



nia

FROM  
LOVE'S BOOK STORE,  
FULL OF BOOKS  
AND  
ELEGANT GOODS,  
HEDGES BLOCK,  
BURLINGTON, IOWA.



LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA  
SAN DIEGO



→ EDWARD M. NEALLEY ←  
BURLINGTON, IOWA



EDWARD M. NEALLEY  
BURLINGTON, IOWA





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

**MORGAN'S ANCIENT SOCIETY**; or, Researches on the Lines of Human Progress through Savagery and Barbarism to Civilization. By LEWIS H. MORGAN, LL.D. 8vo. \$4.

**SIR HENRY SUMNER MAINE'S WORKS:**

**Ancient Law**: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and its Relation to Modern Ideas. By HENRY SUMNER MAINE, Member of the Supreme Council of India, and Regius Professor of the Civil Law in the University of Cambridge. With an Introduction by Theodore W. Dwight, LL.D. 8vo. \$3.50.

**Lectures on the Early History of Institutions.** A Sequel to "Ancient Law." 8vo. \$3.50.

**Village Communities in the East and West.** Six Lectures delivered at Oxford: to which are added other Lectures, Addresses, and Essays. 8vo. \$3.50.

**E. B. TYLOR'S WORKS:**

**Primitive Culture**: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom. 2 vols. 8vo. \$7.00.

**Researches into the Early History of Mankind, and the Development of Civilization.** 8vo. \$3.50.

PRIMITIVE MANNERS  
AND CUSTOMS

BY

JAMES A. FARRER



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
1879





## *INTRODUCTION.*

FROM the myths characteristic of savage tribes, from their beliefs, their proverbs, their political and social regulations, it is here sought to gain some general estimate of their powers of intelligence and imagination, their moral ideas, and their religion; subjects naturally of much interest and inevitably of some dispute. For the reason that in savagery as in civilisation there are heights and depths, with more of light here, more of darkness there, it is quite impossible to bring the whole of savage life into focus at once, so that every general conclusion can only be taken as true within limits. The field to be studied is also so large and diversified, that no two minds can expect to derive from it the same impressions, nor to attain to more than partial truth about it. But since the savage can never hope to be heard in court himself, it is only fair to start with certain considerations

which he would be entitled to urge, and which deserve to weigh in any judgment made regarding him.

Statements of very low powers of numeration have been perhaps too hastily taken as indicative of a low state of intelligence ; for not only have similar assertions concerning American and Tasmanian tribes by the earliest voyagers proved on subsequent investigation to be erroneous, but many savages have substitutes for our arithmetic which serve them perfectly well, the Loangese, for instance, expressing numbers in narration not by words but by gestures ; and the Koossa Kaffirs—very few of whom are said to be able to count above ten—possessing the peculiar faculty of detecting almost at a glance any loss in a herd of cattle which may amount to half a thousand. In the same way the want of a written language is often supplied by symbolism. Puzzle as it might a person of education to read a letter, expressed by a bundle containing a stone, a piece of charcoal, a rag, a pepper-pod, and a grain of parched corn, this would be the way of saying in Yoruba, that, though the sender was as strong and firm as a stone, his prospects were as dark as charcoal ; that his clothes were in rags ; that he was so feverish with anxiety that his skin burned like pepper, even enough to cause

corn to wither. The Niam-Niam, again, who declare war by hanging on a tree an ear of maize, a fowl's feather, and an arrow, thereby giving contingent enemies to understand that arrows will avenge any injury done to a single fowl or a single ear of maize, convey their meaning quite as clearly as the most politely framed ultimata of any Foreign Office in Europe.

Many of the beliefs attributed to savages are no fair test of their general reasoning capabilities; for there are degrees of credulity in savage as in civilised life, and reason everywhere struggles to exist. When Pelopidas, on the eve of the battle of Leuctra, received commands in a dream to sacrifice to certain shades a virgin with chestnut hair, there were not wanting soldiers, even in that army of Bœotians, who had the shrewdness to think and the courage to say, that it was absurd to suppose any divine powers could delight in the slaughter and sacrifice of human beings, and that, if there were such, they deserved no reverence. All stages of culture thus have their dissenters, their wicked reasoners. Among the Ahts only the most superstitious now burn the house of a dead man, with all its contents, for fear of offending his ghost. The Zulus, whose sole religion consists in ancestor-worship,

exhibited often in the most ridiculous ceremonies, begin to doubt the power and even the existence of their Amatongo, or dead ancestors, if, when they are sick, their prayers and sacrifices fail to effect a cure.

The Tongan king, Finow, often stated to Mariner his doubts about the existence of the gods, and expressed the opinion, that men were fools for believing all they were told by the priests; whilst his saying, that the gods always favoured that side in war on which there were the greatest chiefs and warriors, recalls the opinion of a far more famous potentate than Finow. The disrespect, indeed, that Finow showed to the Tongan religion was such, that his subjects explained violent thunderstorms as the dissensions of the gods in Bolotu about his punishment. On the other hand, savages are also subject to relapses of superstition, such as with us are dignified by the name of 'movements;' an American tribe who traced their origin to a dog were so firmly impressed by a fanatic with the sin of attaching their canine relatives to their sledges, that they resolved to use dogs no more, but women instead, for dragging their possessions.

Savage ideas of morality and of government seem to agree fundamentally with those of more advanced populations, the ideas of the latter differing, indeed,

from the barbaric much as a finished photograph differs from its earlier stage ; that is to say, not as essentially different, but as having become 'fixed' after a process of development. The idea of the wrongfulness of certain acts starts with the fear of their consequences, that of murder, for instance, from the fear of revenge ; nor are such ideas ever separable from the lowest levels of savage life. The sense of the sanctity of property begins with what an individual can make or catch for himself apart from tribal claims ; nor is any state of tribal communism so strong as to recognise no private rights in the people or things a man takes in war, the game he kills, or the weapons he fashions. Respect for the aged is one of the best traits of savage life, for the tribes of whom it is asserted seem to outnumber those of whom it is denied. In Equatorial Africa young men never appear before old ones without curtseying nor pass them by without stooping ; should they sit in their presence, it is 'at a humble distance.' Nor are cases of the abandonment of the aged and infirm conclusive proof of a deficiency of natural affection ; one tribe who were accused of so acting are also known to have carried about with them for years a palsied man with great tenderness and attention. Truthfulness, again,

is recognised as a virtue outside the pale of the higher religions, for Mungo Park found it one of the first lessons taught by Mandingo women to their children, and he mentions the case of one mother, whose only consolation on the murder of her son 'was the reflection that the poor boy in the course of his life had never told an untruth.'

Strange contradictions abound in savage life, extremes of barbarity sometimes co-existing with habits of some refinement. The Ahts, who occasionally sacrifice one of their number to the gods, and till lately deserted their sick and aged, without the excuse of scarcity of food, keep small mats of bark strips for strangers to wipe their feet with, and after meals offer them water and cedar-bark for washing their hands and mouths. They have also a strict etiquette regulating their reception of guests; they observe public ceremonies with extreme formality; their men of rank vie with one another in politeness. The Niam-Niam are generally cannibals, but when several of them drink together 'they may each be observed to wipe the rim of the drinking-vessel before passing it on.' The Bachapins, among whom it is said that a murderer incurs no disgrace, yet measure a man's merit by his industry, and despise a man who does



not work, that is, hunt, for his living. The Aztecs, with their constant and frightful human sacrifices, were so afraid of incurring divine wrath for the blood they spilled in the chase, that they would always preface a hunt by burning incense to their idols, and conclude it by smearing the faces of their divinities with the blood of their game. To turn back from the procession which accompanied the sacrifice of young children to the gods of rain and water rendered a man infamous and incapable of public office; yet death was the penalty for drunkenness in either sex, and 'it was considered degrading for a person of quality to touch wine at all, even in seasons of festival.' Similar inconsistencies are common in social regulations, especially in those relating to marriage, stringent laws of prohibited degrees and the strictest etiquette often affording no further evidence of purity of manners. The most barbarous marriage ceremonies are frequently attended with absurd forms of prudery, which it is perhaps impossible to trace to their origin. The instance of the Aleutian islanders, who with the grossest vices connect such notions of propriety as that either a husband or a wife would blush to address the other in the presence of a stranger, is one among many similar illustrations of a side of savage life

which but for parallels in our own social usages might present itself as an inexplicable anomaly.

Better experience has in so many cases dissipated original assertions of an absolute want of religious ideas among savages, that the strongest doubts must be felt of all similar negative propositions. Theology in one of three grades seems rather to be the universal property of mankind, appearing either harmless, as at the beginning or end of its historical career, or in its second and middle stage as identical with all that is abominable and cruel. The classification of mankind on such a basis of division, though it could never aspire to scientific exactness, would afford at least a standard of practical discrimination, by which the relations between Christian and non-Christian communities might to some extent be adjusted; for, by considering any people under one of these three aspects, it would be possible to form some estimate of their aptitude for, or need of, our theology, and of the advisability of our seeking to force it upon them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The justification of the use of the word *force* is not far to seek. One of the demands in the ultimatum addressed to Cetewayo, which helped to bring about the present unhappy Zulu war, was for the reinstatement of missionaries in Zululand. A Natal correspondent of the *Times*, January 28, 1879, justly observes about this: 'If the Zulus object to missionaries—*who certainly in many cases have acted as spies*—why *force* missionaries upon them?' The italics are not the correspondent's.



Should the principle ever meet with the acceptance it deserves, that missions, like charities, ought to be discriminate, it is not difficult to perceive the direction in which such a truth will be likely some day to receive practical recognition.

For wherever native theology takes the form of cannibalism, sutteeism, human sacrifices, or other rites directly destructive of earthly happiness, there the teaching of missionaries affords the only hope of a speedy reform, the only acquaintance possible for savage tribes with a culture higher than their own, save that which is likely to come to them through the medium of the brandy-bottle or the bayonet. But to send missions to countries like Russia or China, where there exist established systems of religion undefiled by cruelty, violates the first principle of the faith so conveyed, disturbing the peace of families and nations with the curse of religious animosity. When the Jesuits entreated the Chinese Emperor, Young-tching, to reconsider his resolution to proscribe Christianity, there was some reason in the imperial answer: 'What should you say if I sent a troop of lamas and bonzes to your country, to preach their law there?' The Taeping rebellion, or civil war, which devastated China for about fifteen years,

desolating hundreds of miles of fair towns and fertile fields, and fought out among massacres, sieges, and famines, of quite indescribable cruelty and horror, owed its impulse distinctly to the working of Christian tracts among the more ignorant classes, followed by a fanatical endeavour to substitute a travesty of Christianity for the older religions ; yet the seeds of all this misery are still sown in China, in the name and by the ministers of a religion of Peace, a religion that has for its first and final rule of life the duty of so dealing with others as we should wish them to deal with ourselves.

Cases of the third class, where the state of religious belief is so rudimentary as to be innocuous, are unhappily few ; but where such belief has not advanced to the detriment of the general welfare, it would seem the kindest policy not to inspire men, whose lives are spent in the constant perils of the woods or waves, with fears of more malignant spirits than those their own fancy has created for them, nor to teach them the doctrine that, hard and black as this world often proves to them, there is a yet harder and blacker one beyond. There is also some charm in that variety of belief and custom against which we wage unremitting war ; and only a tasteless fanaticism can think with pure joy of

the time, when sectarian chapels shall stand on every island of the seas, and Tartarus be taught wherever the sun shines. Rites and beliefs lose the interest which cling to them in their native home as soon as it is sought to transplant them elsewhere, just as flowers lose their fragrance and beauty when once they have been separated from the plant on which they grew. For this reason Puritanism has but little charm out of England; and though it should please our love of uniformity to read (as we may) of a Tahitian chief carrying his Sabbatarian scruples so far as to ask whether, if he saw ripe plaintains by his garden-path on Sunday, he might pick and eat them; or of another abstaining from turning a pig out of his garden on Sunday, preferring to let his sugar-canes be devoured; such facts are yet no proof that we make Christians of savages; they only prove that, with some trouble, we may make them imbeciles.

It would be difficult, indeed, to pay too high a tribute to the unselfish efforts of missionaries, now and in past times, directly for the benefit of mankind and indirectly for that of science; yet the question, besides its speculative interest, derives some justification from the general results of missions over the world, and from the melancholy disproportion between

their actual and their merited successes : Whether the welfare and improvement of savage tribes would not be best left to themselves and to time? That they are not incapable of independent improvement there is abundant evidence to show. Sometimes it arises in a tribe from imitation of some neighbouring tribe, more powerful but less barbarous than itself ; sometimes from the initiative of some reforming chief of its own. Thus the Comanche Indians of Texas, among whom ' Christianity had never been introduced,' abolished, in consequence of their intercourse with tribes less savage than themselves, the inhuman custom of killing a favourite wife at her husband's funeral. Mariner was himself a witness of the abolition on the Tongan Islands of the custom of strangling the wife of the great Tootonga chief at his death. It is said, again, to be an indisputable fact, that the Monbuttoos of Africa, whose ' cannibalism is the most pronounced of all the known nations of Africa,' have, ' without any influence from the Mahometan or Christian world, attained to no contemptible degree of external culture.' Finow, the Tongan king, was a genuine reformer ; and there have even been kings of Dahome who have wished the abolition of human sacrifices. Bianswah, the great Chippewya chief, put a stop, by

a treaty of peace with the Sioux, to the horrible practice of burning prisoners alive ; and, though the peace between the tribes was often broken, their compact in this respect was never violated. In other instances the modification of older usages points to the operation of reformative tendencies. Thus the Nootka Indians, who used to conclude their hunting festivals with a human sacrifice, subsequently changed the custom into the more lenient one of sticking a boy with knives in various parts of his body. The Zulus abolished the custom of killing slaves with a chief, to prepare food and other things for him in the next world ; so that now it is only a tradition with them that formerly when a chief died he did not die alone : ‘when the fire was kindled the chief was put in, and then his servants were chosen and put in after the chief ; the great men followed—they were taken one by one.’

It is moreover certain that in some instances savages have arrived spontaneously at no contemptible notions of morality, and that they have often lost their native virtues by their very contact with a higher form of faith. The African Bakwains declared that nothing described by the missionaries as sin had ever appeared to them otherwise, except polygamy ; and

the Tongan chiefs (if Mariner may be trusted), when asked what motives they had, beyond their fear of misfortunes in this life, for virtuous conduct, replied, '*as if they wondered such a question should be asked :*' 'The agreeable and happy feelings which a man experiences within himself when he does any good action and conducts himself nobly and generously, as a man ought to do.' The natural virtues attributed to the same people include honour, justice, patriotism, friendship, meekness, modesty, conjugal fidelity, parental and filial love, patience in suffering, forbearance of temper, respect for rank and for age. The Khonds of India, much more savage than the Tongans (their chief virtues consisting in killing an enemy, dying as a warrior, or living as a priest), yet account as sinful acts the refusal of hospitality, the breach of an oath or promise, a lie, or the violation of a pledge of friendship. The virtues the Maoris now possess they are said to have possessed before we came among them, namely honesty, self-respect, truthfulness ; and the belief that these virtues are even '*fading under their assumed Christianity*' recalls the tradition of certain American tribes, that their lives and manners were originally less barbarous, the Odjibwas, for instance, actually tracing the increase of murders, thefts,



falsehood, and disobedience to parents, to the advent of the Christian whites.

It is also remarkable that in several instances savages have of themselves hit upon those very helps to the maintenance of virtue which all Christian Churches have found so efficacious. For we find existing among them as religious and moral observances not only Fasting and Confession, but occasionally even Sermons. In the Tongan Islands *fonos*, or public assemblies, were held, at which the king would address his subjects, not only on agriculture but on morals and politics; and the lower chiefs had *fonos* also for the similar benefit of their feudal subordinates. In America, also, some tribes observed feasts at which the young were addressed on their moral duties, being admonished to be attentive and respectful to the old, to obey their parents, never to scoff at the decrepit or deformed, to be charitable and hospitable. Not only were such precepts dwelt on at great length, but enforced by the examples of good and bad individuals, just as they might be in London or Rome. Such considerations, indeed, prove nothing against the additional good that missionaries may do; but they add some force to the thought that had a tithe of the energy, the devotion, the suffering, the money, that has

been lavished on coaxing savages to be baptized, been spent on promoting international peace in Europe, wars might by this time be as extinct, belong as purely to a past state of things, as judicial combats, the thumbscrew, or the knout.

The vexed question, whether savage life represents a primitive or a decadent condition, whether it represents what man at first everywhere was, or only what he may become, has throughout the following chapters been avoided, that controversy being regarded as 'laid' by the exhaustive researches of Mr. Tylor and other writers. But whilst the state of the lowest modern savages is taken as the nearest approximation we have of the primitive state from which mankind has risen, it is not pretended that the state of any particular tribe may not be one to which it has fallen. As the low position of many Bushmen tribes is quite explicable by their long border-warfare with the Dutch, and the consequent cruelties they were exposed to, or as the state of many Brazilian savages may be traced to similar contact with the Portuguese, so any case of extreme savagery may be the result of causes, whose operation has no historical or written proof to attest them. The gigantic stone images on Easter Island, or the



great earthworks in America, are among the proofs, that but for such material traces of its existence it is possible for a whole civilisation to vanish, and to leave only the veriest savages on the soil where it flourished.<sup>1</sup> As we know that Europe was once as purely savage as parts of Africa are still, and can conceive the cycle of events restoring it to barbarism, so in the depths of time it may have happened in places where no suspicion of such a history is possible. As the surface of the earth seems subjected to processes of elevation and subsidence, land and sea constantly alternating their dominion, so it may be with civilisation, destined to no permanent home on the earth, but subsiding here to reappear there, and varying its level as it varies its latitude.

As the practical infinity of past time makes it impossible to calculate the influence exercised in different parts of the world by migrations, by conquests, or by commerce, except within a very limited period, so it precludes any definite belief in ethnological divisions, and relegates the question of the unity of the human race, like that of its origin, to the limbo of profitless discussion. No characteristic has yet been found by which mankind can be classified

<sup>1</sup> See on this subject Mr. Wallace's *Tropical Nature*, pp. 290-300.

distinctly into races; and with all the differences of colour, hair, skull, or language, which now suffice for purposes of nomenclature, it remains true that there is nothing to choose between the hypothesis that we constitute only one species and the hypothesis that we constitute several. The world is so old as to admit of divergences from a single original type quite as wide as any that exist; whilst, on the other hand, similarity of customs (such, for instance, as that Tartars in Asia, Sioux Indians in America, and Kamschadals should all regard it as a sin to touch a fire with a knife), fail us as a proof of a unity of origin, in the face of our ignorance of prehistoric antiquity.

That the works which have treated before, and better, of the subjects included in the following chapters should have exercised no deterrent effect in treating of them again, must find its excuse in the general interest which those works have produced for the studies in question, and of which the present work is but a sign and consequence. The reader has only himself to blame, if, having read the works on the same or similar subjects by Mr. Tylor, Mr. Spencer, and Sir John Lubbock, or those in German by Peschel, Wuttke, or Waitz, he troubles himself

with yet another book which seeks rather to illustrate than to exhaust the many interesting problems connected with savage life ; but the present writer, whilst under the deepest obligations to the labours of his predecessors—without which his own would have been impossible—has not studied simply to recapitulate their conclusions, but has sought rather to arrive at such results as the evidence forced upon him, independently as far as possible of existing theories or of the authority upon which they rest. Should he have succeeded in making anyone think better than before, with more interest and sympathy, of those outcasts of the world whom we designate as savage, something at least will have been done to claim for them a kinder treatment and respect than in popular estimation they either deserve or obtain.



# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### SOME SAVAGE MYTHS AND BELIEFS.

The universality of religion—Nature and tests of the evidence relating to the subject—Savage ideas of creation : ideas of a first man confused with ideas of a first cause—Illustrative examples of primitive cosmogony—Origin of the myth of the Two Contending Brothers—Prevalence of the belief in a Golden Age—Deluge-myths—Their possible origin in recollections of local floods, in the changes of the land-level, or in fancies about the skies—Absence in most of them of any connection with human crime—Vivid belief in futurity among the lower races—Gradual growth of the idea of the future life as affected by the present one—Difficulties in the attainment of future happiness—The great difference between savage and civilised beliefs regarding the Unknown illustrated by the savage belief in a future life for animals or things as well as for men—Compensations in the savage's creed : no terror of death nor of the future . pages 1-40

## CHAPTER II.

### SAVAGE MODES OF PRAYER.

Difficulties in the study of natural religions—Importance of prayer in savage life—Examples of savage prayers—Are they limited to temporal interests?—Baptismal rites equivalent to prayers—Prayers in the form of toasts—The worship of evil spirits—Doubtful distinction between good and bad divinities among savages—Treatment of obdurate gods—Relation of sacrifice to prayer—Tendency of sacrifices to become more numerous and severe—Pantomimic dances possibly acted petitions—The African gorilla-dance, the Mandan

buffalo-dance, the Sioux bear-dance, the Australian kangaroo-dance—A similar idea in prayers for rain—War-dances—Fetichistic practices perhaps extinct forms of prayer—Prayers to animals, to the moon, to trees, and their survival in modern folk-lore pages 41-77

### CHAPTER III.

#### SOME SAVAGE PROVERBS.

Differences of national character reflected in proverbs—Illustrated by Italian and German sayings on the custom of the Vendetta, by Italian and Persian proverbs about truth, by Catholic and Protestant sentiments about priests—Comparison between the proverbs of savage and civilised communities—Similarities of their feeling as regards poverty, blame, experience, perseverance, habit, cause, mendacity—Intelligence displayed in many savage proverbs—European proverbs of savage coinage, exemplified by a comparison between African and European proverbs relating to women—Inferences deducible from known proverbs . . . 78-100

### CHAPTER IV.

#### SAVAGE MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Are there any authentic cases of a total absence of moral distinctions among savages?—Unsatisfactory evidence regarding their moral notions—The Bushman's notion of a good and bad action—The fear of fellow-tribesmen, of spirits and ghosts, the primary source of distinction in the moral quality of actions—Moral restraints in secular punishments—Compensation necessary for homicide—Collective responsibility for crimes—Is murder ever regarded as indifferent?—Different institutions for the prevention of wrongs—Greenland singing-combats, *tabu*, *muru*, confession. Sins or fanciful wrong acts, illustrated by feelings of proper behaviour with regard to storms, to ancestors, to names, and to animals—Little evidence among savages of any idea of moral qualities apart from the consequences of actions—Their ideas of a future state throw little light on their moral sentiments—Doubtful evidence of a belief in a future life as affected by good or bad conduct—Fundamental agreement between savage and civilised morality . . . 101-129

## CHAPTER V.

## SAVAGE POLITICAL LIFE.

Theory of social evolution—The hunting state not necessarily one of political inferiority—Do any tribes exist without any form of social government?—Examples of the loosest social connections—Connection of agriculture and slavery with more complex social systems—Freedom and equality little known in savage life—Natural foundations for distinction between aristocracy and commonalty—Ordeals previous to admission to higher ranks—Devices for marking differences of position : scars, dress, titles, artificial language, funeral ceremonies, crests—Savage monarchy—Confusion between gods and kings—Old Japanese and Samoan feelings about monarchy—Limitations on savage despotism—Orders of society, approaching to a system of caste—The relation of tabu to monarchy—Primo-geniture in Tahiti—Absurd rights of nephews in Fiji—Taxation a festival in savage life—The subordination of the priesthood to the State pages . . . . . 130-161

## CHAPTER VI.

## SAVAGE PENAL LAWS.

The interest of savage laws—Stage in which the redress of wrongs is a merely personal matter—Tendency of offences to be regarded as matters of family or tribal interest—Growth of the conception of crime as an offence against the tribe, promoted by the custom of submitting disputes to the judgment of chiefs, and marked by customs, which, while making such chiefs judges, leave the punishment of the criminal to the injured party—Such customs found in America, Africa, Samoa, Afghanistan—Tendency of penal laws to become more cruel—Primitive punishments not gratuitously cruel—Savage laws not always arbitrary nor uncertain—Force of precedents in Caffre law—Regularity in legal procedure—Curious notions of equity—The ordeal in savage law, not an appeal to the judgment of God, but an invention of priestcraft for the detection of guilt—Comparison of some ordeals—Their utility for the discovery of guilt—



Death a frequent result of concealing real or fancied guilt—Oaths a later development of the ordeal—The English judicial oath compared with that in vogue in Samoa—Origin of the supposed virtue in touching or kissing the thing sworn by—Invisible connection between the thing touched and the calamity invoked in touching it . . . . . pages 162-187

## CHAPTER VII.

### EARLY WEDDING CUSTOMS.

Curious wedding custom of the Garos, in India—Natural affection among savages, tested by some of the evidence of eye-witnesses—Love-stories—Treatment of women not uniformly bad among savages—Married life—Duty of bashfulness, displayed in curious manners and notions of the Esquimaux, the Hottentots, the Hos, the Thlinkets, the Kirghiz, Kamschadals, the Bushmen, the Zulus, and the Bedouins—Conventional reserve between husband and wife—Restrictions on intercourse between near relations—Kicking and screaming the *proper* behaviour at weddings—Real disinclination also often a cause for the employment of real force—The ceremony of capture affords a bride a real chance of escape from a bridegroom she dislikes—Mercantile aspect of marriage—Marriages by capture often voluntary elopements in defeat of parental contracts, illustrated by customs in India, Afghanistan, Bokhara—Such marriages legalised by successful elopement and subsequent settlement with parents—Exogamy and endogamy, how related—Doubtful origin of exogamy—Its effect in preserving peace between tribes—Woman-stealing the result of artificial social customs—Origin of the difference of language between the sexes among the Caribs—The same phenomenon among the Zulus—Doubtful evidence of a total absence of marriage ceremonies . . . . . 188-238

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FAIRY-LORE OF SAVAGES.

Primitive philosophy of nature—Astro-mythology of Australian tribes, of the Tasmanians, the Bushmen, the Esquimaux, Hervey Islanders,



Thlinket Indians—Such myths invented to account for natural phenomena—Not always the result of forgotten etymologies—The Aht story of the origin of the moon—American story of the robin—Hervey Islanders' story of the sole—Stories also invented to account for curious customs or beliefs—Reason given by the Irish for their annual persecution of the wren—The story of the wren and the eagle, very similar in Ireland and North America—Facility of the dispersion of stories often accounts for their resemblance—Wide range of the story of Faithful John—Polynesian stories of Maui stopping the sun's motion—the same idea in Wallachia and North America—Many similar stories arose independently of each other, as the versions of the idea contained in Jack and the Beanstalk—Some Aryan myths, explained as fancies about the clouds, found also in the New World—Hindu myth of Urvasi compared with myths from Borneo and America—Story-roots to be looked for on earth, not in the clouds—Celestial and terrestrial phenomena confused—The influence of dreams in the production of myths—The influence of flattery—Tendency of chiefs and sorcerers to become gods and heroes after death—Zeus compared with the culture-heroes of savage mythology—The Hottentot Utixo, Mannan MacLear, Manabozho, Viracocha, Quetzalcoatl, Heitsi Eibip, all probably of human origin—Nicknames a factor in mythology—Tendency to personify abstractions—Vivid imagination of savages. pages 239–275

## CHAPTER IX.

## COMPARATIVE FOLK-LORE.

Interest of folk-lore due to the wide range of similar superstitions—Three ways of accounting for such resemblances—Great extent of superstition in civilised life—Savage incomplete distinction of things—Motion and life identified—Analogy of bee superstitions with superstitions about inanimate things—Fear of offending animals by a light use of their names—Spiritualistic character of witchcraft—Illustrations—Relics of object-worship—Sacred trees, animals, birds—Reverence for red things—Chinese analogues to Aryan folk-lore—Mythology probably founded on folk-lore, not folk-lore on

mythology—Traces of fire-worship—Beltane fires, formerly perhaps connected with human sacrifices—Scotch need-fires for cattle—Similar customs among the Mayas of America and the Hottentots—Ideas about the purity of new fire—Recent examples of the sacrifice of living things to appease spirits—Moon superstitions like those about the tides—Remnants of water-worship—Folk-lore a link between civilisation and barbarism—Influence of Christianity on folk-lore—The history of mankind that of a rise, not of a fall . . . . . pages 276-315

## I.

### *SOME SAVAGE MYTHS AND BELIEFS.*

THE question of the universality of religion, of its presence in some form or another in every part of the world, seems to be one of those which lie beyond the bounds of a dogmatic answer. For the accounts of missionaries and travellers, which furnish the only data for its solution, have been so largely vitiated, if not by a consciousness of the interests supposed to be at stake, at least by so strong an intolerance for the tenets of native savage religions, that it seems impossible to make sufficient allowance either for the bias of individual writers or for the extent to which they may have misunderstood, or been purposely misled by, their informants.

Although, however, on the subject of native religions we can never hope for more than approximate truth, the reports of missionaries and others, written at different periods of time about the same place or contemporaneously about widely remote places, as they must be free from all possible sus-

picion of collusion, so they supply a kind of measure of probability by which the credibility of any given belief may be tested. Thus an idea, too inconceivable to be credited, if only reported of one tribe of the human race, may be safely accepted as seriously held, if reported of several tribes in different parts of the world. An Englishman, for instance, however much winds and storms may mentally vex him, would scarcely think of testifying his repugnance to them by the physical remonstrance of his fists and lungs, nor would he easily believe that any people of the earth should seriously treat the wind in this way as a material agent. If he were told that the Namaquas shot poisoned arrows at storms to drive them away, he would show no unreasonable scepticism in disbelieving the fact ; but if he learnt on independent authority that the Payaguan Indians of North America rush with firebrands and clenched fists against the wind that threatens to blow down their huts ; that in Russia the Esthonians throw stones and knives against a whirlwind of dust, pursuing it with cries ; that the Kalmucks fire their guns to drive the storm-demons away ; that Zulu rain-doctors or heaven-herds whistle to lightning to leave the skies just as they whistle to cattle to leave their pens ; and that also in the Aleutian Islands a whole village will unite to shriek and strike against the raging wind, he would have to acknowledge that the statement

about the Namaquas contained in itself nothing intrinsically improbable. And besides this test of genuine savage thought, a test which obviously admits of almost infinite application, there is another one no less serviceable in ethnological criticism, namely, where the reality of a belief is supported by customs, widely spread and otherwise unintelligible. No better illustration can be given of this than the belief, which, asserted by itself, would be universally disbelieved, in a second life not only for men but for material things ; but which, supported as it is by the practice, common alike in the old world and the new, of burying objects with their owner to live again with him in another state, is certified beyond all possibility of doubt. If to us there seems a no more self-evident truth than that a man can take nothing with him out of the world, a vast mass of evidence proves, that the discovery of this truth is one of comparatively modern date and of still quite partial distribution over the globe.

So much, then, being premised as to the nature of the evidence on which our knowledge of the lower races depends, and as to the limits within which such evidence may be received and its veracity tested, let us proceed to examine some of the higher beliefs of savages, which, as they bear some analogy to the beliefs on similar subjects of more advanced societies, are in a sense religious, and, so far at least as the

collected information justifies us in judging, seem of indigenous and independent growth.

Few results of ethnology are more interesting than the wide-spread belief among savages, arrived at purely by their own reasoning faculties, in a creator of things. The recorded instances of such a belief are, indeed, so numerous as to make it doubtful whether instances to the contrary may not have been based on too scant information. The difficulty of obtaining sound evidence on such subjects is well illustrated by the experience of Dobritzhoffer, the Jesuit missionary, who spent seven years among the Abipones of South America. For when he asked them whether the wonderful course of the stars and heavenly bodies had never raised in their minds the thought of an invisible being who had made and who guided them, he got for answer that of what happened in heaven, or of the maker or ruler of the stars, the ancestors of the Abipones had never cared to think, finding ample occupation for their thoughts in the providing of grass and water for their horses. Yet the Abipones really believed that they had been created by an Indian like themselves, whose name they mentioned with great reverence and whom they spoke of as their 'grandfather,' because he had lived so long ago. He was still, they fancied, to be seen in the Pleiades ; and when that constellation disappeared for some months from the sky they would bewail the

illness of their grandfather, and congratulate him on his recovery when he returned in May. Still, the creator of savage reasoning is not necessarily a creator of all things, but only of some, like Caliban's Setebos, who made the moon and the sun, and the isle and all things on it—

But not the stars ; the stars came otherwise.

So that it is possible the creator of the Abipones was merely their deified First Ancestor. For on nothing is savage thought more confused than on the connection between the first man who lived on the world and the actual Creator of the world, as if in the logical need of a first cause they had been unable to divest it of human personality, or as if the natural idea of a first man had led to the idea of his having created the world. Thus Greenlanders are divided as to whether Kaliak was really the creator of all things or only the first man who sprang from the earth. The Minnetarrees of North America believed that at first everything was water and there was no earth at all, till the First Man, the never-dying one, the Lord of Life, sent down the great red-eyed bird to bring up the earth. The Mingo tribes also 'revere and make offerings to the First Man, he who was saved at the great deluge, as a powerful deity under the Master of Life, or *even as identified with him ;*' whilst among the Dog-ribs the First Man, Chapewee,



was also creator of the sun and moon. The Zulus of Africa likewise merge the ideas of the First Man and the Creator, the great Unkulunkulu ; as also do the Caribs, who believe that Louquo, the uncreate first Carib, descended from heaven to make the earth and also to become the father of men.<sup>1</sup> So again in the Aht belief Quawteaht is not only 'the first Indian who ever lived,' their forefather, but the maker of most things visible, of the earth and all animals, yet not of the sun and moon.<sup>2</sup> It seems, therefore, not improbable that savage speculation, being more naturally impelled to assume a cause for men than a cause for other things, postulated a First Man as primeval ancestor, and then applying an hypothesis, which served so well to account for their own existence, to account for that of the world in general, made the Father of Men the creator of all things ; in other words, that the idea of a First Man preceded and prepared the way for the idea of a first cause.

However this may be, and admitting the possible existence of tribes absolutely devoid of any idea of creation at all, the following savage fancies about it are not without their interest as typical examples of primitive cosmogony.

In one of the Dog-rib Indian sagas an important part in the creation is played by a great bird, as among

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 312, 313, 333.

<sup>2</sup> Sproat, *Savage Life*, 178, 179, 209, 210.



several other tribes who loved to trace their origin to a bird, as some would trace theirs to a toad or a rattlesnake. Originally, the saga runs, the world was nothing but a wide, waste sea, without any living thing upon it save a gigantic bird, who with the glance of its fiery eyes produced the lightning, and with the flapping of its wings the thunder. This bird, by diving into the sea, caused the earth to appear above it, and proceeded to call all animals to its surface (except, indeed, the Chippewya Indians, who were descended from a dog). When its work was complete it made a great arrow, which it bade the Indians keep with great care; and when this was lost, owing to the stupidity of the Chippewyas, it was so angry that it left the earth, never afterwards to revisit it; and men now live no longer, as they did in those days, till their throats are worn through with eating and their feet with walking the earth.<sup>1</sup>

Many thousands of miles separate the Tongan Islands from North America, yet there too we find the idea of the earth having come from the waters. In the beginning nothing was to be seen above the waste of waters but the Island of Bolotu, which is as everlasting as the gods who dwell there or as the stars and the sea. One day the god Tangaloa went to fish in the sea, when, feeling something heavy at the end of his line, he drew it in, and there perceived

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 173; and Bancroft, iii. 105.

the tops of rocks, which continued to increase in size and number till they formed a large continent, and his line broke, and only the Tongan Islands remained above the surface. These Tangaloa, with the help of the other gods, filled with trees and herbs and animals from Bolotu, only of a smaller size and not immortal. Then he bade his two sons take their wives and go to dwell in Tonga, dividing the land and dwelling apart. The younger brother was steady and industrious, and made many discoveries ; but the elder was idle and slept away his time, and envied the works of his brother, till at last his envy grew so strong that one day he murdered him. Then came Tangaloa in wrath from Bolotu, to ask him why he had slain his brother, and he bade him bring his brother's family to him. They were told to take their boats and sail eastward till they came to a great land to dwell in. 'Your skin' (to this effect ran Tangaloa's blessing) 'shall be white as your souls, for your souls are pure ; you shall be wise, make axes, have all other riches, and great boats. I myself will command the wind to blow from your land to Tonga, but the people of Tonga will not be able with their bad boats to reach you.' To the others he said : 'You shall be black, because your souls are black, and you shall remain poor. You shall not be able to prepare useful things, nor to go to the land of your brothers. But your brothers

shall come to Tonga and trade with you as they please.'<sup>1</sup>

This Tongan creation-myth is especially striking, not only from its resemblance to the well-known stories of Cain and Abel or of Romulus and Remus, but from the wonderful extension of a similar story over the world. It has been found among the Esquimaux, among the Hervey Islanders, among the Hindoos, among the Iroquois of America. Its origin perhaps lies in early and rude attempts to account for the more obvious dualisms in nature, as those, for instance, between the sun and the moon, or between warm and cold winds. In the Iroquois version the elder brother who killed the younger is said to have been identical with the sun, though his mother, not the brother he killed, was the moon.<sup>2</sup> A curious Indian drawing has been preserved in which the god of the north wind, or of cold weather, contends with the god of the south, or of warmth. The former is figured in a snowstorm, the latter in rain; wolves fight on the side of the one, the crow and plover on that of the other. The conflict is terrible; the southern god is worsted, cold weather prevails, and the earth is frozen up. But in spring he sends forth his crow and plover, who defeat the wolves, and the northern god is drowned in a flood of spray which arises from the melting of the snow and ice. And in

<sup>1</sup> Mariner, *Tonga Islands*, ii. 121-4.    <sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft, *I. T.*, v. p. 155.

this contention for cold and warm weather it is believed they will battle as long as the world shall endure.<sup>1</sup>

The Kamchadal belief is instructive, as showing that by the creation of the world the savage only means that small portion of it which he knows, and that, so far from it being any proof of his intelligence to suppose a cause for the hills or island which limit his energies, it is rather his want of logical thought which impels him to the belief. For seeing, as he does, a spirit in everything, whether it be moving animal, or rushing wind, or standing stone, and accounting, as he does, for everything by a spirit which is at once its cause and controlling principle, it is only natural that he should draw from his unlimited spirit-world one who made and governs all things. Thus the Kamchadals believe that after their supreme deity, of whom they predicate nothing but existence, the greatest god is Kutka. Kutka created the heavens and the earth, making both eternal, like the men and creatures he placed on the earth. But the Kamchadals openly avow that they think themselves much cleverer than Kutka, who in their eyes is so stupid as to be quite undeserving of prayers or gratitude. Had he been cleverer, they say, he would have made the world much better, without so many mountains and inaccessible cliffs, without streams.

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *I. T.*, iv. 496. See Dr. Brinton's explanation of the story in his *Myths of the New World*, pp. 170-3.

of such rapidity, or such tempests of wind and rain. In winter, if they are climbing a mountain, or in summer, if their canoes come to rapids, they will vent loud curses on Kutka for having made the streams too strong for their canoes, or the mountains so wearisome for their feet.

The Tamanaks of the Orinoco manifested a not much higher conception of a creator than the Kamchadals. For they ascribed the creation of the world to Amalivacca, who in the course of his work discussed long with his brother about the Orinoco, having the kind wish so to make it that ships might as easily go up its stream as down, but being compelled to abandon a task which so far transcended his powers. The Tamanaks recently showed a cave where Amalivacca dwelt when he lived among them, before he took a boat and sailed to the other side of the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Not only, however, is the idea of a creation of things quite common among untutored savages, but there is often a belief closely connected therewith that in the beginning death and sickness were unknown in the world, but came into it in consequence of some fault committed by its hitherto immortal occupants. Such a belief, reported as it is from places so widely sundered as Ceylon, North America, and

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt, *Personal Narrative*, v. 595-7.

the Tongan Islands, seems effectually to discountenance the suspicion which might otherwise attach to it of collusion or mistake on the part of our informants. It is the fancy of the Cingalese cosmogony that, in the fifth period of creative energy, the immortal beings who then inhabited the earth ate of certain plants, and thereby involved themselves in darkness and mortality. 'It was then that they were formed male and female, and lost the power of returning to the heavenly mansions.' Liable as they had theretofore been to mental passions, such as envy, covetousness, and ambition, they were thenceforward subjected to corporeal passions as well, and the race now inhabiting the earth became subject to all the evils that afflict them.<sup>1</sup> According to the saga of the Dogrib Indians the first man who lived upon the earth, when food and other good things abounded, was Chapewee, who afterwards, giving his children two kinds of food, black and white, forbade them to eat of the former. When he went away for a long journey to bring the sun into the world, his children were obedient and ate only of the white fruit, but ate it all. But when he went away a second time to bring the moon into the world, in their hunger his children forgot his prohibition and ate of the black fruit. So when Chapewee returned he was very wroth, and declared

<sup>1</sup> Forbes Leslie, *Early Races in Scotland*, i. 177.



that thenceforth the earth should only produce bad fruit and that men should be subject to sickness and death. Afterwards, indeed, when his family lamented that men should have been made mortal for eating the black fruit, Chapewee granted that those who dreamt certain dreams should have the power of curing sickness and so of prolonging human life; but that was the extent to which Chapewee relented.<sup>1</sup> The Caribs, Waraues, and Arawaks are said to believe in two distinct creators of men and women; the creator of the former being superior and doing neither good nor harm. After he had created men he came on the earth to see what they were doing; but finding them so bad that they even attempted his own life, he took from them their immortality and gave it to skin-casting creatures instead. The Aleutian Islanders believe that the god who made their islands completed his work by making men to inhabit them; but these men were immortal beings, for when age came over them they had but to climb a lofty mountain and plunge from thence into a lake, in order to come forth young again and vigorous. Then it happened that a mortal woman, who had the misfortune to draw upon herself celestial love, remon-

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, ii. 155-7, where the beliefs are referred to. Franklin's *Second Journey*, p. 308. They are so remarkable as to arouse suspicion that European influence has affected the native imagination; but the influence, if any, seems beyond the reach of criticism in this as in other striking cases of analogy.

strated one day with her lover for having, in his creation of the Aleutian Islands, made so many mountains and forgotten to supply the land with forests. This imprudent criticism caused her brother to be slain by the angry god, and all men after him to be subject to death. A similar idea is contained in one of the Tongan traditions of creation; for when the islands were made, but before they were inhabited by reasonable beings, some two hundred of the lower gods, male and female alike, took a great boat to go to see the new land fished up by Tangaloa. So delighted were they with it that they immediately broke up their big boat, intending to make some smaller ones out of it. But after a few days some of them died; and one of them, inspired by God, told them that since they had come to Tonga, and breathed its air and eaten its fruits, they should be mortal and fill the world with mortals. Then were they sorry that they had broken their big boat, and they set to work to make another, and went to sea, hoping again to reach Bolotu, the heaven they had left; but being unable to find it, they returned regretfully to Tonga.

Thus it would seem that wherever men have so far advanced in power of thought as to realise the conception of antiquity, the troubles of their actual lot have always tempted them to idealise the past, and the glories of the age of gold have been



sung by the poets of no particular land nor literature. The Shawnee Indians believed there was a time when they could walk on the ocean or restore life to the dead, till they lost these privileges when the nation by its carelessness became divided into two.<sup>1</sup> The Ashantees trace all their calamities to the folly of their ancestors, for when the first created black men were given their choice between a large box and a piece of sealed-up paper they elected to take the box, but found therein only some gold, iron, and other metals, whilst the white men on opening the paper found all that was needful to make them wise, and have ever since treated the blacks as their slaves.<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that a similar fancy is ascribed to the Navajoes of New Mexico. For their ancestors, after creating the sun and moon, made two water-jars, both covered at the top, but one gorgeously painted, containing only rubbish, the other of plain earthenware, unpainted, but containing flocks and herds and other valuables. The Navajoes, allowed to choose before the Pueblos, took the beautiful but worthless jar; whereupon the old men said: 'Thus it will always be with the two nations. You, Navajoes, will be a poor and wandering race; destitute of the comforts of life and ever greedy for things on account of their outward show rather than their intrinsic value; while

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *I. T.*, iv. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Hutton, *Voyage to Africa*, p. 320; and Bosman in Pinkerton, xvi. 396.

the Pueblos will enjoy an abundance of the good things of life, will occupy houses, and have plenty of flocks and herds.'<sup>1</sup> According to the legend in the Zend-Avesta, when Ormuzd created Meschia and Meschiana, the first man and woman, he appointed heaven as their dwelling, under the sole condition of humility and obedience to the law of pure thought, pure speech, and pure action. For some time they were a blessing to one another and lived happily, saying that it was from Ormuzd that all things came—the water and earth, trees and animals, sun, moon, and stars, and all good roots and fruits on the earth. But at last Ahriman became master over their thoughts, and they ascribed the creation of all things to him. So they lost their happiness and their virtue, and their souls were condemned to remain in Duzakh until the resurrection of their bodies, when Sosiosch should restore life to the dead.<sup>2</sup>

Among the myths, however, most widely spread over the world and common to races in all stages of culture, from the most barbarous to the most civilized, a prominent place is due to the legend of an all-destructive deluge, a legend which, arising as it probably did in many different places from exaggerated memories of purely local floods, must, in spite of its seeming universality, remain a merely local

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, iv. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, vii. 368.

myth, entirely destitute of all bearing on the question of the unity of the human race, or of any connection with the story told in Genesis. A local flood like that which on the occasion of an earthquake in 1819 was caused by the sea flowing in at the eastern mouth of the Indus and converting in the space of a few hours a district of 2,000 square miles into a vast lagoon, would naturally be an event which would remain for ever in the oral traditions of the district and tend to become magnified when the event itself was forgotten. In Australia, which is subject at certain epochs and in certain localities to great inundations, and which bears evidence of former floods in what are now waterless deserts, flood stories are said to be 'exceedingly common' among all the tribes, one tribe having a tradition that when they returned to their old hunting-grounds on the banks of a river, after a great flood, they found the sea flowing where had stood the other bank, nor any trace left of its former inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

Or, again, it is possible that alterations in the level of the sea and land or the subsidence of a large continent, such as that of which on geological as well as ethnological grounds it has been supposed that the Polynesian islands are the remains, may have originated the tradition. Thus, the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg imagined the submersion of a large country in

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Eth. Soc.* iii. 233, 234; Oldfield's *Aborigines of Australia*.

the Atlantic to account for the deluge-myths of the Central American nations.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brinton, indeed, suggests, that not physics, but metaphysics is the exciting cause of beliefs in periodical convulsions of the globe, maintaining that 'by nothing short of a miracle' could savages preserve the remembrance of even the most terrible catastrophe beyond a few generations. But it is at least as likely that such remembrance should be possible as that savages, starting, as he supposes, with an idea of creation as a reconstruction of existing elements, should have added thereto the myth of a universal catastrophe, 'to avoid the dilemma of a creation from nothing on the one hand and the eternity of matter on the other.'<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, however, all such legends are best regarded as pure nature-myths, to which we may possibly find the key in the belief of the Esquimaux, that the souls of the dead are encamped round a large lake in the sky, which when it overflows causes rain upon earth and would cause a universal deluge if at any time its floodgates were burst. The belief in a contingency is never far from the assertion of its actuality, nor are the steps of thought always visible which separate the possible from the real.

