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**EARLY BELIEFS AND  
THEIR SOCIAL INFLUENCE**



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# EARLY BELIEFS AND THEIR SOCIAL INFLUENCE

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## PREFACE

THE following discourse was for the most part delivered in the form of lectures at the London School of Economics and Political Science during the spring of 1931. It is based on my books *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, *The History of Human Marriage, Ritual and Beliefs in Morocco*, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, and *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, which contain references to the statements quoted from other writers and the data derived from my own field work in Morocco. The latter have in a considerable measure had a suggestive influence upon my views, especially on topics relating to curses and blessings, magic, and the notions of holiness and ritual uncleanness.

E. W.

*Villa Tusculum, outside Tangier,  
20th March, 1932.*



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# I

## RELIGION AND MAGIC

IN these lectures I shall deal with the influence that early religious and magical beliefs and practices have exerted upon social relationships and institutions. Of course, I do not propose to discuss this extensive subject in its entirety, but must restrict myself merely to certain aspects of it. First of all, however, I have to make clear what I mean by religion and magic, because these terms have been used in different senses by different writers, and there has been much controversy as to the proper use of them. In my definitions I shall try so far as possible to follow the common usage; this is always the safest thing to do when science incorporates household words into its terminology. But as the popular use of terms is often vague, it may be necessary for scientific purposes to give them a more definite meaning.

In expounding my own views on the subject I find it most convenient to begin with an examination of the views of others. As starting-point I shall choose Sir James Frazer's chapter on "Magic and Religion" in *The Magic Art*, although his ideas are so well known that I almost owe an apology for repeating them. By religion Frazer understands "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human

life." Thus defined it "consists of two elements, a theoretical and a practical, namely, a belief in powers higher than man, and an attempt to propitiate or please them." It is not necessary, however, that religious practice should always take the form of a ritual: its aim is to please the deity, and if the deity is one who delights in charity and mercy and purity more than in oblations of blood, the chanting of hymns, and the fumes of incense, his worshippers will best please him by being pure and merciful and charitable towards men. Magic, on the other hand, deals with "impersonal forces," and aims at control or constraint, not conciliation. It is true that it often seeks to affect spirits, who are personal agents of the kind assumed by religion, as well as men or inanimate objects; but whenever it does so in its proper form, it constrains or coerces instead of conciliating or propitiating them, as religion would do. For magic assumes that all personal beings, whether human or divine, are in the last resort "subject to those impersonal forces which control all things," to "the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically."

I think that Frazer has well brought out the difference between religion and magic. The religious practice is essentially an appeal to, or worship of, spiritual beings, the magical practice is essentially coercion. The religious attitude is in its nature respectful and humble, the magical attitude is domineering and self-assertive. At the root of the difference between religion and magic there is thus a difference in the mental state of the persons who practise them. So far as religion is concerned, this agrees well with the notion so forcibly expressed by Schleiermacher, that the religious feeling is in its essence a feeling of dependence; whereas the

word magician invariably suggests the idea of a person who claims to possess power and to know how to wield it in the magic art. In order to achieve his aim he may make use of spirits, but then he coerces them to submit to his will; if he tried to gain their assistance by propitiating them, his attitude would be religious, not magical. The magical force acts mechanically, and it may be inherent not only in personal beings, but also in animals and plants and all sorts of inanimate things. This view of magic finds support in mediæval conceptions of it. It is true that the theologians mostly attributed the success of magic to demons, who were enticed by men to work marvels; but the demons were able to do so largely through their superior knowledge of the forces of nature. And besides the marvels worked by spirits, there were others which were produced without their aid, simply by the wonderful occult virtues inherent in certain objects of nature. To marvels wrought in this manner William of Auvergne applied the term "natural magic." Albertus Magnus likewise associated magic with natural forces and the stars, as well as with demons; and Thomas Aquinas, though strongly upholding the opinion that magic is due to demons, gives us a glimpse of a different conception of it, according to which magicians were able by personal qualifications, by subtle use of occult natural properties, by rites and ceremonies, and by the art of astrology, either to work wonders directly and immediately or to coerce demons to work wonders for them.

While I thus substantially agree with Frazer in his distinction between religion and magic, I think he has, in his theoretical discussion of the relation between them, overlooked what they have in common. He

calls magic "the bastard sister of science." Both magic and science, he says, assume that "the succession of events is perfectly regular and certain, being determined by immutable laws, the operation of which can be foreseen and calculated precisely"; but unlike science, magic misunderstands the nature of the particular laws which govern that sequence. It is nothing but a mistaken application of the very simplest and most elementary processes of the mind, namely, the association of ideas by virtue of resemblance and of contiguity. That such associations play an exceedingly important part in magic has been abundantly proved, but all magic can certainly not be said to be a mistaken application of them or be reduced to what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic." His two branches of it, homœopathic magic and contagious magic, cannot even be regarded as co-ordinate subdivisions of magic. The former consists in an act which is supposed to produce an effect resembling its cause: to pour out water, for instance, will in certain circumstances produce rain. What Frazer calls contagious magic, again, proceeds on the notion that things which have once been conjoined must remain so ever afterwards: there is still a mystic connection between a person's nail-parings or extracted teeth, which once formed parts of his body. But the notion that there is such a connection cannot be called magic at all, if by magic is understood action and not a mere idea: something must be done with the nail-parings or the extracted teeth in order thereby to influence in a magical manner the persons to whom they belonged.

On the other hand, there is one characteristic common to all magical practices and the magical forces applied in

them, which, curiously enough, has found no place in Frazer's general theory, although he, of course, is cognisant of it. Nothing is more prominent in popular notions concerning magic, as well as in the descriptions of it given by mediæval writers, than its marvellousness, mysteriousness, occultness, uncanniness. Professor Malinowski observes, in his book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, that the effects of magic, though constantly witnessed, and though considered as a fundamental fact, "are regarded as something distinctly different from the effects of other human activities. . . . The effects of magic are something superadded to all the other effects produced by human effort and by natural qualities. . . . Magic represents, so to speak, a different sort of reality—'supernatural' or 'supernormal.'" There is always some mystery in it. Frazer himself writes, in a footnote, that he regards a supposed mysterious force "as supplying, so to say, the physical basis both of magic and of taboo, while the logical basis of them both is furnished by a misapplication of the laws of the association of ideas." It is the character of mystery that makes magic akin to religion.

Men distinguish between phenomena that they are familiar with and consequently ascribe to "natural" causes, and other phenomena that seem to them unfamiliar and mysterious and are therefore looked upon as "supernatural" or are supposed to spring from "supernatural" causes. We meet with this distinction among savages as well as civilised races. It may be that in the mind of a savage the natural and the supernatural often overlap, that no definite line can be drawn between the phenomena which he refers to one class and those which he refers to the other; but he

certainly sees a difference between events of everyday occurrence or ordinary objects of nature and other events or objects which fill him with a feeling of wonder or mysterious awe. This is testified by language. Words like the Algonkin *manitou*, the Dakota *wakan* or *wakanda*, the Melanesian *mana*, the Fijian *kalou*, the Maori *atua*, the Malagasy *ndriamanitra*, the Masai *ngāi*, are used to denote a mysterious force or something wonderful or divine. And the testimony of language is corroborated by facts relating to the nature of those objects which are most commonly worshipped. A great cataract, a difficult and dangerous ford in a river, a spring bubbling up from the ground, a volcano, a high mountain, an isolated rock, a curious or unusually large tree, intoxicants and stimulants, animals of an unusual size or appearance, persons suffering from some abnormality, such as albinism or madness—all are looked upon by savages with superstitious regard or are propitiated with offerings.

That the objects of religious worship, as well as the forces applied in magic, are fundamentally more or less mysterious, awe-inspiring, supernatural, seems to me to be a well-established fact, although it has been disputed. Durkheim asserts that the idea of the mysterious has a place in a small number of advanced religions only, and cannot therefore be regarded as a characteristic of the religious phenomena without excluding from the definition most of the facts which should be defined. But I think that the feeling of mystery and the germ of a distinction between the natural and the supernatural are found even in the lower animal world. The horse fears the whip, but it does not make him shy; on the other hand, he may shy

when he sees an umbrella opened before him or a paper moving on the ground. The whip is well known to the horse, whereas the moving paper or the umbrella is strange, uncanny, let us say "supernatural." Dogs and cats are alarmed by an unusual noise or appearance, and remain uneasy till they have by examination satisfied themselves of the nature of its cause. Even a lion is scared by an unexpected sound or the sight of an unfamiliar object ; and we are told of a tiger who stood trembling and roaring in a paroxysm of fear when a mouse tied by a string to a stick had been inserted into its cage.

In full agreement with his general theory of magic, Frazer speaks of the "radical conflict of principle between magic and religion." He admits that there are instances of a "fusion or confusion of magic with religion," but this is, in his opinion, due rather to accident than to any organic affinity between them. He maintains that mankind first passed through an initial stage in which magic existed, but no religion (which I look upon as a doubtful proposition), and that religion arose in a later stage, when it was found that magic was ineffective, and people in consequence gave up their coercive attitude towards spiritual beings and began to propitiate them humbly by prayer and sacrifice, in order to get what they wanted. But he also speaks of an intermediate stage, in which religion, having arisen, co-operated and was to some extent confused with magic, since the functions of priest and sorcerer were often combined. To serve his purpose man wooed the goodwill of gods and spirits by prayer and sacrifice, while at the same time he had recourse to ceremonies and forms of words which he hoped would of themselves

bring about the desired result without the help of god or devil ; he uttered prayers and incantations almost in the same breath, knowing or recking little of the theoretical inconsistency of his behaviour, so long as, by hook or crook, he contrived to get what he desired.

As a matter of fact, however, the relationship between magic and religion is much more intimate. Owing to the element of mystery which is found in both, magical forces may be personified as spirits or gods or be transformed into divine attributes or lead to divine injunctions ; of this I shall give many instances in my course of lectures. It will, indeed, be one of my chief objects to show how profoundly magical beliefs and practices have influenced religion and the notions of gods. You will find how readily curses and blessings, supposed to be effective on account of the impersonal magic force that is ascribed to the words themselves, develop into appeals or prayers to gods ; but on the other hand prayers may also become magical spells which are believed to constrain the gods to whom they are addressed. This appears from the words of many formulas that are used as magical incantations. Assyrian incantations are often dressed in the robe of supplication, and end with the formula, " Do so and so, and I shall gladden thine heart and worship thee in humility." Vedic texts which were not originally meant as charms became so afterwards. Incantations are comparatively rare in the Rig-Veda, and seem even to be looked upon as objectionable, but towards the end of the Vedic period the reign of Brahman, the magical power of prayer, elevated to the supreme god in the Indian pantheon, began to dawn. The prayer is imbued with supernatural energy owing to the holiness of the being

to whom it is addressed, and its constraining force may then be directed even against the god himself. So also a sacrifice, which is originally a gift to a supernatural being, may become endowed with magic force in consequence of its contact or communion with the being to whom it is offered, and may be used as a means of compelling him to yield to the wishes of the sacrificer. We meet with this idea in Zoroastrianism, in many of the Vedic hymns, and especially in Brahmanism. In Morocco every shrine, or grave of a saint, of any importance is frequently visited by persons who desire to invoke him with a view to being cured of some illness, or being blessed with children, or getting a suitable husband or wife, or deriving some other benefit from him. To secure his assistance the visitor casts 'ār upon the saint; and the 'ār implies the transference of a conditional curse, that is, if the person on whom it is put does not grant the request he is cursed. The 'ār may be cast on the saint in various ways, and a particularly efficacious method of doing it is by offering a sacrifice to him. This sacrifice is accompanied by a promise to reward the saint with another one if he does what he is asked to do; but the sacrifice offered in fulfilment of such a promise is theoretically quite distinct from that offered as 'ār, being a genuine gift. It is not always, however, easy to decide whether an animal sacrifice is meant as 'ār or as a gift, in other words, whether it is a magical means of compulsion or a religious act of worship; in fact, it may be both at once. So also it may be difficult or impossible in certain cases to distinguish between misfortunes attributed to *jnūn* (*jinn*)—spirits who seem to have been invented to explain strange and mysterious phenomena suggesting

a volitional cause—and those attributed to an impersonal force of evil ; and the reason for this is that the feeling of uncanniness is at the bottom of the belief in both kinds of supernatural influences.

There may perhaps be some reason to believe that the affinity between magic and religion has found expression in the word religion itself. It has been conjectured that the Latin *religio* is related to *religare*, which means “ to tie.” The relationship between these words has been supposed to imply that in religion man was tied by his god. But the connection between them—if there is any connection—seems to allow of another and more natural interpretation, namely, that it was not the man who was tied by the god, but the god who was tied by the man. This interpretation was suggested to me by certain ideas and practices which I found in Morocco. The Moors are in the habit of tying rags to objects belonging to a saintly place, or of knotting the leaves of a palmetto growing there, as ‘*ār* upon the saint ; and, as already said, the ‘*ār* implies the transference of a conditional curse. The rite is accompanied with a petition, and in performing it the petitioner may declare that he is now tying the saint and is not going to release him, or to open the knot, until the saint has helped him. This is what we should call magic, but the Romans might in ancient days have called it *religio*. They were much more addicted to magic than to true religion ; they wanted to compel the gods rather than to be compelled by them. Their *religio* was perhaps akin to the Greek *κατάδεσμος*, which meant not only an ordinary tie, but also a magic tie or knot or a bewitching thereby. Plato speaks of persons who by incantations and magic ties persuaded the gods, as they said, to execute their

will. That *religio*, however, from having originally a magical significance, came to be used in the sense which we attribute to the term "religion," is not difficult to explain. Men make use of magic not only in relation to their fellow-men, but also in relation to their gods. Magical and religious elements are often inseparably intermingled in the cult; and, as we have seen, the magical means of constraining a god may be externally very similar to the chief forms of religious worship, prayer and sacrifice.

That religion and magic have something in common has also been recognised by Durkheim, in spite of his express denial of an intrinsic connection between the feeling of mystery, or the belief in the supernatural, and the religious phenomena. The objects of both are said by him to belong to a special world of phenomena called *le sacré*, and there must after all be a very close affinity between the *sacré* and that which other writers have styled "the supernatural," considering that these terms are applied to the very same classes of phenomena. With regard to that which distinguishes magic from religion, the difference between Durkheim's and my own views seems to be more essential: like Robertson Smith, as also Hubert and Mauss in their outline of a general theory of magic, Durkheim maintains that religion is social in its aims and magic antisocial, or at any rate non-social. A very similar opinion has been expressed by Dr. Marett. "Magic," he says, "I take to include all bad ways, and religion all good ways, of dealing with the supernormal—bad and good, of course, not as we happen to judge them, but as the society concerned judges them. Sometimes . . . the people themselves hardly know where to draw the line between

the two ; and, in that case, the anthropologist cannot well do it for them. But every primitive society thinks witchcraft bad. Witchcraft consists in leaguering oneself with supernormal powers of evil in order to effect selfish and antisocial ends. Witchcraft, then, is genuine magic—black magic, of the devil's colour. On the other hand, every primitive society also distinguishes certain salutary ways of dealing with supernormal powers. All these ways taken together constitute religion."

The question at issue, however, is not how to define witchcraft or black magic, which, of course, always means something bad. Besides black magic there is also white magic, which implies that there is both good and bad magic. This was recognised even by mediæval theologians. William of Auvergne, whose works present a very detailed picture of the magic and superstition of his time—the earlier half of the thirteenth century—sees no harm whatever in "natural magic," unless it is employed for evil ends ; he observes that the workers of it are called *magi*, because they do great things (*magna agentes*), whereas others, who work magic by the aid of demons, are to be regarded as evil-doers. Albertus Magnus defends the Magi of the gospel story and tries to exculpate them from the practice of those particular evil, superstitious, and diabolical occult arts which Isidore and others had included in their definitions of magic. "They were not devoted to any of these arts," he says, "but only to magic as it has been described ; and this is praiseworthy." He was himself a believer in occult forces and marvels in nature, showed a leaning to the occult sciences, and was called, even by his panegyrists, *magnus in magia* and *in magicis expertus*. In the *Liber*

*aggregationis*, a very popular treatise on magic which has been ascribed to Albertus but is of dubious authenticity, it is said that magical science (*scientia magicalis*) is not evil, since by knowledge of it evil can be avoided and good attained.

Nor does the definition according to which magic includes all bad ways and religion all good ways of dealing with the supernatural, seem to me at all suitable for the purpose of scientific classification. It implies, for example, that a prayer to a god for the destruction of an enemy must be classified as religion if it is offered in a cause which is considered just by the community, but as magic if it is disapproved of. When a man makes a girl drink a love-potion in order to gain her favour, it is religion if their union is desirable from the society's point of view, but if he gives the same drink to another man's wife it is magic. The best part of what has been hitherto called imitative or homœopathic magic no longer remains magic at all; if water is poured out for the purpose of producing rain it is homœopathic magic only in case rain is not wanted by the community, but if it is done during a drought it is religion. Thus the very same practices are qualified as religious or magical according as they have social or antisocial ends. The acceptance of such a view would overthrow well-established and useful terms and deprive us of the comprehensive, convenient, and in every respect appropriate attribute "magical" for all sorts of supposed impersonal occult or supernatural forces.

My own views as regards the proper use of the terms magic and religion may be thus summed up. Religion is a belief in and a regardful attitude towards a super-

natural being, on whom man feels himself dependent, and to whose will he makes an appeal in his worship ; I say " regardful," since, for example, we hardly call it religion when a person flogs his fetish to make it submissive. In magic, on the other hand, man utilises supernatural energy without making any such appeal at all. In religion he attempts to influence supernatural agents by natural means, such as prayers, offerings, abstinences, and so forth ; in magic he attempts to influence either natural or supernatural objects or persons by supernatural means, which act mechanically. But I hasten to add, and desire to emphasise, that this definition of religion is not the complete definition.

It has only reference to religion in the abstract, not to the various religions. In the popular sense of the word, which certainly must be respected, *a* religion may include many practices which are what I have called magical. In the ancient religions of the East magic and religion are indissolubly mixed up together. According to Mohammedan orthodoxy the Arabic words of the Koran work miracles. Christian baptism effects the forgiveness of sins, because by the water, as a medium of the Holy Ghost, " the stains of sins are washed away " ; and the Eucharist has been described as the " medicine of immortality," because it is a bodily self-communication of Christ and the body of Christ is eternal. It would be absurd to say that such beliefs and practices have not belonged to the Christian religion because they are magical. Although the magical and the strictly religious attitudes differ from each other, they are not irreconcilable, and may therefore very well form parts of one and the same religion ; there is no such thing as *a* magic being opposed to *a*

religion. By a religion is generally understood a system of beliefs and rules of behaviour which have reference to, or are considered to be prescribed by, one or several supernatural beings whom the believers call their god or gods—that is, supernatural beings who are the objects of a regular cult and between whom and their worshippers there are established and permanent relationships. If it is admitted that the word “religion” may be thus legitimately used in two different senses, an abstract and a concrete, I think there is little ground left for further controversy on the subject. After all, sociologists may more profitably occupy their time than by continuous quarrelling about the meaning of terms.

## II

### POLITICAL AND MORAL INFLUENCE OF EARLY RELIGION

ACCORDING to Durkheim and his school, religion is, and has always been, a social phenomenon : there is nothing that may be called private religion. It has, for example, been said by a writer of this school that Jesus had no religion until he had a small community of disciples round him. This is to restrict the use of the word " religion " to its concrete sense of a religious institution, an established system of faith and worship ; but such a restriction is certainly opposed to the common usage of the word and leads to obvious absurdities. On the other hand, the communal character which religion has a tendency to assume is by no means a new discovery of sociologists : it is recognised whenever we speak of a people's religion, or the religion of a certain community.

Religious communities are found among primitive peoples wherever there are groups of men who have common religious beliefs and a common cult. In the first place, however, their social units are established by people's habit of living together as a local group or by marriage or the notion of a common descent. These different modes of organisation often coincide. The family is a social unit made up of persons who are either married or related by blood, and at the same time in

normal cases live together. The tribe is a social unit, though often a very incoherent one, consisting of persons who inhabit the same district and also, at least in many cases, regard themselves as descendants of some common ancestor. The clan, which is essentially a body of kindred having a common name, may likewise on the whole coincide with the population of a certain territory, with the members of one or more hordes or villages. This is the case where the husband takes his wife to his own community and descent is reckoned through the father, or where he goes to live in his wife's community and descent is reckoned through the mother. But frequently the matrilineal system of descent is combined with the custom of the husband taking his wife to his own home, and this, in connection with the rule of clan-exogamy, occasions a great discrepancy between the horde and the clan. The local group is then by no means a group of clansmen: the children live in their father's community, but belong to their mother's clan, while the next generation of children within the community must belong to another clan.

Among savages a religious community generally coincides with a community of some other kind; and when this is the case it is of course impossible to distinguish exactly the social influence of the common religion from that exercised by marriage, local proximity, or a common descent. It seems, however, that the importance of the religious bond and especially, in tribes that have totemism,<sup>1</sup> the totem bond, has been

<sup>1</sup> Totemism is an intimate mystic relation which is supposed to exist between a group of people on the one side and a species of natural, or sometimes artificial, objects on the other side, which objects are called the totems of the human group. Sir James Frazer, our chief authority on totemism, observes that it is a mistake

exaggerated by many anthropologists. Thus it has been said that the totem bond is stronger than the bond of blood or family in the modern sense. "Hence in totem tribes every local group, being necessarily composed (owing to exogamy) of members of at least two totem clans, is liable to be dissolved at any moment into its totem elements by the outbreak of a blood feud, in which husband and wife must always (if the feud is between their clans) be arrayed on opposite sides, and in which the children will be arrayed against either their father or their mother, according as descent is traced through the mother, or through the father." But in the cases which are quoted in support of this statement the totemic group is identical with the clan; hence it is impossible to decide whether the strength of the tie which unites its members is due to the totem relationship or to the common descent. And the same may be said in nearly every case where we find totemism, all the members of a clan having the same totem.

But among the Arunta and some other Central Australian tribes described by Spencer and Gillen we have a unique opportunity to study the social influence of totemism apart from that of clanship; for among them the division into totems is, as an exception to an almost universal rule, independent of the clan system. The whole district of a tribe may be mapped out into a large number of areas of various sizes, each of which centres in one or more spots where, in the dim past, certain mythical ancestors are said to have originated or

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to speak of a totem as a god and to say that it is an object of worship, and that totemism therefore cannot be called a religion. At the same time it is a relation of a more or less mystic character and is connected with stringent taboos.

camped during their wanderings, and where their spirits are still supposed to remain, associated with sacred stones, which the ancestors used to carry with them. From these spirits have sprung, and still continue to spring, actual men and women, the members of the various totems being their reincarnations. At the spots where they remained, the ancestral spirits enter the bodies of women, and in consequence a child must belong to the totem of the spot at which the mother believes that it was conceived. A result of this is that no one totem is confined to the members of a particular clan or sub-clan, and that though most members of a given horde or local group belong to the same totemic group, there is no absolute coincidence between these two kinds of organisation. How, then, does the fact that two persons belong to the same totem influence their social relations? This is, from a theoretical point of view, an important question, to which Spencer and Gillen give the following answer :—

“ In these tribes there is no such thing as the members of one totem being bound together in such a way that they must combine to fight on behalf of a member of the totem to which they belong. . . . The men to assist a particular man in a quarrel are those of his locality, and not of necessity those of the same totem as himself, indeed the latter consideration does not enter into account and in this as in other matters we see the strong development of what we have called the ‘ local influence.’ . . . It is only indeed during the performance of certain ceremonies that the existence of a mutual relationship, consequent upon the possession of a common totemic name, stands out at all prominently. In fact, it is perfectly easy to spend a considerable time

amongst the Arunta tribe without even being aware that each individual has a totemic name."

When we pass from the savage and barbarous races of men to peoples of a higher culture, as they first appear to us in the light of history, we meet among them social units similar in kind to those prevalent at lower stages of civilisation: the family, clan, village, tribe. But progress in civilisation is up to a certain point connected with social expansion. Among savages the largest permanent social unit is generally the tribe, and even the tribal bond is often very loose, if not entirely wanting. Civilisation only thrives in states. We may assume that all those ancient empires which arose in the Old World—like Egypt, China, Babylon and Assur—and in the New World, as ancient Mexico and Peru, were formed by an association, either voluntary or forcible, of different tribes; this was the case with those states with whose origin and early growth we are somewhat better acquainted—the Hebrew nation, the Vedic people, the Greek and Italian states. In Greece and Italy the states grew out of forts which had been built on elevated places to serve as common strongholds or places of refuge in case of war. Several tribes united so as to be better able to resist dangerous enemies, and in time one of the fortified towns gained supremacy over all others in the neighbourhood, as Athens did in Attica and Alba Longa in Latium. In historical times attempts were made to carry this process further by joining several of the small states under the rule of one. In this Sparta and Athens failed, whereas the efforts of Rome met with unequalled success.

Like its smaller units, the archaic state was not only a political but at the same time a religious community.

Over and above all separate cults there was in it one religion common to all its citizens. In ancient Mexico and Peru it was the religion of the dominant people, the worship of the god of war or of the sun; and the sovereigns themselves were regarded as incarnations or children of this god. In other cases the state religion arose by a fusion of different cults. The gods of the communities which united into a state not only continued to receive the worship of their old believers, but were elevated to the rank of national deities, and formed together a heavenly commonwealth to which the earthly commonwealth jointly paid its homage. In this way, it seems, the Roman, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian pantheons were recruited; while the Greeks went a step further and, even in prehistoric times, constructed a Pan-Hellenic Olympus.

Nobody will deny that the common religion added strength to the State, but it seems that its national importance has often been overrated. On the one hand, the political fusion between different communities took place before the religious fusion and was obviously the cause of it; on the other hand, the mere tie of a common religion has never proved sufficient to bind together neighbouring tribes or peoples so as to form one nation. The Greek states had both the same religion and the same language, but nevertheless remained distinct states. Professor Seeley's assertion that "in the East to this day nationality and religion are almost convertible terms," is very far from the truth. The orientalist Wallin, who had exceptional opportunities to study the feelings of different Mohammedan nationalities, observes that "every Oriental people has a certain national aversion to every other, and even the

inhabitants of one province to those of another. The Turk does not readily tolerate the Arab, nor the Persian, and these feel similarly towards the Turk; the Arab does not get on well with the Persian, nor the Persian with the Arab; the Syrian does not like the Egyptian, whom he calls inhuman, and the latter does not willingly associate with the Syrian, whom he calls simple-minded and stupid; and the son of the desert condemns both." It sometimes seems as if the national spirit of a people rather influenced its religion than was influenced by it. Patriotism has even succeeded in nationalising the greatest enemy of national distinctions, Christianity, and has well-nigh revived the old notion of a national god, whose chief business is to look after his own people and, especially, to fight its battles.

