciliate by worship and sacrifice. These are the vermin that infest his crops and his cattle. To rid himself of these deadly foes the farmer has recourse to many superstitious devices, of which, though some are meant to destroy or intimidate the vermin, others aim at propitiating them and persuading them by fair means to spare the fruits of the earth and the herds. Thus Esthonian peasants, in the island of Oesel, stand in great awe of the weevil, an insect which is exceedingly destructive to the grain. They give it a fine name, and if a child is about to kill a weevil they say, "Don't do it; the more we hurt him, the more he hurts us." If they find a weevil they bury it in the earth instead of killing it. Some even put the weevil under a stone in the field and offer corn to it. They think that thus it is appeased and does less harm.¹ Amongst the Saxons of Transylvania, in order to keep sparrows from the corn, the sower begins by throwing the first handful of seed backwards over his head, saying, "That is for you, sparrows." To guard the corn against the attacks of leaf-flies (*Erdflöhe*) he shuts his eyes and scatters three handfuls of oats in different directions. Having made this offering to the leaf-flies he feels sure that

¹ J. B. Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *schen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. Heft *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estni-* 2 (Dorpat, 1872), p. 105 note.

they will spare the corn. A Transylvanian way of securing the crops against all birds, beasts, and insects, is this: after he has finished sowing, the sower goes once more from end to end of the field imitating the gesture of sowing, but with an empty hand. As he does so he says, "I sow this for the animals; I sow it for everything that flies and creeps, that walks and stands, that sings and springs, in the name of God the Father, etc."¹ The Huzuls of the Carpathians believe that the bite of the weasel is poisonous and that the animal commits ravages on the cattle. Yet they take care never to kill a weasel, lest the surviving kinsfolk of the deceased should avenge his death on the herds of his murderer. They even celebrate a festival of weasels either on St. Matthew's day (9th August, old style, 21st August, new style), or on St. Catherine's day (24th November, old style, 6th December, new style). On that day no work may be done, lest the weasels should harm the herds.² The following is a German way of freeing a garden from caterpillars. After sunset or at midnight the mistress of the house, or another female member of the family, walks all round the garden dragging a broom after her. She must not look behind her, and must keep murmuring, "Good evening, Mother Caterpillar, you shall come with your husband to church." The garden gate is left open till the following morning.³

The attempts thus made by European peasants to mollify the rage and avert the ravages of vermin have their counterpart in the similar observances of savages. When the Matabele find caterpillars in their fields they put an ear of corn in a calabash, fill the vessel up with caterpillars, and set it down on a path leading to another village, hoping thus to induce the insects to migrate thither.⁴ The Yabim of German New Guinea imagine that the caterpillars and worms which infest their fields of taro are animated by the souls of

Similar attempts made to propitiate vermin by savages.

¹ G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1880), pp. 15 sq.

² R. F. Kaindl, *Die Huzulen* (Vienna, 1894), pp. 79, 103; *id.*, "Vieh-zucht und Viehzauber in den

Ostkarpaten," *Globus*, lxi. (1906) p. 387.

³ E. Krause, "Abergläubische Kuren und sonstiger Aberglaube in Berlin," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xv. (1883) p. 93.

⁴ L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), p. 160.

the human dead ; hence in order to rid the crops of these vermin they politely request the insects to leave the fields and repair to the village. "Ye locusts, worms, and caterpillars," they say, "who have died or hanged yourselves, or have been killed by a falling log or devoured by a shark, go into the village."¹ There is a certain ant whose destructive ravages are dreaded by the people of Nias. Generally they wage war on it by means of traps and other devices ; but at the time of the rice-harvest they cease to call the insect by its common name, and refer to it under the title of Sibaia, a good spirit who is supposed to protect the crop from harm.² In South Mirzapur, when locusts threaten to eat up the fruits of the earth, the people catch one, decorate his head with a spot of red lead, salaam to him, and let him go. After these civilities he immediately departs along with his fellows.³ Among the Wajagga of German East Africa sorcerers attempt to rid the fields of locusts by catching one of the insects, tying its legs together, and letting it fly away, after charging the creature to lead the swarm to the lands of a neighbouring and hostile chief.⁴ The Wagogo, another tribe of German East Africa, catch one of the birds which infest their gardens, and, having drrenched it with a charmed stuff, they release the bird in the hope that it may entice all its companions away into the forest.⁵

Sometimes in dealing with vermin the farmer aims at a judicious mean between undue severity and weak indulgence.

Sometimes in dealing with vermin the farmer aims at hitting a happy mean between excessive rigour on the one hand and weak indulgence on the other ; kind but firm, he tempers severity with mercy. An ancient Greek treatise on farming advises the husbandman who would rid his lands of mice to act thus : "Take a sheet of paper and write on it as follows : 'I adjure you, ye mice here present, that ye neither injure me nor suffer another mouse to do so. I give you

¹ Vetter, "Aberglaube unter dem Jabim-Stamme in Kaiser-Wilhelmsland," *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xii. (1893) pp. 95 *sq.*

² E. Modigliani, *Un Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), p. 626.

³ W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (West-

minster, 1896), ii. 303.

⁴ M. Merker, "Rechtsverhältnisse und Sitten der Wadschagga," *Petermanns Mitteilungen, Ergänzungsheft* No. 138 (Gotha, 1902), pp. 35 *sq.*

⁵ Rev. H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 320.

yonder field' (here you specify the field); 'but if ever I catch you here again, by the Mother of the Gods I will rend you in seven pieces.' Write this, and stick the paper on an unhewn stone in the field before sunrise, taking care to keep the written side up."¹ In the Ardennes they say that to get rid of rats you should repeat the following words: "*Erat verbum, apud Deum vestrum*. Male rats and female rats, I conjure you, by the great God, to go out of my house, out of all my habitations, and to betake yourselves to such and such a place, there to end your days. *Decretis, reversis et desembarassis virgo potens, clemens, justitiae*." Then write the same words on pieces of paper, fold them up, and place one of them under the door by which the rats are to go forth, and the other on the road which they are to take. This exorcism should be performed at sunrise.² Some years ago an American farmer was reported to have written a civil letter to the rats, telling them that his crops were short, that he could not afford to keep them through the winter, that he had been very kind to them, and that for their own good he thought they had better leave him and go to some of his neighbours who had more grain. This document he pinned to a post in his barn for the rats to read.³ The mouse is one of the most dreaded enemies of the rice-crop in Celebes. Many therefore are the prayers and incantations which prudent farmers resort to for the purpose of keeping the vermin from their fields. Thus, for example, a man will run round his field, saying, "Pruner is your name. Creep not through my rice. Be blind and deaf. Creep not through my rice. If you must creep through rice, go and creep through other rice." The following formula is equally effective: "Pruner is your real name. Mouse is your by-name. Down in the evening land is the stone on which you ought to sit; in the west, in Java, is your abode." Or again: "O Longtail, Longtail, eat not my

¹ *Geoponica*, xiii. 5. According to the commentator, the field assigned to the mice is a neighbour's, but it may be a patch of waste ground on the farmer's own land. The charm is said to have been employed formerly in the neighbourhood of Paris (A. de Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des*

Provinces de France, Paris and Lyons, 1846, p. 383).

² A. Meyrac, *Traditions, Coutumes, Légendes et Contes des Ardennes* (Charleville, 1890), p. 176.

³ *American Journal of Folk-lore*, xi. (1898) p. 161.

rice. It is the rice of a prince. It is the field of one who is revered."¹ The Aino of Japan believe that God first created rats and mice at Erum kotan, which means "rat place." Indeed, there are a great many rats and mice there even now, and the people of the village worship mice and offer them libations and sacred sticks whittled at the top into shavings. Grateful for these attentions, the mice spare the gardens and will not nibble at the roots and the fruits. But if the people omit to worship the mice, or if they are rash enough to speak evil of them, the creatures are angry and eat up the garden produce. The havoc which rats and mice now work in the gardens of the Aino every year is attributed to the modern neglect of the people to worship the vermin.²

Sometimes a few of the vermin are treated with high distinction, while the rest are pursued with relentless rigour.

Sometimes the desired object is supposed to be attained by treating with high distinction one or two chosen individuals of the obnoxious species, while the rest are pursued with relentless rigour. In the East Indian island of Bali, the mice which ravage the rice-fields are caught in great numbers, and burned in the same way that corpses are burned. But two of the captured mice are allowed to live, and receive a little packet of white linen. Then the people bow down before them, as before gods, and let them go.³ In the Kangean archipelago, East Indies, when the mice prove very destructful to the rice-crop, the people rid themselves of the pest in the following manner. On a Friday, when the usual service in the mosque is over, four pairs of mice are solemnly united in marriage by the priest. Each pair is then shut up in a miniature canoe about a foot long. These canoes are filled with rice and other fruits of the earth, and the four pairs of mice are then escorted to the sea-shore just as if it were a real wedding. Wherever the procession passes the people beat with all their might on their rice-blocks. On reaching the shore, the canoes, with their little inmates, are launched and left to the mercy of the winds and

¹ G. Maan, "Eenige mededeelingen omtrent de zeden en gewoonten der Toerateya ten opzichte van den rijstbouw," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- en Volkenkunde*, xlv. (1903) pp. 329 sq.

² Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), p. 509.

³ R. van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, N.S., viii. (1879) p. 125.

waves.¹ When the farms of the Sea Dyaks or Ibans of Sarawak are much pestered by birds and insects, they catch a specimen of each kind of vermin (one sparrow, one grasshopper, and so on), put them in a tiny boat of bark well-stocked with provisions, and then allow the little vessel with its obnoxious passengers to float down the river. If that does not drive the pests away, the Dyaks resort to what they deem a more effectual mode of accomplishing the same purpose. They make a clay crocodile as large as life and set it up in the fields, where they offer it food, rice-spirit, and cloth, and sacrifice a fowl and a pig before it. Mollified by these attentions, the ferocious animal very soon gobbles up all the creatures that devour the crops.² In some parts of Bohemia the peasant, though he kills field mice and grey mice without scruple, always spares white mice. If he finds a white mouse he takes it up carefully, and makes a comfortable bed for it in the window; for if it died the luck of the house would be gone, and the grey mice would multiply fearfully in the dwelling.³ In Albania, if the fields or vineyards are ravaged by locusts or beetles, some of the women will assemble with dishevelled hair, catch a few of the insects, and march with them in a funeral procession to a spring or stream, in which they drown the creatures. Then one of the women sings, "O locusts and beetles who have left us bereaved," and the dirge is taken up and repeated by all the women in chorus. Thus by celebrating the obsequies of a few locusts and beetles, they hope to bring about the death of them all.⁴ When caterpillars invaded a vineyard or field in Syria, the virgins were gathered, and one of the caterpillars was taken and a girl made its mother. Then they bewailed and buried it. Thereafter they conducted the "mother" to the place where the caterpillars were, consoling her, in order that all the caterpillars might leave the garden.⁵ On the first of

Mock lamentations of women for insects which destroy the crops.

¹ J. L. van Gennep, "Bijdrage tot de kennis van den Kangean-Archipel," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1896) p. 101.

² C. Hose and W. McDougall, "The Relations between Men and Animals in Sarawak" *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxi. (1901)

pp. 198 *sg.*

³ J. V. Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren* (Prague and Leipsic, 1864), p. 60, § 405.

⁴ J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* (Jena, 1854), Heft i. p. 157.

⁵ Lagarde, *Reliquiae juris ecclesiastici antiquissimae*, p. 135. For this passage

September, Russian girls "make small coffins of turnips and other vegetables, enclose flies and other insects in them, and then bury them with a great show of mourning."¹ In South Africa a plague of caterpillars is removed by a number of small Caffre girls, who go singing through the fields. They wail as they pass through the languishing crops, and thus invoke the aid and pity of some ancestral spirits. The mournful rite ends with a dance on a plot of ground overlooking the fields.²

Ceremony performed by Baronga women to drive insects from the crops.

On the shore of Delagoa Bay there thrives a small brown beetle which is very destructive to the beans and maize. The Baronga call it *noonoo*. In December or January, when the insects begin to swarm, women are sent to collect them from the bean-stalks in shells. When they have done so, a twin girl is charged with the duty of throwing the insects into a neighbouring lake. Accompanied by a woman of mature years and carrying the beetles in a calabash, the girl goes on her mission without saying a word to any one. At her back marches the whole troop of women, their arms, waists, and heads covered with grass and holding in their hands branches of manioc with large leaves which they wave to and fro, while they chant the words, "*Noonoo*, go away! Leave our fields! *Noonoo*, go away! leave our fields!" The little girl throws her calabash with the beetles into the water without looking behind her, and thereupon the women bellow out obscene songs, which they never dare to utter except on this occasion and at the ceremony for making rain.³

Images made of vermin as a charm to get rid of them.

Another mode of getting rid of vermin and other noxious creatures without hurting their feelings or shewing them disrespect is to make images of them. Apollonius of Tyana is said to have cleared Antioch of scorpions by making a

I am indebted to my late friend W. Robertson Smith, who kindly translated it for me from the Syriac. It occurs in the *Canons* of Jacob of Edessa, of which a German translation has been published by C. Kayser (*Die Canonen Jacob's von Edessa ubersetzt und erlautert*, Leipsic, 1886; see pp. 25 sq.).

Russian People (London, 1872), p. 255.

² Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood, a Study of Kafir Children* (London, 1906), p. 292.

³ H. A. Junod, *Les Ba-ronga* (Neuchatel, 1898), pp. 419 sq. As to the rain-making ceremony among the Baronga, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 267 sq.

¹ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the*

bronze image of a scorpion and burying it under a small pillar in the middle of the city.¹ Further, it is reported that he freed Constantinople from flies by means of a bronze fly, and from gnats by means of a bronze gnat.² In the Middle Ages Virgil passed for an enchanter and is said to have rid Naples of flies and grasshoppers by bronze or copper images of these insects; and when the waters of the city were infested by leeches, he made a golden leech, which put a stop to the plague.³ It is reported that a mosque at Fez used to be protected against scorpions by an image of a bird holding a scorpion in its beak.⁴ An Arab writer tells of a golden locust which guarded a certain town from a plague of locusts; and he also mentions two brazen oxen which checked a murrain among cattle.⁵ Gregory of Tours tells us that the city of Paris used to be free of dormice and serpents, but that in his lifetime, while they were cleaning a sewer, they found a bronze serpent and a bronze dormouse and removed them. "Since then," adds the good bishop, "dormice and serpents without number have been seen in Paris."⁶ When their land was overrun with mice, the Philistines made golden images of the vermin and sent them out of the country in a new cart drawn by two cows, hoping that the real mice would simultaneously depart.⁷ So when a swarm of serpents afflicted the Israelites in the desert, they made a serpent of brass and set it on a pole as a mode of staying the plague.⁸

¹ J. Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), p. 264.

² D. Comparetti, *Virgil in the Middle Ages* (London, 1895), p. 265. I have to thank Mr. J. D. May of Merton College, Oxford, for this and the following references to Comparetti's book.

³ D. Comparetti, *op. cit.* pp. 259, 293, 341.

⁴ E. Doutté, *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1908), p. 144.

⁵ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iv. (London, 1903) col. 4395.

⁶ Grégoire de Tours, *Histoire Ecclésiastique des Francs*, traduction de

M. Guizot, Nouvelle Édition (Paris, 1874), viii. 33, vol. i. p. 514. For some stories of the same sort, see J. B. Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions* (Paris, 1679), pp. 306-308.

⁷ 1 Samuel vi. 4-18. The passage in which the plague of mice is definitely described has been omitted in the existing Hebrew text, but is preserved in the Septuagint (1 Samuel v. 6, *καὶ μέσον τῆς χώρας αὐτῆς ἀνεφίθησαν μύες*). See Dean Kirkpatrick's note on 1 Samuel v. 6 (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

⁸ Numbers xxi. 6-9.

§ 2. *Mouse Apollo and Wolf Apollo*

Greek gods who took titles from vermin.

Some of the Greek gods were worshipped under titles derived from the vermin or other pests which they were supposed to avert or exterminate. Thus we hear of Mouse Apollo,¹ Locust Apollo,² and Mildew Apollo;³ of Locust Hercules and Worm-killing Hercules;⁴ of Foxy Dionysus;⁵ and of Zeus the Fly-catcher or Averter of Flies.⁶ If we could trace all these and similar worships to their origin, we should probably find that they were at first addressed, not to the high gods as the protectors of mankind, but to the baleful things themselves, the mice, locusts, mildew, and so forth, with the intention of flattering and soothing them, of disarming their malignity, and of persuading them to spare their worshippers. We know that the Romans worshipped the mildew, the farmer's plague, under its own proper name.⁷ The ravages committed by mice among the crops both in ancient and modern times are notorious,⁸ and according to

Mouse (Smintheus) Apollo.

