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CULTS, MYTHS AND RELIGIONS

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INTRODUCTION

IN the eyes of the evolutionist—and we are all evolutionists nowadays—man springs from beast, humanity from animality. But man, take him where and when you will, is a religious animal ; and religiosity, as the Positivist would say, is the most essential of his attributes. It can no longer be maintained, with Gabriel de Mortillet and Hovelacque, that quaternary man was ignorant of religion. Unless, then, we admit the gratuitous and childlike hypothesis of a primitive revelation, we must look for the origin of religions in the psychology, not of civilised man, but of man the farthest removed from civilisation.

Of this man, anterior to all history, we have no direct knowledge, beyond what we glean from the implements and artistic products of the quaternary period. True, these teach us something, as I have striven to show on a later page ; but, equally truly, they teach us far less than we could wish. To supplement our information, three other sources have to be tapped : the psychology of the present-day savage, the psychology of children, and the psychology of the higher animals.

It is probable that animals, certain that savages and children, are *animists*—that they project the twilit intelligence, stirring within them, into the external

world, and people the universe, especially the beings and objects that surround them, with a life and sentiment akin to their own. Poetry, with her personifications and her metaphors, is only a self-conscious survival of this state of mind, which we might even say has found an eleventh-hour justification in the scientific monism which discerns everywhere the manifestations of one identical principle of energy.

The higher animals not only obey that residuum of ancestral experience known as instinct; they have their physical energies curbed by *scruples*. 'Hawks do not pike out hawks' een,' says the homely adage; and any exceptions that may be alleged against the general rule serve only to confirm it. This scruple, in regard to shedding the blood or devouring the flesh of the species, may not be primitive; but in the case of every species, whose young need to be suckled or protected, it is a vital condition of its preservation. Where no such scruple existed, the species has quickly and inevitably disappeared: natural selection is powerless against suicide. With primitive or savage humanity, the scruple of blood would seem less general than among certain animals. *Homo homini lupus*, said Hobbes. On the other hand it is singularly intense in certain groups united by ties of consanguinity; that is to say, in clans whose members believe themselves to be descended from a common mother—descent from the female being the only form of filiation which can be absolutely established.

Thus the scruple—this barrier opposed to the destructive appetites—is an heritage transmitted to man from animals. Scruples, or at least certain scruples, are as natural to him as the religious sentiment itself. In fact, scruples and animism combined *are* the starting-point of

religion. For if animism is the mother of mythology, scruples lie at the root of religious laws and piety.

Here a third element, peculiar to the *homo sapiens*, comes in. Many of the higher animals live in a gregarious state, implying the scruple of the blood of the species ; but they do not form communities. Man, however, is not only a social animal : he is also, in the Aristotelian phrase, a political animal—ζῷον πολιτικόν. Possibly, bees and ants fall into the same category ; but among mammals, with the single exception of man, there is nothing similar. This social instinct, a development of the gregarious instinct, impels man to seek the company, the friendship, and the protection of his kind. But he goes further, and, under the influence of the animistic illusion, enlarges indefinitely the circle of his relations, actual or imaginary. The savage finds certain animals and certain plants about him, and the very mystery of their existence leads him to give them place in the group formed by the members of the clan. Soon he infers that animal and plant must spring from a common origin with himself, and he proceeds to apply the same scruple to them as to his own people. This respect for plant and animal life is the germ of dendrolatry and zoolatry. In 1900 I called it an hypertrophy of the social instinct, and I do not believe that anyone has since proposed a more acceptable explanation.

The irrational scruple, leading up to a blank, unreasoning interdiction, the sanction of which is death, is found in all human communities and at all periods. These interdictions, in their most primitive and explicit form, have been carefully studied in Polynesia, where they bear the name of *Taboo*. Sociologists have acquiesced in this barbarous but convenient term, and I see no

reason for discarding it. Taboo is not only the interdiction itself ; it is also the being or the object protected by that interdiction. Thus blood is taboo, and conversely we speak of the taboo of blood.

Zoolatry and dendrolatry, like the worship of inanimate objects, or fetichism, were familiar enough to the classical civilisations, but only as survivals pure and simple. It was among the North American peoples of the eighteenth century that they were first observed in general and active operation, entailing the most serious consequences for the constitution of the family itself. Hence—via the missionaries—has come the name *totem*, which the red man applied to the animal, the plant, or (more rarely) the mineral or celestial body, which his clan recognised as an ancestor, a protector, and a rallying symbol. The primitive form of zoolatry and dendrolatry, antedating any kind of anthropomorphism, is totemism. It may not be so widespread as animism, but the fact remains that it exists, or has existed, among numerous tribal groups, both living and dead, in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Oceania.¹

A study of the psychology of children tends to confirm the observations of historians and ethnologists, by enabling them to watch the actual workings of this hypertrophy—this morbid exaggeration of the social instinct—which I imagine to be the origin of totemism. It is only necessary to take a child to the Zoo to be convinced of the extraordinary attraction, quite distinct from mere curiosity, which the animals exercise upon

¹ It is useless to say, with a writer in the *Revue des traditions populaires* (1904, p. 323), that to discuss the subject is tantamount to ploughing the sands, as there is not one *totemism* but many *totemisms*. The remark is equally true of magic, religion, and morality ; yet it is both our right and our duty to disengage their essential principles.

him, and the sympathy or respect—the poles removed from fear—with which certain types inspire him. If this tangled complex of sentiment is totemism in embryo, then twentieth-century man is a totemist from his mother's womb !

The animal fable is the oldest form of popular literature, and, to this day, the best beloved by children. For is it not an echo of tales conceived by the imagination of man, and accepted by his credulity, in those dim ages when the beasts of the field spoke with tongues ?

Between the taboo and the totem are many links ; and the transition is easy from one to the other. In fact, the primitive taboo, the germ of every social compact, protects the totem, which is the animal or plant tabooed. The totem is inconceivable without a taboo, and the logical outcome of a generalised taboo can hardly be anything else than a totem.

Again, if we knew nothing of the Polynesian taboo, nothing of the American totem, and nothing of the analogous phenomena noticeable in so many quarters of the globe, the mere existence of domestic animals and cultivated plants, among the half-civilised peoples of the Old World and the New, would compel us, after eliminating all other hypotheses, to assume the presence of some powerful agency, akin to the taboo and the totem, as alone capable of explaining the domestication of these animals and plants. It is obvious enough that, before they were reared by man and made to increase under his protection and for his use, they must have been *spared* by man. But with primitive humanity, ignorant of cattle and cereals, destitute of food-reserves, and perpetually face to face with starvation, there could be only one influence strong enough to save an edible plant or animal

from destruction. That influence was a religious scruple—a taboo, the violation of which entailed, or was supposed to entail, death. But the taboo which preserves an animal or plant is the essential principle of totemism ; and the animal or plant, which a clan respects and keeps in its immediate neighbourhood as a protector and friend, is the totem. Thus we can establish *a priori* the existence of taboos and totems in countries where domestic animals and cereals have been known from early times. Now, on the other hand, it is perfectly certain—thanks to the traveller and his note-book—that the taboo and totem flourish almost exclusively in regions where the domestic animal and cultivated plant are conspicuous by their absence. The conclusion was drawn by Mr. Jevons : if totemism has left no perceptible trace in the ideas and rites of a given locality, its surest monument is that very civilisation which has so profoundly modified them both.

It is to the honour of Robertson Smith that he was the first to throw into clear relief the religious consequences of totemism—consequences which still persist in the heart of our modern civilisation. As a rule, the animal or vegetable totem, conceived as a well-spring of holiness and power, was allowed to live in peace ; but in exceptional cases the clansmen solemnly slew and ate it as a means of sanctification. As these religious banquets became more frequent, they degenerated into ordinary debauches ; then, with the progress of rationalism, the sacrosanct character of animal or plant was forgotten in its self-evident utility. But the tradition of holy feasts, celebrated in special circumstances, did not disappear, and there always lingered the simple and seductive idea of a gastric assimilation of the divine essence. Theophagy and Communion are relics of this savage creed ; and with

every fresh insight into the genuinely popular and primitive elements of ancient religions, it grows more and more obvious how many votaries that creed must have had even in the Old World. Man is never seriously attracted by fire-new ideas, but by modifications of those old ideas which are insensibly fructifying within him.

* * * * *

In this and the following volumes will be found many applications and confirmations of the foregoing principles, some new, some already seen as through a glass darkly, and others anticipated and developed by different scholars. Had I been the first to formulate them, I should rank with the first thinkers of my day, and modesty alone would preclude me from saying so on the house-tops. As a matter of fact, I do not exactly know who made the discoveries. The names of Tylor, MacLennan, Lang, Smith, Frazer, and Jevons suggest themselves; but the one thing certain is that it was not myself. Mine has been a lowlier part,—to grasp the ideas of my betters, and to diffuse them as widely as I might, first in my lectures at the École du Louvre, then in the Académie des Inscriptions, and again in many popular and scientific reviews. In France, when I began my excursions into these fields, the whole subject was so absolutely a sealed book that M. Charles Richet had to ask me to explain the word *totemism*, before I dealt with that group of phenomena in the *Revue Scientifique*.¹ At the Académie des Inscriptions, in 1900, the only members who did not doubt my sanity, when I read some lucubrations on the biblical taboos and the totemism of the Celts, were MM. Maspero and Hamy. The German scholars whom I saw about the same time, Mommsen among the

¹ The article in question forms chapter vi. of the present volume.

rest, had never heard of a totem. The taboos and totems of the Bible, a question underlying those alimentary interdictions which ignorance regards as hygienic precepts, brought the Jewish theologians into the lists. One of them dealt faithfully with me as an anti-semite, an epithet already hurled at me by my distinguished friend Victor Bérard, because I had ventured to impugn, in the pages of the *Mirage Oriental*, the antiquity and omnipresence of Phœnician commerce. To-day the voice of ignorance is a little less heard in the land. Thanks to the diffusion of the English works which have inspired me, thanks to the labours of the lamented Marillier and the editors of the *Année Sociologique*,—thanks perhaps, in some degree, to my own missionary efforts which, with the ardour of the neophyte, I have carried into the very precincts of the Popular Universities,—those who once kicked most obstinately against the pricks now acknowledge that the system of anthropological exegesis is ‘the fashion,’ and that ‘something may be said for’ totems and taboos. In England, where the relations of the mother-country with her remote colonies have long familiarised the public with these ideas, there is now a school which complains that the totem has been as much abused as the solar myth.¹ A characteristic sign of reaction is that certain latter-day writers on Greek mythology religiously eschew the word totem,—which thus, by a curious turn of the wheel, becomes taboo. This reaction is every whit as unscientific as the abuse which is supposed to have given it birth. It seems to me that the ground won, and well won, should neither be

¹ A. Lang, *Man*, 1901, p. 12. But the same scholar justly remarks (*ibid.* 1902, p. 86): ‘Without totemism one can hardly see how early human society was ever organised at all.’

extended by rash usurpation, nor faint-heartedly abandoned. The system of taboos and totems is not a key to fit every lock. In the complex whole of religious phenomena, myths, and cults, there are many things which ought to be explained otherwise. In mythology, particularly, I believe that the earlier methods, especially that of iconological exegesis, can justify their existence by irrefragable arguments, some few of which are due to myself. But wherever the myth or ritual involves a sacred animal or plant, a god or hero torn in pieces or sacrificed, a masquerade of true believers, or an alimentary prohibition, the duty of a scholarly interpreter is to read the riddle in terms of the taboo and totem. To do otherwise, after the results already attained, is to turn one's back upon the obvious—I might almost say, upon scientific honesty.

The former systems of exegesis, from Euhemerus and the Stoics to Creuzer and Max Müller, have this feature in common: they consider myths and religions as the product of a special faculty of man, set in motion by an impression from without, an historical recollection, or an abstract idea—or, it may be, led astray by some verbal will-o'-the-wisp. The great superiority of the new system lies in the fact that it emphasises the stringent ties which connect the evolution of cults and myths with the sum total of human faculties and the progress of civilisation both moral and material. The primitive life of humanity, in so far as it is not purely animal, is religious. Religion is the parent stem which has thrown off, one by one, art, agriculture, law, morality, politics, and even rationalism, which sooner or later must eliminate all religions. For the original function of rationalism was to devise a ritual capable of breaking the fetters in which man had bound

himself, and to enlarge the liberties of humanity by relaxing the rigours of the taboo. The instrument of this emancipation was the sacerdotal caste, which served the cause of freedom before it turned oppressor. Nor was this its only merit. By fixing ritual while belief was still fluid, it rendered the antagonism between those two elements of religion more sensible and, in the long run, more intolerable.

The careful reader, if this book should find any, will observe that it is not free from repetition. Repetition was inevitable, since each chapter or article forms a self-contained whole. In any case, that vice which Villemain preached as a virtue to the professors of his day is a necessity to the writer who aims at familiarising the man in the street with the results of a science which, like Philosophy aforetime, is both liberal and liberatress.

S. R.

PARIS.

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CULTS, MYTHS, AND RELIGIONS

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL PHENOMENA OF ANIMAL TOTEMISM¹

AT the outset of this article, it may be advisable to recall the fact that the word *totem*—sign, mark, family—emanates from America, precisely as *taboo*—interdiction, thing interdicted—is native to Polynesia. The two terms, however great their discrepancy of origin, are for the future scientifically inseparable ; for totemism, as will appear later, is simply a particular system of taboos.

The totem, as a rule, is an animal ; less frequently a vegetable ; only in exceptional instances is it an inorganic object. The radical distinction between it and the fetish is this : the fetish is one individual object ; the totem is a class of objects, regarded by members of the tribe or clan as *tutelar*—protective, in the widest sense of the word. Take the case of a clan with a serpent totem : the members will call themselves *Serpents*, claim descent from a serpent, abstain from killing serpents, raise pet serpents, read the future by the aid of serpents, believe themselves immune from serpent-bites—and so on indefinitely.

¹ *Revue scientifique*, October 13, 1900.

This aggregate of superstitions and customs radiating from the totem constitutes what for the last thirty years has been known as Totemism. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, French missionaries were struck with the importance of totems in the religious, social, and political life of the North American native. One of them, the Jesuit Lafitau, actually conceived the idea—a stroke of genius in that age—of applying the phenomena of totemism, which he was studying among the Iroquois, to the interpretation of a special type of Greek mythology : the Chimaera.

During the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, missionaries and travellers in almost every quarter of the globe kept gleaning facts analogous to those observed in eighteenth-century America. More than this, it became apparent that not only had similar phenomena been noted in Peru as early as the sixteenth century, but that unmistakable allusions could be traced in the classical writers themselves—in Herodotus, Diodorus, Pausanias, Aelian, &c. In 1869 MacLennan—author of the famous work on primitive marriage—proposed a theory implying the survival of totemic custom and belief in a large number of civilisations both ancient and modern ; but he preached to deaf ears. Towards 1885 the question was again taken up with riper knowledge and greater critical acumen by Robertson Smith and Frazer. Since then it has never ceased to engage the attention of science, especially in England, where Lubbock, Tylor, Herbert Spencer, Andrew Lang, Jevons, Cook, Grant Allen, and others have occupied, or still are occupying, themselves with it.

The fundamental characteristic of animal totemism is the existence of a religious compact, none too clearly

defined, between certain clans of men and certain species of animals.¹

Although cases of totemic survival have been authenticated, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in all parts of the world,² it may be laid down as a broad principle that totemism has only continued to exist where civilisation has remained rough-hewn, more especially in countries where the domestication of animals has made but little headway. We may say, in fact, that if totemism creates a bond between animal and man, the natural consequences of that bond are often fatal to the totemism which created it. The statement may savour of paradox ; but in reality, as Mr. Jevons well showed, the causal nexus is perfectly clear and natural.³ For example :

Suppose a group of totemist clans, given to taming bears, serpents, or eagles, because they credit them with a divine quality by which they hope to profit : obviously this state of affairs might last indefinitely, for the simple reason that the animals in question are totally unsuited for domestication. No doubt, if one of them were edible, it would soon come to be eaten at periodical gatherings of the clan ; the idea being to renew the covenant between man and beast by a species of communion. But, on the other hand, there would be

¹ For the sake of brevity, I have dealt with animal totemism alone. Vegetable totemism, though rarer, lends itself to the same comparative method.

² See Frazer's *Totemism*, pp. 91-95 (*Geographical Distribution of Totemism*). I am aware that the author's ideas were considerably modified in 1899 (v. *Année Sociologique*, iii. 217) ; but the facts which he has so ably classified—and to which I must perpetually refer in the course of this work—outweigh any theory on the primitive character of totemism.

³ Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, pp. 114 and following.

little temptation to multiply these sacred banquets unduly, for wild animals could not be had for the asking, and the supply of tame specimens would of necessity be limited.

Now take another group of clans, and give them as totems the bull, the boar, and the sheep. A few half-tame couples are certain to reproduce their species in the immediate neighbourhood of the clans. As a result, the periodic sacrifices of the totem, and the banquets following those sacrifices, will tend to increase in frequency, until in the long run their character becomes less and less sacramental and more and more gastronomic. When the animals in question are thoroughly domesticated, formed into herds, guarded by dogs, and constantly in touch with man, the tradition of periodic sacrifices and banquets will still be retained as a religious form ; but in practice the tendency will be to discard the old superstitious reverence and look on the animal simply as a flesh-producer. This stage in the decadence of totemism is apt to produce a set of phenomena, for examples of which we need only turn to old-world civilisations. The animal *clan* is no longer the object of a cult : what remains of the primitive sentiment is focused on particular animals, considered as divine,—such as the bull of Apis, the he-goat of Mendes, the crocodile of Lake Moeris, and the lion of Leontopolis in Egypt.¹ Often enough, the prohibition against killing animals of one or more species has survived as a taboo ;² that is to say, as an interdict without a motive, or, at most,

¹ Diodorus Siculus, i. 80.

² At the present day, many totemic tribes are known who are not forbidden to eat their totems. These exceptions can easily be justified and leave the principle intact.

with motives (hygienic, for instance) which belong to an absolutely different order of thought and are merely due to the misplaced ingenuity of a later age. The Mussulman and Jewish religions of to-day are cases in point.

But the principal factor in the decline of totemism is the creation of the Pantheon : in other words, mythology. The idea of divine clans is replaced by that of personal divinities, whose family-trees and family-histories, fixed by poets and priests, reflect in turn totemic traditions, atmospheric phenomena, symbolic conceptions, and occasionally—for there is truth in all the systems proposed—purely verbal combinations or confusions. Religion migrates from earth to heaven, but for all that she never loses touch of earth. After the dissolution of his league with the animal clans, man distributes them among his new clientèle of gods. With these gods—whose numbers are rapidly reduced by syncretism and selection—certain species of animals are rather loosely identified : in some instances, the same species is connected by ritual and legend with several gods, because two or more clans with the same totem have each attributed it to a different deity. Thus, according to Turner, one Samoan god was incarnate in the lizard, the owl, and the milleped ; another in the bat, the pigeon, the domestic fowl, the sea-urchin, and so forth.

In classical mythology, Jupiter is represented in the form of an eagle, a bull, and a swan. Conversely, the wolf is the animal of Apollo and Ares alike ; the bull represents Zeus as well as Dionysos ; and the dolphin is the emblem both of Apollo and Posidon. To multiply examples is useless.

Before going further, it may be well to note that, till the very end of ancient mythology, these animals—the attributes, companions, mounts, or favourite victims of the gods—retain throughout the distinctive mark of totemism; their sanctity resides, not in the individual, but in the species. The statement, that man distributed his totems among his gods, was more than an empty phrase; for totemism, or something very nearly akin to it, was transplanted to Olympus. It was not one eagle which was the bird of Zeus, nor one wolf which was the companion of Ares; it was *every* eagle, *every* wolf, an animal species for each individual god. Thus the old notion, as to the sanctity of the animal clan, lived on in the shadow of the sanctity of God.¹

If mythology, by absorption, tends to cause the disappearance of totemism, it must not be forgotten that, to some extent, it owes its origin to totemism. In Greek mythology, for example, we not only find animal totems associated with the gods, but also a cloud of legends relative to the transformation of gods into animals. These metamorphoses of fable are simply poetical expedients for fitting an older animal legend into the cycle of a divine legend. So, Zeus takes the form of a swan in order to seduce Leda, who brings an egg into the world. This fable must have originated among a group of tribes with a swan totem. In view of the sacrosanct character of the bird and the supposed relationship of the animal clan with the human clan, they would find no difficulty in believing that a swan could couple with

¹ Even to-day the Russian peasant never kills a dove, because it is the bird of the Holy Ghost; and children are still taught in France not to crush the insects called *bêtes du bon Dieu* (lady-birds).

and impregnate a woman.¹ When totemism was verging on extinction, the legend survived ; but if the swan-lover of Leda was to remain divine, mythological tradition was bound to represent him as the incarnation of a god. Thus metamorphosis is not a primary postulate of mythology, but a semi-rationalistic hypothesis to reconcile the relics of totemism to the taste of a nascent anthropomorphism.

The distribution of the clan totems among the tribal and national gods was not the work of a day : it must have been conditioned by a whole mass of circumstances—alliances, wars, local amalgamations—the clue to which is obviously lost forever. One factor of the first importance seems to have been the ritual of sacrifice ; which, like all rituals, is eminently conservative. Take the case of a clan owning the bull as its totem, and sacrificing it at intervals. In time the era of personal deities is ushered in ; the bull is converted into an attribute of the chief god, and offered up to him in sacrifice : yet there lingers a more or less distinct recollection of the victim's own divinity. From this combination of the old idea with the new springs a third, which has been destined to play no trivial part in the religious history of mankind—the idea of the sacrifice of an anthropomorphic god. This conception is especially noticeable in the cult of Zagreus, the Thracian Dionysus, who, according to the rite-begotten legend, fled from the Titans under the form of a young bull, only to be caught, torn in pieces, and devoured. As long as the godhead dwelt in

¹ In Egypt the goat was adored at Mendes, and Herodotus relates that, in his day, a goat of the Mendesian canton ' had open commerce with a certain woman ' (ii. 46). These vagaries of superstition were natural enough, when the myths were swarming with parallels.

the species and not in the individual, a sacrifice of this type could be repeated *ad infinitum*: every bull that was slain, and—limb by bleeding limb—divided among the faithful, was, so to say, a new vessel of election, the sacrifice of which still left a perennial spring of holiness in the *species*.¹

But when the deity was no longer distributed evenly over the species, but concentrated in a single person, the idea of sacrificing him became inadmissible, except on condition of his subsequent resurrection. And this is precisely what we find in the legend of Dionysus Zagreus, who, after being devoured by the Titans (the ancestors of man), was restored to a glorious life by Jove.

Generally, however, the effect of anthropomorphism was to obscure the idea of a sacrifice *of* the god, and to accentuate the offering of the victim *to* the god as a gift or an expiation. This latter conception is not primitive; for it implies the existence of the non-primitive individual god, and the anthropomorphic hypothesis, with which it is bound up, marks a tolerably recent phase in the history of religion. Still, so unquestioned was its vogue in Greece, from the age of Homer and Hesiod downwards, that—except in the case of a few mystic survivals—no other form of sacrifice was dreamed of. Hence, whenever we meet with rites

¹ An absolutely complete example of the 'totemic sacrament' was observed, in 1899, by Messrs. B. Spencer and F. Gillen (*Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 204; cf. Hubert, *Année sociologique*, vol. iii. pp. 208-215). Among certain tribes of Central Australia, the totem is solemnly eaten by the members of the totemic group, at the end of certain ceremonies called *Intichiuma*. 'Not only have they the right to eat of it; they must eat of it *first*. Then, and then only, the members of other totemic groups have the right to eat as much as they choose.'

presupposing the death of a god,—accompanied by lamentations for his taking-off, and followed by ecstatic rejoicings at his resurrection,—we are face to face with the vestiges of totemism. The point might easily be shown by an analysis of the ritual followed at the festival of the Syrian Adonis, who, the legend says, was done to death by a wild boar (an animal that remained taboo in Syria), but who was originally neither more nor less than the wild boar itself—a totem slain and eaten once a year at a solemn feast of communion.

In the totemic period, man offers no victims to his gods or their priests, because he knows neither gods nor priests. The clan sanctifies itself—or, to be accurate, renews its store of sanctity—by eating an animal totem in accordance with certain rites. This need was still felt after the phase of strict totemism had passed away. It survived under two forms. Sometimes the totem, now regarded as an unclean beast, continued to be eaten ritually. This was the rule in the mystic conventicles of Jerusalem, referred to in the following passage of Isaiah (lxvi. 17) : *They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.* Here the forbidden foods are already playing the part of those magic potions to be found in all popular pharmacopœias—the efficacy of which varies directly with their repulsiveness. But the idea of a cleansing sanctification is still clearly indicated by the prophet ; and the custom, against which he inveighs so forcibly, is only a survival from the grey past of religion.

In the second place, where the need for sanctification could no more be satisfied at the expense of an animal

whose prestige had disappeared owing to the decadence of totemism, it was inevitable that man should turn to man: *homo res sacra homini*. The result was human sacrifice accompanied by acts of cannibalism; in which Robertson Smith rightly saw an aftermath of the totemic sacrifice. References abound in the classical authors; although the cannibalism is usually limited to tasting the victim's blood or eating a small part of his body. The most important texts on the subject are those of Plato and Pausanias on the cult of Zeus Lycæus in Arcadia—a deity who has been mistakenly identified with the Phœnician Baal.¹ This cult succeeded a totemic wolf-cult involving a ceremonial sacrifice of the animal, followed by a banquet, in virtue of which the faithful believed that they assimilated the sanctity of the victim and were themselves translated into divine wolves. When the wolf totem was superseded by the Lycæan, or *lupine*, Zeus, the ritual was preserved, but the victim became a man consecrated to the god. As the body of believers still held that by tasting his flesh they were transformed into wolves, they assumed the name of *λύκοι*—exactly as the initiates of Bacchus became *βάκχοι*; the devotees of Bassareus (the Fox-Dionysos), *Bassarids*; and those of the ursine Artemis (*ἄρκτος*), *Arcti*.

There is no such thing as a stationary civilisation: however slow may be the intellectual evolution of a people, the religious ideas of to-day are not those of yesterday. Consequently, it must be confessed that, for us, primitive totemism is largely a sealed book, limited as our knowledge is to survivals, more or less corrupt, of a vanished creed. The description applies equally to

¹ Cf. Frazer, *Pausanias*, vol. iv. p. 189.

the fragmentary indications of classical literature and to the detailed accounts of the travellers who have studied totemism as practised by the modern savage ; the difference is purely one of degree. And yet, if we confine ourselves to the phenomena of most usual occurrence among savages, it is possible to draft a sort of totemic code, whose articles are customs or beliefs that have their counterparts, many or few, in both classical and non-classical religions. Here we have what may be regarded as a practical test of the universality of totemism in the beginning ; for if the tree is known by his fruits, it is equally certain that the original identity of doctrines is proved by the identity of the practices which are the logical result of those doctrines.

We should be inclined to formulate the code of totemism as follows :—

I. *Certain animals are neither killed nor eaten, but man rears specimens and tends them.*

Examples are the cow, the cat, the sheep, the hawk, &c., in Egypt ; the goose, hen, and hare among the Celts of Britain ;¹ the fish in Syria ;² the bear among the Ainos (whose women sometimes suckle the cubs) ; the eel and the crayfish in Samoa ; the dog among the Kalangs of Java ; and the eagle among the Moquis of Arizona.³ In Hellenic countries we find many cases of tabooed animals, fed and reared because they were the property of a god ; for instance, the holy sheep of Helios at Apollonia in Epirus ; the heifers sacred to Persephone at Cyzicus ;⁴ the mice of Apollo at Hamaxitus in the Troad ;⁵ the

¹ Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* v. 12.

² Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 173.

³ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 14.

⁴ Reinach, *Traité d'Épigraphie grecque*, p. 153.

⁵ Aelian, *Hist. Anim.* xii. 5.

bears, eagles, horses, and oxen at Hierapolis;¹ the geese of Juno on the capitol at Rome, &c. It is evident that the idea of divine property is secondary, as it could only come into existence at a time when an organised sacerdotal class was already administering, in its own interests, the properties attributed to the god. Originally all these were totemic animals, like the red dogs of the Kalangs of Java.

II. *Mourning is worn for the accidental death of a member of a particular animal species; and it is buried with the same honours as a member of the clan.*

This was the case with a crab at Seriphos,² with the wolf at Athens,³ the heifer in Egypt,⁴ the goat at Mendes,⁵ the gazelle in Arabia, the owl in Samoa, the hyena among the Wanikah of West Africa, the cobra at Travancore,⁶ and the hen among certain Indian tribes in South America.⁷ The fact that several of these animals are not domestic, but dangerous even, excludes the hypothesis—improbable enough on *a priori* grounds—of a cult inspired by gratitude.

III. *Occasionally the alimentary interdiction applies only to a part of the animal's body.*

Genesis mentions—and explains by a legend—the ban against eating the tendon of the thigh:⁸ Herodotus says that the Egyptians abstained from the heads of animals.⁹ Among the Omahas of North America, the

¹ Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 41.

² Aelian, *Hist. Anim.* xiii. 26.

³ Schol. Apoll. Rhod. ii. 124.

⁴ Herodotus, ii. 41.

⁵ *Ibid.* ii. 46; cf. Diodorus, i. 83, 84.

⁶ Frazer, *Totemism*, pp. 22 sq.

⁷ Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, p. 118.

⁸ Genesis xxxii. 33.

⁹ Herodotus, ii. 39.

members of the clan of Black Shoulders may not eat the tongue of a buffalo ; the ' Eagles ' cannot touch its head, nor the Hangan its ribs.¹ These partial taboos are due to a compromise with the primitive taboo applying to the whole animal, and were dictated by the practical needs of life.

IV. *When animals, ordinarily spared, are killed under the stress of urgent necessity, the slayers address excuses to them, or strive by various artifices to extenuate the violation of the taboo : in other words, the murder.*

This fact explains the ritual of the Bouphonia at Athens.² The ox, by eating the sacred cakes, was supposed to go voluntarily to his death, and the mock trial held after his dispatch ended in a verdict of guilty against the *knife*, which was accordingly thrown into the sea. At Tenedos, the priest who offered up a young bull to Dionysus was attacked with stones. In Corinth, the annual sacrifice of a goat to Hera Acraea was performed by foreign ministers hired for the purpose, and even these were careful to place the knife in such a way that the victim seemed to kill itself by accident.³ In the tribe of Mount Gambier (Southern Australia), a man only kills his totem in case of famine, and then he expresses his grief at having to eat its flesh.⁴ Some tribes of New South Wales do not kill their totems themselves, but, like the Corinthians, employ strangers to do so ; after which they eat without scruple.⁵ The Bechuanas never kill a lion until they have made their apologies, and the slayer must

¹ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 11.

² Cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 304 sqq.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 305, 306.

⁴ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 19.

undergo a purification.¹ In North America an Outaouak of the Bear clan excuses himself to the bear for having been forced to kill him, and explains that his children are hungry.²

V. *The tabooed animal is mourned for after it has been ritually sacrificed.*

'The Thebans,' says Herodotus,³ 'do not sacrifice rams but hold them sacred. On one day in the year, however, on the feast of Zeus, they flay and cut up one single ram and cover the image of Zeus with its skin. . . . This done, all who are in the temple beat themselves, lament the death of the ram, and then bury it in a sacred tomb.'

According to Frazer,⁴ a Californian tribe, which revered the buzzard, used to hold a yearly festival at which the chief ceremony was the killing of a buzzard without spilling a drop of its blood. It was then skinned; the feathers were kept to make a sacred garment for the medicine-man, and the body buried in holy ground, to the lamentations of old women.

The similarity between the two narratives is striking. In Herodotus, the animal's skin is placed on the statue of the god; but this ceremonial detail cannot be primitive, as images of the deity are of no very great antiquity. Probably, in the beginning, the skin was reserved for the sacrificer or chief-priest,—the equivalent of the Californian medicine-man.

The mourning of the Syrian women for the death of Adonis is susceptible of a like explanation, though the

¹ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 19.

² *Ibid.* p. 19.

³ Herodotus, ii. 42. (Macaulay's translation.)

⁴ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 15.

primitive ritual of the Adonia is obscure. The object of the lamentations, following as they did the sacrifice of a totem, appears to have been to lighten, or quite throw off, the load of responsibility incurred.¹ However certain, however imminent the resurrection of the god, his worshippers must still bewail his death—a fact too easily paralleled to need insisting upon.²

VI. *Men put on the skins of certain animals, especially in religious ceremonies. Where totemism exists, these animals are totems.*

Among the Tlinkits of North America, the men, on solemn occasions, appear completely disguised in the skins of animal totems. The Condor clans of Peru ornament themselves with the bird's feathers. Among the Omahas, whose totem is the buffalo, the boys arrange their hair in two curls, in imitation of buffalo horns. Among the Southern Slavenians, a male child, at birth, is clothed in a wolf-skin, while an old woman sallies out of the house and cries: 'A she-wolf has brought forth a wolf.'³ It was on record that the new-born Zalmoxis was enveloped in a bear's hide.⁴ During the celebration of certain rites, the men of an Australian tribe, whose totem is the wild dog, or dingo, mimic it by howling and walking on all fours. Classical antiquity is fruitful of examples; though, here, totemism is only conjectural. Thus the candidate for admission to the mysteries of Sabazius was invested with the skin of a fawn;⁵ the

¹ Robertson Smith, *op. cit.* p. 412.

² It is only necessary to recall what still occurs on Good Friday and the following days. The votaries of a dead God mourn until He shall rise again to the joy of all hearts.

³ Frazer, *Totemism*, pp. 27-33.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 32-33.

⁵ Demosthenes, *De Corona*, p. 260.

young girls of Attica, between the ages of five and ten, were called *ἄρκτοι* (*she-bears*), and, clothed as such, took part in the cult of a bear-goddess, the Brauronian Artemis ;¹ while the pilgrims starting for Hierapolis sacrificed a sheep, ate it, and covered themselves with the skin.²

We have already mentioned the Egyptian rite of clothing the statue of the Theban god with the skin of a sacrificed ram ; and we have observed that originally it must have been the priest and not the statue that was covered. Robertson Smith broached an ingenious theory, that the widespread custom of donning the skin of a sacrificed animal gave birth to the plastic types of the animal-headed Egyptian gods—Bast, Sekhet, Khnum, &c.³ His hypothesis is the more probable since the passage of Herodotus allows us to assume a period of transition, during which the skin was placed, not on the sacrificer, but on the image of a divinity supposed to be present.

VII. *Clans and individuals take the names of animals. Where totemism exists, these animals are totems.*

The habit is almost universal among the Indians of North America ; and examples are also numerous in Australia.⁴ In Egypt it seems as though the animal names bestowed on the nomes, or cantons, must have been totemic. In the Hellenic world we meet clans like the *Cynadae* of Athens, the *Porcii* of Rome, and the *Hirpi* (wolves) of Samnium ; along with nations like the Myrmidons (ants), the Mysians (mice), the Lycians

¹ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 40.

² Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, c. 55.

³ Cf. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, ed. 2, vol. ii. p. 129.

⁴ Frazer, *Totemism*, pp. 61-82.

