

FRAZER JAMES GEORGE

THE GOLDEN BOUGH: A
STUDY IN MAGIC AND
RELIGION (THIRD EDITION,
VOL. 08 OF 12)

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Chapter IX. Ancient Deities
of Vegetation as Animals

§ 1. Dionysus, the Goat and the Bull

Ancient deities of vegetation as animals

However we may explain it, the fact remains that in peasant folk-lore the corn-spirit is very commonly conceived and represented in animal form. May not this fact explain the relation in which certain animals stood to the ancient deities of vegetation, Dionysus, Demeter, Adonis, Attis, and Osiris?

Dionysus as a goat: his association with the Pans, Satyrs, and Silenuses, who have been interpreted as semi-goat-shaped deities of the woods

To begin with Dionysus. We have seen that he was represented sometimes as a goat and sometimes as a bull.¹ As a goat he can hardly be separated from the minor divinities, the Pans, Satyrs, and Silenuses, all of whom are closely associated with him and are represented more or less completely in the form of goats. Thus, Pan was regularly portrayed in sculpture and painting with the face and legs of a goat.² The Satyrs were depicted with pointed goat-ears, and sometimes with sprouting horns and short tails.³ They were sometimes spoken of simply as goats;⁴ and in the drama their parts were played by men dressed in goatskins.⁵ Silenus is represented in art clad in a goatskin.⁶ Further, the Fauns, the Italian counterpart of the Greek Pans and

¹ See above, vol. i. pp. 16 *sqq.*

² Herodotus, ii. 46; L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,⁴ i. (Berlin, 1894), pp. 745 *sq.*; K. Wernicke, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1407 *sqq.*

³ L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,³ i. 600; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 138.

⁴ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 139.

⁵ Julius Pollux, iv. 118.

⁶ W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 142 *sq.*

Satyrs, are described as being half goats, with goat-feet and goat-horns.⁷ Again, all these minor [pg 002] goat-formed divinities partake more or less clearly of the character of woodland deities. Thus, Pan was called by the Arcadians the Lord of the Wood.⁸ The Silenuses associated with the tree-nymphs.⁹ The Fauns are expressly designated as woodland deities;¹⁰ and their character as such is still further brought out by their association, or even identification, with Silvanus and the Silvanuses, who, as their name of itself indicates, are spirits of the woods.¹¹ Lastly, the association of the Satyrs with the Silenuses, Fauns, and Silvanuses,¹² proves that the Satyrs also were woodland deities. These goat-formed spirits of the woods have their counterparts in the folk-lore of Northern Europe. Thus, the Russian wood-spirits, called *Ljeschie* (from *ljes*, “wood”) are believed to appear partly in human shape, but with the horns, ears, and legs of goats. The *Ljeschi* can alter his stature at pleasure; when he walks in the wood he is as tall as the trees; when he walks in the meadows he is no higher than the grass. Some of the *Ljeschie* are spirits of the corn as well as of the wood; before

⁷ Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 361, iii. 312, v. 101; *id.*, *Heroides*, iv. 49.

⁸ Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 22. 3.

⁹ Homer, *Hymn to Aphrodite*, 262 *sqq.*

¹⁰ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xii. 3; Ovid, *Metam.* vi. 392; *id.*, *Fasti*, iii. 303, 309; Gloss. Isid. Mart. Cap. ii. 167, cited by W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 113.

¹¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xii. 3; Martianus Capella, ii. 167; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, xv. 23; Aurelius Victor, *Origo gentis Romanae*, iv. 6.

¹² Servius on Virgil, *Ecl.* vi. 14; Ovid, *Metam.* vi. 392 *sq.*; Martianus Capella, ii. 167.

harvest they are as tall as the corn-stalks, but after it they shrink to the height of the stubble.¹³ This brings out – what we have remarked before – the close connexion between tree-spirits and corn-spirits, and shews how easily the former may melt into the latter. Similarly the Fauns, though wood-spirits, were believed to foster the growth of the crops.¹⁴ We have already seen how often the corn-spirit is represented in folk-custom as a goat.¹⁵ On the whole, then, as Mannhardt argues,¹⁶ [pg 003] the Pans, Satyrs, and Fauns perhaps belong to a widely diffused class of wood-spirits conceived in goat-form. The fondness of goats for straying in woods and nibbling the bark of trees, to which indeed they are most destructive, is an obvious and perhaps sufficient reason why wood-spirits should so often be supposed to take the form of goats. The inconsistency of a god of vegetation subsisting upon the vegetation which he personifies is not one to strike

¹³ W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 138 sq.; *id.*, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 145.

¹⁴ Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 10.

¹⁵ Above, vol. i. pp. 281 sqq.

¹⁶ *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, ch. iii. pp. 113-211. In the text I have allowed my former exposition of Mannhardt's theory as to ancient semi-goat-shaped spirits of vegetation to stand as before, but I have done so with hesitation, because the evidence adduced in its favour appears to me insufficient to permit us to speak with any confidence on the subject. Pan may have been, as W. H. Roscher and L. R. Farnell think, nothing more than a herdsman's god, the semi-human, semi-bestial representative of goats in particular. See W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1405 sq.; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 431 sqq. And the Satyrs and Silenuses seem to have more affinity with horses than with goats. See W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, iv. 444 sqq.

the primitive mind. Such inconsistencies arise when the deity, ceasing to be immanent in the vegetation, comes to be regarded as its owner or lord; for the idea of owning the vegetation naturally leads to that of subsisting on it. We have already seen that the corn-spirit, originally conceived as immanent in the corn, afterwards comes to be regarded as its owner, who lives on it and is reduced to poverty and want by being deprived of it.¹⁷

Wood-spirits in the form of goats

Thus the representation of wood-spirits in the form of goats appears to be both widespread and, to the primitive mind, natural. Therefore when we find, as we have done, that Dionysus – a tree-god – is sometimes represented in goat-form,¹⁸ we can hardly avoid concluding that this representation is simply a part of his proper character as a tree-god and is not to be explained by the fusion of two distinct and independent worships, in one of which he originally appeared as a tree-god and in the other as a goat. If such a fusion took place in the case of Dionysus, it must equally have taken place in the case of the Pans and Satyrs of Greece, the Fauns of Italy, and the *Ljeschie* of Russia. That such a fusion of two wholly disconnected worships should have occurred once is possible; that it should have occurred twice independently is improbable; that it should have occurred thrice

¹⁷ Above, vol. i. pp. 231 *sqq.*

¹⁸ Above, vol. i. pp. 17 *sq.*

independently is so unlikely as to be practically incredible.

**The bull as an embodiment of Dionysus
seems to be another expression of
his character as a god of vegetation**

Dionysus was also figured, as we have seen,¹⁹ in the shape of a bull. After what has gone before we are naturally led to expect that his bull form must have been only another [pg 004] expression for his character as a deity of vegetation, especially as the bull is a common embodiment of the corn-spirit in Northern Europe;²⁰ and the close association of Dionysus with Demeter and Persephone in the mysteries of Eleusis shews that he had at least strong agricultural affinities. The other possible explanation of the bull-shaped Dionysus would be that the conception of him as a bull was originally entirely distinct from the conception of him as a deity of vegetation, and that the fusion of the two conceptions was due to some such circumstance as the union of two tribes, one of which had previously worshipped a bull-god and the other a tree-god. This appears to be the view taken by Mr. Andrew Lang, who suggests that the bull-formed Dionysus “had either been developed out of, or had succeeded to, the

¹⁹ Above, vol. i. pp. 16 *sq.*

²⁰ Above, vol. i. pp. 288 *sqq.*

worship of a bull-totem.”²¹ Of course this is possible. But it is not yet certain that the Aryans ever had totemism.²² On the other hand, it is quite certain that many Aryan peoples have conceived deities of vegetation as embodied in animal forms. Therefore when we find amongst an Aryan people like the Greeks a deity of vegetation represented as an animal, the presumption must be in favour of explaining this by a principle which is certainly known to have influenced the Aryan race rather than by one which is not certainly known to have done so. In the present state of our knowledge, therefore, it is safer to regard the bull form of Dionysus as being, like his goat form, an expression of his proper character as a deity of vegetation.

The *bouphonia*, an Athenian sacrifice of an ox to Zeus Polieus

The probability of this view will be somewhat increased if it can be shewn that in other rites than those of Dionysus the ancients slew an ox as a representative of the spirit of vegetation. This they appear to have done in the Athenian sacrifice known as “the murder of the ox” (*bouphonia*). It took place about the end of June or beginning of July, that is, about the time when the threshing is nearly over in Attica. According to tradition the

²¹ A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*,² ii. 252.

²² Compare *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 12 sqq.

sacrifice was instituted to procure a cessation of drought and dearth which had [pg 005] afflicted the land. The ritual was as follows. Barley mixed with wheat, or cakes made of them, were laid upon the bronze altar of Zeus Polieus on the Acropolis. Oxen were driven round the altar, and the ox which went up to the altar and ate the offering on it was sacrificed. The axe and knife with which the beast was slain had been previously wetted with water brought by maidens called “water-carriers.” The weapons were then sharpened and handed to the butchers, one of whom felled the ox with the axe and another cut its throat with the knife. As soon as he had felled the ox, the former threw the axe from him and fled; and the man who cut the beast's throat apparently imitated his example. Meantime the ox was skinned and all present partook of its flesh. Then the hide was stuffed with straw and sewed up; next the stuffed animal was set on its feet and yoked to a plough as if it were ploughing. A trial then took place in an ancient law-court presided over by the King (as he was called) to determine who had murdered the ox. The maidens who had brought the water accused the men who had sharpened the axe and knife; the men who had sharpened the axe and knife blamed the men who had handed these implements to the butchers; the men who had handed the implements to the butchers blamed the butchers; and the butchers laid the blame on the axe and knife, which were accordingly found guilty, condemned and cast into the sea.²³

²³ Pausanias, i. 24. 4; *id.*, i. 28. 10; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 29 *sq.*; Aelian, *Var.*

The ox sacrificed at the *bouphonia* appears to have embodied the corn-spirit

The name of this sacrifice, – “the *murder* of the ox,”²⁴ – the [pg 006] pains taken by each person who had a hand in the slaughter to lay the blame on some one else, together with the formal trial and punishment of the axe or knife or both, prove that the ox

Hist. viii. 3; Scholia on Aristophanes, *Peace*, 419, and *Clouds*, 985; Hesychius, Suidas, and *Etymologicum Magnum*, s. v. βούφονια; Suidas, s. v. Θάύλων; Im. Bekker's *Anecdota Graeca* (Berlin, 1814-1821), p. 238, s. v. Δυπόλια. The date of the sacrifice (14th Skirophorion) is given by the Scholiast on Aristophanes and the *Etymologicum Magnum*; and this date corresponds, according to W. Mannhardt (*Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 68), with the close of the threshing in Attica. No writer mentions the trial of both the axe and the knife. Pausanias speaks of the trial of the axe, Porphyry and Aelian of the trial of the knife. But from Porphyry's description it is clear that the slaughter was carried out by two men, one wielding an axe and the other a knife, and that the former laid the blame on the latter. Perhaps the knife alone was condemned. That the King (as to whom see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 44 sq.) presided at the trial of all lifeless objects, is mentioned by Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens*, 57) and Julius Pollux (viii. 90, compare viii. 120).

²⁴ The real import of the name *bouphonia* was first perceived by W. Robertson Smith. See his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 304 sqq. In Cos also an ox specially chosen was sacrificed to Zeus Polieus. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 616; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 716; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, iii. pp. 357 sqq., No. 3636; J. de Prott et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae e Titulis collectae*, Fasciculus i. (Leipsic, 1896) pp. 19 sqq., No. 5; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 17-21. A month Bouphionion, corresponding to the Attic Boedromion (September), occurred in the calendars of Delos and Tenos. See E. Bischoff, “De fastis Graecorum antiquioribus,” in *Leipziger Studien für classische Philologie*, vii. (Leipsic, 1884) p. 414.

was here regarded not merely as a victim offered to a god, but as itself a sacred creature, the slaughter of which was sacrilege or murder. This is borne out by a statement of Varro that to kill an ox was formerly a capital crime in Attica.²⁵ The mode of selecting the victim suggests that the ox which tasted the corn was viewed as the corn-deity taking possession of his own. This interpretation is supported by the following custom. In Beauce, in the district of Orleans, on the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of April they make a straw-man called “the great *mondard*.” For they say that the old *mondard* is now dead and it is necessary to make a new one. The straw-man is carried in solemn procession up and down the village and at last is placed upon the oldest apple-tree. There he remains till the apples are gathered, when he is taken down and thrown into the water, or he is burned and his ashes cast into water. But the person who plucks the first fruit from the tree succeeds to the title of “the great *mondard*,”²⁶ Here the straw figure, called “the great *mondard*” and placed on the oldest apple-tree in spring, represents the spirit of the tree, who, dead in winter, revives when the apple-blossoms appear on the boughs. Thus the person who plucks the first fruit from the tree and thereby receives the name of “the great *mondard*” must be regarded as a representative of the tree-spirit. Primitive

²⁵ Varro, *De re rustica*, ii. 5. 4. Compare Columella, *De re rustica*, vi. praef. § 7. Perhaps, however, Varro's statement may be merely an inference drawn from the ritual of the *bouphonia* and the legend told to explain it.

²⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 409.

peoples are usually reluctant to taste the annual first-fruits of any crop, until some ceremony has been performed which makes it safe and pious for them to do so. [pg 007] The reason of this reluctance appears to be a belief that the first-fruits either belong to or actually contain a divinity. Therefore when a man or animal is seen boldly to appropriate the sacred first-fruits, he or it is naturally regarded as the divinity himself in human or animal form taking possession of his own. The time of the Athenian sacrifice, which fell about the close of the threshing, suggests that the wheat and barley laid upon the altar were a harvest offering; and the sacramental character of the subsequent repast – all partaking of the flesh of the divine animal – would make it parallel to the harvest-suppers of modern Europe, in which, as we have seen, the flesh of the animal who stands for the corn-spirit is eaten by the harvesters. Again, the tradition that the sacrifice was instituted in order to put an end to drought and famine is in favour of taking it as a harvest festival. The resurrection of the corn-spirit, enacted by setting up the stuffed ox and yoking it to the plough, may be compared with the resurrection of the tree-spirit in the person of his representative, the Wild Man.²⁷

²⁷ See *The Dying God*, p. 208.

Sacrifice of an ox to Zeus Sosipolis at Magnesia on the Maeander. The bull so sacrificed seems to have been regarded as an embodiment of the corn-spirit

Still more clearly, perhaps, does the identification of the corn-spirit with an ox come out in the sacrificial ritual which the Greeks of Magnesia on the Maeander observed in honour of Zeus Sosipolis, a god whose title of Sosipolis ("Saviour of the City") marks him as the equivalent of Zeus Polieus ("Zeus of the City"). The details of the ritual are happily preserved in an inscription, which records a decree of the council and of the people for the regulation of the whole proceedings. Every year at a festival in the month of Heraeon the magistrates bought the finest bull that could be had for money, and at the new moon of the month of Cronion, at the time when the sowing was about to begin, they and the priests dedicated the animal to Zeus Sosipolis, while solemn prayers were offered by the voice of a sacred herald for the welfare of the city, of the land, and of the people, for peace and wealth, for the corn-crops and all other fruits, and for the cattle. Thereafter the sacred animal was kept throughout the winter, its keep being undertaken by a contractor, who was bound by law to drive the bull to the market and there collect contributions for its [pg 008] maintenance from all the hucksters and in particular from the corn-chandlers; and a prospect was held out to such as contributed that it would go

well with them. Finally, after having been thus maintained at the public cost for some months, the bull was led forth with great pomp and sacrificed in the market-place on the twelfth day of the month Artemision, which is believed to have been equivalent to the Attic month of Thargelion and to the English month of May, the season when the corn is reaped in the Greek lowlands. In the procession which attended the animal to the place of sacrifice the senators, the priests, the magistrates, the young people, and the victors in the games all bore a part, and at the head of the procession were borne the images of the Twelve Gods attired in festal array, while a fluteplayer, a piper, and a harper discoursed solemn music.²⁸ Now in the bull, which was thus dedicated at the time of sowing and kept at the cost of the pious, and especially of corn-chandlers, to be finally sacrificed at harvest, it is reasonable to see an embodiment of the corn-spirit. Regarded as such the animal was consecrated when the seed was committed to the earth; it was fed and kept all the time the corn was growing in

²⁸ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*² (Leipsic, 1898-1901), vol. ii. pp. 246-248, No. 553. As to the identification of the Magnesian month Artemision with the Attic month Thargelion (May), see Dittenberger, *op. cit.* ii. p. 242, No. 552 note 4. It is interesting to observe that at Magnesia the sowing took place in Cronion, the month of Cronus, a god whom the ancients regularly identified with Saturn, the Italian god of sowing. In Samos, Perinthus, and Patmos, however, the month Cronion seems to have been equivalent to the Attic Scirophorion, a month corresponding to June or July, which could never have been a season of sowing in the hot rainless summers of Greece. See E. Bischoff, "De fastis Graecarum antiquioribus," in *Leipziger Studien für classische Philologie*, vii. (1884) p. 400; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 645 note 14, vol. ii. p. 449.

order that by its beneficent energies it might foster that growth; and at last, to complete the parallel, when the corn was reaped the animal was slain, the cutting of the stalks being regarded as the death of the corn-spirit.²⁹ Similarly we have seen that in the harvest-fields and on the threshing-floors of modern Europe the corn-spirit is often conceived in the form of a bull, an ox, or a calf, which is supposed to be killed at reaping or threshing; and, [pg 009] further, we saw that the conception is sometimes carried out in practice by slaughtering a real ox or a real calf on the harvest-field. Thus the parallelism between the ancient Greek and the modern European idea of the corn-spirit embodied in the form of a bull appears to be very close.

The Greek conception of the corn-spirit as both male and female

On the interpretation which I have adopted of the sacrifices offered to Zeus Polieus and Zeus Sosipolis the corn-spirit is conceived as a male, not as a female, as Zeus, not as Demeter or Persephone. In this there is no inconsistency. At the stage of thought which the Greeks had reached long before the dawn of history they supposed the processes of reproduction in nature to be carried on by a male and a female principle in conjunction; they did not believe, like some backward savages, that the female

²⁹ In thus interpreting the sacrifice of the bull at Magnesia I follow the excellent exposition of Professor M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 23-27.

principle alone suffices for that purpose, and that the aid of the male principle is superfluous. Hence, as we have seen, they imagined that the goddesses of the corn, the mother Demeter and the daughter Persephone, had each her male partner with whom she united for the production of the crops. The partner of Demeter was Zeus, the partner of Persephone was his brother Pluto, the Subterranean Zeus, as he was called; and reasons have been shewn for thinking that the marriage of one or other of these divine pairs was solemnised at Eleusis as part of the Great Mysteries in order to promote the growth of the corn.³⁰

The ox as a representative of the corn-spirit at Great Bassam in Guinea

The ox appears as a representative of the corn-spirit in other parts of the world. At Great Bassam, in Guinea, two oxen are slain annually to procure a good harvest. If the sacrifice is to be effectual, it is necessary that the oxen should weep. So all the women of the village sit in front of the beasts, chanting, "The ox will weep; yes, he will weep!" From time to time one of the women walks round the beasts, throwing manioc meal or palm wine upon them, especially into their eyes. When tears roll down from the eyes of the oxen, the people dance, singing, "The ox weeps! the ox weeps!" Then two men seize the tails of the beasts

³⁰ See above, vol. i. pp. 36 *sq.*, 65 *sqq.*

and cut them off at one blow. It is believed that a great misfortune will happen in the course of the year if the tails are not severed at one blow. The oxen are afterwards [pg 010] killed, and their flesh is eaten by the chiefs.³¹ Here the tears of the oxen, like those of the human victims amongst the Khonds and the Aztecs,³² are probably a rain-charm. We have already seen that the virtue of the corn-spirit, embodied in animal form, is sometimes supposed to reside in the tail, and that the last handful of corn is sometimes conceived as the tail of the corn spirit.³³ In the Mithraic religion this conception is graphically set forth in some of the numerous sculptures which represent Mithras kneeling on the back of a bull and plunging a knife into its flank; for on certain of these monuments the tail of the bull ends in three stalks of corn, and in one of them corn-stalks instead of blood are seen issuing from the wound inflicted by the knife.³⁴ Such representations certainly suggest that the bull, whose sacrifice appears to have formed a leading feature in the Mithraic ritual, was conceived, in one at least of its aspects, as an incarnation of the corn-spirit.

³¹ H. Hecquard, *Reise an die Küste und in das Innere von West-Afrika* (Leipsic, 1854), pp. 41-43.

³² See above, vol. i. p. 248.

³³ Above, vol. i. pp. 268, 272.

³⁴ Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (Brussels, 1896-1899), ii. figures 18, 19, 20, 59 (p. 228, corn-stalks issuing from wound), 67, 70, 78, 87, 105, 143, 168, 215, also plates v. and vi.

The ox as a personification of the corn-spirit in China

Still more clearly does the ox appear as a personification of the corn-spirit in a ceremony which is observed in all the provinces and districts of China to welcome the approach of spring. On the first day of spring, usually on the third or fourth of February, which is also the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the governor or prefect of the city goes in procession to the east gate of the city, and sacrifices to the Divine Husbandman, who is represented with a bull's head on the body of a man. A large effigy of an ox, cow, or buffalo has been prepared for the occasion, and stands outside of the east gate, with agricultural implements beside it. The figure is made of differently-coloured pieces of paper pasted on a framework either by a blind man or according to the directions of a necromancer. The colours of the paper prognosticate the character of the coming year; if red prevails, there will be many fires; if white, there will be floods and rain; and so with the other colours. The [pg 011] mandarins walk slowly round the ox, beating it severely at each step with rods of various hues. It is filled with five kinds of grain, which pour forth when the effigy is broken by the blows of the rods. The paper fragments are then set on fire, and a scramble takes place for the burning fragments, because the people believe that whoever gets one of them is sure to be fortunate throughout

the year. A live buffalo is next killed, and its flesh is divided among the mandarins. According to one account, the effigy of the ox is made of clay, and, after being beaten by the governor, is stoned by the people till they break it in pieces, “from which they expect an abundant year.”³⁵ But the ceremony varies somewhat in the different provinces. According to another account the effigy of the cow, made of earthenware, with gilded horns, is borne in procession, and is of such colossal dimensions that forty or fifty men can hardly carry it. Behind this monstrous cow walks a boy with one foot shod and the other bare, personifying the Genius of Industry. He beats the effigy with a rod, as if to drive it forward. A great many little clay cows are afterwards taken out of the large one and distributed among the people. Both the big cow and the little ones are then broken in pieces, and the people take the sherds home with them in order to grind them to powder and strew the powder on their fields, for they think thus to secure a plentiful harvest.³⁶ In the cities nearest to Weihaiwei, in northern China, the ceremony of “the Beginning of Spring”

³⁵ *China Review*, i. (July 1872 to June 1873, Hongkong), pp. 62, 154, 162, 203 *sq.*; Rev. J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, ed. Paxton Hood (London, 1868), pp. 375 *sq.*; Rev. J. H. Gray, *China* (London, 1878), ii. 115 *sq.*

³⁶ *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, March 14, 1890, quoted by J. D. E. Schmeltz, “Das Pflugfest in China,” *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, xi. (1898) p. 79. With this account the one given by S. W. Williams (*The Middle Kingdom*, New York and London, 1848, ii. 109) substantially agrees. In many districts, according to the *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, the Genius of Spring is represented at this festival by a boy of blameless character, clad in green. As to the custom of going with one foot bare and the other shod, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 311-313.

is a moveable feast, which falls usually in the first moon. The local magistrate and his attendants go in procession to the eastern suburbs of the city to “meet the Spring.” A great pasteboard effigy of an ox is carried in the procession, together with another pasteboard image of a man called Mang-Shen, “who represents either the [pg 012] typical ox-driver or ploughman or the god of Agriculture.” On the return of the procession to the magistrate's court, that dignitary himself and his principal colleagues beat and prod the pasteboard ox with wands, after which the effigy is burned along with the image of its attendant. The colours and apparel of the two effigies correspond with the forecasts of the Chinese almanack. Thus if the head of the ox is yellow, the summer will be very hot; if it is green, the spring will be sickly; if it is red, there will be a drought; if it is black, there will be much rain; if it is white, there will be high winds. If Mang-Shen wears a hat, the year will be dry; if he is bareheaded, it will be rainy; and so on with the other articles of his apparel. Besides the pasteboard ox a miniature ox made of clay is also supposed to be provided.³⁷ In Chinese the ceremony is called indifferently “beating the ox” and “beating the spring,” which seems to prove that the ox is identified with the vernal energies of nature. We may suppose that originally the ox which figures in the rite was a living animal, but ever since the beginning of our era, when the custom first appears in history, it has been an effigy of terra-cotta or pasteboard. To this day the Chinese calendar devotes a

³⁷ R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (London, 1910), pp. 180-182.

page to a picture of “the ox of spring” with Mang, the tutelary genius of spring, standing beside it and grasping a willow-bough, with which he is about to beat the animal for the purpose of stimulating its reproductive virtue.³⁸ In one form of this Chinese custom the corn-spirit appears to be plainly represented by the corn-filled ox, whose fragments may therefore be supposed to bring fertility with them. We may compare the Silesian custom of burning the effigy of Death, scrambling for the burning fragments, and burying them in the fields to secure a good crop, and the Florentine custom of sawing the Old Woman and scrambling for the dried fruits with which she was filled.³⁹ Both these customs, like their Chinese counterpart, are observed in spring.

The ox as a personification of the corn-spirit in Kashgar and Annam

The practice of beating an earthenware or pasteboard [pg 013] image of an ox in spring is not confined to China proper, but seems to be widely spread in the east of Asia; for example, it has been recorded at Kashgar and in Annam. Thus a French traveller has described how at Kashgar, on the third of February 1892, a mandarin, clad in his finest robes and borne in a

³⁸ Ed. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan, Essai de Monographie d'un Culte Chinois* (Paris, 1910), p. 500 (*Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'Études*, vol. xxi.).

