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THE WORSHIP OF NATURE



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THE
WORSHIP OF NATURE

BY

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THIS volume contains the whole of the Gifford Lectures delivered by me before the University of Edinburgh in the years 1924 and 1925, together with much additional matter which could not be compressed within the limits of twenty lectures. In the sequel I propose to complete the survey of the Worship of the Sun and to deal with the personification and worship of other aspects of nature, both inanimate and animate.

J. G. FRAZER.

22nd December 1925.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE mind of man refuses to acquiesce in the phenomena of sense. By an instinctive, an irresistible impulse it is driven to seek for something beyond, something which it assumes to be more real and abiding than the shifting phantasmagoria of this sensible world. This search and this assumption are not peculiar to philosophers; they are shared in varying degrees by every man and woman born into the world. Take, for example, a ploughman. He wakes at cock-crow and prepares to begin the familiar round of labour. He sees his wife lighting the cottage fire and preparing his morning meal, his children gathering expectant round the table: he hears the crackling of the fire on the hearth, the lowing of cows, the distant bleating of sheep and barking of dogs. And with these sights before his eyes and these sounds in his ears he has more or less consciously in his mind the scene that awaits him in the fields and on the way to it. He has a vision, for a vision it is, of the village church and churchyard with its solemn yews and its grassy mounds sleeping in the morning sunshine; of the turn in the road where he catches a glimpse of a winding river and of far blue hills; of the gate opening into the field where he is to toil till evening, pacing behind the plough drawn by the patient horses up and down the long furrows of upturned brown earth. He does not reflect on these things, still less does he question their reality. He assumes that they exist somewhere outside and independently of him, and that other eyes will see the old familiar scenes and that other ears

The search for the real.

will hear the old familiar sounds when his own are stopped for ever in the churchyard mould.

A supposed real world constructed by imagination behind the immediate data of sense.

In the same way every one of us is perpetually, every hour of the day, implicitly constructing a purely imaginary world behind the immediate sensations of light and colour, of touch, of sound, and of scent which are all that we truly apprehend; and oddly enough it is this visionary world, the creation of thought, which we dub the real world in contradistinction to the fleeting data of sense. Thus viewed, the mind of man may be likened to a wizard who, by the help of spirits or the waving of his magic wand, summons up scenes of enchantment which, deceived by the very perfection of his art, he mistakes for realities. Only by deliberate reflection is it possible to perceive how unsubstantial, in the last resort, is the seemingly solid structure of what we call the material universe. In the literal acceptation of the word, it consists of such stuff as dreams are made of. The only difference between the dreams of sleep and the dreams which we call our waking life is the greater orderliness which distinguishes the latter. Their succession is so regular that to a great extent we can predict it with confidence, and experience daily and hourly confirms the prediction. We anticipate, for example, the sights that will meet us when we pass into the garden or the neighbouring street, and the anticipation is invariably fulfilled. This fulfilment, countless times repeated, of our expectation is perhaps the principal cause, as certainly it is the best justification, of our instinctive belief in the reality of an external world. It is this regularity in the succession of phenomena which breeds in our mind the conception of a cause; in the last analysis cause is simply invariable sequence. The observation of such sequences is essential to the conduct, nay to the existence, of life, not only in men but in animals; with its help we are able to foresee the future and to adapt ourselves to it; without it we must perish prematurely.

Two philosophic theories of the ultimate reality, the materialistic and the spiritualistic.

But while mankind in general tacitly assumes that behind the phenomena of sense there is a real world of a more substantial and abiding nature, there are men who occupy themselves by predilection with the investigation of

that assumed external world. They ask, is there really such a world hidden behind the veil of sensible phenomena? and if so, what are its origin and nature? and what laws, if any, does it obey? The men who ask these questions as to the ultimate reality of the world are philosophers in the widest sense of the word, and, roughly speaking, their answers fall into one of two classes according as they find the ultimate reality of the world in matter or in mind. On the one view, the ultimate reality is dead, unconscious, inhuman; on the other view, it is living, conscious, and more or less analogous to human feeling and intelligence; according to the one, things existed first and mind was developed out of them afterwards; according to the other, mind existed first and created, or at all events set in order, the realm of things. On the one view, the world is essentially material; on the other, it is essentially spiritual. Broadly speaking, science accepts the former view, at least as a working hypothesis; religion unhesitatingly embraces the latter.

Need for simplification and unification of phenomena.

Whichever hypothesis be adopted, the mind, in obedience to a fundamental law, seeks to form a conception which will simplify, and if possible unify, the multitudinous and seemingly heterogeneous phenomena of nature. Thus, to deal first with the materialistic hypothesis, ancient Greek philosophers attempted to reduce the apparent multitude and diversity of things to a single element, whether it was water, or fire, or what not. Others, less ambitious, were content to postulate the existence of four distinct and irreducible elements, fire, air, earth, and water. For a long time modern chemistry continued to multiply the apparently ultimate and irreducible elements of which the material universe was believed to be composed, till the number of elements had reached some eighty-eight. But, as has been observed by an eminent philosopher of our time,[1] science could not rest content with the theory that the universe was built up out of just eighty-eight different sorts of things, neither more nor less; to limit the kind of atoms to eighty-eight seemed as arbitrary as to limit the number of fundamental religious truths to thirty-nine. In both cases the mind naturally craves for either more or less; and for the sake of unity and simplicity it

Ancient Greek philosophy attempted to simplify phenomena by reducing them to one or a few elements.

[1] Bertrand Russell, *The A B C of Atoms* (London, 1923), p. 19.

Modern scientific simplifications in physics and biology.

prefers less rather than more. In the case of science that craving has in recent years been satisfied by the more or less probable reduction of all the old chemical elements to the single element of hydrogen, of which the rest would appear to be only multiples.[1] Similarly in biology the theory of evolution reduces the innumerable species of plants and animals to unity by deriving them all from a single simple type of living organism.[2]

The apparent simplifications of science are probably illusory, concealing inner complexities which the progress of knowledge will later reveal.

Thus alike in regard to the organic and the inorganic world the science of to-day has attained to that unity and simplicity of conception which the human intellect imperiously demands if it is to comprehend in some measure the infinite complexity of the universe, or rather of its shadows reflected on the illumined screen of the mind. Yet, as that complexity is infinite, so the search for the ultimate unity is probably endless also. For we may suspect that the finality, which seems to crown the vast generalizations of science, is after all only illusory, and that the tempting unity and simplicity which they offer to the weary mind are not the goal but only halting-places in the unending march. The fair-seeming fruit of knowledge too often turns out to be apples of Sodom. A closer inspection of the apparently simple result may reveal within it a fresh and as yet undreamed-of complexity, which in its turn may prove to be the starting-point of another quest, longer and more arduous than that which had yielded to the mind a brief and transient repose. For the

[1] "Physicists now believe that all of the elements are compounded of hydrogen atoms, bound together by negative electrons. Thus helium is made up of four hydrogen atoms, yet the atomic weight of helium (4) is less than four times that of hydrogen (1·008). The difference may represent the mass of the electrical energy released when the transmutation occurred" (G. E. Hale, *The New Heavens*, New York and London, 1922, p. 80). At present the number of multiples of hydrogen, and consequently the number of the elements, postulated by physicists appears to be ninety-two, but of these several remain to be discovered, their existence being rendered probable by gaps in the series of atomic numbers, which begins with hydrogen at one and ends with uranium at ninety-two. See Sir William Bragg, *Concerning the Nature of Things* (London, 1925), pp. 36 *sq.* In this passage Sir W. Bragg is speaking of the difference between the elements as consisting, not in the different multiples of hydrogen, but in the different number of electrons which they can normally attract or hold as satellites. But apparently the number of multiples of hydrogen in an element is identical with the number of its electrons, and both of them with its atomic number.

[2] For a full and clear statement of the evidence, see A. Dendy, *Outlines of Evolutionary Biology*, Third Edition (London, 1923).

thinker there is no permanent place of rest. He must move for ever forwards, a pilgrim of the night eternally pressing towards the faint and glimmering illumination that eternally retreats before him. With Ulysses he may say that—

> "*All experience is an arch wherethro'*
> *Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades*
> *For ever and for ever when I move*".[1]

A like process of simplification and unification may be traced in the history of religion.

A gradual process of simplification and unification, like that which marks the progress of science or the materialistic interpretation of the world, may be traced in the history of religion or the spiritualistic interpretation of the world. Savages explain the phenomena of nature and of human life by supposing the existence of a multitude of spiritual beings, whether gods or ghosts, who people the sky, the air, the sea, the woods, the springs, the rivers, and by their actions bring about all the varied effects which a materialistic philosophy refers to the agency of impersonal forces. Such, for example, was the theory of the Polynesians before, for their misfortune, a European flag ever floated in the Pacific. "By their rude mythology, each lovely island was made a sort of fairy-land, and the spells of enchantment were thrown over its varied scenes. The sentiment of the poet that—

Savages assume the existence of a multitude of spirits.

> '*Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,*
> *Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep*,'

was one familiar to their minds; and it is impossible not to feel interested in a people who were accustomed to consider themselves surrounded by invisible intelligences, and who recognized in the rising sun—the mild and silver moon—the shooting star—the meteor's transient flame—the ocean's roar—the tempest's blast, or the evening breeze—the movements of mighty spirits. The mountain's summit, and the fleecy mists that hang upon its brows—the rocky defile—the foaming cataract—and the lonely dell—were all regarded as the abode or resort of these invisible beings."[2]

A like assumption made by the ancient Greeks.

The same theory long persisted among peoples at a far higher level of culture than the rude islanders of the Pacific.

[1] Tennyson, *Ulysses*.

[2] W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1832–1836), i. 331.

"*The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,*
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
Under a cope of sky more variable,
Could find commodious place for every God.

. . . . . *The traveller slaked*
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs, fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper." [1]

Primitive animism, the theory that everything is animated by a spiritual principle like that of man.

When man began seriously to reflect on the nature of things, it was almost inevitable that he should explain them on the analogy of what he knew best, that is, by his own thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Accordingly he tended to attribute to everything, not only to animals, but to plants and inanimate objects, a principle of life like that of which he was himself conscious, and which, for want of a better name, we are accustomed to call a soul. This primitive philosophy is commonly known as animism. It is a childlike interpretation of the universe in terms of man. Whether or not it was man's earliest attempt at solving the riddle of the world, we cannot say. The history of man on earth is long; the evidence of geology and archaeology appears to be continually stretching the life of the species farther and farther into the past. It may be that the animistic hypothesis is only one of many guesses at truth which man has successively formed and rejected as unsatisfactory. All we know is that it has found favour with many backward races down to our own time. To illustrate it by a concrete example I will quote a dialogue between a missionary and his native pupil which was published in the present year of grace (1924), and which sets in the clearest light the antithesis between the savage and the civilized interpretation of physical phenomena. The contrast is all the more striking because the materialistic hypothesis of phenomena is here advocated by a Christian missionary, who would doubtless apply to the universe in general that spiritualistic theory which he scouts as absurd

[1] Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book IV. ll. 718-721, 871-879.

in particular cases. The scene of the dialogue is in British New Guinea or Papua, as it is now called. The missionary writes as follows:

Dialogue between a missionary and his pupil on the subject of animism.

"I knew the natives believed that when a tree was felled its soul was dispossessed and had to seek an abiding-place in another tree. Its preference was for a tree of the species from which it had been expelled, but failing it there were alternative species in which it could dwell temporarily. As an illustration I was told that when an *aravea* tree was felled its soul entered a *laura*, a species of the acacia group, and remained there until it could re-establish itself in another *aravea* tree. I saw in this belief an opportunity to question the other belief in the presence of a soul in everything that exists. Assuming that timber had no soul because when the tree was felled from which it came its soul was expelled, I took as an object likely to help me to prove my case an old table standing on the verandah of our house." On the subject of this table the missionary thereupon engaged in an edifying conversation with a native Papuan lad who had come to lay the cloth for dinner. As recorded by the missionary, the conversation ran thus:

The soul of a table.

"I began something in this way. 'Your people say that everything has its own soul, but they also say that when a tree is felled its soul is expelled.' He replied, 'That is so.' 'Well, then,' I asked, 'how can this table have a soul, seeing that when the tree was felled from which its timber was sawed, the tree soul fled to another tree habitat?' I can recall the image of that lad's face as I write; it beamed with amused interest as he put this question, 'How could it be here as a table if it had not a soul inside it to hold it together?' I did not regard that as a poser, and replied, 'It is here as a table because skilled men sawed the timber from a felled tree, cut it into lengths, shaped them into legs and top, nailed and glued the parts together, and it is held together by glue and nails, not by a soul.' A Papuan does not contradict any one whom he regards as a chief. He could not even seem to confuse me, or in any way to suggest that my ignorance was palpable to him. He stooped down, got under the table, drew his finger-tips along the planks, came from under the table, stood up, drew quite near to me, held

the finger-tips so that I could see them plainly and said, 'Those tiny pellets you can see under my finger-nails came from the table, others will fall from it like them, and so the table will go on wasting until it will crumble away altogether; then, and not till then, its soul will flee away and it will no longer be a table.' It was my turn, but I had nothing to say; only much to think about, to marvel about. He had not done, however, until he had given me what he considered the most conclusive evidence of the presence of soul in things. Again he stretched his right hand towards me and said, 'Each of those little pellets between my finger-nails has its soul; if it had not we could not see it, it could not be.' Such were his views of the omnipresence of soul." [1]

The soul of sawdust.

Tendency of thought to empty the external world of spiritual contents by substituting unconscious forces for spirits.

Thus while the savage stoutly maintained the spiritualistic theory of natural phenomena, the missionary as stoutly maintained the materialistic theory and rejected the spiritualistic interpretation as childish and absurd. In doing so he undoubtedly followed the general trend of civilized thought, which for centuries has been gradually emptying the external world of all spiritual contents and reducing it to a welter of unconscious forces.

The passing of the gods.

"*Unbewusst der Freuden, die sie schenket,*
Nie entzückt von ihrer Herrlichkeit,
Nie gewahr des Geistes, der sie lenket,
Sel'ger nie durch meine Seligkeit,
Fühllos selbst für ihres Künstlers Ehre,
Gleich dem toten Schlag der Pendeluhr,
Dient sie knechtisch dem Gesetz der Schwere,
Die entgötterte Natur.

"*Morgen wieder neu sich zu entbinden,*
Wühlt sie heute sich ihr eigenes Grab,
Und an ewig gleicher Spindel winden
Sich von selbst die Monde auf und ab.
Müssig kehrten zu dem Dichterlande
Heim die Götter, unnütz einer Welt,
Die, entwachsen ihrem Gängelbande,
Sich durch eignes Schweben hält." [2]

[1] J. H. Holmes, *In Primitive New Guinea* (London, 1924), pp. 154 *sq.* In quoting the text I have substituted for the native word *imunu* the English word "soul", which is its nearest equivalent. Mr. Holmes defines *imunu* as "soul, living principle" "the soul of things", p. 150.

[2] Schiller, *Die Götter Griechenlands.*

Yes, the gods of Greece are gone, and only poets are left to mourn their departure:

> "*Great God! I'd rather be*
> *A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;*
> *So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,*
> *Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;*
> *Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;*
> *Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.*"

The unlimited number of indwelling spirits is gradually reduced to a limited pantheon of deities believed to control the various departments of nature: animism is replaced by polytheism.

This process of despiritualizing the universe, if I may be allowed to coin the phrase, has been a very slow and gradual one, lasting for ages. After men had peopled with a multitude of individual spirits every rock and hill, every tree and flower, every brook and river, every breeze that blew, and every cloud that flecked with silvery white the blue expanse of heaven, they began, in virtue of what we may call the economy of thought, to limit the number of the spiritual beings of whom their imagination at first had been so prodigal. Instead of a separate spirit for every individual tree, they came to conceive of a god of the woods in general, a Silvanus or what not; instead of personifying all the winds as gods, each with his distinct character and features, they imagined a single god of the winds, an Aeolus, for example, who kept them shut up in bags and could let them out at pleasure to lash the sea into fury. To put it otherwise, the innumerable multitude of spirits or demons was generalized and reduced to a comparatively small number of deities; animism was replaced by polytheism. The world was now believed to be governed by a pantheon of gods and goddesses, each with his or her individual character, powers, and functions, in virtue of which they were entrusted with the control of particular departments of nature or of human life. By this generalization the instinctive craving of the mind after simplification and unification of its ideas received a certain measure of satisfaction; but the satisfaction was only partial and temporary. The intelligence could not finally acquiesce in the conception of a number of separate and more or less independent deities, whose inclinations and activities constantly conflicted with each other.

The same process of abstraction and generalization, the same desire for simplification and unification, which

In time the many gods are deposed in favour of one: polytheism passes into monotheism.

had evolved polytheism out of animism, now educed monotheism out of polytheism; the many gods, who had long divided among them the sway of the world, were deposed in favour of one solitary deity, the maker and controller of all things. At first this one God was conceived, for example, by the Jews, as regulating the whole course of nature by a series of arbitrary acts of will and as liable to be deflected from his purposes by judicious appeals to his passions or his interests. But as time went on, and the uniformity of nature and the immutability of natural law were gradually recognized and firmly established by every advance of science, it was found necessary, or advisable, to relieve the deity of his multifarious duties as the immediate agent of every event in the natural world, and to promote him, if I may say so, to a higher sphere in the supernatural world, as the creator or architect of the universe; while the management of affairs in this sublunary region was committed to his subordinate agents, the purely physical forces of attraction and repulsion, which modern science, if I apprehend it aright, appears to resolve into gravitation and electricity, or possibly into electricity alone. Thus the spiritualistic theory of the world has undergone a process of simplification and unification analogous to that undergone by the materialistic theory: as the materialistic hypothesis has reduced the multitudinous forms of matter to one substance, hydrogen, so the spiritualistic hypothesis has reduced the multitude of spirits to one God.

Both theories, the materialistic and the spiritualistic, aim at explaining the reality of a world beyond the immediate data of sense.

Both theories aim at ascertaining and defining the ultimate reality; the one discovers it in hydrogen and electricity, the other in a deity. How far the two supplement or conflict with each other, is a nice question which might suitably be discussed by a Gifford lecturer; but an adequate discussion of it would require a combination of philosophic and scientific attainments to which I can lay no claim. All that I desire to point out is that both hypotheses aim at explaining and justifying our instinctive belief in the reality of a world beyond the immediate data of sense. This is no less true of the materialistic than of the spiritualistic hypothesis; for we must constantly bear in mind that the atoms and electrons into which modern

science resolves the material world are as truly beyond the reach of our senses as are gnomes and fairies, and any other spiritual beings. It is true that we may have much better reasons for believing in the existence of atoms and electrons than of ghosts and hobgoblins; but in themselves atoms and electrons, ghosts and hobgoblins are equally hypothetical and therefore, in the strict sense of the word, imaginary, beings, invented to account for sensible phenomena. The supposed effects of both we can perceive, but not the things themselves. We can see, for example, the grassy ring which is said to be made by the feet of fairies dancing their rounds by moonlight on the greensward, but the fairies themselves we cannot see. We can perceive the bright line which is said to be the luminous trail left behind by an atom of helium shooting athwart a darkened chamber;[1] but the atom itself escapes our purblind vision as completely as do the fairies.

The present analysis of matter into atoms and electrons is probably not final.

Even if, through some as yet undreamed-of refinement of our scientific instruments, atoms and electrons should be brought within the ken of our senses, can we doubt that science would at once proceed to analyse the now perceptible atoms and electrons into some minuter and imperceptible particles of matter, and so on to infinity? Already science assumes that every atom is, as it were, a little sun with planets in the form of electrons revolving about it.[2] May it not be that each of these tiny suns comprises within itself a still tinier sun, or rather an incalculable number of such suns in the shape of atoms, and that in every one of these atoms of an atom a solar system, nay a whole starry universe, a miniature copy of ours, with all its wealth of vegetable and animal life, is, like our own, in process of evolution or decay? Conversely, we may imagine that this universe of ours which seems to us so inconceivably vast, is no more than an atom vibrating in a vaster universe; and so on to infinity.[3]

[1] Sir William Bragg, *Concerning the Nature of Things*, pp. 25 *sqq*.

[2] Sir William Bragg, *Concerning the Nature of Things*, p. 29; F. Soddy, *Matter and Energy* (London, 1920), pp. 186 *sq*.

[3] The thought of the two infinities, the infinitely great and the infinitely little, which equally evade the utmost span of man's puny intellect, was long ago eloquently enforced by Pascal in a famous passage. See Pascal, *Pensées sur la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne*, par J. Chevalier (Paris, 1925), i. 43 *sqq*. In modern times the same idea has been set forth by Ernest Renan in

Incapacity of the human mind to apprehend the infinities between which it is poised.

Thus it is that thought perpetually outstrips sense in the infinitely little as in the infinitely great; however far we extend the field of vision, whether to stars of unimaginable distance, or to corpuscles of unimaginable minuteness, thought still passes beyond them in the endless search after the real, the invisible, the eternal. We stand as it were at a point between two infinities neither of which we can ever hope to reach, yet both of which, by the pressure of some force unknown, we are perpetually urged to pursue. Thought is poised on a knife-edge between two abysses, into the unfathomable depths of which she is for ever peering, till her sight grows dim and her brain reels in the effort to pierce the thick gloom that closes the vista on either hand. Yet we understate the mystery that compasses about our little life when we speak of it as if it were only twofold, the mystery of the infinitely great and the infinitely small in space; for is there not also the twofold mystery of time, the mystery of the infinite past and the mystery of the infinite future? Thus our metaphor of thought poised between two abysses needs to be corrected and expanded: not two, but four infinities, four gulfs, four bottomless chasms yawn at her feet; and down into them some Tempter—or is it some bright angel?—whispering at her ear, perpetually lures her to plunge, only, it would seem, to beat and flutter her ineffectual wings in the impenetrable darkness. Yet even here, unappalled by the apparently insoluble nature of the enigma, the human mind refuses to acquiesce in these manifold antitheses. Of late, if I apprehend it aright, philosophy or science (for on fundamental questions these two sisters, after following the circle of human knowledge in opposite directions, tend to meet and kiss at last), philosophy or science has recently been at work to simplify the ultimate problems by reducing the seemingly irreducible principles of space and time to a single reality.[1] It is not for me to

what we may call his confession of philosophic faith written towards the end of his life. See E. Renan, "Examen de Conscience philosophique", *Feuilles détachées* (Paris, 1892), pp. 407 *sqq.*

[1] Compare Bertrand Russell, *The A B C of Relativity* (London, 1925), pp. 58 *sqq.* In speaking so glibly of infinities, as I have done in the text, I should mention that at the present time several scientific gentlemen are engaged in reconstructing the universe on a new and improved pattern of finite dimensions. Indeed, two of these reconstructions are now complete and

pronounce an opinion on this bold generalization. I refer to it only as perhaps the latest effort of the philosophic or scientific mind to unify and harmonize the apparently heterogeneous and discordant constituents of the universe.

The Gifford lectures were founded to stimulate and advance the study of natural theology. By natural theology I understand the conception which man, without the aid of revelation, has formed to himself of the existence and nature of a God or gods. The theme is a vast one, exceeding the capacity of any single man to treat of adequately in a course of twenty lectures. Accordingly your lecturers have naturally and rightly chosen to deal with those particular sides or aspects of the subject with which their own special studies had made them in some measure acquainted. I propose to follow their example. As you are perhaps aware, my attention has been given almost exclusively to the early history, I may almost say to the embryology, of natural religion; I mean, to the ideas which the ancients and the backward races of mankind formed of the divine nature and its relations to the world. Accordingly in the lectures which I have the honour to deliver in this place I purpose to take certain of these ideas as my subject, to describe the conceptions themselves and the practical consequences which have been deduced from them, whether in the shape of ritual or of rules for the guidance of life. I am aware that the description of beliefs and customs which the enlightened portion of mankind has long agreed to dismiss as false and absurd, if not as monstrous, vicious, and cruel, is apt to be somewhat tedious and repellent; certainly it lacks the vivid interest which would naturally

The Gifford lectures intended to promote the study of natural theology.

The subject of the present course is the religion of ancient and backward races.

ready for delivery. But as the two differ fundamentally from each other, and the value of both seems dubious, the unscientific laity may perhaps be pardoned for temporarily acquiescing in the old-fashioned infinities and in the antiquated notion of a radical distinction between space and time. See Bertrand Russell, *The ABC of Relativity*, pp. 164 *sqq.*: "Two somewhat different finite universes have been constructed, one by Einstein, the other by De Sitter", etc. The difference between the two, according to Mr. Russell, is that, whereas in Einstein's universe it is only space that is queer, in De Sitter's universe both space and time have gone mad, so that only a hatter would be in a position to understand them. Even Einstein, it appears, after ejecting absolute space and time by the front door, has smuggled them in by the back—a melancholy backsliding which deals a staggering blow to the reconstructed universe and encourages the profane to indulge in a chimerical hope of the continued existence and sanity of both space and time.

attach to a discussion such as I have indicated of the relations between the latest advances of science and the latest advances, or retreats, of theology. Still I trust that an account even of crude theories and preposterous practices may not be wholly destitute of interest and instruction, if it enables us to picture to ourselves something of the effort which it has cost our predecessors to grope their way through the mists of ignorance and superstition to what passes with us of this generation for the light of knowledge and wisdom. They were the pioneers who hewed their way through a jungle that might well have seemed impenetrable to man: they made the paths smooth for those who were to come after: we walk in their footsteps, and reap at our ease the harvest which they sowed with labour and anguish. The gratitude we owe them for the inestimable service which they have rendered us should temper the harsh judgments which we are too apt to pass on their errors, on what a hasty verdict stigmatizes as their follies and their crimes; and the lesson which we draw from the contemplation of their long wanderings and manifold aberrations in the search for the true and the good should be one rather of humility than of pride; it should teach us how weak and frail is human nature, and by what a slender thread hangs the very existence of our species, like a speck or mote suspended in the inconceivable infinities of the universe.

The theology to be discussed is that of simple folk, not that of the schools.

Accordingly the natural theology of which I propose to treat is the theology of simple folk, not the theology of the schools, where the doctrine of the divine nature has been elaborated and refined by age-long discussion and the successive contributions of generations of subtle thinkers. Who then are the simple folk whose theological notions we are about to study together? The great bulk of them may be described as savages, by which I mean the races of lower culture, so far as their customs and beliefs have not been modified by contact with civilization. Under simple folk I include also the uneducated classes in civilized countries, and especially the peasantry, among whom ancient modes of thought and of practice commonly linger long after they have disappeared among the more enlightened members of the community. The beliefs and customs handed down by

Under simple folk are included savages and the uneducated classes in civilized countries.

tradition from time immemorial among the unlearned are commonly comprised under the general term of folk-lore; as the great bulk of them probably originated in a very remote antiquity, they furnish valuable evidence as to the habits and ideas which may be presumed to have prevailed generally in former times, before the advance of knowledge, and with it of civilization, gradually ousted them from polite society and drove them into holes and corners, where they subsist like bats and owls in the darkness of ignorance and superstition. Accordingly I shall sometimes appeal to folk-lore for evidence of ancient modes of thought and practice, which, however strange and barbarous they may seem to civilized eyes, often shed a flood of light on the religion of our primitive forefathers.

The religions of the civilized nations of antiquity will also be considered, because these religions are essentially popular creations.

Lastly, I shall draw not a few of my illustrations from the ancient religions of India, of Egypt, of Babylon, of Greece, and of Rome. As society in these countries at the epochs to which I shall refer was not only civilized, but had recorded its civilization in copious and elaborate literatures, it might be objected that I have no right to include these peoples among the simple folks from whom I profess to derive the materials of these lectures. It is true no doubt that in many respects the theology and ritual of ancient India and classical antiquity had been modified and refined, even in very early days, by the influence of a higher thought and a purer morality than can be expected of an ignorant and unenlightened multitude. Yet after making every allowance for such improvements, gradually and no doubt for the most part silently effected by the intellectual and moral progress of the leaders, we must still regard the national religions of these civilized peoples as essentially popular creations, and as bearing on their face the indelible imprint of their origin. In other words, they were not, like the great historical religions, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, created each at a blow by the genius of a single founder, who was raised far above his fellows by the loftiness or the energy of his personal character, by the force of his moral enthusiasm or of his worldly ambition, and by the breadth of his intellectual outlook. On the contrary, all the evidence points to the conclusion that the national religions

of ancient India and the Mediterranean basin were in general the fruit of a long, gradual, and so to say natural evolution, which lasted for many ages and was effected rather by the tacit and almost unconscious co-operation of the many than by the purposeful intervention of a few outstanding individuals.

The religion of Israel, unlike the popular religions of classical antiquity, bears the imprint of moral reformation instituted by individual legislators and prophets.

To this general rule perhaps the only exception is the religion of ancient Israel, which undoubtedly bears the clearest marks of having been profoundly and repeatedly modified not only by the deliberate action of able and far-seeing legislators, but by the moral enthusiasm of the prophets. Yet even these men, who have exerted on the history of humanity an influence which it would hardly be possible to exaggerate, even they did not create the religion of their people; the substance of it had no doubt been handed down, generation after generation, from times beyond the memory of man: all that the great lawgivers and prophets did was to reform the ancient faith by purging it of its grosser elements and adapting it in some measure to their own high ideals of religion and ethics. But these reformations were not complete; indeed they could not be so; the weaknesses and imperfections of human nature alike in reformers and reformed forbade, as they will always forbid, the realization of the fairest dreams. Hence it came about that even after the reformers had done their work, the national religion of Israel retained not a few crudities that had been bequeathed to it from ruder ages, relics of ignorance and barbarism which neither legislators nor prophets had been able to efface from the book of the law and the hearts of the people. Such relics are folk-lore, and to some of them I may allow myself to refer in the course of these lectures without, I trust, incurring the suspicion of trespassing on the forbidden ground of revelation.

The principal forms of natural religion in its earlier stages.

Such, then, are the sources from which I propose to draw most of the facts illustrative of that department of natural theology which I have taken as the subject of my lectures. Before closing this general introduction to the course, it remains to indicate briefly the principal forms which natural religion is commonly found to assume in its earlier stages, with which alone we are here concerned.

As I have already pointed out, the natural religion to

which I purpose to confine my attention is that of simple folk, or in other words of primitive peoples, if I may be allowed to use the ambiguous word primitive in a relative, not an absolute sense, to denote a level of culture much below that which has been reached by educated persons in modern civilized society. If then, we survey the natural religion of primitive peoples in all parts of the world, we shall probably discover that it everywhere assumes one of two forms, which, far from being incompatible with each other, are usually found to be embraced simultaneously and with equal confidence by the worshippers. One of them is the worship of nature, the other is the worship of the dead. I must say a few words about each.

The natural religion of simple folk falls into two branches, the worship of nature and the worship of the dead.

First, in regard to the worship of nature, I mean by that the worship of natural phenomena conceived as animated, conscious, and endowed with both the power and the will to benefit or injure mankind. Conceived as such they are naturally objects of human awe and fear. Their life and consciousness are supposed to be strictly analogous to those of men; they are thought to be subject to the same passions and emotions, and to possess powers which, while they resemble those of man in kind, often far exceed them in degree. Thus to the mind of primitive man these natural phenomena assume the character of formidable and dangerous spirits whose anger it is his wish to avoid, and whose favour it is his interest to conciliate. To attain these desirable ends he resorts to the same means of conciliation which he employs towards human beings on whose goodwill he happens to be dependent; he proffers requests to them, and he makes them presents; in other words, he prays and sacrifices to them; in short, he worships them. Thus what we may call the worship of nature is based on the personification of natural phenomena. Whether he acts deliberately in pursuance of a theory, or, as is more probable, instinctively in obedience to an impulse of his nature, primitive man at a certain stage, not necessarily the earliest, of his mental evolution attributes a personality akin to his own to all, or at all events to the most striking, of the natural objects, whether animate or inanimate, by which he is surrounded. This process of personification appears to be the principal,

The worship of nature is based on the personification of natural phenomena.

though it is probably not the only source of the worship of nature among simple folk. The worship of nature will form the subject of my Gifford lectures.

The worship of the dead rests on the assumption of their existence and of their power to influence the living for good or evil.

The other form of natural religion to which I have referred is the worship of the dead. While it differs from the worship of nature in itself and in the presuppositions on which it rests, it is perhaps equally diffused among men [1] and has probably exerted at least an equal influence on their thought and institutions. The assumptions on which the worship of the dead is founded are mainly two: first, that the dead retain their consciousness and personality, and second, that they can powerfully influence the fortunes of the living for good or evil. To put it otherwise, the human soul is supposed to survive the death of the body and in its disembodied state to be capable of benefiting or injuring the survivors. Thus a belief in immortality, or at all events in the survival of consciousness and personality for an indefinite time after death, is the keystone of that propitiation or worship of the dead which has played a most important part in history and has been fraught with the most momentous consequences for good or evil to humanity.

Both courses of lectures to be devoted to the worship of nature.

When I undertook to deliver these lectures, my intention was to devote my first course to the worship of nature, and my second course to the worship of the dead, thus rounding off, in outline at least, the whole sphere of natural religion among simple folks. But when I addressed myself to the writing of the lectures, I found the materials for the study of the worship of nature far too copious to be compressed into a course of ten lectures. They overflowed the prescribed limits and promised to furnish ample materials for a second course. Accordingly, instead of attempting to deal more or less cursorily with the two forms of natural religion, the worship of nature, and the worship of the dead, I have decided that it will be better to give both courses to a more thorough investigation of the worship of nature alone. In my next lecture I will open the subject with some account of the worship of the sky in Aryan antiquity.

[1] Compare Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 211: "The worship of the spirits of the departed is perhaps the most widely spread form of natural superstition all over the world."

CHAPTER II

THE WORSHIP OF THE SKY AMONG THE ARYAN PEOPLES OF ANTIQUITY

§ 1. *The Worship of the Sky in general*

The subject of the lectures the worship of nature.

IN my last lecture I said that the natural religion of simple folk comprises two main branches, the worship of nature and the worship of the dead, and I indicated that I propose to take the former of these two worships for the theme of my Gifford lectures. On that subject we enter to-day.

I pointed out that the worship of nature is based on the assumption that natural phenomena, whether animate or inanimate, are living personal beings analogous to man in their nature, though often far superior to him in power. In short, the worship of nature is based on the personification of nature. This general thesis I intend to illustrate in these lectures by taking some of the principal phenomena of nature and showing how they have been personified and deified by various races of men.

The worship of the sky.

Of all the phenomena of nature the most universal is perhaps the sky. It is the great canopy which covers, or appears to cover, all the races of men in every part of the world. Even the earth on which we stand is less universal, since to the mariner out of sight of land it disappears and is replaced by a great expanse of water. No wonder that a phenomenon so universal and so impressive should at an early date have inspired men with wonder and awe and found a place in their religion. Accordingly I shall begin our survey of natural religion with the worship of the sky. The subject has recently been treated by Professor

The treatise of Professor Pettazzoni on sky-gods.

Pettazzoni of Rome in an elaborate work, in which he describes and discusses the belief in sky-gods among primitive peoples all over the world.[1] To his very learned book I must refer those of my hearers who desire to study the subject in detail. The scope of these lectures precludes me from dealing with more than a small part of the evidence accumulated by Professor Pettazzoni. And whereas in this volume the Italian scholar limits his survey to the celestial beings or sky-gods of primitive or uncivilized races, I propose to begin mine with the sky-gods of our Aryan forefathers, partly on the ground of the superior antiquity of the documents, partly on the ground of the higher interest which attaches to a form of religion which was long held by our own ancestors, and which has perhaps not been without its influence in moulding the religious thought of much later ages.

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sky among the Vedic Indians*[2]

The hymns of the Rig Veda.

The oldest literary documents in the Aryan or Indo-European languages are the Sanscrit hymns of the Rig Veda, which were composed in north-western India probably between 1500 and 1200 B.C.[3] "Vedic mythology", says Professor Macdonell, "occupies a very important position in the study of the history of religions. Its oldest source presents to us an earlier stage in the evolution of beliefs based on the personification and worship of natural phenomena, than any other literary monument of the world. To this oldest phase can be traced by uninterrupted development the germs of the religious beliefs of the great majority

Professor Macdonell on Vedic mythology as a personification of natural phenomena.

[1] R. Pettazzoni, *Dio: Formazione e sviluppo del Monoteismo nella Storia delle Religioni*, vol. i. *L' Essere celeste nelle Credenze dei Popoli Primitivi* (Roma, 1922).

[2] The worship of the great Sky-god among all the peoples of the Aryan family has been treated elaborately in a learned monograph by the late Leopold von Schroeder (*Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott.* Leipzig, 1923). But while he holds that the Supreme God of the Aryan pantheon was a Sky-god, he denies (pp. 345 *sq.*) that this Supreme God was a personification of the physical sky.

[3] F. Max Müller, "Lecture on the Vedas", *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology, and Religion* (London, 1881), ii. 119 (as to the date); W. Crooke, in *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, New Edition, vol. i. (Oxford, 1909) p. 403 (as to the place of composition).

of the modern Indians, the only branch of the Indo-European race in which its original nature worship has not been entirely supplanted many centuries ago by a foreign monotheistic faith. The earliest stage of Vedic mythology is not so primitive as was at one time supposed, but it is sufficiently primitive to enable us to see clearly enough the process of personification by which natural phenomena developed into gods, a process not apparent in other literatures. The mythology, no less than the language, is still transparent enough in many cases to show the connexion both of the god and his name with a physical basis; nay, in several instances the anthropomorphism is only incipient. Thus *uṣas*, the dawn, is also a goddess wearing but a thin veil of personification; and when *agni*, fire, designates the god, the personality of the deity is thoroughly interpenetrated by the physical element.

Vedic mythology based on primitive animism.

"The foundation on which Vedic mythology rests is still the belief, surviving from a remote antiquity, that all the objects and phenomena of nature with which man is surrounded are animate and divine. Everything that impressed the soul with awe or was regarded as capable of exercising a good or evil influence on man, might in the Vedic age still become a direct object not only of adoration but of prayer. Heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, plants might be supplicated as divine powers; the horse, the cow, the bird of omen, and other animals might be invoked; even objects fashioned by the hand of man, weapons, the war-car, the drum, the plough, as well as ritual implements, such as the pressing-stones and the sacrificial post, might be adored.

The Vedic gods are anthropomorphic representatives of natural phenomena.

"This lower form of worship, however, occupies but a small space in Vedic religion. The true gods of the Veda are glorified human beings, inspired with human motives and passions, born like men, but immortal. They are almost without exception the deified representatives of the phenomena or agencies of nature. The degree of anthropomorphism to which they have attained, however, varies considerably. When the name of the god is the same as that of his natural basis, the personification has not advanced beyond the rudimentary stage. Such is the case with Dyaus, Heaven,

Pṛthivī, Earth, Sūrya, Sun, Uṣas, Dawn, whose names represent the double character of natural phenomena and of the persons presiding over them. Similarly in the case of the two great ritual deities, Agni and Soma, the personifying imagination is held in check by the visible and tangible character of the element of fire and the sacrificial draught, called by the same names, of which they are the divine embodiments. When the name of the deity is different from that of the physical substrate, he tends to become dissociated from the latter, the anthropomorphism being then more developed. Thus the Maruts or Storm-gods are farther removed from their origin than Vāyu, Wind, though the Vedic poets are still conscious of the connexion."[1]

General evolution of deities of nature.

This lucid exposition of the development of Vedic mythology and theology, which I have quoted from Professor Macdonell, would probably apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the evolution of all religions, which, starting with the personification of natural phenomena, have ended in a pantheon of anthropomorphic deities whose original connexion with nature has been more or less obscured and forgotten.

Two Vedic sky-gods, Dyaus and Varuna. Dyaus the counterpart of Zeus and Jupiter.

Vedic mythology appears to have included two distinct sky-gods, Dyaus and Varuna. Of the two, the celestial nature of Dyaus is the more transparent; indeed no possible doubt can subsist on this point, for in the Rig Veda the name *dyaus* occurs at least five hundred times as a designation of the physical sky, without any mythical implication.[2] The name is derived from a root *div*, meaning "bright", "shining", which appears again in the names of the kindred deities Zeus and Jupiter, the sky-gods of ancient Greece and Rome.[3] Thus Dyaus signifies the Bright or Shining One, an eminently appropriate name for a sky-god.

Father Heaven (*dyaus pitar*) and Mother Earth *pṛithivī matar*).

Personified as the god of heaven, Dyaus is generally

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 2 (*Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, herausgegeben von G. Bühler, vol. iii. Part I. A). Compare A. Barth, *The Religions of India* (London, 1882), pp. 7 *sq.*

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 21; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India* (London, 1896), p. 58.

[3] O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strassburg, 1901), p. 670; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* (Strassburg, 1905–1907), ii. 506; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott* (Leipzig, 1923), pp. 300 *sqq.* and 309 *sqq.* (as to the paternity of Dyaus); H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda* (London, etc., 1923), p. 14.

coupled with Pṛithivī, Earth, the pair being regarded as the universal parents. In their marriage the sky-god Dyaus is the divine father, and the earth-goddess Pṛithivī is the divine mother. Thus in a hymn of the Rig Veda the poet invokes Father Heaven (*dyauṣ pītar*) along with Mother Earth (*pṛthivī mātar*);[1] and in many other passages of the hymns his paternity is either expressly stated or implied by association with the Earth Goddess. Indeed, so closely were Father Heaven and Mother Earth associated in the minds of their worshippers that their names are generally linked together in the dual compound *dyāvāpṛthivī*.[2]

Father Heaven and Mother Earth the universal parents.

But in some passages of the hymns the Heaven is separately styled father, and the Earth mother.[3] The two were regarded as the parents not only of men, but of the gods, as appears from various texts where they are designated by the epithet *devaputre*, "having gods for their children".[4] Thus the goddess of Dawn (Ushas) is repeatedly called the daughter of Dyaus; and the Fire-god (Agni), the Sun-god (Surya), and the Storm-gods (Maruts) are described as his sons or children.[5] In one passage he is spoken of as the father of the great god Indra.[6] But apart from the conception of paternity there is little to show that in Vedic mythology the sky-god Dyaus was invested with personal attributes. In a few passages he is spoken of as a bull, and in one as a bull that bellows. The point of the comparison is probably the generative power of the animal, which is implicitly likened to the rain of heaven falling on and fertilizing the barren earth. The bellowing of the bull may signify the peal of thunder which accompanies heavy rain.[7] Elsewhere, with reference to his prolific virtue, Dyaus is spoken of as "rich in seed".[8] In one passage he is

Dyaus as a bull.

[1] *Rig Veda*, vi. 51. 5 (vol. ii. p. 394 of Griffith's translation); A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 22.

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 21, 22; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 98 *sq.*

[3] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. (London, 1884) pp. 22 *sq.*

[4] J. Muir, *op. cit.* v. 23.

[5] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 21.

[6] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 21; *Rigveda*, iv. 17. 4 (vol. ii. p. 119, Griffith's translation).

[7] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 21, 22. In *Rig Veda*, v. 58. 6, to which Professor Macdonell refers, the bellowing of the bull is understood by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith to signify thunder; for he translates, "Let Dyaus the red steer send his thunder downward" (vol. ii. p. 269).

[8] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 21.

compared to a dark horse decked with pearls, in allusion to the star-spangled sky of night.[1]

Epithets applied to Dyaus and Pṛithivī (Heaven and Earth).

As personifications of the sky and the earth, Dyaus and Pṛithivī are characterized in the hymns by a profusion of epithets suggestive of the physical phenomena of which they were the mythical embodiments, such as vastness, breadth, profundity, productiveness, unchangeableness. Yet the two were not conceived of merely as nature powers, as simple personifications of physical objects; the poets ascribe to them attributes of a moral or spiritual order by speaking of them as beneficent, wise, and promoters of righteousness.[2] Thus in one hymn we read:

Moral attributes ascribed to them.

"*At the festivals I worship with offerings, and celebrate the praises of, Heaven and Earth, the promoters of righteousness, the great, the wise, the energetic, who, having gods for their offspring, thus lavish, with the gods, the choicest blessings, in consequence of our hymn.*

"*With my invocations I adore the thought of the beneficent Father, and that mighty inherent power of the Mother. The prolific Parents have made all creatures, and through their favours have conferred wide immortality on their offspring.*"[3]

And again:

Prayers to Heaven and Earth.

"*O Heaven and Earth, with one accord promoting*
with high protection, as of queens, our welfare,
Far-reaching, universal, holy, guard us. May we,
car-borne, through songs be victors ever.
To both of you, O Heaven and Earth, we bring
our lofty song of praise,
Pure ones! to glorify you both.
Ye sanctify each other's form, by your own proper might ye rule,
And from of old observe the Law."[4]

And again:

"*Filled full of fatness, compassing all things that be,*
wide, spacious, dropping meath, beautiful in their form,
The Heaven and the Earth by Varuṇa's decree, unwasting,
rich in germs, stand parted each from each.
The everlasting pair, with full streams, rich in milk,
in their pure rule pour fatness for the pious man.

[1] *Rig Veda*, x. 69. 11 (vol. iv. p. 239 Griffith's translation); A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 22.

[2] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 22.

[3] *Rig Veda*, i. 159. 1 *sq.*; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 21.

[4] *Rig Veda*, iv. 56. 4-6; *The Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated with a popular commentary by Ralph T. H. Griffith (Benares, 1889–1892), ii. 180.

Ye who are regents of this world, O Earth and Heaven,
pour into us the genial flow that prospers men.
Whoso, for righteous life, pours offerings to you, O Heaven
and Earth, ye hemispheres, that man succeeds. . . .
May Heaven and Earth make food swell plenteously for us,
all-knowing father, mother, wondrous in their works.
Pouring out bounties, may, in union, both the worlds,
all-beneficial, send us gain, and power, and wealth." [1]

Once more we read:

"*As priest with solemn rites and adorations I worship*
Heaven and Earth, the high and holy.
To them, great parents of the gods, have sages
of ancient time, singing assigned precedence,
With newest hymns set in the seat of Order
those the two parents, born before all others.
Come, Heaven and Earth, with the celestial people,
hither to us, for strong is your protection.
Yea, Heaven and Earth, ye hold in your possession
full many a treasure for the liberal giver.
Grant us that wealth which comes in free abundance,
Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings." [2]

Heaven and Earth created by a divine artificer.

Yet there is a passage in the Rig Veda which proves that by one solitary thinker at least Heaven and Earth were conceived of, not as existing from all eternity, but as having themselves been created by the hand of a divine artificer. We read:

"*These Heaven and Earth, bestow prosperity on all,*
sustainers of the region, holy ones and wise,
Two bowls of noble kind: between these goddesses
the god, the fulgent Sun, travels by fixed decree.
Widely-capacious pair, mighty, that never fail,
the Father and the Mother keep all creatures safe.
The two world-halves, the spirited, the beautiful, because
the Father hath clothed them in goodly forms. . . .
Among the skilful gods most skilled is he, who made
the two world-halves which bring prosperity to all;
Who with great wisdom measured both the regions out,
and established them with pillars that shall ne'er decay." [3]

[1] *Rig Veda*, vi. 70. 1-3, 6 (Griffith's translation, vol. ii. pp. 423 *sq.*).

[2] *Rig Veda*, vii. 53 (Griffith's translation, vol. iii. p. 68). For another translation, see H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 98.

[3] *Rig Veda*, i. 160 (Griffith's translation, vol. i. p. 273). For another translation, see H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 98 *sq.* Compare J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 22. In this hymn it will be observed that Heaven and Earth are spoken of as two goddesses. The explanation is that in about twenty passages of the hymns *dyaus* (heaven),

Myth of the separation of Heaven and Earth.

It is a common belief of primitive peoples that sky and earth were originally joined together, the sky either lying flat on the earth or being raised so little above it that there was not room between them for people to walk upright. Where such beliefs prevail, the present elevation of the sky above the earth is often ascribed to the might of some god or hero, who gave the firmament such a shove that it shot up and has remained up above ever since. In some parts of Polynesia this exploit is attributed to the famous hero Maui; in Micronesia it is said to have been the work of various deities.[1] A similar story of the original conjunction and subsequent separation of sky and earth meets us in Vedic mythology. We read that "these two worlds (heaven and earth) were once joined. Subsequently they separated. After their separation there fell neither rain, nor was there sunshine. The five classes of beings (gods, men, etc.) then did not keep peace with one another. Thereupon the gods brought about a reconciliation of both these worlds. Both contracted with one another a marriage according to the rites observed by the gods."[2]

The personification of Dyaus and Pṛithivī vague and shadowy.

But in this passage the union, separation, and final marriage of the two great natural powers savours almost as much of a cosmogonical speculation as of a mythical personification of the two powers in question. And of Dyaus and Pṛithivī generally we may say that their personification is still vague and shadowy; they hover, so to say, on the border betweeen the physical and the divine. They do not appear to have been the object of a highly developed worship; on the whole, we may say that they occupied a subordinate place in Vedic religion. Certainly there is nothing to show that Dyaus, the Indian Sky-god, was the Supreme Deity of the Vedic pantheon, as Zeus

curiously enough, is feminine even when heaven is personified. See A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 22. Moreover, instead of "father and mother", Heaven and Earth are often spoken of as "the two mothers". See E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 59.

[1] E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 322 *sqq.*; Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London, 1884), pp. 44 *sqq.* As to the Polynesian legend, see Sir George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology* (London, 1855), pp. 1 *sqq.*; *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 226, 275; as to the Micronesian legend, see *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, iii. 58, 59 *sq.*

[2] *Aitareya Brāhmana*, iv. 27, quoted and translated by J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 23.

and Jupiter, the Greek and Roman Sky-gods, were unquestionably the Supreme Deities of their respective pantheons.[1] Yet his identity in name and nature with these two great gods seems to prove beyond question that the Sky-god, if not the principal, was certainly one of the oldest of the Aryan deities, and that his worship dates from the time when the forefathers of the Aryan or Indo-European peoples still lived together before the dispersion which scattered their descendants from the Ganges to Ireland.[2]

The other Vedic sky-god is Varuna, the equivalent of the Greek Uranus.

The other great Sky-god of the Vedic pantheon is Varuna, whose name appears to be etymologically identical with the Greek *ouranos* (οὐρανός), which was the name both of the physical sky and of the old mythical sky or Sky-god, Uranus.[3] The name appears to be derived from a root *var*, "to cover", so that Varuna means "the Encompasser", with reference to the overarching vault of heaven.[4] But in Varuna the old physical basis of the god is far less transparent than in Dyaus; the process of personification has been carried much farther, and in particular the moral character of the deity has been more fully developed. Side by side with Indra he is the greatest of the gods of the Rig Veda.[5] He is described as king of all, both gods and

He is the king of the gods. His great powers.

[1] Compare H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 240; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 58 *sq.*; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 22; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 100 *sq.*

[2] Compare L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 309 *sqq.*

[3] The identity of Varuna with οὐρανός (Uranus) in name and nature appears to be generally, though not universally, accepted by scholars. See F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*[6], ii. 454, 475; *id.*, *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (London, 1873), p. 231; *id.*, "Comparative Mythology", *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology, and Religion* (London, 1881), i. 370 *sq.*; J. Darmsteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman* (Paris, 1877), p. 53; A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2] (Leipzig, 1881), pp. 85, 200 *sq.*; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 76; A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, p. 16; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 63, 66, 70; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 27 *sq.*; *id.*, "Vedic Mythology", in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xii. (Edinburgh, 1921) p. 603; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, p. 322; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 112 *sq.* Professor Meillet proposes to derive the name *Varuna* from the Sanscrit *vrata*, "ordinance". See J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), p. 64.

[4] A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2], p. 200; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 28; L. von Schroeder, *op. cit.* p. 322; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 112 *sq.*

[5] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 22 *sq.*

men, of the whole world, of all that exists.[1] He is the upholder both of the physical and of the moral order. He is the great lord of the laws of nature. He established heaven and earth: he supports them: he dwells in all the worlds: he set the sun in the sky: he opened a broad path for him: he made him to shine like a golden swing in heaven: the wind which whistles through the air is his breath: by his ordinances the moon moves on in splendour through the night, and the stars are fixed in their places aloft: he measured the earth with the sun as with a measuring-rod: he caused the rivers to flow, and in obedience to his command they stream for ever: he clothes himself in the waters, he moves in their midst, his golden house is there, his house with a thousand doors: men pray to him for rain, and he bestows it on them: he tilts his casks, and they pour water on heaven and earth and air, they moisten the parched ground, they bedew the pastures with oil and the regions of the world with honey: he causes the mountains to be veiled in clouds: the gods themselves obey his ordinances: neither the birds as they fly nor the rivers as they flow can reach the limit of his dominion, his might, and his wrath: man cannot escape from him, though he should flee far beyond the sky: he knows all things—the flight of the birds in the sky, the path of ships in the sea, the course of the far-travelling wind: he beholds all the secret things that have been or shall be done: he witnesseth men's truth and falsehood: the very winkings of their eyes are all numbered by him, and whatever they do, or think, or devise, he knows it all.[2]

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 24.

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 24-26, with the references to the *Rig Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*. To the passages cited by Professor Macdonell I have added, "he measured the earth with the sun as with a measuring rod" (*Rig Veda*, v. 85. 5). As to the character and power of Varuna, see further A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2], pp. 85 *sqq.*; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 58 *sqq.*; A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, pp. 16 *sqq.*; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 61 *sqq.*; H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, pp. 185 *sqq.*; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 321 *sqq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 111-149. Oldenberg argued that Varuna was originally a moon-god, borrowed from the Semites or Accadians. But his views on this point appear not to have met with acceptance. See E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 571 note; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 28; F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*

As a moral governor of the world Varuna stands far above all the other Vedic gods. His wrath is roused by sin, the breach of his ordinances, and he punishes it severely: he binds sinners with threefold and sevenfold fetters, which ensnare the liar but pass by him who speaks the truth. But he is gracious to the penitent: he unties the bonds of sin and sets the sinner free: he pardons men their sins and the sins of their fathers: he spares the suppliant who has transgressed his laws, and he is gracious to such as have broken them through thoughtlessness. There is indeed no hymn to Varuna in which the suppliant does not pray for forgiveness of guilt, just as in hymns to other gods he prays for worldly prosperity. Varuna is on a footing of friendship with his worshipper, who communes with him in his heavenly mansion and sometimes beholds him with the eye of faith.[1]

The moral character of Varuna.

One hymn may serve as a specimen of the prayers which his worshippers addressed to Varuna:

Prayer to Varuna.

"*Let me not yet, king Varuna, enter into the house of clay:*
Have mercy, spare me, mighty lord!
When, thunderer! I move along tremulous like a wind-blown skin,
Have mercy, spare me, mighty lord!
O bright and powerful god, through want of strength I erred and went astray:
Have mercy, spare me, mighty lord!
Thirst found thy worshipper though he stood in the midst of waterfloods;
Have mercy, spare me, mighty lord!
O Varuna, whatever the offence may be which we as men commit against the heavenly host,
When through our want of thought we violate thy laws, punish us not,
O god, for that iniquity."[2]

A god so high and holy is clearly far from being a simple personification of the blue vault of heaven. In

The divine majesty of Varuna.

(Bruxelles, 1896–1899), i. 224 note[3]; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum* (Gotha, 1896–1903), ii. 70; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 430 *sqq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 147-149.

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 26 *sq.* On the ethical character of Varuna, see especially H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 121 *sqq.*

[2] *Rig Veda*, vii. 89 (Griffith's translation, vol. iii. p. 110). The hymn has also been translated by F. Max Müller ("Lecture on the Vedas," *Selected Essays on Language, Mythology, and Religion*, ii. 148 *sq.*), by J. Muir (*Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 67), and by H. D. Griswold (*The Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 123).

regard to no other deity of the Vedic pantheon is the sense of the divine majesty and of the absolute dependence of the creature expressed with the same force and dignity: we must turn to Job and the Psalms to find similar accents of heartfelt adoration and humble supplication.[1]

The relation of Varuna to Mitra.

Yet his old physical nature as a Sky-god pure and simple may be said to peep out here and there under the gorgeous drapery which religious poetry has thrown over his august figure. Thus he is very often coupled with another god Mitra, and some good scholars are of opinion that in origin Mitra was a sun-god like his Iranian counterpart and name-sake Mithra.[2] Nothing could well be more natural than to associate a sky-god with a sun-god. The Vedic poets speak of the sun as the eye both of Varuna and Mitra;[3] and if Varuna was indeed originally the sky, the comparison of the sun to his eye is apt and appropriate; though on the other hand, if Mitra was originally the sun, the sun could hardly be spoken of as his eye until his original conception had been obscured and absorbed in that of the Sky-god, with whom he was constantly associated.[4] The abode of the two gods is described as golden and situated in heaven.[5] In a passage of the *Satapatha Brāhmana* the god Varuna alone, conceived as the lord of the Universe, is stationed in the midst of heaven, from which he surveys the places of punishment situated all around him.[6]

Great antiquity of the worship of Varuna.

The Sky-god Varuna appears to date from the time when the ancestors of the Iranians and of the Aryan Indians still lived together and worshipped the same deities; for the

[1] A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, p. 18. In his excellent work on the *Rig Veda* (second edition, pp. 85 *sqq.*) the German scholar A. Kaegi illustrates the references of the Vedic poets to Varuna by apt quotations from Job, the Psalms, and the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 7, 22 *sq.*, 27, 29 *sq*; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 57 *sq.* As to the equivalence of Mitra and Mithra, and the solar nature of both, compare H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, pp. 189 *sqq.* However, the original solar character both of Mitra and Mithra is denied by other scholars, whose opinion carries weight. See L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 361 *sq.*, 381 *sqq.*, 431; and below, pp. 461, 503, 509 *sqq.*

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 23.

[4] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 27.

[5] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 23, referring to *Rig Veda*, i. 136. 2, v. 67. 2.

[6] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 23, referring to *Satapatha Brāhmana*, xi. 6. 1.

great Iranian deity Ahura Mazda, who figures in the *Avesta*, agrees with Varuna in character, though not in name.[1] Further, the similarity in name and nature between Varuna and the old Greek sky-god Uranus suggests that the worship of this personification of the firmament goes back to a still remoter period, when the Aryan ancestors of Greeks, Indians, and Iranians still formed one people, dwelling in the same land and united in the worship of the same divinities.

Of the two Vedic Sky-gods Dyaus is perhaps the older.

Thus it appears that the Indians of the Vedic age and their Aryan forefathers worshipped two separate personifications of the physical sky, which they distinguished by different names. In Vedic mythology one of these personifications is Dyaus, and the other is Varuna. Of the two, if we may hazard a conjecture on so obscure a question, Dyaus is perhaps the older. For his name as the appellation of a deity is much more widely diffused than that of Varuna, since it meets us in the Old High German *Zio*, the Anglo-Saxon *Tiw*, and the Eddic *Tyr*, as well as in the Greek *Zeus* and the Latin *Jupiter*.[2] Moreover, the old physical basis of the deity remains much clearer in Dyaus than in Varuna, in whom it has been largely overgrown and concealed by a rich vein of religious and moral reflection; and this greater simplicity and transparency of Dyaus as compared to Varuna may be thought to plead in favour of his higher antiquity. The association of the Earth-goddess Pṛithivī with Dyaus but not with Varuna points in the same direction; for the conception of Sky and Earth as a pair of wedded deities appears to be exceedingly ancient, if we may judge by its frequent occurrence among savages, whose mental condition on the whole represents an earlier stage in the evolution of thought than that which

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 8, 28; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 72; J. Darmsteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman* (Paris, 1877), pp. 44-57; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 334 *sqq*.

[2] F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*[6], ii. 468. The old German form of the name is now given as *Tius* or *Tiuz*, or again as *Tiwaz* or *Tiwz*. In any case the old German and Norse god who corresponds to Dyaus, Zeus, and Jupiter was not a Sky-god but a War-god. See R. M. Meyer, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1910), pp. 178 *sq*.; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 301, 485, 490 *sq*., 492.

meets us in the most ancient literature of the Aryan race. To some of these savage ideas concerning the marriage of Sky and Earth I shall presently invite your attention.

§ 3. *The Worship of the Sky among the ancient Iranians*

Herodotus on the religion of the ancient Persians.

That a people of the Iranian stock adored a great Sky-god we know from the testimony of Herodotus, who tells us that the ancient Persians deemed it unlawful to set up images and temples and altars, and that they reckoned men fools who did so; for they did not conceive the gods to be of like nature with men, as the Greeks conceived them. Hence, instead of employing the work of men's hands as the symbols and instruments of worship, it was the wont of the Persians to ascend to the tops of the mountains and there offer sacrifices to Zeus, giving the name of Zeus to the whole circle of the sky.[1] It is highly probable that in this passage Herodotus has recorded, with a slight variation, the native name of the ancient Aryan Sky-god in the Persian language; for the Old Persian form of the name would be Diyaus, and this, as was well observed by the late Professor J. H. Moulton, would inevitably suggest its Greek cognate and synonym Zeus to the ear of a Greek traveller.[2] Elsewhere Herodotus informs us that the Scythians worshipped Zeus and the Earth, whom they regarded as the wife of Zeus.[3] It is highly probable, that by Zeus the historian here designates a Scythian sky-god;[4] and if the Scythians were Iranians, as there is some reason to suppose, it will follow that the Vedic myth of the marriage of Heaven and Earth had its counterpart in Iranian mythology.[5]

Some scholars think that the Supreme God of the Iranians, Ahura Mazda, was originally a personification of the sky.

Some scholars of high authority have held that Ahura Mazda himself, the Supreme God of the Iranians, whose

[1] Herodotus, i. 131. Compare Strabo, xv. 3. 13, p. 732, who seems to be simply copying Herodotus.

[2] J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), pp. 391 *sq.*; compare *id.*, "Iranians", in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vii. 418 *sq.*; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 337 *sqq.* (who doubts whether Herodotus here meant to give the Persian name of the god).

[3] Herodotus, iv. 59.

[4] So J. C. F. Baehr in his commentary on Herodotus, iv. 59.

[5] J. H. Moulton, "Iranians", in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vii. 419. As to the evidence for the Iranian origin of the Scythians, see E. H. Minns, "Scythians", in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 278 *sq.*; id., in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, iii. 192 *sqq.*

name signifies "Wise Lord", was originally a personification of the sky and therefore substantially identical with the Vedic Dyaus and the Greek Zeus, both of whom were sky gods and the heads of their respective pantheons. The great antiquity of Ahura Mazda is attested by the oldest cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenian dynasty, in which, under the name of Auramazda, he is invoked as the Creator of heaven, earth, and mankind, as the protector of the kings and the source of their dominion. Thus Darius acknowledges that it was Auramazda who made him king and helped him, along with the rest of the gods.[1] In support of the view that Ahura Mazda was originally a personification of the sky, the eminent Iranian scholar, James Darmesteter, quoted the following passage of the Zend-Avesta:

"Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathushtra, saying: Do thou proclaim, O pure Zarathushtra! the vigour and strength, the glory, the help and the joy that are in the Fravashis[2] of the faithful, the awful and overpowering Fravashis; do thou tell how they come to help me, the awful Fravashis of the faithful. Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra, I maintain that sky, there above,

[1] James Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman* (Paris, 1877), p. 25; F. Cumont, *s.v.* "Oromasdes", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iii. 1051. As to the interpretation of Ahura Mazda as "the Wise Lord", see Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde* (Leipzig, 1871–1878), ii. 21, note 4; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion," in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranische Philologie*, ii. (Strassburg, 1896–1904), p. 632; J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), p. 447; J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Arhiman*, pp. 28 *sq.*; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, p. 282.

[2] The Fravashis appear to have been originally worshipful ancestral spirits, but in later times the conception was extended so as to cover the spirits or doubles of the living as well as of the dead. We are told that they corresponded to the Latin *genius* as well as to the Latin *manes*. Some would limit them to the spirits of the good. In any case they appear to have been regarded as purely beneficent beings, a sort of guardian angels, and were accordingly worshipped with sacrifice. They were especially associated with the stars; but during the intercalary days at the end of every year they were supposed to descend to earth and tarry there for ten nights during which they received offerings of food and clothes from their worshippers. See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 91-98; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 643; J. H. Moulton, *s.v.* "Fravashi", in J. Hastings's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vi. 116-118; *id.*, *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 254 *sqq.*

shining and seen afar, and encompassing this earth all around. It looks like a palace that stands built of a heavenly substance, firmly established, with ends that lie afar, shining in its body of ruby over the three-thirds of the earth; it is like a garment inlaid with stars, made of a heavenly substance, that Mazda puts on.'"[1]

However, it may be observed that in this passage the sky is said to be maintained by Ahura Mazda; it is not identified with him, though it is compared to a star-spangled garment which the deity puts on. But again in another passage of the Zend-Avesta the sun is called the eye of Ahura Mazda, and Ahura Mazda himself is described as "the radiant, the glorious".[2] On this Darmesteter remarks that "a radiant and glorious god who has the sun for his eye can be nothing but the Sky-god or the Sun-god, whether he be Zeus, or Varuna, or Indra, or Odin".[3] Again, in support of the original identity of Ahura Mazda with the sky, the French scholar notes that the Fire (*Âtar*) is called his son, and that the Waters (*Âpô*) are called his wives. Both these mythical relationships, he thinks, are naturally explicable on the view that the Sky-god weds the Rain-clouds and begets on them the lightning.[4] On the whole, Darmesteter concludes that Ahura Mazda was originally a god of the sky, especially of the bright sky, and he thinks that this view harmonizes with, and is supported by, the testimony of Herodotus cited above.[5] To this opinion the eminent historian of Mithraicism, Franz Cumont, has briefly signified his assent.[6] Professor Williams Jackson also sees in Ahura Mazda certain "mythical traits which point to a connexion between him and the old idea of a Sky-god".[7]

But this view is rejected by other scholars.

On the other hand the opinion that Ahura Mazda was originally a sky-god has been decidedly rejected by

[1] *The Zend-Avesta*, translated by James Darmesteter, Part II. (Oxford, 1883) pp. 180 *sq.* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxiii.).

[2] *The Zend-Avesta*, Part III. translated by L. H. Mills (Oxford, 1887), p. 199 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxi.).

[3] J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p 32.

[4] J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 33 *sqq.*

[5] J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 35-37.

[6] F. Cumont, *s.v.* "Oromasdes", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iii. 1052.

[7] A. V Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 633.

some Iranian scholars who speak with authority. Thus, summing up the result of his investigation of the character of Ahura Mazda, the veteran German scholar, Fr. Spiegel, observes: "We have found two things: first, that Ahura Mazda is conceived of as a thoroughly spiritual being; second, that he stands infinitely high above all other beings, even those of the world of light, all of which, collectively and individually, are viewed as his creatures. This unique position which Ahura Mazda occupies in the Iranian religion is very noteworthy. Among his features no single one reminds us of an Aryan or even an Indian god, and I therefore entirely share the opinion of Windischmann, that Ahura Mazda does not date from the Aryan period but is a creation of the Iranian genius."[1] To the same effect J. H. Moulton held that when in the doctrine of Zarathushtra the great god Ahura Mazda took his place at the centre of the Iranian religion, he had lost, if he ever possessed, all real traits of an elemental deity and was conceived of as essentially a moral and a spiritual God.[2] Another eminent scholar, the late L. von Schroeder, also denied that Ahura Mazda was a personification of the sky or indeed of any natural phenomenon; like Spiegel and Moulton, he held that Ahura Mazda was a purely spiritual deity, but unlike Spiegel he would practically identify Ahura Mazda with Varuna and refer him, or at all events the original on whom he was modelled by Zarathushtra, back to the pantheon of the still undivided Aryans.[3]

On the respective validity of these conflicting opinions I am not competent to pronounce an opinion; I am content to record the two views without attempting either to judge or to reconcile them.

§ 4. *The Worship of the Sky among the ancient Greeks*

Two ancient Greek sky-gods, Zeus and Uranus.

The ancient Greeks personified and deified the sky under two different names, Zeus and Uranus; and, as we have seen,

[1] Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 25.

[2] J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 60 *sq.*, 94 *sqq.*

[3] L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 281 *sq.*, 321, 326 *sq.*, 334 *sq.*, 339, 341 *sqq.*

these two sky-gods corresponded in name and origin to the two Vedic sky-gods, Dyaus and Varuna.[1] But the history of the two Greek gods, like that of their Indian counterparts, was very different. For whereas Uranus, a transparent personification of the sky, the name of which he bore,[2] always remained a dim, remote figure of mythology, to whom no temples were built, no sacrifices offered, no prayers addressed, Zeus on the contrary occupied from the earliest times of which we have record a position of acknowledged supremacy over all the other gods, and as time went on his old physical basis in the vault of heaven tended to fall more and more into the background, obscured by the glory of the ethical and spiritual attributes with which a purer morality and a higher flight of religious thought gradually invested his majestic figure.

The myth of Uranus, how he married the Earth-goddess and begat the Titans.

But though the old sky-god Uranus was never admitted to a share of Greek worship, he played a not unimportant part in Greek mythology. In the beginning of time he is said to have married the Earth-goddess, and by her to have become the father of Ocean, Rhea, Cronus, and other ancient divinities known as the Titans.[3] But Uranus was a cruel father, and as fast as his wife bore him children he hid them away in a secret den of the earth and would not suffer them to come up to the light of day, and, lost to all paternal feelings, he even chuckled over the wicked deed. But the Earth-goddess was straitened by reason of the monstrous brood thus crammed into her entrails, and she plotted against her unfeeling husband. She made a great sickle of adamant or flint, and offering it to her imprisoned offspring urged them to attack the author of their being with this formidable weapon. They shrank appalled at the impiety and danger of the task; Cronus alone, the youngest of them, plucked up courage, and undertook to do the deed. So his mother placed the sickle in his hands and put him in ambush. And when night fell, and Uranus went to bed and embraced his

How Uranus was mutilated and deposed by his own son Cronus.

[1] The Greek sky-god in his double form is discussed by L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 445 *sqq*. Zeus is the subject of a monumental monograph by Mr. A. B. Cook, still incomplete (*Zeus*, vols. i. and ii., Cambridge, 1914-1925).

[2] Uranus is the Latinized form of *ouranos* (οὐρανός), which was, and still is, the ordinary name for "sky" in Greek.

[3] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 132-138; Apollodorus, i. 1. 1-3.

spouse the Earth-goddess, Cronus stretched forth his hand, and shore off his father's genital member, and cast it away behind him. The drops of blood all fell on the bosom of the Earth-goddess, and quickened by them she in due time gave birth to the Furies and the Giants. But as for his father's severed member, Cronus threw it into the sea. Tossed to and fro on the billows, the salt-sea foam gathered round it, and from the foam issued Aphrodite, goddess of love.[1] Not content with mutilating his father, the unnatural son Cronus deposed him, and with the help and assent of his brethren was himself elevated to the vacant throne of heaven.[2]

How Cronus married his sister Rhea and swallowed his offspring by her, lest he should be deposed by one of his sons.

But ill deeds do not prosper, and the punishment which he had inflicted on his father was in time to recoil on his own head at the hands of his offspring. For Cronus married his sister Rhea and had by her the goddesses Hestia, Demeter, and Hera, and the gods Pluto, Poseidon, and Zeus. But an oracle of Earth and Sky warned him that he should in time be dethroned by his own son, and to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy the unnatural father adopted the precaution of swallowing his progeny as soon as they were born. Five of the family had thus perished ; but when the mother was about to give birth to Zeus, the youngest, she besought her parents the Sky-god (Uranus) and the Earth-goddess to help her to conceal the babe. So they sent her to Crete ; and when the infant Zeus was born, the Earth-goddess hid him in a cave, and wrapping up a stone in swaddling bands, she gave it to Cronus to swallow instead of the child. The trick was successful. Deceived by the baby linen, the divine father bolted the stone without a qualm or a scruple, and congratulated himself on having thus effectually disposed, as he fancied, of the last pretender to the throne of heaven. Little did he suspect that his latest-born son Zeus survived and would yet conquer him, drive him from the throne, and reign over the immortal gods, even as he himself had deposed his father and reigned in his stead.[3]

How Zeus, his youngest-born, escaped his father's maw.

How Zeus and his brothers and sisters made war on their father Cronus and deposed him.

Now Zeus was a very fine child, and when he had grown up to manhood, or rather to godhead, he called in the help

[1] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 154 - 192 ; Apollodorus, i. 1. 2-4.

[2] Apollodorus, i. 1. 4.

[3] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 453 - 491 ; Apollodorus, i. 1. 5-7. According to Apollodorus, it was Rhea, not the Earth-goddess, who gave the stone to Cronus.

of Metis ("Cunning"), daughter of Ocean, and she gave Cronus a dose. No sooner had he gulped it down, than he was seized with a fit of vomiting, when up came, first of all, the stone, which must have lain heavy on his stomach, and after it the divine infants Pluto, Poseidon, and the rest, whom he had swallowed. With the aid of these, his brothers and sisters, Zeus waged war on his father Cronus and the whole brood of the Titans. The war lasted ten years. The Cyclopes supplied the three gods with arms. To Zeus they gave thunder and lightning, to Pluto a helmet, and to Poseidon a trident. Armed with these weapons, the gods conquered the Titans and shut them up in the gloomy depths of Tartarus, a dank and mouldy dungeon in a gulf so deep that a man would be a whole year in falling from top to bottom, tossed about upon the wings of grievous whirlwinds. From that dismal place there is no escape; for the roots of earth and sea compose the massy roof; and round about there runs a wall of brass, and brazen gates, wrought by Poseidon's hand, are shut upon the prisoners; and on the walls and at the gates monsters with hundred hands keep watch and ward.[1] Having thrust the fallen Titans down into this dolorous abyss, the three brother gods, Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto, cast lots for the now vacant sovereignty. To Zeus fell the dominion of the sky, to Poseidon the dominion of the sea, and to Pluto the dominion of the infernal regions.[2]

How Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto divided the vacant kingdom.

Afterwards Zeus, now established on the throne of heaven, married Metis, the daughter of Ocean, who had helped him to the throne by administering the emetic to his father Cronus. Now Metis, whose name means Craft or Cunning, was wiser than gods and mortal men; but Sky and Earth warned Zeus, as they had warned his father before him, that his wife would give birth to a son who should prove more mighty than his sire and should reign as king over gods and men. To prevent this catastrophe Zeus had recourse to the same simple expedient as his father Cronus; but instead of awaiting the birth of a son and then

How Zeus swallowed his wife Metis that he might not be deposed by her son.

[1] Apollodorus, i. 2. 1; Hesiod, *Theogony*, 492-506, 617-745. According to Homer (*Iliad*, xiv. 203 *sq.*), Zeus shut up Cronus "beneath the earth and the unvintaged sea".

[2] Apollodorus, i. 2. 1; Homer, *Iliad*, xv. 187-193.

swallowing him, Zeus preferred to take time by the forelock by swallowing his wife before she could give birth to the heir apparent. This accordingly he did,[1] and the stratagem would seem to have been perfectly successful; for henceforth Zeus remained the undisputed lord of heaven and head of the Greek pantheon until he was finally deposed by the Christian god.[1]

Cronus an obscure figure in Greek mythology.

Such, in brief, is the barbarous legend of the three Greek Sky-gods, father, son, and grandson, who reigned successively after each other, and of whom the first two were deposed and cruelly ill-treated by their offspring. That the first and third of the triad were sky-gods, is certain; there is more doubt about the middle one, Cronus, whose figure remains among the darkest and most mysterious in the Greek pantheon. No satisfactory derivation of his name has been suggested. He may be, as many have thought, a foreign deity, perhaps the god of an aboriginal race which the Greek invaders found in possession of the land and conquered, annexing some of their gods as well as part of their territory. The story of how Cronus swallowed his children has often been compared to the Semitic practice of sacrificing children to the gods, in particular to the Carthaginian practice of placing children on the sloping hands of a brazen image from which they rolled into a pit of fire. The Carthaginian god to whom these human sacrifices were offered was identified by the Greeks with Cronus,[2] and this identification lends colour to the theory that in the story of Cronus and his children we have a reminiscence of a cruel ritual rather than a cosmogonical myth of physical phenomena.[3] Yet whatever may have been his original meaning and attributes, when we find him interpolated in a mythical story between two undoubted sky-gods, as the son of the one and the father of the other, we can hardly doubt that in the mind of the story-teller Cronus

Comparison of his myth with the Semitic practice of sacrificing children to the gods.

[1] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 886-990, 929[a]-929[b] (ed. H. G. Evelyn-White); Apollodorus, i. 3. 6; Scholiast on Plato, *Timaeus*, p. 23 D.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, xx. 14. See further *The Golden Bough*, Part IV., *The Dying God*, pp. 74 *sq.*, 166 *sqq.*; A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, i. (Cambridge, 1914) pp. 721 *sq.*

[3] As to Cronus, see M. Mayer, "Kronos," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 1452 *sqq.*; L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*[4], bearbeitet von C. Robert, i. 43 *sqq.*; O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, pp. 1104 *sq.*; L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, i. 23 *sqq.*

was at least temporarily invested with the character of a sky-god. If we cut out the episode of Cronus as a later interpolation, due to the contact of the Greeks with an alien race, we shall be left with the two unquestionable sky-gods, Uranus and Zeus, as father and son, instead of grandfather and grandson, and shall be driven to regard Zeus instead of Cronus as the unfilial mutilator of his own father.[1] Indeed, according to one tradition, which was adopted by the Orphic theology, Zeus made his father Cronus drunk with honey-wine, bound him fast, and castrated him, even as Cronus had castrated his own father, Uranus.[2]

Orphic story of the mutilation of Cronus.

The story of the mutilation of Uranus is perhaps a myth of the separation of earth and sky.

Be that as it may, the savage tale of the mutilation of Uranus by his own offspring is most plausibly explained as a myth of the separation of earth and sky,[3] which were supposed by the ancestors of the Greeks, as by many other primitive peoples, to have been originally joined together, or, in mythical language, locked firmly together in a nuptial embrace. A reminiscence of the time when the sky was supposed to lie flat on the earth, involving it in total darkness, seems to linger in the statement of the story-teller that Uranus hid away his children in a secret place of the earth and would not suffer them to see the light.[4] Indeed, the belief that sky and earth were of old inseparate is recorded by Euripides in some verses which he puts in the mouth of the heroine, Melanippe:

> "*Not mine the tale—I learned it from my mother—*
> *That heaven and earth were once a single whole;*
> *But when they parted, each from each asunder,*
> *They brought forth all things and produced them to the light—*
> *Trees, winged things, beasts and the creatures of the brine*
> *And race of mortals*".[5]

[1] L. von Schroeder conjectured that in the original myth Uranus was the father, not the grandfather, of Zeus, and that Cronus was a Cretan or Carian god interpolated at a later date in the story. See L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 463 note [2], 466 note [1]. The conjecture is plausible.

[2] Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 16. Compare Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xi. vol. i. p. 210 ed. L. Dindorf; Aristides, *Or.* iii. vol. i. p. 35 ed. G. Dindorf; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, iv. 983.

[3] Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London, 1884), pp. 45 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (London, 1887), i. 295 *sqq.*

[4] Hesiod, *Theog.* 155-159. In the corresponding passage of Apollodorus (i. 1. 2) it is said that Uranus cast his offspring "into Tartarus, a gloomy place in Hades", which seems a less primitive version of the story.

[5] Euripides, *Frag.* 484, in *Tragi-*

However, we cannot be sure that Euripides is here reporting a genuine popular tradition; for Diodorus Siculus, who quotes the passage, reminds us that the poet was a disciple of the philosopher Anaxagoras, and it may well be that in these lines the tragedian is merely stating a cosmogonical speculation of his master or possibly a deduction of his own. Certainly, it was a tenet of Anaxagoras that formerly "all things were together, infinite in number and in minuteness; and when all things were together, it was impossible, on account of their minuteness, to distinguish anything".[1] From such a cosmogonical theory, which reminds us of the nebular hypothesis of Laplace,[2] it would have been an easy inference that sky and earth were once intermingled and indistinguishable.

Euripides on the marriage of Sky and Earth.

Elsewhere, however, Euripides has described in undoubtedly mythical language the mythical marriage of Sky and Earth. In a passage descriptive of the power of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, he tells us that:

"*The Earth doth love the rain, what time the parched ground,*
Barren with drought, doth crave a shower.
The solemn Sky, too, full of rain, doth love
To fall upon the Earth, when Aphrodite prompts.
Then when the two are joined in love's embrace,
They make all things to grow for us, and feed them too,
Whereby the race of mortals lives and thrives".[3]

Aeschylus on the marriage of Heaven and Earth.

In writing thus Euripides may well have had in mind similar lines of his great predecessor, Aeschylus, on the nuptials of Heaven and Earth. The passage runs thus:

"*The holy Heaven doth live to wed the ground,*
And Earth conceives a love of marriage.
The rain that falls from husband Heaven
Impregnates Earth; and she for mortal men gives birth
To pastoral herbage and to Ceres' corn".[4]

corum Graccorum Fragmenta, ed. A. Nauck[2], p. 511. The passage is quoted by Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Ars Rhetorica*, 11, vol. v. p. 355 ed. Reiske (incompletely); Diodorus Siculus, i. 7. 7 (except the first line); Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, i. 7. 8.

[1] Anaxagoras, *Frag.* 1, in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, griechisch und deutsch* von H. Diels[2], i. (Berlin, 1906), p. 313.

[2] Compare J. H. Jeans, *The Nebular Hypothesis and Modern Cosmogony* (Oxford, 1923).

[3] Athenaeus, xiii. 73, pp. 599F-600B; Euripides, *Frag.* 898, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck[2], p. 648.

[4] Athenaeus, xiii. 73, p. 600 B;

In these passages from the tragedians the word for sky or heaven is, as usual, *ouranos*, or, in its Latinized form *uranus*. Thus the identity of the mythical Uranus with the physical sky is manifest and indubitable. If there could remain any doubt on this point, it would be resolved by a passage in an Homeric hymn addressed to "Earth, Mother of All Things," in which the poet says, "Hail, Mother of the gods, wife of starry Uranus!"[1]

Sky (Uranus) and Earth invoked in oaths.

Lastly, Earth and Sky (under his proper name of Uranus) were personified and coupled together as witnesses to oaths, with the implication that as deities they would punish perjury. This appeal to the deified powers of nature is as old as Homer. Thus in the *Iliad* Hera swears by Earth and Sky and the dripping water of Styx, and in the *Odyssey* Calypso calls the same three powers to witness that she will do no harm to Ulysses.[2]

The other Greek Sky-god, Zeus, was always conceived as a personal being, closely associated with the vault of heaven.

So much for the old Sky-god Uranus. We must now turn for a little to the other Greek Sky-god Zeus who, through the splendours of Greek poetry and art, cast his ancient rival and mythical grandfather into deep shadow. In Zeus the process of personification was carried much farther than in Uranus; his physical basis in the sky is overgrown and obscured by a luxuriant growth of mythology. Indeed, it appears that the name Zeus never occurs in Greek as a simple designation of the sky; it is always the name of a personal being, a mighty god, who stands in some relation, near or remote, to the vault of heaven. Yet that Zeus, like his Vedic namesake Dyaus, was in origin a sky-god, there can be no reasonable doubt.[3] His epithets and attributes combine unmistakeably to prove it. He was addressed as Heavenly (*ouranios*) Zeus,[4] and as Heavenly Zeus

His epithets are commonly derived from the celestial phenomena, clouds, rain, thunder, and lightning.

Aeschylus, *Frag.* 44, in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. Nauck[2], p. 44. In this passage I read τρῶσαι and ἔκνσε with the MSS. instead of πλῆσαι and ἔδευσε, with some editors.

[1] *Homeric Hymns*, xxx. 17.

[2] Homer, *Iliad*, xv. 36, *Odyssey*, v. 184. Compare *Homeric Hymn to the Pythian Apollo*, 156 (334).

[3] On Zeus as a sky-god, see L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*[4], bearbeitet von C. Robert, i. 115 *sqq.*; O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, pp. 1100 *sq.*; A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, i. (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 1 *sqq.* I formerly argued that Zeus was primarily a god of the oak, and only secondarily a god of the thundering sky. But this view I now believe to be erroneous, and I have long retracted it. See *The Golden Bough*, Part VII., *Balder the Beautiful*, vol. i. Preface, pp. ix *sq.*

[4] Callimachus, *Hymn*, i. 54, *Epigr.* liii. 3.

he was worshipped at Sparta, where one of the two kings regularly officiated as his priest.[1] But commonly his epithets and attributes refer to celestial phenomena, such as clouds, rain, thunder and lightning, rather than to the actual vault of heaven. Thus Homer speaks of Zeus gathering clouds, wrapt in black clouds, wielding the lightning, delighting in the thunderbolt, and so on.[2] In one passage he says that "Zeus rained continuously;"[3] and elsewhere he speaks repeatedly of the rain of Zeus.[4] He declares that Zeus set fast the rainbow in the clouds to be a sign to mortal men.[5] A Greek expression for rain-water is "water from Zeus."[6] On the acropolis of Athens there was an image of Earth praying to Zeus for rain.[7] And in time of drought the Athenians themselves prayed, saying, "Rain, rain, O dear Zeus, on the cornland of the Athenians and on the plains".[8] An altar of Showery Zeus stood on Mount Hymettus, and there were altars of Rainy Zeus in various parts of Greece.[9] One of them was in the island of Cos, and the members of a religious society used to go in procession and offer sacrifices on the altar when the thirsty land stood in need of refreshing showers.[10] On the ridge of Mount Tmolus, near Sardes, there was a spot called the Birthplace of Rainy Zeus, probably because omens of rain were drawn from clouds resting upon it.[11] On Mount Parnes there was an altar on which people sacrificed to Zeus, invoking him either as the Showery god or as the Averter of Ills.[12] The climate of eastern Argolis is dry, and the rugged mountains are little better than a stony waterless

Zeus as the rain-god.

[1] Herodotus, vi. 56.

[2] For the epithets and the references to the passages, see H. Ebeling, *Lexicon Homericum* (Leipzig, 1880–1885), i. 521.

[3] *Iliad*, xii. 25 *sq.*

[4] *Iliad*, v. 91, xi. 493, xii. 286.

[5] *Iliad*, xi. 27 *sq.*

[6] Herodotus, ii. 13; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonaut.* ii. 1120; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Naturales*, ii. 4; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 93, vol. i. p. 123.

[7] Pausanias, i. 24. 7.

[8] Marcus Antoninus, v. 7.

[9] Pausanias, ii. 19. 8, ix. 39. 4.

[10] Paton and Hicks, *The Inscriptions of Cos* (Oxford, 1891), No. 382, pp. 269 *sqq.*; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 1107, vol. iii. pp. 266 *sq.*; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung mit Ausschluss der Attischen* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 4. According to Professor Nilsson, the worshippers mentioned in the inscription were not a religious association but the whole community (τὸ κοινόν).

[11] Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 48, ed. Bekker.

[12] Pausanias, i. 32. 2.

wilderness. On one of them named Mount Arachnaeus, or the Spider Mountain, stood altars of Zeus and Hera, and when rain was wanted, the people sacrificed there to the god and goddess.[1] It is said that once, when all Greece was parched with drought, envoys assembled in Aegina from every quarter and besought Aeacus, the king of the island to intercede with his father Zeus for rain.[2] The king complied with the petition, and by sacrifices and prayers he wrung the needed showers from his sire Zeus, the sky-god. "Complying with their petition, Aeacus ascended the Hellenic mountain, and stretching out pure hands to heaven he called on the common god, and prayed him to take pity on afflicted Greece. And even while he prayed a loud clap of thunder pealed, and all the surrounding sky was overcast, and furious and continuous showers of rain burst out and flooded the whole land. Thus was exuberant fertility procured for the fruits of the earth by the prayers of Aeacus."[3] In gratitude for this timely answer to his prayers, Aeacus built a sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Panhellenius in Aegina.[4] No place could well be more appropriate for a temple of the sky and the rain; for the sharp peak of Mount Panhellenius, cutting the sky-line like a blue horn, is a conspicuous landmark viewed from all the neighbouring coasts of the Saronic gulf, and in antiquity a cloud settling on the mountain was regarded as a sign of rain.[5]

The prayer of Aeacus to Zeus for rain.

As a god of the sky and the rain, Zeus was naturally associated with mountains, whose tops seem to touch the sky, and are often veiled in rain-clouds. The god was said to have been reared on Mount Lycaeus in Arcadia, where there is a spring which was reported, like the Danube, to flow with an equal body of water winter and summer. If there was a long drought, and the seeds in the earth and the

Zeus associated with mountain-tops. Rain-making ceremony at a spring on Mount Lycaeus.

[1] Pausanias, ii. 25. 10. As to the climate and scenery of these barren mountains, see A. Philippson, *Der Peloponnes* (Berlin, 1891), pp. 43 *sq.*, 65.

[2] Isocrates, *Evagoras*, 14; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 61. 1 *sq.*; Pausanias, ii. 29. 7 *sq.*; Apollodorus, iii. 12. 6; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* vi. 3. 28, p. 753 ed. Potter; Scholiast on Pindar, *Nem.* v. 9 (17). Aeacus was said to be the son of Zeus by Aegina, daughter of Asopus (Apollodorus, *l.c.*).

[3] Clement of Alexandria, *l.c.*

[4] Pausanias, ii. 30. 4.

[5] Theophrastus, *De signis tempestat.* i. 24.

leaves of the trees were withering, the priest of Lycaean Zeus used to look to the water and pray; and having prayed and offered the sacrifices enjoined by custom, he let down an oak branch to the surface of the spring, but not deep into it; and the water being stirred, there rose a mist-like vapour, and in a little the vapour became a cloud, and gathering other clouds to itself it caused rain to fall on the land of Arcadia.[1] In these ceremonies the sacrifices and prayers for rain were reinforced by the magical rite of dipping an oak-bough in the water. As the oak-tree was sacred to Zeus,[2] it was natural to suppose that the damping of the oak-leaves would induce or compel the reluctant or forgetful deity to send the wished-for showers.

Ceremonies to avert hail-clouds at Cleonae in Argolis.

At Cleonae in Argolis watchmen were maintained at the public expense to look out for hail-storms. When they saw a hail-cloud approaching they made a signal, whereupon the farmers or vinedressers turned out and sacrificed lambs or fowls. People who were too poor to offer lambs or fowls pricked their fingers and offered their own blood to the clouds to induce them to go away somewhere else. We are told, and may readily believe, that the obliging hail-cloud turned aside quite as readily from a field in which a few drops of human blood had been offered to the cloud as from one in which it had been propitiated with more costly sacrifices. But if the hail-storm obstinately refused to accept the sacrifices, and to hearken to the spells of the magicians, and the crops suffered in consequence, the watchmen were brought to the bar of justice and punished for neglect of duty.[3] From Plutarch we learn that the men thus set to look out for hail-storms made use particularly of mole's blood and menstruous rags for the purpose of averting the clouds.[4]

The personification of the clouds implied by these ceremonies represents a more primitive stratum of religious belief than the worship of Zeus.

In these quaint rites for getting rid of hail-clouds there is no mention of Zeus, and we need not suppose that he entered for a moment into the minds of the farmers when they slaughtered their lambs or scratched their fingers; it was the clouds which were personified as divine beings who

[1] Pausanias, viii. 38. 2-4.

[2] *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art*, ii. 358 *sq.*

[3] Seneca, *Quaestiones Naturales*, iv. 6; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* vi. 3. 31, p. 754 ed. Potter.

[4] Plutarch, *Quaestiones Conviviales*, vii. 2. 2.

could be appeased with blood or moved to compassion, and so induced to comply with the wishes and prayers of men. Here, therefore, we touch a deeper stratum, a more primitive form, of religious belief than in the worship of the great sky-god Zeus; for whereas in that worship the sky, the clouds, the rain, the thunder, the lightning have been, so to say, gathered up and generalized in a single comprehensive conception, the personification of the clouds lags behind at that old stage of thought known as animism, which, incapable of rising to large general ideas, is content to attribute to every object in nature its own individual spirit. The persistence of such a primitive worship of the clouds among peasants long after the great sky-god Zeus had been enshrined in stately temples and adored with pompous rites, is very instructive; it reminds us of the old truth, which we are too apt to forget, that contemporaries in time are often very far from being contemporaries in mental evolution. The philosopher and the savage rub shoulders in civilized society to-day as they did in Greece of old; for when farmers and vinedressers were offering their blood to the clouds at Cleonae, Seneca was philosophizing at Rome, and Jesus had already preached and died in Judea. If in discussing the nature of Zeus as a sky-god I have noticed the quaint rustic rites of Cleonae, it is because they exhibit in an elementary and perfectly transparent form that personification of celestial phenomena which attained its highest manifestation in Zeus.

Aristophanes on the divinity of clouds.

In his amusing parody of the Socratic method and doctrine, Aristophanes represents the philosopher as discrediting the existence of Zeus, but treating the Clouds as great goddesses, who are the real causes of rain, thunder, and lightning.[1] Doubtless the poet himself regarded the idea as manifestly absurd; but we may suppose that many of his rustic hearers, who had flocked into the city to witness the Dionysiac festival or to escape the prowling bands of the enemy in the open fields, saw nothing to laugh at in the divinity of clouds, and their faith in the aerial deities may have been strengthened if, while they sat in the open air on the benches of the theatre, which still rise, tier above tier, on the sunny side of the Acropolis,

[1] Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 252-411.

a heavy bank of clouds, drifting up from Mount Parnes, blotted out the blue Attic sky and, bursting with a peal of thunder overhead, drove the spectators, drenched and dripping, to their homes. As they scurried away to seek shelter, the pious Athenians may have thought to themselves, "This is what comes of poking fun at the Clouds and denying the existence of Zeus!"

Zeus as the God of thunder and lightning.

As a sky-god Zeus was supposed to wield the thunder and lightning; a multitude of epithets lavished upon him deal with that formidable side of his nature.[1] It is said that when Zeus released the Cyclopes, whom their father Uranus had imprisoned, they rewarded their deliverer by fashioning for him the lightning, the thunder, and the thunderbolt. Armed with these weapons Zeus then overthrew the Titans, and trusting in the power of the celestial artillery he thenceforth ruled over gods and men.[2] In Homer he thunders and hurls the thunder-bolt with deadly aim and fatal effect;[3] moreover, he gives omens to men by the flash of lightning and the crash of thunder.[4] At Olympia and elsewhere he was worshipped under the surname of Thunderbolt;[5] and at Athens there was a sacrificial hearth of Lightning Zeus on the city wall, where some priestly officials watched for lightning over Mount Parnes at certain seasons of the year.[6] Further, spots which had been struck by lightning were regularly fenced in and dedicated to Zeus the Descender, that is, to the god who came down in the flash from heaven. Altars were set up within these enclosures and sacrifices offered on them. Several such places are known from inscriptions to have existed in Athens.[7]

[1] O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, p. 111 note [3].

[2] Hesiod, *Theog.* 501-506; Apollodorus, i. 2. 1.

[3] Homer, *Iliad*, xiv. 417, xv. 117, xxi. 198 *sq.*, 401; *Odyssey*, xii. 415 *sqq.*; *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 288.

[4] Homer, *Iliad*, viii. 170 *sq.*, ix. 236 *sq.*, xv. 377 *sq.*; *Odyssey*, xx. 102 *sqq.*, xxi. 413 *sqq.*

[5] Pausanias, v. 14. 7; H. Roehl, *Inscriptiones Graecae antiquissimae* (Berlin, 1882), No. 10; Fränkel, *Inscriptiones von Pergamon*, i. No. 232; Joannes Malalas, *Chronographia*, viii. p. 199, ed. L. Dindorf.

[6] Strabo, ix. 2. 11, p. 404.

[7] Pollux, ix. 41; Hesychius, *s.v.* ἠλάσιον; *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 341. 8 *sqq.*; Artemidorus, *Oneirocrit.* ii. 9; Pausanias, v. 14. 10; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* [3], No. 992, vol. iii. p. 123, with the references to other inscriptions; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions grecques* (Brussels, 1900), Nos. 747, 748, p. 634.

Zeus worshipped as a god of cool breezes in the island of Ceos.

As a god of the sky and the upper air Zeus could send cool winds to temper the burning heat of a Greek summer. Once upon a time, we are told, in the Aegean island of Ceos, the blaze of the midsummer sun about the rising of the Dogstar had parched the fields and spread a wasting sickness among men and beasts. In their distress the people summoned Aristaeus, son of Apollo, to their aid, that he might end the drought and stay the pestilence. He came and built an altar to Zeus under the title of Icmaeus or Icmius, that is, God of Moisture. On that altar in the mountains he offered sacrifices to Sirius or the Dogstar and to Zeus. The god accepted the sacrifice and sent the Etesian winds to blow and cool the earth for forty days. Thereafter in the island of Ceos the priests continued every year to offer sacrifices on the mountains to the Dogstar and to pray to Zeus that he would send cool breezes, and every year Zeus hearkened to the prayer and sent the cool Etesian wind for forty days. In gratitude for this service Aristaeus was numbered among the gods; according to the learned poet Callimachus, he even took the title of Zeus Aristaeus.[1] A sober Greek historian, Heraclides Ponticus, recorded that every year the people of Ceos were wont to observe carefully the rising of the Dogstar, and from the appearance of the splendid star, whether shining brilliantly in a serene sky or looming dim through mist and cloud, they prognosticated the weather of the coming year, and with it the salubrity or unwholesomeness of the seasons.[2] It is thus that religion may develop, or degenerate, into science, and an altar make room for an observatory.

With the progress of thought the conception of Zeus, the Sky-god, tended to absorb and obscure that of all the other gods.

But Greek thinkers could not rest content with the conception of a world parcelled out between a trinity of brother gods—the god of the sky, the god of the sea, and the god of the nether regions. The idea of a tripartite divinity furnished them with no permanent halting-place on the long march from polytheism to monotheism. Urged by that imperious craving after simplicity and unity which is a

[1] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonaut.* ii. 516-527; Callimachus, *Aitia*, iii. 1. 32-37, p. 208 ed. Mair; Hyginus, *Astronomica*, ii. 4, pp. 37 *sq.*, ed. Bunte; Probus, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 14; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung mit Ausschluss der Attischen* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 6-8.

[2] Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 57. 130.

fundamental impulse of human nature and essential to the conduct of human understanding, they tended more and more to resolve the trinity into unity, to fuse the three gods into one; and on this one great god they bestowed the name of Zeus. Thus the Sky-god finally absorbed and extinguished his brother deities: they were lost in his radiant glory, like stars that vanish before the rising sun.

Aeschylus on the universality of Zeus.

To this thought of the essential unity of the divine nature the deeply religious genius of Aeschylus gave powerful expression in the fifth century before our era. He said:

> "*Zeus is the ether, Zeus the Earth, and Zeus the sky.*
> *In truth, Zeus is all things and what there is beyond them*".[1]

Zeus identified with the ether by Euripides.

Euripides identified Zeus with the all-embracing ether. In verses of a lost play, verses often quoted by the ancients and translated by Cicero, he says:

> "*Seest thou yon infinite ether aloft*
> *That clasps the earth in moist embrace?*
> *That ether deem thou Zeus, esteem it God*".[2]

In another passage of a lost play he introduces a speaker who affirms that the ether is what men name Zeus.[3]

Elsewhere he couples the ether of Zeus and the Earth as the universal parents:

> "*Earth the mighty and the ether of Zeus,*
> *He is the begetter of men and gods;*
> *And she, when she has caught the rain's moist drops,*
> *Gives birth to mortals,*
> *Gives birth to pasture and the beasts after their kinds.*
> *Whence not unjustly*
> *She is deemed mother of all things.*

[1] Aeschylus, *Frag.* 70, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck [2], p. 70; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* v. 14. 115, p. 718 ed. Potter; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, xiii. 13, vol. ii. p. 272, ed. Heinichen.

[2] Euripides, *Frag.* 941, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck [2], p. 663; Lucian, *Jupiter Tragoedus*, 41; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* v. 14. 115, p. 717 ed. Potter; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, xiii. 13, vol. ii. p. 272, ed. Heinichen; Plutarch, *De exilio*, 5 (omitting the last impious verse). For Cicero's versified translation of the lines, see *De natura deorum*, ii. 25. 65.

[3] Euripides, *Frag.* 877, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck [2], p. 642.

But that which has been born of earth
To earth returns;
And that which sprouted from etherial seed
To heaven's vault goes back.
So nothing dies of all that into being comes,
But each from each is parted
And so takes another form".[1]

But we can hardly doubt that for the poet the name of Zeus was merely a cloak, a threadbare cloak, to hide a profound religious scepticism, which elsewhere he hardly takes the trouble to conceal. In one passage he says plainly, "Zeus, whoever Zeus may be, for I know him not except in speech";[2] and elsewhere he passionately asserts that there are no gods in heaven, and that nobody but a fool would believe such an old wives' tale.[3] No doubt all these sayings are put in the mouth of fictitious personages created by the poet to suit the exigencies of the drama; but in them we seem to catch a ring of personal conviction which it is hardly possible to mistake; they probably reflect the real belief of the dramatist.[4] In identifying Zeus with the ether he appears to have accepted the doctrine of the early philosopher Anaximenes, who taught that the infinite air was the original matter out of which all things were produced in the past, are produced in the present, and will be produced in the future, the processes of evolution and dissolution going on perpetually and to all appearance simultaneously. This air, infinite in extent and for ever in motion, he identified with God or the Supreme God; for according to one account he supposed the popular gods to participate in the universal process of generation and decay.[5]

The Supreme God identified with the air by Anaximenes.

[1] Euripides, *Frag.* 830, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck[2], p. 633; Sextus Empiricus, p. 751, lines 21 *sqq.* ed. Bekker (quoting the first seven lines without the author's name); Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* vi. 2. 24, p. 750 (quoting the last three lines from the *Chrysippus* of Euripides).

[2] Euripides, *Frag.* 480, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck[2], p. 510; Lucian, *Jupiter Tragoedus*, 41.

[3] Euripides, *Frag.* 286, in *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, ed. Nauck[2], p. 445.

[4] The religious scepticism of Euripides was rightly emphasized by A. W. Verrall in his book *Euripides the Rationalist* (Cambridge, 1895).

[5] Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium Haeresium*, i. 7; Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum*, i. 3. 6; Cicero, *De natura deorum*, i. 10. 26; *id.*, *Academica*, ii. 37. 118; Lactantius, *Divin. Institut.* i. 5. See further H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*[2], i. 17 *sqq.*; E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, i.[4] 219 *sqq.*

About a century later than Euripides the comic poet Philemon again gave expression to the view that Zeus was the air; but in his verses, as in those of his great predecessor, the name of the deity appears little more than a mask to cover a materialistic philosophy. He introduces the god himself speaking as follows:

Zeus identified with the air by the comic poet Philemon.

"*Whom no one, neither god nor man, can e'er deceive,*
In what he does, or shall do, or has done in former days,
That being, I am he,
To wit, the air, and you may also name me Zeus.
The function of a god is mine in this, that I am everywhere,
Here in Athens, in Patrae, in Sicily,
In all the cities, and in every house,
And in you all. There is no place
Where air is not; and he who everywhere exists
Must needs in virtue of his omnipresence be omniscient".[1]

Hymn to Zeus of the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes.

A far more deeply religious spirit breathes in the famous *Hymn to Zeus* composed in the third century before our era by Cleanthes, one of the founders of the Stoic school. He addresses the god in terms of serious, indeed enthusiastic adoration:

"*Most glorious of the Immortals, thou of many names, omnipotent for aye,*
O Zeus, founder of nature, who dost govern all things by law,
All hail! For mortals all enjoy the right to call upon thee,
Since we are thine offspring, the lot having fallen on us to be thine echo,
We alone, all mortal things that live and creep on earth.
Therefore will I hymn thee and sing thy might for ever.
All yonder world that wheels about the earth
Obeys thee, wheresoe'er thou leadest, and willingly is swayed by thee.
Such minister hast thou in thine unconquered hands,
The two-edged, fiery, ever-living thunderbolt,
For at its stroke all nature quakes.
By it thou dost direct the universal reason, which through all things
Runs, mingled with the lights both great and small.
So great art thou, a king supreme for ever.
Without thee, power divine, there is naught done on earth
Nor in heaven's holy vault, nor in the deep,
Save what bad men in their own folly perpetrate.
But thou dost know how best to make the uneven even,
To order the disorderly, and make the loveless loving.

[1] Stobaeus, *Eclogae*, i. 2. 32 (vol. i. p. 17 ed. Meineke).

So hast thou harmonized in one all good things with the bad
That they should form the Reason of the Eternal Universe,
Which evil men, fleeing, abandon,
Mortals ill-starred, who, coveting the gain of fancied good,
Do neither see nor hear God's universal law,
That law, to which obedience yielding they might lead a life of sense and virtue.
But they, strangers to goodness, seek their various ends:
Some on the feverish quest of glory all agog,
Others intent on lucre's sorry gain,
Others, voluptuous, all on ease and pleasure bent,
Wander this way and that, nor ever reach the goal.
But thou, O Zeus, all-bounteous, wrapt in dusky clouds, lord of the thunderbolt,
O save men from their baneful ignorance,
Disperse it, Father, from their soul afar; grant that we do attain
That wisdom, wherein trusting thou dost rule all things in justice,
To the end that we, honoured by thee, may thee requite with honour,
Hymning thy works for evermore, as doth become
A mortal man; for sure nor men nor gods can win a guerdon greater
Than to hymn the universal law in righteousness for aye".[1]

Through this hymn, which I have rendered very imperfectly, there runs a tone of religious fervour, which bespeaks the sincerity of the poet. In the concluding address to the deity there is something of the organ swell with which Milton ends his lines *At a Solemn Music*:

> *"O may we soon again renew that song,*
> *And keep in tune with heaven, till God ere long*
> *To his celestial consort us unite,*
> *To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light".*

Certainly no contrast could well be greater than that between the Mephistophelean sneer of Euripides at Zeus and the ecstatic hymn of Cleanthes, between the conception of a world moved by cold, impersonal, unconscious forces alone, and that of a universe fashioned and guided by a being of supreme wisdom, supreme power, and supreme goodness, whose praises it will be the highest bliss of mortals to sing in a rapture of music for ever.

Aratus on the omnipresence and beneficence of Zeus.

Contemporary with the philosopher Cleanthes was the poet Aratus, who introduced his astronomical poem with an exordium addressed to Zeus, which enjoys the distinction of

[1] Cleanthes, quoted by Stobaeus, *Eclogae*, i. 2. 12, vol. i. pp. 8 *sq.* ed. Meineke.

being the one solitary passage of pagan literature quoted in the Bible. The lines run somewhat as follows:

"*From Zeus let us begin; him never do we men pass by*
In silence. Full of Zeus are all the streets,
And all the market-places of men; full is the sea,
And full the havens; sure at every turn we all have need of Zeus,
For we too are his offspring; and he, out of his kindness, gives to men
Auspicious omens, and doth wake the world to work,
Reminding men to earn their bread. He tells what time the clods are best
For ox and mattock; tells when the buxom season most invites
To plant the shoots and cast the seeds of every sort.
For himself it was who set the signs in heaven,
Marked out the constellations, and for the year contrived
What stars should best the heralds be
Of seasons to mankind, that so all things should grow unfailingly.
Wherefore men do reverence to him ever, first and last.
Hail, Father, mighty marvel, mighty blessing
Unto mankind".[1]

The providential character and fatherhood of Zeus.

In these verses, as in the hymn of Cleanthes, the gracious and providential character of Zeus is strongly marked. In both he is the wise and mighty Father of mankind, who has ordained all things for the good of his children. This thought of the fatherhood of Zeus is very ancient, for in Homer he is commonly addressed as Father both by gods and men,[2] and in ancient India, as we saw, his namesake Dyaus was regularly accorded the same endearing epithet by his worshippers. But while Aratus conceives Zeus as a deity chiefly concerned in ministering to the material well-being and comfort of mankind, the thought of the Stoic Cleanthes takes a much higher flight, dwelling mainly on the moral aspect of the deity as the source of that universal reason and universal law to which not mankind alone but all living beings must conform at their peril. For the philosopher is clearly at pains to solve the ancient, the perennial problem of reconciling the existence of evil in the world with the supposition of an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good Creator.

[1] Aratus, *Phaenomena*, 1-15. The expression "For we too are his offspring" (τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμέν, line 5) is quoted by St. Paul (Acts of the Apostles, xvii. 28). A very similar expression (ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν) occurs in the hymn of Cleanthes to Zeus. See above, p. 51.

[2] Ζεῦ πάτερ, Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 371, v. 757, 762, viii. 236, xiii. 631, *Odyssey*, iv. 341, vii. 311, xvii. 132, xviii. 235, xx. 201, xxiv. 376.

On that knotty point he appears to take refuge in the popular solution of the freedom of the will: if men go wrong, as unquestionably they do, it is all the fault of their own blind folly, for which the Creator cannot justly be held responsible. Let them only conform to the order of nature and the moral law established by the deity, and all will go well with them.

The pseudo-Aristotle on the universal divinity of Zeus.

But perhaps the most complete expression of the universal divinity of Zeus is to be found in a treatise on the universe which passes under the name of Aristotle and is included in his works, though no doubt it is the composition of a much later age. The passage runs as follows:

"There is one being of many names, who is designated by all the attributes of which he is himself the author. We call him *Zen* and *Zeus*, using the words to signify 'He by whom we live' (*zōmen*). He is said to be the son of Cronus and of Time (*chronos*), because he endures from eternity to eternity. He is called He of the Lightning, He of the Thunder, He of the Thunderbolt, Bright, Etherial, Rainy, after the rain, the thunderbolts, and all the rest. Moreover, he is named Fruitful after the fruits, and Civic after the cities; from his social relations he is called the Family God, He of the Courtyard, He of the Kinsfolk, the Paternal God; also the God of Fellowship, the Friendly One, the Hospitable, the Soldier God, Holder of Trophies, Purifier, Avenger, and the Gracious One, as poets say, the Saviour, the Deliverer in truth, and, in a word, the Heavenly and the Earthly God, who takes his names from the whole range of nature and of fortune, since he is himself the cause of all. Hence in the Orphic poems it is not ill said:

'*Zeus was the first and Zeus the last, god of the flashing thunderbolt:*
Zeus is the head, and Zeus the middle, for of Zeus were all things made.
Zeus is the foundation of the earth and of the starry sky.
Zeus was a male, Zeus was a nymph divine.
Zeus is the breath of all things, Zeus the rush of the unwearied fire.
Zeus is the root of Ocean, Zeus the lord of all, god of the flashing thunderbolt'".[1]

[1] Aristotle, *De mundo ad Alexandrum*, 7, p. 401 ed. Bekker. The passage is quoted, with some trifling variations, as from Aristotle by Stobaeus, *Eclogae*, i. 2. 3, vol. i. pp. 22 ed. Meineke. Stobaeus also quotes

Finally, the stoical deification of the whole universe under the name of Zeus is summed up in a few words by a certain Arius Didymus, a writer of unknown date: "The whole universe, with all its parts, they call God. They say that it is one alone, and finite, and living, and a god, for in it are contained all bodies, and there is no vacuum in it. . . . For these reasons we must deem that the god who directs the whole takes thought for men, seeing that he is beneficent, and good, and kind, and just, and possessed of all the virtues. Wherefore the universe is also called Zeus, since to us he is the cause of life" (*zēn*).[1]

Arius Didymus on the identification of the universe with Zeus.

Thus from a simple childlike personification of the sky, Greek thought advanced step by step to the conception of a Supreme God, a Heavenly Father, the beneficent Creator and Preserver of the universe.

If in Greek philosophy the idea of Zeus, the Sky-god, reached its culminating point somewhat late, after the genius of the nation had passed its meridian and was declining towards its still splendid sunset, it was otherwise in Greek art. At the very moment when that genius touched its zenith, the great sculptor Phidias embodied the ideal of Zeus in that famous image at Olympia, which, if we may judge of it by the praises lavished on it by antiquity, must have been one of the greatest glories of the ancient world, one of the most marvellous creations of the human hand.[2] The Roman general, Aemilius Paulus, the conqueror of Macedonia, was deeply moved by the sight of the image; he felt as if he were in the presence of the god himself, and declared that Phidias alone had succeeded in embodying the Homeric conception of Zeus.[3] Cicero says that Phidias

The ideal of Zeus embodied by Phidias in his image of the god at Olympia.

the Orphic poem at much greater length (*Eclogae*, i. 2. 23, vol. i. pp. 10 *sq.* ed. Meineke). Most of the epithets applied to Zeus in this passage are enumerated and explained by Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* xii. vol. i. pp. 237 *sq.*, ed. L. Dindorf).

[1] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, xv. 15, vol. ii. pp. 401 *sq.*, ed. Heinichen. As to the Stoical conception of Zeus, see further E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Dritter Theil, Erste Abtheilung[3] (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 324 *sq.*

[2] The passages of ancient writers referring to the statue are collected and printed in full by J. Overbeck, *Die antiken Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der Künste bei den Griechen* (Leipzig, 1868), pp. 125-136. Compare *id.*, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, Besonderer Theil, i. (Leipzig, 1871), pp. 34 *sqq.*; Pausanias, v. 11., 1, with my commentary, vol. iii. pp. 530 *sqq.*

[3] Livy, xlv. 28; Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, 28; Polybius, quoted by Suidas. *s.v.* Φειδίας.

fashioned the image, not after any living model, but after that ideal beauty which he saw with the inward eye alone.[1] Quintilian asserts that the beauty of the image served to deepen the popular religion, the majesty of the image equalling the majesty of the god.[2] A poet declared that either the god must have come from heaven to earth to show Phidias his image, or Phidias must have gone to heaven to behold the deity in person.[3] The statue was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world,[4] and to die without having seen it was deemed a misfortune.[5] The Greek rhetorician, Dio Chrysostom, a man of fine taste, extolled it in one of his speeches. He calls it the most beautiful image on earth, and the dearest to the gods.[6] He represents Phidias speaking of his "peaceful and everywhere gentle Zeus, the overseer, as it were, of united and harmonious Greece, whom, with the help of my art and in consultation with the wise and good city of Elis I set up, mild and august in an unconstrained attitude, the giver of life and breath and all good things, the common father and saviour and guardian of mankind, so far as it was possible for mortal man to conceive and imitate the divine and infinite nature".[7] And elsewhere he says: "Methinks that if one who is heavy laden in mind, who has drained the cup of misfortune and sorrow, and whom sweet sleep visits no more, were to stand before this image, he would forget all the griefs and troubles that are incident to the life of man."[8]

The Greek Sky-gods Zeus and Uranus compared to the Vedic Sky-gods Dyaus and Varuna.

So far did the Sky-god Zeus outrun his mythical predecessor, the Sky-god Uranus, in the race of glory. By a curious antithesis the careers of the two Greek Sky-gods were almost exactly the reverse of those of their two Indian namesakes. For whereas the Indian Dyaus always remained true to his simple origin as a personification of the sky, and as such was regularly coupled with his wife, the Earth-goddess, his Greek namesake Zeus never wedded the Earth-

[1] Cicero, *Orator*, ii. 8. Compare the passage of Plotinus (*Ennead.* v. 8) quoted by J. Overbeck, *Die antiken Schriftquellen*, p. 131, No. 716.

[2] Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.* xii. 10. 9.

[3] *Anthologia Palatina, Appendix Planudea*, iv. 81.

[4] Hyginus, *Fab.* 223.

[5] Epictetus, *Dissert.* i. 6. 23.

[6] Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* xii. vol. i. p. 220, ed. L. Dindorf.

[7] Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* xii. vol. i. pp. 236 *sq.*, ed. L. Dindorf.

[8] Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* xii. vol. i. pp. 229 *sq.*, ed. L. Dindorf.

goddess, and lost more and more the traces of his connexion with the merely physical heaven, overshadowed as it were and obscured in the transcendent glory of his elevation to the position of Supreme God. On the other hand, while the Greek Uranus remained to the last a transparent personification of the sky, his Indian namesake, Varuna, soon shed that character and underwent a transformation analogous to that of the Greek Zeus. Thus, whereas in name Uranus corresponds to Varuna, and Zeus to Dyaus, in their mythical or divine character it is Uranus who answers to Dyaus, and Zeus to Varuna. If we are asked why two pairs of sky-gods, with names originally identical, ran opposite courses, we can only surmise that in each case the god who bore the ordinary name for the sky naturally kept the closer to his original nature; in Sanscrit he was Dyaus and in Greek Uranus; whereas the god who bore a name which was no longer the ordinary name for the sky was more easily divorced from the physical heaven, and thus lent himself more readily to the play of mythical fancy: in Sanscrit he was Varuna and in Greek Zeus.

§ 5. *The Worship of the Sky among the ancient Romans*

The Sky-god Jupiter, the head of the Roman pantheon.

In Roman religion we meet with the same old sky-god as in Vedic and Greek mythology. His name is Jupiter, which is etymologically identical with the Vedic *Dyaus pitar* and the Greek *Zeus pater*, the latter part of his name (*-piter*) being only a slightly altered form of *pater*, "father", while the first part (*Ju-*) is contracted from *Diov*, as appears from the forms of the divine name *Iovis* and *Diovis* which occur in Old Latin and Oscan. A rare alternative form of Jupiter is *Diespiter*, in which the original form of the first part of the name is more clearly preserved.[1] The sky-god Jupiter was always the head of the Roman pantheon, just as his

[1] G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2] (Munich, 1912), p. 113; Aust, *s.v.* "Jupiter", in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 619 *sqq.*; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strassburg, 1901), p. 670; *id.*, "Aryan Religion", in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, i. 33; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* (Strassburg, 1905-1907), ii. 505 *sq.* As to the forms *Diovis* and *Diespiter*, see Varro, *De lingua Latina*, v. 66; Aulus Gellius, v. 12. 5 *sq.*; Macrobius *Saturn.* i. 15. 14; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 567.

namesake the sky-god Zeus was always the head of the Greek pantheon; but unlike Zeus the process of personification was never carried so far in Jupiter as to obscure his original connexion with the sky. The Latin poets not uncommonly use his name as equivalent to sky,[1] and Ennius in a verse which is often quoted says:

"Behold yon shining firmament which all name Jove."[2]

In another passage the same poet declares that Jupiter "is what the Greeks call the air, which is the wind and the clouds, afterwards the rain, and the cold which follows rain".[3] In quoting this latter passage the learned Roman antiquary Varro says plainly that Jupiter and Juno are the deified Sky and Earth;[4] and many centuries afterwards the learned Christian Father, St. Augustine, declared that the identity of Jupiter with the sky was affirmed by a multitude of witnesses.[5]

Jupiter as the god of rain.

As a sky-god Jupiter was naturally associated with the rain, the thunder, and the lightning, of all of which he was supposed to be the author. One of his epithets was Rainy,[6] and another was Serene, with reference to a cloudless sky,[7] because by his look he was believed to clear the cloudy heaven and still the storm.[8] In time of drought prayers were put up to Jupiter for rain. At Rome the women used to go in procession with bare feet and streaming hair up the slope to the Capitol, and implore the deity to send the needed showers; whereupon, we are told, the rain used immediately to fall in bucketsful, and they all returned home as wet as drowned rats. But nowadays, says the writer who records these good old times when rain was to be had of Jupiter for the asking, nobody believes that the sky is the sky, nobody fasts, nobody cares a brass button for

[1] Thus the expression *sub Jove*, "under Jupiter", means "under the open sky". See Horace, *Odes*, i. 1. 25; Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 138, 299, iii. 527, iv. 505; *id.*, *Ars Amat.* i. 726, ii. 623; *id.*, *Metam.* iv. 260; Claudian, *Panegyric on the Consuls Probinus and Olybrius*, 36 *sq.* For other cases of *Jupiter* used as equivalent to "sky", see Horace, *Odes*, i. 22. 19 *sq.*, iii. 10. 7 *sq.*, *Epodes*, xiii. 1 *sq.*; Virgil, *Ecl.* vii. 60, *Georgics*, i. 418, ii. 419.

[2] Cicero, *De natura deorum*, ii. 2. 4, ii. 25. 65, iii. 4. 10; Festus, *s.v.* "Sublimem", p. 400, ed. Lindsay.

[3] Ennius, quoted by Varro, *De lingua Latina*, v. 65.

[4] Varro, *loc. cit.*

[5] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 19.

[6] Tibullus, i. 7. 26 (*Pluvio-Jovi*); H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 3043 (*Jovi pluviali*).

[7] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 3042.

[8] Virgil, *Aen.* i. 255.

Jupiter, and that is the reason why farming is now in so bad a way.[1] Speaking of these prayers for rain, the Christian Father, Tertullian, says contemptuously, "You sacrifice to Jupiter for rain, you command the people to go barefoot, you seek the sky on the Capitol, and you expect clouds from the ceiling".[2] In his capacity of a deity from whom rain could be elicited by prayer, like water from a barrel by turning a tap, Jupiter had an altar on the Aventine which was said to have been dedicated by the pious King Numa.[3]

Jupiter as the god of thunder and lightning.

But of all the celestial phenomena none were so frequently ascribed to the direct agency of Jupiter as thunder and lightning. Many epithets derived from thunder and lightning were applied to him;[4] indeed the very names for lightning and thunderbolt were coupled with his name as if he were identical with these phenomena.[5] In the Field of Mars at Rome there was a shrine of Lightning Jupiter.[6] In a familiar passage Horace speaks of Jupiter sending snow and hail on the earth, and hurling lightning from his red right hand, as if the flash of the lightning spread a ruddy glow over his uplifted arm.[7] Augustus founded a temple of Thundering Jupiter on the Capitol in gratitude for a narrow escape which he had had of being killed by lightning. For once, when he was marching by night in Spain, it chanced that a flash of lightning grazed his litter and struck dead the slave who was carrying a torch in front of him.

The temple of Thundering Jupiter on the Capitol.

[1] Petronius, *Satyr.* 44.

[2] Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 40.

[3] Varro, *De lingua Latina*, vi. 95; Livy, i. 20. 7, "*Ad ea elicienda ex mentibus divinis Jovi Elicio aram in Aventino dicavit*". As to *Jupiter Elicius*, compare Livy, i. 31. 8; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 327 *sq.*; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 140; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 1. The ancients apparently associated Jupiter Elicius rather with lightning than with rain (Livy, Ovid, Arnobius, *ll.cc.*; Plutarch, *Numa*, 15); but modern scholars are probably right in regarding Jupiter Elicius as primarily a rain-god. See Aust, *s.v.* "Jupiter", in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 656-658; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], p. 121. The ceremony of *aquaelicia* mentioned by Tertullian (*Apolog.* 40) speaks strongly in favour of this interpretation.

[4] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 3044, 3045, 3046, 3047, 3048, 3051; Festus, *s.v. Provorsum*, p. 254, ed. Lindsay.

[5] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 3052, 3053; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], p. 121.

[6] Vitruvius, i. 2. 5. Vitruvius does not mention the place of the shrine, but that is determined by an inscription. See G. Henzen, *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* (Berlin, 1874), p. ccxxxviii; Aust, *s.v.* "Jupiter", in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 656.

[7] Horace, *Odes*, i. 2. 1-4.

This Temple of Thundering Jupiter on the Capitol the devout emperor used often to visit. Once he dreamed that Capitoline Jupiter appeared to him and complained of the loss of his worshippers, who were drawn away from him by the attractions of the new temple. The emperor endeavoured to pacify the irate deity by assuring him that he had only planted the Thunderer there in order to serve as doorkeeper to the genuine and original Jupiter in his ancient temple hard by; and to lend an air of plausibility to the excuse he caused bells to be hung from the gable of the Thunderer's temple, so that visitors to the temple might ring a bell to advertise the god of their approach and to ascertain whether he was at home, just as Roman gentlemen did when they called on their friends.[1] The story is instructive as illustrating the extreme jealousy of the divine nature; for in this case Capitoline Jupiter was clearly very jealous of Thundering Jupiter, though in point of fact the Thunderer was only himself under another name. The anecdote shows, too, how easy it is to multiply gods by the simple process of multiplying their names; for no doubt many simple-minded people would take the two Jupiters for two distinct and even rival deities, who competed against each other for the custom of their worshippers. In this or some such way Roman mythology might have developed a god of thunder different from and independent of the god of the sky. Elsewhere such a differentiation of divine functions has actually taken place. We shall see presently, for example, that the Babylonian pantheon included a Thunder-god as well as a Sky-god, the two deities being distinct in both name and nature.

Jupiter Best and Greatest (*Optimus Maximus*).

The supreme place which Jupiter occupied in the Roman pantheon is sufficiently indicated by the titles Best and Greatest (*Optimus Maximus*) which were commonly bestowed on him, but which belonged especially to Capitoline Jupiter at Rome.[2] When Cicero, on his return from exile, appealed

[1] Suetonius, *Augustus*, xxix. 1 and 3, xci. 2. Compare *Monumentum Ancyranum*, ch. 29, p. 91, ed. Hardy.

[2] Cicero, *De natura deorum*, ii. 25. 64; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 2996, 2997, 2999, 3000, 3001, 3002, 3003, 3004, 3005, 3007, 3008, 3009; E. Aust, *Die Religion der Römer* (Münster-i.-W., 1899), p. 122; L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3], i. 205 *sqq.*; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], pp. 125 *sqq.*;

to the pontiffs for the restoration of his house, which in his absence had been pulled down by his enemy, the ruffian Clodius, he concluded his speech with a peroration in which he solemnly invoked the protection of the Roman Gods, beginning with Capitoline Jupiter under his titles of Best and Greatest, and explaining that the Roman people gave the name of Best to Jupiter on account of his benefits, and the name of Greatest on account of his power.[1] When Anthony addressed Caesar as king and attempted to place a crown on his head, Caesar refused it and sent the crown to Jupiter, Best and Greatest, on the Capitol, saying that Jupiter alone was king of the Romans.[2] Down to the end of paganism this worship of Jupiter Best and Greatest on the Capitol remained the heart of Roman religion: in a late dedication the deity is styled the chief of the gods, the governor of all things, the ruler of heaven and earth.[3] He was indeed the divine embodiment of the Roman empire; and when the emperor Constantine abandoned the old for a new religion, it was fitting that he also abandoned the ancient capital for a new seat of empire nearer to the birthplace of the Oriental faith which he had borrowed from Judaea.

L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, p. 470.

[1] Cicero, *Pro domo sua*, lvii. 144.

[2] Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, lxxix. 2; Dio Cassius, xliv. 11.

[3] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. viii. Supplementum, Pars II. (Berlin, 1894), p. 1748, No. 18219; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 2999, *Iovi optimo maximo deorum principi, gubernatori omnium rerum, caeli terrarumque rectori, ob reportatam ex gentilibus barbaris gloriam Flavius Leontius v(ir) p(erfectissimus) dux per Africam posuit.* The inscription is thought to date from the fourth century A.D.

CHAPTER III

THE WORSHIP OF THE SKY AMONG NON-ARYAN PEOPLES OF ANTIQUITY

§ 1. *The Worship of the Sky among the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians*

The worship of the sky among non-Aryan peoples.

HAVING treated of the worship of the sky among the Aryan peoples of antiquity we now pass to consider that worship among peoples of different races and different languages. We may begin with the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, the two peoples whose civilization dates from the remotest past of which we possess written records.

The Sumerians in Babylonia.

To take the Babylonians first. It was at one time the fashion to regard Babylonian civilization as of purely Semitic origin, and to assume that the Semitic Babylonians and they alone were the founders of that complicated system of religious belief and practice which we know to have existed from a very early time on the banks of the Euphrates. But the extensive excavations conducted in Babylonia within recent years have proved beyond the reach of doubt that before the Semites ever reached Babylonia the country was occupied by a non-Semitic race known as the Sumerians, who tilled the land, reared cattle, built cities, dug canals, and developed a comparatively high civilization, including a copious literature. But there is some evidence that even the Sumerians were not the first inhabitants of the land. It is probable that, like the Semites of a later age, they were merely settlers in it, and that they reached the fertile valley of the two rivers from some mountainous region of Central Asia. Who occupied the country before the coming of the Sumerians we cannot say, for of the aborigines we know

nothing. The first inhabitants of Babylonia of whom we have definite knowledge were the Sumerians; they deeply influenced the religion of the Semitic invaders who attacked and overthrew their empire, and it is impossible rightly to understand the religious system of the Semitic Babylonians without taking into account the foreign Sumerian influence under which it grew up.[1]

Antiquity and decline of the Sumerian domination: rise of the Semites: supremacy of Babylon.

The beginning of Sumerian influence in Babylonia is lost in the mists of antiquity, but an eminent historian, the late Leonard W. King, was of opinion that the earliest religious centres in the country may well have been founded some six or seven thousand years before Christ. The decline of the political power of the Sumerians, on the other hand, may be assigned roughly to the centuries between 2500 B.C. and 2300 B.C. At the latter date Babylon had risen to a position of pre-eminence among the cities of the land, and the Semitic population had gained a complete mastery over their ancient rivals, whom they gradually absorbed. From that time onward the city of Babylon maintained her supremacy, and never ceased to be the capital of the country to which she afterwards gave her name.[2]

The Assyrians an offshoot of the Babylonians.

While the Babylonians in their religious beliefs were deeply influenced by the conquered Sumerians, they in their turn exercised a still deeper influence on their northern neighbours the Assyrians. At first, indeed, the Assyrians were no more than a handful of colonists from Babylonia, who carried with them the faith of their mother country to their new home. Though later on they gained their independence, and after many centuries of conflict reduced the elder branch of their race to subjection, their system of religion, despite a few changes and modifications, always remained essentially Babylonian. Hence their religious writings may safely be used as materials for the study of Babylonian religion.[3] Indeed a great, perhaps the greatest, part of our knowledge of the Babylonian religion is derived

[1] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology* (London, 1899), pp. 1 *sq.* Compare *id.*, *A History of Sumer and Akkad* (London, 1916), pp. 1 *sqq.*; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] (Cambridge, 1924) pp. 356 *sqq.*

[2] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 2 *sq.*

[3] L. W. King, *op. cit.* p. 5.

The library of King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh.

from Assyrian documents, and mainly from the thousands of clay tablets which once formed part of the library of King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. That ruthless conqueror, but enlightened patron of learning, was one of the last kings to occupy the throne of Assyria, reigning from 669 B.C. to about 625 B.C. To his credit, he made great efforts to collect and preserve the old literature of Babylonia and Assyria. His scribes visited especially the ancient cities and temples of the south, and took copies of literary works of all sorts which they found there. These they gathered and arranged in the king's palace at Nineveh, and the wrecks of that great library now form our principal source of information on Babylonian religion and mythology.[1]

The Babylonian gods anthropomorphic.

The gods of the Babylonians, in the forms under which they were worshipped during the later historical periods, were conceived as beings with very definite personalities. All the greater gods, though they wielded superhuman powers, were supposed to be endowed with human forms, possessed of human thought and feeling, and animated by human passions. Like men they were born, like men they loved and fought, and like men they died. In short, the Babylonian gods were highly anthropomorphic; the distinction between the worshipper and his god was not in kind but in degree.[2]

Babylonian religion a worship of nature: the gods personifications of natural forces.

While the higher gods of the Babylonian pantheon have each their own strongly marked individualities, it is not difficult to discover the ground of their differentiation. On this subject I will quote the opinion of one of our best authorities on Babylonian religion, the late Leonard W. King. I do so all the more gladly because his testimony goes to confirm the general thesis which I maintain in this treatise, namely, that a very large part of religion, at least in its earlier phases, is based on a direct personification of nature. Speaking of the Babylonian pantheon, Mr. King says: "The characters of the gods themselves betray their origin. They are personifications of natural forces; in other words, the gods and many of the stories told concerning them are the best explanation the Babylonian could

[1] L. W. King, *op. cit.* pp. 3 *sq.* [2] L. W. King, *op. cit.* pp. 8 *sq.*

give, after many centuries of observation, of the forces and changes he saw at work around him in the natural world. He saw the sun pass daily overhead, he observed the phases of the moon and the motions of the stars; he felt the wind and feared the tempest; but he had no notion that these things were the result of natural laws. In company with other primitive peoples he explained them as the work of beings very like himself. He thought of nature as animated throughout by numberless beings, some hostile and some favourable to mankind, in accordance with the treatment he had received from them. From the greater powers and forces in nature he deduced the existence of the greater gods, and in many of the legends and myths he told concerning them we may see his naïve explanation of the working of the universe. He did not speak in allegory or symbol, but believed his stories literally, and moulded his life in accordance with their teaching. Babylonian religion, therefore, in its general aspect may be regarded as a worship of nature, and the gods themselves may be classified as the personifications of various natural powers."[1]

The Babylonian trinity, Anu, Bel, and Ea.

Now the Babylonians divided the whole realm of nature into three departments, namely the Sky, the Earth, and the subterranean Water, and each of these departments they personified as a god. To the Sky-god they gave the name of Anu; to the Earth-god they gave the name of Bel; and to the Water-god they gave the name of Ea. These three gods were superior to all the other deities, but among themselves they were approximately equal. Together they embraced the whole universe within their sphere of influence, thus forming a triad or trinity which may be compared to the Greek trinity of Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto. When, therefore, a worshipper invoked Anu, Bel, and Ea, he believed that he named all the powers that determine the fate of man, since their triple kingdom comprised within it all the realms of the many inferior deities.[2] At a very early period in Sumerian history we find these three great deities mentioned in

[1] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 9 *sq.*

[2] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 14; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3] (Berlin, 1902), p. 350; M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston, U.S.A., 1898), pp. 107, 147 *sqq.*

Sumerian names of the three gods.

close connexion with each other under their Sumerian names of Anna or Ana, corresponding to Anu, of Enlil corresponding to Bel, and of Enki corresponding to Ea. King Lugal-zaggisi, who caused the inscription to be written in which their names occur, was one of the earliest Sumerian rulers of whose reign we have evidence, and we can thus trace back the existence of this great trinity of gods to the very beginning of history. During the later periods the connexion of these deities with each other, as the three great gods of the universe, remained in full force. Each member of the trinity had his own centre of worship. Thus Anu, while he had temples in other parts of the country, was specially worshipped in Uruk, the Babylonian name of Erech, which is mentioned in Genesis as one of the oldest cities of Babylonia.[1] The Semitic god Bel was identified with the Sumerian deity Enlil, whose worship in E-Kur, as his temple in the city of Nippur was called, is the oldest, or one of the oldest, of the local cults attested by the archaic inscriptions. The worship of Ea, the third member of the trinity, took its rise in Eridu, the most southerly of the great cities of Babylonia. The site of the city, now marked by the mound of Abu Shahren, is some fifty miles distant from the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab; but in the earliest period of Babylonian history, before the formation of the present delta, the city must have stood on the shore of the Persian Gulf.[2]

Anu, principally worshipped at Uruk (Erech), Enlil at Nippur, and Ea at Eridu.

Anu, the Sky-god.

Anu, the name of the Babylonian Sky-god, means "the one on high".[3] It is of Sumerian origin, being probably derived from the Sumerian word *an*, signifying the sky; in any case Anu is essentially a personification of the sky,[4] like Dyaus in Sanscrit, Zeus in Greek, and Jupiter in Latin. Though the three members of the trinity, as we have seen, may be regarded as approximately equal in dignity and power, yet in theory a certain supremacy appears to have

His superiority to the other two persons of the trinity.

[1] Genesis x. 10.

[2] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 16 *sq.* As to King Lugal-zaggisi, see L. W. King, *A History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 193 *sqq.* In this latter passage the author gives the god's name as Ana.

[3] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 153.

[4] H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], pp. 351 *sq.*; M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 88-90; P. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne* (Paris, 1910), pp. 53 *sq.*; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (Heidelberg, 1920-1925), ii. 4.

been assigned to the Sky-god, Anu, as standing at the head of the divine hierarchy, like the Sky-god, Zeus, at the head of the Greek pantheon.[1] He was described by preference as King (*sharru*) and Father of the Gods (*abu ilâni*).[2] His theoretical superiority to the other two persons of the trinity is clearly marked by the assignation to him of the number sixty, the unit of the sexagesimal system, while the other two gods had to content themselves with the inferior numbers of fifty and forty respectively.[3] Thus the Sky-god marched, so to say, in the van of the trinity, while the Water-god brought up the rear. The Sky-god, Anu, was naturally conceived of as dwelling in the radiant heaven; there was the throne (*kussû*) on which he sat, and from which, as occasion served, he also stood up. His special home would seem to have been in the northern sky.[4]

The worship of Anu not popular in Babylonia.

Yet in spite of the lofty rank accorded to him as head of the pantheon, the worship of Anu appears never to have been popular in Babylonia. Though he passed for the Father of the Gods, he remained little more than an abstraction. None of the important cities of Babylonia and Assyria revered him as their patron deity.[5] It is true that he was worshipped specially in Der, but that city never attained to a position of ascendancy in the country. In Assyria his worship was thrown into the shade by that of the national god Ashur.[6] He was honoured, indeed, in Erech, but there his cult was soon ousted by the worship of his daughter Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love, who was there inseparably associated with him. Not content with installing herself beside her father in the temple of E-anna, "the house of heaven", she introduced her characteristically licentious rites, which made the city a byword, and in which her Heavenly Father presumably had no share.[7] In Ashur, the old capital of Assyria, the Sky-

At Erech he was ousted by his daughter Ishtar.

[1] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 88, 207; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* pp. 53 *sq.*, 66 *sq.*

[2] H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 352; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 68.

[3] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 465; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 352.

[4] H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 352.

[5] H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 352; M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 89; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* pp. 68 *sq.*; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*,[2] i. 2 (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1909), p. 423; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 396.

[6] P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* pp. 69 *sq.*; M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 155, 207.

[7] P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 69; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 352. As to the

In Ashur the Sky-god Anu was differentiated from Ramman or Adad, the god of thunder and lightning.

god Anu shared a temple with Ramman or Adad, the god of thunder and lightning, who was deemed his son.[1] Thus the differentiation of the Thunder-god from the Sky-god, which was barely incipient in Roman religion,[2] was complete in Babylonian religion; the division of labour, which works such wonders in human society, was successfully applied in the society of the gods; the Supreme Being was relieved of the trouble of rolling the thunder and hurling the lightning, and might consequently devote himself with less interruption to that life of contemplation which may be thought peculiarly appropriate to a celestial deity. The temple of the two gods at Ashur was originally built by Shamshi-Adad, a high priestly official, but after going to decay for six hundred and forty-one years it was pulled down by Ashur-dan, King of Assyria. Sixty years afterwards, about 1100 B.C., it was rebuilt in magnificent style by King Tiglath-pileser, who has recorded its restoration in an inscription. He tells us that in the beginning of his reign Anu and Adad, the great gods, his lords, demanded of him the restoration of their sacred dwelling. He proceeds: "I made bricks, and I cleared the ground, until I reached the artificial flat terrace upon which the old temple had been built. I laid its foundation upon the solid rock and incased the whole place with brick like a fireplace, overlaid on it a layer of fifty bricks in depth, and built upon this the foundations of the temple of Anu and Adad of large square stones. I built it from foundation to roof larger and grander than before, and erected also two great temple towers, fitting ornaments of their great divinities. The splendid temple, a brilliant and magnificent dwelling, the habitation of their joys, the house for their delight, shining as bright as the stars on heaven's firmament and richly decorated with ornaments through the skill of my artists, I planned, devised, and thought out, built and completed. I made its interior brilliant like the dome of the heavens; decorated its walls, like the splendour

The temple of Anu and Adad at Ashur rebuilt by Tiglath-pileser.

worship of Ishtar at Erech (Uruk), see M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 84, 311, 472, 475 *sq.*, 648; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* pp. 422 *sq.*; and as to the city, the temple E-anna and its tower, see S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 396 *sq.* The huge walls of the moat which surrounded the temple are still intact.

[1] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 153 *sq.*, 207.

[2] See above, p. 60.

of the rising stars, and made it grand with resplendent brilliancy. I reared its temple towers to heaven and completed its roof with burned brick; placed therein the upper terrace containing the chamber of their great divinities; and led into its interior Anu and Adad, the great gods, and made them dwell in this their lofty home, thus gladdening the heart of their great divinities." Having thus recounted the rebuilding of the temple the king prays to the two gods as follows: "May, therefore, Anu and Adad turn to me truly and faithfully, accept graciously the lifting up of my hand, hearken unto my devout prayers, grant unto me and my reign abundance of rain, years of prosperity, and fruitfulness in plenty! May they bring me back safely from battle and from flight; may they reduce to submission all the countries of my enemies, mountain regions that are powerful, and kings who are my adversaries! May they come nigh unto me and my priestly seed with friendly blessings; may they establish my priesthood as firm as the rocks before Ashur and the great deities for the future and for ever!"[1]

Adad perhaps preferred to Anu by Tiglath-pileser.

This prayer for rain and fruitfulness is addressed with great propriety to the gods of the sky and the thunder, who might reasonably be expected to fertilize the fruits of the earth by the genial rain from heaven. If the Assyrian king discriminated at all between the two great deities whom he so highly honoured, it would seem that he put his trust rather in the Thunder-god than in the Sky-god, for after invoking the curses of Anu and Adad on any who should thereafter break, destroy, or conceal his memorial slab and foundation cylinder and erase his signature, the monarch proceeds: "May Adad strike his country with disastrous lightning!" thus apparently implying that the lightning of the Thunder-god was a more efficient instrument of vengeance than any that the Sky-god could wield. Can we see in this a hint that at Ashur the Sky-god was being elbowed out by his own son, just as at Erech he was elbowed out by his own daughter?

[1] "Inscription of Tiglath-pileser I., King of Assyria", in R. F. Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (New York, 1901), pp. 25 *sq.* In quoting I have changed a single word, substituting the English "placed" for the American "located."

Antu or Antum, the wife of Anu.

As every god must have his wife, Anu was provided with a consort called Antu or Antum. Her name is apparently a feminine form of Anu, just as Bel had a female partner called Belit, whose name is a feminine form of his own.[1] In an inscription of Agumkakrime, who reigned over Babylon about 1650 B.C., the king prays, "May Anu and Antum, who live in heaven, send a blessing on Agum, the good king, who built the sanctuaries of Marduk and freed from obligation the workmen!"[2] But, apart from her character as a wife, Antu or Antum appears to have had no very distinct personality; it is said that after the time of Agumkakrime she is never mentioned again in the inscriptions of Babylonian and Assyrian rulers.[3] Yet in the theological lists, which aimed at reducing the crowded pantheon to some sort of order and system, Anu was identified with the sky and his wife Antu with the earth.[4] Thus in the religion of Babylonia we find again that ancient myth of the marriage of Sky and Earth which we have already met with in the religions of India and Greece.

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sky among the ancient Egyptians*

In Egyptian mythology Sky (Nut) and Earth (Seb or Keb) are a married couple; but the Sky is the wife, and the Earth is the husband.

Herodotus tells us that the ancient Egyptians observed laws and customs which for the most part were exactly the reverse of those observed by the rest of mankind.[5] The observation which the Father of History applied to the laws and customs of the Egyptians might perhaps be extended to their mythology. To take the particular instance with which we are here concerned, they resembled other nations in personifying the Sky and Earth, and in marrying them to each other, but they differed from other nations in representing the Earth as the husband and the Sky as the wife. The reason for this assignment of sexes to the two deities is grammatical; for in the Egyptian language the word for sky (*pet*) is feminine, and the word for earth (*to*) is

[1] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 153; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 352; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 70.

[2] "Inscription of Agumkakrime", in R. F. Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 5. As to the date of King Agumkakrime, see E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, i. 2 (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1909), p. 585.

[3] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 153; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 70.

[4] P. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne*, p. 70.

[5] Herodotus, ii. 35.

masculine.[1] In Egyptian mythology the Earth-god is named Seb or Keb (for the name is variously rendered), and in art he is represented in human form reclining on the ground with one arm raised: the Sky-goddess is named Nut, and in art she is represented as a woman with her body arched over that of her husband, her feet resting on the ground at one of his extremities and her hands touching the ground at the other. Sometimes, as if to render her identity with the sky perfectly clear, her body is spangled with stars.[2]

The separation of Sky (Nut) from Earth (Seb or Keb) by Shu, the father of the Sky-goddess.

The Egyptians, like many other peoples, had a tradition that at first the sky and the earth were not separate from each other. This they expressed in mythical form by representing the Sky-goddess Nut lying flat on her husband the Earth-god Seb or Keb, until Shu, the father of the Sky-goddess, insinuated himself between the pair and raised up the Sky-goddess, thus creating the sky and the earth in their present form and position.[3] Egyptian artists were fond of depicting Shu in the act of uplifting the Sky-goddess and supporting her on his upraised hands. There were many variations in their representations of the scene. In some of them we see Shu holding up the boat of the Sun-god Ra under the body of the Sky-goddess; in others we see the two boats of the Sun-god placed side by side on her back, the deity in the one boat being the Sun-god in his capacity of Khepera, while in the other he is Osiris. Sometimes the head of the Sky-goddess points to the east, and at other times to the west; sometimes the Earth-god lies with his head to the west, at other times with his head to the east.[4] A text from the tombs of the Kings at Thebes

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2] (Berlin, 1909), p. 7.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1897), pp. 230-232; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 7, 14, 35; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), ii. 97 *sq.*, 99, 100, 104 *sq.*

[3] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 35 *sq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 32 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 98, 104, 105; J. H. Breasted, *History of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1908), p. 57.

[4] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 105. For scenes in which Shu is represented supporting the Sky-goddess on his hands, see (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *op. cit.* ii. 99, with the plate facing p. 96; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter* (Leipzig, 1885), p. 210; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 231; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 35; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient Classique, les Origines* (Paris, 1895), p. 129.

says of Shu that "he has divided the heaven from the earth; he has uplifted the heaven in eternity above the earth".[1] The radical meaning of his name appears to be "the Uplifter", corresponding to the root *shû*, "to uplift, to uplift oneself"; it expresses the belief that he was the supporter of the heavens, or the divinity who had once raised them and thus separated them from the earth.[2] In later times the Egyptians conceived of him as god of the air which fills the space between earth and sky.[3] As the god of that vast intermediate region Shu was thus appropriately represented under the form of a god who held up the sky with his two hands, one supporting it at the place of sunrise, and the other at the place of sunset; several porcelain figures exist in which he is seen kneeling on one knee, in the act of lifting up with his two hands the sky with the solar disk in it.[4]

Nut the Mother of the Gods and of the Sun-god in particular.

The Sky-goddess Nut is spoken of in Egyptian texts as "lady of heaven", "mistress and mother of the gods", "Nut, the great lady, who gave birth to the gods", "Nut, who gave birth to the gods, the lady of heaven, the mistress of the two lands".[5] She is usually represented in the form of a woman who bears on her head a vase of water, which has the phonetic value *Nu*, thus indicating both her name and her nature as the source of rain.[6] According to one myth, the Sky-goddess Nut gave birth to her son the Sun-god daily: traversing her body he arrived at her mouth, into which he disappeared, and passing through her body he was reborn the next morning. Another myth set forth how the sun sailed in a boat up the legs and over the back of the goddess until noon, when he embarked in another boat,

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 32 *sq.*

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 33. But according to Sir E. A. Wallis Budge (*The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 87), "the name Shu appears to be derived from the root *shu*, 'dry, parched, withered, empty'; . . . Thus Shu was a god who was connected with the heat and dryness of sunlight and with the dry atmosphere which exists between the earth and the sky."

[3] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 19.

[4] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 89.

[5] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 232; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 102 *sq.*

[6] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 103. In the illustration given by the author on this page Nut is figured as a woman with star-spangled body, standing erect, with her arms stretched at full length above her head; beneath her arms is something which may represent a vessel of water.

in which he continued his journey down the arms of the goddess until sunset. In the picture which accompanies and illustrates this myth, the whole body and limbs of the goddess are bespangled with stars, as if to remove any possible uncertainty about the nature of the object which she personified.[1]

The sky sometimes conceived by the Egyptians as a great cow.

But the Egyptians sometimes conceived of the sky not as a woman but as a huge cow, the legs of which were held in position by various divinities, whilst the body of the animal was supported by the god Shu. In one representation of this celestial cow the stars are figured in a row along the stomach of the animal, while the Sun is seen in his boat between its forelegs. This heavenly cow was sometimes identified with Nut and sometimes with the goddess Hathor. When the Sun-god Ra decided to retire from the lower world, he took up his abode on the back of the cow, and there he ruled the upper heaven, which, as the text relates, he had himself created, together with all those happy heavenly fields, where the pious Egyptian hoped after death to dwell among the millions of departed spirits who sing the praises of the God their maker.[2]

[1] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 104 *sq.*, with plate facing p. 96.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 64; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 106; E. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 7, 8, 15.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORSHIP OF THE SKY AMONG THE CIVILIZED PEOPLES OF THE FAR EAST

§ 1. *The Worship of the Sky in China*

Heaven or the Sky the Supreme God in the Chinese pantheon.

ANOTHER people of ancient civilization who have worshipped the sky from time immemorial are the Chinese. Indeed, in the religion of China the sky, personified as a divine power, has always occupied, and still occupies, the supreme place in the national pantheon. It is worshipped not only under its proper name *Ti'en*, "sky", but also under the title of *Ti*, "Emperor", and still more commonly under the title of *Shang-ti*, "Emperor-above" or "Supreme Emperor". These latter titles clearly indicate the conception of the sky as a personal being and supreme ruler.[1] In the Chinese classics the word for sky or heaven (*T'ien*, pronounced *Thien*) is everywhere used to denote the Supreme Power, ruling and governing all the affairs of men with an omnipotent and omniscient righteousness and goodness; and this impersonal term is constantly interchanged in the same paragraph for the personal names Emperor (*Ti*) and Supreme Emperor (*Shang-ti*).[2] Thus we may safely conclude that

[1] J. H. Plath, *Die Religion und der Cultus der alten Chinesen*, i. (Munich, 1862) pp. 13, 18 *sq.*; (Sir) E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*[2] (London, 1873), ii. 257, 352; J. Legge in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iii. (Oxford, 1879) pp. xxiii *sqq.*; A. Réville, *La Religion Chinoise* (Paris), 1889, pp. 134 *sqq.*; C. de Harlez, *Les Religions de la Chine* (Leipzig, 1891), pp. 31 *sqq.*, 35 *sqq.*; J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese* (New York, 1910), p. 103; Marcel Granet, *La Religion des Chinois* (Paris, 1922), p. 49. *Shang-ti* is the term which most Protestant missionaries in China have adopted to represent the word God; for the same purpose the Catholic missionaries have chosen the expression *T'ien Chu*, that is "Lord of Heaven". See R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (London, 1910), p. 395 note [1].

[2] J. Legge, *op. cit.* p. xxiv.

from the earliest times of which we have any record the Chinese have personified the vault of heaven as a mighty, indeed almighty god. More than that, there are indications in the Chinese classics that the god was conceived in human shape. For example, we read of a barren woman who sacrificed and then walked in the footprints of the Sky-god (*Shang-ti*) in order to obtain offspring. Yet, whether from religious veneration or a lack of poetic fancy, the process of personification in his case was never carried very far: his majestic figure always remained aloof, remote, and awful: it was never, like that of the Greek Sky-god Zeus, familiarized and brought home to the minds and hearts of his worshippers by intimate personal traits, gossipy anecdotes, and romantic adventures, such as the dethronement of Cronus and the war with the Giants.[1]

The worship of Heaven or the Sky is the religion of the State rather than of the people.

In conformity with this lofty, but somewhat frigid, conception of the Sky-god his worship has always remained more or less cold, abstract, and official. It is the religion of the State, not of the people: it attracts the devotion and secures the homage of the learned, it does not win the affection and excite the enthusiasm of the great mass of men. Candidates who have passed their examinations return their thanks to Heaven, and at marriage bride and bridegroom pay their respects to the same mighty being. In the school of Confucius there are devotees who celebrate the worship of Heaven at the new and the full moon; others are content to do so once a year. But on the whole the occasions on which the ordinary man prostrates himself before the great Celestial Being, the Supreme Emperor, are not frequent, nor are the devotions which the deity receives characterized by religious fervour: the worship of Heaven counts for little in the life of the ordinary Chinese. Heaven is too high and too majestic, they say, to receive the approaches of common folk, to consult their needs, and to grant their requests. Most people believe that the earthly Emperor, who claims to be descended from heaven and hence bears the title of Son of Heaven, is alone qualified to render to Heaven its due and to celebrate its rites with fitting pomp and solemnity. Hence it has come about that the full

The Chinese Emperor called the Son of Heaven.

[1] A. Réville, *La Religion Chinoise*, pp. 136 *sq.*

worship of Heaven is regularly celebrated at the Imperial Court alone. There it has attained to the dignity of a fundamental institution of State, and the Chinese people would be exceedingly displeased and exceedingly disquieted if the Emperor failed to discharge this essential part of his duties. This state of public opinion is a logical outcome of the conception which people in general have formed of the character of the Celestial Power, the Supreme Emperor. As he is supposed to govern the world by general laws without consideration for individuals, it is natural and appropriate that the nation as a whole, represented by and, as it were, summed up in the person of the Emperor, should pay him the honours which he has a right to expect from mankind. That is why the worship of Heaven holds the first place in the Imperial religion, which is at the same time the religion of the State.[1]

Heaven deemed responsible for the course of the seasons and the supply of food.

While Heaven or the Sky-god is believed to regulate the whole order of nature, he is deemed particularly responsible for the order of the seasons, on which the welfare and indeed the existence of mankind is dependent. Hence sacrifices are offered to him for a good year, in other words, for abundant crops; and as the crops in their turn depend on the fall of rain, he is expected and requested to send seasonable showers to refresh and fertilize the thirsty and barren earth. This utilitarian aspect of the Sky-god, in virtue of which he is ultimately charged with the maintenance of the food supply, is the principal and perhaps the original source of the religious veneration which he inspires in the minds of his worshippers.[2]

The great sacrifice to Heaven on the night of the winter solstice.

Of all the sacrifices offered to Heaven in China the most important and the most august is that which takes place on the night of the winter solstice, that is, on the longest night of the year. The moment is eminently suitable; since from that night the light, of which Heaven is in some sense the personification, begins to increase; the god is born again, the day is his birthday. For the same reason

[1] A. Réville, *La Religion Chinoise*, pp. 140-142. As to the title "Son of Heaven" bestowed on the emperor, and his claim to be descended from Heaven, see Marcel Granet, *La Religion des Chinois*, pp. 50, 56 *sq.*: as to the title, compare J. Legge, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iii. p. xxv note [1].

[2] Marcel Granet, *La Religion des Chinois*, p. 49.

in antiquity the worshippers of Mithra selected the winter solstice as the birthday of the Sun, and in order to wean the pagans from their devotion to the Sun on that day, the Catholic Church adroitly transferred the birthday of Christ from Old Christmas on the sixth of January to New Christmas on the twenty-fifth of December.[1] The Chinese sacrifice to Heaven at midwinter is offered on the Altar of Heaven (*T'ien-tan*), also known as the Round Eminence (*Yuen-khiu*), which stands to the south of the Chinese quarter of Peking. The altar, open to the sky, consists of three round marble terraces, of different dimensions, placed one above the other, all provided with balustrades and accessible by marble staircases, which exactly face the four quarters of the compass. It thus represents the celestial sphere with its cardinal points. A wide area, including a park with huge old trees, surrounds this, the greatest altar in the world. The whole is enclosed by high walls, within which there is room for a town of forty or fifty thousand inhabitants.

The Altar of Heaven at Peking.

On the longest night of the year the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, repairs, or rather used till lately to repair, to the altar in great state. Princes, grandees, officers, attendants, troops to the number of many hundreds, escort him, and many hundreds more assemble on the altar to receive him. Everybody is gorgeously attired in the richest ceremonial costume. Lit up by the flickering glare of great torches, the spectacle is very imposing. Every prince, minister, and mandarin has his allotted place on the terraces of the altar or on the marble pavement which surrounds it. On the upper terrace is planted perpendicularly a large tablet bearing the inscription, "Imperial Heaven — Supreme Emperor": it stands in a shrine on the north side of the altar and faces due south. In two rows, facing east and west, are shrines containing tablets sacred to the ancestors of the Emperor; and the presence of the ancestral tablets is significant, because it shows that the Son of Heaven worships Heaven as the oldest, the original ancestor of his house. Before each tablet a variety of sacrificial food is placed in conformity with ancient precedent and

The scene at the altar.

[1] See below, pp. 526-528.

tradition. On the second terrace stand tablets in honour of the spirits of the Sun, the Moon, the Great Bear, the five planets, the twenty-eight principal constellations, and the host of stars; also tablets dedicated to the gods of Clouds and Rain and Thunder. Before these tablets in like manner are set dishes and baskets containing sacrifices. Cows, goats, and swine have been slaughtered to provide all these offerings; and while the ceremonies are being performed a bullock is burning on a pyre as a special sacrifice to High Heaven.

The sacrifices and prayers at the altar.

The Emperor, who has purified himself for the solemn rite by fasting, is led up the altar by the southern flight of steps, which on both sides is thronged by ministers and dignitaries. Masters of ceremonies direct him and proclaim in a loud voice every act he has to perform. In a hymn, chanted by voices and accompanied by instrumental music, the Spirit of Heaven is implored to descend into the tablet which has been prepared for his reception. Before this tablet, and afterwards before the tablets of his ancestors, the Emperor offers incense, jade, silk, broth, and rice spirits. He humbly kneels and knocks his forehead several times against the marble pavement. A grandee intones a statutable prayer in a loud voice, and on the second terrace several officials, appointed for the purpose, offer incense, silk, and wine before the tablets of the Sun, Moon, Stars, Clouds, Rain, Wind, and Thunder. Finally, the sacrificial offerings are carried away, thrown into furnaces and burned. So ends what has been described as the most pompous worship ever paid on earth to a divinity of nature. It is attended by a crowd of musicians and religious dancers, who by their sweet strains and graceful posturing lend variety and charm to the pageant.[1]

Another altar under a dome representing the vault of heaven.

In the same vast park at Peking there stands, farther to the north, another altar of the same form but of lesser dimensions. It supports a large circular edifice with a dome or cupola, being the only building of this shape and size in China. It represents the vault of the celestial sphere. In this

[1] J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, pp. 103-106. A good view of the great Altar of Heaven, rising in its triple circular terraces one above the other, is given in *The Review of Reviews*, No. 419, December 15th, 1924, p. 505.

dome prayers are put up for a happy year, that is, for a good harvest throughout the empire. Here, too, year by year, in the first decade of the first month, the Emperor offers a great sacrifice to Heaven and his ancestors. And in the first month of summer, to obtain seasonable rains for the crops, a sacrifice is presented in the same building to Heaven and the ancestors of the Emperor, also to Rain, Thunder, Clouds, and Winds, all represented by their tablets. If rain does not fall in due time, the sacrifice is repeated. These sacrifices are usually performed by princes, grandees, or ministers, as proxies for the Son of Heaven.[1]

The Emperor's remonstrances with Heaven in time of drought.

In time of drought, when the crops were perishing for lack of rain and the people were afflicted with famine, the Emperor remonstrated with Heaven, his ancestors, and the spirits generally on their unfeeling and ungrateful conduct in plunging the whole kingdom in misery after all the sacrifices that had been offered to them. Thus in the *Shih King* or *Book of Poetry*, one of the most ancient of the Chinese classics, we read the following plaint of a king in time of severe drought:

"Bright was the milky way, shining and revolving in the sky. The king said, 'Oh! What crime is chargeable on us now, that Heaven sends down death and disorder? Famine comes again and again. There is no spirit I have not sacrificed to; there is no victim I have grudged; our jade symbols, oblong and round, are exhausted;[2] how is it that I am not heard? The drought is excessive; its fervours become more and more tormenting. I have not ceased offering pure sacrifices; from the border altars (of Heaven and Earth) I have gone to the ancestral temple.[3] To the powers above and below (Heaven and Earth) I have presented my offerings and then buried them; there is no spirit whom I have not honoured. . . . This wasting and ruin of our country—would that it fell (only) on me!

"'The drought is excessive, and I may not try to excuse

[1] J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, pp. 106 *sq.*

[2] These symbols were used at sacrifices: they were of different shapes and colours.

[3] "By 'the border altars' we are to understand the altars in the suburbs of the capital, where Heaven and Earth were sacrificed to—the great services at the solstices, and any other seasons" (J. Legge).

myself. I am full of terror and feel the peril, like the clap of thunder or the roll. . . . Among the black-haired people[1] there will not be half a man left; nor will God from his great heaven exempt (even) me. Shall we not mingle our fears together? (The sacrifices to) my ancestors will be extinguished.

"'The drought is excessive, and it cannot be stopped. More fierce and fiery, it is leaving me no place. My end is near; I have none to look up, none to look round, to. The many dukes and their ministers of the past give me no help.[2] O ye parents and (nearer) ancestors, how can ye bear to see me thus?

"'The drought is excessive; parched are the hills, and the streams are dried. The demon of drought exercises his oppression, as if scattering flames and fire. My heart is terrified with the heat; my sorrowing heart is as if on fire. The many dukes and their ministers of the past do not hear me. O God, from thy great heaven, grant me the liberty to withdraw (into retirement).'"[3]

In short, deserted by God and even by dukes, who either could not or would not comply with his request for rain, the monarch in despair thought of abdicating and so making room for a successor, who might wring from reluctant Heaven and the deceased nobility those showers of which the parched earth stood so sorely in need and of which these august personages are notoriously the only dispensers.

The worship of the Sky among the Lo-lo p'o of Southern China.

The Lo-lo p'o are an aboriginal tribe of Yunnan, a province of Southern China. Their religion consists in honouring the Sky and venerating their deceased kinsfolk. The Catholic missionary who reports their creed was at some pains to ascertain what they meant by the Sky which they honour. Is it simply the blue vault of heaven? Is it a Higher Being, a Great Spirit? Or is it some combination of the two? To these questions he could elicit no satisfactory answer. The natives, he tells us, either do not raise such questions at all, or, if they do, the result of their

[1] That is, the Chinese.

[2] The king had sacrificed to the spirits of all the early lords and their ministers, but in vain.

[3] *The Shih King*, Decade iii. Ode 4, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iii. (Oxford, 1879), pp. 419-422.

reflections is far from lucid; and an examination of the popular expressions applied to the sky does not resolve the ambiguity, for while some of them admit of a spiritual, others on the contrary favour a purely materialistic interpretation. If the more intelligent of the people are questioned on the subject, they reply that the Sky (*Meu-nyi mo*) which they adore is the same as the God of the Christians. If, on the other hand, the question is put to the less intelligent members of the tribe, "What is that Sky which you adore?" they answer, "Why, it is just the Sky." But if you insist in asking, "But after all what do you understand by the Sky?" they cut you short by replying, "We do not know".[1] The same question put to any primitive people concerning their Sky-god would probably elicit the same or a similar answer. Whether the distinction between the material and the spiritual is sound or not, it is one that has been reached by civilized peoples after a long period of reflection and discussion, and it is much too abstract to be understood by simple folk who have never troubled themselves about such metaphysical subtleties. For them the Sky is the Sky, and if they invest it with personal qualities, as they do, they merely follow the impulse of the childlike tendency to personify the whole realm of nature. Thus the Lo-lo p'o regard the sky as the father of mortals; he is often called Father Sky (*Meu-nyi-mo a-bo*). Similarly, they sometimes speak of the earth (*Mi-bou-do*) as Mother Earth (*Mi-bou-do a-mo*); and they often say, "The Sky is our father, the Earth is our mother". Yet apparently they do not look upon Sky and Earth as husband and wife. Questioned on this subject, they say, "The Earth is called Mother because the Sky, which is our Father, covers it and protects it".[2] They think that the Sky created man and things for his use. You may hear them saying, "Men cannot make things of that sort; it is the Sky that made them"; or again, "It was the Sky that made the earth". Again, they appear to conceive of the Sky as omniscient. They will say, for example, "Men cannot know such and such a thing; the Sky (*Meu-nyi-mo*) knows it"; or again, "We must not do

The Sky regarded as a Father and the Earth as a Mother.

[1] A. Liétard, *Au Yun-nan, Les Lo-lo p'o* (Münster-i.-W., 1913), pp. 127 *sq.*

[2] A. Liétard, *Au Yun-nan, Les Lo-lo p'o*, p. 129.

evil, the Sky would not look on us with favour". Sometimes, instead of speaking simply of the Sky, they say "The Master of the Sky". In short, they appear to use the name for Sky in a sense nearly equivalent to God; so at least, Father Liétard, our authority on the tribe, translates the word.[1]

Offering to the Sky on the first day of the year.

On the first day of the year the head of a Lo-lo p'o family presents an offering to the Sky. A bowl of rice and a piece of meat are set on a tray, and holding the tray in his hands the householder steps to the threshold of the door, makes three deep obeisances, and lifts the tray towards the sky. That ends the simple ceremony. Afterwards the rice and meat are consumed by the family,[2] so that the Sky gets nothing, unless indeed, it be the spiritual essence of the food, for on that meagre diet many divinities are forced to subsist.

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sky in Corea*

Siang-tiei, the Supreme God, commonly identified with the Sky.

In Corea, as in China, the popular religion is the worship of ancestors, but with this is conjoined a conception more or less vague of a great deity named Siang-tiei, whom most people identify with the sky. His name is clearly the same with Shang-ti, which, in the sense of Supreme Emperor, is the name commonly bestowed on the Sky-god by the Chinese.[3] The missionaries have often questioned highly educated Coreans as to the meaning which they attach to the word Siang-tiei, but without ever obtaining a clear and precise answer. Some Coreans believe that the name designates the Supreme Being, the creator and preserver of the world; others maintain that it is simply and solely the sky, to which they attribute a providential power of producing, preserving, and ripening the crops, banishing sickness, and so forth; but most people confess that they know nothing and do not trouble themselves about it. When public sacrifices are offered for rain or fine weather, or for deliverance from plague, the prayers are addressed either

[1] A. Liétard, *op. cit.* p. 128 *sq.* He translates *Meu-nyi-mo* sometimes as "le Ciel" and sometimes as "Dieu".

[2] A. Liétard, *op. cit.* p. 128.

[3] See above, p. 74.

to the Supreme Being or to the Sky, according to the text of the programme drawn up by the mandarin who arranges the ceremony.[1]

Sacrifices to the Supreme Being or the Sky in time of drought.

