

One of these, known as "Toad-day," seems to carry us back to the days of the Druids, or even an earlier and pre-Aryan period. On Toad-day people resort to a "wise man," or in other words a wizard, to purchase a charm or fetish which is to protect them and theirs from injury for a year. This charm consists of a leg torn from a living toad, which the purchaser devoutly wears about his person.* In Scotland "wise women" cure rheumatism by giving the patient a potato which he must carry in his trousers pocket. While it is in his possession, and carried according to prescription, he is exempt from attack. I once heard a shrewd, long-headed farmer say: "I ha'e haen a twinge o' rheumatics. I had a tatie I got frae a wife, but I slipped it oot o' my pouch amang a wheen twine." The potato being lost or mislaid, his old enemy had returned.

We have seen how religion, when the king ceases to be worshipped as a man-god, tends to pass over to a deification of the powers of nature, associating with these the reproductive energy of departed priests or ancestors. These, or their spirit, may be present in any object, or they may only occupy the position of an influence, as when an African says when he escapes from danger, "The soul of my father saved me." This tends to become pantheism—a deification of all nature. Such is the root idea of Mlungu of the Zulus; the father of the race of men among the Sillocks on the Nile; † Loma of the Bongo; ‡ heaven fire or lightning of the Mitto, § and the Lubare of the Lake region. || This is a comparatively late

* Rowley. † Schweinfurth. ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.* || Mackay.

development, and can only be elaborated after religion has passed through many phases, and man comes to regard the supernatural as distinct from and independent of his own will. The older forms may and do persist after philosophy has arrived at the pantheistic idea, but they are on the wane, and preparing to follow the systems which preceded into the land of forgetfulness. Before considering the doctrines of substitution, sacrifice and sacrificial worship, we may examine traces of nature-worship under the form of the creative or reproductive spirit, as that has survived in civilised lands in popular superstition, ceremonial acts, and national festivals.

One of the most familiar of festivals is the village May-pole, an undoubted survival from very ancient times. We may the better understand its significance if we compare the yearly merry-making on the village green with the Galla festival of Woda, or, better still, with the annual sacrifices to Tari by the Khonds of India. Our knowledge of this latter festival is full and accurate. Major MacPherson, who suppressed the custom now over forty years ago, wrote an account of it in all its details, of which what follows is a brief summary:—The sacrifices were intended to ensure good crops and avert accidents of all kinds in connection with the fertility of the soil and yield of crops, as well as fecundity and productiveness among the people. The victim, or Meriah, was acceptable to the goddess only in the event of being purchased or being born of a victim purchased at a previous time. To avoid accidents or difficulty in procuring a suit-

able Meriah at the time of the festival, a number were always kept on hand to be ready in case of emergency. Of these, many were women, and, as the victims could not be sacrificed if pregnant, many of them managed to escape their fate for years. Their children were, however, doomed as victims from infancy, as were also children of a free woman by a male Meriah. Even free people, Khonds themselves, at times sold their children as victims. To sell a son or daughter was the highest virtue, as "the child died that all the world might live."* These ghastly sacrifices were offered by tribes and sub-tribes, and were so arranged that each household got a shred of flesh to sow in his fields about the time when the crop was laid down, or as the corn already in the earth began to sprout.

The sacrifices were performed in the following manner:—Ten days before the festival the victim's hair was cut off. Thereafter came days of feasting, dancing, and devilry. On the day preceding the sacrifice the victim was dressed in new and very fine garments, and then led from the village in grand procession, with every possible circumstance of display and honour. With music, dancing, exuberant merriment, and homage done to the victim, the procession wended its way to the sacred grove, at a distance from any dwellings, none of the trees of which might be felled or touched with an axe. Arrived at the grove, the victim was tied to a post, anointed with a mixture of oil and turmeric, and richly adorned with cut flowers. During the

* MacPherson

whole of that day a species of reverence equivalent to adoration was paid to the Meriah. There was a constant struggle to obtain a flower, a particle of the turmeric, even a spittle from the victim's person, and these were regarded as sovereign and absolute in all cases to secure the end sought by the worshipper. On the day of sacrifice the dance was continued till noon, when it ceased, and the assembled crowd—for young and old were present—proceeded to the final act. The victim was again anointed as before, and at times carried in triumphal procession from house to house. At this stage the Meriah might not be bound nor make any sign of resistance. It was indeed essential that there should be a voluntary surrender and sacrifice. To ensure success and perfect obedience with apparent willingness, the priests might, and often did, break the bones of both arms and legs, or, when this was not done, they gave a dose of some narcotic, as opium.

The method of putting the victim to death was strangulation, and that was performed in the following manner:—A green branch from a tree was cleft for a length of a few feet, and the victim's neck inserted into the fork thus formed, after which the officiating priest closed and secured the free ends. He then wounded the Meriah slightly with his axe, when the crowd rushed forward with knives and bill-hooks to tear the flesh from the bones in shreds and fibres, leaving the head, thorax, and abdomen intact. An alternative method was to fasten the victim to the trunk of a wooden elephant which revolved on a pivot. As it whirled round

and round the crowd cut strips of flesh from the living Meriah. In each case the flesh was treated in the manner we shall presently see. In one district the method of death was slow roasting before a large fire. In this case a low stage was formed and on it the victim was placed. Fires were lighted and burning brands applied to make the sacrifice roll and wriggle as long as possible. The more the victim rolled, and the more tears and cries, the more plentiful would be the crop.

All this looks like a sacrifice to the goddess Tari, but when the treatment of the victim while held captive, and the homage paid before being put to death, together with the use made of the shreds of flesh is considered, it is highly probable that the intention was the sacrifice of the goddess herself; the decaying powers of nature put to death in order that the spirit of these powers might re-enter the earth as a creative and reproductive power, in the same manner as the spirit of the slain king entered his successor and dwelt there. Confirmation of this view is derived from the manner in which the flesh was disposed of, which was as peculiar as it is suggestive.

The strips and shreds of flesh cut from the Meriah were instantly carried away by appointed persons to the several villages represented at the festival and sacrifice. To secure prompt arrival, relays of runners were posted at short intervals along the roads. Arrived at the village, the runner deposited the flesh in the place of public assembly, and there the priest divided it into two portions.

One portion he buried in a hole in the ground, to which, while he performed the operation, he kept his back carefully turned. Then each villager, all having rigidly fasted till now, added a little earth till the hole was filled up. The other portion of flesh the priest divided among heads of families, who wrapped up each his share in green leaves and proceeded at once to bury it in their corn-fields. "For three days no house was swept, and silence was generally observed."* In three days corn sown sprouts; so, too, by inference, the spirit of corn represented by the Meriah. The head and entrails of the victim, which, as we have seen, had been left intact, were watched by the priests for a night, and next day burned with a whole sheep, and the ashes scattered over the fields.

These observances clearly show that power was ascribed to the victim other than is associated with sacrifice to secure the favour of deity. But it may be objected that there is no connection between such bloody rites as those represented by Khond sacrifices and the merry-making on fine summer mornings, as ruddy youths and fair maidens dance around the village May-pole. To trace that connection we must go back to a time when May-day festivities meant, not the exuberant energy and frolic of youth, but the stern realities of a religion observed by men in terrible earnest, and accompanied by the sacrifice of quivering human beings to secure life and favour from the gods. In order to understand this we must trace briefly the history of another form

* Campbell.

of sacrifice and development of divinity common among the Celtic tribes of Europe.