³⁹ See *The Dying God*, pp. 240 sq., 250.

magnificent palanquin, conducted solemnly through the streets the pasteboard image of an ox, “a sacred animal devoted to the deity of spring who gives life to the fields. It is thus carried to some distance outside of the town on the eastern side. The official who acts as pontiff ceremoniously offers food and libations to it in order to obtain a fruitful year, and next day it is demolished by the lashes of a whip.”⁴⁰ Again, in Annam, every year at the approach of spring the Department of Rites publishes instructions to the provincial governors as to the manner in which the festival of the inauguration of spring is to be celebrated. Among the indispensable features of the festival are the figures of an ox and its warder made of terra-cotta. The attitudes of the two and the colours to be applied to them are carefully prescribed every year in the Chinese calendar. Popular opinion attributes to

⁴⁰ J. L. Dutreuil de Rhins, *Mission Scientifique dans la Haute Asie, 1890-1895*, i. (Paris, 1897) pp. 95 *sq.* After describing the ceremony as he witnessed it at Kashgar, the writer adds: “Probably the ox was at first a living animal which they sacrificed and distributed the flesh to the bystanders. At the present day the official who acts as pontiff has a number of small pasteboard oxen made, which he sends to the notables in order that they may participate intimately in the sacrifice, which is more than symbolical. The reason for carrying the ox a long distance is that as much as possible of the territory may be sanctified by the passage of the sacred animal, and that as many people as possible may share in the sacrifice, at least with their eyes and good wishes. The procession, which begins very early in the morning, moves eastward, that is, toward the quarter where, the winter being now over, the first sun of spring may be expected to appear, whose divinity the ceremony is intended to render propitious. It is needless to insist on the analogy between this Chinese festival and our Carnival, at which, about the same season, a fat ox is led about. Both festivals have their origin in the same conceptions of ancient natural religion.”

the colour of the ox and the accoutrement of its warder, who is called Mang Than, a certain influence on the crops of the year: a green, yellow, and black buffalo prognosticates an abundant harvest: a red or white buffalo foretells wretched crops and great droughts or hurricanes. If Mang Than is represented wearing a large hat, the year will be rainy; if on the other hand [pg 014] he is bareheaded, long barren droughts are to be feared. Nay, the public credulity goes so far as to draw good or evil omens from the cheerfulness or ill humour which may be detected on the features of the Warder of the Ox. Having been duly prepared in accordance with the directions of the almanack, the ox and its warder are carried in procession, followed by the mandarins and the people, to the altar of Spring, which is usually to be found in every provincial capital. There the provincial governor offers fruits, flowers, and incense to the Genius of Spring (*Xuan Quan*), and gold and silver paper money are burnt on the altar in profusion. Lastly the ox and his warder are buried in a spot which has been indicated by a geomancer.⁴¹ It is interesting to observe that the three colours of the ox which are taken to prognosticate good crops, to wit, green, yellow, and black, are precisely the colours which the ancients attributed to Demeter, the goddess of the corn.⁴²

⁴¹ Colonel E. Diguët, *Les Annamites, Société, Coutumes, Religions* (Paris, 1906), pp. 250-253.

⁴² See above, vol. i. pp. 41 *sq.*, and below, pp. [21](#) *sq.*

Annual inauguration of ploughing by the Chinese emperor

The great importance which the Chinese attach to the performance of rites for the fertility of the ground is proved by an ancient custom which is, or was till lately, observed every year in spring. On an appointed day the emperor himself, attended by the highest dignitaries of the state, guides with his own hand the ox-drawn plough down several furrows and scatters the seed in a sacred field, or "field of God," as it is called, the produce of which is afterwards examined from time to time with anxious care by the Governor of Peking, who draws omens from the appearance of the ears; it is a very happy omen if he should chance to find thirteen ears growing on one stalk. To prepare himself for the celebration of this solemn rite the emperor is expected to fast and remain continent for three days previously, and the princes and mandarins who accompany him to the field are bound to observe similar restrictions. The corn grown on the holy field which has thus been ploughed by the imperial hands is collected in yellow sacks and stored in a special granary to be used by the emperor in certain solemn sacrifices which he offers to the god [pg 015] Chan Ti and to his own ancestors. In the provinces of China the season of ploughing is similarly inaugurated by the provincial governors as representatives of the

Analogy of the Chinese custom to the agricultural rites at Eleusis and elsewhere

The sacred field, or “field of God,” in which the emperor of China thus ceremonially opens the ploughing for the year, and of which the produce is employed in sacrifice, reminds us of the Rarian plain at Eleusis, in which a sacred ploughing similarly took place every year, and of which the produce was in like

⁴³ Du Halde, *The General History of China*, Third Edition (London, 1741), ii. 120-122; Huc, *L'Empire Chinois*⁵ (Paris, 1879), ii. 338-343; Rev. J. H. Gray, *China* (London, 1878), ii. 116-118. Compare *The Sacred Books of China*, translated by James Legge, Part iii., *The Lî Kî (Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvii., Oxford, 1885), pp. 254 sq.: “In this month [the first month of spring] the son of Heaven on the first day prays to God for a good year; and afterwards, the day of the first conjunction of the sun and moon having been chosen, with the handle and share of the plough in the carriage, placed between the man-at-arms who is its third occupant and the driver, he conducts his three ducal ministers, his nine high ministers, the feudal princes and his Great officers, all with their own hands to plough the field of God. The son of Heaven turns up three furrows, each of the ducal ministers five, and the other ministers and feudal princes nine. When they return, he takes in his hand a cup in the great chamber, all the others being in attendance on him and the Great officers, and says, ‘Drink this cup of comfort after your toil.’ In this month the vapours of heaven descend and those of the earth ascend. Heaven and earth are in harmonious co-operation. All plants bud and grow.” Here the selection of a day in spring when sun and moon are in conjunction is significant. Such conjunctions are regarded as marriages of the great luminaries and therefore as the proper seasons for the celebration of rites designed to promote fertility. See *The Dying God*, p. 73.

manner devoted to sacrifice.⁴⁴ Further, it recalls the little sacred rice-fields on which the Kayans of central Borneo inaugurate the various operations of the agricultural year by performing them in miniature.⁴⁵ As I have already pointed out, all such consecrated enclosures were probably in origin what we may call spiritual preserves, that is, patches of ground which men set apart for the exclusive use of the corn-spirit to console him for the depredations they committed on all the rest of his domains. Again, the rule of fasting and continence observed by the Emperor of China and his august colleagues before they put their hands to the plough resembles the similar customs of abstinence practised by many savages as a preparation for engaging in the various labours of the field.⁴⁶[pg 016]

The rending of live animals in the rites of Dionysus

On the whole we may perhaps conclude that both as a goat and as a bull Dionysus was essentially a god of vegetation. The Chinese and European customs which I have cited⁴⁷ may perhaps shed light on the custom of rending a live bull or goat at the rites of Dionysus. The animal was torn in fragments, as the Khond victim was cut in pieces, in order that the worshippers might

⁴⁴ See above, pp. 74, 108.

⁴⁵ See above, p. 93.

⁴⁶ See above, pp. 94, 109; *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 105 *sqq.*

⁴⁷ As to the European customs, see above, p. [12](#).

each secure a portion of the life-giving and fertilising influence of the god. The flesh was eaten raw as a sacrament, and we may conjecture that some of it was taken home to be buried in the fields, or otherwise employed so as to convey to the fruits of the earth the quickening influence of the god of vegetation. The resurrection of Dionysus, related in his myth, may have been enacted in his rites by stuffing and setting up the slain ox, as was done at the Athenian *bouphonia*.

§ 2. Demeter, the Pig and the Horse

Association of the pig with Demeter. Pigs in the ritual of the Thesmophoria. The sacred serpent at Lanuvium

Passing next to the corn-goddess Demeter, and remembering that in European folk-lore the pig is a common embodiment of the corn-spirit,⁴⁸ we may now ask whether the pig, which was so closely associated with Demeter, may not have been originally the goddess herself in animal form? The pig was sacred to her;⁴⁹ in art she was portrayed carrying or accompanied by a pig;⁵⁰ and the pig was regularly sacrificed in her mysteries, the reason assigned being that the pig injures the corn and is therefore an enemy of the goddess.⁵¹ But after an animal has been conceived as a god, or a god as an animal, it sometimes happens, as we have seen, that the god sloughs off his animal form and becomes

⁴⁸ See above, vol. i. pp. 298 *sqq.*

⁴⁹ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 747.

⁵⁰ J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, Besonderer Theil, ii. (Leipsic, 1873-1878), p. 493; Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, ii. pl. viii. 94.

⁵¹ Hyginus, *Fab.* 277; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 23; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 747; *id.*, on *Frogs*, 338; *id.*, on *Peace*, 374; Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 380; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* x. 16.

purely anthropomorphic; and that then the animal, which at first had been slain in the character of the god, comes to be viewed as a victim offered [pg 017] to the god on the ground of its hostility to the deity; in short, the god is sacrificed to himself on the ground that he is his own enemy. This happened to Dionysus,⁵² and it may have happened to Demeter also. And in fact the rites of one of her festivals, the Thesmophoria, bear out the view that originally the pig was an embodiment of the corn-goddess herself, either Demeter or her daughter and double Persephone. The Attic Thesmophoria was an autumn festival, celebrated by women alone in October,⁵³ and appears to have represented with mourning rites the descent of Persephone (or Demeter)⁵⁴ into the lower world, and with joy her return from the dead.⁵⁵ Hence the name Descent or Ascent variously applied to the first, and

⁵² See above, vol. i. pp. 22 *sq.*

⁵³ As to the Thesmophoria see my article "Thesmophoria" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, vol. xxiii, 295 *sqq.*; August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 308 *sqq.*; Miss J. E. Harisson, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*² (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 120 *sqq.*; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 313 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 75 *sqq.* At Thebes and in Delos the Thesmophoria was held in summer, in the month of Metageitnion (August). See Xenophon, *Hellenica*, v. 2. 29; M. P. Nilsson *Griechische Feste*, pp. 316 *sq.*

⁵⁴ Photius, *Lexicon*, s. v. στήνια, speaks of the ascent of *Demeter* from the lower world; and Clement of Alexandria speaks of both Demeter and Persephone as having been engulfed in the chasm (*Protrept.* ii. 17). The original equivalence of Demeter and Persephone must be borne steadily in mind.

⁵⁵ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 69; Photius, *Lexicon*, s. v. στήνια.

the name *Kalligeneia* (fair-born) applied to the third day of the festival. Now from an old scholium on Lucian⁵⁶ we learn some details about the mode of celebrating the Thesmophoria, which shed important light on the part of the festival called the Descent or the Ascent. The scholiast tells us that it was customary at the Thesmophoria to throw pigs, cakes of dough, and branches of pine-trees into “the chasms of Demeter and Persephone,” which appear to have been sacred caverns or vaults.⁵⁷ In these caverns or vaults [pg 018] there were said to be serpents, which guarded the caverns and consumed most of the flesh of the pigs and dough-cakes which were thrown in. Afterwards – apparently at the next annual festival⁵⁸ – the decayed remains of the pigs, the cakes,

⁵⁶ E. Rohde, “Unedirte Lucians-scholien, die attischen Thesmophorien und Haloen betreffend,” *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F., xxv. (1870) p. 548; *Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 275 sq. Two passages of classical writers (Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17, and Pausanias, ix. 8. 1) refer to the rites described by the scholiast on Lucian, and had been rightly interpreted by Chr. A. Lobeck (*Aglaophamus*, pp. 827 sqq.) before the discovery of the scholia.

⁵⁷ The scholiast speaks of them as *megara* and *adyta*. The name *megara* is thought to be derived from a Phoenician word meaning “cavern,” “subterranean chasm,” the Hebrew מַעְדָּן. See F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier* (Bonn, 1841), i. 220. In Greek usage the *megara* were properly subterranean vaults or chasms sacred to the gods. See Hesychius, quoted by Movers, *l. c.* (the passage does not appear in M. Schmidt's minor edition of Hesychius); Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 6; and my note on Pausanias, ii. 2. 1.

⁵⁸ We infer this from Pausanias, ix. 8. 1, though the passage is incomplete and apparently corrupt. For ἐν Δωδώνῃ Lobeck (*Aglaophamus*, pp. 829 sq.) proposed to read ἀναδύναι or ἀναδοθῆαι. At the spring and autumn festivals of Isis at Tithorea geese and goats were thrown into the *adyton* and left there till the following festival, when the remains were removed and buried at a certain spot a little way from the

and the pine-branches were fetched by women called “drawers,” who, after observing rules of ceremonial purity for three days, descended into the caverns, and, frightening away the serpents by clapping their hands, brought up the remains and placed them on the altar. Whoever got a piece of the decayed flesh and cakes, and sowed it with the seed-corn in his field, was believed to be sure of a good crop. With the feeding of the serpents in the vaults by the women we may compare an ancient Italian ritual. At Lanuvium a serpent lived in a sacred cave within a grove of Juno. On certain appointed days a number of holy maidens, with their eyes bandaged, entered the grove carrying cakes of barley in their hands. Led, as it was believed, by the divine spirit, they walked straight to the serpent's den and offered him the cakes. If they were chaste, the serpent ate the cakes, the parents of the girls rejoiced, and farmers prognosticated an abundant harvest. But if the girls were unchaste, the serpent left the cakes untasted, and ants came and crumbled the rejected viands and so removed them bit by bit from the sacred grove, thereby purifying the hallowed spot from the stain it had contracted by the presence of a defiled maiden.⁵⁹

temple. See Pausanias, x. 32. 14. This analogy supports the view that the pigs thrown into the caverns at the Thesmophoria were left there till the next festival.

⁵⁹ Aelian, *De natura animalium*, xi. 16; Propertius, v. 8. 3-14. The feeding of the serpent is represented on a Roman coin of about 64 b. c.; on the obverse of the coin appears the head of Juno Caprotina. See E. Babelon, *Monnaies de la République Romaine* (Paris, 1886), ii. 402. A common type of Greek art represents a woman feeding a serpent out of a saucer. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 75.

Legend told to explain the ritual of the Thesmophoria

To explain the rude and ancient ritual of the Thesmophoria [pg 019] the following legend was told. At the moment when Pluto carried off Persephone, a swineherd called Eubuleus chanced to be herding his swine on the spot, and his herd was engulfed in the chasm down which Pluto vanished with Persephone. Accordingly at the Thesmophoria pigs were annually thrown into caverns to commemorate the disappearance of the swine of Eubuleus.⁶⁰ It follows from this that the casting of the pigs into the vaults at the Thesmophoria formed part of the dramatic representation of Persephone's descent into the lower world; and as no image of Persephone appears to have been thrown in, we may infer that the descent of the pigs was not so much an accompaniment of her descent as the descent itself, in short, that the pigs were Persephone. Afterwards when Persephone or Demeter (for the two are equivalent) took on human form, a reason had to be found for the custom of throwing pigs into caverns at her festival; and this was done by saying that when Pluto carried off Persephone, there happened to be some swine browsing near, which were swallowed up along with her. The story is obviously a forced and awkward attempt to bridge over

⁶⁰ *Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe, pp. 275 sq.

the gulf between the old conception of the corn-spirit as a pig and the new conception of her as an anthropomorphic goddess. A trace of the older conception survived in the legend that when the sad mother was searching for traces of the vanished Persephone, the footprints of the lost one were obliterated by the footprints of a pig;⁶¹ originally, we may conjecture, the footprints of the pig were the footprints of Persephone and of Demeter herself. A consciousness of the intimate connexion of the pig with the corn lurks in the legend that the swineherd Eubuleus was a brother of Triptolemus, to whom Demeter first imparted the secret of the corn. Indeed, according to one version of the story, Eubuleus himself received, jointly with his brother Triptolemus, the gift of the corn from Demeter as a reward for revealing to her the fate of Persephone.⁶² Further, it is to be noted that at the Thesmophoria [pg 020] the women appear to have eaten swine's flesh.⁶³ The meal, if I am right, must have been a solemn sacrament or communion, the worshippers partaking of the body of the god.

Analogy of the Thesmophoria to the folk-customs of Northern Europe

As thus explained, the Thesmophoria has its analogies in

⁶¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 461-466, upon which Gierig remarks, "*Sues melius poeta omisisset in hac narratione.*" Such is the wisdom of the commentator.

⁶² Pausanias, i. 14. 3.

⁶³ Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 338.

the folk-customs of Northern Europe which have been already described. Just as at the Thesmophoria – an autumn festival in honour of the corn-goddess – swine's flesh was partly eaten, partly kept in caverns till the following year, when it was taken up to be sown with the seed-corn in the fields for the purpose of securing a good crop; so in the neighbourhood of Grenoble the goat killed on the harvest-field is partly eaten at the harvest-supper, partly pickled and kept till the next harvest;⁶⁴ so at Pouilly the ox killed on the harvest-field is partly eaten by the harvesters, partly pickled and kept till the first day of sowing in spring,⁶⁵ probably to be then mixed with the seed, or eaten by the ploughmen, or both; so at Udvarhely the feathers of the cock which is killed in the last sheaf at harvest are kept till spring, and then sown with the seed on the field;⁶⁶ so in Hesse and Meiningen the flesh of pigs is eaten on Ash Wednesday or Candlemas, and the bones are kept till sowing-time, when they are put into the field sown or mixed with the seed in the bag;⁶⁷ so, lastly, the corn from the last sheaf is kept till Christmas, made into the Yule Boar, and afterwards broken and mixed with the seed-corn at sowing in spring.⁶⁸ Thus, to put it generally, the corn-spirit is killed in animal form in autumn; part of his flesh

⁶⁴ Above, vol. i. p. 285.

⁶⁵ Above, vol. i. p. 290.

⁶⁶ Above, vol. i. p. 278.

⁶⁷ Above, vol. i. p. 300.

⁶⁸ Above, vol. i. pp. 300 *sq.*

is eaten as a sacrament by his worshippers; and part of it is kept till next sowing-time or harvest as a pledge and security for the continuance or renewal of the corn-spirit's energies. Whether in the interval between autumn and spring he is conceived as dead, or whether, like the ox in the *bouphonia*, he is supposed to come to life again immediately after being killed, is not clear. At the Thesmophoria, according to Clement and Pausanias, as emended by Lobeck,⁶⁹ the pigs [pg 021] were thrown in alive, and were supposed to reappear at the festival of the following year. Here, therefore, if we accept Lobeck's emendations, the corn-spirit is conceived as alive throughout the year; he lives and works under ground, but is brought up each autumn to be renewed and then replaced in his subterranean abode.⁷⁰

The horse-headed Demeter of Phigalia

If persons of fastidious taste should object that the Greeks never could have conceived Demeter and Persephone to be embodied in the form of pigs, it may be answered that in the cave of Phigalia in Arcadia the Black Demeter was portrayed

⁶⁹ In Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17, for μεγαρίζοντες χοίρους ἐκβάλλουσι Lobeck (*Aglaophamus*, p. 831) would read μεγάροις ζῶντας χοίρους ἐμβάλλουσι. For his emendation of Pausanias, see above, p. [18](#) note 1.

⁷⁰ It is worth nothing that in Crete, which was an ancient seat of Demeter worship (see above, vol. i. p. 131), the pig was esteemed very sacred and was not eaten (Athenaeus, ix. 18, pp. 375 f-376 a). This would not exclude the possibility of its being eaten sacramentally, as at the Thesmophoria.

with the head and mane of a horse on the body of a woman.⁷¹ Between the portrait of a goddess as a pig, and the portrait of her as a woman with a horse's head, there is little to choose in respect of barbarism. The legend told of the Phigalian Demeter indicates that the horse was one of the animal forms assumed in ancient Greece, as in modern Europe,⁷² by the corn-spirit. It was said that in her search for her daughter, Demeter assumed the form of a mare to escape the addresses of Poseidon, and that, offended at his importunity, she withdrew in dudgeon to a cave not far from Phigalia in the highlands of Western Arcadia. The very cavern, now turned into a little Christian chapel with its holy pictures, is still shewn to the curious traveller far down the side of that profound ravine through which the brawling Neda winds under overhanging woods to the sea. There, robed in black, she tarried so long that the fruits of the earth were perishing, and mankind would have died of famine if Pan had not soothed the angry goddess and persuaded her to quit the cave. In memory of this event, the Phigalians set up an image of the Black Demeter in the cave; it represented a woman dressed in a long robe, with the head and mane of a horse.⁷³ The Black Demeter, in

⁷¹ Pausanias, viii. 42.

⁷² Above, vol. i. pp. 292 *sqq.*

⁷³ Pausanias, viii. 25 and 42. At the sanctuary of the Mistress (that is, of Persephone) in Arcadia many terracotta statuettes have been found which represent draped women with the heads of cows or sheep. They are probably votive images of Demeter or Persephone, for the ritual of the sanctuary prescribed the offering of images (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 939, vol. ii. pp. 803 *sq.*).

whose absence the fruits [pg 022] of the earth perish, is plainly a mythical expression for the bare wintry earth stripped of its summer mantle of green.

See P. Perdrizet, "Terres-cuites de Lycosoura, et mythologie arcadienne," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, xxiii. (1899) p. 635; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 347 *sq.* On the Phigalian Demeter, see W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 244 *sqq.* I well remember how on a summer afternoon I sat at the mouth of the shallow cave, watching the play of sunshine on the lofty wooded sides of the ravine and listening to the murmur of the stream.

§ 3. Attis, Adonis, and the Pig

Attis and the pig

Passing now to Attis and Adonis, we may note a few facts which seem to shew that these deities of vegetation had also, like other deities of the same class, their animal embodiments. The worshippers of Attis abstained from eating the flesh of swine.⁷⁴ This appears to indicate that the pig was regarded as an embodiment of Attis. And the legend that Attis was killed by a boar⁷⁵ points in the same direction. For after the examples of the goat Dionysus and the pig Demeter it may almost be laid down as a rule that an animal which is said to have injured a god was originally the god himself. Perhaps the cry of “Hyes Attes! Hyes Attes!”⁷⁶ which was raised by the worshippers of Attis, may be neither more nor less than “Pig Attis! Pig Attis!” —*hyes* being possibly a Phrygian form of the Greek *hȳs*, “a pig.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 221. On the position of the pig in ancient Oriental and particularly Semitic religion, see F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. (Bonn, 1841), pp. 218 *sqq.*

⁷⁵ *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 220.

⁷⁶ Demosthenes, *De corona*, p. 313.

⁷⁷ The suggestion was made to me in conversation by my lamented friend, the late R. A. Neil of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Adonis and the boar. Ambiguous position of pigs at Hierapolis

In regard to Adonis, his connexion with the boar was not always explained by the story that he had been killed by the animal.⁷⁸ According to another story, a boar rent with his tusk the bark of the tree in which the infant Adonis was born.⁷⁹ According to yet another story, he perished at the [pg 023] hands of Hephaestus on Mount Lebanon while he was hunting wild boars.⁸⁰ These variations in the legend serve to shew that, while the connexion of the boar with Adonis was certain, the reason of the connexion was not understood, and that consequently different stories were devised to explain it. Certainly the pig ranked as a sacred animal among the Syrians. At the great religious metropolis of Hierapolis on the Euphrates pigs were neither sacrificed nor eaten, and if a man touched a pig he was unclean for the rest of the day. Some people said this was because

⁷⁸ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 8; and to the authorities there cited add Athenaeus, ii. 80, p. 69 b; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 5. 3, § 8; Aristides, *Apologia*, II, p. 107, ed. J. Rendel Harris (Cambridge, 1891); Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 44; Propertius, iii. 4 (5). 53 sq., ed. F. A. Paley; Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* i. 17; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi. 7; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 9; Macrobius, *Saturnal.* i. 21. 4. See further W. W. Graf Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun* (Leipsic, 1911), pp. 142 sqq.

⁷⁹ See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 186.

⁸⁰ W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London, 1855), p. 44.

the pigs were unclean; others said it was because the pigs were sacred.⁸¹ This difference of opinion points to a hazy state of religious thought in which the ideas of sanctity and uncleanness are not yet sharply distinguished, both being blent in a sort of vaporous solution to which we give the name of taboo. It is quite consistent with this that the pig should have been held to be an embodiment of the divine Adonis, and the analogies of Dionysus and Demeter make it probable that the story of the hostility of the animal to the god was only a late misapprehension of the old view of the god as embodied in a pig. The rule that pigs were not sacrificed or eaten by worshippers of Attis and presumably of Adonis, does not exclude the possibility that in these rituals the pig was slain on solemn occasions as a representative of the god and consumed sacramentally by the worshippers. Indeed, the sacramental killing and eating of an animal implies that the animal is sacred, and that, as a general rule, it is spared.⁸²

Attitude of the Jews to the pig

The attitude of the Jews to the pig was as ambiguous as that of

⁸¹ Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 54.

⁸² The heathen Harranians sacrificed swine once a year and ate the flesh (En-Nedîm, in D. Chwolsohn's *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, St. Petersburg, 1856, ii. 42). My friend W. Robertson Smith conjectured that the wild boars annually sacrificed in Cyprus on 2nd April (Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 45) represented Adonis himself. See his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 290 sq., 411.

the heathen Syrians towards the same animal. The Greeks could not decide whether the Jews worshipped swine or abominated them.⁸³ On the one hand they might not eat swine; but on the other hand they might not kill them. And if the former rule speaks for the uncleanness, the latter [pg 024] speaks still more strongly for the sanctity of the animal. For whereas both rules may, and one rule must, be explained on the supposition that the pig was sacred; neither rule must, and one rule cannot, be explained on the supposition that the pig was unclean. If, therefore, we prefer the former supposition, we must conclude that, originally at least, the pig was revered rather than abhorred by the Israelites. We are confirmed in this opinion by observing that down to the time of Isaiah some of the Jews used to meet secretly in gardens to eat the flesh of swine and mice as a religious rite.⁸⁴ Doubtless this was a very ancient ceremony, dating from a time when both the pig and the mouse were venerated as divine, and when their flesh was partaken of sacramentally on rare and solemn occasions as the body and blood of gods. And in general it may be said that all so-called unclean animals were originally sacred; the reason for not eating them was that they were divine.

⁸³ Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 5.

⁸⁴ Isaiah lxxv. 3, lxxvi. 3, 17. Compare R. H. Kennett, *The Composition of the Book of Isaiah in the Light of History and Archaeology* (London, 1910) p. 61, who suggests that the eating of the mouse as a sacrament may have been derived from the Greek worship of the Mouse Apollo (Apollo Smintheus). As to the Mouse Apollo see below, pp. 282 sq.

§ 4. Osiris, the Pig and the Bull

Attitude of the ancient Egyptians to the pig. Annual sacrifice of pigs to Osiris and the moon

In ancient Egypt, within historical times, the pig occupied the same dubious position as in Syria and Palestine, though at first sight its uncleanness is more prominent than its sanctity. The Egyptians are generally said by Greek writers to have abhorred the pig as a foul and loathsome animal.⁸⁵ If a man so much as touched a pig in passing, he stepped into the river with all his clothes on, to wash off the taint.⁸⁶ To drink pig's milk was believed to cause leprosy to the drinker.⁸⁷ Swineherds, though natives of Egypt, were forbidden to enter any temple, and they were the only men who were thus excluded. No one would give his daughter in marriage to a swineherd, or marry a swineherd's daughter; the swineherds married among themselves.⁸⁸ [pg 025]

⁸⁵ Herodotus, ii. 47; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* x. 16. Josephus merely says that the Egyptian priests abstained from the flesh of swine (*Contra Apionem*, ii. 13).

⁸⁶ Herodotus, *l. c.*

⁸⁷ Plutarch and Aelian, *ll. cc.*

⁸⁸ Herodotus, *l. c.* At Castabus in Chersonese there was a sacred precinct of Hemithea, which no one might approach who had touched or eaten of a pig (Diodorus Siculus, v. 62. 5).

Yet once a year the Egyptians sacrificed pigs to the moon and to Osiris, and not only sacrificed them, but ate of their flesh, though on any other day of the year they would neither sacrifice them nor taste of their flesh. Those who were too poor to offer a pig on this day baked cakes of dough, and offered them instead.⁸⁹ This can hardly be explained except by the supposition that the pig was a sacred animal which was eaten sacramentally by his worshippers once a year.

