

FRAZER JAMES GEORGE

THE GOLDEN BOUGH: A
STUDY IN MAGIC AND
RELIGION (THIRD EDITION,
VOL. 03 OF 12)

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in Magic and Religion
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James George Frazer

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Preface

The term Taboo is one of the very few words which the English language has borrowed from the speech of savages. In the Polynesian tongue, from which we have adopted it, the word designates a remarkable system which has deeply influenced the religious, social, and political life of the Oceanic islanders, both Polynesians and Melanesians, particularly by inculcating a superstitious veneration for the persons of nobles and the rights of private property. When about the year 1886 my ever-lamented friend William Robertson Smith asked me to write an article on Taboo for the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, I shared what I believe to have been at the time the current view of anthropologists, that the institution in question was confined to the brown and black races of the Pacific. But an attentive study of the accounts given of Taboo by observers who wrote while it still flourished in Polynesia soon led me to modify that view.

The analogies which the system presents to the superstitions, not only of savages elsewhere, but of the civilised races of antiquity, were too numerous and too striking to be overlooked; and I came to the conclusion that Taboo is only one of a number of similar systems of superstition which among many, perhaps among all races of men have contributed in large measure, under many different names and with many variations of detail, to build up the complex fabric of society in all the various sides or elements of it which we describe as religious, social, political, moral and economic. This conclusion I briefly indicated in my article. My general views on the subject were accepted by my friend Robertson Smith and applied by him in his celebrated *Lectures* to the elucidation of some aspects of Semitic religion. Since then the importance of Taboo and of systems like it in the evolution of religion and morality, of government and property, has been generally recognised and has indeed become a commonplace of anthropology.

The present volume is merely an expansion of the corresponding chapter in the first edition of *The Golden Bough*. It treats of the principles of taboo in their special application to sacred personages, such as kings and priests, who are the proper theme of the book. It does not profess to handle the subject as a whole, to pursue it into all its ramifications, to trace the manifold influences which systems of this sort have exerted in moulding the multitudinous forms of human society. A treatise which should adequately discuss these topics would

far exceed the limits which I have prescribed for myself in *The Golden Bough*. For example, I have barely touched in passing on the part which these superstitions have played in shaping the moral ideas and directing the moral practice of mankind, a profound subject fraught perhaps with momentous issues for the time when men shall seriously set themselves to revise their ethical code in the light of its origin. For that the ethical like the legal code of a people stands in need of constant revision will hardly be disputed by any attentive and dispassionate observer. The old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable. The moral world is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change, of perpetual flux. Contemplate the diversities, the inconsistencies, the contradictions of the ethical ideas and the ethical practice, not merely of different peoples in different countries, but of the same people in the same country in different ages, then say whether the foundations of morality are eternally fixed and unchanging. If they seem so to us, as they have probably seemed to men in all ages who did not extend their views beyond the narrow limits of their time and country, it is in all likelihood merely because the rate of change is commonly so slow that it is imperceptible at any moment and can only be detected by a comparison of accurate observations extending over long periods of time. Such a comparison, could we make it, would probably convince us that if we speak of the moral law as immutable and eternal, it can only be in the relative or figurative sense in which we apply the

same words to the outlines of the great mountains, by comparison with the short-lived generations of men. The mountains, too, are passing away, though we do not see it; nothing is stable and abiding under or above the sun. We can as little arrest the process of moral evolution as we can stay the sweep of the tides or the courses of the stars.

Therefore, whether we like it or not, the moral code by which we regulate our conduct is being constantly revised and altered: old rules are being silently expunged and new rules silently inscribed in the palimpsest by the busy, the unresting hand of an invisible scribe. For unlike the public and formal revision of a legal code, the revision of the moral code is always private, tacit, and informal. The legislators who make and the judges who administer it are not clad in ermine and scarlet, their edicts are not proclaimed with the blare of trumpets and the pomp of heraldry. We ourselves are the lawgivers and the judges: it is the whole people who make and alter the ethical standard and judge every case by reference to it. We sit in the highest court of appeal, judging offenders daily, and we cannot if we would rid ourselves of the responsibility. All that we can do is to take as clear and comprehensive a view as possible of the evidence, lest from too narrow and partial a view we should do injustice, perhaps gross and irreparable injustice, to the prisoners at the bar. Few things, perhaps, can better guard us from narrowness and illiberality in our moral judgments than a survey of the amazing diversities of ethical theory and practice which have

been recorded among the various races of mankind in different ages; and accordingly the Comparative Method applied to the study of ethical phenomena may be expected to do for morality what the same method applied to religious phenomena is now doing for religion, by enlarging our mental horizon, extending the boundaries of knowledge, throwing light on the origin of current beliefs and practices, and thereby directly assisting us to replace what is effete by what is vigorous, and what is false by what is true. The facts which I have put together in this volume as well as in some of my other writings may perhaps serve as materials for a future science of Comparative Ethics. They are rough stones which await the master-builder, rude sketches which more cunning hands than mine may hereafter work up into a finished picture.

J. G. Frazer.

Cambridge,

1st February 1911.

Chapter I. The Burden Of Royalty

§ 1. Royal and Priestly Taboos

Life of divine kings and priests regulated by minute rules. The Mikado or Dairi of Japan.

At a certain stage of early society the king or priest is often thought to be endowed with supernatural powers or to be an incarnation of a deity, and consistently with this belief the course of nature is supposed to be more or less under his control, and he is held responsible for bad weather, failure of the crops, and similar calamities.¹ To some extent it appears to be assumed that the king's power over nature, like that over his subjects and slaves, is exerted through definite acts of will; and therefore if drought, famine, pestilence, or storms arise, the people attribute the misfortune to the negligence or guilt of their king, and punish him accordingly with stripes and bonds, or, if he remains obdurate, with deposition and death.² Sometimes, however, the course of nature, while regarded as dependent on the king, is supposed to be partly independent of his will. His person is considered, if we may express it so, as the dynamical centre of

¹ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. pp. 332 *sqq.*, 373 *sqq.*

² *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. pp. 352 *sqq.*

the universe, from which lines of force radiate to all quarters of the heaven; so that any motion of his – the turning of his head, the lifting of his hand – instantaneously affects and may seriously disturb some part of nature. He is the point of support on which hangs the balance of the world, and the slightest irregularity on his part may overthrow the delicate equipoise. The greatest care must, therefore, be taken both by and of him; and his whole life, down to its minutest details, must be so regulated that no act of his, voluntary or involuntary, may disarrange or upset the established order of nature. Of this class of monarchs the Mikado or Dairi, the spiritual emperor of Japan, is or rather used to be a typical example. He is an incarnation of the sun goddess, the deity who rules the universe, gods and men included; once a year all the gods wait upon him and spend a month at his court. During that month, the name of which means “without gods,” no one frequents the temples, for they are believed to be deserted.³ The Mikado receives from his people and assumes in his official proclamations and decrees the title of “manifest or incarnate deity” (*Akitsu Kami*) and he claims a general authority over the gods of Japan.⁴ For example, in an official decree of

³ *Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century: from recent Dutch Visitors to Japan, and the German of Dr. Ph. Fr. von Siebold* (London, 1841), pp. 141 sqq.

⁴ W. G. Aston, *Shinto (the Way of the Gods)* (London, 1905), p. 41; Michel Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. (Paris, 1907), pp. 189 sqq. The Japanese word for god or deity is *kami*. It is thus explained by the native scholar Motoöri, one of the chief authorities on Japanese religion: “The term *Kami* is applied in the first place to the various deities

the year 646 the emperor is described as “the incarnate god who governs the universe.”⁵

Rules of life formerly observed by the Mikado.

of Heaven and Earth who are mentioned in the ancient records as well as their spirits (*mi-tama*) which reside in the shrines where they are worshipped. Moreover, not only human beings, but birds, beasts, plants and trees, seas and mountains, and all other things whatsoever which deserve to be dreaded and revered for the extraordinary and pre-eminent powers which they possess, are called *Kami*. They need not be eminent for surpassing nobleness, goodness, or serviceableness alone. Malignant and uncanny beings are also called *Kami* if only they are the objects of general dread. Among *Kami* who are human beings I need hardly mention first of all the successive Mikados – with reverence be it spoken... Then there have been numerous examples of divine human beings both in ancient and modern times, who, although not accepted by the nation generally, are treated as gods, each of his several dignity, in a single province, village, or family.” Hirata, another native authority on Japanese religion, defines *kami* as a term which comprises all things strange, wondrous, and possessing *isao* or virtue. And a recent dictionary gives the following definitions: “*Kami*. 1. Something which has no form but is only spirit, has unlimited supernatural power, dispenses calamity and good fortune, punishes crime and rewards virtue. 2. Sovereigns of all times, wise and virtuous men, valorous and heroic persons whose spirits are prayed to after their death. 3. Divine things which transcend human intellect. 4. The Christian God, Creator, Supreme Lord.” See W. G. Aston, *Shinto (the Way of the Gods)*, pp. 8-10, from which the foregoing quotations are made. Mr. Aston himself considers that “the deification of living Mikados was titular rather than real,” and he adds: “I am not aware that any specific so-called miraculous powers were authoritatively claimed for them” (*op. cit.* p. 41). No doubt it is very difficult for the Western mind to put itself at the point of view of the Oriental and to seize the precise point (if it can be said to exist) where the divine fades into the human or the human brightens into the divine. In translating, as we must do, the vague thought of a crude theology into the comparatively exact language of civilised Europe we must allow for a considerable want of correspondence between the two: we must leave between them, as it were, a margin of cloudland to which in the last resort the deity may retreat from the too searching light of philosophy and science.

⁵ M. Revon, *op. cit.* i. 190 n.²

The following description of the Mikado's mode of life was written about two hundred years ago: —⁶

“Even to this day the princes descended of this family more particularly those who sit on the throne, are looked upon as persons most holy in themselves, and as Popes by birth. And, in order to preserve these advantageous notions in the minds of their subjects, they are obliged to take an uncommon care of their sacred persons, and to do such things, which, examined according to the customs of other nations, would be thought ridiculous and impertinent. It will not be improper to give a few instances of it. He thinks that it would be very prejudicial to his dignity and holiness to touch the ground with his feet; for this reason when he intends to go anywhere, he must be carried thither on men's shoulders. Much less will they suffer that he should expose his sacred person to the open air, and the sun is not thought worthy to shine on his head. There is such a holiness ascribed to all the parts of his body that he dares to cut off neither his hair, nor his beard, nor his nails. However, lest he

⁶ Kaempfer, “History of Japan,” in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vii. 716 sq. However, Mr. W. G. Aston tells us that Kaempfer's statements regarding the sacred character of the Mikado's person cannot be depended on (*Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 41, note †). M. Revon quotes Kaempfer's account with the observation that, “*les naïvetés recèlent plus d'une idée juste*” (*Le Shintoïsme*, vol. i. p. 191, note ²). To me it seems that Kaempfer's description is very strongly confirmed by its close correspondence in detail with the similar customs and superstitions which have prevailed in regard to sacred personages in many other parts of the world and with which it is most unlikely that Kaempfer was acquainted. This correspondence will be brought out in the following pages.

should grow too dirty, they may clean him in the night when he is asleep; because, they say, that which is taken from his body at that time, hath been stolen from him, and that such a theft doth not prejudice his holiness or dignity. In ancient times, he was obliged to sit on the throne for some hours every morning, with the imperial crown on his head, but to sit altogether like a statue, without stirring either hands or feet, head or eyes, nor indeed any part of his body, because, by this means, it was thought that he could preserve peace and tranquillity in his empire; for 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. But it having been afterwards discovered, that the imperial crown was the palladium, which by its immobility⁷ could preserve peace in the empire, it was thought expedient to deliver his imperial person, consecrated only to idleness and pleasures, from this burthensome duty, and therefore the crown is at present placed on the throne for some hours every morning. His victuals must be dressed every time in new pots, and served at table in new dishes: both are very clean and neat, but made only of common clay; that without any considerable expense they may be laid aside, or broke, after they have served once. They are generally broke,

⁷ In Pinkerton's reprint this word appears as "mobility." I have made the correction from a comparison with the original (Kaempfer, *History of Japan*, translated from the original Dutch manuscript by J. G. Scheuchzer, London, 1728, vol. i. p. 150).

for fear they should come into the hands of laymen, for they believe religiously, that if any layman should presume to eat his food out of these sacred dishes, it would swell and inflame his mouth and throat. The like ill effect is dreaded from the Dairi's sacred habits; for they believe that if a layman should wear them, without the Emperor's express leave or command, they would occasion swellings and pains in all parts of his body.” To the same effect an earlier account of the Mikado says: “It was considered as a shameful degradation for him even to touch the ground with his foot. The sun and moon were not even permitted to shine upon his head. None of the superfluities of the body were ever taken from him, neither his hair, his beard, nor his nails were cut. Whatever he eat was dressed in new vessels.”⁸

Rules of life observed by kings and priests in Africa and America.

Similar priestly or rather divine kings are found, at a lower level of barbarism, on the west coast of Africa. At Shark Point near Cape Padron, in Lower Guinea, lives the priestly king Kukulu, alone in a wood. He may not touch a woman nor leave his house; indeed he may not even quit his chair, in which he

⁸ Caron, “Account of Japan,” in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vii. 613. Compare B. Varenius, *Descriptio regni Japoniae et Siam* (Cambridge, 1673), p. 11: “*Nunquam attingebant (quemadmodum et hodie id observat) pedes ipsius terram: radiis Solis caput nunquam illustrabatur: in apertum aërem non procedebat,*” etc. The first edition of this book was published by Elzevir at Amsterdam in 1649. The *Geographia Generalis* of the same writer had the honour of appearing in an edition revised and corrected by Isaac Newton (Cambridge, at the University Press, 1672).

is obliged to sleep sitting, for if he lay down no wind would arise and navigation would be stopped. He regulates storms, and in general maintains a wholesome and equable state of the atmosphere.⁹ On Mount Agu in Togo, a German possession in West Africa, there lives a fetish or spirit called Bagba, who is of great importance for the whole of the surrounding country. The power of giving or withholding rain is ascribed to him, and he is lord of the winds, including the Harmattan, the dry, hot wind which blows from the interior. His priest dwells in a house on the highest peak of the mountain, where he keeps the winds bottled up in huge jars. Applications for rain, too, are made to him, and he does a good business in amulets, which consist of the teeth and claws of leopards. Yet though his power is great and he is indeed the real chief of the land, the rule of the fetish forbids him ever to leave the mountain, and he must spend the whole of his life on its summit. Only once a year may he come down to make purchases in the market; but even then he may not set foot in the hut of any mortal man, and must return to his place of exile the same day. The business of government in the villages is conducted by subordinate chiefs, who are appointed by him.¹⁰ In the West African kingdom of Congo there was a supreme pontiff called Chitomé or Chitombé, whom the negroes regarded as a god on earth and all-powerful in heaven. Hence

⁹ A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste* (Jena, 1874-75), i. 287 sq., compare pp. 353 sq.

¹⁰ H. Klose, *Togo unter deutscher Flagge* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 189, 268.

before they would taste the new crops they offered him the first-fruits, fearing that manifold misfortunes would befall them if they broke this rule. When he left his residence to visit other places within his jurisdiction, all married people had to observe strict continence the whole time he was out; for it was supposed that any act of incontinence would prove fatal to him. And if he were to die a natural death, they thought that the world would perish, and the earth, which he alone sustained by his power and merit, would immediately be annihilated.¹¹ Similarly in Humbe, a kingdom of Angola, the incontinence of young people under the age of puberty used to be a capital crime, because it was believed to entail the death of the king within the year. Of late the death penalty has been commuted for a fine of ten oxen inflicted on each of the culprits. This commutation has attracted thousands of dissolute youth to Humbe from the neighbouring tribes, among whom the old penalty is still rigorously exacted.¹² Amongst the semi-barbarous nations of the New World, at the date of the Spanish conquest, there were found hierarchies or theocracies like those of Japan;¹³ in particular, the high pontiff of the Zapotecs in Southern Mexico appears to have presented a close parallel to the Mikado. A powerful rival to the king himself, this spiritual lord governed Yopaa, one of the chief cities of the

¹¹ J. B. Labat, *Relation historique de l'Éthiopie occidentale* (Paris, 1732), i. 254 *sqq.*

¹² Ch. Wunenberger, "La Mission et le royaume de Humbé, sur les bords du Cunène," *Missions Catholiques*, xx. (1888) p. 262.

¹³ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. pp. 415 *sq.*

kingdom, with absolute dominion. It is impossible, we are told, to overrate the reverence in which he was held. He was looked on as a god whom the earth was not worthy to hold nor the sun to shine upon. He profaned his sanctity if he even touched the ground with his foot. The officers who bore his palanquin on their shoulders were members of the highest families; he hardly deigned to look on anything around him; and all who met him fell with their faces to the earth, fearing that death would overtake them if they saw even his shadow. A rule of continence was regularly imposed on the Zapotec priests, especially upon the high pontiff; but “on certain days in each year, which were generally celebrated with feasts and dances, it was customary for the high priest to become drunk. While in this state, seeming to belong neither to heaven nor to earth, one of the most beautiful of the virgins consecrated to the service of the gods was brought to him.” If the child she bore him was a son, he was brought up as a prince of the blood, and the eldest son succeeded his father on the pontifical throne.¹⁴ The supernatural powers attributed to this pontiff are not specified, but probably they resembled those of the Mikado and Chitomé.

The rules of life imposed on kings in early society are intended to preserve their lives for the good of their people.

Wherever, as in Japan and West Africa, it is supposed that the order of nature, and even the existence of the world, is bound

¹⁴ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-centrale*, iii. 29 sq.; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 142 sq.

up with the life of the king or priest, it is clear that he must be regarded by his subjects as a source both of infinite blessing and of infinite danger. On the one hand, the people have to thank him for the rain and sunshine which foster the fruits of the earth, for the wind which brings ships to their coasts, and even for the solid ground beneath their feet. But what he gives he can refuse; and so close is the dependence of nature on his person, so delicate the balance of the system of forces whereof he is the centre, that the least irregularity on his part may set up a tremor which shall shake the earth to its foundations. And if nature may be disturbed by the slightest involuntary act of the king, it is easy to conceive the convulsion which his death might provoke. The natural death of the Chitomé, as we have seen, was thought to entail the destruction of all things. Clearly, therefore, out of a regard for their own safety, which might be imperilled by any rash act of the king, and still more by his death, the people will exact of their king or priest a strict conformity to those rules, the observance of which is deemed necessary for his own preservation, and consequently for the preservation of his people and the world. The idea that early kingdoms are despotisms in which the people exist only for the sovereign, is wholly inapplicable to the monarchies we are considering. On the contrary, the sovereign in them exists only for his subjects; his life is only valuable so long as he discharges the duties of his position by ordering the course of nature for his people's benefit. So soon as he fails to do so, the care, the devotion, the religious homage

which they had hitherto lavished on him cease and are changed into hatred and contempt; he is dismissed ignominiously, and may be thankful if he escapes with his life. Worshipped as a god one day, he is killed as a criminal the next. But in this changed behaviour of the people there is nothing capricious or inconsistent. On the contrary, their conduct is entirely of a piece. If their king is their god, he is or should be also their preserver; and if he will not preserve them, he must make room for another who will. So long, however, as he answers their expectations, there is no limit to the care which they take of him, and which they compel him to take of himself. A king of this sort lives hedged in by a ceremonious etiquette, a network of prohibitions and observances, of which the intention is not to contribute to his dignity, much less to his comfort, but to restrain him from conduct which, by disturbing the harmony of nature, might involve himself, his people, and the universe in one common catastrophe. Far from adding to his comfort, these observances, by trammelling his every act, annihilate his freedom and often render the very life, which it is their object to preserve, a burden and sorrow to him.

Taboos observed by African kings.

Of the supernaturally endowed kings of Loango it is said that the more powerful a king is, the more taboos is he bound to observe; they regulate all his actions, his walking and his

standing, his eating and drinking, his sleeping and waking.¹⁵ To these restraints the heir to the throne is subject from infancy; but as he advances in life the number of abstinences and ceremonies which he must observe increases, “until at the moment that he ascends the throne he is lost in the ocean of rites and taboos.”¹⁶ In the crater of an extinct volcano, enclosed on all sides by grassy slopes, lie the scattered huts and yam-fields of Riabba, the capital of the native king of Fernando Po. This mysterious being lives in the lowest depths of the crater, surrounded by a harem of forty women, and covered, it is said, with old silver coins. Naked savage as he is, he yet exercises far more influence in the island than the Spanish governor at Santa Isabel. In him the conservative spirit of the Boobies or aboriginal inhabitants of the island is, as it were, incorporate. He has never seen a white man and, according to the firm conviction of all the Boobies, the sight of a pale face would cause his instant death. He cannot bear to look upon the sea; indeed it is said that he may never see it even in the distance, and that therefore he wears away his life with shackles on his legs in the dim twilight of his hut. Certain it is that he has never set foot on the beach. With the exception of his musket and knife, he uses nothing that comes from the whites; European cloth never touches his person, and he scorns tobacco, rum, and even salt.¹⁷

¹⁵ A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 355.

¹⁶ O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 336.

¹⁷ O. Baumann, *Eine afrikanische Tropen-Insel, Fernando Póo und die Bube* (Wien

Taboos observed by African kings. Prohibition to see the sea.

Among the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast, in West Africa, “the king is at the same time high priest. In this quality he was, particularly in former times, unapproachable by his subjects. Only by night was he allowed to quit his dwelling in order to bathe and so forth. None but his representative, the so-called ‘visible king,’ with three chosen elders might converse with him, and even they had to sit on an ox-hide with their backs turned to him. He might not see any European nor any horse, nor might he look upon the sea, for which reason he was not allowed to quit his capital even for a few moments. These rules have been disregarded in recent times.”¹⁸ The king of Dahomey himself is subject to the prohibition of beholding the sea,¹⁹ and so are the kings of Loango²⁰ and Great Ardra in Guinea.²¹ The sea is the fetish of the Eyeos, to the north-west of Dahomey, and they and their king are threatened with death by their priests if ever they dare to look on it.²² It is believed that the king of Cayor in Senegal

und Olmütz, 1888), pp. 103 *sq.*

¹⁸ G. Zündel, “Land und Volk der Eweer auf der Sclavenküste in Westafrika,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, xii. (1877) p. 402.

¹⁹ Béraud, “Note sur le Dahomé,” *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), Vme Série, xii. (1866) p. 377.

²⁰ A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 263.

²¹ Bosman's “Guinea,” in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 500.

²² A. Dalzell, *History of Dahomey* (London, 1793), p. 15; Th. Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone* (London, 1803),

would infallibly die within the year if he were to cross a river or an arm of the sea.²³ In Mashonaland down to recent times the chiefs would not cross certain rivers, particularly the Rurikwi and the Nyadiri; and the custom was still strictly observed by at least one chief within the last few years. "On no account will the chief cross the river. If it is absolutely necessary for him to do so, he is blindfolded and carried across with shouting and singing. Should he walk across, he will go blind or die and certainly lose the chieftainship."²⁴ So among the Mahafalys and Sakalavas in the south of Madagascar some kings are forbidden to sail on the sea or to cross certain rivers.²⁵ The horror of the sea is not peculiar to kings. The Basutos are said to share it instinctively, though they have never seen salt water, and live hundreds of miles from the Indian Ocean.²⁶ The Egyptian priests loathed the sea, and called it the foam of Typhon; they were forbidden to set salt on their table, and they would not speak to pilots because they got their living by the sea; hence too they would not eat fish, and the hieroglyphic symbol for hatred was a fish.²⁷ When the Indians of the Peruvian Andes were sent by the Spaniards to work in the

pp. 229 *sq.*

²³ J. B. L. Durand, *Voyage au Sénégal* (Paris, 1802), p. 55.

²⁴ W. S. Taberer (Chief Native Commissioner for Mashonaland), "Mashonaland Natives," *Journal of the African Society*, No. 15 (April 1905). p. 320.

²⁵ A. van Gennep, *Tabou et totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), p. 113.

²⁶ Father Porte, "Les Reminiscences d'un missionnaire du Basutoland," *Missions Catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) p. 235.

²⁷ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 32.

hot valleys of the coast, the vast ocean which they saw before them as they descended the Cordillera was dreaded by them as a cause of disease; hence they prayed to it that they might not fall ill. This they all did without exception, even the little children.²⁸ Similarly the inland people of Lampong in Sumatra are said to pay a kind of adoration to the sea, and to make it an offering of cakes and sweetmeats when they behold it for the first time, deprecating its power of doing them mischief.²⁹

Taboos observed by chiefs among the Sakalavas and the hill tribes of Assam.

Among the Sakalavas of southern Madagascar the chief is regarded as a sacred being, but “he is held in leash by a crowd of restrictions, which regulate his behaviour like that of the emperor of China. He can undertake nothing whatever unless the sorcerers have declared the omens favourable: he may not eat warm food: on certain days he may not quit his hut; and so on.”³⁰ Among some of the hill tribes of Assam both the headman and his wife have to observe many taboos in respect of food; thus they may not eat buffalo, pork, dog, fowl, or tomatoes. The headman must be chaste, the husband of one wife, and he must separate himself from her on the eve of a general or public observance

²⁸ P. J. de Arriaga, *Extirpacion de la idolatria del Piru* (Lima, 1621), pp. 11, 132.

²⁹ W. Marsden, *History of Sumatra* (London, 1811), p. 301.

³⁰ A. van Gennep, *Tabou et totémisme à Madagascar*, p. 113, quoting De Thuy, *Étude historique, géographique et ethnographique sur la province de Tuléar*, Notes, Rec., Expl., 1899, p. 104.

of taboo. In one group of tribes the headman is forbidden to eat in a strange village, and under no provocation whatever may he utter a word of abuse. Apparently the people imagine that the violation of any of these taboos by a headman would bring down misfortune on the whole village.³¹

Taboos observed by Irish kings.

The ancient kings of Ireland, as well as the kings of the four provinces of Leinster, Munster, Connaught, and Ulster, were subject to certain quaint prohibitions or taboos, on the due observance of which the prosperity of the people and the country, as well as their own, was supposed to depend. Thus, for example, the sun might not rise on the king of Ireland in his bed at Tara, the old capital of Erin; he was forbidden to alight on Wednesday at Magh Breagh, to traverse Magh Cuillinn after sunset, to incite his horse at Fan-Chomair, to go in a ship upon the water the Monday after Bealltaine (May day), and to leave the track of his army upon Ath Maighne the Tuesday after All-Hallows. The king of Leinster might not go round Tuath Laighean left-hand-wise on Wednesday, nor sleep between the Dothair (Dodder) and the Duibhlinn³² with his head inclining to one side, nor encamp for nine days on the plains of Cualann, nor travel the road of Duibhlinn on Monday, nor ride a dirty

³¹ T. C. Hodson, "The *genna* amongst the Tribes of Assam," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) p. 98. The word for taboo among these tribes is *genna*.

³² The Duibhlinn is the part of the Liffey on which Dublin now stands.

black-heeled horse across Magh Maistean. The king of Munster was prohibited from enjoying the feast of Loch Lein from one Monday to another; from banqueting by night in the beginning of harvest before Geim at Leitreacha; from encamping for nine days upon the Siuir; and from holding a border meeting at Gabhran. The king of Connaught might not conclude a treaty respecting his ancient palace of Cruachan³³ after making peace on All-Hallows Day, nor go in a speckled garment on a grey speckled steed to the heath of Dal Chais, nor repair to an assembly of women at Seaghais, nor sit in autumn on the sepulchral mounds of the wife of Maine, nor contend in running with the rider of a grey one-eyed horse at Ath Gallta between two posts. The king of Ulster was forbidden to attend the horse fair at Rath Line among the youths of Dal Araidhe, to listen to the fluttering of the flocks of birds of Linn Saileach after sunset, to celebrate the feast of the bull of Daire-mic-Daire, to go into Magh Cobha in the month of March, and to drink of the water of Bo Neimhidh between two darknesses. If the kings of Ireland strictly observed these and many other customs, which were enjoined by immemorial usage, it was believed that they would never meet with mischance or misfortune, and would live for ninety years without experiencing the decay of old age; that no epidemic or mortality would occur during their reigns; and that the seasons would be favourable and the earth yield its fruit in abundance; whereas, if they set

³³ The site, marked by the remains of some earthen forts, is now known as Rathcroghan, near Belanagare in the county of Roscommon.

the ancient usages at naught, the country would be visited with plague, famine, and bad weather.³⁴

Taboos observed by Egyptian kings.

The kings of Egypt were worshipped as gods,³⁵ and the routine of their daily life was regulated in every detail by precise and unvarying rules. “The life of the kings of Egypt,” says Diodorus, “was not like that of other monarchs who are irresponsible and may do just what they choose; on the contrary, everything was fixed for them by law, not only their official duties, but even the details of their daily life... The hours both of day and night were arranged at which the king had to do, not what he pleased, but what was prescribed for him... For not only were the times appointed at which he should transact public business or sit in judgment; but the very hours for his walking and bathing and sleeping with his wife, and, in short, performing every act of life were all settled. Custom enjoined a simple diet; the only flesh he might eat was veal and goose, and he might only drink a

³⁴ *The Book of Rights*, edited with translation and notes by John O'Donovan (Dublin, 1847), pp. 3-8. This work, comprising a list both of the prohibitions (*urgharta* or *geasa*) and the prerogatives (*buadha*) of the Irish kings, is preserved in a number of manuscripts, of which the two oldest date from 1390 and about 1418 respectively. The list is repeated twice, first in prose and then in verse. I have to thank my friend Professor Sir J. Rhys for kindly calling my attention to this interesting record of a long-vanished past in Ireland. As to these taboos, see P. W. Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, i. 310 *sqq.*

³⁵ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. pp. 418 *sqq.*

prescribed quantity of wine.”³⁶ However, there is reason to think that these rules were observed, not by the ancient Pharaohs, but by the priestly kings who reigned at Thebes and in Ethiopia at the close of the twentieth dynasty.³⁷ Among the Karen-nis of Upper Burma a chief attains his position, not by hereditary right, but on account of his habit of abstaining from rice and liquor. The mother, too, of a candidate for the chieftainship must have eschewed these things and lived solely on yams and potatoes so long as she was with child. During that time she may not eat any meat nor drink water from a common well. And if her son is to be qualified for the office of chief he must continue to observe these habits.³⁸

Taboos observed by the Flamen Dialis at Rome.

Of the taboos imposed on priests we may see a striking example in the rules of life prescribed for the Flamen Dialis at Rome, who has been interpreted as a living image of Jupiter, or a human embodiment of the sky-spirit.³⁹ They were such as the following: – The Flamen Dialis might not ride or even touch a horse, nor see an army under arms,⁴⁰ nor wear a ring which was

³⁶ Diodorus Siculus, i. 70.

³⁷ G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, ii. 759, note ³; A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique* (Paris, 1902), pp. 314-318.

³⁸ (Sir) J. G. Scott, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, part ii. vol. i. (Rangoon, 1901) p. 308.

³⁹ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. ii. pp. 191 sq.

⁴⁰ Among the Gallas the king, who also acts as priest by performing sacrifices, is the

not broken, nor have a knot on any part of his garments; no fire except a sacred fire might be taken out of his house; he might not touch wheaten flour or leavened bread; he might not touch or even name a goat, a dog,⁴¹ raw meat, beans,⁴² and ivy; he might not walk under a vine; the feet of his bed had to be daubed with mud; his hair could be cut only by a free man and with a bronze knife, and his hair and nails when cut had to be buried under a lucky tree; he might not touch a dead body nor enter a place where one was burned;⁴³ he might not see work being done on

only man who is not allowed to fight with weapons; he may not even ward off a blow. See Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die geistige Cultur der Danâkil, Galla und Somâl*, p. 136.

⁴¹ Among the Kafirs of the Hindoo Koosh men who are preparing to be headmen are considered ceremonially pure, and wear a semi-sacred uniform which must not be defiled by coming into contact with dogs. "The Kaneash [persons in this state of ceremonial purity] were nervously afraid of my dogs, which had to be fastened up whenever one of these august personages was seen to approach. The dressing has to be performed with the greatest care, in a place which cannot be defiled with dogs. Utah and another had convenient dressing-rooms on the top of their houses which happened to be high and isolated, but another of the four Kaneash had been compelled to erect a curious-looking square pen made of poles in front of his house, his own roof being a common thoroughfare" (Sir George Scott Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush* (London, 1898), p. 466).

⁴² Similarly the Egyptian priests abstained from beans and would not even look at them. See Herodotus, ii. 37, with A. Wiedemann's note; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 5.

⁴³ Similarly among the Kafirs of the Hindoo Koosh the high priest "may not traverse certain paths which go near the receptacles for the dead, nor may he visit the cemeteries. He may not go into the actual room where a death has occurred until after an effigy has been erected for the deceased. Slaves may cross his threshold, but must not approach the hearth" (Sir George Scott Robertson, *op. cit.* p. 416).

holy days; he might not be uncovered in the open air; if a man in bonds were taken into his house, the captive had to be unbound and the cords had to be drawn up through a hole in the roof and so let down into the street. His wife, the Flaminica, had to observe nearly the same rules, and others of her own besides. She might not ascend more than three steps of the kind of staircase called Greek; at a certain festival she might not comb her hair; the leather of her shoes might not be made from a beast that had died a natural death, but only from one that had been slain or sacrificed; if she heard thunder she was tabooed till she had offered an expiatory sacrifice.⁴⁴

Taboos observed by the Bodia of Sierra Leone.

Among the Grebo people of Sierra Leone there is a pontiff who bears the title of Bodia and has been compared, on somewhat slender grounds, to the high priest of the Jews. He is appointed in accordance with the behest of an oracle. At an elaborate ceremony of installation he is anointed, a ring is put on his ankle as a badge of office, and the door-posts of his house are sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed goat. He has charge of the public talismans and idols, which he feeds with rice and oil every new moon; and he sacrifices on behalf of the town to the dead and to demons. Nominally his power is very great, but

⁴⁴ Aulus Gellius, x. 15; Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 109-112; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 146; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* i. 179, 448, iv. 518; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 16. 8 sq.; Festus, p. 161 a, ed. C. O. Müller. For more details see J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.² 326 sqq.

in practice it is very limited; for he dare not defy public opinion, and he is held responsible, even with his life, for any adversity that befalls the country. It is expected of him that he should cause the earth to bring forth abundantly, the people to be healthy, war to be driven far away, and witchcraft to be kept in abeyance. His life is trammelled by the observance of certain restrictions or taboos. Thus he may not sleep in any house but his own official residence, which is called the “anointed house” with reference to the ceremony of anointing him at inauguration. He may not drink water on the highway. He may not eat while a corpse is in the town, and he may not mourn for the dead. If he dies while in office, he must be buried at dead of night; few may hear of his burial, and none may mourn for him when his death is made public. Should he have fallen a victim to the poison ordeal by drinking a decoction of sassywood, as it is called, he must be buried under a running stream of water.⁴⁵

Taboos observed by sacred milkmen among the Todas of South India.

⁴⁵ Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia* (London, 1906), ii. 1076 *sq.*, quoting from Bishop Payne, who wrote “some fifty years ago.” The Bodia described by Bishop Payne is clearly identical with the Bodio of the Grain Coast who is described by the Rev. J. L. Wilson (*Western Africa*, pp. 129 *sqq.*). See below, p. 23; and *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. p. 353. As to the iron ring which the pontiff wears on his ankle as the badge of his office we are told that it “is regarded with as much veneration as the most ancient crown in Europe, and the incumbent suffers as deep disgrace by its removal as any monarch in Europe would by being deprived of his crown” (J. L. Wilson, *op. cit.* pp. 129 *sq.*).