The story of the death of Balder, the good and beautiful god, is familiar to all readers of Professor Rhys' *Celtic Heathenism*. The goddess Frigg obtained an oath from fire, water, metals, trees, beasts of all kinds, birds, and creeping things, that they would not touch or injure Balder. When this was done the god was regarded as invulnerable and immortal. Loke, the evil-worker, was displeased at what Frigg had done, and sought to discover if anything had been omitted from the oath by which he could injure or kill the god. He discovered that the mistletoe had not been included, as being too young to swear. So Loke went and pulled the mistletoe, which he brought to the assembly of the gods. A twig of it was given to Hödur, who made it into an arrow, which he shot at Balder. It pierced him through the heart and he fell down dead. The assembled gods stood speechless for a great space, and then lifted up their voices and wept, for the best and bravest had fallen. Then Balder's ship was launched by a giantess who came riding on a wolf, and his body placed on board on a funeral pile. When his wife Nanna saw what was done her heart burst for sorrow and she died. Her body was laid beside her husband, and so too were his horse and trappings. The ship having been fired, was sent to sea with its sad freight, and so ended the life of Balder. This is briefly the story which in the original Edda is told with great amplification of

circumstance. Its very minuteness suggests that it belongs to that class of myths which are invented to explain ritual; for a myth is never so graphic as when it is a transcript of what the narrator has seen.* The main incidents are: first, the pulling of the mistletoe; and secondly, the death and burning of the god. Both these incidents appear to have formed an essential part of Celtic observances, as cut flowers and the death of the Meriah did of the ritual of the Khonds. We may now turn to May-day customs.

In all parts of Europe the peasantry, from time immemorial, have been in the habit of kindling fires and performing ceremonial acts on certain days of the year. It is a universal custom to dance round Midsummer fires, leap over them, and treat them as in a manner sacred. These customs can be traced back to the time of the Druids. They, in various forms, survived all and every change, and still persist, though thousands of years have elapsed since the reasons which gave them birth have passed away from the public mind. In Caithness, within the last seventy years, each family in the neighbourhood of Watten carried bread and cheese, before sunrise on May morning, to the top of a hill called Heathercow, and left it there.† After sunrise the cowherds might take away the spoil for their own use. No one could explain the origin of the practice; it was unlucky to neglect it, that was all. Here we have a survival of an offering to the earth goddess, which in Druidical times was accompanied

* J. G. Frazer.

† Rev. A. Gunn, MS. Notes.

with bloody rites and sacrifices, in which the sacred mistletoe played an important part. It seems to carry us back to the days of Balder, when men killed the spirit of vegetation and creative energy in the person of their god, that it might re-enter the growing corn and make the earth fruitful once more. In the Western Isles the people on a given day poured out libations to the sea-god Shony, and then held a festival with curious rites, which were observed not more than two centuries ago. There is an account of the practice, written about 1690, as performed at that date, and with which the writer seems to have been familiar :—“ The inhabitants of this island (Lewis) had an ancient custom to sacrifice to the sea-god called Shony at Hallowtide, in the manner following. The inhabitants round the island came to the Church of St. Malvay, having each man his provision along with him ; every family furnished a peck of malt, and this was brewed into ale. One of their number was picked out to wade into the sea up to the middle, and, standing still in that posture, cried out with a loud voice : ‘ Shony, I give you this cup of ale, hoping that you’ll be so kind as to send us plenty of seaware for enriching our land for the ensuing year ;’ and so threw the cup into the sea. At his return to the land, they all went into the church, where there was a candle burning upon the altar ; and then, standing silent for a time, one of them gave a signal at which the candle was put out, and immediately all of them went to the fields, where they fell a-drinking their ale, and spent the remainder of the

night in dancing, singing, &c.”* One would very much like to know what the worthy chronicler meant to convey by “&c.,” and whether here, as in savagedom generally, the worship of Venus formed an essential part of the ceremony as performed at that time. He does tell us that the reformed pastors had spent years trying to suppress the practice, but with indifferent success. Corresponding acts of devotion, now represented by ceremonial usages, were performed by the Celts in early spring and at Midsummer.

Similar customs are common in every country in Europe. For example. In Bohemia the Spring Queen is dressed with garlands and crowned with flowers. She then, accompanied by a band of girls, who whirl round her continually, singing as they go, proceeds from house to house announcing that spring has come, and wishing them the blessings of the year. “In Ruhea, as soon as the trees begin to grow green in spring, the children assemble on Sunday and go out into the woods, where they choose one of their playmates to be the Little Leaf Man. They break branches from the trees and twine them about the child till only his shoes peep out from the leafy mantle. Singing and dancing, they take him from house to house asking for gifts of food. Lastly, they sprinkle the Leaf Man with water, after which they feast on the food they have collected.” † A somewhat similar custom is observed in England, where a chimney-sweep walks about encased in holly and ivy, and accompanied by his

* Martin.

† J. G. Frazer, quoting Mannhardt.

fellow-craftsmen, who collect money with which to have a carouse.

These customs, which might be illustrated indefinitely, are all analogous to the setting up and decoration of the village May-pole. Formerly it had to be renewed from year to year, the carrying of the new pole into the town being accompanied by crowds in holiday attire, who kept up a continual singing and clapping of hands with whirling and dancing. The object of the custom undoubtedly was to bring in the fructifying spirit of vegetation newly awakened, and for this purpose a newly cut pole and freshly gathered flowers were necessary. As the ancient Druidical sacrifices were abolished under the influence of an advancing conception of divinity, the festivals remained, merely changing their outward form and expression. What was stern reality became a pleasant pastime, and so came to be continued through the centuries, after men had forgotten the object served by them in a ruder age. And this affords an illustration of how among a savage people customs change so slowly. Two or three generations of literature do more to change thought and obliterate myth than thousands of years of tradition. Hence it is that in Africa, Australia, parts of India, and the South Sea Islands, we have at present time conditions similar to what obtained in Europe long before the rise of the Greek Republic. From this long digression we must now return to the consideration of African sacrifices, substitutionary and propitiatory.

CHAPTER IV

SACRIFICE

WE have already seen that the earliest form of human sacrifice was associated in the minds of men with killing the god himself. The divine King of Congo was put to death by his successor. In the Fiji Islands old people are burned alive. When a king of Kabonga is near his end the magicians quietly strangle him. Certain tribes of East Africa put their kings to death as soon as wrinkles or grey hairs appear.* A modification of the custom of king-killing was introduced when the expedient of temporary kings was reached. These could be put to death at stated intervals. We have met with examples of this in Sofala and Calicut. Ancient Babylonia affords another illustration. There, when the time drew near that the king should be put to death, he abdicated for a few days, during which a temporary monarch reigned and suffered in his stead. "A prisoner condemned to death was dressed in the king's robes, seated on the king's throne, allowed to issue whatever commands he pleased, to eat, drink, and enjoy himself, and to lie with the king's concubines. But at the end of the

* Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in East Africa*

five days he was stripped of his royal robes, scourged and crucified." * This same custom, softened down, is observed in Cambodia, where the king abdicates annually for a few days. The substitute performs all functions of State, and receives the revenues for the time he reigns. At the close of his brief term of office he goes and does homage to the king, and then, as his last act, orders the elephants to trample the "mountain of rice." This is a large scaffold hung round with rice-sheaves. When they are trampled down the people gather up the rice, each man taking home a portion to mix with his seed-corn and so secure a good harvest. †

Once the idea of substitution was reached, sacrifice as an institution would develop rapidly, and the curious thing is, that a trace of the original system of killing the god has remained to tell the world of an older and ruder conception of divinity. To the ancient man-god it was so convenient to have another take his place, that we can fancy the innovation being hailed with joy by the ruling castes, who by it were freed from the uncertainties of popular discontent and the accidental advent of signs of decay. But the doctrine of substitution had its disadvantages, and these in course of time would be felt and have far-reaching effects. Under the old order men were accustomed to offer homage to the living king; and their supreme and final act of worship was when he was put to death that his spirit might enter his successor as the creative, fructifying and preserving power of the world.