No empire on earth could form a less coherent political unit than the old empire of Morocco. The majority of the tribes of which it was composed were practically independent of the Sultan, so much so that when he travelled from one of his capitals, Fez, to the other, Marrakesh, he had to make a long circuit in order to avoid the Berber tribes inhabiting the vast district lying between his capitals. Nevertheless, all the Sultan's subjects and nominal subjects had not only the same religion, but regarded him as their religious head, as God's vicegerent on earth. Even the most independent Berber tribes included him in their prayers, asking God to bestow on him his blessings. The holiness of the Sultan was considered to be most essential for the welfare of the whole country. When it was strong and unpolluted, the people lived in happiness and comfort, the crops were abundant, the fishing along the coasts was excellent, the women gave birth to healthy and

virtuous children. But in spite of this the tribes would have furiously resisted any attempt of the Sultan to exercise political authority over them.

Like the political influence of religion as a means of tying together the members of the same social unit, so also the moral influence of religion has often been greatly exaggerated. I can find no solid foundation for the statements that "the historical beginning of all morality is to be found in religion" (Pfleiderer); that even in the earliest period of human history "religion and morality are necessary correlates of each other" (Caird); that "all moral commandments originally have the character of religious commandments" (Wundt); that in ancient society "all morality—as morality was then understood—was consecrated and enforced by religious motives and sanctions" (Robertson Smith); that the clan-god was the guardian of the tribal morality (Jevons). It seems to me to be a fact beyond dispute that the moral consciousness has originated in emotions entirely different from that feeling of uncanniness and mystery which first led to the belief in supernatural beings.

The old saying that religion was born of fear seems to hold true, in spite of recent assertions to the contrary. It appears that in all quarters of the savage world fear predominates as the initial element in the religious sentiment, that people are more inclined to ascribe evil than good to the influence of supernatural beings, and that their sacrifices or other acts of worship more frequently have in view to avert misfortunes than to procure positive benefits. Of the gods of many uncivilised peoples we are directly told that they are of a

malicious nature and mostly intent on doing harm to mankind.

On the other hand, adoration of supernatural beings who are considered at least occasionally beneficent is also very prevalent in the savage world. We may suppose that even at an early stage of culture man was sometimes impressed by a fortunate event which he ascribed to the influence of a friendly spirit, and that he was anxious to keep on amicable terms with the benefactor. It should also be noticed that the belief in guardian or tutelary spirits of tribes, clans, villages, families, or individuals is extremely widespread. These spirits may be exacting enough—they are often greatly feared by their own worshippers, and sometimes described as distinctly malignant by nature; but their general function is nevertheless to afford assistance to the persons or persons with whom they are associated, on condition that they are properly attended to. We have to remember that the goodness of many savage gods only consists in their readiness to help those who please them by offerings or adoration.

It seems that most gods of uncivilised peoples are thoroughly selfish beings who care about nothing else than what concerns their own personal interests—that they are utterly indifferent to men's behaviour towards their fellow-men, neither disapproving of vice or punishing the wicked, nor approving of virtue or rewarding the good. That this is the case with gods who are of a malicious nature follows from the fact that altruistic feelings are an essential source of moral emotions; but even a friendly supernatural being is by no means *ipso facto* a guardian of men's conduct towards one another. In Morocco the patron saint of

a town, village, or tribe is not in the least concerned about any kind of behaviour which has not immediate reference to himself.

We are told by competent observers that the supernatural beings of savage belief frequently show the utmost disregard to all questions of worldly morality. According to Spencer and Gillen, the Central Australian natives, though they assume the existence of both friendly and mischievous spirits, "have not the vaguest idea of a personal individual other than an actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct, so far as anything like what we call morality is concerned." The Society Islanders maintained that "the only crimes that were visited by the displeasure of their deities were the neglect of some rite or ceremony." Of various tribes on the West African Gold and Slave Coasts Major Ellis writes:—"Religion, at the stage of growth in which we find it among these . . . groups of tribes, has no connection with morals, or the relations of men to one another. It consists solely of ceremonial worship, and the gods are only offended when some rite or ceremony has been neglected or omitted. . . . Murder, theft, and all offences against the person or against property, are matters in which the gods have no immediate concern, and in which they take no interest, except in the case when, bribed by a valuable offering, they take up the quarrel in the interests of some faithful worshipper." The Indians of Guiana, according to Sir Everard Im Thurn, observe an admirable code of morality, which exists side by side with a simple animistic form of religion, but the two have absolutely no connection with one another. With reference to the Tarahumare of

Mexico, Lumholtz states that the only wrong towards the gods of which an Indian may consider himself guilty is that he does not dance enough. "For this offence he asks pardon. Whatever bad thoughts or actions toward man he may have on his conscience are settled between himself and the person offended." "In the primitive Indian's conception of a god," says Parkman, "the idea of moral good has no part. His deity does not dispense justice for this world or the next."

On the other hand, there are also instances in which savage gods are said to punish the transgression of rules relating to worldly morality. Occasionally, as will be shown later on, such gods are represented as avengers of some special kind of wrongdoing, such as murder, theft, lack of hospitality, or lying. Of certain negro tribes we are told that "when a man is about to commit a crime, or do that which his conscience tells him he ought not to do, he lays aside his fetish, and covers up his deity, that he may not be privy to the deed." The Ainu of Japan are heard to say, "We could not go contrary to the customs of our ancestors without bringing down upon us the wrath of the gods." Of various savages we are told that they believe in the existence of a supreme being who is a moral lawgiver or judge. This belief may be traced to several different sources. When not a "loan-god" of foreign extraction, he may be a mythical ancestor or headman; or a deification of the sky or some large and remote object of nature, like the sun; or a personification or personified cause of the mysteries or forces of nature. In various cases we have reason to suppose that even though the notion of a supreme being is fundamentally

of native origin, foreign conceptions have been engrafted upon it ; and to these belongs in particular the idea of a heavenly judge who in after-life punishes the wicked and rewards the good. Yet we are not entitled to assume that the idea of moral retribution as a function of the great god has in every case been adopted from a higher culture. A mythical ancestor or headman may of his own accord approve of virtue and disapprove of vice. Moreover, as we shall see, justice readily becomes the attribute of a god who is habitually appealed to in curses, oaths, or ordeals ; and that the supreme being of savages, notably African savages, is thus invoked is in some cases directly stated by our authorities.

When we pass from the gods of the simpler peoples to more civilised gods we notice a marked difference. Among peoples of a higher culture the gods are on the whole benevolent to man when duly propitiated. They resent by preference offences committed against themselves personally ; but in many cases they at the same time avenge social wrongs of various kinds, act as superintendents of human justice, and are even looked upon as the originators and sustainers of the whole moral order of the world. The gods have thus experienced a gradual change for the better ; until at last they are described as ideals of moral perfection, even though, when more closely scrutinised, their goodness and notions of justice are found to differ materially from what is deemed good and just in the case of men.

Growing reflection has a tendency to attribute more amiable qualities to the gods. The religious consciousness of men becomes less exclusively occupied with the hurts they suffer, and comes more and more to reflect

upon the benefits they enjoy. The activity of a god which displays itself in a certain phenomenon, or group of phenomena, appears to them on some occasions as a source of evil, but on other occasions as a source of good ; hence the god is regarded as partly malevolent, partly benevolent, but in all circumstances as a being who must not be neglected. Moreover, a god who is by nature harmless or good may by proper worship be induced to assist man in his struggle against evil spirits. The protective function of nature gods becomes particularly important when the god is humanised also with regard to his shape, and consequently more or less dissociated from the natural phenomenon in which he originally manifested himself—when, for example, a powerful sun-god has developed from the idea of the sun itself as a supernatural phenomenon. Nothing, indeed, seems to have contributed more towards the improvement of nature gods than the expansion of their sphere of activity. When supernatural beings can exert their power in the various departments of life, men naturally choose for their gods those among them who with great power combine the greatest benevolence.

Men have selected their gods according to their usefulness. We have many instances of such “supernatural selection.” Among the Maori of New Zealand “a mere trifle, or natural casualty, will induce a native (or a whole tribe) to change his Atua.” The negro, when disappointed in some of his speculations, or overtaken by some sad calamity, throws away his fetish and selects a new one. When hard pressed, the Samoyed, after he has invoked his own deities in vain, addresses himself to the Russian god, promising to become his worshipper if he relieves him from distress ; and in most

cases he is said to be faithful to his promise, though he may still try to keep on good terms with his former gods by occasionally offering them a sacrifice in secret. North American Indians attribute all their good or bad luck to their Manitou, and "if the Manitou has not been favourable to them, they quit him without any ceremony, and take another." Among many of the ancient Indians of Central America there was a regular and systematic selection of gods. Father Blas Valera says that their gods had annual rotations and were changed each year in accordance with the superstitions of the people. "The old gods were forsaken as infamous, or because they had been of no use, and other gods and demons were elected. . . . Sons, when they inherited, either accepted or repudiated the gods of their fathers, for they were not allowed to hold their pre-eminence against the will of the heir. Old men worshipped other greater deities, but they likewise dethroned them, and set up others in their places when the year was over, or the age of the world, as the Indians had it. Such were the gods which all the nations of Mexico, Chiapa, and Guatemala worshipped, as well as those of Vera Paz, and many other Indians. They thought that the gods selected by themselves were the greatest and most powerful of all the gods." These are crude instances of a process which in some form or other must have been an important motive force in religious evolution by making the gods better suited to meet the wants of their believers.

Men not only select as their gods such supernatural beings as may be most useful to them in the struggle for life, but also magnify their good qualities in worshipping them. Praise and exaggerating eulogy are common in the mouth of a devout worshipper. In ancient Egypt

the god of each petty state was within it said to be the ruler of the gods, the creator of the world, and the giver of all good things. So also in Chaldea the god of a town was addressed by its inhabitants with the most exalted epithets, as the master or king of all the gods. The Vedic poets were engrossed in the praise of the particular deity they happened to be invoking, exaggerating his attributes to the point of inconsistency. "Every virtue, every excellence," says Hume, "must be ascribed to the divinity, and no exaggeration will be deemed sufficient to reach those perfections with which he is endowed." But though the tendency of the worshipper to extol his god beyond all measure is largely due to the idea that the god is fond of praise, it may also be rooted in a sincere will to believe or in genuine admiration. That nations of a higher culture, especially, have a strong faith in the power and benevolence of their gods is easy to understand when we consider that these are exactly the peoples who have been most successful in their national endeavours. The Greeks attributed their victory over the Persians to the assistance of Zeus, the Romans maintained that the grandeur of their city was the work of the gods whom they had propitiated by sacrifices.

The benevolence of a god, however, does not imply that he acts as a moral judge. A friendly god is not generally supposed to bestow his favours gratuitously; it is hardly probable, then, that he should meddle with matters of social morality out of sheer kindness and of his own accord. But by an invocation he may be induced to reward virtue and punish vice. We shall see what a vast influence this fact has exerted upon the relation between morality and religion.

### III

#### RESPECT FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY—CHARITY

THE retributive activity of many gods is closely connected with the curses and blessings of men. The belief in the efficacy of a curse or blessing is in the first place rooted in the close association between a wish, more particularly a spoken wish, and the idea of its fulfilment. The wish is looked upon in the light of energy which may be transferred to the person or object concerned and then becomes a fact. In order to add efficacy to this process, he who pronounces the curse or blessing frequently gives it the form of an appeal to a god ; and if this is regularly done in connection with some particular kind of behaviour, the idea may grow up that the god punishes or rewards it even independently of any human invocation. In Morocco the very patron saint of a village is expressly said not to care about the conduct of its inhabitants outside the precinct of his sanctuary ; yet I found that some particular saints not only resent theft committed at their own shrines, but also punish robbers who merely pass by, either preventing them from proceeding further until they are caught, or making it impossible for them to sell the stolen object, so that they are found out at last. The reason for their hostility to an offence which does not concern them personally obviously lies in the fact that those saints have so often been appealed to

in oaths taken by persons suspected of theft that they have at last come to be looked upon as permanent enemies of thieves and guardians of property. At Fez there are certain saints who are said to be so much opposed to wrongdoers that they do not even suffer them to live in the neighbourhood of their shrines, and those saints are exactly those by whom it is considered most dangerous to swear ; hence we may assume that they have acquired their remarkable moral sensitiveness by being such severe avengers of perjury. Moreover, powerful curses may be personified as supernatural beings ; or the magic energy inherent in a curse or a blessing may become an attribute of the chief god, owing to his tendency to attract supernatural forces that are in harmony with his general nature. Various departments of social morality have thus been placed under the supervision of gods. To these belongs the right of property.

Theft is not only punished by men, but is often supposed to be avenged by supernatural powers. On the West Coast of Africa fetishes are inaugurated to detect and punish certain kinds of theft, and persons who are cognisant of such crimes and do not give information about them are also liable to be punished by the fetish. The Bechuanas, in South Africa, speak of an unknown being, vaguely called by the name of Lord and Master of things (Mongalinto), who punishes theft. One of them said :—“ When it thunders, every one trembles ; if there are several together, one asks the other with uneasiness, Is there any one amongst us who devours the wealth of others ? All then spit on the ground, saying, We do not devour the wealth of others. If a thunderbolt strikes and kills one of them,

no one complains, no one weeps; instead of being grieved, all unite in saying that the Lord is delighted (that is to say, he has done right) with killing that man." In Greece Zeus κτήσιος was a guardian of the family property; and according to a Roman tradition the domestic god repulsed the robber and kept off the enemy. The removing of landmarks has frequently been regarded as sacrilegious. It was strictly prohibited by the religious law of the Hebrews. In Greece boundaries were protected by Zeus ὄριος. Plato says in his *Laws*:—"Let no one shift the boundary line either of a fellow-citizen who is a neighbour, or, if he dwells at the extremity of the land, of any stranger who is conterminous with him. . . . Every one should be more willing to move the largest rock which is not a landmark, than the least stone which is the sworn mark of friendship and hatred between neighbours; for Zeus, the god of kindred, is the witness of the citizen, and Zeus, the god of strangers, of the stranger, and when aroused terrible are the wars which they stir up. He who obeys the law will never know the fatal consequences of disobedience, but he who despises the law shall be liable to a double penalty, the first coming from the gods, and the second from the law." The Romans worshipped Terminus or Jupiter Terminalis as the god of boundaries.

This religious sanction given to ownership is undoubtedly connected with curses pronounced by men. Cursing is a frequent method of punishing criminals who cannot be reached in any other way. In the Book of Judges we read of Micah's mother, who had uttered a curse with reference to the money stolen from her, though afterwards, when her son had confessed his

guilt, she hastened to render it ineffective by a blessing. In early Arabia the owner of stolen property had recourse to cursing in order to recover what he had lost. In Samoa "the party from whom anything had been stolen, if he knew not the thief, would seek satisfaction in sitting down and deliberately cursing him." The Kamchadals "think they can punish an undiscovered theft by burning the sinews of the stone-buck in a publick meeting with great ceremonies of conjuration, believing that as these sinews are contracted by the fire so the thief will have all his limbs contracted." A very common mode of detecting the perpetrator of a theft is to compel the suspected individual to make oath, that is, to pronounce a conditional curse upon himself.

Cursing is resorted to not only for the purpose of punishing thieves or compelling them to restore what they have stolen, but also as a means of preventing theft. In the South Sea Islands it is a common practice to protect property by making it *taboo*, and the tabooing of an object is, as Codrington puts it, "a prohibition with a curse expressed or implied." The curse is then in many cases deposited in some article which is attached to the thing or place it is intended to protect. The mark of taboo sometimes consists of a cocoa-nut leaf plaited in a particular way, sometimes of a wooden image of a man or a carved post stuck in the ground, sometimes of a bunch of human hair or a piece of an old mat, and so forth. In Samoa there were various forms of taboo which formed a powerful check on stealing, especially from plantations and fruit-trees, and each was known by a special name indicating the sort of curse which the owner wished would fall on the thief. Among the

Washambala, in East Africa, the owner of a field sometimes puts a stick wound round with a banana leaf on the road to it, believing that anybody who without permission enters the field "will be subject to the curse of this charm." The Wadshagga, in the same part of Africa, protect a doorless hut against burglars by placing a banana leaf over the threshold, and any maliciously inclined person who dares to step over it is supposed to fall ill or die. Of the Barotse (Upper Zambesi) we are told that "when they do not want a thing touched they spit on straws and stick them all about the object." Jacob of Edessa speaks of a Syrian priest who wrote a curse and hung it on a tree, that nobody might eat the fruit. In the early days of Islam a masterful man reserved water for his own use by hanging pieces of fringe of his red blanket on a tree beside it, or by throwing them into the pool; and in modern Palestine nobody dares to touch the piles of stones which are placed on the boundaries of landed property. The old inhabitants of Cumaná on the Caribbean Sea used to mark off their plantations by a single cotton thread, in the belief that anybody tampering with these boundary marks would speedily die. A similar idea seems still to prevail among the Indians of the Amazon. Among the Jurís a traveller noticed that in places where the hedge surrounding a field was broken, it was replaced by a cotton string; and when Brazilian Indians leave their huts they often wind a piece of the same material round the latch of the door. Sometimes they also hang baskets, rags, or flaps of bark on their landmarks. In these and various other instances it is not expressly stated that the taboo mark embodies a curse, but their similarity to cases in which it does so

is striking enough to preclude much doubt about its real meaning.

So far I have only spoken of curses either pronounced or embodied in property marks, not about appeals to any god; but we are frequently expressly told that spirits or gods are invoked in curses referring to theft. On the Gold Coast, "when the owner of land sees that someone has been making a clearing on his land, he cuts the young inner branches of the palm tree and hangs them about the place where the trespass has been committed. As he hangs each leaf he says something to the following effect: 'The person who did this and did not make it known to me before he did it, if he comes here to do any other thing, may fetish Katawere (or Tanor or Fofie or other fetish) kill him and all his family.'" In Samoa, in the case of a theft, the suspected persons had to swear before the chiefs, each one invoking the village god to send swift destruction if he had committed the crime; and if all had sworn and the culprit was still undiscovered, the chiefs solemnly made a similar invocation on behalf of the thief. In ancient Greece it was a custom to dedicate a lost article to a deity, with a curse for those who kept it. On the landmarks of the ancient Babylonians, generally consisting of stone pillars in the form of a phallus, imprecations were inscribed with appeals to various deities. One of these boundary stones contains the following curse directed against the violator of its sacredness:—"Upon this man may the great gods Anu, Bêl, Ea, and Nusku, look wrathfully, uproot his foundation, and destroy his offspring"; and similar invocations are then made to many other gods.

Curses in connection with landmarks have also been personified and elevated to the rank of a divinity, such

as the Roman god Terminus, or been transformed into an attribute of the chief god. This explains the origin of conceptions such as Zeus ὄριος and Jupiter Terminalis, as well the extreme severity with which Yahveh treated the removal of landmarks. In these and yet other cases there are obvious indications of a connection between the god and a curse. Apart from other evidence to be found in Semitic antiquities, there is the anathema of Deuteronomy, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark." That the boundary stones dedicated to Zeus ὄριος were originally charged with imprecations appears from a passage in Plato's *Laws*, already quoted, as also from inscriptions made on them. The Etruscans cursed anyone who should touch or displace a boundary mark :—Such a person shall be condemned by the gods ; his house shall disappear ; his race shall be extinguished ; his limbs shall be covered with ulcers and waste away ; his land shall no longer produce fruits ; hail, rust, and the fires of the dog-star shall destroy his harvests. Considering the important part played by blood as a conductor of imprecations, it is not improbable that the Roman ceremony of letting the blood of a sacrificial animal flow into the hole where the landmark was to be placed was intended to give efficacy to a curse. In some parts of England a custom of annually "beating the bounds" of a parish has survived up to the present time, accompanied with religious services, in which a clergyman invokes curses on him who should transgress the bounds of his neighbours, and blessings on him who should regard the landmarks. This custom has been practised during the last years in the centre of London. It was described in *The Times* in the following words :—

“ Twenty-four years had passed since last the rector and substantial men of the parish made a common perambulation of the boundaries, and in the intervening period many houses have been pulled down to make way for modern buildings. The changes have caused the disappearance of a considerable number of the boundary plates, but twenty-five anchors were located by the procession and duly beaten. Before the procession set out a brief service was held in the church, when the Rector . . . read comminatory sentences applicable to those who remove landmarks of their neighbours. It is to be feared that the offence has been rather common in recent years, for more than forty boundary anchors have been destroyed or taken away from their former places since the last official perambulation. The procession was headed by the surveyor. Behind him walked choir-boys wearing purple cassocks and white surplices and a small anchor suspended from a collar of blue ribbon. Then came three churchwardens, who carried the maces of the church; behind them the Rector, parishioners, and school children. The choir-boys carried long stripped twigs with which they whipped the bounds. A first halt was made outside Messrs. Child’s Bank, where a metal landmark is sunk in the pavement of the Strand. The boys beat the plate with youthful enthusiasm. . . . The beaters were determined to carry through their duties thoroughly, and as the parish boundary is supposed to go to the centre of the river, Rector, choir-boys, and churchwardens embarked in boats at the Temple steps and were rowed out to mid-stream, where the twigs were applied to the surface of the water. From the river the boundary line passes through the Hotel Cecil, which was made the

next place of call. A few minutes later the procession reached the Lyceum Theatre and trod a part of the stage, which is in the parish. The enclosing stages of the tour were by way of Drury Lane, Kingsway, Lincoln's Inn, and the Law Courts. One or two landmarks were beaten by boys leaning out of the office windows."

Among peoples of culture charity has often been strenuously enjoined by their religion. The sacred law-books of India are full of prescriptions imposing almsgiving as a duty. It confers merit on the giver, it frees him from guilt, it destroys sin; "for whatever purpose a man bestows any gift, for that purpose he receives in his next birth with due honour its reward." On the other hand, he who cooks for himself alone eats nothing but sin. Of the ancient Persians Thucydides said that they preferred giving to receiving. To be charitable towards the poor of their own faith was among them a religious duty of the first order. Zoroaster thus addressed Vîshthâspa: "Let no thought of Angra Mainyu (the evil spirit) ever infect thee, so that thou shouldst indulge in evil lusts, make derision and idolatry, and shut to the poor the door of thy house." The holy Sraosha is the protector of the poor. In the Shâyast it is said that the clothing of the soul in the next world is formed out of almsgiving.

Charity was urgently insisted upon by the religious law of the Hebrews. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land;" "for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto." Even "if thine enemy be hungry,

give him bread to eat ; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink : . . . the Lord shall reward thee." Especially in the Old Testament Apocrypha and in the Rabbinical literature almsgiving assumed an excessive prominence—so much so that the word which in the older writings means " righteousness " in general, came to be used for almsgiving in particular. " Shut up alms in thy storehouses and it shall deliver thee from all affliction." " As water will quench a flaming fire, so alms maketh an atonement for sins." " For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life." The charitable man is rewarded with the birth of male issue. Almsgiving is equal in value to all other commandments. He who averts his eyes from charity commits a sin equal to idolatry. To such an extreme was almsgiving carried on by the Jews, that some Rabbis at length decreed that no man should give above a fifth part of his goods in charity.

Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting were the three cardinal disciplines that the synagogue transmitted to the Christian Church and the Mohammedan mosque. According to Islam the duty next in importance to prayer is that of giving alms. The Prophet repeatedly announces that the path which leads to God is the helping of the orphans and the relieving of the poor. " Ye cannot attain to righteousness until ye expend in alms of what ye love." " Those who expend their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, they shall have their hire with their Lord." It is said that " prayer carries us half-way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms procure us admission." Certain alms, called *Zakât*, are prescribed by

law : it is an indispensable duty for every Mohammedan of full age to bestow in charity about one-fortieth of all such property as has been a year in his possession, provided that he has sufficient for his subsistence and has an income equivalent to about five pounds per annum. Other charitable gifts are voluntary, and confer merit upon the giver.

By Christianity charity of the religious type which we find in the East was introduced into Europe. We have certainly no reason to blame the ancient Greeks and Romans for neglecting their poor. Among them slavery in a great measure replaced pauperism ; and what slavery did for the very poor, the Roman system of clientage did for those of a somewhat higher rank. Moreover, the relief of the indigent was an important function of the State. At Athens the Arcopagus provided public works for the poor. At Rome gratuitous distribution of corn was the rule for many centuries ; agrarian laws furnished free homesteads to the landless on conquered or public territory ; since the days of Nerva a systematic support of poor children was prescribed in all the cities of Italy. The duty of charity was forcibly enjoined by some of the moralists. The wise man, says Seneca, " will dry the tears of others, but will not mingle his own with them ; he will stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked mariner, will offer hospitality to the exile, and alms to the needy." But his alms are not thrown away by chance ; his purse will open easily, but never leak. He will never give without sufficient reason ; for unwise gifts must be reckoned among foolish extravagances. So also Cicero, while styling beneficence and liberality " virtues that are the most agreeable to the nature of man," is anxious

to warn his readers against imprudence in practising them, "lest our kindness should hurt both those whom it is meant to assist and others."

In a very different light was charity viewed by the Christians. Unlimited open-handedness became a cardinal virtue. An ideal Christian was he who did what Jesus commanded the young man to do: who went and sold what he had and gave it to the poor. Promiscuous almsgiving was enjoined as a duty:—"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." The discharge of this duty was even more profitable to the giver than to the receiver. There is perhaps no precept in the Gospel to which a promise of recompense is so frequently annexed as to that concerning charity. Eternal life is promised to those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick. Charity was regarded as an atonement. "God," says St. Augustine, "is to be propitiated through alms for sins past"; and countless times is the thought expressed, that almsgiving is a safe investment of money at good interest with God in heaven. St. Cyprian, who is the father of the Romish doctrine of good works, establishes an arithmetical relation between the number of alms-offerings and the blotting out of sins. "The food of the needy," says Leo the Great, "is the purchase-money of the kingdom of heaven." "As long as the market lasts," says St. Chrysostom, "let us buy alms, or rather let us purchase salvation through alms." The rich man is only a debtor; all that he possesses beyond what is necessary belongs to the poor, and ought to be given away. The poor, no longer looked down upon, became instruments of salvation.