Such sacrifices are not very frequent. But when districts or provinces suffer from drought, the government issues an order to the mandarins, and each of them, on the day appointed, betakes himself to the place set apart for the ceremony. Attended by his suite, his guards, and his satellites, he there awaits patiently the favourable moment without eating or drinking, or even smoking to beguile the weary hours. The lucky time is usually towards midnight; in any case the mandarin may not return home till after midnight is passed. At the exact moment he sacrifices pigs, sheep, and goats, and offers the raw flesh and blood to the deity. On the morrow he rests from his labours, but only to begin them again the day after, and so it goes on alternately every other day till rain falls. In the capital the mandarins relieve each other, so that the sacrifices take place every day. If after two or three sacrifices the Supreme Being or the Sky (whichever of them happens to be down on the programme) turns a deaf ear to the prayer and a blind eye to the sacrifice, the place of sacrifice is shifted, and they try again. The various places, where the deity is offered raw pork, mutton, and goat's flesh as an inducement to send rain, are determined by ancient custom. But if, after all, no result is obtained, the mandarins are replaced by Cabinet Ministers, who officiate in their stead. But if neither mandarins nor Cabinet Ministers can extract a drop of rain from the deity, recourse is had, as a last resort, to the king, and he comes in great state to offer the sacrifices and to procure the salvation of his people. When rain at last falls, as it always does, sooner or later, neither the sacrificer nor the persons of his suite may take shelter from the downpour; they must wait till midnight before they return home. The whole crowd of spectators follows their example, for they think that it would be an insult to the Sky if they sought to avoid the rain, the object of such earnest desires and prayers. Should anybody be so forgetful of common decency as to put on his hat or open his umbrella,

[1] Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée* (Paris, 1874), i. pp. cxxxviii *sq.*

the angry crowd would knock his hat off his head, smash his umbrella, and overwhelm him under a shower of blows and curses.[1]

Rewards for the mandarin who procures rain.

A mandarin whose sacrifice has been followed by rain is regarded as the saviour of his country; the king rewards him by giving him promotion or a valuable present. In the nineteenth century a mandarin of the capital who dared to offer the sacrifice before the prescribed hour was immediately dismissed from office. But that very night rain began to fall; so the degraded magistrate was restored to his dignity and shared the reward with his brother mandarin, who officiated the next day, and who had the good fortune to be drenched with rain in the very act of sacrificing. On both of them the king bestowed a deerskin, which was carried to their respective abodes with all possible pomp and ceremony.[2]

Sacrifices for fine weather at Seoul.

At Seoul, the capital of Corea, sacrifices to procure fine weather are offered at the great South Gate. The hour is the same, the sacrificer observes the same rules of abstinence, and so long as the sacrifices continue the gate is shut day and night, and all traffic is stopped. Sometimes, too, on such occasions it is forbidden to carry the dead out to burial. If at these times undertakers attempt to conduct funerals, whether in ignorance of the edict, or in the hope of evading it, or because the date of the obsequies has been fixed by the diviners and cannot be postponed, they are inexorably stopped at the gates of the city; and as they cannot return home before the burial, they and the coffins which they are carrying are obliged to remain out in the rain, often for several days, till with the return of fine weather the embargo on funerals has been rescinded, and the dead are suffered peaceably to repair to their long homes.[3]

Sacrifices in time of public calamity.

Sometimes in great calamities, as when cholera is raging, individuals club together or collect money to defray the expense of numerous sacrifices, and the king for his part essays to appease the wrath of Heaven by granting partial or general amnesties.[4]

[1] Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*, i. pp. cxxxix *sq.*

[2] Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*, i. p. cxl.

[3] Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*, *l.c.*

[4] Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*, *l.c.*

§ 3. *The Worship of the Sky in Annam.*

In Annam the Sky is personified as a wise and generally beneficent deity.

In Annam, as in China, the sky (*troi*) is personified as an intelligent, wise, and on the whole beneficent deity. The personification transpires clearly in such popular expressions as "Mr. Sky" and "Mr. Blue Sky" or "Grandfather Sky", "Grandfather Blue Sky"; for the title Mr. or Monsieur (*ong*) means literally "grandfather", though it is applied in a complimentary sense to any person for whom the speaker entertains respect. Sometimes in common speech the noun "sky" is omitted, while the personification remains. Thus you may hear people say, "Grandfather is raining", Grandfather is causing a flood", "If Grandfather goes on like that we shall lose the harvest".[1] But to the mind of the Annamites the sky (*troi*) is much more than the personified cause of atmospheric phenomena. It occupies towards mankind the position of an overruling Providence. It is the cause of all that happens here on earth. They say, "Life and death are in the power of Heaven" (*troi*); "Good and bad fortune are in the power of Heaven"; "Riches and honours, want and plenty depend on Heaven"; "It is the will of Heaven." It is Heaven, too, that sends the wasting sicknesses which spread havoc among the people; cholera or plague is "Heaven's evil" (*dich troi*). Yet Heaven is also beneficent and compassionate. Men appeal to it in time of trouble. Thousands of times every day the cry goes up from the unfortunate and unhappy in Annam to a just, a pitiful Heaven; "O Heaven (*troi ôi!*)" is the simple appeal; according to the circumstances and feelings of the speaker it is a cry of supplication, of suffering, of discouragement, of astonishment, or of indignation. Sometimes, in their despair, men blaspheme Heaven, rendering it responsible for the evils that befall them: hence there is "a sin against heaven" (*Pham troi*); and they say that "Heaven punishes" (*troi phat*). But in calmer moments men appeal to Heaven as to a wise and just judge. They say, "Heaven knows" (*troi biêt*), "Heaven judges" (*troi xet*), meaning, "Heaven sees what I do, he hears what I

[1] L. Cadière, "Philosophie populaire annamite," *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) pp. 118-120; P. Giran, *Magie et Religion Annamites* (Paris, 1912), pp. 262 *sq.*

say; he is my witness that I speak the truth, that I am innocent; he will not leave unpunished the wrong that is done me". And it is to this great Celestial Being, who made man and watched over him during his life on earth, that man returns after death; to die is "to return to Heaven" (*vê troi*). Thus on the whole the physical sky (*troi*) is personified by the Annamites as a wise, good, just and omniscient being, in short, as a high god.[1]

Theological subtleties concerning the divine nature eschewed by the people.

But if the people are asked whether this great deity, this overruling Providence, is distinct from the material heaven, the blue vault that they see above their heads, they cannot answer. Either they have never put the question to themselves, or, if they have, they have kept to themselves the fruit of their reflections.[2] It is the old, old riddle, and how can we expect that Annam should find the answer?

> "*Earth could not answer: nor the Seas that mourn*
> *In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;*
> *Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd*
> *And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.*"

The Sky-god called the Emperor of Jade; he is attended by a court and two secretaries, who are the Northern and Southern Star.

But with such unprofitable subtleties the great mass of mankind in Annam, as elsewhere, do not concern themselves. To their thinking the sky is a god, and that is an end of it. About his personality there is no manner of doubt. They call him Ngoc Hoang, that is, the Emperor of Jade. He dwells in the midst of heaven and is the supreme ruler of the universe. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, the thunder, the rain, the spirits of the mountains, of the rivers, and of the forests are all subject to him. It was he who sent to mankind the three great emperors Phuc y, Than nong, and Hien vien, who taught the human race to till the ground and to clothe their nakedness. But the Emperor of Jade does not dwell in lone splendour above the clouds. He is surrounded by a regular court, and in the despatch of all business concerning mankind he is assisted by two Secretaries of State, who are no other than the Northern Star and the Southern Star. It is the duty of these functionaries to superintend and register all things, good and bad, that affect

[1] L. Cadière, "Philosophie populaire annamite," *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) pp. 121 *sq.*

[2] L. Cadière, "Philosophie populaire annamite," *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) p. 122.

the welfare of humanity. But while the Southern Star keeps his eye on the living and records all their doings, of which they will have to render an account after death, the Northern Star is lord of the dead; he it is who regulates their punishment, increasing, mitigating, or suspending it at his discretion; and it is to him that, a few days before the end of the year, the Spirit of the Kitchen makes his annual report on all that, as Guardian of the Hearth, he has seen and heard in the house during the past year. In popular art the Emperor of Jade is represented clad in a robe of imperial yellow, sitting on a throne amid clouds, and holding an ivory sceptre in his clasped hands. On either side of him stand, at the foot of the throne, the two Secretaries of State, each with the emblems of his office, to wit, a register and a paint-brush or pencil wherewith to make the entries in the judgment roll. The image or statue of the deity is to be seen in many temples, yet he receives no special worship; no ceremonies are performed and no festivals held in his honour, such as are performed and held in honour of the Sun and Moon.[1]

The descent of the Sky-god's daughter to Earth.

The Emperor of Jade is a father; he has sons and daughters. Among the daughters the most celebrated is the goddess Liêu Hanh.[2] One day when her father had invited a select party of gods to dinner, she was so awkward as to break a valuable vase, and for this fault she was banished by her stern sire to earth. There she became a princess in the royal family of the Lês and married a young official named Dao Lang. But after three years she died. When her husband opened the coffin to take a last look at his dead wife the body had vanished. The goddess had resumed the likeness of a young damsel, and in that form now roamed the forests, making the woods echo to her songs and the music of the harp. There her husband, who was inconsolable for his loss, had the good fortune to fall in with her and to recognize her with the help of a very elegant poem which she had carved on the bark of a tree. They married again and lived long years together without ever wearying of their love. Her husband devoted himself to the pursuit

[1] P. Giran, *Magie et Religion Annamites*, pp. 262-264; E. Diguet, *Les Annamites* (Paris, 1906), pp. 219 *sq.*

[2] P. Giran, *op. cit.* p. 264.

of literature, graduated with distinction at the university, and rose to be a high mandarin. Their marriage was blessed with a son. One day—one melancholy day—while they were joyously discussing his future career, they were surprised by a strain of sweet and solemn music which seemed to proceed from the sky. A shudder thrilled the wife: she started up and said to her husband, "We must part, my darling. Thou art Dao Lang and I am the goddess Liêu Hanh. My father, the Emperor of Jade, is calling me to himself. Farewell." She vanished, this time to return no more, and he was left lamenting.[1]

[1] E. Diguet, *Les Annamites*, pp. 225-227; compare P. Giran, *op. cit.* p. 264.

CHAPTER V

WORSHIP OF THE SKY IN AFRICA

§ 1. *Worship of the Sky in Western Africa*

THUS far we have discussed the worship of the Sky as it has existed among the civilized peoples of antiquity and of modern times. But that worship is by no means confined to civilized nations; it occurs also commonly enough in savage and barbarous tribes. Nor is this surprising. When we remember that the religious veneration of the Sky is based on a simple personification of the visible firmament, in other words, on an attribution to it of qualities and powers like those of man in kind, though higher in degree, we shall probably be less astonished that so crude a philosophy should commend itself to primitive folk than that it should so long have survived among peoples at a higher level of culture.

The worship of the Sky common in savage and barbarous tribes.

I do not propose to ransack the whole annals of savagery and barbarism in search of sky-gods; to do so would tax too far the patience of my hearers and exceed the time at my disposal. There is the less need for me to dwell at length on the topic because the whole of this wide field has already been surveyed and mapped by Professor Pettazzoni in the learned work to which I have already referred.[1] For my purpose it will suffice to select as examples of this particular phase of religion the beliefs and practices of a single race, or rather group of races, to wit, the black peoples of Africa, among whom the personification and worship of

The worship of the Sky well developed in Africa.

[1] R. Pettazzoni, *Dio*, vol. i. *L' Essere Celeste nelle Credenze dei Popoli Primitivi* (Rome, 1922).

the Sky are particularly well developed. We begin with the tribes of Western Africa.

The worship of the Sky among the tribes of Upper Senegal.

The worship of the Sky appears to be common to all the negroes of Western Africa, but among many of them it is cast into the shade by the worship of the Earth and of the Forest. This, for example, is true of the Bobos, a tribe of Upper Senegal or the French Sudan, who occupy a territory in the valley of the Niger to the north of the Ivory Coast.[1] But among the Sankuras, a branch of the Bobos, who have been influenced by Mohammedanism, the Sky-god has regained some of his original importance because his worshippers have identified him with Allah. Still, even among them the Sky has to yield precedence to the Earth and the Forest.[2] Again, among the Nunumas, another tribe of the same region, the two great deities are still the Earth and the Forest, but the people also revere the Sky or the Good God, as they call him, and they offer sacrifices to him when the diviner orders them to do so. At his bidding they ascend one of the terraces of their large family dwellings (*sukalas*), which are built of beaten earth and in their massive proportions often present the appearance of lofty rectangular fortresses rather than of houses. There, on the terrace, they cut the throat of a fowl, throw it in the air, and watch it, as it flutters and flaps its wings in the agony of death. If it expires on its back, the omen is good: Heaven has accepted the sacrifice. But if the bird does not die on its back, it is a sign that Heaven is displeased and rejects the offering. In that case the sacrifices must be continued till a victim yields up its life in the required position.[3] The worship of the dead forms an important element in the religion of the Nunumas; for the souls of ancestors are supposed to dwell under ground and to cause the growth of vegetation, particularly of the grain; hence at the time of sowing the seed the head of a family always sacrifices to the ancestral spirits either at their graves or at the little huts dedicated to them.[4] Now it is noteworthy

The worship of the Sky among the Nunumas.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan* (Paris, 1912), p. 74.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 83.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 195. Throughout this discussion I use Heaven and Sky as equivalent terms.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 189 *sq.*

that in this tribe the Sky-god is always invoked along with the ancestral spirits.[1] On the terraces of their houses the people sometimes erect huge pointed cones of beaten earth in honour either of the ancestors or of the Sky. Further, the Nunumas, like other negroes, associate the worship of certain pebbles with the worship of the Sky. When the head of a family finds in the forest a pebble which attracts his attention by its colour, or beauty, or curious shape, he picks it up and takes it home. There he constructs a cone of beaten earth, some three feet high at most, and sets the pebble on the top of it, and offers sacrifices to it, saying that it is the Good God himself, or at all events a fetish which the Good God has bestowed on him. This is natural enough, for in the belief of the blacks these pebbles have fallen from the Sky, and are in fact fragments of that great divinity.[2]

The worship of the Sky among the Kassunas Fras.

The Kassunas Fras, another negro people of the same region, to the north of the Gold Coast, similarly offer sacrifices to the Sky on the terraces of their houses, especially when they are about to set out on a journey. They also in like manner worship certain pebbles as fragments of the divine Sky, from which they are supposed to have fallen. When a man finds one of these pebbles he constructs a cone of beaten earth in front of the door of his house, places the pebble on the top of it, and from time to time sacrifices fowls or goats to it. This he usually does in obedience to the injunction of a diviner.[3] But with them, as with other tribes of these parts, the worship of the Sky appears to be overshadowed by the worship of the Earth and of the ancestral spirits. Even when rain is wanted, it is not to the Sky but to the Earth and the Ancestors that the Kassunas Fras, like the Nunumas, offer sacrifices in order to elicit showers from the brazen heaven.[4]

The worship of the Sky among the Nankanas.

Again, the Nankanas, another tribe of the same region, revere the Earth and the Forest as their great deities, but they also pay their devotions to the Sky, who, however, is not so universally feared and respected as the Earth. At

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 195.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 195 *sq.*

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 238.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 196 *sq.*, 241 *sq.*

Zeko the French official, M. Louis Tauxier, to whom we owe a valuable account of these tribes, was told by the people whom he questioned that everybody believed in the Earth, but that not everybody believed in the Sky. However, the chief of Zeko, to do him justice, was not one of these sceptics. Like the pious man he was, he believed in the Sky, and from time to time in the courtyard of his house he sacrificed fowls, sheep, goats, and even oxen to the celestial deity. According to the worshippers of the Sky in this tribe, it is the Sky who bestows rain, and the Thunder and Lightning are his progeny.[1]

The worship of the Sky among the Kassunas-Buras.

Again, the Kassunas-Buras, a tribe situated to the east of the preceding, similarly worship the Earth and the Forest as the prime divinities, but they also find a place in their pantheon for the Sky-god, who bears the name of We, while the sky itself is called *kunkualu* or *kongkuanu*: thus they distinguish between the firmament and the god who inhabits it. At the bidding of the diviner, they sacrifice fowls, millet flour, and so forth to We in order to procure many children and many wives. Anybody is free to offer such sacrifices, provided that he is instructed to do so by the seer. By extension they also give the name of We to the divine pebbles which they collect and treasure, because they believe them to have fallen from the sky. As for the lightning, it is the sword of the Good God, but they do not offer sacrifices to it. They believe that it strikes none but evildoers.[2]

The worship of the Sky among the Mossi and Samos.

Among the Mossi of Yatenga, a district of Upper Senegal, the Sky-god ranks as the supreme deity. In theory he is more powerful even than the redoubtable Earth-god, although, unlike that great divinity, he does not busy himself with men, and never punishes them. Nevertheless everything is said to be ordered by him. He resides in the sky, and his name is Wende or Wennam.[3] The Samos of the same region sacrifice to the Sky, which they represent by balls of earth; they call it *laré* or *lôro*.[4]

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 272 *sq.*

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 328. In French the god's name is spelled Oue.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga* (Paris, 1917), p. 377.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 694.

The Habés worship a god of the sky called Amma, or Amba, who sends the rain.

The Habés are an aboriginal people who inhabit a mountainous district of Upper Senegal within the great bend of the Niger. Formerly they dwelt in the fertile lowlands of the great Nigerian tableland; but, driven thence by the inroads of their foes the Peuls, they took refuge in the mountains, and built their villages on steep slopes or on the summits of cliffs, where ever since they have bidden defiance to their enemies and preserved their ancient customs and heathen religion.[1] They believe that the sky, which they call *ana-kala*, is solid, and that there is a god of the sky, who sends the rain. They call him Amma or Amba. They offer sacrifices to him on altars with three points, to which they give the same name as to the deity. On some of the cliffs may be seen a number of monoliths or menhirs, some six feet high, which are usually fixed in clefts of the rock and supported by stones at their base. These stones are altars of the kind Sky-god Amma or Amba, who bestows the rain on mankind. No definite shape is ascribed to him, but he is supposed to dwell or to be embodied in the menhirs; and he also resides in caves and piles of rocks. Sacrifices are offered to him at all times. When any one desires to obtain a favour of the deity, whether it be rain, or offspring, or an increase of worldly goods, he repairs alone to a menhir, sprinkles millet flour on it, and utters his prayer. If his prayer is granted, he must inform the High Priest (*hogon*) and the elders of the village. They assemble before the sacred stone, and in their presence the worshipper who has obtained his wish sacrifices a goat, a cock, and a hen, so that the blood drips on the menhir. The flesh of the victim is then shared among the persons present. Women are excluded from these sacrifices of thanksgiving. If the favoured mortal were to forget thus to testify his gratitude to the deity, Amba would take his revenge by sending great misfortunes upon him. The Habés believe that the Earth is the wife of Amba, because he fertilizes her every year with the rain; the fruits which, thus fertilized, she brings to the birth are deemed the children of Amba.[2]

They offer bloody sacrifices to him on sacred menhirs.

[1] R. Arnaud, "Notes sur les Montagnards Habé", *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, ii. (1921) pp. 241 *sqq.*

[2] R. Arnaud, "Notes sur les Montagnards Habé", *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires*, ii. (1921) pp. 255 *sq.* As to the High

The worship of the Sky among the tribes in the interior of the Ivory Coast.

The Kulangos, in the interior of the Ivory Coast, regard the sky, or rather the atmosphere (*yego*), as a great deity. We are told that like the other negroes of the Sudan they distinguish the firmament, which they believe to be solid, from the atmospheric phenomena, such as clouds, storm, rain, thunder and lightning, which take place beneath it; and it is these phenomena, and not the blue sky, which they deem divine. To this god of the sky, or rather of the atmosphere, they offer sacrifices when the diviners command them to do so; and it is he who sends the thunder, the lightning, and the wind.[1] But the Earth is the great deity of the Kulangos. Other tribes in the interior of the Ivory Coast, such as the Abrons, the Gans, and the Deghas, deify the Sky and the Earth, and offer sacrifices to them.[2] The Guros in the interior of the Ivory Coast recognize the divinity of the atmospheric sky, but they do not sacrifice to it. However, when anybody has been struck by lightning, they sacrifice a fowl to the lightning in order to appease it. They believe that the polished stone axes of the neolithic period, which are found all over the Ivory Coast, were thrown down from the sky by the thunder, and they look upon them as divine. So they collect them and keep them in vessels of water. From time to time they bathe in the holy water, and offer fowls to the thunder-stones, that is, to the stone axes, trusting thereby to win their favour.[3]

The worship of the Sky among the tribes in the interior of the Gold Coast.

Among the tribes which inhabit the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast the worship of Sky and Earth prevails in forms which closely resemble those which we have found to be practised by the natives of Upper Senegal; nor is this surprising when we remember that the boundary between Senegal and the Gold Coast, in other words, between French and British territory, is a purely arbitrary one, being drawn straight along the eleventh parallel of North latitude, with the result that the same tribes are impartially divided

Priest (*hogon*), see *id.* pp. 249 *sqq.* He is the religious and sacred chief of a group of people; he is deemed to be something more than a man, and he has to observe many taboos.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou* (Paris, 1921), pp. 175 *sq.*

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, pp. 353, 375, 379, 385, 407.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou* (Paris, 1924), pp. 200, 248; compare *id.*, p. 139, as to the Gagus, who similarly worship polished stone axes as thunder-stones.

between the two different spheres of political influence. For example, the Nankana (or Nankanni) and the Kassuna Fras (or Kassena) inhabit both sides of the Franco-British boundary line.[1] The tribes on the English side of the boundary have recently been described by Mr. A. W. Cardinall, and from his description I will borrow what he tells us about the worship of the Sky among these people. It will be seen that his account tallies with and confirms that of his French colleague, M. Louis Tauxier, across the frontier.

But these tribes worship chiefly the numerous Earth-gods.

Among the tribes in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast the principal form of worship is that of the Earth-gods, for of such deities there are many, and all have different names;[2] each community reveres at least one.[3] Thus the natives appear not to have attained to the general conception of a single god of the whole earth; they conceive of a multitude of Earth-gods, each with his own particular name and local habitat. But every one believes in a Supreme Being, the creator of life and the moulder of destiny. The Nankanni call him Wuni; the Kassena call him We; and the Builsa call him Weni. His power is boundless, and he has pre-ordained everything. No definite shape is ascribed to him, but he apparently lives in the sky, or sometimes is identical with the sky or with the sun. He stands alone, and for the most part is not to be approached by mere mortals.[4] Yet at the same time we are told that "the sky itself—or maybe the Creator—has a private worship paid to it. All are at liberty to offer to the sky, and in most, but by no means all, houses one will see on the roof of one of the huts a small pyramid of sun-baked mud on the summit of which is a small stone—usually a cast-away hand-grinder. This is the sacrificial place for We."[5] Among these tribes, moreover, as among some of the tribes of Upper Senegal, the worship of certain stones is confused or blent with the worship of the sky. Stone implements abound everywhere, and are supposed by the natives to have come from God, or the sky, or the rain. A

Belief in a Supreme Being called We, Wuni, or Weni.

Worship of stone implements which are thought to have fallen from the sky.

[1] A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast* (London, N.D.), pp. vii, 1.

[2] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* p. 24.

[3] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* p. 16.

[4] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* pp. 22, 26.

[5] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* pp. 23 *sq.*

man will pick up and treasure any curiously-shaped stone, and if good luck should afterwards attend him, he may, in consultation with the sorcerers, conclude that he owes his prosperity to the stone; and thus in course of time the stone may acquire great renown.[1]

Why the Sky is so far away.

To explain why the sky is so far away the Kassena say that in the beginning the sky was so close to the ground that it was in the way of an old woman who was about to cook. In a rage she cut a slice off the sky and made it into soup. At this indignity the Sky was so vexed that he went away to the place which he occupies to the present day. Similarly the Ashantis tell how in days of old the sky was so near the earth that a woman who was pounding yams hit it continually with her pestle. This was more than the Sky could stand, and he withdrew out of her reach.[2] Almost exactly the same story is told by the Kpelle, a negro tribe of Liberia.[3]

Supreme importance of the worship of ancestors among these tribes.

But among these tribes, while the worship of the Earth-gods is the most important for the community, that of ancestors is by far the most important for the individual. A religious man will do nothing without a sacrifice of some sort, generally a fowl, to his ancestors. In every courtyard may be seen the mound that stands for the founder's grave, and outside of it are little pyramids representing other deceased members of the family. Each pyramid is capped with a stone, on which are laid blood and feathers from the sacrifices. And when a family migrates, earth from the pyramids is carried to the new abode, and there the sacrifices to the dead are offered as before.[4]

The Tshi-speaking peoples and their country.

To the south of the territory occupied by these tribes stretches the great extent of country inhabited by a race of true negroes, who speak dialects of a language known as the Tshi, Tshwi, or Twi. It is a land of countless small hills and low ranges, all covered by dense tropical forest. The climate is hot, oppressive, and in a high degree unfavourable to the physical and mental energies of man. The natives live

[1] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* p. 23.
[2] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* pp. 22 *sq.*
[3] D. Westermann, *Die Kpelle, ein Negerstamm in Liberia* (Gottingen und Leipzig, 1921), p. 533.
[4] A. W. Cardinall, *op. cit.* p. 45.

in insignificant villages and hamlets, built in small clearings of the forest; communication is kept up by narrow paths cut through the jungle. With the exception of Coomassie (the capital of Ashanti) and Djuabin, there is no purely native assemblage of buildings which deserves the name of town. In such a country, where men live in small isolated communities, mere specks in a vast tract of almost impenetrable forest, ideas permeate but slowly; shut off from the outer world by their woods, and enervated by the deadly influence of the climate, the people have remained in a backward condition little, if at all, in advance of that in which they were discovered by the Portuguese navigators more than four hundred years ago.[1] To the east of their country stretches, as far as the Benin River, the territory occupied by the Ewe-speaking and Yoruba-speaking peoples. All three languages—the Tshi, the Ewe, and the Yoruba—belong to the same family of speech, and all three peoples appear to have sprung from a common stock. But they differ in the degree of culture they have reached as we proceed from west to east, the Tshis in the west being the most savage, and the Yorubas in the east being the most advanced, while between them the Ewes occupy an intermediate position in respect of culture as well as of locality. The more open and level country inhabited by the Ewes and the Yorubas, by facilitating communication, may partially account for their greater progress in the direction of civilization.[2] The religions of all three peoples conform to the same type, and they all entertain similar views as to the Sky-god, who stands at the head of their pantheon. The same may be said of the Gãs, a kindred people who inhabit the Gold Coast immediately to the west of the Volta River. Their language (the Gà) belongs to the same family of speech, and their religious beliefs resemble very closely those of their neighbours the Tshis.[3]

The Ewe-speaking and Yoruba-speaking peoples.

Among the Tshi-speaking peoples the Ashantis are by

[1] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), pp. 1-4.

[2] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), pp. v *sq.*, 8 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), pp. 32 *sq.*

[3] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. v, vi.

Among the Ashantis the Sky-god Onyame or 'Nyame is the greatest of the gods.

far the most powerful and the most famous. They regard the Sky and the Earth as their two great deities.[1] But, unlike the tribes of Upper Senegal, they rank the Sky above the Earth. He is indeed the greatest of their gods, the Supreme Being.[2] His name in the Tshi language is Onyame, "the Shining One", shortened into 'Nyame, or lengthened into Onyankopon or Nyankopon. These names are applied both to the deity and to the sky. The Tshi negro conceives of the visible sky as animated: the firmament is, as it were, the body, or at least the abode, of the deity, who is its soul.

The same name of the god is known to many widely separated tribes.

It is remarkable that the same name for the deity occurs in the languages of widely separated tribes of the Bantu stock in Western Africa. Thus in Dualla it is Nyambe, in the language of Angola it is Ndzambi or Nzambi, in Herero it is Ndyambi, and similar names occur in many intermediate tongues.[3] In the language of the Gãs of the Gold Coast the name both of the Sky and of the Sky-god is Nyonmo.[4]

Miss Kingsley on the worship of the Sky-god in West Africa.

The general character of this Sky-god, who under many names is worshipped by many tribes of Western Africa, has been thus described by Miss Mary Kingsley: "No trace of sun-worship have I ever found. The firmament is, I believe, always the great indifferent and neglected god, the Nyan Kupon of the Tschwi, and the Anzambe, Nzam, etc., of the Bantu races. The African thinks this god has great power if he would only exert it, and when things go very badly with him, when the river rises higher than usual and sweeps away his home and his plantations; when the smallpox stalks through the land, and day and night the corpses float down the river past him, and he finds them jammed among his canoes that are tied to the beach, and choking up his fish traps; and then when at last

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford, 1923), p. 214.

[2] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 86, 90 *sq.*, 139 *sqq.*

[3] J. G. Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language* (Basel, 1881), pp. 342 *sq.*, *s.v.* Onyame; *id.*, "Negersagen von der Goldküste", *Zeitschrift für afrikanische Sprachen*, i. (1887–1888) p. 49 note [2]. Compare (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, pp. 24 *sqq.*; *id.*, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 36 *sq.*; R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 48, 49, 86, 90 *sq.*, 94, 141, 145, 173; G. Cyril Claridge, *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa* (London, 1922), pp. 268 *sqq.*

[4] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 35.

the death-wail over its victims goes up night and day from his own village, he will rise up and call upon this great god in the terror maddened by despair, that he may hear and restrain the workings of these lesser devils."[1]

A. B. Ellis on the West African worship of the Sky-god.

"The general bias of the negro mind", says Sir A. B. Ellis, "has been in favour of selecting the firmament for the chief Nature-god, instead of the Sun, Moon, or Earth; and in this respect the natives resemble the Aryan Hindus, Greeks, and Romans, with whom Dyaus pitar, Zeus, and Jupiter equally represented the firmament".[2] "The Tshis and Gãs use the words Nyankupon and Nyonmo to express sky, rain, or thunder and lightning, and the Ewes and Yorubas, the words Mawu and Olorun to express the two former. The Tshi people say *Nyankupon bom* (Nyankupon knocks), 'It is thundering'; *Nyankupon aba* (Nyankupon has come), 'It is raining'; and the Gã peoples, 'Nyanmo knocks (thunders),' 'Nyanmo pours', 'Nyanmo drizzles', etc., while in just the same way the Ancient Greeks ascribed these phenomena to Zeus, who snowed, rained, hailed, gathered clouds, and thundered. Nyankupon has for epithets the following: *Amosu* (Giver of Rain); *Amovua* (Giver of Sunshine); *Tetereboensu* (Wide-spreading Creator of Water), and *Tyaduampon*, which seems to mean 'Stretched-out Roof' (*Tyo*, to draw or drag, *dua*, wood, and *pon*, flat surface)."[3]

In the Ashanti language the rainbow is called literally

[1] Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 508. Compare R. H. Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (London, 1904), p. 36, who gives as different forms of the god's name "Anyambe, Anyambie, Njambi, Nzambi, Anzam, or, in other parts, Ukuku, Suku, and so forth". And on this Sky-god in general, see R. Pettazzoni, *Dio*, i. *L' Essere Celeste nelle Credenze dei Popoli Primitivi* (Roma, 1922), pp. 234 *sqq.* Among the Ibos, an important people of Southern Nigeria, the name of the Supreme God is Čuku or Chuku; but he does not appear to be specially described as a Sky-god. See N. W. Thomas, *Anthropological Report on the Ibo-speaking Peoples of Nigeria* (London, 1913), i. 26 *sq.*; G. T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* (London, 1921), pp. 214-216. According to Mr. Basden (*op. cit.* p. 215), this god "is believed to control all things in heaven and earth, and dispenses rewards and punishments according to merit". On the other hand, Mr. Thomas tells us (*op. cit.* p. 27) that "Čuku appears to play a relatively unimportant part in the lives of the people. I have nowhere found any sacrifice to him." Suku is the name for God also in the Ovimbundu tribe of Bihe in Angola. See D. Campbell, *In the Heart of Bantuland* (London, 1922), p. 245.

[2] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 35.

[3] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 35-36 note.

Stone celts regarded by the Ashantis as the Sky-god's axes or hoes.

the Sky-god's bow,[1] and stone celts are named the Sky-god's axes (*'Nyame akuma*) or the Sky-god's hoes (*'Nyame asoso*). They are supposed to fall from the sky during thunderstorms and to bury themselves in the earth. The natives believe that, coming from the Sky-god 'Nyame, stone celts are endowed with some of the power of that great spirit. Hence they are constantly found as appurtenances of the inferior gods (*abosom*) and of charms (*suman*); hence, too, the medical virtue ascribed to them. To cure diseases they are sometimes fastened to the body of the sufferer, or they are ground down to a powder, which is given him to swallow. However, there are still alive in Ashanti old men who know that these stone celts were made by human hands, and that they were used by their ancestors not so long ago at a time when the smelting of iron was already practised.[2] When a tree is cleft by lightning, a common man will say that it has been split by the Sky-god's axe.[3]

'Nyame dwells in the sky, but concerns himself little with human affairs.

'Nyame, the Supreme Being of the Ashantis, is thought to dwell somewhat aloof in his firmament and to be too far away to concern himself directly with the affairs of man, but he has delegated some of his powers to his lieutenants, the lesser gods (*abosom*), who act as his vice-gerents on earth.[4] Yet there are beautifully designed temples of the Sky-god hidden away in remote corners of the older palaces, and these temples are served by priests. Moreover, almost every courtyard in Ashanti contains an altar of the Sky-god in the shape of a forked branch cut from a certain tree which the Ashantis call the Sky-god's tree (*'Nyame dua*). Between the branches, which are cut short, is fixed a basin or a pot; in this receptacle the offerings are placed, and in it is generally to be found a neolithic celt, one of the Sky-god's axes. These rude altars of the Sky-god are frequently represented on ancient Ashanti weights.[5] On one such weight, for example, we see a man offering a fowl at one of these altars, while two eggs are shown lying in the basin on the top of the forked pole.[6] Mashed yams are sometimes thrown on the roof of the house as an offering to the Sky-

Altars of the Sky-god in the shape of forked branches.

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 174.
[2] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 322 *sq.*
[3] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 176.
[4] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 86, 141.
[5] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 142, with the plate compare p. 51.
[6] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 312, with Fig. 125 facing p. 310.

god and to the spirits of the Earth.[1] When a drummer is about to beat a drum for the first time on a particular day, he pours some drops of wine on the drum and calls upon the gods of the Sky and the Earth and many other deities to drink.[2] In prayers the Sky-god is addressed as "He upon whom men lean and do not fall".[3] When an under-chief swore fealty to his liege lord, a sword was given him, and he turned the point of it first to the sky and then to the earth. Thereupon he bent his head, and while the great chief placed his left foot on it, the subject prayed that the gods of the Sky and the Earth might catch him, if ever he should turn traitor to his lord.[4] We have seen that in like manner the ancient Greeks swore by Sky and Earth.[5]

Oaths by the gods of Sky and Earth.

A popular myth, known from one end of Ashanti to the other, relates that 'Nyame, the Sky-god, had various sons, of whom one was a favourite, and that he sent them down to earth to receive benefits from, and to confer them upon, mankind. All these sons bore the names of what are now waters, whether rivers, lakes, or the sea. Thus it would seem that in Ashanti waters are looked upon as emanations of the Sky-god and as containing, in greater or less degree, the spirit or virtue of the divine Creator.[6] Grandmother Asiama, the traditionary foundress and first ruler of the Beretuo clan, is said to have come from the Sky-god;[7] and that great deity is reported to have sent down a python and a dove, which are the respective totems of two other Ashanti clans.[8]

Rivers, lakes, and the sea regarded as sons of the Sky-god.

One of our best authorities on the religion of these people, the late Sir A. B. Ellis, was formerly of opinion that their Sky-god, whom he calls Nana-Nyankupon, "the Lord of the Sky", was borrowed by them from the Christians and was in fact little more than Jehovah under a new name and a thin disguise.[9] But this opinion he afterwards saw reason to retract. Discussing the nature of Mawu, the Sky-god of

The Sky-god of these West African tribes is a native deity not borrowed from Europeans.

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 52.

[2] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 263 *sqq*.

[3] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 148, 165, 297.

[4] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 225 *sq*.

[5] Above, p. 42.

[6] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 145 *sq*., compare p. 54.

[7] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 111.

[8] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 48, 49.

[9] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), pp. 24 *sqq*.

the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast, he observes: "While upon the subject of this god, I may as well say that, from additional evidence I have since collected, I now think that the view I expressed concerning the origin of Nyankupon, the parallel god of the Tshi-speaking peoples,[1] was incorrect; and that instead of his being the Christian God, borrowed and thinly disguised, I now hold that he is, like Mawu, the Sky-god, or indwelling spirit of the sky; and that, also like Mawu, he has been to a certain extent confounded with Jehovah. It is worthy of remark that *nyankum* means 'rain', and *nyan-konton*, 'rainbow', while the word *nyankupon* itself is as frequently used to express sky, firmament, thunder, or rain, as it is as a proper name."[2]

R. S. Rattray on the independent evolution of the Sky-god in West Africa.

The view, that the Sky-god of the Ashantis and other Tshi-speaking peoples is a pure product of native thought, and that the resemblance which he presents to the Jehovah of the Jews and Christians is the result of the similar, but independent, working of the human mind in response to similar natural surroundings, is strongly confirmed by the latest and probably the best-informed investigator of Ashanti religion, Captain R. S. Rattray. He says: "I have already stated that I am convinced that the conception, in the Ashanti mind, of a Supreme Being has nothing whatever to do with missionary influence, nor is it to be ascribed to contact with Christians or even, I believe, with Mohammedans. . . . I believe that such a thought, so far from postulating an advanced stage in culture and what we term civilization, may well be the product of the mind of a primitive people who live face to face with nature, perhaps unclothed, sleeping under the stars, seeing great rivers dry up and yet again become rushing torrents, seeing the lightning from the heavens rending great trees and killing men and beasts, depending upon the rains for their own lives and those of their herds, observing that the very trees, and herbs, and grass can only live if they are watered from the skies.

[1] The Tshi or Twi language is spoken in the southern part of the Gold Coast, including Ashanti; in the northern part another language, the Moshi, is spoken in many districts. See A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, p. 113.

[2] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), pp. 36 *sq.*

"I can see no reason, therefore, why the idea of one great God, who is the Firmament, upon whom ultimately all life depends, should not have been the conception of a people living under the conditions of the Ashanti of old, and I can see no just cause for attributing what we have come to regard as one of the noblest conceptions of man's mind, to dwellers in, and builders of, cities, and to writers and readers of parchments and books.

"In a sense, therefore, it is true that this great Supreme Being, the conception of whom has been innate in the minds of the Ashanti, is the Jehovah of the Israelites. It was He who of old left His own dwelling above the vaulted sky, and entered the tent of dyed skins, where was His earthly abode and His shrine, when He came down to protect the children of Israel in their march to the Promised Land." [1]

'Nyame identified with Allah.

It is natural that the Ashantis should notice and acknowledge the resemblance of their Sky-god to the Supreme Being of Christians and Moslems. Captain Rattray was told by a native that "the Allah of the Mohammedan was just the same as the 'Nyame of the Ashanti".[2]

Yet the Ashantis prefer polytheism to monotheism.

But when, on the strength of this resemblance of 'Nyame to Jehovah, Captain Rattray asked an old priest why he did not put all his trust in the one great God and neglect the lesser deities, the Ashanti was by no means prepared to renounce polytheism in favour of monotheism, and he rendered a reason for the faith that was in him. He said: "We in Ashanti dare not worship the Sky-god alone, or the Earth-goddess alone, or any one spirit. We have to protect ourselves against, and use when we can, the spirits of all things in the Sky and upon Earth. You go to the forest, see some wild animal, fire at it, and find you have killed a man. You dismiss your servant, but later find you miss him. You take your cutlass to hack at what you think is a branch, and find you have cut your own arm. There are people who can transform themselves into leopards; 'the grass-land people' are especially good at turning into hyenas.

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 140 *sq.* Captain Rattray severely rebukes his superior officer, Colonel Sir A. B. Ellis (pp. 139 *sq.*), for his former view of the Christian origin of 'Nyame (Nyankupon), without noticing that the gallant and learned colonel had afterwards explicitly recanted his heresy.

[2] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 164 note [1].

There are witches who can make you wither and die. There are trees which fall upon and kill you. There are rivers which drown you. If I see four or five Europeans, I do not make much of one alone, and ignore the rest, lest they too may have power and hate me."[1]

Among all the spirits worshipped by the Ashantis the most important are the ancestral spirits. They are the real land-owners; the living are only their tenants at will.

Among the numerous spirits whom the Ashanti is thus obliged to recognize and, as far as possible, to conciliate, the most important for his practical welfare appear to be the spirits of his own dead ancestors. On this subject I will again quote the weighty words of Captain Rattray. He writes: "It is not, however, the Sky and the Earth deities who in Ashanti are held to be the prime factors in shaping and influencing the actions and destinies of mankind. These great unseen powers are generally too remote or perhaps too mighty to be concerned very intimately with the individual clan, much less with the individual member of that clan, and the predominant influences in the Ashanti religion are neither 'Saturday Sky-god' nor 'Thursday Earth-goddess', nor even the hundreds of gods (*abosom*), with which it is true the land is filled, but are the *samanfo*, the spirits of the departed forebears of the clan. They are the real landowners, who, though long departed, still continue to take a lively interest in the land from which they had their origin or which they once owned. The Ashanti land laws of to-day appear but the logical outcome of a belief which, in the not very remote past, considered the living landowners as but holding as it were tenancies at will from the dead, and as being the trustees of the latter."[2]

Similarity of Ashanti land laws to the English law of Real Property. This similarity is not due to borrowing, but to independent evolution.

"The student of the English law of Real Property who comes to examine the Ashanti law relating to that subject, will at first be astonished to find that a system, which he had been taught to believe was peculiar to his own country, had an almost exact replica in West Africa among the Ashanti. Topham, one of our authorities on the law of Real Property, writes, 'The law relating to land is the most difficult branch of English law, partly because it is peculiar to England and differs widely from any other system, and partly because it is founded in ancient rules and formalities invented to suit

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 150. [2] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 216.

a society in which writing was almost unknown, and land was by far the most important form of wealth'. The student who argues that the similarity in our own ancient feudal land laws to the system evolved in Ashanti was due to any culture contact or to European influences is, I believe, arguing on a faulty premiss. The human mind and human intelligence, even among peoples so widely separated in culture as the Ashanti and the English of the eleventh century, seem often to have reacted in a like manner to a similar stimulus, and the Ashanti, under certain conditions not unlike those existing at the time of the Norman conquest, seem to have evolved an almost exactly similar land code. This is not a matter of surprise when we know that our own land laws, like theirs, were 'invented to suit a state of society in which writing was almost unknown and land was by far the most important form of wealth'." [1]

What Captain Rattray here judiciously observes as to the independent origin of the similar land laws of Ashanti and England applies, with the necessary modifications, to the similarities in the worship of the Sky-god which we find among so many races of men separated from each other by long distances in space and long ages in time. These similarities, too, at least the greater part of them, are not to be explained by a theory of borrowing, by an hypothesis that the worship of the Sky-god was invented once for all in a single place by a single people, who thereafter passed on the invention to other tribes and nations, till, in ever-widening circles, it had spread almost to the ends of the earth. With far greater probability such resemblances may be deduced from the similarity, first of the human mind in all latitudes, and next of the blue vault of heaven which, lit up by sun, moon, and stars, everywhere looks down in serene majesty on all the races of man.

So the similarities in the worship of the Sky-god in many different races are the products of independent evolution.

Like many other African tribes, the Tshi-speaking people of the Gold Coast tell stories which profess to explain human mortality by the negligence or perversity of a messenger whom the Sky-god had sent to men with the glad tidings that death would not be for them the end of all things. One form of the story runs thus. In the beginning, when sky

Story told of the Sky-god to explain human mortality: the tale of the two messengers the sheep and the goat.

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 223 *sq.*

and earth existed, but as yet there were no men on earth, there fell a great rain, and soon after it had ceased a great chain was let down from heaven to earth with seven men hanging on it. These men had been created by the Sky-god Onyankopon, and they reached the earth by means of the chain. Not long afterwards the Sky-god sent a goat from heaven to deliver the following message to the seven men: "There is something that is called Death; it will one day kill some of you; but though you die, you will not perish utterly, but you will come to me here in heaven". The goat went on his way, but when he came near the town he stopped to browse on a bush. When the Sky-god saw that the goat loitered by the way, he sent a sheep to deliver the same message. The sheep went, but did not say what God had commanded her to say; for she perverted the message and said to men, "When you once die, you perish, and have no place to go to". Afterwards the goat came and said, "God (Onyankopon) says you will die, it is true, but that will not be the end of you, for you will come to me". But the men answered, "No, goat, God (Onyankopon) did not say that to you. What the sheep first reported, by that we shall abide."[1] In another version of the story the parts of the goat and the sheep are inverted; it is the sheep that bears the good tidings and loiters by the way to browse, and it is the goat that bears the evil tidings and is the first to deliver them. The story ends with the melancholy reflection that "if only the sheep had made good speed with her message, man would have died but returned after death; but the goat made better speed with the contrary message, so man returns no more".[2]

The Sky-god Mawu the highest deity of the Ewe-speaking peoples.

The Ewe-speaking peoples are a race of pure negroes, who inhabit the Slave Coast of West Africa, including what we may call the provinces of Togo on the west and Dahomey on the east. In their religious system, the Sky-god Mawu ranks as the highest deity of the pantheon. His name is

[1] J. G. Christaller, "Negersagen von der Goldküste", *Zeitschrift für afrikanische Sprachen*, i. (Berlin, 1887–1888), pp. 51-55. I have reported this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 58 *sq.*).

[2] J. G. Christaller, *op. cit.* pp. 56-58. Compare E. Perregaux, *Chez les Achanti* (Neuchâtel, 1906), pp. 198 *sq.*; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 59 *sq.*

used as equivalent to sky or firmament; "and the god himself is no other than the indwelling spirit of the firmament, the deified canopy of the heavens".[1] The name of Mawu is known throughout the whole of the country, wherever the Ewe language is spoken, from the coast far into the interior, and is of importance in the daily life of the people. The idea of the Sky-god is not of foreign origin, a reflection of missionary teaching; it is an ancient possession of the race and is said to have formerly occupied an even higher place in the popular religion than it does at the present day. The conception seems to have been moulded directly on the sight of the celestial vault. The light which floods the sky is conceived as the oil with which the deity anoints his gigantic body; the blue colour of the sky is the veil behind which he hides his face; and the varied formations of the clouds are the robes and the ornaments which he puts on from time to time.[2] When the morning clouds are seen encircled with a rim of light and the blue sky peeps between the rifts, the natives say, "Mawu has donned his coat of many colours".[3] The proper name for the visible sky is *dzingbe*, but the visible sky is also called *Mawu gã*, "the great God". In a native assembly a man has been heard to say, "I have always looked up to the visible sky as to God. When I spoke of God, I spoke of the sky, and when I spoke of the sky, I thought of God". Another man observed, "Wherever the sky is, there is God; for the sky is God".[4]

The meaning and derivation of Mawu, the name of the Sky-god, appear to be uncertain. According to Sir A. B. Ellis, the word is derived from a root *wu*, signifying "to stretch over, to overshadow", so that *Mawu* would be literally "the canopy of heaven".[5] According to the experienced German missionary, Jakob Spieth, to whom we owe the most thorough investigation of the religion of the Ewe-speaking peoples, the natives agree in explaining the root *wu* to signify "more" or "surpassing"; so that *Mawu* should mean, "The Surpassing", "He who is and has more than

The meaning of the name Mawu.

[1] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), p. 31; J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), p. 67*.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo* (Leipzig, 1911), p. 5.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 424.

[4] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 423.

[5] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 31.

men". In fact, the natives always end their explanations of the name by saying "*Ewu nusianu*", "He surpasses everything that exists". But the missionary prudently warns us that all such interpretations rest rather on conjectures and assertions of the natives than on exact philological investigation. He himself inclines to discover the essential part of the name in the syllable *ma*, of which the natives give various inconsistent explanations; and he interprets the whole name in the sense of a being who is opposed to all wrath, revenge, and wrong. "His nature contains no *veve*, that is, nothing that causes pain or injury. The worshipper of Mawu may therefore paint himself only with white and wear only white cloth; white colour alone harmonizes with *ma*. For the same reason during the worship of Mawu he may not have anything to do with the Earth-gods or with magic."[1]

How one of Mawu's two sons cheated his brother out of his father's blessing.

But while Mawu appears to be essentially a god of the physical sky, popular fancy invests him with the form and attributes of a man.[2] He is supposed to be married to the Earth; hence he is addressed as "Husband of the Earth", and also as "Our Father".[3] According to one account he has two wives. His first wife, Kusoako, bore him a son named Mawute, who stammered; his second wife, Baka, bore him a son named Adedze, who did not stammer. One morning Adedze went to his divine father to greet him. Touched by this polite attention, his father promised to bestow on him his power, his royal insignia, and his warlike accoutrements. But Mawu's other wife, the mother of the stammerer, happened to overhear this promise, and she said to her son, "Stop stammering and speak rightly! Go to thy father, Mawu, that thou mayest get his royal insignia." Her son Mawute obeyed, and when he came to his father Mawu, and spoke to him without stammering, his father thought that he was his son Adedze, and gave him his royal insignia. But after that Mawute had thus deceived his father, Mawu's other son Adedze came to his father and said, "Father, I have come to thee to get what thou didst promise me yesterday". His father said, "Hast thou not

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, pp. 421-423.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 15; *id.*, *Die Ewe-Stamme*, p. 424.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 423.

already come and received that which I promised thee?" But Adedze answered, "Nay, I have not been with thee". Then said his father, "Therefore hath thy brother taken away the promise, and I possess nothing else". But his son Adedze earnestly entreated him, and his father, Mawu, bestowed on him power also.[1]

Why Mawu retired from earth to heaven.

The natives say that long ago the great god Mawu dwelt among men on terms of intimacy, but that through their guilt he was forced to withdraw to an infinite distance and to delegate the conduct of affairs to the inferior gods.[2] The offence which gave umbrage to the deity is variously related. According to one account, the sky was once so near the earth that men could touch it with their hands. Hence when they kindled a fire the smoke blew into the Sky-god's eyes so that they smarted, and that is why he retired so far away. Others say that after their meals people used to wipe their dirty fingers on the sky, and even thrust their porridge-pestles into the Sky-god's face. That was naturally more than he could put up with, and in dudgeon he withdrew to his present exalted position in the sky.[3] There, according to some, he dwells in a space surrounded by fire; but according to others he resides in a house which stands in a large garden planted with banana trees.[4] Thus the Sky-god, Mawu, is conceived of as distinct from the physical sky. A priest of the Earth explicitly declared, "Mawu is not the Sky (*dzingbe*), but he has his dwelling in the sky".[5]

Mawu supposed to control the rain.

In his capacity of Sky-god, Mawu sends the rain as a good gift to men.[6] Hence in time of drought the god's priest prays to the Sky, saying, "O our father and our Lord, we thank thee. But see how parched our land is! It is very dry and we must suffer hunger. Grant that to-day, even to-day, the rain may fall!"[7] But while Mawu controls the

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, pp. 25 *sq.* This story is told by the natives in the neighbourhood of Mount Agu. It presents a suspicious resemblance to the Biblical story of how Jacob, at the instigation of his mother, intercepted the paternal blessing which was designed for his elder brother Esau (Genesis xxvii.).

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stamme*, pp. 67*, 419.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 423.

[4] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 67*, compare p. 424.

[5] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 424.

[6] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, pp. 15, 25.

[7] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, pp. 72, 432.

rain, and keeps a vast store of water in the firmament, which he lets out at will, the seasons on the Slave Coast are so regular that there is rarely either drought or flood; hence the natives are seldom driven to the necessity of appealing to the Sky-god to increase or diminish the rainfall.[1] The rainbow is a sign given by Mawu. When it is seen to stand over the valley instead of over the mountain, it is a sign that Mawu is angry because of man's disobedience, and it is needful to appease him by pouring palm-wine and blood on the earth.[2] In Agu, when a rainbow appears in the sky, they say, "Kusoako (the wife of Mawu) and her husband are departing and going home".[3]

The rainbow a sign given by him.

According to Lieutenant Herold, while the Ewe-speaking negroes of Togo entertain a profound belief in Mawu as a higher divine being, they conceive of him on the analogy of a great African king who sits enthroned and lives at ease in his capital, doing nothing, while he leaves the government of the country to his chiefs. Similarly Mawu is supposed to be an all-powerful king, who created the world and is still lord of it, but has now retired from it and is far too high and mighty to trouble himself about all the sons of men. Therefore he leaves the conduct of affairs in the hands of his chiefs, who are the minor deities or fetishes. Yet is he a friend of men and so great and good that he demands no offerings from them. All would go well with the world if only Mawu kept the reins in his own hands instead of committing them to the fetishes. These represent the various forces of nature, and bear rule each in his own particular department. They stand in closer relations to man than Mawu, and can be induced either to help or to abstain from injuring him, if only he can win their favour or avert their wrath by sacrifice and offerings. But the great god Mawu, despite his omnipotence, can or will do nothing for man. Thus the belief in a great God Mawu, the Creator of the world, has fallen completely into the background, and it would not be in the interest of the fetish-priests to revive it, since such a revival would tend to lower the reputation

The native conception of Mawu as a god too high and mighty to trouble about human affairs.

[1] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 34.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 25.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 27.

and diminish the influence of the minor deities or fetishes, on whose imaginary powers for good or evil the priests themselves depend for their livelihood.[1]

Ellis on this conception of Mawu.

To the same effect Sir A. B. Ellis tells us that, "though Mawu is considered the most powerful of all the gods, sacrifice is never directly offered to him, and prayer rarely. He is in fact ignored rather than worshipped. The natives explain this by saying he is too distant to trouble about man and his affairs, and they believe that he remains in a beatific condition of perpetual repose and drowsiness, the acme of bliss, according to the notion of the indolent negro, perfectly indifferent to earthly matters. . . . To this belief may be undoubtedly attributed the absence of sacrifice to Mawu. To the native mind a god that works no evil to man, and is indifferent to his welfare, is one that it would be a work of supererogation to mollify or appease, while there are so many other gods who either work evil and have to be appeased, or are special guardians and have to be lauded."[2]

The relation of Mawu to birds.

However, Ellis hastens to qualify this alleged absence of sacrifice to Mawu by telling us that, when domestic fowls and other birds are sacrificed to the terrestrial gods, their spirits are believed to ascend to Mawu as his portion of the sacrifice, while the bodies of the birds are the share of the terrestrial deities. For birds are thought to stand in some relation to Mawu, since they soar aloft and approach his abode in the sky. A small bird, a variety of the oriole, which soars like a lark, and makes a whirring sound by striking its wing-feathers together, is sacred to Mawu.[3]

Prayers and sacrifices to Mawu.

Further, in correction of what he regards as Ellis's too absolute negation of sacrifices offered directly to Mawu, the experienced missionary Jakob Spieth tells us that it is precisely the priests of the Sky-god who offer both prayers and sacrifices. As an instance of prayers offered by these

[1] Lieutenant Herold, "Bericht betreffend religiöse Anschauungen und Gebräuche der deutschen Ewe-Neger", *Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, v. (1892) pp. 141 *sq.*, 149.

[2] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 33 *sq.* Compare H. Klose, *Togo unter deutscher Flagge* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 266 *sq.*, whose account of Mawu agrees in general with that of Ellis.

[3] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 34 *sq.*

priests he cites the supplications for rain in time of drought which we have already noticed. Besides, he informs us, the priest offers every year a piece of a yam which he has planted for the purpose, and he accompanies the sacrifice with a prayer.[1]

The worship of the great Sky-god Mawu.

The great Sky-god (*Mawu gâ*) is only worshipped by persons with whom he is believed to dwell, and who have prepared for him a seat and a special place of worship. Sometimes the seat is of a very humble sort and consists simply of a vessel set upon a three-pronged pole, thus exactly resembling the altars of the Sky-god in Ashanti.[2] In this vessel are placed certain plants, especially one called *ma*, which resembles spinach and is much used in the worship of the Sky-god. The vessel is also kept full of water the whole year. Other people, however, make an enclosure for the god, fencing it with palm-branches and planting in it various herbs and a certain sort of tree, which they call God's tree (*Mawuti*). Its lofty and slender stem, which distinguishes it from the other trees, appears to mark it out as specially suitable for the worship of the Sky-god. Beside it they also plant another palm-like tree, which they call "the lightning-tree". Under the shadow of these trees stands the sacred vessel, which differs from the sacred vessels of the Earth-gods in this that its clay has not been fired.[3] The water which it contains must be drawn by a pure and unmarried girl, and it is mixed with palm wine.[4]

The daily, weekly, and monthly observances in honour of Mawu.

The observances in honour of the great Sky-god take place daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. The daily service consists mainly in washing with water drawn from the god's vessel. This purification the worshipper undergoes immediately on rising in the morning; he accompanies it with a prayer, and until he has performed it he may not speak with any one. At the weekly and monthly services the worshipper makes a small offering of eggs, palm-wine, and meal. In presenting it he prays, saying, "O great God, who seest my thoughts, here I bring thee two partridge eggs. Have a care of my house, of my children and of my wives,

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 72*.

[2] See above, p. 100.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, pp. 435 *sq.* As to the *ma* plant, see *id.* pp. 421 *sq.*

[4] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 436.

and grant that I get cowry shells, in order that my house may evermore have peace." The weekly service falls on Saturday. When the priest rises from his mat, he washes his face with water from the god's vessel, dabs white clay on his forehead, temples, breast and arms, and puts on white clothes. Then he betakes himself to the hut dedicated to the worship of Mawu. There, sitting on a stool sprinkled with white clay, he remains till the sun goes down. This he does because on that day the god is believed to abide with him till the cool of the evening, when he takes his departure. On leaving the hut the priest hangs a white cloth over the doorway.[1]

The sacrifice of a white sheep at the annual festival in honour of Mawu.

At the annual festival the only offering is that of a sheep of a pure white fleece. The vessels out of which the sacrificer eats and drinks must be spotlessly clean; the vessel out of which he eats should be white. The guests invited to the festival must have slept apart from their wives on the preceding night. The food must be cooked and the water fetched by girls who have not yet known a man. The fire used in cooking may not be taken from a common hearth; it ought to be struck from flint and steel, but the use of European matches is now allowed. The pot is set over the fire on a tripod of three stout sticks. At the conclusion of the festival the fire is extinguished by water which has been drawn in the morning by a pure hand. This precaution is adopted lest the sacred element should be defiled. The three charred sticks are carefully preserved by the worshipper.[2] Before sacrificing the sheep, the worshipper holds the animal up thrice towards the sky and prays; he then cuts the sheep's throat with a knife, and from the spouting blood he allows some drops to fall into the god's vessel. The rest of the blood is suffered to flow across the entrance to the sacred enclosure. In entering the enclosure the worshipper must take care not to step in the blood, because the god Mawu himself is believed to set his feet in the blood when he comes out of the holy place. The sacrificer then drinks water out of the sacred vessel, washes his face and body, and so enjoys the peace of God. The flesh of the

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 436.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, pp. 436 *sq.*

victim is cooked and divided among the persons present. The time of offering the sacrifice is when the afternoon wears on to evening, and the earth grows cool after the noonday heat. The sun is regarded as the messenger who conveys the prayers of mortals to the Sky-god. Hence, while the priest turns in prayer to the house of God in the holy place, he yet looks, in the deepening shadows, towards the setting sun, which will carry his words to the great deity in the course of the ensuing night.[1]

Beliefs of the Fo concerning Mawu.

In Atakpame, an inland district of Togo, there are some isolated settlements of a tribe called Fo, who speak a Ewe language among people of an alien tongue. They have preserved the tradition of the Supreme God Mawu, and they tell some stories about him. One of the stories professes to explain the origin of death. It runs as follows. When Mawu created men, he said to them, "When anybody dies, he shall come back to earth", by which he meant that when a man died, he was to come to life again. But the spider did not like the notion and said, "That is not well". Then Mawu took a calabash, and set it on the water, and said, "As the calabash always remains on the surface of the water, so shall man also always remain on the earth". But the spider threw a stone into the water, and the stone sank, and the spider said, "Mawu ought to say that, when a man dies, he should vanish like this stone and not come back again". To this fatal proposal Mawu unhappily assented. Soon after the spider's mother died, and the spider came to Mawu, and begged him to retract his sentence of death, but Mawu refused to do so. That is why nobody returns, when once he is dead. If only Mawu had retracted his rash sentence, dead men would have come back to earth, just like the moon, which dies and returns to the sky.[2]

Story of the origin of death: Mawu and the spider.

How Mawu provides the beasts with their food: the dwarf antelope and the cat.

Again, the Fo tell a story to explain how Mawu provides the beasts of the earth with food. They say that once on a time there was a famine among the beasts and they all grew very lean, all except the dwarf antelope

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, pp. 438 *sq.*

[2] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, iii. (1908) pp. 275 *sq.*, 277.

(*Cephalolophus maxwellii*), for her mother was with Mawu in heaven, and every day her mother let down a rope, and the dwarf antelope climbed up it to its mother to browse. So the beasts said, "We will watch the dwarf antelope and learn how she gets her food". And they told the cat to watch. And the cat took up a post on a tree, and kept a sharp look-out. When the dwarf antelope saw that the other animals had gone away, she sang her song, and her mother let down the rope. Then the cat summoned the animals, and they came, grasped the rope, and proceeded to climb up it, hand over hand. But the mother, in hauling up the rope, felt the unusual weight, and said to herself, "My daughter alone is not so heavy as all that". So she whipped out a knife and cut the rope, and down fell all the animals. Where they fell, the sea came and the grass grew no more. To compensate for this loss of pasture, the kindly Mawu sent food to all the animals. Therefore they suffer from famine no more.[1]

Uwolowu, the Sky-god of the Akposos, in the interior of Togo.

In the interior of Togo, which, as we have seen, is a province of the Slave Coast, there live a number of tribes speaking languages which differ from the Ewe. But among them also we find the worship of the same great Sky-god under different names. Thus the Akposos worship him under the name of Uwolowu, which they regard as equivalent to the Mawu of the Ewe-speaking peoples, and to the Buku of the Atakpames, their neighbours on the east. The same word Uwolowu is used to designate both the firmament and its personification. This personified sky is conceived of as the Supreme Being and a good God. He created everything, including the lesser gods. He bestows on men the blessings of offspring and harvest, of rain and sunshine. He has also given them fire. He is almighty and can impart all good things. Wherever a priest has set a place apart for his worship, there is the god in a special way near to men. The place of worship is a circle of stones from three to five feet in diameter, with a flat stone in the middle, "like the cromlechs of the later stone-age in England". In cases of sickness and at the end of harvest sacrifices are

[1] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, iii. (1908) p. 279.

offered, consisting of rams, fowls, oil, meal, salt, cowry-shells, and palm-wine. The god punishes especially vampyres and persons who forswear themselves by his name. The week of the Akposos consists of five days, and the fifth day is sacred to Uwolowu. The second day is a bad day. People do not work on it, but they sacrifice to the gods, though not to Uwolowu.[1]

Men sometimes possessed by Uwolowu.

The worshippers of Uwolowu are not distinguished by any outward mark. From time to time the god takes possession of a man. The chosen vessel announces the divine inspiration by a particularly piercing shriek, then he remains dumb and quivers all over his body. In this state he betakes himself to one of the holy places of Uwolowu, where the priest gives him water mixed with white clay to drink and claps him on the head with the flat of his hand. The possessed man thus recovers the use of his tongue, but for that day he may not carry anything on his head; it would infallibly fall. On special occasions, such as sickness, drought, or war, an Akposo will go on pilgrimage to Adele, there to consult Buku or Uwolowu, as he calls the deity, and to offer sacrifice.[2]

Myths about Uwolowu. His two wives, the frog and the kingfisher.

Various myths are told of Uwolowu. Thus it is said that he had two wives; one of them was a frog, and the other was a bird called *itanco*, perhaps the kingfisher. Now Uwolowu loved his frog wife more than his kingfisher wife, and he gave all sorts of pretty things to her, but none to the kingfisher. Well, one day he said he would put their love to the test, and with that view he gave each of them seven pots and made believe to be dead, and his widows were to weep for his decease and let their tears fall into the pots. The frog began and wept like anything, but as fast as her tears fell they were licked up by ants. Then the kingfisher wept so copiously that her tears filled the seven pots. After that the frog tried again, but still the ants licked up her tears, so that little enough trickled into the pots. Thereupon God stood up and said, "She whom I did not love has filled seven pots with the tears which she wept

[1] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) p. 201.

[2] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) p. 202.

for me, and she whom I loved has wept very little". With these pathetic words the deity lunged out with his foot and kicked the frog into the slime and ooze of a river-bank, where she has wallowed ever since. But as for the king-fisher, Uwolowu set her free to roam joyously for ever in the azure deep of air.[1]

Myth of the origin of death: Uwolowu, the dog, and the frog.

Another myth is told of Uwolowu to explain the origin of death. They say that once upon a time men sent a dog with a message to the deity to say that, when they died, they would like to come to life again. So off the dog trotted to deliver the message. But on the way he felt hungry and turned into a house, where a man was boiling magic herbs. So the dog sat down and thought to himself, "He is cooking food". Meantime the frog had set off to tell Uwolowu that, when men died, they would rather not come to life again. Nobody had asked him to take that message; it was a piece of pure officiousness and impertinence on his part. However, away he tore. The dog, who still sat hopefully watching the hell-broth brewing, saw him go tearing by, but thought he to himself, "When I have had a snack, I'll soon catch froggy up". However, froggy came in first and said to the deity, "When men die, they would rather not come to life again". After that, up comes the dog, and says he, "When men die, they would like to come to life again". The deity was naturally puzzled, and said to the dog, "I really do not understand these two messages. As I heard the frog's message first, I will comply with it. I will not do what you said." That is the reason why men die and do not come to life again. If the frog had only minded his own business instead of meddling with other people's, the dead would all have risen from the dead down to this blessed day. But frogs come to life again when it thunders at the beginning of the rainy season, after they have been dead all the dry season while the Harmattan wind was blowing. Then, while the rain drips and the thunder peals, you may hear them quacking in the marshes.[2] Thus we see that the frog had his own private ends to serve in distorting the message.

[1] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) p. 204.

[2] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) p. 203. I have cited this myth elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 62).

He gained for himself the immortality of which he robbed mankind.

Myth of the origin of sun and moon: Uwolowu and the grub.

These people also tell a story of Uwolowu to explain the origin of the sun and moon. One day, while as yet there was neither sun nor moon in the sky, a grub came to Uwolowu and said, "What must be done to the clouds to make them bright?" And Uwolowu said to the grub, "Go to the smith and fetch the thing which he would set in the clouds". So away went the grub, and much he pondered what he should do, for he had not the glimmering of a notion what the thing was that he had to fetch. So the grub went to all the birds and begged a feather from every one of them; and when he had rigged himself out in these borrowed plumes, he flew back to Uwolowu and asked him, "Where's the grub?" And Uwolowu, not recognizing him in his disguise, answered, "Because the sky was empty, I sent him to fetch the thing to set in the sky". But the artful grub asked again, "What was he to fetch?" Uwolowu answered, "I sent him to the smith to say that he was to forge the sun and moon, and when they glowed and threw out sparks, which are the stars, he was to put them all in his bag and bring them to me". When the grub heard that, he flew away, put off his disguise, and gave back the feathers to the birds. Then he delivered the message to the smith. So the smith gave him the sun, moon, and stars, and the grub brought the whole bag of tricks to Uwolowu. And Uwolowu asked the grub, "Who taught you all that?" and the grub answered, "It was an idea of my own". And Uwolowu said to the grub, "Put the sun in its place," and the grub did so. And at evening Uwolowu said to the grub, "Put the moon and the stars in their places likewise". And the grub did so, and the moon and the stars shone in the sky. That, you may take my word for it, is the true origin of the sun, moon, and stars.[1]

The Yoruba-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast.

The eastern half of the Slave Coast is inhabited by peoples speaking the Yoruba language. Their territory is bounded on the west by Dahomey, on the east by Benin,

[1] Fr. Müller, "Die Religionen Togos in Einzeldarstellungen", *Anthropos*, ii. (1907) p. 208.

and on the south by the sea. On the north they are pent in by Mohammedan tribes, which in modern times have invaded and conquered some of Yoruba-land. The Yorubas were originally an inland people, and it was only about the beginning of the nineteenth century that, under the pressure of stronger tribes from the north, they moved southward and occupied the coast.[1] They believe in a Sky-god named Olorun, who corresponds to the 'Nyame of the Tshi- or Twi-speaking peoples, and to the Mawu of the Ewe-speaking peoples. He is the deified firmament, the personified sky. His name Olorun signifies "Owner of the Sky", from *oni*, "possessor", and *orun*, "sky".[2] Like many other African Sky-gods, Olorun is thought to be too far off, or too indifferent, to interfere in the affairs of this sublunary world. The Yorubas are of opinion that after having, so to say, roughed out the world, Olorun entrusted the task of completing and governing it to a deputy-deity named Obatala, while he himself retired from the business and became a sleeping partner in the divine firm. Accordingly, he now enjoys a life of complete idleness and repose, a blissful condition between slumber and dozing, like that of a negro king in the sultry climate of Guinea. Since he is too indolent or listless to exercise any control over earthly affairs, man on his side wastes no time in vain efforts to propitiate him, but reserves his worship and his offerings for more active and enterprising deities or demons, who are apt to take only too great an interest in the business and fortunes of mankind. Hence there are no images, no temples, no symbols of Olorun; no priests are dedicated to his service; and it is only in times of calamity or affliction, when the other gods have turned a deaf ear to his supplications, that a Yoruba will, perhaps, as a last resource, invoke the help or appeal to the compassion of the Sky-god Olorun. But such occasions are rare. As a rule the god receives no worship and is importuned by no prayers. Nevertheless, when a native, for example, conceives himself to be the victim of injustice, he may instinctively appeal to Olorun to

Their belief in a Sky-god called Olorun, who is supposed not to concern himself with human affairs and consequently is not generally worshipped

[1] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), pp. 1 *sq.*

[2] (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 35 *sq.*; Père Baudin, "Le Fétichisme ou la Religion des Nègres de la Guinée", *Les Missions Catholiques*, No. 776, 18 avril 1884, p. 191.

attest his innocence, saying, "Olorun sees me", or "Olorun knows that I speak the truth", or "O Olorun, save me!" They also swear by Olorun, often using the simple words, "Olorun! Olorun!" while at the same time they lift their hands towards the sky. The name of Olorun is also frequently heard in salutations at morning and evening. Thus in the morning a man will say to a friend, "Have you risen well?" and the other will answer, "Thanks be to Olorun"; and at evening a common salutation or prayer is, "May Olorun protect us all!" (*K'Olorun k'o so gbogbo wo!*).[1]

The Sky-god Olorun recognized by the Yorubas of Northern Nigeria.

The Yoruba-speaking people are not confined to the Slave Coast. A large body of them, numbering more than half a million, is to be found to the west of the Niger in the northern provinces of Nigeria,[2] inhabiting a country which may have been the home of their race before the bulk of the nation was driven southward to the sea. Here, however, the original negro type has been modified by an Hamitic, or at any rate non-negro element, which manifests itself in the slender build of the body.[3] But though Islam is now the dominant religion of Northern Nigeria, being embraced by about two-thirds of the population,[4] many of these Yorubas retain their faith in a remote Sky-god named Olorun, who has been called the Zeus of the Yoruba pantheon. They think that Olorun created Obatala or Oshala, who fashions human children in the mother's womb and is wedded to Odudua. Of this divine pair were born Aganju, lord of the soil, and Yemaja, the goddess of water. Aganju married his sister Yemaja, and they begat Orungan, the god of the upper air. But the lustful Orungan ravished his mother Yemaja, and from this incestuous union a whole brood of gods was born at a single birth, including the Sun-god Orun; the Moon-god Oshu; Shango, lord of lightning; Dada, god of vegetation; Orisha Oko, god of agriculture; Oshosi, god of hunting; Ogun, god of iron workers

[1] Père Baudin, "Le Fétichisme ou la Religion des Nègres de la Guinée", *Les Missions Catholiques*, No. 776, 18 avril 1884, p. 191; (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 36 *sq.* Compare P. Bouche, *La Côte des Esclaves et le Dahomey* (Paris, 1885), pp. 106-108.

[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria* (Oxford University Press, 1925), i. 24.

[3] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 29.

[4] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 1 *sq.*

and of war; and Shankpana, god of smallpox. In giving birth to these numerous divinities Yemaja's body burst, and where she fell the sacred town of Ife arose. Hence to this day every Yoruba-speaking tribe endeavours to trace its descent from the holy town of Ife.[1]

The Hausas of Northern Nigeria a people formed by the amalgamation of various races.

But the Yoruba-speaking tribes form but a small part of the population of Northern Nigeria, a country five times the size of England.[2] The fertile provinces in the northern part of this great territory border on the vast sandy desert of the Sahara, and being divided from it by no natural barrier have offered for unnumbered ages a tempting bait to horde after horde of warlike invaders from the north and east, who, sweeping over the country in wave after wave, and blending to a certain extent with the aborigines, have produced a heterogeneity of cultures and languages, as well as of racial type, which almost defies analysis. Those tribes which were able to maintain themselves in the open fertile plains of the north have in large measure amalgamated and evolved, from the most diverse elements, a comparatively homogeneous nation and language, the Hausa nation and the Hausa tongue.[3] They now form the most widely distributed people of the country, which they may be said to dominate socially and economically.[4]

The more backward tribes retain their primitive ideas and customs in the fastnesses of the hills.

The weaker and more backward tribes were driven by the tide of invasion to seek refuge in the hills, where they formed groups of polyglot peoples, exhibiting almost unparalleled diversities in culture and social organization. Safe in their highlands from the stream of foreign intrusion, which broke at the foot of their mountains, they have kept to modern times all their primitive ideas and customs, including cannibalism, head hunting, and the worship of ancestors; while the hard conditions of life on the hills and the struggle for land have tended to the maintenance of perpetual warfare between tribe and tribe and even between village and village.[5]

Thus the population of the northern provinces of

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 28 *sq.*
[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 4.
[3] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 19, 27 *sq.*
[4] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 23.
[5] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 19 *sq.*

These primitive pagan tribes believe in a Supreme God who dwells in the sky.

Nigeria is extremely mixed in blood and diverse in culture. The negro element is everywhere predominant, but it has been modified through fusion with a Mediterranean or Hamitic element represented by the Fulani, and with a Semitic element, represented by the Arabs.[1] In the principal tribes, including the Hausa, the Fulani, the Nupe, and the Yoruba, the majority of the people are comparatively civilized and profess the Mohammedan religion; but most of the lesser tribes, of which there are said to be over two hundred and fifty, retain their old pagan religion.[2] Nevertheless all these pagan tribes, however addicted to their primitive forms of heathendom, believe in the existence of a Supreme Ruler of the World, though they frankly admit that they know little or nothing of his divine attributes. Many of them conceive of the Supreme Being as a god who dwells in the sky, too far away for man to approach him directly, but with whom, nevertheless, the souls of dead ancestors, despite their attachment to earth, are in some mysterious fashion associated.[3]

In some tribes the Supreme God is called Achidong or Pwa; by other tribes he is associated or identified with the Sun.

Thus the Jukun, a tribe of the tall Nilotic or Hamitic type, who claim to be the earliest inhabitants of Bornu,[4] believe that the Supreme God, whom they call Achidong, has charge of the souls of the dead, though apparently he is not himself a glorified ghost.[5] On the other hand, among the Bachama, a pagan tribe which observes a form of totemism and recognizes the rule of female chiefs,[6] the Sky-god Pwa is also the tribal ancestor. Here, accordingly, there would seem to be a definite connexion between the idea of the Sky-god and the worship of ancestors.[7] In other tribes, again, the Supreme God is associated with, if indeed he is not actually a personification of, the Sun. He can be approached through the tutelary genius (*dodo*), who is usually the spirit of the founder either of the village or of the tribe. This guardian spirit is commonly personated by a living man, who conceals his identity under a mask

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 24-27.
[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 23.
[3] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 29.
[4] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 58, 79.
[5] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 29 *sq.*
[6] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 87, 185, 220 *sq.*
[7] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 30.

or other disguise, such as a white ram's skin thrown over his head, and who appears either periodically, as at the first gathering of the corn, or on special occasions, as when he is called upon to drive away disease or to admonish erring wives, which he does by night to the terror of the guilty or at all events accused women. But in the Berom and some other tribes people pray directly to the Sun-god, without the mediation of these mummers; in praying they hold up the palms of their hands to the great luminary.[1] The Mumbakẹ also identify their high god Nyame with the Sun,[2] but in practice they combine the worship of ancestors with the homage which they pay to the solar deity. For before they go out on their annual hunting drive they clean up the graves of their forefathers, and then lay down their weapons on the graves, beseeching the spirits of the dead to give them prowess with the weapons which their fathers had taught them how to use; and on the morning of the hunt the chief repairs with his elders to the holy grove, and there, holding up a sacred bough towards the sun, again implores the assistance of the ancestral spirits.[3] Under the name of Nan, Nen, or Nyan the Sun is the Supreme God of the Angas, Yergum, Pe, Montoil, and Sura, as well as of the Mumbake; and under the name of Yamba is recognized by many other tribes as the god who dwells in the sky. Festivals are held in honour of Nan, and every year, among the Yergum, the chief descends to the ancestral tomb, and, taking up the skulls of his forefathers, calls on each in turn to intercede with Nan, that the great God, the Giver of Rain and Ripener of Crops, may grant an abundant harvest.[4] Here again, therefore, the worship of the Supreme Being is combined with the worship of ancestors, or rather the ancestors are regarded as the proper intercessors between God and man. That Nan is indeed looked upon as the Supreme Ruler of the world is shown by the willingness of the Angas to apply to him, and to him alone, the Moslem title of Allah;

The Supreme God called Nan, Nen, Nyan, or Yamba.

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 30. As to the tutelary genius (*dodo*), see *id.* ii. 18-21.

[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 30.

[3] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 106.

[4] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 30.

but under him they acknowledge the existence of various departmental deities, such as Kim, the god of war, Gwon or Bom, the god of justice and fertility, and a host of minor divinities.[1]

Among the pagan tribes of Northern Nigeria the Supreme God is sometimes distinguished from the sun but oftener identified with him.

Among these pagan tribes of Northern Nigeria the great Sky-god is regarded as the sole agent in creation. Thus the Munshi believe that the Sky-god, whom they call Awondo, created the world and has power over all natural phenomena, and that he is the author both of good and of evil. Subordinate to him is a deity named Poro, to whom, however, rather than to the Supreme God, the Munshi pay the greater part of their devotions. They think that the Moon is Poro's daughter, and that the Sun is his son, and they believe in lesser gods of thunder, hunting, agriculture, and childbirth.[2] Thus the Munshi clearly distinguish the Sun from the Supreme God Awondo, since they believe the Supreme God to be the father of the Sun. Yet, we are informed that among the pagan tribes of this region the great Sky-god, the Supreme Being, is commonly identified with the Sun.[3] "The Sun is their Supreme Deity, the All Father, the Giver of Rain, the Ripener of Crops, but so remote and otiose that he can only be approached through the host of intermediaries already described—the spirits of ancestors who dwell near him, and those nature spirits who are demi-gods and his servants. He is too far removed to need the propitiation of sacrifice; but in times of stress his devotees vaguely hold out their hands to him in prayer. The Sun-worshippers seem to regard the Sun primarily as the Ripener of Crops."[4]

The power of making rain shared with the Sky-god by the divine king of the Jukun.

But among the northern tribes of Nigeria the power of sending rain was not a monopoly of the Sky-god; it was shared by many human beings and in particular by the king of the Jukun, who passed for divine, or at all events for a demi-god, and was believed to control the rain supply.[5]

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 30.

[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 30 *sq.*

[3] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 31.

[4] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 25. Among the Sun-worshippers the author here names the Kamuku, Berom, Galambe, Ganawuri, Mumbake, Vere, Tera, Seiyawa, Kagoma, and Jarawa, adding that some Gwari swear by the Sun.

[5] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 254 *sq.*, ii. 163.

Indeed, he retained the beneficent faculty of drawing down the water of heaven even after his death. When his corpse was carried out to burial, mounted on a horse, some millet was placed in his right hand and a gourd of water in his left. As the king rode away on his last journey to the far country, the assembled people set up a wail and besought their deceased monarch not to leave them thus bereft of corn and rain; so the horse's head was turned back again, and the dead king's hands were made to shower the corn and the water in the direction of his subjects. Many Jukun traditions ascribe to the king the power of controlling the elements. Once, for example, when the armies of Bornu and the Jukun were set in array against each other, the king of Bornu caused the grass between the hosts to be set on fire, but the king of the Jukun at once called down from heaven a shower of rain, which extinguished the conflagration.[1]

The divine king of the Jukun formerly put to death at the end of seven years, or whenever he showed signs of infirmity.

But the semi-divine character of the Jukun king reveals itself in other ways than in rainmaking. His person is charged with a spiritual force which makes mere contact with him dangerous; were he to touch the ground with his hands or bare feet, the crops would be blighted.[2] But in spite, or rather in consequence of, his divinity it used to be deemed necessary to slay him ceremonially at the end of seven years, in order that his sacred spirit should pass, unimpaired by the weakness and decay of old age, to his successor on the throne.[3] Nay, even during the seven years, if he fell ill, or so much as sneezed or coughed, or was thrown from his horse, he might be put to death. The duty of slaying him devolved on the head councillor, who is known as the Abun Achuwo. The mode of execution or of sacrifice is said to have been strangling. The entrails were removed, and the body was preserved by some process which included fumigation. It is said that his brain, kidneys, and heart were dried and eaten by his successor, together with the oil that exuded from the corpse during the process of desiccation. The custom of killing the king at the end of seven years was broken down by a Jukun sovereign,

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 62.

[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 254, ii. 62 *sq.*

[3] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, i. 255.

who enlisted a Hausa bodyguard to protect him against attack, and thereby succeeded in preserving his life and ruling over the kingdom for eleven years instead of seven. According to one tradition, he escaped death by entrapping and killing the three religious chiefs whose duty it was to slay the king.[1]

The reason for the custom of regicide.

The custom of putting the king to death, either at the end of a fixed period or whenever he showed signs of bodily or mental decay, was by no means peculiar to the Jukun; it was practised by many other tribes of this region, including the Yorubas.[2] In all cases it was probably based on a belief in the divine character of the king and in the fatal consequences which would be entailed on the people and the land by the failure of his powers through age or natural infirmity.[3]

The Edo-speaking people of Benin believe in a supreme Sky-god called Osa or Osalobula.

The Edo-speaking people of Benin, a province of Southern Nigeria, believe in a supreme deity, commonly called Osa or Osalobula, who lives in heaven. He is regarded as the creator of the world, and a myth is told in which Osanowa, or Osa of the house, has an evil counterpart, Osanoha, or Osa of the bush. Osanowa created man; Osanoha created animals. Osanoha also made a house of sickness, in which were all diseases. When men and women, on their way from heaven to earth, came near that house, rain fell and drove them for

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 60.

[2] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, ii. 59-63.

[3] The custom has been described and discussed by me in *The Golden Bough*, Part III. *The Dying God*, pp. 9 *sqq*. The latest example of this wide-spread African practice is reported from Uha, a district of Tanganyika Territory, at the north-eastern end of Lake Tanganyika. See Capt. C. H. B. Grant, "Uha in Tanganyika Territory," *The Geographical Journal*, November 1925, p. 419: "A sultan is never allowed to die, nor is he buried in the ground. When *in extremis*, he is either strangled or his neck twisted by whosoever is present at the moment. Pandemonium reigns in the village at the death, and every one flees, driving away all beasts and seizing any article they can lay hands on. The Bihi (who are said to be the children of certain slave women) alone remain, and take charge of the body, and seize all stock, etc., left behind. A white cow is killed and the skin removed entire, the horns being detached from the skin. The body is placed in this skin with the head in the head of the skin, and the arms and legs in the four legs of the skin. The skin is sewn up, and the whole is dried over fires which are fed with milk. When dry, the body is placed in a canoe-shaped wooden trough, the whole sewed up in a cow-hide, and carried to the burial-place of the sultans, and is there placed on trestles, and a hut built over it." See also below, p. 188 note [4].

shelter into it. Thus sickness came to the earth. And because the wicked Osanoha was the creator of animals, man became their enemy, and so, whenever he sees an animal, he kills it. Another explanation of the enmity between Osanowa and Osanoha is that they agreed to reckon up and compare their riches, whereupon it was found that the children of Osanoha were more numerous than the children of Osanowa; wherefore the two have been enemies ever since.[1]

Though Osa, as a rule, receives no regular sacrifices, yet he is far from being the ordinary type of otiose creator, remote from mankind and indifferent to their welfare. He figures largely in the folk-tales of the people, and his name is constantly on their lips. His usual emblem, a long pole with white cloth attached to it, is to be seen in nearly every village.[2] In some places Osa is represented by a pot. In Okpe his representative is a tree with a white cloth tied round it. Though Osa is the one persistent figure in the Edo pantheon, the natives in some places have only a vague idea of his personality. Some of them say that he looks like a cloud, which is natural enough in a Sky-god. Over a great part of the Edo country there are no images of gods.[3] At Idumowina, a village a few miles north of Benin, a goat is annually sacrificed to Osa and its blood poured on his shrine.[4]

The emblems of Osa.

Annual sacrifice of a goat to him.

The Ibibios are a tribe of negroes who inhabit Eket, a district of Southern Nigeria bounded on the south by the sea and on the east by the Cross River. In their pantheon at the present day Obumo, the Thunder-god, is usually regarded as the principal deity and the creator of all things. His home is in the sky, and, being too far off to trouble much about the petty affairs of men, he leaves these in the hands of lesser powers, reserving to himself the ordering of the great events of the year, such as the regular succession of the seasons.[5] Some people, however, distinguish Obumo, the Thunderer, from Abassi, the Supreme God, the maker of heaven and earth, and allege that Thunder and Lightning are only the messengers whom Abassi sends to kill witches,

Among the Ibibios the head of the pantheon is Obumo, the Thunder-god, or Abassi, the Supreme Being.

[1] N. W. Thomas, *Anthropological Report on the Edo-speaking Peoples of Nigeria* (London, 1910), i. 24 *sq.*

[2] N. W. Thomas, *op. cit.* i. 24.

[3] N. W. Thomas, *op. cit.* i. 25 *sq.*

[4] N. W. Thomas, *op. cit.* i. 30 *sq.*

[5] P. Amaury Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria* (London, 1923), p. 7.

to strike trees, and to give warning of the approach of rain.[1] It is said that Obumo once dwelt on earth, but that long ago he ascended to the sky; from his home in the clouds he still sends forth his messengers, who are the Rain, the Storm-wind, the Thunder-bolt, and the Fish-eagle. The Ibibios believe that at the beginning of the rainy season Obumo descends in the form of a fish-eagle, to woo his terrestrial wife Eka Abassi.[2] But according to an esoteric doctrine, revealed only to the initiated, this goddess Eka Abassi is not only the wife but the mother of Obumo and the true head of the Ibibio pantheon. Her name appears to mean "Mother of God", and she is said to be regarded as the divine Creatress, the great First Cause. She is thought to have conceived Obumo, her first-born, without the assistance of a husband.[3] In some places this great goddess is identified with Isong, the Earth.[4] But though Obumo, or Abassi Obumo, is now commonly regarded as the divine husband of Eka Abassi, some traces exist of a belief in an older god called Ete Abassi, that is, Father God, who was the original husband of Eka Abassi. At the present day, however, he has been superseded by Abassi Obumo, as the Greek Cronus was superseded by Zeus. Abassi is generally represented by a small clay pot, filled with water, in which is placed an armlet and sometimes an egg.[5]

Eka Abassi, "Mother of God", the wife of Obumo.

To Abassi Obumo, the Thunderer, human sacrifices were always offered at the annual festival of the New Yams. Bark, stripped from piassava palms, was wrapped round the victim so as to envelop him completely, and he was then tied to the trunk of a very tall tree and left there to perish. At Atebio, a town in the centre of the Ekèt District, may still be seen several trees which in former days were set apart for thus bearing human sacrifices offered to the God of Thunder.[6] Palm-trees are believed to be associated in some mysterious fashion with the Thunder-god.[7] Whenever the

Human sacrifices offered to Abassi Obumo, the Thunderer.

[1] P. A. Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 255.

[2] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 11. As to the fish-eagle, compare *id.* pp. 7, 14.

[3] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* pp. 7, 8, 11; D. Amaury Talbot (Mrs. Talbot), *Woman's Mysteries of a Primitive People, the Ibibios of Southern Nigeria* (London, etc., 1915), p. 13.

[4] P. A. Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 13.

[5] P. A. Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 13.

[6] P. A. Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 17.

[7] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 18.

rich, orange-hued clusters did not ripen, or even when the crop was small, the people were ordered to search the country-side till they found a leper whose face had been eaten away by the ravages of disease. Him they dragged to the nearest palm-grove and bound by waist and throat to the tallest tree, his arms tied round the trunk as though he were clasping it. Through both feet were driven long hooked pegs, sharply pointed, which pinned the victim to the ground. There he was doomed to stay, enduring intolerable agonies from wounds, hunger, and thirst in the full glare of a tropical sun, till death mercifully released him from his sufferings. After such a sacrifice the palms were supposed to bear fruit abundantly.[1] Why a leper was chosen for the victim, we are not told. Perhaps his pallid hue was thought to mark him out, among a black race, as a sacrifice peculiarly acceptable to a god of the sky. We have seen that among these negroes white is often the colour prescribed in the worship of the Sky-god.[2]

Priests of the Thunder-God Obumo are supposed to possess the power of calling down the lightning on the house of any man against whom they cherish a grudge.[3] In some parts of the district a curious means is taken to prevent a young child from fearing thunder and lightning. Electric fishes are caught and placed in a bowl during a storm. After they have been left there some time, the water is poured off and given to the child to drink. Thus inoculated with electricity, the child will naturally have no fear of lightning and so will enjoy the special protection of the Thunder-god. Under the shelter of his wing it is confidently anticipated that the little one will live to be rich and powerful.[4]

Priests of the Thunder-god can call down lightning.

The people of Calabar, the neighbours of the Ibibios on the east, acknowledge a creator and supreme governor of all things, whom, like the Ibibios, they name Abassi. In the yard of every house there used to be built a small circular mound on which were placed a few shallow dishes of earthenware and some old bones, which commonly included a human skull. This domestic shrine was called *isu Abassi*,

Worship of the Supreme God Abassi among the people of Calabar.

[1] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 3.
[2] Above, pp. 113, 127.
[3] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 18.
[4] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 19.

that is, "the Face or Presence of Abassi", and on a certain day of the native week, which comprises eight days, the worshippers used to approach the deity at his shrine, beseeching him, as the case might be, either to benefit themselves or to harm their neighbours, and supporting their petition by a libation of water poured into one of the vessels. This practice, however, appears to have fallen into desuetude even before the establishment of a Christian mission in Calabar, and the homage of the native pagans is now chiefly paid to the various subordinate deities known as *idems*. One of these, called Ndem Efik, is a sort of tutelary deity of the country. The man appointed to take charge of his worship bore the title of King Calabar, and in past times probably united the regal to the priestly power. As tribute he received the skins of all leopards killed in the country, and any slave who took refuge at the shrine belonged to the deity. The office, however, imposed certain restrictions on the incumbent, for example, he might not eat in the presence of anybody, and he was prohibited from engaging in traffic. On account of these and other disabilities, when the last of the titular kings died, nobody was found willing to undertake the burden of royalty, and the kingship or priesthood became extinct.[1] History presents many instances of a royal and priestly office similarly crushed under the weight of the fetters rivetted on its bearers.

Worship of a Sky-god Abassi or Osowo in the Obubura Hill District.

Among the negro tribes of the Obubura Hill District in Southern Nigeria, on the borders of Cameroons, the great god who lives in the sky is known by several names. The Efiks, who are the natives of Calabar, call him Abassi; and this name is heard in many parts of the Obubura Hill District. The Indems, one of the tribes of the district, call him Osowo. He is the greatest of all the gods. Offerings to him are deposited just outside the village, either where two or more roads meet, or by the side of a single road. They generally consist of small portions of food and drink, and are set on the ground in potsherds or calabashes, or are placed in a basket which is inserted in the fork of a pole

[1] H. Goldie, *Calabar and its Mission* (Edinburgh and London, 1890), pp. 42 *sq.* The author spells the great god's name *Abasi*. For the sake of uniformity I have adopted the form *Abassi*.

set upright in the earth. These offerings are made by, or on behalf of, sick people, who hope that Osowa himself will eat the food and heal them, or that he will give it to such of their parents or friends as live with him, and so effect the desired cure. Palm-wine and gin are offered to the deity in shells, which the natives find in the forest and use as cups. Besides these communal offering-places outside the village, there is generally in every courtyard some kind of structure at which the Supreme Deity is worshipped. Thus in a courtyard at Obubura the temple of Abassi consists merely of a bundle of bamboo poles lashed together and set upright, with stones and bones lying at its foot. The natives believe that Osowo can kill men, and also that he sends the spirit into new-born babes.[1] Thus they look on this Sky-deity as the source both of life and of death. No wonder that they revere him as the greatest of the gods.

Belief in the Sky-god Obassi Osaw and the Earth-god Obassi Nsi among the Ekoi.

Among the Ekoi, who inhabit the Oban District of Southern Nigeria on the border of Cameroons, two great deities are recognized, the Sky-god Obassi Osaw, and the Earth-god Obassi Nsi; but besides them the people believe in countless hordes of inferior spirits, who people the trees, the lakes, the rocks, and the rivers; the forest teems with these dreadful beings; its shadow lies heavy on all.[2] Questioned as to the respective characters of the Sky-god and the Earth-god, an Ekoi man, who knew no English and was a mine of folk-lore, declared that the Earth-god Obassi Nsi was kind and good, but that the Sky-god Obassi Osaw was fierce and cruel. Asked how he knew that Obassi Osaw was fierce and cruel, he replied, "Because he tries to kill us with thunder and in many other ways. Also, he is not so loving and near to us as Obassi Nsi, for he cannot receive our offerings. We sometimes throw things up into the air for him, but they always fall back again to the earth. Obassi Nsi draws them down; that shows he is more powerful." To the question how he knew that the Earth-god Obassi Nsi was good, the same man answered, "He never shows us terrifying things as Osaw does, such as

[1] Charles Partridge, *Cross River Natives* (London, 1905), pp. 281 *sq.*, compare pp. 273, 284.

[2] P. Amaury Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush* (London, 1912), p. 13.

thunder or lightning, nor the sun which blazes so hot as to frighten us sometimes, and the rain which falls so heavily at others as to make us think there will be no more sunshine. Nsi ripens our yams, cocos, plantains, etc., which we plant in the ground. When we are dead we are buried in the ground, and go to the world under the earth, to our Father Obassi Nsi."[1]

The Earth conceived as a mother.

But while the Earth is now personified as a god and a father, enough legends and fragments of ritual survive to hint, if not to prove, that formerly Earth was conceived as a goddess and a mother.[2] Indeed, the same Ekoi man who had referred to Obassi Nsi as "our Father", on further reflection said, "I think that Obassi Nsi is really our mother and Osaw our father. For whenever we make offerings we are taught to say Nta Obassi (Lord Obassi) and Ma Obassi (Lady Obassi). Now I think that the lord is Osaw, and the lady Nsi. Surely Nsi must be a woman, and our mother, for it is well known to all people that a woman has the tenderest heart."[3] Thus we should be brought back to the ancient and widespread myth of Father Sky and Mother Earth.

The Ekoi believe that Obassi Osaw and Obassi Nsi made all things between them. At first they dwelt together, but after a while they agreed to separate and have different lands. Obassi Osaw fixed his dwelling place in the sky, while Obassi Nsi came down to earth and lived there.[4]

Trees sacred to the two deities.

In the central courtyard of almost every house is set a little group, consisting usually of a growing tree, carved post, and sacrificial stone, sacred to one or other of the two great deities. By far the greater number of these are dedicated to the Earth-god Obassi Nsi, as is shown by the coco yams planted, or laid in a small heap, close by. Those of Obassi Osaw can easily be distinguished by the clump of epiphytic ferns growing on the tree trunk.[5]

Prayers to Obassi Osaw.

Before beginning the work of the day every man or woman who still clings to the ancient custom takes a calabash and washes in the central courtyard. Then, when the sun rises, they lift up their eyes to it and pray, saying,

[1] P. Amaury Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, pp. 16 *sq.*
[2] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 16.
[3] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 16.
[4] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* pp. 70 *sq.*
[5] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* pp. 21.

"Sun of morning, sun of evening, let me be free from danger to-day". This they do, because they think that the sun is charged by Obassi to receive all prayers offered on earth and to carry them to his home in heaven. Next the suppliant takes water in his right hand and holds it up on high, calling on the name of the great Sky-god, Obassi Osaw. Next he takes water in his left hand and pours it out on the ground, thus committing himself to the keeping of the great Earth-god Obassi Nsi.[1]

Story of the boy who received a wishing-box from Obassi Osaw.

The two deities enter into countless folk-tales, from which many details as to their nature and attributes may be gleaned.[2] One such story tells how a poor boy looked up at the sun, and pointing eggs towards it cried out, "Male God! Female God! will you open the gate for me?" Then the eggs slipped from his hand, and out of each flew a small chick. The chicks surrounded the boy and flew with him up to the sky, to the kingdom of Obassi Osaw. There he saw the great Sky-god in his seat of judgment and the ghosts of the dead passing before him, amongst them the ghost of the boy's own dead mother. When all had passed by, Obassi Osaw gave the boy a box out of which he could get all that he wanted only by wishing for it. With this box the boy returned to earth, but the fatal curiosity of a woman cut short all his hopes of happiness and even his life.[3]

Obassi Osaw and the cause of human mortality: story of the two messengers, the frog and the duck.

Another story tells how the Sky-god Obassi Osaw designed to cheer mankind with the prospect of immortality, and how his kindly intention was frustrated through the gross misconduct of a duck. It happened in this way. In the beginning of the world, when men died, they were carried in a sort of dream to the abode of Obassi Osaw in heaven. If the deity thought fit, he would make the dead man wake from his dream and stand up before him. Then he would restore him to life and send him back to earth. But such men on their return could never tell what had happened to them. One day Obassi Osaw thought to himself, "Men fear to die. They do not know that perhaps they may come to life again. I will tell them that such a thing may happen; then they will have less dread of death." So he stood up

[1] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 21 *sq.*
[2] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* p. 21.
[3] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* pp. 18-20.

in his house in the sky and called a frog and a duck before him. To the frog he said, "Go to earth and say to the people, When a man dies, it is the end of all things; he shall never live again". To the duck he said, "Go tell the earth folk that if a man dies he may come to life again" Then he led them a little way, and showed them the road down to earth, saying, "Take my message. Duck, you may go to the left hand. Frog, keep to the right." So frog kept on till he came to earth. He told the first people he met the message which Obassi Osaw had sent, the message that for man death is the end of all things. In due time the duck also reached earth. She came to a place where people had been making palm oil, and she began to gulp it down. So greedily did she swill it that she forgot all about the message which God had charged her to deliver, the message that the dead may come to life again. Thus men never heard the glad tidings of immortality. That is why, when once a man dies, we never see him again. It is all the fault of the duck. She forgot the message, and of course we are bound to go by the one which the frog brought us.[1]

How the first fire was stolen by a cunning boy from the house of Obassi Osaw in heaven.

Another story relates how a cunning boy stole fire from the house of Obassi Osaw in heaven and brought it down to earth. It was the first fire on earth, for though Obassi Osaw made everything, he had not given fire to mankind. Indeed, when the boy first went to heaven and asked Obassi to give him fire for the use of people on earth, the deity was very angry and sent the boy about his business. However, on a second visit to the sky, the urchin contrived to purloin a glowing brand, which he wrapped in plantain stems and leaves to smother the smoke, and then hurried down to earth with it. When Obassi Osaw looked down from his house in the sky, he saw the smoke curling up from the earth. So he sent his eldest son down to ask the boy if it was he who had stolen the fire. The boy confessed the theft, and as a punishment he was obliged to go lame for the rest of his natural life. He it was who first brought fire to earth from Obassi Osaw's home in the sky.[2]

[1] P. A. Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 229. I have reported this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 58).

[2] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.* pp. 370 *sq.*

The Ekoi are not confined to Southern Nigeria, a considerable body of them inhabits the district of Ossidinge in the neighbouring province of Cameroons, to the south of the Cross River.[1] The district is of some importance ethnologically, since the boundary between the true negroes and the Bantu tribes appears to run through it. Of the seven tribes which inhabit it, six, including the Ekoi, are Bantus, one only, the Bokis, belongs to the true negro type.[2] The natives refer all events to the Supreme God, whom they call Obashi, though in prayer they address him as Ewerok-babi. Of his form they seem to have no idea, but they assume that he dwells above the clouds and reveals himself to men in dreams. They constantly repeat, "God tells us in dreams what we are to do". On this belief rests their faith in the efficacy of simples. God is supposed to impart to every man in a dream the name and the place in the forest of the magical plant which will answer his special need. Next day the man must find the plant in the forest, fasten it to a pole, and set the pole up in front of his farm. If after that anybody steals anything from the farm, the plant possesses the power of making the thief sick even at a distance. Besides this great god Abashi the natives recognize the existence of a series of minor deities or demons, who mediate between God and man and hover invisible in the air.[3]

The Ekoi of Cameroons believe in a supreme God called Obashi.

The Fan or Fang, a large tribe in French Congo, believe in a great deity called Nzame or Nsambe, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who created or gave birth to all living things, and set in order the world as we at present see it. For a time Nsambe continued to be on intimate terms with mankind, whom he had created; he plays a great part in the myths and legends of the people. But after a while he left them and removed to a distance. The reasons which induced him to take this step are nowhere clearly stated; hence his departure has somewhat the appearance of a caprice. Be that as it may, his disappearance was so sudden and

The Fan of French Congo believe in a great deity, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, whom they call Nzame or Nsambe.

[1] A. Mansfeld, *Urwald Dokumente, vier Jahren unter den Crossflussnegern Kameruns* (Berlin, 1908), pp. 7 *sqq.* Compare P. Amaury Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush*, p. 1, "The Ekoi people are divided into two unequal parts by the boundary which separates the Cameroons from Southern Nigeria".

[2] A. Mansfeld, *op. cit.* p. 7.

[3] A. Mansfeld, *op. cit.* pp. 210 *sq.*

clandestine that one fine day men found themselves abandoned by him and destitute of the bare necessaries of life, so that they were obliged to send messengers after him to request that he would provide them with food and fire. In another version of the story Nsambe departed bag and baggage, taking all the animals with him in his train; but after a time, bethinking him of the duties he owed to his creatures, mankind, he despatched the animals to them with a message from him and a supply of fire and other necessaries. Whatever the causes of his alienation from his creatures, the Creator Nsambe has now retired into the background; he has become a purely mythical figure rather than an object of worship; the German writer who has given us the fullest account of him compares him to the head of a great commercial firm, who has retired from the active management of affairs, which he leaves to his subordinates, though he retains a general control over the business, and his name still figures on the brass plate at the door.[1]

Story of the origin of death: Nsambe, the chameleon and the lizard.

Like other African gods who have retired from business, the Nsambe of the Fans is associated with a story which professes to explain the origin of human mortality. It is said that he first sent the chameleon to men with a message that nobody would die, and that there should be no such thing as poverty or ill-luck. Afterwards apparently he changed his mind and sent a lizard with a message that all men would die. But the lizard outran the slow-paced chameleon and brought the fatal tidings of mortality to mankind before they received the glad news of immortality from the chameleon. That is the reason why men continue to die down to this day.[2] This story, which lays the blame of human mortality on the chameleon is very widespread in Africa.[3] We shall meet with it again later on.[4]

Belief of the Bafioti of Loango in a Supreme Being, called Zambi or Nsambi.

To the south of the Fan and of French Congo, the same ubiquitous deity meets us again in Loango, where, to all appearance, he has been long at home. The natives of Loango call themselves Bafioti, that is, the Dark People.

[1] G. Tessmann, *Die Pangwe* (Berlin, 1913), ii. 12-19. The name of the Fan tribe is given in a great variety of forms by our authorities. Mr. Tessmann adopts the form Pangwe.

[2] G. Tessmann, *Die Pangwe*, ii. 30.

[3] See *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 63 *sqq.*

[4] Below, pp. 173, 177, 221, 255-258, 672.

They belong to the great Bantu race, which stretches across Africa from sea to sea.[1] As to their religion the Abbé Proyart, who wrote a history of Loango in the second half of the eighteenth century, informs us that the natives "acknowledge a Supreme Being, who, having no origin, is himself the origin of all things. They believe he has created all that is fine, all that is good in the universe; that being by nature just, he loves justice in others, and severely punishes fraud and perjury. They call him Zambi; they take his name in testimony of the truth; and they regard perjury as one of the greatest of crimes; they even pretend that a species of malady, called *Zambi-a-n-pongou* is the punishment of it; and they say, when they see one attacked with it, 'There's a perjured man'. Besides this just and perfect God, they admit another, to whom they give quite different attributes; the first created all, the latter would destroy all; he delights in the evil which he causes among men; it is he who counsels them to injustice, perjury, thefts, poisonings, and all crimes; he is the author of accidents, losses, diseases, barrenness of land, in a word, of all the miseries which afflict humanity, and even of death itself; they call him *Zambi-a-n'bi*, God of wickedness. Here may be perceived", proceeds the pious and orthodox Abbé, "the error of the Manichaeans touching the Divinity. It appears natural enough that man who is not enlightened with the torch of revelation, considering the evils of all kinds that beset him from his entrance into the world to his departure, should study to discover the cause, and that, ignorance being one of the greatest disorders of his soul, he should be bewildered in his conjectures on matters so much above his faculties. . . . They who know only the theology of the country, persuaded that the good God will always be sufficiently favourable, think only of appeasing the God of wickedness; some, to render him propitious to them, never eat fowls or game; others eat only certain sorts of fish, fruits, or vegetables; not one among them but makes profession of abstaining all his lifetime from some sort of nourishment. The only way of

[1] *Die Loango Expedition, ausgesandt von der deutschen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung Äquatorial-Afrikas, 1873–1876*, Dritte Abteilung, Zweite Hälfte, von Dr. E. Pechuel-Loesche (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 1 *sq.*

making him offerings is to let die, under their feet, some shrubs laden with their fruits; the banana tree is that which they consecrate to him in preference."[1]

Powers ascribed to Nsambi.

About a hundred years after Proyart wrote his history of Loango, the country was carefully examined by a German scientific expedition, and the members of it found a belief in the same great god still current among the natives. They tell us that Nsambi, as they spell the name of the deity, is believed to have power over everything. He, or his vital and creative energy, is in the earth, the water, the air, the plants, animals, and men. When he wills, he knows the thoughts as well as the deeds of men; he sees them, whether they sleep or wake, under the open sky, in their huts, by day and by night. He sends the rain that the plantations may flourish and yield their fruits to mankind, when men are good. He sends drought, famine, pestilence, and other evils, that men may suffer, sicken and die, when they are wicked.[2]

How Nsambi created men, and being offended at them retired from earth to heaven.

Whether Nsambi created everything that exists, the natives do not know for certain. Yet they conceive it possible, indeed some of them stoutly assert that he created land and water, plants and animals, and likewise sun, moon, and stars. The story of the creation of mankind is variously told. According to one account, Nsambi moulded men out of potter's earth mixed with the blood of animals.[3] But men in the early ages of the world were no better than they are nowadays. They wrangled and fought, and did evil. Nsambi was grieved at that, and forbade them many things. But bad men did not heed his prohibitions. So, to punish them, Nsambi sent drought, famine, and pestilence, and many of the sinners died. Many of the righteous also perished, and justly enough, because they had not kept an eye on the wicked. So mankind at last, driven to despair, called on Nsambi for help. He came, but they all shrieked at him laying the blame

[1] Proyart, "History of Loango, Kakongo, and other kingdoms in Africa", in J. Pinkerton's *General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, xvi. (London, 1814) pp. 593 *sq.* Proyart's *History* was published at Paris in 1776.

[2] *Die Loango-Expedition, ausgesandt von der deutschen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung Äquatorial-Afrikas, 1873–1876*, Dritte Abteilung, Zweite Hälfte, von Dr. E. Pechuël-Loesche (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 266 *sq.*

[3] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *op. cit.* p. 267.

on each other and overwhelming him so with their petitions that the din and clamour were deafening. At last the deity grew tired of the hubbub. He fell into a passion, and went away and never came back. At the present day, if you ask a native where is the abode of the deity, he will spread out his fingers and point upwards, at the same time stretching out his arms in all directions, thereby signifying that Nsambi dwells in heaven. But whether he resides in a house or camps at large in the celestial regions appears to be a matter of uncertainty. Many people opine that he lives in the style of a wealthy gentleman with plenty of servants to wait on him, and perhaps in possession of wives and children. But after all who knows?[1]

The Good God and the Bad God.

As in the days of the Abbé Proyart, some natives of Loango distinguish the Good God (*Nsambi-a-mbote*) from the Bad God (*Nsambi-a-mbi*), and say that the Good God does no evil to men, it is only the Bad God that harms them. Others, however, are of opinion that there is only one great god, Nsambi, who does good or evil to men according to their works. More frequently than either Nsambi-a-mbote or Nsambi-a-mbi does the name Nsambi-a-mpungu occur on the lips of the people. It seems to mean Nsambi the Mighty, *mpungu* being a descriptive epithet applied to the deity. The same word is used in the sense of an important man, the father of a large family, an effective speaker, an outstanding personality. But according to another interpretation and tradition Mpungu is the father of Nsambi, and the expression Nsambi-a-Mpungu signifies Nsambi, the son of Mpungu. Some say that Mpungu sent his son, Nsambi, down to earth to look after mankind, and to comfort the mourners. The son did good to men, and when his father Mpungu despatched Hunger to gnaw at the bellies of mortals, Nsambi caught him, so that the fruits of the earth flourished again, and people had plenty to eat. Then Mpungu sent Sickness; but Nsambi warded her off or healed the sick. At last Mpungu sent Death, who struck men down and robbed them of their breath; for he was strong like Mpungu himself.[2]

Nsambi-a-mpungu, Nsambi the Mighty.

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *op. cit.* pp. 268 *sq.*

[2] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *op. cit.* pp. 269 *sq.*

Nsambi is thought to pay little heed to human affairs; hence people are generally indifferent to him.

But in spite of some confusion and discrepancy in the accounts of Nsambi, he is generally accorded the rank of a Supreme Being, who exists invisibly everywhere and controls the forces of nature either personally or by the intervention of his representatives. Towards mankind his attitude on the whole is one of nonchalance and neglect. Yet does he sometimes interpose in human affairs with a heavy hand. Certainly nothing that concerns mankind escapes his vigilance or happens without his ordinance. On their side men do not worship him; no ceremony is performed in his honour, no sacrifice is offered to him. As a deity he appears to stand quite aloof from human life. He is too great and too far away to trouble himself much about the weal or woe of his creatures. And they repay his lack of sympathy with a corresponding indifference. But in times of great and general distress they recognize his handiwork and speak of him with a certain awe. "Nsambi is angry, he is destroying us", they cry, but they do not turn to him directly for help and pity; they look to some intermediary for an alleviation of their sufferings.[1]

Only in great emergencies do they acknowledge his power and appeal to him.

Nevertheless from time to time in dangers and great emergencies people feel their dependence on his divine power, acknowledge the working of his divine will, and commit their affairs to his divine keeping. A man who is sick and like to die, or who is anxious and troubled about the issue of some undertaking that touches him deeply, will comfort himself by saying, "It is in Nsambi's power", or "Nsambi's will be done". When a boat is swept down the rapids of a rushing river, and the helmsman is adjured to do his utmost, he will answer with an upward look or gesture and the words, "It is Nsambi's affair". When a death has taken place, the survivors may console each other with the reflection that "Nsambi has bidden him, has called him away". Women, too, in the pangs of travail cry to Nsambi to have pity on them.[2] Finally, we are told that the belief in Nsambi has not been borrowed by the natives from Christian missionaries, since it is both older and more widely diffused than missionary activity.[3]

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *op. cit.* p. 271.
[2] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *op. cit.* p. 272.
[3] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *op. cit.* p. 274.

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sky in the Valley of the Congo*

Belief of the natives of the Congo in a Supreme Being and Creator called Nzambi.

The great valley of the Congo is peopled by many tribes, the great majority of which belong to the Bantu stock. Among them there is a general belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of all things, who is eternal and incapable of doing evil, but who at the same time occupies so lofty a position that he does not busy himself with the lot of his creatures. The general name for this great deity is Nzambi, though the precise form of the name varies somewhat with the dialect of the tribe. In Nzambi the black man personifies the first and universal cause of everything which he cannot understand or explain. For the most part Nzambi is conceived as a solitary being; but in the coast region of the Lower Congo, where the beliefs of the natives have lost something of their originality and have been modified by European influence, Nzambi has been associated with a female companion or wife. Many tribes hold that Nzambi has created one or more divine beings of an inferior order, to whom he has granted very large powers, and who act as his deputies or vicars on earth. It is these deputy-deities, and not the great God himself, who keep up a certain intercourse with mortals, and in turn delegate their powers, either wholly or in part, to human beings, to animals, and even to inanimate objects, such as stones, rocks, trees, and waters. The abode of Nzambi is not defined, it is everywhere and nowhere, it is in another world which the native does not picture to himself. If you press him for an answer, he shakes his head and says that the question makes his head ache.[1]

Rev. J. H. Weeks on the belief in Nzambi among the natives of the Congo.

An experienced English missionary, the Rev. J. H. Weeks, who lived and worked for thirty years among the natives both of the Lower and the Upper Congo, tells us that "the name for a Supreme Being (*Nzambi*) is known all over the Lower Congo, and indeed, among all the tribes throughout the watershed of the Congo river; but the knowledge concerning him is very vague. He is regarded as the principal creator of the world and all living creatures;

[1] *Notes Analytiques sur les Collections Ethnographiques du Musée du Congo*, i. (Bruxelles, 1902–1906) p. 146.

and it is thought that after His work of creation He withdrew Himself, and, since then, He has taken little, if any further interest in the world and its inhabitants. He is spoken of among the natives as being strong, rich, and good —so good that He will not hurt them, hence no sacrifices are offered to Him, no prayers to Him ever pass their lips, and they never worship Him. As the Supreme One He is very remote from them, unconcerned in their welfare, and harmless, therefore they consider that there is no need for them to trouble about Him. We never found an atheist among them, but their theism is of a very hazy quality."[1]

The conception of Nzambi is of native origin.

Mr. Weeks is clearly of opinion that the conception of Nzambi as a Supreme Being is of purely native origin and not borrowed by the blacks from the whites. He says: "In each case the natives' ideas of the Supreme Being were gathered and noted long before our teaching had influenced their views or increased their knowledge concerning Him. Before we could preach our views we had to learn their language, and while learning their language we necessarily received—in the definitions of the words we were learning from them—their ideas of that great Being who created the world. We found their knowledge of Him was scarcely more than nominal, and no worship was ever paid to Him.

Various names for the Supreme Being in the valley of the Congo.

"On the Lower Congo He is called *Nzambi*, or by His fuller title *Nzambi a mpungu*; no satisfactory root word has yet been found for *Nzambi*, but for *mpungu* there are sayings and proverbs that clearly indicate its meaning as, most of all, supreme, highest, and *Nzambi a mpungu* as the Being most High or Supreme.[2]

"On the Upper Congo among the Bobangi folk the word used for the Supreme Being is *Nyambe*; among the Lulanga people, *Nzakomba*; among the Boloki, *Njambe*; among the Bopoto people it is *Libanza*, which word is also well known among the Boloki people, and was probably introduced by slaves from Bopoto. At Yakusu, near Stanley

[1] John H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive Bakongo* (London, 1914), p. 276. The author lived for fifteen years among the Boloki or Bangala of the Upper Congo, and for fifteen more years in other parts of the Congo, including nine years at San Salvador and Matadi on the Lower Congo. See J. H. Weeks, *op. cit.* pp. 9, 19.

[2] The same epithet is applied to Nsambi (Nzambi) in Loango. See above, p. 139.

Falls, the word used is *Mungu*, which is a shortened form of the Swahili word *muungu*, and this may contain the root of the Lower Congo word *mpungu*. It is interesting to note that the most common name for the Supreme Being on the Congo is also known, in one form or another, over an extensive area of Africa reaching from 6° north of the Equator away to extreme South Africa; as, for example, among the Ashanti it is *Onyame*, at Gaboon it is *Anyambie*, and two thousand miles away among the Barotse folk it is *Niambe*." [1]

Various uses of the name of God.

"During the whole thirty years of my life in various parts of the Congo I have heard the name of the Deity used in the following four ways only: Among the Lower Congo people, when they desire to emphasize a statement or vouch for the truthfulness of their words, they use the name in an oath. When in extreme trouble they cry out, 'I wish *Nzambi* had never made me!' or when in great distress, '*Nzambi*, pity me!' Also on the Lower Congo there is the phrase *lufwa lua Nzambi*—death by God, *i.e.* a natural death as distinctive from death by witchcraft; but this view of death is not so frequently heard on the Lower Congo as among the Boloki, where *awi na Njambe* = he died by God, *i.e.* there is no witchcraft about the death of the deceased, nor anything pointing to witchcraft about the accident that caused the death, is often heard. These are the only phrases which suppose that the Supreme Being has anything to do with the world. They are generally employed in the case of poor folk when they die, as no one wants the trouble and expense of engaging a witch-doctor to seek out the witch." [2]

Deaths in Africa often imputed to witchcraft; expense of detecting the witch, and consequent reluctance of poor people to institute a prosecution for witchcraft.

In explanation of this last statement it may be observed that in Africa many deaths are set down to the nefarious arts of witches and wizards, and that in all such cases it is, or rather used to be, under native rule, deemed essential to discover the guilty wretch and to put him or her to death. Thus a single natural death in the old days was apt to entail many deaths by violence; for the suspected witches were commonly obliged to submit to the poison ordeal, to which multitudes of perfectly innocent victims succumbed.

[1] J. H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals* (London, 1913), pp. 246 *sq.*

[2] J. H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals*, pp. 247 *sq.*

It is hardly too much to say that till Africa came under the sway of Europe its black population was decimated by the combined effects of the belief in witchcraft and the practice of the poison ordeal.[1] Fortunately the circumstances to which in the foregoing passage Mr. Weeks briefly alludes appear to have exercised some influence in moderating and restricting the ravages of this fatal superstition. In order to detect the supposed witch who had caused a death it was necessary to employ the agency of a professional witch-finder or witch-doctor, as he is commonly called by writers on Africa; and this man of skill, or rather arrant impostor, had naturally to be paid for his services, and his charges might often be excessive. Thus an accusation of death by witchcraft doubtless often entailed heavy expenses on the accusers, and as a rule only wealthy people could afford to prosecute the sorcerer who, in their opinion, had done their kinsman to death by his malignant enchantments. Poor people, even if they suspected foul play, would generally deem it prudent to stifle or hush up their suspicions, lest by giving vent to them they should be forced to call in the aid of a witch-finder and to satisfy his possibly exorbitant demands for bringing the imaginary culprit to justice. Hence, when death had removed one of the family circle, his or her indigent relations were under a strong temptation to attribute their bereavement to the hand of God rather than to that of a witch or wizard, since thereby they saved the expenses of a prosecution. Thus by a beautiful dispensation of Providence faith in God was powerfully reinforced by purely economic motives.

Belief of the natives of the Lower Congo in a great god Nzambi.

The belief of the natives of the Lower Congo in a great and powerful god whom they call Nzambi, or more emphatically Nzambi-a-mpungu, is described also by Mr. G. C. Claridge, who spent twelve years in intimate intercourse with the people, and his description agrees with and confirms that of Mr. Weeks. He tells us that the natives look upon Nzambi as almighty, good, just, merciful, and kind, but that nevertheless, or rather for that very reason, they do not worship him. Nothing evil is ever attributed to him. Pain,

[1] For evidence of the scourge, see *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, vol. iii. pp. 307-401, "The Poison Ordeal in Africa".

disease, and death come from evil spirits and witches, but never from God. Hence people need not fear or propitiate him, for he is never angry or offended. Consequently he may safely be left alone. He receives no mark of homage and is represented by no material object or fetish, though all the other inferior spirits are represented by fetishes which are deemed essential for the safety and even existence of mankind, who without them would be at the mercy of ghosts and demons.[1]

Source of the belief in Nzambi.

As to the source of this belief in a great and beneficent deity Mr. Claridge observes that the Congolese "arrive at the idea of the existence of a chief good spirit by the same reasoning as they come at the notion of a chief evil spirit. It is a negro chieftainship glorified."[2] Indeed, whatever is mysterious or beyond human comprehension is called by them "a thing of God" (*ma kia Nzambi*). Thus an inedible fungus, the use of which is not understood, is spoken of as "God's fungus" (*wivwa wa Nzambi*); the wild, vast, tangled jungle, with its majesty and mystery, is "God's jungle" (*titi kia Nzambi*); and man himself in common parlance is "God's man" (*muntu a Nzambi*).[3] There is a certain wasp of which the head and thorax are joined to the body by such a slender pin-like waist that the natives believe it to be impossible for the insect to bear young or lay eggs. The wasp builds itself a nest of mud in the shape of a cluster of cylindrical cells cemented together and exquisitely finished. In each cell the wasp lays an egg, and when the young are hatched the mother wasp carefully feeds them by pushing grubs, flies, and small spiders into each cell; then, when every cell is thus stored with food, she seals it up, to all appearance, hermetically. In due time the native, who has watched the process, sees issuing from the nest, not a grub, a fly, or a spider, like the insects which he saw put into it, but a wasp like the one he saw building the nest and depositing the grubs, flies, and spiders in the cells. This

The name Nzambi applied to whatever is mysterious and incomprehensible.

[1] G. Cyril Claridge, *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa* (London, 1922) pp. 268-275. According to Mr. Claridge (*op. cit.* p. 269), the epithet *mpungu* is an absolute superlative, signifying "the utmost", "supreme". It can be applied to men as well as to God, for example in the phrase *mpungu ngangu*, "an absolute fool".

[2] G. Cyril Claridge, *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa*, p. 269.

[3] G. Cyril Claridge, *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa*, pp. 270 *sq.*

apparent transformation he cannot understand; he looks upon it as an act of creation, and accordingly he calls this particular species of wasp "God's transforming or creating wasp" (*mfingi a Nzambi ankitula*).[1] With this extended use of the word God (*Nzambi*) we may compare the Homeric application of the epithets god-like and divine (*theios*, *dios*) to a great variety both of objects and of persons, including a house, a tower, a city, a land, horses, a herald, a bard, and even a swineherd.[2]

Belief of the Upotos in a god called Libanza.

The Upotos, who inhabit the banks of the Upper Congo between 20° and 22° East Longitude, believe in a god called Libanza, who lives in the east, while his sister Ntsongo lives in the west. He had a beginning but he will never die, and the same is true of all the divine beings, because, when they are on the point of death, Libanza brings them to life again. But though Libanza appears to be at present the chief god of the Upotos and to dwell in the sky, he was not the first being in existence, nor did he always inhabit heaven. Before he was born, two sisters lived in a tall tree. They had magnificent voices, and they sang so that it was a real pleasure to hear them. A long string hung from the tree to the ground, and anybody who wished to hear the sisters sing had nothing to do but to pull the string, and at once the songstresses in the tree opened their lips and chanted the most ravishing strains. Several animals, including a leopard, pulled the string, and were so enchanted with the concert that they offered marriage to the arboreal sirens, but their offers were rejected. At last a cock of resplendent plumage came along, sang "Cock-a-doodle-do!" and tugged at the string. The songstresses responded as usual from the tree, and their sweet voices made such an impression on the susceptible bosom of chanticleer, that like his predecessors he offered them his heart and hand on the spot. Whether the sisters were fascinated by his gorgeous feathers or his musical talent, it is impossible to say, but certain it is that

Mythical history of Libanza: his descent from a fine songstress.

[1] G. Cyril Claridge, *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa*, pp. 269 *sq.*

[2] Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 836, iv. 192, viii. 185, xxi. 43, 526, xxiii. 346, *Odyssey*, iii. 326, iv. 43, 313, viii. 43, xiii. 440, xiv. 48, 401, xvi. 1, 333, 452, xvii. 260, 507 *sq.*, 589. For many more examples see H. Ebeling, *Lexicon Homericum* (Lipsiae, 1880–1885) vol. i. pp. 310 *sq.*, 557 *sq.*, *svv.* δῖος and θεῖος.

they at once closed with his offer, descended the tree, and followed him to his home. There they all lived happily together until one day it began to rain. When the shower was over, the ants, as usually happens after rain, popped up out of the earth by thousands, and the cock ran about picking them up and swallowing them. This disgusting conduct was overseen by a maidservant, who officiously reported it to the ladies, the wives of chanticleer. At first they refused to credit the report, which they treated as a base calumny, the invention of a low-minded hussy who was jealous of their handsome husband. Touched to the quick by this reflection on her honour, the abigail watched the cock and soon found him at his old trick again. Not only that, she brought her incredulous mistresses to the spot while the unconscious cock was still at his meal. Seeing was believing, the horrified wives deserted their ant-eating spouse and returned to the tree, where, after a period of sorrow and silence, they resumed their popular concerts. One day it chanced that Lotenge, the future father of the Supreme Being, passed near the tree and heard the ravishing accents of the songstresses proceeding from among the boughs. He looked up, and, pleased with the aspect and voices of the singers, he made them the usual offer of marriage, which was accepted. Well, to cut a long story short, one of the sisters, whose name was Ntsombobelle, gave birth to a son, who came into the world armed cap-à-pie with spear, knife, and buckler. After that she brought forth thousands and thousands of serpents, mosquitoes, and other vermin, all of them, singularly enough, armed to the teeth with spears and bucklers. After that she bore to her husband twin sons, of whom the younger was no other than the Supreme God, Libanza himself. After his birth Libanza roamed the earth and met with many adventures. He married several wives and had at least one son. He fought many people, including his own aunt, and he gave proof of his marvellous powers in various ways, particularly by restoring not a few people to life, including some whom he had himself knocked on the head. But his quarrelsome and sanguinary disposition estranged the affections of his mother and sister. His mother abandoned him

The adventures of Libanza.

His quarrel with his sister, and his ascension to heaven.

to his evil courses, and his sister reproached him for his misdeeds in very bitter words. "You killed your elder brother," she said, "and you very nearly killed your own father, and do you imagine that I will stick at declaring that I hate you? No, I hate you and I should be glad to see you die." To this stinging reproof Libanza replied very meekly, for, to do him justice, in spite of his general truculence he kept a soft place in his heart for his sister. It happened that she had expressed a wish that he should fetch her some palm nuts, and now, by way of heaping coals of fire on her head, he climbed up the palm-tree to gather the nuts. But the higher he climbed, the higher grew the palm, till its branches were lost in the clouds, and the people who remained at the foot of the tree could see neither the nuts nor Libanza. He disappeared, because he would no longer live with his sister, who hated him and wished for his death. His sister and her people waited for him at the foot of the tree, and when they saw that he did not come back, they founded a village on the spot, which stands there to this day. Up aloft, above the clouds, Libanza discovered to his surprise the aunt whom he had fought and the brother whom he had murdered. He also engaged in a battle royal with Lombo, the King of the Air, in which he gained a complete victory and reduced the King of the Air and all his people to slavery.[1]

The abode of Libanza with the souls of the dead in the sky.

Nowadays Libanza, as we have seen, inhabits the east, while his sister Ntsongo, with whom he quarrelled, inhabits the west. The day when he will go to see her in the west, everybody will fall ill, and many people will die. The day will come when the sky will collapse and flatten us all out, blacks and whites alike. The thing would probably have happened long ago, if it had not been for the intercession of the souls of the dead (*molimons*), who have begged and prayed Libanza not to let the sky fall, and up till now he has lent an ear to their prayer; but how long he will do so is more than anybody knows. The moon is a huge boat, which sails across the whole earth picking up the souls of the dead and conveying them to Libanza. The stars are

[1] M. Lindeman, *Les Upotos* (Bruxelles, 1906), pp. 23-40. I have greatly abridged the story of Libanza.

the fires lit by the souls of the dead, who sleep by day. That is proof positive that Libanza lives in the sky; for the souls of the dead live with him, and since we see their fires every night in heaven, it follows necessarily that Libanza is there too. As for the sun, he brews palm-wine for Libanza and brings it to him for his refreshment every evening. When there is a storm, it is Libanza fighting; when there is a mist, it is Libanza smoking his pipe; and when there is a wind, it is Libanza sneezing. The beard of Libanza is like a staircase; his people climb up and down it on their way to and from him. As for his figure, Libanza, his sister, his son, and his cousin have all the likeness of human beings, but oddly enough their complexion is white instead of black, as you would naturally expect it to be.[1]

Story of the origin of death: Libanza, the Moon people and the Earth people.

Like many Sky-gods, Libanza is believed to be ultimately responsible for human mortality. They say that one day he summoned to his presence the people of the moon and the people of the earth. The people of the moon responded promptly to the summons, and were accordingly rewarded by the deity, who addressed them as follows: "Because you have come at once when I called you, you shall never die, or, to speak more correctly, you shall only be dead for two days a month, and that will be to rest; thereafter you shall return more splendid than before". But when the people of the earth at last arrived, Libanza was angry and he said to them in his wrath, "Because you did not come at once when I called you, you shall die one day and shall not return to life except to come to me".[2] That is the reason why the moon dies once a month and comes to life again after two days, and why men, when they die, do not return, but go, as everybody knows, to Libanza in heaven.

Belief of the Basonge in a Supreme Being called Efile Mokulu.

The Basonge, who inhabit a country bordering on the Sankuru River, a southern tributary of the Congo, believe in the existence of a Supreme Being whom they call Efile Mokulu. The same name is applied to the Supreme Being by all the tribes of the great Baluba family, to which the Basonge belong. To Efile Moluku they attribute the creation of the world and of everything in it. After he had created

[1] M. Lindeman, *Les Upotos*, pp. 43 *sq.*

[2] M. Lindeman, *Les Upotos*, pp. 23 *sq.*

the first man and the first woman, he observed that their progeny multiplied at an alarming rate, and he said, "These folk grow too numerous and too strong. Soon they will be so powerful that they will have the upper hand over me and will do with me what they please." So he drove them to earth and said, "The earth is too far off for them ever to find their way back. There they will abide all the days of their life, so long as they rejoice in the strength of their thews, and only their impalpable souls will come to me." Hence it is that after death the souls of men go to Efile Mokulu and are governed by him; but what they do there, is more than anybody knows. The people offer neither prayers nor sacrifices to him, but they invoke his name in taking an oath. In swearing a solemn oath a man first points to the sky, then he cracks his forefinger against the other fingers of his hand, saying, "This is the truth, this is the truth, this is the truth, and if not, may Efile Moluku kill me on the spot!" This custom of pointing to the sky before taking an oath seems to imply that Efile Moluku is believed to dwell there. Although he drove the living out of his sight, he appears to have retained a certain control over them and to consult their interest, in so far as he punishes murderers by calling their souls to himself and thus causing their death.[1]

Oath by Efile Mokulu.

§ 3. *The Worship of the Sky in Southern Africa*

Belief of the Herero in a great God Ndyambi or Ndyambi Karunga.

The Herero, a Bantu people of South-west Africa, believe in a great god whom they call Ndyambi or Ndyambi Karunga. Like other Bantu tribes, they look on him as a good God and as the Creator; but they believe that he has retired to the sky and dwells there, leaving the government of the earth in the hands of inferior deities or demons. Questioned by missionaries as to the nature of this divinity, the Herero answered, "We call him Ndyambi Karunga; he is in heaven above and not in the graves; he is a god of

[1] E. Torday et T. A. Joyce, *Notes Ethnographiques sur des Populations habitant les Bassins du Kasai et du Kwango Oriental* (Bruxelles, 1922), pp. 25 *sq.* The authors, in a footnote, record that, according to another account, *Vidia* (*sic*) *Mokulu* is in the centre of the earth, and the souls of men go to him but return after a time, and are reincarnated, with the exception of such as have been guilty of crimes. For this account they refer to Schmitz, *Les Basonge*, p. 324, a work which I have not seen.

blessing; he is angry with nobody and punishes nobody". Asked why they did not worship him and offer sacrifices to him they replied, "Why should we sacrifice to him? We do not need to fear him, for he does not do us any harm, as do the spirits of our dead (*ovakuru*)." And if anybody accuses them of having no God, they at once repel the accusation, saying, "No, no! we are not so bad as that. We have Ndyambi Karunga, we also pray to him." They do so when some unexpected piece of good luck befalls them. Then they stand stock still, look up to heaven and cry, "Ndyambi Karunga!" as if they would say "He loves us!" In general Ndyambi Karunga is looked upon as the preserver of life. When a man who has been grievously sick recovers, they say, "Ndyambi has made him whole". When a man has reached a great age, they say, "Ndyambi Karunga has preserved him"; and when such a veteran dies, the expression employed is, "Ndyambi Karunga has called him". It would seem that Karunga is believed to exercise some influence on the powers of nature. Now and then it is said that the rain comes from him, that his way is in the rolling thunder, and that it is he who hurls the flashes of lightning. In a violent thunderstorm the headman of a house or village may be heard to pray, "Karunga, do not come here, go flash into the animals of the field and into the trees". They also pray to Karunga in other dangers; when for example lions are prowling around they will pray to Karunga, saying, "See my distress and anguish, and help me. Show that thou art mighty and strong." And generally in seasons of distress and danger the Herero used to pray to Ndyambi Karunga to avert all manner of evil. Nowadays such prayers are rarely heard. Instead the people prefer to call on the spirits of their ancestors, who, however, can only be invoked at their graves. But if the graves are too far off or for any reason inaccessible, the Herero will even now call to Ndyambi for help. They look on him as a god of love and blessing: the essence of his character is benevolence: the punishment of evil is no part of his function. They believe, indeed, in such punishment, but they think that the powers which inflict it are the spirits of their dead ancestors (*ovakuru*). It is these spirits accordingly whom they fear, it is they who

Prayers to Ndyambi Karunga.

Worship of ancestral spirits.

are apt to be angry and to bring danger and misfortune on men. Hence it is that they render all their worship, not to Ndyambi Karunga, but to the souls of their departed. To win the favour of these formidable beings or to avert their wrath, the Herero offer many sacrifices, not out of love and gratitude, but out of fear and anguish. The real religion of the Herero, like that of so many other Bantu tribes, is the worship of ancestors.[1]

Belief of the Ovambo in a god Kalunga.

The Ovambo, another Bantu people of South-west Africa, believe in a god Kalunga, whose name, apart from a difference of dialect, is clearly the same with the Karunga of their neighbours the Herero. They think that Kalunga created the world and men, but their notions about him are vague, and when they are questioned on the subject, their usual answer is, "We do not know". They neither fear nor worship him; he appears to trouble himself very little about human weal or woe.[2] Yet according to another and earlier account the Ovambo regard Kalunga as a good being; like the Herero, they say, "We are kept by Kalunga; Kalunga only kills very bad people". Moreover, they hold that he gives fertility to the fields, and makes the corn and the beans to grow. However, it would seem that Kalunga is conceived rather as an Earth-god than as a Sky-god. They say that he came forth from the earth to create the ancestors of the Ovambo, the Herero, and the Bushmen. Moreover, he is reported to live in the ground near the chief village, and to appear from time to time to the people in the company of his wife Musisi. On such occasions a voice may be heard commanding a man to sacrifice a black ox. The man obeys and kills an ox on the spot where he heard the voice. Then Kalunga appears to him, strokes him with his hand over the eyes, exhorts him to follow after that which is good, and sends through him a gracious admonition to the king.[3]

But apparently Kalunga is rather an Earth-god than a Sky-god.

[1] Rev. H. Beiderbecke, "Some religious Ideas and Customs of the Ovaherero" (*South African*) *Folk-lore Journal*, ii. (Capetown, 1880) pp. 88-92; J. Irle, *Die Herero* (Gütersloh, 1906), pp. 72-74. The latter author notes (p. 75) the occurrence of the same divine name under various forms (Njambi, Njame, Onjame, Nyambi, Ngambe, Nzambi, Zambi, Ambi, Anjambi, etc.) in many widely separated tribes of the Bantu family.

[2] H. Tönjes, *Ovamboland* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 193 *sq.*

[3] Rev. H. Beiderbecke, "Some religious Ideas and Customs of the Ovaherero" (*South African*) *Folk-lore Journal*, ii. (Capetown, 1880) pp. 95 *sq.*

The Bapindji and the Badjok, two tribes in the basin of the Kasai River, a southern tributary of the Congo, recognize a Supreme Being whom they call Kalunga. The Badjok invoke him in prayer, but little can be learned concerning him, except that he is supposed to cause the death of old people who die otherwise than by violence.[1] Thus a Supreme Being called Karunga or Kalunga is recognized by several widely separated tribes of South-west Africa.

Belief of the Bapindji and Badjok in a god Kalunga.

§ 4. *The Worship of the Sky in Eastern Africa*

We have now completed our survey of the worship of the sky in Western and Southern Africa. We have seen that many tribes of that vast region believe in the existence of a Supreme God and Creator who lives in the sky, and who, in some cases at least, appears to have been originally a simple personification of the physical firmament. We have seen that, coupled with the belief in the existence of such a deity, is the notion that of old he lived upon earth on terms of intimacy with mankind, but that, as time went on, men offended him in some way, and therefore he quitted the earth and retired to the sky, where for the most part he is now supposed to concern himself very little with human affairs, which he leaves in the hands of his agents, the inferior spirits or demi-gods. The authorities who have reported these beliefs at first hand are practically unanimous in holding that they are of native African origin and not borrowed, directly or indirectly, from Christian teaching.

The belief in a Supreme God who dwells in the sky is general in West and South Africa.

Now similar beliefs concerning the Sky-god and his relations to mankind prevail among the tribes of Eastern Africa, at least from Delagoa Bay on the south to the great lakes and the head waters of the Nile on the north, and in some of these tribes the deity in question is known by the very same name, Nzambi or Nyambe, by which he is designated among many tribes of Western Africa. The resemblance, amounting in some cases almost to identity, of religious belief among tribes which together probably occupy

A similar belief concerning a great Sky-god prevails among the tribes of East Africa; in some of these tribes he bears the same name (Nzambi or Nyambe) as in West Africa.

[1] E. Torday et T. A. Joyce, *Notes Ethnographiques sur des Populations habitant les Bassins du Kasaï et du Kwango Oriental* (Bruxelles, 1922), p. 293.

a full half of the great continent of Africa, is certainly remarkable. The problem of its origin is interesting and worthy of serious consideration, but the evidence to hand is insufficient to justify any positive conclusions, and conjectures on the subject, in the present state of our knowledge, would be premature. It is more profitable to study the facts than to speculate on their origin. Accordingly we proceed to survey the beliefs concerning Sky-gods and Supreme Beings among the natives of Eastern Africa, treating of the tribes in a roughly geographical order from south to north. We begin with the Thonga, a Bantu tribe about Delagoa Bay in Portuguese East Africa. Their religious and social system has been very fully and ably described by a Swiss Protestant missionary, Monsieur Henri A. Junod, in two excellent books, from which I will draw in what follows.

Belief of the Thonga in a mysterious power called Tilo who is identified with the sky.

The Thonga believe in a dim mysterious power which they identify with the sky and call by their name for sky, which is *tilo*. In common speech the word *tilo* designates the blue sky or heaven, conceived as a place, and especially, it would seem, as a place of rest for the weary. This thought is expressed in a song:

> "*O! how I should love to plait a string, and go up to Heaven, I would go there to find rest*".[1]

Tilo is thought to regulate certain natural and human phenomena, such as rain, storms, and the birth of twins.

But Tilo is more than a place. It is a power which acts and manifests itself in various ways. Sometimes it is called a Lord (*hosi*); but generally it is regarded as something entirely impersonal. The Thonga appear to think that Heaven regulates and presides over certain great cosmic phenomena to which men are obliged, whether they will or not, to submit. It is especially events of a sudden and unexpected nature which are thus traced to the direction and influence of Heaven. In the sphere of nature they comprise rain and storms; in the sphere of human life they include convulsions and the birth of twins.[2] Thus it is Heaven that afflicts children with those terrible and

[1] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchâtel, 1912–1913), ii. 389-391; *id.*, *Les Ba-Ronga* (Neuchâtel, 1898), pp. 408-410.

[2] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 392; *id.*, *Les Ba-Ronga*, pp. 410 *sq.*

mysterious convulsions which carry them off suddenly. A child in convulsions is said to be "ill from Heaven" (*a ni Tilo*). But more than that it is Heaven that kills and makes alive. Hence, when somebody has escaped a great danger or is very prosperous, it is often said, "Heaven loved him" (*Tilo dji mou randjilé*); but if a man has been very unlucky or has died, they say, "Heaven hated him" (*Tilo dji mou yalilé*).[1] But the natives agree that in former times it was more usual than at present to ascribe death to the direct agency of Heaven, which was believed to kill by lightning; nowadays death is more commonly thought to be caused by witchcraft or by the action of the inferior gods.[2]

The cause of thunder is attributed by the Thonga either to a mythical bird or, more frequently, to Heaven. The proper expression for "it thunders" is "Heaven roars" (*Tilo dji djuma*). Native magicians fancy that they can avert a thunderstorm by blowing on an enchanted flute which contains a magical stuff supposed to be extracted from the mythical thunder-bird. When he sees a thunderstorm approaching the magician ascends a hill, blows his flute, and shouts, "You Heaven, go farther! I have nothing against you, I do not fight against you." He may add in a threatening tone, "If you are sent by my enemies against me, I will cut you open with this knife of mine".[3] In this case Heaven seems to be clearly conceived of as a personal being who can be intimidated with threats and cut to pieces with a knife.

The cause of thunder attributed to Heaven (Tilo).

Again, in the minds of the Thonga twins are closely associated with Heaven and rain. The mother of twins is called Heaven (*Tilo*), and the twins are called "Children of Heaven" (*Bana ba Tilo*).[4] The mother is said to have made Heaven (*a hambi Tilo*), to have carried Heaven (*a rwi Tilo*), to have ascended to Heaven (*a khandjiyi Tilo*). The day after twins have been born, nobody tills the ground, because they fear that, if they did so, they would prevent the rain

Twins closely associated with Heaven (Tilo) and rain: they are called, "Children of Heaven".

[1] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 392; *id.*, *Les Ba-Ronga*, pp. 410 *sq.*

[2] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 393 *sq.*, 407; *id.*, *Les Ba-Ronga*, pp. 411 *sq.*

[3] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 290-292.

[4] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 394; *id.*, *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 412.

from falling.[1] In time of drought a mother of twins must lead a procession of women, who draw water and pour it on the graves of twins in order to ensure the fall of rain. And if a twin should have been buried in dry ground, the women will dig up the body and bury it again near a river; or if they do not dig it up, they will at least go in procession and pour water on the grave. This is supposed to act on Heaven, which is killing the earth by the terrible heat of the sun. Soon after the burning wind will cease to blow, and rain will fall.[2]

Twins appealed to for help in thunderstorms.

The connexion between twins and Heaven appears in relation to thunderstorms as well as to rain. When lightning threatens a village, people say to a twin, "Help us. You are a child of Heaven, you can therefore cope with Heaven, it will hear you when you speak." So the child goes out of the hut and prays to Heaven in these words: "Go away! Do not annoy us! We are afraid. Go and roar far away!" When the thunderstorm is over, the child is thanked for its service. The mother of twins can similarly dispel a storm of thunder and lightning, for has she not ascended to Heaven?[3]

The Ba-Ila of Northern Rhodesia believe in a Supreme Being named Leza, who lives in the sky.

The Ba-Ila or Ila-speaking tribes are a Bantu people of Northern Rhodesia in the valley of the Kafue River, which is a northern tributary of the Zambesi. They believe in the existence of a Supreme Being named Leza, who made men and all things and inhabits the sky. They apply to him several epithets, such as Creator (*Chilenga* or *Namulenga*), Moulder and Constructor (*Shakapanga*), with reference to his creative power. Again he is spoken of as "The Eternal One", and in relation to men as "The Guardian", and "The Giver". One of his titles means, "Master, Owner of his things", because he is believed to be not only the master, but the owner of all, and the ordainer of the fate of all. Such titles are commonly applied to Leza; they are in no sense esoteric, but may be heard on the lips of anybody.[4]

[1] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 398 *sq.*

[2] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 296; *id.*, *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 418.

[3] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 399 *sq.*

[4] E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), ii. 197 *sqq.*

Another name given to Leza is "The Faller", with reference to the fall of rain. For of all the functions discharged by Leza, that of bestowing rain on the earth is apparently the most important. Hence in popular speech Leza is identified with the rain and with its common accompaniments, thunder and lightning. Instead of saying, "It rains", they say, "Leza falls"; instead of saying, "It lightens", they say, "Leza is fierce"; instead of saying, "It thunders", they say, "Leza is making the reverberating sound, *ndi-ndi-ndi*", or "Leza is beating his rugs". A thing struck by lightning is said to be "split by Leza". And they identify, or at least associate, Leza with other atmospheric phenomena. Thus the rainbow is called "Leza's bow"; when the weather is very hot, they say, "Leza is very hot"; when a wind is blowing they say, "Leza blows".[1] Thus to the thinking of the natives Leza is the rain, Leza is the thunder, Leza is the lightning, Leza is the heat, Leza is the wind. In short, Leza is the sky and what comes from it. His identification with the rain is particularly striking, because the people have the common Bantu word for rain (*imvula*), yet they always speak of the rain as Leza in the regular expression, "Leza falls", that is, "rain falls". Thus the analogy between this African Sky-god and the great Aryan Sky-god, of whom Zeus is the most familiar type, appears to be complete.[2]

Leza gives rain and is identified with it.

Leza associated with other natural phenomena, such as thunder, lightning, and wind.

And the natural conditions which have favoured the development of such a conception are not dissimilar in the two countries. Just as in Greece the long summer is almost rainless, so is the winter season in the tropical climate of Northern Rhodesia. There not a drop of rain falls from the end of March till the end of October. The small rivers either disappear entirely or shrivel up into shallow pools. As winter passes and the sultry month of August comes in, the sun's power waxes day by day, until in the weeks that precede the rains the heat becomes almost unbearable. Then a wonderful, an impressive change comes over the landscape. In the azure heaven the dark clouds gather, the wind suddenly veers round to the west, and a

Leza, like Zeus, thought of as the beneficent giver of rain.

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 202, 204.

[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 204, 205.

great storm bursts, sweeping over the country and heralding the approach of the rainy season. The transformation of the scene is magical. A day or two after the storm has rolled away, and the thunder has ceased to peal, the lightning to flash, and the torrential rain to fall, nature wears a new, a fresher, greener aspect. Millions of tiny seedlings are pushing their way through the late parched and thirsty soil. The people have hoed their fields and are now busy planting them. For months, it may be, food has been scarce; and the coming of the rain has been anticipated with eagerness and anxiety. Should it be delayed or the fall be scanty, the disappointment is deep, the outlook is gloomy. When a native speaks of Leza, this African Zeus, as "The Compassionate", "The Kindly One", he is thinking of an abundant rainfall with all its blessed consequences for mankind.[1]

Leza conceived as a moral being, a lawgiver.

These last epithets imply that Leza is not a simple personification of natural forces, but a moral being, a personal god. He stands in some relationship to men; he is their god, not merely a Sky-god; he is believed to have established many customs, and to punish any breach of them; certain laws or regulations are called, "God's prohibitions".[2] People swear by Leza and invoke him as a witness to the truth of a solemn asseveration, as for example, "Before God (*Leza*) I did not steal".[3] In short, the Ba-Ila have risen to the conception of a great and powerful being, who is closely related to the phenomena of the sky, but who at the same time is the maker of all things and the guardian of men. Yet they are far from conceiving of Leza as a purely benevolent being. He is indeed over all; as the canopy of the sky he "covers us", to adopt their expression, but this is not altogether a comfort. For the most part the natives regard him as an all-powerful Fate, to whom they trace much of the evil and sorrow of life. A man who is bereft of his children is spoken of as "one upon whom Leza has looked", as if there was death in the mere look of the Sky-god.[4]

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 205.
[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* i. 345, ii. 206, 207, 211.
[3] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* i. 355.
[4] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 207.

But whatever his character, Leza is entirely distinct from the worshipful ghosts (*mizhimo*), who once were living men, and who now are revered as the divinities of their descendants. Nobody suggests that Leza was ever a man, nor is he ever spoken of as a worshipful ghost. He stands in a class by himself. It is true that legends assign to him a wife and a family, but that does not imply his original humanity. The ancestral ghosts (*mizhimo*) are near to men; they are of the same nature, they know human life from the inside, they understand the wants of men, for they have been men themselves. But it is not so with Leza; he is far off and takes little or no cognizance of the affairs of individuals.[1]

Leza quite distinct from the worshipful ghosts.

Hence there is a difference between the worship of Leza and the worship of the ancestral ghosts. While it is necessary to invoke the help of the ghosts and to propitiate them with offerings, many tribes who acknowledge the existence of Leza do not pray to him at all; they think him too far away, too indolent to heed the petty affairs of mankind. But the Ba-Ila do not adopt this view of the purely apathetic and nonchalant character of Leza. They seek to come into relationship with him. They look upon the ancestral ghosts as mediators between Leza and themselves, but on occasion they address him directly. They say that "his ears are long", meaning that he can hear even words whispered in secret. But he has not, like the great ghosts, any mouthpiece or prophet who periodically summons the people to sacrifice to him. Generally speaking, it is only on occasions of special need, when the help of lesser beings has proved of no avail, that the natives fall back on Leza as their last hope.[2]

The worship of Leza distinct from the worship of ancestral ghosts.

As might be expected in the case of a god of the sky and the rain, it is especially in seasons of drought that the help of Leza is earnestly besought. Then the people chant invocations to him, addressing him by his laudatory names. One such refrain runs thus:

Prayers to Leza for rain.

"*Come to us with a continued rain, O Leza, fall!*"

These prayers for rain are put up by the people in one or more huts specially built for the purpose. But as the Ba-Ila,

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 207 *sq.*

[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 208.

like many other people, distrust the unassisted efficacy of prayer, they have recourse to magic to reinforce their supplications, and to extort rain from the sky. Accordingly the services of a rain-maker are called in, and he performs a ceremony with water and smoke, which, by imitating clouds and rain, is supposed, on the principles of homoeopathic magic, to produce or to assist in producing the desired result.[1] This combination of magic and religion is characteristic of mankind in all ages and in all countries; the theoretical opposition of magic and religion presents no obstacle to their simultaneous application in practice.

Prayers of hunters to Leza for success in the chase.

Again, when a party of hunters have been out in the forest for many days and have had no luck, they build a shed, and if there is a diviner among them, they inquire of him what divinity it is that keeps them from killing game. If the diviner discovers that it is Leza himself who is to blame, he says to them, "Let us go out of the shed and sweep a clear space outside". They do so, and then with all their things they assemble at that clear space. The eldest man takes his place in the middle, and with the others sitting in a ring around him, he prays, saying, "O Eternal One, if it be Thou that keepest us from killing animals, why is it? We pray Thee, let us kill to-day before the set of sun." When he has finished praying, all the rest fall to the ground and cry, "O Chief, to-day let us kill". Then they break up and go to the shed to rest a while. Late in the afternoon they separate and hunt. If one of them kills an animal, he calls his fellows, and they clap their hands. One cuts off bits of meat from the quarry and makes an offering, throwing a piece in the air and saying, "I thank Thee for the meat which Thou givest me. To-day Thou hast stood by me." They clap their hands. Then they take the meat to the space cleared for Leza. The oldest man arises, cuts off bits of meat and makes an offering, saying, "Chief, here is some of the meat Thou has given us. We are very grateful." Then he throws the morsels of meat into the air, and offers again between the horns of the beast. Lastly they utter a shrill greeting and divide the meat. They say, "Who gave us

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 208 *sq.*

the meat? It was Leza who gave it to us, not a divinity," that is, it was not given by one of the ancestral ghosts (*mizhimo*), who are the ordinary divinities of the people.[1]

Prayers to Leza to heal the sick.

Again, in sickness, when prayers to the ancestral ghosts have proved unavailing, people will pray directly to Leza himself. In that case the head of the household fills a vessel with water and meal, pours some of the liquid on the ground at the right side of the threshold, and prays thus: "Leza, I pray Thee. If it be Thou who hast made our brother sick, leave him alone, that Thy slave may go about by himself. Was it not Thou who createdst him on the earth and said he should walk and trust Thee? Leave Thy child, that he may trust thee, Eternal One! We pray to Thee—Thou art the great Chief!" He then fills his mouth with water and squirts some out as an offering.[2]

Prayers of travellers to Leza.

Further, when a man is travelling and arrives at a river, he sometimes takes the opportunity of offering a sacrifice to Leza. Filling his mouth with water, he squirts some of it on the ground and says this, or something like it: "It is Thou who leadest me. Now may I return with Thy prosperity from the place whither I am going, O Leza! Go on shepherding me well, my Master!"[3]

Prayers of fishermen to Leza.

Again, among the Balumbu, one of the Ila-speaking tribes, when a party of fishermen are about to set a trap in the river, the doctor or magician, whose business it is to draw fish to their doom, wades into the water, fills his mouth with magical stuff, and spits it all around. Then he prays, saying, "We are humble before thee. Make good, O Leza, and give to us crocodiles and many fish!" If a crocodile chances to be caught in the trap, where it flounders and splashes about, it is looked upon as a happy omen; for where there is a crocodile, there the natives expect to find many fish.[4]

Offerings to Leza after killing an elephant.

Again, when hunters have killed an elephant and returned to the village, the occasion is celebrated by a great feast. But before the people partake of the good cheer set out for them, they present offerings to Leza, to the ancestral spirits, and to the ghost of the deceased

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 209. As to the worshipful ghosts or divinities, see *id.* ii. 164 *sqq.*

[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 210.

[3] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 211.

[4] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* i. 161 *sq.*

elephant, who is supposed to have followed his slayers back to the village. They pray, also, to the ghost, saying, "O Spirit, have you no brothers and fathers who will come to be killed? Go and fetch them." So the ghost of the elephant goes away and rejoins the other elephants, where he acts in the capacity of spiritual guardian, not to say, of decoy, to his successor in the herd. In this excellent frame of mind the ghost is presumably confirmed by the Sky-god Leza in return for the offering which he has received from the people.[1]

Leza, his wife, and his mother-in-law: story of the Origin of Death.

Leza is not conceived of as a solitary being. According to one account, he had a wife and a family of five children, three sons and two daughters, likewise a mother and even a mother-in-law. When his mother died, he intended that she should come to life again, and he told his wife so. But she said, "No, let her die, she has eaten all my beans in the field". The argument was conclusive, and Leza acquiesced in the mortality of his mother. Five months later his mother-in-law died also, and his wife asked that she might rise from the dead. But the prospect of his mother-in-law returning to life was far from agreeable to the Supreme Being, and he repelled the idea with natural indignation. "She return!" cried he, "and my mother already rotten!" The wife said, "Do you refuse, husband?" He replied, "Yes, I do refuse, for when my mother died you refused". So his wife had to put up with it, and said, "Let her die then. This is the great death." That is how death began in the world. It is all owing to the greed of Leza's wife, who prevented the resurrection of her mother-in-law. Thereupon, Leza spoke to the people whom he had sent down to earth. He said, "I also shall die. And when my heir begins to weep, I shall descend to you and burn houses. Because here aloft my relation is dead, I shall kill you on earth." So he sent down diseases and also medicines to cure them. Said he: "I give you both: when a person is sick, doctor him. If I will that he live, he will live; if I will that he die, he will die." And having given Death to mankind, he also gave them a birth-medicine, that the race should not die out.[2] In this account of the

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* i. 168.

[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* i. 102.

Origin of Death the descent of Leza to earth and the burning of houses by him refer to the fall of rain and the destruction of dwellings by lightning. The reference to the death of Leza appears to imply that at the end of a rainy season the Sky-god dies, and that at the next rainy season his heir succeeds to his place and weeps for his predecessor in the falling rain.[1] If this inference is correct, we seem obliged to suppose that, in the opinion of some at least of the Ba-Ila, there is not a single immortal Leza, but an endless succession of them, who die and are mourned for every year, like the annual death and laments for Thammuz, Adonis, and Osiris in classical antiquity.

Perhaps an annual succession of Lezas.

Some confirmation of this conclusion is perhaps furnished by a native story which presents a curious analogy to Plutarch's famous tale of the death of the Great Pan. In the year 1906 the Ba-Ila were found to be mourning for the death of Mwana Leza, that is the Son of the Sky-god. It appeared that a certain man living somewhere in the north was one day out hunting. He had wounded a wart-hog and was following it. As he went through the open country, there appeared before him something bright and dazzling that reached from earth to heaven. The man fell to the earth like one dead. Then he heard a voice saying, "Hast thou not heard that it is forbidden to eat the flesh of wart-hog? Stop following the tracks, and tell people that if they persist in eating that flesh there will be trouble. And—stay! Why is it that you people on earth have never lamented the death of Mwana Leza who died so many years ago? Bid them weep." The man presently returned to his senses, and made his way home. He told the people what he had seen and heard, but they only laughed at him. A few days afterwards two people died very mysteriously in the village. That was enough to set them mourning. The deaths were accepted as a sign. "Leza is angry with us," said they, "come, let us weep". So they began to mourn as for a friend. Moreover, they sent messages to the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, and they in turn passed on the message to more distant villages, until in a short time the people all over the country were

The great mourning for Mwana Leza, the son of the Sky-god.

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* i. 102.

mourning for the death of the Son of the Sky-god. In some places, perhaps in most, the matter was regarded in a most serious light. The people would gather outside the village, where the elders would solemnly warn them that there must be no joking or playing. For more than a week the mourning would be carried out and the ashes from all the fires collected and placed in a heap outside the village. Then a pole would be set up by the heap in token that they had obeyed Leza's command to mourn the death of his Son. So the Sky-god would pass by them and not blast their village with lightning.[1]

The son of the Sky-god said to have been killed by men.

According to another account Mwana Leza, the Son of the Sky-god, came down long ago in the country of Lusaka; he was kind and gentle and went about telling people to cease fighting. But they killed him at Chongo. His spirit now enters into many prophetesses, who foretell events and urge people to live at peace with each other and to shed blood no more.[2]

Smith and Dale on the story of Mwana Leza.

In the opinion of Messrs. Smith and Dale, to whom we owe a most valuable account of the Ba-Ila, the story of Mwana Leza is not a mere corruption of missionary teaching. In the district where they first heard of it there were then no missionaries, nor were there any in the northern district where the hunter saw the vision, nor in the districts of Lusaka and Chongo, where the Son of the Sky-god is said to have descended from heaven and to have been put to death. Moreover, there is every sign, they tell us, that the story is much older than the advent of missionaries among the Ba-Ila. Mwana Leza is a personage who figures in the folk-tales. Messrs Smith and Dale incline to think that the story is an offshoot of Christian teaching grafted upon an old native idea, and that while the tale may possibly have come to the Ba-Ila through other tribes from the preaching of Dr. Livingstone, it has more probably filtered through from the old Jesuit missions in Portuguese East or West Africa.[3] If they are right, the old native idea on which the Christian teaching has been grafted might still be the conception of a Sky-god who dies every year and whose

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 145 *sq.*
[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 144 *sq.*
[3] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 146.

death is annually mourned at the beginning of the rainy season. What more natural than to take the dark rain-clouds for mourners weeping the death or the disappearance of the radiant God, whose azure image they have blotted out?

Story of the Origin of Death: Leza, the chameleon, and the hare.

Be that as it may, the Sky-god Leza, like many other African Sky-gods, is associated with a story of the Origin of Death which in all probability is very ancient, since, with minor variations, it occurs in the traditionary lore of many African tribes scattered at immense distances from each other over the continent. The Ila version of the story runs as follows. The Sky-god Leza sent Chameleon to men with the message, "Go and tell men that they shall die and pass away for ever". So Chameleon set out on his journey, but he travelled very slowly and often rested by the way. When God saw that Chameleon loitered, he sent Hare to men with another message, saying, "Tell them that they shall die and return". On his arrival Hare announced to the people, "You shall die and return". But Chameleon contradicted him, saying, "No, that is not what God sent us to say. He sent us, saying, 'They shall die and pass away for ever'". But Hare would not have it so. He stuck to it that God had said, "They shall return". Thereupon he went back to God in anger and said, "Yon person whom you sent has told men that they will pass away for ever". "All right", said the deity, "let it be so as he has told them". That is the reason why men are mortal to this day.[1]

Another version of the story.

In another Ila version of the tale the parts of the Chameleon and the Hare are reversed. God sent Hare to men, saying, "Go and take a message of death to men. You go also, Chameleon, and take a message of life." The Hare arrived first and announced, "Men shall die and pass away for ever". After he had delivered this message, up came Chameleon and said, "Men shall die and shall return". But it was too late: the doom of men was sealed.[2]

We have seen that stories of the Origin of Death, conforming to the same type of the Two Messengers,

[1] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 100 *sq.*

[2] Smith and Dale, *op. cit.* ii. 101.

are commonly found among African tribes and always in association with the Supreme Being or Sky-god.[1]

Belief of the Ba-Kaonde in a great Sky-god called Lesa.

The Ba-Kaonde are a Bantu people inhabiting the Kasempa district of Northern Rhodesia. They immediately adjoin the Ba-Ila, who occupy the land to the south-east of them. The Ba-Kaonde believe in the existence and power of a great Sky-god called Lesa, who in name and character appears to be substantially identical with the Leza of the Ba-Ila. They believe that Lesa created the first man and woman, and that he lives in the sky and manifests himself by thunder, lightning, rain, and the rainbow. He kills people not only by lightning but by sickness, accident, and so on. What we call natural deaths are sometimes supposed to be caused by him, but epidemics are more commonly viewed as his handiwork. He is married to a wife named Chandashi, who lives in the ground and manifests herself by earth tremors, which are common in the country but apparently do little damage. A native declared that he knew the tremors were produced by a woman, "because she makes a lot of fuss and does nothing".[2]

Lesa appealed to for rain.

The only occasion when the Ba-Kaonde appeal and pray to Lesa is when they want rain, for they believe that rain is a gift of Lesa. There are no professional rain-makers in the tribe, but if the rainy season advances without rain falling the people pray directly to Lesa to send the needed showers, without which famine would ensue. Early in the morning of the day appointed a tall white pole is set up on the outskirts of the village, and all the people gather there, men, women, and children. The headman sits in the middle, near the pole, and the people sit in a circle round about him. Then he prays, "Thou God (*Lesa*), we are all thy people. Send us rain!" At that all the people clap their hands and then return to the village. The pole is allowed to stand till it falls through the ravages of white ants or other causes, and when it falls it is left to rot where it lies.[3]

Oaths by Lesa.

One of the names applied to Lesa by the Ba-Kaonde is

[1] See above, pp. 105 *sq.*, 117, 133 *sq.*, 136.

[2] F. H. Melland, *In Witch-bound Africa* (London, 1923), pp. 154 *sq.*

[3] F. H. Melland, *op. cit.* p. 155.

Shyakapanga, which seems to correspond to the Shakapanga ("the Constructor") of the Ba-Ila.[1] Under this name the Ba-Kaonde swear by Lesa, saying, "May Shyakapanga kill me!"[2]

Lesa created the first man and the first woman; the name of the man was Mulonga, and the name of the woman was Mwinambuzhi. Now the honey-guide bird was a friend of the man and the woman, and Lesa called the bird and gave him three gourds, all of which were closed at both ends. "Go, take these", he said, "to the man and woman whom I have created, and open them not on the way. When you hand them to the people, say unto them, 'Thus saith Lesa: Open this one and that one which contain seeds for sowing, so that you may have food to eat; but the third one ye shall not open until I come. When I come I will instruct you as to the contents of the third package'". The honey-guide bird took the gourds and went on his way, but, his curiosity getting the better of him, he disobeyed the Creator and stopped to open them. In the first two gourds he found seeds of corn, of beans, and of other food-crops, and having examined them he put them back in the gourds, and closed the gourds as they had been before. He then untied the third gourd. But in it, alas! were Death, and Sickness, and all kinds of beasts of prey, and deadly reptiles. These all escaped from the gourd, and the honey-guide bird could not catch them. Then up came Lesa, and very angry was he, to be sure. He asked the bird where were the things that had escaped from the gourds, but the crestfallen bird could only reply that he did not know. So Lesa and he went in search of them, and sure enough they found the lion in his den, the snake in his lair, and so on with the rest of the noxious creatures, but to catch them and put them back in the gourd was beyond the power of Lesa and the honey-guide bird. Then Lesa said sternly to the bird, "Thou hast sinned greatly, and the guilt is thine". That frightened the bird, and he flew away into the forest and dwelt there, and he lived no longer with man. But whenever he hungered, he would come back to his old friends, the man and the woman, and call them to some honey which he had found;

Lesa created the first man and woman.

How Death, Sickness, and Beasts of Prey were let loose in the world through the fault of the honey-guide bird.

[1] See above, p. 156.

[2] F. H. Melland, *op. cit.* p. 160.

and guided by him they would take the honey and leave a little on the ground for him. Thus it was that death, sickness, and fear came to man. The painful situation was explained by the Creator with perfect frankness to the man and his wife. He justly laid all the blame on the honey-guide bird. "That bird", said he, "is a great sinner. I told him that on no account was the third gourd to be opened until I came; but he disobeyed me. Thereby he has brought you much trouble, sickness, and death, not to mention the risks from lions, leopards, snakes, and other evil animals and reptiles. This I cannot help now, for these things have escaped and cannot be caught; so you must build yourselves huts and shelters to live in for protection from them."[1]

The art of making fire imparted by the Creator.