* J. G. Frazer, quoting Athenæus.

† Aymonier.

Worshippers who associated such ideas with sacrifice could not be prevented from viewing the real victim offered, even as a substitute, as in some sort divine by inherent right. If divine by inherent right, the question of the spirit's return to the real king might be raised. Advanced thinkers would ask whether the spirit of the god, or the god-life, left the king to enter the substitute, slave or criminal, when the former abdicated, and if so, whether other causes might not lead to the same result? Could a successful revolt, headed by a bold and fearless man, secure to the usurper the god-life the moment the king was deposed or slain? If so, revolt and revolution might be, if not lawful, at all events possible, without the collapse of the world. Again, was there a true transference of divinity to the temporary king, his mean and common spirit taking the place of the god in the hereditary monarch? If so, might not men of ambition become substitutes, and at the last act rally their friends in order to retain the divine spirit permanently? Would the substitute's spirit, which dwelt in the king, give place to the returning god-spirit, "poor fluttering thing," after the victim was slain? With such questions pressing for solution—and for a question to be raised among savage men is to find an answer—kings and their advisers would naturally seek to foster faith in an hereditary principle of divinity apart from the actual sacrifice of the god himself. We call this the divine right of kings. When this conception of hereditary divinity was reached, men would sacrifice to the king-god as a personal and hereditary spirit—a spirit dwelling

in the king in virtue of his office, or whom he represented to men—rather than to the spirit of creative and reproductive energy and vegetation which, in an earlier and ruder age was undoubtedly the savage's conception of his divine king. He was divine, not because he was a personal immortal spirit, but because in him was contained that spirit or power which ensured the orderly continuance of the course of nature.

The sacrifice made in former days of the king himself by the priests, would, under the advance of thought, be made in the first instance to the king, and the more costly the sacrifices, and the more elaborate the ritual, the greater would be the virtue, and by consequence his influence and power. Kings attaining to great eminence as conquerors and administrators would be greatly honoured with sacrificial offerings during their lives, and revered after their death. Their successors, especially if weaker men, would, in order to secure the continued allegiance of their people, pay respect to their memory. This, without any revolution of thought, would take the form of offerings, prayer, and sacrifice. Then the spirit of the departed king visited his successor in dreams and visions. At such times he entered his person; hence the common saying, "He got the spirit of his father." By such means he kept his successor informed of his wishes, which were respected and obeyed; thus enabling a weakling to retain power which otherwise would have dropped from his nerveless grasp. That this is no phantasy is clearly proved by beliefs common among

Africans at the present day. A Kaffir who has a remarkable dream will begin to tell it next day by saying: "My father's soul was within me last night." Prophets claim to be god-possessed, or, in other words, to have within them the souls of departed priests or chiefs. In this case they work themselves into, or through long practice assume, a state of semi-coma. During their paroxysms and the succeeding unconsciousness they are treated as objects of worship; in other words, they are truly divine for the time being.

Let us now proceed to illustrate these general statements by an examination of the sacrificial system common throughout the continent, and in doing so it will be well to select a few places, widely apart, as typical illustrations. The natives of South Africa discontinued human sacrifices before they had much contact with Europeans, and, being of mixed origin, we study their religious institutions at a disadvantage. But an examination of their system of thought leads us up to a time when their rites and sacrifices differed in no essential from what is common to the vast majority of the tribes inhabiting the continent, from 10° of north latitude to the farthest promontory of the south.

When the course of nature is not to a Kaffir's mind, as during drought, floods, sickness among men or cattle, misfortune in war, failure in hunting or a visitation of locusts, he offers propitiatory sacrifices to the offended deities. Each man sacrifices to his own ancestors; each clan, through the magician, to the heads of the clan; the tribe to the ancestors

of its chief; but in the latter case the sacrifice can only be offered by the tribal priest, or by the chief in those rare instances in which he is not only the ruler but the high priest also. I am not aware of any ruler at present in South Africa being his own high priest, but the combination is not unknown. The chief Makoma used to offer the sacrifices on important occasions himself.

Here we have the curious anomaly of sacrifices to minor divinities made by ordinary householders, while those to superior deities can only be offered by the high priest if they are to be acceptable to the god. Those whose function it is to stand between men and the unseen, approach divinity with an offering for men's sins. They stand there as representatives or substitutes, taking the place of the worshippers. For a tribal offering may be made by the priest without a muster of the tribe or even the army. The sacred functions belong to sacred persons, and they determine how and when these are to be performed, and only obey certain general principles, without which no sacrifice is a genuine offering. One of these is that all sacrifices must be made by fire. Unless portions of the animal slain are burned, there has been no true offering, and the gods view the whole ceremony in grief and anger. Another is, that the animal must be honestly come by. A man may purchase a sacrifice, but this is rare, and, I think, regarded as irregular; but no man would sacrifice a beast that had been stolen. The most acceptable sacrifice is that which is a man's very own. There is also one phrase in the

dedicatory prayer which is never omitted. It is this : " We do not offer the dead ; it is blood. We offer life. Behold, O ye hosts." During the time when the sacrifice is offered the priest stands as intercessor for the people in room of the chief. His orders are obeyed as the chief's, and his deliverances accepted as the very oracles of God.

It may at first sight be difficult to connect this doctrine of propitiatory sacrifice with that of substitution, as we have seen that in the case of the killing of the temporary king. And if this propitiatory system of sacrifice were our only guide, it would be impossible to do so. But there is another system, complete in all its parts and distinct from the idea of propitiation, observed by the same people alongside of this doctrine. It is that of thank-offering and sacrificial thanksgiving. For every supposed benefit a man makes a thank-offering. It may be but a single grain of corn, or even an article of no value, as a tuft of grass, but it is never omitted. When a father offers a sheep as a thank-offering for the birth of a child, his idea is not only to recompense the soul of his father for good offices by so much burning fat, but to "give to those who were before" the keeping of the child's soul ; giving the soul to them in homage and thankfulness. This is undoubtedly the dedicatory offering of the soul by the sacrifice of a sheep as a substitute for the firstborn, a custom with which we are only too familiar elsewhere. Besides, the first child of a widow who re-marries, should her husband have fallen in war, is put to death : offered to the gods

as "the child of the assegai."* In making thank-offerings for good offices a man adds to the portion of the sacrifice that is burned something from his own person, and men have been known to cut off a finger or toe for this purpose, to enhance the value of the offering. The Israelitish practice of shaving, as a sign of having made a vow or formed a resolve, is not unknown.† Adopting peculiar garments as a head-dress, in token of anything remarkable having happened to a man, is common.