Among the Todas of Southern India the holy milkman (*palol*), who acts as priest of the sacred dairy, is subject to a variety of irksome and burdensome restrictions during the whole time of his incumbency, which may last many years. Thus he must live at the sacred dairy and may never visit his home or any ordinary village. He must be celibate; if he is married he must leave his wife. On no account may any ordinary person touch the holy milkman or the holy dairy; such a touch would so defile his holiness that he would forfeit his office. It is only on two days a week, namely Mondays and Thursdays, that a mere layman may even approach the milkman; on other days if he has any business with him, he must stand at a distance (some say a quarter of a mile) and shout his message across the intervening space. Further, the holy milkman never cuts his hair or pares his nails so long as he holds office; he never crosses a river by a bridge, but wades through a ford and only certain fords; if a death occurs in his clan, he may not attend any of the funeral ceremonies, unless he first resigns his office and descends from the exalted rank of milkman to that of a mere common mortal. Indeed it appears that in old days he had to resign the seals, or rather the pails, of office whenever any member of his clan departed this life. However, these heavy restraints are laid in their entirety only on milkmen of the very highest class.⁴⁶ Among the Todas there are milkmen and milkmen; and some of them get off more lightly in

⁴⁶ W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), pp. 98-103.

consideration of their humbler station in life.⁴⁷ Still, apart from the dignity they enjoy, the lot even of these other milkmen is not altogether a happy one. Thus, for example, at a place called Kanodrs there is a dairy-temple of a conical form. The milkman who has charge of it must be celibate during the tenure of his office: he must sleep in the calves' house, a very flimsy structure with an open door and a fire-place that gives little heat: he may wear only one very scanty garment: he must take his meals sitting on the outer wall which surrounds the dairy: in eating he may not put his hand to his lips, but must throw the food into his mouth; and in drinking he may not put to his lips the leaf which serves as a cup, he must tilt his head back and pour the liquid into his mouth in a jet from above. With the exception of a single layman, who is allowed to bear the milkman company, but who is also bound to celibacy and has a bed rigged up for him in the calves' house, no other person is allowed to go near this very sacred dairy under any pretext whatever. No wonder that some years ago the dairy was unoccupied and the office of milkman stood vacant. "At the present time," says Dr. Rivers, "a dairyman is appointed about once a year and holds office for thirty or forty days only. So far as I could ascertain, the failure to occupy the dairy constantly is due to the very considerable hardships and restrictions which have to be endured by the holder of the office of dairyman, and the time is probably not far distant when this dairy, one of the

⁴⁷ For restrictions imposed on these lesser milkmen see W. H. R. Rivers, *op. cit.* pp. 62, 66, 67 *sq.*, 72, 73, 79-81.

most sacred among the Todas, will cease altogether to be used.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas*, pp. 79-81.

§ 2. Divorce of the Spiritual from the Temporal Power

The effect of these burdensome rules was to divorce the temporal from the spiritual authority.

The burdensome observances attached to the royal or priestly office produced their natural effect. Either men refused to accept the office, which hence tended to fall into abeyance; or accepting it, they sank under its weight into spiritless creatures, cloistered recluses, from whose nerveless fingers the reins of government slipped into the firmer grasp of men who were often content to wield the reality of sovereignty without its name. In some countries this rift in the supreme power deepened into a total and permanent separation of the spiritual and temporal powers, the old royal house retaining their purely religious functions, while the civil government passed into the hands of a younger and more vigorous race.

Reluctance to accept sovereignty with its vexatious restrictions.

To take examples. In a previous part of this work we saw that in Cambodia it is often necessary to force the kingships of Fire and Water upon the reluctant successors,⁴⁹ and that in Savage

⁴⁹ *The Magic Art*, vol. ii. p. 4.

Island the monarchy actually came to an end because at last no one could be induced to accept the dangerous distinction.⁵⁰ In some parts of West Africa, when the king dies, a family council is secretly held to determine his successor. He on whom the choice falls is suddenly seized, bound, and thrown into the fetish-house, where he is kept in durance till he consents to accept the crown. Sometimes the heir finds means of evading the honour which it is sought to thrust upon him; a ferocious chief has been known to go about constantly armed, resolute to resist by force any attempt to set him on the throne.⁵¹ The savage Timmes of Sierra Leone, who elect their king, reserve to themselves the right of beating him on the eve of his coronation; and they avail themselves of this constitutional privilege with such hearty goodwill that sometimes the unhappy monarch does not long survive his elevation to the throne. Hence when the leading chiefs have a spite at a man and wish to rid themselves of him, they elect him king.⁵² Formerly, before a man was proclaimed king of Sierra Leone, it used to be the custom to load him with chains and thrash him. Then the fetters were knocked off, the kingly robe was placed on him, and he received in his hands the symbol of royal dignity, which was nothing but the axe of the executioner.⁵³ It is not therefore

⁵⁰ *Id.* vol. i. pp. 354 *sq.*

⁵¹ A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 354 *sq.*, ii. 9, 11.

⁵² Zweifel et Moustier, "Voyage aux sources du Niger," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), VI^{me} Série, xx. (1880) p. 111.

⁵³ O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 250.

surprising to read that in Sierra Leone, where such customs have prevailed, “except among the Mandingoes and Suzees, few kings are natives of the countries they govern. So different are their ideas from ours, that very few are solicitous of the honour, and competition is very seldom heard of.”⁵⁴ Another writer on Sierra Leone tells us that “the honour of reigning, so much coveted in Europe, is very frequently rejected in Africa, on account of the expense attached to it, which sometimes greatly exceeds the revenues of the crown.”⁵⁵ A reluctance to accept the sovereignty in the Ethiopian kingdom of Gingiro was simulated, if not really felt, as we learn from the old Jesuit missionaries. “They wrap up the dead king's body in costly garments, and killing a cow, put it into the hide; then all those who hope to succeed him, being his sons or others of the royal blood, flying from the honour they covet, abscond and hide themselves in the woods. This done, the electors, who are all great sorcerers, agree among themselves who shall be king, and go out to seek him, when entering the woods by means of their enchantments, they say, a large bird called *liber*, as big as an eagle, comes down with mighty cries over the place where he is hid, and they find him encompass'd by lyons, tygers, snakes, and other creatures gather'd about him by witchcraft. The elect, as fierce as those beasts, rushes out upon those who seek him, wounding and sometimes killing some

⁵⁴ J. Matthews, *Voyage to Sierra-Leone* (London, 1791), p. 75.

⁵⁵ T. Winterbottom, *Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone* (London, 1803), p. 124.

of them, to prevent being seiz'd. They take all in good part, defending themselves the best they can, till they have seiz'd him. Thus they carry him away by force, he still struggling and seeming to refuse taking upon him the burthen of government, all which is mere cheat and hypocrisy.”⁵⁶

Sovereign powers divided between a temporal and a spiritual head.

The Mikados of Japan seem early to have resorted to the expedient of transferring the honours and burdens of supreme power to their infant children; and the rise of the Tycoons, long the temporal sovereigns of the country, is traced to the abdication of a certain Mikado in favour of his three-year-old son. The sovereignty having been wrested by a usurper from the infant prince, the cause of the Mikado was championed by Yoritomo, a man of spirit and conduct, who overthrew the usurper and restored to the Mikado the shadow, while he retained for himself the substance, of power. He bequeathed to his descendants the dignity he had won, and thus became the founder of the line of Tycoons. Down to the latter half of the sixteenth century the Tycoons were active and efficient rulers; but the same fate overtook them which had befallen the Mikados. Immeshed in the same inextricable web of custom and law, they degenerated into mere puppets, hardly stirring from their palaces and occupied in a perpetual round of empty ceremonies, while the real business

⁵⁶ *The Travels of the Jesuits in Ethiopia*, collected and historically digested by F. Balthazar Tellez (London, 1710), pp. 197 sq.

of government was managed by the council of state.⁵⁷ In Tonquin the monarchy ran a similar course. Living like his predecessors in effeminacy and sloth, the king was driven from the throne by an ambitious adventurer named Mack, who from a fisherman had risen to be Grand Mandarin. But the king's brother Tring put down the usurper and restored the king, retaining, however, for himself and his descendants the dignity of general of all the forces. Thenceforward the kings or *dovas*, though invested with the title and pomp of sovereignty, ceased to govern. While they lived secluded in their palaces, all real political power was wielded by the hereditary generals or *chovas*.⁵⁸ The present king of Sikkim, "like most of his predecessors in the kingship, is a mere puppet in the hands of his crafty priests, who have made a sort of priest-king of him. They encourage him by every means in their power to leave the government to them, whilst he devotes all his time to the degrading rites of devil-worship, and the ceaseless muttering of meaningless jargon, of which the Tibetan form of Buddhism chiefly consists. They declare that he is a saint by birth, that he is the direct descendant of the greatest king of Tibet, the canonised Srongtsan Gampo, who was a contemporary of Mahomed in the seventh century a. d. and who first introduced Buddhism to Tibet." "This saintly lineage, which secures for the king's person popular homage amounting to worship, is probably, however, a mere invention

⁵⁷ *Manners and Customs of the Japanese*, pp. 199 *sqq.*, 355 *sqq.*

⁵⁸ Richard, "History of Tonquin," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, ix. 744 *sqq.*

of the priests to glorify their puppet-prince for their own sordid ends. Such devices are common in the East.”⁵⁹ The custom regularly observed by the Tahitian kings of abdicating on the birth of a son, who was immediately proclaimed sovereign and received his father's homage, may perhaps have originated, like the similar custom occasionally practised by the Mikados, in a wish to shift to other shoulders the irksome burden of royalty; for in Tahiti as elsewhere the sovereign was subjected to a system of vexatious restrictions.⁶⁰ In Mangaia, another Polynesian island, religious and civil authority were lodged in separate hands, spiritual functions being discharged by a line of hereditary kings, while the temporal government was entrusted from time to time to a victorious war-chief, whose investiture, however, had to be completed by the king. To the latter were assigned the best lands, and he received daily offerings of the choicest food.⁶¹ The Mikado and Tycoon of Japan had their counterparts in the Roko Tui and Vunivalu of Fiji. The Roko Tui was the Reverend or Sacred King. The Vunivalu was the Root of War or War King. In one kingdom a certain Thakambau, who was the War King, kept all power in his own hands, but in a neighbouring kingdom the real ruler was the Sacred King.⁶² Similarly in Tonga, besides the civil king or *How*, whose right to the throne was

⁵⁹ L. A. Waddell, *Among the Himalayas* (Westminster, 1899), pp. 146 *sq.*

⁶⁰ W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1832-1836), iii. 99 *sqq.*

⁶¹ W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, pp. 293 *sqq.*

⁶² The late Rev. Lorimer Fison, in a letter to the author, dated August 26, 1898.

partly hereditary and partly derived from his warlike reputation and the number of his fighting men, there was a great divine chief called *Tooitonga* or “Chief of Tonga,” who ranked above the king and the other chiefs in virtue of his supposed descent from one of the chief gods. Once a year the first-fruits of the ground were offered to him at a solemn ceremony, and it was believed that if these offerings were not made the vengeance of the gods would fall in a signal manner on the people. Peculiar forms of speech, such as were applied to no one else, were used in speaking of him, and everything that he chanced to touch became sacred or tabooed. When he and the king met, the monarch had to sit down on the ground in token of respect until his holiness had passed by. Yet though he enjoyed the highest veneration by reason of his divine origin, this sacred personage possessed no political authority, and if he ventured to meddle with affairs of state it was at the risk of receiving a rebuff from the king, to whom the real power belonged, and who finally succeeded in ridding himself of his spiritual rival.⁶³ The king of the Getae regularly shared his power with a priest, whom his subjects called a god. This divine man led a solitary life in a cave on a holy mountain, seeing few people but the king and his attendants. His counsels added much to the king's influence with his subjects, who believed that he was thereby enabled to impart to them

⁶³ W. Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, Second Edition (London, 1818), ii. 75-79, 132-136.

the commands and admonitions of the gods.⁶⁴ At Athens the kings degenerated into little more than sacred functionaries and it is said that the institution of the new office of Polemarch or War Lord was rendered necessary by their growing effeminacy.⁶⁵ American examples of the partition of authority between a king and a pope have already been cited from the early history of Mexico and Colombia.⁶⁶

Fetish kings and civil kings in West Africa.

In some parts of western Africa two kings reign side by side, a fetish or religious king and a civil king, but the fetish king is really supreme. He controls the weather and so forth, and can put a stop to everything. When he lays his red staff on the ground, no one may pass that way. This division of power between a sacred and a secular ruler is to be met with wherever the true negro culture has been left unmolested, but where the negro form of society has been disturbed, as in Dahomey and Ashantee, there is a tendency to consolidate the two powers in a single king.⁶⁷ Thus, for example, there used to be a fetish king at New Calabar who ranked above the ordinary king in all

⁶⁴ Strabo, vii. 3. 5, pp. 297 *sq.* Compare *id.* vii. 3. 11, p. 304.

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, iii. 2. My friend Professor Henry Jackson kindly called my attention to this passage.

⁶⁶ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. p. 416, and above, p. 6.

⁶⁷ Miss Mary H. Kingsley in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. (1899) pp. 61 *sqq.* I had some conversation on this subject with Miss Kingsley (1st June 1897) and have embodied the results in the text. Miss Kingsley did not know the rule of succession among the fetish kings.

native matters, whether religious or civil, and always walked in front of him on public occasions, attended by a slave who held an umbrella over his head. His opinion carried great weight.⁶⁸ The office and the causes which led to its extinction are thus described by a missionary who spent many years in Calabar. "The worship of the people is now given especially to their various *idems*, one of which, called Ndem Efik, is a sort of tutelary deity of the country. An individual was appointed to take charge of this object of worship, who bore the name of King Calabar; and likely, in bypast times, possessed the power indicated by the title, being both king and priest. He had as a tribute the skins of all leopards killed, and should a slave take refuge in his shrine he belonged to Ndem Efik. The office, however, imposed certain restrictions on its occupant. He, for instance, could not partake of food in the presence of any one, and he was prohibited from engaging in traffic. On account of these and other disabilities, when the last holder of the office died, a poor old man of the Cobham family, no successor was found for him, and the priesthood has become extinct."⁶⁹ One of the practical inconveniences of such an office is that the house of the fetish king enjoys the right of sanctuary, and so tends to become little better than a rookery of bad characters. Thus

⁶⁸ T. J. Hutchinson, *Impressions of Western Africa* (London, 1858), pp. 101 *sq.*; Le Comte C. N. de Cardi, "Ju-ju Laws and Customs in the Niger Delta," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. (1899) p. 51.

⁶⁹ H. Goldie, *Calabar and its Mission*, New Edition (London, 1901), P. 43.

on the Grain Coast of West Africa the fetish king or Bodio, as he is called, “exercises the functions of a high-priest, and is regarded as protector of the whole nation. He lives in a house provided for him by the people, and takes care of the national fetiches. He enjoys some immunities in virtue of his office, but is subject to certain restrictions which more than counterbalance his privileges. His house is a sanctum to which culprits may betake themselves without the danger of being removed by any one except by the Bodio himself.”⁷⁰ One of these Bodios resigned office because of the sort of people who quartered themselves on him, the cost of feeding them, and the squabbles they had among themselves. He led a cat-and-dog life with them for three years. Then there came a man with homicidal mania varied by epileptic fits; and soon afterwards the spiritual shepherd retired into private life, but not before he had lost an ear and sustained other bodily injury in a personal conflict with this very black sheep.⁷¹

The King of the Night.

At Porto Novo there used to be, in addition to the ordinary monarch, a King of the Night, who reigned during the hours of darkness from sunset to sunrise. He might not shew himself in the street after the sun was up. His duty was to patrol the streets

⁷⁰ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), p. 129. As to the taboos observed by the Bodio or Bodia see above, p. [15](#).

⁷¹ Miss Mary H. Kingsley, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. (1899) p. 62.

with his satellites and to arrest all whom he found abroad after a certain hour. Each band of his catchpoles was led by a man who went about concealed from head to foot under a conical casing of straw and blew blasts on a shell which caused every one that heard it to shudder. The King of the Night never met the ordinary king except on the first and last days of their respective reign; for each of them invested the other with office and paid him the last honours at death.⁷² With this King of the Night at Porto Novo we may compare a certain king of Hawaii who was so very sacred that no man might see him, even accidentally, by day under pain of death; he only shewed himself by night.⁷³

Civil rajahs and taboo rajahs in the East Indies.

In some parts of the East Indian island of Timor we meet with a partition of power like that which is represented by the civil king and the fetish king of western Africa. Some of the Timorese tribes recognise two rajahs, the ordinary or civil rajah, who governs the people, and the fetish or taboo rajah (*radja pomali*), who is charged with the control of everything that concerns the earth and its products. This latter ruler has the right of declaring anything taboo; his permission must be obtained before new land may be brought under cultivation, and he must perform certain necessary ceremonies when the work

⁷² Marchoux, "Ethnographie, Porto-Novo," *Revue Scientifique*, Quatrième Série, iii. (1895) pp. 595 *sq.* This passage was pointed out to me by Mr. N. W. Thomas.

⁷³ O. von Kotzebue, *Entdeckungs-Reise in die Süd-See und nach der Berings-Strasse* (Weimar, 1821), iii. 149.

is being carried out. If drought or blight threatens the crops, his help is invoked to save them. Though he ranks below the civil rajah, he exercises a momentous influence on the course of events, for his secular colleague is bound to consult him in all important matters. In some of the neighbouring islands, such as Rotti and eastern Flores, a spiritual ruler of the same sort is recognised under various native names, which all mean "lord of the ground."⁷⁴ Similarly in the Mekeo district of British New Guinea there is a double chieftainship. The people are divided into two groups according to families, and each of the groups has its chief. One of the two is the war chief, the other is the taboo (*afu*) chief. The office of the latter is hereditary; his duty is to impose a taboo on any of the crops, such as the coco-nuts and areca nuts, whenever he thinks it desirable to prohibit their use. In his office we may perhaps detect the beginning of a priestly dynasty, but as yet his functions appear to be more magical than religious, being concerned with the control of the harvests rather than with the propitiation of higher powers. The members of another family are bound to see to it that the taboo imposed by the chief is strictly observed. For this purpose some fourteen or fifteen men of the family form a sort of constabulary. Every evening they go round the village armed with clubs and disguised

⁷⁴ J. J. de Hollander, *Handleiding bij de Beoefening der Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, ii. 606 sq. In other parts of Timor the spiritual ruler is called *Anaha paha* or "conjurer of the land." Compare H. Zondervan, "Timor en de Timoreezen," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, v. (1888) Afdeeling, mehr uitgebreide artikelen, pp. 400-402.

with masks or leaves. All the time they are in office they are forbidden to live with their wives and even to look at a woman. Hence women may not quit their houses while the men are going their rounds. Further, the constables on duty are prohibited from chewing betel nut and drinking coco-nut water, lest the areca and coco-nuts should not grow. When there is a good show of nuts, the taboo chief proclaims that on a certain day the restriction will come to an end.⁷⁵ In Ponape, one of the Caroline Islands, the kingship is elective within the limits of the blood royal, which runs in the female line, so that the sovereignty passes backwards and forwards between families which we, reckoning descent in the male line, should regard as distinct. The chosen monarch must be in possession of certain secrets. He must know the places where the sacred stones are kept, on which he has to seat himself. He must understand the holy words and prayers of the liturgy, and after his election he must recite them at the place of the sacred stones. But he enjoys only the honours of his office; the real powers of government are in the hands of his prime-minister or vizier.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ A. C. Haddon, *Head-hunters, Black, White, and Brown* (London, 1901), pp. 270-272.

⁷⁶ Dr. Hahl, "Mittheilungen über Sitten und rechtliche Verhältnisse auf Ponape," *Ethnologisches Notizblatt*, ii. Heft 2 (Berlin, 1901), pp. 5 sq., 7. The title of the prime-minister is *Nanekin*.

Chapter II. The Perils Of The Soul

§ 1. The Soul as a Mannikin

What is the primitive conception of death?

The foregoing examples have taught us that the office of a sacred king or priest is often hedged in by a series of burdensome restrictions or taboos, of which a principal purpose appears to be to preserve the life of the divine man for the good of his people. But if the object of the taboos is to save his life, the question arises, How is their observance supposed to effect this end? To understand this we must know the nature of the danger which threatens the king's life, and which it is the intention of these curious restrictions to guard against. We must, therefore, ask: What does early man understand by death? To what causes does he attribute it? And how does he think it may be guarded against?

Savages conceive the human soul as a mannikin, the prolonged absence of which from the body causes death.

As the savage commonly explains the processes of inanimate nature by supposing that they are produced by living beings working in or behind the phenomena, so he explains the phenomena of life itself. If an animal lives and moves, it can only be, he thinks, because there is a little animal inside which

moves it: if a man lives and moves, it can only be because he has a little man or animal inside who moves him. The animal inside the animal, the man inside the man, is the soul. And as the activity of an animal or man is explained by the presence of the soul, so the repose of sleep or death is explained by its absence, sleep or trance being the temporary, death being the permanent absence of the soul. Hence if death be the permanent absence of the soul, the way to guard against it is either to prevent the soul from leaving the body, or, if it does depart, to ensure that it shall return. The precautions adopted by savages to secure one or other of these ends take the form of certain prohibitions or taboos, which are nothing but rules intended to ensure either the continued presence or the return of the soul. In short, they are life-preservers or life-guards. These general statements will now be illustrated by examples.

The soul as a mannikin in Australia, America, and among the Malays.

Addressing some Australian blacks, a European missionary said, "I am not one, as you think, but two." Upon this they laughed. "You may laugh as much as you like," continued the missionary, "I tell you that I am two in one; this great body that you see is one; within that there is another little one which is not visible. The great body dies, and is buried, but the little body flies away when the great one dies." To this some of the blacks replied, "Yes, yes. We also are two, we also have a little body within the breast." On being asked where the little body went

after death, some said it went behind the bush, others said it went into the sea, and some said they did not know.⁷⁷ The Hurons thought that the soul had a head and body, arms and legs; in short, that it was a complete little model of the man himself.⁷⁸ The Esquimaux believe that “the soul exhibits the same shape as the body it belongs to, but is of a more subtle and ethereal nature.”⁷⁹ According to the Nootkas of British Columbia the soul has the shape of a tiny man; its seat is the crown of the head. So long as it stands erect, its owner is hale and hearty; but when from any cause it loses its upright position, he loses his senses.⁸⁰ Among the Indian tribes of the Lower Fraser River, man is held to have four souls, of which the principal one has the form of a mannikin, while the other three are shadows of it.⁸¹ The Malays conceive the human soul (*semangat*) as a little man, mostly invisible and

⁷⁷ R. Salvado, *Mémoires historiques sur l’Australie* (Paris, 1854), p. 162; *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vii. (1878) p. 282. In this edifying catechism there is little to choose between the savagery of the white man and the savagery of the black.

⁷⁸ *Relations des Jésuites*, 1634, p. 17; *id.*, 1636, p. 104; *id.*, 1639, p. 43 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

⁷⁹ H. Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, p. 36. The Esquimaux of Bering Strait believe that every man has several souls, and that two of these souls are shaped exactly like the body. See E. W. Nelson, “The Eskimo about Bering Strait,” *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, part i. (Washington, 1899) p. 422.

⁸⁰ Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 44 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*).

⁸¹ Fr. Boas, in *Ninth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 461 (*Report of the British Association for 1894*).

of the bigness of a thumb, who corresponds exactly in shape, proportion, and even in complexion to the man in whose body he resides. This mannikin is of a thin unsubstantial nature, though not so impalpable but that it may cause displacement on entering a physical object, and it can flit quickly from place to place; it is temporarily absent from the body in sleep, trance, and disease, and permanently absent after death.⁸²

The soul as a mannikin in ancient Egypt.

The ancient Egyptians believed that every man has a soul (*ka*) which is his exact counterpart or double, with the same features, the same gait, even the same dress as the man himself. Many of the monuments dating from the eighteenth century onwards represent various kings appearing before divinities, while behind the king stands his soul or double, portrayed as a little man with the king's features. Some of the reliefs in the temple at Luxor illustrate the birth of King Amenophis III. While the queen-mother is being tended by two goddesses acting as midwives, two other goddesses are bringing away two figures of new-born children, only one of which is supposed to be a child of flesh and blood: the inscriptions engraved above their heads shew that, while the first is Amenophis, the second is his soul or double. And as with kings and queens, so it was with common men and women. Whenever a child was born, there was born with him a double which followed him through the various stages of life;

⁸² W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 47.

young while he was young, it grew to maturity and declined along with him. And not only human beings, but gods and animals, stones and trees, natural and artificial objects, everybody and everything had its own soul or double. The doubles of oxen and sheep were the duplicates of the original oxen or sheep; the doubles of linen or beds, of chairs or knives, had the same form as the real linen, beds, chairs, and knives. So thin and subtle was the stuff, so fine and delicate the texture of these doubles, that they made no impression on ordinary eyes. Only certain classes of priests or seers were enabled by natural gifts or special training to perceive the doubles of the gods, and to win from them a knowledge of the past and the future. The doubles of men and things were hidden from sight in the ordinary course of life; still, they sometimes flew out of the body endowed with colour and voice, left it in a kind of trance, and departed to manifest themselves at a distance.⁸³

⁸³ G. Maspero, *Études de mythologie et d'archéologie égyptiennes* (Paris, 1893), i. 388 sq.; A. Wiedemann, *The ancient Egyptian Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul* (London, 1895), pp. 10 sqq. In Greek works of art, especially vase-paintings, the human soul is sometimes represented as a tiny being in human form, generally winged, sometimes clothed and armed, sometimes naked. See O. Jahn, *Archäologische Beiträge* (Berlin, 1847), pp. 128 sqq.; E. Pottier, *Étude sur les lécythes blancs attiques* (Paris, 1883), pp. 75-79; *American Journal of Archaeology*, ii. (1886) pll. xii., xiii.; O. Kern, in *Aus der Anomia, Archäologische Beiträge Carl Robert zur Erinnerung an Berlin dargebracht* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 89-95. Greek artists of a later period sometimes portrayed the human soul in the form of a butterfly (O. Jahn, *op. cit.* pp. 138 sqq.). There was a particular sort of butterfly to which the Greeks gave the name of soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$). See Aristotle, *Hist. anim.* v. 19, p. 550 b 26, p. 551 b 13 sq.; Plutarch, *Quaest. conviv.* ii. 3. 2.

The soul as a mannikin in Nias, Fiji, and India.

So exact is the resemblance of the mannikin to the man, in other words, of the soul to the body, that, as there are fat bodies and thin bodies, so there are fat souls and thin souls;⁸⁴ as there are heavy bodies and light bodies, long bodies and short bodies, so there are heavy souls and light souls, long souls and short souls. The people of Nias (an island to the west of Sumatra) think that every man, before he is born, is asked how long or how heavy a soul he would like, and a soul of the desired weight or length is measured out to him. The heaviest soul ever given out weighs about ten grammes. The length of a man's life is proportioned to the length of his soul; children who die young had short souls.⁸⁵ The Fijian conception of the soul as a tiny human being comes clearly out in the customs observed at the death of a chief among the Nakelo tribe. When a chief dies, certain men, who are the hereditary undertakers, call him, as he lies, oiled and ornamented, on fine mats, saying, "Rise, sir, the chief and let us be going. The day has come over the land." Then they conduct him to the river side, where the ghostly ferryman comes to ferry Nakelo ghosts across the stream. As they thus attend the chief on his last journey, they hold their great fans close to the ground to shelter him, because, as one of them explained

⁸⁴ W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific* (London, 1876), p. 171.

⁸⁵ H. Sundermann, "Die Insel Nias und die Mission daselbst," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, Bd. xi. October 1884, p. 453.

to a missionary, “His soul is only a little child.”⁸⁶ People in the Punjaub who tattoo themselves believe that at death the soul, “the little entire man or woman” inside the mortal frame, will go to heaven blazoned with the same tattoo patterns which adorned the body in life.⁸⁷ Sometimes, however, as we shall see, the human soul is conceived not in human but in animal form.

⁸⁶ The late Rev. Lorimer Fison, in a letter to the author, dated November 3, 1898.

⁸⁷ H. A. Rose, “Note on Female Tattooing in the Panjâb,” *Indian Antiquary*, xxxi. (1902) p. 298.

§ 2. Absence and Recall of the Soul

Attempts to prevent the soul from escaping from the body.

The soul is commonly supposed to escape by the natural openings of the body, especially the mouth and nostrils. Hence in Celebes they sometimes fasten fishhooks to a sick man's nose, navel, and feet, so that if his soul should try to escape it may be hooked and held fast.⁸⁸ A Turik on the Baram River, in Borneo, refused to part with some hook-like stones, because they, as it were, hooked his soul to his body, and so prevented the spiritual portion of him from becoming detached from the material.⁸⁹ When a Sea Dyak sorcerer or medicine-man is initiated, his fingers are supposed to be furnished with fish-hooks, with which he will thereafter clutch the human soul in the act of flying away, and restore it to the body of the sufferer.⁹⁰ But hooks, it is plain, may be used to catch the souls of enemies as well as of friends. Acting on this principle head-hunters in Borneo hang wooden hooks beside the skulls of their slain enemies in the belief that

⁸⁸ B. F. Matthes, *Over de Bissoes of heidensche priesters en priesteressen der Boeginezen* (Amsterdam, 1872), p. 24 (reprinted from the *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde, Deel vii.*).

⁸⁹ A. C. Haddon, *Head-hunters*, p. 439.

⁹⁰ H. Ling Roth, "Low's Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) p. 115.

this helps them on their forays to hook in fresh heads.⁹¹ When an epidemic is raging, the Goajiro Indians of Colombia attribute it to an evil spirit, it may be the prowling ghost of an enemy. So they hang strings furnished with hooks from the roofs of their huts and from all the trees in the neighbourhood, in order that the demon or ghost may be caught on a hook and thus rendered powerless to harm them.⁹² Similarly the Calchaquis Indians to the west of Paraguay used to plant arrows in the ground about a sick man to keep death from getting at him.⁹³ One of the implements of a Haida medicine-man is a hollow bone, in which he bottles up departing souls, and so restores them to their owners.⁹⁴ When any one yawns in their presence the Hindoos always snap their thumbs, believing that this will hinder the soul from issuing through the open mouth.⁹⁵ The Marquesans used to hold the mouth and nose of a dying man, in order to keep him in life by preventing his soul from escaping;⁹⁶ the same custom is reported of the New Caledonians;⁹⁷ and with the like intention

⁹¹ A. C. Haddon, *Head hunters*, pp. 371, 396.

⁹² H. Candelier, *Rio-Hacha et les Indiens Goajires* (Paris, 1893), pp. 258 *sq.*

⁹³ R. Southey, *History of Brazil*, iii. 396.

⁹⁴ G. M. Dawson, "On the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands," *Geological Survey of Canada, Report of Progress for 1878-1879* (Montreal, 1880), pp. 123 B, 139 B.

⁹⁵ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 114, § 665.

⁹⁶ M. Radiguet, *Les Derniers Sauvages* (Paris, 1882), p. 245; Matthias G —, *Lettres sur Iles les Marquises* (Paris, 1843), p. 115; Clavel, *Les Marquisiens*, p. 42 note.

⁹⁷ Gagnière, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxxii. (1860) p. 439.

the Bagobos of the Philippine Islands put rings of brass wire on the wrists or ankles of their sick.⁹⁸ On the other hand, the Itonamas in South America seal up the eyes, nose, and mouth of a dying person, in case his ghost should get out and carry off others;⁹⁹ and for a similar reason the people of Nias, who fear the spirits of the recently deceased and identify them with the breath, seek to confine the vagrant soul in its earthly tabernacle by bunging up the nose or tying up the jaws of the corpse.¹⁰⁰ Before leaving a corpse the Wakelbura in Australia used to place hot coals in its ears in order to keep the ghost in the body, until they had got such a good start that he could not overtake them.¹⁰¹ Esquimaux mourners plug their nostrils with deerskin, hair, or hay for several days,¹⁰² probably to prevent their souls from

⁹⁸ F. Blumentritt, "Das Stromgebiet des Rio Grande de Mindano," *Petermanns Mitteilungen*, xxxvii. (1891) p. 111.

⁹⁹ A. d'Orbigny, *L'Homme américain*, ii. 241; T. J. Hutchinson, "The Chaco Indians," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, N.S., iii. (1865) pp. 322 sq.; A. Bastian, *Culturländer des alten Amerika*, i. 476. A similar custom is observed by the Cayuvava Indians (A. d'Orbigny, *op. cit.* ii. 257).

¹⁰⁰ E. Modigliani, *Un Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), p. 283.

¹⁰¹ A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), p. 473.

¹⁰² Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), pp. 613 sq. Among the Esquimaux of Smith Sound male mourners plug up the right nostril and female mourners the left (E. Bessels in *American Naturalist*, xviii. (1884) p. 877; cp. J. Murdoch, "Ethnological Results of the Point Barrow Expedition," *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1892), p. 425). This seems to point to a belief that the soul enters by one nostril and goes out by the other, and that the functions assigned to the right and left nostrils in this respect are reversed in men and women. Among the Esquimaux of Baffin land "the

following that of their departed friend; the custom is especially incumbent on the persons who dress the corpse.¹⁰³ In southern Celebes, to hinder the escape of a woman's soul at childbirth, the nurse ties a band as tightly as possible round the body of the expectant mother.¹⁰⁴ The Minangkabauers of Sumatra observe a similar custom; a skein of thread or a string is sometimes fastened round the wrist or loins of a woman in childbed, so that when her soul seeks to depart in her hour of travail it may find the egress barred.¹⁰⁵ Among the Kayans of Borneo illness is attributed to the absence of the soul; so when a man has been ill and is well again, he attempts to prevent his soul from departing afresh. For this purpose he ties the truant into his body by fastening round his wrist a piece of string on which a *lukut*, or antique bead, is threaded; for a magical virtue appears to be ascribed to such beads. But lest the string and the bead should be broken and lost, he will sometimes tattoo the pattern of the bead on his wrist, and this is found to answer the purpose of tethering his soul quite as

person who prepares a body for burial puts rabbit's fur into his nostrils to prevent the exhalations from entering his own lungs" (Fr. Boas, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, xv. part i. (1901) p. 144). But this would hardly explain the custom of stopping one nostril only.

¹⁰³ G. F. Lyon, *Private Journal* (London, 1824), p. 370.

¹⁰⁴ B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes* (The Hague, 1875), p. 54.

¹⁰⁵ J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxix. (1890) p. 56.

well.¹⁰⁶ Again, the Koryak of North-Eastern Asia fancy that if there are two sick people in a house and one of them is at the last extremity, the soul of the other is apt to be lured away by the soul of the dying man; hence in order to hinder its departure they tie the patient's neck by a string to the bands of the sleeping-tent and recite a charm over the string so that it may be sure to detain the soul.¹⁰⁷ And lest the soul of a babe should escape and be lost as soon as it is born, the Alfoors of Celebes, when a birth is about to take place, are careful to close every opening in the house, even the keyhole; and they stop up every chink and cranny in the walls. Also they tie up the mouths of all animals inside and outside the house, for fear one of them might swallow the child's soul. For a similar reason all persons present in the house, even the mother herself, are obliged to keep their mouths shut the whole time the birth is taking place. When the question was put, Why they did not hold their noses also, lest the child's soul should get into one of them? the answer was that breath being exhaled as well as inhaled through the nostrils, the soul would be expelled before it could have time to settle down.¹⁰⁸ Popular expressions in the language of civilised peoples, such as to have

¹⁰⁶ C. Hose and R. Shelford, "Materials for a Study of Tatu in Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) p. 65.

¹⁰⁷ W. Jochelson, "The Koryak, Religion and Myths" (Leyden and New York, 1905), p. 103 (*Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. vi. part i.).

¹⁰⁸ W. F. A. Zimmermann, *Die Inseln des Indischen und Stillen Meeres* (Berlin, 1864-65), ii. 386 sq.

one's heart in one's mouth, or the soul on the lips or in the nose, shew how natural is the idea that the life or soul may escape by the mouth or nostrils.¹⁰⁹

The soul conceived as a bird ready to fly away.

Often the soul is conceived as a bird ready to take flight. This conception has probably left traces in most languages,¹¹⁰ and it lingers as a metaphor in poetry. But what is metaphor to a modern European poet was sober earnest to his savage ancestor, and is still so to many people. The Bororos of Brazil fancy that the human soul has the shape of a bird, and passes in that shape out of the body in dreams.¹¹¹ According to the Bilqula or Bella Coola Indians of British Columbia the soul dwells in the nape of the neck and resembles a bird enclosed in an egg. If the

¹⁰⁹ Compare τοῦτον κατ' ὄμου δεῖρον ἄχρισ ἡ ψυχὴ | αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ χειλέων μῦνον ἢ κακὴ λειφοῦν, Herodas, *Mimiambi*, iii. 3 sq.; μόνον οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖς χεῖλεσι τὰς ψυχὰς ἔχοντας, Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* xxxii. vol. i. p. 417, ed. Dindorf; modern Greek μὲ τῆ ψυχῆ ᾿ς τὰ δόντια, G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 193 note; “*mihi anima in naso esse, stabam tanquam mortuus*,” Petronius, *Sat.* 62; “*in primis labris animam habere*,” Seneca, *Natur. quaest.* iii. praef. 16; “*Voilà un pauvre malade qui a le feu dans le corps, et l’âme sur le bout des lèvres*,” J. de Brebeuf, in *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 113 (Canadian reprint); “This posture keeps the weary soul hanging upon the lip; ready to leave the carcass, and yet not suffered to take its wing,” R. Bentley, “Sermon on Popery,” quoted in Monk's *Life of Bentley*,² i. 382. In Czech they say of a dying person that his soul is on his tongue (Br. Jelínek, in *Mittheilungen der anthropolog. Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxi. (1891) p. 22).