(wolves), and the Arcadians (i.q. *Arctadians*, bears). The case of the Arcadians is peculiarly interesting, as we know there existed in the country a cult of an ursine Artemis, Callisto, who was changed into a bear by Hera.¹

Lubbock and Spencer have subscribed to the view that totemism had its origin in the weakness of primitive man for assuming an animal's name; so, the grandchildren of the warrior *Serpent* might convince themselves that they were descended from the actual reptile. Unfortunately, the theory starts from the false premise that the idea of descent is the essence of totemism; while, as a matter of fact, it is simply the hypothesis of a savage groping after an explanation of the immemorial alliance between the animal clan and his own. The facility of animal nomenclature is an effect, not a cause, of totemism.

VIII. *In many instances, the clan carries the image of an animal on its ensigns and arms. The individual may paint this image on his body, or tattoo himself with it.*

Mr. Frazer has adduced many American examples of this practice, in which the image of the tutelary animal is that of the totem.² In the ancient world we find the wolf figuring on the ensigns of Rome, the wild boar on those of Gaul; while other considerations suggest that both wolf and boar were once totems among the two peoples. In Egypt the hawk blazoned on the king's banner was undoubtedly the totem of the family which founded the Egyptian royal house. It is remarkable that the Greeks themselves tried to establish a relationship between the facts of totemism, as observed in Egypt,

¹ Cf. Bérard, *Origine des cultes arcadiens*, p. 130.

² Frazer, *Totemism*, pp. 29-31.

and the choice of animals for ensigns. We read in Diodorus :¹ 'The second explanation which they give touching the worship of sacred animals is couched thus : the inhabitants of Egypt, who beforetime were oft beaten by their enemies, through their ignorance of the art of war, conceived the idea of having rallying signs in their battles. Now these signs were representations of the animals which they venerate to-day, and the chiefs affixed them to the point of their pikes, in view of each rank of soldiers. The said marks contributing much to their victory, they regarded them as the cause of their salvation, and for very gratitude forbore to kill any of the animals so depicted. Afterwards this custom became an article of religion.' Diodorus gives three explanations—none rational—of the origin of totemism in Egypt. The one quoted has at least the advantage of clearly establishing the fact that the sacred animals appeared on the Egyptian ensigns ; precisely as the natives of the Upper Darling engrave their totem on their shields, and as several American tribes in time of war carry sticks surmounted by pieces of bark on which their animal totems are painted.² As the standards always precede troops on the march, it is probable that the animal-ensign represents the animal-augur or animal-guide which we shall have to consider a little later (see XI).

IX. *The totemic animal, if dangerous, is supposed to spare the members of the totemic clan, but only when they belong to it by birth.*

This belief lies at the root of the *totemic ordeal*, examples of which are found in the classical period. In

¹ Diodorus, i. 86.

² Frazer, *op. cit.* p. 30.

Senegambia the men of the Scorpion clan declare they are never bitten by the creature; the Psyllians of Marmarica (Eastern Tripoli), as well as the Ophiogenes of Parium, considered themselves proof against snake-bites.¹ In fact, the Psyllians exposed their new-born children to serpents as a test of legitimacy; and to-day the Moxos of Peru, whose totem is the jaguar, submit their medicine-men to a similar ordeal.² Among the Bechuanas there is a Crocodile clan, which expels any member who has been bitten by a crocodile, or so much as splashed by water from a stroke of its tail.³ The exposure of Romulus and Remus (sons of the Wolf Mars), whom the she-wolf by sparing recognises as her offspring, may also be classed as a kind of totemic ordeal.

X. *Animal totems help and protect the members of the totemic clan.*

There was a tale in Egypt that one of the ancient kings had been saved from death by a crocodile, who carried him across Lake Moeris on his back.⁴ The Greek legends of animal preservers, like Arion's dolphin and the fox of Aristomenes, have probably a similar origin; and the same explanation will cover the numerous traditions of fabulous heroes fed by beasts. Both ancients and moderns, however, are in error, when they

¹ Strabo mentions a tribe of *Ophiogenes* at Parium on the Propontis. They believed themselves akin to serpents and descended from a snake-hero. The males were credited with the power of curing viper bites by the laying-on of hands (Strabo, xiii. 588). A slip of Pliny's locates them in Paros—in *insula Paro* (xxviii. 30), and the variant *Cypro* has led some of the moderns to assign them to Cyprus. Elsewhere (vi. 2, 2), Pliny—citing Crates of Pergamus—says the Ophiogenes lived 'on the Hellespont around Parium' (*in Hellesponto circa Parium*); and in this he coincides with Varro. Aelian also speaks of a tribe of Ophiogenes in Phrygia, claiming descent from Halia, who became pregnant to a sacred serpent.

² Frazer, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.* p. 21.

⁴ Diodorus, i. 89.

attribute totemism to a sentiment of gratitude for the services of animals. In the first place, most totems belong to the dangerous species; and, in the second, the most useful animals—those which have been domesticated by man—owe both their usefulness and their domestication to totemism itself. The idea of gratitude, like the idea of relationship, has no value beyond that of a convenient explanation, invented to account for a state of things the origin of which was already forgotten.

XI. *Animal totems foretell the future to the faithful, and serve them as guides.*

In Greece and Rome we can only suppose that the augural animals were former totems; but, in Egypt, Diodorus distinctly states that the hawk, the totem of the royal family, was venerated because it foretold the future.¹ In Australia and Samoa the kangaroo, the crow, and the owl premonish their fellow clansmen of events to come. At one time the Samoan warriors went so far as to rear owls for the sake of their vaticinatory qualities in war.² In this connection we may recall the prophetic hare of the British queen Boadicea (Budicca), who governed a country where, in Caesar's time, the hare was fed but not eaten,—which is tantamount to saying that it was treated as a totem.³ Another instance is the story of the wolf which guided the Samnites to the foundation of their colony.⁴ This last example is the more interesting that the Samnites in question called themselves *Hirpini*—from *hirpus*, their word for wolf.⁵ It is, therefore, extremely probable that they looked upon the wolf as a totem.

¹ Diodorus, i. 87.

² Frazer, *op. cit.* p. 23.

³ Dion Cassius, lxii. 9.

⁴ Compare the pillar of cloud or fire (*Yahveh*) which guided the Israelites in the desert (Exodus xiv. 21).

⁵ Strabo, vi. 12

This use of animal totems for purposes of augury is, in all likelihood, of great antiquity. Men must soon have realised that the senses of animals were acuter than their own ; nor is it surprising that they should have expected their totems—that is to say, their natural allies—to forewarn them both of unsuspected dangers and of those provisions of nature, wells especially, which animals seem to scent by instinct.¹

Divination by animals can have had no other origin ; and the hypothesis also explains why the augural animals at an earlier period seem to have been both guides, augurs, and totems at one and the same time. The bird which so often precedes the war-chariots, on ancient Greek vases, certainly played the double part of guide and augur.

XII. *The members of a totemic clan frequently believe themselves related to their animal totem by the bond of a common descent.*

I put this characteristic last, though many have seen in it the very quintessence of totemism. To my mind it is simply a vain thing foolishly invented by totemic man, to account, either for certain taboos whose origin he failed to comprehend, or for the traditional name of his own clan. Still, this attempt at an explanation is very old, and traces of it exist in classical antiquity. Thus the Ophiogenes of Parium, whose totem was the serpent, believed—as their name indicates—that they sprang from a snake.² According to an Aeginetan fable recorded by Strabo, the Myrmidons were ants transformed into men after a plague which depopulated the whole

¹ Tacitus, translating an Alexandrine author, will have it that the Jews adored the ass because wild asses had revealed to Moses the existence of a spring (*Histories*, v. 3).

² See the Stephanus-Didot *Thesaurus*, s.v.

island.¹ This legend, without a doubt, must have grown up round the name *Myrmidon* (ant) itself; on the other hand, *Ophiogenes* (the serpent-born) must be the translation of a genealogical legend coined to explain the tribal intimacy with serpents.

The Gaulish patronymics beginning with the name of an animal, and terminating in *genos*, which indicates a divine filiation—e.g. *Matugenos* (boar-son), *Brannogenos* (crow-son), &c.—are themselves no more than a reflection of traditions associating the cult of an animal with a certain family. The Semitic tribes have furnished Robertson Smith with several instances of a supposed kinship between man and beast. Among modern totemic races examples are legion. It is enough to refer the reader to Mr. Frazer's collection;² to add to it, though easy, would be labour lost.³

* * * * * *

From the foregoing evidence it follows conclusively that the different countries composing the ancient world show unequivocal traces of taboos and customs analogous to those of modern totemic religions. The one thing lacking is a clear and definite statement of that compact, which to us appears the very essence of totemism. It must be conceded, however, that nowhere—even in totemic countries—is the idea distinctly formulated. Almost everywhere it has been replaced by the notion of relationship or an exchange of services in the remote

¹ Strabo, viii. 16.

² Frazer, *Totemism*, pp. 3 *sqq.*

³ I purposely refrain from classing exogamy with the logical developments of totemism. Exogamy, like the horror of incest, which is an attenuated form of it, springs from the taboo of the blood of the clan. As the members of a clan are recognised by their possession of a common totem, it is only natural that totemism and exogamy should often go in pairs; but exogamy is neither an offshoot of totemism nor inseparable from it (cf. *Année Sociologique*, vol. iii. p. 218).

past ; in other words, by a later attempt to explain the meaning of the old taboos.

Still, as the idea of a pact is the only one that accounts for all the phenomena of totemism, it remains both possible and logically sound to start from those phenomena and reascend to the parent conception. We have shown that the facts in question were of fairly frequent occurrence in the Mediterranean world before the Christian era : it seems, therefore, perfectly legitimate to consider them as the fruits—dried, perhaps, but authentic nevertheless—of a train of thought similar to that observable at the present day in both Americas, part of Asia, Africa, and Oceania. The conclusion may not have the cast-iron rigour of a mathematical demonstration ; but, at least, it shares that high degree of probability which is the utmost we can expect in any investigation of religious and social data.

We may also approach the question from another, more general and philosophic, point of view, and show that primitive totemism would be an absolutely necessary hypothesis, even if we had neither ethnological facts nor literary evidence to support it.

Attempts at defining the *homo sapiens* have stopped at the formula : ‘ Man is a religious animal.’ The definition is scrupulously exact—on the one condition that we take *religion* in its widest sense, and not as a synonym for modern theological doctrines. Primarily religion is a system of taboos—spiritual restraints on the brute energies and instincts of man. The first religious codes were collections of prohibitions and interdictions, the oldest and most universal of which forbade the shedding of blood within the limits of a group united by ties of blood. Superstition, however, under this system, sapped

all the energies of man. The taboos applied alike to the human, animal, and vegetable kingdoms ; between which the savage—an animist by nature—was incapable of discriminating with precision. Now, so far as the system of taboos centred round the relations of man to man, it formed the nucleus of family and social law, of morality and of politics ; so far, however, as it concerned the animal and vegetable world, it constituted totemism. Totemism—or the whole body of prohibitions curbing human activity in its dealings with animal and plant life—is not merely a correlative of law and morality in their infancy ; it is inextricably mingled and blent with both, just as, in the eyes of primitive man and the child, human beings, animals, and plants form but one kingdom, permeated by the same vital principle.

We have said the oldest taboos only protect the members of a clan ; even in the Decalogue, the words *Thou shalt not kill* have not the universal force with which, theoretically, at least, we credit them. But, at the time of the Commandments, the clan had already emerged from the intermediate, or tribal, stage, and was now a *people*. Clan-alliances, the germ of a larger national unity, were early necessitated by the struggle for existence ; isolated clans disappeared, and the survival of a group depended on the vigour of its social instincts. Now, with the haziest of boundary-lines between the kingdoms of nature—plant, animal, and man—it was natural enough that human clans should contract alliances, not only with each other, but also with animal or vegetable clans or both. As a result, the protective taboos in the human clan came to include the animal or vegetable species with which it was leagued and on whose aid and

protection it relied.¹ Thus we gain what may be called an *a priori* explanation of the fundamental compact constituting totemism—a compact which is simply an extension of the universal and primitive taboo, *Thou shalt not kill*.

¹ Truth to say, these primitive alliances are no more strange than the well-known covenant, between Israel and Jehovah, on which the Mosaic religion is based. Judging from experience, men could no more expect succour from Jehovah than from an animal or vegetable clan. Yet they believed they could, and from that belief drew an enduring force which to this day sustains them in their trials.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORY OF SACRIFICE ¹

SACRIFICE is the crucial point of all cults, the essential bond between man and deity. In this respect it is comparable to prayer; but whereas the latter is a spiritual appeal, the former entails the employment of a material substance forfeited or destroyed in the sacrificial act.

The general conception of sacrifice is that of a gift offered by man to the divinity in order to conciliate his favour; in other words, it is a purchase of friendship by the mammon of unrighteousness. 'Gifts,' says Hesiod, 'prevail upon gods and reverend kings.' The abbé Bergier in the '*Dictionnaire de Théologie*' defines it as 'the offering up to God of an object which is destroyed in His honour, as a recognition of His sovereign dominion over all things.' If we analyse this sentence closely, the underlying absurdity is apparent: how does the destruction of any object do honour to any person? The abbé proceeds: 'It is not in the least anomalous for a poor man to make some slight present to a rich man who has done him a kindness; he considers

¹ Lecture given in Paris, 1902, at the *Université populaire*, rue Richer.

that, though his benefactor may not need the gift, still an expression of gratitude cannot fail to please him.'

There is, perhaps, a certain crudity in the notion, but with that we are not concerned. Here in the eyes of most critics is the root idea of sacrifice. Its principle is that man behaves towards divinity as he would towards one or more persons endowed with powers vastly superior to his own—potentates whose aid it were ill to seek with empty hands.

If it were true that the gift-sacrifice was the primitive form of sacrifice, it would also be necessary to prove that peoples on a lower plane of religious belief regard the superhuman and mysterious beings, upon whom they conceive themselves to depend, as men writ large; that is to say, as personalities subject to the same limitations and frailties as man, but gifted with higher or more active faculties. In that case, we should find them treating those beings precisely as their experience has shown it advisable to treat the grandees of this world, to wit, the priests and chiefs. Now, the etiquette observed by every non-civilised race forbids a man to approach his chief without a present. This constitutes the *propitiatory sacrifice*. If he has received a favour, he shows his gratitude by a fresh gift, and this may be called the *sacrifice of thanksgiving*. Or he thinks the chief is displeased, and to appease him, offers a *sacrifice of pacification* or *expiation*.¹

All the above is true, but it is true only of a comparatively recent period in the history of mankind.

You know what is understood by the doctrine of

¹ Goblet d'Alviella, *Revue de l'université de Bruxelles*, 1897-89, pp. 499-500. I have more than once borrowed textually from this excellent article.

evolution. It is the knowledge that all things are in motion, and subject to a slow transformation governed by certain determinable laws.

One of the axioms which should guide the sociologist who accepts this doctrine is that our modern ideas, because they *are* modern, cannot have been the ideas of primitive man, but must have been evolved from his by a gradual process of transformation.

Now the theory which considers sacrifice as a gift made to the divinity—the divinity being regarded as an immortal and therefore trebly formidable man—cannot hold good for the beginning of things, for it still dominates the superstition of to-day.

Open one of the recent books—the ‘Chinoiseries Romaines’ of Sthéno, the ‘Cordicoles’ of Téry, the ‘Dossier des Pèlerinages’ of Noel Parfait, or the excellent articles published in the *Semaine Religieuse* by the abbé Hemmer—and you will find that the essential character of present-day devotion, say the cult of Saint Anthony of Padua, lies in the idea of exchange—of *gif-gaf*. ‘Good Saint, let me pass my examination, let me find my umbrella and I will give you, according to the state of my purse, a hundred francs or a hundred sous. You may even have them in advance, if that will weigh in my favour.’

Gentlemen, I do not say that this is either good or bad, childish or reasonable; we are students, not tractarians. But, without leaving our own times, observe that, besides these sacrifices consisting of gifts or fines—privations which the believer inflicts upon himself—religion contains another and far more mysterious rite, hard for the non-elect to understand: I mean the so-called Sacrifice of the Mass. The salient features are

these. The priest, impersonating the community, absorbs, under the form of bread and wine, the flesh and blood of the deity in order to impregnate himself with the divine essence. At intervals the faithful are allowed to participate in this sacrifice ; but since the Middle Ages, from motives of pure expediency, only the bread is given, not the wine.

I have no sympathy with the sceptic—*Voltairean* he calls himself—who jests at this solemn and ancient rite ; he would be much better occupied in studying its origin and development. The question whether the godhead is or is not present in the host is not a scientific question ; the answer in the affirmative is only an opinion, and admits of no discussion. The problem we have to solve is this : Why, in the religion of to-day, are there two forms of sacrifice—one of the earth earthy, quite clear, and universally intelligible (I refer, of course, to the gift-sacrifice) ; the other obscure in the extreme, shrouded in mysticism, and so peculiar in its character that the communicant himself is none too sure what he is doing ?

If we concede the theory of evolution, it is certain that the straightforward sacrifice by gift must be a recent growth, while conversely the perplexing sacrifice of the deity himself must date from a past correspondingly remote. But it may be asked, how can the sacrifice of the Mass be older than the other, when the Mass was instituted less than two thousand years ago, whereas the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians knew and practised the gift-sacrifice three or four thousand years before the birth of Christ ?

That is precisely the fallacy. The Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans were highly civilised nations, and there-

fore, like ourselves, cognizant of the gift-sacrifice. But, though distinctly reticent on the subject, they were also acquainted with the more mystic type, and aware of its extreme antiquity.

Moreover, a nation may have lived two thousand years before another and yet represent a more advanced stage of civilisation. Take an Australian savage of the present day, and compare him with one of those Greeks who, twenty-five hundred years ago, created the beautiful monuments of Athens. Which of the two is the primitive man? Which of the two would have the more rudimentary—the more primeval—notions on religion? The savage, obviously. The savage, then, is our principal witness; and for the last hundred years he has been cross-examined with the utmost care. Now this is what happens. An Australian aboriginal tells you a strange tale. He says, for example, that he is absolutely forbidden to eat a certain animal, because that animal is his ancestor. This is surprising enough at first; but, if you are a reader, you remember that the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Hebrews have all testified to similar beliefs lingering among them as vestiges of the past—*survivals* as the moderns have it. You conclude then that the existing savage resembles a bed of limestone cropping out in an alluvial country. If we dig to a sufficient depth under the gravel, we strike the same limestone again; and analogously if we delve far enough into the history of civilisation, from three to five thousand years before Christ, we rediscover our savage's articles of faith.

Thus, the twentieth-century savage enables us to catch a glimpse—or more than a glimpse—of the opinions of our far-off ancestors, members of races that ripened

earlier into civilisation, but nevertheless passed through the phase in which the savage still remains.

To return to the gift-sacrifice. If it were a primitive conception, then the lowest strata of savage humanity would exhibit two phenomena : firstly, the belief in one or more gods after the pattern of men ; and, secondly, the existence of priests acting as representatives and treasurers of the god. For without the priest there is no gift-sacrifice ; a pair of visible hands is always necessary to receive the offering in lieu of the unseen God.

But the case is not so. On the contrary, the most primitive religions know neither a personal god made in the image of man, nor a priest, the deputy of that god.

The Bible might be quoted as an exception ; but if from the very beginning the Bible assumes a personal god, it knows nothing of the priest. The priest is a late-comer in the history of Israel. And as for the anthropomorphic deity of the Pentateuch, he is barely older than the year 1000 B.C., the earliest date to which the present version of Genesis can be attributed. A millennium before Christ is little more than the day before yesterday—and the proof is easy. We all know now that there was a long period in the history of man when he knew neither metals, domestic animals, nor cereals. Now the redactor of Genesis is so comparatively recent a person that he had no inkling of any such period : Adam tends the trees in the garden of Eden, and, immediately upon his expulsion, betakes himself to agriculture, as though men from the first must have been familiar with fruit trees and cereals. Therefore the writer to whom we owe the biblical Genesis is modern, and his idea of a man-like god cannot be primitive.

On the other hand, the animal—or animal-headed—deities of Egypt carry us back to a much earlier epoch, anywhere between 5000 B.C. and 6000 B.C. Thus we may plausibly conclude that long before the divinity was invested with human traits he was envisaged under the form of certain animals.

And now comes a striking coincidence. Go to the most primitive of modern savages and you find a religion to which the man-god is unknown, and the animal or plant god all in all. It is not an individual animal or plant which they adore; it is a particular species—animal or vegetable—the members of which they imagine are bound to themselves by a mysterious and immemorial tie. These, to their minds, are the protectors, the talismans, of the tribe or clan. More than this, they are apt to persuade themselves that they are lineal descendants of the guardian animal or plant, and proceed, logically enough, to adopt its name.

For instance, certain North American Indians call themselves Beavers. They hold that their ultimate ancestor was a beaver, who miraculously brought forth a man; they will not pass a beaver without some token of respect or attachment; and they are fertile in anecdotes of beavers who saved their lives—beavers who showed them fords—beavers who did them all manner of services.

From time to time, primitive peoples, addicted to the cult of animals, indulge in a peculiar type of sacrifice. Suppose that a tribe is afflicted with famine, drought, or an epidemic; it argues that, for some reason or other, the mascot—say, the beaver—has withdrawn its countenance and protection. To effect a reconciliation, two methods will be employed. On the one hand, the tribe

will offer gifts—in other words, carry food—to its tutelar animal: this is the gift-sacrifice. At other times the remedy is more eccentric. The first step is to convene a grand synod of tribal chiefs; then a beaver must be caught and killed; and, finally, every man present eats a portion of its flesh. The point of this ceremony is supposed to lie in the fact that it is a sort of self-deification, inasmuch as it directly increases the element of divine energy inherent in every man. In a word, it is a savage sacrament, resorted to in supreme moments of distress or peril—a communion in which the sacrifice of a divine object imparts divinity to all that eat of it.

The great discovery of Professor Robertson Smith, of Cambridge, who died there at an early age in 1884, has shown that sacrifice by communion was older and more primitive than the sacrifice by gift; that it was, in fact, the oldest form of sacrifice; that traces of it are found among the Greeks and Romans as well as among the Hebrews; and, lastly, that the communion in Christian churches is only an evolution of this primitive sacrificial rite. The communion did not originate with Christianity. On the contrary, it was a time-honoured and widely prevalent institution, especially among the half-civilised communities of Asia, where it had a great vogue with the lower classes, as the more enlightened section of the population had been won over to the simpler idea of the gift-sacrifice. To-day, then, we may call it a survival—a survival from the very childhood of the world. And here we have a perfectly satisfactory solution to two problems: firstly, why this extraordinary form of sacrifice should have taken so firm a hold on the better half of mankind; and, secondly, why its primary significance should have been so obscured both in the

Middle Ages and in our own generation. In the first case, it gained ready and rapid acceptance because man was predisposed in its favour by his own religious past ; and in the second, its import has been easily obliterated because it corresponds to an idea as far removed from modern modes of thought as a primitive chip flint from a Lebel gun.

Even yet we meet with the notion that when two men take food together a kind of moral and physical bond is established between them. Originally this idea was still stronger ; but only sacred food could knit the sacred tie. Nothing but the flesh of the holy animal would serve, and the solemn mystery of its death was justified in the sight of the faithful by their conviction that so and not otherwise must the mystic bond between the believer and his god be created and confirmed. Thus all there was of a higher life in the primitive community was bought by the death and periodic sacrifice of a god.

And now let us try to outline the evolutionary process which fused this primitive type of sacrifice with that of sacrifice by gift. When once agriculture and the domestication of animals had dispelled the mystery surrounding the different forms of plant and animal life, familiarity began to breed contempt. Little by little the idea of a divinity hedging certain species of animals faded away, and man began to create the godhead in his own likeness. Yet there remained a tradition of animals sacrificed and eaten by the community. Therefore both sacrifice and banquet were retained, in the belief that the god—anthropomorphic now—smelt the blood and inhaled the smoke of the burnt-offering. To provide him with a representative, a priest assisted at the ceremony, until in the end he and his ritual completely dwarfed the part

played by the body of the faithful, and, while the sacrifice and banquet still survived, their significance was wholly inverted.

Gentlemen, I stop here. The question is difficult enough without my proceeding to pile problem upon problem. The point which I wished to bring out is this : that in primitive sacrifice the idea of *communion*—however modern it may appear at the first glance—is a factor of prime importance. The English scholar, who first discerned this truth, literally revolutionised the study of religion. He built, so to speak, a solid bridge between our own day and those dim ages when man bowed down and adored the beast. And this he accomplished by throwing into its proper perspective the primitive and strangely persistent conception of the god-animal, fated to be slain and eaten by its worshippers. I venture to think the discovery involves so much and has found so little recognition that you will pardon me for having made it the subject of these remarks.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN AND ESSENCE OF TABOOS¹

THEORETICALLY man's activity has but one limit—that of his physical powers : he can eat what he pleases, kill as he lists, provided always that he is the stronger. Driven by his needs and his passions, he stops only before a power superior to his own, and nothing but outside force can restrain or repress his energy.

But this state of absolute independence is purely theoretical. In practice—look as far back as we will into the past—man submits to an inner or subjective restraint as well as to an outer or objective one. Not only does he experience obstacles, he creates them for himself, in the shape of fears and scruples. In the course of time these fears and scruples have taken to themselves names—moral law, religious law, political law. And precisely as these three laws exist to-day and still exercise their restraining influence on human activity, so they existed—confused and undivided as yet—among the earliest of savage communities. Morality, religion, and politics, as we conceive them, had not so much as dawned on the primitive mind, but man submitted to and accepted a multitude of restraints, which, taken as a whole,

¹ Lesson given in 1900 at the École du Louvre.

constituted what is called the system of taboos. The general formula of the taboo is : ' Do not do this, do not touch that.' It is the English *don't*, as applied to children. The taboo, whatever form it may take, has always the one characteristic, that it sets a bound to human activity. This path is taboo, do not walk there. This fruit is taboo, do not eat it. This field is taboo on such a day, do not work there. Thus, unlike civil, religious, or moral law, the law of taboo never implies action, but always abstention : it is a curb, not a whip.

I have said this curb was forged of fears and scruples : and, in fact, if we set aside brute force opposed to force, it is difficult to see what could restrain the energy of man except fear, which is the sentiment that engenders scruple. Now, the savage not only fears the lion's tooth and the serpent's fang ; he dreads above everything illness and death, punishments inflicted by the angry spirits with which his imagination peoples the world. Man is pre-eminently a social animal ; at every stage of civilisation he pictures the external world as an integral part of the same community as himself, and by a natural generalisation concludes that the spiritual principle, which he feels to be working within him, must be working also in the infinite phenomena without him. Before he rises to a definite and consistent idea of godhead, he feels himself surrounded by gods, fears them, and strives to live at peace with them.

The general cause of taboos, then, is the fear of danger. If man—civilised now, and with science perpetually at hand to steel him against the nightmares of childhood—still falls a constant prey to groundless terrors, what must have been his thralldom, when, science yet unborn, every act, no matter how innocent, was liable to be taken as

the direct cause of the next chance mishap which befell him? Are we not to this day everlastingly tempted to confuse temporal sequence with causal connection? *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*—*B* follows *A*, therefore *A* is the cause of *B*—the fallacy is daily committed by education and illiteracy alike.

The savage, lacking the notion of cause and effect but endowed with a memory, was certain to assign a given misadventure to some immediately preceding event, though nine times out of ten the two would be unconnected. Thus, in primitive communities, there grew up a vast oral tradition of leading cases: such or such an act has such or such a fatal consequence—on such or such a day I fell and hurt myself, *because*, when I went out in the morning, I saw a snake. If all these hasty generalisations had taken root in any one community, fear would have suspended all action, and the community would have perished. But here, as in all things, selection played a part. The fears experienced by the tribal magnates—old men, chiefs, and priests—were shared by the rank and file, and gave rise to various scruples all more or less widely diffused: the rest were forgotten.

Thus the taboos came into being. They cannot be said to be the result of experience: the everyday lessons of experience—as, that fire burns and water drowns—have no need to be confirmed by any prohibition or interdict of a religious character. Nor yet are they due to scientific experiment, to repeatedly verified observations of cause and effect. The taboos correspond to fears, and the fears, in their turn, to rash generalisations from isolated facts.

We have all the more reason for this view of the case, when we consider the similarly vicious process of thought

in modern superstition. Every railway company knows that there are fewer travellers on the thirteenth of the month ; every hostess, that it is fatal to have thirteen at table. Now this prejudice is based on a generalisation from a single instance—the Last Supper where Jesus sat down with the twelve Apostles. Two of the thirteen died before the year was out, and this one accident has been enough to create a taboo, the effects of which will doubtless be felt for long to come.

Even when he gives his imagination free play, primitive man loves a realistic explanation. To the savage a dangerous object is essentially an object dangerous to touch, whence the widespread idea that the principal cause of danger is contact. Things taboo and persons taboo, are not to be touched, and are therefore sacred—intangible in the strict sense of the word. But why should contact be dangerous ? Here the naïve physical science of the savage comes into play. A dangerous contact is one by which something dangerous passes from an alien body into ours : the sting of an insect or a snake, for example. Hence the conception of objects taboo or tabooed as so many reservoirs of dangerous forces, contact with which may produce electrical and devastating results. This idea suffices to explain not only the greater part of the taboos, but also the ceremonial employed in Polynesia, and elsewhere, to annul their effects. Thus, a man who touches the accursed thing—a tabooed object—absorbs by his act a dangerous element, capable of injuring both him and all whom he may touch in his turn. To rid himself of this poison in the system, he has recourse to widely different means, reducible, however, to two great classes. Sometimes he puts himself in contact with a person charged with a

more powerful taboo, and thus passes on the danger without prejudice to its recipient; sometimes, by bathing, he transmits the taboo to the water, which can absorb it with impunity. In the island of Tonga a tabooed person touches the foot-sole of a superior chief, by pressing it against his stomach. Now, this guileless method of curing a malady by contact with some great one of the earth has been held efficacious almost to our own day. Only by the light of the taboo can we penetrate the inner sense of the ceremony by which the kings of France—though neither magicians nor priests—healed the species of scrofula known as the King's Evil. From the twelfth century onwards the French kings were supposed to have the power of curing this infirmity by simply touching the sufferer. The proof that we have here a pagan custom of great antiquity lies in the fact that St. Louis—most pious of sovereigns—thought it his duty to christianise the rite, just as crucifixes have been planted on certain menhirs in order to modify the heathen cult associated with the old stones. Guillaume de Nangis tells us that, while his predecessors merely touched the patients, St. Louis supplemented the treatment with the sign of the Cross, in the hope, adds the chronicler, that they would ascribe the cure to the virtue of the Cross and not to the dignity of the king. Louis XIV, at the time of his coronation, and James II of England, during his exile at St.-Germain, were still asked to touch for the Evil—the sick men, victims of a taboo, discharged it on a person whom the taboo could not attack. What Louis XIV would have said, had it been pointed out that he was forming himself on the model of a Polynesian chief, is another question.

The desire to remove taboos, and so to restore the

liberty of men and things, was the corner-stone of a special science, which in Greece and Rome was called the science of lustration and purification. Like the taboos themselves, this science has been of incalculable service to humanity. If the taboo had never been, the savage, deaf to reason and regardless of the morrow, would have turned the earth into a wilderness. The taboo taught him restraint and moderation. But had there been no corrective to the taboo, the savage, equally deaf to criticism and enamoured of the marvellous, would have so enchained his life through the fear of losing it, that civilisation would have been forever impossible. The priestly purification gave him back a measure of freedom, judiciously restricted by the dread of contracting new taboos which might require a complicated and painful lustration. Now, as far back as we can go, the duty of priests was to purify. To the priesthood, then, man owes his partial liberation from the terrors which paralysed him. The conclusion is worthy of notice ; for it shows once more the falsity of the pet theory of the eighteenth century, according to which the priesthood was governed by the purely selfish motive of deceiving men and confiscating their liberties in its own behoof.

If the taboo served a useful end, it was because the very thought of its violation inspired profound horror. In the beginning there was no question of a social sanction, no thought of punishing the sinner : the crime itself begot the penalty. To violate a taboo, unintentionally though it were, was to expose oneself to death. In the civilisations which are known to us from eye-witnesses, like that of Polynesia at the opening of the nineteenth century, the severity of the penalties has already been relaxed, and society—as represented by the chiefs—has

taken upon itself to make hard the way of transgressors. And indeed, if the violation of a taboo exposes the whole tribe to a dangerous contagion, and may also provoke the anger of spirits, drastic measures are necessary, both by way of example, and to appease the irate powers. But clearly punishment by the community is not primitive ; it begins in the period when respect for the taboo is on the wane, and the need arises for a penal code to reinforce the chastisement which it was once believed would follow inevitably from the offence itself.

CHAPTER IV

TARPEIA ¹

I

‘WHY,’ asks Plutarch in the thirty-seventh chapter of his ‘Roman Questions,’ ‘should custom have ordained that, out of all the offerings we make to heaven, only the spoils of war should be left to the mercies of moth and rust, untended and unrepaired?’² Plutarch’s questions are invariably of great interest, for the simple reason that they hinge upon customs to which his age had lost the clue. Plutarch’s answers, however, are usually absurd, for the equally simple reason that he brings to the interpretation of prehistoric religious usage the intellectual stock-in-trade of a philosophic amateur in the first century after Christ. In the present instance, he hazards two solutions of the problem. Either the disappearance of the spoils would dim the splendour of the exploits commemorated, and spur another generation to fresh feats of arms; or, on the other hand, there might be something odious in the notion of perpetuating the memory

¹ *Revue archéologique*, 1908, i. pp. 42-74.

² Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* c. 37, p. 237e. The text is uncertain on one point (προσκυβεῖν in the sense of ‘taking care’); but the general sense is not in doubt.

of spilt blood and stricken fields—precisely as Greek opinion deplored the audacity which first reared trophies in stone or bronze.¹ . . . These specimens of exegesis speak for themselves : comment would be out of place.

To-day the question raised by Plutarch is one of a class which the science of comparative religion and custom is able to answer off-hand : if the Romans did not repair their trophies, it was because those trophies were invested with a sanctity of their own which rendered all contact perilous. The Hebrew Ark of the Covenant, to go no further, is a case in point, though with this difference : the sanctity of the Ark was inherent in its origin, while the sanctity of spoils wrested from the enemy was an adventitious result of the circumstances which caused them to change hands after the combat.

II

Among the early Romans, who erected no trophies on the field of battle,² we find the spoils hung in temples and public buildings, in private houses and on trees—particularly oaks. This last mode of exposure, to which both Virgil and Statius allude,³ is obviously the first in point of time. Nor had its memory passed away in the first century of the Empire ; witness the famous passage⁴ where Lucan compares Pompey to an old and leafless oak, long dead, which, standing in the midst of a fruitful field and charged with ancient spoils, still remains an

¹ Cf. Cic. *De Invent.* ii. 23, 69 ; Diod. Sic. xiii. 24 ; Plut. *Alcib.* 29. The use of metal trophies was general later on in Greece ; but the Macedonians never raised trophies of any sort (Paus. ix. 40, 9).

² Florus, iii. 2.