Although many of the deluge-myths of the world are doubtless owed their origin to the zeal with which they have been sought for in the cause of ortho-

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Brinton, pp. 198, 199.

dox theories, it is improbable that all of them have been produced in this way. Dr. Brinton, who has examined the evidence with care, asserts that there are twenty-eight American nations among whom a distinct and well-authenticated myth of the deluge was found.<sup>1</sup>

It would be tedious to allude to more than a few illustrations of the belief as it exists in the world, or to try to distinguish the elements in them of purely native growth from the influences of Christian teaching. The Kamchadals believe that the earth was once flooded and many persons drowned, though they tried to save themselves in boats, those only succeeding who made great rafts of trees and let down stones for anchors, to prevent themselves from drifting out to sea ; when the waters subsided their rafts rested on the mountain-tops. The Esquimaux appealed to the bones of whales found on their mountains in support of their assertion that the world had once been tilted over and all men drowned but one. The Mandan Indians, according to Catlin, celebrated every year in pantomime the subsidence of the great waters.<sup>2</sup>

It is noticeable that in most savage legends of a flood (and it may, perhaps, be taken as some test of

<sup>1</sup> Brinton, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Catlin, ii. 127. For some other deluge-myths of a similar kind see Bancroft, iii. 46, 47, 64, 75, 76, 88, 100 ; Turner's *Polynesia*, p. 249. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 386 ; Franklin, i. 113 ; Sir G. Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, 61 ; Brett, *Indian Tribes of Guiana*. pp. 381, 385, 398, 399 ; Dall, *Alaska*, p. 423.

their authenticity) there is an entire absence of the idea, so familiar to ourselves, of the flood having resulted from any fault committed by the then inhabitants of the earth. At most such an idea appears in germ, as in the tradition of the Society Islanders, that a fisherman, catching his hook in the hair of the great sea-god as he lay asleep in his coral grove, so angered that divinity that he caused the waters to arise till they flooded the very tops of the mountains and drowned the inhabitants, the fisherman and his family alone being suffered to escape, and thereby serving to attest the genuineness of the tradition. So in Fiji the deluge was caused by two grandsons of a god killing his favourite bird, and instead of being apologetic acting with insolence and fortifying the town they lived in for the purpose of defying their grandfather. The connection of the catastrophe with human wickedness belongs apparently to a more advanced state of thought, of which the recently deciphered Chaldæan version may be taken as a sample. In it Hasisadra, the sage, who with his wife escaped the general destruction, tells Izdubar, the giant, how he built a vessel according to the directions of Hea, to save himself and his family from the universal deluge which the gods sent upon the earth to punish the wickedness of men; how the deluge lasted six days, and on the seventh, when the storm ceased, the vessel was stranded for seven days on the mountains



of Nizir ; and how on the seventh day, he Hasisadra, sent out first a dove and then a swallow, both of whom, finding no resting-place, returned to the vessel, till a raven was sent forth and did not return ; and Hasisadra sent out the animals to the four winds, and poured out a libation in thanksgiving, and built an altar on the summit of the mountain.

The belief in a future life—a belief perhaps first suggested in that rude state of culture where the dreaming and waking life are not clearly distinct but are both equally real—appears to prevail so generally among the lower races, that it is more difficult to find instances where it is *not* found than instances where it is. The dead who visit the living in their sleep are not thought of as dead, but as simply invisible ; and for this reason all over the globe it is so common to bury material things in the graves of the departed, to serve them in that other world which is so vividly conceived as but a continuation of this one. The Red Indian takes his horses, the Greenlander his reindeer, and both the common requisites of earthly economy ; just as many tribes still take their slaves and their wives to accompany them on that journey which, as it is imagined so distinctly, is undertaken withoutmystery to a fresh existence. Till lately, in parts of Sweden, a man's pipe and tobacco-pouch, some money and lights, were interred with him ; and at Reichenbach, in Germany, a man's umbrella and

goloshes are still placed in his grave.<sup>1</sup> In Russia formerly a new pair of shoes was put on the feet of the dead for the long journey before him, a custom also found among the natives of California, and the Christian priest used to place on a man's breast, as he lay in his coffin, a pass, which, besides being inscribed with his Christian name and the dates of his birth and death, was also a certificate of his baptism, of the piety of his life, and of his having partaken of the communion before his death.<sup>2</sup> These are but survivals of savage ideas, which picture the continuation of consciousness far more vividly than more advanced religions. The Ahts bury blankets with their dead, that they may not shiver in the cold ones provided in the land of Chayher. The Delawar Indian used to make an opening at the head-end of the coffin, that the soul of the deceased might go in and out till it had thoroughly settled on its future place of residence. When the Chippewyas killed their aged relatives who could hunt no more, the medicine-song used proves

<sup>1</sup> Koehler, *Volksbrauch im Voightland*, p. 444. 'Dem Verstorbenen giebt man die Gegenstände mit in das Grab, welche er im Leben am liebsten hatte : so ist es geschehen, dass man selbst Regenschirm und Gummischühe mitgab. (Reichenbach.) . . . In Schweden hat man dem Todten Tabakspfeife, Tabaksbeutel, Geld und Feuerzeug mitgegeben, damit er nicht spuke. . . . In einem Grabe des Gottesackers zu Elsterberg wurde eine Anzahl Kupfermünzen gefunden.'

<sup>2</sup> This fact has been denied in King's *Greek Church*, p. 358, but it is mentioned by most of the earliest English travellers in Russia ; by Chancellor, in *Hackluyt's Voyages*, i. 283 ; Jenkinson, *ibid.*, p. 361 ; and Fletcher, *Russe Commonwealth*, 106 ; as well as by later ones.



the simple faith which made the cruel deed an act of mercy: 'The Lord of life gives courage. It is true all Indians know that he loves us, and we give over to him our father, that he may feel himself young in another land and able to hunt.'

It is possible, indeed, that in many cases the attention shown by savages to their dead, by the burial of property which would have been of use to the survivors, or by the placing of food on their graves at periodical feasts, arose rather from fear than from any kinder motive, dictated by the dread always felt by the living of the dead and the wish to satisfy them, if possible, by some peace-offering. The Samoyed sorcerer, after a funeral, goes through the ceremony of soothing the departed, that he may not trouble the survivors nor take their best game; a feeling still further illustrated by their habit of not taking the dead out to be buried by the regular hut door, but by a side-opening, that if possible they may not find their way back—a habit found also in Greenland and in many other parts of the world. For the fear of the dead is a universal sentiment, common no less to the Abipones, who thought that sorcerers could bring the dead from their graves to visit the living, or to the Kaffirs, who think that bad men alone live a second time and try to kill the living by night, than it is to the ignorant who still believe in the blood-sucking vampire, a belief which little more than a century

ago amounted to a kind of epidemic in Hungary, resulting in a general disinterment and the burning or staking of the suspected bodies. In the sepulture, therefore, of men with their possessions, it was probably the original thought that the dead would be less likely to haunt the dwellings of the living, if they were not compelled to re-seek upon earth those articles of daily use which they knew were to be found there.

But the savage belief in a future is very variable ; nor could we expect to find it much affected by ideas of earthly morality, when such ideas themselves hardly appear to exist. At most it is men of rank and courage who live again, while cowards and the commonalty perish utterly ; generally there is no qualification of any kind. The Bedouins have no fixed belief at all, some thinking that after death they are changed into screech-owls, and others that if a camel is slain on their graves they will return to life riding on it, but otherwise on foot. All North American Indians are said to believe in the continual life of the soul, and, because they think themselves the highest beings on earth, postulate a hereafter where all their earthly longings will be satisfied.<sup>1</sup> But they trouble themselves little about it, thinking that the god they recognise as supreme is too good to punish them. Thus the Indians of Arauco look forward to an eternal life in a beautiful land which lies to the west,

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, ii. 165.

far over the sea, whither souls are taken by the sailor Tempulazy and where no punishment is expected : for Pillican, their god, the Lord of the world, would not inflict pain.<sup>1</sup> The Tunguz Lapps look on the next life as simply a continuation of this one ; in it there will be no punishment, for here everyone is as good as he can be, and the gods kill men reluctantly, but are thereby satisfied. In the Polynesian future there is a similar absence of any idea of retribution. There is, for instance, no moral qualification, but only one of rank, for Bolotu, that happy land of the dead which lies far away to the north-west of Tonga, beyond the reach of Tongan boats and greater than all the Tongan islands put together, wherein abound beautiful and useful trees, whose plucked fruit instantly grows again ; where a delicious fragrance fills the air, and birds of the loveliest colours sit upon the trees ; where the woods swarm with pigs, which are immortal so long as they are not eaten by the gods. Nothing, indeed, shows better how independent is imagination of race than the great similarity of those idealised earths which constitute the heavens of the most distant savage tribes. The American Indian, who visits in a dream the unseen world, reports of it, in language recalling that of Homer, that it is a land where there is neither day nor night, where the sun never rises nor sets ; where rain and tomahawks and arrows are never

<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, *Travels in South America*, i. 58.

seen ; where pipes abound everywhere, lying ready to be smoked ; where the earth is ever green, the trees ever in leaf ; where there is no need of bearskin nor of hut ; where, if you would travel, the rivers will take your boat whithersoever you will, without the need of rudder or of paddle. And just as in the Tongan Bolotu the plucked fruit is replaced, so there the goat voluntarily offers its shoulder to the hungry man, in full confidence that it will grow again, and the beaver for the same reason makes a ready sacrifice of its beautiful tail.<sup>1</sup>

So far there is no idea of a future life as in any way affected by this one. But such ideas do exist among savages, and are extremely interesting as indications of the growth of their moral ideas. The quality most necessary for a savage is pre-eminently courage, and courage, therefore, appearing as the first recognised virtue, lays first claim, as such, to consideration hereafter. The Brazilians believed that the souls of the dead became beautiful birds, whilst cowards were turned into reptiles. The Minnetarrees held that there were two villages which received the dead ; but that the cowardly and bad went to the small one, whilst the brave and good occupied the larger. Among the Caribs, who entertain the strange fancy that they have as many souls as they feel nerves in their body, but that the chief of these resides in the heart and

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, ii. 166.

goes to heaven at death, whilst the others go to the sea or the woods, we meet again with the reservation of happiness to the souls of the brave. They alone will live merrily, dancing, feasting, and talking ; they alone will swim in the great streams, feeling no fatigue ; the Arawaks will either serve them as slaves or wander about in desert mountains. Somewhat similar was the faith of the old Mexicans, who divided the future world into three parts: the first, the House of the Sun, where the days were spent in joyful attendance on that luminary, with songs and games and dances, by such brave soldiers as had died in battle or as prisoners had been sacrificed to the gods, and by women who had died in giving children to the community ; the second, the kingdom of Tlalocan, hidden among the Mexican mountains, not so bright as the former, but cool and pleasant, and filled with unfailing pumpkins and tomatoes, reserved for priests and for children sacrificed to Tlaloc and for all persons killed by lightning, by drowning, or by sickness ; the third, the kingdom of Mictlauteuctli, reserved for all other persons, but with nothing said of any punishment there awaiting them. One of the beliefs in Greenland is, that heaven is situate in the sky or the moon, and that the journey thither is so easy that a soul may reach it the same evening that it quits the body, and play at ball and dance with those other departed souls who are encamped round the great lake and

shine in heaven as the northern lights. But others say that it is only witches and bad people who join the heavenly lights, where they not only enjoy no rest, owing to the rapid revolutions of the sky, but are so plagued with ravens that they cannot keep them from settling in their hair. They believe that heaven lies under the earth or sea, where dwells Torngarsuk, the Creator, with his mother, in perpetual summer and beautiful sunshine. There the water is good and there is no night, and there are plenty of birds, and fish, and seals, and reindeer, all to be caught at pleasure, or ready cooking in a great kettle ; but these delights are reserved for persons who have done great deeds and worked steadfastly, who have caught many whales or seals, who have been drowned at sea, or have died in childbirth. These persons alone may hope to join the great company and feast on inconsumable seals. Even then they must slide for five days down the blood-stained precipice ; and unhappy they to whom the journey falls in stormy weather or in winter, for then they may suffer that other death of total extinction, especially if their survivors disturb them by their noise or affect them injuriously by the food they eat. The Kamchadal belief is very curious, as showing how the idea of compensation in the next world for the evils of this—an idea already apparent in the Mexican and Greenland beliefs—may have served to bridge over the conception of a mere con-



tinuance of life for the soul, and the conception of an actual retribution awaiting it. They imagine that the dead come to a place under the earth, where Haetsch dwells, son of Kutka the Creator, and the first man who died on earth, now Lord of the under-world and general receiver of souls. To those who come dressed in fine furs and drive fat dogs before their sledges, he gives instead old ragged furs and lean dogs ; but to those who have known poverty on earth he gives new furs and beautiful dogs and also a better place to live in than the others. The dead live again as on earth ; their wives are restored to them, they build ostrogs again, and catch fish, and dance and sing ; there is less storm and snow than above ground, and more people ; indeed, abundance of everything.

It is easy to conceive how, when once the idea had been reached that the brave deserved compensation in the next world for their earthly courage, the poor for their earthly wretchedness, or the sick for their earthly sufferings, and all men for the misfortune of premature death, it should also be inferred, as soon as any criterion between goodness and badness more refined than the mere difference between courage and cowardice had been attained, that the good should have some advantage over the bad, and from such an inference to a complete theory of retribution and punishment of the bad the logical steps seem fairly obvious. Few things, indeed, are more

remarkable among the lower races than the general absence of the ideas we associate with hell.<sup>1</sup> At most the idea of future punishment is negative, the lives of slaves and cowards terminating in a total cessation of consciousness, as opposed to its continuance for warriors and chiefs. Still, the idea of difficulty in attaining the blessed abodes, such as that above noticed as prevalent in Greenland—an idea, as Mr. Tylor suggests, probably connected with the sun's passage across the sky to the west, where the happy land is so generally figured to lie—is very common, and from such an idea it is natural to connect the difficulty of the journey to Paradise with the destruction of those whose presence in it would mar its blessedness.

The trial of merit, varying with experiences of physical geography, generally lies either in the passage of a river or gulf by a narrow bridge, or in the climbing of a steep mountain. The Choctaws, for instance, believe that the dead have to pass a long and slippery pine-log, across a deep and rapid river, on the other side of which stand six persons, who pelt new-comers with stones and cause the bad ones to fall in.<sup>2</sup> In Khond theology the judge of the dead

<sup>1</sup> See Brinton, p. 242. 'Nowhere (in the New World) was any well-defined doctrine that moral turpitude was judged and punished in the next world. No contrast is discoverable between a place of torments and a realm of joy ; at the worst but a negative castigation awaited the liar, the coward, and the niggard.'

<sup>2</sup> For other instances of the myth of the heaven-bridge, and its wide range, see Mr. Tylor's *Early History of Mankind*, p. 348.



resides beyond the sea, on the smooth and slippery Leaping Rock, below which flows a black unfathomable river; and the souls of men take bold leaps to reach the rock, those that fail contracting a deformity which is transferred to the next soul animated on earth. The Blackfoot Indians, on the other hand, believe that departed souls have to climb a steep mountain, from the summit of which is seen a great plain, with new tents and swarms of game; that the dwellers in that happy plain advance to them and welcome those who have led a good life, but reject the bad—those who have soiled their hands in the blood of their countrymen—and throw them headlong from the mountain; whilst women who have been guilty of infanticide never reach the mountain at all, but hover round the seat of their crimes with branches of trees tied to their legs. The Fijians think that even the brave have some difficulty in reaching the judgment-seat of Ndengei, and they provide the dead with war-clubs to resist Sama and his host, who will dispute their passage. But celibacy is in their eyes apparently the only offence which calls for peremptory and hopeless punishment. Unmarried Fijians are dashed to pieces by Nangananga as in vain attempts to steal round to a certain reef they are driven ashore by the rising tide.<sup>1</sup> The Norwegian Lapps consider

<sup>1</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, i. 244.

that abstinence from stealing, lying, and quarrelling entitles a man to compensation hereafter. Such receive after death a new body, and live with the higher gods in Saiwo, and indulge in hunting and magic, brandy-drinking and smoking, to a far higher degree than was possible on earth. Wicked men, perjurers, and thieves go to the place of the bad spirits, to Gerre-Mubben-Aimo.<sup>1</sup> The idea of compensation of the good leads naturally to the idea of retribution for the bad ; and even among the Guinea Coast negroes we find future inducements to the practice of such moral duties as they recognise. For they are wont to make for themselves idols, called Sumanes whose favour they endeavour to secure by abstinence from certain kinds of foods, believing that after death those who have been constant in their vows of abstinence and in offerings to the Sumanes will come to a large inland river, where a god inquires of everyone how he has lived his days on earth, and those who have not kept their vows are drowned and destroyed for ever. The inland-dwelling negroes declare that at this river dwells a powerful god in a beautiful house, which, though always exposed, is never touched by rain. He knows all past and present things; he can send any kind of weather, he can heal sicknesses and work miracles. Before him must all the dead appear ;

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, iii. 71-77.

the good to receive a happy and peaceful life, the bad to be killed for ever by the large wooden club which hangs before his door. Lastly, it may be noticed that negro tribes believe that death will take them to the land of the European and give them the white man's skin ; but, as they generally paint their devil white, we cannot be sure that such a change is not rather dreaded as a punishment for the bad than regarded as a change for the better.

So far it appears that savages have developed from the promptings and imaginings of their own minds some idea of a Creator and of a soul, as well as of a future to some extent dependent on earthly antecedents. It is of course difficult to judge how far the missionaries or travellers, who have mainly supplied the only evidence we have, may have clearly understood, or how much they may have unintentionally imported into, beliefs they represent as purely indigenous. In many cases a remarkable similarity may lead us to suspect that the belief is not native, but implanted at some time by Christian or other influence, though traces of such influence may be absolutely wanting or at least not proved. There can, for instance, be little doubt whence Sissa, the devil of the Guinea Coast negroes, derived the pair of horns and long tail with which he is usually depicted. But, on the other hand, we cannot lay down any rigid canon for the imaginations of men, nor say that if one belief

is identical with another a thousand miles off it must therefore have been borrowed and cannot be of independent growth. Indeed, when we reflect on the limited nature of the mental faculties of savages, on the limited range of objects for their minds to work upon, on their childlike fear of the dark and the unseen, and their still more childlike delight in the indulgence of their fancy, so far from there being anything strange in the analogies of thought between distant tribes, the strangeness would rather be if such analogies did not exist. It is probable that children tell one another much the same stories in London as they do at the Antipodes, and there is no more reason to be surprised at finding much the same theologies current in Africa as in Australia or Ceylon. The same sun, which shines on men's bodies alike, shines on their minds alike too; and myths, like dreams, with all the apparent field for variety in their formation, are really subject to the closest laws of uniformity and sameness.

We have, however, to be careful, in applying terms of our own religious phraseology to savage thoughts and fancies, to discriminate between the higher and lower meaning they bear, and always to employ them in the lower. The belief, already noticed, of the Kamchadals in Kutka well illustrates how different is the meaning involved in the Kamchadal theory of creation from that involved in Genesis or the Zend-Avesta. The same is true of the belief in a soul and

its future life ; for the savage, intensely vivid as is his future beyond the grave, seldom doubts for an instant but that he will share it with all the rest, not only of the animate, but of the inanimate world. For that reason he buries axes, and clothes, and food with the dead, to be of service in the next world. The Fijians used to show 'the souls of men and women, beasts and plants, of stocks and stones, canoes and houses, and of all the utensils of this frail world, swimming, or rather tumbling one over the other,' as they were borne by a swift stream at the bottom of a deep hole to the regions of immortality.<sup>1</sup> So of the animate world. The Kamchadal believes that the smallest fly that breathes will rise after death to live again in the under-world.<sup>2</sup> If the Laplander expects that all honest people will re-meet in Aimo, he as fully expects that bears and wolves will meet there too. The Greenlander believes that all the heavenly bodies were once Greenlanders, *or animals*, and that they shine with a pale or red light according to the food they ate on earth. He also believes that when all things now living on the earth are dead, and the earth cleansed from their blood by a great water-flood ; when the purified dust is consoli-

<sup>1</sup> Mariner, ii. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, ii. 315. 'Jedes Thier, auch die kleinste Fliege, ersteht sofort nach ihrem Tode und lebt unter der Erde.'

dated again by a great wind, and a fairer earth, all plain and no cliffs, is substituted for the present one; when Priksoma, he who is above, breathes on men that they may live again—then animals will also rise again and be in great abundance. The old inhabitants of Anahuac and Egypt believed equally that animals would share the next world with them; and, if the universality of an opinion were any reason for its credibility, few opinions could claim a better title to acceptance than this one. So confident were the Swedish Lapps of the future life of animals, that whenever they killed one in sacrifice they buried the bones in a box, that the gods might more easily restore it to life.<sup>1</sup> There is really nothing very unnatural in this idea, when we remember that in the lower stages of culture man not only admits the equality of brutes with himself, but even acknowledges their superiority by actual worship of them. It is not difficult to understand how it is that savages who see deities in everything, in the motionless mountain or stone no less than in the rushing river or wind, should see in animals deities of extraordinary power, whose capacities infinitely transcend their own. Recognising as they do in the tiger a strength, in the deer a speed,

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, iii. 83. 'Endlich wurden die besondern Theile nebst den Knochen in der Kiste begraben. Man glaubte, das Opferthier werde von den Göttern wieder belebt und in den Saiwo versetzt.'



in the monkey a cunning, all superior to their own, they naturally conceive of them as deities whom above all others it is expedient to humour by adoration and sacrifice. Some negro tribes, holding that all animals enshrine a spirit, which may injure or benefit themselves, will refrain from eating certain animals, otherwise perfectly edible, and endeavour to propitiate them by lifelong attention. Thus some regularly offer food at the earth-houses of termites, or fatten sheep and goats, for a purely temporary and perfectly spiritual advantage. It is on account of their divine and immortal nature that the well-known custom of apologising to animals killed in the chase is so general among savages. It is generally a deprecation of any post-mortem vindictiveness on the part of the animal's ghost. The natives of Greenland refrain from breaking seals' heads or throwing them into the sea ; but they pile them in a heap before their hut door, that the souls of the seals may not be angry and in their spite frighten living seals away. The Yuracares of Bolivia were careful to put small fish-bones carefully aside, lest fish should disappear ; and other Indian tribes would keep the bones of beavers and sables from their dogs for a year and then bury them, lest the spirits of those animals should take offence and no more of them be killed or trapped.<sup>1</sup> The Lapps are so afraid that the soul of the animal

<sup>1</sup> Dall, *Alaska*, p. 89.



whose flesh they have killed may take its revenge as a disembodied spirit, that before eating it they not only entreat pardon for its death, but perform the ceremony of treating it first with nuts or other delicacies, that it may be led to believe it is present as a guest—not to be eaten, but to eat. Another Kamchadal fancy indicates how savages, whose theory of cause and effect appears to be that it is quite sufficient for two things to be connected contemporaneously for one to be cause and the other effect, are led more especially to see deities in birds, from the observation that changes in weather are associated with their arrival and departure. Since to be associated with a thing is to be caused by it, migratory birds take away or bring the summer with them. For the reason that the spring and the wagtails return together the Kamchadal thanks the wagtail for bringing back the spring, and it is probably from a similar confusion of thought that he thanks the ravens and crows for fine weather.

Whether, in conclusion, it be true or not that the more civilised nations of the earth have gone through stages of growth in which their religious conceptions resembled those of contemporary savage tribes, one result at least is clear, that the actual standpoint of the savage with regard to the great mysteries of existence is removed *toto cælo* from that of Christian, or Mahometan, or Parsee. The Creator he believes

in is not so much the cause of all things as the maker of some things, because seemingly the first father of men needed the wherewithal to exercise his energies. The savage's soul is simply his breath or ghost, which indeed will survive his body, but which may lose its identity in the body of an animal or thing, destined like himself to live again. He conceives of himself generally as not mortal, but not therefore as immortal. His future is but a repetition of his present, with the same base wants and pursuits, only with a greater possibility of indulgence, and not necessarily indefinite in duration. It is, perhaps, some compensation for this, that, if it does not hold out great hopes, its prospect serves to deprive death of its terror, and brightens the sufferings of the passing day. To the native American death is said to be rather an event of gladness than of terror, bringing him rest or enjoyment after his period of toil; nor does he fear to go to a land 'which all his life long he has heard abounds in rewards without punishments.'<sup>1</sup> No thought of possibly flying from present evils to find immeasurably greater ones awaiting him after death would ever occur to a savage, and he will even kill himself or cheerfully submit to be killed by his friends, in order to realise the sooner the difference imagined between earth and heaven. The

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *J. T.*, v. 91, 403; ii. 68.

powers of evil which vex him here will be absent hereafter, and the Spirit he recognises as supreme in his hierarchy of invisible powers is either conceived as too beneficent to punish, or, if he punishes at all, as likely to punish at once and for ever.

## II.

*SAVAGE MODES OF PRAYER.*

IN the same way as a child is insensibly educated by the very efforts of an adult to place himself on its level, so any tribe of savages is to some extent modified by the time that a stranger has fitted himself, by long residence among them and the acquisition of their language, to tell us anything about them. This primary difficulty, amounting theoretically to insuperability, might alone suffice to invalidate most of the received evidence which asserts or denies concerning savages anything whatsoever in broad general terms. But when the evidence concerns religious ideas another difficulty is superadded, and one which appertains to the subject of religion alone—the reserve, that is, (attested by too many travellers to need specific references,) with which savages guard their stock of fundamental beliefs. The delicacy manifested by the most skilled of the Iowa Indian tribe as to communicating fully or freely on religious

subjects, lest they should bring on themselves or their nation some great calamity,<sup>1</sup> indicates the feeling that probably underlies such religious reticence. If a savage dare not pronounce his own name, much less the names of his dead, it is a fair matter of wonder that he should ever have become so free with the names and attributes of his divinities as to have rendered it possible for such systematic representations of his theology as are current to appear before the world.

The evidence afforded by ethnology as to the nature of prayer among savages is slighter than on most subjects relating to them, partly from the natural disregard paid to such matters by most Christian missionaries, partly from the secret and hidden character of prayer, which alone would make its study impossible ; but there is abundant evidence to show that religious supplication of a certain kind enters more deeply than might be supposed into the daily lives of the lower races of mankind. Says Ellis of the Society Islanders : ‘ Religious rites were connected with almost every act of their lives. An *ubu* or prayer was offered before they ate their food, planted their gardens, built their houses, launched their canoes, cast their nets, and commenced or concluded a journey.’<sup>2</sup> In the Fijian Islands business transactions were commonly terminated by a short wish or prayer ;

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, iii. 268.

<sup>2</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 350.

and in the Sandwich Islands the priest would pray before a battle that the gods he addressed would prove themselves stronger than the gods of his foes, promising them hecatombs of victims in the event of victory. But the mere fact of such prayers is of less interest than the actual formulas used; these, however, have more rarely been thought worth recording.

According to a recent African traveller it is a daily prayer in some parts of Guinea: 'O God, I know thee not, but thou knowest me: thy aid is necessary to me.' Or again: 'O God, help us; we do not know whether we shall live to-morrow: we are in thy hand.'<sup>1</sup> A Bushman, being asked how he prayed to Cagn (recognised by his tribe as the first being and creator of all things), answered, in a low, imploring tone: 'O Cagn, O Cagn, are we not your children? do you not see our hunger? Give us food;' 'and,' he added, 'he gives us both hands full.'<sup>2</sup> It further appears that the Bushmen address petitions to the sun, to the moon, and to the stars;<sup>3</sup> and the Kamchadals, who have been made to dispute with them the lowest rank of humanity, had a rude form of prayer to the Storm-god, which was uttered by a small child, sent naked round the ostrog with a shell

<sup>1</sup> Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 536.

<sup>2</sup> *Cape Monthly Magazine*, July 1874.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek, *Bushman Folklore*, pp. 15, 18.



in its uplifted hand: 'Gsanlga, sit down and cease to storm; the mussel is accustomed to salt, not to sweet water; you make me too wet, and from the wet I must freeze. I have no clothes; see how I freeze.'<sup>1</sup> In a certain African tribe it is said to be usual for the men to go every morning to a river, and there, after splashing water in their faces, or throwing sand over their heads, after clasping and loosing their hands and whispering softly the words *Eksuvais*, to pray: 'Give me to-day rice and yams, gold and aggry-beads, slaves, riches, and health; make me active and strong.'

The Zulus of Africa and the Khonds of India supply good illustrations of savage prayer. The head man of a Zulu village, at the sacrifice of a bullock to the spirits of the dead, thus addresses them in prayer: 'I pray for cattle that they may fill this pen. I pray for corn that many people may come to this village of yours and make a noise and glorify you. I also ask for children, that this village may have a large population and that your name may never come to an end.'<sup>3</sup> The Khonds, also, at the sacrifice of a bullock express their wishes with rather more emphasis: 'Let our herds be so numerous that they cannot be housed; let children so abound that care of them shall

<sup>1</sup> Steller, *Kamschatka*, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, ii. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, pt. ii. 182.



overcome their parents, as shall be seen by their burnt hands.' Or, again, they will ask that their swine may so abound that their fields shall require no other ploughs than their 'rooting snouts;' that their poultry may be so numerous as to hide the thatch of their houses; that neither fish, frog, nor worm shall be able to live in their drinking ponds beneath the trampling feet of their multitude of cattle.<sup>1</sup>

These may be taken as fair samples of primitive prayer; but it is only just, as against the inference that a savage's prayers have reference solely to the good and evil things of this world, to notice indications of higher sentiments. The Yebus of Africa, with faces bowed to the earth, are said commonly to pray, not only for preservation from sickness and death, but for the gifts of happiness and *wisdom*.<sup>2</sup> The Tahitian priest, praying to the god by whom it was supposed that a dead man's spirit had been required, that the sins of the latter, especially that one for which he had lost his life, might be buried in a hole then dug in the ground and not attach to the survivors, points to the occasional presence of a moral motive in prayer; though even here the deprecation of further anger on the part of the gods appears the principal object of concern.<sup>3</sup> So little indeed do thoughts of morality or of a future state enter as factors into savage prayer,

<sup>1</sup> Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, ii. 437-444.

<sup>2</sup> Waitz, ii. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis, i. 402.

and so little does any ethical distinction appear in the savage conception of supernatural powers, that not unfrequently supplication is directed to the attainment of ends morally the reverse of desirable. Like the Roman tradesman praying to Mercury to aid him in cheating, the Nootka warrior would entreat his god that he might find his foes asleep, and so kill a great many of them.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the best illustration of the perverted use of prayer is one employed by a clan of the Hervey Islanders when engaged on a thieving and murdering expedition, and uttered as near as possible to the dwelling of the person about to be robbed. It is apparently addressed to Rongo, or Oro, the great Polynesian god of war, and is thus translated in Mr. Gill's 'Myths and Songs of the South Pacific':—<sup>2</sup>

We are on a thieving expedition ;  
 Be close to our left side to give aid.  
 Let all be wrapped in sleep ;  
 Be as a lofty cocoa-nut tree to support us.

The god is then entreated to cause all things to sleep ; the owner of the house is entreated to sleep on, likewise the threshold of the house, the insects, beetles, earwigs, and ants that inhabit it, the central post, the several rafters and beams that support it ; and after the thatch of the house has been asked to sleep on, the prayer thus concludes :—

<sup>1</sup> Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> Page 150.

The first of its inmates unluckily awaking  
Put soundly to sleep again.  
If the Divinity so please, man's spirit must yield.  
O Rongo, grant thou complete success.

If, however, we may hope to find anywhere indications of a higher purpose in prayer than the attainment of merely temporary or personal needs, we must seek it (nor is the search entirely vain) in those rites of religion which, from the highest to the lowest levels of culture, are customary upon the entrance of a fresh life on the stage of this world's trials and sorrows. The popular saying, that the cries of a child at its christening are the cries of the devil going out of it, expresses identically the same belief which still prompts our savage contemporaries to drive evil spirits from a new-born child by rites of mysterious spiritual efficacy ; and it is probably to the indigenous prevalence of baptism among many savage tribes that some Catholic missionaries, complacently identifying conversion with immersion, have owed the success of their efforts. It would at least be interesting to know whether baptism was a native African rite at the time that the Capuchin Merolla baptized with his own hands 13,000 negroes, and Padre Jerom da Montefarchio his 100,000 in the space of twenty years.<sup>1</sup> Mungo Park gives an account of a purely heathen festival held about a week after the birth of a child,

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 304.

at which a priest, taking the latter in his arms, would pray, soliciting repeatedly the blessing of God on the child and all the company. And Bosman tells of a priest binding ropes, corals, and other things round the limbs of a new-born child, and exorcising the spirits of sickness and evil.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot, however, be proved with certainty that such rites are of native growth wherever they have been found, though similar feelings of natural impurity, of natural anxiety, may well have contributed to make them common all the world over. With this reservation, let it suffice to recall some illustrations drawn from the most distant parts of the world. The most touching form of the custom is told of a tribe in the Fiji Islands, where the priest, presented by the relations with food with which to notify the event to the gods before the birth-festival, would thus petition the latter: 'This is the food of the little child: take knowledge of it, ye gods. Be kind to him. Do not pelt him or spit upon him, or seize him, but let him live to plant sugar-canes.'<sup>2</sup> In New Zealand, the tohunga, or priest, dipping a green branch into a calabash of water, sprinkled the child therewith and made incantations according to its sex;<sup>3</sup> whilst in the Hervey Islands, where the child was immersed in a taro leaf filled with water, the ceremony was in-

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 388, 874.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Dieffenbach, p. 28.

timately connected with their system of tribes and dedication for future sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> Crossing over to America, we find among the Indian tribes of Guiana the native priest dancing about an infant and dashing water over it, finishing the ceremony by passing his hands over its limbs, muttering all the while incantations and charms.<sup>2</sup> In some North American tribes, water having been boiled with a certain sweet-scented root, and some of it having been first thrown into the fire and the rest distributed to the company by the oldest woman present, the latter would then offer a short prayer to the Master of Life, on behalf of the child, that its life might be spared and that it might grow; and if, at the festival held to commemorate the child's first slain animal, one of the chief persons present would entreat the Great Spirit to be kind to the lad and let him grow to be a great hunter, in war to take many scalps and not to behave like an old woman, it cannot be said that such a prayer was purely selfish in its aim or confined solely to present necessities.<sup>3</sup>

Although, however, it is impossible to dissociate baptismal rites so rude as these from a belief in magic, the idea of water as conferring moral as well as physical purity appears to have been attained by some of the more advanced heathen tribes. The rite of bap-

<sup>1</sup> Gill, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Brett, *Indian Tribes of Guiana*, p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> Harmon, *Journal of Voyages, &c.*, p. 345.

tism, says Dr. Brinton, was of immemorial antiquity among the Cherokees, Aztecs, Mayas, and Peruvians: the use of water as symbolical of spiritual cleansing clearly appearing, for instance, in the prayer of the Peruvian Indian, who after confessing his guilt would bathe in the river and say: 'O river, receive the sins I have this day confessed unto the sun, carry them down to the sea, and let them never more appear.'<sup>1</sup> It has often been told, on the original authority of Sahagun, how the Mexican nurse, after bathing the new-born child, would bid it approach its mother, the goddess of water; praying at the same time to her that she would receive it and wash it, would take away its inherited impurity, make it good and clean, and instil into it good habits and manners.<sup>2</sup>

The mere enunciation of a wish often amounts among savages to a complete prayer, it being conceived that the expression of desire is of more moment than the manner of such expression; such a conception still surviving among ourselves at certain wishing towers, wishing gates, or on the occurrence of certain natural phenomena. In Fiji it was common to shout aloud, after drinking a toast, the name of some object of desire, and this was equivalent to a

<sup>1</sup> Brinton, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, iii. 370-3. For baptismal rites in Northern Europe before Christianity, see Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, p. 205.



prayer for whatever it might be—for food, wealth, a fair wind, or even for the gratification of cannibal gluttony. Franklin tells how some Indians, disappointed in the chase, set themselves to beat a large tambourine and sing an address to the Great Spirit, praying for relief, their prayer consisting solely of three words constantly repeated ;<sup>1</sup> the tambourine probably being employed for the same purpose that the Sioux Indians kept a whistle in the mouth of one of their gods, namely, to make their invocation audible. The Ahts, praying to the moon, sometimes say no more than *teech, teeoh*, that is, Health or Life ; and it is curious that the rude savages of Brazil exclaim *teh, teh*, to the same luminary.<sup>2</sup> The Sioux would often say, ‘Spirits of the dead, have mercy !’ adding thereto a notification of their wishes, whether for good health, good luck in hunting, or anything else.<sup>3</sup> The Zulus, however, sometimes carry this principle of brevity furthest, for sometimes in their prayers to the spirits of their dead they simply say, ‘Ye people of our house,’ ‘the suppliant taking it for granted that the Amatongo will know what he wants ;’ though generally their addresses to their ancestors are of a much more orthodox length than this.<sup>4</sup> When we consider how large a place the spirits of the dead fill in

<sup>1</sup> Franklin, *Journey to the Polar Sea*, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, iii. 237.

<sup>4</sup> Callaway, i. 33.



the savage's spirit-world it appears possible that many of the prayers and sacrifices, said to be offered to the Great Spirit or unknown divinities, are really addressed to the all-controlling, ever-present spirits of the departed.

If we may believe the testimony of a great many travellers in all parts of the world, the case of the Yezidis, who to the recognition of a supreme being are said to join actual worship of the chief power of evil, represents no exceptional phase of human thought. Yet even the Yezidis, according to Dr. Latham, are said to be improperly called Devil-worshippers, since they only try to conciliate Satan, speak of him with respect or not at all, avoid his name in all their oaths, and are pained if they hear people make a light use of it.<sup>1</sup> In Equatorial Africa it is said that whilst Mburri, the spirit of evil, is worshipped piously as a tyrant to be appeased, it is not considered necessary to pray to Njambi, the good spirit.<sup>2</sup> Harmon says distinctly of all the different Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains that they pray and make frequent and costly sacrifices to the bad spirit for delivery from evils they feel or fear, but that they seldom pray to the supreme good spirit, to whom they ascribe every perfection, and whom they consider too benevolent ever to inflict evil on

<sup>1</sup> Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, ii. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 250.

his creatures.<sup>1</sup> There is, indeed, little doubt that, if a certain amount of evidence suffices the requirements of proof, we must yield consent to the fact, in itself neither incredible nor unintelligible, that many savage tribes, recognising and believing in a good and powerful spirit, make that very goodness a reason for their neglect of him, and address their petitions instead to the mercy of that other spirit to whose power for evil they conceive the world to lie subject.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, much to be said in favour of the view, that the mind in its primitive state is unconscious of this moral dualism in the spirit-world, attributing rather (in perfect accordance with the analogy of human relationships) good and bad things alike to the agency of the same beings, according as transitory impulses affect them.

Thus, according to Castren, an antagonism between absolute good and absolute evil finds no place among the Samoyeds. They have no extreme divinities corresponding in their attributes to Ahriman and Ormuzd. 'The human temper is the divine temper also, good and bad mixed.'<sup>3</sup> Mburri, who, according to one writer, is the evil spirit in Equatorial Africa, is, according to another, the good spirit, or at

<sup>1</sup> Harmon, *Journal of Voyages*, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Kames, *History of Man*, vol. iv., asserts this of many tribes, the Tahitians, Hottentots, and others. See also pp. 234, 238, 297.

<sup>3</sup> Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, i. 480.

least the less wicked of the two, both the good and bad receiving worship, and being endowed with much the same powers.<sup>1</sup> The Beetjuans, venerating Morimo as the source of all good and evil that happened to them, were not agreed as to whether he was entirely a beneficent or a malevolent being; and, if they thanked him for benefits, they never hesitated to curse him for ills or for wishes unfulfilled.<sup>2</sup> 'To the very same image,' says Bosman of the negroes, 'they at one time make offerings to God and at another to the devil, so that one image serves them in the capacity of god and devil.' It was untrue, he declares, that the negroes prayed and made offerings to the devil, though some of them would try to appease a devil by leaving thousands of pots of victuals standing ever ready for his gratification; on the contrary, the devil was annually banished from their towns with great ceremony, being hunted away with dismal cries, and his spirit pelted with wood and stones.<sup>3</sup>

The evidence, again, in this respect concerning the aborigines of America is important. The Winnebagoes are said to have had a tradition that soon after the creation a bad spirit appeared on the scene, whose attempts to vie with the products of the Good Spirit

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 250, and Du Chaillu's *Explorations*, pp. 202-3.

<sup>2</sup> Lichtenstein, ii. 332; Callaway, i. III

<sup>3</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 402, 530.

resulted in making a negro in failure of an Indian, a grizzly bear in failure of a black one, and snakes which were endowed with venom; he also it was who made all the worthless trees, thistles, and weeds, who tempted Indians to lie, murder, and steal, and who receives bad Indians when they die. The suspicion, however, of Christian influence among this tribe makes the tradition of little value to the argument. Turning to other evidence, amid Schoolcraft's reiterated statements of the original dualism of Indian theology, whereby the Indian was careful 'to guard his good and merciful God from all evil acts and intentions, by attributing the whole catalogue of evil deeds among the sons of men to the Great Bad Spirit of his theology,' we yet find this admission, that 'it is impossible to witness closely the rites and ceremonies which the tribes practise in their sacred and ceremonial societies without perceiving that *there is no very accurate or uniform discrimination between the powers of the two antagonistical deities.*'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Pond, who resided with the Sioux Indians for eighteen years and had every opportunity to become acquainted with such matters, declares that it was 'next to impossible to penetrate' into the subject of their divinities; but he

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, iv. 635-7. The admission quoted seems to cancel the statements repeated clearly and positively in i. 16, 17, 32, 35, 38, and iii. 60, of a dualism as decided as that between Ahriman and Ormuzd. In i. 32 it is said that the *first* notice of such a doctrine occurs in Charlevoix, *Voyage to North America in 1721*.

was never able to discover 'the least degree of evidence that they divide the gods into classes of good and evil,' nor did he believe that they ever distinguished the Great Spirit from other divinities 'till they learnt to do so from intercourse with the whites;' for they had no chants, feasts, dances, nor sacrificial rites which had any reference to such a being, or which, if they had, were not of recent origin.<sup>1</sup> Of the same people says Mr. Prescott, a man related to and resident among them many years: 'As to their belief in evil spirits, they do not understand the difference between a great good spirit and a great evil spirit, as we do. *The idea the Indians have is that a spirit can be good if necessary, and do evil if it thinks fit.*' They 'know very little about whether the Great Spirit has anything to do with their affairs, present or future.' Their idea of the Great Spirit is of the vaguest possible kind, since they lack entirely any conception of his power, or of the mode of, or of a reason for, man's creation. The Great Spirit they believe made everything but the wild rice and the thunder; and they have been known to accuse their deity of badness in sending storms to cause them misery.<sup>2</sup> In the same way the Comanches of Texas neither worship the evil spirit nor are aware of his existence, '*attributing everything to arise from the*

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, iv. 642-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 195, 197; iii. 231.

*Great Spirit, whether of good or evil.*<sup>1</sup> Had the ancient Jews been described by Greek travellers instead of by themselves, we may fairly suspect that they would have been introduced to posterity as a people, consciously theistic indeed, but at the same time as addicted, in most of their rites, to demonolatry and the propitiation of imaginary evil beings. The true view would seem to be that the theology of the lower races does not admit of that preciseness of terminology, of that clear distinction of qualities, of that systematic marshalling of powers, which has been so often predicated of it, but that in its growth it undergoes a period of flux and change similar to that which may be seen to occur in the evolution of the lowest forms of physical life into more determinate types of being.

The Sioux Indians, abusing their Great Spirit for sending them storms, or the Kamschadals cursing Kutka for having created their mountains so high and their streams so rapid, expose a state of thought relating to the gods which is most difficult to reconcile with the savage's habitual dread of them, still more with a high conception of them, but which is too well authenticated to admit of doubt. Franklin saw a Cree hunter tie offerings (a cotton handkerchief, looking-glass, tin pin, some ribbon and tobacco) to

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, ii. 131.



the value of twenty skins round an image of the god Kepoochikan, at the same time praying to him in a rapid monotonous tone to be propitious, explaining to him the value of his presents, and strongly cautioning him against ingratitude.<sup>1</sup> If all the prayers and presents made to their god by the Tahitians to save their chiefs from dying proved in vain, his image was inexorably banished from the temple and destroyed.<sup>2</sup> The Ostiaks of Siberia, if things went badly with them, would pull down from their place of honour in the hut and in every way maltreat the idols they generally honoured so exceedingly; the idols whose mouths were always so diligently smeared with fish-fat, and within whose reach a supply of snuff ever lay ready.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese are said to do the same by their household gods, if for a long time they are deaf to their prayers, and so do the Cinghalese;<sup>4</sup> so that the practice is more than an impulsive manifestation of merely local feeling. That such feelings occasionally crop out in civilised Catholic countries is matter of more surprise; but it is an authentic historical fact that the good people of Castelbranco, in Portugal, were once so angry with St. Anthony for letting the Spaniards plunder their town, contrary to his agreement, that they broke many of his statues in pieces, and, taking the head off one they specially revered,

<sup>1</sup> Franklin, i. 114-15.

<sup>2</sup> Ellis, i. 350.

<sup>3</sup> Klemm, iii. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Kames, *History of Man*, iv. 327.



substituted for it the head of St. Francis.<sup>1</sup> Neapolitan fishermen are said to this day to throw their saints overboard if they do not help them in a storm; and the images of the Virgin or of St. Januarius, worn in Neapolitan caps, are in danger of being trodden under foot and destroyed, if adverse contingencies arise. The latter saint, indeed, once received during a famine very clear intimation, that, unless corn came by a certain time, he would forfeit his saintship.<sup>2</sup>

It is perhaps a refinement of thought when a present becomes an advisable accompaniment to a simple petition; but the principle of exchange once entered into, the relations between man and the supernatural lead logically from the offering of fruits and flowers to the sacrifice of animals and of men. Some Algonkin Indians, mistaking once a missionary for a god, and petitioning his mercy, begged him to let the earth yield them corn, the rivers fish, and to prevent sickness from slaying or hunger from tormenting them. Their request they backed with the offer of a pipe;<sup>3</sup> and in this ridiculous incident the whole of the savage's philosophy of sacrifice is contained. Prescott, coming with some Indians to a lake they were to cross, saw his companions light their pipes and smoke by way of invoking the winds to be calm.<sup>4</sup> And the Hurons offered a similar prayer with tobacco to a local god,

<sup>1</sup> Kames, *History of Man*, iv. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Klemm, vi. 423.

<sup>3</sup> Brinton, p. 298.

<sup>4</sup> Schoolcraft, iii. 226.

saying : ' Oki, thou who livest on this spot, we offer thee tobacco. Help us, save us from shipwreck. Defend us from our enemies. Give us good trade, and bring us safe back to our villages.'<sup>1</sup> In the island of Tanna, the village priest, addressing the spirits of departed chiefs (thought to preside over the growth of yams and fruits), after the first-fruits of vegetation had been deposited on a stone, on the branch of a tree, or on a rude altar of sticks, would pray : ' Compassionate father, here is some food ; eat it, be kind to us on account of it ;' and in Samoa, too, a libation of ava at the evening meal was the offering, in return for which the father of a family would beg of the gods health and prosperity, productiveness for his plantations, and for his tribe generally a strong and large population for war.<sup>2</sup> In Fiji, again, when the chief priests and leading men assembled to discuss public affairs in the yaquona or kava circle, the chief herald, as the water was poured into the kava, after naming the gods for whom the libation was prepared, would say : ' Be gracious, ye lords, the gods, that the rain may cease, and the sun shine forth ;' and again when the potion was ready : ' Let the gods be of a gracious mind, and send a wind from the east.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brinton, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, pp. 88, 200, 239.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, p. 144.