¹¹⁰ Compare the Greek ποτάομαι, ἀναπτερόω, etc.

¹¹¹ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 511, 512.

shell breaks and the soul flies away, the man must die. If he swoons or becomes crazed, it is because his soul has flown away without breaking its shell. The shaman can hear the buzzing of its wings, like the buzz of a mosquito, as the soul flits past; and he may catch and replace it in the nape of its owner's neck.¹¹² A Melanesian wizard in Lepers' Island has been known to send out his soul in the form of an eagle to pursue a ship and learn the fortunes of some natives who were being carried off in it.¹¹³ The soul of Aristneas of Proconnesus was seen to issue from his mouth in the shape of a raven.¹¹⁴ There is a popular opinion in Bohemia that the parting soul comes forth from the mouth like a white bird.¹¹⁵ The Malays carry out the conception of the bird-soul in a number of odd ways. If the soul is a bird on the wing, it may be attracted by rice, and so either prevented from taking wing or lured back again from its perilous flight. Thus in Java when a child is placed on the ground for the first time (a moment which uncultured people seem to regard as especially dangerous), it is put in a hen-coop and the mother makes a clucking sound, as if she were calling hens.¹¹⁶ Amongst the Battas of Sumatra, when

¹¹² Fr. Boas, in *Seventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 14 sq. (separate reprint of the *Report of the British Association for 1891*).

¹¹³ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, pp. 207 sq.

¹¹⁴ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 174. Compare Herodotus, iv. 14 sq.; Maximus Tyríus, *Dissert.* xvi. 2.

¹¹⁵ Br. Jelínek, "Materialien zur Vorgeschichte und Volkskunde Böhmens," *Mittheilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxi. (1891) p. 22.

¹¹⁶ G. A. Wilken, "Het animisme bij de volken van den Indischen Archipel," *De*

a man returns from a dangerous enterprise, grains of rice are placed on his head, and these grains are called *padiruma tondi*, that is, “means to make the soul (*tondi*) stay at home.” In Java also rice is placed on the head of persons who have escaped a great danger or have returned home unexpectedly after it had been supposed that they were lost.¹¹⁷ Similarly in the district of Sintang in West Borneo, if any one has had a great fright, or escaped a serious peril, or comes back after a long and dangerous journey, or has taken a solemn oath, the first thing that his relations or friends do is to strew yellow rice on his head, mumbling, “Cluck! cluck! soul!” (*koer, koer, semangat*). And when a person, whether man, woman, or child, has fallen out of a house or off a tree, and has been brought home, his wife or other kinswoman goes as speedily as possible to the spot where the accident happened, and there strews rice, which has been coloured yellow, while she utters the words, “Cluck! cluck! soul! So-and-so is in his house again. Cluck! cluck! soul!” Then she gathers up the rice in a basket, carries it to the sufferer, and drops the grains from her hand on his head, saying again, “Cluck! cluck! soul!”¹¹⁸ Here the intention clearly is to decoy back the loitering bird-soul and replace it in the head of its owner. In southern Celebes they think that a bridegroom's soul is apt to fly away at marriage,

Indische Gids, June 1884, p. 944.

¹¹⁷ G. A. Wilken, *l. c.*

¹¹⁸ E. L. M. Kühr, “Schetsen uit Borneo's Westerafdeeling,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, xlvii. (1897) p. 57.

so coloured rice is scattered over him to induce it to stay. And, in general, at festivals in South Celebes rice is strewed on the head of the person in whose honour the festival is held, with the object of detaining his soul, which at such times is in especial danger of being lured away by envious demons.¹¹⁹ For example, after a successful war the welcome to the victorious prince takes the form of strewing him with roasted and coloured rice “to prevent his life-spirit, as if it were a bird, from flying out of his body in consequence of the envy of evil spirits.”¹²⁰ In Central Celebes, when a party of head-hunters returns from a successful expedition, a woman scatters rice on their heads for a similar purpose.¹²¹ Among the Minangkabauers of Sumatra the old rude

¹¹⁹ B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes*, p. 33; *id.*, *Over de Bissoes of heidensche priesters en priesteressen der Boeginezen*, pp. 9 sq.; *id.*, *Makassaarsch-Hollandsch Woordenboek*, s. vv. *Kôerróe* and *soemāñgá*, pp. 41, 569. Of these two words, the former means the sound made in calling fowls, and the latter means the soul. The expression for the ceremonies described in the text is *ápakôerróe soemāñgá*. So common is the recall of the bird-soul among the Malays that the words *koer* (*kur*) *semangat* (“cluck! cluck! soul!”) often amount to little more than an expression of astonishment, like our “Good gracious me!” See W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 47, note 2.

¹²⁰ B. F. Matthes, “Over de *âdá*'s of gewoonten der Makassaren en Boegineezen,” *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen* (Amsterdam), Afdeeling Letterkunde, Reeks iii. Deel ii. (1885) pp. 174 sq.; J. K. Niemann, “De Boegineezen en Makassaren,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxviii. (1889) p. 281.

¹²¹ A. C. Kruyt, “Het koppensnellen der Toradja's,” *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen* (Amsterdam), Afdeeling Letterkunde, Reeks iv. Deel iii. (1899) p. 162.

notions of the soul seem to be dying out. Nowadays most of the people hold that the soul, being immaterial, has no shape or form. But some of the sorcerers assert that the soul goes and comes in the shape of a tiny man. Others are of opinion that it does so in the form of a fly; hence they make food ready to induce the absent soul to come back, and the first fly that settles on the food is regarded as the returning truant. But in native poetry and popular expressions there are traces of the belief that the soul quits the body in the form of a bird.¹²²

The soul is supposed to be absent in sleep.

The soul of a sleeper is supposed to wander away from his body and actually to visit the places, to see the persons, and to perform the acts of which he dreams. For example, when an Indian of Brazil or Guiana wakes up from a sound sleep, he is firmly convinced that his soul has really been away hunting, fishing, felling trees, or whatever else he has dreamed of doing, while all the time his body has been lying motionless in his hammock. A whole Bororo village has been thrown into a panic and nearly deserted because somebody had dreamed that he saw enemies stealthily approaching it. A Macusi Indian in weak health, who dreamed that his employer had made him haul the

¹²² J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxix. (1890) pp. 56-58. On traces of the bird-soul in Mohammedan popular belief, see I. Goldziher, "Der Seelenvogel im islamischen Volksglauben," *Globus*, lxxxiii. (1903) pp. 301-304; and on the soul in bird-form generally, see J. von Negelein, "Seele als Vogel," *Globus*, lxxix. (1901) pp. 357-361, 381-384.

canoe up a series of difficult cataracts, bitterly reproached his master next morning for his want of consideration in thus making a poor invalid go out and toil during the night.¹²³ The Indians of the Gran Chaco are often heard to relate the most incredible stories as things which they have themselves seen and heard, hence strangers who do not know them intimately say in their haste that these Indians are liars. In point of fact the Indians are firmly convinced of the truth of what they relate; for these wonderful adventures are simply their dreams, which they do not distinguish from waking realities.¹²⁴

The soul absent in sleep may be prevented from returning to the body.

Now the absence of the soul in sleep has its dangers, for if from any cause the soul should be permanently detained away from the body, the person thus deprived of the vital principle must die.¹²⁵ There is a German belief that the soul escapes from a sleeper's mouth in the form of a white mouse or a little bird, and that to prevent the return of the bird or animal would be fatal to the sleeper.¹²⁶ Hence in Transylvania they say that you should not let a child sleep with its mouth open, or its soul will

¹²³ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 340; E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp. 344 *sqq.*

¹²⁴ V. Fric, "Eine Pilcomayo-Reise in den Chaco Central," *Globus*, lxxxix. (1906) p. 233.

¹²⁵ Shway Yoe, *The Burman, his Life and Notions* (London, 1882), ii. 100.

¹²⁶ R. Andree, *Braunschweiger Volkskunde* (Brunswick, 1896), p. 266.

slip out in the shape of a mouse, and the child will never wake.¹²⁷ Many causes may detain the sleeper's soul. Thus, his soul may meet the soul of another sleeper and the two souls may fight; if a Guinea negro wakens with sore bones in the morning, he thinks that his soul has been thrashed by another soul in sleep.¹²⁸ Or it may meet the soul of a person just deceased and be carried off by it; hence in the Aru Islands the inmates of a house will not sleep the night after a death has taken place in it, because the soul of the deceased is supposed to be still in the house and they fear to meet it in a dream.¹²⁹ Similarly among the Upper Thompson Indians of British Columbia, the friends and neighbours who gathered in a house after a death and remained there till the burial was over were not allowed to sleep, lest their souls should be drawn away by the ghost of the deceased or by his guardian spirit.¹³⁰ The Lengua Indians of the Gran Chaco hold that the

¹²⁷ H. von Wlislöcki, *Volks Glaube und Volksbrauch der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Berlin, 1893), p. 167.

¹²⁸ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), p. 220; A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 20.

¹²⁹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 267. For detention of a sleeper's soul by spirits and consequent illness, see also Mason, quoted in A. Bastian's *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 387 note.

¹³⁰ J. Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. i. part iv. (April 1900) p. 327. The Koryak of North-Eastern Asia also keep awake so long as there is a corpse in the house. See W. Jochelson, "The Koryak, Religion and Myths," *Memoir of the American Museum for Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. vi. part i. (Leyden and New York, 1905) p. 110.

vagrant spirits of the dead may come to life again if only they can take possession of a sleeper's body during the absence of his soul in dreams. Hence, when the shades of night have fallen, the ghosts of the departed gather round the villages, watching for a chance to pounce on the bodies of dreamers and to enter into them through the gateway of the breast.¹³¹ Again, the soul of the sleeper may be prevented by an accident or by physical force from returning to his body. When a Dyak dreams of falling into the water, he supposes that this accident has really befallen his spirit, and he sends for a wizard, who fishes for the spirit with a hand-net in a basin of water till he catches it and restores it to its owner.¹³² The Santals tell how a man fell asleep, and growing very thirsty, his soul, in the form of a lizard, left his body and entered a pitcher of water to drink. Just then the owner of the pitcher happened to cover it; so the soul could not return to the body and the man died. While his friends were preparing to burn the body some one uncovered the pitcher to get water. The lizard thus escaped and returned to the body, which immediately revived; so the man rose up and asked his friends why they were weeping. They told him they thought he was dead and were about to burn his body. He said he had been down a well to get water, but had

¹³¹ G. Kurze, "Sitten und Gebräuche der Lengua-Indianer," *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xxiii. (1905) p. 18.

¹³² H. Ling Roth, "Low's Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) p. 112.

found it hard to get out and had just returned. So they saw it all.¹³³ A similar story is reported from Transylvania as follows. In the account of a witch's trial at Mühlbach in the eighteenth century it is said that a woman had engaged two men to work in her vineyard. After noon they all lay down to rest as usual. An hour later the men got up and tried to waken the woman, but could not. She lay motionless with her mouth wide open. They came back at sunset and still she lay like a corpse. Just at that moment a big fly came buzzing past, which one of the men caught and shut up in his leathern pouch. Then they tried again to waken the woman, but could not. Afterwards they let out the fly; it flew straight into the woman's mouth and she awoke. On seeing this the men had no further doubt that she was a witch.¹³⁴

Danger of awaking a sleeper suddenly before his soul has

¹³³ *Indian Antiquary*, vii. (1878) p. 273; A. Bastian, *Völkerstämme am Brahmaputra*, p. 127. A similar story is told by the Hindoos and Malays, though the lizard form of the soul is not mentioned. See *Panjab Notes and Queries*, iii. p. 166, § 679; N. Annandale, "Primitive Beliefs and Customs of the Patani Fishermen," *Fasciculi Malayenses, Anthropology*, part i. (April 1903) pp. 94 sq.

¹³⁴ E. Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, ii. 27 sq. A similar story is told in Holland (J. W. Wolf, *Nederlandsche Sagen*, No. 250, pp. 343 sq.). The story of King Gunthram belongs to the same class; the king's soul comes out of his mouth as a small reptile (Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Langobardorum*, iii. 34). In an East Indian story of the same type the sleeper's soul issues from his nose in the form of a cricket (G. A. Wilken, in *De Indische Gids*, June 1884, p. 940). In a Swabian story a girl's soul creeps out of her mouth in the form of a white mouse (A. Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, i. 303). In a Saxon story the soul comes out of the sleeper's mouth in the shape of a red mouse. See E. Mogk, in R. Wuttke's *Sächsische Volkskunde*² (Dresden, 1901), p. 318.

time to return.

It is a common rule with primitive people not to waken a sleeper, because his soul is away and might not have time to get back; so if the man wakened without his soul, he would fall sick. If it is absolutely necessary to rouse a sleeper, it must be done very gradually, to allow the soul time to return.¹³⁵ A Fijian in Matuku, suddenly wakened from a nap by somebody treading on his foot, has been heard bawling after his soul and imploring it to return. He had just been dreaming that he was far away in Tonga, and great was his alarm on suddenly waking to find his body in Matuku. Death stared him in the face unless his soul could be induced to speed at once across the sea and reanimate its deserted tenement. The man would probably have died of fright if a missionary had not been at hand to allay his terror.¹³⁶ Some Brazilian Indians explain the headache from which a man

¹³⁵ Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, ii. 103; M. and B. Ferrars, *Burma* (London, 1900), p. 77; R. G. Woodthorpe, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvi. (1897) p. 23; A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 389; F. Blumentritt, "Der Ahnencultus und die religiösen Anschauungen der Malaien des Philippinen-Archipels," *Mittheilungen der Wiener Geogr. Gesellschaft*, 1882, p. 209; J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik-en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 440; *id.*, "Die Landschaft Dawan oder West-Timor," *Deutsche geographische Blätter*, x. 280; A. C. Kruijt, "Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschapelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xxxix. (1895) p. 4; K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, pp. 340, 510; L. F. Gowing, *Five Thousand Miles in a Sledge* (London, 1889), p. 226; A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 308. The rule is mentioned and a mystic reason assigned for it in the *Satapatha Brâhmana* (part v. p. 371, J. Eggeling's translation).

¹³⁶ Rev. Lorimer Fison, in a letter to the author dated August 26, 1898.

sometimes suffers after a broken sleep by saying that his soul is tired with the exertions it made to return quickly to the body.¹³⁷ A Highland story, told to Hugh Miller on the picturesque shores of Loch Shin, well illustrates the haste made by the soul to regain its body when the sleeper has been prematurely roused by an indiscreet friend. Two young men had been spending the early part of a warm summer day in the open air, and sat down on a mossy bank to rest. Hard by was an ancient ruin separated from the bank on which they sat only by a slender runnel, across which there lay, immediately over a miniature cascade, a few withered stalks of grass. “Overcome by the heat of the day, one of the young men fell asleep; his companion watched drowsily beside him; when all at once the watcher was aroused to attention by seeing a little indistinct form, scarce larger than a humble-bee, issue from the mouth of the sleeping man, and, leaping upon the moss, move downwards to the runnel, which it crossed along the withered grass stalks, and then disappeared among the interstices of the ruin. Alarmed by what he saw, the watcher hastily shook his companion by the shoulder, and awoke him; though, with all his haste, the little cloud-like creature, still more rapid in its movements, issued from the interstice into which it had gone, and, flying across the runnel, instead of creeping along the grass stalks and over the sward, as before, it re-entered the mouth of the sleeper, just as he was in the act of awakening. ‘What is the matter with you?’ said the watcher, greatly alarmed, ‘what ails

¹³⁷ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 340.

you?’ ‘Nothing ails me,’ replied the other; ‘but you have robbed me of a most delightful dream. I dreamed I was walking through a fine rich country, and came at length to the shores of a noble river; and, just where the clear water went thundering down a precipice, there was a bridge all of silver, which I crossed; and then, entering a noble palace on the opposite side, I saw great heaps of gold and jewels; and I was just going to load myself with treasure, when you rudely awoke me, and I lost all.’ ”¹³⁸

Danger of moving a sleeper or altering his appearance.

Still more dangerous is it in the opinion of primitive man to move a sleeper or alter his appearance, for if this were done the soul on its return might not be able to find or recognise its body, and so the person would die. The Minangkabauers of Sumatra deem it highly improper to blacken or dirty the face of a sleeper, lest the absent soul should shrink from re-entering a body thus disfigured.¹³⁹ Patani Malays fancy that if a person's face be painted while he sleeps, the soul which has gone out of him will not recognise him, and he will sleep on till his face is washed.¹⁴⁰ In Bombay it is thought equivalent to murder to change the aspect of a sleeper, as by painting his face in fantastic colours or giving

¹³⁸ Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (Edinburgh, 1854), ch. vi. pp. 106 sq.

¹³⁹ J. L. van der Toorn, “Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxix. (1890) p. 50.

¹⁴⁰ N. Annandale, in *Fasciculi Malayenses, Anthropology*, part i. (April 1903) p. 94.

moustaches to a sleeping woman. For when the soul returns it will not know its own body and the person will die.¹⁴¹ The Coreans are of opinion that in sleep “the soul goes out of the body, and that if a piece of paper is put over the face of the sleeper he will surely die, for his soul cannot find its way back into him again.”¹⁴² The Servians believe that the soul of a sleeping witch often leaves her body in the form of a butterfly. If during its absence her body be turned round, so that her feet are placed where her head was before, the butterfly soul will not find its way back into her body through the mouth, and the witch will die.¹⁴³ The Esthonians of the island of Oesel think that the gusts which sweep up all kinds of trifles from the ground and whirl them along are the souls of old women, who have gone out in this shape to seek what they can find. Meantime the beldame's body lies as still as a stone, and if you turn it round her soul will never be able to enter it again, until you have replaced the body in its original position. You can hear the soul whining and whimpering till it has found the right aperture.¹⁴⁴ Similarly in Livonia they think that when the soul

¹⁴¹ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, iii. p. 116, § 530.

¹⁴² W. W. Rockhill, “Notes on some of the Laws, Customs, and Superstitions of Korea,” *American Anthropologist*, iv. (1891) p. 183.

¹⁴³ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 117 *sq.*; F. S. Krauss, *Volks Glaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven* (Münster i. W., 1890), p. 112. The latter writer tells us that the witch's spirit is also supposed to assume the form of a fly, a hen, a turkey, a crow, and especially a toad.

¹⁴⁴ Holzmayer, “Osiliana,” *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. (1872) No. 2, p. 53.

of a were-wolf is out on his hateful business, his body lies like dead; and if meanwhile the body were accidentally moved, the soul would never more find its way into it, but would remain in the body of a wolf till death.¹⁴⁵ In the picturesque but little known Black Mountain of southern France, which forms a sort of link between the Pyrenees and the Cevennes, they tell how a woman, who had long been suspected of being a witch, one day fell asleep at noon among the reapers in the field. Resolved to put her to the test, the reapers carried her, while she slept, to another part of the field, leaving a large pitcher on the spot from which they had moved her. When her soul returned, it entered the pitcher and cunningly rolled it over and over till the vessel lay beside her body, of which the soul thereupon took possession.¹⁴⁶

The soul may quit the body in waking hours, thereby causing sickness, insanity or death. Recalling truant souls in Australia, Burma, China, Sarawak, Luzon and Mongolia.

But in order that a man's soul should quit his body, it is not necessary that he should be asleep. It may quit him in his waking hours, and then sickness, insanity, or death will be the result. Thus a man of the Wurunjeri tribe in Victoria lay at his last gasp because his spirit (*murup*) had departed from him. A medicine-man went in pursuit and caught the spirit by the middle just as it

¹⁴⁵ P. Einhorn, "Wiederlegung der Abgötterey," etc., reprinted in *Scriptores rerum Livonicarum*, ii. 645 (Riga and Leipsic, 1848).

¹⁴⁶ A. de Nore, *Coutumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France* (Paris and Lyons, 1846), p. 88.

was about to plunge into the sunset glow, which is the light cast by the souls of the dead as they pass in and out of the underworld, where the sun goes to rest. Having captured the vagrant spirit, the doctor brought it back under his opossum rug, laid himself down on the dying man, and put the soul back into him, so that after a time he revived.¹⁴⁷ The Karens of Burma are perpetually anxious about their souls, lest these should go roving from their bodies, leaving the owners to die. When a man has reason to fear that his soul is about to take this fatal step, a ceremony is performed to retain or recall it, in which the whole family must take part. A meal is prepared consisting of a cock and hen, a special kind of rice, and a bunch of bananas. Then the head of the family takes the bowl which is used to skim rice, and knocking with it thrice on the top of the house-ladder says: “*Prrrroo!* Come back, soul, do not tarry outside! If it rains, you will be wet. If the sun shines, you will be hot. The gnats will sting you, the leeches will bite you, the tigers will devour you, the thunder will crush you. *Prrrroo!* Come back, soul! Here it will be well with you. You shall want for nothing. Come and eat under shelter from the wind and the storm.” After that the family partakes of the meal, and the ceremony ends with everybody tying their right wrist with a string which has been charmed by a sorcerer.¹⁴⁸ Similarly the Lolos, an aboriginal tribe of western China, believe that the soul

¹⁴⁷ A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, p. 387.

¹⁴⁸ Bringaud, “Les Karens de la Birmanie,” *Missions Catholiques*, xx. (1888) pp. 297 sq.

leaves the body in chronic illness. In that case they read a sort of elaborate litany, calling on the soul by name and beseeching it to return from the hills, the vales, the rivers, the forests, the fields, or from wherever it may be straying. At the same time cups of water, wine, and rice are set at the door for the refreshment of the weary wandering spirit. When the ceremony is over, they tie a red cord round the arm of the sick man to tether the soul, and this cord is worn by him until it decays and drops off.¹⁴⁹ So among the Kenyahs of Sarawak a medicine-man has been known to recall the stray soul of a child, and to fasten it firmly in its body by tying a string round the child's right wrist, and smearing its little arm with the blood of a fowl.¹⁵⁰ The Ilocanes of Luzon think that a man may lose his soul in the woods or gardens, and that he who has thus lost his soul loses also his senses. Hence before they quit the woods or the fields they call to their soul, "Let us go! let us go!" lest it should loiter behind or go astray. And when a man becomes crazed or mad, they take him to the place where he is supposed to have lost his soul and invite the truant spirit to return to his body.¹⁵¹ The Mongols sometimes explain sickness by supposing that the patient's soul is absent, and either does not care to return to its body or cannot find the way back. To secure

¹⁴⁹ A. Henry, "The Lolos and other tribes of Western China," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiii. (1903) p. 102.

¹⁵⁰ C. Hose and W. M'Dougall, "The Relations between Men and Animals in Sarawak," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxi. (1901) pp. 183 sq.

¹⁵¹ De los Reyes y Florentino, "Die religiöse Anschauungen der Ilocanes (Luzon)," *Mittheilungen der k. k. Geograph. Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxxi (1888) pp. 569 sq.

the return of the soul it is therefore necessary on the one hand to make its body as attractive as possible, and on the other hand to shew the soul the way home. To make the body attractive all the sick man's best clothes and most valued possessions are placed beside him; he is washed, incensed, and made as comfortable as may be; and all his friends march thrice round the hut calling out the sick man's name and coaxing his soul to return. To help the wanderer to find its way back a coloured cord is stretched from the patient's head to the door of the hut. The priest in his robes reads a list of the horrors of hell and the dangers incurred by souls which wilfully absent themselves from their bodies. Then turning to the assembled friends and the patient he asks, "Is it come?" All answer "Yes," and bowing to the returning soul throw seed over the sick man. The cord which guided the soul back is then rolled up and placed round the patient's neck, who must wear it for seven days without taking it off. No one may frighten or hurt him, lest his soul, not yet familiar with its body, should again take flight.¹⁵²

Recalling truant souls in Africa and America.

Some of the Congo tribes believe that when a man is ill, his soul has left his body and is wandering at large. The aid of the sorcerer is then called in to capture the vagrant spirit and restore it to the invalid. Generally the physician declares that he has successfully chased the soul into the branch of a tree. The whole

¹⁵² A. Bastian, *Die Seele und ihre Erscheinungswesen in der Ethnographie*, p. 36.

town thereupon turns out and accompanies the doctor to the tree, where the strongest men are deputed to break off the branch in which the soul of the sick man is supposed to be lodged. This they do and carry the branch back to the town, insinuating by their gestures that the burden is heavy and hard to bear. When the branch has been brought to the sick man's hut, he is placed in an upright position by its side, and the sorcerer performs the enchantments by which the soul is believed to be restored to its owner.¹⁵³ The soul or shade of a Déné or Tinneh Indian in the old days generally remained invisible, but appeared wandering about in one form or another whenever disease or death was imminent. All the efforts of the sufferer's friends were therefore concentrated on catching the roving shade. The method adopted was simple. They stuffed the patient's moccasins with down and hung them up. If next morning the down was warm, they made sure that the lost soul was in the boots, with which accordingly they carefully and silently shod their suffering friend. Nothing more could reasonably be demanded for a perfect cure.¹⁵⁴ An Ottawa medicine-man has been known to catch a stray soul in a little box, which he brought back and inserted in the patient's mouth.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ H. Ward, *Five Years with the Congo Cannibals* (London, 1890), pp. 53 sq.

¹⁵⁴ A. G. Morice, "The Western Dénés, their Manners and Customs," *Proceedings of the Canadian Institute, Toronto*, Third Series, vii. (1888-1889) pp. 158 sq.; *id.*, *Au pays de l'ours noir, chez les sauvages de la Colombie Britannique* (Paris and Lyons, 1897), p. 75.

¹⁵⁵ Clacteur, in *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, iv (1830) p. 479.

Recalling truant souls in Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes.

Pining, sickness, great fright, and death are ascribed by the Battas or Bataks of Sumatra to the absence of the soul (*tendi*) from the body. At first they try to beckon the wanderer back, and to lure him, like a fowl, by strewing rice. Then the following form of words is commonly repeated: "Come back, O soul, whether thou art lingering in the wood, or on the hills, or in the dale. See, I call thee with a *toemba bras*, with an egg of the fowl Rajah *moelija*, with the eleven healing leaves. Detain it not, let it come straight here, detain it not, neither in the wood, nor on the hill, nor in the dale. That may not be. O come straight home!"¹⁵⁶ Sometimes the means adopted by the Battas to procure the return of a sick person's soul are more elaborate. A procession sets out from the village to the tuck of drum to find and bring home the strayed soul. First goes a person bearing a basket which contains cakes of rice-meal, rice dyed yellow, and a boiled fowl's egg. The sorcerer follows carrying a chicken, and behind him walks a man with a black, red, and white flag. A crowd of sympathisers brings up the rear. On reaching the spot where the lost soul is supposed to tarry, they set up a small bamboo altar, and the sorcerer offers on it the chicken to the spirit of the place, the drums beating all the time. Then, waving his shawl to attract the soul of the sick man, he says: "Come hither, thou soul of So-and-So, whether thou sittest among the stones or in the mud. In the house is thy

¹⁵⁶ M. Joustra, "Het leven, de zeden en gewoonten der Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlv. (1902) p. 408.

place. We have besought the spirit to let thee go.” After that the procession reforms and marches back to the village to the roll of drums and the clash of cymbals. On reaching the door of the house the sorcerer calls out to the inmates, “Has it come?” and a voice from within answers, “It is here, good sorcerer.” At evening the drums beat again.¹⁵⁷ A number of plants, including rice, a species of fig, and garlic, are supposed by the Battas to possess soul-compelling virtue and are accordingly made use of by them in rites for the recovery of lost souls. When a child is sick, the mother commonly waves a cloth to beckon home its wandering spirit, and when a cock crows or a hen cackles in the yard, she knows that the prodigal has returned. If the little sufferer persists in being ill in spite of these favourable omens, the mother will hang a bag of rice at the head of her bed when she goes to sleep, and next morning on getting up she measures the rice. If the rice has increased in volume during the night, as it may do in a moisture-laden atmosphere, she is confident that the lost soul has indeed come home to stay.¹⁵⁸ The Kayans of Borneo fasten packets of rice, flesh, and fish to the window in the roof through which the wandering soul of a sick man is expected to return home. The doctor sits cross-legged on a mat under the open window with a display of pretty things spread

¹⁵⁷ J. H. Meerwaldt, “Gebruiken der Bataks in het maatschappelijk leven,” *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, li. (1907) pp. 98 sq. The writer gives *tondi* as the form of the Batak word for “soul.”

¹⁵⁸ Dr. R. Römer, “Bijdrage tot de Geneeskunst der Karo-Batak's,” *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, i. (1908) pp. 212 sq.

out temptingly before him as baits to entice the spirit back to its deserted tabernacle. From the window hangs a string of precious corals or pearls to serve the returning prodigal as a ladder and so facilitate his descent into the house. The lower end of the string is attached to a bundle composed of wooden hooks, a fowl's feather, little packets of rice, and so forth. Chanting his spells, the doctor strokes the soul down the string into the bundle, which he then deposits in a basket and hides in a corner till the dusk of the evening. When darkness has fallen, he blows the captured soul back into the patient's head and strokes the sufferer's arm downwards with the point of an old spear in order to settle the soul firmly in his body.¹⁵⁹ Once when a popular traveller was leaving a Kayan village, the mothers, fearing that their children's souls might follow him on his journey, brought him the boards on which they carry their infants and begged him to pray that the souls of the little ones would return to the familiar boards and not go away with him into the far country. To each board was fastened a looped string for the purpose of tethering the vagrant spirits, and through the loop each baby was made to pass a chubby finger to make sure that its tiny soul would not wander away.¹⁶⁰ When a Dyak is dangerously ill, the medicine-men may say that his soul has escaped far away, perhaps to the river; then they will wave a garment or cloth about to imitate the casting of

¹⁵⁹ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *In Centraal Borneo* (Leyden, 1900), i. 148, 152 *sq.*, 164 *sq.*; *id.*, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 112 *sq.*, 125.

¹⁶⁰ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, ii. 481.

a net, signifying thereby that they are catching the soul like a fish in a net. Or they may give out that the soul has escaped into the jungle; and then they will rush out of the house to circumvent and secure it there. Or again they may allege that it has been carried away over seas to some unknown land; and then they will play at paddling a boat to follow it across the great water. But more commonly their mode of treatment is as follows. A spear is set up in the middle of the verandah with a few leaves tied to it and the medicine-boxes of the medicine-men laid at its foot. Round this the doctors run at full speed, chanting the while, till one of them falls down and lies motionless. The bystanders cover him with a blanket, and wait while his spirit hies away after the errant soul and brings it back. Presently he comes to himself, stares vacantly about like a man awaking from sleep, and then rises, holding the soul in his clenched right hand. He then returns it to the patient through the crown of his head, while he mutters a spell.¹⁶¹ Among the Dyaks of the Kayan and Lower Melawie districts you will often see, in houses where there are children, a basket of a peculiar shape with shells and dried fruits attached to it. These shells contain the remains of the children's navel-strings, and the basket to which they are fastened is commonly hung beside the place where the children sleep. When a child is frightened, for example by being bathed or by the bursting of a thunderstorm,

¹⁶¹ J. Perham, "Manangism in Borneo," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 19 (Singapore, 1887), p. 91, compare pp. 89, 90; H. Ling Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo*, i. 274, compare pp. 272 sq.

its soul flees from its body and nestles beside its old familiar friend the navel-string in the basket, from which the mother easily induces it to return by shaking the basket and pressing it to the child's body.¹⁶² The Toboongkoos of Central Celebes believe that sickness in general is caused by the departure of the soul. To recover the wanderer a priest will set out food in the courtyard of the sufferer's house and then invoke the soul, promising it many fine things if it will only come back. When he thinks it has complied with his request, he catches it in a cloth which he keeps ready for the purpose. This cloth he afterwards claps on the sick man's head, thereby restoring to him his lost soul.¹⁶³

Wandering souls in popular tales.

In an Indian story a king conveys his soul into the dead body of a Brahman, and a hunchback conveys his soul into the deserted body of the king. The hunchback is now king and the king is a Brahman. However, the hunchback is induced to shew his skill by transferring his soul to the dead body of a parrot, and the king seizes the opportunity to regain possession of his own body.¹⁶⁴ A tale of the same type, with variations of detail, reappears among the Malays. A king has incautiously transferred his soul to an ape, upon which the vizier adroitly inserts his own soul into the king's

¹⁶² E. L. M. Kühr, "Schetsen uit Borneo's Westerafdeeling," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897) pp. 60 sq.

¹⁶³ A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische aantekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlv. (1900) p. 225.

¹⁶⁴ *Pantschatantra*, übersetzt von Th. Benfey (Leipsic, 1859), ii. 124 sqq.

body and so takes possession of the queen and the kingdom, while the true king languishes at court in the outward semblance of an ape. But one day the false king, who played for high stakes, was watching a combat of rams, and it happened that the animal on which he had laid his money fell down dead. All efforts to restore animation proved unavailing till the false king, with the instinct of a true sportsman, transferred his own soul to the body of the deceased ram, and thus renewed the fray. The real king in the body of the ape saw his chance, and with great presence of mind darted back into his own body, which the vizier had rashly vacated. So he came to his own again, and the usurper in the ram's body met with the fate he richly deserved.¹⁶⁵ In another Indian story a Brahman reanimates the dead body of a king by conveying his own soul into it. Meantime the Brahman's body has been burnt, and his soul is obliged to remain in the body of the king.¹⁶⁶ In a Chinese story we read of a monk in a Buddhist monastery who used from time to time to send his soul away out of himself. Whenever he was thus absent from the body, he took the precaution of locking the door of his cell. On one of these occasions an envoy from the north arrived and put up at

¹⁶⁵ J. Brandes, "Iets over het Pape-gaai-boek, zooals het bij de Maleiers voorkomt," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xli. (1899) pp. 480-483. A story of this sort is quoted from the *Persian Tales* in the *Spectator* (No. 578, Aug. 9, 1714).

¹⁶⁶ *Katha Sarit Sāgara*, translated by C. H. Tawney (Calcutta, 1880), i. 21 sq. For other Indian tales of the same general type, with variations in detail, see *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, xii. 183 sq.; *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iv. p. 28, § 54.

the monastery, but there was no cell for him to pass the night in. Then he looked into the cell of the brother whose soul was not at home, and seeing his body lying there motionless, he battered the door in and said, "I will lodge here. The man is dead. Take the body and burn it." His servants obeyed his orders, the monks being powerless to interfere. That very night the soul came back, only to find its body reduced to ashes. Every night it could be heard crying, "Where shall I settle?" Those who knew him then opened their windows, saying, "Here I am." So the soul came in and united itself with their body, and the result was that they became much cleverer than before.¹⁶⁷ Similarly the Greeks told how the soul of Hermotimus of Clazomenae used to quit his body and roam far and wide, bringing back intelligence of what he had seen on his rambles to his friends at home; until one day, when his spirit was abroad, his enemies contrived to seize his deserted body and committed it to the flames.¹⁶⁸ It is said that during the last seven years of his life Sultan Bayazid ate nothing that had life and blood in it. One day, being seized with a great longing for sheep's trotters, he struggled long in this glorious contest with his soul, until at last, a savoury dish of trotters being

¹⁶⁷ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iv. 104.

¹⁶⁸ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 174; Plutarch, *De genio Socratis*, 22; Lucian, *Muscae encomium*, 7. Plutarch calls the man Hermodorus. Epimenides, the Cretan seer, had also the power of sending his soul out of his body and keeping it out as long as he pleased. See Hesychius Milesius, in *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, v. 162; Suidas, s. v. Ἐπιμενίδης. On such reported cases in antiquity see further E. Rohde, *Psyche*,³ ii. 91 sqq.

set before him, he said unto his soul, "My soul, the trotters are before thee; if thou wishest to enjoy them, leave the body and feed on them." Hardly had he uttered these words when a living creature was seen to issue from his mouth and drink of the juice in the dish, after which it endeavoured to return whence it came. But the austere sultan, determined to mortify his carnal appetite, prevented it with his hand from entering his mouth, and when it fell to the ground commanded that it should be beaten. The pages kicked it to death, and after this murder of his soul the sultan remained in gloomy seclusion, taking no part or interest in the affairs of government.¹⁶⁹

The wandering soul may be detained by ghosts.