³ Virg. *Aen.* xi. 5 *sqq.* ; Stat. *Theb.* ii. 707 *sqq.*

⁴ Lucan, *Phars.* i. 136 *sqq.*

object of adoration. Now, if a tree like this—whose age was to be counted by centuries—could stand in the very heart of the countryside, braving the casual cupidity of every passer-by, and yet retain its burden inviolate, there is only one conclusion to be drawn: the spoils were protected from all contact by the sanctity attached to them. Conversely, if these were left to hang on the withered boughs of a tottering oak, and not a man dreamt of transferring them to a sounder stem, it can only have been because the support of the spoils was as sacred as the spoils themselves. Only the natural chances of time and tide could reduce them to dust: the hand of man must on no account interfere in the process.

Equally intangible, in the strict sense of the word, were the private trophies in the home of a successful commander. Generation after generation they hung secure from injury—patents of nobility to the house, and sources of prestige to its owner.¹ So, after the disaster at Cannae, when Fabius wished to fill up the gaps hewn in the senatorial ranks, he chose a certain number of burgesses whose family residences were ornamented with spoil stripped from the enemy.² Pompey's house—*rostrata domus*—was still gay with the prows of Cilician ships when it passed to Mark Antony, and later, by inheritance, to a forbear of the emperor Gordian.³ In the great fire under Nero, Suetonius tells us, the mansions of old-world generals perished 'still ornamented with

¹ 'They arrange their trophies,' says Polybius (vi. 39), 'in the most conspicuous positions available, as they consider them palpable evidence of their own prowess.' Similarly, Tibullus (i. 1, 54) admits it may well become Messala to war by sea and land, 'that his house may flaunt it in hostile spoils.' Compare also Liv. x. 7; Cic. *Phil.* ii. 28; Sil. It. *Pun.* vi. 436, &c.

² Liv. xxiii. 23: 'qui spolia ex hoste fixa domi haberent.'

³ Capitolinus, *Gordian*, 3; cf. Cic. *Phil.* ii. 28, 68.

the enemies' spoils.'¹ Even when a house passed by sale to another family, the new owner might not touch the *spolia*, still less remove them.² There is a shade of guilelessness in the notion that this prohibition of touching, tending or repairing the *spolia* was dictated by fear lest the unscrupulous should display apocryphal spoil in their houses—much as old armour or family portraits are bought at a price to-day.³ The scruple, proof of which we have already adduced, was purely religious, and the Romans continued to act in conformity with it long after they had lost all real comprehension of its character.

In the temples—the habitation of the gods—the trophies were nailed on the walls and could never be removed. Only in circumstances of the utmost gravity, when the salvation of the state hung by a thread, was it permissible to equip recruits with the arms of a vanquished enemy. After Cannae, at a moment when Rome appeared defenceless, the consuls, according to Livy, had weapons made in hot haste, and 'the spoils of ancient foemen were torn down from temple and portico.'⁴ A little later the dictator M. Junius Pera was authorised by special edict to mount on horseback,—this was contrary to religious law,—and proceeded to accoutre six thousand men in the Gaulish arms which had decked the triumph of Flaminius.⁵ Livy well knew that such a measure was every whit as exceptional as the other which was passed at the same time and opened the ranks of the Roman army to slaves. They were, he says, 'the last resources

¹ Suet. *Nero*, 38 : 'hostilibus adhuc spoliis ornatae.'

² Pliny, xxxv. 7.

³ 'The object being doubtless to guard against the frauds of false pretenders.' Smith, *Dict. of Ant.*, s.v. 'Spolia,' p. 691.

⁴ Liv. xxii. 57.

⁵ *Ibid.* xxiii. 14.

of an almost desperate state, driven to make convention give way to necessity.’¹ The use of arms taken in war was so abnormal a course that it was only adopted with hesitancy, even if the spoils were not the fruits of victory, but a gift. During the revolt of Syracuse, Livy relates, ‘the armed citizens mustered in the public squares, while the unarmed flocked to the shrine of Olympian Jove in search of the Gallic and Illyrian spoils which Rome had bequeathed to Hiero. Let Heaven be gracious, they prayed, and lend them these sacred arms; every blow they struck should be for fatherland, for freedom, and for the temples of their gods.’² The arms were indeed sacred, but not more so than those in the porticoes and private houses of Rome. The point was, not that they belonged to a temple, but that they were arms taken in war—*exuviae*. By the very fact of their capture they were withdrawn from use, and became—theoretically, at least—untouchable; just as we have seen to be the case when they simply hung on tree-branches or house-walls. The religious character of the temples where they were lodged added nothing to the sanctity inherent in them; the most it could do was to guarantee that sanctity by rendering it apparent to all eyes.

III

This example, after so many others, shows the perversity of certain historians, still inspired by the prejudices of the eighteenth century, who seek in public utility—or what we are now pleased to consider such—

¹ ‘Honestas utilibus cedunt’ (Liv. xxiii. 14, 3). Cf. the speech of Fabius in the *Punica* of Silius, x. 598 sqq.

² Livy, xxxiv. 21.

the origin of primeval law and custom. Two poverty-stricken tribes go to war ; an engagement is fought, and the victors collect the arms and clothing of the vanquished. Common sense, a bad guide for once, would say they were making hay while the sun shone, in order to follow up an initial success with fresh resources. Unfortunately, the winning tribe does nothing of the sort, unless driven by an absolute necessity which silences the scruples of religion. The spoils are sacred, and must be called in from circulation because they have become dangerous to touch. Sometimes, as we have seen, they may be hung out of reach in a building : sometimes, and this earlier—for man makes war long before temples, porticoes, and houses—they may be thrown into water, or destroyed by fire. Finally, if the tribe is sedentary, they may be piled upon a consecrated part of its territory, with the prohibition attached that none shall lay a hand on them. In short, the rites prescribed for the treatment of spoils correspond to the various funerary rites—suspension in mid-air until the slow process of natural decay is complete, immersion, cremation, burial. The four elements, air, water, fire, and earth, combine to rescue man from the dangers—not of this world—with which he is threatened by the sacred objects. In the course of time, thanks to the priesthood whose business it is to conciliate or neutralise the powers of magic, we find the work of destruction arrested. Man no longer sequesters the whole of his capture from the usages of life, he surrenders a fraction to the gods—in other words, to the priests who allow him to dispose of the remainder at will. The bulk of what were *spoils* has become *booty*. And yet on the ever valid principle of the survival of religious scruples, the spoils taken from an enemy have never entirely lost

the sacred character with which they were originally invested ; there has always been a shade of reluctance to treat them as everyday objects available for any purpose. At a period when first-fruits and tithes of the booty were no longer offered to heaven, Napoleon had the cannon captured by the Grande Armée cast into a triumphal column, instead of adding them to his batteries or keeping them in his arsenals to fight another day.

IV

We have spoken of the destruction of spoils by fire, of their immersion in water, of their exposure on land ; we have now to collect a few examples of these primitive rites.

Orosius, probably on the authority of Livy,¹ states that the Cimbrians and Teutons, after routing the consul Manilius and the proconsul Caepio, destroyed the whole of the immense booty which they seized in the two Roman camps. Articles of clothing were torn to shreds and scattered to the winds ; gold and silver were flung into the river, horses into an abyss ; the equipment of men and chargers was broken up piecemeal. In the conduct of these barbarians—‘extravagant’ he naturally considers it—Orosius sees ‘a new and unusual mode of execration.’² To the Danish scholars of the nineteenth century, Worsaae in particular, belongs the credit of proving that here we have nothing either ‘new’ or ‘unusual’ ; only the simple performance of a rite familiar to the barbarian peoples of the North. In 1866 Worsaae thus explained the numerous finds of bronze weapons and ornaments

¹ Orosius, v. 16.

² ‘. . . nova quadam atque insolita execratione.’

in the turf-pits of Denmark, which actually are old lakes ; a year later he extended his theory to the Bronze Age.¹ 'In all the deposits from our turf-pits,' said Engelhardt at the Congress of Copenhagen (1869),² 'there is hardly a single object but is imperfect, and unfitted for subsequent use. . . . The fact is, all these deposits come from booty collected on the field of battle and the articles have been deliberately incapacitated during the process of offering them to the gods, to whom a sacrifice of this nature had been promised beforehand : the warriors kept nothing but the glory. The passages cited by Worsaae and Beauvois from a number of classical authors, together with Steenstrup's profound study of the animal bones found in the same strata as the antiquities, and mixed with them, have thoroughly cleared up this point, which but lately seemed inexplicable.'

Worsaae's theory was popularised in France by Alexandre Bertrand, who wrote an article on the subject, under the title 'La Part des dieux.'³ His monograph, like those of Worsaae which it recapitulates, is marred by several anachronisms ; indeed, the title—felicitous though it may seem—is itself one. In the days when Rome had evolved her polytheistic system, and religious customs of the kind we are dealing with had already a grey antiquity behind them, the classical writers believed that the spoils destroyed or abandoned were vowed to certain divinities or reduced to nothingness in their honour. Livy has several references to spoils burnt 'to

¹ Worsaae, *Mém. de la Soc. des antiquaires du Nord*, 1866, p. 61 ; cf. O. Tischler, *Gedächtnissrede an Worsaae*, 1886, p. 8.

² *Congrès d'archéol. préhistorique* (Copenhagen), 1869, p. 200.

³ August 5, 1872. See Bertrand, *Archéol. celtique et gauloise*, ed. 2, p. 221. Cf. S. Müller, *Mém. de la Soc. des antiquaires du Nord*, 1884-1889, p. 225.

Vulcan '—*spolia Vulcano cremantur*.¹ Elsewhere we find spoils vowed to Jupiter, Mars, Lua Mater, 'and the other gods to whom religion permits the consecration by fire of hostile spoils.'² It was to Mars, Minerva, Lua, and the rest of the gods that Aemilius Paulus solemnly addressed himself, when, after having the shields of brass transported on his galleys, he heaped together the other arms of every description, fired the pile with his own hands, and invited the military tribunes to throw lighted torches upon it. In conforming to this archaic ritual, Paulus believed—or feigned to believe—that he was burning the Macedonian arms *in honour of the gods*; in reality, he was following a venerable custom of earlier date than the constitution of the Roman Pantheon. Of all the divinities whom Livy names in similar circumstances, one only had not been hellenised in the time of Aemilius Paulus: this was *Lua*, whose name is related to *lues*, and means purely and simply *destruction*. To vow to Lua is to destroy, and nothing else. To recognise the 'portion of the gods' in sacrifices of this type is all the less legitimate because the accredited representatives of the gods, the priests, received nothing. If every offering to Vulcan had been necessarily burnt, his temple would never have contained anything but ashes. The portion of the gods was not the part destroyed, but, on the contrary, the part preserved; and the victor could only have made his offering in the relatively late era when there were temples to hold it and priests to receive it. True, Livy relates that Romulus, after the defeat of Acron, whom he killed and stripped of

¹ Liv. i. 37; viii. 10; xxiii. 46; xxx. 6; xli. 2; cf. Preller-Jordan, *Röm. Mythologie*, ii. p. 162.

² Liv. x. 29, 'Iovi victori spolia cum vovisset . . . cremavit': *ibid.* xlv. 33, 'Marti, Minervae, Luæque Matri et ceteris deis quibus spolia hostium dicare fas est succensi.'

his arms, consecrated the spoil of that chief in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, so called from the litter or *feretrum* used for the transport.¹ But, as a matter of fact, this temple, which Livy considers the oldest in Rome, does not appear in history till 328, when, four full centuries later, it received the *spolia opima* of the Veian king Volumnius—a trophy still visible in the time of Augustus.² The primitive Roman rite, as Virgil knew, was either to burn the enemy's spoils³ or to hang them on the trunk of an oak tree raised upon a hillock : ⁴ thus Aeneas 'reared on a mound a giant oak, shorn of its encircling boughs, and clothed it in shining arms.'⁵

I am not aware of any text which indicates that the Romans, like the Teutons and Cimbrians, were in the habit of throwing their spoils into lakes and marshes, yet I believe they must have done so ; for not only did the Italian lakes receive a quantity of offerings in the shape of *stipites*, but, at the rebuilding of the Capitol by Vespasian, the haruspices, who were steeped in ancient custom, ordered the flame-scorched ruins of the old temple to be flung into the marshes to preclude their after use.⁶

¹ Livy, i. 10, 5. The etymology, of course, is absurd ; the one which connects *Feretrius* with *ferire* is more reasonable (Prop. v. 10, 46). Cf. the art. 'Jupiter' in Roscher's *Lexikon*, pp. 671, 674.

² Cf. Hermes, vol. xiii. p. 142.

³ Virg. *Aen.* xi. 193.

⁴ Lucan's oak, *sublimis in agro*, is 'sublime' for this reason (*Phars.* i. 136).

⁵ 'Ingentem quercum decisis undique ramis
constituit tumulo fulgentiaque induit arma' (*Aen.* xi. 5).

⁶ 'Ut reliquiae prioris delubri in paludes aveherentur' (Tac. *Hist.* iv. 53).

V

In the historical period, the Romans may well have vowed the spoils of the enemy to a particular deity beforehand, as did Fabius at the moment of his attack on the Samnites.¹ But when, by way of fulfilling their engagement, they destroyed the booty instead of preserving it, they were obeying a custom whose primitive character had been obscured by time. When, again, they saw the barbarians doing likewise, they imagined them to be offering sacrifices to their gods; for they had lost the conception of a primitive state in which a sacrifice was something the poles removed from an offering to a given divinity. Yet, in one passage at least, Livy seems to have felt a doubt. In 176 B.C. the Ligurians took Mutina, seized an enormous amount of booty, and destroyed it. 'They killed the prisoners after hacking them to pieces, turned the temples into shambles rather than places of sacrifice,² and finally, after a carnage of all living things, vented their fury upon inanimate objects. Vases of every kind were dashed against the walls—especially any that seemed made for use rather than ornament.'³ Thus the Ligurians behaved precisely as did the Cimbrians and Teutons seventy years afterwards, butchering and battering everything with such a rage of destruction that Livy hesitates to term this massacre a sacrifice—*trucidant verius quam sacrificant*. And, indeed,

¹ Livy, x. 29, 14–18.

² '... cum foeda laceratione interficiunt . . . pecora in fanis trucidant verius passim quam interficiunt.'

³ Livy, xli. 18: 'Satiati caede animantium, quae inanima erant parietibus adfligunt, vasa omnis generis usui magis quam ornamento in speciem facta. . . .' (An allusion to the destruction of the precious vases of Corinth by Mummius?)

to call it a sacrifice would be an abuse of words : there is no question here of a gift-sacrifice, none of a sacrifice of expiation or communion ; it is simply and solely the execution of a sort of outlawry, *herem*, to use the expression of the Bible, which furnishes us with equivalent examples.

Before passing to those examples, which are exceedingly instructive, I must touch briefly on the rite whose distinctive feature is that the hostile spoils are left heaped on the ground without being burnt. I have found no text attesting its practice in Italy ; but a very important passage in Caesar attributes it to the Gauls, whose civilisation at the time of the conquest offers more than one analogy to that of primitive Italy. 'Mars,' he says,¹ 'is their arbiter of war ; and as a general rule, if they are resolved on battle, they promise him the spoils. After victory they sacrifice all animals that fall into their hands and deposit the remainder of their prizes in some one determinate place : in many districts the towering heaps of spoil on consecrated ground are very noticeable. It rarely happens that a Gaul so far defies his religion as to conceal a part of the booty in his house or to remove anything from the general pile : the penalty for that offence is death, preceded by the cruelest tortures.' Caesar rightly perceived that it was here a question of a religious law or custom, sanctioned by the most terrible penalties. Other texts tell us the Gauls sometimes burned the booty.² On occasion, also, they sank it in lakes or ponds—those, for instance, around Toulouse, where, in 105 B.C., the Romans under Q. Servilius Caepio

¹ Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* vi. 17.

² This must undoubtedly be Florus' meaning, when he says the Boii vowed the Roman arms to Vulcan (i. 20, 5). Cf. Waltzing, *Rev. des Études anciennes*, vol. iv. p. 53.

reaped an ample harvest of gold and silver.¹ The commonly received opinion that these ponds served as treasuries for the Tectosages is obviously inadmissible. Not less so is the story that their riches were fruits of the pillage of Delphi; though there is one grain of truth in the legend: the gold of Toulouse, *aurum Tolosanum*, was the result of military expeditions, and had been submerged on account of its sacred character. I have already remarked that the sanctity of the spoils threatened the gravest consequences to those who touched or appropriated the objects thus withdrawn from circulation. Hence, when Caepio and his army were annihilated in 105 B.C. by the Cimbrians, the disaster was ascribed to the sacrilegious theft of the Toulouse gold—an opinion which must have originated in Gaul and afterwards have filtered through to Italy, where it was a commonplace that the treasure had been fatal, not only to the actual depredators, but even to their kith and kin. These are the normal effects of a violated taboo.²

M. d'Arbois de Jubainville has recently commented on the following well-known excerpt from Diodorus, relative to the Celts: ³ 'Taking the heads of their fallen foes, and fastening them to their horses' necks, they leave to their servants the bloody spoils of the slain, and for their sole booty carry off the scalps amid songs of triumph and hymns of victory.' M. d'Arbois justly observes that there must have been many Germans amongst these servants; and here we have a feasible explanation how the Celtic word for victory, **bheñdi*,

¹ Strabo, iv. 1, 13; Justin, xxxii. 3, 9.

² At a later period the Gauls, like the Romans, preserved their booty in temples. Cf. *Revue des Études anciennes*, vol. iv. pp. 280 sq.

³ Diod. Sic. v. 24, 4. Cf. d'Arbois, *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des Inscr.* 1907, p. 172.

became the German word *Beute*—booty. Diodorus omits to specify the Celtic tribe he alludes to ; and the habit he describes cannot have been general, as it contradicts the direct evidence of Caesar. However, it may be retained as an example, local perhaps, of a religious reminiscence vivid enough to deter the Gauls from carrying off the spoils of war. To say they were content with the mere glory of conquest, and nursed a chivalrous disdain for the material fruits of victory, is to be misled by the influence of exclusively modern ideas ; a lapse which was made by Engelhardt, who, in the passage quoted above, attributes a like disinterestedness to the Scandinavian warriors who threw their booty into the lakes. These are the domains of superstition, not of ethics. Only when superstition relaxed her grip, and the desire for material emoluments and tangible gains took the upper hand, did the dread of touching the booty give way to the lust of possessing it. This was the attitude of the Germans in Augustan days, when they slaughtered the officers of Varus' army, but did not hesitate to enrich themselves with the spoils.¹ Tacitus, relating the avenging campaign of Germanicus, more than once remarks upon the avidity shown by the soldiers of Arminius 'who preferred robbery to blood.'² And yet these Germans had preserved the memory of their ancestors' habit of consecrating spoils by suspension, a method similar to the one long practised at Rome ; for the ensigns of Varus' legions were fixed by Arminius to old oaks in the Teutoburger Wald.³

¹ Tacitus, *Ann.* i. 37: 'Ferebantur et spolia Varianae cladis, plerisque . . . praedae data.'

² *Ibid.* i. 65: 'Hostium aviditas, ommissa caede, praedam sectantium.'

³ *Ibid.* i. 59.

VI

In order to confirm and clarify what has been said up to now with regard to the sacred character of spoils taken in warfare, and the religious objection of semi-barbarous peoples to their appropriation and subsequent use, there is no need to scour North America for examples ; the Bible is sufficient.

The theory of the interdict (*herem*), which condemns the spoil of the enemy to destruction, with a few reservations dictated by practical necessity, is found in two passages of Deuteronomy and Numbers :—

‘ When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it . . . ; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee ; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them ; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them : neither shalt thou make marriages with them ; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me.’ ¹

‘ Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean : nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation : and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.’ ²

And now for the practice, which naturally precedes all theory. We find it in the book of Joshua.³ The Hebrews had arrived before Jericho, only to find the gates shut. ‘ And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I

¹ Deuteronomy vii. 1-4.

² Numbers xxxi. 22, 23.

³ Joshua vi. 2 *sqq.*

have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns : and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout ; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat.' Joshua hearkened to the word of the Lord, traced a *magic circle* round the town, and 'cut it off' ; that is, virtually suppressed it. On the seventh day, when the seventh circuit had been made, and the priests lifted their trumpets, ' Joshua said unto the people, Shout ; for the Lord hath given you the city. And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord : only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing lest ye make yourself accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord : they shall come unto the treasury of the Lord.' The walls fell, Jericho was taken, and the Hebrews applied the interdict, killing ' both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.' They burnt the town and all it contained except ' the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron ' which they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua adjured them in this manner : ' Cursed be the

man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth the city Jericho : he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall be set up the gates of it.'

The curse put in Joshua's mouth appears to have borne fruit : for centuries none dare to rebuild Jericho.¹ The extensive excavations, recently carried out on the site by MM. Sellin and Niemann, have brought to light the remains of the walls and of two forts, along with a great number of broken articles, especially fragments of vases ; almost all of which, so the explorers maintain, go back to the Canaanitish period before the Hebrew supremacy. Once 'cut off' by the magic operations described, Jericho ceased to exist. The savage destruction of the town and all its contents, animate and inanimate, is strangely reminiscent of Livy's account of the Ligurian frenzy at Mutina, and of the passage in which Orosius deals with the Cimbrians ; but the sequel is yet more instructive, for it throws light on the contagion immanent in objects stricken by the *herem*. Even though the book of Joshua, in its present form, may not be earlier than the Exile, the primitive stamp of thought everywhere apparent is enough to show that the bed-rock of the narrative

¹ The first book of Kings (xvi. 34) relates that, in the time of Ahab, Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho, but at the price of the lives of his two sons : ' he laid the foundation thereof on Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.' This might seem the echo of a *foundation-sacrifice*, designed to buy off or blot out the *herem* ; but the text, such as it is, hints rather at an accident which cost the life of Hiel's two sons (Reuss, *La Bible*, vol. i. p. 485). Reuss remarks on the point : ' Jericho had long been rebuilt, and is mentioned as an existing and inhabited town in the story of David.' This inference is in no way to be drawn from the text cited (2 Samuel x. 5).

belongs to the remote past, when a still rudimentary civilisation was wholly dominated by religious scruples.¹

VII

In spite of the interdict a Hebrew by the name of Achan appropriated some of the objects that came from Jericho. The sanction of the violated taboo soon made itself felt : three thousand soldiers were put to flight by the inhabitants of Ai. Joshua bowed himself before the Ark and prayed to the Lord. Then the Lord said to Joshua : ' Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them : for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed : neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.' Thus the whole people was contaminated by the crime of an individual ; and this crime had to be expiated, for ' there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel.' What follows is obscure, the text being doubtless corrupt ; but it seems as though, to discover the culprit, the Lord had prescribed a magic test—an appeal to the ordeal of casting lots. The lot fell upon Achan, who acknowledged his guilt : ' When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish

¹ The redactor of the book of Joshua makes Jahveh intervene in everything, just as the Roman historians spoke of the spoils as consecrated *to the gods* ; but ' the taboo of the spoils ' with all its consequences appears to have been much earlier than the constitution of Hebraic monotheism, as well as anterior to that of Roman polytheism. It belongs to the period of magic and *djinn* (polydemonism).

garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them ; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.' Joshua sent messengers to the tent of Achan, and the articles were recovered. Then, acting upon the express commands of the Lord, he seized Achan, together with the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons and his daughters, his oxen and his asses, his sheep, his tent and all his goods ; and, followed by all Israel, he led them to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said to him : ' Why hast thou troubled us ? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore, the name of that place was called, the valley of Achor (*trouble*), unto this day.'

Comparing this with the passage from Caesar, we now understand why a Gaul who purloined anything from the heap of spoils was put to a lingering death by torture. Not only did he defile himself by laying hands on the sacred and interdicted objects, but he exposed the whole community to the contagion of his own pollution. It was imperative, therefore, in the public interest, to strike terror into potential evil-doers by the most drastic examples and threats ; and the extermination of a criminal with every refinement of cruelty was held to be the surest deterrent to his would-be imitators. This idea, that the pollution was contagious, crops up in the story of the theft of the Toulouse treasure by Caepio, who was killed by the Cimbrians, his army annihilated, and his very daughters, according to Strabo, reduced

to the vilest prostitution. The moral and intellectual outlook of the persons who circulated this edifying piece of history, sometime about the year 100 B.C., is little different from that of the redactor of Joshua, who calmly dilates on the sufferings of Achan, the stoning and burning of his sons and daughters, cattle and sheep, and the destruction even of his lifeless belongings, which might possibly be infected with the germ of uncleanness. Of course, the whole narrative may have been fabricated to account for the existence of a stone tumulus in a place called *Achor*, for the belief was general that a heap of stones invariably covered the body of a criminal who had been stoned to death. But the important point for the history of religion and morals is not that the events should have occurred precisely as they are related in the Bible, but that it should have been thought possible and probable for them to have so occurred.

A few years ago, M. l'abbé Paul Renard, Doctor of Theology, and professor of Holy Writ in the Grand Séminaire de Chartres, thus summarised the Achan episode: ¹ 'His crime was the violation of the order of Joshua, who had expressly anathematised the town with all that it contained—both men and booty. This annihilation of the first town conquered in Canaan was a sort of religious consecration carried out, partly in acknowledgment of the sovereign rights of Jehovah, and partly to inspire a wholesome fear in the rest. Hence disobedience to the order became an act of sacrilege deserving the vengeance of God.'

This method of satisfying the requirements of modern ethics by an emasculation and distortion of the facts is a vexatious anachronism ; nor is the indignation expressed

¹ Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, s.v. 'Akhan.'

by the philosophers of the eighteenth century, on the perusal of these barbarous narratives, less contrary to the exigencies of the critical spirit. At a certain moment of their social evolution, the Hebrews, the Ligurians, the Cimbrians, and, no doubt, all other nations as well, have thought the same and acted the same. Their deeds, though they may fill us with horror, were only the logical outcome of their ideas; and if we feel some pride in measuring the road travelled since then, we ought to reserve our censure for those who would even now propose the conduct of prehistoric savages as a guide for our consciences and morals.

There are other examples of the laying down of an interdict in the Bible, and also of its violation. Thus Saul, despite the word of the Lord, who bade him smite the Amalekites and kill 'both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass,' stopped short after butchering the Amalekites, and kept the pick of their cattle. The Almighty rebuked his disobedience by the mouth of Samuel, and punished him for it. Saul's defence is interesting: ¹ 'I . . . have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.' As the excuse was not admitted, it follows that the enforcement of the interdict has nothing whatever in common with a sacrifice. Only things clean can be offered up to God, and the interdict is first and foremost an interdict of the unclean; even the metal objects preserved must undergo a purification by fire and water before taking their place in the treasure-house of the Almighty. Here, in its simple and primitive form,

¹ 1 Samuel xv. 3; ii. 23.

we have the rite of 'outlawry,' that ban on persons and things in time of war, which we meet—anæmic now, and half anthropomorphised—in the pages of the classic historians. When these tell us that a general, before the battle, vowed the fruits of his approaching victory to this or that divinity, the Biblical *herem* allows us to penetrate the underlying principle of the act: it was not a case of oblation or sacrifice, but of extermination.

VIII

Now that we have established the nature of the *herem* and its equivalents among other nations of antiquity, we come to the second part of our inquiry. What was the origin of a custom, so directly opposed to the material and immediate interests of the poor but passively obedient tribes which it forbade to act on the sensible, if secular, axiom: *What is good to take is good to keep*?

There is a so-called orthodox explanation of this assemblage of facts, much favoured by the ordinary commentator of the Bible. 'In certain cases,' writes M. l'abbé Lesêtre, 'in order to inspire the Israelites with a horror of idolatry, God commanded that all booty taken from the idolaters should be destroyed, with the exception of what could be purified by fire,—metal objects for instance. . . . These precautions had for aim both the physical hygiene and the moral purity of the Hebrews.'¹ The notion that the use of fire and water for the *religious* purification of metal articles from a looted town was inspired by a solicitude for 'physical hygiene' may possibly be ingenious, but certainly does not merit discussion. As to the 'moral hygiene' of the Israelites, it is open to question

¹ Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, art. 'Butin.'

whether the massacre of children at the breast and women with child was peculiarly well calculated to promote it. Moreover, in such cases it is neither scientific nor even commonly honest to neglect the parallels furnished by the history of pagan nations. As the Biblical *herem* is only a particular instance of a custom, once very widely spread if not universal, no historian—though he be an orthodox theologian—has any right to allege the good intentions of the Almighty and the precautions of Divine Wisdom against the contagion of idolatry.

A German scholar, Herr Schwally, who has recently studied the holy wars of ancient Israel,¹ thinks that 'the interdict imposed on booty was only an obstacle to individual greed; the consecration preserved the integrity of the loot.' He refers, in this connection, to the Polyneesian use of the taboo for protecting the fruits before the harvest, and the products of the tribal fishing and hunting before their division.² In a word, the interdict is a manufactured superstition invented to fill the place of police regulations which were then impracticable. Here, at the beginning of the twentieth century, we have an hypothesis which would not have been disavowed by the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth—ready as they always were to explain the apparently most fantastic customs as the deliberate inventions of religious legislators, whom they classified as benevolent impostors from the same mint as Voltaire's Mohammed. M. Fauconnet justly remarks on this view: 'The theory of the *herem*, proposed

¹ F. Schwally, *Semitische Kriegsalterthümer*, I. *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israël*, Leipzig, 1901. Cf. Fauconnet, *Année sociologique*, vol. v. pp. 602 sq.

² Fauconnet, *loc. laud.* p. 605. The analogy between the *herem* and the taboo had been already recognised by Rob. Smith (*Religion der Semiten*, p. 118): 'Ein solcher Bann ist ein Tabu, das durch die Furcht vor übernatürlichen Strafen veranlasst ist.'

by M. Schwally, must apparently be consigned to the same category as those other theories which would explain . . . the rules of exogamy by the drawbacks attendant on consanguineous marriages.' And, in fact, the anachronism and absurdity are not less. But I fancy M. Fauconnet's resignation is a little premature, when he says 'the causes which determined the consecration and destruction of the booty remain to be discovered.' To me they seem easy enough to fathom. With primitive mankind, war is an essentially religious phenomenon. Peace itself, not only between clansman and clansman but between clan and clan or tribe and neighbouring tribe, is based exclusively on religious ideas and religious ties. To break those ties which protect man against man—to be authorised in violating, to the detriment of a given community, the sacred scruple of human blood—you must have another religious phenomenon of equal power. And the manifestation of this is the solemn outlawry of the enemy and all that is his. In the case of Jericho we have seen that the Ark of the Covenant was carried seven times round the walls, tracing a magic circle which 'cut off' the enemy's town, and suppressed it—ideally, of course—before a single act of overt hostility had been committed. The magic proved operative, the walls dropped, and it only remained for the Israelites to destroy by fire and sword what they had already virtually annihilated. There was no question, I repeat, of a sacrifice; for only things clean can be offered to the gods, and a formal purification was necessary before the gold and silver of Jericho could be placed in the divine treasury. On the contrary, everything on which an interdict is laid becomes impure—with an impurity that is dangerous, not only to the individual, but—witness the story of

Achan—to the whole group of which he forms a part. From this point of view, destruction and extermination are not acts of anger and vengeance, but precautionary measures, similar, in due proportion, to those taken in our day, when an infected lazaretto is burnt and not a stick or a stone left. It is obvious, of course, that, in scenes of arson and massacre, ferocity and the wickedness of man's heart are more likely to run amok than to abdicate their claims ; but, neither in the case of the Hebrews, nor in that of the Ligurians and Cimbrians, can those passions explain the systematic destruction of cattle and even inanimate objects. Ferocity was the hand that struck, the brain which conceived and ruled was religion.

'Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum !'

To conclude : the spoils of war were inoculated with a magic power for evil—a virus communicated by the conqueror's own wizardry. Logic and 'magical hygiene' alike demanded their destruction ; but covetousness sighed at the waste, and before long self-interest and the practical needs of life began to temper the iron rigours of the excommunication. And, first, with regard to human life, only the adult males were slain ; women, girls, and children were reduced to slavery, until in the end the whole vanquished population shared the same fate and swelled the riches of the victor. As for animals and lifeless objects, recourse was had to two expedients. Either the clan, following a prescribed ritual, purified all it wished to keep and use ; or it surrendered a part in return for the privilege of retaining the rest. The priesthood—omnipotent in the sphere of magic—determined alike the proportion that should be enfranchised to the conqueror, and the amount which must escheat

to the gods and remain forever untouched and unappropriated. Of all the objects which the victor renounced, either to be destroyed by fire or water, or to be exposed in a holy place beyond the reach of harm, none preserved their inviolability so long as the *exuviae*—the arms and personal equipment of the vanquished. But another factor had to be reckoned with ; and, in the course of time, national pride and individual vanity converted into trophies of victory the weapons and harness, once gathered together and laid away through fear of the supernatural dangers which attached to them. When we look at the trophies of Dacian arms sculptured on the base of Trajan's column, it is not amiss to recall that these monuments of military glory are only the secular outcome, so to say, of a long process of evolution whose beginning was the sequestration of arms taken from the enemy—a sequestration dictated by scruples eminently and exclusively religious.

The foregoing developments at last enable me to offer what I venture to think is a simple and convincing explanation of one of the strangest legends in the primitive history of Rome : I mean the death of Tarpeia.

IX

Livy's story is common knowledge.¹ The Sabines, under King Tatius, attacked the Capitol—the Roman fortress. The governor's daughter Tarpeia, seduced by the sight of the gold ornaments which they wore on the left arm, promised to betray the citadel in exchange. However, the moment she gave them entry, they buried her under their shields, ' either ' (says Livy) ' to create an

¹ Livy, i. 11 (after Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus).

impression that they had taken the place by assault, or to discourage treason by a memorable example.' ¹

Many variants of the tale have come down to us ; some transmitted directly, others mentioned, only to be discarded, by the historians in general and Dionysius and Plutarch in particular. Schwegler and, more recently, Ettore Pais have taken great, perhaps too great, pains to marshal and discuss the details. It will be enough for us to show that, by the testimony of the texts themselves, every incident of the story was doubtful and fluctuating, even in antiquity, with the exception of a single point, on which our authorities speak with one voice : Tarpeia had been crushed to death under the weight of the enemy's arms. I have had occasion to point out in some of my earlier articles that the same phenomenon recurs in several old legends whose theme is the violent death of a hero : the causes, remote or proximate, of the catastrophe are lost in a tangle of conflicting traditions or gross inconsistencies ; agreement exists only as to the actual circumstances of the death. The conclusion is forced upon us from the outset : these stories and the like have their origin in self-conscious combination, and the parent stem of the various ætiologies is the one tangible reality for us—a cult or a ritual.

A glance at the variants of the Tarpeian legend shows the following results :—

1. The majority of writers place the heroine in the reign of Romulus ; but the Greek poet Simylus would have it that she betrayed the Capitol to the Gauls under Brennus.²

¹ 'Obrutam armis necavere, seu ut vi capta potius arx videretur, seu prodendi exempli causa, ne quid unquam fidum proditori esset' (Livy, i, 11, 7). Analogous reflections in Plut. *Rom.* xvii. 7, and Prop. v. 4, 89.

² *Ap.* Plut. *Rom.* xvii.