¹ Homer, *Iliad*, i. 39, with the Scholia and the comment of Eustathius; Strabo, xiii. i. 48 and 63; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xii. 5; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii 39, p. 34, ed. Potter; Pausanias, x. 12. 5.

² Strabo, xiii. i. 64; Pausanias, i. 24. 8.

³ Strabo, xiii. i. 64; Eustathius, on Homer, *Iliad*, i. 39, p. 34; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 609 (vol. ii. p. 386).

⁴ Strabo and Eustathius, *l.c.*

⁵ Professor W. Ridgeway has pointed out that the epithet Bassareus applied to Dionysus (Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30) appears to be derived from *bassara*, "a fox." See J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 771; W. Ridgeway, in *The Classical Review*, x. (1896) pp. 21 *sqq.*; S. Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes, et Religions*, ii. (Paris, 1906) pp. 106 *sqq.*

⁶ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* x. 75; Pausanias, v. 14. i, viii. 26. 7; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 38, p. 33, ed. Potter.

⁷ *Robigo* or personified as *Robigus*. See Varro, *Rerum rusticarum*, i. 1. 6;

id., *De lingua latina*, vi. 16; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 905 *sqq.*; Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, 5; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv. 21; Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* i. 20; L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*³ (Berlin, 1881-1883), ii. 43 *sqq.*; W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (London, 1899), pp. 88 *sqq.*

⁸ Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* vi. 37, p. 580 b 15 *sqq.*; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xvii. 41; W. Warde Fowler, in *The Classical Review* vi. (1892) p. 413. In Laos, a province of Siam, the ravages committed by rats are terrible. From time to time whole armies of these destructive rodents appear and march across the country in dense columns and serried ranks, devouring everything as they go, and leaving famine, with all its horrors, in their train! See Lieut.-Col. Tournier, *Notice sur le Laos Français* (Hanoi, 1900), pp. 104, 135. So in Burma, the rats multiply in some years to such an extent that they cause a famine by destroying whole crops and granaries. See Max and Bertha Ferrars, *Burma* (London, 1900), pp. 149 *sq.*

a tradition which may be substantially correct the worship of the Mouse (Smintheus) Apollo was instituted to avert them.¹ The image of a mouse which stood beside Apollo's tripod in the god's temple in the Troad,² may be compared with the golden mice which the Philistines made for the purpose of ridding themselves of the vermin; and the tame mice kept in his sanctuary, together with the white mice which lived under the altar,³ would on this hypothesis be parallel to the white mice which the Bohemian peasant still cherishes as the best way of keeping down the numbers of their grey-coated brethren.⁴ An Oriental counterpart of the Mouse Apollo is the ancient pillar or rude idol which the Chams of Indo-China call *yang-tikuli* or "god rat," and to which they offer sacrifices whenever rats infest their fields in excessive numbers.⁵

Another epithet applied to Apollo which probably admits of a similar explanation is Wolfish.⁶ Various legends set forth how the god received the title of Wolfish because he exterminated wolves;⁷ indeed this function was definitely attributed to him by the epithet Wolf-slayer.⁸ Arguing from the analogy of the preceding cases, we may suppose that at first the wolves themselves were propitiated by fair words and sacrifices to induce them to spare man and beast; and that at a later time, when the Greeks, or rather the enlightened portion of them, had outgrown this rude form of worship, they transferred the duty of keeping off the wolves to a beneficent deity who discharged the same useful office for other pests, such as mice, locusts, and mildew. A reminiscence of the direct propitiation of the fierce and dangerous beasts themselves is preserved in the legends told to explain the origin of the Lyceum or Place of Wolves at Athens and of the sanctuary of Wolfish Apollo at Sicyon. It is said that once, when Athens was infested by wolves, Apollo commanded sacrifices to be offered on the Place of Wolves and the smell

Wolfish
Apollo.

¹ Polemo, cited by a scholiast on Homer, *Iliad*, i. 39 (ed. Im. Bekker). Compare Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, i. 39.

² Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xii. 5.

³ Aelian, *l.c.*

⁴ See above, p. 279.

⁵ E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leurs religions," *Revue de l'Histoire des*

Religions, xxiv. (1891) p. 236.

⁶ Λύκειος or Λύκιος, Pausanias, i. 19. 3 (with my note), ii. 9. 7, ii. 19. 3, viii. 40. 5; Lucian, *Anacharsis*, 7; Im. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca* (Berlin, 1814-1821), i. 277, lines 10 sq.

⁷ Pausanias, ii. 9. 7; Scholiast on Demosthenes, xxiv. 114, p. 736.

⁸ Sophocles, *Electra*, 6.

proved fatal to the animals.¹ Similarly at Sicyon, when the flocks suffered heavily from the ravages of wolves, the same god directed the shepherds to set forth meat mixed with a certain bark, and the wolves devoured the tainted meat and perished.² These legends probably reflect in a distorted form an old custom of sacrificing to the wolves, in other words of feeding them to mollify their ferocity and win their favour. We know that such a custom prevailed among the Letts down to comparatively recent times. In the month of December, about Christmas time, they sacrificed a goat to the wolves, with strange idolatrous rites, at a cross-road, for the purpose of inducing the wolves to spare the flocks and herds. After offering the sacrifice they used to brag that no beast of theirs would fall a victim to the ravening maw of a wolf for all the rest of that year, no, not though the pack were to run right through the herd. Sacrifices of this sort are reported to have been secretly offered by the Letts as late as the seventeenth century;³ and if we knew more of peasant life in ancient Greece we might find that on winter days, while Aristotle was expounding his philosophy in the Lyceum or Place of Wolves at Athens, the Attic peasant was still carrying forth, in the crisp frosty air, his offering to the wolves, which all night long had been howling round his sheepfold in a snowy glen of Parnes or Pentelicus.

¹ Scholiast on Demosthenes, xxiv. 114, p. 736.

² Pausanias, ii. 9. 7.

³ P. Einhorn, *Reformatio gentis*

Letticae in Ducatu Curlandiae, reprinted in *Scriptores rerum Livonicarum*, vol. ii. (Riga and Leipsic, 1848) p. 621. The preface of Einhorn's work is dated 17th July 1636.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRANSMIGRATION OF HUMAN SOULS INTO ANIMALS

WITH many savages a reason for respecting and sparing certain species of animals is a belief that the souls of their dead kinsfolk are lodged in these creatures. Thus the Indians of Cayenne refuse to eat certain large fish, because they say that the soul of some one of their relations might be in the fish, and that hence in eating the fish they might swallow the soul.¹ The Piaroas Indians of the Orinoco believe that the tapir is their ancestor and that the souls of the dying transmigrate into animals of that species. Hence they will never hunt the tapir nor eat its flesh. It may even ravage their crops with impunity; they will not attempt to ward it off or scare it away.² The Canelos Indians of Ecuador also believe in the transmigration of souls; it is especially under the form of jaguars that they expect to be born again; hence they refuse to attack a jaguar except by way of righteous retribution for some wrong he has done them.³ The doctrine of transmigration finds favour also with the Quixos Indians; an old man told the Italian traveller Osculati that the soul is a breath which passes from the human body into an animal, and on the death of the animal shifts its quarters to another body.⁴ The Caingua Indians of Paraguay think that the souls of the dead which are unable to depart this earth are born again in the shape of animals; for that reason many of

Many savages spare certain animals because they believe the souls of their dead to be lodged in them. Examples of this belief among the American Indians.

¹ A. Biet, *Voyage de la France Equinoxiale en l'Isle de Cayenne* (Paris, 1664), p. 361.

² J. Chaffanjon, *L'Orénoque et le Caura* (Paris, 1889), p. 203.

³ Levrault, "Rapport sur les provinces de Canélos et du Napo,"

Bulletin de la Société de Géographie (Paris), Deuxième Série, xi. (1839) p. 75.

⁴ G. Osculati, *Esplorazione delle regioni equatoriali lungo il Napo ed il fiume delle Amazzoni* (Milan, 1850), p. 114.

them refuse to eat the flesh of the domestic pig, because they say, "He was a man."¹ Once when a Spaniard was out hunting with two Piros Indians of Peru, they passed a deserted house in which they saw a fine jaguar. The Indians drew the Spaniard away, and when he asked why they did not attack the animal, they said: "It was our sister. She died at the last rains. We abandoned the hut and on the second night she came back. It was the beautiful jaguar."² Similarly a missionary remarked of the Chiriguanos Indians of Bolivia that they must have some idea of the transmigration of souls; for one day, while he was talking with a woman of the tribe who had left her daughter in a neighbouring village, she started at sight of a fox passing near and exclaimed, "May it not be the soul of my daughter who has died?"³ The Colombian Indians in the district of Popayan will not kill the deer of their forests, and entertain such a respect for these animals that they view with horror and indignation any one who dares to eat venison in their presence. They say that the souls of persons who have led a good life are in the deer.⁴ In like manner the Indians of California formerly refused to eat the flesh of large game, because they held that the bodies of all large animals contained the souls of past generations of men and women. However, the Indians who were maintained at the Spanish missions and received their rations in the form of beef, had to overcome their conscientious scruples in regard to cattle. Once a half-caste, wishing to amuse himself at the expense of the devout, cooked a dish of bear's flesh for them and told them it was beef. They ate heartily of it, but when they learned the trick that had been played on them, they were seized with retchings, which only ended with the reappearance of the obnoxious meat. A reproach hurled by the wild tribes at their brethren who had fallen under European influence was "They eat venison!"⁵ Californian Indians have been known to plead for the life of an old grizzly she-bear, because they thought

¹ J. B. Ambrosetti, "Los Indios Caingua del alto Paraná (misiones)," *Boletín del Instituto Geográfico Argentino*, xv. (Buenos Ayres, 1895) p. 740.

² Ch. Wiener, *Pérou et Bolivie* (Paris, 1880), p. 369.

³ *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*,

Nouvelle Édition, viii. (Paris, 1781) pp. 335 *sqq.*

⁴ Fr. Coreal, *Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Amsterdam, 1722), ii. 132.

⁵ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), v. 215 *sq.*

it housed the soul of a dead grandam, whose withered features had borne some likeness to the wrinkled face of the bear.¹

The doctrine of the transmigration of human souls into animal bodies is viewed with great favour by the negroes of northern Guinea. In different parts of the coast different species of animals are accounted sacred, because they are supposed to be animated by the spirits of the dead. Hence monkeys near Fishtown, snakes at Whydah, and crocodiles near Dix Cove live in the odour of sanctity.² In the lagoon of Tendo, on the Ivory Coast of West Africa, there is a certain sacred islet covered with impenetrable scrub, on which no native dare set foot. It is peopled only by countless huge bats, which at evening quit the island by hundreds of thousands to fly towards the River Tanoe, which flows into the lagoon. The natives say that these bats are the souls of the dead, who retire during the day to the holy isle and are bound to present themselves every night at the abode of Tano, the great and good fetish who dwells by the river of his name. Paddling past the island the negroes will not look at it, but turn away their heads. A European in crossing the lagoon wished to shoot one of the bats, but his boatmen implored him to refrain, lest he should kill the soul of one of their kinsfolk.³ In the Mopane country of South Africa there is, or used to be, no check on the increase of lions, because the natives, believing that the souls of their chiefs entered into the animals, never attempted to kill them; on the contrary, whenever they met a lion they saluted him in the usual fashion by clapping their hands. Hence the country was so infested by lions that people, benighted in fields, often slept for safety in trees.⁴ Similarly, the Makanga, who occupy the angle between the Zambesi and Shire rivers, refrain from killing lions because they believe that the spirits of dead chiefs enter into them.⁵ The Amambwe universally suppose that their reigning chief turns at death into a lion.⁶

Belief of the transmigration of human souls into animals in Africa.

¹ H. R. Schoolcraft, *op. cit.* iii. 113.

² Rev. J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), p. 210.

³ J. C. Reichenbach, "Étude sur le royaume d'Assinie," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), vii. Série, xi. (1890) pp. 322 sq.

⁴ D. Livingstone, *Missionary Tra-*

vels and Researches in South Africa (London, 1857), p. 615.

⁵ Miss A. Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa* (London, 1906), p. 64.

⁶ C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), p. 200.

The Bahima of Ankole, in Central Africa, also imagine that their dead kings are changed into lions. Their corpses are carried to a forest called Ensanzi, where they lie in state for several days. At the end of that time the body is supposed to burst and give forth a lion cub, which contains the spirit of the deceased king. The animal is nurtured by priests till it is grown up, when it is released and allowed to roam the forest with the other lions. It is the duty of the priests to feed and care for the lions and to hold communications with the dead kings when occasion arises. For that purpose the priests always live in a temple in the forest, where they receive frequent offerings of cattle for the lions. In this forest the lions are sacred and may not be killed, but in other parts of the country they may be slaughtered with impunity. Similarly, the Bahima think that at death the king's wives are changed into leopards; the transformation takes place in like manner through the bursting of the dead bodies in a belt of the same sacred forest. There the leopards are daily fed with offerings of meat by priests, whose office is hereditary. Further, the Bahima are of opinion that the spirits of dead princes and princesses come to life again in the form of snakes, which burst from their dead bodies in another belt of the same forest: there is a temple in the forest where priests feed and guard the holy serpents. When the little snakes have issued from the corpses of the princes, they are fed with milk till they are big enough to go alone.¹ The El Kiboron clan of the Masai, in East Africa, imagine that when married men of the clan are buried, their bones turn into serpents. Hence the El Kiboron do not, like the other Masai, kill snakes: on the contrary they are glad to see the reptiles in the kraal and set out saucers of milk and honey for them on the ground. It is said that snakes never bite members of the clan.² The Ababu and other tribes of the Congo region believe that at death their souls trans-

¹ Rev. J. Roscoe, "The Bahima, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) pp. 101 sq. Compare Major J. A. Meldon, "Notes on the Bahima of Ankole," *Journal of the African Society*, No. 22 (January, 1907), p. 151.

² M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1894), p. 202. The belief that the human dead are turned into serpents is common in Africa; and the practice of offering milk to the reptiles appears to be not infrequent. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*,² pp. 71 sq.

migrate into the bodies of various animals, such as the hippopotamus, the leopard, the gorilla, and the gazelle; and on no account would a man eat the flesh of an animal of the particular kind which he expects to inhabit in the next life.¹ Some of the Caffres of the Zambesi region, in Portuguese territory, who believe in the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of animals, judge of the species of animals into which a dead person has transmigrated by the resemblance which he bore to it in his life. Thus, the soul of a big burly man with prominent teeth will pass into an elephant; a strong man with a long beard will become a lion; an ugly man with a large mouth and thick lips will be a hyaena; and so on. Animals supposed to be tenanted by the spirits of the dead are treated as sacred and invulnerable. When a Portuguese lady, named Dona Maria, to whom the blacks were much attached, had departed this life, it chanced that a hyaena came repeatedly by night to the village and carried off pigs and kids. The lady's old slaves would not do the creature the smallest hurt, saying, "It is Dona Maria, our good mistress. She is hungry and comes to her house seeking what she may devour."²

The belief that the souls of the dead transmigrate into the bodies of animals appears to be widely diffused among the tribes of Madagascar. Thus, for example, the souls of the Betsileo are thought after death to be reborn in boa-constrictors, crocodiles, and eels of a particular sort according to their rank in life. It is the nobles, or at all events the most illustrious of them, who have the privilege of turning into boa-constrictors at death. To facilitate the transformation the corpse of a dead noble is strapped to the central pillar of his house, and the products of decomposition are collected in a silver bowl. The largest of the worms which are bred in the putrid liquid is believed to contain the soul

Belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals in Madagascar.

¹ J. Halkin, *Quelques Peuplades du district de l'Uelè* (Liège, 1907), p. 102; *Notes Analytiques sur les Collections Ethnographiques du Musée du Congo, La Religion* (Brussels, 1906), p. 162.