Belief that the eating of a sacred animal causes skin-disease, especially leprosy

The view that in Egypt the pig was sacred is borne out by the very facts which, to moderns, might seem to prove the contrary. Thus the Egyptians thought, as we have seen, that to drink pig's milk produced leprosy. But exactly analogous views are held by savages about the animals and plants which they deem most sacred. Thus in the island of Wetar (between New Guinea and Celebes) people believe themselves to be variously descended from wild pigs, serpents, crocodiles, turtles, dogs, and eels; a man

⁸⁹ Herodotus, ii. 47 *sq.*; Aelian and Plutarch, *ll.cc.* Herodotus distinguishes the sacrifice to the moon from that to Osiris. According to him, at the sacrifice to the moon, the extremity of the pig's tail, together with the spleen and the caul, was covered with fat and burned; the rest of the flesh was eaten. On the evening (not the eve, see H. Stein's note on the passage) of the festival the sacrifice to Osiris took place. Each man slew a pig before his door, then gave it to the swineherd, from whom he had bought it, to take away.

may not eat an animal of the kind from which he is descended; if he does so, he will become a leper, and go mad.⁹⁰ Amongst the Omaha Indians of North America men whose totem is the elk, believe that if they ate the flesh of the male elk they would break out in boils and white spots in different parts of their bodies.⁹¹ In the same tribe men whose totem is the red maize, think that if they ate red maize they would have running sores all round [pg 026] their mouths.⁹² The Bush negroes of Surinam, who practise totemism, believe that if they ate the *capiai* (an animal like a pig) it would give them leprosy;⁹³ perhaps the *capiai* is one of their totems. The Syrians, in antiquity, who esteemed fish sacred, thought that if they ate fish their bodies would break out in ulcers, and their feet and stomach would swell up.⁹⁴ The Nyanja-speaking tribes of Central Angoniland, in British Central Africa, believe that if a person eats his totemic animal, his body would break out in spots. The cure for this eruption of the skin

⁹⁰ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), pp. 432, 452.

⁹¹ Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 225; Miss A. C. Fletcher and F. la Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1911), p. 144. According to the latter writers, any breach of a clan taboo among the Omahas was supposed to be punished either by the breaking out of sores or white spots on the body of the offender or by his hair turning white.

⁹² Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, *op. cit.* p. 231.

⁹³ J. Crevaux, *Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1883), p. 59.

⁹⁴ Plutarch, *De superstitione*, 10; Porphyry, *De abstinence*, iv. 15. As to the sanctity of fish among the Syrians, see also Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 473 sq.; Diodorus Siculus, ii. 4.

is to bathe the body in a decoction made from the bone of the animal, the eating of which caused the malady.⁹⁵ The Wagogo of German East Africa imagine that the sin of eating the totemic animal is visited not on the sinner himself but on his innocent kinsfolk. Thus when they see a child with a scald head, they say at once that its father has been eating his totem and that is why the poor child has scabs on its pate.⁹⁶ Among the Wahehe, another tribe of German East Africa, a man who suffers from scab or other skin disease will often set the trouble down to his having unwittingly partaken of his totemic animal.⁹⁷ Similarly among the Waheia, another tribe of the same region, if a man kills or eats the totemic animal of his clan, he is supposed to suffer from an eruption of the skin.⁹⁸ In like manner the Bantu tribes of Kavirondo, in Central Africa, hold that the eating of the totem produces a severe cutaneous eruption, which can however be cured by mixing an extract of certain herbs with the fat of a black ox and rubbing the body of the sufferer all over with the mixture.⁹⁹ The Chasas of Orissa believe that if they were to

⁹⁵ R. Sutherland Rattray, *Some Folklore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja* (London, 1907), pp. 174 sq.

⁹⁶ Rev. H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 307, compare p. 317.

⁹⁷ E. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe* (Berlin, 1908), p. 42.

⁹⁸ J. Kohler, "Das Banturecht in Ostafrika," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, xv. (1902) pp. 2, 3.

⁹⁹ C. W. Hobley, "Anthropological Studies in Kavirondo and Nandi," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiii. (1903) p. 347.

injure their totemic animal, they [pg 027] would be attacked by leprosy and their line would die out.¹⁰⁰ These examples prove that the eating of a sacred animal is often believed to produce leprosy or other skin-diseases; so far, therefore, they support the view that the pig must have been sacred in Egypt, since the effect of drinking its milk was believed to be leprosy. Such fancies may perhaps have been sometimes suggested by the observation that the eating of semi-putrid flesh, to which some savages are addicted, is apt to be followed by eruptions on the skin. Indeed, many modern authorities attribute leprosy to this cause, particularly to the eating of half rotten fish.¹⁰¹ It seems not impossible that the abhorrence which the Hebrews entertained of leprosy, and the pains which they took to seclude lepers from the community, may have been based on religious as well as on purely sanitary grounds; they may have imagined that the disfigurement of the sufferers was a penalty which they had incurred by some infraction of taboo. Certainly we read in the Old Testament of cases of leprosy which the historian regarded as the direct consequence of sin.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey, II. Draft Articles on Uriya Castes* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 16.

¹⁰¹ C. Creighton, s. v. "Leprosy," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iii. col. 2766.

¹⁰² 2 Kings v. 27; 2 Chronicles xxvi. 16-21.

Mere contact with a sacred object is deemed dangerous and calls for purification as a sort of disinfectant

Again, the rule that, after touching a pig, a man had to wash himself and his clothes, also favours the view of the sanctity of the pig. For it is a common belief that the effect of contact with a sacred object must be removed, by washing or otherwise, before a man is free to mingle with his fellows. Thus the Jews wash their hands after reading the sacred scriptures. Before coming forth from the tabernacle after the sin-offering, the high priest had to wash himself, and put off the garments which he had worn in the holy place.¹⁰³ It was a rule of Greek ritual that, in offering an expiatory sacrifice, the sacrificer should not touch the sacrifice, and that, after the offering was made, he must wash his body and his clothes in a river or spring before he could enter a city or his own house.¹⁰⁴ The Parjas, a small tribe of [pg 028] the Central Provinces in India, are divided into clans which have for their respective totems the tiger, the tortoise, the goat, a big lizard, a dove, and so on. If a man accidentally kills his totemic animal, "the earthen cooking-pots of his household are thrown away,

¹⁰³ Leviticus xvi. 23 *sq.*

¹⁰⁴ Porphyry, *De abstinencia*, ii. 44. For this and the Jewish examples I am indebted to my friend W. Robertson Smith. Compare his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 351, 426, 450 *sq.*

the clothes are washed, and the house is purified with water in which the bark of the mango or *jamun* tree (*Eugenia jambolana*) has been steeped. This is in sign of mourning, as it is thought that such an act will bring misfortune.”¹⁰⁵ If a Chadwar of the Central Provinces who has the pig for his totem should even see a pig killed by somebody else, he will throw away the household crockery and clean the house as if on the death of a member of his family.¹⁰⁶ The Polynesians felt strongly the need of ridding themselves of the sacred contagion, if it may be so called, which they caught by touching sacred objects. Various ceremonies were performed for the purpose of removing this contagion. We have seen, for example, how in Tonga a man who happened to touch a sacred chief, or anything personally belonging to him, had to perform a certain ceremony before he could feed himself with his hands; otherwise it was believed that he would swell up and die, or at least be afflicted with scrofula or some other disease.¹⁰⁷ We have seen, too, what fatal effects are supposed to follow, and do actually follow, from contact with a sacred object in New Zealand.¹⁰⁸ In short, primitive man believes that what is sacred is dangerous; it is pervaded by a sort of electrical sanctity which communicates a shock to, even if it does not kill, whatever comes

¹⁰⁵ *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey, VII. Draft Articles on Forest Tribes* (Allahabad, 1911), p. 97.

¹⁰⁶ *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey, I. Draft Articles on Hindustani Castes* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 32.

¹⁰⁷ See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 133 sq.

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.* pp. 134-136.

in contact with it. Hence the savage is unwilling to touch or even to see that which he deems peculiarly holy. Thus Bechuanas, of the Crocodile clan, think it “hateful and unlucky” to meet or see a crocodile; the sight is thought to cause inflammation of the eyes. Yet the crocodile is their most sacred object; they call it their father, swear by it, and celebrate it in their festivals.¹⁰⁹ The goat is the sacred animal of the Madenassana [pg 029] Bushmen; yet “to look upon it would be to render the man for the time impure, as well as to cause him undefined uneasiness.”¹¹⁰ The Elk clan, among the Omaha Indians, believe that even to touch the male elk would be followed by an eruption of boils and white spots on the body.¹¹¹ Members of the Reptile clan in the same tribe think that if one of them touches or smells a snake, it will make his hair white.¹¹² In Samoa people whose god was a butterfly believed that if they caught a butterfly it would strike them dead.¹¹³ Again, in Samoa the reddish-seared leaves of the banana-tree were commonly used as plates for handing food; but if any member of the Wild Pigeon family had used banana

¹⁰⁹ E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), p. 211; D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London, 1857), p. 255; John Mackenzie, *Ten Years north of the Orange River* (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 135 note. See further *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 372.

¹¹⁰ J. Mackenzie, *l. c.*

¹¹¹ Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, “Omaha Sociology,” *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 225.

¹¹² *Ibid.* p. 275.

¹¹³ G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), p. 76.

leaves for this purpose, it was supposed that he would suffer from rheumatic swellings or an eruption all over the body like chicken-pox.¹¹⁴ The Mori clan of the Bhils in Central India worship the peacock as their totem and make offerings of grain to it; yet members of the clan believe that were they even to set foot on the tracks of a peacock they would afterwards suffer from some disease, and if a woman sees a peacock she must veil her face and look away.¹¹⁵ Thus the primitive mind seems to conceive of holiness as a sort of dangerous virus, which a prudent man will shun as far as possible, and of which, if he should chance to be infected by it, he will carefully disinfect himself by some form of ceremonial purification.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 70.

¹¹⁵ Captain C. Eckford Luard, in *Census of India, 1901*, vol. xix. *Central India*, Part i. (Lucknow, 1902) pp. 299 *sq.*; also *Census of India, 1901*, vol. i. *Ethnographic Appendices* (Calcutta, 1903), p. 163.

Thus the pig was probably at first a sacred animal with the Egyptians, and may have been regarded as an embodiment of the corn-god Osiris, though at a later time he was looked on as an embodiment of Typhon, the enemy of Osiris. The havoc wrought by wild boars in the corn is a reason for regarding them as foes of the corn-god

In the light of these parallels the beliefs and customs of the Egyptians touching the pig are probably to be explained as based upon an opinion of the extreme sanctity rather than of the extreme uncleanness of the animal; or rather, to put it more correctly, they imply that the animal was looked on, not simply as a filthy and disgusting creature, but as a being endowed with high supernatural powers, and that as [pg 030] such it was regarded with that primitive sentiment of religious awe and fear in which the feelings of reverence and abhorrence are almost equally blended. The ancients themselves seem to have been aware that there was another side to the horror with which swine seemed to inspire the Egyptians. For the Greek astronomer and mathematician Eudoxus, who resided fourteen months in Egypt and conversed with the priests,¹¹⁶ was of opinion that the Egyptians spared the pig, not out of abhorrence, but

¹¹⁶ Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, viii. 8.

from a regard to its utility in agriculture; for, according to him, when the Nile had subsided, herds of swine were turned loose over the fields to tread the seed down into the moist earth.¹¹⁷ But when a being is thus the object of mixed and implicitly contradictory feelings, he may be said to occupy a position of unstable equilibrium. In course of time one of the contradictory feelings is likely to prevail over the other, and according as the feeling which finally predominates is that of reverence or abhorrence, the being who is the object of it will rise into a god or sink into a devil. The latter, on the whole, was the fate of the pig in Egypt. For in historical times the fear and horror of the pig seem certainly to have outweighed the reverence and worship of which he may once have been the object, and of which, even in his fallen state, he never quite lost trace. He came to be looked on as an embodiment of Set or Typhon, the Egyptian devil and enemy of Osiris. For it was in the shape of a black pig that Typhon injured the eye of the god Horus, who burned him and instituted the sacrifice of the pig, the sun-god Ra having declared the beast abominable.¹¹⁸ Again, the story that Typhon was hunting a boar when he discovered and mangled the body of Osiris, and that this was the reason why pigs were

¹¹⁷ Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* x. 16. The story is repeated by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 168.

¹¹⁸ E. Lefébure, *Le Mythe Osirien*, Première Partie, *Les yeux d'Horus* (Paris, 1874), p. 44; *The Book of the Dead*, English translation by E. A. Wallis Budge (London, 1901), ii. 336 sq., chapter cxii.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), i. 496 sq.; *id.*, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London and New York, 1911), i. 62 sq.

sacrificed once a year,¹¹⁹ is clearly a modernised version of an older story that Osiris, like Adonis and Attis, was slain [pg 031] or mangled by a boar, or by Typhon in the form of a boar. Thus, the annual sacrifice of a pig to Osiris might naturally be interpreted as vengeance inflicted on the hostile animal that had slain or mangled the god. But, in the first place, when an animal is thus killed as a solemn sacrifice once and once only in the year, it generally or always means that the animal is divine, that he is spared and respected the rest of the year as a god and slain, when he is slain, also in the character of a god.¹²⁰ In the second place, the examples of Dionysus and Demeter, if not of Attis and Adonis, have taught us that the animal which is sacrificed to a god on the ground that he is the god's enemy may have been, and probably was, originally the god himself. Therefore, the annual sacrifice of a pig to Osiris, coupled with the alleged hostility of the animal to the god, tends to shew, first, that originally the pig was a god, and, second, that he was Osiris. At a later age, when Osiris became anthropomorphic and his original relation to the pig had been forgotten, the animal was first distinguished from him, and afterwards opposed as an enemy to him by mythologists who could think of no reason for killing a beast in connexion with

¹¹⁹ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8. E. Lefébure (*op. cit.* p. 46) recognises that in this story the boar is Typhon himself.

¹²⁰ This important principle was first recognised by W. Robertson Smith. See his article, "Sacrifice," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xxi. 137 *sq.* Compare his *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 373, 410 *sq.*

the worship of a god except that the beast was the god's enemy; or, as Plutarch puts it, not that which is dear to the gods, but that which is the contrary, is fit to be sacrificed.¹²¹ At this later stage the havoc which a wild boar notoriously makes amongst the corn would supply a plausible reason for regarding him as the foe of the corn-spirit, though originally, if I am right, the very freedom with which the boar ranged at will through the corn led people to identify him with the corn-spirit, to whom he was afterwards opposed as an enemy.

Evidence of the depredations committed by wild boars on the crops

As the depredations committed by wild swine on the growing crops in countries where these creatures abound are necessarily unfamiliar to most English readers, it may be well to illustrate them by examples. Thus, for instance, in Palestine the wild boar “is eagerly chased and destroyed on account of the frightful ravages it makes among the [pg 032] crops. Not only does it devour any fruits within reach, but in a single night a party of wild boars will uproot a whole field, and destroy the husbandman's hopes for the year. The places they love to frequent are the reedy marshes and thickets by rivers and lakes, and they swarm in the thickets all along the banks of the Jordan from Jericho to the

¹²¹ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 31.

Lake of Gennesaret. From these fastnesses, whence neither dog nor man can dislodge them, they make nightly forays upon the corn-fields and root-crops of the villagers, returning at daybreak to their coverts. About Jericho they are especially destructive, and when the barley crop is ripening, the husbandmen have to keep nightly watch to drive them away. Their presence can always be detected by the crashing noise they make in forcing their way through the thickets, when the men fire, guided by the sound.”¹²² Wild pigs are the special enemies of the crops in South Africa; the fences constructed by the Zulus round their gardens are mainly designed to guard against the devastating depredations of these brutes, though porcupines, baboons, hippopotamuses, and elephants also make havoc of the ripe grain. Sometimes small huts are erected on platforms in the gardens, and in these huts watchers are set to scare away the nocturnal invaders.¹²³ So in British Central Africa sentinels are posted day and night in huts raised on platforms to protect the maize fields from the inroads of baboons and of wild pigs, which are still more destructive than the baboons, for they grub up the plants as well as devour the grain; and the watchers drum continually on any metal they have at hand to keep the marauders at bay.¹²⁴ In

¹²² H. B. Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible*, Ninth Edition (London, 1898), pp. 54 sq.

¹²³ Rev. J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London, 1857), pp. 18-20.

¹²⁴ Miss A. Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa* (London, 1906), pp. 182 sq.

the island of Nias whole fields are sometimes trampled down by these pests between sunset and sunrise. Often the stillness of the serene equatorial night is broken by the strident cries of the watchers of the fields; the sound goes echoing through the wooded valleys for a long time, and here and there a dull grunting tells that the efforts of the sentinels have not been in vain.¹²⁵ [pg 033] In Northern Luzon, of the Philippine Archipelago, the rice-fields are similarly exposed to the depredations of wild hogs, and watchers remain on guard day and night in outlooks, sometimes in commodious structures of stone erected for the purpose, who burn fires at night to frighten the animals away.¹²⁶ At the beginning of their annual agricultural labours the Banars of Cambodia pray to Yang-Seri that he would be pleased to give them plenty of rice and to prevent the wild boars from eating it up.¹²⁷ In Gayo-land, a district of Sumatra, the worst enemies of the rice crops are wild swine and field mice; the whole of the harvest is sometimes destroyed by their inroads.¹²⁸ Among the Kai of German New Guinea people who are engaged in the labour of the fields will on no account eat pork. The reason is that pigs, both wild and tame, are the most dangerous foes of the crops; therefore it seems clear to the mind of the Kai

¹²⁵ E. Modigliano, *Un Viaggio a Nias* (Milan, 1890), pp. 524 *sq.*, 601.

¹²⁶ A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot*, (Manilla, 1905), pp. 100, 102.

¹²⁷ A. Bastian, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Gebirgs-stämme in Kambodia," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, i. (1866) p. 44.

¹²⁸ G. Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Gajöland en zijne Bewoners* (Batavia, 1903), p. 348.

that if a field labourer were to eat pork, the flesh of the dead pig in his stomach would attract the living pigs into the field.¹²⁹ Perhaps this superstition, based on the principle of sympathetic magic, may explain the aversion to pork which was entertained by some of the agricultural peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean in antiquity.

The ravages of wild boars among the crops help us to understand the ambiguous attitude of the ancient Egyptians to swine

To people thus familiarised with the ravages of wild boars among the ripe crops the idea might naturally present itself that the animal is either the enemy of the corn-god or perhaps the corn-god himself come in person to enjoy his own despite all the efforts of mankind to keep him out of his rights. Hence we can understand how an agricultural people like the ancient Egyptians may have identified the wild boar either with their corn-god Osiris or with his enemy Typhon. The view which identifies the pig with Osiris derives not a little support from the sacrifice of pigs to him on the very day on which, according to tradition, Osiris himself was killed;¹³⁰ for thus the killing [pg 034] of the

¹²⁹ Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, 1911), p. 125.

¹³⁰ E. Lefébure, *Le Mythe Osirien*, Première Partie, *Les yeux d'Horus* (Paris, 1874), pp. 48 sq.

pig was the annual representation of the killing of Osiris, just as the throwing of the pigs into the caverns at the Thesmophoria was an annual representation of the descent of Persephone into the lower world; and both customs are parallel to the European practice of killing a goat, cock, and so forth, at harvest as a representative of the corn-spirit.

Egyptian sacrifices of red oxen and red-haired men

Again, the theory that the pig, originally Osiris himself, afterwards came to be regarded as an embodiment of his enemy Typhon, is supported by the similar relation of red-haired men and red oxen to Typhon. For in regard to the red-haired men who were burned and whose ashes were scattered with winnowing-fans, we have seen fair grounds for believing that originally, like the red-haired puppies killed at Rome in spring, they were representatives of the corn-spirit himself, that is, of Osiris, and were slain for the express purpose of making the corn turn red or golden.¹³¹ Yet at a later time these men were explained to be representatives, not of Osiris, but of his enemy Typhon,¹³² and the killing of them was regarded as an act of vengeance inflicted on the enemy of the god. Similarly, the red oxen sacrificed by the Egyptians were said to be offered on the ground of their

¹³¹ See above, pp. 260 *sq.*; *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 331, 338.

¹³² Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 33, 73; Diodorus Siculus, i. 88.

resemblance to Typhon;¹³³ though it is more likely that originally they were slain on the ground of their resemblance to the corn-spirit Osiris. We have seen that the ox is a common representative of the corn-spirit and is slain as such on the harvest-field.

Osiris identified with the sacred bulls Apis and Mnevis. Stratification of three great types of religion or superstition in ancient Egypt

Osiris was regularly identified with the bull Apis of Memphis and the bull Mnevis of Heliopolis.¹³⁴ But it is hard [pg 035] to say whether these bulls were embodiments of him as the corn-spirit, as the red oxen appear to have been, or whether they were not in origin entirely distinct deities who came to be fused with Osiris at

¹³³ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 31; Diodorus Siculus, i. 88. Compare Herodotus, ii. 38.

¹³⁴ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 20, 29, 33, 43; Strabo, xvii. 1. 31; Diodorus Siculus, i. 21, 85; Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*,⁵ i. 55 sqq. On Apis and Mnevis, see also Herodotus, ii. 153, with A. Wiedemann's comment, iii. 27 sq.; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 14. 7; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 184 sqq.; Solinus, xxxii. 17-21; Cicero, *De natura deorum*, i. 29; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, xviii. 5; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xi. 10 sq.; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* viii. 1. 3; *id.*, *Isis et Osiris*, 5, 35; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. 13. 1 sq.; Pausanias, i. 18. 4, vii. 22. 3 sq.; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipsic, 1903-1905), Nos. 56, 90 (vol. i. pp. 98, 106, 159). Both Apis and Mnevis were black bulls, but Apis had certain white spots. See A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter* (Münster i. W., 1890), pp. 95, 99-101. When Apis died, pious people used to put on mourning and to fast, drinking only water and eating only vegetables, for seventy days till the burial. See A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin, 1905), pp. 170 sq.

a later time. The universality of the worship of these two bulls¹³⁵ seems to put them on a different footing from the ordinary sacred animals whose worships were purely local. Hence if the latter were evolved from totems, as they may have been, some other origin would have to be found for the worship of Apis and Mnevis. If these bulls were not originally embodiments of the corn-god Osiris, they may possibly be descendants of the sacred cattle worshipped by a pastoral people.¹³⁶ If this were so, ancient Egypt would exhibit a stratification of three great types of religion or superstition corresponding to three great stages of society. Totemism, which may be roughly described as a species of superstitious respect paid to wild animals and plants by many tribes in the hunting stage of society, would be represented by the worship of the local sacred animals; the worship of cattle, which belongs to society in the pastoral stage, would be represented by the cults of Apis and Mnevis; and the worship of cultivated plants, which is peculiar to society in the agricultural stage, would be represented by the religion of Osiris and Isis. The Egyptian reverence for cows, which were never killed,¹³⁷ might belong either to the second or the third of these stages. The consecration of cows to Isis, who was portrayed with

¹³⁵ Diodorus Siculus, i. 21.

¹³⁶ On the religious reverence of pastoral peoples for their cattle, and the possible derivation of the Apis and Isis-Hathor worship from the pastoral stage of society, see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,² pp. 296 *sqq.*

¹³⁷ Herodotus, ii. 41.

cow's horns¹³⁸ and may have been supposed to be incarnate in the animals, would indicate that they, like the red oxen, were embodiments of the corn-spirit. However, this identification of Isis with the cow, like that of Osiris with the bulls Apis and Mnevis, may be only an effect of [pg 036] syncretism. But whatever the original relation of Apis to Osiris may have been, there is one fact about the former which ought not to be passed over in a disquisition on the custom of killing a god. Although the bull Apis was worshipped as a god with much pomp and profound reverence, he was not suffered to live beyond a certain length of time which was prescribed by the sacred books, and on the expiry of which he was drowned in a holy spring.¹³⁹ The limit, according to Plutarch, was twenty-five years;¹⁴⁰ but it cannot always have been enforced, for the tombs of the Apis bulls have been discovered in modern times, and from the inscriptions on them it appears that in the twenty-second dynasty two of the holy steers lived more than twenty-six years.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Herodotus, ii. 41, with A. Wiedemann's commentary; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 19; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London and New York, 1911), i. 8. In his commentary on the passage of Herodotus Prof. Wiedemann observes (p. 188) that "the Egyptian name of the Isis-cow is *hes-t* and is one of the few cases in which the name of the sacred animal coincides with that of the deity."

¹³⁹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 184; Solinus, xxxii. 18; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 14. The spring or well in which he was drowned was perhaps the one from which his drinking-water was procured; he might not drink the water of the Nile (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 5).

¹⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 56.

¹⁴¹ G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*⁴ (Paris, 1886), p. 31. Compare Duncker,

On the stratification of religions corresponding to certain social types

To prevent misunderstandings it may be well to add that what I have just said as to the stratification of three great types of religion or superstition corresponding to three great types of society is not meant to sketch, even in outline, the evolution of religion as a whole. I by no means wish to suggest that the reverence for wild animals and plants, the reverence for domestic cattle, and the reverence for cultivated plants are the only forms of religion or superstition which prevail at the corresponding stages of social development; all that I desire to convey is that they are characteristic of these stages respectively. The elements which make up any religious system are far too numerous and their interaction far too complex to be adequately summed up in a few simple formulas. To mention only a single factor of which I have taken no account in indicating roughly a certain correspondence between the strata of religion and of society, the fear of the spirits of the dead appears to have been one of the most powerful factors, [pg 037] perhaps, indeed, the most

Geschichte des Alterthums,⁵ i. 56. It has been conjectured that the period of twenty-five years was determined by astronomical considerations, that being a period which harmonises the phases of the moon with the days of the Egyptian year. See L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 182 sq.; F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 180 sq.

powerful of all, in shaping the course of religious evolution at every stage of social development from the lowest to the highest; and for that very reason it is not specially characteristic of any one form of society. And the three types of religion or superstition which I have selected as characteristic of three stages of society are far from being strictly limited each to its corresponding step in the social ladder. For example, although totemism, or a particular species of reverence paid by groups of men to wild animals and plants, probably always originated in the hunting stage of society, it has by no means been confined to that primitive phase of human development but has often survived not only into the pastoral but into the agricultural stage, as we may see for example by the case of many tribes in Africa, India, and America; and it seems likely that a similar overlapping of the various strata takes place in every instance. In short, we cannot really dissect the history of mankind as it were with a knife into a series of neat sections each sharply marked off from all the rest by a texture and colour of its own; we may indeed do so theoretically for the convenience of exposition, but practically the textures interlace, the colours melt and run into each other by insensible gradations that defy the edge of the finest instrument of analysis which we can apply to them. It is a mere truism to say that the abstract generalisations of science can never adequately comprehend all the particulars of concrete reality. The facts of nature will always burst the narrow bonds of human theories.