When a tribe is at war, or preferably before entering upon hostilities, if an enemy can be caught he is put to death. The warriors eat his heart raw.‡ Various parts of his body, supposed to be the seat of particular virtues, are used in the preparation of the compound known as war medicine, while shreds of fat from his kidneys are burned in the fire. Much the same is done in the case of a slain enemy who has distinguished himself for bravery and feats of strength.§ This, though the people do not say so, is undoubtedly an offering made to the gods. The explanation given is, "Our people always did so," and that war medicine, without the fat burning in the fire while it is being prepared, would not act.|| For the true significance of such acts we must seek an explanation, not from the people, who can give none, but from analogy, and their resemblance to other acts performed by the same people, or by others having customs in common with them. The fat burned in the fire

* J. Sutton, MS. notes.

§ *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ G. M. Theal, *Boers and Bantu.*

|| J. Sutton, MS. notes.

when oxen are sacrificed in time of war, drought, or the great annual festival of firstfruits, is avowedly a gift to the gods,* the odour of which they inhale;† and when we find the burning of human fat in almost identical circumstances—*i.e.*, war—and the preparation of a magic decoction into which calcined human flesh largely enters, and on which depends its efficacy, the conclusion is forced upon us that here we have the last lingering traces of human sacrifice. Nor is this the only use made of portions of the human body in connection with the religious ritual of the people. The dried fingers of a man's hand is an essential portion of a magician's outfit when he goes to curse his chief's enemies.‡ Wizards deal largely in human flesh.§

The multiplication of sacrifices is acceptable to all the gods || of heathendom, and one case is on record in which tribes killed every hoof of cattle and destroyed every peck of corn to secure the favour of their ancestors. True, the priest who ordered this to be done promised that there should be a general resurrection of both ancestors and cattle on a given day, that of full moon; but this only adds to the completeness of the faith reposed in his predictions as the oracles of God. On the appointed day thousands of men and women gathered for a moon dance; folds had been erected for the cattle that were to rise; stores for the corn which men were to gather; houses for the ancestors who were to come clad in armour. In honour of the great event

* Chalmers, J. Sutton, Hon. C. Brownlee.

† Chalmers.

‡ Hon. C. Brownlee, *Christian Express*.

§ Dr. Elmslie, MS. notes.

|| J. Sutton, MS. notes.

the sun was to rise double on the resurrection morning. During that night sounds of revelry were heard far and near, but when day came the sun rose alone while his companion lagged behind. Black fear entered every heart. Starvation stared men in the face. Umlanjeni declared they had mistaken the day of full moon, and urged a resumption of the dance with assured triumph on the morrow. But men had no heart left, and the next twenty-four hours were but a sorry time. Once more the sun rose in lonely majesty, and men's worst fears were realised; the gods had betrayed them. By such experiences did men learn to differentiate the natural and supernatural.

When a chief dies, one at least, or it may be many persons are put to death for having killed the king by the exercise of the unlawful art of witchcraft; but this falls rather under magic and divination than under sacrifice. The only connection it has with the latter is, that among most tribes the chief is never allowed "to go alone." A few of his wives, servants and slaves must be killed to accompany him and attend to his wants. It may also be noted that the ruling chief may order, even in the case of accusations of having caused his father's death, the substitution of an ox for the condemned person.* The ox is sacrificed, not killed, as a criminal substitute for the wizard, who is set at liberty. This seems to point to the victims of witchcraft, whom we generally regard as criminals under native law, being in reality a sacrifice to the

* Hon. C. Brownlee, MS notes.

gods. The substitution of an animal, which is killed as a sacrifice, is common in cases where the patient has recovered, though causing sickness with intent to kill is a capital crime.

When we leave South Africa and pass into the Lake region all doubt about substitutionary human sacrifice is set at rest. If a Wayao murderer is caught he may make compensation by giving a few slaves to be put to death, so that they may accompany the murdered man, taking his place to attend upon him.* Should the murderer escape, one of his relatives is caught and treated as if he were the murderer. The object here is not so much the punishment of crime as an offering to the deceased, whose spirit would naturally be enraged at his own relatives were they not to pay due honour to it by sending, either the murderer to be his slave, or such of his relatives or slaves as may make amends for his absence. Of departed spirits some have considerable influence among the gods. Matanga of the Wayao has many powerful servants, and arranges most of the details of the spirit world in that region.† He is capricious and easily offended, but can be coaxed by judicious flattery. Men having ghostly relations with him, or with lesser divinities through him, can compound for personal service by substitution. So, instead of betaking themselves to the land of shades, as in duty bound, when a relative to whom they owe allegiance dies, they send a number of slaves as their representatives to do duty by proxy.

* Rev. Duff MacDonald.

† *Ibid.*

But it is when we enter the territories of powerful kings, like Mr. Stanley's friend Mtesa, that we can study primitive sacrificial institutions to best advantage. Broken and scattered tribes like those round Lake Nyassa, or bands of marauding warriors like the ancestors of the tribes inhabiting South Africa, do not retain the institutions of their forefathers in their unblemished splendour. In the one case, poverty, oppression, and the constant fear of death or captivity, slowly but surely undermine and modify original institutions. In the latter, daring warriors learn by degrees to defy even the gods, or at least neglect them. That stout old Roman who threw the sacred chickens into the sea was not a bolder reformer than the Zulu monarch who gave battle to the army of Moselekatse when all the omens of heaven and earth warned him of defeat. More fortunate than the Roman, a decisive victory saved both his own head and his country's freedom.

Among the Wagogo the simplest form of human sacrifice is when the magician comes to the palace with two bunches of grass dipped in the blood of a victim slain quietly and without ostentation.* These he lays on the lintel or threshold, where they are touched by the king, and so offered to the gods. Of these gods the principal is Makusa, who, as we have seen, claims a right higher than the king over the Lake, as the embodiment of the powers of nature. He it is that is personified by the Lubare, who is the real object of worship. Makusa as a sort of Neptune is but a chief Lubare.† He enters

* Mackay, of Uganda.

† Felkin.

a person ; that person is god, and to him sacrifices are offered. Closely bound up with the worship of the Lubare is the care of the place where the king's predecessors are kept, or rather of these predecessors themselves, for the Lubare holds converse with the dead as with the living.*

Associated with, or subordinate to the Lubare are Nende, Kajangeyewe, and Kubuka, who are a kind of national guardian spirits. These appear in persons who are god-possessed, and such persons are always accompanied by magicians, priests, and executioners ; † that is to say, those who slay victims for the sacrifices. The god-possessed person has but to demand a victim, when a wayfarer is caught, bound, beheaded, and offered in sacrifice. Every person holding the sacred office of priest or magician claims to have the spirit of the king dwelling in him, or at least visiting him at intervals.‡ The head wife of every great man's harem is called "Kuda Lubare" §—*i.e.*, slave of the spirit, meaning one in whom the god dwells. The same terms are applied to the child of a woman long barren, and who offered sacrifice and prayed to the Lubare for offspring. This is a true dedication of issue at the shrine when the offering is made. Of this we have an illustration, in widely different circumstances, when Hannah said : "O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life," ||

* Felkin.
§ *Ibid.*

† Mackay, of Uganda.
|| I Samuel.