It is a somewhat obvious inference, if presents like these fail to obtain corresponding results, that the spirit addressed is not satisfied, and that he requires a greater value in exchange for the blessings at his disposal. The crowning petition, therefore, of disappointed and despairing humanity is, by an irrefragable chain of reasoning, the sacrifice of a human life, or, if this fails, of many lives. Long and frequent were the prayers of the Tahitians to the gods when their chiefs were ill, for, under the idea that 'the gods were always influenced by the same motives as themselves, they imagined that the efficacy of their prayers would be in exact proportion to the value of the offerings with which they were accompanied.' Hence, if the disease grew violent, the fruits of whole plantain fields or more than a hundred pigs would be hurried to the marae; nay, not unfrequently a number of men with ropes round their necks would be led to the altar and presented to the idol, with prayers that the mere sight of them might satisfy his wrath.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear that on such occasions they were actually slain, but we seem here rather to see the first step towards human sacrifice than merely a survival of it, for the obtaining of this particular wish. The process is naturally from the sacrifice of the least possible to the sacrifice of the greatest possible,

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, i. 349.

though after that point has been reached there may well be a tendency, varying with the character of a tribe, to fall back upon make-believe, curtailed losses: The Mandan Indians, Catlin repeats, always sacrificed the best of its kind to the Great Spirit, the favourite horse, the best arrow, or the best piece of buffalo; <sup>1</sup> so that the sacrifice of their fingers was more probably a form of incipient human sacrifice than, as it sometimes is, a relic of a more complete self-surrender. Both the Aztecs and the Mayas, with all the cruel forms of sacrifice that disgraced their civilization, retained traditions of a time when the gods were contented with the milder offerings of fruits and flowers; and in Yucatan, where hundreds of young girls were sacrificed in the dark but sacred pit of Chichen, there were recollections of a time when one victim sufficed the demands of the spirit-world. And in this instance may be seen how human sacrifice, besides being the highest gift man could offer to his god or gods, was in yet another sense a mode of prayer; for whilst the victims stood round the pit, whilst the incense burnt on the altar and in the braziers, the officiating priest explained to the messengers from earth 'the things for which they were to implore the gods into whose presence they were about to be introduced.'<sup>2</sup> So also the priests of Mexico would exhort the deputation of eigh-

<sup>1</sup> Catlin, i. 133; ii. 247. Cf. Schoolcraft, iii. 243.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, &c., ii. 705.

teen souls they sent to the sun to remember the mission for which they were sent, the people's wants they were to make known, the favours they were to ask for their countrymen.<sup>1</sup>

Less obviously connected with prayer than sacrifice is dancing, a custom which the civilized world has long since ceased to regard as in any sense connected with religion, but which among savages, besides being a natural expression of joy in life, of thankfulness for sun or shower, is not unfrequently a mode of prayer, a means employed for the attainment of desire. This at least seems the case with those imitative dances or pantomimes in which with marvellous exactitude the savage all the world over acts the part of the animals he pursues in the chase. The national dance of the Kamschadals consists in the imitation of the manners and motions of seals and bears, varying from the gentlest movement of their bodies to the most violent agitation of their thighs and knees, accompanied with singing and stamping in time;<sup>2</sup> and it is remarkable that in Vancouver's Island also there is a seal dance, for which the natives, stripping themselves naked, enter the water, regardless of the cold of the night, and emerge 'dragging their bodies along the sand like seals,' then

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races, &c.*, iii. 428; Burton, *Mission to Gelele*, ii. 18-25.

<sup>2</sup> Klemm, ii. 216, from Langsdorf, ii. 261.

enter the houses and crawl about the fires, and finally jump up and dance about.<sup>1</sup>

But although it is intelligible that such facility and perfection of beast-acting as, for instance, enabled the Dog-rib Indians to approach and kill the reindeer, acquired originally by the necessities of the chase, should be perpetuated as a religious ceremony to keep up a habit of actual importance to existence, there are cases to which this explanation would hardly apply, as, for example, to the African gorilla dance, which has been so vividly described by a recent eye-witness, and which, he says, 'was a religious festival held on the eve of an enterprise,' the eve, namely, of a gorilla hunt. An African dancing to a drum and harp imitated closely all the attitudes and movements of the gorilla, being joined in the chorus by all the rest present. 'Now he would be seated on the ground, his legs apart, his hands resting on his knees, his head drooping, and in his face the vacant expression of the brute. Sometimes he folded his arms on his forehead. Suddenly he would raise his head with prone ears and flaming eyes,' till in the last act he represented the gorilla attacked and killed.<sup>2</sup> But, unless gorillas are ever killed by so clever an imita-

<sup>1</sup> Sproat, p. 66. The Juangs of Bengal practise a bear dance, a pigeon dance, a pig dance, a tortoise dance, a quail dance, a vulture dance. Dalton, *Desc. Eth. of Bengal*, p. 156; and see *New Encyc. Brit.* for similar cases: article, 'Dance.'

<sup>2</sup> Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 200.



tion of themselves that they really mistake their African neighbours for their own brothers, the gorilla dance must, by a phenomenon of thought not without analogy, be a mode of prayer for obtaining a desired result ; the same fetishistic law of thought prevailing that is traceable in the idea that by pouring water on a stone you can bring rain on the earth, or that you can injure your enemy by an injury to his effigy.

It may be, however, that pantomimic dances were employed originally as a clearer expression than mere words of the suppliant's wishes, the acting of a hunt or battle being equivalent to a petition for favour and success in the same, and the unseen deities addressed being not unnaturally conceived as more likely to see the bodily movements than to hear the feeble voice of the petitioner. The analogy of the various tongues, prevalent among birds, beasts, and men, might well suggest to a savage the possibility of the spiritual world being unavoidably deaf to his utterances from mere inability to comprehend them ; whilst dealings with the nearest tribe might make it natural for him to resort to the use of signs and symbols as the least mistakable vehicle for his meaning. The Ahts, retiring to the solitude of the woods, and there standing naked with outstretched arms before the moon, employ set words and gestures according to the nature of the object they desire. Thus in praying for salmon the suppliant rubs the back of his



hands, and, looking upwards, says, 'Many salmon, many salmon;' in asking for deer he carefully rubs both his eyes, for geese the back of his shoulders, for bears his sides and legs, uttering in a sing-song way the usual formula. The meaning of all these rubbings is obscure; but it has been suggested that the rubbing of the hands indicates a wish that the hand may have the requisite steadiness for throwing the salmon spear; the rubbing of the eyes, a prayer, that they may be opened to discern deer in the forest.<sup>1</sup> Among a Californian tribe it was usual, preparatory to the chase, to resort to a certain stake-inclosure and there to pray to the god's image for success, by mimicry of the actions of the hunt, as by leaping and twanging of the bow.<sup>2</sup> In the Society Islands, if the land had been in any way defiled by an enemy, a mode of religious purification consisted in offering pieces of coral, collected expressly, on the altar to the gods, to induce them 'to cleanse the land from pollution, that it might be pure as the coral fresh from the sea.'<sup>3</sup>

The Voguls, whose most frequent prayers are for success in hunting, are said to promote their fulfilment by '*images in the shape of the beast more especially sought for, rudely shaped out of wood or stone.*'<sup>4</sup> But to dance like the animal would naturally serve the

<sup>1</sup> Sproat, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, iii. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis, i. 348.

<sup>4</sup> Latham, *Desc. Eth.*, i. 459.

purpose as well ; and so the interpretation of some dances as symbolised prayers explains several American customs which are strikingly analogous to the African gorilla dance already described. Every Mandan Indian was compelled by social law to keep his buffalo's mask, consisting of the skin and horns of a buffalo's head, in his lodge, ready to put on and wear in the buffalo dance, whenever the protracted absence of that animal from the prairie rendered it expedient to resort to this means for the purpose of inducing the herds to change the direction of their wanderings and bend their course towards the Mandan villages. And a principal part in the annual celebration of the subsidence of the great waters consisted in the buffalo dance, wherein eight men dressed in entire buffalo skins, so as to imitate closely the appearance and motions of buffaloes, were the chief actors, and four old men chanted prayers to the Great Spirit for the continuation of his favours in sending them good supplies of buffaloes for the coming year.<sup>1</sup> In this instance the close relation between dance and prayer, the dance being either supplementary or explicative, clearly appears ; as it also does in a very similar buffalo dance performed by a neighbouring tribe of the Mandans, the Minnatarees. In their ceremony six elderly men acted the animals, imitating with great

<sup>1</sup> Catlin, i. 127, 164, 182.

perfection even the peculiar sound of their voice.<sup>1</sup> Behind them came a man, who represented the driving of the beasts forward, and who, at a certain point, placing his hands before his face, sang, and made a long speech in the nature of a prayer, containing good wishes for the buffalo hunt and for war, as also an appeal to the heavenly powers to be propitious to the huntsmen and their arms. So again the Sioux Indians for several days before starting on a bear hunt would hold a bear dance, which was regarded as 'a most important and indispensable form,' and in which the whole tribe joined in a song to the Bear Spirit, to conciliate as well as to consult him. 'All with the motions of their hands closely imitated the movements of that animal; some representing its motion in running, and others the peculiar attitude and hanging of the paws when it is sitting up on its hind feet and looking out for the approach of an enemy.'<sup>2</sup> And the same tribe, whenever they had bad luck in hunting, would institute a dance to invoke the aid of one of their gods.<sup>3</sup>

To the African gorilla dance, the Mandan buffalo dance, the Sioux bear dance, may be added the custom of the Koossa Kafirs, who, before they start on a hunt, perform a wonderful game, which is

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, ii. 120. 'Ahnten die knarrende röchelnde Stimme des Bisonthiers in grosser Vollkommenheit nach.'

<sup>2</sup> Catlin, i. 244-5.

<sup>3</sup> Schoolcraft, iii. 487.

considered absolutely necessary to the success of the undertaking.<sup>1</sup> One of them, representing some kind of game, takes a handful of grass in his mouth and runs about on all fours; whilst the rest make-believe to transfix him with their spears, till at last he throws himself on the ground as if he were killed.<sup>2</sup> On the occasion of a Sioux Indian dreaming of the fish-eating cormorant, a fish dance was instituted, to ward off any danger portended, in which the most elaborate imitation of the cormorant was observed. The medicine-men, dancing up to a fish, affixed to a pole, began quacking, flapping their arms like wings, biting at the fish, and pretending to hide a piece in their nests away from the wolves.<sup>3</sup> The Ahts, again, Sproat observed, spent the eve of a deer hunt 'in dancing and singing and in various ceremonies intended to secure good luck on the morrow.'<sup>4</sup> And in South Australia it is remarkable that, when boys of a certain age undergo the ceremony of losing their front teeth, power is conferred on them of killing the kangaroo by a kind of kangaroo dance. First of all, a kangaroo of grass is deposited at their feet; and then the actors, the adults of the tribe, having fitted themselves with long tails of grass, set off 'as a herd of kangaroos, now jumping along, then

<sup>1</sup> 'Ein wunderbares Spiel, das zum glücklichen Erfolg des Unternehmens *durchaus nothwendig* gehalten wird.'

<sup>2</sup> Lichtenstein, i. 444.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Eastman, *Dahcotah*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Sproat, p. 146.

lying down and scratching themselves, as those animals do when basking in the sun,' two armed men following them meanwhile, as it were to steal on them unmolested and spear them.<sup>1</sup>

The same thought occurs in prayers for rain. Modern Servian peasants, pouring water over a girl covered with grass and flowers, employ a mode of petition for rain very similar to that in vogue near Lake Nyanza. There, after a wild dance, a jar of water is placed before the village chief: the woman who acts as priestess of the ceremonies washes her hands, arms, and face with the water; then a large quantity of it is poured over her, and finally all the women present rush to dip their calabashes in the jar and to toss the water in the air with loud cries and wild gesticulations.<sup>2</sup>

Again, the common savage war dance may be taken to have a religious significance in addition to its secular motive of sustaining martial feelings and habits. In the war dance of the Navajoes of New Mexico the most important part of the war dance was the arrow dance, when a young virgin, beautifully dressed, represented in gesture 'the war path.' An eye-witness has described it as a really beautiful performance. Slowly and steadily she would pursue her imaginary foe; suddenly her step would quicken as she came in sight of the enemy; she would dance

<sup>1</sup> Collins, *New South Wales*, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Callaway, i. 125.

faster and faster, and, seizing an arrow, demonstrate by the rapidity of her movements that the fight had begun ; she would point with the arrow, show how it wings its course, how the scalp is taken, how the victory is won.<sup>1</sup> Among the Winnebagoe Indians also it was part of the war dance for a warrior to go through the pantomime of the discovery of the enemy, of the ambuscade, the attack, the slaughter, and the scalping.<sup>2</sup> And in this reference may be noted the curious proceeding of the women of Accra, on the Guinea Coast, who, whilst the male population were engaged in war with a neighbouring people, endeavoured every day to bring it to a happy issue by dancing fetish ; that is, by fighting sham battles with wooden swords, flying to the boats on the beach and pretending to row, throwing some one into the sea, taking a trowel and making believe to build a wall—all actions literally symbolical of corresponding ones to be performed by the men in the course of defeating their enemy.<sup>3</sup> In Madagascar, too, when the men are absent in war, the custom of the women to dance, in order to inspire their husbands with courage, has been thought not to be destitute of a religious meaning.

That a dance may be in reality a form of prayer,

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, iv. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 285.

<sup>3</sup> Isert, *Guinea*, in French translation, p. 204 : ‘ L’action de ramer voulait dire que leurs maris allaient passer la rivière Volta pour se battre avec les Augéens et les noyer ; la truelle et le travail de maçon indiquait l’érection de fort Königstein.’



a petition acted instead of spoken, as more likely so to be understood, makes it possible that prayers may be hidden under customs which are generally only cited to illustrate the absurdity of primitive metaphysics. May it not be that the Indian, when he thinks to ensure a successful chase by drawing a figure of his game with a line leading to its heart from its mouth, and by so subjecting its movements to himself, or when he thinks to cure a man of sickness by shooting the bark-effigy of the animal supposed to possess him—may it not be that he thereby hopes to influence known or unknown natural forces in his favour by a clear representation of his wants? The control of natural phenomena by witchcraft may thus have been in its origin a direction to natural phenomena, or rather to the spirits ruling them; an address perhaps to those spirits of the dead which to a savage are his earliest and for long his only gods; and thus the absurdities of fetishism might become intelligible as lifeless prayers, with more or less of their primal meaning, descended from such a philosophy of nature. The Kamschadal child sent out naked to make the rain stop, clear as the meaning of the custom is with the prayer joined to it, would without it appear in the light of ordinary fetishism. So the Khond, carrying a branch cut from hostile soil to his god of war, and there, after he has dressed it like one of the enemy, throwing it down, with certain incantations, on the

shrine of the divinity, urges his petition in a way which even the god of war can scarcely fail to understand. And the Basuto woman, who in her wish for children, prays to her tutelary divinity for the accomplishment of her desires by making dolls of clay and treating them as infants, affords yet another illustration of the operation of the same law of thought.<sup>1</sup>

It remains to show how, in primitive theology, prayer attaches itself as well to the material as the spiritual world, for it is here especially that it finds its counterpart in the folk-lore of our own day. As, however, there is scarcely an object in nature which in a state of ignorance may not with reason be worshipped, a few illustrations must be taken for thousands on a subject it were less easy to exhaust than the patience of the reader.

‘As for animals having reasoning powers,’ says an exceptionally credible witness, ‘I have heard Indians talk and reason with a horse the same as with a person.’<sup>2</sup> Our fairy tales of talking animals would be commonplace facts to a savage. Hence it can be no matter of surprise to find that it is a common Indian custom to converse with rattlesnakes, and to endeavour to propitiate them with presents of tobacco. On one occasion, the Iowas having begun to build a village, the presence of a rattlesnake on a neighbour-

<sup>1</sup> Casalis, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft (Prescott), iii. 230.

ing hill was suddenly announced, when forthwith started the great snake doctor with tobacco and other presents: when he had offered these, and had had a long talk with the snake, he returned to his village, with the satisfactory news that his tribesmen might now travel in safety, as peace had been made between them and the snakes.<sup>1</sup>

But perhaps of all natural objects that have attracted human worship, and been regarded as a supreme source of human woe or welfare, none can compare with the moon. For the moon's changes of aspect being far more remarkable than any of the sun's, and more calculated to inspire dread by the nocturnal darkness they contend with, are held in popular fancy nearly everywhere to cause, portend, or accord with changes in the lot of mortals and all things terrestrial. In the Hervey Islands cocoa-nuts are invariably planted at the full of the moon, the size of the latter being held symbolical of the future fulness of the fruit; <sup>2</sup> and in South Africa it is unlucky to begin a journey or any work of importance in the last quarter of the moon.<sup>3</sup> The moon's wane makes things on earth wane too; when it is new or full, it is everywhere the proper season for new crops to be sown, new households to be formed, new weather to begin.

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, iii. 273, 231.

<sup>2</sup> Gill, 312.

<sup>3</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 875.

The feeling of the Congo Africans, who at the sight of the new moon fall on their knees or stand and clap their hands, praying that their lives may be renewed like that of the moon, corresponds exactly with the idea of English folk-lore that crops are more likely to be plentiful if sown when the moon is young, or with the idea of German folk-lore that the new moon is the season for counting money which it is desired may increase. 'On the first appearance of the new moon, which,' says Mungo Park, 'the Kafirs look upon as newly created, the pagan natives, as well as Mahomedans, say a short prayer,' seemingly the only adoration they offer to the Supreme Being ;<sup>1</sup> so that the sentiment of the Congo prayer may be guessed to underlie, consciously or not, the salutations by which the new moon is greeted generally throughout Africa, from the salutations of the Hottentots to the prayers of the Makololos, for the success of their journeys or the destruction of their enemies.<sup>2</sup>

More difficult to understand than the worship of either animals or the heavenly bodies is that of such inanimate things as stones, trees, or rivers. Yet the state of thought is not so far remote from our own but that we can still listen with pleasure, in stories like 'Undine,' to the voices of the forest or the river. To a savage, however, it is not only the motion or the sound of natural objects which suggests their divinity,

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 875.    <sup>2</sup> Livingstone, *South Africa*, p. 235.

but the danger that is ever latent in them ; and it is rather to prevent the river from drowning him or the tree from falling on him than from any perception of their beauty that he makes offerings to them and pays them homage. Such feelings as that of the 'Cree Indians, who believed that a deer, found dead within a few yards of a willow bush which they worshipped and of which it had eaten, had fallen a victim to the sin of its sacrilege, are not confined to savage lands nor times.<sup>1</sup> As savages have been known to apologize to a slain elephant or bear, assuring it that its death was accidental, so it is said that in parts of Germany a woodcutter will still (or would recently) beg the pardon of a fine healthy tree before cutting it down.<sup>2</sup> In our own midland counties there is a feeling to this day against binding up elder-wood with other faggots ; and in Suffolk it is believed misfortune will ensue if ever it is burnt. In Germany formerly an elder-tree might not be cut down entirely ; and Grimm was himself an eye-witness of a peasant praying with bare head and folded hands before venturing to cut its branches. That trees are still popularly endowed with a conscious personality is further proved by the custom, not yet extinct, of trying to secure the future favours of fruit trees by presents and prayers. The placing of money in a hole dug at the foot of them, the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Franklin, *First Journey*, i. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Wuttke, *Deutsche Volksaberglaube*, p. 14.

senting them with money on New Year's Day, the shaking under them of the remainder of the Christmas dinner, the beating of them with rods on Holy Innocents' Day—all German methods to incite fruit trees to further fertility—answer closely to the English custom of apple-howling or wassailing, when at Christmas or Epiphany the inhabitants of a parish, walking in procession to the principal orchards, and there singling out the principal tree, sprinkle it with cider, or place cider-soaked cakes of toast and sugar in its branches, saluting it at the same time with set words in the form of a prayer to the trees to be fruitful for the ensuing year, as the doggerel verses following show plainly enough:—

Here's to thee, old apple tree,  
Whence thou mayst bud and whence thou mayst blow,  
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow,  
Hats full, caps full,  
Bushel, bushel, sacks full,  
And my pocket full too.<sup>1</sup>

And similar prayers, as lifeless now as the fossil shells on the shore of some ancient coral sea, lie scattered abundantly in many an English rhyme and ballad, serving to show how the philosophy of one age passes into the nonsense of a later one, and how ideas which constituted a religion for one time may only survive as an amusement for another.

<sup>1</sup> Polwhele, *History of Cornwall*, p. 48.



## III.

*SOME SAVAGE PROVERBS.*

THE German proverb, 'Speak, that I may see thee,' may be applied as truly to a whole community as to an individual. For proverbs—or, roughly defining, popular sayings—reflect conspicuously the general character of a nation, constituting its actual code of social, political, and moral philosophy. Besides the beauty and wisdom, from which alone many of them derive an imperishable charm, they serve as a kind of literature in miniature, in which the inner life of a nation is more clearly legible than in its more voluminous writings. And in spite of the general resemblance which seems to pervade the proverbial lore of the world, arising partly from the direct interchange of thought inseparable from international commerce of any kind, partly from a uniformity of experience—such, for example, as has impressed on all people the wisdom of caution and truth—there are yet well-marked differences in the proverbs of nations,

which as clearly retain the records of their several histories as do their different laws and customs. Remarkable, therefore, as is the substantial similarity of proverbial codes, of which the general characteristic is a high sense of right coupled with a mournful consciousness of human infirmity, they betray often in the very expression of the same idea the individuality of their national birthplace. It is obvious, for instance, that, largely as all modern nations are indebted to a writer like Æsop for the thoughts they share in common, each nation severally will owe more of its wisdom to writers of its own, who, like Shakespeare or Cervantes, have, from greater familiarity with the manners, been more competent to express the feelings, of their different countries. But the way in which good proverbs, like good gold, find acceptance everywhere, and pass readily into the current coinage of different realms, may be illustrated by the fact of the existence, in countries so widely remote as Spain, Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, and India, of a saying, second to none in all the essentials of a good proverb, to the effect that 'when God wills the destruction of an ant, he supplies it with wings.'<sup>1</sup>

An instructive instance of the light thrown on national character by proverbs may be supplied from

<sup>1</sup> 'Da Dios alas á la hormiga para que se pierda mas aina,' is the Spanish version.—*Polyglot of Foreign Proverbs*, 210. Compare with Roebuck's *Persian and Hindoostanee Proverbs*, i. 365, and ii. 283; Thornburn's *Afghan Frontier*, 279; and Burckhardt's *Arabic Proverbs*.

a comparison of Italian, German, and Persian teaching on the subject of vindictiveness. In communities destitute of social organisation, the 'vendetta,' or duty of blood-revenge, probably preceded and led the way to the practice of legal punishment. Originally it was a kind of lynch-law, supplying the default of any legal protection of life; and all nations bear traces in their history of having passed through a stage of growth in which the sacred duty of vengeance was the germ of any idea of a more judicial retribution. Confucius made it a duty for a son to slay his father's murderer, just as Moses insisted on a strictly retaliatory penalty for bloodshed. The duty of revenge, which if it is yet extinct in Corsica survives with so much interest in the play of 'The Corsican Brothers,' to this day, in places like Fiji, still passes from father to son, and from the son to the nearest relation. The longer survival of such feelings in Italy, consequent on the different circumstances of her history, is clearly impressed on the proverbial philosophy of her people, constituting a remarkable contrast to the sentiments of other countries. For the Italian, extolling the sweetness of revenge, declares it a morsel fit for God; and, expressing pity or contempt for the man who either cannot or will not carry out his revenge, counsels patience and the waiting of time and place for its successful execution. In a proverb so terribly expressive that you seem to hear in it the assassin's gnashing

teeth, he will tell you that 'revenge, though a hundred years old, still has its milk teeth,' a maxim which stands on no higher a level than the pagan African saying, 'Hate hath no medicine,' or than that of Afghanistan, 'Speak good words to an enemy very softly, gradually destroy him root and branch ;' and which may be fitly compared with the Fijian expression of malice : 'Let the shell of the oyster perish by reason of years, and to these add a thousand more, still my hatred shall be hot.' How much purer than the Italian is the German teaching, which declares revenge to be fresh wrong, the conversion of a little right into a great injustice, and sure in its turn to draw revenge after it ; or how far nobler still is the more positive sentiment of Persia, that to take revenge for an injury is the sign of a mean spirit ; that it is easy to return evil for evil, but that the manly thing is to return good for it !

The contrast conveyed in these proverbs is the more striking, in that Italy might pre-eminently call herself the Catholic, as against Germany the heretical, or Persia the infidel, land. It has been said that every tenth proverb in an Italian collection contains a selfish or cynical maxim ; and though the beauty and purity of many Italian sayings counterbalance the baseness of others—those, for instance, on love being as refined as those on revenge are barbarous—it may not be uninteresting to compare generally the proverbs

of Italy with those of a land like Persia where the religious history has been so different.

The noblest Italian proverb is to the effect that a hundred years cannot repair a moment's loss of honour ; the basest, perhaps, that bad as it is to be a knave, it is worse to be known as one. To love a friend with all his faults ; to associate with the good in order to be good ; to work in order to rest ; to do right in spite of consequences, and good irrespectively of persons ; to do evil never, whatever the benefit—these are among the highest lessons of Italian proverb-lore. That among men of honour a word is a bond, and that conscience is as good as a thousand witnesses ; that the best sermon is a good life, and that the gains of begging are dearly bought, are maxims of the same upright tendency. Yet, over against these, are proverbs pervaded by the saddest spirit of universal mistrust, instilling utter disbelief of any sincerity in friendship, and even counselling to selfish or downright wicked conduct. What more melancholy evidence of this than is afforded by the following common sayings?—

He who suspects is seldom to blame.

Trust was a good man, Trust-not a better.

From those I trust God guard me ; from those I mistrust I will guard myself.

Who would have many friends let him test but few.

Tell your secret to your friend, and he will set his foot on your neck.

Or, again, what can be thought of such maxims

as, that it is expedient to peel a fig for your friend but a peach for your enemy ; that the man who esteems none but himself is happy as a king ; that public money, like holy water, is the property of all men ; or that with art and knavery men may live through half the year, and with knavery and art through the other ?

The Persian proverbs seem to breathe a different moral atmosphere from these, being as generous in character as the Italian are cynical, and displaying a free spirit of liberality, trust, independence, above all, of truthfulness, which is unsurpassed in any country of Europe. If in Italy it is common to say that a man who cannot flatter knows not how to talk, in Persia the sentiment prevails that to flatter is worse than to abuse. The Persian, true to the character given of him by Herodotus, holds boldly, that the man who speaks truth is always at ease ; that men never suffer from speaking the truth ; that it behoves them to speak their minds unreservedly, for that there is no hill in front of the tongue. Add to this the popular sayings, that the accounts of friends are in the heart, and that it is better to be in chains with friends than in the garden with strangers. That it should have become proverbial in Persia, that a man lowers himself by vexing the poor, and loses all claim to greatness by finding fault with his inferiors, proves the purity of a religion which has instilled such



thoughts into the ethics of a nation ; nor could any language in Europe produce proverbs characterised by a higher spirit of morality than is revealed in the following selection :—

A high name is better than a high house.

The cure for anger is silence.

A man must cut out his own garments of reputation.

Heaven is at the feet of mothers (*i.e.* lies in dutiful obedience).

It is better to die of want than to beg.

The liberal man is the friend of God.

Practise liberality, but lay no stress on the obligation.

As another illustration of the way in which a few proverbs may condense centuries of history, may be instanced the recorded experiences of mankind touching priests and priestcraft. With no other evidence than that of proverbs before him, a future historian of Europe might easily detect a marked difference of feeling on this matter between Protestant Germany and the Catholic countries of Europe. Not that the latter are wanting in sayings to the prejudice of the priestly class, but they are not so numerous as in Germany. The French have two proverbs, marked with all the wit and boldness of their genius, one charging anyone who values a clean house not to let into it either a priest or a pigeon ; the other declaring that it is human ignorance alone which causes the pot to boil for priests. The Spanish experience also is, that it is best neither to have a good friar for a friend nor a bad one for an enemy,

and that it is well to keep awake in a land thickly tenanted by monks. But the Germans go much farther than this. In German estimation the priest is a being who, in company with a woman, may be found at the bottom of all the mischief that goes on in the world, and is as little likely as a woman to forgive you an injury. Like the bites of wolves, those of priests are hard to heal, so that it is best, if you fight with them at all, to beat them to death. If they are ever hot, it is from eating, not from work ; for they always take care to bless themselves first, nor do they ever pay any tithes to one another.

The above comparisons suffice to show how differences of national character, and even how the operation of different forms of faith, may reveal themselves in proverbs. Yet such estimates must be formed with caution, in consideration of the wide possibilities of error which are inseparable from so inexhaustible a subject. For not only may the proverb-collector easily attribute to one country alone a saying which belongs equally to, or may even have originated in, another, but his canon of selection is somewhat arbitrary and dependent on his preconceptions of what a proverb really is. 'To take the ball on the hop,' for instance, is as genuine an English proverb as 'to make hay whilst the sun shines,' which contains the same idea ; yet whilst the one might be heard every day, the other might not be heard once a

year, so that it might easily escape notice altogether, or if found be rejected as obsolete. We can consequently, as in other branches of human study, only make use, *on trust*, of such data as lie at hand, and, whilst fully acknowledging the imperfection of the evidence, strive after an approximation to truth, without hope for its actual attainment.

If now we extend the limits of our comparison, to take in some proverbs of the lower races as well as of the higher, we shall find therein a strong corroboration of the lesson already learnt in any comparison of the superstitions, myths, and manners of different societies; namely, that differences of race, colour, and even structure, sink into insignificance when compared with the intellectual affinities which unite the families of mankind, and that there is, perhaps, no phase of thought nor shade of feeling belonging to the higher culture of the world to which we may not find an anti-type or even an equivalent in the lower. If we take some of the proverbs collected from tribes confessedly low in civilisation—those, for instance, of West Africa—and compare them with proverbs still prevalent in Europe, we cannot fail to be struck with the strong likeness between them, as well as impressed with the idea, that many actually existent common sayings may have had their birth in days of the most remote and savage antiquity. The immense number of modern proverbs, drawn from the observation of the

natural, and especially of the animal, world (a number which must be nearly one out of five), coupled with the coincidence that the same fact is perhaps the most striking one in the proverbs collected from West Africa, seems to lend some support to such a theory.

As an introductory instance let us take savage and civilised sentiments about poverty, a belief in the misfortune of which is written clearly in every language of Europe. Italian experience says that poverty has no kin, and that poor men do penance for rich men's sins; in Germany the poor have to dance as the rich pipe; whilst in Spain and Denmark the evil is expressed more graphically still, it being matter of observation in the one country that the poor man's crop is destroyed by hail every year; in the other, that the poor man's corn always grows thin. And, in the Oji dialect, spoken by about two millions of people, including the Ashantees, Fantees, and others, it is also proverbial that the poor man has no friend, that poverty makes a man a slave, and that hard words are fit for the poor. And as the Dutch have learnt, that 'poor folks' wisdom goes for little,' or the Italians, that 'the words of the poor go many to the sackful,' so in Oji exactly the same idea is conveyed in the saying, that 'when a poor man makes a proverb it does not spread'; in Yoruba, in the saying, that 'poverty destroys a man's repu-

tation ;' and in Accra in the still cleverer proverb, that ' a poor man's pipe does not sound.'<sup>1</sup>

The proverbs of savages are moral and immoral, elevated and base, precisely as are those of more civilised nations. The proverbs of the Yorubas, justly observes the missionary, Mr. Bowen,<sup>2</sup> ' are among the most remarkable of the world ;' and indeed the intellectual powers and moral ideas displayed in West African proverbs generally ought largely to modify our conceptions of their originators, and make us sceptical of that extreme dearth of mental wealth which has so frequently been declared to attend a low standard of material advancement. Their wit, terseness, vividness of illustration, and insight into life, are all alike surprising ; and acquaintance with them must suggest caution in any estimate of the mental capacities of savages whose languages may have been less investigated and consequently remain less known. ' It has always been passing travellers who have drawn the most doleful pictures of so-called savages, and especially have asserted the poverty of their language.'<sup>3</sup> It may well prove that better acquaintance with the languages of tribes, classed at present for various reasons almost outside the human

<sup>1</sup> Most of the African proverbs here referred to are taken from Captain Burton's collection from various sources in his *Wit and Wisdom of West Africa*.

<sup>2</sup> *Central Africa*, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> Oscar Peschel, *The Races of Mankind*, translation, p. 150.

family, may show them to combine, as Humboldt found was the case with the once depreciated Carib language, 'wealth, grace, strength, and gentleness.' It was said of the Veddahs once that they were utterly destitute of either religion or *language*; and the Samojeds were reported to shriek and chatter like apes.

The Basutos of South Africa are savages, yet the following proverbs are current among them:—

- A good name makes one sleep well.
- Stolen goods do not make one grow.
- Famine dwells in the house of the quarrelsome.
- The thief catches himself.
- A lent knife does not come back alone.
- (*i.e.* a good deed is never thrown away.)<sup>1</sup>

Compare, for elevation of mind, these Yoruban proverbs with those already noticed as current in Italy:—

- He that forgives gains the victory.
- He who injures another injures himself.
- Anger benefits no one.
- We should not treat others with contempt.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, 'If a great man should wrong you, smile on him,' may be compared with the Arabic advice about dangerous friends, 'If a serpent love thee, wear him as a necklace;' or with the Pashto

<sup>1</sup> Casalis, *Les Basutos*, pp. 324-8.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Burton justly calls attention to the possibility of many Yoruban proverbs being relics of the Moslems, who, in the tenth-century, overran the Soudan.



proverb of the same intention, ' Though your enemy be a rope of reeds, call him a serpent.'

Here are some more proverbs with whose European equivalents everyone will be familiar :—

ON FAULTFINDING.

If you can pull out, pull out your own grey hairs. (Oji.)  
 Before healing others, heal yourself. (Wolof.)

With which we may compare the Chinese :—

Sweep the snow from your own doors without troubling about the frost on your neighbour's tiles.

ON THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE.

Nobody is twice a fool. (Accra.)  
 Nobody is twice ashamed. (Accra.)  
 He is a fool whose sheep run away twice. (Oji.)  
 He dreads a slowworm who has been bitten by a serpent. (Oji.)

With which we may compare our own—

It's a silly fish that's caught twice with the same bait.

Or the German—

An old fox is not caught twice in the same trap.

To which both Italy and Holland have exactly similar proverbs.

ON PERSEVERANCE.

Perseverance always triumphs. (Basuto.)  
 The moon does not grow full in a day. (Oji.)  
 Perseverance is everything.  
 Who has patience has all things. (Yoruba.)  
 By going and coming a bird builds its nest. (Oji.)

Which latter may be compared with the Dutch proverb—

By slow degrees a bird builds its nest.

And all of them with the Chinese—

A mulberry-leaf becomes satin with time.

#### ON THE FORCE OF HABIT.

The thread follows the needle.

Its shell follows the snail wherever it goes. (Yoruba.)

As is the sword so is the scabbard. (Oji.)

To which again China supplies a good parallel in

The growth of the mulberry tree follows its early bent.'

#### ON CAUSATION.

If nothing touches the palm-leaves they do not rustle. (Oji.)

Nobody hates another without a cause. (Accra.)

A feather does not stick without gum. (A Pashto proverb.)

Again, the Turkish proverb, that curses, like chickens, come home to roost, or the Italian one that, like processions, they come back to their starting-point, is well matched by the Yoruba proverb that 'ashes fly back in the face of their thrower.' Or the tendency of travellers to exaggerate or tell lies, impressed as it has been on all human experience, is also confirmed by the Oji proverb, that 'he who travels alone tells lies.' And the universal belief in the ultimate exposure of falsehood conveyed in such proverbs as the Arabian, 'The liar is short-lived;' the Persian,

'Liars have bad memories ;' or the still more expressive Italian saying, that 'the liar is sooner caught than a cripple,' finds itself corroborated by the Wolof proverb, that 'lies, though many, will be caught by Truth as soon as she rises up.' Even in Afghanistan, where it is said that no disgrace attaches to lying *per se*, and where lying is called an honest man's wings, while truth can only be spoken by a strong man or a fool, there is also a proverb with the moral, that the career of falsehood is short.<sup>1</sup>

That 'hope is the pillar of the world,' that 'it is the heart which carries one to hell or heaven,' or that 'preparation is better than after-thought'—all experiences of the Kanuri, a Moslem tribe, who think it a personal adornment to cut each side of their face in twenty places—shows that there is no necessary connection between general savagery and an absence of moral culture. The natives of New Zealand, with all their barbarity, had in common use a saying which were a desirable maxim for European diplomacy: 'When you are on friendly terms, settle your disputes in a friendly way; when you are at war, redress your injuries by violence.'<sup>2</sup> Even the Fijians would say that an unimproved day was not to be counted, and that no food was ever cooked by gay clothes and

<sup>1</sup> For a collection of Pashto proverbs see Thornburn's *Afghan Frontier*, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Sir G. Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, p. 21.

frivolity.<sup>1</sup> A good Ashantee proverb warns people not to speak ill of their benefactors, by forbidding them to call a forest a shrubbery that has once given them shelter. The proverbs already quoted from Yoruba teach the same lesson, nor would it be difficult to add many more, all proving the existence among savages of a morality identical in its main features with that of the higher group of nations to which we ourselves belong, interpenetrated as it has been for ages with the philosophies and religions of the civilised East.

A similar testimony to the intellectual powers of savages is afforded by their proverbs, though of course the argument is only a suggestive one from tribes whose language has been well studied to others not so well known. That the Soudan negroes are on a higher level of general culture than many savages of other islands or continents is proved by the fact that all known Africans are acquainted with the art of smelting iron and converting it into weapons and utensils; so that they may be said to be living in the iron age, and thus, materially at least, are more advanced than the Botocudos of Brazil, who are still in the age of polished stone implements. From the fact alone that the Yorubas express their contempt for a stupid man by saying that he cannot count nine times nine, we are enabled at once to place them

<sup>1</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, p. 97.

above tribes whose powers of numeration fall short of such readiness. Hence we should not be justified in expecting to find among Australian or American aborigines proverbs of so high an intellectual order as abound in Africa, of which the following may be selected as samples :—

Were no elephant in the jungle the buffalo would be large ;

or—

The dust of the buffalo is lost in that of the elephant.

A crab does not bring forth a bird.

Two small antelopes beat a big one.

Two crocodiles do not live in one hole.

A child can crush a snail, but not a tortoise.

A razor cannot shave itself.

You cannot stop the sun by standing before it.

If you like honey, do not fear the bees.

When a fish is killed its tail is inserted in its own mouth.

(Said of people who reap the reward of their deeds.)

The Zulus, speaking of the uncertainty of a result, say, ' It is not known what calf the cow will have ; ' <sup>1</sup> and when the Fantees tell you to ' cross the river before you abuse the crocodile, ' <sup>2</sup> there is no difficulty in translating their meaning into English. In all these proverbs it is obvious how the facts of every-day life have readily served everywhere as the basis of intellectual advancement, and how similar lessons have everywhere been drawn from the observation of similar occurrences.

Leaving now the analogy between African and

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, ii. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, *Mission to Dahome*, ii.

European proverb-lore, which the uniformity of moral experiences and the observation of similar laws of nature sufficiently account for, let us endeavour to find among civilised nations any proverbs which, by the figures involved in them or their likeness to savage maxims, seem to bear a distinct impression of a barbaric coinage. One French proverb may almost certainly be so explained. It is, for instance, well known that the lower races very generally account for eclipses of either sun or moon by supposing them to be the victims of the fury or voracity of some ill-disposed animal, whom they try to divert by every horrible noise they can produce, or by any weapon they have learnt to fashion. A typical instance of this was the belief of the Chiquitos of South America that the moon was hunted across the sky by dogs, who tore her in pieces when they caught her, till driven off by the Indian arrows. It has been suggested that the French proverb, 'Dieu garde la lune des loups,' said in deprecation of a dread of remote danger, is a survival of a similar rude philosophy of nature which is still prevalent in the capital of Turkey, and in the days of St. Augustine was current over Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Another instructive set of proverbs may be adduced to show how the social philosophy current in the savage state may survive in contemporary expres-

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 333.



sions of modern Europe. In Africa, where, speaking generally, a man's wife has no better status in society than that which attaches to his slave or his ox, and a son has been known to wager his own mother against a cow, we cannot be astonished at finding in vogue proverbs strongly depreciatory of the worth of the female sex. Thus a wise Kanuri is cautioned, that if a woman shall speak to him two words, he shall take one and leave the other; nor should he give his heart to a woman, if he would live, for a woman never brings a man into the right way. So, too, Pashto proverbs say contemptuously, that a woman's wisdom is under her heel, and that she is well only in the house or in the grave. The same feeling is endorsed by the Persians, who declare that both women and dragons are best out of the world, classing the former with horses and swords among their by-words of unfaithfulness.

The literatures of all countries are strongly tinged with sentiments of the same unjust nature. Even the French say that a man of straw is worth a woman of gold, though their proverb, 'Ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut,' is as true as it is a witty variation of the well-known democratic formula. The Italians have made the shrewd observation, that, whilst with men every mortal sin is venial, with women every venial sin is mortal; but no language has anything worse than this, that as both a good horse and a bad horse need

the spur, so both a good woman and a bad woman need the stick.

It is, however, in Germany that the character of women has suffered most from the shafts of that other half of the community, which (it might be complained) has as unfair a monopoly of making proverbs as it has of making laws. The humorous saying, that there are only two good women in the world, one of whom is dead and the other not to be found, contains the key to the common national sentiment. A woman is compared to good fortune in her partiality for fools, and to wine in her power to make them. Like a glass, she is in hourly danger; and, like a priest, she never forgets. Her vengeance is boundless, and her mutability find its only parallel in nature in the uncertain skies of April. Her affections change every moment, like luck at cards, the favour of princes, or the leaves of a rose; and though you will never find her wanting in words, there is not a needle-point's difference betwixt her yea and her nay. She only keeps silence where she is ignorant, and it is as fruitless to try to hold a woman at her word as an eel by its tail. Her advice, like corn sown in summer, may perhaps turn out well once in seven years; but wherever there is mischief brewing in the world, rest assured that there is a woman and a priest at the bottom of it. Every daughter of Eve would rather be beautiful than good, and may be caught as surely by gold as a hare by dogs or a

gentleman by flattery. Even in the house she should be allowed no power, for where a woman rules the devil is chief servant ; whilst two women in the same house will agree together like two cats over a mouse or two dogs over a bone.

Spanish experience on this subject coincides with the Teutonic, but without the expenditure of nearly so much spleen, and with several glimpses of a happier experience. What can be worse than this: 'Beware of a bad woman, nor put any trust in a good one ;' or sadder than this: 'What is marriage, mother? Spinning, childbirth, and crying, daughter'? Yet the Spanish woman, as hard to know as a melon, as little to be trusted as a magpie, as fickle as the wind or as fortune, as ready to cry as a dog to limp, in labour as patient as a mule, is not so destitute as the German of any redeeming qualities for her failings. The Spaniard is taught to believe that with a good wife he may bear any adversity, and that he should believe nothing against her unless absolutely proved. It is also in remarkable contrast to the experiences of other countries, that in Spain it should have passed into a proverb, that whilst an unmarried man advocates a daily beating for a wife, as soon as he marries he takes care of his own.

Female talkativeness appears also to be a subject of lament all over the world, from our own island, where a woman's tongue proverbially wags like a lamb's tail,

to the Celestial Empire, where it is likened to a sword, never suffered by its owner to rust. Regard not a woman's words, says the Hindoo; and the African also is warned against trusting his secrets even to his wife. The Spaniard believes that he has only to tell a woman what he would wish to have published in the market-place; and all languages have sayings to the same effect. The Scotch divine who, before the Session, defended his heresy that women would find no place in heaven, by the text, 'There was silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour,' only expressed a sentiment of universal currency over the world.

The proverbs collected from the lower races are still very few, when compared with the immense mass of those from nations with whose literature we are more familiar. It is in the nature of things that missionaries and travellers should have been first struck by, and first given us information about, matters more directly challenging their notice than phrases in common use, for a real knowledge of which the most favourable conditions of a prolonged intimacy are obviously requisite. The large collection of such proverbs from West Africa alone, revealing as they do an elevation of feeling and a clearness of intelligence which other facts of their social life would never have led us to suspect, point at the possibility of such collections elsewhere largely modifying our present views concerning other savage tribes.

They at least should teach us caution against accepting the conclusions which some writers have drawn from their study of savage languages, when, from the absence or loss in a dialect of such words as 'love' or 'gratitude,' they proceed to explain, on the hypothesis of degradation, that rude state of existence which is denoted by the word 'savage,' and which there are abundant reasons for supposing was really the primitive germ, out of which all subsequent civilisation has been unfolded. 'Were,' says Archbishop Trench, 'the savage the primitive man, we should then find savage tribes furnished, scantily enough it might be, with the elements of speech, yet, at the same time, with its fruitful beginnings, its vigorous and healthful germs. But what does their language on close inspection prove? In every case what they are themselves, the remnant and ruin of a better and a nobler past. Fearful indeed is the impress of degradation which is stamped on the language of the savage—more fearful, perhaps, even than that which is stamped upon his form.'<sup>1</sup> Yet, whatever may be the case with some tribes, who may be shown historically to have fallen from a higher state (and such are the exceptions), at least the languages spoken in Africa bear no such 'fearful impress of degradation' as are declared to be traceable *in every case*, if we may judge of a language by the thoughts which it expresses rather than by the words which it contains.

<sup>1</sup> Trench, *On the Study of Words*, p. 17.

## IV.

*SAVAGE MORAL PHILOSOPHY.*

LUCRETIUS, in his retrospect of prehistoric times, imagines primeval man as unpossessed of any moral law, and is at pains to explain how, as men were once ignorant of the property of either fire to warm or of skins to cover them, so once there was a time when no moral restraints affected the relations between man and man.<sup>1</sup> Across the Atlantic we find the same strain of thought in the myths, common in many different stages of progress, of those culture heroes who had come long ago to teach men the arts and virtues of life, and had left their names to be worshipped by a grateful posterity. The Peruvian legend, that moral law was unknown until the Sun sent two of his children to raise humanity from their animal condition, coincides with the modern hypothesis that the morality of the cave-men resembled very

<sup>1</sup> 'Nec commune bonum poterant spectare nec ullis  
Moribus inter se scierant nec legibus uti.'—V. 956.

So Virgil, *Æn.*, viii. 317.



much that of the cave-bear ; so that it becomes a subject worthy of inquiry whether any human communities ever have lived, or are actually living, with no more idea of moral right and wrong than is necessary for the social harmony of a wolf-pack or a wasp's nest ; whether, in short, what to the Roman was a matter of speculation, or to the American of legend, can fairly become for us one of science.

The Shoshones of North America, some of whom are said to have built absolutely no dwellings, but to have lived in caves and among the rocks, or burrowed like reptiles in the ground ; or the Cochinis, who resorted at night for shelter to caverns and holes in the ground, may be taken as the best representatives of the ancient cave-dwellers, and the nearest known approach to communities living in the state presupposed by the legends of most latitudes.<sup>1</sup> Californians generally are said to have had 'no morals, nor any religion worth calling such ;' yet even the Shoshones knew, like so many other American tribes, how to ratify either a treaty or a bargain by the ceremony of smoking, and used shell-money as an instrument of barter. But some moral notions must enter into the rudest kind of barter, and barter was known to the ancient cave-dwellers of Périgord, just as it is to the lowest contemporary savage tribes.

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States of North America*, i. 426, 560.

Rock crystal and Atlantic shells, found among the remains of men, tigers, and bears, in the caves of Périgord, could, it is argued, only have got thither by barter; so that the earliest human beings we have record of must have possessed at least so much morality as is necessary for commerce.<sup>1</sup>

As regards existing savages, evidence as to their moral ideas can only be sought in incidental allusion to their customs, penalties, beliefs, or myths, never in chapters expressly devoted to the delineation of their moral character. Not only do such delineations by different writers conflict hopelessly with one another, but inconsistencies abound in the accounts of the same writer, as, for instance, where Cranz describes Greenlanders as mild and peaceable, and a few pages further on as 'naturally of a murderous disposition.' The value of Cranz' evidence is marred by the fact that he writes expressly to rebut the Deistic idea of a natural morality existing by the light of reason and independent of Revelation; and the evidence of other writers, whenever a long residence among savages entitles them to speak with any authority at all, is spoilt by their several temptations to bias. Whether the temptation be to enliven a book of travel, to inculcate the need and enhance the merit of missionary labours, or to illustrate the uniformity of moral percep-

<sup>1</sup> Peschel, *Races of Man*, pp. 39, 209.

tions and the universality of certain moral laws, in any case we are exposed to the error of mistaking for habitual what is really peculiar, and of misunderstanding the indications of facts which are as often anomalous as they are illustrative.