The departure of the soul is not always voluntary. It may be extracted from the body against its will by ghosts, demons, or sorcerers. Hence, when a funeral is passing the house, the Karens of Burma tie their children with a special kind of string to a particular part of the house, lest the souls of the children should leave their bodies and go into the corpse which is passing. The children are kept tied in this way until the corpse is out of sight.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century by Evliyā Efendī*, translated from the Turkish by the Ritter Joseph von Hammer (Oriental Translation Fund), vol. i. pt. ii. p. 3. I have not seen this work. An extract from it, containing the above narrative, was kindly sent me by Colonel F. Tyrrel, and the exact title and reference were supplied to me by Mr. R. A. Nicholson, who was so good as to consult the book for me in the British Museum.

¹⁷⁰ E. B. Cross, "On the Karens," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, iv. (1854) p. 311.

And after the corpse has been laid in the grave, but before the earth has been shovelled in, the mourners and friends range themselves round the grave, each with a bamboo split lengthwise in one hand and a little stick in the other; each man thrusts his bamboo into the grave, and drawing the stick along the groove of the bamboo points out to his soul that in this way it may easily climb up out of the tomb. While the earth is being shovelled in, the bamboos are kept out of the way, lest the souls should be in them, and so should be inadvertently buried with the earth as it is being thrown into the grave; and when the people leave the spot they carry away the bamboos, begging their souls to come with them.¹⁷¹ Further, on returning from the grave each Karen provides himself with three little hooks made of branches of trees, and calling his spirit to follow him, at short intervals, as he returns, he makes a motion as if hooking it, and then thrusts the hook into the ground. This is done to prevent the soul of the living from staying behind with the soul of the dead.¹⁷² On the return of a Burmese or Shan family from a burial, old men tie up the wrists of each member of the family with string, to prevent his or her “butterfly” or soul from escaping; and this string remains till it is worn out and falls off.¹⁷³ When a mother dies leaving a young baby, the Burmese think that the “butterfly”

¹⁷¹ A. R. McMahon, *The Karens of the Golden Chersonese* (London, 1876), p. 318.

¹⁷² F. Mason, “Physical Character of the Karens,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866, pt. ii. pp. 28 sq.

¹⁷³ R. G. Woodthorpe, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxvi. (1897) p. 23.

or soul of the baby follows that of the mother, and that if it is not recovered the child must die. So a wise woman is called in to get back the baby's soul. She places a mirror near the corpse, and on the mirror a piece of feathery cotton down. Holding a cloth in her open hands at the foot of the mirror, she with wild words entreats the mother not to take with her the "butterfly" or soul of her child, but to send it back. As the gossamer down slips from the face of the mirror she catches it in the cloth and tenderly places it on the baby's breast. The same ceremony is sometimes observed when one of two children that have played together dies, and is thought to be luring away the soul of its playmate to the spirit-land. It is sometimes performed also for a bereaved husband or wife.¹⁷⁴ The Bahnars of eastern Cochin-China think that when a man is sick of a fever his soul has gone away with the ghosts to the tombs. At sunset a sorcerer attempts to lure the soul back by offering it sugar-cane, bananas, and other fruits, while he sings an incantation inviting the wanderer to return from among the dead to the land of the living. He pretends to catch the truant soul in a piece of cotton, which he then lays on the patient's head.¹⁷⁵ When the Karo-Bataks of Sumatra have buried somebody and are filling in the grave, a sorceress runs about beating the air with a stick. This she does in order to drive away

¹⁷⁴ C. J. S. F. Forbes, *British Burma* (London, 1878), pp. 99 *sq.*; Shway Yoe, *The Burman* (London, 1882), ii. 102; A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 389.

¹⁷⁵ Guerlach, "Mœurs et superstitions des sauvages Ba-hnars," *Missions Catholiques*, xix. (1887) pp. 525 *sq.*

the souls of the survivors, for if one of these souls happened to slip into the grave and to be covered up with earth, its owner would die.¹⁷⁶ Among some of the Dyak tribes of south-eastern Borneo, as soon as the coffin is carried to the place of burial, the house in which the death occurred is sprinkled with water, and the father of the family calls out the names of all his children and the other members of his household. For they think that the ghost loves to decoy away the souls of his kinsfolk, but that his designs upon them can be defeated by calling out their names, which has the effect of bringing back the souls to their owners. The same ceremony is repeated on the return from the burial.¹⁷⁷ It is a rule with the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia that a corpse must not be coffined in the house, or the souls of the other inmates would enter the coffin, and they, too, would die. The body is taken out either through the roof or through a hole made in one of the walls, and is then coffined outside the house.¹⁷⁸ In the East Indian island of Keisar it is deemed imprudent to go near a grave at night, lest the ghosts should catch and keep the soul of the passer-by.¹⁷⁹ The Kei Islanders believe that the spirits of their forefathers, angry at not receiving food, make people sick

¹⁷⁶ J. H. Neumann, "De *begoe* in de godsdienstige begrippen der Karo-Bataks in de Doesoen," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlvii. (1902) p. 27.

¹⁷⁷ F. Grabowsky, in *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) p. 182.

¹⁷⁸ Fr. Boas, in *Eleventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 6 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1896*).

¹⁷⁹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 414.

by detaining their souls. So they lay offerings of food on the grave and beg their ancestors to allow the soul of the sick to return, or to drive it home speedily if it should be lingering by the way.¹⁸⁰

Attempts to rescue the lost soul from the spirits of the dead who are detaining it.

In Bolang Mongondo, a district in the west of Celebes, all sickness is ascribed to the ancestral spirits who have carried off the patient's soul. The object therefore is to bring back the soul of the sufferer and restore it to him. An eye-witness has thus described the attempted cure of a sick boy. The priestesses, who acted as physicians, made a doll of cloth and fastened it to the point of a spear, which an old woman held upright. Round this doll the priestesses danced, uttering charms, and chirruping as when one calls a dog. Then the old woman lowered the point of the spear a little, so that the priestesses could reach the doll. By this time the soul of the sick boy was supposed to be in the doll, having been brought into it by the incantations. So the priestesses approached it cautiously on tiptoe and caught the soul in the many-coloured cloths which they had been waving in the air. Then they laid the soul on the boy's head, that is, they wrapped his head in the cloth in which the soul was supposed to be, and stood still for some moments with great gravity, holding their hands on the patient's head. Suddenly there was a jerk, the priestesses whispered and shook their heads, and the cloth was taken off –

¹⁸⁰ J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* pp. 221 *sq.*

the soul had escaped. The priestesses gave chase to it, running round and round the house, clucking and gesticulating as if they were driving hens into a poultry-yard. At last they recaptured the soul at the foot of the stair and restored it to its owner as before.¹⁸¹ Much in the same way an Australian medicine-man will sometimes bring the lost soul of a sick man into a puppet and restore it to the patient by pressing the puppet to his breast.¹⁸² In Uea, one of the Loyalty Islands, the souls of the dead seem to have been credited with the power of stealing the souls of the living. For when a man was sick the soul-doctor would go with a large troop of men and women to the graveyard. Here the men played on flutes and the women whistled softly to lure the soul home. After this had gone on for some time they formed in procession and moved homewards, the flutes playing and the women whistling all the way, while they led back the wandering soul and drove it gently along with open palms. On entering the patient's dwelling they commanded the soul in a loud voice to enter his body.¹⁸³ In Madagascar when a man was sick or lunatic in consequence of the loss of his soul, his friends despatched a wizard in haste to fetch him a soul from the graveyard. The emissary repaired by night to the spot, and having made a hole

¹⁸¹ N. Ph. Wilken en J. A. Schwarz, "Het heidendom en de Islam in Bolaang Mongondou," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xi. (1867) pp. 263 sq.

¹⁸² James Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, 1881), pp. 57 sq.

¹⁸³ W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific* (London, 1876), pp. 171 sq.

in the wooden house which served as a tomb, begged the spirit of the patient's father to bestow a soul on his son or daughter, who had none. So saying he applied a bonnet to the hole, then folded it up and rushed back to the house of the sufferer, saying he had a soul for him. With that he clapped the bonnet on the head of the invalid, who at once said he felt much better and had recovered the soul which he had lost.¹⁸⁴

Rescuing the soul from the dead in Borneo and Melanesia.

When a Dyak or Malay of some of the western tribes or districts of Borneo is taken ill, with vomiting and profuse sweating as the only symptoms, he thinks that one of his deceased kinsfolk or ancestors is at the bottom of it. To discover which of them is the culprit, a wise man or woman pulls a lock of hair on the crown of the sufferer's head, calling out the names of all his dead relations. The name at which the lock gives forth a sound is the name of the guilty party. If the patient's hair is too short to be tugged with effect, he knocks his forehead seven times against the forehead of a kinsman who has long hair. The hair of the latter is then tugged instead of that of the patient and answers to the test quite as well. When the blame has thus been satisfactorily laid at the door of the ghost who is responsible for the sickness, the physician, who, as in other countries, is often an old woman, remonstrates with him on his ill behaviour. "Go

¹⁸⁴ De Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande Isle Madagascar* (Paris, 1658), pp. 101 sq.

back,” says she, “to your grave; what do you come here for? The soul of the sick man does not choose to be called by you, and will remain yet a long time in its body.” Then she puts some ashes from the hearth in a winnowing fan and moulds out of them a small figure or image in human likeness. Seven times she moves the basket with the little ashen figure up and down before the patient, taking care not to obliterate the figure, while at the same time she says, “Sickness, settle in the head, belly, hands, etc.; then quickly pass into the corresponding part of the image,” whereupon the patient spits on the ashen image and pushes it from him with his left hand. Next the beldame lights a candle and goes to the grave of the person whose ghost is doing all the mischief. On the grave she throws the figure of ashes, calling out, “Ghost, plague the sick man no longer, and stay in your grave, that he may see you no more.” On her return she asks the anxious relations in the house, “Has his soul come back?” and they must answer quickly, “Yes, the soul of the sick man has come back.” Then she stands beside the patient, blows out the candle which had lighted the returning soul on its way, and strews yellow-coloured rice on the head of the convalescent, saying, “Cluck, soul! cluck, soul! cluck, soul!” Last of all she fastens on his right wrist a bracelet or ring which he must wear for three days.¹⁸⁵ In this case we see that the saving of the soul is combined with a vicarious sacrifice to the ghost, who receives a puppet on which

¹⁸⁵ E. L. M. Kühr, “Schetsen uit Borneo's Westerafdeeling,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897) pp. 61 sq.

to work his will instead of on the poor soul. In San Cristoval, one of the Melanesian islands, the vicarious sacrifice takes the form of a pig or a fish. A malignant ghost of the name of Tapia is supposed to have seized on the sick man's soul and tied it up to a banyan-tree. Accordingly a man who has influence with Tapia takes a pig or fish to the holy place where the ghost resides and offers it to him, saying, "This is for you to eat in place of that man; eat this, don't kill him." This satisfies the ghost; the soul is loosed from the tree and carried back to the sufferer, who naturally recovers.¹⁸⁶ A regular part of the stock-in-trade of a Dyak medicine-man is a crystal into which he gazes to detect the hiding-place of a lost soul or to identify the demon who is causing the sickness.¹⁸⁷ In one of the New Hebrides a ghost will sometimes impound the souls of trespassers within a magic fence in his garden, and will only consent to pull up the fence and let the souls out on receiving an unqualified apology and a satisfactory assurance that no personal disrespect was intended.¹⁸⁸ In Motlav, another Melanesian island, it is enough to call out the sick man's name in the sacred place where he rashly intruded, and then, when the cry of the kingfisher or some other bird is heard, to shout "Come back" to the soul of the sick man and run back with

¹⁸⁶ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, pp. 138 *sq.*

¹⁸⁷ Bishop Hose, "The Contents of a Dyak Medicine Chest," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 39, June 1903, p. 69.

¹⁸⁸ R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.* p. 208.

it to the house.¹⁸⁹

Buryat mode of recovering a lost soul from the nether world.

It is a comparatively easy matter to save a soul which is merely tied up to a tree or detained as a vagrant in a pound; but it is a far harder task to fetch it up from the nether world, if it once gets down there. When a Buryat shaman is called in to attend a patient, the first thing he does is to ascertain where exactly the soul of the invalid is; for it may have strayed, or been stolen, or be languishing in the prison of the gloomy Erlik, lord of the world below. If it is anywhere in the neighbourhood, the shaman soon catches and replaces it in the patient's body. If it is far away, he searches the wide world till he finds it, ransacking the deep woods, the lonely steppes, and the bottom of the sea, not to be thrown off the scent even though the cunning soul runs to the sheep-walks in the hope that its footprints will be lost among the tracks of the sheep. But when the whole world has been searched in vain for the errant soul, the shaman knows that there is nothing for it but to go down to hell and seek the lost one among the spirits in prison. At the stern call of duty he does not flinch, though he knows that the journey is toilsome, and that the travelling expenses, which are naturally defrayed by the patient, are very heavy. Sometimes the lord of the infernal regions will only agree to release the soul on condition of receiving another in

¹⁸⁹ R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.* pp. 146 *sq.*

its stead, and that one the soul of the sick man's dearest friend. If the patient consents to the substitution, the shaman turns himself into a hawk, pounces upon the soul of the friend as it soars from his slumbering body in the form of a lark, and hands over the fluttering, struggling thing to the grim warden of the dead, who thereupon sets the soul of the sick man at liberty. So the sick man recovers and his friend dies.¹⁹⁰

American Indian modes of recovering a lost soul from the land of the dead.

When a shaman declares that the soul of a sick Thompson Indian has been carried off by the dead, the good physician, who is the shaman himself, puts on a conical mask and sets off in pursuit. He now acts as if on a journey, jumping rivers and such like obstacles, searching, talking, and sometimes engaging in a tussle for the possession of the soul. His first step is to repair to the old trail by which the souls of heathen Thompsons went to the spirit-land; for nowadays the souls of Christian Thompsons travel by a new road. If he fails to find the tracks of the lost soul there, he searches all the graveyards, one after the other, and almost always discovers it in one of them. Sometimes he succeeds in heading off the departing soul by taking a short cut to the other world. A shaman can only stay a short time there. So as soon as he lays hands on the soul he is after, he bolts with it. The other souls give chase, but he stamps with his foot, on

¹⁹⁰ V. M. Mikhailovskii, "Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895) pp. 69 sq.

which he wears a rattle made of deer's hoofs. At the rattle of the hoofs the ghosts retreat and he hurries on. A bolder shaman will sometimes ask the ghosts for the soul, and if they refuse to give it, he will wrest it from them. They attack him, but he clubs them and brings away the soul by force. When he comes back to the world, he takes off his mask and shews his club all bloody. Then the people know he had a desperate struggle. If he foresees that the harrowing of hell is likely to prove a tough job, he increases the number of wooden pins in his mask. The rescued soul is placed by him on the patient's head and so returned to his body.¹⁹¹ Among the Twana Indians of Washington State the descent of the medicine-men into the nether world to rescue lost souls is represented in pantomime before the eyes of the spectators, who include women and children as well as men. The surface of the ground is often broken to facilitate the descent of the rescue party. When the adventurous band is supposed to have reached the bottom, they journey along, cross at least one stream, and travel till they come to the abode of the spirits. These they surprise, and after a desperate struggle, sustained with great ardour and a prodigious noise, they succeed in rescuing the poor souls, and so, wrapping them up in cloth, they make the best of their way back to the upper world and restore the recovered souls to their owners, who have been seen to cry heartily for joy at

¹⁹¹ J. Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. i. part iv. (April 1900) pp. 363 sq.

receiving them back.¹⁹²

Abduction of souls by demons in Annam, Cochin-China, and China.

Often the abduction of a man's soul is set down to demons. The Annamites believe that when a man meets a demon and speaks to him, the demon inhales the man's breath and soul.¹⁹³ The souls of the Bahnars of eastern Cochin-China are apt to be carried off by evil spirits, and the modes of recovering them are various. If a man suffers from a colic, the sorcerer may say that in planting sugar-cane, maize or what-not, he has pierced the stomach of a certain god who lives like a mole in the ground, and that the injured deity has punished him by abstracting his soul and burying it under a plant. Hence the cure for the colic is to pull up the plant and water the hole with millet wine and the blood of a fowl, a goat, or a pig. Again, if a child falls ill in the forest or the fields, it is because some devil has made off with its soul. To retrieve this spiritual loss the sorcerer constructs an apparatus which comprises an egg-shell in an egg-holder, a little waxen image of the sick child, and a small bamboo full of millet wine. This apparatus he sets up at a cross-road, praying the devil to drink the wine and surrender the stolen soul by depositing it in the egg-shell. Then he returns to the house, and putting a

¹⁹² Rev. Myron Eels, "The Twana, Chemakum, and Klallam Indians of Washington Territory," *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1887*, pt. i. pp. 677 sq.

¹⁹³ A. Landes, "Contes et légendes annamites," No. 76 in *Cochinchine Française: excursions et reconnaissances*, No. 23 (Saigon, 1885), p. 80.

little cotton to the child's head restores the soul to its owner. Sometimes the sorcerer lays a trap for the thievish demon, the bait consisting of the liver of a pig or a fowl and the blood-smearred handle of a little mattock. At nightfall he sets the trap at a cross-road and lies in wait hard by. While the devil is licking the blood and munching the liver, the artful sorcerer pounces out on him, and after a severe struggle wrests the soul from his clutches, returning to the village victorious, but breathless and bleeding from his terrific encounter with the enemy of souls.¹⁹⁴ Fits and convulsions are generally set down by the Chinese to the agency of certain mischievous spirits who love to draw men's souls out of their bodies. At Amoy the spirits who serve babies and children in this way rejoice in the high-sounding titles of "celestial agencies bestriding galloping horses" and "literary graduates residing halfway up in the sky." When an infant is writhing in convulsions, the frightened mother hastens to the roof of the house, and, waving about a bamboo pole to which one of the child's garments is attached, cries out several times, "My child So-and-so, come back, return home!" Meantime, another inmate of the house bangs away at a gong in the hope of attracting the attention of the strayed soul, which is supposed to recognise the familiar garment and to slip into it. The garment containing the soul is then placed on or beside the child, and if the child does

¹⁹⁴ Guerlach, "Chez les sauvages Ba-hnars," *Missions Catholiques*, xvi. (1884) p. 436, xix. (1887) p. 453, xxvi. (1894) pp. 142 sq.

not die recovery is sure to follow sooner or later.¹⁹⁵ Similarly we saw that some Indians catch a man's lost soul in his boots and restore it to his body by putting his feet into them.¹⁹⁶

Abduction of souls by demons in the East Indies.

If Galelareese mariners are sailing past certain rocks or come to a river where they never were before, they must wash their faces, for otherwise the spirits of the rocks or the river would snatch away their souls.¹⁹⁷ When a Dyak is about to leave a forest through which he has been walking alone, he never forgets to ask the demons to give him back his soul, for it may be that some forest-devil has carried it off. For the abduction of a soul may take place without its owner being aware of his loss, and it may happen either while he is awake or asleep.¹⁹⁸ The Papuans of Geelvink Bay in New Guinea are apt to think that the mists which sometimes hang about the tops of tall trees in their tropical forests envelop a spirit or god called Narbrooi, who draws away the breath or soul of those whom he loves, thus causing them to languish and die. Accordingly, when a man lies sick, a friend or relation will go to one of these mist-capped trees

¹⁹⁵ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, i. 243 sq.

¹⁹⁶ See above, p. 45.

¹⁹⁷ M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1895) p. 509.

¹⁹⁸ M. T. H. Perelaer, *Ethnographische Beschrijving der Dajaks* (Zalt-Bommel, 1870), pp. 26 sq.

and endeavour to recover the lost soul. At the foot of the tree he makes a peculiar sound to attract the attention of the spirit, and lights a cigar. In its curling smoke his fancy discerns the fair and youthful form of Narbrooi himself, who, decked with flowers, appears and informs the anxious enquirer whether the soul of his sick friend is with him or not. If it is, the man asks, "Has he done any wrong?" "Oh no!" the spirit answers, "I love him, and therefore I have taken him to myself." So the man lays down an offering at the foot of the tree, and goes home with the soul of the sufferer in a straw bag. Arrived at the house, he empties the bag with its precious contents over the sick man's head, rubs his arms and hands with ginger-root, which he had first chewed small, and then ties a bandage round one of the patient's wrists. If the bandage bursts, it is a sign that Narbrooi has repented of his bargain, and is drawing away the sufferer once more to himself.¹⁹⁹

Abduction of souls by demons in the Moluccas.

In the Moluccas when a man is unwell it is thought that some devil has carried away his soul to the tree, mountain, or hill where

¹⁹⁹ "Eenige bijzonderheden betreffende de Papoeas van de Geelvinksbaai van Nieuw-Guinea," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Neêrlandsch-Indië*, ii. (1854) pp. 375 *sq.* It is especially the souls of children that the spirit loves to take to himself. See J. L. van Hasselt, "Die Papuastämme an der Geelvinkbai," *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, ix. (1891) p. 103; compare *ib.* iv. (1886) pp. 118 *sq.* The mists seen to hang about tree-tops are due to the power of trees to condense vapour, as to which see Gilbert White, *Natural History of Selborne*, part ii. letter 29.

he (the devil) resides. A sorcerer having pointed out the devil's abode, the friends of the patient carry thither cooked rice, fruit, fish, raw eggs, a hen, a chicken, a silken robe, gold, armlets, and so forth. Having set out the food in order they pray, saying: "We come to offer to you, O devil, this offering of food, clothes, gold, and so on; take it and release the soul of the patient for whom we pray. Let it return to his body, and he who now is sick shall be made whole." Then they eat a little and let the hen loose as a ransom for the soul of the patient; also they put down the raw eggs; but the silken robe, the gold, and the armlets they take home with them. As soon as they are come to the house they place a flat bowl containing the offerings which have been brought back at the sick man's head, and say to him: "Now is your soul released, and you shall fare well and live to grey hairs on the earth."²⁰⁰ A more modern account from the same region describes how the friend of the patient, after depositing his offerings on the spot where the missing soul is supposed to be, calls out thrice the name of the sick person, adding, "Come with me, come with me." Then he returns, making a motion with a cloth as if he had caught the soul in it. He must not look to right or left or speak a word to any one he meets, but must go straight to the patient's house. At the door he stands, and calling out the sick person's name, asks whether he is returned. Being answered from within that he is returned, he enters and lays the cloth in which he has caught the soul on the patient's throat, saying, "Now you

²⁰⁰ Fr. Valentyn, *Oud- en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, iii. 13 sq.

are returned to the house.” Sometimes a substitute is provided; a doll, dressed up in gay clothing and tinsel, is offered to the demon in exchange for the patient's soul, with these words, “Give us back the ugly one which you have taken away and receive this pretty one instead.”²⁰¹

Abduction of souls by demons in Celebes and Siberia.

Among the Alfoors or Toradjas of Poso, in Central Celebes, a wooden puppet is offered to the demon as a substitute for the soul which he has abstracted, and the patient must touch the puppet in order to identify himself with it. The effigy is then hung on a bamboo pole, which is planted at the place of sacrifice outside of the house. Here too are deposited offerings of rice, an egg, a little wood (which is afterwards kindled), a sherd of a broken cooking-pot, and so forth. A long rattan extends from the place of sacrifice to the sufferer, who grasps one end of it firmly, for along it his lost soul will return when the devil has kindly released it. All being ready, the priestess informs the demon that he has come to the wrong place, and that there are no doubt much better quarters where he could reside. Then the father of the patient, standing beside the offerings, takes up his parable as follows: “O demon, we forgot to sacrifice to you. You have visited us with this sickness; will you now go away from us to

²⁰¹ Van Schmidt, “Aanteekeningen nopens de zeden, gewoonten en gebruiken, benevens de vooroordeelen en bijgelovigheden der bevolking van de eilanden Saparoea, Haroekoe, Noessa Laut, en van een gedeelte van de zuidkust van Ceram,” in *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indië*, 1843, dl. ii. 511 *sqq.*

some other place? We have made ready provisions for you on the journey. See, here is a cooking-pot, here are rice, fire, and a fowl. O demon, go away from us.” With that the priestess strews rice towards the bamboo-pole to lure back the wandering soul; and the fowl promised to the devil is thrown in the same direction, but is instantly jerked back again by a string which, in a spirit of intelligent economy, has been previously attached to its leg. The demon is now supposed to accept the puppet, which hangs from the pole, and to release the soul, which, sliding down the pole and along the rattan, returns to its proper owner. And lest the evil spirit should repent of the barter which has just been effected, all communication with him is broken off by cutting down the pole.²⁰² Similarly the Mongols make up a horse of birch-bark and a doll, and invite the demon to take the doll instead of the patient and to ride away on the horse.²⁰³ A Yakut shaman, rigged out in his professional costume, with his drum in his hand, will

²⁰² A. C. Kruijt, “Een en ander aangaande het geestelijk en maatschappelijk leven van den Poso-Alfoer,” *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xxxix. (1895) pp. 5-8.

²⁰³ A. Bastian, *Die Seele und ihre Erscheinungswesen in der Ethnographie* (Berlin, 1868), pp. 36 sq.; J. G. Gmelin, *Reise durch Sibirien*, ii. 359 sq. This mode of curing sickness, by inducing the demon to swap the soul of the patient for an effigy, is practised also by the Dyaks and by some tribes on the northern coast of New Guinea. See H. Ling Roth, “Low’s Natives of Borneo,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) p. 117; E. L. M. Kühr, “Schetsen uit Borneo’s Westerafdeeling,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897) pp. 62 sq.; F. S. A. de Clercq, “De West- en Noordkust van Nederlandsch Nieuw-Guinea,” *Tijdschrift van het kon. Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893) pp. 633 sq.

boldly descend into the lower world and haggle with the demon who has carried off a sick man's soul. Not uncommonly the demon proves amenable to reason, and in consideration of the narrow circumstances of the patient's family will accept a more moderate ransom than he at first demanded. For instance, he may be brought to put up with the skin of an Arctic hare or Arctic fox instead of a foal or a steer. The bargain being struck, the shaman hurries back to the sufferer's bedside, from which to the merely carnal eye he has never stirred, and informs the anxious relatives of the success of his mission. They in turn gladly hasten to provide the ransom.²⁰⁴

Souls rescued from demons at a house-warming in Minahassa.

Demons are especially feared by persons who have just entered a new house. Hence at a house-warming among the Alfoors of Minahassa in Celebes the priest performs a ceremony for the purpose of restoring their souls to the inmates. He hangs up a bag at the place of sacrifice and then goes through a list of the gods. There are so many of them that this takes him the whole night through without stopping. In the morning he offers the gods an egg and some rice. By this time the souls of the household are supposed to be gathered in the bag. So the priest takes the bag, and holding it on the head of the master of the house, says, "Here

²⁰⁴ V. Prikloński, "Todtengebräuche der Jakuten," *Globus*, lix. (1891) pp. 81 sq. Compare *id.*, "Über das Schamenthum bei den Jakuten," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 218 sq.

you have your soul; go (soul) to-morrow away again.” He then does the same, saying the same words, to the housewife and all the other members of the family.²⁰⁵ Amongst the same Alfoors one way of recovering a sick man's soul is to let down a bowl by a belt out of a window and fish for the soul till it is caught in the bowl and hauled up.²⁰⁶ And among the same people, when a priest is bringing back a sick man's soul which he has caught in a cloth, he is preceded by a girl holding the large leaf of a certain palm over his head as an umbrella to keep him and the soul from getting wet, in case it should rain; and he is followed by a man brandishing a sword to deter other souls from any attempt at rescuing the captured spirit.²⁰⁷

Souls carried off by the sun and other gods.

In Nias, when a man dreams that a pig is fastened under a neighbour's house, it is a sign that some one in that house will die. They think that the sun-god is drawing away the shadows or souls of that household from this world of shadows to his own bright world of radiant light, and a ceremony must needs be performed to win back these passing souls to earth. Accordingly, while it is

²⁰⁵ P. N. Wilken, “Bijdragen tot de kennis van de zeden en gewoonten der Alfoeren in de Minahassa,” *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, vii. (1863) pp. 146 *sq.* Why the priest, after restoring the soul, tells it to go away again, is not clear.

²⁰⁶ J. G. F. Riedel “De Minahasa in 1825,” *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xviii. 523.

²⁰⁷ N. Graafland, *De Minahassa* (Rotterdam, 1869), i. 327 *sq.*

still night, the priest begins to drum and pray, and he continues his orisons till about nine o'clock next morning. Then he takes his stand at an opening in the roof through which he can behold the sun, and spreading out a cloth waits till the beams of the morning sun fall full upon it. In the sunbeams he thinks the wandering souls have come back again; so he wraps the cloth up tightly, and quitting the opening in the roof, hastens with his precious charge to the expectant household. Before each member of it he stops, and dipping his fingers into the cloth takes out his or her soul and restores it to the owner by touching the person on the forehead.²⁰⁸ The Thompson Indians of British Columbia think that the setting sun draws the souls of men away towards it; hence they will never sleep with their heads to the sunset.²⁰⁹ The Samoans tell how two young wizards, passing a house where a chief lay very sick, saw a company of gods from the mountain sitting in the doorway. They were handing from one to another the soul of the dying chief. It was wrapt in a leaf, and had been passed from the gods inside the house to those sitting in the doorway. One of the gods handed the soul to one of the wizards, taking him for a god in the dark, for it was night. Then all the gods rose up and went away; but the wizard kept the chief's soul. In the morning some women went with a present of fine mats to fetch a famous physician.

²⁰⁸ Fr. Kramer, "Der Götzendienst der Niasser," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890) pp. 490 sq.

²⁰⁹ J. Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. i. part iv. (April 1900) p. 357.

The wizards were sitting on the shore as the women passed, and they said to the women, "Give us the mats and we will heal him." So they went to the chief's house. He was very ill, his jaw hung down, and his end seemed near. But the wizards undid the leaf and let the soul into him again, and forthwith he brightened up and lived.²¹⁰

Lost souls extracted from a fowl.

The Battas or Bataks of Sumatra believe that the soul of a living man may transmigrate into the body of an animal. Hence, for example, the doctor is sometimes desired to extract the patient's soul from the body of a fowl, in which it has been hidden away by an evil spirit.²¹¹

Lost souls brought back in a visible form. Soul lost by a fall and recovered from the earth.

Sometimes the lost soul is brought back in a visible shape. In Melanesia a woman, knowing that a neighbour was at the point of death, heard a rustling in her house, as of a moth fluttering, just at the moment when a noise of weeping and lamentation told her that the soul was flown. She caught the fluttering thing between her hands and ran with it, crying out that she had caught the soul. But though she opened her hands above the mouth of

²¹⁰ G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 142 *sq.*

²¹¹ J. B. Neumann, "Het Pane- en Bila-stroomgebied op het eiland Sumatra," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, dl. iii., Afdeeling, meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 2 (1886), p. 302.

the corpse, it did not revive.²¹² In Lepers' Island, one of the New Hebrides, for ten days after a birth the father is careful not to exert himself or the baby would suffer for it. If during this time he goes away to any distance, he will bring back with him on his return a little stone representing the infant's soul. Arrived at home he cries, "Come hither," and puts down the stone in the house. Then he waits till the child sneezes, at which he cries, "Here it is"; for now he knows that the little soul has not been lost after all.²¹³ The Salish or Flathead Indians of Oregon believe that a man's soul may be separated for a time from his body without causing death and without the man being aware of his loss. It is necessary, however, that the lost soul should be soon found and restored to its owner or he will die. The name of the man who has lost his soul is revealed in a dream to the medicine-man, who hastens to inform the sufferer of his loss. Generally a number of men have sustained a like loss at the same time; all their names are revealed to the medicine-man, and all employ him to recover their souls. The whole night long these soulless men go about the village from lodge to lodge, dancing and singing. Towards daybreak they go into a separate lodge, which is closed up so as to be totally dark. A small hole is then made in the roof, through which the medicine-man, with a bunch of feathers, brushes in the souls, in the shape of bits of bone and the like, which he

²¹² R. H. Codrington, "Religious Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, x. (1881) p. 281; *id.*, *The Melanesians*, p. 267.

²¹³ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 229

receives on a piece of matting. A fire is next kindled, by the light of which the medicine-man sorts out the souls. First he puts aside the souls of dead people, of which there are usually several; for if he were to give the soul of a dead person to a living man, the man would die instantly. Next he picks out the souls of all the persons present, and making them all to sit down before him, he takes the soul of each, in the shape of a splinter of bone, wood, or shell, and placing it on the owner's head, pats it with many prayers and contortions till it descends into the heart and so resumes its proper place.²¹⁴ In Amboyna the sorcerer, to recover a soul detained by demons, plucks a branch from a tree, and waving it to and fro as if to catch something, calls out the sick man's name. Returning he strikes the patient over the head and body with the branch, into which the lost soul is supposed to have passed, and from which it returns to the patient.²¹⁵ In the Babar Islands offerings for evil spirits are laid at the root of a

²¹⁴ Horatio Hale, *United States Exploring Expedition, Ethnography and Philology* (Philadelphia, 1846), pp. 208 sq. Compare Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (London, 1845), iv. 448 sq. Similar methods of recovering lost souls are practised by the Haidas, Nootkas, Shuswap, and other Indian tribes of British Columbia. See Fr. Boas, in *Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 58 sq. (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1889*); *id.* in *Sixth Report*, etc., pp. 30, 44, 59 sq., 94 (separate reprint of the *Report of the Brit. Assoc. for 1890*); *id.* in *Ninth Report*, etc., p. 462 (in *Report of the Brit. Assoc. for 1894*). Kwakiutl medicine-men exhibit captured souls in the shape of little balls of eagle down. See Fr. Boas, in *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895*, pp. 561, 575.

²¹⁵ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, pp. 77 sq.

great tree (*wokiorai*), from which a leaf is plucked and pressed on the patient's forehead and breast; the lost soul, which is in the leaf, is thus restored to its owner.²¹⁶ In some other islands of the same seas, when a man returns ill and speechless from the forest, it is inferred that the evil spirits which dwell in the great trees have caught and kept his soul. Offerings of food are therefore left under a tree and the soul is brought home in a piece of wax.²¹⁷ Amongst the Dyaks of Sarawak the priest conjures the lost soul into a cup, where it is seen by the uninitiated as a lock of hair, but by the initiated as a miniature human being. This the priest pokes back into the patient's body through an invisible hole in his skull.²¹⁸ In Nias the sick man's soul is restored to him in the shape of a firefly, visible only to the sorcerer, who catches it in a cloth and places it on the forehead of the patient.²¹⁹ Amongst the Indians of Santiago Tepehuacan, if a child has fallen from the arms of its bearer and an illness has resulted from the fall, the parents will take the child's shirt, stretch it out on the spot where the little one fell, and say, "Come, come, come back to

²¹⁶ J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* pp. 356 *sq.*

²¹⁷ J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* p. 376.

²¹⁸ Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*,² i. 189; H. Ling Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo*, i. 261. Sometimes the souls resemble cotton seeds (Spenser St. John, *l. c.*). Compare *id.* i. 183.

²¹⁹ Nieuwenhuisen en Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het Eiland Nias," *Verhandel. van het Batav. Genootsch. van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (Batavia, 1863) p. 116; H. von Rosenberg, *Der Malayische Archipel*, p. 174; E. Modigliani, *Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), p. 192.

the infant.” Then they bring back a little of the earth wrapped up in the shirt, and put the shirt on the child. They say that in this manner the spirit is replaced in the child's body and that he will recover.²²⁰ With this we may compare an Irish custom reported by Camden. When any one happens to fall, he springs up again, and turning round thrice to the right, digs the earth with a sword or knife, and takes up a turf, because they say the earth restores his shade to him. But if he falls sick within two or three days thereafter, a woman skilled in these matters is sent to the spot, and there says: “I call thee, So-and-so, from the East and West, from the South and North, from the groves, woods, rivers, marshes, fairies white, red, and black,” and so forth. After uttering certain short prayers, she returns home to the sick person, and whispering in his ear another prayer, along with a *Pater Noster*, puts some burning coals into a cup of clean water, and so decides whether the distemper has been inflicted by the fairies.²²¹ Here, though Camden is not very explicit, and he probably did not quite understand the custom he describes, it seems plain that the shade or soul of a man who has fallen is conceived as adhering to the ground where he fell. Accordingly he seeks to regain possession of it by digging up the earth; but if he fails to recover it, he sends a wise woman to the spot to win

²²⁰ “Lettre du curé de Santiago Tepehuacan à son évêque sur les mœurs et coutumes des Indiens soumis à ses soins,” *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), II^e Série, ii. (1834) p. 178.

²²¹ W. Camden, *Britannia* (London, 1607), p. 792. The passage has not always been understood by Camden's translators.

back his soul from the fairies who are detaining it.

Recovery of the soul in ancient Egypt.