Few persons, probably, will be disposed to doubt that this frank and lucid explanation entirely exonerates the Creator from all blame in the momentous transaction. To alleviate, as far as lay in his power, the disastrous effects of the honey-guide bird's ill-advised curiosity, he kindly taught men to make fire by rubbing one stick on another; more than that he instructed them in the art of smelting iron and of fashioning axes, hoes, and hammers.[2]

Belief of the Alunda in a Creator-god called Nzambi.

Among the Alunda, another Bantu tribe of Northern Rhodesia, whose territory adjoins that of the Ba-Kaonde on the north-west, the name of the Creator-god is not Lesa or Leza, but Nzambi, which, as we have seen, is the usual name of the deity throughout the valley of the Congo.[3] The Alunda believe that Nzambi is remote from mankind and inaccessible to them. Apart from the act of creation, his influence on human affairs is deemed to be indirect and negligible; he is obscured by the vast crowd of tribal spirits who interfere directly in every phase of life on earth. Yet he is said to be the creator of all things, of vegetables and minerals as well as of animals; he also made all spiritual beings. "It is his business to make spirits in the tribal sense, but not in the family sense, except indirectly". He is somewhat of a tribal deity, and the ancestor of the family spirits (*akishi*) is supposed to have been made by him. His name is constantly used in oaths, "*Nzambi yami!*" that is

[1] F. H. Melland, *op. cit.* pp. 156-159.

[2] F. H. Melland, *op. cit.* p. 159.

[3] Above, pp. 141 *sqq.*

"My God!" both seriously and profanely; and in legal cases it is usual to swear to the truth of a statement by the name of Nzambi. Yet no prayers are offered to him, and he is not an object of worship. Indeed, he is hardly treated with reverence; for many jokes are cracked at his expense, and he is taunted with his stupidity in sending rain when it is not wanted, and so forth. Unlike the Ba-Kaonde, the Alunda do not pray to Nzambi for rain. But on the other hand they do pray for rain to the family spirits (*akishi*), that is, to dead ancestors, for these powerful beings are supposed to be able to turn on the celestial water-taps at certain seasons.[1]

How Nzambi created man and woman.

It is said that in the twilight of antiquity Nzambi slid down to earth on a rainbow, and finding the earth a pleasant place he improved it by creating animals, trees, and so forth. Afterwards he created a man and a woman, and said to them, "Marry and beget children!" He also put spirits (*akishi*) into their bodies. He laid only a single prohibition on mankind, and it was this, that none might sleep while the moon walked the skies, and the penalty for transgression of this command was to be Death. Well, when the first man grew old and his sight failed, it chanced one night that the moon was veiled behind clouds, and with his dim eyes the old man did not see her silvery light. So he slept, and sleeping died. Since then everybody has died because nobody can keep awake while the moon is up.[2]

Story of the Origin of Death.

Leza or Lesa the commoner name of the Sky-god in this part of Africa.

But while among the Alunda the Sky-god bears the name of Nzambi, his more usual appellation among the tribes of this region would seem to be Leza or Lesa, which is said to be applied to him from the Kasai River in the basin of the Congo on the west to Lake Nyasa on the east,[3] and from Lake Tanganyika on the north to the Zambesi River on the south.[4]

Names of the Sky-god on the Upper Zambesi.

Among the Bantu tribes of the Upper Zambesi the name for the Supreme Being or Sky-god varies; the names which appear to be most frequently applied to him are Leza

[1] J. L. Keith, in F. H. Melland, *In Witch-bound Africa*, pp. 162 *sq.*

[2] J. L. Keith, in F. H. Melland, *In Witch-bound Africa*, pp. 164 *sq.*

[3] D. Campbell, *In the Heart of Bantuland* (London, 1922), p. 246.

[4] C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), p. 80.

Belief of the Barotse in a powerful God and Creator called Niambe.

and Nyambe (Niambe).[1] Thus among the Ba-Rotse or Ma-Rotse, who occupy a vast region traversed by the upper waters of the Zambesi almost from its source to a point beyond the great Victoria Falls, there is reported to exist the belief in an all-powerful god, the creator of the universe, to whom they give the name of Niambe. To him as the great cause they ascribe everything that happens, whether good or evil; nothing can be done against his will. He is personified by the sun; yet the Ba-Rotse insist that the sun is not Niambe himself, but only his dwelling-place. The moon is his wife, and from their union sprang the world, the animals, and last of all man. But the cunning, the intelligence, and the audacity of man frightened his Creator. Having made himself spears, man went about killing the animals. At first the benevolent Niambe restored the dead creatures to life; but as man persisted in slaughtering them, Niambe was so much alarmed that he took refuge in heaven, to which he mounted up on a spider's web. From that coign of vantage he is able, at his pleasure, either to benefit or to injure mankind; that is why people pray to him, and sometimes offer him sacrifices. Thus in the morning, the worshipper of Niambe will make a little heap of sand and set a vessel full of water on the top of it; then when the sun appears on the horizon, the devotee will give the royal salute, raising his arms several times to the sky and crying "*Yo cho! Yo cho!*" After that, he falls on his knees and claps his hands. The water is offered to the god for his use in his journey across the sky; for it is natural to suppose that in the heat of the day the deity will be thirsty. Another reason for offering it to the rising sun is that everything good comes from the east, whereas everything bad comes from the west. In a long drought the people sacrifice to Niambe a black ox as a symbol of the black rain-clouds which they wish to see lowering overhead. Again, the women invoke Niambe before they sow their fields. At such times they gather all their hoes and the seed in a heap, and standing in a circle round the heap they address their prayers to the deity, beseeching him that he would be pleased

Alarmed at the cunning of mankind, Niambe retreated to heaven.

Prayers and sacrifices to Niambe.

[1] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya* (Paris, 1899), p. 102.

to make their labour fruitful. In case of sickness, also, people consult a diviner, who ascertains the will of Niambe by means of his divining bones, and on receipt of a fee consents to heal the patient.[1]

The sun worshipped by the Barotse as the symbol of the great unseen God Niambe.

Speaking of the Barotse and neighbouring tribes, an explorer towards the end of the nineteenth century observed: "These Upper Zambezi natives, like the Masarkwas and many other African tribes, worship the sun as the visible sign of a great unseen God, and have been described to me by a missionary as a very religious people. On the eve of battle they petition their deity; prior to starting on a hunting expedition they pray for success; and when they plant their gardens they ask for the blessings of *Niambe* (God), though it must be confessed they seem to busy themselves much more in their endeavours to propitiate the evil spirits to whose malice they attribute all deaths as well as the troubles and misfortunes of this mortal life. In obeisance to the sun they kneel on the ground and lower the body until the forehead rests on the earth."[2]

But the Barotse pay their devotions chiefly to the spirits of their dead kings.

Yet though the Barotse recognize Niambe as the Supreme God, it is not to him, but to the inferior deities that they most frequently address their petitions. These lesser gods, to whom the people commonly turn in their distress, are the spirits of their dead kings, who have been raised to the rank of divinities (*ditino*). Their tombs are carefully kept up, and it is to them that the worshippers resort in time of need to consult the royal ghosts.[3] The tomb of such a deified king is always in the neighbourhood of the village which he inhabited in life. It regularly stands in a grove of beautiful trees, which is surrounded by a lofty palisade. The whole enclosure is sacred. No one may enter it except the guardian of the tomb, who is at the same time a sort of priest, for he acts as intermediary between the ghost of the dead king and the suppliants who come to implore his aid or ask his advice.[4] The range of these deified spirits is limited, for they are strictly attached to their tombs. They

The tombs of the kings.

[1] E. Béguin, *Les Ma-Rotsé* (Lausanne et Fontaines, 1903), pp. 118 *sq.*

[2] Captain A. St. H. Gibbons, *Exploration and Hunting in Central Africa, 1895–1896* (London, 1898) p. 130.

[3] E. Béguin, *Les Ma-Rotsé*, p. 120.

[4] E. Béguin, *Les Ma-Rotsé*, pp. 120 *sq.*

have no relation to Niambe, who dwells in the sky and can be invoked anywhere, since his abode is in the sun. He is the Supreme God, but the people know very little about him. Hence they prefer to address themselves to the local divinities, who were historical personages, national heroes, whose deeds are commemorated in legend. These mighty beings, now dowered with immortality, are alone in a position to succour or to punish mortals. Their tombs, scattered over the country, keep their names fresh in the memory of the people, who can name their deceased monarchs for ten generations back.[1]

Belief of the Louyi in a god Nyambe, who now dwells in the sky.

The Louyi, another tribe of the Upper Zambesi, tell similar stories about Nyambe (Niambe). They say that he formerly lived on earth with his wife Nasilele, but that he ultimately retired to the sky for fear of men. For whenever he carved one piece of wood, men were sure to carve another; for example, if the deity whipped out his knife and cut a plate, men took their knives and cut out just such another. This was more than the deity could bear; so he mounted on a spider's web to heaven. They say, indeed, that originally he had fallen down from heaven to earth.[2]

Stories of the Origin of Death; Nyambe, his dog and his mother-in-law.

Be that as it may, the Louyi, like many other African tribes, attribute the origin of human mortality to the action of their Sky-god. They say that it fell out in this way. Nyambe's dog died, and Nyambe said, "Let my dog live". But his wife objected to the proposal on the ground that the dog was a thief. Nyambe pleaded for the animal, saying, "For my part, I love my dog". But his wife was inexorable. "Cast him out", she said peremptorily. So together they heaved him out. After that it happened that the deity's mother-in-law departed this vale of tears. Her daughter, the wife of

[1] E. Béguin, *Les Ma-Rotsé*, pp. 122 *sq.* Compare L. Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), p. 74: "The Barotse chiefly worship the souls of their ancestors. When any misfortune happens, the witch-doctor divines with knuckle-bones whether the ancestor is displeased, and they go to the grave and offer up sacrifice of grain or honey. They believe in a Supreme Being, 'Niambe', who is supposed to come and take away the spiritual part of the dead. Thus, to express a man dead, they say, '*O Nkeloe had*' (he has been taken)."

[2] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Troisième Partie, *Textes Louyi* (Paris, 1901), pp. 116 *sq.*, 118.

the deity, said to her divine husband, "Let her come to life again". But the deity would not hear of it. "By no manner of means", he replied, "let her die and be done with it. I told you that my dog ought to come to life again and you refused; well, it is my will that your mother die once for all." The story is apparently told to account for the origin of human mortality; but for the same purpose the Louyi tell another tale which conforms to the common type of the Two Messengers. They say that Nyambe and his wife sent the chameleon and the hare to bear messages to men. They told the chameleon to say to men, "Ye shall live"; and they told the hare to say to them, "Ye shall die for good and all". So off the two animals went to deliver their respective messages. But the chameleon kept returning on his footsteps, whereas the hare ran straight on. So he arrived before the chameleon and announced to men that they were to die for good and all. After he had delivered his message he returned. And still, when men die, they die for good and all, as the hare told them to do.[1]

Story of the Two Messengers, the chameleon and the hare.

The Louyi say that when Nyambe had climbed up to the sky on the spider's web, he said to men, "Worship me". But, far from complying with this command, men said one to the other, "Let us kill Nyambe". To carry out this nefarious design, they planted tall poles in the earth, and tied other poles to the tops of them, and so on to a great height. Then they swarmed up the poles, intending to beard Nyambe in heaven and murder him. But before they reached the sky, the poles tumbled down, and the men fell down with them and perished.[2]

How men tried to climb up to heaven and kill Nyambe: an African Tower of Babel.

The Louyi allege that Nyambe is the sun. When the sun rises, they say, "Behold our king, he has appeared!" They worship him saying, "*Mangwe! Mangwe! Mangwe!* our King!"[3] Here accordingly the conception of the Sky-god appears to approach, if not to merge into, the conception of the god of the Sun. We have seen that in the religion of the Barotse the Sky-god is closely associated with the

Nyambe identified with the Sun by the Louyi.

[1] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Troisième Partie, *Textes Louyi*, pp. 116 *sq.* Compare the Ila stories, above, p. 165.

[2] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Troisième Partie, *Textes Louyi*, p. 118.

[3] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Troisième Partie, *Textes Louyi*, p. 118.

sun, and the same union or confusion of the Sky-god with the Sun-god will meet us in other tribes of Eastern Africa.

The Sky-god called Leza by the Soubiya.

The Soubiya, another tribe of the Upper Zambesi, tell similar tales of the Sky-god, but they call him Leza instead of Nyambe. They say that originally Leza was a very strong man who lived on earth. When he was in his hut (*khotla ?*), it was as if the sun were sitting there. So men stood in great fear of him. One day Leza ascended to the sky. They say that he spun a very long spider's web and climbed up it to heaven. Some other people tried to climb up the spider's web after him, but they could not manage it, and they fell to the ground. Then they said, "Let us put out the spider's eyes". So they caught the spider and put out its eyes. That is why the spider has been blind ever since; at least the Soubiya believe that the spider is blind.[1]

An African Tower of Babel.

Afterwards men erected a very tall scaffold and said, "Let us go to heaven". But they did not succeed, they tumbled down, and gave up the attempt for fear of being dashed to pieces. Aforetime men had dwelt with Leza under a great tree, one of the trees which the people call *ibozu*. Such trees are usually solitary; one of them is commonly to be found near a village. They are all sacred, and the natives deposit their offerings under their shadow. Well, it was beneath one of these holy trees that the Soubiya dwelt of old with Leza. It was there that they performed the offices of religion, because they said that their chief lived there. They brought sheep and goats in great numbers to the tree, that Leza might have food to eat. One day Leza met a man under the tree and said to him, "Where do you come from?" The man answered, "I am bringing your goats". Leza said to him, "Return to your village and say: Thus saith Leza, when ye shall see a great dust, then shall ye know that it is Leza". The man returned to his village and spoke as he had been commanded. One day the people saw a great dust: it was Leza. A hurricane blew: they knew that it was Leza. They gathered and sat down in the public place. Leza came and took up his post

Sacred trees in the worship of Leza.

[1] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya* (Paris, 1899), pp. 102-104.

in a tree. The people heard him speak as follows: "It is I, Leza; ye shall see me no more on earth". They looked up, but they could not see him. Even a man who asked Leza for snuff could not see him; all he saw was his snuff-box. Leza spoke to them thus, saying, "Worship my house", and by his house he meant the sacred tree (*ibozu*) under which he had dwelt of old in the midst of his people.[1]

Leza, his wife, and son.

They say that Leza has a wife in the sky, to which he ascended. They say also that he has a son. It is reported that Leza in his wrath would have killed all the men on earth, if his wife had not dissuaded him. He gave ear to her advice and relinquished his project of a general massacre. Another day it was his wife who, in her anger, would have slain the women, if her husband in his turn had not objected to the sanguinary proposal. Another day it was their son who thirsted for the blood of the children, his companions. But his father and mother were angry with him for his bloody purpose, and they beat him with rods, so that he wept. To this day, when men see stars shooting down from the sky, they utter cries and say that it is Leza, their chief, coming to examine his children who remain here on earth. They affirm that they were not created by Leza, but that they fell from a dry and withered tree.[2]

The worship of Leza.

Leza said to a certain woman, "Thou shalt be the mother of all men. Thou shalt die, and then they will worship at thy tomb." To this day, when they worship Leza, they bring red beads and say that Leza, their chief, hears them. They set up little tables on the spot where they worship him. When they worship him they clap their hands and say, "We worship thee, O our chief, hear us. Thou art the great chief who givest with both hands." When they worship thus, they bend their heads to the earth and lift their hands towards the sky. And when they have finished their supplications they return home, but only to come back and repeat their prayers, their obeisances, and the stretching out of their hands to heaven on the next occasion.[3]

[1] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya*, pp. 104 *sq.*

[2] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya*, pp. 105 *sq.*

[3] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya*, pp. 107 *sq.*

Story of the Origin of Death: a man, his dog, and his mother-in-law.

The Soubiya explain the origin of human mortality by stories like those which the Louyi tell on the same profound subject.[1] One of the stories is that of a man, his dog, and his mother-in-law; for in the Soubiya version the story is told, not of the Supreme God, but of an ordinary man, whose name is not recorded. In the Soubiya version the man shows himself less hard than Nyambe in the matter of his deceased mother-in-law; for when she died he made a successful attempt to bring her back to life, though when his dog had died his unfeeling wife had positively refused to let him resuscitate the animal. What happened was this. When his mother-in-law died, he at first would not hear of her resurrection; but at last, yielding to the entreaties of her daughter, his wife, he said, "Bring her into the hut". So they brought her in; and when they had done so, the man went in search of a medicine which restores the dead to life. This he brought, and having cooked it, he gave it to the dead woman to eat. When she had done masticating it, she revived and sat up, looking very fat. Then the man went out of the hut and said to his wife, "Don't open the door of that hut. If you do, your mother will die again." His wife said, "All right". So he shut the door behind him and went away to dig up another medicine. But scarcely was his back turned when his wife opened the door of the hut, and there sure enough she saw her mother sitting up in the middle of the hut. But when her mother saw her, the heart went out of her, and she died for the second time.

When the husband came back with the medicine he found his mother-in-law dead again. He asked his wife, "Did you open the door of the hut?" The woman answered, "Certainly it was not I". "Who was it then that did it?" inquired the husband. "I don't know," quoth she. Then the man said, "I'll resuscitate your mother no more". But his wife said, "I implore you, do resuscitate her". "Certainly not," replied her husband, "I am tired of resuscitating your mother; I will not do it again. Bury her". So they buried her. Then the man said, "Henceforth all men will die thus, just like your mother". It was

[1] See above, pp. 172 *sq.*

thus that Death entered into the world through the decease of a man's dog and of his mother-in-law.[1]

Another story of the Origin of Death: Leza, the chameleon, and the lizard.

But the Soubiya also tell that other and more usual story to account for the origin of death which we may call the Story of the Two Messengers; and they relate it in the ordinary and orthodox form, in which the two messengers are a chameleon and a lizard. They say that the chameleon was sent by Leza to men to tell them, "Ye men, when ye shall see somebody die, say not that he is really dead; nay, he is not really dead; men will come to life again". So the chameleon set off with this cheering intelligence. But when the chameleon had got about half way, Leza said to the lizard, "Go and say, men will die and will not come to life again. Begone: if you find the chameleon already arrived, say nothing; but if you find that he has not yet come, tell men that they will die of a truth and not come to life again." When the lizard set out, he ran and overtook the chameleon who was crawling slowly and had not yet arrived at the men's village. So the lizard passed him and ran on. He came to the men and said to them, "Leza says that ye shall die of a truth and not come to life again". Then he returned to Leza and told him, "I found that the chameleon had not arrived among men". Leza thanked him. As for the chameleon, the storyteller did not know what became of him.[2]

The Nyanja or Manganja.

The Nyanja or Manganja are a Bantu people who inhabit the Shire highlands and the southern shores of Lake Nyasa, both on the western and, to a lesser extent, on the eastern side of the lake. About the middle of the nineteenth century the northern Nyanja tribes, to the west of the lake, were conquered by a tribe of Zulus, called the Angoni, who invaded the country from the south, and imposed some of their habits and customs on the Nyanja, but adopted their language. At the present time the Zulu language has entirely given place to Nyanja (Chinyanja) in one or other of its dialects; thus most of the inhabitants of Central

[1] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya*, pp. 109 *sq.*

[2] E. Jacottet, *Études sur les langues du Haut-Zambèze*, Seconde Partie, *Textes Soubiya*, pp. 111-114.

Angoniland, to the west of Lake Nyasa, are of Zulu descent, but speak the Nyanja language. Another tribe who harried and raided the Nyanja were the Yaos; it was under the pressure of these more warlike neighbours that a body of Nyanja settled on the eastern shore of Lake Nyasa.[1]

Mulungu, the name for God among the Nyanja.

Among the Nyanja the general name for god is Mulungu or Mlungu, which appears in Swahili as Muungu, and in Lomwe and Makuwa as Mluku. Under this term are included not only the deity, but all that appertains to the spirit world. Whether in its primary sense it conveys the idea of personality is uncertain, for the word belongs to an impersonal class of nouns, and always takes the concord of an impersonal class. When, however, the deity is alluded to in respect of any of his attributes, there is no doubt that personality is attributed to him, as when the Nyanja speak of "Leza, the Nurse", "Mlengi, the Creator", "Mphambi, the heavens", and "Chauta, the Almighty". Other names are also applied to the Supreme Being, as Chanjiri, Chinsumpi, Mbamba, Mphezi, but these are generally confined to certain local manifestations of the deity in the persons of men who claim to possess the divine powers and to be invested with the divine attributes. For example, in the year 1910 an individual appeared in South Angoniland who arrogated to himself the possession of such powers under the name of Chanjiri, the Supreme God. In that capacity he demanded offerings from the people and forbade them to pay the annual tax to the British Government. Whilst the names Leza and Chauta are the common appellatives of the deity among the neighbouring Awemba and Atonga, the name Mulungu is universally understood to signify the Supreme Being, and among the Nyanja people it is the only name in use.[2]

Other names for the deity.

Ideas of the Nyanja about the deity.

But by whatever names they call him, we are assured by a careful and competent inquirer that the Nyanja believe in one all-powerful Being who has his abode in or above the

[1] L. T. Moggridge, "The Nyassaland Tribes", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 467, 468; A. Hetherwick, *s.v.* "Nyanjas", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ix. 419; R. Sutherland Rattray, *Some Folk-lore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja* (London, 1907), p. viii.

[2] A. Hetherwick, *s.v.* "Nyanjas", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ix. 419 *sq.*

sky. He is supposed to be the creator of all things and to rule the great forces and phenomena of nature, such as rain, thunder and lightning, earthquakes, and winds. He has many names, such as Chauta or Chiuta, Leza, Chanjiri, and Mpambe, but they all signify the one great Power. He is not a spirit (*mzimu*) in the native sense, for *mzimu*, as understood by the Nyanja, is the soul of a human being who once lived on earth. The deity of the Nyanja is rather, we are told, "a supreme power having in him the nature of a soul of the universe, but here the resemblance to the Creator of the civilized peoples of the earth ends, for the Supreme Being [of the Nyanjas] takes no concern whatever in the affairs of mankind, as the spirits do. He is totally indifferent to good or evil, nor is he even appealed to in temporal matters as are the spirits of ancestors, except only in cases of drought."[1]

Prayers of the Nyanja to the deity for rain.

If the rains do not come at the expected time, the Nyanja say, "Look at this, the rain keeps refusing to fall from above; come, let us try to propitiate the rain spirit, and perhaps the rain may come". So they collect maize, and grind and pound it, and they boil the beer and pour it into a gourd-cup, and next morning at dawn they all come together and they go to the rain temple, taking the beer with them. Now the rain temple is a miniature hut about two feet high, or it may be two or three such little huts built close together. The temple is generally in the village, but sometimes it stands in the forest. And when they are come to the temple, they clear away the grass that the ground may be open. He who is chief of the ceremony sits in the middle, and first draws some of the beer, and pours it in a pot buried in the ground, and says, "Master Chauta, you have hardened your heart towards us, what would you have us do? We must perish indeed. Give your children the rains. There is the beer we have given you." Then the people begin to clap their hands and to make a shrill sound, clicking their tongues against their cheeks; they sing also, swaying their bodies backwards and forwards, and keep saying, "Pardon, pardon". When they have done propitiating the rain spirit, they take the beer that remains, and dip

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Some Folk-lore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja*, p. 198.

a cup in it, and give every one to drink, just a little; even the children must sip it. After that they take branches of trees and begin to dance and sing, saying,

> "*This little cloud, and this,*
> *This little cloud, and this,*
> *Let the rains come with this little cloud.*
> *Give us water,*
> *Our hearts are dry,*
> *Krôle.*
> *Give us water,*
> *Our hearts are dry,*
> *Krôle.*"

When they come to the village they find that an old woman has drawn water in readiness and put it at the doorway; and the people dip their branches in the water and wave them aloft, scattering the drops. Then they see the rain come in heavy storm-clouds.[1] Thus the prayer for rain addressed to Master Chauta, the Rain-god, is reinforced by a pantomime in imitation of a shower; in short, the Nyanja, like so many other peoples, supplement religion by magic.

The Yaos of Lake Nyasa.

The Yaos or Wayas are a Bantu tribe who dwell at the southern end of Lake Nyasa and farther to the south in the Shire Highlands. Their original home seems to have been the large and lofty plateau which lies to the east of Lake Nyasa and is bounded by the Rivers Rovuma and Lujenda. From there they were driven westward to the lake and southward to the mountains by the pressure of enemies about the time when Livingstone first entered their country.[2] Physically they are said to be the finest of the South Nyasa tribes and to be remarkable for a higher sense of personal decency and a lower standard of morality than their neighbours.[3] Their theology seems to resemble that of the Nyanja.

Belief of the Yaos in a Creator called Mulungu.

Like them, the Yaos believe in a Creator whom they call Mulungu. They say that Mulungu made the world, and man, and animals. Far in the interior of the continent, towards the north-west, beyond the plains and swamps of the Loangwa River and Lake Bangweolo, there lies, in Yao

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Some Folklore Stories and Songs in Chinyanja*, pp. 118 *sq.*, with the note on pp. 204 *sq.*

[2] A. Hetherwick, "Some animistic Beliefs among the Yaos of British Central Africa", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 89.

[3] L. T. Moggridge, "The Nyassaland Tribes", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 468.

legend, a lake, and in the midst of the lake is an island, and in the island is a large flat rock, and on the rock are the footprints of men and animals of all kinds. When that rock was a heap of moist clay, Mulungu created all living things and sent them across the soft mass, where their footprints, now hardened into solid rock, may be seen to this day. Such is the Yao story of the creation of the world, or at all events of living creatures. To the mind of the people Mulungu is always the Great Creator.[1] To him is ascribed the sending of the rain, but apparently he has no part in giving good crops or causing a plentiful harvest, neither does he take any direct interest in human affairs.[2] However, he is thought to receive the spirits of the dead. If he refuses to receive a man's spirit, that man continues to live. When a patient has recovered from some malady which commonly proves fatal, the natives say, "Mulungu refused him", or "Mulungu spat him out".[3]

Ideas of the Yaos about Mulungu.

Nevertheless it appears that in this sense Mulungu is hardly conceived of as a personal being. Indeed we are informed that the untaught Yao refuses to ascribe to Mulungu any idea of personality. To him the word denotes rather "a quality or faculty of the human nature whose signification he has extended so as to embrace the whole spirit world". Hence the term is employed to designate the world of spirit in general or, more properly speaking, the aggregate of the spirits of all the dead.[4] But apart from its use in this collective sense the word *mulungu* denotes any single human soul after death; for the Yaos believe that the soul survives the death of the body, and that in its disembodied state it exercises a potent influence on the lives and fortunes of those whom it has left behind in the world.

The word *mulungu* also denotes any human soul after death.

Worship of the dead.

Hence the souls of the dead are powers to be honoured and propitiated, and their worship enters largely into the religious and social life of the Yaos. In almost every Yao village there is a shrine which forms the centre of the worship of

[1] A. Hetherwick, *op. cit.* p. 94.

[2] H. S. Stannus, "The Wayao of Nyasaland", *Harvard African Studies* (Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., 1922), p. 312. Dr. Stannus adds, "Nor is he 'God the Creator', of man or earth", which seems to contradict the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Hetherwick, one of our highest authorities on the tribes of Nyasaland.

[3] H. S. Stannus, *op. cit.* p. 313.

[4] A. Hetherwick, *op. cit.* p. 94.

Shrines on the graves of dead chiefs.

the inhabitants. It is a wooden hut enclosed by a strong fence or hedge of cactus, and is built on the grave of a dead chief. The soul (*mulungu*) of the chief is supposed either to inhabit the hut or at least to be there accessible to his worshippers. The worship paid to the soul of the deceased chief, or indeed to the soul of any dead man, is called *kulomba mulungu*. If a chief is about to go to war or to undertake a long journey, he must lay an offering at the shrine of his dead predecessor in order to secure his favour and help. If a long drought threatens to spoil the harvest, the deceased ruler must be entreated to send the needed rain. The living chief or any near relative of the deceased acts as priest on the occasion. He opens the gate of the fence, pours beer into the pot at the head of the grave, and deposits a basket of porridge and a plate of meat on the sepulchral mound. Then he retires, and kneeling down outside the gate looks towards the shrine, and chants his prayer. Meanwhile all the people who have accompanied him clap their hands in unison with his utterances and chant the responses. But it is only the graves of chiefs or headmen which are thus treated as shrines and become the seat of worship. Common folk and slaves are buried in the wilderness, where only the rank grass or a thicket of old trees marks their last place of rest. No offerings are ever carried thither, for they who sleep in these neglected graves can have no influence in the spirit world, and therefore cannot affect the fortunes of the living.[1]

Ambiguity consequent on the double use of the word *Mulungu*.

But where the same word Mulungu is applied indifferently to the Creator and to the soul of a dead chief, it may sometimes be difficult to discriminate between these two very different sorts of being, and there must be a certain danger of confusing the one with the other. The ambiguity does not exist, or at all events is greatly lessened, in languages which draw a sharp line of distinction between the two different kinds of beings by assigning a name like Leza or Nyambe to the Creator and a totally different name to the inferior spirits. But among the Yao, when we hear of worship paid to Mulungu (*kulomba mulungu*), it may often be open to doubt whether it is the Creator or a deified chief who is

[1] A. Hetherwick, *op. cit.* pp. 92 *sq.*

supposed to receive the adoration of the worshippers. For example, outside of a village or beside a headman's hut may often be seen a rough shed in which the first-fruits of the new crop are placed by the villagers as a thank-offering for the harvest. Again, a small offering of flour or beer is occasionally set at the foot of the tree in the village court-yard, where men sit and talk or work. Again, a devout native, sitting down to a meal, will throw a morsel of food at the root of the nearest tree as an offering to Mulungu before he begins to eat. Once more, a traveller on a journey will sometimes stop and lay a little flour in a pyramidal heap at the foot of a tree by the wayside or at an angle where two roads meet. All these acts of worship are addressed to Mulungu; but whether the Mulungu in question is the Creator, or the soul of a dead chief, or some other spirit, we are not told, and perhaps the native himself might be at a loss to tell. "The distinction in the native mind", we are told, "is ever of the haziest. No one will give you a dogmatic statement of his belief on such points."[1]

The Angoni believe in a Supreme God, the Creator, but think that he has delegated the government of the world to the inferior spirits.

Of the Angoni or Ngoni, who inhabit a treeless and undulating tableland about four thousand feet above sea level, to the west of Lake Nyasa, we are told that, "although they do not worship God, it is nevertheless true that they have a distinct idea of a Supreme Being. The Ngoni call him *Umkurumqango*, and the Tonga and Tumbuka call him *Chiuta*. It may be that the natives, from an excess of reverence as much as from negligence, have ceased to offer him direct worship. They affirm that God lives: that it is He who created all things, and who giveth all good things. The government of the world is deputed to the spirits, and among these the malevolent spirits alone require to be appeased, while the guardian spirits require to be entreated for protection by means of sacrifices. I once had a long conversation on this subject with a witch-doctor who was a neighbour for some years, and the sum of what he said was, that they believe in God who made them and all things, but they do not know how to worship Him. He is thought of

[1] A. Hetherwick, "Some animistic Beliefs among the Yaos of British Central Africa", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 94 *sq.*

as a great chief and is living, but as He has the ancestral spirits with Him they are His *amaduna* (headmen). The reason why they pray to the *amadhlozi* (spirits) is that these, having lived on earth, understand their position and wants, and can manage their case with God. When they are well and have plenty no worship is required, and in adversity and sickness they pray to them. The sacrifices are offered to appease the spirits when trouble comes, or, as when building a new village, to gain their protection." [1]

Worship of the Supreme God eclipsed by that of the ancestral spirits.

In this account of the Supreme Being of the Angoni we recognize the familiar features of the Creator who has made and ordered all things, but who has long since retired from the active management of affairs, leaving them in the hands of subordinate agents, and whose worship has been almost wholly thrown into the shade by that of the ancestral spirits or ghosts. We are not expressly told that his abode is in the sky, and that he maintains a general control over rain, thunder, and lightning; but the analogy of many similar deities in Africa suggests that he possesses these attributes in common with them.

Chiwuta, the god of the Tumbuka.

The same may perhaps be said of the God of the Tumbuka, another tribe of the same region, whose country lies to the west of Lake Nyasa and adjoins that of the Ngoni. We are told that "they believe in God, but this is one of the least influential articles of their faith, for God is to them an absentee deity. He is called Chiwuta, which might mean the great bow, but apparently does not, at least no native will agree that the name has any relation to the bow of the firmament, or of the Avenger, or any other kind of bow. What the root of the word is, no one seems yet to have discovered. Chiwuta is known as the creator, and the master of life and death. By him the world was made, and everything that has life. It is He who sends the great diseases, like rinderpest and smallpox, and He too is the sender of death. The only characteristic of God that the raw native is sure of is this, 'He is cruel for it is He who takes away the children', but where He lives, and what He thinks they do not know. To the general imagination He

[1] W. A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni* (Edinburgh and London, 1899), p. 67 *sq.*

has withdrawn from the world, and has nothing to do with it, beyond sending death or disease. I do not think that I have yet found that prayers were addressed to the Creator God, though they were frequently offered to the local deities, who also, when they were not named by their personal titles, were called Chiwuta. The Creator was too unknown and too great for the common affairs of man."[1] On the other hand, among the Tumbuka, as among so many other Bantu tribes, the most active spiritual agents are believed to be the ancestral spirits, which are supposed to be everywhere and to be continually intervening for good or evil in human affairs, though their influence is limited to the concerns of their kinsfolk.[2]

Leza, the Supreme God of the tribes of Northern Rhodesia.

Among the Bantu tribes of the great plateau of Northern Rhodesia, to the west of Lake Nyasa, the conception of the Creator or Supreme Being, whom they call Leza, is still vague; his attributes, it is reported, are still in process of evolution. From one point of view Leza seems to be regarded rather as a physical force than as a personal deity. Thunder, lightning, rain, earthquakes, and other natural phenomena are grouped together as manifestations of Leza. From another and perhaps later point of view, Leza emerges as a personal deity, the greatest of all the spirits. To the Awemba, an important tribe of the great plateau, the thunder is "God himself who is angry", the lightning is "the Knife of God". Leza is said to be the creator of life and death.

Story of the Origin of Death: the two bundles.

According to a fable told by the Awemba, the deity created a man and woman, who increased and multiplied and replenished the earth. To this first pair the Creator Leza gave two small bundles, in one of which was life (*bumi*), and in the other was death (*mfwa*); but unhappily the man chose "the little bundle of death".[3]

Leza thought to stand aloof from the affairs of this lower world.

Yet among some of these tribes of the plateau, as among so many other African tribes, the great god whom they call Leza is believed to stand aloof from the lower world. Serene and imperturbable he controls the heavens, but does not concern himself with the destinies of mortals. Hence

[1] Donald Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People* (London, 1914), pp. 120 *sq.*

[2] Donald Fraser, *op. cit.* p. 124.

[3] C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), pp. 80 *sq.*

the people do not conceive of Leza as a moral being against whom it is possible to sin by those breaches of the moral law which the inferior spirits are quick to mark and to avenge. Leza still remains "the incomprehensible" (*Leza ni shimwelenganya*). "How otherwise", ask the Wemba old men, "has he caused the firmament, the sun, moon, and stars to abide over our heads without any staypoles to uphold them?" "Were Leza by himself", say the Walambia, "we should never die of disease; it is the evil spirits and their allies the wizards who cause swift death." Leza only brings at the fit and proper time the gentle, painless death of old age (*mfwa Leza*). Among many of the ancient tribes who dwell in the mountain fastnesses of the North Luangwa district this theory of an impassive God still obtains.[1]

The more progressive tribes think that Leza takes an interest in human affairs.

But among the more progressive tribes of the plateau, such as the Wabisa and Awemba, a further stage in the evolution of the godhead has been reached. They think that Leza takes an interest in human affairs, and though they do not pray to him, they nevertheless invoke him by his names of praise, in which his attributes are gradually unfolded, and he becomes in a sense the Protector and Judge of mankind. The Cunning Craftsman, the Great Fashioner, the Nourisher, the Unforgetful, the Omniscient, all occur in the laudatory titles of Leza. Again, he is thought to receive the souls of men after death. According to the Awiwa, the soul at its departure from the body goes down to the spirit world to God (*kuzimu ku Leza*), who not only sways the heavens but judges the spirits of the departed.[2]

Prayers and sacrifices not offered to Leza, but to the ancestral spirits.

Yet, so far as the dominant Wemba tribe is concerned, the worship of Leza forms no part of the ordinary religion. Prayers and sacrifices are not offered to him but to the great tribal and ancestral spirits. For upon a belief in the

[1] Gouldsbury and Sheane, *op. cit.* p. 81.

[2] Gouldsbury and Sheane, *op. cit.* p. 81. Compare J. H. West Sheane, "Some aspects of Awemba religion and superstitious observances", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) pp. 150 *sqq.* According to Mr. Sheane (pp. 150 *sq.*), Leza "is the judge of the dead, and condemns thieves, adulterers, and murderers to the state of Vibanda, or Viwa (evil spirits), exalting the good to the rank of *mipashi*, or benevolent spirits. There is no special worship of Leza, for he is to be approached only by appeasing the inferior spirits, who act as intercessors."

existence of powerful spirits of nature and spirits of the dead, the whole fabric of Wemba religion has been built up.[1]

L. Decle on Leza and the ancestral spirits.

Speaking of the natives of a Tanganyika plateau in general, without distinction of tribe, a French traveller, Lionel Decle, reported that "these people have a vague sort of Supreme Being called Lesa, who has good and evil passions; but here, as everywhere else, the Musimo, or spirits of the ancestors, are a leading feature in the beliefs. They are propitiated as elsewhere by placing little heaps of stones about their favourite haunts. At certain periods of the year the people make pilgrimages to the mountain of Fwambo-Liambo, on the summit of which is a sort of small altar of stones. There they deposit bits of wood, to which are attached scraps of calico, flowers, or beads: this is to propitiate Lesa. After harvest, for instance, they make such an offering. So, when a girl becomes marriageable, she takes food with her and goes up the mountain for several days. When she returns the other women lead her in procession through the villages, waving long tufts of grass and palms."[2]

Mbamba or Kiara, the god of the Konde, apparently a personification of the sky.

The Konde are a tribe who inhabit a territory at the extreme north end of Lake Nyasa, in what used to be German East Africa but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Their land is for the most part shut in between steep mountains and the lake: on the north rises the massive volcano, Mount Rungwe.[3] The Konde believe in a god named Mbamba or Kiara, who with his children dwells above the firmament. His shape is human and his complexion is a shining white. Apparently he is a personification of the bright sky. Prayers are offered to him, and in them he is addressed as Father. Of this deity the Moravian missionaries report that "a conception of God is imprinted on the whole people. A god there is who, on the one hand, stands above everything else and is invoked as such, but who, on the other hand, in consequence of his impotence and weakness, occupies but a humble position in their minds.

[1] Gouldsbury and Sheane, *l.c.* As to the spirits of nature (*milungu*) and the spirits of the dead (*mipashi*), see *id.* pp. 82 *sqq.*

[2] Lionel Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (London, 1898), p. 293.

[3] F. Fülleborn, *Das deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet, Land und Leute* (Berlin, 1906), p. 266.

The religious behaviour of the people is characterized by a mixture of respect and contempt, of worship and neglect. With regard to his essence, the seat of his kingdom, and the most of his qualities, they are in the dark."[1] According to one account the Konde also worshipped an evil principle or personal devil, whom they called Mbassi, and attempted to appease by offerings; but according to another, and perhaps more probable account, Mbassi is only another name of the Sky-god imported among the Konde by a priestly family from Ukinga.[2]

The Konde said to worship an evil spirit called Mbassi.

Another account of the belief of the Konde in a good god Kyala and a bad god Mbasi.

However, the belief of the Konde in two distinct gods, a good one and a bad one, is confirmed by Mr. D. R. Mackenzie, who lived for twenty-four years among the tribes at the north end of Lake Nyasa. According to him, the name most commonly applied by the Konde to the Supreme Being is Kyala, and the name of the evil deity is Mbasi.[3] But the name Kyala is not confined to the Supreme Being, "for it may be applied to persons in whom the Deity dwells, or to men who, though they lived on earth, were yet *Kyala*. The name is sometimes applied to white men, who are dangerous because they are believed to have closer relations with the source of all power than common men have. Other names are *Tenende*, the Owner of all things; *Nkurumuke*, the Undying One; *Chata*, the Originator; *Kyaubiri*, the Unseen; *Kalesi*, He who is everywhere present. The name *Ndorombwike* is the one used on solemn occasions, and comes from the verb, *kutoromboka*, to create in a sense in which God only can. *Mperi*, again, is the Maker, applied to God only, though the verb from which it is derived may be applied to men also. Prayer is addressed directly to the ancestral spirits, who in many cases are conceived as having power of themselves to grant a petition; but more frequently they are entreated to carry the petitions to God, who alone can give what is asked for. 'Why do you ask me for rain?' says Chungu,[4] when his impatient people come to him, 'God

Various names of the Supreme God (Kyala).

The ancestral spirits asked to intercede with the Supreme God.

[1] F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.* p. 316.

[2] F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.* pp. 316 *sq.*

[3] D. R. Mackenzie, *The Spirit-ridden Konde* (London, 1925), pp. 178 *sqq.*, 185 *sqq.*

[4] The title of the priestly king. Formerly he was not suffered to die a natural death; when he fell seriously ill, it was the duty of his councillors to kill him by stopping his breath. See D. R. Mackenzie, *op. cit.* pp. 68 70.

owns the rain, and only He can give it.' 'But,' reply the people, 'common men cannot pray. Pray you to your ancestors, and let them carry your prayer to God.' There is, however, also direct address in the formula, 'Be gracious to us, O God, and hear the prayers of those whom we have named', the reference being to the spirits, to whom the main body of the petition is addressed." [1]

Scanty and conflicting information concerning the Supreme Being.

Of this Supreme Being, we are told, there is little that can be said with certainty except that the people assuredly believed in him before the white men came and Christianity was taught. Indications of the belief are found everywhere in the native mind, inextricably intertwined with life and thought and language, with prayer and sacrifice, with birth and death, with famine and pestilence and sword. But for the rest there is much confusion, and no developed theology exists. What one informant will give as common belief, another will say that he never heard of; it belongs, he will tell you, to another district, but it was not the belief of his fathers.[2]

Modes in which the Supreme God reveals himself.

The Supreme Being is thought to reveal himself in diverse manners. Anything great of its kind, such as a great ox or even a great he-goat, a huge tree, or any other impressive object, is called Kyala, by which it may be meant that God takes up his abode temporarily in these things. When a great storm lashes the lake into fury, God is walking on the face of the waters; when the roar of the waterfall is louder than usual, it is the voice of God. The earthquake is caused by his mighty footstep, and the lightning is *Lesa*, God coming down in anger. When men see the lightning, they sit silent or speak in whispers, lest the angry God should hear them and smite them to the earth. God sometimes comes also in the body of a lion or a snake, and in that form he walks about among men to behold their doings. For he is a God of righteousness and never comes but when evil is rampant and vengeance is called for. Hence what the people desire above all things is that God should go away again. "Go far hence, O God, to the Sango, for Thy House is very large", is a prayer that is not seldom heard on the lips of the Konde when they think that God is near. They look

[1] D. R. Mackenzie, *The Spirit-ridden Konde*, pp. 179 *sq.*

[2] D. R. Mackenzie, *The Spirit-ridden Konde*, p. 178.

on an eclipse as a special visitation of the deity, and greet it with wild drumming and shouting, with entreaties and confession of sin; for the consciousness of sin is a sentiment by no means foreign to their minds. They make offerings to the spirits to induce them to intercede with the deity, but no offerings are ever made to the great *Ndorombwike* Himself, for man has nothing to offer that would be of the least value to Him. God is indeed for them an ever-present terror, and the thought of communion with Him has never entered into their minds. He is the Owner of the World, and it is for men to see that He is not offended. Of the many sins that bring down the wrath of God and of the spirits on the community the chief are widespread sexual offences and the neglect of sacrifice.[1]

Offerings made to the spirits, but not to the Great God.

Sacred groves of Mbamba or Kiara: prayers offered to him.

The souls of the dead, as we have seen, are thought by the Konde to act as mediators or intercessors between Kiara (*Kyala*) and mankind. Prayers and sacrifices are offered to them as well as to him, but the dead may not be buried in the groves which are dedicated to the worship of the god. One of these sacred groves, in which the deity is believed to dwell with his children, exists on the slope of the volcano, Mount Rungwe. Hither the people come with cattle and much beer to worship Kiara or Mbamba. They dance, and sing, and invoke the deity, saying, "Mbamba, let our children thrive! May the cattle multiply! May our maize and sweet potatoes flourish! Take pestilence away!" and so on. Then they fill their mouths with leaves of a certain sort which they chew, and having mixed them with a draught of beer they spit or spray out the mixture on the trees of the grove; this form of offering is called "puffing at the God". After that, they slaughter cattle, feast on their flesh, and quaff the beer which they have brought with them to the holy place.[2]

Sacred grotto of Mbamba or Kiara.

Another famous place where sacrifices are, or rather used to be, offered to Mbamba or Kiara is on the peninsula of Ikombe, at the north-eastern extremity of Lake Nyasa. Here a rock, called by the natives God's Rock, juts out into

[1] D. R. Mackenzie, *The Spirit-ridden Konde*, pp. 181 *sq.*

[2] F. Fülleborn, *Das deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet, Land und Leute*, p. 318.

the lake. It is shaded by lofty trees, and a brook of clear water babbles close by. In this rock there is a grotto which the natives call the House of God. The entrance is overgrown with creeping plants, and the floor of the grotto is covered with several layers of earthen pots, which once contained offerings. A priest, who bore the title of Son of the Lake (*Muakinjassa*), used to be in charge of the sanctuary; he had a wife and cattle, but both wife and cattle were deemed the property of the deity. In time of drought the Konde chiefs used to meet at this rock beside the lake shore to pray for rain. A victim was slain and its flesh placed in the House of God. Then a chief, who acted as spokesman in the prayers, filled a gourd with water from the lake, took a mouthful of the water, and puffed it out on the ground. This he continued to do until he had emptied the gourd. Then he prayed, saying, "Mbamba! Kiara! Thou hast refused us rain, give us rain, that we die not. Save us from death by hunger. Thou art indeed our Father, we are thy children, Thou hast created us, why wouldst thou that we die? Give us maize, bananas, and beans. Thou hast given us legs to run, arms to work, and also cattle; give us now rain, that we may reap the harvest." But if the deity turned a deaf ear to these petitions, and the drought continued, the people repaired again to the grove and repeated their prayers, until Mbamba or Kiara was graciously pleased to hearken to them and to send the longed-for rain.[1]

Prayers and sacrifices for rain.

Another sacred grotto of Kiara is similarly situated in a cliff which, rising in romantic beauty from the brink of the lake, has been christened by Europeans the Loreley Rock. But here also the worship of the native god appears to have been long neglected. A European who visited the holy spot some years ago had to cut his way to it through the tangled and matted forest with a knife. A native, who accompanied him to the forlorn sanctuary with fear and trembling, informed him that in time past this shrine had enjoyed a high reputation, not only among the Konde and the Wakissi; even the Wakinga came down from the mountains to sacrifice here beside the lake. The offerings

Another sacred grotto of Kiara, a place of sacrifice.

[1] F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.* p. 320.

consisted of meal and white fowls, also of goats and cattle, but the colour of the cattle was indifferent. If a cow destined for sacrifice chanced to low, it was a sign that Kiara would not have it; so the animal was not slaughtered. Of the slain cattle a head and leg used to be laid in the grotto as offerings. The goats were taken a little way aside from the sanctuary and slaughtered at the foot of a cliff, under the shadow of ancient trees. Their flesh is said to have been wholly consumed by the worshippers. The white fowls were brought alive to the sanctuary and fed by the priest with millet.[1] In contrast to the white fowls thus offered to Kiara were the black calves sacrificed to the dead. The Konde used to offer human sacrifices. As late as 1896 there were rumours of the sacrifice of a woman and child in connexion with a ceremony to procure rain; but we are not told that the sacrifice was offered to Kiara. The mode of sacrifice was to cut the victim's throat and sprinkle the blood about.[2]

Story of the Origin of Death: the Two Messengers, the sheep and the dog.

Like many other African peoples, the Konde tell a story of the Origin of Death which conforms to the type of the Two Messengers; in this case the messengers are a sheep and a dog. They say that of old there was as yet no such thing as death, and men were divided in opinion as to whether they should ask God to grant them death or not. Those who thought death desirable sent a sheep to impress their view on the deity; while those who preferred not to die despatched a dog to plead the cause of immortality with God. But the sheep, the advocate of death, arrived before the dog; the deity gave judgment in his favour, and consequently men have been mortal ever since.[3] A somewhat similar story of the Origin of Death is told in Calabar, on the opposite side of the continent, and in it also the messengers are a dog and a sheep. They say that for a long time after the creation of the world there was no death in it. At last, however, a man sickened and died. So the people sent a dog to God to ask him what they should do with the dead man. The dog stayed so long away that the people grew tired of waiting and sent off a sheep to God with

[1] F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.* p. 321.
[2] F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.* pp. 322 *sq.*
[3] F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.* p. 331.

the same question. The sheep soon returned and reported that God said, "Let the dead man be buried". So they buried him. Afterwards the dog returned also and reported that God said, "Put warm ashes on the dead man's belly, and he will rise again". However, the people told the dog that he came too late; the dead man was already buried according to the instructions of the sheep. That is why men are buried when they die. But as for the dog he is driven from men and humiliated, because it is through his fault that we all die.[1]

Belief of the Wakulwe in a good God and Creator called Nguluwi.

The Wakulwe inhabit a district to the west of Lake Rukwa, in the south-western corner of Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa). Down to about a hundred and fifty years ago, according to native tradition, their country was uninhabited, the haunt of elephants, buffaloes, zebras, lions, leopards, and other wild beasts.[2] According to the testimony of a Catholic missionary, Father Hamberger, who lived among them for about eight years and knew their language, the Wakulwe believe in the existence of a good and righteous God, the Creator, who is an incorporeal spirit. They call him Nguluwi, but among some neighbouring tribes, including the Wabemba, Wamambwe, and Wafipa, his name is Leza. On account of his goodness the Wakulwe often give him the title of Mother (*Mama*), though they by no means regard him as feminine. The souls of the dead (*wazimu*) are believed to dwell with him in a bright place and by their petitions to exercise great influence over him, though in themselves they are not endowed with any divine power. Among the souls of the dead the spirits of deceased chiefs bear a special name (*maleza*) and are the most influential intercessors with the deity.[3] Their name (*maleza*) is the plural form of Leza, which, as we have seen, is the name of the Supreme Being in some neighbouring tribes; yet we are told that no divine power is ascribed even to them.[4]

[1] "Calabar Stories," *Journal of the African Society*, No. 18 (January, 1906), p. 194. I have reported this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 63). See also above, pp. 105 *sq.*

[2] A. Hamberger, "Religiöse Überlieferungen und Gebräuche der Landschaft Mkulwe (Deutsch-Ostafrika)", *Anthropos*, iv. (1909) p. 295.

[3] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 305.

[4] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 308.

Mwawa, an African Satan.

Another incorporeal spirit who plays a great part in the religion of the Wakulwe is called Mwawa. The people hate and fear him, though outwardly they honour him and obey his perverse commands, lest he should destroy them. His special function is to deceive people and to strike them blind or to "eat them up" by means of the smallpox. Hence he is often known as Mother Smallpox (*Mama Nduwi*), for the title Mother is given him to flatter him. In short, as Father Hamberger observes, Mwawa is no other than Satan in person, and like Satan he lives in the air.[1]

Nguluwi the source of all good.

From God or Nguluwi, on the other hand, come all good things, such as children, rain, food, health, and luck in hunting, fishing, and undertakings of every sort. He will even help a man to destroy an enemy either by violence or by sorcery. But the blessings which he so liberally dispenses he frequently bestows, not on his own initiative, but at the prompting of the good spirits who dwell with him. Even Mwawa, in other words Satan, can appear before him in the office of intercessor.[2]

Prayers to Nguluwi.

Prayers are offered by the father of a family, either to Nguluwi directly, or to the souls of the worshipper's dead forefathers with a request that they will intercede with Nguluwi for him.[3] Thus when rain is wanted, the chief of the district sacrifices animals at the graves of his ancestors and begs them to implore rain from Nguluwi, saying, for instance, "Thou Father Luiwa, guard me! All ye fathers of the land, guard me! Ask rain of Nguluwi for me! Guard me, guard us, us, your children, that we die not of famine", and so on.[4]

Story of a great flood.

Some of the Wakulwe tell a story of Nguluwi which bears a close, not to say suspicious, resemblance to the Biblical narrative of the Great Flood. It runs thus:

Long ago the rivers came down in flood. God said to two men, "Go into the ship. Also take into it seeds of all sorts and all animals, one male and one female of each." They did so. The flood rose high, it overtopped the mountains, the ship floated on it. All animals and all men died. When the water dried up, the man in the ship said, "Let us

[1] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 305.
[2] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* pp. 305 *sq.*
[3] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* pp. 306 *sq.*
[4] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 308.

see, perhaps the water is not yet dried up". He sent out a dove. She returned to the ship. He waited, he sent out a hawk which did not return, because the water was dried up. The men went forth from the ship, they let out all the animals and all the seeds. This legend is reported by Father Hamberger, who tells us that it is known to few of the people. He had it from two men, who assured him that it was an ancient tradition of the country and not borrowed from foreigners.[1]

Story like that of the Tower of Babel.

Like other African tribes, the Wakulwe also tell of an attempt which men of old made to scale the heaven. Their wish was to reach the moon, and for this purpose they set one tree on the top of another, till the structure attained a great height. Then it fell down and killed them. Other men repeated the attempt with the same result, after which the survivors desisted from the rash undertaking.[2] The story savours of the Tower of Babel, but not more so than some other African tales of the same type.[3]

Story of the Origin of Death: Nguluwi, the sheep and the dog.

Lastly, the Wakulwe explain the origin of human mortality by a story which is clearly not copied directly from the Mosaic record. According to them the fatal event happened thus. One day men said, "Let us ask the sheep and the dog". They gave the sheep a piece of meat, they gave the dog a bone. An old woman, inspired by Mwawa (that is, by Satan), said to them, "Ye err. Give the dog the meat." The men agreed, they did just the contrary of what they had done at first, they gave the dog the meat, they gave the sheep the bone. They said, "The one that swallows it and speaks first, his words shall have weight". The dog made haste, bolted the meat, barked, "Bow wow!" and said, "We die, we perish". The sheep nibbled at the bone, but could not bolt it down. At last she spoke and said, "Ba! ba! We die but we come back," meaning that we rise from the dead. The men said, "Alas! The dog was before you." They beat the dog and drove it away.[4]

On this story Father Hamberger remarks that it is universally known among the natives and is often told by

[1] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 304. I have reported this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 332).

[2] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 304.

[3] For examples see above, pp. 173, 174, and below, p. 201.

[4] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 300.

them in a shorter form. Further he tells us that, in accordance with the native habit of leaving unsaid much that they regard as too obvious to require mention, we must understand it to have been the will of Nguluwi, that is of God, that men should give the meat to the sheep, as indeed they did in the first instance, instead of to the dog. If only they had done so, it is plain that the sheep would have swallowed the meat before the dog could have masticated the bone, and that, having bolted it, the sheep would have delivered the glad tidings of resurrection before the dog could have announced his doom of death. Hence we should all have been immortal, or, what comes to much the same thing, we should all have risen from the dead down to this day. Thus the benevolent intention of the deity towards his creatures is again triumphantly vindicated. It was not his fault that men gave the meat to the dog instead of to the sheep. Understood in this way, the story is clearly nothing but a variation on the story of the Two Messengers, which so many African tribes tell to explain the origin of human mortality. In that widespread tradition the purpose of the Creator to bestow immortality on mankind is always frustrated by the mistake or misconduct of the messenger who is charged with the good news of life eternal. In the Konde and Calabar versions of the tale cited above the two messengers are, as in the Wakulwe version, a dog and a sheep; but in them, the parts of the messengers are inverted, the dog being the herald of resurrection, while the sheep announces the sentence of death irretrievable.[1]

Mgr. Lechaptois on Nguluwi (Nguluwi), the Supreme Being of the Wakulwe.

Father Hamberger's account of Nguluwi, the Supreme Being of the Wakulwe, is confirmed by the testimony of a French Catholic Missionary, Monseigneur Lechaptois, who lived and worked among the tribes of the south-western corner of Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa). He tells us that in Mkulwe, that is, the country of the Wakulwe, the Creator and Supreme Being is known as Ngulwi (*Ngouloui*). He is sovereignly good and has for his ministers Katavi and Mwawa, two incorporeal spirits who fly in the air. The first of them (Katavi) appears to preside over the rewards, and the second (Mwawa)

[1] See above, pp. 192 *sq.*

over the punishments respectively bestowed or inflicted on souls in the other world.[1] In this account Mwawa is clearly identical with the spirit of the same name whom Father Hamberger equates with Satan; and with regard to Katavi, we must conclude that he is no other than Katai, who, according to Father Hamberger, is merely Mwawa himself under another name.[2]

Various names for the Supreme Being, such as Leza, Katema (meaning the sun), and Ilanzi.

Further, Monseigneur Lechaptois informs us that in Nyasaland, on the banks of Lake Tanganyika, and in Urungu, which is the country at the south-western corner of Lake Tanganyika, the name for the Supreme Being is Leza. He it is who has made all things, and who gives life to the child in its mother's womb. It is to him that men go when they die. In Ugala he receives the same name as the sun, namely Katema. The Wagala say that he pays little heed to men, but that he kills those at whom he is angry.[3] In Rukwa and Ufipa (the land of the Wafipa) the usual name of the Supreme God is Leza; but according to the tradition of the natives this name was introduced among them by the Warungu. The true name of the Sovereign Creator in the native language is said to be Ilanzi, which means the sun. In the morning when they woke, people used to say, "Ilanzi has kept me during the night"; and when some one died, they said, "Ilanzi has taken him away".[4]

The Supreme God lives in the sky and hardly troubles himself about the life of man. The lower world is ruled by inferior spirits, including the souls of the dead, and it is these whom the people worship.

But among all these tribes, situated at or near the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, whether he be called Leza, or Ilanzi, or Nguluwi, or Katema, this Supreme God is said to enter very little into the everyday life of the people. He inhabits the sky, where he is supremely happy; and it seems that he cannot stoop so low as to interest himself in the multifarious needs of his creatures. Hence they in their turn deem it useless to pay him any particular homage or to address any prayers to him. But below this great deity they admit the existence of a multitude of inferior

[1] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux Rives du Tanganika* (Algiers, 1913), p. 165. Both Monseigneur Lechaptois and Father Hamberger belong to the Order of the White Fathers. Father Hamberger is, or was, head of the Catholic mission of Mkulwe (St. Boniface).

[2] A. Hamberger, *op. cit.* p. 305.

[3] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, p. 165.

[4] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, pp. 165 *sq.*

divinities, who rule the world, some of them dispensing all the comforts and blessings, others inflicting all the calamities and woes that affect for good or evil the life of man. It is to these lower divinities, the dread of whom is deeply implanted in the native mind, that all the offerings and prayers of the people are addressed.[1] The name for these lesser deities varies with the dialect of the tribe; in one they are called *mizimu*, in another *miyao* or *migabo*, in another *amaleza*. This last name, which is current especially among the Warungu and Wafipa, would literally mean "Sons of Leza"; but the natives use the terms father and son in too wide and loose a sense to allow us to draw any precise conclusions from the name *amaleza*.[2] Whatever be the exact essence of these minor deities, they seem to be all subject to the infirmities of human nature. Like men they are apt to be weary and to suffer from hunger and thirst. Hence people erect little huts where the spirits may rest from the fatigue of scouring the air, and where they may refresh themselves with the victuals which are deposited in the tiny huts for their consumption. The spirits of the human dead also roam about the villages where they dwelt in life, and they still take a kindly interest in the affairs of their living kinsfolk. Hence for them, too, little shelters are put up near their old homes, and there the survivors scatter flour, pour beer, or slaughter an animal in sacrifice, while they pray to the souls of their fathers, their mothers, or their brothers to behold their sufferings and heal their diseases.[3] Indeed, we are told that these people possess a mythology as rich as that of Greece in antiquity. The popular imagination has given itself full play in peopling the forests, the rocks, the cascades, the glens, the rivers, and above all the shores of the lake with innumerable spirits. There is hardly a reef, hardly a cape in Lake Tanganyika which has not its god dreaded by

Rich mythology of these tribes.

[1] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, p. 166.

[2] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, p. 167.

[3] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, p. 168. Thus the author appears to distinguish the souls of the dead from the *mizimu*, which he seemingly regards as spirits of nature. But no doubt the *mizimu* are identical with the *wazimu*, which Father Hamberger expressly identifies with the souls of the dead (*Anthropos*, iv. 305); and the same word, with dialectical differences, occurs in the sense of "souls of the dead" in many Bantu languages.

the mariner. Such a cape, for example, is Kaboga, where the hollow rocks at its base receive the breaking waves and give out their muffled roar, like a peal of thunder, heard far off for miles. To the ear of the native this mysterious sound is the voice of the spirit calling for a sacrifice or threatening with vengeance the bold mortal who should dare to refuse his demand.[1] Above all the hubbub and bustle of life on earth, the Supreme Being, by whatever name he is called, is supposed to sit in majestic calm, hardly deigning to disturb the bliss of heaven by a moment's thought bestowed on the petty affairs of his puny creature man.

Story of the Origin of Death and of the immortality of serpents.

Two of these tribes, the Wafipa and the Wabende, who inhabit the country on the south-eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, tell a story which, like many other African tales, associates the Supreme Being with the origin of human mortality. They say that Leza, the high God, came down to earth, and, addressing all living creatures, he said, "Who among you wishes not to die?" Unfortunately, men and animals were asleep. The serpent alone was awake and answered "I" to the question of the deity. That is why man dies like all the animals. The serpent alone does not die of itself. To die, it must be killed. Every year, in order to renew its youth and vigour, it has only to change its skin.[2] Almost identical stories to explain human mortality are told by the Dusuns of British North Borneo and the Todjo-Toradjas of Central Celebes.[3]

The Wahehe of Tanganyika Territory believe in a Supreme Being called Nguruhi, but they do not pray or sacrifice to him, reserving all their worship for the spirits of the dead.

To the east of these tribes, but still in the southern portion of Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa), the Wahehe inhabit a mountainous and barren region intersected by valleys down which rush torrents of clear cold water. Despite its situation within the tropics the country, swept by keen biting winds, enjoys a cool or even cold climate. The rich grass which carpets the banks of the rivers affords excellent pasture for cattle; and accordingly the Wahehe

[1] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, pp. 170, 172.

[2] Mgr. Lechaptois, *Aux rives du Tanganika*, p. 195.

[3] See *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 66. For the Dusun version of the story, add to the references Ivor H. N. Evans, *Studies in Religion, Folk-lore, and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula* (Cambridge, 1923), pp. 47, 49.

are mainly a pastoral people, who put all their pride and ambition in the maintenance and multiplication of their herds.[1] Like the other tribes whom we have surveyed, the Wahehe believe in a Supreme Being, a Creator, whom they call Nguruhi. The name appears to be only another form of Nguluwi, by which the Wakulwe designate the same mighty being.[2] The Wahehe believe that he sends rain and sunshine, wind and storm, thunder and lightning, in short, that he is the author of all the great atmospheric phenomena of nature. In his hand, too, are the destinies of mankind; he causes them to be born and to die, to be well or to be sick, to be rich or to be poor; at his good pleasure he blesses them with abundant harvests or smites them with dearth and famine. He is a spirit, invisible, and incapable of being represented in art; accordingly, no image of him exists or has ever existed. He created the world, but as to when or how he did so, the people have no definite idea. They conceive of him as all-powerful, but yet as maintaining only a general control over the world and human destiny, while the spirits of the dead (*masoka*) exert a permanent and very considerable influence on the course of all particular events. It is true that Nguruhi is lord also over the spirits of the dead, but his relation to them is a subject on which the natives have but little reflected. To this Supreme Being they neither pray nor sacrifice; they do not strive to enter into any form of communion with him; substantially he stands quite aloof from their religious life, and in practice he serves only as the standing explanation of every thing and every event which is otherwise inexplicable. All the devotion, all the worship of the people is directed to the spirits of the dead, who are the real objects of the popular religion.[3]

The Wapare or Wasu believe in a good God and Creator called Kyumbi.

The Pare mountains form a range running southward from Mount Kilimanjaro, near the eastern boundary of Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa). The greater part of the mountains is inhabited by a tribe called the

[1] E. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe* (Berlin, 1908), p. 3. The writer omits to describe the situation of Uhehe, the country of the Wahehe, but from the sketch map we gather that it lies somewhere between the valleys of the Ruaha and the Rufiji or Alanga Rivers.

[2] See above, p. 193.

[3] E. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, pp. 22 *sq.*

Wapare or Wasu. Among them have been recorded some ancient and half-forgotten legends of a good God, the Creator of the world, whom they call Kyumbi. They say that he gave their forefathers cattle, in order that they might clothe themselves in the hides, for he pitied their nakedness. He gave them also maize and the fruits of the field, and taught them to till the ground, for they suffered from hunger. God was near, men lived in communion with him. But Kiriamagi, the Eater of Eggs, the Deceiver, the Serpent, tempted men to eat eggs, which Kyumbi had forbidden them to do. And God punished them with a great famine, so that they began to eat beetles in order to save their lives. All mankind died, except two, a young man and a young woman. From them all the generations of the earth are descended. Now God was still near to men. But when men multiplied they grew froward, and they spake among themselves, saying, "Come, let us build a tower, whose top shall reach to the upper land, in order that we may creep up it and wage war on Him that is above in His own country". But Kyumbi looked down on them, as a man looks down on a heap of ants, and he said, "What are these little pigmies down below there?" Then the earth quaked, and the tower broke in two, and buried the builders under the ruins. But Kyumbi moved the upper land far away, and ever since he has not been near men, but far, far away. And since that day men have sought God, and wished to draw him down to them, but they could not; for Kyumbe hearkened to them no more.[1]

Story like that of the Tower of Babel.

And men beheld the fiery orb which rises in the east from the underworld and passes by to vanish again in the west, and to go down into the realm of shadows; and they made the fiery orb their god, and from that time they named their god Ithuwa, that is to say, the Sun. Thoughtful people among the Wapare still speak of a God who is separate from the sun, and who lives on or in the sun and created it, as he created everything else. But for most folk the three names Kyumbi, Ithuwa, and Mrungu are all one; all three signify God. If you ask them where Kyumbi, or

Kyumbi is also called Ithuwa, that is, the Sun.

[1] J. J. Dannholz, *Im Banne des Geisterglaube, Züge des animistischen Heidentums bei den Wasu in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig, 1916), p. 12.

Ithuwa, or Mrungu is, they point to the sun. Ithuwa, the Sun, is the male god, and he begat mankind; Mweji, the Moon, is the female deity, and she bore mankind. The stars are the divining pebbles which the Moon handles when she consults the oracle about the birth of children. Men pray to Ithuwa for children and increase of cattle; and apart from these blessings they pray to him chiefly to guard them against the foe who walks in darkness and dabbles in magic. Early in the morning the father of the family takes a mouthful of beer and spits it out twice towards the rising sun, and twice he prays, saying, "O Ithuwa, thou chief, thou Mrungu, thou who didst create men, and cattle, and trees, and grass, thou who passest by overhead, look upon him who curses me! When thou breakest forth in the morning, may he see thee; but when thou goest down at evening, may he see thee no more! But if I have sinned against him, may I die before thou dost decline!" And when a man is dying, he takes the hand of his son, spits into it and says: "My son, I die. But do thou dwell below the water-brook that thou mayest ever be able to water thy field. May Ithuwa give thee the strength and fatness of the field. May He give thee cattle and children, a son and a daughter!"[1]

Morning prayer to the Sun.

Thus it would appear that the Wapare have some traditions or reminiscences of an ancient Sky-god named Kyumbi, who at a later time has been identified or confused by them with the sun. The foregoing account of this religious evolution or degeneration is drawn from the work of a German missionary who has lived among the Wapare. It is confirmed by the testimony of another German missionary, who, on questioning a very old man as to what the Wapare knew about God, received the following answer: "Kiumbe is the Creator who created everything. We know nothing more about him. He does not trouble himself about us, and we do not trouble ourselves about him. But the Sun is great, and the Moon is great; the Moon gives birth to the children of men." Another native said, "As Creator, Kiumbe is known to us all". But when one of the

The Sky-god Kyumbi identified or confused with the Sun.

[1] J. J. Dannholz, *Im Banne der Geisterglaube*, pp. 13 *sq.* The author spells the name of the Sun-god Izuwa, but says that the z is to be pronounced like the English *th*.

Wapare is asked to give fuller information on the deity, he has nothing more to say, and falls back on the Sun and Moon as more familiar and, above all, visible beings.[1] The same missionary describes more fully the prayer offered by those people to the Sun for the destruction of an enemy. He tells us that when a chief is threatened with an unjust war by an enemy, he prepares some honey-beer in a small pot, and mounts with it to the roof of his hut, where he sets down the pot and offers a libation to the Creator (*Kiumbe*), to the Firmament (*kilunge*), and to the Sun and Moon, spitting twice towards the sunrise and twice towards the sunset. He prays at the same time that his foe may see the rising, but not the setting of the orb of day. This prayer or incantation he repeats on four successive days, and on the day of battle he gives his enemy notice of it by proclamation. And a native doctor, after he has treated his patient, will go out of the house with his medicine bottle, spit towards the east and the west, and cry to the Sun, "Take our sicknesses to thyself, and go with them whither thou goest!"[2]

Prayers to the Sun for the destruction of an enemy and for the healing of the sick.

On the extreme northern edge of Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa), close to the boundary of Kenya Colony, stands Mount Kilimanjaro, a huge extinct volcano more than nineteen thousand feet high. For a perpendicular height of some five thousand feet its summit is sheathed in a mantle of eternal ice and snow. Rising in isolated majesty from the plain, the great mountain offers a most impressive spectacle, whether, viewed from a distance of over a hundred miles, its snowy dome appears like a dazzling white cloud against the blue African sky, or whether the traveller gazes up at its soaring mass from the hot tropical lowlands at its foot. The sides of the mountain are riven into ridges by deep ravines carved by torrents, their precipitous banks draped with tree ferns and wild bananas; waterfalls plunge with a thundrous roar down sheer cliffs or trickle over rocky inclines into clear crystal pools set in a riot of jungle growth; on the lower slopes the

Mount Kilimanjaro, the African Olympus.

[1] E. Kotz, *Im Banne der Furcht, Sitten und Gebräuche der Wapare* (Hamburg, etc.: N.D. Introduction dated 1922), p. 192.

[2] E. Kotz, *Im Banne der Furcht*, p. 193.

ridges are clad in the verdurous mantle of unbroken banana groves, among which nestle the huts of the mountain dwellers; higher up the luxuriant groves give place to virgin forest, the haunt of elephants and leopards, where the gnarled tree-trunks are interwoven by trailing vines and decked with ferns, orchids, and moss, where the dense foliage overhead is wet with the morning mist, and under foot the ground is carpeted with delicate wild flowers, and honeycombed with springs that well forth at every step. Here monkeys gambol among the trees, squirrels leap from bough to bough, the air is full of the ceaseless hum of insects, and butterflies of gorgeous hues flit through the dappled sunshine and shade of the forest. Higher up the woods are replaced by open grass lands, and higher still succeed moors of heather, strewn with boulders. Here the trees have disappeared, and with them have gone most of the signs and sounds of abounding animal life which relieved the gloom of the forest. Silence and solitude now reign, broken occasionally by the croak of a raven on a rock, or by the sight of a duiker scampering through the heather, or of a hawk poised on level pinions overhead. Higher still a desert of sand, shingle, and rock stretches up to the eternal snows and glaciers of the summit. The very few Europeans who have scaled Mount Kibo, the loftier of the two peaks of Kilimanjaro, have looked down with wonder on an immense crater, over a mile wide and many hundreds of feet deep, its floor covered with vast sheets and battlements of ice. For though lava has flowed over the rim of the crater and run down the flanks of the mountain, leaving great petrified ridges which look like giant girders supporting the dome of ice, yet at the present day the volcano displays no sign of outward activity; only the ominous tremors that often shake the ground give warning of the tremendous fires that slumber beneath the seemingly calm and peaceful surface. In its combination of loftiness with grandeur and beauty of scenery, if not in the solemn religious impression which it has made on the minds of its people, Kilimanjaro deserves to rank as the Olympus of Africa.[1]

[1] Hon. Charles Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People* (London, 1924), pp. 11-27, 32 *sq.*, 38. For another account of two partial ascents of Kilimanjaro,

The native inhabitants of Kilimanjaro occupy the slopes from a height of about four to six or seven thousand feet. They belong to the Bantu family, but they are by no means homogeneous in blood, being the descendants of different tribes who have been driven up the mountain from the plains by the pressure of enemies. They have no common name for themselves, but by Europeans they are called Wachagga or Chagga, and this name has now been practically adopted by the people themselves. They have evolved a more or less common language, with dialects which are very distinct from each other. Similarly their customs are for the most part uniform, though they vary in detail. The differences of dialect, and to a certain extent of custom are favoured by the configuration of their country; for the various communities inhabit separate ridges which are sharply divided from each other by the deep river valleys of the mountain. Each community styles itself the people of this or that ridge, as for instance the Wamashe, the Wamoshi, and so forth. They are all devoted exclusively to agriculture, except in one district where pasture land favours the breeding of cattle.[1] Before the arrival of the Wachagga the mountain is said to have been inhabited by a dwarf people called the Wakonyingo or Wadarimba.[2]

The Wachagga of Mount Kilimanjaro.

The Wachagga recognize the existence of a great Sky-god whom they call Ruwa.[3] In its absolute form the word Ruwa denotes the sun only, but in its locative form it designates the sky.[4] Some confusion seems to reign in the

The great Sky-god of the Wachagga is named Ruwa, a word which may denote either the sky or the sun.

see Charles New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa* (London, 1873), pp. 400 *sqq.*, 419 *sqq.* Mr. New's description of the scenery on the ascent tallies closely with that of Mr. Dundas. On his second ascent, with much difficulty, he just reached the level of the snow. Of the landscape on the lower slope he says (p. 402): "Here are fairy woods and bowers, sunny hills and shady dells, murmuring brooks, bridges, viaducts, and, in fact, the whole collection of sylvan beauties and delights; enough to elicit poetry from the most prosaic of mortals".

[1] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 32, 41.

[2] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 37, 41, 50 *sq.*

[3] Bruno Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger* (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 177 *sqq.*; J. Raum, "Die Religion der Landschaft Moschi am Kilimandjaro", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, xiv. (1911) pp. 192 *sqq.*; Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 107 *sqq.* The name is given as *Ruwa* by Messrs. Raum and Dundas, as *Iruva* by Mr. Gutmann. But in a later essay Mr. Gutmann adopted the form *Ruwa*. See his essay, "Feldbausitten und Wachstumsbräuche der Wadschagga," *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie*, liv. (1913) p. 509. Hence I have adopted the form *Ruwa* throughout.

[4] J. Raum, *op. cit.* p. 193.

language, if not in the minds, of the Wachagga as to the distinction between Ruwa as a god, as the sun, and as the sky. In the same breath they will speak of him as a divine being, the Creator of men, and as the physical sun which rises, sets, and shines. But this confusion, though it may puzzle the European, presents no difficulty to the African. The conception of the external world as purely physical is foreign to him ; the boundary of the supernatural and mysterious, if he admits a boundary of it at all, is close at hand for him, and he passes it readily and without misgiving ; to him it is perfectly natural to invest with personality and to treat as powerful spiritual beings those objects of the external world which affect him deeply. His worship of Ruwa is founded on a simple personification either of the orb of the sun or of the dome of heaven.[1] Which of the two, the sun or the sky, furnished the starting-point of the conception of the great god seems doubtful. One of our best authorities on the Wachagga, the German missionary, Bruno Gutmann, appears to hold that the primary root of the deity is the sky rather than the sun. He tells us that the Wachagga energetically deny that Ruwa dwells in the sun or above the blue vault of heaven ; his place is between the sky and the earth ; they name the whole sky Ruwa, and say that it is a god who embraces, as it were, the whole world of man. But the actual vault or firmament, which they believe to be of stone, they call by a different name (*ngina*). Again, the god Ruwa cannot be identical with the physical sun, because at night the sun sets in the west and passes under the earth to his place of rising in the east ; whereas Ruwa is conceived of as brooding by night as well as by day over our human world. From all this Mr. Gutmann infers that in deifying Ruwa the Wachagga thought originally, not of the glowing orb of day, but of the whole broad heaven. "The worship of the sky", he says, "was the starting-point of their idea of God".[2]

But the primary root of the deity seems to be the sky rather than the sun.

This conclusion as to the celestial rather than the solar origin of the god Ruwa is confirmed by the opinion of an

Native account of the celestial nature of Ruwa.

[1] J. Raum, *op. cit.* p. 193.

[2] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, pp. 178 *sq.*

intelligent native, who reported the views of his people as follows:

"It appears that in speaking of Ruwa they think, it is true, of the sun, but, on the whole, more of the sky. If they believed that Ruwa was the sun, then a man who prayed to Ruwa at night would look downward, because at night the sun is believed to be below the earth. At evening also he would turn towards the west where the sun goes down. But people do not so, not by any means. The reason why they think of the sun is this: they know that the sun is something very big and wonderfully shiny. It can also walk day and night without stopping for rest and refreshment. But nobody can say why it keeps walking about, whether it be to keep awake or for any other reason. They believe also that in form it is like a man, and that it talks like a man and eats grass. It, or rather he, has also made a farmsteading for himself; and when he is in the zenith he has reached his steading. The moon is the wife of Ruwa, and the stars are his cattle. But whether he slaughters them is more than anybody knows." [1]

Comparison of Ruwa to a cow.

With this description of the Sun as a being of the graminivorous order, we may compare the vision which an old Chagga woman professed to have had of Ruwa himself. Asked to describe the deity, she said that he was as large as a cow, and that his tail was speckled red and white.[2]

The birds that peck at the rising sun.

How little the Wachagga identify the physical sun with Ruwa appears from their belief that, when the sun rises in the morning, it is so tiny that it would be pecked to pieces by the birds, if certain sleepless guardians were not stationed far in the east, at the end of the world, to scare away the flocks of fowls that would otherwise swallow the sun and leave the world in darkness.[3]

Ruwa the Creator of man but not of the universe.

Ruwa is not conceived of as the Creator of the universe. If a Chagga man be asked who made the sun and the earth, he will answer that they have always existed, but of the stars he will sometimes say that they are Ruwa's children.[4] On the other hand Ruwa is said to have created the first human

[1] J. Raum, *op. cit.* pp. 197, 200.
[2] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 178.
[3] B. Gutmann, *l.c.*
[4] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, p. 107.

pair; among the various verbs used to express this creation one (*igumba*) is otherwise only used to express the moulding of clay by a potter. To this day men come into being by the will of Ruwa. He it is who fashions the child in its mother's womb. A childless man will say sadly, "Ruwa has overlooked me". A cripple is under the special protection of Ruwa, and none may mock or illtreat him, because they say that it was Ruwa who made him so.[1]

Moral character of Ruwa.

As a personal deity, Ruwa is believed to be kind and merciful, and these amiable features of his character are illustrated by many stories told about him. For example, we hear of a poor man who set out to seek Ruwa. He wandered on and on eastward, till he came to a meadow where a great herd of cattle was browsing. Some of the kine took a path that led downward, but others went upward, and the poor man followed them and came to Ruwa. And Ruwa received him kindly, inquired into his distress, and granted his request, saying, "That which thou wishest for thou shalt find at home".[2]

Ruwa the guardian of the moral law.

More than that, Ruwa is regarded in some sense as the guardian of the moral law. On the omnipotence and goodness of Ruwa a Chagga man expressed himself as follows:

"Ruwa has power to do all things. Ruwa does not change: as Ruwa was of old, so he is now. Nor does he lie; as he says so will he do. If a man does evil, though it be at night, Ruwa sees him. If the chief and his warriors surround a man, they cannot kill him if Ruwa does not permit it. When a man sickens and goes to the diviner and slaughters many goats and oxen for sacrifice, he will not be cured if Ruwa does not wish it. But Ruwa assists such and such a spirit to cure him. The spirit is the deputy of Ruwa who sends it to do his work, to cast sickness on

[1] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 182; compare J. Raum, *op. cit.* p. 195. Another verb (*itana*) applied to the creation of man also expresses the work of a smith (B. Gutmann, *l.c.*). On the other hand Mr. Dundas tells us that "Ruwa was not really the Creator of Mankind, he merely liberated the first human beings from some mysterious vessel by bursting it. On this account he is known as *Ruwa mopara wandu*, God who burst (out) men" (*Kilimanjaro and its People*, p. 108).

[2] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 180; compare Ch. Dundas, *op. cit.* p. 107.

people, to give them children, to bring famine, to mock bad men, to demand cattle, goats, and sheep, and to take them to Ruwa, and to bring small-pox and war into the country, to kill such and such a one by sickness and to kill all those whom Ruwa wants.

What parents teach their children about Ruwa.

"And the Wachagga teach their children thus: If a child is sent by its parents, and if that child refuses, or if a child quarrels with the parents and strikes them, or if it does evil, stealing so that people seize the property of the parents, such a child is rejected by Ruwa and will die before he marries. And a robber who steals much and kills people, such a man cannot hide himself; there will come a day when Ruwa will place him in the hands of the judge who will punish him. A man who commits treason, who invites enemies to attack his country, such a man is rejected by Ruwa and will die with all his clan; Ruwa will cut them down in their land. Ruwa cares for the poor, he cares for the orphans. If a man does good, if he does not intrigue against any one, if he does not steal but eats of his own hand, if he honours and cares for his elders, Ruwa will rejoice and give the blessing of cattle and goats and children. Now if you see a hut which has many sorrows, there evil has been done by the owner and his forebears, and now Ruwa has sent a spirit of this family to bring distress among them. So, my child, fear evil, do well, and Ruwa will rejoice and he will send you great blessing.

"And the elders thus teach their children at the hour of noon, and those who are taught point to the sky with one finger and spit thrice."[1]

The worship of Ruwa cast into the shade by that of the ancestral spirits.

Yet withal the worship of Ruwa plays a very small part in the religion of the Wachagga; as in so many other Bantu tribes, the worship of the Supreme Being is cast into the background and almost completely overshadowed by the worship of the dead: the cult of ancestral spirits is the real religion of the Wachagga. Indeed the figure of Ruwa seems at times almost to fade away into a dim, a shadowy abstraction, destitute of all significance for the practical life of the people. It is not only that he is thought of as so far away, so foreign, so aloof from mere humanity, while the

[1] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 121-123.

spirits of the dead are so near and so familiar; it is also that he is so good and so kind that he never sends trouble or distress, and therefore men have no need to fear and propitiate him; whereas among the spirits of the dead there are many that persecute and torment poor mortals; hence the Wachagga are compelled to sacrifice continually to these powerful and dangerous beings, to court their favour or appease their wrath.[1]

Why the Wachagga honour the dead more than Ruwa.

The same Chagga man who testified to the goodness and overruling providence of Ruwa went on further to explain why it is that nevertheless the Wachagga fear and honour the spirits of the dead more than him. He said:

"If you ask them why they fear and obey the spirits more than they do Ruwa, they will answer thus: 'When the Chief sends to demand something that is his due, and on that day you have naught to give, whom will you try to appease, the Chief or his messenger that he may speak well of you to the Chief and the Chief may have mercy on you? And if you give bad words to the spirit who is sent to you, or refuse him that which the diviner has counselled you to give (that is, to sacrifice), that spirit will go to Ruwa and accuse you, and Ruwa will be angered and will send another spirit, a foreign spirit who is not of your ancestry, to afflict you greatly and to kill you. For this reason we honour the spirits more.' Thus the old men speak concerning God and the spirits."[2]

Sacrifices and prayers offered to Ruwa only in the second place.

As a general rule, sacrifices are only offered to Ruwa when the prayers and sacrifices offered to the spirits have proved in vain. For example, if a man is sick, and offerings have been made to the spirits for many days to ensure his recovery, but without result, the people may say, "All this is useless. We will go no more to the diviner. The next goat that we slaughter shall be offered to Ruwa." So they fetch a goat when the sun is in the zenith. They bring it into the courtyard, and hold it with their hands, and spit on its head and say, "Here is the goat, Ruwa, my Chief. Thou alone knowest, how thou wilt deal with this man, as if

[1] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 185; J. Raum, *op. cit.* p. 193.

[2] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, p. 123.

thou wouldst beget him anew." The goat is taken away, brought behind the house, and slaughtered. The flesh they eat themselves. Ruwa gets only the soul.[1]

Goats sacrificed to Ruwa for rain.

Again, when rain is wanted, and the rainmaker has uttered his incantations and sacrificed to the ancestral spirits, but all in vain, he will advise the chief to offer sacrifice to Ruwa or the Sun. He will say, "The rain would have come by now, O chief, but it is hindered by a Man of the Sun. A goat must be sacrificed over the door of the hut, and beer and milk must be spat upward". Accordingly the sacrifice is offered by the rainmaker, assisted by an old man. The goat is hoisted on the thatched roof of the chief's hut and stretched out at full length on its back over the doorway, with its horns fastened in the thatch. Kneeling on the goat, the wizard receives a calabash full of beer, takes some of the beer in his mouth, spits it four times towards the sky, and prays, "Sun, my Chief, let the rain fall on us!" Then he does the same with the milk. Lastly, he stabs the goat to the heart with a knife, thus accomplishing the sacrifice. The goat is then taken down from the roof and cut up. The rainmaker carries home one half of the animal, and his assistant gets the other.[2]

Sacrifices to Ruwa for offspring.

Again, when a married pair are childless or all their children have died, they seek to procure offspring by offering a sacrifice to Ruwa or the Sun. The sacrifice is offered at noon, when the sun is in the zenith, for that is the right time to sacrifice to Ruwa. The victim, a goat, is laid on its back at the entrance of the hut so that half of its body projects into the house. Men and women strip themselves naked and stand beside the victim. The old people say, "We have given heed to that which here cuts off the thread of life, and we find that the cause is not any human being here on earth, but that it is He on High, who turns his eyes down on us below. It is He in his wrath. But if we sacrifice to him, the trouble will cease, he will give you the child." Before the goat is stabbed to the heart, the childless couple spit four times between its horns, and

[1] J. Raum, *op. cit.* pp. 198 *sq.*; compare B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p 185.

[2] Bruno Gutmann, "Feldbausitten und Wachstumsbrauche der Wadschagga," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, liv. (1913) p. 487.

each of them leaps four times over its body, the husband first and after him the wife. Then the victim is slaughtered and cut up, and omens are taken from the state of the entrails.[1]

Sacrifices and prayers to Ruwa in war.

Again, when the Wachagga go to war, they sacrifice to the spirits and Ruwa, and they say, "Ruwa, my Chief, mayest thou take me by the hand and lead me safe! Keep for me a head of cattle, O Chief, that with it I may sacrifice to thee." And if the army returns with a booty of cattle, they sacrifice and give thanks, once to the spirits, and once to Ruwa, saying, "Hail, Ruwa, my Chief! Thou hast brought me back safe and sound, so that I am come to my house. Here is a goat, thou wealthy one, mayest thou hereafter lend me another!"[2]

Sacrifices and prayers to Ruwa at the boundary of the country.

There is another sacrifice in which Ruwa is brought into immediate connexion with the ancestral spirits. The Wachagga formerly fortified their country on the side of the steppes by deep trenches. By day, to facilitate peaceful intercourse, these trenches were bridged by tree-trunks, which the wardens of the bridges removed at night. The guardian spirit of the bridge was believed to be the ancestor who first kept watch and ward at the trench. At the end of the rainy season, when the intercourse between the different communities, and also with the population of the steppes, begins afresh, sacrifices are still offered at all these entrances into the country in order to prevent sickness and plague from passing the boundary. The sacrifices are addressed to God (Ruwa), because the ancestral spirits have no power over sickness that comes from far; it is sent not by them but by God. The prayer which accompanies the sacrifice runs thus: "Thou Man of Heaven, O Chief, take this head of cattle. We pray thee that thou wouldest lead far past and away the sickness that comes on earth! And Thou, O Owner of the Bridge, help us to entreat the Man of Heaven that he send us no sickness!" Thus the prayer is addressed to God (Ruwa) and to the Owner of the Bridge, that is, to the spirit of the dead first Warden of the Marches;

[1] Bruno Gutmann, "Feldbausitten und Wachstumsbräuche der Wadschagga," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, liv. (1913) p. 509.

[2] J. Raum, "Die Religion der Landschaft Moschi am Kilimandjaro," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, xiv. (1911) p. 199.

but the Warden is only besought to act as intercessor with the Man of Heaven, the great god Ruwa.[1]

Morning and evening prayers to Ruwa.

Simple prayers, unaccompanied by sacrifices, are also offered to Ruwa by pious people both at morning and at evening. Thus at night a man will take his stand in the courtyard of his hut and looking up at the sky will say, "Ruwa, O Chief, hail to thee! Thou hast made me to pass this day in peace, grant that I pass this night in peace also!" And in the morning likewise many people look up at the sky, the mid sky, not at the point where the sun rises, and as they look they say, "Thanks be to thee, Ruwa O Lord, thou hast guarded me this night. Be pleased to guard me also the livelong day and let me not want some food to eat!" With these words they spit towards the sky.[2] The regular Chagga mode of saluting Ruwa is to name the god and to spit thrice towards the sky, his home.[3]

Stories about the Origin of Death told by the Wachagga.

The Wachagga tell many stories about Ruwa. Among these stories is one which professes to account for human mortality. It is so remarkable that it deserves to be related in full.

Story of the Forbidden Fruit.

The story runs thus. When Ruwa had either created mankind or at all events liberated them from confinement,[4] he kindly provided for their subsistence. He gave them a banana grove, and in the grove of their principal elder he planted a great number of sweet potatoes and yams. And in the centre he planted a species of yam called *Ula*, or *Ukaho*, which is planted beneath large trees and trained up creeper vines. What follows is related in the words of the natives, only rendered into English.

"Ruwa instructed the elder of the village in this wise, 'I give you leave to eat all the fruit of the bananas, also all the potatoes in the banana grove. Eat all the bananas and

[1] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, pp. 187 *sq.* As to the trenches, compare Charles New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa* (London, 1873), pp. 403 *sq.*: "Issuing from the stockade, we came to a deep and spacious fosse, over which we had to make our way upon a narrow and very shaky plank. The whole of Chaga is surrounded by these trenches. They are well dug, and are wide, deep, and steep enough to make the passage a difficult operation to foes, particularly if defended by a few brave men. They are the work of former generations, and are being neglected in these days."

[2] J. Raum, *op. cit.* pp. 196 *sq.*

[3] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 123, 311, 319, 321, 323, 325, 326, 331.

[4] See above, p. 208 note [1].

potatoes, you and your people. But the yam which is called Ula or Ukaho, truly you shall not eat it. Neither you nor your people may eat it, and if any man eats it, his bones shall break and at last he shall die.'

How the man was tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit.

"Then Ruwa left the people and went his ways. And every morning and evening he came to greet the elder and his people. Now one day a stranger came and greeted the elder and begged for food. The elder said to the stranger: 'Go into the banana grove to eat bananas and potatoes there, but the potato Ula do not eat at all. For Ruwa directed me and my people that we should not eat it, therefore do you not eat it.' The stranger said: 'It is now noon, this morning early Ruwa bade me tell you to give me a cooking-pot that I might cook this Ula, to eat it with you and your people that we may rejoice'. The elder hearing that Ruwa had sent this stranger, gave him a cooking-pot. And the stranger took a digging-stick and dug up the Ula and put it in the pot. The elder and the stranger cooked the Ula yams, and they started to eat.

"As they were eating Ruwa's Minister smelt the odour of cooking like to the odour of Ula. At once he came running up and asked them: 'What do you? What are you eating?' So the elder and the stranger were astonished and greatly afraid, they could find nothing to reply. Then the Minister of Ruwa took the pot with the yams and carried it to Ruwa. When Ruwa saw them he was very angry and sent his Minister a second time. And he went and spoke to the elder and his people: 'Because you were deceived by a stranger and ate my Ula, I shall break your bones and burst your eyes, and at last you shall die'. So the Minister returned to Ruwa. Since that day they have not seen him again, and Ruwa has not sent word to them again, and people commenced to be broken, and their eyes to be closed, and afterwards they died. Thus the old men of the Wachagga tell and know.

Death the consequence of eating of the forbidden fruit.

Another story of the Origin of Death, the cast skin and the naughty granddaughter.

"When the Minister had gone to Ruwa, at once the people and their elders commenced to sicken in their bones and eyes. So the elder prayed to Ruwa for honey and milk. And Ruwa hearkened to him, and he sent his minister again to tell the elder, 'Now I will have mercy

on you and your people. Know henceforth that you shall grow to a great age, and when you die you shall cast your skin as a snake does, and afterwards you shall become as a youth again. But not one of your people may see you when you cast your skin, you must be alone at such time. And if your child or grandchild see you, in that hour you shall die altogether and not be saved again.'

"So they lived until the elder became very aged. His children seeing this gave him his granddaughter to care for him, that he might not fall into the hearth and be burnt. Now the old man knew that the day was come for him to cast his skin as Ruwa had sent word to him by his Minister. And he considered how to be rid of his granddaughter to give him opportunity to change his skin. And he said to the granddaughter: 'Bring a gourd and fetch me water here'. And the granddaughter brought a gourd. The old man took a large needle and made small holes in the bottom of the gourd and gave it to the girl and instructed her to bring water. The old man knew she would not return quickly for the gourd was pierced with many holes. The granddaughter went quickly to draw water. But when the bowl was filled she saw that all the water leaked out because the gourd was pierced with many holes. And she made efforts to plug the holes. When she had finished plugging the holes she filled the gourd. And she placed the gourd on her head and hastened home to her grandfather. As she entered the house she was startled, for the old man had cast half his skin. The old man stared at her in great amazement, and cried out aloud: 'So be it, I have died, all of you will die; I have died, all of you shall die. For you, granddaughter, entered while I cast my skin. Woe is me, woe is you!'

"So the old man slowly wrapped himself up in his skin and died. And his children came with his grandchildren and they buried him. And that bad grandchild they drove away, and she went into the forest. And she became a wife and bore children, but not human children; she gave birth only to children with four legs and a tail. And these indeed are the baboons, and monkeys, and apes, and colobus monkeys. Thus the baboons and these others are the

The origin of baboons, monkeys, and apes.

children of her who offended against her grandfather. For this reason the baboons and their like are called 'People of the Forest' or 'Children of the Curse'." [1]

The two stories give two different explanations of the Origin of Death.

This curious legend has been reported by the Hon. Charles Dundas, Senior Commissioner of Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa). It obviously comprises two apparently distinct explanations of the origin of human mortality. According to the one explanation, men die because one of the first men ate of a certain kind of yam which God had forbidden him to eat under pain of death. According to the second explanation, men die because one of the first men was seen by his granddaughter in the act of casting his skin like a serpent and hence was prevented from renewing his youth. For, like many other primitive peoples, the Wachagga believe that serpents renew their youth by casting their skin: "to grow young like a serpent" appears to be a proverb with them.[2]

Both stories reported independently by a German missionary.

Both stories—that of the forbidden fruit and that of the cast skin—are reported independently by the German missionary, Mr. Bruno Gutmann, one of our best authorities on the religion and customs of the Wachagga. His version of the story of the cast skin runs as follows:

The story of the Cast Skin.

A man and his wife reached a great age. They had two children, a boy and a girl. One day the man said to his wife, "We must do something to renew our youth". He commanded her saying, "Plait two market-bags out of tree-bark. In them the children shall fetch water, for such bags leak, so the children will not soon return."

When the wife had woven the bags, she called the two children, gave them the two bags, and said to them, "With these bags fetch water to-day, and come not again until the bags are full". The children went away, and the old man said to his wife, "Now will we cast our skins like the serpents and be young again". So they began to strip off their skin. But hardly had they begun to do so when they heard the children talking in the courtyard. The old man sent them away again, and cried, "Go to the water until it remains in the bag". The children did as he had bidden

[1] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 108-111.

[2] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 190.

them. Ten times they turned back with the bags drained empty. Then they said, "We will go to the house". This time they went softly and came unperceived into the house.

The story of the Two Pots.

There they found their father and mother half stripped of their skin. Their father called out to them, "Now you see me as I am. Shall I now burst like an earthen pot, or shall I burst like a calabash that one pieces together again?" The son said, "Burst like an earthen pot, which one does not piece together again". Then his father burst and died.[1]

In this story the conclusion concerning the burst pot introduces us to a third and independent explanation of the origin of death which has been clumsily tacked on to the story of the cast skin. In its independent form the story of the burst pot runs as follows:

Of old when a man died he burst with a crack like that of a gourd-bottle. Then his friends came and sewed him up, and he got up as fresh and well as before. Now when an old woman drew near to death, she called her children and said to them, "I shall now die. Choose ye now what kind of death ye wish, my sons. Will ye die and break in bits like a gourd-bottle which is patched up again? or will ye break in bits like an earthen pot?" They answered, "We should like to break in bits like an earthen pot". Then the old woman cried out, "Alas! If ye had said, I will break in bits like a gourd bottle, ye should have been patched up again. But how shall ye patch up an earthen pot when once it is in bits?" Hence men have now incurred the doom of death, which cannot be cured. When they die, it is all up with them. They are buried and rot.[2]

Another story of the Origin of Death: the moon and the perverted message.

The thoughts of the Wachagga would seem to be much occupied with the problem of human mortality, for they tell yet another and quite different story to explain it. The story is this:

A certain man had two wives. The child of one of the wives died, and the mother asked the other wife, saying, "Go and cast my child into the forest, and as thou dost so say these words, 'Go and come back like the moon'". But the other wife envied her the child; and when she laid it

[1] B. Gutmann, *Volksbuch der Wadschagga* (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 119 *sq.*

[2] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 124.

down in the forest, she said, "Go and lose thyself and come not back; but let the moon go and come back". Since that day the moon comes back after it has vanished, but when man dies he comes back no more.[1]

The same story is told by the Masai,[2] from whom the Wachagga may have borrowed it, for the two peoples have long been in contact with each other. It contains the elements of the perverted message and of the moon, both of which are typical of whole classes of myths told by simple peoples to account for the origin of death.[3]

In one version of the Chagga story it is a serpent who tempts man to eat the forbidden fruit.

But to return to the story of the forbidden fruit. In Mr. Dundas's version it is a stranger who tempts the man to eat of it, but in Mr. Gutmann's version it is a serpent. As reported by Mr. Gutmann, the story runs thus: In the beginning God created a man and a woman. Then he created the cattle, bull and cow, then the goats, he-goat and she-goat. So he did with all living things, two and two he created them. In the beginning there were only two human beings, until they multiplied. God commanded them that they should not eat all the fruits which he had made. But the serpent deceived the woman, and she ate with her husband. The serpent said, "It is a lie, God has deceived you. Only eat." But God said, "I will scatter your sons, so that none knows the speech of the other".[4]

Resemblances of Chagga myths to Biblical stories.

The reader will observe that this version of the story contains no allusion to the origin of death. It has the appearance of being made up of elements drawn from the Biblical stories of the Fall of Man and the Tower of Babel. The suspicion that this is so derives support from other Chagga legends, which bear some resemblance to the Biblical stories of Cain and Abel and the Great Flood. These stories have been reported by Mr. Charles Dundas in the words of his native informants.[5] To report and discuss them here would be out of place. I will content myself with quoting Mr. Dundas's judicious remarks on

[1] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 124; *id.*, *Volksbuch der Wadschagga*, p. 156.

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 271 *sq.*

[3] See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. 60 *sqq.*; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 52 *sqq.*

[4] B. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, p. 182.

[5] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 111-120.

these African parallels to the narratives in Genesis. He says :

Mr. Dundas on these African parallels to narratives in Genesis.

"The first of these myths bears a striking resemblance to the Biblical accounts of the fall of man and the origin of death. The second part recalls very vividly the story of Cain. So also the destruction of mankind by Ruwa recalls the story of the flood. The first destruction was by a devouring colossus who came from the water, the second destruction was caused by an actual flood.

"These ancient myths sound a little strange in African form and applied to conditions which survive to this day, but they retain the essential substance and characteristics of the ancient Semitic accounts. I have satisfied myself that they are familiar to the Chagga people; and that they could not have been gleaned from Mission teachings, follows in the first place from the circumstance that Mission activities have been too recently introduced on Kilimanjaro, in the second place these myths are best known to the old people. Furthermore, if such legends were imitations of Christian teaching there is no reason why they should have been restricted to the Old Testament.

"Merker in his book on the Masai has recounted a number of myths which bear an astonishing resemblance to the Biblical myths and include the substance of those here related. This portion of Merker's book has been much criticized and its authenticity doubted, but it seems to me to receive strong support from the fact that similar myths are known to the Chagga people. The latter not only have lived for generations surrounded by the Masai, and have been in close contact with that tribe, but many of them are direct offshoots of the Masai. It is therefore very possible that they have incorporated in their mythology a part of the Masai legends, adapting them to their own conditions of life.

"There seems no absolute reason for an assumption that the Biblical myths could not have been known to the Masai, and if they were, it is not surprising that the Wachagga should have acquired the same myths. But it is curious to observe how the one myth may be cloaked in many different forms, while its essential elements are carefully preserved.

Between Noah's flood and Rimu's devastation there is considerable difference, but it is typical of changes in legendary that the flood in one place should in another be converted into a devouring monster proceeding from the water. Such variation seems to me too authentic to be the mere invention or repetition of something heard, and suggests rather an ancient origin of the myth."[1]

The Chagga myth of the cast skin has nothing to correspond to it in the Biblical myth of the Origin of Death.

While I agree with Mr. Dundas in thinking that the Chagga stories which resemble the early narratives in Genesis may have been borrowed from the Masai, and that the Masai stories in turn may not improbably be traced back to a Semitic source, I would point out that among the Chagga explanations of the origin of human mortality there is one which at first sight differs entirely from the Biblical legend of the Fall of Man. That explanation is given in the story of the cast skin, which relates that formerly men were able to renew their youth perpetually by casting their skins like serpents, which are supposed in like manner to slough off old age with their skins and so to live for ever; but of this serpentine immortality, as we may call it, men were unfortunately deprived by the ill-timed intervention of somebody at the critical moment. As I have had occasion to point out elsewhere,[2] a story of this type is widely diffused over the world. At the first blush, it appears to have no connexion with the Biblical narrative and the corresponding Chagga myth of the Fall of Man, which traces human mortality to the eating of a forbidden fruit. Yet a connecting link may be detected between them in the part which the serpent plays in the Biblical version and in one of the Chagga

[1] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People*, pp. 120 *sq.* According to the legend reported by Mr. Dundas (pp. 114-117) the monster Rimu was commanded by Ruwa "to destroy all living human beings and animals, because the people have abandoned the ancient customs and adopted evil ways; and they have oppressed the poor, and have followed indolence and pride themselves daily". Accordingly Rimu passed over the earth devouring all mankind and all the cattle, goats, and sheep, until after seven days nobody and nothing was left alive but one poor woman, her infant son, and her cattle; for Ruwa guarded her, and prophesied that she and her son should rule the earth. And when her son grew up, he shot and killed Rimu with poisoned arrows. But in Chagga folk-lore Rimu seems to be the general name of a whole class of cannibal monsters, about whom many tales are told. See B. Gutmann, *Volksbuch der Wadschagga*, pp. 73 *sqq.*

[2] *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. 69 *sqq.*; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 66 *sqq.*

versions of the myth. If in the story the serpent deprives man of the boon of immortality, we may surmise that in the original form of the tale the wily creature always did this for the purpose of appropriating to himself the blessing of which he robbed mankind; so that the story regularly aimed at explaining the cause both of the real mortality of men and of the supposed immortality of serpents. In the Biblical version the story has apparently been mutilated, and thereby rendered unintelligible, by the omission of one half of the tale, namely, that which explained the supposed immortality of serpents.

Suggested link between the two myths.

The story which contrasts the mortality of man with the supposed immortality of serpents is found among other Bantu tribes beside the Wachagga. Thus we have found it among the Wafipa and Wabende of Tanganyika Territory.[1] It occurs also in a somewhat different form among the Kavirondo in Kenya Colony (British East Africa), on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria Nyanza. They say that after the first human pair had begotten children, and men multiplied on earth, they were subject to all kinds of misery, but death had not yet carried away any of them. One day a chameleon said to a man, "Bring me a pot of beer". The man brought the pot of beer, and the chameleon crept up the pot, and plunged into the beer. Having bathed in it, he ordered the man to drink the beer. But the man refused, for he abhorred the chameleon, thinking that the mere touch of his skin was poisonous. On his refusal, the chameleon said to him, "From henceforth all you men will die". While he was speaking, a snake came along, and the chameleon ordered him to sip of the beer. The snake obeyed the order and sipped of the beer. Hence men die and snakes do not, because a snake is reborn every time that he sloughs his skin.[2] On this story it may be remarked, that since lizards cast their skin, and the chameleon is a species of lizard, the story-teller seems to derive the snake's power of sloughing his skin from the like power possessed by the chameleon, since the snake is said to have acquired this property by drinking the beer in which the chameleon had bathed.

African stories of the mortality of man contrasted with the immortality of serpents.

The chameleon, the man, and the serpent.

[1] Above, p. 199.

[2] N. Stam, "Bantu Kavirondo of Mumias district (near Lake Victoria)", *Anthropos*, xiv.-xv. (1919–1920) p. 979.

The woman who would have cast off her old skin and so renewed her youth.

The Baluba, a great tribe or nation in the valley of the Congo, tell a story of the origin of human mortality in which the notion of immortality attained by casting the skin is clearly expressed, though there is no mention of serpents. They say that in the early days of the world God granted a woman the power of renewing her youth and of transmitting the power to the whole human race, on condition that she succeeded in the effort in her own case. So when she began to grow old and withered, she took a friend's winnowing-basket and shut herself up in her hut. There she began to tear off her old skin and to deposit the pieces in the basket. The old skin peeled off easily, and underneath it appeared a skin as fresh as that of a baby. She had nearly finished the operation, and there only remained the head and neck to strip, when her friend approached the hut to get back her basket. Before the old woman could stop her, she pushed the door open and entered. At the same moment the old woman, who had almost renewed her youth, fell dead and carried away with her the secret of immortality. That is why we must all die.[1]

God, the woman, and the serpent.

Again, the Baholoholo, a tribe who border on the Baluba in the valley of the Congo, say that in the beginning God one day sent for the first man and the first woman and also the serpent. Wishing to prove them, he took a kernel in each hand and held them out in his clenched fists, one to the woman and the other to the serpent, saying to them, "Choose". Now the one kernel contained the seed of mortality and the other the seed of immortality. The woman chose the seed of mortality, and the serpent chose the seed of immortality. "I am sorry for your sake", said God to the woman, "that you have chosen death, while the serpent has chosen eternal life." That, continues the legend, is why serpents do not die, whereas men do so. On this story the missionary who reports it remarks that in the opinion of the Tanganyika tribes the serpent does not die; he merely changes his skin; he only dies when he is completely crushed.[2]

God, the bird, and the snake.

In this last story, as in so many others of the same type,

[1] Le R. P. Colle, *Les Baluba* (Brussels, 1913), ii. 522 *sq.*

[2] Le R. P. Colle, *Les Baluba* (Brussels, 1913), ii. 507.

it was clearly the intention, or at all events the wish, of God that men should be immortal, and he was grieved that the superior sagacity of the serpent had baffled his kindly purpose. The same feature of the myth comes out still more clearly in a Galla version. The Gallas say that God sent to men a certain bird which is called *holowaka* or "the sheep of God", because its cry resembles the bleating of a sheep. This bird the deity charged to tell men that they would not die, and that when they found themselves growing old and weak, they should slip off their skins and grow young again. The bird set out to carry the message, but he had not gone far before he fell in with a snake eating carrion. The bird said to the snake, "Give me some of the meat and the blood, and I will tell you God's message". The snake answered gruffly that he did not want to hear the message. But the bird pressed him, and at last he consented to listen to it. The bird then said, "The message is this: when men grow old they will die, but you, when you find yourself growing infirm, all you have to do is to crawl out of your skin and you will renew your youth". That, says the story, is why people grow old and die, but snakes change their skins and grow young again. God cursed the bird for betraying the secret of immortality to serpents. That is why the bird sits moaning and wailing on tree-tops down to this day.[1]

How snakes learned to grow young again by casting their skins.

It is possible that the Biblical story of the Fall of Man, with its significant but mutilated account of the part played by the serpent in that momentous transaction, was borrowed by the Hebrews, like so much else, from Babylonian and ultimately Sumerian mythology. But no such tale has yet been discovered in Babylonian and Sumerian literature, and when we contrast the absence of the story in Babylonia with its wide diffusion in Africa, we must not exclude the possibility that the myth originated in Africa and was thence derived, through one channel or another, by the Semites. Even if the story should hereafter be found in a Sumerian version, this would not absolutely exclude the hypothesis of its African origin, since the original home of the Sumerians is unknown. It is conceivable, I do not say

The Biblical story of the Fall of Man perhaps borrowed from Africa.

[1] A. Werner, "Two Galla legends", *Man*, xiii. (1913) pp. 90 *sq.* I have cited this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 74 *sq.*).

probable, that the Hebrews learned the story from negroes with whom they may have conversed during their long sojourn in Egypt. Certainly negroes appear to have been settled in Egypt as early as the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (about 2200 to 2000 B.C.), long before the traditional servitude of the Israelites in that country. The faces of the Egyptians on monuments of the Middle Kingdom are thought to exhibit approximations to the negro type, pointing to a mixture of the two races; nay it is even surmised that negro blood may have flowed in the veins of the royal family, which was of southern extraction.[1] There is therefore no inherent extravagance in the supposition that the Hebrews may have borrowed the barbarous myth of the Fall of Man from the barbarous negroes, with whom they may have toiled side by side in the burning sun under the lash of Egyptian taskmasters. In favour of an African origin of the myth it may be observed that the explanation of the supposed immortality of serpents, which probably formed the kernel of the story in its original form, has been preserved in several African versions, while it has been wholly lost in the Hebrew version; from which it is natural to infer that the African versions are older and nearer to the original than the corresponding, but incomplete, narrative in Genesis.

Belief in a Supreme Being called Imana among the Warundi (Barundi) of Urundi.

In Urundi and Ruanda, two districts at the extreme north-west of Tanganyika Territory, the basis of the native religion is the fear of the ancestral spirits (*bazimu*, *abasimu*) whom the people regard as malignant and as the cause of the evils that befall them. Every father of a family sacrifices to the spirits of his ancestors and

[1] H. R. Hall, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 295 *sq.* As to the trading relations of the Egyptians with negroes in the south, and the representation of negroes on the monuments, see A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, N.D.), pp. 659 *sqq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), pp. 10, 271 *sq.* There is still no general agreement among critics and historians as to the probable date of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt; but the tendency of recent inquiries seems to be to date the Exodus in the second half of the thirteenth century B.C., under King Rameses II. or his successor King Meneptah (Merneptah). See *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 356 note [2], 403 note [1], 694; A. Lods, in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xc. (1924) pp. 134-138.

of his other deceased relations in the little grass huts which stand near his dwelling, for in them these ghostly beings are believed to reside.[1] But at the same time the people acknowledge the existence of a high god or Supreme Being whom they call Imana. He is spoken of by some of our authorities as the Creator of the World;[2] and though Father Van der Burgt, a high authority on the language and religion of the Warundi or Barundi, denies that Imana is conceived of as a Creator in the strict sense of the word, by which he means one who creates something out of nothing, he admits that in the opinion of the natives, Imana, either alone or with the help of two other spirits, Rikiranga and Riyangombe, made all visible things, and that he is supposed to dispense life and death, prosperity and misfortune to his creatures.[3] The real religion of the Warundi, he tells us, consists in the worship of evil spirits whom they identify with the souls of the dead. Imana is a spirit superior to all the others; he is the first of the ghosts; he has ordered and arranged everything, and, in the view of the Warundi, he is the master of everything in our planetary system.[4] Although the Warundi say that Imana has set everything in order, and that he still intervenes in everything, bestowing life and rain and the fruits of the earth, and healing diseases, yet their beliefs concerning him are confused and inconsistent; for sometimes they confound him with the spirits of the dead, and sometimes they regard him as a sort of Pan, who embraces and includes all created beings. Further, they look upon him as their national god, and think that he was the first ancestor of their tribe, of their kings, and even of the whole human species. In short, as Father Van der Burgt remarks, it is very difficult to form an exact idea of Imana, and the difficulty is increased by the loose way in which the Warundi employ the name Imana. Thus, they apply it to a sacred grove, to the king of Urundi, to a cock, to the sacred bull, to the sacred lance, to amulets, and so forth.

The real religion of the Warundi the worship of the dead.

[1] J. Czekanowski, *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet*, i. (Leipzig, 1917) p. 298; H. Meyer, *Die Barundi* (Leipzig, 1916), p. 119.

[2] J. Czekanowski, *op. cit.* i. 301; H. Meyer, *Die Barundi*, p. 120.

[3] J. M. M. van der Burgt, *Dictionnaire Français-Kirundi* (Bois-le-Duc, 1903), p. 135.

[4] J. M. M. van der Burgt, *Dictionnaire Français-Kirundi*, p. 167.

Further, they call Imana by many different names, and confuse or identify him with many different deities.[1] Yet they neither sacrifice nor pray to him. They seem to regard him as a Being too lofty to be approached by man, and they turn for help rather to the inferior deities, who, having been once men themselves, are believed to be more closely knit to humanity.[2]

Belief in a Supreme Being called Imana among the Banya-ruanda of Ruanda.

The like vagueness and uncertainty characterize the conception of Imana in the neighbouring province of Ruanda. He is said to be the Creator, yet his relations to the inferior divinities are not clearly defined. The idea which the Banyaruanda have of him is dim and misty. He is said to have created the first man and woman and to have given them fire. He is the master of thunder, lightning, and rain; and people pray to him in some such words as these: "Be favourable to me, Imana, thou who hast made me, who hast made my father, and my grandfather, and my grandfather's father, and my grandmother, and my grandmother's mother, and my own mother. He has healed me, how has he healed me!" Yet the Banyaruanda do not sacrifice to Imana. Hence he plays no part in their worship, and his only function is to satisfy what we may call a theoretical or philosophical craving.[3] His home would seem to be in the sky. He is spoken of as the King of Heaven, and he is said to have created animals and plants in the sky, where men at first lived with him in bliss, for sickness and suffering were then unknown.[4] Besides his proper name Imana, the Supreme Being is known in Ruanda under various titles, such as *Rugaba*, "The Giver", from a verb *kugaba*, "to give"; *Rulema*, "The Creator", from a verb *kulema*, "to create"; and *Rugira*, "He who makes to possess", from a verb *kugira*, "to make to possess".[5]

[1] J. M. M. van der Burgt, *op. cit.* p. 214; H. Meyer, *Die Barundi*, pp. 120 *sq.*

[2] H. Meyer, *Die Barundi*, p. 120.

[3] J. Czekanowski, *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet*, i. 301; A. Arnoux, "Le Culte de la Société Secrète des Imandwa au Ruanda", *Anthropos*, vii. (1912) p. 285.

[4] Le P. Loupias, "Tradition et Légende des Batutsi sur la Création du Monde et leur Établissement au Ruanda", *Anthropos*, iii. (1908) pp. 2, 3, 5.

[5] A. Arnoux, "Le Culte de la Société Secrète des Imandwa au Ruanda", *Anthropos*, vii. (1912) p. 383.

Belief in a Supreme Being called Rugaba among the natives of Kiziba.

In Kiziba, a district of Tanganyika Territory to the west of Lake Victoria Nyanza, the natives entertain a similar idea of the Supreme Being, whom they call Rugaba. But they can give no exact account of him. He is believed to have created men and cattle, and so long as man lives he is thought to be in the power of Rugaba. Yet the people never sacrifice and seldom pray to Rugaba. It is said that only in the case of a difficult birth do they appeal for help to the Creator of Men.[1] Thus the name Rugaba given to the Supreme Being in Kiziba coincides with one of the titles applied to him in Ruanda.

The Baganda of Uganda.

Their national gods.

The worship of dead kings.

Of all the native tribes who inhabit the lake region of Central Africa, the Baganda, who give their name to the Uganda Protectorate, are probably at once the most powerful and the most advanced. They occupy the country which borders on the north-western shores of Lake Victoria Nyanza, bounded on the east by the head waters of the Nile, where the great river flows out of the great lake. The Baganda worship, or rather worshipped till lately, a number of national gods, who appear to have been at one time human beings, noted for their skill and bravery in their life, and raised to the rank of deities after their death.[2] The theory of the human origin of the national gods of Uganda is strongly confirmed by the practice of worshipping every dead king in a special temple, where his jawbone and navel-string were preserved with religious care, and where his spirit was regularly consulted as an oracle by a medium or prophet, who was believed to be directly inspired by the ghost.[3] "The ghosts of kings", we are told, "were placed on an equality with the gods, and received the same honour and worship; they foretold events concerning the State, and advised the living king, warning him when war was likely to break out. The king made periodical visits to the temple, first of one, and then of another, of his predecessors. At such times the jawbone and the umbilical cord were placed on the throne in the temple, and the King sat behind them;

[1] H. Rehse, *Kiziba, Land und Leute* (Stuttgart, 1910), pp. 125 *sq.*

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 271.

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 282 *sqq.*

they were handed to him, and he examined them and returned them to the custodian."[1] Yet even more important in the practical religion of the people appear to have been the ghosts of their own departed kinsfolk, for ghosts were believed to possess an incalculable power for good or evil, and they were worshipped in small shrines built near their graves, where offerings of beer and clothes were made to them by their relatives.[2] Thus on the whole the religion of the Baganda may be described as essentially a worship of the dead.

The worship of ancestral spirits.

Worship of a Supreme God called Katonda among the Baganda.

At the same time the Baganda acknowledged the existence of a Supreme God, the Creator, whom they named Katonda. He was called the Father of the Gods, because he had created all things, including the inferior deities, who, after appearing on earth in human form for some time, returned to God. However, not much was known about Katonda, and he received little honour and attention. He had a temple on the Banda Hill in the Kyagwe district, but it was only a small hut, much inferior to the temples of the God of Plenty and the God of War. He had a medium or prophet who gave oracles by night; no fire or light was allowed to burn in his temple. Offerings of cattle were occasionally made to him; some of the animals were killed, but most were decorated with a bell round the neck and allowed to roam about during the day, while at night they were brought to one of the huts. The king sometimes sent as a special offering an animal which was never killed. Indeed, he annually despatched a gift of an ox and a milch cow to the temple, and he worshipped the deity on behalf of his people and of the country. But Katonda never came to earth, nor did he take any active part in ruling the world; he left the management of affairs to the inferior gods, his sons. A common saying of the people was that the Creator had done his work, and there is no need to disturb him; the task of carrying on the business of this sublunary sphere had been deputed by him to other deities, whose duty it was to see that all went on smoothly.[3]

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 283.

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 273, 285 *sq.*

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 312; *id.*, *Twenty-five Years in East Africa* (Cambridge, 1921), pp. 136 *sq.* Compare C. T. Wilson and R. W. Felkin, *Uganda and the Egyptian Soudan*

Descent of the kings of Uganda from Katonda.

The Sky-god Gulu is said by the Baganda to have been a son of Katonda and father of Kintu, the first man who came to earth, and who reigned as the first king of Uganda. All the kings of Uganda traced their descent in an unbroken line to Kintu and hence to his grandfather, the Supreme God Katonda.[1]

The Bahuma or Banyankole of Ankole.

Ankole is a district lying to the south-west of Uganda. The country is hilly, interspersed with tracts of rolling grassy plain and valleys. A few of the hills are extinct volcanoes, in the craters of which nestle lakes of clear water embowered in luxuriant tropical vegetation.[2] The climate is healthy and the country lends itself well to cattle-breeding; the governing class consists of a people who are entirely pastoral in their habits. They are known among the neighbouring tribes as Bahuma or Bahima, though they themselves prefer to be called Banyankole. They are a tall, fine race, though physically not very strong. Women as well as men are above the usual stature of their sex in other tribes. The features of these pastoral people are good: they have straight noses with a bridge, thin lips, finely chiselled faces, heads well set, and a good carriage; indeed, apart from their swarthy complexion and short woolly hair there is little of the negroid about them. They undoubtedly belong to the Hamitic stock, and they differ from other branches of Bahuma in having kept their race pure by refraining from intermarriage with members of

(London, 1882), i. 206: "They [the Baganda] believe in a Supreme Being who made the world and mankind, and whom they call Katonda, or the Creator, but they offer no worship to him, as they consider him too exalted to pay any regard to mankind. Their principal objects of worship are inferior gods or devils called *lubari*." This statement must be corrected by Mr. Roscoe's fuller and more accurate evidence. It seems probable that other general statements as to African Supreme Beings, who are said not to be worshipped, might have to be similarly limited or corrected if we knew more about the religion of the people.

[1] J. Roscoe, *Twenty-five Years in East Africa*, pp. 137, 138; *id.*, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 25, 26, with the genealogical table, plate ii.; *id.*, *The Baganda*, pp. 136, 214, 460 *sqq.* In the tradition recorded in this last passage (pp. 460 *sqq.*) Kintu is said to have married Nambi, daughter of Gulu, the king of Heaven; but he is not spoken of as a son of Gulu. For the legend of Kintu and Nambi, see also Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1904), ii. 700 *sqq.*

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Banyankole* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 3. Compare *id.*, *The Northern Bantu* (Cambridge, 1915), pp. 101 *sq.*

negro tribes. Their ancestors must long ago have invaded and conquered the aborigines, who were true negroes and devoted to agriculture. The conquerors did not exterminate the original inhabitants of the land but reduced them to a state of serfdom, in which their descendants continue to this day. These serfs or peasants are known as Bahera. They cultivate fields of millet for their own use, keep a few sheep or goats with which to buy wives or pay fines, and serve their masters the Bahuma or Banyankole, for whom they perform all the menial tasks and drudgery of transport, of building huts and cattle-kraals, and so forth, as well as supplying them with beer and any vegetable food they may require.[1] This superposition of a tribe of conquering Hamitic herdsmen on an aboriginal negro population of agricultural peasants, with a consequent division of the people into two classes which differ fundamentally from each other in race, as well as in their habits and modes of life, is characteristic of other parts of the Lake region of Central Africa; it recurs notably in Bunyoro, as we shall see presently.

The negro aborigines called Bahera.

The Bahuma are not a very religious people; the gods do not trouble them much, and they do not often trouble the gods. Their chief deity is named Ruhanga. He lives, or used to live, in the sky, and he is known as the Creator and Powerful One. The world is said to belong to him; his favour brings life, his anger inflicts sickness and death. Yet he receives no worship and no offerings; he has neither temple nor priest, and people do not pray to him. However, they utter his name in certain ejaculations, such as *Tata Ruhanga*, an exclamation of joy, accompanied by the clapping of hands, at the birth of a child. Also they sometimes cry out, "May Ruhanga heal you!" (*Ruhanga akutambire*). Still, everybody knows Ruhanga and acknowledges his existence; he is the great benefactor from whom they receive all the good in life as a matter of course and without any thought of making him a return in the shape of offerings. He is said to have created a man Rugabe and his wife Nyamate and sent them to people the earth. They

Ruhanga, the chief god of the Bahuma, dwells in the sky but is not worshipped.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 102 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Soul of Central Africa* (London, etc., 1922), pp. 53, 56 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Banyankole*, pp. 1, 94.

had a son Isimbwa, who was the first of a dynasty of kings that ruled the country. These kings did not die, but became the gods of the land. They had no temples, but there were certain men and women who professed to be their mediums or prophets and claimed the power of healing diseases and otherwise helping the people.[1] But, as happens with so many African peoples, the most important part of the religion of the Bahuma is the worship of the dead. All classes of the people, from the king downwards, have or had till lately shrines for their family ghosts, to whom they daily offer milk from certain cows which are specially dedicated to the use of these august beings.[2]

The religion of the Bahuma mainly a worship of the dead.

Similarly the Bambwa, a turbulent tribe of mountaineers inhabiting the western slopes of the Ruwenzori range, acknowledge the existence of a Creator, but pay him no worship and make him no offerings. The only supernatural beings whom they believe to exert any real influence on their lives are the spirits of the dead, which accordingly require to be propitiated by offerings. Children are named after ancestors, because the ghosts are supposed to become the guardians of their youthful namesakes, the ghosts of men looking after boys, and the ghosts of women taking girls under their protection.[3]

A Creator acknowledged, but not worshipped, by the Bambwa.

To the north-west of Uganda lies Bunyoro or Kitara, as it should rather be called, which was at one time the largest and most powerful of all the independent kingdoms in the lake region of Central Africa. It was not until some three or four generations ago that the territory and power of the kingdom began to dwindle in consequence of the encroachments of its great enemies, the Baganda.[4] Most of the country is a rolling plain covered with coarse grass. Yet the flora is very rich and varied, though during the dry season little meets the eye but a scorched and arid waste. The advent of the rains produces a sudden outburst of tropical growth which transforms the desert as by magic

Bunyoro or Kitara.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, p. 131; *id.*, *The Banyankole*, p. 23. In the former work the author gives the name of the chief deity as Lugaba.

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Banyankole*, pp. 25 *sq.*

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu* (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 148 *sq.*

[4] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara or Banyoro* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 1.

into a beautiful garden. On the whole the country is best adapted to the rearing of cattle.[1]

The two races of Bunyoro, the conquering Banyoro (Kitara) and the subject Bahera.

The dominant people of Bunyoro or Kitara are not negroes, but a branch of the Hamitic stock, akin to the Bahuma of Ankole. At some early date their ancestors invaded the country, apparently from the north-east, conquering and subjecting to their rule the negro aborigines. These conquerors, like those of Ankole, were pastoral nomads commonly known as Bahuma; and the conquered negro aborigines, as in Ankole, were called Bahera, and subsisted chiefly by a rude sort of agriculture. The relations between the conquering herdsmen and the subject farmers were much the same as in Ankole, though in Bunyoro the division between the two races has not been maintained with the same rigour, the rulers sometimes allowing members of the subject people to rank as freemen and to marry women of the pastoral clans. The result of the intermarriage has been to modify the customs and to some extent the physical type of the dominant race and to assimilate both to those of the aborigines.[2]

Belief of the Banyoro in a god Ruhanga, the Creator and Father of Mankind.

The Banyoro or Bakitara are reported to have had many objects of worship, but only one god, Ruhanga, the creator and father of mankind. With him were associated the names of Enkya and Enkyaya Enkya, two mysterious beings whose identity it is not easy to separate from that of Ruhanga. One of Mr. Roscoe's native informants asserted that the three were a trinity and yet one god; but as he had been for some years a devout Christian, in constant attendance at the Roman Catholic Mission Station, his statement may have been coloured by Christian ideas. The general impression which Mr. Roscoe received from his inquiries was that the belief of the Bakitara was entirely monotheistic, and that if the three beings were not one deity, then Enkya and Enkyaya Enkya were subordinate gods whose appearance in the native theology was later than that of Ruhanga. No temples or priesthoods were dedicated to any of the three; but in time of distress or need people called upon Ruhanga and more frequently on Enkya, stand-

No temples or priests of Ruhanga.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, pp. 3, 5.
[2] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, pp. 6 *sqq.*, 12 *sq.*

ing in the open with hands and eyes raised skywards, while they prayed. Thus Ruhanga was apparently conceived of as dwelling in heaven. But on the whole he was supposed to have retired from active participation in the affairs of the world which he had created; and people generally turned for help, not to him but to a misty and somewhat bewildering collection of beings called the Bachwezi, supposed to be immediate descendants of Ruhanga, but completely subordinate to him. They were regarded as immortal and almost divine. After living as men in the country for many years, these Bachwezi suddenly departed, leaving behind them their priests, who could communicate with them and obtain blessings and favours from them for the people.[1]

The Bachwezi.

It seems to have been especially in seasons of drought, when the ordinary means for procuring rain had been employed without effect, that an appeal was made to Ruhanga to have compassion on the people and unlock the celestial fountains. Thus, when the local rain-makers had sought in vain to wring the needed showers from the reluctant sky, when the crops were dying and the pasturage failing, the people used to petition the king, who accordingly instructed the chief rain-maker of the district to discharge his office, and supplied him with a red and black bull, a ewe, a black he-goat, and two white fowls, the colours of the creatures being chosen to represent the sky in different aspects, bright, dark, and variegated. The rain-maker told the king's messengers which of the animals he would require for the offering, and these were put in his hut and remained there all night. Early next morning the rain-maker and his assistant set out with the destined victims for the sacred shrine. One of these holy places, where solemn intercessions were made for rain, Mr. Roscoe was allowed to visit. It was a glade in the deep forest, where the overarching boughs of tall trees shed a religious gloom over the quiet place. At one end of the glade were two pits, of no great depth, which were said to have been dug by the hand of Ruhanga himself. A few feet away among the bushes stood some water-pots, which were used

Prayers and sacrifices to Ruhanga for rain.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, pp. 21 *sq.* Compare *id.*, *The Northern Bantu*, p. 91.

during the ceremony to work the sympathetic magic that formed an important element of the rite. When one of the victims had been killed, some of the blood was poured into each of the pits, and its body was cast into one of them. Then a vessel of water was brought from a neighbouring spring, and the rain-maker raised his hands and prayed thus to Ruhanga: "Ruhanga, bless us. Thou king of all the earth, hear us. The people are dying from hunger." With much ceremony the water was then poured into some of the pots and left exposed to the air, in order to draw down rain by sympathetic magic.[1] Thus in the ritual of the Bakitara, as in that of so many other peoples, religion is blent with and reinforced by magic.

White bull sacrificed to Ruhanga for rain.

Sometimes when rain failed to come, one of the rain-makers would send to the king to tell him that it was necessary to make a special offering at an empty pit far away in the wilderness. A white bull was demanded as the offering, and with it the rain-maker and his staff set off for the pit. There the bull was offered to Ruhanga and then killed near the pit, while prayers for rain were put up. It is said that rain invariably fell a short time after the ceremony.[2]

Ruhanga and his three grandsons.

Apparently Ruhanga was believed to be married, for a story is told of a dispute as to precedence between his three grandsons, which Ruhanga settled by means of three pots of milk which he gave the brothers one evening to hold and not put down. In the morning Ruhanga decided in favour of the youngest, Machuli, because his pot alone was full of milk, while the pot of the second brother was not full, and the pot of the eldest brother was empty. Ruhanga declared that Machuli, the youngest, should rule them all, that his second brother, Mugati, should look after his milk, and that the eldest brother, Musiganjo, should be the slave of all, to build, and to carry, and to eat potatoes.[3]

Story of the Origin of Death: the woman and the dog.

Like many other African tribes, the Banyoro or Bakitara trace the origin of death to a doom of their great God. They say that at one time men rose again from the dead and came

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, pp. 28-30.
[2] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, pp. 31 *sq.*
[3] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, pp. 336 *sq.*

back to their friends on earth. Only animals did not enjoy the privilege of resurrection; when they died they remained dead. Now there was a man who lived with his sister, and she had a dog of which she was very fond, and the dog died. When people rose again from the dead, it was the custom that all the living adorned themselves in their best to go and meet their risen friends. The man and his friends said to his sister, "Put on your good clothing and come to meet the risen". But she answered, "No. Why should I go when my dog is dead and gone?" Ruhanga overheard her reply and was angry. He said, "So people don't care what becomes of the dead. They shall not rise again, for death will end their careers." So now, when a man dies, he does not rise again from the dead.[1]

Another story of the Origin of Death: the woman, the chameleon, and the moon.

A different story of the origin of death was recorded by Emin Pasha among the Banyoro or Bakitara. They say that in primeval times people were numerous on the earth; they never died but lived for ever. But as they grew presumptuous and offered no gifts to "the great Magician" who rules the destinies of man, he was angry and killed them all by throwing the whole vault of heaven down upon the earth. But in order not to leave the earth desolate, "the great Magician" sent down a man and woman from above. Both the man and the woman had tails. They begat a son and two daughters who married. One daughter bore a loathsome beast, the chameleon; the other daughter bore a giant, who was the moon. Both children grew up, but soon they quarrelled; for the chameleon was wicked and spiteful, and at last "the great Magician" took the moon up to the place in the sky whence it still looks down upon the earth. But, to keep in remembrance its earthly origin, it waxes, growing large and bright, and then wanes as though it were about to die; yet it does not die, but in two days passes round the horizon from east to west and appears again, tired from its journey and therefore small, in the western sky. But the sun was angry with his new rival and burned him, and you may see the marks of burning on the moon's face any clear and moonlit night. As for the chameleon, his progeny peopled the earth; in time they dropped their tails,

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Bakitara*, p. 337.

and the original pallor of their skin changed into a dusky hue under the torrid beams of an African sun. Down to the present hour the heavenly bodies are inhabited by people with tails who have many herds of cattle.[1]

The chameleon and the moon in stories of the Origin of Death.

This legend of the origin of death combines two mythical personages, the chameleon and the moon, who usually appear in different versions of the myth, in one of which the chameleon is represented as the messenger whose tardy pace robbed man of the boon of immortality, while in the other the monthly return of the moon after its apparent decline and destruction is contrasted with the fate of man, who dies and returns no more.[2] Perhaps Emin Pasha's native informant confused the two distinct versions of the story.

The Basoga of Busoga.

Immediately to the east of Uganda, but separated from it by the head waters of the Nile, where the river issues from Lake Victoria Nyanza, lies the province of Busoga. Its native population, the Basoga, are pure negroes of the same type as the agricultural peasants of Bunyoro or Kitara. Their features are those generally known as negroid; the nose is almost bridgeless and flat, the face round, with thick but not generally protuberant lips. The chief industry is agriculture, but cattle, sheep, and goats are reared, and most of the peasants keep a few fowls. In temperament the Basoga are much more submissive and pacific than the Baganda and Banyoro. From time immemorial they have been subject and tributary to one or other of the surrounding nations, particularly the Banyoro and Baganda; and this subjection to different foreign rulers may help to explain certain differences which have been noted in the customs of the several districts. The country is open, undulating, and remarkably fertile; travellers have long admired the vast stretches of arable land interspersed with great groves of plantains and plots of sweet potatoes.[3] At the present day, unfortunately, under the rule of the native chiefs, the people of this naturally rich and fruitful country

[1] *Emin Pasha in Central Africa* (London, 1888), pp. 92 *sq.*

[2] *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. 60 *sq.*, 65 *sqq.*; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 52 *sqq.*, 60 *sq.*, 63 *sqq.* See also above, pp. 136, 149, 163, 169, 173, 177, 217 *sq.*, 221.

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 197-200; *id.*, *The Bagesu*, pp. 97 *sq.*

have sunk into a miserable condition, and famine has attacked them more than once.[1]

Belief of the Basoga in a Supreme Being called Katonda or Mukama.

The Basoga retained their ancient pagan faith and practised their ancient pagan customs long after these were almost extinct among their neighbours the Baganda, with whom they are closely connected by language and habits. They believe in a Supreme Being whom, according to some authorities, they call Katonda, the name which the Baganda also apply to their chief or only god. The name is said to signify Creator, being derived from a verb *kutonda*, "to create".[2] Perhaps the name may be due to the once dominant influence of the Baganda in the country. In the Central District of Busoga the Creator, who made man and beast, is named Mukama. At one time he is said to have lived in a deep hole on Mount Elgon, where, with his sons, he worked iron and forged all the hoes which were first introduced into the land. Thus far, therefore, Mukama would seem to be an African Vulcan rather than a Jupiter. However, he is also believed to be the creator of all rivers, which are said to have their source at his mountain home.

Any child born with its teeth cut isr egarded as an incarn a tion of Mukama.

Oddly enough, any child that happens to be born with its teeth already cut is taken to be an incarnation of Mukama. On its birth a hut is built for such a child and a high fence is erected around it; there the mother is lodged with her infant during the period of her seclusion. When that is over, the divine infant is exhibited to relatives and friends.

Ceremonies observed at the birth of such a child.

A vessel of water is brought from Lake Kyoga, together with a reed from the papyrus-grass, by the husband's sister's son, who has to go secretly to the lake; nobody may see him either going or returning. He takes with him four coffee-berries which he offers to the water-spirit of the lake, as he draws the water. When the time of seclusion is over, two houses are built for the reception of the child, one for a sleeping-room, the other for a living-room. To this new home the mother and child are conducted with great ceremony. In front walks the husband's sister's son, carrying

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Soul of Central Africa*, p. 292.

[2] N. Stam, "The religious Conceptions of some Tribes of Buganda", *Anthropos*, iii. (1908) p. 217; M. A. Condon, "Contributions to the Ethnography of the Basoga-Batamba, Uganda Protectorate", *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) p. 381.

the papyrus-reed as a spear, and behind him follow a number of medicine-men. Next comes a woman carrying a native iron hoe, which she brandishes as she walks. She utters a shrill cry as women do in danger, in order to warn people of their approach. Behind her walk members of the parents' clan, and the rear of the procession is brought up by the father and mother with the child. The mother is escorted into the living-room, where a sacred meal is partaken of, and after the meal the child is brought out and has its head shaved, the water brought mysteriously from the lake being used both to wet the head for shaving and to wash it after it is shorn. When the ceremony of shaving is over, the father gives his shield to the child. The company remain three days with the mother and the holy infant. On the third day the papyrus-reed is handed to the child, who is thereupon appointed governor over a portion of land. The mother remains with the child, for her husband resigns her to this pious duty, and her clan presents him with another wife to take the place of the Mother of God, whose time and attentions are now devoted to the care of the infant deity. For the child is regarded as a God, being no other than an incarnation of the Creator Mukama, and people come to pray to him for whatever they happen to want. When the god dies, for he is mortal, a medium or prophet is appointed to hold communion with his departed spirit and to impart his precious answers to the suppliants who come to consult the oracle.[1] Thus we see that there is much virtue in being born with teeth in Busoga. It secures for the happy possessor of the teeth the reputation of being a great god incarnate both in his lifetime and after death.

Elsewhere in Busoga the Creator is called Lubare.

Elsewhere in Busoga the Creator seems to have been known as Lubare, which in Uganda is the general name for any god. Under this name he had shrines in different parts of the country, to which people resorted to pray and sacrifice. The priest presented the offerings to Lubare, then killed the fowls in front of the shrine, and divided them. One half went to the people who had brought the offerings, and the other half went to the priests.[2]

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 248 *sq.*

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 104. As to *lubare*, "god" (plural *balubare*),

In Busoga the worship of the Creator is over-shadowed by the worship of the dead.

But in Busoga, as in so many other parts of Africa, the worship of the gods, including that of the Creator, is over-shadowed by the worship of the dead. On this subject I will quote the evidence of Mr. John Roscoe, our best authority on the peoples of the Uganda Protectorate, in which Busoga is included. He says: "In all parts of Busoga worship of the dead forms a most important part of the religion of the people, and the belief in ghosts and the propitiation of them are the chief features of their most constant and regular acts of worship. The gods, with fetishes and amulets, are able to do great things for the living; but, after all, it is the ghost that is most feared and obtains the most marked attention. In child-birth, in sickness, in prosperity, and in death, ghosts materially help or hinder matters; hence it behoves the living to keep on good terms with them. It is because of this belief that people frequently make sacrifices of fowls and other animals to the dead and constantly seek their help. First and foremost, it is because of the firm conviction of the presence of ghosts that the elaborate funeral ceremonies are performed. . . . In the beliefs of these primitive people we must relegate gods to a secondary place after the worship of the dead."[1]

Mount Elgon, its scenery and its caves.

Mount Elgon is a large range or rather group of mountain peaks rising in isolated grandeur on the borders of the Uganda Protectorate and Kenya Colony (British East Africa). It occupies an area of many square miles, and some of the peaks are very lofty, the snow lying on them for long periods of the year. Copious streams of water gush from springs far up the heights and flow down deep, luxuriantly wooded gorges, between which the ridges stand out like the ribs of a monster stretching away up the mountain sides. On these ridges are perched the villages of the natives, but at such wide intervals apart that, even with the cultivated ground about them, they appear but as specks on the vast slope of wild mountain. In some places the mountain breaks away in sheer cliffs hundreds of feet high, over the brink of which

in the language of Uganda, see J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 271; *id.*, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 73, 74.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, p. 245.

streams tumble into rocky basins far below. The faces of these cliffs are thickly draped with maiden-hair and other ferns, while a profusion of exquisite tropical or semi-tropical plants flourishes in the spray and moisture of the falling water. Most of these beautiful waterfalls are sacred, and the natives resort to them for the healing of diseases. Some parts of the mountain are honeycombed with large natural caves capable of holding hundreds of cows and several families of people. In these caves the natives, with their flocks and herds, used to find refuge when they were hard pressed by the raids of warlike enemies from the plains below. Most of the caverns are approached by steep and narrow paths, which can easily be defended against attack, and some of them were formerly always kept provisioned and ready for occupation in case of sudden need. So long as the raiders prowled in the neighbourhood, the cattle were kept in the caves during the day and taken out to graze by night. Some of these caves have been examined, but they showed no sign of permanent habitation, the floors being smooth rock without any deposits.[1]

The Bagesu of Mount Elgon.

The Bagesu tribe on Mount Elgon is one of the most primitive of the negro tribes of Africa, though they are surrounded by other Bantu tribes much more advanced than themselves. They are an agricultural people, supporting themselves chiefly by the cultivation of millet and plantains, though they also keep a few cows, sheep, and goats.[2] The clans into which the tribe is divided for the most part occupy separate ridges of the mountain and until lately used to be at constant enmity with each other, so that it was unsafe even for an armed man to wander in the territory of another clan. Only after harvest, when beer had been brewed, a universal truce was observed between all the clans; the people, unarmed, roamed from village to village, drinking beer, dancing, and singing by day and by night, the festivity degenerating into saturnalia, in which the sexes indulged their passions without any regard to the bonds of marriage. These orgies were all the more remarkable

Their harvest festival.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 161-163; *id.*, *The Bagesu*, pp. 1 *sq.*

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 161, 165 *sq.*, 168; *id.*, *The Bagesu*, pp. 1, 12 *sqq.*, 17 *sq.*

because at other times of the year the women of the tribe were strictly chaste, and the men guarded their wives with jealous care.[1] Another proof of the savagery of the Bagesu was their cannibalism. The dead were not buried but carried out to waste land and deposited there. Then, when darkness had fallen, some old women, relatives of the deceased, stole out of the village, carved the corpse, and brought back the favourite joints to be cooked and devoured by the mourners. This ghoul-like feast lasted for days, until the flesh had all been consumed, and the bones burnt to ashes. The reason the people gave for not burying their dead was that, if they allowed a corpse to decay, the ghost would be detained near the place of death and would take his revenge by causing sickness among the children of the family.[2] Thus with these savages the fear of the ghost was the source of cannibalism. It was also with them at least one of the motives which contributed to the prosecution of the blood-feud ; for we are told that, when a man had been slain, his relatives would keep up a feud against the clan who had killed him and would watch, it might be, for years for a chance of slaying some member of the clan, in order to pacify the ghost of their kinsman, whose wrath nothing but blood for blood could appease.[3]

Cannibalism of the Bagesu.

In spite of their savagery the Bagesu are reported to believe in a Creator, whom they call Weri Kubumba. But they did not often trouble him with requests of any kind. If there was a year in which the cows did not bear well, the herdsmen took them to a specially prepared shrine ; one barren cow was offered to the god by the priest, who then drank beer, on which a blessing had been pronounced, and puffed it over the other cows. The cow was then killed and a feast made for all the owners of cattle, after which the herds were driven back to their ordinary pastures.[4]

Belief of the Bagesu in a Creator called Weri Kubumba.

Offerings were also made to the Creator at the elaborate ceremonies of initiation, when all lads about the age of puberty had to undergo a very severe form of circumcision

Offerings to the Creator at the circumcision of boys.

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 161, 164, 189 *sq.* ; *id.*, *The Bagesu*, pp. 3 *sq.*, 15-17 ; *id.*, *Twenty-five Years in East Africa*, pp. 241 *sq.*

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 161, 177 *sq.* ; *id.*, *The Bagesu*, pp. 40 *sq.*

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 23.

[4] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 8.

before they were deemed fit to marry or to share in the councils of the men. These ceremonies commonly took place every second or third year in a district, but if the harvest happened to be a poor one and the supply of beer consequently scanty, the ceremony was postponed to another year. Early in the morning of the day appointed for the performance of the rite, the priest went to the mountain shrine of the Creator Weri, which was under the shade of a large tree and near a spring of water. He was attended by one or more followers, including the chief of the village in which the ceremony was to take place. They took with them a fowl, usually white, and two eggs; the fowl was offered to the god, and was then killed and left at the foot of the sacred tree, while the eggs were broken in the path for a snake which was supposed to live in the tree. In many parts of Africa a green snake, with a patch of orange under the head, haunts trees near springs, where it preys on birds that come to sip the water. Such snakes are always sacred. The particular tree-snake to which the Bagesu offer eggs may belong to this species.

Sacrifice of bulls or goats.

After the Creator had thus been propitiated with a fowl, and the tree-snake with eggs, the boys who were to be circumcised were taken by the priest and the chief into the forest for another sacrifice to the god. If among the lads were any sons of chiefs or wealthy men, one or more bulls might be provided for the sacrifice and feast; but if the lads were sons of poor men, the sacrificial victims would only be goats. One of the animals was taken with them into the forest and offered to the god, after which it was killed, and the contents of the stomach, mixed with water, were smeared over the bodies of the boys. A plentiful supply of cooked vegetable food and beer had also been brought, and the meat of the animal which had been offered to the god was cooked and eaten with the vegetables and beer as a sacred meal, while the priest pronounced the god's blessing on each boy.

Dances before circumcision.

When the meal was over and they had drunk freely of the beer, the boys returned at a run to the village. They arrived there about noon; dancing went on vigorously, and the excitement grew apace. Up and down in an open space, surrounded by a crowd of spectators, pranced the

boys, brandishing heavy clubs, with which they were supposed to be repelling the assaults of an evil ghost; but too often they missed the ghost and hit the spectators, so that broken heads were the order of the day, and sometimes the wounded succumbed to their injuries. In thus laying recklessly about them with their bludgeons the lads were supposed to be under the influence of a spirit, to whose account the blood spilt, the eyes blackened, and the bruises inflicted were doubtless debited. The excitement spread also among the crowd: women often grew hysterical, and, shaking in every limb, joined in the frenzied dance. They, too, were believed to dance under the influence of the spirit.

The blessing of the Creator.

By this time the day had worn on to afternoon. The declining sun marked the approach of the hour when the boys had to undergo the last, the fearful ordeal, from which, under pain of lifelong infamy, they dared not shrink. To brace them for it they had to repair once more at a run to the mountain shrine, there again to receive the blessing of the Creator conveyed to them by his priest. At the shrine the priest was waiting for them. To each boy he gave his blessing, and smeared the face and body of each novice with white clay. The visit to the shrine and the benediction at it occupied about an hour, and when it was over, what with the beer, and the dancing, and the prospect of the dreadful operation now looming immediately before them, the boys were wrought up to such a pitch of excitement that on their breakneck course back to the village (for they had again to go at a run) they needed guides to direct their steps and to help them along. Immediately after their return they underwent the operation, each at his own village.[1]

The circumcision.

Sacrifice of goats to the Creator in sickness.

Sometimes, in serious sickness, a diviner discovered by the exercise of his art that the illness was brought about by the Creator Weri. Thereupon a goat and two long branches of a tree were brought to the house where the sick man lay. The branches were planted outside near the door to serve as a shrine or shelter for the Creator, and the goat was offered to him beside them. If the goat made water while the preparations for the sacrifice were afoot, it was a sign that the god accepted the offering, whereupon the animal

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 27-32.

was led away, with drums beating, to the forest, where it was killed and eaten. If, however, the deity did not thus signify his acceptance of the victim, the goat was taken back to the flock, and another goat was brought and tied near the tree for a short time, that it might be seen whether the god approved of it or not. If he showed by the usual sign that he accepted the offering, the goat was conducted to the forest and there sacrificed. After that the sick man no doubt either recovered or died.[1]

The Bakyiga clan also believe in the god Weri.

On the northern slopes of Mount Elgon there lived a clan called the Bakyiga, who, though they belonged to the Bagesu tribe, held little communication with the other clans. They, too, believed in the god Weri; but in their opinion ghosts were the responsible agents in the affairs of life, and to these powerful spirits offerings were made whenever the medicine-man called for them.[2]

Sacrifice for rain.

When rain was wanted, the rain-maker offered a fowl to rejoice the heart of the god, and he usually smeared some of the blood on his fetishes. Afterwards he sprinkled some medicated water upwards towards heaven and round him on every side, calling upon the spirit to give rain.[3] This sprinkling of water heavenward suggests that the spirit who was asked to give rain had his abode in the sky, but whether he was identified with the Creator Weri we are not informed.

Were, the god of the Wawanga.

The Wawanga, a tribe of the Elgon District in Kenya Colony (British East Africa), recognize a god whom they name Were. In every village and on the path leading to the village may be seen small stones, usually oblong, which have been set up in honour of Were.[4] Sacrifices are offered, libations poured out, and prayers addressed to Were and the spirits of the dead at a ceremony which takes place in honour of a deceased person at the season when the eleusine grain is sown; but we are not told that the Were of the Wawanga is regarded as a Creator or Supreme Being, nor that he is thought to dwell in the sky. Indeed, in prayers addressed to him he seems to be identified with the spirit of a person recently deceased.[4] However, the similarity of his

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 37.
[2] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 48.
[3] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 10.
[4] Hon. Kenneth R. Dundas, "The Wawanga and other Tribes of the Elgon District, British East Africa", *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xliii. (1913) pp. 31, 37.

name to the Weri of the Bagesu suggests that perhaps in one of his aspects he may claim a lofty position in the celestial hierarchy.

The Akamba of Kenya their country.

The Akamba are a Bantu tribe who occupy an extensive territory in Kenya Colony (British East Africa), at a considerable distance to the south of Mount Kenya. Their country, known as Ukamba, comprises a series of granitic mountain ranges running roughly north and south, with great stretches of flat land lying between them. Many springs rise on the hills and at their foot, and the intervening plains sometimes present a park-like appearance, but oftener they are covered with thickets of thorny scrub. Great watercourses traverse these plains, but their beds are dry except at the height of the rainy season. However, water can generally be obtained by digging holes in the clean white sand. At these holes women will sometimes sit for hours before they can fill their calabashes with the water which slowly oozes from them. The country as a whole is treeless: only on the tops of some of the higher mountains may be seen small remnants of primeval forests. The woods which once clothed the hill-sides appear to have been cut down by the Akamba to make room for their fields. The western district, named Ulu, is the most fertile and best watered portion of the country; on the other hand, in the eastern portion of Kitui, which is the most easterly district of Ukamba, the rainfall is very fluctuating, and severe famines occur at intervals of seven or ten years. On the eastern borders of Kitui the mountains cease and are succeeded by a flat, waterless, bush-covered desert, which stretches away unbroken to the valley of the Tana River. The fertility of the soil in this desert is extraordinary, but unless the wilderness can at some future time be irrigated by water from the river, it must remain useless to man.[1]

The Akamba subsist chiefly by agriculture, but they also keep cattle and value them highly.[2] They appear to

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of the A-Kamba and other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 3; G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, Second Edition (Uppsala, 1920), pp. 22 *sq.*, 26; Hon. Charles Dundas, "History of Kitui", *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xliii. (1913) pp. 480 *sq.*

[2] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, pp. 475 *sqq.*, 501 *sqq.*

The Akamba recognize a high god and creator called Mulungu or Engai, who lives in the sky.

recognize the existence of a high god, whom they call Mulungu or Engai (Ngai) or sometimes Chua, which means the sun.[1] They look upon him as the creator of all things; hence they name him Mumbi, "the Creator", from *umba*, a verb which means "to fashion", "to shape", and is most commonly applied to the shaping of pottery. Less often he is called Mwatwangi, "the Cleaver", from *atwangga*, "to cleave into pieces", because he is thought to have formed all living beings originally "as one hews out a stool or some other object with an axe". He is believed to be above the ancestral spirits (*aimu*) and all the powers of nature. Yet he seldom receives worship in the form of sacrifice or in any other way. He dwells in the skies at an indefinite distance and is held to be well-disposed towards human beings, but beyond that he has nothing to do with them. The Akamba say, "Mulungu does us no evil; so wherefore should we sacrifice to him?" It is only on rare and special occasions that they pray to him. At the birth of a child they have been heard to say, "Mumbi, thou who hast created all human beings, thou hast conferred a great benefit on us by bringing us this child". And when rain is wanted they sometimes pray, or seem to pray, for it to Mulungu-Ngai, yet such prayers, according to one account, are really addressed to the ancestral spirits.[2]

Different opinions of observers as to Mulungu or Engai.

But so vague and indefinite is the conception which the Akamba have formed of this high god that a careful observer of them has even denied that they have any word for God at all. According to him, the names Mulungu or Muungu and Ngai (Engai), "are merely collective words meant to denote the plurality of the spiritual world".[3] But this conclusion is rejected by Mr. C. W. Hobley, one of our best authorities on the Akamba. He says: "While it is recognised that great confusion of thought may exist on the subject among the bulk of the people, there is little doubt that the elders of *ithembo*, or tribal shrines, are quite clear on the matter. Great care was taken to record only such information on the question as was furnished by this grade of

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic* (London, 1922), p. 62.

[2] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, pp. 244 *sq.*

[3] Hon. Charles Dundas, "History of Kitui", *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xliii. (1913) p. 535.

Kamba society. And as the elders of *ithembo* correspond, in a measure, to the priestly castes of more highly developed communities, their opinion has a certain value, and we therefore feel justified in saying that the Kamba religion contains the concept of a high god."[1] The same view is held by Mr. Gerhard Lindblom, a Swedish ethnologist who has made a very careful study of the tribe.[2] Mr. Lindblom appears to be also right in holding that the Kamba conception of Mulungu is quite distinct from, and independent of, that of the ancestral spirits (*aimu*). He tells us that the natives generally, though not always, draw a sharp distinction between Mulungu and the ancestral spirits, and that Mulungu is believed to have created the first man who existed before death came into the world, and to dwell in the sky "among the clouds", whereas the ancestral spirits are suppose to live in the earth or upon it. These beliefs appear to be inconsistent with the hypothesis that Mulungu or Engai is simply the spirit of the first ancestor of the tribe, or that he stands for the whole body of the ancestral spirits collectively. At the same time Mr. Lindblom admits that the terms *Mulungu* and *aimu* (ancestral spirits) are often used by the Akamba indiscriminately, in particular that in their mouth *Mulungu-Ngai* is sometimes employed in the sense of *aimu* to denote the ancestral spirits.[3]

Prayer and sacrifice to Mulungu or Ngai in time of drought.

To an agricultural and pastoral people, living in a country where there are no lakes, where the river-beds are generally dry, and where the rainfall is uncertain, drought is apt to prove a great calamity, and it is no wonder that at such times the Akamba should appeal to the Creator, Mulungu or Engai, to have pity on them and moisten their parched fields and pastures with the water of heaven. Scattered over the country are shrines or sacred places (*mathembo*, singular *ithembo*), where the people pray and sacrifice to Engai or Mulungu for rain, and where also they worship him at times when pestilence has broken out among men or

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 62.

[2] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, pp. 249 *sqq*. Mr. Lindblom says: "Mulungu is not worshipped at all (or at least extremely seldom) by offering of sacrifices, nor in any other way" (p. 244). But sacrifices to Mulungu are recorded by Mr. C. W. Hobley. See below, pp. 247 *sqq*.

[3] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, pp. 245-247.

beasts. Sacred places bearing the same name (*mathembo*) are also dedicated to the worship of the ancestral spirits (*aiimu*). But whereas the sacred places of the ancestral spirits belong to a group of two or three villages, the sacred places of Engai or Mulungu belong to the whole country, or rather to each of the large divisions of the country. But whether dedicated to the deity or to the spirits, these holy spots almost always include a sacred tree at which the sacrifices are offered. In the shrines of Engai or Mulungu the sacred tree is regularly a fig tree of the sort which the Akamba call *mumo*. On the other hand, at the shrines of the ancestral spirits the sacred tree may be either a fig tree of the *mumo* species, or another variety of wild fig called *mumbo*, or a tree called *mutundu*.[1]

Sacred trees in the shrines.

When a sacrifice for rain is to be offered to Mulungu or Engai at one of his sacred places, the procedure is said to be as follows. The elders who are to take part in it must observe continence on the preceding night and for six days following that on which the sacred meat was eaten. No elder may participate in the rite who has the pollution of death on him; that is to say, if his wife or child has died, and he has not completed the ceremony of purification which their decease obliges him to perform; or again if he or one of his men has killed some one, and the ceremony of purification designed to relieve a homicide from the guilt or defilement of bloodshed has not yet been carried out. On the day appointed for the ceremony the elders assemble early in the morning and repair slowly to the sacred place, taking with them a male goat, usually of a black colour, as well as milk, snuff, and a small quantity of every kind of produce cultivated by the people. Among the produce thus conveyed to the shrine are millet, sorghum, bananas, sugar-cane, beans, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins, also beer made from sugar-cane (honey-beer is forbidden), red beads, cowries, leaves of a sweet-smelling plant, butter, and gruel. The men lead the goat and carry the milk, gruel, snuff, and beer, while the other things are carried to the tree by old women.

Procedure at the sacrifices for rain.

Ceremonial purity of the officiating elders.

The victim and offerings.

The women in general are not allowed to approach the

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 35.

tree, but dance together some way off. Six senior elders and six old women are chosen and all proceed to the sacred tree. The men go first and taste a little of the milk, gruel, and beer, which they spit out at the foot of the tree, and then give way to the old women, who go through the same ceremony. After that, the men return to the tree and pour the rest of the milk and so forth at its foot. Each elder now puts some of the snuff in the palm of his hand, takes a little and deposits the remainder. Next the women again come up and pour the foodstuffs at the foot of the sacred tree and smear the butter on the trunk. When the offerings have thus been deposited, the officiating elders pray as follows: "Mulungu, this is food. We desire rain, and wives and cattle and goats to bear, and we pray God that our people may not die of sickness." The ceremony at the sacred tree.

The sacrifice of the goat follows; but before the animal is slain, it is sanctified by being obliged to drink water mixed with the pulverized roots of two sorts of trees (the *mriti* and *muthumba*). This done, they lead the goat up to the tree, set it up on its hind legs before the trunk, and cut its throat, allowing the blood to pour over the offerings deposited at the foot of the tree. The upper portion of the skull with the horns is cut off and buried at the foot of the tree. Small pieces of meat are cut from every part of the carcase and from every internal organ and are laid also at the foot of the tree. The flesh is then divided; the left shoulder and part of the back are given to the old women, while the elders take the rest. Each party, that of the men and that of the women, lights a separate fire kindled with the wood of a *mumo* tree, not that of the sacred tree, but of another of the same species. The six men and six women each stick a fragment of the meat on a skewer of *mumo* wood, roast and eat it. This is a ceremonial meal, and when it is over they divide up the rest of the meat, and may use firewood of any sort to cook it. The sacrifice of the goat.

The sacrifice of the goat is called *kutonya ngñondu*, "to pierce the sacrifice". But the word sacrifice hardly expresses the meaning of *ngñondu*, which rather implies purification, or perhaps expiation, the underlying idea being that the goat is an expiatory gift offered for the sake of The idea of expiation.

relieving the country from the effects of the deity's displeasure and from the drought which is a consequence of his anger.[1]

Prayer to Engai for rain.

In another account of these sacrifices offered to the deity for rain, the prayer uttered by the men on depositing the offerings is said to be, "We pray to God (*Engai*) that rain may bless all our country".[2] After the sacrificial meal the bones are collected and placed on the fire and covered with the contents of the stomach. The smoke which rises to heaven is said to be pleasing to Engai.[3]

The house of offerings at the tree.

A little house is always built at the foot of the sacred tree on the eastern side, with the door facing the rising sun; and two days before the time appointed for beginning to plant the crops a pot of water and one of food, as well as butter and milk, are placed in it. These offerings are said to be for Engai; the pot of water is to remind him that rain is wanted, and the food represents the crops.[4]

Ceremonies to save the crops in drought.

The Akamba of Kitui, which is the most arid and rainless district of Ukamba, perform a curious ceremony when their crops are in danger of being blighted for lack of rain. They snare a couple of hyrax (*Procavia sp.*) and carry them round the fields of standing crops. Then they kill one of the animals and release the other. A fire is lit among the crops, and the heart, intestines, and contents of the stomach of the victim are placed upon it. The smoke of the sacrifice is said to be pleasing to the deity, that is, to Engai. The carcase is not eaten.[5] For some reason the Akamba appear to attribute to the hyrax a power of fertilizing their fields. Hence in Ulu, a district of Ukamba, the people mix the dung of the animal and other ingredients with some of the seed which they intend to sow; the mixture is then burned in such a way that the smoke drifts over the field. The ashes of the fire are afterwards mixed with the seed which is about to be sown. In Kitui, however, it is said that a live hyrax is carried round the fields by the

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 53-55.
[2] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 57.
[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 57 *sq.*
[4] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 60.
[5] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 60 *sq.*

villagers in procession; the animal is then killed and its blood and entrails scattered over the field.[1]

Prayer reinforced by magic.

When a villager sees that his crops are suffering from drought or the ravages of insects, he will go to the bed of a river and cut the branch of a tree called *kindio* which grows there. He then digs a hole in the ground among the crops, and plants the branch in it, together with an egg. On doing so he prays to Engai, beseeching him to make his crops grow like the *kindio* tree, which never withers.[2] Here the prayer to the deity is reinforced by the magic of the evergreen tree.

Sacrifice to Engai after capturing cattle.

On returning from a successful raid, the leader of the expedition used to sacrifice the largest ox of the captured cattle, and pray to Engai by way of thanking him for his favours. But the thanksgiving ceremony never took place at a shrine (*ithembo*), probably because the deity was supposed to shrink from personal contact with the man-slayers, at least while the blood or the smell of it was still fresh upon them.[3]

Rebirth of the dead.

The Akamba of Kitui believe that the spirits of their dead ancestors sometimes pray to Engai to give them another body, and that, if the deity grants their prayer, one of the spirits will be born again as a human infant. Their reason for thinking so is that a woman with child will sometimes dream of a dead man night after night, and if she afterwards gives birth to a son, they are sure that the child is no other than that same dead man come to life again; so the infant is given his name.[4]

Blood brotherhood sanctioned by Engai.

The Akamba of Kitui observe the widespread custom of blood brotherhood, whereby two men make a sacred and lasting covenant of friendship by exchanging and swallowing a little of each other's blood. If such a covenant is broken by the treachery of either party, the Akamba are very shocked, and believe that Engai will injure the traitor's village, probably killing him and his kinsfolk and his cattle. On this belief Mr. Hobley remarks that "it is often difficult to state with precision whether the high god or the ancestral

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 76.
[2] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 140.
[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 65.
[4] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 159.

spirits are meant when the term *Engai* is here used. In this case, however, the high god is probably referred to. And if the opinion be correct, it is a striking example of the belief in the concept of a personal God, who takes a continual and minute interest in the doings of His creatures."[1]

Prayer to Engai in sickness.

When sickness prevails in a village of Kitui, the headman consults a diviner, who may declare that the spirit (*imu*) of some dead person is troubling the people and must be appeased. To effect this desirable end, the headman walks round the village with some ashes in his right hand and a fowl in his left; on reaching a point opposite the gate of the village he releases the fowl and lets it fly inside. Then the bird is caught again, its throat is cut, and the knife is afterwards buried in the cattle pen. The children of the village eat the flesh of the fowl. Thereupon the headman prays to Engai, begging him to remove the sickness and keep it from the village. Afterwards he prays to the spirit (*imu*) of the dead person who is supposed to have brought the sickness. They say that they pray to Engai first because the spirit of the dead man has gone to him. The spirits of the dead which chiefly afflict villages are those of deceased medicine-men who in their lifetime were believed to communicate with Engai in their dreams.[2]

Sacrifice of a goat and prayer to Engai to avert sickness.

Sometimes a goat instead of a fowl is employed to ward off sickness from a village. In that case the proceedings are as follows. The evening before the ceremony the headman puts a stone in the fire of the hut and leaves it there all night. Next morning he calls a small boy and girl, and the boy leads a he-goat round the outside of the village, followed by the girl. For the success of the ceremony it is essential that the goat should be all of one colour; a speckled goat would be useless. When the procession reaches the gate of the village, the headman takes half a gourd of water and places it on the goat's head between the horns. The stone is now fetched from the glowing embers of the fire in the hut; by this time the stone is red hot, and when it is dropped into the bowl on the goat's head it fizzes and causes the water to boil and give off steam. A hole is

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 249.

[2] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 138.

next dug at the door of the headman's hut; the headman himself holds the stone over the hole and prays saying, "O Engai, I do not wish to see the sickness enter my village, so now I bury this stone and bury the sickness with it". The goat is not killed, but allowed to go free, so that it is a little hard to see what part it takes in staving off the sickness. Apparently in this respect the chief reliance is placed on the fizzing hot stone, which, if it does not actually kill the sickness with which it is buried, may at least be thought to act as a powerful deterrent on his imagination in case he should meditate a fresh assault on the village.[1]

Engai lives in the sky or on a high mountain.

While we are told that Engai or Mulungu is vaguely supposed to live in the sky,[2] it is also sometimes said that he dwells in the high mountains, inhabiting, for example, the lofty Mount Kenya,[3] which, though it rises only half a degree south of the equator, is sheathed in glaciers for a perpendicular height of about four thousand feet.[4] So stupendous a mountain, towering far beyond the limits of perpetual snow, might well be deemed the home of an African Sky-god.

Engai associated with rain, shooting stars, and eclipses.