To them was given the first place in the church and in the Christian community. St. Chrysostom says of them, "As fountains flow near the place of prayer that the hands that are about to be raised to heaven may be washed, so were the poor placed by our fathers near to the door of the church, that our hands might be consecrated by benevolence before they are raised to God." Gregory the Great announces, and the Middle Ages re-echo, "The poor are not to be lightly esteemed and despised, but to be honoured as patrons." Thus it happened that even in the darkest periods, when other Christian virtues were nearly extinct, charity survived unimpaired. Later on Protestantism, by denying the atoning effect of good deeds, deprived charity of a great deal of its religious attraction. And in modern times the enlightened opinion on the subject, recognising the demoralising influence of indiscriminate almsgiving, rather agrees with the principles laid down by the pagan moralists Cicero and Seneca, than with the literary interpretation of the injunctions of Christ. Some one has said, "The superficially sympathetic man flings a coin to the beggar; the more deeply sympathetic man builds an almshouse for him; the most radically sympathetic is the man who arranges that the beggar shall not be born."

How shall we explain that close connection between charity and religion? First, there is an idea that niggardliness may expose a person to supernatural danger, whereas charity and liberality may entail supernatural reward. In Morocco nobody would like to eat in the presence of others without sharing his meal with them, since otherwise they might poison his food by looking at it with an evil eye. Generally speaking, the

evil eye of an unsatisfied person is considered a great danger. Thus, if any one evinces a strong desire to buy, let us say, my gun or horse, it is wiser for me to sell it because, if not, the gun may easily come to grief or the horse die; and if a person praises a thing belonging to some one else without adding a word of blessing, the article is henceforth worth nothing. Now it would seem that if anybody must get what he wants or asks for, the right of property is seriously shaken. But an example will show that the danger is not so great as it looks. Once when I was staying at a place in the High Atlas mountains, the Governor's son, who in his father's absence acted as my host, showed me great attention. He came now and then into my tent, sat down with evident pleasure on my camp-chair—probably he had never sat on a chair before—and asked if he might look through my field-glass. The young man was so enraptured by these objects that I understood he wished to possess them. Not to fulfil a desire of this kind might seem both impolite and unwise, but though I was loath to be lacking in courtesy to my hospitable host, I could not possibly dispense with the things he desired. Then it flashed upon me that I might pay him back in his own coin. He had come to me riding on a splendid mule. When he began singing the praises of the chair and the field-glass I started similar admiration of his excellent mule. He at once turned the conversation to something else; and the danger was at an end.

The principle of reciprocity, however, cannot be applied when the person who wants your thing has himself nothing to lose. Hence the evil eye and the curse are powerful weapons and means of retaliation in

the hands of the poor and the needy. The ancient Greeks believed that the beggar had his Erinys, or avenging demon, who was obviously only a personification of his curse. It is said in the Proverbs, "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack : but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse." The same idea is expressed in Ecclesiasticus :—" Turn not away thine eye from the needy, and give him none occasion to curse thee : for if he curse thee in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard of him that made him. . . . A prayer out of a poor man's mouth reacheth to the ears of God, and his judgment cometh speedily." According to the Zoroastrian Yasts, the poor man who follows the good law, when wronged and deprived of his rights, invokes Mithra for help, with hands uplifted. Chapman states that " though the Damara are, generally speaking, great gluttons, they would not think of eating in the presence of any of their tribe without sharing their meal with all comers, for fear of being visited by a curse from their ' Omu-kuru ' (or deity), and becoming impoverished." There is every reason to suppose that in this case the curse of the deity was originally the curse, or evil wish, of an angry man.

Moreover, a poor man is able not only to punish the uncharitable by means of his curses, but to reward the generous giver by means of his blessings. During my residence in a mountain tribe in Morocco the village was visited by a band of ambulant scribes who went from house to house, receiving presents and invoking blessings in return ; and far from grudging the expense, some of the villagers told me that this was a profitable bargain, since they would be tenfold repaid for their gifts through the blessings of the scribes. A town

Moore who starts for a journey to the country generally likes to give a coin to one of the beggars who are sitting near the gate, in order to receive his blessing. It is said in Ecclesiasticus :—“ Stretch thine hand unto the poor, that thy blessing may be perfected. A gift hath grace in the sight of every man living.”

The curses and blessings of the poor partly account for the fact that charity has come to be regarded as a religious duty, containing, as they generally do, the invocation of a god. His own feelings need not be considered at all : his name may be simply brought in to give the curse or the blessing that mystic efficacy which the plain word lacks. Thus both in the Old Testament and in the Talmud there are traces of the ancient idea that the name of the Lord might be used with advantage in any curse, however undeserved. But with the deepening of the religious sentiment this idea had to be given up. A righteous and mighty god cannot agree to be a mere tool in the hand of a wicked curser. Hence the curse comes to be looked upon in the light of a prayer, which is not fulfilled if undeserved ; as it is said in the Proverbs, “ the curse causeless shall not come.” And the same is the case with the blessing. In ancient days Jacob could take away his brother’s blessing by deceit ; the blessing acted in the same way as a medicine, which cures the patient just as well if it is stolen as if it is bought. But later on its efficacy was limited by moral considerations. The Psalmist declares that only the offspring of the righteous can be blessed ; and according to the Apostolic Constitutions, “ although a widow who eateth and is filled from the wicked pray for them, she shall not be heard.” On the other hand, curses and blessings, when well-deserved, continued to

draw down calamity or prosperity upon their objects, by inducing God to put them into effect; this idea prevails both in post-exilic Judaism and in Mohammedanism, and underlies the Christian oath and benediction. The final view was that as an uncharitable man deserves to be punished and a charitable man merits reward, the curses and blessings of the poor will naturally be heard by a righteous God. "The Lord will plead their cause."

Besides the belief in the efficacy of curses and blessings there is another, still more important reason for the extraordinary stress that the higher religions put on the duty of charity, namely the connection between almsgiving and sacrifice. When food is offered as a tribute to a god, he is supposed to enjoy its spiritual part only, while the substance of it is left behind and eaten by the poor. And when the offering is continued in ceremonial survival in spite of the growing conviction that, after all, the deity does not need and cannot profit by it, the poor become the heirs of the god. The chief virtue of the act then lies in the self-abnegation of the donor, and its efficacy is measured by the "sacrifice" which it costs him.

Many instances may be quoted of sacrificial food being left for the poor or being distributed among them. At Scillus, where Xenophon had built an altar and a temple to Artemis and a sacrifice was afterwards made every year, the goddess supplied the poor people living there in tents with "barley-meal, bread, wine, sweetmeats, and a share of the victims offered from the sacred pastures, and of those caught in hunting." According to Yasna, sacrifices to Mazda were given to his poor. In ancient Arabia the poor were allowed to partake

of the meal-offering which was laid before the god Uqaicir.

In other cases we find that almsgiving is itself regarded as a form of sacrifice, or takes the place of it. In the sacred books of India the two things are repeatedly mentioned side by side. "The householder offers sacrifices, the householder practises austerities, the householder distributes gifts." "In the Krita age the chief virtue is declared to be the performance of austerities, in the Tretâ divine knowledge, in the Dvâpara the performance of sacrifices, in the Kali liberality alone." In the Zoroastrian prayer Ahuna-Vairya, to which great efficacy is ascribed, it is said, "He who relieves the poor makes Ahura king." When the destruction of the temple with its altar filled the Jews with alarm as they thought of their unatoned sins, Johanan ben Zakkai comforted them by saying, "You have another means of atonement as powerful as the altar, and that is the work of charity, for it is said: 'I desired mercy, and not sacrifice.'" Many other passages show how closely the Jews associated almsgiving with sacrifice. "He that giveth alms sacrificeth praise." "As sin-offering makes atonement for Israel, so alms for the Gentiles." "Almsdeeds are more meritorious than all sacrifices." An orphan is called an "altar to God." Alms were systematically collected in the synagogues, and officers were appointed to make the collection. So also among the early Christians the collection of alms for the relief of the poor was an act of the Church life itself. Almsgiving took place in public worship, nay formed itself a part of worship. Gifts of natural produce, the so-called oblations, were connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

They were offered to God as the first-fruits of the creatures (*primitiæ creaturarum*), and were regarded as sacrifice in the most special sense. But while they were used for the Lord's Supper, they also formed the chief means for the relief of the poor. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of almsgiving as a sacrifice of thanksgiving which continues after the Jewish altar has been done away with. When the Christians were reproached for having no sacrifices, Justin wrote, "We have been taught that the only honour that is worthy of Him is not to consume by fire what He has brought into being for our sustenance, but to use it for ourselves and those who need." So also Irenæus observes that sacrifices are not abolished in the New Testament, though their form is altered, because they are no longer offered by slaves but by freemen, of which just the oblations are the proof. St. Augustine says, "The sacrifice of the Christians is the alms bestowed upon the poor."

The objection will perhaps be raised that I have here tried to trace back the most beautiful of all religious virtues to a magical and ritualistic origin without taking into due account the benevolent feelings attributed to the deity. But in the present connection I have tried to show why in the ethics of the higher religions charity has attained the same supreme importance as is otherwise attached only to devotional exercises. And this is certainly a problem by itself for which the belief in a benevolent god affords no adequate explanation.

## IV

### HOSPITALITY—THE RIGHT OF SANCTUARY

IN early society the duty of charity, like other rules of social morality, is generally restricted to members of the same social unit, whereas foreigners are subject to a very different treatment. Even in Greece and Rome and among the Teutonic peoples the stranger had in ancient times no legal rights. The Latin word *hostis* was originally used to denote a foreigner, and the German *elender* has acquired its present meaning from the connotation of the older word which meant an "outlandish" man. Throughout the Middle Ages all Europe seems to have tacitly agreed that foreigners were created for the purpose of being robbed. It is not surprising, then, to find that savages are hostile to foreigners. But there is a remarkable exception to this rule. Side by side with gross indifference or positive hatred to strangers there is an institution which, as it seems, prevails universally among the lower races while in their native state and which also prevailed among the peoples of culture in the earlier stages of their civilisation, namely, the custom of hospitality towards strangers.

This custom presents features utterly opposed to their tribal or national exclusiveness generally. The stranger is often welcomed with special marks of honour when he comes as a guest. The best seat is assigned to him ; the best food at the host's disposal is

set before him; he takes precedence over all the members of the household; he enjoys extraordinary privileges. Among many uncivilised peoples it is customary for a man to offer even his wife, or one of his wives, to the stranger for the time he remains his guest. And custom may require that hospitality should be shown even to an enemy; the old Norsemen considered it a duty to treat a guest hospitably although it came out that he had killed the brother of his host. It is true that the duty of hospitality is only of short duration. The Anglo-Saxon rule was, "two nights a guest, the third night one of the household," that is, a slave. The Southern Slavs declare that "a guest and a fish smell on the third day." The Moors say that "the hospitality of the Prophet lasts for three days"; but the first night he is entertained most lavishly, for then he is "the guest of God." When I arrived at some governor's castle in the High Atlas mountains, one or several sheep were generally given me on the first evening; on the following day my host was less generous; and on the third day I found I had better leave. But as long as it lasts the duty of hospitality is exceedingly stringent, and it is enforced not only by custom but very frequently by religion as well.

Among the doctrines held up for acceptance by the religious instructors of the Iroquois there was the following precept:—"If a stranger wander about your abode, welcome him to your home, be hospitable towards him, speak to him with kind words, and forget not always to mention the Great Spirit." The Kalmucks believed that want of hospitality would be punished by angry gods. The Kandhs in India say that the first duty which the gods have imposed upon man is that of

hospitality. In the sacred books of the Hindus hospitality is repeatedly spoken of as a most important duty, the discharge of which will be amply rewarded. "The inhospitable man," the Vedic singer tells us, "acquires food in vain. I speak the truth—it verily is his death." According to the Vishnu Purána, a person who neglects a poor and friendless stranger in want of hospitality goes to hell. Hesiod says that Zeus himself is wrath with him who does evil to a suppliant or a guest, and at last, in requital for his deed, lays on him a bitter penalty. Similar opinions prevailed in ancient Rome; the stranger, who enjoyed no legal protection, was as a guest protected by custom and religion. The *dii hospitales*, or gods of hospitality, and Jupiter were on guard over him; hence the duties towards a guest were even more stringent than those towards a relative. The God of Israel was a preserver of strangers. In the Talmud; hospitality is described as "the most important part of divine worship," as being equivalent to the duty of honouring father and mother, as even more meritorious than frequenting the synagogue. Mohammed said, "Whoever believes in God and the day of resurrection must respect his guest"; but the idea that a guest enjoys divine protection prevailed among the Arabs long before the time of the Prophet.

That a stranger, who in other circumstances is treated as an inferior being or a foe, liable to be robbed and killed with impunity, should enjoy such extraordinary privileges as a guest, is certainly one of the most curious contrasts which present themselves to a student of the moral ideas of mankind. It may be asked, why should he be received at all? Of course, he stands in

need of protection and support, but why should those who do not know him care for that ?

One answer is that his helpless condition may excite pity ; facts seem to prove that even among savages the altruistic feelings, however narrow, can be stirred by the sight of a suffering and harmless stranger. Another answer is that the host himself may expect to reap benefit from his act. And there can be little doubt that the rules of hospitality are in the main based on egoistic considerations.

It has been justly observed that in uncivilised countries, where there is no public accommodation for travellers, " hospitality is so necessary, and so much required by the mutual convenience of all parties, as to detract greatly from its merit as a moral quality." When the stranger belongs to a community with which a reciprocity of intercourse prevails, it is prudent to give him a hearty reception ; he who is the host to-day may be the guest to-morrow. Moreover, the stranger is a bearer of news and tidings, and as such may be a welcome guest where communication between different places is slow and rare. During my wanderings in the remote forests of Northern Finland I was constantly welcomed with the phrase, " What news ? " But the stranger may be supposed to bring with him something which is valued even more highly, namely, good luck or blessings.

During the first days of my stay at Demnat, in the High Atlas, the natives, in spite of their hostility towards Europeans, said they were quite pleased with my coming to them, because I had brought with me rain and an increase of victuals, which just before my arrival had been very scarce. So, too, while residing

among the mountaineers of Andjra in the north of Morocco, I was said to be a person with "propitious ankles," because since I settled down among them the village was frequently visited by Shereefs—presumed descendants of the Prophet—who are always highly valued guests on account of the *baraka*, or holiness, with which they are supposed to be in a smaller or greater degree endowed. The stranger may be a source of good fortune either involuntarily, as a bearer of luck, or through his good wishes; and there is every reason to hope that, if treated hospitably, he will return the kindness of his host with a blessing. According to the old traveller d'Arvieux, strangers who come to an Arab village are received by the Sheikh with some such words as these:—"You are welcome; praised be God that you are in good health; your arrival draws down the blessing of heaven upon us; the house and all that is in it is yours." It is said in one of the sacred books of India that through a Brâhmana guest the people obtain rain, and food through rain, hence they know that "the hospitable reception of a guest is a ceremony averting evil." We can now understand the eagerness with which guests are sought for. When a guest enters the hut of a Kalmuck, "the host, the hostess, and everybody in the hut, rejoice at the arrival of the stranger as an unexpected fortune." Among the Arabs of Sinai, "if a stranger be seen from afar coming towards the camp, he is the guest for that night of the first person who descries him, and who, whether a grown man or a child, exclaims, 'There comes my guest.' Such a person has a right to entertain the guest that night. Serious quarrels happen on these occasions." It is also very usual in the East to eat before the gate of the

house where travellers pass, and every stranger of respectable appearance is invariably requested to sit down and partake of the repast.

If efficacy is ascribed to the blessings of even an ordinary man, the blessings of a stranger are naturally supposed to be still more powerful. For the unknown stranger, like everything unknown and everything strange, arouses a feeling of mysterious awe in superstitious minds. The Ainu say, "Do not treat strangers slightingly, for you never know whom you are entertaining." In the writings of ancient India, Greece, and Rome, guests are mentioned next after gods as due objects of regard. According to Homeric notions, "the gods, in the likeness of strangers from far countries, put on all manner of shapes, and wander through the cities beholding the violence and the righteousness of men." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

The visiting stranger, however, is regarded not only as a potential benefactor, but as a potential source of evil. He may bring with him disease or ill luck. He is commonly believed to be versed in magic; and the evil wishes and curses of a stranger are greatly feared, partly owing to his quasi-supernatural character, partly to the close contact in which he comes with the host and his belongings.

Among the Herero, in South-West Africa, "no curse is regarded as heavier than that which one who has been inhospitably treated would hurl at those who have driven him from the hearth." According to Greek ideas, guests and suppliants had their Erinyes—personifications of their curses; and it would be difficult to

attribute any other meaning to "the genius (*δαίμων*) and the god of the stranger, who follow in the train of Zeus," spoken of by Plato, and to the Roman *diī hospitales* in their capacity of avengers of injuries done to guests. Æschylus represents Apollo as saying, "I shall assist him (Orestes) and rescue my own suppliant; for terrible both among men and gods is the wrath of a refugee, when one abandons him with intent." Apastamba's Aphorisms, one of the sacred books of India, contain a Sutra the object of which is to show the absolute necessity of feeding a guest, because "if offended, he might burn the house with the flames of his anger."

In Morocco the duty of hospitality is closely connected with the practice of 'ār, which intrinsically implies the transference of a conditional curse for the purpose of compelling some one to grant a request. Externally the casting of 'ār on a person presents a great variety of forms, but the feature which is common to all these acts is that they are meant to serve as conductors of conditional curses. A very frequent and powerful form of 'ār is to kill a sheep or a goat at the threshold of his house or the entrance of his tent; other methods are to establish material contact by touching him with one's turban or a fold of one's dress, or by grasping with one's hand either the person himself or the horse he is riding. If he does not do what is asked of him, his welfare is at stake—he will die or his children will die, or some other evil will happen to him; and the danger is particularly great if an animal has been killed at his door and he steps over the blood or only catches a glimpse of it. So also the owner of a house or a tent to which a person has fled for refuge must, in his own

interest, assist the fugitive, who by being there is in close contact with him and his belongings; and the same is the case with any stranger as soon as he has entered another person's dwelling.

The ideas underlying these customs are certainly not restricted to Morocco. Blood is frequently used as a conductor of curses; one object of the practice of sacrifice is to transfer an imprecation to the god by means of the blood of the victim. Bodily contact is another common means of communicating curses; and this may account for many remarkable cases of compulsory hospitality and protection which have been noticed in different quarters of the world, though no explanation has been given of them by our authorities. The common meal partaken of by the host and his guest also establishes a tie between them, both in Morocco and elsewhere; it is like the meal which is used as a method of covenanting, because the eaten food embodies a conditional curse. All Bedouins of the East regard the eating of "salt"—that is, even the smallest portion of food—together as a bond of mutual friendship, and there are tribes that require the renewal of this bond every twenty-four hours, or after two nights and the day between them, since otherwise, as they say, "the salt is not in their stomachs," and can therefore no longer punish the person who breaks the contact.

As the stranger is looked upon as a more or less dangerous individual, it is natural that those who are exposed to the danger should do what they can to avert it. In many countries a guest is received with ceremonies the object of which seems to be either to purify him from evil influences or to transfer to him conditional

curses. A Moorish servant of mine told me that the following custom prevailed in his tribe. As soon as a stranger appears in the village, some water or, if he be a person of distinction, some milk is presented to him. Should he refuse to partake of it, he is not allowed to go freely about, but has to stay in the village mosque. On asking for an explanation of this custom, I was told that it is a precautionary measure against the stranger ; should he steal or otherwise misbehave himself, the drink would cause his knees to swell so that he could not escape. In other words, he has drunk a conditional curse. The Arabs of Nejd "welcome" a guest by pouring on his head a cup of melted butter, I suppose in order to purify him.

Among precautions taken against the visiting stranger, kind and respectful treatment is of particularly great importance. No traveller among an Arabic-speaking people can fail to notice the contrast between the lavish welcome and the plain leave-taking. The profuse greetings mean that the stranger will be treated as a friend ; and it is the more desirable to secure his goodwill in the beginning, since the first glance of an evil eye is always held to be the most dangerous. We can now realise that the extreme regard shown to a guest and the preference given him in every respect must in a large measure be due to fear of his anger, besides the hope of his blessings. Even the custom which requires a host to lend his wife to a guest becomes more intelligible when we consider the supposed danger of the stranger's evil eye or his curses, as well as the benefits which may be expected from his love. And when the guest leaves, it is wise of the host to accept no reward ; for there may be misfortune in the stranger's gift.

That hospitality should be free of cost is implied in the very meaning of the word. Wherever the custom of entertaining guests has been preserved pure and genuine, remuneration is neither asked nor expected; indeed, to offer payment would give offence, and to accept it would be disgraceful. Such a custom might no doubt result from absence or scarcity of money, as it cannot be supposed that the wandering stranger shall carry with him heavy presents to all his future hosts; and where the intercourse is mutual, the hospitable man may hope one day to be paid back in his own coin. But it seems likely that the custom of not receiving payment from a guest is largely due to the same dread of strangers as underlies many other rules of hospitality. The acceptance of gifts is frequently considered to be connected with some danger. In Morocco, if a person gives a thing to another both he and the recipient, or at any rate one of them, say the *bismillāh*, "in the name of God," since otherwise there is no *baraka* in the gift and it may cause mischief. According to rules laid down in the sacred books of India, he who is about to accept gifts, or he who has accepted gifts, must repeatedly recite certain Vedic verses; or all gifts are to be preceded by pouring out water into the extended palm of the recipient's right hand, evidently because the water is supposed to cleanse the gift from the baleful energy with which it may be saturated. Moreover, a gift, to be accepted by a brahman, ought to be given voluntarily, not to be asked for. So, too, Hebrew writers are anxious to inculcate the duty of giving alms with an ungrudging eye, as also of not giving anything before witnesses—the latter obviously with a view to preventing the evil influence emanating from

the eye of an envious spectator. An Atlas Berber, who had probably never before had anything to do with a European, spat on the coin I gave him for rendering me a service, and my native friends told me that he did so for fear lest the coin, owing to some sorcery on my part, should not only itself return to me, but at the same time take away all the money with which it had been in contact in his bag. Of the Annamites it is said that "for fear of bringing ill luck into the place the people even decline presents."

Contrary to what is the case with other duties that men owe to their fellow-creatures, hospitality has been on the decline in every progressive society. In the later days of Greece and Rome it almost dwindled into a survival. In the Middle Ages it was extensively practised by high and low; it was enjoined by the tenets of Chivalry, and the poorer people also considered it disgraceful to refuse to share their meals with a needy stranger. But in the reign of Henry IV. Thomas Occlif complains of hospitality being on the wane in England; and in the middle of the Elizabethan age Archbishop Sandys says that "it is come to pass that hospitality itself is waxen a stranger." The reasons for this decline are not difficult to find. Increasing intercourse between different communities not only makes hospitality an intolerable burden, but leads to the establishment of inns, and thus hospitality becomes superfluous. It habituates people to the sight of strangers, and in consequence deprives them of that mystery which surrounds the lonely wanderer in an isolated district whose inhabitants have little communication with the outside world. And increase of intercourse gives rise to laws which make an individual protector needless,

by placing the stranger under the protection of the State.

In an important respect connected with the duty of affording protection to a refugee, which is implied in the duty of hospitality, is the right of sanctuary. Among many peoples in different stages of civilisation sacred places give shelter to refugees. Among the Arunta, in Central Australia, there is in each local totem centre a spot in the immediate neighbourhood of which everything is sacred and must on no account be hurt. The plants growing there are never interfered with in any way; animals that come there are safe from the spear of the hunter; and a man who was pursued by others would not be touched so long as he remained at the spot. In many Polynesian islands and some parts of New Guinea criminals could take refuge at sacred places. So also in many North American tribes certain sacred places or whole villages served as asylums, where persons who were pursued by the tribe or an enemy were safe as soon as they had obtained admission. In Africa the right of sanctuary is widespread. Among the Barotse (Upper Zambesi) there is a city of refuge, and the tombs of chiefs are sanctuaries, which is also the case among the Kafirs. In Ashanti a slave who flies to a temple and dashes himself against the fetish cannot easily be brought back to his master. Among the Negroes of Accra criminals used to "seat themselves upon the fetish," that is, place themselves under its protection.

In Morocco both shrines and mosques are asylums for refugees; but as a rule the former are safer places for them than the latter, and in many parts of the

country mosques are not places of refuge at all, because there is nobody to intervene on behalf of those who would flee to them. Again, the degree of protection which a refugee enjoys at a shrine depends on the importance of the saint and the influence of his descendants or caretaker. If the refugee has only committed a small offence, the latter try perhaps to persuade the authorities to pardon him; whereas if he has perpetrated a great crime, they may do their best to induce him to leave the place, but intervene at the same time on his behalf so that his punishment shall not be excessive. If he refuses to leave, the governor can have him put in irons to prevent his escape, but nobody can forcibly compel him to leave the place. Nor must he be starved into subjection; if his own relatives do not bring him food, he is fed by charitable visitors or by the people connected with the shrine. I heard of a thief in Tangier who remained for four years with shackled feet in the precinct of its patron saint, leaving it only when the man whom he had robbed died and the descendants of the saint managed to mediate between his sons and the thief. Many stories are told of punishments inflicted by saints on persons who have violated the right of sanctuary attached to their shrines. I saw a madman whose insanity was attributed to the fact that he once, while a soldier, had forcibly removed a fugitive from the tomb of a certain saint. It is said that Mûlai 'Abd-el-'Azîz's powerful grand-vizier Bba Hmed was killed by two great saints because he had laid violent hands on their refugees, and that the Sultan himself eventually lost his throne because he had ordered the execution of a shereef who had murdered an English missionary in Fez and then fled to the most

sacred place of the town. In other Mohammedan countries besides Morocco the tombs of saints, as also mosques, are, or have been, places of refuge.

Among the Hebrews the right of asylum belonged originally to all altars, but was afterwards limited to certain cities of refuge. According to the Old Testament, manslayers could find shelter there only in the case of involuntary homicide, but this was undoubtedly a narrowing of the ancient custom. Many heathen sanctuaries of the Phœnicians and Syrians retained even in Roman times what seems to have been an unlimited right of asylum. In Greece many sacred places possessed such a right down to the end of paganism, and any violation of it was supposed to be severely punished by the deity. In Rome there seem to have been since ancient times sacred places that gave shelter to refugees ; but it was only in a comparatively late period of Roman history that the right of sanctuary, under Greek influence, was recognised as an institution of some importance. When Christianity became the religion of the State the churches laid claim to the same privilege ; but a legal right of asylum was only granted them by Honorius in the West and Theodosius in the East. Subsequently it was restricted by Justinian, who decreed that all manslayers, adulterers, and kidnappers of women who fled to a church should be taken out of it.