The ancient Egyptians held that a dead man is not in a state to enter on the life hereafter until his soul has been found and restored to his mummified body. The vital spark had been commonly devoured by the malignant god Sit, who concealed his true form in the likeness of a horned beast, such as an ox or a gazelle. So the priests went in quest of the missing spirit, slaughtered the animal which had devoured it, and cutting open the carcase found the soul still undigested in its stomach. Afterwards the son of the deceased embraced the mummy or the image of his father in order to restore his soul to him. Formerly it was customary to place the skin of the slain beast on the dead man for the purpose of recruiting his strength with that of the animal.²²²

Souls stolen or detained by sorcerers in Fiji and Polynesia.

Again, souls may be extracted from their bodies or detained on their wanderings not only by ghosts and demons but also by men, especially by sorcerers. In Fiji, if a criminal refused to confess, the chief sent for a scarf with which “to catch away the soul of the rogue.” At the sight or even at the mention of the scarf the culprit generally made a clean breast. For if he did not, the

²²² A. Moret, *Le Rituel du culte divin journalier en Égypte* (Paris, 1902), pp. 32-35, 83 sq.

scarf would be waved over his head till his soul was caught in it, when it would be carefully folded up and nailed to the end of a chief's canoe; and for want of his soul the criminal would pine and die.²²³ The sorcerers of Danger Island used to set snares for souls. The snares were made of stout cinet, about fifteen to thirty feet long, with loops on either side of different sizes, to suit the different sizes of souls; for fat souls there were large loops, for thin souls there were small ones. When a man was sick against whom the sorcerers had a grudge, they set up these soul-snares near his house and watched for the flight of his soul. If in the shape of a bird or an insect it was caught in the snare the man would infallibly die.²²⁴ When a Polynesian mother desired that the child in her womb should grow up to be a great warrior or a great thief, she repaired to the temple of the war-god Oro or of the thief-god Hiro. There the priest obligingly caught the spirit of the god in a snare made of coco-nut fibre, and then infused it into the woman. When the child was born, the mother took it to the temple and dedicated it to the god with whose divine spirit the infant was already possessed.²²⁵ The Algonquin Indians

²²³ Th. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*² (London, 1860), i. 250.

²²⁴ W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, p. 171; *id.*, *Life in the Southern Isles*, pp. 181 *sqq.* Cinet, sinnet, or sennit is cordage made from the dried fibre of the coco-nut husk. Large quantities of it are used in Fiji. See Th. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*,² i. 69.

²²⁵ J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London, 1838), pp. 93, 466 *sq.* A traveller in Zombo-land found traps commonly set at the entrances of villages and huts for the purpose of catching the devil. See Rev. Th. Lewis,

also used nets to catch souls, but only as a measure of defence. They feared lest passing souls, which had just quitted the bodies of dying people, should enter their huts and carry off the souls of the inmates to deadland. So they spread nets about their houses to catch and entangle these ghostly intruders in the meshes.²²⁶

Detention of souls by sorcerers in Africa.

Among the Sereres of Senegambia, when a man wishes to revenge himself on his enemy he goes to the *Fitaure* (chief and priest in one), and prevails on him by presents to conjure the soul of his enemy into a large jar of red earthenware, which is then deposited under a consecrated tree. The man whose soul is shut up in the jar soon dies.²²⁷ Among the Baoules of the Ivory Coast it happened once that a chief's soul was extracted by the magic of an enemy, who succeeded in shutting it up in a box. To recover it, two men held a garment of the sick man, while a witch performed certain enchantments. After a time she declared that the soul was now in the garment, which was accordingly rolled up and hastily wrapped about the invalid for the purpose of restoring his spirit to him.²²⁸ Some of the Congo negroes think that enchanters can get possession of human souls, and enclosing them in tusks of ivory, sell them to the white man, who makes them work for him in his country under the sea. It is believed that very many of the

²²⁶ "The Ancient Kingdom of Kongo," *The Geographical Journal*, xix. (1902) p. 554.

²²⁷ *Relations des Jésuites*, 1639, p. 44 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

²²⁸ L. J. B. Bérenger-Féraud, *Les Peuplades de la Sénégambie* (Paris, 1879), p. 277.

²²⁸ Delafosse, in *L'Anthropologie*, xi. (1895) p. 558.

coast labourers are men thus obtained; so when these people go to trade they often look anxiously about for their dead relations. The man whose soul is thus sold into slavery will die “in due course, if not at the time.”²²⁹ In some parts of West Africa, indeed, wizards are continually setting traps to catch souls that wander from their bodies in sleep; and when they have caught one, they tie it up over the fire, and as it shrivels in the heat the owner sickens. This is done, not out of any grudge towards the sufferer, but purely as a matter of business. The wizard does not care whose soul he has captured, and will readily restore it to its owner if only he is paid for doing so. Some sorcerers keep regular asylums for strayed souls, and anybody who has lost or mislaid his own soul can always have another one from the asylum on payment of the usual fee. No blame whatever attaches to men who keep these private asylums or set traps for passing souls; it is their profession, and in the exercise of it they are actuated by no harsh or unkindly feelings. But there are also wretches who from pure spite or for the sake of lucre set and bait traps with the deliberate purpose of catching the soul of a particular man; and in the bottom of the pot, hidden by the bait, are knives and sharp hooks which tear and rend the poor soul, either killing it outright or mauling it so as to impair the health of its owner when it succeeds in escaping and returning to him. Miss Kingsley knew a Kruman who became very anxious about his soul, because for several nights he had smelt in his dreams the savoury smell of smoked

²²⁹ W. H. Bentley, *Life on the Congo* (London, 1887), p. 71.

crawfish seasoned with red pepper. Clearly some ill-wisher had set a trap baited with this dainty for his dream-soul, intending to do him grievous bodily, or rather spiritual, harm; and for the next few nights great pains were taken to keep his soul from straying abroad in his sleep. In the sweltering heat of the tropical night he lay sweating and snorting under a blanket, his nose and mouth tied up with a handkerchief to prevent the escape of his precious soul.²³⁰

Taking the souls of enemies first and their heads afterwards.

When Dyaks of the Upper Melawie are about to go out head-hunting they take the precaution of securing the souls of their enemies before they attempt to kill their bodies, calculating apparently that mere bodily death will soon follow the spiritual death, or capture, of the soul. With this intention they clear a small space in the underwood of the forest, and set up in the clearing one of those miniature houses in which it is customary to deposit the ashes of the dead. Food is placed in the little house, which, though raised on four posts, is connected with the ground by a tiny inverted ladder of the sort up which spirits are believed to swarm. When these preparations have been completed, the leader of the expedition comes and sits down a little way from the miniature house, and addressing the spirits of kinsmen who had the misfortune to be beheaded by their enemies, he says,

²³⁰ Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), pp. 461 sq.

“O ghosts of So-and-so, come speedily back to our village. We have rice in abundance. Our trees all bear ripe fruit. Our baskets are full to the brim. O ghosts, come swiftly back and forget not to bring your new friends and acquaintances with you.” But by the new friends and acquaintances of the ghosts he means the souls of the enemies against whom he is about to lead the expedition. Meantime the other warriors have hidden themselves close by behind trees and bushes, and are listening with all their ears. When the cry of an animal is heard in the forest, or a humming sound seems to issue from the little house, it is a sign that the ghosts of their friends have come, bringing with them the souls of their enemies, which are accordingly at their mercy. At that the lurking warriors leap forth from their ambush, and with brandished blades hew and slash at the souls of their foemen swarming unseen in the air. Taken completely by surprise, the panic-stricken souls flee in all directions, and are fain to hide under every leaf and stone on the ground. But even here their retreat is cut off. For now the leader of the expedition is hard at work, grubbing up with his hands every stone and leaf to right and left, and thrusting them with feverish haste into the basket, which he at once ties up securely. He now flatters himself that he has the souls of the enemy safe in his possession; and when in the course of the expedition the heads of the foe are severed from their bodies, he will pack them into the same basket in which their souls are already languishing in captivity.²³¹

²³¹ E. L. M. Kühr, in *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) p. 163; *id.*,

Injuries of various sorts done to captured souls by wizards.

In Hawaii there were sorcerers who caught souls of living people, shut them up in calabashes, and gave them to people to eat. By squeezing a captured soul in their hands they discovered the place where people had been secretly buried.²³² Amongst the Canadian Indians, when a wizard wished to kill a man, he sent out his familiar spirits, who brought him the victim's soul in the shape of a stone or the like. The wizard struck the soul with a sword or an axe till it bled profusely, and as it bled the man to whom it belonged fell ill and died.²³³ In Amboyna if a doctor is convinced that a patient's soul has been carried away by a demon beyond recovery, he seeks to supply its place with a soul abstracted from another man. For this purpose he goes by night to a house and asks, "Who's there?" If an inmate is incautious

"Schetsen uit Borneo's Westerafdeeling," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897) pp. 59 sq. Among the Haida Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands "every war-party must be accompanied by a shaman, whose duty it was to find a propitious time for making an attack, etc., but especially to war with and kill the souls of the enemy. Then the death of their natural bodies was certain." See J. R. Swanton, "Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida" (Leyden and New York, 1905), p. 40 (*Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. v. part i.). Some of the Dyaks of south-eastern Borneo perform a ceremony for the purpose of extracting the souls from the bodies of prisoners whom they are about to torture to death. See F. Grabowsky, "Der Tod, das Begräbnis, etc., bei den Dajaken," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) p. 199.

²³² A. Bastian, *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), i. 119.

²³³ *Relations des Jésuites*, 1637, p. 50 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

enough to answer, the doctor takes up from before the door a clod of earth, into which the soul of the person who replied is thought to have passed. This clod the doctor lays under the sick man's pillow, and performs certain ceremonies by which the stolen soul is conveyed into the patient's body. Then as he goes home the doctor fires two shots to frighten the soul from returning to its proper owner.²³⁴ A Karen wizard will catch the wandering soul of a sleeper and transfer it to the body of a dead man. The latter, therefore, comes to life as the former dies. But the friends of the sleeper in turn engage a wizard to steal the soul of another sleeper, who dies as the first sleeper comes to life. In this way an indefinite succession of deaths and resurrections is supposed to take place.²³⁵

Abduction of human souls by Malay wizards.

Nowhere perhaps is the art of abducting human souls more carefully cultivated or carried to higher perfection than in the Malay Peninsula. Here the methods by which the wizard works his will are various, and so too are his motives. Sometimes he desires to destroy an enemy, sometimes to win the love of a cold or bashful beauty. Some of the charms operate entirely without contact; in others, the receptacle into which the soul is to be lured has formed part of, or at least touched, the person of the

²³⁴ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (the Hague, 1886), pp. 78 sq.

²³⁵ E. B. Cross, "On the Karens," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, iv. (1854) p. 307.

victim. Thus, to take an instance of the latter sort of charm, the following are the directions given for securing the soul of one whom you wish to render distraught. Take soil from the middle of his footprint; wrap it up in pieces of red, black, and yellow cloth, taking care to keep the yellow outside; and hang it from the centre of your mosquito curtain with parti-coloured thread. It will then become your victim's soul. To complete the transubstantiation, however, it is needful to switch the packet with a birch composed of seven leaf-ribs from a "green" coco-nut. Do this seven times at sunset, at midnight, and at sunrise, saying, "It is not earth that I switch, but the heart of So-and-so." Then bury it in the middle of a path where your victim is sure to step over it, and he will unquestionably become distraught.²³⁶ Another way is to scrape the wood of the floor where your intended victim has been sitting, mix the scrapings with earth from his or her footprint, and knead the whole with wax from a deserted bees' comb into a likeness of him or her. Then fumigate the figure with incense and beckon to the soul every night for three nights successively by waving a cloth, while you recite the appropriate spell.²³⁷ In the following cases the charm takes effect without any contact whatever, whether direct or indirect, with the victim. When the moon, just risen, looks red above the eastern horizon, go out, and standing in the moonlight, with the big toe of your right foot on the big toe of your left, make a speaking-trumpet of your right

²³⁶ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), pp. 568 sq.

²³⁷ W. W. Skeat, *op. cit.* pp. 569 sq.

hand and recite through it the following words:

“OM. I loose my shaft, I loose it and the moon clouds over,
I loose it, and the sun is extinguished.
I loose it, and the stars burn dim.
But it is not the sun, moon, and stars that I shoot at,
It is the stalk of the heart of that child of the congregation,
So-and-so.

Cluck! cluck! soul of So-and-so, come and walk with me,
Come and sit with me,
Come and sleep and share my pillow.
Cluck! cluck! soul.”

Repeat this thrice and after every repetition blow through your hollow fist.²³⁸ Or you may catch the soul in your turban, thus. Go out on the night of the full moon and the two succeeding nights; sit down on an ant-hill facing the moon, burn incense, and recite the following incantation:

“I bring you a betel leaf to chew,
Dab the lime on to it, Prince Ferocious,
For Somebody, Prince Distraction's daughter, to chew.
Somebody at sunrise be distraught for love of me,
Somebody at sunset be distraught for love of me.
As you remember your parents, remember me;
As you remember your house and house-ladder, remember

²³⁸ W. W. Skeat, *op. cit.* pp. 574 sq.

me.

When thunder rumbles, remember me;

When wind whistles, remember me;

When the heavens rain, remember me;

When cocks crow, remember me;

When the dial-bird tells its tales, remember me;

When you look up at the sun, remember me;

When you look up at the moon, remember me,

For in that self-same moon I am there.

Cluck! cluck! soul of Somebody come hither to me.

I do not mean to let you have my soul,

Let your soul come hither to mine.”

Now wave the end of your turban towards the moon seven times each night. Go home and put it under your pillow, and if you want to wear it in the daytime, burn incense and say, “It is not a turban that I carry in my girdle, but the soul of Somebody.”²³⁹

Athenian curse accompanied by the shaking of red cloths.

Perhaps the magical ceremonies just described may help to explain a curious rite, of immemorial antiquity, which was performed on a very solemn occasion at Athens. On the eve of the sailing of the fleet for Syracuse, when all hearts beat high with hope, and visions of empire dazzled all eyes, consternation suddenly fell on the people one May morning when they rose and found that most of the images of Hermes in the city had been

²³⁹ W. W. Skeat, *op. cit.* pp. 576 sq.

mysteriously mutilated in the night. The impious perpetrators of the sacrilege were unknown, but whoever they were, the priests and priestesses solemnly cursed them according to the ancient ritual, standing with their faces to the west and shaking red cloths up and down.²⁴⁰ Perhaps in these cloths they were catching the souls of those at whom their curses were levelled, just as we have seen that Fijian chiefs used to catch the souls of criminals in scarves and nail them to canoes.²⁴¹

Extracting a patient's soul from the stomach of his doctor.

The Indians of the Nass River, in British Columbia, are impressed with a belief that a physician may swallow his patient's soul by mistake. A doctor who is believed to have done so is made by the other members of the faculty to stand over the patient, while one of them thrusts his fingers down the doctor's throat, another kneads him in the stomach with his knuckles, and a third slaps him on the back. If the soul is not in him after all, and if the same process has been repeated upon all the medical men without success, it is concluded that the soul must be in the head-doctor's box. A party of doctors, therefore, waits upon him at his house and requests him to produce his box. When he has done so and arranged its contents on a new mat, they take the votary of

²⁴⁰ *Lysias, Or. vi. 51*, p. 51 ed. C. Scheibe. The passage was pointed out to me by my friend Mr. W. Wyse. As to the mutilation of the Hermae, see *Thucydides, vi. 27-29, 60 sq.*; *Andocides, Or. i. 37 sqq.*; *Plutarch, Alcibiades*, 18.

²⁴¹ Above, p. [69](#).

Aesculapius and hold him up by the heels with his head in a hole in the floor. In this position they wash his head, and “any water remaining from the ablution is taken and poured upon the sick man's head.”²⁴² Among the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia it is forbidden to pass behind the back of a shaman while he is eating, lest the shaman should inadvertently swallow the soul of the passer-by. When that happens, both the shaman and the person whose soul he has swallowed fall down in a swoon. Blood flows from the shaman's mouth, because the soul is too large for him and is tearing his inside. Then the clan of the person whose soul is doing this mischief must assemble and sing the song of the shaman. In time the suffering sorcerer vomits out the soul, which he exhibits in the shape of a small bloody ball in the open palms of his hands. He restores it to its owner, who is lying prostrate on a mat, by throwing it at him and then blowing on his head. The man whose soul was swallowed has very naturally to pay for the damage he did to the shaman as well as for his own cure.²⁴³

²⁴² J. B. McCullagh, in *The Church Missionary Gleaner*, xiv. No. 164 (August 1887), p. 91. The same account is copied from the “North Star” (Sitka, Alaska, December 1888) in *Journal of American Folk-lore*, ii. (1889) pp. 74 sq. Mr. McCullagh's account (which is closely followed in the text) of the latter part of the custom is not quite clear. It would seem that failing to find the soul in the head-doctor's box it occurs to them that he may have swallowed it, as the other doctors were at first supposed to have done. With a view of testing this hypothesis they hold him up by the heels to empty out the soul; and as the water with which his head is washed may possibly contain the missing soul, it is poured on the patient's head to restore the soul to him. We have already seen that the recovered soul is often conveyed into the sick person's head.

²⁴³ Fr. Boas in *Eleventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 571

(*Report of the British Association for 1896*). For other examples of the recapture or recovery of lost, stolen, and strayed souls, in addition to those which have been cited in the preceding pages, see J. N. Vosmaer, *Korte Beschrijving van het Zuid-oostelijk Schiereiland van Celebes*, pp. 119-123 (this work, of which I possess a copy, forms part of a Dutch journal which I have not identified; it is dated Batavia, 1835); J. G. F. Riedel, "De Topantunuasu of oorspronkelijke volksstammen van Central Selebes," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxv. (1886) p. 93; J. B. Neumann, "Het Pane- en Bilastroom-gebeid," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, dl. iii., Afdeeling, meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 2 (1886), pp. 300 sq.; J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bei den Minangkabauer," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxix. (1890) pp. 51 sq.; H. Ris, "De onderafdeeling Klein Mandailing Oeloe en Pahantan," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvi. (1896) p. 529; C. Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjéhers* (Batavia and Leyden, 1893-4), i. 426 sq.; W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, pp. 49-51, 452-455, 570 sqq.; *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895) pp. 128, 287; Chimkievitch, "Chez les Bouriates de l'Amoor," *Tour du monde*, N.S. iii. (1897) pp. 622 sq.; Father Ambrosoli, "Notice sur l'île de Rook," *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxvii. (1855) p. 364; A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, ii. 388, iii. 236; *id.*, *Völkerstämme am Brahmaputra*, p. 23; *id.*, "Hügelstämme Assam's," *Verhandlungen der Berlin. Gesell. für Anthropol., Ethnol. und Urgeschichte*, 1881, p. 156; Shway Yoe, *The Burman*, i. 283 sq., ii. 101 sq.; G. M. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, p. 214; J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, pp. 110 sq. (ed. Paxton Hood); T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*,² i. 242; E. B. Cross, "On the Karens," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, iv. (1854) pp. 309 sq.; A. W. Howitt, "On some Australian Beliefs," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiii. (1884) pp. 187 sq.; *id.*, "On Australian Medicine Men," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* xvi. (1887) p. 41; E. P. Houghton, "On the Land Dayaks of Upper Sarawak," *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London*, iii. (1870) pp. 196 sq.; L. Dahle, "Sikidy and Vintana," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Annual*, xi. (1887) pp. 320 sq.; C. Leemius, *De Lapponibus Finmarchiae eorumque lingua, vita et religione pristina commentatio* (Copenhagen, 1767), pp. 416 sq.; A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manilla, 1905), pp. 199 sq.; C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 185 sq. My friend W. Robertson Smith suggested to me that the practice of hunting souls, which is denounced in Ezekiel xiii. 17 sqq., may have been akin to those described in the text.

§ 3. The Soul as a Shadow and a Reflection

A man's soul conceived as his shadow, so that to injure the shadow is to injure the man.

But the spiritual dangers I have enumerated are not the only ones which beset the savage. Often he regards his shadow or reflection as his soul, or at all events as a vital part of himself, and as such it is necessarily a source of danger to him. For if it is trampled upon, struck, or stabbed, he will feel the injury as if it were done to his person; and if it is detached from him entirely (as he believes that it may be) he will die. In the island of Wetar there are magicians who can make a man ill by stabbing his shadow with a pike or hacking it with a sword.²⁴⁴ After Sankara had destroyed the Buddhists in India, it is said that he journeyed to Nepaul, where he had some difference of opinion with the Grand Lama. To prove his supernatural powers, he soared into the air. But as he mounted up, the Grand Lama, perceiving his shadow swaying and wavering on the ground, struck his knife into it and down fell Sankara and broke his neck.²⁴⁵ In the Babar Islands the demons get power over a man's soul by holding fast his shadow, or by striking and wounding

²⁴⁴ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 440.

²⁴⁵ A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien*, v. 455.

it.²⁴⁶ Among the Tolindoos of central Celebes to tread on a man's shadow is an offence, because it is supposed to make the owner sick;²⁴⁷ and for the same reason the Toboongkoos of that region forbid their children to play with their shadows.²⁴⁸ The Ottawa Indians thought they could kill a man by making certain figures on his shadow.²⁴⁹ The Baganda of central Africa regarded a man's shadow as his ghost; hence they used to kill or injure their enemies by stabbing or treading on their shadows.²⁵⁰ Among the Bavili of West Africa it used to be considered a crime to trample on or even to cross the shadow of another, especially if the shadow were that of a married woman.²⁵¹ Some Caffres are very unwilling to let anybody stand on their shadow, believing that they can be influenced for evil through it.²⁵² They think that "a sick man's shadow dwindles in intensity when he is about to die; for it has such an intimate relation to the man

²⁴⁶ J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* p. 340.

²⁴⁷ N. Adriani en A. C. Kruijt, "Van Posso naar Parigi, Sigi en Lindoe," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlii. (1898) p. 511; compare A. C. Kruijt, *ib.* xliv. (1900) p. 247.

²⁴⁸ A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische aantekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *op. cit.* xliv. (1900) p. 226.

²⁴⁹ *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, iv. (1830) p. 481.

²⁵⁰ Rev. J. Roscoe, in a letter to me dated Mengo, Uganda, May 26, 1904.

²⁵¹ R. E. Dennett, "Bavili Notes," *Folk-lore*, xvi. (1905) p. 372; *id.*, *At the Back of the Black Man's Mind* (London, 1906), p. 79.

²⁵² Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, p. 84.

that it suffers with him.”²⁵³ The Ja-Luo tribes of Kavirondo, to the east of Lake Victoria Nyanza, tell of the ancestor of all men, Apodtho by name, who descended to earth from above, bringing with him cattle, fowls, and seeds. When he was old, the Ja-Luo plotted to kill him, but for a long time they did not dare to attack him. At last, hearing that he was sick, they thought their chance had come, and sent a girl to see how he was. She took a small horn, used for cupping blood, in her hand, and while she talked with him she placed the cupping-horn on his shadow. To her surprise it drew blood. So she returned and told her friends that, if they wished to kill Apodtho, they must not touch his body, but spear his shadow. They did so, and he died and turned into a rock, which has ever since possessed the property of sharpening spears unusually well.²⁵⁴ In a Chinese book we read of a sage who examined human shadows by lamplight in order to discover the fate of their owners. “A man's shadow,” he said, “ought to be deep, for, if so, he will attain honourable positions, and a great age. Shadows are averse to being reflected in water, or in wells, or in washing-basins. It was on such grounds that the ancients avoided shadows, and that in old days *Khü-seu*, *twan-hu*, and other shadow-treading vermin caused injury by hitting the shadows of men. In recent times there have been men versed in the art of cauterizing the shadows of their patients.”

²⁵³ Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood*, p. 68.

²⁵⁴ C. W. Hobley, “British East Africa,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiii. (1903) pp. 327 sq.

Another sapient Chinese writer observes: "I have heard that, if the shadow of a bird is hit with a piece of wood that was struck by thunder, the bird falls to the ground immediately. I never tried it, but on account of the matter stated above I consider the thing certain."²⁵⁵ The natives of Nias tremble at the sight of a rainbow, because they think it is a net spread by a powerful spirit to catch their shadows.²⁵⁶

Danger to a person of letting his shadow fall on certain things. Animals and trees also may be injured through their shadows.

In the Banks Islands, Melanesia, there are certain stones of a remarkably long shape which go by the name of *tamate gangan* or "eating ghosts," because certain powerful and dangerous ghosts are believed to lodge in them. If a man's shadow falls on one of these stones, the ghost will draw his soul out from him, so that he will die. Such stones, therefore, are set in a house to guard it; and a messenger sent to a house by the absent owner will call out the name of the sender, lest the watchful ghost in the stone should fancy that he came with evil intent and should do him a mischief.²⁵⁷ In Florida, one of the Solomon Islands, there are places sacred to ghosts, some in the village, some in the gardens, and some in the bush. No man would pass one of these places when the sun was so low as to cast his shadow into it, for then

²⁵⁵ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iv. 84 sq.

²⁵⁶ E. Modigliani, *Viaggio a Nias*, p. 620, compare p. 624.

²⁵⁷ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 184.

the ghost would draw it from him.²⁵⁸ The Indian tribes of the Lower Fraser River believe that man has four souls, of which the shadow is one, though not the principal, and that sickness is caused by the absence of one of the souls. Hence no one will let his shadow fall on a sick shaman, lest the latter should purloin it to replace his own lost soul.²⁵⁹ At a funeral in China, when the lid is about to be placed on the coffin, most of the bystanders, with the exception of the nearest kin, retire a few steps or even retreat to another room, for a person's health is believed to be endangered by allowing his shadow to be enclosed in a coffin. And when the coffin is about to be lowered into the grave most of the spectators recoil to a little distance lest their shadows should fall into the grave and harm should thus be done to their persons. The geomancer and his assistants stand on the side of the grave which is turned away from the sun; and the grave-diggers and coffin-bearers attach their shadows firmly to their persons by tying a strip of cloth tightly round their waists.²⁶⁰ In the Nicobar Islands burial usually takes place at sundown, before midnight, or at early dawn. In no case can an interment be carried out at noon or within an hour of it, lest the shadows of the bearers who lower the body into the earth, or of the mourners taking their last look at the shrouded figure, should fall into the grave; for

²⁵⁸ R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.* p. 176.

²⁵⁹ Fr. Boas, in *Ninth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 461 sq. (*Report of the British Association for 1894*).

²⁶⁰ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, i. 94, 210 sq.

that would cause them to be sick or die. And when the dead has been laid in his last home, but before the earth is shovelled in upon him, the leaves of a certain jungle tree are waved over the grave, and a lighted torch is brandished inside it, to disperse any souls of the sorrowing bystanders that may be lingering with their departed friend in his narrow bed. Then the signal is given, and the earth or sand is rapidly shovelled in by a party of young men who have been standing in readiness to perform the duty.²⁶¹ When the Malays are building a house, and the central post is being set up, the greatest precautions are taken to prevent the shadow of any of the workers from falling either on the post or on the hole dug to receive it; for otherwise they think that sickness and trouble will be sure to follow.²⁶² When members of some Victorian tribes were performing magical ceremonies for the purpose of bringing disease and misfortune on their enemies, they took care not to let their shadows fall on the object by which the evil influence was supposed to be wafted to the foe.²⁶³ In Darfur people think that they can do an enemy to death by burying a certain root in the earth on the spot where the shadow of his head happens to fall. The man whose shadow is thus tampered with loses consciousness at once and will die if the proper antidote be not administered. In like manner they can

²⁶¹ E. H. Man, "Notes on the Nicobarese," *Indian Antiquary*, xxviii. (1899) pp. 257-259. Compare Sir R. C. Temple, in *Census of India, 1901*, iii. 209.

²⁶² W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 143.

²⁶³ J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 54.

paralyse any limb, as a hand or leg, by planting a particular root in the earth in the shadow of the limb they desire to maim.²⁶⁴ Nor is it human beings alone who are thus liable to be injured by means of their shadows. Animals are to some extent in the same predicament. A small snail, which frequents the neighbourhood of the limestone hills in Perak, is believed to suck the blood of cattle through their shadows; hence the beasts grow lean and sometimes die from loss of blood.²⁶⁵ The ancients supposed that in Arabia, if a hyæna trod on a man's shadow, it deprived him of the power of speech and motion; and that if a dog, standing on a roof in the moonlight, cast a shadow on the ground and a hyæna trod on it, the dog would fall down as if dragged with a rope.²⁶⁶ Clearly in these cases the shadow, if not equivalent to the soul, is at least regarded as a living part of the man or the animal, so that injury done to the shadow is felt by the person or animal as if it were done to his body. Even the shadows of trees are supposed by the Caffres to be sensitive. Hence when a Caffre doctor seeks to pluck the leaves of a tree for medicinal purposes, he “takes

²⁶⁴ Mohammed Ebn-Omar El-Tounsy, *Voyage au Darfour*, traduit de l'Arabe par le Dr. Perron (Paris, 1845), p. 347.

²⁶⁵ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, p. 306.

²⁶⁶ [Aristotle] *Mirab. Auscult.* 145 (157); *Geoponica*, xv. 1. In the latter passage, for κατάγει ἐαυτήν we must read κατάγει αὐτόν, an emendation necessitated by the context, and confirmed by the passage of Damirī quoted and translated by Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, i. col. 833, “*cum ad lunam calcat umbram canis, qui supra tectum est, canis ad eam [scil. hyaenam] decidit, et ea illum devorat.*” Compare W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*,² p. 129.

care to run up quickly, and to avoid touching the shadow lest it should inform the tree of the danger, and so give the tree time to withdraw the medicinal properties from its extremities into the safety of the inaccessible trunk. The shadow of the tree is said to feel the touch of the man's feet."²⁶⁷

Danger of being overshadowed by certain birds or people.

Conversely, if the shadow is a vital part of a man or an animal, it may under certain circumstances be as hazardous to be touched by it as it would be to come into contact with the person or animal. Thus in the North-West Provinces of India people believe that if the shadow of the goat-sucker bird falls on an ox or a cow, but especially on a cow buffalo, the beast will soon die. The remedy is for some one to kill the bird, rub his hands or a stick in the blood, and then wave the stick over the animal. There are certain men who are noted for their powers in this respect all over the district.²⁶⁸ The Kaitish of central Australia hold that if the shadow of a brown hawk falls on the breast of a woman who is suckling a child, the breast will swell up and burst. Hence if a woman sees one of these birds in these circumstances, she runs away in fear.²⁶⁹ In the Central Provinces of India a pregnant woman avoids the shadow of a man, believing that if it fell on her, the child would take after him in features,

²⁶⁷ Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood*, p. 71.

²⁶⁸ W. Crooke, in *Indian Antiquary*, xix. (1890) p. 254.

²⁶⁹ Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 612.

though not in character.²⁷⁰ In Shoa any obstinate disorder, for which no remedy is known, such as insanity, epilepsy, delirium, hysteria, and St. Vitus's dance, is traced either to possession by a demon or to the shadow of an enemy which has fallen on the sufferer.²⁷¹ The Bushman is most careful not to let his shadow fall on the dead game, as he thinks this would bring bad luck.²⁷² Amongst the Caffres to overshadow the king by standing in his presence was an offence worthy of instant death.²⁷³ And it is a Caffre superstition that if the shadow of a man who is protected by a certain charm falls on the shadow of a man who is not so protected, the unprotected person will fall down, overcome by the power of the charm which is transmitted through the shadow.²⁷⁴ In the Punjaub some people believe that if the shadow of a pregnant woman fell on a snake, it would blind the creature instantly.²⁷⁵

The shadows of certain persons are regarded as peculiarly dangerous. The savage's dread of his mother-in-law.

Hence the savage makes it a rule to shun the shadow of certain persons whom for various reasons he regards as sources

²⁷⁰ M. R. Pedlow, in *Indian Antiquary*, xxix. (1900) p. 60.

²⁷¹ W. Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Aethiopia* (London, 1844), i. 158.

²⁷² Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, p. 313.

²⁷³ D. Kidd, *op. cit.* p. 356.

²⁷⁴ Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood*, p. 70.

²⁷⁵ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, i. p. 15, § 122.

of dangerous influence. Amongst the dangerous classes he commonly ranks mourners and women in general, but especially his mother-in-law. The Shuswap Indians of British Columbia think that the shadow of a mourner falling upon a person would make him sick.²⁷⁶ Amongst the Kurnai tribe of Victoria novices at initiation were cautioned not to let a woman's shadow fall across them, as this would make them thin, lazy, and stupid.²⁷⁷ An Australian native is said to have once nearly died of fright because the shadow of his mother-in-law fell on his legs as he lay asleep under a tree.²⁷⁸ The awe and dread with which the untutored savage contemplates his mother-in-law are amongst the most familiar facts of anthropology. In the Yuin tribes of New South Wales the rule which forbade a man to hold any communication with his wife's mother was very strict. He might not look at her or even in her direction. It was a ground of divorce if his shadow happened to fall on his mother-in-law: in that case he had to leave his wife, and she returned to her parents.²⁷⁹ In the Hunter River tribes of New South Wales it was formerly death for a man to speak to his mother-in-law; however, in later times

²⁷⁶ Fr. Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 92, 94 (separate reprint from the *Report of the British Association for 1890*); compare *id.* in *Seventh Report*, etc., p. 13 (separate reprint from the *Rep. Brit. Assoc. for 1891*).

²⁷⁷ A. W. Howitt, "The Jeraeil, or Initiation Ceremonies of the Kurnai Tribe," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiv. (1885) p. 316.

²⁷⁸ Miss Mary E. B. Howitt, *Folk-lore and Legends of some Victorian Tribes* (in manuscript).

²⁷⁹ A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, p. 266.

the wretch who had committed this heinous crime was suffered to live, but he was severely reprimanded and banished for a time from the camp.²⁸⁰ In the Kulin tribe it was thought that if a woman looked at or spoke to her son-in-law or even his brother, her hair would turn white. The same result, it was supposed, would follow if she ate of game which had been presented to her husband by her son-in-law; but she could obviate this ill consequence by blackening her face, and especially her mouth, with charcoal, for then her hair would not turn white.²⁸¹ Similarly in the Kurnai tribe of Victoria a woman is not permitted to see her daughter's husband in camp or elsewhere. When he is present, she keeps her head covered with an opossum rug. The camp of the mother-in-law faces in a different direction to that of her son-in-law. A screen of high bushes is erected between both huts, so that no one can see over from either. When the mother-in-law goes for firewood, she crouches down as she goes out or in, with her head covered.²⁸² In Uganda a man may not see his mother-in-law nor speak to her face to face. Should they meet by accident, she must turn aside and cover her head with her clothes; or if her garments are too scanty for that, she may squat on her haunches and hide her face in her hands. If he wishes to hold any communication with her, it must be done through a third person,

²⁸⁰ A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.* p. 267.

²⁸¹ A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.* pp. 256 sq.

²⁸² A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.* pp. 280 sq. Compare J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, pp. 32 sq.

or through a wall or closed door. Were he to break these rules, he would certainly be seized with a shaking of the hands and general debility.²⁸³ Among some tribes of eastern Africa which formerly acknowledged the suzerainty of the sultan of Zanzibar, before a young couple had children they might meet neither their father-in-law nor their mother-in-law. To avoid them they must take a long roundabout. But if they could not do that, they must throw themselves on the ground and hide their faces till the father-in-law or mother-in-law had passed by.²⁸⁴ Among the Basutos a man may never meet his wife's mother, nor speak to her, nor see her. If his wife is ill and her mother comes to nurse her, he must flee the house so long as she is in it; sentinels are posted to warn him of her departure.²⁸⁵ In New Britain the native imagination fails to conceive the extent and nature of the calamities which would result from a man's accidentally speaking to his wife's mother; suicide of one or both would probably be the only course open to them. The most solemn form of oath a New Briton can take is, "Sir, if I am not telling the truth, I hope I may shake hands with

²⁸³ Partly from notes sent me by my friend the Rev. J. Roscoe, partly from Sir H. Johnston's account (*The Uganda Protectorate*, ii. 688). In his printed notes (*Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 39) Mr. Roscoe says that the mother-in-law "may be in another room out of sight and speak to him through the wall or open door."

²⁸⁴ Father Picarda, "Autour du Mandera, Notes sur l'Ouzigoua, l'Oukwéré et l'Oudoé (Zanguebar)," *Missions Catholiques*, xviii. (1886) p. 286.