Other indications of the celestial abode of Engai are his association with the rain, with shooting stars, and with eclipses. The Akamba emphatically affirm that it is Engai, and not the ancestral spirits (*aiimu*), who sends the rain.[5] When a shooting star appears to fall on a sacred place (*ithembo*), they think that Engai has descended to the shrine to ask for food; so to appease his hunger they take various kinds of food to the spot or even sacrifice an animal.[6] Again, eclipses are said to be wrought by the high god Engai and to be an omen of sickness in the land. Accordingly, at an eclipse the headman of each village has to take two children and a goat. The goat is led round the outside of the village, and when it reaches the gate, an elder cuts a piece out of one of its ears and lets the animal return to the

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 139 *sq.*

[2] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes*, p. 85; compare G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, p. 244.

[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 63.

[4] W. J. Sollas, *Primitive Hunters*, Third Edition (London, 1924), pp. 16 *sq.*

[5] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 63.

[6] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 64.

village. Then they smear white earth on the face, the stomach, and along the back of the goat to its tail.[1] This remedy for an eclipse has never yet been known to fail; invariably, after the whitening of the goat, the sun or the moon regains its former radiance.

The first parents thrown down by Mulungu.

Yet another indication of the abode of the deity in the sky is the legend that the first parents of the existing tribes were thrown down by Mulungu from the clouds, bringing with them a cow, a goat, and a sheep. The very place where they fell and built the first village is still pointed out.[2] However, according to another and equally probable account, Engai produced the first man, the ancestor of the human race, out of an ant-hill by the sea. Hence the Kamba Adam is known as "He who came out of the earth".[3]

Engai or Mulungu associated with sacred fig trees.

A very notable feature in the Kamba religion is the association of Engai or Mulungu with sacred trees; for almost always, as we have seen, his holy places are at sacred fig trees of a particular species.[4] The way in which any fig tree came to be regarded as sacred and so to form the centre of a holy place, is said to have been as follows. In any particular village, long ago, there would be a woman who enjoyed a high reputation as a prophetess or seer, inasmuch as her prophecies always came true. At her death she would be buried in the village, and after her death her spirit (*imu*) would take possession of another woman of the same village, who, thus inspired, would speak in the name of the dead prophetess, saying, "I cannot stay here, I am called by Engai, and I go to live at a certain tree", which she would name. The tree thus designated became holy henceforth. Four elders and four old women would then be chosen to go and consecrate it. They took with them earth from the grave of the prophetess, and one of them, a relation of the deceased, would take a goat. Arrived at the tree, they deposited the earth from the grave at its foot and led the goat thrice round the trunk; the goat was then sacrificed, and the delegates prayed, or rather addressed the spirit of the dead prophetess, saying, "We have brought you to the

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 259.
[2] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, p. 252.
[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 26.
[4] Above, p. 248.

tree you desire". After that a small hut was built on the spot. From time to time it is usually rebuilt before a great ceremony takes place at the tree. The elders who build the hut must have their heads shaved next morning, but they are obliged to shave one another, no one else is permitted to discharge that holy office. The shorn locks are then hidden, probably to prevent an enemy from bewitching them by means of the clippings.[1]

However, this explanation of the origin of a sacred place would apply to the foundation of shrines sacred to ancestral spirits as well as to Engai or Mulungu; indeed, it appears to hold good especially of the shrines of ancestral spirits, since it is the spirit of a dead woman who is supposed to have been mainly instrumental in instituting the sanctuary.

Association of Sky-gods with certain species of trees.

The association of the Sky-god Engai or Mulungu with a species of fig tree reminds us of the association of the Greek and Roman Sky-gods, Zeus and Jupiter, with the oak. But why a fig tree should be chosen for the honour does not appear. The reason for associating the oak with the Sky-gods Zeus and Jupiter probably is that in Europe the oak is oftener blasted by lightning from heaven than any other tree of the forest.[2] The ancients themselves would seem to have observed this curious fact; for Aristophanes puts into the mouth of Socrates the remark that Zeus strikes his own temples and the great oaks with his thunderbolts.[3] Can it be that in East Africa the sacred fig trees belong to a species which is often the target of heaven's artillery?

Story of the Origin of Death: Engai, the bird, and the chameleon.

Like so many other African peoples the Akamba believe that God originally designed to endow men with the gift of immortality, or at all events with the almost equally valuable property of rising from the dead after a brief interval, but that this benevolent intention was frustrated through the fault of one of the animals whom the Creator had sent to bear the glad tidings to his creatures. In the Kamba versions of the myth the two messengers are a chameleon and a bird, which is variously described as a thrush and a weaver-bird. In one version the two creatures are accompanied

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 61 *sq.*

[2] *The Golden Bough*, Part VII., *Balder the Beautiful*, ii. 298 *sqq.*

[3] Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 401 *sq.*

on their mission by a frog, but he plays no active part in the story, which runs thus. Once upon a time there were a frog, a chameleon, and a bird called *itoroko*, which is said to be a small bird of the thrush tribe (*Cossypha imolaens*), with a black head, bluish-black back, and a buff-coloured breast. These three were sent by Engai, that is, by God, to search for human beings who died one day and came to life again the next. In those days the chameleon was a very important personage, so he led the way. Presently he spied some people lying like dead; so, while the three approached the seeming corpses, the chameleon called out to them softly, "*Niwe, niwe, niwe*". But the thrush was vexed with the chameleon and asked what he was making that noise for. The chameleon replied, "I am only calling the people who go forward and then come back", by which he meant people who die and come to life again. But the sceptical thrush derisively declared it to be clean impossible to find people who ever came back to life. The chameleon, however, stuck to it that the thing was possible, and added by way of illustration, "Do not I go forward and back?" alluding to the way the chameleon lurches backwards and forwards before he takes a step. By this time the three messengers had come up to the spot where the dead people were lying, and in response to the call of the chameleon sure enough the corpses opened their eyes and listened to him. But the thrush cried out to them, "You are dead to this world and must stay where you are. You cannot rise to life again." Having delivered this discouraging message the thrush flew away. But the frog and the chameleon stayed behind. The chameleon now took up his parable again and addressed the dead in these words: "I was sent by Engai to wake you up; do not believe the words of the thrush, he only tells you lies". But the spell of his power was now broken: his exhortations were of no avail: the dead turned a deaf ear to them and either could not or would not come to life. So the chameleon and the frog returned to Engai, and the deity questioned the chameleon as to the result of his mission. He said, "Did you go?" The chameleon said, "Yes". The deity then asked, "Did you find the people?" "Yes, I did," answered

the chameleon. "What did you say?" inquired the deity. The chameleon replied, "I called out *Niwe, niwe, niwe.* I spoke very gently, but the thrush interrupted me and drowned my voice, so the dead people only listened to what he said." Engai then turned to the thrush and asked whether that was so, whereupon the thrush stated that the chameleon so bungled his message that he, the thrush, felt morally bound to interrupt him. Engai believed the story of the thrush, and, being very vexed at the way in which the chameleon had executed his commands, he reduced that animal from his high estate, and ordained that ever after he should only be able to walk very, very slowly, and that he should never have any teeth. But he took the thrush into high favour, and commissioned him to wake up the inhabitants of the world every morning, and that duty the thrush discharges punctually down to this day; for he begins to sing every morning at 2 A.M. when all other birds are still fast asleep.[1]

Another version of the story of the Origin of Death; Mulungu, the bird, and the chameleon.

In a shorter Kamba version of the story the kindly intention of the deity is more plainly expressed, but on the other hand he is taxed with a change of purpose which bespeaks a certain vacillation or fickleness of character. The story runs as follows:

When Mulungu created man, he resolved to endow him with immortality. Now he knew the chameleon to be a very trustworthy animal, slow but sure; so he chose him to carry the message of immortality to the children of men. So the chameleon set off, but his duty sat very lightly on him, and he stopped now and then to catch flies. At last, however, he arrived at mankind, and opening his mouth proceeded to deliver his message of immortality. But unfortunately he was afflicted with an impediment in his speech, and when he attempted to speak he got no further in his message than this, "I have been commissioned to—I have been commissioned to——". Here the deity grew impatient; he had now changed his mind and decided that man should die, "like the roots of the aloe". The swift-

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes*, pp. 107 *sq.* I have already cited this version elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 60-62).

flying weaver-bird was accordingly despatched post haste with the new, the fatal message, and he arrived while the chameleon still stood stuttering and stammering, "I—I—I have b-b-been co-co-co-com-missioned to—to—to——". But before he could spit it all out, the bird cut in and delivered his message of death. That is why all men are mortal down to this day.[1]

The Akikuyu and their country.

To the north and north-west of the Akamba dwells another and perhaps kindred Bantu tribe called the Akikuyu. They inhabit a highland country which, though it lies nearly under the equator, enjoys a temperate and perfectly healthy climate on account of its great elevation above the ocean. It is a vast expanse of hills in the form of ridges, which, seen from a height, present the appearance of the billows of a troubled and tossing sea receding, wave beyond wave, into the distance, till they break at the foot of the lofty mountains that bound the horizon on nearly every side. These rolling downs would seem to have been once clothed with a dense forest of giant trees and impenetrable jungle; but now only a few patches of virgin forest, where the axe of the woodman has spared the sacred groves of the sylvan gods, add here and there a touch of verdure to the bleakness and bareness of the scenery. Yet is its monotony relieved by the view of the great mountains in the near or farther distance, above all by the sight of the magnificent mass of Mount Kenya rearing its mighty top, crowned with eternal glaciers and perpetual snow, far up into the blue vault of heaven. The prospect of it, at all times impressive, is perhaps most striking at early morning or towards evening, when clouds veil the lower slopes and the summit is bathed in the purple mist of dawn or lit up by the gorgeous hues of sunset. The glorious mountain dominates like an Olympus the landscape for miles and miles. No wonder that the Akikuyu place the home of their god on Mount Kenya.[2]

[1] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, p. 253.

[2] W. S. Routledge and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People, the Akikuyu of British East Africa* (London, 1910), pp. 1 *sq.* As to the fine climate of the country, see P. Cayzac, "La Religion des Kikuyu (Afrique Orientale)", *Anthropos*, v. (1910) p. 310.

Like their kinsfolk the Akamba, they call their deity indifferently Engai (Ngai) or Mulungu (Molungu),[1] and their notions of him seem to be equally vague and floating, far indeed from being crystallized into the hard lines and inflexible shapes of a dogmatic theological system. Yet they regard him as the master of all, the being without whose permission neither good nor evil can happen to men. They offer many sacrifices to him, sometimes the first-fruits of the crops, but most commonly a sheep. The sacrifice is public and solemn, and it takes place at the foot of a sacred tree; for, like the Akamba, the Akikuyu regularly associate the reverence for sacred trees with the worship of the Supreme God. The aim of the sacrifice is to obtain some benefit, such as rain, from the deity. It is offered exclusively by the elders of a district. Women and children take no part in it. On the other hand, in the numerous sacrifices which they offer to the spirits of the dead (*ngoma*) the whole of the family, down to the little children, must participate.[2]

Engai or Mulungu, the high god of the Akikuyu.

Among the Akikuyu the Supreme God seems to be known as Engai (Ngai) more commonly than as Mulungu.[3] His sacred tree, as among the Akamba, is a species of fig, the great wild fig-tree (*Ficus capensis*), which the natives call *mugumu* or *muti wa Engai*. Dotted about the country are numbers of these sacred trees, many of which were formerly sacred shrines or places of sacrifice to Engai from time immemorial.[4] No beast or bird may be killed or shot in a sacred tree, and if any impious person cuts off a branch or makes an incision in the trunk, dire results are believed to ensue. The elders oblige the sinner to pay a fine of a ram and a he-goat, and the animals are sacrificed at the tree. The elders apply a strip of the skin of one of the victims to the cut in the tree to heal the wound, and they anoint it

The wild fig-tree sacred to Engai.

[1] P. Cayzac, "La Religion des Kikuyu (Afrique Orientale)", *Anthropos*, v. (1910) pp. 309 *sq.*

[2] P. Cayzac, "La Religion des Kikuyu (Afrique Orientale)", *Anthropos*, v. (1910) pp. 309 *sq.*

[3] H. R. Tate, "Further Notes on the Kikuyu tribe of British East Africa", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiv. (1904) pp. 263 *sq.*; W. S. Routledge and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, pp. 225 *sqq.*; C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 40 *sqq.*

[4] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 40; H. R. Tate, *op. cit.* p. 263.

with the fat and the contents of the stomach. Moreover, the breast of the ram is cut off and hung in the tree; but the remainder of the carcase and the whole of the goat are eaten by the elders.[1]

Sacrifices offered by the Akikuyu at the sacred trees.

Sacrifices are offered at the sacred trees to procure rain, to obtain relief from famine, and to check the progress of an epidemic.[2] On the day when a sacrifice is offered for rain, no one may touch the earth with iron; a sword or spear may not so much as be rested on the ground, else the Akikuyu believe that the sacrifice would be in vain. Nay on such a day, an elder may not even strike his staff into the ground in the usual way.[3] Apparently the notion is that earth should not be wounded at the moment when she is about to be fertilized by rain from heaven. The victim offered is regularly a ram. One year it may be a black ram; but if in that particular year the seasons chance to be unfavourable, the Akikuyu conclude that the deity is displeased and therefore change the colour of the victim to red or white. When the ram is brought to the sacred tree, one of the elders lifts up the animal so that it stands on its hind legs facing the tree. A gourd of honey and another of beer, brewed from sugar-cane, are then poured out at the foot of the tree, and the elders call out, "We pray to God (Engai), we sacrifice a goat, we offer all things". It is curious that the elders should thus say that they are sacrificing a goat, when the victim is really a ram. The victim is then suffocated and its throat pierced with the sacrificial knife. The flowing blood is collected in a gourd and poured out at the foot of the sacred tree. The right half of the carcase is then skinned and removed, while the left half, wrapped in the skin, is deposited at the foot of the tree and left there. This portion is believed to be eaten by a hyena or wild cat which is moved to do so by the deity. The remainder of the flesh is cooked and eaten by the elders on the spot. In olden times the fire on which the sacrificial meat is roasted was always supposed to be kindled with new fire made by the friction of wood, but nowadays a firebrand is often brought

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 41.

[2] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 45 *sq.*

[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 47.

from a village. None of the meat may be taken back to the village. The bones of the portion of the sacrificial ram eaten by the elders are each broken into two parts and deposited at the foot of the tree: the marrow is not extracted. After partaking of the sacrificial meal, the elders retire to a little distance and chant these words: "We elders pray God (Engai) to give us rain". The night before and the night after the sacrifice the elders must observe strict chastity. A breach of the rule by any person present at the ceremony is believed to render the sacrifice ineffectual. No elder whose father is alive may attend the ceremony.[1]

Prayer to Engai for rain.

Every year, when the maize is just sprouting, the elders summon the chief medicine-men and repair with them to the sacred tree to offer sacrifice. One of the medicine-men pours "medicine" into the mouth of the sacrificial ram before it is killed, and he pours it also on the fire on which the meat is roasted. The bones of the victim are then burned in the fire, that the smoke of them may ascend into the tree and be well-pleasing to the deity among the branches. The flowing blood is caught in a half-gourd and placed in the horn of an ox. Half of it is poured out at the foot of the sacred tree; the other half is mixed with pieces of intestinal fat and put in the large intestine of the sacrificial ram. This large intestine, with the blood and fat in it, is next roasted over the fire and eaten by the senior elders.[2]

Sacrifice at the sacred tree when the maize is ripening.

Near the time of harvest, when the crops are ripe, but before they are reaped, the elders take a ram to the sacred place and slaughter it. They pour the blood at the foot of the tree and pray, "O God (Engai), we have to bring meat so that we may not fall ill, for we have good crops and are glad".[3] The elders then eat the meat. After the feast, they take the contents of the stomach of the sacrificial ram and sprinkle them over the ripe crops and also over the large wicker bottles and large gourds in which grain is stored. It is believed that if the elders failed to do this, the people would suffer greatly from diarrhoea.[4]

Sacrifice at the sacred tree at harvest.

Besides the sacred trees at the communal places of

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 42-45.
[2] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 46.
[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, p. 46.
[4] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 46 *sq.*

Private sacrifices at sacred trees.

sacrifice, the head of a village usually has a private sacred tree of his own, at which he sacrifices to the deity for good fortune or for help in time of trouble. Women are not allowed to attend a sacrifice to the deity at one of the regular sacred trees; but at a private sacrifice for good fortune, performed at a sacred tree belonging to a particular village, the village elders attend with their wives and children, their cattle, sheep, and goats. However, even then the women and children may not come near the tree, but must remain a little way off. When the sacrificial ram has been killed, the fat of the victim is smeared on the whole family as well as on the flocks and herds. The party then returns home, uttering the usual African cry of joy. After a private sacrifice the skin of the slain ram is carried back to the village and presented to the elder's chief wife, but this is never done after a public or communal sacrifice. The night before the sacrifice the elders must observe continence. On the morning after a private sacrifice the wives go to the sacred tree and deposit there offerings of grain, bananas, and other things. Two days after a private sacrifice a ceremonial drinking of beer takes place at the village, men and women drinking apart. During the ceremony they pray to the deity, saying, "We pray thee, O God (Engai), that you will give us all things, children, goats, and cattle".[1]

The sacred places of Engai are sanctuaries where criminals and foes can take refuge.

The sacred places of Engai serve as sanctuaries. If a murderer or other criminal can escape to one of them and touch the sacred tree, he is safe from the vengeance of his pursuers. He cannot, of course, stay indefinitely at the tree, or he would soon die of hunger, but the elders come and take him away under safe conduct. His clansmen must go to the sacred tree and sacrifice a ram, which they are supposed to offer in exchange for him. The contents of the stomach of the victim are smeared on the body of the murderer, and a senior elder draws a line of white earth on his face from the forehead to the tip of his nose. The criminal is now ceremonially clean and may return to his family; until the purification had been accomplished, he might not enter the village. All the flesh of the ram is eaten by the elders; none is left at the tree. But some of the contents of the

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 48-50.

victim's stomach are sprinkled at the foot of the tree to cleanse the spot where the criminal stood. In war, if an enemy succeeded in taking sanctuary at a sacred tree, he might not be slain there, but he would probably be seized and killed at some distance from the holy spot.[1]

Sacrifices offered by the Akikuyu to the ancestral spirits.

The Akikuyu, as we have seen, offer many sacrifices to the ancestral spirits (*ngoma*) as well as to God (Engai). Indeed, they attribute the ordinary ills of life to the agency of the ancestral spirits, who have to be propitiated accordingly.[2] But the sacrifices to the ancestral spirits are never offered at the sacred trees; they always take place in the village, close to the village shrine. The victim sacrificed is regularly a ram. The portions of its flesh which are eaten are roasted on a fire, which was formerly kindled on the spot by the friction of wood. Nowadays the fire is supposed to be brought from a village. An elder usually sacrifices a ram every three months or so at the grave of his father. He pours blood, fat, and beer on the grave, and leaves the ram-skin there. Sacrifices to the ancestral spirits must take place before sunrise, probably because the spirits are supposed to be on the prowl by night but to retire during the day. If on the occasion of a sacrifice at the sacred tree the elders chance to see a snake, they say that it is an ancestral spirit (*ngoma*) and try to pour a little of the blood from the sacrificed ram on the head, back, and tail of the reptile.[3]

Primitive tribes on the south-eastern slopes of Mount Kenya.

Bordering on the territory of the Akamba and the Akikuyu are some small tribes who inhabit a rugged and not very accessible country on the south-eastern slopes of the mighty Mount Kenya. Here the declivities of the mountain are still to a great extent clothed with dense virgin forest, which is, however, slowly retreating before the encroachments of man. Here the rivers flow in deep rocky gorges, their heavily-timbered sides swept in the wet season by torrents of rain which render the paths across them, difficult at all times, then doubly precarious. On the ridges, parted

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 47 *sq.*

[2] W. S. Routledge and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p. 227; P. Cayzac, "La Religion des Kikuyu (Afrique Orientale)", *Anthropos*, v. (1910) p. 310.

[3] C. W. Hobley, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 50 *sq.*

from each other by these profound and sometimes almost impassable ravines, dwell isolated communities, which, secluded in the fastnesses of their wild highlands, have clung to their ancient modes of life and thought, while their neighbours in the lowlands have succumbed more or less to that restless tide of change, which even in Africa may be traced setting silently but surely in the direction of progress, wherever nature has not opposed insuperable obstacles to its current. Altogether these mountaineers on the rugged slopes of the great extinct volcano remained very little affected by foreign influence down to the beginning of the twentieth century.[1]

The Chuka.

Among them, the most typical are the Chuka, who claim to have inhabited the country from time immemorial, though they tell of a race of hairy dwarfs who once dwelt in the depths of the forest, practising no kind of agriculture, and subsisting solely by the chase and by bee-keeping, while they lodged in burrows dug out of the ground and roofed over to keep out the rain.[2] The Chuka themselves are apparently the nucleus out of which other less pure tribes in their neighbourhood have been formed by admixture of foreign elements on the north and west.[3] Physically they are rather more thickset and muscular and decidedly darker in hue than their neighbours; their eyes are of the warm brown colour characteristic of the negro. Yet two distinct types of face occur in about equal proportions among them. One, which may be called the Bushman type, is marked by prominent cheek-bones, lumpy forehead, heavy jaws, and matted hair and beard. The other is a sort of Mongolian type, with narrow eyes, high cheek-bones, wide mouth, and slanting forehead.[4] All the tribes are divided into clans which are exogamous, marriage within the clan being regarded as incest. Descent of the clan is hereditary in the male line. Traces of totemism appear to exist in the special relation of various animals and insects to certain clans,

The two physical types.

The clans and their mode of life.

[1] Major G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya* (London, 1925), pp. 17-25, 39.

[2] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 20 *sq.* The name commonly applied to these dwarfs is Agumbe, though the name Asi also occurs as an alternative.

[3] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 25-27, 42.

[4] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 42-44.

which use them as signs or badges.[1] The people subsist mainly on maize, beans, and millet, which they cultivate in the usual wasteful fashion by clearing patches in the forest, sowing them for a few years, and then suffering them to relapse into the wilderness. The men fell the trees, grub up the roots and bushes, and remove the stones, the women sow the seed and reap the crops.[2] Some of the tribes keep a few cattle, the milk and flesh of which form part of their diet.[3] But nobody will drink milk and eat flesh at the same time; strictly speaking, three months ought to elapse between a draught of milk and a meal of meat, but in practice the eater or drinker is allowed to purify himself by eating a small bitter berry that grows on a large tree, thus preparing his body for a change of diet. The motive for not allowing milk to come into contact with meat in the stomach is a fear lest such contact should harm, not the eater, but the cow that gave the milk; for the natives believe that she and her calf would break out in spots as a consequence of any breach of the rule.[4] The people also keep goats, which they slaughter both for food and in a variety of ceremonies, though they do not drink the milk.[5] Of the ceremonies in which the goat figures as a victim the most curious perhaps is one performed at the birth of a child; it consists apparently in a pretence that the infant has been born from a goat instead of from its human mother. A goat having been killed, its skin is spread on the legs of the child's mother; the baby is wrapped in it, and then snatched from the skin by old women, who in doing so utter the trilling cry which is usual at the birth of a child. Sometimes the intestine of a goat is tied round the mother's waist and is cut at the moment when the child is lifted out of the goatskin, apparently in imitation of the severance of the navel string.[6] A similar ceremony is performed on boys before circumcision among the Akikuyu.[7] Other

Meat not eaten with milk.

The ceremony of birth from a goat.

[1] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, p. 39.

[2] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 66 *sq.*

[3] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 117 *sq.*

[4] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, p. 100.

[5] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, p. 119.

[6] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 82 *sq.*

[7] W. Scoresby Routledge and Kathleen Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People, the Akikuyu of British East Africa*, pp. 151-153. Compare C.

Scrupulosity as to ceremonial cleanness.

occasions which require the slaughter of a goat are purificatory rites intended to rid persons of ceremonial uncleanness (*thahu*), which they are supposed to have contracted through a great variety of causes.[1]

Vague belief of the people in a Creator called Engai.

But while the whole social life of these wild tribes is permeated by a scrupulosity as to ceremonial cleanness which reminds us of the Pharisees, they are said to have very little religion, and in particular, unlike most African tribes, to have no idea of a life after death. Yet they certainly believe vaguely in a Creator, and the snowy cap of Mount Kenya appears to be generally regarded as his home; thus in the course of his incantations a wizard will address the holy mountain and pray for the divine approbation of the undertaking he has in hand. The name universally applied to the deity is the Masai word Engai. However, they seem to have very little idea of any definite control exerted by Engai over the affairs of ordinary life. Their theology may accordingly be described as a vague theism, the belief in a great First Cause, whose will may perhaps be thought to work automatically in the social laws of uncleanness, purification, and so on.[2]

How men were deprived of the boon of immortality: the Sun, the mole, and the hyena.

Yet, like so many of the simple folks of Africa, these savages have meditated on the eternal problem of human mortality and have found what perhaps they regard as a satisfactory solution of it. They say that long, long ago the Sun desired that all men should rise from the dead. To give effect to this kindly wish he prepared a medicine which had the marvellous property of bringing the dead to life, if it were only smeared on their lips. This priceless drug he committed to the care of a mole with instructions to distribute it broadcast among mankind; and he chose the mole as his messenger because in those far-off days the mole was a beast that ran about on the surface of the ground. So off the mole set on the journey with the precious packet in his hand. On the way he fell in with a hyena, who stopped him to ask what errand he was running. In the fulness of

W. Hobley, "Kikuyu Customs and Beliefs," *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) pp. 440 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, pp. 77-79; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, ii. 7 *sqq.*

[1] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 181 *sq.*

[2] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 205 *sq.*

his heart the mole confided to him the great secret and showed him the little packet that was to make all men immortal. At the news the hyena was struck with consternation, "For what," said he, "am I to eat if there are no more nice fresh corpses for me to devour?" The bread would, so to say, be taken out of his mouth if the mole were to deliver the medicine at the correct address. But a thought struck him. "Look here," he said to the mole insinuatingly, "you have always been a friend of mine, so do me one favour. Just give me the medicine that the Sun gave you, and take this here medicine of mine instead." Now the medicine of the hyena was meant to kill all men so that there would be many corpses for him to batten on. The mole did not much like the proposal, but being loth to disoblige an old friend he swopped medicines with the hyena. Then, feeling some qualms, he returned to the Sun and told him all that had happened. The Sun fell into a passion and upbraided him in very bitter words. "You have lost the medicine", he said, "which I had so much trouble in making, and now I cannot make any more. I trusted you to take my message, and you have failed. Henceforth you shall fear my face and hide when you see me." The mole went away much ashamed, and since that time he has lived beneath the earth; if he sees the face of the Sun he dies.[1]

Belief in a Supreme God among the Nilotic or Hamitic tribes of East Africa.

Like the other tribes of East Africa whose beliefs concerning Sky-gods and Supreme Beings we have thus far been investigating, the Akikuyu and the Akamba belong to the great Bantu family, which, roughly speaking, occupies the whole southern half of Africa from the equator to the Cape of Good Hope, with the exception of the comparatively small area inhabited by the Hottentots and Bushmen. But in the part of Africa that we have now reached, which may be said to extend from the head waters of the Nile eastward to the Indian Ocean, there are a number of tribes which belong to an entirely different stock and speak entirely different languages. As many of them dwell in the valley and along the banks of the Upper Nile, they have been classed together, appropriately enough, under the general name of Nilotics.

[1] G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*, pp. 216 *sq.*

Racially they are usually assigned to the type known as Hamitic. They are tall thin men, with features which are not markedly negroid and sometimes resemble what is called the Caucasian type.[1] Among some of these Nilotic or Hamitic tribes there prevails a belief in a Supreme God, who lives in the sky or at all events in the upper regions of the air, and who presents a more or less close analogy to the Sky-god or Supreme Being of the other African peoples whom we have thus far been considering. Accordingly I shall conclude this survey of the worship of Sky-gods in Africa by a brief notice of the similar deities worshipped, or at all events recognized, by the Nilotic or Hamitic tribes in question.

The Masai, their character and military organization.

Of these tribes the most southerly and probably the most famous are the warlike Masai, who inhabit an extensive region in Kenya Colony (British East Africa) and Tanganyika Territory (German East Africa), to the east of Lake Victoria Nyanza, and stretching from the equator to about 6° south latitude.[2] They are, or were down to recent years, a race of nomadic herdsmen, devoted to war and the care of their cattle and despising the pursuit of agriculture. Their martial temper and their elaborate military organization long made them the terror of the neighbouring tribes and secured for them a predominant position in East Africa. Yet they never succeeded in founding a state or polity like the kingdoms of Uganda and Unyoro. The reason probably was that these fierce warriors never bowed their necks to a monarchical yoke. The centre of political gravity was not with the chiefs or elders, but with a republic of young men, dominated by the spirit of soldierly comradeship and thirsting only for military glory. To retire at a mature age from the ranks of the warriors and to assume the dignity of chief was honourable, but seems to have been looked upon as a descent to a lower sphere of activity, a decline from the prime of manhood to the threshold of old age. The chiefs planned the details of the raids which the warriors desired to undertake, but their power of compelling these hotspurs to do anything for which they had no liking was slight indeed. The nearest approach to a central and supreme

[1] Sir Charles Eliot, in A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), pp. xi *sq.*

[2] Sir Charles Eliot, *op. cit.* p. xi.

authority was made by a line of seers or medicine-men who exercised much influence over the people in virtue of the divine support which they were supposed to enjoy and of the divine oracles which they delivered under the inspiring promptings of honey-wine. Yet, great as was the power they wielded, they seem never to have availed themselves of it as a means of establishing a despotism like that of the sultans on the neighbouring coast or of the kings on the farther shore of the great lake.[1]

Belief of the Masai in a high god called Engai or Ngai.

A peculiar feature in the character of this turbulent and warlike people is their piety and their firm faith in a high god whom they name Engai or Ngai.[2] This, as we have seen, is the name which the Akamba and the Akikuyu bestow on the same exalted Being, and it is probable that both peoples borrowed the name from their neighbours the Masai.[3] The Akamba have long been in close, though for the most part hostile, contact with the Masai, of whom they formerly lived in great terror;[4] and the high reputation which the Masai acquired by their warlike exploits induced many of the surrounding peoples to copy the Masai dress, customs, and rules of life. The Akikuyu, for example, imitate the dress and equipment of Masai warriors, including the badges on the Masai shields.[5] It would not, therefore, be surprising if the Akamba and Akikuyu adopted the name of the great God who had so often led their dreaded foes to victory. Be that as it may, the Masai seem to repose an implicit faith in the great god Engai, who lives up aloft in the sky, as the Israelites of old did in Jehovah, and like the Israelites they firmly believe themselves to be the chosen people of the deity, and consequently they hold that all

The Masai think themselves the chosen people of Engai.

[1] Sir Charles Eliot, *op. cit.* pp. xiv-xviii, xx. The fullest accounts of the Masai, their customs, beliefs, and legends, are contained in the German work of the late Captain M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1904), and in the English work of Mr. A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905). Compare J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (London, 1860), pp. 358 *sqq.*; Joseph Thomson, *Through Masailand* (London, 1885); Oscar Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 156 *sqq.*; S. L. Hinde and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai* (London, 1901).

[2] O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle*, p. 163.

[3] G. Lindblom, *The Akamba*, p. 247; W. S. Routledge and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p. 226.

[4] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes*, pp. 44 *sq.*

[5] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes*, p. 132.

other nations, whom they brand with the title of Unbelievers (*el meg*) ought of right to be subject to them. In their view God made the earth and everything that exists upon it for the Masai. Hence when they attack a neighbouring tribe, slaughter the men, and carry off their cattle, they are simply recovering the property which God had destined for them from the creation of the world, and which their impious and unbelieving foes had been most unrighteously withholding from them. Apparently the Masai conceive of Engai as an incorporeal being, as a spirit. Certainly they make no images or likenesses of him, and they appear not to have meditated on his outward form. But the stars which twinkle in the nocturnal sky are the eyes of Engai looking down from heaven on the slumbering Masai. A shooting star prognosticates the death of somebody, and at sight of it the Masai pray that the somebody may not be one of themselves, but an enemy, an unbeliever. The lightning is the dreadful glance of Engai's eye, the thunder is his cry of joy at what he has seen. During the long rainy season, when the cattle grow sleek, the raindrops are the tears of joy which the emotional deity sheds at sight of the fat beeves; and during the short rainy season, when the cattle pine for lack of pasture, the raindrops are the tears of sorrow wrung from the compassionate divinity by the melancholy spectacle.

The prayers of the Masai to Engai.

Then the Masai seek to allay his sorrow and assuage his grief by their prayers. In prayer they stand with uplifted hands and invoke the deity. Such prayers they put up before every raid and in all the undertakings of life. In their uplifted hands they hold bunches of grass, which has for them a sacred character, because it is the fodder of the cattle on which they depend for their subsistence.[1] Altogether, the Masai are, or used to be, a most prayerful people. The prayers which they put up to Engai were incessant. Nothing could be done without hours of howling, whether it was to discover where they could best slaughter their enemies or

[1] O. Baumann, *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle*, p. 163; M. Merker, *Die Masai*, p. 196. As to the religious use of grass among the Masai, compare Joseph Thomson, *Through Masailand* (London, 1885), p. 445; A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. 288 *sqq.*; S. L. Hinde and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai*, pp. 103 *sq.* As to the term *el meg*, which the Masai apply to all people other than Masai, see M. Merker, *Die Masai*, p. 115.

how they could best ward off disease.[1] If only the efficacy of prayer were proportioned to its fervour, the Masai ought long ago to have overrun the earth.

Belief of the Masai that Engai gave them all the cattle in the world, and that in stealing the herds of their neighbours they are only recovering their own.

The pious motive which prompted the Masai to steal the cattle of their neighbours was long ago observed and recorded by one of the earliest missionaries who came into contact with these devout and truculent savages. He says: "When cattle fail them they make raids on the tribes which they know to be in possession of herds. They say that Engai (Heaven) gave them all that exists in the way of cattle, and that no other nation ought to possess any. Wherever there is a herd of cattle, thither it is the call of the Wakuafi and Masai to proceed and seize it. Agreeably with this maxim they undertake expeditions for hundreds of leagues to attain their object, and make forays into the territories of the Wakamba, the Galla, the Wajagga, and even of the Wanika on the sea coast. They are dreaded as warriors, laying all waste with fire and sword, so that the weaker tribes do not venture to resist them in the open field, but leave them in possession of their herds, and seek only to save themselves by the quickest possible flight."[2]

Story told by the Masai to explain how God (Engai) gave them all the cattle in the world.

The Masai tell a story to explain how God gave them cattle, and why the Dorobo, a tribe akin to the Masai, have no cattle and are obliged to support themselves by hunting. The Dorobo, Andorobo, or Wandorobo, as they are also called, inhabit forests that stretch from 1° north to 5° south of the equator.[3] The Masai say that when God (Engai) came to prepare the world, he found three things in the land, to wit, a Dorobo, a serpent, and an elephant. At first all three lived amicably together, but in time the Dorobo accused the serpent of blowing on him and making his body to itch. The serpent replied, "Oh, my father, I do not blow my bad breath on you on purpose". The excuse did not satisfy the Dorobo, and that same evening he picked up his club, struck the serpent on the head and killed it. Meantime the Dorobo had somehow or other obtained a cow and used to take her

[1] Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai-land*, p. 445.

[2] J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (London, 1860), p. 359.

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 2.

out to graze and to drink at the puddles of rain. But the elephant contracted a bad habit of wallowing in the puddles and stirring up the mud, so that the water was muddy when the Dorobo's cow came to quench her thirst at a puddle. So the Dorobo was angry, and made an arrow with which he shot and killed the elephant. The daughter of the elephant naturally resented the murder of her mother, and in high dudgeon went away to another country. "The Dorobo is bad," quoth she, "I will not stop with him any longer. He first of all killed the snake, and now he has killed mother. I will go away and not live with him again."

On her arrival at another country the young elephant met a Masai man, who asked her where she came from. The young elephant replied, "I come from the Dorobo's kraal. He is living in yonder forest, and he has killed the serpent and my mother." The Masai, to make sure of the facts, inquired, "Is it true that there is a Dorobo there who has killed your mother and the serpent?" The reply being in the affirmative, he said to the elephant, "Let us go there. I should like to see him." So they went and found the Dorobo's hut, which God (Engai) had turned upside down, so that the door of it looked towards the sky. God then called the Dorobo and said to him, "I wish you to come to-morrow morning, for I have something to tell you". The Masai man overheard the remark, and next morning he went and presented himself to God saying, "I have come". The deity, who was perhaps near-sighted, apparently mistook him for the Dorobo whom he had commanded to appear before him. At all events he told the Masai man to take an axe and to build a big kraal in three days. When it was ready, he was to go and search for a thin calf, which he would find in the forest. This he was to bring to the kraal and slaughter. The meat he was not to eat but to tie up in the hide, and the hide he was to fasten outside of the door of the hut; then he was to fetch firewood, light a big fire, and throw the meat into it. He was afterwards to hide himself in the hut, and not to be startled when he heard a great noise outside like thunder.

The Masai man did as he was bid. He searched for a calf, and when he found it he slaughtered it and tied up the

flesh in the hide. Then he fetched firewood, lit a big fire, and threw the meat into it. After that he entered the hut, leaving the fire burning outside.

How God (Engai) let down cattle from heaven.

God (Engai) then got to work. He let down a strip of hide from heaven so as to hang just over the calf-skin, and immediately cattle began to descend the strip of hide until the whole kraal was full. Indeed, the beasts jostled each other so that they almost broke down the hut in which the Masai man lay hid. The Masai man was startled and uttered an exclamation of astonishment. Then he went outside of the hut and found that somebody had cut the strip of hide, so that no more cattle came down from heaven. God asked him whether the cattle that had come down from heaven were sufficient, "For", said he, "you will receive no more because you were surprised". The Masai man then went away and attended to the beasts that had been given him. But as for the Dorobo, he lost the cattle because he did not present himself before the deity at the critical moment as the Masai did. Hence the Dorobo have had to shoot wild beasts for their livelihood down to this day. Indeed, according to one version of the tale it was the Dorobo who shot away the strip of hide by which the cattle descended from heaven. How then could they reasonably expect to have any cows? But the Masai, who appeared before God at the right time and did his bidding, were given cattle by the deity. Hence nowadays, if cattle are seen in the possession of Bantu tribes, it is presumed that they have been stolen or found, and the Masai say, "These are our animals, let us go and take them; for God (Engai) in olden days gave us all the cattle upon the earth".[1]

Belief of the Masai in two gods, a Black God and a Red God.

However, the religion of the Masai would seem to be far from a pure monotheism, it is even tainted with Manicheism. For according to one of their stories, there are two gods, a Black God and a Red God. One day the Black God said to the Red God, "Let us give the people some water, for they are dying of hunger". The Red God agreed and told

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 266-269, 271. The Dorobo are called Andorobo or Wandorobo by some writers. See A. C. Hollis, *op. cit.* p. 28 note [2]. The Dorobo are said to comprise members of all three branches of the Masai mixed with the remains of another extinct race which, according to Merker, was Semitic. See M. Merker, *Die Masai*, 221.

his colleague to turn on the water. This the Black God did, and it rained heavily. After a time the Red God told the Black God to stop the water, because rain enough had fallen. The Black God, however, was of opinion that the people had not had enough, so he refused to turn off the water. Both remained silent after that, and the rain continued to pour down steadily till next morning, when the Red God again said that enough had fallen. The Black God then turned off the water.

A few days later the Black God proposed that they should give the people some more water, because the grass was very dry. The Red God, however, was obstinate and refused to allow the water to be turned on at any price. They argued the point for some time, till at length the Red God in a passion, threatened to kill the people, whom he said the Black God was spoiling. At that the Black God bridled up and said, "I will not allow my people to be killed"; and happily he has been able to protect them, for he lives near at hand, whilst the Red God is above him. So now when you hear a great crash of thunder in the sky, you may know that it is the Red God who is trying to come to the earth to kill human beings; but when you hear the thunder rolling and rumbling far away, you may be sure that it is the Black God saying, "Leave them alone, do not kill them".[1]

Masai prayers for rain.

Hence, if no rain falls, the old men light a bonfire of cordia wood and throw a charm into it. Then they encircle the fire and sing as follows:

"*Solo.* The Black God! ho!
Chorus. God, water us!
O the (*sic*) of the uttermost parts of the earth!
Solo. The Black God! ho!
Chorus. God, water us!"[2]

Again, in time of drought Masai women fasten grass to their clothes and offer up prayers to God (Engai) for rain.[3] Children, too, at such times may be called in to assist in invoking the aid of Engai. If the drought is prolonged and rain is urgently needed, the great chief sends a proclamation

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. 264 *sq.*

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, p. 348.

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, p. 289. For the prayer, see *id.* p. 347.

to the surrounding villages, requiring that on a given day all the children shall assemble and sing for the rain. This is done at seven in the evening. The children stand in a circle and each child holds a bunch of grass in its hand. Meanwhile, the mothers, also holding bunches of grass, fling themselves on the ground. No one else takes part in this ceremony, which is deemed an infallible means of bringing on rain.[1]

Prayer for absent warriors.

When warriors tarry on a foray, their mothers, sisters, and sweethearts gather outside the huts when the Morning Star is shining in the sky, and they pray to God (Engai). They tie grass to their clothes, and leave milk in their gourds, for they say, "Our children will soon be returning, and when they arrive they may be hungry". When they have all assembled they pray as follows:

"*Solo.* The God (Engai) to whom I pray, and he hears.
Chorus. The God (Engai) to whom I pray for offspring.
Solo. I pray the heavenly bodies which have risen.
Chorus. The God (Engai) to whom I pray for offspring.
Solo. Return hither our children.
Chorus. Return hither our children."[2]

Sacrifice and prayer after a birth.

When a Masai woman has given birth to a child, the other women gather and take milk to the mother; then they slaughter a sheep, which is called "The Purifier of the Hut" or simply "The Purifier". They slaughter the animal by themselves and they eat all the meat. No man may approach the spot where the animal is slaughtered. When they have finished their meal, they stand up and sing the following song:

"*Solo.* My God! my God! (Engai! Engai!) to whom I pray,
Give me the offspring.
Who thunders and it rains,
Chorus. Thee every day only I pray to thee.
Solo. Morning Star which rises hither,
Chorus. Thee every day only I pray to thee.
Solo. He to whom I offer prayer is like sage,
Chorus. Thee every day only I pray to thee.

[1] S. L. Hinde and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai*, p. 102. The children's song for rain is recorded by A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, p. 349. It does not contain a mention of Engai.

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. 350 *sq.*

Solo. Who is prayed to, and He hears,
Chorus. Thee every day only I pray to thee." [1]

A third god, Naiteru-kop, recognized by the Masai.

Besides the Black God and the Red God the Masai recognize the existence of a third god named Naiteru-kop, but he is not so great as the Black God. According to one story it was he, and not Engai, who let cattle down from heaven by a strip of hide for the use of the Masai.[2] Of this minor god is told the sad story which, in different forms, has met us among so many African tribes, the story of the origin of death. The Masai version of the tale runs thus.

Story of the Origin of Death: God, man, and the moon.

One day Naiteru-kop told a certain man named Le-eyo that, if a child were to die, he was to say when he threw away the body: "Man, die, and come back again; moon, die, and remain away". Soon afterwards a child died, but it was not one of Le-eyo's own children, and when he was told to throw it away, he picked it up and said to himself, "This child is not mine; when I throw it away I shall say, 'Man, die, and remain away; moon, die, and return'". So he threw it away, and spoke these words, and returned home. Next one of his own children died, and when he threw it away, he said, "Man, die, and return; moon, die, and remain away". But Naiteru-kop said to him, "It is of no use now, for you spoilt matters with the other child". That is how it came about that when a man dies he does not return, whereas when the moon is finished, it comes back again and is always visible to us.[3]

Here we have the old story of the kindly god whose benevolent intention of endowing man with immortality miscarried through the fault of somebody. In this, as in some other similar stories, the blame is man's alone, and the gift of eternal life which he forfeited by his misconduct is transferred to the moon, which consequently never dies, or,

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. 345 *sq.*

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, p. 270. Compare J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (London, 1860), p. 360: "As to the origin of these truculent savages, they have a tradition that Engai—Heaven, or Rain—placed in the beginning of time a man named Neiterkob, or Neiternkob, on the Oredoinio-eibor (White Mountain, Snow Mountain, the Kegnia of the Wakamba) who was a kind of demi-god; for he was exalted above men and yet not equal to Engai."

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. 271 *sq.* Compare the Chagga story, above, pp. 217 *sq.*

to speak more correctly, which dies once a month and always comes to life again.

Finally, it would seem that the primary idea at the root of the Masai god Engai is rather the rain than the blue vault of heaven. On this point I will quote an instructive passage from the writings of Mr. A. C. Hollis, our best English authority on the Masai and their language. He writes: "I have been asked to add a few words on the subject of *eng-Aï*, the Masai term for God. Eng-Aï, *i.e. Aï* with the feminine article prefixed, means literally 'the rain', and though one occasionally hears other words used as the equivalent of God, *e.g. Parmasis* and *Parsai*, there is no other word for rain.

The primary idea of the Masai god Engai is perhaps rather the rain than the sky. Mr. Hollis's account of Engai.

"To the Masai eng-Aï is of much the same general pattern as the sky-god, *e.g.* Zeus, was to the ancients. Joseph Thomson[1] states that their conception of the deity, whom he called *Ngai*, was marvellously vague, and that whatever struck them as strange or incomprehensible they at once assumed had some connexion with Ngai. Thus, his lamp was Ngai, he himself was Ngai, Ngai was in the steaming holes, and his house in the eternal snows of Kilima Njaro. But Thomson was incorrect. It is conceivable that the Masai alluded to him, to his lamp, or to the steaming holes as e-ng-Aï or le-'ng-Aï, *i.e. of* God, as this is the only term they have, so far as I am aware, to express anything supernatural or sacred. Sickness, grass, the only active volcano in Masailand, can all be, and indeed are, referred to as e-'ng-Aï or le-'ng-Aï, according to the gender of the substantive which precedes the expression. 'God gave us cattle and grass,' the Masai say, 'we do not separate the things that God has given us.' Cattle are sacred, and grass is consequently also sacred, *i.e.* it is *of* God. The volcano which Thomson and others called Donyo Ngai is known to the Masai as Ol-doinyo le-'ng-Aï, the Mountain of God, or the sacred mountain. I am glad to see that in the newest maps the change in orthography has been made.

Resemblance of Engai to Zeus.

"That eng-Aï is personified is apparent from the prayers given in my book,[2] which are all authentic, as well as in the

Engai a personal being who hears prayer.

[1] Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai-land*, pp. 444 *sq.*

[2] *The Masai.* For the prayers, see above, pp. 274 *sqq.*

forms of blessing and cursing. In one instance, it will be remembered, it is said: 'The God to whom I pray and He hears'.

"Eng-Aï can also be used to express the sky or heavens, but the Masai equivalent for clouds, fog, cold, etc., may also be used in this sense. 'Heaven' in the expression 'Heaven help you' would be translated by eng-Aï, whilst *ing-atambo*, the clouds, would be required in a sentence like 'The heavens are overcast'."[1]

The two races of Kavirondo, the Bantu and the Nilotic.

Kavirondo is a vast territory stretching round the north-eastern shores of Lake Victoria Nyanza. It is a rolling grass country at an altitude of from 3800 feet to about 5000 feet above the level of the sea. The climate is fairly warm and sunny, yet the rainfall is abundant; the soil is well adapted to the agriculture practised by the people.[2] The country is peopled by two entirely different races, one of them belonging to the Bantu and the other to the Nilotic family. The Bantu Kavirondo are physically much finer, though socially much less developed, than the Baganda.[3] The Nilotic Kavirondo, whose proper name is Jaluo, belong to the same family as the great Dinka tribe of the Sudan, and are near relations of the Aluri and Acholi tribes, which live on both sides of the Nile near Wadilai, the differences being less marked than those which usually distinguish two adjoining Bantu tribes. Probably, therefore, the Jaluo originally formed one tribe with the Acholi. In appearance they are a fine race, not so much remarkable for beauty of face as for stature and development.[4] Though the mornings and evenings are comparatively cold in their hills, the Jaluo go stark naked; indeed they object to clothes as indecent, and members of the tribe who have been abroad and have adopted clothing are requested to put it off during their residence in their old homes.[5]

[1] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions* (Oxford, 1908), i. 90 *sq.*

[2] C. W. Hobley, *Eastern Uganda* (London, 1902), p. 13.

[3] C. W. Hobley, *Eastern Uganda*, p. 8.

[4] G. A. S. Northcote, "The Nilotic Kavirondo", *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) p. 58.

[5] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, p. 275.

Belief of the Kavirondo in a Supreme Being or Creator called Nyasaye, whom they do not worship.

Both the Bantu and the Nilotic Kavirondo are reported to believe in a Supreme Being or Creator, to whom, however, they pay no formal worship. On this subject I will quote the evidence of a missionary who has lived among the people. He says:

"Though entirely different in origin and language the religious beliefs of the two races are very similar, differing only in minor points of ritual. Both the Nilotic and the Bantu Kavirondo have a distinct idea of God, the Supreme Being. The first call him *Nysaye* (from *sayo*, to adore), and the latter *Nasaye* (from *gusaya*, to beseech). He is considered to be the Creator or originator of all things. It is true, the Supreme Being is not adored, but, when a child is born, it is ascribed to Nyasaye; when any one dies, it is Nyasaye that has taken him away; and when a warrior returns safe from battle, it is Nyasaye that has given him a safe return to his home.

The Kavirondo worship the Sun and Moon and the spirits of their forefathers.

"As, however, no external worship is given to the Creator, it would seem to the ordinary observer, that the Sun is their principal deity and the Moon their second, whilst the spirits of their forefathers rank as minor spirits. In the early morning the Kavirondo may be seen facing the sun. His mode of worship is, to say the least, peculiar. He commences by spitting towards the East, in honour of the rising orb, then he turns successively to the North, West, and South, and salutes each quarter solemnly in the same manner, whilst he earnestly beseeches the Sun-god to give him good luck. A similar ceremony, if ceremony it can be called, is gone through when the new moon appears, in order to obtain good speed for that month. But we must not lose sight of the fact that though health and good luck are asked from the Sun and the New Moon, life itself is ascribed to the Creator *Nyasaye*. In fact it would seem that the higher the particular object of reverence is in the estimation of the Kavirondo, the less ceremonious is his mode of showing his reverence. The Supreme Being, the Creator of all things and giver of life and death, has to be content with the mere acknowledgement of His existence; the Sun and New Moon receive a periodical expectoration; but the spirits of the departed, who are

really the lowest in rank, are worshipped with an elaborate ritual."[1]

J. Roscoe on the religion of the Nilotic Kavirondo.

To much the same effect Mr. John Roscoe has described the religion of the Nilotic Kavirondo. He tells us that "apart from worship of the dead and belief in ghosts, the people have little religion. They call the supreme being Nyasi, who, they say, is to be found in large trees. In times of trouble or sickness they make offerings to him of an animal which is killed under a large tree, and the flesh is cooked and eaten near by, though sometimes the meat is taken a little distance away and is not eaten under the shadow of the tree."[2]

In these accounts of the Supreme Being of the Kavirondo nothing is said to connect him definitely with the sky; indeed the statement that he is to be found in great trees, where sacrifices are offered to him, would point to an arboreal rather than a celestial deity. However, we have seen that among the Akamba and Akikuyu the worship of Engai or Mulungu, who has some claim to rank as a Sky-god, is closely associated with sacred trees,[3] and the same may be true of the Supreme Being of the Kavirondo.

The Nandi, a Hamitic or Nilotic tribe.

To the north of Kavirondo stretches what is known as the Nandi plateau, a highland country which is one of the most fertile and beautiful regions of Kenya Colony (British East Africa). The tribe, who give their name to it, the Nandi, are akin to the Masai, and form one of a group of Hamitic or Nilotic tribes to which the Suk and Turkana also belong. All these tribes appear to be hybrids, perhaps

[1] N. Stam, "The Religious Conceptions of the Kavirondo", *Anthropos*, v. (1910) p. 360. In one place (the first) the writer spells the god's name *Nysaye*, but elsewhere consistently *Nyasaye*. The latter is probably the correct form. With the writer's account of Sun-worship among the Kavirondo compare G. A. S. Northcote, "The Nilotic Kavirondo", *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) p. 63: "The Jaluo religion is extremely slight. They worship the sun, and to a less extent the moon. They regard the sun as a deity seldom beneficent, more often malignant, and usually apathetic; as one of them said to the writer, 'It does not matter how much you pray, you fall sick and die just the same'. The offerings made at all important occasions in their daily life they make more with the idea of appeasing him than of obtaining positive benefits."

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, pp. 291 *sq.*

[3] See above, pp. 248, 259 *sq.*

formed by a mixture of Galla or Somali with negro blood; the Galla or Somali element is judged to be stronger in the Masai and Nandi than in the Suk and Turkana.[1] Together the four tribes make up what we may call the East African section of the Nilotic family. The features which distinguish them from their brethren who inhabit the valley of the Nile, such as the Bari, Acholi, and Aluru, are that they are more or less nomadic herdsmen, and that their young men are organized as a special class of warriors. As a result apparently of these institutions, which are perhaps due to an infusion of Galla-Somali blood, these tribes of warlike herdsmen have spread widely over East Africa. Their kinsfolk on the Nile, on the other hand, are settled cultivators of the soil; and though they fight on occasion and esteem bravery, they do not devote the prime of life exclusively to raiding their neighbours, nor do they despise peaceful labour. The nomadic and military mode of life is most fully developed in the Masai, who disdain agriculture and all occupations except fighting and herding cattle. One section of the Suk are tillers of the soil; the other section and the Turkana do little in the way of cultivation, but tend cattle and hunt. The various sections of the Nandi have taken to agriculture, seemingly within the last few generations, and they practise it in a somewhat desultory fashion.[2]

The Eastern Nilotic tribes.

The religious beliefs of the Nandi are somewhat vague and unformulated, but they recognize the existence of a Supreme God whom they call Asis or Asista. His name means the sun. He dwells in the sky: he created man and beast, and the world belongs to him. Prayers are addressed to him. He is acknowledged to be a benefactor and the giver of all good things, and offerings are at times made to him in return for his benefits.[3] Besides the high god Asis or Asista the Nandi believe in the existence of two thunder-gods, the one kindly, the other malevolent, who closely resemble the Black God and the Red God of

Belief of the Nandi in a Supreme God called Asis or Asista, whose name means "the Sun".

Two thunder-gods.

[1] Sir Charles Eliot, in A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, pp. xi *sqq.*; *id.*, in A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), pp. xv *sqq.*; *id.*, in M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk* (Oxford, 1911), p. xi.

[2] Sir Charles Eliot, in A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, p. xvii.

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, pp. xix, 40 *sq.*; *id.*, "The Religion of the Nandi", *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions* (Oxford, 1908), i. 87.

the Masai. The crashing peal of thunder near at hand is said to be the bad thunder-god trying to come to earth to kill people, whilst the distant muttering or rumbling of thunder is supposed to be the good thunder-god protecting mankind and driving away his evil-disposed colleague. Forked lightning is said to be the sword of the bad thunder-god, while sheet lightning is thought to be the sword of the good thunder-god, who does not kill people. Whenever forked lightning—the flashing sword of the bad thunder-god—is seen, all Nandi women look on the ground, as it is deemed wrong that they should witness the havoc which the sun or God (Asista) is allowing to take place. During a thunderstorm it is usual to throw some tobacco on the fire, and the youngest child of a family has to take a certain stick, used for cleaning gourds, thrust it into the ashes of the fire, and then throw it out of doors. But the two thunder-gods are not worshipped, nor are offerings made to them.[1]

Prayers of the Nandi to Asista and to dead ancestors.

The commonest form of prayer is addressed both to the great god Asista and to the spirits of deceased ancestors. It is supposed to be recited by all adult Nandi twice a day, but it is more particularly used by old men when they rise in the morning, especially if they have had a bad dream. It runs thus :

"*God, I have prayed to thee, guard my children and cattle,*
I have approached thee morning and evening.
God, I have prayed to thee whilst thou didst sleep and whilst thou wentest.
God, I have prayed to thee. Do not now say : 'I am tired '.
O our spirits, guard us who live on the earth, and do not say :
'We were killed by human beings'."[2]

Prayers in war.

When warriors have gone to the wars, the men's mothers tie four knots in their belts, and going out of their huts every morning spit towards the sun and say "God, give us health". And the fathers of the absent warriors meet together regularly, and before they drink their beer they sing,

"*God guard our children,*
That we may greet them".

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, pp. 41, 99.

[2] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 87 *sq.*; compare *id.*, *The Nandi*, pp. 41 *sq.*

Then they sprinkle some of the beer on the ground and on the walls of the hut, and say,

> "*O our spirits, we pray to you.*
> *Regard this beer, and give us health.*"

If an expedition has been unsuccessful and a number of warriors have been killed, the survivors must all go to a river on their return and bathe. Then they hold a dance at which the women wail and cry at intervals. Afterwards an old man stands up amidst the seated warriors and says:

> "*God, we admit ourselves beaten,*
> *We pray thee, give us peace*".

Prayers for cattle.

When cattle have been carried off by an enemy or killed by lightning, a procession is formed, and the cattle that have been left are driven to the nearest river, and there every animal is sprinkled with water. One old man recites these lines, all present repeating them after him:

> "*God, guard these that are left,*
> *We pray thee, guard these that are left*".

When disease breaks out in a herd, a great bonfire is kindled and the sick herd is driven to the fire. A pregnant sheep is killed and eaten, and the herd is driven round the fire, each beast being sprinkled with milk, whilst the following prayer is offered up:

> "*God, we pray thee,*
> *Guard these that are here*".[1]

Prayers at harvest.

While the eleusine grain is ripening, and after the grain has been reaped, the harvest ceremonies are held. Porridge is made from the first basketful of grain cut, and all the members of the family take some of the food and dab it on walls and roofs of the huts. They also put a little in their mouths and spit it out towards the east. The head of the family then holds some of the eleusine grain in his hand, and offers up the following prayer, everybody present repeating the words after him:

[1] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 88; compare *id.*, *The Nandi*, pp. 42-46.

"*God, give us health,*
And may we be given strength,
And may we be given milk.
If any man eats of this corn, may he like it.
And if a pregnant woman eats it, may she like it." [1]

After the harvest has been gathered in, each geographical division (*pororiet*) of the tribe holds its own feast on the top of a hill or in a large open plain, and all the warriors gather and dance the war-dance. A great bonfire is kindled with the wood of certain trees and shrubs, and when the flames blaze high, a sort of doorway, like that of a cattle-kraal, is built near the fire, and as the warriors file past, the old men, standing by the door-posts, take a little milk and beer and spit it on them. The old men then sing as follows:

"*God, give us health.*
God, give us raided cattle.
God, give us the offspring
Of men and cattle."

Before the assembly separates, the old men kill and eat a pregnant goat, and the women, who have oiled their bodies, proceed to the nearest river, where they take two pebbles from the water: one of the pebbles they place in their water-jars and keep it there till the next harvest festival; the other pebble they place in their granaries.[2]

Prayers for rain.

When there is a long drought, the old men assemble, and take a black sheep, and go with it to a river. There they tie a fur cloak on the sheep's back and push the animal into the water. Next they take beer and milk into their mouths and spit them out in the direction of the rising sun. When the sheep scrambles out of the water and shakes itself, they recite the following prayer:

"*God, we pray thee give us rain.*
Regard this milk and beer.
We are suffering like women labouring with child.
Guard our pregnant women and cows." [3]

Prayers after child-birth.

Four months after the birth of a child a feast is held. An ox or goat is slaughtered, and after the mother, child,

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, pp. 46 *sq.*; *id.*, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 89.

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, p. 47; *id.*, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 89.

[3] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 89; *id.*, *The Nandi*, p. 48.

and animal have been anointed with milk by one of the elders of the clan, the child's face is washed with the undigested food from the animal's stomach. The elder then prays as follows:

"*God, give us health.*
God, protect us.
O our spirits, guard this child.
O belly, guard this child." [1]

Prayer at house-building.

When they begin to build a house, they perform a short inaugural ceremony. The elders of the family pour milk and beer and put some salt into the hole that has been prepared for the reception of the central pole, and they say:

"*God, give us health.*
God, give us milk.
God, give us power.
God, give us corn.
God, give us everything that is good.
God, guard our children and our cattle." [2]

Prayer at pot-making.

Among the Nandi, as among many savage tribes, the potters are women. When the pots have been baked, the potters recite the following prayer:

"*God, give us strength,*
So that, when we cook in the pots, men may like them".[3]

Prayer at seeking iron.

When smiths search for iron ore they pray, saying:

"*God, give us health.*
God, give us iron." [4]

Prayer of children at the extraction of teeth.

As a rule, children do not pray, but when the two middle incisor teeth of the lower jaw are extracted, according to the tribal custom, the child must throw the teeth away towards the rising sun, saying:

"*God, take these brown teeth and give me white ones,*
So that I may drink calf's milk".[5]

[1] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 89 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Nandi*, p. 65.

[2] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 89; *id.*, *The Nandi*, p. 15.

[3] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 90; *id.*, *The Nandi*, p. 35.

[4] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 90; *id.*, *The Nandi*, p. 37.

[5] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit.* i. 90; *id.*, *The Nandi*, p. 30.

Thus the Nandi, like their kinsfolk the Masai, may be fairly called a prayerful people.

Is Asista a Sky-god or a Sun-god?

As Asis or Asista, the name of the Supreme God of the Nandi, is also the name of the sun, it might be thought that Asis or Asista is a Sun-god rather than a Sky-god. It may be so, but in all that is recorded of him there seems to be very little except his name to connect him definitely with the sun,[1] though the customs of spitting and throwing teeth in the direction of the sun certainly admit of, if they do not require, a solar interpretation. On the whole it is perhaps safer to class the great god of the Nandi among the kindly Sky-gods, whose range is so wide in Africa, than to rank him with the pure Sun-gods, who, apart from their occurrence in ancient Egypt, appear to be on the whole rare in Africa. Similarly we saw that among the Wachagga of Kilimanjaro the Supreme God is known by a name (Ruwa) which signifies the sun, though his attributes are rather those of a Sky-god.[2]

A. C. Hollis on the religion of the Nandi.

On the Nandi religion and its relation to that of the Bantu tribes about them I will quote the remarks of Mr. A. C. Hollis, our highest authority on the tribe. He says: "It will be seen that the Nandi believe in a sky-god, whose name, as already stated, is synonymous with the sun. The Nandi also, like the surrounding Bantu peoples and unlike the Masai, worship and propitiate the spirits of deceased ancestors. As a general rule it may, I think, be said that prayer and sacrifice to the sun or deities in the sky are unknown among the Bantu tribes of Eastern Africa, whilst this form of worship is followed by all the Nilotic or Hamitic tribes. The Bantu Kikuyu, it is true, acknowledge a sky-god whom they call Ngai, but both the name and the worship are obviously borrowed from the Masai. The Chaga, too, who sometimes pray to a sun-god called Iruwa, and spit towards the east when they leave their huts in the morning, have probably taken these customs from the Dorobo, who are nearly akin to the Nandi."[3]

[1] Compare Sir Charles Eliot, in A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, p. xix.

[2] See above, pp. 205 *sqq*. Other African Sky-gods whose names appear to mean "the Sun" are Ilanzi, the god of the Wafipa, and Ithuwa, the god of the Wapare. See above, pp. 197, 201 *sqq*. Compare pp. 122-124, 170 *sq*., 173 *sq*., 279.

[3] A. C. Hollis, "The Religion of the Nandi", *op. cit*. i. 90.

Like so many other African peoples, the Nandi tell a story to account for the origin of human mortality; but unlike some of their congeners they appear entirely to exculpate the deity from all share in the unfortunate transaction and to lay the whole blame of it on a dog. What happened, if we can trust their account, was as follows. When the first people lived on the earth a dog came to them one day and said, "All people will die like the moon, but unlike the moon you will not return to life again unless you give me some milk to drink out of your gourd and beer to drink through your straw. If you do this, I will arrange for you to go to the river when you die and to come to life again on the third day." But the people laughed at the dog and gave him some milk and beer to drink off a stool. The dog was huffed at not being served in the same vessels as a human being, and although he put his pride in his pocket and swallowed the milk and the beer, he went away very sulky, saying, "All people will die, and the moon alone will return to life". That is why, when people die, they remain away, whereas when the moon dies she reappears after three days' absence.[1] If only people had treated that dog more civilly, we should all unquestionably have risen from the dead on the third day.

Story of the Origin of Death: the dog and the moon.

The Suk belong, as we have seen, to the same group of Nilotic tribes as the Nandi and Masai, but they are much less homogeneous and compact. The physical type varies greatly from the tall handsome Hamite, with almost perfect features, to the squab, dwarf-like pigmy with spread nose and protruding eyes. Their original home seems to have been on the Elgeyo escarpment, to the east of Mount Elgon, in Kenya Colony (British East Africa). Timber and grass are plentiful there, and the rocky descent into the Kerio offers many natural fortresses. In these mountain fastnesses, accordingly, the Suk appear to have been joined by many broken men, refugees from tribes that had been conquered or exterminated by more warlike invaders. Hence the diversity of physical type which now characterizes the Suk. Of all the tribes that have gone to compose the Suk nation,

The Suk and their country.

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, p. 98. I have reported this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 54 *sq.*).

none has so deeply influenced both the language and the customs as the Nandi.[1]

Belief of the Suk in a Supreme God called Torôrut.

The religious notions of the Suk are extremely vague; it is difficult to find two men whose ideas on the subject coincide. All, however, agree as to the existence of a Supreme Being; most of them call him Torôrut, that is, the Sky; but a few call him Ilat, that is, the Rain. A man named Tiamolok, one of the oldest of the Suk then living, and renowned for his knowledge of folk-lore, gave Mr. Beech the following outline of Suk theology.

A compendium of Suk theology.

"Torôrut is the Supreme God. He made the earth and causes the birth of mankind and animals. No man living has seen him, though old men, long since dead, have. They say he is like a man in form, but has wings—huge wings—the flash of which causes the lightning (*kerial*), and the whirring thereof is the thunder (*kotil*). He lives above (*yim*), and has much land, stock, ivory, and every good thing. He knows all secrets; he is the universal father; all cattle diseases and calamities are sent by him as punishment to men for their sins.

"His wife is *Seta* (the Pleiades), and his first-born son is *Arawa* (the Moon). *Ilat* (the Rain) is another son, as are *Kokel* (the Stars) his other children. *Topogh* (the Evening Star) is his first-born daughter. *Asis* (the Sun) is his younger brother, who is angry in the dry season. All these are gods, and all are benevolently disposed towards mankind."[2]

Asis, the Sun, and Ilat, the Rain.

This is a clear and consistent account of a great Sky-god, husband of the Pleiades, father of the Moon, the Stars, and the Rain, and elder brother of the Sun. It will be observed that according to this account Asis, the Sun, who is the chief god of the Nandi, occupies only a subordinate place in Suk theology. Other Suk, however, say that the only god they know is Ilat, the Rain, who is supreme and lord of life and death. Others, again, maintain that Ilat is the servant of Torôrut, that it is his duty to carry water, and that when he spills the water, it rains.[3]

[1] M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk, their Language and Folk-lore* (Oxford, 1911), pp. xi *sq.*, 2, 3 *sq.*

[2] M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk*, p. 19.

[3] M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk*, p. 19.

On the whole, Mr. Beech, our best authority on the language, customs, and beliefs of the Suk, concludes that "the general consensus of opinion inclines to the belief in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient being or entity, to whom it is advisable to make frequent prayers, and who is responsible, not only for the creation of the world, but for all the good and evil occurrences that have happened in it ever since." [1]

The Alur, a Nilotic people of Lake Albert and the Nile.

The Alur are a Nilotic people who inhabit a considerable area on the western shore of Lake Albert and along the western bank of the Nile from the point where it issues from Lake Albert to a point a little north of Wadelai. Their language differs from that of all the tribes around them and is identical with that of the Shilluk, who inhabit the western bank of the Nile much farther to the north. Hence there is every reason to accept as probable the tradition of the Alur that their ancestors migrated to their present home from the north more than a century ago.[2] They are an agricultural people, cultivating maize, sorghum, eleusine grain, bananas, and sweet potatoes. Eleusine grain constitutes their staple food. Men and women share in the labour of agriculture. But they also rear cattle, though they do not pay so much attention to the herds as do the Dinka and Bari, two other tribes of the Upper Nile.[3]

Belief of the Alur in a Supreme Being called Rubanga, who lives in the sky or the air.

The Alur believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, whom they call Rubanga. His home is generally supposed to be the sky or the air, but no bodily attributes are ascribed to him. He receives little or no regular worship; but when the harvest has been good, a number of communities will meet together and hold a festival under shady trees. Men and women share in the festivity, and all join in singing, eating, and above all drinking in honour of Rubanga. But in general Rubanga is only invoked to explain events of which the causes are mysterious or unknown, as, for example, when some one is suddenly cut off in the prime of life, when a fire breaks out in a village and the incendiary cannot be discovered, or when one man's herds multiply

[1] M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk*, p. 20.

[2] Franz Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 492-494.

[3] Franz Stuhlmann, *op. cit.* pp. 497-499.

while his neighbour's cattle are dwindling away. In short, the Alur make of Rubanga a sort of stalking-horse to explain all inexplicable occurrences and to cloak their own ignorance. In ordinary life you may often hear such expressions as, "Rubanga has done that"; or, "Are you Rubanga, that you give yourself such airs?"[1]

Belief of the Alur in spirits of nature and spirits of the dead.

Besides this mysterious being the Alur believe in the existence of spirits of nature, which dwell in the woods, the steppes, the river, and the wind. The river spirits are particularly feared, because the crocodiles do their bidding. Of a life beyond death the Alur are said to know nothing. Yet the spirits of the dead are believed to appear to them in dreams and to give them injunctions which it would be unlucky to disregard. But if a ghost persistently intrudes on somebody's slumbers, the sufferer will lay a small gift on the grave of the deceased in order to get rid of his unquiet spirit. But apart from such petty offerings occasionally deposited on the graves and left there for a short time, there can hardly be said to be any regular worship of the spirits of the dead.[2]

The Lango district.

The Lango district occupies a great region in the north of the Uganda Protectorate. Its area is between five and six thousand square miles, and it is inhabited by a variety of tribes, among which the Lango alone, who give their name to the district, number about a quarter of a million.[3] It is a flat, savannah-like country, for the most part treeless, but covered with coarse spear-grass some eight or ten feet high, and intersected by innumerable marshy rivers, whose sluggish current is almost blocked by thick vegetation. But the yellow-flowering mimosa is everywhere to be seen, yellow-flowering leguminosae break the monotony of the unending grass, and a profusely flowering lilac adds a touch of colour to the drab landscape. Papyrus lines the river banks, and water-lilies, blue, white, and yellow, drape the surface of Lake Kwania. In general, the prospect is limited by the tall grass, but in August and September, when the flowers are in full bloom and have been refreshed by the

[1] Franz Stuhlmann, *op. cit.* p. 528.

[2] Franz Stuhlmann, *op. cit.* pp. 528 *sq.*

[3] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango, a Nilotic Tribe of Uganda* (London, 1923), pp. 42, 50.

passing of an occasional shower, the eye is pleased by frequent and unexpected patches of colour, where the *Calotropis procera*, with its balloon-like fruit, the gardenia, petunia and aster, jasmine and gladiolus, lupin and the heavy-scented clematis are all ablaze. Later in the year nothing is to be seen but the parched grass and here and there the sere and yellow leaves of withered and stunted trees. Only in the north-eastern portion of the district, where the rivers flow in deeper beds, the gullies are fringed with magnificent trees mantled with convolvulaceae and lianae in tropical exuberance.[1]

The game of the district.

As might be expected from the nature of the country, with its abundance of water and of cover, game is numerous and varied, including giraffe, rhinoceros, elephant, buffalo, eland, zebra, and many kinds of bucks. Wild boars are destructive of the crops; lions, leopards, and hyenas prey on the live-stock. Rats and voles are omnipresent. The hippopotamus is seen wallowing in some waters, and crocodiles abound in the rivers and lakes, except in Lake Kwania, where their numbers have been reduced by the Lango, who eat their flesh. Mosquitoes swarm everywhere, and at certain times and in certain regions sandflies are an unmitigated pest.[2] Thus man has many foes to contend with in this exuberance of animal life.

The Lango, their physical characteristics and mode of life.

The Lango are a Nilotic people, and like other tribes of the same stock they are a narrow-jawed, long-limbed, dark-skinned race, lean, but muscular. Their lips are much thinner and their noses better formed, according to our European standard, than is usual among pure negroes. In contrast with the practice of Bantu tribes, the men do all the hard work of cultivation, and this, together with the pursuits of hunting and fighting, has given them a fine appearance of physical strength and activity, which is not belied by their powers of endurance and sustained exertion.[3] They raise good crops, but their success is due to the fertility of the soil rather than to their skill as farmers; for they are agricultural from necessity and not from choice; at heart, like other Nilotic tribes, they are a pastoral

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 43-46.

[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 46 *sq.*

[3] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 50.

people, who really love their herds. Not infrequently, when cattle have died or been carried off by raiders, the women raise the cry of mourning, as if for a dead man. The type of Lango cattle is the short-horned, humped zebu. The owner of a cow milks her himself, or, in his absence, his children do it for him; but in no case may a woman perform the duty. The Lango also keep goats and sheep, but do not milk them.[1]

Religion of the Lango: their belief in a high god called Jok.

The religion of the Lango is said to be composed of two elements, on the one hand, the worship of ancestral spirits, and on the other hand the worship of a high god whom they call Jok. This name for a Supreme Being is said to be known, in varying forms, to all the Nilotic tribes except the Jaluo, among whom, as we saw, the high god is known by a different name.[2] The Lango conception of Jok is vague. They liken him to moving air, and a village in which many deaths occur is said to be on the path of the air or of Jok. He has never been seen, but he can be heard and felt; he manifests himself most sensibly in whirlwinds and circular eddies of air. Like the air or the wind, he is omnipresent; his dwelling is everywhere—in trees, in rocks, in hills, in springs and pools, and more vaguely in the air.[3] Apparently, too, he inhabits the sky, for on rare occasions he has taken up people to it from the earth. One such visitor to heaven is known to have returned to this sublunary world after a stay of four days in the celestial mansions. He could not remember much of what he had seen; but he did know that there were a great many black, but no white, people in heaven; that they were just like people here on earth, except that they all wore tails, and that they ate nothing but fried flies, though there were cattle, sheep, and goats in plenty. As a diet of fried flies did not agree with him, and there was nothing else to eat, he begged Jok to send him back to earth, and with this request the kind-hearted deity apparently complied.[4]

Jok as Creator and source of life.

Jok created the sky and the earth, which the Lango conceive as the two halves of a great sphere; and the births

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 90 *sq.*, 93, 94, 96.

[2] Above, p. 279.

[3] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 216 *sq.*

[4] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 217.

both of men and animals are still referred to his agency. For example, a goat which bears twins or triplets is garlanded or festooned with a particular sort of convolvulus in recognition of the favour shown by Jok to the animal;[1] and of a human mother of twins it is said, "Jok visited so-and-so; she has borne twins".[2]

Jok is kind but jealous.

In general, the character of Jok is benevolent. From him come rich harvests, and he ordered the seasons so that the rainy season should ensure abundant crops, and that the dry season should allow of the joys of hunting. Further he shows his kindly nature in being always accessible to the prayers and inquiries of the faithful, and through his seers he gives advice on all matters great and small, but specially on the important topics of war and hunting. Still he is a jealous god and punishes neglect with severity, demanding his meed of sacrifice and observance. Scoffers who openly profess that they do not believe in Jok, and that his oracles are worthless, are punished by him with leprosy or a painful death. Indeed, disease, accidents, failure in hunting, loss of cattle, and many other tribulations are commonly regarded by the Lango as punishments inflicted by Jok upon men for their neglect or their sin.

The overpowering energy of Jok.

So powerful is Jok that his proximity is dangerous to men, not so much because he bears them ill-will, as on account of the very nature of the divine essence, contact with which is more than a mortal can endure; some buffer must be interposed to screen humanity from the awful, the overpowering energy of the deity. Hence the Lango never build their villages on hills, because hills are vaguely associated with Jok.[3]

Jok takes up his abode in sacred trees, where he is worshipped and consulted as an oracle.

Nevertheless, curiously enough, there is no danger to be feared from Jok if he takes up his abode in a tree near the village, or even in the village itself, for he will not do so without warning, which gives time to propitiate him by offerings, the erection of shrines, and compliance with his instructions concerning religious observances and the rules of life. The effect is to mollify the deity, or at all events to neutralize the danger inevitably attendant on his personality.[4]

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 223.
[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 222.
[3] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 218 *sq.*
[4] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 218, 223 *sq.*

Indeed, the worship of Jok is specially associated with sacred trees. In this connexion he bears a special title, Jok Adongo, that is, Jok the Large or Powerful. Sometimes Jok will call a village headman by name at dead of night, and when the man answers, the deity will say, "Do not you or any of your people cut such and such a tree, for I am present in it, and it is sacred to me; nor may any one venture to pass under its shadow from *otyeno* (about 5 P.M.) till dawn". The headman instructs his people accordingly, and that tree is for ever sacred. No particular sort of tree is thus dedicated to Jok, but fig trees and kigelias are the kinds he specially favours. Once the tree has been thus sanctified by the presence of Jok, the headman resorts to it for the purpose of getting advice on such subjects as war and hunting. He goes to the tree at dawn, alone and unattended, and standing at a safe distance asks the tree's advice and counsel, observing that he and his people have faithfully refrained from injuring the tree or passing under its shadow. The tree will answer, speaking with a human voice and saying that the people have no claim on its gratitude; "For where", it asks, "is my shrine? and where are my offerings and sacrifices?" It then directs the headman as to the building of a suitable shrine. The shrine is thereupon built under the tree. It is a diminutive hut, consisting only of a grass roof supported on four posts about a foot high, the whole hut being no more than eighteen inches in diameter. Contented with this humble shrine and with the offerings at it, the tree, or rather Jok in the tree, will give an oracular response on any question which the headman may put to it, without the intervention of a seer or any other intermediary.[1]

Various titles of Jok.

Though Jok is conceived of as an indivisible entity permeating the whole universe,[1] and there is no plural form of his name,[2] yet he is known under a variety of titles which correspond to his different manifestations and activities. Thus one of his manifestations, as we have seen, is in the form of a tree-god, in which character he bears the title of Jok Adongo. But his oldest manifestation, curiously enough,

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 218.
[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 223 note [1].

is in the form of a female called Atida, a name which may not be spoken by the vulgar, who address her as Min Jok, that is, "the Mother of God". She is particularly associated with hunting, fighting, and rain, and her oracles are mainly, though not exclusively, delivered by prophetesses.[1] For example, to the north of the River Moroto there is said to be a large banyan tree which for very many years has been sacred to Atida, the Mother of God, and under the tree sits the prophetess, a woman of great stature. In recent years the popularity of the shrine has declined, but formerly the Lango resorted to it from far and wide to receive prophecies of war and of the chase, and they took with them presents of beer, or chickens, or goats. On the day of their arrival they would sit there in meditation, and next night they would lean their spears against the tree, in order that virtue might pass from the tree into the spears and give them success. In the morning they would proffer their request, and the prophetess would convey it to the tree and interpret the answer of the tree to the inquirers; for, though the tree spoke with a human voice, its words were understood only by the prophetess. In that respect the banyan tree of the Mother of God differed from the trees animated by Jok Adongo, for these latter speak in a language intelligible to anybody who knows the Lango tongue. After a successful foray or hunt the votaries would bring thankofferings of loot or game, which were hung upon the banyan tree.[2]

Atida, the Mother of God, and her prophetess under a tree.

At an elaborate ceremony, which is annually performed for the purpose of ensuring a due fall of rain, prayers are addressed to Min Jok, the Mother of God, and her help is besought at the festival. She is implored to send abundant rain and to give a good harvest, and further she is urged to disclose any persons whose hearts are evil, and who purpose to conceal or withhold the rain by magic. The ceremony takes place at a sacred tree, either a fig tree or a sycamore, and the men sit in orderly rows under the tree while the prayers for rain are being put up. The old men lead the prayer, and the others respond in a monotone, concluding each prayer with a long-drawn, deep-throated moan. After

Annual ceremony and prayers to the Mother of God for rain.

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 218.
[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 219 *sq.*

the prayers the men dance what is called the bell dance, in which all the performers imitate the actions of their totemic animals, whether the animal is a leopard, a monkey, a duiker, or what not. There is no instrumental music, but a singer stands in the middle of the circle of the dancers and sings while they dance. The ceremonies and the dances last several days. On the last day medicated water is thrown up into the air, and an old man climbs the tree and sprinkles the medicated water on its leaves, praying the while for good rains and harvest. The ceremony includes the sacrifice of a ram and a goat under the sacred tree. The members of one clan will use only a black goat for the sacrifice, because the black colour is symbolical of rain clouds. In no case may a red goat be employed as a victim. At the end of the festival the bones, heads, and skins of the ram and goat are taken away by an old man, who buries them secretly in a river or swamp.[1]

Jok as the patron of souls.

In one of his manifestations Jok is specially concerned with the souls (*tipo*) of human beings and animals, for some animals, such as giraffes, roan, elephants, rhinoceroses, and warthogs, possess souls, but others, such as lions and leopards, do not. In his capacity of patron of souls Jok is known as Jok Orongo.[2] Indeed, the spirits of the human dead are believed to merge into Jok. We are told that the idea which the word Jok now conveys to the Lango mind is apparently "the sum total of the long departed merged into one pre-existing deity called Jok, a plurality of spirits unified in the person of a single godhead, a Spiritual Force composed of innumerable spirits, any of which may be temporarily detached without diminishing the oneness of the Force".[3]

Shrines for ghosts.

But in spite of this general absorption of souls in the deity after death, it seems to be beyond question that a certain number of them do retain their individuality, sometimes indeed, a very marked and even obtrusive individuality, for a considerable time after their decease. For example, a

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 249-253; *id.*, "Rain-making among the Lango", *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, xlix. (1919) pp. 48-61.

[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 220. As to the souls of animals, see *id.* pp. 229 *sq.* The Lango word for soul (*tipo*) means "shade" or "shadow". It is applied equally to the souls of persons, animals, and inanimate objects. See J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 228.

[3] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 223.

ghost may demand that a shrine be erected for him. This demand he may either communicate personally to a relative, or he may so harass him by a series of petty annoyances that the man is driven to consult a diviner, who thereupon reveals the ghost's wishes to him. A shrine is accordingly built for him, and in this he takes up his abode, and if he is decently treated by the family he may favour them with as valuable advice as Jok himself, though sometimes, it must be admitted, the oracle is dumb, the ghost preserving an impenetrable silence. But whether he is taciturn or loquacious, his shrine exactly resembles those that are built for Jok, and at it he receives from time to time offerings of food and beer.[1]

The exorcism of a trouble-some ghost.

But some ghosts are so unreasonable and fractious that not even the construction of a shrine in their honour can pacify them. They continue to haunt and plague their relatives, till it becomes necessary to lay them once for all. For that purpose a man of God (*ajoka*, literally a Jok man) is sent for. On his arrival he is presented with a he-goat. He kills the animal ceremonially and smears some of the contents of its stomach on the chest of the man who is haunted by the troublesome ghost. Then he shakes a rattle to avert evil influences and places in readiness a new-made jar with a narrow mouth. In the jar he puts some of the goat's meat and a little of the sort of food of which the deceased in his lifetime was known to be fond. At the side of the jar he places the lid ready to be clapped on at a moment's notice. The trap is now set and baited; it only remains to lure the ghost into it. For this purpose the man of God shakes his rattle vigorously and calls loudly on the ghost by name. Suppose the dead man was named Okelo, the man of God will cry, "Okelo, come here and take your food". The ghost accordingly arrives on the scene of action, but he is wary and suspicious. "How do I know that I may trust you?" says he. "There are none of my friends here. Where is Ngulu?" naming a former friend. But the man of God is prepared to meet this objection, for he has summoned the friends and relations of the deceased, and

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 231.

they are now at hand, ready to answer to their names in case the ghost should call for them. So Ngulu comes forward as a guarantee of good faith and sits down by the pot. The ghost then goes through the muster-roll of his old friends; they all answer to their names and come forward, or if any happen to be unavoidably detained, a satisfactory explanation of their absence is tendered to the ghost. The misgivings of the ghost are now dispelled, and firmly convinced that he is really being invited to a family feast, he, so to say, puts his head in the noose by entering the jar to partake of the savoury meat which his soul loves. But no sooner is he inside the jar than the man of God claps on the lid and fastens it down tightly. The ghost inside struggles manfully and raises a bitter cry, "Thou deceivest me, thou killest me", but it is all in vain. The man of God turns a deaf ear to his remonstrances, seals the lid, carries away the pot, and buries it in the middle of a swamp. That is the end of the ghost as such. Henceforth his immortal spirit is absorbed in Jok, the deity.[1]

The release of a repentant ghost.

That may be taken as the regular method of giving a quietus to a troublesome ghost. But sometimes a ghost, on being safely caught and bottled up in a jar, is led to see the error of his ways and to promise amendment, if only they will let him out. On the other hand he threatens that, if they persist in sealing up the pot and burying it in the swamp, he will kill every soul in the village. Alarmed at these sanguinary threats, and knowing that, if the worst comes to the worst, they can always pot him again, his relations take off the lid and let him out, and even build a shrine for him in the village. But beside the shrine they always set the pot as a reminder to the ghost of what he may expect if he should relapse into his former career of crime. It is to the credit of ghosts in general that no such case of a backsliding ghost is on record.[2]

State of the souls of animals after death.

Whether the souls of animals as well as of men are finally absorbed into the deity we are not informed; but it seems clear that some of them at least lead an independent life for some time after the death of the body. For

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 232 *sq.*
[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 233.

example, if a hunter kills a rhinoceros, the soul or ghost of the rhinoceros is very vengeful and dangerous, and the slayer must at once return to his village and consult a seer as to what steps he should take to appease or lay the ghost of the animal. The ceremonies prescribed by the seer naturally vary with the circumstances, but they always include the sacrifice of a black ram at the door of the slayer's house. The carcase is dragged whole into the wilderness and left near a river, but the old men of the village may go and eat it there, provided that they burn the skin and bones and throw the ashes into the water. Having thus appeased the ghost of the rhinoceros, the slayer may return and cut up its body; but he may not bring the horns into the village, because in the case of a rhinoceros it is not physically possible wholly to eradicate the viciousness of the ghost. The same holds true in an even higher degree of the roan antelope, the ghost of which is most particularly vengeful, vicious, and dangerous.[1]

How to lay the ghost of a rhinoceros.

These facts are of interest for their bearing on the much-debated question whether or not animals possess immortal souls like those of men. In the opinion of the Lango some animals, such as elephants, rhinoceroses, and warthogs, certainly do possess souls which survive the death of their bodies, and their testimony on this important topic may be accepted for what it is worth.

A man who interprets Jok's will for the benefit of his fellow-creatures is called an *ajoka*, that is, a Jok-man or man of God. Both men and women may hold the sacred office; indeed the most famous of these divinely inspired ministers have always been women. Women alone are competent to serve in the capacity of prophetesses at certain shrines, particularly at those of Atida or the Mother of God. While a man of God is engaged in ascertaining the will of Jok, he wears a serval skin slung down the front of his body, the forefeet being fastened round his neck, and he holds in his hand a rattle to avert inauspicious influences. An inquirer of the deity always prefaces his petition with a small present, generally some beer, flour, or cakes, part of which is offered at the shrine and the rest kept by the man or woman of

The inspired interpreter of Jok's will is called a Jok-man or Man of God.

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 229 *sq.*

God as his or her fee. If the petition is one of great importance a goat may be offered.[1]

Among the inspired interpreters of the divine will are epileptic patients, both men and women.

Among these interpreters of the divine will a special class is occupied by epileptic patients, who may be either men or women, but are oftener women than men. For an epileptic fit is regarded as a sure and certain token of divine inspiration; the deity is thought to have entered into the patient and taken possession of him or her; they say that "God has seized him" (*Jok omake*). The first step in such a case is to serve a notice of ejectment on God, in other words, to exorcize him. In former days the ejectment often took a very forcible form; the patient was simply flogged to the accompaniment of drums and singing till God had left him, in other words till the fit was over. The present procedure is more elaborate. In every village, apparently, there is a small hut set specially apart for the use of inspired, that is, epileptic patients; it is quite distinct from the shrine (*abila*) either of Jok or of a ghost, and it bears a different name, being called a House of Exorcism (*ot abani*). It contains nothing but a sacred spear or spear of Jok (*tong jok*). Accordingly, when a person falls down in a fit, an exorcizer, who must himself be an epileptic patient, comes to the hut of his fellow sufferer with a sacred spear in his hand and conducts him to the House of Exorcism, at the door of which a goat has been tied. At entering the house the patient administers a kick to the goat, which is then removed and killed. A little of the meat is given to the sufferer, who eats it in the House of Exorcism. Meantime the whole village is engaged in drinking beer, dancing, singing, and making as much noise as is humanly possible in order to drive away evil influences. By this time the worst effects of inspiration are over; the convulsive stage is past, and though the patient is still possessed by Jok, he now lies passive, inert, and comparatively sane. The dance of exorcism is accompanied by the music of six large drums, and all the exorcizers who can be mustered for the occasion take part in it, carrying their sacred spears and shaking their rattles. On his recovery the patient has to pay the owner of the drums a goat and one hoe, and to supply him with new

The treatment of epileptics.

The House of Exorcism.

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 234.

skins for his drums, as the old skins are presumably worn out with the hard usage to which they have been subjected in the process of exorcism. At night he is led back to his own house, but the exorcizer who came to the rescue at the first instance remains for two days without food in the House of Exorcism, for it takes him that time to complete the exorcism. If the patient succumbs to the treatment, his friends submit to the will of heaven; for they know that the day fore-ordained for him has arrived, and that Jok has sent his spirit to take him away. But if he survives, as he generally does, he is now a fully qualified exorcizer (*abanwa*) and man of God (*ajoka*), competent at any time to reveal the will of God to his worshippers.[1]

Oracles of Jok delivered by persons in epileptic fits.

Whenever Jok, in his special manifestation as Jok Nam, desires to communicate with a mortal, he always does so through one of these epileptics. When the chosen vessel feels the old symptoms coming on, he takes his measures accordingly. He hurries to the House of Exorcism, and there, the full force of inspiration descending on him, he falls down in a fit and writhes in the usual convulsions which attest the presence of the deity. In this divine frenzy, Jok Nam, speaking through the mouth of the epileptic, summons the person with whom he desires to communicate. On his arrival he receives the divine message from the man or woman in the fit, who thereafter gradually recovers from the delirium of inspiration and remains in his right mind until the next time.[2]

Exorcism of the ghosts of wild animals.

These exorcizers (*abanwa*) are invariably epileptic patients and can communicate the will of Jok just like ordinary men and women of God (*ajoka*), who are not epileptics. In certain cases, indeed, it is absolutely essential to consult them, as when a man has killed an elephant, a rhinoceros, or a warthog, and goes about in bodily fear of the ghost of the warthog, the elephant, or the rhinoceros. In such an emergency the only person on earth who can relieve him of his terrors by laying the ghost of the animal is an epileptic.[3]

A qualified practitioner can voluntarily induce a fit of inspiration, that is, of epilepsy, by dancing and other

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 237-239.

[2] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 239.

[3] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 239.

provocatives of violent excitement, and the words which in that state he utters are accepted by the inquirer as the words of God, a revelation of Jok Nam. But more usually he seats himself calmly in the House of Exorcism and falls into a trance, during which his soul leaves him and visits Jok, in his special manifestation as Jok Orongo, from whom the soul obtains the requisite information. On its return to his body the practitioner, still in a sort of trance, communicates the divine message to the inquirer, and then slowly returns to his normal condition.[1]

How the great god Jok can be outwitted.

But while the great god Jok is thus regarded as the supreme fount of wisdom, which may flow down to mortals through epileptics and other suitable channels, his intelligence would seem to be, in certain directions, of a limited order; for the Lango think that they can outwit and overreach him. For example, when the men are going out to hunt, they take the auspices, and it may be that the omens are unfavourable, prognosticating, for example, that one of the hunters will fall a prey to a leopard. To obviate this calamity, they mould clay figures of a man, a woman, and a leopard; the leopard is represented in the act of biting the man, and the woman is supposed to be the man's widow lamenting his death. The name of an enemy is given to the figure of the man, and that enemy, it is confidently anticipated, will be attacked and devoured by the leopard. This ingenious device is called "frustrating God" (*keto Jok*), because the wrath of God is thereby diverted from its proper object to another.[2] Again, when the children of a family have died in succession, one after the other, the next born will be called by some such trivial or unseemly name as "frog", "ordure", and so forth. Thus dust is thrown in the eyes of the deity, who will not turn his attention to a child so named, and thus the life of the infant will be saved.[3] From all this we may infer that in the opinion of the Lango their great god Jok is by no means infallible.

J. H. Driberg on the religion of the Lango.

To conclude this notice of Lango theology, I will quote the words of Mr. Driberg, our best and almost only authority

1 J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 239.

2 J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 113 *sq.*, 224 *sq.*

3 J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 144, 225.

on the people. He says: "It cannot be too often emphasized that religion is a much more important factor in the secular life of primitive peoples than it is with civilized communities—indeed, it is the most important factor of all. It enters into all their family and social relations, into their most commonplace activities and their daily occupations—in short, there is no aspect of native life which has not its religious significance, and which is not more or less controlled by religious rites or prohibitions. Jok is so intensely all-pervading that in all important events prudence compels that his will be ascertained, lest he be offended by an unintentional slight, or in order to profit by his omniscience in obtaining the best results of a contemplated action."[1]

The Dinka, a Nilotic tribe of the White Nile.

The Dinka are another Nilotic tribe, or rather congeries of independent tribes who occupy an immense territory in the valley of the White Nile, situated chiefly on the eastern bank of the river and stretching from the sixth to the twelfth degree of north latitude. Physically they are a typical Nilotic people, tall, long-legged, slender, and with a complexion of the deepest black. They are essentially a pastoral people, passionately devoted to the care of their numerous herds of cattle, though they also keep goats and sheep, and the women cultivate small quantities of millet and sesame. But besides the comparatively powerful tribes who own cattle there are some small and poor tribes who have no cattle and hardly till the ground, but live in the marshes near the river and depend largely for their support on fishing and hunting the hippopotamus. Their dirty evil-smelling villages are built on ground that scarcely rises above the vast reedy expanse of the marshes. The pastoral people naturally depend for their subsistence in great measure on the regular fall of rain, without which the pastures wither and the cattle die. Rain accordingly plays a great part in the religion and superstition of the Dinka.[1]

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, p. 233.

[2] As to the Dinka and their country, see "E. de Preussenaere's Reisen und Forschungen im Gebiete des weissen und blauen Nil", Petermann's *Geographische Mittheilungen*, Ergänzungsheft, No. 50 (Gotha, 1877), pp. 13 *sqq.*, 18 *sqq.*; G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, Third Edition (London, 1878), i. 48 *sqq.*; *The Golden Bough*, Part III. *The Dying God*, pp. 28 *sqq.*; C. G. Seligmann, *s.v.* "Dinka", in J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iv. 704 *sqq.*

The Dinka worship ancestral spirits (*jok*) and a high god Dengdit, whose name means "Great Rain".

The Dinka are a deeply religious people. They worship a host of ancestral spirits called *jok* and a high god called Dengdit, whose name means literally "Great Rain". They also give him the name of Nyalich, which, literally translated, signifies "in the above", being the locative form of a word which means "above". It is, however, only used as a synonym of Dengdit. A common beginning of Dinka prayers is *Nyalich ko kwar*, that is, "God and our ancestors". The phrase indicates the two main elements of which Dinka religion is composed, to wit, the worship of a high god and the worship of ancestors; and the order in which the two are mentioned in the prayer is significant of their relative importance, for there is no doubt that the great god Dengdit or Nyalich ranks above the ancestral spirits (*jok*). He is believed to have created the world and established the present order of things, and he it is who is supposed to send the rain from "the rain-place" above, which is especially his home. Nevertheless in the ordinary affairs of life the ancestral spirits (*jok*) are appealed to far oftener then Dengdit, and in some cases, in which the appeal is nominally made to Dengdit, its form seems to imply that he has been confused with the ancestral spirits.[1]

How the path between earth and heaven was cut off.

The Dinka have a legend that formerly earth and heaven were connected by a path, up and down which men used to pass at will, but that the path was unfortunately cut off under the following melancholy circumstances. Dengdit had a wife named Abuk. One day she was busy making men and women from a bowl of fat which her husband had given her for the purpose; for it appears that God had deputed to his wife the task of creating mankind. Softening the fat over the fire, she moulded the figures out of it with her hand, just as a Dinka potter moulds moist clay. As each person was completed in this fashion, he or she passed down the road to earth; for naturally the creation of human kind took place in heaven, the home of God and his wife. Well, while she was at work, God happened to pass by, and seeing what she was about he warned her against her father-in-law or brother-in-law Lwal Burrajok, with whom the

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *s.v.* "Dinka", in J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iv. 707.

deity was not on those amicable terms which might have been anticipated from their family relationship. But his wife forgot the warning and went to the forest to fetch wood, leaving the bowl simmering on the fire. Just then Lwal Burrajok strolled up, and seeing the bowl, drank some of the fat, spilt more of it on the ground, and out of pure mischief moulded what was left of the fat into preposterous figures, with eyes, mouths, and noses all bunged up and perfectly useless. He then went on his way, but fearing the wrath of his son-in-law or brother-in-law the deity, who could not be expected to take in good part this travesty of creation, he beat a retreat down to earth by the usual road. On her return, God's wife was horrified to find the spilt fat and the misshapen figures, and she hastened to inform the deity of the trick which his father-in-law or brother-in-law had played her. God was naturally indignant and started in pursuit of his waggish relative by marriage. But when he came to the path leading down to earth, he found to his surprise that the communication had been cut and the road rendered impassable. For the culprit, anticipating pursuit, had persuaded a certain bird to bite through the path with its bill. That was the end of the path that used to join earth and heaven. The bird that did this great mischief is a little bird about the size of a wren, with red and brown plumage; it builds its nests in the roofs of huts and is very common throughout the Sudan.[1]

Shrines of Dengdit.

Shrines or temples of Dengdit appear to be scattered all over the Dinka country. Most Dinka tribes have one shrine in their territory. At these shrines the people present offerings.[2] It is said that in former days a hut was built in every village to serve as God's house, and that sacrifices were offered at it.[3] Of these shrines one of the holiest is at Luang Deng. The Dinkas visit it in great numbers. Its guardians are thought to be in a special sense the servants of Dengdit. Only they may enter the shrine. But a man desirous of offspring may bring cattle

Sacrifices of cattle to Dengdit at his shrines.

[1] S. L. Cummins, "Sub-tribes of the Bahr-el-Ghazal Dinkas", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiv. (1904) pp. 157 *sq.*

[2] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 708.

[3] S. L. Cummins, "Sub-tribes of the Bahr-el-Ghazal Dinkas", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxiv. (1904) p. 157.

to the shrine and offer them to Dengdit, praying that the desire of his heart may be granted. The door of the shrine is regularly kept shut, but it is opened when one of the animals offered to Dengdit is slaughtered; and, peering in through the doorway, the worshipper discerns in the darkness the shifting shapes of men and animals, and even of abstractions like happiness, hunger, satisfaction, and cattle-disease. No sacrifice is made until Dengdit has sent a dream to the keeper of the shrine, authorizing him to accept the offering, so that worshippers are nearly always kept waiting for a few days till the keeper dreams his dream. But it rarely happens that a sacrifice is finally refused. It is thought that if a man be sent away without being allowed to sacrifice, he will soon die, or disease will attack his people. As the worshipper approaches, he is accompanied by two servants of the shrine, one on either side. The animal is killed with a spear kept specially for the purpose, and the spirit of the victim goes to join the other spirits in the shrine. Before the worshipper leaves the shrine, one of the servants of Dengdit takes dust from the holy precincts, mixes it with oil, and rubs the mixture over the body of the devotee. Sometimes a material object, as a spear, may be given to a man as a sign of favour and a guarantee that he will obtain his wish. In front of the shrine a low mound of ashes has arisen through the cooking of many sacrifices, and on it offerings, such as pieces of tobacco, may be thrown. The contents of the large intestine of the victim are scattered over and about this mound, and near it the worshippers thrust the branch of a tree called *akoch* into the ground.[1]

Worship of dead ancestors and sacrifices on their graves.

In the Shish tribe of Dinka, certain men who lived long ago were spoken of as "the sons of Dengdit", though this expression does not imply a physical relationship; it appears that the Shish considered these "sons" as spirits that came from above to possess certain men who became known by

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 708. Dr. Seligmann adds the following note: "According to prevailing views, this shrine is situated in Nuer territory, though it was formerly held by Dinka, and there are Dinka priests at the shrine. The writer believes the distinction drawn between Dinka and Nuer to be erroneous, and that the Nuer are simply a tribe of Dinka differing no more from other admittedly Dinka tribes than these do among themselves."

their names. Each of these men is regarded as the ancestor of a Shish clan and has become a powerful ancestral spirit (*jok*) of the usual type. Every year, after the harvest has been reaped, ceremonies are performed at the graves of these men, four in number, whose names are Walkerijok, Majush, Mabor, and Malan. At this yearly sacrifice a man, in whom the ancestral spirit is supposed to be immanent, kills a sheep or a bull, and smears its blood and the contents of the large intestine on the grave in the presence of the descendants of the hero, for no person but the descendants of the hero may take part in the rite. The flesh is boiled, all eat thereof, and great care is taken not to break the bones, which are thrown into the river.[1]

Beliefs of the Dinka concerning the fate of the human soul after death.

The beliefs of the Dinka concerning the fate of the human souls (*atiep*) after death are apparently not always consistent with each other. On the one hand they think that the spirits of the old and mighty dead (*jok*) and the spirits of the recent dead (*atiep*) exist in and around the villages in which their descendants live. Of these two sorts of spirits those of the ancient dead (*jok*) are the more powerful and energetic, and they sometimes have special shrines built in their honour. They are also supposed to have their home in the earth, in the immediate neighbourhood of their shrines. The spirits of the recent dead (*atiep*) are thought to be at their strongest immediately after death, and although funeral feasts are held for no other purpose than to propitiate them lest they should cause sickness and death, they gradually grow weaker, and in a very few generations may safely be forgotten. The spirits of the ancient or, as we may perhaps style them, the heroic dead (*jok*) retain their strength and energy, and require to be propitiated by sacrifice. Nor are the sacrifices offered to them on stated occasions sufficient to satisfy their craving. They accept these as their due, but they also make known their wants by appearing to their descendants in dreams and demanding that a bullock or other animal shall be killed; or they may appear to a professional seer (*tiet*) and command him to deliver their message. If their demands are disregarded, they send sickness or bad luck,

Sacrifices to the heroic dead.

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* pp. 708, 709.

and the only remedy for these ills is sacrifice. But the spirits of the heroic dead (*jok*) may send sickness to mankind without warning them beforehand in dreams and visions of the night; hence the usual treatment of all sickness is to begin by making offerings to the heroic dead or to the great god Dengdit, when he is confused with them.[1]

Belief that the souls of the dead go to Dengdit.

But side by side with this belief that the spirits of the dead are everywhere around them and mingling in the affairs of the living, the Dinka entertain another and apparently incompatible belief, that after death the human soul (*atiep*) leaves the neighbourhood of its body at the time of burial and passes upward to the great god Dengdit in his place between earth and sky, whence comes the rain from which the deity, as we have seen, takes his name. But the spirits that thus attain to the abode of Dengdit are not absorbed in him, for they retain their power of returning to earth. It is a common notion that the spirits of the ancient or heroic dead (*jok*) can pass to and from this earth to Dengdit, and one of the most familiar articles of Dinka faith is that these august beings come to every dying person to take and conduct his parting spirit (*atiep*) to its place of rest. The Niel Dinka believe that these angels of death, as we may call them, come in the form of their totem animals; for the Dinka are divided into totemic clans, and most of the clans speak of their totemic animals as their ancestors. Among the totemic animals, and therefore the ancestors, of the Dinka are snakes, crocodiles, hippopotamuses, lions, and foxes.[2]

Oaths by Dengdit.

The reverence which the Dinka entertain for Dengdit appears in their oaths. In small matters the Shish Dinka affirm the truth of their asseverations "by Nyalich", which, as we have seen, is a synonym for Dengdit. Among the Agar Dinka a form of oath is to place a spear or stick on the ground and jump over it, saying, "By Dengdit, I have not done this thing; if I have, may my spear be speedily put on my grave!" This refers to the Agar custom of putting a man's spear, bracelets, and shield on his grave for seven days. The most solemn and terrific oath of all is to go to the shrine of Dengdit and swear by it.[3]

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 709. *sq.*, 711.
[2] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* pp. 705
[3] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 712.

Importance of rain-makers among the Dinka.

The need of rain for the pastures and hence for the cattle, which are the staff of life for the Dinka, has tended to invest the office of rain-maker (*bain*) among them with the highest dignity and power. The men who are commonly called the chiefs or sheikhs of the Dinka tribes are regularly rain-makers, actual or potential. A successful rain-maker is supposed to be animated by the spirit of the great rain-makers of the past, and his influence is very great, for in virtue of his indwelling spirit he is believed to be wiser than common men.[1]

Lerpiu an ancestral spirit, thought to be immanent in rain-makers.

One of these ancestral spirits supposed to be immanent in living rain-makers of the Bor tribe is called Lerpiu. In 1911 the rain-maker of the Bor tribe believed himself to be animated by the great and powerful spirit of Lerpiu, and he affirmed that at his death Lerpiu would pass into his son. There is a shrine in which Lerpiu is thought to reside more or less constantly. Within the hut is kept a very sacred spear, which also bears the name of Lerpiu, and before it stands a post, to which are attached the horns of many bullocks sacrificed to Lerpiu.

Sacrifices to Lerpiu to procure rain.

The ceremony which is intended to ensure the rainfall consists of a sacrifice offered to Lerpiu for the purpose of inducing him to move Dengdit to send the rain; for Lerpiu is regarded only as a mediator between men and the great sky-god or rain-god Dengdit. The ceremony takes place in spring, about April, when the new moon is a few days old. In the morning two bullocks are led twice round the shrine and are tied to the post by the rain-maker. Then the people beat drums, and men and women, boys and girls, all dance round the shrine. Nothing further is done until the bullocks urinate, when every one who can get near the beasts rubs his body with the urine. After that all except the old people go away. Presently the rain-maker kills the bullocks by spearing them and cutting their throats. While the sacrifice is being prepared, the people chant: "Lerpiu, our ancestor, we have brought you a sacrifice: be pleased to cause rain to fall". The blood of the sacrifice is collected in a gourd, transferred to a pot, put on the fire, and eaten by the old and important people of the clan. Some of the flesh of one bullock is put into two pots, cooked with much fat, and left for many months near

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 711.

a sacred bush (*akoi*), which is an essential part of the shrine, because the spirit of Lerpiu is believed to quit the hut and come to the bush during the great rain-making ceremony in spring. Hence the meat left in pots at the bush is no doubt destined for his consumption; indeed, it is expressly said to be intended for the ancestral spirit (*jok*). But the meat of the other bullock is eaten the same day. The bones of the sacrificed bullocks are thrown away, but their horns are added to the rest on the post.[1]

Sacrifices for rain at the beginning of the rainy season.

Besides the great rain-making ceremony performed at a central shrine, some tribes offer a sacrifice for rain in each settlement. Among the Shish Dinka this takes place before, or at the beginning of, the rainy season. The old men of the settlement (*bai*) kill a sheep, thanking and praising Dengdit. The victim is bisected longitudinally and horizontally, and the upper half is cut in pieces and thrown up into the air as an offering to Dengdit. As the pieces fall on the ground, so they are left and are soon eaten by dogs and birds. The blood of the sacrifice is allowed to soak into the ground, but the rest of the meat is boiled and eaten; the bones may not be broken; they are buried in the skin for seven days and then cast into the river. Some durra (a kind of millet) is boiled, thrown into the air, and then left lying on the ground just like the flesh of the sacrifice.[2] The throwing of the offerings, whether of flesh or of grain, up into the air is a very natural way of presenting them to the deity whose home is in the upper regions of the world.

The Shilluk, a Nilotic tribe of the White Nile.

The Shilluk are a Nilotic tribe or nation of the White Nile. Their country is a narrow strip on the western bank of the river from Kaka in the north to Lake No in the south. They also occupy a portion of the eastern bank, and their villages extend some way up the Sobat River. Their country is almost entirely in grass; hence cattle constitute their wealth and the principal object of their care, but they also grow a considerable quantity of durra (a species of millet), though not enough to support the dense population. The villages are built on the slight elevations which break the monotony of the plain. Physically the Shilluk conform to the Nilotic type, being tall, lean, and so dark in colour as

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* pp. 711 *sq.* [2] C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 712.

to be almost black. The cheek-bones and lips protrude, but not excessively so; the nose in general is flat, but high noses are not infrequent.[1]

Belief of the Shilluk in a high god called Juok and in a powerful ancestral spirit called Nyakang.

The Shilluk believe in the existence of a high god whom they call Juok. He is formless and invisible, and, like the air, he is everywhere at once; he is far above men and even above Nyakang, the semi-divine ancestor of the Shilluk kings; nevertheless it is only through Nyakang, as mediator or intercessor, that men can approach him, for by sacrificing to Nyakang they induce him to move Juok to send rain. Although the name of Juok occurs in many greetings, as in the phrase, "May Juok guard you!" (*Yimiti Juok*), and although a sick man may, like Job, remonstrate with the deity, crying out, "Why, O Juok?" (*Er ra Juok*), yet it seems doubtful whether he is ever worshipped directly; and although some Shilluk may vaguely associate the dead with him, this feeling does not seem to imply any dogma concerning the abode and state of the dead. There is an undefined but general belief that the spirits of the dead are about everywhere, and that sometimes they come to their descendants in dreams and help them in sickness or give them good counsel. Yet, though, in the case of important men the funeral rites are neither short nor lacking in ceremony, nevertheless there is no such considerable worship of ancestral spirits among the Shilluk as there is among the Dinka. The explanation is probably to be found in the concentration of the religion of the Shilluk on the worship of Nyakang and of the divine kings in whom the spirit of Nyakang is believed to be incarnate. Thus, while the Dinka commonly attribute sickness to the action of an ancestral spirit, the Shilluk regard the entrance of the spirit of one of their divine kings into the patient's body as the most usual cause of illness. But probably it is only the ancient kings who are imagined to afflict people in this manner. Be that as it may, the practical religion of the Shilluk at the present time is the worship of Nyakang.[2]

Belief of the Shilluk as to the spirits of the dead.

[1] C. G. Seligmann, *The Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk* (London, 1911), p. 217; *id.*, *s.v.* "Shilluk", in J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 458; D. Westermann, *The Shilluk People* (Berlin, 1912), pp. xx-xxiii.

[2] C. G. Seligmann, *The Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk* (London, 1911), p. 220; *id.*,

Father Hofmayr on the Shilluk conception of Juok.

The Shilluk conception of Juok is thus explained by a Catholic missionary, Father Hofmayr: "The fundamental idea of the Shilluk word Juok is that of a Being who is unfathomable and unknown; to whom is ascribed everything that is gigantic and beyond the reach of human understanding; who stands high above the spirits of the dead and the evil spirits, to which he abandons the world, and who thus has nothing to oppose him. The good and evil that befall mankind are both attributed to him, for he is the Creator, the Punisher of Sins, and the Author of Death. For the rest, he dwells high above and troubles himself not about mankind; good and bad luck he has committed to the care of the subordinate spirits. Hence, once born into the world—the only good turn which the Shilluk acknowledges that he owes to Juok—the ordinary man is no longer dependent on him; indeed, since everything comes to him from his ancestors and he knows Juok only as an avenger, he feels under no obligation whatever to do any reverence to his Creator and Lord. It is very seldom that he mentions the name of Juok, and then only in three forms of greeting, on arrival, 'Juok has brought you', 'Juok has kept you'; and again at parting, 'Juok guide you.'

"To Juok, too, is ascribed anything wonderful or monstrous. So, for example, when Halley's comet was seen here in full splendour, it was immediately entitled Juok or Juok's Star. When the first great Nile steamers passed by the lands of the Shilluk, the people said, 'Such ships can no man make: they are the handiwork of Juok'.

"Lastly, the word Juok is mentioned in cases of sickness and death; at such times the Great Spirit appears only as the avenger of past sins. Thus, they say, *ya da Juok*, 'I am sick', or *anake Juok*, 'He is dead'. Only on such an occasion is an offering made, and that is done, not to show

s.v. "Shilluk", in J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 459, 462. Compare W. Hofmayr, "Religion der Schilluk", *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) pp. 120 *sqq.*; D. Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, pp. xxxix *sqq.* Father Hofmayr spells Juok's name as Cuok, and Nyakang's name as Nykang. Mr. Westermann spells Juok's name as Jwok and Nyakang's name as Nyikang. For the sake of uniformity I have adopted the spellings Juok and Nyakang throughout, even in quoting from Father Hofmayr. As to Nyakang and the divine kings of the Shilluk, see also *The Golden Bough*, Part III. *The Dying God*, pp. 17 *sqq.*

reverence to the deity, but only to appease the spirit, and that in a mood of sorrow and dejection that accords well with the circumstances. If after such an offering the sick man recovers, strings of beads are tied round his feet, the cure is ascribed to Nyakang's intercession with Juok, and the convalescent belongs to the class of persons who are dedicated to King Nyakang. . . .

The essence of Juok.

"As to the essence of Juok, he is *yomo*, that is, wind or spirit, able to be present everywhere, invisible, from whose hand everything has proceeded and can proceed. This Being can assume different shapes at pleasure, but he does not do so, at least not since the great kings have become his intermediaries.

The abode of Juok.

"To the question where this great Being dwells, the Shilluk answers, *e a mal*, he is above, in the air, above the clouds, there he has a great house, there he lives, old and alone. Though the Shilluk stands at a lower level than the Mohammedans to whom he was once subject, he does not think, at least he does not speak, of life in the other world after so sensuous a fashion as his former rulers. When the sun is passing the highest point in the sky, it is said that he is going under Juok's house. Juok can certainly choose different places of abode, yet he does not do so and is usually at home, just like the elders of the Shilluk, who love to be in repose. He only comes to earth when something is to be created or when he visits the villages with sickness and death. What this Great Spirit does at other times, the Shilluk know not. Their notion of him is modelled on the mode of life of their aged chiefs, who, lacking nothing, pass their time in gossip. Of old, after the creation, men often got speech of God. Nyakang was the first and last Shilluk who conversed with the Great Spirit. Since he vanished from the earth, Juok has not deigned to deal directly with mankind, but does everything at the intercession of that first king."[1]

The idea of Juok modelled on that of an old chief.

Shilluk story of the creation of men by Juok.

Of the creation of mankind the Shilluk tell the following story. They say that Juok, the Creator, moulded all men out of earth, and that while he was engaged in the work of creation he wandered about the world. In the land of the

[1] W. Hofmayr, "Religion der Schilluk", *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) pp. 121 *sq.*

whites he found a pure white earth or sand, and out of it he fashioned white men. Then he came to the land of Egypt, and out of the mud of the Nile he made red or brown men. Lastly, he came to the land of the Shilluks, and finding there black earth he created black men out of it. The way in which he modelled men was this. He took a lump of earth and said to himself, "I will make man, but he must be able to walk and run and go out into the fields, so I will give him two long legs, like the flamingo". Having done so, he thought again, "The man must be able to cultivate his millet, so I will give him two arms, one to hold the hoe, and the other to tear up the weeds". So he gave him two arms. Then he thought again, "The man must be able to see his millet, so I will give him two eyes". So two eyes he gave him. Next he thought to himself, "The man must be able to eat his millet, so I will give him a mouth". So a mouth he gave him. After that he thought within himself, "The man must be able to dance and speak and sing and shout, and for these purposes he must have a tongue". And a tongue he gave him accordingly. Lastly, the deity said to himself, "The man must be able to hear the noise of the dance and the speech of great men, and for that he needs two ears". So two ears he gave him, and sent him out into the world a perfect man.[1]

Juok of the Shilluk compared with Jok of the Lango and the Dinka.

It is clear that Juok, the God of the Shilluk, is identical both in name and nature with the Jok of the Lango.[2] But while both names agree with the *jok* of the Dinka, they differ from it in meaning, since in the Dinka language *jok* signifies, not a great God and Creator, but the spirit of a dead ancestor. From this it might perhaps be inferred that, if we could trace back the history of the Shilluk Juok and of the Lango Jok far enough, we should find that both these great Gods were men who had been deified after death. It may be so, but the analogy of African Sky-gods or Supreme Beings in general is against the hypothesis. For we have

[1] W. Hofmayr, "Religion der Schilluk", *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) pp. 128 *sq.* I have cited this story of creation elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 22 *sq.*).

[2] Above, pp. 292 *sqq.* It is notable also that the word *tipo* in the sense both of shadow and of the human soul is common to the Lango and the Shilluk languages. See J. H. Driberg, *The Lango*, pp. 228 *sqq.*; D. Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, p. xlv.

seen that for the most part the high gods or Supreme Beings are sharply distinguished from the ancestral spirits not only in name but in function; for while the task of creating the world and man is usually assigned to the high god, who generally dwells in the sky, or at all events in the upper region of the air, the work of carrying on what we may call the ordinary business of the world is commonly supposed to be deputed to the spirits of the dead; for it is from them that the African for the most part imagines that he experiences both good and evil, and it is they accordingly whom he feels bound to propitiate by prayer and sacrifice, while the Creator, having retired from the active conduct of affairs and committed it to the inferior spirits, is supposed to exercise little or no direct influence on human life and accordingly receives but scanty worship from his creature man. The meaning of the names of African Supreme Beings is commonly unknown or disputed; but it is significant that among not a few tribes of Eastern Africa the name of the high god undoubtedly signifies Sun, Sky, or Rain,[1] while other tribes of Eastern Africa and many tribes of Northern Nigeria positively identify their Supreme God with the Sun, whether they call him by the name of the Sun or not.[2] So far as they go, these facts support the view that African Sky-gods or Supreme Beings in general are not deified ancestors, but simply personifications of the great celestial phenomena, whether the sky, or the rain, or the sun.

The names of African high gods: some of them equivalent to Sun, Sky, or Rain.

[1] Sun among the Wagala, the Wafipa, the Wapare, the Wachagga, and the Nandi; Sky among most of the Suk; Rain among the Masai, the Dinka, and some of the Suk. See above, pp. 197, 201-203, 205-207, 211, 281 (as to the Sun); p. 288 (as to the Sky); pp. 277, 288, 304 (as to the Rain).

[2] See above, pp. 122-124 (as to the tribes of Northern Nigeria), 170 *sq.* (as to the Barotse), 173 *sq.* (as to the Louyi), compare p. 279 (as to the Kavirondo).

CHAPTER VI

THE WORSHIP OF EARTH AMONG THE ARYAN PEOPLES OF ANTIQUITY

§ 1. *The Worship of Earth among the Vedic Indians*

Pṛithivī, the Vedic Earth-goddess, is the wife of the Sky-god Dyaus, but otherwise hardly figures in Vedic mythology.

HAVING treated in previous chapters of the personification and worship of the sky, we may next proceed to examine the corresponding personification and worship of the earth, which in the physical world is in a sense the counterpart of the sky. In mythology the Earth, regarded as a person, is often conceived of as the wife of the Sky-god. We have seen that among the ancient Aryans of India the Sky and Earth were thus personified as husband and wife under the names of Dyaus and Pṛithivī, the father and mother of all living creatures.[1] But apart from her association as a wife with the Sky-god, the Earth-goddess Pṛithivī appears to have played a very small part in Vedic religion. She is praised alone in a short hymn of the *Rig-veda*,[2] but in it she is hardly regarded as an Earth-goddess pure and simple; for, though she is said to quicken the earth, she is also described as wielding the thunder-bolt. In the *Atharva-veda*, which is a much later collection of hymns than the *Rig-veda* and was not at first recognized as canonical,[3] there is a long and beautiful hymn addressed to the Earth-

Hymn to the Earth-goddess in the *Atharva-veda*.

[1] Above, pp. 22 *sqq*.

[2] *Rig-veda*, v. 84; *Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated by R. T. H. Griffith (Benares, 1889–1892), vol. i. p. 301.

[3] *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire* (Oxford, 1909), ii. 229. The writer (Professor A. A. Macdonell) says that "the *Atharvaveda* is decidedly later in language than the *Rigveda*, but earlier than the *Brahmanas*. It must have been in existence as a collection by 600 B.C., but was a long time in attaining to canonical rank. It was, however, recognized as the fourth Veda by the second century B.C."

goddess.[1] In it we read: "The Earth is the mother and I am the son of the Earth: Parjanya is the father; may he nourish us!"[2] and again: "Reverence be paid to the Earth, the wife of Parjanya, to her who draws her richness from showers".[3] Here it will be noticed that the husband of the Earth-goddess is not the Sky-god Dyaus, but Parjanya, who appears to be a personification of the rain-cloud.[4] In the same hymn we read: "O Mother Earth, kindly set me down upon a well-founded place! With (father) Heaven co-operating, O thou wise one, do thou place me into happiness and prosperity!"[5] But the greater part of the long hymn is devoted to a description of the physical earth with its hills and snowy mountains and plains, its seas and rivers, its forests, and its races of men and animals. As to the inhabitants of the earth the poet says, addressing the goddess: "The mortals born of thee live on thee, thou supportest both bipeds and quadrupeds. Thine, O Earth, are these five races of men, of mortals, upon whom the rising sun sheds undying light with his rays. These creatures all together shall yield milk for us; do thou, O Earth, give us the honey of speech! Upon the firm broad earth, the all-begetting Mother of the plants, that is supported by (divine) law, upon her, propitious and kind, may we ever pass our lives! . . . Upon the earth men give to the gods the sacrifice, the prepared oblation; upon the earth men live pleasant lives by food. May this Earth give us breath and life, may she cause me to reach old age!"[6] Once more we read in the hymn: "The earth upon whom the noisy mortals sing and dance, upon whom they fight, upon whom resounds the roaring drum, shall drive forth our enemies, shall make us free from rivals!"[7] Throughout the hymn the poet never loses sight of the material nature of the earth; its mythical or religious aspect he touches on very lightly; the personification is very slight and perfectly transparent.

[1] *Atharva-veda*, xii. 1; *Hymns of the Atharva-veda*, translated by M. Bloomfield (Oxford, 1897), pp. 197-205 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xlii.).

[2] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. (London, 1884) p. 23.

[3] J. Muir, *l.c.*

[4] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 83.

[5] *Atharva-veda*, xii. 1. 63; *Hymns of the Atharva-veda*, translated by M. Bloomfield, p. 207.

[6] *Atharva-veda*, xii. 1. 15, 16, 17, 22; *Hymns of the Atharva-veda*, translated by M. Bloomfield, p. 201.

[7] *Atharva-veda*, xii. 1. 41; *Hymns of the Atharva-veda*, translated by M. Bloomfield, p. 204.

Mother Earth takes the dead back to her bosom.

By a natural train of thought Mother Earth, who gives birth to men, is conceived to take her dead sons back to her bosom. In a funeral hymn of the *Rig-veda* the poet, addressing a dead man, speaks thus:

"*Betake thee to the lap of Earth the Mother, of Earth, far-spreading, very kind and gracious.*
Young dame, wool-soft unto the guerdon-giver, may she preserve thee from Destruction."

Then turning to Earth herself, the poet proceeds:

"*Heave thyself, Earth, nor press thee downward heavily: afford him easy access, gently tending him.*
Earth, as a mother wraps her skirt about her child, so cover him." [1]

§ 2. *The Worship of Earth among the Ancient Greeks* [2]

The Greek Earth-goddess, Gaia or Ge, not prominent in Greek religion.

In ancient Greece, as in ancient India, the worship of Earth as a goddess was not an important element of the national religion, unless indeed we regard Demeter as an Earth-goddess, for unquestionably Demeter was one of the most important, as well as among the most stately and beautiful, figures in the Greek pantheon. But she was a goddess of the corn rather than of the earth.[3] The true Greek goddess of the Earth was Gaia or Ge, whose name means nothing but the actual material earth, and is constantly used in that sense by Greek writers from the earliest to the latest times. Hence in her case the personification is open and unambiguous; the veil of mythic fancy is too thin and transparent to conceal the physical basis of the goddess.

The Earth-goddess in Greek mythology: Hesiod's account of her.

But if the Earth-goddess never received a large share of Greek worship, she played an important part in the scheme of Greek mythology as expounded by the poet Hesiod in his *Theogony*. According to him, Broad-bosomed Earth, as

[1] *Rig-veda*, x. 18. 10, 11; *Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated by R. T. H. Griffith, vol. iv. p. 139. On this beautiful hymn, see H. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* (Berlin, 1879), pp. 404-407.

[2] For details on this subject, see Preller-Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*[4], i. (Berlin, 1894), pp. 632 *sqq.*; Drexler, *s.v.* "Gaia", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 1566; Eitrem, *s.v.* "Gaia", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vii. 1. 467 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 1 *sqq.*, 307 *sqq.*

[3] See *The Golden Bough*, Part V. *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, i. 35 *sqq.*

he calls her, was the first being that came into existence after the primeval chaos. She was older than the sky, indeed she gave birth to the starry sky, he was her first-born; and afterwards she brought forth the mountains and the sea. All these, apparently, she was thought to have produced of herself without the assistance of any male power. But thereafter, she mated with the Sky, her own offspring, and from their union were born Ocean and the Titans.[1] For the poet distinguished the sea, by which he probably meant the Mediterranean, from the great ocean lying beyond the Pillars of Hercules, of which adventurous mariners had brought back tales of wonder to the Greeks of the home-land, and of which rumours had reached even the poet-husbandman Hesiod among the quiet dells of Helicon. Yet husbandman as he was, and author of the oldest extant treatise on husbandry, Hesiod appears to have felt little tenderness or respect for the Earth-goddess on whom he depended for his livelihood; perhaps the land about Ascra, his native town, was hard and stony, and yielded but a scanty harvest to the plough and the sickle. Certainly he grumbled at Ascra, which he described as "a wretched village, bad in winter, disagreeable in summer, good at no time".[2] It stood on the top of a hill, exposed to all the winds that blow; by the second century of our era the place had fallen into utter decay and nothing worth mentioning remained in it but a single tower. The solitary tower still crowns the summit of the hill, a far-seen landmark, and the hill-side is still stony and rugged.[3] So perhaps after all the bard had some ground for complaining of the niggardliness of the goddess and for paying her out in the uncomplimentary verses which he wrote about her. Certainly he represents her in a very unamiable light as hard, cruel, and treacherous. For did she not instigate her offspring, the Titans, to attack and mutilate their own father while he, quite unsuspecting, lay quiet with her in bed? Did she not even provide the weapon with which the dastardly outrage was perpetrated on the deity by his unnatural son?[4]

The poet's home at Ascra.

[1] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 116-138.

[2] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 639 *sq.*

[3] Pausanias, ix. 29. 2, with my commentary (vol. v. pp. 149 *sq.*).

[4] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 159-182. See above, pp. 36 *sq.*

The Homeric hymn to Earth, the Mother of All.

A far more favourable portrait of the Earth-goddess, and one which probably harmonized much better with Greek notions and sentiments about her, is painted by the author of the Homeric hymn addressed to "Earth, the Mother of All". In English it runs thus:

"*I'll sing of Earth, Mother of All, of her the firm-founded,*
Eldest of beings, her who feeds all that in the world exists;
All things that go upon the sacred land and on the sea,
And all that fly, all they are fed from thy bounty.
By thee, O Queen, are men blessed in their children, blessed in their crops;
Thine it is to give life and to take it back
From mortal men. Happy is he whom thou in heart
Dost honour graciously; he hath all things in plenty.
For him his fruitful land is big with corn, and his meads
Abound in cattle, and his house is full of good things.
Such men do rule in righteousness a city of fair women.
Great wealth and riches wait on them;
Their sons exult in joyance ever new;
In florid troops their maidens blithesomely
Do sport and skip about the meadows lush with flowers.
Such are they whom thou dost honour, Goddess revered,
O bounteous Spirit.
Hail, Mother of Gods, Spouse of the Starry Sky,
And graciously for this my song bestow on me
Substance enough for heart's ease. So shall I not forget
To hymn thee in another lay."[1]

Plutarch on the worship of Earth.

Hundreds of years later a like feeling of reverence and affection for the Earth-goddess was expressed by Plutarch with that simple piety and transparent sincerity which characterize all the writings of that excellent and lovable man. He says: "Fire receives barbaric honours among the Medes and Assyrians, who out of fear think to acquit themselves of the obligations of religion by worshipping the destructive rather than the venerable aspects of nature; but the name of Earth is dear, I ween, and precious to every Greek, and it is a custom handed down to us by our fathers to revere her like any other deity".[2]

Antiquity of the worship of Earth in Greece.

But if in the historical ages of Greece the public worship of Earth was comparatively rare and unimportant, there are some grounds for thinking that it must have been very

[1] *Homeric Hymns*, xxx. (pp. 296 *sq.*, ed. Allen and Sikes).

[2] Plutarch, *De facie in orbe lunae*, xxii. 14.

ancient. The three great seats of the national religion were Dodona, Delphi, and Olympia, and at all of them the worship of the Earth-goddess would seem to have been established in antiquity. At Dodona the main objects of religious reverence were certainly Zeus and his oracular oak, but side by side with them the Earth-goddess appears to have shared the homage of the pilgrims who flocked to the shrine. For the priestesses, who perhaps bore the title of Doves, are said to have chanted the verses:

The worship of Earth at Dodona.

> "*Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus shall be: O great Zeus!*
> *The Earth yields fruits, therefore glorify Mother Earth*".[1]

At Delphi the oracle is said to have belonged to Poseidon and Earth long before it was taken over by Apollo, and the tradition ran that the Earth-goddess delivered her oracles in person, while Poseidon employed a mere human being as his interpreter and intermediary.[2] In a hymn to Apollo, which was discovered by the French in their excavations at Delphi, there is an allusion to the peaceful displacement of Earth by Apollo when he came from Tempe to take possession of the oracle.[3] The poet Aeschylus, a high authority on the religious traditions of his country, represents the Pythian priestess at Delphi as praying first of all to Earth, and calling her the first who ever gave oracles at the shrine.[4] Among her predictions she is said to have prophesied that Cronus would be dethroned by his own son, that Zeus would vanquish the Titans with the help of the Cyclopes, and that Metis would bear a son who should be the lord of heaven.[5] Down to the time of Plutarch the ancient goddess had a sacred precinct at Delphi to the south of the great temple of Apollo.[6] The frowning cliffs above Delphi and the deep glen below might naturally mark out the spot as a fit seat for a sanctuary and oracle of Earth. Nowhere else in Greece, unless it be at the foot

The oracle of Earth at Delphi.

[1] Pausanias, x. 12. 10. Pausanias here assumes that the priestesses were called Doves. But perhaps he misunderstood a tradition, recorded by Herodotus (ii. 55), that the oracle at Dodona was founded in obedience to the bidding of a black dove, which flew from Thebes in Egypt to Dodona, and there, perching on an oak, spoke with a human voice. Compare my note on Pausanias, vii. 21. 2 (vol. iv. pp. 149 *sq.*).

[2] Pausanias, x. 5. 6.

[3] *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, xvii. (1893) p. 566.

[4] Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 1 *sq.*

[5] Apollodorus, i. 1. 5, i. 2. 1, i. 3, 6.

[6] Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis*, 17.

of the tremendous precipices down which the water of the Styx falls or dribbles in Arcadia, has Nature thus wrought as with an artist's hand to impress on the spectator's mind so deep a sense of awe and solemnity. Indeed, in antiquity some philosophers attempted to explain the oracle at Delphi by a theory that the priestess was inspired by certain physical exhalations or vapours due to the nature and configuration of the ground, and they traced the decadence of the oracle in their own time to a decrease or cessation of the exhalations consequent on changes in the crust of the earth brought about by natural causes, such as heavy rains, thunderbolts, and above all, earthquakes. Plutarch, who seems to have inclined to accept this view, compares the exhaustion of the oracular vein to the exhaustion of the silver mines in Attica, and of the copper mines in Euboea, and to the frequent intermittence in the flow of hot springs. On this attempt to reconcile science with religion one of the interlocutors in Cicero's dialogue on divination pours scorn. "You might think", says he, "that they were talking of wine or pickles, which go off with time; but what length of time can wear out a power divine?"[1]

Altars and sanctuaries of Earth in Greece.

In the great sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia there was an altar of the Earth-goddess made of ashes, and the tradition ran that of old the goddess had an oracle on the spot.[2] Some miles from the site of the ancient Aegae in Achaia there was a sanctuary of Earth, who here bore the title of Broad-bosomed. At this sanctuary an oracle of Earth subsisted down to the second century of our era. The priestess drank bull's blood, and under its influence descended into the oracular cave. She was bound to remain chaste during her tenure of office, and before she entered on it she might not have known more than one man. The bull's blood which inspired a chaste priestess was supposed to act like poison on one who had not kept her vow.[3] Similarly, the prophetess of Apollo Diradiotes at Argos drank the blood of a sacrificial lamb once a month as a means of inspiration before she prophesied in the name of the god. The

[1] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum*, 40 *sqq.*; Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 19. 38, i. 36. 79, ii. 57. 117.

[2] Pausanias, v. 14. 10.

[3] Pausanias, vii. 25. 13; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 147. The two accounts supplement each other.

lamb was sacrificed by night, and the prophetess, like the priestess of Earth near Aegae, had to abstain from all intercourse with the other sex.[1] At Sparta there were two sanctuaries of Earth.[2] There was an altar to Earth at Tegea in Arcadia,[3] and another at Phlya in Attica, where she bore the title of the Great Goddess.[4] In the great sanctuary of Olympian Zeus at Athens, where the lofty columns which have survived the wreck of ages are among the most imposing monuments of ancient Greece, there was a precinct of Olympian Earth, where the ground was cloven to the depth of a cubit. Tradition ran that in Deucalion's time the water of the great flood, which submerged almost the whole of Greece, all flowed away down this seemingly insignificant drain.[5] This sanctuary of Earth is mentioned by Thucydides as one proof of the antiquity of the city in that quarter.[6] Thus, if the shrines of the Earth-goddess were neither numerous nor splendid, the traditions associated with them point to the great age of her worship in Greece. Perhaps the Greeks took it over from the aborigines whom they conquered or exterminated.

Mode of worship of Earth in Greece. Black victims sacrificed to her.

About the manner of the worship which they offered to her we know very little. The victims sacrificed to her would seem to have been black. In Homer we read of the sacrifice of a black ewe lamb to Earth, and of a white male lamb to the Sun:[7] black yearling lambs were sacrificed to Subterranean (Chthonian) Earth and Subterranean (Chthonian) Zeus for the crops on the twelfth day of the month Lenaeon in the island of Myconos;[8] and at Marathon a goat entirely black was sacrificed to Earth "at the oracle" on the tenth day of the month Elaphebolion, and a cow in calf was offered to her "among the acres" at another time of the year, but the colour of the cow is not mentioned.[9]

[1] Pausanias, ii. 24. 1.
[2] Pausanias, iii. 11. 9, iii. 12. 8.
[3] Pausanias, viii. 48. 8.
[4] Pausanias, i. 31. 4.
[5] Pausanias, i. 18. 7.
[6] Thucydides, ii. 15.
[7] Homer, *Iliad*, iii. 103 *sq.*
[8] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 1024, vol. iii. p. 174; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Bruxelles, 1900), No. 714, p. 616; J. de Prott, L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae* (Lipsiae, 1896–1906), No. 4, vol. i. p. 14.
[9] J. de Prott, L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, No. 26, vol. i. p. 48, col. B.

The sacrifice offered to her for the crops in Myconos proves that she was supposed to quicken the seed in the ground, which was a very natural function for an Earth-goddess to perform. The same inference may be drawn from the epithet, Fruit-bearing, which was applied to her both at Athens and at Cyzicus. At Athens the name of the goddess with this epithet is engraved on the rock of the Acropolis, and the inscription, which is still legible, informs us that it was carved in compliance with an oracle.[1] Near this inscription on the Acropolis there was an image of Earth praying to Zeus for rain,[2] from which we may perhaps infer that the goddess was invoked to intercede with Zeus for rain in time of drought. The image may have represented her in the act of emerging from the rock and stretching her arms upward, while a great part of her body remained under ground. In this attitude she is often depicted on Greek vases and on a well-known terra-cotta relief, in which the goddess is represented with her head and shoulders only above ground, holding up the infant Erichthonius to his mother Athene in presence of Poseidon, whose fishy tail gives him the appearance of a merman.[3] The conception of Earth as a power able both to fertilize the ground and to bestow offspring on men appears to be indicated by her association with Green Demeter, and by the epithet of Nursing-mother (*Kourotrophos*) bestowed on her at a sanctuary which was dedicated to her and to Green Demeter, near the entrance to the Acropolis at Athens.[4] Erichthonius is said to have been born from the earth, and very appropriately he is reported to have been the first to sacrifice to the Earth-goddess under the title of Nursing-mother, and to set up an altar to her on the Acropolis out of gratitude for his upbringing.[5] The Athenian lads used

Earth the Fruit-bearing.

Earth praying for rain.

Earth the Nursing-Mother.

[1] *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, iii. No. 166; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, Part II. (Cambridge, 1905), No. 245, pp. 465 *sq.* The epithet Fruit-bearing applied to Earth at Cyzicus is known from an inscription. See L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, iv. 91, quoting *Bulletin de Correspondance hellénique*, 1882, p. 454.

[2] Pausanias, i. 24. 3.

[3] A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, i. 492, fig. 536; W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. coll. 1577-1578, fig. 2. As to the legend of the birth of Erichthonius from the earth, see Apollodorus, iii. 14. 6.

[4] Pausanias, i. 22. 3.

[5] Suidas, *s.v.* κουροτρόφος.

to sacrifice to the Nursing-mother on the Acropolis;[1] and in a fragmentary inscription found on the Acropolis the sacrifice of a pig to Earth the Nursing-mother appears to be prescribed.[2] Aristophanes represents the Athenian women praying to Demeter and Earth the Nursing-mother at the festival of the Thesmophoria.[3] Not far from the joint sanctuary of Earth and Green Demeter, whose epithet of Green refers to the green sprouting corn, there was a sanctuary of the Furies near the Areopagus, and in it were statues of Earth, Pluto, and Hermes. Here sacrifices were offered both by Athenians and foreigners, but especially by persons who had been acquitted at the bar of the Areopagus.[4] Curiously enough, persons who had been wrongly supposed to be dead, and for whom funeral rites had been performed, were not allowed to enter this sanctuary of the Furies.[5]

Earth invoked in oaths.

The Earth-goddess was often invoked in solemn oaths, along with other deities, especially Zeus and the Sun, to witness the truth of an asseveration. Thus when Agamemnon solemnly swore that he had not approached Briseis while she was his prisoner, he sacrificed a boar to Zeus, and looking up to heaven called upon Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, and the Furies to be his witnesses that he did not lie.[6] And in the *Odyssey* Calypso swears to Ulysses by "Earth, and the wide Sky above, and the down-trickling water of Styx" that she meant him no harm.[7] An Aetolian oath was by Zeus, the Earth, and the Sun.[8] In Chersonesus, a Greek city of the Crimea, the citizens took an oath of loyalty to their city, swearing by Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, the Virgin, the gods and goddesses of Olympus, and the heroes who protected the city and the country and the walls.[9] In a treaty of alliance between the cities of Drerus

[1] *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, ii. No. 481, lines 58 *sq.*

[2] *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, i. No. 4.

[3] Aristophanes, *Thesmophor.* 297 *sqq.*

[4] Pausanias, i. 28. 6.

[5] Hesychius, *s.v.* Δευτερόποτμος, citing Polemo as his authority.

[6] Homer, *Iliad*, xix. 252-265.

[7] Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 184-187.

[8] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 1212, vol. iii. p. 357; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 1421, p. 939.

[9] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 360, vol. i. pp. 585, 586; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 1316, pp. 875, 876. The Virgin was a deity worshipped in Chersonesus, where she had a sanctuary. See Strabo, vii. 4. 2,

and Cnossus in Crete the allies took a tremendous oath of fidelity by Hestia of the Prytaneum, and Zeus (Den) of the Market-place, and Tallaean Zeus (Den), and the Delphinian Apollo, and Athene the Guardian of the City, and the Poetian Apollo, and Latona, and Artemis, and Ares, and Aphrodite, and Hermes, and the Sun, and Britomartis, and Phoenix, and Amphiona, and the Earth, and the Sky, and the heroes, and the heroines, and the springs, and the rivers, and all the gods and goddesses, that they would never and by no manner of means be friendly to the Lyttians, neither by night nor by day, but that on the contrary they would do all the harm they possibly could to the city of the Lyttians.[1] About the year 244 B.C. the people of Magnesia concluded a treaty of alliance with Smyrna and King Seleucus II., and swore to observe it faithfully, calling on Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, Ares, Warlike Athene, Tauropolus, the Sipylene Mother, Apollo of Panda, all the other gods and goddesses, and the Fortune of King Seleucus, to be their witnesses. The people of Smyrna on their part swore in much the same terms to observe the treaty, but in the list of deities by whom they swore they omitted Apollo in Panda and the Fortune of King Seleucus, substituting Stratonicean Aphrodite in their room.[2] The mercenary troops of Eumenes I., King of Pergamum, took an oath of loyalty to him, swearing by Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, Poseidon, Demeter, Ares, Warlike Athene, Tauropolus, and all the other gods and goddesses; and the king swore by the same deities to observe good faith to the troops.[3] In or about the year 3 B.C. the Paphlagonians swore fealty to the Emperor Augustus by Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, all the gods and goddesses, and also by the Emperor himself.[4] Thus in

p. 308. She had an altar on the acropolis of Chersonesus, and the people celebrated in her honour a festival which included a procession. See G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 709, vol. iii. pp. 344, 345.

[1] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 527, vol. i. pp. 769-771; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 23, pp. 28 *sq.*; P. Cauer, *Delectus Inscriptionum Graecarum*[2], No. 121, pp. 77 *sq.*

[2] W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Lipsiae, 1903-1905), No. 229, vol. i. pp. 371, 372.

[3] W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 266, vol. i. pp. 438-440; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 15, pp. 9 *sq.*

[4] W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 532, vol. ii. pp. 198 *sq.*; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 8781, vol. ii. p. 1010.

Greek-speaking lands the old oath by Zeus, the Earth, and the Sun persisted from the Homeric age down to imperial times.

§ 3. *The Worship of Earth among the Ancient Romans*[1]

Scanty evidence of the worship of Earth in Rome and Italy.

The ancient Romans, like the ancient Greeks, personified and worshipped the Earth as a Mother Goddess; but though her worship was doubtless very ancient, the evidence for its observance in Rome and Italy is very scanty; the goddess would seem to have been pushed into the background by other and more popular deities, above all by the Sky-god Jupiter, and by the Corn-goddess Ceres, with whom she was often confounded.[2] Her proper name was Tellus,[3] which is also a common Latin noun signifying "earth"; but in later times she was more usually invoked under the name of Terra or Terra Mater,[4] that is, "Mother Earth," *terra* being practically synonymous with *tellus* in the sense of "earth". Apparently she personified, not so much the whole earth as, primarily, the fruitful field to which men owe their food and therefore their life, and, secondarily, the burial ground which receives their bodies after death. The poet Lucretius sums up the conception of the Earth-mother in her double aspect in a striking phrase by saying that she is thought to be "the universal parent and the common tomb".[5] So the older poet Ennius said that the Earth "gave birth to all nations and takes them back again".[6] Again, in an epitaph on a tomb it is said that,

Her names, Tellus and Terra.

[1] For details, see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3] (Berlin, 1881–1883), ii. 2 *sqq.*; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2] (Munich, 1912), pp. 191 *sqq.*; *id.*, "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 331 *sqq.*

[2] Compare G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 339.

[3] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 1954, 3956, 3957, 3958, 3959, 7994.

[4] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 1522, 3950, 3951-3954, 3960, 5050[136], 8008. According to Servius (on Virgil, *Aen.* i. 171), *Tellus* was properly the name of the goddess, and *terra* the name of the element of earth. As to the lateness of the designation *Terra Mater* compared to the earlier *Tellus* or *Tellus Mater*, see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3], ii. 2 note[2]; G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 332.

[5] Lucretius, v. 259, "*Omniparens eadem rerum commune sepulcrum*".

[6] Ennius, quoted by Varro, *De lingua latina*, v. 64, "*Terris gentis omnis peperit et resumit denuo*".

"the bones which Earth produced she covers in the grave".[1] For the Earth was thought to be the source not only of vegetable but of animal life. In the ode composed by Horace to be sung at the Secular Games which Augustus celebrated in 17 B.C., the poet prays that "Earth (*Tellus*), fruitful in crops and cattle, may bestow on Ceres a crown of ears of corn";[2] and from an inscription containing an account of the Secular Games, which was found in the Field of Mars (*Campus Martius*) at Rome in 1890, we learn that on this occasion the goddess was invoked under the title of Mother Earth (*Terra Mater*) and that a sow big with young was sacrificed to her.[3] Again, in an oath of loyalty to Rome, which the Italians took in 91 B.C., they swore by Capitoline Jupiter, by the Roman Vesta, by Mars, by the Sun, and by "Earth, the benefactress both of animals and plants".[4]

Pregnant sow sacrificed to her.

In an inscription found at Rome mention is made of a sanctuary dedicated to the Eternal Sky, to Mother Earth, and to Mercury Menestrator.[5] At the beginning of his treatise on agriculture, Varro, the greatest of Roman antiquaries, tells us that he will invoke the twelve Confederate Gods (*dei consentes*), not those twelve gods, male and female, whose gilded statues adorned the forum, but the twelve gods who were the special patrons of farming. Among them he invokes in the first place Jupiter and Earth (*Tellus*) because they, in their respective spheres of sky and earth (*terra*), contain all the fruits of husbandry; therefore, he proceeds, because they are called the Great Parents, Jupiter is named Father, and Earth (*Tellus*) is named Mother.[6] In this passage, just as Tellus is plainly a personification of the physical earth, so Jupiter is plainly a personification of the physical sky. Thus Varro is at one with the writer of the inscription, in which, as we have just seen, Mother Earth is

Earth coupled with the Sky and Jupiter.

[1] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 7994.

[2] Horace, *Carmen Saeculare*, 29 *sq.*

[3] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 5050[136].

[4] Diodorus Siculus, xxxvii. 11.

[5] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 3950.

[6] Varro, *Rerum rusticarum libri tres*, i. 1. 5. In this passage the MSS. read *Tellus terra mater*. But *terra* appears to be a gloss on *Tellus*, as H. Jordan observed (L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3], ii. 2 note[2]). It is rightly omitted by G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 332.

coupled with the Eternal Sky; and Varro more than hints at the ancient myth of the marriage of Sky and Earth, though perhaps his orthodox Roman faith prevented him from expressly substituting Earth for Jupiter's legitimate wife Juno. A similar collocation of Jupiter and Earth occurs in the solemn form of imprecation in which a Roman general devoted to destruction, the cities, lands, armies, and people of the enemy, for at the close of the curse he called on Mother Earth (*Tellus*) and Jupiter to be his witnesses; and when he named Earth, he touched the earth with his hands; and when he named Jupiter, he raised his hands towards the sky.[1] Here, again, the identification of Jupiter as a Sky-god is rendered indubitable by the accompanying gesture, and it is remarkable that in this fearful imprecation Mother Earth takes precedence of the Sky-god, perhaps with reference to the fate of the foemen who might be expected soon to return to the bosom of their Mother, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Sacrifices offered by the pontiffs to Earth (Tellus) and Tellumo.

Elsewhere Varro tells us that the pontiffs used to sacrifice to four deities, namely Earth (*Tellus*), Tellumo, Altor, and Rusor.[2] Here Tellumo is apparently a male Earth-god, the husband of the Earth-goddess. Certainly his name appears to be only a masculine form of *Tellus*, "the earth". Varro himself saw this and explained the two deities as personifications of the earth in its twofold aspect, first as a male who produces the seeds (*Tellumo*), and second as a female who receives and nourishes them (*Tellus*).[3] In a late writer a masculine deity Tellurus, no doubt equivalent to Tellumo, is mentioned along with Ceres.[4] As to the deity Altor, whom the pontiffs associated with Earth

[1] Macrobius, *Saturn*, iii. 9. 9-12.

[2] Varro, quoted by Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 23. The passages of Varro bearing on the worship of Earth (*Tellus*) are collected by R. Agahd, *M. Terenti Varronis Antiquitatum Rerum Divinarum libri* i. xiv. xv. xvi. (Leipzig, 1898) pp. 212-214.

[3] Varro, quoted by Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 23, "*Una eademque terra habet geminam vim, et masculinam, quod semina producat; et femininam, quod recipiat atque enutriat*". Compare Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv. 10. According to C. Pauli, Tellumo is an Etruscan deity. See W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und romischen Mythologie*, v. 330, *s.v.* "Tellumo".

[4] Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, i. 49, "*Corrogantur ex proxima* [*regione*] *transcursis conjugum regum Ceres Tellurus Terraeque pater Vulcanus et Genius*". Here *Terraeque pater* is perhaps a gloss on Tellurus.

(*Tellus*) and Tellumo, he was no doubt rightly interpreted by Varro to mean the Nourisher, from the verb *alere*, to nourish, "because all things that are born are nourished from the earth". The fourth deity Rusor was explained by Varro to signify Reverser, because all things revert or revolve back again to the same place.[1]

The Earth-goddess (Tellus or Terra) associated with Ceres, the Corn-goddess. Sacrifices to the two goddesses at the festival of sowing.

Naturally enough the Earth-goddess Tellus or Terra was often associated with the Corn-goddess Ceres. The two are neatly compared and distinguished by Ovid, who says that the Corn-goddess makes the seeds to grow, while the Earth-goddess gives them a place in which to grow.[2] Hence certain sacrifices were offered to them jointly. One such sacrifice took place at the festival of sowing. The most approved time for the winter sowing was from the autumnal equinox in September till the winter solstice in December.[3] The festival of sowing followed in January, after the seed had been committed to the ground,[4] and its aim was no doubt to foster the growth of the seedlings.[5] No fixed day was appointed for it in the calendar; it was a moveable feast, the time for which varied from year to year with the state of the season and the weather.[6] The day for the beginning of the festival was appointed in each year by the pontiffs.[7] The offering to the two goddesses consisted of spelt and the inward parts of a sow big with young.[8] The festival comprised two days which were separated from each other, curiously enough, by an interval of seven days. The first of the two days was dedicated to the Earth-goddess Tellus or Terra, the second was dedicated to the Corn-

[1] Varro, quoted by Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 23, "*Altori quare? Quod ex terra, inquit, aluntur omnia quae nata sunt. Rusori quare? Quod rursus, inquit, cuncta eodem revolvuntur*". As to these names, see G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 333, who prefers to connect Rusor with the same root as *ruma*, *rumen*, *Rumina*.

[2] Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 673 *sq.*, "*Officium commune Ceres et Terra tuentur: Haec praebet causam frugibus, illa locum*". Two lines before the poet used *Tellusque Cereque* in precisely the same sense as *Ceres et Terra*, thus proving that he regarded *Tellus* and *Terra* as synonymous.

[3] Varro, *Rerum rusticarum libri tres*, i. 34; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 201-204; *Geoponica*, ii. 14.

[4] Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 657-662.

[5] Festus, *De verborum significatione*, *s.v.* "Sementivae", p. 455, ed. Lindsay.

[6] Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 657-662; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iii. 6, ed. Bekker; Macrobius, *Saturn*, i. 16. 6; Festus, *De verborum significatione*, *s.v.* "Conceptivae", p. 55, ed. Lindsay.

[7] Varro, *De lingua latina*, vi. 26.

[8] Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 671 *sq.*

goddess Ceres.[1] On this second day, probably, the Flamen Cerialis offered to Earth (*Tellus*) and Ceres jointly a sacrifice, at which he invoked the help of twelve subordinate deities, each concerned with a special department of agriculture, and all of them together making up a complete cycle of the operations of husbandry, from the first breaking up of the fallow under the plough to the reaping, gathering into the barn, and the taking of corn from the granary.[2] These twelve lubbardly fiends, with their uncouth names, furnish a good instance of the minute scrupulosity of the Roman religious mind, which, far from content with committing the direction of affairs to a few great gods, relieved these overworked deities of a great part of their functions by installing a complete bureaucracy of minor divinities, whose special business it was to superintend the whole circle of human life down to its pettiest and most seemingly insignificant details.[3] Indeed, deities multiplied at such a rate that a Roman philosopher calculated that the population of heaven exceeded that of earth,[4] and a Roman wench complained that she could not walk the streets in pursuit of business without knocking up against a god much oftener than against a man.[5] Even the twelve minor divinities, whom the Flamen Cerialis invoked at the festival of sowing, did not suffice to bring the corn to maturity; they were all males, and Augustine furnishes us with a supplementary list of

Twelve subordinate deities of agriculture.

Supplementary list of female divinities charged with fostering the growth of corn.

[1] Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 6 ed. Bekker. According to this author, the first day was dedicated to Demeter in her character of Earth (Δήμητρι, οἷον τῇ γῇ τῇ ὑποδεχομένῃ τοὺς καρποὺς), but we must correct this statement by the evidence of Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 671, "*Placentur frugum matres Tellusque Ceresque*". So Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 334.

[2] Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 21, "*Fabius Pictor hos deos enumerat, quos invocat Flamen, sacrum Cereale faciens Telluri et Cereri: Vervactorem, Redaratorem* [so we must read with Salmasius for the MS. *Reparatorem*], *Imporcitorem, Insitorem, Obaratorem, Occatorem, Sarritorem, Subruncinatorem, Messorem, Convectorem, Conditorem, Promitorem*". Compare G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 334. Servius, or his authority Fabius Pictor, does not mention which of the Flamens was charged with the duty of offering this sacrifice to Earth and Ceres, but we may safely conclude that it was the Flamen Cerialis, whose existence at Rome is known from at least one inscription. See H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 1447, compare No. 9011.

[3] These minor divinities were the *Di Indigites*. For a formidable list of them see R. Peter, *s.v.* "Indigitamenta", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 129 *sqq.*

[4] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 16.

[5] Petronius, *Satyricon*, 16.

female divinities, whose duty it was to assist the growth of the corn at every stage of its development; it would task a professional botanist to explain the nice distinctions between the various functions which they discharged. The Christian Father makes merry over the really excessive exuberance of the Roman deities, remarking, that while one man sufficed to act as door-porter, no less than three gods were required to do the same job, one of them being told off to look after the door, a second to take care of the hinges, and a third to keep the threshold in order.[1] To such a degree of perfection did the Romans carry the principle of the division of labour in the sphere of religion.

The Fordicidia: sacrifice of pregnant cows to the Earth-goddess on April 15th.

Another sacrifice for the crops was offered to the Earth-goddess Tellus on the fifteenth of April. The victim sacrificed was a cow in calf; such a victim was called a *bos forda*; hence the festival bore the name of *Fordicidia*, that is, the Killing of the Pregnant Cow.[2] These victims were sacrificed in all the thirty wards (*curiae*) of Rome and also by the pontiffs on the Capitol.[3] No doubt a victim big with young was chosen with reference to the crops, in order that, by a sort of sympathetic magic, Earth's womb might teem with increase and yield an abundant harvest. A curious piece of ritual was performed at this sacrifice. The unborn calves were torn from the wombs of their mothers and burned to ashes, and these ashes, mixed with the blood of a horse and bean-stalks, were afterwards used by the Senior Vestal Virgin to purify the people at the shepherds' festival of the Parilia, which fell six days later, on the twenty-first of April. On that day people repaired to the temple of Vesta, where the Senior Vestal distributed to them from the altar the mingled ashes, blood, and beanstalks. These they carried away to be used in the fumigations which formed a notable part of the rites. The poet Ovid, who describes the ritual in his valuable work on the Roman calendar, tells us that he himself

[1] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv. 8.

[2] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 629-634; Varro, *De lingua latina*, vi. 15; Festus, *De verborum significatione*, *s.v.* "Fordicis", p. 74, ed. Lindsay. Another form of the name of the festival was *Fordicalia*, *Hordicalia*, or *Hordicidia*, the two latter being derived from *horda*, a different dialectical form of *forda*, "pregnant". See Varro, *Rerum rusticarum libri tres*, ii. 5. 6; Festus, *s.v.* "Horda," p. 91, ed. Lindsay; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 49, ed. Bekker.

[3] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 635 *sq.*

often came away from the altar with a handful of ashes and beanstalks.[1] The blood, which was mingled with the ashes of the unborn calves to serve in fumigation, had also a curious history. On the fifteenth day of October in every year a chariot-race was run in the Field of Mars, and the right-hand horse of the victorious chariot was sacrificed to Mars for the good of the crops. The animal's tail was then cut off and carried by a runner at full speed to the King's House in the Forum, where it arrived still reeking, and was held so that the blood dripped on the hearth or altar.[2] It was this blood, shed just six months before, and now clotted and dry, which added its own purificatory virtue to that of the ashes of the calves and the beanstalks. The vulgar opinion was that the Romans, as descendants of the Trojans, sacrificed the horse out of revenge, because Troy had been betrayed and captured through the stratagem of the Wooden Horse.[3] On this the hard-headed Polybius observed sarcastically that by the same token all the barbarians must be descendants of the Trojans, since all, or almost all, of them sacrificed a horse before going to war, and drew omens from its death agony.[4] The true significance of the rite as designed to contribute to the fertility of the soil is intimated by the statement that the sacrifice was offered for the sake of the crops, and that the severed head of the horse was encircled with a necklace of loaves.[5]

The blood of the October horse mixed with the sacrifices.

But while a cow in calf was sacrificed to the Earth-goddess at the Fordicidia in April, her regular victim was a sow big with young.[6] We have seen that such victims were sacrificed to her at the festival of sowing and at the Secular

Pregnant sows the regular victims offered to the Earth-goddess.

[1] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 637-640, 721-735.

[2] Festus, *De verborum significatione*, *svv.* "October equus" and "Panibus", pp. 190, 191, 246, ed. Lindsay; Polybius, xii. 4B; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 97. Compare W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strassburg, 1884), pp. 156 *sqq.*; *The Golden Bough*, Part V. *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii. 42 *sqq.* Plutarch wrongly places the sacrifice on the Ides of December (13th December) instead of on the Ides of October (15th October). The name of the sacrifice (the October horse) would be conclusive against this date, and the exact day of October (the Ides) is mentioned by Festus (p. 246, ed. Lindsay).

[3] Festus, *De significatione verborum*, *s.v.* "October equus", p. 190, ed. Lindsay; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 97.

[4] Polybius, xii. 4B.

[5] Festus, *De verborum significatione*, *s.v.* "Panibus", p. 246, ed. Lindsay.

[6] Festus, *De verborum significatione*, *s.v.* "Plena sue", p. 274, ed. Lindsay, p. 238, ed. Müller; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 22.

Games.[1] The true reason for sacrificing pregnant sows and in general pregnant victims to the Earth-goddess was not that the pig is an animal destructive of the crops,[2] but that, as I have already pointed out in the case of the Fordicidia, a pregnant victim is supposed to communicate its own fertility to the ground and so to ensure a good harvest.[3]

The Earth-goddess apparently associated with the Corn-goddess Ceres in a sacrifice at harvest.

Another occasion on which the Earth-goddess appears to have been associated with the Corn-goddess Ceres was at a sacrifice offered every year before the reaping began, or perhaps rather before it was lawful to partake of the new fruits. The victim was a sow which received a special name (*porca praecidanea*), referring to its slaughter before the harvest, or before the eating of the new corn.[4] It is true that the writers who mention the sacrifice of a sow at this season speak of it as offered to the Corn-goddess Ceres alone, without any mention of the Earth-goddess; but on the other hand we are told on the high authority of Varro that a sow bearing the same title (*porca praecidanea*) must be sacrificed jointly to the Earth-goddess (*Tellus*) and Ceres by an heir when the person to whom he succeeded had not been duly buried; otherwise the family would be ceremonially polluted.[5] This latter custom is mentioned also by two of our authorities (Aulus Gellius and Festus) who record the sacrifice of the sow before harvest; but again they mention only Ceres as the goddess to whom the sacrifice was offered. Festus says that if any person had not paid funeral rites to a dead man by casting a clod on his body, he had to sacrifice a sow (*porca praecidanea*) to Ceres before he might taste the new corn of the harvest.[6] To the same

Sow sacrificed to the Earth-goddess and Ceres by an heir when the person to whom he succeeded had not been duly buried.

[1] Above, pp. 328, 330.

[2] This seems to be the reason assigned by Festus (*De verborum significatione*), in a mutilated passage restored by K. O. Müller, p. 238; compare *id.*, p. 274, ed. Lindsay.

[3] This is recognized by Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 22, "*Telluri gravidas atque fetas ob honorem fecunditatis ipsius*".

[4] Cato, *De agri cultura*, cxxxiv. 1; Aulus Gellius, iv. 6. 8; Festus, *De verborum significatione*, pp. 242, 243, 250, ed. Lindsay.

[5] Varro, *De vita Populi Romani*, lib. iii., quoted by Nonius Marcellus, *De compendiosa doctrina*, *s.v.* "Praecidaneum", p. 173, ed. Quicherat, "*Quod humatus non sit, heredi porca praecidanea suscipienda Telluri et Cereri: aliter familia pura non est*".

[6] Festus, *De verborum significatione*, p. 250, ed. Lindsay, "*Praecidanea agna vocabatur, quae ante alias caedebatur. Item porca, quae Cereri mactabatur ab eo, qui mortuo justa non fecisset, id est glebam non objecisset, quia mos erat eis id facere, priusquam novas fruges gustarent*".

effect Aulus Gellius declares that the sacrifice of the sow (*porca praecidanea*) to Ceres was an expiation incumbent on persons who had failed to perform the usual purificatory rites after a death in the family, and that this sacrifice had to be offered by them before they might partake of the new fruits.[1] Thus explained, the sacrifice of the pig (*porca praecidanea*) becomes perfectly intelligible. It is a widespread view, all over the world, that the first-fruits of harvest are holy, and that consequently they may not be eaten by persons in a state of ceremonial pollution.[2] But a man who has been rendered unclean by a death in his family, and has not taken the proper steps to cleanse himself and his relations by performing the funeral ceremonies incumbent on him, is held to be in a state of virulent pollution, and consequently cannot without gross impiety partake of the new corn until he has first appeased the Corn-goddess by the sacrifice of a sow. Hence in this application the term *porca praecidanea* is a sow sacrificed before eating the new corn[3] rather than a sow sacrificed before reaping the new corn.[4] But, as we have seen, Varro tells us that in such cases the sow was sacrificed to the Earth-goddess as well as to the Corn-goddess, and this also is perfectly intelligible; for the Earth-goddess, who receives the dead into her bosom, naturally resents any omission of funeral rites as disrespectful to herself as well as to the departed, and naturally calls for an expiation in the shape of the sacrifice of a sow.[5]

Sacrifices perhaps offered to the Earth-goddess after an earthquake.

Another occasion on which a sacrifice was perhaps offered to the Earth-goddess was after an earthquake. It is said that during an earthquake a voice was once heard from the temple of Juno on the Capitol commanding an expiatory sacrifice of a pregnant sow,[6] and a pregnant sow, as we have

[1] Aulus Gellius, iv. 6. 8, "*Porca etiam praecidanea appellata, quam piaculi gratia ante fruges novas captas immolare Cereri mos erat, si qui familiam funestam aut non purgaverant, aut aliter eam rem, quam oportuerat, procuraverant*".

[2] *The Golden Bough*, Part V. *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii. 48 *sqq.*

[3] Festus, p. 250, ed. Lindsay, "*priusquam novas fruges gustarent*".

[4] Festus, p. 243, ed. Lindsay, "*antequam novam frugem praeciderent*"; Aulus Gellius, iv. 6. 8, "*ante fruges novas captas*".

[5] On this sacrifice, compare G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 335-336.

[6] Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 101.

seen, was the regular victim offered to the Earth-goddess. Again, while the Romans were fighting the Picentes in the year 268 B.C., a shock of earthquake was felt by the contending armies, and in consequence the Roman Consul, P. Sempronius Sophus, vowed and built a temple of the Earth-goddess Tellus at Rome.[1] Yet on the other hand we have it on the authority of Varro that in the case of earthquakes the Romans observed all the scrupulous caution which characterized them in religious matters. When an earthquake took place, they proclaimed a holy day or holy days, but refrained from announcing, as they usually did, the name of the god in whose honour the holy days were to be kept, and this they did for fear that they might name the wrong god and so involve the people in sin. Further, if any person, whether wittingly or unwittingly, desecrated one of these holy days the sacrilege had to be expiated by a sacrifice; but not knowing who the offended deity was, they did not dare to name him or her, but contented themselves with directing the sacrifice "whether to god or goddess", leaving it to the deity to whom it properly belonged to claim his own. Such was the rule laid down by the pontiffs, the highest authorities on questions of religion, and the reason alleged for the rule was that they did not know what force or what god or goddess caused an earthquake.[2] Thus it is by no means clear whether a pregnant sow was regularly offered after an earthquake, and even if it was so, it must still remain doubtful whether any part of the victim was formally assigned to the Earth-goddess.

The temple of the Earth-goddess on the Esquiline.