The right of sanctuary existed among the pagan Slavs, or some of them, and probably also among the ancient Teutons. After their conversion to Christianity the privilege of asylum within the church was recognised in most of their codes. In the Middle Ages and later persons who fled to a church or to certain boundaries surrounding it were, for a time at least, safe from all

persecution, it being considered treason against God, an offence beyond compensation, to force even the most flagrant criminal from His altar. The ordinary of the sacred place, or his official, was the only one who could try to induce him to leave it, but if he failed, the utmost that could be done was to deny the refugee victuals so that he might go forth voluntarily. Gradually, however, the right of sanctuary was subjected to various restrictions both by secular legislation and by the Church. It was enjoined that such protection should not be given to persons who had committed certain grave crimes ; in England, in the reign of Henry VIII., it was taken away from persons guilty of murder, rape, burglary, highway robbery, and arson. The law of sanctuary was then left unchanged till the reign of James I., when, in theory, the privilege in question was altogether denied to criminals. Yet, as a matter of fact, asylums continued to exist in England so late as the reign of George I., when that of St. Peter's at Westminster was demolished.

The right of sanctuary has been ascribed to various causes. Legal writers, who have generally paid little attention to the influence which superstition has had on law and legal practice, have attributed this privilege to a desire to give time for the first heat of resentment to pass over before the injured party could seek redress. I admit that such a desire may have helped to preserve the right of asylum where it has once come into existence, but it could not account for the origin of it. We should remember that the privilege of sanctuary not only affords temporary protection to the refugee, but in many cases altogether exempts him from punishment or retaliation. And why were the places of refuge sanctuaries ?

Robertson Smith has stated part of the truth in saying that "the assertion of a man's undoubted rights as against a fugitive at the sanctuary is regarded as an encroachment on its holiness." There is an almost instinctive fear not only of shedding blood, but of disturbing the peace in a holy place; and if it is improper to commit an act of violence in the house of another man, it is naturally considered no less offensive, and also infinitely more dangerous, to do so in the homestead of a supernatural being. But this is only one aspect of the matter: another, equally important, still calls for an explanation. Why should the gods or saints themselves be so anxious to protect criminals who have sought refuge in their sanctuaries? Why do they not deliver them up to justice through their earthly representatives?

The answer lies in certain ideas which refer to human as well as divine protectors of refugees. The god or saint is in exactly the same position as a man to whose house a person has fled for shelter. Among various peoples the domicile of the chief or king, or of the priest or high-priest, is an asylum for criminals; nobody dares to attack a man who is sheltered by so mighty a personage, and from what has been said before, in connection with the rules of hospitality, it is also evident why he holds it necessary for himself to protect him. By being in close contact with him the suppliant is able to transfer to him a dangerous curse. Sometimes a criminal can in a similar way be a danger to the king even from a distance, or by meeting him, and must in consequence be pardoned. In Madagascar an offender escaped punishment if he could obtain sight of the sovereign, whether before or after conviction;

hence criminals at work on the highroad were ordered to withdraw when the sovereign was known to be coming by. In Usambara even a murderer is safe as soon as he has touched the person of the king. On the Slave Coast "criminals who are doomed to death are always gagged, because if a man should speak to the king he must be pardoned." In Ashanti, if an offender should succeed in swearing on the king's life, he must likewise be pardoned, since such an oath is believed to involve danger to the king; knives are therefore driven through the cheeks from opposite sides, over the tongue, to prevent him from speaking. So also among the Romans, according to an old Jewish writer, a person condemned to death was gagged to prevent him from cursing the king.

Now as a refugee may by his curse force a king or a priest or any other man with whom he establishes some kind of contact to protect him, so he may in a similar manner constrain a god or a saint as soon as he has entered his sanctuary. According to the Moorish expression he is "in the '*ār*'" of the supernatural being, who is bound to protect him, for the same reason as a host is bound to protect his guest. It is not only men who have to fear the curses of dissatisfied refugees: gods are also susceptible to curses hurled at them. Let us once more remember the words which Æschylus puts into the mouth of Apollo, when he declares his intention to assist his suppliant, Orestes:—"Terrible both among men *and gods* is the wrath of a refugee, when one abandons him with intent."

## V

### THE SUBJECTION OF CHILDREN—REGARD FOR TRUTH AND GOOD FAITH—THE OATH

I HAVE attempted to show how gods have become moral specialists by being invoked in curses and blessings of men in connection with certain modes of conduct, and shall now discuss some other cases in which such invocations have led to divine sanction of rules of social morality. They have done so in the case of the relations between parents and children.

Among some of the lower races who reckon descent not through the father but through the mother, children are in the power of the head of their mother's family or their maternal uncle; but it seems that among the majority of those peoples who have matrilineal descent, as well as among all who have patrilineal descent, children are distinctly in the power of their father, who, however, may have to share his authority with the mother. The extent and duration of the father's power vary greatly. So far as the daughter is concerned, it lasts till she marries, but as a rule no longer. With regard to the son, it mostly comes to an end as he grows up. But the case is different among many peoples of culture. When we pass from the savage and barbarous races of men to those next above them in civilisation, the peoples of archaic culture, we find paternal or parental authority and filial reverence at their height.

The idea that filial piety is the fundamental duty of man has up to our days been dominant in China; the house-father reigns there almost supreme in the household, and not even marriage withdraws the son from his power. It is a general opinion among Assyriologists that in ancient Chaldea, at least in the early period of its history, the father had absolute authority over all the members of his family; anything undertaken by them without his consent was held invalid in the eyes of the law, and disobedient sons might be sold as slaves. Among the Hebrews a father might sell his child to relieve his own distress, or offer it to a creditor as a pledge. He had unlimited power to marry his daughter, and also chose wives for his sons; and there is no indication that the subjection of sons ceased after a certain age. How important were the duties of the child to the parents may be at once learned from the placing of the law on the subject among the Ten Commandments, and from its position there in the immediate proximity to the commands relating to the duties of man towards God. In Mohammedan countries parents have actually great authority over their children. In Morocco it is curious to see big, grown-up sons sneak away as soon as they hear their father's steps, and to notice their absolute reticence in his presence. Children's respect for their mother is less formal, but almost equally great.

Among the ancient Romans, as Mommsen says, in relation to the house-father, "all in the household were destitute of legal rights—the wife and the child no less than the bullock or the slave." The father not only had judicial authority over his children—implying the right of inflicting capital punishment on them—but he

could sell them at discretion. Even the grown-up son and his children were subject to the house-father's authority, and in marriage without *conventio in manum* a daughter remained in the power of her father or tutor even after marriage. It has been suggested by Sir Henry Maine and others that the *patria potestas* of the Romans was a survival of the paternal authority that existed among the primitive Aryans. But no clear evidence of the general prevalence of such unlimited authority among other so-called Aryan peoples has been adduced. The ancient jurist observed, "The power which we have over our children is peculiar to Roman citizens; for there are no other nations possessing the same power over their children as we have over ours." Among the Greeks and Teutons the father had the right to expose his children in their infancy, to sell them, in case of urgency, as long as they remained in his power, and to give away his daughters in marriage; but this does not imply the possession of a sovereignty like that which the Roman house-father exercised over his descendants of all ages. Nor is there any evidence that the *patria potestas* of the Roman type ever prevailed in full in India, great though the father's or parents' authority has been, and still is, among the Hindus. According to some of their sacred books, the father and the mother have power to give, to sell, and to abandon their son, unless he be an only son; but in others such a right is denied them. According to ancient Russian and other Slavonic laws, fathers likewise had great power over their children, but it is not probable that sons could be sold as slaves.

Among all these peoples there is a close connection

between filial submissiveness and religious beliefs. In China and Japan the reverence for parents almost forms a part of the worship of ancestors. As to the Israelites, Philo Judæus remarks that the commandment enjoining obedience to parents occupies its position immediately after those prescribing the duties of man towards God because parents are something between divine and human nature, partaking of both—of human nature inasmuch as it is plain that they have been born and that they will die, and of divine nature because they have engendered other beings, and have brought into existence what did not exist before. What God is to the world, that parents are to their children; they are “the visible gods.” The religious character of filial duties is very conspicuous both in Moham-  
medanism and Hinduism. Disobedience to parents is considered by Moslems as one of the greatest sins, and is put in point of heinousness on a par with idolatry, murder, and desertion in an expedition against infidels. According to ancient Hindu ideas, a father, mother, and spiritual teacher are equal to the three Vedas, equal to the three gods, Brahman, Vishnu, and Siva. A man who shows no regard for them derives no benefit from any religious observance; whereas, “by honouring his mother he gains the present world; by honouring his father, the world of gods; and by paying strict obedience to his spiritual teacher, the world of Brahman.” In the Greek writings there are numerous passages which put filial piety on a par with the duties towards the gods. To the ancient Romans the parents were hardly less sacred beings than the gods. In Russia the father, like the Tsar, “was thought to hold from Heaven a sort of right divine, to rebel against which would have been

sacrilege." According to a Slavonic maxim, "a father is like an earthly god to his son."

Among the ancient nations of culture the father was invested with sacerdotal functions. In primitive antiquity, says Fustel de Coulanges, "the father is not only the strong man, the protector who has power to command obedience; he is the priest, he is heir to the hearth, the continuator of the ancestors, the parent stock of the descendants, the depositary of the mysterious rites of worship, and of the sacred formulas of prayer. The whole religion resides in him."

But another very important reason for the connection between filial submissiveness and religious beliefs was undoubtedly the extreme importance attached to the curses and blessings of parents. The Israelites believed that parents, and especially the father, could by their blessings or curses determine the fate of their children; and we have reason to assume that the reward which in the fifth commandment is held out to respectful children was originally a result of parental blessings. We still meet with the ancient idea in Ecclesiasticus, where it is said:—"Honour thy father and mother both in word and deed, that a blessing may come upon thee from them. For the blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children; but the curse of the mother rooteth out foundations." The Moors have a proverb that "he who has been broken by his parents will not be repaired by the saints, and he who has been broken by the saints will be repaired by his parents"; in other words, the curses of parents are more powerful than those of saints.

The notion that the parents' blessings beget prosperity

and that their curses bring ruin prevailed in ancient Greece. Plato says in his *Laws* :—" Neither God, nor a man who has understanding, will ever advise any one to neglect his parents. . . . For the curses of parents are, as they ought to be, mighty against their children as no others are. And shall we suppose that the prayers of a father or mother who is specially dishonoured by his or her children are heard by the gods in accordance with nature ; and that if a parent is honoured by them, and in the gladness of his heart earnestly entreats the gods in his prayers to do them good, he is not equally heard, and that they do not minister to his request ? " Parents, like guests and suppliants and beggars, had their Erinyes, who obviously were only personifications of curses pronounced in case of ill-treatment or neglect. But the fulfilment of their curses was also looked upon as an act of divine justice. According to Plato, " Nemesis, the messenger of justice," watches over unbecoming words uttered to a parent ; and Hesiod says that if anybody reproaches an aged father or mother, " Zeus himself is wroth, and at last, in requital for wrong deeds, lays on him a bitter penalty." It also seems to be beyond all doubt that the *divi parentum* of the Romans, like their *dii hospitales*, were nothing but personified curses. For it is said, " If a son beat his parent and he cry out, the son shall be devoted to the parental gods for destruction."

In aristocratic families in Russia children used to stand in mortal fear of their fathers' curses ; and the country people believe that a marriage without the parents' approval will call down the wrath of Heaven on the heads of the young couple. Some of the Southern Slavs maintain that if a son does not fulfil the

last will of his father, the soul of the father will curse him from the grave.

Various uncivilised peoples, also, ascribe great efficacy to the curses or blessings of parents. Among the natives of the Lower Congo children are terribly afraid of their father's curses. Among the Mpongwe, in Western Africa, "there is nothing which a young person so much deprecates as the curse of an aged person, and especially that of a revered father." Among the Nandi, in British East Africa, "if a son refuses to obey his father in any serious matter, the father solemnly strikes the son with his fur mantle. This is equivalent to a most serious curse, and is supposed to be fatal to the son unless he obtains forgiveness, which he can only do by sacrificing a goat before his father." The Barca and Kunáma, in North-East Africa, are convinced that any undertaking which has not the blessing of the old people will fail, that every curse uttered by them must be destructive. Among the Bogos, in the same neighbourhood, nobody takes an employment or gives it up, nobody engages in a business or contracts a marriage, before he has received the blessing of his father or his master.

Why are curses and blessings of parents supposed to possess such extraordinary power? One reason is no doubt the mystery of old age and the nearness of death. Not parents only, but to some extent old people generally, are held capable of giving due effect to their good and evil wishes, and this capacity is believed to increase when life is drawing to a close. According to Teutonic ideas, the curse of a dying person was the strongest of all curses. A similar notion prevailed among the ancient Arabs; and among the Israelites

the father's mystic privilege of determining the weal or woe of his children was particularly obvious when his days were manifestly numbered. But at the same time parental imprecations and benedictions possess a potency of their own owing to the parents' superior position in the family and the respect in which they are naturally held. The influence that such a superiority has upon the efficacy of curses is well brought out by certain facts. According to the Greek notion, the Erinyes avenged wrongs done by younger members of a family to elder ones, even brothers and sisters, but not *vice versa*. There is a Moorish proverb that "the woman who is cursed by her husband is like one who is cursed by her father." The Tonga Islanders believe that curses have no effect "if the party who curses is considerably lower in rank than the party cursed." Moreover, where the father was the priest of the family, his blessings and curses would for that reason also be efficacious in an exceptional degree.

Another department of social morality that has been placed under the supervision of gods is truth-speaking and fidelity to a given promise. Lying is often supposed to be attended with supernatural danger. From West Africa we hear of fetishes that punish liars. The Fjort have a tale about a fisherman who every day used to catch and smuggle into the house great quantities of fish but denied to his brother and relatives that he had caught anything. All this time the fetish Sunga was watching, and was grieved to hear him lie thus. The fetish punished him by depriving him of the power of speech, that he might lie no more, and so for the future he could only make his wants

known by signs. In another instance, the Fjort tell us, the earth-spirit turned into a pillar of clay a woman who said that she had no peas for sale, when she had the basket full of them. The Nandi believe that " God punishes lying by striking the untruthful person with lightning." The Dyaks of Borneo think that the lightning-god is made angry even by the most non-sensical untruth, such as the statement that a man has a cat for his mother or that vermin can dance. Many gods of the higher religions are concerned with veracity and good faith. In ancient Egypt Amon Ra, " the chief of all the gods," was invoked as " Lord of Truth " ; and Maa, or Maat, represented as his daughter, was the goddess of truth and righteousness. In a Babylonian hymn the moon god is appealed to as the guardian of truth. The Vedic gods are described as " true " and " not deceitful," as friends of honesty and righteousness ; and Agni was the lord of vows. According to Zoroastrianism, truthfulness is a most sacred duty : the god Mithra was a protector of truth, fidelity, and covenants, and Rashnu Razista, " the truest true," was the genius of truth. According to the Iliad, Zeus is " no abettor of falsehoods " ; according to Plato, a lie is hateful not only to men but to gods. Among the Romans, Jupiter and Dius Fidius were gods of treaties, and Fides was worshipped as the deity of faithfulness. How shall we explain this connection between religious beliefs and the duties of veracity and fidelity to promises ?

Apart from the circumstances which in some cases make gods vindicators of the moral law in general, there are quite special reasons for their disapproval of lying and bad faith. Here again we notice the influence of magical beliefs on the religious sanction of morality.

There is something uncanny in the untrue word itself. As Professor Stanley Hall points out, children not infrequently regard every deviation from the most painfully literal truth as alike heinous, with no perspective or degrees of difference between the most barefaced intended and unintended lies. In some children this fear of telling an untruth becomes so neurotic that to every statement, even to yes or no, a "perhaps" or "I think" is added mentally, whispered, or aloud. One boy had a long period of fear that, like Ananias and Sapphira, he might some moment drop down dead for a chance and perhaps unconscious lie. On the other hand, an acted lie is felt to be much less harmful than a spoken one; to point the wrong way when asked where some one is gone is less objectionable than to speak wrongly, to nod is less sinful than to say yes. Indeed, acted lies are for the most part easily gotten away with, whereas some mysterious baleful energy seems to be attributed to the spoken untruth. That its evil influence is looked upon as quite mechanical appears from the palliatives used for it. Many American children are of opinion that a lie may be reversed by putting the left hand on the right shoulder, and that even an oath may be neutralised or taken in an opposite sense by raising the left instead of the right hand. Among children in New York "it was sufficient to cross the fingers, elbows, or legs, though the act might not be noticed by the companion accosted, and under such circumstances no blame attached to a falsehood." To think "I do not mean it," or to attach to a statement a meaning quite different from the current one, is a form of reservation which is repeatedly found in children.

Feelings and ideas of this kind are not restricted to the young ; they are fairly common among grown-up people, and have even found expression in ethical doctrines. They are at the root of the Jesuit theory of mental reservations. Private protestations were thought sufficient to relieve men in conscience from being bound by a solemn treaty or from the duty of speaking the truth ; and an equivocation, or play upon words in which one sense is taken by the speaker and another sense intended by him for the hearer, was in certain cases held permissible. According to Alfonso de' Liguori—who lived in the eighteenth century and was beatified in the nineteenth, and whose writings were declared by high authority not to contain a word that could be justly found fault with—there are three sorts of equivocation which may be employed for a good reason, even with the addition of a solemn oath. We are allowed to use ambiguously words having two senses, as the word *volo*, which means both to “ wish ” and to “ fly ” ; sentences bearing two main meanings, as “ This book is Peter's,” which may mean either that the book belongs to Peter or that Peter is the author of it ; words having two senses, one more common than the other or one literal and the other metaphorical—for instance, if a man is asked about something which it is in his interest to conceal, he may answer, “ No, I say,” that is, “ I say the word ‘ no.’ ” As for mental restrictions, again, such as are “ purely mental,” and on that account cannot in any manner be discovered by other persons, are not permissible ; but we may, for a good reason, make use of a “ non-pure mental restriction,” which in the nature of things is discoverable, although it is not discovered by the person

with whom we are dealing. Thus it would be wrong to insert secretly the word "not" in an affirmative oath without any external sign; but it would not be wrong to insert it in a whispering voice or under the cover of a cough. The "good reason" for which equivocations and non-pure mental restrictions may be employed is defined as "any honest object, such as keeping our goods spiritual or temporal."

These instances of casuistry are psychologically interesting. I think most people would prefer telling lies by ambiguous statements to telling downright lies. Nay, it is not uncommonly argued that in defence of a secret we may not "lie," that is, produce directly beliefs contrary to facts; but that we may "turn a question aside," that is, produce indirectly, by natural inference from our answer, a negatively false belief, or that we may "throw the inquirer on a wrong scent," that is, produce similarly a positively false belief. This extreme formalism may no doubt to some extent be traced to the influence of early training. From the day we learned to speak, the duty of telling the truth has been strenuously enjoined upon us, and the word "lie" has been associated with sin of the blackest hue; whereas other forms of falsehood, being less frequent, less obvious, and less easy to define, have also been less emphasised. But after full allowance is made for this influence, the fact still remains that a mystic efficacy is very commonly ascribed to the spoken word. Even among ourselves many persons would not dare to praise their health or good fortune for fear lest some evil should result from their speech; and among less civilised peoples much greater significance is given to a word than among us. Herodotus, after mentioning

the extreme importance which the ancient Persians attached to the duty of speaking the truth, adds that they held it unlawful even "to talk of anything which it is unlawful to do." I think, then, we may assume that if for some reason or other falsehood is stigmatised, the mysterious tendency inherent in the word easily develops into an avenging power which, as often happens in similar cases, is associated with the activity of a god.

The punishing power of a word is particularly conspicuous in the case of an oath. But the evil attending perjury is in the first place a result of the curse which constitutes the oath. An oath is essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which a person calls down upon himself some evil in the event of what he says not being true. The efficacy of an oath may be entirely magical, being due to the magic power of the cursing words. In order to charge them with supernatural energy, various methods are adopted. Sometimes the person who takes the oath puts himself into contact with some object which represents the state referred to in the oath, so that the oath may absorb, as it were, its quality and communicate it to the perjurer. The Tunguses regard it as the most dreadful of all their oaths when an accused person is compelled to drink some of the blood of a dog which, after its throat has been cut, is impaled near a fire and burnt, or has its flesh scattered about piece-meal, and to swear:-- "I speak the truth, and that is as true as it is that I drink this blood. If I lie, let me perish, burn, or be dried up like this dog." In other cases the person who is to swear takes hold of a certain object and calls it to

inflict on him some injury if he perjure himself. The Kandhs frequently take oath upon the skin of a tiger, "from which animal destruction to the perjured is invoked." The Chuvashes, again, put a piece of bread and a little salt in the mouth and swear, "May I be in want of these, if I say not true!" or "if I do not keep my word!" Another method of charging an oath with supernatural energy is simply to touch, or to establish some kind of contact with, a holy object on the occasion when the oath is taken. The Iowa Indians had a mysterious iron or stone, wrapped in seven skins, by which they made men swear to speak the truth. The people of Kesam, in the highlands of Palembang in Sumatra, swear by an old sacred knife, the Ostyaks on the nose of a bear, which is regarded by them as an animal endowed with supernatural power. Hindus swear on a copy of the Sanskrit *haribans*, or with Ganges water in their hands, or touch the legs of a brahman in taking an oath. Mohammedans swear on the Koran, as Christians do on the Bible; and I am told that in this country, where a witness has to kiss it, care is sometimes taken that he does not put his finger between his lips and the Bible—there would then be no contact between them, and perjury would consequently be attended with no evil result. In mediæval Christendom sacred relics were generally adopted as the most effective means of adding security to oaths, and "so little respect was felt for the simple oath that, ere long, the adjuncts came to be looked upon as the essential feature, and the imprecation itself to be divested of binding force without them." In Morocco an oath derives efficacy from contact with, or the presence of, any lifeless object, animal, or person

endowed with *baraka*, or holiness, such as a shrine or a mosque, bread or wool, a flock of sheep or a horse, or a shereef.

Finally, as an ordinary curse, so an oath frequently takes the form of an appeal to a supernatural being. When the Comanches of Texas make a sacred pledge or promise, "they call upon the great spirit as their father, and the earth as their mother, to testify to the truth of their asseverations." Of the Chukchi we are told that "as often as they would certify the truth of any thing by oath or solemn protestations, they take the sun for their guarantee and security." Among the Tunguses an accused person takes a knife in his hand, brandishes it towards the sun, and says, "If I am guilty, may the sun send diseases into my bowels as mortal as a stab with this knife would be." A Moor may swear by a gun which he presses against his chest or points towards his body, saying, "By this cannon, may God discharge it into my heart if I did this or that," or, "By this poison, may God pour it into me if I did this or that." Among the Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast, "to make an oath binding on the person who takes it, it is usual to give him something to eat or to drink which in some way appertains to a deity, who is then invoked to visit a breach of faith with punishment." It seems to be a common practice in some parts of Africa to swear by a fetish. In Florida, of the Solomon Group, a man will deny an accusation by the ghostly frigate-bird, or by the ghostly shark. When an ancient Egyptian wished to give assurance of his honesty and good faith, he called Thoth to witness, the advocate in the heavenly court of justice, without whose justification no soul could stand in the day of

judgment. The Eranians swore by Mithra, the Greeks by Zeus, the Romans by Jupiter and *Dius Fidius*. A god is more able than ordinary mortals to master the processes of nature, and may also better know whether the sworn word be true or false. It is undoubtedly on account of their superior knowledge that sun- or moon- or light-gods are so frequently appealed to in oaths. The Egyptian god Ra is a solar, and Thoth a lunar deity. The Zoroastrian Mithra, who "has a thousand senses, and sees every man that tells a lie," is closely connected with the sun; and Rashnu Razista, according to Darmesteter, is an offshoot either of Mithra or Ahura Mazda himself. *Dius Fidius* seems originally to have been a spirit of the heaven, and a wielder of the lightning, closely allied to the great Jupiter. Zeus is all-seeing, the infallible spy of both gods and men. Now, even though the oath has the form of an appeal to a god, it may nevertheless be of a chiefly magic character, being an imprecation rather than a prayer. But the more the belief in magic was shaken, the more the spoken word was divested of that mysterious power which had been attributed to it by minds too apt to confound words with facts, the more prominent became the religious element in the oath. The fulfilment of the self-imprecation was made dependent upon the free will of the deity appealed to, and was regarded as the punishment for an offence committed by the perjurer against the god himself.

Owing to its invocation of supernatural sanction, perjury is considered the most heinous of all acts of falsehood. But it has a tendency to make even the ordinary lie or breach of faith a matter of religious concern. If a god is frequently appealed to in oaths,

a general hatred of lying and unfaithfulness may become one of his attributes, as is suggested by various facts I have quoted. There is every reason to believe that a god is not, in the first place, appealed to because he is looked upon as a guardian of veracity and good faith, but that he has come to be looked upon as a guardian of these duties because he has been frequently appealed to in connection with them.

## VI

### THE ORDEAL—REGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE— JUSTICE—CRIMINAL LAW

CLOSELY connected with oaths and curses is the ordeal. To say, " May I die if I have done this or that," is an oath. To say, " May this drink kill me if I have done this or that," and then to drink the fluid in question, is an ordeal ; the drink will kill the person because he has charged it with a conditional self-imprecation. Or the conditional curse may be pronounced not by the person who is subjected to the ordeal, but by some other person, who administers it. For example, the so-called " trial of jealousy " mentioned in the Old Testament involved a curse pronounced by the priest to the effect that the holy water which the woman who was suspected of adultery had to drink should cause her belly to swell and her thigh to rot, in case she had committed the crime she was suspected of. In many cases at least, the ordeal contains an oath or conditional curse which has reference to the guilt or innocence of a suspected person, and the proper object of the ordeal is then to give reality to the imprecation for the purpose of establishing the validity or invalidity of the suspicion. And just as in the case of the ordinary oath and curse, so also the imprecation in the ordeal very frequently contains the appeal to a god. To take a few instances from the

savage world, where ordeals are as frequent as among more civilised peoples.

The Madi of Central Africa have various means of trial by ordeal, through which it is believed that the guilt of a suspected individual can be detected; and "before any of these trials the men look up and solemnly invoke some invisible being to punish him if guilty, or help him if innocent." Among the East African Akamba, when the supposed criminal is to undergo the ordeal of the hatchet, a magician makes him repeat the following words:—"If I have stolen the property of so-and-so, or committed this crime, let Mulungu respond for me; but if I have not stolen, nor done this wickedness, may he save me." The magician then passes the red-hot iron four times over the flat hand of the accused; and the people believe that if he is guilty, his hand will be burned, but that, if innocent, he will suffer no injury. Among the Negroes of Northern Guinea, in the case of the "red-water ordeal," the accused "invokes the name of God three times, and imprecates his wrath in case he is guilty of the particular crime laid to his charge." He then steps forward and drinks freely of the "red-water"—that is, a decoction made from the inner bark of a tree of the mimosa family. If it nauseates and makes him vomit freely, he is at once pronounced innocent, whereas, if it causes vertigo and he loses self-control, it is regarded as evidence of guilt.