‡ *Ibid.*

which vow Eli, worthy man, thought to be but the ravings of a drunken votary.

Mention has been made of the tombs of the king's predecessors. This is a large hut, of comparatively slight construction, and needing frequent repair or renewal. Connected with it is a large college of sorceresses, whose chief duty it is to tend the spirits of the departed and guard the sacred place. When the king decides that it must be repaired, he issues his orders to the members of this college, who see the work done, and report when it is completed. Offerings must now be made to their majesties as a kind of solatium for the trouble they were put to, owing to the disturbance in connection with the repair of their quarters. As many as two thousand victims have been offered on such occasions. These are to the Lubare as the earth god, rather than to the kings, for the Lubare is the genius of the country, the object of universal worship. So general is the worship of Lubare that no one leaves his hut in the morning without first throwing out an offering, as a wisp of grass, saying, "Here, Lubare, take that.*"

To them Katonga, or Creator, and Lubare mean the same, for every phenomenon is subject to Lubare. Crops, famine, food, rain, thunder, storms on the lake, day, night; everything in nature has its Lubare, and still Lubare is one and not many. It is the spirit of Makusa, who is all and is everywhere—a kind of universal deification of nature as animate. When sacrifices are offered to the Lubare,

* Mackay, Uganda.

as on the completion of repairs of the "house of the king's ancestors" or the death of a great man, the method of procuring victims is at once simple and sufficient. If victims were selected by choice from the sub-tribes and clans, difficulties of no ordinary kind would be met with in the case of a sudden demand for a parcel of five hundred or a thousand; if chosen by lot, expedients would be adopted to avoid the ordeal. All these inconveniences are avoided by the executioners, of which a small army is kept, posting themselves on the great highways approaching the capital and seizing travellers on their way to the palace. At such times the gods send the proper victims, and when a sufficient number has been caught the sacrifices are offered. These victims go as royal messengers, or more properly pages, to attend on the king's ancestors.

Turning to West Africa, where all religious institutions are modified by Fetish, the systems at first seem distinct, not only in details, but in original conception of what is due to divinity. A closer examination shows that the conceptions of Central and West Africa regarding the unseen world are substantially the same, and that the intention in sacrifice is the same. From killing the god they passed to substitution, thence to propitiatory sacrifice and thank-offerings. Each kingdom has its own particular customs and yearly festivals, presenting an infinite variety of detail, but in their general features the same; marking the steady advance of thought from the rude conceptions of

the days when the world was young, to a conception of divinity akin to Pantheism, and passing over into that system at various points.

In Gomba, when a sacrifice is offered, the victim is paraded about the streets after the manner of the Lord Mayor's show. He is decked out in finery, adorned with jewels, and wearing a crown and other insignia of royalty. From being a slave, he becomes something more than a king; he becomes a demi-god. He may do whatever he pleases and have all he fancies, should his tastes be like those of the damsel who asked the Baptist's head. Nothing is denied him, as long as it does not imply his escaping his doom at the appointed hour. As he parades the streets he receives and accepts the homage due to a god, and when slain, men prostrate themselves before the body. The body itself is taken up by the women, decorated and honoured as divine, and finally treated more as god than an offering to a god. The object seems to be, not so much an offering to the god as the killing of the god himself by substitutionary sacrifice. The King of Ashantee, when holding the great annual Fetish festival, calls it the festival of his fathers,* and is himself for the time regarded as the personification of the gods. His actions are not so much that of their delegate, which he claims at all times to be, but their actions, their words, and their very movements. If the king rises, the gods stand; if he reclines, they sleep; should he dance, they too caper about with the movements of his arms and legs. For the festival

* Ramseyer and Kuhne.

he arrays himself with scrupulous care and with extraordinary grandeur. Whatever of wealth and splendour his palace holds is wrapped round his person or attached to his garments. He is literally loaded with precious gems and the most costly ornaments. The drums that are to accompany him in procession are decorated with human skulls, while soldiers, priests and executioners deck themselves with what is acceptable to the gods and on which they love to gaze. During the festival, sheep, goats, and human beings are indiscriminately sacrificed. The king, during the pageant procession, is carried by the priests, and must on no account walk or even touch the ground. He receives homage on behalf of his fathers, and it is impossible to determine how much the intention is to sacrifice to them or to the king himself. They reside in him as the god in the Fetish, and in virtue of such possession he is divine.

But the great festival of the year is the yam festival. Before the day appointed for the king to eat fresh yams there are processions, reviews, dances, and general rejoicing, in which the king takes an active part. On the fifth day of the festival a human sacrifice is offered, or, to be correct, a "messenger" is despatched by the king to the spirit world. As this messenger is not designed for any of his ancestors, nor charged with any commission to them, the inference is that like the Khond sacrifices to Tari, the sacrifice is to the world of life and reproduction. After the sacrifice is made, the king eats fresh yams from a dish held by the chief cook, who keeps stirring the contents with a gold fork,

while the nobles stand before him uncovered.* At this and the palm-wine festival the honours of adoration are all done to the king, and the progress of the festival is consecrated by any stray person about the palace doors being seized and slain as an act of reverence to his majesty.† The treatment of such victims after execution is thus described by Kühne, who frequently witnessed such scenes.

“One took a finger, another an arm or foot, and whoever obtained the head danced in crazy ecstasy, painted its forehead red and white, kissed it on the mouth, laughing, or with mocking words of pity, and finally hung it round his neck or seized it with his teeth. Another took out the heart and washed it, carried it in one hand and a loaf of maize bread in the other, and walked about as if he were eating his breakfast.

“In the evening they brought the skulls of their most important enemies from the mausoleum at Bantama, and placed them, in the stillness of the night, in front of the Fetish. Among them was the skull of Sir Charles Macarthy, kept in a brass basin and covered with a white cloth. . . . On the next day all laws were abrogated, and every one drinking freely was permitted to do what was good in his own eyes. Even funerals were celebrated for those who had suffered capital punishment.”

Here we have, in the extreme west, the common Pondo custom of the abrogation of all law at the feast of firstfruits. From the last sentence, which Kühne does not explain, it is to be inferred that

* Ramseyer and Kuhne.

+ *Ibid.*

holding funerals for persons executed is, according to Ashantee notions, the farthest extreme of license to which men can go.

The festival of Bantama affords the king an opportunity of sending a messenger to his fathers. He delivers his charge slowly and deliberately, as if giving a diplomatic commission, and then the executioners cut off the victim's head, a knife having been previously run through his cheek and left there. Should the king remember anything he wished to say after the victim is slain, he orders another to be brought, and sends him with a hurried postscript lest his ancestors should be offended at the matter not being referred to in the original communication.