So far as we know the temple built for the Earth-goddess in consequence of the earthquake of 268 B.C. was the only one she ever possessed in Rome. It stood in the quarter called the Carinae, on the western slope of the Esquiline Hill, above the Forum; the house of the Pompeys was not far off.[3] The exact site has not been discovered, but it is believed to have been somewhere in the neighbourhood, though not immediately close to, the church of San Pietro in Vincoli,

[1] Florus, *Epitoma*, i. 14.
[2] Aulus Gellius, ii. 28. 2-3.
[3] Suetonius, *De grammaticis*, 15; Servius, on Virgil, viii. 361; Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* viii. 79. 3.

which contains the famous seated statue of Moses by Michael Angelo.[1] Cicero's brother Quintus lived in the same quarter;[2] he seems to have undertaken to restore or embellish the temple. His statue was set up in front of it by his brother the orator.[3] In Cicero's lifetime part of the sacred area of the temple appears to have been appropriated by a private individual, who built himself a vestibule to his house on the spot; and for some reason the guilt of the sacrilege was apparently laid at the door of Cicero by his deadly enemy Publius Clodius. The season happened to be bad, the fields were barren, corn was scarce and dear, and in defending himself against the charge of impiety Cicero confesses to have felt misgivings as to whether the Earth-goddess had received her dues, all the more because the soothsayers reported that in the Campagna there had been heard a mysterious noise, accompanied by a dreadful clash of arms, which was interpreted to signify that the Earth-goddess and other deities were clamouring for their arrears.[4] The day after Caesar had been murdered, Mark Antony summoned the Senate to meet in the temple of Earth because it was close to his house and he dared not go down to the Senate-house, situated as it was beneath the Capitol, where the assassins had taken refuge and were mustering the professional cut-throats known as gladiators to defend them. The messengers with the summons went round to the houses of the senators in the course of the night, and the senators met in the temple while the grey dawn was breaking over the city. Among the speakers on that memorable occasion were Mark Antony himself and Cicero.[5] In the fierce street-fighting between the troops of Marius and Sulla, when the soldiers of Sulla, forcing their way into the city, were received with volleys of stones and tiles from the multitude perched on the house-tops, the general replied by ordering his men to set fire to the houses and leading the way himself with

Meeting of the Senate in the temple of Earth after the murder of Caesar.

The temple of Earth in the civil wars.

[1] O. Richter, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*[2] (Munich, 1901), pp. 323-325; H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, i. 3, bearbeitet von Ch. Huelsen (Berlin, 1907), pp. 323-326.

[2] Cicero, *Ad Quintum fratrem Epist.* ii. 3. 7.

[3] Cicero, *Ad Quintum fratrem Epist.* iii. 1. 14.

[4] Cicero, *De haruspicum responso*, x. 20, xiv. 31.

[5] Appian, *Bell. Civ.* ii. 18. 126 *sqq.*; Dio Cassius, xliv. 22 *sqq.*; Cicero, *Philipp.* i. 13. 31; *id.*, *Epist. ad Atticum*, xvi. 14. 1.

a blazing torch in his hand. Marius was driven back to the temple of Earth, where he vainly endeavoured to make a last stand, calling on the slaves to rally round him and to win their freedom by the sword.[1] Many years later, when the tide of civil war had ebbed far from the capital, though the issue had still to be fought out on distant battle-fields and seas, the aged antiquary Varro, then in his eightieth year, ascended the hill and passing along the now peaceful streets entered the temple of Earth. It was the time of the sowing festival, and he came at the invitation of the sacristan, probably to take part in some rite appropriate to the holy day. The sacristan himself was absent, but in the temple Varro met several friends who had also come at the invitation of the same official. He found them contemplating a picture of Italy painted on one of the walls of the edifice. Awaiting the return of the sacristan, they sat down on benches and fell into a discourse very appropriate to the season and the place, for it turned on the fertility of Italy, in which they agreed that it surpassed all the rest of the earth. For what spelt, they asked, was like the Campanian? what wheat like the Apulian? what wine like the Falernian? what olive-oil like the Venafran? could the vineyards of Phrygia vie with those of Italy? did the cornfields of Argos equal the cornfields of Italy? And as for fruit trees, were they not planted so thick in Italy that the whole country resembled an orchard?[2] This patriotic panegyric on their native land, put in the mouth of a knot of old gentlemen discoursing peacefully on a holiday at the temple of the Earth-goddess, may perhaps have suggested to Virgil his famous praise of Italy,[3] which is undoubtedly one of the noblest expressions of the love of country ever penned by mortal man.

Varro's dialogue in the temple of Earth.

In her temple on the Esquiline the Earth-goddess was annually worshipped along with the Corn-goddess Ceres on the thirteenth day of December, which seems to have been the anniversary of the foundation of the temple. Apparently the worship took the form of a *lectisternium*, in which the

The Earth-goddess annually worshipped on December 13th.

[1] Plutarch, *Sulla*, 9.

[2] Varro, *Rerum rusticarum libri tres*, i. 2. 1-7. That Varro was in his eightieth year when he wrote this treatise is mentioned by himself in the preface (*op. cit.* i. 1. 1).

[3] Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 136 *sqq.*

deities were represented reclining on couches and partaking of a banquet.[1]

The worship of the Roman Earth-goddess Tellus or Terra appears to have been widespread in the provinces, from Spain in the west to Dalmatia in the east, and southward to Numidia. But the inscriptions which attest the diffusion of the worship furnish little or no information as to the nature of the rites.[2] At Rudnik, to the south of Belgrade, there was a temple of Mother Earth (*Terra Mater*) appropriately situated at the entrance to some quarries or mines; it was rebuilt in the name of the Emperor Septimius Severus by the procurator Cassius Ligurinus.[3] Near Murcia, in Spain, a dedication to Mother Earth (*Terra Mater*) has been found, surmounted by an image of the goddess. She is represented as a woman of mature age, seated and holding in her left hand a cornucopia, in her right hand a saucer, while on her knees various fruits are heaped up in a fold of her robe.[4] Such a representation lays stress on the character of the goddess as a deity of fertility; no wonder that as such she was sometimes confused with the Corn-goddess Ceres. In Africa the worship of the Earth-goddess seems to have been particularly popular. At Cuicol in Numidia the city built a temple to her under the title of Tellus Genitrix, which is equivalent to Mother Earth, and in the temple was an image of the goddess, presented by a certain Titus Julius Honoratus, Pontiff and Perpetual Flamen.[5] Other temples of the Earth-goddess are known to have existed in Africa, as at Vaga and Cirta; the one at Vaga was restored in the year 2 B.C.[6] Between Zama and Uzappa there was a temple of the Goddess Earth (*dea Tellus*), which was rebuilt by one of the successors of Marcus Aurelius. The existence of a priesthood, and consequently of a public

The worship of the Earth-goddess in the provinces.

[1] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.[2] p. 237 (*Fasti Praenestini*), with Mommsen's Commentary, pp. 336 *sq.*; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 32. Arnobius mentions only a *lectisternium* of Ceres, and he omits to give the name of the month in which the ceremony took place, though he mentions the day of the month (the Ides). His omissions are supplied by the engraved calendars (*fasti*).

[2] J. Toutain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'Empire Romain*, i. (Paris, 1907) pp. 338 *sqq.*

[3] J. Toutain, *op. cit.* i. 339.

[4] J. Toutain, *l.c.*

[5] J. Toutain, *l.c.*; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 3957.

[6] J. Toutain, *op. cit.* i. 339 *sq.*

worship, of the goddess is attested by inscriptions at Madaura and Thubursicum in Numidia. In both these towns the priestly office was discharged by priestesses.[1] It has been remarked that traces of the worship of the Earth-goddess in Africa are found only in the interior of the province and in fertile regions, where the population had certainly been sedentary and agricultural before the Roman conquest. The natural inference is that the cult of the Earth-goddess had deep roots in the soil of Africa.[2]

The Earth-goddess in relation to the dead.

The last aspect of the Roman Earth-goddess which here calls for notice is her relation to the dead. She was often coupled with the deified spirits of the departed (the *di manes*). When the news of the death of Tiberius was made known at Rome, the populace were wild with joy and ran about the streets shouting, "To the Tiber with Tiberius", while others prayed to Mother Earth and the deified dead to give the deceased tyrant a place among the damned in hell.[3] Similar pious prayers were put up to the same deities by the Roman mob for the soul of the Emperor Gallienus.[4] The grave would seem to have been naturally enough the place where Mother Earth and the deified spirits of the dead were worshipped together. An epitaph on the tomb of three members of the great Cornelian house contains a dedication to these divine spirits and to Mother Earth.[5] And addresses to both Mother Earth and the deified dead often occur in sepulchral inscriptions.[6]

Custom of devoting the army of an enemy to the Earth-goddess and the spirits of the dead.

But the most solemn of all occasions when these deities were conjoined was when a Roman general devoted himself to them in order by his death to procure the victory of his own men and the destruction of the enemy's army. Two instances of this devotion are recorded in Roman history. In the year 340 B.C. the Roman and the Latin armies were encamped over against each other in the neighbourhood of Capua. The Roman army was under the command of the two consuls P. Decius Mus and

[1] J. Toutain, *op. cit.* i. 340.

[2] J. Toutain, *op. cit.* i. 340 *sq.*

[3] Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 75.

[4] Sextus Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, xxxiii. 31.

[5] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 8008.

[6] G. Wissowa, *s.v.* "Tellus", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, v. 336 *sq.*

T. Manlius Torquatus. It was the eve of battle. In the dead of night both consuls dreamed the same dream. They seemed to see the figure of a man of more than mortal stature and of more than human majesty, who said that the general of the one side and the army of the other were doomed to fall victims to the deified spirits of the dead and to Mother Earth, and that victory would rest with the side whose general devoted himself and the army of the enemy to death. In the morning the consuls compared their dreams, and resolved that, to avert the anger of the gods, sacrifices should be offered, but that if the omens drawn from the victims should be found to tally with the visions of the night, one of the two consuls should comply with the decree of fate. The sacrifices were offered, and the omens tallied exactly with the dreams. So a council of war was held; the situation was clearly explained to the officers by the commanders, and it was decided not to alarm the soldiers by the voluntary and public death of one of the consuls in front of the whole army, but to abide the issue of battle; then, if either wing of the Roman army gave way before the enemy, the consul in command of that wing was to devote himself to death for the Roman people and army, and rushing into the midst of the enemy to seek and find death.[1] The thing was done. The battle took place near the foot of Vesuvius. Before the consuls led out the army to the fight, a sacrifice was offered and the auspices were taken. The soothsayer, on inspecting the entrails of the victim, informed the consul Decius that the omens were ill for him, but well for his colleague Manlius. "If they be well for him", replied Decius, "then all is well." He commanded the left wing; Manlius commanded the right. On the left wing the front Roman line gave way under a charge of the Latins and fell back on the second line. Their commander, the consul Decius, called for the pontiff, and bade him recite the form of words by which a general devoted himself to death for his army. The pontiff complied, and Decius repeated the words after him, in the attitude prescribed by ritual, standing on a javelin with his head muffled and his hand applied to his chin. Invoking all the Roman gods

The consul P. Decius Mus thus devoted himself and the army of the enemy in 340 B.C.

[1] Livy, viii. 6. 8-13.

in due form, he prayed for the victory of the Roman arms and the destruction of the foe, concluding with a solemn dedication of himself and the army of the enemy to the Earth-goddess and the spirits of the dead. Then, having sent word to his colleague Manlius of what he had done, he leaped, sword in hand, on his horse, charged into the thickest of the enemy and was cut to pieces. But from the spot where he fell, consternation spread like wild-fire in the Latin ranks. Their whole army was soon in full flight, and the battle ended in a complete victory for the Romans. But the struggle lasted till nightfall, and in the darkness it was impossible to discover the dead body of Decius. Next day it was found, pierced with many wounds, where the enemy's dead lay thickest; and his colleague paid him funeral honours worthy of the death he had died.[1]

Livy on the ritual of devotion.

The historian Livy, after describing the devotion and death of Decius, adds some curious details of the ancient Roman ritual which had long passed out of use and almost of memory in his own day. He tells us that in devoting the army of the enemy to destruction a Roman commander was free to devote to death any soldier of his own army instead of himself, and that if the soldier so devoted fell in the battle, all was well; but that if he survived, a statue seven feet high or more had to be buried in the earth and a piacular sacrifice offered, and on the ground where the statue was buried, no Roman magistrate might set foot. Clearly the statue was offered to the Earth-goddess and the spirits of the dead as a substitute for the living victim of which they had been deprived by the escape of the soldier from the battle. But if the general devoted himself, as Decius did, and nevertheless survived, he was thenceforth incapable of offering any sacrifice, whether public or private, apparently because, having been devoted to the the infernal powers, he carried the taint of death about with him, and would consequently defile any religious rite at which he might venture to assist. Lastly, Livy tells us that the javelin, on which the general stood when he pronounced the formula of devotion, might not without sacrilege fall into the hands of the enemy; but that if they did contrive

[1] Livy, viii. 9-10; Valerius Maximus, i. 7. 3.

to get possession of it, the sacrilege had to be expiated by the sacrifice of a sheep and a bull to Mars.[1]

Similar death of the consul P. Decius, son of P. Decius Mus.

Forty-five years after the heroic death of P. Decius Mus, his son and namesake, the consul P. Decius, died a similar death in a desperate battle with the united forces of the Samnites, Umbrians, Etruscans, and Gauls. He, like his father, devoted himself and the army of the enemy to the Earth-goddess and the spirits of the dead; he, like his father, charged on horseback into the thickest of the foe and found a soldier's death in their midst; and his mangled body, like that of his father, was borne from the field by his weeping soldiers to receive the last honours that a grateful country could pay to his memory.[2]

[1] Livy, viii. 10. 11-14, viii. 11. 1.

[2] Livy, x. 27-29.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORSHIP OF EARTH AMONG NON-ARYAN PEOPLES OF ANTIQUITY

§ 1. *The Worship of Earth among the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians*

Enlil, the Babylonian Earth-god, an ancient Sumerian deity who had his seat at Nippur.

WE have seen that in Babylonian mythology the Earth-god Enlil held a high rank as a member of the great trinity, of which the other members were Anu, the god of the sky, and Ea, the god of the abyss of water beneath the earth.[1] But though Enlil is commonly designated by modern writers as the Earth-god without qualification,[2] it seems very doubtful whether from the first he occupied that dignified position. There is no doubt that originally he was the local god of Nippur, the religious centre of Babylonia. His name is Sumerian and means Lord of the Wind or of the Storm, which points to his being a god of the air rather than of the earth. The Semites, in adopting his worship, gave him the Semitic name of Bel, equivalent to Baal, which merely means Lord or Master. But at Nippur he seems to have been never known by any other name than Enlil or Ellil; hence we may infer that he was an ancient Sumerian deity and that at Nippur his worship always remained essentially

[1] See above, pp. 65 *sq.*

[2] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 10, 14; M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 140, 147; S. Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 17, 23; *id.*, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 391, 392. As to the worship of Enlil (Ellil) or Bel, as the Semites called him, see M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 52-55; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das alte Testament*[3] (Berlin, 1903), pp. 354-356; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2. pp. 407, 421 *sq.*, 440 *sq.*, 519, 559 *sq.*; P. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne* (Paris, 1910), p. 70; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (Heidelberg, 1920–1925), ii. 6-8.

Sumerian.[1] Indeed, he was the chief national god of the Sumerians; his temple at Nippur was the principal shrine of the whole country, and the holy city itself may be called the Sumerian Rome.[2] And as the Sumerian city of Nippur was the Rome of Babylonia, so the ancient Sumerian language remained the holy tongue of Babylonia even after it had long been superseded by a Semitic speech in all the usages of daily life, just as Latin has remained the holy tongue of the Catholic Church for centuries after it was displaced by its daughter tongues, the Romance languages. Down to a late time the original Sumerian texts continued to be copied and accompanied by Semitic translations, when Sumerian had become a dead language; nay, it was a rule to add Sumerian versions even to original Semitic texts.[3]

The ruins of Nippur.

In their origin the great cities of Babylonia were little more than collections of rude huts built of reeds cut in the surrounding marshes; but in time these frail structures gave place to more substantial buildings of clay and sun-dried brick. From the very first it would seem that the shrine of the local god played an important part in the foundation and subsequent development of each centre of population; it formed as it were the nucleus or germ about which a town tended to grow both by the natural multiplication of the inhabitants and by the aggregation of dwellers from the surrounding country, who would be attracted to it, partly by the security afforded by its walls and the strength of its natural position, partly by the reputation of the deity, under whose powerful protection they hoped to place themselves. Such in outline would seem to have been the early history of Nippur. It was built on a group of mounds rising like an island from the dead flat of the marshes. The site, still known by its ancient name in the slightly altered form of

[1] As to the name Enlil, "Lord of the Wind", see H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* pp. 354 *sq.*; E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. pp. 407, 421; P. Dhorme, *La Religion Assyro-Babylonienne*, pp. 70 *sq.*; L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, p. 52; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 391; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 6. But according to M. Jastrow (*op. cit.* p. 53), "Primarily, the ideograph Lil is used to designate a demon in general, and En-lil is therefore the 'chief demon'".

[2] E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. pp. 421, 440 *sq.*; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 391 *sq.* On Nippur as the religious centre of Babylonia, see L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad* (London, 1916), pp. 85, 107, 297.

[3] E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. p. 521.

Niffer or Nuffar, is marked by the ruins which in recent years have been investigated and excavated by American scholars. The mounds, once occupied by a thriving population, have long been deserted; and, like the sites of many other ancient cities in Babylonia and Assyria, no modern town or village is built upon them or in their immediate neighbourhood. In summer the surrounding marshes consist of pools of water connected by a network of channels meandering through the reed-beds; but in spring, when the snows have melted in the Taurus and the mountains of Kurdistan, the flood-water converts the marshes into a great lagoon, and in the vast level expanse nothing meets the eye but here and there a solitary date-palm and a few hamlets built on knolls that scarcely rise above the waste of waters.[1] Of this site of the ancient city, now lying desolate, the words of the prophet may seem to have come true: "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces."[2]

The sanctuary of Enlil at Nippur.

The sanctuary of Enlil occupied the centre of the ancient city, and was built on an artificial mound to prevent it from being swamped when the floods were out. An ancient plan of the temple, drawn on a clay tablet which is believed to date from the first half of the second millennium before our era, enables us to form a fairly accurate notion of the general arrangement of the sanctuary, which bore the name of E-Kur. It was surrounded by an irregular wall and cut by a canal or sluice, on one side of which stood the store-houses of the temple. The most striking feature of the sacred area was the great temple-tower (*ziggurat*), built of bricks and rising in the form of a pyramid, with a ramp winding round and up it to the summit. Such temple-towers, forming conspicuous landmarks in the flat country of

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 84-86.
[2] Isaiah xiii. 20-22.

Babylonia, perhaps gave rise to the legend of the Tower of Babel. The great one at Nippur is known from inscriptions to have been built by Ur-Engur, the first king of Ur of the Chaldees, who reigned about 2400 B.C. In the treasure-chambers of the sanctuary were deposited the votive offerings of Sumerian kings and princes, particularly vases made of stone and bearing inscriptions.[1]

Images and titles of Enlil.

Clay figures of the god represent him in human form with long hair and beard. He wears a horned head-dress, the emblem of divinity. He bore the title of "the Great Mountain" (*kur-gal* in Sumerian, *shadû-rabû* in Assyrian) or "King of the Mountain-lands" (*lugal kurkura* in Sumerian, *bêl mâtati* in Assyrian); and *E-Kur*, the name of his temple at Nippur, means "House of the Mountain".[2] But the god was also known more simply as Lord or King of the Lands, probably in the sense of Lord or King of the whole Earth.[3] Further, he was styled the King of Heaven and Earth,[4] and the Father of the Gods.[5] Possessing dominion over the whole earth, he was able to confer it on his favourites. He also determined the fates, and as a symbol of this supreme power, which few gods could claim, he constantly carried the tablets of destiny. One morning, when he was washing himself, he incautiously took off his crown and laid it on a chair while he performed his ablutions. The storm-bird Zu seized the opportunity

Enlil and the tablets of destiny.

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 86-89; E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. pp. 415, 441; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 392. As to King Ur-Engur, see S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 435 *sqq.*, who calls him "the real champion of Sumer and Akkad, the organizer of its most brilliant period" (p. 435). "The emperors of Ur surpassed their predecessors in their reverence for Nippur. So great were the revenues in grain, fruit, live stock, and various offerings that a receiving-house was built on the Euphrates below Nippur, now the ruins of Drehem. Arabs have found many hundred tablets from temple archives, and nearly every collection in Europe, America, and the British Empire possesses some of these records" (*ib.* p. 437). According to Professor Langdon (*op. cit.* i.[2] 435, 658), Ur-Engur came to the throne in 2474 B.C. and reigned eighteen years.

[2] E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. p. 421; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 355; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 72; M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 56; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 392; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 7 *sq.* As to the horned head-dress, compare S. H. Langdon, *op. cit.* i.[2] 438.

[3] E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. p. 421; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 355; L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 101, 104, 194, 196 *sq.*, 198 *sq.*

[4] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, p. 128.

[5] E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. p. 445; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 72.

to purloin the tablets of destiny and so to rob the deity of his power. It cost Enlil much trouble to recover his stolen property. The story of the theft and the recovery is the theme of an epic poem.[1]

Enlil's wife Ninlil.

Side by side with Enlil was worshipped his wife Ninlil, a goddess of procreation and fertility, whose name is only a feminine form of Enlil. The Semites called her Belit, the feminine form of Bel, which, as we saw, was the Semitic name of her consort Enlil. She also bore the title of the Lady of Heaven and Earth, corresponding to the title of King of Heaven and Earth bestowed upon her husband. Further, she was akin to, and afterwards identified with, Nin-khar-sag, "the Lady of the Mountain", who was known as the Mother of the Gods and was believed to nourish princes with her holy milk. Yet the glory of Ninlil was dimmed by that of her husband Enlil; like most Babylonian goddesses she was only a pale reflection of her powerful Lord.[2]

Enlil's place in the Babylonian pantheon beside Anu and Ea.

Thus Enlil, from being merely the local god of Nippur, gradually rose to a position of supremacy as the deity of the whole habitable world. It was in virtue of this enhanced dignity that among the Semites he became known simply as Bel, that is Baal, the Lord or Master. As the god of the whole surface of the earth he took his place in the Babylonian pantheon beside Anu, the god of the sky, and Ea, the god of the subterranean waters.[3]

Enlil in a treaty between Lagash and Umma.

Evidence of the high rank accorded to Enlil among all the gods of Sumer is furnished by a treaty contracted between the neighbouring cities of Lagash and Umma in Southern Babylonia. There had been a dispute between them concerning the boundary line, and with the consent of both sides Mesilim, king of Kish, drew up a treaty of delimitation. The document has been discovered in modern times and is peculiarly interesting because it forcibly illustrates the theocratic sentiment of these early peoples, who conceived themselves to be under the immediate sway of

[1] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 7, 182.

[2] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 55 *sq.*; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 356; E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. 2. pp. 421 *sq.*: P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 73; L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 104, 294; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 8.

[3] M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 53; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 355; P. Dhorme, *op. cit.* pp. 71 *sq.*

their respective deities far more than under that of their human governors. In accordance with this view the rulers (*patesis*) of the two cities are not so much as named in the treaty; the dispute is supposed to have been settled by the gods, not by any mere mortal agents. The president of the peace conference was not a human king nor yet his prime minister; it was the great god Enlil in person, "the King of the Lands". On account of the unique position which he held among the deities of Babylonia, his authority was frankly acknowledged by the smaller divinities, the local gods of the other cities. Thus it was at his command that Ningirsu, the god of Lagash, and the city-god of Umma fixed the boundary. It is true that Mesilim, the king of Kish, is named in the treaty, but he only acted at the bidding of his own goddess Kadi, and his duties were merely those of a secretary; all that he had to do was to put down in writing the treaty which the gods themselves had drawn up. We could hardly have a more striking instance of the theocratic spirit which prevailed among the early inhabitants of Babylonia somewhere about three thousand years before our era. Like the Israelites at a much later date, these simple-minded folk regarded the gods as the real rulers of their cities. Human kings and governors (*patesis*) were nothing more than ministers or diplomatic agents appointed to carry out the divine will. Hence, when one city made war upon another city, it was not ostensibly because the two peoples owed each other a grudge; the reason, or at all events the pretext, alleged for hostilities was that the gods were at feud, and that therefore the worshippers were bound to support the sacred cause by fire and sword. But we may suspect that in such cases the gods were little more than fair masks to hide the foul passions of men. And in like manner, when the sword was sheathed, it was nominally for the gods to dictate the treaty of peace and for men to submit to it.[1]

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 100-102. Compare E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2. p. 445, who names Gishu instead of Umma as one of the two contracting cities. The date of King Mesilim is given by L. W. King (*op. cit.* Appendix II.) as somewhere before or about 3000 B.C.; by Meyer it is given as about 2850 B.C. Professor S. H. Langdon assigns him a much earlier date, about 3638 B.C. See *The Cam-*

The Sumerian conqueror Lugal-zaggisi ascribed all the glory of his conquests to Enlil.

Again, at a somewhat later period a strong testimony to the overruling power of the great god Enlil is borne by Lugal-zaggisi, lord of Umma, who, about the year 2800 B.C., subdued the whole of Sumer and won for himself a dominion as great as, if not greater than, any hitherto acquired by any Sumerian ruler of a city state, for it would seem to have stretched from the Persian Gulf (the Lower Sea) to the Mediterranean (the Upper Sea). The record of his conquests has been pieced together from the inscriptions engraved upon a number of fragments of vases, made of white calcite stalagmite, which Lugal-zaggisi had dedicated to Enlil and deposited as votive offerings at his great temple of E-kur in Nippur, where they were discovered in the course of the excavations carried out by the University of Pennsylvania. In these inscriptions the pious Sumerian king ascribes all the glory of his conquests to Enlil, just as a pious Israelitish king would ascribe all the glory of his conquests to Jehovah.[1] Thus King Lugal-zaggisi says: "When the god Enlil, the King of the Lands, had bestowed upon Lugal-zaggisi the kingdom of the land, and had granted him success in the eyes of the land, and when his might had cast the lands down, and he had conquered them from the rising of the sun unto the setting of the same, at that time he made straight his path from the Lower Sea over the Euphrates and the Tigris unto the Upper Sea".[2]

Prayer of King Lugal-zaggisi to Enlil.

Further, in these inscriptions King Lugal-zaggisi has left on record that he dedicated the vases to Enlil, after making due offerings of loaves in Nippur and pouring a libation of pure water. Then he adds a dedicatory prayer,

bridge Ancient History, i.², 368 *sq.* According to Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, "It is not possible at present to assign an exact date to the reign of Mesilim, and of his works at Kish nothing is known. . . . The evidence which Langdon has collected proves, he thinks, that Kish was the oldest capital of Sumer and Akkad, and that it maintained control of the entire land for longer periods, and more often, than any other City-State before the coming of Sargon, who removed his seat of royalty from Kish to Agade. The founders of Kish were undoubtedly Sumerians. Sargon, the Semite, became king of Kish because the god Enlil slew 'Kish like the bull of heaven'." See Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, Second Edition (London, 1925), p. 257.

[1] Compare King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 44-49.

[2] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 193 *sq.* Compare S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.², 402 *sq.*, who dates the rise of Lugal-Zaggisi about 2897 B.C.

beseeching the deity to grant life to himself, peace to his country, and a large army. His prayer for these blessings runs as follows: "May Enlil, the King of the Lands, pronounce my prayer to Ana, his beloved father! To my life may he add life! May he cause the lands to dwell in security! Warriors as numerous as the grass may he grant me in abundance! Of the celestial folds may he take care! May he look with kindness on the land of Sumer! May the gods not alter the good destiny they have assigned to me! May I always be the shepherd, who leads his flock!"[1]

Commemorative offerings of kings to Enlil at Nippur.

Other kings commemorated their victories in inscriptions engraved on stone vases, which they dedicated as thank-offerings to Enlil at Nippur. Some of these vases were made of white calcite stalagmite, others of dark brown sandstone, and others of dark brown tufa or igneous rock. In the land of Sumer, formed of alluvial soil, stone is a rare commodity; and vases made of it were fitting offerings at the shrine of Enlil among the marshes.[2]

Devotion of two kings of Ur to Enlil of Nippur.

At a later time two kings of Ur, by name Bur-Sin and his son Gimil-Sin, manifested their devotion to Enlil of Nippur in many ways. Both of them fully recognized the importance of the central shrine at Nippur and laid stress on Enlil's position at the head of the Babylonian pantheon. Both of them dedicated offerings to the god at his great temple of E-kur; and both of them publicly acknowledged that to him they owed their elevation to the throne of Ur. Thus in the inscriptions Bur-Sin's regular titles are generally preceded by the phrase, "whose name Enlil has pronounced in Nippur"; while his son Gimil-Sin describes himself as "the beloved of Enlil", "whom Enlil has chosen as his heart's beloved", or "whom Enlil in his heart has chosen to be the shepherd of the land and of the four quarters". From inscriptions found at Nippur we know that Bur-Sin enlarged the great temple of E-Kur, and also built a storehouse for offerings of honey, butter, and wine, while his third year was dated by the construction of a great throne in

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 198 *sq.* Compare E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2. p. 458.

[2] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 165 *sq.*, 201 *sq.*

honour of En-lil. The king's son and successor, Gimil-Sin, appears to have been equally zealous in his devotion to the shrine; for out of his short reign two years take their titles from the setting up of a great sculptured slab and the building of a sacred boat, both offerings being dedicated to the glory of Enlil and his wife Ninlil.[1]

The titles of Enlil of Nippur afterwards assumed by Marduk of Babylon.

When the centre of political power shifted northwards from Sumer to Akkad and settled definitely at Babylon, the local god of Babylon, by name Marduk, naturally aspired to a dignity in the pantheon suitable to the rank which his city had assumed in the sublunary sphere; and this natural ambition was gratified by investing him with the title and attributes of the oldest and greatest of the ancient Sumerian deities, Enlil of Nippur. Thus Marduk usurped the title of Lord of the Lands (*bêl matâti*) which for ages had been the property of Enlil; and in later times he abridged the title into Bêl, the general Semitic name for Lord or Master, which really belonged to Enlil. Further, he annexed without scruple not a few myths and hymns which, time out of mind, had been recited and chanted in honour of Enlil and other gods. Nay, he went so far as to oust Enlil from the dignity of Creator and to pose in that lofty character himself. Thus, to take a single instance, it was indubitably Enlil, the mighty warrior, who in the beginning fought and conquered the great dragon Tiamat, parted the earth and sky, and fashioned this terrestrial globe in the manner in which it has continued to exist, with very little change, down to our own time. Yet these beneficent exploits were in later ages transferred bodily from Enlil of Nippur to Marduk of Babylon. However, the ancient deity in a sense took his revenge on the unscrupulous upstart who had made free with his property and tricked himself out in borrowed plumes; for more and more, as time went on, the name of Marduk tended to fall into abeyance, until at

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, p. 297. As to the two kings, Bur-Sin and Gimmil-Sin, see S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 457-459. According to him, King Bur-Sin, whose name signifies "Youth of the Moon-god", succeeded to the throne in 2398 B.C. and reigned eight years, receiving divine honours from the date of his accession. His son Gimmil-Sin was also deified in his lifetime. Compare Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*[2] (London, 1925), pp. 31 *sq.*

last it was almost entirely replaced by that of Bel, the ancient Semitic title of Enlil.[1]

Yet though Enlil rose to the rank of a god of the whole earth, he seems to have held that position rather as a lord or possessor of the surface of the earth than as a personification of its material substance. Hence if by an Earth-god we mean the personification of the earth as a divine being, Enlil can hardly lay claim to the title.

Enlil hardly a personification of the material earth.

§ 2. *The Worship of Earth among the Ancient Egyptians*

We have seen that the ancient Egyptians personified the earth as a male god named Seb or Keb, who was married to the Sky-goddess, Nut.[2] But apart from his marriage to the personified sky and his relation to the dead, the Earth-god plays little part in Egyptian mythology and religion.[3] In art he is represented as a man either with a crown, sometimes of a peculiar shape, or with a goose on his head. Sacred geese of a particular species were sacred to him and bore his name (*seb* or *keb*), because he was thought to have flown through the air in the shape of a goose. In hieroglyphic writing one of his symbols is a goose, and another is an egg. He personified both the element earth and the surface of the earth on which trees and plants grow. Hence the earth was conceived of as his body, but also as his house; for it was called the House of Keb, just as the air was called the House of Shu, the heaven the House of Ra, the Sun-god, and the underworld the House of Osiris.[4] There was no special city or district set apart for his worship, but his chief seat appears to have been at Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, where he and his wife laid and hatched a great egg, out of which the Sun-god burst in the shape of a phoenix. In virtue of having laid this

The Egyptian Earth-god Seb or Keb.

[1] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 54; H. Zimmern, *op. cit.* 355 *sq.*; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2. pp. 430, 521, 559 *sq.*

[2] Above, pp. 70 *sq.* The god's name is spelled Geb by Professor Peet (*The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 331).

[3] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2] (Berlin, 1909), p. 21.

[4] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), ii. 94; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter* (Leipzig, 1885–1888), p. 577; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1897), pp. 230 *sq.*

celebrated egg, the god sometimes went by the name of the Great Cackler.[1] He is also described as one of the porters of heaven's gate, who draws back the bolt and opens the door to let the light of the Sun-god stream upon the world; when he moves, thunder rolls in the sky, and the earth quakes.[2] According to the lists of the divine dynasties in Memphis and Thebes, he was the fourth king of Egypt, and was therefore to be reckoned as one of the younger gods. In the Legend of the Destruction of Mankind he is installed as king in immediate succession to the Sun-god Ra.[3] Hence in the hierarchy at the court of Ra he bore a title equivalent to Heir Apparent or Crown-prince of the Gods; the throne belonged of right to him as the future king, and his seat was regularly styled the Chair of the Heir to the Throne.[4] And he passed on the inheritance to his son Osiris. In a hymn addressed to Osiris it is said that his father Seb gave him "the kingdom of the two Egypts. He made over to him the government of the lands for good luck and gave him this land into his hand; his water, his air, his herbs, all his herds, all that flies and all that hovers, his creeping things and his wild beasts, were given to the son of Nut, and the two lands (Upper and Lower Egypt) were content therewith."[5] Earthly kings and queens boasted of being heirs of Seb and of occupying his chair, as a proof of their legitimacy and their right to the throne.[6]

Seb reckoned the fourth king of Egypt and the successor of Ra.

The connexion of Seb with the worship of the dead is very slight; nevertheless he is often named incidentally in the texts,[7] particularly in the *Book of the Dead*. Thus he is one of the company of gods who watch the weighing of the heart of the deceased in the Judgment Hall of Osiris. The righteous were provided with the magic words which enabled them to escape from the earth, wherein their bodies were laid, but the wicked were held fast by Seb. It was to Seb that the dead man prayed to open wide his two jaws for him, to unseal his eyes, and to loose his legs from the

The connexion of Seb with the worship of the dead.

[1] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *op. cit.* ii. 95 *sq.*; H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 577.

[2] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *op. cit.* ii. 98; H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 580.

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 231.

[4] H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 578.

[5] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 38.

[6] H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 578.

[7] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p 231.

bandages in which they were swathed. To Seb the dead man appealed for help against serpents, and he never tired of boasting that his cakes "were on the earth with the god Seb", and that the gods had declared that he was "to live upon the bread of Seb". Again, a certain Nu, the overseer of the house of the overseer of the seal, is represented as saying, in a burst of joy at the prospect of his blissful future, "The doors of heaven are opened for me, the doors of earth are opened for me, the bars and bolts of Seb are opened for me"; and again, "I exchange speech with Seb, I am decreed to be the divine heir of Seb, the lord of the earth, and to be the protector therein. The god Seb refresheth me, and he maketh his risings to be mine."[1]

Seb the Earth-god identified by the Greeks with Cronus: resemblances in their myths.

As the father of his five children—Osiris, the elder Horus, Set, Isis, and Nephthys—the Earth-god Seb was called the Father of the Gods.[2] The Greeks identified him with their ancient and mysterious god Cronus.[3] In two passages of the *Book of the Dead* there is an allusion to a myth concerning Seb which may perhaps explain and justify his identification with Cronus. In one of these passages the dead man says, "I, even I, am Osiris, who shut in his father together with his mother on the day of making the great slaughter", and the text adds, "Now the father is Seb, and the mother is Nut". Here the Egyptian word for "slaughter" is *shat*, and we are told that there is no doubt whatever about its meaning. It is derived from a root signifying, "to cut", "to cut in pieces", "to sever". The eminent Egyptologist Brugsch conjectured that the reference was to a mutilation which Osiris inflicted on his father Seb, like the mutilation which the Greek god Cronus inflicted on his father Uranus (the Sky). He points out that the same word *shat* is applied in the *Book of the Dead* to the mutilation which the Sun-god Ra is said to have inflicted on himself, and that out of the drops of blood falling from his severed member certain deities are said to have sprung,

[1] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 95.

[2] H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 579; G. Parthey, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris* (Berlin, 1850), p. 190.

[3] H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 576; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 230 *sq.*; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 12, with G. Parthey's note (p. 190).

just as from the blood of Uranus, mutilated by his son, the Furies and Giants are said to have originated in Greek mythology.[1] The parallel thus suggested between the Egyptian and the Greek myths may be carried a step further. For Osiris, who seems to have mutilated his father Seb, was himself afterwards mutilated in like manner by his wicked brother Typhon, that is, Set;[2] and in Greek mythology Cronus, who had mutilated his father Uranus, is said to have been in turn mutilated by his son Zeus.[3] As the life of the gods is regularly modelled on the life of men, the double parallel suggests that in certain families, or under certain circumstances, the practice of mutilation may have been hereditary.

[1] H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 581; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 99 *sq.* As to the mutilation of Uranus by Cronus, see above, pp. 36 *sq.* As to the birth of the Furies and Giants from the dripping blood of Uranus, see Hesiod, *Theog.* 180-186; Apollodorus, i. 1. 4.

[2] Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 18.

[3] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xi. vol. i. p. 210, ed. L. Dindorf; Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 16; Aristides, *Or.* iii. vol. i. p. 35, ed. G. Dindorf; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 983.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORSHIP OF EARTH IN CHINA

The conception of Earth as a Mother goddess and wife of the Sky-god is a late development of Chinese religion.

WE have seen that the Chinese personify and worship the Sky as a great deity, the head of the pantheon.[1] But they also personify and worship the Earth, under a title which signifies "The Sovereign Earth". In this capacity the Earth is conceived as feminine, as a Mother Goddess, the counterpart of the Sky or Heaven in his capacity of a Father God, the two great deities forming a married couple. Yet this personification and deification of the whole Earth as a great Mother Goddess appears to be a comparatively late development of Chinese religion. It seems not to have originated earlier than the foundation of the Han dynasty in the second century before our era, and it was in the reign of the Emperor Wu (140–87 B.C.) that the worship of the Sovereign Earth as a goddess was definitely established. Henceforth the cult of Heaven and Earth attained a prodigious importance; this natural dualism, embracing the entire universe, appears as the supreme expression of Chinese religion.[2]

Older Chinese belief in a hierarchy of particular Earth-gods.

But if the Chinese were long of attaining to the generalized idea of the whole Earth as a single divine being, they appear nevertheless to have worshipped from the earliest times a whole series or hierarchy of particular Earth-gods, that is, of deities who personified each a particular portion of ground, from the plot of land owned by

[1] Above, pp. 74 *sqq.*

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan, Essai de Monographie d'un Culte chinoise* (Paris, 1910), pp. 520-525 (*Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'Études*, vol. xxi.). In the following account of the Chinese Earth-gods I follow closely the masterly exposition of Chavannes, a great scholar too early lost to his country and to learning. Compare M. Granet, *La Religion des Chinois* (Paris, 1922), pp. 62 *sq.*

a single family up to a whole province or kingdom; for the division of the earth or of the ground over which each of the Earth-gods presided was determined by the extent of the human group which occupied it. All these particular or local Earth-gods were conceived as males; they were the personifications of the energies resident in the soil.[1]

The Earth-god of land owned by a family.

At the base of this hierarchy of terrestrial divinities, on the lowest rung of the ladder, stands the god of the plot of land owned by a single family. The seat of this deity used to be a place called *tchong lieou*, situated under an opening in the roof of the family dwelling. The characters of which his name is composed imply that he was at the centre, that is, that he concentrated in himself all the energies inherent in the landed property of the family, and further that he was exposed to the rain, in other words, that he was under the open sky to allow the earth or ground, which he personified, to participate in that general movement of exchange which constitutes universal life. The Earth-god thus seated at his shrine in the midst of the family dwelling was one of the five domestic deities to which in antiquity all Chinamen paid homage. The other four deities were the hearth or stove, in which burns the domestic fire; the well, in which resides the Water-spirit; the outer door and the inner doors, the deities of which watch over the comings and goings through the doorways and so guard the whole house. In our days the domestic shrine of the Earth-god no longer exists under its old name (*tchong lieou*), but its equivalent remains in the shape of a little local elf called *t'ou ti chen* to whom every family sacrifices; in the streets of every Chinese town, towards evening, sticks of incense are lighted in the open air and smoke in front of the elf's tablet at the doors of shops. This tribute is paid to him because, the earth being deemed the ultimate source of all the good things that men enjoy, these little

[1] E. Chavannes, "Le Dieu du Sol dans la Chine antique", *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 437. Throughout his very learned and valuable essay on the Chinese Earth-god (pp. 437-525), Chavannes speaks of him consistently as *Dieu du Sol*, not as *Dieu de la Terre*; and *Dieu du Sol* might be rendered perhaps more exactly as "God of the Ground or of the Soil" rather than as "God of the Earth", which is apt to be taken to signify "God of the whole Earth". But I trust that this ambiguity will be obviated by the explanations and definitions in the text.

local elves have come to be regarded as simply the deities of the family prosperity, and nowadays they are revered no longer as powers of nature, but as guardian spirits who help the family to make plenty of money.[1]

The Earth gods of parishes and counties.

Above the family is the larger group of people called a *li*, which we may perhaps translate by parish. Each parish, including twenty-five families, had its own Earth-god, and the parishioners had orders to sacrifice to him on a holy day in the second month of spring; every family in the parish sent one of its members to assist at the ceremony.[2] Above the parish there was a larger territorial division, which we may compare to a county, it included two thousand five hundred hearths; and the head magistrate of the county, whom we may compare to the sheriff, was bound to sacrifice to the county Earth-god twice a year. Under the Han dynasty, in the year 205 B.C., the Emperor Kao tsou gave orders to institute an Earth-god in every county; and a few years later, in 197 B.C., he approved of an ordinance in virtue of which every sheriff was commanded to sacrifice regularly a sheep and a pig to the Earth-god and the Harvest-god in the second month of spring and in the last month of the year. Thus we see that the county Earth-god had a sort of acolyte or colleague in the person of the Harvest-god. We shall find that Earth-gods of higher rank were similarly coupled with Harvest-gods; but the Harvest-god appears to have always remained in the position of a satellite, a mere reflection of the glory of the Earth-god, with whose destinies his own were inseparably linked.[3]

Biennial sacrifice of a sheep and a pig to the Earth-god and Harvest-god of the county.

Earth-gods of kingdoms and provinces.

Under the Tcheou dynasty there existed, above the county, feudal kingdoms and, higher still, nine provinces. Each kingdom and each province had its own Earth-god and Harvest-god. The Han dynasty altered the higher local divisions and the number of the provinces; but each division or province had still its own Earth-god and Harvest-god, and in every case it was the lord-lieutenant or governor

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T"ai Chan*, pp. 438 *sq.* With regard to the earth as the producer of all good things, see *The Li Ki*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvii. (Oxford, 1885) p. 378, "Heaven produces the seasons. Earth produces all the sources of wealth".

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T"ai Chan*, pp. 439 *sq.*

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T"ai Chan*, pp. 441 *sq.*

who presided at the sacrifice of a sheep and a pig to the deity. But when the governor of a province went on a round of inspection at the head of an army, he always took the Earth-god with him, but never the Harvest-god; because, with their usual good sense, the Chinese calculated that, as the governor could nowhere stop long enough to sow and reap, he would have no occasion to employ the services of the Harvest-god, and therefore it would be useless to cart that deity about with the rest of the baggage.[1]

The two Earth-gods of the Chinese Emperor, the Great Earth-god and the Imperial Earth-god.

Finally, passing over a multitude of Earth-gods instituted by many subordinate officials in their various capacities, we may notice the Earth-gods of the Chinese Emperor or Son of Heaven, as he was commonly styled by his subjects. Of these Earth-gods the Emperor had two. One of them, called the Great Earth-god, had his altar in the imperial palace, opposite to the Ancestral Temple; his worship was established for the good of the whole empire. The other, called the Imperial Earth-god, had his altar in the sacred field, where the Emperor annually performed the ceremony of ploughing for the purpose of producing the millet which was to be used for the offerings in the Ancestral Temple. This latter Earth-god belonged in a peculiar sense to the Emperor; it was he, and not the Great Earth-god, whom the Emperor carried with him when he went to war; and it was in presence of the Imperial Earth-god, and not of the Great Earth-god, that the Emperor inflicted punishment on the guilty. A further distinction between these two Earth-gods of the very highest class was that the Great Earth-god was associated with a Harvest-god, but the Imperial Earth-god was not.[2]

The altar of the Earth-god.

The shrine of the Earth-god was marked by an altar of earth, and the same word (*chŏ*), which properly designates the Earth-god himself, was very often applied to the altar which symbolized him. The altar, in fact, was a mound which represented the whole of the surrounding ground; as the Chinese commentators constantly repeat, the whole of the ground is sacred, and therefore sacrifices should be offered to it everywhere, but as that is not possible, people

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 442-444.

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 444-448.

choose certain spots and there erect heaps of earth in which the whole latent energies of the environment are concentrated.[1]

The altar of the Great Earth-god in the imperial palace.

In the time of the Han dynasty the altar of the Great Earth-god, situated in the imperial palace, was of a rectangular shape, measuring fifty feet square; each side of the altar was made of earth of a colour corresponding to that of the quarter which it faced, green for the east, red for the south, white for the west, and black for the north; on the top of the altar the earth was yellow.[2] The reason for the diversity of colours exhibited by the four different sides of the altar was this. When a vassal was invested by the Emperor with a fief, he received a clod of earth from the altar of the Great Earth-god in the imperial palace, and this clod was taken from that side of the altar which faced towards the quarter where the vassal's fief was situated. Hence if the fief lay to the east, the clod was of green earth; if the fief lay to the south, the clod was of red earth, and so on. This clod, wrapped up in white herbs of a certain sort (*mao*), the vassal carried away with him to his fief, where he set it up as his Earth-God and worshipped it. Such was one of the regular rites of investiture; and there are good grounds for believing that it was very ancient. Under the Han dynasty the privilege of receiving a clod from the altar of the Great Earth-god in order to convert it into a local Earth-god appears to have been confined to the sons of the Emperor.[3]

The altar of the Earth-god had to be in the open air; it was thought that he could only live in contact with the atmospheric influences, and that, cut off from them, he would pine and waste away. Hence if you would render an Earth-god impotent, you have nothing to do but to enclose him in a building with a roof over his head. Accordingly, when the great conqueror T'ang had founded the dynasty of the Yin or Shang and wished to extirpate by the roots the vanquished Hia dynasty, the surest means that occurred to him for effecting his object was to remove the Earth-god of

The altar of the Earth-god had to be in the open air; but the altar of the Earth-god of a deposed dynasty was roofed over in order to disable him for doing mischief.

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 450.

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 451.

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 452-459.

his predecessors; but, failing in the sacrilegious attempt, he contented himself with shutting up the deity in a house. Afterwards, when his family was in turn ousted by the Tcheou, the founder of the new dynasty treated the Earth-god of the deposed family precisely as they had treated the Earth-god of their predecessors; he built a house over him, but opened a window in the north wall of the building in order that the blighting principle of the *yin*, that is, the principle of darkness and death, might alone play upon the deity, and so disable him for doing mischief. In the ancient Chinese books of ritual called the *Li Ki* we read that in the palace of the Emperor "the altar of the Great Earth-god must needs be exposed to the hoar-frost and the dew, to the wind and the rain, in order that it may be in communication with the influences of the sky and of the earth. That is the reason why the Earth-god of a conquered dynasty is covered with a building; in that way he is no longer open to the action of the heavenly *yang* (the principle of light and life). As for the Earth-god of Po (the Earth-god of the deposed Yin or Shang dynasty), they made a window for him on the north side in order that the principle of the *yin* (the principle of darkness and death) might illuminate him."[1]

Clods from the altar of a conquered Earth-god distributed as awful warnings to noblemen.

Thus the worship of the Earth-god of the conquered Yin or Shang dynasty was maintained in a certain limited form at the court of their successors on the imperial throne. More than that, the Emperor distributed clods from the vanquished Earth-god's altar to his noblemen in order that they might carry them away and make local Earth-gods of them on their own lands, to serve them as awful warnings of the fate that would surely overtake them if they dared to rebel against their liege lord. When they looked upon the deity, languishing in captivity, how was it possible that, with his melancholy fate before their eyes, they could entertain even a thought of disloyalty to the emperor? That this was indeed the train of reasoning at the back of the Emperor's mind in distributing the sods among his lords,

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 459-461. Compare *The Li-Ki*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvii. p. 425. I follow Chavannes' translation. Po had been the capital of the conquered Yin or Shang dynasty. The site was in the present Ho-nan (Legge's note, *l.c.*).

is made clear by the following passage from the *Tou-touan* of Ts'ai Yong. "In antiquity the Son of Heaven took the Earth-god of the conquered dynasty to give pieces of it to the lords, in order that out of these pieces they might make Earth-gods which should warn them to be on their guard. They walled up these Earth-gods of the conquered dynasty; they covered their top in order that they might not communicate with the sky; they set up a palisade at their base in order that they might not communicate with the earth; thus these Earth-gods were isolated from heaven and from earth; they faced the north and were turned towards the principle of the *yin* (the principle of darkness and death) to show clearly that they were dead."[1]

From a passage of a Chinese commentator named Kou-leang we learn further that the building which enclosed the Earth-god of the conquered dynasty had to be near the Ancestral Temple, to which it acted as a screen.[2]

The custom of imprisoning for life the superannuated Earth-god of a conquered dynasty as a sort of scare-crow for evil-doers appears not to have lasted beyond the Tcheou dynasty; there is no mention of it in texts relating to the Han dynasty. The memory of the custom, however, survived, for in the year 6 A.D., under the usurper Wang Mang, a proposal was made to revive the ancient practice. His ministers reminded the usurper that "in antiquity, when a reigning family revolted against the commands of Heaven and was exterminated, they used to wall up the Earth-god of the family on four sides, cover the top, and surround the base with a palisade, to show that he could no longer communicate with the sky and the earth; they distributed pieces of this Earth-god to the nobles, in order that every time they went out they might see it, and that it might be for them a manifest warning". Accordingly, the ministers suggested to the usurper that he should treat the Earth-god of the Han dynasty in like fashion by clapping him in gaol and distributing fragments of his broken body among the nobility in order to remind them perpetually of their duty.[3]

The custom of imprisoning the Earth-god of a vanquished dynasty fell into abeyance.

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 462 *sq.*

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 463 *sq.*

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 465 *sq.*

A sacred tree essential to the altar of an Earth-god.

But for his proper worship the Earth-god required a tree as well as an altar. The Chinese dictionary *Chouo wen* tells us explicitly that "for every Earth-god they planted a tree of the sort which suited the soil".[1] Another Chinese text throws light on the geographical distribution of the trees which thus represented the Earth-god. It informs us that "the Great Earth-god was a pine-tree; the Earth-gods of the East were thuyas; the Earth-gods of the South were catalpas; the Earth-gods of the West were chestnuts; the Earth-gods of the North were acacias."[2]

The presence of a tree at every place where there was an Earth-god is attested by many passages of Chinese writers. Thus we read of an oak-tree of which the wood could not be used for any purpose; so they kept the tree and turned it into an Earth-god. Again, we hear of the soul of a murdered man which passed into the tree of an Earth-god and shook the branches.[3]

Originally the tree was looked on as an embodiment of the Earth-god; later it was viewed as a simple sign-post.

In later times, from the Han dynasty onwards, the relation of the tree to the Earth-god was misunderstood, and it was explained on shallow rationalistic principles as a simple sign-post to attract the attention of passers-by to the shrine, or as a memorial planted to commemorate some great event. But the ancient texts of the Tcheou dynasty suffice to prove that the tree in question had much deeper religious roots than the barren and paralysing scepticism of a later age allowed for. For they prove beyond question that the tree was essential to the Earth-god's altar, nay that it was not distinguished from the deity himself; in short that the tree was the Earth-god. Is it not clear, in fact, even to the most purblind vision, dimmed by the mists of freethinking, that a fine tree concentrates in itself all the creative and nutritious virtues of the surrounding soil? Does not the tree spring from the earth as a living expression of her maternal fecundity? To this day a traveller in China passes from time to time great trees loaded with red cloths on which the votaries have recorded in black letters and touching language the expression of their gratitude to the arboreal deity. Why

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 466.

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 467.

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 468.

then, in the name of common sense, should we doubt that the tree is a god, in fact, the Earth-god, who manifests himself in this majestic form and verdurous garb?[1] If any lingering doubts could subsist in our minds on the subject, a simple consideration should suffice to set them at rest; the tree was so truly an expression of the vitality of the Earth-god, that while the altar of the Earth-god of a conquered dynasty was allowed to survive, the conquerors cut down the tree beside it to signify that the god was dead.[2]

At first the Earth-god was represented by a whole wood.

In the most ancient times, indeed, the Earth-god appears to have been represented, not by a single tree, but by a whole wood. This comes out in the oldest prayer to an Earth-god that is on record. In the time of T'ang, the great conqueror who founded the second Chinese dynasty, there was a severe drought in the land. For five or seven whole years no harvest was reaped. At the end of that time they drew lots, and the lot declared that the prayer for rain must be accompanied by a human sacrifice. In this emergency the Emperor came forward and nobly offered himself as a victim to be offered up for the salvation of his people to the wood of Sang. In presenting the sacrifice of himself to the wood the Emperor addressed to it the following solemn prayer: "If it is I who am guilty, the guilt extends not to the multitude; if it is the multitude that is guilty, then let the guilt rest on me alone. Suffer not that for my fault the ghosts and the gods should blast the life of my people." After that he consummated the great sacrifice by cutting, not his throat, but his hair and nails and offering the clippings to the deity as a substitute for his person. The sacrifice was accepted, the people were content, and rain fell in abundance.[3]

Sacrifice of the Emperor to a sacred wood in time of drought.

The sacred wood dwindled to a single tree.

Thus the Earth-god appears for the first time surrounded by the religious horror of a sacred wood and calling from its gloomy depths for the sacrifice of a human victim to end the drought that was desolating the country. To that call the Emperor promptly responded in his own person, and by a simple sacrifice of the superfluities of his person succeeded

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 470-472.

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 472.

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 472-475.

in appeasing the divine wrath and saving his people. But by a melancholy process of religious decadence the sacred wood dwindled down to a single tree, and in time, the winter of scepticism following hard on the summer of faith, even the solitary tree shed its sanctity like its leaves and was taken by blind infidelity for nothing better than a sign-post.[1]

The shrine of the Earth-god needed a sacred block or tablet of stone besides the sacred tree.

But the shrine of the Earth-god, to be complete, required a block of stone in addition to an altar and a sacred tree. For this block of stone the Chinese name is *tchou*. The word is now generally translated "tablet", and in most Chinese religious ceremonies at the present time the *tchou* is in fact a wooden tablet with the God's name inscribed on it. But certain rites, which are observed to this day, prove that the tablet, whether of wood or stone, was originally something more than a simple seat or lodging of the deity, it was his living image. Thus in the worship of ancestors one of the essential ceremonies consists in what is called punctuating the ancestral tablet which represents the deceased; that is to say, the spots in the tablet where the eyes and ears of the dead man are supposed to be are marked with points of blood; the blood animates his eyes and ears and so enables the deceased to see and hear. This rite seems to show that originally the tablet was a rudimentary statue, whether of wood or stone, representing a ghost or a god. Similarly the Earth-god was figured in this uncouth shape beside the sacred tree, which was at first no other than the god himself, but which, as we have seen, came afterwards to be looked upon as a simple sign-post, when the deity had shifted his quarters from the tree to the tablet (*tchou*) that represented him. Thus a Chinese writer of the ninth century of our era, speaking of the customs observed in the time of the Han dynasty, says: "For each of these Earth-gods they plant a tree to mark the place where he is to be found; and besides they make a tablet (*tchou*) to represent the divinity".[2]

This block or tablet seems to have been originally an image of the deity.

Shape and size of the sacred stone.

The tablet, if we may call it so, of the Earth-god was in fact a block or rather a shaft of stone which stood beside the god's altar. What the exact shape and dimensions of

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 475 *sq.*

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 476 *sq.*

the sacred stone were in antiquity we do not know; but from a document of 705 A.D. we learn that it was proposed to make it five feet high by two feet wide, tapering at the top and square at the base, and to bury half of the shaft in the ground in imitation of a root. The proposal was adopted, and we know that precisely the same rules for shaping and planting the Earth-god's sacred stone were observed hundreds of years later under the Song dynasty (960–1279 A.D.).[1]

Why men worshipped the Earth-god.

If now we ask what were the attributes of the Chinese Earth-god, and why men worshipped him, the first and most obvious answer is that he was worshipped because the farmer required his help in tilling the ground. The labour of the husbandman aims at stimulating the fertility of the earth; the sower sows the seed in the firm belief that there is a spirit in the ground who will cause the seed to bear fruit and multiply. Nothing therefore can be more natural and reasonable than that he should address his prayers to the Earth-god in the second month of spring to entreat his favour for the future harvest, and that in the second month of autumn he should thank the deity for the crop he has reaped and gathered into his barns.[2]

Relation of the Earth-god to the Harvest-god.

But here we are at first sight confronted with a difficulty. We have seen that the Earth-god is regularly coupled with a Harvest-god. Now if the husbandman addresses his petitions and his thanks for the harvest to the Earth-god, the question naturally arises, Where does the Harvest-god come in? In accepting the adoration of the farmer is not the Earth-god poaching on the preserves of his colleague? At the first blush it might certainly appear to be so, but a little reflection will convince us that each of the gods has his own proper function, and that, far from clashing, they work harmoniously into each other's hands. The Harvest-god in fact expresses the energy of the Earth-god in so far as that energy is useful to man in the budding and growth of the cereals. But the powers of the Earth-god are by no means exhausted by these forms of his activity; far from it; he exercises an influence infinitely more complex and

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 477 *sq.*

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 478 *sq.*

The two great principles of Chinese philosophy, the *yin* and the *yang*.

more general, inasmuch as he personifies the great principle of the *yin*, which is opposed to the other great principle of the *yang*, just as the earth is opposed to the sky, and as darkness is opposed to light. Thus we see that, important as the Harvest-god unquestionably is, his importance is yet secondary to that of the Earth-god who contains within himself all the great cosmic forces which make up one of the two grand constituent principles of the universe.[1] For, as every Chinaman is aware, the whole world is composed of the two antagonistic yet correlative principles of the *yang* and the *yin*, which by their mutual action and reaction, their attraction and repulsion, maintain in equipoise the universal framework of things. If Europe resolves the universe into hydrogen and electricity, or perhaps at bottom into positive and negative electrons, China resolves it into the positive and negative elements known respectively as the *yang* and the *yin*. Of the two great principles, heaven or the sky is the chief storehouse of the *yang*, which is the principle of light, warmth, and life; earth is the chief storehouse of the *yin*, which is the principle of darkness, cold, and death.[2]

This philosophy first expounded in the *Yî King*.

This precious system of philosophy was first apparently revealed to China in a very ancient book known as the *Yî King*,[3] which, with another called the *Shu King*, has been called the Bible of China.[4] It was composed by the famous King Wan and his equally famous son the Duke of Kau in the twelfth century before our era.[5] The work is held in high esteem by Chinese scholars and sages. In his old age Confucius declared that, if years were added to his life, he would give fifty of them to the study of the *Yî*, and that then, enlightened by his long poring over the sacred volume, he might hope to escape from falling into serious errors. Indeed, he read the book so hard that the leathern binding was thrice worn out, and still in his enthusiasm the great master declared, "Give me several years more and I shall

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 479 *sq.*

[2] As to the *yang* and the *yin* see J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iii. 940, iv. 12 *sqq.*, 67 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Religion of the Chinese*, pp. 3 *sq.*, 16, 19, 55, 133 *sq.*, 136, 152.

[3] *The Yî King*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvi. (Oxford, 1882) pp. 43, 423 *sq.*

[4] J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, p. 18.

[5] *The Yî King*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvi. (Oxford, 1882) pp. 3-6.

be master of the *Yî*".[1] The European reader who peruses or merely inspects the work in question is apt to form a somewhat different opinion of its merits and to hesitate whether he should wonder more at the state of mind of the author who composed it or at that of the philosopher who admired it. The whole farrago of nonsense purports to set forth the mystic meaning of hexagrams or figures of six parallel and horizontal straight lines, one or more of which are usually divided in the middle. The following passage, which professes to reveal the meaning of a particular sort of hexagram called a *lî*, may serve as a specimen of the treasures of wisdom unlocked to humanity in the sacred volume:

Scope of the *Yî King*.

"Lî suggests the idea of one treading on the tail of a tiger, which does not bite him. There will be progress and success.

"The first line, undivided, shows its subject treading his accustomed path. If he go forward, there will be no error. . . .

"The third line, divided, shows a one-eyed man who thinks he can see; a lame man who thinks he can walk well; one who treads on the tail of a tiger and is bitten. All this indicates ill-fortune. We have a mere bravo acting the part of a great ruler.

"The fourth line, undivided, shows its subject treading on the tail of a tiger. He becomes full of apprehensive caution, and in the end there will be good fortune."[2]

The Earth-god held responsible for solar eclipses.

But to return to the Chinese Earth-god. Since the earth is identified with the principle of darkness, it is perfectly plain to the Chinese mind that the Earth-god must have a hand in solar eclipses, since at such times the principle of darkness (*yin*) manifestly triumphs over the principle of light (*yang*). Accordingly, when such an untoward event happened, the Chinese undertook to restore the balance of nature which had been disturbed by the encroachment of the Earth-god, or the principle of darkness, upon the domain of the Heaven-god, or the principle of light. For Chinese philosophy identifies the earth with the moon, which in its

[1] *The Yî King*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvi. (Oxford, 1882) *Introduction*, p. 1.

[2] *The Yî King*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xvi. (Oxford, 1882) pp. 78 *sq.*

turn represents the principle of darkness (*yin*), while the sun represents the principle of light. Hence, when the moon causes an eclipse by obstructing the rays of the sun, the conclusion is obvious; it is the Earth-god who is really responsible for the obstruction by breaking bounds and trespassing on the celestial sphere. Consequently it is necessary to compel or persuade him to retreat within his proper limits and leave the great luminary alone. For this purpose the Chinese used to beat drums, to tie a red cord round the Earth-god's altar, and to sacrifice a victim to him. The beating of the drums was a martial demonstration to intimidate the deity; the red cord tied round his altar was a mode of putting him in the stocks; and the victim offered to him was meant to soothe his agitated feelings, which had naturally been ruffled by the menacing rub-a-dub of the drums and the galling constriction of the red cord.[1] There are some grounds for thinking that of old the people did not content themselves with beating drums at an eclipse, but that they also shot arrows at the moon or the Earth-god (the two being practically identical) in order to force him to let go his hold on the sun.[2]

Conduct of the Chinese during eclipses of the sun.

In times of excessive rain as well as of solar eclipses the Earth-god was held responsible for disturbing the course of nature, since he was, so to say, a tool or instrument of the great principle of the *yin*, which includes damp as well as darkness and death in its scope. Accordingly, to stop the rain by restricting the activity of the Earth-god they tied the god up with a red cord, which they passed ten times round him or his altar. However, unlike the similar rite practised at solar eclipses, the custom of tying up the Earth-god in heavy rain seems to be comparatively modern, dating perhaps from the second century of our era, and apparently it had no great vogue and soon died out.[3]

The Earth-god held responsible for excessive rain and tied up with a red cord.

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 480-490.

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 486 *sq.* According to Chavannes, the ritual of tying a red cord round the altar of the Earth-god during an eclipse is very ancient, since its original significance (that of fettering the Earth-god and so preventing him from doing mischief) was already a matter of doubt and discussion in the second century B.C. See E. Chavannes, *op. cit.* pp. 484-486.

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 493 *sq.* The treatise *Tong Tchong-chou*, which mentions the practice, is a work of the second century A.D. (*id.* p. 570).

But if in time of excessive rain it was necessary to restrain the too exuberant energies of the Earth-god, in time of drought, on the contrary, it was essential to encourage him and remove any obstacles that might be standing in the way of his discharging his watery functions as representative of the great *yin* principle. For that purpose his altars were swept and cleaned, obviously with the view of setting free his energies to wrestle with the drought. Further, for the same wise end, the villagers made a hole in the Earth-god's altar and led a channel to it from a little canal outside the village. By thus laying on the water to the Earth-god's abode they hoped no doubt to stimulate him to turn on the celestial water-taps, of which he naturally had the full control. As a further reminder of what was expected of him, they put five frogs on his altar, that their croaking for rain might induce him to grant their prayer.[1] Treatment of the Earth-god's altar in time of drought.

But if with every incentive and inducement to right conduct, the Earth-god proved recalcitrant and obstinately refused either to abate the rain or to terminate the drought, there was nothing for it but to cashier him and give his office to another deity, who, it was hoped, would prove more regardful of human wishes and necessities. Thus the great religious teacher, Mencius, a pupil of Confucius, wrote that, "When the victims have been perfect, when the millet offered in the vases has been pure, when the sacrifices have been performed at the prescribed seasons, if nevertheless there are droughts and inundations, then we change the Earth-gods and Harvest-gods, and institute new deities in their stead".[2] Recalcitrant Earth-gods cashiered.

But the Earth-god does not restrict his activity to superintending and promoting the agricultural operations of sowing and harvest. As a personification of the great *yin* principle he presided at death and executions. One of the very early sovereigns of China threatened that if his soldiers disobeyed him in a forthcoming battle, he would put them to death before the altar of the Earth-god; at the same time he promised that those who obeyed him should be rewarded The Earth-god presides at death and executions.

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 495 *sq.*

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 503 *sq.*

in presence of his ancestral spirits.[1] Similarly, when in the eleventh century before our era King Wu triumphed over the last sovereign of the Yin dynasty and compelled him to commit suicide, he repaired to the shrine of the Earth-god and rubbed the blood of his victims on the altar or image of the deity, thus communicating fresh vital energy to him; and in presence of this Supreme Judge he proclaimed to Heaven and to the people of the conquered prince the crimes for which he had inflicted the punishment.[2] In the year 640 B.C. a petty prince of Chan-tong sacrificed a disloyal vassal to the Earth-god. The historian adds that by this exemplary punishment the prince hoped to reduce to submission the barbarians who then occupied all the eastern part of Chan-tong. And the sacrifice of one or more prisoners of war to the Earth-god after a victory appears to have been prescribed by ancient Chinese ritual.[3]

The Earth-god and his counterpart the Ancestral Temple.

Just as in the physical world the principle of the *yin* is balanced by the principle of the *yang*, so the Earth-god has his counterpoise in the Ancestral Temple. The parallelism between the two is rigorously carried out. The Earth-god stands for the principle of darkness (*yin*): hence his altar is placed to the right, that is, to the west of the royal palace, because the west is the domain of darkness. The Ancestral Temple represents the principle of light (*yang*): hence it is built to the left, that is, to the east of the royal palace, because the east is the domain of light, being the place of sunrise. And just as universal life is dominated by the two principles of the *yin* and the *yang*, so the national life is dominated in everything by the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple. The presence of this pair of tutelary powers constitutes the true seat of government: the capital is founded on the altar of the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple. When a sovereign builds or chooses a city to serve as his residence, his first care is to establish the altar of the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple.[4]

[1] *The Shû King*, translated by James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. iii. (Oxford, 1879) p. 77; E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 77. Legge translates "shall be put to death before the altar of the spirits of the land"; Chavannes translates "*de les faire périr devant le dieu du sol*".

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 507.

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 508-510.

[4] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 511 *sq.*

On going forth to war the Emperor was attended by representatives of the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple.

But it was not enough that these two divine powers should be installed at the capital on either side of the royal palace: it was essential that they should attend the monarch when he went forth to war, in order that they might keep him safe under the shadow of their wings. But as it was practically impossible to transport a temple and an altar among the baggage of the army, the sovereign had to be content to be followed by a special car, called "the car of purity", in which were placed the stone shaft representing the Earth-god and the wooden tablet representing one of the ancestors.[1] The Earth-god had previously been sprinkled with holy water by the Grand Magician, who had also smeared blood on the drums of the warriors. Thus the army marched forth to battle, followed by the Earth-god and the Ancestor, who, refreshed by the sacrifices which the Grand Magician and the subordinate Master of Ceremonies had offered to them, stimulated the valour of the troops from a strategic position in the rear. If defeat instead of victory attended the arms of the sovereign, on the return of the beaten army the Earth-god and the Ancestor were publicly degraded, the care of their worship being taken from their usual ministers and left to an inferior official.[2]

Together the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple represent the spiritual reality of the Chinese Empire.

Thus, whether in the capital or in the camp, the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple are always present as the expression of the spiritual reality of the kingdom. They symbolize everything that assures the unity and continuance of the social group, to wit, a common soil and a common inheritance, that common inheritance being summed up in the continuity of the princely family. By means of the Ancestral Temple the existence of the ancient princes is perpetuated and therefore confers on their descendants an authority such as no single individual could wield: the altar of the Earth-god concentrates in itself all the vitality of the fruitful soil. Together, the temple and the altar furnish a guarantee to the people that they will be governed and fed; the first object of royalty is to maintain, by the appropriate sacrifices, the full efficacy of this twofold protection. That is why, in the words of a Chinese text, the prince must

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 512.

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 512-514.

above everything "preside over the Earth-gods and Harvest-gods and attend to the sacrifices offered to the ancestors". In countless passages of Chinese literature the emperors refer the prosperity of their reigns, as the Emperor Wen did in 167 B.C., "to the supernatural support of the Ancestral Temple and to the blessing of the Earth-god and the Harvest-god".[1]

Intimate union of the Earth-god with the Ancestral Temple shown in various ways.

The intimate union of the Earth-god and the Harvest-god with the Ancestral Temple, is shown in many ways. On the point of setting out on a military expedition, the commander repaired to the Ancestral Temple there to receive his marching orders, and he went to the altar of the Earth-god to partake of the raw flesh offered in sacrifice. Whenever a great calamity happened, whether in heaven or on earth, the sacrifices prescribed by the ritual were offered to the Earth-god and the Harvest-god and to the ancestors at their temple.[2] In the Ancestral Temple of the Emperor and at his altar of the Earth-god one of the essential rites of sacrifice was to take portions of the flesh of the victims and give them to certain persons to eat for the purpose of strengthening their loyalty to the imperial house by this species of communion. At one time, under the Tcheou dynasty, the privilege of thus communicating with the sovereign was nominally restricted to noblemen bearing the same family name as the king, but in fact it was extended to other princes and high dignitaries. The flesh offered in the Ancestral Temple was cooked; the flesh offered to the Earth-god was raw, because, we are told, as a god of war and of executions he delighted in blood, whereas the ancestors, less ferocious, preferred to eat their victuals roast or boiled.[3]

To the last the ancient Earth-god, the Harvest god, and the Ancestral Spirits continued to be worshipped beside the two great divinities, Father Sky, and Mother Earth.

Thus to the last, beside the colossal figures of Father Sky and Mother Earth, which with the growth of Empire loomed ever larger in the national pantheon, the Earth-god, the Harvest-God, and the ancestral spirits in their temple continued to subsist and to receive the homage of their worshippers, witnessing by their immemorial sanctity to beliefs bred in the very bone of the Chinese race. These

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 514 *sq.*

[2] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 516.

[3] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, pp. 517-519.

ancient deities represent the simple religion of the husbandman, who in his rude daily task counted on the support of his forefathers, dead and gone, as a child trusts to the help and protection of his living father, while at the same time he threw himself on the mercy of the God of his native Earth, beseeching him not to blight his hopes of an abundant harvest. This local and family worship is the deepest stratum of religious thought in China: nothing in that great country savours of a more remote antiquity than the Earth-god and the Ancestral Temple.[1]

[1] E. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 525. The last paragraph in the text is practically a translation of Chavannes' conclusion. I desire again to express my gratitude to that great scholar for the debt I owe him in this section of my work.

CHAPTER IX

THE WORSHIP OF EARTH IN MODERN INDIA

§ 1. *The Worship of Earth among the Hindoos*

The worship of Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*) among the Hindoos of the Punjab and Bengal.

IN modern India the earth is worshipped as a goddess both by Hindoos and Dravidians, the aboriginal inhabitants of the country. To the Hindoos the goddess is known as *Dharti Mata* or Mother Earth. In the Punjab a pious Hindoo does obeisance to her and invokes her when he rises from his bed in the morning; and even those who are less punctilious in the matter of religion comply with the same custom when they begin to plough or to sow. When a cow or a buffalo is first bought, or when she first gives milk after calving, the first five streams of milk drawn from her udders are allowed to fall on the ground in honour of the Earth-goddess, and at every milking the first stream of milk is similarly devoted to her. So, too, when medicine is taken, a little of it is sprinkled on the ground in honour of the deity.[1] As the digging of the foundations of a new house naturally disturbs the Earth-goddess, she must be worshipped when the house is occupied for the first time. In Bengal the chief festival in her honour is held at the hot season, when she is supposed to suffer from the infirmity common to women. All ploughing, sowing, and other work cease during that time, and widows in Bengal refrain from eating cooked rice. The Earth-

[1] (Sir) Denzil C. J. Ibbetson, *Outlines of Panjab Ethnography* (Calcutta, 1883), p. 114. Compare W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 26. *Dharti* means "the earth". See Sir Henry M. Elliot, *Memoirs on the History, Folk-lore, and Distribution of the Races of the North Western Provinces of India*, edited by J. Beames (London, 1869), ii. 290.

goddess is also worshipped at the family rites of marriage and childbirth.[1] At Chunar in Bengal, after a long drought, the women assembled in a field from which all men were excluded. Three of them, members of a farmer's family, stripped themselves naked; two were yoked to a plough like oxen, and the third held the plough handle. Then they imitated the operation of ploughing, while the woman who held the plough-handle cried out, "O Mother Earth! bring parched grain, water, and chaff. Our stomachs are breaking to pieces from hunger and thirst." After that the landlord and accountant approached them, and laid down some grain, water, and chaff in the field. The women then dressed and returned home.[2]

The worship of Mother Earth among the Hindoos of the Bombay Presidency.

The Hindoos of the Bombay Presidency similarly regard the earth as one of the great deities and worship it on many occasions, especially when anything is to be built on its surface. In the Deccan a Hindoo, on rising in the morning, asks pardon of the earth before he steps on the floor. Thus, before setting foot on the ground, he will say: "O Goddess, who is clothed (surrounded) by the sea, whose breasts are mountains, and who is the wife of Vishnu, I bow down to thee; please forgive the touch of my feet. O Goddess Earth! who art born by the power of Vishnu, whose surface is of the colour of a conch shell and who art the storehouse of innumerable jewels, I bow down to thee."[3] Again the Earth-mother is worshipped at the digging of a well or of a sacrificial pit, at the making of a tank, at the laying of the foundation-stone of a house, or at any other constructive work raised upon or made in the ground. The intention of the ceremony is to propitiate the goddess in order that she may not interrupt the operations. The owner or the person interested in the new construction pours a little water on the earth where the foundation-pit is to be dug, sprinkles red lac and red powder, places a betel-nut and a few precious coins, and digs out the first clod of earth with his own hands.

[1] W. Crooke, *Natives of Northern India* (London, 1907), p. 232.

[2] *North Indian Notes and Queries*, i. (1891–1892) p. 210, § 1161. For similar ceremonies to procure rain, see R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), iii. 106; *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 282 *sq.*

[3] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 81, 87.

Some of the things offered to Earth at such times are betel-nuts and betel-leaves, a bowl, green garments and the five precious things (*pancharatna*), to wit, gold, silver, copper, coral, and pearls.[1]

Worship of Mother Earth on Dasara day.

On the *Dasara* day, which is the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Ashvin (September-October) Hindoo kings go out in state with their ministers and subjects to worship the Earth-mother and the holy *shami* tree (*Prosopis spicigera*). A wetted plot of ground is first dug over with pikes, tender-wheat plants and *shami* leaves are then mixed with the muddy earth, and the whole is kneaded into little balls. A small coin and a betel-nut are inserted in each ball, and every worshipper receives one of the balls as a mark of good luck. Afterwards the wheat-plants are extracted from the balls and are allowed to grow in an earthen vessel filled with clay till they have sprouted to the height of a span, when they are taken from the vessel and used.[2] Wheat-plants thus cultivated in the worship of Earth remind us of the Gardens of Adonis cultivated in the worship of that sad oriental deity.

Worship of Mother Earth on various occasions.

Again, Earth is worshipped when treasure is buried in the ground, and when a marriage procession reaches the boundary of the bridegroom's village.[3] When presents are given to Brahmans outside the limits of the village, the Earth-mother is worshipped by pouring milk on the ground and by placing seven betel-nuts and seven copper coins thereon.[4] Some women of the Thana District, in the Bombay Presidency, worship the Earth daily during the four months of the rainy season, at the end of which they give a Brahman a piece of land or the equivalent of it in money.[5]

Worship of Earth at sowing and harvest.

At sowing and harvest farmers appease the Earth by offering her coco-nuts, fowls, rice mixed with curds, and so forth. On the fifteenth day of the bright half of the month of Ashvin (September-October) every farmer prepares some sweetmeats in his house and takes them to his farm. There he gathers five stones, worships them, and offers the

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* pp. 81 *sq.*
[2] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* pp. 82 *sq.*
[3] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* p. 83.
[4] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* p. 84.
[5] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* p. 87.

sweetmeats to the Earth. Afterwards he takes a portion of the food and scatters it over the farm. The members of his family then gather there and eat a hearty meal. In the evening the person who carried the food to the farm picks up some grains of barley and puts them in a basket. On return home the grains are thrown over the house.[1]

Worship of Earth at threshing and ploughing.

In the Deccan, when new grain is heaped on the threshing-floor, Mother Earth is worshipped by offering to her cooked food or some animal. At the time when a stake, to which the bullock is to be tethered, is set up in the middle of the threshing-floor, a coco-nut is offered to the Earth. Again, red powder is offered to the Earth at the time of ploughing.[2] At the foundation of a new village, when the gates have been set up, Mother Earth is worshipped, and afterwards the headman, accompanied by a Brahman reciting incantations, either winds a cotton thread besmeared with red lac round the village or pours a stream of milk round the village boundaries.[3]

§ 2. *The Worship of Earth among the Dravidians*

Worship of Mother Earth among the Oraons of Chota Nagpur.

Among the Dravidian tribes of Central India the worship of the earth prevails widely.[4] Thus among the Oraons, a primitive Dravidian people of Chota Nagpur, when a cultivator wishes to begin transplanting his rice-seedlings, he must employ a village priest to make an offering to Mother Earth (*Dhartimāi*). Accompanied by the priest, the cultivator repairs to the field, whither bundles of rice-seedlings have already been brought. He takes with him a pot of rice-beer, and on arriving at the field the priest pours a little of the beer on the ground as a libation, while he invokes the goddess, saying, "O Mother Earth! may we have plenty of rain and a bumper crop. Here is a libation for thee." Next the priest plants with his own hands five rice-seedlings on the spot where the rice-beer has been poured. That done, the women begin to transplant the rest of the seedlings

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* p. 87.
[2] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* p. 87 *sq.*
[3] R. E. Enthoven, *op. cit.* p. 302.
[4] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 30.

Marriage of the Earth-goddess to the Sun-god.

on the fields.[1] Every year the Oraons celebrate the marriage of the Earth-goddess to the Sun-god in order to ensure the fertility of the ground. The rite, which goes by the name of Sarhul, is celebrated in the month of May, when the *sal* tree is in bloom. In it the divine bridegroom, the Sun-god, is personated by the village priest, and the divine bride, the Earth-goddess, is personated by the priest's wife. We are told that "the object of this feast is to celebrate the mystical marriage of the Sun-god (*Bhagawan*) with the Goddess-earth (*Dharti-mai*), to induce them to be fruitful and give good crops". At the same time all the minor deities or demons of the village are propitiated, in order that they may not hinder the beneficent activity of the Sun-god and the Earth-goddess. On the eve of the appointed day no man may plough his fields, and the priest, accompanied by some of the villagers, repairs to the sacred grove, where he beats a drum and invites all the invisible guests to attend the great feast on the morrow. Very early next morning, before cock-crow, holy water is fetched from the sacred spring in a new pot by an acolyte, who carries it secretly to the priest's house. During the morning victims for the sacrifice are collected from the houses. In the afternoon the people all gather at the sacred grove, and the priest proceeds to consummate the sacrifice. The first victims to be immolated are a white cock for the Sun-god and a black hen for the Earth-goddess; and as the feast is the marriage of these great deities the marriage is performed over the two fowls before they are despatched. Amongst other things both birds are marked with vermilion, just as a bride and bridegroom are marked at a human marriage; and the earth is also smeared with vermilion, as if it were a real bride, on the spot where the sacrifice is offered. Sacrifices of fowls or goats to the minor deities or demons follow. Meantime the acolyte has collected flowers of the *sal* tree and set them round the place of sacrifice, and he has also fetched the holy water from the priest's house. A procession is now formed and the priest is carried in triumph to his own abode. There his wife has been watching for him, and on his arrival the two go through

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Orāons of Chōtā Nāgpur* (Ranchi, 1915), pp. 143, 441.

the marriage ceremony, applying vermilion to each other in the usual way "to symbolize the mystical marriage of the Sun-god with the Earth-goddess". Meantime all the women of the village are standing on the thresholds of their houses, each with a winnowing-fan in her hand. In the fan are two cups, one empty to receive the holy water, the other full of rice-beer for the refreshment of the priest. At each house he distributes flowers and holy water to the women, and blesses them, saying, "May your rooms and granary be filled with rice, that the priest's name may be great". The holy water which he leaves at each house is sprinkled over the seeds that have been kept to sow next year's crop. Having blessed the household, the priest drinks the rice-beer that is offered him, and as he repeats his benediction and his potation at every house, he is naturally very drunk by the time he gets to the end of the village. "By that time every one has taken copious libations of rice-beer, and all the devils of the village seem to be let loose, and there follows a scene of debauchery baffling description—all these to induce the Sun and the Earth to be fruitful."[1] Before the marriage of Sun and Earth has thus been celebrated in April or May no Oraon may manure his fields; for up to that time, in the opinion of the Oraons, Mother Earth has remained a virgin since the preceding harvest; how then, they argue, could it be lawful to fecundate her before she is duly married?[2]

Propitiation of malignant spirits at reclaiming waste land for cultivation.

But besides the beneficent goddess of the cultivated earth, who fosters the growth of the crops, there are malignant spirits who have to be appeased whenever an Oraon

[1] Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., "Religion and Customs of the Uraons", *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. i. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1906), pp. 144-146. Compare E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 261 (who does not mention the Sun-god, though he speaks of the marriage of Dharti, the Earth); Rev. F. Hahn, "Some Notes on the Religion and Superstitions of the Oraōs", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, lxxii. Part III. (Calcutta, 1904) p. 12; Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Oraons of Chōtā Nāgpur*, pp. 167, 279. According to Col. Dalton (*l.c.*), the ceremony takes place "towards the end of March, or beginning of April, but any day whilst the sal trees are in blossom will answer". According to Mr. S. C. Roy (*op. cit.* p. 279) the marriage is celebrated in April. I have described the marriage of the deities elsewhere. See *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 76 *sq.*, 148; *id.*, Part IV. *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, i. 47 *sq.*

[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Oraons of Chōtā-Nāgpur*, pp. 167, 279.

encroaches on their domain by reclaiming some of the land for cultivation. On such an occasion the cultivator sacrifices a fowl or an animal to pacify the wrathful spirit, lest some misfortune befall his family. The same procedure is followed when a house is to be built on waste land. If within a short time after a plot of waste land has been reclaimed or a house built on it, there should occur a case of sickness or death to man or beast in the family, it is believed to be caused by the offended spirit of the land. Accordingly the master of the family vows to offer to the angry spirit a particular animal or fowl, if the sick person or animal recovers, or if no other death happens in the family within a certain time. As a pledge of the fulfilment of the vow, the dedicated animal or fowl is set apart and fed on sacrificial rice.[1]

Worship of Mother Earth in Hoshangabad at the end of sowing.

In Hoshangabad, the end of the sowing is celebrated by the worship of Mother Earth, here called *Machandrî*. The ceremony is intended to promote the fertility of the ground. Every cultivator performs the worship for himself in the company of his family and servants. At the edge of one of his fields he puts up a little semicircle or three-sided wall of clods about a foot high, meant to represent a hut. This is covered with a certain sort of green grass (*Imperata spontanea*) in imitation of thatch. At the two ends of the hut two posts of a certain wood (*Butea frondosa*) are erected, with leaves round the tops, like those which are put up at marriage. They are tied to the thatch with red thread. This little house is the temple of Mother Earth (*Machandrî*). In the middle of it a small fire is kindled, and a little milk is set to boil on it in a tiny earthen pot. The milk is allowed to boil over as a sign of abundance. While this is going on, the ploughmen gather in a field and drive their bullocks at a trot, striking them wildly; it is the end of the year's labour for the cattle. The cultivator meanwhile offers a little rice, molasses, and saffron to Mother Earth, and then makes two tiny holes in the ground to represent granaries; into the holes he drops a few seeds of grain and covers them over, as a symbol of prayer, that his granary may be filled with the produce of the land. After that he dabs a little saffron

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Orāons of Chōtā Nagpur*, pp. 148 *sq.*

on the foreheads of the ploughmen and the bullocks, and ties a red thread round the horns of the cattle. Thereupon the animals are let go; and the ploughmen run off at full speed across the country, scattering boiled wheat in token of abundance. This concludes the ceremony, and every one returns home.[1]

Worship of Mother Earth among the jungle tribes of South Mirzapur.

Many similar customs are observed by the jungle tribes of South Mirzapur. The Korwas regard Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*) as one of their chief deities. She lives in the general village shrine under a *sal* tree (*Shorea robusta*). In the month of Aghan (November-December) she is worshipped with flowers and the offering of a goat. When she is duly worshipped, the people believe that the crops will prosper and that no epidemics will break out. The Patâris also acknowledge her divinity, and worship her in August. The local priest (*baiga*) offers her a goat, a cock, and rich cakes. She is also worshipped in the cold weather before the grain and barley are sown, and again on the threshing-floor before the winnowing begins. The flesh of the victims is eaten by the males and unmarried girls; no grown-up girl or married woman may partake of it. The Ghasiyas also believe in Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*). She is their village goddess and receives as an offering a ram, or a goat, or cakes. The offering is presented by the local priest (*baiga*); the materials are provided by a general contribution levied on the village. The Kharwars worship her at the village shrine before the wood-cutting and ploughing begin. They also perform a special service in her honour known as the "worship of greenery" (*Hariyâri Pûjâ*) at the time when the rice is transplanted. In November they perform the "thatching-grass" worship (*Khar Pûjâ*) at the season when they begin to cut the thatching-grass (*khar*). A cock, some leaves of the *Bassia latifolia*, and parched grain are offered to her. The service is performed by the local priest, who receives the offerings; none but males are allowed to attend. Similarly the Pankas worship her before sowing and harvesting the grain. They and the Bhuiyars offer a pig and some liquor at the

[1] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 31, quoting Elliott, *Settlement Report*, 125.

more important agricultural seasons. When the crops are being sown, the Kharwars release a fowl as a scapegoat and pray, saying, "O Mother Earth! keep in prosperity and protect the ploughmen and the oxen".[1]

The Parahiyas, a Dravidian tribe of Mirzapur, propitiate Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*) by pouring a little milk or liquor on the ground.[2] Some Pankas, in eating, throw a little bread and water on the ground as an offering to Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*).[3] Similarly the Dusadhs, a menial caste, put a little food on the ground in honour of the same goddess before they begin their meals.[4] The Koiris, a caste whose ethnical affinities are doubtful, are found both in the North-Western Provinces and in Bengal. At marriage they pour curds, mixed with pepper, sugar, and water, on the ground as an offering to Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*).[5] The Bhuiyas and the Kharwars, both Dravidian tribes of South Mirzapur, worship Mother Earth (*Dharti Mata*) in association with the collective village gods (*Dih*); the victim offered to her by the Kharwars on this occasion is a goat, which is sacrificed by the village priest (*baiga*).[6]

Chief festivals of the Dravidians intended to stimulate the fertility of Mother Earth.

In general, the chief periodical festivals of the Dravidians are celebrated for the purpose of stimulating the fertility of Mother Earth; hence they fall at the critical seasons of the farmer's year, to wit, at sowing and transplanting the rice, at reaping the harvest and at garnering it in the barn. At these festivals the youths and maidens dance and pat the ground with their hands in order to rouse the Earth-goddess to activity.[7]

Human sacrifices offered to the Earth-goddess by the Khonds of Orissa.

Far less innocent were the means which another Dravidian tribe adopted to attain the same end. The cruel human sacrifices, which down to the middle of the nine-

[1] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 32.

[2] W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (Calcutta, 1896), iv. 130.

[3] W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, iv. 118.

[4] W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, ii. 357.

[5] W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, iii. 290. As to the ethnical affinities of the Koiris, see *id.*, pp. 287 *sq.*; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1892), i. 500 *sq.*

[6] W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, ii. 80, iii. 247.

[7] W. Crooke, *Natives of Northern India*, p. 232.

teenth century the Khonds of Orissa offered to the Earth-goddess in order to ensure the fertility of their fields, have earned for them an unenviable notoriety among all the Dravidian tribes of India. The Khonds inhabit the hills of Orissa, a province of Southern Bengal, but they extend southwards into the Madras Presidency and westward into what used to be part of the Central Provinces.[1] The general character of the country is wild and mountainous ; it consists of a jumble of ranges covered with dense forests of *sal* trees (*Shorea robusta*). About two-thirds of it is believed to be occupied by jungle. The Khonds live in scattered villages built in clearings of the jungle, each surrounded by its patch of tilled land won from the virgin forest. They are a shy and timid folk and eschew contact with the inhabitants of the lowlands. They love their wild mountain gorges and the stillness of life in the jungle ; on the least alarm they fly to the most impenetrable recesses of the forest or the hills. They live by hunting and agriculture. Like many other savage tribes, they clear patches of land in the forest during the cold season, and set fire to the fallen timber in the hot weather. After the second year of cultivation the land thus reclaimed is abandoned, and a fresh clearing is made. By this primitive form of husbandry the people raise barely enough food to support them for half the year ; they supply their wants for the remainder by bartering turmeric, of which they cultivate large quantities. Like their kinsfolk, the Santals, the Mundas, and the Hos, they regard themselves, not without reason, as the true owners of the land, and they insist on their rights with a curious pertinacity.[2]

The Khonds and their country.

The Khond pantheon is said to number no less than eighty-four gods, of whom Dharni Deota, the Earth-god, is the chief. Deota is an Aryan word : the proper Khond name for a god is *Pennu*. The Earth-deity is now a male, but formerly she was a female, named Tari Pennu or Bera Pennu. We are told, and may readily believe, that there is nothing surprising in a god changing his or her sex for the opposite. A parallel case is the Earth-deity of Chhattisgarh,

The Earth-god of the Khonds called Dharni Deota (male) or Tari Pennu (female).

[1] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 397 ; E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), iii. 357 ; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), iii. 464.

[2] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 397.

who, like the Earth-deity of the Khonds, used to receive human sacrifices; he is either a god named Thakur Deo, or a goddess named Thakurāni Mai. The Earth-god of the Khonds is usually accompanied by Bhātbarsi Deo, the god of hunting. The Earth-god Dharni Deota is represented by a rectangular peg of wood driven into the ground, while the Hunting-god Bhātbarsi has a place at his feet in the shape of a piece of conglomerate stone covered with circular granules. Once in four or five years a buffalo is offered to the Earth-god in room of the human victim who used to be sacrificed to the grim deity. The animal is predestined for sacrifice from its birth, and is allowed to wander and graze on the crops at will. The stone representing Bhātbarsi is examined from time to time, and when the granules on it appear to have increased, it is known that the season for the sacrifice has come. In Kālāhandi a lamb is sacrificed every year, and strips of its flesh are distributed to all the villagers, who bury them in their fields as divine agents of fertilization, just as they used to bury pieces of the flesh of the human victims for the same purpose.[1]

Animals now sacrificed in room of human victims.

These human sacrifices offered to the Earth-goddess Tari Pennu[2] were formerly believed to ensure good crops and immunity from all diseases and accidents. In particular they were deemed essential in the cultivation of turmeric, the Khonds arguing that the turmeric could not have a deep red colour without the shedding of blood.[3] The sacrifice was

Motives for offering human sacrifices to the Earth-goddess.

[1] R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 473.

[2] The chief authorities on these sacrifices are the reports of the two officers, Major-General John Campbell and Major S. C. Macpherson, who were engaged in suppressing the custom. See Major-General John Campbell, *Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years' Service amongst the Wild Tribes of Khondistan* (London, 1864), pp. 52-58, etc.; Major S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India* (London, 1865), pp. 113-131. Compare Mgr. Neyret, Bishop of Vizagapatam, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxiii. (1851) pp. 402-404; E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 285-288; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 403 *sqq.*; E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes on Southern India* (Madras, 1906), pp. 510-519; *id.*, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), iii. 371-385; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 473 *sqq.* I have described the sacrifices in *The Golden Bough*, Part V. *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, i. 245 *sqq.* My description has been reprinted by Sir H. H. Risley, *op. cit.* i. 404 *sqq.*, and by Mr. R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 474 *sqq.*

[3] Major-General J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 56.

performed as a public oblation by tribes, branches of tribes, or villages, both at periodical festivals and whenever special occasions appeared to demand extraordinary propitiations. And besides these social or communal offerings, the rite was observed by individuals to avert the wrath of the goddess Tari from themselves and their families.[1] For example, if a child were carried off by a tiger, the parents would fly to the priest, bring him to their house, dash vessels of water over him, seat him in his wet garments, and set a cup of water before him. Into this cup of water the priest dipped his fingers thrice, smelled them, sneezed, and being filled with the deity spoke wildly in her name. If he declared that Tari had inflicted the blow as a punishment for the neglect of her worship, the father would vow to expiate his sin by sacrificing a human victim within the year.[2]

Distribution of the human flesh.

The periodical sacrifices offered by communities were generally so arranged that each head of a family was able to procure a shred of human flesh for his fields at least once a year, usually about the time when he laid down his principal crop.[3] The victims were commonly known as Meriahs; but in the Khond language the name for them was *Tokki* or *Keddi*. Persons of any race or age and of either sex were acceptable victims, with the exception of Brahmans, who, having been invested with the sacred thread, were perhaps considered already dedicated to the gods.[4] Grown men were the most esteemed because they were the most costly. Children were purchased, and brought up for years with the family of the person who ultimately devoted them to a cruel death whenever circumstances were supposed to require a sacrifice at his hands. They seem to have been treated with kindness, and in youth were kept under no restraint, but when they were old enough to be sensible of the fate that awaited them, they were placed in fetters and guarded. The victim must always be purchased. Criminals, or prisoners captured in war, were not deemed fit to be sacrificed. Most of the victims rescued by British officers

The victims called Meriahs; how they were procured and kept.

[1] Major S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, p. 113; E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, iii. 372 *sq.*

[2] Major S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 114.

[3] Major S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 113.

[4] S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 114.

had been sold by their parents or nearest relations, a practice which seems to have been very common.[1] To prevent the grown victims from running away, the purchaser sometimes promised not to sacrifice them, and sometimes he kept his word, gave the young man a wife, and indemnified himself for sparing the father by sacrificing the children of the marriage. At the same time, despite his promise, he reserved to himself the right of sacrificing the father also, if he thought fit to do so; and any pretext was good enough to justify the butchery, it might be a public calamity, a serious illness, a family festival, a marriage, or what not.[2] Further, as the wife of a Meriah was herself usually a victim, it was in the power and within the right of the owner to immolate the whole family, father, mother, and children, and the right was sometimes exercised without hesitation. Should a destined victim have intercourse with the wife or daughter of a Khond, the husband or father of the woman, far from resenting the deed as a blot on his scutcheon, returned thanks to the goddess for the honour she had done him. For so long as he lived, the victim was regarded as a consecrated being, and, if he was left at large, he was eagerly welcomed at every threshold.[3] Hence parents were not ashamed to sell their children for victims, believing that the beatification of their souls was certain, and that their death for the benefit of mankind was the most honourable that could fall to the lot of a mortal. Once, when a father had sold his daughter for a victim, her lover loaded him with curses and spat in his face. But a party of Khonds who witnessed the affair consoled the insulted father, saying, "Your child has died that all the world may live, and the Earth-goddess herself will wipe that spittle from your face".[4] But persons of riper years were kidnapped and sold by wretches who traded in human flesh.[5]

Sacred character of the victims.

[1] E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, iii. 373, quoting Russell, *Selections from Records, Government of India*, No. V. *Human Sacrifice and Infanticide*, 1854.

[2] Mgr. Neyret, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxiii. (1851) p. 403. The evidence here quoted by Monsignor Neyret is that of a missionary who visited the Khonds and recorded what he had learned from the lips of destined victims.

[3] S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 116.

[4] S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* pp. 115 *sq.*

[5] J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 50, 52 *sq.*; E. Thurston, *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*, iii. 373.

The priest (*zanee*) who officiated at the sacrifice might be of any caste, but he performed the preliminary ceremony of offering flowers and incense through the medium of a Khond child under seven years of age. This child, who bore the title of Toomba, was fed and clothed at the public expense, ate with no other person, and was subjected to no act deemed impure.[1] The priest and his assistant.

The mode of consummating the sacrifice varied in different places. The earliest report of it, dating from 1837, describes the custom as it was observed in the hill tracts of Goomsur, in the Madras Presidency. There the sacrifice was annually offered to the Earth, represented by the effigy of a peacock, in order to induce the deity to grant favourable seasons and good crops. It was preceded by a month of revelry. The people feasted, drank themselves drunk, and danced round the destined victim, who was decked with garlands. On the day before the rite he was stupefied with toddy and made to sit, or, if necessary, was bound to the foot of a post which bore the effigy of a peacock. The assembled multitude then danced round the post to music, and addressing the earth they said, "O God! we offer the sacrifice to you. Give us good crops, seasons, and health." After that they addressed the victim, saying, "We bought you with a price and did not seize you. Now we sacrifice you according to custom, and no sin rests with us." Next day, the victim having been again intoxicated and anointed with oil, every person present touched the anointed part of the victim's body, and wiped off the oil on his own head. All then marched in procession round the village and its boundaries, preceded by music and bearing the victim and a pole, to the top of which was tied a bunch of peacock's feathers. The sacrificial post was always placed near the shrine of a village deity called Zakaree Pennoo, who was represented by three stones, near which the brass effigy of a peacock was buried. When the procession with the victim reached the fatal post, a hog was killed in sacrifice, and its blood allowed to flow into a pit prepared for the purpose. The victim, still dead drunk if possible, was then seized and thrown into the pit, and his face was pressed down The modes of consummating the sacrifice.

[1] E. Thurston, *l.c.*

into the bloody mire till he died of suffocation, while all the while the music crashed. Then the priest cut a piece of flesh from the body, and buried it with ceremony near the effigy and the village idol as an offering to the Earth. Afterwards all the rest of the people similarly cut pieces from the body and carried the bleeding flesh to their respective villages, where part of it was buried in like manner near the village idol and little bits were interred on the boundaries. The head and face of the victim were not touched by the knives, and when the bones had been stripped bare of flesh, they were buried with the face and head in the bloody pit. When the ceremony was over, a buffalo calf was brought in front of the post, its forefeet were cut off, and the animal was left to welter in its blood till the following day. Then women, dressed and armed as men, drank, danced, and sang round the spot. The calf was killed and eaten, and the priest was dismissed with a present of rice and a hog or calf.[1]

The flesh of the victim buried.

Other modes of performing the sacrifice.

Elsewhere the mode of putting the victim to death was different, and often far less merciful. In some districts the acceptable place of sacrifice was discovered the previous night by persons who went about the village probing the ground with sticks in the dark, and the first deep chink which they lit upon was the spot marked out by the Earth-goddess herself for the slaughter. There, in the morning, a short post was inserted; around it four larger posts were usually set up, and in the midst of these the victim was placed. The priest, assisted by the chief and one or two of the village elders, then took the branch of a green tree cleft several feet down the middle. In the rift they inserted sometimes the chest and sometimes the throat of the victim, and with the help of cords twisted round the open extremity of the stake strove with all their strength to close it. Then the priest wounded the victim with his axe, whereupon the crowd threw themselves upon the wretch and stripped the flesh from his bones, leaving untouched the head and intestines.[2] According to another account the victim was

[1] E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, iii. 372-376, quoting Russell's Report, *Selections from the Records, Government of India*, No. V. *Human Sacrifice and Infanticide*, 1854. The original Report appears to date from 1837.

[2] S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* pp. 127 *sq.*

squeezed to death between two strong planks.[1] Sometimes he was cut up alive. This was the account given by the destined victims themselves to a Catholic missionary who visited the Khond hills while the custom was still in full vogue. They said that after the victim had been tied up, generally in a state of intoxication, the crowd danced round him, and then, at a given signal, rushed at him and cut off pieces of his living body; the flesh had to be quivering, warm, and bleeding; and as each man took his slice, he hurried away with it to the field which he wished to fertilize.[2]

The ways of performing the sacrifice in Chinna Kimedy.

Chinna Kimedy is a principality a little to the south and west of Goomsur. The plains are fertile, but the mountains are to a great extent covered with forest and jungle. In the lower hills water is comparatively scarce and the valleys present a poor and barren appearance. The distant prospect is that of range after range of mountains thickly mantled with forests of bamboo and the damur tree. These highlands are the home of the Khonds, who in the old days used to raid the peaceful inhabitants of the rich lowlands and then retreat with their booty into the inaccessible fastnesses of the jungle. Throughout the mountains human sacrifices were offered not to the Earth alone, as in Goomsur, but to a number of other deities whose favour was deemed essential to the life and happiness of the people.[3] Major-General Campbell, who took active measures for suppressing the barbarous custom, has described some of the ways in which these atrocities were perpetrated in the name of religion. He says: "One of the most common ways of offering the sacrifice in Chinna Kimedy, is to an effigy of an elephant, rudely carved in wood, fixed on a stout post, on which it is made to revolve. After the performance of the usual ceremonies, the intended victim is fastened to the proboscis of the elephant, and amidst the shouts and yells of the excited multitude of Khonds, is rapidly whirled round, when, at a given signal by the officiating Zani or priest, the crowd rush in, seize the Meriah, and with their knives cut the flesh

[1] J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 57 *sq.*

[2] Mgr. Neyret, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, xxiii. (1851) pp. 403 *sq.* Compare J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 56, 58, 120 *sq.*

[3] J. Campbell, *op. cit.* pp. 119, 120, 125.

off the shrieking wretch as long as life remains. He is then cut down, the skeleton burnt, and the horrid orgies are over."[1] In another report the same officer describes how "the miserable victim is dragged along the fields, surrounded by a crowd of half-intoxicated Khonds, who, shouting and screaming, rush upon him, and with their knives cut the flesh piecemeal from the bones, avoiding the head and bowels, till the living skeleton, dying from loss of blood, is relieved from torture, when its remains are burnt, and the ashes mixed with the new grain to preserve it from insects".[2]

The victims burned alive.

Even this was not the worst that a fiendish ingenuity, masked under the guise of religion, could do to augment the sufferings of a fellow-creature. We are informed that "in one tract the victim is put to death slowly by fire. A low stage is formed, sloping on either side like a roof; upon it the victim is placed, his limbs wound round with cords, so as to confine but not prevent his struggles. Fires are lighted, and hot brands applied, so as to make the victim roll alternately up and down the slopes of the stage. He is thus tortured as long as he is capable of moving or uttering cries; it being believed that the favour of the Earth-goddess, especially in respect of the supply of rain, will be in proportion to the quantity of tears which may be extracted. The victim is next day cut to pieces."[3]

Ritual observed over the mangled remains of the victims.

We have seen that when the human victim was cut up at the stake or other place of execution, care was taken to avoid injuring certain portions, particularly the head and bowels. These mangled remains were regarded as sacred and became the objects of a ritual observance, which is thus described by Major Macpherson, one of the British officers engaged in the suppression of the sacrifices. He says:

"The most careful precautions are taken lest the offering should suffer desecration by the touch or even the near approach of any persons save the worshippers of the Earth-goddess, or by that of any animal. During the night after the sacrifice, strong parties watch over the remains of the victim; and next day the priest and the Mullickos [the chiefs

[1] J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 126.

[2] Colonel (Major-General) Campbell, quoted by E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, iii. 376.

[3] Major S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, p. 130.

of the villages] consume them, together with a whole sheep, on a funeral pile, when the ashes are scattered over the fields, or are laid as paste over the houses and granaries. And then two formalities are observed which are held indispensable to the virtue of the sacrifice. The first is that of presenting to the father of the victim, or to the person who sold or made him over to the Khonds for sacrifice, or the representative of such person, a bullock, called the *dhuly*, in final satisfaction of all demands. The second formality is the sacrifice of a bullock for a feast, at which the following prayer is offered up.

Prayer to the Earth-goddess, Tari Pennu.

"After invoking all the gods, the priest says: 'O Tari Pennu! you have afflicted us greatly; have brought death to our children and our bullocks, and failure to our corn; have afflicted us in every way. But we do not complain of this. It is your desire only to compel us to perform your due rites, and then to raise up and enrich us. We were anciently enriched by this rite; all around us are great from it; therefore, by our cattle, our flocks, our pigs, and our grain, we procured a victim and offered a sacrifice. Do you now enrich us. Let our herds be so numerous that they cannot be housed; let children so abound that the care of them shall overcome their parents, as shall be seen by their burned hands; let our heads ever strike against brass pots innumerable hanging from our roofs; let the rats form their nests of shreds of scarlet cloth and silk; let all the kites in the country be seen in the trees of our village, from beasts being killed there every day. We are ignorant of what it is good to ask for. You know what is good for us. Give it to us.'"[1]

The victim's flesh carried in haste to the fields to fertilize them.

As the main object of the sacrifice to the Earth-goddess was to ensure the fertility of the ground which fell within her province, and as the principal agent of fertilization was the flesh of the human victim, every expedient was adopted in order to apply it as speedily as possible to the fields which were to be fecundated by its influence. We have seen that for this purpose the flesh ought to be quivering, warm, and bleeding.[2] Further, when a sacrifice took place,

[1] Major S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, pp. 128 *sq.*

[2] Above, p. 391.

deputies from all Earth-worshipping Khonds attended it, and no sooner had the victim been hacked to pieces than these deputies returned home in hot haste, each with his portion of dripping flesh. Sometimes, in order to ensure its rapid arrival, it was forwarded by relays of runners and conveyed with postal fleetness for distances of fifty or sixty miles.[1] Meantime in the village the priest and all who remained at home fasted rigidly till the arrival of the flesh. The bearer brought it rolled up in leaves of the *googlut* tree, and deposited it on a cushion of grass in the place of public assembly. There it was received by the priest and the heads of families. The priest divided it into two portions, one of which he offered to the Earth-goddess by burying it in a hole in the ground with his back turned, and without looking; but first he tendered an apology to the goddess for the smallness of the offering, explaining that the victim had been sacrificed by another village, and that they could not give her more. Then each man added a little earth to bury the offering, and the priest poured water from a hill gourd. The other portion of flesh the priest divided into as many shares as there were heads of families present. Each head of a house then rolled his shred of flesh in leaves, and after a mock battle with stones and mud, in which many heads were broken, he finally buried it in his favourite field, depositing it in the earth behind his back without looking.[2] In some places every man carried his portion of flesh to a stream which watered his fields, and there hung it on a pole.[3]

A section of the Khonds abhorred human sacrifices.

It is only just to the Khonds to mention that a certain section of them, who worshipped Boora Pennu, the God of Light, abhorred the human sacrifices offered by their kinsfolk to Tari Pennu, the Earth-goddess. They looked with horror on the country that was sullied by the blood of these sacrifices; and when they visited it between the seasons of sowing and reaping, they might not use its polluted fire, but had to obtain pure fire by the friction of wood; nor might they drink the water of its pools and

[1] E. B. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 288; Major S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 129.

[2] Major S. C. Macpherson, *op. cit.* p. 129.

[3] J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 182.

fountains until they had first fixed their arrows in them to symbolize their conquest of the defiled water. Similarly they might not sleep in a house until they had snatched and burned a few straws from its thatched roof to symbolize the conquest of the contaminated house by fire. They believed that death was often the penalty for neglect of these precautions.[1]

Animals substituted for human victims in the sacrifice.

After the suppression of human sacrifices, inferior victims were substituted in some places; for instance, in the capital of Chinna Kimedy a goat took the place of a human victim.[2] Elsewhere a buffalo does duty for a man. They tie the animal to a wooden post in a sacred grove, dance fast and furiously round it with brandished knives, then, falling on the live beast, soon hack it to shreds, leaving nothing but the head, bones, and stomach. In a few minutes every particle of flesh and skin has been stripped from the buffalo, while the men fight over it and struggle for every morsel of the carcase. As soon as a man has secured a piece of the flesh, he makes off with it at full speed to bury it in his fields, according to ancient custom, before the sun has set, and as some of them have far to go, they must run very fast. The crowd of women, who have witnessed the slaughter but taken no part in it, throw clods of earth at the rapidly retreating figures of the men, some of them taking very good aim. Soon the sacred grove, so late a scene of tumult and hubbub, is silent and deserted, except for a few people who remain to guard all that is left of the buffalo, to wit, the head, the bones, and the stomach, which are burned with ceremony at the foot of the stake.[3]

[1] Major S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India*, p. 131.

[2] J. Campbell, *op. cit.* p. 187.

[3] E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, iii. 381-385, quoting the *Madras Mail*, 1894.

CHAPTER X

THE WORSHIP OF EARTH IN AFRICA

The worship of the Sky eclipsed by the worship of the Earth in some tribes of Western Africa.

IN dealing with the worship of the sky in Western Africa we saw that in certain tribes of that region the divinity of the Sky is to some extent overshadowed and eclipsed by that of the Earth, who ranks as a still higher deity.[1] This holds good in particular of a group of tribes in Upper Senegal or the French Sudan, within the great bend of the Niger. Among them the Bobos inhabit the plain in the Mossi-Gurunsi country, to the east of the Black Volta river. They subsist mainly by agriculture, cultivating especially various sorts of millet.[2] As a rule, they till a patch of land for five years, then abandon it, and obtain fresh ground for tillage either by cutting down the virgin forest or by clearing away the trees and shrubs that have grown up on old fallows.[3] In every Bobo village there is generally, in addition to the village chief, a religious chief who bears the title of Chief of the Earth and is charged with the duty of offering sacrifices to the Earth and to the other local deities. He has no political authority and in that respect is subject to the village chief; but he is the necessary mediator between the people and the gods, and when he dies he is succeeded in his office by his son.[4] Like the other tribes of this region, the Bobos regard the Earth as a great and formidable deity who avenges breaches of the moral law. In particular he or rather she (for the sex of the deity appears to be feminine) dislikes to see human blood flowing and is

The Bobos: their worship of the Earth conducted by a religious chief called the Chief of the Earth.

Dislike of the Earth-goddess to see blood flowing.

[1] See above, pp. 90 *sqq.*

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan* (Paris, 1912), p. 30.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 42.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 61.

offended when it is spilt. Hence when a murder has taken place or a simple wound involving bloodshed has been inflicted, it becomes necessary to appease the angry deity by sacrifice, which is offered either by the Chief of the Earth or, where there is no such priestly authority, by the chief of the village. The culprit furnishes the victim or victims, it may be a goat, a sheep, a dog, or fowls, or several of these different sorts of creatures. After being offered to the Earth the flesh of the victims is consumed by the chief and the village elders. The wounded person or the family of the murdered man gets nothing, because the intention of the rite is not to compensate the wronged at the expense of the wrong-doer, but to pacify the anger of the Earth at the sight of bloodshed. But if an assault has not involved the shedding of blood, nothing is done, no atonement is needed.[1] In other tribes of this region the victims sacrificed to the Earth to pacify her wrath at bloodshed are usually oxen, one or more in number.[2] The place of sacrifice may be either the sacred grove or the holy place in the middle of the village.[3]

The communal houses (*sukala*) of the Bobos.

But sacrifices are offered by the Bobos to the Earth on many other occasions. The people live in large communal houses, massively constructed of beaten earth so as to present the appearance externally of fortresses. Each such communal house, called a *sukala*, is inhabited by the members of a single family in the larger sense of the word, including married sons, married brothers, the sons of married brothers, and so forth. The daughters at marriage quit the parental dwelling, but are replaced in it by the wives of the married sons. The head of the family presides as chief over the communal house. When the house becomes too small to lodge the growing family, it is enlarged; or, if that is not possible on account of the proximity of other houses, the younger brother of the head of the family goes away, taking some of the overflowing household with him, and settles in a new communal house elsewhere. Each of these family dwellings or fortresses usually stands by itself, at an interval

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 64 *sq.*, 73.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 101, 176, 177, 178, 227 *sq.*, 290, 313-315, 352.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 239.

of one or two hundred yards from its next neighbour, and the ground about each is planted with maize, hemp, and other plants with long stalks, so that in the rainy season every house is surrounded by a compact mass of lofty verdure, above which its massive walls rise like cliffs from a green sea. At that time of the year all the members of the household, whether married or not, work together on the family fields from early morning till late afternoon, with an interval of about three hours for rest and refreshment in the heat of the day.[1]

Sacrifices at sowing and harvest to the ancestral spirits and to a tree which represents the Earth and the Forest.

At the time of sowing the head of the family offers a sacrifice to the ancestral spirits in order that they may make the seed to sprout. The sacrifice is performed either at the door of the communal dwelling (*sukala*) or on the grave of the last head of the family. But in addition he offers a sacrifice to a great tree in the field. This tree represents both the Earth and the Forest; for in the mind of the black man these two great and mighty deities are practically fused into one, and the sacrifice offered to them in the form of the tree is intended to ensure their favour for the sowing. The victims presented to them and to the ancestral spirits on this occasion are fowls. At harvest some Bobos always sacrifice a fowl and millet flour to the ancestral spirits and the great tree as a thank-offering to the spirits and to the Earth for their bounty. Others, more cautious or economical, consult a diviner as to whether it is necessary to testify their gratitude to the higher powers in this fashion. If the sage says yes, they sacrifice the animal which he prescribes, it may be a sheep, a goat, or a fowl, to the ancestral spirits to thank them for having caused the crop to grow; for dwelling underground they can make the seed to sprout, and without their goodwill the earth would remain barren. The sacrifice is appropriately offered on the grave of the last head of the family dwelling (*sukala*). Thus we see the close relation which subsists between the divinity of the ancestors and the divinity of the Earth.[2] If there is a Chief of the Earth in the village, it is he who offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving after harvest; if not, the duty

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 41, 60.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 70 *sq.*

devolves on the chief of the village. The season of the harvest is November or December.[1]

Sacrifices to the Forest, when fires are kindled in it.

At the same time the Bobos sacrifice to the Forest, because at this season they burn the grass and kindle fires in the forest as a preparation for hunting, in order that the hunters may not be stung by serpents, devoured by leopards or lions, or incur other mishaps. The sacrifice, consisting of a fowl or a goat, is offered by the Chief of the Earth or the Chief of the Forest near the village or sometimes on a rising ground. But it is to be borne in mind that the blacks do not clearly distinguish between the Earth and the Forest. They say that the trees are the children of the Earth, and that when they sacrifice to a tree or a sacred grove they sacrifice at the same time to the Earth, their Mother. Thus the Forest, embracing all the vegetation that grows on the bosom of the Earth, is a daughter of Earth and as such is confused with her Mother. Hence, too, the members of Secret Societies in these tribes claim to be under the special protection of the Earth and carry leaves and branches in support of their claim.[2] This ascription of maternity to Earth appears to designate that deity as female, as a divine Mother rather than a divine Father.

Worship of the Earth among all the tribes of the Mossi-Gurunsi country.

The worship of the Earth as the great deity, or rather the greatest of the deities, prevails in similar forms among all the pagan tribes of the Mossi-Gurunsi country. All have their Chiefs of the Earth, who preside over the worship, and all offer sacrifices to the Earth on various occasions, such as at sowing and harvest, when human blood has been shed, and when rain is wanted, and indeed whenever the diviner declares that the Earth demands this mark of homage. All look upon the Earth as a just divinity, who does good to the virtuous and punishes the wicked. She is the abode of the dead, and it may be that from them she derives her power of being kind to the righteous and a terror to evil-doers.[3]

Oaths by the Earth.

The profound confidence which these tribes repose in

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 73.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 73 *sq.*

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 101, 104, 105, 106, 170, 176, 177, 190, and especially 194.

the Earth as a power which makes for righteousness is clearly manifested in the solemn oath which an accused man will swear by the Earth in order to attest his innocence. Thus when a man is charged with being a sorcerer and with having caused the death of somebody by "eating his soul," he is made to drink water in which is mixed a handful of earth taken from the place of sacrifice. Before he drinks he protests his innocence and calls upon the Earth to kill him if he lies. Should he be guilty, it is thought that the Earth will take him at his word and slay him on the spot; whereas if he is innocent, she will not harm a hair of his head.[1] Sometimes the accuser as well as the accused was obliged to drain the cup, and it was left to the Earth to decide between them by killing one or the other. One of the two always succumbed, or at least ought to do so; and if both perished, it was accepted as proof conclusive that both were sorcerers.[2] One of the nefarious tricks practised by sorcerers in this region is to turn themselves into hyenas and in that disguise to attack and kill anybody against whom they have a grudge. When that has happened, and the crime has been brought home to the criminal in the usual way, by the corpse bumping up against him when it is carried by two bearers, the accused has to swear his innocence by the Earth, and if he forswears himself, it is believed that the Earth will kill him within two days. But if he refuses to swear and prefers to confess that he really did turn into a hyena and as such despatched his victim, they put on his breast some earth, which is supposed to kill him the very next time he turns into a hyena.[3] One way in which the Earth slays a perjurer is by causing his belly to swell after he has drunk the water in which a little of the sacred soil has been dropped.[4]

Sacrifices to the Earth at clearing land for cultivation.

One of the occasions of sacrificing to the Earth is naturally at clearing land for cultivation. A man who is about to clear some ground in the forest goes to the Chief of the Earth or the chief of the village, and together they repair to the spot where the field is to be laid out. There they

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 194 *sq.*, 229, 289.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 375, 376.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 353.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 375.

sacrifice a victim, it may be a fowl, a goat, or what not, to the Earth, and sometimes also to the Forest; and having slaughtered the animal they cook and eat the flesh. After that the operation of cutting down the trees and bushes may proceed.[1]

Sacrificing to the Earth for rain in time of drought.

Another motive for offering sacrifice to the Earth is to obtain rain in time of drought. For rain is very important for all these agricultural tribes, and if it does not fall in sufficient quantity to ripen the crops during the rainy season, it is a public disaster. In such a case the village elders take a fowl to the Chief of the Earth, who sacrifices it to the Earth in their presence that the rain may fall, and together they eat the flesh. If still no rain falls, they repeat the sacrifice.[2] Sometimes, to encourage the Earth to do her best for them, the Chief of the Earth, in sacrificing the fowl, promises to sacrifice a goat also as soon as rain falls. Sometimes, cheered by the prospect, the goddess puts forth her power at once: the thunder rolls, the tornado bursts, and the rain pours down in torrents. At other times several days pass before the water of heaven descends, but it always falls sooner or later, which is not so miraculous as it might seem, because such sacrifices are only offered in the rainy season.[3] Among the Kassunas-Buras the Chief of the Earth sacrifices a dog, a sheep, a goat, or even an ox to the Earth for rain in the sacred grove or, if there is no sacred grove, at the place set apart for sacrifices to the Earth. Only the chief of the village and the elders may assist at the ceremony.[4] Among the Sissalas, when rain has fallen in great abundance, the Chief of the Earth thanks the goddess by seizing a fowl by the legs and dashing its head against the ground on the bare spot in the middle of the village which is dedicated to the worship of Earth.[5] Among the Nunumas, when a heavy shower has fallen, the head of a house (*sukala*) takes a fowl to his field. If there is a tamarind tree or another tree of a certain species in the field, he causes the blood of the fowl to

Thank-offerings to the Earth for rain.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 163, 328, 347.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 74 *sq.*; compare *id.* pp. 106, 196 *sq.*

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 241 *sq.*

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 327.

[5] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 358.

flow on the tree, but if there is no such tree he lets the blood pour on the ground. This is a sacrifice to the Earth and the Forest for a good crop.[1] If the harvest answers his expectations, the husbandman makes a mess of millet porridge, seasoned with fish sauce, carries it to his field, and pours part of it on the ground, while he thanks the Forest for having given him a good crop.[2]

Worship of the Earth among the Kassunas-Buras.

Among the Kassunas-Buras the Chief of the Earth sacrifices to the Earth for the whole village at the time of sowing, in order that the seeds may thrive. The sacrifice consists of millet flour, moistened with water, which he offers at or near the door of his family house (*sukala*); and after harvest he sacrifices to the Earth for the whole village to thank the goddess for her bounty.[3] But in this tribe the husbandman himself at sowing sometimes sacrifices in his field to the Earth and the Forest. If there is a great tree in the field, he pours the blood of the victim or smears a paste of flour on it; but if there is no tree, he applies the sacrificial blood or flour to a rock or stone; and if there is no rock or stone, he pours out the whole on the ground. The tree, the rock, or the ground is supposed to convey the offering to the deity.[4] More usually, however, in this tribe, the head of a family at sowing offers the sacrificial paste to the ancestral spirits at their little huts made of beaten earth in the large communal dwelling (*sukala*).[5]

Seat of the Earth-goddess on dunghills.

Among the Kassunas-Fras one of the favourite seats of the Earth deity, curiously enough, is on the great dunghills, sometimes twelve feet or more in height, one of which is usually to be seen at the door of the large communal house (*sukala*) of the village chief. In such cases the sacrifices to the Earth-goddess are offered to her on the heap of ordure.[6]

The Earth-goddess and the Forest-goddess.

While the Earth-goddess, as we have seen, is at times confounded with her daughter the Forest-goddess, the two great deities are sometimes distinguished from each

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 190.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 191.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 323.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 322 *sq.*

[5] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 322. For other sacrifices to Earth at sowing, see *id.* p. 587.

[6] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 315, 328.

other. Thus the Nunumas look on the Forest as the second great divinity and as closely related to the Earth, who indeed is her mother. At bottom she is righteous like her parent, yet is she of a sterner temper, more terrible, more mischievous. In the gloomier cast of her character we may trace the horror of the dense thickets and matted jungle, the haunts of wild beasts.[1] In some villages of the Kassunas-Fras there is a Chief of the Forest distinct from the Chief of the Earth, and at sowing he sacrifices one or two fowls to the Forest for the whole village in order that the seed sown may prosper.[2]

The office of Chief of the Earth: its origin.

In most villages of the Kassunas-Buras and probably of most other pagan tribes of the Mossi-Gurunsi country, there is a Chief of the Earth as well as a chief of the village. When a native was asked why there was this division of authority, and why the chief of the village could not be also the Chief of the Earth, he answered that the duplication dated from a time when two brothers had divided the power between them, the elder electing to be Chief of the Earth and the younger to be chief of the village, and that their descendants had inherited their respective offices.[3] In this explanation there may be an element of truth, if we suppose that the Chiefs of the Earth are representatives of the aboriginal race which was conquered and deprived of political predominance by a race of invaders and conquerors, the Mossis, who were content to leave in the hands of the ancient inhabitants those religious functions, and especially that worship of the Earth, which as newcomers they felt themselves incompetent to undertake.[4]

The worship of the Earth in Yatenga.

In Yatenga, a district of Upper Senegal or the French Sudan, to the north of the Mossi-Gurunsi country, the worship of the Earth is similar. There also the Earth (*Tenga*) is esteemed a powerful divinity, indeed the supreme divinity in conjunction with Wenda, the Sky. But she is much more terrible than he. She is the great champion of morality and justice, the great avenger of wrong. She is angered by all the crimes and faults that men commit,

The Earth-goddess the great champion of morality and justice.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 195.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 170, 240.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 309 *sq.*

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 594-596.

for example, by the shedding of blood; and if these crimes and faults are not redressed, she manifests her indignation by the various calamities which she has it in her power to inflict, as by withholding rain or sending famine, locusts, and disease. For example, if a girl is raped in the forest, it is necessary to sacrifice two goats and two fowls to the Earth-goddess, otherwise the rain will not fall and the millet harvest will fail; and the same thing holds good of other crimes. In particular, the Earth is the relentless foe of perjurers. The way of swearing by her is as follows. The Chief of the Earth (*Tengasoba*) of the village collects spear-heads, arrow-heads, old knives, and so forth, and puts them all in a hole dug in the ground. There he kills a fowl, goat, sheep, or ox, while at the same time he invokes the formidable divinity. Over the hole, thus watered with the blood of the victim, he compels the accused to swear his innocence and to call upon the Earth to kill him if he is not speaking the truth. If he is innocent, the Earth naturally spares him; but if he is guilty, she kills him within a given time. The Mossis and Foulses of Yatenga stand in great fear of the Earth-goddess (*Tenga*), and often prefer to make a clean breast of their misdeeds rather than forswear themselves in such conditions.[1]

Oaths by Earth.

Worship of the Forest in Yatenga.

In Yatenga the Forest is also worshipped. Before a patch of ground is cleared for cultivation, a sacrifice is offered to the Forest. The victim is generally a fowl, sometimes a goat, more seldom a sheep, and still more rarely an ox. At sowing also a sacrifice is offered. But indeed the Forest divinity is only one side of the Earth divinity; on closer analysis the two appear to coincide.[2]

The Chief of the Earth in Yatenga.

In every village of Yatenga the public worship is in the hands of the Chief of the Earth (*Tengasoba*, from *tenga*, "earth," and *soba*, "chief"). He is always a Foulsé by race, not a Mossi. The political chiefs (*tenganabas*) of Yatenga never themselves offer sacrifices, though they may command the Chiefs of the Earth to do so.[3] Towards the end of February the people hold a festival for the purpose of

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga* (Paris, 1917), pp. 376 *sq.*

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 377.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 389.

ensuring a good crop. They dance and beat drums for seven days and nights, and offer sacrifices to the ancestral spirits, to the Earth, and to the Sky.[1] Again, when a husbandman is about to sow his field, he calls in the aid of the Chief of the Earth (*Tengasoba*) of his village and gives him a fowl, a goat, and so forth to sacrifice to the Evil Spirits, to the Earth, and to the Forest. The animals are roasted and eaten on the spot by the Chief of the Earth and the man on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered. Similarly, if the harvest turns out well, a thank-offering of a fowl, a goat, and so forth, is presented in the fields to the same divine powers.[2]

The worship of the Earth among tribes in the interior of the Ivory Coast.

Further to the south the worship of the Earth is practised in similar form by the negro tribes in the interior of the Ivory Coast. Thus the Kulangos regard the Earth as their great divinity. They think that she hates murderers, thieves, sorcerers, and all who do ill. Often she is represented by a tree of which the great roots ramify like serpents on the ground. On these roots they place a block of massive red ferruginous stone, looking on the tree, the roots, and the stone as symbols or images of the Earth. If they can find two or three of these trees so near together that their roots are intertwined, so much the better; the red block is then placed in the middle of the group of trees and completes the material representation of the great divinity.[3] In the opinion of the Kulangos the Forest is a deity identical with the Earth, the mother of all vegetation.[4] Besides the civil chief there is in every Kulango village a religious chief, who bears the title of Chief of the Earth (*Sakotese*, from *sako*, "earth"). If anybody wishes to sacrifice to the Earth, he must call in the aid of the Chief of the Earth, who will offer the sacrifice for him. Every seventh day is a day of rest, on which no work may be done; different villages choose different days of the week for their rest-day or Sabbath. On the Sabbath they assemble in the courtyard of the Chief of the Earth, bringing palm-wine with them. The Chief of the Earth

The worship among the Kulangos.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 380.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou* (Paris, 1921), p. 175.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 176.

then prays that the Earth will be pleased to send a good crop, to protect the husbandmen, and to see that no evil befalls them. Then he offers a little of the palm-wine by pouring it out on the ground. After that all the people drink of the wine and enjoy this bounty of the divine giver.[1]

Sacrifices of the Kulangos to the Earth-goddess at burning the forest.

In the dry season, which falls in December and January, when the Kulangos are about to burn the withered grass and kindle fires in the forest, they hold a festival which lasts from one to seven days. They beat drums, dance, and eat fowls, after having cut the throats of the birds and offered the blood to the Earth-goddess. They thank her for having given a good harvest, and pray that in burning the forest they may not be hurt by the wild beasts that lurk in it. They also pray that in these conflagrations the villages may not catch fire, an accident which often happens, partly through the negligence of the natives and partly through the force of the parching north-easterly wind, the harmattan. If anybody sets fire to the forest before the festival and before the Chief of the Earth has offered the usual sacrifice, that functionary obliges him to pay a fine of a goat and two fowls, which he sacrifices to the Earth to appease her anger. The forest fires are kindled to assist the people in clearing ground for cultivation and to make hunting easier.[2]

Succession to the office of Chief of the Earth.

When the Chief of the Earth dies, he is succeeded in office by his nephew, the eldest son of his eldest sister. If the heir is too young to take office, the sacrifices to the Earth are offered by his mother till he is grown up, when he assumes the priesthood in succession to his uncle.[3] The office of village chief is also hereditary, but it passes at death to the chief's eldest son and not to his sister's son.[4] Thus the archaic rule of hereditary transmission to a sister's son is observed in succession to the religious office, while the succession to civil office is regulated by the more modern rule of hereditary transmission to a man's own son. Here as usual religion is essentially conservative.

The Abrons, another tribe in the interior of the Ivory

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 167.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, pp. 167 *sq.*

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 168.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 170.

Coast, also worship the Earth and offer sacrifices to her, especially when they are searching for gold.[1] They also sacrifice a victim, generally a fowl, to the Earth at clearing land for cultivation; the blood of the fowl is the share of the goddess, its flesh is eaten by the sacrificer. Further, they promise a fowl or a goat to the Earth if she gives them a good harvest; and when the goddess grants their prayer, they pay their vow.[2]

Worship of the Earth among the Abrons.

The Nafanas, another pagan tribe in the interior of the Ivory Coast, recognize two great deities, the Sky and the Earth, to both of whom they offer sacrifices. They regard the Earth as the guardian of morality. They think that the Earth resents an act of unchastity committed in the forest, and that in such cases it is necessary to offer a sacrifice in order to appease her anger; otherwise she will not allow the rain to fall or will send some other calamity.[3]

Worship of Sky and Earth among the Nafanas.

Among the Gagus, another tribe in the interior of the Ivory Coast, there is a Chief of the Earth (*toua-kini* or *toua-kéné*) in every village besides the ordinary civil chief. Before the French occupation these Chiefs of the Earth were more important and had more power than the civil chiefs. The French have altered the balance of power, making it incline to the side of the civil instead of the religious authority.[4] The Chief of the Earth used to offer sacrifices to the Earth for the whole village on a great stone that stood in his courtyard. He interpreted the wishes of the Earth, and could announce that the deity would have no work done on a particular day. Thus he could prevent the villagers from going forth to their labour, even when they wished to work, and they obeyed from fear of incurring the vengeance of the goddess. On the other hand, if anybody was wounded

The Chief of the Earth among the Gagus: his functions.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 353. In the gold-bearing districts of the Gold Coast, where the natives dug for alluvial gold, it was thought that the precious metal was brought up from the bowels of the earth by a local deity, who thus rewarded his worshippers for their offerings. When the supply of gold ran short, the people fancied that the god was angry or lacked labourers, so they sacrificed two or three slaves to him to assist him in his mining operations. See (Sir) A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast* (London, 1887), pp. 69 *sq.*

[2] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 309.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Bondoukou*, p. 379.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou, Centre de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris, 1924), p. 135.

or killed in the forest, the Chief of the Earth was responsible, and had to pay compensation to the wounded man or to the family of the deceased. Moreover, he had to sacrifice a young he-goat and a fowl to the Earth to pacify her wrath.[1] A murderer had to give a kid to the Chief of the Earth, who sacrificed it to the Earth to appease her anger.[2] Theft also excited the wrath of that righteous deity, and the thief was obliged to soothe her by the sacrifice of a kid, which was offered to her by the Chief of the Earth. If the theft had been committed in another village than that of the thief, the sacrifice of the kid was offered half-way between the two villages by the Chiefs of the Earth of both places and in the presence of the two village chiefs and the elders of both villages.[3] So when there had been war between two villages and some of the combatants had been slain, the Chiefs of the Earth of the two sides used to meet half-way between the two villages and sacrifice two young he-goats to the Earth, begging her to forgive the slaughter and the blood that had been spilled. The civil chiefs and the elders of the villages attended the ceremony and partook of the flesh of the kids. Thus peace was restored between the villages.[4]

Worship of the Earth among the Guros of the Ivory Coast.

The Guros are another tribe in the interior of the Ivory Coast who revere the Earth as a great divinity, the upholder of the moral law.[5] In respect of political evolution they stand at a somewhat higher level than the Gagus, for unlike the latter they have chiefs of tribes as well as chiefs of villages. Yet their social organization would seem to have remained essentially theocratic till it received a rude shock through contact with European civilization when the French invaded and conquered the country. For the tribal chiefs and their subordinates, the village chiefs, were rather priests than civil rulers; they all bore the title of Chief of the Earth (*Terezan*, from *teré*, "earth"), and their principal functions were religious, it being their duty to offer sacrifices to the Earth both periodically and on special occasions, when the wrath of the great goddess was excited by

Chiefs of the Earth: their duties.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 136.
[2] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 137.
[3] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 138.
[4] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 139.
[5] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 248.

breaches of the moral law, such as murder, theft, rape, and adultery. The tribal chiefs, in their capacity of Chiefs of the Earth, sacrificed to the Earth on behalf of the whole tribe; and the village chiefs, in their capacity of Chiefs of the Earth, sacrificed to Earth on behalf of the whole village.[1] The periodic sacrifices include those offered at clearing the land for cultivation, at sowing, and at harvest,[2] but some at least of these appear to have been offered by the heads of families rather than by the Chiefs of the Earth. Thus among the southern Guros it is the head of a family who at sowing offers a fowl to the Earth on an ant-hill,[3] and among the central Guros it is the husbandman himself who sacrifices a fowl and a little rice to the Earth at clearing land for cultivation.[4] But among the northern Guros it is the tribal chief or Grand Chief of the Earth in person who sacrifices to the Earth at harvest, while the people drink palm-wine and dance to the sound of the drums for two days.[5]

Sacrifices to the Earth.

Among the crimes which, in the opinion of the Guros, had to be atoned for by an offering to the Earth, homicide or simple bloodshed was generally expiated by the sacrifice of a male kid, sometimes two kids, offered either by the Chief of the Earth or by the oldest man of the village,[6] but sometimes in the case of wounds the victim was a fowl.[7] When somebody killed a person of another village, the village of the slain man or woman took up the quarrel and killed somebody of the homicide's village immediately, it might be in the very night that followed the murder. The chief of the tribe then intervened to stop reprisals. He exacted a kid from the family of the first homicide, and a kid from the family of the second homicide, and the Chief of the Earth of the one village, bringing with him the kid, met the Chief of the Earth of the other village, bringing the other kid, at a point between the two villages, both chiefs being accompanied by the

Crimes which had to be atoned for by sacrifices to the Earth.

[1] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, pp. 171, 182, 196 *sq.*, 243, 244.

[2] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, pp. 186, 197, 208, 225, 260.

[3] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 186.

[4] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 197.

[5] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 260.

[6] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, pp. 173, 175, 198, 199, 245.

[7] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 246.

inhabitants of their respective villages. At the place of meeting the great Chief of the Earth sacrificed the kids to the Earth, then seasoned the flesh with a medicine intended to prevent the repetition of such acts; the medicine consisted of a little earth or sand gathered at the spot where the sacrifice had just been offered to the Earth. The people of the two villages ate the flesh thus seasoned, and the quarrel was over.[1]

Sacrifices to the Earth at peace-making.

When a man killed a member of another tribe, no composition for the murder was accepted, and the result was a petty war between the tribes which might last two or three years. When both sides were weary of hostilities, the great Chief of the Earth of a third tribe interposed his good offices as mediator between the combatants. If they accepted his mediation, the tribe which had killed the first man gave a kid, which was sacrificed to the Earth by the great Chief of the Earth. The kid was cut in two, and the tribe which had killed most men in the war enjoyed the privilege of eating the fore-quarters of the animal, while the tribe which had shed less blood acknowledged its inferiority by consuming the hind-quarters of the victim.[2]

Sacrifices to the Earth in expiation of crimes.

Among the Guros the expiation for theft also consisted in the sacrifice of a male kid to the Earth. These people deemed rape a less serious offence than theft; the ravisher furnished a fowl, which was offered to the Earth as an atonement by the brother or husband of the injured woman.[3] Among the central Guros an adulterer had to give a kid and two fowls to the injured husband, who sacrificed them to the Earth; for if the wrath of the Earth at the adulteress were not thus appeased the woman's children would die.[4] Among the northern Guros the sacrifice of a fowl to the Earth was deemed sufficient to protect the guilty couple and the innocent husband from the natural consequences of the crime.[5] Another crime abhorred by the Earth was sorcery, the malignant art of killing a person by eating his or her soul. A convicted wizard or witch had to give a

[1] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 245.
[2] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, pp. 245 *sq.*
[3] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 174.
[4] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 195.
[5] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, p. 241.

goat and a fowl, or even a goat and a bull, which were sacrificed to the Earth in atonement of the horrid crime.[1]

Moral influence of belief in an Earth deity.

On the whole, among these tribes of Upper Senegal and the Ivory Coast the belief in the moral character of the great Earth deity appears to have exercised a powerful influence in enforcing respect for human life, for private property, and for the sanctity of the marriage tie.

Worship of the Earth-goddess among the Ashantis.

The Ashantis of the Gold Coast regard the Sky and the Earth as their two great deities. With their Sky-god, whose name is 'Nyame, we have already dealt.[2] The worship of the Earth-goddess is less well known, perhaps because it is not quite so obvious. No temple, no image is reared in her honour, but her power is none the less universally acknowledged. From the Earth, according to one of their most familiar myths, sprang some of the noblest of the Ashanti clans, for example the Oyoko, from whom the later Ashanti kings were descended. The Ashanti name for Earth is Asase Ya, that is, Old Mother Earth. The day dedicated to her worship was Thursday, and even now the Ashanti farmer will not till or break the soil on that day; down to some thirty years ago a breach of the rule was punished with death.[3] To this day the Ashanti farmer makes an offering to Old Mother Earth every year on the day when he begins to till his land. He goes to the field, taking with him a fowl and some mashed plantain or yam which his wife or sister has cooked for him. Arrived at the field where work is to begin, he wrings the fowl's neck, and letting the blood drip on the mashed yam and the earth he speaks as follows: "Grandfather So-and-so, you once came and hoed here and then you left it to me. You also Earth, Ya, on whose soil I am going to hoe, the yearly cycle has come round and I am going to cultivate; when I work let a fruitful year come upon me, do not let the knife cut me, do not let a tree break and fall upon me, do not let a snake bite me." He then cuts up the fowl and mixes the flesh with the yam. After that he throws portions of the mixture to the four points of the compass; and some of the remains he places

[1] L. Tauxier, *Nègres Gouro et Gagou*, pp. 204, 222.

[2] Above, pp. 97 *sqq.*

[3] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 214 *sq.*

in a leaf and deposits on the spot where he stood in making the offering.[1]

Earth-gods worshipped among the inhabitants of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.

Among the inhabitants of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast there prevails a worship of the Earth like that which we have found characteristic of the inhabitants of Upper Senegal or the French Sudan, and the resemblance is natural enough since, as I have already pointed out, the boundary between the two countries is not racial but merely political, the same tribes being settled on both sides of it.[2] While the natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast all recognize the existence of a great Sky-god or Supreme Being, whom they call Wuni, Weni, or We,[3] they in practice pay much more attention to the Gods of the Earth; for, like the ancient Chinese, they have not risen to the general conception of a single Earth-god, the personification of the whole earth, but believe in the existence of a great number of Earth-gods, each presiding over his own particular territory, like a human chief. For the most part every community possesses at least one Earth-god, and the names of the Earth-gods vary from place to place.

Sacred groves of the Earth-gods.

They are invisible, but abide in natural objects, such as clumps of trees, rocks of large size or remarkable appearance, and ponds; but clumps of trees are their favourite homes. At Kanjaga, for example, there are two such sacred groves. One of them is a small cluster of fan palms surrounding a single tall one, all of them growing out of a white ants' nest. The other is a group of short, long-leaved raphia palms such as grow in the marshes of the Ashanti forest. This latter grove, situated in a small dale otherwise bare of trees, presents a striking appearance, all the more so because these palms are elsewhere unknown in the district. The

Propitiation of the Earth-god after the commission of certain crimes, such as bloodshed and incest.

propitiation of the local Earth-god is deemed of the utmost importance, for, were it neglected, famine would surely follow as a consequence of the wrath of the offended deity. His righteous indignation is excited by the spilling of human blood on the ground, and by the commission of incest, for such acts are thought to pollute the soil. Even so seemingly trivial an act as the shooting of an arrow in

[1] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, pp. 215 *sq.*

[2] Above, pp. 94 *sq.*

[3] Above, p. 95.

anger suffices to disturb the equanimity of the sensitive deity. When such a deed has been done, or indeed anything untoward has happened, the particular Earth-god on whose domain the event took place must be appeased. The duty of making atonement devolves on the religious chief or priest who bears the title of *tindana*, *tengyona*, or *tengsoba*, meaning literally in every case the Owner of the Land or Chief of the Earth, as the corresponding official is commonly designated in Upper Senegal. It is his office to intercede between the people and the deity who gave them the land on which they live and the food which they eat. They say that no place is without its Chief of the Earth (*tindana*), and to this day, if people migrate into an uninhabited country in the hope of finding there a less niggardly soil than the one they have left behind them, they must obtain a grant of land from the Chief of the Earth who happens to be nearest to the new settlement. As usual, the atonement takes the form of sacrifices, which are ordered by the Chief of the Earth to be performed as the occasion arises. He also appoints the day when the new crops may be eaten by the community ; in short, he regulates all matters that concern the religion of the Earth-god.[1]

Soothsaying by means of stones.

The requirements of the deity are revealed from time to time by a soothsayer, who ascertains them by means of certain magical stones, which he shakes out of a bag. The divine wishes announced by this form of soothsaying are regularly gratified, or if not, so much the worse for the Chief of the Earth who is responsible for the omission. For example, the Chief of the Earth at Issa was informed by the soothsayer that his Earth-god desired a market to be re-established on the spot. The Chief delayed to comply with the divine injunction, and in consequence his son was badly mauled by a leopard as a warning to the Chief himself to be less dilatory in obeying the deity.[2] Through the communication which the soothsayer thus maintains with the higher powers his services are indispensable, not only in religious matters but in the conduct of everyday

[1] A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast* (London, N.D.), pp. 15-17, 24-26.

[2] A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, pp. 26, 30.

life; practically nothing is done without consulting him; the whole structure of society is in his hands. Yet the stones by which he works his wonders are neither rare nor beautiful: they are just hard, smooth stones which may be picked up anywhere in the fields. The natives believe that the stones have fallen from heaven, so they gather them and pile them on the ancestral graves, or rather on the little pyramids of mud which are set up to serve as altars in the worship of the dead. But sceptical Europeans are of opinion that these precious stones are simply disused hand-grinders.[1]

Worship of the Earth-goddess among the Ewe-speaking people of Southern Togo.

The Ewe-speaking people of Southern Togo, a province to the east of Ashanti, worship the Earth as a goddess under the name of Anyigba. One of the epithets applied to the goddess is Mother of the Little Children, for she it is who bestows offspring on people. She also makes the yams to grow and trade to prosper; she gives good luck in hunting and victory in war. It is in her power, too, both to inflict and to heal sickness and disease. One day of the week, named *asiamigbe*, is her rest-day or sabbath; therefore on that day it is unlawful to hoe the ground, to dig yams, and to thrust a stake into the earth, because such acts are clearly calculated to disturb her divine repose, if not to do her bodily injury. Anybody who hoes the ground on her sabbath will surely die. When a man is accused of theft or any other wrong and denies the accusation, he smites the earth with his hand, praying that the Earth may kill him if he is not speaking the truth; and if he is lying the Earth will surely kill him, for she can distinguish between truth and falsehood and make the distinction manifest. She is served by a priest whose office is hereditary, descending from father to son. The badges of the priest are two bells and a priestly cap woven of rushes.[2] If a man has sworn falsely by the Earth, his sin must be expiated by the sacrifice of two fowls and a goat, which the priest offers to the goddess, killing them without the use of a knife.[3]

Oaths by the Earth.

[1] A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, pp. 29-31.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 56 *sq.*, 59; *id.*, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), p. 716.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, pp. 62 *sq.*

When a wife is childless she goes with her husband to the priest of the Earth. Her husband gives the priest palm-wine, two hen's eggs, some tobacco, and four strings of cowries, and begs him to pray the goddess to cause his wife to conceive. The priest takes a little of the wine, names the goddess, gives the woman a chicken in her hand, and prays, saying, "This woman says she would like to have a child, and if she gets one she will come again and thank thee". Thereupon her husband says to the goddess, "I have made over my wife to thee, that thou mayest give her a child, which she shall bear. If she gets a child, I will come again and thank thee." The priest now commands the husband to inquire of his wife at home whether she has been guilty of any secret sin; for should she have sinned and not confess her fault before putting her hand in the sacrificial vessel of the goddess, she would surely die. If the wife agrees, she draws water next morning, and she and her husband go with the water to the priest. To him the woman confesses her secret sins. If she hides anything, she will surely die. After her confession the priest pours holy water into a vessel of the goddess, and causing the woman to kneel down pours the water over her. In the vessel are palm-kernels and pebbles, which consecrate the water. Then the priest withdraws, and the woman bathes in water taken from the holy vessel. After that the priest binds round the woman's neck a cord made of the bark of the raphia palm, with two cowries fastened to the end. The cord signifies that the woman has been made over to the goddess. Twice a week, during the time that she is gone with child, the woman must bring maize-meal to the priest in order that he may feed the goddess with it. This the woman must do down to the day of her delivery. When her child is born and the navel string has fallen off, the mother brings the infant to the priest, who prays over it, bathes it, and ties a cord of raphia-palm bark about its neck. If the child thrives, the mother bathes it twice a week (on *asiamigbe* and *domesigbe*) with water drawn from the holy vessel of the goddess. If the child is a girl, she will afterwards wash herself with water from the holy vessel. If the child is a boy, he will afterwards buy palm-wine for the

Wife's prayer to the Earth-goddess for a child.

priest, work on the priest's field, and run errands for him to the neighbouring towns.[1]

The place of sacrifice.

The place of sacrifice is a great mound of earth in which the quills of a porcupine and the feathers of a certain bird (*aklama*) are inserted. On this mound fowls are sacrificed to the goddess.[2]

Offerings to the Earth-goddess at the planting of yams.

When the time has come for planting the yams, all the towns bring each a piece of seed-yam to the priest of the Earth. The women give maize, earth-nuts, and cotton-seeds. On the day of the week called *domesigbe*, which, as we have seen, is the sabbath of the goddess, these gifts are brought to the priest. They are carried to the sanctuary in the forest, the seed-yams on three great wooden plates, and the maize, nuts, and cotton-seed in a basket; and on arriving at the holy place they are set down on the earth. When the people have returned home, the priest casts up two mounds of earth and plants the seed-yams in them. After that he gives notice that any one who pleases may plant his yams.[3]

Offerings to the Earth-goddess at the festival of the new yams.

At the annual festival of the new yams all the chiefs bring an offering of two yams apiece to the priest of the Earth. To these offerings he adds his own, and carries the whole to the house of the goddess, where he prays, saying, "To-day the life-yam has come into the town. Here is thy portion. Take and eat it. Thou must eat before we eat. May no man who eats yams to-day suffer pain." There in the house of the goddess the yams are left, and the priest returns home. Arrived there, he cooks some of the new yams, mixes them with oil, and strews them all about his house and courtyard. When he has done so, everybody is free to eat the new yams.[4]

Offerings and prayers to the Earth-goddess for rain.

In time of long drought the servants of the chiefs go about the town catching fowls. When they have caught about a score, they bring them to the house of the Earth-

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 58.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, pp. 58 *sq.*, 59 *sq.*

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 60.

[4] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Südo-Togo*, p. 60. Among the Ho's of Togo the Earth-deity to whom the new yams are offered is a male god named Agbasia. See J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stamme*, pp. 304-310, 340; *The Golden Bough*, Part V. *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii. 58-62. In a prayer to Agbasia the priest addresses him as "Our Father" (J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 308).

goddess on her sabbath (*domesigbe*). There the priest prays over the fowls, saying, "Because it rains no more, the elders have stolen these fowls for thee. Grant therefore that the rain again falls on the crops and not upon men." In thus praying the priest holds up a cock and a hen. After the prayer he kills them both by dashing them on the ground. The flesh of the birds is then cooked and eaten, and at the conclusion of the meal the worshippers drink palm-wine.[1]

Offerings and prayers to the Earth-goddess to avert disease.

When the chiefs hear that an infectious disease is raging, they go together to the priest of the Earth. He prays, saying, "We have heard that an evil disease is raging. Let it not come to us. If thou wilt hinder it from coming to us we will give thee a goat." Next morning the whole town is swept and the sweepings are carried outside the walls. On the third day all the fires in the whole town must be extinguished, and the ashes are carried out of the town by women on broken wooden plates. The chiefs take thick clubs, wrapt in creepers, fasten a toad and the fruit of the calabash-tree to a fresh palm-leaf, and going out into the forest throw away the leaf and its contents. On their return fires may again be lit in the town.[2]

Offerings and prayers to the Earth-goddess in time of war.

On the outbreak of war the chiefs gather to the priest of the Earth, and he prays to the Earth, saying, for example, "The men of Agate are about to go to war. If nobody on our side falls, we will give thee a goat." Then the warriors take a white fowl, go out into the street, hold up the bird, and pray, saying, "To-day thy children are about to go to war and have made a sign for themselves. Therefore be round about them, and if none of us falls in the war, we will come and thank thee." After praying thus each man plucks a feather of the white fowl and fastens it to his gun. The servants of the chiefs kill the fowl and eat it, after which the warriors march away to the battle.[3]

Worship of the Earth-god Mkissi nssi or Bunssi among the Bafioti of Loango.

We have seen that the Bafioti of Loango believe in a great deity named Zambi or Nsambi, who created men but,

[1] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 60.

[2] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, pp. 60 *sq.* Among the Hos of Togo a similar ceremony is annually performed before the eating of the new yams. See J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, pp. 305-307; *The Golden Bough*, Part VI. *The Scapegoat*, pp. 134-136.

[3] J. Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Süd-Togo*, p. 61.

wearied by their importunity, retired from earth to heaven, where he now dwells aloof from human affairs and occupies himself but little with the weal and woe of his creatures.[1] However, they think that at his departure to a higher sphere the deity did not leave this lower world entirely forlorn. He either left behind him or sent down from above a certain being named Mkissi nssi or Bunssi, whose name and attributes appear to mark him out as an earth-god, though the native opinions about him are various and conflicting. His name Mkissi nssi is compounded of *mkissi*, "magic", and *nssi*, "earth"; so that literally it signifies "Magic-earth". His other name Bunssi is sometimes explained as meaning *mama ma nssi*, that is, "Mother Earth", from *mama*, "mother", and *nssi*, "earth". He or she appears to be an embodiment of the earth viewed in its productive and fertilizing aspect. Like Nsambi himself, he is invisible and intangible; but, unlike Nsambi, he dwells in the earth and comes up occasionally to the surface, especially at places where in former times public fires were maintained on behalf of the State.[2] His function is to look after the welfare of all that dwell on Nsambi's earth, particularly to regulate the fertility of the ground and the distribution of rain. This he does chiefly by requiring the strict maintenance of the sacred taboos (*china*), which are nothing but the commands and prohibitions issued by the great god Nsambi himself. Breaches of these ordinances bring down misfortunes either on the guilty district or on the whole country, and for the sake of the general weal they must be punished and expiated. Closely connected with these beliefs are the notions of the holiness of the earth and the importance of its fertility, which, for an agricultural people like the Bafioti, is an essential condition of life.[3]

Native opinions as to the Earth-god.

The native opinions about the Earth-god Mkissi nssi or Bunssi are, as we have seen, various and conflicting. The old orthodox opinion would seem to be that he is one and all powerful and everywhere the same; but others hold that there are many independent Earth-gods differing from each

[1] Above, pp. 136 *sqq.*

[2] E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2 (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 276 *sq.*

[3] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, p. 277.

other in power, and that every district has its own particular Earth-god, each with his own special name. Some believe that the Earth-god was established by the great god Nsambi; others say that he has nothing to do with Nsambi. Some think that he no longer exists or at least is no longer active, that like Nsambi he has retired from business and withdrawn into the depths of the earth or somewhere else far away.[1]

The sanctuaries of the Earth-god in Loango.

In the old days, when native kings reigned in Loango, the sanctuaries of the Earth-god were also the places where the king's sacred fires burned perpetually. Such spots are still well remembered by the people, who will not pass them by without doing them reverence.[2] At the present day the sanctuaries of the Earth-god are found either in the forest remote from dwellings or in the villages, sometimes surrounded by a clump of trees, sometimes standing on the edge of a thicket. They all contain a building of some sort, varying from a solitary and much weathered hut to a more elaborate structure in which a number of fetish-men or magicians may be lodged. The materials used in their construction are largely papyrus stems and palm branches; the wooden posts and beams are often carved and painted red and black; the walls, made of slim papyrus stems set close together, are sometimes decorated with graceful patterns formed by dark stalks of plants or creepers, which are woven in and out of the papyrus stems so as to produce the effect of embroidery. The simplest form of sanctuary consists of a square or oblong hut, closed on all sides and built on a floor of beaten earth. In a single place Dr. Pechuël-Loesche saw a circular hut, open on all sides, with a thatched conical roof supported on seven round wooden pillars. The existence of such a round hut, dedicated to the Earth-god Bunssi, is all the more remarkable because the nearest round huts are said to be situated far to the north in the Cameroons mountains.[3]

Simplicity of the sanctuaries.

The sanctuaries of the Earth-god are characterized by great simplicity. No sacred animals are kept in them, and

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 278, 279.

[2] E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 278, 281.

[3] E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 282-284.

no bloody sacrifices are offered; no one may hunt in the neighbourhood. At the entrance of some, but not all, of the huts, an antelope horn or a leaden funnel is stuck in the ground as a receptacle for the palm-wine or rum which worshippers offer to the Earth-god.[1]

The priest of the Earth-god.

The priest who is charged with the guardianship of the sanctuary and with the performance of all rites at it must be a man of sound and unblemished body who has never shed blood. He receives no regular salary, but is maintained by the offerings of the faithful, for whom he performs the offices of religion. He has no official costume and no official dwelling; he resides in the village, and for days or weeks together may not go near the sanctuary of which he has charge. None but he may enter the holy building: he must celebrate the rites between sunrise and sunset: he must have fasted and abstained from women since the evening before. However, these rules are said to be now not everywhere strictly observed. From a variety of indications it is inferred that in the regal period the priests of the Earth-god were trained smiths and workers in metal. Nothing is known of stone tools in Loango. When the priest enters the holy house and shuts the door behind him to convey the petition of the worshipper to the deity, he rings an iron hand-bell, which, like all his priestly furniture, must be of native workmanship.[2]

Prayers to the Earth-God for rain.

In time of severe drought the people go on pilgrimage to one of these sanctuaries to pray for rain. Arrived at the holy place they take up position on three sides of a square facing towards the house of the god, and wait in silence till the sun rises. Then they all begin to pray in a loud voice, their prayer being accompanied by the beating of drums and the blowing of horns, while the priest is officiating and ringing his bell in the house. So it goes on without a break till sunset, or until the people, who must be fasting, are completely exhausted. Such assemblies are said in times of great distress to have numbered many thousands.[3]

Other occasions of consulting the priest.

Different and more complicated are the rites of the sanctuary when the pilgrims come to ask for help in their

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, p. 284.

[2] E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 285-287.

[3] E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 288 *sq.*

private affairs or to do penance for sins which they have committed by breaking taboos. The occasions which induce them thus to go on pilgrimage may be long-continued sickness, or inexplicable misfortunes, or the fear of coming evils. The priest consoles and encourages the sick, the dejected, and the sinful by a variety of antics, clashing iron instruments of antique patterns or scraping the rust off them into water, cutting capers and prancing round the pilgrims, puffing at them, stroking them, painting red, yellow, and white lines, dots, and circles on their bodies, or setting vessels full of water on their heads and observing the ways in which the water overflows. Finally, he assures them that all is now well and dismisses them with advice for their conduct in the future.[1]

Penance done by sinners at the sanctuary of the Earth-god.

Among the sins which in the native opinion are fraught with serious consequences are sexual offences, and the guilty couple must do penance at a sanctuary of the Earth-god. They must fast from meat and drink for twenty-four hours, then appear at sunrise at the holy place, their bodies clean shaven and smeared with charcoal, their heads and shoulders sprinkled with ashes. They bring two new mats and a pair of unblemished fowls, which must be either pure white or pure black in colour; the man brings the hen, and the woman the cock. The mats are unrolled before the door of the hut, and the sinners take their stand on them, while the priest with a piece of iron traces a circle about them on the ground. Next he tethers the cock to the ankle of the woman and the hen to the ankle of the man, but so that the fowls can approach each other, for from the behaviour of the birds one to the other omens are said to be drawn as to the future weal or woe of the guilty pair. The sinners now make their confession in a low voice, and the priest afterwards repeats it in the holy hut, ringing his bell at the same time. The ceremony of confession is repeated thrice, at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. All that time, till darkness falls, the pair must stand silent and motionless, exposed to the jeers, the witticisms, and the reproaches of passers-by or of the villagers who have gathered to witness their penance. It is related that on one such occasion the woman, unable to bear the shame of the exposure, fled from the spot, but the angry

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, p. 289.

crowd pursued and killed her, and then put her paramour also to death.[1]

Purification of sinners.

Many of these penitents are said to be obliged to appear at the sanctuary for three days in three successive months, after full moon, and to creep on all fours or to hop on one leg thrice round the holy hut. And by way of cleansing them from their sin earth is thrown on them, dust is puffed at them, and they are sprinkled with rust scraped from a sacred implement of iron. Other modes of purification are sprinkling the sinners with salt water and forcing them to leap over wisps of burning grass. It is probable that the rites of penance vary with the nature and gravity of the misdemeanour.[2] The reason of the extreme seriousness with which the natives of Loango regard breaches of sexual morality is that such offences are supposed by them to blight the fertility of the earth, especially by stopping the rainfall.[3] Similar notions prevail and lead to similar practices in other parts of Africa. Thus among the Chagga of Mount Kilimanjaro almost the most heinous crime was deemed sexual intercourse between a girl and an uncircumcised lad, because such an offence was thought to bring misfortune on the land. Hence, if the girl was got with child, the guilty pair were laid one on the top of the other and staked to the ground. This was done above or below the cultivated land, and the corpses were left unburied.[4]

Why sexual crimes are deemed grave.

Hunters bring the heads of game to the Earth-god.

In Loango hunters are expected to bring to the priest of the Earth-god the fresh heads of the animals which they have killed, along with the tongues. The flesh is eaten at the sanctuary, and the priest adds the skull to the heap of mouldering skulls and bones which gradually accumulates at the holy place. The reason alleged for the custom is that the animals live on the products of the earth. A hunter who omits to bring a fresh head of game to the sanctuary of the Earth-god is bound, according to the priests, to do penance for the omission; for they say that by his negligence he has injured the earth and lost his luck

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 290 *sq.*

[2] E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 291 *sq.*

[3] J. G. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*, Second Edition (London, 1913), pp. 54 *sqq.*

[4] Ch. Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and its People* (London, 1924), p. 296.

in the chase.[1] It might naturally be thought that the first-fruits of the ground would be offered at the sanctuaries of the Earth-god, but there is no strict rule on the subject, and such offerings are said to be few in number and small in quantity.[2]

Worship of the Earth-god Kitaka among the Baganda.

The Baganda, the once powerful nation who give their name to the Uganda Protectorate, used to worship an Earth-god whom they called Kitaka. He had a temple in Busiro, where his will was interpreted by a prophet. When the king contemplated putting to death people who had been condemned by the other gods, he would often send to Kitaka and ask him to destroy the ghosts of the doomed men. Speaking in the name of Kitaka, the prophet undertook to destroy both their bodies and their spirits, so that their ghosts could not return to harm the king. Kitaka was consulted by women when they wished to ensure the fertility of a garden which they had just laid out; moreover, prayers and offerings were addressed to him in order that the land might yield abundant crops.[3]

Musisi, another Earth-god of the Baganda.

But the Baganda also believed in another Earth-god named Musisi, whom they held to be responsible for earthquakes. He had his temple on one of the Sese Islands in Lake Victoria Nyanza, but he was believed to dwell in the centre of the earth and to cause earthquakes when he moved about. At such times anybody who had fetishes at hand patted them and asked the god to keep quiet; pregnant women patted their stomachs to prevent the god from taking either their own life or that of their unborn child; others raised a shrill cry to remind the deity of their existence and to induce him to remain still. He was not a god who was much consulted by the people, but they made him gifts lest he should be angry and disturb the earth by his movements.[4]

Worship of the Earth-god Kitaka among the Basoga.

In the central district of Busoga, the country which adjoins the territory of the Baganda on the east, the Earth-god Kitaka is believed to be the cause of earthquakes. The Basoga think that the god is present in the form of a

[1] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, pp. 291 *sq.*

[2] E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Die Loango-Expedition*, iii. 2, p. 292.

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 312 *sq.*

[4] J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, pp. 313 *sq.*

great stone or rock. Accordingly they build a shrine beside the rock to receive offerings, and they go thither to pray to the deity. Sometimes men disappear from the district and are said to have been spirited away by the god. Fowls and goats are sacrificed at the rock; the blood is poured out on the ground beside the shrine, and the head of the victim is buried close by. The worshippers cook and eat the meat in the vicinity of the rock.[1]

How the Earthquake god Kitaka passes through Busoga with his sinister follower Kibaho.

The Basoga say that sometimes Kitaka journeys through the land and causes the earth to quake on his passage. He is always followed by another god named Kibaho, who is greatly feared, because plague or sickness of some kind usually dogs his steps, unless it can be averted. So when a tremor of the earth betrays the passage of Kitaka, the medicine-men set to work to ward off the evil which his follower might bring in his train. They say that Kitaka passes from Mount Elgon to Lake Kyoga; hence when an earthquake is felt they call on the people to cut a path for the god Kibaho, in order that he may pass by as swiftly as possible. So in each district the people cut down the grass and shrubs and smooth a road some ten feet wide, while others bring food and place it at the boundary of their land to be carried on by the inhabitants of the next district. This road is said to expedite the god and to carry him through to Lake Kyoga without doing any harm. The people of the next district take up the work and pass on the victuals to their boundary; and in this manner the path is made and the food carried on, with additions from each district, until the shore of Lake Kyoga is reached. There a canoe is ready, and the food is put into it and rowed to an island, where a priest takes the food and offers it to the god by scattering it upon the water. This offering averts the plague and death that otherwise would almost certainly have attended the passage of the Earthquake-god Kitaka and his dreadful follower.[2]

Belief of the Banyankole in the Earthquake gods Omusisi and Nabinge.

Among the Banyankole, a pastoral people whose country adjoins that of the Baganda on the south-west, the Earthquake-god was originally known as Omusisi, a

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu* (Cambridge, 1915), pp. 250 *sq.*

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, p. 251.

name which is clearly identical with Musisi, the appellation of the Earthquake-god among the Baganda. But of late years some people among the Banyankole have claimed to be the prophets of another Earthquake-god called Nabinge. These prophets or priests built a hut and hung about in it things that rattled when they were shaken. So when anybody came to consult the oracle the priests made a noise like the rumbling of an earthquake and shook the hut till it seemed to be falling down. This so terrified the applicants that they willingly made offerings to the priests in order to avert the threatened danger.[1]

Worship of the Earthquake-god Nabinge among the Bakyiga.

The worship of this Earthquake-god Nabinge has in recent years spread also among the Bakyiga, a large tribe of the Bantu stock who inhabit the mountainous region called Kigezi to the east of Lake Edward. They are a wild and truculent people, who set little value on human life, and in their mountain fastnesses long maintained their independence against all comers. The country inhabited by these savages, with its wonderful mountain scenery, its tropical luxuriance of vegetation, its dashing waterfalls and calm lakes spangled with water-lilies and embosomed in forests of grand timber, is said to be the most beautiful in Eastern Africa.[2] Like the Basoga, the Bakyiga associate the outbreak of plague or other sickness with the Earthquake-god and think that on such occasions it is necessary to appease his wrath. So the headman of the village builds a shrine and calls upon the people to bring offerings of goats and sheep, which, according to their number, are exchanged for a cow or cows. One cow is sacrificed, and the blood, heart, and liver are the portion of the deity; the blood is allowed to run on the ground, while the heart and liver are placed in the shrine. Some of the meat is cooked and eaten on the spot, and the people carry the rest to their homes.[3]

Offerings to rock-spirits at earthquakes.

On the eastern slope of the great Luenzori range, between Lake Edward and Lake Albert, there are at various places boiling springs, where the natives have long been accustomed to take vapour baths as a cure for fever or

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Banyankole* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 25.