In the Middle Ages ordeals were frequently resorted to for the purpose of ascertaining the guilt or innocence of a person accused or suspected of having committed a crime. An important ordeal was the wager of battle, or judicial combat, well known to every student of mediæval law. It seems to have developed out of the

ancient Teutonic practice of settling disputes by private duelling. In a time when the community did its best to suppress acts of revenge, it was no doubt a wise measure to adopt the duel as a form of judicial procedure, investing it with the character of an ordeal. It seems probable that the duel had assumed this character even among the pagan Teutons. Like other ordeals, it was resorted to in cases where there was some doubt as to the guilt of the accused ; and the issue of the fight decided the question of guilt because of the imprecation involved in the oath preceding the duel. Before the combat commenced, each party asserted his good cause in the most positive manner, confirmed the assertion by a solemn oath on the Gospels or on a relic of approved sanctity, and called upon God to grant victory to the right. Such an oath was an indispensable preliminary to every judicial combat, and the defeat was thus not merely the loss of the suit, but also a conviction of perjury, to be punished as such. Witnesses might have to fight as well as principals. Some mediæval codes required them to come into court armed, and to have their weapons blessed on the altar before giving their testimony. The practice of blessing the arms before the duel took place was no doubt intended to enable them the better to carry out the imprecation by saturating them with sanctity, or by increasing their natural sanctity ; weapons are commonly regarded with superstitious veneration, hence oaths taken upon them are held to be particularly binding. But while the judicial duel fundamentally derived its efficacy as a means of ascertaining the truth from its connection with an oath, it was at the same time regarded as an appeal to the justice of God.

In most European countries the judicial combat survived the close of the Middle Ages, but disappeared some time afterwards; in England, however, it was formally abolished by law only in 1819, though it had long been obsolete. But when finally banished from the courts of justice, the duel did not die. In the sixteenth century, when the judicial duel faded away, the duel of honour began to flourish. Buckle observes that "as the trial by battle became disused, the people, clinging to their old customs, became more addicted to duelling." The judicial combat may thus be regarded as the direct parent of the modern duel.

I do not maintain that all ordeals are connected with oaths or curses, expressed or implied. The mediæval custom of swimming witches, for instance, is said to have arisen from the notion that everything unholy is repelled by water and unable to sink into its depths; and the ordeal of touching the corpse of a murdered person, from the belief that the soul of such a person lingered about the body until appeased by the shedding of the murderer's blood. Pitcairn writes in his book on criminal trials in Scotland that "by the murderer's approach, and especially by his polluted touch, the soul was excited to an instant manifestation of its indignation, by appearing in the form in which it was supposed to subsist, *viz.* in that of blood." But even though all ordeals have not the same foundation, it seems highly improbable that any people in the first instance resorted to this method of discovering innocence and guilt from a belief in a god who is by his nature a guardian of truth and justice.

We shall still consider a department of social morality the religious sanction of which is connected with certain primitive beliefs, namely, the regard for human life.

Savages, no less than civilised mankind, practically regard a man's life as his highest good. Whatever opinions may be held about the existence after death, whatever blessings may be supposed to await the disembodied soul, nobody likes to be hurried into that existence by another's will. According to early beliefs, the soul of a murdered man is furious with the person who slew him. His ghost persecutes the manslayer, or actually cleaves to him like a miasma ; he is regarded as unclean and must undergo rites of purification to get rid of the infection. Until this is done, he is among many peoples regarded as a source of danger, and may consequently be cut off from free intercourse with his fellows.

Some North American Indians believe that a murderer is surrounded by the ghosts, who keep up a constant whistling ; that he can never satisfy his hunger, though he eat much food ; and that he must not be allowed to roam at large lest high winds arise. The Basutos, in South Africa, consider it necessary that, on return from battle, " the warriors should rid themselves as soon as possible of the blood they have shed, or the shades of their victims would pursue them incessantly and disturb their slumbers " ; hence they go in full armour to the nearest stream, and, as a rule, at the moment they enter the water a diviner, placed higher up, throws some purifying substances into the current. Many other similar instances from the savage world are found in Sir James Frazer's book *Psyche's Task*. In the Old

Testament we read that after the slaughter of the Midianites those Israelites who had killed any one, or touched the slain, had to remain outside the camp for seven days, purifying themselves and everything in their possession either by water or fire or both. According to the Laws of Manu, the mythical Hindu legislator, a person who has unintentionally killed a brahman shall make a hut in the forest and dwell in it during twelve years; and in order to remove his guilt he shall throw himself thrice headlong into a blazing fire, or walk against the stream along the whole course of a certain river, or shave off all his hair. The ancient Greeks believed that one who had suffered a violent end, when newly dead, was angry with the author of his death. The blood-guilty individual shunned all contact and conversation with other people, and avoided their dwellings. Even the involuntary manslayer had to leave the country for some time; according to Plato's *Laws*, which embodies the customary law of Attica, he "must go out of the way of his victim for the entire period of a year, and not let himself be found in any spot which was familiar to him throughout the country." Nor must he return to his land until sacrifice had been offered and ceremonies of purification performed.

The state of uncleanness incurred by the shedding of human blood does not intrinsically involve moral guilt. As appears from some instances just referred to, it results not only from the murder of a tribesman, but from so meritorious a deed as the slaying of a foe. But there can be no doubt that in many cases the polluting effect attributed to manslaughter has influenced the moral judgment of the act. Whenever

the commission of an act of homicide has any tendency at all to call forth moral blame, the disapproval of it will easily be enhanced by the spiritual danger attending on it, as also by the inconvenient restrictions laid on the tabooed manslayer and the ceremonies of purification to which he is subjected. The deprivations which he has to undergo come to be looked upon in the light of a punishment, and the rites of cleansing as a means of removing guilt. Moreover, the notion of a persecuting ghost may be replaced by the notion of an avenging god. Confusions are common in the world of mystery : doings or functions attributed to one being are easily transferred to another—this is an important fact in the history of religion. Among the Omaha Indians the ghost of the murdered man was not lost sight of : the murderer “ was obliged to pitch his tent about a quarter of a mile from the rest of the tribe when they were going on the hunt lest the ghost of his victim should raise a high wind, which might cause damage.” But at the same time his deed was considered offensive to the divine being called Wakanda ; no one wished to eat with him, for they said, “ If we eat with whom Wakanda hates for his crime, Wakanda will hate us.” In the Chinese books there are numerous instances of persons haunted by the souls of their victims on their death-bed, and in most of these cases the ghosts state expressly that they are avenging themselves with the special authorisation of Heaven, the highest god. The Greeks believed that a murdered man had his Erinyes, or avenging demon, and, as Rohde has shown, this idea originated in the earlier notion of a persecuting ghost, whose anger or curses were personified as an independent spirit. And the transformation went further

still : the Erinyes were represented as the ministers of Zeus, who by punishing the murderer carried out his divine will. Originally, as it seems, only the murder of a kinsman was an offence against Zeus and under the ban of the Erinyes, but later on their sphere of action was expanded, and all bloodshed, if the victim had any rights at all within the city, became a sin which needed purification. Uncleanness was thus transformed into spiritual impurity. When the pollution with which a manslayer is tainted is regarded as merely the work of a ghost, it may be devoid of all moral significance in spite of the dread it inspires ; but the case is different when it comes to be conceived of as a divine punishment, or a sin-pollution in the eyes of the supreme god. Such a transformation of ideas could hardly take place unless the act considered polluting were by itself apt to evoke moral disapproval. But it is obvious that the gravity of the offence is increased by the religious aspect it assumes.

In yet another way the defiling effect attributed to the taking of human life has had an influence upon religious and moral ideas. Such defilement is shunned not only by men, but in a still higher degree by gods. The shedding of human blood, as we have seen in another connection, is commonly prohibited in a sacred place. Among the North American Indians, for instance, there were several places which served as " towns of refuge," where human blood was never shed ; " although they often forced persons from thence, and put them to death elsewhere." At Athens the prosecution for homicide began with debarring the criminal from all sanctuaries and assemblies consecrated by religious observances. According to Greek

ideas, purification was an essential preliminary to an acceptable sacrifice. Hector said, "I shrink from offering a libation of gleaming wine to Zeus with hands unwashed ; nor can it be in any way wise that one should pray to the son of Kronos, god of the storm-cloud, all defiled with blood and filth." In many parts of Morocco a man who has slain another person is never afterwards allowed to kill the sacrificial sheep at the "Great Feast." When David had in his heart to build a temple, God said to him, "Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood." A decree of the penitential discipline of the Christian Church, which was enforced even against emperors and generals, forbade any one whose hands had been imbrued in blood to approach the altar without a preparatory period of penance.

While from fear of contaminating anything holy casual restrictions have thus been imposed on all kinds of manslayers, more stringent rules have been laid down for persons permanently connected with the religious cult. We are told that the "holy men" of North American Indians, like the Jewish priests, were by their function absolutely forbidden to shed human blood. The Druids of Gaul never went to war, presumably to keep themselves free from blood-pollution ; it is true, they sacrificed human victims to their gods, but these they burnt. To the same class of facts belong those decrees of the Christian Church which forbade clergymen to take part in a battle. Moreover, if a Christian priest passed a sentence of death he was punished with degradation and imprisonment for life ; nor was he allowed to write or dictate anything with a view to bringing about such a sentence.

Though he might assist at judicial proceedings resulting in a sentence of death, he was obliged to withdraw for the moment when the sentence was passed. If he killed a robber in order to save his life, he had to do penance till his death. He was not even allowed to perform a surgical operation by help of fire or iron. The principle of the Church was, "Ecclesia non sitit sanguinem"; and whilst ostentatiously sticking to it, she had recourse to the convenient method of punishing heretics by relegating the execution of the sentence to the civil power, with a prayer that the culprit should be punished "as mildly as possible and without the effusion of blood," that is, by the death of fire.

It cannot be doubted that the horror of blood-pollution had a share in that regard for human life which from the beginning, and especially in early times, was characteristic of Christianity. But in other respects, also, Christian feelings and beliefs had an inherent tendency to evoke such a sentiment. The extraordinary importance attached to this earthly life as a preparation for the life to come naturally increased the guilt of any one who, by cutting it short, not only killed the body, but probably to all eternity injured the soul.

I have thus far tried to show how gods have come to take an interest in various aspects of social morality, how they have become moral specialists. In several cases they have become so by being invoked in curses or blessings of men. But such invocations have also had a more general effect. Where the oath is an essential element in the judicial proceedings, as it is even among many uncivilised peoples and as it was in

the archaic State, the guardianship of gods, instead of being restricted to some special branches of morality, is extended to the whole sphere of justice. Truth and justice are repeatedly mentioned hand in hand as matters of divine concern, and the same gods as are appealed to in oaths are often described as judges of human conduct. Zeus presided over assemblies and trials ; according to Solon, the judges of Athens had to swear by him. And the Erinyes, the personifications of curses and oaths, are sometimes represented by poets and philosophers as guardians of right in general. Yet it is obvious that even a god like Zeus was more influenced by the invocation of a suppliant than by his sense of justice. Dr. Farnell points out that the epithets which designate him as the god to whom those stricken with guilt can appeal are far more in vogue in actual Greek cult than those which attribute to him the function of vengeance and retribution. He is not a guardian of morality at large in the same sense as the god of Israel, the god of Christianity, or the god of Islam. It does not fall within the limits of my subject to discuss the causes which have led to the notion of a god whose will is the foundation of all moral obligations. I only wish to point out that the gods of monotheistic religions have such a multitude of the most elevated attributes that it would be astonishing if they had remained unconcerned about morality at large. If flattery or genuine admiration makes the deity all-wise, all-powerful, all-good, they also make him the supreme judge of human conduct.

This carries with it the implication that every offence against man is at the same time an offence

against God. It has thereby assumed a graver aspect, which we find reflected in the criminal codes of many civilised peoples. Offences against fellow-men are frequently punished by them with a severity far surpassing the rigour of the *jus talionis*, or rule of equivalence between injury and retaliation, which is a characteristic of savage justice. Capital punishment is inflicted for many such offences besides homicide, and there are other cruelties as well committed in the name of justice. This has been the case in the old monarchies of America and Asia and in Christian countries up to quite modern times. Now there is sufficient evidence to show that the severity of their criminal codes has been regarded as beneficial to society owing to the deterrent effects of punishment, but the chief explanation of it lies in their connection with despotism or religion, or rather with both combined. An act which is prohibited by law may be punished, not only on account of its intrinsic character, but for the very reason that it is illegal. When the law is, from the outset, an expression of popular feelings, the severity of the penalty with which it threatens the transgressor depends, in the first place, on the public indignation evoked by the act itself, independently of the legal prohibition of it. But the case is different with laws established by despotic rulers or ascribed to divine lawgivers. Such laws have a tendency to treat criminals not only as offenders against the individuals whom they injure or against society at large, but as rebels against their sovereign or their god.

According to Garcilasso de la Vega, the Peruvians—among whom the most common punishment was death—maintained “ that a culprit was not punished for the

delinquencies he had committed, but for having broken the commandment of the Ynca, who was respected as God," and that, viewed in this light, the slightest offence merited to be punished with death. In China the Emperor "is regarded as the vicegerent of heaven, especially chosen to govern all nations, and is supreme in everything, holding at once the highest legislative and executive powers, without limit or control." According to ancient Japanese ideas, "the duty of a good Japanese consists in obeying the Mikado, without questioning whether his commands are right or wrong. The Mikado is god and vicar of all the gods, hence government and religion are the same." In mediæval and modern Europe the increase of the royal power was accompanied with increasing severity of the penal codes. Every crime came to be regarded as a crime against the King. Indeed, breach of the King's peace became the foundation of the whole criminal law of England; the right of pardon, for instance, as a prerogative of the Crown, took its origin in the fact that the King was supposed to be injured by a crime and could therefore waive his remedy. And the King was not only regarded as the fountain of social justice, but as the earthly representative of the heavenly lawgiver and judge.

Religion has influenced criminal legislation not only as regards its attitude towards injuries inflicted on a fellow-creature, but by introducing a new class of crimes. Even the monotheistic god, like all other gods, is particularly sensitive to offences committed against him personally. According to Hebrew notions, it is a man's duty to avenge offences against God, and hardly any punishment is too severe to be inflicted on the ungodly. These ideas were adopted by the Christian

Church and Christian governments: the principle stated in the Laws of Cnut, that "it belongs very rightly to a Christian king that he avenge God's anger very deeply, according as the deed may be," was acted upon till recent times. But the idea that men have particular duties to their gods, which become social duties because, if transgressed, the community may have to suffer for it, is earlier than monotheism.

## VII

### DUTIES TO GODS

MEN attribute to their gods a variety of human qualities, and their conduct towards them is in many respects determined by considerations similar to those which regulate their conduct towards their fellow-men. They must respect the life of a god ; if he takes up his abode in an animal or a tree, the worshipper must not kill the animal or cut down the tree. Supernatural beings are subject to human needs. The gods of the heathen Siberians laboured for their subsistence, engaged in hunting and fishing, and laid up provisions of roots against times of dearth. The Vedic gods wore clothes, suffered from constant hunger, and were great drunkards. An Egyptian god cannot be conceived without his house in which he lives, in which his festivals are solemnised, and which he never leaves except on professional days. His dwelling has to be cleaned, and he is assisted at his toilet by his attendants ; the priest has to dress and serve his god, and places every day on his table offerings of food and drink.

The idea that supernatural beings have human appetites and human wants leads to the practice of sacrifice. Whatever means they may have of earning their livelihood, they are certainly not indifferent to gifts offered by men. If such offerings fail them they

may suffer want and become feeble and powerless. We meet with this idea at every step in the Vedic hymns. Should sacrifices cease for an instant to be offered, the gods would cease to send rain, to bring back at the appointed hour Aurora and the sun, to raise and ripen harvests—not only because they would be unwilling, but because they would be unable to do so. The Zoroastrian books likewise represent the sacrifice as an act of assistance to the gods, by which they become victorious in their combats with the demons ; when not strengthened by offerings they fly helpless before their foes.

But sacrifice does not only in this positive manner promote the prosperity of the community : in many cases it averts calamities. This is particularly the case with the sacrifice of human beings. We meet with human sacrifice in the past history of every Aryan race. It occurred, at least occasionally, in ancient India, and several Hindu sects practised it in quite recent times. There are numerous indications that it was known in Greece. In Rome also human sacrifices, though exceptional, occurred in historic times. Pliny records that in the year 97 B.C. a decree forbidding such sacrifices was passed by the Roman Senate, and afterwards the emperor Hadrian found it necessary to renew this prohibition. Human sacrifices were offered by Celts, Teutons, and Slavs ; by the ancient Semites and Egyptians ; by the Japanese in early days ; and in the New World, to a frightful extent, by the Aztecs. They are also met with among various savage tribes, but cannot be regarded as characteristic of savage races. On the contrary, they are found much more frequently among barbarians and semi-civilised peoples than among

genuine savages, and at the lowest stages of culture known to us they are hardly heard of.

Men offer up human victims to their gods, of course, because they think that the gods are gratified by such offerings. In many cases they are supposed to have an appetite for human flesh or blood ; but sometimes, as on the Gold Coast, human sacrifice was connected with the idea that the gods required attendants. In other cases, again, a god demands the death of a person who has aroused his anger, or of some representative of a community that has committed an offence against him. This kind of human sacrifice has, in fact, survived even in the Christian world, since every execution performed for the purpose of appeasing an offended and angry god may be justly called a sacrifice.

It is impossible to discover in every special case in what respect the worshippers believe the offering of a man to be gratifying to their god. Probably they have not always definite views on the subject themselves. They know, or believe that on some certain occasion they are in danger of losing their lives ; they attribute this to the designs of a supernatural being ; and by sacrificing a man they hope to gratify its craving for human life, and thereby to avert the danger from themselves. That this principle mainly underlies the practice of human sacrifice appears from the circumstances in which it generally occurs.

Human victims are often offered in war, before a battle, or during a siege ; for the purpose of stopping or preventing epidemics ; as a method of putting an end to a famine or drought ; or with a view to averting perils arising from the sea or from rivers. When the Saxons were about to leave the coast of Gaul and sail

home, they sacrificed a tenth part of their captives ; and when the vikings of Scandinavia launched a new ship, they seem to have bound a victim to the rollers on which it slipped into the sea, thus reddening the keel with sacrificial blood. But human life is also sacrificed, by way of substitution, for the purpose of preventing the death of some particular individual, especially a chief or a king, from sickness, old age, or other circumstances. In the Ynglingasaga we are told that King Aun sacrificed nine sons, one after the other, to Odin in order to obtain a prolongation of his life. Suetonius states that Nero, frightened by the sight of a comet, sacrificed a number of Roman noblemen with a view to averting disaster from himself. According to one account, Antinous sacrificed himself to save the life of Hadrian. The notion that the death of one person may serve as a substitute for that of another, is said to prevail in the Vatican. When, during Leo XIII.'s last illness, one of the Cardinals died, it was thought that his death had saved the life of the Pope, Heaven being satisfied with one victim.

Human sacrifices are offered in connection with the foundation of buildings. This is a widespread custom, which not only occurs among various uncivilised and semi-civilised peoples, but is proved to have existed among the Aryan races. Among the Romans the old custom survived in the practice of placing statues or images under the foundations of their buildings. A Scotch legend tells that when St. Columba first attempted to build a cathedral on Iona, the walls fell down as they were erected ; he then received supernatural information that they would never stand unless a human victim was buried alive,

and, in consequence, his companion, Oran, was interred at the foundation of the structure. It is reported that when, not very long ago, the Bridge Gate of Bremen city walls was demolished, the skeleton of a child was found embedded in the groundwork; and when the new bridge at Halle, finished in 1843, was building, "the common people fancied a child was wanted to be walled into the foundations." It seems highly probable that the building-sacrifice, like other kinds of human sacrifice, is based on the idea of substitution. A new house or dwelling-place is commonly regarded as dangerous, a wall or a tower is liable to fall down and cause destruction of life, a bridge may break or the person who crosses it may tumble into the water and be drowned. Uncultured people are often afraid of anything new; and, apart from this, the erection of a new building is an intrusion upon the land of the local spirit, and therefore likely to arouse its anger. It is natural, then, that attempts should be made to avert the danger; and, human life being at stake, no preventive could be more effective than the offering up of a human victim.

I do not affirm that the practice of human sacrifice is in every case based on the idea of substitution; but I think there is sufficient evidence to show that when men offer the lives of their fellow-men in sacrifice to their gods, they do so as a rule in the hope of thereby saving their own. Human sacrifice is then a method of life-insurance—absurd, no doubt, according to our ideas, but not an act of wanton cruelty. When practised in a case of national distress, it is hardly more cruel than to compel thousands of men to suffer death on the battle-field on behalf of their country.

Supernatural beings are believed to have a feeling of their worth and dignity. They are sensitive to insults, they demand submissiveness and homage. These traits of their character have given rise to a variety of duties to gods, and have influenced criminal legislation. Among the ancient Peruvians and Hebrews, as also among Christian nations up to comparatively recent times, blasphemy was a capital offence. In England, in the reign of Henry VII., a boy of fifteen was burned because he had spoken, much after the fashion of a parrot, some idle words affecting the sacrament of the altar, which he had chanced to hear, but of which he could not have understood the meaning. According to Mohammedan law, a person guilty of blasphemy is to be put to death without delay, even though he profess himself repentant, as adequate repentance for such a sin is deemed impossible. These and similar laws are rooted in the idea that the god is personally offended by the insult. It was the Lord Himself who made the law stated in Leviticus, that he who blasphemed His name should be stoned to death by all the congregation. "Blasphemy," says Thomas Aquinas, "as being an offence directly against God, outweighs murder, which is an offence against our neighbour. . . . The blasphemer intends to wound the honour of God." That blasphemy is, or should be, punished not as a sin against the deity, but as an offence against the religious feelings of men, is an idea of quite modern origin.

In many cases it is considered offensive to a supernatural being merely to mention his name. Sometimes the name is tabooed on certain occasions only or in ordinary conversation, sometimes it is not to be

pronounced at all. Many instances of this are found both among savage and civilised peoples. The gods of Brahmanism have mystic names, which nobody dares to speak. The divine name of Indra was secret, the real name of Agni was unknown. The real name of Confucius is so sacred that it is a statutable offence in China to pronounce it; and the name of the supreme god of the Chinese is equally tabooed. "*Tien*," they say, "means properly only the material heaven, but it also means Shang-Te (supreme ruler, God); for, as it is not lawful to use his name lightly, we name him by his residence, which is in *tien*." The "great name" of Allah is a secret name, known only to prophets, and possibly to some great saints. Yahveh said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain"; and orthodox Jews avoid mentioning the word Yahveh altogether. Among Christian peoples there is a common disinclination to use the word "God" or its equivalents in everyday parlance. The English say "good" instead of "God" ("good gracious," "my goodness," "thank goodness"); the Germans, *Potz* instead of *Gotts* ("Potz Welt," "Potz Wetter," "Potz Blitz"); the French, *bleu* instead of *Dieu* ("corbleu," "morbleu," "sambleu"); the Spaniards, *brios* or *diez* instead of *Dios* ("voto à brios," "juro à brios," "par diez").

These taboos have sprung from fear. There is, first, something uncanny in mentioning the name of a supernatural being, even apart from any definite ideas connected with the act. But the uncanny feeling or the notion of danger readily leads to the belief that the supernatural being feels offended if his name is pro-

nounced ; there is a similar association of thought in connection with the names of dead people. And a god may also have good reason for wishing that his name should not be used lightly or taken in vain. According to primitive ideas a person's name is a part of his personality, hence the holiness of a god may be polluted by his name being mentioned in profane conversation. Moreover, it may be of great importance for him to prevent his name from being divulged, as magic may be wrought on a person through his name just as easily as through any part of his body. In early civilisation there is a common tendency to keep the real name of a human individual secret so that sorcerers may not make an evil use of it ; and it is similarly believed that gods must conceal their true names lest other gods or men should be able to conjure with them. The great Egyptian god Ra declared that the name which his father and mother had given him remained hidden in his body since his birth, so that no magician might have magic power over him. The list of divine names possessed by the Roman pontiffs in their *indigitamenta* was a magical instrument which laid at their mercy all the forces of the spirit world ; and we are told that the Romans kept the name of their tutelary god secret in order to prevent their enemies from drawing him away by pronouncing it. There is a Mohammedan tradition that whosoever calls upon Allah by his " great name " will obtain all his desires, being able merely by mentioning it to raise the dead to life, to kill the living—in fact to perform any miracle he pleases.

One of the greatest insults which can be offered a god is to deny his existence. Plutarch was astonished at people's saying that atheism is impiety, while at the

same time they attribute to gods all kinds of less creditable qualities. "I for my part," he adds, "would much rather have men to say of me that there never was a Plutarch at all, nor is now, than to say that Plutarch is a man inconstant, fickle, easily moved to anger, revengeful for trifling provocations, vexed at small things." But Plutarch seems to have forgotten that a person is always most sensitive on his weak points, and that the weakest point in a god is his existence. Religious intolerance is in a large measure the result of that feeling of uncertainty which can hardly be completely eradicated even by the strongest will to believe. It is a means of self-persuasion in a case where such persuasion is sorely needed. But atheism is a sin of civilisation. Uncultured people are ready to believe that all supernatural beings they hear of also exist.

Some gods are extremely ungenerous towards all those who do not recognise them, and only them, as *their* gods. To believe in Ahura Mazda was the first duty which Zoroastrianism required of a man; it was Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit, that had countercreated the sin of unbelief. Yahveh said:—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. . . . Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." In the pre-prophetic period the existence of other gods was recognised, but they were not to be worshipped by Yahveh's people. Nor was any mercy to be shown to their followers, for Yahveh was "a man of war." The God of Christianity inherited his jealousy. In the name of Christ wars were waged, not, it is true, for the purpose of exterminating unbelievers, but with a view to converting them to a faith which alone could save their souls from

eternal perdition. So far as the aim of the persecution is concerned we can thus notice a distinct progress in humanity. But while the punishment which Yahveh inflicted upon the devotees of other gods was merely temporal and restricted to a comparatively small number of people—he took notice of such foreign nations only which came within his sphere of interests—Christianity was a proselytising religion on a large scale, anxious to save, but equally ready to condemn to everlasting torments, all those who refused to accept it, nay even the millions of men who had never heard of it. In this point Christianity was even more intolerant than the Koran, which does not absolutely confine salvation to the believers in Allah and his Prophet, but leaves some hope of it to Jews, Christians, and Sabæans, though all other infidels are hopelessly lost.