Reverence of the Dinka for their cattle

Before quitting this part of our subject it may be well to illustrate by one or two examples the reverence which primitive pastoral tribes pay to their cattle, since, as I have just indicated, the worship of sacred bulls by the ancient Egyptians, like the modern Hindoo worship of cows, may very well have been directly derived from a similar respect paid by their remote ancestors to their cattle. A good instance is supplied by the Dinka, a large cattle-breeding tribe, or rather nation, of the White Nile. "Every idea and thought of the Dinka," says Schweinfurth, "is how to acquire and maintain cattle: a kind of reverence would [pg 038] seem to be paid to them; even their offal is considered of high importance; the dung, which is burnt to ashes for sleeping in and for smearing their persons, and the urine, which is used for washing and as a substitute for salt, are their daily requisites. It must be owned that it is hard to reconcile this latter usage with our ideas of cleanliness. A cow is never slaughtered, but when sick it is segregated from the rest, and carefully tended in the large huts built for the purpose. Only those that die naturally or by an accident are used as food. All this, which exists among most of the pastoral tribes of Africa, may perchance appear to be a lingering remnant of an exploded cattle-worship; but I may draw attention to the fact that the Dinka are by no means disinclined to partake of any feast of their

flesh, provided that the slaughtered animal was not their own property. It is thus more the delight of actual possession, than any superstitious estimate, that makes the cow to them an object of reverence. Indescribable is the grief when either death or rapine has robbed a Dinka of his cattle. He is prepared to redeem their loss by the heaviest sacrifices, for they are dearer to him than wife or child. A dead cow is not, however, wantonly buried; the negro is not sentimental enough for that; such an occurrence is soon bruited abroad, and the neighbours institute a carousal, which is quite an epoch in their monotonous life. The bereaved owner himself is, however, too much afflicted at the loss to be able to touch a morsel of the carcass of his departed beast. Not unfrequently in their sorrow the Dinka remain for days silent and abstracted, as though their trouble were too heavy for them to bear.”¹⁴² A rich Dinka will sometimes keep a favourite ox and treat it with such marks of respect that an observer has compared the animal to the Apis of the ancient Egyptians. “Here and there,” we are told, “beside the hut of a wealthy negro is set up a great withered tree. From its boughs hang vessels containing food and perhaps trophies of war; to its trunk is fastened the great drum (*Noqara*), which summons to war or to the dance. To this tree, separated from the rest of the cattle, [pg 039] is tethered a great fat ox. It is of a white colour passing into a slaty grey on the shoulders and legs: its long horns are artificially bent to opposite sides and adorned with bunches of hair: the tuft of the tail is cut

¹⁴² G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, Third Edition (London, 1878), i. 59 *sq.*

off. This is the *makwi*, the Apis of the negro. His master, who has singled him out from his youth for his colour and certain marks, has cherished and reared him in order that he may one day be his pride in the eyes of the village. He has gelded him, adorned him, trained him to walk at the head of the herd, to dance, and to fight. His *makwi* is always an object of his tenderest attention; he never fails to bring him a bundle of the finest herbs; if he can procure a bell, he hangs it round the animal's neck; and at evening, if he has milk or *meriša* enough for guests, the drum is beaten to summon the youth to come and dance round the deified ox.”¹⁴³

Reverence of the Nuehr for their cattle

Again, speaking of the Nuehr, another pastoral tribe of the Upper Nile, a traveller tells us that “as among the Dinka, so among the Nuehr-negroes the cattle enjoy a respect, indeed we may say a veneration, which reminds us of the animal worship of the ancient Egyptians, especially of that of the holy steer Apis, though the respect may be grounded on the simple fact that cattle are the only possession of these negroes. The largest and handsomest bull is the leader of the herd; he is decked with bunches of hair and small bells, marked out from the rest in every way, and regarded as the guardian genius of the herd as well as of the family. His loss is the greatest misfortune that can

¹⁴³ E. de Pruyssenaere, *Reisen und Forschungen im Gebiete des Weissen und Blauen Nil* (Gotha, 1877), pp. 22 sq. (*Petermann's Mittheilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No. 50).

befall his owner. At night his master drives the animal round the herd, couched about the smoky fire, and sings of his beauty and courage, while the bull signifies his contentment by a complacent lowing. To him his master every morning commits the herd, in order that he may guide them to the best pastures and guard them from danger; in him he reveres his ideal of all that is beautiful and strong; nay he designates him by the same name which he applies to his own dim conception of a Supreme Being, *Nyeledit*, and to the thunder.”¹⁴⁴[pg 040]

¹⁴⁴ Ernst Marno, *Reisen im Gebiete des Blauen und Weissen Nil* (Vienna, 1874), p. 343. The name *Nyeledit* is explained by the writer to mean “very great and mighty.” It is probably equivalent to *Nyalich*, which Dr. C. G. Seligmann gives as a synonym for Dengdit, the high god of the Dinka. According to Dr. Seligmann, *Nyalich* is the locative of a word meaning “above” and, literally translated, signifies, “in the above.” See C. G. Seligmann, s. v. “Dinka,” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by J. Hastings, D.D., vol. iv. (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 707. The Sakalava of Ampasimene, in Madagascar, are said to worship a black bull which is kept in a sacred enclosure in the island of Nosy Be. On the death of the sacred bull another is substituted for it. See A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), pp. 247 *sq.*, quoting J. Carol, *Chez les Hova* (Paris, 1898), pp. 418 *sq.* But as the Sakalava are not, so far as I know, mainly or exclusively a pastoral people, this example of bull-worship does not strictly belong to the class illustrated in the text.

§ 5. Virbius and the Horse

The tradition that Virbius had been killed in the character of Hippolytus by horses, and the custom of excluding horses from the sacred Arician grove, may point to the conclusion that the horse was regarded as an embodiment of Virbius and was annually sacrificed in the grove. Similarly at Athens the goat was usually excluded from the Acropolis but was admitted once a year for a necessary sacrifice

We are now in a position to hazard a conjecture as to the meaning of the tradition that Virbius, the first of the divine Kings of the Wood at Aricia, had been killed in the character of Hippolytus by horses.¹⁴⁵ Having found, first, that spirits of the corn are not infrequently represented in the form of horses;¹⁴⁶ and, second, that the animal which in later legends is said to have injured the god was sometimes originally the god himself, we may conjecture that the horses by which Virbius or Hippolytus was said to have been slain were really embodiments of him as a deity of vegetation. The myth that he had been killed by horses

¹⁴⁵ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 19 sqq.

¹⁴⁶ See above, vol. i. pp 292-294.

was probably invented to explain certain features in his worship, amongst others the custom of excluding horses from his sacred grove. For myth changes while custom remains constant; men continue to do what their fathers did before them, though the reasons on which their fathers acted have been long forgotten. The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice. In the case before us we may be sure that the myth is more modern than the custom and by no means represents the original reason for excluding horses from the grove. From their exclusion it might be inferred that horses could not be the sacred animals or embodiments of the god of the grove. But the inference would be rash. The goat was at one time a sacred animal or embodiment of Athena, as may be inferred from the practice of representing the goddess clad in a goat-skin (*aegis*). Yet the goat was [pg 041] neither sacrificed to her as a rule, nor allowed to enter her great sanctuary, the Acropolis at Athens. The reason alleged for this was that the goat injured the olive, the sacred tree of Athena.¹⁴⁷ So far, therefore, the relation of the goat of Athena is parallel to the relation of the horse to Virbius, both animals being excluded from the sanctuary on the ground of injury done by them to the god. But from Varro we learn that there was an exception to the rule which excluded the goat from the Acropolis. Once a year, he says, the goat was driven on to the Acropolis for a necessary

¹⁴⁷ Athenaeus, xiii. 51, p. 587 a; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 204. Compare W. Robertson Smith, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, article "Sacrifice," vol. xxi. p. 135.

sacrifice.¹⁴⁸ Now, as has been remarked before, when an animal is sacrificed once and once only in the year, it is probably slain, not as a victim offered to the god, but as a representative of the god himself. Therefore we may infer that if a goat was sacrificed on the Acropolis once a year, it was sacrificed in the character of Athena herself;¹⁴⁹ and it may be conjectured that the skin of the sacrificed animal was placed on the statue of the goddess and formed the *aegis*, which would thus be renewed annually. Similarly at Thebes in Egypt rams were sacred and were not sacrificed. But on one day in the year a ram was killed, and its skin was placed on the statue of the god Ammon.¹⁵⁰ Now, if we knew the ritual of the Arician grove better, we might find that the rule of excluding horses from it, like the rule of excluding goats from the Acropolis at Athens, was subject to an annual exception, a horse being once a year taken into the grove and sacrificed as an embodiment of the god Virbius.¹⁵¹ By the usual

¹⁴⁸ Varro, *De agri cultura*, i. 2. 19 sq.: “hoc nomine etiam Athenis in arcem non inigi, praeterquam semel ad necessarium sacrificium.” By *semel* Varro probably means once a year.

¹⁴⁹ The force of this inference is greatly weakened, if not destroyed, by a fact which I had overlooked when I wrote this book originally. A goat was sacrificed to Brauronian Artemis at her festival called the Brauronia (Hesychius, s. v. Βραυρωνίους; compare Im. Bekker's *Anecdota Graeca*, p. 445, lines 6 sqq.). As the Brauronian Artemis had a sanctuary on the Acropolis of Athens (Pausanias, i. 23. 7), it seems probable that the goat sacrificed once a year on the Acropolis was sacrificed to her and not to Athena. (Note to Second Edition of *The Golden Bough*.)

¹⁵⁰ Herodotus, ii. 42.

¹⁵¹ It is worth noting that Hippolytus, with whom Virbius was identified, is said to

misunderstanding the horse [pg 042] thus killed would come in time to be regarded as an enemy offered up in sacrifice to the god whom he had injured, like the pig which was sacrificed to Demeter and Osiris or the goat which was sacrificed to Dionysus, and possibly to Athena. It is so easy for a writer to record a rule without noticing an exception that we need not wonder at finding the rule of the Arician grove recorded without any mention of an exception such as I suppose. If we had had only the statements of Athenaeus and Pliny, we should have known only the rule which forbade the sacrifice of goats to Athena and excluded them from the Acropolis, without being aware of the important exception which the fortunate preservation of Varro's work has revealed to us.

Annual sacrifice of a horse at Rome in October

The conjecture that once a year a horse may have been sacrificed in the Arician grove as a representative of the deity of the grove derives some support from the similar sacrifice of a horse which took place once a year at Rome. On the fifteenth of October in each year a chariot-race was run on the Field of Mars. Stabbed with a spear, the right-hand horse of the victorious team was then sacrificed to Mars for the purpose of ensuring good crops, and its head was cut off and adorned with a string

have dedicated horses to Aesculapius, who had raised him from the dead (Pausanias, ii. 27. 4).

of loaves. Thereupon the inhabitants of two wards – the Sacred Way and the Subura – contended with each other who should get the head. If the people of the Sacred Way got it, they fastened it to a wall of the king's house; if the people of the Subura got it, they fastened it to the Mamilian tower. The horse's tail was cut off and carried to the king's house with such speed that the blood dripped on the hearth of the house.¹⁵² Further, it appears that the blood of the horse was caught and preserved till the twenty-first of April, when the Vestal virgins mixed it with the blood of the unborn calves which had been sacrificed six days before. The mixture was then distributed to shepherds, and used by them for fumigating their flocks.¹⁵³[pg 043]

The horse so sacrificed seems to have embodied the corn-spirit

In this ceremony the decoration of the horse's head¹⁵⁴ with a

¹⁵² Festus, ed. C. O. Müller, pp. 178, 179, 220; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 97; Polybius, xii. 4 b. The sacrifice is referred to by Julian, *Orat.* v. p. 176 d (p. 228 ed. F. C. Hertlein). It is the subject of a valuable essay by W. Mannhardt, whose conclusions I summarise in the text. See W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 156-201.

¹⁵³ Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 731 *sqq.*, compare 629 *sqq.*; Propertius, v. 1. 19 *sq.*

¹⁵⁴ The Huzuls of the Carpathians attribute a special virtue to a horse's head. They think that fastened on a pole and set up in a garden it protects the cabbages from caterpillars. See R. F. Kaindl, *Die Huzulen* (Vienna, 1894), p. 102. At the close of the rice-harvest the Garos of Assam celebrate a festival in which the effigy of a horse plays an important part. When the festival is over, the body of the horse is thrown into

string of loaves, and the alleged object of the sacrifice, namely, to procure a good harvest, seem to indicate that the horse was killed as one of those animal representatives of the corn-spirit of which we have found so many examples. The custom of cutting off the horse's tail is like the African custom of cutting off the tails of the oxen and sacrificing them to obtain a good crop.¹⁵⁵ In both the Roman and the African custom the animal apparently stands for the corn-spirit, and its fructifying power is supposed to reside especially in its tail. The latter idea occurs, as we have seen, in European folk-lore.¹⁵⁶ Again, the practice of fumigating the cattle in spring with the blood of the horse may be compared with the practice of giving the Old Wife, the Maiden, or the *clyack* sheaf as fodder to the horses in spring or the cattle at Christmas, and giving the Yule Boar to the ploughing oxen or horses to eat in spring.¹⁵⁷ All these usages aim at ensuring the blessing of the corn-spirit on the homestead and its inmates and storing it up for another year.

Archaic character of the sacrifice and its analogies in the harvest customs of Northern Europe

The Roman sacrifice of the October horse, as it was called,

a stream, but the head is preserved for another year. See Note at the end of the volume.

¹⁵⁵ Above, pp. 9 *sq.*

¹⁵⁶ Above, vol. i. pp. 268, 272.

¹⁵⁷ Above, vol. i. pp. 141, 155, 156, 158, 160 *sq.*, 301.

carries us back to the early days when the Subura, afterwards a low and squalid quarter of the great metropolis, was still a separate village, whose inhabitants engaged in a friendly contest on the harvest-field with their neighbours of Rome, then a little rural town. The Field of Mars on which the ceremony took place lay beside the Tiber, and formed part of the king's domain down to the abolition of the monarchy. For tradition ran that at the time when the last of the kings was driven from Rome, the corn stood ripe for the sickle on the crown lands beside the river; but no one would eat the accursed grain and it was flung into the river in such heaps that, the water being low with the summer heat, it formed the nucleus of an island.¹⁵⁸ [pg 044] The horse sacrifice was thus an old autumn custom observed upon the king's corn-fields at the end of the harvest. The tail and blood of the horse, as the chief parts of the corn-spirit's representative, were taken to the king's house and kept there; just as in Germany the harvest-cock is nailed on the gable or over the door of the farmhouse; and as the last sheaf, in the form of the Maiden, is carried home and kept over the fireplace in the Highlands of Scotland. Thus the blessing of the corn-spirit was brought to the king's house and hearth and, through them, to the community of which he was the head. Similarly in the spring and autumn customs of Northern Europe the Maypole is sometimes set up in front of the house of the mayor or burgomaster, and the last sheaf at harvest is brought to him as the head of the village. But while

¹⁵⁸ Livy, ii. 5.

the tail and blood fell to the king, the neighbouring village of the Subura, which no doubt once had a similar ceremony of its own, was gratified by being allowed to compete for the prize of the horse's head. The Mamilian tower, to which the Suburans nailed the horse's head when they succeeded in carrying it off, appears to have been a peel-tower or keep of the old Mamilian family, the magnates of the village.¹⁵⁹ The ceremony thus performed on the king's fields and at his house on behalf of the whole town and of the neighbouring village presupposes a time when each township performed a similar ceremony on its own fields. In the rural districts of Latium the villages may have continued to observe the custom, each on its own land, long after the Roman hamlets had merged their separate harvest-homes in the common celebration on the king's lands. There is no intrinsic improbability in the supposition that the sacred grove of Aricia, like the Field of Mars at Rome, may have been the scene of a common harvest celebration, at which a horse was sacrificed with the same rude rites on behalf of the neighbouring villages. The horse would represent the fructifying spirit both of the tree and of the corn, for the two ideas melt into each other, as we see in customs like the Harvest-May.

¹⁵⁹ Festus, ed. C. O. Müller, pp. 130, 131.

Other examples of the exclusion of horses from sanctuaries. Uncertainty as to the reason for excluding horses from the Arician grove

However, it should be borne in mind that the evidence for thus interpreting the relation of horses to Virbius is [pg 045] exceedingly slender, and that the custom of excluding horses from the sacred Arician grove may have been based on some other superstitious motive which entirely escapes us. At the city of Ialysus in Rhodes there was a sanctuary of Alectrona, one of the daughters of the Sun, into which no horse, ass, mule, or beast of burden of any kind might enter. Any person who broke the law by introducing one of these animals into the holy precinct, had to purify the place by a sacrifice; and the same atonement had to be made by any man who brought shoes or any portion of a pig within the sacred boundaries. And whoever drove or suffered his sheep to stray into the precinct was obliged to pay a fine of one obol for every sheep that set foot in it.¹⁶⁰ The reasons for these prohibitions are quite unknown; and the taboo on horses is particularly remarkable, since the Rhodians

¹⁶⁰ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 560 (vol. ii. pp. 259-261); Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), No. 434, pp. 323 *sq.*; P. Caer, *Delectus Inscriptionum Graecarum propter dialectum memorabilium*² (Leipsic, 1883), No. 177, pp. 117 *sq.* As to Alectrona or Alectryona, daughter of the Sun, see Diodorus Siculus, v. 65. 5.

were in the habit of offering a chariot and horses every year to the Sun, the father of Alectrona,¹⁶¹ doubtless in order that he might ride on them through the sky. Did they think that it was not for the daughter of the Sun to meddle with horses, which were the peculiar property of her father? The conjecture may perhaps be supported by an analogy drawn from West Africa. The Ewe negroes of the Slave Coast conceive the Rain-god Nyikplā as a man who rides a horse, and who may be seen galloping on it through the sky in the form of a shooting star. Hence in the town of Angla, where he generally resides when he is at home, no person may appear on horseback in the streets, that being apparently regarded as an impious usurpation of the style of the deity. In former days even Europeans were forbidden to ride on horseback in Angla; and missionaries who attempted to set the local prejudice at defiance have been pelted with sticks and dirt by the outraged natives.¹⁶² Another deity who suffered not horses to enter his sacred [pg 046] place was Rakelimalaza, a Malagasy god whose name signifies “renowned, although diminutive.” His residence was a village situated on the top of a hill about seven miles east of Tananarivo. But horses were not the only animal or thing to which this fastidious being entertained a rooted aversion. “Within the limits of the ground which is considered sacred,

¹⁶¹ Festus, s. v. “October equus,” p. 181 ed. C. O. Müller. See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 315.

¹⁶² G. Zündel, “Land und Volk der Eweer auf der Slavenküste in West-afrika,” *Zeitschrift für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, xii. (1877) pp. 415 sq.

and which embraces a wide circumference in the immediate vicinity of the idol's residence, it is strictly forbidden to bring, or to suffer to come, certain animals and certain objects, which are carefully specified by the keepers of the idol. Things thus forbidden are called *fady*; a term of similar import with the well-known tabu of the South Sea Islands. Every idol has its own particular *fady*. The things prohibited by Rakelimalaza are, guns, gunpowder, pigs, onions, sifotra (a shell-fish resembling a snail), sitry (a small animal resembling the young crocodile), striped or spotted robes, anything of a black colour, goats, horses, meat distributed at funerals or at the *tangena*, and cats and owls. Its keepers are forbidden to enter any house where there is a corpse; and in crossing a river they are not permitted to say, 'Carry me,' otherwise they place themselves in danger of being seized by the crocodiles; and in war they must not talk, or they are in danger of being shot."¹⁶³ To attempt to discover the particular reasons for all these numerous and varied taboos would obviously be futile; many of them may be based on accidental circumstances which for us are lost past recovery. But it may be worth while to observe that a variety of taboos was enforced at other ancient Greek shrines besides the sanctuary of Alectrona at Ialysus. For example, no person was allowed to enter the sanctuary of the Mistress at Lycosura in Arcadia clad in black, purple, or flowered vestments, or wearing shoes or a ring, or with his or her hair plaited or covered, or carrying flowers in

¹⁶³ Rev. W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, preface dated 1838), i. 402 *sq.*

his hand;¹⁶⁴ and no pomegranates might be brought into the sanctuary, though all other fruits of the orchard were free to enter.¹⁶⁵ These instances may warn us against the danger of [pg 047] arguing too confidently in favour of any one of the many possible reasons which may have moved the old Latins to exclude horses from the sacred Arician grove. The domain of primitive superstition, in spite of the encroachments of science, is indeed still to a great extent a trackless wilderness, a tangled maze, in the gloomy recesses of which the forlorn explorer may wander for ever without a light and without a clue.

[pg 048]

¹⁶⁴ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 939 (vol. ii. p. 803).

¹⁶⁵ Pausanias, viii. 37. 7.

Chapter X. Eating The God

§ 1. The Sacrament of First-Fruits

Custom of eating the new corn sacramentally as the body of the corn-spirit. Loaves baked of the new corn in human shape and eaten

We have now seen that the corn-spirit is represented sometimes in human, sometimes in animal form, and that in both cases he is killed in the person of his representative and eaten sacramentally. To find examples of actually killing the human representative of the corn-spirit we had naturally to go to savage races; but the harvest-suppers of our European peasants have furnished unmistakable examples of the sacramental eating of animals as representatives of the corn-spirit. But further, as might have been anticipated, the new corn is itself eaten sacramentally, that is, as the body of the corn-spirit. In Wermland, Sweden, the farmer's wife uses the grain of the last sheaf to bake a loaf in the shape of a little girl; this loaf is divided amongst the whole household and eaten by them.¹⁶⁶ Here the loaf represents the

¹⁶⁶ W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), p. 179.

corn-spirit conceived as a maiden; just as in Scotland the corn-spirit is similarly conceived and represented by the last sheaf made up in the form of a woman and bearing the name of the Maiden. As usual, the corn-spirit is believed to reside in the last sheaf; and to eat a loaf made from the last sheaf is, therefore, to eat the corn-spirit itself. Similarly at La Palisse, in France, a man made of dough is hung upon the fir-tree which is carried on the last harvest-waggon. The tree and the dough-man are taken to the mayor's house and kept there till the vintage is over. Then the close of the harvest is celebrated by a [pg 049] feast at which the mayor breaks the dough-man in pieces and gives the pieces to the people to eat.¹⁶⁷

Old Lithuanian ritual at eating the new corn

In these examples the corn-spirit is represented and eaten in human shape. In other cases, though the new corn is not baked in loaves of human shape, still the solemn ceremonies with which it is eaten suffice to indicate that it is partaken of sacramentally, that is, as the body of the corn-spirit. For example, the following ceremonies used to be observed by Lithuanian peasants at eating the new corn. About the time of the autumn sowing, when all the corn had been got in and the threshing had begun, each farmer

¹⁶⁷ W. Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme* (Berlin, 1875), p. 205. It is not said that the dough-man is made of the new corn; but probably this is, or once was, the case.

held a festival called Sabarios, that is, “the mixing or throwing together.” He took nine good handfuls of each kind of crop – wheat, barley, oats, flax, beans, lentils, and the rest; and each handful he divided into three parts. The twenty-seven portions of each grain were then thrown on a heap and all mixed up together. The grain used had to be that which was first threshed and winnowed and which had been set aside and kept for this purpose. A part of the grain thus mixed was employed to bake little loaves, one for each of the household; the rest was mixed with more barley or oats and made into beer. The first beer brewed from this mixture was for the drinking of the farmer, his wife, and children; the second brew was for the servants. The beer being ready, the farmer chose an evening when no stranger was expected. Then he knelt down before the barrel of beer, drew a jugful of the liquor and poured it on the bung of the barrel, saying, “O fruitful earth, make rye and barley and all kinds of corn to flourish.” Next he took the jug to the parlour, where his wife and children awaited him. On the floor of the parlour lay bound a black or white or speckled (not a red) cock and a hen of the same colour and of the same brood, which must have been hatched within the year. Then the farmer knelt down, with the jug in his hand, and thanked God for the harvest and prayed for a good crop next year. Next all lifted up their hands and said, “O God, and thou, O earth, we give you this cock and hen as [pg 050] a free-will offering.” With that the farmer killed the fowls with the blows of a wooden spoon, for he might not cut their heads

off. After the first prayer and after killing each of the birds he poured out a third of the beer. Then his wife boiled the fowls in a new pot which had never been used before. After that, a bushel was set, bottom upwards, on the floor, and on it were placed the little loaves mentioned above and the boiled fowls. Next the new beer was fetched, together with a ladle and three mugs, none of which was used except on this occasion. When the farmer had ladled the beer into the mugs, the family knelt down round the bushel. The father then uttered a prayer and drank off the three mugs of beer. The rest followed his example. Then the loaves and the flesh of the fowls were eaten, after which the beer went round again, till every one had emptied each of the three mugs nine times. None of the food should remain over; but if anything did happen to be left, it was consumed next morning with the same ceremonies. The bones were given to the dog to eat; if he did not eat them all up, the remains were buried under the dung in the cattle-stall. This ceremony was observed at the beginning of December. On the day on which it took place no bad word might be spoken.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae oder Preussische Schaubuhne, im wörtlichen Auszüge aus dem Manuscript herausgegeben* von Dr. William Pierson (Berlin, 1871), pp. 60-64; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), pp. 249 *sqq.* Mathaeus Praetorius, the author to whom we owe the account in the text, compiled a detailed description of old Lithuanian manners and customs in the latter part of the seventeenth century at the village of Niebudzen, of which he was Protestant pastor. The work, which seems to have occupied him for many years and to have been finished about 1698, exists in manuscript but has never been published in full. Only excerpts from it have been printed by Dr. W. Pierson. Praetorius was born at Memel about

Modern European ceremonies at eating the new corn or new potatoes

Such was the custom about two hundred years or more ago. At the present day in Lithuania, when new potatoes or loaves made from the new corn are being eaten, all the people at table pull each other's hair.¹⁶⁹ The meaning of this last custom is obscure, but a similar custom was certainly observed by the heathen Lithuanians at their solemn [pg 051] sacrifices.¹⁷⁰ Many of the Esthonians of the island of Oesel will not eat bread baked of the new corn till they have first taken a bite at a piece of iron.¹⁷¹ The iron is here plainly a charm, intended to render harmless the spirit that is in the corn.¹⁷² In Sutherlandshire at the present day, when the new potatoes are dug all the family must taste them, otherwise "the spirits in them [the potatoes] take offence, and the potatoes would not keep."¹⁷³ In one part of

1635 and died in 1707. In the later years of his life he incurred a good deal of odium by joining the Catholic Church.

¹⁶⁹ A. Bezzenberger, *Litauische Forschungen* (Göttingen, 1882), p. 89.

¹⁷⁰ Simon Grunau, *Preussischer Chronik*, herausgegeben von Dr. M. Perlbach, i. (Leipsic, 1876) p. 91.

¹⁷¹ J. B. Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. Heft 2 (Dorpat, 1872), p. 108.

¹⁷² On iron as a charm against spirits, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 232 sqq.

¹⁷³ *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) p. 54.

Yorkshire it is still customary for the clergyman to cut the first corn; and my informant believes that the corn so cut is used to make the communion bread.¹⁷⁴ If the latter part of the custom is correctly reported (and analogy is all in its favour), it shews how the Christian communion has absorbed within itself a sacrament which is doubtless far older than Christianity.

Ceremony of the heathen Cheremiss at eating the new corn

Among the heathen Cheremiss on the left bank of the Volga, when the first bread baked from the new corn is to be eaten, the villagers assemble in the house of the oldest inhabitant, the eastern door is opened, and all pray with their faces towards it. Then the sorcerer or priest gives to each of them a mug of beer, which they drain; next he cuts and hands to every person a morsel of the loaf, which they partake of. Finally, the young people go to the elders and bowing down to the earth before them say, "We pray God that you may live, and that God may let us pray next year for new corn." The rest of the day is passed in mirth and dancing. The whole ceremony, observes the writer who has described it, looks almost like a caricature of the Eucharist.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Communicated by the Rev. J. J. C. Yarborough, of Chislehurst, Kent. See *Folklore Journal*, vii. (1889) p. 50.

¹⁷⁵ Von Haxthausen, *Studien über die innern Zustände, das Volksleben und insbesondere die ländliche Einrichtungen Russlands*, i. 448 sq.