² Father Courtois, "Scènes de la vie Cafre," *Les Missions Catholiques*,

xv. (1883) p. 593. For more evidence of similar beliefs in Africa, see Father Courtois, "À travers le haut Zambèze," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xvi. (1884) p. 299 (souls of the dead in guinea-towl); Father Lejeune, "Dans la forêt," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xxvii. (1895) p. 248 (souls of the dead in apes, owls, etc.).

of the dead nobleman and to develop in due time into a boa-constrictor. Accordingly these huge serpents are regarded as sacred by the Betsileo; nobody would dare to kill one of them. The people go down on their knees to them and salute them, just as they would do to a real live nobleman. It is a happy day when a boa-constrictor deigns to visit the village which he formerly inhabited in human form. He receives an ovation from his family. They go forth to meet him, spread silk for him to crawl upon, and carry him off to the public square, where he is allowed to gorge himself with the blood of a sacrificed ox. The souls of commoners of good standing transmigrate into the bodies of crocodiles, and in their new form still serve their old masters, particularly by announcing to them the approach of the hour when they must shuffle out of the human frame into the frame of boa-constrictors. Lastly, the scum of the population turn at death into eels, and to render the change as easy for them as possible it is customary to remove the bowels from the corpse and throw them into a sacred lake. The eel that swallows the first mouthful becomes the domicile of the soul of the deceased. No Betsileo would eat such eels.¹ Again, the Antankarana, a tribe in the extreme north of Madagascar, believe that the spirits of their dead chiefs pass into crocodiles, while those of common folk are reborn in other animals.² Once more, the Tanala, a tribe of south-eastern Madagascar, suppose that the souls of their dead transmigrate into certain animals, such as scorpions and insects, which accordingly they will not kill or eat, believing that the creatures will in like manner abstain from injuring them.³

Some of the Nagas of Assam hold that the spirits of the departed, after undergoing a cycle of changes in a subterranean world, are reborn on earth in the form of butterflies or small house flies, only however in that shape to perish for

Belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals in Assam, Burma, and Cochin China.

¹ Father Abinal, "Croyances fabuleuses des Malgaches," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xii. (1880) pp. 549-551. A somewhat different account of the Betsileo belief in the transmigration of souls is given by another authority. See G. A. Shaw, "The Betsileo," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, Reprint of the First Four*

Numbers (Antananarivo, 1885), p. 411. Compare A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), pp. 272 sq., 283, 291.

² Rev. J. Sibree, *The Great African Island* (London, 1880), p. 270.

³ "Das Volk der Tanala," *Globus*, lxxxix. (1906) p. 362.

ever. Hence, when these small flies light on the wine-cups of the living, the wassailers will not kill them for fear of destroying some one of their ancestors.¹ For a like reason the Angamis, one of the Naga tribes, carefully abstain from injuring certain species of butterfly.² At Ang Teng, a large village of Upper Burma, the river at a point above a dilapidated bridge swarms with fish, which the people hold sacred, because they imagine them to be their dead come to life again in a fishy form. In former days no one might kill one of these fish under pain of death. Once a Shan, caught fishing with some dead fish in his possession, was instantly haled away and killed.³ The people of Kon-Meney in eastern Cochin China will not eat toads, because long ago the soul of one of their chiefs passed at death into a toad. In his new shape he appeared to his son in a dream, informed him of the transformation, and commanded him to sacrifice a pig, a fowl, and millet wine to his deceased parent, assuring him that if he complied with the injunction the rice would grow well. The dutiful son obeyed the author of his being; the toad appeared in the rice-fields watching over the growth of the rice, and the crop was magnificent. For two generations the sacrifices were duly offered, the toad appeared at the time of sowing, and the granaries were full. Afterwards, however, the people neglected to sacrifice to the toad and were punished accordingly by failure of the crops and consequent famine.⁴ Some of the Chams of Indo-China believe that the souls of the dead inhabit the bodies of certain animals, such as serpents, crocodiles, and so forth, the kind of animal varying with the family. The species of animals most commonly regarded as tenanted by the spirits of the departed are the rodents and active climbing creatures which abound in the country, such as squirrels. According to some people, these small animals are especially the abode of still-born infants or of children

¹ W. H. Furness, "The Ethnography of the Nagas of Eastern Assam," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 463.

² T. C. Hodson, *The Nāga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), p. 159.

³ (Sir) J. George Scott and J. P.

Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* (Rangoon, 1900-1901), Part ii. vol. i. p. 26.

⁴ Guerlach, "Chez les sauvages de la Cochinchine Orientale, Bahnar, Reungao, Sédang," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xxvi. (1894) pp. 143 sq.

who died young. The souls of these little ones appear in dreams to their mourning parents and say: "I inhabit the body of a squirrel. Honour me as such. Make me a present of a flower, a coco-nut, a cup of roasted rice," and so on. The parents discharge this pious duty, respect these familiar spirits, ascribe illnesses to their displeasure, pray to them for healing, and on their deathbed commend to their descendants the care of such and such a spirit, as a member of the family.¹

Belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals in the Philippines, the Sandwich Islands, and the Pelew Islands.

The Igorrots of Cabugatan, in the Philippines, regard the eels in their stream as the souls of their forefathers. Hence instead of catching and eating them they feed them, till the eels become as tame as carp in a pond.² In the Sandwich Islands various people worshipped diverse kinds of animals, such as fowls, lizards, owls, rats, and so forth. If a man who adored sharks happened to have a child still-born, he would endeavour to lodge the soul of the dead infant in the body of a shark. For this purpose he laid the tiny body, together with a couple of roots of taro, some kava, and a piece of sugar-cane, on a mat, recited prayers over it, and then flung the whole into the sea, believing that by virtue of this offering the transmigration of the child's soul into the shark's body would be effected, and that henceforth the voracious monsters would spare all members of the family who might otherwise be exposed to their attacks. In the temples dedicated to sharks there were priests who, morning and evening, addressed prayers to the shark-idol, and rubbed their bodies with water and salt, which, drying on their skin, imparted to it an appearance of being covered with scales. They also wore red stuffs, uttered shrill cries, leaped over the sacred enclosure, and persuaded the credulous islanders that they knew the exact moment when the children thrown

¹ E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leurs religions," *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, xxiv. (1891) p. 267. Compare D. Grangeon, "Les Cham et leurs superstitions," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) p. 46. According to the latter writer, white horses are specially set apart to serve as domiciles for these domestic deities. After its dedication such a horse is care-

fully tended and never mounted again.

² F. Blumentritt, "Der Ahnencultus und die religiösen Anschauungen der Malaïen des Philippinen-Archipels," *Mittheilungen der Wiener Geogr. Gesellschaft*, 1882, p. 164; *id.*, *Versuch einer Ethnographie der Philippinen* (Gotha, 1882), p. 29 (*Petermanns Mittheilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No 67).

into the sea were turned into sharks. For this revelation they were rewarded by the happy parents with a plentiful supply of little pigs, coco-nuts, kava, and so on.¹ The Pelew Islanders believed that the souls of their forefathers lived in certain species of animals, which accordingly they held sacred and would not injure. For this reason one man would not kill snakes, another would not harm pigeons, and so on; but every one was quite ready to kill and eat the sacred animals of his neighbours.²

We have seen that the Battas of Sumatra seldom kill a tiger and never without performing an elaborate ceremony to appease the animal's ghost. The reason alleged for treating tigers with this respect is that the souls of the dead often transmigrate into these animals, and therefore in killing a tiger a man never knows whether he is not killing a relative of his own. If members of the totemic clan of the Tiger should happen to be in a village when the carcass of a slain tiger is brought into it, they are bound to pay special marks of honour to its remains by putting betel in its mouth. A priest offers food and drink to the dead tiger, addresses him as Grandfather, prays him not to be angry or frightened, and explains to the gods the reasons for putting the animal to death.³

Transmigration of human souls into tigers in Sumatra.

The Kayans of Borneo think that when the human soul departs from the body at death it may take the form of an animal or bird. For example, if a deer were seen browsing near a man's grave, his relations would probably conclude that his soul had assumed the shape of a deer, and the whole family would abstain from eating venison lest they should annoy the deceased.⁴ Most of the Kalamantans,

Belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals in Borneo.

¹ L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde*, ii. (Paris, 1829) pp. 595 sq.

² K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln im Stillen Ocean* (Leipsic, 1873), pp. 87 sq., 193. These sacred animals were called *kalids*. A somewhat different account of the *kalids* of the Pelew Islanders is given by J. Kubary ("Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, Berlin, 1888, i. 5 sq.).

³ W. D. Helderman, "De tijger en het bijgeloof der Bataks," *Tijdschrift*

voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde, xxxiv. (1891) pp. 170-175.

The account which this writer gives of the reception of a dead tiger by the Battas agrees with, and is probably the source of, Mr. Batten's account cited above (pp. 216 sq.).

⁴ C. Hose, "The Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiii. (1894) p. 165. Compare A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *In Centraal Borneo* (Leyden, 1900), i. 148; *id.*, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 105.

another tribe of Borneo, will kill and eat deer freely, but there are exceptions to the rule. "Thus Damong, the chief of a Malanau household, together with all his people, will not kill or eat the deer *Cervulus muntjac*, alleging that an ancestor had become a deer of this kind, and that, since they cannot distinguish this incarnation of his ancestor from other deer, they must abstain from killing all deer of this species. We know of one instance in which one of these people refused to use again his cooking-pot which a Malay had borrowed and used for cooking the flesh of this deer. This superstition is still rigidly adhered to, and these people have been converted to Islam of recent years. . . . The people of Miri, who also are Mohammedan Malanau, claim to be related to the large deer (*Cervus equinus*) and some of them to the muntjac deer also. Now these people live in a country in which deer of all kinds abound, and they always make a clearing in the jungle around a tomb. On such a clearing grass grows up rapidly, and so the spot becomes attractive to deer as a grazing ground; and it seems not improbable that it is through frequently seeing deer about the tombs that the people have come to entertain the belief that their dead relatives become deer or that they are in some other way closely related to the deer. The Bakongs, another group of Malanau, hold a similar belief with regard to the bear-cat (*Artictis*) and the various species of *Paradoxurus*, and in this case the origin of the belief is admitted by them to be the fact that on going to their graveyards they often see one of these beasts coming out of a tomb. These tombs are roughly constructed wooden coffins raised a few feet only from the ground, and it is probable that these carnivores make their way into them in the first place to devour the corpse, and that they then make use of them as lairs."¹ Among the Sea Dyaks, also, of Borneo the idea of metempsychosis is not unknown. One of them used to treat a snake with the greatest kindness, because he said it had been revealed to

According to the latter writer the Kayans or Bahaus in general abstain from the flesh both of deer and of grey apes, because they think that the souls of the dead may be in them.

¹ Ch. Hose and W. McDougall, "The Relations between Men and Animals in Sarawak," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxi. (1901) p. 193.

him in a dream that the spirit of his grandfather dwelt in that snake.¹

Some of the Papuans on the northern coast of New Guinea also believe in the transmigration of souls. They hold that at death the souls of human beings sometimes pass into animals, such as cassowaries, fish, or pigs, and they abstain from eating the animals of the sort in which the spirits of the dead are supposed to have taken up their abode.² For example, at Masur in Dutch New Guinea there are people who imagine that the spirits of their ancestors transmigrated into cassowaries, and accordingly they will not partake of the flesh of the long-legged bird.³ In Simbang, a village at the mouth of the Bubui river in German New Guinea, there is a family who will not harm crocodiles, not merely because they fear the vengeance of the creatures, but also because they reckon crocodiles their kinsfolk and expect that they themselves will turn into crocodiles at death. As head of the family they recognise a certain aged crocodile, everywhere known as "old Butong," who is said to have been born of a woman at Simbang.⁴ They think that while they are at work in the fields, and the houses stand empty, their ancestors come forth from the river and repair to the place in the roof where the mysterious bull-roarers are kept, which make a humming sound at the initiatory rites of young men. But when the people return from the fields they find the houses as empty and silent as when they left them: the spirits of their forefathers have plunged into the river again. If a crocodile carries off anybody, the natives are sure that the brute must be a stranger, not one of their own crocodile kinsfolk, who never would do such a thing; and if their neighbours at Yabim are so unfeeling as to kill a crocodile, the Bubui people protest against the outrage and demand satisfaction. Some Yabim

Belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals in New Guinea.

¹ E. H. Gomes, *Seventeen Years among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo* (London, 1911), p. 143.

² F. S. A. de Clercq, "De West en Noordkust van Nederlandsch Nieuw-Guinea," *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893) p. 635.

³ Max Krieger, *Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, N.D.), p. 404.

⁴ K. Vetter, *Komm herüber und hilf uns!* iii. (Barmen, 1898) p. 22. Compare *id.*, in *Nachrichten über Kaiser Wilhelms-Land*, 1897, pp. 87 sq.; B. Hagen, *Unter den Papuas* (Wiesbaden, 1899), p. 225.

people give out that after death their souls will be turned into certain fabulous cave-haunting swine, and accordingly their relatives refuse to spear or to eat the real wild swine. If these animals break into and ravage the fields, their human kinsfolk attempt to appease them with offerings of coco-nuts and other valuable articles.¹ Similarly in Tamara, an island off the coast of German New Guinea, the people will not eat pork, because it is their conviction that the souls of the dead transmigrate into the bodies of pigs.² The Kai people, who inhabit the rugged and densely wooded mountains inland from Finsch Harbour in German New Guinea, imagine that the gloomy depths of some wild ravines are haunted by the souls of the dead in the form of cuscuses and other animals. None but the owner has the right to kill game in these dark and awful gullies, and even he must propitiate the soul of every animal that he slays in such a spot. For this purpose he spreads out offerings on the carcase and presents them to the injured spirit, saying, "Take the gifts and leave us the animal, that we may eat it." After leaving the articles long enough to allow the soul of the beast to abstract and convey away the souls of the things, the hunter is free to cut up and consume the carcase. Some years ago, when heavy rains caused a landslide in these wild mountains, and a house with its inmates was buried in the ruins, public opinion in the neighbourhood attributed the disaster to the misconduct of the deceased, who had failed to appease the soul of a boa-constrictor slain by them on haunted ground.³

Belief in the transmigration of human souls into animals in the Solomon Islands.

In the Solomon Islands a man at the point of death would gather the members of his family about him and inform them of the particular sort of creature, say a bird or a butterfly, into which he proposed to transmigrate. Henceforth the family would regard that species of animal as sacred and would neither kill nor injure it. If they fell in with a creature of the kind, it might be a

¹ H. Zahn, "Die Jabim," in R. Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) p. 310.

² R. Parkinson, "Die Berlinhafen der Neu-Guinea Küste," *Internation-*

ales Archiv für Ethnographie, xiii. (1900) p. 40.

³ Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) pp. 150 sq.

bird or a butterfly, they would say, "That is papa," and offer him a coco-nut.¹ In these islands sharks are very often supposed to be ghosts, for dying people frequently announce their intention of being sharks when they have put off their human shape. After that, if any shark remarkable for its size or colour is seen to haunt a certain shore or rock, it is taken to be somebody's ghost, and the name of the deceased is given to it. For example, at Ulawa a dreaded man-eating shark received the name of a dead man and was propitiated with offerings of porpoise teeth. At Saa, certain food, for example coco-nuts from particular trees, is reserved to feed such a ghost-shark, but men of whom it is positively known that after death they will be in sharks are allowed by anticipation to partake of the shark-food in the sacred place. Other men will sometimes join themselves to their company, and speaking with the voice of a shark-ghost will say, "Give me to eat of that food." If such a man happens to be really possessed of supernatural power, he will in due time become a shark-ghost himself; but it is perfectly possible that he may fail. In Savo not very long ago a certain man had a shark that he used to feed and to which he offered sacrifice. He swam out to it with food, called it by name, and it came to him. Of course it was not a common shark, but a ghost, the knowledge of which had been handed down to him from his ancestors. Alligators also may lodge the souls of dead Solomon Islanders. In the island of Florida a story was told of an alligator that used to come up out of the sea and make itself quite at home in the village in which the man whose ghost it was had lived. It went by the name of the deceased, and though there was one man in particular who had special connexion with it and was said to own it, the animal was on friendly terms with everybody in the place and would even let children ride on its back. But the village where this happened has not yet been identified.² In the same island the appearance of anything wonderful is taken as proof of a ghostly presence and stamps the place as sacred. For example, a man planted some coco-nut palms

¹ Mr. Sleigh of Lifu, quoted by Prof. E. B. Tylor, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxviii. (1898) p. 147.

² R. H. Codrington, *The Melaneseans* (Oxford, 1891), pp. 179 sq.

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls taught in ancient Greece by Pythagoras and Empedocles.