²⁸⁵ Father Porte, "Les Réminiscences d'un missionnaire du Basutoland," *Missions Catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) p. 318.

my mother-in-law.”²⁸⁶ At Vanua Lava in the Banks Islands, a man would not so much as follow his mother-in-law along the beach until the rising tide had washed out her footprints in the sand.²⁸⁷ To avoid meeting his mother-in-law face to face a very desperate Apache Indian, one of the bravest of the brave, has been seen to clamber along the brink of a precipice at the risk of his life, hanging on to rocks from which had he fallen he would have been dashed to pieces or at least have broken several of his limbs.²⁸⁸ Still more curious and difficult to explain is the rule which forbids certain African kings, after the coronation ceremonies have been completed, ever to see their own mothers again. This restriction was imposed on the kings of Benin and Uganda. Yet the queen-mothers lived in regal state with a court and lands of their own. In Uganda it was thought that if the king were to see his mother again, some evil and probably death would surely befall him.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ H. H. Romily and Rev. George Brown, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. ix. (1887) pp. 9, 17.

²⁸⁷ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 43.

²⁸⁸ J. G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook*, p. 132. More evidence of the mutual avoidance of mother-in-law and son-in-law among savages is collected in my *Totemism and Exogamy*; see the Index, s. v. “Mother-in-law.” The custom is probably based on a fear of incest between them. To the almost universal rule of savage life that a man must avoid his mother-in-law there is a most remarkable exception among the Wahehe of German East Africa. In that tribe a bridegroom must sleep with his mother-in-law before he may cohabit with her daughter. See Rev. H. Cole, “Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 312.

²⁸⁹ O. Dapper, *Description de l’Afrique*, p. 312; H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin*, p. 119; *Missions Catholiques*, xv. (1883) p. 110; J. Roscoe, “Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 67.

A man's health and strength supposed to vary with the length of his shadow. Fear of the loss of the shadow. Fear of the resemblance of a child to its parents.

Where the shadow is regarded as so intimately bound up with the life of the man that its loss entails debility or death, it is natural to expect that its diminution should be regarded with solicitude and apprehension, as betokening a corresponding decrease in the vital energy of its owner. An elegant Greek rhetorician has compared the man who lives only for fame to one who should set all his heart on his shadow, puffed up and boastful when it lengthened, sad and dejected when it shortened, wasting and pining away when it dwindled to nothing. The spirits of such an one, he goes on, would necessarily be volatile, since they must rise or fall with every passing hour of the day. In the morning, when the level sun, just risen above the eastern horizon, stretched out his shadow to enormous length, rivalling the shadows cast by the cypresses and the towers on the city wall, how blithe and exultant would he be, fancying that in stature he had become a match for the fabled giants of old; with what a lofty port he would then strut and shew himself in the streets and the market-place and wherever men congregated, that he might be seen and admired of all. But as the day wore on, his countenance would change and he would slink back crestfallen to his house. At noon, when his once towering shadow had shrunk to his feet, he would shut himself up and refuse to stir abroad, ashamed to look his fellow-townsmen in the face; but in the afternoon

his drooping spirits would revive, and as the day declined his joy and pride would swell again with the length of the evening shadows.²⁹⁰ The rhetorician who thus sought to expose the vanity of fame as an object of human ambition by likening it to an ever-changing shadow, little dreamed that in real life there were men who set almost as much store by their shadows as the fool whom he had conjured up in his imagination to point a moral. So hard is it for the straining wings of fancy to outstrip the folly of mankind. In Amboyna and Uliase, two islands near the equator, where necessarily there is little or no shadow cast at noon, the people make it a rule not to go out of the house at mid-day, because they fancy that by doing so a man may lose the shadow of his soul.²⁹¹ The Mangaians tell of a mighty warrior, Tukaitawa, whose strength waxed and waned with the length of his shadow. In the morning, when his shadow fell longest, his strength was greatest; but as the shadow shortened towards noon his strength ebbed with it, till exactly at noon it reached its lowest point; then, as the shadow stretched out in the afternoon, his strength returned. A certain hero discovered the secret of Tukaitawa's strength and slew him at noon.²⁹² The savage Besis of the Malay Peninsula fear to bury their dead at noon, because they fancy that the shortness of their shadows at that hour would sympathetically

²⁹⁰ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* lxvii. vol. ii. p. 230, ed. L. Dindorf.

²⁹¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 61.

²⁹² W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, pp. 284 sqq.

shorten their own lives.²⁹³ The Baganda of central Africa used to judge of a man's health by the length of his shadow. They said, "So-and-so is going to die, his shadow is very small"; or, "He is in good health, his shadow is large."²⁹⁴ Similarly the Caffres of South Africa think that a man's shadow grows very small or vanishes at death. When her husband is away at the wars, a woman hangs up his sleeping-mat; if the shadow grows less, she says her husband is killed; if it remains unchanged, she says he is unscathed.²⁹⁵ It is possible that even in lands outside the tropics the observation of the diminished shadow at noon may have contributed, even if it did not give rise, to the superstitious dread with which that hour has been viewed by many peoples, as by the Greeks, ancient and modern, the Bretons, the Russians, the Roumanians of Transylvania, and the Indians of Santiago Tepehuacan.²⁹⁶ In this observation, too, we may perhaps detect

²⁹³ W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), ii. 110.

²⁹⁴ The Rev. J. Roscoe, in a letter to me dated Mengo, Uganda, May 26, 1904.

²⁹⁵ T. Arbousset et F. Daumas, *Voyage d'exploration* (Paris, 1842), p. 291; Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, pp. 83, 303; *id.*, *Savage Childhood*, p. 69. In the last passage Mr. Kidd tells us that "the mat was *not* held up in the sun, but was placed in the hut at the marked-off portion where the *itongo* or ancestral spirit was supposed to live; and the fate of the man was divined, not by the *length* of the shadow, but by its *strength*."

²⁹⁶ Theocritus, i. 15 *sqq.*; Philostratus, *Heroic*. i. 3; Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 26; Lucan, iii. 423 *sqq.*; Drexler, s. v. "Meridianus daemon," in Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2832 *sqq.*; Bernard Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, pp. 94 *sqq.*, 119 *sq.*; Georgeakis et Pineau, *Folk-lore de Lesbos*, p. 342; A. de Nore, *Coutumes, mythes, et traditions des provinces de France*, pp. 214 *sq.*; J.

the reason why noon was chosen by the Greeks as the hour for sacrificing to the shadowless dead.²⁹⁷ The loss of the shadow, real or apparent, has often been regarded as a cause or precursor of death. Whoever entered the sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Lycaeus in Arcadia was believed to lose his shadow and to die within the year.²⁹⁸ In Lower Austria on the evening of St. Sylvester's day – the last day of the year – the company seated round the table mark whose shadow is not cast on the wall, and believe that the seemingly shadowless person will die next year. Similar presages are drawn in Germany both on St. Sylvester's day and on Christmas Eve.²⁹⁹ The Galelareese fancy that if a child resembles his father, they will not both live long; for the child has taken away his father's likeness or shadow, and consequently the father must soon die.³⁰⁰ Similarly among some tribes of the Lower

Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,⁴ ii. 972; C. L. Rochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Brauch*, i. 62 sqq.; E. Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, i. 331; "Lettre du curé de Santiago Tepehuacan," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), II^{me} Série, ii. (1834) p. 180; N. von Stenin, "Die Permier," *Globus*, lxxi. (1897) p. 374; D. Louwerier, "Bijgeloovige gebruiken, die door die Javanen worden in acht genomen," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlix. (1905) p. 257.

²⁹⁷ Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 293.

²⁹⁸ Pausanias, viii. 38. 6; Polybius, xvi. 12. 7; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae*, 39.

²⁹⁹ Th. Vernaleken, *Mythen und Bräuche des Volkes in Österreich*, p. 341; Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Das festliche Jahr*, p. 401; A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² p. 207, § 314.

³⁰⁰ M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1895) p. 459.

Congo, “if the child is like its mother, father, or uncle, they think it has the spirit of the person it resembles, and that that person will soon die. Hence a parent will resent it if you say that the baby is like him or her.”³⁰¹

The shadows of people built into foundations to strengthen the edifices.

Nowhere, perhaps, does the equivalence of the shadow to the life or soul come out more clearly than in some customs practised to this day in south-eastern Europe. In modern Greece, when the foundation of a new building is being laid, it is the custom to kill a cock, a ram, or a lamb, and to let its blood flow on the foundation-stone, under which the animal is afterwards buried. The object of the sacrifice is to give strength and stability to the building. But sometimes, instead of killing an animal, the builder entices a man to the foundation-stone, secretly measures his body, or a part of it, or his shadow, and buries the measure under the foundation-stone; or he lays the foundation-stone upon the man's shadow. It is believed that the man will die within the year.³⁰² In the island of Lesbos it is deemed enough if the builder merely casts a stone at the shadow of a passer-by; the man whose shadow is thus struck will die, but the building will be solid.³⁰³ A Bulgarian mason measures the shadow of a man

³⁰¹ J. H. Weeks, “Notes on some Customs of the Lower Congo People,” *Folk-lore*, xix. (1908) p. 422.

³⁰² B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen* (Leipsic, 1871), pp. 196 *sq.*

³⁰³ Georgeakis et Pineau, *Folk-lore de Lesbos*, pp. 346 *sq.*

with a string, places the string in a box, and then builds the box into the wall of the edifice. Within forty days thereafter the man whose shadow was measured will be dead and his soul will be in the box beside the string; but often it will come forth and appear in its former shape to persons who were born on a Saturday. If a Bulgarian builder cannot obtain a human shadow for this purpose, he will content himself with measuring the shadow of the first animal that comes that way.³⁰⁴ The Roumanians of Transylvania think that he whose shadow is thus immured will die within forty days; so persons passing by a building which is in course of erection may hear a warning cry, "Beware lest they take thy shadow!" Not long ago there were still shadow-traders whose business it was to provide architects with the shadows necessary for securing their walls.³⁰⁵ In these cases the measure of the shadow is looked on as equivalent to the shadow itself, and to bury it is to bury the life or soul of the man, who, deprived of it, must die. Thus the custom is a substitute for the old practice of immuring a living person in the walls, or crushing him under the foundation-stone of a new building, in order to give strength and durability to the structure, or more definitely in order that the angry ghost may haunt the place and guard it against the intrusion of enemies. Thus when a new gate was made or an old gate

³⁰⁴ A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipsic, 1898), p. 199; W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 127.

³⁰⁵ W. Schmidt, *Das Jahr und seine Tage in Meinung und Brauch der Romänen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1866), p. 27; E. Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, ii. 17 sq. Compare F. S. Krauss, *Volks Glaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 161.

was repaired in the walls of Bangkok, it used to be customary to crush three men to death under an enormous beam in a pit at the gateway. Before they were led to their doom, they were regaled at a splendid banquet; the whole court came to salute them; and the king himself charged them straitly to guard well the gate that was to be committed to their care, and to warn him if enemies or rebels came to assault the city. The next moment the ropes were cut and the beam descended on them. The Siamese believed that these unfortunates were transformed into the genii which they called *phi*.³⁰⁶ It is said that when the massive teak posts of the gateways of Mandalay were set up, a man was bound and placed under each post and crushed to death. The Burmese believe that men who die a violent death turn into *nats* or demons and haunt the spot where they were killed, doing a mischief to such as attempt to molest the place. Thus their spirits become guardians of the gates.³⁰⁷ This theory would explain why such sacrifices appear to be offered most commonly at thoroughfares, such as gates and bridges, where ghostly warders may be deemed especially serviceable in keeping; watch on the multitudes that go to and fro.³⁰⁸ In Bima, a district of the East Indian island

³⁰⁶ Mgr. Bruguière, in *Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, v. (1831) pp. 164 sq.; Pallegoix, *Description du royaume Thai ou Siam*, ii. 50-52.

³⁰⁷ A. Fytche, *Burma, Past and Present* (London, 1878), i. 251 note.

³⁰⁸ On such practices in general, see E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,² i. 104 sqq.; F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, pp. 284-296; F. S. Krauss, "Der Bauopfer bei den Südslaven," *Mittheilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xvii. (1887) pp. 16-24; P. Sartori, "Über das Bauopfer," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xxx. (1898)

of Sambawa, the custom is marked by some peculiar features, which deserve to be mentioned. When a new flag-pole is set up at the sultan's palace a woman is crushed to death under it; but she must be pregnant. If the destined victim should be brought to bed before her execution, she goes free. The notion may be that the ghost of such a woman would be more than usually fierce and vigilant. Again, when the wooden doors are set up at the palace, it is customary to bury a child under each of the door-posts. For these purposes officers are sent to scour the country for a pregnant woman or little children, as the case may be, and if they come back empty-handed they must give up their own wives or children to serve as victims. When the gates are set up, the children are killed, their bodies stript of flesh, and their bones laid in the holes in which the door-posts are erected. Then the flesh is boiled with horse's flesh and served up to the officers. Any officer who refuses to eat of it is at once cut down.³⁰⁹ The

pp. 1-54; E. Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1906-1908), i. 461 *sqq.* For some special evidence, see H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, pp. 363 *sqq.* (as to ancient India); Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine*, ii. 47 (as to Pegu); Guerlach, "Chez les sauvages Bahnars," *Missions Catholiques*, xvi. (1884) p. 82 (as to the Sedans of Cochin-China); W. H. Furness, *Home-life of Borneo Head-hunters*, p. 3 (as to the Kayans and Kenyahs of Burma); A. C. Kruijt, "Van Paloppo naar Posso," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlii. (1898) p. 56 note (as to central Celebes); L. Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (London, 1894), i. 148 *sq.*; H. Ternaux-Compans, *Essai sur l'ancien Cundinamarca*, p. 70 (as to the Indians of Colombia). These customs are commonly called foundation-sacrifices. But the name is inappropriate, as Prof. H. Oldenberg has rightly observed, since they are not sacrifices but charms.

³⁰⁹ D. F. van Braam Morris, in *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*,

intention of this last practice is perhaps to secure the fidelity of the officers by compelling them to enter into a covenant of the most solemn and binding nature with the ghosts of the murdered children who are to guard the gates.

Deification of a measuring tape.

The practice of burying the measure of a man's shadow, as a substitute for the man himself, under the foundation-stone of a building may perhaps throw light on the singular deity whom the people of Kisser, an East Indian island, choose to guard their houses and villages. The god in question is nothing more or less than the measuring-tape which was used to measure the foundations of the house or of the village temple. After it has served this useful purpose, the tape is wound about a stick shaped like a paddle, and is then deposited in the thatch of the roof of the house, where food is offered to it on all special occasions. The deified measuring-tape of the whole village is that which was used to measure the foundations of the first house or of the village temple. The handle of the paddle-like stick on which it is wound is carved into the figure of a person squatting in the usual posture; and the whole is kept in a rough wooden box along with one or two figures to act as its guards.³¹⁰ It is possible, though perhaps hardly probable, that these tapes may be thought

xxxiv. (1891) p. 224.

³¹⁰ J. H. de Vries, "Reis door eenige eilandgroepen der Residentie Amboina," *Tijdschrift van het koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweedie Serie, xvii. (1900) pp. 612 sq.

to contain the souls of men whose shadows they measured at the foundation ceremony.

The soul sometimes supposed to be in the reflection.
Dangers to which the reflection-soul is exposed.

As some peoples believe a man's soul to be in his shadow, so other (or the same) peoples believe it to be in his reflection in water or a mirror. Thus “the Andamanese do not regard their shadows but their reflections (in any mirror) as their souls.”³¹¹ According to one account, some of the Fijians thought that man has two souls, a light one and a dark one; the dark one goes to Hades, the light one is his reflection in water or a mirror.³¹² When the Motumotu of New Guinea first saw their likenesses in a looking-glass they thought that their reflections were their souls.³¹³ In New Caledonia the old men are of opinion that a person's reflection in water or a mirror is his soul; but the younger men, taught by the Catholic priests, maintain that it is a reflection and nothing more, just like the reflection of palm-

³¹¹ E. H. Mann, *Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands*, p. 94.

³¹² T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*,² i. 241. However, the late Mr. Lorimer Fison wrote to me that this reported belief in a bright soul and a dark soul “is one of Williams' absurdities. I inquired into it on the island where he was, and found that there was no such belief. He took the word for ‘shadow,’ which is a reduplication of *yalo*, the word for soul, as meaning the dark soul. But *yaloyalo* does not mean the soul at all. It is not part of a man as his soul is. This is made certain by the fact that it does not take the possessive suffix *yalo-na* = his soul; but *nona yaloyalo* = his shadow. This settles the question beyond dispute. If *yaloyalo* were any kind of soul, the possessive form would be *yaloyalona*” (letter dated August 26, 1898).

³¹³ James Chalmers, *Pioneering in New Guinea* (London, 1887), p. 170.

trees in the water.³¹⁴ The reflection-soul, being external to the man, is exposed to much the same dangers as the shadow-soul. Among the Galelareese, half-grown lads and girls may not look at themselves in a mirror; for they say that the mirror takes away their bloom and leaves them ugly.³¹⁵ And as the shadow may be stabbed, so may the reflection. Hence an Aztec mode of keeping sorcerers from the house was to leave a vessel of water with a knife in it behind the door. When a sorcerer entered he was so much alarmed at seeing his reflection in the water transfixed by a knife that he turned and fled.³¹⁶ In Corrèze, a district of the Auvergne, a cow's milk had dried up through the maleficent spells of a neighbouring witch, so a sorcerer was called in to help. He made the woman whose cow was bewitched sit in front of a pail of water with a knife in her hand till she thought she saw the image of the witch in the water, whereupon he made her stab the image with the knife. They say that if the knife strikes the image fair in the eye, the person whose likeness it is will suffer a corresponding injury in his or her eye. This procedure, we are

³¹⁴ Father Lambert, *Mœurs et superstitions des Néo-Calédoniens* (Nouméa, 1900), pp. 45 sq.

³¹⁵ M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1895) p. 462.

³¹⁶ B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne* (Paris, 1880), p. 314. The Chinese hang brass mirrors over the idols in their houses, because it is thought that evil spirits entering the house and seeing themselves in the mirrors will be scared away (*China Review*, ii. 164).

informed, has been successful in restoring milk to the udders of a cow when even holy water had been tried in vain.³¹⁷ The Zulus will not look into a dark pool because they think there is a beast in it which will take away their reflections, so that they die.³¹⁸ The Basutos say that crocodiles have the power of thus killing a man by dragging his reflection under water. When one of them dies suddenly and from no apparent cause, his relatives will allege that a crocodile must have taken his shadow some time when he crossed a stream.³¹⁹ In Saddle Island, Melanesia, there is a pool “into which if any one looks he dies; the malignant spirit takes hold upon his life by means of his reflection on the water.”³²⁰

Dread of looking at one's reflection in water.

We can now understand why it was a maxim both in ancient India and ancient Greece not to look at one's reflection in water, and why the Greeks regarded it as an omen of death if a man dreamed of seeing himself so reflected.³²¹ They feared that the

³¹⁷ G. Vuillier, “Chez les magiciens et les sorciers de la Corrèze,” *Tour du monde*, N.S. v. (1899) pp. 522, 524.

³¹⁸ H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus* (Natal and London, 1868), p. 342.

³¹⁹ T. Arbousset et F. Daumas, *Voyage d'exploration au nord-est de la colonie du Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, p. 12; T. Lindsay Fairclough, “Notes on the Basuto,” *Journal of the African Society*, No. 14 (January 1905), p. 201.

³²⁰ R. H. Codrington, “Religious Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia,” *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* x. (1881) p. 313; *id.*, *The Melanesians*, p. 186.

³²¹ *Fragmenta philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, i. 510; Artemidorus, *Onirocr.* ii. 7; *Laws of Manu*, iv. 38 (p. 135, G. Bühler's translation,

water-spirits would drag the person's reflection or soul under water, leaving him soulless to perish. This was probably the origin of the classical story of the beautiful Narcissus, who languished and died through seeing his reflection in the water. The explanation that he died for love of his own fair image was probably devised later, after the old meaning of the story was forgotten. The same ancient belief lingers, in a faded form, in the English superstition that whoever sees a water fairy must pine and die.

“Alas, the moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see! —
I saw a maiden on a stream,
And fair was she!

I staid to watch, a little space,
Her parted lips if she would sing;
The waters closed above her face
With many a ring.

I know my life will fade away,
I know that I must vainly pine,
For I am made of mortal clay,
But she's divine!”

Reason for covering up mirrors or turning them to the

wall after a death.

Further, we can now explain the widespread custom of covering up mirrors or turning them to the wall after a death has taken place in the house. It is feared that the soul, projected out of the person in the shape of his reflection in the mirror, may be carried off by the ghost of the departed, which is commonly supposed to linger about the house till the burial. The custom is thus exactly parallel to the Aru custom of not sleeping in a house after a death for fear that the soul, projected out of the body in a dream, may meet the ghost and be carried off by it.³²² In Oldenburg it is thought that if a person sees his image in a mirror after a death he will die himself. So all the mirrors in the house are covered up with white cloth.³²³ In some parts of Germany and Belgium after a death not only the mirrors but everything that shines or glitters (windows, clocks, etc.) is covered up,³²⁴ doubtless because they might reflect a person's image. The same custom of covering up mirrors or turning them to the wall after a death prevails in England, Scotland, Madagascar,³²⁵ and among the Karaits, a Jewish sect in the Crimea.³²⁶ The Suni

³²² See above, p. [37](#).

³²³ A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,² pp. 429 sq., § 726.

³²⁴ A. Wuttke, *l. c.*; E. Monseur, *Le Folklore Wallon*, p. 40.

³²⁵ *Folk-lore Journal*, iii. (1885) p. 281; T. F. Thiselton Dyer, *English Folk-lore*, p. 109; J. Napier, *Folk-lore, or Superstitious Beliefs in the West of Scotland*, p. 60; W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, i. 238. Compare A. Grandidier, "Des rites funéraires chez les Malgaches," *Revue d'Ethnographie*, v. (1886) p. 215.

³²⁶ S. Weissenberg, "Die Karäer der Krim," *Globus*, lxxxiv. (1903) p. 143; *id.*

Mohammedans of Bombay cover with a cloth the mirror in the room of a dying man and do not remove it until the corpse is carried out for burial. They also cover the looking-glasses in their bedrooms before retiring to rest at night.³²⁷ The reason why sick people should not see themselves in a mirror, and why the mirror in a sick-room is therefore covered up,³²⁸ is also plain; in time of sickness, when the soul might take flight so easily, it is particularly dangerous to project it out of the body by means of the reflection in a mirror. The rule is therefore precisely parallel to the rule observed by some peoples of not allowing sick people to sleep;³²⁹ for in sleep the soul is projected out of the body, and there is always a risk that it may not return. "In the opinion of the Raskolniks a mirror is an accursed thing, invented by the devil,"³³⁰ perhaps on account of the mirror's supposed power

"Krankheit und Tod bei den südrussischen Juden," *Globus*, xci. (1907) p. 360.

³²⁷ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 169, § 906.

³²⁸ J. V. Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, p. 151, § 1097; *Folk-lore Journal*, vi. (1888) pp. 145 sq.: *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 61, § 378.

³²⁹ J. G. Frazer, "On certain Burial Customs as illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886) pp. 82 sqq. Among the heathen Arabs, when a man had been stung by a scorpion, he was kept from sleeping for seven days, during which he had to wear a woman's bracelets and earrings (Rasmussen, *Additamenta ad historiam Arabum ante Islamismum*, p. 65, compare p. 69). The old Mexican custom of masking and the images of the gods so long as the king was sick (Brousseau de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale*, iii. 571 sq.) may perhaps have been intended to prevent the images from drawing away the king's soul.

³³⁰ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 117. The objection, however,

of drawing out the soul in the reflection and so facilitating its capture.

The soul sometimes supposed to be in the portrait. This belief among the Esquimaux and American Indians.

As with shadows and reflections, so with portraits; they are often believed to contain the soul of the person portrayed. People who hold this belief are naturally loth to have their likenesses taken; for if the portrait is the soul, or at least a vital part of the person portrayed, whoever possesses the portrait will be able to exercise a fatal influence over the original of it. Thus the Esquimaux of Bering Strait believe that persons dealing in witchcraft have the power of stealing a person's *inua* or shade, so that without it he will pine away and die. Once at a village on the lower Yukon River an explorer had set up his camera to get a picture of the people as they were moving about among their houses. While he was focusing the instrument, the headman of the village came up and insisted on peeping under the cloth. Being allowed to do so, he gazed intently for a minute at the moving figures on the ground glass, then suddenly withdrew his head and bawled at the top of his voice to the people, "He has all of your shades in this box." A panic ensued among the group, and in an instant they disappeared helter-skelter into their houses.³³¹ The Dacotas hold that every man has several *wanagi*

may be merely Puritanical. W. Robertson Smith informed me that the peculiarities of the Raskolniks are largely due to exaggerated Puritanism.

³³¹ E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of*

or “apparitions,” of which after death one remains at the grave, while another goes to the place of the departed. For many years no Yankton Dakota would consent to have his picture taken lest one of his “apparitions” should remain after death in the picture instead of going to the spirit-land.³³² An Indian whose portrait the Prince of Wied wished to get, refused to let himself be drawn, because he believed it would cause his death.³³³ The Mandan Indians also thought that they would soon die if their portraits were in the hands of another; they wished at least to have the artist's picture as a kind of hostage.³³⁴ The Tepehuanes of Mexico stood in mortal terror of the camera, and five days' persuasion was necessary to induce them to pose for it. When at last they consented, they looked like criminals about to be executed. They believed that by photographing people the artist could carry off their souls and devour them at his leisure moments. They said that when the pictures reached his country they would die or some other evil would befall them.³³⁵ The Canelos Indians of Ecuador think that their soul is carried away in their picture. Two of them, who had been photographed, were so alarmed that they came back next day on purpose to ask if it were really true that their

the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I. (Washington, 1899) p. 422.

³³² J. Owen Dorsey, “A Study of Siouan Cults,” *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1894), p. 484; *id.* “Teton Folk-lore,” *American Anthropologist*, ii. (1889) p. 143.

³³³ Maximilian Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-America*, i. 417.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* ii. 166.

³³⁵ C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), i. 459 *sq.*

souls had been taken away.³³⁶ Similar notions are entertained by the Aymara Indians of Peru and Bolivia.³³⁷ The Araucanians of Chili are unwilling to have their portraits drawn, for they fancy that he who has their portraits in his possession could, by means of magic, injure or destroy themselves.³³⁸

The same belief in Africa.

The Yaos, a tribe of British Central Africa in the neighbourhood of Lake Nyassa, believe that every human being has a *lisoka*, a soul, shade, or spirit, which they appear to associate with the shadow or picture of the person. Some of them have been known to refuse to enter a room where pictures were hung on the walls, “because of the *masoka*, souls, in them.” The camera was at first an object of dread to them, and when it was turned on a group of natives they scattered in all directions with shrieks of terror. They said that the European was about to take away their shadows and that they would die; the transference of the shadow or portrait (for the Yao word for the two is the same, to wit *chiwilili*) to the photographic plate would involve the disease or death of the shadeless body. A Yao chief, after much difficulty, allowed himself to be photographed on condition that the picture should be shewn to none of his subjects, but sent out of the country as soon as possible. He feared lest some ill-

³³⁶ A. Simson, “Notes on the Jivaros and Canelos Indians,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, ix. (1880) p. 392.

³³⁷ D. Forbes, in *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, ii. (1870) p. 236.

³³⁸ E. R. Smith, *The Araucanians* (London, 1855), p. 222.

wisher might use it to bewitch him. Some time afterwards he fell ill, and his attendants attributed the illness to some accident which had befallen the photographic plate in England.³³⁹ The Ngoni of the same region entertain a similar belief, and formerly exhibited a similar dread of sitting to a photographer, lest by so doing they should yield up their shades or spirits to him and they should die.³⁴⁰ When Joseph Thomson attempted to photograph some of the Wa-teita in eastern Africa, they imagined that he was a magician trying to obtain possession of their souls, and that if he got their likenesses they themselves would be entirely at his mercy.³⁴¹ When Dr. Catat and some companions were exploring the Bara country on the west coast of Madagascar, the people suddenly became hostile. The day before the travellers, not without difficulty, had photographed the royal family, and now found themselves accused of taking the souls of the natives for the purpose of selling them when they returned to France. Denial was vain; in compliance with the custom of the country they were obliged to catch the souls, which were then put into a basket and ordered by Dr. Catat to return to their respective owners.³⁴²

³³⁹ Rev. A. Hetherwick, "Some Animistic Beliefs among the Yaos of British Central Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 89 *sq.*

³⁴⁰ W. A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni* (Edinburgh and London, 1899), pp. 70 *sq.*

³⁴¹ J. Thomson, *Through Masai Land* (London, 1885), p. 86.

³⁴² E. Clodd, in *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895) pp. 73 *sq.*, referring to *The Times* of March 24, 1891.

The same belief in Asia and the East Indies.

Some villagers in Sikkim betrayed a lively horror and hid away whenever the lens of a camera, or “the evil eye of the box” as they called it, was turned on them. They thought it took away their souls with their pictures, and so put it in the power of the owner of the pictures to cast spells on them, and they alleged that a photograph of the scenery blighted the landscape.³⁴³ Until the reign of the late King of Siam no Siamese coins were ever stamped with the image of the king, “for at that time there was a strong prejudice against the making of portraits in any medium. Europeans who travel into the jungle have, even at the present time, only to point a camera at a crowd to procure its instant dispersion. When a copy of the face of a person is made and taken away from him, a portion of his life goes with the picture. Unless the sovereign had been blessed with the years of a Methusaleh he could scarcely have permitted his life to be distributed in small pieces together with the coins of the realm.”³⁴⁴ Similarly, in Corea, “the effigy of the king is not struck on the coins; only a few Chinese characters are put on them. They would deem it an insult to the king to put his sacred face on objects which pass into the most vulgar hands and often roll on the ground in the dust or the mud. When the French ships arrived for the first time in Corea, the mandarin who was sent on board

³⁴³ L. A. Waddell, *Among the Himalayas* (Westminster, 1899), pp. 85 sq.

³⁴⁴ E. Young, *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe* (Westminster, 1898), p. 140.

to communicate with them was dreadfully shocked to see the levity with which these western barbarians treated the face of their sovereign, reproduced on the coins, and the recklessness with which they put it in the hands of the first comer, without troubling themselves in the least whether or not he would shew it due respect.”³⁴⁵ In Minahassa, a district of Celebes, many chiefs are reluctant to be photographed, believing that if that were done they would soon die. For they imagine that, were the photograph lost by its owner and found by somebody else, whatever injury the finder chose to do to the portrait would equally affect the person whom it represented.³⁴⁶ Mortal terror was depicted on the faces of the Battas upon whom von Brenner turned the lens of his camera; they thought he wished to carry off their shadows or spirits in a little box.³⁴⁷ When Dr. Nieuwenhuis attempted to photograph the Kayans or Bahaus of central Borneo, they were much alarmed, fearing that their souls would follow their photographs into the far country and that their deserted bodies would fall sick. Further, they imagined that possessing their likenesses the explorer would be able by magic art to work on

³⁴⁵ Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée* (Paris, 1874), i. p. xxv. This account of Corea was written at a time when the country was still almost secluded from European influence. The events of recent years have naturally wrought great changes in the habits and ideas of the people.

³⁴⁶ “Iets over het bijgeloof in de Minahasa,” *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, III. Série, iv. (1870) pp. 8 sq.

³⁴⁷ J. Freiherr von Brenner, *Besuch bei den Kannibalen Sumatras* (Würzburg, 1894), p. 195.

the originals at a distance.³⁴⁸

The same belief in Europe.

Beliefs of the same sort still linger in various parts of Europe. Not very many years ago some old women in the Greek island of Carpathus were very angry at having their likenesses drawn, thinking that in consequence they would pine and die.³⁴⁹ It is a German superstition that if you have your portrait painted, you will die.³⁵⁰ Some people in Russia object to having their silhouettes taken, fearing that if this is done they will die before the year is out.³⁵¹ In Albania Miss Durham sketched an old man who boasted of being a hundred and ten years old. When every one recognised the likeness, a look of great anxiety came over the patriarch's face, and most earnestly he besought the artist never to destroy the sketch, for he was certain that the moment the sketch was torn he would drop down dead.³⁵² An artist in England once vainly attempted to sketch a gypsy girl. "I won't have her drawn out," said the girl's aunt. "I told her I'd make her scrawl the earth before me, if ever she let herself be drawn out again." "Why, what harm can there be?" "I know there's a fiz (a charm) in it. There was my youngest, that the gorja drewd

³⁴⁸ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 314.

³⁴⁹ "A Far-off Greek Island," *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1886, p. 235.

³⁵⁰ J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch, Aberglauben, Sagen und andre alte Überlieferungen im Voigtlande* (Leipsc, 1867), p. 423.

³⁵¹ W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 117.

³⁵² Miss M. E. Durham, *High Albania* (London, 1909), p. 107.

out on Newmarket Heath, she never held her head up after, but wasted away, and died, and she's buried in March churchyard.”³⁵³ There are persons in the West of Scotland “who refuse to have their likenesses taken lest it prove unlucky; and give as instances the cases of several of their friends who never had a day's health after being photographed.”³⁵⁴

³⁵³ F. H. Groome, *In Gipsy Tents* (Edinburgh, 1880), pp. 337 sq.

³⁵⁴ James Napier, *Folk-lore, or Superstitious Beliefs in the West of Scotland*, p. 142. For more examples of the same sort, see R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, Neue Folge (Leipsic, 1889), pp. 18 sqq.

Chapter III. Tabooed Acts

§ 1. Taboos on Intercourse with Strangers

Primitive conceptions of the soul helped to mould early kingships by dictating rules to be observed by the king for his soul's salvation.

So much for the primitive conceptions of the soul and the dangers to which it is exposed. These conceptions are not limited to one people or country; with variations of detail they are found all over the world, and survive, as we have seen, in modern Europe. Beliefs so deep-seated and so widespread must necessarily have contributed to shape the mould in which the early kingship was cast. For if every person was at such pains to save his own soul from the perils which threatened it on so many sides, how much more carefully must *he* have been guarded upon whose life hung the welfare and even the existence of the whole people, and whom therefore it was the common interest of all to preserve? Therefore we should expect to find the king's life protected by a system of precautions or safeguards still more numerous and minute than those which in primitive society every man adopts for the safety of his own soul. Now in point of fact the life of the early kings is regulated, as we have seen and shall

see more fully presently, by a very exact code of rules. May we not then conjecture that these rules are in fact the very safeguards which we should expect to find adopted for the protection of the king's life? An examination of the rules themselves confirms this conjecture. For from this it appears that some of the rules observed by the kings are identical with those observed by private persons out of regard for the safety of their souls; and even of those which seem peculiar to the king, many, if not all, are most readily explained on the hypothesis that they are nothing but safeguards or lifeguards of the king. I will now enumerate some of these royal rules or taboos, offering on each of them such comments and explanations as may serve to set the original intention of the rule in its proper light.

The general effect of these rules is to isolate the king, especially from strangers. The savage fears the magic arts of strangers and hence guards himself against them. Various modes of disenchanting strangers.

As the object of the royal taboos is to isolate the king from all sources of danger, their general effect is to compel him to live in a state of seclusion, more or less complete, according to the number and stringency of the rules he observes. Now of all sources of danger none are more dreaded by the savage than magic and witchcraft, and he suspects all strangers of practising these black arts. To guard against the baneful influence exerted voluntarily or involuntarily by strangers is therefore an elementary dictate of savage prudence. Hence before strangers

are allowed to enter a district, or at least before they are permitted to mingle freely with the inhabitants, certain ceremonies are often performed by the natives of the country for the purpose of disarming the strangers of their magical powers, of counteracting the baneful influence which is believed to emanate from them, or of disinfecting, so to speak, the tainted atmosphere by which they are supposed to be surrounded. Thus, when the ambassadors sent by Justin II., Emperor of the East, to conclude a peace with the Turks had reached their destination, they were received by shamans, who subjected them to a ceremonial purification for the purpose of exorcising all harmful influence. Having deposited the goods brought by the ambassadors in an open place, these wizards carried burning branches of incense round them, while they rang a bell and beat on a tambourine, snorting and falling into a state of frenzy in their efforts to dispel the powers of evil. Afterwards they purified the ambassadors themselves by leading them through the flames.³⁵⁵ In the island of Nanumea (South Pacific) strangers from ships or from other islands were not allowed to communicate with the people until they all, or a few as representatives of the rest, had been taken to each of the four temples in the island, and prayers offered that the god would avert any disease or treachery which these strangers might have brought with them. Meat offerings were also laid

³⁵⁵ Menander Protector, in *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 227. Compare Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xlii. vol. vii. pp. 294 *sq.* (Edinburgh, 1811).

upon the altars, accompanied by songs and dances in honour of the god. While these ceremonies were going on, all the people except the priests and their attendants kept out of sight.³⁵⁶ On returning from an attempted ascent of the great African mountain Kilimanjaro, which is believed by the neighbouring tribes to be tenanted by dangerous demons, Mr. New and his party, as soon as they reached the border of the inhabited country, were disenchanted by the inhabitants, being sprinkled with “a professionally prepared liquor, supposed to possess the potency of neutralising evil influences, and removing the spell of wicked spirits.”³⁵⁷ In the interior of Yoruba (West Africa) the sentinels at the gates of towns often oblige European travellers to wait till nightfall before they admit them, fearing that if the strangers were admitted by day the devil would enter behind them.³⁵⁸ The whole Mahafaly country in Madagascar used to be tabooed to strangers of the white race, the natives imagining that the intrusion of a white man would immediately cause the death of their king. The traveller Bastard had the greatest difficulty in overcoming the reluctance of the natives to allow him to enter their land and especially to visit their holy city.³⁵⁹ Amongst the

³⁵⁶ G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 291 *sq.*

³⁵⁷ Charles New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa* (London, 1873), p. 432. Compare *ibid.* pp. 400, 402. For the demons on Mt. Kilimanjaro, see also J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours in Eastern Africa* (London, 1860), p. 192.