2. Most historians make her a Roman, but some say that she was a Sabine.¹

3. According to some, her father, Tarpeius, was absent ; others describe him as a traitor put to death by Romulus.²

4. The custody of the citadel belonged, according to some, to Tarpeius ; according to others, to Tarpeia herself.³

5. Tarpeia was or was not a Vestal Virgin.⁴

6. According to some, she acted from cupidity ;⁵ according to others, to entrap the Sabines by exacting the surrender of their shields ;⁶ according to Propertius, she was in love with Tatius ;⁷ according to Simylus, with Brennus ;⁸ according to Antigonus of Carystus, she wished to be avenged upon Romulus.⁹

7. The Sabines (or the Gauls) killed her, either to foster the belief that they had penetrated into the citadel by force, or from disgust at her treason,¹⁰ or to punish her for deceiving them, or to escape parting with their golden ornaments,¹¹ or because she refused to reveal the secrets of Romulus to Tatius.¹²

All are unanimous on the one point that Tarpeia was crushed under the arms and ornaments of the enemy.

¹ Antigonus of Carystus made her the daughter of Tatius (Plut. *Rom.* xvii.).

² Opinion of Sulpicius Galba ; combated by Plut. *Rom.* xvii.

³ Another opinion refuted by Plutarch (*l.l.*).

⁴ She was a Vestal Virgin according to Varro (*L. Lat.* v. 41), Propertius (v. 4, 18), and the chronographer of 354 (*Chron. Min.* i. p. 144, 8). Those who say that she met the Sabines while going out to draw water seem to share the same opinion (Livy, i. 11; Val. Max. ix. 6, 1, &c.).

⁵ Livy, i. 11.

⁶ The version of L. Calpurnius Piso, adopted by Dionysius (ii. 50).

⁷ Prop. iv. 4, 39.

⁸ Plut. *Rom.* xviii.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Livy, i. 11.

¹¹ The version of Fabius (Dionysius, ii. 38).

¹² *Chron. Min.* i. p. 144.

Almost all, in this connection, mention the great shields ; some add the golden bracelets and rings worn by the Sabines or Gauls.¹

There is one valuable piece of numismatic evidence. In the last century of the Republic, two Roman families claiming a Sabine descent placed the virgin Tarpeia upon their coins. On the reverse side of those struck by the Titurii, she is represented in the act of separating a Roman and a Sabine warrior ; the inference being that she was considered as one of those heroic dames who threw themselves between the two armies in order to end the struggle. On the coins of the Turpili, she is a young girl, seen from the front, with both arms raised and only the upper part of her body emerging from a heap of shields.²

Thus the opinion, that Tarpeia was a Sabine and not a Roman, had its adherents in the sixth century A.U.C. The explanation is possibly to be found in the incontestable traces of a Sabine domination on the Capitol ;³ where not only was the house of Tatius shown,⁴ but it had been necessary to *exaugurate* and demolish several Latin chapels of his foundation, at the time when the temple of Jupiter was being built by Tarquin.⁵ But it was sheer guesswork that translated Tarpeia into a Sabine or the daughter of Tatius himself ; positive knowledge

¹ According to Plutarch (*Rom.* xvii.) Tatius was the first to throw his shield and bracelet on Tarpeia ; and the same version—given by Piso—is familiar to Dionysius (ii. 38). In a fragment of Appian (*De Reg.* 4), quoted by Suidas and perhaps incomplete, she is buried (κατεχώσθη) under ornaments of gold. A similar account, from the suspect Aristides of Miletus, is preserved by Plutarch (*Parall.* xv.).

² Babelon, *Monnaies de la Rép. rom.* ii. pp. 301, 498 ; Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, p. 97.

³ Liv. i. 32 ; Tac. *Ann.* xii. 24 ; Dionys. ii. 50.

⁴ Plut. *Rom.* 20 ; Solin. i. 21.

⁵ Livy, i. 55. Cf. Schwegler, *Röm. Gesch.* i. p. 484.

of her there was none, beyond these three facts: a rock on the Capitol was called by her name, her tomb—or cenotaph—was exhibited there, and yearly rites were celebrated in her honour. This follows unmistakably from the passage in which Dionysius subscribes to the version given in the Gracchan period by Calpurnius Piso, who held that Tarpeia had not betrayed the Romans, but attempted to deceive their enemies. ‘The sequel of the incident,’ says Dionysius,¹ ‘demonstrates the truth of Piso’s view; for a magnificent tomb was erected to Tarpeia on the holiest of the Seven Hills, at the place where she met her death; and every year—to repeat Piso—the Romans make libations and offer sacrifices to her. Now, it is certain that, had she perished in the act of selling her country to the enemy, neither those who killed her nor those whom she betrayed would have shown her any such respect, but rather have flung her carcass into the sewer.’ Plutarch seems to imply that this tomb was a cenotaph, or, strictly speaking, an altar more than a tomb. ‘Tarpeia,’ he says,² ‘was buried in this very place and the hill took its name *Tarpeian* from her, until King Tarquin consecrated it to Jupiter;’³ when her remains were transferred elsewhere, and her name disappeared (*καὶ τοῦνομα τῆς Ταρπηΐας ἐξέλιπε*). One trace, however, was left; and the rock on the Capitol, from which condemned criminals are hurled to their death, is still known as the Tarpeian Rock.’ Now, if Tarpeia’s remains had really been ‘transferred

¹ Dionysius, ii. 38.

² Plut. *Rom.* xvii.

³ Mr. Pais thinks the name *Tarpeia* identical with *Tarquin*, and considers the Vestal Tarpeia and the Vestal Tarquinia, who gave the plain of the Tiber to the Romans, to be one and the same person (*Legends of Roman History*, p. 105). The theory seems to me inadmissible.

elsewhere,' vestiges of her cult would have been discovered somewhere in Rome. But the case is not so; and the passage from Plutarch is probably the echo of a lost text which stated the negative results of a search for the maiden's bones. Finally, Festus puts it on record that current opinion recognised Tarpeia in an old statue in the temple of Jupiter built by Metellus (*in aede Jovis Metellina*).¹ Unfortunately, he enters into no detail, and we can hardly suppose the image to have been similar to that on the Turpilian coins.

This latter, then, is our only document; and we may take it as the starting-point in our attempt to determine what the ancients definitely knew—or believed themselves to know—upon the subject, and to unravel the tangled skein of legends designed to account for one feature or another in the tale.

X

Tarpeia was the local divinity of the Tarpeian Rock; and there she possessed an altar where her cult was annually celebrated. Tradition had it that she died on this spot, crushed to death by shields—Sabine in some versions, Gaulish in others, but in either case *non-Roman*. The engraver of the coin represented her agony, while she was still writhing under the weight of the arms accumulated upon her; a moment later, and nothing would have been visible but a heap of shields in the form of a mound. Now, this mound of shields, which quite possibly was interspersed with a few rings, bracelets, and armlets of gold, is the root of the whole legend; and after what has been said above, it is easy to account for its existence.

¹ Festus, p. 363, M.

At a period when temples were still to seek at Rome, and huts served for houses, the spoils of war, so far as they escaped destruction, must—like the Gaulish trophies noticed by Caesar—have been piled on some plot of consecrated ground, where they were immune from touch. In these heaps of arms the trophy had its origin; and Tacitus, speaking of that erected by Germanicus, could still call it a ‘mound of weapons.’¹ But with the advent of temples and comparatively large dwelling-houses where the enemy’s spoil might be hung, the primitive rite was forgotten, and the pile of shields on the Tarpeian Hill became an enigma. Now, with ancient as well as modern man, the sight of a heap of stones is certain to engender the belief that an important personage lies buried beneath—generally as a punishment for some crime. I could cite many examples from latter-day folklore; but there is no dearth of classical texts. An epigram on the brigand Balista, attributed to Virgil, begins:

‘Under this hill of stones Balista lies.’²

Achilles caused Pisidice of Methymna to be crushed under a heap of stones.³ In the days which saw the compilation of the book of Joshua, the heap of stones under which Achan⁴ slept was still pointed out, as well as another that covered the body of the King of Ai.⁵ Possibly the fact that stoning to death was the usual penalty for the most serious crimes may have favoured the birth of these legends; but similar tales are found where it is purely a question of ordinary earthen tumuli which might be

¹ Tac. *Ann.* ii. 22: ‘Congeriem armorum struxit superbo cum titulo.’

² ‘Monte sub hoc lapidum tegitur Balista sepultus’: Serv. ad *Aen.* vol. i. p. 1, ed. Thilo.

³ Parthenius, *Erot.* xxi. 8.

⁴ Joshua vii. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.* viii. 29.

natural phenomena, defensive fortifications, or the sites of a cult, but are almost always regarded as the tombs of heroes or heroines, giants, fairies, and so forth. Specimens of this nomenclature, implying a whole legend, are met with in the *Iliad*.¹

Popular imagination is essentially logical, even in its errors. The sight of a heap of shields, forming a tumulus on a place sacred to the cult of the eponymous heroine Tarpeia, was bound to suggest the idea that this heroine had been crushed to death under the shields. But why such a punishment? Popular imagination is more than logical; it is just, and requires that every penalty shall have its corresponding crime. In this case, the punishment must have been inflicted by foreign warriors, for the arms employed were foreign. But warriors spare unarmed women; therefore Tarpeia could not have been killed in defence of the Capitol. There remained the hypothesis of treason—a conjecture facilitated by the knowledge that condemned traitors (as Plutarch does not fail to recall) were hurled from the Tarpeian Rock.² Why, then, it may be objected, does tradition not mete out the same fate to the arch-traitress herself? The answer is that the legend of her treason was not formed independently, but was suggested, as we have seen, by the existence of a heap of shields, under which Tarpeia, the local nymph, was buried.

If at the time of the capture of Rome by the Gauls, there existed a mound of Sabine shields on some one point of the Capitol, those arms must have disappeared in the catastrophe of 390 and have been replaced, a little later, by Gaulish weapons. This explains, to my mind, the

¹ *Il.* ii. 811–814.

² *Plut. Rom.* xvii.; *Syll.* x.; *Livy*, xxv. 7, 14, &c.

curious variant of the legend, according to which Tarpeia falls in love with Brennus, betrays the Capitol to the Gauls, and is whelmed under their arms. Nor is this the only feature of the story which is connected both with the Sabines and the Gauls. The little gate of the Capitol—the *Porta Pandana*¹—had always to be left open ; but our authorities differ as to whether this was a condition of peace imposed by the Sabine Tatius² or an exaction of Brennus the Gaul.³

A detail which astonished Schweigler was the quantity and beauty of the gold ornaments attributed to the Sabines ; he suspected a confusion between them and the Gauls, whose weakness for decorative effect was notorious.⁴ Mr. Pais counters the objection by pointing out that the *armillae* and rings of gold were equally appropriate to the Sabines, whose wealth in the precious metals was eulogised by Fabius Pictor, and whose arms, in 310 and 293 B.C., are described as glittering with gold and silver.⁵ However, as the ancient world was always impressed by the size of the Gaulish shields, I am inclined to fancy that the legend owes its inception to the sight of a pile of them intermixed with the gold ornaments worn by the Celts on their campaigns. But, as a tradition, which we are justified in considering historical, reported a Sabine occupation of the Capitol long before the Gallic invasion, two rival legends—Gaulish and

¹ Paulus Diaconus, p. 220 ; cf. Varr. *Ling. lat.* v. 42 ; Solinus, i. 13 ; Arnobius, iv. 3.

² Festus, p. 363 : ' When making peace, Tatius insisted that the gate should always be open to the Sabines'—*ut ea Sabinis semper pateret*.

³ Polyæn. viii. 25, 1.

⁴ Livy, vii. 10 ; Gell. ix. 11, 5 ; xiii. 3, 7 ; Pliny, xxiii. 5, 15, &c.

⁵ Pais, *Ancient Legends*, p. 298 ; cf. Plut. *Cat. maior*, ii. 2 ; Livy, ix. 40 ; x. 39.

Sabine—sprang up, the second of which won the more general acceptance, partly because it referred to a more distant period, and partly, perhaps, because the Sabine conquest evoked the less painful memories at Rome. Schwegler writes: 'The nature of the death assigned to Tarpeia has undoubtedly a local reason which cannot be divined,'¹ and Mr. Pais has, more recently, come to the same conclusion. I believe I have shown that the problem may be solved without allowing hypothesis to play too great a part.

XI

When it was a question of crystallising and fixing the literary form of the Tarpeian legends, the historians drew upon the treasury of Greek fable; and there they found all the analogies they desired. In the first place, there was a whole string of stories dealing with fair and frail ladies who betrayed their relatives, or who delivered up their cities in order to pleasure the object of their affections.² Other narratives wear a closer resemblance to the one which finally gained the day in the case of Tarpeia. The most interesting is that of Pisidice, daughter of the king of Methymna in the island of Lesbos. Achilles was besieging the town, when the princess, catching sight of him from the battlements, lost her heart, and sent out her nurse, offering to sell the town in exchange for his love. The hero promised all; but, once master of Methymna, bade his soldiers stone the girl to death. In this connection, Parthenius³ repeats the lines of some poet (perhaps Apollonius Rhodius, as K. Müller

¹ Schwegler, *Röm. Gesch.* vol. i. p. 487.

² Paris, *op. laud.* p. 299; cf. Schwegler, *Röm. Gesch.* vol. i. p. 484.

³ Parthenius, *Erotica*, xxi.

conjectured), who sang the early history of Lesbos in hexameters. There is some reason to think the legend was already known to Hesiod,¹ which, of course, excludes the idea that it might have been borrowed from that of Tarpeia. This is not the case with the story of Brennus at Ephesus, as related in the 'Parallelæ'—falsely attributed to Plutarch—on the strength of a *soi-disant* 'History of the Galatians' (Γαλατικά) by Clitophon.² The Gaulish chief Brennus, while ravaging Asia, laid siege to Ephesus. There he succumbed to the charms of a young Greek girl, who promised to comply with his desires and betray Ephesus to boot, if she might have an equivalent in gold collars and ornaments. Brennus ordered his men to throw all the gold they had into the lap of this mercenary light-of-love; they obeyed, and she was buried alive under the gauds. The story contrives to be both revolting and absurd: the girl could not promise her love-sick Gaul the town-keys *over and above* her favours; there must have been an older and more rational version in which she fell in love with Brennus, as Pisidice with Achilles. But it is well known how little value can be attached to the extracts from authors, real or mythical, which fill the 'Parallelæ Minores' that pass under Plutarch's name. The story of Polycrite of Naxos inspires more confidence, as it was known already to Aristotle.³ Polycrite won the love of Diognetus, the chief of the Erythræans besieging Naxos, and exploited her conquest by opening the camp-gates to her countrymen. After the slaughter, she returned in triumph to her native town, but was suffocated under the garlands showered upon her by her fellow-

¹ Cf. Höfer, in Roscher's *Lexikon*, art. 'Peisidike,' p. 1793

² Pseudo-Plut. *Parall. Min.* c. xv.

³ Cf. Höfer's article 'Polykrite,' in Roscher's *Lexikon*, p. 2650.

citizens, who then erected a tomb in her honour. Though the circumstances are all different, this pretty story comprises four elements—a siege, a love intrigue, a betrayal, and the suffocation of the traitress—which are found in at least one version of the story of Tarpeia.

XII

Thus, once again, though by devious ways, I have shown how a rite gave birth to a myth. Here the rite is a taboo of the spoils of war—the custom of upheaping them on consecrated ground, where to touch them was sacrilege. The myth is that of the local heroine—the *genius loci* (for there is no place without its genius, as Servius says)—suffocated under this pile of weapons to atone for some imagined crime. Euhemerism is right, every legend has its root in reality; but if the legend is old, then the reality that gave it life is not an episode of history but a ritual—a cult-practice.

CHAPTER V

THE DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS ¹

THE domestic animals—the dog, the horse, the ox, the sheep, the pig, the poultry of our farm-yards—are such old friends to the European that he rarely asks himself what were the circumstances which linked their fate to his ; in fact, it requires some effort of thought to realise that it was not always so linked. That effort had not been made by the redactor of Genesis. In his philosophy, dominion over animals is a God-given privilege of man's nature ; and the animals are accommodating enough to submit without a struggle. So docile are they that the first man watches them file before his face, and learns their names from the mouth of the living God (ii. 19). Immediately on the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, Adam begins to till the soil : there is no hint of the long-drawn years when man lived by hunting alone, or by gathering the fruits of earth. Of the two sons of Adam, Abel is a shepherd, Cain a husbandman. True, we find a hunter, as well, in Genesis, the famous Nimrod ; but Nimrod was a powerful

¹ An address given, in 1902, at the *Université Populaire* (8^{me} arrondissement, Paris). An extremely instructive development of the same subject is to be found in Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, pp. 113 sq.

chief, and seems to have hunted for pleasure, like the kings of Assyria. There is nothing in the text to indicate that he did so as a means of livelihood. Then came the Deluge, and the Lord said to Noah: 'Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by twos, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.' Beasts and birds alike showed themselves complacent and entered the Ark, though the Biblical historian forgets to say how, for the eight long months of the Flood, Noah contrived to feed this menagerie, or accomplished the still more difficult feat of keeping the lion from the stag and making the wolf to lie down with the lamb. Quite lately, a leading light of the French clergy decided that the narrative need not be taken literally, a concession for which we owe him much thanks.

The Greek had less childlike ideas on the past of mankind. He knew perfectly well that men had been hunters before they were shepherds, and shepherds before they were agriculturists; he had even names for the heroes or demigods to whom he attributed the credit of first taming wild animals or inventing the plough. During the whole of the Middle Ages—in fact, down to our own time—the authority of the Biblical narrative and the risk of disputing it were enough to deter scholars from any study of the origins of civilisation, alluring though the theme might be. The nineteenth century, however, made up for lost time. Archæology has shown that the oldest human habitations, the caverns of the quaternary period, contain so far no trace of domestic animals. The tenants of the caves lived by the chase, and the

animals which they hunted were all *wild*. The proof lies in the fact that the bones found among the relics of their meals belong to animals of all ages, whereas pastoral and agricultural peoples refrain, as a rule, from killing young beasts.

The exploration of the lake dwellings of Switzerland and France, huts built on piles at a little distance from the water-edge, has demonstrated that domestic animals were known in the polished-flint age, which—after a long interval of transition—succeeded the quaternary era. Similarly, in Egypt and Babylonia, where the spade has exhumed dead civilisations which flourished from five to six thousand years before Christ, some of the domestic animals are missing, but others, notably the dog and the ox, are found from the very earliest periods.

How came man to conceive the idea of domesticating animals? Before answering the question, we may observe that there are huge tracts of territory in the world which were absolutely devoid of domestic animals until a period very near our own. There was not a single domestic animal in Australia, when that continent was discovered by the Dutch, and to this day the natives have neither flocks nor herds. When the New World was sighted by Columbus, America had only a single domestic animal, the llama, and that was confined to Peru. Cattle, dogs, and horses were all unknown. In North America the only wild cattle were bison, and the Indians had as yet made no attempt to domesticate them.

For domestic animals to exist in any country, that country must obviously possess animals, in the wild state, which are susceptible of domestication. Now, in Australia, the kangaroo is indigenous but not domestic-

able ; and in neither of the Americas were there any horses, goats, or sheep for men first to tame and then domesticate.

But even if animals capable of being domesticated do exist, man is none the wiser. Nothing but experiment—or, rather, a long course of experiment—will open his eyes. But if he has no conception of domestication how could he, and why should he, try any experiment? Accident might perhaps lead to the discovery of gold, copper, or iron ore, but it could not lead to the discovery of a domestic animal, for the fact that an animal is domestic presupposes its education by man.

Up to late years the difficulty was explained away on an assumption which at first sight looks satisfactory enough. Take the case of a savage who makes shift to live by the flesh of animals killed in hunting. One day he happens to kill a wild cow which is suckling two calves of different sexes. The sentiment of compassion, which is natural to man, moves him to spare these little animals, and to give them to his children as playfellows. They grow up, pair, have young in their turn, and, at the end of a few generations, the habit of living in contact with man has transformed the breed into domestic animals.

It is a pretty romance, but a romance none the less ; and one that abounds in palpable impossibilities. In the first place, the savage who depends on his bow and spear has no food-reserves. He is not an agriculturist, but lives from hand to mouth, and very often suffers hunger owing to the lack of game. We have still people, in our civilised communities, who both suffer hunger and die from hunger. But what to-day is a social scandal was once virtually the rule. To the savage death from

starvation was the normal end of existence, and his every faculty was strained in the one endeavour to procure his daily bread. Is it reasonable to suppose that a savage of this type, with a young bull and a young heifer hard at hand outside his hut, would not be tempted a hundred times to kill and eat them before they obtained the age of reproduction? Any pleasure he might have derived from playing with them would soon cloy, and would certainly be inadequate to still the pangs of hunger. Will it be said that, hungry as he was, he spared them, in the hope that they would grow up, reproduce their species, and eventually make him the owner of a substantial herd of cattle? The idea is sheer folly: a savage cannot dream of a herd, like Perrette, when he does not know what a herd means—that tame animals can reproduce themselves, and multiply under his eyes. *Ignoti nulla cupido!*

There is another reason which invalidates the theory of a transformation of pet animals into domestic animals. At the present day we are acquainted with peoples in South Africa, and elsewhere, who know nothing of agriculture, and live entirely on their flocks and herds. If it were true that hunters became herdsmen for the sake of having more animals to eat, and those within easier reach, we should naturally expect the herdsman to be a great flesh-eater. Now, the exact opposite is the case. Hunters are essentially carnivorous; herdsmen are frugivorous, and feed only on the milk of their cattle and the butter and cheese which it yields. They are too fond of their animals to kill them save at the last extremity; and they are especially careful never to destroy them while still able to breed, or, in the case of the females, to give milk. The Kaffirs only kill their cattle as a

sacrifice to the gods, or to celebrate a wedding. A close observer, Schweinfurth, says that the Dinkas in South Africa never kill a cow, and that, if one falls ill, she is separated from the rest of the herd and tended in a large hut constructed for the purpose. Should an epidemic or a raid thin the animals belonging to a Dinka tribe, all the members show the greatest sorrow. As similar phenomena have been observed among pastoral peoples elsewhere, it would seem that the herdsman—in other words, the man who has succeeded in domesticating animals—never dreams of eating them, his only thought being to keep them and increase their numbers.

It is not everyone who can study the savage in his native wilds ; but the young savage is always with us. Now what is it that we are obliged to impress on children ? I mean strong and healthy children. Is it to eat ? Certainly not, but rather not to eat too much. The natural instinct of man is to use, and abuse, food : the gourmand is first cousin to the cannibal. To persuade a savage, or a child to abstain from food which he likes, a strong deterrent must be urged, or, rather, the strongest of all deterrents, fear.

To return to our savage hunter. If no restraint were put upon his passion for destruction, subserving as it does an appetite sharpened by life in the open air, he would soon slaughter every creature in his neighbourhood ; depopulate forest, plain, and hill ; then move on, and continue the work of devastation. Unless a new factor intervened to stay the butchery, domestic animals could never come into existence, for the simple reason that all the wild animals would be bound to disappear after a few centuries of unintermittent massacre.

But they have not disappeared, either in Europe or

Asia or Africa ; and we see that man has domesticated a certain number of species. Consequently there must have been a time when fear operated with sufficient effect to force him to kill with discrimination, and to strike a truce with particular kinds of animals.

That fear was religion. 'Fear,' said the ancients, 'gave birth to the gods.' But the ancients had not sunk their plummet as deep as the moderns ; and it was a mistaken genealogy that made the gods the first-born of fear. The idea of gods in the image of man, or of one God uniting in himself all the powers of Nature, is comparatively modern. Not all communities have gods, but all have a religion ; religion is older than the gods, and it is she who is the daughter of fear.

Religion is the name given to a complex of scruples impeding the natural appetites of man, and curtailing the free exercise of his physical faculties. Thus it may be said with perfect truth that morality, law, and civilisation itself, are the outcome of religion. Without it man would never have learnt to put restraint upon himself, even when he most rebelled against the restraint : he would have remained forever a featherless biped. The point of view which questions the advantage of religion in already civilised communities is perhaps comprehensible ; but it cannot be doubted that non-civilised communities owe to religion their emergence out of barbarism.

One of the oldest and most widely diffused forms of religion is the reluctance to kill and eat some particular animal—a scruple which is still far removed from extinction. Mohammedans and Jews eat no pork ; the Russian will not touch a pigeon ; Europeans—in general, at any rate—do not regard the dog as an edible animal ;

and, in many cases, horse-meat inspires an instinctive repugnance which was once an article of religion.

In America, Asia, and Oceania the study of present-day savages, and their reservations in killing and eating animals, has elicited a curious fact. The savage believes that a certain animal, the bear for instance, is the ancestor of his tribe, its sworn ally, and its protector. It is not an individual animal that is sacred in his eyes, but a whole species—a whole animal tribe, if we may use the expression. And, in fact, closer attention seems to show that it literally is a case of a solemn league and covenant, for offensive and defensive purposes, between two tribes, one composed of men and the other of animals. The first condition of a treaty is that the contracting parties shall spare each other. The savage observes the convention; and the animals, when they are not carnivorous, do so in the nature of things. If they are carnivorous, the savage still imagines they spare his own clan; for religion, the daughter of faith, is apt to become the mother of credulity.

Totemism—from the American word *totem* or *otem*, distinctive mark or sign—is the name given to that primitive form of religion whose essence is that a tribe of men considers itself linked by an enduring pact to a species of animals.

This totemism was the oldest form of all religions. Long before he had gods, the savage had his sacred animals to which he stood in the double relation of protector and protected. At the root of this phenomenon, there is not only the sympathy which an animal inspires in a savage and a child, there is also the curiosity and fear which an animal awakens. Children are still extremely susceptible to both feelings. To the child, the

fear of a wolf is a more real thing than the fear of a policeman ; and he had far rather see the lions and tigers in the Zoological Gardens than watch the fine ladies in Hyde Park or the Allée des Acacias. Once admit that primitive man was totemistic and the domestication of animals is explained in the simplest and easiest manner.

Imagine a nation of primitive hunters living in old France, a country whose indigenous animals included bulls, horses, goats, bears, and wolves—to go no further. These hunters are divided into clans or little tribes, every one of which claims a different animal as its ancestor. The wolf-clan believes itself to be descended from a wolf, and to have made a treaty of alliance with all wolves ; it cannot therefore, except in the case of legitimate self-defence, kill a wolf. The horse-clan thinks itself descended from a horse, and cannot kill one without committing a horrible crime—and so on. Each clan, as a matter of course, abstains from hunting and killing its patron animal. But that is not enough. Since the animals are the protectors of the clan, guide it in its wanderings, and give notice of impending danger either by cries or by signs of uneasiness, two or more of the species must always be kept with the clan by way of sentinels. These couples—which naturally have to be taken at the tenderest age possible—grow accustomed to man, and are soon perfectly tame ; while the young, born and bred in the very midst of the clan, become its friends. It must be clearly understood that all this will take place only when the animal chosen as totem possesses the attributes which make for domestication. Thus the bear may be tamed, but is not a domestic animal ; it can neither be trained to draw a cart, nor trusted to keep a disinterested eye upon the herds. A

few species of wolves or jackals, first tamed and afterwards domesticated, have given man his best friend, the dog ; still, the wolf-species, as a rule, is quite intractable, and has remained the consistent foe of humanity. On the other hand, the horse, the bull, the wild boar, and the goat, not to mention geese and the various kinds of fowl, have almost everywhere passed from independence to domestication.

In what part of the world was the domestication of animals first achieved ? We do not know. Possibly, in several places at the same time ; for it is the product of two factors, one of which—totemism—appears to have been universal, while the other—the presence of domesticable animals—was a condition satisfied in a multitude of countries, Asian, African, and European. Archæology, however, furnishes an interesting sidelight. In the villages on the Danish coast (the oldest human habitations of the post-quaternary period) we find the bones of the common or domestic dog in the midst of a huge pile of relics—edible shell-fish, and the bones of deer, boars, and birds, killed and eaten by man. It is also noticeable that these animal bones are often gnawed, and that the incisions in them are due to dogs' teeth. But for dogs to gnaw the bones left from the meals of these village hunters and fishermen, they must have lived with them ; in other words, they were domestic dogs.

Thus, as far as the present state of our knowledge allows us to judge, the first animal domesticated in Europe was the dog ; the earliest indications of his existence are met with on the shores of Denmark ; and his domestication must date from the long period—some five or six thousand years—between the end of the

quaternary era and the civilisation of the polished flint age, such as we know it from the lake dwellings of Switzerland. The question remains : What is the origin of the domestic dog ? Is it from the wolf, which inhabits both Europe and Asia, or from the jackal, which is almost confined to Asia ? The experts are still at variance.¹ Under any circumstances, it would be decidedly singular if the domestic dog came from Asia, and Asiatic tribes had taken the road, with their dogs, to catch shell-fish on the coasts of Denmark. Common sense inclines one to suppose that the dog is a descendant, domesticated by totemism, of some species of wolf which inhabited the dense forests of Europe at a time intermediate between the quaternary epoch and the present geological formation. In any case, there are so many varieties of dogs that the gradual evolution of certain wolves and jackals into domestic dogs might have taken place in several parts of the world at the same or different times.

The most recent of these 'conquests of man,' to use Buffon's phrase, is none the less instructive because it is even yet incomplete : I refer to the domestication of the cat. The cat is still far from being as thoroughly domesticated as the dog. It abhors being chained up ; if it hunts, it hunts on its own account ; and its instincts of independence—of revolt, even—are often only too patent ! The domestic cat was practically unknown to the Greeks and Romans. The rarity of its appearances on the painted vases of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. confirms the silence of the written tradition. In Pompeii, where the remains of multifarious animals have been discovered under the rain of *lapilli*, the cat has so far been

¹ For a recent discussion, see *L'Anthropologie*, 1904, p. 41, where the whole question has been well summed up by M. U. Duerst.

sought in vain.¹ The only country where it abounded, and had done so from the remotest antiquity, was Egypt. There it was regarded as a sacred animal, especially in the nome of Bubastis, where cat-mummies may be counted by tens of thousands. To kill a cat was considered a monstrous crime. In fact, under one of the later Ptolemies, a Roman, who had unwittingly transgressed in this respect, was torn to pieces by the crowd, despite the efforts of the local authorities.²

The exportation of cats was strictly forbidden. More, from time to time an Egyptian commission travelled through the Mediterranean countries in order to buy and bring back every cat which had been lured out of Egypt. After the triumph of Christianity in Egypt, during the fourth century, these old laws naturally fell into desuetude. Simultaneously, the Greek monks began to leave the land of Pharaoh to travel and preach in Europe; and with them went the cat. Its advent was well timed, for just then the rat—equally unknown to the ancient world—appeared from Asia in the train of the Huns; so that in the fifth century cats and rats had their stricken fields no less than Attila and Theodoric. Thus the cat, a local totem in Egypt, tamed and domesticated in that country only, spread over Europe when Egyptian paganism had vanished and all the barriers reared by the old cult had been levelled with the ground.³

The theory of the domestication of animals, which I have just expounded, was first broached by Mr. Frazer; later it was taken up by Galton, and finally developed by Mr. Jevons in his Introduction to the 'History of Religion,'

¹ Compare Engelmann, *Jahrbuch des Instituts*, 1899, p. 136.

² Diodorus Siculus, i. 83, 8.

³ Cf. *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1900, p. 264.

published in 1896. In France, I think, I was the first to advocate it, both in my lectures at the École du Louvre and in the press. It is equally applicable to the domestication of vegetables, the beginning of cultivated plant-life ; and it seems to me that, as a logical consequence of animal or vegetable totemism, the primitive form of all religion, it holds the field to the exclusion of every other hypothesis.

CHAPTER VI

THE KING SACRIFICED ¹

TOWARDS the close of the year 1900, there appeared a new edition of Mr. Frazer's celebrated work, 'The Golden Bough.' The result was a sensation bordering on the scandalous. In a hitherto unpublished part of the third volume, Mr. Frazer, starting from the observations of Messrs. Wendland, Cumont, Parmentier, and others, proposed—though under every reservation—to recognise an element of myth and ritual in the tragedy of Golgotha. The sequel among English scholars has been a prolonged discussion, though the echoes of it have hardly reached France. The gravity of the question is such, and its connection with anthropology so close, that a fairly detailed summary of it will not be out of place here.

I

Many countries, at particular seasons, hold a festival similar to the Roman Saturnalia and marked by the same brief suspension of the usual civic and moral laws. These periods of exaltation and exuberant joy generally coincide with seed-time or harvest. At Rome, the

¹ *L'Anthropologie*, 1902, pp. 620–627.

Saturnalia were supposed to commemorate the blissful reign of Saturn, an era when there was neither discord among men, nor distinction between class and class, nor constraint in any shape. Over this Golden Age there hung one sinister shadow—human sacrifice. But in the Roman Saturnalia, which lasted seven days, the hated rite had left no trace. The outstanding characteristic of the feast was the license granted to the slaves, who, for the nonce, became masters of the house. One of them, chosen by lot, took the style of *king*, and issued fantastic edicts to his subjects: one must dance, another sing, a third carry a flute-girl on his back, and so forth. In Roman eyes the whole proceeding was a burlesque of royalty.

In the provinces things ran the same course; but here we meet features of an apparently more archaic cast. We have a detailed account of the Saturnalia, as celebrated by a troop of Roman soldiers encamped on the Danube, at Durostolum, in the reigns of Maximian and Diocletian. The description is preserved in a history of the martyrdom of St. Dasius, published by M. Cumont, in 1897, after a Greek manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale.¹ Thirty days before the feast the soldiers chose by lot a handsome youth, whom they dressed in royal robes and hailed as the representative of good king Saturn. Surrounded by a brilliant escort, he paraded the streets, with full authority to use and abuse his power, until, on the thirtieth day, he was compelled to kill himself on the altar of the Saturn whom he personified. In 303 the lot fell upon the Christian soldier Dasius, who refused

¹ Cumont, *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvi., and *Man*, 1901, p. 66; Parmentier, *Revue de Philologie*, 1897, p. 143; A. Lang, *Man*, 1901, p. 83.

to play a part in which he would have to stain himself with debauchery immediately before death. He was beheaded at Durostolum on Friday, November 20, which (adds the narrative) was the twenty-fourth day of the moon.

At Rome, during the classical period, the Saturnalian king was simply a stage monarch—an inoffensive clown; but the story of St. Dasius appears to hint at an earlier day when he forfeited his life along with his crown, and the feast terminated in one of those human sacrifices, traces of which are vaguely preserved by our authorities.¹ Further—and this is an essential point—the man-victim was the representative of a god.

The Carnival of Christian nations is neither more nor less than the Roman Saturnalia. In Italy, Spain, and France, where the influence of Rome has been deepest and most persistent, a salient feature of the Carnival is the making of a grotesque effigy, which personifies the feast, and, after a fleeting term of glory, is destroyed or burnt in public. This King of the Carnival is merely a survival of the god Saturn.