In ancient Greece also the theory of the transmigration of souls found favour with the early philosophers Pythagoras and Empedocles, both of whom, if we may trust tradition, appealed to their own personal experience in support of the doctrine. According to ancient writers, Pythagoras affirmed that he had been Euphorbus the Trojan in one of his former lives, and in proof of the assertion he identified the shield of Euphorbus among the Trojan spoils at Mycenae.¹ He would seem to have held that human souls can transmigrate into animals or even into plants;² and we may suppose that the possibility of such transmigrations was at least one of the reasons he alleged for enjoining the strictest of his disciples neither to kill nor to eat animals and to abstain from certain vegetables, such as beans and mallows.³ Certainly at a later time these principles were maintained and these precepts inculcated by Empedocles, who outdid the reminiscences of his predecessor by asserting that he himself in former lives had been a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird, and a fish.⁴ Hence he denounced as a crime the practice of killing and eating animals, since according to him a man could never know but that in slaughtering and eating an animal he might be murdering and devouring one of his dead kinsfolk, it might be his father or mother, his son or daughter.⁵ Thus from the doctrine of transmigration Empedocles logically drew the same practical conclusion as the savage, who abstains, for example, from killing and eating crocodiles or pigs because he believes the souls of his departed relations to be embodied in crocodiles or pigs: the only important difference between the savage and the

lection of stories which has been completely translated into English by the late Professor E. B. Cowell, Dr. W. H. D. Rouse, and other scholars (6 volumes, Cambridge, 1895-1907).

¹ Diodorus Siculus, x. 6. 1-3; Jamblichus, *De Pythagorica vita*, xiv. 63; Porphyry, *Vita Pythag.* 26 sq.; Ovid, *Metamorph.* xv. 160 sqq. According to Heraclides Ponticus, the philosopher remembered his personal identity in four different human lives before he was born into the world as Pythagoras (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* viii. 1. 4 sq.). See further E. Rohde,

*Psyche*³ (Leipsic and Tübingen, 1903), ii. 417 sqq.

² Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* viii. 1. 4 and 36.

³ Jamblichus, *De Pythagorica vita*, xxiv. 107-109; Sextus Empiricus, ix. 127-130; Aulus Gellius, iv. 11.

⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* viii. 2. 77; H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*,² i. (Berlin, 1906) p. 208, frag. 117.

⁵ Sextus Empiricus, ix. 129; H. Diels, *op. cit.* i. pp. 213 sq., frag. 137.

philosopher in this respect is that, whereas the savage venerates and spares only animals of one particular species on the ground of their possible affinity to himself, the philosopher on his own shewing was bound to abstain from all animals whatever, since according to him the spirits of his deceased relatives might be lurking in creatures of any species. Hence while a faith in transmigration imposes but few restrictions on the diet of a savage, since it leaves him free to partake of the flesh of every sort of animals but one, the creed of Empedocles logically cut him off from a flesh diet altogether and compelled him to live on vegetables alone; indeed, if he had been rigidly logical, he must have denied himself the use of vegetables also and perished of hunger, since on his theory vegetables as well as animals may house the souls of the dead.¹ However, like a wise man he sacrificed logic to life, and contented himself with forbidding his disciples the use of a few vegetables, such as beans and laurels,² while he suffered them to browse freely on all the rest.

So far as we can gather the real opinions of Pythagoras and Empedocles from the traditional history of the one and the miserably mutilated writings of the other, they seem both, like Buddha, with whom they had much in common, to have used the old savage doctrine of the transmigration of souls mainly as a handle by which to impress on the minds of their followers the necessity of leading an innocent, pure, and even ascetic life in this world as the only means of ensuring a blissful or at all events an untroubled eternity in a world to come.³ At least this is fairly certain for Empedocles, whose views are comparatively well known to us through the fragments of his philosophical writings. From these utterances of his, the genuineness of which seems to be beyond suspicion, we gather that the psychology of Empedocles was a curious blend of savagery and mysticism. He regarded the incarnation of the human soul in a body of any sort as a punishment for sin, a degradation, a fall from heaven, an

The doctrine of transmigration used by Pythagoras and Empedocles mainly to inculcate certain ethical precepts.

The pessimism of Empedocles unlike the ordinary Greek view of life; its similarity to Buddhism.

¹ Compare Sextus Empiricus, ix. 127-130.

² Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iii. 1. 2. 7; Aulus Gellius, iv. 11. 9; H. Diels,

op. cit. i. p. 214, fragments 140, 141.

³ As to Pythagoras in this respect, see E. Rohde, *Psyche* ³ (Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903), ii. 161 *sqq.*

exile from God, a banishment from a world of bliss to a world of woe.¹ He describes the earth as a cavern,² a joyless land, where men wander in darkness, a prey to murder and revenge, to swarms of foul fiends, to wasting sickness and decay.³ He speaks with pity and contempt of the life of mortals as a wretched and miserable existence, begotten of strife and sighs and prolonged as a punishment for their sins through a series of transmigrations, until, by the exercise of virtue, they have been born again as prophets, poets, physicians, and princes, and so return at last to communion with the gods to live thenceforth free from pain and sorrow, immortal, incorruptible, divine.⁴ This view of human destiny, this passionate scorn poured on the present world, this ecstatic aspiration after a blissful eternity, the reward of virtue in a world to come, are very alien from the cheerful serenity, the calm rationalism of the ordinary Greek attitude towards existence on earth.⁵ In his profound conviction of the manifold sufferings inseparable from mortality, in his longing to put off the burden of the body or what he calls "the garment of flesh,"⁶ in his tenderness for the lower animals and his strong sense of kinship with them, Empedocles resembled Buddha, whose whole cast of thought, however, was tinged with a still deeper shade of melancholy, a more hopeless outlook on 'the future. Yet so close in some respects is the similarity between the two that we might incline to suppose a direct influence of Buddhism on Empedocles, were it not that the dates of the two great thinkers, so far as they can be ascertained, appear to exclude the supposition.⁷

¹ Plutarch, *De exilio*, 17; *id.*, *De esu carniuum*, i. 7. 4; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* iv. 4. 12, p. 569 ed. Potter; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium Haeresium*, vii. 29, p. 388 ed. L. Duncker and F. G. Schneidewin; H. Diels, *op. cit.* i. pp. 207 sq., fragments 115, 119.

² Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 8.

³ H. Diels, *op. cit.* i. pp. 208 sq., frag. 121.

⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* iii. 3. 14, iv. 23. 152, v. 14. 123, pp. 516 sq., 632, 722 ed. Potter; H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokra-*

tiker,² i. (Berlin, 1906) pp. 207, 209, 215 sq., fragments 115, 124, 144-147.

⁵ Empedocles is cited by Aristotle as an example of the melancholy which he believed to be characteristic of men of genius. See Aristotle, *Problem.* 30, p. 953 a 27 ed. Im. Bekker.

⁶ Stobaeus, *Eclogae*, i. 41. 60 (vol. i. p. 331 ed. A. Meineke); Plutarch, *De esu carniuum* ii. 4. 4; H. Diels, *op. cit.* i. p. 210, frag. 126.

⁷ It seems to be fairly certain that Buddha died and Empedocles was born somewhere about the year 480 B.C. Hence it is difficult to suppose that the

But if on its ethical side the teaching of Empedocles may almost be described as Buddhism relieved of its deepest shadows, on its scientific side it curiously anticipated some speculations which have deeply stirred the European mind in our own and our fathers' days. For to his savage psychology and religious mysticism Empedocles superadded a comprehensive and grandiose theory of the material universe, which presents a close analogy to that of Herbert Spencer. The scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy or, as he preferred to call it, the persistence of force, which Spencer made the corner-stone of his system, has its counterpart in the Empedoclean doctrine of the conservation or indestructibility of matter, the sum of which, according to him, remains always constant, never undergoing either increase or diminution.¹ Hence all the changes that take place in the physical world, according to Empedocles, resolve themselves into the integration and disintegration of matter, the composition and decomposition of bodies, brought about by the two antagonistic forces of attraction and repulsion, which in mythical language he called love and hate. And just as all particular things are evolved by the force of attraction and dissolved by the force of repulsion, a state of concentration or aggregation in the individual perpetually alternating with a state of diffusion or segregation, so it is also with the material universe as a whole. It, too, alternately contracts and expands according as the forces of attraction and repulsion alternately prevail. For it was the opinion of Empedocles that a long, perhaps immeasurable, period of time, during which the force of attraction prevails over the force of repulsion, is succeeded by an equally long period in which the force of repulsion prevails over the force of attraction, each period lasting till, the predominant force being spent, its action is first arrested and then reversed by the opposite force; so that the material universe performs a

Analogy of the physical speculations of Empedocles to those of Herbert Spencer.

ideas of the former should have percolated from India to Greece, or rather to Sicily, in the lifetime of the latter. As to their respective dates see H. Oldenberg, *Buddha*⁵ (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1906), pp. 115, 227; E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, i.⁴

(Leipzig, 1876) p. 678 note¹

¹ Plutarch, *Adversus Coloten*, 10; Aristotle, *De Xenophane*, 2, p. 975 a 39-b 4 ed. Im. Bekker; H. Diels, *op. cit.* i. pp. 175, 176, fragments 8 and 12.

periodic and rhythmic movement of alternate contraction and expansion, which never ceases except at the moments when, the two opposite forces exactly balancing each other, all things come to rest and equilibrium for a time, only however to return, with the backward sweep of the cosmic pendulum, to their former state either of consolidation or of dispersion. Thus under the influence of attraction and repulsion matter is constantly oscillating to and fro: at the end of a period of contraction it is gathered up in a solid globe: at the end of a period of expansion it is diffused throughout space in a state of tenuity which nowadays we might describe as gaseous. And this gigantic see-saw motion of the universe as a whole has gone on and will go on for ever and ever.¹

Herbert
Spencer's
theory of
alternate
periods of
concentra-
tion and
dissipation
of matter.

The imposing generalisation thus formulated by Empedocles in the fifth century before our era was enunciated independently in the nineteenth century of our era by Herbert Spencer. Like his Greek predecessor, the modern English philosopher held that the material universe passes through alternate periods of concentration and dissipation, of evolution and dissolution, according as the forces of attraction and repulsion alternately prevail. The terms in which he sums up his general conclusions might be used with hardly any change to describe the conclusions of Empedocles. For the sake of comparison it may be well to subjoin the passage. It runs as follows:—

“Thus we are led to the conclusion that the entire process of things, as displayed in the aggregate of the visible Universe, is analogous to the entire process of things as displayed in the smallest aggregates.

“Motion as well as matter being fixed in quantity, it would seem that the change in the distribution of Matter which Motion effects, coming to a limit in whichever direction it is carried, the indestructible Motion thereupon necessitates a reverse distribution. Apparently, the universally

¹ The evidence, consisting of the testimonies of ancient authorities and the fragments of Empedocles's own writings, is fully collected by H. Diels in his excellent work *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Zweite Auflage, i. (Berlin, 1906) pp. 158 sqq., 173 sqq. Compare *Fragmenta Philosophorum*

Graecorum, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, i. (Paris, 1875) pp. 1 sqq.; H. Ritter et L. Preller, *Historia Philosophiae Graecae et Latinae ex fontium locis contexta*, Editio Quinta (Gothae, 1875), pp. 91 sqq.; F. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, i.⁴ (Leipsic, 1876) pp. 678 sqq.

coexistent forces of attraction and repulsion, which, as we have seen, necessitate rhythm in all minor changes throughout the Universe, also necessitate rhythm in the totality of its changes—produce now an immeasurable period during which the attractive forces predominating, cause universal concentration, and then an immeasurable period during which the repulsive forces predominating, cause universal diffusion—alternate eras of Evolution and Dissolution. And thus there is suggested the conception of a past during which there have been successive Evolutions analogous to that which is now going on; and a future during which successive other such Evolutions may go on—ever the same in principle but never the same in concrete result.”¹

The most recent researches in physical science tend apparently rather to confirm than to invalidate these general views of the nature of the universe; for if modern physicists are right in regarding the constitution of matter as essentially electrical, the antagonistic forces of attraction and repulsion postulated by Empedocles and Spencer would resolve themselves into positive and negative electricity. On the other hand the atomic disintegration which is now known to be proceeding in certain of the chemical elements, particularly in uranium and radium, and which is probably proceeding in all, suggests a doubt whether the universe is really, as Spencer supposed, in process of integration and evolution and not rather in process of disintegration and dissolution; or whether perhaps the apparent evolution of the organic world is not attended by a simultaneous dissolution of the inorganic, so that the fabric of the universe would be a sort of Penelope’s web, which the great artificer weaves and unweaves at the same time.² With such a grave doubt to

Evolution
or dissolution.

¹ Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, Third Edition (London, 1875), pp. 536 sq.

² On the discovery of the atomic disintegration of certain chemical elements, and the general question (Evolution or Dissolution?) raised by that discovery, see W. C. D. Whetham, “The Evolution of Matter,” in *Darwin and Modern Science* (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 565-582, particularly his concluding paragraph: “In the strict

sense of the word, the process of atomic disintegration revealed to us by the new science of radio-activity can hardly be called evolution. In each case radio-active change involves the breaking up of a heavier, more complex atom into lighter and simpler fragments. Are we to regard this process as characteristic of the tendencies in accord with which the universe has reached its present state, and is passing to its unknown future? Or have

trouble the outlook on the future, we may perhaps say that Empedocles was wiser than Herbert Spencer in leaving, as he apparently did, the question undecided, whether during the epoch open to human observation the force of attraction or that of repulsion has been and is predominant, and consequently whether matter as a whole is integrating or disintegrating, whether all things are gradually evolving into more complex and concentrated forms, or are gradually dissolving and wasting away, through simpler and simpler forms into the diffused tenuity of their primordial constituents.

Empe-
docles as a
forerunner
of Darwin.

Just as in his view of the constitution and history of the physical universe Empedocles anticipated to some extent the theories of Spencer, so in his view of the development of living beings he anticipated to some extent the theories of Darwin; for he held that the existing species of animals have been evolved out of inorganic matter through intermediate sorts of monstrous creatures, which, being ill fitted to survive, gradually succumbed and were exterminated in the struggle for existence.¹ Whether Empedocles himself clearly enunciated the principle of the survival of the fittest as well as the doctrine of evolution, we cannot say with certainty; but at all events it is significant that Aristotle after stating for the first time the principle of the survival of the fittest, illustrates it by a reference to Empedocles's theory of the extinction of monstrous forms in the past, as if he understood the theory to imply the principle.²

we chanced upon an eddy in a back-water, opposed to the main stream of advance? In the chaos from which the present universe developed, was matter composed of large highly complex atoms, which have formed the simpler elements by radio-active or rayless disintegration? Or did the primaeval substance consist of isolated electrons, which have slowly come together to form the elements, and yet have left here and there an anomaly such as that illustrated by the unstable family of uranium and radium, or by some such course are returning to their state of primaeval simplicity?"

¹ H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*,² i. (Berlin, 1906) pp. 190 sqq.; *Fragmenta Philosophorum Grae-*

corum, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, i. (Paris, 1875) pp. 8 sqq.; H. Ritter und L. Preller, *Historia Philosophiae Graecae et Latinae ex fontium locis contexta*¹ (Gothae, 1875), pp. 102 sq.; E. Zeller *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, i.⁴ (Leipzig, 1876) pp. 718 sqq.

² Aristotle, *Physic. Auscult.* ii. 8. p. 198 b 29 sqq., ed. Im. Bekker *δπου μὲν οὖν ἅπαντα συνέβη ὡς περ καὶ εἰ ἐνεκά του εἶναι το, ταῦτα μὲν ἐσώθη ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου συστάνα ἐπιτηδείως ὅσα δὲ μὴ οὕτως, ἀπόλετο καὶ ἀπόλλυται καθάπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς λέγει τὰ βουγενὶ ἀνδρόπρωρα.* This passage is quoted by Darwin in the "Historical Sketch" prefixed to *The Origin of Species* with the remark, "We here see the principle of natural selection shadowed

It is a remarkable instance of the strange complexities and seeming inconsistencies of human nature, that a man whose capacious mind revolved ideas so far-reaching and fruitful, should have posed among his contemporaries as a prophet or even as a god, parading the streets of his native city bedecked with garlands and ribbons and followed by obsequious crowds of men and women, who worshipped him and prayed to him that he would reveal to them the better way, that he would give them oracles and heal their infirmities.¹ In the character of Empedocles, as in that of another forerunner of science, Paracelsus, the sterling qualities of the genuine student would seem to have been alloyed with a vein of ostentation and braggadocio; but the dash of the mountebank which we may detect in his composition probably helped rather than hindered him to win for a time the favour and catch the ear of the multitude, ever ready as they are to troop at the heels of any quack who advertises his wares by a loud blast on a brazen trumpet. With so many claims on the admiration of the wise and the adulation of the foolish, we may almost wonder that Empedocles did not become the founder, if not the god, of a new religion. Certainly other human deities have set up in business and prospered with an intellectual stock-in-trade much inferior to that of the Sicilian philosopher. Perhaps Empedocles lacked that perfect sincerity of belief in his own pretensions without which it seems difficult or impossible permanently to impose on the credulity of mankind. To delude others successfully it is desirable, if not absolutely necessary, to begin by being one's self deluded, and the Sicilian sage was probably too shrewd a man to feel perfectly at ease in the character of a god.