The way, also, in which the love of theory may give rise to unjustifiable credulity or even to absolute misstatement may be exemplified from the common story of the Bushman who spoke with absolute unconcern of having murdered his brother, or of the other Bushman who gave as an instance of his idea of a good action, stealing some one else's wife, and of a bad one, losing in the same way his own. According to the original authority, the Bushmen who were questioned, to test their intelligence, on a few moral points, and especially on what they considered good actions and what bad, belonged to a kraal of extremely poor, half-starved Bushmen, seemingly 'the outcasts of the Bushmen race;' the interpreter, through whom Burchell made his inquiries, said he could not make them understand what he said, and to the specific question about good and bad actions *they made no reply*, the missionary himself adding, as comment, that 'their not understanding it must have been either pretended stupidity or a wilful misrepresentation by the interpreter.' This same interpreter is suspected by Burchell, in the very same page, of such misrepresentation, or of actual invention in respect of the story of the

murder—a story which, if true, adds the missionary, would have justified him in saying, Here are men who know not right from wrong. Yet both these stories have been quoted to exemplify the state of the moral destitution of the lower races.<sup>1</sup>

The fear of incurring the ill-will of his fellow-beings or of those invisible spirits disposed more or less hostilely towards him and everywhere surrounding him, must have sufficed, even for prehistoric man, to have marked out certain acts as less advisable than others, and so far as wrong. The instinct to repel or revenge personal injuries, and the instinct to appease the unknown forces of nature, neither of which, be it assumed, acted less energetically in the past than the present, must have always contributed to rank certain sets of actions as better to be avoided. Personal or tribal well-being has probably always supplied a sufficiently defined moral standard, sufficiently defended by real or fanciful sanctions. So suggests theory; and in point of fact a savage tribe is as difficult to find as it is to imagine, without a sense of a difference in the quality of actions, arising from a difference in their likely consequences to themselves.

The fear of revenge from a man's survivors or

<sup>1</sup> Burchell, *Travels in Southern Africa*, i. 456-62. Compare Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, i. 376. Also Wuttke, *Geschichte des Heidenthums*, p. 164. *Ein Brudermord wurde von ihnen als etwas ganz Harmloses erzählt.*

from his ghost would at any time tend to make homicide a prominent act of guilt. The vendetta, sometimes carried out as much against a homicidal tiger or tree as against a man, would scarcely ever be not dreaded by a human murderer ; and the associations are obvious and few between homicide as merely an act to be avenged and a crime to be avoided. Even in instances where bloodshed seems to have left but an external stain, affecting the hands not the heart of the murderer, and calling simply for purification by washing, the presence of a feeling of difference may be detected between the killing of a man and the killing of a bear. But the dread of vengeance from a murdered man's ghost, which is said to have acted as a check on murder among the Sioux Indians, or the dread of such vengeance from the tutelary gods of the deceased, which is said to have acted as a check on cannibalism in Samoa, points to the existence of prudential restraints which are likely not to have been limited in their operation to a tribe in America nor to an island in the Pacific.

But, besides spiritual terrors, secular punishment has a well-defined place among savages, to check the extreme indulgence of hatred or passion. It is doubtful whether any savage tribe is so indifferent to the criminality of murder as to be destitute of customary penal laws to prevent or punish it. These customs vary from the payment of a slight compen-

sation, payable either to the dead man's family or to the tribal chief, down to actual capital punishment. Among the Northern Californians a few strings of shell-money compounded for the murder of a man, and half a man's price was paid for a woman; banishment from the tribe being sometimes the penalty, death never.<sup>1</sup> Among the Kutchin tribes human life was valued at forty beaver skins.<sup>2</sup> Even the Veddahs insist upon compensation to survivors. The Tunguse Lapps, with whom homicide was a brave rather than a shameful act, punished nevertheless a murderer with blows, and compelled him to support the dead man's relations.<sup>3</sup> In some cases a slight penance was the only law against homicide. A Yuma Indian, for instance, who killed a tribesman had perforce to starve for a month on vegetables and water, bathing frequently during the day; whilst a Pima who killed an Apache had to fast for sixteen days, living in the woods, careful meanwhile to keep his eyes from the sight of a blazing fire and his tongue from conversation.<sup>4</sup>

The custom, moreover, of extending to a whole family the guilt of an individual is an additional protection to human life among savages. In the same way as, till lately, English law avenged itself on the suicide who had escaped its jurisdiction, by

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, i. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Bancroft, i. 520, 553.



punishing the criminal's relations, savage custom satisfies indignation by taking any member of a family as a substitute for a fugitive criminal. The Thlinket Indians, if they cannot kill the actual murderer, kill one of his tribe or family instead.<sup>1</sup> 'An Indian,' says Kane, 'in taking revenge for the death of a relative, does not, in all cases, seek the actual offender; as, should the party be one of his own tribe, any relative will do, however distant.'<sup>2</sup> Catlin tells the story how, when a great Sioux warrior, the Little Bear, had been shot by the Dog, the avengers of the former, failing to overtake the Dog, caught and slew his brother instead, notwithstanding that he was a man much esteemed by the tribe.<sup>3</sup> If a Californian criminal escaped to a sacred refuge he was regarded as a coward, in that he diverted to a relation a punishment he deserved himself.<sup>4</sup> In Samoa not only the murderer but all his belongings would fly to another village as a city of refuge, for in Samoan law a plaintiff might seek redress from 'the brother, son, or other relative of the guilty party.'<sup>5</sup> In Australia wide-spread consternation followed the commission of a crime, especially if the culprit escaped, for the brothers of the criminal held themselves quite as guilty as he was, and only persons

<sup>1</sup> Dall, *Alaska*, p. 416.    <sup>2</sup> Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Catlin, *North American Indians*, ii. 192.    <sup>4</sup> Bancroft, iii. 167.

<sup>5</sup> Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 285.

unconnected with the family believed themselves safe.<sup>1</sup> In the Fiji Islands a warrior once left his musket in such a position that it went off and killed two persons. The owner of the musket was condemned to death ; but, as he fled away, the strangulation of his father instead of him perfectly satisfied the ends of justice.<sup>2</sup>

The Samoans, as far back as it was possible to trace, had had customary laws for the prevention of theft, adultery, assault, and murder, and the penalties for such crimes appeared rather to have grown milder than severer with time. Not only this, but they had penal customs for such wrong acts as rude conduct to strangers, pulling down of fences, spoiling fruit trees, or calling chiefs by opprobrious epithets. It is open to doubt whether other savage tribes had not equally good safeguards for preventing at least those greater social offences, whose immorality furnishes the first principle of even the ethics of civilised communities.

In Fiji the criminality of actions is said to have varied with the social rank of the offender, murder by a chief being accounted less heinous than a petty larceny by a man of low rank. Theft, adultery, witchcraft, violation of a *tabu*, arson, treason, and disrespect to a chief were among the few crimes regarded as serious. With regard to murder, we are told (and the

<sup>1</sup> Sir G. Grey, *Journals in Australia*, ii. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Fiji*.

passage is a favourite one for illustrating the extreme variability of moral sentiment), that to a Fijian shedding of blood was 'no crime, but a glory,' and that to be an acknowledged murderer was 'the object of his restless ambition.' In a similar strain it has been said, that in New Zealand intentional murder was either very meritorious or of no consequence; the latter if the victim were a slave, the former if he belonged to another tribe. The malicious destruction of a man of the same tribe was, however, rare, the *lex talionis* alone applying to or checking it;<sup>1</sup> and it is probable that this reservation in favour of native New Zealand should be made for all cases where murder is spoken of as a trivial matter. Whenever murder is spoken of as no crime, reference seems generally made to murder outside the tribe, so that from the circumstances of savage life it resolves itself into an act of ordinary hostility; or if the reference is to murder within the tribe, it is to murder sanctioned by necessity, custom, or superstition. The Carrier Indians, who did not think murders worth confessing when they confessed other crimes of their lives, yet regarded the *murder of a fellow-tribesman as something quite senseless*, and the man who committed such a deed had to absent himself till he could pay the relatives, since at home he was only safe if a chief lent him the

<sup>1</sup> *Old New Zealand*. By a Pakeha Maori, p. 105.

refuge of his tent or of one of his garments.<sup>1</sup> 'A murder,' says Sproat, '*if not perpetrated on one of his own tribe, or on a particular friend, is no more to an Indian than the killing of a dog.*' The sutteeism and parenticide, which missionaries describe as murders, are, from the savage point of view, rather acts of mercy, being intimately connected with their ideas of future existence, to which it is neither fair nor scientific to apply the phraseology and associations of Christian morality.<sup>2</sup>

Different tribes have evolved different institutions for the prevention of wrongs, which supplement to a large extent the absence of fixed legal remedies.

In Greenland there was the singing combat, in which anyone aggrieved, dancing to the beat of a drum and accompanied by his partisans, recited at a public meeting a satirical poem, telling ludicrous stories of his adversary, and obliged to listen afterwards to similar abuse of himself, till, after a long succession of charges and retorts, the assembled spectators gave the victory to one of the combatants. These combats, says Cranz, served to remind debtors of the duty of repayment, to brand falsehood and detraction with infamy, to punish fraud and injustice,

<sup>1</sup> Harmon's *Journal*, pp. 299, 300.

<sup>2</sup> Seemann says of Fijian cruelty (*Viti*, p. 192): 'Affection for the departed—of course mistaken affection—prompted their relatives or friends to dispatch widows at the time of their husband's burial,' &c.

and above all to overwhelm adultery with contempt. The fear of incurring public disgrace at these combats was, with the fear of retaliation for injury, the only motive to virtue which the writer allows to the natives of Greenland.

In Samoa thieves could be scared from plantations by cocoa-nut leaflets so plaited as to convey an imprecation; and a man who saw an artificial sea-pike suspended from a tree would fear, that, if he accomplished his theft, the next time he went fishing a real sea-pike would dart up and wound him mortally. Images of a similar nature, conveying imprecations of disease, death, lightning, or a plague of rats, seem also to have been effective restraints upon thievish propensities;<sup>1</sup> and in the Tonga Islands fruits and flowers were tabooed, that is, preserved, by plaited representations of a lizard or a shark.<sup>2</sup> It is likely that a similar meaning attached in Africa to 'certain branches of trees which, stuck into the ground in a particular manner, with bits of broken pottery, were enough to prevent the most determined robber from crossing a threshold.'<sup>3</sup> Similar *tabu* marks were seen on some rocks at Tahiti, placed there to prevent people fishing or getting shells from the Queen's preserves;<sup>4</sup> and it is possible that the origin of all *tabu*

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Polynesia*, pp. 294-5.

<sup>2</sup> Mariner, ii. 233.

<sup>3</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 595, from Froyart's *Loango*.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzroy, *Voyages of 'Adventure' and 'Beagle'*, ii. 574.

customs may have lain in the supposed efficacy of symbolical imprecation.

In New Zealand the institution of *muru*, or the legalized enforcement of damages by plunder, extended the idea of sinfulness even to involuntary wrongs or accidental sufferings. Involuntary homicide is said to have involved more serious consequences than murder of malice prepense; and if a man's child fell into the fire, or his canoe was upset and himself nearly drowned, he was not only cudgelled and robbed, but he would have deemed it a personal slight not to have been so treated.<sup>1</sup> To escape from drowning was indeed a common sin in savage life, for was it not to escape the just wrath of the Water Spirit, and perhaps to turn it upon some one else? In Kamschatka so heinous was the sin of cheating the Water Spirit of his prey, by escape from drowning, that no one would receive such a sinner into his house, speak to him, nor give him food: he became, in short, socially dead. Fijians who escape shipwreck are supposed to be saved in order to be eaten, and Williams tells, how on one occasion fourteen of them who lost their canoe at sea only escaped becoming food for sharks to become food for their friends on shore. If the Koossa Kafirs see a person drowning, or indeed in any danger of his life, they either run away from the spot

<sup>1</sup> *Old New Zealand*, pp. 96-100.



or pelt the victim with stones as he dies.<sup>1</sup> So also with death by fire: if an Indian falls into the fire or is partially burnt, it is believed that the spirits of his ancestors pushed him into the flames owing to his negligence in supplying them with food.<sup>2</sup> The custom of an African tribe to expel from their community anyone bitten by a zebra or an alligator, or even so much as splashed by the tail of the latter, is evidently related to the same idea.<sup>3</sup>

Again, however much Catlin's assertion that self-denial, torture, and immolation were constant modes among North American Indians for appealing to the Great Spirit for countenance and forgiveness, may overstate the truth, it is remarkable that not only penance by fasting and self-torture, but the practice of confession, should occur in the lower culture as a mode of moral purification. Confession was common not only in Mexico and Peru, but among widely remote savage tribes, being closely connected with the belief in the power of sin to cause, and of priestcraft to cure, dangerous sickness. The Carrier Indians of North America thought, that the only chance of recovery from sickness lay in a disclosure before a priest of every secret crime committed in life, and that the concealment of a single fact would meet with the punish-

<sup>1</sup> Lichtenstein, i. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft, *I. T.*, i. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels in South Africa*, p. 255.

ment of instantaneous death.<sup>1</sup> The Samoan Islanders believing that all disease was due to the wrath of some deity, would inquire of the village priest the cause of sickness, who would sometimes in such cases command the family to assemble and confess. At this confessional ceremony each member of the family would confess his crimes, and any judgments he might have invoked in anger on the family or the invalid himself; long-concealed crimes being often thus disclosed.<sup>2</sup> In Yucatan, confession, introduced by Cukulcán, the mythical author of their culture, was much resorted to, 'as death and disease were thought to be direct punishments for sins committed.' The natives of Cerquin, in Honduras, confessed, not only in sickness, but in immediate danger of any kind, or to procure divine blessings on any important occasion. So far did they carry it, that, if a travelling party met a jaguar or puma, each would commend himself to the gods, confessing loudly his sins, and imploring pardon; if the beast still advanced they would cry out, 'We have committed as many more sins; do not kill us.'<sup>3</sup>

But over and above the wrong acts from which restraints lie in the revenge of individuals, in punishment by the community, or in artificial restrictions,

<sup>1</sup> Harmon, *Journal*, p. 300.      <sup>2</sup> Turner, *Polynesia*, p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft, iii. 486.

there is a large class of acts, defended rather by spiritual than secular sanctions, deriving their sinfulness from pure misconceptions of things, and constituting for savages by far the larger part of their field for right and wrong. The consciousness of having trodden in the footstep of a bear would be as painful to a Kamschadal as the consciousness of having stolen, the possible consequences of the former being infinitely more dreadful. Such acts as the experience of primitive times has thus generalized into acts provocative of unpleasant expressions of dissatisfaction from the spiritual world, and so far as sinful, become in the folk-lore of later date acts merely unlucky or ominous. The feeling to this day prevalent in parts of England and Germany, that if you transplant parsley you may cause its guardian spirit to punish you or your relations with death, fairly illustrates how the wrongful acts of bygone times may even in civilised countries continue to be guarded by the very same sanction that gave them potency in the days of savagery.

Of such regulations in restraint of the natural liberty of savage tribes let it suffice to give some instances of sinful acts which derive all their associations of wrong from rude notions concerning the nature of storms, of ancestors, of names, and of animals. It will be seen that in some cases such superstitions act as real checks to real wickedness ;

though the connection between them seems purely accidental, rather than the result of any intuitive discrimination of the qualities of actions.

As English sailors will refrain from whistling at sea, lest they should provoke a storm, so the Kamschadals account many actions sinful on account of their storm-breeding qualities. For this reason they will never cut snow from off their shoes with a knife out of doors, nor go barefooted outside their huts in winter, nor sharpen an axe or a knife on a journey. The Fuejian natives brought away by Captain Fitzroy felt sure that anything wrong said or done caused bad weather, especially the sin of shooting young ducks. They declared their belief in an omniscient Big Black Man, who had his living among the woods and mountains, and influenced the weather according to men's conduct ; in illustration of which they told a story of a murderer, who ascribed to the anger of this being a storm of wind and snow which followed his crime.<sup>1</sup> In Vancouver's Island there is a mountain, the sin of mentioning which in passing may cause a storm to overturn the offender's canoe.<sup>2</sup>

Prominent among the moral checks of savage life is the fear of the anger of the dead. Among savages the supposed wishes of their departed friends, or

<sup>1</sup> Fitzroy, *Voyages*, ii. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, p. 265.

deified forefathers, operate as real commands, girt with all the sanction of superstitious terror, and clothing the most fanciful customs with all the obligatory feelings of morality. A New Zealand chief, for instance, would expect his dead ancestors to visit him with disease or other calamity if he let food touch any part of his body, or if he entered a dwelling where food hung from the ceiling.<sup>1</sup> The wide prevalence of the feeling that disease and death are due to the displeasure of the dead, who may return to earth, to reside in some part of a living person's body, may be illustrated by the Samoan custom of taking valuable presents as a last expression of regard to the dying, or by way of bribing them to forego their incorporeal privilege of post-mortem revenge.<sup>2</sup> On the Gold Coast also friends make presents to the dead of gold, brandy, or cloth, to be buried with them; just as in ancient Mexico all classes of the population would beg of their dead king to accept their offerings of food, robes, or slaves, which they vied in giving him, or as the Mayas would place precious gifts or ornaments near or upon the corpse of a deceased lord of a province. So the Bodos, presenting food at the graves of their relations, would pray, saying, 'Take and eat . . . we come no more to you, come no more to us.'

<sup>1</sup> Shortland, *Southern Districts of New Zealand*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, *Polynesia*, pp. 225, 236.

Proper behaviour with regard to names is one of the most important points of savage decorum. The confusion, amounting almost to identification, between a person and his name is one of the most signal proofs of the power of language over thought. As Catlin's or Kane's Indian pictures were thought to detract from the originals something of their existence, giving the painter such power over them that whilst living their bodies would sympathise with every injury done to their pictures, and when dead would not rest in their graves, so the feeling among savages is strong that the knowledge of a person's name gives to another a fatal control over his destiny. An Indian once asked Kane 'whether his wish to know his name proceeded from a desire to steal it;'<sup>1</sup> whilst with the Abipones it was positively sinful for anyone to pronounce his own name. Kane could only discover Indians' names through third parties; and it is curious that the natives of one of the Fiji Islands will never tell their names to an inquirer, if there should be anyone else to answer the question.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is that the highest compliment a savage can pay a person is to exchange names with him, a custom which Cook found prevalent at Tahiti and in the Society Islands, and which was also common in North America.<sup>3</sup> Warriors sometimes take the name

<sup>1</sup> Kane, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; Seemann, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft, i. 245, 285, 438.



of a slain enemy, from the same motive apparently which, in some instances, is an inducement to eat their flesh, namely, to appropriate their courage. The Lapps change a child's baptismal name, if it falls ill, rebaptizing it at every illness, as if they thought to deceive the spirit that vexed it by the simple stratagem of an *alias*; <sup>1</sup> and the Californian Shoshones, in changing their names after such feats as scalping an enemy, stealing his horses, or killing a grizzly bear, had, perhaps, some similar idea of avoiding retaliation. Among the Chinook Indians near relations often changed their names, lest the spirits of the dead should be drawn back to earth by often hearing familiar names used.

With these ideas about names it is easy to understand how especial reverence would become attached to the names of kings or dead persons whose power to punish a light use of their appellations might well be deemed exceptional. On accessions to royalty in the Society Islands all words resembling the king's name were changed, and any person bold enough to continue the use of the superseded terms was put to death, with all his relations.<sup>2</sup> From a similar state of thought the Abipones invented new words for all things whose previous names recalled a dead person's memory, whilst to mention his name was 'a nefarious

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, *Voyages*, iii. 158.

proceeding.'<sup>1</sup> In Dahome the king's name must be pronounced with bated breath, and it is death to utter it in his presence.<sup>2</sup> The degrees of guilt, attached to the mention of a dead person, arising from a belief in the power of spoken names to call back their owners, vary in sinfulness from its being a positive crime, punishable by fine, to a mere rudeness, to be checked in the young. Among the Northern Californians it was one of the most strenuous laws that whoever mentioned a dead person's name should be liable to a heavy fine, payable to the relatives.<sup>3</sup> The tribe of Ainos held it a great rudeness to speak of the dead by their names; whilst young Ahts are instantly checked, if they make an unthinking use of the name of a chief that has been relinquished in memory of some event of importance.<sup>4</sup>

Several causes may have led to animal worship. The tendency to call men by qualities or peculiarities in them fancifully recalling those of some animal, and the tendency to apotheosize distinguished ancestors, thus named after the tiger or the bear, may have led to a confusion of thought between the animal and the man, till the divine attributes, once attached to the individual, became transferred to the species of

<sup>1</sup> Dobritzhoffer, *Abipones*, ii. 203, 274.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, *Mission*, i. 231.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft, ii. 357.

<sup>4</sup> Dall, *Alaska*, 524. For instances of the feeling in North America see Bancroft, i. 205, 288, 544, 745; iii. 521, 522.

animal that survived him in constant existence. Or the same fancy, which sees inspiration in an idiot from his very lack of common reason, may have attributed peculiar wisdom and looked with peculiar awe on the animal world, by very reason of its speechlessness. Then, again, the idea that the bodies of animals may be the depositories of departed human souls may have led to the worship of certain animals : some Californians for this reason refraining from the flesh of large game, because it is animated by the souls of past generations, so that the term 'eater of venison' is one of reproach among them. Or the prohibitions of shamans may have produced the result in some cases : the Thlinket Indians being found, for this reason, abstinent from whale's flesh or blubber, whilst both are commonly eaten by surrounding tribes. But, whatever the original causes may have been, tribes are found all over the world beset with a feeling of sinfulness with regard to the injuring, eating, or in any way offending different species of animals ; of which, as no extreme instance, may be mentioned the Fijian custom of presenting a string of new nuts, gathered expressly, to a land crab, 'to prevent the deity leaving with an impression that he was neglected, and visiting his remiss worshippers with drought, dearth, or death.'

Beyond, however, customs or ideas in prevention of acts prejudicial to their real or supposed welfare,

savage communities appear to have little idea of any quality in actions rendering them good or bad independently of consequences. Their prayers, their beliefs, and their mythology, alike go to prove this. That they will pray for such temporal blessings as health, food, rain, or victory, but not for such moral gains as the conquest of passion or a truthful disposition, to some extent justifies the inference that moral advancement forms no part of their code of things desirable. Their good and evil spirit or spirits are simply distinguished, where they are distinguished at all, as the causes respectively of things agreeable or disagreeable, as taking sides for or against struggling humanity, so that tribes which pay and sacrifice to the source of evil, to the neglect of that of good, cannot be said not to conform to reason. Their mythology, again, owes its very monotony mainly to the lack of moral interest to relieve and sustain it. As Mr. Grote, arguing from the mythology to the moral feeling of legendary Greece, observes, that such a sentiment as a feeling of moral obligation between man and man was 'neither operative in the real world nor present to the imaginations of the poets,' so it may be said not less emphatically of extant savage mythology. The Polynesian idea of a god, it has been well said, is mere *power* without any reference to goodness. The divine denizens of Avaiki (the Hades of the Hervey Islands), as they marry, quarrel, build, and live just

like mortals, so they murder, drink, thief, and lie quite in accordance with terrestrial precedents.<sup>1</sup> The unethical nature, however, of savage prayer or mythology is obviously not incompatible with the practical recognition of certain moral distinctions ; in the same Hervey Islands, for instance, the greatest possible sin was to kill a fellow-countryman by stealth, instead of in battle.<sup>2</sup>

Ideas, again, relating to a future state and the dependence of future welfare on the mode of life spent on earth, though they would seem to afford some insight into the moral sentiments of those holding them, in default of definition of the good or bad conduct so rewarded or punished, do not really prove much. In the following instances, which offer several shades of variety, there is scarcely any attempt at moral definition, and the native belief has, perhaps, been adulterated by Christian influence. The Good Spirit of the Mandans dwelt in a purgatory of cold and frost, where he punished those who had offended him, before he would admit them to that warmer and happier place, where the Bad Spirit dwelt and sought to seduce the happy occupants.<sup>3</sup> For the Charocs of California were two roads, one strewn with flowers, and leading the good to the bright Western land, the other bristling with thorns and briers, and leading

<sup>1</sup> Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Catlin, *North American Indians*, i. 157.

the wicked to a place full of serpents. The souls of Chippewyans drifted in a stone canoe to an enchanted island in a large lake; if the good actions of their life predominated they were wafted safely ashore; but if the bad, the canoe sank beneath their weight, leaving the wretches to float for ever, in sight of their lost and nearly won felicity. Wicked Okanagans, again, a Columbian tribe (and by the wicked are here specified murderers and thieves), went to a place where an evil spirit, in human form, with equine ears and tail, belaboured them with a stick.<sup>1</sup> The Fijian belief appears truer to savage thought; for whilst such of their dead as succeeded in reaching Mbula were happy or not, according as they had lived so as to please the gods, mortals subjected to special punishment were persons who had not their ears bored, women who were not tattooed, and men who had not slain an enemy.<sup>2</sup>

Taking, however, these instances at their best, there is nothing to show that the good or bad, rewarded or punished as above described, were really anything more than those who on earth had fought and hunted with courage or cowardice. Writers citing such beliefs do not always make allowance for the difference between the savage and the civilised

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, iii. 519; and other instances in the same work, chapter xii.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, p. 247.



moral standard. The code to be observed, says Schoolcraft, in order for the soul to pass safely the stream which leads to the land of bliss, 'appears to be, as drawn from their funeral addresses, fidelity and success as a hunter in providing for his family, and bravery as a warrior in defending the rights and honour of his tribe. There is no moral code regulating the duties and reciprocal intercourse between man and man.'<sup>1</sup> And if the good American Indians above mentioned were distinguished by any higher moral attributes than those of mere bravery and activity, it is difficult to account for the fact that, while Mexican civilisation consigned all who died natural deaths, good and bad alike, to the dull repose of Mictlan, reserving for the higher pleasures of futurity those who met their deaths in war or water, or from lightning, disease, or childbirth, tribes whose culture stood to that of Mexico as far removed as that of Polynesia from that of Europe, should have attained to the moral belief of the influence of earthly conduct reaching beyond the grave.<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing brief review of some of the real evidence on the subject would seem to indicate the conclusion that, in matters of morals, savages are

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 403, 404.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Brinton (p. 250) says that no ethical bearing was assigned to the myth of the future by the red race till they were taught by Europeans, and that all Father Brebeuf could find was, that the souls of suicides and persons killed in war lived apart from others after death.

neither so low as they have been painted by most writers nor so blameless as they have been portrayed by some. Their faults, such as their vindictiveness, their ingratitude, or their mendacity, might be predicated as easily of communities the most advanced in the world ; nor, in the face of the great neglect of precision of language in all narratives of travel, can any evidence of the utter ignorance of right and wrong among any tribe lay claim to the smallest scientific value. Of the African Yorubas, whilst one writer asserts that they are not only covetous and cruel, but ‘ wholly deficient in what the civilised man calls conscience,’ of the same people another says that they have several words in their language to express honour, and ‘ more proverbs against ingratitude than perhaps any other people.’<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps no description of savage character is fairer than Mariner’s of the Tongan Islanders. ‘ Their notions,’ he says, ‘ in respect to honour and justice are tolerably well-defined, steady, and universal ; but in point of practice both the chiefs and the people, taking them generally, are irregular and fickle, being in some respects extremely honourable and just, and in others the contrary, as a variety of causes may operate.’<sup>2</sup> But the justice of such remarks is lost in their vagueness, and their impartial generality would render them

<sup>1</sup> Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> Mariner, *Tongan Islands*, ii. 154.

of world-wide rather than of merely local or insular application.

If, therefore, in consideration of the unsatisfactory nature of the direct evidence, we resort to the indirect for the materials of our judgment, we shall perhaps not err widely from the truth if we say that average savage morality coincides very much with that of any contemporary remote village of the civilised world, where the fear of retaliation and disgrace is the chief preventive of great wickedness, and the natural play of the social affections the main safeguard of good order. The statement calls for but few limitations, that wherever travellers have explored, or missionaries taught, they have been able to detect customary laws regulating the relations of civil life, the orderly transference of property by exchange or inheritance, no less than the fixed succession to titles and dignities. They have found not only punishments for the prevention, but judicial ordeals for the detection, of crimes ; nor is it possible to believe that such penal laws can exist without ideas of wrongness attaching to the deeds they prohibit. But, besides the secular absolution involved in legal penalties, they have found not unfrequently a kind of spiritual purification by means of confession, penances, and fasting ; the practice of such confession alone proving that feelings of remorse are not foreign to savage races, difficult as it must always be to discriminate

between actual remorse for wickedness and the mere dread of contingent punishment. The greater social crimes, murder, theft, and adultery, though not recognized as morally worse than many acts of purely fanciful badness, are sufficiently prevented by the fear of revenge or of tribal punishment; and statements concerning indifference to the immorality of such actions either do not rest on good evidence or apply to extra-tribal, that is, to hostile relations. It seems, therefore, that fundamentally the two extremities of civilisation are ethically united; each having for its standard of morality the idea of its own welfare, and deriving a sense of moral obligation from a more or less vague dread of consequences. The fundamental identity of human emotions, of the operations of the feelings of love, fear, hope, and shame, appear to have produced, in different stages of culture, very similar moral feelings; nor is it conceivable that such feelings, howsoever much weaker, were ever radically different in the most remote antiquity.

## V.

*SAVAGE POLITICAL LIFE.*

FROM the accounts of travellers respecting the nature of government among uncivilised tribes it would not be a purely baseless theory to construct a scale of successive developments, ranging from people entirely destitute of political cohesion to people characterised by a quite despotic form of government, and agreeing in the main with the fishing or hunting and the agricultural stages of human advancement respectively. The savage idea of monarchy is represented by all the possible gradations between the most limited and the most absolute kind of government, and we should naturally look for the best types of the latter among tribes where geographical limitations or other causes have necessitated a stationary and agricultural life. We should expect to find the first germs of recognised leadership among people taught by war and the chase to appreciate superior strength or skill; and to see such temporary leaders pass into definite political

chiefs, when a more settled mode of life has given fixedness to ideas of property and made its defence more desirable. We might infer *à priori* that as men lived by hunting or fishing before they drove flocks, and drove flocks before they tilled the ground, so they lived in families before they lived in hordes, and in hordes before they lived in larger social aggregates. As representatives of the lowest stage of society, we might instance the Esquimaux, whom Cranz found 'destitute of the very shadow of a civil polity;' and we might pass from the hunting populations of America, who only choose rulers for the temporary purposes of war or the chase, to the despotic forms of government characteristic of the agricultural communities of Africa or Polynesia.

It is not, however, worth insisting on an induction which would be at the mercy of negative instances drawn from so large a surface as the whole known globe. To supply only one instance, in which the hunting state coexists with a somewhat advanced political system. Most South American tribes, who practised husbandry in addition to fishing and hunting to a far greater extent than North American tribes, were found, in point of social organisation, at a much lower level than the Northern tribes, it being possible to classify the latter into nations by words supplied by themselves, whilst in the South there were merely bands, and it was necessary to invent names for such



groups of bands as were allied together by language.<sup>1</sup> Facts are the test of theories, not theories of facts; and to insist on fitting facts to a theory is to fall into the error of the unskilful shoemaker, who transposes the task of fitting shoes to feet for the easier one of insisting that feet shall fit his shoes.

Without, therefore, attempting to elaborate theories about the development of political ideas from their rudest beginnings to their expression in mature and complex state-systems, it may not be labour lost to collect, within readable compass, some estimate of the notions of sovereignty, the political organisations, the relations of classes, and the peculiar institutions found among those communities of the earth who seem the best representatives of primitive manners and the least advanced from a state of primitive barbarism.

Statements concerning the total absence of civil government among savages, like statements concerning their total ignorance of religion, should be received with the reserve due to all propositions containing terms of expansive signification. It is noteworthy that it is generally tribes declared to be destitute of all religious feelings who in the same sentence or paragraph are described as also destitute of political ties; the statement that a tribe is entirely destitute of religion or of any civil polity being, in fact, often only an hyperbolic expression, intended to convey an

<sup>1</sup> Peschel, 428-31.

extreme idea of their barbarity. Bushmen, Californians, and Australians have severally been described as not only not recognizing any gods, but as not recognizing any chiefs; but subsequent research having proved that Bushmen, at least, possess an elaborate mythology, worshipping the ethereal bodies, and having their own distinctive myths concerning the Creation, suspicion is naturally aroused that all broadly negative assertions of the same sort may be but the results of insufficient observation.<sup>1</sup> 'The Caribs,' says one writer, 'had no chiefs; every man obeyed the dictates of his passions unrestrained by government or laws;' but according to another they lived in hordes of from forty to fifty persons, under a patriarchal form of government, and recognized a common chief whenever they went to war with their neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly, however, in countries where excess of numbers has not driven communities to improve their condition by raids against their neighbours, and where, consequently, military skill has attained no importance nor authority, much looser social bonds may be found than in places where a sense of property and of its value has arisen. Among people like the

<sup>1</sup> The collection of native Bushman literature is said to have reached eighty-four volumes! In Dr. Bleek's *Brief Account of Bushman Folk Lore*, and in the *Cape Monthly Magazine* for July 1874, some account is given of their mythology.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Bancroft, i. 771, and Humboldt, *Personal Narrative*, v. 269.

Esquimaux, the Lapps, or the Kamschadals, who live together in independent families, age is the only title to authority ; and if skill in seal-catching or in weather-lore procure for a Greenlander the deference of younger members of his race, he has no power to compel any of them to follow his counsels, and the only moral check to a refractory person is a possible refusal on the part of his fellows to share the same hut with him. If, in distant voyages, all the boatmen submit their kajaks to the guidance of their countryman who is best acquainted with the way, they are at perfect liberty to separate from him at pleasure. Beyond this slight tie they have, or had when Cranz wrote, no political union, no system of taxation or legislation of any kind, albeit they were not wanting in methods for the enforcement of certain moral duties and the prevention of certain moral wrongs. Of the Kamschadals, Steller tells us that they had no chief, but that everyone was allowed to live according to his pleasure ; yet that they chose leaders for their expeditions, who were without even power to decide private disputes, and that each *ostrog*, or family settlement, had its ruler (generally the oldest male), whose power to punish consisted solely in the right of verbal correction.<sup>1</sup>

From the condition of the Kamschadals or Esquimaux to the condition of Eastern Asia or Polynesia, where a king's name is often so sacred as

<sup>1</sup> Steller, *Kamschatka*, pp. 234, 355.

to be avoided altogether, as many gradations of civil authority exist as otherwise mark the difference of their respective civilisations. As the progress of an individual from infancy to old age is marked at each stage by a strict equipoise of good and evil, varying only in kind, so every upward step in the social advancement of mankind seems attended with some equivalent loss. Individual liberty is greatest where the social bond is the loosest; and people like the rude hunting tribes of Brazil, with only their hunting-grounds to defend and only temporary leaders to obey, undoubtedly enjoy greater freedom than is compatible with an agricultural life. As soon as tribes become settled and practise husbandry they are naturally impelled to seek the labour of slaves, which is a thing undesirable when a scanty subsistence is gained by the exertions of the chase. And when once the existence of slavery has established a difference between bondsmen and free, a way is open for all those artificial divisions of society into ranks and castes which seem in later times to belong to, nay, to constitute, the natural order of things.

It is, however, even at lower levels of general culture, often among tribes who are still in the hunting stage, that we find all traces disappear of that condition of freedom and equality once fondly imagined to belong to a 'state of nature.' Savages seldom constitute pure democracies, in the sense

either of all being equal or of all being free. Even where the monarchical power is quite rudimentary, well-marked distinctions serve to sever them into aristocracy and commonalty ; for the natural differences of capacity between men divide them, if less strongly, not less definitely than slavery. Superiority in courage, strength, sagacity, or experience, entitles a savage to much the same privileges that, in more civilised countries, are allotted to superiority in wealth or lineage. The conditions, however, of savage life cause merit, and not birth, to be the primary qualification both for chieftainship and nobility. Where military capacity is the sole basis of authority it follows that such authority only descends to sons, if they are as gifted as their parents with military prowess ; also, that any commoner may at any time become a noble if duly qualified for a leader, and that for the same reason even the female sex is not excluded from a career of political ambition. Among the Abipones women were often raised to the dignity of cacique or captainship of a horde ; nor is it rare to find them capable of occupying positions of similar dignity among tribes who, in other respects, treat their women as little better than beasts of burthen. The Iroquois women, for instance, on whom devolved all daily labour, such as planting the corn, cutting and carrying firewood, bearing all burdens when marching, had their representatives in the public

councils, enjoyed a veto upon declarations of war, and the right of interposing to bring about a peace.<sup>1</sup> Khond wives filled the same important post of mediators and peace-makers in the wars between the tribes of their husbands and their parents; and in Africa, where the position of women is almost uniformly one of slavery, they are ambassadors, traders, warriors, sometimes queens, besides tilling the ground, tending the herds, or working in mines.<sup>2</sup>

As many savages surround the entrance to their paradise with imaginary physical difficulties which only the bravest can overcome, so they frequently make admission to the rank of their nobility dependent on the performance of certain rites and ceremonies which sufficiently attest the endurance of the aspirant to social elevation. An Indian tribe on the Orinoco used to lay such a candidate on a hurdle, place burning coals beneath, and then cover him with palm-leaves all over, in order to make the heat more suffocating. Or, they would perhaps anoint him with honey, and leave him for hours tied to a tree at the mercy of the insects of those latitudes. The Abiponian plan was, to place a black bead on a tribeman's tongue and insist on his staying at home for three days, abstaining all the while from the

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *I. T.*, iii. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 51; Burton, *Dahome*, ii. 76; Pinkerton, xvi. 492.



ordinary pleasures of food, drink, and speech. Then on the eve of the day of his inauguration all the women of the horde would come to his tent, in uncouth attire, and lament loudly for the ancestors of the man who would fain be a noble. The next day, after galloping spear in hand on horses decorated with bells and feathers to the four quarters of the wind, he had to suffer the priestess of the ceremonies to shave a band on his head, three inches wide from the forehead backwards. A eulogy by the old woman, recording his warlike character and noble actions, concluding with a change of name befitting his change of rank, completed the ceremony of his installation. In ancient Mexico a candidate for the noble order of the Tecuhtli had to remain impassive whilst the high priest insulted him, whilst the assistant priests mocked him as a coward and tore his clothes from his body, and all this previous to a noviciate which lasted two years, and ended with four days of severe penance, fastings, and prayers.<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence, indeed, of equality among savages is one of those fictions which date from the time when writers drew on their own minds for a knowledge of anthropology: a fiction due to the same tendency which created for the Greeks their Elysian Fields, or for the Tongan islanders their Bolotu, leading them

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, ii. 194, and i. 414, 280. Compare Catlin, i. 170; and Grote's *Greece*, for an ordeal at Sparta.

to refer to the distant or the unknown the actualisation of those longings and ideals which the immediate surroundings of the world could not gratify. But the truth is, that so firmly among most savages has the idea become fixed of an essential difference in the nature of nobles and commons, of governors and governed, that the demarcations of their mundane economy are transferred into their speculations about the unseen world, and the inequalities of this life are often perpetuated in the next. New Zealanders believed that, whilst all spirits at death went as falling stars to Reinga, or the lower world, those of chiefs went first of all to heaven, where their left eye remained as a star.<sup>1</sup> Among the Zulus the snakes into which departed chiefs turn are easily distinguishable from those which embody commoner people.<sup>2</sup> As paupers and bondsmen were not admitted to Valhalla, so the 'masses' of the Tongan islanders have neither souls nor futurity. The Dahomans who call this world their plantation and the next their home, believe that in the latter 'the king is a king and the slave a slave for ever and ever.'<sup>3</sup> In Samoa not only had chiefs a larger hole than plebeians by which to descend to the under world, but also a separate habitation, serving as columns to support the temple of the underground god, 'and enjoying the best of food and all other

<sup>1</sup> Dieffenbach, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup> Callaway, ii. 196.

<sup>3</sup> Burton, *Mission*, ii. 157.

pleasures.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the Thlinkets burnt most bodies, that they might be warm in their new home, slaves were buried, as only deserving to freeze there ; and the Ahts, allotting a plenteous and sunny land in the sky to dead chiefs, relegate persons of low degree to a subterranean abode, where the houses are poor, the deer small, and the blankets thin.<sup>2</sup>

Devices have varied all over the world for marking the innate or acquired differences between men. The Tibboos of Africa denote difference of rank by different scars on the face ; but distinctions in dress or in titles have been the usual resort of the civilised and semi-civilised world alike ; and the highest Fijian chiefs, who would style themselves the 'subjects of Heaven only,' were prompted by the same natural vanity that gave birth among ourselves to the 'Knights of the Lion and Sun' or to the doctrine of the divine right of kings. But the most striking device in the lower grades of civilisation is the conscious invention and use of a different form of speech, amounting almost to the use of a different language, such as was the plan adopted by the Abipones to mark the difference between noble and plebeian. Persons advanced to the rank of nobles, or the Hocheri, were not only distinguished from their fellows by a change of name (men adding the suffix *in*, women *en*, to their former

<sup>1</sup> Turner, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Sproat, p. 213.

appellation), but the whole language spoken by the Hocheri was, by the insertion or addition of syllables, so altered from the vulgar tongue as to amount to a distinct aristocratic dialect.<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable how a similar practice prevails in widely remote parts of the globe. Among Circassians the language for the common people is one, that for the princes and nobility another; nor may the commonalty, though they understand it, venture to speak in the secret or court language.<sup>2</sup> 'As in the Malayan so in the Fijian language, there exists an aristocratical dialect,' and in some places 'not a member of a chief's body or the commonest acts of his life are mentioned in ordinary phraseology, but are all hyperbolised.'<sup>3</sup> In the Sandwich Islands 'the chiefs formed a conventional dialect, or court language, understood only among themselves. If any of its terms became known by the lower orders they were immediately discarded and others substituted.'<sup>4</sup> So, too, it is said that the island Caribs held their war councils in a secret dialect, known only to the chiefs and elders, into which they were initiated after attaining distinction in war.<sup>5</sup> Of the Society Islanders, Ellis tells us that 'sounds in the language composing the names of the king and queen could no

<sup>1</sup> Dobritzhoffer, *Abipones*, ii. 204, 441.

<sup>2</sup> Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, iv. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, p. 29.      <sup>4</sup> Jarves, *History of Hawaii*, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Brett, *Wild Tribes of Guiana*, p. 131.

longer be applied to ordinary significations'—a rule, he adds, which brought about many changes in the words used for things.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, in the Tongan islands something of the same kind also prevailed, for there we find that among the ways of paying special honour to the *Tooitonga*, or divine chief, was the employment, in speaking with him, of words devoted exclusively to his use, as substitutes for words of ordinary parlance.

Another method by which savages seek to mark the different grades of society is to signalise by an excess of demonstration their sorrow for the departure of persons of rank from among them. The custom of cutting off finger-joints in token of grief, from its prevalence among the Blackfeet Indians of North America, the Hottentots of South Africa, some tribes of Australia, and among the female portion of the Charruas of South America, may be considered to rank among the remarkable analogies of world-culture, when we find that a similar custom prevailed also among the Tongan Islanders whenever the death of a chief or a superior relation left his survivors comfortless. It is possible that the idea of propitiating angry gods by self-inflicted pains may have originally underlain many of the practices in after times regarded as mere manifestations of grief; for Captain Cook, speaking of the knocking out of front teeth at fune-

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, iii. 104.

rals, says that he always understood that this custom, like that of cutting off finger-joints, was not inflicted from any violence of grief so much as intended for a propitiatory sacrifice to the Atoa, to avert any possible danger or mischief from the survivors.<sup>1</sup> Thus Bushmen sacrifice the end joints of their fingers in sickness ; and during the illness of a Tooitonga his countrymen would seek to appease the god whose anger had caused the disease by the sacrifice daily of the little finger of a young relation. Mariner mentions two patriotic young Tonganers contesting with fist and foot the right thus to testify their regard for the lord of their country. It is easily conceivable how a practice, begun with the idea of conciliating the cause of a disease, might be continued for the purpose of conciliating the cause of death, and thus how (as in Fiji, where on the death of a king orders were issued that one hundred fingers should be cut off) an archaic superstition might pass into a meaningless formality.

There are, however, various other ways of exhibiting regret for departed nobility. In the Sandwich Islands, if a chief dies, the highest mark of respect his survivors can show is to strike out one of their front teeth with a stone. They also tattoo their tongues, deprive themselves of an ear, or shave their heads in fantastic designs. The latter is a world-wide

<sup>1</sup> Cook, *Voyages*, vii. 149.



symbol of sorrow ; more peculiar is the license to rob and burn houses and commit other enormities, which is, or was once, customary in Hawaii on the death of a chief. In Tonga and Tahiti it was customary on such occasions to cut the forehead and breast with sharks' teeth. Axes, clubs, knives, stones, or shells were employed freely for self-mutilation, when Finow, the King of Tonga, died ; his disconsolate subjects seeking to induce him, by the energy of their blows and the loudness of their prayers, to lay aside those suspicions of their loyalty which had prompted him to depart from Tonga to Bolotu.<sup>1</sup>

In modern civilised life such clear distinctions exist no longer, but there is at least one symbol of nobility which bears distinct traces of descent from uncivilised conceptions and usages. From the common practice of making a particular species of animal the totem, or representative, of a particular person, family, or tribe, arose probably the custom of distinguishing persons or families by crests, figurative of their patron animals. Both among the Kolushs, a fishing North American tribe, and their neighbours, the Haidahs, of Queen Charlotte's Island, the existence of an aristocracy of birth is proved from the presence of family crests among them, derived from figures of certain animals. Sir G. Grey noticed in

<sup>1</sup> Mariner, *Tongan Islands*, i. 380, 403.

Australia that each family adopted some animal or vegetable for its crest or Kobong,<sup>1</sup> and the hereditary nobility of the rude Thlinket Indians paint or carve the heraldic emblem of their clan on their houses, boats, robes, shields, or wherever else they can find room for it.<sup>2</sup> These few instances from the lower culture suffice to explain how animal figures, supposed to be expressive of the character of gods or warriors, came to be worn above their helmets; and how in the case of warriors at least, they gradually passed from their helmets to their shields, till they became part of armorial bearings, so highly prized and zealously transmitted from generation to generation. Newton, the author of the 'Display of Heraldry,' expresses his belief that the most ancient class of crests were taken from ferocious animals, which were regarded as figuratively representing the bearer and his pursuits. Certain it is that a far larger proportion of crests are derived from the animal world, from beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, and even insects, than from any other sublunary class of things.<sup>3</sup>

If now we turn to the savage conception of

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Australia*, ii. 228.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, i. 109

<sup>3</sup> In Papworth's *Ordinary of British Armorial*, no less than 124 pages are filled with the names of families who take their crest from some animal; 34 pages of families take their crests from the lion alone.

monarchy, we shall find that, wherever regal authority exists, it is sustained by a more or less strong belief in the divine origin of kings. The constitutional power of a king varies with the amount of divinity ascribed to him. As Russians of the sixteenth century held the will of their Grand Duke to be the will of God, and whatever he did to be done by the will of God,<sup>1</sup> so now in Africa the king of Loango is not only honoured as a god, but known by the same name as the Deity; namely, Samba. His subjects, accrediting him with power over the elements, pray to him for rain in times of drought. But as a king's divine origin means his divine right, or in other words his despotic power, his subjects only enjoy their lives and property on the tenure of his will, nor does there seem any moral limitation to his regal rights, save an obligation to make use of native products and dresses. The king of Dahomey, also revered as a god, appears to possess power over his countrymen which is only so far limited, that he cannot behead princes of the blood royal but must confine his vengeance against them to strangulation or slavery. Without his leave no caboceer may alter his house, wear European shoes, or carry an umbrella. Many kings of the Fiji Islands claimed a divine origin and asserted the rights of deities, their persons indeed being so religiously

<sup>1</sup> Herberstein, i. 32.

revered that even in battle their inferiors would fear to strike them. In Tahiti, Oro, the chief god, was called the king's father, and the same homage that was paid to the gods and their temples was paid also to the king and his dwellings, the homage, namely, of stripping to the waist. At his coronation the king asserted his dominion over the sea, by being rowed in Oro's sacred canoe and receiving congratulation from two divine sharks. So that it was no mere spirit of bombastic adulation that caused the king's houses to be identified, in popular parlance, with the Clouds of Heaven, the lights in them with the Lightning, or his canoe with the Rainbow; and if his voice was described as the Thunder, it doubtless was due to that common association of electricity with divinity, such as, for instance, prompted the savages of Chili to employ the same name for Thunder and for God. The ceremony of creating a Tahitian king consisted in girding him with a girdle of red feathers, which, as they were taken from the chief idols, were thought to be capable of conferring on the monarch the divine attributes of power and vengeance. That a human sacrifice was essential, not only at the commencement and completion of the girdle, but often for every piece successively added to it, confirms the experience of all ages and countries respecting the tendency of monarchical governments in barbarous times, a tendency which was never better appreciated than by

the ancient Japanese. For they used to make their prince sit crowned on his throne for some hours every morning, without suffering him to move his hands or feet, his head or eyes, or indeed any part of his body, believing that by this means alone could peace and tranquillity be preserved ; and 'if unfortunately he turned himself on one side or the other, or if he looked a good while towards any part of his dominions, it was apprehended that war, famine, fire, or some other great misfortune was near at hand to desolate the country.'<sup>1</sup> The Samoans thought also that some deadly influence radiated from the person of a king which could only be broken by aspersion with water.<sup>2</sup>

Inasmuch, however, as government of any kind is impossible without a subdivision of functions, and a king needs ministers to execute his will, the limitation of a council is almost inseparable from even the most absolute monarchy. A perfectly pure despotism exists, therefore, nowhere save in the definitions of the science of politics. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive an arbitrary government except as a synonym for total anarchy. In Loango, where the king nominates and displaces his officers at pleasure, and is absolute disposer of his subjects' lives and liberties, armed resistance is said to be often made against him, and his power to depend on his wealth and connections.