Bantama is the resting-place or mausoleum of the departed kings, and when Kühne was in Ashantee there were fourteen of the king's predecessors within its walls. It is a long building, divided into small cells, each of which contains the skeleton of a king;* the coffins containing these, as well as the skeletons themselves, being connected together with gold wires. Each cell contains such articles as the tenant loved best during his life. At the festival of Bantama the skeletons are placed on chairs in the audience hall to receive the royal visitor. This they do in the order of seniority. The king on entering offers each skeleton food, and as he does so, passing from one to another, the victim selected for each is decapitated in the approved manner by the executioners. During the succeeding night, and after the monarchs are returned to their cells and coffins,

* Kühne.

victims are slain at intervals by beat of drum or sound of horn. With the regularity of the minute-gun, the horn sounds a double blast, which means "death"; then three rapid blasts, which signify an order to cut off a victim's head; followed by one long blast to tell that the head has dropped. When the building needs repair, the king pays it a visit of inspection, after which the same ritual as we saw among the Wagogo is observed, the victims being counted by hundreds. Should the king dance with his wives, a messenger must be sent to his fathers to explain why he is at that particular time engaged in the light pastime.*

But it is not necessary to go so far afield as Ashantee to find illustration of messages being sent to the spirit world. My father, who over seventy years ago resided for some years in the Highlands of Perthshire, used to tell how at that time the people of Glenlyon and Glendochart charged their dying relatives with messages beyond the grave, and that people came long distances to ask, as an extreme favour, that their wishes should be made known "beyond" about certain particulars, one of the most common requests being to explain away shady transactions: "If you meet such an one, tell him how we are, and all that is going on. I gave every penny he left to his daughter. Mind you tell him the dun horse, which I kept to get a better price for, died." Such were the commissions entrusted to the dying by pious Calvinists as late as the second decade of the present century;

* Kuhne.

commissions from which even elders of the kirk were not exempt. If this may happen in the green tree of Puritanism, what may not be done in the dry tree of Paganism.

In Dahomey the customs observed are in their main characteristics identical with those of Ashantee and other West African kingdoms. One peculiarity of Dahomeyan religion is—and in this, so far as I know, it is singular—that the Fetish priest is supposed to be able to visit the regions of the dead in *propria persona*, as the substitute or representative of the living, and there act for them as if they were themselves present in the land of shades.* For example, a man falls ill and believes that he is being warned by some ancestral spirit that his presence is required beyond the bourne. He consults the priest, who on receipt of a suitable fee agrees to descend and make reconciliation on his behalf, so that he may continue to enjoy the upper air for a further period. When this is done the patient recovers; if not, he is killed by evil persons; the spirits never called at all, for the intervention of the priest is, within limits, effectual in all cases when the matter is in the hands of the gods. But this leads us to the verge of the doctrine of devils, which is an advanced form of savage religious thought; the worship of devils being a late development as compared with that of the beneficent gods. After spirits were multiplied, men, in seasons of drought and times of disaster and stress of circumstances, would endeavour to conciliate the demon that

* Winterbotham, Rowley.

brought calamity. Hence it is that demon worship is always propitiatory, while the worship of the gods is devotional and sympathetic, as in thank-offerings and tokens of goodwill and fellowship towards the unseen, whether regarded as personal or as the earth-god, nature, the mother of all. When a king of Dahomey dies he must enter the lower world in such regal state as became his dignity while he lived. The number of victims is almost incredible in order to make a grand procession. During his life he sends substitutes and messengers to spirit-land on the most slender pretext, or on no pretext at all.

Similar illustrations of the doctrine of substitution by sacrifice might be given from the observances of American Indians, South Sea Islanders, ancient Mexicans, and the Teutonic peoples of Europe. In tracing the system we have seen how the original practice of killing the god, as the spirit of vegetation and creative energy, passed into the form of substitution. Even in propitiatory sacrifice we see the same idea of the earth spirit reappearing whenever we can catch a glimpse of society under primitive conditions. Sacrifices to kings or Fetish are more to the earth-goddess than to the object to which they are immediately presented; that is, to the powers of nature as in vegetation and reproduction generally. This points back to the time when the divine element of natural force resided in kings, and was sacrificed to ensure a new resurrection with the opening year. Our inquiry has led us away from that original conception of primitive

man to a more elaborate system of thought, which, gradually expanding, included within its range factors and forces, spirits personal and impersonal, and conceptions of man himself, of which the earlier philosophy took no account. To understand the further development of human thought, and how spirits came to be classified as good and bad, we must consider the restrictions under which divine and sacred persons were placed, and the reasons for such restrictions so far as these may be discovered.

CHAPTER V

TABOOS

WE have already seen how the Mikado of Japan and the divine King of Laondo lived surrounded with safeguards and restrictions. The dangers to which souls are exposed have also been touched upon. We shall now consider how these were guarded, and the fresh dangers to which taboos gave rise as restrictions were multiplied.

To the savage, as we know him, the great danger of existence is witchcraft and the action of charms and spells; and to secure himself against these he adopts such precautions as the nature of the case suggests. But witchcraft itself is a system which must have had an origin, and developed, from one or more simple conceptions, to be an art practised by persons who claimed to have communication with the unseen world. With the art we generally associate the ideas of pure mischief, but it was capable of being turned to good account, and the Scotch witches who banned rats from farmers' barns were thought worthy of a night's quarters and a substantial honorarium for their service. It has been hastily inferred that they learned the art from ecclesiastics, who, with bell, book and candle could ban the devil himself; but it is far more likely that

priests learned the art of banning from an older cult coming down from the ages before the Flood.

With great persuasion I once induced an old woman to repeat to me a form of words for the banning of rats, which she had learned from "a woman that had the second sight and could do things." It is many years since I heard the doggerel, and can remember but one sentence of it, which, wedged in between imprecations and curses, was, that they should "shed the hair off their skulls" if they did not betake themselves to other quarters. This freed the farmer of the pest, but unfortunately the same power could be turned against any one who offended the witch. She in that case brought an army of rats down upon him, "to eat his corn and cut his sacks, and teach him to rue the day that he shut his door on Shoanad." This I heard from a Morven woman nearly thirty years ago, when quite a boy. If Andrew Lang, who in those days was a frequent visitor at Ard-tornish, had but known Gaelic, we should have had a store of legends, rhymes and charms preserved to us which are now finally lost. I have travelled in all parts of the Highlands of Scotland, but nowhere have I met with such variety and richness of legend and myth as along the shores of the Sound of Mull.

If men need to guard against witchcraft in Scotland, how much more necessary must it be to do so in savagedom. Lives of great importance to the community we may expect to find guarded with special care, in the same way as we guard royalty

in Europe, from attack by evil-disposed persons, sane and insane. There are not only the dangers which may lurk unseen near at hand, but also unknown dangers from a distance, and which are associated with the arrival of foreigners. Besides, there are districts specially charged with such malign influences, and any one visiting these must be purged and purified before he has any communication with others. Thus the missionary New and his party were, on their return from Killimanjaro, sprinkled by a "professionally prepared liquor" on arriving on the borders of the inhabited country. This was done by the priest, and before they had had any communication with the tribe. In the Yoruba country there is a custom of keeping strangers standing outside the gate of the town till sundown, lest evil spirits should enter with them if admitted during the day.* In South Africa the traveller must halt at a distance from the "great place," and is invited to the chief's presence only after the magician has performed the necessary incantations. Dinka and Bongo tribes on the Nile, take the like precautions against the advent of evil spirits when visited by strangers.† The South Sea Islanders subject those landing on their shores to a process of purgation to expel any evil which may hang about them. These are all general precautions taken for the benefit of the community. But do what he may, the savage cannot absolutely exclude evil from the tribe. Spirits do enter in the most unexpected manner, and witches will prowl

* Hinderer.

† Schweinfurth.

about and follow their unlawful calling while men sleep. So he takes special precautions to guard those whose lives are of great value; precautions which, in their own language, "cannot be taken for commoners."