Empe-
docles as a
pretender
to divinity

The old savage doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which Empedocles furbished up and passed off on his dis-

forth, but how little Aristotle fully comprehended the principle, is shown by his remarks on the formation of the teeth." Darwin omits Aristotle's reference to Empedocles, apparently deeming it irrelevant or unimportant. Had he been fully acquainted with the philosophical speculations of Empedocles, we can scarcely doubt that

Darwin would have included him among the pioneers of evolution.

¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* viii. 2. 62; H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*,² i. (Berlin, 1906) p. 205, frag. 112. Compare *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 390.

trouble the outlook on the future, we may perhaps say that Empedocles was wiser than Herbert Spencer in leaving, as he apparently did, the question undecided, whether during the epoch open to human observation the force of attraction or that of repulsion has been and is predominant, and consequently whether matter as a whole is integrating or disintegrating, whether all things are gradually evolving into more complex and concentrated forms, or are gradually dissolving and wasting away, through simpler and simpler forms, into the diffused tenuity of their primordial constituents.

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forerunner
of Darwin.

Just as in his view of the constitution and history of the physical universe Empedocles anticipated to some extent the theories of Spencer, so in his view of the development of living beings he anticipated to some extent the theories of Darwin; for he held that the existing species of animals have been evolved out of inorganic matter through intermediate sorts of monstrous creatures, which, being ill fitted to survive, gradually succumbed and were exterminated in the struggle for existence.¹ Whether Empedocles himself clearly enunciated the principle of the survival of the fittest as well as the doctrine of evolution, we cannot say with certainty; but at all events it is significant that Aristotle, after stating for the first time the principle of the survival of the fittest, illustrates it by a reference to Empedocles's theory of the extinction of monstrous forms in the past, as if he understood the theory to imply the principle.²

we chanced upon an eddy in a back-water, opposed to the main stream of advance? In the chaos from which the present universe developed, was matter composed of large highly complex atoms, which have formed the simpler elements by radio-active or rayless disintegration? Or did the primaeval substance consist of isolated electrons, which have slowly come together to form the elements, and yet have left here and there an anomaly such as that illustrated by the unstable family of uranium and radium, or by some such course are returning to their state of primaeval simplicity?"

¹ H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*,² i. (Berlin, 1906) pp. 190 sqq.; *Fragmenta Philosophorum Grae-*

corum, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, i. (Paris, 1875) pp. 8 sqq.; H. Ritter und L. Preller, *Historia Philosophiae Graecae et Latinae ex fontium locis contexta*⁶ (Gothae, 1875), pp. 102 sq.; E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, i.⁴ (Leipzig, 1876) pp. 718 sqq.

² Aristotle, *Physic. Auscult.* ii. 8, p. 198 b 29 sqq., ed. Im. Bekker; *ἔθου μὲν οὖν ἅπαντα συνέβη ὥσπερ κἄν εἰ ἐνεκά του ἐγίνετο, τὰτα μὲν ἐσώθη ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου συστάνα ἐπιτηδείως ἔσα δὲ μὴ οὕτως, ἀπώλετο καὶ ἀπόλλυται, καθάπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς λέγει τὰ βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρωρα.* This passage is quoted by Darwin in the "Historical Sketch" prefixed to *The Origin of Species* with the remark, "We here see the principle of natural selection shadowed

It is a remarkable instance of the strange complexities and seeming inconsistencies of human nature, that a man whose capacious mind revolved ideas so far-reaching and fruitful, should have posed among his contemporaries as a prophet or even as a god, parading the streets of his native city bedecked with garlands and ribbons and followed by obsequious crowds of men and women, who worshipped him and prayed to him that he would reveal to them the better way, that he would give them oracles and heal their infirmities.¹ In the character of Empedocles, as in that of another forerunner of science, Paracelsus, the sterling qualities of the genuine student would seem to have been alloyed with a vein of ostentation and braggadocio; but the dash of the mountebank which we may detect in his composition probably helped rather than hindered him to win for a time the favour and catch the ear of the multitude, ever ready as they are to troop at the heels of any quack who advertises his wares by a loud blast on a brazen trumpet. With so many claims on the admiration of the wise and the adulation of the foolish, we may almost wonder that Empedocles did not become the founder, if not the god, of a new religion. Certainly other human deities have set up in business and prospered with an intellectual stock-in-trade much inferior to that of the Sicilian philosopher. Perhaps Empedocles lacked that perfect sincerity of belief in his own pretensions without which it seems difficult or impossible permanently to impose on the credulity of mankind. To delude others successfully it is desirable, if not absolutely necessary, to begin by being one's self deluded, and the Sicilian sage was probably too shrewd a man to feel perfectly at ease in the character of a god.

Empe-
docles as a
pretender
to divinity

The old savage doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which Empedocles furbished up and passed off on his dis-

forth, but how little Aristotle fully comprehended the principle, is shown by his remarks on the formation of the teeth." Darwin omits Aristotle's reference to Empedocles, apparently deeming it irrelevant or unimportant. Had he been fully acquainted with the philosophical speculations of Empedocles, we can scarcely doubt that

Darwin would have included him among the pioneers of evolution.

¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* viii. 2. 62; H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*,² i. (Berlin, 1906) p. 205, frag. 112. Compare *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 390.

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls in Plato.

ciples as a philosophical tenet, was afterwards countenanced, if not expressly affirmed, by another Greek philosopher of a very different stamp, who united, as no one else has ever done in the same degree, the highest capacity for abstract thought with the most exquisite literary genius. But if he borrowed the doctrine from savagery, Plato, like his two predecessors, detached it from its rude original setting and fitted it into an edifying moral scheme of retributive justice. For he held that the transmigration of human souls after death into the bodies of animals is a punishment or degradation entailed on the souls by the weaknesses to which they had been subject or the vices to which they had been addicted in life, and that the kind of animal into which a peccant soul transmigrates is appropriate to the degree and nature of its weakness or guilt. Thus, for example, the souls of gluttons, sots, and rakes pass into the bodies of asses; the souls of robbers and tyrants are born again in wolves and hawks; the souls of sober quiet people, untinged by philosophy, come to life as bees and ants; a bad poet may turn at death into a swan or a nightingale; and a bad jester into an ape. Nothing but a rigid practice of the highest virtue and a single-minded devotion to abstract truth will avail to restore such degraded souls to their human dignity and finally raise them to communion with the gods.¹ Though the passages in which these views are set forth have a mythical colouring and are, like all Plato's writings, couched in dramatic form and put into the mouths of others, we need not seriously doubt that they represent the real opinion of the philosopher himself.² It is interesting and instructive to meet with the old savage theory of the transmigration of souls thus masquerading under a flowing drapery of morality and sparkling with the gems of Attic eloquence in the philosophic system of a great Greek thinker. So curiously alike may be the solutions which the highest and the lowest intellects offer of

¹ Plato, *Phaedo*, pp. 81 B-84 C; *Republic*, x, pp. 617 D-620 D; *Timaeus*, pp. 41 D-42 D; *Phaedrus*, p. 249 B.

² This is the view of E. Zeller (*Die Philosophie der Griechen*, ii.³ Leipsic, 1875, pp. 706 sqq.), Sir W.

E. Geddes (on Plato, *Phaedo*, p. 81 E), and J. Adam (on Plato, *Republic*, x, p. 618 A). We have no right, with some interpreters ancient and modern, to dissolve the theory into an allegory because it does not square with our ideas.

those profound problems which in all ages have engaged the curiosity and baffled the ingenuity of mankind.¹

¹ In our own time the theory of transmigration is favoured by Dr. McTaggart, who argues that human beings may have lived before birth and may live many, perhaps an infinite number of, lives after death. Like Plato he further suggests that the nature of the body into which a person transmigrates at death may be appropriate to and de-

termined by his or her character in the preceding life. See J. McT. Ellis McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion* (London, 1906), pp. 112-139. However, Dr. McTaggart seems only to contemplate the transmigration of human souls into human bodies; he does not discuss the possibility of their transmigration into animals.

CHAPTER XVII

TYPES OF ANIMAL SACRAMENT

§ 1. *The Egyptian and the Aino Types of Sacrament*

The ambiguous behaviour of the Aino and the Gilyaks towards bears explained.

WE are now perhaps in a position to understand the ambiguous behaviour of the Aino and Gilyaks towards the bear. It has been shewn that the sharp line of demarcation which we draw between mankind and the lower animals does not exist for the savage. To him many of the other animals appear as his equals or even his superiors, not merely in brute force but in intelligence ; and if choice or necessity leads him to take their lives, he feels bound, out of regard to his own safety, to do it in a way which will be as inoffensive as possible not merely to the living animal, but to its departed spirit and to all the other animals of the same species, which would resent an affront put upon one of their kind much as a tribe of savages would revenge an injury or insult offered to a tribesman. We have seen that among the many devices by which the savage seeks to atone for the wrong done by him to his animal victims one is to shew marked deference to a few chosen individuals of the species, for such behaviour is apparently regarded as entitling him to exterminate with impunity all the rest of the species upon which he can lay hands. This principle perhaps explains the attitude, at first sight puzzling and contradictory, of the Aino towards the bear. The flesh and skin of the bear regularly afford them food and clothing ; but since the bear is an intelligent and powerful animal, it is necessary to offer some satisfaction or atonement to the bear species for the loss which it sustains in the death of so many of its members. This satisfaction or atonement is

made by rearing young bears, treating them, so long as they live, with respect, and killing them with extraordinary marks of sorrow and devotion. So the other bears are appeased, and do not resent the slaughter of their kind by attacking the slayers or deserting the country, which would deprive the Aino of one of their means of subsistence.

Thus the primitive worship of animals assumes two forms, which are in some respects the converse of each other. On the one hand, animals are worshipped, and are therefore neither killed nor eaten. On the other hand, animals are worshipped because they are habitually killed and eaten. In both forms of worship the animal is revered on account of some benefit, positive or negative, which the savage hopes to receive from it. In the former worship the benefit comes either in the positive form of protection, advice, and help which the animal affords the man, or in the negative one of abstinence from injuries which it is in the power of the animal to inflict. In the latter worship the benefit takes the material form of the animal's flesh and skin. The two forms of worship are in some measure antithetical: in the one, the animal is not eaten because it is revered; in the other, it is revered because it is eaten. But both may be practised by the same people, as we see in the case of the North American Indians, who, while they apparently revere and spare their totem animals,¹ also revere the animals and fish upon which they subsist. The aborigines of Australia have totemism in the most primitive form known to us; but, so far as I am aware, there is no clear evidence that they attempt, like the North American Indians, to conciliate the animals which they kill and eat. The means which the Australians adopt to secure a plentiful supply of game appear to be primarily based, not on conciliation, but on sympathetic magic,² a principle to which the North American

Two forms of the worship of animals.

¹ This is known, for example, of the Yuchi Indians, for among them "members of each clan will not do violence to wild animals having the form and name of their totem. For instance, the Bear clan people never molest bears." See F. G. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians* (Philadelphia, 1909), p. 70. But in spite of the

attention which has been paid to American totemism, we possess very little information as to the vital point of the system, the relation between a man and his totemic animal. Compare *Totemism and Exogamy*, iii. 88 sq., 311.

² See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 85 sqq. However, Collins reports that among the

Indians also resort for the same purpose.¹ Hence, as the Australians undoubtedly represent a ruder and earlier stage of human progress than the American Indians, it would seem that before hunters think of worshipping the game as a means of ensuring an abundant supply of it, they seek to attain the same end by sympathetic magic. This, again, would shew—what there is good reason for believing—that sympathetic magic is one of the earliest means by which man endeavours to adapt the agencies of nature to his needs.

Two types of animal sacrament, the Egyptian and the Aino type.

Corresponding to the two distinct types of animal worship, there are two distinct types of the custom of killing the animal god. On the one hand, when the revered animal is habitually spared, it is nevertheless killed—and sometimes eaten—on rare and solemn occasions. Examples of this custom have been already given and an explanation of them offered. On the other hand, when the revered animal is habitually killed, the slaughter of any one of the species involves the killing of the god, and is atoned for on the spot by apologies and sacrifices, especially when the animal is a powerful and dangerous one; and, in addition to this ordinary and everyday atonement, there is a special annual atonement, at which a select individual of the species is slain with extraordinary marks of respect and devotion. Clearly the two types of sacramental killing—the Egyptian and the Aino types, as we may call them for distinction—are liable to be confounded by an observer; and, before we can say to which type any particular example belongs, it is necessary to ascertain whether the animal sacramentally slain belongs

natives of New South Wales the women were “compelled to sit in their canoe, exposed to the fervour of the mid-day sun, hour after hour, chaunting their little song, and inviting the fish beneath them to take their bait” (D. Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, London, 1804, p. 387). This may have been a form of conciliation like that employed by the American Indians towards the fish and game. But the account is not precise enough to allow us to speak with confidence. It is sometimes reported that the Australians

attempt to appease the kangaroos which they have killed, assuring the animals of their affection and begging them not to come back after death to torment them. But the writer who mentions the report disbelieves it. See Dom Théophile Béréngier, in *Les Missions Catholiques*, x. (1878) p. 197.

¹ G. Catlin, *O-Kee-pa, a Religious Ceremony, and other Customs of the Mandans* (London, 1867), Folium reservatum; Lewis and Clarke, *Travels to the Source of the Missouri River* (London, 1815), i. 205 sq.

to a species which is habitually spared, or to one which is habitually killed by the tribe. In the former case the example belongs to the Egyptian type of sacrament, in the latter to the Aino type.

The practice of pastoral tribes appears to furnish examples of both types of sacrament. "Pastoral tribes," says a learned ethnologist, "being sometimes obliged to sell their herds to strangers who may handle the bones disrespectfully, seek to avert the danger which such a sacrilege would entail by consecrating one of the herd as an object of worship, eating it sacramentally in the family circle with closed doors, and afterwards treating the bones with all the ceremonious respect which, strictly speaking, should be accorded to every head of cattle, but which, being punctually paid to the representative animal, is deemed to be paid to all. Such family meals are found among various peoples, especially those of the Caucasus. When amongst the Abchases the shepherds in spring eat their common meal with their loins girt and their staves in their hands, this may be looked upon both as a sacrament and as an oath of mutual help and support. For the strongest of all oaths is that which is accompanied with the eating of a sacred substance, since the perjured person cannot possibly escape the avenging god whom he has taken into his body and assimilated."¹ This kind of sacrament is of the Aino or expiatory type, since it is meant to atone to the species for the possible ill-usage of individuals. An expiation, similar in principle but different in details, is offered by the Kalmucks to the sheep, whose flesh is one of their staple foods. Rich Kalmucks are in the habit of consecrating a white ram under the title of "the ram of heaven" or "the ram of the spirit." The animal is never shorn and never sold; but when it

Examples of animal sacraments among pastoral tribes.

Aino or expiatory type of animal sacrament among the Abchases and Kalmucks.

¹ A. Bastian, in *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie, und Urgeschichte*, 1870-71, p. 59. J. Reinegg (*Beschreibung des Kaukasus*, Gotha, St. Petersburg, and Hildesheim, 1796-97, ii. 12 sq.) describes what seems to be a sacrament of the Abghazses (Abchases). It takes place in the middle of autumn. A white ox called Ogginn appears from a

holy cave, which is also called Ogginn. It is caught and led about amongst the assembled men (women are excluded) amid joyful cries. Then it is killed and eaten. Any man who did not get at least a scrap of the sacred flesh would deem himself most unfortunate. The bones are then carefully collected, burned in a great hole, and the ashes buried there.

grows old and its owner wishes to consecrate a new one, the old ram must be killed and eaten at a feast to which the neighbours are invited. On a lucky day, generally in autumn when the sheep are fat, a sorcerer kills the old ram, after sprinkling it with milk. Its flesh is eaten; the skeleton, with a portion of the fat, is burned on a turf altar; and the skin, with the head and feet, is hung up.¹

Egyptian
type of
animal
sacrament
among the
Todas and
Madi.