³⁵⁸ Pierre Bouche, *La Côte des Esclaves et le Dahomey* (Paris, 1885), p. 133.

³⁵⁹ A. van Gennep, *Tabou et totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), p. 42.

Ot Danoms of Borneo it is the custom that strangers entering the territory should pay to the natives a certain sum, which is spent in the sacrifice of buffaloes or pigs to the spirits of the land and water, in order to reconcile them to the presence of the strangers, and to induce them not to withdraw their favour from the people of the country, but to bless the rice-harvest, and so forth.³⁶⁰ The men of a certain district in Borneo, fearing to look upon a European traveller lest he should make them ill, warned their wives and children not to go near him. Those who could not restrain their curiosity killed fowls to appease the evil spirits and smeared themselves with the blood.³⁶¹ “More dreaded,” says a traveller in central Borneo, “than the evil spirits of the neighbourhood are the evil spirits from a distance which accompany travellers. When a company from the middle Mahakam river visited me among the Blu-u Kayans in the year 1897, no woman shewed herself outside her house without a burning bundle of *plehiding* bark, the stinking smoke of which drives away evil spirits.”³⁶² In Laos, before a stranger can be accorded hospitality, the master of the house must offer sacrifice to the ancestral spirits; otherwise the spirits would be offended and would send disease on the inmates.³⁶³ When Madame Pfeiffer arrived at the village of Hali-Bonar, among the

³⁶⁰ C. A. L. M. Schwaner, *Borneo* (Amsterdam, 1853-54), ii. 77.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.* ii. 167.

³⁶² A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, ii. 102.

³⁶³ E. Aymonier, *Notes sur le Laos* (Saigon, 1885), p. 196.

Battas of Sumatra, a buffalo was killed and the liver offered to her. Then a ceremony was performed to propitiate the evil spirits. Two young men danced, and one of them in dancing sprinkled water from a buffalo's horn on the visitor and the spectators.³⁶⁴ In the Mentawai Islands, when a stranger enters a house where there are children, the father or other member of the family takes the ornament which the children wear in their hair and hands it to the stranger, who holds it in his hands for a while and then gives it back to him. This is thought to protect the children from the evil effect which the sight of a stranger might have upon them.³⁶⁵ When a Dutch steamship was approaching their villages, the people of Biak, an island off the north coast of New Guinea, shook and knocked their idols about in order to ward off ill-luck.³⁶⁶ At Shepherd's Isle Captain Moresby had to be disenchanted before he was allowed to land his boat's crew. When he leaped ashore, a devil-man seized his right hand and waved a bunch of palm leaves over the captain's head. Then "he placed the leaves in my left hand, putting a small green twig into his mouth, still holding me fast, and then, as if with great effort, drew the twig from his mouth – this was extracting the evil spirit – after which he blew violently, as if to speed it away. I now held a twig between my teeth, and he went through the same

³⁶⁴ *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), IVme Série, vi. (1853) pp. 134 sq.

³⁶⁵ H. von Rosenberg, *Der malayische Archipel* (Leipsic, 1878), p. 198.

³⁶⁶ D. W. Horst, "Rapport van eene reis naar de Noordkust van Nieuw Guinea," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxii. (1889) p. 229.

process.” Then the two raced round a couple of sticks fixed in the ground and bent to an angle at the top, which had leaves tied to it. After some more ceremonies the devil-man concluded by leaping to the level of Captain Moresby's shoulders (his hands resting on the captain's shoulders) several times, “as if to show that he had conquered the devil, and was now trampling him into the earth.”³⁶⁷ North American Indians “have an idea that strangers, particularly white strangers, are oftentimes accompanied by evil spirits. Of these they have great dread, as creating and delighting in mischief. One of the duties of the medicine chief is to exorcise these spirits. I have sometimes ridden into or through a camp where I was unknown or unexpected, to be confronted by a tall, half-naked savage, standing in the middle of the circle of lodges, and yelling in a sing-song, nasal tone, a string of unintelligible words.”³⁶⁸

Disenchantment effected by means of stinging ants and pungent spices. Disenchantment effected by cuts with knives.

When Crevaux was travelling in South America he entered a village of the Apalai Indians. A few moments after his arrival some of the Indians brought him a number of large black ants, of a species whose bite is painful, fastened on palm leaves. Then all the people of the village, without distinction of age or sex,

³⁶⁷ Capt. John Moresby, *Discoveries and Surveys in New Guinea* (London, 1876), pp. 102 sq.

³⁶⁸ R. I. Dodge, *Our Wild Indians* (Hartford, Conn., 1886), p. 119.

presented themselves to him, and he had to sting them all with the ants on their faces, thighs, and other parts of their bodies. Sometimes when he applied the ants too tenderly they called out "More! more!" and were not satisfied till their skin was thickly studded with tiny swellings like what might have been produced by whipping them with nettles.³⁶⁹ The object of this ceremony is made plain by the custom observed in Amboyna and Uliase of sprinkling sick people with pungent spices, such as ginger and cloves, chewed fine, in order by the prickling sensation to drive away the demon of disease which may be clinging to their persons.³⁷⁰ In Java a popular cure for gout or rheumatism is to rub Spanish pepper into the nails of the fingers and toes of the sufferer; the pungency of the pepper is supposed to be too much for the gout or rheumatism, who accordingly departs in haste.³⁷¹ So on the Slave Coast of Africa the mother of a sick child sometimes believes that an evil spirit has taken possession of the child's body, and in order to drive him out, she makes small cuts in the body of the little sufferer and inserts green peppers or spices in the wounds, believing that she will thereby

³⁶⁹ J. Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1883), p. 300.

³⁷⁰ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 78.

³⁷¹ J. Kreemer, "Hoe de Javaan zijne zieken verzorgt," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xxxvi. (1892) p. 13. Mr. E. W. Lewis, of Woodthorpe, Atkins Road, Clapham Park, London, S.W., writes to me (July 2, 1902) that his grandmother, a native of Cheshire, used to make bees sting her as a cure for local rheumatism; she said the remedy was infallible and had been handed down to her from her mother.

hurt the evil spirit and force him to be gone. The poor child naturally screams with pain, but the mother hardens her heart in the belief that the demon is suffering equally.³⁷² In Hawaii a patient is sometimes pricked with bamboo needles for the sake of hurting and expelling a refractory demon who is lurking in the sufferer's body and making him ill.³⁷³ Dyak sorceresses in south-eastern Borneo will sometimes slash the body of a sick man with sharp knives in order, it is said, to allow the demon of disease to escape through the cuts;³⁷⁴ but perhaps the notion rather is to make the present quarters of the spirit too hot for him. With a similar intention some of the natives of Borneo and Celebes sprinkle rice upon the head or body of a person supposed to be infested by dangerous spirits; a fowl is then brought, which, by picking up the rice from the person's head or body, removes along with it the spirit or ghost which is clinging like a burr to his skin. This is done, for example, to persons who have attended a funeral, and who may therefore be supposed to be infested by the ghost of the deceased.³⁷⁵ Similarly Basutos, who have carried a corpse to the grave, have their hands scratched with a knife from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the forefinger, and magic

³⁷² Father Baudin, "Le Fétichisme," *Missions Catholiques*, xvi. (1884) p. 249; A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1894), pp. 113 sq.

³⁷³ A. Bastian, *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), i. 116.

³⁷⁴ J. B. de Callone, "Iets over de geneeswijze en ziekten der Daijakers ter Zuid Oostkust van Borneo," *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indie*, 1840, dl. i. p. 418.

³⁷⁵ M. T. H. Perelaer, *Ethnographische Beschrijving der Dajaks*, pp. 44, 54, 252; B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes* (The Hague, 1875), p. 49.

stuff is rubbed into the wound,³⁷⁶ for the purpose, no doubt, of removing the ghost which may be adhering to their skin. Among the Barotse of south-eastern Africa a few days after a funeral the sorcerer makes an incision in the forehead of each surviving member of the family and fills it with medicine, “in order to ward off contagion and the effect of the sorcery which caused the death.”³⁷⁷ When elephant-hunters in East Africa have killed an elephant they get upon its carcass, make little cuts in their toes, and rub gunpowder into the cuts. This is done with the double intention of counteracting any evil influence that may emanate from the dead elephant, and of acquiring thereby the fleetness of foot possessed by the animal in its life.³⁷⁸ The people of Nias carefully scrub and scour the weapons and clothes which they buy, in order to efface all connexion between the things and the persons from whom they bought them.³⁷⁹

Ceremonies observed at the reception of strangers may sometimes be intended to counteract their enchantments.

It is probable that the same dread of strangers, rather than any desire to do them honour, is the motive of certain ceremonies

³⁷⁶ H. Grützner, “Über die Gebräuche der Basutho,” in *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie, und Urgeschichte*, 1877, pp. 84 sq.

³⁷⁷ L. Declé, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), p. 81.

³⁷⁸ P. Reichard, *Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig, 1892), p. 431.

³⁷⁹ Nieuwenhuisen en Rosenberg, “Verslag omtrent het eiland Nias,” in *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (Batavia, 1863) p. 26.

which are sometimes observed at their reception, but of which the intention is not directly stated. In the Ongtong Java Islands, which are inhabited by Polynesians, and lie a little to the north of the Solomon Islands, the priests or sorcerers seem to wield great influence. Their main business is to summon or exorcise spirits for the purpose of averting or dispelling sickness, and of procuring favourable winds, a good catch of fish, and so on. When strangers land on the islands, they are first of all received by the sorcerers, sprinkled with water, anointed with oil, and girt with dried pandanus leaves. At the same time sand and water are freely thrown about in all directions, and the newcomer and his boat are wiped with green leaves. After this ceremony the strangers are introduced by the sorcerers to the chief.³⁸⁰ In Afghanistan and in some parts of Persia the traveller, before he enters a village, is frequently received with a sacrifice of animal life or food, or of fire and incense. The Afghan Boundary Mission, in passing by villages in Afghanistan, was often met with fire and incense.³⁸¹ Sometimes a tray of lighted embers is thrown under the hoofs of the traveller's horse, with the words, "You are welcome."³⁸² On entering a village in central Africa Emin Pasha was received with the sacrifice of two goats; their

³⁸⁰ R. Parkinson, "Zur Ethnographie der Ontong Java- und Tasman-Inseln," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, x. (1897) p. 112.

³⁸¹ T. S. Weir, "Note on Sacrifices in India as a Means of averting Epidemics," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, i. 35.

³⁸² E. O'Donovan, *The Merv Oasis* (London, 1882), ii. 58.

blood was sprinkled on the path and the chief stepped over the blood to greet Emin.³⁸³ Before strangers entered the country or city of Benin, custom compelled them to have their feet washed; sometimes the ceremony was performed in a sacred place.³⁸⁴ Amongst the Esquimaux of Cumberland Inlet, when a stranger arrives at an encampment, the sorcerer goes out to meet him. The stranger folds his arms and inclines his head to one side, so as to expose his cheek, upon which the magician deals a terrible blow, sometimes felling him to the ground. Next the sorcerer in his turn presents his cheek to the smiter and receives a buffet from the stranger. Then they kiss each other, the ceremony is over, and the stranger is hospitably received by all.³⁸⁵ Sometimes the dread of strangers and their magic is too great to allow of their reception on any terms. Thus when Speke arrived at a certain village, the natives shut their doors against him, “because they had never before seen a white man nor the tin boxes that the men were carrying: ‘Who knows,’ they said, ‘but that these very boxes are the plundering Watuta transformed and come to kill us? You cannot be admitted.’ No persuasion could avail with them, and

³⁸³ *Emin Pasha in Central Africa, being a Collection of his Letters and Journals* (London, 1888), p. 107.

³⁸⁴ H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin* (Halifax, England, 1903), p. 123.

³⁸⁵ *Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition made by Charles F. Hall*, edited by Prof. J. G. Nourse, U.S.N. (Washington, 1879), p. 269, note. Compare Fr. Boas, “The Central Eskimo,” *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 609.

the party had to proceed to the next village.”³⁸⁶

Ceremonies observed at entering a strange land to disenchant it. Ceremonies at entering a strange land to disenchant it or to propitiate the local spirits.

The fear thus entertained of alien visitors is often mutual. Entering a strange land the savage feels that he is treading enchanted ground, and he takes steps to guard against the demons that haunt it and the magical arts of its inhabitants. Thus on going to a strange land the Maoris performed certain ceremonies to make it *noa* (common), lest it might have been previously *tapu* (sacred).³⁸⁷ When Baron Miklucho-Maclay was approaching a village on the Maclay Coast of New Guinea, one of the natives who accompanied him broke a branch from a tree and going aside whispered to it for a while; then stepping up to each member of the party, one after another, he spat something upon his back and gave him some blows with the branch. Lastly, he went into the forest and buried the branch under withered leaves in the thickest part of the jungle. This ceremony was believed to protect the party against all treachery and danger in the village they were approaching.³⁸⁸ The idea probably was

³⁸⁶ J. A. Grant, *A Walk across Africa*, pp. 104 sq.

³⁸⁷ E. Shortland, *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders*² (London, 1856), p. 103.

³⁸⁸ N. von Miklucho-Maclay, “Ethnologische Bemerkungen über die Papuas der Maclay-Küste in Neu-Guinea,” *Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie*, xxxvi. 317 sq.

that the malignant influences were drawn off from the persons into the branch and buried with it in the depths of the forest. Before Stuhlmann and his companions entered the territory of the Wanyamwesi in central Africa, one of his men killed a white cock and buried it in a pot just at the boundary.³⁸⁹ In Australia, when a strange tribe has been invited into a district and is approaching the encampment of the tribe which owns the land, “the strangers carry lighted bark or burning sticks in their hands, for the purpose, they say, of clearing and purifying the air.”³⁹⁰ On the coast of Victoria there is a tract of country between the La Trobe River and the Yarra River, which some of the aborigines called the Bad Country. It was supposed to act injuriously on strangers. Hence when a man of another clan entered it he needed some one of the natives to look after him; and if his guardian went away from the camp, he deputed another to take his place. During his first visit, before he became as it were acclimatised, the visitor did nothing for himself as to food, drinking-water, or lodging. He was painted with a band of white pipe-clay across the face below the eyes, and had to learn the Nulit language before going further. He slept on a thick layer of leaves so that he should not touch the ground; and he was fed with flesh-meat from the point of a burnt stick, which he removed with his teeth, not with his lips. His drinking-water was drawn from a small hole in the ground by his entertainers, and they made it muddy by stirring it

³⁸⁹ Fr. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 94.

³⁹⁰ R. Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, i. 134.

with a stick. He might only take three mouthfuls at a time, each of which he had to let slowly trickle down his throat. If he did otherwise, his throat would close up.³⁹¹ The Kayans and Kenyahs of Borneo think it well to conciliate the spirit of the land when they enter a strange country. "The old men, indeed, trusting to the protection afforded by omens, are in little need of further aid, but when young boys are brought into a new river of importance, the hospitality of the local demons is invoked. The Kayans make an offering of fowls' eggs, which must not be bought on the spot, but are carried from the house, sometimes for distances so long that the devotion of the travellers is more apparent than their presents to the spirits of the land. Each boy takes an egg and puts it in a bamboo split at the end into four, while one of the older men calls upon the hills, rocks, trees, and streams to hear him and to witness the offering. Careful to disguise the true nature of the gift, he speaks of it as *ovē*, a yam, using a form of words fixed by usage. 'Omen bird,' he shouts into the air, 'we have brought you these boys. It is on their account only that we have prepared this feast. Harm them not; make things go pleasantly; and they give you the usual offering of a yam. I give this to the country.' The little ceremony is performed behind the hut where the night is spent, and the boys wait about for the charm to take effect. The custom of the Kenyahs shows the same feeling for the unknown and unseen spirits that are supposed to abound. A fowl's feathers, one for each boy, are held by an old man, while the youngsters

³⁹¹ A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, p. 403.

touch his arm. The invocation is quite a powerful example of native rhetoric: 'Smooth away trouble, ye mystic mountains, hills, valleys, soil, rocks, trees. Shield the lives of the children who have come hither.' ”³⁹² When the Toradjas of central Celebes are on a head-hunting expedition and have entered the enemy's country, they may not eat any fruits which the foe has planted nor any animal which he has reared until they have first committed an act of hostility, as by burning a house or killing a man. They think that if they broke this rule they would receive something of the soul or spiritual essence of the enemy into themselves, which would destroy the mystic virtue of their talismans.³⁹³ It is said that just before Greek armies advanced to the shock of battle, a man bearing a lighted torch stepped out from either side and threw his torch into the space between the hosts. Then they retired unmolested, for they were thought to be sacred to Ares and inviolable.³⁹⁴ Now some peoples fancy that when they advance to battle the spirits of their fathers hover in the van.³⁹⁵ Hence fire thrown out in front of the line of battle may be meant to disperse these shadowy combatants, leaving the issue of the fight to be determined by more substantial weapons than ghosts

³⁹² Ch. Hose, *Notes on the Natives of British Borneo* (in manuscript).

³⁹³ A. C. Kruijt, "Het koppensnellen der Toradja's van Midden-Celebes, en zijne beteekenis," *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der Koninkl. Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, iv. Reeks, iii. (1899) p. 204.

³⁹⁴ Scholiast on Euripides, *Phoenissae*, 1377, ed. E. Schwartz.

³⁹⁵ Conon, *Narrationes*, 18; Pausanias, iii. 19. 12; Francis Fleming, *Southern Africa* (London, 1856), p. 259; Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, p. 307.

can wield. Similarly the fire which is sometimes borne at the head of an army³⁹⁶ is perhaps in some cases intended to dissipate the evil influences, whether magical or spiritual, with which the air of the enemy's country may be conceived to teem.

Purificatory ceremonies observed on the return from a journey.

Again, it is thought that a man who has been on a journey may have contracted some magic evil from the strangers with whom he has been brought into contact. Hence, on returning home, before he is readmitted to the society of his tribe and friends, he has to undergo certain purificatory ceremonies. Thus the Bechuanas “cleanse or purify themselves after journeys by shaving their heads, etc., lest they should have contracted from strangers some evil by witchcraft or sorcery.”³⁹⁷ In some parts of western Africa when a man returns home after a long absence, before he is allowed to visit his wife, he must wash his person with a particular fluid, and receive from the sorcerer a certain mark on his forehead, in order to counteract any magic spell which a stranger woman may have cast on him in his absence, and which might be communicated through him to the women of his village.³⁹⁸ Every year about one-third of the men of the Wanyamwesi tribe make journeys to the east coast of Africa

³⁹⁶ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. ii. pp. 263 sq.

³⁹⁷ John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, being a Narrative of a Second Journey in the Interior of that Country* (London, 1822), ii. 205.

³⁹⁸ Ladislaus Magyar, *Reisen in Süd-Afrika* (Buda-Pesth and Leipsic, 1859), p. 203.

either as porters or as traffickers. Before he sets out, the husband smears his cheeks with a sort of meal-porridge, and during his absence his wife may eat no flesh and must keep for him the sediment of the porridge in the pot. On their return from the coast the men sprinkle meal every day on all the paths leading to the camp, for the purpose, it is supposed, of keeping evil spirits off; and when they reach their homes the men again smear porridge on their faces, while the women who have stayed at home strew ashes on their heads.³⁹⁹ In Uganda, when a man returns from a journey, his wife takes some of the bark cloths from the bed of one of his children and lays them on her husband's bed; and as he enters the house, he jumps over one of his wives who has children by him, or over one of his children. If he neglects to do this, one of his children or one of his wives will die.⁴⁰⁰ When Damaras return home after a long absence, they are given a small portion of the fat of particular animals, which is supposed to possess certain virtues.⁴⁰¹ A story is told of a Navajo Indian who, after long wanderings, returned to his own people. When he came within sight of his house, his people made him stop and told him not to approach nearer till they had summoned a shaman. When the shaman was come "ceremonies were performed over the returned wanderer, and

³⁹⁹ Fr. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 89.

⁴⁰⁰ J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 62.

⁴⁰¹ C. J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami*² (London, 1856), p. 223.

he was washed from head to foot, and dried with corn-meal; for thus do the Navajo treat all who return to their homes from captivity with another tribe, in order that all alien substances and influences may be removed from them. When he had been thus purified he entered the house, and his people embraced him and wept over him.”⁴⁰² Two Hindoo ambassadors, who had been sent to England by a native prince and had returned to India, were considered to have so polluted themselves by contact with strangers that nothing but being born again could restore them to purity. “For the purpose of regeneration it is directed to make an image of pure gold of the female power of nature, in the shape either of a woman or of a cow. In this statue the person to be regenerated is enclosed, and dragged through the usual channel. As a statue of pure gold and of proper dimensions would be too expensive, it is sufficient to make an image of the sacred *Yoni*, through which the person to be regenerated is to pass.” Such an image of pure gold was made at the prince's command, and his ambassadors were born again by being dragged through it.⁴⁰³ In some of the Moluccas, when a brother or young blood-relation returns from a long journey, a young girl awaits him at the door with a *caladi* leaf in her hand and water in the leaf. She throws the water over his face and bids him welcome.⁴⁰⁴ Among the

⁴⁰² Washington Matthews, “The Mountain Chant: a Navajo Ceremony,” *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1887), p. 410.

⁴⁰³ *Asiatick Researches*, vi. 535 sq. ed. 4to (p. 537 sq. ed. 8vo).

⁴⁰⁴ François Valentyn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, iii. 16.

Kayans of Borneo, men who have been absent on a long journey are secluded for four days in a small hut made specially for the purpose before they are allowed to enter their own house.⁴⁰⁵ The natives of Savage Island (South Pacific) invariably killed, not only all strangers in distress who were drifted to their shores, but also any of their own people who had gone away in a ship and returned home. This was done out of dread of disease. Long after they began to venture out to ships they would not immediately use the things they obtained from them, but hung them up in quarantine for weeks in the bush.⁴⁰⁶

Special precautions taken to guard the king against the magic of strangers.

When precautions like these are taken on behalf of the people in general against the malignant influence supposed to be exercised by strangers, it is no wonder that special measures are adopted to protect the king from the same insidious danger. In the middle ages the envoys who visited a Tartar Khan were obliged to pass between two fires before they were admitted to his presence, and the gifts they brought were also carried between the fires. The reason assigned for the custom was that the fire purged away any magic influence which the strangers might mean to exercise over the Khan.⁴⁰⁷ When subject chiefs

⁴⁰⁵ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *In Centraal Borneo*, i. 165.

⁴⁰⁶ G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 305 sq.

⁴⁰⁷ De Plano Carpini, *Historia Mongolorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus*, ed. D'Avezac (Paris, 1838), cap. iii. § iii. p. 627, cap. ult. § i. x. p. 744, and Appendix, p. p.

come with their retainers to visit Kalamba (the most powerful chief of the Bashilange in the Congo Basin) for the first time or after being rebellious, they have to bathe, men and women together, in two brooks on two successive days, passing the nights under the open sky in the market-place. After the second bath they proceed, entirely naked, to the house of Kalamba, who makes a long white mark on the breast and forehead of each of them. Then they return to the market-place and dress, after which they undergo the pepper ordeal. Pepper is dropped into the eyes of each of them, and while this is being done the sufferer has to make a confession of all his sins, to answer all questions that may be put to him, and to take certain vows. This ends the ceremony, and the strangers are now free to take up their quarters in the town for as long as they choose to remain.⁴⁰⁸ Before strangers were admitted to the presence of Lobengula, king of the Matebeles, they had to be treated with a sticky green medicine, which was profusely sprinkled over them by means of a cow's tail.⁴⁰⁹ At Kilema, in eastern Africa, when a stranger arrives, a medicine is made out of a certain plant or a tree fetched from a distance, mixed with the blood of a sheep or goat. With this mixture the stranger is besmeared or

775; "Travels of William de Rubriques into Tartary and China," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vii. 82 sq.

⁴⁰⁸ Paul Pogge, "Bericht über die Station Mukenge," *Mittheilungen der Afrikanischen Gesellschaft in Deutschland*, iv. (1883-1885) pp. 182 sq.

⁴⁰⁹ Coillard, "Voyage au pays des Banyais et au Zambèse," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), VI^{me} Série, xx. (1880) p. 393.

besprinkled before he is admitted to the presence of the king.⁴¹⁰ The king of Monomotapa, in South-East Africa, might not wear any foreign stuffs for fear of their being poisoned.⁴¹¹ The king of Cacongo, in West Africa, might not possess or even touch European goods, except metals, arms, and articles made of wood and ivory. Persons wearing foreign stuffs were very careful to keep at a distance from his person, lest they should touch him.⁴¹² The king of Loango might not look upon the house of a white man.⁴¹³ We have already seen how the native king of Fernando Po dwells secluded from all contact with the whites in the depths of an extinct volcano, shunning the very sight of a pale face, which, in the belief of his subjects, would be instantly fatal to him.⁴¹⁴ In a wild mountainous district of Java, to the south of Bantam, there exists a small aboriginal race who have been described as a living antiquity. These are the Baduwis, who about the year 1443 fled from Bantam to escape conversion to Islam, and in their mountain fastnesses, holding aloof from their neighbours, still cleave to the quaint and primitive ways of their heathen forefathers. Their villages are perched in spots which

⁴¹⁰ J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (London, 1860), pp. 252 sq.

⁴¹¹ O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 391.

⁴¹² Proyart, "History of Loango, Kakongo," etc., in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 583; Dapper, *op. cit.* p. 340; J. Ogilby, *Africa* (London, 1670), p. 521. Compare A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 288.

⁴¹³ A. Bastian, *op. cit.* i. 268 sq.

⁴¹⁴ See above, pp. 8 sq.

deep ravines, lofty precipices, raging torrents, and impenetrable forests combine to render almost inaccessible. Their hereditary ruler bears the title of Girang-Pu-un and unites in his hands the temporal and spiritual power. He must never quit the capital, and none even of his subjects who live outside the town are ever allowed to see him. Were an alien to set foot in his dwelling, the place would be desecrated and abandoned. In former times the representatives of the Dutch Government and the Regent of Java once paid a visit to the capital of the Baduwis. That very night all the people fled the place and never returned.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁵ L. von Ende, "Die Baduwis auf Java," *Mittheilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xix. (1889) pp. 7-10. As to the Baduwis (Badoejs) see also G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Leyden, 1893), pp. 640-643.

§ 2. Taboos on Eating and Drinking

Spiritual dangers of eating and drinking and precautions taken against them.

In the opinion of savages the acts of eating and drinking are attended with special danger; for at these times the soul may escape from the mouth, or be extracted by the magic arts of an enemy present. Among the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast “the common belief seems to be that the indwelling spirit leaves the body and returns to it through the mouth; hence, should it have gone out, it behoves a man to be careful about opening his mouth, lest a homeless spirit should take advantage of the opportunity and enter his body. This, it appears, is considered most likely to take place while the man is eating.”⁴¹⁶ Precautions are therefore taken to guard against these dangers. Thus of the Battas of Sumatra it is said that “since the soul can leave the body, they always take care to prevent their soul from straying on occasions when they have most need of it. But it is only possible to prevent the soul from straying when one is in the house. At feasts one may find the whole house shut up, in order that the soul (*tondi*) may stay and enjoy the good things set before it.”⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 107.

⁴¹⁷ J. B. Neumann, “Het Pane- en Bila- Stroomgebied op het eiland Sumatra,” *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, dl. iii. (1886) Afdeeling, meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 2, p. 300.

The Zafimanelo in Madagascar lock their doors when they eat, and hardly any one ever sees them eating.⁴¹⁸ In Shoa, one of the southern provinces of Abyssinia, the doors of the house are scrupulously barred at meals to exclude the evil eye, and a fire is invariably lighted, else devils would enter and there would be no blessing on the meat.⁴¹⁹ Every time that an Abyssinian of rank drinks, a servant holds a cloth before his master to guard him from the evil eye.⁴²⁰ The Warua will not allow any one to see them eating and drinking, being doubly particular that no person of the opposite sex shall see them doing so. "I had to pay a man to let me see him drink; I could not make a man let a woman see him drink." When offered a drink of *pombe* they often ask that a cloth may be held up to hide them whilst drinking. Further, every man and woman must cook for themselves; each person must have his own fire.⁴²¹ The Tuaregs of the Sahara never eat or drink in presence of any one else.⁴²² The Thompson Indians of British Columbia thought that a shaman could bewitch them most easily

⁴¹⁸ J. Richardson, "Tanala Customs, Superstitions and Beliefs," *The Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, Reprint of the First Four Numbers* (Antananarivo, 1885), p. 219.

⁴¹⁹ W. Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, iii. 171 sq.

⁴²⁰ Th. Lefebvre, *Voyage en Abyssinie*, i. p. lxxii.

⁴²¹ Lieut. V. L. Cameron, *Across Africa* (London, 1877), ii. 71; *id.*, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vi. (1877) p. 173.

⁴²² Ebn-el-Dyn el-Eghouâthy, "Relation d'un voyage dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique septentrionale," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), II^{me} Série, i. (1834) p. 290.

when they were eating, drinking, or smoking; hence they avoided doing any of these things in presence of an unknown shaman.⁴²³ In Fiji persons who suspected others of plotting against them avoided eating in their presence, or were careful to leave no fragment of food behind.⁴²⁴

Seclusion of kings at their meals.

If these are the ordinary precautions taken by common people, the precautions taken by kings are extraordinary. The king of Loango may not be seen eating or drinking by man or beast under pain of death. A favourite dog having broken into the room where the king was dining, the king ordered it to be killed on the spot. Once the king's own son, a boy of twelve years old, inadvertently saw the king drink. Immediately the king ordered him to be finely appparelled and feasted, after which he commanded him to be cut in quarters, and carried about the city with a proclamation that he had seen the king drink. "When the king has a mind to drink, he has a cup of wine brought; he that brings it has a bell in his hand, and as soon as he has delivered the cup to the king, he turns his face from him and rings the bell, on which all present fall down with their faces to the ground, and continue so till the king has drank... His eating is much in the same style, for which he has a house on purpose, where his victuals

⁴²³ J. Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, vol. i. part iv. (April 1900) p. 360.

⁴²⁴ Th. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*.² i. 249.

are set upon a bensa or table: which he goes to, and shuts the door: when he has done, he knocks and comes out. So that none ever see the king eat or drink. For it is believed that if any one should, the king shall immediately die.” The remnants of his food are buried, doubtless to prevent them from falling into the hands of sorcerers, who by means of these fragments might cast a fatal spell over the monarch.⁴²⁵ The rules observed by the neighbouring king of Cacongo were similar; it was thought that the king would die if any of his subjects were to see him drink.⁴²⁶ It is a capital offence to see the king of Dahomey at his meals. When he drinks in public, as he does on extraordinary occasions, he hides himself behind a curtain, or handkerchiefs are held up round his head, and all the people throw themselves with their faces to the earth.⁴²⁷ Any one who saw the Muata Jamwo (a great potentate in the Congo Basin) eating or drinking would certainly be put to death.⁴²⁸ When the king (*Muata*) of Cazembe raises his glass to his mouth to drink, all who are present prostrate themselves and avert their faces in such a manner as not to see

⁴²⁵ “Adventures of Andrew Battel,” in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 330; O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, p. 330; A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 262 sq.; R. F. Burton, *Abeokuta and the Cameroons Mountains*, i. 147.

⁴²⁶ Proyard's “History of Loango, Kakongo,” etc., in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 584.

⁴²⁷ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa*, p. 202; John Duncan, *Travels in Western Africa*, i. 222. Compare W. W. Reade, *Savage Africa*, p. 543.

⁴²⁸ Paul Pogge, *Im Reiche des Muata Jamwo* (Berlin, 1880), p. 231.

him drinking.⁴²⁹ At Asaba, on the Lower Niger, where the kings or chiefs number fully four hundred, no one is allowed to prepare the royal dishes. The chiefs act as their own cooks and eat in the strictest privacy.⁴³⁰ The king and royal family of Walo, on the Senegal, never take their meals in public; it is expressly forbidden to see them eating.⁴³¹ Among the Monbutto of central Africa the king invariably takes his meals in private; no one may see the contents of his dish, and all that he leaves is carefully thrown into a pit set apart for that purpose. Everything that the king has handled is held sacred and may not be touched.⁴³² When the king of Unyoro in central Africa went to drink milk in the dairy, every man must leave the royal enclosure and all the women had to cover their heads till the king returned. No one might see him drink. One wife accompanied him to the dairy and handed him the milk-pot, but she turned away her face while he drained it.⁴³³ The king of Susa, a region to the south of Abyssinia, presides

⁴²⁹ F. T. Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa* (London, 1861), ii. 256.

⁴³⁰ A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, *Up the Niger* (London, 1892), p. 38.

⁴³¹ Baron Roger, "Notice sur le gouvernement, les mœurs et les superstitions des Nègres du pays de Walo," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), viii. (1827) p. 351.

⁴³² G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, ii. 45 (third edition, London, 1878); G. Casati, *Ten Years in Equatoria* (London and New York, 1891), i. 177. As to the various customs observed by Monbutto chiefs in drinking see G. Burrows, *The Land of the Pigmies* (London, 1898), pp. 88, 91.

⁴³³ J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 526, from information furnished by the Rev. John Roscoe.

daily at the feast in the long banqueting-hall, but is hidden from the gaze of his subjects by a curtain.⁴³⁴ Among the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast the person of the king is sacred, and if he drinks in public every one must turn away the head so as not to see him, while some of the women of the court hold up a cloth before him as a screen. He never eats in public, and the people pretend to believe that he neither eats nor sleeps. It is criminal to say the contrary.⁴³⁵ When the king of Tonga ate, all the people turned their backs to him.⁴³⁶ In the palace of the Persian kings there were two dining-rooms opposite each other; in one of them the king dined, in the other his guests. He could see them through a curtain on the door, but they could not see him. Generally the king took his meals alone; but sometimes his wife or some of his sons dined with him.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ W. Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, iii. 78.

⁴³⁵ A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 162 sq.

⁴³⁶ Capt. James Cook, *Voyages*, v. 374 (ed. 1809).

⁴³⁷ Heraclides Cumanus, in Athenaeus, iv. 26, p. 145 b-d. On the other hand, in Kafa no one, not even the king, may eat except in the presence of a legal witness. A slave is appointed to witness the king's meals, and his office is esteemed honourable. See F. G. Massaja, in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), Vme Série, i. (1861) pp. 330 sq.; Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: die geistige Cultur der Danâkil, Galla und Somâl* (Berlin, 1896), pp. 248 sq.

§ 3. Taboos on shewing the Face

Faces veiled to avert evil influences. Kings not to be seen by their subjects.