When the Roman year began on the 1st of January, the Saturnalia were celebrated in December: earlier, when it used to open on the 1st of March, they were held in February or the beginning of March; and this remains the date of the Carnival. The feast of the Matronalia, in which the female slaves enjoyed the same privileges as the males during the Saturnalia, always

¹ On the supposition, of course, that the rite of Durostolum was an old custom revived. It is, however, quite possible that it was only a more barbarous form of an originally harmless practice. In the Roman empire, after the second century, there are many traces of moral brutalisation and mental retrogression—a phenomenon, which may, to a large extent, be explained by the invasion of oriental cults.

continued to be celebrated on the 1st of March. It was the time of tillage and sowing, an obviously appropriate season for the cult of Saturn, who was pre-eminently an agricultural god (*sata*—crops).

Customs analogous to the Roman Saturnalia existed in Crete, Thessaly, Olympia, Rhodes, and elsewhere. The Greek Saturn was called Kronos; and there are well-known traditions associating his cult with human sacrifice. Every year the Rhodians slew a man in his honour; and, in the later periods, this man was a criminal condemned by common law—exactly as among the Celts in Caesar's lifetime. The procedure was to lead the victim outside the city, make him drunk, and then cut his throat. Even more curious was the feast of the *Sacæa*, which lasted for five days in Babylon. As in Rome, the servant was exalted above his lord; and in every house a slave clothed in kingly attire, and wearing the title of *Zoganes*, exercised a short-lived power. Nor was this all. A criminal under sentence of death was robed as a king and authorised to act as such, even to the extent of enjoying the royal concubines. At the close of the festival, he was stripped of his fine linen, scourged, and either hanged or crucified. All these details were drawn by Athenæus and Dion from authors who wrote centuries before the Christian era.

The Babylonian festival of the *Sacæa* took place at the beginning of the year, about the 25th of March. It may, perhaps, be identified with one in honour of the great god Marduk, which is mentioned in the earliest Babylonian texts.

In 1891 Herr Zimmern recognised in the *Sacæa* the origin of the Jewish feast of Purim (*lots*). The first mention of it is in the book of Esther, which was

written after the return of the Jews from captivity and cannot be assigned to an earlier date than the fourth century B.C. The book of Esther is a novel with a purpose, and the object is to supply a motive for the *Purim*. This was a bacchanalian fête, which lasted two days, and was still, in the eighteenth century, celebrated with scandalous freedom and uproar. The story of Esther is well known. The king of Persia has a vizier, Haman, who has been offended by the Jew, Mordecai. The vizier prepares a gallows on which he hopes to hang his enemy, while he himself shall ride in state through the town, clad in the royal robes, wearing the royal crown, and mounted on the king's own horse. Thanks to Esther, the tables are turned : Ahasuerus hangs Haman, and the royal honours are paid to Mordecai. Here we have a reminiscence of the Sacæan Zoganes, divided (so to speak) between two actors ; one of whom hopes to play the part of the king, but is hanged, while the other, who does play the part, escapes the fate intended for him. The Babylonian affinities of the tale are still further accentuated by the names : for Mordecai is evidently *Marduk*, and Esther is connected with the Babylonian goddess Istar—the Astarte of the Greeks. An attempt has even been made to identify Haman with an Elamite god of the same name. Be this as it may, it is certain that the Jews, in celebrating the feast of Purim, were in the habit of first crucifying, then burning, an effigy of Haman. A law of the Theodosian Code forbade the crucifixion, as the use of the cross in such a ceremony was regarded as an insult to Christianity ; but in Jewish communities the custom of hanging or burning a representation of Haman has survived to our own days.

We know from Dion that the Babylonian Sacæa had

been introduced into Persia, and also that a feast similar to Purim was celebrated both at Babylon and in Persia. At the beginning of spring, a beardless man was perched on an ass and triumphantly paraded through the town. He carried a fan and complained of the heat, while the people threw snow or cold water upon him. In the course of his promenade, he stopped at the doors of the rich and levied contributions: in a word, the clown played the part of a young Sun-king till the end of the day. At sunset—unless he contrived to hide himself—he was beaten with sticks: in earlier times, no doubt, he was put to death. This cavalcade of the ‘beardless king’ is suspiciously like the triumphal procession of Mordecai, as it is described in the book of Esther.

II

In an article in ‘Hermes,’ published in 1898, a German scholar, Herr Wendland, emphasised the points of similarity between the treatment of Christ by the Roman soldiers at Jerusalem, and the treatment of the Saturnalian King at Durostolum. The analogy, he considered, might explain the royal robe and crown which the soldiery put on Jesus, on the ground that he claimed to be King of the Jews.

The great difficulty is the date, as the Roman Saturnalia were held in December and Christ was put to death in the spring. It is not impossible, however, that the Roman garrison at Jerusalem may have conformed to the ancient custom, placing the Saturnalia at the beginning of the year, which, under the old system, fell in March.

In any case, the resemblance of the Passion to the

Sacæa is still more striking than its resemblance to the Saturnalia. Take St. Matthew's account (xxvii. 26-31) : ' Then released he Barabbas unto them : and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, " Hail, King of the Jews ! " And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.'

Now compare this passage with Dion Chrysostom's description of the treatment meted out to the king of the Sacæa :

' Taking one of the prisoners sentenced to death, they seat him on the throne, clothe him in royal vestments, and for several days permit him to drink and be merry, and to use the king's concubines. But at the end of his term, they strip off his garments, and scourge and crucify him.'

It is quite true—and Mr. Frazer freely admits it—that this may be only a coincidence. Still, the scarlet robe, the crown (for the theory, that the thorns were designed to increase the sufferings of Christ, is late), the reed-sceptre, and the mock homage to a majesty that was soon to be insulted and done to death—all this is remarkably like an act of ritual. Would a Roman governor, for one moment, have allowed his soldiers to act as buffoons before fulfilling their office as executioners ?

Mr. Frazer again asks if Christ was not crucified in the character of Haman, in accordance with the above-mentioned ritual of the feast of Purim. But the feast of Purim fell on the fourteenth of Adar ; that is to say, exactly a month before Easter, which was the period of the crucifixion. In fact, we may say generally that Mr. Frazer has confused his theory by the introduction of Haman and Mordecai, to whom there is not the slightest allusion in the Gospel tradition.

The one thing certain is that the Gospel narratives would gain in clarity, if, at that particular time, it was customary to put a condemned criminal to death, after disguising him as a king. By the received account, Pilate was more sympathetic than hostile to Christ. Then why, all-powerful as he was, did he not spare him ? On the hypothesis suggested, the answer is easy : custom demanded a victim and all that Pilate could do was to leave the choice free between Barabbas and Christ.

It must also be remembered that, according to the identically similar statements of the four Gospels, Pilate had the cross surmounted by an inscription, stating that the executed criminal was the King of the Jews (INRI, *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudæorum*). In the reign of so suspicious and jealous a sovereign as Tiberius, would a Roman governor have dared, even as a gruesome jest, to give the title *king* to a condemned malefactor, unless it was a formula sanctioned by custom and regularly employed on these occasions ?

The personality of Barabbas is singular. We are told that at the Easter festival it was usual for the governor to set free a prisoner nominated by the people. Pilate tried to persuade the mob to choose and spare Christ : they, on the contrary, clamoured for his death and the liberation

of a certain Barabbas, who was in prison for sedition and murder. But why was it necessary to liberate a prisoner at all? Mr. Frazer supposes that the man who was freed was obliged to perambulate the streets in royal robes and play the part of Mordecai, while the condemned man played the part of Haman. There is nothing to authorise such a supposition; but it is certain that the story, as we have it in the Gospels, cannot be understood. Another curious circumstance is that the name Barabbas is composed of two Aramaic words meaning *son* and *father*: Barabbas, therefore, is *The Son of the Father*—or exactly what Christ believed himself to be. Barabbas was to have been executed, Christ was executed in his stead; consequently, it must have been as *Son of the Father* that he was nailed to the cross. Mr. Frazer is disposed to think that Barabbas is not a name, but a surname given to the victim chosen at this season; perhaps, because Easter in Syrian countries was originally accompanied by the sacrifice of the first-born—a son dying for his father. It will be seen we are on more than shifting ground—a soil honeycombed by quagmires and abysms, with will-o'-the-wisps alluring and misleading us on every hand. But that is no reason why a modern investigator should pass by and dismiss as insignificant all these sidelights of myth and ritual.

To complicate matters still more, Herr Wendland has disinterred a story of Philo's. Philo, it is well known, was a Jewish philosopher who lived at Alexandria in the time of Christ. He relates that when Agrippa, the grandson of Herod, was invested by Caligula at Rome with the crown of Judæa, the young king passed through Alexandria on the way to his new capital. The populace there was antisemitic, and the Jewish kinglet offered

a fair target for their buffoonery. Accordingly, they seized a poor idiot by the name of Carabas, who used to wander the streets, stark naked, and pestered by the attentions of small boys. They put a crown on his head, gave him a reed for sceptre, clothed him in sham robes of state, and surrounded him with a guard of honour. To make it more obvious that their satire was levelled at the princeling Agrippa, the crowd shouted *Marin! Marin!*—a Syriac word for ‘Lord.’ Here, again, we have a burlesque procession similar to that in which Christ figured—a fresh proof that the procession at Jerusalem was no whim of the moment, but on the contrary, a normal feature of certain oriental customs. But who was this luckless Carabas? The name is meaningless both in Hebrew and Syriac; and yet it is certain that the mock-king, whom the Alexandrian rabble set up in opposition to the despised Jewish monarch, must himself have been a Jew. It is tempting to take *Carabas* as a clerical error for *Barabbas*, which would be, not a proper name, but the stock title of the stage-king who strutted his little hour in certain festivals of the same type as the Saturnalia and Sacæa.

Now comes another fact which intensifies the obscurity and makes confusion doubly confounded.¹ Origen, writing about the year 250 A.D., was familiar with manuscripts of St. Matthew’s gospel, which read (xxvii. 16): ‘And they had then a notable prisoner called *Jesus Barabbas*.’ This strange text is still found in a number of Greek, Aramaic, and Syrian codices. In Mark the first mention of the name Barabbas is preceded by the words *ὁ λεγόμενος*—‘he who was called, or surnamed,

¹ See the article ‘Barabbas’ in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. These later facts are not mentioned by Mr. Frazer.

Barabbas.' Can it be that this man was also called Jesus, and was given the surname Barabbas as a means of distinguishing him from Christ? The assumption that two condemned criminals were both called Jesus is so improbable that it verges on the impossible. Barabbas, then, would seem to have been a surname; and in an old source, known to the compiler of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, this surname, or nickname, must have been applied to Christ—*Jesus Barabbas*—*Jesus, the Son of the Father*. Thus Barabbas would be an alias for Jesus; and the whole story of the choice left to the people, an invention to explain the double name. These are grave conclusions, which I mention without adopting. An exceptionally trenchant intellect might perhaps evolve a plausible theory out of this mass of data: for my part, I fail to see my way clearly and can do no more than point out the elements of the problem—undoubtedly one of the most absorbing that can engage the historian's attention.

In his concluding observations, Mr. Frazer lays great stress on the following considerations. As early as the year 112 A.D., we see from Pliny's letter to Trajan what rapid strides Christianity had already made in Asia Minor. If we decline to admit a supernatural intervention, we are forced to assume—in view of this bewildering expansion of a creed so alien from the spirit of Græco-Roman culture—that the soil was awaiting the seed; in other words, that in Western Asia the lower strata of the population were already permeated by analogous doctrines of an equally mystic character. Now we know how widespread in Asia were the cults of Attis and Adonis—cults whose fundamental dogma was the unmerited death and triumphant resurrection of a god. Knowing

this, we know also that the peoples of Asia were predisposed to accept without question what to them was the twice-told tale of a man, in whom there was no guilt, slain by hands which a little before had garbed him in regal purple. 'In this form, the story of the life and death of Jesus exerted an influence which it could never have had if the great Teacher had died, as is commonly supposed, the death of a vulgar malefactor. It shed round the cross on Calvary a halo of divinity which multitudes saw and worshipped afar off; the blow struck on Golgotha set a thousand expectant strings vibrating in unison wherever men had heard the old, old story of the dying and risen God.'¹

It is to be hoped that the miscellany of proofs, half-proofs, and potential proofs, which we owe to Messrs. Wendland, Cumont, and Frazer, may induce more than a few scholars to prosecute the question. For the moment nothing has been absolutely demonstrated beyond the secondary character of the gospel accounts of the Passion—and this has scarcely been in doubt since Strauss's work. It is necessary to go further, and, by a microscopic examination of the evidence, to reconstruct the primitive and original narrative which shall explain all subsequent developments of the legend. This Mr. Frazer has not claimed to do; but whoever may eventually succeed in the difficult task must always owe him a heavy debt.

¹ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ed. 2, vol. iii. p. 197.

CHAPTER VII

THE ORIGIN OF PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD¹

FUSTEL DE COULANGES, at the beginning of his 'Cité Antique,' shows by conclusive citations that, in Roman, Greek and Hindoo eyes, the dead were gods to whom their descendants paid homage, and whose aid they besought in prayer. Here we need only recall the invocation which Electra, in the 'Choephoroe' of Aeschylus, addresses to her father Agamemnon, as he lies in the tomb :²

' And I, libation pouring to the dead,
Thus pray, my Sire invoking :—" Pity me,
And dear Orestes pity. Kindle thou
A light within this palace. For we're sold
By her that bare us—outcast on the earth—
While he that in thy blood dipped murderous hands
Sleeps in her bed. What am I? Slave and worse!
Thy son strays beggared—and the adulterers
Sit hugely merry on thy ravished throne.
I pray thee, send Orestes hitherward;
Sweeten his cup; lead back his wandering feet.—
Give ear, and grant me, Father, to become
Sounder of mind by far than is my mother,
With hands more pure." '

¹ *Revue des Études juives*, 1900, pp. 161-173. A short sketch of this article appeared in the *Strena Helbigiana*, Leipzig, 1900.

² Aeschylus, *Choephoroe*, 129-140 (Weil)—reading φῶς ἀναψον ἐν δόμοις (131), and ἐν τοῖσι σοῖς θρόνοισι (137).

This solitary example is proof enough that the ancients *prayed to* the dead, because—according to their lights—the dead man became a familiar god.

The pagan worship of the dead, rendered impartially to rich and poor, was sharply reprobated by St. Augustine, who contrasted the humble honours shown by the Christians to their martyrs: ‘We have in honour of the martyrs neither temples nor priests, neither ceremony nor sacrifice; for they are not gods to us, and we have none other god than their God. Truly we venerate their tombs as those of trusty servants of God. . . . But who among the faithful hath ever heard a priest, standing before an altar built to God’s glory over the holy relics of the martyrs, say in his prayer: *Peter, Paul, or Cyprian, I offer thee this sacrifice?* For the sacrifice, though it be offered on the tomb of the martyrs, is nevertheless offered to God alone, even to that God who made them men and martyrs and hath placed them among His angels.’¹

St. Augustine was right in denying that the Christians offered *sacrifices* to the martyrs: the mass celebrated on their tombs from the end of the second century bore a totally different character. Of *prayer* the passage says nothing, for its author knew that the selfsame petitions were addressed by the pagan to his dead and by the Christian to his mediators and intercessors, the Saints. In this respect, the cult of the Saints exhibits close analogies with the Græco-Roman cult of the dead; the difference is, that in modern religions the Saints are the *only* dead to whom prayer is made.

The idea of an intercession by dead and canonised heroes is foreign to paganism; but the belief that men

¹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, vi. 27.

peculiarly acceptable to God may intercede with effect in favour of their fellow-mortals is already evident in the Old Testament.¹ Thus, in Genesis (xviii. 23), Abraham, informed by the angels of the approaching destruction of Sodom, begs the Almighty to spare the righteous, and not to cut them off with the wicked. In Jeremiah (xv. 1) the Lord Himself says to the prophet that He will not allow His just anger to be appeased, even by Moses or Samuel: 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.' The passage is of high importance, for Moses and Samuel are obviously regarded as departed sages that have attained heroic rank—saints honoured with access to the throne of the Almighty.

The Old Testament, therefore, is cognisant of intercession, and admits both its possibility and its efficacy. What it is not cognisant of—though the practice has been general in Christianity since the first centuries—is that a living person should beseech one of the illustrious dead to intercede for him in the presence of God. The prayers of the Hebrew ascend directly to the Supreme Being, the Christian has often need of an ambassador.

In his treatise 'De Corona,' dating from about the year 200, Tertullian enumerates the different Christian practices which are not dependent on any Scriptural text.² One of these he finds in offerings for the dead, *oblationes pro defunctis*. 'Certainly,' he says, 'the custom is not prescribed by the written law, but tradition authorises it, custom confirms it, and faith observes

¹ A number of somewhat obscure examples will be found in the seventh chapter of Esdras IV.

² Tertullian, *De Corona*, iv.

it. More, tradition, custom, and faith are backed by reason: if you are not certain of it yourselves, another who is certain will teach you.' The passage, for all its brevity, reveals several facts. Firstly, the pious custom of making offerings on behalf of the dead—unluckily Tertullian omits to say in what they consisted—was in force among the Christian communities of the second century after Christ; ¹ secondly, objections had already been raised by those who clung to the letter of the Law and insisted upon all rites being justified by texts; thirdly, Tertullian had no texts to quote, and was forced to appeal from tradition to reason, *ratio*, as interpreted by the only competent authorities, the pastors of the faithful.

The same author, in his treatise 'De Monogamia,' ² speaks of a widow who prayed for her husband's soul, pleaded for his beatitude, expressed the hope of being reunited to him in the first resurrection, and made offerings on each anniversary of his death. These practices furnished Tertullian with an argument against second marriages. If a widower, he says, marries again, he will have two wives, one in the flesh, and one in the spirit. Will he not pray for the soul of the first and offer sacrifice for her salvation? ³ But, in that case, he must in God's sight be guilty of bigamy. It is well known that in this respect, as in others, the Church has not admitted the strict doctrine of Tertullian.

¹ There is undoubtedly an allusion to prayer for the dead in the epitaph of Abercius, which was discovered in Phrygia and is of earlier date than the year 216 (cf. H. Marucchi, *Éléments d'archéol. chrétienne*, vol. i. p. 296). I am still unable to understand the text altogether, but I cannot subscribe to the over-ingenuous theory by which M. Dietrich attempts to establish its pagan origin (cf. *Revue critique*, December 14, 1896).

² Tertullian, *De Monogamia*, x.

³ Tertullian, *De exhort. castit.* xi.

The bishop Acrius, about 355 A.D., and the priest Vigilantius, some forty-five years later, declared war on the custom of prayers for the dead and the appeal to the intercession of Saints. There is no need to dilate on these controversies, which are active enough to-day.¹ The Reformers of the sixteenth century, emulating the heretics of the thirteenth, took up the thesis of Vigilantius and established its supremacy among the Protestant nations. On the other hand, prayers for the dead are still reverently offered in Catholic countries, as well as in the Orthodox Greek Church and among the Jews.²

The pagans, then, prayed *to* the dead, and the Christians *for* the dead. In the eyes of the former, the dead were gods—at the least, demigods or heroes; in the eyes of the latter, they were placed in so precarious and perilous a situation as to stand in need of the prayers which the survivors addressed to God for their salvation, and of the good works by which it was hoped to conciliate the divine clemency. Even the most virtuous must be prayed for. Thus, more than fifteen years after the death of his sainted mother Monica, St. Augustine, on his own admission, was still praying for her.³

So striking a contrast between two religious conceptions is well worth the historian's attention. There is no reason why we should allow the theologians

¹ As far as the fourth and fifth centuries are concerned, a host of quotations will be found in M. Isr. Lévi's article on the 'Commemoration of Souls' (*Revue des Études juives*, 1894, vol. xxix. pp. 55, 56).

² That the custom is independent of the belief in Purgatory is proved by the fact that the Orthodox Greeks, who deny the existence of Purgatory, nevertheless pray for the dead (cf. *Revue anglo-romaine*, 1895, p. 156). For the 'Commemoration of the Dead' among the Jews of the Middle Ages, see M. Lévi's study quoted above (*Revue*, &c., 1894, vol. xxix. pp. 44 *sqq.*).

³ St. Augustine, *Confess.* ix. 13.

a monopoly of such problems—our task is essentially different from theirs. Theology sets out to assail or defend an opinion: history is concerned only with disentangling the origins of that opinion, and starts, not from doctrinal prepossessions, but from the conviction that the genesis of ideas, like the genesis of matter, obeys the law of evolution, and that the intellectual, like the physical, world is governed by the principle of continuity.

To begin with, we have the incontestable fact, recognised as early as the year 200 by Tertullian, that neither the Old Law nor the New, neither the Bible nor the Gospels, prescribe or mention prayers for the dead. The accounts of the death of Lazarus, even those of the death of Jesus himself, make no allusion to the custom. If the holy women visited the sepulchre, it was to carry perfumes,¹ not to pray. According to Matthew,² they came simply 'to see the sepulchre.' As a matter of fact, the controversialists are at one on this point; the only subject as to which opinions differ is the origin and authority of the tradition pressed into service by Tertullian.

Bossuet, whose discussions with the Protestant divines brought him more than once to the question of prayers for the dead, may be taken as a type of the Catholic apologist. In spite of the silence of the Old Testament—unbroken except in a single instance—and of the Gospels, he goes to the oldest strata of the Jewish religion for the origin of this custom which was so quickly and so generally accepted.³

Two Protestants, MM. de la Roque and Blondel, had

¹ Luke xxiv. 1; Mark xvi. 1.

² Matthew xxviii. 10.

³ Bossuet, *Défense de la tradition*, ed. 1846, vol. viii. p. 301.

asserted that prayers for the dead were unknown to the Jews before the time of Rabbi Akiba, who lived in the reign of Hadrian ; and that the Christians borrowed them, not from the Jews, but from the Sibylline Books, forged by an impostor in the reign of Antoninus Pius. Bossuet answers, firstly, that there is nothing in Akiba's words to indicate that prayers for the dead were a novelty ; and, secondly, that mention of them is found, before the Gospels, in the second book of Maccabees.

We must pause for an instant to consider these two pieces of evidence and determine their exact significance and date.

The following is the tradition with regard to Akiba, as given by Bossuet from a Latin translation : ¹ ' One day, Rabbi Akiba, while walking, met a man laden with wood ; and the burden was so heavy that it exceeded the load of an ass or a horse. Rabbi Akiba asked him if he were a man or a ghost ; the other answered that he was a man who had died some time ago, and that he was obliged every day to carry a similar load in Purgatory,² where he was burning on account of the sins which he had committed in this world. The Rabbi inquired if he had not left any children, what was his wife's name, and where they lived. When the ghost had answered all these questions, Rabbi Akiba sought out the son of the dead man and taught him the prayer beginning with the word *Kadisch* (that is to say, *saint*) which is to be found

¹ Bossuet quotes ' *La Gémara du Talmud, au traité Calla.*' The reference is exact ; cf. Hamburger, *Real-Encyklop. für Talmud*, art. ' *Kaddisch*,' p. 607. The treatise, however, is not a part of the Talmud. For the passages of the Talmudists which imply the idea of an intercession by the living in favour of the dead, I refer the reader to the article of M. Isr. Lévi, quoted above.

² M. Isr. Lévi tells me that this expression is not in the Hebrew.

in the ritual of the Jews, promising him that his father should be delivered from Purgatory if he recited it every day. After a while, the dead man appeared in a dream to Rabbi Akiba, thanked him, and told him that by this means he had been freed from Purgatory and was now in the Garden of Eden, which (adds Bossuet) is the earthly Paradise where, according to Jewish belief, the souls of the blessed have their residence.’¹

Bossuet was right in maintaining that this story does not credit Akiba with the institution of prayers for the dead, but simply with the employment of one particular prayer which was efficacious for the deliverance of souls. But Bossuet was wrong in omitting to inform us that the legend requisitioned by him dates from the Middle Ages only, and that no hint of it is discoverable in any of the earlier and more authoritative accounts of Akiba in our possession. He was equally wrong in claiming that prayers for the dead ‘were constantly in use, from time immemorial, in all synagogues.’ The assertion is perfectly gratuitous, and the silence of the Old Testament is enough to refute it.

We now come to the other argument, based on a solitary passage in the second book of Maccabees. This book was rejected from the Jewish canon, and it was only with difficulty that the Christian Church finally secured its inclusion. About the year 350 the Council of Laodicea threw it out ; while, in 397, the third Council of Carthage accepted it. In 494 the Council of Rome, under Pope Gelasius, admitted the first two books of Maccabees into the canon ; but the Protestant Bibles have excluded them to this day. ‘It is useless to object,’

¹ Bossuet, *op. laud.* vol. xii. pp. 221–222.

says Bossuet, 'that the book is non-canonical ; it is sufficient for our purpose that it should be not only older than Akiba but older than the Gospels themselves.'¹ The remark is just ; but it might be as well to weigh the authority of the work and consider if the doctrine it presents can pass, as Bossuet seems to believe, for that of the whole pre-Christian Synagogue.

Herr Niese, in opposition to a few over-sceptical critics, seems to have demonstrated that the second book of Maccabees, the historical value of which is not to be despised, dates from the year 124 B.C. It must have been composed in Egypt by a Jew belonging to the sect of the Pharisees.² The author professes to summarise a work in five books, by another hellenised African Jew, Jason of Cyrene.³ This latter must have written at least twenty years after the time (ca. 175-160 B.C.)⁴ of the events which he chronicles ; and his version already contains a liberal admixture of fable. But, if the work we possess is comparatively old, it was only at a distinctly late period that it began to exercise any influence on Jewish thought. The first writer who appears acquainted with it, is the Egyptian Jew Philo, who was about thirty years of age at the time of the birth of Jesus. Josephus, born in the year 37 A.D., has no knowledge of it (at least, directly) ; nor is there a single quotation from it in the Gospels, the Acts, or the genuine Epistles. The first allusion to the book in Christian literature is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is universally recognised as the work of

¹ Bossuet, *Oeuvres*, ed. 1846, vol. viii. p. 301.

² B. Niese, *Kritik der beiden Makkabäerbücher*, Berlin, 1900 (extr. fr. *Hermes*, vol. xxxv. pp. 268, 453).

³ 2 Macc. ii. 23 ; cf. ii. 26, 28.

⁴ Schürer, *Gesch. des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. ii. p. 740.

a Paulinist of Alexandria living about the year 80 A.D.¹ All this evidence, let us observe, takes us back to Egypt in general, and Alexandria in particular. We shall hardly do wrong, then, to assume that the dogmatic parts of the little work in question reflect not so much the general opinion of Judaism as that of a limited Judæo-Alexandrine clique.

The second book of Maccabees² relates that the soldiers of Judas, on stripping the corpses of a few companions of theirs who had fallen in an engagement with Gorgias, the governor of Idumea, found a number of amulets under their tunics. As these articles were forbidden by the Jewish Law, Judas 'prayed that this transgression might be blotted out,' and sent 2000 drachms of silver to Jerusalem as a sin-offering. 'Wherein,' comments our author, 'he did very well and honestly in that he was mindful of the resurrection: for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.'

This commentary is evidently prejudiced: it is the work of a man, himself a believer in the resurrection and the efficacy of prayers for the dead, who desires to prove that Judas Maccabæus held the same views. His argument, however, is worthless.³ Among all peoples a violation of religious law on the part of individuals has been regarded as a danger to the community at large—a crime requiring special expiation or purification. Judas begs the Almighty to pardon a few Jewish soldiers for an act of idolatry, and offers a sacrifice in order to

¹ G. Krüger, *Gesch. der altchristl. Literatur*, 1895, p. 11; A. Harnack, *Die Chronologie*, 1897, p. 479.

² 2 Maccabees xii. 43.

³ This opinion is shared by M. Israël Lévi, *Revue des Études juives*, 1894, vol. xxix.

avert the divine wrath from his army: the fate of his soldiers in another world does not concern him. The story, then, so far from proving what the epitomator thought it proved, implies the exact contrary: that in the Palestine of 170 B.C., the period of Judas Maccabæus, there was no belief either in the resurrection or in the efficacy of prayers for the dead. Had those doctrines been current coin at the time, our anonymous author would never have been reduced to the absurd induction by which he hoped at once to establish their antiquity and to place them under distinguished patronage.

Bossuet missed the point. 'The action of Judas,' he remarks, 'shows that even in those days the Jews believed in the feasibility of expiation and sacrifice for the dead.'¹ Many commentators have fallen into the same snare, since Origen first insisted on the passage as supporting the doctrine of intercession. The only valid conclusion that can be drawn from it is that the Jews of the Maccabæan period *did not yet believe* in the saving grace of prayer for the dead, but that, by the time of the epitomator (ca. 120 B.C.), a sect had arisen which did believe in it, though not without incurring the opposition of its contemporaries. This must have been a sect of Pharisees, for the Pharisees, according to Josephus, admitted the resurrection, while the Sadducees denied it.² The earliest Biblical text, where the idea of resurrection finds clear expression, occurs in the book of Daniel,³ which it is now agreed dates from the Maccabæan period—about 165 B.C. It is obvious that the theory must have gained a certain amount of ground, and have

¹ Bossuet, ed. 1846, vol. viii. p. 301.

² Cf. Schürer, *op. laud.* vol. ii. p. 460.

³ Daniel xii. 2; cf. Schürer, *ibid.*

assumed definite shape, before men could realise the duties entailed on the living by the certainty that sooner or later the dead must appear before the judgment-seat of God. In short, everything tends to prove that the custom of praying for the dead was introduced, in the first century before our era, in certain Jewish communities, particularly in those of Egypt, to one of which the writer of the second book of Maccabees belonged. It had not yet been adopted by the Palestine which listened to the teaching of Jesus—who never speaks of it, although very positive on the subject of a future life and the judgment of souls according to their merits. Even in Egypt, where it left its mark, the resistance and doubt must have been great.¹ There is nothing to prove that in Akiba's time, about 130 A.D., the doctrine had penetrated into the ritual of the synagogues; but neither is there anything to prevent our admitting it. About that date the belief was doubtless borrowed by the growing Christian communities, so that Tertullian, in the year 200, could speak of it as an established usage.

Thus Bossuet was right in holding that the custom of praying for the dead had been transmitted by the Synagogue to the Church, though he was strangely deceived on the score of its antiquity and its universality among the Jews. But the question is only half solved. It remains to be seen how the idea of an intercession by the living for the dead penetrated into the Jewish thought

¹ In the fourth book of Esdras, which probably dates from the year 97 A.D. and is the work of an Alexandrine Jew, the doctrine of intercession is mentioned as an ill-defined theological novelty. 'Lord,' says Esdras to the angel, 'at the Day of Judgment shall the just be able to intercede for the unjust in the eyes of the Most High?' And the Angel answers, 'There shall be none who shall cast his burden on his fellow: for every man shall suffer what he hath merited and shall be held accountable for his own doings.'

of the first century before our era, thence to spread into all Christian Churches previous to the Reformation.

As the second book of Maccabees is the work of an Alexandrine Jew, and the first two authors who quote from it are also Alexandrine Jews, it is only natural that our first glance should turn to Egypt—not the old Egypt of the Pharaohs, coeval with Abraham, but the hellenised Egypt which sheltered and influenced the Hebrew colony in Alexandria.

Relative to our subject we have a most important text of Diodorus Siculus, who visited Egypt about the year 50 B.C.¹ He says: ‘When the chest containing the dead is put upon the boat, and the *survivors call on the nether gods and beseech them to give him ingress into the mansions set aside for the pious*, the crowd cry assent, and pray likewise that the deceased may enjoy eternal life in Hades in the congregation of the good.’ This passage may be compared with certain prayers, forming part of the Egyptian ritual and designed to assist the dead in his progress to the habitation of the blessed.² ‘It is the solemn moment,’ writes Maspero, ‘when the dead man, leaving the town where he had lived, begins his journey to another world. The multitudes assembled on the banks salute him with good wishes: “May you reach in peace the West of Thebes! In peace, in peace to Abydos! Go down in peace to Abydos, toward the Western Sea!”’³ Even if the Egyptian texts—so far, at least, as my knowledge goes—offer no exact equivalent to the prayer quoted by Diodorus, there is not the faintest reason why we should impugn the

¹ Diodorus Siculus, i. 91.

² Révillout, *Revue égyptologique*, 1885, p. 42.

³ Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 149.

statement of an historian who was also an eye-witness. Moreover, the statement is borne out by a whole series of Greek epitaphs from Egypt, dating from the imperial epoch, but pagan. There we find a recurrence of formulæ such as the following: 'Serapis, grant him victory over his enemies,'—enemies, that is, whom the dead man might encounter on his journey to the realms of bliss,— 'give him good welcome, Lord Serapis.'¹ M. Révillout, a specialist on these texts, has very justly remarked that, in the Christian epitaphs of Egypt, prayer for the dead on the part of the survivors is a far more frequent phenomenon than in the contemporary epitaphs of other countries—as if the Christians of the Nile valley had, like the Jews, or through the Jews, absorbed the influence of native religious tradition. The same scholar, however, appears to be mistaken when he writes:² 'Prayers for the dead . . . only make their appearance among the Jews at the time of their great struggle with the Syrian kings under the Maccabees—and then, perhaps, owing to Egyptian influence. We must not forget that at this period the Ptolemies were certainly secret supporters of the Jews against the Seleucidæ, precisely as the Pharaohs had once been their mainstay against the Assyrian satraps.' Personally, I believe that the prayers in question did not come into vogue amongst the Jews until some fifty years after the Maccabees, and that the influence exercised by Egypt was simply due to the existence of a large Jewish colony in that country. The policy of the Lagidæ counted for nothing. At the time of Christ's teaching, Philo estimated that there were a million Jews in Egypt, against 180,000 in Asia Minor

¹ *Corpus inscr. graec.* 4710, 4712b.

² *Revue égyptologique*, 1885, p. 45.

and 8000 at Rome; and he tells us that at Alexandria they occupied two out of the five quarters of the town.¹ It is not surprising that so huge an agglomeration should have developed a centrifugal tendency, and that its ideas—tinctured as they were by Græco-Roman speculation—should have spread not only into Syria but into other parts of the Hellenic world.

It seems to me there is a trace of this propaganda at Corinth, a town whose commercial relations with Alexandria were constant, and also the site of an important Jewish colony. Here St. Paul found the rite of Baptism for the Dead, in which a living proxy baptised himself in order to assure the eternal salvation of a friend who had passed away unbaptised²—a species of intercession belonging to the same order as that referred to in the second book of Maccabees. This baptism, it must be observed, was not the Christian baptism but the baptism of the Proselytes³—Greeks who had been converted to Judaism and thus paved the way for the formation of Christian communities.⁴

From all these data we may take it that the origin of prayer for the dead was Egyptian. But as Christianity was developed not so much in Egypt as in the Hellenic world, we are justified in asking whether she may not even there have found certain kindred ideas favourable to the growth of her nascent doctrine on the efficacy of prayer for the dead.

¹ Philo, in *Flacc.* 6 and 8. Cf. Th. Reinach, art. 'Judæa,' in *Saglio's Dictionnaire des antiquités*, p. 622.

² 1 Cor. xv. 29.

³ Schürer, *op. laud.* vol. ii. p. 369.

⁴ A detailed discussion of Baptism for the Dead would lead us too far. I shall only point out that Epiphane ascribes the practice (which, by the way, St. Paul does not condemn) to the Cerinthians. Now, Cerinthus seems to have been an *Egyptian Jew*.