[2] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu* (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 162 *sq.*

[3] J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, p. 166.

rheumatism. At one place the bubbling of the water under a rock can be both heard and felt; the people say that a rock-spirit dwells there and makes his presence known by this noise. They used to make offerings here whenever a severe shock of earthquake was felt. These shocks are frequent and sometimes severe.[1]

Worship of the Earth-spirit Irungu among the natives of Kiziba.

The natives of Kiziba, a district to the west of Lake Victoria Nyanza, believe in the existence of an Earth-spirit called Irungu, who, at the bidding of the Supreme Being Rugaba or of a powerful spirit named Wamara, fashioned the earth, the mountains, and the woods, and peopled them with animals. For the use of this Earth-spirit every householder builds two miniature huts of grass or sticks to right and left of the doorway of his own hut; in shape the little huts resemble the big one; their doors must face in the same direction. In each of the tiny huts is placed a potsherd with an offering of bananas for the spirit. Irungu presides not only over the house but also over the forest trees that grow on the edge of the banana groves, also over any rivers that may flow there, and over the birds. It is especially necessary to propitiate him when one of his creatures, the wild animals, has been killed either in the chase or by accident. All who have been concerned in the slaughter, sometimes amounting to hundreds of men, assemble before the house of the Earth-spirit, with the dead animal lying in their midst. The priest comes forth with the severed bloom of a banana-cluster in his hand. This he cuts in two with a knife, inserts wood of various sorts between the halves, and then presses the whole together. After that he kills a fowl, sticks it on a spit with the banana-bloom, carries it into the hut of the Earth-spirit, and there roasts it. As soon as they perceive the smell of the roast fowl the hunters form in line, and, preceded by the priest, stride over the dead game. Thus the anger of the Earth-spirit at the slaughter of his creature is appeased. Such an expiatory rite is called by a name which means "healing" (*kutamba*).[2]

[1] J. Roscoe, *The Soul of Central Africa* (London, etc., 1922), p. 124.

[2] H. Rehse, *Kiziba, Land und Leute* (Stuttgart, 1910), pp. 126, 127 *sq.*, with the illustration on p. 128.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORSHIP OF EARTH IN AMERICA

MANY of the American Indians appear to have personified the Earth as their mother and to have supposed that their first ancestors issued from it as a child from the womb. Thus with regard to the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, who formerly inhabited Pennsylvania, we are informed by an old observer that "the Indians consider the earth as their universal mother. They believe that they were created within its bosom, where for a long time they had their abode, before they came to live on its surface. They say that the great, good, and all powerful Spirit, when he created them, undoubtedly meant at a proper time to put them in the enjoyment of all the good things which he had prepared for them upon the earth, but he wisely ordained that their first stage of existence should be within it, as the infant is formed and takes its first growth in the womb of its natural mother. . . . The Indian mythologists are not agreed as to the form under which they existed while in the bowels of the earth. Some assert that they lived there in the human shape, while others, with greater consistency, contend that their existence was in the form of certain terrestrial animals, such as the ground-hog, the rabbit, and the tortoise." [1]

The Earth personified as Mother by the American Indians.

Belief of the Delaware Indians that their ancestors came forth from the earth.

Beliefs of the same sort prevailed also among the Iroquois, as we learn from the evidence of a Mohawk chief which was taken down in January 1743 by the Rev. Christopher Pyrlaeus. It runs as follows:

Similar belief among the Iroquois.

[1] Rev. John Heckewelder, "An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the neighbouring States", *Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society*, i. (Philadelphia, 1819) pp. 241 *sq.*

"*Tradition.* That they had dwelt in the earth where it was dark and where no sun did shine. That though they followed hunting, they ate mice, which they caught with their hands. That *Ganawagahha* (one of them) having accidentally found a hole to get out of the earth at, he went out, and that in walking about on the earth he found a deer, which he took back with him, and that both on account of the meat tasting so very good, and the favourable description he had given them of the country above and on the earth, their mother concluded it best for them all to come out; that accordingly they did so, and immediately set about planting corn, etc. That, however, the *Nocharauorsul*, that is, the *ground hog*, would not come out, but had remained in the ground as before."[1]

Belief of the Ottawa Indians in Earth, the Great-grand-mother of All.

The Ottawa Indians, a branch of the great Algonkin family, believed that a certain being, whom they called Na-na-bush, created the ground in obedience to the commands of the Great Spirit, and further that, as a benevolent intercessor between the Supreme Being and mankind, he procured the creation of the animals, in order that their flesh might serve men as food and their skins as raiment. He also sent down roots and medicines of sovereign power to heal the sicknesses of mankind and in times of hunger to enable them to kill the wild beasts. All these things, destined for the benefit of the human race, were committed to the care of Me-suk-kum-mik O-Kwi, or the Earth, the Great-grand-mother of All; and in order that men and women should never call upon her in vain, the Old Woman was directed to remain constantly at home in her lodge. Hence it is that good Indians never dig up the roots of which their medicines are made without at the same time depositing in the earth something as an offering to Me-suk-kum-mik O-Kwi. They also sing to her the songs in which they relate the creation of the earth and animals and all other good things by Na-na-bush.[2]

[1] Quoted by J. Heckewelder, *op. cit.* pp. 243 *sq.* The Mohawks were a tribe of Iroquois: their proper name was Caniengas.

[2] *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, prepared for the press by Edwin James, M.D. (London, 1830), pp. 192 *sq.* That the Indians among whom Tanner lived as a captive were Ottawas appears to follow from his statement (p. 36) that his captor was a kinsman of Net-no-kwa, the principal chief of the Ottawwaws (Ottawas).

Belief of the Winnebagos in an Earth-goddess whom they call Grandmother.

The Winnebagos, an Indian tribe of the Siouan stock, similarly look upon the earth as a goddess. She is indeed one of the most ancient deities of the tribe, and appears as the Grandmother in some of their oldest myths. Offerings are made to her at the various ceremonies, particularly at the medicine-dance and the war-bundle feast. However, in the myths she is represented as a being nowise interested in furthering the welfare of mankind; on the contrary, she is spoken of as the sister of those bad spirits who are bent on destroying the human race.[1] She is generally known either as Earth (*mana*) or simply as Grandmother (*kunika*). Her connexions are almost exclusively with peace. She played a far greater part in the earlier than in the later phases of Winnebago religion, and she figures prominently in the stories of transformation, in which her grandson the Hare is also an important personage. In the myths which are told to explain the origin of rites her character is changed from that of a somewhat indifferent, and at times hostile, deity to that of a beneficent all-loving Mother-earth.[2]

Winnebago prayers to the Earth-goddess.

The following are specimens of Winnebago prayers addressed to the Earth-goddess at what are called war-bundle feasts. Thus after offering tobacco, with prayers, to the Moon and the Morning Star, the officiant prays as follows: "To you, grandmother, the Earth, do we offer tobacco also. We pray for victory in war, and for all the medicines that are necessary to attain it, so that we may bind ourselves with medicine; that we may use the flowers of the earth for paint—all that is red and all that is blue—this we ask of you. Should there be anything better, we ask that you arrange it so that we obtain it. Tobacco and corn for food do we offer to you, and should you need more tobacco we will send it along. Here it is."[3]

Again, on a similar occasion, the officiant prays, saying, "You who are our grandmother, Earth, you blessed grandfather Djobenaegiwiexga with life and war powers. As far as you extend, that far, O grandmother, do we spread out for you tobacco and food and mocassins. Here is the

[1] P. Radin, "The Winnebago tribe", *Thirty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1923), p. 286.

[2] P. Radin, *op. cit.* pp. 440 *sq.*

[3] P. Radin, *op. cit.* p. 536.

tobacco. Here in the fire shall I place tobacco; and food and offerings of buckskin will we send to you at all times. You will always accept them, grandfather said, it is said, so that our clansmen may travel in a straight path of war and life." [1]

Worship of the Earth among the Cheyenne Indians.

The Cheyenne Indians, a tribe of the western plains who belong to the Algonkin stock, say that there is a principal god named Heammawihio, who lives up aloft, and that there is also a god called Ahk tun o wihio, who lives under the ground. Both deities are beneficent, and they possess like powers. Next after Heammawihio, we are informed, "the power of the earth is named in prayer. It is implored to make everything grow which we eat, so that we may live; to make the water flow, that we may drink; to keep the ground firm, that we may live and walk on it; to make grow those plants and herbs that we use to heal ourselves when we are sick; and to cause to grow also the grass on which the animals feed." Such reverence for the earth is general among the western Indians.[2] On this subject, the same writer, Mr. G. B. Grinnell, whose acquaintance with the western Indians extends over half a century, tells us that "the almost universal reverence of the Indians for the earth is interesting in connection with their feeling about the ownership of land. The earth is regarded as sacred, often it is called the 'mother', and it appears to rank second among the gods. A sacrifice of food is held up first to the sky and then is deposited on the earth, and perhaps rubbed into the soil. The first smoke is directed to the sky, the second to the earth, and then those to the four directions in order. Other sacrifices are commonly held up first to the sky, and then are held toward the earth. Before beginning to perform any sacred office, the priest or doctor holds his hands first towards the sky, and then rubs them on the ground. 'It is by the earth', they say, 'that we live. Without it we could not exist. It nourishes and supports us. From it grow the fruits that we eat, and the grass that sustains the animals whose flesh we live on; from it come forth, and over its surface run, the waters which we drink. We

[1] P. Radin, *op. cit.* p. 501; compare *id.* pp. 449, 459, 469.

[2] G. B. Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* (New Haven, 1923), ii. 88, 89.

walk on it, and unless it is firm and steadfast we cannot live.'" [1]

Personification of the Earth among the Klamath Indians.

The Klamath Indians of south-western Oregon regard the Earth as a mysterious, shadowy power of incalculable energies and influences, rather mischievous and wicked than beneficial to mankind. They ascribe anger and other passions to it, but their personification of it has not advanced beyond a rudimentary stage. In the many tales which they tell about the Earth, that mysterious power nowhere appears as an active deity.[2] An Indian prophet who announced his mission at Priest Rapids, on the Middle Columbia River, dissuaded his numerous followers from tilling the ground, alleging as his reason that "it is a sin to wound or cut, tear up or scratch our common mother by agricultural pursuits; she will avenge herself on the whites and on the Indians following their example by opening her bosom and engulfing such malefactors for their misdeeds".[3]

Worship of the Earth Mother among the Zuñis of New Mexico.

The Zuñis of New Mexico speak of the Earth Mother (*Awitelin Tsita*) as the source of all man's food, both vegetable and animal.[4] In all the poetic conceptions of the Zuñis one great object is said to be paramount, and that is food to support the life of man. Thus they pray, saying, "May the rain-makers water the Earth Mother that she may be made beautiful to look upon. May the rain-makers water the Earth Mother that she may become fruitful and give to her children and to all the world the fruits of her being, that we may have food in abundance. May the Sun Father embrace our Earth Mother that she may become fruitful, that food may be bountiful [plentiful], and that our children may live the span of life, not die, but sleep to awake with their gods." [5]

The Earth-goddess among the Hopi Indians.

At a ceremony of the Hopi Indians of Arizona the Earth-goddess is represented by a bundle of sticks placed on

[1] G. B. Grinnell, "Tenure of land among the Indians", *American Anthropologist*, ix. (1907) p. 3, note [1].

[2] A. S. Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians of Southwestern Oregon* (Washington, 1890), p. xci (*Contributions to North American Ethnology*, vol. ii. Part I.).

[3] A. S. Gatschet, *op. cit.* p. xcii.

[4] Mrs. Matilda Coxe Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians", *Twenty-third Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1904), pp. 20, 23, 24.

[5] Mrs. Matilda Coxe Stevenson, "Ethnobotany of the Zuñi Indians", *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1915), p. 37.

the floor of the house, and over this bundle the priest kneels when he shouts to the Earth-goddess down a hole in the floor.[1]

Worship of the Earth among the Caribs of the Antilles.

The Caribs of the Antilles said that the Earth was a good mother who gave them all things necessary for life.[2] They regarded an earthquake as a sign given them by the Earth to dance for the sake of their health. So they used to dance for four days and four nights by moonlight, arrayed in all their barbaric finery, wearing masks of diverse colours, and necklaces, bracelets, belts, and garters loaded with little shells, which clashed and clattered as they danced, while old women shook rattles and droned a monotonous accompaniment.[3]

Belief of the Salivas in Mother Earth.

One of the tribes of the Salivas, an Indian nation on the Orinoco, claimed to be a daughter of the Earth; they said that formerly the earth brought forth men and women just as it brings forth briars and thorns nowadays.[4] The Peruvian Indians worshipped the Earth as a goddess, whom they named Pachamama or Mother Earth because it yielded them the fruits whereby they lived.[5] The worship of Mother Earth (Mamapacha) persisted among the Indians of Peru even after their nominal conversion to Christianity. The women were particularly devoted to it, especially at the time of sowing their fields. They professed to speak with the goddess, begging her to grant them a good crop, and in order to enforce their petition they poured out maize-beer and maize-flour as an offering to her; this they did either with their own hands or by the intervention of a priest.[6] When they fell sick, they sometimes thought that

Worship of Mother Earth (Pachamama or Mamapacha) among the Peruvian Indians.

[1] J. W. Fewkes, "Hopi Katcinas", *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1903), p. 55.

[2] De Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles*, Seconde Edition (Rotterdam, 1665), p. 469.

[3] De la Borde, *Relation de l'origine, mœurs, coustumes, religion, guerres et voyages des Caraibes sauvages des Isles Antilles de l'Amerique*, p. 38 (in *Recueil de divers Voyages faits en Afrique et en Amerique*, Paris, 1684).

[4] J. Gumilla, *Histoire naturelle, civile et geographique de l'Orenoque* (Avignon, 1758), i. 175.

[5] Garcilasso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Yncas*, vol. i. p. 49, Markham's translation (Hakluyt Society, London, 1869–1871); J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, vol. ii. p. 304, Grimston's translation (Hakluyt Society, London, 1880).

[6] P. J. de Arriaga, *La Extirpacion de la Idolatria en el Peru* (Lima, 1920), p. 20. The original edition of this work was printed at Lima in 1620.

the Earth-mother was angry with them; so to appease her wrath they poured out chicha (maize-beer) and burned woollen cloths on the spot where they had fallen ill. Women in childbed also invoked her help with similar sacrifices. Yet we are told that in Peru the worship of the Earth-mother, universal and important as it was, mainly rested on this popular basis: it had no place in the public ritual of the community, though it retained a prominent position among the rites performed for the special benefit of the Apu-Ccapac-Inca.[1] Thus, for example, after sacrificing to the Sun, the Thunder, and the Moon, and praying for the health, prosperity, and victory of the reigning Inca, the priests also sacrificed to the Earth and prayed to her, saying, "O Mother Earth! preserve the Lord Inca, thy son, who stands upon thee, in peace and safety".[2] Sacrifices to Mother Earth (Pachamama) were equally prominent among the sacrifices offered by the Apu-Ccapac-Incas in their progresses from place to place: at the principal provincial centres on these occasions two llamas were sacrificed to the Creator (Pachacamac), two to the Sun, two to the Earth, and one to the Thunder.[3] The village or town of Mama ("Mother"), situated on a tributary of the Rimac, derives its name from a celebrated sanctuary of the Earth-mother, who was there worshipped as a consort of the Creator, Pachacamac. The two streams which mingle their waters below the sanctuary were known us the breasts of the Earth-mother.[4]

Sacrifices and prayers to Mother Earth.

[1] E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. (Oxford, 1892) p. 467.

[2] Chr. de Molina, "The Fables and Rites of the Yncas", in *The Rites and Laws of the Yncas*, translated and edited by C. R. Markham (Hakluyt Society, London, 1873), p. 56. The prayer is somewhat differently translated by E. J. Payne (*l.c.*). In particular he translates Pachamama by "Mother of all things" rather than by Mother Earth, on the ground that *pacha* "appears to be in its origin a collective term, simply denoting many colligated objects of thought, and hence may be translated 'things'. Employed to designate the visible things around the speaker, it is equivalent to 'world'" (*op. cit.* p. 456). While he admits that the Earth was invoked under the name of Pachamama, he holds that the true translation of the title is "Mother of (all) things", and adds that "Mother Earth" would be Mamapacha. Yet he notes that the form Mamapacha is found occasionally, but rarely; it is used for example by Arriaga, an excellent authority (see above, p. 432).

[3] E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 467.

[4] E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 458. The worship of Pachamama has left some traces of itself among the christianized Indians of Bolivia. See R. Paredes,

Worship of the Mother of the Gods or the Heart of the Earth among the ancient Mexicans.

The ancient Mexicans worshipped a goddess whom they variously named Mother of the Gods (*Teteo innan*), Grandmother (*Toci*), or Heart of the Earth (*Tlalyollotli*).[1] In explanation of this last title it was said that when she chose she made the earth to quake.[2] Hence modern writers seem to be justified in treating her as an Earth-goddess,[3] though she is not definitely so described, so far as I have observed, by the original Spanish authors who have described her strange and bloody rites. Her festival fell in the eleventh month of the Mexican year, which began on the twenty-fourth of August and ended on the twelfth of September.[4] The goddess presided over medicines and medicinal plants, which accords well with the character of an Earth-deity. Hence she was worshipped especially by physicians, surgeons, blood-letters, midwives, women who procured abortion, and fortune-tellers of all sorts, such as those who predicted the future from grains of maize or drew omens from the inspection of water in a bowl. All these guilds clubbed together once a year to celebrate a great festival in honour of their patron divinity. For this purpose they bought a woman who was to personate the goddess at the festival and to be put to death in that character.[5] She had to be neither very old nor very young; hence a woman of about forty or forty-five was usually selected for the fatal dignity. The purchase was made forty days before the festival. Like all the other slaves chosen to personate deities she was washed and purified and received the name of the goddess whom she was to represent in life and death. Thus sanctified and consecrated she was from that day onward shut up in a cell and closely guarded, that she should not sin; for the representative of a goddess must be sinless. When twenty days were over, they brought her forth from her cell, clothed her in the garments appropriate

Festival at which the goddess was personated by a woman, who was put to death in the divine character.

The consecration of the victim.

Mitos, Supersticiones y Supervivencias populares de Bolivia (La Paz, 1920), pp. 38 *sqq.*

[1] B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, traduite et annotée par D. Jourdanet et R. Simeon (Paris, 1880), pp. 18, 68, 134; Diego Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España* (Mexico, 1867-1880), ii. 185, 187; E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 464, 468.

[2] D. Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, ii. 187.

[3] E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 464, 468; T. A. Joyce, *Mexican Archæology* (London, 1914), pp. 43.

[4] J. de Torquemada, *Monarchia Indiana* (Madrid, 1723), ii. 275.

[5] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* p. 18.

to the goddess, and set her before the public that all might see and adore her as the deity incarnate. From that hour the people esteemed her as the Mother of the Gods herself and paid her as much reverence as if in truth she had been that great divinity. Seven days before the festival they gave her in charge to four old medical women or midwives, who waited on her and made it their business to keep her in a happy and cheerful frame of mind, telling her stories and encouraging her to laugh and be merry, for it was an evil omen if any woman or man who was to die in the character of a god was sad and cast down at the prospect of death.[1] If that happened they thought that many soldiers would be slain in war or that many women would die in childbed.[2] Among other occupations the woman who personated the Mother of the Gods was given a quantity of aloes which in her last days she had to dress, spin, and weave into a shirt and petticoats, which were afterwards to figure in the ghastly ritual.[3] But the principal mode of diverting the thoughts of the unhappy woman from her approaching doom was the dance. Four rows of dancers, carrying branches of trees in blossom, danced silently, without singing, daily in the afternoon till set of sun. They hardly moved their legs or bodies, but lifted and lowered their arms in time to the music. These dances went on for eight days. Then the medical women, young and old, divided themselves into two parties and engaged in a sham fight before the woman who acted the part of the Mother of the Gods. In the battle the two sides pelted each other with balls made of tree-moss, leaves of reeds, portions of cactus, or yellow flowers of a certain sort; and the woman who personated the goddess had to lead the first attack.[4]

The dances.

These sham-fights lasted four days, and when they were over they led the woman who was to die to the market-place, escorted by all the medical women, that she might bid it a last farewell, for she was to return to it no more. On her return from it she scattered maize wherever she passed by way of good-bye to the market. Thence they reconducted

The farewell to the market.

[1] D. Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, ii. 187 *sq.*

[2] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* p. 134.

[3] D. Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, ii. 188.

[4] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 133 *sq.*

her to her cell, which was hard by the temple where she was to die that night. As they went, the medical women and the midwives consoled her, saying, "Be not sorrowful, sweetheart; this night you will sleep with the king. Therefore rejoice." They did not let her know that she was about to be killed; for her death must be sudden and unexpected. They covered her with the ornaments of the Mother of the Gods, and at midnight they led her to the temple where she was to die. A great multitude had gathered to see her pass, but no one spoke or coughed; a profound silence reigned.

The sacrifice.

Arrived at the place of sacrifice she was hoisted on the back of an assistant, whereupon the priest came up, and seizing her by the hair adroitly cut off her head, while her streaming blood drenched the man who supported the now headless body. The skin was immediately stripped from the still warm and throbbing corpse, and in it a tall robust young man clad himself, thus personating the goddess come to life again. Over the woman's skin he wore the shirt and petticoats which she had woven in her last days.[1] One of the woman's thighs was flayed separately and the skin carried to another temple, where a young man put it on his face as a mask and thus personated the maize-god Cinteotl, the son of the Mother of the Gods. Besides the mask of skin he wore a hood and jacket of feathers.[2]

Personification of the goddess and her son Cinteotl by men wearing the skin of the victim.

Ritual observed by the representatives of the goddess and her son.

The man who represented the Mother of the Gods and was clad in the skin of the dead woman now joined the other who personated the son of the goddess and wore the mask of skin on his face. After a curious ritual of flight and pursuit, in which the fugitives carried bloody besoms of couch-grass and at sight of which all the beholders were seized with fear and trembling, the two actors who played the parts of the divine Mother and the divine Son repaired together very deliberately to the temple of the Mother of the Gods, where the woman had been slain in the character of the goddess. There the man who represented the Mother of the Gods entered the temple. It was still night, but at break of day he ascended the steps of the pyramidal temple and took up his post on the summit. No sooner did his

[1] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* p. 134; D. Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, ii. 188.

[2] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* p. 135.

figure appear outlined against the sky than men who had been waiting below ran up the staircase at full speed to bring him offerings. Some covered his feet and head with white eagle down; others painted his face red; others put on him a short cloak which bore the likeness of an eagle embroidered or woven in the stuff; others clad him in painted petticoats. Some cut off the heads of quails in his presence; others offered him copal. Also they decked him out in all the richest ornaments of the goddess and set a splendid crown on his head. Then the captives who were to die were set in a row before him. He took one of them, laid him on his back on the block, cut open his breast, and tore out his heart. This he did to a second, a third, and a fourth. The rest he left to be butchered by the priests.[1]

Sacrifice of the captives.

Leaving the sacred shambles the two men who personated the divine Mother and the divine Son then repaired to the temple of Cinteotl, preceded by devotees who wore ornaments of paper, cotton, and feathers, and escorted on either side by medical women who sang as they marched, while priests led the singing and played on musical instruments. The heads of the human victims were brought to this temple. There a great many old soldiers were waiting, and when the procession arrived they took the man who played the part of the divine Son in their midst and ran with him at full speed to a certain hill which stood at the borders of the enemy's country. There the divine Son took from his face the mask made of the skin from the thigh of the dead woman and deposited it in a tower or keep at the frontier. Often the enemy was waiting for them at the spot, a fight ensued, and some were slain, after which the survivors returned home.[2]

The representatives of the goddess and her son at the temple of Cinteotl.

The deposition of the mask of human skin.

A variety of ceremonies followed in which the representative of the Mother of the Gods played a conspicuous part, dancing with the medical women in the court of the temple of the Mother of the Gods. The captains and soldiers who had just been decorated by the King for gallantry took part in these dances. They danced silently to the tuck of drum, and all were so festooned that they

The dance of the representative of the Mother of the Gods.

[1] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 135 *sq.* [2] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 136 *sq.*

looked like living flowers to the admiration of the beholders. But the women who saw them dancing in gorgeous array wept, saying, "Our sons now so richly bedecked will have to march when war is proclaimed. Think you that they will return? Perhaps we shall see them no more." The King and all his courtiers were present at these ceremonies. The gold on their persons was so plentiful that the courtyard shone with a dazzling splendour in the blaze of the sun.[1]

The blood of the human victims tasted by the representative of the Mother of the Gods.

Yet the human representative of the Mother of the Gods had to figure in another and grimmer scene than these flowery sun-illumined dances. For the blood of the human victims slain in sacrifice was brought to him in a vessel decked with feathers, and he had to stoop over it, dip his finger in the blood, and suck his bloody finger. Then he gave a doleful groan, and all who heard it were seized with fear and said that the Earth herself felt it and shook. At the conclusion of this dismal rite, all the people stooped down, took up a little earth on one finger, and ate it. This ceremony of eating earth they commonly performed at their solemn festivals and in presenting themselves before their idols; they looked on it as a mark of reverence and humility towards the gods. After their conversion to Christianity they sometimes observed the custom before the images of the saints.[2]

The skin of the woman who personated the Mother of the Gods hung on a tower.

Finally, a priest descended the staircase of the temple-pyramid of the great god Uitzilopochtli, carrying in his hand a wooden basket full of white chalk and white feathers, which he left at the foot of the steps. Immediately a great number of soldiers, who had been waiting and watching, raced to the basket, striving who should be the first to reach it. There they filled their hands with the contents of the basket and ran back to the point from which they had started. The man who wore the skin of the dead woman and who personated the Mother of the Gods watched them plundering the contents of the basket, and when they had done he ran after them as if in pursuit, while all the spectators accompanied his movements with loud cries, and when he passed them in his course they spat at him and hurled at

[1] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 137 *sq.*

[2] D. Diego, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, pp. 189 *sq.*

him whatever they happened to have in their hands. The King himself took part in this affray and returned to his palace at a run. All did the same, and abandoned the representative of the Mother of the Gods with the exception of a few who joined some priests and escorted him to a place called Tocititlan, that is, "Near our Grandmother". There the representative of the goddess stripped off the woman's skin and hung it on a tower or keep that stood on the spot. There it was stretched out with the head up and the arms open, in full view of the road. Such was the end of the festival of the Mother of the Gods.[1]

Meaning of the custom of choosing men and women to personate gods or goddesses and putting them to death.

The custom of choosing a living woman to represent a goddess, treating her as the divinity in person, and afterwards killing her and clothing in her skin a man who thereupon figured as the representative of the deity, was by no means confined to the worship of the Mother of the Gods; it was a common piece of Aztec ritual, in which men as well as women played the fatal part of gods and came to the same tragic end.[2] The only probable explanation of such barbarous rites would seem to be that they were based on a belief in the natural mortality of the gods, and were intended to prolong the lives of the deities for the good of the world by annually killing their human representatives and then simulating their resurrection, this pretence of resurrection being effected by clothing a living man in the skin of the slain representative of the deity. In this way,

[1] B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 138 *sq.* The two fullest accounts of this strange festival are those of B. de Sahagun, *op. cit.* pp. 18 *sq.*, 68 *sq.*, 133-139, and D. Duran, *op. cit.* ii. 185-191. The two accounts differ from and supplement each other on many points, but are not necessarily inconsistent. I have combined them in the text, following mainly the account of Sahagun. A much briefer description is given by J. de Torquemada, *Monarchia Indiana* (Madrid, 1723), ii. 275 *sq.*, which appears to have little or no independent value. A short account of the festival, based on Torquemada's, is given by Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale* (Paris, 1857-1859), iii. 523-525; while a very full one, based throughout on Sahagun's and following it closely, is supplied by H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (London, 1875-1876), iii. 353-359. When Bancroft wrote, the second volume of Duran's work, containing his description of the festival, had not yet been published. E. J. Payne's brief account (*History of the New World called America*, i. 470) is drawn from Duran alone. I have described the festival elsewhere. See *The Golden Bough*, Part VI. *The Scapegoat*, pp. 288-291.

[2] For examples see *The Golden Bough*, Part VI. *The Scapegoat*, pp. 275 *sqq.*

to take the particular instance with which we are here concerned, the Mexicans may have imagined that they annually endowed with a fresh lease of life the important Earth-goddess, the Mother of the Gods. But it is not clear why apparently a man was always chosen to personate a goddess come to life again by wearing the bloody skin of the woman who had died in the character of the divinity; rather we should expect that, as one woman acted the divine death, so another woman should act the divine resurrection.

CHAPTER XII

THE WORSHIP OF THE SUN AMONG THE ARYAN PEOPLES OF ANTIQUITY

§ 1. *The Worship of the Sun in general*

The worship of the Sun not so widely diffused as is commonly supposed.

As one of the most conspicuous and powerful objects in the physical world the sun has naturally attracted the attention and obtained the homage of many races, who have personified and worshipped it as a god. Yet the worship of the sun has been by no means so widely diffused among primitive peoples as, on purely abstract grounds, we might at first sight be tempted to suppose. If we were to draw a map of the world showing in colour the regions where sun-worship is known to have prevailed, we might be surprised at the many large blanks in the chart, blanks which would probably be particularly numerous and extensive in countries occupied by the most backward races. In Africa, for example, while sun-worship was a most important element in the religion of ancient Egypt, it is on the whole conspicuously absent among the black races of that continent, though we have noted some evidence of its occurrence in many tribes of Northern Nigeria and in certain tribes of East Africa.[1] The same paucity of sun-worship, or at all events of any trustworthy evidence of its existence, is characteristic of the indigenous Australian, Melanesian,[2]

[1] See above, p. 315, with the references.

[2] Speaking of the Melanesian religion, Dr. Codrington, our highest authority on the subject, observes that "there is no appearance of a belief that any heavenly bodies are living beings; in the Banks Islands the Sun and Moon are thought to be rocks or islands" (*The Melanesians*, Oxford, 1891, p. 348). In San Cristoval, one of the Solomon Islands, Mr. C. E. Fox has recently recorded some connexions supposed to exist between the clan of

A. Bastian on the rarity of Sun-worship.

Polynesian,[1] and Micronesian races, who together occupy a considerable portion of the globe. On the limited diffusion of this form of religion in the world the most learned and far-travelled of ethnologists, Adolf Bastian, long ago remarked that sun-worship, which people used to go sniffing about to discover everywhere, is found on the contrary only in very exceptional regions, or on lofty table-lands of equatorial latitude.[2] Subsequent research has confirmed this weighty judgment. Whatever the reason may be, a solar religion appears to flourish best among nations which have attained to a certain degree of civilization, such as the ancient Egyptians and the Indians of Mexico and Peru at the time when they were discovered by the Spaniards. Perhaps the regular and peaceful movement of the sun in the heavens, by lacking the element of the sudden, the terrible, and the unforeseen, disqualifies it for being an object of interest to the simple savage, whose attention is excited and whose emotions are stirred rather by those events which

Sun-worship in ancient Egypt, Mexico, and Peru.

the chiefs and the sun, and in these connexions he finds "many traces of sun-worship"; but, so far as I have observed, he has reported no case of actual sun-worship, that is, of prayer and sacrifice offered to the great luminary. See C. E. Fox, *The Threshold of the Pacific* (London, 1924), pp. 239 *sq.* 363.

[1] Speaking of the Tahitians, a typical Polynesian people, William Ellis, who knew them well at a time when they were still but little modified by European influence, remarked, "I am not aware that they rendered divine homage either to the sun or moon" (*Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition, London, 1832–1836, iii. 171). Mr. Elsdon Best, a high authority on Maori religion and lore, believes that a worship of the sun formerly existed in Polynesia, though he admits that "there is but little direct evidence" of its former existence, and indeed that the Maoris "did not practise a direct worship of the sun". His theory of a former prevalence of sun-worship in Polynesia is based on his view of the god Tane, whom he interprets as a personification of the sun. But this interpretation seems not to be generally accepted by the Maoris; for Mr. Best tells us that "apparently the people on the whole were not aware that Tane represents the sun, and it was only when we gained a closer knowledge of native myths that we recognised in him a personified form of the sun. . . . Fornander, of Hawaii, gave many proofs in his work on the Polynesian race that Tane represents the sun, yet he makes in that work the statement that solar worship had faded from the Polynesian mind since the race entered the Pacific." See Elsdon Best, *The Maori* (Wellington, N.Z., 1924), i. 275 *sq.* The late Dr. Rivers, indeed, propounded a far-reaching theory of a secret sun-worship in the Pacific, but the theory rested on the extremely doubtful evidence of a single writer (J. A. Moerenhout). See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 119, 266, note [4], 286, note [6]. If the Polynesians ever had a secret worship of the sun, the secret was so well kept that it has never leaked out.

[2] Adolf Bastian, *Die Voelker des Oestlichen Asien*, iv. (Jena, 1868) p. 175.

occur at irregular intervals, which threaten his existence, and which no means at his disposal enable him to predict. A higher degree of intelligence and reflection is needed to ask whence comes the marvellous uniformity of those operations of nature whereof the courses of the heavenly bodies are at once the most easily observable and the most splendid examples.

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sun among the Vedic Indians*

The Sun worshipped by the Vedic Indians under the names of Surya and Savritri or Savitar.

Among peoples of the Aryan stock solar worship has not been unknown, but the Sun has never occupied the leading place in their pantheon. The Indians of the Vedic age personified and to some extent worshipped the sun under various names, of which the chief were Surya and Savitri or Savitar.[1] It is under these two different appellations that the sun is chiefly celebrated in the *Rig-veda*, though it is sometimes difficult to perceive why in any particular case the one name should be employed rather than the other. Yet different sets of hymns are devoted to the worship of the deity under each of these names, and the epithets applied to him in each of these characters are for the most part distinct. In a few passages both these names, and occasionally certain others, appear to be applied to the solar divinity indiscriminately; but in most cases the distinction between them is at least nominally preserved.[2]

Surya the more concrete of the two solar deities.

Of the two solar deities, Surya and Savitri or Savitar, the former is the more concrete; he remains closer to the physical object which he personifies; his connexion with the great luminary is never lost sight of. His name indeed of Surya designates the solar orb; hence in many passages it is impossible to say whether the word denotes the physical sun simply or the personification of it as a god.[3] The difficulty of discriminating the physical from the divine aspect of Surya is all the greater, because in his case the personification

[1] A. Barth, *The Religions of India* (London, 1882), pp. 20, 165 *sq.*; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] (London, 1884) pp. 155 *sqq.*; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), pp. 30-35; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India* (London, 1896), pp. 40-50; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda* (London, etc., 1923), pp. 266-278.

[2] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 155 *sq.*

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 30.

is never carried far; mythical fancy has hardly played about him; indeed, the only myth of which he is the subject relates how the great god Indra vanquished him[1] and carried off one of the wheels of his chariot.[2] The allusion may be to the obscuration of the sun by a thunder-cloud or to a solar eclipse. However, Surya is so far personified that, like other sun-gods, he is described as driving across the sky in a car drawn either by one or several or seven fleet and ruddy horses or mares.[3] He is said to be the son of the great sky-god Dyaus.[4] The Dawn (Ushas) is spoken of as his wife in one passage,[5] while in another she is said to have brought him forth.[6] Thus in the fancy of the Vedic poet the two great natural phenomena, the Sun and the Dawn, were not yet crystallized into sharply defined figures, but floated vaguely in a golden or rosy haze. The eye of Surya is mentioned several times in the hymns, but he is himself equally often called the eye of Mitra and Varuna or of Agni (the Fire-god).[7] In the *Atharva-veda* he is called the Lord of Eyes, and is said to be the one eye of created beings, and to see beyond the sky, the earth, and the waters. He is described as far-seeing, all-seeing, the spy of the whole world, he who beholds all beings and the good and bad deeds of mortals. He is the preserver and soul of all things, both stationary and moving, the vivifier of men and common to them all. Enlivened by him men pursue their ends and perform their work.[8] He shines for all the world, for men and gods. He dispels the darkness with his light. He rolls up the darkness as a skin. His beams throw off the darkness as a skin into the waters. He triumphs over beings of darkness and witches.[9] It is said that "truth is the base that bears the earth; by Surya are the heavens sustained".[10]

Surya the son of Dyaus and the husband or son of the Dawn (Ushas).

[1] *Rig-veda*, x. 43. 5.

[2] *Rig-veda*, i. 175. 4, iv. 28. 2, iv. 30. 4, v. 29. 10; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 31; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 159.

[3] J. Muir, *op. cit.* V.[3] 156; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 30.

[4] *Rig-veda*, x. 37. 1.

[5] *Rig-veda*, vii. 75. 5.

[6] *Rig-veda*, vii. 78. 3.

[7] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 30; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 157.

[8] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 157.

[9] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 31.

[10] *Rig-veda*, x. 85. 1.

Surya sometimes spoken of as an inanimate object.

Yet elsewhere Surya is occasionally spoken of as an inanimate object, as a gem of the sky, a variegated stone placed in the midst of heaven, a brilliant weapon which Mitra and Varuna conceal with cloud and rain.[1] Hence he is said to have been produced, or caused to shine or to rise, or to have his path prepared by various gods. Thus we are told that Indra generated him, caused him to shine, or raised him to heaven; that Indra-Soma brought him up with light; that Soma placed light in the Sun, caused him to shine, or raised him in heaven; that Agni (the Fire-god) established the brightness of the sun on high, and made him ascend to heaven; that Dhatri, the creator, fashioned the sun as well as the moon. In these and other passages relating to the creation of the sun the notion of the simple luminary doubtless predominates.[2] The ancient hymns, composed perhaps before the descent of the Aryans into the sweltering plains of Northern India, contain only two or three allusions to the sun's burning heat; in the *Rig-veda* the luminary is not a maleficent power; for that aspect of his nature we must turn to the later *Atharva-veda* and the literature of the *Brahmanas*.[3]

Hymn to Surya, the Sun.

Ten entire hymns of the *Rig-veda* may be said to be devoted to the celebration of the Sun under the name of Surya.[4] The following may serve as specimens.

"*His heralds bear him up aloft, the god who knoweth all that lives,*
Surya, that all may look on him,
The constellations pass away, like thieves, together with their beams,
Before the all-beholding Sun.
His herald rays are seen afar refulgent o'er the world of men,
Like flames of fire that burn and blaze.
Swift and all beautiful art thou, O Surya, maker of the light,
Illuming all the radiant realm.
Thou goest to the host of gods, thou comest hither to mankind,
Hither all light to be beheld.
With that same eye wherewith thou look'st, O purifying Varuna,
Upon the busy race of men,
Traversing sky and wide mid-air, thou metest with thy beams our days,
Sun, seeing all things that have birth.

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 31.
[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 31.
[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 31.
[4] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 30.

Seven bay steeds harnessed to thy car bear thee, O thou far-seeing one,
God, Surya, with the radiant hair. . . .
Looking upon the loftier light above the darkness we have come
To Surya, god among the gods, the light that is most excellent.
Rising this day, O rich in friends, ascending to the loftier heaven,
Surya, remove my heart's disease, take from me this my yellow hue.
To parrots and to starlings let us give away my yellowness,
Or this my yellowness let us transfer to Haritâla trees." [1]

Prayer to the Sun for the cure of jaundice.

In these last lines the poet prays the Sun to remove his jaundice on the principle of homœopathic magic, in accordance with which the yellowness of the disease can be transferred to yellow objects, such as the sun and yellow parrots. Similar cures for jaundice were known to the ancient Greeks and Romans and are not unknown in modern Europe.[2] That this was indeed the notion which prompted the old Vedic prayer to the Sun is certain; for the same cure is recorded in unambiguous terms as a simple charm in the *Atharva-veda*. The charm is as follows:

Charm for the cure of jaundice.

"*Up to the sun shall go thy heart-ache and thy jaundice: in the colour of the red bull do we envelop thee!*
"*We envelop thee in red tints, unto long life. May this person go unscathed, and be free of yellow colour!*
"*The cows whose divinity is Rohinî, they who, moreover, are themselves red* (rohinîh)—*in their every form and every strength we do envelop thee.*
"*Into the parrots, into the thrush do we put thy jaundice, and, furthermore, into the yellow wagtail* (hâridravas) *do we put thy jaundice.*" [3]

In this charm the word (*hâridrava*) translated "yellow wagtail" occurs in the hymn of the *Rig-veda* quoted above, where it is translated "Haritâla trees". The translator (Mr. R. T. H. Griffith) in a note says that the word *hâridrava* is understood by the commentator Sâyana to mean a *haritâla* tree, but that there seems to be no tree of that name. He further remarks that *haritâla* usually signifies yellow orpiment, which is a yellow crystalline metal, and

[1] *Rig-veda*, i. 50; *Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated with a popular commentary by R. T. H. Griffith (Benares, 1889–1892), vol. i. pp. 88 *sq.*

[2] *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 79 *sqq.*

[3] *Atharva-veda*, i. 22 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xlii., *Hymns of the Atharva-veda*, translated by M. Bloomfield, Oxford, 1897, pp. 7 *sq.*, with the commentary, pp. 263-265).

that *hâridrava* generally means a yellow vegetable powder; and he adds that "the word *hâridrava* is explained in the Petersburg Lexicon as a certain yellow bird". In any case the essential point is that the objects to which the jaundice is to be transferred must be either yellow or red; for on the principles of homoeopathic magic or medicine yellow objects naturally absorb the yellow disease, while red objects are similarly calculated to infuse into the sallow patient the rosy hue of health. To this day the Mehtars of the Central Provinces of India hang the flesh of a yellow snake or of a fish with yellowish scales about the neck of a child who is suffering from jaundice; or they catch a small frog alive, tie it up in a yellow cloth, and hang it by a blue thread till it dies on the neck of the little sufferer. Of course the yellow snake, the yellow fish, and the yellow cloth all possess the valuable property of absorbing the jaundice and thereby relieving the patient.[1] On similar grounds anybody can see for himself that the Sun is a natural recipient of the jaundice.

A higher note is struck by another Vedic poet in a hymn addressed to Surya the sun: Hymn to Surya the Sun.

"*Do homage unto Varuna's and Mitra's eye: offer this solemn worship to the mighty god,*

"*Who seeth far away, the ensign, born of gods. Sing praises unto Surya, to the son of Dyaus.*

"*May this my truthful speech guard me on every side, wherever heaven and earth and days are spread abroad.*

"*All else that is in motion finds a place of rest: the waters ever flow and ever mounts the sun. . . .*

"*O Surya, with the light whereby thou scatterest gloom, and with thy ray impellest every moving thing,*

"*Keep far from us all feeble, worthless sacrifice, and drive away disease and every evil dream.*

"*Sent forth thou guardest well the path of every man, and in thy wonted way arisest free from wrath.*

"*When, Surya, we address our prayers to thee to-day, may the gods favour this our purpose and desire.*

"*This invocation, these our words may Heaven and Earth, and Indra and the Waters and the Maruts hear.*

"*Ne'er may we suffer want in presence of the Sun, and, living happy lives, may we attain old age.*

[1] R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), iv. 224.

"*Cheerful in spirit, evermore, and keen of sight, with store of children, free from sickness and from sin,*
"*Long-living, may we look, O Surya, upon thee uprising day by day, thou who art rich in friends!*
"*Surya, may we live long and look upon thee still, thee, O far-seeing one, bringing the glorious light,*
"*The radiant god, the spring of joy to every eye, as thou art mounting up o'er the high shining flood.*
"*Thou by whose lustre all the world comes forth, and by thy beams again returns unto its rest,*
"*O Surya with the golden hair, ascend for us day after day, still bringing purer innocence.*
"*Bless us with shine, bless us with perfect daylight, bless us with cold, with fervent heat and lustre.*
"*Bestow on us, O Surya, varied riches, to bless us in our home, and when we travel.*" [1]

The Vedic Sun-god Savitri or Savitar.

The other Vedic personification of the sun is Savitri or Savitar, who, as we have seen, is sometimes distinguished from and sometimes identified with Surya. In him the personal element is more prominent and the physical element less conspicuous than in his divine colleague or double.[2] The name appears to be derived from a root meaning to stimulate, arouse, vivify, and in nearly half its occurrences it is accompanied by the noun *deva*, "god", so that it would seem not to have lost its adjectival force. Hence we may conclude that Savitri or Savitar was originally an epithet applied to the sun as the great stimulator of life and motion in the world.[3] He is

The Golden God.

celebrated in eleven whole hymns of the *Rig-veda* as well as in parts of others. Above all other deities, he is the golden god: the poets describe him as golden-eyed, golden-handed, and golden-tongued: he puts on golden or tawny mail: he mounts a golden car with a golden pole drawn by two radiant steeds, or by two or more brown, white-footed

[1] *Rig-veda*, x. 37 (*Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated by R. T. H. Griffith, vol. iv. pp. 176 *sq.*).

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 34. The god's name is spelled *Savitr* by Macdonell, *Savitri* by A. Barth (*Religions of India*, p. 20) and J. Muir (*Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 162), and *Savitar* by R. T. H. Griffith (*Hymns of the Rigveda*, vol. i. p. 64), A. Kaegi (*Der Rigveda*[2], Leipzig, 1881, p. 40), E. W. Hopkins (*Religions of India*, p. 46), and H. D. Griswold (*The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 270 *sqq.*).

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 34; A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2], p. 79; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 275-277.

horses.[1] Mighty golden splendour is his and his alone. He illumines the air, the earth, the world, and the vault of heaven. He lifts up his strong golden arms, wherewith he blesses and arouses all beings: his arms extend even to the ends of the earth. He rides in his golden car, beholding all creatures both on an upward and on a downward path. He shines after the path of the dawn. He has measured out the earthly spaces: he goes to the three bright realms of heaven and is united with the rays of the sun. His ancient paths in the sky are dustless and easy to traverse. He supports the whole world. He fixed the earth with bonds and made firm the sky in the rafterless space of air. He bestows length of days on man and immortality on the gods. He drives away bad spirits and sorcerers; he is implored to deliver men from evil dreams and sin, and to waft the parting soul to the land where dwell the righteous who have gone before.[2]

According to the commentator Sâyana, the sun is called Savitri before his rising, but from his rising to his setting his name is Surya. Yet Savitri is sometimes spoken of as lulling to sleep; hence he would seem to be associated with the evening as well as with the morning. Indeed, in one hymn he is extolled as the setting sun, and there are indications that most of the hymns addressed to him are designed for either a morning or an evening sacrifice. He is said to lull to rest all two-footed and four-footed beings: he unyokes his steeds in the gloaming: he brings the wanderer to rest: at his command the night comes on: the weaver rolls up her web, and the man of skill lays down his work unfinished: then every bird seeks his nest and every beast his lodging.[3]

Evening hymn to Savitri, the Sun-god.

Besides these two great personifications of the sun, mythologists sometimes distinguish three other solar deities

Mitra sometimes regarded as another solar deity in the Vedic pantheon.

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 32; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 162; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 273.

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 32 *sq.*; compare J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 162-164; E. W. Hopkins, *Religions of India*, pp. 46-50.

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 33 *sq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 273 *sq.* The evening hymn, as we may call it, to the Sun-god Savitri is *Rig-veda*, ii. 38. In the text I have borrowed some touches from it.

But his solar character is dim and doubtful.

in the Vedic pantheon, namely Mitra, Pushan, and Vishnu.[1] Of all the solar divinities of the *Rig-veda* the oldest perhaps is Mitra, the "Friend", the personification of the sun's beneficent agency. Surviving from an earlier period, his individuality is almost merged in that of the great god Varuna, with whom he is nearly always invoked. Indeed, only a single hymn of the *Rig-veda* is addressed to him alone.[2] The great antiquity of Mitra is vouched for by the occurrence of his name under the form Mithra in the old Persian pantheon, which seems to show that he dates from a period before the separation of the Indian and Iranian peoples.[3] However, it must be admitted that the solar character of Mitra is but dimly adumbrated in the *Rig-veda*; indeed, some high authorities believe that he, like his Iranian counterpart Mithra, was originally a personification of the celestial light rather than of the sun, though in later times, like Mithra, he came to be identified with the great luminary.[4] Others think that the primary character of Mitra was moral rather than physical; according to them, he personified the virtue of good faith and strict regard for the sanctity of compacts.[5]

Pushan, another solar deity of the Vedic pantheon.

Another Vedic deity in whom mythologists detect a personification of the solar orb is Pushan, the "Prosperer".

[1] A. A. Macdonell, "Sanskrit Literature", *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. ii. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 213 *sq.*

[2] A. A. Macdonell, "Sanskrit Literature", *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. ii. (Oxford, 1909), p. 213; *id.*, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 29. For the hymn to Mitra, see *Rig-veda*, iii. 59. On Mitra as a Sun-god, see H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, pp. 185 *sqq.*; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott* (Leipzig, 1923), pp. 367 *sqq.* (who rejects the view, which he formerly accepted, that Mitra was originally a Sun-god); H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 114-121.

[3] F. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde* (Leipzig, 1871–1878), ii. 86; J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman* (Paris, 1877), pp. 67 *sq.*; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 71; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 57 *sq.*; Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (Bruxelles, 1896–1899, i. 223 *sq.*; L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 367 *sqq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 114 *sqq.*

[4] This is the view of Fr. Spiegel (*Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 77 *sqq.*), A. Barth (*The Religions of India*, p. 19), J. Darmesteter (*Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 62 *sqq.*, 72 *sq.*), and F. Cumont (*Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, i. 223 *sqq.*).

[5] L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, I. *Einleitung. Der altarische Himmelsgott*, pp. 372 *sq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 116 *sq.*

He is said to exhibit the genial aspect of the sun, manifested chiefly as a pastoral deity, the protector and multiplier of cattle. In this respect he reminds us of the Greek Sun-god Helios, who kept herds of kine, as Ulysses and his companions learned to their cost. But the individuality of Pushan is vague and his human traits are scanty. He is called the best charioteer: his car is drawn by goats instead of horses; and he subsists on a low diet of gruel. As a cowherd he carries an ox-goad: he follows and protects the cattle: he preserves them from falling into a pit, brings them home unhurt, seeks and drives back the lost. He beholds all creatures clearly, and he is the lord of all things, both moving and stationary. He is said to have been the wooer of his mother or the lover of his sister: the gods gave him in marriage to the sun-maiden Surya. The epithet "glowing" is often applied to him. Born on the far path of heaven and the far path of earth, he goes to and returns from both the beloved abodes, which well he knows. Hence he conducts the dead on the path to the fathers who have gone before; and, knowing the paths, he is a guardian of roads, and is besought to protect the wayfarer from the perils of wolves and robbers.[1]

In all this there is not much to show that Pushan personifies any natural phenomenon. However, we are told that a large number of passages point to a connexion between him and the sun. One Indian commentator, Yaska, explains Pushan to be "the sun, the preserver of all beings", and in post-Vedic literature Pushan occasionally occurs as a name of the sun.[2]

Vishnu, another solar deity of the Vedic pantheon.

The last of the solar deities in Vedic literature is Vishnu. Though less often invoked than the others, he is historically by far the most important, since he developed into one of the three persons of the Hindoo trinity. In the *Rig-veda* his most characteristic trait is that he takes three strides,

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 35-37; *id.*, "Sanskrit Literature", *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. ii. (Oxford, 1909), p. 214; A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, p. 20; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 171 *sqq.*; A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2], pp. 77 *sq.*; E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 50 *sqq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 278-282. As to the Greek Sun-god Helios and his cattle, see below, pp. 466 *sqq.*

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 37.

which are often referred to in the hymns. Scholars are almost unanimous in interpreting the three strides with reference to the course of the sun, but they differ as to the application of the myth, some understanding the three steps to mean the rising, culminating, and setting of the sun, while others regard them as descriptive of the sun's passage through the three realms of the universe. The former view is favoured by most European scholars; the latter is supported by a practically unbroken tradition in India from the later Vedic period onward. Whichever interpretation be adopted, the highest step of Vishnu is heaven, where the gods and the fathers dwell. In several passages he is said to have taken his three steps for the benefit of mankind. According to a myth of the *Brahmanas*, Vishnu rescued the earth for man from the demons by taking his three strides after that he had assumed the form of a dwarf. In this we have a transition to the later mythology, in which Vishnu's benevolent character is further developed in the doctrine of Avatars or incarnations for the good of humanity.[1]

Ushas, the Dawn.

Closely connected with the solar gods is Ushas, the Dawn. Her name, derived from the root *vas*, "to shine", means the dawn, and is etymologically identical with the Latin *aurora* and the Greek *ēōs*, both signifying "dawn".[2] Hence, conceived as a goddess, she always betrays her physical basis through a transparent veil of mythical fancy. In her graceful figure the personification is but slight: in addressing her the poet never forgets the radiant glory and the gorgeous hues of the sky at break of day.[3] She is said to have been born in the sky, and is constantly called the daughter of heaven. She is the sister, or the elder sister, of Night, and the names of Dawn and Night are often conjoined as a dual compound. She is said to have opened the paths for Surya, the Sun-god, to travel in: she shines with the light of the sun. In one passage the Sun-god Surya is spoken of as following her as a young man follows

Her mythical relationship to Night and the Sun.

[1] A. A Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 37-39; *id.*, "Sanskrit Literature", *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. ii. (Oxford, 1909), p. 214. Compare E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 56 *sq.*; A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2], pp. 78 *sq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 282-285.

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 49.

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 46; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 244.

a maiden, but in another she is described as the wife of Surya, and elsewhere the Dawns are called the wives of the Sun; for recollecting the multitude of dawns that have succeeded each other, the poet often speaks of Dawn in the plural. Thus, as followed in space by the sun, the Dawn is conceived of as his spouse or mistress; but as preceding the sun in time she is occasionally thought of as his mother.[1] Born anew every morning, she is always young; yet at the same time she is old, nay immortal; she wears out the lives of the generations of men, which vanish away one after another, while she continues undecaying.[2] As she shone in former days, so she shines now and will shine in days to come, never ageing, immortal. Arraying herself in gay attire, like a dancer, she displays her bosom: like a maiden decked by her mother, she shows her form. Effulgent in peerless beauty, she withholds her radiance from neither small nor great: rising resplendent as from a bath, revealing her charms, she comes with light, driving the shadows away. She dispels the darkness: she removes the black robe of night: she wards off evil spirits and evil dreams. She discloses the treasures which the shadows of night had concealed: she distributes them bountifully. When she awakes, she illumines the utmost borders of the sky: she opens the gates of heaven: she unbars the doors of darkness as the cows throw open their stall: her radiant beams appear like herds of cattle. The ruddy beams fly up: the ruddy cows yoke themselves: the ruddy Dawns weave their web of light as of old. Thus Dawn comes to be called Mother of Kine.[3] She is borne on a shining chariot: she is said to arrive on a hundred chariots. She is drawn by ruddy horses or by ruddy cows or bulls. Both the horses and the cows probably represent the red rays of morning, though the cows are often explained as the rosy clouds of daybreak.[4]

The chariot of Dawn.

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 48; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 190 *sq.*

[2] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 195; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 249 *sq.*

[3] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 46 *sq.*; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rig-veda*, p. 247.

[4] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 47; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V.[3] 194. As to Dawn (Ushas), see also A. Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*[2], pp. 73-76; J. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, pp. 73-80; H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 244-254.

Among the many hymns specially dedicated to Ushas or the Dawn,[1] it will suffice to quote one: its pensive beauty needs no words to commend it to the attention of the reader:

Hymn to the Dawn.

"*This light is come, amid all lights the fairest; born is the brilliant, far-extending brightness.*

"*Night, sent away for Savitar's uprising, hath yielded up a birth-place for the morning.*

"*The fair, the bright is come with her white offspring; to her the dark one hath resigned her dwelling.*

"*Akin, immortal, following each other, changing their colours both the heavens move onward.*

"*Common, unending is the sisters' pathway; taught by the gods, alternately they travel.*

"*Fair-formed, of different hues and yet one-minded, Night and Dawn clash not, neither do they tarry.*

"*Bright leader of glad sounds, our eyes behold her, splendid in hue she hath unclosed the portals.*

"*She, stirring up the world, hath shown us riches: Dawn hath awakened every living creature.*

"*Rich Dawn, she sets afoot the coiled-up sleeper, one for enjoyment, one for wealth or worship,*

"*Those who saw little for extended vision; all living creatures hath the Dawn awakened.*

"*One to high sway, one to exalted glory, one to pursue his gain, and one his labour;*

"*All to regard their different vocations, all moving creatures hath the Dawn awakened.*

"*We see her there, the child of Heaven, apparent, the young maid flushing in her shining raiment.*

"*Thou sovran lady of all earthly treasure, flush on us here, auspicious Dawn, this morning.*

"*She, first of endless morns to come hereafter, follows the path of morns that have departed.*

"*Dawn, at her rising, urges forth the living: him who is dead she wakes not from his slumber. . . .*

"*How long a time, and they shall be together,—dawns that have shone and dawns to shine hereafter?*

"*She yearns for former dawns with eager longing, and goes forth gladly shining with the others.*

"*Gone are the men who in the days before us looked on the rising of the earlier morning.*

"*We, we the living, now behold her brightness, and they come nigh who shall hereafter see her.*

[1] *Rig-veda*, i. hymns 48, 49, 92, 113, 124; iii. hymn 61; iv. hymns 51, 52; v. hymns 79, 80; vi. hymns 64, 65; vii. hymns 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81; x. hymn 172.

"*Foe-chaser, born of Law, and Law's protector, joy-giver, maker of all pleasant voices,*
"*Auspicious, bringing food for gods' enjoyment, shine on us here, as best, O Dawn, this morning.*
"*From days eternal hath Dawn shone, the goddess, and shows this light to-day, endowed with riches.*
"*So will she shine on days to come; immortal she moves on in her own strength, undecaying.*
"*In the sky's borders hath she shone in splendour: the goddess hath thrown off the veil of darkness.*
"*Awakening the world with purple horses, on her well-harnessed chariot Dawn approaches.*
"*Bringing all life-sustaining blessings with her, showing herself she sends forth brilliant lustre.*
"*Last of the countless mornings that have vanished, first of bright morns to come hath Dawn arisen.*
"*Arise! the breath, the life, again hath reached us: darkness hath passed away, and light approacheth.*
"*She for the Sun hath left a path to travel: we have arrived where men prolong existence.*
"*Singing the praises of refulgent mornings with his hymn's web the priest, the poet, rises.*
"*Shine then to-day, rich maid, on him who lauds thee, shine down on us the gift of life and offspring. . . .*
"*Mother of gods, Aditi's form of glory, ensign of sacrifice, shine forth exalted.*
"*Rise up, bestowing praise on our devotion: all-bounteous, make us chief among the people.*
"*Whatever splendid wealth the Dawns bring with them to bless the man who offers praise and worship,*
"*Even that may Mitra, Varuna vouchsafe us, and Aditi and Sindhu, Earth and Heaven.*" [1]

§ 3. *The Worship of the Sun among the Ancient Persians*

Herodotus on the Persian worship of the Sun.

We have learned on the authority of Herodotus that the ancient Persians worshipped the whole circle of the sky, which they called by a name equivalent to Zeus, and to which they offered sacrifices on the tops of the highest mountains.[2] In the same passage the old historian, who appears to have been accurately acquainted with the Persian

[1] *Rig-veda*, i. 113 (*Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated with a popular commentary by R. T. H. Griffith, vol. i. pp. 195-198). Portions of this and of other two hymns, addressed to Ushas, the Dawn, are translated by J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, vol. V.[3] pp. 181-190, and by H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda*, pp. 244 *sqq*.

[2] Herodotus, i. 131. See above, p. 32.

religion, informs us that the Persians also sacrificed to the sun and moon and earth and fire and water and the winds. They thought that leprosy was a punishment inflicted on the sufferer for a sin which he had committed against the sun; hence the leper was strictly secluded and forbidden to mix with his fellows.[1] When Xerxes was about to march out of Sardes at the head of his mighty host for the invasion of Greece, the sun was suddenly eclipsed in a clear sky, and the shadows of night replaced the splendour of the day. Alarmed at the portent, the King inquired of the Magians what it meant. But they reassured him and encouraged him to proceed on the fatal and ill-omened expedition by declaring that the eclipse portended the evacuation or desolation of the Greek cities, since it was the function of the sun to give omens to the Greeks, but of the moon to give omens to the Persians.[2]

The prayer and offering of Xerxes before crossing the Hellespont.

When he had reached the Hellespont, and the bridges were all ready for the passage of the army, the monarch tarried on the Asiatic shore till sunrise. Meantime, while the host waited in solemn silence for the order to march, myrtle boughs were strewed all over the ground on which they were to tread, and incense was burned on the bridges; the long line of fires might be seen glimmering in the morning twilight far away to the European shore, the shore from which so many thousands were to return no more. At the moment when the sun appeared above the horizon, Xerxes poured a libation from a golden cup into the sea, and looking towards the orb of day he prayed that no reverse might befall him which should prevent him from carrying his victorious arms to the utmost bounds of Europe. Having so prayed, he cast the golden cup, together with a golden bowl and a Persian scimitar, into the Hellespont; but the careful historian adds that he could not say whether the King offered these things to the sun or to the sea; for a short time before the despot had caused the sea to be scourged for destroying the first bridge over the Hellespont, and he might naturally wish, as a measure of prudence, to propitiate the sea-god, whose feelings might still be hurt and his back still sore from the beating.[3] The army was accompanied on the march by a

[1] Herodotus, i. 138. [2] Herodotus, vii. 37.

[3] Herodotus, vii. 54. As to the scourging of the Hellespont, see *id.* vii. 35.

chariot drawn by eight white horses in which no man was allowed to ride because it was sacred to the god whom Herodotus calls Zeus;[1] the deity may have been either the Sky-god or the Supreme God Ahura Mazda, whom Xerxes is known from the cuneiform inscriptions to have worshipped under the name of Auramazda. In one of these inscriptions Xerxes declares that "Auramazda is a powerful god; he is the greatest of the gods".[2] This chariot sacred to Zeus is mentioned also by Xenophon in the historical romance which he devoted to the glorification of Cyrus the Elder, and he tells us that it was followed by a chariot of the Sun, also drawn by white horses and wreathed with garlands like the chariot of Zeus.[3]

The chariot of the Sun.

The evidence of Xenophon on all points of Persian religion and life is to be received with great caution, for curiously enough he saw through a sort of magnifying haze of glory the Persians whom he had fought under a Persian captain. Yet on his long march and retreat through the Persian empire he had many opportunities of acquainting himself with the character and customs of his gallant enemies, and we cannot afford to dismiss all his statements on the subject as a soldier's dream. In the same passage in which he describes the chariot of the Sun he tells us that horses were led along to be sacrificed to the solar deity,[4] and later on he relates how the animals were burned entire in honour of the luminary.[5] The statement that the Persians sacrificed horses to the Sun is confirmed by other ancient writers.[6] Indeed, Xenophon had personal reasons for being acquainted with the custom; for marching through the snow on the mountains of Armenia he came to a village where horses were being bred as tribute for the king of Persia; and in return for the hospitality which he and his men received from the villagers he gave the headman of the village a horse to fatten up and sacrifice to the Sun. The gift was not so liberal as his host perhaps imagined;

Xenophon on Persian religion.

Horses sacrificed to the Sun by the Persians.

[1] Herodotus, vii. 40, 55.

[2] J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman* (Paris, 1877), p. 25.

[3] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, viii. 3. 12. According to Quintus Curtius (iii. 3. 7) the sacred chariot of Jupiter (Zeus) was followed by a great horse called the horse of the Sun.

[4] Xenophon, *l.c.*

[5] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, viii. 3. 24.

[6] Pausanias, iii. 20. 4; Philostratus, *Vit. Apollon.* i. 31. 2; Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 385 *sq.*

for the shrewd Greek soldier observes that the charger was old and damaged by the march, and he feared it would die if pressed to go farther; moreover, he took care to replace it by a colt which was being bred for his enemy the Persian king.[1] Another people, possibly Iranian, who used to sacrifice horses to the Sun were the Massagetae, a people of Turkestan, to the east of the Caspian. They alleged as the ground for the sacrifice that the swiftest of the gods ought to receive for his share the fleetest of mortal animals.[2] We shall see presently that in like manner horses were sacrificed to the Sun by the Lacedaemonians and the Rhodians.[3]

Horses sacrificed to the Sun by the Massagetae.

Further, in the imaginary picture which he draws of the last days of Cyrus, his Greek panegyrist represents him offering sacrifices and praying to Zeus, the Sun, and all the other gods on the tops of the mountains in gratitude for the favours they had bestowed on him in his long career of glory.[4] A later Greek historian, Agatharchides of Samos, speaks of Xerxes in Greece sacrificing oxen on an altar of the Sun.[5] In a Greek letter of Darius the First, which was found engraved on a stone near Magnesia in Asia Minor, the monarch praises his vassal Gadates for transplanting certain fruits from beyond the Euphrates to Lower Asia, but threatens him with punishment for his impiety in taking tribute of the vinedressers, who were sacred to Apollo, and compelling these holy men to dig unhallowed ground.[6] Here Apollo is probably equivalent to the Sun, who would accordingly seem to have had vineyards and vinedressers of his own in the time of Darius, just as he had cattle in the time of Homer.

Persian sacrifices to the Sun.

Vinedressers sacred to Apollo.

In the *Zend-Avesta* the Sun is invoked not unfrequently, but it cannot be said that he is the object of fervent worship; the references to him are mostly incidental; the benefits which

Invocations of the Sun in the *Zend-Avesta*.

[1] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, iv. 5. 34 *sq.*

[2] Herodotus, i. 216; Strabo, xi. 8. 6. As to the ethnical affinities of the Massagetae, see (Sir) E. H. Bunbury, *History of Ancient Geography*[2] (London, 1883), ii. 224 note[9]. Humboldt was of opinion that the Massagetae belonged to the Indo-European family. If he was right, they may have been Iranians.

[3] See below, pp. 476, 484.

[4] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, viii. 7. 3.

[5] Agatharchides Samius, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 197.

[6] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 22 (vol. i. pp. 20 *sq.*); Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Bruxelles, 1900), No. 32, p. 39.

he confers on mankind are rather left to be inferred than expressly enumerated in the texts.[1] It would almost appear as if the prophet, lost in the rapturous contemplation of the spiritual Creator, were indifferent to the gross realities of the material universe. In the *Zend-Avesta* the name of the Sun is *hvare*, which is verbally equivalent to the Sanscrit *svar*, of which Surya, the name for the sun and the Sun-god, is a derivative. The Greek *helios*, "the sun", comes from the same root.[2] The sun is called the eye of Ahura Mazda ;[3] and he is often spoken of as "swift-horsed",[4] which seems to imply that, like his Vedic counterpart and namesake Surya, he was supposed to be driven across the sky in a chariot drawn by horses. Thus in a hymn to the Sun we read :

Hymn to the Sun in the *Zend-Avesta*.

"Unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun be propitiation, with sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification. We sacrifice unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun. When the light of the sun waxes warmer, when the brightness of the sun waxes warmer, then up stand the angels (*Yazatas*),[5] by hundreds and thousands : they gather together its Glory, they make its Glory pass down, they pour its Glory upon the earth made by Ahura, for the increase of the world of holiness, for the increase of the creatures of holiness, for the increase of the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun.

"And when the sun rises up, then the earth, made by Ahura, becomes clean ; the running waters become clean, the waters of the wells become clean, the waters of the sea become clean, the standing waters become clean ; all the holy creatures, the creatures of the Good Spirit, become clean.

"Should not the sun rise up, then the demons (*daêvas*) would destroy all the things that are in the seven quarters of the earth (*Karshvares*),[6] nor would the heavenly angels

[1] Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 66 *sq.*

[2] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 31 *sq.*

[3] *Zend-Avesta*, Part III. translated by L. H. Mills (Oxford, 1887), p. 199 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxi.).

[4] A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. (Strassburg, 1896–1904), p. 649.

[5] *Yazatas* are an inferior order of divinities or angels. See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 41 ; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. p. 632 ; J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 432.

[6] The old Iranians divided the earth into seven or three quarters or regions (*karshvares*). See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, i. 189.

(*Yazatas*) find any way of withstanding or repelling them in the material world.

"He who offers up a sacrifice unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun—to withstand darkness, to withstand the demons (*daêvas*) born of darkness, to withstand the robbers and bandits, to withstand the sorcerers (*Yâtus*)[1] and the peris (*Pairikas*),[2] to withstand death that creeps in unseen —offers it up to Ahura Mazda, offers it up to the archangels (*Amesha-Spentas*),[3] offers it up to his own soul. He rejoices all the heavenly and worldly angels (*Yazatas*), who offers up a sacrifice unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun. . . . I bless the sacrifice and the invocation, and the strength and vigour of the undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun."[4]

Daily prayer to the Sun.

And every layman over eight years old was bound to recite a prayer to the Sun, thrice a day, namely at sunrise, at noon, and at three o'clock in the afternoon: he recited it standing and girt with his sacred cord (*kosti*). He prayed, saying among other things:

"Hail to Ahura Mazda! Hail to the lesser deities (*Amesha-Spentas*)! Hail to Mithra, the lord of wide pastures! Hail to the Sun, the swift-horsed! . . . We sacrifice unto the bright, undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun. We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who is truth-speaking, a chief in assemblies, with a thousand ears,

[1] The *Yâtus* include both human sorcerers and demon sorcerers. See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 146-148; J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 174 *sq.*; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 665; J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 209.

[2] The *Pairikas* are wicked fairy women who seduce men by their beauty. See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 138 *sq.*; J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 174 *sq.*; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 665.

[3] The *Amesha-Spentas* or *Amsha-spands*, as they are called in later Persian, whose name signifies "the Immortal Holy Ones", are the deities who rank below Ahura Mazda; they may be described as archangels. Their number is six or, if Ahura Mazda is included among them, seven. They are deified abstractions and therefore of comparatively late origin rather than ancient deities of nature. See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 28 *sqq.*; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 633 *sq.* Plutarch tells us that Oromasdes (Ahura Mazda), created six gods, who are doubtless the *Amesha-Spentas*, though Plutarch does not name them so. See Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 47.

[4] *Zend-Avesta*, Part II. translated by James Darmesteter, pp. 85-87 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxiii.).

well-shapen, with ten thousand eyes, high, with full knowledge, strong, sleepless, and ever awake. We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of all countries, whom Ahura Mazda made the most glorious of all the gods in the world unseen. So may Mithra and Ahura, the two great gods, come to us for help! We sacrifice unto the bright, undying, shining, swift-horsed Sun."[1]

Mithra distinguished from the Sun.

This prayer suffices to prove that at the date of its composition Mithra was regarded as a god distinct from the Sun; he was not yet identified or confused with the solar deity, as he came to be in later times. To that confusion we shall return presently.[2]

§ 4. *The Worship of the Sun among the Ancient Greeks*[3]

Greek worship of Helios, the Sun.

The Greeks personified and worshipped the Sun under his proper name of Helios, but in general they paid little attention to him. To this rule the Rhodians were an exception, for they deemed their island sacred to the Sun-god and elevated him to a high, if not to the principal, place in their pantheon. But on the whole the solar deity under his proper name plays a very subordinate part in the religion, the mythology, and the art of ancient Greece. In the hymn-book which goes by the name of Homer, a short and not very enthusiastic piece is devoted to his praise. In it we read that his father was Hyperion, that is, He who goes on high; that his mother was Euryphaesia, that is, She who shines far and

Homeric hymn to the Sun.

[1] *Zend-Avesta*, Part II. translated by James Darmesteter, pp. 349-351 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxiii.). The *kosti*, as the modern Parsees call it, was the sacred cord with which, at about the age of fifteen, every worshipper of Ahura Mazda was solemnly girt as a token of his membership of the religious community. It was worn constantly both by men and women during the day and only laid aside at night. In later times the investiture with the sacred cord took place earlier than in the fifteenth year. See Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, iii. 578, 700 *sq.*: W. Geiger, *Ostiranische Kultur im Altertum* (Erlangen, 1882), pp. 238 *sq.*

[2] See below, pp. 503 *sqq.*

[3] On this subject see F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre* (Göttingen, 1857-1863), i. 400-413; L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.[4], ed. C. Robert, pp. 429-440; Rapp, *s.v.* "Helios", in W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. coll. 1993-2026; E. Cahen, *s.v.* "Sol", in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 2, pp. 1373-1381; Jessen, *s.v.* "Helios", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, viii. 1, coll. 58-93; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 417-420.

wide; and that his sisters were the rosy-armed Dawn and the fair-tressed Moon. He himself is spoken of as splendid, unwearied, like the immortals; mounted on his golden-reined chariot, drawn by horses, he shines on mortals and the immortal gods. He wears a golden helmet; bright rays flash from him; bright hair floats about his temples and enframes his lovely beaming face; a glistering garment, finely spun, wraps him about and streams upon the wind.[1]

The chariot and horses of the Sun-god.

This description of the resplendent Sun-god in human form, riding his horse-drawn car, answers to the general conception of him which the Greeks formed and embodied in works both of literature and art. We see him, for example, exactly so portrayed in a fine metope which once adorned a temple at New Ilium. The god stands erect in the chariot, which, however, is hidden by the four prancing steeds: one arm is raised over the heads of the horses as if holding the reins: his face is turned full to the right and to the spectator: the features of his face are noble: ample curling locks enframe his brow and cheeks: broad sunbeams radiate from his head; and behind him his flowing robe streams on the wind.[2] Yet it is remarkable that no mention of the chariot and horses of the Sun occurs in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, though the car and the steeds are repeatedly mentioned in the Homeric hymns. Thus, to take another instance, when Demeter was searching the world over for her daughter Persephone, ravished by gloomy Dis, she appealed to the Sun to help her to find the loved and lost one. She took her stand in front of the chariot and horses and prayed, saying: "O Sun, have pity on me, since from the divine ether thou lookest down with thy rays on all the earth and sea, tell me true if thou didst see what god or mortal man has snatched far from me my darling child". The god informed the sorrowful goddess that Hades (Pluto) had carried her daughter off on his chariot to be his bride in the gloomy infernal world. Then,

The chariot and horses of the Sun in a metope of a temple.

Demeter's appeal to the Sun-god in his chariot.

[1] *Homeric Hymn*, xxxi. In line 11 I accept Pierson's emendation, *περὶ κροτάφοισί τ' ἔθειραι* for the manuscript reading *παρὰ κροτάφων τε παρειαί*.

[2] A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, i. 639, fig. 710; W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 2005-2006. For evidence of the chariot and horses of the Sun in Greek literature and art, see further Rapp, *op. cit.* coll. 1998 *sq.*, 2005-2009; Jessen, *op. cit.* coll. 88-90.

after comforting her as well as he could by dwelling on the splendid match which her daughter was making, he called to his horses, and they swept away his chariot, like birds upon the wing.[1]

The all-seeing Sun invoked as witness.

This conception of the Sun as knowing all that happens upon earth, because he looks down on it from the sky, is familiar to Homer, for both in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the Sun is said to see and hear all things, and in one passage Agamemnon appeals to him, along with Zeus, and the Rivers, and Earth, and the gods of the nether world, to be the witnesses of his oath,[2] and elsewhere the King swears by Zeus, Earth, Sun, and the Avenging Furies.[3] Euripides makes Medea, on her arrival in Athens, exact from King Aegeus an oath by the Earth and the Sun that he will protect her;[4] and Apollonius Rhodius represents her swearing to Arete, wife of Alcinous, by the light of the Sun and Hecate.[5] In a letter to a certain philosopher named Maximus the Emperor Julian calls Zeus, the great Sun, Athene, and all the gods and goddesses to witness that he had trembled for the safety of his philosophic friend.[6] We have seen that in Greek-speaking lands the custom of attesting fidelity by a solemn appeal to Zeus, the Sun, and the Earth persisted down to Imperial times; such oaths are often recorded in inscriptions.[7]

The personification of the Sun as a righteous deity in Greek tragedy.

This personification of the Sun as a deity who knows everything and stands for righteousness is sometimes employed with fine effect by the Greek tragedians. Thus in Aeschylus, when Prometheus is nailed to a crag on the snowy Caucasus as a punishment for the benefits which he had conferred on mankind, he appeals to "the all-seeing circle of the Sun", to the divine ether and swift-winged breezes, to the springs of rivers and the unnumbered dimpling smile of ocean waves, and to Earth the Universal Mother, calling on them to witness the wrongs which he, himself a god, suffers at the hand of the gods.[8] Again, going to her death, Cassandra prays to

[1] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 62-89. The chariot and horses of the Sun are also mentioned in *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 68 *sq.*

[2] Homer, *Iliad*, iii. 275-280; *Odyssey*, xi. 109, xii. 323.

[3] Homer, *Iliad*, xix. 257 *sqq.*

[4] Euripides, *Medea*, 745-753.

[5] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, iv. 1019 *sq.*

[6] Julian, *Epist.* 38, vol. ii. p. 536 ed. Hertlein.

[7] See above, pp. 325-327.

[8] Aeschylus, *Prometheus*, 88-92.

the Sun for vengeance on her murderers.[1] And when the matricide Orestes feels his brain beginning to reel at the approach of the Furies of his murdered mother, he bids them spread out the gory garment which his father wore in his last hour, that in it the all-seeing Sun may behold the unhallowed handiwork of his mother and may at his trial bear witness that he was indeed the man to visit on her the blood of his dead sire.[2]

Sophocles also introduces the Sun as the unwilling witness of unrighteous deeds and as their appropriate avenger. Thus in the palace at Mycenae, polluted by the murder of the rightful king and the triumph of his murderers, the chorus asks passionately where are the thunderbolts of Zeus and where the bright Sun, if they behold these deeds and sit with folded hands nor smite the guilty pair.[3]

At Thebes, when the full horror of the crimes committed by the unwitting Oedipus had been brought to light, Creon drove him into the house on the plea that the pure Sun ought not to look upon so defiled a wretch.[4] Afterwards at Colonus, in Attica, on a bright day in early spring, while snow still crowned the distant hills and the nightingales were singing in the neighbouring grove, the blind and banished Oedipus retorted on his persecutor Creon, cursing him and all his house, and saying, "May the all-seeing Sun give thee and thine even such a sad old age as mine".[5] Again, in Euripides, when the witch Medea announces that she has steeled her heart to slay her children, the horror-struck chorus prays to Earth and to the Sun's resplendent glory to look down upon the abandoned woman before she lays a ruthless hand upon her offspring.[6]

The appeal of the dying Ajax to the Sun.

But nowhere perhaps has a Greek poet yoked, so to say, the chariot of the Sun in his service with finer effect than in the pathetic passage wherein the gallant Ajax, about to fall upon his sword, looks up at the Sun and bids him, in his bright chariot carry the message of his sorrows and his

[1] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1323-1326.

[2] Aeschylus, *Choephor.* 983-989.

[3] Sophocles, *Electra*, 825 *sq.*

[4] Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, 1424-1431.

[5] Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus*, 868-870. For the scene and time of the play, see Jebb's Introduction to his edition (Cambridge, 1900), p. xii.

[6] Euripides, *Medea*, 1251-1254.

death to his far home in Greece, across the rolling sea. "O Sun," he cries, "who in thy car dost ride heaven's steep, when thou lookest upon my fatherland, O draw thy golden reins and tell my sorrows and my fate to my old sire and to the hapless dame, my mother; all the town will ring with her sad wail when she shall hear thy tidings. And thou, O present radiance of the shining day, and thou the Sun, the charioteer, I hail ye for the last time, and then no more for ever."[1]

The golden goblet of the Sun.

But while the Sun was thus supposed to drive across the sky in a chariot by day, it was imagined that after plunging into the sea in the west he returned by night to his starting-point in the east, floating over the subterranean ocean in a golden goblet. In a beautiful poem Mimnermus has described the tired god, after his day's toil, sleeping in his lovely bed, while the winged goblet, wrought of beaten gold by the hands of Hephaestus, wafts him lightly over the waves from the far western land of the Hesperides to the far eastern land of the Ethiopians, where his chariot and horses stand waiting for him, till his herald, the rosy-fingered Dawn, shall mount the sky and the great god shall begin his weary, never-ending journey afresh.[2] According to Pherecydes, the horses of the Sun were also ferried across the sea by night in the golden goblet;[3] and this seems only reasonable, else how could they have crossed all that stretch of water and been ready to start again next morning in the east? When Hercules went to lift the cattle of Geryon in his far western island of Erythea, beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, he needed a vessel of some sort in which to sail across the sea. So he asked the Sun for the loan of his golden goblet, and bending his bow at the solar orb, threatened to shoot the deity, if he did not comply with his request. The frightened Sun implored him not to shoot, and lent him the precious goblet. So Hercules embarked in it and sailed away westward. And when he came out on the open Atlantic, and saw the coasts of Spain and Africa stretching away behind him and fading into the blue distance, the god of Ocean, to try his

[1] Sophocles, *Ajax*, 845-857. I have shortened the passage.

[2] Athenaeus, xi. 38-39, pp. 469-470, quoting Pisander, Panyasis, Stesichorus, Antimachus, Aeschylus, and Mimnermus. The poem of Mimnermus is given also by Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*, ii.[3] p. 412, frag. 12.

[3] Pherecydes; quoted by Athenaeus, xi. 39, p. 470 C.

courage, caused the goblet to rock and heave on the swell of the great billows. But, nothing daunted, the truculent hero threatened to shoot the Sea-god also; and the deity, in alarm, begged him to hold his hand, so there was a great calm.[1] Thus bully Hercules sailed to Erythea, stole the kine of Geryon, embarked them on the goblet, and landed them safely on the coast of Spain; after which, he restored the goblet to the Sun.[2]

The humanity of the Sun-god.

These accounts suffice to prove how very human the Sun-god was supposed to be; for in them we see him at one time driving his team across the sky, at another time reining them up and stopping to deliver the last message of the dying Ajax to his parents in Salamis, and yet again cowed by the threats of Hercules and lending his precious goblet on compulsion to the swaggering hero. In Homer the deity also figures as a successful cattle-breeder; for in the *Odyssey* we read how in the island of Thrinacia he had seven herds of cows and seven flocks of sheep, fifty cows in every herd and fifty sheep in every flock; neither herd nor flock ever multiplied or diminished; their numbers remained for ever the same. They were tended by two fair-tressed nymphs, Phaethusa and Lampetia, whom Neaera bore to the Sun.[3] These goodly herds and flocks the Sun-god loved to behold, both at his rising and at his setting.[4] The witch Circe in her magic isle, and the ghost of the prophet Tiresias in the nether world, had bidden Ulysses beware of molesting the sacred herds and flocks, warning him that, if he slaughtered them, his ship and all his comrades would perish, and that if he himself ever reached home it would be after long delay and in evil plight.[5] So when the ship,

The sacred flocks and herds of the Sun in Thrinacia.

[1] Pherecydes, quoted by Athenaeus, xi. 39, p. 470 C-D; compare Apollodorus, ii. 5. 10; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 1396.

In a late vase-painting the Sun and the Dawn, mounted on a four-horse car, are seen transported across the sea in a ship, not a goblet. See F. G. Welcker, *Antike Denkmäler*, iii. taf. x. 1; E. Gerhard, *Gesammelte akademische Abhandlungen* (Berlin, 1866–1868), taf. vii. 3.

[2] Apollodorus, ii. 5. 10.

[3] Homer, *Od.* xii. 127-136. Compare Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 964-979. According to the historian Timaeus (quoted by a scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 965), the island of Thrinacia was Sicily, which was so called on account of its triangular shape. But more probably the island was purely mythical.

[4] Homer, *Od.* xii. 379 *sq.*

[5] Homer, *Od.* xi. 104-115, xii. 127-141.

after threading the perilous passage between Scylla and Charybdis, was off the Thrinacian isle, the mariners could hear afar off the lowing of the cows and the bleating of the sheep. Weary with the voyage they landed on the island for rest and refreshment beside a spring of sweet water. After partaking of supper and lamenting for the comrades whom Scylla had snatched from the ship and devoured, the night closed in upon them, and they wept themselves to sleep. But when the night was waning and the stars had crossed the zenith, the wind rose and blew a hurricane. For a whole month it blew, and the mariners dared not put out upon the angry sea. For a time, warned by Ulysses, they subsisted on the corn and wine they had brought with them in the ship; but when these were exhausted, one evil day, while Ulysses had wandered away and fallen fast asleep, they yielded to the pangs of hunger and slew the finest of the oxen of the Sun and roasted the flesh on spits over the fire. Waking from sleep and retracing his steps to the ship, Ulysses smelt the sweet savour of the roast meat and groaned aloud. Word of the sacrilege was carried by Lampetia to the Sun; for in spite of his sharp sight the outrage appears to have escaped his notice. The indignant deity at once appealed to Zeus and the other immortal gods, demanding vengeance on the sinners, and threatening that, if this reasonable demand were not granted, he would go down to Hades and shine among the dead. In great agitation, Zeus implored him not to carry out this dreadful threat and promised to hurl a thunderbolt at the ship and smash it in the middle of the sea. Reckless of their doom, the sinners feasted on the finest of the oxen for six whole days. Then on the seventh day, when the wind had dropped, they put off from shore, stepped the mast, and hoisted the white sails. But when they were out of sight of land, black clouds gathered overhead and the sea grew dark beneath them. The wind came down out of the west with a roar and snapped the rigging, so that the mast fell with a crash, striking the helmsman's head and sweeping him overboard. Then Zeus kept his word to the Sun; for he hurled a thunderbolt and smote the ship, which staggered under the blow and was filled with sulphur. All the wicked

How the companions of Ulysses impiously killed and ate the sacred kine.

How Zeus punished the sinners and avenged the Sun-god.

men who had partaken of the sacred roast beef tumbled into the sea and were drowned; but the pious Ulysses was saved on a floating spar. Thus were the sinners punished and the Sun-god avenged.[1]

The cows and sheep of the Sun interpreted as the days and nights of a lunar year.

The cattle and sheep of the Sun-god have been variously interpreted in ancient and modern times. Homer clearly thought of them as very substantial animals, whose flesh could furnish a hearty meal. But this interpretation is too gross and palpable to satisfy some mythologists, with whom it is a first principle that in mythology nothing is what it seems or what its name seems to imply. From observing that the total number of the cows was three hundred and fifty, since seven herds of fifty head apiece amount precisely to that sum, the sagacious Aristotle concluded that the cows stood for the days of a lunar year, which he appears to have calculated at three hundred and fifty and which, like the cows of the Sun, never vary in number but remain perpetually the same.[2] An ingenious scholiast on Homer clinches the interpretation by explaining the corresponding three hundred and fifty sheep to be the nights of the lunar year.[3] The Aristotelian explanation of the three hundred and fifty cows was accepted by Lucian in antiquity[4] and by F. G. Welcker in modern times.[5] Apollonius Rhodius perhaps favoured the same interpretation, for in describing the cattle of the Sun, which the Argonauts saw in passing the island, and of which the lowing of the cows and the bleating of the sheep were wafted to their ears out at sea, he tells us that not one of the cows was dark, every one was white as milk with golden horns.[6] The picture might pass in mythology for a description of a bright day touched with the gold of sunrise and sunset. Certainly Homer would seem to have had a definite idea in his mind when he fixed the number of the Sun's cows and sheep at precisely three hundred and fifty each, adding that the numbers never varied. The idea corresponds fairly to the number of days and nights in a year

[1] Homer, *Od.* xii. 260-425; compare Apollodorus, *Epit.* vii. 22 *sq.*

[2] Scholiast on Homer, *Od.* xii. 129; Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xii. 130, p. 1717.

[3] Scholiast on Homer, *Od.* xii. 129.

[4] Lucian, *De astrologia*, 22.

[5] F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre* (Göttingen, 1857–1862), i. 404-406.

[6] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 964-978.

composed of twelve lunar months; for though the true number of the days in such a year is not three hundred and fifty but three hundred and fifty-four, we may allow the poet the licence of a round number without tying him down to mathematical exactness.

The cows of the Sun interpreted as clouds.

Others would see in the cows of the Sun the white and golden or red clouds that gather round the great luminary at his rising and setting. In favour of this view it might be alleged that the Sun himself in his appeal to Zeus and the gods declares that he loved to look on his cattle both when he mounted up into the starry sky and when he returned again from heaven to earth.[1] Further, it has been pointed out that according to one account the kine in the island of Erythea were the cows of the Sun,[2] that these kine are expressly said to have been red or purple,[3] and that Erythea is the Red Island in the far west.[4] All this would fit very well into a myth of the red, purple, and golden clouds of sunrise and sunset; but it leaves the fixing of their number at three hundred and fifty quite unexplained.

Herds of cows and flocks of sheep dedicated to the Sun.

However, many of the ancients, rejecting or ignoring both the astronomical and the nebular hypothesis, appear to have acquiesced in the plain view that the cows and sheep of the Sun were cows and sheep and nothing else. In Sicily the very place was pointed out, near the little town of Artemisium, where the cows of the Sun had pastured, and where Ulysses slept while his comrades committed the fatal sacrilege.[5] At Cape Taenarum, in Laconia, there used to be kept flocks of fleecy sheep which were deemed sacred to the Sun;[6] and we are told that formerly there were herds of the Sun at Gortyn in Crete.[7]

Flock of sheep sacred to the Sun at Apollonia in Epirus.

At Apollonia in Epirus, down apparently to the time of Herodotus in the fifth century before Christ, there were sheep sacred to the Sun, which pastured by day on the banks of a river, but were folded at night in a cave far from the city, where they were guarded during the hours

[1] Homer, *Od.* xii. 379 *sq.*

[2] Apollodorus, i. 6. 1.

[3] Apollodorus, ii. 5. 10 εἶχε δὲ φοινικᾶς βόας.

[4] W. H. Roscher, *Hermes der Windgott* (Leipzig, 1878), p. 44; Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 2018 *sq.*

[5] Appian, *Bell. Civ.* v. 116.

[6] *Homeric Hymn to the Pythian Apollo*, 233-235.

[7] Servius, on Virgil, *Ecl.* vi. 60.

of darkness by men of the richest and noblest families in Apollonia. Each of these guardians held office for a year. On one occasion it chanced that the guardian, Evenius by name, fell asleep on his watch, and while he slept wolves attacked the sheep and devoured sixty of them. For thus sleeping on his watch and allowing the sacred flock to be ravaged, Evenius was punished by having both his eyes put out. But after he had been thus mutilated, the sacred sheep ceased to lamb and the land to bear fruit as usual. So the people of Apollonia consulted the oracles of Delphi and Dodona, and the prophets at these holy places informed them that the gods were angry with the people for wrongfully blinding the shepherd of the sacred sheep, because it was the gods themselves who had instigated the wolves to worry the sheep, and that they would never cease avenging the wrong done to that innocent man until the people atoned for it by granting him whatever satisfaction he might demand; moreover, they said that as soon as this satisfaction was made they would themselves bestow on the blind shepherd such a gift as would make many persons account him blessed. When these oracles were reported, the people of Apollonia kept them quiet and commissioned some of their number to see the blind man and try to make the best bargain they could with him. The commissioners found him sitting on a bench in the marketplace; so they sat down beside him and entered into conversation. From general topics they led the talk to the subject of his misfortune, and after expressing their sympathy with him they asked, in a casual sort of way, what compensation would satisfy him, supposing that his fellow-citizens were willing to make him amends for the wrong they had done him. To this the blind man, knowing nothing of the oracle, replied in the innocence of his heart, that if they gave him the two best estates in the country and the finest house in the city he would be perfectly satisfied and would owe them no grudge for what they had done to him. The commissioners took him at his word and divulged the secret by saying that the people would give him this compensation in obedience to the oracles. The blind man fumed and stormed, feeling that he had been outwitted, and thinking how very much higher he would have pitched his demands

How the somnolent shepherd became a great diviner.

if only he had known that the gods had, so to say, given him a blank cheque to draw on the bank of Apollonia. However, it was all to no purpose ; the estates and the house were purchased by the town and handed over to him, and he had to make the best of the bargain. But the gods were as good as their word ; for no sooner had he thus come into his fortune than they endowed him with the gift of prophecy, and he became a famous diviner.[1]

Suggested explanation of the sacred cattle of the Sun.

This story has all the air of being authentic, and it is of interest as illustrating the eminent degree of sanctity which in historical times the inhabitants of Apollonia attached to the sheep of the Sun, since they set a man of the highest birth and fortune to watch over the sheep every night in their cave, and punished the watchman severely for any neglect of duty. Here the sheep were undoubtedly sheep and not clouds of the rosy dawn or golden sunset ; hence the cows of the Sun, which the companions of Ulysses devoured in the isle of Thrinacia may very well have been likewise creatures of flesh and blood and not pale abstractions of the mythical fancy. Perhaps we may suppose that real herds of cows and flocks of sheep were actually dedicated to the Sun-god, and that the number both of the cows and of the sheep was fixed at three hundred and fifty, or perhaps at three hundred and fifty-four, because, in the imperfect state of the calendar, that was reckoned the number of days in the year, and people thought that a daily allowance of one cow and one sheep should suffice to support the deity in the discharge of his arduous duties. If we adopt this view, we need not necessarily assume that the animals were sacrificed daily ; like many other divinities, the Sun-god may have been imagined to content himself with the spiritual essence of the sacred kine without insisting on their slaughter.

The wife and children of the Sun.

In accordance with his character as a personal being the Sun was supposed to be married. The name of his wife is commonly given as Perse, or Perseis, daughter of Ocean,[2] but many other goddesses, nymphs, or women are mentioned by ancient authors as the partners of the Sun-god in

[1] Herodotus, ix. 93-94.

[2] Homer, *Od.* x. 139 *sq.*; Hesiod, *Theog.* 956 *sq.*; Apollodorus, i. 9. 1, iii. 1. 2, *Epit.* vii. 14; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 591; Hyginus, *Fab.* 156 and preface p. 31 ed. Bunte.

love or marriage and as the mothers of his numerous offspring.[1] Among them we might naturally expect to find the Moon, and there are some grounds for holding that the Greeks did associate her with the Sun as his wedded wife, but the mythical marriage of the two great luminaries is rather a matter of inference than of direct attestation.[2] Of the children of the Sun the most celebrated were Aeëtes[3] Circe,[4] and Pasiphae.[5] It is remarkable that all three of them, as well as some of their offspring, such as Medea and Phaedra, were famed for their wickedness and crimes; in particular the women were notorious witches. Why there should have been this taint in the blood of the Sun is not manifest.

Aeetes, the son of the Sun.

Aeëtes is called baleful by Homer;[6] and Diodorus Siculus says that Aeëtes and his brother Perses, both children of the Sun, were exceedingly cruel.[7] Aeëtes was king of Colchis, and being warned by an oracle that he would die whenever strangers should land in his country and carry off the Golden Fleece, which Phrixus had dedicated in the temple of Ares, he gave orders that all strangers were to be sacrificed. This, says Diodorus, he did not only to escape the threatened danger but also out of sheer natural cruelty, in order that, the report of the savagery of the Colchians getting abroad, no foreigner might dare to set foot in their land. Moreover, lest anybody should make off with the Golden Fleece, he built a wall round the temple of Ares in which the precious fleece was kept, and he set

[1] Rapp, *s.v.* "Helios", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 2016 *sq.*; Jessen, *s.v.* "Helios", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, viii. 1. coll. 78-80.

[2] That the Sun (Helios) and Moon (Selene) were regarded as husband and wife has been maintained, for example, by W. H. Roscher. See his *Selene und Verwandtes* (Leipzig, 1890), pp. 75 *sqq.*; *id.*, *s.v.* "Mondgöttin", in *Ausführ. Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. coll. 3157 *sqq.* Compare *The Golden Bough*, Part III. *The Dying God*, pp. 87 *sqq.*; and especially A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, i. (Cambridge, 1914) pp. 521 *sqq.*

[3] Homer, *Od.* x. 137-139; Hesiod, *Theog.* 956 *sq.*; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 45. 1; Apollodorus, i. 9. 1; Hyginus, *Fab.* 156 and p. 31 ed. Bunte.

[4] Homer, *Od.* x. 135-139; Hesiod, *Theog.* 956 *sq.*; Apollodorus, i. 9. 1, *Epit.* vii. 14; Hyginus, *Fab.* 156 and p. 31 ed. Bunte. According to Diodorus Siculus (iv. 45. 3), Circe was a daughter of Aeëtes and therefore granddaughter of the Sun.

[5] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iii. 999; Apollodorus, i. 9. 1, iii. 1. 2; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 60. 4; Pausanias, v. 25. 9; Hyginus, *Fab.* 40 and 156.

[6] Homer, *Od.* x. 137.

[7] Diodorus Siculus, iv. 45. 1.

watchmen to watch it, whom rumour magnified into a dragon and fire-breathing bulls.[1]

Circe, the daughter of the Sun.

As for Circe, the daughter of the Sun, it is said that she was a past-mistress of drugs and poisons of all sorts. Being married to the king of the Sarmatians, she began operations by taking him off by poison, and then, having succeeded to the throne, she committed so many crimes of cruelty and violence against her people that they drove her out of the country. Afterwards, according to some mythologists, she took refuge with her attendant women in a remote and desert isle of ocean; but certain historians will have it that she settled at the headland of Italy which was called Circeii after her.[2] Every one knows how by her baleful drugs she turned the companions of Ulysses into swine, after that by her enchantments she had transformed other men into wolves and lions, which stood on their hind legs, wagged their tails, and fawned upon human beings.[3]

Pasiphae, the daughter of the Sun.

As for Pasiphae, daughter of the Sun, to say nothing of her unnatural love for a bull,[4] she bewitched her husband Minos so that he was affected by a strange malady which proved fatal to any woman whom he approached.[5] This wicked woman had a wicked daughter Phaedra,[6] whose criminal passion for her stepson Hippolytus led to the tragic death of that slandered but virtuous young man.[7] Thus Phaedra, as a daughter of Pasiphae, was a granddaughter of the Sun.

Medea, a granddaughter of the Sun, her long career of crime.

Still more flagrant and notorious, if possible, were the crimes of Medea, who, as a daughter of Aeëtes, was likewise a granddaughter of the Sun.[8] Having made a thorough

[1] Diodorus Siculus, iv. 46-47. According to Hyginus (*Fab.* 22), Aeetes had received an oracle that he would reign as long as the Golden Fleece, which Phrixus had dedicated, should remain in the temple of Mars.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, iv. 45. 3-5. The Italian home of Circe naturally found favour with Italian poets (Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 10 *sqq.*; Ovid, *Metamorph.* xiv. 8-10).

[3] Homer, *Od.* x. 210-243; Ovid, *Metamorph.* xiv. 245-307. According to Apollodorus (*Epit.* vii. 15), she turned some of the comrades of Ulysses into swine, some into wolves, some into asses, and some into lions.

[4] Apollodorus, iii. 15. 8; Ovid, *Metamorph.* ix. 735-740.

[5] Apollodorus, iii. 15. 1; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 41.

[6] Apollodorus, iii. 1. 2.

[7] Apollodorus, *Epit.* i. 17-19; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 62; Pausanias, i. 22. 1 *sq.*, ii. 1-4; Hyginus, *Fab.* 47; Ovid, *Metamorph.* xv. 497 *sqq.*

[8] Hesiod, *Theog.* 958-962; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 45. 3; Apollodorus, i. 9. 23; Hyginus, *Fab.* 25.

study of all the properties of drugs,[1] this bad woman became a profound adept in witchcraft and, armed with that deadly weapon and with a heart steeled against every emotion of pity, perpetrated such a series of atrocious crimes as is calculated to fill the mind with horror. By her drugs she lulled to sleep the watchful dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece, thus enabling her lover Jason to purloin that talisman on which depended the life, or at all events the reign, of her aged father. Then with her paramour she fled the country, and being pursued by her injured sire she did not scruple to cut her young brother Apsyrtus limb from limb and scatter the pieces in the sea in order to stay pursuit, while her father engaged in the melancholy task of gathering up the mangled remains of his murdered son.[2] Having reached Iolcus, the home of Jason, she repaired to the palace of Pelias, the king of the country, and persuaded the king's daughters to make mince meat of their old father and boil him in a cauldron, promising that by the help of her enchantments he would issue from the cauldron alive and young. To demonstrate the truth of her prediction she actually did thus restore to life and youth an aged ram which she had carved and boiled. But naturally Pelias remained as dead as a door-nail, and Iolcus became too hot to hold Medea.[3] So she and her husband sought refuge in Corinth. There Jason divorced her and would have married Glauce, daughter of Creon, the king of the country. But the witch Medea sent the bride a wedding robe steeped in poison, and, when the hapless bride put it on, she was consumed with fire, she and her father, who had rushed to extinguish the conflagration. After that, the ruthless Medea murdered the children whom she had by Jason and fled away to Athens on a chariot borne by dragons which she had received from her grandfather the Sun.[4] After other adventures she is said, according to one account, to have returned to Colchis and

Medea in Colchis.

Medea in Iolcus.

Medea in Corinth.

[1] Diodorus Siculus, iv. 46. 1.

[2] Apollodorus, i. 9. 23 *sq.* The murder of Apsyrtus is otherwise related by Apollonius Rhodius (*Argon.* iv. 224 *sq.*, 303-481), the Orphic poet (*Argonautica*, 1027 *sqq.*), and Hyginus (*Fab.* 23). See my note on Apollodorus, *l.c.*

[3] Apollodorus, i. 9. 27; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 50-52; Pausanias, viii. 11. 2 *sq.*; Hyginus, *Fab.* 24; Ovid, *Metamorph.* vii. 297-349.

[4] Apollodorus, i. 9. 28; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 54; Hyginus, *Fab.* 25. These events are the subject of Euripides' great tragedy, *Medea.*

closed a long career of crime by murdering her paternal uncle Perses; though some say that the murder was perpetrated, not by her, but by her hopeful son Medus, who would seem to have been a chip of the old block.[1]

Such in brief was the discreditable career of some children of the Sun.

The worship of the Sun in Greece.

Of a direct worship of the Sun there are comparatively few records in Greek literature. In one passage Homer speaks of a white ram to be offered by the Trojans to the Sun, along with a black ewe to be offered to the Earth, the sex of the victim being clearly adapted to that of the deity, while a similar adaptation of colour is indicated by assigning a white victim to the Sun and a black one to the Earth.[2] Elsewhere we read in Homer of a boar being sacrificed to Zeus and the Sun in confirmation of an oath.[3] In a passage of the *Laws*, where Plato sets himself seriously to combat the shocking impiety of those who denied the existence of the gods, he seems to say that the habit of praying and doing obeisance to the rising and setting Sun and Moon was practically universal among Greeks and barbarians alike, though, like the recitation of the spells which they had heard from their nurses and sucked in with their mother's milk, the good old custom had apparently gone out of fashion with the pert young jackanapes who presumed to question the fundamental truths of religion. These scapegraces and ne'er-do-weels the philosopher proceeds to admonish in fatherly style, telling them that they are by no means the first, as they imagine, to hold these pestilent opinions, and that they will certainly know better when they are older, for that there was no such thing as an aged atheist.[4] These sound principles the senile philosopher might have illustrated by the practice of his master Socrates; for elsewhere he has described how on one occasion, after standing a whole day and night plunged in profound meditation, Socrates was seen at sunrise to pray to the rising luminary and then to go on his way.[5] The ordinary Greek mode of saluting the rising Sun was to kiss the hand to it.[6] In the beautiful essay *In praise of*

Plato on the custom of saluting the Sun.

[1] Apollodorus, i. 9. 28; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 56. 1; Hyginus, *Fab.* 27.

[2] Homer, *Il.* iii. 103 *sq.*

[3] Homer, *Il.* xix. 196 *sq.*, 249-268.

[4] Plato, *Laws*, x. 3, pp. 887 C-888 D.

[5] Plato, *Symposium*, 36, p. 220 C D.

[6] Lucian, *De saltatione*, 17.

Fatherland, which passes under the name of Lucian, though it breathes a warmer spirit and strikes a deeper note than we expect to find in the writings of that cold, though brilliant, wit and sceptic, we read that every man must look on the Sun as his own paternal deity because he saw it for the first time from his own fatherland.[1] And referring to the preposterous notion that the Sun and Moon are mere lifeless bodies, the pious Plutarch informs us that all men worship these luminaries and offer prayer and sacrifice to them.[2] One of the articles in the accusation of Socrates was that he did not believe in the divinity of the Sun and Moon, and that he inculcated on the minds of the youth of Athens the damnable doctrine that the Sun was nothing but a stone and the Moon nothing but earth. In his defence the philosopher did not directly deny the charge but parried it by declaring that the heresy in question was to be found in the writings of Anaxagoras, which any young man could buy at a book-stall for a shilling.[3]

Plutarch on the worship of the Sun.

Certainly the Sun was worshipped in various parts of Greece, but for the most part these cults appear to have been of only subordinate importance. We have seen that, according to tradition, flocks of sheep sacred to the Sun used always to pasture on the promontory of Taenarum in Laconia, and that flocks of sheep dedicated to the solar deity were kept by the people of Apollonia in Epirus down at least to the time of Herodotus.[4] Sacred to the Sun was a peak of Taygetus, the splendid range of mountains which dominates the vale of Sparta and from its long line of glistering snow-capped crests reflects at morning the beams of the rising sun, while the deep purple shadows still brood on the slopes below. On this holy pinnacle the Spartans used to sacrifice horses to the bright orb of day.[5] Perhaps they thought that at noon, passing over the mountains, the deity used to rein in his weary steeds and yoke these fresh horses to his golden car, before he drove

Local cults of the Sun in Greece.

Worship of the Sun in Laconia.

[1] Lucian, *Patriae encomium*, 6.

[2] Plutarch, *Adversus Coloten*, 27.

[3] Plato, *Apolog.* 14, p. 26 C-E.

[4] See above, p. 469.

[5] Pausanias, iii. 20. 4. According to Festus (*s.v.* "October equus", p. 190 ed. Lindsay), the Lacedaemonians sacrificed a horse on Mount Taygetus to the winds and burned the body of the animal, in order that the winds should carry the ashes all over the country. This is probably the sacrifice mentioned by Pausanias, though the interpretation of it is different.

down the slope of heaven and plunged at evening into the waves of the incarnadined sea. On the other side of the range, in the bleak and savage country which intervenes between the mountains and the sea, there was a place called Thalamae, where the sea-goddess Ino had an oracular sanctuary. In the open part of the sanctuary stood a bronze image of the Sun and another of Pasiphae, whom the Greek traveller Pausanias understood to be the Moon, an interpretation according well with the name Pasiphae which means "She who shines on all".[1] The interpretation derives some support from an inscription which proves that at Gytheum, the port of Sparta, there was a joint cult of the Sun and Moon and other deities, and that a priest officiated in the worship.[2]

Worship of the Sun in Arcadia.

In Arcadia the traces of Sun-worship are few. But in Mantinea, situated in a flat and now marshy plain surrounded by mountains, they showed the grave of Arcas, the mythical hero who gave his name to Arcadia, and near the grave was a place called the Altars of the Sun.[3] At Megalopolis, in the great western plain of Arcadia, there was an image of the Sun which bore the surnames of Saviour and Hercules.[4]

Images of the Sun and Moon at Elis.

In the market-place of Elis stood two marble images of the Sun and Moon; horns projected from the head of the Moon and beams from the head of the Sun.[5] The legend of Augeas, King of Elis, lord of multitudinous herds of cattle, also points to a worship of the Sun in Elis; for according to one account he was himself a child of the Sun,[6] and his father the Sun had bestowed on him these wondrous herds, that he might be rich beyond all other men in cattle, and the god himself looked to it that the kine throve and multiplied from year to year, free from murrain and wasting sickness.[7] The poet Theocritus has given us

[1] Pausanias, iii. 26. 1.

[2] *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, No. 1392 (vol. i. p. 671). The other deities associated with the Sun and Moon are Zeus the Counsellor, Aesculapius, and Health. The inscription is of the Imperial age. Compare S. Wide, *Lakonische Kulte* (Leipzig, 1893), p. 215.

[3] Pausanias, viii. 9. 4.

[4] Pausanias, viii. 31. 7.

[5] Pausanias, vi. 24. 6.

[6] Pausanias, v. 1. 9; Apollodorus, ii. 5. 5; Theocritus, xxv. 54; J. Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, ii. 279 *sq.*; Hyginus, *Fab.* 14, p. 42, ed. Bunte.

[7] Theocritus, xxv. 118 *sqq.*

a graphic description of the cows and the sheep of Augeas as they came home at sunset, trooping in their thousands and filling all the plain with their jostling multitudes and all the air with their lowing.[1] Among them, he tells us, were twelve bulls, white as swans, and sacred to the Sun.[2] On a certain day, when the sun was low in the west, the women of Elis used to lament for Achilles;[3] but this does not imply that they identified the dead hero with the setting sun, for it was a rule of Greek religion to sacrifice to the dead at sunset, but to the heavenly gods at sunrise.[4] At Olympia there was a common altar of the Sun and Cronus.[5]

Temple and altars of the Sun in Argolis.

At Hermion, on the coast of Argolis, there was a temple of the Sun:[6] at Troezen, on the same coast, an altar of the Sun of Freedom stood near a temple of Wolfish Artemis;[7] and in the Argolic plain, on the way from Mycenae to Argos, there was another altar of the Sun.[8] At Sicyon, also, an altar of white marble dedicated to the Sun stood near a sanctuary of Hera.[9] When the people of Cleonae, a little town to the south-west of Corinth, were afflicted by a pestilence, the Delphic oracle advised them to sacrifice a he-goat to the rising Sun. They did so, and the plague was stayed. In gratitude for their deliverance they sent a bronze he-goat as a thank-offering to the Delphic Apollo, whom, like many people in ancient and modern times, they seem to have identified with the Sun.[10]

Sacrifice to the rising Sun.

Worship of the Sun at Corinth.

The city of Corinth was associated in a particular manner with the myth and worship of the Sun; indeed one of its names was Helioupolis, that is, the City of the Sun.[11] It is said that the Sun disputed the possession of the country with the Sea-god Poseidon, and that, the dispute being submitted to the arbitrament of Briareus, he assigned the isthmus to Poseidon, while he awarded to the Sun the precipitous and lofty height which towers above the isthmus

[1] Theocritus, xxv. 85 *sqq.*
[2] Theocritus, xxv. 129-131.
[3] Pausanias, vi. 23. 3.
[4] Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* i. 587.
[5] *Etymologicum Magnum, s.v.* Ἥλις, p. 426, lines 17 *sqq.*
[6] Pausanias, ii. 34. 10.
[7] Pausanias, ii. 31. 5.
[8] Pausanias, ii. 18. 3.
[9] Pausanias, ii. 11. 1.
[10] Pausanias, x. 11. 5.
[11] Stephanus Byzantius, *s.vv.* Ἡλιούπολις and Κόρινθος.

and became in later ages the citadel of the city.[1] Yet afterwards, according to the Corinthians, the Sun resigned this imposing stronghold to the goddess of love, Aphrodite.[2] Hence on the summit, which commands magnificent views over the blue Saronic Gulf on the one side and the blue Gulf of Corinth on the other, with the lilac-tinted mountains of Attica and Boeotia looming sharp and clear through the crystalline air in the distance, there stood a temple of Aphrodite and an image of the Sun.[3] Lower down the steep slope were altars of the Sun;[4] and in the city itself there was a portal surmounted by two gilded chariots, one bearing an image of the Sun and the other an image of Phaethon, the ill-fated child of the Sun.[5] On some Corinthian coins of the Imperial age the portal is represented, with a four-horse chariot or chariots above it; on others we see the Sun-god driving his car.[6] Another legend which connected Corinth with the Sun was that the Sun-god had bestowed the land, under its ancient name of Ephyraea, on his son Aeëtes, who reigned over it before he departed to assume the kingdom of Colchis.[7]

Images and altars of the Sun at Corinth.

At Athens inscriptions prove that there was a regular worship of the Sun, conducted by a priestess who had a special seat in the theatre of Dionysus.[8] There was also a priest of the Sun at Athens. On the twelfth day of the month Scirophorion, which seems to have fallen about Midsummer Day, a festival called Scira was celebrated, at which the priest of the Sun, the priest of Poseidon-Erechtheus, and the priestess of Athene went in procession from the Acropolis to a place called Scirum, situated at a short distance from Athens on the road to Eleusis. In this procession the priest of Poseidon-Erechtheus carried a large white umbrella, perhaps as a protection against the heat of the midsummer sun, which beats down fiercely from the cloudless Attic heaven.[9] Again, at the Attic festivals of the Pyanepsia and

Worship of the Sun at Athens.

The priest of the Sun.

[1] Pausanias, ii. 1. 6.
[2] Pausanias, ii. 4. 6.
[3] Pausanias, ii. 5. 1.
[4] Pausanias, ii. 4. 6.
[5] Pausanias, ii. 3. 2.
[6] F. Imhoof-Blumer and Percy Gardner, *A Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, p. 22, with Plate F xcvii, xcviii, xcix, c, ci, cii.
[7] Eumelus, cited by Pausanias, ii. 3. 10.
[8] *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, iii. Nos. 202, 313; Δελτίον ἀρχαιολογικόν, 1889, pp. 19 *sq.*
[9] Harpocration, *s.v.* Σκίρον; Suidas and Photius, *Lexicon*, *s.vv.* Σκίρον and

Procession in honour of the Sun and of the Seasons.

Thargelia the Athenians performed ceremonies in honour of the Sun and the Seasons. On these occasions boys carried in procession branches of olive or laurel wreathed with wool and loaded with ripe fruits of the season, and they hung the branches over the doors of houses as a charm to avert dearth and ensure plenty.[1] This procession in honour of the Sun and the Seasons used regularly to wind through the streets of Athens down to the time of Porphyry in the third century of our era; for that advocate of vegetarianism and adversary of Christianity, in speaking of the bloodless sacrifices of the olden time, cites with approval this same Athenian procession in honour of the Sun and the Seasons as still to be witnessed in his day; and he enumerates the various sorts of vegetable produce which were carried in it, including barley, wheat, and acorns or branches of oak.[2] The ancient antiquary Polemo tells us that the sacrifices which the Athenians offered to the Sun and Moon, to Memory and various other deities, were "sober", that is wineless;[3] and though he assigns no motive for the rule we may reasonably suppose that it was intended to guard against the intoxication of these deities, for it requires no great stretch of imagination to picture to ourselves the catastrophes which would inevitably ensue if the Sun and Moon were tipsy when they drove their chariots across the sky. Indeed, this very explanation of the custom was given by the ancients themselves; for the historian Phylarchus tells us that "among the Greeks persons who sacrifice to the Sun pour libations of honey, but do not bring wine to the altars, alleging that the god who holds together and controls the universe ought to keep strictly sober".[4] The rule is illustrated and confirmed by an inscription which refers to the sacrifices to be offered in the temple of Aesculapius at the Piraeus. In it

Wineless sacrifices to the Sun and Moon.

Σκίρος; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Knights*, 18. As to the festival, compare Aug. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 504 *sqq.*; and my note on Pausanias, i. 36. 4 (vol. ii. pp. 488 *sq.*).

[1] Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Knights*, 729, and *Plutus*, 1054. The scholiasts hesitate as usual between λιμός ("dearth") and λοιμός ("pestilence") as the motive for the festival. The ripe fruits of the season appear to be decisive in favour of the former interpretation. Compare Aug. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, pp. 279, 480 *sq.*

[2] Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 7.

[3] Polemo, quoted by the Scholiast on Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus*, 100.

[4] Phylarchus, quoted by Athenaeus, xv. 48, p. 693 E F.

we read of honeycombs sacrificed to the Sun and to Memory, and the altars at which these "sober" sacrifices were offered are themselves called "sober",[1] doubtless because no libations of wine were poured upon them.

Altars of the Sun in Cos and Cyprus.

In the island of Cos we hear of an altar dedicated to the Sun;[2] and in the island of Cyprus there were altars and precincts consecrated in common to the Sun and Zeus.[3] At Mopsuestia in Cilicia an inscription records a dedication to the Sun and the people.[4] At Pergamum there would seem to have been a regular worship of the Sun, for there was an altar to that deity in the sanctuary of Demeter, and an inscription records a dedication to "the Sun, the Highest God".[5] Another Pergamene inscription commemorates the dedication of an image of the Sun on horseback, with a suppliant standing beside the horse. This mode of representing the Sun riding a horse instead of mounted in a chariot is proved by many sculptured reliefs to have been common in Asia Minor, though it was foreign to purely Greek art.[6]

Worship of the Sun at Pergamum.

Worship of the Sun in Rhodes.

Myths of the relation of the Sun to Rhodes.

The island of Rhodes was deemed sacred to the Sun, and its inhabitants worshipped the Sun above all the other gods, looking upon him as the ancestor and founder of their race. The myth ran that the Sun fell in love with the nymph or goddess Rhodos and named the island and the people after her. But the truth, according to the rationalistic historian Diodorus Siculus, was this. In the beginning the island was marshy; but the rays of the sun dried up the superfluous moisture, and the plastic soil produced, by a sort of spontaneous generation, seven men known as the Heliades or Children of the Sun, who became the ancestors of the Rhodians. These seven Children of the Sun had a sister

[1] Ἐφημερὶς ἀρχαιολογική, 1885, p. 88; *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum*, iii. No. 1651; G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 1040; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 672; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, Part II. (Cambridge, 1905) p. 379, No. 133; J. de Prott et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae e titulis collectae*, Pars Altera (Leipzig, 1906), p. 71, No. 18.

[2] W. R. Paton and E. L. Hicks, *Inscriptions of Cos* (Oxford, 1891), p. 116, No. 64.

[3] Julian, *Or.* iv. pp. 135 D, 143 D.

[4] W. Frochner, *Les Inscriptions Grecques du Louvre* (Paris, 1880), p. 30, No. 17.

[5] Jessen, *s.v.* "Helios", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, viii. 1. col. 69, referring for the inscription to Fränkel, *Inschriften von Pergamon*, 330.

[6] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[2], No. 754, with Dittenberger's note.

named Electryone, but she died a maid and so left no posterity behind her; however, the Rhodians accorded her heroic honours.[1] One of the Seven, whose name Actis means Beam of Light, is said to have migrated to Egypt and there founded Heliopolis, or the City of the Sun, which he named after his father.[2] A more poetical account of the association of the Sun with Rhodes is given by Pindar. According to him, while Zeus and the other gods were parcelling out the earth among themselves, the Sun was absent and the island of Rhodes had not yet appeared, being still buried at the bottom of the sea. When the Sun remonstrated with Zeus on being thus left out in the cold, Zeus offered to draw the lots over again, but the Sun refused, declaring that he could discern a goodly and a fruitful land growing up from the depths of the green water, and he desired that it might be granted to him as his share. His request was granted; the island of Rhodes emerged from the waves, and was made over as a possession to the Sun-god, the lord of fire-breathing steeds. There the bright deity met the nymph or goddess Rhodos in love's dalliance and begot on her his seven sons, the wisest of the men of old.[3]

Inscriptional evidence of the worship of the Sun at Rhodes.

But of the actual worship of the Sun in Rhodes very few details have come down to us, and these mostly brief notices in inscriptions. A sacred precinct of the Sun is mentioned in a Rhodian inscription dating from about 51 A.D.[4] Another inscription of the Roman period records the dedication of an offering to the Sun in fulfilment of a vow made after an earthquake;[5] another commemorates the sacrifice of a white or red kid to the Sun.[6] The priests

[1] Diodorus Siculus, v. 56. 3-5. Compare Aristides, *Or.* xliv. vol. i. p. 840, ed. Dindorf.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, v. 57. 2.

[3] Pindar, *Olymp.* vii. 54-73. Compare Aristides, *Or.* xliii. vol. i. p. 807 ed. Dindorf.

[4] *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum Rhodi Chalces Carpathi cum Saro Casi*, ed. F. Hiller de Gaertringen (Berlin, 1895), No. 2, pp. 2 *sq.*; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, No. 3753 (vol. iii. 1. p. 420). Compare Xenophon Ephesius, *Ephesiac.* v. 10.

[5] *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum Rhodi*, etc., No. 22, p. 14.

[6] *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum Rhodi*, etc., No. 892, p. 146; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, No. 4226 (vol. iii. 1. p. 564); J. de Prott et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae e titulis collectae*, Pars Altera, No. 149, p. 365.

of the Sun are often mentioned in the inscriptions.[1] One inscription records a decree of the Rhodians that "prayers should be offered by the priests and the sacrificers to the Sun and Rhodos and all the other gods and goddesses and to the founders and the heroes, who have in their keeping the city and the country of the Rhodians".[2] From the inscriptions we learn that the priests did not hold office for life; indeed the tenure of the priesthood was only for one year, and the year was named after the priest.[3]

Halieia, the festival of the Sun at Rhodes.

The principal festival of the Sun in Rhodes was called the Halieia or Haleia, from *halios*, the Doric form of the name for the sun. It is occasionally mentioned by classical writers,[4] and oftener in inscriptions. In one of these inscriptions mention is made of the Great Halieia and the Little Halieia,[5] and it is probable that the Little Halieia was an annual celebration, and that the Great Halieia is to be identified with the Dipanamia Halieia, which is known to have been a quadrennial festival held every fourth year, so that three years intervened between two successive celebrations.[6] The quadrennial festival is believed to have been

[1] *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum Rhodi*, etc., Nos. 65, 833 (pp. 32, 132); H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, Nos. 3756, 3798, 3799, 3800, 3801, 4190 (vol. iii. 1. pp. 422 *sq.*, 460 *sq.*, 552); G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 723 (vol. ii. p. 380).

[2] P. Cauer, *Delectus Inscriptionum Graecarum propter dialectum memorabilium*[2] (Leipzig, 1883), No. 181, p. 123; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 21, p. 24; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, No. 3749 (vol. iii. 1. p. 412).

[3] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 723 (vol. ii. p. 380); Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 874, pp. 715 *sq.*; J. de Prott et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae e titulis collectae*, Pars Altera, No. 147, p. 362; Chr. Blinkenberg, *La Chronique du Temple Lindien* (Copenhagen, 1912), pp. 340, 341; Jessen, *s.v.* "Helios", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, viii. 1. coll. 66 *sq.*

[4] Athenaeus, xiii. 12, p. 561 E; Aristides, *Or.* xliii. vol. i. p. 808, ed. Dindorf. Compare Xenophon Ephesius, *Ephesiac.* v. 11, who mentions a magnificent public festival at Rhodes, including a procession and a sacrifice and attended by a multitude of people. This was no doubt the Halieia. As to the festival compare M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung mit Ausschluss der attischen* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 427 *sq.*

[5] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 1067 (vol. iii. pp. 222 *sq.*).

[6] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 724 (vol. ii. p. 381); *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum Rhodi*, etc., No. 730, pp. 106 *sq.*; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 875, pp. 716 *sq.*; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, No. 4135 (vol. iii. 1. p. 530).

called Dipanamia because it was celebrated in the intercalary month Panamus, which was inserted every fourth year immediately after the ordinary month of the same name, so that in that year there were two months named Panamus and the festival was held in the second of them.[1] It included athletic contests, and from the inscriptions which record victories in the contests we learn that among the games were wrestling matches and chariot races.[2] From another source we gather that every year the Rhodians used to throw into the sea a chariot drawn by four horses as an offering to the Sun, because the Sun-god was supposed to drive round the world in such a car.[3] No doubt the ceremony was observed at the annual festival of the Halieia, and the chariot and horses were intended to furnish the Sun-god with a new car and a fresh team to replace those which had been worn out by the daily journey across the sky. May not the chariot and horses thus cast into the sea have been those which had just won the victory in the racecourse? Their superior swiftness would naturally mark them out for the service of the Sun. So at Rome it was a horse of the victorious team which was specially selected for sacrifice to Mars.[4]

Chariot and horses thrown into the sea as a sacrifice to the Sun.

In or about the year 408 B.C. the three ancient and formerly independent Rhodian cities of Camirus, Ialysus, and Lindus united to found the new city of Rhodes, near the extreme northern point of the island.[5] This union of the three cities in a single State marks the beginning of what we may call the Golden Age of Rhodes, which by virtue of its strong insular position, extensive commerce, and powerful navy acquired, in the declining age of Greek independence, a position of political importance comparable to that of Venice in the middle ages. The analogy is rendered all the closer

Foundation of the city of Rhodes.

[1] This is the explanation of the name suggested by F. Hiller von Gaertringen (G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge*[2], No. 609 = *Sylloge*[3], No. 724) and accepted by P. Stengel (Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. 1. coll. 1151 *sq.*, *s.v.* Διπανάμια). Compare G. F. Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer*[4] (Berlin, 1897–1902), ii. 557.

[2] *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum Rhodi*, etc., Nos. 72, 73, 74, 75 (pp. 34 *sq.*); H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, Nos. 3807, 3808, 3809, 3810 (vol. iii. 1. pp. 462-464).

[3] Festus, *s.v.* "October equus", p. 190 ed. Lindsay.

[4] Festus, *l.c.*

[5] Diodorus Siculus, xiii. 75. 1.

by the oligarchical constitution of the Rhodian State and the architectural and artistic splendour of the capital, which was laid out by the same architect, Hippodamus, who had planned the Piraeus, and which survived in all its glory to the reign of Augustus when the Piraeus lay in ruins.[1]

The Sun and the Rose, the emblems of Rhodes.

With the foundation of the new city of Rhodes the Rhodians started a new coinage, of which the principal types were the Head of the Sun-god and the Rose; for the Greek word for rose (*rhodon*) being almost identical with the name of the island (Rhodos), the flower naturally suggested itself as a fitting emblem of the State. Thus Rhodes was the island at once of the Sun and the Rose. On the coins the full face of the Sun-god is portrayed beardless, with strong and noble features, his ample locks curling about his forehead and sometimes encircled by rays. The rose is represented less full blown than modern roses at their prime and often with a rosebud beside it.[2]

The colossal image of the Sun-god at Rhodes.

But the great pride of Rhodes was the huge bronze statue of the Sun-god, which was executed by the sculptor Chares, a native of Lindus in Rhodes and a pupil of Lysippus. He spent twelve years in constructing it. The cost amounted to three hundred talents and was defrayed by the sale of the siege engines which Demetrius Poliorcetes left behind after his memorable but unsuccessful siege of Rhodes. The height of the statue is stated by Pliny to have been seventy cubits. Sixty-six years after its erection the statue was thrown down by an earthquake and remained prostrate in the time of Pliny, who, to give us an idea of its immense size, says that few men could encircle the thumb with their arms, and that the fingers were larger than most statues. Through the yawning crevasses in the enormous figure the spectator could see in the interior the great rocks by which the sculptor had sought to impart stability to the image.[3]

[1] Strabo, xiv. 2. 5 and 9; Harpocration, *s.v.* Ἱπποδάμεια (as to the name of the architect).

[2] B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum* (Oxford, 1887), pp. 538-542.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxiv. 41. Pliny does not mention the material of which the statue was made; but that the material was bronze is mentioned by a poet of the Greek Anthology (*Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 171), Lucian (*Iupiter Tragoedus*, 11), Suidas (*s.v.* Κολοσσαεῖς), a scholiast on Lucian (*Icarom.* 12), and Hyginus (*Fab.* 223). The scholiast on Lucian (*l.c.*) agrees with Pliny in giving the height as sixty cubits, but he erroneously states that the statue was a work of Lysippus.

Another estimate of the height of the statue was one hundred and five feet.[1] In falling, the Colossus broke off at the knees, and the Rhodians, in consequence of an oracle, refrained from attempting to set it up again,[2] although Ptolemy, King of Egypt, promised to contribute no less than three thousand talents to its restoration.[3] The image, popularly known as the Colossus, was reckoned one of the Seven Wonders of the World.[4] The date of its erection is believed to have been about 284 B.C.[5]

Lucian on the Colossus of Rhodes.

Often as the Colossus is mentioned by ancient writers, not one of them has told us where exactly the image stood or in what attitude the Sun-god was represented. The story that the image bestrode the mouth of the harbour, and that ships sailed under its straddling legs, is a modern fancy.[6] But from a passage of Lucian we may infer with some probability that the god was represented, not in his chariot, but as a single standing figure, as indeed is almost implied by the statement of Strabo that, in falling, the image broke off at the knees. In the passage of Lucian the Colossus of Rhodes is introduced speaking in his own person. It appears that Zeus had been greatly perturbed by a public discussion held the day before between a Stoic and an Epicurean philosopher, in which the Epicurean had roundly declared that the gods did not exist, and though the Stoic had put in a plea for their existence, no conclusion had been reached and the meeting had broken up in disorder. Smarting under the reflection thus cast on the divine nature, Zeus summoned an assembly of the gods in order to determine what was to be done in this emergency. The deities answered to the call, and arrangements were made for seating them in the order of merit according to the fineness of the material of which they were wrought and the degree

The passages of ancient writers referring to the image are collected by J. Overbeck, *Die antiken Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der bildenden Künste bei den Griechen* (Leipzig, 1868), Nos. 1539-1554, pp. 291-294.

[1] Festus, *s.v.* "Colossus", p. 50 ed. Lindsay. But according to Hyginus (*Fab.* 223), the height was ninety feet, which agrees closely with the estimate of sixty cubits.

[2] Strabo, xiv. 2. 5.

[3] Polybius, v. 89.

[4] Strabo, xiv. 2. 5; Hyginus, *Fab.* 223.

[5] J. Overbeck, *Geschichte der griechischen Plastik*[4] (Leipzig, 1893–1894), ii. 175.

[6] J. Overbeck, *l.c.*

of artistic finish bestowed upon them by the sculptor. The front row of seats was naturally reserved for the golden gods; the second row was assigned to the silver gods, and the third to the ivory gods; the bronze and marble gods had to take what seats they could find in the fourth row, the order of precedence between them not being settled; while the riff-raff of deities, made of wood, earthenware, or such like base material, were left to scuffle among themselves for places in the rear. Now according to this arrangement the Colossus would have to take a back seat in the fourth row, since he was made of bronze. But against the slight thus put on him the burly deity entered an indignant protest, arguing that with the money spent in making him the Rhodians could have made sixteen golden gods of the usual size; so that on the simple ground of weight, to say nothing of the fineness of his workmanship, he was fully entitled to sit with the best of the gods in the front row of the stalls. To this plea Zeus demurred. In an aside to Hermes, who was acting as usher, he observed rather testily, "Why does the fellow come here to make a disturbance in the stalls and cast a slur on the rest of us for not being so big as he?" Then turning to the Colossus, with a forced air of politeness he pointed out to him the serious practical difficulty involved in his proposal. "If you sit down in the front row," he said, "all the other gods will have to stand up, since one half of your person would cover the whole place of popular assembly at Athens. So you had much better just keep standing, and stoop over the assembly when you want to see what is going on."[1]

The identification of Apollo with the Sun a result of philosophic speculation.

The great Greek god Apollo has often been identified with the Sun-god both in ancient and modern times, but the identification would appear to have been the fruit of philosophic thought rather than an article of popular faith. Thus the early philosophers Parmenides and Empedocles seem to have explained Apollo as equivalent to the Sun.[2] It is said that Orpheus did not honour Dionysus, but that he regarded the Sun, which he identified with Apollo, as the greatest of the gods, and he used to rise by night and ascend Mount Pangaeum that he might catch the first glimpse

[1] Lucian, *Iupiter Tragoedus*, 1-11.

[2] H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*[2], i. (Berlin, 1906) p. 108, frag. 20, p. 157, frag. 23.

of the rising luminary. Hence Dionysus was angry with him, and sent the Bacchanals, who tore him limb from limb and scattered his mangled remains.[1] The Cynic philosopher Crates also identified Apollo with the Sun.[2] The speculative poet Euripides, who loved to resolve the traditional Greek gods into natural phenomena, puts into the mouth of Clymena the saying, that he who knows the secret names of the deities is aware that the true name of the Sun is Apollo, in the sense of the Destroyer (*Apollyon*), since he had been the undoing of her and of Phaethon, the ill-fated son whom she had borne to the Sun-god.[3] The philosopher Cornutus, who wrote a compendium of Greek mythology in the first century of our era, announced, without hesitation or beating about the bush, that Apollo was the sun and Artemis the moon.[4]

Apollo identified with the Sun-god by late Greek writers.

The identification of Apollo with the Sun-god is repeatedly mentioned by Plutarch as an ancient and popular doctrine; in a passage of a dialogue he reports a remark that "all the Greeks, so to say, hold Apollo to be identical with the Sun".[5] A contemporary of Plutarch, the eloquent rhetorician Dio Chrysostom, in a speech addressed to the Rhodians, remarks that "some people say that Apollo and the Sun and Dionysus are the same, and you think so too".[6] In the dreary welter of confused thought and mystical aspiration which passed under the name of Orphism in later ages the identification of Apollo with the Sun was inevitable, and the solar deity might even be thankful if he did not find himself in worse company. One poet of this rhapsodical school declares that Apollo is a name of the Sun, and that the Sun is all the same with the leach Aesculapius.[7]

Pausanias on the identification of Apollo with the Sun.

In the second century of our era the Greek antiquary and traveller Pausanias tells us that in the sanctuary of Aesculapius at Aegium in Achaia he met a Phoenician from Sidon who engaged him in a theological discussion. The

[1] Pseudo-Eratosthenes, *Catasterr.* 24, pp. 28 *sq.* ed. Olivier; scholiast on Caesar Germanicus, *Aratea*, 273, pp. 404 *sq.* ed. Eyssenhardt (appended to his edition of Martianus Capella).

[2] Scholiast on Homer, *Il.* xviii. 239.

[3] *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. A. Nauck [2], p. 608.

[4] Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 32.

[5] Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos*, 4. Compare *id.*, *De defectu oraculorum*, 42; *id.*, *De latenter vivendo*, vi. 3.

[6] Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xxxi. vol. i. p. 347 ed. Dindorf.

[7] *Orphica*, ed. E. Abel, p. 217.

stranger maintained that his countrymen the Phoenicians had juster views of the divine nature than the Greeks, and as a case in point he cited the Phoenician legend that Aesculapius had Apollo for his father, but no mortal woman for his mother. "For Aesculapius", said he, "is the air, and as such he is favourable to the health, not only of mankind, but of every living thing; and Apollo is the sun, and most rightly is he called the father of Aesculapius, since by ordering his course with due regard to the seasons he imparts to the air its wholesomeness." "Agreed," replied Pausanias, "but that is just what the Greeks say too. For at Titane, in the land of Sicyon, the same image is named both Health and Aesculapius, clearly because the sun's course over the earth is the source of health to mankind."[1] The conversation is probably typical of much crude rationalism which, in the later ages of classical antiquity, sought to find a basis for the traditional religion in natural philosophy or in what passed for such. From loose and vague speculations of that sort no inference can be drawn as to an original identity of Apollo with the Sun.

The identity of Apollo with the Sun variously affirmed and denied by modern scholars.

Yet in modern times that identity has been maintained by some mythologists of repute, such as F. G. Welcker,[2] L. Preller,[3] and W. H. Roscher.[4] On the other hand it was denied by the brilliant antiquary and historian, K. O. Müller,[5] whose too early death was one of the heaviest losses suffered by Greek studies in the nineteenth century. Labouring with consuming zeal and tireless energy at the excavation, decipherment, and copying of inscriptions, in front of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, bare-headed under the fierce blaze of a July sun, this great scholar was suddenly struck down in the height of his intellectual powers and carried back unconscious to Athens to die.[6] In his death superstitious fancy might be tempted to see the vengeance of

[1] Pausanias, vii. 23. 7 *sq.* As to the sanctuary of Aesculapius at Titane see Pausanias, ii. 11. 5 *sq.* For more evidence of the identification, or confusion, of Apollo and the Sun, see Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 17. 7 *sqq.*

[2] F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, i. 457 *sqq.*

[3] L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*[4], i. 230 *sqq.*

[4] W. H. Roscher, *Apollon und Mars* (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 16 *sqq.*; *id.*, *s.v.* "Apollon", *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 422 *sqq.*

[5] K. O. Müller, *Die Dorier*[2] (Breslau, 1844), i. 286-293.

[6] See the Memoir by his brother, Eduard Müller, prefixed to K. O. Müller's *Kleine deutsche Schriften* (Breslau, 1847–1848), i. p. lxviii.

the archer Apollo, shooting down at his own temple the impious mortal who had dared to deny his identity with the Sun.

However, the tragic end of Karl Otfried Müller has not deterred later scholars from following in his footsteps and rejecting the solar myth of Apollo. Among these bold spirits are numbered Wernicke in Germany,[1] and Dr. Farnell[2] and Dr. Rendel Harris in England. In an essay by the last of these learned men Apollo appears, not only shorn of his sunbeams, but reduced to the level of a common apple-tree and bearing in his name to the last the unmistakeable trace of his humble origin.[3] But we are not here concerned with the intricate problem of detecting the original nucleus out of which the fertile Greek imagination evolved the complex but splendid figure of Apollo; it is enough for our present purpose to conclude that his fusion with the Sun came rather at the end than at the beginning of his long mythical career.[4]

§ 5. *The Worship of the Sun among the Ancient Romans*[5]

Little evidence of Sun-worship in ancient Rome.

The traces of a native worship of the Sun are even fewer and fainter among the ancient Romans than among the ancient Greeks. In Latin calendars of the Augustan age,

[1] Wernicke, *s.v.* "Apollon", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii. 1. coll. 19-21.

[2] L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iv. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 136-144.

[3] Rendel Harris, *The Ascent of Olympus* (Manchester, 1917), pp. 19-55.

[4] It is true that in some cities of Asia Minor the Sun was identified with Apollo in later times, as we learn from inscriptions and coins. Thus at Patara, in Lycia, the name Sun Apollo (*Helios Apollon*) occurs in an inscription. See *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, x. (1889) p. 81. At Smyrna there was a worship of Sun Apollo Kisauloddenus. See G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], No. 996 (vol. iii. p. 127), where the editor remarks that the confusion of Apollo with the Sun betrays, as always, the late date of the inscription. And on coins of Tralles, of the Imperial age, there appears a bust of the Sun with the inscription "Apollo Sun" (*Apollon Helios*). See B. Head, *Historia Numorum* (Oxford, 1887), p. 555. But these late identifications on Asiatic soil prove nothing as to the original identity of Apollo and the Sun in the genuine ancient religion of Greece. See further on this point L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iv. 138, 366; Jessen, *s.v.* "Helios", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, viii. 1. coll. 70, 76; A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, ii. (Cambridge, 1925) p. 500.

[5] On this subject see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3], i. 324-327; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], pp. 315-317; Franz Cumont, *s.v.* "Sol", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 1381-1386; Fr. Richter, *s.v.* "Sol", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iii. 1137-1152.

there is recorded, under the date of August the ninth, a public sacrifice to the Sun (*Sol Indiges*) on the Quirinal Hill.[1] The meaning of the epithet *Indiges* here applied to the Sun is ambiguous and has been variously interpreted by modern scholars. If it implies that the Sun was reckoned among the ancient native gods known as *Di indigetes*, which we may render as Indigenous Gods, it proves that among the Romans the worship of the Sun was of immemorial antiquity, for the *Di indigetes* belong to the oldest stratum of Roman religion.[2] On this interpretation, which is the most obvious and natural one, the Indigenous Sun (*Sol Indiges*) is analogous to the Indigenous Jupiter (*Jupiter Indiges*), who had a sacred grove in Latium near the river Numicius,[3] and whom Roman mythologists afterwards identified with the deified Aeneas.[4] The view of the great antiquity of the worship of the Sun at Rome has the support of the learned Roman antiquary Varro, who tells us that the Roman annals recorded the dedication of altars to the Sun and Moon by the old Sabine King Titus Tatius, the adversary and afterwards the colleague of Romulus.[5] Moreover, the ancient Roman family of the Aurelii, who are said to have been of Sabine origin, were believed by the ancients to take their name from the sun, which in the Sabine language appears to have been called *ausel*: hence the original name of the family was not Aurelii but Auselii. On account of their worship of the Sun the family were granted by the Roman State a place in which they could sacrifice to the luminary.[6]

Sacrifice to the Sun on the Quirinal on August 9th.

Worship of the Sun in the old Roman family of the Aurelii.

[1] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. i. Pars Prior[2] (Berlin, 1893), pp. 240, 324.

[2] L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3], i. 90 *sqq.*; J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.[2] (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 7 *sqq.*; G. Wissowa, "De dis Romanorum indigetibus et novensidibus", *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur römischen Religions- und Stadtgeschichte* (Munich, 1904), pp. 175 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], pp. 18 *sqq.*; R. Peter, *s.v.* "Indigitamenta", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 129-233.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* iii. 56.

[4] Livy, i. 2. 6; Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.* i. 259.

[5] Varro, *De lingua Latina*, v. 74. Compare Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 50. 3; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv. 23.

[6] Festus, *s.v.* "Aureliam familiam", p. 22 ed. Lindsay. The name *ausel* should probably be read in Varro, *De lingua Latina*, v. 68, "*Sol ausel quod ita Sabini*", instead of with the MSS. "*Sola vel quod ita Sabini*". The correction is due to Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], p. 315, note[3]. On the etymology of the word, which is connected with *aurora*, see G. Curtius, *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie*[6]

As part of the original Aryan religion, Sun-worship was probably ancient in Rome.

We have seen that the worship of the Sun was shared by other great branches of the Aryan stock, the Vedic Indians, the ancient Persians, and the ancient Greeks,[1] and it appears to have been common to their northern kinsfolk in Europe, the Lithuanians and the Germans;[2] hence we may reasonably infer that Sun-worship was part, though apparently a subordinate part, of the original Aryan religion, which the various branches of the family after their dispersal carried with them to their new homes. Hence we need not suppose, with some modern mythologists, that the Romans were reduced to the necessity of borrowing the worship from the Greeks,[3] in whose religion it had never played an important part. It is more probable, as Franz Cumont has rightly observed, that the adoration of the heavenly bodies, which serve to mark the seasons and exert so great an influence on agriculture, existed from the beginning in the rustic population of Italy, as in the other branches of the Indo-European family.[4] In favour of this view it may be noted that Varro, an eminent authority on agriculture as well as on mythology, at the outset of his book on farming tells us that he will invoke the twelve gods, not the city gods, male and female, whose gilded images stand in the Forum at Rome, but the twelve gods who are the best guides of husbandmen, and among them he mentions the Sun and Moon, "whose seasons are observed at seed-time and harvest", immediately after Father Jupiter and Mother Earth, and

Varro, on the Twelve Gods of the farmer.

(Leipzig, 1879), pp. 399 *sq.*; P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache* (Gottingen, 1896), p. 83.

[1] Above, pp. 443, 456, 461.

[2] Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* vi. 21; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strassburg, 1901), p. 472; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*[3], i. (Jena, 1906) pp. 439 *sq.*; R. M. Meyer, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1910), pp. 104 *sq.*

[3] This is the view of G. Wissowa (*Religion und Kultus der Romer*[2], pp. 315 *sqq.*) and of Fr. Richter, *s.v.* "Sol", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iii. 1138. Wissowa would explain the epithet *Indiges*, applied to the Sun, not as an ancient title classing him with the old *Di Indigetes*, but as bestowed on him in the Augustan age in order to distinguish him as a native Sun-god from the foreign Sun-gods whose worship became popular in Imperial times. See Wissowa, *op. cit.* p. 317; *id.*, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, pp. 180 *sq.* But the explanation seems somewhat forced and improbable, though it is accepted by Fr. Richter (*s.v.* "Sol", in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon*, iii. 1141) and W. Warde Fowler (*Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, p. 193).

[4] Franz Cumont, *s.v.* "Sol", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 1381.

immediately before such genuine old Italian deities as Ceres, Liber, Flora, and Robigus, the god of Mildew.[1] So learned an antiquary was not likely to interpolate new-fangled Greek gods in the list of the divinities who were to serve as guides to the Italian farmer.

Temples of the Sun at Rome.

On the Quirinal Hill there was a temple or shrine of the Sun, in which couches were decked out for the accommodation of the god and his divine colleagues who feasted with him; on these sacred couches a place was reserved for the Evening Star under his genuine old Latin name of Vesperug. The name does not savour of Greek influence, and the temple or shrine stood near the temple of the good old Sabine god Quirinus.[2] It may well have been the shrine which in bygone days the Roman State had assigned to the Sabine family of the Aurelii or Auselii as a place where they could sacrifice to the Sun, from whom they took their name. Further, there was an ancient temple of the Sun in or near the Circus Maximus. When a plot to assassinate Nero in the Circus had been detected, special honours were paid to the Sun in this his old sanctuary, because he was supposed to have revealed the designs of the conspirators. On the gable of the temple there was an image of the Sun, for it was not thought right that the image of the god who traverses the open sky should be placed under a roof.[3] In the topographical descriptions of Rome dating from the reign of Constantine the temple is called the temple of the Sun and Moon.[4]

Obelisks of the Sun transported from Egypt to Rome.

When Augustus conquered Egypt he brought two obelisks away from Heliopolis to Rome, where he set them up, one of them in the Circus Maximus, the other in the

[1] Varro, *Rerum rusticarum libri*, i. 1. 4-6.

[2] Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* i. 7. 12.

[3] Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, 8; Tacitus, *Annales*, xv. 74. Tacitus seems to say that the temple was near the Circus, whereas Tertullian appears to affirm that it stood in the middle of the Circus. Huelsen attempted to reconcile both statements by supposing that the temple stood originally outside the Circus, but was afterwards included within it, when the Circus was extended. See H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, i. 3, bearbeitet von Ch. Huelsen (Berlin, 1907), p. 115. But this explanation is not generally accepted. Compare O. Richter, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*[2] (Munich, 1901), p. 179.

[4] F. Cumont, *s.v.* "Sol", in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 1382; *Notitia* xi., *Curiosum urbis, reg.* 11, in H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, ii. (Berlin, 1871) p. 558.

Field of Mars.[1] The obelisks still stand in Rome, though not in their original positions; the one which Augustus placed in the Circus Maximus is now in the Piazza del Popolo; the other, which graced the Field of Mars, now stands in the Piazza di Monte Citorio. Each of them bears an inscription which records that, after reducing Egypt to the condition of a Roman province, Augustus in his eleventh consulship (10 B.C.) dedicated the obelisk as a gift to the Sun.[2] Thus these monuments of Egyptian piety, which in their original home at Heliopolis had been consecrated to the Sun,[3] continued in Rome to be sacred to the solar deity. Indeed, the one which Augustus set up in the Field of Mars was turned to appropriate use, being converted into the gnomon of a colossal sun-dial, the face of which consisted of a pavement with lines inlaid in bronze and radiating from the obelisk as a centre, which was crowned with a gilt ball. The hieroglyphic inscription on the obelisk proves that it was originally set up by King Psammetichus (not, as Pliny thought, by Sesostris) about the middle of the seventh century before our era. In Pliny's time the gigantic gnomon had ceased to mark the true solar time, which the philosopher attributed to a slight displacement of the obelisk either by an earthquake or by floods.[4]

Worship of the Sun-god introduced into the Roman Empire from the East.

If the worship of the Sun played but an insignificant part in the genuine old Roman religion, it was far otherwise in later times when, under the Empire, at the height of its power or hastening to its fall, the ancient Italian gods were driven into the background by an invading host of foreign and especially of Oriental deities, among whom the Sun-god was one of the most popular. The missionaries of the foreign faiths which, in the decline of paganism, the masses of mankind eagerly embraced as substitutes for the outworn creeds and faded gods of Greece and Rome,

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xvii. 4. 12. For a full account of the obelisks and their transportation to Rome, see Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxvi. 64-73. The removal of the two obelisks from Heliopolis to Rome is mentioned also by Strabo (xvii. 1. 27).

[2] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No 91 (vol. i. p. 25); H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, i. 3, bearbeitet von Ch. Huelsen, pp. 124, 610-612.

[3] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxvi. 64.

[4] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxvi. 71-73; H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, i. 3, bearbeitet von Ch. Huelsen, pp. 610 *sq.*

were in great measure merchants and soldiers travelling about in pursuit of trade or shifted in regiments on military duty from one end of the Empire to the other. These men brought with them, so to say, in their bales and knapsacks the religious beliefs and practices which they had picked up in distant lands, and which they now unfolded to eager listeners as a new gospel, the latest message to poor trembling mortals from the world beyond the grave.[1] A striking instance of Sun-worship imported by soldiers into Italy from the East was witnessed at the second battle of Bedriacum, fought in 69 A.D. between the forces of the rival Emperors Vitellius and Vespasian. The two armies met and grappled in the darkness of night. For hours the combat swayed to and fro, and still the issue hung in suspense. At last the moon rose and turned the trembling balance in favour of the army of Vespasian; for shining behind them and full on the faces of the enemy it confused the sight of the one side and presented them as a visible target to the missiles of the other. The commander of the army of Vespasian seized the opportune moment to urge his men, and especially the Guards, to a desperate charge. Just then, by a fortunate coincidence, the sun rose; and the men of the third legion, who had their backs to the east, at once faced round and saluted it; for having recently served in Syria they had learned the habit of thus greeting the rising orb of day. The effect was instantaneous and decisive; for the enemy, believing that they were saluting reinforcements coming, like the Prussians at Waterloo, to turn the tide of battle, wavered, broke, and fled.[2] Thus the Sun-god crowned with victory the arms of Vespasian.

The cool-headed Vespasian so far yielded to popular superstition as to consult the oracle of God on Mount Carmel and to heal a blind man by spitting on his eyes;[3] but he seems never to have testified his gratitude to the Sun-god for his opportune help at the most critical moment

[1] As to the part played by merchants and soldiers in this religious propaganda, see below, pp. 507 *sq.*

[2] Tacitus, *Hist.* iii. 22-25. Herodian has similarly described how, in a desperate battle between the Parthians and the Romans, the Parthians saluted the rising sun, "according to their custom", and then charged the Romans with a great cheer. See Herodian, iv. 15.

[3] Suetonius, *Vespasian*, v. 6, vii. 2 *sq.*

of his career. However, if he failed in respect for the solar deity, several of his successors on the throne made ample amends for his deficiency. At Emesa in Syria there was a large black conical stone which was said to have fallen from the sky and bore the Phoenician name of Elagabalus. It was popularly supposed to be an image of the Sun, and was lodged in a great temple resplendent with gold and silver and precious stones. The god received the homage not only of the natives but of distant peoples, whose governors and kings sent costly offerings every year to the shrine. Among the rest the soldiers of a great Roman camp pitched in the neighbourhood used to visit the temple and admire the handsome young priest when, wearing a jewelled crown and arrayed in gorgeous robes of purple and gold, he tripped gracefully in the dance round the altar to the melody of pipes and flutes and other musical instruments.[1] This dainty priest of the Sun, then in the full bloom of youth and beauty, and resembling, we are told, the ideal portraits of the youthful Bacchus, was the future Emperor Elagabalus, the most abandoned reprobate who ever sat upon a throne. On being elevated, at the age of fourteen, to the imperial dignity by the intrigues of his artful grandmother and the favour of the soldiers, the stripling, whose original name was Bassianus, assumed the style of his barbarous god Elagabalus or Heliogabalus, as the name was also pronounced in order to suggest to Greek ears the name of the Sun (*Helios*).[2] Further, the young fanatic caused the rude fetish of the deity to be transported from Emesa to Rome, where he built a great and stately temple for it on the Palatine beside the imperial palace. The site had formerly been occupied by the genuine old Roman god Orcus.[3]

Worship of Elagabalus, identified with the Sun, at Emesa in Syria.

The worship of Elagabalus introduced at Rome by his namesake the Roman Emperor.

[1] Herodian, v. 3. 4-9. As to the identification of Elagabalus with the Sun, compare Dio Cassius, lxxviii. 31. 1.

On the god Elagabalus see E. Meyer, *s.v.* "Elagabal", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 1229-1231; F. Lenormant, *s.v.* "Elagabalus", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, ii. 1. pp. 529-531; L. Preller, *Romische Mythologie*[3], ii. 399-402; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Romer*[2], pp. 365 *sq.*

[2] Lampridius, *Heliogabalus*, i. 4-6; Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 23. The intrigues by which his grandmother Maesa contrived to win for him the allegiance of the soldiers and hence the empire, are described by Herodian (v. 3. 10-12).

[3] Lampridius, *Heliogabalus*, i. 6, iii. 4; Herodian, v. 5. 8.

Round about the temple were set up many altars, on which every morning hecatombs of bulls and sheep were slaughtered, incense of all sorts was piled, and jars of the oldest and finest wines were poured, so that streams of mingled blood and wine flooded the pavement. And round the altar on the ensanguined pavement danced the emperor and a choir of Syrian damsels with clashing cymbals and droning drums, while the knights and senators stood looking on in a great circle, and the entrails of the sacrificial victims and the perfumes were carried in golden jars on the heads, not of menials and servitors, but of captains of armies and ministers of state, arrayed in the long loose-sleeved robes and linen shoes of Syrian prophets; for among these degenerate nobles it was deemed the highest honour to be allowed to participate in the sacrifice.[1]

The Sun-god's summer holidays.

And in the height of summer, lest the Sun-god should suffer from the excess of his own heat, the considerate emperor escorted him to an agreeable suburb, where he had built another vast and costly temple in which the deity might while away the sultry months till the refreshing coolness of autumn should permit of his return to Rome. On these annual excursions to and from the country the god, or rather the stone, was conveyed in a chariot glittering with gold and jewels and drawn by six superb white horses, themselves resplendent in trappings of gold. No man might share the sacred chariot with the deity. But the emperor himself held the reins and went before, walking the whole way backward out of respect to the god, upon whom he kept his eyes fixed, and supported on either side by his guards lest he should stumble and fall. The whole road was thickly strewed with gold dust, and on either side ran crowds waving torches and flinging garlands and flowers on the path. On reaching the summer quarters of his deity the emperor used to ascend certain towers which he had erected for the purpose, and from which he showered on the multitude largess in the shape of golden and silver cups, fine raiment, and all sorts of beasts, both wild and tame, except pigs, for by a law of the Phoenician religion the pious Phoenician emperor was bound to refrain from contact with these unclean

[1] Herodian, v. 5. 8-10.

animals. In the wild struggle of the crowd to profit by the imperial bounty many persons perished, either trampled under foot by their fellows or pushed by them on the levelled spears of the guards.[1]

Intention of Elagabalus to supersede the worship of all the gods by the worship of the Sun.

It was the intention of this eminently religious but crack-brained despot to supersede the worship of all the gods, not only at Rome but throughout the world, by the single worship of Elagabalus or the Sun. In particular he aimed, we are told, at concentrating the religion of the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Christians in his new temple on the Palatine, which was to be the Zion of the future. In pursuance apparently of this policy he began operations, after a truly Puritanical fashion, by defiling the temple of Vesta and attempting to extinguish her eternal fire.[2] But this religious reformer and champion of monotheism, whose infamous orgies far outdid the wildest excesses of Caligula and Nero, was no believer in celibacy even for the Supreme Being, who could not, in his opinion, reasonably be expected to do without a wife. It was at once the duty and the pleasure of the emperor to select a consort for the deity, and to this delicate task he devoted as much thought and attention as it was in his nature to devote to anything. His first choice fell on Minerva, whose sacred image, known as the Palladium, was popularly supposed to have been rescued by Aeneas from the flames of Troy and transplanted to Rome, where the goddess was established in a temple, from which she had never since stirred except on a single occasion when she had been forced temporarily to quit the building by a fire. But the emperor was not a man to stand on ceremony. The hallowed image was transported to the palace and the divine wedding was about to be celebrated, when it occurred to the imperial lunatic that his soft Syrian god might be frightened in the nuptial bower by the formidable aspect of a bride in armour; for Minerva could not be expected to lay aside her shield and spear even for the honeymoon. So on second thoughts he sent to Africa for the image of Astarte, the great goddess of love, which Dido was said to have set up in Carthage when she founded the

Marriage of the Sun-god to the Carthaginian Astarte.

[1] Herodian, v. 6. 6-10.

[2] Lampridius, *Heliogabalus*, iii. 4 *sq.*, vi. 7.

city of old, and which was held in great reverence by the Libyans as well as by the Carthaginians. Her Phoenician worshippers identified her with the Moon, from which, as well as from her affectionate nature, the emperor concluded that she would be a most suitable mate for his Sun-god. So she came, and much treasure with her, and all the subjects of the empire were bidden to contribute to the dowry of the bride. The divine union was consummated, and all Rome and Italy were compelled to hold high revelry in honour of the wedding.[1]

Assassination of the Emperor Elagabalus and expulsion of the Sun-god Elagabalus.

But even the patience of the degenerate Romans, long schooled to submission, could not for ever put up with the freaks and follies, the extravagances and outrages of their dissolute and crazy emperor. They rose in rebellion, slew him in the sordid den in which he had sought to conceal himself from their fury, dragged his body through the streets, and flung it into a sewer; and when it choked the sewer they fished it out and carried it, dripping and stinking, to the Tiber, where they heaved it into the river, weighted with a stone, that the vile body might never come to the surface and never receive the rites of burial.[2] Such was the miserable end of the religious reformer who would have established solar monotheism throughout the Roman empire. Monuments of the attempted reformation and of the ill-starred reformer are extant in the shape of contemporary inscriptions which record dedications to the Sun-god Elagabalus,[3] and make mention of the emperor in his capacity of priest of that deity.[4] As for the sacred black stone, of which so much had been made, on the death of its namesake the emperor it was expelled from the city,[5] and found its way back to Emesa; for there the Emperor Aurelian saw it in the temple when he entered the city after his victory over Zenobia.[6]

[1] Herodian, v. 6. 3-5; Dio Cassius, lxxix. 12.

[2] Lampridius, *Heliogabalus*, xvii. 1. 1-3; Herodian, xv. 8. 8; Dio Cassius, lxxix. 20; Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 23.

[3] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, vol. ii. 1. p. 172, No. 4329 *Soli Alagabalo*, No. 4330 *Sol. Elagabali*, No. 4332 *deo Soli Alagabal. Ammudati.*

[4] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 473 *[sa]cerd. amp[l.] invicti Solis Elagaba[li]*; No. 475 *sacerdos amplissi[mus dei invicti Solis] Elagabali*; No. 2008 *sacerdos am[plis]simus invicti Solis Elagabali*; No. 9058, *sacerdos [amplissimus dei invi]cti Solis Elagabali.*

[5] Dio Cassius, lxxix. 21, ὅ τε Ἐλεγάβαλος αὐτὸς ἐκ τῆς Ῥώμης παντάπασιν ἐξέπεσε.

[6] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxv. 4.

Scheme of the Emperor Aurelian to establish the worship of the Sun at Rome.

Some fifty years after the disastrous attempt of Elagabalus to establish the worship of the Sun at Rome on a new and more solid basis, the scheme was revived by the Emperor Aurelian, a man of a very different character, in whom the stern inflexible temper and military genius of ancient Rome shone bright for a brief time, like the flicker of an expiring candle, in the gloomy evening of the Roman empire. From his youth fortune would seem to have marked him out as the natural champion of the Sun-god. His family name linked him with the Aurelii, the noble old Roman house who bore the name of the Sun and may have deemed themselves his offspring.[1] His mother is said to have been a priestess of the temple of the Sun in the village where he was born.[2] Being sent on a mission to Persia, he received from the Persian king the gift of a cup on which the Sun was represented in the familiar garb and attitude which the future Emperor of Rome had so often beheld in the temple where his mother ministered.[3] When Zenobia, the rebel Queen of the East, was defeated and captured, her people massacred, and Palmyra, her once stately and beautiful capital, reduced to a heap of blood-stained ruins, the temple of the Sun in the city shared the fate of the other buildings; but Aurelian ordered that it should be completely restored. The despatch in which he conveyed the order to the officer commanding the troops at Palmyra has been preserved by the emperor's biographer; it runs as follows: "Aurelian Augustus to Cerronius Bassus: The swords of the soldiers must be stayed. Enough of the people of Palmyra have been slain and cut to pieces. We spared not the women: we killed the children: we slaughtered the old men: we destroyed the peasants. To whom shall we leave hereafter the country and the city? The survivors are to be spared. For we think that so few have been sufficiently chastised by the condign punishment of so many. As for the temple of the Sun in Palmyra, which was sacked by the eagle-bearers of the third legion, along with the standard-bearers, the dragon-bearer, the hornblowers, and the trumpeters, it is my will that it be restored to its original

The temple of the Sun at Palmyra restored by Aurelian.

[1] See above, p. 491.

[2] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, iv. 2.

[3] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, v. 5.

state. You have three hundred pounds of gold from the coffers of Zenobia: you have eighteen hundred pounds of silver from the plunder of Palmyra: you have the royal jewels. Out of all these see that the temple is beautified: in doing so you will oblige me and the immortal gods. I will write to the Senate requesting them to send a pontiff to dedicate the temple."[1]

Temple of the Sun built by Aurelian at Rome.

Not content with restoring the temple of the Sun among the ruins of Palmyra, the conqueror built a magnificent temple of the Sun at Rome and adorned it with the spoil of the captured city. In it he set up images of the Sun and of Bel, of whom no doubt the latter was the Semitic Baal.[2] Among the votive offerings which it contained were masses of gold and jewellery and fine robes studded with gems.[3] A silver statue and a painted portrait of Aurelian himself were afterwards to be seen within the walls.[4] The splendour of the temple was enhanced by colonnades, in which wines belonging to the imperial treasury were stored.[5] The service of the temple was entrusted to a new college of priests called Pontiffs of the Sun, or Pontiffs of the Sun-god, or Pontiffs of the Unconquered Sun-God,[6] but of the ritual observed in the temple we know nothing. The coins of Aurelian also attest his devotion to the solar deity. On one of them the Sun is seen offering to the emperor a globe as a symbol of the empire of the world, with a captive lying at their feet; some of the inscriptions on the coins proclaim the Sun-god to be the Preserver or Restorer of the World or even Lord

The Sun-god on the Imperial coins.

[1] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxxi. 5-9.

[2] Zosimus, i. 61; Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxv. 6, xxxix. 2.

[3] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxviii. 5, xxxix. 6.

[4] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, x. 2; *id.*, *Tacitus*, ix. 2.

[5] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxxv. 3, xlviii. 4. The situation of the temple is not described by ancient authors, but it seems to have been in the Field of Mars, on or near the site of the present monastery of S. Silvestro. Eight costly columns of red porphyry were afterwards removed from the temple and conveyed to Constantinople, where they were employed in the construction of the Church of St. Sophia. See H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, i. 3, bearbeitet von Ch. Huelsen, pp. 453-456; O. Richter, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*[2] (Munich, 1901), pp. 263-265.

[6] Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxxv. 3, *sacerdotia composuit*. For the inscriptions see H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 1203, 1210, 1211, 1217, 1243, 1259, 2941, 4149, 4413, 6185; F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, ii. 109-111; compare *id.*, *s.v.* "Sol", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 2, p. 1384.

of the Roman Empire. Such legends seem to announce the intention of the emperor to set the Sun-god at the head of the pantheon. It is remarkable that on all these coins the type of the god, in spite of his Oriental origin, is purely Greek, being clearly derived from that of Apollo. On some we see a young man wearing a crown with the solar rays and carrying in his left hand a globe or a whip; his right hand is raised; he is naked except for a light cloak which floats on his back. Sometimes he is represented driving a four-horse car.[1] In the reign of Probus the intimate relation of the emperor to the Sun was signified by a legend on the coins, "To the Unconquered Sun, the Companion of Augustus", and the reorganization of the empire by Diocletian did not affect the now traditional types and inscriptions on the coins which referred to the solar worship.[2] An inscription found at Aquileia records a dedication to the Sun-god by the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian.[3] The armies of Licinius marched to fight the armies of Constantine under the protection of the Sun-god, and a curious inscription informs us that Licinius established in his camp at Salvosia in Moesia an annual sacrifice in honour of the Sun on the eighteenth of November, which was the first day of the year according to the calendar of Antioch.[4] Constantine himself, during the first quarter of his reign, struck many pieces with figures or busts of the Sun-god and legends, "The Unconquered Sun", "To the Unconquered Sun, the Companion of Our Augustus", and so forth.[5]

Annual sacrifice to the Sun on November 18th.

The imperial patronage thus accorded to Sun-worship for at least half a century before the establishment of Christianity was little more than an official recognition of a universal solar religion which had long been spreading in the empire under the combined influence of philosophic

Spread of a solar religion in the Roman Empire.

[1] F. Cumont, *s.v.* "Sol", in E. Saglio et E. Daremberg, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 2. p. 1384; Fr. Richter, *s.v.* "Sol", in W. H. Roscher, *Ausfuhrliches Lexikon der griechischen und romischen Mythologie*, iii. 1148 *sq.*; H. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest, Kapitel I bis III*[2] (Bonn, 1911), pp. 358 *sq.* ("Sol Invictus").

[2] F. Cumont, *op. cit.* pp. 1384 *sq.*

[3] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 624.

[4] F. Cumont, *op. cit.* p. 1385; Fr. Richter, *op. cit.* iii. 1148.

[5] F. Cumont, *op. cit.* p. 1385; H. Usener, *op. cit.* p. 363.

thought, astrological speculation, and Oriental mysteries.[1] Among these mysteries none were more popular, none proved more dangerous rivals to Christianity, than the worship of the old Persian god Mithra, who was now definitely identified with the Sun-god under the title of the Unconquered Sun.[2] About the beginning of our era Strabo affirms without hesitation or ambiguity that the Persian deity Mithra was the Sun.[3] Yet in the opinion of some good modern scholars Mithra originally personified the light, not of the Sun, but of the luminous heaven in general. As to the mode, place, and date of the process which transformed him from a god of light in general into a god of the Sun in particular we have no information. The change perhaps took place in Babylonia, where, under the powerful influence of Chaldean theology and astrology, the Iranian deities were assimilated to their nearest Semitic counterparts, the Supreme God Ahura Mazda being identified with the Sky-god Bel, while the goddess Anahita was confused with Ishtar (Astarte), the goddess of the planet Venus, and Mithra was equated with the Sun-god Shamash.[4]

Popularity of the worship of Mithra; the old Persian god identified with the Unconquered Sun.

But Babylonia was only a stage in the triumphal march of Mithra westward. Even under the early kings of the Achemenidian dynasty Persian colonists seem to have settled

Spread of the worship of Mithra from Babylonia westward.

[1] F. Cumont, *s.v.* "Sol", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iv. 2, pp. 1385 *sq.*

[2] The standard work on the later worship of Mithra is the masterly treatise, in two volumes, of Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (Bruxelles, 1896-1899). Elsewhere the same scholar has treated the subject in a more summary but always authoritative manner. See his article "Mithras", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausfuhrliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 3026-3071; his article "Mithra", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iii. 2, pp. 1944-1954; and his excellent book *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme romain*[2] (Paris, 1909), pp. 200-239. For other treatments of the topic see G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2], pp. 368-373; S. Reinach, "La Morale du Mithraisme", *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, ii. (Paris, 1906) pp. 220-233; S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (London, 1920), pp. 584-626; J. Toutain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'Empire Romain*, Première Partie, ii. (Paris, 1911) pp. 121-177.