According to another account, each Cheremiss householder on this occasion, after bathing, places some of each kind of grain, together with malt, cakes, and drink, in a vessel, which he holds up to the sun, at the same time thanking the gods for the good things which they have bestowed upon him.¹⁷⁶ [pg 052] But this part of the ceremony is a sacrifice rather than a sacrament of the new corn.

Ceremony of the Aino at eating the new millet

The Aino or Ainu of Japan are said to distinguish various kinds of millet as male and female respectively, and these kinds, taken together, are called “the divine husband and wife cereal” (*Umurek haru kamui*). “Therefore before millet is pounded and made into cakes for general eating, the old men have a few made for themselves first to worship. When they are ready they pray to them very earnestly and say: – ‘O thou cereal deity, we worship thee. Thou hast grown very well this year, and thy flavour will be sweet. Thou art good. The goddess of fire will be glad, and we also shall rejoice greatly. O thou god, O thou divine cereal, do thou nourish the people. I now partake of thee. I worship thee and give thee thanks.’ After having thus prayed, they, the worshippers, take a cake and eat it, and from this time the people may all partake of the new millet. And so

¹⁷⁶ J. G. Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des Russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1776), p. 37.

with many gestures of homage and words of prayer this kind of food is dedicated to the well-being of the Ainu. No doubt the cereal offering is regarded as a tribute paid to god, but that god is no other than the seed itself; and it is only a god in so far as it is beneficial to the human body.”¹⁷⁷

Ceremonies of the Melanesians of Reef Island at eating the new bread-fruits and yams

The natives of the Reef Islands in Melanesia describe as follows the ceremonies which they observe at eating new fruits: “When the fruit of trees that are eatable, such as bread-fruit, or *ninas* (nuts) is nearly ripe, about a month before the time that people eat it, they all go together into the bush. They must all go together for this ‘holy eating,’ and when they return they all assemble in one place, and no one will be absent; they sit down and cook bread-fruit. While it is being cooked no one will eat beforehand, but they set it in order and cook it with reverence, and with the belief that the spirit has granted that food to them and they return thanks to him for it. When it is cooked a certain man takes a bread-fruit and climbs up a tree, and all the people stand on the ground and they all look up, and when he has reached the top they shout out, and when they have shouted they call out, ‘This is the bread-fruit of the whole [pg 053] land’; then he throws

¹⁷⁷ Rev. J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), pp. 204, 206.

down the bread-fruit and they pick it up and shout out again and give thanks, for they think that the spirit who protects the fruit will hear. Their thoughts are thus also with regard to the yam, there is no difference, it is all the same; they think that a spirit gives them food, and the people assemble together and thank the spirit. In every island they think that there is a spirit presiding over food.”¹⁷⁸

Ceremony of the New Caledonians at eating the first yams

At Bourail, in New Caledonia, the eating of the first yams of the season is a solemn ceremony. The women may take no part in it; indeed for five days previously they may not even shew themselves on any pretext, and must hide in the forest. But the men of other tribes are invited to share in the festivity. On the day of the ceremony seven or eight yams are dug up with the greatest precaution, wrapt in leaves, and carried before the great wooden images, ten or twelve feet high, rudely carved in human form and painted black, red, and white, which represent the ancestors of the tribe. Special pots, only used on these occasions, are then disinterred by boys, who cook the new yams in them, eat them, and afterwards bury the pots in the places where they found them. Thereupon the chief or the oldest man mounts a ladder and

¹⁷⁸ “Native Stories from Santa Cruz and Reef Islands,” translated by the Rev. W. O’Ferrall, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiv. (1904) p. 230.

addresses the crowd in a long and voluble harangue, telling them how their forefathers always respected the feast of the first yams, and exhorting the young men of the tribe to do the same in the time to come. After that, turning towards the ancestral images, he prays them to give a good crop of yams every year to the people and their descendants, adjuring them to remember how, while they were still on earth, they always ate to their heart's content, and beseeching them to reflect that their sons and grandsons naturally desire to do the same. When the orator has finished his discourse, and his hearers have signified their approval of his eloquence by a loud grunt, the new yams are dressed and eaten, each family cooking them in a pot of its own.¹⁷⁹[pg 054]

Ceremonies observed at eating the new rice in Buru and Celebes

At the close of the rice harvest in the East Indian island of Buru, each clan (*fenna*) meets at a common sacramental meal, to which every member of the clan is bound to contribute a little of the new rice. This meal is called “eating the soul of the rice,” a name which clearly indicates the sacramental character of the repast. Some of the rice is also set apart and offered to the spirits.¹⁸⁰ Amongst the Alfoors of Minahassa, in the north

¹⁷⁹ Glaumont, “La culture de l'igname et du taro en Nouvelle-Calédonie,” *L'Anthropologie*, viii. (1897) pp. 43-45.

¹⁸⁰ G. A. Wilken, “Bijdragen tot de kennis der Alfoeren van het eiland Boeroe,” p.

of Celebes, the priest sows the first rice-seed and plucks the first ripe rice in each field. This rice he roasts and grinds into meal, and gives some of it to each of the household.¹⁸¹ Shortly before the rice-harvest in Bolang Mongondo, another district of Celebes, an offering is made of a small pig or a fowl. Then the priest plucks a little rice, first on his own field and next on those of his neighbours. All the rice thus plucked by him he dries along with his own, and then gives it back to the respective owners, who have it ground and boiled. When it is boiled the women take it back, with an egg, to the priest, who offers the egg in sacrifice and returns the rice to the women. Of this rice every member of the family, down to the youngest child, must partake. After this ceremony every one is free to get in his rice.¹⁸²

Ceremonies observed at eating the new rice in Ceram and Borneo

On the north coast of Ceram every owner of a rice-field begins planting by making six holes in the middle of the field

26 (*Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* vol. xxxviii., Batavia, 1875).

¹⁸¹ 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. 127.

¹⁸² N. P. Wilken en J. A. Schwarz, "Allerlei over het land en volk van Bolaang Mongondou," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xi. (1867) pp. 369 sq.

and depositing rice-seed in them. When the crop is ripe, the rice which has sprouted from these six holes must be the first to be reaped and the first to be eaten by the owner at the common harvest-feast of the village. When all the owners of the fields have thus partaken of the rice that was first planted and first reaped in their fields, the other villagers may help themselves to rice out of the pot. Not till this feast has been held may the owners of rice-fields sell their rice.¹⁸³ Among the Kayans of Central Borneo, who, as [pg 055] we have seen, believe rice to be animated by a soul,¹⁸⁴ before a family partakes of the new rice at harvest, a priestess must touch the face and breast of every person with a magical instrument (*kahe parei*) consisting of the husk of a certain fruit adorned with strings of beads. After this ceremony has been performed on every member of the family, he or she eats a few grains of the new rice and drinks a little water. When all have complied with this ritual, the feast begins.¹⁸⁵

Ceremonies observed at eating the new rice in India

Amongst the Burghers or Badagas, a tribe of the Neilgherry

¹⁸³ J. Boot, "Korte schets der noordkust van Ceram," *Tiidschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (1893) pp. 671 sq.

¹⁸⁴ See above, vol. i. pp. 184 sqq.

¹⁸⁵ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *In Centraal Borneo* (Leyden, 1900), i. 156; *id.*, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 117 sq. In the latter passage "*ist jeder*" is a misprint for "*isst jeder*"; the Dutch original is "*eet ieder*."

Hills in Southern India, the first handful of seed is sown and the first sheaf reaped by a Curumbar – a man of a different tribe, the members of which the Burghers regard as sorcerers. The grain contained in the first sheaf “is that day reduced to meal, made into cakes, and, being offered as a first-fruit oblation, is, together with the remainder of the sacrificed animal, partaken of by the Burgher and the whole of his family, as the meat of a federal offering and sacrifice.”¹⁸⁶ Amongst the Coorgs of Southern India the man who is to cut the first sheaf of rice at harvest is chosen by an astrologer. At sunset the whole household takes a hot bath and then goes to the rice-field, where the chosen reaper cuts an armful of rice with a new sickle, and distributes two or more stalks to all present. Then all return to the threshing-floor. A bundle of leaves is adorned with a stalk of rice and fastened to the post in the centre of the threshing-floor. Enough of the new rice is now threshed, cleaned, and ground to provide flour for the dough-cakes which each member of the household is to eat. Then they go to the door of the house, where the mistress washes the feet of the sheaf-cutter, and presents to him, and after him to all the rest, a brass vessel full of milk, honey, and sugar, from which each person takes a draught. Next the man who cut the sheaf kneads a cake of rice-meal, plantains, milk, honey, seven new rice corns, seven pieces [pg 056] of coco-nut, and so on. Every one receives a little of his cake on an Ashvatha leaf, and

¹⁸⁶ H. Harkness, *Description of a Singular Aboriginal Race inhabiting the Summit of the Neilgherry Hills* (London, 1832), pp. 56 sq.

eats it. The ceremony is then over and the sheaf-cutter mixes with the company. When he was engaged in cutting the rice no one might touch him.¹⁸⁷ Among the Hindoos of Southern India the eating of the new rice is the occasion of a family festival called Pongol. The new rice is boiled in a new pot on a fire which is kindled at noon on the day when, according to Hindoo astrologers, the sun enters the tropic of Capricorn. The boiling of the pot is watched with great anxiety by the whole family, for as the milk boils, so will the coming year be. If the milk boils rapidly, the year will be prosperous; but it will be the reverse if the milk boils slowly. Some of the new boiled rice is offered to the image of Gaṇeṣa; then every one partakes of it.¹⁸⁸ In some parts of Northern India the festival of the new crop is known as *Navan*, that is, "new grain." When the crop is ripe, the owner takes the omens, goes to the field, plucks five or six ears of barley in the spring crop and one of the millets in the autumn harvest. This is brought home, parched, and mixed with coarse sugar, butter, and curds. Some of it is thrown on the fire in the name of the village gods and deceased ancestors; the rest is eaten by the family.¹⁸⁹ At Gilgit, in the Hindoo Koosh, before wheat-harvest begins, a member of every household gathers a handful of ears

¹⁸⁷ Ch. E. Gover, *The Folk-songs of Southern India* (London, 1872), pp. 105 *sqq.*; "Coorg Folklore," *Folk-lore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 302 *sqq.*

¹⁸⁸ Gover, "The Pongol Festival in Southern India," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., v. (1871) pp. 91 *sqq.*

¹⁸⁹ From notes sent to me by my friend Mr. W. Crooke.

of corn secretly at dusk. A few of the ears are hung up over the door of the house, and the rest are roasted next morning, and eaten steeped in milk. The day is spent in rejoicings, and next morning the harvest begins.¹⁹⁰

Ceremonies observed by the Chams at ploughing, sowing, reaping, and eating the new rice

The Chams of Binh-Thuan, in Indo-China, may not reap the rice-harvest until they have offered the first-fruits to Po-Nagar, the goddess of agriculture, and have consumed them sacramentally. These first-fruits are gathered from certain sacred fields called *Hamou-Klêk-Laoa* or “fields of [pg 057] secret tillage,” which are both sown and reaped with peculiar ceremonies. Apparently the tilling of the earth is considered a crime which must be perpetrated secretly and afterwards atoned for. On a lucky day in June, at the first cock-crow, two men lead the buffaloes and the plough to the sacred field, round which they draw three furrows in profound silence and then retire. Afterwards at dawn the owner of the land comes lounging by, as if by the merest chance. At sight of the furrows he stops, pretends to be much surprised, and cries out, “Who has been secretly ploughing my field this night?” Hastening home, he kills a kid or some fowls, cooks the victuals, and prepares five quids

¹⁹⁰ Major J. Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh* (Calcutta, 1880), p. 103.

of betel, some candles, a flask of oil, and lustral water of three different sorts. With these offerings and the plough drawn by the buffaloes, he returns to the field, where he lights the candles and spreading out the victuals worships Po-Nagar and the other deities, saying: "I know not who has secretly ploughed my field this night. Pardon, ye gods, those who have done this wrong. Accept these offerings. Bless us. Suffer us to proceed with this work." Then, speaking in the name of the deities, he gives the reassuring answer, "All right. Plough away!" With the lustral water he washes or sprinkles the buffaloes, the yoke, and the plough. The oil serves to anoint the plough and to pour libations on the ground. The five quids of betel are buried in the field. Thereupon the owner sows a handful of rice on the three furrows that have been traced, and eats the victuals with his people. After all these rites have been duly performed, he may plough and sow his land as he likes. When the rice has grown high enough in this "field of secret tillage" to hide pigeons, offerings of ducks, eggs, and fowls are made to the deities; and fresh offerings, which generally consist of five plates of rice, two boiled fowls, a bottle of spirits, and five quids of betel, are made to Po-Nagar and the rest at the time when the rice is in bloom. Finally, when the rice in "the field of secret tillage" is ripe, it has to be reaped before any of the rest. Offerings of food, such as boiled fowls, plates of rice, cakes, and so forth, are spread out on the field; a candle is lit, and a priest or, in his absence, the owner prays to the [pg 058] guardian deities to come and partake of the food set before them.

After that the owner of the land cuts three stalks of rice with a sickle in the middle of the field, then he cuts three handfuls at the side, and places the whole in a napkin. These are the first-fruits offered to Po-Nagar, the goddess of agriculture. On being taken home the rice from the three handfuls is husked, pounded in a mortar, and presented to the goddess with these words: "Taste, O goddess, these first-fruits which have just been reaped." This rice is afterwards eaten, while the straw and husks are burned. Having eaten the first-fruits of the rice, the owner takes the three stalks cut in the middle of the field, passes them through the smoke of the precious eagle-wood, and hangs them up in his house, where they remain till the next sowing-time comes round. The grain from these three stalks will form the seed of the three furrows in "the field of secret tillage." Not till these ceremonies have been performed is the proprietor at liberty to reap the rest of that field and all the others.¹⁹¹

Ceremony at eating the new yams at Onitsha on the Niger

The ceremony of eating the new yams at Onitsha, on the Niger, is thus described: "Each headman brought out six yams, and cut down young branches of palm-leaves and placed them before his gate, roasted three of the yams, and got some kola-nuts

¹⁹¹ E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leurs religions," *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, xxiv. (1891) pp. 272-274.

and fish. After the yam is roasted, the *Libia*, or country doctor, takes the yam, scrapes it into a sort of meal, and divides it into halves; he then takes one piece, and places it on the lips of the person who is going to eat the new yam. The eater then blows up the steam from the hot yam, and afterwards pokes the whole into his mouth, and says, 'I thank God for being permitted to eat the new yam'; he then begins to chew it heartily, with fish likewise."¹⁹²

Ceremonies at eating the new yams among the Ewe negroes of Togoland

Among the Ewe negroes of West Africa the eating of the new yams is the greatest festival of the year; it usually falls at the beginning of September, and its character is predominantly religious. We possess a native account of the festival [pg 059] as it is celebrated by the tribe of the Hos in Togoland. When the yams are ripe and ready to be dug up and brought home, two days are devoted to cleansing the town of all ills, whether spiritual or material, as a solemn preparation for the ensuing celebration. When these rites of purification, which will be described in a later part of this work, have been accomplished, then, in the words of the native account, "the people make ready to eat the

¹⁹² S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger* (London, 1859), pp. 287 *sq.* Mr. Taylor's information is repeated in *West African Countries and Peoples*, by J. Africanus B. Horton (London, 1868), pp. 180 *sq.*

new yams. And the manner of making ready consists in going to the fields and digging the yams. However, they do not bring them home but lay them down somewhere on the way. The reason why they do not bring them home is that the people have not yet been on the place where they sacrifice to the deity. When they wish to go thither, the way to the sacrificial place of Agbasia must first be cleared of grass. Afterwards the people come with their drums, which they beat loudly. When they are come to the place of sacrifice, they first raise two great mounds of earth, and they bring to the place of sacrifice palm wine, uncooked and cooked yams, and meal mixed with oil. First of all the uncooked yams are cut in two through the middle, and then this prayer is offered: 'Agbasia, thou art he who has given the yams; therefore here is thine own! We thank thee sincerely. May the eating of the yams be a great joy, and may no quarrel intervene!' Thereupon they lay down on the ground yams mixed with oil and not mixed with oil. In doing so they say to Agbasia, 'He who eats not the white yams, to him belong the yams mixed with oil; and he who eats not the yams mixed with oil, to him belong the white yams.' They do the same with the meal that is mixed with oil and with the meal that is not mixed with oil. Thereby they say: 'Here we bring thee all that thou hast given us. Eat thereof what thou pleasest!' After that they pour palm wine into one pot and water into another, and say, 'When one has eaten, one drinks water.' Thereby the drums sound, songs are sung, and the priest says: 'Our father Agbasia, we pray thee, let us hear no more evil but good only!

When women are with child, let them bear twins and triplets, that we may increase and multiply! When the time for sowing the yams comes again, make it to rain upon them even more than hitherto, in order that we [pg 060] may come again and thank thee more sincerely than hitherto!’ Thereupon the priest pours water on one of the mounds, makes a paste with it, and calls the people thither. Then he dips his finger in the slime and smears it on their brows, temples, and breasts, saying, ‘This is the slime of Agbasia, wherewith I smear you, that ye may remain in life.’ After that they disperse and go home. Further, the prayers and offerings of the individual peasants on the occasion of the yam festival are described as follows. “In the evening, when the town is swept clean, the people go to the fields to fetch yams, which, however, they may not yet bring into the town and therefore they hide them in the forest. As soon as the high priest quits the town next morning to go to the sacrificial place of his god, the women set out to fetch the yams which they had deposited. Now they begin to cook. Many people kill fowls or goats, and others buy fish for the festival. When the yams are sodden, a little is broken off, mixed with oil, and laid, together with uncooked yams, on the ground at the entrance to the homestead. Thereby the house-father says: ‘That belongs to all those (gods) who abide at the fence.’ He does the same under the door of the house and says: ‘That belongs to all those (gods) who dwell with me.’ Then he goes to the loom, and brings it its offering, and says: ‘That belongs to all the “Artificers” who have helped me in weaving.’ After that

he lays all his charms on a mat spread in the house, and brings them also their offering, and speaks with them.”

“Another account describes the priestly functions of the house-father still more fully. Every house-father takes a raw piece of yam and goes with it to his loom (*agbati*) and prays: ‘May the Artificers take this yam and eat! When they practise their art, may it prosper!’ Again he takes a raw yam and goes with it under the house-door and prays: ‘O my guardian-spirit (*aklama*) and all ye gods who pay heed to this house, come and eat yams! When I also eat of them, may I remain healthy and nowhere feel pain! May my housemates all remain healthy!’ After he has invoked their protection on his family, he takes a cooked yam, crumbles it on a stone, and mixes it with red oil. With this mixture he goes again to the loom and prays [pg 061] as before. But even that is not the end of the worship of the Artificers. He again crumbles a cooked yam, but this time he does not mix it with red oil; he goes to the entrance of the homestead and prays again to the loom: ‘He among the Artificers who does not relish yams mixed with oil, let him come and take the white yam and eat it!’ From there he goes again under the house-door and prays: ‘He of my guardian gods and he of the watchers of the house who likes not yams mixed with oil, let him come and take the white yam from my hand and eat!’ From the house-door he steps into the midst of the chamber and says: ‘He who relishes not the yams mixed with oil, may eat the white; he who relishes not the white may eat the red; and he who relishes not the red may eat the uncooked!’ With this prayer

he has completed his duties as house-priest. Just as the weaver prays to his loom, so the hunter prays to his musket, the smith to his hammer and anvil, and the carpenter to his plane and saw.

“Now, while the free people begin to cook the yams so soon as the priest has left the town, the slaves of the Earth Gods, the *Trōkluwo*, must first as children perform their duties to the priest of their gods. Each of these children receives from his parents on the morning of the Yam Festival two pieces of yam, which he brings to the priest of his god. The priest cuts off a small piece of the yam and divides the piece again into four pieces. The child kneels before him and lolls out his tongue. Holding two of these pieces of yam in his hands, the priest utters a prayer over the child and touches his tongue five times with the pieces of yam. Then the child stretches his hands out, each of which the priest touches five times with the same pieces of yam and prays as before. Then he touches both feet of the child five times and prays for the third time. He takes half of the cowry-shells which the child has brought, fastens them on a string, and hangs it round the child's neck. Thereby the child gets leave to eat new yams.

“After all these preparations the yams are pounded into a mash, and every one calls his brother, that he may eat with him. When the meal is over, the people are called together to amuse themselves and to drink palm wine. In [pg 062] the afternoon every one bathes, puts on a new garment, and girds himself with a new loin-cloth.”¹⁹³

¹⁹³ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 304-310, 340; compare *id.*

Festival of the new yams among the Ashantees in September

The Ashantees celebrate the festival of the new yams early in September; until it is over none of the people may taste of the new yams. "The Yam Custom," we are told, "is like the Saturnalia; neither theft, intrigue, nor assault are punishable during the continuance, but the grossest liberty prevails, and each sex abandons itself to its passions." An eye-witness has described the scene at Coomassie, the capital: "The next morning the King ordered a large quantity of rum to be poured into brass pans, in various parts of the town; the crowd pressing around, and drinking like hogs; freemen and slaves, women and children, striking, kicking, and trampling each other under foot, pushed head foremost into the pans, and spilling much more than they drank. In less than an hour, excepting the principal men, not a sober person was to be seen, parties of four, reeling and rolling under the weight of another, whom they affected to be carrying

pp. 435, 480, 768. The "slaves of the Earth-gods" are children whom women have obtained through prayers offered to Agbasia, the greatest of the Earth-gods. When such a child is born, it is regarded as the slave of Agbasia; and the mother dedicates it to the service of the god, as in similar circumstances Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel i.). If the child is a girl, she is married to the priest's son; if it is a boy, he serves the priest until his mother has given birth to a girl whom she exchanges for the boy. See J. Spieth, *op. cit.* pp. 448-450. In all such cases the original idea probably was that the child has been begotten in the woman by the god and therefore belongs to him as to his father, in the literal sense of the word.

home; strings of women covered with red paint, hand in hand, falling down like rows of cards; the commonest mechanics and slaves furiously declaiming on state palavers; the most discordant music, the most obscene songs, children of both sexes prostrate in insensibility. All wore their handsomest cloths, which they trailed after them to a great length, in a drunken emulation of extravagance and dirtiness.” About a hundred persons, mostly culprits reserved for the purpose, used to be sacrificed at this festival in Coomassie. All the chiefs killed several slaves that their blood might flow into the hole from which the new yam was taken. Such as could not afford to kill slaves took the head of a slave who had already been sacrificed and placed it in [pg 063] the hole. About ten days after these ceremonies the whole of the royal household ate new yams for the first time in the market-place, the King himself being in attendance. Next day he and his captains set off before sunrise to perform their annual ablutions in the river Dah; almost all the inhabitants of the capital followed him, so that the streets appeared to be deserted. The following day the King, attended by his suite, washed in the marsh at the south-east end of the town and laved the water not only over himself but also over the chairs, stools, gold and silver plate, and the articles of furniture which were set aside for his special use.¹⁹⁴ From another account it appears that the King of Ashantee must eat the new yams before any of his subjects was at liberty to do

¹⁹⁴ T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, New Edition (London, 1873), pp. 226-229.

so.¹⁹⁵ Similarly in the West African kingdom of Assinie, which forms part of the French possessions of Senegal, the king must eat the new yams eight full days before the people may taste them.¹⁹⁶

Festival of the new yams at Coomassie and Benin

A second festival of yams used to be celebrated at Coomassie in December, when the king or a fetish priest consecrated the new yams before they could be eaten by common folk. On one of the days of this December celebration all the laws were suspended, and every man might do what seemed good in his own eyes: he might even, contrary to custom, look at the king's wives, to the number of several hundreds, when they returned with the king and his suite from washing in the fetish water of Tana. All that day drinking went on, and the noise and uproar were prolonged far into the night. Early in the morning a human victim was sacrificed: the first man found near the gates of the palace was seized, butchered, and cut in pieces, and the executioners danced with the bleeding fragments of the victim in their hands or fastened round their necks. Before he ate of the new yams the king washed himself in fetish water brought from distant

¹⁹⁵ A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast* (London, 1887), pp. 229 sq.

¹⁹⁶ J. C. Reichenbach, "Étude sur le royaume d'Assinie," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), vii.ème Série, xi. (1890) p. 349.

springs, and the chiefs performed similar ablutions.¹⁹⁷ In [pg 064] Benin the new yams might not be eaten until the king had performed certain ceremonies, among which one is said to have been a pretence of making a yam to grow in a pot. Dancing, merrymaking, and farces or plays formed part of the festival, the city was crowded with people, and they indulged in a regular orgie.¹⁹⁸

Ceremonies observed by the Nandi at eating the new eleusine grain.

Among the Nandi of British East Africa, when the eleusine grain is ripening in autumn, every woman who owns a cornfield goes out into it with her daughters, and they all pluck some of the ripe grain. Each of the women then fixes one grain in her necklace and chews another, which she rubs on her forehead, throat, and breast. No mark of joy escapes them; sorrowfully they cut a basketful of the new corn, and carrying it home place it in the loft to dry. As the ceiling is of wickerwork, a good deal of the grain drops through the crevices and falls into the fire, where it explodes with a crackling noise. The people make no attempt to prevent this waste; for they regard the crackling of the grain in the fire as a sign that the souls of the dead are partaking of it. A few days later porridge is made from the new grain and served up with milk at the evening meal. All the members of the family take

¹⁹⁷ Ramseyer and Kühne, *Four Years in Ashantee* (London, 1875), pp. 147-151; E. Perregaux, *Chez les Achanti* (Neuchatel, 1906), pp. 158-160.

¹⁹⁸ H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin* (Halifax, England, 1903), pp. 76 sq.

some of the porridge and dab it on the walls and roofs of the huts; also they put a little in their mouths and spit it out towards the east and on the outside of the huts. Then, holding up some of the grain in his hand, the head of the family prays to God for health and strength, and likewise for milk, and everybody present repeats the words of the prayer after him.¹⁹⁹ Amongst the Baganda, when the beans were ripe, a woman would call her eldest son to eat some of the first which she cooked; if she neglected to do so, it was believed that she would incur the displeasure of the gods and fall ill. After the meal her husband jumped over her, and the beans might thereafter be eaten by all.²⁰⁰

Festival of the new fruits among the Caffres of Natal and Zululand

Amongst the Caffres of Natal and Zululand, no one may eat of the new fruits till after a festival which marks [pg 065] the beginning of the Caffre year and falls at the end of December or the beginning of January. All the people assemble at the king's kraal, where they feast and dance. Before they separate the “dedication of the people” takes place. Various fruits of the earth, as corn, mealies, and pumpkins, mixed with the flesh of a sacrificed animal and with “medicine,” are boiled in great pots,

¹⁹⁹ A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), pp. 46 sq.

