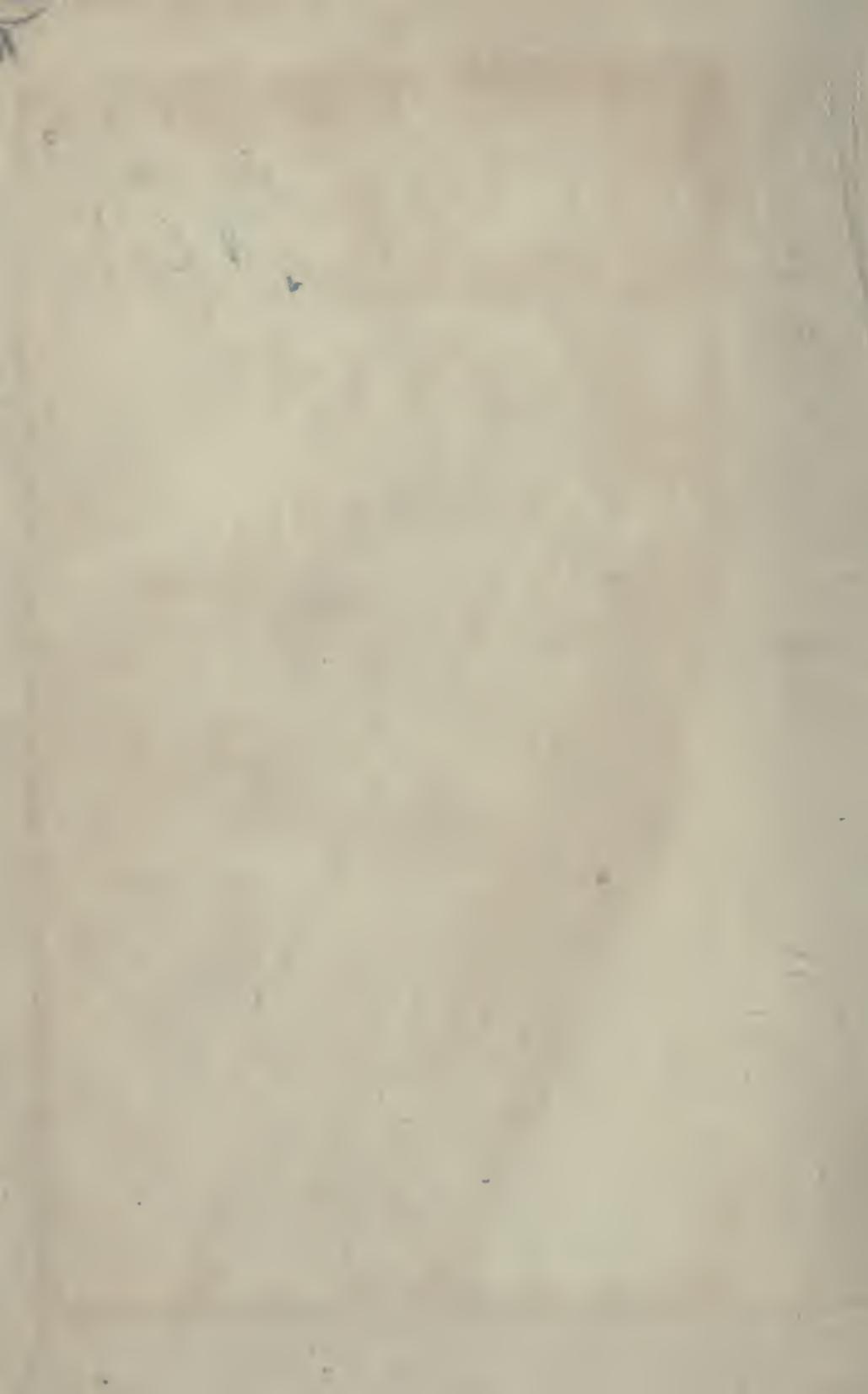


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MYTHS AND DREAMS



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# MYTHS AND DREAMS

BY

EDWARD CLODD

AUTHOR OF

'THE CHILDHOOD OF THE WORLD,' 'THE STORY OF CREATION,' ETC.



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TO  
RICHARD A. PROCTOR, B.A.,

AUTHOR OF 'THE SUN,' 'OTHER WORLDS,' ETC.,  
EDITOR OF 'KNOWLEDGE.'

MY DEAR PROCTOR—The best gifts of life are its friendships, and to you, with whom friendship has ripened into fellowship, and under whose editorial wing some of the chapters of this book had temporary shelter, I inscribe them in their enlarged and independent form.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD CLODD.



## P R E F A C E.

THE object of this book is to present in compendious form the evidence which myths and dreams supply as to primitive man's interpretation of his own nature and of the external world, and more especially to indicate how such evidence carries within itself the history of the origin and growth of beliefs in the supernatural.

The examples are selected chiefly from barbaric races, as furnishing the nearest correspondences to the working of the mind in what may be called its "eocene" stage, but examples are also cited from civilised races, as witnessing to that continuity of ideas which is obscured by familiarity or ignored by prejudice.

Had more illustrations been drawn from sources alike prolific, the evidence would have been swollen to undue dimensions without increasing its significance; as it is, repetition has been found needful here and there, under the difficulty of entirely de-

taching the arguments advanced in the two parts of this work.

Man's development, physical and psychical, has been fully treated by Mr. Herbert Spencer, Dr. Tylor, and other authorities, to whom students of the subject are permanent debtors, but that subject is so many-sided, so far-reaching, whether in retrospect or prospect, that its subdivision is of advantage so long as we do not permit our sense of interrelation to be dulled thereby.

My own line of argument will be found to run for the most part parallel with that of the above-named writers ; there are divergences along the route, but we reach a common terminus.

The footnotes indicate the principal works which have been consulted in preparing this book, but I desire to express my special thanks to Mr. Andrew Lang for his kindness in reading the proofs, and for suggestions which, in the main, I have been glad to adopt.

E. C.

ROSEMONT, TUFNELL PARK,  
LONDON, *March* 1885.

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I.

MYTH:

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ITS BIRTH AND GROWTH.

“UNCHECKED by external truth, the mind of man has a fatal facility for ensnaring, entrapping, and entangling itself. But, happily, happily for the human race, some fragment of physical speculation has been built into every false system. Here is the weak point. Its inevitable destruction leaves a breach in the whole fabric, and through that breach the armies of truth march in.”

Sir H. S. MAINE.

# MYTH:

## ITS BIRTH AND GROWTH.

### § I.

#### ITS PRIMITIVE MEANING.

IT is barely thirty years ago since the world was startled by the publication of Buckle's *History of Civilisation*, with its theory that human actions are the effect of causes as fixed and regular as those which operate in the universe; climate, soil, food, and scenery being the chief conditions determining progress.

That book was a *tour de force*, not a lasting contribution to the question of man's mental development. The publication of Darwin's epoch-making *Origin of Species*<sup>1</sup> showed wherein it fell short; how the importance of the above-named causes was exaggerated and the existence of equally potent causes overlooked. Buckle probably had not read Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, and he knew nothing of the profound revolution in silent preparation in the quiet of Darwin's home; otherwise, his book must

<sup>1</sup> Buckle's work appeared in 1857, Darwin's in 1859.

have been rewritten. This would have averted the oblivion from which not even its charm of style can rescue it. Its brilliant but defective theories are obscured in the fuller light of that doctrine of descent with modifications by which we learn that external circumstances do not alone account for the widely divergent types of men, so that a superior race, in supplanting an inferior one, will change the face and destiny of a country, "making the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose." Darwin has given us the clue to those subtle and still obscure causes which bring about, stage by stage, the unseen adaptations to requirements varying a type and securing its survival, and which have resulted in the evolution of the manifold species of living things. The notion of a constant relation between man and his surroundings is therefore untenable.

But incomplete as is Buckle's theory, and all-embracing as is Darwin's, so far as organic life is concerned, the larger issue is raised by both, and for most men whose judgment is worth anything it is settled. Either man is a part of nature or he is not. If he is not, there is an end of the matter, since the materials lie beyond human grasp, and cannot be examined and placed in order for comparative study. Let Christian, Brahman, Bushman, and South Sea Islander each hold fast his "form of sound words" about man's origin. One is as good as another where all are irrational and beyond proof. But if he is, then the inquiry concerning him may

not stop at the anatomy of his body and the assignment of his place in the succession of life on the globe. His relation, materially, to the simplest, shapeless specks of living matter ; structurally, to the highest and more complex organisms, is demonstrated ; the natural history of him is clear. This, however, is physical, and for us the larger question is psychical. The theory of evolution must embrace the genesis and development of mind, and therefore of ideas, beliefs, and speculations about things seen and unseen.

In the correction of our old definitions a wider meaning must be given to the word *myth* than that commonly found in the dictionaries. Opening any of these at random we find myth explained as fable, as something designedly fictitious, whether for amusement only, or to point a moral. The larger meaning which it holds to-day includes much more than this—to wit, the whole area of intellectual products which lie beyond the historic horizon and overlap it, effacing on nearer view the lines of separation. For the myth, as fable only, has no place for the crude fancies and grotesque imaginings of barbarous races of the present day, and of races at low levels of culture in the remote past. And so long as it was looked upon as the vagrant of fancy, with no serious meaning at the heart of it, and as corresponding to no yearning of man after the truth of things, sober treatment of it was impossible. But now that myth, with its prolific offspring, legend and tradition, is seen to be a necessary travelling through

which the mind of man passed in its slow progress towards certitude, the study and comparison of its manifold, yet, at the centre, allied forms, and of the conditions out of which they arose, takes rank among the serious inquiries of our time.

Not that the inquiry is a new one. The limits of this book forbid detailed references to the successive stages of that inquiry—in other words, to the pre-Christian, patristic, and pseudo-scientific theories of myth which remained unchallenged, or varied only in non-essential features, till the rise of comparative mythology. But apology for such omission here is the less needful, since the list of ancient and modern vagaries would have the monotony of a catalogue. However unlike on the surface, they are fundamentally the same, being the products of non-critical ages, and one and all vitiated by assumptions concerning gods and men which are to us as “old wives’ fables.”

In short, between these empirical theories and the scientific method of inquiry into the meaning of myth there can be no relation. Because, for the assigning of its due place in the order of man’s mental and spiritual development to myth, there is needed that knowledge concerning his origin, concerning the conditions out of which he has emerged, and concerning the mythologies of lower races and their survival in unsuspected forms in the higher races, which was not only beyond reach, but also beyond conception, until this century.

Except, therefore, as curiosities of literature, we

may dismiss the Lemprière of our school-days, and with him "Causabon"-Bryant and his symbolism of the ark and traces of the Flood in everything. Their keys, Arkite and Ophite, fit no lock, and with them we must, in all respect be it added, dismiss Mr. Gladstone, with his visions of the Messiah in Apollo, and of the Logos in Athênê.

The main design of this book is to show that in what is for convenience called *myth* lie the germs of philosophy, theology, and science, the beginnings of all knowledge that man has attained or ever will attain, and therefore that in myth we have his serious endeavour to interpret the meaning of his surroundings and of his own actions and feelings. In its unbroken sequence we have the explanation of his most cherished and now, for the most part, discredited beliefs, the persistence of which makes it essential and instructive not to deal with the primitive myth apart from its later and more complex phases. Myth was the product of man's emotion and imagination, acted upon by his surroundings, and it carries the traces of its origin in its more developed forms, as the ancestral history of the higher organisms is embodied in their embryos. Man wondered before he reasoned. Awe and fear are quick to express themselves in rudimentary worship; hence the myth was at the outset a theology, and the gradations from personifying to deifying are too faint to be traced. Thus blended, the one as inevitable outcome of the other, they cannot well be treated separately, as if the myth were earth-born and the theology

heaven-sent. And to treat them as one is to invade no province of religion, which is quite other than speculation about gods. The awe and reverence which the fathomless mystery of the universe awakens, which steal within us unbidden as the morning light, and unbroken on the prism of analysis ; the conviction, deepening as we peer, that there is a Power beyond humanity, and upon which humanity depends ; the feeling that life is in harmony with the Divine order when it moves in disinterested service of our kind—these theology can neither create nor destroy, neither verify nor disprove. They can be bound within no formula that man or church has invented, but undefined

“ Are yet the fountain life of all our day,  
Are yet a master light of all our seeing.”

At what epoch in man's history we are to place the development of the myth-making faculty must remain undetermined. It is of course coincident with the dawn of thought. We cannot credit the nameless savage of the Ancient Stone Age with it. If he had brains and leisure enough to make guesses about things, he has left us no witness of the fact. His relics, and those of his successors to a period which is but as yesterday in the history of our kind, are material only ; and not until we possess the symbols of his thought, whether in language or rude picture, do we get an inkling of the meaning which the universe had for him, in the details of his pitiless daily life, in the shapes and motions of surrounding

objects, and in the majesty of the heavens above him. Even then the thought is more or less crystallised, and if we would watch it in the fluent form we must have a keen eye for the like process going on among savages yet untouched by the Time-spirit, although higher in the scale than the Papuans and hill tribes of the Vindhya. Although we cannot so far lull our faculty of thought as to realise the mental vacuity of the savage, we may, from survivals nowadays, lead up to reasonable guesses of savage ways of looking at things in bygone ages, and the more so when we can detect relics of these among the ignorant and superstitious of modern times.

What meaning, then, had man's surroundings to him, when eye and ear could be diverted from prior claims of the body, and he could repose from watching for his prey, and from listening to the approach of wild beast or enemy? He had the advantage, from greater demand for their exercise, in keener senses of sight, hearing, smell, and touch, than we enjoy; nor did he fail to take in facts in plenty. But there was this vital defect and difference, that in his brains every fact was pigeon-holed, charged with its own narrow meaning only, as in small minds among ourselves we find place given to inane peddling details, and no advance made to general and wide conception of things. In sharpest contrast to the poet's utterance:

"Nothing in this world is single,  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle,"

every fact is unrelated to every other fact, and therefore interpreted wrongly.

Man, in his first outlook upon nature, was altogether ignorant of the character of the forces by which he was environed ; ignorant of that unvarying relation between effect and cause which it needed the experience of ages and the generalisations therefrom to apprehend, and to express as "laws of nature." He had not even the intellectual resource of later times in inventing miracle to explain where the necessary relation between events seemed broken or absent.

His first attitude was that of wonder, mingled with fear—fear as instinctive as the dread of the brute for him. The sole measure of things was himself, consequently everything that moved or that had power of movement did so because it was alive. A personal life and will was attributed to sun, moon, clouds, river, waterfall, ocean, and tree, and the varying phenomena of the sky at dawn or noonday, at gray eve or blackclouded night, were the manifestation of the controlling life that dwelt in all. In a thousand different forms this conception was expressed. The thunder was the roar of a mighty beast ; the lightning a serpent darting at its prey, an angry eye flashing, the storm demon's outshot forked tongue ; the rainbow a thirsty monster ; the waterspout a long-tailed dragon. This was not a pretty or powerful conceit, not imagery, but an explanation. The men who thus spoke of these phenomena meant precisely what they said. What does the savage know about heat, light, sound, electricity, and the other modes of motion

through which the Proteus-force beyond our ken is manifest? How many persons who have enjoyed a "liberal" education can give correct answers, if asked off-hand, explaining how glaciers are born of the sunshine, and why two sounds, travelling in opposite directions at equal velocities, interfere and cause silence? The percentage of young men, hailing from schools of renown, who give the most ludicrous replies when asked the cause of day and night, and the distance of the earth from the sun, is by no means small.

Whilst the primary causes determining the production of myths are uniform, the secondary causes, due in the main to different physical surroundings, vary, bringing about unlikeness in subject and detail. Nevertheless, in grouping the several classes of myths, those are obviously to be placed prominently which embrace explanations of the origin of things, from sun and star to man and insect, involving ideas about the powers to whom all things are attributed. But in this book no exhaustive treatment is possible, only some indication of the general lines along which the myth-making faculty has advanced, and for this purpose a few illustrations of barbaric mental confusion between the living and the not living are chosen at the outset. They will, moreover, prepare us for the large element of the irrational present in barbaric myth, and supply a key to the survival of this in the mythologies of civilised races.

## § II.

CONFUSION OF EARLY THOUGHT BETWEEN THE  
LIVING AND THE NOT LIVING.

In selecting from the literature of savage mythology the material overburdens us by its richness. Much of it is old, and, like refuse-heaps in our mining districts once cast aside as rubbish but now made to yield products of value, has, after long neglect, been found to contain elements of worth, which patience and insight have extracted from its travellers' tales and quaint speculations. That for which it was most prized in the days of our fathers is now of small account ; that within it which they passed by we secure as of lasting worth. Much of that literature is, however, new, for the impetus which has in our time been given to the rescue and preservation of archaic forms has reached this, and a host of accomplished collectors have secured rich specimens of relics which, in the lands of their discovery, have still the authority of the past, unimpaired by the critical exposure of the present.

The subject itself is, moreover, so wide reaching, bringing the ancient and the modern into hitherto unsuspected relation, showing how in customs and beliefs, to us unmeaning and irrational, there lurk the degraded representations of old philosophies, and in what seems to us burlesque, the survivals of man's most serious thought.

One feels this difficulty of choice and this temptation to digress in treating of the confusion inherent in the savage mind between things living and not living, arising from superficial analogies and its attribution of life and power to lifeless things. The North American Indians prefer a hook that has caught a big fish to the handful of hooks that have never been tried, and they never lay two nets together lest they should be jealous of each other. The Bushmen thought that the traveller Chapman's big waggon was the mother of his smaller ones; and the natives of Tahiti sowed in the ground some iron nails given them by Captain Cook, expecting to obtain young ones. When that ill-fated discoverer's ship was sighted by the New Zealanders they thought it was a whale with wings. The king of the Coussa Kaffirs having broken off a piece of the anchor of a stranded ship soon afterwards died, upon which all the Kaffirs made a point of saluting the anchor very respectfully whenever they went near it, regarding it as a vindictive being. But perhaps one of the most striking and amusing illustrations is that quoted by Sir John Lubbock from the *Smithsonian Reports* concerning an Indian who had been sent by a missionary to a colleague with four loaves of bread, accompanied by a letter stating their number. The Indian ate some of the bread, and his theft was, of course, found out. He was sent on a second errand with a similar batch of bread and a letter, and repeated the theft, but took the precaution to hide the letter under a stone while he was eating the loaves,

so that it might not see him! As the individual is a type of the race, so in the child's nature we find analogy of the mental attitude of the savage ready to hand. To the child everything is alive. With what timidity and wonder he first touches a watch, with its moving hands and clicking works; with what genuine anger he beats the door against which he has knocked his head, whips the rocking-horse that has thrown him, then kisses and strokes it the next moment in token of forgiveness and affection.

“As children of weak age  
Lend life to the dumb stones  
Whereon to vent their rage,  
And bend their little fists, and rate  
the senseless ground.”<sup>1</sup>

Even among civilised adults, as Mr. Grote remarks, “the force of momentary passion will often suffice to supersede the acquired habit, and an intelligent man may be impelled in a moment of agonising pain to kick or beat the lifeless object from which he has suffered.” The mental condition which causes the wild native of Brazil to bite the stone he stumbled over may, as Dr. Tylor has pointed out in his invaluable *Primitive Culture*, be traced along the course of history not merely in impulsive habit, but in formally enacted law. If among barbarous peoples we find, for example, the relatives of a man killed by a fall from a tree taking their revenge by cutting the tree down and scattering it in chips, we find a continuity of idea in the action of the court of justice

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna*.

held at the Prytaneum in Athens to try any inanimate object, such as an axe, or a piece of wood or stone, which has caused the death of any one without proved human agency, and which, if condemned, was cast in solemn form beyond the border. "The spirit of this remarkable procedure reappears in the old English law, repealed only in the present reign, whereby not only a beast that kills a man, but a cart-wheel that runs over him, or a tree that falls on him and kills him, is deodand or given to God, *i.e.* forfeited and sold for the poor." Among ancient legal proceedings at Laon we read of animals condemned to the gallows for the crime of murder, and of swarms of caterpillars which infected certain districts being admonished by the Courts of Troyes in 1516 to take themselves off within a given number of days, on pain of being declared accursed and excommunicated.<sup>1</sup>

Barbaric confusion in the existence of transferable qualities in things, as when the New Zealander swallows his dead enemy's eye that he may see farther, or gives his child pebbles to make it stony and pitiless of heart; and as when the Abipone eats tiger's flesh to increase his courage, has its survival in the old wives' notion that the eye-bright flower, which resembles the eye, is good for diseases of that organ, in the mediæval remedy for curing a sword wound by nursing the weapon that caused it, and in the old adage, "Take a hair of the dog that bit you." As illustrating this, Dr. Dennys<sup>2</sup> tells a story

<sup>1</sup> Countess Cesaresco's *Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> *The Folk-Lore of China*, p. 52.

of a missionary in China whose big dog would now and again slightly bite children as he passed through the villages. In such a case the mother would run after him and beg for a hair from the dog's tail, which would be put to the part bitten, or when the missionary would say jocosely, "Oh! take a hair from the dog yourself," the woman would decline, and ask him to spit in her hand, which itself witnesses to the widespread belief in the mystical properties of saliva.<sup>1</sup> Among ourselves this survives, degraded enough, in the cabmen's and boatmen's habit of spitting on the fare paid them. *Treacle* (Greek *thēriake*, from *thērion*, a name given to the viper) witnesses to the old-world superstition that viper's flesh is an antidote to the viper's bite. Philips, in his *World of Words*, defines treacle as a "physical compound made of vipers and other ingredients," and this medicament was a favourite against all poisons. The word then became applied to any confection or sweet syrup, and finally and solely to the syrup of molasses.

The practice of burning or hanging in effigy, by which a crowd expresses its feelings towards an unpopular person, is a relic of the old belief in a real and sympathetic connection between a man and his image; a belief extant among the unlettered in by-places of civilised countries. When we hear of

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 33, John ix. 6. Cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 81—"A certain man of the Alexandrian populace afflicted with wasted eyes kept imploring the prince to deign to spatter saliva on his cheek and eyeballs." In Finnish myth the demon Hiisi forms a huge snake from the spittle of a fellow-demon. Cf. also Thomson's *Masai Land*, pp. 288-290.

North American tribes making images of their foes, whose lives they expect to shorten by piercing those images with their arrows, we remember that these barbarous folk have their representatives among us in the Devonshire peasant, who hangs in his chimney a pig's heart stuck all over with thorn-prickles, so that the heart of his enemy may likewise be pierced. The custom among the Dyaks of Borneo of making a wax figure of the foe, so that his body may waste away as the wax is melted, will remind the admirers of Dante Rossetti how he finds in a kindred mediæval superstition the subject of his poem "Sister Helen," while they who prefer the authority of sober prose may turn to that storehouse of the curious, Brand's *Popular Antiquities*. Brand quotes from King James, who, in his *Dæmonology*, book ii. chap. 5, tells us that "the devil teacheth how to make pictures of wax or clay, that by roasting thereof the persons that they bear the name of may be continually melted or dried away by continual sickness;" and also cites Andrews, the author of a *Continuation of Henry's Great Britain*, who, speaking of the death of Ferdinand, Earl of Derby, by poison, in the reign of Elizabeth, says, "The credulity of the age attributed his death to witchcraft. The disease was odd, and operated as a perpetual emetic; and a waxen image, with hair like that of the unfortunate earl, found in his chamber, reduced every suspicion to certainty." A century and half before this the Duchess of Gloucester did penance for conspiring with certain necromancers against the life of Henry VI. by melting a waxen

image of him, while, as hinging the centuries together, "only recently a *corp cré*, or clay image, stuck full of birds' claws, bones, pins, and similar objects, was found in one of the Inverness-shire rivers. It was a fetish which, as it dissolved away by the action of the stream, was supposed to involve the 'wearing away' of the person it was intended to represent."<sup>1</sup> The passage from practices born of such beliefs to the use of charms as protectives against the evil-disposed and those in league with the devil, and as cures for divers diseases, is obvious. Upon this it is not needful to dwell; the superstitious man is on the same plane as the savage, but, save in rare instances, without such excuse for remaining, as Bishop Hall puts it, with "old wives and starres as his counsellors, charms as his physicians, and a little hallowed wax as his antidote for all evils."

But we have travelled in brief space a long way from our picture of man, weaving out of streams and breezes and the sunshine his crude philosophy of personal life and will controlling all, to the peasant of to-day, his intellectual lineal descendant, with his belief in signs and wonders, his forecast of fate and future by omens, by dreams, and by such pregnant occurrences as the spilling of salt, the howling of dogs, and changes of the moon; in short, by the great mass of superstitions which yet more or less influence the intelligent, terrorise the ignorant, and delight the student of human development.

<sup>1</sup> Henderson's *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*, p. 229; cf. Horace, *Sat.* i. 8, 30; Frazer's *Golden Bough*, i. 9; Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, p. 208.

## § III.

## PERSONIFICATION OF THE POWERS OF NATURE.

(a.) *The Sun and Moon.*

A good deal hinges upon the evidences in savage myth-making of the personification of the powers of nature. Obviously, the richest and most suggestive material would be supplied by the striking phenomena of the heavens, chiefly in sunrise and sunset, in moon, star, star-group and meteor, cloud and storm, and, next in importance, by the strange and terrible among phenomena on earth, whether in the restless waters, the unquiet trees, the grotesquely-shaped rocks, and the fear inspired in man by creatures more powerful than himself. Through the whole range of the lower culture, sun, moon, and constellations are spoken of as living creatures, often as ancestors, heroes, and benefactors who have departed to the country above, to heaven, the *heaved*, up-lifted land. The Tongans of the South Pacific say that two ancestors quarrelled respecting the parentage of the first-born of the woman Papa, each claiming the child as his own. No King Solomon appears to have been concerned in the dispute, although at last the infant was cut in two. Vatea, the husband of Papa, took the upper part as his share, and forthwith squeezed it into a ball and tossed it into the heavens, where it became the sun. Tonga-iti sullenly allowed the lower half to remain a day or two on the ground,

but, seeing the brightness of Vatea's half, he compressed his share into a ball and tossed it into the dark sky, during the absence of the sun in the nether world. Thus originated the moon, whose paleness is owing to the blood having all drained out of Tonga-iti's half as it lay upon the ground. Mr. Gill, from whose valuable collection of southern myth this is quoted, says that it seems to have its origin in the allegory of an alternating embrace of the fair Earth by Day and Night. But despite the explanations, more or less strained, which some schools of comparative mythologists find for every myth, the savage is not a conscious weaver of allegories, or an embryo Cabalist, and we shall find ourselves more in accord with the laws of his intellectual growth if, instead of delving for recondite and subtle meanings in his simple-sounding explanations of things, we take the meaning to be that which lies on the surface. More on this, however, anon. Among the Red races one tribe thought that sun, moon, and stars were men and women who went into the sea every night and swam out by the east. The Bushmen say that the sun was once a man who shed light from his body, but only for a short distance, until some children threw him into the sky while he slept, and thus he shines upon the wide earth. The Australians say that all was darkness around them till one of their many ancestors, who still shine from the stars, shedding good and evil, threw, in pity for them, an emu's egg into space, when it became the sun. Among the Manacicas of Brazil, the sun was their culture-

hero, virgin-born, and their jugglers, who claimed power to fly through the air, said that his luminous figure, as that of a man, could be seen by them, although too dazzling for common mortals.

The sun has been stayed in his course in other places than Gibeon, although by mechanical means of which Joshua appears to have been independent. Among the many exploits of Maui, abounding in Polynesian myth, are those of his capture of the sun. He had, like Prometheus, snatched fire from heaven for mortals, and his next task was to cure Ra, the sun-god, of his trick of setting before the day's work was done. So Maui plaited thick ropes of cocoa-nut fibre, and taking them to the opening through which Ra climbed up from the nether world, he laid a slip-noose for him, placing the other ropes at intervals along his path. Lying in wait as Ra neared, he pulled the first rope, but the noose only caught Ra's feet. Nor could Maui stop him until he reached the sixth rope, when he was caught round the neck and pulled so tightly by Maui that he had to come to terms, and agree to slacken his pace for the future. Maui, however, took the precaution to keep the ropes on him, and they may still be seen hanging from the sun at dawn and eve. In Tahitian myth Maui is a priest, who, in building a house which must be finished by daylight, seizes the sun by its rays and binds it to a tree till the house is built. In North American myth a boy had snared the sun, and there was no light on the earth. So the beasts held council who should undertake the perilous task of

cutting the cord, when the dormouse, then the biggest among them, volunteered. And it succeeded, but so scorched was it by the heat that it was shrivelled to the smallest of creatures. Such a group of myths is not easy of explanation; but when we find the sun regarded as an ancestor, and as one bound, mill-horse like, to a certain course, the notion of his control and check would arise, and the sun-catchers take their place in tradition among those who have deserved well of their race. It is one among numberless aspects under which the doings of the sun and of other objects in nature are depicted as the doings of mortals, and the crude conceptions of the Ojibwas and the Samoans find their parallel in the mythologies of our Aryan ancestors. Only in the former we see the mighty one shorn of his dignity, with noose round his neck or chains on either side; whilst in the latter we see him as Herakles, with majesty unimpaired, carrying out the twelve tasks imposed by Eurystheus, and thus winning for himself a place among the immortals.

The names given to the sun in mythology are as manifold as his aspects and influences, and as the moods of the untutored minds that endowed him with the complex and contrary qualities which make up the nature of man. *Him*, we say, not *it*, thus preserving in our common speech a relic not only of the universal personification of things, but of their division into sex.

The origin of gender is most obscure, but its investment of both animate and inanimate things with

sexual qualities shows it to be a product of the mythopœic stage of man's progress, and demands some reference in these pages. The languages of savages are in a constant state of flux, even the most abiding terms, as numerals and personal pronouns, being replaced by others in a few years. And the changes undergone by civilised speech have so rubbed away and obscured its primitive forms that, look where he may, the poverty of the old materials embarrasses the inquirer. If the similar endings to such undoubtedly early words as father, mother, brother, sister, in our own and other related languages, notably Sanskrit, afford any clue, it goes rather to show that gender was a later feature than one might think. But there is no uniformity in the matter. It seems pretty clear that in the early forms of our Indo-European speech there were two genders only, masculine and feminine. The assignment of certain things conceived of as sexless to neither gender, *neutrius generis*, is of later origin. Some of the languages derived from Latin, and, to name one of a different family, the Hebrew, have no neuter gender, whilst others, as the ancient Turkish and Finnish, have no grammatical gender. In our own, under the organic changes incident to its absorption of Norman and other foreign elements, gender has practically disappeared (although ships and nations are still spoken of as feminine), the pronouns *he*, *she*, *it*, being its representatives. Such a gain is apparent when we take up the study of the ancestral Anglo-Saxon, with its masculine, feminine, and neuter

nouns, or of our allied German with its perplexities of sex, as, *e.g.*, its masculine spoon, its feminine fork, and its neuter knife. Turning for a moment to such slight aid as barbaric speech gives, we find in the languages of the hill tribes of South India a curious distinction made; rational beings, as gods and men, being grouped in a "high-caste or major gender," and living animals and lifeless things in a "casteless or minor gender." The languages of some North American and South African tribes make a distinction into animate and inanimate gender; but as non-living things, the sun, the thunder, the lightning, are regarded as persons, they are classed in the animate gender.

Further research into the radicals of so relatively fixed a language as Chinese, and into more mobile languages related to it, may, perhaps, enlighten the present ignorance; but one thing is certain, that language was "once the scene of an immense personification," and has thereby added vitality to myth. Analogies and conceptions apparent to barbaric man, and in no way occurring to us, caused him to attribute sexual qualities not only to dead as to living things, but to their several parts, as well as, in the course of time, to intellectual and abstract terms. Speaking broadly, things in which were manifest size and qualities, as strength, independence, governing or controlling power, usually attaching to the male, were classed as masculine; whilst those in which the gentler and more subordinate features were apparent were classed as feminine. Of course marked excep-

tions to this will at once occur to us, as, *e.g.*, in certain savage and civilised languages, where the sun is feminine and the moon is masculine, but in the main the division holds good. The big is male and the small is female. The Dyaks of Borneo call a heavy downpour of rain a *he* rain; and, if so strength-imparting a thing as bread is to be classed as either masculine or feminine, we must agree with the negro who, in answer to his master's question, "Sambo, where's the bread?" replied, "De bread, massa? him lib in de pantry." The mediæval Persians are said to have distinguished between male and female even in such things as food and cloth, air and water, and prescribed their proper use accordingly; while, as Dr. Tylor, from whom the above is quoted, adds, "even we, with our blunted mythologic sense, cannot give an individual name to a lifeless object, such as a boat or a weapon, without in the very act imagining for it something of a personal nature."

But we must not stay longer in these attractive byways of philology, however warranted the digression may be, and must return to the many-titled sun.

Whilst in the more elaborate mythologies of classic peoples we find him addressed in exalted terms which are still the metaphors of poetry, we are nearer the rough material out of which all myth is shaped when among races who speak of sun, moon, and stars as father, mother, and children, and who mean exactly what they say. We may find similar relationships in the solar and lunar deities of Egyptian and classic

myth, but profound moral elements have entered into these and dissolved the material. We are face to face with the awful and abiding questions personified in Osiris and Isis, in *Œdipus* and *Jocaste*, where for us the sunlight pales and the storm clouds are dispersed before the dazzling mysteries of human life and destiny.

No such matters confront us when in Indian myth we read that the moon is the sun's sister, an aged, pale-faced woman, who in kindness led to her brother two of the tribe who had sprung through a chasm in the sky to the pleasant moonlit land. Neither do they in Australian myth, which shows that the dwellers on Olympus had no monopoly of conjugal faithlessness. For in it *Mityan*, the moon, is a native cat, who fell in love with somebody else's wife, and has been driven to wander ever since. Among the Bushmen, the moon has incurred the sun's anger, and is hacked smaller and smaller by him, till, begging for mercy, a respite is given. But as soon as he grows larger the sun hacks him again. In Slavonic myth the sun cleaves him through for loving the morning star. The Indians of the far west say that, when the moon is full, evil spirits begin nibbling at it, and eat a portion every night till it is all gone; then a great spirit makes a new moon, and, weary with his toil, falls asleep, when the bad spirits renew their attack. Another not uncommon group of myths is that which speaks of sun and moon as borne across the heavens on the backs of ancestors, as in Greek

myth Atlas supports the world, or as in ceaseless flight, dogged by some pursuer, moon-dog, or "sun-wolf," as parhelion is called in Swedish. The group of kindred myths to which eclipses gave rise, when the cloud-dragon or serpent tries to swallow sun or moon, and for a time succeeds, is too well known to need other than passing reference here.

A widespread body of myth has its source in the patches on the moon's face. In the Samoan Islands these are said to be a woman, a child, and a mallet. A woman was once hammering out paper-cloth, and seeing the moon rise, looking like a great bread-fruit, she asked it to come down and let her child eat a piece of it. But the moon was very angry at the idea of being eaten, and gobbled up the woman, child, and mallet, and there they are to this day. The Selish Indians of North-Western America say that the little wolf was in love with the toad, and pursued her one moonlight night, till, as a last chance, she made a desperate spring on to the face of the moon, and there she is still. People in the East see the figure of a hare in the patches, and both in Buddhist Jâtakas and Mongolian myth that animal is carried by the moon. In Greenland myth the moon was in love with his sister, and stole in the dark to caress her. She, wishing to find out who her lover was, blackened her hands so that the marks might be left on him, which accounts for the spots. The Khasias of the Himâlaya say that the moon falls in love every month with his mother-in-law, who, like a well-conducted matron, throws ashes in his face. Grimm quotes a mediæval

myth that the moon is Mary Magdalene, and the spots her tears of repentance, whilst in Chaucer's *Testament of Cressida* the moon is Lady Cynthia.—

“ On her brest a chorn paintid ful even,  
*Bering a bush of thornis on his bake,*  
 Which for his *theft* might clime no ner the heven.”

Comparing these with more familiar myths, we have our own man in the moon, who is said to be the culprit found by Moses gathering sticks on the Sabbath, although his place of banishment is a popular addition to the Scripture narrative. According to the German legend he was a scoffer who did the same heinous offence on a Sunday, and was given the alternative of being scorched in the sun or frozen in the moon. The Frisians say that he stole cabbages, the load of which he bears on his back. He does not appear as a member of the criminal classes in China, his function being that of celestial matchmaker, who ties together future couples with an invisible silken cord which breaks not during life. In Icelandic myth the two children familiar to us as Jack and Jill were kidnapped by the moon, and there they stand to this day with bucket on pole across their shoulders, falling away one after the other as the moon wanes,— a phase described in the couplet :—

“ Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
 And Jill came tumbling after.”

Mr. Baring Gould, whose essay on this subject in his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* gives a convenient summary of current legends, contends that Jack and

Jill are the Hjúki and Bil of the *Edda*, and signify the waxing and waning of the moon, their bucket indicating the dependence of rainfall on her phases—a superstition extant among us yet.