<sup>1</sup> Kempper, *Japan*; Pinkerton, vii. 718.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, p. 343.

Even a king of Dahomey said that he would imperil his life if he attempted to put down slavery and human sacrifices all at once, and it is said that whatever despotic acts may be witnessed in Africa they are all performed according to the common law of the land.<sup>1</sup> Among the Ashantees there are four men at the head of the nobility who exert great influence and serve to balance the monarchical power.<sup>2</sup> Among the Kaffirs, the chiefs of hordes, though with power of life and death, are restrained by the councillors they themselves nominate from attacking ancient usages ; and though the king is despotic, his despotism must not transgress known laws. The right of desertion also which practically belongs to every member of a horde, acts as a most effectual moral check upon tyrannical tendencies. Indeed, throughout Africa, the differentiation of functions of government, or the division of political labour, is carried to an extent which proves how little necessary connection there is between high political capacity and high culture in other respects. In Dahomey, where a man's life is less sacred than that of a fox in England, there are two chief ministers in constant attendance on the king, a third who is commander-in-chief of the army, and a fourth who superintends the due punishment of crimes.

<sup>1</sup> Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, *Mission*, ii. 367 ; and Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 318.



The existence, again, of grades of society, clearly marked by differences of functions and privileges, is itself a proof of a political organisation which implies limitations to the exercise of sovereignty. Classes with distinct rights and relations prove the constraint of a public law which even monarchs must recognise and respect. In Fetu in Africa, where frequently from four to five hundred slaves are killed at a king's funeral to serve him beyond the grave, there is a distinct class of freemen, with specific rights, sprung from the noble and slave classes. So, also, wherever the Malay race has settled in the Pacific, their feudal institutions and classes bear a striking resemblance to those of mediæval Europe. In the Fiji Islands, such classes are said to be so clearly defined as to amount almost to a system of caste. They are:—

1. The kings and queens.
2. Chiefs of large dependent islands or districts.
3. Chiefs of towns, and priests.
4. Warriors of low birth ; chiefs of carpenters and of turtle-fishers.
5. The people.
6. The slaves taken in war.

With which may be compared the Tongan social scale:—

1. The Tootonga and Veachi, chiefs of divine descent.
2. The king, or How.
3. The Egi, or nobles ; all persons in any way related to the two former classes.
4. The priests.
5. The Matabooles, attendants on chiefs, managers of ceremonies, preservers of records, &c.
6. The Mooas, or younger sons or brothers of the Matabooles.
7. The Tooas, or common people, who practise such arts as are not dignified enough to pass from father to son, as cookery, club carving, shaving, or tattooing.

These ranks are so fixed and unalterable that they form a prominent feature in the Tongan conception of a future world. Rank, not merit, constitutes the title of admission to Bolotu. All *noble* souls arrive there and enjoy a power similar but inferior to that of the original deities, being capable, like the latter, of inspiring priests living on earth. The Matabooles also gain admittance to Bolotu, but are unable to cause priestly inspirations. The souls of the Tooas dissolve with the body, as too plebeian to find a place in Paradise.

In the Sandwich Islands, there were formerly three aristocratic orders—the first consisting of the

king and queen, their relations, and the chief councillors ; the second of the chiefs of dependent districts ; the third of the chiefs of villages and of priests. Servile homage from all the inferior classes was paid to these three orders, but particularly to the priests and higher chiefs, their very persons and houses being accounted sacred, and the sight of them a peremptory signal for prostration. The people, as in mediæval Europe, were attached to the soil and transferred with it : but a strong customary law is said nevertheless to have regulated both the tenure of land and personal security.<sup>1</sup> If they had no voice in the government, they sometimes took part in public meetings, nor did the king ever resolve on matters of weight without the counsel of his principal chiefs. Yet government was more despotic in the Sandwich than in either the Society or the Fiji Islands. In Tahiti, public assemblies were held, in which the speakers did not hesitate to compare the state to a ship, of which the king was only the mast, but the landed nobility the ropes that kept it upright.<sup>2</sup>

Many savage tribes have succeeded, by speciously devised forms and ceremonies, in clothing arbitrary power with a cloak of legality, inviolably divine. The most remarkable of these devices is the famous institution of *tabu*, which, by transferring the divinity

<sup>1</sup> Jarves, *History of Hawaii*, pp. 21, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, iii. 97.

inherent in a king or chief to everything that comes in contact with him, early invested sovereign power with a most facile and elastic weapon of government. For the principle, that whatever a king touched became sacred to his use, supplied regal power with a most convenient immunity from the shackles of ordinary morality. A Fijian king, by giving his dress to an English sailor, enabled the latter to appropriate whatever food he chose to envelope with the train of his dress. Whatever house a Tahitian king or queen enters is vacated by its owners; the field they tread on becomes theirs; their clothes, their canoes, the very men who carry them, are invested with a sanctity the violation of which is death, and are regarded as precisely as holy as objects less ostensibly associated with earthly necessities.

But whether or not the institution of *tabu* was a clever invention of kings for increasing their power, its inevitable extension reacted in time as a limitation to it. This may be illustrated from the Tongan Islands, where the regal power, owing probably to a long constitutional struggle between the rival claims to sovereignty of birth and merit, stood in a most anomalous position. For the king did not belong to the highest rank of the people, his title depending in part on birth, but principally on his reputation for personal strength and military capacity. Tootonga and Veachi, the direct descendants of the gods who first

visited the island, or (as we may perhaps rationalistically translate it) the direct descendants of the earliest kings, occupied a higher status than the actual king, and were honoured with acknowledgments of their divinity which even the king himself had to pay. To the posterity of bygone monarchs the actual king stood in the relation of a peasant to a prince, being expected, like anyone else, to sit down on the ground when they passed, though they might be his inferiors in wealth nor possessed of any direct power save over their own families and attendants. The dignity of the Tooitonga survived not only in his not being circumcised nor tattooed as other men, and in peculiar ceremonies attending his marriage or his burial, but in the more substantial offerings of the firstfruits of the year at stated periodical festivals. The king used to consult him before undertaking a war or expedition, though often regardless of the counsel offered; and in reference to the person of either descendant of the gods the king was subject to tabu, or even in reference to ordinary chiefs in any way related to them. If he but touched the body, the dress, or the sleeping mat of a chief nearer related to Tooitonga and Veachi than himself, he could only exempt himself from the inconveniences incurred by the violation of tabu by the dispensation attached to the ceremony of touching, with both his hands, the feet of such supernatural chief, or of some one his equal in rank.

In the Society Islands, in consequence of the regal attribute inseparable from royalty of tabooing whatever ground it traversed, Tahitian kings became in course of time either entirely restricted to walking in their own domains, or subjected to the discomfort of a progress on servile shoulders over whatever district they wished to visit. So that tabu in both these instances acted as a limitation to the despotism of the king.

In Tahiti, however, the king's power was further limited by a custom which, extending as it did to all the noble classes, was perhaps the most anomalous institution in the world, whether as regards the theory or the practice of inherited rank. For the custom compelling a king or a noble to transfer all his titles and dignity to his firstborn son at the moment of his birth, whether instituted originally for securing an undisputed succession to the regency or due to a similar rude confusion of ideas, such as associates the sanctity of a man's origin with the sanctity of all he touches, carried the claims of primogeniture to a degree unknown either by the Jewish or the English law. 'Whatever might be the age of the king, his influence in the state, or the political aspect of affairs in respect to other tribes, as soon as a son (of noble birth) was born, the monarch became a subject; the infant son was at once proclaimed sovereign of the people; the royal name was conferred upon him, and



his father was the first to do him homage by saluting his feet and declaring him king.' The national herald, sent round the island with the infant ruler's flag, proclaimed his name in every district, and, if it were acknowledged by the aristocracy, edicts were thenceforth issued in his name. Not only the homage of his people, but the lands and other sources of his father's power, were transferred to the minor child, the father only continuing to act as regent till his child's capacity for government was matured.

The Fijians also have a peculiar custom, the institution of Vasu, which serves as a barrier both to regal and aristocratic oppression, and shows how, even among savages, the caprice of individuals is held in bondage by the traditions of the elders. Vasu signifies the common-law right of a nephew to appropriate to his own use anything he chooses belonging to an uncle or to anyone under his uncle's power. The king often availed himself of Vasu for his own benefit, it being customary for a nephew to surrender as tribute most of the legal extortions which his title of Vasu might enable him to levy. But the king himself was liable to Vasu ; for we are told that, 'however high a chief may rank, *however powerful a king may be*, if he has a nephew he has a master ;' for, except his lands and his wives, neither chief nor king possessed anything which his nephew might not appropriate at any moment. If, for instance, the uncle built a canoe for

himself, his nephew had only to come, mount the deck, and sound his trumpet shell, to announce to all the world a legitimate and indefeasible transfer of ownership. It is even said that on one occasion a nephew at war with his uncle actually supplied himself, unresisted, with ammunition from his enemy's stores. It is difficult indeed to divine the origin of so singular an institution, unless perhaps we regard it as surviving from a time when as in so many parts of the world nephews and not sons ranked as first in inheritance. In Loango the nephews of a deceased king become princes, whilst his sons descend to the commonalty; the throne of Ashantee passes not to a man's natural heir, but to his brother's or sister's son, and the same rule of descent prevails widely over the world.<sup>1</sup>

In two respects especially, savages may be accredited with having secured a certain stability for their institutions and saved them from some of the dangers which have been the bane of more civilised countries. It entitles them to no slight praise that they have generally so adjusted the relations of the temporal and spiritual powers as to prevent their clashing, and have taken its sting from taxation by making the day of taxpaying a day of public rejoicing. In the Tongan Islands (before the custom was abolished by

<sup>1</sup> See Klemm, iii. 330, for the custom in Loango; Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 43, for that in Ashantee; and Peschel, *Races of Man*, p. 235, for other instances.

a revolutionary king) the tax of the annual payment of firstfruits to the Tootonga was almost forgotten in the grand ceremonies with which it was associated, and tributes received from inferiors by chiefs came as much as possible in the way of presents, whilst so far away as the Slave Coast, the feast of tax-paying is the great recurring Saturnalia of the year. In Dahomey income-tax is 'paid under a polite disguise,' each man bringing a present to the king in proportion to his rank, and at an annual festival.<sup>1</sup> The feast lasts a whole month; public plays take place every four or five days; singers chant the king's praises and the historical traditions of the country; and the whole concludes with the ever popular African entertainment of human sacrifice, on an unlimited scale. In Fiji also taxpaying was associated with all that the people love; the time of its taking place being 'a high day, a day for the best attire, the pleasantest looks, and the kindest words; a day for display.' The Fijian carried his tribute with every demonstration of joyful excitement, paying it in with songs and dances to a king who received it with smiles and who provided a feast for the happy taxpayers. So among the Kaffirs the presence of the four royal<sup>2</sup> taxgatherers in the town was the signal for feasting and amusements, and when payment had been at last

<sup>1</sup> *Savage Africa*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, p. 40.

demanding by them they were conducted out of the town, as they had been welcomed into it, by dancers and musicians.<sup>1</sup>

In all the lower communities of the globe the priest, as the Shaman who can invoke rain, who can cause or cure diseases, who can detect the unknown thief, or read the result of a coming battle, may be revered for his power as a sorcerer, but he seldom enters into the scheme of the body politic as an efficient political force. In the Sandwich Islands, where priestly power was more developed than elsewhere, the priesthood, though not merely an hereditary body and possessed of much property in men and lands, but recipients of the same servile homage that was paid to the highest chiefs, occupied, nevertheless, a subordinate position to the governing class. As the nation retained a chief priest who had charge of the national god, so each chief retained his own family priest, whose function it was to follow him to the battle-field carrying his war-god and to direct the sacred rites of his house. In New Zealand the tohunga (or priest) was 'not significative of a class separated from the rest by certain distinctions of rank,' but was an office open to anyone.<sup>2</sup> In the Tongan Islands, a priest had no respect paid to him beyond what was due to his family rank, owing to the fact that the title to the priesthood was dependent on the accident of

<sup>1</sup> Santo, *Eastern Ethiopia*. Pink, xvi. 698.    <sup>2</sup> Dieffenbach, ii. 100.

inspiration by some god. Whenever a priest invoked the gods (and it was generally on a person of the lower classes that such inspiration fell), the chiefs, nay, even the king himself, would sit indiscriminately with the common people in a circle round him, 'on account of the sacredness of the occasion, conceiving that such modest demeanour must be acceptable to the gods.'<sup>1</sup> Whatever the priest then said was deemed a declaration of the god, and, in accordance with a confusion of the human voice and the divine, not unknown elsewhere, the oracle, in speaking, actually made use of the first person, as though the relation of himself to the god were not merely one of delegated authority, but of real and complete identification. Except, however, on such special occasions, a Tongan priest was distinguished by no particular dress, nor invested with any official privileges. In Fiji, also, the priests ranked below the principal chiefs; and the chief priest, though, as in Tahiti, it was his office to perform the ceremony which introduced the monarch to regal dignity, seems in nowise to have interfered afterwards with the sovereignty of his temporal lord. It is remarkable that the power of priestcraft increases

<sup>1</sup> Mariner, *Tonga Islands*, i. 100. It has generally been thought best, in referring to books written some time ago, to employ the past tense where possibly the present would still be applicable. Wherever the present is used, it must be taken to refer not necessarily to the actual present but to the present of the original authority for the fact.

with the increase of civilisation ; ultimately serving to arrest and retard the growth of which it is at once a symptom and a measure.

If from the foregoing data, collected from the best accredited missionary sources, it is permissible to speak in general terms of primitive political life, it would appear that the social organisation of the lower races stands at a far higher level than too rapid an inspection would lead a critic to suspect. Their institutions are such as to presuppose as much ingenuity in their evolution as sagacity in their preservation. Their despotism is never so unlimited but that it recognises the existence of a customary code beside and above it ; nor is individual liberty ever so unchecked as to outweigh the advantages or imperil the existence of a life in common. In short, the subordination of classes, the belief in the divine right of kings and in differences ordained by nature between nobles and populace, the principle of hereditary government (often so firmly fixed that not even women are excluded from the highest offices), the prevalence of feudalism with its ever-recurring wars and revolutions, not only prove an identity of social instinct which is irrespective of latitude or race, but prove also among the lower races the existence of a capacity for self-government, which is disturbing to all preconceptions derived from accounts of their manners and superstitions in other relations of life.



## VI.

*SAVAGE PENAL LAWS.*

IF, interpreting the present by the past, and taking as our standard of the past contemporary savage life, we endeavour to gain some insight into the origin of those legal customs and ideas which are so interwoven with our civilisation, the statements of travellers relating to the judicial institutions of savage tribes gain considerably in interest and value. For savage modes of redressing injuries, of assessing punishment, of discovering truth, reveal not a few striking points of resemblance and of contrast to the practices prevalent in civilised communities; whilst they serve at the same time to illustrate the natural laws at work in the evolution of society.

The different stages of progress from the lowest social state, where the redress of wrongs is left to individual force or cunning, to the state where the wrongs of individuals are regarded and punished as wrongs to the community at large, may be all ob-

served in the customs of modern or recent savage tribes. Yet instances where the redress of wrongs is purely a matter of personal retaliation are not really numerous, occurring chiefly where the rulership of a tribe is ill-defined and is an exercise of influence rather than authority, as among the Esquimaux, the Kamschadals, and some Californian and other American tribes. In such states of society, though some political sovereignty is vested in the heads of the different families, they have but little power either to make commands or to inflict punishments, so that self-help is for individuals the first rule of existence. But generally this deficiency in the legal protection of life and property is made up for by a principle which lies at the root of savage law—the principle, that is, of collective responsibility, of including in the guilt of an individual all his blood relations jointly or singly.

This consideration of crimes as family or tribal rather than as personal matters, (the duty of satisfying the family or tribe of anyone injured devolving upon the family or tribe of the wrongdoer,) must have tended in the earliest times to withdraw attention from the merely personal aspect of injuries and to direct it to their more social relations. The common test of likelihood is no bad guide in ethnology; and the difficulty of conceiving any society of men, even the most savage, living together absolutely unaffected by, or uninterested in, wrongs done by one of their

members to another, is only equalled by the difficulty of finding credible records of any such community. Even in Kamschatka, where the head of an ostrog had only the power to punish verbally, a man caught stealing was held so infamous, that no one would befriend him, and he had to live thenceforth alone without help from anybody ; whilst, if the habit seemed inveterate, the thief was bound to a tree, and his arms bound by a piece of birch-bark to a pole stretched crosswise ; the bark was then ignited, and the man's hands, thereby branded, marked his character in future to all who might be interested in knowing it.<sup>1</sup> Even in so rude a tribe as the Brazilian Topanazes, a murderer of a fellow-tribesman would be conducted by his relations to those of the deceased, to be by them forthwith strangled and buried, in satisfaction of their rights ; the two families eating together for several days after the event as though for the purpose of reconciliation.<sup>2</sup> And several other tribes, destitute of any chiefs possessing the power or right to judge or punish, have fixed customs regulating such offences as theft or murder. Thus the Nootka Indians avenge or compound for punishable acts, though their chiefs have little or no voice in the matter. Where, as among the Haidahs of Columbia, crime likewise has no legal punishment, murder being simply an affair to be settled with the robbed

<sup>1</sup> Steller, *Kamschatka*, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> Eschwege, *Brazilien*, i. 221.

family, we may detect the beginnings of later legal practices in the occasional agreement among the leading men to put to death disagreeable members of the tribe, such as medicine-men, and other great offenders.<sup>1</sup> So that wherever, from causes of war or otherwise, tribal chieftaincy has become at all fixed and powerful, we may expect to find the chief or chiefs called upon to settle disputes between individuals or families ; and thus gradually a way would be found for the addition of judicial functions to the more primary duties of government.

From this natural tendency of submitting disputed claims or the measure of redress to the decision of a single chieftain or of several, the personal right of retaliation would soon become a tribal one ; and though ignorant of the science of jurisprudence, most savage tribes seem early to have learnt to treat torts or offences against an individual as crimes or offences against the community, taking as their standard of punishment the measure of the wrong done to the individual. The transfer of sovereignty from smaller units to the tribe is clearly marked in instances where the chiefs of a tribe try crimes and decide guilt, but leave the punishment of the offender to the discretion of the injured persons or family ; of which the following are characteristic illustrations.

According to Catlin, every Indian tribe he visited

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races of Pacific States*, i. 168.

had a council-house in the middle of their village, where the chiefs would assemble, as well for the investigation of crimes as for public business, giving decisions after trial concerning capital offences, but leaving the punishment to the nearest of kin, to be inflicted by him under the penalty of social disgrace, but free from any control by them as to time, place, or manner.<sup>1</sup> So also on the Gold Coast, where suits lay at the decision of the caboceros or chiefs, the original conception of murder appears clearly, in the practice for the murderer to get generally from the relations of the deceased some abatement of the pecuniary penalty affixed by law to his crime; they being the only persons the criminal had to agree with, and free to take from him as little as they pleased, whilst the king had no pretence to any share of the fine except what he might get for his trouble in exacting it.<sup>2</sup> In the Central African kingdom of Bornou, a convicted murderer was handed over to the discretionary revenge of the murdered man's family.<sup>3</sup> In Samoa, again, the chief of a village and the heads of families, forming as they did the judicial as well as legislative body, might condemn a culprit to sit for hours naked in the sun, to be hung by his head, to take five bites from a pungent root, or to play at ball with a prickly sea-urchin, according to

<sup>1</sup> Catlin, ii. 240.    <sup>2</sup> Pinkerton. *Bosman, Guinea*, xvi. 406.

<sup>3</sup> Denham, *Discoveries in Africa*, i. 167.

the nature of his offence. But one punishment was especially remarkable, as showing how the right of punishment originally belonging to the family may survive in form long after it has in reality passed to a wider political union. This was the punishment of binding a criminal hand and foot and carrying him suspended from a prickly pole run through between his hands and feet, to the family of the village against which he had transgressed, and there depositing him before them, as if to signify that he lay at their mercy.<sup>1</sup> And in the villages of Afghanistan, where an assembly of the elders act as the judges of the people, a show is always made of delivering up the criminal to the accuser and of giving the latter the chance of retaliating, though it is perfectly understood that he must comply with the wishes of the assembly. This instance, therefore, illustrates the two distinct methods of legal punishment in process of actual transition from one to the other.<sup>2</sup>

If then the original standard of punishment was just that amount of severity which would suffice to prevent individuals from seeking satisfaction by their private efforts and avenging their own wrongs, it is intelligible that penal customs should be cruel in proportion to their primitiveness. It is distinctly stated that in Samoa fines in food and property gra-

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Polynesia*, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> Elphinstone, *Caubul*, ii. 223.



dually superseded more severe penalties. Yet, in the face of the very varying penalties found in most different conditions of culture, it is a subject on which it is difficult to lay down any rule. Sometimes murder alone is a capital crime, sometimes theft, witchcraft, and adultery as well; sometimes all or some of them are commutable by fine. Nor does it seem that, wherever an offence is punishable by fine, the penalty has been mitigated from one originally more severe. In some cases the chief judges may have found their interest in assessing a more humane, and to themselves more profitable, forfeit than that of life or limb; but savages, living in the most primitive conditions, seem to have been led by their natural reason alone to observe fitting proportions between crime and retribution. For their punishments, in default generally of imprisonment or banishment, are not as a rule gratuitously cruel: though as occasional punishments among the Caffres are mentioned the application of hot stones to the naked body, or exposure to the torments of ants;<sup>1</sup> and slavery, so common a punishment in Africa, far from being essentially cruel, is rather a sign of an amelioration of manners, of a reasonable willingness to take the useful satisfaction of a man's labour in lieu of the useless one of his life. Severity of the penal code would rather seem to be a concomitant of growth

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, *South Africa*, ii. 351.

in civilisation, of stronger and deeper moral feelings, of a sense of the failure of milder means, than of a really primitive savagery. On the whole continent of America no savage tribe ever approached the Aztecs in cruelty of punishment, nor is it among people of a ruder type of culture that we should ever look to find some form of death the penalty alike for the lightest as for the gravest crimes, for slander no less than for adultery, for intoxication as much as for homicide.<sup>1</sup>

It might naturally be inferred that, because the laws of savages are unwritten and depend on usage alone for their preservation, therefore they are entirely uncertain and arbitrary. This, however, is not often the case. On few points are the statements of travellers less vague than on the details of native penal customs; a fact which is only compatible with their being both well known and regularly enforced. What the Abbé Froyart says of the natives of Loango, may be said of all but the lowest tribes: 'There is no one ignorant of the cases which incur the pain of death, and of those for which the offender becomes the slave of the person offended.'<sup>2</sup> The laws of the Caffre tribes are said to be a collection of precedents, of decisions of bygone chiefs and councils, appealing solely to what has been customary in the past, never to

<sup>1</sup> See Bancroft, ii. 454-472, for the penal code of the Aztecs.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton. Froyart, *History of Loango*, xvi. 581.

the abstract merits of the case. There appears, it is said, to be no uncertainty whatever in their administration, the criminality of different acts being measured exactly by a fixed number of cattle payable in atonement. And the customs reported from Ashantee manifest a similar sense of the value of fixed penalties. An Ashantee is at liberty to kill his slave, but is punished if he kills his wife or child ; only a chief can sell his wife or put her to death for infidelity ; whilst a great man who kills his equal in rank is generally suffered to die by his own hands. If a man brings a frivolous accusation against another, he must give an entertainment to the family and friends of the accused ; if he breaks an Aggry bead in a scuffle, he must pay seven slaves to the owner. A wife who betrays a secret forfeits her upper lip, an ear if she listens to a private conversation of her husband.<sup>1</sup> Savage also as is the kingdom of Dahomey, arbitrary power is so far limited, that no sentence of death or slavery, adjudged by an assembly of chiefs, can be carried out without confirmation from the throne ; and such a sentence ' must be executed in the capital, and notice given of it by the public crier in the market.' It is no paradox to say, that human life, even in Dahomey, enjoys more efficient legal protection at this day than it did in England in times long subsequent to the signature of Magna Charta.

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, *Voyage to Africa*, p. 319.

The forms of legal procedure manifest often no less regularity than the laws themselves. In Congo the plaintiff opens his case on his knees to the judge, who sits under a tree or in a great straw hut built on purpose, holding a staff of authority in his hand. When he has heard the plaintiff's evidence he hears the defendant, then calls the witnesses, and decides accordingly. The successful suitor pays a sum to the judge's box, and stretches himself at full length on the ground to testify his gratitude.<sup>1</sup> In Loango, the king, acting as judge, has several assessors to consult in difficult cases, and the suit begins by both parties making a present to the king, who then proceeds to hear in turn plaintiff, defendant, and witnesses. In default of witnesses the affair is deferred, spies being sent to gather ampler information and ground for judgment from the talk of the people. In the public trials of Ashantee 'the accused is always heard fully, and is obliged either to commit or exculpate himself on every point.' On the Gold Coast a plaintiff would sometimes defer his suit for thirty years, letting it devolve on his heirs, if the judges, the caboceros, from interested motives, delayed to grant him a trial and thus obliged him to wait, in hopes of finding less impartial or else more amenable judges in the future.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 242, in Merolla's *Voyage to Congo*.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton. Bosman, *Guinea*, xvi. 405. For an account of a savage law suit, see Maclean's *Caffre Laws and Customs*, pp. 38-43.

Several rules of savage jurisprudence betray curiously different notions of equity from those of more civilised lands. The Abbé Froyart was shocked that, on the complaint of the missionaries to the King of Loango of nocturnal disturbances round their dwellings, the king should have issued an ordinance making the disturbance of the missionaries' repose a capital crime. The reason the natives gave him for thus putting slight offences on an equality with grave ones was, that, in proportion to the ease of abstinence from anything forbidden, or of the performance of anything commanded was the inexcusableness of disobedience and the deserved severity of punishment. Again, impartiality with regard to rank or wealth, which is now regarded in England as a self-evident principle of justice, as a primary instinct of equity, is by no means so regarded by savages; for not only is murder often atoned for according to the rank of the murderer, as on the Gold Coast or in old Anglo-Saxon law, on the basis, apparently, of the value to the individual of his loss in death, but such difference of rank sometimes enters into the estimate of the due punishment for robbery. Thus the Guinea Coast negroes thought it reasonable to punish rich persons guilty of robbery more severely than the poor, because, they said, the rich were not urged to it by necessity, and could better spare the money-fines laid on them. Caffre law distinguishes

broadly and clearly between injuries to a man's person and injuries to his property, accounting the former as offences against the chief to whom he belongs, and making such chief sole recipient of all fines, allowing only personal redress where a man's property has been damaged. Thus Caffre law divides itself into lines bearing some analogy to those of our criminal and civil law: such offences as treason, murder, assault, and witchcraft entering into the criminal code, and constituting injuries to the actual sufferer's chief; whilst adultery, slander, and other forms of theft, enter as it were into the civil law, as injuries for which there are direct personal remedies.<sup>1</sup>

The almost universal test among savages of guilt or innocence, where there is a want or conflict of evidence, is the ordeal. At first sight it would appear that such a practice presupposes a belief in a personal supernatural deity—that it is, in fact, as it was in the middle ages, a judgment of God, an appeal to His decision. If so, a theistic belief would be of wide extent, for the ordeal is common to very low strata of culture; but, in consideration of the savage belief in the personality and consciousness of natural objects or in spirits animating them, it would seem best to regard the ordeal simply as a direct appeal to the decision of such objects or spirits themselves, or through such objects to the decision of dead

<sup>1</sup> Maclean, *Caffre Laws*, p. 34.



ancestors, a means for the discovery of truth that would naturally suggest itself to the shamanic class. For it is at the peril of his life that a shaman, or priest, asserts a title to superior power and wisdom; and as his skill is tested in every need or peril that occurs, he is naturally as often called upon to detect hidden guilt as to bring rain from the clouds, or drive sickness from the body. Driven, therefore, to his inventive resources by the demands made upon him, he thinks out a test which he may really consider just, or which, by proving fatal to the suspected, may place alike his ingenuity and the verdict beyond the reach of challenge. Such ordeals not only often elicit true confessions of guilt by the very terror they inspire, so that, according to Merolla, it sufficed for the Congo wizards to issue proclamations for a restitution of stolen property under the threat of otherwise resorting to their arts of detection, but they are valuable in themselves to the shamanic class from being easily adapted to the destruction of an enemy and offering a ready channel for the influx of wealth. A comparison of some of these tests, which decide guilt not by an appeal to the fear of falsehood, as an oath does, but by what is really an appeal to the verdict of chance, will display so strong a family resemblance, together with so many local peculiarities, as to make the origin suggested appear not improbable.

Bosman mentions the following ordeals as customary on the Gold Coast in offences of a trivial character:

1. Stroking a red-hot copper arm-ring over the tongue of the suspected person.
2. Squirting a vegetable juice into his eye.
3. Drawing a greased fowl's feather through his tongue.
4. Making him draw cocks' quills from a clod of earth.

Innocence was staked on the innocuousness of the two former proceedings, on the facility of the execution of the two latter. For great crimes the water ordeal was employed, a certain river being endowed with the quality of wafting innocent persons across it, how little soever they could swim, and of only drowning the guilty.<sup>1</sup>

Livingstone mentions the anxiety of negro women, suspected by their husbands of having bewitched them, to drink a poisonous infusion prepared by the shaman, and to submit their lives to the effect of this drink on their bodies; a judicial method strikingly similar to the test of bitter waters ordained in the Book of Numbers to decide the guilt of Jewish wives whom their husbands had reason to suspect of infidelity. The Barotse tribe, in Africa, who judge of

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 259.

the guilt of an accused person by the effect of medicine poured down the throat of a dog or cock, manifest more humanity in their system of detection.<sup>1</sup>

But perhaps the best collection of African ordeals is that given in the voyage of the Capuchin Merolla to Congo in 1682. In case of treason a shaman would present a compound of vegetable juices, serpents' flesh, and such things to the delinquent, who would die if he were guilty, but not otherwise; it being of course open to the administrator to omit at will the poisonous ingredients. Innocence was further proved, if a man suffered nothing from a red-hot iron passed over his leg, if he felt no bad effects from chewing the root of the banana, from eating the poisoned fruit of a certain palm, from drinking water in which a torch of bitumen or a red-hot iron had been quenched, or from drawing a stone out of boiling water. The crime of theft was proved by the ignition or the non-ignition of a long thread held at either end by the shaman and the accused, on the application of a red-hot iron to the middle. Among the Bongo tribe a murder is often traced to its source, by making plastic representations so closely resembling the victim, that at a feast given with dances and songs the criminal will generally manifest a desire to leave the company.<sup>2</sup>

So great in general is the dread of such ordeals,

<sup>1</sup> Livingstone, *South Africa*, pp. 621, 642.

<sup>2</sup> Schweinfurth, *Heart of Africa*, i. 285.

that they often actually serve as the most potent instruments for the discovery of crimes. In the kingdom of Loango was kept a fetich in a large basket before which all cases of theft and murder were tried; and when any great man died, a whole town would be compelled to offer themselves for trial for his murder by kissing and embracing the image, in the fear of falling down dead if they fancied themselves guilty. In the space of one year Andrew Battel witnessed the death of many natives in this way.

In the Tongan Islands the king would call the people together, and, after washing his hands in a wooden bowl, command everyone to touch it. From a firm belief that touching the bowl, in case of guilt, would cause instantaneous death, refusal to touch it amounted to conviction.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Fijians, distinguished in so many points from other savages by originality of conception, the ordeal of the scarf was the one of greatest dread, extorting confession, it is said, as effectually as a threat of the rack might have done. The chief or judge, having called for a scarf, would proceed, if the culprit did not confess at the sight of it, to wave it above his head, till he had caught the man's soul, bereft of which the culprit would be sure ultimately to pine away and die.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, iii. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, p. 250.

Among the ordeals of the Sandwich Islanders was one called the 'shaking-water.' The accused persons, sitting round a calabash full of water, were required in turns to hold their hands above it, that the priest, by watching the water, might detect, when it trembled, the presence of guilt. On the Society Islands the ordeal only differed slightly, the priest reading in the water the reflected image of the thief, after prayer to the gods to cause his spirit to be present. The mere report that such a measure had been resorted to often led to timely restitutions of stolen goods.<sup>1</sup>

In Sardinia there is, or was, a well, the waters of which were supposed to blind a person suspected of robbery or lying, if he were guilty; otherwise to strengthen and improve his sight.<sup>2</sup>

The above instances, remarkable for their practical efficiency no less than for their puerile ingenuity, suffice to illustrate the nature of savage judicial ordeals and the extreme variety displayed in their invention. The identity of many ordeals among different people, such as that by fire or water, is probably due to the readiness with which such tests would suggest themselves to the imagination. 'He who, holding fire in his hand,' said the Indian law, 'is not burnt, or who, diving under water, is not soon forced up by it, must be held veracious in his testimony upon oath;' and

<sup>1</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 378; iv. 423.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 690.

the same was the idea in China and Africa as well as in Europe. That these ordeals, like others, were originated by the class of shamans, and were traditionally preserved by them as one of the sources of their power, derives probability from their close analogy to the judicial ordeals invented and administered by the priests of early Europe. The trial by the hallowed morsel, which decided guilt by the effects of swallowing a piece of hallowed bread or cheese; the trial by the cross, when both accuser and accused were placed under a cross with their arms extended, and the wrong adjudged to him who first let his hands fall; or the trial by the two dice, when innocence was proved if the first dice taken at hazard bore the sign of the cross—though they may have been metamorphosed heathen ordeals, seem rather to have been of pure Christian invention; nor are they distinguished in any point above corresponding practices on the coast of Guinea, except in this, that they were called the judgments of God, and implied some belief in a personal spirit, who could and would control the verdict of chance to prove guilt or innocence.<sup>1</sup>

As in Europe after the fifteenth century the oath of canonical purgation gradually displaced the older

<sup>1</sup> Wuttke, *Geschichte des Heidenthums*, p. 102, speaking of savage ordeals, says: 'Wir können nicht sagen, dass ein monotheistischer Gedanke hier vorhanden sei; die Menschen glauben an die Gerechtigkeit des Schicksals noch nicht an einen gerechten Gott.'



system of ordeals, so it would seem that in savage life too the judicial oath succeeds in order of time the judicial ordeal. An oath implies a prayer, an invocation of punishment in case of perjury; and a man's conscience is evidently more directly appealed to where his guilt is tested to some extent by his own confession, than where it is decided by something quite external to himself.

The witness in a modern English law court, invoking upon himself divine wrath if he swear falsely by the book he kisses, preserves with curious exactitude the judicial oath of savage times and lands. Our English judicial oath, in use though no longer compulsory, has withstood all attacks upon it, for the insuperable practical reason that the majority of men are more afraid of swearing falsely than of speaking falsely, and that the fewer scruples a man feels about lying, the more he is likely to feel about perjury. The notion that one is morally worse than the other is probably due to the imaginary terrors which, associated time out of mind with perjury, have given it a legal existence apart, and made it, so to speak, a kind of lying-extraordinary, a crime outside the jurisdiction of humanity.

In Samoa, as at Westminster, physical contact with a thing adds vast weight to the value of a man's evidence. Turner relates how in turn each person suspected of a theft was obliged before the chiefs to

touch a sacred drinking-cup, made of cocoa-nut, and to invoke destruction upon himself if he were the thief. The formula ran : 'With my hand on this cup, may the god look upon me and send swift destruction if I took the thing which has been stolen.' 'Before this ordeal the truth was rarely concealed,' it being firmly believed that death would ensue, were the cup touched and a lie told. Or the suspected would first place a handful of grass on the stone or other representative of the village god, and laying his hands on it, say, 'In the presence of our chiefs now assembled, I lay my hand on the stone ; if I stole the thing, may I speedily die,' the grass being a symbolical curse of the destruction he invoked on all his family, of the *grass* that might grow over their dwellings. The older ordeal of fixing the guilt upon a person to whom the face of a spun cocoa-nut pointed when it rested, shows how ordeals may survive in use after the attainment of judicial oaths and contemporaneously with them.<sup>1</sup>

To understand the binding force of oaths among savages it is necessary to observe how closely connected they are with savage ideas of fetichism and their belief in witchcraft as a really active natural force. The hair or food of a man, which a savage burns to rid himself of an enemy, is no mere symbol of that enemy so much as in some sense that enemy

<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Polynesia*, pp. 215, 241, 293.

himself. The physical act of touching the thing invoked has reference to feelings of casual connection between things, as in Samoa, where a man, to attest his veracity, would touch his eyes, to indicate a wish that blindness might strike him if he lied, or would dig a hole in the ground, to indicate a wish that he might be buried in the event of falsehood. In Kam-schatka, if a thief remained undetected, the elders would summon all the ostrog together, young and old, and, forming a circle round the fire, cause certain incantations to be employed. After the incantations the sinews of the back and feet of a wild sheep were thrown into the fire with magical words, and the wish expressed that the hands and feet of the culprit might grow crooked ; there being apparently a connection assumed between the action of the fire on the animal's sinews and on the limbs of the man. And in Sweden there are still cunning men who can deprive a real thief of his eye, by cutting a human figure on the bark of a tree and driving nails and arrows into the representative feature. But perhaps the best illustration of this feeling is the practice of the Ostiaks, who offer their wives, if they suspect them of infidelity, a handful of bear's hairs, believing that, if they touch them and are guilty, they will be bitten by a bear within the space of three days. It would seem that oaths appeal to the same idea of vicarious or representative influence, a real but invisible connection being

imagined between the actual thing touched and the calamity invoked in touching it.

Instances from the oaths of other tribes will manifest the operation of the same feeling as that which makes grass a symbol of utter ruin in Samoa, or some bear's hairs of a bear's bite among the Ostiaks.

North Asiatic tribes have in use three kinds of oaths, the first and least solemn one being for the accused to face the sun with a knife, pretending to fight against it, and to cry aloud, 'If I am guilty, may the sun cause sickness to rage in my body like this knife!' The second form of oath is to cry aloud from the tops of certain mountains, invoking death, loss of children and cattle, or bad luck in hunting, in the case of guilt being real. But the most solemn oath of all is to exclaim, in drinking some of the blood of a dog, killed expressly by the elders and burnt or thrown away, 'If I die, may I perish, decay, or burn away like this dog.'<sup>1</sup> Very similar is the oath in Sumatra, where, a beast having been slain, the swearer says, 'If I break my oath, may I be slaughtered as this beast, and swallowed as this heart I now consume.'<sup>2</sup> The most solemn oath of the Bedouins, that of the cross-lines, is also characterised by the same belief which appears in the case of the slain beast affecting with sympathetic decay anyone guilty of perjury. If a Bedouin cannot convict a man he suspects of theft it

<sup>1</sup> Klemm, iii. 68. <sup>2</sup> Wuttke, *Geschichte des Heidenthums*, p. 103.

is usual for him to take the suspected before a sheikh or kady, and there to call upon him to swear any oath he may demand. If the defendant agrees, he is led to a certain distance from the camp, 'because the magical nature of the oath might prove pernicious to the general body of Arabs were it to take place in their vicinity.' Then the plaintiff draws with his sekin, or crooked knife, a large circle in the sand with many cross-lines inside it, places his right foot inside it, causes the defendant to do the same, and makes him say after himself, 'By God, and in God, and through God, I swear I did not take the thing, nor is it in my possession.' To make the oath still more solemn, the accused often puts also in the circle an ant and a bit of camel's skin, the one expressive of a hope that he may never be destitute of camel's milk, the other of a hope that he may never lack the winter substance of an ant.<sup>1</sup>

Firm, however, as is the savage belief that the consequences of perjury are death or disease, a belief which shows itself not unfrequently in actually inferring the fact of perjury from the fact of death, escape from the obligation of an oath is not unknown among savages. On the Guinea Coast recourse was had to the common expedient of priestly absolution, so that when a man took a draught-oath, imprecating death on himself if he failed in his promise, the priests

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins*, p. 73.

were sometimes compelled to take an oath too, to the effect that they would not employ their absolving powers to release him. In Abyssinia a simpler process seems to be in vogue ; for the king, on one occasion having sworn by a cross, thus addressed his servants : ' You see the oath I have taken ; I scrape it clean away from my tongue that made it.' Thereupon he scraped his tongue and spat away his oath, thus validly releasing himself from it.<sup>1</sup>

It does not appear that savages refine on their motives for punishment, the sum of their political philosophy in this respect being rather to inflict penalties that accord with their ideas of retribution deserved for each case or crime, than to deter other criminals by warning examples. The statement that New Zealanders beat thieves to death, and then hung them on a cross on the top of a hill, as a warning example, conflicts with another account which says that thieves were punished by banishment.<sup>2</sup> But, subject to the influence of collateral circumstances, savage penal laws appear to be as fixed, regular, and well-known, as inflexibly bound by precedent, as often improved by the intelligence of individual chiefs, as penal laws are in more advanced societies. The case of an Ashantee king, who, limiting the number of lives to be sacrificed at his mother's funeral, resisted all importunities and appeals to precedent for a greater

<sup>1</sup> Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, ii. 98.   <sup>2</sup> Klemm, iv. 334



number, is not without parallel in reforms of law. Thus we may read of one Caffre chief who abolished in his tribe the fine payable for the crime of approaching a chief's krall with the head covered by a blanket; whilst another chief made the homicide of a man taken in adultery a capital offence, thus transferring the punishment for the crime from the individual to the tribe.<sup>1</sup>

In legal customs analogous to those of the savage or rather semi-civilized world, the legal institutions of civilized countries, their methods of procedure, of extorting truth, of punishing crimes, seem to have their root and explanation. For this reason the same interest attaches to the legal institutions of modern savages as attaches to the laws of the ancient Germanic tribes or to the ordinances of Menu, the interest, that is, of descent or relationship. The oath, for instance, of our law courts presupposes in the past, if not in the present, precisely the same state of thought as the oath customary in Samoa; and the same virtue inherent in touching and kissing the Bible in England, or the cross in Russia, leads the Tunguse Lapp to touch and then kiss the cannon, gun, or sword, by which he swears allegiance to the Russian crown.<sup>2</sup> The Highlander of olden time, kissing his dirk, to invoke death by it if he lied, is a similar instance of the survival of the primitive

<sup>1</sup> Maclean, pp. 124, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Klemm, iii. 69.

conception, that physical contact with a thing creates a spiritual dependence upon it. The ordeal, so lately the judicial test of witchcraft, still retains a foothold of faith among our country people, as is proved by the fact that not longer ago than 1863 an octogenarian died in consequence of having been 'swum' as a wizard at Little Hedingham, in Essex. And, lastly, the English law that no person could inherit an estate from anyone convicted of treason, or from a suicide, shows how naturally the savage law of collective responsibility, in reality so unjust, may survive into times of civilisation, whilst the ignominy still attached to the blood-relations of a criminal shows with what difficulty the feeling is eradicated.

## VII.

*EARLY WEDDING CUSTOMS.*

AMID the wonderful uniformity which pervades the thoughts and customs of the world some strange reversals here and there occur, as where white is the colour significative of grief, or where to turn one's back on a person is a sign of reverence. But perhaps few such reversals are more curious than the custom of the Garos, in India, who consider any infringement of the rule that all proposals of marriage must come from the female side as an insult to the *mahári* to which the lady belongs, only to be atoned for by liberal donations of beer and pigs from the man's *mahári* to that of the 'proposee.' More curious, however, than even this is their marriage ceremony ; at which, after the bride has been bathed in the nearest stream, the wedding party proceed to the house of the bridegroom, '*who pretends to be unwilling and runs away, but is caught and subjected to a similar ablution, and then taken, in spite of the resistance and counterfeited grief and lamentations of his parents, to the bride's house.*'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 64.

An exactly analogous custom as regards the bride's behaviour at her wedding is sufficiently well known ; and if it has been correctly interpreted as the survival, in form and symbol, of a system of capturing wives from a neighbouring tribe, there must have been a time when among the Garos a husband could only have been obtained in a similar way. The improbability of this suggests the possibility of some other explanation underlying the reluctance, feigned or real, with which it is common in savage life for a girl to enter upon the paths of matrimony, and for the show of resistance with which her friends oppose her departure with her husband.

In many instances this peculiar feature of primitive life appears as simply the outcome of feelings and affections which are the same, howsoever different in expression, in savage as in civilised lands. The conviction that there is an utter absence of anything like love between children and their parents, or between men and women, in the ruder social communities, is so strong and has been so often dwelt upon, that in speculations on this subject there is a tendency and danger of altogether overlooking the influence of natural affection in the formation of customs. It is needful, therefore, to preface the present chapter with a brief reference to the express statements of missionaries and travellers ; for if it can be shown that there is such a thing as affection between

parents and children, the inference is fair that neither would parents part with their children nor children leave their parents without mutual regret, when the children are married.

Of the Fijians, so famous for their cannibalism and their parenticide, it is declared to be 'truly touching to see how parents are attached to their children and children to their parents.'<sup>1</sup> Among the Tongans, who would sacrifice their children cruelly for the recovery of the sick, children were 'taken the utmost care of.'<sup>2</sup> The New Zealanders were not guiltless of infanticide, yet 'some of them, and especially the fathers, seemed fond of their children.'<sup>3</sup> The Papuans of New Guinea manifested 'respect for the aged, love for their children, and fidelity to their wives.'<sup>4</sup> In Africa, Mungo Park says of the Mandigoes: 'The maternal affection is everywhere conspicuous among them, and creates a corresponding return of tenderness in the child.'<sup>5</sup> Among the Eastern Ethiopians were women who lived a wild life in the woods; yet the testimony is the same: 'However barbarous these people be by nature, they yet are not devoid of feeling for their children; these they rear with nicest care, and for their provision strive to amass what property they can.'<sup>6</sup> Yoruba 'children are much beloved by

<sup>1</sup> Seemann, *Mission to Viti*, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Mariner, ii. 302.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis, iii. 349.

<sup>4</sup> Earle, *Indian Archipelago*, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 872.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 697.

both parents.’<sup>1</sup> Love for their children unites the greater number of the Bushmen for their whole lives.<sup>2</sup> In North America the Thlinket Indians ‘treat their wives and children with much affection and kindness.’<sup>3</sup> Among the Greenlanders, says Cranz, ‘the bonds of filial and parental love seem stronger than amongst any other nations.’ Their fondness for their children is great; parents seldom let them out of their sight, and mothers often throw themselves in the water to save a child from drowning. In return ingratitude towards their aged parents is ‘scarcely ever exemplified among them.’<sup>4</sup> Of the natives of Australia, Sir G. Grey says that they ‘are always ardently attached to their children,’ and similar testimony has been borne to the parental affection even of the Tasmanians.<sup>5</sup>

But, lest it should be thought that these evidences are drawn from the higher savagery, let appeal be made to the case of savages who confessedly belong to the lowest known types of mankind, the Andaman Islanders, the Veddahs, and the Fuejians.

In reference to the first it is said that ‘the parents are fond of their children, and the affection is reciprocal.’<sup>6</sup> The Veddahs are not only ‘kind and constant to their

<sup>1</sup> Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Lichtenstein, ii. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Portlock’s *Voyage*, p. 260, in Bancroft, i. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Cranz, i. 149, 150, 174, 218.

<sup>5</sup> *Travels in Australia*, ii. 355; and Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, pp. 10, 78-98.