[3] Strabo, xv. 3. 13. Compare Lactantius Placidus, on Statius, *Theb.* i. 718, "*Apud Persas Sol proprio nomine Mithra dicitur*"; *id.* on Statius, *Theb.* i. 720, "*Persae in spelaeis Solem colunt. Et hic Sol proprio nomine vocatur Mithra*".

[4] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, i. 230 *sq.*; *id.*, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme romain*[2], pp. 216 *sq.*, 384 *sq.* See also above, pp. 30, 461.

in Armenia, where, according to Strabo, all the Persian deities were worshipped.[1] It is said that the governor of Armenia used to send no less than twenty thousand colts a year to the Persian king for use at the Mithrakana or festival of Mithra.[2] Of the mode of celebrating the festival at the Persian court we know little or nothing except that the only day on which the king was allowed to be drunk was the day on which sacrifices were offered to Mithra, and on that day he also danced a Persian dance.[3] But the wave of Persian colonization rolled westward beyond the boundaries of Armenia. In its climate, as in its natural products, the tableland of Anatolia resembles that of Iran, and lent itself particularly to the breeding of horses, and hence to the formation of a native cavalry, the arm in which the Persians always excelled. Under the sway of Persia the nobility who owned the land appear to have belonged to the conquering race in Cappadocia and Pontus as well as in Armenia, and despite all the changes of government which followed the death of Alexander these noble lords remained the real masters of the country, ruling each the particular canton in which his domains were situated and, on the borders of Armenia at least, preserving through all political vicissitudes down to the time of Justinian the hereditary title of satrap which recalled their Iranian origin.[4] This military and feudal aristocracy furnished Mithridates Eupator with many of the officers by whose help he was so long able to set the power of Rome at defiance, and still later it offered a stout resistance to the efforts of the Roman emperors to subjugate Armenia. Now these warlike grandees worshipped Mithra as the patron-saint of chivalry; hence it was natural enough that even in the Latin world Mithra always passed for the "Invincible", the guardian of armies, the soldier's god.[5] In the time of Strabo the Magians were still to be found in large numbers, scattered over Cappadocia, where they maintained the perpetual fires

The Persian colonization of Anatolia.

The Magian religion in Cappadocia and Lydia.

[1] Strabo, xi. 14. 16.

[2] Strabo, xi. 14. 16. As to the Mithrakana see F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, i. 230.

[3] Athenaeus, x. 45, p. 434 E, quoting the historians Ctesias and Duris.

[4] F. Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme romain*[2], p. 213.

[5] F. Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme romain*[2], pp. 213 *sq.*

in their chapels, intoning the liturgy with the regular Persian ritual.[1] A century and a half later the same sacred fires still blazed to the drone of the same liturgy in certain cities of Lydia: for Pausanias tells us that "the Lydians have sanctuaries of the Persian goddess, as she is called, in the cities of Hierocaesarea and Hypaepa, and in each of the sanctuaries is a chapel, and in the chapel there are ashes on an altar, but the colour of the ashes is not that of ordinary ashes. A magician, after entering the chapel and piling dry wood on the altar, first claps a tiara on his head, and next chants an invocation of some god in a barbarous and, to a Greek, utterly unintelligible tongue: he chants the words from a book. Then without the application of fire the wood must needs kindle and a bright blaze shoot up from it." [2]

The worship of Mithra among the Cilician pirates.

Outside of the Anatolian tableland the first to observe the rites of Mithra are said to have been the Cilician pirates. During the civil wars which distracted the attention and absorbed the energies of the Romans in the first century of our era, these daring rovers seized the opportunity to issue from the secret creeks and winding rivers of Cilicia and scour the seas, landing from time to time, harrying islands, holding cities to ransom, and carrying off from some of the most famous sanctuaries the wealth which had been accumulated there by the piety of ages. Gorged with plunder and elated by the impunity which they long enjoyed, the corsairs rose to an extraordinary pitch of audacity and effrontery, marching up the highroads of Italy, plundering villas, and abducting Roman magistrates in their robes of office; while at sea they displayed a pomp and

[1] Strabo, xv. 3. 15.

[2] Pausanias, v. 27. 5 *sq.* At Hierocaesarea a goddess was worshipped whom the Romans called the Persian Diana: she was probably Anahita (Anaitis); and there was also a chapel which was said to have been dedicated in the reign of Cyrus. See Tacitus, *Annales*, iii. 62. On coins of the city Artemis is represented with the legend ΙΕΡΣΙΚΗ. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum* (Oxford, 1887), p. 550. The goddess is also mentioned under that name in an inscription which may have been found at Hierocaesarea. See W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 333 (vol. i. pp. 519 *sq.*). Hence, as Dittenberger remarks on that inscription, it is highly probable that in the passage of Pausanias (v. 27. 5), cited above, we should read Ιερσικῆς with some MSS. for the vulgate Ιερσικοῖς. Elsewhere (vii. 6. 6) Pausanias speaks of a sanctuary of the Persian Artemis in Lydia, and it is probable that the sanctuary in question is the one at Hierocaesarea. This makes the proposed correction of the text of Pausanias v. 27. 5 practically certain. I have adopted it in the text.

pageantry proportioned to the riches which they had amassed by their successful forays. Their galleys flaunted gilded sails and purple awnings, and glided along to the measured plash of silvered oars, while the sounds of music and revelry, wafted across the water, told to the trembling inhabitants of the neighbouring coasts the riot and debauchery of the buccaneers.[1] The worship of Mithra, which these sanctified ruffians practised in their fastnesses among the wild Cilician mountains, may have been learned by them from Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus, whom they assisted in his wars with the Romans.[2]

Statius and his scholiast on the worship of Mithra.

By the end of the first century of our era the worship of Mithra and his identification with the Sun appear to have been familiar to the Romans; for in an address to Apollo the poet Statius, enumerating the titles by which that deity was called, suggests that the god might prefer to be known as "Mithra, who under the rocks of the Persian cave twists the bull's struggling horns".[3] The allusion is plainly to the most widespread and familiar monument of Mithraism, the sculpture which represents Mithra in a cave, kneeling on the back of a bull and twisting its head back with one hand, while with the other he plunges a knife into its flank.[4] The ancient scholiast Lactantius Placidus, commenting on this passage of Statius, not only explains Mithra as the Sun whom the Persians worshipped in caves, but completes the solar interpretation by adding that the horned bull is the horned Moon, and that the scene is laid in a cave to signify an eclipse of the sun by the interposition of the moon. In the group of Mithra and the bull, as the scholiast correctly observes, Mithra is regularly portrayed in Persian costume wearing the usual tiara or peaked Phrygian cap; but the scholiast proceeds to say that Mithra was also represented with the head of a lion, and he explains this representation either with reference to the constellation of the Lion which the Sun enters in his course through the zodiac, or as a

[1] As to the Cilician pirates see Strabo, xiv. 5. 2, pp. 668 *sq.*; Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 24; Appian, *Bellum Mithridat.* 92 *sq.*; Dio Cassius, xxxvi. 20-23; Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompeii*, 11 *sq.*

[2] Plutarch, *Pompey*, 24.

[3] Statius, *Theb.* i. 719 *sq.*

[4] Many of these monuments are extant in many parts of Europe. See F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, ii. 209 *sqq.*

symbol of the superiority of the Sun-god over all the other gods, like the superiority of the lion over the other beasts.[1] In this interpretation the scholiast appears to have erred. The figure of a lion-headed god, standing with a serpent twined round his body and holding one or two keys in his hands, is explained with greater probability as a personification of Time, answering to the Persian divinity Zervan Akarana, Infinite Time, which from the period of the Achemenides was deemed by a Magian sect to be the origin of all things and the begetter both of Ormuzd and Ahriman.[2]

Long seclusion of the worship of Mithra in the highlands of Anatolia.

Compared to other Oriental deities, such as the Phrygian Great Mother, the Carthaginian Astarte, and the Egyptian Isis and Serapis, the Phrygian god Mithra was a late arrival in Rome. The nature of the Anatolian plateau explains in some measure the long seclusion of the deity from the western world. It is a bleak upland region of steppes and forests and precipices, which offers few attractions to the stranger; and there, in the solitude of the mountains or the dreary expanse of the unending plains, Mithra remained for ages isolated amid natural surroundings which formed a not unsuitable setting for his stern and soldierly religion. Even during the Alexandrian age, after the victorious Greek armies had swept over the country, Mithra never descended from his highland home to the soft skies and blue seas of Ionia. A single late dedication to the Sun Mithra, found at the Piraeus, is the only monument of his worship on the coasts of the Aegean. The Greeks never welcomed this god of their ancient enemies to their hospitable pantheon.[3]

Rapid diffusion of the worship of Mithra by Roman soldiers, merchants, and slaves.

But no sooner was the Anatolian tableland overrun by Roman armies and annexed to the Roman empire than the worship of Mithra spread like wildfire to the remotest regions of the west and south. The soldiers adopted it with enthusiasm, and from about the end of the first century of our era they carried it with them to their distant camps on the Danube and the Rhine, on the coast of France, among

[1] Lactantius Placidus on Statius, *Theb.* i. 720.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 74-85. This scholar suggests (p. 79) that the lion-headed god in Oriental art is the last heir of a lion-totem.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 241-243, ii. 469, Inscription No. 220 A, τῷ Ἡλίῳι τῷ Μίτραι.

the mountains of Wales and Scotland, in the valleys of the Asturias, and even on the edge of the Sahara, where a line of military posts guarded the southern frontier of the empire. In all these widely separated quarters of the globe they left memorials of their devotion to Mithra in the shape of monuments dedicated to his worship. At the same time merchants of Asia introduced the religion into the ports of the Mediterranean and carried it far into the interior by waterways or roadways to all the important trading cities and marts of commerce. In our own country Mithraic monuments have been found in London, York, and Chester. Finally, among the apostles of the new faith must be reckoned the Oriental slaves, who were everywhere and had a hand in everything, being employed in the public services as well as in private families, whether they toiled as labourers in the fields and the mines, or as clerks and book-keepers in counting-houses and government offices, where their number was legion.[1]

The worship of Mithra favoured by Commodus and later Roman Emperors.

At last the foreign deity wormed his way into the favour of the high officials and even of the emperor. Towards the close of the second century of our era an immense impulse was given to the propagation of the religion by the attention bestowed on it by the Emperor Commodus, who, in keeping with his brutal and cruel character, is said to have polluted the rites by human sacrifice.[2] The dedications, "to The Unconquered Sun Mithra for the safety of Commodus Antoninus Augustus, our Lord",[3] and numerous other

[1] F. Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme romain*[2], pp. 220 *sq.* For details as to the diffusion of the religion and the monuments, see *id.*, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 241 *sqq.*; *id.*, *s.v.* "Mithras", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 3030-3037; *id.*, *s.v.* "Mithra", in E. Daremberg et E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iii. 2. pp. 1945-1947; and especially J. Toutain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'Empire Romain*, Première Partie, ii. 144-159. For the Mithraic monuments in Britain, see F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, ii. pp. 389-396. From a careful analysis of the geographical diffusion and character of the monuments, Monsieur J. Toutain concludes that Mithraism was mainly a religion of the soldiers, that it was never popular with the bulk of the middle classes, and that its adherents were never so numerous as to constitute a serious rivalry with Christianity.

[2] Lampridius, *Commodus*, 9 (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, vol. i. p. 105, ed. H. Peter).

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, ii. pp. 99, 170, Inscriptions 34 and 541. The two inscriptions vary slightly in the wording.

Mithraic dedications dating from the reign of Commodus, attest the popularity which the worship attained in the sunshine of imperial favour.[1] From the early years of the third century the religion was served by a domestic chaplain in the palace of the Caesars, and inscriptions record the vows and offerings of its devotees for the prosperity of the Emperors Septimius and Alexander Severus and afterwards of Philip. Still later the Emperor Aurelian, who, as we have seen, established an official cult of the Sun at Rome, could not but sympathize with Mithra, the god who was himself now regularly identified with the Sun. By the beginning of the fourth century the Mithraic faith had spread so widely and struck its roots so deep, that for a moment it seemed as if it would overshadow all its rivals and dominate the Roman world from end to end. In the year 307 A.D. Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius had a solemn meeting at Carnuntum on the Danube, and there consecrated together a sanctuary "to the Unconquered Sun-god Mithra, the favourer of their empire".[2] So near did Mithra come to being the Supreme God of the Roman empire. Yet a few years later and that same empire bowed its neck to the yoke of another Oriental god, and the Sun, the Unconquered Sun, of Mithra set for ever.

Popular identification of Mithra with the Sun.

The popular identification of Mithra with the Sun in the later times of classical antiquity is placed beyond the reach of doubt by a multitude of inscriptions, found in all parts of the Roman empire, which directly qualify Mithra as the Sun or more usually as Mithra the Unconquered Sun.[3]

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 281, with the references to the inscriptions in vol. ii. pp. 540 *sq.*

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 281, ii. 146, Inscription 367; *id.*, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme romain*[2], pp. 221 *sq.*

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. Inscriptions Nos. 2, 28, 29, 30, 34, 49, 50, 51, 53, 56, 58, 61, 62, 66, 67, 72, 74, 75, 131, 135, 141, 144, 149, 151, 156, 157, 159, 161, 163, 172, 235, 258, 287, 295, 320, 354, 355, 360, 423, 430, 461, 479, 509, 526, 541, 542 (Mithra the Unconquered Sun), Nos. 76, 134, 150, 193, 485 (Mithra the Sun, or Mithra the Sun-god). All these inscriptions are in Latin, except Nos. 75, 149, and 150, which are in Greek. In this list I have omitted many inscriptions in which the title "Mithra the Unconquered Sun" is indicated only by abbreviations, such as *D(eo) S(oli) I(nvicto) M(ithrae)* in the inscription of Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius (No. 367). For inscriptions which describe Mithra as the Unconquered Sun (*Sol Invictus Mithras*) or the Unconquered Sun-god Mithra (*deus Sol invictus Mithras*), see H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 659 (=Cumont, No. 367), 1661, 4152, 4191, 4194, 4198, 4200, 4202, 4203, 4204, 4205, 4213, 4215, 4223, 4226, 4227, 4229, 4237, 4238.

Nevertheless on many monuments of the worship Mithra and the Sun are represented by separate figures as if they were distinct deities. In one scene we see Mithra standing in his usual Oriental costume opposite a young man, naked or clad in a simple cloak, who is either standing or kneeling at the feet of Mithra. In some reliefs Mithra is putting on his companion's head or removing from it a large curved object which sometimes resembles a horn or a deflated leathern bottle. The kneeling personage is usually passive, but sometimes he lifts his arms, whether in supplication or to put aside or retain the mysterious object which is being placed on his head or removed from it. In some reliefs the scene is more complicated: Mithra is displacing the enigmatical object with his right hand, while with his left he places on his companion's head a radiant crown. In one scene of a great relief found at Osterburken we see Mithra holding the same object over the head of the kneeling figure with his right hand, while he puts his left hand to the hilt of his sword at his belt, and the radiant crown lies on the ground between them. The exact significance of the scene is uncertain, but the standing or kneeling figure who receives or loses the radiant crown is interpreted as the Sun, towards whom Mithra seems to adopt an attitude of superiority by conferring upon him or removing from him the crown of rays which is the emblem of his solar character. Perhaps the scene refers to a contest between the two deities in which Mithra remained the victor. It has also been suggested that Mithra is pouring oil or other liquid from a horn on the head of the Sun as a solemn form of baptism or investiture in sign of the powers which that deity will wield when he is crowned with the diadem of rays.[1] In another scene of a great relief found at Heddernheim we see Mithra holding out his hand to the kneeling Sun as if helping him to rise: the head of the Sun is surrounded by a nimbus.[2] On several monuments the two gods are represented standing opposite each other

Mithra and the Sun represented by separate figures on the monuments.

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 172 *sq.* For the relief at Osterburken, see *id.*, vol. ii. pp. 348-351, with Plate VI. Compare F. Cumont, *s.v.* "Mithras", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 3047.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 173. For the relief at Heddernheim, see *id.*, vol. ii. pp. 362 *sqq.*, with Plate VII.

and shaking hands. Mithra wears his usual costume: the Sun is either naked with a nimbus round his head, or he wears a cloak and the radiant crown and carries a whip. The meaning of the scene is obvious. The two deities have concluded a treaty of alliance, and peace and harmony will henceforth reign between them. In the relief at Osterburken, as if to give a religious consecration to the union of the two gods, they are represented shaking hands over an altar.[1] Further, the peace between Mithra and the Sun is sealed by a banquet, at which they are portrayed reclining side by side at the festive board and holding up goblets in their right hands, while about the table are gathered a number of guests as partakers of the sacred feast. The importance attached to this divine banquet is attested both by the number of the monuments on which it is figured and by the important place assigned to it in the series of subsidiary scenes arranged round the central piece, the sacrifice of the bull by Mithra.[2] Often, especially in the great sculptured reliefs which have been found in the valley of the Rhine, the relief representing the banquet is the last of the whole series, as if it formed the concluding act in the history of the god's exploits, the Last Supper of which he partook before quitting the scene of his earthly labours.[3]

The scene of the banquet.

Remembering that according to the Christian Fathers a sort of communion was celebrated in the Mithraic mysteries[4], we can understand why the devotees of the religion set so high a value on this last feast of Mithra and his companions, or should we say his disciples? The sacramental act which the liturgy appears to have prescribed was accomplished in memory of the example set by the Divine Master. This relation between the legend and the ritual is established by a fragmentary relief discovered in Bosnia. It represents two devotees reclining at a table on which loaves are set out: one of them holds a drinking horn: both are in the attitude in which Mithra and the Sun are regularly represented on the other monuments. Round about the two devotees, or rather communicants, are grouped the initiated

The banquet a ritual of commemoration.

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 173.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 173.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 174 *sq.*

[4] See below, pp. 524, 525.

The mystic hierarchy.

of various grades in the mystic hierarchy, including the Raven, the Persian, the Soldier, and the Lion, wearing the masks which are appropriate to their names and which they are known from other sources to have worn in the sacred rites.[1] A text of St. Jerome, confirmed by a series of inscriptions, informs us that there were seven degrees of initiation in the Mithraic mysteries, and that the initiated took successively the names of the Raven, the Occult, the Soldier, the Lion, the Persian, the Courier of the Sun (*heliodromus*), and the Father. These strange names were not simply honorary titles. On certain occasions the officiants disguised themselves in costumes appropriate to the names which they bore. These sacred masquerades were variously interpreted by the ancients with reference either to the signs of the zodiac or to the theory of transmigration. Such differences of opinion only prove that the original meaning of the disguises was forgotten. Probably the masquerade was a survival from a time when the gods were supposed to wear or assume the form of animals, and when the worshipper attempted to identify himself with his deity by dressing in the skin and other trappings of the divine creature. Similar survivals in ritual are common in many religions.[2]

Sacred masquerades.

The ascension of Mithra to heaven in the chariot of the Sun.

To complete the history of Mithra we must notice the monuments on which the Sun is represented driving in his chariot, which is drawn by four horses at full gallop. With the left hand he grasps the reins, while he holds out his right hand to Mithra, who approaches to take his place beside the Sun in the chariot: sometimes, indeed, Mithra clings to the arm of the Sun-god as if preparing to leap into the whirling car. Sometimes the Ocean, into which the Sun's chariot descends at night, is indicated by the figure of a bearded man reclining on the ground and leaning on an urn or holding a reed.[3] Yet the daily disappearance of the Sun

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 176.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 314-317. For the passage of St. Jerome (*Epistle*, cvii. *ad Laetam*, Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, xxii. p. 869), quoted by Cumont, see *id.* ii. 18. As to the degrees of initiation in the Mithraic mysteries see also Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, iv. 16, who mentions the titles of Eagles and Hawks in addition to those of Ravens and Lions. Porphyry notices the zodiacal explanation of the titles, but prefers the theory of the transmigration of human souls into animal bodies.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 176 *sq.*

setting in the sea does not suffice to explain this scene nor the part which Mithra plays in it. To understand it we must compare the scenes carved on some Christian sarcophaguses, which present so striking a resemblance to the Mithraic sculptures that the two series can hardly be independent of each other. On the Christian sarcophaguses it is the prophet Elijah who stands erect in his car drawn by four galloping steeds. He grasps the reins with his left hand, while with his right he holds out his mantle to the prophet Elisha, who stands on the ground behind the car. In front of the car, and beneath the rearing steeds, the figure of a bearded man is stretched, leaning with his left arm on an urn from which water is flowing. The reclining figure represents the Jordan, from whose banks the prophet Elijah was swept away to heaven on the chariot and horses of fire. In the light of this parallel we may suppose that Mithra, like the prophet of Israel, his earthly labours over, was believed to have ascended up to heaven in the Sun's bright chariot, though doubtless he was thought still to look down upon and protect the faithful worshippers whom he left behind him on earth. *Sic itur ad astra.*[1]

The figures of the two torch-bearers, Cautes and Cauto-pates, on the Mithraic monuments.

It remains to mention among the Mithraic sculptures two figures which are commonly supposed to be connected with the solar character of Mithra. The great scene of the sacrifice of the bull, which occupied the central place in Mithraic art and probably in Mithraic religion, is regularly flanked by two youthful male figures dressed like Mithra and wearing the usual peaked Phrygian cap. Each of them grasps a burning torch, but one of them holds the burning end of the torch up, while the other turns it down towards the earth. Though they are most commonly represented in the scene of the sacrifice, where they are in a sense the acolytes or satellites of Mithra, yet they also occur in large numbers as detached sculptures. For example, they are found in couples as votive offerings in the usual subterranean sanctuaries. In the scene of the sacrifice they are portrayed as smaller than Mithra, but not disproportionately so, and they are always dressed exactly like him. For the most part they take no part in the sacrifice, but stand

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 178, 306.

motionless as statues, gazing into space or absorbed in the contemplation of the flame of their torch. Sometimes, however, the torch-bearer who stands behind the bull grips the animal's tail below the bunch of ears of corn in which the tail terminates: the gesture seems to indicate that he is about to detach the bunch of ears from the tail.[1] Two pairs of statues of these torch-bearers are accompanied by inscriptions, from which we learn that the one who held up his torch was called Cautes, and that the one who held down his torch was called Cautopates. Elsewhere the same names have been found on inscribed pairs of pedestals, though the statues which stood on the pedestals are lost. The addition of the words *deus* ("god") to the names in some of the inscriptions proves that both Cautes and Cautopates were regarded as divine.[2]

The tripl Mithra, or the Mithraic Trinity.

The meaning and etymology of these two barbarous names are uncertain, attempts to derive them from the Persian appear to have hitherto failed;[3] but from some of the inscriptions in which they occur it seems indubitable that both names are merely epithets of Mithra himself. One of these inscriptions reads, *d(eo) i(nvicto) M(ithrae) Cautopati*, that is, "To the Unconquered god Mithra Cautopates", and a certain number of dedications ought to be read similarly.[4] Another inscription runs, *deo M(ithrae) C(autopati) S(oli) i(nvicto)*, that is, "To the god Mithra Cautopates, the Unconquered Sun".[5] Hence it would seem that in the great scene of the sacrifice of the bull, which occurs so often in Mithraic art, Mithra is represented thrice over. Now we are told by the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite that the Magians celebrated a festival of the Triple Mithra; and this statement, which has been much discussed, is illustrated by the monuments in question, which represent Mithra in three distinct forms, namely, the central figure of Mithra slaying the bull, flanked by the two torch-

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 203-205.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 207, ii. p. 122, Inscription 165, p. 142, Inscriptions 329, 330; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4250, 4252a, 4252b, 4253a, 4253b, 4254, 4255, 4256, 4258, 4259, 9280.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 208.

[4] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 208, ii. 533; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4256.

[5] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4257.

bearers Cautes and Cautopates. Hence apparently we are driven to conclude that the sculptor meant to portray a triune god or a single deity at three different moments of his existence.[1]

Cautes and Cautopates interpreted as the rising and the setting Sun.

This Mithraic trinity has nothing to correspond to it in the religion of Zoroaster, but it may well be of Babylonian origin. Now according to Semitic astrology Mithra is a solar god; hence the two torch-bearers must also be the Sun, but they must represent him under different aspects or at different moments of his course. Perhaps the two youths stand for the brightening or the fading glow of the morning or evening twilight, while the god stabbing the bull between them may represent the splendour of noon. Long ago the learned French antiquary Montfaucon interpreted the three figures of these reliefs as the rising sun, the mid-day sun, and the setting sun. This would explain why in many reliefs the figure of Cautes, who holds up his torch, is accompanied by a cock, the herald of the dawn. So in Greek mythology the cock was regarded as the herald of the Sun and was accounted sacred to him; and Plutarch speaks of an image of Apollo holding a cock in his hand, which he naturally interprets as a symbol of the dawn and sunrise. Similarly in two Mithraic monuments the torch-bearer who holds up his torch in one hand supports a cock on the other. Hence we infer that this youth, named Cautes, was regarded as an emblem of the rising sun, and we may suppose that in the daily liturgy Cautes was invoked at sunrise, the bull-slaying god at noon, and Cautopates at sunset.[2]

Cautes and Cautopates interpreted as the vernal and the autumnal Sun.

A more recondite theory would explain the two torch-bearers as symbols of the vernal and the autumnal sun respectively, the one waxing and the other waning in power and splendour. In favour of this interpretation it is pointed out that Cautes and Cautopates are sometimes

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 208 *sq.* The passage of the Pseudo-Dionysius (*Epist.* vii., Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. iii. p. 1082) is quoted by F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 11, εἰσέτι Μάγοι τὰ μνημόσυνα τοῦ τριπλασίου Μίθρου τέλουσιν.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 209 *sq.* As for the sanctity of the cock and its dedication to the Sun in Greek mythology, see Pausanias, v. 25. 9; Jamblichus, *De Pythagorica vita*, xxviii. 147. For the image of Apollo with the cock on his hand see Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis*, 12.

represented holding in their hands, the one the head of a bull, and the other a scorpion ; or a bull is seen browsing or resting beside Cautes, while a scorpion crawls at the feet of Cautopates. Now at a very remote date the Bull and the Scorpion were the signs of the zodiac which the sun occupied at the vernal and the autumnal equinoxes respectively, although in classical times, as a consequence of the precession of the equinoxes, the sun had long retrograded to the signs of the Ram and the Balance. It is tempting to conjecture that the traditional emblems of the constellations which once marked the beginning of spring and the beginning of autumn were transmitted from Chaldea to the west and preserved in the symbolism of the mysteries long after they had ceased to correspond with the facts of astronomy.[1]

Significance of the two torch-bearers.

Be that as it may, we may be fairly certain as to the general significance of the two torch-bearers in Mithraic art. The one who lifts his torch is a personification either of the matutinal or of the vernal sun which mounts higher and higher in the sky and by its growing light and strength imparts fertility to the earth. The other who depresses his torch personifies the declining sun, whether the great luminary appears to haste at evening to his setting, or to sink day by day lower and lower in the autumnal and wintry sky.[2]

The great scene of the Sacrifice of the Bull on the Mithraic monuments.

Far more obscure and difficult to interpret is the scene of the sacrifice of the bull, which, as we have seen, occupies the central place in Mithraic art, as the sacrifice itself doubtless formed the supreme act in the Mithraic religion. In the crypts, which constituted the Mithraic temples, a sculptured group representing Mithra in the act of slaying the bull was regularly placed at the far end, facing the entrance, in a position corresponding to that which is occupied by the altar in Christian churches. Not only so, but reduced copies of the group were placed, like crucifixes with Christians, in domestic oratories and no doubt in the private apartments of the faithful. The number of reproductions of it which have come down to us is

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 210.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 211.

enormous,[1] comparable to the number of crucifixes which would be found in the ruins of Europe by the hordes of infidel and iconoclastic invaders which may one day lay the whole fabric of western civilization in the dust.

The ears of corn issuing from the dying bull.

A possible clue to the meaning of the mysterious sacrifice is furnished by certain curious details of the sculptures which represent it. On almost all the monuments the tail of the dying bull ends in a bunch of ears of corn, and on the most ancient of the Italian monuments three ears of corn are distinctly represented issuing instead of blood from the wound in the bull's side.[2] The inference seems inevitable that the bull was supposed to contain in itself certain powers of vegetable fertility, which were liberated by its death.

In Avestan cosmogony the slaughter of the primeval ox by Ahriman is the source of all life, both vegetable and animal.

Now according to the ancient Avestan system of cosmogony the primeval ox, created by the Supreme God Ahura Mazda, contained in itself the seeds of all plants and of all animals except man; it was slain by the evil demon Ahriman, but in its death it gave birth to the whole vegetable and animal creation, always with the exception of the human species, which was supposed to have had a different origin. Thus in the *Bundahish*, an ancient Pahlavi work on cosmology, mythology, and legendary history, we read: "On the nature of the five classes of animals it says in revelation, that, when the primeval ox passed away, there where the marrow came out grain grew up of fifty and five species, and twelve species of medicinal plants grew; as it says that out of the marrow is every separate creature, every single thing whose lodgment is in the marrow. From the horns arose peas, from the nose the leek, from the blood the grape-vine from which they make wine—on this account wine abounds with blood—from the lungs the rue-like herbs, from the middle of the heart thyme for keeping away stench, and every one of the others as revealed in the Avesta. The seed of the ox was carried up to the moon station; there it was thoroughly purified, and produced the manifold species of animals. First, two oxen, one male and one female, and,

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 63, 179.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 186 *sq.*, ii. 228, with fig. 10. The remarkable monument showing the ears of corn instead of blood is now in the British Museum. It was formerly in Rome.

afterwards, one pair of every single species was let go into the earth."[1] Again, in another passage of the same treatise we read: "As it (the primeval ox) passed away, owing to the vegetable principle proceeding from every limb of the ox, fifty and five species of grain and twelve species of medicinal plants grew forth from the earth, and their splendour and strength were the seminal energy of the ox. Delivered to the moon station, that seed was thoroughly purified by the light of the moon, fully prepared in every way, and produced life in a body. Thence arose two oxen, one male and one female; and, afterwards, two hundred and eighty-two species of each kind became manifest upon the earth."[2]

The sacrifice of the bull on the Mithraic monuments may represent the slaughter of the primeval ox.

Hence it seems highly probable that the Mithraic sculpture of the sacrifice of the bull represents the slaughter of the primeval ox, which in dying produced from the various parts of its body the whole vegetable and animal creation, always with the exception of humankind.[3] We can now understand why, in the Mithraic group of the slaughter of the bull, the animal is always represented fallen with its head to the right, never to the left. The reason is given in the *Bundahish*, which tells us that "when the primeval ox passed away it fell to the right hand".[4] Thus we may fairly conclude that in the belief of the Mithraic devotees the slaughter of the primeval ox was a creative act to which plants and animals alike owed their origin. We can therefore understand why the priests should have transferred that beneficent, though painful, act from Ahriman, the evil spirit, to Mithra, the good and beneficent god. In this way Mithra apparently came to be deemed the creator and source of life, as indeed he is described in a passage of Porphyry.[5] Thus the sad

[1] *Bundahish*, xiv. 1-3, in E. W. West's *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I. (Oxford, 1880) pp. 45 *sq.* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. v.). Compare J. Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 144 *sqq.*; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 669, 673 *sq.*; F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 186 *sq.*

[2] *Bundahish*, x. 1-3; compare xxvii. 2, in E. W. West's *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I. pp. 31 *sq.*, 99 *sq.*

[3] This is the view of F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 186 *sq.*, whose explanation of the sacrifice I have adopted.

[4] *Bundahish*, iv. 1, in E. W. West's *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I. p. 20.

[5] Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 24, ἐποχεῖται δὲ [scil. Μίθρας] ταύρῳ Ἀφροδίτης, ὡς καὶ ὁ ταῦρος δημιουργὸς ὢν ὁ Μίθρας καὶ γενέσεως δεσπότης. In this passage the words ὁ Μίθρας are perhaps an interpolation, as F. Cumont has seen (*Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii.

and solemn scene which always met the eyes of Mithraic worshippers in the apse at the far end of their temples commemorated the consummation of the great sacrifice which in ages gone by had given life and fertility to the world.[1]

Mazdean doctrine of the future resurrection of all the dead to be accomplished by a Saviour or Redeemer by means of the slaughter of an ox and a magic potion.

But perhaps the sight of the tragic group in the religious gloom of the vaulted temple awakened in the minds of the worshippers other thoughts which moved them still more deeply.[2] For it is probable, we are told, that in the Mithraic religion the cosmogonic myths were correlated with the ideas entertained by the Magians as to the end of the world. In fact, the two sets of beliefs present a resemblance which is naturally explained by the identity of their origin, if we suppose that both narratives are variants of a single primitive theme. We know, both from Greek writers and the Mazdean scriptures, that the ancient Persians believed in a resurrection of the dead at the end of this present world. Thus the Greek historian Theopompus recorded that according to the Magians men would come to life again and be immortal.[3] According to Aeneas of Gaza, in his treatise on the immortality of the soul, "Zoroaster predicts that a time will come in which there will be a resurrection of all the dead".[4] The statements of these Greek writers are amply confirmed by the sacred books of the ancient Persian religion, which explicitly teach the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, good and bad alike, at the end of the present dispensation. They predict that in these last days there will arise a Redeemer or Saviour named Soshyans or Saoshyant, who will be the

p. 41). If that is so, all that Porphyry expressly affirms is that "the bull is also a creator and master of generation", with the implication that Mithra is a creator and master of life as well as the bull. But in that case the sentence is ungrammatical, for instead of the nominatives (ὁ ταῦρος, κ.τ.λ.) we ought to have genitives (τοῦ ταύρου, κτλ.).

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 187.

[2] Here I again follow the suggestions of F. Cumont (*Textes et Monuments*, i. 187 *sq.*).

[3] Theopompus, cited by Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philosoph., Prooemium*, 9, p. 3, ed. Cobet. Diogenes adds that the same statement was made by Eudemus the Rhodian.

[4] Aeneas of Gaza, *Dial. de immort. animae*, ed. Boissonade, 1836, p. 77, Ὁ δὲ Ζωροάστρης προλέγει ὡς ἔσται ποτε χρόνος ἐν ᾧ πάντων νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις ἔσται· οἷδεν ὁ Θέοπομπος (quoted by F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 187, note [7]). However, Herodotus (iii. 62) reports the saying of a Persian nobleman which implies a complete scepticism as to the resurrection of the dead. But even if the saying is authentic, it does not follow that the scepticism was universal among the Persians, though the speaker appears to assume that it was shared by Cambyses.

agent of the resurrection.[1] He it is, we are told, "who makes the evil spirit impotent, and causes the resurrection and future existence".[2] In the task of bringing the dead to life the Redeemer will be assisted by fifteen men and fifteen damsels, and their labours will last for seven and fifty years. Now the way in which they will bring about the resurrection is this. They will slay an ox called Hadhayos, and from the fat of that ox and the sacred white *hom* or *haoma* (the equivalent of the Sanscrit *soma*) they will prepare an ambrosia (*hûsh*), and they will give it to all men, and all men will drink of it and become immortal for ever and ever. Then will all men stand up, the righteous and the wicked alike. Every human creature will arise, each on the spot where he died. The souls of the dead will resume their former bodies and they will gather in one place, and they will know those whom they knew formerly in life. They will say, "This is my father, and this is my mother, and this is my brother, and this is my wife, and these are some other of my nearest relations". They will come together with the greatest affection, father and son and brother and friend, and they will ask one another, saying, "Where hast thou been these many years? and what was the judgment upon thy soul? hast thou been righteous or wicked?" And all will join with one voice and praise aloud the Lord God Almighty (Ahura Mazda) and the archangels.

The Last Judgment.

There in that assembly, which no man can number, all men will stand together, and every man will see his own good deeds and his own evil deeds, and in that assembly a wicked man will be as plain to see as a white sheep among black. In that day the wicked man who was a friend of a righteous man will make his moan, saying, "Why, when he was in the world, did he not make me acquainted with the good deeds which he practised himself?" Afterwards they will separate the righteous from the wicked, and the righteous will be carried up to heaven, but the wicked will be cast down into

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 187 *sq.* On the doctrine of the Redeemer and the resurrection from the dead in the Mazdean religion, see Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 158 *sqq.*; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Die iranische Religion", in W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ii. 669 *sq.*, 685 *sq.* The principal passage on the subject in the sacred books is *Bundahish*, xxx. (E. W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I. pp. 120-130).

[2] *Bundahish*, xi. 6 (E. W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I. p. 33).

hell. For at the bidding of the Lord God Almighty (Ahura Mazda), the Redeemer and his assistants will give to every man the reward and recompense of his deeds.[1]

Mithra as the Saviour, and the sacrifice of the bull as the supreme event in the history of the world.

Hence it would seem that Mithra succeeded to the place which in the old Persian religion had been occupied by Soshyans or Saoshyant, the Redeemer or Saviour. Thus in the belief of his worshippers "the sacrifice of the divine bull was in truth the great event in the history of the world, the event which stands alike at the beginning of the ages and at the consummation of time, the event which is the source at once of the earthly life and of the life eternal. We can therefore understand why among all the sacred imagery of the mysteries the place of honour was reserved for the representation of this supreme sacrifice, and why always and everywhere it was exposed in the apse of the temples to the adoration of the worshippers."[2] On the minds of worshippers, seated in the religious gloom of the subterranean temple, the mournful scene of the slaughter of the bull, dimly discerned at the far end of the sanctuary, was doubtless well fitted to impress solemn thoughts, not only of the great sacrifice which in days long gone by had been the source of life on earth, but also of that other great sacrifice, still to come, on which depended all their hopes of a blissful immortality.

The *taurobolium* or baptism of bull's blood for the washing away of sins and the rebirth to eternal life.

A rite which presents a superficial resemblance to the sacrifice of the bull in the Mithraic religion was the ceremony known as a *taurobolium*. This strange sacrament consisted essentially in a baptism or bath of bull's blood, which was believed to wash away sin, and from which the devotee was supposed to emerge born again to eternal life. Crowned with gold and wreathed with fillets, the candidate for the new birth descended into a pit, the mouth of which was covered with a wooden grating. A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead plastered with gold leaf, was then driven on to the grating and there slaughtered with a sacred spear. Its hot reeking blood poured through the grating on the worshipper in the pit, who received it with devout eagerness

[1] *Bundahish*, xxx. 1-27 (E. W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Part I. pp. 120-127). Compare Fr. Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 160 *sq.*; F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 187 *sq.*

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 188.

on every part of his person and garments, till at last he emerged gory from head to foot, and received the homage, nay, the adoration, of his fellows as one who had been born again to eternal life and had washed away his sins in the blood of the bull.[1] It does not appear that this baptism of blood ever formed part of the regular Mithraic ritual. The many inscriptions which mention it, with the exception of one which appears to be forged, explicitly refer the rite to the worship of the Great Mother and Attis.[2] Yet worshippers of Mithra are known to have sometimes submitted to the repulsive rite; for we possess the dedication of an altar to the Mother of the Gods and Attis by a certain Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius, who describes himself as Father of Fathers in the religion of the Unconquered Sun-god Mithra, and at the same time claims to have been "born again to eternal life by the sacrifice of a bull and a ram".[3] But the Father of Fathers ranked as the highest dignitary, a sort of little pope, in the Mithraic hierarchy;[4] accordingly we can hardly doubt that the example set by so exalted a prelate was often followed by the inferior clergy. In fact, we hear of another Father of Fathers who boasted, with honest

The rite was no part of the regular Mithraic worship, but was often observed by Mithraic devotees.

[1] Prudentius, *Peristephan.* x 1006-1050. Compare Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religione*, xxvii. 8, "*Neminem aput idola profusus sanguis munit, et ne cruor pecudum miseros homines aut decipiat aut perdat, polluit sanguis iste, non redimit, et per varios casus homines premit in mortem: miseri sunt qui profusione sacrilegi sanguinis cruentantur. Tauribolium quid vel criobolium scelerata te sanguinis labe perfundit? Laventer itaque sordes istae quae colligis.*" The pious apologist naturally seizes the opportunity to exhort his readers to wash in the blood of the lamb (*agnus dei*), which he assures them is a great deal more efficacious than bull's blood for the purging of sin.

[2] H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4118-4159 (vol. ii. Part I. pp. 140-147). For the forged dedication, which professes to record the dedication of a *taurobolium* "to the great god Mithra", by a man who had been born again to eternal life by secret washings ("*arcanis perfusionibus in aeternum renatus*"), see F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 179, Inscription No. 584. I follow F. Cumont and J. Toutain in thinking that the *taurobolium* formed no part of the Mithraic ritual. See F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 334 *sq.*; J. Toutain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'Empire Romain*, Première Partie, ii. p. 138. I have described the *taurobolium* elsewhere. See *The Golden Bough*, Part IV., *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, i. 274 *sqq.*, with the references.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 96, Inscription No. 17; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4152, "*taurobolio criobolioq. in aeternum renatus*".

[4] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 317 *sq.*, vol. ii. pp. 93-96, 98, 118, 163, Inscriptions Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 26, 27, 141, 494; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4213, 4254, 9279.

pride, that not only he himself but his wife also, with whom he lived for forty years, had been washed in the blood of the bull.[1] Another high dignitary of the Mithraic church was the Father of the Sacred Rites, though presumably he ranked below the supreme pontiff, the Father of Fathers.[2] Two of these Fathers of Sacred Rites similarly bragged of having been regenerated by the application of bull's blood.[3] Again, one of the inferior clergy, a simple Father and Sacred Herald of the Unconquered Sun-god Mithra, records that he too had partaken of the sacrament of the bull. This last prelate would seem to have mixed up his religions in a very liberal spirit, for, apart from the preferments which he held in the Mithraic communion, he informs us that he was priest of Isis, hierophant of Hecate, and arch-cowkeeper of the god Liber, who apparently laid himself out for cattle-breeding. And far from being ashamed of having been drenched with the blood of the slaughtered bull, this reverend pluralist prayed that he might live to repeat the performance twenty years later;[4] for though in theory the blood was supposed to regenerate the votary for ever, it seems that in practice its saving efficacy could not safely be trusted to last longer than twenty years at the most, after which the sacrament had to be repeated.[5] Thus we may conclude that the worshippers of Mithra were often glad to practise a barbarous rite which, though it formed no part of their own religious service, yet served to remind them of that supreme sacrifice to which they attached the deepest importance as being nothing less than the great central fact in the history of the world.

The striking similarities which may be traced in certain points between Mithraism and Christianity were clearly

The Christian Fathers on the similarities between Mithraism and Christianity.

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 95, Inscription No. 15, "*tauroboliatus, pater patrum . . . tauroboliata*".

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 317.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, pp. 95, 98, Inscriptions No. 14 ("*tauroboliato . . . patri sacrorum*"), No. 23 ("*pater sacrorum dei invicti Mithrae, taurobolio criobolioque perfecto*").

[4] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. pp. 96 *sq.*, Inscription No. 20; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4153.

[5] Compare H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4154, "*iterato, viginti annis expletis taurobolii sui*", where, as Dessau notes, *taurobolii sui* may be a stonemason's mistake for *tauro bolio suo*.

perceived by the Christian Fathers; indeed we are indebted to their writings for our knowledge of some of the parallels which otherwise might have been forgotten. In accordance with their general theory of the world, they explained the resemblances as wiles of the devil, who sought to beguile poor souls by a spurious imitation of the true faith. Thus Justin Martyr tells us that in the mysteries of Mithra the evil spirits mimicked the eucharist by setting before the initiates a loaf of bread and a cup of water with certain forms of words.[1] But the Father who appears to have possessed the most intimate knowledge of Satan and the greatest skill in unmasking him under all his disguises, was Tertullian, and to his ruthless exposure of the great Enemy of Mankind we are indebted for certain particulars which, but for his scathing denunciation, might long have been consigned to the peaceful limbo of oblivion. Thus in his essay on *The Soldier's Crown* he reveals some points in the curious ritual observed when a Mithraic votary was promoted to the rank of soldier in the sacred hierarchy, for Mithraism had its Salvation Army. The ceremony took place in one of the crypts which formed the regular Mithraic temples. There a crown was offered to the candidate on the point of a sword, and a pretence was made of placing it on his head; but he was instructed to wave it aside and to say that his crown was Mithra. Thus was his constancy put to the proof, and he was counted a true soldier of Mithra if he cast down the crown and said that his crown was his god.[2] This, according to Tertullian, was a diabolic counterfeit of the conduct of a true Christian who should learn to despise the glories of this frail fleeting world in the prospect of a better world that will last for ever. "What hast thou to do," asks the Father in a glow of religious emotion, "what hast thou to do with flowers that fade? Thou hast a flower from the rod of Jesse, a flower on which hath rested the whole grace of the Holy Spirit, a flower incorruptible, unfading, eternal." He reminds the Christian soldier of the Spirit's promise: "Be thou faithful

Tertullian on the Soldier's Crown.

[1] Justin Martyr, *Apolog.* i. 66 (vol. i. p. 268 ed. Otto); F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 20.

[2] Tertullian, *De corona militis*, 15 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, ii. 101 *sq.*); F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, ii. 50.

unto death and I will give thee a crown of life";[1] and he recalls the boast of the great Apostle of the Gentiles uttered when the time of his departure was at hand: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."[2]

The Mithraic rites of baptism and the eucharist.

Further, we learn from Tertullian that among the Mithraic rites there was a species of baptism at which remission of sins was promised to the initiate at the baptismal font. This also, according to Tertullian, was a device of Satan, whose cue it is to invert the truth by aping the holy sacraments in the mysteries of idols.[3] In further proof of the craft and subtlety of the devil Tertullian adds: "And if I remember aright, Mithra marks his soldiers on their foreheads: he celebrates the offering of bread: he enacts a parody of the resurrection; and he redeems the crown at the point of the sword. Nay more, he enacts that his high priest shall marry but once, and he has his virgins and celibates."[4] Here "the offering of bread" obviously refers to the same sacrament of bread and water which Justin Martyr stigmatizes as a diabolic imitation of the eucharist. The virgins and celibates of Mithra appear to have anticipated the nuns and monks of Christianity. It is not so certain what "the parody of the resurrection" alludes to.

The Mithraic rite of the resurrection.

But from the words which Lampridius uses in describing the profanation of the mysteries by Commodus, it seems clearly to follow that the death of a man by violence was dramatically represented in the mysteries. For the historian says that Commodus "polluted the Mithraic rites with a real homicide, whereas the custom in them is only to say or to pretend something that creates an appearance of fright".[5]

[1] Revelation ii. 10.

[2] 2 Timothy iv. 7-8. The two texts are briefly referred to by Tertullian (*l.c.*) in the words: "*Esto et tu fidelis ad mortem: decerta et tu bonum agonem, cujus coronam et Apostolus repositam sibi merito confidit*".

[3] Tertullian, *De praescriptionibus adversus haereticos*, 40 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, ii. 54 *sq.*); F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 51.

[4] Tertullian, *De praescriptionibus adversus haereticos*, 40.

[5] Lampridius, *Commodus*, ix. 6, "*Sacra Mithriaca homicidio vero polluit, cum illic aliquid ad speciem timoris vel dici vel fingi soleat*".

Again, Zacharias the Scholiast, in a life of the Patriarch Severus of Antioch, which must have been written about 514 A.D., asks, "Why in the mysteries of the Sun do the pretended gods reveal themselves to the initiates only at the moment when the priest produces a sword stained with the blood of a man who has died by violence? It is because they only consent to impart their revelations when they see a man put violently to death by their machinations."[1] The mysteries of the Sun here referred to are probably those of Mithra, but the writer appears to be mistaken in supposing that human sacrifices ever formed part of the Mithraic ritual.[2] All that we can safely infer from his testimony, confirmed by that of Lampridius, is that one of the scenes acted in the mysteries was the pretended killing of a man, and that a bloody sword was produced in proof that the slaughter had actually been perpetrated. We may conjecture that the supposed dead man was afterwards brought to life, and that this was the parody of the resurrection which Tertullian denounced as a device of the devil.

The date of Christ's Nativity shifted by the Church from January 6th (Old Christmas) to December 25th, the old pagan festival of the Birth of the Sun.

If the Mithraic mysteries were indeed a Satanic copy of a divine original, we are driven to conclude that Christianity took a leaf out of the devil's book when it fixed the birth of the Saviour on the twenty-fifth of December; for there can be no doubt that the day in question was celebrated as the birthday of the Sun by the heathen before the Church, by an afterthought, arbitrarily transferred the Nativity of its Founder from the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December.[3] From the calendar of Philocalus, which was drawn up at Rome about 354 A.D., we learn that the twenty-fifth of December was celebrated as the birthday of the Unconquered Sun by games in the circus.[4] These games

[1] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 361, quoting and translating a passage of a Syriac version of the Life of the Patriarch Severus of Antioch by Zacharias the Scholiast, *Das Leben des Severus von Antiochien*, published by Spanuth, Göttingen, 1893.

[2] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 69 *sq.*, 322.

[3] F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 325 *sq.*, 339, 342, 355 *sq.*; Th. Mommsen, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.² Pars prior (Berlin, 1893), pp. 338 *sq.*; H. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*², *Kapitel* i.-iii. (Bonn, 1911) pp. 348 *sqq.*; L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*⁵ (Paris, 1920), pp. 271-279; *The Golden Bough*, Part IV., *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, i. 302-305.

[4] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.² Pars prior, pp. 278, 338. The calendar of Philocalus is assigned to the year 354 A.D. by Th. Mommsen (*op. cit.* p. 254) and H. Usener (*Das Weihnachts-*

are mentioned by the Emperor Julian, who tells us that they were performed with great magnificence in honour of the Unconquered Sun immediately after the end of the Saturnalia in December.[1] The motives which induced the ecclesiastical authorities to transfer the festival of Christmas from the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December are explained with great frankness by a Syrian scholiast on Bar Salibi. He says: "The reason why the fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December was this. It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling fires until the sixth."[2] The custom of holding a festival of the Sun on the twenty-fifth of December persisted in Syria among the pagans down at least to the first half of the sixth century, for a Syriac writer of that period, Thomas of Edessa, in a treatise on the Nativity of Christ, informs us that at the winter solstice "the heathen, the worshippers of the elements, to this day everywhere celebrate annually a great festival, for the reason that then the sun begins to conquer and to extend his kingdom". But the pious writer adds that, though the power of the Sun waxes from that day, it will afterwards wane again; whereas, "Holy Church celebrates the festival of the Nativity of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who begins to conquer error and Satan, and will never wane".[3]

fest[2], p. 348), but to 336 A.D. by L. Duchesne (*Origines du Culte Chrétien*[5], p. 272).

[1] Julian, *Or.* iv. p. 156 ed. Spanheim (vol. i. pp. 202 *sq.* ed. Hertlein).

[2] C. A. Credner, "De natalitiorum Christi origine", *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, iii. 2. (1833), p. 239, note [46]; Th. Mommsen, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.[2] Pars prior, pp. 338 *sq.*; H. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*[2], pp. 349 *sq.*

[3] Fr. Cumont, "La Célébration du 'Natalis Invicti' en Orient", *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, lxxxii. (1920) pp. 85 *sq.*, quoting Thomae Edesseni, *Tractatus de Nativitate Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, textum syriacum edidit, notis illustravit, latine reddidit, Simon Joseph Carr, Romae, 1898.

This opposition between the natural Sun of the heathen and the metaphorical Sun of Righteousness of the Christians is a rhetorical commonplace of ecclesiastical writers, who make use of it particularly with reference to the Nativity.[1] The pagan origin of Christmas is plainly hinted at, if not tacitly admitted, by St. Augustine in a sermon wherein he exhorts his Christian brethren not to solemnize that day like the heathen on account of the sun, but on account of Him who made the sun.[2] Similarly Leo the Great rebuked the pestilent belief of those who thought that Christmas was to be observed for the sake of the birth of the new sun, as it was called, and not for the sake of the Nativity of Christ.[3]

Worship of the Sun embraced by the Emperor Julian.

The last stand for the worship of the Sun in antiquity was made by the Emperor Julian. In a rhapsody addressed to the orb of day the grave and philosophic emperor professes himself a follower of King Sun.[4] He declares that the Sun is the common Father of all men, since he begat us and feeds us and gives us all good things;[5] there is no single blessing in our lives which we do not receive from him, either perfect from him alone, or at the hand of the other gods perfected by him.[6] And Julian concludes his enthusiastic panegyric with a prayer that the Sun, the King of the Universe, would be gracious to him, granting him, as a reward for his pious zeal, a virtuous life and more perfect wisdom, and in due time an easy and peaceful departure from this life, that he might ascend to his God in heaven, there to dwell with him for ever.[7] However the deity to whom he prayed may have granted him a virtuous life, he withheld from his worshipper the boon of an easy and peaceful end. It was in the press of battle that this last imperial votary of the Sun received his mortal wound and met a most painful death with the fortitude of a hero and the serenity of a saint.[8] With him the sun of pagan and imperial Rome set not ingloriously.

[1] Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 355 *sq.*

[2] Augustine, *Serm.* cxc. 1 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxxviii. 1007).

[3] Leo the Great, *Serm.* xxii. (al. xxi.) 6 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, liv. 198).

[4] Julian, *Or.* iv. p. 130 ed. Spanheim.

[5] Julian, *Or.* iv. pp. 131, 152 ed. Spanheim.

[6] Julian, *Or.* iv. p. 153 ed. Spanheim.

[7] Julian, *Or.* iv. p. 158 ed. Spanheim.

[8] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxv. 3.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WORSHIP OF THE SUN AMONG THE NON-ARYAN PEOPLES OF ANTIQUITY

§ 1. *The Worship of the Sun among the Ancient Babylonians and Assyrians*

The worship of the Sun (Shamash) in Babylonia.

IN ancient Babylonia the Sun was worshipped from immemorial antiquity. The ideogram of the Sun, like that of the moon, in the Babylonian language is always preceded by a determinative which implies divinity.[1] The Semitic name both of the Sun and of the Sun-god in Babylonia is Shamash; the Sumerian name is Utu or Babbar;[2] for even before the Semites settled in the country the Sun-god was worshipped by their predecessors the Sumerians. The two great seats of Sun-worship were Larsa in the south and Sippar in the north of Babylonia. The site of Larsa is now marked by the mounds called Senkereh; the site of Sippar, to the north of Babylon and to the south-west of Bagdad, is now occupied by the ruins of Abu Habba. In both cities the Sun-god was worshipped by the Sumerians, and in both his temple was called E-babbar or E-babbara, that is, "the House of the Sun".[3] In Babylonia the Sun-god Shamash is always masculine, but in south Arabia his namesake

The two great seats of Sun-worship at Larsa and Sippar.

[1] P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne* (Paris, 1910), p. 81.

[2] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (Heidelberg, 1920–1925), ii. 19 *sq.*; S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Modern History*, i.[2] (Cambridge, 1924) p. 397.

[3] H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3] (Berlin, 1902), p. 367; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 85. Zimmern translates E-babbara as "*weisses Haus*", "White House". Others translate the words as "house of lustre" or "bright house". See M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston, U.S.A., 1898), p. 70; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology* (London, 1899), p. 18; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 21 ("*glänzendes Haus*").

Shams is feminine.[1] The great temple of the Sun-god at Sippar, with its tower rising in stages, occupied a terrace 1300 feet square on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, just south of the Royal Canal.[2]

Popularity of the worship of the Sun-god Shamash.

There was no deity of the pantheon whose worship enjoyed an equally continued popularity from the earliest to the latest time both in Babylonia and Assyria. And through all that long period Shamash, Utu, or Babbar, retained the character of a solar god with scarcely any modification.[3] Yet, singularly enough, he did not rank with the greatest gods. He was not one of the supreme trinity, which comprised Anu, the god of heaven, Bel, the god of earth and of mankind, and Ea, the god of the abyss of water under the earth. He may be said to have formed part of an inferior trinity, which included himself, and Sin, the god of the moon, and Ramman or Adad, the god of the atmosphere.[4] But even in this subordinate trinity the Sun-god Shamash was not the foremost. He was deemed a son of the Moon-god Sin. One of the early rulers of Ur calls the Sun-god the offspring of Nannar, which is one of the names of the Moon-god; and Nabonidus, the last native king of Babylonia, assigns to him the same father, so that from first to last the Sun-god ranked below the Moon-god in dignity. His inferiority was marked in other ways. In the list of gods drawn up by Babylonian and Assyrian kings and preserved for us in inscriptions, the Sun-god is always mentioned after the Moon-god; and the number assigned to him is only twenty, whereas the number of his father the Moon-god is thirty. Indeed, his very name is said to signify "attendant", or "servitor". This subordination of Sun-worship to Moon-worship is an interesting peculiarity of early Babylonian religion, in which, if we may say so, the sun seems to have been always eclipsed by the lesser luminary. However, at a later period, when the system of mythology was more fully developed, the solar deity to some extent emerged from the cloud, or rather from the shadow of the moon, which had so long obscured

Inferiority of Shamash to the great gods of the pantheon.

Shamash a son of the Moon-god Sin.

[1] H. Zimmern, *l.c.*; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2, p. 376.

[2] S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 395.

[3] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 68.

[4] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 14, 17.

his radiance.[1] Agumkakrime, one of the Cassite kings of Babylonia, in the second millennium before our era, even speaks of Shamash as "the Lord of Heaven and Earth";[2] and in an Assyrian inscription Shamash is repeatedly described as "chief of the gods".[3] Nevertheless, the Sun-god never played an important part in mythology.[4] With him was associated, especially at Sippar, his wife Aya, Aia, Ai, or Aa, whose name appears to mean "bride". She is often coupled with him in incantations, but seldom appears in historical texts.[5] In Sumerian she is also called Shenirda.[6] The Sun-god was blessed with a numerous progeny, including a son Kettu, whose name signifies Justice; another son, Mesharu, whose name means Right; another son, Sumuqan, the God of Meadows; a daughter, the Goddess of Dreams; and several other deities who presided over cattle and fields.[7]

Ai, the wife of the Sun-god.

Originally the Sun-god made his way painfully across the sky on foot, but in later times, with the progress of civilization, a chariot was considerately placed at his disposal with a charioteer named Bunene to drive him; the car was drawn by two fiery steeds or mules.[8] Thus the god was enabled to accomplish the long journey in tolerable comfort.

The chariot of the Sun-god.

The Sun-god was represented as an old man with a long beard, and often with sunbeams radiating from his shoulders. Sometimes he is seen sitting on a throne; in Assyrian art

Representations of the Sun-god in art.

[1] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 68 *sq.*; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 17 *sq.*; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], p. 368; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 19 *sq.*

[2] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Agumkakrime", p. 6.

[3] R. Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic* (London, 1908), p. 26.

[4] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 21.

[5] H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], p. 368; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 21; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 23; M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 74 *sq.*; R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 402. Jastrow shortens the name of the goddess to Â.

[6] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 21.

[7] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 21; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], p. 368; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 84.

[8] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 20; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 32; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, pp. 81 *sq.*, 84 *sq.*; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], p. 368.

he is occasionally represented standing on a horse. In Babylonia his special emblem is a round disk with a four-pointed star within it and beams or flames flickering between the points of the star. On Assyrian monuments the disk is fitted with long wings, so that it presents a striking resemblance to the winged disk of the Sun in Egyptian art.[1]

The solar disk.

The gates of heaven.

In the solid dome of heaven there were thought to be two gates, one in the east and the other in the west, for the use of Shamash, the Sun-god, in his daily passage across the world. Coming from behind the dome of heaven, he passed through the eastern gate, and stepping out upon the Mountain of the Sunrise at the edge of the world, he began his journey across the sky. In the evening he came to the Mountain of the Sunset, and, stepping upon it, he passed through the western gate of heaven and disappeared from the sight of men. On a cylinder-seal he is represented standing in the eastern gate of heaven with one foot planted on the Mountain of the Sunrise.[2]

Hymns to Shamash, the Sun-god.

In the following hymn addressed to the Rising Sun, the god is described entering the world through the eastern gate of heaven:

"*O Shamash, on the foundation of heaven thou hast flamed forth.*
Thou hast unbarred the bright heavens,
Thou hast opened the portals of the sky.
O Shamash, thou hast raised thy head over the land.
O Shamash, thou hast covered the lands with the brightness of heaven."[3]

Another hymn addressed to the Setting Sun contains a reference to the return of the god into the interior of heaven:

"*O Shamash, when thou enterest into the midst of heaven,*
The gate bolt of the bright heavens shall give thee greeting,
The doors of heaven shall bless thee.
The righteousness of thy beloved servant shall direct thee.
Thy sovereignty shall be glorious in E-babbara, the seat of thy power,
And Ai, thy beloved wife, shall come joyfully into thy presence,
And she shall give rest unto thy heart.

[1] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 21; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, pp. 81 *sq.*

[2] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 31 *sq.*

[3] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 32.

A feast for thy godhead shall be spread for thee.
O valiant hero, Shamash, mankind shall glorify thee.
O lord of E-babbara, the course of thy path shall be straight.
Go forward on the road which is a sure foundation for thee.
O Shamash, thou art the judge of the world, thou directest the decisions thereof." [1]

Every evening, when Shamash entered the innermost part of heaven he was met by Ai, his wife, and he feasted and rested from his labours in the abode of the gods.[2]

Universal homage paid to Shamash.

But Shamash was much more than a simple personification of the physical sun. On account of the conspicuous place which he occupies in the sky he attracted universal attention and received universal homage. "Mankind, all the people together, pay heed to him." Even "the beasts, the four-footed creatures, look upon his great light". All the sorts of men who engage in perilous undertakings by land or sea—the messenger, the mariner, the hunter, the merchant and his henchman, he who carries the weight-stones—pray to him before they set out on their journeys.[3] Before an army marched to war, offerings were made to the Sun-god, and he was consulted as to the issue of the battle.[4] Before the king of Assyria appointed a man to a high office, he inquired of Shamash whether the man would be loyal to him or not.[5] And Shamash was gracious to the sufferer. "Him who is sick unto death he makes to live, and he delivers the captive from his bonds." The woman in travail he supported in her hour of need.[6] The following is a prayer addressed to the Sun-god on behalf of a woman in child-bed: "O Shamash, lofty judge, father of the Black-headed ones, as for this woman the daughter of her god, may the knot that impedes her delivery be loosed in presence of the godhead! May this woman bring happily her offspring to the birth! May she bear! May she remain in life, and may it be well with the child in her womb! May

Shamash gracious to sufferers.

[1] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 33.

[2] L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 33.

[3] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 20, 167 *sq.*; for the merchant's prayer to the Sun-god, see *id.* i. 338; for the Sun-god as the patron of hunters, see *id.* i. 224. Compare Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*[2] (London, 1925), pp. 135-137.

[4] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. 101.

[5] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. 133.

[6] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 20.

she walk in health before thy godhead! May she be happily delivered and honour thee."[1]

Shamash the supreme judge and source of law.

But in his capacity of the great luminary which lights up all the world, Shamash was conceived especially as the supreme judge, and hence as the fount of law and justice, the supporter of virtue and the avenger of vice and crime. In the epilogue to his code, the great king and law-giver Hammurabi or Hammurapi speaks of Shamash as "the great judge of heaven and earth"; and the monarch expressly acknowledges that it is from Shamash the Sun-god that he received his laws.[2] Indeed, to put the solar inspiration of his code beyond a doubt, the monument on which the laws of Hammurabi are inscribed exhibits in sculpture the figure of the king standing in an attitude of adoration before the Sun-god, who is seated on his throne and is handing to Hammurabi a ring and staff in token of his divine commission. The nature of the deity is plainly indicated by the three wavy sunbeams that emanate from each of his shoulders.[3] In an inscription of Gudea, an early king of Lagash, under whom that city seems to have attained its highest degree of material prosperity,[4] it is said that the Sun-god "tramples iniquity under his feet."[5] Again, in an inscription of Ur-engur, king of Ur, we read that the king established the reign of justice "according to the just laws of the Sun-god."[6] In legal as well as historical inscriptions Shamash is accorded the title of "judge of heaven and earth". He is even called "the great judge of the gods", or "the supreme judge of the Anunnakis", that is to say, of all the terrestrial divinities. Hence he is, above all others, "Lord of Judgment" (*bêl dîni*), and from the most ancient times his temple at Babylon was

Hammurabi and the Sun-god.

[1] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. 390.

[2] H. Winckler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 40, 41; H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder* (Tübingen, 1909), i. 170; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 83.

[3] H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, ii. 58, Abb. 94.

[4] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad* (London, 1916), p. 259. According to King (*op. cit.* p. 64), Gudea acceded to the throne about 2450 B.C. As to King Gudea, see S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 426 *sqq.* Twelve diorite statues of Gudea have been found, most of them decapitated. One of them is perhaps the finest specimen of Sumerian sculpture (*ib.* pp. 428, 429). In *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 670, the date assigned to Gudea is 2600 B.C.

[5] P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 83.

[6] P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 83.

called "the House of the Judge of the World" (*Ê-di-kud-kalama*).[1] In his capacity of a righteous judge the Sun-god "looks with a gracious eye upon the weak"; but "the unjust judge thou wilt put in bonds; him who takes bribes, who directs not the case aright, thou wilt punish. But as for him who takes not bribes and who pleads the cause of the weak, he is pleasing to the Sun-god, and the Sun-god will lengthen his life".[2]

The moral character of the Sun-god Shamash recognized in Assyria.

While this conception of the moral character of the Sun-god as the patron of justice was early developed in Babylonia, it was fully accepted at a later date in Assyria, where indeed the ideas regarding Shamash reached a higher ethical level than those concerning any other deity. The national god Ashur and the mighty goddess Ishtar are partial to Assyria, and uphold her rulers at any cost; but the favours of Shamash are bestowed upon the kings because of their righteousness, or, what comes to much the same thing, because of their claim to be righteous. To the thinking of Tiglath-pileser the First, great and ruthless conqueror as he was, the Sun-god Shamash was the judge of heaven and earth, who beheld the wickedness of the king's enemies and shattered them on account of their guilt. When the king captured alive all the kings of the countries of Nairi and mercifully granted them their lives, it was in the presence of Shamash, his lord, that he undid their bonds and set them free. It was therefore as champion of the right that Tiglath-pileser claimed to have received the glorious sceptre at the hands of the Sun-god.[3]

Prominence of Sun-worship under the later kings of Assyria.

Especially in the days of Ashur-nasirbal and Shalmaneser the Second, in the ninth century before our era, the worship of the Sun received great prominence. These kings called themselves the Sun of the world.[4] Indeed, more than a thousand years before them King Hammurabi had dubbed himself the Sun-god of Babylon.[5] Shalmaneser bestows many complimentary epithets

[1] P. Dhorme, *l.c.*

[2] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. 148, ii. 20, 167; M. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* (Giessen, 1905–1912), i. 435.

[3] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 209 *sq.*; R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I.", pp. 12, 19, 20.

[4] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 210.

[5] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. 47.

on Shamash, calling him the guide of everything, the messenger of the gods, the hero, the judge of the world, who leads mankind aright, and the lord of law.[1] But in placing themselves under the protection of the great judge, the kings of Assyria were not unmindful of another aspect of the Sun-god's nature, his warlike character. Tiglath-pileser calls Shamash "the warrior", and declares that the Sun-god guarded him when Ashur, his lord, sent him forth on his career of conquest. The same title of "the warrior" is often given to Shamash in the religious literature.[2]

The temple of Shamash at Sippar restored by Nebuchadnezzar II.

The character of the Sun-god as at once the righteous judge and the great warrior is expressly acknowledged by Nebuchadnezzar the Second, king of Babylon, in an inscription in which he records how he repaired E-babbara, the temple of Shamash at Sippar, which had fallen into decay and was little more than a heap of ruins when the pious monarch undertook to restore it. Nebuchadnezzar says: "For Shamash, the lord, the exalted judge of heaven and earth, the great warrior, the worthy hero, the lord who dictates righteous decisions, the great lord, my lord, his temple, E-babbara, which is in Sippar, I built with joy and rejoicing. O Shamash, great lord, when thou joyfully enterest E-babbara, thy shining temple, ever look with favour upon the costly undertaking of my hand! May my gracious deeds be established on thy lips! By thy sure command may I be sated with offspring. A long life and a firm throne do thou grant me! May my sway be long and extend forever! Adorn my kingdom forever with a righteous sceptre, with goodly rule, and with a staff of justice for the welfare of my people. Protect my people with strong weapons and with the onslaught of battle. Do thou, O Shamash, truly answer me in judgment and in dream! At thy noble command, which cannot be altered, may my weapons be drawn, may they wound, may they overthrow the weapons of the enemies!"[3]

In virtue, apparently, of his character as the great source

[1] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 210; F. R. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser II.", p. 33.

[2] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 210; F. R. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I.", p. 19.

[3] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, pp. 156 *sq.*; compare *id.* p. 154.

of light Shamash was reckoned, like Apollo in Greece, the god of oracles and the patron of prophets and diviners. He is called the Lord of the Oracle. He was supposed to inscribe the oracular signs on the inwards of the sheep, in order that the diviner, by reading the signs, might predict the future. But he also condescended to answer in person the questions of his worshippers.[1] The seers or diviners, whose profession was hereditary, being transmitted from father to son, traced their lineage to a certain fabulous Enmeduranki, king of Sippar, the favourite of the Sun-god, who lived before the great flood.[2] Hence these diviners occupied the first place among the officials of the temple of the Sun-god at Sippar.[3] But the oracular function was often shared by the Sun-god with the Thunder-god Adad (Ramman); inquiries were addressed to them in common; together they ranked as "Lords of Divination" (*bêlê bîri*).[4]

Shamash the god of oracles and the patron of prophets and diviners.

A series of questions addressed to the oracular Sun-god by kings of Assyria has been preserved in inscriptions. They date from the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal in the seventh century before our era. All deal with matters concerning the state and the royal family; hence they are valuable historical documents. All begin with the same form of words: "O Shamash, great lord! As I ask thee, do thou in true mercy answer me." Then follows the question, in which the priest, acting as mediator between god and man, asks whether certain political or warlike operations will be carried out within a set time. Next follows a prayer that the Sun-god would not heed any imperfections, impurities, or contaminations in the sacrificial lamb, or any shortcoming of the priest in dress, accent, or ceremonial purity. The first request is then repeated by the priest in a shorter form; the animal victim is inspected, and in a final prayer the Sun-god is besought to send a favourable oracle.[5]

Questions addressed to Shamash by the kings of Assyria.

[1] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 20 *sq.*, 66, 242; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 84.

[2] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 53 *sq.*, 66.

[3] P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 84; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], p. 368.

[4] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 242; P. Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 84.

[5] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. lxi; M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 333.

Questions addressed to Shamash by King Esarhaddon.

The following may serve as a specimen of these questions put by the king to the oracular Sun-god. The speaker is King Esarhaddon, who, being hard pressed by a certain Kashtariti at the head of a group of nations, including the Medes, asks for an oracle from Shamash as to the outcome of the threatened danger:

"O Shamash, great lord! As I ask thee, do thou in true mercy answer me.

"From this day, the third day of this month of Iyar,[1] to the eleventh day of the month of Ab[2] of this year, a period of one hundred days and one hundred nights is the prescribed time for the priestly activity.

"Will within this period, Kashtariti, together with his soldiery, will the army of the Gimirrites, the army of the Medes, will the army of the Manneans, or will any enemy whatsoever succeed in carrying out their plan, whether by strategy or by main force, whether by the force of weapons of war and fight or by the axe, whether by a breach made with machines of war and battering rams or by hunger, whether by the power residing in the name of a god or goddess, whether in a friendly way or by friendly grace, or by any strategic device, will these aforementioned, as many as are required to take a city, actually capture the city Kishsassu, penetrate into the interior of that same city Kishsassu, will their hands lay hold of that same city Kishsassu, so that it falls into their power? Thy great divine power knows it. The capture of that same city Kishsassu, through any enemy whatsoever, within the specified period, is it definitely ordained by thy great and divine will, O Shamash? Will it actually come to pass?"[3]

Then having put his question, Esarhaddon proceeds to pray that no irregularity or omission in the ritual may vitiate the oracle. He says:

"*Heed not what the chief offering of this day may be, whether good or baa; a stormy day on which it rains!*
Heed not that something unclean may have produced uncleanness at the place of vision and rendered it unclean!

[1] The second month.
[2] The fifth month.
[3] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 334; compare R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, pp. 425 *sq.*

Heed not that the lamb of thy divinity, which is looked upon for vision, be imperfect and with blemish!
Heed not that he who touches the forepart of the lamb may have put on his garment for sacrifice as arshati (?) or have eaten, drunk, or rubbed himself upon something unclean! . . .
Heed not that in the mouth of the son of the seer, thy servant, a word may have been passed over in haste!" [1]

Omens drawn from the state of the sacrificial victim.

The priest who is consulting the oracle next proceeds to examine the victim before him, which is a lamb. A list of omens is introduced for the guidance of the officiating priest, but not to be recited by him as part of the liturgy. He is instructed to observe whether "at the nape on the left side" there is a slit; whether "at the bottom on the left side of the bladder" some peculiarity is found, or whether it is normal; whether "the nape to the right side" is sunk and split, or whether the viscera are sound. The proportions, too, in the size of the various parts of the body appear to have been deemed important; hence a large number of points are mentioned to which the priest is to give heed. From a consideration of all the peculiarities and signs manifested in the victim, he divines the disposition of the god, whether it is favourable or the reverse. Finally, the ceremony closes with another appeal to the deity, entreating him to answer the question addressed to him. The priest prays, saying:

"By virtue of this sacrificial lamb, arise and grant true mercy, favourable conditions of the parts of the animal, a declaration favourable and beneficial be ordained by thy great divinity. Grant that this may come to pass. To thy great divinity, O Shamash! great lord! may it be pleasing, and may an oracle be sent in answer." [2]

Shamash the god of oracles.

The foregoing is only one of a series of questions which Esarhaddon addressed to the Sun-god and which are preserved for us in inscriptions. Again and again he beseeches Shamash to reveal the issue of the campaigns in which he was engaged. Again and again does his foe Kashtariti figure in these appeals to the divinity, along with the Medes, the Gimirrites, and the rest of his enemies. We may conclude

[1] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 426; compare M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 335 *sq.*

[2] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 337 *sq.*

that a regular ritual for the procuring of oracles and the observation of omens was established in Assyria, and that the oracular god above all others was Shamash the Sun-god.[1]

Inscriptions of Agumkakrime and Nabonidus.

It is probable that a similar ritual was observed in Babylonia long before the rise of Assyria; indeed we have positive evidence of its observance in the reign of the Cassite King Agumkakrime or Agukakrime, about a thousand years before the time of Esarhaddon. For in a long inscription Agumkakrime boasts how he brought back to Babylon the image of Marduk which had been captured and carried away by enemies, and how in connexion with this enterprise he consulted Shamash by means of the lamb of a soothsayer.[2] Long afterwards Nabonidus, the last king of Babylonia before the Persian conquest, tells us that when he was rebuilding the temple of the Moon-god Sin in Harran, he laid the foundation in a favourable month and on an auspicious day which had been revealed to him by Shamash.[3]

History of the temples of Shamash at Larsa and Sippar.

On the history and ritual of the temples of Shamash in Babylonia our information is very scanty. The first mention of the temple of the Sun-god at Larsa, in southern Babylonia, occurs in inscriptions of the first dynasty of Ur, dating about 2900 B.C.[4] Ur-Bau, king of Lagash, who is thought to have reigned somewhere about 2500 B.C., tells us that he built a temple to Shamash at Larsa, but this may only mean that he restored an ancient one which had fallen into disrepair.[5] A certain Enannatum, "who was chief priest in the temple of the Moon-god at Ur, has left us an inscription upon clay cones, in which he records that he rebuilt the temple of the Sun-god at Larsa for the preservation of his own life and that of Gungunu, the King of Ur".[6] This Gungunu is

[1] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 338 *sqq.*

[2] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Agumkakrime", p. 3; compare M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 122, 152 *sq.*; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 245. According to Meissner, Agumkakrime reigned about 1600 B.C. This king's name is spelled Agumkakrimi by Jastrow, Agumkakrime by Harper, and Agukakrime by Meissner.

[3] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Nabonidus", p. 164; Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 245.

[4] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 69.

[5] M. Jastrow, *l.c.* As to Ur-Bau and his date, see L. W. King, *Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 258 *sq.*, 361. According to Professor Langdon in *The Cambridge Ancient History* (i.[2] 373), Ur-Bau reigned about 2700 B.C.

[6] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 310 *sq.*

believed to have reigned about 2200 B.C.[1] The temple of Shamash at Sippar, in Northern Babylonia, was rebuilt by Naram-Sin, king of Akkad, who reigned about 2600 B.C.[2] The great Hammurabi, king of Babylonia, who reigned about 2100 B.C.,[3] was strongly attached to the worship of the Sun-god Shamash, from whom, as we have seen, he professed to have received his laws. He enlarged E-babbar, the temple of Shamash at Sippar, the temple "which is like the fabric of the sky"; he also fortified Larsa, and there restored the other E-babbar for Shamash, his helper.[4] At a later time Kara-indash, one of the Cassite dynasty, who reigned over Babylonia about 1450 B.C., again restored the temple of the Sun-god at Larsa.[5]

The temple of Shamash at Sippar restored by King Nabonidus.

Still later the temple of the Sun-god at Sippar was restored by King Nebuchadnezzar, but forty-five years later its walls had fallen in, as we learn from an inscription of Nabonidus, the last native king of Babylon, who restored the temple once more, perhaps for the last time. He recorded the restoration as follows:

"For Shamash, the judge of heaven and earth, E-babbara, his temple which is in Sippara, which Nebuchadrezzar, a former king, had rebuilt, after searching for its platform-foundation without finding it—that house he rebuilt, but in forty-five years its walls had fallen in. I became anxious and humble; I was alarmed and much troubled. When I had brought out Shamash from within it and made him take residence in another house, I pulled that house down and made search for its old platform-foundation; and I dug to a depth of eighteen cubits, and Shamash, the great lord of

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, p. 362, Table III.; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2. p. 502. The latter historian dates Gungunu about 2000 B.C. According to *The Cambridge Ancient History* (i.[2] 658), Gungunum, King of Larsa, reigned from 2264 to 2238 B.C.

[2] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 244, 361; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*[2], i. 2. p. 479.

[3] L. W. King, *History of Babylon* (London, 1915), pp. 111, 320; *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 659.

[4] H. Winckler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis*[2], pp. 8 *sq.*; H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, i. 141 *sq.* In another inscription Hammurabi describes more fully his fortification of Sippar. See R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription from a cylinder of Hammurabi", p. 2: "I raised the battlements of the wall of Sippara, like a great mountain, with a swamp (moat) I surrounded it. I dug the canal of Sippara to Sippara, and supported it with a wall of safety".

[5] M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 144.

E-babbara, the temple, the dwelling well-pleasing to him, permitted me to behold the platform-foundation of Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, which during a period of thirty-two hundred years, no king among my predecessors had seen. In the month Tishrit, in a favourable month, on an auspicious day, revealed to me by Shamash and Ramman in a vision, with silver, gold, costly and precious stones, products of the forest, sweet-smelling cedars, amid joy and rejoicing, I raised its brick-work—not an inch inward or outward—upon the platform-foundation of Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon. I laid in rows five thousand large cedars for its roof; I set up in its doorways high doors of cedar, thresholds and hinges (?). I built E-babbara, with its temple tower E-ilu-an-azagga anew and I completed its construction. I took the hands of Shamash, my lord, and with joy and rejoicing I made him take up a residence therein well-pleasing to him. I found the inscription, written in the name of Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, and I did not alter it. I anointed it with oil, offered sacrifices, placed it with my inscription, and restored it to its place.

Prayer of Nabonidus to Shamash.

"O Shamash, great lord of heaven and earth, light of the gods, his fathers, offspring of Sin and Ningal, when thou enterest E-babbara, thy beloved temple, when thou takest residence in thy eternal shrine, look with joy upon me, Nabonidus—king of Babylon, the prince, thy supporter, who hath gladdened thy heart and built thy lofty dwelling-place—and my gracious works! Give me favourable signs daily at the rising and setting of the sun in the heavens and on the earth! Receive my supplications and grant favour to my petitions! May I hold the legitimate sceptre and staff, which thou hast intrusted to me, forever and ever!"[1]

[1] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Nabonidus", pp. 166 *sq.* The statement in the inscription that three thousand two hundred years elapsed between the time of Naram-Sin and that of Nabonidus has sometimes been used as a basis for reconstructing the early chronology of Babylonia. But it appears to be certainly erroneous and far in excess of the truth. To explain the error it has been suggested that the scribe may have reckoned as consecutive a number of dynasties which were contemporaneous. See L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 60 *sqq.*; S. A. Cook, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 155 *sq.* Sargon, father of Naram-Sin, was an ancient king of Akkad who reigned about 2650 B.C. His proper name was Shar-Gani-sharri. See L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 216 *sqq.*, 361. This Sargon I. is not to be

The king's prayer to the Sun-god was as vain as that which long afterwards the Emperor Julian addressed, in a fervour of devotion, to the same bright deity. For a few years more, and Babylon had fallen to the arms of Cyrus, and King Nabonidus was a captive. So little help, apparently, can the Sun-god give even to his royal and imperial worshippers.

Offerings to Shamash.

Of offerings made to the Sun-god by his votaries the records appear to be few. Shar-Gani-sharri, king of Agade, better known as Sargon the First, dedicated to Shamash in his temple at Sippar a famous inscribed mace-head, which is now in the British Museum.[1] Rimush, king of Kish, the son and successor of Sargon the First, added ten sheep for daily sacrifice to the ten which had previously been offered to the Sun-god at Sippar, thus bringing the number up to twenty sheep a day. He also doubled the other sacrifices, thus making a total of four oxen, six measures of corn, three measures of meal, and corresponding quantities of dates, oil, fat of swine, milk, and honey, besides the twenty sheep.[2] Manishtusu, the successor of Rimush on the throne of Kish, after subjugating the rebel king of Anshan, led his captive into the presence of Shamash at Sippar, and lavishly enriched the temple of the Sun-god in gratitude for his victory.[3] His restoration of the temple and the worship of the Sun-god is recorded in a long inscription engraved in twelve columns on a large cruciform stone.[4] Gungunum, king of Larsa (about 2264–2238 B.C.) dedicated two copper palm-trees and a great copper statue

confounded with Sargon II., the famous Assyrian king and conqueror, who captured Samaria in 722 B.C. See R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, pp. lxxiii *sqq.*

[1] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 218, 361. Mr. King dates the reign of Sargon I. about 2650 B.C. According to Professor Langdon, Sargon I. founded the empire of Agade about 2872 B.C. (*The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 403). According to Br. Meissner, Sargon I. reigned from 2637 to 2582 B.C. (*Babylonian und Assyrien*, ii. 443). Thus King and Meissner agree fairly closely as to the date of Sargon I. and differ widely from Professor Langdon.

[2] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 85. As to Rimush, see S. H. Langdon, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 408 *sq.* According to Br. Meissner (*Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 443), he reigned from 2581 to 2573 B.C.

[3] L. W. King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 231, 360.

[4] *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 409. According to Br. Meissner (*Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 443), Manishtusu reigned from 2572 to 2558 B.C.

in the temple of the Sun-god.[1] Nur-Adad, king of Larsa (about 2197–2182 B.C.) offered a golden throne to Shamash, and invested the high-priest of the god with due authority.[2]

Inscription of Nabupaliddin.

From an inscription of Nabupaliddin, king of Babylon, who reigned in the first half of the ninth century B.C., we learn that at some period the temple of Shamash at Sippar had been ruined in an invasion of a hostile people, the Sutu, that the image and insignia of the god had disappeared, and had been vainly sought for by the king of Babylon; and that at a subsequent time, as a result of distress and famine, the regular sacrifices had been discontinued, and the drink offering had fallen into abeyance. The disappearance of the image was interpreted as a sign of the displeasure of the god, who had turned away his neck in anger. However, in the reign of King Nabupaliddin the deity relented and showed his favour once more. "The relief of his image, cut in clay, his statue and insignia were found on the other side of the Euphrates towards the west; and Nabunadinshum, the priest of Sippar, the seer, of the seed of Ekurshumushabshi, the priest of Sippar, the seer, showed Nabupaliddin, the king, his lord, that relief of the image; and Nabupaliddin, the king of Babylon, who had commanded him and intrusted him to replace that image, saw that image, and his countenance was glad and his spirit exultant; he directed his attention to replace that image, and with the wisdom of Ea . . . with pure gold and brilliant lapis lazuli, he carefully prepared the image of Shamash, the great lord. He washed his mouth according to the purification rite of Ea and Marduk, in the presence of Shamash in Ekarsaginna, which is on the bank of the Euphrates, and he (Shamash) took up his residence. He made offerings to his heart's content, consisting of immense oxen and large sheep, and with honey, wine, and grain in abundance he filled the granaries." Further, King Nabupaliddin showed favour to Nabunadinshum, the priest of the Sun-god at Sippar. He made him an allowance of food and drink, the ancient dues of Shamash; also he assigned to him a garden, which a former king of Babylon had bestowed on a former priest of Shamash at Sippar.

Recovery of the image of Shamash.

Royal favours to the priest of the Sun-god at Sippar.

[1] R. Campbell Thompson, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 478.

[2] R. Campbell Thompson, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 481.

Moreover, the king presented six fine garments of purple wool for the use of Shamash, his wife Ai, and his charioteer Bunene.[1] Having recorded these and other munificent gifts to the Sun-god and his priest, the king concludes the record with the following solemn warning: "Whoever in the future enters this palace as ruler and renders null the gift of the King Nabupaliddin, or presents it to another, or cuts down the allowance, or reckons it as belonging to the prefect, or appropriates it to himself, or by some evil act destroys this tablet, as for that man, by the command of Shamash, A, and Bunene, lords of fates, the great gods, may his name pass away, may his seed perish, in distress and want may his life go out, may his corpse be cast out, and may he not be granted burial!"[2] On his accession to the throne Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, offered six minae of gold as a tithe to the Sun-god at Sippar.[3]

Wealth of the temple of Shamash at Sippar.

Through the accumulation of votive offerings the temples acquired a considerable degree of wealth and became the monetary centres or banks of the community. As early as the time of the first dynasty the temple of Shamash at Sippar was ready to lend money or arrange loans in seed to farmers. In inscriptions of that period we read of a man who borrowed five and a half shekels from the Sun-god Shamash at Sippar, agreeing to pay it back with interest at harvest; and we read of another man who got a loan of ten measures of grain from a priestess of Shamash and promised to pay for it at a stipulated rate when the harvest came round.[4]

Ritual of the worship of Shamash at Sippar.

A ritual tablet furnishes us with some details as to the worship of Shamash at Sippar in the tenth century before our era.[5]

[1] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Nabupaliddin", pp. 30-32; P. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes religieux assyro-babyloniens* (Paris, 1907), pp. 385-397. As to Ai or A and Bunene, see above, p. 531. As to the historical events recorded in the inscription, compare L. W. King, *History of Babylon* (London, 1915), p. 257.

[2] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "Inscription of Nabupaliddin", p. 33.

[3] Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii. 86.

[4] R. Campbell Thompson, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 534.

[5] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "A ritual tablet", pp. 399-407. Nothing is here said as to the date of the tablet or the place to which it refers; but from a reference in R. Campbell Thompson's *Semitic Magic*, p. xxii (compare p. xlii), I infer that the tablet refers to the worship of Shamash at Sippar, and that it dates from the first half of the tenth century B.C.

In it directions are given that, "as soon as the horizon of the heaven is overcast with darkness", the priest is to prepare three tables and place them in a row, the middle table for Shamash and Ramman (Adad), the left table for Aa, the wife of Shamash, and the right table for Bunene, the messenger and charioteer of Shamash. Four clean rams are also to be provided, two for Shamash and Ramman, one for Aa, and one for Bunene. Directions are further given for distributing the flesh of the victims, for strewing cypress and cedar roots on three censers, and for pouring out sesame wine, and for a prostration to be performed by the priest. A lamb is to be sacrificed to the protecting god and a libation to be offered, with the words, "Shamash and Ramman, great gods!" Further, the seer is to place the divining-cup in position. Without a gift the seer shall not approach the place of judgment nor raise the staff of cedar; else the gods will not reveal the oracle to him. It is the diviner, who divines by means of oil, that shall cause the sacrificer to raise the cedar staff, he shall shake water upon the oil. If the sacrificial victim be found without blemish, "then shall the seer set himself before Shamash and Ramman upon the judgment seat, and give a true and righteous judgment. Then will Shamash and Ramman, the great gods, the lords of the oracle, the lords of the decision, stand up for him, make a decision for him, and answer him with true grace."[1]

Offering to Shamash before sunrise.

In the same tablet directions are given for making an offering to Shamash before the rising of the sun. A censer is to be placed before Shamash, another before Ramman (Adad), another before Marduk, another before Aa, another before Bunene, another before Kettu, and another before Mesharu. Behind the censer which is before Shamash shall be set a table, and on the table shall be placed four jugs of sesame wine, thrice twelve wheaten loaves, and a mixture of

[1] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "A ritual tablet", pp. 402 *sq.* The mode of divination referred to in the text is mentioned repeatedly in another inscription, where we read "the tablet of the gods, the tablet of the mystery of the heavens and of the earth, to observe the oil on the water, the secret of Anu, of Bel, and of Ea". See P. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes religieux assyro-babyloniens* (Paris, 1907), pp. 141, 143; compare H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*[3], pp. 533 *sq.*

honey and curds, sprinkled with salt. "The censer which is before Shamash thou shalt strew, take the hand of the sacrificer, and speak thus: 'May So-and-so, thy servant, offer a sacrifice at the rising of the sun, may he raise the staff of cedar, and stand in the presence of thy great divinity; may thy great divinity be well pleased with reference to this sheep, all of whose flesh is unblemished, whose appearances are auspicious'. Thereupon thou shalt offer the sacrifice."[1]

Sculptured representation of the worship of the Sun-god at Sippar.

A scene of worship in the temple of the Sun-god at Sippar is sculptured in relief on a well-known Babylonian tablet, which is now in the British Museum. On the lower part of the tablet are inscribed the records of the benefactions conferred on the temple by Nabupaliddin (Nabû-apal-iddina), king of Babylon.[2] The upper part contains the sculptured relief. The Sun-god is represented sitting within a shrine upon a throne, the side of which is carved with two mythical figures; he has a long beard and wears a high pointed cap and a flowing robe, which reaches to his ankles. In his extended right hand he holds a disk and bar, "which may be symbolic of the sun's orbit, or eternity". Above his head are the three disks emblematic of the Moon, the Sun, and the planet Venus. The roof of the shrine is supported by a column in the form of a palm-trunk standing immediately in front of the seated deity. Before the shrine is a square altar, on which rests the disk of the Sun. Within the disk is a four-pointed star with wavy lines between the points to represent sunbeams. The disk is held in position by means of ropes tightly drawn in the hands of two divine beings, whose busts are seen projecting from the celestial canopy just above the capital of the supporting column. Approaching the disk are three figures, much smaller than that of the seated Sun-god. The first of the three is the high priest of the Sun-god, who is leading the king to worship the disk, the symbol of the solar deity; the last of the three figures is an attendant goddess holding up her hands in an attitude of adoration. The shrine of the god rests upon the

[1] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, "A ritual tablet", pp. 403 *sq.* As to Kettu and Mesharu, the children of the Sun-god, see above, p. 531.

[2] See above, pp. 544 *sq.*

Celestial Ocean, which is indicated by wavy lines that run the whole length of the relief. Within the water of the Ocean are seen four small disks, each containing a star; they may perhaps stand for the four cardinal points of the sky. The text inscribed below this relief describes the restoration of the temple of the Sun-god by two kings named Simmash-shipak (about 1030 B.C.) and E-ulmash-shakin-shum (about 1020 B.C.). It then proceeds to say that Nabupaliddin (Nabû-apal-iddina), king of Babylon, found and restored the ancient image of the Sun-god and the sculptures of the temple, which had been overthrown by the enemies of the country. The shrine of the god had been stripped of its beautiful ornaments, and its ancient endowments had been appropriated for profane uses. But when Nabupaliddin came to the throne, he resolved to take vengeance on the foe who had perpetrated this shocking sacrilege, to found again and to endow again the shrines of the gods, and to institute regular festivals and offerings. Moreover, he adorned the ancient figure of the Sun-god with gold and lapis lazuli. The text concludes with a list of the offerings which the king dedicated to the temple, and enumerates at length the various garments and apparel which the priests were to wear on holy days and at festivals. The tablet was engraved in the ninth century B.C., but the sculptured scene of Sun-worship at the top was probably copied from a much more ancient relief.[1]

The Sun-god Shamash invoked in exorcisms.

The Sun-god Shamash was believed to possess power over demons, witches, and wizards; hence in incantations he was besought to deliver the haunted, the sick, and the bewitched from the snares and spells of these maleficent beings. Thus when a man was haunted by the ghost of a dead relative, the exorcist was directed to take two threads, one scarlet and the other of many colours, to spin the two together, and to tie seven knots in the string, and while he tied the knots he was to repeat the following incantation:

[1] *Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum*[3] (London, 1922), pp. 69-71, with plate xxvi. Compare L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 19; M. Jastrow, *Bildermappe zur Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, Fig. 94; H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, ii. 57, Abb. 92.

"O Sun-god, king of heaven and earth, judge of what is above and below, lord of the dead, ruler of the living,
O Sun-god, the dead who have risen and appeared, whether the ghost of my father or of my mother, or the ghost of my brother,
Or of my sister, let them accept this, and leave me free!"

Effigy employed in exorcism.

Further, in order to make sure of laying the ghost, an effigy of the dead man was to be made and buried in a grave, while at the same time an effigy of the haunted person was to be made and washed in pure water by way of signifying his riddance of the ghost.[1]

Shamash appealed to for help against sorcerers.

Another incantation contains an appeal to the Sun-god to undo the enchantments of sorcerers. It runs as follows:

"It is thee whom I have invoked, O Shamash, in the midst of the bright heavens; sit down in the shadow of a cedar. Let thy feet rest on the root of a cypress. The countries acclaim thee, they throw themselves before thee, uttering cries of joy. Thy brilliant light beholds all the peoples; thy net is cast on all the lands. O Shamash, thou knowest all the spells that enchain them; thou destroyest the wicked, thou dost undo the enchantments, the signs, the fatal omens, the heavy, evil dreams; thou cuttest the bonds of wickedness, which destroy peoples and lands. Such as have wrought enchantments, sorceries, evil witcheries, O keep them not before thee; to the bright Nisaba[2] deliver their images, the images of those who have wrought witcheries and planned iniquity, whose heart meditates a multitude of wickednesses. Be propitious, O Shamash! light of the great gods! May I be strong in the face of the author of my enchantment; may the god who begat me stand fast at my side; over the purification of my mouth, over the righteousness of my hands, keep watch, O Lord! light of the world! Shamash, thou judge!"[3]

Prayer to Shamash before felling a sacred tree.

Again, before an image-maker felled a tree of which the wood was to be used to make images, he had to pray to the Sun-god, saying, "O Shamash! august lord, sublime judge, overseer of the world and of the sky, sovereign of the dead and of the living, I fell a divine tree, a sacred

[1] R. Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic* (London, 1908), pp. 33 *sq.*

[2] A goddess, who, along with Ea, was besought to break the power of demons. See M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 101.

[3] C. Fossey, *La Magie assyrienne* (Paris, 1902), pp. 293, 295.

tamarisk, a holy tree, whereof to make images which I will place in the house of So-and-So, son of So-and-So, to lay low the wicked spirits. I kneel before thee. May all that I do succeed and prosper!" Having said so he was to fell the tree with a golden axe; then from the wood he was to make seven images of the seven gods in their proper costume and hats; on a pedestal of tamarisk wood he was to place them, clad in grey clay as in a garment.[1]

Prayers to the Sun-god on behalf of persons bewitched.

The following prayer or incantation is addressed to the Sun-god on behalf of a man on whom a spell has been cast:

"*O Shamash! from the depths of the sky thou lightest thy lamp,*
Thou undoest the bolt of the bright heavens.
O Shamash! upon the lands thou liftest up thy head.
O Shamash! thou coverest with light the heavens and the earth,
To the peoples afar off thou givest the light.
All the witchcraft that is in his body, let it come forth!
Let him shine like bright copper!
Dissolve thou his enchantment!
To the end of his life may he tell of thy grandeur,
And I, the exorcist, thy servant, may I be able to celebrate thy worship."[2]

Another prayer or incantation addressed to the Sun-god by a man who has been bewitched is as follows:

"*O Shamash!*
Make me to live; to the pure hands of my god and of my goddess,
For my salvation and life, do thou commit me.
O Shamash! thou art the king of heaven and earth, thou governest the world above and below.
O Shamash! it is in thy power to give life to the dead, to deliver the captive.
Thou art a judge incorruptible, thou governest mankind.
Illustrious scion of the lord of illustrious origin,
Mighty son, bright light of the lands,
Thou dost illumine the whole heaven and earth, O thou, Shamash!
O Shamash! because the charm is not yet broken which has fastened on me now many a day,
Wasting and corruption and an evil plight of flesh are in me;
By man, by the beasts of the fields, by all that bears a name, the charm doth break me;
It hath filled me with sickness, with weakness incurable;
By the breaking of my heart and the evil plight of my flesh I am undone.

[1] C. Fossey, *La Magie assyrienne*, pp. 132 *sq.*

[2] C. Fossey, *La Magie assyrienne*, pp. 309, 311. I have omitted some obscure or fragmentary lines.

And I, day and night, I am without repose;
I am in darkness, I am afflicted, I am full of anguish;
By pain and lamentation I am brought low.
My fault, I know it not; of the crime that I have committed I am ignorant.
When I was young, I sinned;
I transgressed the commandments of my God." [1]

Grove of the Sun-god and Tammuz at Eridu.

The Sun-god Shamash is often brought into relation with other deities. We have seen that he is frequently coupled with Adad (Ramman) in the giving of oracles. At the ancient city of Eridu, which formerly stood on the shore of the Persian Gulf, though the sea has long retreated from it, we hear of a holy grove, like a forest, untrodden by the foot of man, where in the deep shade the Sun-god dwelt with Tammuz, the spirit of plant life which blooms in spring to wither in the scorching heat of summer.[2] It is interesting to find the personification of the short-lived blossoms thus dwelling side by side in the same shady grove with the personification of the sun, who might be thought his cruel foe.

Shamash endeavours to bring back Ishtar (Astarte) from the nether world.

Again, when Ishtar (Astarte), the goddess of love, had descended to the nether world, and the life both of men and of animals was consequently threatened with extinction, her brother Shamash, the Sun-god, went to their father Sin, the Moon-god, and with tears running down his face explained to him the melancholy situation. He said: "Ishtar has gone down into the earth, and has not yet come forth; after Ishtar had descended to the land of No-Return, the bull did not mount the cow, nor did the ass leap upon the she-ass, the man did not approach the maid in the street, the man lay down to sleep upon his own couch, while the maid slept by herself". Apparently the Moon-god had no remedy to suggest for this alarming state of affairs; at least, if he offered any remarks on the subject, they have not been recorded by the scribe. However, the great god Ea took measures promptly to bring back the goddess of love to the upper earth and so to set the tide of life flowing once more. He sent down a messenger to Allatu, the goddess who kept

[1] François Martin, *Textes religieux assyriens et babyloniens* (Paris, 1900), p. 15 (*Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études*, Fascicule 130).

[2] P. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes religieux assyro-babyloniens*, p. 99.

the infernal gaol, with orders that she was to release Ishtar at once. The grim Fury received the command with anything but good humour; indeed, she cursed the messenger in very bitter words, saying, "I will curse thee with a fearful curse. The food of the sewage of the city shall be thy food, the gutters of the city shall be thy drinking-place, the shadow of the wall shall be thy station, the threshold shall be thy place of residence, may dungeon and prison-house destroy thy strength!" But for all her rage she could not resist the orders of the great god. So Ishtar was sprinkled with the water of life and led out through the seven gates of hell, which opened to let her pass; and at every gate there was restored to her one of the ornaments of which she had been stripped on her descent to the nether world.[1]

Dialogue between Shamash and Gilgamesh.

Again, we possess a short and unfortunately fragmentary dialogue between the Sun-god and Gilgamesh, the hero of the famous Babylonian epic which bears his name. Mourning for his dead friend and wandering the world over to find the secret of immortality, Gilgamesh came to the Sun-god, to Shamash. But Shamash was sad and said to him, "Gilgamesh, why runnest thou hither and thither? The life that thou seekest thou shalt never find." Gilgamesh said to him, to the warrior Shamash, "Since I have been roving the earth like the *dalu* bird, have the stars above the earth diminished? I have lain down for years together. O that my eyes may behold the sun! that I may satisfy myself with the light! Darkness is far off when the light is abundant. O that the dead might behold the gleam of the sun!"[2]

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sun among other Ancient Semites*

Worship of the Sun among the ancient Arabs.

The evidence for the practice of Sun-worship in other branches of the Semitic race is very scanty, though it might

[1] R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, pp. 411-413. Compare L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 178-183; P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen* (Berlin, 1900), pp. 81-91; P. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes religieux assyro-babyloniens*, pp. 327-341; H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, i. 65-69; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1912), pp. 121-131.

[2] P. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes religieux assyro-babyloniens*, pp. 199-301. Compare A. Ungnad und H. Gressmann, *Das Gilgamesch-Epos* (Göttingen, 1911), pp. 70 *sq.*

be rash to infer the absence of the worship from the scarcity of the records. According to Strabo, the Nabataeans, in northern Arabia, worshipped the Sun; they built altars to him on the roofs of their houses and poured libations and burned incense in his honour day by day.[1] With regard to the heathen Arabs we are told that Shams, that is, the Sun, "was an idol of the Banu Tamim; he had a house and all the Banu Udd worshipped him".[2] Here Shams is spoken of in the masculine gender, but only because the word for "idol" is masculine. The deity was in reality feminine and was known simply as "the goddess". In Palmyra, where in later times, as we have seen, there was a well-developed worship of the Sun,[3] Shams was also masculine, but this was probably an effect of foreign, perhaps Greek, influence;[4] for in Greek mythology the Sun was always masculine. Aramaic inscriptions found at Palmyra record votive offerings to Shamash, the Sun-god: one of them contains the dedication of an altar and a sun-pillar to him;[5] another mentions the dedication of six pillars, their beams, and their coverings to Shamash, jointly with Allath and Raham, "the good gods".[6] Among the stately ruins of Palmyra, where the long line of dazzling white columns presents a striking and picturesque contrast with the yellow sand of the desert, the remains of the temple of the Sun are the most magnificent objects and, being of the Ionic order, relieve the monotony of the prevailing and more florid Corinthian style.[7]

Worship of the Sun in Palmyra.

There is nothing to suggest that in their nomadic life the Israelites were worshippers of the Sun; and even after they had settled in Palestine positive evidence of such a worship is lacking before the times of the kings. In default of such evidence the theory of a worship of the Sun among the early Israelites rests on the slippery foundation of etymological speculation, in which the towns of Beth-Shemesh, "House of the Sun", and En-Shemesh,

No positive evidence of Sun-worship in early Israel.

[1] Strabo, xvi. 4. 26.

[2] J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*[2] (Berlin, 1897), p. 60.

[3] Above, pp. 500 *sq.*

[4] J. Wellhausen, *l.c.*

[5] A. G. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1903), pp. 298 *sq.*, Inscription No. 298. As to sun-pillars compare M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions sémitiques*[2] (Paris, 1905), pp. 213-215.

[6] G. A. Cook, *op. cit.* p. 275, Inscription No. 117.

[7] William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 537.

"Fountain of the Sun", naturally figure prominently. On the strength mainly of his name, which means "solar", Samson has often been explained as a solar hero or god, and in support of this view it has been remarked that he belonged to the tribe of Dan, the name of which means "judge", the title so often bestowed on the Babylonian Sun-god Shamash.[1]

Worship of the Sun at Jerusalem under King Manasseh.

But while the evidence for a primitive cult of the Sun in Israel is at best very dubious, there is no doubt that in later times the worship gained a foothold in the kingdom. Manasseh, the idolatrous king of Judah, worshipped all the host of heaven and built altars for them in the two courts of the temple at Jerusalem,[2] and in the host of heaven he would necessarily include the Sun and Moon. As Manasseh reigned for fifty-five years, the example set by the king was doubtless followed by many of his subjects.

The reformation of King Josiah.

Later on, in the same century, the pious King Josiah abolished the worship of the heavenly bodies; he caused the vessels that had been used in the idolatrous service to be carried out of Jerusalem and to be burned, and the very ashes of them to be conveyed away to Bethel; and he put down the idolatrous priests and those who had burned incense to Baal, to the Sun, and to the Moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.[3] And in the book of Deuteronomy, which is generally believed to have been published by King Josiah in 621 B.C. and made the basis of his reformation, the penalty of death by stoning is denounced against any man or woman who should, by the testimony of two witnesses, be proved guilty of the abominable crime of worshipping the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven; the witnesses were to cast the

[1] *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, *s.v.* "Nature-worship", vol. iii. coll. 3355-3356; *id.*, *s.v.* "Samson", vol. iv. coll. 4268-4270. As to the solar theory of Samson, see H. Steinthal, "The Legend of Samson", in Ignaz Goldziher's *Mythology among the Hebrews* (London, 1877), pp. 392-446; A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*[2] (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 478-482; Paul Carus, *The Story of Samson* (Chicago, 1907); A. Smythe Palmer, D.D., *The Samson-Saga* (London, 1913); C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (London, 1918), pp. 391 *sqq.* The theory has been rejected by Fr. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religions-geschichte* (Berlin, 1888), pp. 161 *sqq.*, and by G. F. Moore, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (Edinburgh, 1903), pp. 364 *sq.*

[2] 2 Kings xxi. 1-5.

[3] 2 Kings xxiii. 4-5.

first stones at him or her.[1] The prophet Jeremiah, a contemporary of King Josiah, predicts that "they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried".[2] In another passage the same stern prophet foretells the desolation that shall come upon "all the houses upon whose roof they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven".[3] Similarly the prophet Zephaniah speaks with indignation of "them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops".[4] Hence we may infer that the idolatrous Israelites, like the Nabataeans, adored the Sun on the roofs of their houses. King Josiah broke down "the altars that were on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made", and he cast the dust of the broken altars into the brook Kidron.[5] Probably these altars on the roof were consecrated to the worship of the Sun and the other heavenly bodies, like the altars on the roofs of houses among the Nabataeans.

Jeremiah on the worship of the Sun and Moon.

The worship on the housetops.

Further, the royal reformer and ardent iconoclast "took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire".[6] This is the only notice in the Old Testament of horses and chariots dedicated to the Sun in the temple at Jerusalem; but from the Jewish commentators it appears that the horses were not kept for sacrifice, but that they were harnessed to the chariots and driven out towards the east to meet and worship the sun at his rising.[7] We may conjecture

The chariots and horses of the Sun at Jerusalem.

[1] Deuteronomy xvii. 2-7.
[2] Jeremiah viii. 1-2.
[3] Jeremiah xix. 13.
[4] Zephaniah i. 5.
[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 12.
[6] 2 Kings xxiii. 11.
[7] S. Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, editio tertia (Leyden, 1682), vol. i. coll. 176 *sq.*; G. F. Moore, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, *s.v.* "Nature-worship", vol. iii.

that the chariots and horses were placed at the disposal of the Sun to enable him to accomplish his journey across the sky in ease and comfort. We have seen that the notion of the Sun driving in a chariot across the sky was common to the Vedic Indians, the Iranians, the Greeks, and the Babylonians, and that the Rhodians were wont annually to throw a chariot and horses into the sea for the use of the Sun.[1]

Ezekiel's vision of the worshippers of the Sun at the gate of the temple.

Yet the sweeping reformation instituted by King Josiah would seem to have failed to eradicate the seeds of Sun-worship from the minds of the Israelites; for in the following century the prophet Ezekiel, writing in exile by the waters of Babylon, describes how in a vision he was brought to the temple at Jerusalem and saw there at the gate women weeping for Tammuz, and how in the inner court, between the porch and the altar, he beheld five and twenty men with their backs towards the temple and their faces towards the east, and they were worshipping the Sun and putting the branch to their noses.[2] The pious Job speaks of the practice of kissing the hand to the sun as a heathen custom and a punishable offence. He says: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above".[3]

The custom of saluting the Sun.

§ 3. *The Worship of the Sun among the Ancient Egyptians*[4]

Prevalence of Sun-worship in ancient Egypt.

Among all the peoples of antiquity none adored the Sun so fervently and so long as the Egyptians. Indeed, the Sun-god may be said to have occupied the foremost place in the national pantheon and to have tended from time to time to

3356. It has sometimes been thought that the horses were statues; but Bochart seems to be right in arguing that they were living animals.

[1] See above, pp. 444, 457, 459, 462 *sq.*, 484, 531.

[2] Ezekiel viii. 14-17.

[3] Job xxxi. 26-28.

[4] On this subject see A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1897), pp. 14-102, 106-124; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2] (Berlin, 1909), pp. 10-13, 32-38, 71-84; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), i. 322-371, ii. 3 *sqq.*; Roeder, *s.v.* "Sonne und Sonnengott", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iv. coll. 1155-1210; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 8-17, 312-370.

efface the other deities, either by identifying them with himself or by abolishing them altogether. It is true that the evidence for the existence of Sun-worship does not begin to flow clearly until the time of the fourth and fifth dynasties, which seem to have lasted roughly from about 3100 B.C. to 2800 B.C.[1] It was in this period that the five pyramids at Sakkarah (Memphis) were built, and from the inscriptions engraved in hieroglyphics on the walls, passages, and galleries of the pyramids we gather that the worship of the Sun formed then the groundwork of the national, or at least of the royal religion.[2]

The Sun-god Ra worshipped specially at Heliopolis.

The ordinary name of the Sun-god was Ra or Re, as the name is now usually transliterated. The name is simply the ordinary Egyptian word for the Sun,[3] so that the Egyptian Sun-god is as clearly a personification of the physical sun as the Vedic Surya, the Greek Helios, the Latin Sol, and the Babylonian Shamash. But the deity had many other titles, apparently because he was identified with various local gods, some of whom probably had originally no connexion with the Sun. In very early times the worship of the Sun was centred at Heliopolis, a vanished city which stood not far north of the site now occupied by the modern Cairo. But even there it seems that

[1] *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 662. Erman dates the fourth, fifth, and sixth dynasties somewhat later, namely, from 2800 to 2300 B.C. (*Die ägyptische Religion*, p. vii).

[2] T. E. Peet, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 330. As to the engravings on the pyramids, the so-called Pyramid Texts, see *The Golden Bough*, Part IV. *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, ii. 3 *sqq.*, with the references. According to one calculation, the Pyramid Texts were engraved during a period roughly of a hundred and fifty years from 2625 B.C. onward.

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 14; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 10. It seems to be now generally held that the Egyptians, like the ancient Hebrews, did not write the vowels but only the consonants, so that in most cases there is little or no guidance to the correct vocalization of the words. This naturally adds much to the difficulty of the language. See R. A. Stewart Macalister, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 119. Hence Egyptologists vary greatly in their transliteration of Egyptian proper names. In the almost infinite variety of forms thus offered to his choice the uninitiated may perhaps be excused for selecting what seem to him the simplest, clearest, and most euphonious. On this ground I have preferred the spelling Ra to the spelling Re in the name of the Sun-god as less liable to be misunderstood by English readers. The spelling Ra has the authority of Brugsch, Wiedemann, Maspero, Pierret (*Le Livre des Morts*, Paris, 1882), Moret, and Budge; the spelling Re is adopted by Erman, Ed. Meyer, Roeder, Breasted, Peet, and W. Max Müller (*Egyptian Mythology*).

Ra identified with Atum and Horus.

the Sun was not the original deity; he was identified with an older local divinity called Atum or Tum, of whose origin we know nothing, but who may perhaps have been an ichneumon totem, since in later times he was occasionally represented in the form of an ichneumon.[1] The Sun-god was also identified with Horus, the Falcon-god of Behdet (Edfu) in Upper Egypt, who later was worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom; and the identification was supported by conceiving the sun as a falcon flying across the sky. The comparison was very popular, and it is in the form of Horus on the Horizon (*Hor-achte*) that the Sun-god was most commonly represented even in early times.

Ra conceived as Khepera, the scarab beetle.

Yet again the Sun-god was conceived of as Khepera or Khepri, the scarab beetle, which symbolizes coming-into-existence; and it has been conjectured that the idea may have been suggested by the resemblance which popular fancy traced between the sun's disk crossing the sky and the beetle rolling his ball of dung before him.[2]

Egyptian Sun-worship imposed on a basis of totemism.

"In all this", observes Professor Peet, "we see how strong was the tendency to harmonize sun-worship with the local totemic cults. The impression we receive is that sun-worship, and indeed the whole cosmic system of which it is typical, was secondary in Egypt, imposing itself on a substratum of totemism. In any case, whatever doubts there may be on this point, one thing is clear, namely that nine-tenths of the mythology of Ancient Egypt is cosmic in origin, and that it was grafted on to a totemic system with which it had originally no connexion. Thus to Horus, a falcon totem in origin, was attached the whole of the mass of myth which centred round the sun, while to Thoth, originally an ibis totem in the north-eastern Delta, accrued all the legend connected with the moon."[3]

Attempts to reconcile the various names and attributes of the Sun-god.

Sometimes an attempt was made to reconcile the different names and attributes of the Sun-god by supposing that they applied to him at different times of his course across the

[1] T. E. Peet, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 330.

[2] T. E. Peet, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 330 *sq.*; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 10; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 31. According to Wiedemann, the name Khepera (Khepri) is derived from a verb *kheper*, "to become".

[3] T. E. Peet, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 331.

sky. Thus in the Turin papyrus it is said that the Sun-god is Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and Atum at evening, but the distinction was never carried out consistently; an ancient text, for example, represents the rising sun as Ra and the setting sun as Khepera.[1]

The Sun-god supposed to cross the sky in a boat or boats.

Most commonly the Sun-god was supposed to sail across the sky in a ship or boat built on the model of the ordinary boats which are used on the Nile. Amidships was a cabin in which the god installed himself either sitting or standing; fore and aft were his attendant deities, whose business was to navigate the boat and to fight such foes as might oppose the progress of the Sun-god: the watch was relieved hourly. For, accustomed as they were to the use of waterways rather than of roadways in travelling, the Egyptians imagined that the movement of the heavenly bodies also consisted in a navigation, either on the waters which were thought to form the firmament, or else on the celestial Nile, which was supposed to run through a sky of metal. It was commonly understood that the Sun had two barks at his disposal, one called the *mâd* or *mâdet* boat, in which he sailed in the morning, and the other the *sekti* boat, in which he sailed in the afternoon. But, according to another theory, the number of the Sun's barks was much larger, one being provided for every hour of the day.[2] Thus the different vehicles provided for the use of the Sun-god in different lands furnish a good instance of the way in which men create their gods in their own likeness. Where men travelled in chariots drawn by horses, they naturally assumed that the deity did so too; and, on the other hand, where men habitually voyaged in boats, they took it for granted that the divinity similarly navigated the azure ocean of heaven in a ship of some sort. If there ever had been a Venetian Sun-god, he would no doubt have traversed the sky in a gondola or, if he kept pace with the march of intellect, in a steam-launch.

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 10 *sq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 31; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 352.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 23 *sq.*, with figs. 3 and 4 on pp. 22, 23; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 11; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique: les origines* (Paris, 1895), p. 90; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 323 *sq.*

Nocturnal passage of the Sun through the underworld.

During the night the Sun was supposed to traverse the underworld (*Duat*) or land of the dead from west to east, sailing in his boat on a river which runs through that dismal region. His subterranean voyage is described in great detail in two long texts which have come down to us, the *Book of Am Duat*, and the *Book of the Gates*.[1] On the banks of the subterranean river dwelt all manner of spirits and demons, some of them in the form of monkeys, because it was their function to worship the setting sun; the Egyptians may have noticed how monkeys chatter together at sunset and may have interpreted their chattering as adoration addressed to the descending luminary.[2] The underworld was thought to be divided into twelve compartments, called fields, cities, or dwellings: each of them was entered by a door; and the passage of the Sun through each of them occupied one hour. The dead shouted with joy when they beheld the bark of the Sun floating by in glory and illumining the infernal gloom by his radiance for one brief hour; for the departed were supposed to dwell in darkness which was dissipated by the passage of the Sun only for one hour out of the twenty-four. At all other times the blackness of darkness prevailed, only relieved, if relief it could be called, by the lurid light of fire-spitting serpents, or of the sea of fire in which the enemies of the Sun-god were consumed. Thus to sit in utter darkness was the lot of nearly all the dead, of the rich and great as well as of the poor and lowly; kings themselves were not exempt from it. Few there were who remained for ever with the Sun and voyaged with him eternally; these were not necessarily the great ones of the earth, nor yet the very good, but they were those who possessed the most minute information about the next world and who were best versed in magic.[3] As for the dead in the nether world, they greet the Sun-god joyfully: "they lift up their arms and praise him, and tell him all their wishes. . . . Their eyes open again at the sight of him, and their heart exults when they see him. He hears the prayer of him who lies in the coffin; he dispels their sorrow and drives away

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 83-102.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 84 *sq.*

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 94 *sq.*

their sadness; he puts breath into their nostrils", and as the fresh breezes of the upper world never blow in the windless underworld, the dead seize the rope at the bow of the Sun-god's boat and draw the vessel along, plodding on the bank like men who tow a barge on the Nile when the wind is contrary.[1]

The Sun-goddess Rat.

From the earliest times the Sun-god was regularly conceived to be male; but in later times the Egyptians associated with him a goddess, who was created very simply by adding a feminine termination to the masculine name for the sun. Thus the Sun-goddess Rat or Rat Taui, that is, "Rat of the Two Lands", came into being. But no particular duties were assigned to her: her functions, so far as she had any, resembled those of Isis, and she was even represented bearing the cow horns of that goddess, but never with the head of a falcon. She was often called the Lady of Heliopolis, but she was also supposed to dwell in other places, as in the peninsula of Sinai.[2]

Heliopolis (An, On), the great seat of the worship of the Sun.

The great seat of Sun-worship in the times of the ancient kingdom was the city which the Egyptians called An, the Hebrews On, and the Greeks Heliopolis, that is, the City of the Sun. The Egyptians also named it *Pa Ra*, "the House of Ra". It was a small town, which, while it exercised a great influence on the history of Egyptian religion, took no part in political revolutions; it was a purely religious capital. The city has long vanished. It stood in the plain at a little distance from the Nile, near the apex of the Delta. The site is now partly occupied by the village of Matarieh, about five miles to the north-east of Cairo. An obelisk standing erect in the middle of the fields, some mounds of ruins, some scattered stones, and two or three fragments of crumbling walls are all that remain to tell of its former grandeur. The obelisk bears the name of Usertesen or Senusret the First, a king of the Twelfth Dynasty (about 2200 to 2000 B.C.), who is better known by the name of Sesostris.[3] The

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 11 *sq.*

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 15 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 287, 328.

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 17 *sq.*; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique: les origines* (Paris, 1895), pp. 135 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 328. As to the approximate dates of the Twelfth dynasty, see *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 658 *sq.*

history of the city cannot be carried very far back. In texts of the Old Kingdom it is seldom named, and the foundation of the great temple of Ra, which was zealously adorned by later Pharaohs, dates only from the Twelfth Dynasty. The event is described in a document written on leather and now preserved at Berlin. But the temple was not the first sanctuary built in the city; for the same manuscript mentions that on the occasion of the new foundation the great house of Tum or Atum was enlarged. Under Rameses the Third (about 1200 B.C.) the temple was at the height of its power; nearly thirteen thousand persons are said to have been engaged in its service.[1] But the decline of the city appears to have begun somewhat early. In the fifth century before our era Herodotus visited the city and conversed with the priests, who revealed to him some of their divine mysteries which he preferred not to divulge.[2] In Strabo's time, about the beginning of our era, the city had fallen into utter decay and was deserted; but the ancient temple of the Sun was still standing, together with the great houses once inhabited by the priests, and the sacred bull Mnevis was still fed and worshipped as a god in his stall, like the other divine bull Apis at Memphis. But the old college of priests, who were thought to devote themselves to philosophy and astronomy and to practise a life of religious austerity, had ceased to exist; nobody was to be seen about the deserted courts and quadrangles but the men whose business it was to offer sacrifice, and the guides who earned a livelihood by showing strangers over the temple.[3]

Zenith and decline of the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis.

There was in Heliopolis a sacred spring of the Sun-god which has survived his temple. When King Piankhi of Ethiopia arrived at Heliopolis about 730 B.C., on his of triumphal march through Egypt, he washed his face, as he himself relates, in the pool of fresh water in which the Sun-god Ra was wont to lave his divine countenance. The Arabs still call it "the Spring of the Sun"; and here, as the ancient legend relates, the Mother of Christ washed her infant's swaddling clothes when she reached Egypt in her flight from Herod. It is said that from the water falling on

The spring of the Sun-god at Heliopolis.

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 17 *sq.*

[2] Herodotus, ii. 3.

[3] Strabo, xvii. 1. 27-29.

the ground there sprang up a balsam shrub, the like of which, according to the Arab historian Makrizi, is not to be found in the world. Even to this day the traveller is shown the sycamore, under which the Holy Family rested after their long and weary journey.[1]

Visit of the Ethiopian king Piankhi to the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis.

The Ethiopian king recorded his triumphal march through Egypt in a long inscription, which is said to be the best example of a truly historical Egyptian inscription. In it, after describing how he washed his face in the pool of the Sun, the monarch continues as follows: "He proceeded to the sandhill in Heliopolis, he brought an offering on the sand-dune in Heliopolis to Ra at his rising, a great offering of white oxen, milk, incense, balsam, and all sorts of sweet-smelling woods. Then he returned to the temple of Ra; the superintendent of the temple praised him highly: the speaker of prayers spoke the prayer for the averting of enemies from the king: the king performed the ceremony in the chamber of purification, the putting on of the bands, the purifying with incense and the water of libations, the handing of flowers for the Hat Benben of the god. He took the flowers, he ascended the steps to the great terrace, to see Ra in the Hat Benben, he the king himself. When the prince was alone, he undid the bolt, he opened the doors and saw his Father Ra in the Hat Benben, he saw the morning boat of Ra and the evening boat of Tum. He closed the doors, he put the seal on, and sealed it with the royal seal. He declared to the priests, 'I have put on the seal, no other king shall go in thither'. They threw themselves down before His Majesty and said, 'May Horus, the darling of Heliopolis, exist, and remain, and never pass away'. And he went and entered into the temple of Tum, and they brought the statue of Tum the Creator, the lord of Heliopolis, and King Osorkon came to see His Majesty."[2] At this time Egypt was broken up into a number of petty kingdoms. The Osorkon here mentioned was king of Bubastis.[3]

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 18, 21.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Ägyptische Geschichte* (Gotha, 1884), pp. 573 *sq.* For a translation of the whole inscription, see *id.* pp. 566-575; compare A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 21-23; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 331 *sq.*

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Ägyptische Geschichte*, p. 564.

The temple of the Sun at Heliopolis called Hat Benben, the "House of the Obelisk".

The title of Hat Benben, given to the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, means the "House of the Obelisk", for the Benben was a small stone obelisk or rather perhaps pyramid, which was supposed to be an embodiment of the Sun-god Ra himself. It enjoyed a great reputation and is mentioned especially in religious and magical texts; it may even have been the model of the great obelisks which were amongst the most striking features of Egyptian Sun-worship.[1] The great obelisks which stood at the entrances of temples were dedicated to the Sun, and so were the little votive obelisks which were placed in tombs, particularly during the period of the Old Kingdom. Under the New Kingdom these small obelisks were replaced by small pyramids, which are not to be regarded as modelled on the huge sepulchral pyramids of the Old Kingdom; rather they represent the obelisks, the pointed tops of which are similarly shaped.[2]

The temples of the Sun different in plan from the ordinary temples.

The kings of the Fifth Dynasty were devoted to the worship of the Sun-god Ra; indeed, the first king of the dynasty is said to have been a high priest of that deity, and from him his successors on the throne appear to have inherited their partiality for the solar religion. Almost every one of them built a new sanctuary for the Sun-god near his residence, and the highest nobility served as priests in it. These sanctuaries, which bore titles such as "Favourite Seat of Ra", were built on quite a different plan from the usual Egyptian temple. In the ordinary temple the Holy of Holies, approached through a pillared hall from an open cloistered court, was a closed chamber in which deep darkness reigned; for it had no windows, and light penetrated to it only through the door. There in the religious gloom might be faintly discerned the image of the god; it was usually a wooden idol not more than eighteen inches high, for it had to be small and light that it might be carried in the processions which figured largely in the worship. On the other hand, in the temples of the Sun-god built by kings of the Fifth Dynasty the deity was represented in the Holy

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 33, 55; Roeder, *s.v.* "Sonne und Sonnengott", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iv. 1162.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 16.

of Holies by a great stone obelisk, resting on a massive truncated pyramid as a foundation and completely open to the sky and the sunlight. The temples of this peculiar type were perhaps modelled on the great temple of the Sun-god at Heliopolis, which has disappeared and of which we have no description. One of these Sun-temples stood at Abu Gurab; from its remains, many of which are now in the museum at Berlin, it is possible to restore conjecturally the general plan of the temple.[1]

Temple of the Sun-god at Busiris.

Another temple of the Sun-god, on the same plan, has been excavated at Abusir (Busiris) in the Delta. Outside of the temple, on the southern face of it, was discovered the image of a boat, about a hundred feet long, built of bricks. It was no doubt provided for the convenience of the Sun-god to enable him to accomplish his daily voyage across the sky; and as the temple stands to the west of the Nile we may suppose that the boat was the one which the deity used in the afternoon and evening to transport him to his setting in the west. Hence it would appear that the temple at Abusir (Busiris) was dedicated specially to the Setting Sun.[2] The unusual materials employed in the construction of the vessel would be no impediment to its use by the deity, who would find, or make, bricks quite as buoyant as timber.

Temple of the Sun-god at Behdet (Edfu).

Another seat of Sun-worship was Behdet, the modern Edfu, in Upper Egypt. The temple of the Sun-god there, restored in the Greek period on the ancient model, is still in perfect preservation. It is constructed on the ordinary plan with an inner sanctuary or Holy of Holies of the usual type.[3]

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 52-56; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 16 *sq.* As to the general plan of an ordinary Egyptian temple, see also A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 380 *sq.* The Holy of Holies was divided into three chapels, side by side. The image of the god stood in the central chapel, while the images of his wife and son usually stood in the side chapels, in accordance with the common distribution of Egyptian deities into triads or trinities, each consisting of a Father, a Mother, and a Son. See A. Wiedemann, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 103 *sq.* As to the religious gloom characteristic of the Holy of Holies in ordinary Egyptian temples, compare G. Maspero, *L'Archéologie égyptienne*, p. 71.

[2] G. Maspero, *Causeries d'Égypte* (Paris, N.D., preface dated 1907), pp. 327-333.

[3] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 13, 51; G. Maspero, *L'Archéologie*

The Sun-god Ra represented as a man with the head of a falcon or hawk.

The Sun-god Ra was almost invariably represented as a man with the head of a falcon or hawk, holding in one hand the kingly sceptre, and in the other hand the symbol of life, which was a cross with a loop at the top to serve as a handle.[1] On his head he wears the solar disk with the uraeus coiled about it, that serpent being symbolic of power over life and death. It is a characteristic sign of Egyptian solar deities to have the head of a hawk or falcon: many of them were supposed to be incarnate in the bird; wherever a god is so represented, his solar nature may be confidently assumed. In times when an attempt was made to convert the whole Egyptian religion into Sun-worship, the figure of the sparrow-hawk proper was equivalent to the sign for *neter*, "god", and similarly the figure of the uraeus serpent was equivalent to the sign for *neteret*, "goddess". We have no ancient information as to how the hawk or falcon came to be associated with the sun; *bak*, which is the Egyptian name of the bird, has no philological connexion with the heavenly body.[2] It is a plausible conjecture, though it may be nothing more, that "the falcon-god Horus, originally, it would seem, the local totem-god of Behdet in the Delta, became in pre-dynastic times the national god of Lower Egypt, simply because the falcon tribe acquired an ascendancy over the other tribes of the Delta. Later still, on the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, he became the national god of the united country, and it was doubtless then that he was given a new home at Behdet of Upper Egypt, the modern Edfu".[3]

The falcon-god perhaps originally a falcon-totem.

In Egyptian mythology it is necessary to distinguish

égyptienne, p. 73. Compare *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 261, 329; Roeder, *s.v.* "Sonne und Sonnengott", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausfuhrliches Lexikon der griechischen und romischen Mythologie*, iv. 1159.

[1] The name of the symbol ☥ was *ankh*; by modern writers it is often referred to as the *crux ansata*. See A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 288 *sq.*, who denies that the symbol has anything to do with a cross.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 25 *sq.* Some modern authorities speak of the Sun-bird as a hawk, others call it a falcon. The two words are not synonymous. See Alfred Newton, *Dictionary of Birds* (London, 1893–1896), *s.vv.* "Falcon" and "Hawk", pp. 235, 411. Of the two, "falcon" is the more precise and definite, while hawk is "a word of indefinite meaning, being often used to signify all diurnal Birds of Prey, which are neither vultures nor eagles" (Newton, *op. cit.* p. 411).

[3] T. E. Peet, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 329.

Horus the Sun-god from Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis. Originally these two deities, both named Horus, appear to have had nothing in common, but in later times an attempt was made to blend them into one, and to liken the war which Horus the Sun-god waged on the powers of darkness to the long combat in which Horus, the son of Osiris, engaged with Set the murderer of his divine father. Generally speaking, the Sun-god Horus can be distinguished from his namesake, the son of Osiris, by the possession of certain titles which varied with the provinces or cities in which he was worshipped. In course of time each of the different forms of the Sun-god Horus, discriminated from the rest by a distinctive epithet, came to be regarded as an independent divinity, and we often find several such duplicate deities worshipped contemporaneously, as if they had no relation to each other, in the later periods of Egyptian history.[1] Among these various forms of Horus the Sun-god the following may be particularly noted.

Horus the Sun-god and Horus the son of Osiris and Isis.

Different forms of Horus the Sun-god.

Her-ur, that is, "Horus the Elder", whom the Greeks called Arueris and identified with their Apollo.[2] His mother was the goddess Hathor: he was born at Apollinopolis Parva, and he was especially worshipped at Latopolis, near Memphis. A great temple was also dedicated to him at Ombos in Upper Egypt. He was represented as a man with a hawk's head or simply as a hawk.[3] But in some places he was worshipped in the form of a lion. The inscriptions on the walls of the temple at Ombos prove that he was called the Lord of the South, the Lord of Nubti (Ombos), and that he was identified with Shu, the son of Ra, and with several other gods who were regarded as gods of light and of the rising Sun in various of his aspects.[4]

Horus the Elder (Arueris).

Horus the Elder was distinguished from Horus the Younger or Horus the Child, Her-pe-khred, whom the Greeks called Harpocrates. This Horus the Younger was the son of Osiris and Isis; but he could not escape the fate of the Egyptian gods, who were regularly attracted to

Horus the Younger (Harpocrates).

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 27.

[2] Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 12.

[3] A Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 27 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 467 *sq.*

[4] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 468.

the sun like moths to the flame of a candle, and in after times he was identified with the young Sun just risen above the horizon.[1]

Horus of the Two Eyes.

Her-mer-ti, "Horus of the Two Eyes", that is, of the Sun and Moon. He was called Lord of Shedennu, a city of Lower Egypt; in art he was represented as a man with a hawk's head and above it the solar disk encircled by the uraeus-serpent, and in his hand he bore a certain symbol (*utchati*) in which two eyes appear side by side.[2]

The Blind Horus.

Her-khent-an-ma, "Horus, Lord of Not Seeing", a god of Latapolis who was supposed to be blind and to symbolize an eclipse of the sun. The shrew-mouse was sacred to the Blind Horus because it was thought to be blind, and also because darkness is older than light. The little creature was said to be born of ordinary mice in the fifth generation at new moon, and its liver was supposed to diminish in size during a lunar eclipse.[3]

Horus on the Two Horizons (Harmachis).

Her-em-khu-ti, the Harmachis of the Greeks, "Horus on the Two Horizons", that is, the eastern and the western horizon, so that the name signifies Horus at his rising and at his setting. Sometimes he was designated simply Her-em-khu, "Horus on the Horizon", and then represented especially the god of the rising sun. He was easily and commonly identified with the ordinary Sun-god Ra in his daily course across the sky. In that capacity he was styled "the Great God, the Lord of heaven, Ra Harmachis". He appears in this form as god of Heliopolis, where he was associated with a wife named Iû-s-âas. He played a prominent part also in the city of Tanis, in the far east of the Delta, on the Asiatic frontier. But the greatest and most famous monument dedicated to his worship is the huge Sphinx, near the pyramids of Gizeh, which was his type and symbol. According to the inscriptions, this colossal

The great Sphinx.

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 223 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 468 *sq.* The latter writer transliterates the Egyptian name of the god as Heru-p-khart.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 28; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 469 *sq.*

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 28. The Egyptian notions about the shrew-mouse are mentioned by Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 5. 2.

figure was in existence in the days of King Khephren (Khafra), who built the second pyramid at Gizeh.[1] But curiously enough no mention of this monstrous monument occurs in the inscriptions until the reign of Thothmes or Thutmose the Fourth (about 1420–1411 B.C.). An inscription engraved on a tablet near the Sphinx records how in his youth, long before his father's death, Thothmes was one day hunting and in the ardour of the chase was carried out into the desert near the pyramids of Gizeh. There, overcome with weariness and the noonday heat he lay down to rest in the shadow of the great Sphinx. He fell asleep, and as he slept he dreamed a dream. It seemed to him that the Sun-god, with whom in those days the Sphinx was identified, appeared to him and besought him to clear away the desert sand which had drifted against his image and had partially buried it. As a reward for this pious labour the Sun-god promised him the kingdom. The prince vowed to do as the great god desired, and no sooner did he come to the throne than he hastened to perform his vow. He cleared the gigantic figure of the Sphinx from the drifted sand, and he recorded the whole story on a tablet in the neighbourhood. A later version of the tale, made by the priests of the palace, was engraved on a huge granite architrave taken from the neighbouring temple and set up against the breast of the Sphinx between its fore-legs, where it stands to this day.[2]

The history of its dedication: the dream of Thothmes.

Her-nub, "the Golden Horus", was primarily the god of the morning sun, who manifested himself in the golden glory of the dawn. He was thus the counterpart of the Golden Hathor, the goddess of the western sky, who received the dying sun in the sunset glow and was hence supposed to receive the dead on their departure from the upper world. In this capacity the Golden Hathor was usually represented emerging from the Mountain of the West. From of old the Pharaohs, who always sought to pose as the Sun on earth, greatly affected the title of "the Golden Horus", and their public appearances were commonly

The Golden Horus.

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 28 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 470-472.

[2] J. H. Breasted, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. 91; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 472.

described as the breaking forth of light by the use of a word which also signified the sunrise.[1]

The Sun-god Tum or Atum of Heliopolis.

The Sun-god Tum or Atum was originally the local god of Heliopolis, and in the dynastic period at all events he was held to be a form of the great Sun-god Ra and to personify the setting sun in contradistinction to Khepera, the morning sun. He was adored at Heliopolis as Lord of the World and the great Creator. In the Book of the Dead he is called "Creator of heaven, maker of beings, procreator of all that is; He who gave birth to the gods; self-created; Lord of Life; He who grants new strength to the gods". His worship was intimately associated with the Egyptian doctrine of immortality. But in regard to this life also he was a beneficent deity: from before him went forth the north wind that brought cool airs to the dry and dusty land during the hot Egyptian summer, and to breathe its sweet breath was reckoned one of the passionate desires of the dead. Another centre of the worship of Tum was Pa Tum, "the House of Tum", the Pithom of the Old Testament, the ruins of which were discovered by the eminent Swiss Egyptologist, M. Édouard Naville, in 1883, at Tell el Maskhûtah, east of the Delta. In the papyri and the monuments Tum is usually represented as a man wearing the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt; in his right hand he holds the emblem of life, and in his left hand the sceptre. In the boat of Ra he is depicted in human form even when Ra is symbolized by a disk which is being rolled along by a beetle, and when the Sun-god Khepera is portrayed by a beetle. Originally Tum had no divine consort, but in one of the later texts, from Denderah, there is mention of a goddess Tumt, the feminine form of Tum; the text says that she was worshipped at Bubastis.[2]

Pa Tum (Pithom), "the House of Tum".

The Sun-god Ra identified with Amon the local god of Thebes.

But the identification which carried with it the most far-reaching consequences for Egyptian religion was that of the Sun-god Ra with Amon (Ammon), the local god of Thebes in Upper Egypt. In the most ancient times of Egyptian history Thebes was an obscure provincial town, so

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 29 *sq.*

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 31 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 349 *sqq.*, who transliterates the god's name as Tem, or Temu, or Atem.

insignificant that its god Amon is hardly mentioned in the oldest religious texts. It was not until the time of the Middle Kingdom, when two Theban families came to the throne, that something was done for the glory of the local god, and with him his consort Mut began to emerge from her obscurity. But the great day for the gods of Thebes dawned with the beginning of the New Kingdom (about 1600 B.C.). During the confusion which followed the close of the twelfth dynasty and continued under the rule of the foreign conquerors, the Hyksos, Thebes was the capital of a princely house, which, by a brilliant stroke of policy, identified its local god Amon with the great Sun-god Ra, and so worshipped the composite deity under the name of Amon-Ra. When this royal family succeeded in expelling the Hyksos and bringing the whole of Egypt under their sway, it was inevitable that Amon-Ra, "the King of the Gods", should become the official god of the whole kingdom. Under the great and warlike kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty the dominion of Egypt stretched from the Euphrates to the Sudan, and with it the fame of Amon-Ra, the patron god of the conquerors, spread far and wide. From the riches, which in the form of tribute, flowed into their treasury the Pharaohs of that and the following dynasties testified their gratitude for their victories by rearing in honour of Amon-Ra at Thebes (Karnak) the gigantic temples which, enlarged by the labours and the wealth of successive generations, remain to this day the wonder of the world, the most colossal shrines which the hands of men have ever dedicated on earth to the glory of God. And in other cities also the kings caused new temples to be erected to the Sun-god, that men everywhere might pay their devotion to his supreme majesty. For a thousand years this hybrid deity stood at the head of the Egyptian pantheon.[1]

The temples of Amon-Ra at Thebes (Karnak).

In truth, he was a curious hybrid, compounded out of the sun and a ram, since Amon, the local god of Thebes,

Amon of Thebes originally a ram-god.

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 71-73; E. Meyer, *s.v.* "Ammon", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 283-285; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 107 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 4 *sq.*, 22 *sq.*

appears to have been of old a ram and nothing else. For the sheep was sacred and worshipped at Thebes, as cats, crocodiles, lions, wolves, monkeys, and the rest of the divine menagerie were sacred and worshipped in other parts of Egypt; indeed, whoever adored the Theban god in any part of the kingdom was bound to spare the life of the sheep as a holy animal.[1] The god himself was represented in the form of a ram or of a man with a ram's head, or of a man with the horns of a ram, wearing the solar disk. The avenues leading to his temples at Thebes were flanked on either side by colossal figures of rams with coiled or curved horns, that being the species of the animal which was especially sacred to the god, or rather in which he was supposed to be incarnate.[2] But though the people of Thebes did not usually sacrifice rams, deeming them sacred, nevertheless on one day of the year, at the god's festival, they killed a ram, skinned it, and clothed the image of the god in the skin of the slaughtered beast. Thereupon all the people in the temple lamented for the ram, beating their breasts, after which they buried the carcase in a sacred coffin.[3] In this custom the god seems clearly to be identified with the ram by being clothed in the animal's skin, and the divinity of the ram is in like manner plainly indicated by the lamentations for his death and by the burial of his dead body in a sacred coffin. The intention of the rite probably was to renew the strength of the god once a year by communicating to his image, and thereby to himself, the vigour of a live ram, the creature in which his divine spirit was believed to be incarnate.[4] The supposed necessity of thus annually renewing the strength of the god will be manifest when we remember that in the opinion of the Egyptians the gods in general and the Sun-god in particular were subject to the weakness and decrepitude of old age.

Annual sacrifice of a ram at Thebes and identification of the god with the ram.

[1] Herodotus, ii. 42; Strabo, xvii. 1. 40; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 39, p. 34, ed. Potter.

[2] E. Meyer, *s.v.* "Ammon", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 284; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 118-120; *id.*, *Herodots Zweites Buch* (Leipzig, 1890), p. 202; A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, i. 347.

[3] Herodotus, ii. 42.

[4] Compare *The Golden Bough*, Part V. *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii. 172 *sq.*

The Sun-god identified with Chnum (Chnubis), the ram-god of Elephantine.

To this notion we shall return presently. Meantime it deserves to be noticed that Thebes was not the only place where the Sun-god was identified with a deity who would seem originally to have been neither more nor less than a ram. The god Chnum or Chnubis, as the Greeks called him, who was worshipped in Elephantine, the city situated at the First Cataract in Upper Egypt, was represented on the oldest monuments as a man with a ram's head, the horns projecting horizontally from the temples and not curved downwards, like the horns of the ram Amon. The two rams, thus distinguished from each other, clearly belonged to different species.[1] According to Brugsch, the god was represented at his sanctuaries by a living ram in which the soul of the deity was believed to reside; the animal was chosen from the flock on purpose to serve as the god's incarnation.[2] But in course of time the ram of Chnum, like that of Amon, was identified with the Sun-god Ra; hence at Abaton, near Philae, a little south of Elephantine, the sacred ram of Chnum was called the "living soul of Ra".[3] Hence, too, in Egyptian inscriptions from the sixteenth century B.C. onwards his name was coupled with that of Ra in the compound of Chnum-Ra to indicate the divine partnership, or rather identity, of the two gods; and the composite nature of the hybrid deity was graphically indicated by portraying him as a man with a ram's head surmounted by the

[1] H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter* (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 290 *sqq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots Zweites Buch* (Leipzig, 1890), pp. 197 *sq.*; *id.*, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 128 *sq.*; Drexler, *s.v.* "Knuphis", in W. H. Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ii. 1250 *sqq.*; Sethe, *s.v.* "Chnubis", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, iii. 2349-2352; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 49 *sqq.*; A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, i. 346 *sq.* The last two of these writers call the god Khnemu. The Greek form of the name (Χνοῦβις) occurs in a Greek inscription of Ptolemy VIII. (146-116 B.C.), which was found in one of the islands of the Cataracts. See W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 130, vol. i. pp. 207 *sq.* Strabo (xvii. 1. 48) calls the god Knuphis (Κνοῦφις). The name is given as Kneph by Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*, 21) and Eusebius (*Praepar. Evangel.* iii. 11. 28). Eusebius (*op. cit.* iii. 12. 1) describes the god's image at Elephantine as that of a man seated, of a blue colour, with the head of a ram surmounted by a disk. The description is borne out by the monuments.

[2] H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 291.

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 128.

solar disk. His worship prevailed especially in the south of Egypt.[1]

The divine ram perhaps a totem.

If, as there is some ground for thinking, the religion of the primitive Egyptians was saturated with totemism,[2] we can easily understand why a ram should have been worshipped as a sacred animal at Thebes in Lower Egypt and at Elephantine in Upper Egypt; in both places the ram may originally have been the totem of the ruling clan.

Hymn to Amon-Ra, the Sun-god.

The power and glory of Amon-Ra are celebrated in hymns which attempt to make up by fulsome flattery for their lack of poetical inspiration. For example, in a lofig hymn of the Twentieth Dynasty, which is now preserved in the museum of Gizeh, the god is addressed as follows:

"*Praise to Amon-Ra!*
To the bull in Heliopolis, to the chief of all the gods,
To the beautiful and beloved god,
Who giveth life by all manner of warmth, by
All manner of fair cattle.
Hail to Thee, Amon-Ra, lord of the throne of the two lands,
Dwelling in Thebes,
Husband of his Mother, dwelling in his fields,
Wide-ranging, dwelling in the Land of the South,
Lord of the Libyans, ruler of Arabia (Pûnt),
Prince of heaven, heir of earth,
The lord who giveth duration to things, duration to all things."[3]

In the same hymn he is called "the chief of all the gods, maker of men, former of the flocks, lord of the things which are":

"*The gods give praise unto him;*
Maker of things below and things above, he illumines
The two lands, he traverseth the upper heaven in peace;
King of Upper and Lower Egypt."[4]

Still in the same hymn he is described as

"*Hearing the prayer of him who is in affliction,*
Kindly of heart towards him who calleth upon him.
He delivereth the timid from him who is of a froward heart;

[1] Sethe, *s.v.* "Chnubis", in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, iii. 2351; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, pp. 242 *sq.*, 294, 296; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 48, 71; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 52.

[2] T. E. Peet, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, i.[2] 246, 328 *sq.*

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 111.

[4] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 112.

He judgeth the cause of the poor, between the poor and the mighty,
He is the lord of understanding, plenty is on his lips.
He cometh as the Nile to those who love him.
Lord of sweetness, a great one of love." [1]

In the same hymn the god's creative power is extolled as follows:

"*Only form, who didst make all that is, one and only one, maker of all that have being!*
Mankind went forth from his two eyes,
The gods were created on his lips.
He maketh the herbage which maketh the cattle to live,
The fruit trees for men;
He maketh to live the fishes in the river,
The fowls beneath the sky.
He giveth breath to that which is in the egg;
He maketh the grasshoppers to live,
He maketh the birds to live,
The creeping things and the flying, as well as what belongeth to them.
He maketh provision for the mice in their holes;
He maketh to live the birds in every tree,
Hail to thee, maker of all these! . . .
Hail to thee from all flocks,
Acclamations to thee from every land,
To the height of heaven, to the width of earth,
To the depth of the sea.
The gods bow before thy majesty;
They exalt the spirits of him who formed them,
They rejoice at the comings of him who begat them;
They say unto thee: 'Approach in peace,
Father of the fathers of all the gods,
Thou who upholdest the heaven and puttest down the earth'. . . .
King is he when alone even as in the midst of the gods;
Many are his names, none knoweth their number; he riseth in the horizon of the east, he setteth in the horizon of the west;
He overthroweth his enemies. . . .
Hail to thee, Amon-Ra, lord of the throne of the two lands!
Whose city loveth his rising." [2]

Representations of Amon-Ra in art.

Amon-Ra is generally represented in human form with a human head; he holds either the sceptre alone or the sceptre in the left hand and the symbol of life (*ankh*) in the right, and he is crowned with the solar disk and two long feathers, which rise either from a stiff cap or else from a pair

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 114.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 115-118. Compare A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 73 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 5 *sqq.*

of ram's horns. The sections of the plumes are coloured alternately red and green or red and blue. His body is sometimes coloured blue, probably because that was the colour of the sky in which he ruled as Sun-god. It is to be noted that the horns which he wears are those of Chnum rather than of Amon, since they stand out horizontally from the head instead of curling round the ears. Sometimes he is given the head of a hawk surmounted by the solar disk with the uraeus serpent coiled round it. Again, in many scenes he is portrayed with the head of a ram and above it the solar disk, plumes, and uraeus serpent.[1]

Mut, the wife of Amon-Ra.

The principal wife of Amon-Ra, the king of the Gods, in the New Empire was Mut, whose name means "Mother". In one, at least, of her aspects she appears to have been conceived as the great World-mother, who brought forth whatever exists. Her relation to the Sun-god seems to have been somewhat uncertain. In a late text she is described as "the Mother of the Sun, in whom he rises"; but in the city of Samhud she was held to be the daughter of Ra. In pictures the goddess is usually represented as a woman wearing on her head the united crowns of the South and the North, and holding in her hands the papyrus sceptre and the symbol of life. Elsewhere we see her in female form, standing upright with her arms stretched out at full length and with large wings attached to them. The chief centre of her worship was Asher, a place south of Karnak (Thebes). Here King Amenophis the Third built a temple to her, with a sacred lake attached to it. Votive statues representing the goddess with the head of a lioness, both standing and seated, were dedicated there by the founder and by King Sheshonk the First (the Shishak of the Bible) in such numbers that even in ancient times many were transferred to other Egyptian sanctuaries, and in modern times almost every great museum of the world possesses one or more of them. Such a representation appears to imply a warlike character in the goddess.[2]

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 118 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 16 *sq.*

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 122 *sq.*; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 16; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 28.

Rise of the priesthood of Amon-Ra at Thebes in power and wealth acquired by foreign conquest.

Fortified by his association with the Sun-god Ra and by the support of the reigning dynasty, the once obscure and insignificant deity Amon of Thebes rose in the course of about a century to the rank of "the King of the Gods" of Egypt. Under the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties the wealth of the Theban priests must have been enormous, and the religious and social influence which they wielded was such as to render them formidable rivals of the royal house. The golden age of the Theban temples and priesthood began with the Asiatic expeditions of the eighteenth dynasty. Indeed, there is some ground for suspecting that the great Egyptian raids, both to the north in Syria and to the south in Nubia, were dictated as much by the desire of enriching the temples and the priests as by the ambition of extending the glory and prestige of the empire. The slavish homage which the Thothmes (Thutmose) kings and the Ramessids paid to Amon-Ra, and the lavish gifts which they showered on his sanctuaries, suggest that behind the stately figureheads of the kings it was the pious, but not altogether unworldly, ecclesiastics who pulled the real strings of war and peace.[1] Of the prodigal liberality with which the kings heaped wealth on the religious establishments some of them have bequeathed to us exact records. Thus King Seti the First (about 1320 B.C.) tells us that "he gave to his Father Amon-Ra, the silver, gold, lapis lazuli, malachite, and all the precious stones which he had got as booty in the wretched land of Syria". The sculptures which accompany and illustrate this inscription show that among the booty were the splendid vessels, fashioned of precious metals in fantastic forms, which were in that age the much-admired handiwork of Syrian goldsmiths.[2]

Munificent benefactions of Rameses III. to the temple of Amon-Ra at Thebes.

But all other records of pious munificence are cast into the shade by the roll known as the great Harris papyrus, some hundred and thirty-three feet long, in which are set forth the benefactions which King Rameses the Third (about 1200 B.C.) conferred on Egyptian sanctuaries during his long reign of thirty-one years. They include one hundred and sixty-nine cities, of which nine were in Syria and Ethiopia; more

[1] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 11 *sq.*; A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 403 *sqq.*

[2] A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 404.

than a hundred thousand slaves; nearly half a million head of cattle; more than five hundred vineyards and gardens; more than two thousand seven hundred images of gods; and many thousand vessels of gold, silver, and bronze; not to mention many millions of less precious offerings. Of the royal bounty, Amon-Ra at Thebes appears to have appropriated the lion's share, for we know that in the reign of this generous benefactor the god's temple in that city owned more than eighty thousand slaves, more than four hundred thousand head of cattle, hundreds of thousands of acres of cornland, four hundred and thirty-three vineyards and orchards, fifty-six cities in Egypt, and the whole of the nine foreign cities which were allocated to the service of Egyptian religion. Thus the patrimony of the great god of Thebes far surpassed that of all his brother and sister deities in Egypt. It was at least five times as great as that of the Sun-god Ra at Heliopolis, and it was ten times greater than that of Ptah at Memphis; yet in the early ages of the kingdom, the gods of Heliopolis and Memphis had been reckoned among the wealthiest divinities of Egypt. We can understand the force of attraction exercised by a deity so richly dowered with the goods of this world, since, by ensuring him the means of conquest, they at the same time demonstrated the reality and power of his divinity beyond the reach of cavil.[1] No wonder that, fostered by endowments beside which the revenues of the wealthiest monasteries of the Middle Ages in Europe must appear almost insignificant, the great religious foundations at Thebes should have reared to the greater glory of God those gigantic temples at Karnak to which no other country and no other age in the history of the world can present a parallel.[2]

Usurpation of kingly power by the High Priests of Amon-Ra at Thebes: the dynasty of priestly kings.

But towards the close of the twentieth dynasty a decline set in; a paralysis seems to have struck the line of Rameses. The later kings of that dynasty led no armies into foreign lands: they neglected even the Delta, Memphis, and Ethiopia, and what little activity they displayed, was devoted to the service of the gods of Thebes. No longer enriched by the

[1] G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique: les premières mêlées des peuples* (Paris, 1897), pp. 557-559; A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 405-409; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 85.

[2] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 84 *sq.*

spoils of conquest, the treasury of Amon-Ra was drained to supply the wants of the vast religious establishment: poverty stared the clergy in the face. To replenish their empty coffers the priests wrested from the feeble and degenerate successor of Rameses the Third the right of levying taxes on the Theban people and of appropriating to the service of God certain of the revenues of the city. Finally, when the last Rameses had been gathered to his fathers, the high priest of Amon-Ra, grasping at the show as well as the substance of power, made himself king of Egypt and so became the founder of the twenty-first dynasty, the dynasty of the priestly kings.[1]

The theocracy and the female pope, the earthly wife of Amon-Ra.

Under the ghostly sway of these Theban popes, who, like their brethren of Rome in the Middle Ages, combined the spiritual with the temporal power, the central Egyptian government assumed the form of a theocracy. For the real rulers, the high priests of Amon-Ra, masked their rescripts under the guise of oracles of the god, who, with the help of a little pious jugglery, complacently signified his assent to their wishes by nodding his head or even by speech. But oddly enough the papal power was wielded, nominally at least, not by the pope himself but by a woman, the earthly consort of Amon-Ra. Her office was hereditary, passing by rights from mother to daughter. But probably the entail was often broken by the policy or ambition of the men who stood behind the scenes and worked the oracle by hidden wires for the edification of the multitude. Certainly we know that on one occasion King Psammetichus the First foisted his own daughter into the holy office by dedicating her to Amon under a hypocritical profession of gratitude for favours bestowed on him by the deity. And the female pope had to submit to the intrusion with the best grace she could assume, protesting her affection for the adopted daughter who had ousted her own daughter from the throne. When kings reigned at Thebes, the wife of the god was either the queen or a princess.[2]

[1] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 12; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique: les premières mêlées des peuples* (Paris, 1897), pp. 559-566; J. H. Breasted, *History of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1908), pp. 347 *sqq.*, 357 *sqq.*; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. (Gotha, 1896), pp. 66, 98-100; H. R. Hall, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, iii. (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 251 *sqq.*

[2] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 87, 185 *sqq.* As to the oracular

The Queen of Egypt believed to be the wife of the Sun-god and to be impregnated by him.

Not only was the Queen of Egypt usually the wife of the Sun-god, but she was believed to be actually impregnated by him and in consequence to give birth to a son, who was no other than the king of Egypt; for from the fifth dynasty onward the king was styled the Son of Ra and was believed to have been physically begotten by the Sun-god.[1] The divine marriage, the birth of the royal infant, and his or her recognition by the gods are carved and painted in great detail on the walls of two ancient temples, one at Deir el Bahari and the other at Luxor; and the inscriptions attached to the sculptures leave no doubt as to the meaning of the scenes. The sculptures at Deir el Bahari, which represent the begetting and birth of Queen Hatshopsitou (Hatshepsut), are the older and have been reproduced with but little change at Luxor, where they represent the begetting and birth of King Amenophis the Third. There is a prologue in heaven, in which the god summons his assessors, the deities of Heliopolis, and reveals to them the future birth of a new Pharaoh, a royal princess, and requests them to make ready the fluid of life and of strength, whereof they are the masters. Then the god is seen approaching the queen's bed-chamber: the mystery of incarnation takes place: Amon-Ra lays aside his godhead and becomes flesh in the likeness of the king, the human spouse of the queen. The union of the two follows immediately. On a bed of state the king and queen appear sitting opposite each other, with their legs crossed. The queen receives from her husband the symbols of life and strength, while two goddesses, the patronesses of matrimony, support the feet of the couple and guard them from harm. The text which encloses the scene sets forth clearly the mystic union of the human with the divine: "Thus saith Amon-Ra, king of the gods, lord of Karnak, he who rules over Thebes, when he took the form of this male, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Thothmes the First, giver of life. He found the queen when

jugglery see J. H. Breasted, *History of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1908), pp. 357 *sq.* Compare *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 134 *sq.*

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 53; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 49; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 15 *sq.*

she lay in the glory of her palace. She awoke at the fragrance of the god and marvelled at it. Straightway His Majesty went towards her, took possession of her, placed his heart in her, and shewed himself to her in his divine form." Further he announces the birth of her daughter, the future queen.[1]

The kings of Egypt supposed to be the offspring of the Sun-god.

It was therefore much more than an idle compliment, a piece of courtly flattery, when the ancient Egyptians spoke of their kings as the offspring of the Sun-god. They really looked upon them as divine Sons of a divine Father. "It has never been doubted that the king claimed actual divinity; he was the 'great god', the 'golden Horus', and son of Ra. He claimed authority not only over Egypt, but over 'all lands and nations', 'the whole world in its length and its breadth, the east and the west', 'the entire compass of the great circuit of the sun', 'the sky and what is in it, the earth and all that is upon it', 'every creature that walks upon two or upon four legs, all that fly or flutter, the whole world offers her productions to him'. Whatever in fact might be asserted of the Sun-god was dogmatically predicable of the king of Egypt. His titles were directly derived from those of the Sun-god."[2]

Devotion of Amenophis IV. to the worship of the Sun and his attempt to establish solar monotheism, the worship of the Sun's disk under the name of Aton.

Of all the kings of Egypt none displayed so fervent, so fanatical a devotion to the worship of the Sun as a king of the eighteenth dynasty, the famous Amenophis (Amenhotep) the Fourth, who reigned from about 1380 to 1362 B.C.[3] But his devotion took a heretical turn. A philosophic dreamer, absorbed in the contemplation of the divine and engrossed in a visionary scheme of a religious reformation, which was to sweep away all the barbarous and monstrous gods of his country and replace them by a pure monotheism, the worship of the Sun as the only god, he frittered away his short life in a vain attempt to elevate his people to the

[1] A. Moret, *Du Caractère religieux de la Royauté Pharaonique* (Paris, 1902), pp. 48-54. For a full description and discussion of the various scenes, with illustrations, see A. Moret, *op. cit.* pp. 48-73. Compare A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, pp. 268 *sq.*; *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 130-133.

[2] (Sir) Peter le Page Renouf, "The Priestly Character of the earliest Egyptian civilisation", *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, xii. (1890) p. 355. Compare *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 418 *sq.*

[3] *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. 702.

contemplative heights at which he loved to expatiate in thought, while his kingdom fell into disorder and his Syrian empire crumbled away under the pressure of the new and formidable empire of the Hittites, which was now rising, like a dark and menacing cloud, on the northern horizon. The old titles and effigies of the Sun-god were abolished. Instead of the many names in which he had hitherto rejoiced, he was to be known henceforth by the simple name of Aton, which signified the solar disk. He was no longer permitted to prance about with the legs of a man and the head of a ram or a hawk. Truth to nature was now the watchword of the reformation, and after all what is the sun to our eyes but a bright disk with beams radiating from it? Accordingly a bright disk with beams radiating from it was to be thenceforth the sole image of the Sun: the shocking impiety of likening him to a man or a beast was no longer to be tolerated. But as a slight concession to human weakness the sunbeams were provided with human hands, which they extended in an affectionate manner towards their orthodox worshippers. The pattern of orthodoxy was naturally set by the king, and on the monuments of his time he and his wife are often represented thus basking in the rays of the divine Sun. But nevertheless the Sun was still so far personified that he passed for the father of the king. In his inscriptions Amenophis the Fourth repeatedly refers to him as "Aton my father".

Command of the king to destroy the images and to erase the names of all the other gods, especially the name of Amon-Ra.

In his zeal for the unity of God, the king commanded to erase the names of all other gods from the monuments, and to destroy their images. Singularly enough, the rage of the reformer was particularly directed against Amon or Amon-Ra, who, on account of the close alliance which, in his capacity of a ram, he had struck up with the Sun, might well have been spared the indignities to which he was now subjected. But no, he had to go with the rest of the old-fashioned deities. Even the sanctity of the grave was not respected, masons scoured the cemetery of Thebes and hammered out the obnoxious name of Amon wherever it appeared on the tombs. The long rows of statues of the high and noble, memorials of Egypt's ancient but now fast vanishing glories, ranged in silent and solemn grandeur

along the walls of the great temple at Karnak, were similarly mutilated by the erasure of the once honoured name. Stone-cutters climbed to the tops of the lofty obelisks and chipped away the name of Amon even on the apex. Worse still, the name of the king's own father Amenophis (Amenhotep) had to be effaced on his monuments because it contained the name of Amon. Even the private apartments of the late monarch in his splendid palace at Thebes were invaded and the king's name erased from the sumptuous decorations of the walls, leaving unsightly gaps where the mason's chisel had struck out the royal cartouche. The name of the reformer himself suffered from precisely the same defect; for was not he too an Amenophis? The sensitive king felt the name like a blot on his scutcheon, and he changed it for one in which the new name of the deity figured instead. He was henceforth known as Ikhnaton, which means "Aton is satisfied", or "He with whom Aton is satisfied".[1]

The king changed his own name to Ikhnaton.

Thebes itself, the ancient capital of his glorious ancestors, full of the monuments of their piety and idolatry, was no longer a fit home for the puritan king. Perhaps as he looked westward at evening from his palace window, and saw the sun, which he worshipped, setting behind the mountains, the long line of the royal tombs in the deep shadows below might seem to reproach him silently for the outrage he had committed on the dead, his ancestors, who slept in these solemn mausoleums. Be that as it may, he deserted Thebes and built himself a new capital, which he called Akhetaton, "Horizon of Aton", situated some three hundred miles lower down the river, at the place now known as Tell-el-Amarna. It is a fine and spacious bay in the cliffs which hem in the valley. Here in a few years a city of palaces and gardens rose like an exhalation at his command, and here the king, his dearly loved wife and children, and his complaisant courtiers led a merry life. The Sun-god was worshipped with songs and hymns, with the music of harps and flutes, with offerings of cakes and fruits and flowers. Blood seldom stained his kindly altars. The king himself celebrated the offices of religion. He preached with unction,

The capital of Egypt shifted by the royal reformer from Thebes to Tell-el-Amarna.

Life in the new capital: the king in the pulpit.

[1] J. H. Breasted, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. 113.

and we may be sure that his courtiers listened with at least an outward semblance of devotion. From the too faithful portraits of himself which he has bequeathed to us we can still picture to ourselves the heretic king in the pulpit, with his tall, gaunt figure, his bandy legs, his pot belly, his long, lean, haggard face, aglow with the fever of religious fanaticism. Yet "the doctrine", as he loved to call it, was apparently no stern message of renunciation in this world, of terrors in the world to come. The thoughts of death, of judgment, and of a life beyond the grave, which weighed like a nightmare on the minds of the Egyptians, seem to have been banished for a time. Even the name of Osiris, the awful judge of the dead, is not once mentioned in the graves at Tell-el-Amarna. So life at Akhetaton glided peacefully away in a round of religious ceremonies and pious meditation. Rumours of war and prayers for help from hard-pressed vassals fell unheeded on the ears of the devout monarch; like the muttering of distant thunder, they were drowned in the noise of psalmody and the music of harps and flutes.

Reaction after the death of the reformer.

But the reformation, so fondly inaugurated, was brief and transient; it hardly outlasted the life of the reformer. His death was followed by a violent reaction. The old gods were reinstated in their rank and privileges: their names and images were restored, and new temples were built. But all the shrines and palaces reared by the heretic king were thrown down, even the sculptures that referred to him and to his god in rock-tombs and on the sides of hills were erased or filled up with stucco: his name appears on no later monument, and was carefully omitted from all official lists. The new capital was abandoned, never to be inhabited again. Its plan can still be traced in the sands of the desert.[1]

[1] On this attempted reformation of religion, one of the most curious and interesting episodes in Egyptian history, see Lepsius, in *Verhandlungen der königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1851, pp. 196-201; H. Brugsch, *History of Egypt* (London, 1879), i. 441 *sqq.*; A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 74 *sq.*, 355-357; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 76-84; A. Wiedemann, *Aegyptische Geschichte* (Gotha, 1884), pp. 396 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, pp. 20-22; *id.*, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 35-43; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. (Gotha, 1896) pp. 84-92; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des*

Hymns to the Sun-god Aton.

Of all the surviving monuments of this attempted reformation, the most remarkable are the hymns addressed to the Sun-god under his new name of Aton. Two of them, which have been found engraved on the tombs of nobles, may perhaps have been composed by the king himself; if so he may rank, like David in Israel, as the sweet singer of Egypt. A portion of one of them may serve as a specimen of a hymn which has been compared to the hundred and fourth psalm.

"*Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,*
O living Aton, Beginning of life!
When thou risest in the eastern horizon,
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.
Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high above every land,
Thy rays, they encompass the lands, even all that thou hast made.
Thou art Ra, and thou carriest them all away captive;
Thou bindest them by thy love.
Though thou art far away, thy rays are upon earth;
Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day.

When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,
The earth is in darkness like the dead;
They sleep in their chambers,
Their heads are wrapped up,
Their nostrils are stopped,
And none seeth the other,
While all their things are stolen,
Which are under their heads,
And they know it not.
Every lion cometh forth from his den,
All serpents, they sting.
Darkness . . .
The world is in silence,
He that made them resteth in his horizon.

Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon.
When thou shinest as Aton by day
Thou drivest away the darkness.

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peuples de l'Orient classique: les premières mêlées des peuples, pp. 316 *sqq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 68-84; A. Moret, *Kings and Gods of Egypt* (New York and London, 1912), pp. 41-68; J. H. Breasted, *History of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1908), pp. 264-289; *id.*, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 319-343; *id.*, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. 109-129; T. E. Peet, *ib.* pp. 203-207; W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology* (London, etc., N.D.), pp. 224 *sqq.* Compare *The Golden Bough*, Part IV. *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, ii. 123-125, from which I have here borrowed some sentences.

Hymn to the Sun-god Aton.