The group of customs observed amongst both barbaric and civilised peoples at the changes of the moon, customs which are meaningless except as relics of lunar worship, belong to the passage of mythology into religion, of personifying into deifying.

(b.) *The Stars.*

In the great body of nature-myth the stars are prominent members. In their multitude ; their sublime repose in upper calms above the turmoil of the elements ; their varying brilliancy, "one star differing from another star in glory"; their tremulous light ; their scattered positions, which lend themselves to every vagary of the constellation-maker ; their slow procession, varied only by sweeping comet and meteor, or falling showers of shooting stars ; they lead the imagination into gentler ways than do the vaster bodies of the most ancient heavens. Nor, although we may compute their number, weigh their volume, in a few instances reckon their distance, and, capturing the light that has come beating through space for unnumbered years, make it reveal the secret of their structure, is the imagination less moved by the clear heavens at night, or the feeling of awe and reverence blunted before that "mighty sum of things for ever speaking."

In barbaric myth the stars are spoken of as young suns, the children of the sun and moon, but more often as men who have lived on the earth, translated without seeing death. The single stars are individual chiefs or heroes; the constellations are groups of men or animals. To the natives of Australia the brilliant Jupiter is a chief among the others; and the stars in Orion's belt and scabbard are young men dancing a corroboree, the Pleiades being girls playing to them. The Kasirs of Bengal say that the stars are men who climbed to the top of a tree, and were left in the branches by the trunk being cut away. To the Eskimos the stars in Orion are seal-hunters who have missed their way home. And in German folk-lore they are spoken of as the mowers, because, as Grimm says, "they stand in a row like mowers in a meadow." In North American myth two of the bright stars are twins who have left a home where they were harshly treated, and leapt into the sky, whither their parents followed them and ceaselessly chase them. In Greek, myth the faintest star of the seven Pleiades is Merope, whose light was dimmed because she alone among her sisters married a mortal. The New Zealanders say that those stars are seven chiefs who fell in battle, and of whom only one eye of each is now visible. In Norse myth Odin having slain a giant, plucks out his eyes and flings them up to the sky, where they become two stars. In German star-lore the small star just above the middle one in the shaft of Charles's Wain, is a waggoner who, having given

our Saviour a lift, was offered the kingdom of heaven for his reward, but who said he would sooner be driving from east to west to all eternity, and whose desire was granted—a curious contrast to the wandering Jew, cursed to move unresting over the earth until the day of judgment, because he refused to let Jesus, weary with the weight of the cross, rest for a moment on his doorstep. The Housatonic Indians say that the stars in Charles's Wain are men hunting a bear, and that the chase lasts from spring to autumn, when the bear is wounded and its dripping blood turns the leaves of the trees red. With this may be cited the myth that the red clouds at morn and eve are the blood of the slain in battle. In the Northern Lights the Greenlanders see the spirits of the departed dancing, the brighter the flashes of the Aurora the greater the merriment, whilst the Dacotas say of the meteors that they are spirits flying through the air.

Of the Milky Way—so called because Hêrê, indignant at the bantling Herakles being put to her breast, spilt her milk along the sky (the solar mythologers say that the "red cow of evening passes during the night across the sky scattering her milk")—the Ottawas say that it was caused by a turtle swimming along the bottom of the sky and stirring up the mud. According to the Patagonians it is the track along which the departed tribesmen hunt ostriches, the clouds being their feathers; in African myth it is some wood-ashes long ago thrown up into the sky by a girl, that her people might be

able to see their way home at night ; in Eastern myth it is chaff dropped by a thief in his hurried flight.

The idea of a land beyond the sky—be it the happy hunting-ground of the Indian, or the Paradise of Islam, or the new Jerusalem of the Apocalypse—would not fail to arise, and in both the Milky Way and the Rainbow barbaric fancy sees the ladders and bridges whereby the departed pass from earth to heaven. So we find in the lower and higher culture alike the beautiful conceptions of the *chemin des ames*, the Red man's road of the dead to their home in the sun ; the ancient Roman path of, or to, the gods ; the road of the birds, in both Lithuanian and Finnish myth, because the winged spirits flit thither to the free and happy land. In prosaic contrast to all this, it is curious to find among ourselves the Milky Way described as Watling Street ! That famous road, which ran from Richborough through Canterbury and London to Chester, now gives its name to a narrow bustling street of Manchester warehousemen in the City. But who the Wætlingas were—whether giants, gods, or men—and why their name was transferred from Britain to the sky, we do not know,<sup>1</sup> although the fact is plainly enough set down in old writers, foremost among whom is Chaucer. In his *House of Fame*<sup>2</sup> he says :—

“Lo, there, quod he, cast up thine eye,  
se yondir, to, the galaxie,

<sup>1</sup> Grimm, *T. M.*, 356, 357.

<sup>2</sup> II. 427.

the whiche men clepe the Milky Way,  
for it is white, and some parfay  
ycallin it han Watlingestrete."

To the savage the rainbow is a living monster, a serpent seeking whom it may devour, coming to earth to slake its unquenchable thirst, and preying on the unwary. But in more poetic myth, its mighty many-coloured arch touching, as it seems to do, the earth itself, is a road to glory. In the *Edda* it is the three-coloured bridge Bifröst, "the quivering track" over which the gods walk, and of which the red is fire, so that the Frost-giants may not cross it. In Persian myth it is Chinvad, the "bridge of the gatherer," flung across the gloomy depths between this world and the home of the blessed; in Islam it is El-Sirat, the bridge thin as a hair and sharp as a scimitar, stretching from this world to the next; among the Greeks it was Iris, the messenger from Zeus to men, charged with tidings of war and tempest; to the Finns it was the bow of Tiernes, the god of thunder; whilst to the Jew it was the messenger of grace from the Eternal, who did set "his bow in the clouds" as the promise that never again should the world be destroyed by flood. Such belief in the heavens as the field of activities profoundly affecting the fortunes of mankind, and in the stars as influencing their destinies, has been persistent in the human mind. The delusions of the astrologer are embalmed in language, as when, forgetful of a belief shared not only by sober theologians, but by Tycho Brahe and Kepler, we speak

of "disaster," and of our friends as "joyial," "saturnine," or "mercurial." But the illusions of the savage or semi-civilised abide as an animating part of many a faith, undisturbed by a science which has swept the skies and found no angels there, and whose keen analysis separates for ever the ancient belief in a connection between the planets and man's fate. For convenience' sake, we retain on our celestial maps and globes the men and monsters pictured by barbaric fancy in the star-positions and clusters, noting these as interesting examples of survival. Yet we are the willing dupes of illusions nebulous as these, and, charm he never so wisely, the Time-spirit fails to disenchant us.

(c.) *The Earth and Sky.*

If the sun and moon are the parents of the stars, the heavens and the earth are the parents of all living things. Of this widely-found myth, one of the most striking specimens occurs among the Maoris. From Rangi, the heaven, and Papa, the earth, sprang all living things; but earth and sky clave together, and darkness rested on them and their children, who debated whether they should rend them asunder or slay them. Then Tane-mahuta, father of forests, reasoned that it was better to rend them, so that the heaven might become a stranger, and the earth remain as their nursing-mother. One after another they strove to do this, but in vain, until Tane-mahuta, with giant strength and strain,

pressed down the earth and thrust upward the heaven. But one of his brothers, father of wind and storm, who had not agreed to this parting of his parents, followed Rangi into the sky, and thence sent forth his progeny, "the mighty winds, the fierce squalls, the clouds dense and dark, wildly drifting, wildly hunting," himself rushing on his foe, snapping the huge trees that barred his path, and strewing their trunks and branches on the ground, while the sea was lashed into high-crested waves, and all the creatures therein affrighted. The fish darted hither and thither, but the reptiles fled into the forests, causing quarrel between Tangaroa, the ocean-god, and Tane-mahuta for giving them shelter. So the brothers fought, the ocean-god wrecking the canoes and sweeping houses and trees beneath the waters, and had not Papa hidden the gods of the tilled food and the wild within her bosom, they would have perished. Wars of revenge followed quickly one upon the other; the storm-god's anger was not soon appeased; so that the devastation of the earth was well-nigh complete. But, at last, light arose and quiet ensued, and the dry land appeared. Rangi and Papa, parted for ever, quarrelled no more, but helped the one the other, and "man stood erect and unbroken on his mother Earth."

The myth of Cronus will at once occur to the reader. Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Gaea) were husband and wife, and their many children all hated their father for concealing them between the hollows of their mother's breasts, so that they were shut out

from light. Gaea sided with them and provided Cronus, the youngest, with an iron sickle wherewith he unmanned Uranus and separated him from Gaea. Cronus married his sister Rhea, and, at the advice of his parents, swallowed his children one by one as they were born, lest they grew up and usurped his place among the Immortals. But when Zeus was born, and Cronus asked for the child, Rhea deceived him by giving him a stone wrapped in swaddling bands. When Zeus grew up he gave his father an emetic, whereupon the children were all disgorged, and with them the stone, which became a sacred object at Delphi. There is no such being as Cronus in Sanskrit, but what may be called the Vedic variant of the myth is that in which Dyaus (Heaven) and Prithivî (Earth), were once joined and subsequently separated.

In China we find a legend of "a person called Puangku, who is said to have separated the heaven and the earth, they formerly being pressed down close together," and, as one might expect, such a transparent nature-myth of the rending asunder of the world and sky is widespread.

The solar mythologists were perplexed at its presence among the refined and cultured Greeks. "How can we imagine that a few generations before the time of Solon the highest notions of the Godhead among the Greeks were adequately expressed by the story of Uranus maimed by Cronus, of Cronus eating his own children, swallowing a stone, and vomiting out alive his own progeny. Among the lowest

tribes of Africa and America we hardly find anything more hideous and revolting." So the moral character of the Greeks and the exclusive comparative method of Professor Max Müller and his adherents were vindicated by the discovery that as Cronus means time, the apparently repulsive myth simply means that time swallows up the days which spring from it; "and," remarks Sir G. W. Cox in his *Manual of Mythology*, "the old phrase meant simply this and nothing more, although before the people came to Greece they had forgotten its meaning."<sup>1</sup> Cronus is a more than usually troublesome *crux* to the etymologists.

Here, as elsewhere, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;" and we may turn to the fundamental idea resident in the myth. The savage, in the presence of recurring light and darkness, of the clouds lifting and dispersing before the sunrise, has his legend of a time when this was not so, but when heaven and earth were closed-in one upon the other till some hero thrust them apart. And, to his rude intelligence, the conception of night as a devouring monster, might easily "start the notion of other swallowing and disgorging beings." In brief, to quote Mr. Andrew Lang, "just as the New Zealander had conceived of heaven and earth as at one time united, to the prejudice of their children, so the ancestors of the Greeks had believed in an ancient union of heaven and earth. Both by Greeks and Maoris, heaven and earth were thought of as living

<sup>1</sup> Page xvi.

persons, with human parts and passions. Their union was prejudicial to their children, and so the children violently separated their parents.”<sup>1</sup>

The beliefs of the ancient Finns, as described in the *Kalevala*, in the world as a divided egg, of which the white is the ocean, the yolk the sun, the arched shell the sky, and the darker portions the clouds; and of the Polynesians that the universe is the hollow of a vast cocoa-nut shell, at the tapering bottom of which is the root of all things, are to us so grotesque that it is not easy to regard them as explanations seriously invented by the human mind. Yet these, together with the notions of the two halves of the shell of Brahma’s egg, and of the two calabashes which form the heaven and the earth in African myth, find their correspondences in the widespread conception of the over-arching firmament as a hard and solid thing,<sup>2</sup> with holes (or windows<sup>3</sup>) to let the rain through, with gates through which angels descend,<sup>4</sup> or through which prophets peer into celestial mysteries;<sup>5</sup> a firmament outside which other people live, as instanced by the Polynesian term for strangers, “papalangi,” or “heaven-bursters.” In

<sup>1</sup> *Custom and Myth*, pp. 49, 50. While these sheets are passing through the press I am glad to take occasion to commend Mr. Lang’s scholarly and fascinating book to the reader. As an explanation of the survival of crude and irrational elements in the myths of civilised races, it is a book to be reckoned with by the advocates of the solar theory.

<sup>2</sup> “And said the gods, let there be a hammered plate in the midst of the waters, and let it be dividing between waters and waters.” Gen. i. 6. The verb from which the substantive is derived signifies, among other meanings, “to beat out into thin plates.”

<sup>3</sup> Gen. viii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. xxviii. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Ezek. i. 1.

Esthonian myth Ilmarine hammers steel into a vault which he strained like a tent over the earth, nailing thereon the silver stars and moon, and suspending the sun from the roof of the tent with machinery to lift it up and let it down. The like achievement is recorded of Ilmarinen in the *Kalevala*, the cosmogony of which corresponds to that of the Esthonian *Kalevipöeg*.

These are the less refined forms of myths which have held their ground from pre-scientific times till now, and the rude analogies of which are justified by the appearances of things as presented by the senses. Man's intellectual history is the history of his escape from the illusions of the senses, it is the slow and often tardily accepted discovery that nature is quite other than that which it seems to be. And this variance between appearances and realities remained hidden until the intellect challenged the report about phenomena which the sense-perceptions brought. For in the ages when feeling was dominant, and the judgment scarce awakened, the simple explanations in venerable legends sung by bard or told by aged crone—legends to which age had given sanctity which finally placed them among the world's sacred literatures—were received without doubt or question. But, as belief in causality spread, men were not content to rest in the naïve explanations of an uncritical age. What man had guessed about nature gave place to what nature had to say about herself, and with the classifying of experience science had its birth.

Meanwhile, until this quite recent stage in man's progress was reached, the senses told their blundering tale of an earth flat and fixed, with sun, moon, and stars as its ministering servants, while gods or beasts upbore it, and mighty pillars supported the massive firmament. In Hindu myth the tortoise which upholds the earth rests upon an elephant, whose legs *reach all the way down!* In Bogotà the culture-god Bochica punishes a lesser and offending deity by compelling him to sustain the part of Atlas, and it is in shifting his burden from shoulder to shoulder that earthquakes are caused. The natives of Celebes say that these are due to the world-supporting Hog as he rubs himself against a tree; the Thascaltecs that they occur when the deities who hold up the world relieve one another; the Japanese think that they are caused by huge dragons wriggling underground, an idea probably confirmed by the discovery of monster fossil bones. In Algonquin myth the mighty man Earthquake "can pass along under the ground, and make all things shake and tremble by his power."

As the myths about earth-bearers prevail in the regions of earthquakes, so do those about subterranean beings in the neighbourhood of volcanoes. The superstitions which mountainous countries especially foster are intensified when the mountains themselves cast forth their awful and devastating progeny, "red ruin" and the other children born of them. Man in his dread, "caring in no wise for the external world, except as it influenced his own

destiny ; honouring the lightning because it could strike him, the sea because it could drown him,"<sup>1</sup> could do naught else than people them with maleficent beings, and conceive of their sulphur-exhaling mouths as the jaws of a bottomless pit.

(d.) *Storm and Lightning, etc.*

If in freeing ourselves from the tyranny of the "solar" theory we shackled ourselves with some other, we should certainly prefer that which is known as the "meteorological," and which, in the person of Kuhn and other supporters, finds a more rational and persistent source of myth in phenomena which are fitful and startling, such as hurricane and tempest, earthquake and volcanic outburst. Sunrises and sunsets happen with a regularity which failed to excite any strong emotion or stimulate curiosity, and the remotest ancestor of the primitive Aryan soon shook off the habit—if, indeed, he ever acquired it—of going to bed in fear and trembling lest the sun should not come back again. Nature, in her softer aspects and her gracious bounties, in the spring-time with its promise, the summer with its glory, the autumn with its gifts, has moved the heart of man to song and festival and procession ; as, by contrast, the frosts that nipped the early buds and the fierce heat that withered the approaching harvest gave occasion for plaintive ditty and sombre ceremony. It is in the fierce play and passionate out-

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Painters*, iii. 154.

bursts of the elements, in the storm, the lightning, and the thunder, that the feelings are aroused and that the terror-stricken fancy sees the strife of wrathful deities, or depicts their dire work amongst men. Hence, all the world over, the storm-god and the wind-god have played a mighty part.

To the savage, the wind, blowing as it listeth, its whence and whither unknown, itself invisible, yet the sweep and force of its power manifest and felt, must have ranked amongst the most striking phenomena. And, as will be seen hereafter, the correspondences between wind and breath, and the connection between breath and life, added their quota of mystery in man's effort to account for the impalpable element. Of this personification of the elements the following Ojibway folk-tale, cited by Dorman, gives poetic illustration:—"There were spirits from all parts of the country. Some came with crashing steps and roaring voice, who directed the whirlwinds which were in the habit of raging about the neighbouring country. Then glided in gently a sweet little spirit, which blew the summer gale. Then came in the old sand-spirit, who blew the sand-squalls in the sand-buttles toward the west. He was a great speech-maker, and shook the lodge with his deep-throated voice, as he addressed the spirits of the cataracts and waterfalls, and those of the islands who wore beautiful green blankets."

In the legends of the Quiches, the mysterious creative power is Hurakan (whence *hurricane*), among the Choctaws the original word for Deity is Hushtoli,

the storm-wind, and in Peru to kiss the air was the commonest and simplest sign of adoration of the collective divinities. The Guayacuans of South America, when a storm arose and there was much thunder or wind, all went out in troops, as it were to battle, shaking their clubs in the air, shooting flights of arrows in that direction whence the storm came.<sup>1</sup>

The Araucanians thought that gales and thunderstorms were the battles fought between the spirits of the dead and their foes.

Turning to the literatures of higher races, we find in the prose *Edda*, when Gangler asks whence comes the wind, that Ha answers him: "Thou must know that at the northernmost point in the heavens sits a giant,

" In the guise of an eagle ;  
And the winds, it is said,  
Rush down on the earth  
From his outspreading pinions."

In Finnish myth the north wind Pulmri, father of the frost, is sometimes imaged as an eagle.

"The Indians believe in a great bird called by them *Wochowsen* or *Wuchowsen*, meaning Wind-Blow or the Wind-Blower, who lives far to the north, and sits upon a great rock at the end of the sky. And it is because whenever he moves his wings the wind blows they of old times called him that." And in another Algonquin myth: "Ga-oh is the Spirit of the Winds. He moves the winds, but he is chained to a rock. The winds trouble him, and he tries very

<sup>1</sup> Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 350.

hard to get free. When he struggles the winds are forced away from him, and they blow upon the earth. Sometimes he suffers terrible pain, and then his struggles are violent. This makes the winds wild, and they do damage on the earth. Then he feels better and goes to sleep, and the winds become quiet also.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Veda* the Maruts or Storm-gods, to whom many of the hymns are addressed, "make the rocks to tremble and tear asunder the kings of the forest," like Hermes in his violence and like Boreas in his rage. Whether or no they become in Scandinavian legend the grim and fearful Ogres swiftly sailing in their cloud-ships, we may see in them the "crushers" and "grinders,"<sup>2</sup> as their name imports, the types of northern deities like Odin, long degraded into the Wild Huntsman and his phantom crew, whose uncouth yells the peasant hears in the midnight air.<sup>3</sup> Among the Aztecs Cuculkan, the bird-serpent, was a personification of the wind, especially of the east wind, as bringer of the rain. It was at one of his shrines, to which pilgrimages were made from great distances, that the Spaniards first saw to their surprise a cross surmounting the temple of this god of the wind, whence arose a legend that the Apostle Thomas had evangelised America. But, in fact, the pagan cross of Central America and Mexico was the symbol of the four cardinal points.

<sup>1</sup> Leland's *Algonquin Legends*, pp. 111, 204.

<sup>2</sup> From Sans. *mar*, to "grind." Ares and Mars come from the same root.

<sup>3</sup> *Merry Wives of Windsor*, act iv. sc. 4.

In his valuable book on the *Myths of the Red Race* Dr. Brinton has brought together a mass of evidence in support of a theory that the sanctity in which the number four is held by the American races is due to the adoration of the cardinal points, which are identified with the four winds, who in hero-myths are the four ancestors of the human race. The illustrations with which the argument is supported are numerous and valuable, but the argument itself is made to rest too strongly on an assumed primitive symbolism, whereas it suffices to show how the early notion of the flat world, as also square, would lead to the myth of the four winds blowing from the four corners, a myth often illustrated in ancient maps with an angel at each corner from whose mouth the wind issues. The official title of the Incas was "Lord of the four quarters of the earth," and the number appears in all sorts of combinations, but the theory may be pushed to extremes in compelling every fact to square with it.<sup>1</sup> As the illustrations given above show, we are some steps nearer to the primitive myth when we find the wind conceived of as a mighty bird, which indeed is in both old and new world mythology a common symbol of thunder and lightning also. On this matter Dr. Brinton's remarks bear quoting.

Like the wind the bird sweeps through the aërial spaces, sings in the forests, and rustles on its course; like the cloud it floats in mid-air, and casts its shadow on the earth; like the

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<sup>1</sup> In Finnish myth the dwarfs punish with pimples and ringworm those who enter new houses without bowing to the four corners.

lightning it darts from heaven to earth to strike its unsuspecting prey. These tropes were truths to savage nations, and led on by that law of language which forced them to conceive everything as animate or inanimate, itself the product of a deeper law of thought which urges us to ascribe life to whatever has motion, they found no animal so appropriate for their purpose here as the bird. Therefore the Algonquins say that birds always make the winds, that they create the water-spouts, and that the clouds are the spreading and agitation of their wings; the Navajos that at each cardinal point stands a white swan, who is the spirit of the blasts; so also the Dakotas frequently explain the thunder as the sound of the cloud-bird flapping his wings; the lightning as the fire that flashes from his tracks, like the sparks which the buffalo scatters when he scours over a stony plain.

Estimates differ much as to the size of the Thunder-Bird. In one tradition an Indian found its nest, and secured a feather which was above two hundred feet long, while in another tradition the bird is said to be no bigger than one's little finger. But among the Western Indians he is an immense eagle. "When this aërial monster flaps his wings loud peals of thunder roll over the prairie; when he winks his eye it lightens; when he wags his tail the waters of the lake which he carries on his back overflow and produce rain." Mixcoatl, the Mexican Cloud-Serpent, as well as Jove, carries his bundle of arrows or thunderbolts, which in the hand of Thor are represented by his mighty club or hammer. The old and universal belief that stones were hurled by the Thunder-God is not so far-fetched as we, in our pride of science, might think, for the flints which are mistaken for thunderbolts, and which become objects

of adoration as well as charms, produce a flash when struck by the lightning. In the lightning flash man would see the descent of fire from heaven for his needs. That he should regard it, like water, as a living creature, with power to hurt or help him, is in keeping with attribution of life to all that moved. Its apparent connection with the great source of heat would foster the feeling which expressed itself in fire-worship, with its curious survivals to modern times. No element was more calculated to excite awe in its seeming unrelation to the objects which produced it. Once secured, to guard it from extinction or theft was a serious duty, and everything from which it issued, trees as its hiding-place, since it came from the wood when rubbed, stones also, since sparks shot from them when struck, were held sacred. In the manifold myths about its origin one feature is common, that its seed was stolen, the chief agents (probably as the messengers between earth and sky) being birds, or men assuming the form of birds. The Sïoux Indians say that their first ancestor procured his fire from the sparks which a panther struck from the rocks as he bounded up a hill. But of examples from the lower culture, fore-runners of the Zeus-defying Prometheus, Mr. Gill's *Myths of the South Pacific* supplies one which may be taken as a sample of the rest. Maui, a famous South Sea hero, finding some cooked food in a basket brought by Buataranga from the nether world, and relishing it more than raw food, determines to steal the fire, and flying to the Buataranga's realm

frightens the fire-god by threats and blows into revealing the secret. Then wresting the fire-sticks from him he sets the under-world in flames, and returns with his prize to the upper-world; thenceforth "all the dwellers there used fire-sticks, and enjoyed the luxuries of light and of cooked food."

(e.) *Light and Darkness.*

As in the conflict raging in the sky during gale or tempest, when the light and the darkness alternately prevail, the barbaric mind sees war waged between the heroes of the spirit-land who have carried their unsettled blood feuds thither, so in many myths the lightning is no comrade of the thunder, but its foe, the battle of bird with serpent. The resemblance of the lightning flash to the sharp, sudden, zigzag movements of the serpent, a creature so mysterious to barbaric man in its unlikeness to the beasts of the field, accounts for a myth the influence of which as a terrorising agent on human conduct is in course of rapid decay. Its importance in the history of belief in the supernatural is too far-reaching to be passed over, and in tracing its course it is necessary to show its connection with the group of storm-myths and sun-myths of the Aryan race in the battles between Indra and Vritra, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Thor and Midgard, Hercules and Cacus, Apollo and Pythôn, and St. George and the Dragon.

All the Aryan nations have among their legends, often exalted into epic themes, the story of a battle

between a hero and a monster. In each case the hero conquers, and releases treasures, or in some way renders succour to man, through his victory. In Hindu myth this battle is fought between Indra and Vritra.

Indra, one of the Vedic gods, comes, according to Professor Max Müller, from the same root as the Sanskrit *indu*, drop, sap, but the etymology is doubtful. What is not doubtful is that he is the god of the bright sky, and although, like the other gods invoked in the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, a departmental or tribal deity, he is a sort of *primus inter pares*, of whose many titles, Vritrahan or "Vritra-slayer" is the pre-eminent one. The benefits showered by him upon mortals caused the attribution of moral qualities to him, and he was adored as "lord of the virtues," while the juice of the sacred soma plant was offered in his honour, for which reason he is also called Somapâ or "soma-drinker." It is his struggle with Vritra which is a constant theme of the Vedic hymns, the burden of which remind us of the praises offered in the Psalms to Yahweh as a man of war, as mighty in battle. "The gods do not reach thee, nor men, thou overcomest all creatures in strength. . . . Thou thunderer, hast shattered with thy bolt the broad and massive cloud into fragments, and has sent down the waters that were confined in it to flow at will; verily thou alone possessest all power." The primitive physical meaning of the myth is clear. Indra is the sun-god, armed with spears and arrows, for such did the solar rays sometimes appear to barbaric fancy. The rain-clouds are imprisoned in dungeons or

caverns by Vritra, the "enveloper," the thief, serpent, wolf, wild boar, as he is severally styled in the *Rig-Veda*. Indra attacks him, hurls his darts at him, they pierce the cloud-caverns, the waters are released, and drop upon the earth as rain.

This explanation, which has many parallels in savage myth, is self-consistent as fitting into crude philosophy of personal life and volition in sun and cloud, and is fraught with deep truth of meaning in regions like the Punjaub, where drought brought famine in its train.

The Aryans were a pastoral people, their wealth being in flocks and herds.<sup>1</sup> The cow yielded milk for the household; her dung fertilised the soil; her young multiplied the wealth of the family at an ever-increasing rate, and she naturally became the symbol of fruitfulness and prosperity, ultimately an object of veneration; while, for the functions which the bull performed, he was the type of strength. The Aryan's enemy was he who stole or injured the cattle; the Aryan's friend was he who saved them from the robber's clutch.

Intellectually, the Aryan tribes were, speaking broadly, in the mythopœic stage, and the personification of phenomena was rife among them. Their barbaric fancy, as kindred myths all the world over

<sup>1</sup> Both "pecuniary" and "fee" are, as established by Grimm's law, from *pecu*. Latin *pecu-a*, pl. *pecus*, "cattle"; Sanskrit *paçu*, "cattle," from *pac*, to fasten (that which is tied up, *i.e.* domestic cattle). Cf. Skeats' *Etymol. Dict. in loc.* A. S. *feoh* is cognate with German *vieh*, and the ideas these express occur in *klēma*, the Greek word for "property," which Grimm derives from the verb *keto*, "to feed cattle."

testify, would find ample play in the fleeting and varied scenery of the cloud-flecked heavens, suggestive, as this would be, of bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial. To these children of the plain the heavens were a vast, wide expanse, over which roamed supra-mundane beasts, the two most prominent figures in their mythical zoology being the cow and the bull. The sun, giver of blessed light, was the bull of majesty and strength; the white clouds were cows, from whose swelling udders dropped the milk of heaven—the blessed rain. But there were dark clouds also, clouds of night and clouds of storm, and within these lurked the monster-robber; into them he lured the herds, and withheld both light and rain from the children of men. To the sun-god, therefore, who smote the thief-dragon, Vritra, with his shaft, and set free the imprisoned cows, went up the shout of praise, the song of gratitude. This myth survives in many legends of the Aryan race, and their family likeness is unmistakable. In its Latin guise it appears as Hercules<sup>1</sup> and Cacus, although the preciseness of detail narrated by Virgil, Livy, and other writers, has given it quasi-historical rank. Hercules, after his victory over Geryon, stops to rest by the Tiber, and while he is sleeping the three-headed monster, Cacus, steals some of his cattle, dragging them by their tails into his cavern in Mons Avertinus.

<sup>1</sup> Not the same as the Greek Heraklēs. The similarity of name led the Romans to identify their Hercules, who was a god of boundaries, like Jupiter Terminus, with the Greek hero. *Cacus* is not cognate with Greek *kakos*, bad, but was originally *Cacius*, the “blinder” or “darkener.”

Their bellowing awakens Hercules, who attacks the cavern, from the mouth of which Cacus vomits flames, and roars as in thunder. But the hero slays him and frees the cattle, a victory which the earlier Romans celebrated with solemn rites at the Ara Maxima. In Greek myth the most familiar examples are the struggles between the sun-god, Apollo, and the storm-dragon, Pythôn, and the deliverance of the Princess Andromeda by Perseus from the sea-monster sent by Poseidôn to ravage the land. In the northern group we have the battle of Siegfried with the Niflungs, or Niblungs, and of Sigurd with the dragon Fafnir, who guards golden treasures; while, in the *Edda*, Thor goes fishing with the giant Hymir, and catches the demon Loki, whose foul brood are Hell, the wolf Fenri, and the Earth-girdling Serpent. Amongst ourselves, Beowulf, hero of the poem of that name, attacks the dragon or fire-drake Grendel, who, with his troll-mother, haunts a gloomy marsh-land. Thence he stole forth at night to seize sleeping champions, taking them to his dwelling-place to devour them, and this in such numbers that scarce a man was left. One pale night, Beowulf awaited the coming of the monster, and, gripping him tightly, snapped his limbs asunder, so that he died.

These brief illustrations would hardly be complete without some reference to our national saint. Opinions differ as to his merits, Gibbon stigmatising him as a fraudulent army contractor,<sup>1</sup> while the researches of M. Ganneau seek to establish his

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, iii. 171; Emerson's *English Traits*, p. 123.

relation to the Egyptian Horus and Typhon. Be this as it may, the stirring old legend tells how George of Cappadocia delivered the city of Silene from a dragon dwelling in a lake hard by. Nothing that the people could give him satisfied his insatiate maw, and in their despair they cast lots who among their dearest ones should be flung to the dread beast. The lot fell to the king's daughter, and she went unflinchingly, like Jephthah's daughter, to her fate. But on the road the hero learns her sad errand, and bidding her fear not, he, making sign of the cross, brandishes his lance, attacks and transfixes the dragon, and leading him into Silene, beheads him in sight of all the people, who, with their king, are baptized to the glory of Him who made St. George the victor.<sup>1</sup>

(f.) *The Devil.*

While, however, the myth of Indra and Vritra has in its western variants remained for the most part a battle between heroes and dragons, the moral element rarely obscuring the physical features, it gave rise among the Iranians or ancient Persians to a definite theology, the strange fortunes of which have, as remarked above, profoundly affected Christendom.

Although in the Vedic hymns the features of the primitive nature-myth reappear again and again, Indra himself boasting, "I slew Vritra, O Maruts, with might, having grown strong with my own vigour; I who hold the thunderbolt in my arms, I have made

<sup>1</sup> See Ralston's *Russian Folk-Tales*, p. 347, for similar Bulgarian legend about St. George.

these all-brilliant waters to flow freely for man," we find an approach in them to some conception of that spiritual conflict of which the physical conflict was so complete a symbol. Indra as victor, is an object of adoration and invested with purity and goodness; Vritra, as the enemy of men, is an object of dread, and invested with malice and evil.

But while in the Zend-Avesta, the Scriptures of the old Iranian religion, the struggle between Thraetaôna and the three-headed serpent Azhi-Dahâka (in which names are recognisable the Traitana and Ahi of the *Veda* and the Feridun and Zohak of Persian epic) is narrated, the moral idea is dominant throughout. The theme is not the attack of the sun-god to recover stolen milch cows from the dragon's cave, but the battle between Ormuzd, the Spirit of Light, and Ahriman, the Spirit of Darkness. The one seeks to mar the earth which the other has made. Into the fair paradise, Airayana-Vaêjô, "a delightful spot," as the Avesta calls it, "with good waters and trees," and into other smiling lands which Ormuzd has blessed, Ahriman sends "a mighty serpent . . . strong, deadly frost . . . buzzing insects, and poisonous plants . . . toil and poverty," and, worse than all, "the curse of unbelief."<sup>1</sup> Between these two spiritual powers and their armies of good and bad angels the battle rages for supremacy in the universe, for possession of the citadel of Mansoul.

Early in the history of the Asiatic Aryan tribes there had arisen a quarrel between the Brahmanic

<sup>1</sup> Haug's *Essays on the Parsis*, tr. Vendidâd, pp. 225 ff.

and Iranian divisions. The latter had become a quiet-loving, agricultural people, while the former remained marauding nomads, attacking and harassing their neighbours. In their plundering inroads they invoked the aid of spells and sacrifices, offering the sacred soma-juice to their gods, and nerving themselves for the fray by deep draughts of the intoxicating stuff. Not only they, but their gods as well, thereby became objects of hatred to the peaceful Iranians, who foreswore all worship of freebooter's deities, and transformed these *devas* of the old religion into demons. That religion, as common to the Indo-European race, was polytheistic, a worship of deities each ruling over some department of nature, but a worship exalting now one, now another god, be it Indra, or Varuna, or Agni, according to the indications of the deity's supremacy, or according to the mood of the worshipper. As remarked by Jacob Grimm, "the idea of the devil is foreign to all primitive religions," obviously because in all primitive thought evil and good are alike regarded as the work of deities. In the Old Testament, Yahweh is spoken of as the author of both ;<sup>1</sup> the angels, whether charged with weal or woe, are his messengers. In the *Iliad* Zeus dispenses both :—

"Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,  
The source of evil one, the other good ;  
From thence the cup of mortal man he fills,  
Blessings to these, to those distribute ill,  
To most, he mingles both,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Isaiah xlv. 7, 1 Kings xxii. 21-23, Amos iii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Iliad*, Book xxiv. 663 ff., and cf. Lang's tr., p. 494.

and 'tis a far cry from this to the loftier conception of Euripides: "If the gods do evil, then are they no gods." So there was a monotheistic—or, as Professor Max Müller terms it, a henotheistic—element in the Vedic religion which in the Iranian religion, and this mainly through the teaching of the great thinker and reformer Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), was largely diffused. In his endeavour to solve the old problem of reconciling sin and misery with omnipotent goodness, he supposes "two primeval causes," one of which produced the "reality," or good mind; the other the "non-reality," or evil mind. Behind these was developed belief in a philosophical abstraction, "uncreate time," of which each was the product; but such doctrines were too subtle for the popular grasp, and, wrapped in the old mythological garb, they appeared in concrete form as dualism. Vritra survived in Ahriman, who, like him, is represented as a serpent; and in Ormuzd we have the phonetic descendant of Ahura-mazda.

Now, it was with this dualism, this transformed survival of the sun and cloud myth, that the Jews came into association during their memorable exile in Babylon. Prior to that time their theology, as hinted above, had no devil in it. But in that belief in spirits which they held in common with all semi-civilised races, as a heritage from barbarous ancestors, there were the elements out of which such a personality might be readily evolved. Their *satan*, or "accuser," as that word means, is no prince of the demons, like the Beelzebul of later times; no dragon

or old serpent, as of the Apocalypse, defying Omnipotence and deceiving the whole world; but a kind of detective who, by direction of Yahweh, has his eye on suspects, and who is sent to test their fidelity. In all his missions he acts as the intelligent and loyal servant of Yahweh. But although therefore not regarded as bad himself, the character and functions with which he was credited made easy the transition from such theories about him to theories of him as inherently evil, as the enemy of goodness, and, therefore, of God. He who, like Vritra, was an object of dread, came to be regarded as the incarnation of evil, the author and abettor of things harmful to man. Persian dualism gave concrete form to this conception, and from the time of the Exile we find Satan as the Jewish Ahriman, the antagonist of God. Not he alone, for "the angels that kept not their first estate" were the ministers of his evil designs, creatures so numerous that every one has 10,000 at his right hand and 1000 at his left hand, and because they rule chiefly at night no man should greet another lest he salute a demon. They haunt lonely spots, often assume the shape of beasts, and it is their presence in the bodies of men and women which is the cause of madness and other diseases.<sup>1</sup>

From the period when the Apocryphal books, especially those having traces of Persian influence, were written,<sup>2</sup> this doctrine of an arch-fiend with his

<sup>1</sup> Vide my *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Notably *Tobit* and *Baruch*, and cf. *Book of Wisdom*, ii. 24, for earliest indications of the belief. The Asmodeus of *Tobit*, iii. 8 and 17, appears to be the Aeshmô dêvô of the Zend-Avesta.

army of demons received increasing impetus. It passed on without check into the Christian religion, and wherever this spread the heathen gods, like the *devas* of Brahmanism among the Iranians, were degraded into demons, and swelled the vast crowd of evil spirits let loose to torment and ruin mankind.