We said at the beginning that classical antiquity knew nothing of these prayers, because, in Greek and Roman eyes, the dead man became a god. Still, side by side with this primitive idea, there was another of a much more modern cast. The dead were judged in accordance with their conduct in this life ; some were sent incontinent to the Elysian Fields, the abode of the blessed ; others were hurled into Tartarus. In the sixth book of the *Aeneid* we have even a reference to Purgatory and Limbo, conceptions which have passed into Christian eschatology and still play an important part in it. Between this point of view and that which Fustel found underlying the religions of Greece and Rome, there is obviously an absolute incompatibility. Instead of being a god or demi-god, the dead man is a prisoner at the bar, threatened with a shorter or longer term of punishment ; and he must either justify himself or be purified by suffering before he can be admitted into the circle of the elect. Even there he will only be a privileged person, not a god,—something immeasurably different from the Aeschylean Agamemnon to whom Electra prays, not merely for the success of her plans, but for virtue itself.

It is remarkable that the same dualism of beliefs has been observed in Egypt, Italy, and Gaul. In these three countries, as in Greece, the dead man is sometimes supposed to inhabit his tomb, where he receives homage and even dispenses oracles ; but sometimes he migrates to a far-off land, at the risk of a voyage beset with fatigue and danger. Of these two conceptions, the first—in Greece, at any rate—appears to be that of the official religion, the second that of the popular religion. In the course of time the official religion succumbs under the double assault of science and conscience : in revenge the popular religion,

which is not necessarily the more recent, but is simply the creed of the lower classes, develops, dresses itself in philosophic or moral formulæ, and tends to exercise undivided sovereignty over those souls which have not yet detached themselves from all religion.

In Greece and Southern Italy the popular religion was called Orphism. In the sixth century B.C. it found a legislator in Pythagoras ; in the fourth it left a deep impress on Platonic thought ; at the time of Christ it inspired Virgil, who in the fourth 'Eclogue' and the sixth book of the Aeneid made himself the interpreter of Messianism and Orphic eschatology. A century later it began to exercise its influence on Christian thought, and that without any attempt at concealment on the part of the early Christians. The poet Orpheus figures as a precursor of Jesus on the Christian sarcophagi and in the paintings of the catacombs.¹ All the mysticism of primitive Christianity, which goes under the name of Gnosticism, is imbued with Orphic elements.² Dying paganism was filled with it. Even in the third century the emperor Alexander Severus, a pious eclectic, gathered together in his imperial oratory the images of Orpheus, Apollonius of Tyana, and Jesus.

Now there is every reason to suppose—though our information is distressingly scanty—that popular Orphism recognised prayer and sacrifice for the dead. We have two texts on the subject, one from Plato, and the other from an anonymous Orphic poet. Both relate to ceremonies by which men believed it possible to redeem the faults or crimes of their ancestors : both, however,

¹ Cf. A. Heussner, *Die altchristlichen Orpheusdarstellungen*, Cassel, 1893.

² Dieterich, *Nekyia*, Leipzig, 1893, p. 172 and *passim*.

are open to differences of opinion,¹ and it seems useless to insist upon them here. What to my mind is more conclusive as regards the problem under discussion is the fact that Herodotus and Diodorus have remarked the analogy between the Orphic, Pythagorean, and Egyptian doctrines; and that Diodorus lays especial stress upon the indebtedness of Orpheus to Egypt for his theories of the life to come.² 'According to the Egyptians,' he writes, 'Orpheus brought back from his travels the ceremonies and the more part of the mystical rites celebrated in remembrance of the wanderings of Ceres, as well as the myths touching the infernal regions.'³ When an ancient historian disposes of the analogies between Orphism and Egyptian theology by assuming a journey undertaken by Orpheus to Egypt, no importance need be attached to his explanation. But the case is otherwise with the analogies themselves, attested as they are by men who knew infinitely better than we the rites and doctrines under comparison. We shall admit, then, not an Egyptian influence upon primitive Orphism—which is possible but non-proven—but a close similarity between the Orphic and the Egyptian rites. On one point of considerable importance we have been able for a few years past to control and verify this resemblance. In several tombs dating from the third and second centuries B.C., and discovered in Southern Italy and Crete, fragments have been found of a little Orphic poem engraved on golden tablets, which was designed to guide the dead on his journey beyond the tomb, and to forewarn him of

¹ Plato, pp. 364 E–365 A; *Orphica*, ed. Abel, p. 237. I have discussed these passages in the *Revue de Philologie*, 1899, p. 228, in answer to the doubts expressed by M. Tannery, *ibid.* p. 126.

² Herod. ii. 81; Diod. i. 92.

³ Diod. i. 96.

the supernatural dangers that overhung him.¹ Allowing for the greater sobriety of Greek thought, this guide is the exact equivalent of the 'Book of the Dead,' extracts from which were placed in Egyptian tombs, with the selfsame object of protecting the dead wayfarer against the perils besetting his pilgrimage to the Better Land.²

Our conclusion, then, seems justified: that the idea of prayer and sacrifice for the dead was Egyptian and Orphic both. From Egypt it penetrated into the Jewish community of Alexandria, and thence into the vast region dominated by Alexandrian commerce; through Orphism it spread into Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy. The soil was well prepared by a double ploughing for the spiritual revolution, which, in place of the deified dead, substituted a creature trembling at thought of his Judge, and transformed the prayer addressed to the departed into the petition, which still goes up to God, that He would give the soul His peace.

¹ *Inscriptiones graecae Italiae*, nos. 638, 641, 642; *Bull. de Corresp. hellén.* 1893, p. 121.

² The parallelism was first pointed out by M. Dieterich (*De hymnis Orphicis*, Marburg, 1891, p. 41), and has been ingeniously developed by M. Foucart in his first monograph on the mysteries of Eleusis (Paris, 1895).

CHAPTER VIII

ART AND MAGIC ¹

AT the present day we are acquainted with some ten caves—mostly in Périgord and the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees—the walls of which are decorated with sculptures and paintings.² These monuments of pre-historic art form a welcome supplement to the engravings on stone, horn, and bone, and the figures in relief and full relief which were discovered, during the second half of the nineteenth century, in the cave-dwellings of the Reindeer Age. Most of these cave-dwellings, it may be said, are also found in Périgord and round the Pyrenees, a district which, in addition, has furnished specimens of rock sculpture and painting.

¹ *L'Anthropologie*, 1903, pp. 257-266. I outlined the leading ideas of this paper in an article published in the *Chronique des arts*, Feb. 7, 1903, and reprinted in the *Revue archéologique*, March-April of the same year, p. 290. In May, at a meeting of the Académie des Inscriptions, Dr. Capitan made some remarks on totemism and magic in their relations to the cave-paintings. He did so, however, with reference to my article, which I had brought to his notice; and in the course of the sitting I enlarged on some of its conclusions. Certain newspapers—the *Petit Temps* of May 20, for instance—reported the facts in such a fashion that it might easily be imagined I was here reproducing Dr. Capitan's ideas, which I am sure he would regret even more than myself. I hope the present note will avert any misunderstanding.

² For a summary of these discoveries, v. *L'Anthropologie*, 1901, p. 671; 1902, p. 348.

There is no complete catalogue of these different manifestations of the early artistic spirit: M. Piette's work, which has involved considerable expense, is to include the most important, but has not yet been given to the public.¹ At the lowest estimate, there must be 150 of these cave drawings and sculptures, each treating a recognised theme, usually from the animal world. To lighten the task of the student, I have had reproductions made at the Musée de Saint-Germain of all the original drawings and casts in the possession of the institute, omitting only those in M. Piette's collection. The fac-similes—most ably executed by M. Champion—have been arranged and classified in three large cases, now on view, in the first room of the Museum. The collection is of distinct interest, as it is now possible for the first time to appreciate and compare a large number of designs, carved either on the surface of long bones or on the so-called 'staffs of office.' As the publication of cave-pictures advances, I propose to place photographic reproductions of them in other cases, which will be hung on the walls of the same room.

Both the large and the small pictures belong to the same civilisation and the same period. The fact is proved by the presence, in each series, of the characteristic animals of the second phase of the quaternary epoch; for instance, the mammoth, reindeer, and European bison. Moreover, so striking are the analogies and so marked the family resemblance between the rock designs and those on the smaller objects, that no archaeologist, however ignorant of palæontology, would hesitate to class them in the same group, or in two contemporary and related groups.

¹ In 1904.

In drawing up for my own use a list, necessarily incomplete, of the known remains of quaternary art, I was struck by two points. The first has often been observed before—that subjects borrowed from the animal kingdom are in a great majority. The second seems novel—that the animals represented are exclusively those upon which tribes of hunters and fishermen feed. In other words, only desirable animals were taken for models. The undesirable, and unrepresented, species included the great felines—such as the lion and tiger—the hyena, the jackal, the wolf, different varieties of serpents, and so forth. I am not aware of a single case in which one of these latter animals has been represented : for the supposed *felis spelæa* of Bruniquel is probably a badly drawn bull or cow,¹ and the serpents of the Madeleine² and Montgaudier³ are enormous eels.⁴ It may be taken, therefore, as a general rule that the hunters of the Reindeer Age never depicted carnivorous animals, which were dangerous neighbours and scarcely edible ; and yet it is certain that they knew them, feared them, and were familiar with them both dead and alive. Birds, also, are of rare occurrence in the group of pictures in question : I mention the fact, but can see no explanation.⁵

¹ See the excellent engraving published by M. Cartailhac in *L'Anthropologie*, 1903, p. 145. The hind-quarters are distinctly bovine.

² S. Reinach, *Alluvions et Cavernes*, fig. 90, p. 228.

³ *Ibid.* fig. 135, p. 266.

⁴ In objection to this M. Piette produces a few drawings of serpents (*L'Anthropologie*, 1904, p. 174), together with a carving which he takes to represent a wolf. But the wolf is very doubtful, and the serpents might belong to an edible species. Besides, M. Piette himself acknowledges that quaternary man almost invariably limited his artistic efforts to animals which he could eat.

⁵ M. Piette writes (*loc. laud.* p. 175) : ' They rarely drew birds, and yet the bones found prove they ate them, . . . so that it is not easy to see a satisfactory reason for the abstention.'

It is not surprising, however, that the hippopotamus and rhinoceros are absent: for the first of these was undoubtedly already extinct in France, and the second appears to have been far from common.¹

Now, if among two hundred drawings, carvings, and paintings of animals there is not one solitary specimen of a carnivorous creature, the omission cannot be ascribed to accident. This granted, we are forced to an important conclusion: that, when the cave-dweller drew or carved or painted, he had something in view above and beyond the simple desire to while away his time or to impress his companions by an exhibition of his own dexterity. The severely restricted choice of subject, which cramped his artistic activity, implies a more recondite cause for that activity than has hitherto been supposed. The primitive draughtsman was no idle dreamer outlining a familiar, chance-suggested silhouette, with no graver motive than the inspiration of the moment, but a worker who knew both what he was doing and why he did it.

Ethnography has long familiarised us with the artistic tastes of a number of present-day tribes, still in the savage or barbarous stage. Engraving and sculpture on bones are common in the extreme northern latitudes, especially among the Eskimos, who have no knowledge, however, of wall-painting. Engraving on walls is general in Africa—most of all in the Saharan region and among the Bushmen, who also paint on rocks. The Australian, while fond of painting on stone or wood, has no notion of engraving or sculpture.² Unlike the modern savage,

¹ M. Piette has published two rhinoceros heads (Tich. de Gourdan), engraved on stalagmite (*ibid.* p. 147). Is the determination of this species certain?

² See E. Grosse, *Les débuts de l'art*, French translation, pp. 124 *sqq.*

the troglodyte of South-West France seems to have been both painter and sculptor ; or, at least, the painting and carving tribes must have lived at the same time and in the same place. But our only hope of discovering *why* the troglodyte painted and carved, is to seek the information from the primitive peoples of to-day, whose conditions have been ethnologically ascertained.

As a matter of fact, the question has often been put without eliciting any answer of interest. The twentieth-century savage, however primitive he may appear, has a long evolution behind him : his ancestors have bequeathed him a legacy of tradition, which he observes, and of custom, to which he conforms, though he may understand neither one nor the other. Consequently, when a savage answers that he carves or paints to amuse himself, or because his forefathers did so, or for no reason at all, it merely proves that, in his case, artistic activity no longer exists except as a survival or a pastime. But, should other savages give a more definite answer, that answer deserves our preference—on the one condition that it conforms to certain general ideas common to mankind at large.

Of those ideas, few are more widely diffused than the following : The representation of an object, animate or inanimate, gives a hold over that object ; in other words, the maker or owner of an effigy is able to influence the original. This hold or influence is, of course, magical, and derives from a time-honoured superstition, older than religions and theogonies, but so profoundly rooted in the human mind that it has held its own side by side with religions—often in spite of them—and seems destined to survive them.

A natural corollary to the idea that like gives a hold

on like inspires man with a fear of being represented in effigy. That fear is almost ubiquitous, and in some cases religion has had to take it into account by forbidding the reproduction of the human form in either painting or sculpture. The magic process of *envoûtement*, which was still flourishing in the Middle Ages, and was carried out by breaking or piercing an image in order to harm or kill the original, is only one example among a hundred typifying the effects of this belief that there exists a network of invisible threads connecting things or beings with their effigies.¹

If primitive man's inveterate distrust of portraiture has retarded the progress of art, that progress has been effectively furthered by the desire of attracting or influencing things and beings. Nor is this true of the plastic arts alone. Numerous examples are known of pantomimic or dramatic representations, intended to provoke similar movements or phenomena in the animate or inanimate world. We need only recall the practice, prevalent among so many nations, of obtaining rain by pouring water on the ground, or of unloosing the storm by counterfeiting the sound of thunder. The Australians have numbers of imitative 'animal dances,' the best known being the kangaroo dance, in which the actors copy the kangaroo's motions with remarkable fidelity. All this, say some, is readily accounted for by the savage's highly developed instinct for mimicry; ² others consider the rite as a means of initiating the novice into the manners and customs of an animal which the Australian

¹ See the examples collected by Hirn, *Origins of Art*, p. 287, and the bibliography which he quotes. The custom of executing absent criminals in effigy still survived in medieval Périgord (Tarde, *Études pénales*, p. 241).

² See E. Grosse, *Les débuts de l'art*, French edition, p. 165.

must hunt, if he is to live. Neither explanation is valid : the object of the kangaroo dance, it is now recognised, is to endow the dancers with a magical power over the kangaroo.¹ Here, the power is acquired by pantomime ; elsewhere, the agency preferred is sculpture or painting. So, among the Golds of Eastern Siberia, carvings of fish are used as charms to attract fish.²

Some exceedingly interesting facts, belonging to the same order of ideas, have been noted among the tribes of Central Australia by a pair of most competent observers, Messrs. Spencer and Gillen. The larvæ of certain insects, a great delicacy to the Australian palate, are known under the name of *udnirringita*—otherwise, witchetty grub—from *udnirringa*, the herbs or bushes on which they feed. When the clan, whose totem this insect is, performs the ceremony of *intichiuma*, it gathers at the foot of a wall of rock on which great pictures of the witchetty grub are painted.³ The purpose of the ceremony is to assure, by magical means, the multiplication of the animal totem. The songs, sung in chorus, are invocations to the insects, beseeching them to come from all points of the horizon and lay a multitude of eggs.⁴ This is the invariable object of any *intichiuma*. Each totem, according to the authors, has its special ceremony ; no two are identical, but all serve a single end—to increase the food-supply by stimulating the reproduction of the animal or vegetable which gives its name to the tribal totem. It is well known that this new conception of the totemic cult is due to the researches of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, and that it was almost immediately accepted and developed by Mr. Frazer.

¹ See Y. Hirn, *The Origins of Art*, p. 285.

² *Ibid.* p. 287.

³ Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, 1899, p. 171.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 172.

Describing the ceremonies of the Emu clan, the same travellers relate that certain natives let their blood drip on to a patch of ground about three yards square until the soil is well soaked. As soon as the blood is dry, they take a quantity of pipe-clay, red and yellow ochre, and charcoal; then, within the blood-reddened area, they draw a sacred picture of the emu, with circles of yellow and black to represent the eggs before or after they are laid. The clansmen sit round the picture and sing in chorus, while the chief, or master of the ceremonies, explains the details of the drawing.¹ Given the motive for these rites, we have here an indisputable example of the magical employment of a painted image to promote the reproduction of the model. Before the account of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen's second expedition had yet appeared, Mr. Frazer, who was reading the proofs, wrote to me from Cambridge on June 17, 1903: 'I find a description of some very elaborate totemic designs; drawn on the ground and forming an integral part of totemic ritual.' At the end of their first volume (1899), the authors devote several pages to Australian rock-paintings, several of which they reproduce in colour.² In their opinion, a large proportion must be related to totemic worships, and we learn one detail of vital significance: that, in a great many instances, the figures are traced on walls of rock, in places rigorously tabooed to women, children, and non-initiated men. This is curiously analogous to a phenomenon observed in France—that the paintings are not at the entrance of the caves, where the light is comparatively strong, but are relegated to the dimmest recesses, at the end of long and hardly accessible corridors.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 179, fig. 29.

² *Ibid.* pp. 614 sq.

As soon as I gathered from the accounts of MM. Capitan and Breuil that the designs had been executed under such conditions, it seemed to me obvious that the fact at once excluded the 'pastime' theory, and established beyond doubt the religious and mystic character of the paintings. Unquestionably, there would be some rashness in postulating, for the cave-dwellers of the Reindeer Age, a totemic cult identical with that of the Aruntas of modern Australia; but, unless we are to renounce all attempt at an explanation, it is better to seek it among the hunter-tribes of to-day than among the agricultural populations of Gaul or historic France. Now, the representation of edible animals, to the total exclusion of the carnivorous species, would be simply and satisfactorily accounted for, if the troglodytes were approximately on the same religious plane as the Aruntas who were studied by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen. On that hypothesis, the object in view was the multiplication, by magic practices, of the game upon which the existence of the clan or tribe depended. To this end, ceremonies limited to the adult males were held in the remotest and obscurest parts of the cavern—holy ground which the profane were forbidden to tread. The paintings, perhaps executed by artificial light (though no traces of smoke have been found on the walls), could only be visible under the same conditions—unless the habit of living in darkness had developed in the men of that age an acuteness of sight distinctly superior to ours.¹ Those paintings were the

¹ In 1903 I ventured the suggestion that, by spending a considerable part of their lifetime in caves, the troglodytes might have acquired the faculty of seeing in the dark, in cases where a modern man would be incapable of distinguishing anything (*Chronique des Arts*, Feb. 7, 1903). Certainty, however, is impossible, without data as to the variability of the visual power in man, and those data I do not possess.

object of a cult, addressed not to the individual animals portrayed, but to the whole species, some occult power over which was supposed to be conferred by the mere representation of its individual members. If our cave-men resembled the Aruntas in their way of thinking, the rites which they celebrated in front of these effigies must have been destined to replenish the stock of the elephants, wild bulls, horses, and deer, which constituted their staple food. Beyond this there was the hope of decoying them into the vicinity of the cave—a hope founded on the principle of savage physics, which lays it down that a spirit or an animal can be forced to fix its habitation in the place where a counterfeit presentment of its body is to be found. Mr. Hirn has suggested the name *homocopathic magic* for the developments of this doctrine of the attraction of like to like—*similia similibus*.¹ Thus we should gain an absolutely complete explanation of the absence of carnivorous animals from the cave-paintings. If there are still country-folk who fear to name the wolf, lest the wolf should come, what must have been the troglodyte's dread of portraying the ravenous beasts which threatened impartially his own life and the life of the herbivorous creatures that gave him sustenance?

Is it possible that the same explanation would cover the animal pictures—engraved on stone, horn, and bone, or carved in high relief—which have been found in the caverns of the Reindeer Age? One isolated scholar—the obscure Bernardin—proposed, about the year 1876, to assume a connection between these figures and those of clans with totemic cults; but his theory woke no echo,

¹ Hirn, *Origins of Art*, p. 282.

and at the present day no reference to it is ever seen.¹ For the most part, modern authorities have agreed in regarding the sculptures and engravings of the Reindeer Age as the products of a genuinely artistic activity, subserved by qualities of observation and manual dexterity which the struggle for existence must have developed in primitive mankind.² It has even been claimed that the cave-dwellers, thanks to their herds of semi-domesticated reindeer, must have had both an assured livelihood and a certain amount of leisure, without which they would have found it impossible to give much time to that luxury of life—art. The elaborately ornamented objects which are called staffs of office have been successively identified as arms, instruments for straightening arrows, insignia of chieftaincy, parts of reindeer harness, hooks for fastening garments, and hunting trophies. This last hypothesis was the one I held in 1889;³ but, as I

¹ In an article of the *Revue Savoisienne* (Feb. 1876), Bernardin, who was the conservator of the Musée de Melle in Belgium, compared the genealogical staffs of the Maoris not only with the 'staffs of office,' but with the incised reindeer bones and antlers. 'The instruments called staffs of office are often marked with regular notches. Could not these have been intended to recall the chief's genealogy? On one side, there is usually the drawing of an animal. . . . This looks as though it might be a tribal badge. For instance, we should have a Trout tribe in Belgium, and tribes of the Wild Goat, Ram, and Beaver or Otter, in Savoy. So, *the North American Indians had animal figures for the symbols or totems of their tribes*' (l.l. p. 12). In 1878 Revon alluded to the theory (*La Haute-Savoie avant les Romains*, p. 13). If there has been any other notice of it, it lies outside my ken. Before coming upon these passages, I had written in the *Revue Archéologique* (1899, ii. p. 478), with reference to MM. Girod and Massénat's book: 'Personally, I have always insisted on the religious character of the staffs of office; and—Mortillet's opinion notwithstanding—I think we are fully justified in crediting the cave-men with a well-developed religious sense. Perhaps the animal pictures, which bulk so largely in their art, are evidence of some form of totemism.'

² E. Grosse, *Les débuts de l'art*, French edition, p. 151.

³ S. Reinach, *Alluvions et Cavernes*, p. 234.

had doubts, I added : ' It is impossible to say whether or not they were the object of superstitious practices ; there is nothing improbable in the supposition.' To-day it seems to me more than probable. We do not know—in all likelihood we never shall know—the part played by the staffs of office in magic ceremonial : some part, I firmly believe, they must have played. What is true of these staffs must also be true of other drawings and sculptured objects ; though it may well be that a few indistinct or incomplete specimens are simply prentice efforts, and were never used ritually. Among the carvings on bone collected by M. Piette there are several skinned animal-heads, which present a very difficult problem. Did the cave-dweller, like the modern artist, work from a skinless model, with an eye to the better learning of his trade ? This explanation is obviously inadmissible, and another must be sought. Now, when the wild horse, killed at a distance from the cave, was brought back by the hunters, it is probable they had already skinned it—perhaps dismembered it—on the spot where it fell : the flayed head was carried home as a trophy of victory. It was this that became the cynosure of all eyes, and was copied on bone or horn, to serve as the charm which should allure living horses to the cavern. To call that copy a work of art, in the modern sense of the term, is a clear anachronism : the prehistoric sculptor was not concerned with *pleasing*, but with *evoking*.

In fact, this idea of a mystic *evocation* by drawing or relief—the counterpart of *invocation* by the spoken word—is the germ from which the art of the Reindeer Age was developed. That art, then, was not, as the art of civilised peoples, a luxury or a pastime. It was the expression of a religion, rude enough but intensely

earnest—a religion built up of magic ceremonies and looking to a single end, the daily bread of its votaries. A drawing or carving of edible animals was as vital to the success of the huntsman or fisherman as his assegai or barbed harpoon. Like the Australians of to-day, these savages did not, and could not, ask more of religion than the satisfaction of their physical cravings. They were still in that phase of evolution where man has no gods, and interposes no higher power between himself and the operations of nature, because he believes that, within the limit of his own needs, he can directly dominate those operations, and subject them to his will either by violence or by magic.

If the preceding theories are correct, it is evident that the two rival schools of archæology have been equally in error—the one school, in holding that the cave-men had no form of religion whatever ; the other, in attributing to them a rudimentary sun-worship, with the appropriate symbols and amulets. The intellectual level of the troglodyte, to judge from that of the Aruntas, was too low either for a theology—an essential part of all modern religions—or for an astral cult, which is suited only to an agricultural population. The Aruntas believe that the sun is a woman who comes night by night to rest on the earth ;¹ but they neither represent it by a circle, nor offer prayers to it. Though the question is still obscure,² it would seem that the most backward primitive peoples look upon the heavenly bodies as animals or men, and only by slow degrees rise to any conception of their nature or their influence upon the world.

By a hackneyed figure of speech, we talk of the magic

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *op. cit.* p. 561.

² Cf. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, vol. i. pp. 122 sq.

of the brush or chisel, or of art in general. In the literal sense of a mystic constraint exercised by the will of man upon an alien will or an inanimate object, the phrase is no longer admissible ; but we have seen that time was when it was rigorously true—at least, in the artist's opinion. We should be guilty of gross exaggeration, if we claimed that magic was the only source of art, or shut our eyes to the part played by the instinct of imitation, the instinct of adornment, and the social necessity of expressing and communicating thought. Still, the discovery of the French and Spanish rock-paintings, which form a supplement to the sculptures and engravings found in the caverns, seems to show that the great artistic movement of the Reindeer Age was intimately connected with the development of magic, in much the same form as it retains among the hunting and fishing tribes of to-day.

CHAPTER IX

THE APOSTLES AMONG THE ANTHROPOPHAGI ¹

IN the year of grace 112 Caius Plinius Secundus, better known as Pliny the Younger, was the Roman governor of Bithynia—the north-western part of Asia Minor. He was hardly installed before his ears were stunned with the complaints of the local cattle-owners and dealers, whose business was affected by the waning demand for sacrificial animals. A new religious sect, called Christians, had multiplied to such an extent that the temples were losing their worshippers and seemed threatened with desertion.² Eighty years later, about 200 A.D., the African priest Tertullian could say that the Christians, though only dating from yesterday, had already filled the world—*hesterni sumus et vestra omnia implevimus*.³ The latter part of the phrase seems to savour of hyperbole, but is confirmed by Pliny's testimony. The dissemina-

¹ Address at the Musée Guimet, Jan. 17, 1904.

² This ingenious explanation of the motives which led Pliny to occupy himself with the Christians, and to draw Trajan's attention to them, is due, I believe, to Mr. Ramsay.

³ Tertull. *Apol.* xxxviii.: 'Moor, Marcoman, or Parthian,—whatever nation you will,—is it more populous than one which is bounded only by the universe? We are the children of yesterday, and already we fill everything, your towns, your islands, your boroughs; your municipalities, your comitia, your camps, your tribes; the palace, the senate, the forum. We leave you only your temples.'

tion of Christianity throughout the Roman world was extraordinarily rapid. At the beginning of the second century, its adherents were numerous enough to alarm the vested interests of paganism; at the end of the century, they believed themselves to be in the majority; another hundred years, and they were masters of the Empire.

How was this progress achieved? For the second half of the second century—a period in which Christian texts begin to be plentiful—an answer of sorts can be attempted; but with regard to the first, and decisive, century our ignorance is almost complete. Christ had twelve disciples, called Apostles, whom he commanded to preach his doctrine throughout the world. Now, of these twelve Apostles there are only two of whose lives we can give even the barest outline: St. Peter and St. John. To these, of course, we must add St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, whose calling was subsequent to the death of Christ, but who, thanks to his own Epistles and the Acts, is the most familiar figure of all. On the other hand, what do we know of Philip and Andrew, of Matthew and James, of Bartholomew and the five others? Nothing, save their ministry and their names.

Nor is our ignorance wholly due to the regrettable fact that the Christian literature of the second century has not come down to us in its entirety. Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, writing about the year 330, with one of the richest libraries of Asia at his disposal, knew little more than we. At the beginning of the third book of his 'History of the Church,' he remarks: 'The holy Apostles and disciples of our Saviour spread themselves through the length and breadth of earth. Thomas, as our fathers have taught us, received Parthia for his share, Andrew

Scythia, and John Asia.' Then, with reference to the missions of Peter and Paul, he adds: 'All this may be found in the third book of Origen's commentary on Genesis.' Now Origen, the great Christian scholar of Alexandria, lived from 185 to 254; and if it is from him that Eusebius has to borrow what meagre information he gives, there can be but one reason: he knew of no other source which appeared to him worthy of belief.

Eusebius was a scholar, and therefore resigned himself to his want of knowledge. But the unschooled and lowly—the people, in fact—were not so easily reconciled to this state of acquiescence; and in all countries where Christianity had gained a foothold during the second century a crop of legends sprang up to account for the local origins of the movement. A natural enough rivalry spurred the Churches to claim illustrious founders: and what founders more illustrious than those Apostles who had received the teachings of Christ direct from the sacred lips? But the Acts of the Apostles, which form the sequel to our Gospels, are practically confined to the doings of St. Paul and St. Peter: the devout, therefore, composed others in which justice was done to the rest of the Twelve. In the absence of all authentic evidence, the imagination had free play; and the result was a sort of competition in the miraculous. The Church watched the growth of these narratives with a certain mistrust, which was all the greater because their doctrine was often dubious; every sect, and sects were many from the very infancy of Christianity, had its own pious literature of Gospels, Acts, and Epistles—all saturated with the proper sectarian spirit. And yet the Church, after her victory over Paganism in the fourth century, forbore in the main to destroy the works which she could not approve; in any case

the task would have been enormously difficult, so wide was the circulation of these fabulous histories. Nothing was attempted beyond the elimination or expurgation of any flagrantly unorthodox passages which had been attributed to Christ or the Apostles: the stories themselves were considered inoffensive. Of these apostolic biographies, known as the 'Apocryphal Acts,' many specimens have survived in many languages—Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic. Hardly a year passes without new fragments being discovered; and not all we possess have yet been published. It is a curious, even instructive, bypath of literature. Needless to say, we learn nothing of what the disciples actually did and thought; but, at least, we gain some insight, both into the opinions prevalent upon the subject among the lower classes of the Christian communities, and into the singular mixture of piety and romance which beguiled the religious imagination of the fourth century.

So much by way of preface. I shall now give a summary of one of these narratives entitled 'The Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals.'¹ To throw its character into clearer light, I shall simply tell the tale, without interrupting its course by a commentary. Only at the end, I shall allow myself a few remarks in the hope of determining the origin and sources of this anonymous composition, which has come down to us in many manuscripts and several languages, even in an old Anglo-Saxon translation.

The Apostles, being gathered together in one place, drew lots to decide the country whither each should go

¹ There is a recent study of this apocryphal work by Dobschütz, *Deutsche Rundschau*, April 1902, pp. 87-107. My own memoir was written before I saw that of the German scholar.

and preach the Gospel. The country of the Cannibals fell to Matthias, who had been chosen to fill the place of Judas after the great betrayal. These Cannibals were a terrible people: they ate no bread and drank no wine, but fed upon the flesh and blood of men. When a stranger entered their town, they seized him, put out his eyes, and gave him to drink of a magic drug that destroyed his reason. The moment Matthias stepped within their gates, they laid hold of him, constrained him to drink the potion, blinded him, threw him into prison, and brought him grass to eat. But Matthias ate none, and in his tribulation prayed fervently to the Christ.

While he was yet praying in his prison, of a sudden he beheld a bright and shining light, and a voice issued from out of it, saying: 'Beloved, regain thy vision.' And immediately he could see. Then the voice exhorted him to take courage, and promised that he should be saved by the Apostle Andrew, who should come at the end of twenty-seven days and deliver him from the pains of captivity.

Matthias sat in his prison and sang. When the executioners entered, seeking the victims appointed for that day, Matthias shut his eyes, that they might think him still blind. To his right hand they had fastened a label,¹ inscribed with the date of his imprisonment: he was to wait, like a beast being fattened for the slaughter, until thirty days had been accomplished, after which he would be fetched, and slain, and carved limb from limb.

On the twenty-seventh day the Lord appeared to

¹ This label is called *τάβλα*—the same term which was applied to the name-plates affixed to the Egyptian mummies (Le Blant, *Rev. archéol.* 1874, i. p. 244).

Andrew and bade him set out with his disciples for the land of the Cannibals, that he might deliver Matthias : this he was to do within the term of three days. The Apostle answered that he was ready to go, but the land of the Anthropophagi was far distant, and it were better the Master should give this charge to an angel. ‘Obey,’ answered the Lord, ‘arise early, and get thee to the shore with thy disciples ; there thou wilt find a boat.’ And, after He had blessed Andrew, He ascended into heaven.

The morrow morning, at the first hour, Andrew and his disciples went to the seashore, and saw there a small boat in which were three men seated. ‘Whither go ye, brethren ?’ he asked them.—‘We go,’ answered the Pilot, ‘to the land of the Anthropophagi.’—‘And I, too,’ said Andrew.—‘But,’ said the Pilot, ‘all men avoid that land : why wilt thou go ?’—‘I have business there,’ answered Andrew, ‘and I would fain come on board with my comrades.’—‘Come, then,’ said the Pilot.—‘Before we come,’ replied Andrew, ‘it is fitting I should tell thee we have no money wherewith to pay our passage, nor so much as bread to eat.’—‘Why then think ye of embarking, and how will ye make the journey ?’ demanded the Pilot.—‘Listen, brother, we are the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who hath commanded us to go forth and preach, but hath forbidden us to take with us money or food, or even a change of raiment.¹ If thou wilt receive us as we are, tell us : if thou wilt not, we must search elsewhere.’—‘If that,’ said the Pilot, ‘be the order which ye have received and to which ye are obedient, I am most willing to take you on board—yea,

¹ Matt. x. 10 : ‘Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves : for the workman is worthy of his meat.’ Cf. Mark vi. 9.

far before those that give me gold and silver : for it is a joy to me to behold in my boat an apostle of the Lord.' Andrew thanked him and blessed him, and all went on board.

'Go into the hold and seek there three loaves of bread,' said the Pilot to one of the sailors ; 'our passengers must eat that they may bear the moving of the waves and the sea-sickness.'—'Brother,' said Andrew, 'may the Lord give thee to share in the bread of heaven !'—'If thou art in truth a disciple of Christ,' said the captain, 'tell thy followers of the miracles of thy Lord, that they may rejoice in heart and be no more afraid of the sea.' The boat had already left the shore ; and Andrew reminded his disciples, who were distraught and ill at ease, how one day, when he was on the Lake with Jesus, a great tempest had arisen, which the Master had quickly stilled. Then Andrew said a prayer, and asked that sleep should fall upon his disciples. Nor had he finished praying before they were wrapped in a deep slumber.

The boat sped like an arrow over an oily sea. 'How well thou steerest the bark !' said Andrew to the Pilot. 'I have been a sailor for sixteen years, nor have I yet seen skill like thine.'—'We, likewise,' answered the Pilot, 'have sailed far and run many dangers ; but since thou art a disciple of Jesus, behold, the sea knoweth thou art a just man, and therefore it remaineth calm.'—'I return Thee thanks, O Lord !' cried Andrew, 'that Thou hast caused me to fall in with one who doth glorify Thy name !'