The arts of witchcraft are so subtle that those marked for its victims can be affected through the food they eat, if the wizard can but get his fingers into it, or even see it; through articles taken from their persons, as cut nails, hair, arms, ornaments, saliva, and also through all those articles which sacred persons may not see or touch. Thus it happens that those whose lives are so guarded may not eat in public, nor must their food be seen except by trusted personal attendants. In Gondokoro a guest asked to a marriage sends a present of food, but it must be carefully covered with a napkin to protect it from the influence of wizards and witches,* through whom the whole bridal party might be affected. A Wanyoro will not return by the way he went; his very footprints may in the interval be bewitched. The King of Loango may not be seen eating or drinking, on pain of death. In Dahomey the same law exists, and Cameron in his walk across Africa paid men to let him see them eat or drink.

By judiciously extending these taboos life may be made a burden too grievous to be borne by the persons so guarded, and a day comes when, utterly wearied and goaded to madness, the king defies the gods and asserts his own independence. Such defiance is the herald of reform and a further advance

* Felkin.

of thought. Those having charge of sacred mysteries must adapt their teaching to the stern facts of life, and adopt such ritual as will be submitted to by those who have the civil power in their hands. And this illustrates a curious trait of religious life the world over, viz., that reforms are forced on sacred persons from without. From within it does not come. They cling to tradition and usage, and when a custom or dogma has outlasted its time, instead of boldly throwing it aside, an attempt is made to prop and buttress it up by fresh legislation and more extended ritual, till some one comes and shivers the structure, and it falls crumbling to dust and nothingness by its own weight.

But there is another side to this mystery of taboos, for if the sacred person must be guarded from harm from without, so must others be protected from receiving hurt from him. He is neither in heaven nor on earth, and it is men's interests that he should be suspended as evenly as may be between the two. His divinity will be injured by too much contact with earth and with men; but then this very divinity is a source of danger should men be brought, in the ordinary relations of life, into too close contact with him. He is a source of blessing under proper conditions, but let these be violated, and his divinity becomes a source of greatest danger; a fire which, if touched, will burst forth to scorch and burn. Should any one wear the Mikado's clothes without his leave, he would have swellings all over his body.* Nor is this

* Kaempfer.

confined to Japan. The following quotation from J. G. Frazer, quoting the authority of W. Brown and a Paheka Madri, illustrates the lengths to which taboos were carried in New Zealand.

“It happened that a New Zealand chief of high rank and great sanctity had left the remains of his dinner by the wayside. A slave, a stout hungry fellow, coming up, saw the unfinished dinner, and eat it up without asking any questions. Hardly had he finished when he was informed by a horror-stricken spectator that the food of which he had eaten was the chief's. . . . ‘No sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized by the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which never ceased till he died about sundown the same day. He was a strong man, in the prime of life, and should any one have said he was not killed by the taboo of the chief, he would have been listened to with feelings of contempt for his ignorance and inability to understand plain and direct evidence.’” This is not a solitary case. Mr. Frazer quotes several others, and in each case it is plain the persons died of sheer fright, so all-powerful can a fixed belief become among an ignorant and superstitious people.

With such results before his eyes, it is not to be wondered at if we find the savage placing sacred persons among the dangerous classes, and that he should extend taboos to persons and things supposed to be dangerous. Those who touch the dead are, in New Zealand and Africa, unclean till purified by magicians. Indeed, the rules of ceremonial purity

are so strict among some tribes that cases are on record where men have killed their wives for lying down on their mats at forbidden periods.* Hence it is that at such times women are secluded, as also after child-birth. In the former case they may be even rolled up in mats and suspended as in a hammock for a period of six or seven days, to be unstrapped and conveyed to a stream of water for necessary sanitary purposes.

“The rules of ceremonial purity observed by divine kings, chiefs, and priests; by homicides, women at child-birth, and so on, are in some respects alike. To us these classes of persons appear to differ totally in character and condition. Some of them we should call holy, others unclean and polluted. But the savage makes no such moral distinction between them. . . . To him they are dangerous and in danger, and the danger in which they stand and to which they expose others is what we should call spiritual or supernatural—that is, imaginary.”† One of the substances most commonly tabooed by savages is iron. No iron may touch a sacred person’s body. He may die when a simple incision might save his life, but the incision must not be made. A Hottentot priest never uses a knife in performing the operation of circumcision; he uses a sharp bit of quartz instead. Gold Coast natives remove all iron from their persons when consulting Fetish.‡ Scottish Highlanders never use iron nails or hammers in making the fire-wheel

* *Journal Anthropol.* ix.

† J. G. Frazer.

‡ C. J. Gordon Cumming.

apparatus for the celebration of certain Yule festivals; they use wooden pegs and stone hammers instead. The Jews used no iron tools in building their Temple in Jerusalem, nor in making an altar.

The objection to iron arose in all probability when the metal was new and scarce, and so regarded with superstitious awe and reverence. But soon, daring spirits like Lamech arose, who, defying custom and taboo, and believing only in the strength of his own arm and the trusty weapons his son had forged for him, turned the dreaded metal to good account. A substance charged with such power that spirits could not endure it in their presence, and before which kings might fall down dead, put into men's hands a terrible weapon which could be used with disastrous effects even against the gods themselves. But if iron could be used against the gods, they in turn could use it against evil-doers, and the priesthood would not be slow in availing themselves of so potent a weapon. Apart from its obvious utility as an arm, when properly forged and shaped, it would be regarded as having magic and miraculous power, when properly used, for the expulsion of evil. And so we find iron, and the metals generally, occupying a prominent place in the superstitions of all countries. When a Scottish fisherman hears "the unclean animal"—a pig—mentioned, he feels for the nails in his boots and mutters "cauld iron." So, too, if one of the crew utters certain oaths or curses when at sea. He bans the devil of ill-luck and disaster by nailing a horse-shoe, preferably that of a stallion, to the stern of

his boat. A Golspie fisherman a few years ago had a small boat with which he had an extraordinary run of luck in the prosecution of his calling. Inside the stem was nailed an entire horse's shoe, given to him by "a wise person" As he prospered his ambition grew till he purchased a larger boat, selling the small one and its belongings to a neighbour. From the first day he went to sea with his new boat luck forsook him, nor would fickle fortune be wooed. He bethought him of his horse-shoe, and went to his neighbour to demand restitution. This was denied, the new owner contending successfully that he had purchased the "boat and its gear."* To this day that man believes that to parting with an old shoe was due the entire failure of his season's fishing. Whether returning luck—for he still lives and prospers—had an educative effect upon his mind, I do not know.

Sutherlandshire crofters and cottars ban, or expel, the spirit of death from a house after one dies, by placing bits of iron in the meal chest, the butter jar, whisky bottle, and other articles of food, without which precaution they would speedily "go to rottenness and corruption." Whisky not treated so has been known to turn white as milk and curdle. Among savages iron is held in the same veneration. The Baralongs, who are famous smiths, regard the blacksmith's trade as a sacred art. Furnaces are placed at a distance from the houses, and none dare approach when the metal begins to flow, except those versed in the mysteries of the craft.

* Rev. A. Mackay, MS. notes.