Equal in enormity with the sin of not believing in a certain god is sometimes the sin of having a false belief about him. It seems strange that a god should be so easily offended as to punish with the utmost severity those who hold erroneous notions regarding some attribute of his which in no way affects his honour or glory, or regarding some detail of ritual. Thomas Aquinas himself admits that the heretic *intends* to take the word of Christ, although he fails “in the election of articles whereon to take that word.” But it is in this election that his sin consists. Instead of choosing those articles which are truly taught by Christ, he chooses those which his own mind suggests to him. Thus he perverts the doctrines of Christ, and in consequence deserves not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but to be banished from the world

by death. Moreover, the heretic is an apostate, a traitor who may be forced to pay the vow which he has once taken. The extreme rigour of this sophistical argumentation can only be understood in connection with its historical surroundings. It presupposes a Church which not only regards itself as the sole possessor of divine truth, but whose cohesion and power depend upon a strict adherence to its doctrines.

Whilst intolerance is a general characteristic of monotheistic religions that attribute human passions and emotions to their godhead, polytheism is by nature tolerant. A god who is always used to share with other gods the worship of his believers cannot be a very jealous god. The pious Hennepin was struck by the fact that Red Indians were "incapable of taking away any person's life out of hatred to his religion." "The characteristics of Natural Religion," says Sir Alfred Lyall, "the conditions of its existence as we see it in India, are complete liberty and material tolerance; there is no monopoly either of divine powers or even of sacerdotal privilege." In China the hatred of foreigners has not its root in religion. The Catholics residing there were left undisturbed until they began to meddle with the civil and social institutions of the country; and the difficulty in persuading the Chinese to embrace Christianity is said by a missionary to be due to their notion that one religion is as good as another provided that it has a good moral code. Among the early Greeks and Romans it was a principle that the religion of the State should be the religion of the people, as its welfare was supposed to depend upon a strict observance of the established cult; but the gods cared for external worship rather than for the beliefs of their

worshippers, and evidently took little notice even of expressed opinions. Philosophers openly despised the very rites which they both defended and practised ; and religion was more a pretext than a real motive for the persecutions of men like Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Socrates, and Aristotle. So also the measures by which the Romans in earlier times repressed the introduction of new religions were largely suggested by worldly considerations ; as Lecky says, “ they grew out of that intense national spirit which sacrificed every other interest to the State, and resisted every form of innovation, whether secular or religious, that could impair the unity of the national type, and dissolve the discipline which the predominance of the military spirit and the stern government of the Republic had formed.” It has also been sufficiently proved that the persecutions of the Christians during the pagan Empire sprang from motives quite different from religious intolerance. Liberty of worship was a general principle of the imperial rule. That it was denied the Christians was due to their own aggressiveness, as also to political suspicion. They grossly insulted the pagan cult, denouncing it as the worship of demons, and every calamity which fell upon the Empire was in consequence regarded by the populace as the righteous vengeance of the offended gods. Their proselytism disturbed the peace of families and towns. Their secret meetings aroused suspicion of political danger ; and this suspicion was increased by the doctrines they professed. They considered the Roman Empire a manifestation of Anti-christ, they looked forward with longing to its destruction, and many of them refused to take part in its defence. The greatest and best among the pagans

spoke of the Christians as "enemies," or "haters of the human race."

It is men's duty towards their gods not only to refrain from disrespectful behaviour, but also to pay them homage. We have seen that sacrifice, after losing its original significance, may still survive as a reverent offering. So also prayer is frequently a tribute to the self-regarding pride of the god to whom it is addressed. A supplication is an act of humility, more or less flattering to the person appealed to and especially gratifying where, as in the case of a god, the granting of the request entails no deprivation or loss, but on the contrary is rewarded by the worshipper. Moreover, the request is very commonly accompanied by reverential epithets or words of eulogy; and praise, nay even flattery, is just as pleasant to superhuman as to human ears. Gods are addressed as great or mighty, as lords or kings, as fathers or grandfathers. A prayer of the ancient Peruvians began with the following words:—"O conquering Viracocha! Ever-present Viracocha! Thou art in the ends of the earth without equal!" The ancient Egyptians flattered their gods, the Vedic and Zoroastrian hymns are full of praise. Moham-medans invoke Allah by sentences such as, "God is great," "God is merciful," "God is he who seeth and heareth." Words of praise, as well as words of thanks, addressed to a god, may certainly be expressions of unreflecting admiration or gratitude, free from all thought of pleasing him; but where laudation is demanded by the god as a price for good services, it is simply a tribute to his vanity. There is a Chinese story which amusingly illustrates this little weakness of so many gods:—At the hottest season of the year there was

a heavy fall of snow at Soochow. The people, in their consternation, went to the temple of the Great Prince to pray. Then the spirit moved one of them to say, "You now address me as Your Honour. Make it Your Excellency, and, though I am but a lesser deity, it may be well worth your while to do so." Thereupon the people began to use the latter term, and the snow stopped at once. The Hindus say that by praise a person may obtain from the gods whatever he desires.

We have different means of gratifying a person's self-regarding pride: one is to praise him, another is to humiliate ourselves. Both have been adopted by men with reference to their gods. Besides hymns of praise there are hymns of penitence, the object of which is largely to appease the angry feelings of offended gods. Prayers for remission of sins form a whole literature among peoples like that of the Vedic age, the Chaldeans, and the Hebrews, who commonly regarded calamities which befell men as divine punishments.

Among all sins there is none which gods resent more severely than disobedience to their commandments. We are told of the Efatese, in the New Hebrides, that no people under the sun are more obedient to what they regard as divine mandates than these savages, who believe that an offence against a spiritual being means calamity and death. The Chaldeans had a lively sense of the risks entailed upon the sinner by disobedience to the gods. According to the Bible, disobedience was the first sin committed by man, and death was introduced into the world as its punishment. It is said, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." On the history of morals this demand of obedience has exercised considerable

influence. It gives emphasis to moral rules which are looked upon as divine injunctions, and it helps to preserve such rules after the conditions from which they sprang have ceased to exist. The fact that they have become meaningless does not render them less binding; on the contrary, the mystery surrounding them often increases their sanctity. The commandments of a god must be obeyed independently of their contents, simply because disobedience to him is a sin. Acts totally different in character, crimes of the worst description and practices by themselves perfectly harmless, are grouped together as almost equally offensive to the deity because they have been forbidden by him. And moral progress is hampered by a number of precepts which, though rooted in obsolete superstitions or antiquated ideas about right and wrong, have an obstinate tendency to persist on account of their supposed divine origin.

It may be said that religion, owing to the doctrine of duties towards the deity, may contain an element which constitutes a real peril to the morality of its votaries. Even where it has entered into close connection with worldly morality, much greater importance has been attached to ceremonies or worship or niceties of belief than to good behaviour towards fellow-men. There are people who think that they may make up for lack of the latter by orthodoxy or pious performances. Smollett observes in his *Travels into Italy* that it is held more infamous to transgress the slightest ceremonial institution of the Church of Rome than to transgress any moral duty; that a murderer or adulterer will easily be absolved by the Church, and even maintain his character in society; but that a man who eats a

pigeon on a Sunday is abhorred as a monster of reprobation. Simonde de Sismondi wrote, "The more regular a vicious man has been in observing the commandments of the Church, the more he feels in his heart that he can dispense with the observance of that celestial morality to which he ought to sacrifice his depraved propensities." And how many a Protestant does not imagine that by going to church on Sundays he may sin more freely on the six days between ?

As to the general social influence of the belief in duties to gods it should be observed that their fulfilment is not merely a matter of individual concern. Gods often visit the iniquities of fathers or forefathers upon children or descendants, and punish the whole community for the sins of some of its members ; and on the other hand they reward the whole family or group for the virtues of single individuals. So also, when the members of a community join in common acts of worship, each worshipper promotes not only his own welfare, but the welfare of his people. In early religion it is of the greatest importance that the established cult should be observed. This is a fact which cannot be too much emphasised when we consider the social aspect of religious observances.

## VIII

### MARRIAGE, RELIGIOUS CELIBACY, AND SEXUAL RELATIONS —RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTION

I SHALL now proceed to a discussion of the influence that early beliefs have exerted upon the relations between the sexes.

Among the peoples of archaic culture such influence is very conspicuous in their views relating to marriage as a stringent duty. "Almost all Chinese," says Dr. Gray, "robust or infirm, well-formed or deformed, are called upon by their parents to marry as soon as they have attained the age of puberty. Were a grown-up son or daughter to die unmarried, the parents would regard it as most deplorable." For to die without leaving a son to perpetuate the family cult is considered one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall a man, and at the same time an offence against the whole line of ancestors. It would doom father, mother, and all the ancestry in the Nether-world to a pitiable existence without descendants enough to serve them properly, to worship at the ancestral tombs, to take care of the ancestral tablets, and duly to perform all rites and ceremonies connected with the dead. Among the Semites also we meet with the idea that a dead man who has no children will miss something in Shēol through not receiving that kind of worship which ancestors in early days appear to have received. The Aryan nations in ancient times, as Fustel de Coulanges

and others have pointed out, regarded celibacy as an impiety and a misfortune : “ an impiety, because one who did not marry put the happiness of the manes of the family in peril ; a misfortune, because he himself would receive no worship after his death.” A man’s happiness in the next world depended upon his having a continuous line of male descendants, whose duty it would be to make the periodical offerings for the repose of his soul. The old idea still survives in India : “ a Hindu man must marry and beget children to perform his funeral rites, lest his spirit wander uneasily in the waste places of the earth.” In the Zoroastrian books, as in the sacred books of India, we meet with the idea that a man should marry and get progeny. To him who has no child the bridge of paradise shall be barred ; the first question the angels there will ask him is, whether he has left in this world a substitute for himself, and if he answers in the negative they will pass by and he will stay at the head of the bridge, full of grief. The primitive meaning of this is plain : the man without a son cannot enter paradise because there is nobody to pay him the family worship. The Greek orator Isæus says, “ All those who think their end approaching look forward with a prudent care that their houses may not become desolate, but that there may be some person to attend to their funeral rites and to perform the legal ceremonies at their tombs.”

Side by side with the general idea that marriage is highly desirable or obligatory for all ordinary men and women, we find among many peoples the rule that persons whose function it is to perform religious or magical rites must be celibates. To these belong both savage and barbarous tribes and nations of a

higher civilisation. Among some peoples on the West Coast of Africa, for instance, the priestesses are forbidden to marry. The women who held positions in the temples of ancient Mexico had to observe the strictest chastity. In Peru there were virgins dedicated to the sun, who lived in perpetual seclusion to the end of their lives, and were forbidden to have sexual intercourse with or even to see any man. In ancient Persia there were likewise sun-priestesses who were obliged to refrain from intercourse with men. The Romans had their vestal virgins, who were compelled to continue unmarried during thirty years, which time they employed in offering sacrifices and performing other rites ordained by the law; and if they suffered themselves to be debauched they were delivered up to the most miserable death. In Greece priestesses were not infrequently required to be virgins, if not for their whole life, at any rate for the duration of their priesthood; and there were eunuch priests connected with the cults of the Ephesian Artemis and the Phrygian Cybele. Among the Hindus, in spite of the great honour in which marriage is held, celibacy has always commanded respect in instances of extraordinary sanctity. In the absolute chastity which the student was obliged to observe during the whole course of his study lay the germ of the monastic celibacy of Jainism and Buddhism. In Tibet some sects of the lamas are allowed to marry, but those who do not are considered more holy; and in every sect the nuns must take a vow of absolute continence. Chinese law enjoins celibacy on all priests, Buddhist or Taouist; and among the immortals of Taouism there are some women also, who have led an extraordinarily ascetic life.

Religious celibacy may be traced to different sources. In various cases the priestess is regarded as the wife of the god she serves, and is therefore forbidden to marry anybody else. This is the case with the West African priestesses just mentioned. In ancient Peru the Sun was the husband of the virgins dedicated to him, who were obliged to be of the same blood as their consort, that is to say, daughters of the Incas, the reigning family. In the Egyptian texts there are frequent references to "the divine consort," a position which was generally held by the ruling queen, and the king was believed to be the offspring of such a union. Plutarch says that the Egyptians thought it quite possible for a woman to be impregnated by the approach of some divine spirit, though they denied that a man could have corporeal intercourse with a goddess. Nor was the idea of a nuptial relation between a woman and the deity foreign to the early Christians. St. Cyprian speaks of women who had no husband and lord but Christ, with whom they lived in a spiritual matrimony—who had "dedicated themselves to Christ, and, retiring from carnal lust, vowed themselves to God in flesh and spirit." In the following words he condemns the cohabitation of such virgins with unmarried ecclesiastics, under the pretence of a purely spiritual connection:—"If a husband come and see his wife lying with another man, is he not indignant and maddened, and does he not in the violence of his jealousy perhaps even seize the sword? What? How indignant and angered then must Christ our Lord and Judge be, when He sees a virgin, dedicated to Himself and consecrated to His holiness, lying with a man! and what punishments does He threaten

against such impure connections. . . . She who has been guilty of this crime is an adulteress, not against a husband, but Christ." According to the gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Virgin Mary had in a similar manner dedicated herself as a virgin to God.

Religious celibacy is further enjoined or commended as a means of self-mortification supposed to appease an angry god, or with a view to raising the spiritual nature of man by suppressing one of the strongest of all sensual appetites. Thus we find in various religions celibacy side by side with other ascetic observances practised for similar purposes. Moreover, it was argued that marriage prevents a person from serving God perfectly, because it induces him to occupy himself too much with worldly things. Though not contrary to the act of charity or the love of God, says Thomas Aquinas, it is nevertheless an obstacle to it. This was one, but certainly not the only, cause of the obligatory celibacy which the Christian Church imposed upon her clergy.

A very important cause of religious celibacy is the widespread idea that sexual intercourse is defiling and in certain circumstances a mysterious cause of evil. The fact which chiefly interests us in the present connection is that this idea is particularly conspicuous with regard to religious observances. It is a common rule that he who performs a sacred act or enters a holy place must be ceremonially clean, and no kind of uncleanness is to be avoided more carefully than sexual pollution. Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians, like the Greeks, "made it a point of religion to have no converse with women in the sacred places, and not to enter them without washing after such converse";

and this statement is corroborated by a passage in the Book of the Dead. In Greece and India those who took part in certain religious festivals were obliged to be continent for some time previously. Among the Hebrews it was a duty incumbent upon all to be ritually clean before entering the temple—to be free from sexual defilement, leprosy, and other impurity. A Mohammedan would remove any defiled garment before he commences his prayer, or otherwise abstain from prayer altogether; he would not dare to approach the sanctuary of a saint in a state of sexual uncleanness; and sexual intercourse is forbidden to those who make the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Christians prescribed strict continence as a preparation for baptism and the partaking of the Eucharist. They further enjoined that no married persons should participate in any of the great festivals of the Church if they had lain together the night before; and in the *Vision* of Alberic, dating from the twelfth century, a special place of torture, consisting of a lake of mingled lead, pitch, and resin, is represented as existing in hell for the punishment of married people who have had intercourse on Sundays, church festivals, or fast-days. And they abstained from the marriage-bed at other times also, when they were disposed more freely to give themselves to prayer.

Holiness is a delicate quality which is easily destroyed if anything polluting comes into contact with the holy object or person. The priestly taboos, of which Sir James Frazer has given an exhaustive account in *The Golden Bough*, have undoubtedly in a large measure their origin in such an idea. Nay, sexual uncleanness is not only injurious to holiness,

but may also injure holy persons or objects in a more material manner. When the supreme pontiff in the kingdom of Congo left his residence to visit other places within his jurisdiction, all married people had to observe strict continence the whole time he was out, as it was believed that any act of incontinence would prove fatal to him. In self-defence, therefore, gods and holy persons try to prevent polluted individuals from approaching them, and their worshippers are naturally anxious to do the same. But apart from the resentment which the sacred being must feel against the defiler, it appears that holiness is supposed to react quite mechanically against pollution, to the destruction or discomfort of the polluted individual. I shall illustrate these various effects supposed to result from contact between sexual uncleanness and holiness by some ideas I have found prevalent in Morocco.

If a person who has been polluted by any discharge of sexual matter enters a holy place, a mosque or a shrine, before he has washed himself, it is believed that he will suffer some misfortune : he will become blind or lame or mad, or he or some member of his family will become ill or die, or he will lose some of his animals, or his corn crop will be bad. Sexual cleanness is required of those who have anything to do with the corn ; for such persons are otherwise supposed to pollute its holiness, and also, in many cases, to do injury to themselves. If an unclean person goes among the sheep, they may die, because they are holy animals, or the person himself will suffer some misfortune. If a person who is sexually unclean rides a horse, another holy animal, the horse

will probably get sores on its back, and the rider will tumble down, or be late in arriving at his destination, or will not succeed in his business, or will have boils, or even die. Sexual intercourse destroys the magic efficacy of a charm if it is not removed before the act, and also makes the person who wears it ill.

It should further be noticed that, owing to the injurious effect of pollution upon holiness, an act generally regarded as sacred would, if performed by an unclean individual, lack that magic efficacy which is otherwise attributed to it. Mohammed described the ablution which is a necessary preparation for prayer as "the half of faith and the key of prayer." The Moors say that a scribe is afraid of evil spirits only when he is sexually unclean, because then his recital of passages of the Koran—the most powerful weapon against such spirits—would be of no avail. The Syrian philosopher Jamblichus speaks of the belief that "the gods do not hear him who invokes them, if he is impure from venereal connection." A similar notion prevailed among the early Christians: with reference to a passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Tertullian remarks that the Apostle added the recommendation of a temporary abstinence for the sake of adding an efficacy to prayers.

If sexual cleanness is required even of the ordinary worshipper, it is all the more indispensable in the case of those whose special office is to attend to the sacred cult. Carried further, this idea has been a most important cause of the obligatory celibacy imposed upon the secular and regular clergy. But it has also greatly affected Christian ideas relating to marriage and sexual relations in general.

There was a small class of Hebrews who maintained that marriage is impure. The Essenes, says Josephus, "reject pleasure as an evil, but esteem continence and the conquest over our passions to be a virtue. They neglect wedlock." This doctrine exerted no influence upon Judaism, but perhaps much upon Christianity. St. Paul considered celibacy to be preferable to marriage. "He that giveth her (his virgin) in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage does better." "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband." If the unmarried and widows cannot contain let them marry, "for it is better to marry than to burn." These and other passages in the New Testament inspired a general enthusiasm for virginity. Commenting on the words of the Apostle, Tertullian points out that what is better is not necessarily good. It is better to lose one eye than both, but neither is good; so also, although it is better to marry than to burn, it is far better neither to marry nor to burn. Marriage "consists of that which is the essence of fornication"; whereas continence "is a means whereby a man will traffic in a mighty substance of sanctity." Virginity works miracles: Mary, the sister of Moses, leading the female band, passed on foot over the straits of the sea, and by the same grace Thecla was revered even by lions, so that the unfed beasts, lying at the feet of their prey, underwent a holy fast, neither with wanton look nor sharp claw venturing to harm the virgin. Virginity is like a spring flower, always softly exhaling immortality from its white petals. The Lord

himself opens the kingdoms of the heavens to eunuchs. If Adam had preserved his obedience to the Creator he would have lived for ever in a state of virgin purity, and some harmless mode of vegetation would have peopled paradise with a race of innocent and immortal beings.<sup>1</sup> The use of marriage was permitted to man only as a necessary expedient for the continuance of the human species, and as a restraint, however imperfect, on the natural licentiousness of desire. The procreation of children is the measure of a Christian's indulgence in appetite, just as the husbandman sowing the seed into the ground awaits the harvest, not sowing more upon it.

While looking with suspicion even on the life-long union of one man with one woman, the Church pronounced all other forms of sexual intercourse to be mortal sins. In its Penitentials sins of unchastity were the favourite topic ; and its horror of them finds an echo in the secular legislation of the first Christian emperors. Even the innocent offspring of illicit intercourse were punished for their parents' sins with ignominy and loss of certain rights which belonged to other, more respectable members of the Church and the State. Persons of different sex who were not united in wedlock were forbidden by the Church to kiss each other ; nay, the sexual desire itself, though unaccompanied with any external act, was regarded as sinful in the unmarried. In this standard of purity no difference of sex was recognised, the same obliga-

<sup>1</sup> This opinion, which was held by Gregory of Nyssa and, in a later time, by John of Damascus, was opposed by Thomas Aquinas, who maintained that the human race was from the beginning propagated by means of sexual intercourse, but that such intercourse was originally free from all carnal desire.

tions being imposed upon man and woman. Needless to say that the same held good for the observance of the marriage vow.

In these respects there was a radical difference between the ideas of the Christian Church and those prevalent in classical antiquity and among the Hebrews and, in fact, all other Asiatic peoples of ancient civilisation, who regarded chastity as a duty for unmarried women but not for unmarried men, and required conjugal fidelity of the wife but not of the husband. Cicero said that "if there be any one who thinks that youth is to be wholly interdicted from amours with courtesans, he certainly is very strict indeed"; and according to Roman law adultery means sexual intercourse with another man's wife. In these, as in various other points of morals, however, there has always been a considerable discrepancy between the actual feelings of Christian peoples and the standard of their religion. As to the sexual morality of unmarried men, the words which Cicero uttered on behalf of Cœlius might almost be repeated by any modern advocate who in defending his client ventured frankly to express the popular opinion on the subject; and even in the laws of Christian countries we find an echo of the notion that adultery is a smaller offence in the husband than in the wife.

An important question still calls for an answer:—Why is sexual intercourse looked upon as unclean and defiling, or, in other words, as a mysterious source of danger? That the danger is supposed to be particularly alarming in the case of contact between the polluted individual and anything holy is merely an instance of the general belief that holiness is exceed-

ingly sensitive to, and readily reacts against, external influences; indeed, it is not only exceptionally susceptible to influences that are, or are supposed to be, injurious also in ordinary cases, but it is even affected or influenced by various acts or omissions which are otherwise considered perfectly harmless. It seems that sexual intercourse and, generally, the discharge of sexual matter are looked upon as polluting largely on account of the mysterious propensities of such matter and the veil of mystery which surrounds the whole sexual nature of man. There is also the secrecy drawn over the sexual functions and the feeling of sexual shame, which give them the appearance of something illicit or sinful. But the defiling effects ascribed to them are, further, in all probability connected with the notion that woman is an unclean being. Particularly during menstruation and at childbirth she is supposed to be charged with mysterious baleful energy, no doubt on account of the marvellous nature of these processes and especially the appearance of blood; and it is presumably such frequent temporary defilement of a specifically feminine character that has led to the notion of the permanent uncleanness of the female sex.

While religion has enforced chastity, it has also in some cases itself included unchastity in its cult. On the West Coast of Africa, as I said, there are priestesses who are forbidden to marry because they are considered to be the wives of the god they serve. But this by no means implies that they are debarred from sexual intercourse. We are told that among the Ewhe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast their chief

business is prostitution. "In every town there is at least one institution in which the best-looking girls, between ten and twelve years of age, are received. Here they remain for three years, learning the chants and dances peculiar to the worship of the gods, and prostituting themselves to the priests and the inmates of the male seminaries; and at the termination of their novitiate they become public prostitutes. This condition, however, is not regarded as one for reproach; they are considered to be married to the god, and their excesses are supposed to be caused and directed by him. Properly speaking, their libertinage should be confined to the male worshippers at the temple of the god, but practically it is indiscriminate. Children who are born from such unions belong to the god."

In India dancing-girls are, or have been, attached to a great many temples. According to Ward, who wrote his account of the Hindus more than a hundred years ago, there were, for example, at Jugunnat'huskutru in Orissa a number of women of infamous character employed to dance and sing before the god; the brahmans who officiated there continually had connection with them, but they also prostituted themselves to visitors. With reference to Southern India, Dubois wrote that every temple, according to its size, entertains a band of "servants or slaves of the gods" to the number of eight, twelve, or more. They perform their religious duties, consisting of dancing and singing, twice a day, morning and evening. They are also obliged to assist at all the public ceremonies, which they enliven with their dance and merry song. But as soon as their public business is over, "they open their cells of infamy, and frequently convert the

temple itself into a stew." In the Census Report of Mysore for 1911 it is said that the practice of dedicating girls to temples or as public women obtains in a few of the lower castes, but is gradually getting into disfavour.

There were harlots connected with many Semitic cults. In the Gilgamesh-epos Ishtar is represented as gathering round her dissolute girls and harlots, and as a goddess of prostitution the epithet "consecrated" is applied to her. So also Hammurabi speaks of temple harlots in Babylonia. In the Canaanite cults there were *qedēshōth* consecrated to the deity with whose temple they were associated and at the same time acting as prostitutes; and at the local shrines of North Israel the worship of Yahveh itself seems to have been deeply affected by these practices, which were forbidden in the Deuteronomic code. We hear of women "of the congregation of the people of Astarte" at Carthage. As for non-semitic cults, religious prostitution is clearly attested in connection with the worship of Mā at Comana in Pontus and of Aphrodite in Corinth; but in these cases we have the right to assume Semitic influences at work. The practice survived in Lydia in the later period of the Græco-Roman culture.

As to the origin of these practices, Sir James Frazer has suggested that they may be a survival of early communism in women. In the course of time, he says, as the institution of individual marriage grew in favour, and the old communism fell more and more in discredit, it was still thought necessary to the general welfare that a certain number of women should discharge the old obligation in the old way. In their licentious intercourse at the temples these women

“ imitated the licentious conduct of a great goddess of fertility for the purpose of ensuring the fruitfulness of fields and trees, of man and beast.” For my own part, I venture to suggest that the chief explanation of the custom in question lies in the belief that sexual intercourse with a holy person is beneficial to the worshipper, and that such intercourse on this account became a regular feature of the cult. I have found no evidence whatever for the supposition that individual marriage was anywhere preceded by a state of communism in women; and in any case Frazer’s explanation would be absolutely inconsistent with the kind of prostitution which was connected with certain cults.