<sup>6</sup> *Transactions of Ethnological Society*, Prof. Owen, ii. 36.



wives,' but 'fond of their children;'<sup>1</sup> whilst Mr. Parker Snow saw among the Fuejians 'many instances of warm love and affection for their children;'<sup>2</sup> so that if in the sequel we find daughters at their marriage displaying a real or simulated repugnance to their fate, the fact need not appear to us of such extreme mystery as it otherwise might, nor as one in which natural affection can play no part.

A recent Italian writer on the primitive domestic state says that 'la passione viva d'amore che suole attribuirsi ai popoli primitivi . . . é una pura illusione.'<sup>3</sup> But happily for the primitive populations, their lot is far from being really thus unbrightened by love, though with them, as with the rest of the world, it is a frequent cause of wars and quarrels, interfering especially with the savage custom of infant betrothal, and leading to elopements in defeat of parental contracts. It is peculiar to neither sex. A Tahitian girl, love-stricken, but not encouraged, led her friends, by her threats of suicide, to persuade the object of her affections to make her his wife.<sup>4</sup> The Tongans had a pretty legend of a young chief, who, having fallen in love with a maiden already betrothed to a superior, saved her, when she was condemned to be killed with the other relations of a rebel, by hiding her in a cavern he had found, whence they finally effected their joint

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of Ethnological Society*, ii. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 264.

<sup>3</sup> *Nuova Antologia*, Jan. 1876.

<sup>4</sup> Ellis, i. 268.

escape to Fiji.<sup>1</sup> New Zealand mythology abounds in love-tales. There is the tale of Hinemoa and Tutane-kai, which begins with stolen glances, and ends in a nocturnal swim on the part of Hinemoa to the island, whither the music of her lover guided her. There is the tale also of Takaranji and Raumahora—of Takaranji, who, though besieging her father in his fortress, consented to present both of them with water in their distress. ‘And Takaranji gazed eagerly at the young girl, and she too looked eagerly at Takaranji . . . and as the warriors of the army of Takaranji looked on, lo, he had climbed up and was sitting at the young maiden’s side ; and they said among themselves, “O comrades, our lord Takaranji loves war, but one would think he likes Raumahora almost as well.’”<sup>2</sup>

Nor would it be fair to argue, because in most savage tribes the hard work of life devolves upon the women, that therefore there is an entire absence of affection in savage households, whether polygamous or otherwise, during their continuance. It is scarcely a hundred years ago that in Caithness ‘the hard work was chiefly done, and the burdens borne, by the women ; and if a cottier lost a horse, it was not unusual for him

<sup>1</sup> Mariner, i. 271-7.

<sup>2</sup> These stories are worth reading at length in Grey’s *Polynesian Mythology*, pp. 233-246, 296-301. See also pp. 246-273, 301-313. For a good Zulu love-story see Leslie’s *Among the Zulus*, pp. 275-284 ; and, for a Tasmanian love-legend, Bonwick, p. 34.

to marry a wife as the cheapest substitute.'<sup>1</sup> The Fuejians, whose condition Captain Weddell felt compelled to describe as that of the lowest of mankind, and whose women did all the work, gathering the shell-fish, managing the canoes, and building the wigwams, are said to have shown 'a good deal of affection for their wives,' and care for their offspring.<sup>2</sup> Among the Fijians, who made their women carry all the heavy loads and do all the field-work, and who remonstrated with the Tongans for their more humane treatment of them, not only have widows been known to kill themselves if their relatives refused to do the duty which custom laid upon them—namely, of killing them at their husbands' burial—but 'even widowers, in the depth of their grief, have frequently terminated their existence when deprived of a dearly beloved wife.'<sup>3</sup> In India, Abor husbands treated their wives with a consideration that appeared 'singular in so rude a race.'<sup>4</sup> In America the lot of a woman was generally one of hardship; yet, says Schoolcraft, 'the gentler affections have a much more extensive and powerful exercise among the Indians than is generally believed.'<sup>5</sup> Carib husbands are said to have had much love for their wives, like as it was to a straw fire,

<sup>1</sup> Smiles, *Self-help*, p. 325; Pennant's *Tour*, in Pinkerton, iii. 89: 'Their tender sex are their only animals of burden.'

<sup>2</sup> Weddell, *Voyage to South Pole*, 1825, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Seemann, p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> Dalton, *Bengal*, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> *Indian Tribes*, v. 131-2.

except with respect to the first wife they married.<sup>1</sup> Of the Thlinkeet Indians, characterised by great cruelty to prisoners and other marks of much barbarity, it is said that 'there are few savage nations in which the women have greater influence or command greater respect.'<sup>2</sup> 'It is one of the fine traits,' says Schweinfurth of the cannibal Niam-Niam, 'that they display an affection for their wives which is unparalleled among natives of so low a grade . . . a husband will spare no sacrifice to redeem an imprisoned wife.'<sup>3</sup> Though against this evidence there is much of a darker character to be set, the above instances will suffice to demonstrate the real existence, the real operation, among some of the rudest representatives of our species, of ordinary feelings of love and affection. As in geology so in ethnology it holds true, that the action of known existing causes is sufficient to account for much that is obscure in the past and for all that is strange in the present.

Having so far cleared the ground as to be justified in postulating the existence of ordinary feelings of affection between parents and children, and between men and women, as *veræ causæ*, or real forces, even in the lowest known savage life, let us pass to the inference that at no time are those feelings more likely to be called into play than at a time when the daughter

<sup>1</sup> Rochefort, *Les Îles Antilles*, p. 544.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, i. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Heart of Africa*, i. 472 ; ii. 28.

of a family is about to leave her parents, and perhaps her clan, to live henceforth with a man whom she may not even know, or knows only to dislike.<sup>1</sup> In China, where on the wedding-day the bride is locked up in a sedan-chair, and the key and chair consigned to the bridegroom, who may not see her before that day, a traveller once witnessed a separation between the bride and her family. 'All the family appeared much affected, particularly the women, who sobbed aloud; the father shed tears, and the daughter *was with difficulty torn from the embraces of her parents* and placed in the sedan-chair.'<sup>2</sup> It seems more likely in this case that the reluctance and resistance were real, than that they were merely the symbols, conventionally observed, of a system of wife-capture. But in many instances it is impossible to distinguish a real from a feigned grief. A witness of the marriage ceremonies among the Tartars, who describes the bride and her girl friends as raising piteous lamentations beforehand, says that the poor girl either was or appeared to be a most unwilling victim.<sup>3</sup>

Jenkinson, one of the earliest English travellers in Russia, noticed the same custom there, but thought it affectation. On the day of marriage the bride

<sup>1</sup> The best illustration of this side of savage life, of the sorrow felt by a bride on leaving her home, occurs in the *Finnish Kalewala*, in Schiefner's German translation, pp. 126-132, 147-150.

<sup>2</sup> Dobell, *Travels in Kamtschatka, &c.*, ii. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Holderness, *Journey from Riga*, p. 233.

would in nowise consent to leave the house to go to church, but would resist, strive, and weep, only suffering herself to be led there by force, with her face covered, to hide her simulated grief, and making a great noise, as though she were sobbing and weeping, all the way to the scene of her wedding.<sup>1</sup> But a modern French writer ascribes some reality to the custom, mentioning that traditional songs are still sung in which the young bride addresses words of regret and sorrow to her parents in the midst of her preparations for the nuptial feast.<sup>2</sup> Before this last ceremony she is accustomed to go the round of her village, with a woman who calls for the sympathy of her hearers for the young girl whose care-free existence is about to be exchanged for the troubles and anxieties of married life.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, if in China and Russia, much more among uncivilized tribes, would the life in prospect for a bride, unless perchance her wishes coincided with her parents' interest, cause her to leave the home of her youth with something more than those 'light regrets'

<sup>1</sup> Hakluyt, i. 360; Pierson, *Russlands Vergangenheit*, pp. 202, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Marmier, *Sur la Russie*, ii. 154. 'Au moment de se mettre en marche pour l'église, elle soupire, pleure, refuse de sortir. Tous ses parents essayent de la consoler,' &c.

P. 149: 'Rien ne donne une idée plus touchante du caractère du peuple russe que ces paroles de regret et de douleur que la jeune fiancée adresse à ses parents au milieu des joyeux préparatifs de la fête nuptiale.'

<sup>3</sup> Marmier, i. 127, 229.



which cause tears to commingle with smiles even in England. Greenland girls, says Cranz, do nothing till they are fourteen but sing, dance, and romp about; but a life of slavery is in store for them as soon as they are fit for it; 'while they remain with their parents they are well off, but from twenty years of age till death their life is one series of anxieties, wretchedness, and toil.'<sup>1</sup> Marriage is a fate they would not seek, but cannot avoid. Should they, however, not oppose it, they must enter upon it with reluctance, not with alacrity.

It is worth noticing the reason Cranz gives for this reluctance, because, in so far as modern savages may be taken to represent primitive life, it proves the existence, in that condition, of notions, howsoever they may have arisen, which are exactly analogous to those we connote by the word 'modesty.' When the two old women, commissioned to negotiate with a girl's parents on behalf of a young man, first give a hint of their purpose by praise of him and of his family, 'the damsel directly falls into the greatest apparent consternation and runs out of doors, tearing her bunch of hair; for *single women always affect the utmost bashfulness and aversion to any proposal of marriage, lest they should lose their reputation for modesty*, though their destined husbands be previously well assured of their acquiescence.'<sup>2</sup> Not, indeed, that the reluc-

<sup>1</sup> Cranz, i. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 146.

tance is always feigned, for sometimes the name of her proposed husband causes her to swoon, to elope to a desert place, or to effectually free herself from further addresses, by cutting off her hair in token of grief. Should, however, her parents consent to the match, the usual course is for the old women to go in search of her, 'and *drag her forcibly into the suitor's house*, where she sits for several days quite disconsolate, with dishevelled hair, and refuses nourishment. When friendly exhortations are unavailing she is compelled by force, and even blows, to receive her husband.'

In Greenland, then, as in China, the form of capture resolves itself either into a most unequivocal reluctance to leave home or to a reluctance so to do feigned from feelings of bashfulness. Nor about this bashfulness does it appear that Cranz was in error, for Egede agrees substantially with him, telling how the bridegroom, when he has obtained her parents' and relations' consent, sends some old women *to carry away the bride by force*; 'for though she ever so much approves of the match, yet *out of modesty she must make as if it went against the grain, and as if she were much ruffled at it; else she will be blamed and get an ill name.*' When brought to his hut, therefore, she sits in a corner with dishevelled hair, 'covering her face, being bashful and ashamed.' For '*a new-married woman is ashamed of having changed her condition for*

*a married state;*'<sup>1</sup> and this feeling occurs again plainly in South-Eastern Russia, where, on the eve of marriage, the bride goes round the village, throwing herself on her knees before the head of each house and *begging his pardon.*<sup>2</sup>

This last statement of Egede is most important, since it proves the existence of feelings which seem really to contain the keynote of the symbol of capture, however slight the reasons for suspecting their presence in particular cases. The sentiment prevalent in Greenland has also been noticed among the Tartars, for an authentic witness writes, 'that if one tells a Tartar girl that it is said she is about to be married, she runs immediately out of the room and will never speak to a stranger on that subject.'<sup>3</sup> It has been justly observed that it is unlikely feminine delicacy should diminish with civilization. But the principle *impuris omnia impura* will meet the difficulty. The Aleutian Islander, says a Russian writer, 'knows nothing of what civilized nations call modesty. He has his own ideas of what is modest and proper, while we should consider them foolish.'<sup>4</sup> For, addicted though he is to the worst vices of the Northern nations, he will yet blush to address his wife or ask her for anything in the presence of strangers, and will be bashful if

<sup>1</sup> Egede, pp. 143-145.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers, *Book of Days*, ii. 721.

<sup>3</sup> Holderness, p. 234.

<sup>4</sup> Dall, *Alaska*, pp. 396, 399.

he be caught doing anything unusual, as, for instance, buying or selling directly for himself without the agency of an intermediary.

Characteristic as it is of savages to express all the feelings they share with us with an energy intensified a hundredfold, as is shown abundantly in our different manner of grieving for the dead, it is not surprising if we find their feelings of the kind in question display themselves in extraordinary and often ludicrous rules of social intercourse. The same rule, that an Aleutian husband and wife might not be seen speaking together, led Kolbe to think that no such thing as affection existed among the Hottentots. But this was simply for the same reason that prohibited the Hottentot wife from ever setting foot in her husband's apartment in the hut, or the latter from ever entering hers except by stealth.<sup>1</sup> Among the Yorubas a woman betrothed by her parents is so far a wife that pre-matrimonial unfaithfulness is accounted adultery; 'yet conventional modesty forbids her to speak to her husband, or even to see him, if it can be avoided.'<sup>2</sup> A minority of the Afghan tribes are careful to keep up a similar reserve between the time of betrothal and marriage, so that, as among the warlike Eusofyzes, no man can see his wife till the completion of the marriage

<sup>1</sup> Kolbe, in Medley's translation, i. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Bowen, *Central Africa*, p. 393.

ceremony.<sup>1</sup> Among the Mongols not only may bride and bridegroom not see each other within the same period, but the bride is not allowed to see his parents.<sup>2</sup> In Russia it was once a disgrace for a young man to propose directly to a lady, and between the day of settling the dowry with her parents and the day of marriage he was strictly forbidden the house of his betrothed.<sup>3</sup> But many tribes continue such reserve even after marriage. A Circassian bridegroom must not see his wife or live with her without the greatest mystery: 'this reserve continues during life. A Circassian will sometimes permit a stranger to see his wife, but he must not accompany him.'<sup>4</sup> In parts of Fiji which are still unmodified by Christian teaching it is 'quite contrary to ideas of delicacy that a man ever remains under the same roof with his wife or wives at night.' If they wish to meet, they must appoint a secret rendezvous.<sup>5</sup> And a similar law of social decorum prevails, or prevailed, among the Spartans, Lycians, Turcomans, and some tribes of America,<sup>6</sup> though the processes of thought which led to such customs lie lost, perhaps hopelessly, behind the darkness of a thousand ages.

<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone, *Caubul*, i. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, i. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Herberstein, i. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Pinkerton, *Modern Geography*, ii. 524.

<sup>5</sup> Seemann, *Mission to Fiji*, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> Si J. Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, pp. 75-76.

The custom, again, of deserting a husband and returning home for a longer or shorter period, as found among the Votyaks of Russia and the Mezeyne Arabs, may possibly be traced to feelings of the same description, for we read that among the Hos, 'after remaining with her husband for three days only, it is *the correct thing for the wife to run away* from him and tell all her friends that she loves him not, and will see him no more;' it is also, *correct* for the husband to manifest great anxiety for his loss, and diligently to seek his wife, and 'when he finds her *he carries her off by main force.*'<sup>1</sup> This second show of resistance, customary also among the Votyaks, seems difficult to explain as a traditional symbol of a system of capture.

It is possible that in similar primitive ideas originated the curious restrictions on the intercourse between a man and his mother-in-law, or between a woman and her father-in-law. On the theory that these are remnants of the real anger shown by parents when capture was real, it is not easy to account for the fact that in Fiji the restriction as to eating or speaking together existed not only between parents and children-in-law, or brothers and sisters-in-law, but between brothers and sisters of the same family, and also between first cousins.<sup>2</sup> In Suffolk 'it is (or was) very remarkable that neither father nor mother of

<sup>1</sup> Dalton, *Bengal*, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, p. 136.



bride or bridegroom come with them to church ' at the weddings of agricultural labourers ; and it is said that at Russian weddings also the parents are forbidden to be present, though the priest sometimes waives the prohibition in favour of persons of the higher classes.<sup>1</sup>

There is, therefore, no *à priori* inconceivability against the theory that kicking and screaming at weddings, where they do not arise from genuine reluctance, are really a tribute to conventional propriety ; that, at the marriages of the uncivilized, just as at their burials, shrieks and violence take the place of tears, and a vigorous struggle argues a modest deportment. The evidence of quite independent eye-witnesses confirms this interpretation. The Thlinkeet Indian, on his wedding-day, goes to the bride's house and sits with his back to her door. All her relations then ' raise a song, to allure the coy bride out of the corner where she has been sitting ; ' after which she goes to sit by her husband's side ; but '*all this time she must keep her head bowed down,*' nor is she allowed to take part in the festivities of the day.<sup>2</sup>

Atkinson, who was witness of the first visit of a Kirghiz bridegroom to his wife, declares that the latter could only be persuaded by the pressure of her female relations to see him at all ; ' after a display of

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, *Book of Days*, ii. 733 ; Holman, *Travels*, i. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Dall, *Alaska*, p. 415.

much coyness she consented, and was led by her friends to his dwelling.'<sup>1</sup>

In Kamschatka the original etiquette was for women to cover their faces with some kind of veil when they went out, and if they met any man on the road whom they could not avoid, to stand with their backs to him until he had passed. They would also, if a stranger entered their huts, turn their face to the wall or else hide behind a curtain of nettles.<sup>2</sup> Kam-schatka, however, being the last place where one would have looked for such prudery, it is possible that the feelings of the Greenlanders were also operative in the marriage customs of the Kamschadals. These were rather extraordinary, the form of capture being anything but a mere symbol for an aspirant to matrimony. Such an one, having looked for a bride in some neighbouring village (seldom in his own), would offer his services to the parent for a fixed term, and after some time would ask for leave to seize the daughter for his bride. This obtained, he would seek to find her alone or ill-attended, the marriage being complete on his tearing from her some of the coats, fish-nets, and straps with which from the day of proposal she was constantly enveloped. This was never an easy matter, for she was never left alone a single instant, her mother and a number of old women accompanying her every-

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Eth. Soc.*, i. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Krashenninonikov, *Kamtshatka*, p. 215.

where, sleeping with her, and never losing her out of sight upon any pretext whatever. Any attempt to execute his task entailed upon the suitor such kicking, hair-pulling, and face-scratching, at the hands of this female body-guard, that sometimes a year or more would elapse before he was entitled to call himself a husband; nay, there is record of one pertinacious bachelor who found himself at the end of seven years, in consequence of such treatment, not a husband, but a cripple. If he were disheartened by repeated failures he incurred great disgrace and lost all claim to the alliance; and if the bride continued obdurate from real dislike, he was ultimately expelled from the village.<sup>1</sup> But, however well-disposed towards him she might be, she had always to simulate refusal as a point of honour, and proof was always required 'that she was taken by surprise and made fruitless efforts to defend herself.'<sup>2</sup>

The Bushmen, again, generally betroth their daughters as children without consulting them; but should a girl grow up unbetrothed her consent to be married is as necessary as that of her parents to her

<sup>1</sup> 'Beschwerte sich aber die Braut, dass sie den Brautigam durchaus nicht haben noch sich von ihm erobern lassen wollte, so musste er aus dem Ostrog fort.'—Steller, *Kamtschatka*, p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> Lesseps, *Travels in Kamtschatka* (translated), ii. 93. The account here given of the Kamschadal marriage customs is from Krashenninikov (translated by Grieve), *Travels in Kamtschatka*, pp. 212–214 (1764); Steller, pp. 343–349 (1774); Lesseps, ii. 93 (1790). They differ in some minor details.

lover's suit, 'and on this occasion his attentions are received with an affectation of great alarm and disinclination on her part.'<sup>1</sup>

If, then, Greenlanders, Kamschadals, Thlinket Indians, and even Bushmen, carry their notions of propriety to the extent asserted by eye-witnesses, it is scarcely surprising to find very similar rules of etiquette among the more advanced Zulus of Africa or Bedouins of Arabia in their wedding ceremonials; especially when we are told that in some parts Bedouin women sit down and turn their backs to any man they cannot avoid on the road, and refuse to take anything from the hands of a stranger.<sup>2</sup> 'The principal idea of a Kaffir wedding seems to be to show the great unwillingness of the girl to be transformed into a wife,' for which reason a Zulu wife simulates several attempts to escape.<sup>3</sup> Both the Arabs of Sinai and the Aenezes enact the form of capture to the greatest perfection; among the latter 'the bashful girl' runs from the tent of one friend to another till she is caught at last, whilst among the former she acquires permanent repute in proportion to her struggles of resistance. And if a Sinai Arab marries a bride belonging to a distant tribe, she is placed on a camel and led to her husband's camp escorted by women: during which procession '*decency*

<sup>1</sup> Burchell, ii. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins*, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Leslie, pp. 117, 196.

*oblige her to cry and sob most bitterly.*'<sup>1</sup> Also, among the modern Egyptians, 'if the bridegroom is young, one of his friends has to *carry him* part of the way to the hareem, to *show his bashfulness.*'<sup>2</sup> So that where the carrying of the bride or bridegroom is not merely due to the same feelings that caused our own ancestors to add solemnity to their weddings by such singular sights as blue postilions, it appears in many cases to be nothing more than a prudish way of saying, that matrimony is and ought to be an estate forced upon reluctant victims, not entered upon by voluntary agents. The early Christian Church said the same; but where the saint and the savage meet in sentiment they differ in expression.

Were it not for some of the concomitant and incidental signs, the bowed or veiled head, the dishevelled hair, it might be said that the positive statements of Cranz, Egede, Burchell, and other writers arose from malobservation or from pure mistake. This objection, therefore, is of little avail; and however difficult it may be to account for the presence of such sentiments among tribes of so rude a type as the Esquimaux, the Kamschadals, and the Bushmen, the fact remains, that in the cases above cited the 'form of capture' is explicable as having its origin in primitive conceptions of what is due to delicacy; as being, in fact,

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt, *Notes*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 217.

the original expression of them in the language of pantomime so common to savages.<sup>1</sup> And the presence of such feelings of delicacy may be often suspected, even where they are not directly mentioned, in the ceremony of capture; as, for instance, in the African kingdom of Futa, where the form of capture prevails in the usual way, but where we have the indirect evidence that for months after marriage the bride never stirs abroad without a veil, and that Futa wives are 'so bashful that they never permit their husbands to see them unveiled for three years after their marriage.'<sup>2</sup>

There is, however, no reason to press this explanation too far, nor to account it the only efficient cause. Quite as potent, and perhaps a more natural one, is dislike and disinclination on the part of the bride, which compels the bridegroom to resort to force. The conditions of savage life are a sufficient explanation of this, irrespective of any old custom of capturing wives out of a tribe by reason of a prejudice against marrying within it. A man proposes personally or mediately

<sup>1</sup> Gaya, *Marriage Ceremonies* (pp. 30, 48, 81), for similar old customs, interpreted in the same way, formerly in vogue in France, Germany, and Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> Astley, *Collection of Voyages*, ii. 240, 273. It is a common rule of etiquette that, when a proposal of marriage is made, the purport of the visit shall only be approached indirectly and cursorily. It is curious to find such a rule among the Red Indians (*Algie Researches*, ii. 24; i. 130), the Kafirs (Maclean, p. 47), the Esquimaux (Cranz, i. 146), even the Hottentots (Kolbe, i. 149).



to the parents or relations of the woman he fancies for a wife ; if they consent to accept him as a son-in-law and they agree as to a price, there is a reserved stipulation on the part of the vendor : ‘ *If you can get her.*’ In Tartary, in the thirteenth century, after such a bargain, the daughter would flee to one of her kinsfolk to hide ; the father would say to the husband, ‘ My daughter is yours ; take her wheresoever you can find her.’ The suitor, seeking with his friends till he found her, would then take her by force and carry her home.<sup>1</sup> Here the girl’s reluctance is not so much feigned as overridden, and is only so far formal in that it is entirely disregarded. Often it is no mere ceremony on her part, but a natural and genuine protest—a protest against being treated as a chattel, not as an individual—but a protest which, opposed as it is to parental persuasion and marital force, tends, as far as the husband is concerned, to pass into the region of the merest ceremony.

A few instances will suffice to illustrate the cooperation of dislike and force in savage matrimony. In some Californian tribes the consent of the girl is necessary, although ‘ if she violently opposes the match she is seldom compelled to marry or to be sold.’ Among the Neshenam tribe of the same people ‘ the girl has no voice whatever in the matter, and resistance

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, vii. 34.

on her part merely occasions brute force to be used by her purchaser.'<sup>1</sup> So in the Utah country, where 'families and tribes living at peace would steal each others' wives and children and sell them as slaves,' a wife is usually bought of her parents; but should she refuse, 'the warrior collects his friends, *carries off the recusant fair,*' and thus espouses her.<sup>2</sup> So among the Navajoes 'the consent of the father is absolute, and the one so purchased assents *or is taken away by force.*'<sup>3</sup> It is the same with the Horse Indians of Patagonia. There, as elsewhere, it is common for a cacique to have several wives, and poor men only one, marriages being 'made by sale more frequently than by mutual agreement.' The price is often high, and girls are betrothed without their knowledge in infancy and married without their consent at maturity. But 'if a girl dislikes a match made for her she resists; and although *dragged forcibly to the tent of her lawful owner,* plagues him so much by her contumacy that he at last turns her away, and sells her to the person on whom she has fixed her affections.'<sup>4</sup> In Africa, Yorubas, Mandingoes, and Koossa Kafirs follow the custom of infant betrothal (and it is worth notice as being quite in accord-

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races, &c.*, i. 389.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 436.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 512.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzroy, *Voyage of 'Beagle,'* ii. 152.

ance with the theory that kinship was originally traced through mothers, that Yoruba, Mandingo, and Loango Africans, and some Esquimaux tribes, regard the mother's consent only as necessary to an engagement);<sup>1</sup> but sometimes a Yoruba girl, when the time comes for her to fulfil her mother's engagement, preferring some other than the intended husband, absolutely refuses to co-operate. 'Then she is either teased and worried into submission or the husband agrees to receive back her dowry and release her.'<sup>2</sup> A Mandingo girl must either marry a suitor chosen for her or remain ever afterwards unmarried. Should she refuse, the lover is authorized by the parents 'by the laws of the country to seize on the girl as his slave.'<sup>3</sup> If a Koossa girl, bound by the contract of her parents, 'makes any attempt at resisting the union, corporal punishment is even resorted to, in order to compel her submission.'<sup>4</sup>

It appears, therefore, that resistance on the part of the bride in many cases procures her ultimate release, so that her wishes in the matter are always an element to be considered. In all contracts of marriage, to which she is seldom a party, there is accordingly, in the nature of things, an implied covenant that a

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bowen's *Central Africa*, pp. 303-304; Gray's *Travels in South Africa*, p. 56; Pinkerton, xvi. 568-569; and Bancroft, i. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Bowen, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 873.

<sup>4</sup> Lichtenstein, i. 263.

daughter shall be so far allowed a voice in the matter that if she can make good her resistance she shall not become the property of the intending purchaser. The frequency with which it must have occurred that a girl would defeat a match she disliked by flight, elopement, or resistance, would tend to create a sort of common law right, for all daughters sold in marriage to a certain 'run' for their independence; <sup>1</sup> and the amusement naturally connected with the exercise of such a right would help to preserve the custom in a modified form; so that, however slight in some cases might be the modesty of the bride or her dislike of her suitor, her friends, if only for the sport of the thing, would gladly enact the fiction of an outrage to be resented, of a woman to be defended. In all the interesting cases of the form of capture cited by Sir John Lubbock it appears that in eight (that is, among the Mantras, the Kalmucks, the Fuejians, the Fijians, the New Zealanders, the Papuans of New Guinea, the Philippine Islanders, and the African Kafirs and Futas), the ceremony affords the bride a chance of an effectual escape from a match she dislikes. Should she fly, should she hide successfully, or should her friends defend her successfully, the contract between

<sup>1</sup> Thus Bonwick mentions a custom whereby a woman 'was allowed some chance in her life-settlement. The applicant for her hand was permitted on a certain day to *run* for her;' if she passed three appointed trees without being caught she was free.—*Daily Life, &c.* p. 70.

her parents and suitor becomes null and void ; or sometimes, as among the Zulus and Bassutos, the price for her is raised.<sup>1</sup> And it is remarkable with what precision the rules of the chase have been elaborated in many instances ; as by the Oleepas of Central California, among whom, if a bride is found twice out of three times, she is legally the seeker's ; and the bridegroom, if he fails the first time, is allowed a second and final attempt a few weeks later. 'The simple result is, that if the girl likes him she hides where she is easily found ; but if she disapproves of the match a dozen Indians cannot find her.'<sup>2</sup>

Other feelings would also be present to sustain the pretence of wife-capture. For the savage parent, in parting with his daughter for a favourable settlement, does not act from gratuitous cruelty ; he provides for her future as best he can, sometimes in accordance with her wishes, sometimes against them. As a rule marriage for her is a change for the worse ; but if she does not dislike the bridegroom to the extent of availing herself of her prescriptive and real chance of escape, her natural feelings for her parents and rela-

<sup>1</sup> It is also an old custom in Finland, that, when a suitor tells a girl he has settled matters with her parents, she should ask him what he has given, and then, declaring it to be too little, should proceed to run away from him.—*Marmier*, i. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Delano, *Life on the Plains*, p. 346. In *Notes and Queries*, 1861, vol. xii. 414, it is said that in Wales a girl would often escape a disliked suitor through the custom of the pursuit on horseback—by taking a line of country of her own.

tions would make it incumbent on her at least to affect a dutiful regret at leaving them (in cases where she does), by a half-bashful, half-serious resistance. It would be difficult to find a case of capture, whether in form or in fact, which is not readily explicable as simply the outcome of the natural affections and their protest against so artificial an arrangement as marriage by purchase ; for with marriage by purchase the form of capture always co-exists, so that capture was not necessarily an earlier mode of marriage than that by purchase or agreement. The mock fights between the party of the bride and that of the bridegroom among so many Indian tribes ;<sup>1</sup> the dances, lasting several days, during which it is the business of the squaws to keep the bridegroom at a distance from his bride, among the Tucanas of South America ;<sup>2</sup> the similar duty which devolves on the matrons of the tribe at Sumatran weddings ;<sup>3</sup> the mock skirmishes at Arab weddings, and the efforts of the negresses to keep the bridegroom away from the camel of the bride ;<sup>4</sup> these are surely more intelligible, as arising from the rude ideas and customs of savage life, than as being survivals, artificially preserved, of a time when the bride was really fought for or stolen ; and if such explana-

<sup>1</sup> Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 16, 194, 234, 252, 319.

<sup>2</sup> Bates, *Naturalist on the River Amazon*, p. 382.

<sup>3</sup> Marsden, *Sumatra*, p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> Denham, *Discoveries in Africa*, i. 32-35.



tion is sufficient, should it not logically be admitted before resorting to the hypothesis of a practice whose very existence is rather an inference from such ceremonies than a cause observable in actual operation ?

To pass to a third and quite distinct class of marriages by capture, in which the essential element is not maidenly bashfulness nor real repugnance, but the voluntary elopement of a girl with her lover, in defeat of a prior contract of betrothal. The large part which questions of profit and property play in savage betrothals can never be lost sight of, in estimating the causes of real wife abduction, either within or without the tribe. The primary conception of a daughter is a saleable possession, a source of profit, to her clan in marketings with other clans or to her parents in their bargains in her own clan. This fact alone militates against the supposition of the wide prevalence of female infanticide in primitive communities, the prejudice being rather in favour of killing the boys than the girls ; not solely for the use of the latter as slaves and labourers, but for the price which even among Fuejians or Bushmen is payable in some form or another for their companionship as wives. Abiponian mothers spared their girls oftener than their boys, because their sons when grown up would want wherewithal to purchase a wife, and so tend to impoverish them ; whilst their daughters would bring them in money by their sale in that capacity.<sup>1</sup> To raise the

<sup>1</sup> Dobritzshoffer, ii. 97.

price by limiting the supply was also the reason why the Guanans of America preferred to bury their girls alive rather than their boys.<sup>1</sup>

From this view of daughters as saleable commodities comes polygamy for the rich, polyandry, or illicit elopement, for the poor. Among the Hos of India so high at one time was the price in cattle placed by parents on their daughters that the large number of adult unmarried girls became a 'very peculiar feature in the social state of every considerable village of the Kohlán.' What, then, was the result? That 'young men counteracted the machinations of avaricious parents against the course of true love by *forcibly carrying off the girl*,' thus avoiding extortion by running away with her. The parents in such cases had to submit to terms proposed by arbitrators; but at last wife-abduction became so common that it could only be checked by the limitation by general consent of the number of cattle payable at marriage.<sup>2</sup>

'A very singular scene,' it is said, 'may sometimes be noticed in the markets of Singbhoom. A young man suddenly makes a pounce on a girl and carries her off bodily, his friends covering the retreat (like a group from the picture of the Rape of the

<sup>1</sup> Wuttke, *Heidenthum*, i. 185. 'Die Guanans in Amerika begraben ihre Kinder lebendig, besonders die Mädchen, um diese *seltner und gesuchter zu machen*.'

<sup>2</sup> Dalton, p. 192.

Sabines). This is generally a *summary method of surmounting the obstacles that cruel parents may have placed in the lovers' path*; but though it is sometimes done in anticipation of the favourable inclination of the girl herself, and in spite of her struggles and tears, no disinterested person interferes, and the girls, late companions of the abducted maiden, often applaud the exploit.<sup>1</sup>

In Afghanistan the pecuniary value of women has given rise to the curious custom of assessing part of the fines in criminal cases in a certain number of young women payable in atonement as wives to the plaintiff or to his relations from the family of the defendant. Thus murder is or was expiated by the payment of twelve young women; the cutting off a hand, an ear, or a nose by that of six; the breaking of a tooth by that of three; a wound above the forehead by that of one. This was the logical result of the state of thought which produces wife-purchase; but there was also another. For in the country parts, where matches generally begin in attachment, an enterprising lover may avoid the obstacle of parental consent by a form of capture, which has a legal sanction, though it does not exempt the captor from subsequent payment. This consists in a man's 'seizing an opportunity of cutting off a lock of her (the woman's)

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Dalton, in *Trans. Eth. Soc.*, vi. 27.

hair, snatching away her veil, or throwing a sheet over her, and claiming her as his affianced wife.' But the most common expedient is an ordinary elopement; though this is held an outrage to a family equivalent to the murder of one of its members; and being pursued with the same rancour, is often the cause of long and bloody wars between the clans; for as the fugitive couple are never refused an asylum, 'the seduction of a woman of one Oolooss by a man of another, or a man's eloping with a girl of his own Oolooss,' is the commonest cause of feuds between the clans.<sup>1</sup>

Love attachments, in defeat of parental plans, lead to very similar results in Bokhara. For 'the daughter of a Turcoman has a high price; and the swain, in despair of making a legitimate purchase, seizes his sweetheart, seats her behind him on the same horse, and gallops off to the nearest camp, where the parties are united, and separation is impossible. The parents and relations pursue the lovers, and the marriage is adjusted by an intermarriage with some female relation of the bridegroom, while he himself becomes bound to pay so many camels and horses as the price of his bride.'<sup>2</sup>

There is, therefore, evidence to justify the theory that the form of capture may often be explained as

<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone, *Cabul*, i. 239; ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Burnes, *Travels to Bokhara*, iii. 47.

an attempt to regulate by law the danger to a tribe arising from too frequent elopements, naturally resulting from the abuse of the parental right of selling daughters. In Sumatra the defeat of matrimonial plans by an elopement with a preferred suitor is so common as to be sanctioned and regulated by law, being known as the system of marriage by *telari gadis*; the father in such a case having to pay the fine to which he would have been liable for bestowing his daughter after engagement to another suitor, and only being allowed to recover her, if he catches her in immediate pursuit. 'When the parties,' says Mr. McLennan, 'cannot agree about the price, nothing is more common among the Kal'mucks, Kirghiz, Nogais, and Circassians than to carry the lady off by actual force of arms. The wooer having once got the lady into his *yurt*, she is his wife by the law, and peace is established by her relations coming to terms as to the price.' So too in England, elopements have often preceded and promoted more definite marriage settlements, or, with some slight observances, have stood legally as a substitute for them.

Considering, then, that the affections and wishes do not count for nothing even among savages; considering that among savages, more even than in civilized life, marriage is a question of property and of means, so that, whilst the richest members of a tribe almost universally have several wives, it is often

all that the poorer can do to get a wife at all, we have a set of circumstances leading naturally sometimes to voluntary elopement on the part of the girl, in defeat of her parents, sometimes to literal wife-capture by a man otherwise unable to become a husband. This condition of things leads of necessity to polyandry and wife-robbery. In some Australian tribes, owing to a disproportion between the sexes, many men have to steal a wife from a neighbouring horde. But it is not their normal recognized mode of marriage. On the contrary, their laws on this subject are somewhat elaborate ; and as it appears that before that state of society in which a daughter belongs to her father there is one in which she belongs to her mother, and perhaps a still prior state in which she belongs to her tribe, so from their birth Australian girls are appropriated to certain males of the tribe, nor can the parents annul the obligation. If the male dies the mother may then bestow her daughter on whom she will, for by the death of her legal owner the girl becomes to some extent the property of her relations, who have certain claims on her services for the procurement of food. But to the surrender of a girl by her mother the full consent of the whole tribe is necessary ; and if, as sometimes happens, 'the young people, listening rather to the dictates of inclination than those of law, improvise a marriage by absconding together,' they incur the



fatal enmity of the whole tribe.<sup>1</sup> According to Bonwick, a Tasmanian or Australian woman was never stolen contrary to her expectations or wishes. Only if all other schemes to have her own way failed, would a girl face the penalty of having 'the spear of the disappointed, the spear of the guardian, and the spears of the tribe' thrown at her, for her breach of tribal law.<sup>2</sup>

The conception of the daughters of a clan as its property, as a source of contingent wealth to it, of additional income to it in sheep, dogs, or whatever the medium of exchange, tends to keep up in many cases that prohibition to marry in the same clan or subdivision of a tribe which is known as exogamy. Among the Hindu Kafirs it is said to be uncertain why a man may not sell his girls to his own tribe, and why a man must always buy his wife from another; but it is certain that for this reason the more girls a man has born to him the better he is pleased and the richer his tribe becomes.<sup>3</sup> A Khond father distributes among the heads of the families, belonging to his branch of a tribe, the sum raised on behalf of a son-in-law by subscription from the son-in-law's branch. But, supposing a great inequality of wealth to arise between different clans, originally united by profitable intermarriages, it might become

<sup>1</sup> *Trans Eth. Soc.*, iii. 348-351, in Oldfield's *Aborigines of Australia*, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Bonwick, pp. 65-68.

<sup>3</sup> Latham, *Desc. Ethn.*, ii. 159.

more profitable to sell within the clan than outside it, so that the same motives of interest which, under some circumstances, would tend to encourage exogamy would under others lead to the opposite principle, a rich bridegroom of the same clan being preferable to a poor one of another, whether the gain accrued to a girl's parents or her clan. It is, perhaps, for this reason that a Hindu Kooch incurs a fine if he marries a woman of another clan, becoming a bondsman till his wife redeems him; that is, till she pays back to his clan or its chief what the bridegroom, by purchasing her, has alienated from the use of the tribe.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the reason given by the Khonds for marrying women from distant places was, that they gave much smaller sums than for women of their own tribe.<sup>2</sup>

Exogamy and endogamy would thus co-exist, as the customs of tribes that have attained to a more or less complete recognition of the rights of property, and are so far advanced as to be capable of preserving complex rules of social organization, Marriages, therefore, under either *régime* are matters generally of friendly settlement, of ordinary contract; and where such arrangements are defeated by the perversity of the principal parties—namely, the bride or the bridegroom—what more natural than the device of giving legal sanction to an elopement by settling a subsequent compensation with the parent?

<sup>1</sup> Latham, *Desc. Ethn.*, i. 96. <sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Indian Journal*, 142.

The custom of exogamy is so widely spread over the world that its origin must be sought in conditions as prevalent as itself, and it is possible that it arose out of the same condition which certainly sustains it and is co-extensive with itself, namely, from the marketable position of women. That female infanticide should have led to it is improbable, not only from the comparative rarity of the practice among the *rudest* tribes, but from the negative instance of the Todas, a wild Indian hill-tribe, who, notwithstanding the scarcity of their women, and a scarcity actually attributed to former female infanticide, 'never contract marriage with the other tribes, though living together on most friendly terms.'<sup>1</sup> Judging *à priori*, we should expect to find as of earlier date a prejudice in favour of tribal exclusiveness, of strict endogamy. The idea of the Abors that marriage out of the clan is a sin only to be washed out by sacrifice—a sin so great as to cause war among the elements, and even obscuration of the sun and moon—has a more archaic appearance than the contrary principle; and the confinement of marriages to a few families of known purity of descent is characteristic of some of the lowest Hindu castes.<sup>2</sup> The prejudice against foreign women is so strong that there is often a tendency to

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Anthropology* (July 1870), p. 33; *Trans. Eth. Soc.*, vii. 236, 242.

<sup>2</sup> Buchanan, *Travels*, i. 251, 273, 321, 358, 394; iii. 100.

regard female prisoners of war as merely slaves, as not of the same rank with the real wives of their captors. Thus, 'though the different tribes of the Aht nation are frequently at war with one another, women are not captured from other tribes for marriage, but only to be kept as slaves. The idea of slavery connected with capture is so common that a free-born Aht would hesitate to marry a woman taken in war, whatever her rank had been in her own tribe.'<sup>1</sup> The Caribs, too, if they kept female prisoners as wives always regarded them as slaves, as standing on a lower level than their legitimate wives.<sup>2</sup>

Leaving, however, the obscure problem of the origin of exogamy, there is a point of view from which both that and endogamy are one. For exogamy as regards the subdivisions of a tribe is endogamy as regards the tribe itself, tending in fact to preserve tribal unity and to check an indefinite divergency of interests and dialects. For example, where a Hindoo caste or tribe is composed of several Gotrams, no person of whom may marry an individual of the same Gotram, it is evident that the unity of the tribe is actually sustained by the exogamy of its constituent parts. Such a custom therefore, howsoever originated, would, as serviceable in maintaining tribal unity against hostile neighbouring people, tend to survive from motives of common expediency, from its adaptation

<sup>1</sup> Sproat, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Rochefort, *Les Îles Antilles*, 545.

to the interests of peace; a beneficial result of the system which in Mr. Bancroft's account of the Thlinket and Kutchin Indians clearly appears.<sup>1</sup> The Thlinkets are nationally divided into two great clans, under the totems of the Wolf and the Raven, and these two are again subdivided into numerous sub-totems. 'In this clanship some singular social facts present themselves. People are at once thrust widely apart and yet drawn together. Tribes of the same clan may not war on each other, but at the same time members of the same clan may not marry each other. Thus the young Wolf warrior must seek his mate among the Ravens. . . . *Obviously this singular social fancy tends greatly to keep the various tribes of the nation at peace.*' The Kutchins, again, are divided into three castes, resident in different territories, no two persons of the same caste being allowed to marry. '*This system operates strongly against war between the tribes, as in war it is caste against caste, not tribe against tribe. As the father is never of the same caste as the son, who receives clanship from the mother, there can never be international war without ranging fathers and sons against each other.*' So among the Khonds, who punish intermarriage between persons of the same tribe with death, the intervention of the women was always essential to peace, as they were neutral between the tribe of their fathers

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, i. 109, 132.

and that of their husbands.<sup>1</sup> But it is difficult to think that, if hostile relations between exogamous clans became permanent, the several clans would still insist on exogamous marriages as the only marriages legally valid, and consequently regard the use of force or fraud as the only legitimate title to a wife.

It seems indeed certain that wherever the rule of exogamy exists it may be analysed into a prohibition to marry within the divisions of a larger group ; that larger group being consciously recognised as uniting the divergent families by resemblance of dialect, common political ties, or a traditional common descent. The Kalmucks, for instance, call themselves 'the peculiar people,' or 'the four allies,' and any danger of their national dissolution is obviously diminished by the very fact of the exogamy of their four clans. The Circassians, whose constituent brotherhoods are exogamous, by the occasional assemblies of the brotherhoods for the settlement of disputes, show a consciousness of their political unity, which by the exogamy of the brotherhoods they help to maintain. The Hindu castes preserve their mutual exclusiveness by the very fact of compelling all their constituent families to intermingle in marriage, and so preventing any one of them from dissolving the common relationship by absolute separation or independent growth. So that exogamy rather sustains than prevents a

<sup>1</sup> Macpherson, 65.



system of marriages within the same stock, and is a mark of a higher conception of social organisation, when people have learned to classify themselves with respect to their neighbours, when tribal and personal property is well established, and when, consequently, marriages between the groups can be effected by purchase better than by violence. Exogamy therefore as the product or concomitant of a somewhat advanced state of thought, not of utter barbarism, would never make marriages by capture a necessity of existence; but, if it did, it would argue so much culture in a tribe capable of maintaining such rules, as would equally justify us in ascribing to them moral feelings, not less advanced and refined than those involved in their adherence to so restrictive a political system.

South Australia supplies a typical illustration of the confusion relating to intertribal marriages which arises from the vague use of the word *tribe*. For wherever there is reason to suspect that the word clan or family should stand for the word tribe, it is probable that the exogamy predicated of the tribe only prevails between its constituent elements; in other words, that it is only, as among the Kalmucks, Circassians, or Hindu castes, an extended form of the principle of endogamy. Thus, Collins, describing wife-capture in New South Wales, says that 'it is believed' the women so taken are always selected

from women of a different tribe from that of the males, and from one with whom they are at enmity ; that as wives 'they are incorporated into the tribes to which their husbands belong, and but seldom quit them for others.' But he uses the word tribe as convertible with the word family, as when he speaks of the natives near Port Jackson being distributed into families, each under the government of its own head, and deriving its name from its place of residence.<sup>1</sup> And the statements of Captain Hunter, a previous writer, that the natives are associated 'in tribes of many families together,' living apparently without a fixed residence ; that 'the tribe takes its name from the place of their general residence ;' and that the different families wander in different directions for food, but unite on occasion of disputes with another tribe, make it still more probable that when Collins spoke of different tribes he meant merely different families, or groups, which with all their separate wanderings united sometimes in cases of common danger. So when Captain Hunter himself says that 'there is some reason to suppose that most of their wives are taken by force from the tribes with whom they are at variance, as the females bear no proportion to the males,' we may take it that by tribes he means families, and families who recognise their community of blood when a really different tribe

<sup>1</sup> Collins (1796), *New South Wales*, 362, 351-3.

provokes their hostility by assembling as a tribe themselves.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stanbridge, who spent eighteen years in the wilds of Victoria, corroborates this view; for, according to him, each tribe has its own boundaries, the land of which is parcelled out amongst families and carefully transmitted by direct descent; these boundaries being so sacredly maintained that the member of no one family will venture on the lands of a neighbouring one without invitation. The several families (or tribes) unite for mutual purposes under a chief. The women often, but not always, marry into distant tribes; they are generally betrothed in their infancy, but if they grow up unbetrothed the father's consent must be solicited; failing him, the brother's; then the uncle's; and last of all that of a council or a chief of a tribe.<sup>2</sup> That force was ever the normal method by which marriages were effected in Australia, there is no proof; that, on the contrary, mutual likings often set the law, is proved by the story of the native captive girl, who, after living among the colonists for some time, expressed a desire to go away and be married to a young native of her acquaintance; albeit that she left him after three days, returning sadly beaten and jealous of the other wife.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hunter (1790), *Voyage to New South Wales*, 62, 494.

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. Eth. Soc.*, i. 217-8, and compare Sir G. Grey, *Travels*, &c., ii. 224,

<sup>3</sup> Hunter, 466, 479.

Quite distinct, again, either from the real or pretended reluctance of a savage girl to become a bride, or from the custom of forcing an avaricious parent to a settlement by the shorter process of taking first and paying afterwards, is the custom of stealing women from the same or a neighbouring clan, a custom which prevailed widely in Ireland and Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which in the latter country has been 'glorified in a whole literature of songs and ballads.'<sup>1</sup>

That polygamy and wife-purchase and artificial tribal regulations often lead to such a result cannot be denied ; but that it is anywhere a system, sustained by prejudices, whencesoever derived, seems completely unwarranted by the evidence hitherto collected. The Coinmen of Patagonia, who made annual inroads on the Tekeenica tribe, killing the men and carrying off not only the women but the children, dogs, arrows, spears, and canoes, seem to have been actuated rather by the ordinary motives of freebooters (by such motives, for instance, as induced our early convict settlers in Tasmania to set off with their bullock-chains to make captives of the native women<sup>2</sup>) than by any scruples of marrying relations at home. Carib wives taken in war were accounted slaves ; and so far were the Caribs from being dependent on aggression

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *Hist. of England in Eighteenth Century*, ii. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, 60.

for their wives, that before their customs were modified by acquaintance with the Christians their only legitimate wives were their cousins.<sup>1</sup> If a man had no cousin to marry, or put off doing so till it was too late, he might then marry some non-relative, with the consent of her parents. At the festival that followed a successful war the parents vied with one another in offering their daughters as wives to those who were praised by their captains as having fought with bravery. The Caribs of the continent differed from those of the islands in that men and women spoke the same language, not having corrupted their native tongue by marriages with foreign women.<sup>2</sup> According to Humboldt, the language of the Caribs of the continent was the same, from the source of the Rio Branco to the steppes of Cumana; and the pride of race which led them to withdraw from every other people, and was the cause of the failure of all missionary efforts that tried to combine them with villages containing people of another nation and speaking another idiom, would surely have militated against

<sup>1</sup> Rochefort, *Les Îles Antilles*, 545. 'Ils ne prenaient pour femmes légitimes que leurs cousines, qui leur étoient acquises de droit naturel.' Compare Burckhardt's *Notes on the Bedouins*, 64: 'A man has an exclusive right to the hand of his cousin;' not that he was obliged to marry her, but without his consent she could marry no one else.'