An example of a sacrament of the Egyptian type is furnished by the Todas, a pastoral people of Southern India, who subsist largely upon the milk of their buffaloes. Amongst them "the buffalo is to a certain degree held sacred" and "is treated with great kindness, even with a degree of adoration, by the people."² They never eat the flesh of the cow buffalo, and as a rule abstain from the flesh of the male. But to the latter rule there is a single exception. Once a year all the adult males of the village join in the ceremony of killing and eating a very young male calf, —seemingly under a month old. They take the animal into the dark recesses of the village wood, where it is killed with a club made from the sacred tree of the Todas (the *tûde* or *Millingtonia*). A sacred fire having been made by the rubbing of sticks, the flesh of the calf is roasted on the embers of certain trees, and is eaten by the men alone, women being excluded from the assembly. This is the only occasion on which the Todas eat buffalo flesh.³ The Madi or Moru tribe of Central Africa, whose chief wealth is their cattle, though they also practise agriculture, appear to kill a lamb sacramentally on certain solemn occasions. The custom is thus described by Dr. Felkin: "A remarkable custom is observed at stated times—once a year,

¹ A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, vi. (Jena, 1871) pp. 632, note. On the Kalmucks as a people of shepherds and on their diet of mutton, see J. G. Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1776), pp. 406 sq., compare p. 207; B. Bergmann, *Nomadische Streifereien unter den Kalmücken* (Riga, 1804-5), ii. 80 sqq., 122; P. S. Pallas, *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1771-1776), i.

319, 325. According to Pallas, it is only rich Kalmucks who commonly kill their sheep or cattle for eating; ordinary Kalmucks do not usually kill them except in case of necessity or at great merry-makings. It is, therefore, especially the rich who need to make expiation.

² W. E. Marshall, *Travels amongst the Todas* (London, 1873), pp. 129 sq.

³ W. E. Marshall, *op. cit.* pp. 80 sq., 130.

I am led to believe. I have not been able to ascertain what exact meaning is attached to it. It appears, however, to relieve the people's minds, for beforehand they evince much sadness, and seem very joyful when the ceremony is duly accomplished. The following is what takes place: A large concourse of people of all ages assemble, and sit down round a circle of stones, which is erected by the side of a road (really a narrow path). A very choice lamb is then fetched by a boy, who leads it four times round the assembled people. As it passes they pluck off little bits of its fleece and place them in their hair, or on to some other part of their body. The lamb is then led up to the stones, and there killed by a man belonging to a kind of priestly order, who takes some of the blood and sprinkles it four times over the people. He then applies it individually. On the children he makes a small ring of blood over the lower end of the breast bone, on women and girls he makes a mark above the breasts, and the men he touches on each shoulder. He then proceeds to explain the ceremony, and to exhort the people to show kindness. . . . When this discourse, which is at times of great length, is over, the people rise, each places a leaf on or by the circle of stones, and then they depart with signs of great joy. The lamb's skull is hung on a tree near the stones, and its flesh is eaten by the poor. This ceremony is observed on a small scale at other times. If a family is in any great trouble, through illness or bereavement, their friends and neighbours come together and a lamb is killed; this is thought to avert further evil. The same custom prevails at the grave of departed friends, and also on joyful occasions, such as the return of a son home after a very prolonged absence."¹ The sorrow thus manifested by the people at the annual slaughter of the lamb clearly indicates that the lamb slain is a sacred or divine animal, whose death is mourned by his worshippers,² just as the death of the sacred buzzard was mourned by the Californians and the death of the Theban ram by the

¹ R. W. Felkin, "Notes on the Madi or Moru Tribe of Central Africa," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, xii. (1882-84) pp. 336 sq.

² Mutton appears to be now eaten by the tribe as a regular article of food (R. W. Felkin, *op. cit.* p. 307), but this is not inconsistent with the original sanctity of the sheep.

Egyptians. The smearing each of the worshippers with the blood of the lamb is a form of communion with the divinity ;¹ the vehicle of the divine life is applied externally instead of being taken internally, as when the blood is drunk or the flesh eaten.

§ 2. Processions with Sacred Animals

Form of communion with a sacred animal by taking it from house to house. Effigy of a snake carried from house to house by members of the Snake tribe.

The 'forta of communion in which the sacred animal is taken from house to house, that all may enjoy a share of its divine influence, has been exemplified by the Gilyak custom of promenading the bear through the village before it is slain.² A similar form of communion with the sacred snake is observed by a Snake tribe in the Punjaub. Once a year in the month of September the snake is worshipped by all castes and religions for nine days only. At the end of August the Mirasans, especially those of the Snake tribe, make a snake of dough which they paint black and red, and place on a winnowing basket. This basket they carry round the village, and on entering any house they say :—

*“ God be with you all !
May every ill be far !
May our patron's (Gugga's) word thrive ! ”*

Then they present the basket with the snake, saying :—

*“ A small cake of flour :
A little bit of butter :
If you obey the snake,
You and yours shall thrive ! ”*

Strictly speaking, a cake and butter should be given, but it is seldom done. Every one, however, gives something, generally a handful of dough or some corn. In houses where there is a new bride or whence a bride has gone, or where a son has been born, it is usual to give a rupee and a quarter, or some cloth. Sometimes the bearers of the snake also sing :—

*“ Give the snake a piece of cloth,
And he will send a lively bride ! ”*

¹ See W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*² (London, 1894), pp. 344 sqq. As to communion by means of an external application, see above, pp. 162 sqq.

² See above, pp. 190, 192.

When every house has been thus visited, the dough snake is buried and a small grave is erected over it. Thither during the nine days of September the women come to worship. They bring a basin of curds, a small portion of which they offer at the snake's grave, kneeling on the ground and touching the earth with their foreheads. Then they go home and divide the rest of the curds among the children. Here the dough snake is clearly a substitute for a real snake. Indeed, in districts where snakes abound the worship is offered, not at the grave of the dough snake, but in the jungles where snakes are known to be. Besides this yearly worship, performed by all the people, the members of the Snake tribe worship in the same way every morning after a new moon. The Snake tribe is not uncommon in the Punjab. Members of it will not kill a snake, and they say that its bite does not hurt them. If they find a dead snake, they put clothes on it and give it a regular funeral.¹

Ceremonies closely analogous to this Indian worship of the snake have survived in Europe into recent times, and doubtless date from a very primitive paganism. The best-known example is the "hunting of the wren." By many European peoples—the ancient Greeks and Romans, the modern Italians, Spaniards, French, Germans, Dutch, Danes, Swedes, English, and Welsh—the wren has been designated the king, the little king, the king of birds, the hedge king, and so forth,² and has been reckoned amongst those birds which it is extremely unlucky to kill. In England it is supposed that if any one kills a wren or harries its nest, he will infallibly break a bone or meet with some dreadful misfortune within the year;³ sometimes it is thought that

"Hunting
the Wren"
in Europe.

Sacred
character
of the wren
in popular
super-
stition.

¹ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 91, § 555 (March 1885).

² See Ch. Vallancey, *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis*, iv. (Dublin, 1786) p. 97; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities* (London, 1882 - 1883), iii. 195 sq. (Bohn's ed.); Rev. C. Swainson, *Folklore of British Birds* (London, 1886), p. 36; E. Rolland, *Faune populaire de la France*, ii. 288 sqq. The names for the bird are βασιλικός, *regulus*, *rex avium* (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 90, x. 203), *re di siepe*, *reyessuelo*, *roitelot*, *roi*

des oiseaux, *Zaunkönig*, etc. On the custom of hunting the wren see further N. W. Thomas, "The Scape-Goat in European Folklore," *Folk-lore*, xvii. (1906) pp. 270 sqq., 280; Miss L. Eckstein, *Comparative Studies in Nursery Rhymes* (London, 1906), pp. 172 sqq. Miss Eckstein suggests that the killing of the bird called "the king" may have been a mitigation of an older custom of killing the real king.

³ J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 194.

the cows will give bloody milk.¹ In Scotland the wren is called "the Lady of Heaven's hen," and boys say :—

*" Malisons, malisons, mair than ten,
That harry the Ladye of Heaven's hen ! " 2*

At Saint Donan, in Brittany, people believe that if children touch the young wrens in the nest, they will suffer from the fire of St. Lawrence, that is, from pimples on the face, legs, and so on.³ In other parts of France it is thought that if a person kills a wren or harries its nest, his house will be struck by lightning, or that the fingers with which he did the deed will shrivel up and drop off, or at least be maimed, or that his cattle will suffer in their feet.⁴

Hunting
the Wren
in the Isle
of Man.

Notwithstanding such beliefs, the custom of annually killing the wren has prevailed widely both in this country and in France. In the Isle of Man down to the eighteenth century the custom was observed on Christmas Eve or rather Christmas morning. On the twenty-fourth of December, towards evening, all the servants got a holiday; they did not go to bed all night, but rambled about till the bells rang in all the churches at midnight. When prayers were over, they went to hunt the wren, and having found one of these birds they killed it and fastened it to the top of a long pole with its wings extended. Thus they carried it in procession to every house chanting the following rhyme :—

*" We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
We hunted the wren for Jack of the Can,
We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
We hunted the wren for every one."*

When they had gone from house to house and collected all the money they could, they laid the wren on a bier and carried it in procession to the parish churchyard, where they made a grave and buried it "with the utmost solemnity, singing dirges over her in the Manks language, which they call her knell; after which Christmas begins." The burial

¹ R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, New Edition (London and Edinburgh, N.D.), p. 188.

² *Ibid.* p. 186.

³ P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne* (Paris,

1882), ii. 214.

⁴ A. Bosquet, *La Normandie Romanesque et Merveilleuse* (Paris and Rouen, 1845), p. 221; E. Rolland, *op. cit.* ii. 294 sq.; P. Sébillot, *l.c.*; Rev. C. Swainson, *op. cit.* p. 42.

over, the company outside the churchyard formed a circle and danced to music. About the middle of the nineteenth century the burial of the wren took place in the Isle of Man on St. Stephen's Day (the twenty-sixth of December). Boys went from door to door with a wren suspended by the legs in the centre of two hoops, which crossed each other at right angles and were decorated with evergreens and ribbons. The bearers sang certain lines in, which reference was made to boiling and eating the bird. If at the close of the song they received a small coin, they gave in return a feather of the wren; so that before the end of the day the bird often hung almost featherless. The wren was then buried, no longer in the churchyard, but on the seashore or in some waste place. The feathers distributed were preserved with religious care, it being believed that every feather was an effectual preservative from shipwreck for a year, and a fisherman would have been thought very foolhardy who had not one of them.¹ Even to the present time, in the twentieth century, the custom is generally observed, at least in name, on St. Stephen's Day, throughout the Isle of Man.²

A writer of the eighteenth century says that in Ireland the wren "is still hunted and killed by the peasants on Christmas Day, and on the following (St. Stephen's Day) he is carried about, hung by the leg, in the centre of two hoops, crossing each other at right angles, and a procession made in every village, of men, women, and children, singing an Irish catch, importing him to be the king of all birds."³ Down to

Hunting
the Wren
in Ireland
and Eng-
land.

¹ G. Waldron, *Description of the Isle of Man* (reprinted for the Manx Society, Douglas, 1865), pp. 49 sqq.; J. Train, *Account of the Isle of Man* (Douglas, 1845), ii. 124 sqq., 141.

² In *The Morning Post* of Wednesday, 27th December 1911, we read that "the observance of the ancient and curious custom known as 'the hunt of the wren' was general throughout the Isle of Man yesterday. Parties of boys bearing poles decked with ivy and streamers went from house to house singing to an indescribable tune a quaint ballad detailing the pursuit and death of the wren, subsequently demanding recompense, which is rarely

refused. Formerly boys actually engaged in the chase, stoning the bird to death with the object of distributing the feathers 'for luck.'" From this account we may gather that in the Isle of Man the hunting of the wren is now merely nominal and that the pretence of it is kept up only as an excuse for collecting gratuities. It is thus that the solemnity of ritual dwindles into the pastime of children. I have to thank Mrs. J. H. Deane, of 41 Iverna Court, Kensington, for kindly sending me the extract from *The Morning Post*.

³ Ch. Vallancey, *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis*, iv. (Dublin, 1786) p. 97; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 195.

the present time the "hunting of the wren" still takes place in parts of Leinster and Connaught. On Christmas Day or St. Stephen's Day the boys hunt and kill the wren, fasten it in the middle of a mass of holly and ivy on the top of a broomstick, and on St. Stephen's Day go about with it from house to house, singing:—

"The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze;
Although he is little, his family's great,
I pray you, good landlady, give us a treat."

Money or food (bread, butter, eggs, etc.) were given them, upon which they feasted in the evening.¹ In Essex a similar custom used to be observed at Christmas, and the verses sung by the boys were almost identical with those sung in Ireland.² In Pembrokeshire a wren, called the King, used to be carried about on Twelfth Day in a box with glass windows surmounted by a wheel, from which hung various coloured ribbons. The men and boys who carried it from house to house sang songs, in one of which they wished joy, health, love, and peace to the inmates of the house.³

In the first half of the nineteenth century similar customs were still observed in various parts of the south of France. Thus at Carcassone, every year on the first Sunday of December the young people of the street Saint Jean used to go out of the town armed with sticks, with which they beat the bushes, looking for wrens. The first to strike down one of these birds was proclaimed King. Then they returned to the town in procession, headed by the King, who carried the

Hunting
the Wren
in France.

¹ G. H. Kinahan, "Notes on Irish Folk-lore," *Folk-lore Rev.* iv. (1881) p. 108; Rev. C. Swainson, *Folk-lore of British Birds*, pp. 36 sq.; E. Rolland, *Faune populaire de la France*, ii. 297; Professor W. Ridgeway, in *Academy*, 10th May 1884, p. 332; T. F. Thiselton Dyer, *British Popular Customs* (London, 1876), p. 497; L. L. Duncan, "Further Notes from County Leitrim," *Folk-lore*, v. (1894) p. 197. The custom is still, or was down to a few years ago, practised in County Meath, where the verses sung are practically the same as those in the

text. Wrens are scarce in that part of the country, "but as the boys go round more for the fun of dressing up and collecting money, the fact that there is no wren in their basket is quite immaterial." These particulars I learn from a letter of Miss A. H. Singleton, dated Appy-Leix, Ireland, 24th February 1904.

² W. Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties* (London, 1879), p. 125.

³ Rev. C. Swainson, *op. cit.* pp. 40 sq.

wren on a pole. On the evening of the last day of the year the King and all who had hunted the wren marched through the streets of the town to the light of torches, with drums beating and fifes playing in front of them. At the door of every house they stopped, and one of them wrote with chalk on the door *vive le roi!* with the number of the year which was about to begin. On the morning of Twelfth Day the King again marched in procession with great pomp, wearing a crown and a blue mantle and carrying a sceptre. In front of him was borne the wren fastened to the top of a pole, which was adorned with a verdant wreath of olive, of oak, and sometimes of mistletoe grown on an oak. After hearing high mass in the parish church of St. Vincent, surrounded by his officers and guards, the King visited the bishop, the mayor, the magistrates, and the chief inhabitants, collecting money to defray the expenses of the royal banquet which took place in the evening and wound up with a dance.¹ At Entraigues men and boys used to hunt the wren on Christmas Eve. When they caught one alive they presented it to the priest, who, after the midnight mass, set the bird free in the church. At Mirabeau the priest blessed the bird. If the men failed to catch a wren and the women succeeded in doing so, the women had the right to mock and insult the men, and to blacken their faces with mud and soot, when they caught them.² At La Ciotat, near Marseilles, a large body of men armed with swords and pistols used to hunt the wren every year about the end of December. When a wren was caught it was hung on the middle of a pole, which two men carried, as if it were a heavy burden. Thus they paraded round the town; the bird was weighed in a great pair of scales; and then the company sat down to table and made merry.³

The parallelism between this custom of "hunting the

¹ Madame Clément, *Histoire des Fêtes civiles et religieuses, etc., de la Belgique Méridionale* (Avesnes, 1846), pp. 466-468; A. De Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des provinces de France* (Paris and Lyons, 1846), pp. 77 sqq.; E. Rolland, *Faune populaire de la France*, ii. 295 sq.; J. W. Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. (Göttingen, 1857) pp. 437 sq. The ceremony was abolished at the revo-

lution of 1789, revived after the restoration, and suppressed again after 1830.