In some of the Semitic cults there was a prostitution of men. A clause in Hammurabi’s code seems to refer to it; and it is known that male prostitutes were serving Ishtar at Erech. So-called *qedēshīm* were attached to Canaanite temples. The word properly denotes men dedicated to a deity, but has, no doubt for good reason, been translated “sodomites” in the English version of the Old Testament. It appears that such men were consecrated to the mother of the gods, the famous Dea Syria, being her priests or devotees; and they are frequently alluded to by Hebrew writers, especially in the period of the monarchy, when rites of foreign origin made their way into both Israel and Judah. The acts committed with these sacred men may be explained as an outcome of the same belief which I have suggested to be the chief cause of the prostitution of the temple women. In Morocco supernatural benefits are to this day expected not only from heterosexual but also from

homosexual intercourse with a holy person. I fail to see how the function of the male prostitute could be either a rite intended to ensure "the fruitfulness of fields and trees, of man and beast," or a survival of communal marriage.

The Canaanite temple prostitution has left traces in European legislation down to the present time. It is natural that the Yahveh-worshippers should regard it with the utmost horror as forming part of an idolatrous cult. Unnatural vice was the sin of a people who was not the Lord's people, who thereby polluted the land, so that He visited their guilt and the land spued out its inhabitants. This conception of homosexuality passed into Christianity. The notion that it is a form of sacrilege was here strengthened by the habits of the Gentiles, among whom St. Paul found the abominations of Sodom rampant. During the Middle Ages heretics were accused of it as a matter of course; indeed, so closely was it associated with heresy that the same name was applied to both. The French *bougre* (from the Latin *Bulgarus*, Bulgarian), to which there is an English equivalent, was originally a name given to a sect of heretics who came from Bulgaria in the eleventh century and was afterwards applied to other heretics, but at the same time it became the regular expression for a person guilty of unnatural intercourse. In mediæval laws sodomy was repeatedly mentioned together with heresy, and the punishment was the same for both. Throughout the Middle Ages and later, Christian lawgivers thought that nothing but a painful death in the flames could atone for the sinful act. In France persons were actually burned for it in the middle and latter parts of the eighteenth

century. In England it was punishable by death till 1861, although in practice the extreme punishment was not inflicted. It is interesting to notice that in one religion, besides Hebrewism and Christianity, it has been looked upon with the same abhorrence, namely, Zoroastrianism, and there also as a practice of infidels, of Turanian shamanists.

## IX

### MARRIAGE RITES

THE influence of early beliefs upon marriage is very conspicuous on the occasion when it is contracted. Marriage rites are frequent in the savage world, but nowhere more profuse than among peoples who have reached a higher degree of culture and tribes that have been in close contact with them ; and the large bulk of these rites have originated in magical ideas. At the outset they were not empty formalities, but were intended to serve some useful purpose, although many of them afterwards assumed a more playful character or came to be regarded as " symbols." The purposes for their performance are manifold, but much more manifold are the ways adopted for the achievement of these purposes. This makes those rites a fascinating study.

Some of the most frequent marriage rites symbolise the union of the parties, or, rather, are originally intended to strengthen the marriage tie. First, there is the joining of hands, which is found among many savage tribes and has of old been one of the most important marriage rites among all Indo-European peoples. It may be an expression of different ideas. By the Roman *dextrarum junctio* the bride came under the *manus* of the husband, or was " handed over to him " ; and the joining of hands is also from early times the outward sign of a troth that two persons give

to each other. But very frequently, at least, it is an act of union. In some European countries, such as Poland, Bulgaria, and Portugal, and in many parts of India, the hands of the bridal pair are not merely joined, but tied together. The union of the bride and bridegroom may also be represented by the tying of something to each of them separately; among the Nandi, in British East Africa, they bind a sprig of a certain grass on to each other's wrists. And it seems that betrothal and wedding rings serve a similar purpose. The wedding ring was in use among the ancient Hindus, and the betrothal ring in ancient Rome, where the man presented it to his fiancée. The same custom prevailed in Christian Europe throughout the Middle Ages and later, but was subsequently mostly succeeded by an exchange of rings. Various superstitions connected with the marriage ring indicate that it is regarded as a tie between the couple. To lose it or break it means death or the dissolution of the union or some other misfortune. In the north-east of Scotland people say that if a woman loses her marriage ring "she will lose her man."

An extremely frequent and widespread marriage rite, which is found both among savages and civilised peoples, is the eating together of bride and bridegroom. Among the Hindus of every rank and caste it is the custom for them to take food together from the same leaf or the same plate. In ancient Greece they partook together of a sesame-cake. In Rome a cake made of the old Italian grain called *far*, from which the patrician marriage received its name of *confarreatio*, was offered to Jupiter Farreus and partaken of by bride and bridegroom in the presence of

witnesses. And at the present day the custom of eating together—usually from the same plate or dish, or of the same loaf of bread, or with the same spoon—at the betrothal or, more often, at the wedding is found in many parts of Europe. As for the meaning of this rite, there can be no doubt that it was originally something more than a mere symbol. In Sweden there was a popular belief that if a girl and a youth ate of one morsel, they would fall in love with each other. In Germany it is supposed that if the couple eat the “morning soup” with the same spoon, they will have a peaceful married life. The bride’s and bridegroom’s partaking of food in common was a means of sealing the union by one of the most prominent features of married life, the husband’s sharing of food with his wife.

Besides, and sometimes combined with, the rite of eating together there is the rite of drinking together, which is likewise a symbol of, or a means of strengthening, the union of the couple. Among some South American Indians they drink from the same bowl or they drink brandy together. In China it was the ancient custom for them to drink out of cups made of the two halves of the same melon, the bride drinking from the bridegroom’s half and he from hers; they thereby showed, as it was said, that “they now formed one body, were of equal rank and pledged to mutual affection.” In Japan they drink wine, exchanging cups nine times; and this constitutes the entire ceremony. In Europe the rite of drinking together is found from Italy to Norway, from Brittany to Russia, and there are traces of it in Scotland too. It forms part of the nuptial ceremony among the Jews of all

countries. Smoking tobacco together may also be a marriage rite. Among the Irulans of the Gingee Hills in South India the would-be husband must smoke a tobacco cheroot and then hand it over to the bride, who should smoke it a little and then pass it back to him.

Many rites are practised with a view to making the wife fruitful or the mother of male offspring. In Morocco the bridegroom's mother carries a sieve or a bundle of her son's old clothes on her back, as if it were a baby; or the bride's mother is put into a net by the bachelors and swung to and fro in the same manner as a child is rocked to sleep. When the bride is taken to the bridegroom's place the animal on which she rides must sometimes be a mare, on account of its fruitfulness, and sometimes a stallion, that she may give birth to male offspring; and for the same purpose a little boy rides behind her on the mare. In some parts of Sweden there is a belief among the country-folks that the bride should have a boy-baby to sleep with her on the night preceding the wedding day in order that her first-born shall be a son; and among many, if not all, Slavonic peoples a boy is offered to the bride or is put to sit on her lap. This custom may have belonged to the primitive Indo-European marriage ritual; for we learn that in ancient India, on the bride's entering her new home, a little boy was placed on her lap as an omen of male progeny.

Another rite, to be mentioned in this connection, which has been traced to the primitive Indo-Europeans is the custom of throwing some kind of cereals or dried fruit on the bride. This practice, or that of throwing grain or fruit on the bridal pair or on the

bridegroom separately or even on the wedding company, has been found to prevail from India, Indo-China, and the Malay Archipelago in the East to the Atlantic Ocean in the West. In India we can trace it from the Grihyasūtras through the classical Sanskrit literature down to the present day. In England other things than rice were formerly, or are still in some places, thrown upon the bride, apart from the modern adoption of confetti. We are told that in the seventeenth century wheat was cast on her head when she came from church. In the north of England one of the oldest inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who has been stationed on the threshold of the bride's new home, throws a plateful of short-bread over her head, so that it falls outside; and a scramble ensues for the pieces, as it is deemed very fortunate to get a piece of the short-bread.

The custom of throwing grain or dried fruit at weddings has generally been regarded as a means of securing offspring, in accordance with the principle of sympathetic magic, grain and fruit being sources of fertility. We know that in certain cases it is looked upon in this light by the people who practise it, but we also find other ideas attached to it. Not infrequently it is said to be a means of ensuring prosperity as well as offspring, or prosperity or abundance alone; and in Morocco I found yet other beliefs connected with it, though never the idea of ensuring fertility. The raisins, figs, or dates which in some places are thrown over the bride are said to make everything sweet or to make the bride sweet to the bridegroom's family, or to avert the evil eye from her; and the wheat, flour, or other things which, in other places, she throws

over her head are represented as a means by which she rids herself of evil influences. In some other countries, also, customs of this sort are regarded as prophylactics or means of purification. Considering how many different explanations are given by the people practising them, even in the same country, there can be no doubt that in many cases, at least, their real origin has been forgotten and a new interpretation substituted for the idea from which they arose. But at the same time we should be on our guard against the assumption, only too common in Anthropology, that similar rites necessarily have their roots in similar ideas, even though practised by different peoples. Objects like corn and dried fruit may certainly be used for various purposes; and to ensure prosperity and abundance and to avert evil may have been no less primitive motives for the rite in question than the intention to secure offspring.

Fish are frequently used for reproductive purposes, and figure, partly at least, on that account in marriage rites. Among oriental Jews the newly-wedded couple immediately after the religious ceremony jump three times over a large platter filled with fresh fish, and this, or some similar ceremony, is expounded to be the symbol of a prayer for children. So also it was as a symbol of fertility that fish was formerly eaten on the second day of the wedding week among German Jews. But at Fez I was told that on the ninth day after the actual wedding day the husband buys some fish, which he gives to his wife to prepare, as a means of ensuring prosperity. It would seem that the roe of the fish might suggest not only fertility but abundance.

Eggs are often used as means of promoting fecundity,

and in some marriage rites they are expressly said to hint at offspring. Some West Russian Jews have the custom of setting a raw egg before a bride not only as a symbol of fruitfulness, but also that she may bear as easily as a hen lays an egg; and among the Jews of Morocco, according to an old writer, the bridegroom on the marriage day casts a raw egg at the bride, "intimating thereby his desire that she may have both an easy and joyful child-birth." There are other rites which are likewise supposed to facilitate the delivery of the young wife. In some parts of Sweden a bride must leave the laces of her shoes untied, "so that she may bear children as easily as she removes the shoe."

There are many marriage rites through which one of the parties tries to gain mastery over the other. In Morocco the bridegroom, in order to become the ruler, taps the bride three or seven times on her head or shoulder with his sword, or beats her three times between her shoulders with the cord of his dagger, or smacks or kicks her gently. In Croatia the bridegroom boxes the bride's ears in order to indicate that henceforth he is her master. Among many Slavonic peoples he beats her gently three times, "as a sign that she owes him obedience," or in order that she shall forget her earlier sweethearts and be afraid of her husband. It is also the custom for the bride to pull off the bridegroom's boots, and in Russia the bridegroom formerly used to beat the bride on the head with the boot-leg; but among the Slovenes the bride nowadays beats the bridegroom with the boot-leg, to make him understand that she is not always going to pull off his boots.

The bride, also, knows how to get power over her man. In Morocco she mounts the ram which is to be slaughtered for the occasion when she is painted with henna, and boxes its ears, the ram representing the husband ; she hangs on it a necklace to make him weak and harmless like a woman ; and when its stomach has been removed, she puts her right foot on it. In Wales the bride should always buy something as soon as she is married, and before the bridegroom can make a purchase : " Then she'll be master for life," say the old women. In many parts of Germany, when the priest joins the hands of the couple, the bride tries, in a literal sense, to get the upper hand, the bridegroom trying to do the same, and often a struggle of hands ensues, which may be settled by the priest placing the man's hand uppermost.

Besides marriage rites that are supposed to confer positive benefits on bride or bridegroom or both, there are others—and a large number indeed—which are intended to protect them from evil influences or to rid them of such influences, that is, prophylactic or cathartic rites. There is a very general feeling or idea that bride and bridegroom are in a state of danger, being particularly exposed to other persons' magical tricks or evil looks, or to the attacks of evil spirits, or to some impersonal mysterious cause of evil, and therefore stand in need of protection or purification. Moreover, the bride is considered to be not only herself in danger but also a source of danger to others ; hence purificatory ceremonies are of frequent occurrence on her arrival at her new home.

Guns are fired off at weddings, and an object of this is, or has been, to dispel evil spirits or other evil

influences ; and the same may be said of the terrific noise or loud music which so often forms a part of the marriage ritual. All over Europe country marriages have been celebrated with gunfire, which is sometimes expressly said to drive away evil spirits. In rural parts of the county of Durham the bridal party is escorted to church by men armed with guns, which they fire off again and again close to the ears of bride and bridesmaids ; and at Guisborough in Cleveland guns are fired over the heads of the newly-married couple all the way from church.

Weapons of various kinds are used for similar purposes. In Morocco the bridegroom carries a sword, dagger, or pistol, and swords are crossed over his head or in front of him to ward off evil spirits, who are afraid of steel, and especially of weapons made of this metal. In various parts of Germany the bridesmen protect the bride with drawn swords ; and in France the couple had formerly on the wedding day to pass under two swords forming an Andrew's cross. In Normandy, when the bridegroom joined the bride in the marriage chamber, one of his friends cracked a whip in order to drive away the evil spirits that might otherwise molest the couple.

It is, or formerly was, a widespread custom among Indo-European and Mohammedan peoples that bride and bridegroom should have a bath before meeting. In ancient Greece they bathed in water drawn from some particular fountain of running water ; and in modern Greece the bride's bath still forms part of the nuptials. In the north-east of Scotland, on the evening before the marriage, there was the ceremony of " feet-washing " : a few of the bridegroom's most

intimate friends assembled at his house, a large tub was brought forward and nearly filled with water, and the groom was stripped of shoes and stockings and his feet and legs were plunged in the water. The same custom prevailed in Northumberland, and there the bride, too, had her feet washed, though in a more private way. There may, of course, be other than superstitious reasons for the bathing or washing of bride and bridegroom, but the ceremonial character of the act certainly suggests a purificatory object. And so do other water ceremonies so frequently connected with weddings.

Fire or light is also a frequent means of dispelling evil influences at weddings. In ancient Greece and Rome the bride was taken to her new home by the light of torches, and in Rome one of them was made of whitethorn, which was believed to keep away evil influences. Brand thinks it doubtful whether the custom of carrying torches in the bridal procession ever prevailed in England, although there are indications that it did ; but among the Scandinavian peoples torches have been in frequent use at their weddings up to recent times, and it has been said that their object was to keep away the powers of darkness. But fire is used at weddings not only on account of its light, but also because it burns. Among the White Russians, before a wedding, straw is burnt inside the houses of both bride and bridegroom to drive away evil spirits ; the bridegroom, when fetching the bride from her home, must ride or drive over a burning fire, and so also the bride, when arriving at the house of her parents-in-law, must pass a fire, in which she throws coins.

Besides marriage rites that are meant to expel evil spirits or other evil influences, there are rites that are intended to safeguard bride or bridegroom by deception. Disguises at marriages are widespread, and many writers have suggested that their object is to deceive malignant spirits who lie in wait for the young couple.

Among some sections of the brahmans of South India the bride is on the fourth day dressed up as a boy and pretends to be the bridegroom, and another girl is dressed up to represent the bride. In ancient Cos, according to Plutarch, the bridegroom was dressed in woman's clothes when he received his bride; whilst in Sparta, after the bride had been carried off by her husband, "the bridesmaids received her, cut her hair close to her head, dressed her in a man's cloak and shoes, and placed her upon a couch in a dark chamber, where she had to wait for the entrance of the bridegroom." Among the Egyptian Jews in the Middle Ages the bridegroom donned feminine attire, while the bride wore a helmet and sword in hand, led the procession and the dance. At Fez, when the betrothal of a young man is celebrated in his parents' house, he is dressed up as a bride and is placed on cushions, where he sits with his eyes closed as if he were a bride. On the other hand, in some country places in Morocco the bride imitates the appearance of a man by having designs resembling whiskers painted on her face and in some other ways. At Klovborg, in Denmark, on the first day of the wedding bride and bridegroom dress themselves in old clothes, she in man's and he in woman's, and then hide themselves from each other. It is also a custom

in Denmark, and in Esthonia and Russia as well, to put the bridegroom's hat or cap on the bride. Among the people of Southern Celebes the bridegroom at one stage of the proceedings puts on the garments which have just been put off by the bride.

I doubt, however, whether all these practices really can be explained as attempts to deceive evil spirits. The fiancé or bridegroom can hardly be protected against such spirits by being dressed up as a bride, as he is at Fez, or by putting on the garments which have been worn by his bride, since the bride is supposed to be haunted by evil spirits as much as, or even more than, the bridegroom himself; nor does the bride seem to be particularly well protected by pretending to be the bridegroom, as in South India, or by wearing his cap or hat. Facts of this sort seem better to agree with Mr. Crawley's theory of "inoculation," according to which the bride or bridegroom assumes the dress of the opposite sex in order to lessen the sexual danger by wearing the same kind of clothes as "the loved and dreaded person," and the greatest possible assimilation between them would best serve the purpose of neutralising that danger. Similar customs may, as already said, spring from different motives, or there may be mixed motives for the same custom. It should be added that when the bride imitates the appearance of a man, she may do so to be protected not only against evil spirits but against the evil eye.

It is a common custom among Slavonic, Teutonic, and Romance peoples that when the bridegroom or his representative comes to fetch the bride from her home, a false bride is substituted for the real one, another woman, frequently an ugly old one, or a little girl or

even a man being palmed off on him as the bride. In Brittany the substitutes are first a little girl, then the mistress of the house, and lastly the grandmother. In some parts of Bavaria a bearded man in woman's clothes personates the bride; in Esthonia, the bride's brother or some other young man. It has been said that the false bride is supposed to serve as a dummy to attract the attention of the demons or to attract the envious glance of the evil eye and so allow the real bride to escape unhurt. But it seems to me that the attempt to palm off a mock bride on the bridegroom also may be another of those rites by which (as in the case of a ceremonial capture of the bride) the girl and her family feign opposition to her marriage and till the last pretend to put obstacles in the bridegroom's way.

In India mock marriages with animals (like a sheep) or trees or things (like a sword) are often resorted to for the purpose of averting some dreaded evil from the bride or the bridegroom or both. Tree-marriages, in particular, prevail widely throughout Northern India; and, as Dr. Crooke observes, the idea that the tree itself is supposed to die soon after the ceremony "seems to point to the fact that the marriage may be intended to divert to the tree some evil influence, which would otherwise attach to the wedded pair."

There are, further, cases in which the bridegroom or the bride, instead of assuming the appearance of somebody else or being represented by a substitute, is sheltered by some person or persons who are dressed up to resemble him or her, so that there apparently are two or more bridegrooms or brides. Thus at Fez, when the bride is taken to her future home, she is accompanied by some women relatives, who are

dressed exactly like herself, so that no one can distinguish between them; this is said to protect her from magic and the evil eye. In Egypt, again, when the bridegroom goes to the mosque before meeting the bride, he walks between two friends dressed like himself. Among the Livonians two bridesmaids are dressed exactly as the bride. So also at Belford in Northumberland "the bride and her maids are dressed alike"; and I am told that this has been the custom also elsewhere in England. The functions of bridesmaids, bridesmen, and groomsmen have been not only to attend upon bride and bridegroom but to protect them from evil influences, even when no attempt is made to imitate their dress; people always feel safer in company. In Shetland the best-man must sleep with the bridegroom during the night before the wedding. Among the White Russians he lies down on the nuptial bed before the bride and the bridegroom. Among other peoples he or some bridesmen are present when the marriage is consummated, or bridesmen and bridesmaids have to prevent the speedy consummation of it.

An effective method of protecting the bride against external influences, particularly the evil eye, is to shut her up in a box or cage when she is taken to her new home. This is done in the north of Morocco, where the bride is transported to the bridegroom's house in a so-called *'ammariya* on the back of a mule or a horse; and in one tribe this cage is made of oleander branches, which are supposed to afford particularly good protection against the evil eye. In the Mohamadan world generally, she is taken to the bridegroom's home with her face well covered, and the

same is the case elsewhere, also in many uncivilised tribes. The veiling of the bride is referred to in Genesis. It has been common in Europe; and the importance which the ancient Romans attached to this custom appears from the ordinary use of the word *nubere* or *obnubere* to denote a woman's marrying. Its primary object was in all probability to protect the bride, particularly against the evil eye; the veil of the Esthonian bride is expressly said to serve this purpose. But in Morocco I have also found another idea connected with the veiling or covering of the bride: her own glance is considered dangerous to others. Misfortune would befall any person or animal she looked at before she has seen her husband on her arrival at his house; or if she looked at anybody on her way to it, there would be fighting and manslaughter at the wedding. In ancient India the bridegroom had to guard himself against the evil eye of his bride.

It seems that particular care is often taken to protect bride or bridegroom against dangers from above. In China, "when the bride ascends the bridal sedan she wears a hat of paper, and an old woman who has sons and grandsons holds an umbrella over her." The *chuppah*, or canopy, under which Jewish marriages are still celebrated, seems to have been derived from the canopied litter which in ancient time was occupied by the bride during the procession. In the Scandinavian countries, England, and France a square piece of cloth (in French called *carré* and in English "carc cloth") was held over the bride and bridegroom at the benediction. In some parts of Germany the bridegroom wears on the wedding day a tall hat, which he only removes in church.

Bride and bridegroom must be protected against dangers not only from above, but also from below. In Morocco the bridegroom avoids sitting on the ground, in order not to be affected by evil influences; on certain occasions he is carried by his best-man or other bachelor friends; and throughout the wedding he has the backs of his slippers pulled up to prevent their falling off. Similar and still greater precautions are taken with regard to the bride, who would be unlucky if her foot came into contact with the ground. Bride and bridegroom have *baraka*, or "holiness," and persons or objects possessed of this delicate quality are in many cases not allowed to touch the ground; moreover, the real native country of the spirits is under the ground and they are therefore always liable to haunt its surface. Very similar marriage customs are found in other countries. The bride is frequently carried to her future home on an animal or a litter or a man's back or in some other manner; and although this, of course, may be done for the sake of convenience, or may be a ceremonial expression of the reluctance which a virgin bride pretends to feel against being given away in marriage, there can be no doubt that the fear of her touching the ground also has something to do with it. Among the Cheremiss the custom of carrying the bride to the carriage is expressly said to be connected with the idea that a bride must not put her foot on the bare ground.

At Foochow in China, again, the floor of the reception-room in the bridegroom's house is covered with red carpeting from the place where the sedan stops to the door of the bride's room, in order to prevent her feet from touching the floor; and it is presumably

for a similar reason that a Chinese bride on leaving her own home walks all the way from her room to the sedan-chair in her father's shoes, which are then left behind before she steps into the chair. In England there was "a custom at marriages of strewing herbs and flowers, and also rushes, from the house or houses where persons betrothed resided to the church." In Sunderland the footpath of the street in which the bride lives, and along which she must pass in order to be married at the church, is sprinkled with sawdust. Formerly sea-sand was used; and if the custom was to be fully carried out in its integrity, the sand or sawdust should stretch all the way from the bride's house to the church gates. In Newcastle-on-Tyne sand is strewn on the pavement before a bridal pair tread on it. At Cranbrook in Kent, when a newly wedded pair leave the church, the path is strewed with emblems of the bridegroom's calling; thus carpenters walk on shavings, butchers on sheepskins, shoemakers on leather parings, and blacksmiths on scraps of old iron. The red carpet at weddings is familiar to all of us.

That these customs are, at least in part, due to superstitious fear of too close a contact with the ground is the more probable because there are other practices apparently intended to protect bride and bridegroom against supposed danger from below. In Morocco a needle or some salt is put into the right slipper of the bride, or of the bridegroom as well, as a charm against spirits or other evil influences. In many countries a coin or coins are put into their shoes; and although this practice, which is particularly common among the Scandinavian peasantry, is often

supposed to prevent poverty or to produce wealth, it is also expressly said to be regarded as a safeguard against evil. In some parts of Scotland, according to Dalyell, "the bridegroom has sought protection by standing with the latchet of his shoe loose and a coin under his foot, probably for interception from the earth."

Fear of dangers threatening bride and bridegroom from below may also be the origin of the familiar custom of throwing an old shoe or old shoes after them, which is found not only in England and Scotland, but in Denmark, on the Rhine, and among the gypsies of Transylvania, and evidently occurred in ancient Greece, as appears from the representation of a wedding on a vase in the museum of Athens. In most cases the shoe is thrown after the bridal pair when they leave for church or return from church or after the wedding breakfast; but it may also be thrown after the bride and the bridegroom separately, as was the case in the Isle of Man. Various explanations have been given of the origin of this custom; to say that it is considered to bring good luck is, of course, not to explain it. It has been interpreted as a relic of marriage by capture (which is not known to have been among any people the usual or normal mode of contracting a marriage), being "a sham assault on the person carrying off the lady"; as a means of averting evil influences, because spirits may be afraid of leather (in Germany the shoe should be a wooden one); or as an offering to dangerous spirits (why they should be particularly fond of old shoes has not been explained). Now it should be noticed that a shoe is thrown after a bride and a bridegroom when they go somewhere; that the throwing of it occurs

side by side with practices apparently intended to protect them against evil influences from below ; and that it is also a custom found in England, Denmark, Germany, and elsewhere to throw a shoe or a slipper after a person who goes on a journey or to do business or a shooting. Brand says that in England it is accounted lucky by the vulgar to throw an old shoe after a person when they wish him to succeed in what he is going about. These facts suggest that the old shoe was meant to serve the persons in question as an extra magical protection on their way, in addition to the shoes or boots they wore. In Scotland it was the custom to wish brides and bridegrooms " a happy foot."

Evils are averted from bride and bridegroom not only by positive rites, but also by abstinences of various kinds. Being in a dangerous state or a source of danger to others, they must observe the utmost caution in all their doings and do as little as possible. On certain occasions they must not look round. There are taboos prohibiting them from eating or drinking in public, from eating much, from eating certain victuals, or from eating at all. Silence is imposed on brides, and the bridegroom may have to refrain from speaking aloud. Some peoples consider it necessary for them to keep awake. And very frequently continence has to be observed for a shorter or longer time after marriage. Instances of this may be quoted from all parts of the world.