This doctrine of demonology, it should be remembered, was but the elaborated form of ancestral belief in spirits referred to above. In the Christian system it was associated with that belief in magic which has its roots in fetishism, and from the two arose belief in witchcraft. The universal belief in demons in early and mediæval times supplied an easy explanation of disasters and diseases; the sorcerers and charm-workers, the wizards and enchanters, had passed into the service of the devil. For power to work their spite and malevolence they had bartered their souls to him, and sealed the bargain with their blood. It was enough for the ignorant and frightened sufferers to accuse some poor, misshapen, squinting old woman of casting on them the evil eye, or of appearing in the form of a cat, to secure her trial by torture and her condemnation to an unpitied death. The spread of popular terror led to the issue of Papal bulls and to the passing of statutes in England and in other countries against witchcraft, and it was not until late in the eighteenth century that the laws against that imaginary crime were repealed.

There is no sadder chapter in the annals of this

tearful world than this ghastly story of witch-finding and witch-burning. Sprenger computes that during the Christian epoch no less than *nine millions* of persons, mostly women of the poorer classes, were burned; victims of the survival into relatively civilised times of an illusion which had its source in primitive thought. It was an illusion which had the authority of Scripture on its side;<sup>1</sup> the Church had no hesitation concerning it; such men as Luther, Sir Thomas Browne, and Wesley never doubted it; the evidence of the bewitched was supported by honest witnesses; and judges disposed to mercy and humanity had no qualms in passing the dread sentence of the law on the condemned.<sup>2</sup>

And although it exists not to-day, save in by-places where gross darkness lurks, it was not destroyed by argument, by disproof, by direct assault, but only through the quiet growth and diffusion of the scientific spirit, before which it has dispersed. It could not live in an atmosphere thus purified, an atmosphere charged with belief in unchanging causation and in a definite order unbroken by caprice or fitfulness, whether in the sweep of a planet or the pulsations of a human heart.

Of course the antecedents of the arch-fiend himself could not fail to be the subject of curious inquiry in the time when his existence was no matter of

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> For details of witch trials in this island cf. Mrs. Lynn Linton's *Witch Stories*, passim.

doubt. The old theologians scraped together enough material about him from the sacred books of the Jews and Christians to construct an elaborate biography of him ; but in this they would seem to have explained too much in certain directions and not enough in others, thus provoking a reaction which ultimately discredited their painful research. Their genealogy of him was carried farther back than they intended or desired, for the popular notions credited him with both a mother and grandmother. Their theory of his fall from heaven gave rise to the droll conception of his lameness and to the legends of which the "devil on two sticks" is a type. Their infusion of foreign element into his nature aided his pictorial presentment in motley form and garb, as seen in the old miracle-plays. To Vedic descriptions of Vritra's darkness may perchance be traced his murkiness and blackness ; to Greek satyr and German forest-sprite his goat-like body, his horns, his cloven hoofs, his tail ; to Thor his red beard ; to dwarfs and goblins his red cloak and nodding plume ; to theories of transformation of men and spirits into animals his manifold metamorphoses, as black cat, wolf, hellhound, and the like.

But his description was his doom ; it was by a natural sequence that the legends of mediæval times present him, not, with the Scotch theologians, as a scholar and a swindler, disguising himself as a parson, but as gullible and stupid, as over-reaching himself, and as befooled by mortals. And, like the Trolls of Scandinavian folk-lore who burst at sunrise, it needed

only the full light thrown upon his origin and development by the researches of comparative mythologists to dissipate this creation of man's fears and fancies into the vaporous atmosphere where he had his birth.

#### § IV.

##### THE SOLAR THEORY OF MYTH.

The cogency of the evidence concerning the development of belief in Satan out of light-and-darkness myths is generally admitted, but it is of a kind that must not be pushed too far. For the phases of Nature are manifold; manifold also is the life of man; and we must not lend a too willing ear to theories which refer the crude explanations of an unscientific age, when the whole universe is Wonderland, to one source. *Cave hominem unius libri*, says the adage, and we may apply it, not only to the man of one book, but also to the man of one idea, in whom the sense of proportion is lacking, and who sees only that for which he looks. Here such caution is introduced as needful of exercise against the comparative mythologists who, not content with showing—as abundant evidence warrants—that myth has its germs in the investment of the powers of nature with personal life and consciousness, contend that the great epics of our own and kindred races are, from their broadest features to minutest detail, but nature-myths obscured and transformed.

Certain scholars, notably Professor Max Müller, Sir G. W. Cox, and Professor de Gubernatis, as interpreters of the myths of the Indo-European peoples, and Dr. Goldziher, as an interpreter of Hebrew myth and cognate forms, maintain that the names given in the mythopœic age to the sun, the moon, and the changing scenery of the heaven as the fleeting forms and myriad shades passed over its face, lost their original signification wholly or partially, and came to be regarded as the names of veritable deities and men, whose actions and adventures are the disguised descriptions of the sweep of the thunder-charged clouds and of the victory of the hero-god over their light-engulfing forces. But it is better to state the theory in the words of its exponents, and for that purpose a couple of extracts from Sir George Cox's *Mythology of the Aryan Nations* will suffice.

In the spontaneous utterances of thoughts awakened by outward phenomena, we have the source of myths which must be regarded as *primary*. But it is obvious that such myths would be produced only so long as the words employed were used in their original meaning. If once the meaning of the word were either in part or wholly forgotten, the creation of a new personality under this name would become inevitable, and the change would be rendered both more certain and more rapid by the very wealth of words which were lavished on the sights and objects which most impressed their imagination. A thousand phrases would be used to describe the action of a beneficent or consuming sun, of the gentle or awful night, of the playful or furious wind; and every word or phrase become the germ of a new story as soon as the mind lost its hold on the original force of the name. Thus, in the polyonymy (by which term Sir George Cox means the giving of several names

to one object), which was the result of the earliest form of human thought, we have the germ of the great epics of later times, and of the countless legends which make up the rich stores of mythical tradition . . . and the legends so framed constitute the class of *secondary* myths (p. 42).

Henceforth the words which had denoted the sun and moon would denote not merely living things but living persons. . . . Every word would become an attribute, and all ideas, once grouped round a single object, would branch off into distinct personifications. The sun had been the lord of light, the driver of the chariot of the day; he had toiled and laboured for the sons of men, and sunk down to rest, after a hard battle, in the evening. But now the lord of light would be Phoibos Apollôn, while Helios would remain enthroned in his fiery chariot, and his toils and labours and death-struggles would be transferred to Heraklês. The violet clouds which greet his rising and his setting would now be represented by herds of cows which feed in earthly pastures. There would be other expressions which would still remain as floating phrases, not attached to any definite deities. These would gradually be converted into incidents in the life of heroes, and be woven at length into systematic variations. Finally, these gods and heroes, and the incidents of their mythical career, would receive each "a local habitation and a name." These would remain as genuine history when the origin and meaning of the words had been either wholly or in part forgotten (p. 51).

Such is the "solar myth" theory. "We can hardly," as Mr. Matthew Arnold says, "now look up at the sun without having the sensations of a moth," and if occasion has not been given to the adversary to blaspheme, he has been supplied with ample material for banter and ridicule. Some of the happiest illustrations of this are made by Mr. Foster in his amusing and really informing essay on "Nature Myths in Nursery Rhymes," reprinted in *Leisure*

*Readings*,<sup>1</sup> an essay which it seems the immaculate critics took *au sérieux*! With a little exercise of one's invention, given also ability to parody, it will be found that many noted events, as well as the lives of the chief actors in them, yield results comforting to the solar mythologists. Not only the *Volsungs* and the *Iliad*, but the story of the Crusades and of the conquest of Mexico; not only Arthur and Baldr, but Cæsar and Bonaparte, may be readily resolved, as Professor Tyndall says we all shall be, "like streaks of morning cloud, into the infinite azure of the past." Dupuis, in his researches into the connection between astronomy and mythology, had suggested that Jesus was the sun, and the twelve apostles the zodiacal signs; and Goldziher, analysing the records of a remote period, maintains the same concerning Jacob and his twelve sons. M. Senart has satisfied himself that Gotama, the Buddha, is a sun-myth. Archbishop Whately, to confound the sceptics, ingeniously disproved the existence of Bonaparte; and a French ecclesiastic has, by witty etymological analogies, shown that Napoleon is cognate with Apollo, the sun, and his mother Letitia identical with Leto, the mother of Apollo; that his *personnel* of twelve marshals were the signs of the zodiac; that his retreat from Moscow was a fiery setting, and that his emergence from Elba, to rule for twelve months, and then be banished to St. Helena, is the sun rising out of the eastern waters to set in the western ocean after twelve hours' reign in the sky.

<sup>1</sup> *Knowledge Library.*

But upon this solar theory let us cite what Dr. Tylor, whose soberness of judgment renders him a valuable guide along the zigzag path of human progress, says: "The close and deep analogies between the life of nature and the life of man have been for ages dwelt upon by poets and philosophers, who, in simile or in argument, have told of light and darkness, of calm and tempest, of birth, growth, change, decay, dissolution, renewal. But no one-sided interpretation can be permitted to absorb into a single theory such endless many-sided correspondences as these. Rash inferences which, on the strength of mere resemblance, derive episodes of myth from episodes of nature, must be regarded with utter mistrust, for the student who has no more stringent criterion than this for his myths of sun and sky and dawn, will find them wherever it pleases him to seek them."

The investigations of comparative mythologists, more particularly in this country and Germany, have thrown such valuable light on the history of ideas, that it will be instructive to learn what excited the inquiry. The researches of Niebuhr and his school into the credibility of early history made manifest that the only authority on which the chroniclers relied was tradition. To them—children of an uncritical age—that tradition was venerable with the lapse of time, and binding as a revelation from the gods. To us the charm and interest of it lie in detecting within it the ancient deposit of a mythopœic period, and in deciphering from it what manner of men they must have been among whom such

explanation of the beginnings had credence. And in such an inquiry nothing can be "common or unclean," nothing too trivial or puerile for analysis; for where the most grotesque and impossible are found, there we are nearer to the conditions of which we would know more.

The serious endeavour to get at the fact underlying the fabulous was extended to the great body of mythology which had not been incorporated into history, and the interpretations of which satisfied only those who suggested them. As hinted already, the Greeks had sought out the meaning of their myths, with here and there a glimpse of the truth gained; but this was confined to the philosophers and poets. Euhêmeros degraded them into dull chronicle, making Heraklês a thief who carried off a crop of oranges; Jove a king crushing rebellion; Atlas an astronomer; Pythôn a freebooter; Æolus a weather-wise seaman, and so on. Plutarch tried to "restore" them, but only defaced them, and after centuries of neglect they were discovered by Lord Bacon to be allegories with a moral. Then Banier and Lemprière emptied out of them what little life Euhêmeros had left, and the believers in Hebrew as the original speech of mankind saw in them the fragments of a universal primitive revelation! Even Professor Max Müller is so upset by the many loathsome and revolting stories in a mythology current in the land of Lykurgos and Solon, such as the marriage of his mother Jocasta by Œdipus, and the swallowing of his own children by Cronus, that he

inquires (as if he half believed it possible) whether there was not "a period of temporary insanity through which the human mind had to pass," and a degradation from lovely metaphor to coarse fact which only a "disease of language," or the confusion arising from the forgotten meanings of words, explains. There is no need, however, for assumptions of this or of any other kind. This is best shown by a summary of facts which led, more or less directly, to the formulation of the solar theory.

Some fifty years ago a good many idle speculations, products of a reverent and uncurbed fancy concerning Hebrew as the primitive speech of mankind, were laid to rest when the sober guess of Schlegel as to the connection of the leading languages of Europe and those of India and Persia, was converted into certainty by Bopp, Jacob Grimm, Schleicher, and later scholars.

By the application of the comparative method to philology, *i.e.* the interpretation of any set of facts by comparison with corresponding facts, due allowance being made for differences which Grimm's law (see *infra*) explains, the relation of Greek, Latin, Slavonic, Teutonic, and Keltic to one another and to Indian and Persian, and their consequent descent from a common parent language, was proved. To this group the term Aryan (from a Sanskrit word cognate with the root *ar*, our English word *ear*, to plough), is given, a term which ancient records show was applied by the Asiatic Aryans to themselves as the lords of the soil, the dominant race. The names

Indo-Germanic, and, more appropriately as roughly defining the peoples included thereunder, Indo-European, have been suggested in its stead, but Aryan, as the more convenient term, has come into general use.

The survival of grammatical forms common to the Aryan ancestors, and the likeness between words necessary for daily use, evidenced to one parent primitive speech, and, passing from words to the ideas and things which they connoted, philologists were able to infer what manner of men these Aryans were, and under what conditions they dwelt. In the enthusiasm excited by so brilliant a discovery the soberest scholars were apt to over-colour their accurately-outlined picture of old Aryan life ; to read modern meanings into the ancient words. But, making good allowance for this, the sketch which was presented in Max Müller's famous paper on *Comparative Mythology*<sup>1</sup> remains a credit to scholarship in its vivid generalisations from immaterial data.

Professor Max Müller, in agreement with Pictet and others, placed the original settlement of the Aryans as probably in the region between the Hindu Kush Mountains and the Caspian Sea. But the opinion of later scholars of cooler judgment leans to Europe rather than to Asia as the primitive home of the Aryan tribes. The scanty hints which survive point to a larger acquaintance with European flora and fauna than with Asiatic ; to a southward course, whilst silent about westward migration ; the movement of races

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Chips*, ii. 1-146.

inclines from less genial to more genial zones ; the traditions of certain branches, as the Greeks, tell of them as autochthones, or born on the soil where they are found ; and the judgment of experts is decisive as to the greater nearness of the European languages to the original speech as contrasted with Sanskrit and Iranian. These are the principal reasons adduced in support of the theory of a European origin. Benfey places the old Aryan home in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, Schrader and Geiger in Middle Germany, Karl Penka in Scandinavia. But in speculating on the exact habitation of congeries of tribes requiring vast tracts of country for support, no rigid boundaries can be fixed, and there is room for the play of both theories, the more so as theories they must remain.<sup>1</sup>

At the back of this unsettled question lies the interesting subject of the civilisation of pre-Aryan races on the European-Asiatic Continent. In the Newer Stone Age this continent was inhabited by races of short stature, with long and narrow skulls, and probably dark complexions, races whom the Aryans, a tall, round-skulled, fair-complexioned race, conquered, and with whom they so largely intermingled that the varieties of fair and dark people in Europe at this day, speaking an Aryan language, are past finding out. Indeed, there are probably no unmixed races throughout Europe and Asia ; the conquering race imposed its language on

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Professor Keane's Appendix to Sir A. C. Ramsay's *Europe*, p. 557.

the conquered, and thus is explained the community of speech without community of race which must be recognised in the composite European peoples.

With this qualification the kinship of the Aryan-language-speaking peoples is demonstrated, and the like kind of evidence by which this is proved has been applied to establish the identity of their mythologies, legends, and folk-tales. The meaning of the proper names of these once determined, the key to the meaning of the myth or tale was clear ; because, it is contended, the names contain the germs or oldest surviving part. This is to make the last first ; but the result, as already shown in the Aryan light-and-darkness myths, has been to bring out a few striking correspondences in Greek and Vedic names, although by no means so intimate and frequent as the solar mythologists assume. The uniform behaviour of the untutored mind before like phenomena to which barbaric myth witnesses prepares us for general correspondences, but not in such details as we find in the Aryan group. On what theory these, notably in the case of the folk-tales, are to be accounted for, it is not easy to say, for the mode of their diffusion from India to Iceland is obscure. But the fact abides that nursery stories told in Norway and Tyrol, in Scotland and the Deccan, are identical. After allowing for local colouring and for changes incident to the lapse of time, they are the variants of stories presumably related in the Aryan fatherland at a period historically remote, and, moreover, are told in words which are phonetically akin. Their

resemblances in minor incident and detail are not easily explained by theories of borrowing, for apparently no trace of intercourse between the Asiatic Aryans and the Aryans of extreme Western Europe occurs until after the domiciling of the stories where we find them. Nor did they with such close resemblances as appear between the German Faithful John and the Hindu Rama and Luxman; between our own Cinderella, the German Aschenpüttel and the Hindu Sodewa Bai, spring native from their respective soils.<sup>1</sup> And there is just that unlikeness in certain details which might be expected from the different positions and products of the several Aryan lands. They explain, for example, the absence from Scandinavian folk-tale of creatures like the elephant, the giant, ape, and turtle, which figure in the Brahmanic.

When we turn to the great Aryan epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; the *Volsungs*; the *Nibelungs*; *King Arthur and his Round Table*; the *Ramâyanâ* and the *Mahâ Bhâratâ*; the *Shah Nameh*, and so forth, we find similarities of incident and episode which point to a common derivation from old Aryan myth. That common synonyms occur in cognate languages is to be expected, but so far as the names and the characteristics of the heroes and heroines are concerned, the phonetic identity is proven in a far less number of cases than the solar mythologists, working on their too exclu-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Little Saddlehurst" in Mr. Geldart's *Folk-Lore of Modern Greece*, p. 27.

sive method, argue. The key which for them unlocks the meaning of every Aryan myth is Sanskrit. In tracing the history of the Indo-European family of speech, it served as the starting-point, because it has more than any other member preserved the roots and suffixes, if not in their oldest, still in their most accessible form. And in tracing the course of Indo-European mythology, it is in the Vedic texts, chiefly the most ancient, the *Rig-Veda*, that we find the materials for comparative study, since in these venerable hymns of a Bible older than our own are preserved the earliest recorded forms of that mythology. That is to say, we have not in any European branch of Aryan speech any documentary relic of the age of the *Rig-Veda*, otherwise we might find ourselves in possession of more ancient relics of that speech. So that, although the value of Sanskrit as the guide without which knowledge of the Aryan mother-tongue would have remained vague, indeed have been beyond reach, cannot be over-estimated, we must not accept as of universal worth what is local and special in it.<sup>1</sup>

The phonetic kinship and actual identity which comparative philologists have sought to establish between the proper names of gods and heroes of the Greek and Vedic mythologies (for the inquiry has been chiefly restricted to these two), is based on the collection of rules by which we can at once tell what sounds in one language correspond to those of its

<sup>1</sup> Cf. on this matter Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, p. 203.

kindred tongues, called, after its discoverer, "Grimm's Law." This law gave the quietus to theories of common origin and variation of words based on specious resemblances (theories satirised by Dean Swift in his derivation of *ostler* from *oatstealer*), and introduced a scientific method into etymological study.

The varying pronunciation of certain words among the Aryan-speaking peoples which were common to them was discovered by Grimm to be constant ; for example, a Greek *th* answers to an English *d*, and, *vice versâ*, a German *s* or *z* to an English *t*, and so forth, so that by comparing these altered forms the common form from which they spring is reached.

At what fluent period in the history of the Aryan languages these changes of one sound into another were induced is unknown, nor are their precise causes easy of ascertainment, being referable to physical influences, climatal and local, which in the course of time brought about changes in the organs of speech, such, for example, as make our *th* so difficult of pronunciation to a German, in whose language *d* takes its place, as *drei* for *three*, *durstig* for *thirsty*, *dein* for *thine*, etc. We may note tendencies to variation in children of the same household, their prattle often affording striking illustration of Grimm's law, and it is easy to see that among semi-civilised and isolated tribes, where no check upon the variations is imposed, they would tend to become fixed and give rise to new dialects.

Tracing the operation of that law in the changes

in proper names in Greek and Vedic mythology, their correlation is proved in a few important instances. The Greek *Zeus*, the Latin *Deus* (whence French *Dieu* and our *deity*, and also *deuce*), the Lithuanian *Dievas*, and the Sanskrit *Dyaus* all come from an old Aryan root, *div* or *dyu*, meaning "to shine." The Sanskrit *dyu* as a noun means "sky" or "day," and in the *Veda* *Dyaus* is the bright sky or heaven. *Varuna*, the noblest figure in the Vedic religion, the "enveloper" or all-surrounding heaven, is cognate with the Greek *Ouranos* or *Uranus*, the common root being *var*, "to veil" or "cover." Agni, the fire-god, to whom the larger number of hymns occur in the *Veda*, is related to the Latin *ignis*, fire, and so forth.

The heavens and the earth and all that in them is are the raw material on which man works, and the comparative philologists have established exactly what might have been predicated, the nature-origin of the Greek, Vedic, and other Aryan myths. They might well have rested content with this confirmation which their method gives to results arrived at by other methods, and not weakened or discredited it by applying it all round to every leading name in Aryan myth. For this has only revealed the fundamental differences among themselves as to the etymologies and meanings of such names. But not satisfied with the demonstration that the majestic epics have their germs in the phenomena of the natural world, and the course of the day and year, they strain the evidence by contending that "there is absolutely nothing left for further analysis in the

stories ;” that their “resemblances in detail defy the influences of climate and scenery ;”<sup>1</sup> that every incident has its birth in the journey of the sun, the death of the dawn, the theft of the twilight by the powers of darkness, evidence which, in Sir George Cox’s words, “not long hence will probably be regarded as excessive.”

They are nature-myths ; but, and in this is the secret of their enduring life, they are much more than that. The impetus that has shaped them as we now know them came from other forces than clouds and storms.

Without such caution as these remarks are designed to supply, any reader of the *Mythology of the Aryan Nations* would conclude that the philological method had proved the meteorological origin of every epic and folk-tale among the Indo-European peoples. He would learn that, in a way rudely analogous to the supernatural guidance of the Christian Church, the several Aryan tribes had received from the fathers of the race an unvarying canon of interpretation of the primitive myths, a canon seemingly preserved with the jealous veneration with which the Jew regarded the *Thorah*, and the Brahman the *Veda*. He would also learn that the details of Norse and classic myth can be traced to the *Veda*, that these details, not of incident alone, but of thought and expression, survived unimpaired by time and untouched by circumstance, whilst, strange to say, the more prominent names and the

<sup>1</sup> *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, i. 108.

leading characters became obscured in their meaning. Strange indeed, and not true. For what are the facts ?

Long before the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* existed as we know them (and they have remained an inviolate sacred text since 600 B.C., when every verse, word, and syllable were counted) the Aryan tribes had swarmed from their parent hive across boundless steppes and over winding mountain passes, some to the westward limits of Europe, others southward into Hindustan. Among the slender intellectual capital of which they stood possessed was the common mythology of their savage ancestors, in which, as we have seen, sun and moon, storm and thunder-cloud, and all other natural phenomena, were credited with personal life and will. But that mythology had certainly advanced beyond the crude primitive form and entered the heroic stage, wherein the powers of nature were half human, half divine. Their language had passed into the inflective or highest stage, and had undergone such changes that the relationship between its several groups and their origin from one mother-tongue was obscured, and remained so until laid bare in our day. In short, the Aryan tribes had attained no mean state of civilisation, some being more advanced than the others, according as external circumstances helped or hindered, and one by one they passed from the condition of semi-civilised nomads to become fathers and founders of nations that abide to this day.

These being the facts to which language itself

bears witness, how was it possible for their mythologies, *i.e.* their stock of notions about things, to remain unaffected and secure of transmission without organic change? The myths, unfixed in literary form, yielded themselves with ease as vehicles of new ideas; their ancient meaning, already faded, paled before the all-absorbing significance of present facts. These were more potent realities than the kisses of the dawn; the human and the personal, in its struggles, of mightier interest than the battle of rosy morn or purple eve with the sons of thunder; and Homer's music would long since have died away were Achilles' "baneful wrath" but a passively-told tale of the sun's grief for the loss of the morning.

In brief, the complex and varying influences which have transformed the primitive myth are the important factors which the solar theorists have omitted in their attempted solution of the problem. They have forgotten the part which, to borrow a term from astronomy, "personal equation" has played. They have not examined myth in the light of the long history of the race; and the new elements which it took into itself, while never wholly ridding itself of the old, have escaped them. They have secured a mechanical unity, whereas, by combination of the historical with their own method, they might have secured a vital unity.

To all which classic myth itself bears record. The Greeks were of Aryan stock, but the time of their settlement is unknown. The period between this and the Homeric age was, however, long enough

to admit of their advance to the state of a nation rejoicing in the fulness of intellectual life. They remembered not from what rock they were hewn, from what pit they were digged. The nature-gods of their remote ancestors had long since changed their meteorological character, and appeared in the likeness of men, or, at least, played very human pranks on Olympus. In the *Veda* the primitive nature-myth, although exalted and purified, is persistent; under one name or another it is still the ceaseless battle between the darkness and the light; Dyaus was still the bright sky, the cattle of Siva were still the clouds. But the Greek of Homer's time, and his congener in the far north, had forgotten all that; the war in heaven was transferred to the strife of gods and men on the shores of the Hellespont and by the bleak seaboard of the Baltic. Their gods and goddesses, improved by age and experience, put off their physical and put on the ethical; the heaven-father became king of gods and men, source of order, law, and justice; the sun and the dawn, Apollo and Athênê, became wisdom, skill, and guardianship incarnate. And the story of human vicissitudes found in solar myth that "pattern of things in the heavens" which conformed to its design.

Thus Homer, in whose day the old nature-myth had become confused with the vague traditions of veritable deeds of kings and heroes but dimly remembered, touched it as with heavenly fire unquenchable. The siege of Troy, so say the solar mythologists, "is a repetition of the daily siege of the

east by the solar powers that every evening are robbed of their highest treasures in the west." It is surely a truer instinct which, recognising the physical framework of the great epics, feels that the vitality which inheres in them is due to whatever of human experience, joy, and sorrow is the burden of their immortal song. As to the repulsive features of Greek myth, one can neither share the distress of the solar theorists nor feel their difficulties. Both are self-created, and are aggravated by suggestions, serious or otherwise, of "periods of temporary insanity through which the human mind had to pass," as the rude health of childhood is checked by whooping-cough and measles. They are explained by the persistence with which the lower out of which man has emerged asserts itself, as primary rocks pierce through and overlap later strata.

The ancestors of the Aryans were savages in the remote past, and the "old Adam" was never entirely cast out; indeed it is with us still. There are superstitions and credulities in our midst, in drawing-rooms as well as gipsy camps, quite as gross in nature, if less coarse in guise, as those extant among the Greeks. The future historian of our time, as he turns over the piles of our newspapers, will find contrasts of ignorance and culture as startling as any existing in the land of Homer, of Archimedes, and Aristotle. Spirit-rapping and belief in the "evil eye" have their cult among us, although Professor Huxley's *Hume* can be bought for two shillings, and knowledge has free course. And it certainly

accords best with all that we have learnt as to the mode of human progress to believe that the old lived into the new, than that the old had been cast out, but had gained re-entry, making the last state of the Greeks to be worse than the first.

In this matter the Vedic hymns do not help us much. The conditions under which they took the form that insured their transmission are *ipso facto* as of yesterday, compared with the period during which man's endeavour was made to get at that meaning of his surroundings wherein is found the germ of myth throughout the world. They are the products of a relatively highly-civilised time; the conception of sky and dawn as living persons has passed out of its primitive simplicity; these heavenly powers have become complex deities; there is much confounding of persons, the same god called by one or many names. The thought is that of an age when moral problems have presented themselves for solution, and the references to social matters indicate a settled state of things far removed from the fisher and the hunter stage. Nevertheless there lurk within these sacred writings survivals of the lower culture, traces of coarse rites, bloody sacrifices, of repulsive myths of the gods, and of cosmogonies familiar to the student of barbaric myth and legend.

Enough has been said to show that the extreme and one-sided interpretations of the solar mythologists are due to a one-sided method. The philological has yielded splendid results; this the solar theorists have done; the historical yields results equally rich and

fertile ; this they have left undone. Language has given us the key to the kinship between the several members of the great body of Aryan myths ; the study of the historical evolution of myths, the comparison of these, without regard to affinity of speech, will give us the key to the kinship between savage interpretation of phenomena all the world over. The mythology of Greek and Bushman, of Kaffir and Scandinavian, of the Red man and the Hindu, springs from the like mental condition. It is the uniform and necessary product of the human mind in the childhood of the race.

## § V.

### BELIEF IN METAMORPHOSIS INTO ANIMALS.

The belief that human beings could change themselves into animals has been already alluded to, but in view of its large place in the history of illusions, some further reference is needful.

Superstitions which now excite a smile, or which seem beneath notice, were no sudden phenomena, appearing now and again at the beck and call of wilful deceivers of their kind. That they survive at all, like organisms, atrophied or degenerate, which have seen "better days," is evidence of remote antiquity and persistence. Every seeming vagary of the mind had serious importance, and answered to some real need of man as a sober attempt to read the riddle of the earth, and get at its inmost secret.

So with this belief. It is the outcome of that early thought of man which conceived a common nature and fellowship between himself and brutes, a conception based on rude analogies between his own and other forms of life, as also between himself and things without life, but having motion, be they water-spouts or rivers, trees or clouds, especially these last, when the wind, in violent surging and with howling voice, drove them across the sky. Where he blindly, timidly groped, we walk as in the light, and with love that casts out fear. Where rough resemblances suggested to him like mental states and actions in man and brute, the science of our time has, under the comparative method, converted the guess into a certainty; not to the confirmation of his conclusions, but to the proof of identity of structure and function, to the demonstrating of a common origin, however now impassable the chasm that separates us from the lower animals.

The belief in man's power to change his form and nature is obviously nearly connected with the widespread doctrine of metempsychosis, or the passing of the soul at death into one or a series of animals, generally types of the dead man's character, as where the timid enter the body of a hare, the gluttonous that of a swine or vulture.

“Fills with fresh energy another form,  
And towers an elephant or glides a worm;  
Swims as an eagle in the eye of noon,  
Or wails a screech-owl to the deaf, cold moon,  
Or haunts the brakes where serpents hiss and glare,  
Or hums, a glittering insect, in the air.”

But while in transmigration the soul returns not to the body which it had left, transformation was only for a time, occurring at stated periods, and effected by the will of the transformed, or by the aid of sorcery or magic, or sometimes imposed by the gods as a punishment for impious defiance and sin.

Other causes, less remote, aided the spread of a belief to which the mind was already inclined. Among these were the hallucinations of men who believed themselves changed into beasts, and who, retreating to caves and forests, issued thence howling and foaming, ravening for blood and slaughter; hallucinations which afflicted not only single persons, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, whose milder monomania (he, himself, saying in the famous prize poem:—

“As he ate the unwonted food,  
‘It may be wholesome, but it is not good’”),

rather resembled that of the daughters of Prætus, who believed themselves cows, but which also spread as virulent epidemic among whole classes. It is related that, in 1600, multitudes were attacked by the disease known as lycanthropy, or wolf-madness (from Greek, *lukos*, a wolf, and *anthropos*, a man), and that they herded and hunted in packs, destroying and eating children, and keeping in their mountain fastnesses a cannibal or devil’s sabbath, like the nocturnal meetings of witches and demons known as the Witches’ Sabbath. Hundreds of them were executed on their own confession, but some

time elapsed before the frightful epidemic, and the panic which it caused, passed away. Besides such delusions, history down to our own time records instances where a morbid innate craving for blood, leading sometimes to cannibalism, has shown itself. Mr. Baring-Gould, in his *Book of Werewolves*, cites a case from Gall of a Dutch priest who had such a desire to kill and to see killed that he became chaplain to a regiment for the sake of witnessing the slaughter in battle. But still more ghastly are the notorious cases of Elizabeth, a Hungarian lady of title, who inveigled girls into her castle and murdered them, that she might bathe her body in human blood to enhance her beauty; and of the Maréchal de Retz who, cursed with the abnormal desire to murder children, allured them with promises of dainties into his kitchen, and killed them, inhaling the odour of their blood with delight, and then burned their bodies in the huge fireplace in the room devoted to these horrors. When the deed was done the Maréchal would lie prostrate with grief, "would toss weeping and praying on a bed, or recite fervent prayers and litanies on his knees, only to rise with irresistible craving to repeat the crime."

Such instances as the foregoing, whether of delusion or morbid desire to destroy, are among secondary causes; they may contribute, but they do not create, being inadequate to account for the world-wide existence of transformation myths. The animals which are the supposed subject of these vary with

the habitat, but are always those which have inspired most dread from their ferocity. In Abyssinia we find the man-hyæna; in South Africa, the man-lion; in India, the man-tiger; in Northern Europe, the man-bear; and in other parts of Europe the man-wolf, or werewolf (from A.-S. *wer*, a man).

Among the many survivals of primitive thought in the Greek mythology, which are the only key to its coarser features, this of belief in transformation occurs, and, indeed, along the whole line of human development it appears and re-appears in forms more or less vivid and tragic. The gods of the south, as of the north, came down in the likeness of beasts and birds, as well as of men, and among the references to these myths in classic writers, Ovid, in the *Metamorphoses*, tells the story of Zeus visiting Lykaon, king of Arcadia, who placed a dish of human flesh before the god to test thereby his omniscience. Zeus detected the trick, and punished the king by changing him into a wolf, so that his desire might be towards the food which he had impiously offered to his god.

“In vain he attempted to speak; from that very instant  
His jaws were bespluttered with foam, and only he thirsted  
For blood, as he raged amongst flocks and panted for  
slaughter.

His vesture was changed into hair, his limbs became crooked.  
A wolf—he retains yet large traces of his ancient expression,  
Hoary he is as afore, his countenance rabid,  
His eyes glitter savagely still, the picture of fury.”

But we may pass from this and such-like tales of

the ancients to the grim realities of the belief in mediæval times.

If wolves abounded, much more did the werewolf abound. According to Olaus Magnus, the sufferings which the inhabitants of Prussia and neighbouring nations endured from wolves were trivial compared with the ravages wrought by men turned into wolves. On the feast of the Nativity, these monsters were said to assemble and then disperse in companies to kill and plunder. Attacking lonely houses, they devoured all the human beings and every other animal found therein. "They burst into the beer-cellars and there they empty the tuns of beer or mead, and pile up the empty casks one above another in the middle of the cellar, thus showing their difference from natural wolves." In Scandinavia it was believed that some men had a second skin out of which they could slip and appear in the shape of a beast. Perhaps the phrase "to jump out of one's skin" is a relic of this notion. The Romans believed that the werewolf simply effected the change by turning his skin inside out, hence the term "*versipellis*," or "skin-changer." So in mediæval times it was said that the wolf's skin was under the human, and the unhappy suspects were hacked and tortured for signs of such hairy growth. Sometimes the change was induced, it is said, by putting on a girdle of human skin round the waist; sometimes by the use of magical ointment. Whatever the animal whose shape a man took could do, that he could do, plus such power as he possessed in virtue of his

manhood or acquired by sorcery, his eyes remaining as the only features by which he could be recognised. If he was not changed himself, some charm was wrought on the eyes of onlookers whereby they could see him only in the shape which he was supposed to assume. The genuine monomaniacs aided such an illusion. The poor demented one who conceived himself a dog or a wolf, who barked, and snapped, and foamed at the mouth, and bit savagely at the flesh of others, was soon clothed by a terror-stricken fancy in the skin of either brute, and believed to have the canine or lupine appetite in addition to his human cunning. The imagination thus projects in visible form the spectres of its creation; the eye in this, as in so much else, sees the thing for which it looks. Some solid foundation for the belief would, however, exist in the custom among warriors of dressing themselves in the skins of beasts to add to their ferocious appearance. And it was amidst such that the remarkable form of mania in Northern Europe known as the Berserkr rage ("bear-sark" or "bear-skin" wearer) arose. Working themselves by the aid of strong drink or drugs and contagious excitement into a frenzy, these freebooters of the Northland sallied forth to break the backbones and cleave the skulls of quiet folk and unwary travellers. As with flashing eyes and foaming mouth they yelled and danced, seemingly endowed with magic power to resist assault by sword or club, they aroused in the hysterically disposed a like madness, which led to terrible crimes, and which died

away only as the killing of one's fellows became less the business of life. History supplies many examples of strange mental epidemics which sped through towns and provinces in mediæval times. They were induced by religious enthusiasm and other extreme and harmful forms of mental stimulation, the most notorious being the great St. Vitus' dance, and the procession of Flagellants, to which in their mad orgies the hysterical ceremonies of barbarous tribes correspond. Of that tendency towards imitation which these freaks of erratic and unbalanced minds foster Dr. Carpenter<sup>1</sup> quotes an illustration from Zimmerman. A nun in a large convent in France began to mew like a cat, and shortly afterwards other nuns also mewed. At last all the nuns mewed every day at a given time and for several hours together. And this cat's concert was only stopped by the military arriving and threatening to whip the nuns.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the belief in men-beasts reached its maximum, and met with no tender treatment at the hands of a church whose founder had manifested such soothing pity towards the "possessed" of Galilee and Judæa. That church had a cut-and-dried explanation of the whole thing, and applied a sharp and pitiless remedy. If the devil, with countless myrmidons at his command, was "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it," what limit could be put to his ingenuity and arts? Could he not as easily change a man into a wolf or a bear as a woman into

<sup>1</sup> *Mental Physiology*, p. 315.

a cat? and had not each secured this by a compact with him, the foe of God and His Church? The evidence in support of the one was as clear and cogent as in support of the other; hence werewolf hunting and burning became as Christian a duty and as paying a profession as witch-smelling and torturing. Any cruelty was justified by its perpetrators when the object in view was the vindication of the majesty of God; and not until the advancing intelligence of men recoiled against the popular explanations of witchcraft and lycanthropy were the laws against both repealed.