When thou sendest forth thy rays,
The Two Lands (Egypt) are in daily festivity,
Awake and standing upon their feet
When thou hast raised them up.
Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing,
Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning.
Then in all the world they do their work.

All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
The trees and the plants flourish,
The birds flutter in their marshes,
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet,
All the winged things fly,
They live when thou hast shone upon them.
The barques sail up-stream and down-stream alike.
Every highway is open because thou dawnest.
The fish in the river leap up before thee.
Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

Creator of the germ in woman,
Maker of seed in man,
Giving life to the son in the body of his mother,
Soothing him that he may not weep,
Nurse even in the womb.
Giver of breath to animate every one that he maketh!
When he cometh forth from the womb . . . on the day of his birth,
Thou openest his mouth in speech,
Thou suppliest his necessities.

When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell,
Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive.
When thou hast brought him together
To the point of bursting it in the egg,
He cometh forth from the egg
To chirp with all his might.
He goeth about upon his two feet
When he hath come forth therefrom.

How manifold are thy works!
They are hidden from before us,
O sole God, whose powers no other possesseth,
Thou didst create the earth according to thy heart
While thou wast alone:
Men, all cattle large and small,
All that are upon the earth,
That go about upon their feet;
All that are on high,
That fly with their wings.

Hymn to the Sun-god Aton.

The foreign countries, Syria and Kush,
The land of Egypt,
Thou settest every man into his place,
Thou suppliest their necessities.
Every one has his possessions,
And his days are reckoned.
The tongues are divers in speech,
Their forms likewise and their skins are distinguished
For thou makest different the strangers . . .

Thy rays nourish every garden;
When thou risest they live,
They grow by thee.
Thou makest the seasons
In order to create all thy work:
Winter to bring them coolness,
And heat that they may taste thee.
Thou didst make the distant sky to rise therein,
In order to behold all that thou hast made,
Thou alone, shining in thy form as living Aton,
Dawning, glittering, going afar and returning.
Thou makest millions of forms
Through thyself alone;
Cities, towns, and tribes, highways and rivers.
All eyes see thee before them,
For thou art Aton of the day over the earth. . . .

Thou art in my heart,
There is no other that knoweth thee
Save thy son Ikhnaton.
Thou hast made him wise
In thy designs and in thy might.
The world is in thy hand,
Even as thou hast made them.
When thou hast risen they live,
When thou settest they die;
For thou art length of life of thyself,
Men live through thee,
While their eyes are upon thy beauty
Until thou settest.
All labour is put away
When thou settest in the west." [1]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 324-328; *id.*, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. 117-119. Compare *id.*, *History of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1908), pp. 273-277; A. Wiedemann, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 40-42; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 79-81; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 75-79; A. Moret, *Kings and Gods of Egypt*, pp. 55-58; W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, pp. 227-231.

In another hymn of the reformed religion we read :

"*It is the breath of life in the nostrils to behold thy rays.*
All flowers live and what grows in the soil
Is made to grow because thou dawnest,
They are drunken before thee.
All cattle skip upon their feet;
The birds in the marsh fly with joy,
Their wings that were folded are spread.
Uplifted in adoration to the living Aton." [1]

Devotion of the Queen to the Sun-god.

The king's wife, Queen Nofretete, with whom he appears to have lived on terms of warm affection, and who is depicted on his monuments adoring in his company the disk of the Sun and blessed by his radiant glory,[2] shared his devotion to that great deity. She gave expression to her reverence in the following prayer :

The Queen's prayer.

"Thou disk of the Sun, thou living god! there is none other beside thee! Thou givest health to the eyes through thy beams, Creator of all beings. Thou goest up on the eastern horizon of the heaven, to dispense life to all which thou hast created ; to man, four-footed beasts, birds, and all manner of creeping things on the earth, where they live. Thus they behold thee, and they go to sleep when thou settest. Grant to thy son, who loves thee, life in truth, to the Lord of the land, that he may live united with thee in eternity. Behold his wife, the Queen Nofer-i-Thi [Nofretete]. May she live for evermore and eternally by his side, well-pleasing to thee: she admires what thou hast created day by day. He (the king) rejoices at the sight of thy benefits, grant him a long existence as king of the land!" [3]

Vain prayer! The hand of death may already have been on the sickly and emaciated king. Cut off in the flower of his age, he soon slept in a rock-cut tomb in a lonely valley, where one of his daughters had been laid to her last rest before him.[4]

Other prayers to the Sun-god.

Carved on stones of the deserted capital have been found prayers addressed to the Sun-god by lesser mortals,

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 331.

[2] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 73, 77 ; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 37 ; A. Erman, *Die agyptische Religion* [2], p. 83.

[3] H. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, i. 450.

[4] J. H. Breasted, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, ii. 127.

who shared in the devotion of their royal master to the new deity, and assisted him by their labours in various capacities. One of the humbler devotees was the king's steward, another his architect named Bek. The steward prays thus to the setting Sun:

The steward's prayer to the Setting Sun.

"Beautiful is thy setting, thou Sun's disk of life, thou lord of lords, and king of the worlds. When thou unitest thyself with the heaven at thy setting, mortals rejoice before thy countenance, and give honour to him who has created them, and pray before him who has formed them, before the glance of thy son, who loves thee, the King Khunaten [Ikhnaton]. The whole land of Egypt and all peoples repeat thy names at thy rising, to magnify thy rising in like manner as thy setting. Thou, O God, who in truth art the living one, standest before the two eyes. Thou art he which createst what never was, which formest everything, which art in all things; we also have come into being through the word of thy mouth. Give me favour before the king for ever; let there not be wanting to me a peaceful burial after attaining old age in the land of Khu-aten, when I shall have finished my course of life in a good state."[1] With the steward's prayer we may compare the epitaph on the architect's tomb-stone. On the stone the figures of the architect and his wife are seen standing in a niche. On the right-hand side runs an inscription: "A royal sacrifice to Hormakhu, the sun's disk, who enlightens the world; that he may vouchsafe to accept the customary offerings of the dead on the altar of the living sun's disk, in favour of the overseer of the sculptors from life, and of his wife, the lady Tahir". On the left-hand side of the stone is the inscription: "A royal offering to the living sun's disk, which enlightens the world by its benefactions, in order that it may vouchsafe a perfectly complete good life, united with the reward of honour, joy of heart, and a beautiful old age, in favour of the artist of the king, the sculptor of the lord of the land, the follower of the divine benefactor, Bek".[2]

The sculptor's prayer.

Before concluding this sketch of Sun-worship in ancient Egypt we must quit the speculative heights, on which the

[1] H. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, i. 449.

[2] H. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, i. 445.

contemplative genius of the royal reformer loved to dwell, and plunge once more down to the level of those ruder ages and grosser minds which personified the Sun-god in myths redolent of human limitations, passions, and frailties.

The Sun-god Ra deemed the first king of Egypt.

The Sun-god Ra was regarded by the Egyptians, not only as a solar deity, but also as the first king of Egypt. In early times the people seem to have held this notion with a tenacity which no theological subtleties, no priestly refinements availed to shake. Not until later ages did Ra yield his place in popular favour to Osiris, the model of Egyptian kings, and even then he was not entirely deposed; for while Osiris was believed to have ruled as a man over men only, the reign of Ra was relegated to a time when gods still sojourned among men, and the Sun-god ruled over both.[1]

Antiquity of the reign of Ra.

The reign of Ra was placed in the remotest antiquity. "The like has not happened since the time of Ra", was a common phrase used of any event to which no parallel within the memory of man could be adduced. The god was conceived by the Egyptians as existing purely in the shape of a man. In popular tales, such as the Tale of the

Humanity of Ra.

Two Brothers,[2] he appears walking on earth along with other gods, conversing with mortals, granting to his favourites gifts, which did not always minister to their permanent happiness, and conceived as a kindly old man. There is nothing singular in such notions. On the contrary they are commonplaces in the childlike religion of primitive peoples. But in Egyptian faith the Sun-god Ra was brought into still nearer relations to humanity by the belief that he was the begetter of the Egyptian kings, and that at the last he sank into a drivelling old age.[3] Evidence of this belief in the ultimate dotage and decrepitude of the Sun-god will meet us immediately.

Myths of the origin of the Sun-god.

As to the origin of the Sun-god various stories were told. According to one account, he originated, no one knew exactly how or where, in the great primeval ocean called Nun.[4]

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 52.

[2] (Sir) W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, Second Series (London, 1895), pp. 45, 49-51; G. Maspero, *Les Contes populaires de l'Égypte Ancienne*[3] (Paris, N.D.), pp. 8, 9 *sq.*

[3] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 52-54.

[4] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 32.

Many people thought that he first appeared as a child sitting in a lotus flower which bloomed in the primordial watery abyss.[1] Perhaps the notion may have been suggested by the sight of the sun rising over the flooded Delta, where lotus flowers spangled the shimmering surface of the water.[2] According to another account, the Sun-god was hatched from an egg, which lay in a nest, which rested on a hill, which rose from the water. Eight primeval monsters, in the form of frogs and serpents, were present at the birth, and so was a cow. No sooner was the infant god hatched from the egg than he climbed on the back of the cow and, so mounted, swam about in the water. As for the egg, it was not laid by any living creature but fashioned on a potter's wheel by the creator-god Ptah of Memphis. Abydos likewise could point to the birthplace of the Sun.[3] We have seen that in Egyptian mythology the sky was supposed to have originally lain flat on the earth until it was raised to its present position by the god Shu, who, dexterously interposing himself between the bodies of the deified Earth (Seb or Keb) and the deified Sky (Nut), pushed up the firmament to the lofty position which it has occupied ever since. On this view the Sun, which must have at first lain flat on the ground, was elevated, simultaneously with the deified Sky, to the vault of heaven; and on Egyptian monuments he is represented sailing in his boat over the back of the Sky-goddess Nut.[4]

Myth told to account for the position of the Sun in the sky.

But another and even more barbarous myth was told to account for the position of the sun in the sky. It is said that the Sun-god Ra, the king of gods and men, grew old and feeble; his bones turned to silver, his limbs to gold, and his hair to lapis lazuli. So men despised him and plotted against him. But Ra heard the words which men spoke about him; and he said to one of his following, "Call to me my eye (the goddess Hathor or Sekhet), and the god Shu and the goddess Tefnut, the god Seb and the goddess Nut, and the fathers and the mothers who were with me when I was in Nun (the primeval waters), and call also Nun himself (the god of the primeval waters), let him bring his

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 33.

[2] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 522.

[3] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 33.

[4] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 35 *sq.* See above, pp. 71-73.

companions with him; let him bring them in all secrecy, that men may not see them and flee". Now when these gods came to the place where Ra was, they cast themselves down to earth before his majesty, and he spake to Nun, the father of the oldest gods, the maker of men, the king of those that know. He said: "O thou eldest god, by whom I first had my being, and ye ancestral gods! behold, mankind, who had their being from mine eye,[1] plot against me. Tell me what ye would do in face of this. Take ye counsel for me. I will not slay them until I have heard what ye say concerning it."

Ra accuses men of plotting against him.

Then spake the majesty of the god Nun: "O my son Ra, thou god that art greater than his father and his creator, thy throne standeth fast, great is the fear of thee, turn thine eye against those who have uttered blasphemies against thee". And when Ra turned his eye upon them, they fled, into the desert,[2] for their hearts were full of fear because of that which they had said. Then the gods spake to his majesty, to Ra the king, saying: "Send forth thine eye; let it destroy for thee the people which imagined wicked plots against thee. There is no eye among mankind which can withstand thine eye when it descendeth in the form of the goddess Hathor."

Ra sends forth his eye to destroy the men who plotted against him.

So the goddess Hathor went forth, she slew mankind in the desert,[3] she waded in their blood. Then the heart of Ra smote him, and he commanded that the butchery should cease. But the goddess had tasted blood, and she refused to obey. "By thy life," she answered, "when I murder men, my heart is glad." The fall of night alone arrested the carnage.

The goddess Hathor, as the eye of Ra, slays mankind.

While the cruel goddess slept, Ra took steps to prevent her from utterly destroying mankind on the following day. He said: "Call unto me swift messengers; let them run like a blast of the wind; let them run to Elephantine; let

Ra stops the slaughter by rendering Hathor tipsy.

[1] In an obscure myth about the eye of the Sun it is said that the Sun wept, and that men arose out of the tears which fell from his eye. See A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], p. 34.

[2] So Maspero ("*au désert*") and Erman ("*in die Wüste*"); "unto the hills" (Wiedemann); "into the mountain" (Budge); "to the (desert) mountains" (W. Max Müller).

[3] So Erman ("*in der Wüste*"); "upon the hills" (Wiedemann); "on the mountain" (Budge); "on the mountains" (W. Max Müller).

them bring me many mandrakes".[1] So the mandrakes were brought and the god delivered them to the grinder who dwells in Heliopolis, and he ground them to powder, while handmaids brewed barley beer. Then the powder of the mandrakes was poured into the beer, and the beer was red as blood. Seven thousand jars of the red beer were brewed. The majesty of King Ra came with the gods to behold the beer. And when the morning broke, and the goddess Hathor would have resumed the slaughter, Ra said, "I will protect men against her. Carry the beer to the place where she would slay mankind." So the beer was carried there and poured out, and it flooded the fields four spans deep. In the morning the goddess came, she found the fields flooded, she saw her face beautifully reflected in the beer, and she drank of the beer, and her heart was glad, and she returned home drunk, and took no more thought of men.

But, tired of dwelling among men, the old Sun-god withdrew to the sky, being raised on the back of his daughter Nut (the Sky-goddess) in the form of a cow.

Thus did the old Sun-god save mankind from utter destruction. But he would rule no more among these his ungrateful creatures. "By my life," quoth he, "my heart is weary of abiding with them." But the gods remonstrated with him, saying, "Speak not of weariness; thy might is according to thy desire". Nevertheless, the weary Sun-god replied to Nun, the god of the primeval waters, saying: "For the first time my limbs ail; I will not wait until this weakness seizeth me a second time". To discover a retreat and place of rest for the worn-out Sun-god, now fallen into the vale of years, was a task for Nun, the god of the primeval waters. He called his daughter, the Sky-goddess Nut, and she turned herself into a cow, and took the Sun-god on her back, and lifted him up aloft; and there she herself became what is now the sky. But when Nut looked down from heaven, she trembled at the great height. So Ra called the god Shu to him and said, "My son Shu, put yourself under my daughter Nut, take her on thine head". And Shu did as he was bidden, and since then he has supported the heavenly cow, on whose belly the stars twinkle, and the sun sails along in his boat. For, according

[1] So Wiedemann, Maspero, Budge, and W. Max Müller, following Brugsch. The Egyptian word is *didi*, which Erman leaves untranslated, remarking that it must be some fruit with a red juice.

The sky conceived as a cow and identified either with Hathor or with Nut.

to one scheme of Egyptian cosmography, the celestial vault is in fact a gigantic cow, and the sun travels in his bark along the stomach of the animal, which is propped up and prevented from collapsing by various divinities, especially by Shu. The heavenly cow is sometimes identified with the goddess Hathor and sometimes with the Sky-goddess Nut. As for the Sun-god Ra, he perched on the back of the cow; and there he created for himself a kingdom, to wit the upper heaven, with its green fields spangled with stars, and one of the fields he called the Field of Rest. There the blessed dead, a great multitude whom no man can number, gather to him, and walk these happy fields, and praise him, their Maker, for ever and ever.[1]

Another story of how Ra, the Sun-god, destroyed his enemies by Horus the Sparrow-hawk (Horbehudti), in the form of a winged disk.

The destruction of the enemies who took advantage of Ra's age and infirmities to plot against him is related in another myth, which explains the meaning of the winged disk as a symbol of the sun. The story sets forth how, when Ra was in Nubia with his warriors, his foes conspired against him. Ra did not himself go forth to battle with them, but had recourse to the god Horbehudti, that is, Horus the Sparrow-hawk, who thereupon flew up to the sun in the form of a great winged disk; therefore was he thenceforth called the Great God, the Lord of Heaven. From heaven he saw the foemen, he pursued them as a great winged disk. Because of his fierce onset their eyes no longer saw, their ears no longer heard; every man slew his neighbour, not a head remained whereby they could live. When Ra was sailing in his bark on the water, and the crocodiles and hippopotamuses opened their jaws to devour him, then came Horbehudti with his servants; every one of them had an iron lance and a chain in his hand; then they smote the crocodiles and the hippopotamuses; and the number of the foes of Ra that were slain before the city of Edfu was three hundred and eighty-one. Thus

[1] This account of the attempted destruction of mankind by Hathor, and the retirement of the Sun-god to the sky, is found in a magical book which may have been written under the Middle Kingdom and is preserved in royal tombs of the New Kingdom. See A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 36 *sq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 58-64; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique: les origines*, pp. 164-169; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 363-369; W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, pp. 73-78.

did the god Horbehudti traverse the whole of Egypt in the company of Ra, warding off all evil and harm from the king of the gods. Hence it was hoped and believed that he would always and everywhere exert the same beneficent power; therefore the image of the winged disk of the sun was placed over the entrances to the inner chambers of temples as well as over their gates; and it was carved on tablets and other objects as a talisman to stave off harm and destruction. Sometimes the emblem is simply a winged solar disk, but sometimes it is combined with two serpents, one on either side of the disk; occasionally the serpents are crowned with the diadems of Upper and Lower Egypt. They represent the tutelary goddesses of the two divisions of the land, namely, the goddesses Nekhebit and Uazit, whom the Greeks called Eileithyia and Buto. While these winged disks were rarely represented in the Old Kingdom, they were common in the New; and in later times a series of such disks would be placed one below the other on the same monument, doubtless in the hope that the efficacy of the sacred symbol would be strengthened by its repetition. It is probable that originally Horbehudti, the god of the winged solar disk, was an independent deity of the sun, the peer of Ra, though afterwards, in the fusion of local worships, he came to be subordinated to that great god, who drew so many once distinct deities, like planets, into his orbit.[1]

The image of the winged disk of the Sun.

But nowhere are the feebleness and decrepitude of the aged Sun-god Ra depicted so vividly as in the famous myth which relates how the cunning enchantress Isis wheedled him out of his secret name, and by transferring it to herself became mistress of his divine powers; for in accordance with the doctrine of primitive magic a person's true name is not a mere empty sound but a substantial part of him, which carries with it the personal qualities and powers of the owner and can be purloined, like any other piece of property, and used against him by an enemy. In this story of the cajoling of Ra, we read that Ra had many names, but that the great name, which gave him all power over gods and men, was known to none but himself. However, by this time the god was grown old; he slobbered at the mouth, and his spittle

How Isis became Queen of the Gods by inducing the aged Sun-god Ra to reveal to her his secret name.

[1] A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 69-78.

fell upon the ground. So Isis gathered up the spittle and the earth with it, and out of the two, by her magic art, she fashioned a serpent, which stung Ra as he passed on his daily journey to and fro. The god suffered agonies from the effect of the poison, and Isis offered to deliver him from his pangs, if only he would reveal to her his secret name. The god held out for a time, but at last he could bear the torture no more, and in a moment of weakness, to obtain relief, he consented that Isis should search into him, and that his name should pass from his breast into hers. It did so, and Isis kept her part of the bargain by reciting a spell, which caused the poison to flow out of the god's body. Thus possessed of the divine name, Isis became the Queen of the Gods ; but robbed of his name, and ashamed of his fallen state, Ra hid himself from the gods, and his place in the ship of eternity was empty.[1]

Myth of the contest of the Sun-god with a great dragon, Apepi (Apophis).

Even in the zenith of his power and glory, before he sank into the fens and bogs of a feeble old age, the Sun-god Ra or Amon Ra had to contend with a foe more fierce and dangerous than any mere human enemy. This dreadful being was the huge serpent or dragon, Apep, Apepi, or Apophis, who dared to oppose and obstruct the passage of the Sun-god s bark both in the sky above and the world of the dead below. He seems to have personified the principle of darkness in opposition to the sunlight. Originally, perhaps, he was the thick darkness which brooded over the primeval abyss of water (Nun), before the sun arose from it to illumine the universe ; but afterwards he apparently stood for darkness in general, whether the gloom of midnight or of the murky storm-cloud. In the *Books of Overthrowing Apep* he is spoken of at one time as a serpent, and at another as a crocodile ; but in the pictures of Egyptian papyri he is always portrayed in the form of a serpent with a knife stuck in each of his coils. In the *Book of the Gates* he is to be

[1] A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 359-362 ; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 173 *sq.* ; R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di mitologia egizia* (Turin, 1881-1884), pp. 818-822 ; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique : les origines*, pp. 162-164 ; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 54-58 ; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 360-363 ; W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, pp. 79-83 ; *The Golden Bough*, Part II. *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 387-389.

seen chained to the ground by five chains, while another chain is fastened round his neck and is held at one end by a god. But the eye of the Sun-god is victorious over the dragon, and in the combat the crew of the Sun-god's boat exult when they see how the monster is laid low, how his limbs are slashed with knives, his body scorched with fire, and his soul punished still more cruelly.[1] In one aspect of this combat we may perhaps detect a mythical account of a solar eclipse.[2]

How the great dragon was to be destroyed.

In the *Books of Overthrowing Apep* the various ways of dealing with the dragon and overcoming him are described in great detail. He is to be speared, then gashed with knives, every bone of his body is to be severed by red-hot knives, his head, legs, and tail are to be amputated, and what little remains of him is to be scorched, singed, roasted, and finally shrivelled up and consumed by fire. The same fate was in store for his accomplices and for everything that pertained to them, such as their shadows, souls, doubles, and spirits; all these were to be clean wiped out of existence, and the same radical treatment was to be administered to any offspring of which they might be the unhappy parents.[3]

Magical ceremony for the destruction of the dragon performed daily.

In Upper Egypt a special service was daily performed with the object of destroying the power of the dragon and frustrating his attacks on the Sun. The service consisted in reciting a series of chapters at certain hours of the day, while at the same time the celebrant performed a set of magical rites. Thus one rubric directs that the name of the dragon, Apepi, should be written in green ink on a piece of new papyrus, and that a waxen figure of the fiend should be made, and his name inscribed in green ink on the covering; and the papyrus with the name of Apepi on it was to be placed inside the covering of the figure. And the celebrant was to cast the figure on the ground, and to stamp on it with his left foot and defile it, and to spit upon it four times a day. And he was to put the figure in the fire and as the wax melted and

[1] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*[2], pp. 11, 73 *sq.*; (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 324 *sq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 49, 91, 92, 99 *sq.*, 102; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique: les origines*, pp. 90 *sq.*

[2] G. Maspero, *l.c.*

[3] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 270 *sq.*, 325 *sq.*

the papyrus burned, the dragon would decay and fall to pieces. And when the wax was melted, the refuse was to be mixed with filth and burned again. This must be done at midnight, the hour at which the Sun-god began his return journey towards the east in the underworld, and it was to be repeated at dawn, at noon, and at eventide; and it might be performed with advantage whenever the sky lowered or clouds gathered for rain. And the foul fiends that aided and abetted Apepi in his impious attacks on the Sun-god were effectually disposed of in like manner. Waxen images of them were made and inscribed with their names and tied up with black hair; and the celebrant cast them on the ground, kicked them with his left foot, and pierced them with a stone spear.

Survival of primitive magic in Egypt.

The document which contains this interesting liturgy was written about 312–311 B.C., though the compositions which it contains are probably very much older. It suffices to prove that down to a time subsequent to the Macedonian conquest, when Egypt was permeated by Greek influence, the religion of that conservative country was still saturated with elements borrowed from primitive and world-wide magic.[1]

[1] (Sir) E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 270-272. Compare *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 67 *sq.* The document which contains these particulars is known as the papyrus of Nesi-Amsu.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORSHIP OF THE SUN IN MODERN INDIA

§ 1. *The Worship of the Sun among the Hindoos*

The Sun worshipped both by Aryans and aborigines in India from antiquity to the present day.

THE worship of the sun has prevailed in India from the most ancient times of which we have record down to the present day. It has not been confined to immigrants of the Aryan stock, but has been shared by the Dravidian aborigines. We have seen that the Aryans of the Vedic age worshipped the Sun under the two names of Surya and Savitri or Savitar.[1] But "ever since Vedic times the Sun has not ceased to figure prominently in the pantheon as well as in the poetic and religious literature of India. A great part of the *Bhavishya Purâṇa* is specially consecrated to him. Traces of his worship are found on the coins of the satrap kings who ruled over Gujarât towards the Christian era, as well as on those of the Indo-Scythian princes. At a later date, in the same region, one at least of the kings of Valabhî is designated in the inscriptions, *Adityabhakta*, worshipper of the Sun. A little more towards the north, at Multân, in the Punjâb, a temple was erected to this god, the most celebrated in India, the splendours of which have been described by Hiouen-Thsang and the Mussulman writers, and which was finally destroyed only under Aurangzeb. There were other sanctuaries at Gwalior in Râjastan, in Kashmir, and in Orissa. Perhaps Iranian influences had something to do with the organisation of this worship during the middle age; at any rate, a great array of Indian proper names would by itself show how much this cultus was in vogue throughout India. In fine, the Sun has

[1] Above, pp. 443 *sqq.*

always been in a way the professional and family god of astronomers and astrologers, who rarely fail to invoke him at the commencement of their writings."[1]

Sun-worship in India during the Middle Ages.

The worship of the Sun appears to have flourished in India during the middle ages; for in the time of the famous philosopher and commentator Sankara, who was born in 788 A.D., there were no less than six distinct sects of Sun-worshippers. One sect worshipped the rising Sun, which they identified with Brahma; a second sect worshipped the noonday Sun, which they identified with Siva; a third sect worshipped the setting Sun, which they identified with Vishnu; a fourth sect worshipped the Sun in all three of these phases, identifying it with the Tri-murti or triad of forms; a fifth sect worshipped the Sun in the form of a man with golden hair and a golden beard, and zealous members of this sect refused to eat anything in the morning till they had seen the Sun rise; and a sixth sect worshipped an image of the Sun formed in the mind. Members of this last sect spent all their time in meditating on the Sun, and were in the habit of branding circular representations of his disk on their foreheads, arms, and breasts.[2]

Sun-worship favoured by the Moghul emperors.

Akbar the Great, who founded the Moghul empire in India and reigned from 1556 to 1605 A.D., aimed at establishing a religion which should reconcile the Mohammedan with the Hindoo faith.[3] In pursuit of this statesmanlike

[1] A. Barth, *The Religions of India* (London, 1882), pp. 257 *sq.* The *Purāṇas* are a class of epic works, didactic in character and sectarian in purpose, which are on the whole later than the great Sanscrit epic, the *Mahābhārata*. The oldest of them, the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, dates from about 320 A.D. See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire* (Oxford, 1909), ii. 236. Aditya, meaning son of Aditi, is a name of the Sun. It is not often applied to him in Vedic literature, but it is a common name for the Sun in the *Brāhmaṇas* and later books. See A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), pp. 30, 44. Hiouen-Thsang (Hiuen-tsiang) was a famous Chinese pilgrim who, as a Buddhist, travelled through practically the whole of India between 629 and 645 A.D. and recorded his travels in works which are still extant. See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, ii. 79 *sqq.* Aurangzeb was the sixth Moghul emperor of India. He reigned from 1658 to 1707 A.D. See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, ii. 401 *sqq.*

[2] Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India* (London, 1883), p. 342; W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 7, who gives Sankara's date as 1000 A.D. As to Sankara's birth, I follow Professor A. A. Macdonell, in *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, ii. 254.

[3] *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, ii. 397, 398.

policy he endeavoured to introduce a special form of Sun-worship. He commanded that the Sun should be adored four times a day, namely at morning and evening, at noon and midnight. He collected a thousand and one Sanscrit titles of the solar deity, and he read them daily, facing devoutly towards the sun. Then he would lay hold of both his ears, and, turning quickly round, would strike the lower ends of his ears with his fists. He ordered his band to play at midnight, and used to be weighed against gold at his solar anniversary.[1] His son Jahangir was also a worshipper of the Sun; and if further evidence of his devotion were needed, it would be furnished by the Mithraic symbolism on his tomb at Lahore as well as by the accounts of contemporary historians and Portuguese missionaries, who all notice the assiduous worship paid to the Sun by the early Moghul emperors.[2]

Temples of the Sun in India.

Of the Sun-god's temples in India that of Kanarak in Orissa, near the temple of Juggernaut, was built about the beginning of the thirteenth century of our era. It is described as one of the most exquisite memorials of Sun-worship in existence; its luscious ornamentation is at once the glory and the disgrace of Orissan art.[3] Yet the temple is now deserted and in ruins.[4] Ruinous, too, is another famous temple of the Sun at Martand, in Kashmir, about three miles east of Islamabad, the old capital. It was built in the eighth century of our era and has long been roofless. The pillars and pilasters resemble some of the later forms of Roman Doric. Round about the temple are the ruins of about eighty small cells.[5] The situation is appropriate, for it is very sunny and commands magnificent prospects over the beautiful Vale of Kashmir, the paradise of the East, with its sacred streams and glens, its orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by lofty snow-clad mountains.[6] But the glory of the Sun-god has departed.

[1] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 7.

[2] W. Crooke, *Things Indian* (London, 1906), p. 445.

[3] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 6; *id.*, *Things Indian*, p. 445.

[4] Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 343.

[5] *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, ii. 169.

[6] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, pp. 445 *sq.*

He is no longer looked on as a great god, but only as a godling, or even as a hero who once lived and reigned on earth.[1] At the present day there are few temples dedicated to him in Northern India, including two or three in Bengal. There is a small shrine in his honour close to the Annapûrna temple in Benares, where the god is represented sitting in a chariot drawn by seven horses; he is worshipped with the fire-sacrifice in a building detached from the temple. In other temples the god is represented by an equestrian image or merely by a circle painted red. But images of him, whether under his title of Surya or Aditya, are comparatively rare in modern times. His worship has been largely taken over by Vishnu, and wherever the cult of Siva is predominant, that of the Sun falls into neglect.[2]

Sects of Sun-worshippers.

The Saura sect worship the Sun as their special god under the name of Suryapati. They wear a crystal necklace in his honour, and abstain from eating salt on Sundays, and on the days when the sun enters a sign of the zodiac. They make a red mark on their forehead. Their headquarters are now in Oudh.[3] They never eat until they have seen the sun. Nowadays they are few in number, but formerly they were more numerous.[4] Another sect called Nimbarak worship the sun in a modified form. Their name means "the sun in a *nîm* tree" (*Azidirachta Indica*), and to explain it they tell how at the prayer of their founder, who had invited a friend to dinner after sunset, the Sun-god obligingly descended on a *nîm* tree and continued to shine there till the dinner was over.[5]

Sûraj Nârâyan, the Sun-god.

The popular modern name for the Sun-god or Sun-godling is Sûraj Nârâyan. "He is thus regarded as Nârâyana or Vishnu occupying the sun. A curiously primitive legend represents his father-in-law, Viswakarma,

[1] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 5.

[2] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, pp. 445, 446; *id.*, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 5 *sq.* The author's statements in these two passages as to the number of temples of the Sun appear discrepant. In the former passage Mr. Crooke says that "in North India few temples are dedicated to the Sun"; in the latter, he says that "there are many noted temples dedicated to him", and he enumerates more than nine such temples.

[3] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 6.

[4] W. J. Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*, Second Edition (Calcutta and Simla), p. 345.

[5] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 6 *sq.*

as placing the deity on his lathe and trimming away one-eighth of his effulgence, leaving only his feet. Out of the blazing fragments he welded the weapons of the gods."[1]

Sun-worship in the Punjab.

In the Punjab, particularly in the eastern part of it comprised within the Karnal District, the Sun-god ranks first among the pure and benevolent deities adored by the peasants. Any villager, on being asked what divinity he reveres most, will mention the Sun-godling, *Suraj Devata*; for the worship of the Sun has in great measure dropped out of the higher Hindooism, and the peasant calls the solar deity, not Deva but Devata, a godling, not a god. No shrine is built for him, but on Sunday, his holy day, the people abstain from salt, and do not set milk as usual to make butter, but convert it into rice-milk and give a portion of it to Brahmans. A lamp, too, is always burned in honour of the Sun on Sundays. Every now and then Brahmans are fed in the name of the Sun on Sunday, especially on the first Sunday after the fifteenth day of the month Sárh, when the harvest has been got in, and the agricultural year is over. Before a Hindoo takes his daily bath, he throws water towards the Sun.[2] Moreover, the pious householder bows to the Sun as he leaves his house in the morning. His more learned brethren repeat the *Gâyatrî*, that ancient Aryan prayer, saying, "May we receive the glorious brightness of this, the generator, the God who shall prosper our works!"[3] In the chilly mornings of the cold weather, when the sleepy coolies awake with a yawn, you may hear them muttering, "*Sûraj Nârâyan*" in salutation to the Sun, while the yellow light of dawn spreads over the eastern sky.[4]

Sun-worship among the Rajputs.

In the mythology of the Rajputs, of which a better idea may be obtained from their heroic poetry than from the

[1] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 5.

[2] (Sir) Denzil C. J. Ibbetson, *Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Panipat Tahsil and Karnal Parganah of the Karnal District* (Allahabad, 1883), p. 147; *id.*, *Outlines of Punjab Ethnography* (Calcutta, 1883), p. 114.

[3] (Sir) Denzil C. J. Ibbetson, *Report on the Revision of Settlement, etc.*, p. 147; W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 8. The *Gâyatrî* prayer is from the *Rigveda*, iii. 62. 10. See *The Hymns of the Rigveda*, translated by R. T. H. Griffith, vol. i. p. 87, who translates the stanza: "May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god; so may he stimulate our prayers". Savitar is a Vedic name of the Sun-god. See above, p. 448.

[4] W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 8.

legends of the Brahmans, the Sun-god is the deity whom they are most anxious to propitiate, and in his honour they fearlessly shed their blood in battle, hoping to be received into his bright abode. Their highest heaven is accordingly the Bhanuthan or Bhanuloka, that is, "the region of the Sun"; and, like the Massagetae of old, the Rajput warrior of the early ages sacrificed the horse in honour of the Sun and dedicated to him the first day of the week, called *Adityawar*, contracted to Itwar.[1] At Udaipur, the capital of Mewar in Rajputana, the Sun has universal precedence; his portal (*Suryapol*) is the chief entrance to the city; his name gives dignity to the chief apartment or hall (*Suryamahall*) of the palace; and from the balcony of the Sun (*Suryagokhra*) the prince of Mewar, who claims to be a descendant of Rama, shows himself as the Sun's representative in the dark monsoon. A huge painted sun formed of gypsum in high relief, with gilded rays, adorns the hall of audience, and in front of it stands the throne. The sacred standard bears the image of the Sun; and a disk of black felt or ostrich feather, carried on a pole, displays in its centre a plate of gold to represent the solar orb. The royal parasol is called *kirania*, in allusion to its shape, like a ray (*kiran*) of the Sun.[2]

Sun-worship among the Hindoos of the Bombay Presidency.

The worship of the Sun is prevalent among the Hindoos of the Bombay Presidency.[3] In the Konkan, Deccan, and Karnatak it is deemed very meritorious to adore the Sun, and the Brahmans regard the Sun as their chief deity. Persons desirous of ensuring health, wealth, and prosperity propitiate the Sun-god by prayers and ceremonies. For this purpose they make weekly vows in his honour, and the day on which the vow is to be kept is Sunday. In the Deccan, on every Sunday in the month of Shravan (July-August), a picture of the Sun and of his mother Ranubai is drawn on a low wooden stool in quartz powder and worshipped; in this picture the Sun is represented by twelve concentric circles, and his mother is accompanied by the

[1] Lieut.-Col. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, edited by W. Crooke (Oxford, 1920), ii. 658. As to the horse-sacrifice offered to the Sun by the Massagetae, see above, p. 458.

[2] Lieut.-Col. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. W. Crooke, ii. 659 *sq.*

[3] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 29-40.

figure of a swastika and a mace. The seventh day of the month of Magh (January-February) is believed to be the principal day for worship and festivities in honour of the Sun-god; the day bears the special name of *Ratha saptami*. In the Deccan people think that up to that day the Sun's chariot is drawn by a deer, but that after that day it is drawn by horses, which clearly explains why from that time onward the days lengthen; for naturally a deer could not be expected to draw the car so many hours daily as horses. Accordingly, on the day in question a figure of the Sun is drawn in red sandal paste on a low wooden stool; he is represented in human shape sitting in a chariot drawn by seven horses, or by a horse with seven faces. This figure is then placed in the sunshine, and the devotee worships it by offering it spoonfuls of water, red powder, red flowers mixed with red sandal paste, camphor, incense and fruits. Some people kneel down when they make these offerings to the Sun.[1] The Sun-god is also worshipped by Hindoos of the Bombay Presidency on various special occasions, as at solar eclipses On these occasions corn is not ground, the hair is not combed, and cotton-seed may not be ginned.[2]

The Sun worshipped daily by Brahmans.

After performing his toilet a high-caste Hindoo should take a bath and offer morning prayers and oblations, called *arghyas*, to the Sun. These oblations consist of water and some of the following ingredients, namely rice, sandal oil, sesamum seed, white flowers, and *Durva* grass (*Cynodon dactylon*). In making the oblation the Brahman holds the spoon to his forehead and empties it towards the Sun, after reciting the ancient Vedic prayer known as the *Gâyatrî*. This prayer he ought to recite one hundred and eight times. If water is not available for the oblation, sand may be used instead. But on no account may the Sun be deprived of his oblations. As for the *Gâyatrî* prayer, a strict Brahman is bound to recite it thrice one hundred and eight times, making a total of three hundred and twenty-four times, every day of his life; if he does not, he commits as heinous a sin as if he were to slaughter a cow, a contingency at which the brain reels. To obviate the accidental occurrence

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, pp. 32, 38 *sq.*

[2] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 40.

of this fearful calamity, he uses a rosary with one hundred and eight beads, one of which he ticks off at every prayer; when he has thus counted the rosary thrice over, with the accompanying prayer, he has so far discharged his duty to the Sun for the day. The right to repeat the *Gâyatrî* prayer belongs exclusively to the twice-born; nobody else is authorized to recite it or even to hear a word of it. Women and Sudras in particular ought not to catch so much as an echo of a single syllable of it.[1]

Why the Sun receives daily offerings.

The reason why the Sun should not on any account be deprived of his oblations (*arghyas*) is this. The Sun is overjoyed at the birth of a Brahman, and, carried away by the warmth of his feelings, he gives no less than a million cows in charity, counting on the new-born Brahman to make up to him by his oblations for this profuse liberality, since every drop of the oblation wipes out a thousand of the Sun's enemies. Thus every Brahman at birth incurs a debt of a million cows to the Sun, but he discharges the debt by reciting the *Gâyatrî* prayer at least one hundred and eight times a day.[2]

The Sun worshipped by women for the sake of offspring.

Women believe that a vow made to the Sun is a sure means of attaining their desires. The aim of their vows is generally to ensure the birth of a male child. If her prayer is granted, a mother will testify her gratitude to the Sun by naming the child after him; hence such names as Suraj-Ram, Bhanu-Shankar, Ravi-Shankar, and Adit-Ram. Further, she may dedicate a toy-cradle to the Sun in his temple as a record of the fulfilment of her vow. There is a temple of the Sun at Mandavraj, in Kathiawar, where many such votive cradles may be seen. Rich women have these cradles made of precious metal. In this temple Parmar Rajputs, with their brides, bow to the image of the Sun on their wedding day. And when a Rajput's wife has borne him a son, the boy's hair is shaved for the first time in the presence of the Sun-god at his temple, and a suit

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, pp. 31 *sq.* In the Central Provinces and Berar devout Hindoos, on rising from bed in the morning, bow to the Sun with folded hands and one leg raised from the ground. See *Census of India, 1911*, vol. x. *Central Provinces and Berar*, Part I. *Report*, by J. T. Marten (Calcutta, 1912), p. 81.

[2] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 40.

of rich clothes is presented to the image by the child's maternal uncle.[1] In the Karnatak, when a girl attains to puberty, she takes a bath and is made to stand in the sun in order to conceive offspring. A barren woman attempts to satisfy her maternal longing by being exposed to the sun's rays.[2] Thus a physical power of impregnating women is apparently attributed to sunlight. Among the Chamars, a caste of curriers, tanners, and day-labourers found throughout Upper India, childless persons fast and worship the Sun-godling, Sûraj Nârâyan, in the hope of thereby procuring offspring.[3]

The Sun thought to facilitate delivery.

Some people think that the rays both of the sun and of the moon facilitate and expedite a woman's delivery in childbed. Hence, before she is brought to bed, a woman is made to walk about in the sunlight and the moonlight; and after her delivery the mother should glance at the sun with her hands clasped and offer him rice and red flowers. However, in the Deccan it is more commonly believed that the sun's rays are injurious to a pregnant woman, and in order to preserve her offspring she is obliged to take her meals in the dark or in the moonlight. In some places a woman is secluded in a dark room at the time of childbirth, and is not allowed to see sunlight until she presents her child to the Sun with certain ceremonies either on the fourth or the sixth day after her delivery. Exactly a month and a quarter after the birth the mother is taken to a neighbouring stream, there to pray to the Sun and to fetch water thence in an earthen vessel. This ceremony is known as *Zarmazaryan*. Seven small betel-nuts are used in it. The mother carries them and distributes them to barren women, who believe that by eating them from her hand they are likely to conceive.[4] What indeed is more natural than that conception should be effected by the combined influence of the Sun and of a fruitful woman?

Pregnant women secluded from sunlight.

Warlike races descended from the Sun and Moon.

Rajputs, Marathas, and other warlike races love to trace their descent from the Sun and Moon. The descendants of

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 30.

[2] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, pp. 30 *sq.*

[3] W. Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-western Provinces and Oudh* (Calcutta, 1896), ii. 185.

[4] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, pp. 36-38.

the two luminaries are known respectively as the Sun-family (*Suryavanshi*) and the Moon-family (*Somavanshi*). Rulers who claim to be of the solar race always worship the rising Sun. They also keep a golden image of the Sun in their palaces, and engage learned Brahmans to recite verses in his honour. On Sundays they take only one meal, and that of simple rice, for white food is deemed most acceptable to the Sun.[1]

The Sun attested in documents and oaths.

It is believed that nothing can escape the gaze of the Sun in the sky. Hence he receives the names of *Survasakshi*, that is, "Observer of all Things", and *Jagatchakshu*, that is, "the Eye of the World". In accordance with this conception of his nature as the universal witness, documents are attested in his name as Surya-Narayana-Sakshi, and such an attestation is supposed to furnish ample security for the sincerity and good faith of the contracting parties. An oath by the Sun is thought to pledge the person who takes it to the strictest veracity.[2]

The Sun heals diseases of the eyes.

From the matchless power of vision possessed by the Sun it follows as an obvious corollary that vows in his honour are highly efficacious in healing diseases of the eyes and strengthening the eyesight.[3] For much the same reason the sun-face (*surya-mukh*) is looked upon as one of the very best talismans to protect the worshipper against evil; as such it is carved on temples and worked on banners, which are carried in procession.[4] Hindoos of the Bombay Presidency are in the habit of drawing designs in powder, red or white, as seats for the deities, whenever these mighty beings are to be installed and invoked. For one deity the design is a triangle, for another a square, for another a circle, and so forth. The seat for the Sun-god is the swastika; hence the general belief that the swastika represents the sun.[5] In the Konkan some people think that the swastika is the central point of the Sun's helmet, and they will sometimes make a vow called the swastika in its honour. A woman who observes this vow draws a figure

The Sun and the swastika.

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 36.
[2] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 30.
[3] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, pp. 29 *sq.*
[4] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 38.
[5] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 41.

of the swastika and worships it daily during the four months of the rainy season, and at the end of it she gives to a Brahman a gold or silver plate bearing the sign of the swastika graven upon it. But other people in the Konkan are of opinion that the swastika is the foundation-stone of the universe, or that it is the symbol of the god Siva, and not of the sun. Generally, throughout the Bombay Presidency, the swastika is held to be an emblem of peace and prosperity, and for that reason Brahman women draw a figure of the swastika in front of their houses.[1]

Vows of abstinence when the Sun is invisible.

During the rainy season of the monsoons, which lasts four months, many Hindoos in the Bombay Presidency, and particularly in Kathiawar, take a vow called *chaturmas*, which obliges them to abstain from eating on days when the sun is invisible. Even if the luminary happens to be hidden by clouds for days together, the devout votary observes his fast till the bright deity shines out once more.[2]

Sun-worship among the Hindoos of Bengal.

The worship of the Sun prevails also to a certain extent among the Hindoos of Bengal. On this subject we are informed by Sir Edward Gait that "amongst the godlings of Nature the Sun, Surjya or Graharáj (king of the planets), takes the first place. The Sun-god was one of the great deities in Vedic times, but he has now fallen to the rank of a godling. At the same time he is still widely worshipped, especially in Bihar and amongst some of the Dravidian tribes of Chota Nagpur. There are temples in his honour at various places, notably at Kanárk near Puri and at Gaya.[3] Amongst his smaller temples may be mentioned one at Amarkund, near Berhampore, in the Murshidabad district, where he is worshipped as Gangáditya, and is represented by an equestrian image made of stone. In Cuttack the visible representation is a circle painted red. In Mymensingh he is represented as a being with two hands of a dark red colour mounted in a chariot drawn by seven horses. The higher castes worship him daily while bathing, and a libation of

Daily worship.

[1] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 45.

[2] R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay*, p. 35. Compare *Census of India, 1901*, vol. xviii. *Baroda*, Part I. *Report*, by J. A. Dalal (Bombay, 1902), p. 124.

[3] "The most celebrated temple is at Ajodhya in the United Provinces."

water (*arghya*) is made in his honour before other gods and goddesses are worshipped. The *Gáyatri* or sacred verse, which each Bráhman must recite daily, is dedicated to him. Sunday is sacred to him, and on that day many abstain from eating fish or flesh; in some districts salt also is abstained from. The Sundays in the month of Kártik are specially set aside for his worship in Bihar and parts of Bengal.

Great annual festival.

The great festival in his honour, known as the *Chhat Pujá*, is held on the sixth day of the light half of Kártik,[1] when the people gather at a river or pool and offer libations to the setting sun, and repeat the ceremony on the following morning. They also make offerings of white flowers, sandal paste, betel-nut, rice, milk, plantains, etc. Bráhman priests are not employed, but an elderly member of the family, usually a female, conducts the worship. Even Muhammadans join in the *Chhat Pujá*. In Eastern Bengal the Sundays of Baisákh (occasionally Mágh) are held sacred, and low-caste women spend the whole day wandering about in the sun carrying on the head a basket containing plantains, sugar, and their offerings. On the last Sunday of Baisákh the *pujá* [worship] is performed, and a Bráhman priest officiates. In Noakhali widows stand on one leg facing the sun the whole day. In Mymensingh unmarried girls worship the Sun in Magh, in the hopes of obtaining a good husband and, so it is said, a satisfactory mother-in-law. In Puri, Hindu women desirous of obtaining male offspring worship him on the second day after the new moon in Asin. The Sun is often credited with healing powers in all sorts of disease, such as asthma, consumption, skin diseases, white leprosy and severe headaches.

Female counterpart of the Sun-god.

"The Sun is a male deity, but in Rajshahi he has a female counterpart called Chhatamátá, who is worshipped, chiefly by females, on the sixth day of Kártik and Chaitra. On the previous day the devotee takes only rice or wheat cooked in milk without salt, and on the day of the ceremony she fasts till evening, when she goes to a tank with plantains and cakes, and bathes facing the setting sun. She then returns home, keeps vigil throughout the night and repeats

[1] This festival falls early in November. See (Sir) George A. Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life* (Calcutta, 1885), p. 399.

the ceremony in the morning. The offerings are then eaten by the worshipper and her friends." [1]

§ 2. *The Worship of the Sun among non-Aryan peoples of modern India*

Sun-worship among the aborigines of India, especially the Dravidians.

In modern India the worship of the Sun is practised by many aboriginal tribes, especially of the Dravidian stock, and there seems to be good reason to believe that they have not borrowed it from the Aryan immigrants, now represented by the Hindoos, but that they have inherited it from their remote ancestors, who may well have been addicted to it long before the Aryans made their way into the peninsula. Of such tribes many are found in the Central Provinces of India, where in their wild mountains and forests they still adhere to their ancient religion and customs despite the gradual spread of Hindooism and Islam in the more open and level regions around them.

Sun-worship among the Baigas.

Thus the Baigas, a primitive Dravidian tribe of the Central Provinces, while they retain the worship of their old native deities, also acknowledge certain Hindoo divinities and do them reverence, but not in the orthodox manner. Amongst these divinities is Narayan Deo, the Sun-god. To him the Baigas sacrifice the most unclean of animals, the pig, but were a Hindoo to do so it would be a sacrilege. The Baiga mode of sacrificing the animal is peculiar. The pig chosen for sacrifice is allowed to wander loose for two or three years, and is then killed in a cruel manner. It is laid on its back athwart the threshold of a doorway and a stout plank is placed across its stomach. Half a dozen men sit or stand on the two ends of the plank, while the fore and hind feet of the pig are pulled backwards and forwards alternately over the plank till the wretched creature is crushed to death, while all the men sing or shout a sacrificial hymn. The head and feet are then cut off and presented to the solar deity: the carcase is eaten.[2] Pigs are sacrificed in similar fashion to the Sun-god by the Gonds, who are the principal tribe of the Dravidian family and perhaps the

Sacrifice of pigs.

Pigs sacrificed to the Sun by the Gonds.

[1] *Census of India, 1901*, vol. vi. *Bengal*, Part I. *Report*, by (Sir) E. A. Gait (Calcutta, 1902), p. 188.

[2] R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), ii. 85 *sq.*

most important of the non-Aryan or forest tribes in India. In 1911 they numbered three millions and were increasing rapidly.[1] With them the Sun-god, Narayan Deo, is a household deity. He has a little platform inside the threshold of the house. He may be worshipped every two or three years, but should a snake appear in the house or somebody fall ill, they think that the Sun-god is growing impatient at the delay in propitiating him, so they hasten to appease him by sacrifice. A young pig is offered to him and is sometimes fattened up beforehand by being fed on rice. When the time of sacrifice is come, the pig is laid on its back over the threshold of the door, and a number of men squeeze it to death by pressing down a heavy beam of wood laid across its body. Then they cut off the tail and testicles and bury them near the threshold. The carcase is washed in a hole dug in the yard, after which it is cooked and eaten. They sing to the god, "Eat, Narayan Deo, eat this rice and meat, and protect us from all tigers, snakes, and bears in our houses; protect us from all illnesses and troubles". Next day the bones and any other remains of the pig are buried in the hole in the yard, and the earth is well stamped down over them.[2]

The Sun-clan of the Bhainas mourns at a solar eclipse.

The Bhainas are a primitive tribe akin to the Baigas and found only in the Central Provinces. Their home is a wild tract of forest country.[3] They are divided into totemic clans named after the animals or plants which are their totems. Among their totems are the cobra, the tiger, the leopard, the wild dog, the monkey, the vulture, the hawk, the quail, and the black ant. Members of a clan will not injure the totemic animal whose name they bear, and if they see the dead body of the animal or only hear of its death, they throw away an earthen cooking-pot and bathe and shave themselves, just as they would do for the death of one of their family. At marriage images of the totemic animals or birds of the bride and bridegroom are made and worshipped by them. Similar marks of respect are paid to the inanimate objects after which some of the clans are named. Thus the Cowdung clan will not burn cakes of

[1] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 41. [2] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 101 *sq.*
[3] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* ii. 225.

cowdung as fuel, and the clan which takes its name from chillies will not use these peppers. One clan is named after the sun, and when the sun is eclipsed, members of the Sun-clan perform the same formal rites of mourning which the members of other clans perform for the death of their totemic animals.[1] In such rites we may see an incipient worship of the Sun; totems appear to be in the act of blossoming into gods.

Sun-worship among the Bhunjias.

The Bhunjias are a small Dravidian tribe in the Central Provinces. They bow daily to the Sun with folded hands, and believe that he is of special assistance to them in the discharge of their debts, which they consider a primary obligation. When they have succeeded in paying off a debt, these honest debtors offer a coco-nut to the Sun as a mark of their gratitude to him for his assistance.[2]

Sun-worship among the Gadbas and the Kawars.

The Gadbas, a primitive tribe of the Central Provinces who are classed as Mundari or Kolarian on the ground of their language, offer a white cock to the Sun and a red one to the Moon.[3] The Kawars, another primitive tribe of the Central Provinces, are thought to be Dravidians, though they have lost the Dravidian language.[4] They have a vague idea of a supreme deity whom they call Bhagwan and identify with the sun. They bow to him in reverence, but pay him no other attention because he does not interfere with men's concerns.[5]

The Kols, Mundas, or Hos.

The Kols, Mundas, or Hos (for the tribes described by these names appear to belong to the same stock) are a great people of Chota Nagpur, who have given their name to the Kolarian or Mundari family of tribes and languages. They are distributed all over Chota Nagpur and have spread to the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, and Central India. The Santals are a branch of the Kols, and so, too, probably are the Bhumij, the Kharias, the Korwas, and the Korkus. The disintegrating causes which have split up what was originally one people into a number of distinct tribes are in all likelihood no more than distance and settlement in different parts of the country, with consequent

[1] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* ii. 228 *sq.*
[2] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* ii. 327.
[3] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 11.
[4] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 389 *sq.*
[5] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 399.

cessation of intermarriage and social intercourse. Hence the separate tribes came to acquire different names or to receive separate territorial or occupational designations at the hands of the Hindoos, and their former identity has gradually been forgotten. At the present time the whole group of allied tribes appears to number not less than six millions.[1] The Munda languages are quite distinct from the Dravidian and belong to the same family of speech as the Mon-Khmer of Indo-China, the Nicobarese, and the dialects of certain wild tribes of Malacca and Australonesia. In the south of India, where the Dravidian tongues prevail, there are no traces of Munda languages, and it seems therefore necessary to conclude that the Mundas of the Central Provinces and Chota Nagpur did not come to their present home from Southern India, but that they arrived either by way of Assam and Bengal or by sea through Orissa, unless indeed India was their cradleland and from it spread the various peoples who now speak cognate languages in Indo-China, the Malay Peninsula, and the islands of the Indian Archipelago. None of the Munda languages have any proper written character or any literature.[2]

Sing-bonga, the head of the Munda pantheon, identified with the Sun.

At the head of the Munda pantheon stands Sing-bonga, the Sun, a beneficent but somewhat inactive deity, who concerns himself but little with human affairs and leaves the details of government to the departmental gods of nature. Nevertheless, although Sing-bonga does not himself send sickness or calamity to men, he may be invoked to avert such disasters, and for this purpose people sacrifice to him white goats or white cocks by way of appeal from the unjust punishments which are believed to have been inflicted on suffering humanity by his subordinates.[3] In August, when the highland rice is reaped, the first-fruits of the harvest are

[1] R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 500 *sq.* As to the Kols, Mundas, or Hos, see further E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), pp. 151 *sqq.*; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891–1892), ii. 101 *sqq.*; Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912).

[2] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 503 *sq.*; (Sir) George A. Grierson, in *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire*, i. 382-384.

[3] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 103; E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 186; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 512.

presented to Sing-bonga, and a white cock is sacrificed to him. Until this has been done, it would be an act of impiety to eat the new rice.[1] Sing-bonga, the Sun, is said to have married Chando Omol, that is, the Moon, but she deceived him on one occasion, and in his wrath he cut her in two; however, he repented of his rash deed and now he permits her at times to shine forth in all her beauty. The stars are her daughters.[2] Sing-bonga also figures as the creator in Munda cosmogony. In the beginning of time, we are told, the earth was covered with water; but Sing-bonga, the Sun-god, brooded over the face of the water, and the first beings to be born were a tortoise, a crab, and a leech. Sing-bonga commanded these first-born of all animals to bring him a lump of clay from out the depths of the primeval ocean. The tortoise and the crab by turns tried their skill, but in vain. However, the persevering leech succeeded in fishing a lump of clay from out the watery abyss, and out of that clay Sing-bonga moulded this beautiful earth of ours. At his command, too, the earth brought forth trees and plants, herbs and creepers of all sorts. Next Sing-bonga filled the earth with birds and beasts of many kinds and sizes. Last of all the swan laid an egg and out of the egg came forth a boy and a girl, the first of human beings. These were the first parents of the *Horo Honko*, the sons of men, as the Mundas still call themselves. But this first human pair, Tota Haram, the man, and Tota Buri, the woman, were innocent; they knew not the relations of the sexes until Sing-bonga taught them how to make rice-beer; then they drank of it and their eyes were opened, and in due time three sons or, according to another account, twelve sons and twelve daughters, were born to them, and these wandered over the face of the earth and became the ancestors of mankind.[3]

Sing-bonga as Creator.

The Korkus are a Munda or Kolarian tribe in the Central Provinces and Berar. They have a language of

Sun and Moon worshipped by the Korkus.

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 198; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 104.

[2] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 186.

[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Mundas and their Country*, Appendix I. pp. v.-vii. Compare E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 185; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 508.

their own, which resembles that of the Kols of Chota Nagpur.[1] Their principal deities are the Sun and Moon, both of whom in their language they call *Gomaj*, which is also the general word for a god. The Korkus claim to be descended from the Sun and Moon, and they invoke these deities at marriage. The head of each family offers a white she-goat and a white fowl to the Sun every third year; and when they begin to sow, the Korkus stand with the face to the sun; they also face the east at the performance of other rites. However, the Sun and Moon are scarcely expected to interest themselves in the common affairs of daily life; these are regulated rather by the local godlings, to whom accordingly the Korku appeals with more fervour than to the great luminaries that are so far away.[2] The Nahals, a forest tribe of the Central Provinces, seem to be a cross between Korkus and Bhils. They are divided into a number of totemic clans, among which the Surja clan worships Surya, the Sun, by offering him a fowl in the month of Pus (December-January); some members of the clan further keep a fast every Sunday. And while the dead of all the other clans are buried, the dead of the Sun-clan are burnt.[3] The Savars, another primitive tribe of the Central Provinces, are likewise divided into totemic clans, one of which, Suriya Bansia, takes its name from the sun. On the occasion of a solar eclipse members of the Sun-clan feed their caste fellows and throw away their earthen pots.[4]

Sun-worship among the Nahals and Savars.

The Bhuiyas are a non-Aryan tribe of Bengal, who have partially adopted the Hindoo customs and religion. It is thought that they belong rather to the Dravidian than to the Munda or Kolarian stock.[5] They worship the Sun under the titles of Boram or Dharm Deota, and they dedicate sacred groves to him, but make no image or other visible representation of the deity. As the creator and the first and greatest of the gods, Boram is invoked by them at the sowing season, when they offer him a white cock.[6] The

Sun-worship among the Bhuiyas and Kisans.

[1] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 550.

[2] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 557, 559; J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1871), p. 146.

[3] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iv. 259, 260, 261.

[4] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iv. 505.

[5] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 139.

[6] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 141. Compare *id.* p. 147.

Kisans, another primitive tribe of Bengal, short of stature, with broad truncated noses, protruding jaws, and a dusky complexion varying from dark brown to black, similarly adore the Sun and sacrifice white cocks to him.[1] The Bhumij, a tribe of Bengal who are allied to, if not identical with, the Mundas, revere the Sun, under the names of Sing-bonga and Dharm, as the giver of harvests to men and the cause of all those changes of the seasons which affect and control their agricultural fortunes.[2] The Juangs are an aboriginal tribe of Orissa. They claim to be the autochthones of the country, their ancestors having sprung from the ground on the banks of the Baitarni river, which they maintain to be older than the Ganges. Their stature is very short, the males averaging less than five feet in height. The forehead is low, the chin receding, the nasal bone very depressed, the mouth large, the lips very thick, the complexion a reddish brown, the hair coarse and frizzly. By their language they seem to be akin to the Mundas or Hos, though they repudiate all connexion with that tribe. They practise an extremely rude form of agriculture, and down to recent times wore nothing but leaves and beads. Colonel Dalton, who had seen many primitive tribes, regarded the Juangs as the most primitive he had ever met or read of.[3] He could find no word for god in their language and no idea of a future state in their minds. The even tenour of their lives, we are told, is not broken by any obligatory religious ceremonies. Yet when they are in distress they offer fowls to the Sun, and they sacrifice fowls to the Earth that she may yield them her fruits in due season. On these occasions an old man officiates as priest; he bears the title of Nagam.[4]

Sun-worship among the Bhumij and Juangs.

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 132 *sq.*

[2] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 124.

[3] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 152 *sq.*, 154, 157; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 350 *sq.*

[4] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 157; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 353. The inquiries of the latter writer led him to doubt the accuracy of Colonel Dalton's account of Juang religion or absence of religion. He found that the Juangs of Keunjhar worship a forest deity called Baram, who stands at the head of their religious system and is regarded with great veneration. Besides him they revere other deities, including Basumati or Mother Earth. Sacrifices of animals, milk, and sugar are offered to all these deities at seed-time and harvest, and the forest gods are carefully propitiated when a plot of land is cleared of jungle and prepared for the plough.

The Kharias of Chota Nagpur.

Closely related to the Juangs by language are the Kharias, one of the most backward tribes of the Munda or Kolarian stock. Their home is in Chota Nagpur, but a few of them are to be found in the Central Provinces. Their speech belongs to the Munda family, and they resemble the Mundas physically, though their features are somewhat coarser and their figures less well proportioned.[1] The legend which they tell of their origin tends to show that they are an elder branch of the Munda tribe. In this legend there occurs an incident like that of the caskets in *The Merchant of Venice*. They say that in days of old two brothers came to Chota Nagpur, and the younger of the two became king of the country. But the elder brother asked for a share of the inheritance. So the people put two caskets before him, and invited him to choose one. Now the one casket contained silver and the other only some earth. The elder brother chose the casket that contained the earth; hence he was informed that he and his descendants were fated to till the soil. The Kharias say that they are descended from the elder brother, while the younger brother became the ancestor of the Nagvansi Rajahs of Chota Nagpur.[2] Some of the Kharias are settled and are fair cultivators, but the wild Kharias, who frequent the crests of the forest-clad hills and mountains, are acquainted with no mode of agriculture except the barbarous system of burning down a patch of jungle and sowing the seed in the ashes between the stumps of the trees. These wandering savages are believed to be now rapidly dying out, and few Europeans have had an opportunity of seeing them in their homes. They have the reputation of being great wizards.[3] Like many other aboriginal tribes of India, they are divided into totemic and exogamous clans, the members of which pay reverence to their totems. Thus men who have the tortoise, the tiger, the leopard, the cobra, or the crocodile for their totem will not kill these animals; and though men who have rice

Legend of their origin.

Their totemic system.

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 158 *sq.*, 160 *sq.*; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 466; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 445, 453.

[2] R. V. Russell, *op. cit.* iii. 445 *sq.*

[3] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 158, 160; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 469, 470.

or salt for their totems cannot help eating these articles, they compromise by observing certain abstinences. Thus men of the Rice clan will not eat the scum that gathers over rice when it is boiling in a pot; and men of the Salt clan will not take up salt on one finger, though they are free to use two or more fingers for the purpose. Members of the Stone clan will not make ovens with stones, but only with clods of earth.[1] The Kharias worship various deities and among others the Sun, whom they call Bero or, according to another account, Giring Dubo. Every head of a family should in his lifetime make not less than five sacrifices to the Sun-god, the first of fowls, the second of a pig, the third of a white goat, the fourth of a ram, and the fifth of a buffalo. They think that this ought to content the deity for that generation, and they deem him ungrateful if, after accepting all these sacrifices, he does not behave handsomely to his votary. In praying to the Sun-god they address him as Parmeswar, a Hindoo word for deity. The sacrifices are always made in front of an ant-hill, which is used as an altar. This peculiar mode of sacrificing has fallen into desuetude among their kinsfolk the Mundas and Hos, but Colonel Dalton learned from some old men of these tribes that it was orthodox, though not now generally practised. In the worship of Bero, the Sun-god, it is the head of the family who acts as priest.[2] The Korwas are a small tribe of the Munda or Kolarian family, who lead a savage and almost nomadic life among the highlands of Chota Nagpur. A branch of them called the Saonts worship the Sun under the name of Bhagawan, and, like the Kharias, they sacrifice to him in an open place with an ant-hill for an altar.[3]

Sun-worship among the Kharias.

Sun-worship among the Korwas.

The Birhors are a small and very primitive tribe of nomadic hunters, who roam the highlands and forests of Chota Nagpur; their principal haunts are the hills and jungles which fringe that province on the east and north-east. The country occupied by the Birhors is a long succession of wooded hills, range beyond range, separated

The Birhors of Chota Nagpur.

[1] R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iii. 447.

[2] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 159; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, i. 468.

[3] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 221, 222, 223.

by open valleys. These valleys are alone fit for cultivation, and are sparsely inhabited by agricultural tribes on a higher level of culture than the Birhors. The Birhors generally select for their more or less temporary settlements (*tandas*) open glades on the tops or slopes of the wooded hills or the edges of the jungle. They wander about or settle down for a time in small groups of from three or four to about ten families, earning a precarious subsistence by hunting deer and other animals, snaring monkeys, which they eat, collecting bees' wax and honey, and gathering creepers, which they make into ropes for barter or sale in the neighbouring villages. But they also rear scanty crops of maize or beans by burning a patch of jungle, scratching the soil, and sowing seed in the ashes. In person they are small and very black, with sharp attenuated features and long matted hair. Their general appearance is very squalid. They live in little rude hovels made of bamboos and leaves.[1] Ethnically the Birhors belong to the same short, dark, long-headed, broad-nosed, and wavy-haired race as the Mundas, Hos, Santals, and Bhumij, and like these people they speak a language which is now classed in the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of the Austric speech, which extends throughout Indonesia and Melanesia.[2] They are divided into a series of totemic and exogamous clans with descent in the male line. To eat, kill, or destroy a man's own totemic animal is regarded by the Birhors as equivalent to killing a human member of the clan; and were a woman to kill her husband's totemic animal or destroy his totemic plant, she would be thought to have killed her husband himself. Men are supposed to resemble their totemic animal or plant in character or appearance. Thus members of the Vulture clan are said, like vultures, to have usually little hair on the crown of the head; members of the Wild Cat clan have bald foreheads; members of the Myrobolan (*lupung*) clan

Their totemic system.

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 8-10, 15 *sq.*, 24-26, 36, 39-41, 43-46. This valuable monograph embodies and supersedes the former very imperfect accounts of this interesting and hitherto little known tribe. It is based on the writer's personal observations and inquiries extending over many years. For some previous notices of the Birhors, see E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 158, 218-221.

[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 59.

are generally short and plump like the fruit of that plant, and so on.[1]

Sing-bonga, the head of the Bihor pantheon, identified with the Sun.

The Birhors, like their kinsfolk the Mundas, believe in a Supreme God whom they call Sing-bonga and identify with the Sun. In their language the word for sun is *singi*. The Hindoo name Bhagawan is also applied to him. He is believed to stand at the head of the pantheon but to take for the most part no active interest in human affairs, which are supposed to be controlled by the lesser spiritual beings or impersonal forces with which the fancy of the Birhor peoples the universe. Yet though Sing-bonga does not ordinarily cause harm to men, he may occasionally protect them from evil. To avert particular dangers the head of a family, with his face to the east, sacrifices to Sing-bonga a white goat or a white fowl, for the white colour symbolizes the white rays of the sun. Again, at the annual ceremony for the protection of the settlement (*tanda*) from harm, the headman offers Sing-bonga a white fowl. The Birhors also appeal to Sing-bonga for help on various other occasions. Thus when a man goes out to hunt or collect honey, he will sometimes invoke the aid of Sing-bonga in his search for game or honey.[2] On the day after a baby has been born, the father takes a jug of water in his hands, and, standing with his face to the east, slowly pours out the water, saying, "O Sing-bonga, I am making this libation of water to thee. May milk flow from the mother's breast like this water. I vow to offer thee 'milk flower'[3] when my desire is fulfilled."[4]

White victims sacrificed to Sing-bonga.

Sacrifices to Sing-bonga to ensure good crops.

Again, in order to ensure a good crop of maize or rice, the head of a Birhor family vows to sacrifice a white fowl to Sing-bonga at threshing, if the harvest should turn out well. In making this vow he sits with his face to the east before a low stool on which the seed is placed in a wooden vessel. The votive fowl is beside him, and he prays, saying, "I make this vow to thee, O Sing-bonga. May grains grow in abundance, and I shall sacrifice this white fowl to thee at the time of the threshing." Meantime he releases the white fowl and sacrifices a black one in the name of all the

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 89 *sqq.*, 97 *sq.*, 99-101.

[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 288, 297 *sq.*, 333, 553 *sq.*

[3] This is an euphemism for "cow's milk".

[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 225 *sq.*

neighbouring villages, so that the evil eye of any dweller in these villages may not fall on the crops. Then he sprinkles a few drops of blood of the sacrificed fowl on the seed, which is thereupon carried to the field and sown. This ceremony is observed at full moon in the month of Baisakh (April-May). A curious feature of the ritual is that on the eve of the ceremony a small fish is caught in a neighbouring stream or pool, taken home and kept in a jug of water until next day, when, after the seed has been sown, the fish is carried back to the stream or pool. It is believed that as the little fish grows in the water, so will the maize or rice grow in the field.[1] Again, after harvest, at the ceremony of eating the new rice, the owner of the fields drops milk from a jug on the new rice, and as he drops it he prays, saying, "Thou Sing-bonga in heaven, to-day I am giving thee milk. Drink it. From to-day may there be no sickness in stomach or head." A little of the new rice is then offered to the ancestral spirits, and afterwards all the family eat the new rice and drink rice beer.[2] It is a rule with the Birhors that women should not comb their hair at sunset. The reason is that Sing-bonga takes his supper at that hour after his day's work is over, and if women were so thoughtless as to comb their tresses at that time, some of the loose hair might fall into the god's rice, which he would naturally resent.[3]

Birhor theory of eclipses.

The Birhors have discovered a cause of solar and lunar eclipses which has escaped the notice of European astronomers. The truth is, according to them, that these luminaries have generously stood security for the debts of poor men, and when the creditors are tired of waiting for the repayment of their dues they send in bailiffs to take the Sun and Moon into custody. In the discharge of their painful duty the bailiffs meet with resistance; a struggle ensues, which the ignorant call an eclipse; finally the bailiffs are forcibly ejected, and the Sun and Moon go on their way rejoicing until the next occasion when they are brought into personal conflict with the minions of the law. During a lunar eclipse the Birhors clash iron implements together, seemingly in

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 373-375.
[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 356 *sq.*
[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 376.

order to assist the Moon in the tussle by scaring the bailiffs away.[1]

Birhor story of the creation of the earth and of man out of clay.

The Birhors look upon Sing-bonga as the creator and tell a story of the creation of the earth which closely resembles the one told by their kinsfolk the Mundas.[2] They say that in the beginning all was water, but a lotus plant lifted its head above the surface of the flood. Sing-bonga was at first in the nether regions, but he came up through the hollow stem of the lotus and seated himself on the flower of the plant. There he commanded first the tortoise and afterwards the crab to bring up some clay from under the water. The two creatures dived, one after the other, into the depths, but failed to bring the clay to the surface. Then Sing-bonga summoned the leech, who dived to the bottom, swallowed the clay, and emerging from the water disgorged it into the hand of Sing-bonga. The deity moulded the clay into the earth as we see it, flattening some parts of it with an iron leveller and scattering seeds of all sorts, which sprang up and became trees.[3] After that Sing-bonga created first a winged horse and next mankind. He made a clay figure of a man by day and left it to dry. But at night the horse came and trampled the clay figure and spoiled it, for he feared that, were man created, he would subjugate the horse and ride on his back. So next morning Sing-bonga found his clay man damaged. He then made a fresh man of clay and a dog also of clay, and laid them both out to dry. By evening the clay dog had dried up, and the wind blew into its nostrils, and it became a living dog. So Sing-bonga set the dog to guard the clay man, who was still damp. At night the horse came back and would have again attacked the clay man and trampled him into dust, but the dog barked and kept him off. And when the clay man dried up, Sing-bonga endowed him with life. Such is the origin of the human species.[4]

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 495.

[2] See above, p. 615.

[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 398-400.

[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 400-402. A similar story of the creation of mankind is told by the Mundas, but in their version a spider is substituted for a dog. See Sarat Chandra Roy, "The Divine Myths of the Mundas", *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, ii. (Bankipore, 1916) pp. 201 *sq.* For other Indian versions of the same story, see *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 17-19.

Birhor story of the first smelters of iron.

The Birhors say that at first men employed only sticks and stones as their tools and weapons, and that the Asurs were the first to smelt iron on this earth. But the thick smoke which issued from their furnaces began to incommode Sing-bonga up above. He sent messenger after messenger to dissuade the Asurs from smelting iron, but the Asurs refused to desist from their favourite occupation; and more than that they mutilated and drove away Sing-bonga's bird-messengers. So the messengers returned to Sing-bonga and reported to him what they had suffered at the hands of the Asurs. Then Sing-bonga himself in his wrath came down to earth, and in the shape of a boy afflicted with sores contrived to lure the male Asurs into a furnace and burn them alive. Finally, he hurled the female Asurs in different directions; and their spirits still haunt the rocks and woods, the pools and streams and springs on which they fell. Such was the origin of some of the elemental spirits.[1]

Similar story of the first smelters of iron told by the Mundas.

A similar story is told by the Mundas, the kinsfolk of the Birhors. They say that formerly there were people who served Sing-bonga in heaven. But seeing their faces reflected in a mirror they found that they were in the image of God and were therefore his equals. So they worked no more for God, and in his wrath the deity kicked them out of heaven. They fell on a place where iron-ore existed in abundance, and they immediately made seven furnaces and began to smelt the iron in them. But the fire of the furnaces burned the trees and the grass, and the smoke and the sparks ascended to heaven. This disturbed Sing-bonga up aloft, and he sent them word that they must work either by day or by night, but not both day and night. However, they would not obey him. Then Sing-bonga sent two king crows and an owl to warn them; but, far from paying heed to the warning, the smelters tried to catch the birds with their fire-tongs and spoil their long tails. Next Sing-bonga sent a crow and a lark on the same errand, but with no better result. For whereas crows had formerly been white, the smelters caught the messenger crow and smoked it black, which has been the colour of crows ever since; and they caught the lark and reddened it and flattened its head;

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 402 *sq.*

but the orders of the deity were not executed. After that Sing-bonga sent other messengers, but all in vain. At last he resolved to go himself. So down to earth he came and stopped at the house of an old couple of charcoal-burners, named Lutkum Haram and Lutkum Buri. For a time he served them incognito and amused himself by playing with the children of the smelters. The children played with balls of iron and he with eggs, but his eggs smashed their iron balls. When the old man and his wife went to the woods to make charcoal, they left Sing-bonga in charge of the hut and told him to watch the rice that was laid out to dry. But he played all the time, and the fowls ate up the rice, all but a few grains. When the old couple returned they mourned for the loss of their dinner; but Sing-bonga consoled them, and taking the few grains that were left he filled all the pots with them.

The smelters smelted in their own furnace.

By this time the furnaces of the smelters were all falling in, and the smelters sought a diviner to ascertain the cause. They placed rice on a winnowing-fan, and it led them to Sing-bonga, and they asked him what they should do. He answered, "You must offer a human sacrifice". But they could not find a man to sacrifice and so returned to Sing-bonga. On that the god said that he himself would be the sacrifice. Under his direction the smelters made a new furnace, and instead of iron-ore they put Sing-bonga himself into it and blew the bellows, and when the furnace was very hot they sprinkled water on the fire, as they had been directed, and lo! Sing-bonga came forth from the fire unhurt, and from the furnace flowed streams of gold and silver and precious stones, shining like the sun. Then said Sing-bonga, "See what one person has done; if you all pass through the furnace, what a heap of wealth you will have!" They agreed to be smelted; so they entered the fiery furnace, and the door was shut on them, and Sing-bonga ordered their wives to blow the bellows. In the furnace the smelters shrieked and yelled, which frightened their wives, who would have stopped plying the bellows; but Sing-bonga reassured them, saying, "Blow away! They are only quarrelling over the division of the spoil". Thus these wicked beings were all destroyed, because they had

not obeyed the word of Sing-bonga. Then the women said, "You have killed our husbands, what are we to do?" So Sing-bonga had compassion on them and assigned to each of them her abode; and they became the spirits (*bhuts*), both male and female, of the hills and rocks and groves, of the pools and rivers.[1]

Similar story of the first smelters of iron told by the Oraons.

The same story is told at full length, with minor variations of detail, by the Oraons to account for the origin of the evil spirits (*bhuts*) which play a large part in the mythology and religion of these people. In the Oraon version of the legend the deity is named not Sing-bonga but Bhagwan. The beings who persisted in smelting iron and kept their furnaces ablaze day and night are called the twelve brothers Asurs and the thirteen brothers Lodhas. The smoke of the furnaces was so thick and suffocating that God's horse fell sick and could not eat his corn. So, by the mouth of his messengers, the king crow and another bird resembling a hedge sparrow, God commanded the brothers to stop the nuisance. But the brothers paid no heed to his commands and even mauled and disfigured one of his messengers, the birds. So God himself descended to earth, and, taking the likeness of a man covered with purulent sores, he lodged with a kind old widow, who washed his sores and anointed him with oil. In return for her hospitality the deity miraculously increased her store of rice, to the astonishment of the widow. Being consulted by the iron-smelters as to the best mode of repairing their furnaces, which were falling into ruins, the disguised deity contrived, by the same trick as in the Munda version of the story, to decoy them into a furnace and shut them in, so that, when the furnace was opened again, nothing but charred bones was found in it. At that moment the deity jumped on his horse and was preparing to make a bolt for it, when the Asur widows came up, caught the steed by the bridle, and shouted, "We won't let you go. Now that our husbands are all dead, who is going to feed us?" In reply God pleaded the disobedience of their deceased husbands as a justification of the punishment he had inflicted upon them; but he wound up his admonition by saying, "Now I will

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 186 *sq.*

give you the means to live. Become evil spirits (*bhuts*), and your name will be Dehdebi and Dahadebi; go and live among the Oraons, who will offer sacrifices to you."[1] Such was the origin of the evil spirits.

Tradition of the first smelting of iron.

In these stories we seem to detect a dim reminiscence of the time when men discovered the art of smelting iron and began to substitute iron implements for the ancient tools of stone and wood. The wrath of the deity at the discoverers perhaps reflects the resentment felt by conservative members of the primitive community at the momentous innovation.

Birhor story of the separation of sky and earth.

The Birhors tell a story to explain why the sky is now so very far away. They say that in ancient times the sky was so low as almost to touch men's heads. Once, while an old woman was husking rice with a pestle and mortar, her pestle knocked against the sky with such force that the sky was pushed up and has remained ever since hung high aloft.[2] The Gonds give a like explanation of the separation of heaven and earth. According to them, the sky of old lay close down on the earth. One day an old woman was weeping, and when she stood up she knocked her head against the sky. In a rage she put up her broom and shoved the sky away; so it rose up above the earth and has stayed there ever since.[3] Similar myths of the severance of sky and earth have met us in West Africa.[4]

Sun-worship among the Malés.

The Malés are a Dravidian tribe of the Rajmahal hills. They are closely akin to the Oraons and physically represent the extreme Dravidian type as it is found in Bengal. Their stature is low, their complexion swarthy, and their figure sturdy. Their country is rocky and wooded, and by its help they were able to maintain a virtual independence during the period of Mussulman ascendancy in Bengal.[5] At the head of their religious system stands the Sun, whom they call Dharmer Gosain. He is represented by a roughly hewn post set up in front of each house. The Malés worship him

[1] Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., "Religion and Customs of the Uraons", *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. i. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1906), pp. 128-131.

[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 436.

[3] *Census of India, 1901*, vol. xiii. *Central Provinces*, Part I. *Report*, by R. V. Russell (Nagpur, 1902), p. 94.

[4] See above, pp. 96, 109.

[5] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 51.

with offerings of fowls, goats, and oil at the beginning of each harvest and at other times when any misfortune befalls the family. When people are gathered together for this purpose, the village headman, who acts as priest, goes round the congregation with an egg in his hand, and recites the names of certain spirits. Then he throws the egg away, apparently as a propitiatory offering, and enjoins the spirits to hold aloof and abstain from troubling the sacrifice.[1]

Sun worship among the Mal Paharias.

The Mal Paharias are a Dravidian tribe who inhabit the Ramgarh hills in the Santal Parganas. Their tribal affinities are obscure. Down to recent times they lived by hunting and by the rude method of cultivation known as *jhum*, which consists in burning patches of the jungle and sowing seed in the clearings.[2] Their chief divinity is the Sun, to whom they pay reverential obeisance both morning and evening. Occasionally on Sundays the head of a family testifies his respect for the Sun by a special service. For this sacred duty he must prepare himself by eating no salt on the previous Friday and fasting all Saturday, except for a light meal of molasses and milk at sunset. Before sunrise on Sunday morning a new earthen vessel, a new basket, some rice, oil, areca nuts, and vermilion are laid out on a clean space of ground in front of the house. The worshipper shows these offerings to the rising sun, and, addressing the luminary as Gosain, prays that he and his family may be guarded from any peril or trouble that might threaten them. The rice is then given to a goat, and while the animal is eating it, its head is cut off by a single blow from behind. The body of the goat is thereupon cooked and served up to the neighbours at a feast; the head alone, which is deemed sacred, is carefully reserved for the members of the family. Next in honour to the Sun is Dharti Mai, that is, Mother Earth.[3]

The Oraons, a Dravidian people of Chota Nagpur.

The Oraons are an important Dravidian tribe of the Chota Nagpur tableland. They number altogether about

[1] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 57.

[2] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 66.

[3] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 70. Compare E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 275, "I have no information regarding the religion of this tribe, except that they worship the earth and sun".

750,000 persons, of whom 85,000 now belong to the Central Provinces, where they are commonly known as Dhangars, which means farm-servants. The name Oraon has been applied to them by other people; their own name for themselves is Kurukh or Kurunkh. The meaning of both names is obscure.[1] Physically the people are small but well-proportioned; their complexion is of the darkest brown, approaching to black; their hair is jet black, coarse, and inclined to be frizzy. Protruding jaws and teeth, thick lips, low narrow foreheads, and broad flat noses characterize their faces; their eyes are often bright and full; no obliquity is observable in the opening of the eyelids. The countenances of the Oraon youths beam with animation and good-humour. Their supple, lithe figures are often models of symmetry; they have not the squat appearance or muscular development of the dumpy Himalayan tribes. There are about the young Oraon a jaunty air and a mirthful expression that distinguish him from the Munda or Ho, who has more of the dignified gravity that is said to characterize the North American Indian. He is a dandy, but only so long as he remains unmarried. In his roll of hair gleams a small mirror set in brass; from his ears dangle bright brass chains with spiky pendants, and as he trips along with the springy elastic step of youth and tosses his head like a high-mettled steed in the buoyancy of his animal spirits, he sets all his glittering ornaments dancing and jingling, and his laughing mouth displays a row of ivory teeth, sound, white, and regular, that give light and animation to his dusky features. In point of character and temperament the Oraons are said to be, if not the most virtuous, perhaps the most cheerful of the human race.[2]

The country of the Oraons.

Essentially an agricultural people, they would seem to have chosen their present home on account of its adaptation to their favourite pursuits.[3] Their country is the most gently

[1] R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iv. 299 *sq.*; E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 245.

[2] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 249, 250 *sq.*, 262; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 139; Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur* (Ranchi, 1915), pp. 80 *sq.*; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iv. 315 *sq.*

[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, p. 105.

undulating portion of the Chota Nagpur tableland. At the present day it presents to view vast areas of terraced rice-fields, divided by swelling uplands, some of them well-wooded with groves of mango, tamarind, and other useful and ornamental trees, others bearing stately remnants of the ancient forests, which still linger on these heights, the haunts of sylvan sprites who took refuge there in days long ago when the woodman's axe was first heard in the verdurous solitudes of the valleys. The landscape is diversified by deep ravines, sounding cataracts, and masses of rocks piled fantastically upon each other or soaring in pinnacles hundreds of feet high, like the domes of sunken temples in some ruined and buried city. In many places the rock shows for acres together just flush with the surface of the ground, as if the crust of the earth had there been stripped bare. Such spots the Oraons choose above all others as sites for their villages. The flat or gently undulating rock affords them threshing floors, hard surfaces on which to spread out their grain to dry, holes which they can use as mortars for pounding their rice, and open spaces where they can trip it in the dances that they love. In the distance this Indian Arcadia is generally bounded on one or more sides by ranges of low hills.[1]

Dharmesh, the Supreme God of the Oraons, manifested in the sun.

The Oraons acknowledge a Supreme God, whom they call Dharmesh or Dharmes, the Holy One, who is manifest in the sun. They regard him as a perfectly pure and beneficent being, who created us and would in his mercy preserve us, were it not that his benevolent designs are thwarted by malignant spirits or minor deities, to whom Dharmesh has left the management of the world. These evil spirits (*bhuts*) men are obliged to propitiate, since Dharmesh in general cannot or will not interfere, when once the fiends have fastened upon us. It is therefore of little or no use to pray or sacrifice to him; hence, though he is acknowledged and reverenced, he is nevertheless neglected, while the evil spirits are adored.[2] Yet we are told that in

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 246; Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, pp. 52 *sq.*

[2] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 256; Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., "Religion and Customs of the Uraons", *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. i. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1906), p. 125.

their greatest difficulties, when neither the village priest nor the magician has availed to help them, the Oraons will turn to Dharmesh as a last resource and say, "Now we have tried everything, but we have still you to help us". Then they sacrifice a white cock to him. They wash the feet of the bird, and cut its throat with a knife, and pray, saying, "God, thou art our creator, have mercy on us". This sacrifice of a white cock is offered to Dharmesh at all the feasts, and also when the magician drives away the evil spirits.[1]

Marriage of Sun and Earth among the Oraons.

We have seen that the Oraons celebrate the marriage of the Sun-god with Mother Earth at a festival in spring, when the parts of the two deities are played by the village priest and his wife, and that until the mystic union of the god and goddess has been thus consummated, the Oraons may not use nor even gather the new roots, fruits, and flowers of the season.[2]

The Santals, a Dravidian tribe of Bengal.

The Santals are a large Dravidian tribe of Bengal, who on the ground of their language are classed with the Kols or Mundas. They occupy a strip of country some four hundred miles long by a hundred miles broad, which stretches along the whole western frontier of Lower Bengal from within a few miles of the sea to the hills of Bhagulpore. The nucleus of the tribe is to be found in the Santal Parganas or Santalia, which in the second half of the nineteenth century was said to contain upwards of two hundred thousand of them. At the same time their total numbers were estimated at nearly two millions. In appearance the Santals may be regarded as typical examples of the pure Dravidian stock. Their complexion varies from a very dark brown to almost charcoal black: the bridge of the nose is depressed: the mouth is large, the lips thick and protruding: the hair is coarse, black, and occasionally curly. The proportions of the skull, which approach the long-headed type, refute the hypothesis of their Mongolian descent. Their faces are round and blubbery; by some observers the cast of countenance is

[1] Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., "Religion and Customs of the Uraons," *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. i. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1906), p. 125; R. V. Russell, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, iv. 310.

[2] See above, pp. 380 *sq.*

thought to approach the negro type. Their stature is about that of the ordinary Hindoo or a little less.[1] They delight in hunting and are very expert with bows and arrows, their constant weapons in the chase. Every year, in the hot season, when the game can least find cover, they have a great hunting expedition in which thousands take part. But the Santal also practises a form of husbandry for which he is in no way indebted to the superior races who have ousted him from the valleys, and before whom he retreats into the depths of the forest, where he feels most at home. There he clears patches of the jungle for cultivation; there his harmonious flutes sound sweeter, his drums find deeper echoes, and his bows and arrows freer exercise. For him a country denuded of the primeval forest has no attractions. The jungle is his unfailing friend. It supplies all his simple wants, yielding him everything that the lowlander lacks—noble timber, brilliant dyes, gums, bees' wax, vegetable drugs, charms, charcoal, and the skins of wild beasts—a little world of barbaric wealth to be had for the taking. There, in some sequestered spot among the woods and hills, he makes his home; and there now and then a wandering sportsman is surprised to stumble on a Santal village. There the Santal dwells secluded from the Hindoos, from whose contact he shrinks. The only Hindoo whom the sylvan folk tolerate is the blacksmith, who is attached to the village and does all the working in iron for the hamlet, fashioning among other things the armlets and rude jewellery in which the Santal matron delights.[2]

Their shifting cultivation.

Like many other Dravidian tribes of India, the Santals worship the Sun, but as to the exact place which he holds in their pantheon the accounts of our authorities are somewhat conflicting. According to Colonel Dalton, who has given us a valuable account of the people, among the Santals of Chota Nagpur the Sun is the supreme god; they call him Sing-bonga, and look upon him as their creator and preserver. Every third year in most houses, but in some

Sun-worship among the Santals.

They call the Sun Sing-bonga and sacrifice goats to him.

[1] (Sir) W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*[6] (London, 1872), pp. 145 *sq.*; E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 207, 212; (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 224 *sq.*

[2] (Sir) W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*[6], pp. 210-215, 218; E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 208 *sq.*, 216.

every fourth or fifth year, the head of the family offers a goat to the Sun-god, Sing-bonga, for the prosperity of the family, especially of the children, "that they may not be cut off by disease, or fall into sin". The sacrifice is offered at sunrise on any open space cleaned and purified for the occasion. "A very important distinction is observed by all the Kolarians in the motive of the sacrifices to the supreme deity and those by which the minor gods are propitiated. To Sing Bonga the sacrifice is to secure a continuance of his mercies and for preservation. The other deities are resorted to when disease or misfortune visits the family, the sacrifice being to propitiate the spirit who is supposed to be afflicting or punishing them."[1] But according to Sir William Hunter and Sir Herbert Risley, the national god of the Santals and the head of their pantheon is not the Sun-god Sing-bonga but "Marang Buru, the Great Mountain, who appears in their legends as the guardian and sponsor of their race; the divinity who watched over their birth, provided for their earliest wants, and brought their first parents together in marriage. In private and in public, in time of tribulation and in time of wealth, in health and in sickness, on the natal bed and by the death-bed, the Great Mountain is invoked with bloody offerings."[2] However, Sir William Hunter so far agrees with Colonel Dalton as to admit that the Sun-god, whom he calls Chando, is theoretically acknowledged as supreme in the religious system of the Santals, although he seldom receives sacrifice. "Sometimes they adore him as the Sim-bonga, the god who eats chickens, and once in four or five years a feast in his honour is held. The Santal religion, in fact, seems to consist of a mythology constructed upon the family basis, but rooted in a still more primitive system of nature-worship."[3] According to Sir Herbert Risley, every Santal ought to sacrifice two goats, or a goat and a sheep, to the Sun at least once in his life;[4]

Santal worship of Marang Buru, the Great Mountain.

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 213, 214.

[2] (Sir) W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*[5], p. 186. Compare (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 232.

[3] (Sir) W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*[5], p. 184. According to Dalton, the Santals worship Chando Bonga as the Moon-god, not the Sun-god (*Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 214).

[4] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 234.

Traces of a Supreme Being called Thakur, identified with the Sun, among the Santals.

and he tells us that "according to Mr. Skrefsrud traces may be discerned in the background of the Santal religion of a *fainéant* Supreme Being called Thakur, whom the Santals have long ceased to worship for the sufficient reason that he is too good to trouble himself about anybody and does neither good nor ill to mankind. Some identify him with the Sun, whom the Santals regard as a good god and worship every fifth or tenth year with sacrifices of slain goats. But this point is uncertain, and I am myself inclined to doubt whether a god bearing the Hindu name Thakur, and exercising supreme powers which mark a comparatively late stage of theological development, can really have formed part of the original system of the Santals."[1]

Worship of the Sun and the heavenly bodies not developed among the hill-tribes of Assam.

Among the Mongoloid hill-tribes of Assam, who differ radically both in race and language from the Dravidians of India, the worship of the heavenly bodies, including the sun and moon, appears to be either absent or very little developed. Thus of the Lushais we are told that they "do not worship the sun or moon or any of the forces of nature, though when wishing to emphasize a statement they frequently say, 'If what I say is not true, may the sun and moon desert me'. But they believe the hills, streams, and trees are inhabited by various demons."[2] Similarly of the Sema Nagas we read that "the forces and phenomena of nature, though not definitely deified by the Semas, are often regarded as the manifestations or abodes of spirits. In the case of the sun and moon they are not worshipped or deified, and no clear conception at all is entertained of their nature. They are regarded as phenomena, and their existence is taken as a matter of course, but they are called upon to witness oaths and asseverations, and cannot be falsely invoked with impunity."[3] In all oaths it is deemed essential by the Semas that the swearing should take place between sunrise and sunset, "that the sun may see the

[1] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, ii. 232.

[2] J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 65.

[3] J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), pp. 249 *sq.* Elsewhere, speaking of the hill tribes of Assam, Mr. Hutton observes that "there seems to be no worship of the sun or moon at all, though they are called on to witness oaths, 'since they see all that takes place', as a Naga put it to me". See J. H. Hutton, "Some Astronomical Beliefs in Assam," *Folk-lore*, xxxvi. (1925) p. 116.

oath".[1] The implication seems to be that the sun is a conscious and powerful being who can punish perjury. A being so conceived is on the highroad to divinity. The Angami Nagas so far personify the Sun that they regard him as female, the wife of the Moon, whom they look on as a male. Being a woman, she is afraid to go about in the dark and only shows herself by day; whereas her husband the Moon, being a man, moves fearlessly about in the gloom of night.[2] The Lhota Nagas think that the sun is a flaming plate of hard metal, as big as a piece of ground on which one basket of seed rice is sown; by day it travels along its path in the sky, and at night it returns back under the earth and lights up the Land of the Dead; and the moon is just such another plate of flaming metal.[3] Conceived in this materialistic way, the luminaries are far indeed from being deified. The Mikirs, one of the most numerous and homogeneous of the many Tibeto-Burman tribes inhabiting Assam, regard the sun and moon as divine, but do not specially propitiate them.[4] However, among the hill-tribes of Assam the one which seems to have approached most nearly to a worship of the Sun is the Ao. Of this tribe we are told that "among the Aos, although there is no distinctive nature worship, there is something which closely approaches it. In a way there is a sun worship, but it would be more accurate to say that they worshipped the deity who controls it and its beneficent rays. When the weather is inclement for several days, the priests collect a number of eggs, and, going to a particular spot, break them and eat them raw, hanging up the shells for the deity. Then they implore the sun deity to grant favourable weather; otherwise the villagers must suffer from lack of food. This is followed by a rest day, when the priests go from house to house, drinking rice beer and singing praises to the sun. At times they sacrifice cows and pigs to the ruling spirits of

Approach to Sun-worship among the Aos of Assam.

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, p. 166.

[2] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (London, 1921), pp. 410 *sq.* One of Mr. Hutton's informants reversed the sexes of the luminaries, but in doing so he contradicted the normal Angami version (*op. cit.* p. 259). The Khasis also represent the sun as female and the moon as male. See P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis*[2] (London, 1914), pp. 172 *sq.*

[3] J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), p. 172.

[4] E. Stack, *The Mikirs* (London, 1908), pp. 1, 33.

the sun and moon. According to the Aos this has been a customary practice from the beginning of time, and should it not be kept up, the pigs and cattle would die and the crops fail. At some of the other festivals they appeal to the deities of heaven and earth, of the sun and of the moon, to be favourable unto them."[1]

Traces of Sun-worship among the Mongoloid tribes of Burma, the Kachins or Singphos and the Palaungs.

Among the Mongoloid tribes of Burma, immediately to the east of Assam, a few traces of Sun-worship have been recorded. Thus among the Kachins or Singphos (Chingpaws), a large tribe of Upper Burma, the spirits (*nats*) of the Sun and Moon are worshipped once each year, but only by the chief, who jealously guards the privilege. The ceremony takes place in the cold season. No living thing is sacrificed, but food and drink are offered, and the chief begs the spirits of the two great luminaries to protect the whole village.[2] The Palaungs, a tribe inhabiting some of the hills in the Shan States of Burma, profess Buddhism, but like many Buddhists they retain numerous beliefs and practices which have survived from an older worship of nature.[3] Thus, they regard the Sun and Moon as brother spirits so powerful that they are almost ranked as gods. It is believed that if these mighty beings are offended, they can send sickness, sunstroke, violent headaches, or fever as a punishment. If a wise man, on being consulted, decides that sickness is caused by one of these great lights, he advises the patient to take a freshly cut bamboo, split one end of it, and insert two streamers in the split, one red to represent the Sun, and one white to represent the Moon. Further, to the top of the bamboo pole he must fasten two pieces of paper, one of them round or white, with a peacock drawn on it, the other crescent-shaped, with a hare drawn on it; the round white paper stands for the Sun, and the crescent-shaped paper stands for the Moon; and the drawings are obviously appropriate to the luminaries which they represent, because, as everybody knows, a peacock lives in the Sun and a hare resides in the Moon. Having decorated the pole with these symbols, the sufferer plants it firmly in the ground. Then beside it he

[1] W. C. Smith, *The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam* (London, 1925), pp. 87 *sq.*

[2] (Sir) J. George Scott and J. P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part I. vol. i. (Rangoon, 1900) p. 435.

[3] Mrs. Leslie Milne, *The Home of an Eastern Clan* (Oxford, 1924), p. 312.

sets up a shorter stalk of green bamboo, which supports a rough basket. In this basket he places yellow rice and yellow or red flowers for the Sun, and white rice and white flowers for the Moon, with two curries, one sweet and one sour, on the top of the rice. But before he sets up this basket of offerings, the sick man holds it as high as he can above his head and prays, saying, "To-day I am ill; I fear that I may have offended thee, O Sun! thee, O Moon! pity me, please. I offer this rice and curry and these flowers to you both. Grant that I may overcome this illness, O Sun! O Moon!" It is best to offer this prayer at dawn.[1]

Sun-worship among the Todas of the Neilgherry Hills.

The Todas, who inhabit the lofty tableland of the Neilgherry Hills in Southern India, are a small tribe isolated from their neighbours alike by natural surroundings, race, temperament, and occupation. Their racial affinities are unknown; there is no reason to connect them with the Dravidians, the prevailing people of Southern India, from whom they differ totally in physical type. They occupy themselves exclusively with the care of their cattle: their religion centres round their sacred buffaloes: the dairies are their temples, and the dairymen their priests: the chief dairyman (*palol*) is a very sacred personage, a sort of high-priest.[2] But there is no doubt that the Sun is also an object of reverence to the Todas. It is the duty of every man, when first he leaves his hut in the morning, to salute the Sun by raising his hand to his face; and when the sacred dairyman (*palol*) comes out of his dairy to milk the buffaloes, he salutes the Sun by raising his milking-pail and churn to his forehead. All Dr. Rivers' Toda informants were unanimous in saying that the salutation of the sacred dairyman was offered both to the buffaloes and the Sun. The doors of the great majority of the dairies face more or less in an easterly direction, so that the dairyman, in coming out of his dairy in the morning, can see the sun; and where the dairy faces in a different direction he has to turn so as to salute with his face to the east. In the afternoon he salutes in the same direction as in the morning, so that, so far as the salutation

[1] Mrs. Leslie Milne, *The Home of an Eastern Clan* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 256 *sq.*

[2] W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), pp. 38, 42, 98-105, 448 *sq.*, 680 *sq.*

is performed to the Sun, it would seem that reverence is paid rather to the place of sunrise than to the Sun itself.[1] According to Colonel W. E. Marshall, the Todas salaam to the rising and setting Sun (*bîrsh*) and to the Moon (*tiggalu*) at night, reciting the one form of prayer which they use on all devout occasions: it runs thus, "May it be well with the male children, the men, the cows, the female calves, and every one".[2]

[1] W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas*, pp. 94, 126, 128, 436.

[2] Lieut.-Colonel W. E. Marshall, *Travels amongst the Todas* (London, 1873), pp. 71, 123.

CHAPTER XV

THE WORSHIP OF THE SUN IN JAPAN

THE ancient religion of Japan is known as Shinto, or "the Way of the Gods". It is essentially a worship of nature, that is, of the material aspects of the physical world personified as gods or goddesses. The view that it was primarily a worship of ancestors, upon which the worship of nature was afterwards grafted,[1] appears to be erroneous. It is rejected by two of our best modern authorities on Japanese religion, W. G. Aston and M. Revon. According to Aston, "Shinto, which has been described as exclusively a cult of ancestors and deceased sovereigns, has in reality little of this element. It is in the main a worship of nature. The man-deities are of more recent origin and of minor importance".[2] Indeed, he holds that "the worship of ancestors is an importation from China and has no place in the older Shinto".[3] Similarly the French scholar, M. Michael Revon, while he admits that the worship of ancestors became the dominant feature of Shinto at a certain period, is of opinion that this cult of the dead was developed later than the worship of nature, and in proof of it he refers to the prominence given to spirits of nature in ancient Japanese ritual and annals.[4] This ancient worship of nature, which was no doubt in former times the national religion of Japan, has long been thrust into the background by Buddhism, the

Shinto, the ancient religion of Japan, a worship of nature.

[1] W. E. Griffis, *The Religions of Japan* (London, 1895), p. 88, "From the emperor to the humblest believer, the god-way is founded on ancestor worship, and has had grafted upon its ritual system nature worship".

[2] W. G. Aston, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. (Edinburgh, 1920) p. 463.

[3] W. G. Aston, *op. cit.* p. 464.

[4] Michael Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. (Paris, 1907) pp. 57 *sq.*

lofty morality of which furnishes a striking contrast to the general absence of ethical teaching in Shinto,[1] and therefore strengthens its appeal to a people so intelligent and civilized as the Japanese. Yet the old faith still retains a certain hold on the mind of the people, manifesting itself particularly in that adoration of the Sun which appears to have been from the earliest times a salient feature of the national religion. The absence of a moral code in Shinto is acknowledged by modern native commentators, who account for it by the innate perfection of the Japanese nature, which renders such outward props of morality superfluous. It is only, they insinuate, the inferior races, such as the Chinese and Europeans, whose natural depravity requires from time to time to be corrected by the preaching of sages and reformers.[2]

The Sun-goddess, the most eminent of Japanese deities.

Of all the Shinto deities (*kamis*) the most eminent is the Sun-goddess, the personification of the physical sun. She is described as the Ruler of Heaven and as unrivalled in dignity. She wears royal insignia, is surrounded by ministers, and is spoken of in terms appropriate to personages of sovereign rank. From her the Mikados claim to derive their descent and authority. Yet she is hardly what we understand by a Supreme Being. Her power does not extend to the sea and to the Land of Darkness (*yomi*), the Japanese Hades. The commission to rule the Heaven was conferred on her by her parents, and did not by any means convey despotic power. Important celestial matters are determined, not by her, but by a Council of the Gods. The heavenly constitution, like its earthly counterpart, on which no doubt it was modelled, is far from being an absolute monarchy.[3]

Japanese names of the Sun-goddess.

The ordinary Japanese name of the Sun-goddess is *Ama-terasu no Oho-kami*, "the Heaven-shining Great Deity". European writers usually abridge it to *Ama-terasu*, which,

[1] W. G. Aston, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 469.

[2] Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*[4] (London, 1902), p. 414.

[3] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods* (London, 1905), pp. 123 *sq.*; *id.*, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 466. The commonest and most comprehensive word for deity in the Japanese language is *kami*. Its proper meaning is "top" or "above". Applied to persons, human or divine, it signifies little more than "superior". See W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 7-10; B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, Records of Ancient Matters*, pp. xvii *sq.* (*Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Supplement to vol. x.).

however, is a mere epithet, and as such is applied to other deities. She is also called *Ama-terasu hiru-me*, "Heaven-shining Sun-female", or, more briefly, *Hirume*. Another of her titles is *Ama-terasu mi oya*, "Heaven-shining august-parent". In modern times the old title *Ama-terasu no Oho-kami* is little used, and is commonly replaced by its Chinese equivalent *Tenshodaijin*. Partly under cover of a name which is less intelligible to the multitude, the tendency has increased to throw the solar nature of the goddess into the shade and to conceive of her simply as a general Providence at the expense of other divinities. In this way she has made a distinct advance to the dignity of a supreme monotheistic deity. Even in ancient times there was some recognition of the Sun-Goddess as a Providence who watched over human affairs, especially over the welfare of the Mikado and his government. She is said to have provided Jimmu, the first of the Mikados, with a Sun-crow to guide his army.[1] The solar character of the goddess having become obscured, the people have personified the sun afresh under the names of *Nichi-rin sama*, "Sun-wheel-personage", and *O tento sama*, "August-heaven-path-personage". To the lower class of Japanese at the present day, and especially to women and children, *O tento sama* is the actual sun, conceived without sex and without myth, unencumbered by any formal cult, but looked up to as a moral being who rewards the good, punishes the wicked, and enforces oaths made in his name.[2]

The sacred mirror the symbol of the Sun-goddess.

The material symbol or embodiment (*shintai*) of the Sun-goddess, is a mirror, sometimes called the eight-hand-mirror (*yata-kagami*) or the Sun-form-mirror. It is kept in a box to this day in the great shrine at Ise, which has been called the very heart of the ancient Japanese religion. The mirror is about eight inches in diameter. It is treated with the greatest care and reverence, and is even spoken of as if it were the Sun-goddess herself.[3] Religious honours are still

[1] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 124 *sq.*

[2] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 127.

[3] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 134 *sq.*; *id.*, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 466. It is M. Revon who calls the temple at Ise "the very heart of the ancient Japanese religion" (*Le Shintoïsme*, i. 41).

paid to it or to its representative.[1] Formerly the female attendants of the imperial palace used to offer rice, fish, cakes, cloth, and so forth at every new moon to the sacred mirror which represented the goddess. In the modern form of the worship the emperor himself does homage to the shrine which contains the symbols of divinity.[2]

The bird of the Sun-goddess.

The Sun-goddess was also provided with a bird as her messenger and attendant. In Japanese the bird is called *yata-garasu*, "eight-hand crow". It is said to be borrowed from China, where it is called the Sun-crow or Golden Crow, and is described as a bird of a red colour and three claws, which roosts in the sun. Mention of this remarkable fowl occurs in a Chinese poem written in 314 B.C. As a symbol of the Sun it was wrought on the banners set up in front of the Imperial Palace on State occasions. This custom is known to go back to 700 A.D. and is probably much older.[3]

Royal princess dedicated to the service of the Sun-goddess.

At the beginning of every reign an unmarried princess of the imperial blood used to be chosen by divination and consecrated to the service of the Sun-goddess at Ise. For three years before she took up her duties she went on the first day of every month to a sacred hall and worshipped towards the Great Shrine of Ise; this period of preparation was called the "three years' purity".[4]

The Food-goddess, Uka Mochi.

Next to the Sun-goddess the most important, or at all events the most universally popular, deity of the Shinto pantheon is the Food-goddess, Uke-mochi; the outer shrine at Ise is dedicated to her. At the present time daily offerings are made to the two goddesses at Ise. They consist of four cups of rice-beer (*sake*), sixteen saucers of rice and four of salt, besides fish, birds, fruits, seaweed, and vegetables.[5] According to Hirata, the Japanese theologian who worked for a revival of the Shinto religion in the first half of the nineteenth century, no flesh was offered in sacrifice to the Sun-goddess.[6] Clothing was formerly

[1] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 72.

[2] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 291 *sq.*

[3] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 136.

[4] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 205 *sq.*

[5] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 161, 162, 219; *id.*, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 467.

[6] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 254. As to Hirata, who lived from 1776 to 1843 A.D., see *id.* pp. 373 *sq.*

presented to the Sun-goddess at Ise twice a year, in the fourth and ninth months. Her shrine at Ise used to be rebuilt every twentieth year. A special form of liturgy (*norito*) was prescribed for the occasion.[1] Many people go on pilgrimage to the shrines of the Sun-goddess and the Food-goddess at Ise. More than eleven thousand pilgrims have been known to pay their devotions at Ise on New Year's Day. Boys and even girls often run away from home and beg their way to Ise. This is regarded as a pardonable escapade. When an actual visit to a shrine is difficult or impossible, the worshipper may offer his homage from a distance. In some places special shrines are provided at which the deity graciously consents to accept this worship at a distance.[2] On the coast of Ise there is a famous spot to which pilgrims resort in order to worship the Sun as he rises over the distant Mount Fujiyama, the Olympus of Japan. There is a mark to indicate the proper direction in which the devotees should do obeisance to the orb of day. In the eastern wall of a private courtyard a round hole may occasionally be seen for the convenience of worshipping the morning sun. There is a modern custom called Sun-waiting (*himachi*), which consists in keeping awake the whole night of the fifth day of the tenth month in order to worship the Sun at his rising. The rules of religious purity must be observed from the previous day. Many persons assemble at various open places in Tokio for the sake of worshipping the Sun on the first day of the year. This is called "the First Sunrise" (*hat su no hi no de*).[3] The ordinary Japanese salutation to the rising Sun is to bow the head.[4]

Pilgrimages to the shrine of the Sun-goddess at Ise.

Among the places of pilgrimage are the tops of lofty mountains, where the worshipper naturally feels himself nearer to the heavenly gods. The great sacred mountain of Japan is Mount Fuji or Fujiyama, a volcano of very regular shape, like an inverted fan, more than 12,000 feet high.[5] Thousands of pilgrims ascend it annually, but

Pilgrimages to worship the Sun or the tops of mountains

[1] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 287.

[2] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 239 *sq.*; *id.*, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 468.

[3] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 128.

[4] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 208.

[5] B. H. Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*[4] (London, 1902), pp. 189 *sqq.*

only during two months of the year, from the fifteenth of July to the tenth of September. During the rest of the year, woe to the rash intruder who should dare to transgress the prescribed lines![1] Another peak to which pilgrims resort is the lofty Mount Ontake, "the August Peak". The mountain is an ancient volcano; sulphurous fumes still burst from crevices in the rocks. On the top Mr. Weston witnessed a band of white-robed pilgrims making their offerings at the shrine and then worshipping the Goddess of the Sun. It was dawn and streaks of golden light were stealing up into the azure sky. First of all the pilgrims clapped their hands to call the attention of the divinity to their prayers, and then broke into a series of chants of invocation. Mingled with the chants were repetitions of the prayer which is constantly heard on the lips of pilgrims as they toil up the slopes of a holy mountain: "May our six senses be pure, and may the weather on the honourable peak be fine!" Next followed a series of extraordinary pantomimic gestures called "seal-knots" (*in musabi*). With intense energy and earnestness the devotees twisted and tied the fingers of both hands into the oddest combinations of knots, like the "cat's cradles" made by children at play. Each twist, each knot had its own special significance, being addressed to those invisible powers of evil from whose insidious machinations the pilgrim prayed to be delivered, grunting loudly as he made each cabalistic sign.[2]

Blessings expected of the Sun-goddess.

The Goddess of the Sun is not only looked up to with gratitude for the warmth and light which she sheds on the world; she is also supposed to grant bodily health and success in business to her devotees. Further, she protects the country from invasion, and bestows many other blessings which have no obvious relation to her functions as a solar power.[3] Hence some modern writers, both Japanese and

[1] Walter Weston, *Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps* (London, 1896), p. 193.

[2] W. Weston, *op. cit.* pp. 279 *sq.* Elsewhere (p. 272) Mr. Weston mentions that pilgrims are clad in ceremonial white. The clapping of hands was in ancient times a general token of respect in Japan. The number of hand-claps was minutely described in the old ritual. In some ceremonies the number was thirty-two. In more modern times hand-clapping as a token of respect has been confined to divine worship. See W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 209.

[3] W. G. Aston, "Shinto", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 464.

European, have inclined to hold that the Sun-goddess Amaterasu is not so much the physical sun as a deity who rules and guides the sun. Thus the native theologian Hirata maintained that the Sun-goddess was not the Ruler of Heaven but the Ruler of the Sun;[1] and Mr. Basil Chamberlain thinks that in the ancient Japanese mythology "the sun is ruled over by a goddess, the glorious Ama-terasu".[2] But such nice distinctions do not trouble the heads of simple-minded Sun-worshippers. To them the sun, the physical sun, is a god, and that is an end of it. Of this truth we are assured again and again by good observers, who have lived among the Japanese and seen them at their devotions. Thus Dr. W. E. Griffis, formerly of the Imperial University of Tokio, tells us that "to the common people the sun is actually a god, as none can doubt who sees them worshipping it morning and evening. The writer can never forget one of many similar scenes in Tokio, when late one afternoon O Tento Sama (the Sun-Lord of Heaven), which had been hidden behind clouds for a fortnight, shone out on the muddy streets. In a moment, as with the promptness of a military drill, scores of people rushed out of their houses and with faces westward, kneeling, squatting, began prayer and worship before the great luminary."[3]

Japanese deification of the physical Sun.

To the same effect M. Revon tells us that he questioned several devout Shintoists in Japan as to their real thought in this matter, and they assured him that in Ama-terasu, the Sun-goddess, they by no means worshipped a spirit controlling the sun and more or less independent of it, but actually the real, material sun, the animate celestial body which gives light and warmth to men.[4] In the junks and steamers which ply on the Inner Sea there are always some pious passengers who do reverence to the rising or setting sun, and the boatmen are bound by custom thus to adore the great orb of day when he appears above the horizon in the east. So, too, where the railway runs in sight of the sacred Mount Fuji-yama, whether on the side of the sea or where the golden dolphins of the castle of Nagoya glitter in the morning or the

M. Revon on Japanese deification of the physical Sun.

[1] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 124.

[2] Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*[4] (London, 1902), p. 435.

[3] W. E. Griffis, *The Religions of Japan*, p. 87.

[4] M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 77, note [3].

evening light, many passengers, looking out of the windows, pay their respects to the rising or the setting sun; the third-class passengers are particularly assiduous in their devotions.[1] In short, to adopt the words of M. Revon, "the Japanese people adore the Sun as a living god; the worship which they pay him is not vague and spiritual, it is direct and absolutely real, when, every morning, the glorious luminary rises in face of his worshipper, lighting up and warming all things, or at evening when he is about to plunge into the night. And such is the inward, instinctive faith of the whole religious public, from the artisan who, from the back of his dark shop, turns towards the bright dawn, claps his hands and recites piously his prayer to the goddess, up to the pilgrim who, on the summit of Mount Fujiyama, prostrates himself, with dazzled eyes, before the first golden shafts of light and worships the orb with forehead bowed down to the rocks."[2] "For my part," adds M. Revon, "I must confess that one morning on the summit of Fuji, perceiving myself alone in a scene which might have befitted the Last Judgment, faced by the radiant orb which seemed to me like the last living thing of creation, I had a lively illusion that it was a personal being; and when, a moment afterwards, I saw pilgrims hasting from all sides to adore him, I thought their faith perfectly natural. If Herbert Spencer had been there, perhaps he would have abandoned his theory that the worship of the Sun sprang from the worship of the dead through a mistake about their posthumous names."[3]

Mythical origin of the Sun-goddess.

The ancient mythology of Japan relates the origin of the Sun-goddess as follows. Both of the two old native histories of Japan, the *Kojiki* or "Records" and the *Nihongi* or "Chronicles",[4] begin with describing a state of primeval

[1] M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 78, note [1].

[2] M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 77 *sq.*

[3] M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 78, note [1].

[4] For our knowledge of ancient Japanese history and mythology we are indebted mainly to two early Japanese works, the *Kojiki*, or "Records of Ancient Matters", and the *Nihongi*, or "Chronicles of Japan". The *Kojiki* was compiled by Imperial order and completed in 712 A.D. It has been translated into English, with a valuable introduction, by Mr. Basil Hall Chamberlain, and the translation has been published as a Supplement to the tenth volume of the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*. The *Nihongi* has been translated into English by Mr. W. G. Aston, and the translation has been published as Supplement I. to the *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*,

chaos, in which Heaven and Earth were not yet separated from each other, but adhered together in a mass like an egg. In time the two elements parted from each other, the purer and lighter rising to form the Heaven, while the grosser and heavier sank to form the Earth. Thereafter Divine Beings were produced between them.[1] Then followed seven generations of gods, of whom the last were a brother and sister called Izanagi and Izanami. The name of the brother, Izanagi, has been interpreted "Male who invites", and the name of the sister Izanami, has been interpreted "Female who invites", but this interpretation is doubtful. Be that as it may, the brother and sister appear to be personifications of the dual creative powers of the universe; and as ideas so abstract are probably late, we may assume, with some likelihood, that the conception of this pair of creators originated long after that of the simpler and more concrete deities of nature, such as the gods of the Sun and Moon. At all events the brother and sister are said to have united in marriage, and by their union to have produced, first, the various islands of the Japanese Archipalego, and afterwards a brood of gods and goddesses, many of whom we should call personifications of the powers of nature, such as the Wind-Gods, the Sea-gods, the Gods of Mountains and Valleys, the God of Trees, and the Goddess of Food. The youngest born was the God of Fire, and in bringing

Izanagi and Izanami, brother and sister, husband and wife.

London, in two volumes (London, 1896). The scope of the two works is the same, but the later book (the *Nihongi*, or "Chronicles"), though composed only a few years after the *Kojiki*, is written in Chinese and under Chinese influence, which has deeply coloured the whole, omitting or rationalizing some of the most childish and barbarous myths. At the same time the *Nihongi* has an independent value of its own, in so far as the author has added to the original text many variants of the current myths which might otherwise have been lost. Nevertheless, the earlier work, the *Kojiki*, or "Records", is the most important monument of early Japanese literature, "because it has preserved for us more faithfully than any other book the mythology, the manners, the language, and the traditional history of Ancient Japan. Indeed it is the earliest authentic connected literary product of that large division of the human race which has been variously denominated Turanian, Scythian, and Altaic, and it even precedes by at least a century the most ancient extant literary compositions of non-Aryan India. Soon after the date of its compilation, most of the salient features of distinctive Japanese nationality were buried under a superincumbent mass of Chinese culture". See B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, Introduction, pp. i *sqq.*; W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 2 *sq.*

[1] B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, p. 4; W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 1 *sq.*

him into the world his mother expired, being burnt by the flames which emanated from the body of the infant. So she passed away to the Land of Yomi, the Japanese Hades, the Land of the Dead. Her disconsolate husband pursued her thither, and implored her to return, like Orpheus seeking to recall his lost Eurydice. But sadly she said, "My lord and husband, why is thy coming so late? I have already eaten of the cooking-furnace of Yomi. But I am about to lie down to rest. Look not on me." But look at her he did by the light of a torch made from the tooth of a comb which he wore in his hair. What he saw was dreadful. For her body was already falling into putrefaction: maggots swarmed over it; and the eight Thunder-gods had been generated in her members. Horrified at the spectacle he turned and fled, pursued by the Infernal Hags whom his dead wife, enraged at the shame of her exposure, sent after him to slay him. As he fled he threw down first his comb and then his head-dress to delay his pursuers. The comb was changed into bamboo-shoots, which the Hags stopped to devour. The head-dress was changed into grapes, and again the dreadful beings tarried to pick them up. When he reached the Even Pass of Yomi, he found three peaches growing there, and plucking them he hurled them at his pursuers, who turned and fled back. But at the same Even Pass of Yomi the fugitive was overtaken by his dead wife herself, Izanami. He took a great rock and blocked up the pass: he pronounced the words of divorce: he said, "Come no farther"; and he threw down his staff, his garments, and his shoes. So husband and wife parted for ever.[1]

The dead Izanami sought by her husband Izanagi in the Land of the Dead.

Purification of Izanagi on his return from the Land of the Dead.

On returning from this vain attempt to recover his lost spouse, Izanagi's first care was to bathe in a river or the sea in order to purify himself from the pollution which he had contracted in the Land of the Dead. As he did so, fresh deities were born from each article of clothing that he threw down beside the water, and also from each part of his person. For example, one deity was produced from his august girdle, another from his august trousers, and a third

[1] B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, pp. xlv *sq.*, 16 *sqq.*, 29 *sq.*, 34-39; W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 5 *sqq.*, 21-25; *id.*, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 85-94, 169-172.

from his august hat. The Sun-goddess was born when he washed his august left eye; the Moon-god was born when he washed his august right eye, and a god called Susa-no-Wo, or the Impetuous Male, was born when he washed his august nose. To the Sun-goddess her father assigned the heaven to rule over, to the Moon-god he gave dominion over the night, and to the Impetuous Male God he committed the kingdom of the sea. But the Impetuous Male, whom modern scholars variously interpret as a personification of the rain-storm and so forth, was not content with his lot; he did not accept the kingdom of the sea, but blubbered and wept till his beard reached the pit of his stomach. He wept till the green mountains were withered and all the rivers and seas, curiously enough, dried up. When his father, exasperated at this exuberance of sorrow, asked him testily what he meant by it, his hopeful offspring replied, "I wail because I wish to depart to the land of my deceased mother, to the Nether Distant Land". Then the great God his father was very wroth, and forthwith expelled him with a divine expulsion.[1]

The Sun-goddess born from the left eye of Izanagi.

But before the Impetuous Male Deity went down to the Nether Land, he begged to be allowed to ascend for a brief space to heaven, there to meet his elder sister the Sun-goddess once more, after which he promised to depart for ever. Leave was granted him, and up he went accordingly. But such was the fierceness and impetuosity of his nature that at his going there was a commotion in the sea, the rivers trembled, and the hills and mountains groaned aloud. His sister, who knew his violence and wickedness, was startled, and her countenance was changed at the sound of his coming. She said to herself, "Is my younger brother coming with good intentions? I think it must be his purpose to rob me of my kingdom. By the charge which our parents gave to their children, each of us has his own allotted limits. Why, therefore, does he reject the kingdom to which he should proceed, and make bold to come spying here?" So she bound up her hair into knots, and tied up her skirts into the form of trousers. She slung her quivers on her back: she

Ascent of the Impetuous Male Deity to heaven and his interview with his sister the Sun-goddess.

[1] B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, pp. xlvi, 39-45; W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 26-28; *id.*, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 95, 137 *sqq.*; M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 62 *sqq.*

drew a dread loud-sounding elbow-pad on her lower arm: she gripped her sword hilt: she stamped on the hard earth of the courtyard: she sank her thighs into it as if had been snow: she kicked it in all directions. Thus prepared for the worst, she uttered a mighty cry of defiance, and questioned her younger brother, the Impetuous Male Deity, in a straightforward manner. He soothed her agitation, he allayed her suspicions. He said, "From the beginning my heart has not been black. But as in obedience to the stern behest of our parents, I am about to proceed for ever to the Nether Land, how could I bear to depart without having seen face to face thee, my elder sister? It is for this reason that I have traversed on foot the clouds and mists and have come hither from afar. I am surprised that my elder sister should, on the contrary, put on so stern a countenance."

Covenant of the Sun-goddess with the Impetuous Male Deity at the River of Heaven.

Touched at this display of family affection, she answered, "If this be so, how wilt thou make evident the redness of thy heart?" He answered and said, "Let us, I pray thee, make an oath together. Bound by this oath, we shall surely produce children." So they swore to each other, standing on opposite banks of the calm River of Heaven, which mortals call the Milky Way. She asked him for his sword, whereof the jewels made a jingling sound: she broke it into three pieces, she brandished them, she dipped them in the Pool of Heaven: she crunched them with her teeth crunchingly, and blew them away, and from the true mists of her breath gods were born. And he asked his sister for the string of jewels that was twined in her august hair: he brandished it with a jingling sound: he dipped it in the Pool of Heaven, and having crunchingly crunched the jewels between his teeth, he blew them away, and from the true mist of his breath were gods produced. Thus were eight divine children born into the world. Through one of them, who rejoiced in the euphonious name of Masa-ya-a-katsu-kachi-haya-hi-ama-no-oshi-ho-mi-mi, the Mikados trace their descent from the Sun-goddess.[1]

After that, for reasons which it is no longer possible to

[1] B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, pp. 45 *sqq.*; W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 33 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 96 *sq.*; M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 65 *sq.*

ascertain, the conduct of the Impetuous Male Deity became in the highest degree rude and unseemly. It chanced that the Sun-goddess had laid out rice-fields both of the long and of the narrow sort. Well, when the seed was sown in spring, what did the Impetuous Male Deity do but break down the fences and fill up the ditches; and when autumn came, the abandoned wretch let loose the heavenly piebald colts and made them to lie down in the midst of the rice-fields. Worse than that, when the Sun-goddess was about to celebrate the festival of first-fruits, he made his way into the palace and defiled it in a disgusting manner. All this the Sun-goddess bore with admirable patience, and even found excuses for her wayward brother's misconduct. Encouraged, perhaps, by her leniency, he proceeded to greater excesses than ever. While the Sun-goddess sat in her weaving-hall, surrounded by her handmaids plying their looms and weaving the august garments of the gods, the miscreant took a heavenly piebald horse, flayed it, beginning at the tail, and, having broken a hole in the roof of the weaving-hall, he dropped the flayed horse, no longer piebald, into the room. Down it crashed into the midst of the handmaids, who, in their terror, injured themselves with their shuttles and died of the injury on the spot. The patience of the goddess was exhausted by this last unmanly outrage. She straightway entered the Rock-cave of Heaven, and bolting the door behind her dwelt there in sullen seclusion. Deserted by the Sun-goddess, the world was now plunged in darkness, which threatened to be eternal: the cheerful alternation of day and night ceased: instead, night reigned perpetually. The gods naturally were much alarmed. They gathered in their myriads by the Calm River of Heaven and considered what was to be done in this emergency, and how they could entice the sulky goddess from the cave. They resorted to the most approved modes of divination, by consulting the shoulder-blade of a stag and by stripping off the bark from a cherry-tree. They assembled the long-singing birds of night, by which we are to understand the barndoor fowls, and caused them to sing in chorus at the door of the cave. But it was all in vain. The Sun-goddess turned a deaf ear to their melodious voices. They caused the Smith of Heaven

Outrageous behaviour of the Impetuous Male Deity.

The Sun-goddess retires into the Rock-cave of Heaven, leaving the world in darkness.

to make a mirror, an eight-hand mirror. They pulled up by its roots a true *Cleyera japonica*[1] with five hundred branches. They hung a string of five hundred jewels to its upper branches, and the mirror to its middle branches, while on its lower boughs they hung blue soft offerings and white soft offerings. Then the gods, and particularly the white August Heavenly-Beckoning-Ancestor-Lord, prayerfully recited grand liturgies. But the heart of the angry goddess was still not moved: she remained silent in the cave: the bolt did not grate in its socket: the door did not creak on its hinges. As a last resource, one of the goddesses, by name August Heavenly-Alarming-Female, rigged herself out in a sash of club-moss and a head-dress of spindle-tree, with a posy of bamboo grass in her hands. Thus arrayed she turned a tub upside down and danced on the top of it. As she bounced about and stamped on the improvised sounding-board, High Heaven shook, and the myriads of gods roared with laughter. The Sun-goddess in the cave heard the laughter. Her curiosity was excited. She cautiously set the door ajar and peeped out. Two of the gods now pushed forward the mirror and respectfully showed it to the goddess. She gazed on it in astonishment and edged her way a little farther out. Thereupon one of the gods, by name the Heavenly Hand-Strength-Male-Deity, who had artfully concealed himself behind the door, pounced on her, took her august hand, and drew her forth. So the plain of High Heaven and the Central Land of Reed-plains (that is, Japan), grew light again. The gods were overjoyed, and gleefully they cried aloud, "O how delightful it is again to see each others' faces!" They besought her not to return into the cave. But as for the Impetuous Male Deity, who had done all the mischief, the gods imposed on him a fine of a thousand tables of offerings, and they shaved his beard, plucked out the nails of his fingers and toes, and expelled him with a divine expulsion.[2] On the other hand, the goddess, who by her

How the Sun-goddess was lured from the cave and light was restored to the world.

[1] In Japanese *saka-ki*. It is commonly planted in the precincts of Shinto temples.

[2] B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, pp. 52-59; W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 40-45; *id.*, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, pp. 96-101; M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 66-71; G. Kato and H. Hoshino, *Imbe-no-Hironari's Kogoshui, or Gleanings from Ancient Stories*, translated with an Introduction and Notes (Sanseido, 1924), pp. 18-23.

dance had lured the Sun-goddess from the darksome cave, became the ancestress of the inspired diviners, who, in after ages, played an important part in the ceremony of Quieting the Imperial Spirit.[1]

This strange story is the kernel of the mythical lore of Japan. From it were deduced some of the principal ceremonies of the Shinto religion, as they were practised at the Mikado's court.[2] Substantially the story would seem to be a mythical explanation of a solar eclipse.[3]

The story a myth of a solar eclipse.

Not less barbarous is the tale told in the *Nihongi* to explain why the sun and moon do not shine together. It is said that when the Sun-goddess Ama-terasu had been raised by her divine father to heaven, she heard that the Goddess of Food, Uke-mochi, was in the Central Land of Reed-plains, that is, in Japan; so she sent her brother the Moon-god, Tsuki-yomi, to wait upon her. The Moon-god descended to earth and paid a visit to the Goddess of Food, who prepared to receive him with lavish hospitality. For this purpose she turned her head towards the land, and from her mouth she spewed out boiled rice: she faced the sea, and from her mouth she vomited things broad of fin and things narrow of fin: she looked towards the mountains, and from her mouth she disgorged things rough of hair and things soft of hair. All these dainties, the fruit of her vomit, she set out on one hundred tables for the entertainment of the Moon-god. But far from accepting the proffered hospitality, the Moon-god flushed with anger and exclaimed, "Filthy! Nasty! That thou shouldst dare to feed me with things disgorged from thy mouth!" With that he drew his sword and slew the Goddess of Food. Then he returned to heaven and reported everything to the Sun-goddess. But she was exceedingly angry and said, "Thou art a wicked deity! I may not see thee face to face." So the Sun-goddess and the Moon-god were separated by one day and one night and dwelt apart.[4] Such is the real reason for the separation of Sun and Moon.

Myth to explain why the Sun and Moon do not shine together.

[1] G. Kato and H. Hoshino, *op. cit.* p. 82.

[2] W. G. Aston, *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, p. 101.

[3] This is the interpretation of M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 67, 69.

[4] W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, i. 32. The passage is also translated by Mr. B. H. Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters*, Introduction, p. xxiii, note [21]. Compare M. Revon, *Le Shintoïsme*, i. 32 *sq.*

Sun-worship among the Ainos of Japan.

The barbarous Ainos, the aboriginal inhabitants of Japan, reckon the Sun and the Moon among their gods, but assign them only a subordinate place in their pantheon.[1] Yet we read that in Aino theology "the deity who is supposed to hold the most important office next the great Creator of all may be said to be the goddess of the sun, for she is conceived of as being the special ruler of the good things God has made and fixed in the universe".[2] However, we are informed by the same authority that the Ainos suppose the sun to be rather the vehicle of the goddess than the goddess herself; she rules it, she resides in it, her brightness shines through it, and it is her glory, not the splendour of the physical sun, that the Aino adores.[3] When the Sun is eclipsed, the Ainos think that the deity is fainting or dying, and they throw water into the air to revive him, just as, for the same purpose, they squirt water into the face of a swooning or dying person.[4] While most Ainos speak of the Sun in the feminine gender, some of them look on him as a male and the Moon as a female, his wife. They say that the male is appointed to do his work by day and the female by night. The divine Sun has the brightest and best clothes to wear, and that is why he shines so clearly. His garments consist of white embroidery, and he has a larger body than his wife. The Moon is like a round cake made of millet, and is clothed in dark and wide garments worn one over the other, as anybody can see for himself by looking at her. When the Moon is invisible, it is because she has gone to visit her husband. But among the Ainos persons who actually worship the Sun and Moon are few in number.[5] Such worship as they pay to the luminaries appears to consist in pouring libations of rice-beer, with waving of bowls and hands, but without any spiritual act of deprecation or supplication.[6]

[1] B. Scheube, "Die Ainos", *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft b. S. und S.-Ostasiens* (Yokohama), Heft xxii. p. 14; R. Hitchcock, "The Ainos of Yezo, Japan", *Smithsonian Institution, Report of the National Museum for 1890* (Washington, 1892), p. 472.

[2] J. Batchelor, *The Ainu and their Folk-lore* (London, 1901), p. 63.

[3] J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* pp. 63 *sq.*

[4] J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* pp. 64 *sq.*

[5] J. Batchelor, *op. cit.* pp. 63, 67.

[6] Isabella L. Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (London, 1911), p. 274.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WORSHIP OF THE SUN IN INDONESIA

General absence of Sun-worship in Indonesia.

THE worship of the Sun appears for the most part to be absent among the Malays and the other races who inhabit the Malay Peninsula and the great region known as Indonesia or the Indian Archipelago. We are told that among the deities of the Malay pantheon the White Divinity, who dwells in the Sun, and the Black Divinity, who dwells in the Moon, are of some importance, but nothing is said of any worship paid to them. The Malays also believe in a Yellow Divinity who dwells in the Yellow Sunset-glow; but they deem the sunset-glow most dangerous, and when they see it they try to put it out by spitting water towards it, which can hardly be regarded as a form of worship.[1] The Semangs, a primitive aboriginal tribe of the Malay Peninsula, are said to worship the Sun, but the statement appears to be inaccurate.[2] However, they are reported to personify the Sun as a female with an actual

The White Divinity of the Malays.

The Sun personified by the Semangs of the Malay Peninsula and by the Bataks of Sumatra.

[1] W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), pp. 92 *sq.*

[2] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), ii. 202. The authors quote Newbold as the authority for the statement, but I do not find the statement in the passage to which they refer. But speaking of the wild tribes of the Malay Peninsula in general, Newbold affirms that most of them "possess only faint glimmering ideas respecting the existence of a Supreme Being; but with the savages of Tartary and North America, they adore a superior power, not in temples made with hands, not in the form of graven, sculptured, or painted images, but through the medium of one of the greatest and most splendid of his apparent created works—the Sun—the Baal of the Chaldeans—the Mithras of the Persians—and the Belphegor of the Moabites". See T. J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (London, 1839), ii. 385. But little weight can be attached to this vague and rhetorical statement.

human figure, who is married to a husband called Ag-ag or the Crow.[1] Such a personification is at least a step in the direction of deification. Again, of the Bataks, a people in the interior of Sumatra, who have always maintained their political and religious independence against the rising tide of Mohammedanism, we are told that "they know nothing of a worship of nature in the proper sense of the word. Sun, moon, and stars were created by Debata, but are not worshipped. The powers of nature are certainly feared, but not adored."[2] However, the Bataks conceive of the sun and moon as living persons, who sometimes wage war on each other.[3] But here, again, personification is not worship, though it may be a step towards it.

Worship of the Sun in Timor and the adjoining islands.

However, a definite worship of the Sun is reported to be practised in a group of islands, of which Timor is much the largest and most important, situated in the south-eastern part of the Indian Archipelago, though even there the worship would seem to be not highly developed. In this respect the religion of the Timoreese and their neighbours differs notably from the religion of the other peoples of the Indian Archipelago.[4]

Worship of spirits (*nitu*) in the Indian Archipelago.

As a rule, the religions of the pagan peoples of the Archipelago conform to a single type, being based on a faith in spirits of nature and souls of the dead, both of which classes of spiritual beings are believed to be endowed with the power of benefiting or injuring mankind; both are accordingly feared and propitiated. The names for these formidable and worshipful beings vary in different parts of the Archipelago. The general name for both is *nitu*, which is widely diffused among the islands, though in some of them it is confined to the spirits of the dead, while in others it is applied by preference to the spirits of nature. Fear of both

[1] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, ii. 202.

[2] J. Warneck, *Die Religion der Batak* (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 1, 125. Debata, the Batak name for God, is apparently the Hindoo *Devata*, "godling", a diminutive of *Deva*, "God". See J. Warneck, *op. cit.* p. 1; W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, i. 3 *sq.* The same name occurs, with variations, in other parts of the Indian Archipelago. See A. C. Kruijt, "Indonesians", in J. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vii. 249 *sq.*

[3] J. Warneck, *Die Religion der Batak*, p. 6.

[4] G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Leyden, 1893), pp. 625 *sq.*

sorts of spirits is the fundamental motive of the religion and finds expression in a complicated ritual.[1]

Worship of spirits in Timor.

In its essential features the religion of the Timoreese does not diverge from this general type. It is mainly concerned with the spirits of the dead and the spirits of nature, especially with the spirits of earth (*nitu*), because these mighty beings are supposed to exercise far greater influence on human affairs than the celestial deities, and consequently far more offerings are made to them. But besides these lower spirits the Timoreese recognize the existence of certain higher divinities, and this recognition constitutes the distinctive feature of their religion. Amongst these higher divinities the most exalted is Usi-Neno, whose name means "Lord Sun", from *usi* "lord" and *neno* "sun". It does not mean "Lord of the Sun", which would be Neno-Usi. Thus Usi-Neno is a direct personification and deification of the physical sun; he is not simply a god or spirit who resides in the sun and regulates its operations. He is conceived as the male principle, but as too exalted to meddle much with terrestrial affairs. Next to him in rank is Usi-Afu, whose name means "Lady Earth". She is thus the physical earth personified as a goddess, the wife of the Lord Sun. From their union the whole creation is thought to have originated, and it is their union which still imparts fertility and growth to every living thing. The Earth-goddess receives, along with the other earth-spirits, more sacrifices than are offered to the Sun-god; indeed, apart from certain special rites, the Sun-god appears to be worshipped with a great sacrifice only once a year, at the end of the harvest. At that festival his wife, the Earth-goddess, is not forgotten, but her share of the offerings is small, consisting only of a few grains of rice and maize thrown on the ground. But at other times she, like her husband, receives bloody sacrifices of fowls, goats, pigs, and buffaloes. Horses are sacrificed to the Sun-god alone, but such sacrifices appear to be rare. The victims offered to the Sun-god must be male and of a white or red colour; the victims offered to the

Worship of the Lord Sun (Usi-Neno) and of Lady Earth (Usi-Afu).

Sacrifices to these two deities.

[1] J. Warneck, *Die Religion der Batak*, pp. 1-3; G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, pp. 544 *sqq.*, 554, 624 *sq.*

Earth-goddess must be female; according to one account their colour is indifferent, but according to other writers the victims destined for the Earth-goddess and the other earth-spirits must be black.[1] It is said that the people may not directly invoke the Sun-god and implore his blessing; the ancestral spirits (*nitu*) are thought to be the indispensable intermediaries between the great god and men; it is they who are charged with the duty of presenting the prayers of mortals to Usi-Neno and acting as their advocates with him; hence to induce them to use their good offices it is customary from time to time to offer sacrifices on their graves.[2] One of our authorities for Sun-worship in Timor says nothing about the Earth-goddess Usi-Afu, but does mention a certain Usi-Paha, "Lord of the Earth", whom he classes among the evil spirits. On the other hand, he tells us that the Timoreese worship the Moon as a goddess, whom they call Funan and regard as the only and eternal consort of the Sun-god.[3] Such inconsistencies may be due to the imperfect information of our authorities; but more probably, perhaps, they are inherent in the vague and unsystematic thinking of the natives themselves. In Timor some chiefs of distinction and authority bear the honourable title of *Nenoh-ana* or *Neno-o-ân*, "Son of the Sun".[4] If it rains too much or threatens

Chiefs in Timor called Sons of the Sun.

[1] J. S. G. Gramberg, "Een maand in de binnenlanden van Timor", *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxxvi. (1872) pp. 206-209; S. Müller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel* (Amsterdam, 1857), ii. 261-263; A. Bastian, *Indonesien*, ii. *Timor und umliegende Inseln* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 1 *sq.*; H. Zondervan, "Timor en de Timoreezen", *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, v. Afdeeling: Meer uitgebreide artikelen (Leyden, 1888), pp. 397-399, 403 *sq.*; G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, pp. 624-626; *id.*, "Het animisme bij den volken van den Indischen Archipel", *Verspreide Geschriften* (The Hague, 1912), iii. 173 *sq.* Our principal authority is Gramberg; his evidence is reproduced by Zondervan and Wilken. S. Müller describes the worship of the Sun-god Usi-Neno, but not that of the Earth-goddess Usi-Afu.

[2] S. Müller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel*, ii. 261.

[3] S. Müller, *op. cit.* ii. 262. A similar statement as to the Moon-goddess (Funan) and her relation to the Sun in Timor is made by A. Bastian (*Indonesien*, ii. *Timor und umliegende Inseln*, p. 1), but he may be copying S. Müller.

[4] J. S. G. Gramberg, *op. cit.* p. 185; J. G. F. Riedel, "Prohibitieve teekens en tatuage-vormen op het eiland Timor", *Tijdschrift van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xlix. (Batavia, 1907) p. 5 (separate reprint). Compare A. Bastian, *Indonesien*, ii. *Timor und umliegende Inseln*, p. 8, who gives as the title *Nena-Anak*, "Children of the Sun".

to rain when dry weather is wanted, the Timoreese sacrifice a white or red pig to obtain sunshine; but if they desire to procure rain, they sacrifice a black pig. Probably, though our chief authority does not say so,[1] the white or red pig is sacrificed to the Sun-god and the black pig to the Earth-goddess.[2] In any case the colour of the victim is no doubt adapted to the object in view, the white or red answering to the brightness of sunshine, and the black to the darkness of rain-clouds. Such an adaptation is common in ceremonies intended to procure sunshine or rain; it is based on the principle of sympathetic or imitative magic.[3]

Sacrifices for sunshine or rain.

While the elements of Sun-worship appear thus to exist in Timor, it is significant of the variety of religious beliefs prevalent in these islands, that in the neighbouring island of Sumba no worship is paid to the sun, moon, and stars, though the people believe in a god who lives above the clouds; they call him Umbu Walu Mendoku, which means "the Lord who makes everything", but they do not worship him directly.[4]

Absence of Sun-worship in Sumba.

The natives of Rotti, an island to the south-west of Timor, believe in the existence of certain invisible beings, some kindly, some malignant, endowed with mysterious powers, to whose action they ascribe every event that happens to them in life, whether it be good or bad fortune, joy or sorrow, prosperity or adversity. Their chief deity is called Mane-tua-lai, which is thought to mean "Great Lord of Heaven" or simply "Heavenly Lord". Some people hold that this great divinity has his seat in the Sun (*ledoh*); but others, and indeed the majority, are of opinion that he dwells in the moon (*bulak*). From him, even should he not be propitiated by sacrifices, men have nothing to fear: still out of simple gratitude it behoves them now and then, after a successful undertaking, to offer to the deity a sacrifice, which must always consist of white victims, whether fowls, sheep, or what not. But at such ceremonies the name of the

Doubtful worship of the Sun in Rotti.

[1] J. S. G. Gramberg, *op. cit.* p. 209.

[2] This is expressly affirmed by H. Zondervan (*op. cit.* pp. 403 *sq.*), whose account, however, appears to be based on that of Gramberg.

[3] For examples see *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 290 *sqq.*

[4] S. Roos, "Bijdragen tot de Kennis van Taal, Land en Volk of het eiland Soemba", *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxxvi. (1872) pp. 59 *sq.*

divinity may not be uttered; he is too lofty and too awful a being for his name to be profaned by human lips.[1]

Worship of the Sun, Moon, and Earth in Solor.

The inhabitants of Solor, an island to the north-west of Timor, profess Mohammedanism, but retain many heathenish superstitions. They speak, indeed, of Allah, the great invisible God, who created everything and dwells in the sky; but that does not prevent them from invoking also the Sun (*Rarak*), the Moon (*Wulan*), and the Earth (*Tanah*) and making offerings to them on special occasions. They believe that the ghosts of the first human pair, by name Nuba and Nara, still roam the earth, haunt old fig-trees, the clefts of rocks and so forth, and transmit the petitions of mortals to the higher gods, supporting them by their intercession.[2]

Doubtful worship of the Sun in Wetar.

In Wetar, an island to the north of Timor, the people recognize a deity whom they call the Great Lord or the Ancient up above (*Wawaki* or *Wawahaki*), who dwells in the sun (*lelo*) or in the vault of heaven, and represents the male principle as distinct from the female principle, which they identify with the earth (*rae* or *raa*). Their ideas of him are vague, but they pray and sacrifice to him in sickness or after an evil dream and on other occasions.[3]

Worship of the Sun under the name of Upulero or Dudilaa in Leti, Sermata, Babar and Timorlaut.

To the east of Timor stretches an archipelago, or rather series of small archipelagos, including the Leti, Sermata, Babar, and Timorlaut groups of islands. The pagan inhabitants of all these islands worship the Sun as their highest deity under the title of Upulero or Upulera, that is, Lord Sun. In the Timorlaut Islands he is also known as Dudilaa. His worshippers regard him as a male principle who fertilizes the Earth or female principle, who in the Leti Islands is called Upunusa or Grandmother Earth. No images are made of the Sun-god, but he is worshipped under the form of a lamp made of coco-nut leaves, which may be seen everywhere hanging on the houses and on the branches of the sacred fig-trees. Under these trees lies a large flat stone which

[1] S. Müller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel*, ii. 272 *sq.* As to the meaning of the name *Mane-tua-lai*, compare G. Heijmering, "Zeden en gewoonten op het eiland Rottie", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie*, 1844, vol. i. 86 *sqq.*, who gives a fuller list (pp. 85 *sqq.*) of the numerous gods and spirits who are revered or feared in Rotti. He tells us that *lai* means heaven or the sky.

[2] S. Müller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel*, ii. 285 *sq.*

[3] J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik-en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), p. 436.

serves as an altar. On it the heads of slain foes were and are still placed in some of the islands. Once a year, at the commencement of the rainy season, when the east monsoon begins to blow, a great festival, called *poreka*, *poreke*, or *porka*, and lasting usually a month, is held in honour of the Sun-god.[1] At that time the deity is believed to descend into the sacred fig-tree in order to fertilize Grandmother Earth. To facilitate his descent, a ladder, with seven or ten rungs and adorned with carved figures of cocks, is considerately placed at his disposal under the tree; and in the Babar archipelago, to attract his attention, blasts are blown on a triton-shell. Pigs and dogs are sacrificed in profusion. Men and women alike indulge in a saturnalia; and the mystic union of the Sun and the Earth is dramatically represented in public, amid song and dance, by the real union of the sexes under the tree. The object of the festival, we are told, is to procure rain, plenty of food and drink, abundance of cattle and children, and riches from Grandfather Sun. The arrangements for the festival are made by a man and woman, the ministers of the local deities who protect the village. During the festival the man prays thrice to the Sun-god. His first prayer runs somewhat as follows: "O Lord or Grandfather Sun, come down! The fig-tree has put forth new shoots; the former shoots have turned to leaves and have fallen off. The pig's flesh is ready, cut in slices. The canoes of the village are full to overflowing of offerings. Lord or Grandfather Sun, thou art invited to the feast. Cut and eat. Cleave the bamboo and drink. There are heaps of rice, there are packets of cooked rice. O drink indeed! We have given the heart of a fowl that is excellent, the liver of a pig that is excellent. The fowl has bright eyes, the liver of the pig is red in colour. O come indeed, Lord or Grandfather Sun! We expect that thou wilt give into our hands much ivory, much gold. Let the goats cast two or three young apiece. Let the number of the nobles increase, let the number of the people increase or multiply. Replace the dead goats and pigs by living ones.

Marriage of the Sun and Earth at a great festival.

Prayer to the Sun-god.

[1] According to Riedel (*op. cit.* p. 372) the word *poraka* (*sic*) signifies the coming of the spirits to eat at the time when the fig-tree changes leaf. This seems to be the season of the annual festival.

Replace the rice and betel that are used up. Make the empty rice-basket full, make the empty sago-tub full, that the village and the canoes suffer no lack." In the Babar archipelago a special flag is hoisted at this festival as a symbol of the creative energy of the Sun; it is of white cotton about nine feet high, and consists of the figure of a man in an appropriate attitude.[1]

Woman's prayer to the Sun-god Upulero for offspring.

The Sun-god Upulero is thought to possess the power of bestowing offspring on childless women. Hence in the Babar Archipelago, when a woman desires to have a child, she invites a man who is himself the father of a large family to pray on her behalf to Upulero. A doll is made of red cotton, which the woman clasps in her arms as if she would suckle it. Then the father of many children takes a fowl and holds its feet to the woman's head, saying, "O Upulero, make use of the fowl; let fall, let descend a child, I beseech you, I entreat you, let a child fall and descend into my hands and on my lap". Then he asks the woman, "Has the child come?" and she answers, "Yes, it is sucking already". After that the man lets the fowl's feet rest on the husband's head, while he mumbles some form of words. Next the fowl is killed at a blow by being knocked against the house-posts, in order that omens may be drawn from its veins or heart. Whether the omens are favourable or not, the fowl is laid, with some betel, on the domestic place of sacrifice. After that, notice is sent round the village that the woman has been brought to bed, and her gossips come and wish her joy. Lastly, her husband borrows a rocking-cradle from a neighbour, and his wife

[1] J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik-en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, pp. 314 (Luang-Sermata), 337 (Babar archipelago), 372-375 (Leti, Moa, and Lakor), 410 *sq.* (Keisar or Kisser); G. W. W. C. Baron van Hoëvell, in *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde*, xxxiii. (1890) pp. 204 *sq.*, 206 *sq.* (Leti, Babar, Sermata, and Timorlaut); *id.*, "Einige weitere Notizen über die Formen der Götterverehrung auf den Süd-wester en Süd-oster Inseln", *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, viii. (1895) p. 134; J. A. Jacobsen, *Reisen in die Inselwelt des Banda-Meeres* (Berlin, 1896), pp. 123, 125 (Kisser); J. H. De Vries, "Reis door eenige eilandgroepen der Residentie Amboina", *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, xvii. (Leyden, 1900) pp. 594, 612, 615 *sq.* (Babar and Kisser). The Sun-god's name is variously given as *Upulero* (Riedel), *Upulera* (van Hoëvell), *Upulere* (De Vries), and *Opolere* (Jacobsen). According to Jacobsen (p. 123) the name *Opolere* is compounded of *opo* "the Old Man," and *lere* "Sun." I have described the festival more briefly in *The Golden Bough*, Part I. *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 98 *sq.*

rocks the doll in the cradle for seven days.[1] In this ceremony the prayer and sacrifice to the Sun-god are reinforced by the imitation and pretence of motherhood: religion is assisted, as often, by sympathetic or imitative magic.

Worship of the Sun-god and the Moon-goddess in the Kei Archipelago.

Still farther to the north-east of Timor lies the Kei Archipelago. The pagan inhabitants of the islands worship a supreme god called Duad-lerwuan or Duadlera, who has his dwelling in the sun. His consort is Duan-lutch, a personification of the moon. The Sun-god is deemed the creator and also the sustainer of all things; he it is who bestows the rain and sunshine and fertility. The inhabitants of one of the islands (Du-roa or Dulah-laut) say that long ago the Sun-god descended to the island and, finding it uninhabited, fashioned puppets out of clay, into which he afterwards breathed the breath of life. The Sun-god is consulted when it is desired to ascertain the future, or when some offence has been committed for which punishment is feared, or again occasionally for the healing of sickness. His wife, the Moon-goddess, is hardly worshipped at all; only now and then an offering is made to her at the rising of the moon. The native pantheon includes a number of other deities, such as the god who guards seafarers, the god of agriculture, and the village gods. Images are made of all the deities. The Sun-god is represented as a man in a crouching posture, generally armed with a pike. His wife, the Moon-goddess, is portrayed as a woman, sometimes standing and sometimes sitting. The village gods are also represented in human shape either seated or standing. But while every village has its image of its own local god, either set up in the open, or protected by a roof, or lodged in a little wooden house, images of the Sun-god and the Moon-goddess are very rare; they are to be found, if at all, scattered here and there over the islands.[2]

Offerings to the Sun-god before a battle.

In former days, before the islands fell under the sway of the Dutch Government, wars were frequent among the natives of the Kei Archipelago. When it was determined to meet the foe in the field, or to attack his village, an

[1] J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik-en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 353.

[2] C. M. Pleyte, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Kei-eilanden", *Tijdschrift van het Kon. Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, x. (Leiden, 1893) pp. 564, 828 *sq.*

offering used to be made to the Sun-god, Duad-lerwuan, at sunrise on the morning of the battle for the purpose of ascertaining whether the expedition would be successful or not. The offering, which consisted of some gold scrapings wrapt in a banana-leaf, was intended to ensure the forgiveness of the deity for all sins that had been committed. All the warriors who purposed to march out to battle carried the offering in procession to the beach, where the priest (*metuduan*) waited to cast it into the sea. When that had been done, the warriors went down into the sea and ducked their heads thrice under the water, after which they returned to the village to gird on their weapons and don their amulets; for they might not thus array themselves until the offering and the purification by bathing had been accomplished. In full martial pomp they next assembled in the middle of the village to learn whether the Sun-god had accepted their offering. Meantime, while the men were down on the beach at their ablutions, the women had cooked a great quantity of rice and piled it on a mat in the place of assembly. All who were to take part in the fight now gathered in a circle round the heap of rice. The priest then commanded silence; and, rising from his place, the leader of the expedition stepped up to the heap of rice and gathered a handful of the grain. Looking up to the sky he put the rice in his mouth, and endeavoured to swallow it at one gulp. If he succeeded, the Sun-god smiled on the undertaking; if he failed, the expedition was deferred. All the warriors had to submit to the same ordeal: such as bolted the rice at one gulp went to fight: such as boggled or chewed the rice stayed at home and lived to fight another day. When the stalwarts had thus been sorted out from the chicken-hearted, they danced the war-dance in a circle round the priest, who, going from man to man, looked them in the eyes and bade them put all fear away. And as they marched out of the gate, the priest stood by it and gave his last blessing to the departing brave. When they had gone and the gate was closed behind them, the women who were left behind brought out from the houses certain baskets containing fruit and stones. These they anointed with oil and placed on a board, and as they

did so they prayed, saying, "O Lord Sun, Moon, let the bullets rebound from our husbands, brothers, betrothed, and other relations, just as raindrops recoil from these things which are smeared with oil". And no sooner did the sound of the first shot ring out than the women dropped the baskets, and seizing their fans ran through the village waving them in the direction of the enemy. As they did so, they sang; "O golden fans, let our bullets hit and let those of the enemy miss!"[1] Here again religion is reinforced by magic; the slipperiness of the oil and the waving of the fans were clearly supposed to parry such bullets as the Sun-god might fail to stop.

Women's prayer to the Sun and Moon for the men in battle.

At the conclusion of peace these pious islanders again invoked the Sun-god to witness their troth. The chiefs of the two sides swore, saying, "O Lord Sun, Moon, and so forth, if I break my oath, if the opposite side breaks the treaty, then may the head of the perjurer be stuck in the ground and his feet erected skyward both here on earth and in the life hereafter". Finally an arrow, with a little gold fastened to it, was shot towards the sky, while all present raised a cry of "*Ju ju huwe!*"[2] The Kei Islanders apparently conceive the Sun-god as the guardian not only of good faith but of the sanctity of the marriage-tie. When after a birth the infant persists in squalling, and other approved methods of stopping it have been tried in vain, the painful conclusion is forced upon the parents that one of them has been unfaithful. A friend is called in to examine the matter. If he succeeds in eliciting a confession from the culprit, he offers some gold scrapings to the Sun-god (Duadlera) in expiation of the sin.[3]

The Sun and Moon invoked as witnesses to oaths.

The natives of the Kei Islands also resort to the Sun-god Duad-lerwuan for the healing of sickness. As commonly happens in the Indian Archipelago, the natives attribute sickness to the agency of an evil spirit, who has taken possession of the patient's body to torment and destroy him. The Sun-god accordingly must be invoked to cast out the devil, and for that purpose it is essential that he should himself enter into the body of the sufferer; indeed, how

The Sun-god invoked to heal the sick by casting out the devils who possess them.

[1] C. M. Pleyte, *op. cit.* pp. 804 *sq.* [2] C. M. Pleyte, *op. cit.* pp. 806 *sq.*
[3] C. M. Pleyte, *op. cit.* pp. 818 *sq.*

else could he expel the foul fiend? To facilitate this delicate operation the sick man is brought out of the house and set down in the yard, where the priest has already erected an altar. In front of the altar the priest thereupon sets a wooden vessel full of food, a sort of three-cornered hat, a chain of coco-nut leaves fastened together, and a cup of oil, behind which he spreads a small mat. Beside the altar a bamboo is thrust into the ground in a slanting position; on its top a coco-nut leaf is stuck, and at the lower end of the leaf a little bag is fastened to contain offerings. Then the priest puts on his official costume, and with his face turned towards the sun kneels down on the mat. After that he takes the three-cornered hat, which is made of the leaf of a coco-nut palm, and anoints it with the oil from the cup; then standing up he claps the hat on his head and sets the dish of food on the altar. Some of the food he takes and puts in the little bag as an offering to induce the Sun-god to descend and settle on the coco-nut leaf impaled on the bamboo; the rest of the food he scatters on the ground as an offering to the souls of the dead. Next he tries to ascertain whether the Sun-god will consent to help or not. For this purpose he splits a coco-nut in two, and, after waving it thrice circularly in the air, lets it fall on the ground. From the position in which the two halves of the nut rest on the ground he infers whether the Sun-god will lend his aid or not. If the omen is favourable, the sick man is connected with the altar by the chain of coco-nut leaves, which serves the Sun-god as a ladder that enables him to descend into the body of the sufferer from the coco-nut leaf. At the same time the priest entreats the deity so to do. As soon as he perceives that the god has complied with his request, he stops praying and watches until the patient has made an involuntary gesture, which the priest accepts as a sign that the demon of sickness has been driven out, and that the patient will recover.[1]

To the east of the Kei Islands lies the Aru Archipelago. The Aru Islanders also worship the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth as powers that exercise great influence on human life,

[1] C. M. Pleyte, *op. cit.* pp. 62 *sq.*, 829-831.

Worship of the Sun, Moon, and Earth in the Aru and Watubela Islands.

and accordingly they offer them sacrifices.[1] Once more the natives of the Watubela Islands, situated on the north-west of the Kei Islands, revere Grandfather Sun (*Tata lat kola*) as the male principle in nature in contrast to Mistress Earth (*Latu hila la balaa* or *Latu bumu*). Offerings are made to the Sun-god through the agency of a priest to secure the divine favour on various occasions, such as in sickness, on a voyage, at hard labour in childbirth, and in war; and further people render thank-offerings to the same deity on their return after a long absence. The offerings consist of rice, sago, bananas, roasted fowls, betel, and so forth. All the food, after being presented to the deity, is consumed by the priest.[2]

[1] J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik-en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, p. 252.

[2] J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* p. 195.

APPENDIX

THE STORY OF THE FALL OF MAN

Another African Version

In the text I have noted many African stories of the Fall of Man or the Origin of Death.[1] Since the chapter containing them was written and in type I have received another version through the kindness of Mr. Frank Worthington, C.B.E., formerly Secretary for Native Affairs for Northern Rhodesia. He tells me that his informant belonged to the Matotela tribe, which inhabits a stretch of country lying between the Njoko and Lui rivers, tributaries of the Zambesi river on the left bank; the Lui river joins the Zambesi near the foot of the Barotse valley. The story was told to Mr. Worthington towards the end of 1911. It runs as follows:

"Of the many curios which I acquired during my twenty-five years' residence in Africa, there is one which I value above all others. I bought it a few weeks before I left the country.

"It is a round wooden pot with a lid to it. On the lid is the seated figure of a little old man with his back hunched up, his chin resting in his two hands, his elbows on his knees. There is a mildly amused expression on the rudely carved face; whether this is there by accident or design, I cannot say.

"On one side of the pot is a snake in relief; on the other a tortoise.

"I bought this pot from a very old native. So old was he, that his scanty knots of hair were quite white and his eyes were very dim. He must have been a fine enough man once, but now his dull, greyish-black skin clung in folds about his gaunt frame.

"I paid the old man the modest price he named, and asked him the meaning of the figures on the lid and sides of the pot.

"The following is his explanation, given in short, jerky sentences, done into English as literally as our language will permit:

"'Yes, it was a long time ago. So long ago was it that no white

[1] See above, pp. 105 *sq.*, 114, 117, 133 *sq.*, 136, 149, 162, 163, 167 *sq.*, 169, 172 *sq.*, 176 *sq.*, 177, 185, 192 *sq.*, 195, 199, 213 *sq.*, 214 *sq.*, 216 *sq.*, 217 *sq.*, 218, 221, 222, 223, 234 *sq.*, 235 *sq.*, 255-258.

man had then come to this country. It was before my father's day. Before that even of his father. Both died old men. Yes, so long ago was it, that only the old people now speak of those past times. It was when men did not grow old and die. There was no death then ; all men lived on, and happily.

"'One day all this was changed. God became angry—that is God on the lid of the pot. What foolish things men did to make God angry, I cannot say. He must have been very angry.

"'In His anger, God sent His messenger of death to men. He sent His messenger the snake. Then people began to die—that is the snake on the side of the pot.

"'So many people died that all became frightened. They thought all would soon be dead. In their fear they cried to God. They said they were sorry for their foolish act—whatever that might have been. They promised they would anger Him no more. They begged Him to recall His messenger the snake.

"'After a while God agreed. He said He would recall His messenger, the snake. He promised to send another messenger—that is the second messenger on the other side of the pot. God sent the tortoise to recall the snake.'

"The old man paused and mused for a little while, and then resumed :

"'When I was a young man, I thought to myself perhaps the tortoise will overtake the snake: that some day he will deliver God's message. I am an old man now. I do not think the tortoise will ever overtake the snake—at least, not in my time.'

"He said all this without a trace of emotion. He was too much of a philosopher, it seemed, to indulge in anything so profitless as self-pity.

"'Do you kill snakes when you see them?' I asked.

"'No!' said he. 'Why should I? But I do kill tortoises. The tortoise is very lazy. He runs with his message so slowly. Moreover, a tortoise is good meat.'

"Having told his story and pouched the price of his pot, the old man rose painfully and hobbled away.

"Just outside my compound gate, he paused and made a vicious stab at something in a patch of grass.

. . . . . .

"Shouldering his assegai, he passed on his way; a writhing tortoise impaled upon the blade".[1]

In the light of the African parallels which I have cited we may conclude that this Matotela version of the Fall of Man or the Origin of Death is a genuine native myth and not a mere distorted echo of

[1] F. Worthington, C.B.E., Deputy Chief Censor, London, "Life and Death," *The Mail Bag, A Souvenir of the Postal Censor's Office at Liverpool during the Great War*, April 30, 1919, p. 6. Printed and published by *Daily Post* Printers, Wood Street, Liverpool.

the narrative in Genesis. For it conforms to what we may call the stereotyped story of the Two Messengers, a messenger of life and a messenger of death, whom the deity despatched to men, hoping and intending that they should profit by the message of life and so live for ever. But through the fault of one of the messengers the glad tidings of immortality miscarried, and man remained or became mortal and subject to death. The two messengers are always animals. In the Matotela version they are a snake and a tortoise, the snake acting as the messenger of death, and the tortoise acting as the messenger of life, and it is through the slowness of the tortoise in carrying his message that man has been deprived of the boon of immortality. Now the tortoise acts the same fatal part in a story told by the Tati Bushmen to explain the origin of human mortality. They say that in the olden time the Moon wished to send a message to men, to tell them that as she died and came to life again, so they would die, and dying come to life again. So the Moon called the tortoise and said to him, "Go over to those men there, and give them this message from me. Tell them that as I dying live, so they dying will live again." Now the tortoise was very slow, and he kept repeating the message to himself, so as not to forget it. The Moon was very vexed with his slowness and with his forgetfulness; so she called the hare and said to her, "You are a swift runner. Take this message to the men over yonder: 'As I dying live again, so you dying will live again'." So off the hare started, but in her great haste she forgot the message, and as she did not wish to show the Moon that she had forgotten, she delivered the message to men in this way, "As I dying live again, so you dying will die for ever". Such was the message delivered by the hare. In the meantime the tortoise had remembered the message, and he started off a second time. "This time", said he to himself, "I won't forget." He came to the place where the men were, and he delivered his message. When the men heard it they were very angry with the hare, who was sitting at some distance. She was nibbling the grass after her race. One of the men ran and lifted a stone and threw it at the hare. It struck her right in the mouth and cleft her upper lip; hence the lip has been cleft ever since. That is why every hare has a cleft upper lip to this day.[1]

In this last story we read how men were angry with the animal which brought the message of death and how they ill-treated it. Similarly the Matotela kill tortoises because they owe them a grudge, not indeed for bringing a message of death, but for bringing the message of life too late and so depriving men of immortality. In a widely diffused story of this type the Two Messengers are the

[1] Rev. S. S. Dornan, "The Tati Bushmen (Masarwas) and their Language," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xlvii. (1917) p. 80. I have cited this story elsewhere (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 56 *sq.*).

chameleon and the hare, the chameleon being the messenger of life, and the hare being the messenger of death; and the Thonga and Ngoni, who tell the story, kill the chameleon whenever they get a chance, because by its slowness in carrying the message of life it was the cause of human mortality.[1] Similarly in the corresponding Biblical narrative there is enmity put between man and the serpent, because the serpent is supposed to have brought death into the world, and in consequence it is said that men will bruise the serpent's head.[2] Originally, no doubt, this bruising of the serpent's head was meant in the most literal sense; men trampled on a serpent whenever they could, just as some people in Africa kill a tortoise or a chameleon for a precisely similar reason, because they look on the creature as the hateful agent or minister of death.

In both the Biblical and the Matotela version of the story the agent of death is a serpent, but in view of the frequency with which the serpent figures in the sad story, not only in Africa but in other parts of the world,[3] we need not suppose that this feature of the Matotela version is borrowed directly or indirectly from the Hebrew version; both may be drawn independently from those springs of barbaric fancy which everywhere underlie the surface of humanity; or if there has been borrowing, it is perhaps more likely that Judaea borrowed from Africa than Africa from Judaea. In any case we may conjecture that in all the stories of the Origin of Death, whether African or Judaean, in which the serpent figures, the original motive for introducing the reptile was to explain his imaginary immortality by contrast with the real mortality of man, though that feature has disappeared both from the Hebrew and from the Matotela version of the tale.

[1] *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 63-65.

[2] Genesis iii. 15.

[3] See above, pp. 199, 218, 222, 223; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 50 *sq.*, 66-68, 74-76.

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