But in Africa it is on articles from the person, or which have belonged to one regarded as sacred, that the greatest care is bestowed. This is common to the Zulu and the Dinka, to the Galla and Dahomeyan. We meet with it in every possible relation of life. For example, a young Zulu soldier, who was travelling to join his regiment with a companion, arrived at a village where they were to spend the night. They were directed to the "travellers' hut," where they found a mat such as natives sleep upon. The soldier took the mat and unrolled it, when, to his dismay, he found it contained head ornaments and other articles of female dress, such as is only used by the king's household. Seeing this, he rolled the mat up again and put it aside. It belonged to a girl of the king's harem, on her way to the capital, who had stayed there a few nights before. She had forgotten her mat and ornaments. On arriving at headquarters he was at once detailed for cattle-guard, but on his return in the evening he was met by a young man of his regiment, who told him his companion had been put to death, and that he was to be killed for having touched articles belonging to sacred persons.* He fled, but was overtaken and put to death. If touching ornaments is a capital offence, stepping over the head of a recumbent African is a yet more serious crime, if the sleeper be a person sacred in virtue of position or office. The head is peculiarly sacred, and to step over it is the most grievous offence that a man can commit, if it be not excelled in enormity by pulling his hair.

* Hon. C. Brownlee.

When this sanctity of the head and the consequent difficulty of disposing of shorn locks is borne in mind, it will be seen that the barber's vocation is, if an honourable one, a dangerous office. Suppose an artist is called to perform a necessary office for his chief, whose ample locks have become too secure a retreat for the colonies that take shelter under them, he must be first purified with sprinkling, and have the tools of his craft cleansed by the magicians. He then proceeds to the royal residence, and, in presence of the king's guards and officers of State, removes the mass close to the skull. If after the operation the king takes a chill the poor barber is accused of something more than neglect of duty :* he bewitched the king, or he may have given a hair to his friend the wizard to enable the latter to do the evil deed. In either case the barber must stand his trial, in the first case as a principal, in the second as an accessory, and failing his divulging the wizard's name, must take the consequences of his guilt if the magicians decide the case as one of bewitching.

But should he honestly perform his office and no untoward events follow, there remains the difficulty of disposing of the shorn locks. Burn them, says common sense; but to the savage common sense often is what the law was to the elder Weller, "a hass." To burn shorn locks would be to invite all the demons of a locality to secure and treasure up the very essence they are in search of in the ascending smoke. To them the smell of burning hair or

* J. Sutton, MS. notes.

nail clippings is what the carcase is to the vulture. Nor is it safe to keep them by one, for who can guard against rats and white ants, not to speak of accidents of fire, war, and theft. The only prudent course is to bury them.* But how and where? And here the sacred and lawful art of the magician comes to the aid of the perplexed. Sacred spots are set apart for such purposes—a kind of consecrated ground where the chief can bury his shorn locks and cut nails, as well as dispose of other necessary superfluities in the most approved fashion prescribed in Deuteronomy xxiii. 13; there as a wise sanitary precaution; in Africa as a sacred function; at the lowest as a precaution against the works of the devil.

And here I may say that those who had charge of my own youth were most remiss in a necessary and most important particular, evidence of which I have to go before any jury of Celts over seventy years of age with. One of my earliest recollections is having my hair cut by an itinerant tailor, who combined the art of clothing one's limbs with that of unclothing the head. I remember him still: a gaunt, lean-looking man, with hollow eyes and a sepulchral voice. When the operation was finished he directed that the severed locks should be gathered up and burned, because, should the birds—it was spring-time, and the danger was real—get the smallest particle, even a single hair, to build their nests, I should be grey at twenty-one. This he insisted upon with the strongest asseveration

* Livingstone.

of its truth ; while I, evil imp as I must have been, gathered up a handful of hair, which I threw over the window for the robins. The deed was done. The artist stood aghast, and now, though a good decade from the time when grey hairs should appear, I carry the evidence of my own folly to kirk and market.

The gods of the Dakota Indians are mortal, and propagate their kind. Their Onkteri resemble a bull, and can extend their tails and horns to the sky, the seat of their power.* The earth is believed to be animated by the spirit of the female Onkteri, while the water and the earth beneath the water is the abode of the male god. The Onkteri have power to issue from their bodies an essence, signifying a god's arrow, which can work wholesale destruction.† The priests possess or claim all the power ascribed to the gods, and are believed to pass through a series of inspirations by which they receive the god-spirit. They lay hold on all that is mysterious, predict events, and declare that they bring about events of which they made no prediction. They have duplicate souls, one of which remains with the body, while the other wanders at will. Clearly it is necessary that such persons should be surrounded by such restrictions as will ensure the peace and safety of the community. And so we find in Africa, America, Asia, and the South Seas the same system of taboo ; the same objections to certain objects and animals, and the same sanctity of others, running into clan badges and totems, which are at once sacred and to be cared

* Schoolcraft.

† Bettany.

for, while they afford protection to those whose symbols they are.

But let men guard as they may; let them surround divinities with restrictions, and take every precaution against evil persons getting possession of objects dangerous to their lives, accidents will happen and evils will accumulate, with a corresponding increase among those spirits who cause them. So, as we have a process of evolution going on among the gods, we have also a development of the doctrine of devils. This I do not propose to trace fully, but it is necessary to refer to the subject in general terms before we consider the methods adopted for their expulsion.

How man arrived at the idea of good and evil spirits as personal beings is impossible to determine with accuracy. It is probable after he reached the conception of a soul separate from the body, personal and immortal, or at least capable of existence in a distinct spirit-world, he began to attribute to such souls the same character as was borne by the man while he lived. The soul of a seditious man would foment sedition on earth among those whom he could influence after his death. So, too, the soul of a murderer, a thief, or a contentious man would incite to similar crimes. These would be regarded as evil spirits, to be dealt with as men of like disposition are dealt with. To secure society against their influence, only two ways were open to primitive man: one, to defy them, as is often done in the case of men of evil disposition, and so make them practically outcasts; another to conciliate

them, and so by acts of bribery and flattery secure their good offices, or at least their neutrality. Both these methods are found wherever savage man dwells. Devils are cursed, defied, expelled the country, and treated as we do our dangerous classes. At other times they are flattered, cozened, and feasted with sacrifice, in order that the largeness of the offering may be a sufficient inducement for them to refrain from evil. We shall in the present inquiry meet frequently with devil-worship, but here it may be well to inquire how primitive man sought to rid himself of spirits which he both feared and hated.

CHAPTER VI

EXPULSION OF DEMONS

WHEN man found his steps dogged by demons, he sought for means by which he could rid himself of those imps of evil which rendered his life an insupportable burden. His first impulse was to surround himself with safeguards, as a warrior in mail armour. But this necessitated an increase of restrictions each time evil spirits or daring men discovered means of breaking through his taboos. With the discovery of gunpowder mail armour became useless. Bullets could only be resisted by an increase in the weight and thickness of the protecting coat of mail, and warriors found it necessary to change their methods. So the savage whose taboos are rendered useless by a Lamech, finds it necessary to re-examine the whole surrounding. Must he add to the number of restrictions, to the weight of the already overburdened taboos, till they become like swaddling clothes in which he cannot move or breathe? Are his movements to be restricted as dangers multiply? Does the advent of each fresh enemy necessitate a re-adjustment of his whole philosophy?

The savage, feeling the awkwardness of his position by ever-increasing restrictions, arrived at the conception that, by a supreme effort made periodically;