Those explanations were survivals of savage mental philosophy blended with a crude theology. To the savage, all diseases are the work of evil spirits. If a man hurts himself against a stone, the demon in the stone is the cause. If the man falls suddenly ill, writhes or shrieks in his pain, the spirit which has smuggled itself in with the food or the drink or the breath is twisting or tearing him; if he has a fit, the spirit has flung him; if he is in the frenzy of hysteria, the spirit within him is laughing in fiendish glee. And when the man suddenly loses his reason, goes, as people say, "out of his mind," acts and looks no longer like his former self, still more does this seem the work of an evil agent within him. It is kindred with the old belief that the sickly and ugly infant had been left in the cradle by the witch in place of the child stolen by her before its baptism.<sup>1</sup> And the

<sup>1</sup> Spenser says—

"Such, men do *changelings* call, so changed by fairies' theft."

thing to do is to find some mode of conjuring or frightening or forcing the demon out of the man, just as it became a sacred duty to watch over the newly-born until the sign of the cross had been made on its forehead, and the regenerating water sprinkled over it.

“Presbyter is but old priest writ large.” And the theory of demoniacal agency was but the savage theory in a more elaborate guise. To theologians and jurists it was a sufficing explanation; it fitted in with the current notions of the government of the universe, and there was no need to frame any other. Body and mind were to them as separate entities as they are to the savage and the ignorant. Each regarded the soul as independent of the body, and framed his theories of occasional absence therefrom accordingly. But science has taught us to know ourselves not as dual, but as one. She lays her finger on the subtle, intricate framework of man’s nervous system, and finds in the derangement of this the secret of those delusions and illusions which have been so prolific in agony and suffering. She makes clear how the yielding to morbid tendencies can still foster delusions, which, if no longer the subject of pains and penalties in the body politic, are themselves ministers of vengeance in the body where they arise. And in the recognition of a fundamental unity between the physical and the mental, in the healthy working of the one as dependent on the wholesome care of the other, she finds not only the remedy against mental derangement and all forms of

harmful excitement, but also the prevention which is better than cure.

Traditions of transformation of men into beasts are not confined to the Old world.<sup>1</sup> In Dr. Rink's *Tales of the Eskimo* there are numerous stories both of men and women who have assumed animal form at will, as also incidental references to the belief in stories such as that telling how an Eskimo got inside a walrus skin, so that he might lead the life of that creature. And among the Red races, that rough analogy which led to the animal being credited with life and consciousness akin to the human, still expresses itself in thought and act. If even now it is matter of popular belief in the wilds of Norway that Finns and Lapps, who from remote times have passed as skilful witches and wizards, can at pleasure assume the shape of bears, the common saying, according to Sir George Dasent, about an unusually daring and savage beast being, "that can be no Christian bear," we may not be surprised that lower races still ascribe power of interchange to man and brute. The werewolf superstition is extant among the North-Western Indians, but free from those diabolical features which characterised it in mediæval times among ourselves. It takes its place in barbaric myth generally, and although it may have repellent or cruel elements, it was never blended with belief in the demoniacal. The Ahts say that men go into

<sup>1</sup> An Algonquin legend begins: "In old times, in the beginning of things, men were as animals and animals as men; how this was, no one knows."—Leland's *Algonquin Legends*, p. 31.

the mountains to seek their manitou (that is, the personal deity, generally the first animal seen by a native in the dream produced by his fasting on reaching manhood), and, mixing with wolves, are after a time changed into these creatures. Although the illustration bears more upon what has to be said concerning the barbaric belief in animal-ancestors, it has some reference to the matter in hand to cite the custom among the Tonkanays, a wild and unruly tribe in Texas, of celebrating their origin by a grand annual dance. One of them, naked as he was born, is buried in the earth, then the others, clothed in wolf-skins, walk over him, sniff around him, howl in wolfish style, and then dig him up with their nails.<sup>1</sup> The leading wolf solemnly places a bow and arrow in his hands, and, to his inquiry as to what he must do for a living, advises him "to do as the wolves do—rob, kill, and rove from place to place, never cultivating the soil." Dr. Brinton, in quoting the above from Schoolcraft, refers to a similar custom among the ancient dwellers on Mount Soracte.

As in past times among ourselves, so in times present among races such as the foregoing, their wizards and shamans are believed to have power to turn themselves as they choose into beasts, birds, or reptiles. By whatever name these professional impostors are known, whether as medicine-men, or, as in Cherokee, by the high-sounding title of "possessors of the divine fire," they have traded, and wherever

<sup>1</sup> And cf. Bourke's *Snake Dance of the Moquis*, passim.

credulity or darkest ignorance abide, still trade on the fears and fancies of their fellows by disguising themselves in voice and gait and covering of the animal which they pretend to be. Among races believing in transformation such tricks have free course, and the more dexterous the sorcerer who could play bear's antics in a bear's skin proved himself in throwing off the disguise and appearing suddenly as a man, the greater his success, and the more firmly grounded the belief.

The whole subject, although presented here only in the barest outline, would not be fitly dismissed without some reference to the survival of the primitive belief in men-animals in the world-wide stories known as beast-fables, in which animals act and talk like human beings. When to us all nature was Wonderland, and the four-footed, the birds, and the fishes, among our play-fellows; when in fireside tale and rhyme they spoke our language and lived that free life which we then shared and can never share again, the feeling of kinship to which the old fables gave expression may have checked many a wanton act, and, if we learned it not fully then, we may have taken the lesson to heart since—

“Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that lives.”

And then those *Fables* of Æsop, even with the tedious drawback of the “moral,” as powder beneath the jam, did they not lighten for us in school-days the dark passages through our Valpy (for the

omniscient Dr. William Smith was not then the tyro's dread), and again give us communion with the fowl of the air and the beast of the field? Now our mature thought may interest itself in following the beast-myths to the source whence Babrius and Phædrus, knowing not its springhead and antiquity, drew their vivid presentments of the living world, and find in the storied East the well-spring that fed the imagination of youngsters thousands of years ago. Such tales have not fallen in the East to the low level which they have reached here, because they yet accord in some degree with extant superstitions in India, whereas in Europe they find little or nothing to which they correspond. With some authorities the Egyptians have the credit of first inventing the beast-fable, but among them, as among every other advanced race, such stories are the remains of an earlier deposit; relics of a primitive philosophy in which wisdom and skill and cunning are no monopoly of man's. The fondness of the negro races, whose traditions are not limited to South and Central Africa, for such fables is well known, as witness the tales of which "Uncle Remus" is a type, and it is strikingly illustrated in the history of the Vai tribe, who having, partly through contact with whites, elaborated a system of writing, made the beast-fable their earliest essay in composition.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence in support of the common ancestry of the languages spoken by the leading peoples in Europe, and by such important historical races

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mahaffy's *Prolegomena to Ancient History*, p. 392.

in Asia as the Hindu and the Persian, has been already summarised. That evidence, it was remarked, is considered corroborative not only of the common origin of the myths on which the framework of the great Indo-European epics rests, but also of the possession by the several clans of a common stock of folk-lore and folk-tale, in which, of course, the beast-fables are included, these being the relics in didactic or humorous guise of that serious philosophy concerning the community of life in man and brute amongst the barbaric ancestors of the Indo-Europeans, upon which stress enough has been laid.

Even if the common origin be disproved, the evidence would be shifted merely from local to general foundations, because the uniform attitude of mind before the same phenomena would have further confirmation; but the resemblances are too minute in detail to be explained by a theory of independent creation of the tales where we now find them. The likenesses are many, the unlikenesses are few, being the result of local colouring, historical fact blended with the fiction, popular belief, and superstition, all affected by the skill of the professional story-teller. As in the numerous variants of the familiar Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Punchkin, and the like, the same fairy prince or princess, the same wicked magician and clever versatile Boots, peep through, disclosing the near relationship of Hindu nursery tales to the folk-tales of Norway and the Highlands, of Iceland and Ceylon, of Persia and Serbia, of Russia and the lands washed by the Mediterranean.

In the venerable collection of *Buddhist Birth Stories*, now in course of translation by Dr. Rhys Davids,<sup>1</sup> and to which is prefaced an interesting introduction on the source and migration of folk-tales, we are face to face with many a fable familiar to us in the *Æsop* of our school-days. There is the story of the Ass in the Lion's Skin, not in which, as *Æsop* has it, the beast dressed himself, but which the hawker put on him to frighten the thieves who would steal his goods. Left one day to browse in a field whilst his master refreshed himself at an inn, some watchmen saw him, and, raising hue and cry, brought out the villagers, armed with their rude implements. The ass, fearing death, made a noise like an ass, and was killed. Long might he, adds the ancient moral—

“Clad in a lion's skin  
Have fed on the barley green ;  
But he brayed !  
And that moment he came to ruin.”

The variants of this old fable are found in mediæval, in French, German, Indian, and Turkish folk-lore, as are also those of the tortoise who lost his life through “much speaking.” Desiring to emigrate, two ducks agreed to carry him, he seizing hold of a stick which they held between their beaks. As they passed over a village the people shouted and jeered,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i., Trübner and Co. See for some valuable illustrations from early English and other sources an article by Rev. Dr. Morris, in *Contemp. Rev.*, May 1881, and the *Folk-Lore Journal*, 1884-85, for translations of Jâtakas, also by Dr. Morris.

whereupon the irate tortoise called out: "What business is it of yours?" and, of course, thereby let go the stick and, falling down, split in two. Therefore—

"Speak wise words not out of season ;  
You see how, by talking overmuch,  
The tortoise fell."

In *Æsop* the tortoise asks an eagle to teach him to fly ; in Chinese folk-lore he is carried by geese.

Jacob Grimm's researches concerning the famous mediæval fable of "Reynard the Fox" revealed the ancient and scattered materials out of which that wonderful satire was woven, and there is no feature of the story which reappears more often in Eastern and Western folk-lore than that cunning of the animal which has been for the lampooner and the satirist the type of self-seeking monk and ecclesiastic. When Chanticleer proudly takes an airing with his family, he meets master Reynard, who tells him he has become a "religious," and shows him his beads, and his missal, and his hair shirt, adding, in a voice "that was childlike and bland," that he had vowed never to eat flesh. Then he went off singing his Credo, and slunk behind a hawthorn. Chanticleer, thus thrown off his guard, continues his airing, and the astute hypocrite, darting from his ambush, seizes the plump hen Coppel. So in Indian folk-tale a wolf living near the Ganges is cut off from food by the surrounding water. He decides to keep holy day, and the god Sakka, knowing his lupine weakness, resolves to have some fun with him, and turns

himself into a wild goat. "Aha!" says the wolf, "I'll keep the fast another day," and springing up he tried to seize the goat, who skipped about so that he could not be taken. So Lupus gives it up, and says as his solatium: "After all, I've not broken my vow."

The Chinese have a story of a tiger who desired to eat a fox, but the latter claimed exemption as being superior to the other animals, adding that if the tiger doubted his word he could easily judge for himself. So the two set forth, and, of course, every animal fled at sight of the tiger, who, too stupid to see how he had been gulled, conceived high respect for the fox, and spared his life.

Sometimes the tables are turned. Chanticleer gets his head out of Reynard's mouth by making him answer the farmer, and in the valuable collection of Hottentot tales which the late Dr. Bleek, with some warrant, called *Reynard in South Africa*, the cock makes the jackal say his prayers, and flies off while the outwitted beast folds his hands and shuts his eyes.

But further quotations must be resisted; enough if it is made clearer that the beast-fable is the lineal descendant of barbaric conceptions of a life shared in common by man and brute, and another link thus added to the lengthening chain of the continuity of human history.

## § VI.

TOTEMISM: BELIEF IN DESCENT FROM ANIMAL  
OR PLANT.

In addition to the beliefs in the transformation of men into animals and in the transmigration of souls into the bodies of animals, we find among barbarous peoples a belief which is probably the parent of one and certainly nearly related to both, namely, in descent from the animal or plant, more often the former, whose name they bear. Its connection with transmigration is seen in the belief of the Moquis of Arizona, that after death they live in the form of their totemic animal, those of the deer family becoming deer, and so on through the several gentes. The belief survives in its most primitive and vivid forms among two races, the aborigines of Australia and the North American Indians. The word "totemism," given to it both in its religious and social aspects, is derived from the Algonquin "dodaim" or "dodhaim," meaning "clanmark." Among the Australians the word "kobong," meaning "friend" or "protector," is the generic term for the animal or plant by which they are known. It is somewhat akin in significance to the Indian words "manitou," "oki," etc., comprehending "the manifestations of the unseen world, yet conveying no sense of personal unity," which are commonly translated by the misleading word "medicine;" hence "medicine-men."

The family name, or second name borne by all the tribes in lineal descent, and which corresponds to our surname, *i.e. super nomen*, or "over-name," is derived from names of beasts, birds, plants, etc., around which traditions of their transformation into men linger. Sir George Grey<sup>1</sup> says that there is a mysterious connection between a native and his kobong. It is his protecting angel, like the "daimôn" of Socrates, like the "genius" of the early Italian. "If it is an animal, he will not kill one of the species to which it belongs, should he find it asleep, and he always kills it reluctantly and never without affording it a chance of escape. The family belief is that some one individual of the species is their dearest friend, to kill whom would be a great crime," as, in Hindu belief, when a Rajah was said to have entered at death into the body of a fish, a "close time" was at once decreed. Among the Indian tribes we find well-nigh the whole fauna and flora represented, their totems being the Bear, Turtle, Deer, Snake, Eagle, Pike, Corn, Tobacco, etc. Like the Australians, these tribes regarded themselves as being of the breed of their particular animal-totem, and avoided hunting, slaying, and eating (of which more presently) the creature under whose form the ancestor was thought to be manifest. The Chipeways carried their respect even farther. Deriving their origin from the dog, they at one time refrained from employing their supposed canine ancestors in dragging their sledges. The Bechuana and other

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in N.W. and W. Australia*, ii. 229.

people of South Africa will avoid eating their tribe-animal or wearing its skin. The same prohibitions are found among tribes in Northern Asia, and the Vogulitzi of Siberia, when they have killed a bear, address it formally, maintaining "that the blame is to be laid on the arrows and iron, which were made and forged by the Russians!" Among the Delawares the Tortoise gens claimed supremacy over the others, because their ancestor, who had become a fabled monster in their mythology, bore their world on his back. The California Indians are in interesting agreement with Lord Monboddoo when, in claiming descent from the prairie wolf, they account for the loss of their tails by the habit of sitting, which, in course of time, wore them down to the stump! The Kickapoos say their ancestors had tails, and that when they lost them the "impudent fox sent every morning to ask how their tails were, and the bear shook his fat sides at the joke." The Patagonians are said to have a number of animal deities, creators of the several tribes, some being of the caste of the guanaco and others of the ostrich. In short, the group of beliefs and practices found among races in the lower stages of culture point to a widespread common attitude towards the mystery of life around them. In speaking of totemism among the Red races Dr. Brinton thinks that the free use of animate symbols to express abstract ideas, which he finds so frequent, is the source of a confusion which has led to their claiming literal descent from wild beasts. But the barbaric mind

bristles with contradictions and mutually destructive conceptions ; nothing is too wonderful, too *bizarre*, for its acceptance, and the belief in actual animal descent is not the most remarkable or far-fetched among the articles of its creed.

The subject of totemism is full of interest both on its religious and social side :—

On its religious side it has given rise, or, if this be not conceded, impetus, to that worship of animals which assuredly had its source in the attribution of mysterious power through some spirit within them, making them deity incarnate.

On its social side it has led to prohibitions which are inwoven among the customs and prejudices of civilised communities. But, before speaking of these prohibitions, the barbaric mode of reckoning descent should be noticed.

The family name borne by most Australian tribes is perpetuated by the children, whether boys or girls, taking their mother's name. Precisely the same custom is found among some American Indians, the children of both sexes being of the mother's clan. Among the Moquis of Arizona all the members of each gens trace descent from a common ancestor ; they are regarded as brothers and sisters.<sup>1</sup> Now, the family, as we define it, does not exist in savage communities, nor, as Mr. McLennan says in his very remarkable work on *Primitive Marriage*, had "the earliest human groups any idea of kinship, . . . the physical root of which could be discerned only

<sup>1</sup> Bourke's *Snake Dance of the Moquis*, p. 136.

through observation and reflection." Where the relations of the sexes were confused and promiscuous, the oldest system in which the idea of blood-ties was expressed was a system of kinship through the mother. The habits of the "much-married" primitive men made mistake about any one's mother less likely than mistake about his father; and, if in civilised times it is, as the saying goes, a wise child that knows its own father, he was, in barbarous times, a wise father who knew his own child. Examples tracing the kinship through females, father and offspring being never of the same clan, abound in both ancient and modern authorities, and perhaps the most amusing one that can be given is found in Dr. Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity*. He says that the "natives of the province of Keang-se are celebrated among the natives of the other Chinese provinces for the mode or form used by them in address, namely, 'Laon peon,' which, freely translated, means, 'Oh, you old fellow, brother mine by some of the ramifications of female relationship!'"<sup>1</sup>

The prohibitions arising out of or confirmed by totemism are two: 1. Against intermarriage between those of the same name or crest. 2. Against the eating of the totem by any member of the tribe called after it.

1. Among both Australians and Indians a man is forbidden to marry in his own clan, *i.e.* any woman of his own surname or badge, no matter where she was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Art. "Family," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

born or however distantly related to him. The Navajoes of Arizona say that if they married in their own clan "their bones would dry up and they would die."

Were this practice of "Exogamy," as marriage outside the totem-kin is called, limited to one or two places, it might be classed among exceptional local customs based on a tradition, say, of some heated blood-feud between the tribes. But its prevalence among savage or semi-savage races all the world over points to reasons the nature of which is still a *crux* to the anthropologists. The late Mr. McLennan, whose opinion on such a matter is entitled to the most weight, connects it with the custom of female infanticide, which, rendering women scarce, led at once to polyandry, or one female to several males, within the tribe, and to the capturing of women from other tribes. This last-named practice strengthens Mr. McLennan's theory. He cites numerous instances from past and present barbarous races, and traces its embodiment in formal code until we come to the mock relics of the custom in modern times, as, for example, the harmless "survival" in bride-lifting, that is, stealing, as in the word "cattle-lifting."

Connected with this custom is the equally prevailing one which forbids intercourse between relations, as especially between a couple and their fathers and mothers-in-law, and which also forbids mentioning their names. So far as the aversion which the savage has to telling his own name, or uttering that of any person (especially of the dead) or thing feared by him is concerned, the reason is not

far to seek. It lies in that confusion between names and things which marks all primitive thinking. The savage, who shrinks from having his likeness taken in the fear that a part of himself is being carried away thereby, regards his name as something through which he may be harmed. So he will use all sorts of roundabout phrases to avoid saying it, and even change it that he may elude his foes, and puzzle or cheat Death when he comes to look for him. But why a son-in-law should not see the face of his mother-in-law, for so it is among the Navajoes, (where the offender would, they say, go blind), the Aranaks of South America, the Caribs and other tribes of more northern regions, the Fijians, Sumatrans, Dyaks, the natives of Australia, the Zulus, in brief, along the range of the lower culture, is a question to which no satisfactory answer has been given, and to which reference is here made because of its connection with totemism.

2. That the animal which is the totem of the tribe should not be eaten, even where men did not hesitate to eat men of another totem, is a custom for which it is less hard to account. The division of flesh into two classes of forbidden and permitted, of clean and unclean, with the resulting artificial liking or repulsion for food which custom arising out of that division has brought about, is probably referable to old beliefs in the inherent sacredness of certain animals. The Indians of Charlotte Island never eat crows, because they believe in crow-ancestors, and they smear themselves with black paint in memory

of that tradition; the Dacotahs would neither kill nor eat their totems, and if necessity compels these and like barbarians to break the law, the meal is preceded by profuse apologies and religious ceremonies over the slain. Although the aborigines of Victoria, who are to be ranked among the lowest savages extant, devour the most loathsome things, worms, slugs, and vermin, they have a classification of meats to be eaten or avoided. A Kumite is deeply grieved when hunger compels him to eat anything which bears his name, but he may satisfy his hunger with anything that is Krokee. The abstention of the Brahmans from meat, the pseudo-revealed injunction to the Hebrews against certain flesh-foods (has that against pork its origin in the forgotten tradition of descent from a boar?), need no detailing here. But, as parallels, some restrictions amongst the ancient dwellers in these islands are of value. It was, according to Cæsar,<sup>1</sup> a crime to eat the domestic fowl, or goose, or hare, and to this day the last-named is an object of disgust in certain parts of Russia and Brittany. The oldest Welsh laws contain several allusions to the magical character of the hare, which was thought to change its sex every month or year, and to be the companion of the witches, who often assumed its shape.<sup>2</sup> The revulsion against horse-flesh as food may have its origin in the sacredness of the white horses, which, as Tacitus remarks,<sup>3</sup> were kept by the

<sup>1</sup> *De Bell. Gall.*, v. c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Elton's *Origins of English History*, p. 297.      <sup>3</sup> *Germania*, ix. 10.

Germans at the public cost in groves holy to the gods, whose secrets they knew, and whose decrees regarding mortals their neighings interpreted. That this animal was a clan-totem among our forefathers there can be no doubt, and the proofs are with us in the white horses carved in outline on the chalk hills of Berkshire and the west, as in the names and crests of clan descendants.

The totem is not only the clan-name indicating descent from a common ancestor. It is also the clan-symbol, badge, or crest. Where the tribes among whom it is found are still in the picture-writing stage, *i.e.* when the idea is expressed by a portrait of the thing itself instead of by some sound-sign—a stage in writing corresponding to the primitive stage in language, when words were imitative—there we find the rude hieroglyphic of the totem a means of intercourse between different tribes, as well as with whites. A striking example of the use of such totemic symbols occurs in a petition sent by some Western Indian tribes to the United States Congress for the right to fish in certain small lakes near Lake Superior.

The leading clan is represented by a picture of the crane; then follow three martens, as totems of three tribes; then the bear, the man-fish, and the cat-fish, also totems. From the eye and heart of each of the animals runs a line connecting them with the eye and heart of the crane, to show that they are all of one mind, and the eye of the crane has also a line connecting it with the lakes on which the tribes

have their eyes, and another line running towards Congress.

In the barbaric custom of painting or carving the totem on oars, on the bows and sides of canoes, on weapons, on pillars in the front of houses, and on the houses themselves; in tattooing it on various parts of the body (in the latter case, in some instances, together with pictures of exploits; so that the man carries on his person an illustrated history of his own life) we have the remote and forgotten origin of heraldic emblems. The symbols of civilised nations, as, *e.g.* the Imperial eagle, which so many states of ancient and modern renown have chosen; the crests of families of rank, with their fabulous monsters, as the cherub, the Greek *gryps*, surviving in the griffin, the dragon, the unicorn, which, born of rude fancy or terrified imagination, are now carved on the entrance-gates to the houses of the great; the armorial bearings on carriages; the crest engraven on ring or embossed on writing-paper, these are the lineal descendants of the totem; and the Indians, who could see no difference between their system of manitous and those of the white people, with their spread-eagle or their lion-rampant, made a shrewd guess that would not occur to many a *parvenu* applying at the Heralds' College for a crest. The continuity is traceable in the custom of the Mexicans and other civilised nations of painting the totemic animals on their banners, flags, crests, and other insignia; and it would seem that we have in the totem the key to the mystery of those huge

animal-shaped mounds which abound on the North American continent.

The arbitrary selection in the "ages of chivalry" of such arms as pleased the knightly fancy or ministered to its pride, or, as was often the case, resembled the name in sound, together with the ignorance then and till recently existing as to the origin of crests, and also the discredit into which a seemingly meaningless vanity had fallen, have made it difficult to trace the survival of the totem in the crests even of that numerous company of the Upper Ten who claim descent from warriors who came over with the Conqueror. But there is no doubt that an inquiry conducted on the lines suggested above, and not led into by-paths by false analogies, would yield matter of interest and value. It would add to the evidence of that common semi-civilised stage out of which we have risen. Such names as the Horsings, the Wylfings, the Derings, the Ravens, the Griffins, perhaps hold within themselves traces of the totem name of the horse, wolf, deer, raven, and that "animal fantastical," the griffin. In Scotland we find the clan Chattan, or the wild cat; in Ireland "the men of Osory were called by a name signifying the wild red deer." On the other hand such names may have been given merely as nicknames (*i.e.* ekename or the *added* name, from *eke*, "also," or "to augment"), suggested by the physical or mental likeness to the thing after which they are called.

But it is time to turn to the religious significance

of the totem, as shown among races worshipping the animal which is their supposed ancestor.

At first glance this seems strong argument in support of Mr. Herbert Spencer's theory that all forms of religion, and all myth, have their origin in ancestor worship. The mysterious power of stimulation, of excitation to frenzy, or of healing and soothing, or of poisoning, which certain plants possess, has been attributed to indwelling spirits, which, as Mr. Spencer contends, are regarded as human and ancestral. Very many illustrations of this occur, as, *e.g.* the worship of the Soma plant, and its promotion as a deity among the Aryans; the use of tobacco in religious ceremonies among the tribes of both Americas; whilst now and again we find trees and plants as totems. The Moquis have a totem-kin called the tobacco-plant, and also one called the seed-grass. One of the Peruvian Incas was called after the native name of the tobacco-plant; and among the Ojibways the buffalo grass was carried as a charm, and its god said to cause madness.

In Algonquin myth "there is a spirit for the corn, another for beans, another for squashes. They are sisters, and are very kind to each other. There are spirits in the water, in fire, in all the trees and berries, in herbs and in tobacco, in the grass."

The worship of animals is on Mr. Spencer's theory explained as due to the giving of a nickname of some beast or bird to a remote ancestor, the belief arising in course of time that such animal was the actual

progenitor, hence its worship. We call a man a bear, a pig, or a vampire, in symbolic phrase, and the figure of speech remains a figure of speech with us. But the savage loses the metaphor, and it crystallises into hard matter-of-fact. So the traditions have grown, and Black Eagle, Strong Buffalo, Big Owl, Tortoise, etc., take the shape of actual forefathers of the tribe bearing their name and crest. According to the same theory the adoration of sun, moon, and mountains, etc., is due to a like source. Some famous chief was called the Sun; the metaphor was forgotten; the personal and concrete, as the more easily apprehended, remained; hence worship of the powers of nature "is a form of ancestor-worship, which has lost in a still greater degree the character of the original."<sup>1</sup>

The objection raised in these pages to the extreme application of the solar theory applies with equal force to Mr. Spencer's limitation of the origin of myth and religion to one source. Having cleared Scylla, we must not dash against Charybdis. Religion has its origin neither in fear of ghosts, as Mr. Spencer's theory assumes, nor in a perception of the Infinite inherent in man, as Professor Max Müller holds. Rather does it lie in man's sense of vague wonder in the presence of powers whose force he cannot measure, and his expressions towards which are manifold. There is underlying unity, but there are, to quote St. Paul, "diversities of operation." There is just that surface unlikeness which one

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Sociology*, p. 413.

might expect from the different physical conditions and their resulting variety of subtle influences surrounding various races ; influences shaping for them their gods, their upper and nether worlds ; influences of climate and soil which made the hell of volcanic countries an abyss of sulphurous stifling smoke and everlasting fire, and the hell of cold climates a place of deathly frost ; which gave to the giant-gods of northern zones their rugged awfulness, and to the goddesses of the sunny south their soft and stately grace. The theory of ancestor-worship as the basis of every form of religion does not allow sufficient play for the vagaries in which the same thing will be dressed by the barbaric fear and fancy, nor for the imagination as a creative force in the primitive mind even at the lowest at which we know it. And, of course, beneath that lowest lies a lower never to be fathomed. We are apt to talk of primitive man as if his representatives were with us in the black fellows who are at the bottom of the scale, forgetting that during unnumbered ages he was a brute in everything but the capacity by which at last the ape and tiger were subdued within him. Of the beginnings of his *thought* we can know nothing, but the fantastic forms in which it is first manifest compel us to regard him as a being whose feelings were uncurbed by reason. That ancestor-worship is one mode among others of man's attitude towards the awe-begetting, mystery-inspiring universe, none can deny. That his earliest temples, as defined sacred spots, were tombs ; that he prayed to his

dead dear ones, or his dead feared ones, as the case may be, is admitted. From its strong personal character, ancestor-worship was, without doubt, one of the earliest expressions of man's attitude before the world which his fancy filled with spirits. It flourishes among barbarous races to-day; it was the prominent feature of the old Aryan religion; it has entered into Christian practice in the worship of saints, and perhaps the only feature of religion which the modern Frenchman has retained is the *culte des morts*. That it was a part of the belief of the Emperor Napoleon III. the following extract from his will shows:—"We must remember that those we love look down upon us from heaven and protect us. It is the soul of my great Uncle which has always guided and supported me. Thus will it be with my son also if he proves worthy of his name."

But the worship of ancestors is not primal. The comparatively late recognition of kinship by savages, among whom some rude form of religion existed, tells against it as the earliest mode of worship. Moreover, Nature is bigger than man, and this he was not slow to feel. Even if it be conceded that sun-myth and sun-worship once arose through the nicknaming of an ancestor as the Sun, we must take into account the force of that imagination which enabled the unconscious myth-maker, or creed-maker, to credit the moving orbs of heaven with personal life and will. The faculty which could do that might well express itself in awe-struck forms

without intruding the ancestral ghost. Further, the records of the classic religions, themselves preserving many traces of a primitive nature-worship, point to an adoration of the great and bountiful, as well as to a sense of the maleficent and fateful, in earth and heaven which seem prior to the more concrete worship of forefathers and chieftains.

If for the worship of these last we substitute a general worship of spirits, there seems little left on which to differ. As aids to the explanation of the belief in animal ancestors and their subsequent deification and worship, as of the lion, the bull, the serpent, etc., we have always present in the barbaric mind the tendency to credit living things, and indeed lifeless, but moving ones, with a passion, a will, and a power to help or harm immeasurably greater than man's. This is part and parcel of that belief in spirits everywhere which is the key to savage philosophy, and the growth of which is fostered by such secondary causes as the worship of ancestors.

## § VII.

### SURVIVAL OF MYTH IN HISTORY.

For proofs of the emergence of the higher out of the lower in philosophy and religion, to say nothing of less exalted matters, whether the beast-fable or the nursery rhyme, as holding barbaric thought in solution, examples have necessarily been drawn from

the mythology of past and present savage races. But these are too remote in time or standpoint to stir other than a languid interest in the reader's mind; their purpose is served when they are cited and classified as specimens. Not thus is it with examples drawn nearer home from sources at which our young thirst for the stirring and romantic was slaked. When we learn that famous names and striking episodes are in some rare instances only transformed and personified natural phenomena, or, as occurring everywhere, possibly variants of a common legend, the far-reaching influence of primitive thought comes to us in more vivid and exciting form. And although one takes in hand this work of disenchantment in no eager fashion, the loss is more seeming than real. Whether the particular tale of bravery, of selflessness, of faithfulness, has truth of detail, matters little compared with the fact that its reception the wide world over witnesses to human belief, even at low levels, in the qualities which have given man empire over himself and ever raised the moral standard of the race. Moreover, in times like these, when criticism is testing without fear or favour the trustworthiness of records of the past, whether of Jew or Gentile, the knowledge of the legendary origin of events woven into sober history prepares us to recognise how the imagination has fed the stream of tradition, itself no mean tributary of that larger stream of history, the purity of which is now subject of analysis. As a familiar and interesting example let us take the story of William Tell.

Everybody has heard how, in the year 1307 (or, as some say, 1296) Gessler, Vogt (or Governor) of the Emperor Albert of Hapsburg, set a hat on a pole as symbol of the Imperial power, and ordered every one who passed by to do obeisance to it; and how a mountaineer named Wilhelm Tell, who hated Gessler and the tyranny which the symbol expressed, passed by without saluting the hat, and was at once seized and brought before Gessler, who ordered that as punishment Tell should shoot an apple off the head of his own son. As resistance was vain, the apple was placed on the boy's head, when Tell bent his bow, and the arrow, piercing the apple, fell with it to the ground. Gessler saw that Tell, before shooting, had stuck a second arrow in his belt, and, asking the reason, received this for answer: "It was for you; had I shot my child, know that this would have pierced your heart."

Now, this story first occurs in the chronicle of Melchior Russ, who wrote at the end of the fifteenth century, *i.e.* about one hundred and seventy years after its reputed occurrence. The absence of any reference to it in contemporary records caused doubt to be thrown upon it three centuries ago. Guillimann, the author of a work on Swiss antiquities, published in 1598, calls it a fable, but subscribes to the current belief in it because the tale is so popular! The race to which he belonged is not yet extinct. A century and a half later a more fearless sceptic, who said that the story was of Danish origin, was condemned by the Canton of Uri to be burnt alive,

and in the well-timed absence of the offender his book was ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. But the truth is great, and prevails. G. von Wyss, the Swiss historian, has pointed out that the name of Wilhelm Tell does not occur even once in the history of the three cantons, neither is there any trace that a Vogt named Gessler ever served the house of Hapsburg there. Moreover, the legend does not correspond to any fact of a period of oppression of the Swiss at the hands of their Austrian rulers.

“There exist in contemporary records no instances of wanton outrage and insolence on the Hapsburg side. It was the object of that power to obtain political ascendancy, not to indulge its representatives in lust or wanton insult,” and, where records of disputes between particular persons occur, “the symptoms of violence, as is natural enough, appear rather on the side of the Swiss than on that of the aggrandising Imperial house.”<sup>1</sup>

Candour, however, requires that the “evidence” in support of the legend should be stated. There is the fountain on the supposed site of the lime-tree in the market-place at Altdorf by which young Tell stood, as well as the colossal plaster statue of the hero himself which confronts us as we enter the quaint village. But more than this, the veritable cross-bow itself is preserved in the arsenal at Zurich!

However, although the little Tell’s chapel, as

<sup>1</sup>*Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1869, p. 134. Article on Rilliet’s “Origines de la Confédération Suisse : Histoire et Légende.”

restored, was opened with a national *fête*, in the presence of two members of the Federal Council, in June 1883,<sup>1</sup> the Swiss now admit in their school-teaching that the story of the *Apfelschusz* is legendary.

Freudenberger, who earned his death-sentence for affirming that the story came from Denmark, was on the right track, for the following variant of it is given by Saxo Grammaticus, a Danish writer of the twelfth century, who puts it as happening in the year 950:—

Nor ought what follows to be enveloped in silence. Palnatoki, for some time in the body-guard of King Harold (Harold Gormson, or Bluetooth), had made his bravery odious to many of his fellow-soldiers by the zeal with which he surpassed them. One day, when he had drunk too much, he boasted that he was so skilled a bowman that he could hit the smallest apple, set on the top of a stick some way off, at the first shot, which boast reached the ears of the king. This monarch's wickedness soon turned the confidence of the father to the peril of the son, for he commanded that this dearest pledge of his life should stand in place of the stick, adding a threat that if Palnatoki did not at his first shot strike off the apple, he should with his head pay the penalty of making an empty boast. This command forced him to attempt more than he had promised, and what he *had* said, reported by slanderous tongues, bound him to accomplish what he had *not* said. Yet did not his sterling courage, though caught in the snare of slander, suffer him to lay aside his firmness of heart. As soon as the boy was led forth Palnatoki warned him to await the speeding of the arrow with calm ears and unbent head, lest by any slight movement of the body he should frustrate the archer's well-tried skill. He then made him stand with his back towards him, lest he

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<sup>1</sup> *Times'* telegram from Geneva, June 25, 1883.

should be scared at the sight of the arrow. Then he drew three arrows from his quiver, and with the first that he fitted to the string he struck the apple. When the king asked him why he had taken more than one arrow from his quiver, when he was to be allowed to make but one trial with his bow, he made answer, "That I might avenge on thee the swerving of the first by the points of the others, lest perchance my innocence might have been punished, while your violence escaped scot-free."<sup>1</sup>

Going farther northward we find tales corresponding in their main features to the above, in the Icelandic *Saga*, the *Vilkina*; in the Norse *Saga* of Saint Olaf or Thidrik; and in the story of Harold, son of Sigurd. In the *Olaf Saga* it is said that the saint or king, desiring the conversion of a brave heathen named Eindridi, competed with him in various athletic sports, swam with him, wrestled with him, and then shot with him. Olaf then dared Eindridi to strike a writing-tablet from off his son's head with an arrow, and bade two men bind the eyes of the child and hold the napkin so that the boy might not move when he heard the whizz of the arrow. Olaf aimed first, and the arrow grazed the lad's head. Eindridi then prepared to shoot, but the mother of the boy interfered and persuaded the king to abandon this dangerous test of skill. The story adds that had the boy been injured Eindridi would have revenged himself on the king.<sup>2</sup>

Somewhat like this, as from the locality might be

<sup>1</sup> Book x. p. 166. Cf. Baring Gould's *Curious Myths*, p. 117, and Fiske's *Myths and Myth-makers*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Baring Gould, p. 119.

expected, is the Faröe Isles variant. King Harold challenges Geyti, son of Aslak, and, vexed at being beaten in a swimming match, bids Geyti shoot a hazel-nut from off his brother's head. He consents, and the king witnesses the feat, when Geyti

“ Shot the little nut away,  
Nor hurt the lad a hair.”