In some of the preceding cases the intention of eating and drinking in strict seclusion may perhaps be to hinder evil influences from entering the body rather than to prevent the escape of the soul. This certainly is the motive of some drinking customs observed by natives of the Congo region. Thus we are told of these people that “there is hardly a native who would dare to swallow a liquid without first conjuring the spirits. One of them rings a bell all the time he is drinking; another crouches down and places his left hand on the earth; another veils his head; another puts a stalk of grass or a leaf in his hair, or marks his forehead with a line of clay. This fetish custom assumes very varied forms. To explain them, the black is satisfied to say that they are an energetic mode of conjuring spirits.” In this part of the world a chief will commonly ring a bell at each draught of beer which he swallows, and at the same moment a lad stationed in front of him brandishes a spear “to keep at bay the spirits which might try to sneak into the old chief's body by the same road as the *massanga* (beer).”⁴³⁸ The same motive of warding

⁴³⁸ *Notes analytiques sur les collections ethnographiques du Musée du Congo*, I. *Les Arts, Religion* (Brussels, 1902-1906), p. 164.

off evil spirits probably explains the custom observed by some African sultans of veiling their faces. The Sultan of Darfur wraps up his face with a piece of white muslin, which goes round his head several times, covering his mouth and nose first, and then his forehead, so that only his eyes are visible. The same custom of veiling the face as a mark of sovereignty is said to be observed in other parts of central Africa.⁴³⁹ The Sultan of Wadai always speaks from behind a curtain; no one sees his face except his intimates and a few favoured persons.⁴⁴⁰ Similarly the Sultan of Bornu never shewed himself to his people and only spoke to them from behind a curtain.⁴⁴¹ The king of Chonga, a town on the right bank of the Niger above Egga, may not be seen by his subjects nor by strangers. At an interview he sits in his palace concealed by a mat which hangs like a curtain, and from behind it he converses with his visitor.⁴⁴² The Muysca Indians of Colombia had such a respect for their chiefs that they dared not lift their eyes on them, but always turned their backs when they had to address them. If a thief, after repeated punishments, proved incorrigible, they took him to the chief, and one of the nobles, turning the culprit round, said to him, "Since you think

⁴³⁹ Mohammed Ibn-Omar el Tounsy, *Voyage au Darfour* (Paris, 1845), p. 203; *Travels of an Arab Merchant* [Mohammed Ibn-Omar el Tounsy] in *Soudan*, abridged from the French (of Perron) by Bayle St. John (London, 1854), pp. 91 *sq.*

⁴⁴⁰ Mohammed Ibn-Omar el Tounsy, *Voyage au Ouadây* (Paris, 1851), p. 375.

⁴⁴¹ Ibn Batoutah, *Voyages*, ed. C. Defrémery et B. R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1853-1858), iv. 441.

⁴⁴² Le Commandant Mattei, *Bas-Niger, Bénoué, Dahomey* (Paris, 1895), pp. 90 *sq.*

yourself so great a lord that you have the right to break the laws, you have the right to look at the chief.” From that moment the criminal was regarded as infamous. Nobody would have anything to do with him or even speak to him, and he died an outcast.⁴⁴³ Montezuma was revered by his subjects as a god, and he set so much store on their reverence that if on going out of the city he saw a man lift up his eyes on him, he had the rash gazer put to death. He generally lived in the retirement of his palace, seldom shewing himself. On the days when he went to visit his gardens, he was carried in a litter through a street which was enclosed by walls; none but his bearers had the right to pass along that street.⁴⁴⁴ It was a law of the Medes that their king should be seen by nobody.⁴⁴⁵ The king of Jebu, on the Slave Coast of West Africa, is surrounded by a great deal of mystery. Until lately his face might not be seen even by his own subjects, and if circumstances compelled him to communicate with them he did so through a screen which concealed him from view. Now, though his face may be seen, it is customary to hide his body; and at audiences a cloth is held before him so as to conceal him from the neck downwards, and it is raised so as to cover him altogether whenever he coughs, sneezes, spits, or takes snuff. His face is partially hidden by a conical cap with hanging strings of

⁴⁴³ H. Ternaux-Compans, *Essai sur l'ancien Cundinamarca*, p. 60.

⁴⁴⁴ *Manuscrit Ramirez, histoire de l'origine des Indiens qui habitent la Nouvelle Espagne selon leurs traditions*, publié par D. Charnay (Paris, 1903), pp. 107 sq.

⁴⁴⁵ Herodotus, i. 99.

beads.⁴⁴⁶ Amongst the Tuaregs of the Sahara all the men (but not the women) keep the lower part of their face, especially the mouth, veiled constantly; the veil is never put off, not even in eating or sleeping.⁴⁴⁷ Among the Arabs men remarkable for their good looks have been known to veil their faces, especially at festivals and markets, in order to protect themselves against the evil eye.⁴⁴⁸ The same reason may explain the custom of muffling their faces which has been observed by Arab women from the earliest times⁴⁴⁹ and by the women of Boeotian Thebes in antiquity.⁴⁵⁰ In Samoa a man whose family god was the turtle might not eat a turtle, and if he helped a neighbour to cut up and cook one he had to wear a bandage tied over his mouth lest an embryo turtle should slip down his throat, grow up, and be his death.⁴⁵¹ In West Timor a speaker holds his right hand before his mouth in speaking lest a demon should enter his body, and lest the person with whom he converses should harm the speaker's

⁴⁴⁶ A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 170.

⁴⁴⁷ Ebn-el-Dyn el-Eghouathy, "Relation d'un voyage," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), II^{me} Série, i. (1834) p. 290; H. Duveyrier, *Exploration du Sahara: les Touareg du Nord*, pp. 391 sq.; Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, xi. 838 sq.; James Richardson, *Travels in the Great Desert of Sahara*, ii. 208.

⁴⁴⁸ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*² (Berlin, 1897), p. 196.

⁴⁴⁹ Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis*, 17 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, ii. col. 912).

⁴⁵⁰ Pseudo-Dicaearchus, *Descriptio Graeciae*, 18, in *Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, i. 103; *id.*, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 259.

⁴⁵¹ G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 67 sq.

soul by magic.⁴⁵² In New South Wales for some time after his initiation into the tribal mysteries, a young blackfellow (whose soul at this time is in a critical state) must always cover his mouth with a rug when a woman is present.⁴⁵³ We have already seen how common is the notion that the life or soul may escape by the mouth or nostrils.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² J. G. F. Riedel, "Die Landschaft Dawan oder West-Timor," *Deutsche geographische Blätter*, x. 230.

⁴⁵³ A. W. Howitt, "On some Australian Ceremonies of Initiation," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiii. (1884) p. 456.

⁴⁵⁴ Above, pp. [30](#) *sqq.*

§ 4. Taboos on quitting the House

Kings forbidden to leave their palaces or to be seen abroad by their subjects.

By an extension of the like precaution kings are sometimes forbidden ever to leave their palaces; or, if they are allowed to do so, their subjects are forbidden to see them abroad. We have seen that the priestly king at Shark Point, West Africa, may never quit his house or even his chair, in which he is obliged to sleep sitting; and that the king of Fernando Po, whom no white man may see, is reported to be confined to his house with shackles on his legs.⁴⁵⁵ The fetish king of Benin, who was worshipped as a deity by his subjects, might not quit his palace.⁴⁵⁶ After his coronation the king of Loango is confined to his palace, which he may not leave.⁴⁵⁷ The king of Onitsha, on the Niger, “does not step out of his house into the town unless a human sacrifice is made to propitiate the gods: on this account he never goes

⁴⁵⁵ See above, pp. [5](#), [8](#) sq.

⁴⁵⁶ This rule was mentioned to me in conversation by Miss Mary H. Kingsley. However, he is said to have shewn himself outside his palace on solemn occasions once or twice a year. See O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, pp. 311 sq.; H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin*, p. 74. As to the worship of the king of Benin, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. p. 396.

⁴⁵⁷ A. Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste*, i. 263. However, a case is recorded in which he marched out to war (*ibid.* i. 268 sq.).

out beyond the precincts of his premises.”⁴⁵⁸ Indeed we are told that he may not quit his palace under pain of death or of giving up one or more slaves to be executed in his presence. As the wealth of the country is measured in slaves, the king takes good care not to infringe the law. One day the monarch, charmed by some presents which he had received from a French officer, politely attended his visitor to the gate, and in a moment of forgetfulness was about to break bounds, when his chamberlain, seizing his majesty by his legs, and his wives, friends, and servants rushing up, prevented him from taking so fatal a step. Yet once a year at the Feast of Yams the king is allowed, and even required by custom, to dance before his people outside the high mud wall of the palace. In dancing he carries a great weight, generally a sack of earth, on his back to prove that he is still able to support the burden and cares of state. Were he unable to discharge this duty, he would be immediately deposed and perhaps stoned.⁴⁵⁹ The Tomas or Habes, a hardy race of mountaineers who inhabit Mount Bandiagara in Nigeria, revere a great fetish doctor called the Ogom, who is not suffered to quit his house on any pretext.⁴⁶⁰ Among the natives of the Cross

⁴⁵⁸ S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger* (London, 1859), p. 433.

⁴⁵⁹ Le Commandant Mattei, *Bas-Niger, Bénoué, Dahomey* (Paris, 1895), pp. 67-72. The annual dance of the king of Onitsha outside of his palace is mentioned also by S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor (*op. cit.* p. 379), and A. F. Mockler-Ferryman (*Up the Niger*, p. 22).

⁴⁶⁰ “Mission Voulet-Chanoine,” *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), VIII^{me}

River in Southern Nigeria the sacred chiefs of certain villages are confined to their compounds, that is, to the enclosures in which their houses are built. Such chiefs may be confined for years within these narrow bounds. "Among these primitive people, the head chief is often looked upon as half divine, the human representative of their ancestral god. He regulates their religious rites, and is by some tribes believed to have the power of making rain fall when they require it, and of bringing them good harvests. So, being of such value to the community, he is not permitted, except on very rare occasions, to go outside his compound, lest evil should befall him, and the whole town have to suffer."⁴⁶¹ The kings of Ethiopia were worshipped as gods, but were mostly kept shut up in their palaces.⁴⁶² On the mountainous coast of Pontus there dwelt in antiquity a rude and warlike people named the Mosyni or Mosynoeci, through whose rugged country the Ten Thousand marched on their famous retreat from Asia to Europe. These barbarians kept their king in close custody at the top of a high tower, from which after his election he was never more allowed to descend. Here he dispensed justice to his people; but if he offended them, they punished him by stopping his rations

Série, xx. (1899) p. 223.

⁴⁶¹ C. Partridge, *Cross River Natives* (London, 1905), p. 7; compare *id.* pp. 8, 200, 202, 203 *sq.* See also Major A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London, 1906), pp. 371 *sq.*

⁴⁶² Strabo, xvii. 2. 2 σέβονται δ' ὡς θεοὺς τοὺς βασιλεῖας, κατακλειστοὺς ὄντας καὶ οἰκουροὺς τὸ πλεόν.

for a whole day, or even starving him to death.⁴⁶³ The kings of Sabaea or Sheba, the spice country of Arabia, were not allowed to go out of their palaces; if they did so, the mob stoned them to death.⁴⁶⁴ But at the top of the palace there was a window with a chain attached to it. If any man deemed he had suffered wrong, he pulled the chain, and the king perceived him and called him in and gave judgment.⁴⁶⁵ So down to recent times the kings of Corea, whose persons were sacred and received “honours almost divine,” were shut up in their palace from the age of twelve or fifteen; and if a suitor wished to obtain justice of the king he sometimes lit a great bonfire on a mountain facing the palace; the king saw the fire and informed himself of the case.⁴⁶⁶ The

⁴⁶³ Xenophon, *Anabasis*, v. 4. 26; Scymnus Chius, *Orbis descriptio*, 900 *sqq.* (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, i. 234); Diodorus Siculus, xiv. 30. 6 *sq.*; Nicolaus Damascenus, quoted by Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, xlv. 41 (vol. ii. p. 185, ed. Meineke); Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* ii. 1026, *sqq.*, with the note of the scholiast; Pomponius Mela, i. 106, p. 29, ed. Parthey. Die Chrysostom refers to the custom without mentioning the name of the people (*Or.* xiv. vol. i. p. 257, ed. L. Dindorf).

⁴⁶⁴ Strabo, xvi. 4. 19, p. 778; Diodorus Siculus, iii. 47. Inscriptions found in Sheba (the country about two hundred miles north of Aden) seem to shew that the land was at first ruled by a succession of priestly kings, who were afterwards followed by kings in the ordinary sense. The names of many of these priestly kings (*makarribs*, literally “blessers”) are preserved in inscriptions. See Prof. S. R. Driver, in *Authority and Archaeology Sacred and Profane*, edited by D. G. Hogarth (London, 1899), p. 82. Probably these “blessers” are the kings referred to by the Greek writers. We may suppose that the blessings they dispensed consisted in a proper regulation of the weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and so on.

⁴⁶⁵ Heraclides Cumanus, in Athenaeus, xii. 13, p. 517 b. c.

⁴⁶⁶ Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Coreé* (Paris, 1874), i. pp. xxiv-xxvi. The king sometimes, though rarely, left his palace. When he did so, notice was given beforehand

Emperor of China seldom quits his palace, and when he does so, no one may look at him; even the guards who line the road must turn their backs.⁴⁶⁷ The king of Tonquin was permitted to appear abroad twice or thrice a year for the performance of certain religious ceremonies; but the people were not allowed to look at him. The day before he came forth notice was given to all the inhabitants of the city and country to keep from the way the king was to go; the women were obliged to remain in their houses and durst not shew themselves under pain of death, a penalty which was carried out on the spot if any one disobeyed the order, even through ignorance. Thus the king was invisible to all but his troops and the officers of his suite.⁴⁶⁸ In Mandalay a stout lattice-paling, six feet high and carefully kept in repair, lined every street in the walled city and all those streets in the suburbs through which the king was likely at any time to pass. Behind this paling, which stood two feet or so from the houses, all the people had to stay when the king or any of the queens went out. Any one who was caught outside it by the beadles after the procession had started was severely handled, and might think

to his people. All doors must be shut and each householder must kneel before his threshold with a broom and a dust-pan in his hand. All windows, especially the upper ones, must be sealed with slips of paper, lest some one should look down upon the king. See W. E. Griffis, *Corea, the Hermit Nation*, p. 222. These customs are now obsolete (G. N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, Westminster, 1896, pp. 154 *sq.* note).

⁴⁶⁷ This I learned from the late Mr. W. Simpson, formerly artist of the *Illustrated London News*.

⁴⁶⁸ Richard, "History of Tonquin," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, ix. 746.

himself lucky if he got off with a beating. Nobody was supposed to peep through the holes in the lattice-work, which were besides partly stopped up with flowering shrubs.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ Shway Yoe, *The Burman* (London, 1882), i. 30 sq.; compare *Indian Antiquary*, xx. (1891) p. 49.

§ 5. Taboos on leaving Food over

Magical harm done a man through the remains of his food or the dishes he has eaten out of. Ideas and customs of the Narrinyeri of South Australia.

Again, magic mischief may be wrought upon a man through the remains of the food he has partaken of, or the dishes out of which he has eaten. On the principles of sympathetic magic a real connexion continues to subsist between the food which a man has in his stomach and the refuse of it which he has left untouched, and hence by injuring the refuse you can simultaneously injure the eater. Among the Narrinyeri of South Australia every adult is constantly on the look-out for bones of beasts, birds, or fish, of which the flesh has been eaten by somebody, in order to construct a deadly charm out of them. Every one is therefore careful to burn the bones of the animals which he has eaten lest they should fall into the hands of a sorcerer. Too often, however, the sorcerer succeeds in getting hold of such a bone, and when he does so he believes that he has the power of life and death over the man, woman, or child who ate the flesh of the animal. To put the charm in operation he makes a paste of red ochre and fish oil, inserts in it the eye of a cod and a small piece of the flesh of a corpse, and having rolled the compound into a ball sticks it on the top of the bone. After being left for some time in the bosom of a dead body, in order that it may derive a deadly potency by

contact with corruption, the magical implement is set up in the ground near the fire, and as the ball melts, so the person against whom the charm is directed wastes with disease; if the ball is melted quite away, the victim will die. When the bewitched man learns of the spell that is being cast upon him, he endeavours to buy the bone from the sorcerer, and if he obtains it he breaks the charm by throwing the bone into a river or lake.⁴⁷⁰ Further, the Narrinyeri think that if a man eats of the totem animal of his tribe, and an enemy obtains a portion of the flesh, the latter can make it grow in the inside of the eater, and so cause his death. Therefore when a man partakes of his totem he is careful either to eat it all or else to conceal or destroy the refuse.⁴⁷¹ In the Encounter Bay tribe of South Australia, when a man cannot get the bone of an animal which his enemy has eaten, he cooks a bird, beast, or fish, and keeping back one of the creature's bones, offers the rest under the guise of friendship to his enemy. If the man is simple enough to partake of the proffered food, he is at the mercy of his perfidious foe, who can kill him by placing the abstracted bone near the fire.⁴⁷²

Ideas and customs as to the leavings of food in Melanesia

⁴⁷⁰ G. Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," in *Native Tribes of South Australia* (Adelaide, 1879), pp. 24-26; *id.*, in E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, ii. p. 247.

⁴⁷¹ G. Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," in *Native Tribes of South Australia*, p. 63; *id.*, "Notes on the Mixed Races of Australia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, iv. (1875) p. 53; *id.*, in E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, ii. 245.

⁴⁷² H. E. A. Meyer, "Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the Encounter Bay Tribe," in *Native Tribes of South Australia*, p. 196.

and New Guinea.

Ideas and practices of the same sort prevail, or used to prevail, in Melanesia; all that was needed to injure a man was to bring the leavings of his food into contact with a malignant ghost or spirit. Hence in the island of Florida when a scrap of an enemy's dinner was secreted and thrown into a haunted place, the man was supposed to fall ill; and in the New Hebrides if a snake of a certain sort carried away a fragment of food to a spot sacred to a spirit, the man who had eaten the food would sicken as the fragment decayed. In Aurora the refuse is made up by the wizard with certain leaves; as these rot and stink, the man dies. Hence it is, or was, a constant care with the Melanesians to prevent the remains of their meals from falling into the hands of persons who bore them a grudge; for this reason they regularly gave the refuse of food to the pigs.⁴⁷³ In Tana, one of the New Hebrides, people bury or throw into the sea the leavings of their food, lest these should fall into the hands of the disease-makers. For if a disease-maker finds the remnants of a meal, say the skin of a banana, he picks it up and burns it slowly in the fire. As it burns, the person who ate the banana falls ill and sends to the disease-maker, offering him presents if he will stop burning the banana skin.⁴⁷⁴ In German New Guinea the natives take the utmost care to destroy or conceal the husks and other remains of their food,

⁴⁷³ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, pp. 203 *sq.*, compare pp. 178, 188, 214.

⁴⁷⁴ G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 302 *sq.* See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 341 *sq.*

lest these should be found by their enemies and used by them for the injury or destruction of the eaters. Hence they burn their leavings, throw them into the sea, or otherwise put them out of harm's way. To such an extent does this fear influence them that many people dare not stir beyond the territory of their own village, lest they should leave behind them on the land of their neighbours something by means of which a hostile sorcerer might do them a mischief.⁴⁷⁵ Similar fears have led to similar customs in New Britain and the other islands of what is now called the Bismarck Archipelago, off the north coast of New Guinea. There also the natives bury, burn, or throw into the sea the remains of their meals to prevent them from falling into the hands of magicians; there also the more superstitious of them will not eat in another village because they dread the use which a sorcerer might make of their leavings when their back is turned. This theory has led to an odd practical result; all the cats in the islands of the Archipelago go about with stumpy tails. The reason of the peculiarity is this. The natives sometimes roast and eat their cats; and unscrupulous persons might be tempted to steal a neighbour's cat in order to furnish a meal. Accordingly, in the interests of the higher morality people remove this stumbling-block from the

⁴⁷⁵ K. Vetter, *Komm herüber und hilf uns!* iii. (Barmen, 1898) p. 9; M. Krieger, *Neu-Guinea*, pp. 185 sq.; R. Parkinson, "Die Berlinhafen Section, ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie der Neu-Guinea Küste," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, xiii. (1900) p. 44; M. J. Erdweg, "Die Bewohner der Insel Tumléo, Berlinhafen, Deutsch-Neu-Guinea," *Mittheilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxxii. (1902) p. 287.

path of their weaker brothers by docking their cats of a piece of their tails and keeping the severed portions in a secret place. If now a cat is stolen and eaten, the lawful owner of the animal has it in his power to avenge the crime: he need only bury the piece of tail with certain spells in the ground, and the thief will fall ill. Hence a man will hardly dare to steal and eat a cat with a stumpy tail, knowing the righteous retribution that would sooner or later overtake him for so doing.⁴⁷⁶

Ideas and customs as to the leavings of food in Africa, Celebes, India, and ancient Rome.

From a like fear, no doubt, of sorcery, no one may touch the food which the king of Loango leaves upon his plate; it is buried in a hole in the ground. And no one may drink out of the king's vessel.⁴⁷⁷ Similarly, no man may drink out of the same cup or glass with the king of Fida (Whydah) in Guinea; "he hath always one kept particularly for himself; and that which hath but once touched another's lips he never uses more, though it be made of metal that may be cleansed by fire."⁴⁷⁸ Amongst the Alfoors of Celebes there is a priest called the *Leleen*, whose duty appears to be to make the rice grow. His functions begin about a month

⁴⁷⁶ Mgr. Couppé, "En Nouvelle-Poméranie," *Missions Catholiques*, xxiii. (1891) p. 364; J. Graf Pfeil, *Studien und Beobachtungen aus der Südsee* (Brunswick, 1899), pp. 141 sq.; P. A. Kleintitschen, *Die Küstenbewohner der Gazellehalbinsel* (Hiltrup bei Münster, n. d.), pp. 343 sq.

⁴⁷⁷ O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, p. 330. We have seen that the food left by the king of the Monbutto, is carefully buried (above, p. [119](#)).

⁴⁷⁸ Bosman's "Guinea," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 487.

before the rice is sown, and end after the crop is housed. During this time he has to observe certain taboos; amongst others he may not eat or drink with any one else, and he may drink out of no vessel but his own.⁴⁷⁹ An ancient Indian way of injuring an enemy was to offer him a meal of rice and afterwards throw the remains of the rice into a fishpond; if the fish swam up in large numbers to devour the grains, the man's fate was sealed.⁴⁸⁰ In antiquity the Romans used immediately to break the shells of eggs and of snails which they had eaten in order to prevent enemies from making magic with them.⁴⁸¹ The common practice, still observed among us, of breaking egg-shells after the eggs have been eaten may very well have originated in the same superstition.

The fear of the magical evil which may be done a man through his food has had beneficial effects in fostering habits of cleanliness and in strengthening the ties of hospitality.

The superstitious fear of the magic that may be wrought on a man through the leavings of his food has had the beneficial effect of inducing many savages to destroy refuse which, if left to rot, might through its corruption have proved a real, not a merely imaginary, source of disease and death. Nor is it only the sanitary

⁴⁷⁹ P. N. Wilken, "Bijdragen tot de kennis van de zeden en gewoonten der Alfoeren in de Minahassa," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, vii. (1863) p. 126.

⁴⁸⁰ W. Caland, *Altindisches Zauberritual*, pp. 163 sq.

⁴⁸¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 19. For other examples of witchcraft wrought by means of the refuse of food, see E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, ii. 83 sqq.

condition of a tribe which has benefited by this superstition; curiously enough the same baseless dread, the same false notion of causation, has indirectly strengthened the moral bonds of hospitality, honour, and good faith among men who entertain it. For it is obvious that no one who intends to harm a man by working magic on the refuse of his food will himself partake of that food, because if he did so he would, on the principles of sympathetic magic, suffer equally with his enemy from any injury done to the refuse. This is the idea which in primitive society lends sanctity to the bond produced by eating together; by participation in the same food two men give, as it were, hostages for their good behaviour; each guarantees the other that he will devise no mischief against him, since, being physically united with him by the common food in their stomachs, any harm he might do to his fellow would recoil on his own head with precisely the same force with which it fell on the head of his victim. In strict logic, however, the sympathetic bond lasts only so long as the food is in the stomach of each of the parties. Hence the covenant formed by eating together is less solemn and durable than the covenant formed by transfusing the blood of the covenanting parties into each other's veins, for this transfusion seems to knit them together for life.⁴⁸²

⁴⁸² On the covenant entered into by eating together see the classical exposition of W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*² (London, 1894), pp. 269 *sqq.* For examples of the blood-covenant, see H. C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant* (London, 1887). The examples might easily be multiplied.

Chapter IV. Tabooed Persons

§ 1. Chiefs and Kings tabooed

Disastrous results supposed to follow from using the dishes of the Mikado or of a Fijian chief. Sacred persons are a source of danger to others: their divinity burns like a fire what it touches. African examples.

We have seen that the Mikado's food was cooked every day in new pots and served up in new dishes; both pots and dishes were of common clay, in order that they might be broken or laid aside after they had been once used. They were generally broken, for it was believed that if any one else ate his food out of these sacred dishes, his mouth and throat would become swollen and inflamed. The same ill effect was thought to be experienced by any one who should wear the Mikado's clothes without his leave; he would have swellings and pains all over his body.⁴⁸³ In Fiji there is a special name (*kana lama*) for the disease supposed to be caused by eating out of a chief's dishes or wearing his clothes. "The throat and body swell, and the impious person dies. I had a fine mat given to me by a man who durst not use it because Thakambau's eldest son had sat upon it. There was

⁴⁸³ Kaempfer's "History of Japan," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, vii. 717.

always a family or clan of commoners who were exempt from this danger. I was talking about this once to Thakambau. 'Oh yes,' said he. 'Here, So-and-so! come and scratch my back.' The man scratched; he was one of those who could do it with impunity." The name of the men thus highly privileged was *Na nduka ni*, or the dirt of the chief.⁴⁸⁴

The taboo of chiefs and kings in Tonga. The King's Evil cured by the king's touch.

In the evil effects thus supposed to follow upon the use of the vessels or clothes of the Mikado and a Fijian chief we see that other side of the god-man's character to which attention has been already called. The divine person is a source of danger as well as of blessing; he must not only be guarded, he must also be guarded against. His sacred organism, so delicate that a touch may disorder it, is also, as it were, electrically charged with a powerful magical or spiritual force which may discharge itself with fatal effect on whatever comes in contact with it. Accordingly the isolation of the man-god is quite as necessary for the safety of others as for his own. His magical virtue is in the strictest sense of the word contagious: his divinity is a fire, which, under proper restraints, confers endless blessings, but, if rashly touched or allowed to break bounds, burns and destroys what it touches. Hence the disastrous effects supposed to attend a breach of taboo; the offender has thrust his hand into the

⁴⁸⁴ Rev. Lorimer Fison, in a letter to me dated August 26, 1898. In Fijian, *kana* is to eat; the meaning of *lama* is unknown.

divine fire, which shrivels up and consumes him on the spot. The Nubas, for example, who inhabit the wooded and fertile range of Jebel Nuba in eastern Africa, believe that they would die if they entered the house of their priestly king; however they can evade the penalty of their intrusion by baring the left shoulder and getting the king to lay his hand on it. And were any man to sit on a stone which the king has consecrated to his own use, the transgressor would die within the year.⁴⁸⁵ The Cazembes, in the interior of Angola, regard their king (the *Muata* or *Mambo*) as so holy that no one can touch him without being killed by the magical power which pervades his sacred person. But since contact with him is sometimes unavoidable, they have devised a means whereby the sinner can escape with his life. Kneeling down before the king he touches the back of the royal hand with the back of his own, then snaps his fingers; afterwards he lays the palm of his hand on the palm of the king's hand, then snaps his fingers again. This ceremony is repeated four or five times, and averts the imminent danger of death.⁴⁸⁶ In Tonga it was believed

⁴⁸⁵ "Coutumes étranges des indigènes du Djebel-Nouba," *Missions Catholiques*, xiv. (1882) p. 460; Father S. Carceri, "Djebel-Nouba," *ibid.* xv. (1883) p. 450. The title of the priestly king is *cogiour* or *codjour*. "The *codjour* is the pontifical king of each group of villages; it is he who regulates and administers the affairs of the Nubas. He is an absolute monarch, on whom all depend. But he has no princely privileges or immunities; no royal insignia, no badge mark him off from his subjects. He lives like them by the produce of his fields and his industry; he works like them, earns his daily bread, and has no guard of honour, no tribunal, no code of laws, no civil list" (Father S. Carceri, *loc. cit.*).

⁴⁸⁶ "Der Muata Cazembe und die Völkerstämme der Maravis, Chevas, Muembas,

that if any one fed himself with his own hands after touching the sacred person of a superior chief or anything that belonged to him, he would swell up and die; the sanctity of the chief, like a virulent poison, infected the hands of his inferior, and, being communicated through them to the food, proved fatal to the eater. A commoner who had incurred this danger could disinfect himself by performing a certain ceremony, which consisted in touching the sole of a chief's foot with the palm and back of each of his hands, and afterwards rinsing his hands in water. If there was no water near, he rubbed his hands with the juicy stem of a plantain or banana. After that he was free to feed himself with his own hands without danger of being attacked by the malady which would otherwise follow from eating with tabooed or sanctified hands. But until the ceremony of expiation or disinfection had been performed, if he wished to eat, he had either to get some one to feed him, or else to go down on his knees and pick up the food from the ground with his mouth like a beast. He might not even use a toothpick himself, but might guide the hand of another person holding the toothpick. The Tongans were subject to induration of the liver and certain forms of scrofula, which they often attributed to a failure to perform the requisite expiation after having inadvertently touched a chief or his belongings. Hence they often went through the ceremony

Lundas und andere von Süd-Afrika," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde* (Berlin), vi. (1856) pp. 398 *sq.*; F. T. Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa* (London, 1861), ii. 251 *sq.*

as a precaution, without knowing that they had done anything to call for it. The king of Tonga could not refuse to play his part in the rite by presenting his foot to such as desired to touch it, even when they applied to him at an inconvenient time. A fat unwieldy king, who perceived his subjects approaching with this intention, while he chanced to be taking his walks abroad, has been sometimes seen to waddle as fast as his legs could carry him out of their way, in order to escape the importunate and not wholly disinterested expression of their homage. If any one fancied he might have already unwittingly eaten with tabooed hands, he sat down before the chief, and, taking the chief's foot, pressed it against his own stomach, that the food in his belly might not injure him, and that he might not swell up and die.⁴⁸⁷ Since scrofula was regarded by the Tongans as a result of eating with tabooed hands, we may conjecture that persons who suffered from it among them often resorted to the touch or pressure of the king's foot as a cure for their malady. The analogy of the custom with the old English practice of bringing scrofulous patients to the king to be healed by his touch is sufficiently obvious, and suggests, as I have already pointed out elsewhere, that among our own remote ancestors scrofula may have obtained its name of the King's Evil, from a belief, like that

⁴⁸⁷ W. Mariner, *The Natives of the Tonga Islands*,² i. 141 *sq.* note, 434 note, ii. 82 *sq.*, 221-224; Captain J. Cook, *Voyages* (London, 1809), v. 427 *sq.* Similarly in Fiji any person who had touched the head of a living chief or the body of a dead one was forbidden to handle his food, and must be fed by another (J. E. Erskine, *The Western Pacific*, p. 254).

of the Tongans, that it was caused as well as cured by contact with the divine majesty of kings.⁴⁸⁸

Fatal effects of contact with sacred chiefs in New Zealand.

In New Zealand the dread of the sanctity of chiefs was at least as great as in Tonga. Their ghostly power, derived from an ancestral spirit or *atua*, diffused itself by contagion over everything they touched, and could strike dead all who rashly or unwittingly meddled with it.⁴⁸⁹ For instance, it once happened that a New Zealand chief of high rank and great sanctity had left the remains of his dinner by the wayside. A slave, a stout, hungry fellow, coming up after the chief had gone, saw the unfinished dinner, and ate it up without asking questions. Hardly had he finished when he was informed by a horror-stricken spectator that the food of which he had eaten was the chief's. "I knew the unfortunate delinquent well. He was remarkable for courage, and had signalled himself in the wars of the tribe," but "no sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized by

⁴⁸⁸ On the custom of touching for the King's Evil, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. i. pp. 368 *sqq.*

⁴⁸⁹ "The idea in which this law [the law of taboo or *tapu*, as it was called in New Zealand] originated appears to have been, that a portion of the spiritual essence of an *atua* or of a sacred person was communicated directly to objects which they touched, and also that the spiritual essence so communicated to any object was afterwards more or less retransmitted to anything else brought into contact with it" (E. Shortland, *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders*, Second Edition, London, 1856, p. 102). Compare *id.*, *Maori Religion and Mythology*, p. 25.

the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which never ceased till he died, about sundown the same day. He was a strong man, in the prime of life, and if any pakeha [European] freethinker should have said he was not killed by the *tapu* of the chief, which had been communicated to the food by contact, he would have been listened to with feelings of contempt for his ignorance and inability to understand plain and direct evidence.”⁴⁹⁰ This is not a solitary case. A Maori woman having eaten of some fruit, and being afterwards told that the fruit had been taken from a tabooed place, exclaimed that the spirit of the chief, whose sanctity had been thus profaned, would kill her. This was in the afternoon, and next day by twelve o'clock she was dead.⁴⁹¹ An observer who knows the Maoris well, says, “*Tapu* [taboo] is an awful weapon. I have seen a strong young man die the same day he was tapued; the victims die under it as though their strength ran out as water.”⁴⁹² A Maori chief's tinder-box was once the means of killing several persons; for, having been lost by him, and found by some men who used it to light their pipes, they died of fright on learning to whom it had belonged. So, too, the garments of a high New Zealand chief will kill any one else who wears them. A chief was observed by a missionary

⁴⁹⁰ *Old New Zealand*, by a Pakeha Maori (London, 1884), pp. 96 *sq.*

⁴⁹¹ W. Brown, *New Zealand and its Aborigines* (London, 1845), p. 76. For more examples of the same kind see *ibid.* pp. 177 *sq.*

⁴⁹² E. Tregear, “The Maoris of New Zealand,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xix. (1890) p. 100.

to throw down a precipice a blanket which he found too heavy to carry. Being asked by the missionary why he did not leave it on a tree for the use of a future traveller, the chief replied that “it was the fear of its being taken by another which caused him to throw it where he did, for if it were worn, his tapu” (that is, his spiritual power communicated by contact to the blanket and through the blanket to the man) “would kill the person.”⁴⁹³ For a similar reason a Maori chief would not blow a fire with his mouth; for his sacred breath would communicate its sanctity to the fire, which would pass it on to the pot on the fire, which would pass it on to the meat in the pot, which would pass it on to the man who ate the meat, which was in the pot, which stood on the fire, which was breathed on by the chief; so that the eater, infected by the chief's breath conveyed through these intermediaries, would surely die.⁴⁹⁴

Examples of the fatal effects of imagination in other parts of the world.

Thus in the Polynesian race, to which the Maoris belong, superstition erected round the persons of sacred chiefs a real, though at the same time purely imaginary barrier, to transgress which actually entailed the death of the transgressor whenever he became aware of what he had done. This fatal power of the imagination working through superstitious terrors is by no

⁴⁹³ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui, or, New Zealand and its Inhabitants*,² p. 164.

⁴⁹⁴ R. Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 165.

means confined to one race; it appears to be common among savages. For example, among the aborigines of Australia a native will die after the infliction of even the most superficial wound if only he believes that the weapon which inflicted the wound had been sung over and thus endowed with magical virtue. He simply lies down, refuses food, and pines away.⁴⁹⁵ Similarly among some of the Indian tribes of Brazil, if the medicine-man predicted the death of any one who had offended him, “the wretch took to his hammock instantly in such full expectation of dying, that he would neither eat nor drink, and the prediction was a sentence which faith effectually executed.”⁴⁹⁶ Speaking of certain African races Major Leonard observes: “I have seen more than one hardened old Haussa soldier dying steadily and by inches, because he believed himself to be bewitched; so that no nourishment or medicines that were given to him had the slightest effect either to check the mischief or to improve his condition in any way, and nothing was able to divert him from a fate which he considered inevitable. In the same way, and under very similar conditions, I have seen Kru-men and others die, in spite of every effort that was made to save them, simply because they had made up their minds, not (as we thought at the time) to die, but that being in the clutch of malignant demons they were bound to die.”⁴⁹⁷ The Capuchin missionary Merolla da Sorrento,

⁴⁹⁵ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 537 sq.

⁴⁹⁶ R. Southey, *History of Brazil*, i.² (London, 1822), p. 238.

⁴⁹⁷ Major A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London, 1906), pp. 257 sq.

who travelled in the West African kingdom of Congo in the latter part of the seventeenth century, has described a remarkable case of death wrought purely by superstitious fear. He says: "It is a custom that either the parents or the wizards give certain rules to be inviolably observed by the young people, and which they call *chegilla*: these are to abstain from eating either some sorts of poultry, the flesh of some kinds of wild beasts, such and such fruits, roots either raw or boiled after this or another manner, with several other ridiculous injunctions of the like nature, too many to be enumerated here. You would wonder with what religious observance these commands are obeyed. These young people would sooner chuse to fast several days together, than to taste the least bit of what has been forbidden them; and if it sometimes happen that the *chegilla*

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