<sup>2</sup> Rochefort, *Les Îles Antilles*, 460. 'Il est à remarquer que les Caraïbes du continent, hommes et femmes, parlent un même langage, n'ayant point corrompu leur langue naturelle par des mariages avec des femmes étrangères.' (1511.)

making exogamy a preliminary condition of matrimony.<sup>1</sup> Humboldt, indeed, says that polygamy was more extensively practised by the Caribs and other nations that 'preserved the custom of carrying off young girls from the neighbouring tribe;' but it would be contrary to all previous accounts of the people to suppose these were their only wives, such a supplement to domestic felicity being everywhere the common reward, though seldom the chief object, of successful war. The curious difference in the language of the men and of the women found to exist among the Caribs of the West Indian Archipelago, and attributed by tradition to the conquest of a former people on the islands, whose wives the conquerors appropriated, has perhaps been rather exaggerated, for in a list of 488 words and phrases employed by both sexes, in only 36 is there any difference marked between the language of the men and that of the women. The origin of the difference may be doubted, as there were also words and phrases used by the old men of the people which the younger ones might not use; and there was a war-dialect of which neither women, girls, or boys had any knowledge.<sup>2</sup> But probably the difference arose from a custom similar

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt, personal narrative, vi. 40-43.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter on Carib language in *Les Îles Antilles*, 449, and collection of words, where those used exclusively by either sex are marked with an H and F (*Hommes et Femmes*) respectively.



to that of the Zulus, which makes it unlawful for a woman to use any word containing the sound of her father-in-law's name or of the names of her husband's male relations. 'Whenever the emphatic syllable of either of their proper names occurs in any other word, she must avoid it, by either substituting an entirely new word, or at least another syllable in its place. Hence *this custom has given rise to an almost distinct language among the women.*'<sup>1</sup> In consequence of this *Hlonipa* custom, according to another witness, '*the language at this present time almost presents the phenomenon of a double one.*'<sup>2</sup> That the Caribs maintained the common etiquette of reserve between parents and children-in-law,<sup>3</sup> makes it not improbable that the reserve extended itself to their language, and thus produced the same phenomenon that we find in South Africa.

In the same way other cases of wife-capture appear simply in the light of savage lawlessness, which may have been more common among quite primitive tribes than it is in their nearest modern representatives; but which, if it ever was widely prevalent, is most unlikely to have been perpetuated in symbol, by a form of capture. If then the form is easily explicable on other grounds, such as have been suggested, we have a reason the less for supposing in the past a state of things

<sup>1</sup> Maclean, 95.

<sup>2</sup> Leslie, 177.

<sup>3</sup> Du Tertre, *Hist. Gén. des Antilles*, 378.

which would exclude from the relations between male and female the happy influence of that mutual affection which has been shown not to have been entirely absent even among, perhaps, the rudest of our species, the aborigines of Australia or the Veddahs of Ceylon, and which is certainly disseminated more or less widely, outside the human race, through a large part of the animal creation.

It is probably impossible to resuscitate in imagination a picture of primitive times. It is with the lower societies of the world as with the lower animal organisms: the more they are studied, the more wonderful is the complexity of structure they unfold. Tribal and subtribal divisions of communities, tribal and subtribal divisions of territory, strong distinctions of rank, stringent rules of etiquette, are found on all sides to characterise populations in other circumstances of life scarcely less rude than the brute creation around them. The first beginnings of social evolution are lost, nor can they be observed in any known races that appear to have advanced the least distance from the starting-point of progress. But, as there is no reason to suppose that the external conditions of primitive man were ever very different from those of existing tribes; that those, for instance, of the shell-mound builders or the cave-dwellers differed widely from those of existing Ahts or Bushmen, so there is nothing unreasonable in believing, that the earliest

human denizens of the globe were endowed with the same rudiments of feelings that prevail among them, and that these should, even in very early times, have produced very similar social institutions. That Greeks and Egyptians, Chinese and Hindus, had legends ascribing marriage to the invention of a particular legislator, thereby implying there was a time when marriage was not, no more proves that there was ever a time when some sort of marriage was unrecognised than the many legends of the origin of fire prove that mankind were ever destitute of the blessing of its warmth. A minimum of reflection on the subject would produce the legend, just as reflections on the world's origin have produced countless legends of its creation, of a time when it too was nonexistent. And it will be found, wherever any known savage tribe really practises no wedding customs, that the fact of the marriage is distinctly recognised, either by payment in kind or labour by the bridegroom or by some symbolical act notifying the union to all fellow-tribesmen. The Veddahs, for instance, according to Tennant, used no marriage rites ; but another writer mentions, that on the day of marriage the husband received from his bride a cord twisted by herself, which he had to wear round his waist till his death, as a symbol of the lastingness of the union between them. The Kherias of India, who have no word for marriage in their language, give public recognition to the fact

by certain rites and festivities, closely analogous to those in vogue in neighbouring tribes. The Coroadas of Brazil have no marriage solemnity, but the suitor presents the bride's parents with fruit or game, as a tacit engagement to support her by the chase. Such a tacit expression of willingness and ability to take good care of his wife is a common symbolical act among savages, even the rudest; whilst the fact that for the married pair henceforth there will be a union of life and fortune is indicated by many a wedding custom, of no doubtful meaning, as by the eating of a cake together, or by the Dyak custom of making the married couple sit together on two bars of iron, 'to intimate the wish of the bystanders that blessings as lasting and health as vigorous as that metal may attend the pair.'

But symbolical acts like these—and they might be multiplied indefinitely—presuppose an advanced state of thought and feeling, behind which we cannot get in the observation of any existing savage tribes; and since they are common wherever the pretence of capture is common, that pretence may well be symbolical too; but symbolical, not of an earlier system of marriage, but of a conventional regard for good manners. Wherever the pretence of capture exists, it exists amid conditions of life so far removed from what might naturally be conceived as the most archaic, that it is quite legitimate to attribute the decorous

reluctance of the bride and the resistance of her relations at weddings to such feelings as have been proved to prevail upon such occasions, and so to consider the bride's behaviour as something quite unconnected with the lawless practice of wife-abduction, a practice which undoubtedly prevails to a certain extent in the savage world (chiefly in consequence of artificial social arrangements), which may have prevailed to a still greater extent when men lived in the caves of Périgord or upon former continents, but which it is incredible should ever have survived by transmission as a symbol, as a custom worthy of religious preservation.

## VIII.

*THE FAIRY-LORE OF SAVAGES.*

A COMPARISON of some of the fancies of the rudest known tribes of the earth concerning the nature of the sun, the moon, and the stars, proves abundantly not only that the demand for a reason for things is a principle operative in every stage of human development, but that the primitive explanation of things is sought in the occurrences of daily experience and given in terms and figures originally applied to terrestrial objects. From a philosophy of nature of so rude a type and so humble an origin spring many of those marvellous traditions, which in after times rank as the mythology, or perhaps serve as the religion, of the people among whom they had birth.

To begin with some of the astro-mythological ideas of the Australians. Mr. Stanbridge mentions the astonishment with which, as he sat by his camp fire, he listened for the first time to the remarks of two Australian natives as they pointed to the beauti-



ful constellations of Castor and Pollux, of the Pleiades and Orion. These men belonged to a race who had 'the reputation of being lowest in the scale of mankind,' who were 'cannibals of the lowest description,' and 'who had no name for numerals above two;' yet they could explain the wanderings of the moon, by the story that, being once discovered trying to persuade the wife of a certain star in Canis Major to elope with him, he was beaten and put to flight by the angry husband. As so frequently elsewhere, most of the stars were bound by the ties of human relationship, being wives, brothers, sisters, or mothers to one another. The stars in the belt of Orion were believed to be a group of young men dancing, whilst the Pleiades were girls who played to them as they danced. Two large stars in the fore legs of Centaurus were two brave brothers who speared Tchingal to death, and the east stars of Crux were the points of the spears that pierced his body.<sup>1</sup>

Few tribes of known savages appear to be without conceptions of a similar nature. The Tasmanians, according to Bonwick, were no exception to the connection of theology with astronomy. To them Capella was a kangaroo pursued by Castor and Pollux, whose smoke as it was roasted might be seen till the autumn. The Pleiades were maidens who

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of Ethnological Society*, i. 301-3.

courted the kangaroo hunters of Orion and dug up roots for their suppers. Two other stars were two black men who of old appeared suddenly on a hill and threw fire down to earth for the use of its inhabitants; whilst two other luminaries were two women whom a sting-ray had killed as they dived for cray-fish, but whom these same fire-bringers restored to life, by placing stinging ants on their breasts; then escorting them to heaven, after they had first killed the sting-ray.<sup>1</sup>

Bushman star-lore is framed in exactly the same way, the planets of distant solar systems sinking into the insignificance of daily African surroundings. What is the moon but a man who, having incurred the wrath of the sun, is pierced by his knife till he is nearly destroyed, and who, having implored mercy, grows from the small piece left him, till he is again large enough for the stabbing process to recommence? What is the Milky Way but some wood ashes long ago thrown up into the sky by a girl, that her people might be able to see their way home at night? Other stars are reduced to mortal origin, or identified with certain lions, tortoises, or clouds, that have place

<sup>1</sup> Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, 188, 206. The author suggestively calls attention to the similarity of this legend to the Hindu legend of Indra, who delivers the lovely Apas from the monster Vitra in the dark cavern of Ahi, a legend which has been taken to mean the fire-god who destroys the dark storm cloud that chases and maltreats the fleecy maidens of the sky.

in Bushman mythology ; nor does it lie beyond their limits of belief that the sun should once have been seen sitting by the wayside as he travelled on earth, and that the jackal's back is black to this day because he carried that burning substance on his back.<sup>1</sup> This sun they believe was once a mortal on earth who radiated light from his body, but only for a short space round his house ; till some children were sent to throw him as he slept into the sky, whence he has ever since shone over the earth.<sup>2</sup> These children belonged to an earlier race of Bushmen ; and it is an odd coincidence that in Victoria as in South Africa the belief about the sun is associated with the tradition of a race that preceded both Bushmen and Australians in their present homes. In the Australian creed, the earth lay in darkness, till one of the former race threw an emu's egg into space, where it became the sun. That former race was translated in various forms to the heavens, where they made all the celestial bodies, and where they continue to cause all the good and evil that happens on earth. Such traditions may point to a fact ; for both Australians and Bushmen may be degenerate from a better social type than they now present ; but the fact that, even if degenerate, they should preserve such tales and fictions, makes it not inconceivable that such tales

<sup>1</sup> Bleek, *Hottentot Fables*, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Bleek, *Bushman Folklore*.

should arise, as spontaneous products of the mind, among tribes that seem neither to have lapsed from a higher condition, nor ever to have emerged from their primeval state of barbarism.

Of the Esquimaux, Egede observes that 'their notion about the stars is that some of them have been men and others different sorts of animals or fishes.'<sup>1</sup> Here two stars are two persons at a singing combat, or two rival women taking each other by the hair; those other three are certain Greenlanders who, when once out seal-catching, failed to find their way home again and were taken to heaven. It is true such fancies, taken primarily from Cranz, must be received with the reservation that he makes, namely, that they were only harboured by the weaker heads of Greenland, and that the natives had art enough to play off on the Europeans quite as marvellous stories as any they received.<sup>2</sup> But the possible reality of such belief is vouched for by other testimony from all parts of the globe, of which two instances, taken from the Hervey Islanders and the Thlinkeet Indians, will suffice to illustrate the general character. According to the former, a twin boy and girl were badly treated by their mother; so they left their home and leapt into the sky, whither they were also followed by their parents, and where all four may still be seen

<sup>1</sup> Egede, 209.

<sup>2</sup> Cranz, i. 213.

shining ; ' brother and dearly-loved sister, still linked together, pursue their never-ceasing flight, resolved never again to meet their justly-enraged parents.'<sup>1</sup> The Thlinket Indians ascribe to a being called Yehl the liberation of the world from its pristine darkness ; for, amid the many conflicting stories told of him, it is agreed that he it was who obtained light for men at a time when ' sun, moon, and stars were kept by a rich chief in separate boxes which he allowed no one to touch.' Yehl, having become grandson to this chief, cried one day so much for these boxes that his grandfather let him have one. ' He opened it, and lo ! there were stars in the sky.' The grandparent was next cheated out of the moon in the same way ; but to get the sunbox Yehl had to refuse food and become really ill, and then its owner only parted with it on condition that it should not be opened. The prohibition, however, was unheeded. Yehl turned into a raven, flew off with the box, and blessed mankind with the light of the sun.<sup>2</sup>

From these samples of the fairy tales of savages, it is clear that, in addition to the myths which arise from forgotten etymologies, there are many others which are not formed at all by this process of gradual forgetfulness, but spring directly from the use of the intellect and the imagination, in obedience to the im-

<sup>1</sup> Gill, 40-2.

<sup>2</sup> Dall, *Alaska*.

pulse to find a reason for everything. To observe peculiarities in nature is the beginning of science ; to account for them in any way is science itself, true or false. The science of savages is not limited to the skies, but is directed to everything that calls for notice on earth ; nor in the stories invented by them to answer the various problems of existence, are they a whit behind the traditions of European folk-lore on similar subjects, their explanations of natural peculiarities disclosing quite as vivid imaginative powers as the stories of the white race concerning birds or beasts.

Let us take, for instance, as a parallel to the German reason for the owl flying in solitude by night (namely, that when set to watch the wren, imprisoned in a mousehole, he fell asleep, and was so ashamed at letting him thus escape that he has never since dared show himself by day), the story of the rude Ahts, made to account for the melancholy note of the loon as it is heard flying about the wild lakes of Vancouver's Island ; and as a good instance of the resemblance in construction of plot often found in very distant regions, let us place side by side with it a story of the Basutos in the south of Africa :—

*THE AHT STORY.*

Two fishermen went one day in two canoes to catch halibut. But while one of them caught many,

*THE BASUTO STORY.*

Two brothers, having gone in different directions to make their fortunes, met again, after sundry



the other caught none. So the latter, angered by the taunts of his more fortunate but physically weaker companion, bethought himself how he might take all his fish from him by force, and cause him to return home fishless and ashamed. Suddenly, whilst his friend was pulling up a fish, he knocked him on the head with the wooden club he used for killing halibut, and, to prevent the tale ever being told, cut out his companion's tongue, and took the fish home to his own wife. When the tongueless man arrived at the village, and his friends came to enquire of his sport, he could only answer by a noise resembling the note of the loon. 'The great spirit, Quaw-teaht, was so angry at all this, that he changed the injured Indian into a loon, and the other into a crow; and the loon's plaintive cry now is the voice of the fisherman trying to make himself understood.'<sup>1</sup>

adventures, the elder enriched by a pack of dogs, the younger by a large number of cows. The younger offered his brother as many of these cows as he pleased, with the exception of a certain white one. This he would not part with; so as they went home, and the younger brother was drinking from a pool, Macilo, the elder, seized his brother's head and held it under the water till he was dead. Then he buried the body, and covered it with a stone, and proceeded to drive back the whole flock as his own. He had not, however, gone far, before a small bird perched itself on the horn of the white cow and exclaimed: 'Macilo has killed Maciloniane for the sake of the white cow he coveted.' Twice did Macilo kill the bird with a stone, but each time it reappeared and uttered the same words. So the third time he killed it he burnt it, and threw its ashes to the winds. Then proudly he entered his village, and when they all enquired for his brother, he said that they had taken different roads, and that he was ignorant where he was. The white cow was greatly admired, but suddenly a small bird perched itself on its horns and exclaimed: 'Macilo has killed Maciloniane for the sake of the white cow he coveted.' Thus, through a bird

<sup>1</sup> Sproat, p. 182.

into which the heart of the murdered man had been transformed, did the truth become known, and everyone departed with horror from the presence of the murderer.<sup>1</sup>

European folk-lore accounts for the redness of the robin's breast, either by the theory that he extracted a thorn from the thorn-crown of Christ, or by the theory that he daily bears a drop of water to quench the flames of hell. For either reason he might be justly called the friend of man; but for the bird's friendliness the Chippewya Indians give a more poetical explanation than either of the above. There was once, they say, a hunter so ambitious that his only son should signalise himself by endurance, when he came to the time of life to undergo the fast preparatory to his choosing his guardian spirit, that after the lad had fasted for eight days, his father still pressed him to persevere. But next day, when the father entered the hut, his son had paid the penalty of violated nature, and in the form of a robin had just flown to the top of the lodge. There, before he flew away to the woods, he entreated his father not to mourn his transformation. 'I shall be happier,' he said, 'in my present state than I could have been as a man. I shall always be the friend of men and keep near their dwellings; I could not gratify your pride as a warrior,

<sup>1</sup> Casalis, *Les Basutos*. With this story Grimm compares a German one, *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, i. 172.

but I will cheer you by my songs. . . . I am now free from cares and pains, my food is furnished by the fields and mountains, and my path is in the bright air.'<sup>1</sup>

Not less poetical is the Hervey Islanders' account of the origin of some peculiarities among fishes, and notably of the well-known conformation of the head of the common sole. They relate how Ina, leaving the house of her rich parents because she had been beaten and scolded for suffering the arch-thief, Nyana, to steal certain treasures left in her charge, resolved to make her way to the sea beach, and from thence to the Sacred Isle that lay across the sea at the place where the sun set. Arrived at the shore, she first asked the small fish, the *avini*, to bear her across the sea; but the *avini*, unable to support her weight, soon let her fall into the water, for which Ina in her anger struck it repeatedly with her foot, thereby causing those beautiful stripes on its sides which are called to this day 'Ina's tattooing.' Trying next the *paoro*, and meeting with the same mischance, she caused it in the same way to bear ever after those blue marks which are now its glory; and it is said to be historically true that tattooing on that island 'was simply an imitation of the stripes on the *avini* and the *paoro*.' Then the *api*, a white fish, incurring the same dis-

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, ii. 229-30.

pleasure, became at once and for ever of an intensely black hue. The sole, indeed, carried Ina farther than the others, but no farther than the breakers by the reef; and Ina, now wild with rage, stamped with such fury on its head that its underneath eye was removed to the upper side, and thus it was condemned ever afterwards to swim flatwise, unlike other fish, because one side of its face had no eye. How Ina then caused a protuberance on the forehead of all sharks, known to this day as Ina's bump, by cracking a cocoa-nut she wished to drink out of on the forehead of a shark that bore her, how the shark then left her, and how she finally reached the Sacred Isle on the back of the king of sharks, and became the wife of Timirau, the king of all fish, may be read in further detail in Mr. Gill's interesting collection of Myths and Songs from the South Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

The necessity for a reason for everything, exemplified in these traditions, exercises its influence on mythology itself, reasons being invented for inexplicable customs or beliefs just as they are for strange phenomena in nature. The custom, for instance, of hunting a wren to death once a year, which has been observed in Ireland, the isle of Man, and the South of France, has for its general explanation a belief that the wren is a fairy who, after having decoyed many

<sup>1</sup> Gill, 88-98.

men to meet their deaths in the sea, took the form of a wren to escape the plot laid for her by a certain knight-errant. But the Irish have found quite another reason for the custom, having invented the story, that on the eve of the battle of the Boyne the Irish had stolen up to King William's sleeping camp and were on the point of putting an end to the heretics, when a wren hopped upon the drum of a Protestant drummer, and by thus waking him caused their defeat; a defeat which they avenge on every anniversary of the day by the persecution of that unhappy bird.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the wren is well known; how, when the birds were competing for the kingship by the test of the greatest height attained in flying, the wren hid in the eagle's feathers, and, when the eagle had flown far beyond the other birds, darted himself yet a little above it. It is said that the first appearance of this story is in a collection of beast-fables, composed by a rabbi in the 13th century.<sup>2</sup> But the resemblance between the wren-story as it is told in Germany or Ireland, and a story of a linnnet as told by the Odjibwas of North America, is so striking a testimony of the way in which closely similar tales are framed independently, that the two stories are worth comparing.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Cookson, *Legends of the Manx*, 27-30.

<sup>2</sup> Wolf, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie*, i. 2.

## THE ODJIBWA STORY.

'The birds met together one day to try which could fly the highest. Some flew up very swift, but soon got tired, and were passed by others of stronger wing. But the eagle went up beyond them all, and was ready to claim the victory, when the grey linnet, a very small bird, flew from the eagle's back, where it had perched unperceived, and being fresh and unexhausted, succeeded in going the highest. When the birds came down and met in council to award the prize, it was given to the eagle, because that bird had not only gone up nearer to the sun than any of the larger birds, but it had carried the linnet on its back.'

For this reason the eagle's feathers became the most honourable marks of distinction a man could bear.<sup>1</sup>

## THE IRISH STORY.

'The birds all met together one day, and settled among themselves that whichever of them could fly highest was to be the king of all. Well, just as they were on the hinges of being off, what does the little rogue of a wren do, but hop up and perch himself unbeknown on the eagle's tail. So they flew and flew ever so high, till the eagle was miles above all the rest, and could not fly another stroke, he was so tired. "Then," says he, "I'm king of the birds. . . ." "You lie," says the wren, darting up a perch and a half above the big fellow. Well, the eagle was so mad to think how he was done, that when the wren was coming down, he gave him a stroke of his wing, and from that day to this the wren was never able to fly further than a hawthorn bush.'<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to assign limits either to the vitality or to the range of a story. If the commerce which has ever prevailed between the different tribes of the world, as it prevails to this day, either by conquest or by barter, has caused so wide a dispersion of the races and products of the earth, the wonder would

<sup>1</sup> *Algie Researches*, ii. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, *Indo-European Traditions*, 78. See the German version of the tale in Grimm's *Hausmärchen*, ii. 394.



rather be if the products of men's thoughts and fancies had not prevailed so widely, had not taken so deep root in man's memory, seeing that they cost nothing either to carry or to keep. For many stories therefore of wide range, agreeing in such minute particulars as to render difficult the theory of their independent origin, the mystery of their resemblance is amply solved by the theory of their gradual dispersion, without their proving anything as to the common origin of those who tell them. The story, for instance, of Faithful John, the central idea of which is, that a friend can only apprise some one of a danger he will incur on his wedding night, by himself incurring suspicion and being turned into stone, is told with little variation in Bohemia, Greece, Italy, and Spain; and the discovery of the leading thought in a story in India makes it possible that it was there originated.<sup>1</sup> In Polynesia, again, the story of stopping the motion of the sun is widely spread; in New Zealand, Maui makes ropes of flax, goes with his brothers to the point where the sun rises, hides from it by day, and when it rises next day succeeds in his purpose before letting it go further. In Tahiti, Maui is a priest, or chief of olden time, who builds a marae which must be finished by the evening, and who therefore seizes the sun by its rays and binds him to a tree till his

<sup>1</sup> Köhler, *Weimarische Beiträge zur Literatur*, Jan. 1865.

work is finished. In Hawaii Maui stops the sun till evening, because his wife has to finish a certain dress by twilight. In Samoa, Maui appears as Itu, a man who is anxious to build a house of great stones, but is unable to do so because the sun goes too fast ; he therefore takes a boat and lays nets in the sun's path, but as these are broken through, he makes a noose, catches the sun, and only lets it free when his house is finished.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, these stories are all related, but it is impossible to say whether they spread from any one place to the others, or whether they are remnants, retained in altered form, from the primitive mythology of a common Polynesian home. It is, however, worthy of notice that in Wallachian fairy lore also a cow pushes back the sun to the hour of mid-day, to enable a youth who had fallen asleep to accomplish his task,<sup>2</sup> and that the idea of catching the sun is not unknown to the mythology of America.

There is, however, a large class of stories which arise independently, and owe their remarkable family likeness neither to a common descent nor to importation, but to the natural promptings of the imagination. Thus, the idea of a tree so high that it reaches the heavens, and consequently of the heavens as thereby attainable, naturally produces such a story as Jack and the Beanstalk, a story which is said to be found

<sup>1</sup> Schirren, *Wandersagen der Neuseeländer*, 31, 37-39.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm, *Hausmärchen*, i. Pref. 53.

all over the world, but the versions of which agree in no other single point than in the admission to the sky by dint of climbing.<sup>1</sup> In the same way many of the ideas common to the Indo-European nations, and so often explained as originally derived from the fanciful meteorology of the primitive Aryans, find startling analogues outside the Aryan family, where there is no reason to suppose them anything more than the direct offspring of the dreamer or the story-teller. If the constancy of Penelope to Ulysses, tormented by her suitors, is simply that of the evening light, assailed by the powers of darkness, till the return of her husband the sun in the morning,<sup>2</sup> shall we apply the same interpretation to the story of the wife of the Red Swan, of the Odjibwas, who, when he returns from the discovery of his magic arrows from the abode of the departed spirits, finds that his two brothers have been quarrelling for the possession of his wife, but been quarrelling in vain?<sup>3</sup> If the legend of Cadmus recovering Europa, after she has been carried away by the white bull, the spotless cloud, means that 'the sun must journey westward until he sees again the beautiful tints which greeted his eyes in the morning,'<sup>4</sup> shall we say the same of a story

<sup>1</sup> See the different versions in Mr. Tylor's *Early History of Mankind*, 344.

<sup>2</sup> Cox, *Aryan Mythology*, ii. 173.

<sup>3</sup> *Algie Researches*, ii. 1-33.

<sup>4</sup> *Aryan Mythology*, ii. 85.

current in North America, to the effect that a man once had a beautiful daughter whom he forbade to leave the lodge lest she should be carried off by the king of the buffaloes ; and that as she sat, notwithstanding, outside the house, combing her hair, 'all of a sudden the king of the buffaloes came dashing on, with his herd of followers, and taking her between his horns, away he cantered over plains, plunged into a river which bounded his land, and carried her safely to his lodge on the other side,' whence she was finally recovered by her father ?<sup>1</sup>

Again, in Hindu mythology, Urvasi came down from heaven and became the wife of the son of Budha, only on condition that two pet rams should never be taken from her bedside and that she should never behold her lord undressed. The immortals, however, wishing Urvasi back in heaven, contrived to steal the rams ; and as the king pursued the robbers with his sword in the dark, the lightning revealed his person, the compact was broken, and Urvasi disappeared.<sup>2</sup> This same story is found in different forms among many people of Aryan and Turanian descent, the central idea being that of a man marrying someone of aerial or aquatic origin, and living happily with her till he breaks the condition on which her residence with him depends. Thus there is the story of Ray-

<sup>1</sup> *Algie Researches*, ii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, *Vishnu Purana*, 394-5.

mond of Toulouse, who chances in the hunt upon the beautiful Melusina at a fountain and lives with her happily till he discovers her fish-nature and she vanishes ; but exactly parallel stories come no less from Borneo, the Celebes, or North America than from Ireland or Germany ; for which reason it seems sufficient to receive them simply as they stand, as fairy tales natural to every tribe of mankind that has a fixed belief in supernatural beings, rather than to explain these wonderful wives as the 'bright fleecy clouds of early morning, which vanish as the splendour of the sun is unveiled.'<sup>1</sup> Let us compare the story as it is told in America and Bornoese tradition.

*THE BORNOESE STORY.*

A certain Bornoese, when far from home, once climbed a tree to rest, and whilst there 'was attracted by the most ravishing music, which ever and anon came nearer and nearer, until it seemingly approached the very roots of the tree, when a pure well of water burst out, at the bottom of which were seven beautiful virgins. Ravished at the sight, and determined to make one of them his son's wife, he made a lasso of his rattan, and drew her up.' One day, however, her husband hit her

*THE AMERICAN STORY.*

Wampee, a great hunter, once came to a strange prairie, where he heard faint sounds of music, and looking up saw a speck in the sky, which proved itself to be a basket containing twelve most beautiful maidens, who, on reaching the earth, forthwith set themselves to dance. He tried to catch the youngest, but in vain ; ultimately he succeeded by assuming the disguise of a mouse. He was very attentive to his new wife, who was really a daughter of one of the stars, but she wished to

---

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, *Myths and Myth Makers*, 97, and Cox, *Aryan Mythology*, ii. 282.

in anger, and she was taken up to the sky.<sup>1</sup>

return home, so she made a wicker basket secretly, and by help of a charm she remembered, ascended to her father.<sup>2</sup>

It has been imagined that all the fairy tales of the world may be reduced to certain fundamental story roots; but these story roots we should look for not in the clouds, but upon the earth, not in the various aspects of nature, but in the daily occurrences and surroundings of savage life. The uniformity which appears in so many of the myths or fairy tales of the world would thus simply arise from a uniformity of the experiences of existence. The evidence concerning savage astro-mythology is conclusive, that nothing is conceived of the heavenly bodies that has not its prototype on earth; that the skies do but mirror the events or objects of earth, where the memorable incidents of the chase or the battle are told of the stars: nor is it strange if in a few years such tales should have so gained in the telling, that it is often impossible to separate the fact from the fiction, or to distinguish a crude supposition from the creation of a fanciful myth.

For although it is difficult to lay down the boundaries between the language of metaphor and the language of fact, inasmuch as what is faith to one man is often but fancy to another, there is reason to believe

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of Ethnological Society*, ii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Algie Researches*, i. 67.



that savages really do very often confuse celestial with terrestrial phenomena, that, for instance, the Zulus, when they speak of the stars as the children of the sky and of the sun as their father, are expressing rather a real belief than a poetical fancy, and that the conception of the sun and moon as physically related is an actual belief quite as much as a merely figurative explanation. If this be true, a large part of mythology must be regarded not as a poetical explanation of things, suggested by the grammatical form of words or by roots that lend similar names to the most diverse conceptions, but as the direct effect of primitive thought in its application to the phenomena of nature. It is more likely that the early thoughts of men should have framed their language than that the form of their language should have preceded their form of thought. And if it be shown (by those who hold that the personification of impersonal things is consequent on the grammatical structure of a language) that the Kafirs and other tribes of South Africa, whose language does not denote sex, are almost destitute of myths and fables, whilst tribes who employ a sex-denoting language have many,<sup>1</sup> it is noticeable that such personification has been shown to exist among the natives of Australia, between the different dialects of whose language it is said to have been one of the

<sup>1</sup> Bleek, *Hottentot Fables*, Pref. xxv.

points of resemblance, that they recognised no distinctions of gender.<sup>1</sup>

A story of the Ottawa Indians (by internal evidence posterior in date to their acquaintance with guns and ships) may be taken as a sample of savage traditions, which prove that the convertibility of mankind with sun, moon, or stars, is as natural a belief to a savage, as that his next-door neighbour may turn at pleasure into a wolf or a snake. Six young men finding themselves on a hill-top in close proximity to the sun, resolved to travel to it. Two of them finally reached a beautiful plain, lighted by the moon, which, as they advanced, appeared as an aged woman with a white face, who spoke to them and promised to conduct them to her brother, then absent on his daily course through the sky. This woman 'they knew from her first appearance' to be the moon. When she introduced them to her brother, 'the sun motioned them with his hand to follow him,' and they accompanied him with some difficulty till they were restored safe and sound to the earth.<sup>2</sup> So Sir G. Grey, collecting native legends concerning a cave in Australia, found that the only point of agreement was 'that originally *the moon who was a man* had lived there.'<sup>3</sup>

But, except on the assumption that savages are

<sup>1</sup> Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Albic Researches*, ii. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Travels in Australia*, i. 261.

idiots, it is impossible that such legends should not only obtain currency, but enjoy the vitality of traditions, unless they conform to certain canons of belief, unless they contain nothing inherently incredible. A fairy tale pleases a child, not because it is known to be impossible, but because it carries the mind further afield than actual experience does into the realms of the possible; and a tale understood to be impossible would be as insipid to a savage as it would be to a child. Schoolcraft, in reference to Indian popular tales, speaks of the 'belief of the narrators and listeners in every wild and improbable thing told;' and says, 'Nothing is too capacious for Indian belief.'<sup>1</sup> If, as their stories abundantly show, they feel no difficulty in conceiving the instantaneous transformation of men not merely into something living, but into stones or stumps, the fact ceases to be strange, that in Indian faith 'many of the planets are transformed adventurers.'<sup>2</sup> What, then, more natural than that all over the world the deeds of great tribesmen should be transferred to the skies, and, under the action of uniform laws of fancy, should in time become so overgrown with fiction as to pass into the domain of the purest mythology, till at last they appear as mere figurative expressions of the daily life of nature, of the struggle

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Algie Researches*, i. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 409.

between the day and the night, of the dispersion of the clouds by the sun?

The condition of things which makes such conceptions of the heavens the natural outcome of primitive speculation may perhaps, to a certain extent, be recovered by observation of the laws conditioning the actually existent thoughts of the savage world.

The first entrance into Wonderland lies through Dreamland. Schoolcraft's testimony that 'a dream or a fact is alike potent in the Indian mind' accords with much other evidence to the effect that, with savages, the sensations of the sleeping or waking life are equally real or but vaguely distinguished. A native of Zululand will leave his work and travel to his home, perhaps a hundred miles away, to test the truth of a dream,<sup>1</sup> and so great is the importance the Zulus attach to such monitions, that 'he who dreams is the great man of the village;' whilst the gift to them of '*sight by night in dreams*' is ascribed to their first ancestor, the great Unkulunkulu.<sup>2</sup> But how far surpassing even the normal experiences of sleep must be the dreams of men in the hunting or nomad state, the law of whose lives is either a want or an excess of food! What richer fund for story-material can be imagined than the dreams of a savage, or what more likely to introduce him to the mysteries of romance

<sup>1</sup> D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus*, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, Part i. 5.

than recollections of those sudden transformations or those weird images, which have haunted the repose of his slumbering hours? And into what strange lands of beauty and plenty, into what secrets of the skies, would not the flights of his sleep give him an insight! In all fairy tales and all mythology a remarkable conformity to the deranged ideas of sleep does thus occur; and especially do the stories of the lower races, as for instance those of Schoolcraft's 'Algic Researches,' read far more like the recollections of bad dreams than like the worn ideas of a once pure religion, or of a poetical interpretation of nature. The most beautiful of the Indian legends, that of the origin of Indian corn, was in native tradition actually referred to a dream, and to a dream purposely resorted to, to gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of nature.<sup>1</sup> And as dreams do but deal with the incidents of the waking life, exaggerating them and contorting them, but never passing beyond them, may not the somewhat uniform incidents of savage life, whether of hunting, fishing, fighting, or travelling, offer some explanation of that general similarity, which is so conspicuous an element in the comparative mythology or the fairy-lore of the world?

Then the fact that the dead reappear in dreams at that season of the night in which also the stars are

<sup>1</sup> *Algic Researches*, i. 122-8.

seen, would tend to confirm the idea of some community of nature between the dead and the stars, such community as is indeed not unfrequently found, as where the Aurora Borealis or the Milky Way are identified with the souls of the departed. So, too, a Californian tribe is mentioned as having believed that chiefs and medicine-men became heavenly bodies after their death,<sup>1</sup> and even Tasmanians could point to the stars they would go to at death.<sup>2</sup>

But there is another reason which would still further create a mental confusion between the deeds of a mortal on earth and the motions of some luminary in heaven, and that is the language of adulation, which, from ascribing the possession of the sky to a chief, in order to gratify him, becomes imperceptibly the language of belief. It is common for the Zulus to say of a chief, 'That man is the owner of heaven and everything is his,' and a native once expressed his gratitude to a missionary by pointing to the heaven and saying, 'Sir, the sun is yours.' 'It does not suffice them to honour a great man unless they place the heaven on his shoulders; they do not believe what they say, they merely wish to ascribe all greatness to him.' If when a chief goes to war the sky becomes overcast, they say, 'The heaven of the chief feels that the chief is suffering.' Nor was any chief known to

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, iii. 526.

<sup>2</sup> Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, 182.



deprecate the use of such language ; he 'expected to have it said always that the heaven was his.'<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, however, there is no fast line between the language of flattery and the language of fact. From the Tahitians, who would speak of their kings' houses as the clouds of heaven, or the Kafirs of Ethiopia, who called their kings lords of the sun and moon, it is easy to trace the progress of thought which actually led the latter people to pray to their kings for rain, fine weather, or the cessation of storms.<sup>2</sup> The Zulus, like many other savages, think of the sky as at no great distance from the earth, and thus as the roof of their king's palace in the same way that the earth is its floor. 'Utshaka claimed to be king of heaven as well as earth, and ordered the rain-doctors to be killed, because in assuming power to control the weather they were interfering with his royal prerogative.'<sup>3</sup> But if such confusion between royalty and divinity can exist in the savage mind whilst the king is on earth, how natural is it that a man, associated for so long in his lifetime with power over the elements, should, after his removal from earth and from sight, become still more mixed up with elemental forces, or perhaps even localised in some point of space ! The word Zulu actually means the Heavens, and in Zululand King of the Zulus

<sup>1</sup> Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, Part i. 122-3.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, xvi. 689.      <sup>3</sup> Callaway, *Zulu Nursery Tales*, i. 152.

means king of the heavens,<sup>1</sup> so that when the king is drawn in his waggon to the centre of the kraal, it is not surprising that, among the other acclamations, such as 'Lion, King of the World,' with which his creeping subjects salute him, they should actually salute him as Zulu, Heaven.<sup>2</sup> It can only be from the use of such language that among the Zulus 'rain, storm, sunshine, earthquakes, and all else which we ascribe to natural causes are brought about or retarded by *various people* to whom this power is ascribed. Every rain that comes is spoken of as belonging to somebody, and in a drought they say that the owners of rain are at variance among themselves'<sup>3</sup>

That in aftertime, from these modes of thinking and speaking, the attributes of a Zulu or Tahitian chief might become those of a heaven-supporter, such as Atlas, or of a cloud-gatherer, such as Zeus, or that, according as his body was consigned to the earth or the sea, such a chief might become the earth-shaker or the ocean-ruler, is not only what might be expected *à priori*, but what is to some extent justified by facts. In South Africa the word which the missionaries have adopted for both Hottentots and Kafirs as the name for the Deity, from its being the nearest approach to the Christian conception, is believed to be derived from two words signifying Wounded Knee, a term applied generations back to a Hottentot sorcerer of

<sup>1</sup> Leslie, 81, 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 79.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 169.

great fame and skill, who happened to have sustained some injury to his knees. 'Having been held in high repute for extraordinary powers during life, he (Utixo) continued to be invoked even after death as one who could still relieve and protect; and hence in process of time he became nearest to their first conceptions of God.'<sup>1</sup> And the legend of Mannan Mac Lear, mythical first inhabitant and first legislator of the Isle of Man, discloses a germ of similar origin underlying the myth of a culture-hero, as his story preserved in the following lines will show:

'This merchant Manxman of the solemn smile,  
 First legislator of our rock-throned isle,  
 Dwelt in a fort (withdrawn from vulgar sight),  
 Cloud-capped Baroole, upon thy lofty height.  
 From New Year tide round to the Ides of Yule,  
 Nature submitted to his wizard rule.  
 Her secret force he could with charms compel  
 To brew a storm or raging tempests quell;  
 Make one man seem like twenty in a fray,  
 And drive the stranger (*i.e.* Scotch invaders) over seas away.'<sup>2</sup>

In other words, he was a great sorcerer and a great warrior, whose deeds lived after him in story, and whose name lent itself as a nucleus, like that of Charlemagne or of Alfred, for every adventure that was strange, for every imagination that was wonderful.

There seems, indeed, no reason to seek for any

<sup>1</sup> Appleyard, *Kafir Grammar*, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Cookson, *Legends of the Manx*, 23.

higher genesis than this for any of the culture-heroes of any mythology, notwithstanding that they have with so much unanimity been forced into identification with the sun. Zeus himself means but the same thing as Zulu, namely, the Sky or Heaven, so that it is only natural that nothing that could be told of the sky 'was not in some form or other ascribed to Zeus,'<sup>1</sup> just as we see that modern Zulus ascribe to their chiefs all atmospheric phenomena, and actually confer on them the appellation, Zulu. There is indeed nothing in which Zeus differs essentially from Manabozho of North American mythology, from Krishna of the Hindus, from Maui of the Polynesians, from Quawteaht of the rude Ahts, or from Kutka of the still ruder Kamschadals. The stories told of one may be more refined than those told of another, but in no case are these divinities more than names, which serve as convenient centres for the grouping of memorable feats or fictions. Such names serve also, when once men have begun to reflect on the arts or customs of their lives, as sufficient explanations of their origin; and just as we find the institution of marriage attributed in China, or Greece, or India to some mythical hero, so we find the discovery of fire and light, or the invention of remarkable arts, duly ascribed to some hypothetical originator. In Polynesian mythology, Maui, in Thlinket Indian mytho-

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Max Müller, *Science of Language*, ii. 444.

logy, Yehl, played the part of Prometheus in procuring fire for the use of men. From seeing a spider make its web, Manabozho invented the art of making fishing nets; and Kutka (who, like Manabozho, is also in some sense the maker of all things) taught the Kamschadals how to build huts, how to catch birds, and beasts, and fish.<sup>1</sup> The supreme deity of Finnish mythology not only brought fire for men from heaven but was the inventor of music; yet like the other gods he was but a magician, able to destroy the world at pleasure, to hold the sun captive in a box, to conquer all monsters and heal all diseases.<sup>2</sup>

American mythology abounds in culture-heroes, mythical personages who taught men useful arts and laws, and left, in the reverence attached to their memory, a quasi-religious system for their posterity.<sup>3</sup> These too have been resolved into observation of the phenomena of the sun or the dawn. Manabozho or Michabo, the ancestor of the Algonquins, whose name literally means the Great Hare, and conferred peculiar respect on the clan who bore it as their totem, means in reality (according to this theory) the Great Light, the Spirit of Dawn, or under another aspect the North-west Wind; the confusion between the hare and

<sup>1</sup> Steller, 253-4.

<sup>2</sup> Léouzon le Duc, *La Finlande*, 51, 87. 'À dire vrai, tous les dieux de la mythologie finnoise ne sont que les magiciens.'

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft, v. 23.

the dawn being supposed to have arisen from a root *wab*, which gave two words, one meaning *white* and the other *hare*, so that what was originally told of the White Light came to be told of a Hare, and what was at first but a personification of natural phenomena became a tissue of inconsistent absurdities.<sup>1</sup> Ingenious, however, as such a solution undoubtedly is, it is easier to believe that the stories of the Great Hare have grown round a man, called, in complete accordance with American custom, after the hare, and once a famous sorcerer or warrior like Mannan Mac Lear; for in all the more recent traditions of him, there is much more of the magician or shaman than of the wind or the dawn. He turns at will into a wolf or an oak stump, he converses with all creation, he outwits serpents by his cunning, he has a lodge from which he utters oracles; as brother of the winds, by reason of his swiftness, there is no incongruity in the idea that since his death he is the director of storms, and resides in the region of his brother, the North Wind. It is curious that he is swallowed up by the king of the fish, in this resembling in Aryan mythology Pradyumna, the son of Vishnu, who after being swallowed by a fish is ultimately restored to life,<sup>2</sup> or in Polynesian mythology Maui, who is rescued by the sky from the embrace of the jelly fish. Maui, like Tell, Sigurd, Hercules, and

<sup>1</sup> Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, 164.    <sup>2</sup> Vishnu Purana, 575.



others, has recently been discovered to be the sun, the fish which swallows him signifying really the earth; for does not the earth swallow the sun every night, and is not the sun only freed by the eastern sky in the morning? <sup>1</sup> Doubtless, on such a reading of his life, Manabozho has as just a claim as Mani to a place in the solar system; but then—who that has ever lived and died but has the same?

Samé, the great name of Brazilian legend, came across the ocean from the rising sun; he had power over the elements and tempests; the trees of the forests would recede to make room for him, the animals used to crouch before him; lakes and rivers became solid for him; and he taught the use of agriculture and magic. Like him, Bochica, the great lawgiver of the Muyscas and son of the sun, he who invented for them their calendar and regulated their festivals, had a white beard, a detail in which all the American culture-heroes agree. <sup>2</sup> It is not, however, on this particular feature, so much as on their *whiteness* in general that stress has been laid to identify them with the great White Light of Dawn. Of the Mexican Quetzalcoatl, Dr. Brinton says, 'Like all the dawn heroes he, too, was represented of white complexion, clothed

<sup>1</sup> Schirren, 144. Maui wird im Meere geformt, von einem Fisch verschluckt, mit diesem ans Land geworfen und herausgeschnitten. *Der Fisch ist die Erde welche die Sonne zur Nacht verschlingt; der Himmel im Osten befreit die Sonne aus der Erde.*

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, v. 23.

in long white robes.' The white is the emphatic thing about them. So the name Viracocha of the Peruvians, translated by Oviedo, 'the foam of the sea,' is, we are to believe, a metaphor: 'the dawn rises above the horizon as the snowy foam on the surface of the lake.'<sup>1</sup> But Peruvian tradition was confused as to whether Viracocha was the highest god and creator of the world, or only the first Inca; and such confusion between humanity and divinity, which is everywhere the normal result of the deification of the dead, is at least a more natural account of the origin of his worship than a fancied resemblance between the sea-foam and the dawn.<sup>2</sup> Heitsi Eibip, whom the Namaqua Hottentots call their Great Father, and on whose graves they throw stones for luck, so far resembles a solar hero that he is believed to have come like Samé from the East; yet, though much that is wonderful already attaches to his memory, he has not yet thrown off his human personality, but is known to have been merely a sorcerer of great fame;<sup>3</sup> so that in his deification we have almost living evidence of the process here assumed to have operated widely in the formation of the world's mythology.

To the influence of the language of adulation in

<sup>1</sup> Brinton, 180.

<sup>2</sup> Waitz (*Anthropologie*, iv. 394, 448, 455) adopts the view of the human origin of Viracocha.

<sup>3</sup> Bleek, *Hottentot Fables*, 75.

the formation of mythology, may also be added that of the language of affection or of ridicule. Nicknames, taken at hazard from the animal world, or from any object of earth, air, or water, would be obvious sources of improbable stories, tending to the completest confusion between the doings of a man and the attributes of the thing after which he was named. Nicknames of affection would produce the same result; and if, as is likely, other people besides the Finns call their daughters Moon, Sunshine, or Water-glimmer, it is easy to see how, for instance, the departure of Sunshine as a bride might come afterwards to be explained as a myth of the dawn or of twilight, and in the same way anything else that happened to her.<sup>1</sup>

An elemental explanation has been applied with such uniform effect, first to Aryan and then to Polynesian and American mythology, that in the resort to a more natural, albeit less poetical hypothesis, there may be danger of carrying opposing theories too far. There are, however, certain obvious limits; nor, if we doubt whether man in a primitive state really had the poetical views of nature so generally claimed for him, need we deny to him all poetical origination in the construction of his mythology.

<sup>1</sup> Schiefner, *Kalewala*, 129. In the lamentations over an approaching marriage, an old man says to the bride :

‘*Seinen Mond nannt’ dich der Vater,  
Sonnenschein nannt’ dich die Mutter,  
Wasserschimmer dich der Bruder,*’ &c.