Next day Harold sends for the archer, and says :—

“ List thee, Geyti, Aslak's son,  
And truly tell to me,  
Wherefore hadst thou arrows twain  
In the wood yestreen with thee ?”

To which Geyti answers :—

“ Therefore had I arrows twain  
Yestreen in the wood with me,  
Had I but hurt my brother dear  
The other had pierced thee.”

With ourselves it is the burden of the ballad of William of Cloudeslee, where the brave archer says :—

“ I have a sonne seven years old ;  
Hee is to me full deere ;  
I will tye him to a stake—  
All shall see him that bee here—  
And lay an apple upon his head,  
And goe six paces him froe ;  
And I myself with a broad arroe  
Shall cleave the apple in towe.”

In the *Malleus Maleficarum* Puncher, a magician on the Upper Rhine, is required to shoot a coin from off a lad's head ; while, travelling eastwards as far as

Persia, we find the Tell myth as an incident in the poem *Mantic Ulträir*, a work of the twelfth century.

Thus far the variants of the legend found among Aryan peoples have been summarised, and it is tempting to base upon this diffusion of a common incident a theory of its origin among the ancestors of the Swiss and the Norseman, the Persian and the Icelander. But it is found among non-Aryans also. The ethnologist, Castrén, whose researches in Finland have secured a valuable mass of fast-perishing materials, obtained this tale in the village of Ultuwa. "A fight took place between some freebooters and the inhabitants of the village of Alajärai. The robbers plundered every house, and carried off amongst their captives an old man. As they proceeded with their spoils along the strand of the lake a lad of twelve years old appeared from among the reeds on the opposite bank, armed with a bow and amply provided with arrows; he threatened to shoot down the captors unless the old man, his father, was restored to him. The robbers mockingly replied that the aged man would be given to him if he could shoot an apple off his head. The boy accepted the challenge, pierced the apple and freed his father." Among a people in close contact with an Aryan race as the Finns are in contact with both Swedes and Russians, the main incident of the Tell story may easily have been woven into their native tales. But in reference to other non-Aryan races Sir George Dasent, who has treated of the diffusion of the Tell story very fully in the Introduction to his *Popular Tales from the*

*Norse* (a reprint of which would be a boon to students of folk-lore), says that it is common to the Turks and Mongolians, and a legend of the wild Samoyedes, who never heard of Tell or saw a book in their lives, relates it, chapter and verse, of one of their marksmen. What shall we say, then, but that the story of this bold mastershot was prominent amongst many tribes and races, and that it only crystallised itself round the great name of Tell by that process of attraction which invariably leads a grateful people to throw such mythic wreaths, such garlands of bold deeds of precious memory, around the brow of its darling champion. Of course the solar mythologists see in Tell the sun or cloud deity; in his bow the storm-cloud or the iris; and in his arrows the sun-rays or lightning darts.

This is a question which we may leave to the champions concerned to settle. Apart from the evidence of the survival of legend in history, and the lesson of caution in accepting any ancient record as gospel which we should learn therefrom, it is the human element in the venerable tale which interests us most.

Remote in time, far away in place, as is its origin, it moves us yet. The ennobling qualities incarnated in some hero (whether he be real or ideal matters not) meet with admiring response in the primitive listeners to the story, else it would have been speedily forgotten. Thus does it retain for us witness to the underlying oneness of the human heart beneath all surface differences.

Widespread as a myth may be, it takes depth of root according to the more or less congenial soil where it is dropped. That about Tell found favourable home in the uplands and the free air of Switzerland ; with us S. George, falling on times of chivalry, had abiding place, as also, less rugged of type than the Swiss marksman, had Arthur, the "Blameless King," who, if he ever existed, is smothered in overgrowth of legends both native and imported.

For such cycle of tales as gathered round the name of Arthur, and on which our youthhood was nourished, is as mythical as the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus. Modern criticism and research have thoroughly sifted the legendary from the true, and if the past remains vague and shadowy, we at least know how far the horizon of certainty extends. The criticism has made short work of the romancing chronicles which so long did duty for sober history, and has shown that no accurate knowledge of the sequence of events is obtainable until late in the period of the English invasions. Save in scattered hints here and there, we are quite in the dark as to the condition of this island during the Roman occupation, whilst for anything that is known of times prior to this, called for convenience "pre-historic," we are dependent upon unwritten records preserved in tombs and mounds. The information gathered from these has given us some clue to what manner of men they were who confronted the first Aryan immigrants, and, enriched by researches of the ethnologist and philologist, enabled us to trace

the movements of races westwards, until we find old and new commingled as one English-speaking folk.

All or any of which could not be known to the earlier chroniclers. When Geoffry of Monmouth set forth the glory and renown of Arthur and his Court he recorded and embellished traditions six hundred years old, without thought of weighing the evidence or questioning the credibility of the transmitters. Whether there was a king of that name who ruled over the Silures, and around whom the remnant of brave Kelts rallied in their final struggle against the invading hordes, and who, wounded in battle, died at Glastonbury, and was buried, or rather sleeps, as the legend has it, in the Vale of Avilion, "hath been," as Milton says, "doubted heretofore, and may again, with good reason, for the Monk of Malmesbury and others, whose credit hath swayed most with the learned sort, we may well perceive to have known no more of this Arthur nor of his doings than we now living."<sup>1</sup>

In the group of legends both of the Old and New World, which, the solar theorists tell us, symbolise the long sleep of winter before the sweet awakening of the spring, Arthur of course has place. "Men said he was not dead, but by the will of our Lord Jesus Christ was in another place, and men say that he will come again . . . that there is written on his tomb this verse :

‘Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam, Rexque futurus.’”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Prof. Rhys's *Arthurian Legend*, *passim*.

So Charlemagne reposes beneath the Untersberg, waiting for the appointed time to rise and do battle with anti-Christ; Tell slumbers ready-panoplied to save Switzerland when danger threatens; the hero-deity of the Algonquins, when he left the earth, promised to return, but has not, wherefore he is called Glooskap, or the Liar; St. John sleeps at Ephesus till the last days are at hand; and the Church militant awaits the return of her Lord at the Second Advent.

The comparative mythologists say that Arthur is a myth, pure and simple, a variant of Sigurd and Perseus; the winning of his famous sword but a repetition of the story of the Teutonic and Greek heroes; the gift of Guinevere as fatal to him as Helen to Menelaus; his knights but reproductions of the Achaian hosts—much of which may be true; but the romance corresponded to some probable event; it fitted in with the national traditions. There were struggles between the Kelts and subsequent invaders—Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes. There were brave chieftains who led forlorn hopes or fought to the death in their fastnesses. There were, in the numerous tribal divisions, petty kings and queens ruling over mimic courts, with retinues of knights bent on chivalrous, unselfish service. These were the nuclei of stories which were the early annals of the tribe, the glad theme of bards and minstrels, and from which a long line of poets to the latest singer of the *Idylls of the King* have drawn the materials of their epics. The fascination which such a cycle of tales

had for the people, especially in days when the ballad was history and poetry and all literature rolled into one, was so strong, that the Church wisely imported an element which gave loftier meaning to the knightly life, and infused religious ardour into the camp and court. To the stories of Tristram and Gawayne, already woven into the old romance, she added the half-Christian, half-pagan, legend of the knights who left the feast at the Round Table to travel across land and sea that they might free the enslaved, remove the spell from the enchanted, and deliver fair women from the monsters of tyranny and lust, setting forth on what in her eyes was a nobler quest—to seek and look upon the San Graal, or Holy Vessel used by Jesus at the Last Supper, and into which Joseph of Arimathea collected the blood and water that streamed from the side of the crucified Jesus. This mystic cup, in which we have probably a sacrificial relic of the old British religion imported into the Christian incident with which it blended so well, floated, according to Arthurian legend, suddenly into the presence of the King and his Round Table knights at Camelot as they sat at supper, and was as suddenly borne away, to be henceforth the coveted object of knightly endeavour. Only the baptized could hope to behold it ; to the unchaste it was veiled : hence only they among the knights who were pure in heart and life vowed to go in quest of the San Graal, and return not until they had seen it. So to Sir Galahad, the “just and faithful,” Tennyson sings how the sacred cup appeared—

“ Sometimes on lonely mountain meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And, star-like, mingles with the stars.”

Whilst in such legends as the Arthurian group the grain of truth, if it exists, is so embedded as to be out of reach, there are others concerning actual personages, notably Cyrus and Charlemagne, not to quote other names from both “ profane ” and sacred history, in which the fable can be separated from the fact without difficulty. Enough is known of the life and times of such men to detach the certain from the doubtful, as, *e.g.*, when Charlemagne is spoken of as a Frenchman and as a Crusader before there was a French nation, or the idea of Crusades had entered the heads of most Christian kings ; and as in the legends of the infancy of Cyrus, which are of a type related to like legends of the wonderful round the early years of the famous.

This, however, by the way. Leaving illustration of the fabulous in heroic story, it will be interesting to trace it through such a tale of pathos and domestic life as the well-known one of Llewellyn and his faithful hound, Gellert.

Whose emotions have not been stirred by the story of Llewellyn the Great going out hunting, and missing his favourite dog ; of his return, to be greeted by the creature with more than usual pleasure in his eye, but with jaws besmeared with blood ; of the anxiety with which Llewellyn rushed into the house, to find the cradle where had lain his beautiful boy upset, and the ground around it soaked with blood ; of his thereupon killing the dog, and then seeing the child lying unharmed beneath the cradle, and sleeping by the side of a dead wolf, from whose ravenous maw the faithful Gellert had delivered it? Most of us, in our visits to North Wales, have stood by Gellert's grave at Beddgelert, little suspecting that the affecting story occurs in the folk-lore of nearly every Aryan people, and of several non-Aryan races, as the Egyptians and Chinese.

Probably it comes to us as many other tales have come, through collections like the well-known *Gesta Romanorum*, compiled by mediæval monks for popular entertainment. In the version given in that book the knight who corresponds to Llewellyn, after slaying his dog, discovers that it had saved his child from a serpent, and thereupon breaks his sword and departs on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But the monks were no inventors of such tales ; they recorded those that came to them through the pilgrims, students, traders, and warriors who travelled from west to east and from east to west in the Middle Ages, and it is in the native home of fable and imagery the storied Orient, that we must seek for the

earliest forms of the Gellert legend. In the *Panchatantra*, the oldest and most celebrated Sanskrit fable-book, the story takes this form :—An infirm child is left by its mother while she goes to fetch water, and she charges the father, who is a Brahman, to watch over it. But he leaves the house to collect alms, and soon after this a snake crawls towards the child. In the house was an ichneumon, a creature often cherished as a house pet, who sprang at the snake and throttled it. When the mother came back, the ichneumon went gladly to meet her, his jaws and face smeared with the snake's blood. The horrified mother, thinking it had killed her child, threw her water-jar at it, and killed it ; then seeing the child safe beside the mangled body of the snake, she beat her breast and face with grief, and scolded her husband for leaving the house.

We find the same story, with the slight difference that the animal is an otter, in a later Sanskrit collection, the *Hitopadesa*, but we can track it to that fertile source of classic and mediæval fable, the Buddhist *Jâtakas*, or *Birth Stories*, a very ancient collection of fables, which, professing to have been told by the Buddha, narrates his exploits in the 550 births through which he passed before attaining Buddhahood. In the *Vinaya Pitaka* of the Chinese Buddhist collection, which, according to Mr. Beal, dates from the fifth century A.D., and is translated from original scriptures supposed to have existed near the time of Asoka's council in the third century B.C., we have the earliest extant form of the

tale. That in the *Panchatantra* is obviously borrowed from it, the differences being in unimportant detail, as, for example, the nakula, or mongoose, is killed by the Brahman on his return home, the wife having neglected to take the child with her as bidden by him. He is filled with sorrow, and then a Deva continues the strain :—

“ Let there be due thought and consideration,  
 Give not way to hasty impulse,  
 By forgetting the claims of true friendship  
 You may heedlessly injure a kind heart (person)  
 As the Brahman killed the nakula.”

The several versions of the story which could be cited from German, Russian, Persian, and other Aryan folk-lore, would merely present certain variations due to local colouring and to the inventiveness of the narrators or transcribers ; and, omitting these, it will suffice to give the Egyptian variant or corresponding form, in which the tragical has given place to the amusing, save, perhaps, in the opinion of the Wali. This luckless person “once smashed a pot full of herbs which a cook had prepared. The exasperated cook thrashed the well-intentioned but unfortunate Wali within an inch of his life, and when he returned, exhausted with his efforts at belabouring the man, he discovered among the herbs a poisonous snake.”

In pointing to the venerable Buddhist *Birth Stories* as the earliest extant source of Aryan fables, it should be added that these were with the Buddha and his disciples the favourite vehicle of carrying to

the hearts of men those lessons of gentleness and tenderness towards all living things which are a distinctive feature of that non-persecuting religion.

## § VIII.

### MYTH AMONG THE HEBREWS.

With the important exception of reference to the change effected in the Jewish doctrine of spirits, and its resulting influence on Christian theology, by the transformation of the mythical Ahriman of the old Persian religion into the archfiend Satan, but slight allusion has been made in these pages to the myths and legends of the Semitic race. Under this term, borrowed from the current belief in their descent from Shem, are included extant and extinct people, the Assyrians, Chaldeans or Babylonians, Phœnicians, Arabs, Syrians, Jews, and Ethiopians.

The mythology of the Aryan nations has had the advantage of the most scholarly criticism, and the light which this has thrown upon the racial connection of peoples between whom all superficial likeness had long disappeared, as well as upon the early condition of their common ancestors, is of the greatest value as aid to our knowledge of the mode of man's intellectual and spiritual growth. And the comparisons made between the older and cruder forms underlying the elaborated myth and the myths of semi-barbarous races have supported conclusions

concerning man's primitive state identical with those deduced from the material relics of the Ancient and Newer Stone Ages, namely, that the savage races of to-day represent not a degradation to which man has sunk, but a condition out of which all races above the savage have, through much tribulation, emerged. An important exception to this has, however, been claimed on behalf of at least one branch of the Semitic race—namely, the Hebrews or Jews. This claim has rested on their assumed selection by the Deity for a definite purpose in the ordering and directing of human affairs; but no assumption of supernatural origin can screen the documents of disputed authorship and uncertain meaning on which that claim is based from the investigation applied to all ancient records; nor can the materials elude dissection because hitherto regarded as organic parts of revelation. The real difficulties are in the structure of the language and in the scantiness of the material as contrasted with the flexile and copious mythology of the Aryan race. And the investigation has been in some degree checked by the mistaken dicta of authorities such as M. Renan and the late Baron Bunsen; the former contending that "the Semites never had a mythology," and the latter (although any statement of his carries far less weight) that "it is the grand, momentous, and fortunate self-denial of Judaism to possess none."

But, independently of the refusal of the student of history to admit that exceptional place has been accorded of direct Divine purpose to any particular

race, the discoveries of literatures much older than the Hebrew, and in which legends akin to those in the earlier books of the Old Testament are found, together with the proofs of historical connection between the peoples having these common legends, have given the refutation to the distinctive character of the Semitic race claimed by M. Renan. That a people dwelling for centuries, as the Hebrews did, in a land which was the common highway between the great nations of antiquity; a people subject to vicissitudes bringing them, as the pipkin between iron pots, into collision and subject relations to Egyptians, Persians, and other powerful folk, should remain uninfluenced in their intellectual speculations and religious beliefs, would indeed be a greater miracle than that which makes their literature inspired in every word and vowel-point. The remarkable collection of cuneiform inscriptions (so called from their wedge-like shape: Latin, *cuneus*, a wedge) on the baked clay cylinders and tablets of the vast libraries of Babylon and Nineveh, has brought out one striking fact, namely, that the Semitic civilisation, venerable as that is, was the product of, or at least, greatly influenced by, the culture of a non-Semitic people called the Akkadians, from a word meaning "highlanders." These more ancient dwellers in the Euphrates valley and uplands were not only non-Semitic but non-Aryan, and probably racially connected with the complex group of peoples embracing the Tatar-Mongolians, the distinguishing features of whose religion are Shamanistic, with belief in magic

in its manifold forms. "In Babylonia, under the non-Semitic Akkadian rule, the dominant creed was the fetish worship, with all its ritual of magic and witchcraft; and when the Semites conquered the country, the old learning of the land became the property of the priests and astrologers, and the Akkadian language the Latin of the Empire."<sup>1</sup>

It was during the memorable period of the Exile that the historical records of the Jews underwent revision, and from that time dates the incorporation into them of legends and traditions which, invested with a purity and majesty distinctively Hebrew, were borrowed from the Babylonians, although primarily Akkadian. They are here, as elsewhere, the product of the childhood of the race, when it speculates and invents, framing its theory of the beginnings, their when and how; when it prattles of the Golden Age, which seems to lie behind, in the fond and not extinct delusion that "the old is better;" when it frames its fairy tales, weird or winsome, in explanation of the uncommon, the unknown, and the bewildering.

The Babylonian origin of the early biblical stories is now generally admitted, although the dogmas based upon certain of them still retard the acceptance of this result of modern inquiry in some quarters. That reluctance is suggestively illustrated in Dr. Wm. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, where, turning to the heading "Deluge," the reader is referred to "Flood" and thence to "Noah!"

<sup>1</sup> *Academy*, Nov. 17, 1877, p. 472.

So much for the legendary ; but the analysis of the more strictly mythical, the names of culture-ancestors and heroes, sons of Anak and of God, scattered over the Pentateuch, is not so easy a matter. The most important work in this direction has been attempted by Dr. Goldziher,<sup>1</sup> but even his scholarship has failed to convince sympathetic readers that Abraham and Isaac are sun-myths, and that the twelve sons of Jacob are the zodiacal signs ! Under the Professor's etymological solvent the personality of the patriarchs disappears, and the charming idylls and pastorals of old Eastern life become but phases of the sun and the weather. The Hebrew, like the Aryan myth-maker, speaks of the relations of day and night, of gray morning and sunrise, of red sunset and the darkness of night, as of love and union, or strife and pursuit, or gloomy desire and coy evasion. Abh-râm is the High or Heaven-Father (from *râm*, "to be high") with his numberless host of descendants. Yis-châk, commonly called Isaac, denotes "he who laughs," and so the Laughing one, whom the High Father intends to slay, is the smiling day or the smiling sunset, which gets the worst of the contest with the night sky, and disappears. Sarah signifies princess, or the moon, the queen who rules over the great army glittering amidst the darkness. The expulsion of Hagar (derived from a root *hajara*, meaning "to fly," and yielding the word *hijrâ* or "flight," whence the Mohammadan Hegira) is the

<sup>1</sup> *Mythology among the Hebrews, and its Historical Development* (London : Longmans), 1877.

Semitic variant of that inexhaustible theme of all mythology, the battle of Day and Night; Hagar flying before the inconstant sun and the jealous moon. And so on through the whole range of leading characters in Hebrew history; Cain and Abel, in which Dr. Goldziher, to whom they are the sun and dark sky, overlooks the more likely explanation of the story as a quarrel between nomads and tillers of the soil; Jephthah, in which the sun-god kills at mid-day the dawn, his own offspring; Samson, or more correctly Shimshôn, from the Hebrew word for sun, the incidents of whose life, as expounded by Professor Steinthal,<sup>1</sup> are more clearly typical of the labours of the sun; Jonah and the fish, a story long ago connected with the myth of Herakles and Hésionê; "as on occasion of the storm the dragon or serpent swallows the sun, so when he sets he is swallowed by a mighty fish, waiting for him at the bottom of the sea. Then when he appears again on the horizon, he is spat out on the shore by the sea-monster."<sup>2</sup>

These bare references must suffice to show that there is in Hebrew literature a large body of material which must undergo the sifting and the criticism already applied with success to Indo-European and non-Aryan myth. This done, the Semitic race will contribute its share of evidence in support of those conditions under which it has been the main purpose of this book to show that myth has its birth and growth.

<sup>1</sup> *Goldziher*, p. 392 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

## § IX.

## CONCLUSION.

The multitude of subjects traversed in the foregoing sections has compelled presentment in so concise a form that any attempt to gather into a few sentences the sum of things said would be as a digest of a digest, and it is, therefore, better to briefly emphasise the conclusions to which the gathered evidence points. It was remarked at the outset, when insisting on the serious meaning which lies at the heart of myths, that they have their origin in the endeavour of barbaric man to explain his surroundings. The mass of fact brought together illustrates and confirms this view, and has thereby tended to raise what was once looked upon as fantastic, curious, and lawless, to the level of a subject demanding sober treatment and examination on strictly scientific methods.

Archbishop Trench, in his *Study of Words*, quotes Emerson's happy characterisation of language as fossil poetry and fossil history: "Just as in some fossil, curious and beautiful shapes of vegetable or animal life, the graceful fern, or the finely-vertebrated lizard, such as have been extinct for thousands of years, are permanently bound up with the stone, so in words are beautiful thoughts and images, the imagination and the feeling of past ages, of men long since in their graves, of men whose very names have

perished, preserved and made safe for ever." In like manner we may speak of myths as fossil ethics and fossil theology, but, with more appositeness, as embryonic ethics and theology, since they contain potentially all the philosophies and theologies "that man did ever find."

And to the student of the history of humanity who rejoices in the sure foundation on which, tested in manifold ways, the convictions of the highest and noblest of the race rest, the value of myth is increased in its being a natural outgrowth of the mind when, having advanced to the point at which curiosity concerning the causes of surrounding things arises, it frames its crude explanations. For not that which man claims to have received as a message from the gods, as a revelation from heaven, but that which he has learned by experience often painful and bitter, and which succeeding generations have either verified or improved upon, or disproved altogether, is, in the long run, of any worth. Through it alone, as we follow the changes wrought in the process from guess to certainty, can we determine what was the intellectual stage of man in his mental infancy, and how far it finds correspondences in the intellectual stage of existing barbaric races.

Thus, the study of myth is nothing less than the study of the mental and spiritual history of mankind. It is a branch of that larger, vaster science of evolution which so occupies our thoughts to-day, and with it the philosopher and the theologian must reckon. The evidence which it brings from the

living and dead mythologies of every race is in accord with that furnished by their more tangible relics, that the history of mankind is a history of slow but sure advance from a lower to a higher ; of ascent, although with oft backslidings. It confirms a momentous canon of modern science, that the laws of evolution in the spiritual world are as determinable as they are in the physical. To this we, for the enrichment of our life and helpful service of our kind, do well to give heed. Wherever we now turn eye or ear the unity of things is manifest, and their unbroken harmony heard. With the theory of evolution in our hands as the master-key, the immense array of facts that seemed to lie unrelated and discrete are seen to be interrelated and in necessary dependence—"a mighty sum of things for ever speaking." That undisturbed relation of cause and effect which science has revealed and confirmed extends backwards as well as reaches forwards ; its continuity involves the inclusion of man as a part of nature, and the study of his development as one in which both the biologist and the mythologist engage towards a common end.



II.

DREAMS :

THEIR PLACE IN THE GROWTH OF  
BELIEFS IN THE SUPERNATURAL.

“THE physical world is made up of atoms and ether, and there is no room for ghosts.”

W. K. CLIFFORD.

“IF ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—let 'em come where there's company and candles.”

GEORGE ELIOT.

## DREAMS :

### THEIR PLACE IN THE GROWTH OF BELIEFS IN THE SUPERNATURAL.

#### § I.

##### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAVAGE AND CIVILISED MAN.

THE evidence as to pre-historic man's material furniture and surroundings, which was first gathered from and restricted to ancient river valleys and bone caverns of Great Britain, France, and Belgium, is no longer isolated. It is supported by evidence which has been collected from every part of the globe inhabited in past or present times, and its uniform character has enabled us to determine what lies beyond an horizon which within the last half century was bounded by the hazy line of myth and tradition. So rigid seemed the limit defining man's knowledge of his past that some forty years ago even the Geological Society of London recorded with barest reference the unearthing of relics witnessing to his presence in Britain hundreds of thousands of years ago. The canon was closed, and no one ventured

to add to the sayings of the book. But the discoveries which had disproved belief in the earth's supremacy in the universe, and in its creation in six days, led the way to researches into the history of the life upon its surface, and especially of that which, in the language of ancient writ, was "made in the image of God." When the long-forbidding line, imaginary as the equator and lacking its convenience, was crossed, there was found the evidence of the conditions under which man emerged from a state quite other than that which had formed the burden of legends sacred with the hoariness of time. Those conditions, it is well-nigh needless to remind the reader, accord with that theory which holds man to be no specially-created being, started on this earth, fully equipped, Minerva-like, with all ripeness of wisdom and loftiness of soul, but the last and long result of an ever-ascending series of organisms ranging from the lowest, shapeless, nerveless specks to *homo sapiens*, "the foremost in the files of time." Evolution is advance from the simple to the complex. The most primitive forms reach maturity in a shorter time than the higher forms, and fulfil their purpose quicker, and this doctrine applies not only in relation to man and the inferior creatures, but as between the several races of man himself. Herein the differences, which are determined by size, still more by increase in complexity, of brain-stuff, are greater than between the lowest man and the highest animals—that is to say, the savage and civilised man are farther apart than the savage and the anthropoid ape. The cranial

capacity of the modern Englishman surpasses that of the non-Aryan inhabitant of India by a difference of sixty-eight cubic inches, while between this non-Aryan skull and the skull of the gorilla the difference in capacity is but eleven inches,<sup>1</sup> and if we were to take into account the differences in structural complexity, as indicated by the creasing and furrowing of the brain surface, the contrast would be still more striking.

The brains of the earliest known races, the men of the Ancient Stone Age, ape-like savages who fought with woolly-haired elephants, cave-lions, and cave-bears, amidst the forests and on the slopes of the valleys and hills where London now stands, and who in the dawn of human intelligence, applying means to ends, came off victorious, were doubtless much nearer to the chimpanzee with his thirty-five cubic inches than to the Papuan with his fifty-five cubic inches. Indeed, we need not travel beyond this

<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph from Professor Huxley's *Observations on the Human Skulls of Engis and Neanderthal* is extracted from Lyell's *Antiquity of Man*, p. 89 (4th edition).

"The most capacious healthy European skull yet measured had a capacity of 114 cubic inches, the smallest (as estimated by weight of brain) about 55 cubic inches, while, according to Professor Schaaffhausen, some Hindu skulls have as small a capacity as about 46 cubic inches (27 oz. of water). The largest cranium of any gorilla yet measured contained 34.5 cubic inches."

Commenting on this paper Sir Charles Lyell remarks that "it is admitted that the differences in character between the brain of the highest races of man and that of the lowest, though less in degree, are of the same order as those which separate the human from the Simian brain," and that the statements of both Professor Huxley and Dr. Morton show "that the range of size or capacity between the highest and lowest human brain is greater than that between the highest Simian and the lowest human brain."

age or island ; it suffices to compare the brain quality of the rustic, thinking of "maistly nowt," with that of the highest minds amongst us, as evidence of the enormous diversity between wild and cultivated stocks of mankind.

Unless we are so enchained to fond delusions as to place man in a kingdom by himself, and deny in the sympathetic, moral, and intellectual faculties in brutes the germs of those capacities which, existing in a pre-human ancestry, have flowered in the noblest and wisest of our race, we may find in such differences as are shown to occur between civilised and primitive man further evidence of the enormous time since the latter appeared. For unnumbered ages man—then physically hardly distinguishable from apes—may have remained stationary. Certainly the relics from the Drift show no advance : given no change in the conditions, the species do not vary, and man, once adapted to his surroundings, changed only as these changed. But, obscure as are the causes, there came a period when conditions arose inducing some variation, no matter how slight, in brain development, which was of more need than any variation in the rest of the body, and when an impetus was given which, leaving the latter but slightly affected, quickened the former, so that man passed from the highest animality to the lowest humanity. Slowly, in the course of a struggle not yet ended, "the ape and tiger" were subdued within him, and those social conditions induced to which are due that progress which ever draws him nearer to the angels.

The discussion of this in detail lies outside the limits of these pages. Here, after briefly noting on what lines it must run, we are concerned with man at that far later stage in his development when the physical and material evidence respecting his bodily development gives place to the psychical and immaterial evidence respecting his mental development. Chipped flints, flakes, and scrapers of the Drift are indispensable witnesses to his primitive state, but during the long ages that he was making shift with them he remains within the boundaries of the zoological; he is more geological than human. Gleams of the soul within that will one day be responsive to grace of form and harmony of colour appear in the rude portraits of mammoth, reindeer, urus, whale, and man himself, scratched on ivory and horn. Indications of germinal ideas about an after-life are present in the contents of tumuli with the skeletons in defined positions, and with weapons presumably for the use of the departed in the happy hunting-grounds. In these last we are nearing the historic period, for a vast interval exists between the tomb-building races and the men of the Reindeer Period, yet even then the ages are many before man had so advanced as to bequeath the intangible relics of his thought, disclosing what answer he had beat out for himself to the riddle of the earth and the mysteries of life and death. Although the story of his intellectual and spiritual development is a broken one, of the earlier chapters of which we have no record, enough survives to induce and strengthen the

conviction that in this, as in aught else, there is no real disconnection. In the shaping of the rudest pointed flint-tool and weapon there are the germs of the highest mechanical art; in the discordant war-whoop of the savage the latent strains of the "Marseillaise," as, quoting Tennyson, in the eggs of the nightingale sleeps the music of the moon. If we cannot get so near to the elemental forms of thought as we could wish, we must lay hold of the lowest extant, and trace in these the connection to be sought between the barbaric and civilised mind. We must have understanding of the mental condition of races, still on low levels of culture, and if the result is to show that many highly-elaborated beliefs among advanced peoples are but barbaric philosophies "writ large," the conception of an underlying unity between all nations of men that do dwell, or have dwelt, on the face of the earth, will receive additional proof.

## § II.

### LIMITATIONS OF BARBARIC LANGUAGE.

Illustrations of the low intellectual stage of some extant races not quite at the bottom of the scale, drawn from simple matters, will make clearer how they will interpret matters of a more complex order, and interpret them only in one way.

Of the beginning of thought we can know nothing. For numberless ages man was marked out

from the animals most nearly allied to him by that power of more readily adapting means to ends which gave him mastery over nature. Through that dim and dateless time he thought without knowing that he thought. "His senses made him conversant only with things externally existing and with his own body, and he transcended his senses only far enough to draw concrete inferences respecting the action of these things."<sup>1</sup> He is human only when the thought reaches us through articulate speech. Language, as a means of communication between him and his fellows, denotes the existence of the social state, the play of the social evolution which gives the impetus to ideas. Language is the outcome of man's social needs and nature; he speaks not so much because he thinks and feels as because he must perforce tell his thoughts and feelings to others. And by the richness or poverty of his speech we may assess the richness or poverty of his ideas, since language cannot transcend the thought of which it is the vehicle.

By what tones and gestures, by what signs and grimaces, the beginnings of speech were made, we know not. Countless processions of races appeared and vanished before language had reached a stage when the elements of which words are built up could be separated, and the reason which governed the choice of this and that sound or symbol discovered. Now and again, when a correspondence is found between the roots of terms in use amongst the higher races and the names given by lower races to the

<sup>1</sup> Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, p. 147.

same thing, we get nearer primitive thought, the correspondence being not always in sound or spelling, which may be delusive, but in physical or sensible meaning. It would be a wholesome corrective of theories concerning the origin of languages to which many are yet wedded to show that terms not only for things material and concrete, but also for things immaterial and abstract, are of purely physical origin, *i.e.* have been chosen from their analogy to something real. But the consideration of such matters lies outside the purpose of this work.

Language proves the limited range of ideas among barbaric peoples in the absence of their capacity to generalise. They have a word for every familiar thing, sound, and colour, but no word for animal, plant, sound, or colour as abstract terms. It is the concrete, the special shape and feature and action of a thing, which strike the senses at the outset; to strip it of these accidents, as we call them, and merge it in the general, and realise its relation to what is common to the class to which it belongs, is an effort of which the untutored mind is incapable. Many of the northern non-Aryan tribes, as among the Mongols, have names for the smallest rivulet, but no word for river; names for each finger, but no word for finger. The Society Islanders have a separate name for the tails of various animals, but no name for tail. The Mohicans have verbs for every kind of cutting, but no verb "to cut." The Australians and other southern aborigines have no generic term for tree, neither have the Malays, yet

they have words for the several parts, the root, stem, twig, etc. When the Tasmanians wished to express qualities of things, as hard, soft, warm, long, round, they would say for hard, "like a stone"; for tall, "long legs"; for round, "like the moon," and so on. Certain hill-tribes of India give names to sunshine, candle, and flames of fire, but "light" is a high abstraction which they are unable to grasp. Some of the Red Race languages have separate verbs for "I wish to eat meat," or "I wish to eat soup," but no verb for "I wish." Of course, the verb "to be," which, as Adam Smith remarked long ago, is the most abstract and metaphysical of all words, and therefore of no early coinage, is absent from a large number of barbaric languages. Abstract though it be, it is, as Professor Whitney points out, made up of the relics of several verbs which once had, like all elements and parts of speech, a distinct physical meaning. As in "be" and "been" the idea of "growing" is contained, so in "am," "art," "is," and "are," the idea of "sitting" (or, as some think, of "breathing") is embodied. As an example of its absence, the Abipones cannot say "I am an Abipone," only "I Abipone." Turning to another class of illustration, we have proof what a far cry it is from the savage to the Senior Wrangler in the powerlessness of the former to count beyond his fingers; indeed, he cannot always count as far as that, any number beyond two bewildering him. One of the best stories to the point is given in Mr. Galton's *Tropical South Africa*.

"When the Dammaras wish to express four they

take to their fingers, which are to them as formidable instruments of calculation as a sliding rule is to an English schoolboy. They puzzle very much after five, because no spare hand remains to grasp and secure the fingers that are required for units. Yet they seldom lose oxen ; the way in which they discover the loss of one is not by the number of the herd being diminished, but by the absence of a face they know. When bartering is going on, each sheep must be paid for separately. Thus, suppose two sticks of tobacco to be the rate of exchange for one sheep, it would sorely puzzle a Dammara to take two sheep and give him four sticks. I have done so, and seen a man put two of the sticks apart, and take a sight over them at one of the sheep he was about to sell. Having satisfied himself that that one was honestly paid for, and finding to his surprise that exactly two sticks remained in hand to settle the account for the other sheep, he would be afflicted with doubts ; the transaction seemed to come out too "pat" to be correct, and he would refer back to the first couple of sticks ; and then his mind got hazy and confused, and wandered from one sheep to the other, and he broke off the transaction until two sticks were put into his hand and one sheep driven away, and then the other two sticks given him and the second sheep driven away. Once while I watched a Dammara floundering hopelessly in a calculation on one side of me, I observed Dinah, my spaniel, equally embarrassed on the other. She was overlooking half a dozen of her new-born puppies,

which had been removed two or three times from her, and her anxiety was excessive, as she tried to find out if they were all present, or if any were still missing. She kept puzzling and running her eyes over them, backwards and forwards, but could not satisfy herself. She evidently had a vague notion of counting, but the figure was too large for her brain. Taking the two as they stood, dog and Dammara, the comparison reflected no great honour on the man."