²⁰⁰ Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 428.

and a little of this food is placed in each man's mouth by the king himself. After thus partaking of the sanctified fruits, a man is himself sanctified for the whole year, and may immediately get in his crops.²⁰¹ It is believed that if any man were to partake of the new fruits before the festival, he would die;²⁰² if he were detected, he would be put to death, or at least all his cattle would be taken from him.²⁰³ The holiness of the new fruits is well marked by the rule that they must be cooked in a special pot which is used only for this purpose, and on a new fire kindled by a magician through the friction of two sticks which are called "husband and wife." These sticks are prepared by the sorcerers from the wood of the *Uzwati* tree and belong exclusively to the chief. The "wife" is the shorter of the two. When the magician has kindled the new fire on which the new fruits are to be cooked, he hands the fire-sticks back to the chief, for no other hand may touch them; and they are then put away till they are required next season. The sticks are regarded as in a measure sacred, and no one, except the chief's personal servant, may go to the side of the hut where they are kept. No pot but the one used for the preparation of this feast may be set on a fire made by the friction of the "husband and wife." When the feast is over, the fire is carefully extinguished, and the

²⁰¹ F. Speckmann, *Die Hermannsburger Mission in Afrika* (Hermannsburg, 1876), pp. 150 sq.

²⁰² L. Grout, *Zulu-land* (Philadelphia, n. d.), p. 161.

²⁰³ (*South African*) *Folk-lore Journal*, i. (1879) p. 135; Rev. H. Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, Part iii. p. 389 note.

pot is put away with the fire-sticks, where it remains untouched for another year.²⁰⁴

Dance of the Zulu king at the festival. Licentious character of the festival. The festival as celebrated by the Pondos. Bull-fights and games. License accorded to chiefs and others at this festival among the Zulus. Traces of an annual abdication of Zulu kings, perhaps of a custom of burning them and scattering their ashes

A remarkable feature of the festival, as it is observed at [pg 066] the court of the Zulu king, is a dance performed by the king himself in a mantle of grass or, according to another account, of herbs and corn-leaves. This mantle is afterwards burnt and its ashes are scattered and trodden into the ground by cattle.²⁰⁵ Further, it is worthy of notice that the festival is described as a saturnalia, and we are told that “a great deal of noise and dancing goes on, and people are not supposed to be responsible for what

²⁰⁴ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), pp. 216 *sq.* On the conception of the two fire-sticks as husband and wife, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 208 *sqq.*

²⁰⁵ J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal* (London, 1857), p. 27; N. Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (London, 1836), ii. 293; Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir* (London, 1904), pp. 270, 271.

they say or do.”²⁰⁶ Thus, for example, among the Pondos the festival includes a period of license, during the continuance of which the chief abdicates his functions and any crime may be committed with impunity. The description of the Pondo festival comprises so many interesting features that I will reproduce it entire. “When a Pondo chief is to hold the feast of first-fruits, some of his people procure a ripe plant of the gourd family, pumpkin or calabash, from another tribe. This is cooked; the inside cleaned out, and the rind made ready for use as a vessel. It is then presented to the chief with much ceremony. The first-fruits are now brought forward, and a sacrifice, generally a young bull, is offered, after which the feast commences. The chief issues certain orders for the conduct of the proceedings, tastes the fruits which are served in the gourd-dish with which he has been presented, and then abdicates all his functions while the festival lasts. The cattle from all the neighbouring villages are collected in the vicinity, and now they are brought together, and the bulls incited to fight to determine which is to be king among them for the next year. The young people engage in games and dances, feats of strength and running. After these are over the whole community give themselves over to disorder, debauchery, and riot. In their bull-fights and games they but did honour to the powers of nature, and now, as they eat and drink, the same powers are honoured in another form and by other rites. There is no one in authority to keep order, and every man does what

²⁰⁶ J. Macdonald, *op. cit.* p. 189.

seems good in his [pg 067] own eyes. Should a man stab his neighbour he escapes all punishment, and so too with all other crimes against the person, property, and morality. People are even permitted to abuse the chief to his face, an offence which at any other time would meet with summary vengeance and an unceremonious dispatch to join the ancestors. While the feast continues, a deafening noise is kept up by drumming, shouting, hand-clapping, and every kind of instrument that can be made to emit sound. Men advance to the chief and explain their origin, and also the object they hold sacred, by imitating the sounds and movements of their most sacred animal. This is the person's totem. Others imitate the gurgling made by an enemy when stabbed in the throat. Those who adopt this latter emblem are known as 'children of the spear.' When the ceremonies, revels, and mummeries are ended, the chief repairs to his accustomed place, and sitting down there, by that act resumes his kingly functions. He calls the bravest of his braves before him, who is immediately clothed and decorated with skins of animals suggestive of courage and strategy. He performs a dance amid the frenzied shouting of the multitude, after which the chief declares the festival at an end and harvest commenced."²⁰⁷ Another writer, speaking of the Zulu festival of first-fruits as it was celebrated in the time of the ferocious despot Chaka, says that "at this

²⁰⁷ Rev. J. Macdonald, *Religion and Myth* (London, 1893), pp. 136-138, from manuscript notes furnished by J. Sutton. Mr. Macdonald has described the custom more briefly in his *Light in Africa*, Second Edition (London, 1890), p. 189.

period the chiefs are allowed to converse unreservedly with the king, speaking with great freedom, and in some measure to be dictatorial.”²⁰⁸ Again, another traveller, who visited the Zulus in the reign of King Panda, tells us that “in spite of the practice of the most absolute despotism there are three days in the year when the nation in its turn has the right to call the king to a severe account for his acts. It is at the general assembly of the warriors, when the maize is ripe, that the lively discussions take place and the questions are put to which the king must answer at once in a manner satisfactory to the people. I have then seen [pg 068] simple warriors come leaping from the ranks, assume the style of fluent and excessively energetic orators, and not only confront the fiery glare of Panda, but even attack him before everybody, blame his acts, call them infamous and base, compel him to vindicate his conduct, and then refute his vindication by dissecting it and exposing its falsehood, finally proceeding to haughty threats and winding up the harangue with a gesture of contempt.”²⁰⁹ Such liberties taken with the despotic Zulu kings seem to point to a time when they too, like the Pondo chiefs, abdicated or were deposed during the festival. Perhaps we may even go a step further. We have seen that on this occasion the Zulu king dances in a mantle of grass or of herbs and corn-leaves, which is afterwards burnt and the ashes scattered and trodden into the ground. This custom seems clearly intended to

²⁰⁸ N. Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (London, 1836), ii. 292.

²⁰⁹ A. Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe* (Paris, 1847), ii. 237.

promote the fertility of the earth, and in earlier times the same end may have been compassed by burning the king himself and dispersing his ashes; for we have seen that a Bechuana tribe, of the same Bantu stock as the Zulus, were wont to sacrifice a human victim for the good of the crops and to scatter his ashes over the ground.²¹⁰ In this connexion it should be borne in mind that we have found independent evidence of a custom of putting the Zulu king to death whenever his bodily strength began to fail.²¹¹[pg 069]

²¹⁰ Above, vol. i. p. 240.

²¹¹ See *The Dying God*, pp. 36 *sq.* On the Zulu festival of first-fruits see also T. Arbousset et F. Daumas, *Voyage d'Exploration au Nord-Est de la Colonie du Cap de Bonne Espérance* (Paris, 1843), pp. 308 *sq.*; G. Fritsch, *Die Eingeborenen Süd-Afrikas* (Breslau, 1872), p. 143. Fritsch mentions that after executing a grotesque dance in the presence of the assembled multitude the king gives formal permission to eat of the new fruits by dashing a gourd or calabash to the ground. This ceremony of breaking the calabash is mentioned also by J. Shooter (*Kafirs of Natal*, p. 27), L. Grout (*Zulu-land*, p. 162), and Mr. Dudley Kidd (*The Essential Kafir*, p. 271). According to this last writer the calabash is filled with boiled specimens of the new fruits, and the king sprinkles the people with the cooked food, frequently spitting it out on them. Mr. Grout tells us (*l. c.*) that at the ceremony a bull is killed and its gall drunk by the king and the people. In killing it the warriors must use nothing but their naked hands. The flesh of the bull is given to the boys to eat what they like and burn the rest; the men may not taste it. See L. Grout, *op. cit.* p. 161. According to Shooter, two bulls are killed; the first is black, the second of another colour. The boys who eat the beef of the black bull may not drink till the next morning, else the king would be defeated in war or visited with some personal misfortune. See Shooter, *op. cit.* pp. 26 *sq.* According to another account the sacrifice of the bull, performed by the warriors of a particular regiment with their bare hands, takes place several weeks before the festival of first-fruits, and "the strength of the bull is supposed to enter into the king, thereby prolonging his health and strength." See D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and Amatongas*² (Edinburgh,

Ceremonies observed by the Bechuanas before eating the new fruits

Among the Bechuanas it is a rule that before they partake of the new crops they must purify themselves. The purification takes place at the commencement of the new year on a day in January which is fixed by the chief. It begins in the great kraal of the tribe, where all the adult males assemble. Each of them takes in his hand leaves of a gourd called by the natives *lerotse* (described as something between a pumpkin and a vegetable marrow); and having crushed the leaves he anoints with the expressed juice his big toes and his navel; many people indeed apply the juice to all the joints of their body, but the better-informed say that this is a vulgar departure from ancient custom. After this ceremony in the great kraal every man goes home to his own kraal, assembles all the members of his family, men, women, and children, and smears them all with the juice of the *lerotse* leaves. Some of the leaves are also pounded, mixed with milk in a large wooden dish, and given to the dogs to lap up. Then the porridge plate of each member of the family is rubbed with the *lerotse* leaves. When this purification has been completed, but not before, the people are free to eat of the new crops. On the night after the purification every man was bound, as a matter

1875), p. 91. For a general account of the Caffre festival of first-fruits, see Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir* (London, 1904), pp. 270-272.

of ritual, to sleep with his chief wife. If she had been unfaithful to him during the past year, it was incumbent on her to confess her sin before she fulfilled her part of the ceremony. Having confessed she was purified by a medicine-man, who fumigated her with the smoke produced by burning a bean plant. Thereupon husband and wife cut each other slightly under the navel, and each of them rubbed his or her blood, mixed with “medicine,” into the other's wound. That completed the purification of the woman, and the pair might now proceed with the rest of the rite. Should a married man be from home at the time when the annual purification [pg 070] ceremony is performed, he is thought to be in a very sad plight; indeed his chances of surviving for another year are supposed to be small. On his return home, he dare not enter his own house, for he would pollute it, and if even his shadow were to fall on one of his children, the child would die. He must wait till his wife comes to him and brings him a calabash of water to drink, which is a sign that she has waited for his return to perform the rite of purification together. But if she does not bring the water, he knows that in his absence she has performed the rite with some other man, and it becomes necessary to purge her by means of fumigation and blood-letting, as described before. But even when that purgation is completed, husband and wife may not indulge in connubial intercourse for the rest of the year, that is, until the next annual purification has taken place. The Bechuanas think that “any breach of this rule will be punished with supernatural penalties – the husband, wife, or child will

Ceremonies observed by the Matabele at eating the new fruits

Among the Matabele, another Bantu tribe of South Africa, no one might partake of the new fruits till the king had first tasted of them; any one who was known to have broken the law was instantly put to death. On this occasion the regiments assembled at Bulawayo, the capital, and danced in a great semicircle before the king, who occasionally joined in the dance. When he did so, the medicine-men and their satellites, armed with thorn-bushes, rushed about among the dancers and incited them to fresh [pg 071] efforts by a vigorous application of the thorns

²¹² Rev. W. C. Willoughby, “Notes on the Totemism of the Becwana,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 311-313. It is very remarkable that among several Bantu tribes the cohabitation of husband and wife is enjoined as a religious or magical rite on a variety of solemn occasions, such as after the death of a son or daughter, the circumcision of a child, the first menstruation of a daughter, the occupation of a new house or of a new village, etc. For examples see C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 58, 59, 60, 65, 67, 69, 74; H. A. Junod, “Les Conceptions physiologiques des Bantou Sud-Africains et leurs tabous,” *Revue d’Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, i. (1910) p. 148; Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 48, 144, 357, 363, 378, 428, etc.; *id.*, “Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 59, 61. Among the Baganda the act of stepping or leaping over a woman is regarded as equivalent to cohabitation with her, and is accepted as a ritual substitute for it (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 357 note). The ideas on which this custom of ceremonial cohabitation is based are by no means clear.

to the bodies of such as seemed to flag. The king's wives also sang and danced before him in long lines, holding the marriage ring in their right hands and green boughs in their left. On the third day of the festival hundreds of oxen were sacrificed: the flesh and blood of the black or sacred cattle were converted into charms; while the carcasses of the rest were cut up and distributed among the people, who feasted upon them. The fourth day was specially set apart for the ceremony of the first-fruits. In the morning all the people went down to the river to wash, and on their return a witch-doctor or medicine-man took a dish of the new vegetables and corn, mixed with charms, and scattered the contents by handfuls among the crowd, who seized and ate them. After that the people were free to eat the new crops. According to one account, this festival of first-fruits was held at the first full moon which followed the summer solstice (the twenty-first of December in the southern hemisphere); according to another account, it took place a few days after the full moon of February, which marked the beginning of the Matabele year.²¹³

²¹³ Ch. Croonenberghs, S.J., "La fête de la Grande Danse dans le haut Zambeze," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xiv. (1882) pp. 230-234; L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), pp. 157 *sq.* The two accounts supplement each other. I have combined features from both in the text.

Ceremony observed by the Ovambo at eating the new fruits

The Ovambo or, as they call themselves, the Ovakuanjama, of South-West Africa, may not partake of the new fruits of the *omuongo* tree, which ripen in February and from which an intoxicating beverage is extracted, until certain ceremonies have been performed. Among other things husband and wife mutually offer each other one of the fruits, make white strokes with chalk each on the brow, cheeks, and nose of the other, and accompany the action with the formal expression of good wishes. If this ceremony, which seems to mark the beginning of the New Year, were omitted, they believe that they would be attacked by a painful disease of the knee-joints which would cripple them.²¹⁴

Ceremony observed by the Bororo Indians before eating the new maize

The Bororo Indians of Brazil think that it would be certain death to eat the new maize before it has been blessed [pg 072] by the medicine-man. The ceremony of blessing it is as follows. The half-ripe husk is washed and placed before the medicine-man, who by dancing and singing for several hours, and by incessant

²¹⁴ H. Tönjes, *Ovamboland, Land, Leute, Mission* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 200 sq.

smoking, works himself up into a state of ecstasy, whereupon he bites into the husk, trembling in every limb and uttering shrieks from time to time. A similar ceremony is performed whenever a large animal or a large fish is killed. The Bororo are firmly persuaded that were any man to touch unconsecrated maize or meat, before the ceremony had been completed, he and his whole tribe would perish.²¹⁵

The *busk* or festival of first-fruits among the Creek Indians of North America. Fast and purgation. New fire made by friction

Amongst the Creek Indians of North America, the *busk* or festival of first-fruits was the chief ceremony of the year.²¹⁶ It

²¹⁵ V. Frič and P. Radin, "Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) p. 392.

²¹⁶ The ceremony is described independently by James Adair, *History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), pp. 96-111; W. Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (London, 1792), pp. 507 *sq.*; A. Hodgson, *Letters from North America* (London, 1824), i. 131 *sq.*; B. Hawkins, "Sketch of the Creek Country," in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, iii. (Savannah, 1848) pp. 75-78; A. A. M'Gillivray, in H. R. Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1853-1856), v. 267 *sq.*; F. G. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians* (Philadelphia, 1909), pp. 112-131. The fullest descriptions are those of Adair and Speck. In the text I have chiefly followed Adair, our oldest authority. A similar ceremony was observed by the Cherokees. See the description (from an unpublished MS. of J. H. Payne, author of *Home, Sweet Home*) in "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians, by William Bartram, 1789, with prefatory and supplementary notes by E. G. Squier," *Transactions of the American Ethnological*

was held in July or August, when the corn was ripe, and marked the end of the old year and the beginning of the new one. Before it took place, none of the Indians would eat or even handle any part of the new harvest. Sometimes each town had its own busk; sometimes several towns united to hold one in common. Before celebrating the busk, the people provided themselves with new clothes and new household utensils and furniture; they collected their old clothes and rubbish, together with all the remaining grain and other old provisions, cast them together in one [pg 073] common heap, and consumed them with fire.²¹⁷ As a preparation for the ceremony, all the fires in the village were extinguished, and the ashes swept clean away. In particular, the hearth or altar of the temple was dug up and the ashes carried out. Then the chief priest put some roots of the button-snake plant, with some green tobacco leaves and a little of the new fruits, at the bottom of the fireplace, which he afterwards commanded to be covered up with white clay, and wetted over with clean water. A thick arbour of green branches of young trees was then made over the altar.²¹⁸ Meanwhile the women at home were cleaning out their

Society, vol. iii. Part i. (1853) p. 75. The Indians of Alabama also held a great festival at their harvest in July. They passed the day fasting, lit a new fire, purged themselves, and offered the first-fruits to their *Manitoo*: the ceremony ended with a religious dance. See Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), ii. 54. These Indians of Alabama were probably either the Creeks or the Cherokees.

²¹⁷ W. Bartram, *Travels*, p. 507.

²¹⁸ So amongst the Cherokees, according to J. H. Payne, an arbour of green boughs was made in the sacred square; then “a beautiful bushy-topped shade-tree was cut down close to the roots, and planted in the very centre of the sacred square. Every

houses, renewing the old hearths, and scouring all the cooking vessels that they might be ready to receive the new fire and the new fruits.²¹⁹ The public or sacred square was carefully swept of even the smallest crumbs of previous feasts, “for fear of polluting the first-fruit offerings.” Also every vessel that had contained or had been used about any food during the expiring year was removed from the temple before sunset. Then all the men who were not known to have violated the law of the first-fruit offering and that of marriage during the year were summoned by a crier to enter the holy square and observe a solemn fast. But the women (except six old ones), the children, and all who had not attained the rank of warriors were forbidden to enter the square. Sentinels were also posted at the corners of the square to keep out all persons deemed impure and all animals. A strict fast was then observed for two nights and a day, the devotees drinking a bitter decoction of button-snake root “in order to vomit and purge their sinful bodies.” That the people outside the square might also be purified, one of the old men laid down a quantity of green tobacco at a corner of the square; this was carried off by an old woman and distributed to the people without, who chewed and swallowed it “in order to afflict their souls.” During this general fast, the women, children, and men of [pg 074] weak constitution were allowed to eat after mid-day, but not

man then provided himself with a green bough.”

²¹⁹ So Adair. Bartram, on the other hand, as we have seen, says that the people provided themselves with new household utensils.

before. On the morning when the fast ended, the women brought a quantity of the old year's food to the outside of the sacred square. These provisions were then fetched in and set before the famished multitude, but all traces of them had to be removed before noon. When the sun was declining from the meridian, all the people were commanded by the voice of a crier to stay within doors, to do no bad act, and to be sure to extinguish and throw away every spark of the old fire. Universal silence now reigned. Then the high priest made the new fire by the friction of two pieces of wood, and placed it on the altar under the green arbour. This new fire was believed to atone for all past crimes except murder. Next a basket of new fruits was brought; the high priest took out a little of each sort of fruit, rubbed it with bear's oil, and offered it, together with some flesh, "to the bountiful holy spirit of fire, as a first-fruit offering, and an annual oblation for sin." He also consecrated the sacred emetics (the button-snake root and the cassina or black-drink) by pouring a little of them into the fire. The persons who had remained outside now approached, without entering, the sacred square; and the chief priest thereupon made a speech, exhorting the people to observe their old rites and customs, announcing that the new divine fire had purged away the sins of the past year, and earnestly warning the women that, if any of them had not extinguished the old fire, or had contracted any impurity, they must forthwith depart, "lest the divine fire should spoil both them and the people." Some of the new fire was then set down outside the holy square; the

women carried it home joyfully, and laid it on their unpolluted hearths. When several towns had united to celebrate the festival, the new fire might thus be carried for several miles. The new fruits were then dressed on the new fires and eaten with bear's oil, which was deemed indispensable. At one point of the festival the men rubbed the new corn between their hands, then on their faces and breasts.²²⁰ During the festival which followed, the warriors, dressed in their wild martial array, their heads covered with white down and carrying white [pg 075] feathers in their hands, danced round the sacred arbour, under which burned the new fire. The ceremonies lasted eight days, during which the strictest continence was practised. Towards the conclusion of the festival the warriors fought a mock battle; then the men and women together, in three circles, danced round the sacred fire. Lastly, all the people smeared themselves with white clay and bathed in running water. They came out of the water believing that no evil could now befall them for what they had done amiss in the past. So they departed in joy and peace.

Festival of the new fruits among the Yuchi Indians. Game of ball

Ceremonies of the same general type are still annually observed by the Yuchi Indians of Oklahoma, who belong to the

²²⁰ B. Hawkins, "Sketch," etc., p. 76.

Creek nation but speak a different language. The rites are said to have been instituted by the Sun. They are solemnised in the public square, and are timed so as to coincide with the ripening of the corn, which usually takes place about the middle or early part of July. Contenance and abstinence from salt are prescribed during their celebration, and all the men must fast for twelve hours before they take the emetic. A sacred new fire is kindled by striking two stones against each other, after which all the males are scarified or scratched by an official on the arm or breast, so as to let blood flow and drip on the ground of the public square. This bleeding of the men is said to be symbolical of the origin of the Yuchi people; for the first Yuchi sprang from some drops of blood which the mother of the Sun let fall on earth at one of her monthly periods. Hence the Yuchi call themselves the Children of the Sun. The solemn rite of scratching is followed by the no less solemn rite of vomiting. This also was instituted by the Sun. He taught the Indians to steep the button-snake root and the red root in water and to drink the decoction, in order that they might vomit and so purify their bodies against sickness during the ensuing year. They think that if they did not thus purge themselves before eating the new corn, they would fall sick. The chief of the town is charged with the solemn duty of preparing the nauseous concoction, and he is assisted by four boys who have been initiated into the mysteries. The pots containing the stuff are decorated on the rim with a pattern representing the sun, and they stand east of the fire near [pg 076] the middle of the

public square. The order of drinking is regulated by the rank of the drinkers. When the sun is about the zenith, the four noblest come forward, face eastward, and gulp down the vile but salutary potion; then they retire to their places and await the usual results. When they feel the inward workings of the draught, they step out of the square and discharge the contents of their stomachs in a place set apart for the purpose. They are followed by another party of four, and that by another, and so on, till all the men have thus purged themselves. The rite is repeated several times. When it is over, they all go to water and wash off the paint with which they were adorned; then returning to their places in the square they feast on the new corn. After a rest of some hours the men engage in ball play, not as a mere recreation but as a matter of ritual. Sides are chosen; every player is equipped with two rackets, and the aim of each side is to drive the ball through their opponents' goal, which consists of two uprights and a cross-piece. The two goals stand east and west of each other. During the following night dancing is kept up, and a general laxity, degenerating into debauchery, prevails; but parents and elders wink at the excesses of the young folk. Among the dances are some in which the dancers mimic the motions and cries of their totemic animals, such as ducks, buzzards, rabbits, fish, buffaloes, chickens, and owls.²²¹

²²¹ F. G. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians* (Philadelphia, 1909), pp. 86-89, 105-107, 112-131.

Green Corn Dance among the Seminole Indians.

Festival of the new corn among the Natchez Indians

To this day, also, the remnant of the Seminole Indians of Florida, a people of the same stock as the Creeks,²²² hold an annual purification and festival called the Green Corn Dance, at which the new corn is eaten. On the evening of the first day of the festival they quaff a nauseous “Black Drink,” as it is called, which acts both as an emetic and a purgative; they believe that he who does not drink of this liquor cannot safely eat the new green corn, and besides that he will be sick at some time in the year. While the liquor is being drunk, the dancing begins, and the medicine-men join in it. Next day they eat of the green corn; the following [pg 077] day they fast, probably from fear of polluting the sacred food in their stomachs by contact with common food; but the third day they hold a great feast.²²³ Further, the Natchez Indians, another tribe of the same stock, who used to inhabit a district on the lower course and eastern bank of the Mississippi, ate the new corn sacramentally at a great festival which has been fully described by Du Pratz, the French historian of Louisiana.

²²² Th. Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, iii. (Leipsic, 1862) p. 42; A. S. Gatschet, *A Migration Legend of the Creek Indians*, i. (Philadelphia, 1884) pp. 66 *sqq.*; *Totemism and Exogamy*, iii. 167.

²²³ C. MacCauley, “Seminole Indians of Florida,” *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1887), pp. 522 *sq.*

As his work is probably not easily accessible to many of my readers, I shall perhaps consult their convenience by extracting his description entire. The Natchez, he tells us, began their year in March and divided it into thirteen moons. Their sixth moon, which answered to our August, was the Mulberry Moon, and the seventh was the moon of Maize or Great Corn. "This feast is beyond dispute the most solemn of all. It principally consists in eating in common, and in a religious manner, of new corn, which had been sown expressly with that design, with suitable ceremonies. This corn is sown upon a spot of ground never before cultivated; which ground is dressed and prepared by the warriors alone, who also are the only persons that sow the corn, weed it, reap it, and gather it. When this corn is near ripe, the warriors fix on a place proper for the general feast, and close adjoining to that they form a round granary, the bottom and sides of which are of cane; this they fill with the corn, and when they have finished the harvest, and covered the granary, they acquaint the Great Sun,²²⁴ who appoints the day for the general feast. Some days before the feast, they build huts for the Great Sun, and for all the other families, round the granary, that of the Great Sun being raised upon a mound of earth about two feet high. On the feast-day the whole nation set out from their village at sun-rising, leaving behind only the aged and infirm that are not able to travel, and

²²⁴ That is, the grand chief of the nation. All the chiefs of the Natchez were called Suns and were connected with the head chief or Great Sun, who bore on his breast an image of the sun and claimed to be descended from the luminary. See Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), i. 42.

a few warriors, who are to carry the Great Sun on a litter upon their shoulders. [pg 078] The seat of this litter is covered with several deer-skins, and to its four sides are fastened four bars which cross each other, and are supported by eight men, who at every hundred paces transfer their burden to eight other men, and thus successively transport it to the place where the feast is celebrated, which may be near two miles from the village. About nine o'clock the Great Sun comes out of his hut dressed in the ornaments of his dignity, and being placed in his litter, which has a canopy at the head formed of flowers, he is carried in a few minutes to the sacred granary, shouts of joy re-echoing on all sides. Before he alights he makes the tour of the whole place deliberately, and when he comes before the corn, he salutes it thrice with the words *hoo, hoo, hoo*, lengthened and pronounced respectfully. The salutation is repeated by the whole nation, who pronounce the word *hoo* nine times distinctly, and at the ninth time he alights and places himself on his throne.

New fire made by friction

“Immediately after they light a fire by rubbing two pieces of wood violently against each other, and when everything is prepared for dressing the corn, the chief of war, accompanied by the warriors belonging to each family, presents himself before the throne, and addresses the Sun in these words, ‘Speak, for I hear thee.’ The sovereign then rises up, bows towards the four

quarters of the world, and advancing to the granary, lifts his eyes and hands to heaven, and says, 'Give us corn': upon which the great chief of war, the princes and princesses, and all the men, thank him separately by pronouncing the word *hoo*. The corn is then distributed, first to the female Suns, and then to all the women, who run with it to their huts, and dress it with the utmost dispatch. When the corn is dressed in all the huts, a plate of it is put into the hands of the Great Sun, who presents it to the four quarters of the world, and then says to the chief of war, 'Eat'; upon this signal the warriors begin to eat in all the huts; after them the boys of whatever age, excepting those who are on the breast; and last of all the women. When the warriors have finished their repast, they form themselves into two choirs before the huts, and sing war songs for half an hour; after which the chief of war, and all the warriors in succession, recount their brave [pg 079] exploits, and mention, in a boasting manner, the number of enemies they have slain. The youths are next allowed to harangue, and each tells in the best manner he can, not what he has done, but what he intends to do; and if his discourse merits approbation, he is answered by a general *hoo*; if not, the warriors hang down their heads and are silent.