'Tell me, disciple of Jesus, did not thy Master work other miracles than those of which men speak ?'—Andrew hesitated a while, and then consented to satisfy the curiosity of the Pilot. One day, accompanied by the twelve Apostles, Jesus entered a pagan temple, before

which were two Sphinxes. One of these He bade arise from its pedestal, go to the priests, and convince them of His divine mission. The Sphinx obeyed, and spoke with a human voice. Then said Jesus to the Sphinx : *Go thou to the Land of Canaan, even to the field of Mamre, and awaken in their sepulchres Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and bring them hither to the temple.* Again the Sphinx obeyed, and returned with the three Patriarchs. Then the Lord dismissed the Patriarchs, and ordered the Sphinx to take again its place by the temple-door. 'Many other miracles He wrought,' added Andrew, 'but were I to tell them all, thy patience would be overborne.'¹—'Not so,' answered the Pilot, 'for it is always pleasing to me to listen to edifying discourse.'

In the meantime, the boat was approaching the shore. The Pilot leaned his head on the shoulder of one of the sailors, and held his peace. Andrew, too, was silent and finally fell asleep. When he saw that he was sleeping, the Pilot said to his sailors : 'Put your hands under his body, and carry Andrew and his disciples to the walls of the city of the Anthropophagi ; then come again to me.' The sailors spread their wings, hidden till then, obeyed and returned. Then Jesus—for, as may be divined, the mysterious Pilot was none other than the Redeemer himself—ascended into heaven with His angels who had taken the form of sailors.

It is certainly a wonderful picture. If Benozzo Gozzoli or Memling had known the legend, what masterpieces it would have inspired !

¹ John xxi. 25 : 'And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.'

At daybreak Andrew awoke on land and found his disciples sleeping around him. 'Awake,' he said, 'and learn that we have been transported hither without our knowledge by the Lord, who humbled Himself under the guise of a sailor, and thereby put us to the test.' Then he prayed and supplicated the Lord to manifest Himself: and Jesus appeared as a child of wondrous beauty. Andrew craved His forgiveness because he had not known Him. 'Thou hast not sinned,' said Jesus, 'but thou didst doubt whether it were possible for thee to come in three days to the land of the Anthropophagi; and I have shown thee that to Me all things are possible. Now go to the prison where Matthias is, and deliver him, and also every stranger that is with him. Thou shalt be cruelly tormented, and thy blood shall gush out in torrents; but thou shalt not die, for it is ordained to the inhabitants of this city that they shall become believers.' And having so spoken, He ascended into heaven.

Andrew and his disciples arrived at the prison without being discovered. It was surrounded by seven guards. Andrew offered up a prayer, and on the instant they dropped down dead; he made the sign of the Cross on the door, and at once it swung open. They found Matthias seated in his cell singing hymns: they embraced one another; and so the promise of the Saviour to Matthias was accomplished before the thirtieth day. In the same prison were naked men and women eating grass—strangers whom the savages had bereft of sight and reason, and were now fattening for the shambles. Andrew restored their sight by touching their eyes, their reason by touching their breasts; and thus were two hundred and seventy men and forty-nine women delivered

by the Apostle. Andrew counselled them to leave the town and to sit under a large fig-tree, whose fruit, miraculously multiplied, would give them never-failing nourishment : then he caused a cloud to descend from heaven, which carried off Matthias and his disciples to a mountain where St. Peter awaited them. Himself, he remained alone in the town, and seeing a bronze pillar on which was a statue, sat behind it and watched what befell.

The executioners, having gone to the prison to look for victims, found the guards stretched out dead and all the cells empty. On this, they carried the tidings to the magistrates, whose hearts misgave them. 'Return to the prison,' they said to the executioners, 'and bring back the bodies of the guards, that we may eat them to-day. Then will we call together all the aged people and draw lots from among them in order that we may have seven to eat each day. That shall suffice us for a time ; meanwhile we will equip our vessels ; our young men shall set out on a foray and bring back prisoners that we may eat and be filled.'

The executioners did as they were told and began the task of cutting up the seven guards ; but suddenly their knives fell and their hands became as stone. 'Woe is us !' cried the magistrates, 'there is wizardry at work for our undoing ! But, quick ! gather together the gray-beards !' No sooner said than done. They found two hundred and seventeen old men, and the lot appointed seven to be eaten that day. One of them besought the executioners to spare him, and offered in his stead his own son and daughter. The magistrates agreed ; but the poor children wept piteously and begged that they might be allowed to grow up. None the less, they were haled to the place of sacrifice, where there was an oven to cook

the flesh and a basin to receive the blood. Then Andrew, who saw everything, unseen himself, prayed to the Lord. Again the knives fell from the hands of the doomsmen. 'Woe is us !' cried the magistrates, 'must we then perish from hunger ?'

As they were thus lamenting, the devil appeared to them in the guise of a little old man. 'Search the town,' he said to them, 'for a certain stranger by the name of Andrew, and put him to death : for it is he who has delivered your prisoners, and whose spells reduce you to famine.' But Andrew was invisible. They closed the gates, they ferreted everywhere, but in vain. Then the Lord appeared to Andrew and said : 'Arise now and show thyself to these men.' 'Here am I,' cried Andrew, 'it is I whom you seek.' In a twinkling the multitude ringed him round and began to deliberate what manner of death he should die. Killing was all too little : he must suffer—and suffer long. A man, into whom the devil had entered, advised them to bind a rope about his neck and to drag him through the highways and byways of the town, then, when he was dead, to eat him. The crowd shouted in approval, and at once the torture of Andrew began : the Apostle's flesh was horribly bruised by the stones, and the blood flowed from his body like water. But he could not die, and, when evening fell, he was thrown into the prison, with his hands tied behind him. The next morning they dragged him through the streets ; but, for all his torments, he never ceased praying to the Lord. 'Hit him on the mouth,' said the devil, 'and let him spare his breath.' The night came, and once more he was led back to prison. The devil, likewise, with seven others, repaired thither to insult him and to compass his death, but they were not able to draw

near to him : for the seal of the Lord was upon his forehead. The third day his torture began again, and again he was brought back at nightfall to his dungeon. He was weary and outworn, and covered with wounds : but the Lord appeared to him, took him by the hand, and completely restored his strength. Andrew arose, and perceived, in the middle of the prison, a pillar crowned with a statue of alabaster.—This, though the text is silent on the point, was probably one of those statue-fountains which discharged a stream of water—generally from the mouth. The type, which was very common in the Roman period, is represented by a host of examples in our museums.—Andrew ordered the statue to send forth water so copiously from its mouth that the impious inhabitants of the town should rue the day. The statue instantly obeyed, and began to vomit a very torrent of corrosive waters that ate into the flesh and flowed without a respite.

At daybreak the inhabitants saw their town was flooded, and began to flee in all directions, looking for a refuge elsewhere. Then Andrew prayed to the Lord : ‘ Forsake me not, O Lord, but send thine archangel Michael in a cloud, that he may draw a circle of fire around this city, so that none shall escape out of it.’ Immediately the town was girt by flames, and the water, rising to the necks of the people, kept eating into their flesh. ‘ Woe is us !’ they cried, ‘ all these calamities have fallen upon us because of the stranger in the prison ! Let us go and deliver him, else we shall perish, everyone.’

They ran to the prison, crying with might and main : ‘ God of the stranger, deliver us from this water !’ Andrew heard them, and, seeing their affliction, said to the statue : ‘ Stay thy flow of water, for I judge the

inhabitants of this town are desirous of espousing the true faith ; here will I build a church, and in that church I will place thee, in token of the service thou hast done me.' The statue then ceased to send forth water. The inhabitants came to the gates of the prison and humbly prayed the God of the stranger to have pity on their misfortune. Andrew left the prison and walked towards them : and as he walked the water withdrew from his feet. The entire multitude asked him mercy. Among those who thus supplicated him was the old man who had given over his son and daughter to the butchers. 'How darest thou ask my pity,' said Andrew, 'who knewest not pity for thine own children ? I say to thee, therefore, that when this water shall return into the abyss, thou shalt go with it, and with thee also the fourteen headsmen who were content to spill blood every day.' Then Andrew raised his eyes to heaven : the earth opened and swallowed up the water and with it the old man and the fourteen executioners.

'This man comes from God !' cried the savages, 'he will kill us all, he will make the fire to descend and consume us !'—'Be not afraid, my children,' answered Andrew, and he restored to life all the men, women, and children who had been destroyed by the flood. Then he drew up a plan for a church and caused it to be built : and he baptised every living soul, and preached the Gospel of Jesus. That done, he resolved to leave the town. In vain the people sought to keep him near them. 'I must go,' said Andrew, 'to find my disciples,' and he went his way, leaving his new converts in great sorrow that they had lost him so soon.

Thereupon, Jesus, in the form of a little child, appeared to Andrew. 'Why,' he said, 'couldst thou not tarry with

this people a few days? Their cries and tears have ascended to Me in heaven. Return to the town and abide there seven days until their hearts are confirmed in the faith. Thou shalt preach My Gospel, and shalt lead back to the light all them that are in the darkness of the pit.'

Andrew returned thanks to the Lord who thus made manifest his wish that every soul should be saved. He was welcomed in the town with ecstasies of joy, and remained there seven days, teaching and preaching the divine word. Then, when he again departed, all sped him on his journey, from the little children to the old men, saying: 'There is but one God, the God of Andrew, and but one Lord Jesus, to whom be glory and power forever. Amen!'

* * * * *

And now to clear up the geography of this strange tale.

In a sequel to it, which bears the title 'The Martyrdom of Saint Matthias, the Apostle,' the city of the Anthropophagi is called Myrne. Other authorities have it Myrmene or Myrmidona. All three, as Gutschmid recognised, are corruptions of *Myrmecion*, a town in the Tauric Chersonese—the modern Crimea. From Herodotus onward, the Greeks believed that several tribes of what is now Russia were anthropophagous.¹ Of course, cannibalism was utterly extinct in Scythia at

¹ Herodot. iv. 106: 'The Cannibals are in their customs the savagest people on earth, neither regarding justice nor observing any form of law. Nomads one and all, they wear a garb resembling the Scythic, but speak a language proper to themselves, and are the only people hereabout who relish human flesh.' For the anthropophagi of Scythia and Northern Europe, see Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 183.

the period to which the story is supposed to relate ; but it is hardly necessary to prove that the tale is founded on a sailors' legend which must have been centuries older. The point at which Andrew and his companions embarked was an Asiatic town on the shores of the Black Sea, probably Sinope. Even with a favourable wind, it would be impossible for a boat to cover the distance between Sinope and the Crimea in three days—whence Andrew's hesitation at the beginning of our narrative. If he made the journey in less than a day, it must be remembered that Christ was at the helm.

Shall we say that the legend had birth in the Crimea, in some town where a church, containing an alabaster statue, was under the patronage of the apostle Andrew, and supposed to have been founded by him ? Undoubtedly, the legend would have been popular in a locality of that type, but it is hardly possible that it originated there. As a matter of fact, in the story which Andrew tells Jesus in the boat, mention is made of a temple guarded by sphinxes. The only country where such a detail would have been universally intelligible is Egypt.¹ Now, after the Ptolemaic period, the Egyptians were the great sea-carriers of the world ; and, earlier still, the Phœnicians in the maritime service of Egypt must have introduced into their adopted country a thousand of those marvellous tales, beloved of all that have gone down to the sea in ships since the days of Ulysses.

I conclude, then, that the legend of Andrew is based

¹ It is only fair, however, to mention the palace surrounded by sphinxes and griffins, which, according to Herodotus (iv. 79), was built by the Scythian king Scyles. Suvaroff claimed to have discovered a sphinx's head on the Kuban (Olenine, *Tour in Taurida*, London, 1802, p. 413). Cf. Ritter, *Vorhalle*, p. 226.

on nothing more than a romance spun by sailors who were familiar with the cannibal-haunted shores of the Black Sea, and that similar effusions—devoid as yet of any Christian element—must have had their vogue around the docks of Alexandria.¹

Of all the nations that adopted Christianity, the Egyptians had the oldest collection of written tales. Not to mention those garnered by Herodotus, we have an appreciable number of others—translated by M. Maspero—in which we can recognise many a feature of those folk-stories which have never ceased to win their way in the world. Some of them are certainly earlier than the year 1400 B.C.

Here there is an important observation to be made. One of the most curious episodes in the history of Andrew and Matthias is that of the unfortunates who have their senses drowned by a magic drug, are transformed into brutes, and remain for thirty days eating grass, until they are fit meat for their cannibal masters: Matthias himself is careful not to touch what is offered him. Now, this episode recurs in the third voyage extraordinary of Sindbad the Sailor, which is included in the Arabian collection of the Thousand and One Nights.²

Sindbad and his companions are shipwrecked upon an island peopled by black savages, perfectly naked. 'Without saying a word,' Sindbad proceeds, 'they took possession of us and made us enter a great room, where

¹ M. l'abbé Lejay has pointed out to me the likeness between the story of Andrew and that of Circe in the *Odyssey*. It is possible to suppose that there was a grosser form of the latter legend, in which Circe fattened up the men whom she had changed into animals, so as to be able to eat them at her leisure.

² Mardrus' translation, vol. vi. p. 137. Gutschmid has already drawn attention to the parallel.

we found a king seated upon a lofty chair. The king ordered us to sit down, and they brought us dishes filled with food such as in our whole lives we had never seen. The sight of the food did not in the least excite my appetite, as it did that of my shipmates—who ate like gluttons. As for me, my abstinence saved my life. With the very first mouthfuls, a ravenous hunger laid hold of my comrades, and for hours they swallowed whatever was brought them, gesticulating like madmen and snuffing like animals. Whilst they were in this condition, the blackamoors fetched a vase filled with a sort of ointment, with which they rubbed their bodies all over. Its effect upon their stomachs was extraordinary : they swelled in every direction, until they were bigger than a distended water-skin ; and their hunger increased in proportion. I persisted in my refusal to eat the food, nor would I allow them to rub me with the ointment. And truly my restraint was wise : for I discovered that these men were eaters of human flesh and used these various means to fatten such as fell into their hands. I soon noticed a considerable diminution of my companions' intelligence, in direct proportion to the growth of their stomachs. They ended by being completely brutalised, and when they were sunk to the level of beasts in the slaughter-house, they were confided to the care of a shepherd who led them daily to graze in a meadow.'

This parallelism puts the common ground of the two stories beyond dispute : in both, human victims are reduced by their executioners to the condition of grass-eating ruminants. The analogy must be more than coincidence—the same fore-castle yarn inspired the twin episodes in the Acts of the Apostle Andrew and in the Third Voyage of Sindbad.

If we are to believe a goodly number of critics, the nucleus of the Thousand and One Nights is of Hindoo origin. Since Benfey, a numerous school of folklorists has sought to establish India as the starting-point of the popular stories which crop up in all three divisions of the ancient world and bear, on a close investigation, so startling a family-likeness. The theory arose in the days when it was heresy to doubt the high antiquity of Indian civilisation—days when many believed that India was the mother of the nationalities and languages of a part of Asia and Europe. The contrary has been proved to demonstration within the last thirty years, but the old prejudice still survives. But whatever antiquity we may be disposed to attribute to the civilisations of Europe, it is certain that the civilisation of Egypt is still more ancient, and that we possess Egyptian stories of far earlier date than those of Brahminic India. More, we know that India, until a comparatively recent era, had neither shipping nor commerce ; whereas Egypt, in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, exported to India metals, wines, and manufactured articles, and brought back in return the products of the soil. It is more natural to ascribe the diffusion of stories to a commercial country than to one where an export trade was non-existent. Everything, therefore, seems to indicate that Egypt was the great story-teller of the world—that the Indian tales are of Egyptian origin—and that the case is the same with the groundwork of the ever-charming Arabian Nights.

Thus, by two different trains of reasoning we arrive at the same conclusion. The legend of Matthias and Andrew is of Egyptian origin, because we find in it features peculiar to Egypt ; and it is of Egyptian origin,

because it contains elements in common with a story of the Thousand and One Nights, which would seem to be derived from an Egyptian sailor's tale.

I could round off my demonstration by showing the important part played by Egypt in the constitution of the great cycle of legends which surround the first centuries of Christianity, but that would lead me too far. My main object has been to present to you one specimen of a literature which was once popular, is now forgotten, but can never be ignored by the student of religion. If I have inspired you with the desire to read any of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, either in the Greek edition of Lipsius and Bonnet, or in the convenient English translation published by Walker at Edinburgh in 1890, I shall consider that this hour of your time and mine has not been ill spent.

CHAPTER X

THE BABYLONIAN MYTHS AND THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS¹

THE problem of the origin of the world and man, to which anthropology, geology, and the kindred sciences are now systematically seeking a clue, confronted humanity the moment it became self-conscious. Cosmogonies—simple and poetic attempts at reading the riddle—have had their day among most nations, though only a feeble remnant has been handed down to us in written or verbal tradition. The study of cosmogonies, their sources, their borrowings and lendings in the course of the ages, is consequently a chapter of science, and by no means the least interesting one. Hebrew cosmogony, in particular, with the ascendancy which it has contrived to establish over nearly all the white races, has a distinct title to the anthropologist's attention. In fact, by the enormous influence which it has exercised on the development of the science, it is now part and parcel of the history of anthropology. The vicissitudes of that influence—retarding in certain respects, stimulating in others—have recently been outlined by Andrew White in several chapters of his invaluable

¹ *L'Anthropologie*, 1901, pp. 683-688.

work, 'A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology.'¹

It is common knowledge that the Biblical cosmogony comprises two documents of different date, known respectively as Jehovistic and Elohist, because the Almighty is called *Jehovah* (Jahveh) in one and *Elohim*—a plural form—in the other. These documents were not so much fused as juxtaposed by an anonymous editor, writing certainly after the destruction of the kingdoms Israel and Judah by the Assyrians, possibly after the return from the Captivity in 536 B.C. Of late years it has been found feasible to distinguish the two versions and publish them separately, showing that each forms a continuous legend, totally irreconcilable with the other.² For instance, by the Elohist's account, man and woman were created together; according to the Jehovist man was created first, and later God gave him a companion. The Elohist has no mention of the Garden of Eden, nor of the Original Sin,—two features of prime importance in the Jehovist version. The facts are notorious, and it is needless to insist on them here. In a word—Geneses, not Genesis, is the correct term. The juxtaposition, in our Bible, of the Elohist and Jehovist versions has given rise to a mass of difficulties and flagrant contradictions which vanish on the instant if we admit the existence of two distinct traditions.

It has also been known since 1875—thanks to the English Assyriologist George Smith—that poetical narratives, remarkably like the legends of the Hebrew Geneses, were current in Assyria and Babylonia as early as the second millennium before our era. Long fragments of

¹ London, 1897, vol. i. pp. 1, 209, 266, 284, 303.

² See Lenormant, *Les origines de l'histoire*, vol. i. pp. 1 *sqq.*

these narratives, belonging to a pair of epics, 'The Creation' and 'Gilgames,' have been deciphered from tablets found at Nineveh. The first translations proposed were inadequate; but little by little, owing in a measure to the combined efforts of a generation of Orientalists, and in a measure to the discovery of new fragments, we have arrived at a sufficiently accurate idea of the old Babylonian cosmogonies. It goes without saying that their often startling resemblance to the Biblical legends has never been lost sight of. It constitutes the main theme of a book by M. l'abbé Loisy, who comes to his subject with the double authority of an Orientalist and an historian.¹ We cannot do better than leave him to speak for himself.

'The relation between Chaldæan and Jewish traditions is not so simple as it seemed to be in the days when the Biblical legends were supposed to be derived entirely and directly from the religious literature of the Chaldæans. We can no longer take the first eleven or twelve chapters of Genesis as a whole and treat them as a monotheistic redaction of the Babylonian myths' (p. 7). . . . 'The Biblical accounts are not mere transcriptions. The Chaldæan legends unquestionably supplied much of the material for the Biblical legends, but the gaps between them presuppose much assimilation and transformation, much time, and probably many intermediaries to boot' (p. 10). . . . 'If the relationship of the Biblical narratives to the Chaldæan legends is in many respects less intimate than was thought, it now appears to be more general. The Creation, and the Flood in particular, are still the most obvious points of resemblance; but the

¹ A. Loisy, *Les mythes babyloniens et les premiers chapitres de la Genèse*, Paris, Picard, 1901.

story of Adam and Eve, the earthly Paradise, the food of life, the explanation of death,—all of which have sometimes been sought where they were not to be found,—are now found where there was no thought of seeking them' (p. 11). . . . 'The Biblical texts have no literary dependence upon the Babylonian texts ;, they do not even stand to them in a relation of direct dependence in the case of the special traditions they exhibit : but they rest on a similar—we might say a common—foundation, of Chaldæan origin, whose antiquity cannot be even approximately estimated. . . . On the other hand, it appears certain that the period of Assyrian dominance, and the Captivity, quickened the recollection of the old traditions and supplemented them by fresh materials easy to graft on the ancient stem' (p. 101). . . . 'The transformation of the Chaldæan into the Jewish legends was not the work of one or two men, but of many men and many generations. And, without entirely setting aside the influence exerted by written documents, we may well believe that the metamorphosis was complete in the oral tradition of the people before the legend was embodied in the Biblical narrative' (p. 171). . . . 'It would be a mistake to interpret this community of legendary material as a sign of Israel's inferiority. Free exchange has always been the rule in mythology. Its tales are the output of anonymous ingenuity ; and their value, for the most part, lies in the meaning attached to them by the borrower' (p. 10). . . . 'In the Jewish tradition, neither the mythological nor the poetic form has been preserved. The epic poem reverts, and becomes a story in prose again ; but the story takes on a moral cast in order to adjust itself to the character of the one God' (p. 12). . . . 'Israel exploited these reminiscences in the interests of a highly

moral cult of uncompromising principles. Instead of crystallising into a definitive form retaining the spirit and distinctive features of their original version, the old traditions were incorporated piecemeal, and left unassimilated, in a compilation destined to regulate faith and conduct. The Israelitish legend was submerged in the Law' (p. 211).

The abbé formulates his conclusions with the clearness and elegance which might be expected from a writer of his distinction, though they are a poor substitute for the detailed arguments by which he supports them. Still, they serve to convey some idea of their own importance and the place which they are destined to take in the historic and exegetic science of our day. The path had already been prepared—especially since 1890—by the profound researches of Messrs. Jensen, Jeremias, Gunkel, Jastrow, &c. In his critical summary of their results, M. Loisy lays no claim to originality. However, he has at least the honour of giving the first French account of one of the most interesting chapters in the history of ideas together with the consequences which it implies.

As the creation of cosmogonies answers to a need of the human mind—that of knowing the why and wherefore of the world—it is natural to suppose that at first they existed in large numbers, which were only gradually reduced by a process of selection. We may therefore conjecture that the tribes whose union constituted the Jewish people admitted other systems of cosmogony than those preserved in the pages of Genesis. Now—and this is a recent discovery of capital importance—there are in the Bible, if not in Genesis, undoubted traces of a third cosmogony, eliminated by the editors of the

Pentateuch, but mentioned by the Prophets, the authors of the Psalms, and the writer of the Book of Job, as though it were a perfectly familiar conception. With that conception we are now well acquainted through the Babylonian texts. Here we have a fresh instance of a very old belief common to the ancestors of the Chaldæans and Jews of the first millennium before Christ,—a belief which held its ground in Chaldæa but left only sporadic traces in the religious literature of the Hebrews.

When the high priest Joad says, in 'Athalie':

'He that can curb the fury of the wave,
When treachery lifts her head, is strong to save,'

the allusion is to certain well-known passages of Scripture *which preserve an echo of the struggle of the Almighty against the great deep*. These passages are made sun-clear by the Chaldæan history of the god Marduk, who, before creating or organising the world, had to gain the victory over Chaos and the unchained waters of Ocean. With Marduk, 'the gods are masters of the situation—free to arrange the world according to their will. Chaos is conquered, Tiamat has fallen. Their auxiliaries are reduced to captivity, condemned to eternal chains' (p. 30). . . . 'Even after Marduk has pierced her heart and cloven her head; after he has cut her body asunder; after half her carcass has become the firmament, and half the earth; Tiamat still lives and is still to be dreaded. Marduk alone can hold her in check, and prevent her from devouring men and oversetting the world.' For 'Tiamat is the ever living, ever menacing, sea; the power of God the Creator is always necessary to tame her frenzy, and Marduk never ceases to redeem the world from chaos by his triumph over Tiamat' (p. 86).

Now, if in Genesis the idea of a preliminary struggle

before the final creation has entirely disappeared, and the Creator is master from the beginning, yet the Chaldaean conception of chaos resisting the demiurge 'survived in Jewish legend and took as it were a new lease of life in the apocalyptic tradition' (p. 99). The following are some of the texts which verify the foregoing statements and prove that, in a forgotten but once popular cosmogony, the God of Jewry was considered, not as the author but as the conqueror of the elements, which are sometimes personified under the names of Rahab and Leviathan—sea monsters of the same family as Tiamat.

Job ix. 13 : ¹

'God returneth not from his anger ;
Before him bow down the auxiliaries of Rahab.
In his power he holdeth the sea in check,
In his wisdom he whelmeth Rahab.
At his breath the heavens are brightened ;
His hand pierceth the fleeing serpent.'

Job vii. 12 (Job *loquitur*) :

'Am I the sea or a monster of the waters,
That thou settest a barrier against me ?'

Job xxxviii. 8-14 (Jahveh *loquitur*) :

'Who shut up the sea with doors
When it burst forth from its mother's womb . . .
When I traced its frontiers
And set doors and bars for it :
Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther ;
Here shall thy proud waves be stayed.'

Isaiah li. 9-10 (the prophet invokes the arm of Jahveh) :

'Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab,
And wounded the dragon ?
Art thou not it which hath dried the sea,
The waters of the great deep ?'

¹ We reproduce M. Loisy's literal translations.

Psalm lxxxix. :

‘For who in Heaven is comparable with Jahveh,
For who is like unto Jahveh among the sons of the gods ?
It is thou who rulest the pride of the sea,
And who stillest the fury of its billows,
It is thou who hast trampled upon Rahab as upon one
slain ;
Thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.’

Ezekiel (xxxii. 2-8) ‘announces the punishment of the King of Egypt, by recalling the history of the dragon of the waters who was hewn in pieces by the Creator. He compares Pharaoh to a sea monster over whom Jahveh casts his net, as Marduk had done over Tiamat’ (p. 87).

Again, ‘Jeremiah, in one of his oldest oracles (iv. 23-26), draws his inspiration from a description of chaos, when he wishes to intimate the effects of the divine wrath. He represents the sea as curbed and quelled by Jahveh (v. 22). Amos (ix. 3) speaks of the monstrous serpent that dwells at the bottom of the sea’ (p. 110). This monster of chaos reappears in Christian literature : ‘It is identified with Satan, and becomes the apocalyptic dragon whose final destruction shall assure the triumph of the Saints. The combat between Michael and the dragon in the Johannine Apocalypse (xii. 7-9) is the sequel of the combat between Jahveh and Rahab’ (p. 39).

Thus, by the simple comparison of Assyrian and Biblical texts, we have a flood of light thrown upon a conception which classic fable re-echoes in the legend of the war between Gods and Titans.

This restitution of a third cosmogony, foreign to Genesis and held by the prophets of Israel, forms the most interesting part of M. Loisy’s work. But those—and we hope they will be many—who take the trouble to read it, will find it full of pregnant suggestions, coupled

with refutations, as discreet as they are firm, of recent or inveterate errors. We may quote a few examples.

To the apologists who try to reconcile the modern idea of evolution with Genesis, the abbé answers (p. 56) : ' There is not the slightest trace of evolution to be seen in the narrative, all things being struck off in their present forms by great successive batches—if the expression is allowable.'¹

Those, again, who explain the use of an embarrassing plural in Genesis by quoting different hypotheses which go back to the Fathers of the Church,² may be referred to the following judgment : ' The plural *Let us make man* is not a plural of majesty ; it is rather the indication of an older source in which the Creator was not alone but spoke to those around him.³ The narrator has kept a grammatical form, the sense of which was clearer in a context that has not survived ' (p. 57).

The abbé has also a succinct answer for those who assign both a great antiquity and a peculiar moral value to the Hebrew tradition of the Deluge : ' The Jehovist version of the Deluge is older '—than Alexander the Great —' but cannot go very far back, as the first stratum of Jehovist tradition has no mention of the Flood. It is also noticeable that the earliest Hebrew writer who alludes to it is the second Isaiah ' (p. 169). . . . ' Granting that the legend of a universal deluge is in itself a myth and

¹ Neither is there any question of evolution in the Babylonian myths, though Renan has spoken of their authors as ' the unknown Darwins.'

² Cf. Vigouroux, *Dictionn. de la Bible*, vol. i. p. 171.

³ That is to say an account of the creation in which *the gods* acted in concert. One of the orthodox explanations of the passage came unwittingly very near the truth : God the Father, at the moment of creating man, would have consulted the two other persons of the Trinity.

cannot be anything else, it is not the form that seems the least marvellous which is most likely to be the oldest, but the one that is the most nakedly and unreservedly mythological' (p. 169). 'The idea of a universal deluge is mythological *per se*, and without relation to any moral conception whatever. Indeed, we are forced to confess that the intervention of morality is responsible for a contradiction which stands out in the Biblical accounts. It was found necessary to explain why God no longer sends His floods upon the earth, though man is no better than of old :—and the explanation involves a tacit admission that the punishment was equally exaggerated and useless' (p. 136).

If we have multiplied textual quotations in this article, the reason is that it is difficult, impossible indeed, to touch with greater tact than M. l'abbé Loisy upon questions which even anthropologists agree in regarding as distinctly delicate,—perhaps only because no one has yet known how to trace a rational limit between the domain of conscience and that of historic science. The work of demarcation has become imperative : for the old landmarks by which medievalism robbed history of half her heritage are now worm-eaten and level with the ground.¹

¹ M. Georges Fonsegrive, after many others, has recently made the same claim in the *Quinzaine* : 'We ask that we shall not have something imposed on us to-day which will be rejected to-morrow by the very people who imposed it—as has happened in the case of the Deluge. All we desire is to follow the theologians quietly, but we should like to be told clearly what are the points on which doubt is legitimate.' Personally, I do not follow M. Fonsegrive's allusion to the Deluge, as I am unaware that 'the theologians' have ever removed belief in the Flood from the articles of faith.

CHAPTER XI

THE HEBRAIC SABBATH ¹

MR. JASTROW'S work on the Sabbath² deserves to be generally known, but the special character of the review in which it appeared seems likely to condemn it to obscurity. The author, a distinguished Orientalist, definitively refutes the absurd belief which attributes to 'Moses' the institution of a day of obligatory rest designed to safeguard the Hebrew against overwork.³ If the Sabbath—now changed to Sunday⁴—has, in the course of centuries, become such a day of rest, it simply proves that when a superstition allies itself with motives of social utility or hygiene, it stands, and often rightly, an excellent chance of longevity. But originally the seventh day of rest was only a gross superstition absolutely similar to that which, on the thirteenth of every month, lightens the labour of the railways and the steamboat companies. The Sabbath, like the thirteenth, was at first

¹ *L'Anthropologie*, 1900, pp. 472-474. I have retouched the article.

² Morris Jastrow, *The Original Character of the Biblical Sabbath*. From the *American Journal of Theology*, vol. ii. no. 2, pp. 312-352.

³ Overwork might exist among industrial populations like our own, but not among pastoral or agricultural tribes.

⁴ Sunday was celebrated from the beginning of the second century as the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, κυριακή (*Didache*, xiv. 1). Cf. Hotham, art. 'Lord's Day' in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, p. 1042.

an unlucky day—a day when nothing should be undertaken, because the gods were in an ungracious mood. Mr. Jastrow might have found another proof of his thesis in the ‘Works and Days’ of Hesiod, a veritable storehouse of taboos.¹ After enumerating the propitious and the unpropitious days, those on which work might be begun, and those on which it were better to abstain, he adds (v. 825): ‘At whiles a day is a stepmother to a man, at whiles a mother.’ And the Bœotian poet knows why certain days are dangerous: ‘Avoid the fifth of every month, for it is a dark and dreadful day, and men say that upon it the Furies walk the earth . . .’ (802–803). Thus Hesiod already knew that, in the farmer’s case, the day of rest was an unlucky, a *haunted* day: and if the fact has so long been forgotten by the moderns, it does something less than honour to their critical faculty. Moreover, the Greeks and Romans believed that the Jewish Sabbath was essentially a day of sadness: they have even left it on record that it was a day of fasting,² an exaggeration due to the fact that the Bible forbade all cooking on Saturdays. Food had to be prepared the day before, and the custom is still faithfully observed by countless mothers in Israel.

There were even sticklers for the letter of the Law who prescribed complete immobility on the Sabbath day. We have it on Origen’s word that Dositheus, a contemporary of Jesus, and the head of a Samaritan sect with ascetic tendencies, considered himself justified by a passage of Exodus (xvi. 29) in ordering his disciples to keep for the whole Sabbath the exact position in which they might

¹ Cf. E. E. Sikes, *Folklore in the Works and Days of Hesiod* (*Classical Review*, 1893, vol. vii. pp. 389–394).

² See the texts in Th. Reinach’s collection, *Fontes rerum iudaicarum*, vol. i. pp. 104, 243, 266, 287.

happen to be at its beginning. Immobility is obviously the condition least likely to provoke the attacks of malevolent genii ; an animal, when it feels itself threatened and sees no other way of escape, *feigns death*. Dositheus can hardly have invented the precept which Origen attributes to him, but in all probability merely revived an old taboo which had dragged out an obscure existence in a few devout circles.

It may be urged in favour of the social and moral character of the primitive Sabbath, that the Mosaic law enjoined rest, not only for the master, but for his servants and domestic animals (Exodus xx. 10). Times without number this text has done duty in proving that Moses was inspired by the sentiments of a modern philanthropist, even to the extent of feeling pity for animals.¹ Pius IX judged more sanely, when, asked by an English society to join a league for the protection of animals, he answered that he found no scriptural warrant for any such step. If a man must dispense with the work of his servant and his beast of burden on the Sabbath day, the simple reason is that it is an unlucky day and that work done then will be either useless or worse : there is always the risk of injury to man and beast, sickness, and so forth. Fear was the motive power of human action long before charity.²

¹ I must plead guilty to publishing equally sorry stuff in the *Revue Scientifique*, 1888, ii. p. 67 (*la Charité juive*). Neither M. Ch. Richet—who answered my article—nor M. Gust le Bon—whose opinions I had arraigned in it—saw how to unmask its folly : we were three ignorant people crying in the night. All this was not a hundred years ago, but a glance through my earlier production will show what progress science has made in the interval, thanks to the introduction into her vocabulary of a word unknown to Renan—*taboo*.

² I am far from claiming that there is no morality, in the highest sense of the word, in the so-called Mosaic Code ; its originality and grandeur lie precisely in the fact that the moral idea may be seen disengaging itself from primitive taboos. But that idea must not be sought where it does not exist, at the hazard of first putting it there, and then finding it afterwards.

The following is Mr. Jastrow's argument, which he draws entirely from Semitic sources, without tapping those of folklore and comparative psychology.