Dr. Rae says that if an Eskimo is asked the number of his children he is generally puzzled. After counting some time on his fingers he will probably consult his wife, and the two often differ, even though they may not have more than four or five in family. Of the languages of the Australian savages, who are the lowest extant, examined by Mr. Crawford, thirty were found to have no number beyond four, all beyond this being spoken of as "many," whilst the Brazilian Indians got confused in trying to reckon beyond three. The list of such cases might be largely extended, and although exceptions occur where savages are found with a fairly wide range of numbers, notably where barter prevails, the larger proportion of uncivilised people are bewildered at any effort to count beyond three or five. The fingers have, in most cases, determined the limits, for men counted on these before they gave words to the numbers, the words being at last borrowed from the fingers, as in our "five," which is cognate with the Greek "pente," and the Persian "pendji" (said to be derived from the word for "hand"), and

“digits,” from Latin “digitus,” a finger. This limited power of numeration thus shown to be possessed by the savage justifies the statement that he is nearer to the ape than to the average civilised man, nearer, as the extract from Mr. Galton shows, to the spaniel than to the mathematician. What conception of the succession of time, still less of it as a confluence of the eternities, can he have whose feeble brain cannot grasp a to-morrow! And yet the difference is not one of kind, but of degree, which separates the aborigines of Victoria or Papua from the astronomer who is led by certain irregularities in the motion of a planet to calculate the position of the disturbing cause, and thereby to discover it nearly a thousand million miles beyond in the planet Neptune.

### § III.

#### BARBARIC CONFUSION BETWEEN NAMES AND THINGS.

Races which have names for different kinds of oaks, but none for an oak, still less for a tree, and who cannot count beyond their fingers, may be expected to have hazy notions concerning the objective and subjective; or, to put these in terms less technical, concerning that which belongs to the object of thought, and that which is to be referred to the thinking subject. Although primitive religion and

philosophy are too nearly allied to admit of sharp definitions, the former may be said, if the slang is allowed, to be one of funk, and the latter one of fog. There are those amongst us who say that the terrorism which lies at the base of the one and the mist which is an element of the other, linger yet in extant belief and metaphysics. What man cannot understand he fears ; and in all primary beliefs the powers around which seem to him so wayward are baleful, to be appeased by sacrifice or foiled by sorcery. And the confusion which reigns in his cosmos extends to his notion of what is in the mind and what is out of it. He cannot distinguish between an illusion and a reality, between a substance and its image or shadow ; and it needs only some bodily ailment, as indigestion through gorging, or delirium through starving, to give to spectres of diseased or morbid origin, airy nothings, a substantive existence, a local habitation, and a name.

The tangle between things and their symbols is well illustrated in the barbaric notion that the name of a man is an integral part of himself, and that to reveal it is to put the owner in the power of another. An Indian asked Kane whether his wish to know his name arose from a desire to steal it ; the Araucanians would not allow their names to be told to strangers, lest these should be used in sorcery. So with the Indians of British Columbia ; and among the Ojibways husbands and wives never told each other's names, the children being warned against repeating their own names lest they stop growing.

Dobrizhoffer says that the Abipones of Paraguay had the like superstition. They would knock at his door at night, and when asked who was there, no answer would come, through dread of uttering their names. Mr. im Thurn tells us that, although the Indians of British Guiana have an intricate system of names, it is "of little use, in that owners have a very strong objection to telling or using them, apparently on the ground that the name is part of the man, and that he who knows it has part of the owner of that name in his power." In Borneo the name of a sickly child is changed, to deceive the evil spirits that have tormented it; the Lapps change the baptismal name of a child for the same reason; and among the Abipones, the Fuegians, the Lenguas of Brazil, the North-West Indians, and other tribes at corresponding low levels, when any member died the relatives would change their names to elude Death when he should come to look for them, as well as give their children horrid names to frighten the bad spirits away. All over the barbaric world we find a great horror of naming the dead, lest the ghost appear. An aged Indian of Lake Michigan explained why tales of the spirits were told only in winter, by saying that when the deep snow is on the ground the voices of those repeating their names are muffled; but that in summer the slightest mention of them must be avoided, lest the spirits be offended. Among the Californian tribes the name of the departed spoken inadvertently caused a shudder to pass over all those present. Among the Iroquois the name of

a dead man could not be used again in the lifetime of his oldest surviving son without the consent of the latter, and the Australians believe that a dead man's ghost creeps into the liver of the impious wretch who has dared to utter his name. Dr. Lang tried to get the name of a relative who had been killed from an Australian. "He told me who the lad's father was, who was his brother, what he was like, how he walked, how he held his tomahawk in his left hand instead of his right, and who were his companions; but the dreaded name never escaped his lips, and I believe no promises or threats could have induced him to utter it." Dorman gives a pathetic illustration of this superstition in the Shawnee myth of Yellow Sky. "She was a daughter of the tribe, and had dreams which told her she was created for an unheard-of mission. There was a mystery about her being, and none could comprehend the meaning of her evening songs. The paths leading to her father's lodge were more beaten than those to any other. On one condition alone at last she consented to become a wife, namely, that he who wedded her should never mention her name. If he did, she warned him that a sad calamity would befall him, and he would for ever thereafter regret his thoughtlessness. After a time Yellow Sky sickened and died, and her last words were that her husband might never breathe her name. For five summers he lived in solitude, but, alas, one day as he was by the grave of his dead wife, an Indian asked him whose it was, and in forgetfulness he uttered the forbidden

name. He fell to the earth in great pain, and as darkness settled round about him a change came over him. Next morning, near the grave of Yellow Sky a large buck was quietly feeding. It was the unhappy husband."

The original meaning has dropped out of the current saying, "Talk of the devil and you'll see his horns," but savage philosophy recovers it for us. And the shrinking from naming persons is still more marked as we ascend the scale of principalities and powers. In the South Sea Islands not only are the names of chiefs tabooed, but also words and syllables resembling those names in sound. The Tahitians have a custom called *Te pi*, which consists in avoiding in daily language those words which form a part or the whole of the names of the king and royal family, and in inventing new terms in their place. The king's name being *Tu fetu*, "star," had to be changed into *fetia*, and *tui*, "to strike," became *tiai*. In New Zealand knives were called *nekra*, because a chief's name was *Maripi*, or "knife." It is, Professor Max Müller aptly remarks, as if with the accession of Queen Victoria either the word *victory* had been tabooed altogether, or only part of it, as *tori*, so as to make it high treason to speak of *Tories* during her reign. The secret name of Pocahontas was *Matokas*, which was concealed from the English through superstitious fear; and in the mythical story of "Hiawatha" the same metonymic practice occurs, his real name being *Tarenyawagon*. A survival of the dislike to calling exalted temporal,

and also spiritual, beings by their names, probably lies at the root of the Jews' unwillingness to use the name of Yahweh (commonly and incorrectly spelt Jehovah<sup>1</sup>), and in the name "Allah," which is an epithet or title of the Mohammadan deity, and not the "great name"; whilst the concealment by the Romans of the name of the tutelary deity of their city was fostered by their practice, when besieging any place, to invoke the treacherous aid of its protecting god by offering him a high place in their Pantheon. And in the title of Eumenidês, or the "gracious ones," given to the Furies by the Greeks, may be noted a survival of the verbal bribes by which the thing feared was "squared." For example, the Finnish hunters called the bear "the apple of the forest," "the beautiful honey-claw," "the pride of the thicket"; the Laplander speaks of it as "the old man with the fur coat"; in Annam the natives call the tiger "grandfather," or "lord"; and the Dyaks of Borneo speak of the small-pox as "the chief," or "jungle leaves."

The confusion between ideas and objects which these examples illustrate is shared by us, although

<sup>1</sup> The peculiar feature of the Semitic languages is that the consonants are everything and the vowels nothing, every word consisting, in the first instance, merely of three consonants, which form, so to speak, the soul of the idea to be expressed by that word. And as in ancient times the consonants only were written, the name Jehovah appeared as JHVH. Its exact pronunciation is utterly lost, and such veneration gathered round it, that when the Jews came to it they substituted some other name—usually Adonai. Afterwards, when vowels were added to the Hebrew text, those in Adonai, or its phonetic form Edona, were inserted between the letters of the sacred name, and thus JHVH was written Jehovah.

in a remote degree. If the initials of any well-known name are transposed, for example, let W. E. Gladstone be printed E. W. Gladstone ; or if some familiar name is altered, for example, let John Bright be misprinted James Bright, it is curious to note how for a moment the identity is obscured in one's mind. Another personality, indistinct and bewildering, rises before us, showing how we have come to link together a man and his name even to the details of his initials. That which we feel momentarily the uncivilised feels constantly. He cannot think of himself, of his squaw, of his children, or of his fellow-tribesmen, apart from names which are more significant to him than ours are to us. With us the reason which governed selection is forgotten or obscured, the physical features and conditions no longer correspond to ancestral names ; but with barbarous peoples those features and conditions are more apparent. Besides which, children are often named by the medicine-man, and the name is thus endowed with a charm which may roughly be analogous to the halo round a name confirmed by baptism to one simply recorded in the office of a Registrar of Births.

#### § IV.

##### BARBARIC BELIEF IN VIRTUE IN INANIMATE THINGS.

The artificial divisions which man in his pride of birth made between the several classes of phenomena in the inorganic world, and also between the

inorganic and the organic, are being swept away before the larger knowledge and insight of our time. Indeed, it would seem that the surest test we can apply to the worth of any kind of knowledge is whether it adds to or takes from our growing conception of unity. If it does the former, we cannot overthrow it; if it does the latter, then is it science "falsely so called."

That notable doctrine known as the correlation of physical forces, or the convertibility into one another of heat, light, electricity, chemical affinity, etc., each being a mode of manifestation of an unknown energy which "lives through all life, extends through all extent," has its counterpart in the correlation of spiritual forces. Varied as are the modes of expression of these, that variety is on the surface only. Deep down lies the one source that feeds them, the one heart to whose existence their pulsations witness. All primitive philosophies, all religions "that man did ever find," are but as the refractions of the same light dispersed through different media; are the result of the speculations of the same subject, allowances being made for local and non-essential differences upon like objects. And, therefore, in treating of the nature and limitations of man's early thought concerning his surroundings, whether these be the broad earth bathed in the sunshine or swathed in the darkness, or the sounds that come from unseen agents, the sight of spectral visitants of whom he cannot have touch, and out of which are built up his theories of the invisible world, the reader may find reference to the same conditions

which were shown in former pages to give birth and sustenance to primitive myth. The same fantastic conclusions, drawn from rude analyses and associations, and from seeming connections of cause and effect, the same bewildering entanglement between things which we know can have nothing in common, meet us ; and the same scientific method by which we determine the necessary place of each in the advance of man to truth through illusion is applied.

The illustrations of the vital connection which the savage assumes between himself and his name show how easy is the passage from belief in life inhering in everything to belief in it as capable of power for good or evil. This can be shown by illustrations from more tangible things than names. The savage who is afraid to utter these also shrinks from having his likeness taken, in the feeling that some part of him is transferred, and at the mercy of the sorcerer and enemy. The Malemutes of North America refused to risk their lives before a photographic apparatus. They said that those who had their likenesses had their spirit, and they would not let these pass into the keeping of those who might use them as instruments of torment. Catlin relates that he caused great commotion among the Sioux by drawing one of their chiefs in profile. "Why was half his face left out?" they asked ; "Mahtocheega was never ashamed to look a white man in the face." The chief himself did not take offence, but Shouka the Dog taunted him, saying : "The Englishman knows that you are but half a man ; he has painted but one-

half of your face, and knows that the rest is good for nothing." This led to a quarrel, and in the end Mahtocheega was shot, the fatal bullet tearing away just that part of the face which Catlin had not drawn! He had to make his escape, and the matter was not settled till both Shouka and his brother had been killed in revenge for Mahtocheega's death. The Yanktons accused Catlin of causing a scarcity of buffaloes by putting a great many of them in his book, and refused to let him take their portraits. So with the Araucanians, who ran away if any attempt was made to sketch them. Among such races we find great care exercised lest cuttings of hair, parings of nails, saliva, refuse of food, water in which they had washed, etc., should fall into unfriendly or mistrusted hands. The South Sea Island chiefs had servants following them with spittoons, that the saliva might be buried in some hidden place. Among the Polynesians any one who fell ill attributed it to some sorcerer, who had got hold of refuse from the sick and was burning it, and the quiet of the night was often broken by the blowing of shell-trumpets, as signals for the sorcerer to stop until the gifts on their way to appease him could arrive. The idea is common both to Eskimo and Indian that so long as a fragment of a body remains unburnt, the being, man or beast, may, by magic, be revived from it. As with the name or the portrait, whoever possessed a part of the material substance possessed a part of the spiritual, and in this world-wide belief in a symoathetic connection between things living and

not living lies the whole philosophy of sorcery, of charms, amulets, spells, and the general doctrine of luck surviving through the successive stages of culture to this day. And he who would prevent anything from his person getting into hostile hands, naturally sought after things in which coveted qualities were believed to dwell, and avoided those of a reverse nature. So we find tiger's flesh eaten to give courage, and the eyes of owls swallowed to give good sight in the dark. The Kaffirs prepare a powder made of the dried flesh of various wild beasts, the leopard, tiger, elephant, snake, etc., so as to absorb the several virtues of these creatures. The Tyrolese hunter wears his tuft of eagle's down to gain long sight and daring, and the Red Indian strings bears claws round his neck to get Bruin's savage courage. The customs of scalping and, in some measure, of cannibalism, may be referred to the same notion, for the Red man will risk his life to prevent a tribesman's scalp being captured by the foe, and the New Zealander will swallow the eyes of his slain enemy to improve his sight. In Greenland "a slain man is said to have power to avenge himself upon the murderer by *rushing into him*, which can only be prevented by eating a piece of his liver."<sup>1</sup> When a whaler died the Eskimos distributed portions of his dried body among his friends, and rubbed the points of their lances with them, it being held that a weapon thus charmed would pierce a vital part in a whale, where another would fail. Sometimes the body was

<sup>1</sup> Rink's *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, p. 45.

laid in a cave, and, before starting for the chase, the whalers would assemble, and, carrying it to a stream, plunge it in, and then drink the water. When the heroic Jesuit Brébeuf was tortured by the Iroquois, they were so astonished at his endurance that they laid open his breast and came in a crowd to drink the blood of so valiant a foe, thinking to imbibe with it some portion of his courage, while a chief tore out his heart and devoured it.

Cannibalism, it may be remarked, *en passant*, is also found to have a religious significance, on the supposition, which has unsuspected survival among advanced races, that eating the body and drinking the blood communicates the spirit of the victim to the consumer. It is not always the most savage races who practise it; for example, the Australians, despite the scarcity of large animals for food supply, rarely ate the flesh of man, whilst the New Zealanders, who rank far above them, and had not the like excuse, were systematic feeders on human flesh.

As examples of a reverse kind, but witnessing to the play of like beliefs in qualities passing from brutes and lifeless things, we find some races avoiding oil, lest the game slip through their fingers, abstaining from the flesh of deer, lest it engenders timidity, and from that of pigs and of tortoises lest the eater has very small eyes. Dr. Tylor gives an apposite illustration of a kindred superstition in the Hessian lad who thinks that he may escape the conscription by carrying a baby-girl's cap in his pocket as a symbolical way of repudiating manhood. So

the thief of our London slums hopes to evade the police by carrying a piece of coal or slate in his pocket for luck. Among ourselves there was an old medical saw, "Hare-flesh engendereth melancholy bloude," and in Swift's *Polite Conversation* we have this reason assigned by Lady Answerall when asked to eat it; whilst faith is not yet extinct in the "Doctrine of Signatures," or the notion that the appearance of a plant indicates the disease for which it is a remedy, as the "eye-bright," the black purple spot on the corolla of which was said to show that it was good for weak eyes. In referring to the mandrake superstition (a plant whose roots are said to rudely resemble the human form) as illustration of the "recognised principles in magic that things like each other, however superficially, affect each other in a mystic way and possess identical properties," Mr. Andrew Lang quotes a Melanesian belief that a stone in the shape of a pig, of a bread-fruit, of a yam, was a most valuable find, because it made pigs prolific and fertilised bread-fruit trees and yam-plots.<sup>1</sup>

Brand remarks<sup>2</sup> that the custom of giving infants coral to help in cutting the teeth is said to be a survival of an old belief in it as an amulet; and in English, Sicilian, and West Indian folk-lore, we find the belief that it changes colour in sympathy with the pale or healthy look of the wearer. An old Latin author says,<sup>3</sup> "It putteth of lightenyng, whirle-wynde, tempeste, and storms fro shyppes and houses that it is in."

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Custom and Myth*; Art. "Moly and Mandragora," p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Dyers *Folk-Lore*, p. 179.

We are each of us hundreds of thousands of years old, and although our customs and beliefs have a far less venerable antiquity, their sources lie not less in primitive thought. Like the survival of the ancient Roman workman's "casula" or "little house" or "shelter" in the chasuble of the priest; like the use of stone knives in circumcision long after the discovery of metals; the general tends to become special; the common, its primitive need or service forgotten, to become sacred. Sometimes the early idea abides; the Crees, who carry about the bones of the dead carefully wrapped up as a fetish; the Caribs, who think such relics can answer questions; the Xomanes, who drink the powdered bones in water, that they may receive the spirit; the Algonquins, whose god Manobozho turned bits of his own flesh or his wife's into raccoons for food; the Iroquois cited above; represent the barbarous ancestry of higher races, whether of the Bacchanalians described by Arnobius,<sup>1</sup> who thought that the fulness of the divine majesty was imparted to them when they tore and ate the struggling rams with mouths dripping with gore, or of the faithful who receive nutriment through the symbols of the Cross. And the prayers of savage and civilised have this in common, that some advantage is thereby sought by the utterer; their sacrifices are alike the giving up of one's goods or one's self to a deity who may be appeased or bribed thereby; their fastings are cultivated as inducing the abnormal states in which their old men dream dreams and their young men see visions of

<sup>1</sup> Arnobius *adv. Gentes.*, v. 19.

spirits appearing as angels ascending and descending between earth and the abode of the blest. Baptisms are the ancient lustrations, which water, as the cleansing element, suggested; and the eastward position, over which priests and ecclesiastics have fought, is the undoubted relic of worship of the rising sun.

In short, there is no rite or ceremony yet practised and revered amongst us which is not the lineal descendant of barbaric thought and usage, expressing a need which, were men less the slaves of custom and indolence, would long since have found loftier form than in genuflexion before shrine and reliquary. By an exercise of imagination not possible but for these being a felicitous "gesture language" of the cries of human souls, a mass of heathen and pagan rites have been transformed into those of the Christian faith. That they have come to be mistaken for the ideas symbolised, that with the loftiest spiritual teaching there should remain commingled belief in miraculous power in fragments (mostly spurious) of dead men and their clothes; only shows the persistency of that notion of a vital connection between the lifeless and the living which this section has sought to illustrate.

## § V.

### BARBARIC BELIEF IN THE REALITY OF DREAMS.

The confusion in the barbaric mind between the objective and the subjective, and between the name

and the person or thing, which has been illustrated in the foregoing pages, will enable us to see more clearly how the like confusion must enter into the interpretation of such occult and compound phenomena as dreams, and all their kind.

They supply the conditions for exciting and sustaining that feeling of mystery which attends man's endeavour to get at the meaning of his surroundings. The phantasies which have defiled through the brain in coherent order, or danced in mazy whirl about its sinuous passages when complete sleep was lacking, leave their footprints on the memory, and they are strong of head and heart, true pepticians, like the countryman cited by Carlyle, who, "for his part, had no system," whose composure on awaking is not affected by the harmonious or discordant, the pleasant or disagreeable, illusions which have made up their dreams. In the felicitous words of Lucretius, "When sleep has chained down our limbs in sweet slumber, and the whole body is sunk in profound repose, yet then we seem to ourselves to be awake and to be moving our limbs, and amid the thick darkness of night we think we see the sun and the daylight; and though in a confined room, we seem to be passing to new climates, seas, rivers, mountains, and to be crossing plains on foot, and to hear voices, though the austere silence of night prevails all round, and to be uttering speech, though quite silent. Many are the other things of this marvellous sort we see, which all seek to shake, as it were, the credit of the senses: quite in vain,

since the greatest part of these cases cheat us on account of the mental suppositions which we add of ourselves, taking those things as seen which have not been seen by the senses. For nothing is harder than to separate manifest facts from doubtful, which the mind without hesitation adds on of itself.”<sup>1</sup>

While for us dreams fill an empty moment in the telling, albeit now and again nurturing such remains of superstition as cling to the majority of people, they are to the untrained intelligence, unable to distinguish fact from fiction, or to follow any sequence of ideas, as solid as the experiences of waking moments. As a Zulu, well expressing the limits of savage thought, said to Bishop Callaway, “Our knowledge does not urge us to search out the roots of it, we do not try to see them, if any one thinks ever so little, he soon gives it up, and passes on to what he sees with his eyes; and he does not understand the real state of even what he sees.” Nor does his language clear the confusion within when he tells what he has seen and heard and felt, where he has been and what he has done, for the speech cannot transcend the thought, and therefore can represent neither to himself nor to his hearers the difference between the illusions of the night and the realities of the day. The dead relatives and friends who appear in dreams and live their old life, with whom he joins in the battle, the chase, and the feast, the foes with whom he struggles, the wild beasts from whom he flees, or in whose clutches he feels himself, and with shrieks

<sup>1</sup> *De rerum Natura*, Book iv. 453-468.

awakens his squaw, the long distances he travels to sunnier climes lit by a light that never was on land or sea, are all real, and no "baseless fabric of a vision." That now and again he should have walked in his sleep would confirm the seeming reality; still more so would the intensified form of dreaming called "nightmare,"<sup>1</sup> when hideous spectres sit upon the breast, stopping breath and paralysing motion, and to which is largely due the creation of the vast army of nocturnal demons that fill the folk-lore of the world, and that, under infinite variety of repellent form, have had place in the hierarchy of religions.

Dreams are in the main referred by the savage either to the entrance into him of some outside spirit, as among the Fijians, who believe that the spirit of a living man will leave the body to trouble sleeping folk, or to the real doings of himself.

When the Greenlander dreams of hunting, or fishing, or courting, he believes that the soul quits the body; the Dyaks of Borneo think that during sleep the soul sometimes remains in the body or travels far away, being endowed, whether present or absent, with conditions which in waking moments are lacking. Wherever we find a low state of mental development the like belief exists. In Mr. Thurn's elaborate work on the *Indians of Guiana* we have corroborative evidence, the more valuable because of its freshness. He tells us that the dreams which come to the Indian are to him as real as any

<sup>1</sup> According to Professor Skeat, from A.S. *nihl*, night; *mara*, lit. "a crusher," from Aryan root, MAR, to crush. Cf. *Etymol. Dict.*

of the events of his waking life. To him dream-acts and waking-acts differ only in one respect—namely, that the former are done only by the spirit, the latter are done by the spirit in its body. Seeing other men asleep, and afterwards hearing from them the things which they suppose themselves to have done when asleep, the Indian has no difficulty in reconciling that which he hears with the fact that the bodies of the sleepers were in his sight and motionless throughout the time of supposed action, because he never questions that the spirits, leaving the sleepers, played their part in dream-adventures. Mr. Thurn illustrates the complete belief of the Indian in the unbroken continuity of his dream-life and waking-life by incidents which came under his own notice, and which are quoted as serving the present argument better than any theorising.

One morning when it was important to me to get away from a camp on the Essequibo River, at which I had been detained for some days by the illness of some of my Indian companions, I found that one of the invalids, a young Macusi, though better in health, was so enraged against me that he refused to stir, for he declared that, with great want of consideration for his weak health, I had taken him out during the night and had made him haul the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts. Nothing could persuade him that this was but a dream, and it was some time before he was so far pacified as to throw himself sulkily into the bottom of the canoe. At that time we were all suffering from a great scarcity of food, and, hunger having its usual effect in producing vivid dreams, similar events frequently occurred. More than once the men declared in the morning that some absent man, whom they named, had come during the night, and had beaten, or other-

wise maltreated them; and they insisted on much rubbing of the bruised parts of their bodies. Another instance was amusing. In the middle of one night I was awakened by an Arawak named Sam, the captain or head-man of the Indians who were with me, only to be told the bewildering words, "George speak me very bad, boss; you cut his bits!" It was some time before I could collect my senses sufficiently to remember that "bits," or fourpenny-pieces, are the units in which, among Creoles and semi-civilised Indians, calculation of money, and consequently of wages, is made; that to cut bits means to reduce the number of bits or wages given; and to understand that Captain Sam, having dreamed that his subordinate George had spoken insolently to him, the former, with a fine sense of the dignity of his office, now insisted that the culprit should be punished in real life. One more incident, of which the same Sam was the hero, may be told for the sake of the humour, though it did not happen within my personal experience, but was told me by a friend. This friend, in whose employ Sam was at the time, told his man, as they sat round the fire one night, of the Zulu or some other African war which was then in progress, and in so doing inadvertently made frequent use of the expression, "to punish the niggers." That night, after all in camp had been asleep for some time, they were raised by loud cries for help. Sam, who was one of the most powerful Indians I ever saw, was "punishing a nigger" who happened to be one of the party; with one hand he had firmly grasped the back of the breeches-band of the black man, and had twisted this round so tightly that the poor wretch was almost cut in two. Sam sturdily maintained that he had received orders from his master for this outrageous conduct, and on inquiry it turned out that he had dreamed this.<sup>1</sup>

Taking an illustration from nearer home, although from a more remote time, we have in the Scandinavian *Vatnsdæla Saga* a curious account of three Finns who were shut up in a hut for three nights,

<sup>1</sup> *Among the Indians of Guiana*, pp. 344-346.

and ordered by Ingimund, a Norwegian chief, to visit Iceland, and inform him of the line of the country where he was to settle. Their bodies became rigid, and they sent their souls on their errand, and, on their awaking at the end of three days, gave an accurate account of the *Vatnsdæl*, in which Ingimund ultimately dwelt. No wonder that in mediæval times, when witches swept the air and harried the cattle, swooning and other forms of insensibility were adduced in support of the theory of soul-absence, or that we find among savages—as the *Tajals* of the *Luzon* islands—objections to waking a sleeper lest the soul happens to be out of the body. As a corollary to this belief in soul-absence, fear arises lest it be prolonged to the peril of the owner, and hence a rough and ready theory of the cause of disease is framed, for savages rarely die in their beds.

## § VI.

### BARBARIC THEORY OF DISEASE.

That disease is a derangement of functions interrupting their natural action, and carrying attendant pain as its indication, could not enter the head of the uncivilised: and, indeed, among ourselves a cold or a fever is commonly thought of as an entity in the body which has stolen in, and, having been caught, must be somehow expelled. With the universal primitive belief in spiritual agencies everywhere

inhaled with the breath or swallowed with the food or drink, all diseases were regarded as their work, whether, as remarked above, through absence of the rightful spirit or subtle entrance of some hostile one. If these be the causes to which sicknesses are due, obviously the only cure is to get rid of them, and hence the sorcerer and the medicine-man find their services in request in casting out the demon by force, or enticing him by cajolery, or in bringing back the truant soul.

To the savage mind no other explanation of illness is possible than that it is due to the exit of one's own spirit or to the intrusion of a stronger one, whether of revengeful man or animal. An old Dakota, whose son had sore eyes, said that nearly thirty years before, when the latter was a boy, he fastened a pin to a stick and speared a minnow with it, and it was strange that after so long a time the fish should come to seek revenge. When an Indian is attacked by any wild beast he believes that the avenging Kenaima has transferred his spirit to the animal which seizes him, and if he has even a toothache, of which more presently, then the Kenaima has insinuated himself in the shape of a worm. The tribal chief among the Brazilian natives acts as doctor, and when he visits the sick he asks what animal the patient has offended, and if no cure is effected, the convenient explanation is at hand that the right animal has not been found. At the death of Iron Arms, a noted North American Indian warrior, it was said that he died because the doctor

made a mistake, thinking that a prairie-dog had entered him, when it was a mud-hen. In the weird mythology of the Finns the third daughter of the ruler of Tuonela, the underworld, sits on a rock rising from hell-river, beneath which the spirits of all diseases are shut up. As she whirls the rock round like a millstone the spirits escape and go on their torturing errand to mortals. The more abnormal and striking phases of disease manifest when a man is writhing under intense agony, as if torn and twisted by some fiendish living thing, or when in delirium he raves and starts, or when thrown down in epilepsy he struggles convulsively, or when he shivers in an ague, or when in more violent forms of madness he seems endowed with superhuman strength; the various symptoms attending hysteria; each and all support that theory of spirit-influence which survives among advanced races in referring disease to supernatural causes. For the ancient theories of a divine government under which disease is the expression of the anger of the gods, and medicine the token of their healing mercy, and the current notions that any epidemic or pestilence is a visitation of God, are identical in character, however improved in feature, with the barbaric belief illustrated above; and in the ages when belief in the devil as one walking to and fro upon the earth was rampant, he especially was regarded as bringer of both bane and antidote. "He may," says an old writer, "inflict diseases, which is an effect he may occasion *applicando activa passivis* (by applying actives to passives), and by the same

means he may likewise cure . . . and not only may he cure diseases laid on by himself, as Wierus observes, but even natural diseases, since he knows the natural causes and the origin of even those better than the physicians can, who are not present when diseases are contracted, and who, *being younger than he*, must have less experience.”<sup>1</sup> In Lancashire folklore “casting out the ague” was but another name for “casting out the devil”; in the Arabic language the words for epilepsy and possession by demons are the same; and in such phrases as a man being “beside himself,” “transported,” “out of his mind,” or in the converse, as when it is said in the parable of the prodigal son, “he came to himself”; in the words “ecstasy,” which means a displacement or removal of the soul, and “catalepsy,” a seizing of the body by some external power, we have language preserving the primitive ideas of an intruding or departing spirit. Such minor actions as gaping and sneezing confirm the belief. The philosophy of the latter, as Mr. Gill remarks in his *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, is that the spirit having gone travelling about, its return to the body is naturally attended with some difficulty and excitement, occasioning a tingling and enlivening sensation all over the body. And the like explanation lies at the root of the mass of customs attendant on sneezing, and of the superstitions generated by it, which extend through the world.

Williams tells us that among the Fijians, when

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Black: *Folk-Medicine*, p. 13.

any one faints or dies, their spirit, it is said, may sometimes be brought back by calling after it, and occasionally the ludicrous scene is witnessed of a stout man lying at full length and bawling out lustily for the return of his soul. So in China, when a child is lying dangerously ill, its mother will go outside into the garden and call its name, in the hope of bringing back the wandering spirit. But for all the ills that flesh is heir to, from hiccupping to madness, from toothache to broken limbs, the patient seldom dares to doctor himself; neither the etiquette of the ordained medicine-man nor the orthodox therapeutics favour that show of independence. The methods adopted by the faculty vary in detail, but they are ruled by a single assumption. When a Chinaman is dying, and the soul is believed to be already out of the body, a relative holds up his coat on a bamboo stick, and a Taoist priest seeks by incantations to bring back the truant soul so that it may re-enter the sick man. Among the Six Nations the Indians sought to discover the intruder by gathering a quantity of ashes and scattering them in the cabin where the sick person was lying. A similar recipe for tracking demons is given in the *Talmud*; but, as more nearly bearing on the Indian practice, a Polish custom mentioned by Grimm<sup>1</sup> may be quoted. When the white folk torment a sick man a friend walks round him carrying a sievelful of ashes on his back, and lets the ashes run out till the floor round the bed is covered with them. The next morning all the lines in the ashes

<sup>1</sup> *Teut. Mythol.*, 1165.

are counted, and the result told to a wise woman, who prescribes accordingly.

A favourite mode of treatment is blowing upon or sucking the diseased organ, and deception is no infrequent resort when the sorcerer secretes thorns or fishbones, beetles or worms, in his mouth, and then pretends that he has extracted them. Cranz says that the Eskimo old women appear to suck from a swollen leg scraps of leather or a parcel of hair which they have previously crammed into their mouths, and in Australia the same dodge is practised, when the sorcerer makes believe that he has drawn out a piece of bone from the affected part. That toothache is due to a worm is a belief which exists throughout Europe and Asia, and from the Orkneys to New Zealand. Shakspeare refers to it in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act III. Scene ii. —

*Don Pedro.* What ! sigh for the toothache ?

*Leonata.* Where is but a humour or a worm ;

and instances are current of this superstition being acted upon in rural districts, whilst in China the itinerant dentist conceals a worm in the stick which he applies to the aching tooth, and on the stick being gently tapped, the worm wriggles out to the satisfaction of the sufferer. But among barbaric races the treatment of disease is ordinarily the reverse of soothing. Here and there the virtues of some plant have been discovered by accident, and, whilst exalted into a deity in its native home, it has become, like cinchona, a priceless boon to the fever-stricken all over the world ;

but, speaking broadly, the medicine-man is no Melampus, winning the secret of their healing balm from herb and tree. Nor has he much faith in magic or charm compared to his faith in noise, in incantations, with their accompanying hideous grimaces and gestures, and their deafening yells with clang of instrument to drown the sufferer's groans and chase away the demon. Not unfrequently, when the patient is kept without food so as to starve out the indwelling enemy, or when the body is pommelled and squeezed to force him out, the remedy helps the disease! An illustration or two from a great mass at command must suffice. Among the Mapuches the sorcerer adopts the canonical howls and grimaces. Making himself as horrible-looking as he can, he begins beating a drum and working himself into a frenzy until he falls to the ground with his breast working convulsively. As soon as he falls, a number of young men outside the hut, who are there to help him in frightening the disease-bringing spirit out of the patient, add their defiant yells, and dash at full speed, with lighted torches, against the hut. If this does not succeed, and the patient dies, the result is attributed to witchcraft. When a Pawnee chief had some ribs and an arm broken, the medicine-men danced round him, and raised their voices from murmurous chants to howls, accompanying the music by blows upon the wounded man's breast to banish the bad spirit. In olden time this rough-and-tumble business of blows, to which immersion was added, was applied to lunatics in these islands. And, in fact, until some

local paper narrates a current superstition, we seldom awaken to the fact how widely the theological explanation of diseases and the empirical choice of remedies still obtains, each being survivals of barbaric theory and practice.

The savage who has more faith, as a curative, in plants that grow on burial-places, and the Christian, who ascribed special healing power to turf and dew from a saint's grave,<sup>1</sup> differ no whit in kind; and so ingrained was the medicinal belief in virtue inhering in fragments of the dead, that not even the satire of "Reynard the Fox," telling how the wolf was cured of his earache, and the hare of his fever, the moment that they lay down on the grave of the martyred hen, could give quietus to the notion that grated skulls and sacramental shillings were specifics for the healing of the faithful.

This reference to like practices reminds us how belief in the action of invisible agencies has passed into the practice of confession among advanced races outside Christendom, as in Mexico and Peru. The Roman Catholic priests were not less astonished at finding this in vogue on their arrival in South America than the good Father Huc when, on reaching Tibet, he found shaven monks wearing rosaries, worshipping relics, using holy water, and a grand Lama decked in mitre, cope, and cross.<sup>2</sup> But, as the Italian proverb has it, the world is one country, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Grimm, *Teut. Mythol.* 1177.

<sup>2</sup> "Voilà autant de rapports que les Bouddhistes ont avec nous," adds the traveller, for hinting at which analogies between Buddhists and Catholics the Pope put his book on the Index.

“we have all one human heart,” so that the confessional has the like explanation in east as in west. If the disease be the work of an offended deity or of an avenging spirit, let the wrong-doer admit his fault, and trust to him who is credited with influence with the unseen to exorcise the intruder.

## § VII.

### BARBARIC THEORY OF A SECOND SELF OR SOUL.

In thus far illustrating the confusion inherent in the barbaric mind between what is and what is not external to itself, the explanation given of matters still dividing philosophers into opposite camps has been hardly indicated. The uniformity of this confusion among the lower intelligence in every zone and age might surprise us, and we should be in bondage to the theory which explains it by assumption of primal intuitions of the race, were we not rejoicing in the freedom of the truth of the doctrine of the descent, or ascent, of man from an ape-like ancestry, and the resulting slow development of his psychical faculties, involving his accounting for motion in things around by the like personal life and will of which he is conscious in himself, and for his regarding the world of great and small alike as the home and haunt of spirits.

For the assumption underlying the savage explanation of such things as dreams and diseases involves a larger assumption—namely, that the spirit

which acts thus arbitrarily, playing this game of hide-and-peek, now, as it were, caught up into Paradise, and now dodging its owner and worrying its enemy on earth—is, to quote Mr. Spencer's appropriate term, a man's *other self*. It is, at least, what the scientists call a working hypothesis; it is the only possible explanation which the uncultivated mind can give of what it has not the power to see is a subjective phenomenon. Odd and out-of-the-way events have happened to the dreamer; he has been to strange places and seen strange doings, but waking up, he knows that he is in the same wigwam where he laid down to sleep, and can be convinced by his squaw that he has not moved therefrom all night. Therefore it is the other self, this phantom-soul, which has been away for a time, seeing and taking part in things both new and old. We civilised folk, as Dr. Wendell Holmes remarks, not rarely find our personality doubled in our dreams, and do battle with ourselves, unconscious that we are our own antagonists. Dr. Johnson dreamed that he had a contest with an opponent and got the worst of it; of course, he found the argument for both! Tartini heard the devil play a wonderful sonata, and lay entranced by the arch-fiend's execution. On waking he seized his violin, and although he could not reproduce the actual succession of notes, he recovered sufficient impressions to compose his celebrated "Devil's Sonata." Obviously the devil was no other than Tartini.