Torchlight dance

“This great solemnity is concluded with a general dance by torch-light. Upwards of two hundred torches of dried canes, each

of the thickness of a child, are lighted round the place, where the men and women often continue dancing till daylight; and the following is the disposition of their dance. A man places himself on the ground with a pot covered with a deer-skin, in the manner of a drum, to beat time to the dancers; round him the women form themselves into a circle, not joining hands, but at some distance from each other; and they are inclosed by the men in another circle, who have in each hand a chichicois, or calabash, with a stick thrust through it to serve for a handle. When the dance begins, the women move round the men in the centre, from left to right, and the men contrariwise from right to left, and they sometimes narrow and sometimes widen their circles. In this manner the dance continues without intermission the whole night, new performers successively taking the place of those who are wearied and fatigued.

Game of ball

“Next morning no person is seen abroad before the Great Sun comes out of his hut, which is generally about nine o'clock, and then upon a signal made by the drum, the warriors make their appearance distinguished into two troops, by the feathers which they wear on their heads. One of these troops is headed by the Great Sun, and the other by the chief of war, who begin a new diversion by tossing a ball of deer-skin stuffed with Spanish beard from the one to the other. The warriors quickly take part

in the sport, and a violent contest ensues which of the two parties shall drive the ball to the hut of the opposite chief. The diversion generally lasts two hours, and the victors are allowed to wear the feathers of superiority till the following year, or till the next time they play at the ball. After this the warriors perform the war dance; and last of all they go and bathe; [pg 080] an exercise which they are very fond of when they are heated or fatigued.

“The rest of that day is employed as the preceding; for the feast holds as long as any of the corn remains. When it is all eat up, the Great Sun is carried back in his litter, and they all return to the village, after which he sends the warriors to hunt both for themselves and him.”²²⁵

²²⁵ Le Page Du Pratz, *History of Louisiana, or of the western parts of Virginia and Carolina*, translated from the French, New Edition (London, 1774), pp. 338-341. See also J. R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley* (Washington, 1911), pp. 110 *sqq.*, where the passage of Du Pratz is translated in full from the original French. From Mr. Swanton's translation it appears that the English version of Du Pratz, which I have quoted in the text, is a good deal abridged. On the festival of first-fruits among the Natchez see also *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, vii. (Paris, 1781) p. 19; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), vi. 183; De Tonti, “Relation de la Louisiane et du Mississippi,” *Recueil de Voyages au Nord*, v. (Amsterdam, 1734) p. 122; Le Petit, “Relation des Natchez,” *ibid.* ix. 13 *sq.* (reprint of the account in the *Lettres édifiantes* cited above); Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes occidentales* (Paris, 1768), i. 43. According to Charlevoix, Le Petit, and Bossu the festival fell in July. For Chateaubriand's description of the custom, see below, pp. 135 *sqq.*

Ceremonies observed by the Salish and Tinneh Indians before they eat the first wild berries or roots of the season

Even tribes which do not till the ground sometimes observe analogous ceremonies when they gather the first wild fruits or dig the first roots of the season. Thus among the Salish and Tinneh Indians of North-West America, “before the young people eat the first berries or roots of the season, they always addressed the fruit or plant, and begged for its favour and aid. In some tribes regular First-fruit ceremonies were annually held at the time of picking the wild fruit or gathering the roots, and also among the salmon-eating tribes when the run of the ‘sockeye’ salmon began. These ceremonies were not so much thanksgivings, as performances to ensure a plentiful crop or supply of the particular object desired, for if they were not properly and reverently carried out there was danger of giving offence to the ‘spirits’ of the objects, and being deprived of them.” For example, these Indians are fond of the young shoots or suckers of the wild raspberry, and they observe the following ceremony at gathering the first of them in season. “When the shoots are ready to pick, that is, when they are about six or eight inches above the ground, the chief, or directing elder of the community, instructs his wife or his [pg 081] daughters to pluck a small bundle of these and prepare them for eating. This

they do, using a new pot or kettle for cooking them in. In the meantime all the settlement comes together to take part in the ceremony. They stand in a great circle, the presiding chief, elder, or medicine-man as the case may be, and his assistants being in their midst. Whoever is conducting the ceremony now silently invokes the spirit of the plants, the tenor of his prayer being that it will be propitious to them and grant them a good supply of the suckers. While the invocation is being made all in the circle must keep their eyes reverently closed, this being an essential part in all such ceremonies, the non-observance of which would anger the spirits and cause them to withhold the favours sought. To ensure this being strictly done, the assisting elders are armed with long wands with which they strike any person found opening his eyes during the prayer. After this part of the ceremony is over the cooked suckers are handed to the presiding officer in a newly carved dish, and a small portion is given to each person present, who reverently and decorously eats it. This brings the ceremony to a close. Later, when the berries of this plant are ripe, a second and similar ceremony takes place.”²²⁶

²²⁶ C. Hill-Tout, *The Far West, the Home of the Salish and Déné* (London, 1907), pp. 168-170.

Ceremonies observed by the Thompson Indians before they eat the first wild berries or roots of the season

The Thompson Indians of British Columbia cook and eat the sunflower root (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*, Nutt.), but they used to regard it as a mysterious being, and observed a number of taboos in connexion with it; for example, women who were engaged in digging or cooking the root must practise continence, and no man might come near the oven where the women were baking the root. When young people ate the first berries, roots, or other products of the season, they addressed a prayer to the Sunflower-Root as follows: "I inform thee that I intend to eat thee. Mayest thou always help me to ascend, so that I may always be able to reach the tops of mountains, and may I never be clumsy! I ask this from thee, Sunflower-Root. Thou art the greatest of all in mystery." To omit this prayer would make the eater lazy and cause him to sleep long in the [pg 082] morning. Again, when the first tobacco of the season was gathered and smoked for the first time, the inhabitants of each lodge among the Thompson Indians observed the following ceremony. An elderly man assembled all the inmates, often outside the lodge and generally after sunset, and caused all the adult men and women, who were in the habit of smoking, to sit down in a circle, while he stood in the middle. Sometimes he made a long speech to the people, but

as a rule he simply said, "Be it known to you that we will cut up the chief," meaning by the chief the tobacco. So saying he cut up some of the tobacco, and after mixing it with bear-berry leaves he filled a large pipe, lighted it, and handed it to each person, following the sun's course. Everybody took one whiff, and holding up his or her hands, the palms close together, blew the smoke downwards between the fingers and over the breast; and as the smoke descended, he crossed his hands on his breast, and rubbing his chest and shoulders with both hands, as if he were rubbing the smoke in, he prayed: "Lengthen my breath, chief, so that I may never be sick, and so that I may not die for a long time to come." By the chief he meant the tobacco. When every one had had his whiff, the tobacco was cut up small and a piece given to each person.²²⁷

The ceremonies observed by savages at eating the first fruits of any crop seem to be based on the idea that the plant or tree is animated by a spirit, who must be propitiated before it is safe to partake of the fruit

These customs of the Thompson and other Indian tribes of North-West America are instructive, because they clearly

²²⁷ J. Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, p. 349 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, April, 1900).

indicate the motive, or at least one of the motives, which underlies the ceremonies observed at eating the first fruits of the season. That motive in the case of these Indians is simply a belief that the plant itself is animated by a conscious and more or less powerful spirit, who must be propitiated before the people can safely partake of the fruits or roots which are supposed to be part of his body. Now if this is true of wild fruits and roots, we may infer with some probability that it is also true of cultivated fruits and roots, such as yams, and in particular that it holds good of the cereals, such as wheat, barley, oats, rice, and maize. In all cases it seems reasonable to infer that the scruples which [pg 083] savages manifest at eating the first fruits of any crop, and the ceremonies which they observe before they overcome their scruples, are due at least in large measure to a notion that the plant or tree is animated by a spirit or even a deity, whose leave must be obtained, or whose favour must be sought before it is possible to partake with safety of the new crop. This indeed is plainly affirmed of the Aino: they call the millet "the divine cereal," "the cereal deity," and they pray to and worship him before they will eat of the cakes made from the new millet.²²⁸ And even where the indwelling divinity of the first fruits is not expressly affirmed, it appears to be implied both by the solemn preparations made for eating them and by the danger supposed to be incurred by persons who venture to partake of them without observing the prescribed ritual. In all such cases, accordingly,

²²⁸ See above, p. [52](#).

we may not improperly describe the eating of the new fruits as a sacrament or communion with a deity, or at all events with a powerful spirit.

The sanctity of the new fruits indicated in various ways. Care taken to prevent the contact of sacred and profane food in the stomach of the eater. Contact between certain foods in the stomach of the eater forbidden

Among the usages which point to this conclusion are the custom of employing either new or specially reserved vessels to hold the new fruits,²²⁹ and the practice of purifying the persons of the communicants and even the houses and streets of the whole town, before it is lawful to engage in the solemn act of communion with the divinity.²³⁰ Of all the modes of purification adopted on these occasions none perhaps brings out the sacramental virtue of the rite so clearly as the Creek and Seminole practice of taking a purgative before swallowing the new corn. The intention is thereby to prevent the sacred food from being polluted by contact with common food in the stomach of the eater. For the same reason Catholics partake of the Eucharist fasting; and among the pastoral Masai of Eastern

²²⁹ See above, pp. [50](#), [53](#), [65](#), [66](#), [72](#), [81](#).

²³⁰ See above, pp. [59](#), [60](#), [63](#), [69](#) *sq.*, [71](#), [73](#), [75](#) *sq.*, [82](#).

Africa the young warriors, who live on meat and milk exclusively, are obliged to eat nothing but milk for so many days and then nothing but meat for so many more, and before they pass from the one food to the other they must make sure that none of the old food remains in their stomachs; this they do by swallowing a very powerful [pg 084] purgative and emetic.²³¹ Similarly, among the Suk, a tribe of British East Africa, no one may partake of meat and milk on the same day, and if he has chewed raw millet he is forbidden to drink milk for seven days.²³² Among the Wataturu, another people of Eastern Africa akin to the Masai, a warrior who had eaten antelope's flesh might not drink of milk on the

²³¹ Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land* (London, 1885), p. 430; P. Reichard, *Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipsic, 1892), p. 288; O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle* (Berlin, 1894), p. 162; M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1904), p. 33; M. Weiss, *Die Völkerstämme im Norden Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Berlin, 1910), p. 380. However, the motive which underlies the taboo appears to be a fear of injuring by sympathetic magic the cows from which the milk is drawn. See my essay "Folk-lore in the Old Testament," in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), pp. 164 sq. According to Reichard the warriors may partake of honey both with meat and with milk. Thomson does not mention honey and speaks of a purgative only. The periods during which meat and milk are alternately consumed vary, according to Reichard, from twelve to fifteen days. We may conjecture, therefore, that two of them, making up a complete cycle, correspond to a lunar month, with reference to which the diet is perhaps determined.

²³² M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk, their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1911), p. 9. In both cases the motive, as with the Masai, is probably a fear of injuring the cattle, and especially of causing the cows to loose their milk. This is confirmed by other taboos of the same sort observed by the Suk. Thus they think that to eat the flesh of a certain forest pig would cause the cattle of the eater to run dry, and that if a rich man ate fish his cows would give no milk. See M. W. H. Beech, *op. cit.* p. 10.

same day.²³³ Similarly among the Central Esquimaux the rules prohibiting contact between venison and the flesh of marine animals are very strict. The Esquimaux themselves say that the goddess Sedna dislikes the deer, and therefore they may not bring that animal into contact with her favourites, the sea beasts. Hence the meat of the whale, the seal, or the walrus may not be eaten on the same day with venison. Both sorts of meat may not even lie on the floor of the hut or behind the lamps at the same time. If a man who has eaten venison in the morning happens to enter a hut in which the flesh of seal is being cooked, he is allowed to eat venison on the bed, but it must be wrapt up before being carried into the hut, and he must take care to keep clear of the floor. Before changing from one food to the other the Esquimaux must wash themselves.²³⁴ Again, just as the Esquimaux think that their [pg 085] goddess would be offended if venison met seal or whale or walrus meat in the eater's stomach, so the Melanesians of Florida, one of the Solomon Islands, believe that if a man who has eaten pork or fish or shell-fish or the flesh of a certain sort of cuscus were to enter a garden immediately afterwards, the ghosts who preside over the garden and cause the fruits to grow would be angry and the crop would consequently suffer; but three or four days after partaking of such victuals, when the

²³³ O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle* (Berlin, 1894), p. 171.

²³⁴ Fr. Boas, "The Central Eskimo," *Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1888), p. 595; *id.*, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. xv. part i. (New York, 1901) pp. 122-124. For more details see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 208 *sqq.*

food has quite left his stomach, he may enter the garden without offence to the ghosts or injury to the crop.²³⁵ In like manner the ancient Greeks, of whose intellectual kinship with savages like the Esquimaux and the Melanesians we have already met with many proofs, laid it down as a rule that a man who had partaken of the black ram offered to Pelops at Olympia might not enter into the temple of Zeus, and that persons who had sacrificed to Telephus at Pergamus might not go up to the temple of Aesculapius until they had washed themselves,²³⁶ just as the Esquimaux who have eaten venison must wash before they may partake of seal or whale or walrus meat. Again, at Lindus in Rhodes there was a sanctuary of some god or hero unknown into which no one who had partaken of goat's flesh or peas-pudding might enter for three days, and no one who had eaten cheese might enter for one day.²³⁷ The prescribed interval was probably calculated to allow the obnoxious food to pass out of the body of the eater before he entered into the presence of the deity, who for some reason or other cherished an antipathy to these particular viands. At Castabus in the Carian Chersonese there

²³⁵ Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 134.

²³⁶ Pausanias, v. 13. 3. We may assume, though Pausanias does not expressly say so, that persons who sacrificed to Telephus partook of the sacrifice.

²³⁷ Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,² No. 576 (vol. ii. p. 267); Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 723, p. 622. Further, no one who had suffered a domestic bereavement might enter the sanctuary for forty days. Hence the pollution of death was clearly deemed more virulent, or at all events more lasting, than the pollution of food.

was a sanctuary of Hemithea, which no one might approach who had either eaten pork or touched a pig.²³⁸

The sacrament of first-fruits sometimes combined with a sacrifice of them to gods or spirits

In some of the festivals which we have examined, as [pg 086] in the Cheremiss, Buru, Cham, Ewe, and Creek ceremonies, the sacrament of first-fruits is combined with a sacrifice or presentation of them to gods or spirits,²³⁹ and in course of time the sacrifice of first-fruits tends to throw the sacrament into the shade, if not to supersede it. The mere fact of offering the first-fruits to the gods or spirits comes now to be thought a sufficient preparation for eating the new corn; the higher powers having received their share, man is free to enjoy the rest. This mode of viewing the new fruits implies that they are regarded no longer as themselves instinct with divine life, but merely as a gift bestowed by the gods upon man, who is bound to express his gratitude and homage to his divine benefactors by returning to them a portion of their bounty. More examples of the sacrifice, as distinct from sacrament, of first-fruits will be given presently.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Diodorus Siculus, v. 62. 5.

²³⁹ See above, pp. [51 sq.](#), [54](#), [58](#), [60 sq.](#), [64](#), [74](#).

²⁴⁰ See below, pp. [109 sqq.](#)

§ 2. Eating the God among the Aztecs

Aztec custom of eating sacramentally a dough image of the god Huitzilopochtli or Vitzilipuztli as a mode of communion with the deity

The custom of eating bread sacramentally as the body of a god was practised by the Aztecs before the discovery and conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. Twice a year, in May and December, an image of the great Mexican god Huitzilopochtli or Vitzilipuztli was made of dough, then broken in pieces, and solemnly eaten by his worshippers. The May ceremony is thus described by the historian Acosta: “The Mexicans in the month of May made their principal feast to their god Vitzilipuztli, and two days before this feast, the virgins whereof I have spoken (the which were shut up and secluded in the same temple and were as it were religious women) did mingle a quantity of the seed of beets with roasted maize, and then they did mould it with honey, making an idol of that paste in bigness like to that of wood, putting instead of eyes grains of green glass, of blue or white; and for teeth grains of maize set forth with all the ornament and furniture that I have said. This being finished, all the noblemen came and brought it an exquisite and rich garment,

like unto that of the idol, wherewith they did attire it. Being thus clad and deckt, they did set it in an azured chair and in a litter to carry it on their shoulders. [pg 087] The morning of this feast being come, an hour before day all the maidens came forth attired in white, with new ornaments, the which that day were called the Sisters of their god Vitziliputzli, they came crowned with garlands of maize roasted and parched, being like unto azahar or the flower of orange; and about their necks they had great chains of the same, which went bauldrickwise under their left arm. Their cheeks were dyed with vermilion, their arms from the elbow to the wrist were covered with red parrots' feathers." Young men, dressed in red robes and crowned like the virgins with maize, then carried the idol in its litter to the foot of the great pyramid-shaped temple, up the steep and narrow steps of which it was drawn to the music of flutes, trumpets, cornets, and drums. "While they mounted up the idol all the people stood in the court with much reverence and fear. Being mounted to the top, and that they had placed it in a little lodge of roses which they held ready, presently came the young men, which strewed many flowers of sundry kinds, wherewith they filled the temple both within and without. This done, all the virgins came out of their convent, bringing pieces of paste compounded of beets and roasted maize, which was of the same paste whereof their idol was made and compounded, and they were of the fashion of great bones. They delivered them to the young men, who carried them up and laid them at the idol's feet, wherewith

they filled the whole place that it could receive no more. They called these morsels of paste the flesh and bones of Vitzilipuztli. Having laid abroad these bones, presently came all the ancients of the temple, priests, Levites, and all the rest of the ministers, according to their dignities and antiquities (for herein there was a strict order amongst them) one after another, with their veils of diverse colours and works, every one according to his dignity and office, having garlands upon their heads and chains of flowers about their necks; after them came their gods and goddesses whom they worshipped, of diverse figures, attired in the same livery; then putting themselves in order about those morsels and pieces of paste, they used certain ceremonies with singing and dancing. By means whereof they were blessed and consecrated for the flesh and bones of this idol. This [pg 088] ceremony and blessing (whereby they were taken for the flesh and bones of the idol) being ended, they honoured those pieces in the same sort as their god.

Eating the flesh and bones of the god Vitzilipuztli sacramentally

“Then come forth the sacrificers, who began the sacrifice of men in the manner as hath been spoken, and that day they did sacrifice a greater number than at any other time, for that it was the most solemn feast they observed. The sacrifices being ended, all the young men and maids came out of the temple attired as

before, and being placed in order and rank, one directly against another, they danced by drums, the which sounded in praise of the feast, and of the idol which they did celebrate. To which song all the most ancient and greatest noblemen did answer dancing about them, making a great circle, as their use is, the young men and maids remaining always in the midst. All the city came to this goodly spectacle, and there was a commandment very strictly observed throughout all the land, that the day of the feast of the idol of Vitzilipuztli they should eat no other meat but this paste, with honey, whereof the idol was made. And this should be eaten at the point of day, and they should drink no water nor any other thing till after noon: they held it for an ill sign, yea, for sacrilege to do the contrary: but after the ceremonies ended, it was lawful for them to eat anything. During the time of this ceremony they hid the water from their little children, admonishing all such as had the use of reason not to drink any water; which, if they did, the anger of God would come upon them, and they should die, which they did observe very carefully and strictly. The ceremonies, dancing, and sacrifice ended, they went to unclothe themselves, and the priests and superiors of the temple took the idol of paste, which they spoiled of all the ornaments it had, and made many pieces, as well of the idol itself as of the truncheons which they consecrated, and then they gave them to the people in manner of a communion, beginning with the greater, and continuing unto the rest, both men, women, and little children, who received it with such tears, fear, and reverence

as it was an admirable thing, saying that they did eat the flesh and bones of God, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sick folks demanded [pg 089] thereof for them, and carried it with great reverence and veneration.”²⁴¹

The doctrine of transubstantiation or the magical conversion of bread into flesh recognised by the ancient Aztecs and Brahmans

From this interesting passage we learn that the ancient Mexicans, even before the arrival of Christian missionaries, were fully acquainted with the theological doctrine of transubstantiation and acted upon it in the solemn rites of their religion. They believed that by consecrating bread their priests could turn it into the very body of their god, so that all who thereupon partook of the consecrated bread entered into a mystic communion with the deity by receiving a portion of his divine substance into themselves. The doctrine of transubstantiation,

²⁴¹ J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v. ch. 24, vol. ii. pp. 356-360 (Hakluyt Society, London, 1880). I have modernised the old translator's spelling. Acosta's authority, which he followed without acknowledgment, was an anonymous writer of about the middle of the sixteenth century, whose manuscript, written in Spanish, was found in the library of the Franciscan monastery at Mexico in 1856. A French translation of it has been published. See *Manuscrit Ramirez, Histoire de l'Origine des Indiens qui habitent la Nouvelle-Espagne selon leurs traditions*, publié par D. Charnay (Paris, 1903), pp. 149-154. Acosta's description is followed by A. de Herrera (*General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens (London, 1725-1726), iii. 213-215).

or the magical conversion of bread into flesh, was also familiar to the Aryans of ancient India long before the spread and even the rise of Christianity. The Brahmans taught that the rice-cakes offered in sacrifice were substitutes for human beings, and that they were actually converted into the real bodies of men by the manipulation of the priest. We read that “when it (the rice-cake) still consists of rice-meal, it is the hair. When he pours water on it, it becomes skin. When he mixes it, it becomes flesh: for then it becomes consistent; and consistent also is the flesh. When it is baked, it becomes bone: for then it becomes somewhat hard; and hard is the bone. And when he is about to take it off (the fire) and sprinkles it with butter, he changes it into marrow. This is the completeness which they call the fivefold animal sacrifice.”²⁴² These remarkable transformations, daily wrought by the priest, on the rice-wafer, were, however, nothing at all to those which the gods themselves accomplished when [pg 090] they first instituted the rite. For the horse and the ox which they sacrificed became a *bos gaurus* and a gayal respectively; the sheep was turned into a camel; and the goat was converted into a remarkable species of deer, enriched with eight legs, which slew lions and elephants.²⁴³ On the whole it would seem that neither the ancient Hindoos nor the ancient Mexicans had much to learn from the most refined mysteries of Catholic theology.

²⁴² *The Satapatha-Brâhmana*, translated by J. Eggeling, Part i. (Oxford, 1882) p. 51 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xii.).

²⁴³ *Op. cit.* pp. 51 *sq.*, with the translator's note.

The sacred food not to be defiled by contact with common food

Now, too, we can perfectly understand why on the day of their solemn communion with the deity the Mexicans refused to eat any other food than the consecrated bread which they revered as the very flesh and bones of their God, and why up till noon they might drink nothing at all, not even water. They feared no doubt to defile the portion of God in their stomachs by contact with common things. A similar pious fear led the Creek and Seminole Indians, as we saw, to adopt the more thoroughgoing expedient of rinsing out their insides by a strong purgative before they dared to partake of the sacrament of first-fruits.²⁴⁴ We can now also conjecture the reason why Zulu boys, after eating the flesh of the black bull at the feast of first-fruits, are forbidden to drink anything till the next day.²⁴⁵

Aztec custom of killing the god Huitzilopochtli in effigy and eating him afterwards

At the festival of the winter solstice in December the Aztecs killed their god Huitzilopochtli in effigy first and ate him

²⁴⁴ See above, pp. [73](#) *sqq.*

²⁴⁵ Above, p. [68](#), note 3.

afterwards. As a preparation for this solemn ceremony an image of the deity in the likeness of a man was fashioned out of seeds of various sorts, which were kneaded into a dough with the blood of children. The bones of the god were represented by pieces of acacia wood. This image was placed on the chief altar of the temple, and on the day of the festival the king offered incense to it. Early next day it was taken down and set on its feet in a great hall. Then a priest, who bore the name and acted the part of the god Quetzalcoatl, took a flint-tipped dart and hurled it into the breast of the dough-image, piercing it through and through. This was called “killing the god Huitzilopochtli so that his body might be eaten.” One of the priests cut out the heart of the image and gave it to the king to eat. The rest of [pg 091] the image was divided into minute pieces, of which every man great and small, down to the male children in the cradle, received one to eat. But no woman might taste a morsel. The ceremony was called *teoqualo*, that is, “god is eaten.”²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (London, 1875-1876), iii. 297-300 (after Torquemada); F. S. Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, translated by Ch. Cullen (London, 1807), i. 309 *sqq.*; B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, traduite et annotée par D. Jourdanet et R. Siméon (Paris, 1880), pp. 203 *sq.*; J. G. Müller, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Urreligionen* (Bâle, 1867), p. 605; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859), iii. 531-534.

Mexican custom of eating images of dough

At another festival the Mexicans made little images like men, which stood for the cloud-capped mountains. These images were moulded of a paste of various seeds and were dressed in paper ornaments. Some people fashioned five, others ten, others as many as fifteen of them. Having been made, they were placed in the oratory of each house and worshipped. Four times in the course of the night offerings of food were brought to them in tiny vessels; and people sang and played the flute before them through all the hours of darkness. At break of day the priests stabbed the images with a weaver's instrument, cut off their heads, and tore out their hearts, which they presented to the master of the house on a green saucer. The bodies of the images were then eaten by all the family, especially by the servants, "in order that by eating them they might be preserved from certain distempers, to which those persons who were negligent of worship to those deities conceived themselves to be subject."²⁴⁷ In some cities of Mexico, as in Tlacopan and Coyohuacan, an idol was fashioned out of grains of various kinds, and the warriors ate it in the belief

²⁴⁷ F. S. Clavigero, *op. cit.* i. 311; B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 74, 156 *sq.*; J. G. Müller, *op. cit.* p. 606; H. H. Bancroft, *op. cit.* iii. 316; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 535. This festival took place on the last day of 16th month (which extended from 23rd December to 11th January). At another festival the Mexicans made the semblance of a bone out of paste and ate it sacramentally as the bone of the god. See Sahagun, *op. cit.* p. 33.

that the sacred food would increase their forces fourfold when they marched to the fight.²⁴⁸ At certain festivals held thrice a year in Nicaragua all the men, beginning with the priests and chiefs, drew blood from their tongues and genital organs with sharp knives of flint, allowed it to drip on some [pg 092] sheaves of maize, and then ate the bloody grain as a blessed food.²⁴⁹

Mexican custom of eating a man as a human embodiment of the god Tetzcatlipoca

But the Mexicans did not always content themselves with eating their gods in the outward and visible shape of bread or grain; it was not even enough that this material vehicle of the divine life should be kneaded and fortified with human blood. They craved, as it seems, after a closer union with the living god, and attained it by devouring the flesh of a real man, who, after he had paraded for a time in the trappings and received the honours of a god, was slaughtered and eaten by his cannibal worshippers. The deity thus consumed in effigy was Tetzcatlipoca, and the man chosen to represent him and die in his stead was a young captive of handsome person and illustrious birth. During his captivity the youth thus doomed to play the fatal part of divinity

²⁴⁸ Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 539.