So far as Indo-European peoples are concerned, the hypothesis has been set forth that the custom of practising continence for some time after marriage may be traced back to the primitive period of their

race. It was incorporated into ancient Indian law and exists, or has recently existed, in many European countries. In various parts of Germany and Switzerland continence is observed for three nights after marriage, which are frequently known as the "Tobias nights"; it is believed that otherwise the wedded life of the couple would be unlucky, whereas if they abstain from intercourse the devil will not be able to do any harm. In some districts of France also continence is, or recently was, practised for three or two nights after marriage or on the first night. In the latter part of the eighteenth century Lord Hailes was informed that abstinence on the wedding night was "still observed by the vulgar in some parts of Scotland." Now it may be argued that the continence observed after marriage in so many countries of Europe is not a survival of an ancient pagan custom, but is due to the teaching of the Christian Church. A decree of the alleged fourth Council of Carthage, said to have been held in the year 398, enacted that when the bridegroom and bride have received the benediction, they shall remain that same night in a state of virginity out of reverence for that benediction. This enactment was received into the Canon Law; and by subsequent enactments the period of chastity that married couples were required or recommended to observe was extended from one to two or three nights, often with special reference to the example set by Tobias, who (according to the version of the Vulgate) by advice of the archangel Raphael abstained from carnal intercourse with his wife Sarah for three nights. It is conceivable that the same horror of sexual defilement as induced the Church to prescribe continence in con-

nection with various other religious acts also might independently have led to the decree imposing continence in connection with the sacrament of marriage ; but it seems more probable that this decree and the subsequent appeal to the archangel's advice to Tobias only gave religious sanction and scriptural support to an old pagan custom which was highly congenial to the ascetic tendencies of the Church. A similar view has been advocated by Sir James Frazer with much fullness of detail. This view derives support, first, from the fact that the rule of continence after marriage is not only found among pagan peoples in all parts of the world but existed among the Vedic Aryans ; and, secondly, from its persistence in European folk-custom, which suggests a deeper foundation than ecclesiastical injunctions alone.

It must be admitted that the custom of deferring the consummation of the marriage for a time may have a different origin in different cases. Sometimes it is attributed to resistance on the part of the bride, and there may be some truth in this. More frequently, however, the custom in question is ascribed to sexual bashfulness in the bridegroom or in both parties ; and when intercourse is said to be postponed till the guests have gone away and in some other cases, this seems a plausible explanation of the postponement. But it can hardly be doubted that the rule of continence which bride and bridegroom have to observe, like other taboos imposed upon them, is mainly the outcome of superstitious fear. If it is considered dangerous for them to speak or eat or sleep, it is not surprising if sexual intercourse between them is supposed to be fraught with danger.

The prophylactic observances, which play such an important part at marriages in all parts of the world, raise the interesting question, Why are bride and bridegroom considered to be in a dangerous state, and why is the bride considered dangerous to others? As to the latter idea, it may be said that the bride is suspected of carrying evil with her both as a newcomer into her husband's household and in her capacity of being a woman, who is generally looked upon as a more or less suspicious being. But the bulk of the prophylactic rites are undoubtedly due to the fact that the person who is subjected to them is bride or bridegroom for the first time. She or he enters into a new state, the wedding is, to use a phrase coined by M. van Gennep, a *rite de passage*; and to pass into a new condition or to do a thing for the first time is not only in this, but in many other cases, considered to be attended with danger. This explanation is directly suggested by the fact that the ceremonies which a widow or a widower have to undergo are generally very scanty, if there are any such ceremonies at all; they are not in danger, because marriage is nothing new to them. But it must be particularly noticed that in the present instance the nature of the act itself which is sanctioned by the wedding is apt to increase the supposed peril, sexual intercourse, as we have seen, being looked upon as defiling and in certain circumstances as a mysterious cause of evil.

## X

### THE POSITION OF WOMAN

IN discussing the origin of the idea that sexual intercourse is defiling or a cause of danger, I spoke of its connection with the uncleanness attributed to woman. I pointed out that during menstruation and at child-birth she is supposed to be charged with mysterious baleful energy, and suggested that such temporary defilement of a specifically feminine nature has led to the notion of the permanent uncleanness of the female sex. This conception has influenced the position of woman especially at the higher grades of culture.

It is often said that a people's civilisation may be measured by the position held by its women. But at least so far as the earlier stages of culture are concerned, this opinion is not supported by facts. Among several of the lowest races the female sex is treated with far greater consideration than among many of the higher savages or barbarians. Travellers have not seldom noticed that of two neighbouring tribes the less cultured one sets in this respect an example to the other. And that the condition of woman, or her relative independence, is no safe gauge of the general culture of a nation also appears from a comparison between many of the lower races and the peoples of archaic civilisation.

The savage wife is frequently said to be the property

or slave of her husband, entirely destitute of rights. We are told this, for example, of the married women among the Australian natives. Yet if a husband kills his wife without a reason he exposes himself to the vengeance of her kindred. For punishing or divorcing her he must sometimes have the consent of the tribe. There are even cases in which a wife whose husband has been unfaithful to her may complain of his conduct to the elders of the tribe, and he may have to suffer for it. In North-West-Central Queensland the women are on one special occasion allowed themselves to inflict punishments upon the men : at a certain stage of the initiation ceremony " each woman can exercise her right of punishing any man who may have ill-treated, abused, or ' hammered ' her, and for whom she may have waited months or perhaps years to chastise." Of Central Australian natives Spencer and Gillen say that " the women are certainly not treated usually with anything which could be called excessive harshness " ; and according to statements referring to various Australian tribes, married people are often much attached to each other, and continue to be so even when they grow old.

I shall add a few other instances to show that the so-called absolute authority of husbands over their wives is not to be taken too literally. Of the Guiana Indians Sir Everard Im Thurn says that " the woman is held to be as completely the property of the man as his dog. He may even sell her if he chooses." But in another place the same authority admits not only that the women in a quiet way may have a considerable influence with the men, but that, " even if the men were—though this is in fact quite contrary to their

nature—inclined to treat them cruelly, public opinion would prevent this.” Of the Plains Indians of the United States Colonel Dodge writes :—“ The husband owns his wife entirely. He may abuse her, beat her, even kill her without question. She is more absolutely a slave than any negro before the war of rebellion.” But on the next page we are told that custom gives to every married woman of the tribes “ the absolute right to leave her husband and become the wife of any other man, the sole condition being that the new husband must have the means to pay for her.” Dr. Paulitschke tells us that among the Somal, Danakil, and Galla a wife has no rights whatever in relation to her husband, being merely a piece of property ; but subsequently we learn that she is his equal, and “ a mistress of her own will.” We must not conclude, like Herbert Spencer, that where women are exchangeable for oxen or other beasts they are “ of course ” regarded as equally without personal rights. The so-called marriage by purchase simply implies that a man “ buys ” the rights which custom grants to a husband ; and however great these rights may be, I think we may safely say that they never are quite absolute, and that among no people is a married woman completely at the mercy of her husband.

Among many savage peoples the hardest drudgeries of life are said to be imposed on the women. But it seems that these statements, however correct they be, hardly express the whole truth. In early society each sex has its own pursuits. The man is responsible for the protection of his family and, ultimately, for its support. His occupations are such as require strength and agility—fighting, hunting, fishing, the construction of implements for the chase and war, and frequently

the cutting of trees and the building of lodges. The woman may accompany him as a helpmate on his expeditions, sometimes even participating in the battle, and when they travel she generally carries the baggage. But her principal occupations are universally of a domestic kind : she procures wood and water, prepares the food, dresses skins, makes clothes, takes care of the children. She, moreover, supplies the household with vegetable food, gathers roots, berries, acorns, and so forth, and among agricultural peoples very frequently cultivates the soil. While cattle-rearing, having developed out of the chase, is largely a masculine pursuit, agriculture, having developed out of collecting seeds and plants, originally devolves on the woman.

The various occupations of life are thus divided between the sexes according to rules ; and although the formation of these rules no doubt has been more or less influenced by the egoism of the stronger sex, the essential principle from which they spring lies deeper. They are on the whole in conformity with the indications which Nature herself has given. Take, for instance, the apparently cruel custom of using the women as beasts of burden. To the superficial observer, as M. Pinart remarks with special reference to the Panama Indians, it may indeed seem strange that the woman should be charged with a heavy load, while the man walking before her carries nothing but his weapons. But a little reflection will make it plain that he has good reason for keeping himself free and mobile. The little caravan is surrounded with dangers : when traversing a savannah or a forest an enemy may appear at any moment, or a tiger or a snake may lie in wait for the travellers. Hence the man must be on the alert,

and ready in an instant to catch his arms to defend himself and his family against the aggressor. Dobrizhoffer writes, "The luggage being all committed to the women, the Abipones travel armed with a spear alone, that they may be disengaged to fight or hunt, if occasion require."

Superstition may also be responsible for certain rules relating to the division of labour between the sexes. In Africa it is a common belief that the cattle get ill if women have anything to do with them; hence among most negro races milking is permitted only to men. In South-Eastern Africa a woman must not enter the cattle fold; the Bechuanas never allow women to touch their cattle, and the men have therefore to do the ploughing. Agriculture, again, is sometimes supposed to be dependent for success on a magic quality in woman, intimately connected with child-bearing. Some Orinoco Indians said to Father Gumilla:—"When the women plant maize the stalk produces two or three ears; when they set the manioc the plant produces two or three baskets of roots; and thus everything is multiplied. Why? Because women know how to produce children, and know how to plant the corn so as to ensure its germinating. Then, let them plant it; we do not know so much as they do."

Moreover, whatever may have been the original reason for allotting a certain occupation exclusively to one of the sexes, any such restriction has subsequently been much emphasised by custom. Among North American Indians custom ordains that the wife must carefully keep away from all that belongs to her husband's sphere of action; while the men refrain from interfering with the work of the women and from

helping them if they can avoid it "for fear of being laughed at and called a woman." In Abyssinia "it is infamy for a man to go to market to buy anything. He cannot carry water or bake bread; but he must wash the clothes belonging to both sexes, and in this function the women cannot help him." The women in a village in Morocco where I was staying were quite horrified when one of my native servants set out to fetch water; they would on no account allow him to do what they said was a woman's business. Among the Bakongo a man would be much ridiculed by the women themselves if he wanted to help them in their work in the field.

It is obvious that this strict division of labour is apt to mislead the travelling stranger. He sees the women hard at work and the men idly looking on, and it escapes him that the latter will have to be busy in their turn, within their own sphere of action. What is largely due to the force of custom is taken to be sheer tyranny on the part of the men; and the wife is pronounced to be an abject slave of her husband, destitute of all rights. And yet the strong differentiation of work, however burdensome it may be to the wife, is itself a source of rights, giving her authority within the circle which is exclusively her own. Among North American Indians "the lodge itself, with all its arrangements, is the precinct of the rule and government of the wife. . . . The husband has no voice in this matter." Among the Banaka and Bapuku, in West Africa, the wife, though said to be her husband's property and slave, is nevertheless an autocrat in her own house, strong enough to bid defiance to her lord and master. Among the Monbuttu, according to Schweinfurth, "the position

in the household occupied by the men was illustrated by the reply which would be made if they were solicited to sell anything as a curiosity. 'Oh, ask my wife: it is hers.' "

Nothing can better disprove the exaggerated statements about the subjection of married women among savages than their rules of divorce. While among a large number of tribes the husband is said to be able to dissolve the marriage at will or on the slightest grounds or pretexts, a similar right is in the majority of these cases granted to the wife; this is borne out both by the materials I have myself collected and the figures given by Messrs. Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg in their work *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples*. Of certain tribes we are only told explicitly that the wife can leave at will; and although in some or most of these tribes the husband presumably possesses the same power, this is not the case among all of them. But among many of the simpler peoples marriage can be dissolved only by mutual consent, unless it be for some very cogent reason; or one of the parties is said to be unable to effect divorce against the will of the other. We are frequently told that a man must not divorce his wife and a wife not separate from her husband without just or good cause. The ideas as to what constitutes such a cause vary among different tribes. The most generally recognised cause is probably adultery on the part of the wife, but we also hear of uncivilised peoples who do not consider a man justified in repudiating his wife on account of adultery. Among some peoples the wife is said to have a right to divorce a husband who is unfaithful to her, or who neglects or ill-treats her, or

who is lazy and will not do his fair share of work, or who deserts her or is long absent from home, or for whom she has a strong repugnance. Among some natives of Eastern Central Africa the wife may divorce a husband who omits to sew her clothes. Among the Shans of Burma, should the husband take to drinking or otherwise misconduct himself, the wife has the right to turn him adrift and to retain all the goods and money of the partnership.

I must thus distinctly reject as erroneous the broad statement that the lower races in general hold their women in a state of almost complete subjection. Among many of them the married woman, though in the power of her husband, is known to enjoy a remarkable degree of independence, to be treated by him with consideration, and to exercise no small influence over him. In several cases she is said to be his equal, and in a few his superior.

Let us now turn our attention to woman's position among peoples of a higher culture. In China her condition has always been a very inferior one, and no generous sentiment tending to its amelioration has ever come from the Chinese sages. Confucius says that "man is the representative of Heaven, and is supreme over all things. Woman yields obedience to the instructions of man, and helps to carry out his principles. On this account she can determine nothing of herself, and is subject to the rule of the three obediences. When young, she must obey her father and elder brother; when married, she must obey her husband; when her husband is dead, she must obey her son." According to the old penal code of China, a man can divorce his wife on account of adultery, barrenness,

lasciviousness, disregard of his parents, talkativeness, thievish propensities, envious and suspicious temper, and inveterate infirmity. But it does not seem that either law or public opinion justified a wife in deserting her husband or demanding a separation from him. The divorce law of the Japanese Taihō code was substantially the same as that in China, but practically a wife could be divorced at the pleasure of her husband under any slight or flimsy pretext ; and the wife had no legal right to demand a divorce from her husband on any ground.

From various quarters of the ancient world we hear of the rule that the husband shall command and the wife obey. The Lord said to the woman, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." How great the husband's power was among the Hebrews we do not know exactly. He could divorce his wife at his pleasure, whereas it is nowhere said in the Old Testament that a marriage could be dissolved at the will of the wife ; indeed, the Jewish law has never given her a right to divorce her husband, though she may on certain grounds demand a bill of divorce from him and the court may force him to give her such a bill. As the ancient Hebrews, so the pagan Arabs permitted the husband to repudiate his wife whenever he pleased, and subsequently this unlimited customary right was crystallised in Mohammed's law ; but at Mohammedan, as at Jewish, law the wife can never divorce her husband, although she may take steps leading to the dissolution of her marriage.

According to Brahmanic law, as expressed in the Laws of Manu, a woman must in childhood be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is

dead to her sons ; “ a woman must never be independent.” Not even in her own house is she allowed to do anything independently. Him to whom her father may give her, or her brother with the father’s permission, she shall obey as long as he lives. She must never do anything that might displease him ; even though he be destitute of virtue or unfaithful to her, “ a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.” Various passages in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, however, indicate that women in India were subjected to less social restraints in former days than they are according to the rules of Brahmanism.

In Greece also a wife appears to have been a more influential and independent personage in ancient times, in Homeric society, than she became afterwards. In the historic age her position was simply that of the domestic drudge ; her virtues were reduced to the maintenance of good order in her household and obedience to her husband ; her greatest ornament was silence. Aristotle, always a faithful exponent of the most enlightened opinion of his age, gives the following description of what he considers to be the ideal relation of a woman to her husband :—“ A good and perfect wife ought to be mistress of everything within the house. . . . But the well-ordered wife will justly consider the behaviour of her husband as a model of her own life and a law to herself, invested with a divine sanction by means of the marriage tie and the community of life. . . . The wife ought to show herself even more obedient to the rein than if she had entered the house as a purchased slave.” The law invalidated whatever a husband did by the counsel or at the request of his wife, whereas the wife on her part could

transact no business of importance in her own favour, nor by will dispose of more than the value of a bushel of barley.

In Rome, in ancient times, the power which the father possessed over his daughter was generally, if not always, transferred by marriage to the husband. When marrying, a woman passed *in manum viri*, that is, into the power of her husband ; as a wife she was *filix loco*, that is, in law she was her husband's daughter. And since the Roman house-father originally had the power of life and death over his children, the husband naturally had the same power over his wife. Gradually, however, marriage with *manus* fell into disuse and was during the Empire generally succeeded by marriage without *manus*, a form of wedlock which conferred on the husband hardly any authority at all over his wife. Instead of passing into his power, she remained in the power of her father ; and since the tendency of the later law was to reduce the old *patria potestas*, or paternal power, to a nullity, she became practically independent.

This remarkable liberty granted to married women was only a passing incident in the history of the family in Europe. From the very first Christianity tended to narrow it. Christianity enjoins a husband to love his wife as his own body, to do honour unto her as unto the weaker vessel. But " the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head." The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church ; hence, " as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." It is difficult to exaggerate

the influence exerted by a doctrine so agreeable to the selfishness of men, and so readily lending itself to be used as a sacred weapon against almost any attempt to extend the rights of married women, as was this dictum of St. Paul. In an essay on the position of women among the early Christians Principal Donaldson writes, "In the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favourable effect on the position of women, but, on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity." Even the latest Roman law, so far as it is touched by the Constitutions of the Christian emperors, bears some marks of a reaction against the liberal doctrines of the great Antonine jurisconsults, who assumed the equality of the sexes as a principle of their code of equity. And this tendency was in a formidable degree supported by Teutonic custom and law. Among the Teutons a husband's authority over his wife was the same as a father's over his unmarried daughter. This power, which in certain circumstances gave the husband a right to kill, sell, or repudiate his wife, contained much more than the Church could approve of, and so far she has helped to improve the condition of married women in Teutonic countries. But at the same time the Church is largely responsible for those heavy disabilities with regard to personal liberty, as well as with regard to property, from which they have suffered up to recent times. The systems, says Sir Henry Maine, "which are least indulgent to married women are invariably those which have followed the Canon Law exclusively, or those which, from the lateness of their contact with European civilisation, have never had their archaisms weeded out."

The position of wives is in various respects connected with the ideas held about the female sex. Among those peoples of culture with whom I am now dealing woman is regarded as intellectually and morally vastly inferior to man. In Greece, in the historic age, the latter recognised in her no other end than to minister to his pleasure or to become the mother of his children. There was also a general notion that she is naturally more vicious, more addicted to envy, discontent, evil-speaking, and wantonness than the man. Plato classes women together with children and servants, and states that in all the pursuits of mankind the female sex is inferior to the male. To the Buddhist women are of all the snares which the tempter has spread for men the most dangerous; in women are embodied all the powers of infatuation which bind the mind of the world. The Chinese have a saying to the effect that the best girls are not equal to the worst boys.

Islam pronounces the general depravity of women to be much greater than that of men. According to Mohammedan tradition the Prophet said:—"I have not left any calamity more hurtful to man than woman. . . . O assembly of women, give alms, although it be of your gold and silver ornaments; for verily ye are mostly of hell on the day of resurrection." In Morocco I have heard the following proverbs:—"Women are defective in understanding and religion." "Women have been omitted by God from his mercy." "The beauty of the man is in his intelligence, and the intelligence of the woman is in her beauty." "The cunning of women is strong, and the cunning of the devil is weak." There is a saying that when a boy is born a hundred evil spirits are born with him, and that

when a girl is born there are born a hundred angels ; but every year an evil spirit passes from the man to the woman and an angel from the woman to the man, so that when the man is a hundred years old he is surrounded by a hundred angels, and when the woman is a hundred years she is surrounded by a hundred devils. " An old woman is worse than the devil." " What the devil does in a year an old woman does in an hour."

The Hebrews represented woman as the source of evil and death on earth :—" Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die." This notion passed into Christianity. Says St. Paul, " Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Tertullian insists that a woman should go about in humble garb, mourning and repentant, in order to expiate that which she derives from Eve, the ignominy of the first sin and the odium attaching to her as the cause of human perdition. " Do you not know," he exclaims, " that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age ; the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway ; you are the unsealer of that [forbidden] tree ; you are the first deserter of the divine law ; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert—that is, death—even the Son of God had to die." At the Council of Mâcon, towards the end of the sixth century, a bishop even raised the question whether woman really is a human being. He answered it in the negative ; but the majority of the assembly considered it to be proved by Scripture that woman, in spite of all her defects, yet was a member of the human

race. Some of the Fathers of the Church, however, were careful to emphasise that womanhood only belongs to this earthly existence, and that on the day of resurrection all women will appear in the shape of sexless beings.

Progress in civilisation had an unfavourable effect upon the social position of woman by widening the gulf between the sexes, since the higher culture was almost exclusively the prerogative of the men. But there was another and at least equally important cause of her degradation—a cause which was also largely responsible for the state of ignorance in which she was kept—namely, the influence which religion exerted upon ideas, customs, and laws. Woman, as I have said, has been looked upon as an unclean and therefore sinful being, dangerous to holiness. She may consequently be prohibited from approaching holy places or objects or from taking part in sacred functions. According to the sacred books of India, “women are considered to have no business with the sacred texts”; and, being destitute of the knowledge of Vedic texts, they “are as impure as falsehood itself, that is a fixed rule.” If a woman, a dog, or a Sudra touches a consecrated image, its godship is destroyed; the ceremonies of deification must therefore be performed afresh, whilst a clay image, if thus defiled, must be thrown away. If women should worship before a consecrated image, they must keep at a respectful distance from the idol. In China women are not allowed to go and worship in the temples.

Islam is chiefly a religion for men. Though Mohammed did not forbid women to attend public prayers in a mosque, he pronounced it better for them to pray in private, as their presence might inspire in the

men a different kind of devotion from that which is requisite in a place dedicated to the worship of God ; but very few Mohammedan women are taught to say the prayer. In Morocco there are certain saints who do not allow women to visit their shrines. No woman is allowed to tread on the threshing-floor when the corn is there, lest she should spoil its *baraka*, or holiness. Among some tribes she is forbidden to enter a granary, to ride on a horse, to go among the sheep in the afternoon, or to approach a bee-hive ; because the horse, the sheep, and the bees are holy animals and would therefore be injured by the uncleanness of the woman.

In Christian Europe, as ascetic ideas advanced, the women sat or stood in the church apart from the men and entered by a separate door. They were excluded from sacred functions. In the early Church, it is true, there were deaconesses and clerical widows, but their offices were merely to perform some inferior services of the church<sup>1</sup> ; and even these very modest posts were open only to virgins or widows of a considerable age. Whilst a layman could in case of necessity administer baptism, a woman could never, as it seems, perform such an act. Nor was a woman allowed to preach publicly in the church, either by the Apostle's rules or those of succeeding ages ; and it was a serious complaint against certain heretics that they allowed such a practice. " The heretic women," Tertullian exclaims, " how wanton are they ! they who dare to teach, to

<sup>1</sup> We were reminded of the continuance of this rule only the other day when the Archbishop of Canterbury received a deputation who said that a number of well qualified girls would gladly enter the Order of Deaconesses if they could feel that there was a prospect, after the experiment had proved itself, that the Church would be willing to confer the priesthood either upon them or their successors.

dispute, to practise exorcisms, to promise cures, perchance also to baptise!" A Council held at Auxerre at the end of the sixth century forbade women to receive the Eucharist into their naked hands; and in various canons women were enjoined not to come near to the altar while mass was celebrating. To such an extent was this opposition against women carried that the Church of the Middle Ages did not hesitate to provide itself with eunuchs in order to supply cathedral choirs with the soprano tones inhering by nature in women alone.

But the notion that woman is an unclean being charged with mysterious energy has not only been a cause of her degradation: it has also given her a secret power over her husband, and even been a source of rights and privileges.

In Morocco I have often been struck by the superstitious fear that the women inspire in the men. They are supposed to be experts in witchcraft and have also excellent opportunities to practise it to the detriment of their husbands when they prepare their meals. For instance, the wife has only to cut off a little piece of a donkey's ear and put it into the food she gives her husband. What happens? By eating it he will become just like a donkey and always listen to what she says. Or she mixes a bit of a hyena's brain into his food, and he will become so silly that he allows her to do whatever she likes. And if the husband falls in love with another woman, his wife knows how to treat him: she sends perhaps an old witch to the cemetery to get the hand of a newly buried corpse and stirs with it the gruel before she gives it to the husband to eat. The belief that women are versed in witchcraft is wide-

spread. In the Arabian Desert men are afraid of their women "with their sly philters and maleficent drinks." In Dahomey "the husband may not chastise or interfere with his wife whilst the fetish is 'upon' her, and even at other times the use of the rod might be dangerous." Among the ancient Arabs, Babylonians, and Peruvians, as in Europe during the Middle Ages, the witch appeared more frequently than the male sorcerer.

The curses of women are greatly feared. A Moorish proverb says, "If men swear to do you harm spend your night sleeping, and if women swear to do you harm spend your night awake." According to the Talmud the anger of a wife destroys the house; whereas it is also through woman that God's blessings are vouchsafed to it. We read in the Laws of Manu:—"The houses on which female relations, not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse, perish completely, as if destroyed by magic. Hence men who seek their own welfare should always honour women on holidays and festivals with gifts of ornaments, clothes, and dainty food." A Gaelic proverb says, "A wicked woman will get her wish, though her soul may not see salvation."

The belief in the great efficacy of women's curses has led to the custom which makes a woman serve as an asylum. In Morocco she is not only herself protected by the fear she inspires—the authorities prefer having nothing to do with women—but may also protect others: in many parts of the country a person who takes refuge with a woman is safe for the moment, because he has placed himself in her '*āṛ*', which implies that his pursuer exposes himself to her curses if he does not leave him alone. Similar customs are found else-

where. Among certain Asiatic Bedouins "a woman can protect any number of persons, or even of tents." Among the Circassians "a stranger who intrusts himself to the patronage of a woman, or is able to touch with his mouth the breast of a wife, is spared and protected as a relation of blood, though he were the enemy, nay even the murderer of a similar relative." The inhabitants of Barèges in Bigorre have up to recent times preserved the old custom of pardoning a criminal who has sought refuge with a woman.

As an extraordinary instance of privileges that woman has superstition to thank for I shall lastly mention a custom which I found among some Berber tribes in the interior of Morocco. A married woman who does not like to remain with her husband can at any time dissolve the marriage by flying to another man's house or tent and embracing the pole supporting the roof or one of the vertical tentpoles, or taking hold of the handmill and turning it round, as if she were grinding. This is a form of *'ār*, which implies that if the owner of the place does not do what she wants he is cursed by her and will suffer some great misfortune. The consequences of the woman's proceeding are exceedingly serious. The poor man is obliged not only to protect her, but to marry her, whether he be a bachelor or a married man, and whatever be the number of his wives. Moreover, he is compelled to compensate the deserted husband for the loss of his wife. The compensation varies considerably in different tribes, but is fixed by tribal custom; and it may amount even to a hundred pounds. If the new husband is unable to pay the sum required and finds nobody to help him, there is likely to be a feud. I knew an old man of good

family who told me that he in the course of his life had been forced to marry three run-away wives who had thus fled to his house.

Yet however great the benefits that woman has derived from superstition may be, she need not complain of the changes brought about by the progressive civilisation of the Western world, which have gradually transformed the unclean woman, the witch and the demon, into an ordinary human being, nothing more and nothing less.

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