Thus the philosopher, to whom dreaming merely indicates a certain amount of uncontrolled mental

activity, may satisfy himself ; not thus can the savage, who cannot even think that he thinks, and to whom the phenomena of shadows, reflection, and echoes bring confirming evidence of the existence of his mysterious double. What else than a veritable entity can his shadow be to him ? Its intangibility feeds his awe and wonder, and increases his bewilderment ; its actions, ever corresponding with his own, make it, even more than its outline, a part of himself, the loss of which may be serious. Only when the light is withdrawn or intercepted does the shadow cease to accompany, precede, or follow him, and to lengthen, shorten, or distort itself ; whilst not he alone, but all things above and around, have this phantom attendant. The Choctaws believed that each man has an outside shadow, *shilombish*, and an inside shadow, *shilup*, both of which survive his decease. Among the Fijians a man's shadow is called the dark spirit, which goes to the unseen world, while the other spirit, which is his likeness reflected in water or a mirror, stays near the place where he dies. The Basutos are careful, when walking by a river, not to let their shadow fall on the water, lest a crocodile seize it, and harm the owner. Among the Algonquin Indians sickness is accounted for by the patient's shadow being unsettled or detached from the body ; the Zulus say that a corpse cannot cast a shadow, and in the barbaric belief that its loss is baleful, we have the germ of the mediæval legends of shadowless men and of tales of which Chamisso's story of Peter Schlemihl is a type. The New England tribes called the soul *chemung*, the

shadow, and in the Quiche and Eskimo languages, as also in the several dialects of Costa Rica, the same word expresses both ideas ; while civilised speech indicates community of thought in the *skia* of the Greeks, the *manes* or *umbra* of the Romans, and the *shade* of our own tongue. Still more complete in the mimicry is the reflection of the body in water or mirror, the image repeating every gesture and adopting every colour, whilst in the echoes which forest and hillside fling back, the savage hears confirmation of his belief in the other self, as well as in the nearness of the spirits of the dead. The Sonora Indians say that departed souls dwell among the caves and nooks of the cliffs, and that the echoes are their voices, and in South Pacific myth echo is the first and parent fairy, to whom at Marquesas divine honours are still paid as the giver of food, and as she who "speaks to the worshippers out of the rocks." In Greek myth she is punished by Juno for diverting her attention whilst Jupiter flirts with the nymphs, and at last, pining in grief at her unrequited love for Narcissus, there remains nothing but her voice.

But what, in primitive conception, is the more specific nature of the other self, and how does it make the passage from within to without, and *vice versa* ? Very early in man's history he must have wondered at the difference between a waking and a sleeping person, a living and a dead one, and sought wherein this consisted. There lay the body in the repose, more or less broken, of sleep, or in the undisturbed repose of the unawakening sleep ; in the

latter case, with nothing tangible or visible gone, but that which was once "quick" and warm, which had spoken, moved, smiled, or frowned but a little while before, and which still came in dream or vision, was now cold and still.

It should here be remarked, in passing, that many savage races do not believe in death as a natural event, but regard it as differing from sleep only in the length of time that the spirit is absent from the body. No matter what any one's age may be, if his death is not caused by wounds, it is attributed to magic, and the search for the sorcerer becomes a family duty, like the vendetta for other injuries. The widespread myths which account for death have as their underlying idea the infraction of some law or custom, for which the offender pays the extreme penalty. And that personification of it which pervades barbaric thought, whilst undergoing many changes of form, yet retains its hold in popular conception as well as in poetry. Pictured as the messenger of Deity, as the awful angel who sought the rebellious and impious, or who, in mission of tenderness, bore the soul to its home in the bosom of the Eternal, it was transformed and degraded by the grotesque fancy of a later time into a grim and dancing skeleton whetting his sickle for ingathering of the young and fair to their doom, or into the grinning skull and crossbones of Christian headstones. So when the maiden Proserpine is plucking the spring flowers, "crocuses and roses and fair violets," in the Elysian fields, Hades, regent of hell,

regardless of her cries, carries her off to his invisible realm.

But to resume. Whilst shadows, reflections, and echoes, one and all, seemed to satisfy the uncivilised mind as to the existence of the other self, they gave no key to its nature, to what it is like. Obviously the difference between death and life lay in some unsubstantial or semi-substantial thing. Perhaps, thought some races, it lies in the blood, with the unchecked outflow of which death ensues, and the idea of this connection has not been confined to barbaric peoples. Perhaps, thought other races, it lies in the heart, which, say the Basutos, has gone out of any one dead, but has returned when the sick have recovered. Among the Greeks some philosophers held that it was fire, which was extinct when the fuel of life was burnt out, or water, which would evaporate away. But, as language shows, it is with the *breath* that the other self of the savage and the vital principle of the philosopher has been most widely identified. For it is the cessation of breathing which would in the long-run be noted as the unfailing accompaniment of death; and the condensing vapour, as it was exhaled, would confirm the existing theories of a shadowy and gaseous-like soul. In this, as the illustrations to be adduced from various languages will evidence, the continuity of idea which travels along the whole line of barbaric and learned speculation is unbroken.

## § VIII.

## BARBARIC PHILOSOPHY IN "PUNCHKIN" AND ALLIED STORIES.

As bearing upon the barbaric belief in the soul leaving the body at pleasure, there is a remarkable group of stories, the central idea of which is the dwelling apart of the soul or heart, as the seat of life, in some secret place, in an egg, or a necklace, or a flower, the good or evil fortunes of the soul involving those of the body. To this group the name of "Punchkin," the title of one of the older specimens, may conveniently be given. In Miss Frere's *Old Deccan Days* it takes the following form.

A Rajah has seven daughters, and his wife dying when they were quite children, he marries the widow of his prime minister. Her cruelty to his children made them run off to a jungle, where seven neighbouring princes, who were out hunting, found them, and each took one of them to wife. After a time they again went hunting, and did not come back. So when the son of the youngest princess, who had also been enchanted away, grew up, he set out in search of his mother and father and uncles, and at last discovered that the seven princes had been turned into stone by the magician Punchkin, who had shut up the princess in a tower because she would not marry him. Recognising her son, she plotted with him to feign agreement to marry

Punchkin if he would tell her where the secret of his life was hidden. Overjoyed at her yielding to his wish, the magician told her that it was true that he was not as others.

“Far, far away, hundreds of thousands of miles from this, there lies a desolate country covered with thick jungle. In the midst of the jungle grows a circle of palm-trees, and in the centre of the circle stand six chattees full of water, piled one above another; below the sixth chattee is a small cage which contains a little green parrot; on the life of the parrot depends my life, and if the parrot is killed I must die. But,” he added, “this was not possible, because thousands of genii surround the palm-trees, and kill all who approach the place.”

The princess told her son this, and he set forth on his journey. On the way he rescued some young eagles from a serpent, and the grateful birds carried him until they reached the jungle, where, the genii being overcome with sleep by the heat, the eaglets swooped down. “Down jumped the prince; in an instant he had overthrown the chattees full of water and seized the parrot, which he rolled up in his cloak,” then mounted again into the air and was carried back to Punchkin’s palace. Punchkin was dismayed to see the parrot in the prince’s hands, and asked him to name any price he willed for it, whereupon the prince demanded the restoration of his father and his uncles to life. This was done; then he insisted on Punchkin doing the like to “all whom he had thus imprisoned,” when, at the waving of the magician’s wand, the whole garden became suddenly alive.

“Give me my parrot!” cried Punchkin. Then

the boy took hold of the parrot, and tore off one of his wings; and as he did so the magician's right arm fell off. He then pulled off the parrot's second wing, and Punchkin's left arm fell off; then he pulled off the bird's legs, and down fell the magician's right leg and left leg. Nothing remained of him save the limbless body and the head; but still he rolled his eyes, and cried, "Give me my parrot!" "Take your parrot, then," cried the boy, and with that he wrung the bird's neck, and threw it at the magician, and as he did so, Punchkin's head twisted round, and, with a fearful groan, he died. Of course, all the rest "lived very happily ever afterwards," as they do in the plays and the novels.

In the stories of *Chundum Rajah*, and of *Sodewa Bai*, the Hindu Cinderella, the heroine's soul is contained in a string of golden beads. When the Ranee, jealous of her husband's love for Sodewa Bai, asked her why she always wore the same beads, she replies: "I was born with them round my neck, and the wise men told my father and mother that they contained my soul, and that if any one else wore them I should die." Whereupon the Ranee instructed her servant to steal the beads from the princess when she slept; then she died, but her body did not decay, and in the end she was restored to life by the recovery of her necklace. In the Bengali tale, *Life's Secret*, a Rajah's favourite wife gives birth miraculously to a boy, whose soul is bound up in a necklace in the stomach of a boal-fish. In both instances the ornaments are stolen,

and while they are worn by the thieves, prince and princess alike are lifeless, whilst with the recovery of the beads life returned to each. A not unlike idea occurs in the story, *Truth's Triumph*. The children of a village beauty, whom the Rajah had married, are changed into mango trees, to save them from the fury of the jealous Ranee, until the time of danger was past.

In Miss Stokes' collection of *Indian Fairy Tales*, we have variants corresponding more closely to *Punchkin*. In *Brave Hirálálbásá*, a Rakshas (the common name for demon) is induced to reveal the secret of his life. He says, "Sixteen miles from here is a tree, round it are tigers and bears and other animals, on the top of it is a large flat snake, on the head of which is a bird in a cage, and my soul is in that bird." By enchantment Hirálálbásá reached the tree and secured the cage. He pulled the bird's limbs off, and the Rakshas' arms and legs fell off; then he wrung its neck, and the Rakshas fell dead. And in the tale of *The Demon and the King's Son*, from the same collection, the prince falls in love with the monster's daughter, who is dead during the day and alive in the night. The prince asks what she would do, if whilst she is dead, her father were to be killed? She tells him it is impossible for any one to kill her father, for his life is in a *mainá* (starling), which is in a nest in a tree on the other side of the sea, and if, she adds, any one in killing the bird spilt the blood on the ground, a hundred demons would be born from it. The

prince reached the other side, and taking the *mainá*, proceeded to kill it, but first wrapt it in his handkerchief, that no blood might be spilt. The demon, who was far away, knew that the bird was caught, and he set out at once to avert his doom. The story ends, like the preceding one, with the dismemberment of the bird, and the consequent death of the demon.

The nearest approach to tales similar to these in the *Buddhist Birth-stories*, is in one or two isolated cases, when the Karma of a human being is spoken of as immediately transferred to an animal.

In *Tales from the Norse* the one in most striking correspondence with the Punchkin group is that of *The giant who had no heart in his body*. The monster turns six princes and their wives into stone, whereupon the seventh and only surviving son, Boots, sets out to avenge their fate. On his journey he saves the lives of a raven, a salmon, and a wolf, and the wolf, having eaten his horse, compensates Boots by carrying him to the giant's castle, where the lovely princess who is to be his bride is confined. She promises to find out where the giant keeps his heart, and by blandishments and divers arts known to the fair sex both before and since the time of Delilah, she worms out the secret. He tells her that "far, far away in a lake lies an island; on that island stands a church; in that church is a well; in that well swims a duck; in that duck is an egg; and in that egg lies my heart, you darling!" Boots, taking fond farewell of the princess, rides on

the wolf's back to the island. Then the raven he had befriended flies to the steeple and fetches the key of the church; the salmon, in like return for kindness, brings him the egg from the well where the duck had dropped it.

Then the wolf told him to squeeze the egg, and as soon as ever he did so, the giant screamed out. "Squeeze it again," said the wolf; and when the prince did so, the giant screamed still more piteously, and begged and prayed so prettily to be spared, saying he would do all that the prince wished if he would only not squeeze his heart in two. "Tell him if he will restore to life again your six brothers and their brides, you will spare his life," said the wolf. Yes, the giant was ready to do that, and he turned the six brothers into kings' sons again, and their brides into kings' daughters. "Now squeeze the egg in two," said the wolf. With questionable morality, doing evil that good might come, Boots squeezed the egg to pieces, and the giant burst at once.

Asbjörn'sen's *New Series* gives a variant in which a Troll who has seized a princess tells her that he and all his companions will burst, as did the heartless giant, when there passes above them "the grain of sand that lies under the ninth tongue in the ninth head" of a certain dragon. The grain of sand is found and passed over them, when the Troll and all his brood are destroyed. In the Gaelic stories, for which we are indebted to the skill of an early worker in this field, the late Mr. J. F. Campbell, that of the *Young King of Easaidh Ruadh* locates the secret thus: "There is a great flagstone underneath the threshold. There is a wether under the flagstone. There is a duck in the wether's belly, and

an egg in the duck, in the egg is my soul." In the *Sea-Maiden* there is a "great beast with three heads, which cannot be killed until an egg is broken which is in the mouth of a trout, which springs out of a crow, which flies out of a hind, which lives on an island in the middle of the loch."

In his valuable collection of *Russian Folk-Tales*, which is enriched by comparative notes, Mr. Ralston supplies some interesting variants of Punchkin. Koshchei, called "the immortal or deathless," is merely one of the many incarnations of the dark spirit which takes so many monstrous shapes in folk-tales. Sometimes his death, that is, the object with which his life is indissolubly connected, does exist within his body. In one story he carries off a queen, for whom her three sons, one after another, go in search. Prince Ivan, the youngest, at last discovers where his mother dwells, and she at the approach of Koshchei hides her son away. The monster sniffs the blood of a Russian, and inquires if her son has not been with her. She assures him it is only the Russian air in his nostrils. Then after talking to him affectionately on one thing and another, she asks where his death is, and he tells her that, "under an oak is a casket, in the casket is a hare, in the hare is a duck, in the duck an egg, in the egg is my death." Prince Ivan found the egg, and reached his mother's house with it. Presently Koshchei flew in and said, "Phoo, phoo; no Russian bone can the ear hear or the eye see, but there's a smell of Russia here." Then Prince Ivan came out from his hiding place,

and, holding up the egg, said, "There is your death, oh Koshchei!" then he smashed it, and Koshchei fell dead. In another story Koshchei is killed by a blow on the forehead from the mysterious egg. Mr. Ralston also quotes a Transylvanian Saxon story concerning a witch's life, which is a light burning in an egg inside a duck that swims on a pond inside a mountain, and she dies when the light is put out. In the Bohemian story of the *Sun-horse* a warlock's strength lies in an egg in a duck, which is within a stag under a tree. A seer finds the egg and sucks it. Then the warlock becomes as weak as a child, "for all his strength had passed into the seer."

In Servian folk-tale the strength of a baleful being who had stolen a princess lies in a bird which is inside the heart of a fox, and when the bird was taken out of the heart and set on fire, that moment the wife-stealer falls down dead, and the prince regains his bride. From the same source we have the tale of the *Golden-haired Twins*, with an incident akin to that in *Punchkin*. When the king's stepmother buries the twins whom she had stolen, there spring from the spot where they lie trees with golden leaves and blossoms. The king's admiration of them aroused her jealousy, and she had them cut down, but eventually his golden-haired princes are restored to him.

Thus far the illustrations have been drawn solely from the folk-tales of the widespread Indo-European races, but they are not confined to these. From non-Aryan sources we have the Tatar story of the

demon-giant who kept his soul in a twelve-headed snake carried in a bag on his horse's back. The hero finds out the secret, kills the snake, and the giant dies. In one of the Samoyed tales a man had no heart in his body, and could recover it only on restoring to life a woman whom he had killed. Then the man said to his wife, "Go to the place where the dead lies; there you will find a purse, in that purse is her soul; shake the purse over her bones, and she will come to life." The wife did as she was ordered, and the woman revived, whereupon her son dashed the heart to the ground, and the man died.<sup>1</sup>

More elaborate than these are the tales from *The Thousand and One Nights*. In *Seyf-el-Mulook* the jinnee's soul is enclosed in the crop of a sparrow, and the sparrow is imprisoned in a small box, and this is in seven other boxes which are put into seven chests; these are enclosed in a coffer of marble that is sunk in the ocean surrounding the world. By the aid of Suleyman's seal-ring Seyf-el-Mulook raises the coffer, and extricating the sparrow, strangles it, whereupon the jinnee's body is converted into a heap of black ashes. In some tales not included by Galland or Lane, which Mr. Kirby has translated and edited under the title of the *New Arabian Nights*, we have a variant of the above under the title of

<sup>1</sup> In a Finnish legend, which is the subject of Southey's "Donica," a maiden of that name moves about seemingly alive after her death in virtue of a parchment as magic spell, which is fastened to her wrist, until a sorcerer finds out the secret of the connection and unfastens the parchment, when the counterfeit life departs.

*Joadar of Cairo and Mahmood of Tunis.* Joadar is bent on releasing his enchanted betrothed, which he does by also strangling a sparrow, the ogre being simultaneously dissolved into a heap of ashes.

The most venerable illustration of the leading idea in the Punchkin group is however found, though in more subtle form, in the Egyptian tale of the *Two Brothers*. This is of great value on account of its high antiquity, and, moreover, specially interesting as recording an incident similar to that narrated in the life of Joseph. It is contained in the D'Orbiney papyrus preserved in the Bibliothèque Impériale, the date being about the fourteenth or fifteenth century B.C.

There were two brothers, Anepou and Satou, joined as one in love and labour. One day Satou was sent to fetch seed-corn from Anepou's house, where he found his brother's wife adorning her hair. She urged him to stay with her, but he refused, promising, however, to keep her wickedness secret. When Anepou returned at even, she, being afraid, "made herself to seem as a woman that had suffered violence," and told him exactly the reverse of what had happened. Anepou's wrath was kindled against Satou, and he went out to slay him; but Satou called on Phra to save him, and the god placed a river between the brothers, so that when day dawned Anepou might hear the truth. At sunrise Satou tells his story, and, mutilating himself, he says that he will leave Anepou and go to the valley of the cedar, in the cones of which he will deposit his heart, "so that if the tree be cut his heart will fall to the earth, and he must die."

For us the value of these folk-tales lies in the relics of barbaric notions concerning the nature of man and his relation to external things which they preserve. They have amused our youth-hood ; they may instruct our manhood. But if we go to the solar mythologists for their interpretation, we shall learn from Sir G. W. Cox that the "magician Punchkin and the heartless giant are only other forms of the Panis who steal bright treasures from the gleaming west," that "Balna herself is Helen shut up in Iliion . . . the eagles the bright clouds,"<sup>1</sup> and from Professor de Gubernatis that the duck is the dawn and the egg the sun.

These venerable tales have a larger, richer meaning than this, expressive of the wonder deep-seated in the heart of man. Like the "drusy" cavity in granite rock which, when broken open, reveals beautiful prisms of topaz and beryl, the folk-tales disclose under analysis that thought, now crystallised, which confuses ideas and objects, illusions and realities, substances and shadows.

## § IX.

### BARBARIC AND CIVILISED NOTIONS OF THE SOUL'S NATURE.

In proof of the closing remarks in § VII., that the breath has given the chief name to the soul, we find the Western Australians using the same

<sup>1</sup> *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, i. 140.

word, *waug*, for "breath, spirit, soul"; in Java the word *nawa* is used for "health, life, soul"; in the Dakota tongue *niya* is literally "breath," figuratively "life"; in Netela *piuts* is "breath" and "soul"; in Eskimo *silla* means "air" and "wind," and is also the word that conveys the highest idea of the world as a whole, and of the reasoning faculty. The supreme existence they call *Sillam Innua*, Owner of the Air, or of the All; in the Yakama tongue of Oregon *wkrisha* signifies "there is wind," *wkrishwit*, "life"; with the Aztecs *hecatl* expressed "air, life, and the soul," and, personified in their myths, it was said to have been born of the breath of Tezcatlipoca, their highest divinity, who himself is often called Yoalliehecatl, the Wind of Night.<sup>1</sup> This identity of wind with breath, of breath with spirit, and thence of spirit with the Great Spirit, which

"Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind,"

has further illustration in the legends of the Quiches, in which the unknown creative power is Hurakan, a name familiar to us under the form *hurricane*, and in our own sacred records, where the advent of the Holy Spirit is described "as of a rushing mighty wind." In the Mohawk language *atonritz*, the "soul," is from *atonrion*, "to breathe"; whilst, as showing the analogy between the effects of restricted sense and restricted civilisation, Dr. Tylor quotes the case of a girl who was a deaf-mute as well as blind, and who, when telling a dream in gesture language, said: "I

<sup>1</sup> Brinton's *Myths of the New World*, p. 51 (second edition).

thought God took away my breath to heaven." Among the higher languages the same evidence abides.

"The spirit doth but mean the breath."

That word *spirit* is derived from a verb *spirare*, which means "to draw breath." *Animus*, "the mind," is cognate with *anima*, "air"; in Irish, which belongs to the same family of speech as Latin, namely, the Aryan or Indo-European, we have *anal*, "breath," and *anam*, "life," or "soul"; and in Sanskrit we find the root *an*, to "blow" or "breathe," whence *anila*, "wind," and in Greek *anemos*, with the like meaning. In Hampole's *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, *i.e.* "Prick or Remorse of Conscience," a poem of the fourteenth century, we find *ande* or "breath" used as "soul."

"Thus sall ilka saul other se (*i.e.* in the other world)  
For nan of tham may feled be  
Na mar than here a man, ande may  
When it passes fra his mouthe away."<sup>1</sup>

The Greek *psyche*, *pneuma*, and *thymos*, each meaning "soul" and "spirit," are from roots expressing the wind or breath. In Slavonic the root *du* has developed the meaning of breath into that of soul or spirit, and the dialect of the gipsies has *duk* with the meanings of breath, spirit, ghost. That word *ghost*, the German *geist*, the Dutch *geest*, from a root meaning "to blow with violence," is connected with *gust*, *gas*, *geyser*; in Scandinavian, *glösor*, "to pour forth."

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the Rev. Richard Morris for this reference.

In non-Aryan languages, as the Finnish, *far* means "soul, breath, spirit, wind"; *henki*, "spirit, person, breath, air"; the Hebrew *nephesh*, "breath," has also the meanings of "life, soul, mind"; and *ruach* and *neshamah*, to which the Arabic *nefs* and *ruh* correspond, pass from meaning "breath" to "spirit." The legend of man's creation records that he became a living soul through God breathing into his nostrils "the breath of life," and concerning this the Psalmist says of all that live, "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return unto the dust." As a final illustration, the Egyptian *kneph* has the alternative meanings of "life" and "breath."<sup>1</sup>

When we pass from names to descriptions, we find the same underlying idea of the ethereal nature of spirit. The natives of Nicaragua, California, and other countries remote from these, agree in describing the other self as air or breeze, which passes in and out through the mouth and nostrils. The Tongans conceived it as the aëriform part of the body, related to it as the perfume to the flower. The Greenlanders describe it as pale and soft, as without flesh and bone, so that he who tries to seize it grasps nothing. The Lapps say that the ghosts are in-

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Grimm remarks that whilst the more palpable breath, as spirit, is masculine, the living, life-giving soul is treated as a delicate feminine essence. *Soul* is the Icelandic *sála*, German *seele*, Gothic *saiwala*, akin to *saiws*, which means "the sea." *Saiws* is from a root, *si*, or *siv*, the Greek *seio*, to shake, and this choice of the word *saiwala* may indicate that the ancient Teutons conceived of the soul "as a sea within, heaving up and down with every breath, and reflecting heaven and earth on the mirror of the deep."—*T. M.* p. 826.

visible to all but the Shamans. The Congo negroes leave the house of the dead unswept for a year, lest the dust should injure the delicate substance of the ghost ; and the German peasants have a saying that a door should not be slammed, lest a soul gets pinched in it. In some parts of Northern Europe, when the wind-god, Odin, rides the sky with his furious spectral host, the peasants open the windows of every sick-room that the soul of the dying may have free exit to join the wild chase ; whilst both here and in France it is still no uncommon practice to open doors and windows that the soul may depart quickly. Dr. Tylor<sup>1</sup> cites a passage from Hampole, in which the author speaks of the intenser suffering which the soul undergoes in purgatory by reason of its delicate organisation.

“ The soul is more tendre and nesche (soft)  
 Than the bodi that hath bones and fleysche ;  
 Thanne the soul that is so tendere of kinde,  
 Mote nedis hure penaunce hardere-y-finde,  
 Than eni bodi that evere on live was,”

a doctrine clearly due to Patristic theories of incorporeal souls. And a modern poet, Dante Rossetti, in his *Blessed Damozel*, when he describes her as leaning out from the gold bar of heaven and looking down towards the earth, that “ spins like a fretful midge,” whence she awaits the coming of her lover, depicts the souls mounting up to God as passing by her “ like thin flames.” The Greeks and, following

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Culture*, i. 412.

them, the Romans, conceived the soul as of thin, impalpable texture, as exhaled with the dying breath, or, as in Homer, rushing out through the wound that causes the warrior's death. In the metaphysical Arabian romance of *Yokdhan*, the hero seeks the source of life and thought, and discovers in one of the cavities of the heart a bluish vapour, which was the living soul. Among the Hebrews it was of shadowy nature, with echoless motion, haunting a ghostly realm :

“ It is a land of shadows ; yea, the land  
Itself is but a shadow, and the race  
That dwell therein are voices, forms of forms.”

Such conceptions are but little varied ; and, to this day, the intelligence of the major number of people who think about the thing at all presents the departing soul as something vaporous, as a little white cloud.

In keeping with such ideas, the belief in transfer of spirit expresses itself. Algonquin women who desired to become mothers flocked to the couch of those about to die, in hope that the vital principle as it passed from the body would enter theirs. Among the Seminoles of Florida, when a woman died in childbirth, the infant was held over her face to receive her parting spirit, and thus acquire strength and knowledge for its future use. So among the *Tákahlis*, the priest is accustomed to lay his hand on the head of the nearest relative of the deceased, and to blow into him the soul of the de-

parted, which is supposed to come to life in his next child.<sup>1</sup>

In Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk-lore* it is related that while a well-known witch lay dying, "she must needs, before she could 'shuffle off this mortal coil,' transfer her *familiar spirit* to some trusty successor. An intimate acquaintance from a neighbouring township was consequently sent for in all haste, and on her arrival was immediately closeted with her dying friend. What passed between them has never fully transpired, but it is asserted that at the close of the interview this associate *received the witch's last breath into her mouth, and with it her familiar spirit.* The powers for good or evil of the dreaded woman were thus transferred to her companion, and on passing along the road from Burnley to Blackburn we can point out a farmhouse at no great distance, with whose thrifty matron no neighbouring farmer will yet dare to quarrel." When a Roman lay at the point of death, his nearest relative inhaled the last breath; in New Testament story, the risen Jesus breathes on His disciples, that they may receive the Holy Spirit, and the form thus adopted in conferring supernatural grace is still used in the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church.

Speculation about the other self could not, however, stop at identifying it with a man's breath or shadow, or with regarding it as absolutely impalpable. These nebulous and gaseous theories

<sup>1</sup> *Brinton*, p. 271.

necessarily condensed, as it were, into theories of semi-substantiality still charged with ethereal conceptions, but giving embodiment to the soul to account for the appearances of both dead and living in dreams, when their persons were clasped, their forms and features seen, and their voices heard.

Such theories involve a kind of continuity of identity, and often take the form of belief in the soul as a replica of the body, and as suffering corresponding mutilation. When the native Australian has slain his foe, he cuts off his right thumb, so as to prevent him from throwing a shadowy spear; the Chinese dread of decapitation, lest their spirits are headless, is well known; but a more telling illustration is that cited by Dr. Tylor, from Waitz, of the West Indian planter, whose slaves sought refuge from the lash and toil in suicide. But he was too cunning for them; he cut off the heads and hands of the corpses, that the survivors might see that not even death could save them from a taskmaster who could maim their souls in the next world. Among advanced nations the same conceptions survived. Achilles, resting by the shore, sees the dead Patroclus in a dream. "Ay me, there remaineth then, even in the house of Hades, a spirit and phantom of the dead, albeit the life be not anywise therein; for all night long hath the ghost of hapless Patroclus stood over me, wailing and making moan, and wondrous like his living self it seemed."<sup>1</sup> Virgil portrays Æneas, and Homer describes Ulysses, as

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, xxiii. 103 (trans. Lang and others).

recognising their old comrades when they enter the "viewless shades," where the dwellers continue the tasks of their earthly life. In Hebrew legend Saul recognises the shade of Samuel when the magic spell of the Witch of Endor evokes it, although the grave of the old "judge" was sixty miles away. The monarch-shades of "Sheol" hail with derision the entrance of the King of Babylon among them. In New Testament narrative the risen Jesus is alternately material and spiritual, now passing through closed doors, and now submitting his wound-prints to the touch of the doubter. In *Hamlet* the ghost is as "the air, invulnerable," yet "like a king" . . .

". . . that fair and warlike form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march."

Notions of material punishments and rewards involved notions of a material soul, even pending its reunion with the body at the general resurrection. The angels are depicted as weighing souls in a literal balance, while devils clinging to the scales endeavour to disturb the equilibrium.<sup>1</sup> In some frescoes of the fourteenth century, on the walls of the Campo Santo, at Pisa, illustrations of these notions abound; the soul is portrayed as a sexless child rising out of the mouth of the corpse, and eagerly awaited as the crown of rejoicing of the angels, or as the lawful prey of the demons. After this it is amusing to learn that extreme tests of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lecky's *History of Rationalism*, i. 340.

weight of ghosts are now and then forthcoming,<sup>1</sup> from the assertion of a Basuto divine that the late queen had been bestriding his shoulders, and he never felt such a weight in his life, to the alleged modern spiritualistic reckoning of the weight of a human soul at from three to four ounces! And do not spirit-photographs adorn the albums of the credulous?

## § X.

### BARBARIC BELIEF IN SOULS IN BRUTES AND PLANTS AND LIFELESS THINGS.

More graceful is the conception which makes the soul spring up as a flower or cleave the air as a bird. It is, of course, the purified survival of the primitive thought which did not limit its belief in an indwelling spirit to man, but extended it to brutes and plants, and even to lifeless things. For the lower creatures manifested the phenomena from which the belief in spirits in higher creatures was inferred. They moved and breathed, their life ceased with their breath; they cast shadows and reflections; their cries, which to the savage seemed so like human speech,<sup>2</sup> awakened echoes; and they appeared in dreams. Among the western tribes of North America the phantoms of all animals are

<sup>1</sup> *Prim. Culture*, i. 411. See *Soul Shapes* (Fisher Unwin, 1890).

<sup>2</sup> "To the ear of the savage, animals certainly seem even to talk. This fact is universally evident, and ought to be fully realised."—Im Thurn's *Guiana*, p. 351.

supposed to go to the happy beasts' grounds, and in Assam the ghosts of those slain become the property of the hunter who kills them ; whilst the custom of begging pardon of the animal before or after despatching it, as among the Red Indians, who even put the pipe of peace in the dead creature's mouth, further evidences to barbarian belief in beast-souls. Although the belief in the immortality of brutes has now no place in serious philosophy, it has been a favourite doctrine from the Kamchadales, who believe in the after-life of flies and bugs, to the eminent naturalist Agassiz, who advocates the doctrine in his *Essay on Classification* ; and in a list of 4977 books on the nature and future of the soul given in Mr. Alger's elaborate critical history of the subject, nearly 200 deal with the after-life of animals. The advocates have often felt the difficulty of granting this after-life to man and denying it to creatures to which he stands so closely related in ultimate community of origin ; but science, while it finds links of sympathy with the ideas of rude races respecting the common life of all that moves, and presents evidence in support of the common destiny, lends no support to the doctrine of the immortality of oysters. The custom of apologising to doomed brutes is practised in regard to plants. If they exhibit the phenomena of life in a lesser degree, enough are shown to justify the accrediting of them with souls. Besides flinging wavy shadows and reflections (and it cannot be too often enforced that to the barbaric intelligence motion is a prime sign of life), they are not

voiceless. Murmurs are heard in their leaves; sounds echo from their hollow trunks, or tremble, Æolian-like, through their branches; and in their juices are the sources of repose or frenzy.

“The Ojibways believed that trees had souls, and in pagan times they seldom cut down green or living trees, for they thought it put them to pain. They pretended to hear the wailing of the trees when they suffered in this way. On account of these noises, real or imaginary, trees have had spirits assigned them, and worship offered to them. A mountain-ash, in the vicinity of South Ste. Marie, which made a noise, had offerings piled up around it. If a tree should emit from its hollow trunk or branches a sound during a calm state of the atmosphere, or should any one fancy such sounds, the tree would be at once reported, and soon come to be regarded as the residence of some local god.”<sup>1</sup> As expressed in Greek myth, purified in this case from grosser elements, we have the Dryades, who were believed to die together with the trees in which their life had begun to be, and in which they had dwelt. As expressed in folk-lore and its poetic forms, it is in the growth or blossoming of flowers, or the intertwining of branches, that the idea survives. In the ballad of “Fair Margaret and Sweet William”—

“Out of her brest there sprang a *rose*,  
And out of his a *briar*;  
They grew till they grew unto the church-top,  
And there they tyed in a true lover's knot;”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dorman*, pp. 287, 288.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, p. 827.

in the story of "Tristram and Ysonde," "from his grave there grew an eglantine which twined about the statue, a marvel for all men to see ; and, though three times they cut it down, it grew again, and ever wound its arms about the image of the fair Ysonde ;"<sup>1</sup> while the conception often lends itself to the poet's thoughts, from Laertes' words over Ophelia :—

" Lay her i' the earth,  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring,"

to Tennyson's

" And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land."

In Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology* a number of illustrations are supplied of the vagaries of popular imagination, which picture the soul as a bird flying out of a dead person's mouth, and, as a cognate example from rude culture, we find a belief among the Powhatans that "a certain small wood bird received the souls of their princes at death, and they religiously refrained from doing it harm ; while the Aztecs and various other nations thought that all good people, as a reward of merit, were metamorphosed at the close of life into feathered songsters of the grove, and in this form passed a certain term in the umbrageous bowers of Paradise."<sup>2</sup> But many pages might be filled with examples of varying conceptions of the soul, the major number of which (for the idea

<sup>1</sup> Cox and Jones, *Popular Romances*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Brinton*, p. 107.

of it as a mouse, snake, etc., must not be forgotten) have as their nucleus its ethereal nature and freedom from the limitations of solid earth, although round that nucleus gather some more concrete ideas for the mind, desiring something more substantial than symbols, to grasp. The belief that inanimate things as well as animals and plants have a dual being is not so obvious at first sight, and yet, given the reasons for the latter, there are as good grounds, because like in kind, for the former. The Algonquins told Father Charlevoix that "since hatchets and kettles have shadows, as well as men and women, it follows that these shadows must pass along with human shadows into the spirit-land." When the tools or weapons are injured or done with, their souls must cross the water to the Great Village, where the sun sets. Besides, spears and pots and pans, as well as men and dogs, appear in dreams; they throw shadows and images in the water, they give forth a sound when struck, and, as the Fijians also argue, "if an animal or plant die, its soul goes to Bolotoo; if a stone or anything else is broken, it has its reward there; nay, has equal good luck with men and hogs and yams. If an axe or a chisel is worn out or broken up, away flies its soul for the service of the gods." Logically, the savage who believes that in the other world

"The hunter still the deer pursues,  
The hunter and the deer a shade,"

must put in the hands of the one a shadow spear.

So when an Ojibway chief, after a four days' trance, gave an account of his visit to the land of shadows, he told of the hosts whom he had met travelling there laden with pipes and kettles and weapons. These primitive ideas explain, once and for all, matters which have too often been explained by fanciful theories, or cited as evidences of the benighted condition of those places which on missionary maps of the world are painted black. They disclose the reason why food and utensils and weapons were broken and buried with the dead; why fires were lighted round the grave; why animals were slain on the death of a chief; why the Greenlanders, when a child dies, bury a dog with him, because the dog, they say, is able to find his way anywhere; why North American Indian mothers in pathetic custom drop their milk on the lips of the dead child; and why, what seemed so inexplicable to the early missionaries to the East, ignorant of the practice of widow-sacrifice among the ancient peoples of the West, as the Gauls, Teutons, and others, wives and slaves were burned on the funeral pyre. Among the Mexicans sometimes a very rich man would even have his chaplain slaughtered, that he might not be deprived of his support in the other world.

In their initial stage all these gifts are made, all these rites performed, for the supposed need of the dead. Every one had his *manes*, which followed him into the next world, and, lacking which, he would be as poor as if in this world he had lacked it. The spiritual counterpart of the offerings was

consumed by his spirit, just as the old deities were thought to enjoy the sweet-smelling savour of the burnt sacrifices ; the fires were kindled that the soul might not grope about in darkness. So the obolus was put into the mouth of the dead, that its *manes* might be payment to Charon for the ferry of the Styx, as money is put in the corpse's hand or mouth among the German and Irish peasants to this day ; so the warrior's horse was slain at his tomb and the armour laid therein, that he might enter Valhalla riding, and clothed with the tokens of his right to the abode reserved for those who had fallen in battle.