²⁴⁹ G. F. de Oviedo, *Histoire du Nicaragua* (Paris, 1840), p. 219. Oviedo's account is borrowed by A. de Herrera (*General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, translated by Capt. John Stevens, iii. 301).

was allowed to range the streets of Mexico freely, escorted by a distinguished train, who paid him as much respect as if he had been indeed the god himself instead of only his living image. Twenty days before the festival at which the tragic mockery was to end, that he might taste all the joys of this transient world to which he must soon bid farewell, he received in marriage four women, from whom he parted only when he took his place in the last solemn procession. Arrived at the foot of the sacred pyramid on the top of which he was to die, the sacrificers saluted him and led him up the long staircase. On the summit five of them seized him and held him down on his back upon the sacrificial stone, while the high priest, after bowing to the god he was about to kill, cut open his breast and tore out the throbbing heart with the accustomed rites. But instead of being kicked down the staircase and sent rolling from step to step like the corpses of common victims, the body of the dead god was carried respectfully down, and his flesh, chopped up small, was distributed among the priests and nobles as a blessed food. The head, being severed from the trunk, was preserved in a sacred place along with the [pg 093] white and grinning skulls of all the other victims who had lived and died in the character of the god Tetzcatlipoca.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ J. de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14, vol. ii. pp. 259 *sqq.* (Madrid, 1723); Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 510-512.

Communion with a god by eating of his effigy among the Huichol Indians of Mexico and the Malas of Southern India. Catholic custom of eating effigies of the Madonna

The custom of entering into communion with a god by eating of his effigy survived till lately among the Huichol Indians of Mexico. In a narrow valley, at the foot of a beetling crag of red rock, they have a small thatched temple of the God of fire, and here down to recent years stood a small image of the deity in human form roughly carved out of solidified volcanic ash. The idol was very dirty and smeared with blood, and in his right side was a hole, which owed its existence to the piety and devotion of his worshippers. For they believed that the power of healing and a knowledge of mysteries could be acquired by eating a little of the god's holy body, and accordingly shamans, or medicine-men, who desired to lay in a stock of these accomplishments, so useful in the exercise of their profession, were wont to repair to the temple, where, having deposited an offering of food or a votive bowl, they scraped off with their finger-nails some particles of the god's body and swallowed them. After engaging in this form of communion with the deity they had to abstain from salt and from all carnal converse with their wives for five

months.²⁵¹ Again, the Malas, a caste of pariahs in Southern India, communicate with the goddess Sunkalamma by eating her effigy. The communion takes place at marriage. An image of the goddess in the form of a truncated cone is made out of rice and green grain cooked together, and it is decorated with a nose jewel, garlands, and other religious symbols. Offerings of rice, frankincense, camphor, and a coco-nut are then made to the image, and a ram or he-goat is sacrificed. After the sacrifice has been presented, all the persons assembled prostrate themselves in silence before the image, then they break it in pieces, and distributing the pieces among themselves they swallow them. In this way they are, no doubt, believed to absorb the divine [pg 094] essence of the goddess whose broken body has just passed into their stomachs.²⁵² In Europe the Catholic Church has resorted to similar means for enabling the pious to enjoy the ineffable privilege of eating the persons of the Infant God and his Mother. For this purpose images of the Madonna are printed on some soluble and harmless substance and sold in sheets like postage stamps. The worshipper buys as many of these sacred emblems as he has occasion for, and affixing one or more of them to his food swallows the bolus. The practice is not confined to the poor

²⁵¹ C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), ii. 166-171. When Mr. Lumholtz revisited the temple in 1898, the idol had disappeared. It has probably been since replaced by another. The custom of abstaining both from salt and from women as a mode of ceremonial purification is common among savage and barbarous peoples. See above, p. [75](#) (as to the Yuchi Indians), and *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 224 *sqq.*

²⁵² E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), iv. 357 *sq.*

and ignorant. In his youth Count von Hoensbroech and his devout mother used thus to consume portions of God and his Mother with their meals.²⁵³

²⁵³ Graf Paul von Hoensbroech, *14 Jahre Jesuit* (Leipsic, 1909-1910), i. 25 *sq.* The practice was officially sanctioned by a decree of the Inquisition, 29th July 1903.

§ 3. Many Manii at Aricia

Loaves called *Maniae* baked at Aricia. Woollen effigies dedicated at Rome to Mania, the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, at the Compitalia. The loaves at Aricia perhaps sacramental bread made in the likeness of the King of the Wood. Practice of putting up dummies to divert the attention of ghosts or demons from living people

We are now able to suggest an explanation of the proverb “There are many Manii at Aricia.”²⁵⁴ Certain loaves made in the shape of men were called by the Romans *maniae*, and it appears that this kind of loaf was especially made at Aricia.²⁵⁵ Now, Mania, the name of one of these loaves, was also the name of the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts,²⁵⁶ to whom woollen effigies of men and women were dedicated at the festival of the Compitalia. These effigies were hung at the doors of all the

²⁵⁴ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 22.

²⁵⁵ Festus, ed. C. O. Müller, pp. 128, 129, 145. The reading of the last passage is, however, uncertain (“*et Ariciae genus panni fieri; quod manici † appelletur*”).

²⁵⁶ Varro, *De lingua latina*, ix. 61; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, iii. 41; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 7. 35; Festus, p. 128, ed. C. O. Müller. Festus speaks of the mother or grandmother of the *larvae*; the other writers speak of the mother of the *lares*.

houses in Rome; one effigy was hung up for every free person in the house, and one effigy, of a different kind, for every slave. The reason was that on this day the ghosts of the dead were believed to be going about, and it was hoped that, either out of good nature or through simple inadvertence, they would carry off the effigies at the door instead of the living people [pg 095] in the house. According to tradition, these woollen figures were substitutes for a former custom of sacrificing human beings.²⁵⁷ Upon data so fragmentary and uncertain, it is impossible to build with confidence; but it seems worth suggesting that the loaves in human form, which appear to have been baked at Aricia, were sacramental bread, and that in the old days, when the divine King of the Wood was annually slain, loaves were made in his image, like the paste figures of the gods in Mexico, India, and Europe, and were eaten sacramentally by his worshippers.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Macrobius, *l. c.*; Festus, pp. 121, 239, ed. C. O. Müller. The effigies hung up for the slaves were called *pilae*, not *maniae*. *Pilae* was also the name given to the straw-men which were thrown to the bulls to gore in the arena. See Martial, *Epigr.* ii. 43. 5 sq.; Asconius, *In Cornel.* p. 55, ed. Kiessling and Schoell.

²⁵⁸ The ancients were at least familiar with the practice of sacrificing images made of dough or other materials as substitutes for the animals themselves. It was a recognised principle that when an animal could not be easily obtained for sacrifice, it was lawful to offer an image of it made of bread or wax. See Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 116; compare Pausanias, x. 18. 5. Poor people who could not afford to sacrifice real animals offered dough images of them (Suidas, *s. v.* βοῦς ἔβδομος; compare Hesychius, *s. vv.* βοῦς, ἔβδομος βοῦς). Hence bakers made a regular business of baking cakes in the likeness of all the animals which were sacrificed to the gods (Proculus, quoted and emended by Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 1079). When Cyzicus was besieged by Mithridates and the people could not procure a black cow to sacrifice at the rites of

The Mexican sacraments in honour of Huitzilopochtli were also accompanied by the sacrifice of human victims. The tradition that the founder of the sacred grove at Aricia was a man named Manius, from whom many Manii were descended, would thus be an etymological myth invented to [pg 096] explain the name *maniae* as applied to these sacramental loaves. A dim recollection of the original connexion of the loaves with human sacrifices may perhaps be traced in the story that the effigies dedicated to Mania at the Compitalia were substitutes for human victims. The story itself, however, is probably devoid of foundation, since the practice of putting up dummies to divert the attention of ghosts or demons from living people is not uncommon. As the practice is both widely spread and very characteristic of the manner of thought of primitive man, who

Persephone, they made a cow of dough and placed it at the altar (Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 10). In a Boeotian sacrifice to Hercules, in place of the ram which was the proper victim, an apple was regularly substituted, four chips being stuck in it to represent legs and two to represent horns (Julius Pollux, i. 30 *sq.*). The Athenians are said to have once offered to Hercules a similar substitute for an ox (Zenobius, *Cent.* v. 22). And the Locrians, being at a loss for an ox to sacrifice, made one out of figs and sticks, and offered it instead of the animal (Zenobius, *Cent.* v. 5). At the Athenian festival of the Diasia cakes shaped like animals were sacrificed (Schol. on Thucydides, i. 126, p. 36, ed. Didot). We have seen above (p. 25) that the poorer Egyptians offered cakes of dough instead of pigs. The Cheremiss of Russia sometimes offer cakes in the shape of horses instead of the real animals. See P. v. Stenin, "Ein neuer Beitrag zur Ethnographie der Tscheremissen," *Globus*, lviii. (1890) pp. 203 *sq.* Similarly a North-American Indian dreamed that a sacrifice of twenty elans was necessary for the recovery of a sick girl; but the elans could not be procured, and the girl's parents were allowed to sacrifice twenty loaves instead. See *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 11 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

tries in a thousand ways to outwit the malice of spiritual beings, I may be pardoned for devoting a few pages to its illustration, even though in doing so I diverge somewhat from the strict line of argument. I would ask the reader to observe that the vicarious use of images, with which we are here concerned, differs wholly in principle from the sympathetic use of them which we examined before,²⁵⁹ and that while the sympathetic use belongs purely to magic, the vicarious use falls within the domain of religion.

Tibetan custom of putting effigies at the doors of houses to deceive demons

The Tibetans stand in fear of innumerable earth-demons, all of whom are under the authority of Old Mother Khön-ma. This goddess, who may be compared to the Roman Mania, the Mother or Grandmother of Ghosts, is dressed in golden-yellow robes, holds a golden noose in her hand, and rides on a ram. In order to bar the dwelling-house against the foul fiends, of whom Old Mother Khön-ma is mistress, an elaborate structure somewhat resembling a chandelier is fixed above the door on the outside of the house. It contains a ram's skull, a variety of precious objects such as gold-leaf, silver, and turquoise, also some dry food, such as rice, wheat, and pulse, and finally images or pictures of a man, a woman, and a house. "The object of these figures of a

²⁵⁹ See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 55 sqq.

man, wife, and house is to deceive the demons should they still come in spite of this offering, and to mislead them into the belief that the foregoing pictures are the inmates of the house, so that they may wreak their wrath on these bits of wood and so save the real human occupants.” When all is ready, a priest prays to Old Mother Khön-ma that she would be pleased to accept these dainty offerings and to close the open [pg 097] doors of the earth, in order that the demons may not come forth to infest and injure the household.²⁶⁰

Effigies buried with the dead in order to deceive their ghosts

Further, it is often supposed that the spirits of persons who have recently departed this life are apt to carry off with them to the world of the dead the souls of their surviving relations. Hence the savage resorts to the device of making up of dummies or effigies which he puts in the way of the ghost, hoping that the dull-witted spirit will mistake them for real people and so leave the survivors in peace. Hence in Tahiti the priest who performed the funeral rites used to lay some slips of plantain leaf-stalk on the breast and under the arms of the corpse, saying, “There are your family, there is your child, there is your wife, there is your father, and there is your mother. Be satisfied yonder (that is,

²⁶⁰ L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet* (London, 1895), pp. 484-486.

in the world of spirits). Look not towards those who are left in the world.” This ceremony, we are told, was designed “to impart contentment to the departed, and to prevent the spirit from repairing to the places of his former resort, and so distressing the survivors.”²⁶¹ When the Galelareese bury a corpse, they bury with it the stem of a banana-tree for company, in order that the dead person may not seek a companion among the living. Just as the coffin is being lowered into the earth, one of the bystanders steps up and throws a young banana-tree into the grave, saying, “Friend, you must miss your companions of this earth; here, take this as a comrade.”²⁶² In the Banks Islands, Melanesia, the ghost of a woman who has died in childbed cannot go away to Panoi or ghost-land if her child lives, for she cannot leave the baby behind. Hence to bilk her ghost they tie up a piece of banana-trunk loosely in leaves and lay it on her bosom in the grave. So away she goes, thinking she has her baby with her, and as she goes the banana-stalk keeps slipping about in the leaves, and she fancies it is the child stirring at her breast. Thus she is happy, till she comes to ghost-land and finds she has been deceived; for a baby of banana-stalk cannot pass [pg 098] muster among the ghosts. So back she comes tearing in grief and rage to look for the child; but meantime the infant has been artfully removed to

²⁶¹ W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1832-1836), i. 402.

²⁶² M. J. van Baarda, “Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1895) p. 539.

another house, where the dead mother cannot find it, though she looks for it everywhere.²⁶³ In the Pelew Islands, when a woman has died in childbed, her spirit comes and cries, "Give me the child!" So to beguile her they bury the stem of a young banana-tree with her body, cutting it short and laying it between her right arm and her breast.²⁶⁴ The same device is adopted for the same purpose in the island of Timor.²⁶⁵ In like circumstances negroes of the Niger Delta force a piece of the stem of a plantain into the womb of the dead mother, in order to make her think that she has her babe with her and so to prevent her spirit from coming back to claim the living child.²⁶⁶ Among the Yorubas of West Africa, when one of twins dies, the mother carries about, along with the surviving child, a small wooden figure roughly fashioned in human shape and of the sex of the dead twin. This figure is intended not merely to keep the live child from pining for its lost comrade, but also to give the spirit of the dead child something into which it can enter without disturbing its little brother or sister.²⁶⁷ Among the Tschwi of West Africa a lady observed a

²⁶³ Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 275.

²⁶⁴ J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), i. 9.

²⁶⁵ W. M. Donselaar, "Aanteekeningen over het eiland Saleijer," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, i. (1857) p. 290.

²⁶⁶ Le Comte C. N. de Cardi, "Ju-ju laws and customs in the Niger Delta," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. (1899) p. 58.

²⁶⁷ A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1894), p. 80.

sickly child with an image beside it which she took for a doll. But it was no doll, it was an effigy of the child's dead twin which was being kept near the survivor as a habitation for the little ghost, lest it should wander homeless and, feeling lonely, call its companion away after it along the dark road of death.²⁶⁸

Fictitious burials to divert the attention of demons from the real burials

At Onitsha, a town on the left bank of the Niger, a missionary once met a funeral procession which he describes as very singular. The real body had already been buried in the house, but a piece of wood in the form of a [pg 099] sofa and covered up was being borne by two persons on their heads, attended by a procession of six men and six women. The men carried cutlasses and the women clapped their hands as they passed along each street, crying, "This is the dead body of him that is dead, and is gone into the world of spirits." Meantime the rest of the villagers had to keep indoors.²⁶⁹ The sham corpse was probably intended as a lure to draw away prowling demons from the real body. So among the Angoni, who inhabit the western bank of Lake Nyassa, there is a common belief that demons hover about the dying and dead before burial in order to snatch away their

²⁶⁸ Miss Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 473.

²⁶⁹ S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger* (London, 1859), pp. 250 sq.

souls to join their own evil order. Guns are fired and drums are beaten to repel these spiritual foes, but a surer way of baulking their machinations is to have a mock funeral and so mislead and confound them. A sham corpse is made up out of anything that comes to hand, and it is treated exactly as if it were what it pretends to be. This lay figure is then carried some distance to a grave, followed by a great crowd weeping and wailing as if their hearts would break, while the rub-a-dub of drums and the discharge of guns add to the uproar. Meantime the real corpse is being interred as quietly and stealthily as possible near the house. Thus the demons are baffled; for when the dummy corpse has been laid in the earth with every mark of respect, and the noisy crowd has dispersed, the fiends swoop down on the mock grave only to find a bundle of rushes or some such trash in it; but the true grave they do not know and cannot find.²⁷⁰ Similarly among the Bakundu of the Cameroons two graves are always made, one in the hut of the deceased and another somewhere else, and no one knows where the corpse is really buried. The custom is apparently intended to guard the knowledge of the real grave from demons, who might make an ill use of the body, if not of the soul, of the departed.²⁷¹ In like manner the Kamilaroi tribe of Australia are reported to make two graves, a real [pg 100] one

²⁷⁰ J. Macdonald, "East Central African Customs," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxii. (1893) pp. 114 sq.; *id.*, *Myth and Religion* (London, 1893), pp. 155 sq. (from MS. notes of Dr. Elmslie).

²⁷¹ B. Schwarz, *Kamerun* (Leipsic, 1886), pp. 256 sq.; E. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, xiii. 68 sq.

and an empty one, for the purpose of cheating a malevolent spirit called Krooben.²⁷² So, too, some of the Nagas of Assam dig two graves, a sham grave made conspicuous on purpose to attract the notice of the evil spirits, and the real grave made inconspicuous to escape their attention: a figure is set up over the false grave.²⁷³ Isis is said to have made many false graves of the dead Osiris in Egypt in order that his foe Typhon might not be able to find the true one.²⁷⁴ In Bombay, if a person dies on an unlucky day, a dough figure of a man is carried on the bier with him and burnt with his corpse. This is supposed to hinder a second death from occurring in the family,²⁷⁵ probably because the demons are thought to take the dough figure instead of a real person.

Effigies used to cure or prevent sickness by deluding the demons of disease or inducing them to accept the effigies instead of the persons

Again, effigies are often employed as a means of preventing or curing sickness; the demons of disease either mistake the

²⁷² J. Fraser, "The Aborigines of New South Wales," *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, xvi. (1882) p. 229; A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), p. 467.

²⁷³ This I learned from Dr. Burton Brown (formerly of 3 Via Venti Setembri, Rome), who lived for some time among the Nagas.

²⁷⁴ Strabo, xvii. 1. 23, p. 803; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18.

²⁷⁵ *Panjab Notes and Queries*, ii. p. 39, § 240 (December 1884).

effigies for living people or are persuaded or compelled to enter them, leaving the real men and women well and whole.²⁷⁶ Thus the Alfoors of Minahassa, in Celebes, will sometimes transport a sick man to another house, while they leave on his bed a dummy made up of a pillow and clothes. This dummy the demon is supposed to mistake for the sick man, who consequently recovers.²⁷⁷ Cure or prevention of this sort seems to find especial favour with the Dyaks of Borneo. Thus, when an epidemic is raging among them, the Dyaks of the Katoengouw river set up wooden images at their doors in the hope that the demons of the plague may be deluded into carrying off the effigies instead of the people.²⁷⁸ Among the Oloh Ngadju of Borneo, when a sick man is supposed to be suffering from the assaults of a ghost, puppets of dough or rice-meal are made and thrown under [pg 101] the house as substitutes for the patient, who thus rids himself of the ghost. So if a man has been attacked by a crocodile and has contrived to escape, he makes a puppet of dough or meal and casts it into the water as a vicarious offering; otherwise the water-god, who is conceived in the shape of a crocodile, might be angry.²⁷⁹ In certain of the western districts of Borneo

²⁷⁶ Some examples of this vicarious use of images as substitutes for the sick have been given in an earlier part of this work. See *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 62 sq.

²⁷⁷ N. Graafland, *De Minahassa*, (Rotterdam, 1869), i. 326.

²⁷⁸ P. J. Veth, *Borneo's Wester-Afdeeling* (Zaltbommel, 1854-56), ii. 309.

²⁷⁹ F. Grabowsky, "Ueber verschiedene weniger bekannte Opfer bei den Oloh Ngadju in Borneo," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, i. (1888) pp. 132 sq.

if a man is taken suddenly and violently sick, the physician, who in this part of the world is generally an old woman, fashions a wooden image and brings it seven times into contact with the sufferer's head, while she says: "This image serves to take the place of the sick man; sickness, pass over into the image." Then, with some rice, salt, and tobacco in a little basket, the substitute is carried to the spot where the evil spirit is supposed to have entered into the man. There it is set upright on the ground, after the physician has invoked the spirit as follows: "O devil, here is an image which stands instead of the sick man. Release the soul of the sick man and plague the image, for it is indeed prettier and better than he." Similar substitutes are used almost daily by these Dyaks for the purpose of drawing off evil influences from anybody's person. Thus, when an Ot Danom baby will not stop squalling, its maternal grandmother takes a large leaf, fashions it into a puppet to represent the child, and presses it against the infant's body. Having thus decanted the spirit, so to speak, from the baby into the puppet, she pierces the effigy with little arrows from a blow-gun, thereby killing the spirit that had vexed her child.²⁸⁰ Similarly in the island of Dama, between New Guinea and Celebes, where sickness is ascribed to the agency of demons, the doctor makes a doll of palm-leaf and lays it, together with some betel, rice, and half of an empty

²⁸⁰ E. L. M. Kühr, "Schetsen uit Borneo's Westerafdeeling," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlvii. (1897) pp. 60 sq. For another mode in which these same Dyaks seek to heal sickness by means of an image, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 55 sq.

eggshell, on the patient's head. Lured by this bait the demon quits the sufferer's body and enters the palm-leaf doll, which the wily doctor thereupon promptly decapitates. This may [pg 102] reasonably be supposed to make an end of the demon and of the sickness together.²⁸¹ A Dyak sorcerer, being called in to prescribe for a little boy who suffered from a disorder of the stomach, constructed two effigies of the boy and his mother out of bundles of clothes and offered them, together with some of the parents' finery, to the devil who was plaguing the child; it was hoped that the demon would take the effigies and leave the boy.²⁸² Batta magicians can conjure the demon of disease out of the patient's body into an image made out of a banana-tree with a human face and wrapt up in magic herbs; the image is then hurriedly removed and thrown away or buried beyond the boundaries of the village.²⁸³ Sometimes the image, dressed as a man or a woman according to the sex of the patient, is deposited at a cross-road or other thoroughfare, in the hope that some passer-by, seeing it, may start and cry out, "Ah! So-and-So is dead"; for such an exclamation is supposed to delude the demon of disease into a belief that he has accomplished his fell purpose,

²⁸¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), p. 465.

²⁸² H. Ling Roth, "Low's Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) p. 117.

²⁸³ B. Hagen, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Battareligion," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxviii. (1883) p. 531.

so he takes himself off and leaves the sufferer to get well.²⁸⁴ The Mai Darat, a Sakai tribe of the Malay Peninsula, attribute all kinds of diseases to the agency of spirits which they call *nyani*; fortunately, however, the magician can induce these maleficent beings to come out of the sick person and take up their abode in rude figures of grass, which are hung up outside the houses in little bell-shaped shrines decorated with peeled sticks.²⁸⁵

Effigies used to divert the attention of demons in Nias and various parts of Asia

In the island of Nias people fear that the spirits of murdered infants may come and cause women with child to miscarry. To divert the unwelcome attention of these sprites from a pregnant woman an elaborate mechanism has been contrived. A potent idol called Fangola is set up beside her bed to guard her slumbers during the hours of darkness from [pg 103] the evil things that might harm her; another idol, connected with the first by a chain of palm-leaves, is erected in the large room of the house; and lastly a small banana-tree is planted in front of the second idol. The notion is that the sprites, scared away by the watchful Fangola from the sleeping woman, will scramble along the chain

²⁸⁴ M. Joustra, "Het leven, de zeden en gewoonten der Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlv. (1902) pp. 413 sq.

²⁸⁵ N. Annandale and H. C. Robinson, "Some Preliminary Results of an Expedition to the Malay Peninsula," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 416.

of palm-leaves to the other idol, and then, beholding the banana-tree, will mistake it for the woman they were looking for, and so pounce upon it instead of her.²⁸⁶ In Bhutan, when the Lamas make noisy music to drive away the demon who is causing disease, little models of animals are fashioned of flour and butter and the evil spirit is implored to enter these models, which are then burnt.²⁸⁷ So in Tibet, when a man is very ill and all other remedies have failed, his friends will sometimes, as a last resort, offer an image of him with some of his clothes to the Lord of Death, beseeching that august personage to accept the image and spare the man.²⁸⁸ A Burmese mode of curing a sick man is to bury a small effigy of him in a tiny coffin, after which he ought certainly to recover.²⁸⁹ In Siam, when a person is dangerously ill, the magician models a small image of him in clay and carrying it away to a solitary place recites charms over it which compel the malady to pass from the sick man into the image. The sorcerer then buries the image, and the sufferer is made whole.²⁹⁰ So, too, in Cambodia the doctor fashions a rude effigy of his patient in clay and deposits it in some lonely spot, where the ghost or

²⁸⁶ Fr. Kramer, "Der Götzendienst der Niasser," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890) p. 489.

²⁸⁷ A. Bastian, *Die Völkerstämme am Brahmaputra* (Berlin, 1883), p. 73.

²⁸⁸ Sarat Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (London, 1902), p. 134.

²⁸⁹ Shway Yoe, *The Burman* (London, 1882), ii. 138.

²⁹⁰ Pallegoix, *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam* (Paris, 1854), ii. 48 sq. Compare A. Bastian, *Die Völker des östlichen Asien* (Leipsic and Jena, 1866-1871), iii. 293, 486; E. Young, *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe* (Westminster, 1898), p. 121.

demon takes it instead of the man.²⁹¹ The same ideas and the same practices prevail much further to the north among the tribes on the lower course of the River Amoor. When a Goldi or a Gilyak shaman has cast out the devil that caused disease, an abode has to be provided for the homeless devil, and this is done by making [pg 104] a wooden idol in human form of which the ejected demon takes possession.²⁹²

Effigies used to divert ghostly and other evil influence from people in China

The Chinese of Amoy make great use of cheap effigies as means of diverting ghostly and other evil influence from people. These effigies are kept in stock and sold in the shops which purvey counterfeit paper money and other spurious wares for the use of simple-minded ghosts and gods, who accept them in all good faith instead of the genuine articles. Nothing could well be cruder than the puppets that are employed to relieve sufferers from the many ills which flesh is heir to. They are composed of two bamboo splinters fastened together crosswise with a piece of paper pasted on one side to represent a human body. Two other shreds of paper, supposed to stand for boots, distinguish the effigy of a man from the effigy of a woman. Armed with one

²⁹¹ J. Moura, *Le Royaume du Cambodge* (Paris, 1883), i. 176.

²⁹² A. Woldt, "Die Kultus-Gegenstände der Golden und Giljaken," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, i. (1888) pp. 102 *sq.*

of these “substitutes for a person,” as they are called, you may set fortune at defiance. If a member of your family, for example, is ailing, or has suffered any evil whatever, or even is merely threatened by misfortune, all that you have to do is to send for one of these puppets, pass it all over his body while you recite an appropriate spell, and then burn the puppet. The maleficent influence is thus elicited from the person of the sufferer and destroyed once for all. If your child has tumbled into one of those open sewers which yawn for the unwary in the streets, you need only fish him out, pass the puppet over his filthy little body, and say: “This contact (of the substitute) with the front of the body brings purity and prosperity, and the contact with the back gives power to eat till an old, old, old age; the contact with the left side establishes well-being for years and years, and the contact with the right side bestows longevity; happy fate, come! ill fate, be transferred to the substitute!” So saying you burn the substitute, by choice near the unsavoury spot where the accident happened; and if you are a careful man you will fetch a pail of water and wash the ashes away. Moreover, the child's head should be shaven quite clean; but if the sufferer was an adult, it is enough to lay bare with the razor [pg 105] a small patch on his scalp to let out the evil influence.²⁹³

²⁹³ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, vi. (Leyden, 1910) pp. 1103 *sq.*; for a description of the effigies or “substitutes for a person” see *id.*, vol. v. (Leyden, 1907) p. 920. Can the monkish and clerical tonsure have been originally designed in like manner to let out the evil influence through the top of the head?

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