² E. Rolland, *op. cit.* ii. 296 sq.

³ C. S. Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, translated from the French (London, 1800), pp. 11 sq.; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 198. The "hunting of the wren" may be compared with a Swedish custom. On the 1st of May children rob the

Religious processions with sacred animals.

wren " and some of those which we have considered, especially the Gilyak procession with the bear, and the Indian one with the snake, seems too close to allow us to doubt that they all belong to the same circle of ideas. The worshipful animal is killed with special solemnity once a year; and before or immediately after death he is promenaded from door to door, that each of his worshippers may receive a portion of the divine virtues that are supposed to emanate from the dead or dying god. Religious processions of this sort must have had a great place in the ritual of European peoples in prehistoric times, if we may judge from the numerous traces of them which have survived in folk-custom. A well-preserved specimen is the following, which lasted in the Highlands of Scotland and in St. Kilda down at least to the latter half of the eighteenth century. It was described to Dr. Samuel Johnson in the island of Coll.¹ Another description of it runs as follows: "On the evening before New Year's Day it is usual for the cowherd and the young people to meet together, and one of them is covered with a cow's hide. The rest of the company are provided with

Ceremony of beating a man clad in a cow's skin in the Highlands of Scotland.

maggies' nests of both eggs and young. These they carry in a basket from house to house in the village and shew to the housewives, while one of the children sings some doggerel lines containing a threat that, if a present is not given, the hens, chickens, and eggs will fall a prey to the magpie. They receive bacon, eggs, milk, etc., upon which they afterwards feast. See L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden* (London, 1870), pp. 237 sq. The resemblance of such customs to the "swallow song" and "crow song" of the ancient Greeks (on which see Athenaeus, viii. 59 sq., pp. 359, 360) is obvious and has been remarked before now. Probably the Greek swallow-singers and crow-singers carried about dead swallows and crows or effigies of them. The "crow song" is referred to in a Greek inscription found in the south of Russia (ἔξ δεκάδας λυκάβας κεκορώνικα). See *Compte Rendu* of the Imperial Archaeological Commission, St. Petersburg, 1877, pp. 276 sqq. In modern Greece and Macedonia it is still cus-

tomary for children on 1st March to go about the streets singing spring songs and carrying a wooden swallow, which is kept turning on a cylinder. See J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 636; A. Witzschel, *Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Thüringen* (Vienna, 1878), p. 301; G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folk-lore* (Cambridge, 1903), p. 18; J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and ancient Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 35. The custom of making the image of the swallow revolve on a pivot, which is practised in Macedonia as well as Greece, may be compared with the pirouetting of the girl in the Servian rain-making ceremony. The meaning of these revolutions is obscure. See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 273, 275.

¹ S. Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, pp. 128 sq. (*The Works of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D., edited by the Rev. R. Lynam, London, 1825, vol. vi.).

staves, to the end of which bits of raw hide are tied. The person covered with the hide runs thrice round the dwelling-house, *deiseil*—*i.e.* according to the course of the sun; the rest pursue, beating the hide with their staves, and crying [here follows the Gaelic], ‘Let us raise the noise louder and louder; let us beat the hide.’ They then come to the door of each dwelling-house, and one of them repeats some verses composed for the purpose. When admission is granted, one of them pronounces within the threshold the *beannachadh-thurlair*, or verses by which he pretends to draw down a blessing upon the whole family [here follows the Gaelic], ‘May God bless the house and all that belongs to it, cattle, stones, and timber! In plenty of meat, of bed and body-clothes, and health of men, may it ever abound!’ Then each burns in the fire a little of the bit of hide which is tied to the end of the staff. It is applied to the nose of every person and domestic animal that belongs to the house. This, they imagine, will tend much to secure them from diseases and other misfortunes during the ensuing year. The whole of the ceremony is called *colluinn*, from the great noise which the hide makes. It is the principal remnant of superstition among the inhabitants of St. Kilda.”¹

A more recent writer has described the old Highland custom as follows. Towards evening on the last day of the year, or Hogmanay, as the day is called in Scotland, “men began to gather and boys ran about shouting and laughing, playing shinty, and rolling ‘pigs of snow’ (*muca sneachda*), *i.e.* large snowballs. The hide of the mart or winter cow (*seiche a mhairt gheamhraidh*) was wrapped round the head of one of the men, and he made off, followed by the rest, belabouring the hide, which made a noise like a drum, with switches. The disorderly procession went three times *deiseal*, according to the course of the sun (*i.e.* keeping the house on the right hand) round each house in the village, striking the walls and shouting on coming to a door:

Another description of the Highland custom.

¹ John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh and London, 1888). ii. 438 *sq.* The custom is clearly referred to in the “Penitential of Theodore,” quoted by Kemble, *Saxons in England*, i. 525; Ch. Elton,

Origins of English History (London, 1882), p. 411: “*Si quis in Kal. Januar. in cervulo vel vitula vadit, id est in ferarum habitus se communicant, et vestiuntur pellibus pecudum et assument capita bestiarum,*” etc.

'The calluinn of the yellow bag of hide,
Strike the skin (upon the wall)
An old wife in the graveyard,
An old wife in the corner,
Another old wife beside the fire,
A pointed stick in her two eyes,
A pointed stick in her stomach,
Let me in, open this.'

"Before this request was complied with, each of the revellers had to repeat a rhyme, called *Rann Calluinn* (i.e. a Christmas rhyme), though, as might be expected when the door opened for one, several pushed their way in, till it was ultimately left open for all. On entering each of the party was offered refreshments, oatmeal bread, cheese, flesh, and a dram of whisky. Their leader gave to the goodman of the house that indispensable adjunct of the evening's mummeries, the *Caisein-uchd*, the breast-stripe of a sheep wrapped round the point of a shinty stick. This was then singed in the fire (*teallach*), put three times with the right-hand turn (*deiseal*) round the family, and held to the noses of all. Not a drop of drink was given till this ceremony was performed. The *Caisein-uchd* was also made of the breast-stripe or tail of a deer, sheep, or goat, and as many as chose had one with them."¹ Another writer who gives a similar account of the ceremony and of the verses sung by the performers, tells us that the intention of putting the burnt sheep-skin to the noses of the people was to protect them against witchcraft and every infection.² The explanation, which is doubtless correct, reminds us of the extraordinarily persistent hold which the belief in sorcery and witchcraft has retained on the minds of the European peasantry. Formerly, perhaps, pieces of the cow-hide in which the man was clad were singed and put to the noses of the people, just as in the Isle of Man a feather of the wren used to be given to each household. Similarly, as we have seen, the human victim whom the Khonds slew as a divinity was taken from house to house, and every one

¹ J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1902), pp. 230-232. Shinty is the Scotch name for hockey: the game is played

with a ball and curved sticks or clubs.

² R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, New Edition (London and Edinburgh, N. D.), pp. 166 sq.

strove to obtain a relic of his sacred person.¹ Such customs are only another form of that communion with the deity which is attained most completely by eating the body and drinking the blood of the god.

§ 3. *The Rites of Plough Monday*

In the "hunting of the wren," and the procession with the man clad in a cow-skin, there is nothing to shew that the customs in question have any relation to agriculture. So far as appears, they may date from a time before the invention of husbandry when animals were revered as divine in themselves, not merely as divine because they embodied the corn-spirit; and the analogy of the Gilyak procession of the bear and the Indian procession of the snake is in favour of assigning the corresponding European customs to this very early date. On the other hand, there are certain European processions of animals, or of men disguised as animals, which may perhaps be purely agricultural in their origin; in other words, the animals which figure in them may have been from the first nothing but representatives of the corn-spirit conceived in animal shape. Examples of such dramatic and at the same time religious rites have been collected by W. Mannhardt, who says of them in general: "Not only on the harvest field and on the threshing-floor but also quite apart from them people loved to represent the corn-spirit dramatically, especially in solemn processions in spring and about the winter solstice, whereby they meant to depict the return of the beneficent powers of summer to the desolate realm of nature."² Thus, for example, in country districts of Bohemia it is, or used to be, customary during the last days of the Carnival for young men to go about in procession from house to house collecting gratuities. Usually a man or boy is swathed from head to foot in pease-straw and wrapt round in straw-ropes: thus attired he goes by the name of the Shrovetide or Carnival Bear (*Fastnachtsbär*) and is led from house to house to the accompaniment of music and singing. In every house he dances with

Processions of men disguised as animals, in which the animal seems to represent the corn-spirit.

The Shrovetide Bear in Bohemia.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 246 sq.

² W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), p. 183.

the girls, the maids, and the housewife herself, and drinks to the health of the good man, the good wife, and the girls. For this performance the mummer is regaled with food by the good wife, while the good man puts money in his box. When the mummers have gone the round of the village, they betake themselves to the ale-house, whither also all the peasants repair with their wives; "for at Shrovetide, but especially on Shrove Tuesday, every one must dance, if the flax, the vegetables, and the corn are to thrive; and the more and the higher they dance, the greater the blessing which the people expect to crown their exertions." In the Leitmeritz district the Shrovetide Bear, besides being wrapt in straw, sometimes wears a bear's mask to emphasise his resemblance to the animal. In the Czech villages the housewives pluck the pease-straw and other straw from the Shrovetide Bear and put it in the nests of their geese, believing that the geese will lay more eggs and hatch their broods better for the addition of this straw to their nests. For a similar purpose in the Saaz district the women put the straw of the Shrovetide Bear in the nests of their hens.¹ In these customs the dancing for the express purpose of making the crops grow high,² and the use of the straw to make the geese and hens lay more eggs, sufficiently prove that the Shrovetide Bear is conceived to represent the spirit of fertility both animal and vegetable; and we may reasonably conjecture that the dances of the mummer with the women and girls are especially intended to convey to them the fertilising powers of the spirit whom the mummer personates.³

¹ O. Freiherr von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-Kalender aus Böhmen* (Prague, N.D., preface dated 1861), pp. 49-52. Compare E. Cortet, *Essai sur les Fêtes Religieuses* (Paris, 1867), p. 83. Similar processions with a Shrovetide Bear take place among some of the German peasantry of Moravia, though there the mummer is said to be wrapt in skins and furs rather than in straw and to personate Winter. See W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren* (Vienna and Olmütz,

1893), p. 431. This latter interpretation may be due to a misunderstanding of the old custom.

² On this custom see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 137 sqq.

³ Real bears and other animals were formerly promenaded about both town and country with rags of coloured cloth attached to them. Scraps of these cloths and hairs of the animals were given, rather perhaps sold, to all who asked for them as preservatives against sickness and the evil eye. The practice was condemned by the Council of Con-

In some parts of Bohemia the straw-clad man in these Shrovetide processions is called, not the Bear, but the Oats-goat, and he wears horns on his head to give point to the name.¹ These different names and disguises indicate that in some places the corn-spirit is conceived as a bear and in others as a goat. Many examples of the conception of the corn-spirit as a goat have already been cited;² the conception of him as a bear seems to be less common. In the neighbourhood of Gniewkowo, in Prussian Lithuania, the two ideas are combined, for on Twelfth Day a man wrapt in pease-straw to represent a Bear and another wrapt in oats-straw to represent a Goat go together about the village; they imitate the actions of the two animals and perform dances, for which they receive a present in every house.³ At Marburg in Steiermark the corn-spirit figures now as a wolf and now as a bear. The man who gave the last stroke at threshing is called the Wolf. All the other men flee from the barn, and wait till the Wolf comes forth; whereupon they pounce on him, wrap him in straw to resemble a wolf, and so lead him about the village. He keeps the name of Wolf till Christmas, when he is wrapt in a goat's skin and led from house to house as a Pease-bear at the end of a rope.⁴ In this custom the dressing of the mummer in a goat's skin seems to mark him out as the representative of a goat; so that here the mythical fancy of the people apparently hesitates between a goat, a bear, and a wolf as the proper embodiment of the corn-spirit. In Scandinavia the conception of the spirit as a goat who appears at Christmas (*Julbuck*) appears to be common. Thus, for example, in Bergslagshärad (Sweden) it used to be customary at Christmas to lead about a man completely wrapt in corn-straw and wearing a goat's horns on his head: he personated the Yule goat.⁵ In some parts of Sweden a regular feature of the little Christmas drama is a pretence of slaughtering the Yule-goat, who, however, comes to life again. The actor,

The Oats-goat, the Pease-bear, etc.

The Yule-goat in Sweden.

stance. See J. B. Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions* (Paris, 1679), pp. 315 sq. We need not suppose that these animals represented the corn-spirit.

¹ W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 183 sq.

² See above, vol. i. pp. 281 sqq.

³ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 190.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 188.

⁵ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 191-193.

hidden by a coverlet made of skins and wearing a pair of formidable horns, is led into the room by two men, who make believe to slaughter him, while they sing verses referring to the mantles of various colours, red, blue, white, and yellow, which they laid on him, one after the other. At the conclusion of the song, the Yule-goat, after feigning death, jumps up and skips about to the amusement of the spectators.¹ In Willstad after supper on Christmas evening, while the people are dancing "the angel dance" for the sake of ensuring a good crop of flax, some long stalks of the Yule straw, either of wheat or rye, are made up into the likeness of a goat, which is thrown among the dancers with the cry, "Catch the Yule-goat!" The custom in Dalarne is similar, except that there the straw-animal goes by the name of the Yule-ram.² In these customs the identification of the Yule-goat or the Yule-ram with the corn-spirit seems unmistakable. As if to clinch the argument it is customary in Denmark and Sweden to bake cakes of fine meal at Christmas in the form of goats, rams, or boars. These are called Yule-goats, Yule-rams, or Yule-boars; they are often made out of the last sheaf of corn at harvest and kept till sowing-time, when they are partly mixed with the seed-corn and partly eaten by the people and the plough-oxen in the hope thereby of securing a good harvest.³ It would seem scarcely possible to represent the identification of the corn-spirit with an animal, whether goat, ram, or boar, more graphically; for the last corn cut at harvest is regularly supposed to house the corn-spirit, who is accordingly caught, kept through the winter in the shape of an animal, and then mixed with the seed in spring to quicken the grain before it is committed to the ground. Examples of the corn-spirit conceived as a wether and a boar have met us in a preceding part of this work.⁴ The pretence of killing the Yule-goat and bringing him to life again was probably in origin a magical rite to ensure the rebirth of the corn-spirit in spring.

The Straw-
bear at
Whittlesey.

In England a custom like some of the preceding still prevails at Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire on the Tuesday

¹ L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden* (London, 1870), pp. 184 sq.; W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 196 sq.

² W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 196.

³ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 197 sq.

⁴ See above, vol. i. pp. 275, 298 sqq.

after Plough Monday, as I learn from an obliging communication of Professor G. C. Moore Smith of Sheffield University. He writes: "When I was at Whittlesey yesterday I had the pleasure of meeting a 'Straw-bear,' if not two, in the street. I had not been at Whittlesey on the day for nearly forty years, and feared the custom had died out. In my boyhood the Straw-bear was a man completely swathed in straw, led by a string by another and made to dance in front of people's houses, in return for which money was expected. This always took place on the Tuesday following Plough-Monday. Yesterday the Straw-bear was a boy, and I saw no dancing. Otherwise there was no change."¹

A comparison of this English custom with the similar Continental customs which have been described above, raises a presumption that the Straw-bear, who is thus led about from house to house, represents the corn-spirit bestowing his blessing on every homestead in the village. This interpretation is strongly confirmed by the date at which the ceremony takes place. For the date is the day after Plough Monday, and it can hardly be doubted that the old popular celebration of Plough Monday has a direct reference to agriculture. Plough Monday is the first Monday of January after Twelfth Day. On that day it used to be the custom in various parts of England for a band of sturdy swains to drag a gaily decorated plough from house to house and village to village, collecting contributions which were afterwards spent in rustic revelry at a tavern. The men who drew the plough were called Plough Bullocks; they wore their shirts over their coats, and bunches of ribbons flaunted from their hats and persons. Among them there was always one who personated a much bedizened old woman called Bessy; under his gown he formerly had a bullock's tail fastened to him behind, but this appendage was afterwards discarded. He skipped, danced and cut capers, and carried a money-box soliciting contributions from the onlookers. Some of the band, in addition to their ribbons, "also wore small bunches of corn in their hats, from which

The ceremonies of Plough Monday in England.