Any explanation of customs like the foregoing, persistent as they are in kind, however varying in expression, is defective which does not take into account what large part the emotions play in all that is connected with death, and how they infuse such customs with vitality. The bereaved refuse to believe that those whom they have lost have no more concern in the interests of life once common and dear to both. As among the Dakotas, when a mother feels a pain at her breast, they say that her dead child is thinking of her. The place where the body lies becomes the connecting link between it and the soul which is still the solicitude and care, or, it may be, the dread of the living ; succouring and protecting, or, on the other hand, avenging.

The element of dread undoubtedly comes into play early. The awe which we feel in the presence of death, or in passing in the dark through a churchyard, takes in the savage the form of terror. The

behaviour of the ghost in dreams, its ability to do what men still in the flesh cannot do, quicken the belief in occult power, and the desire to propitiate it. Among the Lapps red-hot stones are cast behind the coffins of the dead, and their graves fenced round to prevent their return to earth. The articles placed in the grave as gifts for the dead become sacrifices laid on the altar to appease malignant spirits; the mound or tomb becomes a temple, and awe passes by easy degrees into worship. The prevalence in one form or another of ancestor-worship has, as remarked already, led Mr. Spencer to the conclusion that it is the rudimentary form of all religions; even sun, moon, volcano, river, etc., being feared and adored because they were believed to be the dwelling-places of ancestral ghosts. The facts are against this theory. It is to the larger, the more impressive phenomena of the natural world, the sun in noontide strength and splendour, the lightning and the thunder, that we must look for the primary causes which awakened the fear, the wonder, and the adoration in which lie the germs of the highest religions. Such causes are not only sufficient, but more operative on the undeveloped intelligence than the belief in ancestral spirits of the mountain and the sea, which involves a more complex mental action.<sup>1</sup> The one is contributory, but subordinate, to the other. It is, as M. Réville remarks, "the phenomena of nature regarded as animated and conscious that wake and stimulate the religious sentiments, and become the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ante*, pp. 110-114.

objects of the adoration of man. . . . If nature-worship, with the animism that it engenders,<sup>1</sup> shapes the first law to which nascent religion submits in the human race, anthropomorphism furnishes the second, disengaging itself ever more and more completely from the zoomorphism which generally serves as an intermediary. This is so *everywhere*.”<sup>2</sup>

## § XI.

### BARBARIC AND CIVILISED NOTIONS ABOUT THE SOUL'S DWELLING-PLACE.

The existence of the ghost-soul or other self being unquestioned, the inquiry follows, where does it dwell? Like the trolls of Norse myth, who burst at sunrise, the flitting spirit vanishes in the light and comes with the darkness; but what places does it haunt when the quiet of the night is unbroken by its intrusion, and where are they?

The answers to these are as varied as the vagaries of rude imagination permit. We must not expect to find any theories of the soul's prolonged after-existence among races who have but a dim remembrance of yesterday, and but a hazy conception of a to-morrow. Neither, among such, any theories of the soul abiding in a place of reward or punishment, as the result of things done in the body. Speaking of

<sup>1</sup> More correctly, “that engenders it.”

<sup>2</sup> *Hibbert Lectures*, 1884, pp. 39, 40.

the heaven of the Red man, Dr. Brinton remarks that "nowhere was any well-defined doctrine that moral turpitude was judged and punished in the next world. No contrast is discoverable between a place of torment and a realm of joy; at the worst but a negative castigation awaited the liar, the coward, or the niggard." Ideas of a devil and a hell are altogether absent from the barbaric mind, since it is obvious that any theory of retribution could arise only when man's moral nature had so developed as to awaken questions about the government of the universe, and to call another world into existence to redress the wrongs and balance the injustices of this. His earliest queries were concerned with the whereabouts of the soul more than with its destiny, and it was, and still is, among the lower races, thought of as haunting its old abode or the burial-place of its body, and as acting very much as it had acted when in the flesh. The shade of the Algonquin hunter chases the spirits of the beaver and the elk with the spirits of his bow and arrow, and stalks on the spirits of his snow-shoes over the spirit of the snow. Among the Costa Ricans the spirits of the dead are supposed to remain near their bodies for a year, and the explorer Swan relates that when he was with the North-Western Indians he was not allowed to attend a funeral, lest he offended the spirits hovering round; whilst the Indians of North America often destroy or abandon the dwellings of the dead, the object being to prevent the ghost from returning, or to leave it free so to do. But it is needless to multiply

illustrations of a belief which has been persistent in the human mind from the dawn of speculation about the future of the soul to the present day. The barbarians who think that the spirits of the dead move and have their being near the living, join them on their journeys, and sit down, unseen visitants, at their feasts (to be driven off, as among the Eskimos, by blowing the breath), are one with the multitudes of folks in Europe and America who, sorrowing over their dead, think of them as ministering with unfelt hands, and as keenly interested in their concerns.

“ We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,  
 Along the passages they come and go,  
 Impalpable impressions on the air,  
 A sense of something moving to and fro.”

The Ojibway, who detects their tiny voices in the insect's hum, and thinks of them as sheltering themselves from the rain by thousands in a flower, as sporting by myriads on a sunbeam, is one with the Schoolmen who speculated on the number of angels that could dance on a needle's point, and with Milton in his poetic rendering of the belief of his time, that

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
 Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.”

The Hottentot who avoids a dead man's hut lest the ghost be within, is one with the believers in haunted houses, in banshees, wraiths, and spectres. Such as he should not be excluded as “corresponding members” of the Society for Psychical Research in

the invitations<sup>1</sup> which its committee issues to folks who have seen apparitions, and slept, or tried to sleep, in the dreaded chamber of some moated hall of mystery.

If we look in vain for any consistency of idea or logical relation in barbaric notions, our wonder ceases at the absence of these when we note the conflicting conceptions entertained among intelligent people. But the underlying thought is identical. The examples given in a foregoing section on the belief in the passage of the soul into other human bodies, into animals and stones, strengthened as this is by the likeness in mind and body between children and dead relatives, by the human expression noted on many a brute, by the human shape of many a stone, show how the theory of the soul as nigh at hand finds many-sided support. In this belief, too, lie the germs of theories of successive transmigrations elaborated in the faiths of advanced races, when the defects of body and character were explained as the effects of sin committed in a former existence.

<sup>1</sup> The Society's advertisement is as follows :—

“THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE, APPARITIONS, etc.—The Society for Psychical Research will be grateful for any good evidence bearing on such phenomena as thought-reading, clairvoyance, presentiments, and dreams, noted at the time of occurrence and afterwards confirmed; unexplained disturbances in places supposed to be haunted; apparitions at the moment of death or otherwise; and of such other abnormal events as may seem to fall under somewhat the same categories. Communications to be addressed to E. Gurney, 14 Dean's Yard, S.W.; or to F. W. H. Myers, Leckhampton House, Cambridge. Applications for information or for membership to be addressed to the Secretary, at the Society's Offices, 14 Dean's Yard, S.W.”

Next in order of conception appears to be that of the soul as living an independent existence, an improved edition of the present, in an under or upper world, into which the dead pass without distinction of caste or worth.

The things dreamed about respecting the land of spirits and their occupations are woven of the materials of daily life. Whether to the sleeping barbarian in his wigwam, or to the seer banished in Patmos; whether to the Indian travelling in his dreams to the happy hunting-ground, or to the apostle caught up in trance into paradise; earth, and earth alone, supplies the materials out of which man everywhere has shaped his heaven. Her dented and furrowed surface; valleys and mountain-tops; islands sleeping in summer seas, or fretted by winter storms; cities walled and battlemented; glories of sunrise and sunset; gave variety enough for play of the cherished hopes and imaginings of men. If we collect any group of barbaric fancies, we find, speaking broadly, that a large proportion have pictured the home of souls as in the west, towards the land of the setting sun. Seen from many a standpoint to sink beneath river, lake, or ocean, which for untutored man enclosed his world, it led to the myth of waters of death dividing earth from heaven, which the soul, often at perilous risk, must cross. Such was the Ginnunga-gap of the Vikings; the nine seas and a half across which travellers to Manala, the under-world of the Finns, must voyage; the great water of the Red Indians;

the Vaitarani of the Brahmans; the Stygian stream of the Greeks; and the Jordan of the Christians, that flows between us and the Celestial City, "where the surges cease to roll." The sinking of the sun below the horizon obviously led to belief in an under-world, whither the ghosts went. Barbaric notions are full of this, and the lower culture out of which their beliefs arose is evidenced in the Orcus of the Romans, the Hades of the Greeks, the Helheim of the Norsemen, the Sheol of the Hebrews, and the Amenti of the Egyptians, the solar features of which last are clearly traceable in their doctrine. Among the Hebrews, Sheol (translated, curiously enough, thirty-one times as "grave," and thirty-one times as "hell," in our Authorised Version) was a vast cavernous space in which the shades of good and bad alike wandered—"the small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master." It is akin in character to the Greek Hades, where they "wander mid shadows and shade, and wail by impassable streams." As ideas of a Divine rule of the world grew, its manifestations in justice were looked for, and the mystery of iniquity, the wicked "flourishing like a green bay tree," led to the conception of a future state, in which Lazarus and Dives would change places. Sheol thus became, on the one hand, a land of delight and repose for the faithful, and, on the other hand, one of punishment for the wicked.

Persian, and still older, influences had largely leavened Hebrew conceptions, and local conditions

in Judea added pungent elements. The Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, "the place where lie the corpses of those who have sinned against Jehovah, where their worm shall not die, neither their fire be quenched;" the dreary volcanic region around the Dead Sea, with its legend of doomed cities, supplied their imagery of hell with its lake of fire and brimstone. And, as the belief travelled westward, it fell into congenial soil. The sulphurous stench around Lacus Avernus, the smoke of Vesuvius, Stromboli, and Etna, wreathed themselves round the hell of Christianity and the under-world of barbaric myth; and from Talmudic writer to classic poet, to Dante and to Milton, the imagination exhausted the material of the horrible to describe the several tortures of the damned. The hell of our northern forefathers remained below the flat earth, but the cold, misty Niflheim melted away before the fiery perdition of Christian dogma. And, in the region bordering thereon, the *limbus patrum*, the *limbus infantum*, etc., we have the survival of belief in separate hells characteristic of the Oriental religions, and of the sub-divisions of the lower world in more rudimentary religions.

Beyond the narrow horizon which bounded the world of the ancients, lay the imaginary land of the immortals, the Blessed, the Happy, the Fortunate Isles. But as that horizon enlarged, the Elysian Fields and Banquet Halls were transferred to an upper sphere. In the wonder aroused by the firmament above, with its solid-looking vault across which

sun, stars, and clouds traversed; in the place it plays in dreams of barbarian and patriarch, when the sleeper is carried thither; in its brightness of noonday glory as contrasted with the dark sun-set under-world, we may find some of the materials of which the theory of an upper world, a heaven ("the heaved") is made up. There the barbarian places his paradise to which the rainbow and the Milky Way are roads; there he meets his kindred, and lives where cold, disease, and age are not, but everlasting summer and summer fruits. There, too, for the conceptions of advanced races are drawn from the same sources, the civilised peoples of Europe and America have placed their heaven. And, save in refinement of detail incident to intellectual growth, there is nothing to choose between the earlier and the later; the same gross delights, the same earth-born ideas are there, whether we enter the Norseman's Valhalla, the Moslem's Paradise, or the Christian's New Jerusalem.

## § XII.

### CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING.

It would exceed the limits and purport of this book to follow the extension of the belief in spirits to its extreme range; in other words, to belief in controlling spirits in inanimate objects, which were advanced *pari passu* with man's advancing concep-

tions to place and rank as the higher gods of polytheism. Such belief, as already indicated, is the outcome of that primitive philosophy which invests the elements above and the earth beneath with departmental deities, until, through successive stages of dualism, the idea of a Supreme Deity is reached, and the approach is thus made towards a conception of the unity and unvarying order of nature. De-ferring reference to the part played by dreams as media of communication between heaven and earth, and as warnings of coming events, let us summarise the evidence which has been gathered, and ask whether it warrants the conclusions drawn from it in the present work.

It has been shown that races have existed, and exist still, at so low a level that their scanty stock of words has to be supplemented by gestures, rendering converse in the dark next to impossible. Such people are bewildered by any effort to count beyond their fingers; they have no idea of the relation of things, or of their differences; they have no power of generalisation by which to merge the accidental in the essential. They believe that their names and likenesses are integral parts of themselves, and that they can be bewitched or harmed through them at the hands of any one who knows the one or has obtained the other. As an important result of their confusion between the objective and the subjective, we find a vivid and remarkable belief in the reality of their dreams. The events which make up these are explained only on the theory

that if the body did not move from its sleeping place, something related to it did, and that the people, both living and dead, who appeared in dream and vision, did in very presence come. The puzzle is solved by the theory of a second self which can leave the body and return to it. For the savage knows nothing of *mind*. The belief in this other self is strengthened (possibly more or less created) by its appearance in shadow or reflection, in mocking echo, in various diseases, especially fits, when the sufferer is torn by an indwelling foe, and writhes as if in his merciless grasp. The belief in such a ghost-soul, as to the form and ethereal nature of which all kinds of theories are started, is extended to animals and lifeless things, since like evidence of its existence is supplied by them. The fire that destroys his hut, the wind that blows it down, the lightning that darts from the clouds and strikes his fellow-man dead beside him, the rain-storm that floods his fields, the swollen river that sweeps away his store of food—these and every other force manifest in nature add their weight to the inferences which rude man has drawn. The phenomena which have accounted for the vigour of life and the prostration of disease account for the motion of things in heaven above and the earth beneath, and the barbaric mind thus enlarges its belief in a twofold existence in man to a far-reaching doctrine of spirits everywhere. Step by step, from ghost-soul flitting round the wigwam to the great spirits indwelling in the powers of nature, the belief in supernatural beings with physical

qualities arises, until the moral element comes in, and they appear as good and evil gods contending for the mastery of the universe. Passing by details as to the whereabouts of the other self and its doings and destiny in the other world which the dream involves, and following the order of ideas on scientific lines, two queries arise :—

1. Does the evidence before us suffice to warrant the conclusions drawn from it as to the serious and permanent part which dreams have played in the origin and growth of primitive belief in spirits ; in short, of belief in supernatural agencies from past to present times ? In this place the answer is brief. Of course the antecedent conditions of man's developed emotional nature, and of the universe of great and small, which is the field of its exercise, are taken for granted.

The general animistic interpretation which man gives to phenomena at the outset expressed itself in the particular conceptions of souls everywhere, of which dreams and such-like things supplied the raw material. If they did not, what did ? Denying this, we must fall back on a theory of intuition or on revelation. As to the former, it begs the whole question ; as to the latter, can that which is itself the subject of periodical revision be an infallible authority on anything ?

If dreams, apparitions, shadows, and the like, are sufficing causes, then, in obedience to the Law of Parsimony (as it is termed in logic), we need not invoke the play of higher causes when lower ones

are found competent to account for the effects. If it seems to some that the base is too narrow, the foundation too weak for the superstructure, and that our metaphysics and our beliefs regarding the invisible rest upon something wider and stronger than the illusions of a remote savage ancestry, the facts of man's history may be adduced as witness to his continuous passage into truth through illusions; to the vast revolutions and readjustments made in his correction of the first impressions of the senses. There is not a belief of the past, from the notions of savages about their dreams and ghost-world to those of more advanced races about their spirit-realms and its occupants, to which this does not apply. In the more delicate observations of the astronomer he must, when estimating the position of any celestial body, take into account its apparent displacement through the refractive properties of the atmosphere, and must also allow for defects of perception in himself due to what is called "personal equation." And in ascertaining our place in the scale of being, as well as in seeking for the grounds of belief concerning our own nature, we have to take into account the refracting media of dense ignorance and prejudice through which these beliefs have come, and to allow for the confirming error due to personal equation—fond desire. The result will be the vanishing of illusions involving momentous changes in psychology, ethics, and theology. Instead of groping among mental phenomena for explanations of themselves, they will be analysed by the methods

already indicated. Instead of resting the authority for moral injunctions on innate ideas of right and wrong, and on inspired statutes and standards, it will rest on the accredited, because verifiable, experience of man. Instead of finding incentives to, or restraints on, conduct by operating on men's hope of future reward, or fear of hell as "hangman's whip to keep the wretch in order," they will be supplied by an ever-widening sense of duty, quickened by love and loyalty to a supreme order, in obedience to which the ultimate happiness of humanity in the life that is will be secured.

In this, and not in theories of an hereafter whose origin and persistence are explained, will man find his satisfaction, and the springs of motive to whatever is ennobling, lovely, and of good report. With the poet, who, laying bare the sources of the unrest of his time, has led us to the secret of its peace, he will ask—

"Is it so small a thing  
 To have enjoyed the sun,  
 To have lived light in the spring,  
 To have loved, to have thought, to have done,  
 To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes—  
 That we should feign a bliss  
 Of doubtful future date,  
 And while we dream on this,  
 Lose all our present state,  
 And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?"<sup>1</sup>

2. Does the theory of evolution in its application to the development of the spiritual nature of man, and to the origin and growth of ideas, find any

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna*.

breach of continuity? In its inclusion of him as a part of nature, in accounting for his derivation from pre-human ancestry by a process of natural selection, and in its proofs of his unbroken development from the embryo to adult life, it embraces the growth and development of mind and all that mind connotes. In the words of Professor Huxley, "As there is an anatomy of the body, so there is an anatomy of the mind ; the psychologist dissects mental phenomena into elementary states of consciousness, as the anatomist resolves limbs into tissues, and tissues into cells. The one traces the development of complex organs from simple rudiments ; the other follows the building up of complex conceptions out of simpler constituents of thought. As the physiologist inquires into the way in which the so-called 'functions' of the body are performed, so the psychologist studies the so-called 'faculties' of the mind. Even a cursory attention to the ways and works of the lower animals suggests a comparative anatomy and physiology of the mind ; and the doctrine of evolution presses for application as much in the one field as in the other."<sup>1</sup>

Any coherent explanation of the operations of nature was impossible while man had no conception or knowledge of the interplay of its several parts. Now, by the doctrine of continuity, not only are present changes referred to unvarying causes, but the past is interpreted by the processes going on under our eyes. We can as easily calculate eclipses back-

<sup>1</sup> *Hume*, p. 50.

ward as forward ; we can learn in present formations of the earth's crust the history of the deposition of the most ancient strata ; we read in a rounded granite pebble the story of epochs, the fire that fused its organic or inorganic particles, the water that rubbed and rolled it ; we reconstruct from a few bones the ancestry of obscure forms, and find in the fragments the missing links that connect species now so varied. And the like method is applied to man in his *tout ensemble*. His development is not arbitrary ; what he is is the expansion of germs of what he was.

Till these latter days he has, on the warrant of legends now of worth only as witnesses to his crude ideas, presumed on an isolated place in creation, and excepted his race from an inquiry made concerning every creature beneath him. The pride of birth has hindered his admission of lineal connection between the beliefs of cultured races and the beliefs of savages, and pseudo-scientific writers still confuse issues by assuming distinctions between races to whom spiritual truths have been revealed and races from whom these truths have been withheld. But the only tenable distinction to be drawn nowadays is between the scientific and pre-scientific age in the history of any given race.

In these times, when many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, we forget how recent are the tremendous changes wrought by the science that—

“Reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon.”

Dulled by familiarity, we forget how operative these changes are upon opinions which have been—save now and again by voices speedily silenced—unquestioned during centuries. It is, in truth, another world to that in which our forefathers lived. Even in science itself the revolution wrought by discoveries within the last fifty years is enormous. Our old standard authorities, especially in astronomy and geology, are now of value only as historical indices to the progress of those sciences, while in the domain of life itself the distinctions between plant and animal, assumed under the terms Botany and Zoology, are effaced and made one under the term Biology. Sir James Paget, in a profoundly interesting address on *Science and Theology*, has pointed out that it was once thought profane to speak of life as in any kind of relation or alliance with chemical affinities manifest in lifeless matter; now, the correlation of all the forces of matter is a doctrine which investigation more and more confirms. It was believed—many believe it still—that an impassable chasm separates the inorganic from the organic, the latter being attained only through operations of a “vital force” external to matter. That chasm is imaginary. Even the supposed difference between plants and animals in the existence in the latter of a stomach by which to digest and change nutritive substances, vanishes before the experiments on carnivorous plants. And not only do the observations of Mr. Darwin go far to show the existence of a nervous system in plants, but examination of crystals shows that a “truly elemental

pathology must be studied in them after mechanical injuries or other disturbing forces." And is man, "the roof and crown of things," to witness to diversity amidst this unity?

If we hesitate to believe that our metaphysics have been evolved from savage philosophy, that our accepted opinions concerning man's nature and destiny are but the improved and purified speculations of the past, we must remember what long years had elapsed before the spirit of science arose and breathed its air of freedom on the human mind. The Christian religion wrought no change in the attitude of man towards the natural world; it remained as full of mystery and miracle to the pagan after his conversion as before it. When that religion was planted in foreign soil it had, as the condition of its thriving, to be nourished by the alien juices. It had to take into itself what it found there, and it found very much in common. Although it displaced and degraded the *Dii majores* of other faiths, it had its own elaborated order of principalities and powers; it had as real a belief in demons and goblins as any pagan; and it was, therefore, simply a question of baptizing and rechristening the ghost-world of heathendom, substituting angels for swan-maidens and elves, devils for demons, and retaining unchanged the army of evil agencies, who as witches and wraiths swarmed in the night and wrought havoc on soul and body.

The doctrine of continuity admits no exceptions; it has no "favoured nation" clause for man. Its teaching is of order, not confusion; of gradual de-

velopment, not spasmodic advance ; of banishment of all catastrophic theories in the interpretation of the history of man as of nature. In its exposition nothing is "common or unclean ;" nothing too trivial for notice in study of the growth of language, of law, of social customs and institutions, of religion, or of aught else comprised in the story of our race. The nursery rhyme and the "wise saw" embody the serious belief of past times ; ceremonial rites and priestly vestments preserve the significance and sacredness gathering round the common when it becomes specialised. And in this belief in spiritual powers and agencies within and without, the line uniting the lower and the higher culture is unbroken." Nor can it be otherwise, if it be conceded that the sources of man's knowledge do not transcend his experience, and that within the limits of this we have to look for the origin of all beliefs, from the crudest animism to the most ennobling conceptions of the Eternal.

"This world is the nurse of all we know,  
This world is the mother of all we feel."

And yet we find this denied by professed scientists, whose minds are built, as it were, in water-tight compartments. The theistic philosopher, trembling at the bogey of human automatism, creates an Ego, "an entity wherein man's nobility essentially consists, which does not depend for its existence on any play of physical or vital forces, but which makes these forces subservient to its determinations."<sup>1</sup> The bio-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Carpenter's *Mental Physiology*, p. 27.

logist, shrinking from the application of the theory of evolution to the descent of man, argues that "his animality is distinct in nature from his rationality, though inseparably joined during life in one common personality." His body "was derived from pre-existing materials, and therefore, only derivatively created ; that is, by the operation of secondary laws." His soul, on the other hand, was created in quite a different way, not by any pre-existing means external to God Himself, but by the direct action of the Almighty symbolised by the term "breathing."<sup>1</sup> As this compound nature of man is defended in a scientific treatise, the question that leaps to the lips is, When did the inoculating action take place?—in the embryonic stage, or at birth, or at the first awakenings of the moral sense?

Readers of that eccentric book, *The Unseen Universe*, published some eight years ago, may remember that the authors built up a spiritual body whose home lay beyond the visible cosmos.<sup>2</sup> Their argument was to the following effect:—Just as light is held to result from vibrations of the ether set in motion by self-luminous or light-reflecting bodies, so every thought occasions molecular action in the brain, which gives rise to vibrations of the ether. While the effect of a portion of our mental activity is to

<sup>1</sup> St. Geo. Mivart's *Genesis of Species*, p. 325. In the second edition of this work Professor Mivart cites with satisfaction the authority of S. Thomas Aquinas and of Cardinal Newman on the matter!

<sup>2</sup> For criticism of this pseudo-scientific theory see Professor Clifford's brilliant paper in *Lectures and Essays*, i. 228, ff. ; and a review of "The Unseen Universe" by the present writer, *Fraser's Mag.*, Jan. 1876.

leave a permanent record on the matter of the brain, and thus constitute an organ of memory, the effect of the remaining portion is to set up thought-waves across the ether, and to construct by these means, in some part of the unseen universe, what may be called our "spiritual body." By this process there is being gradually built up, as the resultant of our present activities, our future selves; and when we die our consciousness is in some mysterious way transferred to the spiritual body, and thus the continuity of identity is secured.

"Eternal form shall still divide  
Th' eternal soul from all beside."

We may well quote the ancient words: "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" The physicists, who thus locate the soul in limitless space, and call it vibrations; the mathematician, who said it must be extension; and the musician, who said, like Aristoxenus, that it was harmony; the Cartesian philosopher, who locates it in the pineal gland; the Costa Rican, who places it in the liver; the Tongans, who make it co-extensive with the body; and the Swedenborgians, who assume an underlying, inner self pervading the whole frame—these have met together, the lower and the higher culture have kissed each other.

The tripartite division of man by the Rabbis, the Platonists, the Paulinists, the Chinese, the mediæval theories of vegetal, sensitive, and rational souls; what are these but the "other self" of savage philo-

sophy writ large? Plato's number is found among the Sioux: of their three souls one goes to a cold place, another to a warm place, and the third stays to guard the body. Washington Matthews, in his *Ethnology and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians*, says:—"It is believed by some of the Hidatsa that every human being has four souls in one. They account for the phenomena of gradual death, when the extremities are apparently dead while consciousness remains, by supposing the four souls to depart, one after another, at different times. When dissolution is complete, they say that all the souls are gone, and have joined together again outside the body. I have heard a Minsutaree quietly discussing this doctrine with an Assinneboine, who believed in only one soul to each body."

Let it not be thought that because science explains the earth-born origin of some of man's loftiest hopes, she makes claim to have spoken the last word, and forbids utterance from any other quarter. The theologian is not less free to assume such miraculous intervention in man's development as marks him nearer to the angel than to the ape, only his assumptions lie beyond the scope of scientific inquiry. And it should be noted that whilst science takes away, she gives with no niggard hand, so that the loss is more seeming than real.

When belief in the earth's central and supreme place in the universe was surrendered at the bidding of astronomy, there was compensation in the revelation of a universe to which thought can fix no limits.

And if man is bidden to surrender belief in his difference in kind from other living creatures, he will be given the conception of a collective humanity whose duties and destiny he shares. That conception will not be the destruction, but the enlargement, of the field of the emotions, and, in contrasting the evanescence of the individual with the permanence of the race, he may find a profounder meaning in the familiar words—

“We are such stuff as dreams are made on,  
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.”

### § XIII.

#### DREAMS AS OMENS AND MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GODS AND MEN.

Reference has now to be made to the part played by dreams as supposed channels of communication between heaven and earth ; as portents, omens, etc. The common belief among the nations of antiquity that they were sent by the gods, and the like belief lurking in the minds of the superstitious to this day, are the scarcely-altered survivals of barbaric confusion respecting them.

When man had advanced from the earlier stages of undefined wonder and bewilderment concerning the powers around and above him to anthropomorphic conceptions of them, *i.e.* to making them in his own image, the events of his dreams were striking con-

firmation of his notions about the constant intervention of spiritual beings, gods, chiefs, and ancestors, in the affairs of life. That personal life and will with which the rude intelligence invests the objects of its awe ; waving trees, swirling waters, drifting clouds, whirling winds, stately march of sun and star, seemed especially manifest in dreams and visions. In their unrelated and bewildering, or, on the other hand, their surpassingly clear, incidents, the powers indwelling in all things seemed to come nearer than in the less sensational occurrences of the day, uttering their monitions, or making known their will. They were the media by which this and that thing was commanded or forbidden, or by which guidance and counsel and knowledge of the future were given. To induce them, therefore, became a constant effort. The discovery that fasting is a certain method of procuring them is one reason of its prevalence in the lower culture. Amongst all the indigenous races of North America abstinence has been practised as a chief means of securing supernatural inspiration. The Redskin, to become a sorcerer or to secure a revelation from his *totem*, or the Eskimo, to become *Angekok*, will endure the most severe privations.

It is believed that whatever is seen in the first dream thus produced by fasting becomes the manitou, or guardian spirit of life, corresponding to the "daimon" of Socrates. And whoever by much fasting is favoured with dreams, and cultivates the art of explaining them as bearing on the future, becomes the feared and consulted "medicine man" of his tribe.

His *kee-keel-wins*, or records, are finally shown to the old people, who meet together and consult upon them. They in the end give their approval, and declare that he is gifted as a prophet, is inspired with wisdom, and is fit to lead in the councils of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Very slender data were needed for the conclusions first drawn from dreams ; let the death of a friend or foe be the incident, and the event happen ; let a hunting-path fill the half-torpid fancy, and a day's fasting follow ; let the mother of a young sportsman dream that she saw a bear in a certain place, and the son, guided by her account, find the bear where indicated, and kill it ; the arbitrary relation is set up forthwith. As Lord Bacon says, "Men mark the hits, but not the misses," and a thousand dreams unfulfilled count as nothing against one dream fulfilled. Out of that is shaped, as dream-lore shows, a canon of interpretation by which whole races will explain their dreams, never staying, when experience happens to confirm it, to wonder that the correspondences are not more frequent than they are. Where the arbitrary act was wrought, the isolated or conflicting influences manifest, there deity or demon was working. So the passage from the crude

<sup>1</sup> The following Mohammadan recipe for summoning spirits is given in Klunzinger's *Upper Egypt*. "Fast seven days in a lonely place, and take incense with you, such as benzoin, aloeswood, mastic, and odoriferous wood from Soudan, and read the chapter 1001 times (from the Koran) in the seven days—a certain number of readings, namely, for every day one of the five daily prayers. That is the secret, and you will see indescribable wonders ; drums will be beaten beside you, and flags hoisted over your head, and you will see spirits full of light and of beautiful and benign aspect."—(P. 386).

interpretation of his dreams by the barbarian to the formal elaboration of the dream-oracle is obvious. It was only one of many modes by which the gods were thought to hold converse with man, and by which their will was divined. It was one phase of that many-sided belief in power for good or evil inhering in everything, and which led man to see omens in the common events of life, in births, in the objects any one met in a journey or saw in the sky; to divine the future by numbers, by the lines in the hand, by the song and flight of birds (lurking in the word *augury*), by the entrails of sacrificed men and animals.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the god sends the message through a spiritual being, an angel (literally "messenger"); sometimes he, himself, speaks in vision, but more often through the symbolism of both familiar and unfamiliar things. To interpret this is a serious science, and skill and shrewdness applied therein with success were passports to high place and royal favour. In this we have the familiar illustrations of Joseph and Daniel, and, indeed, we need not travel beyond the books of the Old Testament for abundant and varied examples of the importance attached to dreams and visions, and of the place accorded to dreams,<sup>2</sup> an importance undiminished until we come to the literature of the centuries just before Christ. For example, in the Book of Jesus the Son of Sirac, we read—

<sup>1</sup> In Roget's *Thesaurus*, sect. 511, a curious and instructive list of terms expressive of the different forms of divination is given.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xii. 6; 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 15, etc.

“Vain and deceitful hopes befit the senseless man,  
And dreams make fools rejoice,  
Like one who grasps at a shadow and chases the wind,  
Is he who puts trust in dreams.”<sup>1</sup>

In the belief that through dreams and oracles Yahweh made known his will, the influence of older beliefs and their literature is apparent. Among the Accadians, a pre-Semitic race in Babylonia, there existed a mass of treatises on magic and divination by dreams and visions, and both from this and from Egyptian sources, blended with survivals from their barbaric past, the Hebrews largely drew.

In this, too, “there is nothing new under the sun.” Homer, painting the vividness and agonising incompleteness of the passing visions, affirms that dreams from Jove proceed, although sometimes to deceive men; Plato assigns prophetic character to the images seen in them; Aristotle sees a divination concerning some things in dreams which is not incredible; the answer to oracles was sought in them, as when the worshipper slept in a temple on the skin of a sacrificed ram, and learned his destiny through the dream that came. The Stoics argued that if the gods love and care for men and are all-knowing, they will tell their purposes to men in sleep. Cicero attaches high importance to the faculty of interpreting them; their phenomena, like those of oracles and predictions, should, he contends, be explained just as the grammarians and the commentators explain the poets.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ency. Brit.*, Art. “Dreams.”

With the influence of these beliefs in the air, and with the legend-visions of Scripture as authority, the divine origin of dreams became a doctrine of the Christian Church. Tertullian says that "we receive dreams from God, there being no man so foolish as never to have known any dreams come true," and in his *De Anima* reference is made to a host of writers of dream treatises. For the most part they are but names; their treatises have perished, but enough remains for the perusal of the curious regarding ancient rules of interpretation and the particular significance of certain dreams. The current views of dreams in classic antiquity are believed to be partly embodied in the 'Ὀνειροκριτικά' of Artemidorus of Ephesus, who flourished about the middle of the second century, and who reduces dream interpretation to a body of elaborate rules, while amongst Christian writers Synesius of Cyrene, who lived two centuries later, holds a corresponding place.

Both classic and patristic writers supply copious details concerning the classes into which dreams were divided, and which have some curious correspondences among the Oriental nations, as well as in our dream-lore, e.g., when Artemidorus says that he who dreams he hath lost a tooth shall lose a friend, we may compare with this a quotation which Brand gives from the *Sapho and Phao* of Lily, a playwright of the time of Elizabeth. "Dreams have their truth. Dreams are but dotings, which come either by things we see in the day or meates that we eat, and so the common-sense preferring it to be the imagina-

tive. 'I dreamed,' says Ismena, 'mine eyetooth was loose, and that I thrust it out with my tongue.' 'It foretelleth,' replies Mileta, 'the loss of a friend ; and I ever thought thee so full of prattle that thou wouldst thrust out the best friend with thy tatling.'"

It is, however, needless to quote from Artemidorus and others of their kin. They do but furnish samples of the ingenuity applied to profitless speculations on matters which were fundamental then, and around which the mind played unchecked and unchallenged. Moreover, the subtle distinctions made between dreams in former times were slowly effaced, or sank to their proper level in the gossip of chap books—our European *kee-keé-wins*. But the belief in the dream as having a serious meaning, and in the spectral appearances in visions as real existences, remained as strong as in any barbarian or pagan. In an atmosphere charged with the supernatural, apparitions and the like were matters of course, the particular form of the illusion to which the senses testified being in harmony with the ideas of the age. The devil does not appear to Greek or Roman, but he sorely troubled the saints, unless their nerves were, like Luther's, strong enough to overmaster him. Luther speaks of him as coming into his cell, and making a great noise behind the stove, and of his walking in the cloister above his cell at night ; "but as I knew it was the devil," he says, "I paid no attention to him, and went to sleep." Sceptics now and again arose protesting against the current belief, but they were as a voice crying in the desert.

One Henry Cornelius Agrippa, in the fifteenth century, a man born out of due time, says, "To this delusion not a few great philosophers have given not a little credit, especially Democritus, Aristotle, Sincsius, etc., so far building on examples of dreams, which some accident hath made to be true, that thence they endeavour to persuade men that there are no dreams but what are real."

His words have not yet lost their purport. For the credulity of man, the persistence with which he clings to the shadow of the supernatural after having surrendered the substance, seem almost a constant quantity, varying only in form. Unteachable by experience, fools still pay their guineas to mediums to rap out inane messages from the departed, and send postage stamps to the Astronomer Royal, asking him to "work the planets" for them, and secure them luck in love and law-suits. Nor is there any cure for this but in wise culture of the mind, wise correction, and wholesome control of the emotions. "By faithfully intending the mind to the realities of nature," as Bacon has it, and by living and working among men in a healthy, sympathetic way, exaggeration of a particular line of thought or feeling is prevented, and the balance of the faculties best preserved. For, adds Dr. Maudsley, in pregnant and well-chosen words, "there are not two worlds—a world of nature and a world of human nature—standing over against one another in a sort of antagonism, but one world of nature, in the orderly evolution of which human nature has its subordinate

part. Delusions and hallucinations may be described as discordant notes in the grand harmony. It should, then, be every man's steadfast aim, as a part of nature—his patient work—to cultivate such entire sincerity of relations with it; so to think, feel, and act always in intimate unison with it; to be so completely one with it in life, that when the summons comes to surrender his mortal part to absorption into it, he does so, not fearfully, as to an enemy who has vanquished him, but trustfully, as to a mother who, when the day's task is done, bids him lie down to sleep."

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