Take, for instance, this typical Aryan passage, 'By the early Aryan mind the howling wind was conceived as a great dog or wolf. As the fearful beast was heard speeding by the windows or over the house-top, the inmates trembled, for none knew but his own soul might forthwith be required of him. Hence to this day, among ignorant people, the howling of a dog is supposed to portend a death in the family.'<sup>1</sup> When we find that a dog's howling portends the death of its master among the Nubians,<sup>2</sup> and is regarded as a dreaded omen by the Kamschadals,<sup>3</sup> as well as by the Fijians,<sup>4</sup> and that the Esquimaux lay a dog's head by the grave of a child to show it the way to the land of souls, we may safely reject the Aryan pedigree of the superstition, nor go any farther for its explanation than the nature of the sound itself. But though Aryan mythology may be taken to have grown, like any other, round human personalities, and though popular superstitions are in many instances the primary products of the laws of psychology, ranking rather among the sources than the *débris* of mythology, there is proof from the fairy-lore of savages that some of them have so far advanced in thought as to be not incapable of personifying abstract ideas. Dr. Rink alludes to the tendency of the

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, 35, 76.

<sup>2</sup> Schweinfurth, *Heart of Africa*, ii. 326.

<sup>3</sup> Steller, 279.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, *Fiji*, 204.

Esquimaux to give figurative explanations of things, to personify, for instance, human qualities, just as they are personified in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'<sup>1</sup> The Chippewya Indians personified sleep as Weeng, a giant insect that was once seen on a tree in a wood, where it made a murmuring sound with its wings; and it was generally conceived to cause sleep by sending a number of little fairies to beat drowsy foreheads with their tiny clubs.<sup>2</sup> And the Odjibwas, with a fancy which has been so poetically preserved by Longfellow, identified Winter with an old hoary-headed man called Peboan, Spring with a young man of quick step and rosy face called Segwun.<sup>3</sup>

The testimony, therefore, afforded by the observation of modern savage races as to the growth of mythology discloses several ways in which, as it is being formed now, we may infer that it was formed thousands of years ago. The evidence of Steller that the Kamschadals explained everything to themselves according to the liveliness of their fancy, letting nothing escape their examination,<sup>4</sup> accords with evidence concerning other races to the effect that some intellectual curiosity enters as a constituent into the

<sup>1</sup> Rink, *Tales, &c. of the Esquimaux*, 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Algie Researches*, ii. 226.

<sup>3</sup> *Hiawatha*, Canto xxi.

<sup>4</sup> Steller, 267. 'Die Italmanes geben nach ihrer *ungemein lebhaften Phantasie* von allen Dingen Raison, und lassen nicht das geringste ohne Critic vorbei. Yet they had neither reverence nor names for the stars, calling only the Great Bear the moving star, 281.

lowest human intelligence, giving birth to explanations which are as absurd to us as they are natural to their original framers. A ready capacity for invention is no rare trait of the savage character. Sir G. Grey found that the capability of Australian natives to invent marvels and wonders was proportioned to the quantity of food he offered them, and that rather than confess ignorance of a thing they would *invent* a tradition ;<sup>1</sup> whilst in the fondness of the Koranna Hottentots, as they sit round their evening fires, of relating fictitious adventures, lies a source of legendary lore which is not likely to be limited to South Africa, and is probably aided elsewhere as it is there by the knowledge, common to so many savage tribes, of the preparation of intoxicating drinks.<sup>2</sup> If to these sources of mythology be added the help supplied by dreams to the elaboration of fiction ; the misconceptions effected in traditions by the language of flattery, of affection, or of ridicule ; and, lastly, the tendency, probably consequent on such confusion, to personify things or even abstract ideas ; the wonder will no longer be that the mythology of the different races of the world displays so much uniformity, but that uniformity within limited ranges should ever have been taken as a proof of a common ethnological origin.

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in Australia*, i. 261, 297.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, *South Africa*, ii. 34.



## IX.

*COMPARATIVE FOLK-LORE.*

FOLK-LORE is often explained as the remains of ancient mythology, but the explanation, though perhaps true of some traditional lore still surviving in legends and fairy tales, seems of doubtful application to those popular superstitions yet so prevalent among us, of which our kitchens, our cottages, and our nurseries are the chief depositories. Beliefs, fancies, and customs, however trivial in themselves, and locally absurd, gain an interest from the area they cover and the races they connect; suggesting past unions between nations now remote, in the same way as the smallest weeds are capable of telling, by their geographical dispersion, of lands that once stretched where seas now roll. To take some instances. The English tradition that a swallow's nest is lucky, and its life protected by imaginary penalties, is one that in isolation we should naturally and rightly disregard. - But when we find that the

belief belongs to Germany, and that the supposed penalties are the same in Yorkshire as they are in Swabia, our wonder is aroused; and when we further learn that in China, too, the swallow's nest is lucky and its life inviolate, we become aware of a possible history and antiquity attaching to the superstition, which offer an inviting field for speculation and study. The belief, that the first appearance of mice in a house betokens death, becomes of interest when we find it in Russia as well as in Devonshire. Mothers there are both in Germany and in England who fear their children may grow up to be thieves if their nails are cut before their first year is over. Such superstitions, as we call them, had, without doubt, once a reason; in some cases still to be traced, in others effaced by the wear and tear of time. By the application to them of the comparative method not only may we hope to explain and connect ideas otherwise inexplicable, but also to come to conclusions not uninteresting from an archæological point of view. For if it can be shown that they are the remains of ancient barbarism rather than of ancient mythology, their testimony may be added to that, long since given by the more material relics and witnesses of early times, concerning the general history of civilisation.

For the existence of similar traditions as of similar fairy-tales in widely remote districts there are three

possible hypotheses. These are, migration, community of origin, or similarity of development. Either they have spread from one place to another, or they are the legacies of times when the people possessing them were actually united, or they have sprung up independently in different localities, in virtue of the natural laws of mental growth. It may be difficult of any given belief to say to which of these three classes it belongs ; but there are many beliefs, so alike in general features, yet so divergent in detail, as best to accord with the theory of a common descent or a common development. Some, for instance, may be so common to the different nations of one stock, as to be traceable to periods anterior to their dispersion ; whilst others, yet more widely spread than these, suggest relationships between races of men more fundamental and remote than can be detected in language, and point to an affinity that is older and stronger than mere affinity of blood, an affinity, that is, in the conceptions and fancies of primitive thought. For where actual relationship is not proved by language, analogies in tradition are better accounted for by supposing similar grooves of mental development than by any other theory. Philology may prove a relationship between, let us say, the Nixens of Germany and the Nisses of Scandinavia : but there is no relationship beyond similarity of conception between the Nereids of antiquity and the

mermaids of the North, or between the Brownies of Scotland and the Lares of Latium. Children, of whatever race or country they may be, dislike the dark, nor is it thought necessary to account for this common trait by any theory of connection or descent. So it is with nations. They are or were, in the face of nature, but as children in the dark, and the nearly similar phenomena of sun and storm, breeze and calm, have sufficed to create for them, in their several homes, many of those fears and fancies we find common to them all.

No one who has not turned special attention to the subject, can form any conception of the mass of purely pagan ideas, which, varnished over by Christianity, but barely hidden by it, grow in rank profusion in our very midst and exercise a living hold, which it is impossible either to realise or to fathom, on the popular mind. Like old Roman or British remains, buried under subsequent accumulations of earth and stones, or superficially concealed by an overgrowth of herbage, uninjured during all the length of time they have lain unobserved, there they lie just beneath the surface of nineteenth-century life, as indelible records of our mental history and origin. Only in the higher social strata can they be deemed extinct; but if it can no longer be said, as it was in the seventeenth century, that most houses of the West-end of London have the horse-

shoe on the threshold,<sup>1</sup> yet it may still be said of many a farm or cottage in the country. The astronomer Tycho Brahe, if he met an old woman or hare on leaving home, would take the hint to turn back: but it seems to be only the working population of England, Scotland, or Germany who still do the same. Statistics show that the receipts of omnibus and railway companies in France are less on Friday than on any other day; and many a German that lay dead on the carnage fields of the late war was found to have carried his word-charm as his safest shield against sword or bullet. Most English villages still have their wise men or women, whose powers range, like those of the shamans in savage tribes, from ruling the planets to curing rheumatics or detecting thieves; and witchcraft still has its believers, occasionally its victims, as of yore.<sup>2</sup>

We who have been brought up to look upon the classification of things into animal, vegetable, and

<sup>1</sup> Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, 197.

<sup>2</sup> Those who doubt the existence of much popular superstition in this century may judge of the amount and value of the evidence by referring to the following books: 1. All the volumes of *Notes and Queries*, Index, Folk-Lore. 2. Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk-Lore*, 1867. 3. Henderson's *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders*, 1866. 4. Kelly's *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-Lore*, 1863. 5. Stewart's *Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 1851. 6. Sternberg's *Dialect and Folk-Lore of Northamptonshire*, 1851. 7. Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, 1851. 8. Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, 1861. 9. Koehler, *Volksbrauch im Voigtlande*, 1867. 10. Bosquet, *La Normandie Romanesque*, 1845.

mineral, as primary, or indeed intuitive, are apt to forget that savages never classify, and that animate and inanimate to them are both alike. Sir John Lubbock has collected conclusive evidence that so inconceivable a confusion of thought exists.<sup>1</sup> The Tahitians, who sowed some iron nails that young ones might grow from them; the Esquimaux, who thought a musical-box the child of a small hand-organ; the Bushmen, who mistook a large waggon for the mother of some smaller ones, show the tendency of savages to identify motion with life, and to attribute feelings and relations such as actuate or connect themselves to everything that moves of itself or is capable of being moved. A native sent by one missionary to another with some loaves, and a letter stating the number, having eaten two of them and been detected through the letter, took the precaution the next time to put the letter under a stone that it might not *see* the theft committed.<sup>2</sup> Now there are numerous superstitions, which there is reason to think are relics of this savage state of thought, when all that existed existed under the same conditions as man himself, capable of the same feelings, and subject to the same wants and sorrows. Take, for example, bees. Bees are credited with a perfect comprehension of all that men do and utter, and, as members themselves of the family they belong to,

<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Civilisation*, 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.



they must be treated in every way as human in their emotions. On the day of the Purification in France it is customary in some parts for women to read the Gospel of the day to the bees.<sup>1</sup> French children are taught that the inmates of the hive will come out to sting them for any bad language uttered within their hearing; and in South Russia it is believed 'that if any robbery be committed where a number of hives are kept, the whole stock will gradually diminish, and in a short time die; for bees, they say, will not suffer thieving.'<sup>2</sup> Many persons have probably at some time of their lives, on seeing a crape-covered hive, learnt on inquiry that the bees were in mourning for some member of their owner's family. In Suffolk, when a death occurs in a house, the inmates immediately tell the bees, ask them formally to the funeral, and fix crape on their hives; otherwise it is believed they would die or desert. And the same custom, for the same reason, prevails, with local modifications, not only in nearly every English county, but very widely over the continent. In Normandy and Brittany may be seen, as in England, the crape-set hives; in Yorkshire some of the funeral bread, in Lincolnshire some cake and sugar, may be seen at the hive door; and a Devonshire nurse on her way to a funeral has been known to send back a child to perform the duty she

<sup>1</sup> Hammerton, *Round my House*, 254.

<sup>2</sup> Holderness, *Journey from Riga to the Crimea*, 254.

herself had forgotten, of telling the bees. The usual explanation of these customs and ideas is that they originated long ago with the death or flight of some bees, consequent on the neglect they incurred when the hand that once tended them could do so no longer. Yet a wider survey of analogous facts leads to the explanation above suggested ; for, not to dwell on the fact that in some places in England they are informed of weddings as well as of funerals, and their hives are decorated with favours as well as with crape, the practice of giving information of deaths extends in some parts not only to other animals as well, but, in addition, to inanimate things. In Lithuania, deaths are announced, not only to the bees, but to horses and cattle, by the rattling of a bunch of keys, and the same custom is reported from Dartford in Kent. In the North Riding, not long since, a farmer gravely attributed the loss of a cow to his not having told it of his wife's death. In Cornwall, the indoor plants are often put into mourning as well as the hives ; and at Rauen, in North Germany, not only are the bees informed of their master's death, but the trees also, by means of shaking them. Near Speier, not only must the bees be moved, but the wine and vinegar must be shaken, if it is wished that they shall not turn bad. Near Würtemberg, the vinegar must be shaken, the bird-cage hung differently, the cattle tied up differently, and the beehive

transposed. Near Ausbach the flower-pots must also be moved, and the wine-casks knocked three times ; while at Gernsheim, not only must the wine in the cellar be shaken, to prevent it turning sour, but the corn in the loft must be moved if the sown corn is to sprout.<sup>1</sup> But all these customs, being too much alike to be unrelated, and too widely spread to have sprung up without some reason, by some mere caprice or coincidence, it is difficult to suggest any other reason for them than that they go back to a time when not only bees and cattle, but trees and flowers, vinegar and wine, were, like human beings, considered liable to take offence, and capable also of being pacified by kind treatment, since, according as their several temperaments predisposed them, they were able, by deserting, dying, turning sour, or other untoward conduct, to resent neglect or disrespect on the part of their owners. Such beliefs belong to the lowest state of mental development, to a time when the most obvious marks of natural differentiation were as yet insufficient to produce corresponding distinctions in the minds of their beholders.

Other popular traditions strengthen this interpretation. In Normandy and Brittany it is thought that bees will not suffer themselves to be bought or sold ;

<sup>1</sup> Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 'Aberglaube,' cases 576, 664, 698, 898. These practices, even if no longer existent, throw light upon those that still are.

in other words, that they would take offence if made the subjects of sale and barter.<sup>1</sup> The same belief prevails in Cheshire, Suffolk, Hampshire, Cornwall, and Devonshire, like the old Russian rule that sacred images might not be spoken of as 'bought' but only as 'exchanged for money.'<sup>2</sup> The value of bees is measured, not by money, but by corn, hay, or some other exchangeable commodity; in Sussex, if any money is given for bees, it must be gold. Connected with this idea of the quasi-humanity of bees is the world-wide fear of slighting dangerous animals by calling them by their customary names. Mahometan women dare not call a snake a snake lest they should be bitten by one; Swedish women avert the wrath of bears by speaking of them as old men. Livonian fishermen, when at sea, fear to endanger their nets by calling any animal by its common name. At Mecklenburg, in the twelve days after Christmas, the fox goes by the appellation of the 'Long Tail;' even the timid mouse by that of the 'Floor-runner.' The Esthonians at all times call the fox 'Gray Coat,' the bear 'Broad-foot,' and should they take the liberty of too often mentioning the hare, their flax crops, they fear, would be in peril. In Sweden people dare not mention to anyone in the course of the day the number of fish they have caught, if they would catch any more; a feeling to

<sup>1</sup> Amélie Bosquet, *La Normandie pittoresque*, 217.

<sup>2</sup> Fletcher, *Russe Commonwealth*, 78.

which is probably related the North-Country prejudice against counting one's fish before the day's sport is over.

Witchcraft, although it represents a very low stage of religious conception, yet in its primary idea of a sympathy or identity existing between an original and its image, manifests some degree of intellectual advancement. For the idea of vicarious or representative influence, that if you wish to injure a man you can do so by an injury to a bit of his clothing or a lock of his hair, is, so far as it goes, a spiritual idea, presupposing notions about the interdependence of nature, and as far as possible removed from what we understand by mere materialism. Materialism indeed is one of the latest growths of the human mind, whilst spiritualism is one of its earliest. For to a savage, everything that exists lives and feels like himself, and the unseen spirits that surround and affect him are as the motes in a sunbeam for variety and number. The native Indian speaks of the earth as 'the big plate where all the spirits eat.'<sup>1</sup> Yet the fetichistic mode of thought is undoubtedly a low, and to us an absurd one. Burnings in effigy may probably be traced to it, and the stories so common in the annals of witchcraft of waxen images stuck with pins or burned, in order to injure the person they represented, undoubtedly belong to it. In America Kane found

<sup>1</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, v. 419.



an Indian tribe who believed that the hair of an enemy confined with a frog in a hole would cause the owner of the hair to suffer the torments of the frog.<sup>1</sup> In the Fiji Islands the health of a person can be made to fail with the decay of a cocoa-nut buried under a temple.<sup>2</sup> The Finns are said to this day to shoot in the water at images of their absent enemies. But our own country has its analogies. In Suffolk, in the last century, if an animal was thought to be bewitched, it was burned over a large fire, under the idea that as it consumed away the author of its bewitchment would consume away too. In Anglesey it is still believed that the name of a person inscribed on a pipkin, containing a live frog stuck full of pins, will injuriously affect the bearer of the name.

There are a numerous set of popular traditions which clearly relate to the same state of thought. There is a feeling so wide that it may be called European, that cut hair should always be burned, never thrown away: the reason given in France, in the Netherlands, in Denmark, and near Saalfeld in Germany, being, that its discovery by a witch would subject its owner to sorcery; that generally given in England and also in Swabia being, that if a bird took any of it for its nest the bearer would suffer from headache or lose the rest of his hair. A similar idea

<sup>1</sup> Kane, 216.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, 248.



prevails about teeth: all over England children are taught to throw extracted teeth into the fire, lest a dog by swallowing them should induce the toothache. So with the nail that has scratched you, or the knife that has cut you,—keep the nail or knife free from rust, and the wound will not fester. But all such ideas are explained by those actually existent in savage parts, by the custom, for instance, of the Fijians of hiding their cut hair in the thatch of the house, that it may not be used against them in witchcraft, or by the practice of Zulu sorcerers to destroy their victims by burying some of his hair, his nails, or his dress in a secret place, that the decay of the one may ensure that of the other. And a similar philosophy lies at the root of most popular charms for certain complaints. The remedies for warts, for instance, are all vicarious. Both at home and abroad the most usual method is to rub a black snail on the wart, and then to hang it on a hedge, trusting to the sympathetic decay of the wart and snail. But a piece of stolen raw meat, a stalk of wheat or a hair with as many knots in them as there are warts on the hand, or two apple halves tied together, will, if applied to the part and then buried, cause effectual relief. The essential thing is to ensure the decay of the representative object. In Somersetshire a good ague cure is to shut up a large black spider in a box and leave it to perish, that spider and ague may disappear together. In many places,

it is thought that the whooping-cough may be transferred to a hairy caterpillar tied in a bag round the neck : as the insect dies the cough will go. And in Devonshire some of the patient's hair is given to a dog between two slices of buttered bread, that the dog may take the hair and the cough together ; whilst in Sunderland the head is shaved and the hair (risking we must suppose a headache) left on a bush for the birds to carry off, that the cough itself may pass to them. May it not be said that such customs and fancies betray a mental constitution radically different from our present one, taking us back and ever reminding us of the savagery of our lineage as surely as do flint-flakes or bone-needles, and teaching us that only by the slowest degrees can emancipation be achieved from the superstitions, or, as some think, from the poetry, of ignorance ?

Again, trees, stones, waters, stars, serpents, or animals, are all to this day worshipped far and wide by uncivilised races, and the marks of a similar object-worship by our own race still survive in many a popular tradition. A law of Canute earnestly forbade the heathenship of reverencing ' the sun or moon, fire or flood, waterwhylls, or stones, or trees of the wood of any sort ; ' yet, if such things are no longer worshipped, it may be certainly said that some of them are still revered. To take, for instance, tree-worship. Both in Guiana and Africa the natives have so

superstitious a reverence for the silk cotton tree that they fear to cut it down lest death should ensue.<sup>1</sup> In New Zealand mythology, Rata was rebuked and put to shame by the spirits of the forest for cutting down a tall tree-divinity for making his canoe.<sup>2</sup> The trees which occupy the most prominent place in European folk-lore are the elder, the thorn, and the rowan or mountain ash. In Denmark a twig of elder placed silently in the ground is a popular cure for tooth-ache or ague, whilst no furniture, least of all a cradle, may be made of its wood ; for the tree is protected by the Elder-mother, without whose consent not a leaf may be touched, and who would strangle the baby as it lay asleep. So also about Chemnitz, elder boughs fixed before stalls keep witchcraft from the cattle ; and wreaths of it hung up in houses on Good Friday, after sunset, are believed to confer immunity from the ravages of caterpillars. In Suffolk, it is the safest tree to stand under in a thunderstorm, and misfortune will ensue if ever it is burned. The legend that the cross was made of its wood is evidently an aftergrowth, an attempt, of which we have so many examples, to give a Christian colour to a heathen practice ; for the elder was the tree under which, in pre-Christian times, the old Prussian Earth-god was fabled to dwell. Like the elder, the whitethorn was once an object of wor-

<sup>1</sup> Brett, *Indian Tribes of Guiana*, 369.

<sup>2</sup> Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, III-III4.

ship, for it too is held to be scatheless in storms ; and how else can we account for the fact that in Switzerland, as in the Eastern counties of England, to bring its flowers into a house is thought to bring death, than by supposing it was once a tree too sacred to be touched, and likely to avenge in some way the profanation that was done to it? Too deeply rooted in popular veneration for its sacred character to disappear, the Church, in course of time, wound its own legend round it, and by the fiction that its wood had composed the Crown of Thorns, deprived the worship of its heathen sting. But if round the elder and the thorn feelings of reverence once gathered and still linger, yet more is it true of the rowan. In England, Germany, and Sweden its leaves are still the most potent instrument against the darker powers: Highlanders still insert crosses of it with red thread in the lining of their clothes, and Cornish peasants still carry some in their pocket and wind it round the horns of their cattle in order to keep off evil eyes. In Lancashire sprigs of it are for the same reason hung up at bedheads, and the churn staff is generally made of its wood. It used to stand in nearly every churchyard in Wales, and crosses of it were regularly distributed on Christian festivals as sure preservatives against evil spirits. But this is another attempt to Christianise what was heathen, for the ancient Danes always used some of it for their ships, to secure them against

the storms which Rân, the great Ocean God's wife, with her net for capsized mariners, was ever ready and desirous to raise. The rowan in heathen mythology was called Thor's Helper, because it bent to his grasp in his passage over a flooded river on his way to the land of the Frost Giants ; and it has been thought that the later sanctity of the tree may be due to the place it occupied in mythological fancy. Yet it seems more reasonable to trace the myth to a yet older superstition than to trace the superstition to the myth. For from the exceeding beauty of their berries the rowan and the elder and the thorn would naturally impress the savage mind with the feelings of actual divinity, and would consequently lend themselves to the earliest imaginings about the universe of things. It is more likely that they progressed from a divinity on earth to their position in mythology than from their position in mythology to a divinity on earth, for the mind is capable of employing things for worship long before it is capable of employing them for fable. Worship is the product of fear, and fable of fancy ; and before men can indulge in fancy they must to some extent have cast off fear.

Certain traditions relating to birds and beasts are only explicable on the supposition that they were once objects of divination or worship. The old Germans, we know from Tacitus, used white horses, as the Romans used chickens, for purposes of augury, and

divined future events from different intonations of neighings. Hence it probably is that the discovery of a horse-shoe is so universally thought lucky, some of the feelings that once attached to the animal still surviving round the iron of its hoof. For horses, like dogs or birds, were invariably accredited with a greater insight into futurity than man himself; and the many superstitions connected with the flight or voice of birds resolve themselves into the fancy, not inconceivable among men surrounded on all sides by unintelligible tongues, that birds were the bearers of messages and warnings to men, which skill and observation might hope to interpret. Why is the robin's life and nest sacred, and why does an injury to either bring about bloody milk, lightning, or rain? It has been suggested that the robin, on account of its colour, was once sacred to Thor, the god of lightning; but it is possible that its red breast singled it out for worship from among birds, just as its red berries the rowan from among trees, long before its worshippers had arrived at any ideas of abstract divinities. All over the world there is a regard for things red. Captain Cook noticed a predilection for red feathers throughout all the islands of the Pacific.<sup>1</sup> In the Highlands women tie some red thread round the cows' tails before turning them out to grass in spring, and tie red silk round their own fingers to keep off

<sup>1</sup> Cook, vi. 192.



the witches: and just as in Esthonia, mothers put some red thread in their babies' cradles, so in China they tie some round their children's wrists, and teach them to regard red as the best known safeguard against evil spirits.

One, indeed, of the chief lessons of Comparative Folk-Lore is a caution against the theory which deduces popular traditions from Aryan or other mythology. The fact has been already alluded to, that in parts of China the same feelings prevail about the swallow as in England or Germany. But there are yet other analogies between the East and the West. A crowing hen is an object of universal dislike in England and Brittany; and few families in China will keep a crowing hen.<sup>1</sup> The owl's voice is ominous of death or other calamity in England and Germany, as it was in Greece (except at Athens); but in the Celestial Empire also it presages death, and is regarded as the bird which calls for the soul. And the crow also is in China a bird of ill omen. Is it not therefore likely that all popular fancies about birds and animals have begun in the same way, among the same or different races of the globe, and were subsequently adopted but never originated by mythology? May it not be that certain birds or animals became prominent in mythology because they had already been

<sup>1</sup> Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, ii. 328.

prominent in superstition, rather than that they became prominent in superstition because they previously had been prominent in mythology? For instance, instead of tracing a dog's howling as a death omen to an Aryan belief that the dog guided the soul from its earthly tenement to its abode in heaven, may we not suppose that the myth arose from an already existing omen, and that the latter arose, as omens still do, from a coincidence which suggested a connection, subsequently sustained by superficial observation? The St. Swithin fallacy, which arose within historical memory and still holds its ground in an age of scientific observation, well illustrates how one striking coincidence may grow into a belief, which no amount of later evidence can weaken or destroy. Just so, if it happened that a dog howled shortly before some calamity occurred to our Aryan forefathers, thousands and thousands of years ago, long before they had attained to any thoughts of soul or heaven, we can well imagine that the dog, thus thought to betoken death, should, when they came to frame the myth, be conceived as the guide which was waiting for the soul to take it to heaven, and that the belief thus perpetuated by the myth might survive to the latest ages.

There is abundant evidence in the practices to this very day, or till lately, prevalent in England and Europe, that the worship of the sun or of fire fills a large part in primitive religion. The passing of

children through the fire is not only a Semitic custom, but extends wherever the human mind has attained to the idea of purification and sacrifice. Some North American tribes used to burn to the sun a man-offering in the spring, to the moon a woman-offering in the autumn, expressing thereby their sense of the blessings of light and a desire for their continuance. And traces of such fire-worship and of its accompanying human sacrifices lasted in Europe into the very heart of this century, and in many places still survive. The similarity that exists between them, both in their seasons and mode of observance, illustrates the marvellous sameness of ideas which may so often be found among people in widely remote districts of the globe.

The three great festivals of the Druids took place on Mayday Eve, on Midsummer Eve, and on All Hallow-e'en. On those days went up from cairns, toothills, and Belenian heights fires and sacrifices to the sun-god Beal: and from such fires the lord of the neighbourhood would take the entrails of the sacrificed animal, and, walking barefoot over the ashes, carry them to the Druid who presided over the ceremonies. These fires have descended to us as the famous Beltane fires, lit still, or till lately, in Ireland, Scotland, Northern England, and Cornwall, on the eve of the summer solstice and at the equinoxes, usually on hill tops, with rejoicing and merriment and leaping through the flames on the part of all ages and

sexes of the population.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that this leaping through the flames is a relic of the time when men fell victims to them, a modification of the more barbarous custom. In the Highlands, where at the Beltane feast an oatmeal cake is toasted and portions of it drawn for blindfold by the company as they sit in a trench round a grass table, whosoever is the drawer of that portion which has been purposely toasted black is devoted to Baal to be sacrificed, and must leap perforce three times through the flames. In the same country it is, or was, customary on Yeule or Christmas Eve to burn in a cartload of lighted peat the stump of an old tree, which went by the name of Callac Nollic, or Christmas Old Wife. And in several Continental traditions we find the memory

<sup>1</sup> There are several derivations for Beltane or Bealteine: 1. From Baal or Belus, the Phœnician god, the worship being supposed to be of Phœnician origin; 2. from Baldur, one of the gods of Valhalla who represented the Sun; 3. from lá = day, teine = fire, and Beal = the name of some god, but not Belus; 4. from Paletaine, Pales' fire, the worship being identified with that of the Roman goddess Pales, who presided over cattle and pastures, and to whom, on April 21, prayers and offerings were made. At the Palilia shepherds purified their flocks by sulphur and fires of olive and pine wood, and presented the goddess with cakes of millet and milk, whilst the people leaped thrice through straw fires kindled in a row. Yet we should probably be right if we connected the Palilia and the Beltanes, not as directly borrowed one from the other, but as co-descendants from one and the same origin.

Mr. Forbes-Leslie speaks of Beltane fires as still to be seen in 1865. The Beltane feast proper was on May-day, but the word was also applied to fires kindled in honour of Bel on other days, as on Midsummer Eve, All Hallow-e'en, and Yeule, now Christmas. (*Early Races of Scotland*, i. 120-1.)

of a sacrifice still adhering to Midsummer Eve, or St. John the Baptist's Vigil. On that day, in Livonia, one or two old boats were burned to the songs and dances of young and old ; whilst at Reichenbach, in the Voightland, a May-pole, planted on the green, was, after similar festivities, thrown into the water. On the same day many watermen still refrain from committing themselves to the Elbe, the Unstrut, or the Elster, from the belief that upon that day those rivers require a sacrifice ; and the Saale is avoided for the same reason on Walpurgis, or Mayday Eve, as well. From the latter cases we may infer that, where rivers flowed near, a sacrifice by water was as usual as one by fire, which possibly explains the custom so common in many places in connection with these Beltane fires of rolling something lighted down a hill, and, if possible, into a river. At Conz, on the Moselle, a burning wheel was rolled down the hill into the river, and Scotch children at the Beltane feast used to roll their bannocks three times down a hill before consuming them round a good fire of heath and brushwood. So in Swabia, wheels of lighted straw were rolled down the Frauenberg, and on Scheiblen-Sonntag the young people still go by night to a hill, and after dancing and singing round a fire, swing wooden wheels by means of a stick round and round till they are thoroughly alight, and then fling them down the hill. In North Germany, where the fires take place at

Easter instead of at Midsummer, lighted tar-barrels are rolled down the Osterberge. The Church, to sanctify these fires, made the day of John the Baptist coincident with Midsummer-day, and taught that the heathen customs were symbolical of Christian doctrine. The fires themselves signified the Baptist, that burning and shining light who was to precede the true light; whilst the rolling wheels, as they represented the gradual descent of the sun in heaven after it had reached the highest point, so they illustrated the diminution of the fame of John, who was at first thought to be the real Messiah, till on his own testimony he said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' It has even been attempted in recent times to show that the Midsummer fires, in spite of all their heathen surroundings, were really of Christian origin, and in some way connected with John the Baptist. The two chief objections to this theory are, the survival of heathen names for the fires, as for instance, among others, the name *Himmelsfeuer*, and not the usual *Johannisfeuer*, in one of the districts of Upper Swabia, and also the close analogy, both in the idea and mode of purification, which exists between the Midsummer fire for men and the Need-fires for cattle.

Needfires were fires through which cattle were driven if any disease broke out amongst them. Such a fire was lit in Mull in 1767, and was not only the



method lately employed in Lower Saxony, but is said to be still actually prevalent in Caithness. It would thus appear that after the sacrifice to fire had been modified into the custom of passing through or over it, the newer mode of cure gradually found its explanation in the idea, that fire was a healing or purifying agent on account of its power to drive away those evil spirits, which in savage estimation cause or constitute natural disease. The essential thing was that all fires in the neighbourhood should be first extinguished and new ones relit by means of friction for the cattle to go through. The virtue lay in the new virgin fire uncontaminated by previous use for any purpose whatsoever; and the Forlorn Fires, which are said to be still lighted in Scotland when any *man* thinks himself the victim of witchcraft,<sup>1</sup> agree closely in ceremonial with the Needfires for cattle. A notice having been given to all the householders within the two nearest streams to extinguish all lights and fires on a given morning, the sufferer and his friends on the day cause the emission of new fire by a spinning-wheel or other means of friction, and having spread it from some tow to a candle, thence to a torch, and from the torch to a peatload, send it by messengers to the expectant houses. But exactly similar purificatory effects were attributed to the Midsummer fires. As far as their light reached, crops enjoyed immunity from

<sup>1</sup> Stewart, *Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders*, p. 149.

sorcery for a year, and the ashes collected from them were a constant insurance against calamities of all sorts. Leaping through them was held to avert malignant spirits for a year, and in many places not only did men leap, but cattle were driven, through the flames. Both America and Africa supply curious analogues to the Needfires of Scotland. In the former the Mayas at a festivity in honour of their gods of agriculture danced about the ashes of a burnt pile of wood, and passed barefooted over the coals with or without injury, believing that thus they would avert misfortune and appease the anger of the gods.<sup>1</sup> And among the Hottentots Kolbe attests the custom of driving sheep through a fire, and though the reason told to him for it was, the warding off the attacks of wild dogs by the smell of smoke, the other ceremonies usual on the occasion suggest the interpretation applicable to the Scotch custom.<sup>2</sup> Purification by passing between two fires was also a custom of the Tartars.<sup>3</sup>

Hence there is reason to think that the Mid-summer fires were simply annual and public Needfires, resembling the yearly harvest feasts of the Creeks of North America, among whom, as among

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, iii. 701.

<sup>2</sup> Kolbe, *Caput bonæ Spei*, ii. 431-2, and Thunberg, in Pinkerton, xvi. 143. Kolbe gives a picture of the practice.

<sup>3</sup> Kerr, *Voyages*, i. 131.

the ancients who annually imported fresh fire from Delos to Lemnos, there was an idea of a new and purified life commencing with a new and pure flame, after all fires, debased by their subservience to human needs, had been first extinguished. The Minnetarees at their feast of the new corn made a new fire by drilling the end of a stick into a piece of hard wood;<sup>1</sup> and the Sioux at their sacred feasts were wont to remove all fire from the lodge and rekindle a fresh fire before cooking the food, in order to have nothing unclean at the feast.<sup>2</sup> In India the Nagas, when they clear a fresh piece of jungle, first put out their old fires, and produce a new fire by friction, that of ordinary domestic use not being considered pure enough for the purpose.<sup>3</sup>

The same idea has been found among the Indian tribes of South America. There it was the duty of the high-priests 'to guard the Eternal Fire in the Rotunda; and, in the solemn, annual festival of the Busque, when all the fires of the nation were extinguished, the high-priest alone was commissioned, in the temple, to reproduce the celestial spark and give new fire to the community.'<sup>4</sup> So that from this most remarkable identity of conception between our fore-

<sup>1</sup> Catlin, ii. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, iii. 228.

<sup>3</sup> Latham, *Desc. Ethn.*, i. 141.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, *Antiquities of the Southern Indians*, p. 21, and Schoolcraft, *I. T.*, v. 267.

fathers and the native tribes of America, it is evident there is nothing exclusively Indo-Germanic in the holiness ascribed to virgin-fire, and that there is no need to ascribe to Phœnician influence customs which occur where such influence is at most uncertain. The wheel ignited by friction of its axle was, it has been suggested, an emblem of the sun, and the old Aryan belief, that when the sun was hidden by clouds its light was extinguished and needed renewing, which could only take place by some god working a 'pramantha' in its cold wheel till it glowed again, has been referred to as the possible root of the custom. But such an origin being of difficult application outside the geographical limits of Aryanism, it is obviously better to refer the myth to the custom than the custom to the myth, and to a custom moreover which is as wide as the world.

It may here be noticed in connection with the sacrificial customs which were once a part of the heathen worship, that the idea of a sacrifice to appease an angry spirit that has caused a disease is still far from extinct. The burial of a live animal is still believed in Wärend and North Sweden to prevent the cattle-plague, and an instance of such a sacrifice to the earth spirits is said to have occurred in Jönköping so recently as 1843. In Moray not long ago, whenever a herd of cattle was seized with the murrain, one of them was buried alive, just as in

the North-west Highlands and in Cornwall a black cock is buried alive on the spot where a person is first attacked by epilepsy ; or as, in Algeria, one is drowned in a sacred well for a similar purpose. A case is even cited in this century of an Englishman who burned a live calf to counteract the attacks of evil spirits.<sup>1</sup> Near Speier in Germany, if many hens or pigs or ducks died in quick succession, one of their kind was thrown into the fire, and the Esthonians, if a fire broke out, were wont to throw in a black living fowl to appease the flames.

English country boys, when on the sight of a new moon they turn the money in their pockets to ensure a constant supply there, have no idea of the reason that once underlay the practice. But a wide comparison of customs supplies us with a key ; for we find everywhere a prevalent mental association between the increase or wane of the moon and the increase or wane of things on earth. Maladies, it is thought, will wane more readily if the medicine be taken in the moon's wane, and wood cut at that time will burn better, just as, on the other hand, crops are more likely to be plentiful if sown whilst the moon is young, and marriages more likely to be happy. In some English counties pigs must be killed at the same season, lest the pork should waste in boiling. In Germany it is the best time for the father of a

<sup>1</sup> *Lancashire Folk-Lore*, p. 63.

family to die, for in the latter half of the month his death would portend the decrease of his whole family ; it is also the best time for counting money which it is desired may increase. An invalid in face of a waning moon should pray that his pains may diminish with it. Hence, too, the French idea that hair cut in the moon's wane will never grow again, or the similar one in Devonshire and Iceland, that the rest will fall off ; and hence probably the popular English belief that the weather of the new moon foreshadows the weather for the month. But are all these fancies relics of an old moon-worship, of the existence of which we have other evidence, or simply expressions of that feeling, once so prevalent, that there existed an intimate sympathy between man and nature, and that everything which affected the former was in some way or another typified by the latter ? Analogy seems to favour the latter hypothesis. For instance, all along the East coast of England it is thought that most deaths occur at the fall of the tide, a sympathy being imagined between the ebbing of the water and the ebbing of life ; and it is curious that Aristotle and Pliny entertained a similar idea, the former with respect to all animals, the latter only about man ; and though Pliny's observation of the fact was instigated by the statement of his predecessor, it is likely that the latter was led to the inquiry by the notoriety of a popular



belief. The Cornish idea that deaths are delayed till the ebb-tide, or the Icelandic one that more blood flows from sheep killed while the sea is running out, or that chimneys smoke more if built when the sea is running in, may be cited as similar instances. The inhabitants of Esthonia, if a wolf runs away with a lamb, think, by a kind of sympathy, to cause the wolf to drop it by themselves dropping something out of their pockets. And in parts of England to this day, the bloodstone is a remedy for a bleeding nose, and nettle-tea for a nettle-rash ; just as turmeric was once accounted a cure for the jaundice on account of its yellow colour, and the lungs of a fox were held good for asthma on account of that animal's respiratory powers.

Water-worship, whether as river, lake, or spring, seems as widely spread as that of trees or other natural objects, and the numerous traditions connected with it form yet another link between our civilised present and our barbarous past. 'There is scarcely,' says a writer on Lancashire Folk-Lore, 'a stream of any magnitude in either Lancashire or Yorkshire, which does not possess a presiding spirit in some part of its course.' A water-spirit that haunts some stepping-stones near Clitheroe is still believed once in every seven years to require a human life ; nor is it long since a farmer in Anglesea had to drain a well belonging to him, on account of the damage

done by persons resorting thither, under the belief that if they cursed the disease they suffered from and dropped pins about the well, they would shortly be cured. There is still a pin-well in Northumberland, and another in Westmoreland, wherein country girls in passing throw an offering of pins to the resident spirits. So in Ireland, votive rags may be seen on trees and hedges that surround sacred wells, whither people travel great distances in order to crawl an uneven number of times in the sun's direction round the water, hoping thereby to propitiate the fairies and to avert sorceries.<sup>1</sup> St. Gowen's well on the coast of Pembroke was lately or is still frequented for the cure of paralysis and other maladies, and there are few counties in England where the dedication of curative wells to Christian saints does not betray the attempt to hallow and hide a heathen practice under a Christian name. In Northampton alone we find St. Lawrence's at Peterborough, St. John's at Boughton, St. Rumbald's at Brackley, St. Loy's at Weedon-Loys, St. Dennis' at Naseby, St. Mary's at Hardwick, and St. Thomas' at Northampton. So in Normandy, people still resort from all parts of the province, on the eve of the first of June, to the foun-

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Betham, *Gael and Cimbri*: 1834. 'The branches of a tree near the Stone of Fire Temple in the Persian province of Fars were found thickly hung with rags, and the same offerings are common on bushes round sacred wells in the Dekkan of India and Ceylon.' (Forbes-Leslie, *Early Races of Scotland*, i. 163.)

tain of St. Clotilde, near Andelys, and there are other French wells of no inferior celebrity. As English peasants propitiate bad water-spirits by presents of pins, so do the Bretons by slices of bread and butter; and the Livonians, before starting on a voyage, calm the sea-mother by a libation of brandy.<sup>1</sup> But water, in addition to its dangerous and curative properties, is supposed to contain prophetic ones as well. The Castalian fountain in Greece was prophetic; and as the Laconians, by cakes thrown into a pool sacred to Juno, used to augur good or bad to themselves according as their cakes sank or floated, so do our Cornish countrymen by dropping pins or pebbles into wells read futurity in the signs of the bubbles.

The belief in unseen spirits, which underlies many of the foregoing superstitions, as it is one of the earliest beliefs of the human mind, so it is one of the most persistent. The worship of water, fire, and other natural objects probably arose from a dread of spirits thought to be resident within them, whom it was as well to cajole by gifts and prayers. Earth and air, like fire and water, were peopled respectively with invisible demons, which survive in still current traditions of the Gabriel Hounds, the Seven Whistlers, fairies, elves, and all their tribe. Our countrymen in Cornwall, if the breeze fail while they are winnowing,

<sup>1</sup> Schiefner, *Introduction to Sjögren's Livische Grammatik*. St. Petersburg, 1861.

whistle to the Spriggian, or air-spirits, to bring it back ; and the Esthonians on the Gulf of Finland do, or did, precisely the same. In Northamptonshire, till lately, women used to sweep the hearth before they went to bed, and leave vessels of water for the ablutions of the fairies or spirits of the earth, just as in Siberia food is placed daily in the cellar for the benefit of the Domavoi or house-spirits. In Scotland green patches may still be seen on field or moor left uncultivated as 'the gudeman's croft,' by which it has been hoped to buy the goodwill of the otherwise evil-disposed Devil or earth-spirit ; and it is doubtless from a similar fear of showing neglect or disrespect that Esthonian peasants dislike parting with any earth from their fields, and in drinking beer or eating bread recognise the existence and wants of the earth-spirit by letting some drops of the one and some crumbs of the other find their way to the floor.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing instances of actual Folk-Lore, many of them now mere meaningless survivals, seem only intelligible on the ground that they have descended to us either from the earliest inhabitants of Western Europe, or from times when our Aryan progenitors were perhaps not unlike modern Fuejians. The

<sup>1</sup> The instances of Esthonian superstitions are taken from Grimm's collection in the *Deutsche Mythologie*. Their date is 1788. The same interest attaches to them from an archæological point of view, whether they exist still or have become extinct.

existence has been proved, not only in England but throughout Europe, of phases of thought and modes of worship closely similar to those still found among actual savages. There is no nation that we know in the present or read of in the past so cultivated as not to retain many spots from the dark ages of its infancy and ignorance; but these, absurd as they may seem, hold the rank and claim the interest of prehistoric antiquities. The fact that there still survive among civilised people ideas and practices, corresponding in structure to those found in the various stages of the lower races, is of the same force to prove that we once went through those several stages, as the survival of traits in the growth of the individual, similar to those actually found in lower animals, point to our gradual ascent from a lower scale of being. The belief in, and dread of, evil spirits; the endeavour to affect them by acting on their fetishes or substitutes; the worship of natural objects, as trees, animals, water or even stones; the mistaking of mere sequence in time for causal connection and the consequent importance attached to such occurrences as have been observed to precede remarkable phenomena,—these and many other characteristics of modern savages find abundant representation in modern civilisation, and it is more likely they are there as survivals than as importations.

But it may be urged that no necessary antiquity

can be asserted of traditions simply on account of the wide area they range over, and instances may be cited of Christian superstitions no less widely extended than many above mentioned. The belief, for instance, that about midnight on Christmas Eve, cattle rise on their knees to salute the Nativity, is found with slight modifications in England, Brittany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. In Cornwall a strong prejudice exists against burying on the north side of a church, and precisely the same feeling is found in Esthonia, for the reason there given that at the end of the world all churches will fall on that side. So, too, the custom of opening all doors and windows at a death, to give free outlet to the departing soul, prevails no less in the south of Spain than in England or in parts of Germany.

To this objection there are two answers : first, that the capacity of superstitions to spread widely and rapidly is by no means denied ; secondly, that many Christian traditions are really heathen, though their origin and meaning may now be lost. For the policy of the Church towards paganism, though at times one of radical opposition, was generally one better calculated for success. It learned to prefer gradual triumphs to speedy conquests, aware that the former were more likely to last, and was pleased to satisfy its conscience and hide its impotence under connivance and compromise. It assimilated beliefs which it could not destroy,



and glossed over what it could not erase, substituting simply its saints and angels for the gods and spirits of older cults. On Monte Casino, near Rome, there existed down to the sixth century a temple sacred to Apollo, till St. Benedict came and, like another Josiah, broke the idols and overthrew the altar and burned the grove, but set up a temple to St. Martin in its stead. And this case is typical of the way in which obstinate heathen rites were diverted and customs consecrated. Some illustrations may be added to those already incidentally alluded to, since they serve to explain how so many relics of heathenism have resisted centuries of Christian teaching. The Scandinavian water-spirit, Nikur, inhabitant of lakes and rivers and raiser of storms, whose favour could only be won by sacrifices, became in the middle ages St. Nicholas, the patron of sailors and sole refuge in danger; and near St. Nicholas' church at Liverpool there stood a statue of the Christian saint, to whom sailors used to present a peace-offering when they went to sea, and a wave-offering when they returned. So it was with sacred trees and flowers and waters. Their sanctity was transferred, not destroyed. St. Boniface, with the wood of the oak he so miraculously felled, raised an oratory to St. Peter, to whom were thenceforth paid the honours of Thor. Nobody ventured the more to touch the famous oak at Kenmare when blown down by a storm, because it had been handed

over to the protection of St. Columba, nor did a fragment of St. Colman's oak held in the mouth the less avert death by hanging because it had been sanctified by the name of a saint. The Breton princes, before they entered the church at Vretou, offered prayers under a yew outside, which was said to have sprung from St. Martin's staff and to have been so replete with holiness that the very birds of the air left its berries untouched. The great goddess Freja could only be banished from men's thoughts by transferring what had been sacred to her to the Virgin Mary; and the names of such common plants as Lady's Grass, Lady's Smock, Lady's Slipper, Lady's Mantle, and others, attest to this day the wrong that was done to the Northern goddess. Bits of seaweed called Lady's Trees still decorate many a Cornish chimney-piece, and protect the house from fire and other evils. The Ladybird was once Freja's bird; and Orion's belt, which in Sweden is still called Freja's spindle, in Zealand now belongs to her successor Mary. In the same way Christmas has supplanted the old Yule festival, and the Yule log still testifies to the rites of fire-worship once connected with the season. So we now keep Easter at the time when our pagan forefathers used to sacrifice to the goddess Eostre, and hot cross-buns are perhaps the descendants of cakes once eaten in her honour, on which the mark of Christianity has taken the place of some heathen sign.

Such then is the evidence which Comparative Folk-Lore affords in confirmation of the teaching of history, that the people from whom we inherit our popular traditions were once as miserable and savage as those we now place in the lowest scale of the human family. The evidence that the nations now highest in culture were once in the position of those now the lowest is ever increasing, and the study of Folk-Lore corroborates the conclusions long since arrived at by archæological science. For, just as stone monuments, flint knives, lake-piles, or shell-mounds point to a time when Europeans resembled races where such things are still part of actual life, so do the traces in our social organism of fetishism, totemism, and other low forms of thought, connect our past with people where such forms of thought are still predominant. The analogies with barbarism which still flourish in civilised communities seem only explicable on the theory of a slow and more or less uniform metamorphosis to higher types and modes of life, whilst they enforce the belief that before long it will appear a law of development, as firmly established on the inconceivability of the contrary, that civilisation should emerge from barbarism, as that butterflies should first be caterpillars, or that ignorance should precede knowledge. In this way superstition itself turns to the service of science, confirming its teaching, that the history of humanity

has been a rise, not a fall, not a degradation from completeness to imperfection, but a constantly accelerating progress from savagery to culture; that, in short, the iron age of the world belongs to the past, its golden one to the future.

THE END.



WES

1950/150



**University of California  
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY  
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388  
Return this material to the library  
from which it was borrowed.**

---

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**A** 000 757 205 0