¹ Letter of Professor G. C. Moore Smith, dated The University, Sheffield, 13th January, 1909.

the wheat was soon shaken out by the ungainly jumping which they called dancing. Occasionally, if the winter was severe, the procession was joined by threshers carrying their flails, reapers bearing their sickles, and carters with their long whips, which they were ever cracking to add to the noise, while even the smith and the miller were among the number, for the one sharpened the plough-shares and the other ground the corn'; and Bessy rattled his box and danced so high that he shewed his worsted stockings and corduroy breeches; and very often, if there was a thaw, tucked up his gown skirts under his waistcoat, and shook the bonnet off his head, and disarranged the long ringlets that ought to have concealed his whiskers." Sometimes among the mummers there was a Fool, who wore the skin of a calf with the tail hanging down behind, and wielded a stick with an inflated bladder tied to it, which he applied with rude vigour to the heads and shoulders of the human team. Another mummer generally wore a fox's skin in the form of a hood with the tail dangling on his back. If any churl refused to contribute to the money-box, the plough-bullocks put their shoulders to the plough and ploughed up the ground in front of his door.¹

The object of the dances on Plough Monday is probably to ensure the growth of the corn.

The clue to the meaning of these curious rites is probably furnished by the dances or rather jumps of the men who wore bunches of corn in their hats. When we remember how often on the Continent about the same time of year the peasants dance and jump for the express purpose

¹ R. Chambers, *The Book of Days* (London and Edinburgh, 1886), i. 94 sq.; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, New Edition (London, 1883), i. 506 sqq.; T. F. Thiselton Dyer, *British Popular Customs* (London, 1876), pp. 37 sqq.; O. Freiherr von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Das festliche Jahr* (Leipsic, 1863), pp. 27 sq. Compare W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus* (Berlin, 1875), pp. 557 sq.; T. Fairman Ordish, "English Folk-drama," *Folk-lore*, iv. (1893) pp. 163 sqq.; *Folk-lore*, viii. (1897) p. 184; E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (Oxford, 1903), i. 208-210; H. Munro Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 238. Counties in which the custom of Plough Monday is reported to have

been observed are Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire. Thus the custom would seem to have been characteristic of a group of counties in the centre of England. In January 1887, I witnessed the ceremony in the streets of Cambridge. Wooden ploughs of a primitive sort were dragged about by bands of young men who were profusely decked with scarves and ribbons. They ran at a good pace, and beside them ran a companion with a money-box collecting donations. Amongst them I did not observe any woman or man in female attire. Compare *The Folk-lore Journal*, v. (1887) p. 161.

of making the crops grow tall, we may conjecture with some probability that the intention of the dancers on Plough Monday was similar; the original notion, we may suppose, was that the corn would grow that year just as high as the dancers leaped. If that was so, we need not wonder at the agility displayed on these occasions by the yokels in general and by Bessy in particular. What stronger incentive could they have to exert themselves than the belief that the higher they leaped into the air the higher would sprout the corn-stalks? In short, the whole ceremony was probably a magical rite intended to procure a good crop. The principle on which it rested was the familiar one of homoeopathic or imitative magic: by mimicking the act of ploughing and the growth of the corn the mummers hoped to ensure the success of the real ploughing, which was soon to take place.

If such was the real meaning of the ritual of Plough Monday, we may the more confidently assume that the Straw-bear who makes his appearance at Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire on the day after Plough Monday represents indeed the corn-spirit. What could be more appropriate than for that beneficent being to manifest himself from house to house the very day after a magical ceremony had been performed to quicken the growth of the corn?

The Straw bear a representative of the corn-spirit.

The foregoing interpretation of the rites observed in England on Plough Monday tallies well with the explanation which I have given of the very similar rites annually performed at the end of the Carnival in Thrace.¹ The mock ploughing is probably practised for the same purpose in both cases, and what that purpose is may be safely inferred from the act of sowing and the offering of prayers for abundant crops which accompany and explain the Thracian ceremony. It deserves to be noted that ceremonies of the same sort and closely resembling those of Plough Monday are not confined to the Greek villages of Thrace but are observed also by the Bulgarians of that province at the same time, namely, on the Monday of the last week in Carnival. Thus at Malko-Tirnovsko, in the district of Adrianople, a procession of mummers goes through the streets on that day.

The rites of Plough Monday resemble the rites at the end of the Carnival in Thrace.

Similar rites are performed at the same time by the Bulgarian peasants of Thrace.

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 25 *sqq.*

The principal personages in it bear the names of the *Kuker* and *Kukerica*. The *Kuker* is a man clad in a goatskin. His face is blackened with soot and he wears on his head a high shaggy hat made of an entire skin. Bells jingle at his girdle, and in his hand he carries a club. The *Kukerica*, who sometimes goes by the name of *Baba*, that is, "Old Woman," is a man disguised in petticoats with his face blackened. Other figures in the procession are young men dressed as girls, and girls dressed as men and wearing masks. Bears are represented by dogs wrapt in bearskins. A king, a judge, and other officials are personated by other mummers; they hold a mock court and those whom they condemn receive a bastinado. Some of the maskers carry clubs; it is their duty to beat all who fall into their hands and to levy contributions from them. The play and gestures of the *Kuker* and *Kukerica* are wanton and lascivious: the songs and cries addressed to the *Kuker* are also very cynical. Towards evening two of the company are yoked to a plough, and the *Kuker* ploughs a few furrows, which he thereupon sows with corn. After sunset he puts off his disguise, is paid for his trouble, and carouses with his fellows. The people believe that the man who plays the part of *Kuker* commits a deadly sin, and the priests make vain efforts to abolish the custom. At the village of Kuria, in the district of Losengrad, the custom is in general the same, but there are some significant variations. The money collected by the mummers is used to buy wine, which is distributed among all the villagers at a banquet in the evening. On this occasion a cake in which an old coin has been baked is produced by the *Kuker*, broken into bits, and so divided among all present. If the bit with the coin in it falls to a farmer, then the crops will be good that year; but if it falls to a herdsman, then the cattle will thrive. Finally, the *Kuker* ploughs a small patch of ground, "bending his body to right and left in order to indicate symbolically the ears of corn bending under the weight of the grain." The others lay hold of the man with whom the coin was found, bind him by the feet, and drag him over the land that has just been ploughed.¹ In these observances the

¹ G. Kazarow, "Karnevalbräuche in Bulgarien," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, xi. (1908) pp. 407 sq.

intention of promoting the fertility of the ground is unmistakable; the ploughman's imitation of the cornstalks bending under their own weight is a simple case of homoeopathic or imitative magic, while the omens drawn from the occupation of the person who obtains the piece of cake with the coin in it indicate that the ceremony is designed to quicken the herds as well as the crops. We can hardly doubt that the same serious motive underlies the seemingly wanton gestures of the principal actors and explains the loose character of the songs and words which accompany the ceremony. Nor is it hard to divine the reason for dragging over the fresh furrows the man who is lucky enough to get the coin in the cake. He is probably looked on as an embodiment of the corn-spirit, and in that character is compelled to fertilise the ground by bodily contact with the newly-ploughed earth.

The intention of the rites is clearly to fertilise the ground.

Similar customs are observed at the Carnival not only by Bulgarian peasants in Thrace but also here and there in Bulgaria itself. In that country the leading personage of the masquerade is the *Baba*, that is, the Old Woman or Mother. The part is played by a man in woman's clothes; she, or rather he, wears no mask, but in many villages she carries a spindle with which she spins. The *Kuker* and the *Kukerica* also figure in the performance, but they are subordinate to the Old Woman or Mother. Their costume varies in different villages. Usually they are clad in skins with a girdle of lime-tree bark and five or six bells fastened to it; on their back they wear a hump made up of rags. But the principal feature in their attire consists of their masks, which represent the heads of animals and men in fantastic combinations, such as the horned head of a man or a bird, the head of a ram, a bull, and so on. Much labour is spent on the manufacture of these masks. Early in the morning of Cheese Monday (the Monday of the last week in Carnival) the mummers go about the village levying contributions. Towards noon they form a procession and go from house to house. In every house they dance a round dance, while the Old Woman spins. It is believed that if any householder contrives to carry off the Old Woman and secrete her, a blessing and prosperity will enter into his dwelling;

Similar customs are observed at the Carnival in Bulgaria.

but the maskers defend the Old Woman stoutly against all such attempts of individuals to appropriate her beneficent presence. After the dance the mummers receive gifts of money, eggs, meal, and so on. Towards evening a round dance is danced in the village square, and there the Old Woman yokes the *Kuker* and *Kukerica* to a plough, ploughs with it a small piece of ground, and sows the ground with corn. Next day the performers reassemble, sell the presents they had collected, and with the produce hold a feast in the house of the Old Woman. It is supposed that if strange maskers make their way into a village, fertility will be drawn away to the village from which they have come; hence the villagers resist an inroad of strange maskers at any price. In general the people believe that the masquerade is performed for the purpose of increasing the luck and fertility of the village.¹

In all these cases the ceremonial ploughing and sowing are probably charms to ensure the growth of the crops.

In these Bulgarian rites, accordingly, we are not left to form conjectures as to the intention with which they are practised; that intention is plainly avowed, and it is no other than the one which we have inferred for the similar rites observed in Thrace at the same season and in England on Plough Monday. In all these cases it is reasonable to suppose that the real aim of the ceremonial ploughing and sowing of the ground is thereby, on the principles of homoeopathic or imitative magic, to ensure the growth of the corn on all the fields of the community. Perhaps we may go a step further and suggest that in the Bulgarian Old Woman or Mother, who guides the plough and sows the seed, and whose presence is believed to bring a blessing to any household that can contrive to appropriate her, we have the rustic prototype of Demeter, the Corn-Mother, who in the likeness of an Old Woman brought a blessing to the house of Celeus, king of Eleusis, and restored their lost fertility to the fallow Eleusinian fields. And in the pair of mummers, man and woman, who draw the plough, may we not discern the rude originals of Pluto and Persephone? If that is so, the gods of Greece are not wholly dead; they still hide their diminished heads in the cottages of the

¹ G. Kazarow, "Karnevalbräuche in Bulgarien," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, xi. (1908) pp. 408 sq.

peasantry, to come forth on sunshine holidays and parade, with a simple but expressive pageantry, among a gazing crowd of rustics, at the very moment of the year when their help is most wanted by the husbandman.

Be that as it may, these rites still practised by the peasantry at opposite ends of Europe, no doubt date from an extremely early age in the history of agriculture. They are probably far older than Christianity, older even than those highly developed forms of Greek religion with which ancient writers and artists have made us familiar, but which have been for so many centuries a thing of the past. Thus it happens that, while the fine flower of the religious consciousness in myth, ritual, and art is fleeting and evanescent, its simpler forms are comparatively stable and permanent, being rooted deep in those principles of common minds which bid fair to outlive all the splendid but transient creations of genius. It may be that the elaborate theologies, the solemn rites, the stately temples, which now attract the reverence or the wonder of mankind, are destined themselves to pass away like "all Olympus' faded hierarchy," and that simple folk will still cherish the simple faiths of their nameless and dateless forefathers, will still believe in witches and fairies, in ghosts and hobgoblins, will still mumble the old spells and make the old magic passes, when the muezzin shall have ceased to call the faithful to prayer from the minarets of St. Sophia, and when the worshippers shall gather no more in the long-drawn aisles of Nôtre Dame and under the dome of St. Peter's.

Such rites
no doubt
date from
a remote
antiquity.

NOTE

THE CEREMONY OF THE HORSE AT RICE-HARVEST AMONG THE GAROS

AMONG the Garos, an agricultural tribe of Assam, the close of the rice-harvest is celebrated by a festival in which the effigy of a horse figures prominently. The intention of the ceremony is not stated, but possibly it may be to ensure a good rice crop in the following year. If so, the artificial horse of the Garos would be analogous to the October horse of the Romans, as that animal has been explained by W. Mannhardt. For the sake of comparison it may be well to subjoin Major A. Playfair's account of the Garo ceremony :—¹

Effigy of a horse in a harvest festival of the Garos.

“When the rice harvest has been fully gathered in, the great sacrifice and festival of the year, the *Wangala* or *Gurwata*, takes place. This is the most festive observance of the year, and combines religious sacrifice with much conviviality. It is celebrated by all sections of the tribe except the Duals and some Plains Garos. The cost of the entertainment falls principally on the *nokma* [headman] of the village, who provides a pig to be eaten by his guests, and plenty of liquor. Among the Akawés and Chisaks of the north and north-eastern hills a curious feature of the ceremony is the manufacture of *guré* or ‘horses’ out of pieces of plantain-stem for the body, and of bamboo for the head and legs. The image of the ‘horse’ is laid on the floor of the *nokma*'s house, and the assembled guests dance and sing around it the whole night long, with the usual intervals for refreshments. Early the next morning, the ‘horse’ is taken to the nearest river and launched on the water to find its way down stream on the current. For those who possess the necessary paraphernalia, the *guré* takes the shape of a horse's head of large size, made of straw, and covered with cloth. I once saw one in the village of Rongrong, which, when in use, was ornamented with discs of brass on both sides of the face. Its eyes and ears were made of the same metal, and between the ears were fixed a pair of wild goat's horns. To the head were attached a number

Major Playfair's description of the festival.

¹ Major A. Playfair, *The Garos* (London, 1909), pp. 94 sq.

of bronze bells similar to those hawked about by Bhutia pedlars. The owner, a *laskar*, was unable to tell me whence they came, but said that they were inherited from his wife's mother, and were many generations old.

Dance of a man wearing the mask of a horse's head.

"The manner in which this form of *guré* is used is the following. The head is mounted on a stick, which a man holds before him in such a way that the head comes up to the level of his chest. Two straps pass over his shoulders to relieve his hands of the weight. The body of the 'horse' is then built round his own body with cane and cloth. For a tail, yak's tails are fastened in with his own hair, which, for the occasion, is allowed to hang down instead of being tied up. The performer thus apparelled, commences to dance a shuffling step to the usual music. In front of him dances the priest, who goes through the pantomime of beckoning the animal to come to him. The remaining guests of the *nokma* [headman] form a *queue* behind the 'horse,' and dance after it. When the first man gets tired, another takes his place, and the dancing goes on right through the night. A pleasant part of the performance is the pelting of the *guré* with eggs. A piece of egg-shell was still sticking to the horn of the *guré* which was shown to me.

"Strictly speaking, this festival should last for three days and two nights. When it is over, the *guré* is taken to a stream and the body thrown into the water, the head being preserved for another year. The people who come to see it off, bring rice with them, and a meal by the water's edge closes the proceedings.

"At the *Wangala*, it is the custom to mix flour with water, and for the assembled people to dip their hands into the mixture and make white hand-marks on the posts and walls of the house and on the backs of the guests."

The effigy of the horse at rice-harvest perhaps represents the spirit of the rice.

Can it be that the horse whose effigy is thus made at rice-harvest and thrown into the water, while the head is kept for another year, represents the spirit of the rice? If that were so, the pelting of the head with eggs would be a charm to ensure fertility and the throwing of it into water would be a rain-charm. And on the same theory the horse's head would be comparable to the horse-headed Demeter of Phigalia¹ as well as to the head of the October horse at Rome, which was nailed to a wall, probably to be kept there till next October. If we knew more about the rites of the horse-headed Demeter at Phigalia, we might find that amongst them was a dance of a man or woman who wore the mask of a horse's head and personated the goddess herself, just as, if I am right, the man who dances disguised as a horse at the harvest festival of the Garos, represents the spirit of the rice dancing among the garnered sheaves. The conjecture is to some extent supported by the remains

¹ See above, p. 21.

of the magnificent marble drapery, which once adorned the colossal statue of Demeter or Persephone in the sanctuary of the two goddesses at Lycosura, in Arcadia ; for on that drapery are carved rows of semi-human, semi-bestial figures dancing and playing musical instruments ; the bodies of the figures are those of women, but their heads, paws, and feet are those of animals. Among the heads set on the figures are those of a horse, a pig, a cat or a hare, and apparently an ass.¹ It is reasonable to suppose that these dancing figures represent a ritual dance which was actually performed in the rites of Demeter and Persephone by masked men or women, who 'personated the goddesses in their character of beasts.

¹ See my note on Pausanias, viii. 37. 3 (vol. iv. pp. 375 *sqq.*).

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