The idea of propitiating the divinity plays a great part in Hebrew and Babylonian rites. Both distinguish certain days on which measures should be taken, either to ensure the goodwill of the gods, or to disarm or prevent their anger. One of the motives which guided the choice of those days was the succession of the phases of the moon. Even now the countryman believes that the day of the moon's new quarter is critical, and ushers in a period of good or bad weather. This venerable superstition explains why the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of the lunar month were considered perilous; in other words, of unfavourable, or at least, uncertain, augury.—When in doubt do nothing, says the old proverb.—These days the Babylonians called *sabattu* or *sapattu*, a word said to correspond to the Hebrew *shabbâthôn*, in the sense of *cessation* (of the divine wrath?), *pacification*, and thence *rest*.¹ The old Hebrew Sabbath was marked by expiatory rites, meant to disarm or conciliate the deity: it was then celebrated every seven days and coincided with the phases of the moon. Much later, the prescription of rest, which had been merely secondary and accessory in the primitive Sabbath, became its very essence, and was justified by the legend of God's rest on the seventh day. Again, at the time of the Prophets, the Hebrews were intent upon differentiating their rites from

¹ The proof has not yet been given that the days called *sabattu* by the Babylonians were the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th of the month. On the other hand, M. Pinches has recently published a text which would seem to show that the fifteenth day of the month, that of full moon, was *sapattu* (cf. E. Schürer, *Zeitschrift für neustamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1905, p. 14).

those of the Babylonians, though both sprang from a single source. The custom gained ground of celebrating the Sabbath every seven days without respect to the day of the month, and an attempt—never entirely successful—was made to obliterate its gloomy and anxious character. The plan seems clearly indicated in two verses of Isaiah (lviii. 13-14): 'If thou . . . call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.' The recommendation to turn the Sabbath into a day of happiness or joy has its counterpart in modern custom, which attributes the same cheerful character to the New Year—whereas in primitive Semitic civilisations it was eminently a *critical* day, reserved for propitiatory ceremonies.

Mr. Jastrow seems to me less happy in his attempt to explain God's rest on the seventh day by a comparison with the Babylonian myths of the creation. To all appearances, the tradition may be satisfactorily explained as the reflection of an old ritual, enjoining rest upon the Sabbath, and a childish attempt to explain that ritual by a legend. Without rejecting this simple solution, Mr. Jastrow observes that, in the Babylonian Genesis, the god Marduk fights and overcomes Tiamât and the genii of the storm; after which his anger is appeased, for the enemies of the cosmic order are vanquished, as the Titans were vanquished by Jupiter. In the beginning, then, God's rest, in the Biblical Genesis, would have been the placation of the divine wrath, after it had issued victorious from the fiery struggle against the unchained elements of Chaos.¹

¹ A profound study on the origin of the week and the adoption of a cycle of seven days in the ancient world has been published by E. Schürer, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1905, pp. 1-71.

CHAPTER XII

THE SENTIMENT OF MODESTY

IN the eighteenth century, when those inquiring spirits debated the origin of modesty in Madame d'Épinay's salon,¹ the modern historical method of approaching these questions was still, to all intents and purposes, undiscovered. *A fortiori*, the same is true of St. Augustine's time, and on no subject has a stranger farrago been written. I speak from experience—for there was a time when I studied it myself, and even contemplated a substantial volume. Those were the days when—fed on Kant, Greek, and Latin—I had no suspicion that such a thing as ethnical psychology existed. I had framed a theory of my own, which owed much to St. Augustine ; and here

¹ I give the passage from Madame's *Mémoires* : ' *The Prince* : But how did people come to fight shy of an action which is at once so natural, so necessary, and so general ?—*Saint-Lambert* : And so pleasant !—*Duclos* : Because desire is a sort of taking possession. A passionate man must always monopolise a woman : just as a dog who has snatched a bone carries it in his mouth until he can devour it in a corner, and, while he is devouring it, keeps turning his head and growling for fear anyone should take it from him. *Jealousy is the seed of modesty.*' Others, in the eighteenth century, regarded modesty as coquetry in a mask ; others, again, saw in it—with Parry—

' That happy art of hiding ugliness

Which wears the magic title *Chastity.*'

These amorous futilities seem rather out of date to a reader of Lubbock and Frazer.

is the summary I made *ne varietur*: 'The narrative of *Génésis*, a reflection of old Chaldæan traditions, is full of obscurity with regard to the circumstances of the Fall, but has clearly shown its consequences: namely, the birth of the sentiment of modesty. This sentiment implies a whole system of metaphysics and morals. Modesty is the stigma of the first fall—a mark pointing as clearly to extra-temporal sin¹ as did the hoof prints of the horses of Castor and Pollux on the rocks of Lake Regillus to the intervention of the Dioscuri in the victory of Roman freedom. Modesty is the eternal curse uttered by the higher against the lower, by the conscious against the unconscious,—a cry of shame from a soul that is not free, and feels herself responsible for the senses over which she rules.'

I apologise for resuscitating a page which I thought very beautiful when I wrote it at the age of twenty; though I am thankful to say I did not publish it. After all, it is not much more absurd than Schopenhauer's famous definition of modesty: 'The shame and remorse inseparable from the acts and organs which perpetuate life and human suffering on the earth.' All these ideas are false because they are *a priori* and ignore the evolution of morals and the historical development of humanity. Outside history there is no salvation!

In 1880 I had a young friend of some note (one of the philosophic lights of the nineteenth century, in fact)—poor Guyau, who wrote '*L'irréligion de l'avenir*.' I sent him my dissertation, and I should like, at this point, to quote a few lines from the long reply with which he honoured me: 'Going to the root of the question, I cannot agree with your theory of modesty. You seem

¹ An old idea revived by Kant and Schopenhauer.

to attach supreme importance to this virtue, which you consider the highest of all. To my thinking, it is immeasurably inferior to love. *Modesty is simply a species of armour, indicative of war between the sexes ; its end in nature is to prevent a blind promiscuity.* But to use it as a means of damning love is a great mistake. . . . If matter—in other words, the body—is what divides souls, then, in spite of the seeming paradox, we may define love as that state in which the body shrinks into insignificance and the barriers fade away between soul and soul. You are a materialist without knowing it!’ . . . Thus Guyau himself, in his search for a theory of modesty, took the sentiment as it exists to-day. Like his guileless correspondent he never dreamt of asking himself, what prehistoric phantom, what terror of the superstitious savage, gave it birth.

Less philosophic than Guyau, but more inclined to the historical method (he was a highly gifted journalist and a great traveller), Gabriel Charmes wrote to me from Cairo about the same time : ‘ I should not attach so much importance to modesty as you. It seems a very bold proceeding to build up a whole system of philosophy on so dubious a sentiment. Renan somewhere calls modesty “ a charming equivocation.” Equivocation or no, it is far too artificial a thing to have to be explained by a blank denial of the deepest instincts of our nature. I very much doubt if it existed when the first communities were formed ; and even yet there are surroundings and countries in which I can detect no trace of it. Did the old Egyptians experience the feeling ? One would hardly think so, to look at their monuments and see the absolute unconsciousness with which their bare-bosomed women went about in clinging transparent dresses that revealed

the minutest bodily details. To-day, even, the Fellahin live crowded together in the starkest nakedness, quite regardless of differences of sex. True, some of the women veil their faces when they see a stranger; but this is virtually confined to the towns, where civilisation has ousted nature. I do not believe that modesty is a protection of the weaker sex against the natural human instinct. I believe that, originally, it was a case of man's tyranny imposing a more or less thorough-going reserve on woman—simply because his sense of proprietorship could not bear that what had been his should lie exposed to the covetousness of a rival. Later, this masculine demand became a rooted womanly instinct, thanks to the progress of morality and the refining influences of love. But the "equivocation" is soon dissipated by a sojourn among absolutely primitive—or even partially civilised—races. One of the things that have struck me most, since I came to the East, is the remarkable freedom of word and action which you can use to women of the world in these undeveloped countries. In appearance they are much the same as Western women; but talk with them and you find that the very warmest compliments to their beauty will not even raise a blush. And mind you, it is not vice—only natural simplicity—Oriental ignorance of European prejudices. It seems to me that it would be quite feasible to trace modesty back to the source, and show how, little by little, under the influence of a purer light and a changed atmosphere, this delicate flower has budded and blossomed in our souls. But grant that, alone and unaided, it has thrown out in the soul those roots which I believe to be artificial: what would it prove? *Modesty is the timidity of the body and nothing else.* The timidity of the body and the shyness

of the soul are strictly analogous. Because the body only gives itself with reserve, does it follow that it has no right to give itself at all? Does not the soul also veil herself, and only unveil in love or friendship, or in those intimate communications of the artist, when he reveals his heart and mind to the outside world? We are such imperfect beings—so unworthy of an intelligent creation—that the free exercise of our most legitimate instincts would lead to a condition of appalling anarchy. For this reason life has schooled us to curb those instincts by the help of moral ideas and sensible impressions, which may—and often do—assume an absolute and intrinsic value in our eyes, but on a nearer scrutiny have only the importance of so many precautions against the dangers into which we might be swept by the untrammelled activities of a nature unsuited to its environment.'

In these noble pages of Gabriel Charmes—and I congratulate myself on disinterring them from my papers—there are two, or rather three, distinct ideas. First comes an eighteenth-century theory, false like all the psychological theories of that time, which would make modesty a restraint imposed by the jealousy of the male; then follows a much more valuable suggestion, according to which modesty is the timidity of the body; while finally we have a very distinct recognition of the evolution of the sentiment. But Gabriel Charmes had never heard of taboos. In 1880 that all-essential idea had not yet swum into the full current of contemporary thought. To-day the most insignificant of anthropologists would approach these great problems of the past and present with a surer step.

In a book by Herr Ernst Grosse, published in 1894,¹

¹ Ernst Grosse, *Die Anfaenge der Kunst*, Freiburg u. Leipzig, 1894, pp. 89^{sq.}

I find a theory which—though it is not new—he appears to have been the first to develop. The root idea of the work—art as a *social phenomenon* and a *social function*—is borrowed from Guyau. In his fifth chapter, the author sketches the history of personal decoration and ornament, with special reference to the tattoo. Passing to ‘moveable ornaments,’ he asks if the primitive loin-cloth originated in the sentiment of modesty or the reverse. In this connection he quotes the evidence of travellers as to the total absence of modesty among the Fucigians and Botocudos, together with Man’s verdict on the cincture worn by certain Andaman women ‘evidently as a decoration—not a veil.’ Bulmer passes a similar opinion upon the loin-cloths of the Australian women. ‘In Australia,’ says Brough Smyth again, ‘even where the two sexes go completely naked, the *unmarried* girls wear an apron, which they discard as soon as they have found a husband. The women are generally quite nude; *it is only before beginning their indecent dances that they put on a belt of feathers reaching to the knee.*’¹

From these and similar texts, Herr Grosse concludes that the first garment, far from being an attempt to satisfy the sentiment of modesty, was simply a decoration of the sexual organs in the hope of drawing attention to them. This explains the curious custom of the Australian women, who dress themselves for their dances. It seems the women of the Mincopies do the same. ‘Thus the primitive garment was originally not a veil but an

¹ In Central Australia ‘the women hang any trinkets they may have got from the whites on the front of their bodies, and the men often hang a piece of white shell on the hair of the pubis, more with the idea of attracting attention than of concealing their nakedness’ (*L’Anthropologie*, 1897, p. 361).

ornament ; which, like the most ornaments, was intended to attract the favour of the opposite sex to the wearer.' And so, by a circuitous route, the German Darwinist comes back to one of the favourite theses of the eighteenth century : that coquetry is the mother of modesty.¹

Ingenious as the theory is, it will not bear examination. It may certainly be admitted that a primitive aversion, founded on religious prejudice, might in time become a reasoned aversion, seeking to justify itself on moral grounds. This is the case with the horror inspired by incest. But to believe that evolution is capable of transforming a sentiment into its opposite, and of making modesty spring from self-advertisement, is, I think, pushing boldness to extremes. In the same way, a whole school of psychologists has assayed to explain altruism as an evolution of egoism. But, here again, the method seems mistaken ; for sympathy, the principle of altruism, is a primitive sentiment which may be the natural and immediate result of reflex action—the sight of suffering producing suffering, just as the sight of joy produces joy. Besides, without in the least considering the modern savage as a degenerate, we may doubt the *primitive* character of Herr Grosse's facts : above all, we shall be slow to make them the basis of conclusions applicable to the whole of mankind.

Our conviction remains that the sentiment of modesty has grown out of a *taboo*. The only very old tradition which seeks to account for its origin—the tradition of the Mosaic books—gives it a religious setting ; and even in pagan antiquity the ideas of modesty and religion are closely connected. As to the nature of the taboo from

¹ A theory still maintained in 1891 by M. Schurtz, in his *Grundzüge einer Philosophie der Tracht*.

which modesty is derived, I do not dare to say that M. Durkheim¹ has solved the question by seeing in it a particular application of the taboo of blood: still his exactitude of mind has suggested a solution, which is as yet, in my opinion, the most probable *per se*, and the least open to fatal objections.

¹ See his Monograph, reprinted from the *Année Sociologique*, Paris, 1898, pp. 1-70.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MORALITY OF MITHRAISM ¹

MITHRA, the personification of Light, was a god of the ancient Persian religion ; and we have proof that more than five hundred years before the Christian era he held a place in the Persian Pantheon. That place was not the first : above him in the divine hierarchy stood other and more potent gods, notably the Heaven (Ahura-Mazda, Ormuzd) and the feminine deity Anahîta (Anaitis)—Earth or Water.

Even in those remote days Mithra was distinguished from his fellow-gods by one estimable quality : goodness. His very name, in Persian, means *the friend*. And, in good truth, he was the friend and benefactor of man. In the Zend-Avesta, or Persian Bible,—the actual text of which is post-Christian, but contains liturgical elements of far higher antiquity,—we have a hymn that shows us Mithra with outstretched hands, weeping and saying to the great god Ahura-Mazda : ‘ I am the good protector of all creatures : I am the good saviour of all creatures.’

¹ Conference at the Musée Guimet. Needless to say, I am under great obligations to M. Cumont's work. I have also borrowed largely—sometimes textually—from the articles of M. Jean Réville on the same subject : e.g. *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 1901, p. 184 ; and *Études en hommage à la Faculté de Montauban*, 1901, p. 339.

To play this beneficent part, which corresponds to that of Apollo and the Dioscuri in Greece, Mithra must be ever alert, every ready to succour the victims of injustice and to fight and overcome the enemies of mankind: the friendly god is at the same time a warrior-god, unconquered and unconquerable. Another hymn of the Avesta runs: 'Mithra, whose foot is ever lifted, is a wakeful god, and watcheth all things unceasingly. He is strong, but he heareth the complaint of the weak: he maketh the grass to grow, and he governeth the earth. He is begotten of wisdom, and no man deceiveth him: he is armed with the strength of a thousand.'

James Darmesteter, in comparing the conceptions of Mithra and Apollo, makes the very just observation that the Greeks mainly developed the æsthetic side of Apollo; while the Persians, more sensitive in matters of conscience, emphasised the moral aspect of Mithra. The all-seeing Light became, to its votaries, the emblem of truth: Mithra was the celestial incarnation of conscience. It is obvious that even a secondary god, conceived under such attributes, was by the nature of things destined to play a great part in the history of religious ideas: he was a divinity with a future.

But, if Mithra played such a part, it was not solely in his capacity as god of the kindly light and the moral truth which it symbolises: an additional—perhaps, principal—reason was that he was considered as a mediator. Descending from heaven and the stars of heaven to this dark and chill earth, Light is essentially a mediatrix—a celestial ray travelling without a break from the hearth of all brightness and warmth towards our unquiet and suffering humanity, which, evening after evening, is menaced by the hostile shadow of night, and, day after

day, by storm clouds big with gloom and terrors. Mithra the Mediator—*μεσίτης* the Greeks afterwards called him—was nearer to the hearts of men and had a surer hold on human affection than other more powerful but more distant and inaccessible deities. If Christianity conquered the world, was her conquest not largely due to the conception of a Mediator between God and man, and to that of a host of mediators, the saints, whose charge it is to lay at the feet of the supreme Divinity the prayers and thanksgivings of mortals? That conception existed already in the old Persian creed, and no doubt contributed to its diffusion. Another, and perfectly natural, result was that the figure of Mithra assumed more and more importance in the eyes of the faithful, and—without dethroning the higher divinities—gradually took their place in the everyday life and worship of the people. If we had more documents bearing on the early history of Mithraism, we should find in them a lesson of immense significance, and one which is wholly creditable to human nature: the spectacle of a naturalistic polytheism slowly transformed by a moral idea, until the process of simplification and concentration ends in a single god of pity and love.

About the year 400 B.C., perhaps even earlier, Persian Mithraism began to spread both towards the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates and towards the mountainous region which constitutes the north-eastern part of Asia Minor. In the Hellenic or Hellenistic portions of this latter country, its progress was distinctly slower; but there it found the cults of other native deities—*Mên* and *Adonis-Atys*, for instance—which were foreign to the old Greek Pantheon. With these it allied itself more or less closely, and assimilated a few of their characteristics.

In Babylonia, on the other hand, it felt the influence of Chaldaean astrology, and gathered a cumbrous load of pseudo-scientific conceptions which either obscured or completely hid the noble and beneficent moral idea which was its surest passport to the heart of nations. From East to West the progress of Mithraism is that of a river, which, flowing from a source of crystal purity, is joined by a crowd of tributary streams: the more its volume swells, the more the foreign elements that float with its current and sully the limpidity of its waters.

At the time of the great upheavals which marked the end of the Roman republic, Mithraism had already reached the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. But, by now, Mithra was no longer the light that mediates between heaven and man. The idea of mediation, immanent in his very conception, was not lost, and was destined to persist to the end; but, once he became the god *par excellence*, the tendency was to identify him with the Sun. Such, at least, was Strabo's view, about the beginning of the Christian era. Plutarch tells us that the Cilician pirates, against whom Pompey conducted his victorious campaign, were devotees of Mithra. Not all the conquered pirates were executed; numbers were reduced to slavery and sold in Italy, where—discreetly enough, no doubt—they introduced the worship of the new god and the respect due to his name.

It seems impossible, however, that the diffusion of Mithraism throughout the Roman Empire—one of the most extraordinary events in the history of religion—can be attributed solely to the enslavement of the Cilician pirates. Two more powerful agencies of a less ephemeral nature came into play just before the dawn of Christianity. The first was the recruiting of auxiliaries for the Roman

legions in the poor and mountainous parts of Asia Minor, which, centuries before, had given in their allegiance to Mithraism. Apart from the great gods of the Græco-Roman Pantheon, the dissemination of whose cult was the work of schoolmasters and rhetoricians, the only divinities worshipped from one end of the empire to the other were those adopted by the legions. Thus, of all the Celtic deities, there is but one whose monuments and inscriptions are found in every country from England to the mouths of the Danube—Epona, the protecting goddess of horses. It was her name the Celtic cavalry of the empire invoked; and it was her cult they spread wherever war, or the calls of service, summoned them to pitch their tents.

Apart from the soldiers, the principal agents for the propagation of new gods were the slaves. In the first century of the empire Rome waged war after war in the east of Antolia and on the confines of Persia. As a result, the district became a happy hunting-ground for the Roman slave-dealer, eager to buy his human wares in a part of Asia which had long been characterised by gentler manners than were prevalent in the north and west of Europe. While the Gaulish and German slaves, muscular and inured to fatigue, were sent to farms and workshops where they exercised next to no influence on their masters, the Asiatics found employment in the towns, entered the private service of the citizens, and frequently by sheer personal ascendancy converted them to their own religious beliefs. Juvenal complains that Orontes had become a tributary of Tiber—*Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*—but if we except Epona, whose solitary success has already been accounted for, he has not a word to say of an invasion of Rome by Germanic,

Iberian, or Gaulish divinities. This was due neither to accident, nor to the more active commercial relations between Italy and the East, but simply to the intellectual superiority of the Oriental slaves, who wormed their way into the intimacy of these masters of the earth, and, by example and conversation, won them to alien faiths. Who can tell what was the part played by Syrian hand-maidens in the propagation of Christianity at Rome, and in the conversion of such great families as the Græcini and Glabrones ?

In the reign of Trajan, about a century after Christ, Mithraism began to take its place as a great religious power, especially on the banks of the Danube—a part of the empire which in consequence of the Dacian wars had been flooded by troops of every nationality. Ninety years later the Emperor Commodus was himself initiated into the mysteries of Mithra, and by the end of the second century of the empire, there was not a part of the Roman world where Mithraism had not its votaries. In the third and fourth centuries it continued to spread, despite the competition of adolescent Christianity. For a moment, the conversion of Constantine stemmed its course ; then came the pagan reaction under Julian, and another outburst of energy. In the fifth century it disappeared along with paganism in general, but not without leaving profound traces in the minds of the Eastern populations. Its fundamental ideas survive in the Persian dualism, and in Manichæism—a new form of that dualism, which, almost to the eve of the Protestant Reformation, remained the most dangerous enemy of orthodoxy.

A Belgian scholar, M. Franz Cumont, has recently published a couple of volumes giving all the monuments

of the cult of Mithra—bas-reliefs, statues, and inscriptions,—together with an exhaustive collection of the Greek, Roman, and Oriental texts bearing on the subject. If, unfortunately for us, the texts are scarce and say least where the interest is greatest, the monuments, on the other hand, are extremely numerous: in Rome alone, nearly two hundred have been found. Nor were those who dedicated them drawn exclusively from the lower classes, soldiers or slaves: often they were men of rank and distinction, high officials who had graduated in the schools of the philosophers. In fact, there soon sprang up a sort of alliance between the half-mystic Græco-Roman philosophy, prevalent during the later centuries of the empire, and this popular religion in which contemporary metaphysic saw—or thought it saw—a reflection of its own principles. About the third century it seemed as though the old and thorny barriers between the ancient sects—Platonists, Pythagoreans, Peripatetics, Epicureans, and Stoics—were breaking down under the influence of a syncretism which placed the Sun, as the fount of strength and light, at the head of its ontological conceptions. The deities of Olympus lived, as they live to-day, on paper; but the Sun, to whom Aurelian, in 270, erected the most beautiful temple in Rome, dominated religion and philosophy herself in their decline. Only, to the philosophic eye, the sun shining in the firmament was but a symbol of the heavenly light which beams upon the hearts and minds of men. In 362 the Emperor Julian wrote to the Alexandrians: ‘Are you blind to the splendour which issues from the Sun? Are you ignorant that He gives life to all animals and all plants? This Sun that humanity has seen and honoured from all eternity, whose worship is the source of happiness, is the

living image, animate, rational, and beneficent, of the Intelligible Father.'

Mithra, then, was identified with the sun, whose light he had personified in the beginning. But Græco-Roman paganism was already familiar with another sun-god, Helios, whom it was impossible to depose. Accordingly, he was relegated to the position of an intimate friend of Mithra—who even took over the luminous chariot of the day. We do not know what legend, of what poet, dealt with the situation; but, in a Greek author of the fifth century, Mithra is described as Phaethon; which proves that not only had he become the favourite of Helios, but had temporarily replaced him as driver of the solar chariot.

This short address is no place for a set account of the Mithraic religion as we know it. The subject is peculiarly difficult, and even M. Cumont's erudition has not been wholly successful in lighting up the obscurities. We shall content ourselves with a few general indications, every one of which might furnish material for prolonged discussion. Mithra was a young god, beautiful as the day, who, clothed in Phrygian garb, sojourned of old among men and won their love by doing good. He was born of no mortal mother. One day, in a grotto or stable, he issued from a stone, to the astonishment of the shepherds who alone were present at his birth. Waxing in strength and courage, he overcame the pestilent creatures that infested the world. Most redoubtable of these was a bull, himself divine, whose blood, if shed upon the ground, would render it fruitful and cause miraculous crops to spring. Mithra gave him battle, gained the victory, plunged a knife into his breast, and by this sacrifice assured riches and peace to men. Then he ascended into Heaven, where he still keeps watch over the

children of earth. He grants the petitions of them that pray to him. Those who are initiated into his mysteries, in caverns like that where he first saw the day, receive after death his powerful protection against those enemies beyond the tomb who threaten the tranquillity of the dead. Furthermore, he will one day give to them a better life, and has promised a resurrection. When the fate-appointed time comes round, he will cut the throat of another celestial bull, the source of life and felicity, whose blood shall revive the flagging energies of earth and restore a life of happiness to all who have believed on Mithra.

It is obvious that the creed of Mithra had many elements in common with Christianity. There must also have been others of which we have no cognisance ; for Tertullian, writing about the year 200, attributed the resemblance—a dangerous one to simple souls—to an artifice of the devil. Apart from points of doctrine, there were equally striking analogies in the domains of cult and ritual. ‘The Mithraists,’ says M. Réville, ‘met in little sanctuaries hewn out of rock or under ground, where the number of worshippers was necessarily limited—precisely as was the case in the catacombs. At the entrance of the nave, or central aisle, were receptacles for the holy water used in lustrations. A multitude of lamps, arranged along the side galleries, or hung from the vault, threw a brilliant light on the centre of the shrine. Decorations in painted stucco or mosaic, vivid colours, images and statues of gods, were about in great profusion ; while before the central effigy of all, which represented a bull in act to be slain by Mithra, a lamp burned perpetually.’ Initiation into the mysteries of the god involved tests of a severely ascetic character ; and

these preliminary rites were called *sacramenta*—sacraments. One of them was baptism by blood—the blood of a bull ; and there was also a baptism by pure water, as well as anointings of the forehead with honey. Further, it was the custom to consecrate bread and wine by certain formulæ, and then to distribute the elements among the faithful. Members of the Mithraic communities took the name of *Bræthren*, and at their head was a chief whose title was *Father*. These coincidences—which deserve to be better known—could easily be multiplied. The Fathers of the Church were not less struck by them than the pagans themselves. Saint Augustine relates that one day he had a conversation with a priest of Mithra, who told him they adored the same god. Now, it is noticeable that, although Tertullian had to bring in the malignity of the devil in order to explain the resemblance between Mithraism and Christianity, no Christian writer ever thought of claiming that Mithraism was borrowed from Christianity. The reason must have been that they knew the legend and ritual of Mithra to be chronologically anterior to the preaching of Christianity. This fact may be taken as certain. It cannot, indeed, be established from the documentary evidence we possess, but the argument from the silence of the Church Fathers is conclusive enough. On the other hand, the Emperor Julian, who was initiated into the mysteries of Mithra, and whose aversion to Christianity is well known, never accused Christianity of having borrowed its doctrine or sacred traditions from Mithraism. We should do well, I think, to imitate this discretion, leave the word plagiarism alone, and attribute the startling likeness between the two religions to one influence operating identically on both—the influence of those old conceptions which, dating

from a period undoubtedly earlier than the literary legends of paganism, yet retained their hold on the masses throughout the ancient world, and constituted a mystic environment which conditioned the form of Christianity and Mithraism alike.

It has often been said that, if Mithraism had not found its path blocked by Christianity, it would have become the sole religion of the ancient world. This is true enough ; but in speaking of the struggle between Christianity and paganism, we are apt to make two great mistakes. The first lies in believing that Christianity, in the days of travail when it strove for the dominion of souls, had for its principal or only adversary the paganism of Homer and Virgil—the gods of Olympus. The gods of Olympus were dead, or practically dead ; and in that condition they had languished since the end of the republic. Temples still rose in their honour, sacrifices were still paid them ; but man had ceased to believe in them, for he had ceased to love them. The residuum of piety which clung to them still was purely intellectual. On the other hand, by the time when Juvenal complained that Orontes was flowing into Tiber, the gods of Asia and Egypt had found numerous devotees in Rome ; and it may be said that, at the close of the second century, these Oriental cults, with Mithraism at their head, were the only serious rivals of Christianity. If the latter conquered, it was undoubtedly because it was infinitely freer than they from all taint of dead or dying polytheism. Christianity was grafted upon the old trunk of Judaism, but it refused all solidarity, all connection, with the deities of those nations upon whom the light of the true God had not been shed. Its exclusiveness, the cause of the persecutions which it endured, was also the cause of its triumph.

Whereas Mithraism reconciled Helios with Mithra, identified Jupiter with the supreme god of the Persians, and made room for Diana, Eros, and others of the old Olympic hierarchy, Christianity disdained all syncretism, proudly rejected all compromise, and gave to the world what the world most needed—an Oriental religion disengaged from all ties with the ancient cults, sullied as they were by their long alliance with paganism.

The second widespread error is the belief that the battle between Christianity and paganism was a battle of morality against immorality, of chastity against lust, of humanity and affection against cruelty and selfishness. The Fathers of the Church have unquestionably made the claim at times; but, in the heat of conflict, men do not always measure their words. Political warfare is often unscrupulous enough, but a religious controversy breeds every form of calumny. By way of example, one significant fact may be mentioned. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the Church was engaged in a merciless struggle with the Manichæans of France—the heretics known under the name of Catharists or Albigenses—it was everywhere said that the luckless wretches, whose flesh was feeding the flames, were given to nameless debaucheries, and examples of the blackest profligacy. Now, in the instructions drawn up by the inquisitors of the day for the benefit of their young pupils—and some copies have fortunately survived—it is formally stated that these accusations were unfounded and that no evidence of them had ever been forthcoming. Still, this did not prevent the Church from using them in order to excite the popular conscience against the heretics. As a matter of fact, it is not necessary to look very closely to see that the charges of licentiousness,

human sacrifice, and general turpitude, levelled by sect against sect, or by orthodoxy against heresy, are totally valueless. They are weapons in an unfair campaign, not historical documents.

With regard to Mithraism, it is remarkable that the Christian polemist who mention it bring no definite accusation against its morality. They only say that, as initiation into the Mithraic mysteries took place in the gloom of a cavern, it was probable the rite contained obscene elements; for people who love darkness better than light usually have good reason for their preference.

The argument is feeble and unconvincing. Moreover, it is exactly what the pagans were bound to say when they saw the Christians gathering together in the catacombs; and it is what the Church says to-day of the Knights Templar and Freemasons, who exclude the public from their ceremonies.

Christianity could hardly have had occasion to combat the immorality of Mithraism; for we may take it that the two religions had virtually the same moral code, and in this point resembled each other even more closely than in tradition, liturgy, and ritual.

Mithraism, according to Porphyry, imposed continence—and sometimes, as in Christianity, absolute continence. After observing that Mithraism, like Christianity, celebrated the oblation of bread,—that is to say, the communion,—professed the doctrine of resurrection, crowned its followers with the same crown wherewith the martyrs for the faith were crowned, Tertullian adds: ‘Further, Mithraism prohibits its supreme pontiff from marrying more than once; it has virgins and men vowed to continence.’ *Habet et virgines, habet et*

continentes. This statement, coming from an enemy of the creed, is definitive.

For the ideas of brotherhood prevailing among the Mithraists we have certain proof in the names which they gave themselves : *fratres, consacranei*. The very ceremonies of initiation, from the slight knowledge we possess of them, seem to have aimed at emphasising and testing the submission of the initiates to their spiritual head, the *Father* ; as well as their self-restraint ; their fortitude in enduring fasts, physical suffering and inclemency of weather ; and their courage, when confronted with apparently imminent and threatening dangers. Here again we may draw our own conclusion from the silence of Tertullian. If the Mithraic doctrine had contained impure elements, if the teaching given to the initiates had not been inspired by a high moral ideal, would he have neglected the opportunity of insisting on the intrinsic superiority of Christianity, when he had already drawn attention to the part played by the devil in the outward similarity of the two religions ?

But more remains : we know from the most competent of all authorities, Julian the Apostate, that Mithraism had a dogmatic and imperative morality, such as the Græco-Roman paganism never had. At the end of that beautiful work, 'The Cæsars,' which shows us the Roman Emperors passing before the judgment-seat of the gods and concludes with the glorification of Marcus Aurelius, the Philosopher-Emperor writes as follows : "As to thee," said Mercury, addressing himself to me, "I have caused thee to know Mithra thy father. It is for thee to observe his commandments (*ἐντολαί*), that so thou mayest have in him an assured port and refuge in this life, and that, when thy time is come to quit

the world, thou mayest, with a sweet hope, take this god for guide." ' "

This is evidently an allusion to Julian's initiation into Mithraism ; but it is something else, and something more. Mithra has become the father of Julian, who obeys his commandments. What are these commandments, if not a moral law ? And obedience to them is to have a double effect. On the one hand, while life lasts, Julian, by conforming to the behests of Mithra, will achieve happiness by the way of wisdom ; on the other, death will deal gently with him and a glorious immortality be assured him as a recompense for his virtues. Are we not here in the full current of Christian thought ?

The feeling is more pronounced than ever when we study Julian's short and beautiful life by the light of those many documents that tell the tale. We must have the grace to forget for a moment his struggle against Christianity, a struggle which was never violent. We must have the candour to realise how much was truly Christian (I use the word in its highest and—if I may venture to say so—its most philosophic sense) in a life which from beginning to end was consecrated to the love of wisdom, the love of country, and the love of humanity. In the long list of Christian kings and keysars there is none, with the exception perhaps of St. Louis, who has shown on the steps of the throne, and on the throne itself, more constancy, more abnegation, or more clemency, than Julian. He loved to repeat the saying of the ancient sage Pittacus : ' Forgiveness is better than vengeance,' and he was not slow to act on the precept. Writing against the false philosopher, Heraclius, Julian asks him with emotion : ' What hast thou done great in thy life ? Whom hast thou aided in his struggle for justice ? Whose tears didst

thou dry when he wept? teaching him that death is not an evil either for him who dies or for the loved ones that outlive him.' An hour would soon be gone, if I tried to collect all the passages in Julian's writings that do honour to his character and his heart. Now this man was a worshipper of the Sun-god, an adept in the mysteries of Mithra; and the moral law which governed his thought and action was not simply that of ancient ethics, but primarily the code taught him by his initiator into Mithraism. On that point the unequivocal terms of the passage I have quoted leave no doubt.

I had intended to draw a natural enough conclusion from the preceding remarks: that morality is independent of religion, but that every religion, at some moment of its evolution, adopts and assimilates the current morality of its day. I remembered, however, reading something similar in one of Anatole France's delightful—and profound—books, '*Le Mannequin d'Osier*.'¹ My search was rewarded by the following passage, which seemed infinitely preferable to anything I could say:

'Every period has its ruling morality, which is the outcome neither of religion nor of philosophy, but of custom—the only force capable of producing unity of sentiment among men. Everything that is arguable divides them; and humanity exists on the one condition that it shall abstain from thought on matters essential to its existence. And precisely because morality is the sum total of the prejudices of the community, it is impossible for two rival moralities to exist at the same time, and in the same place. I could illustrate this truth by a great many examples; but there is none more significant

¹ A. France, *Le Mannequin d'Osier*, pp. 318 sq.

than that of the Emperor Julian, to whose works I have given some attention of late. Julian, who fought for his gods with so stout a heart and so great a soul, Julian, the Sun-worshipper, professed every article of Christian morals. Like the Christians he contemned the pleasures of the flesh and extolled the efficacy of fasting, which brings the human into touch with the divine. Like them, he upheld the doctrine of an atonement, believed in the suffering which purifies, and was himself initiated into mysteries which answered, no less than those of the Christians, to a burning desire for purity, renunciation, and the love of God. In fine, his neo-paganism was morally as like primitive Christianity as two brothers are like each other. What is there surprising in this? The two cults were twin children of Rome and the East. Both corresponded to the same humane customs, the same deep-seated instincts of the ancient Latin world. Their souls were identical. But they were distinct in name and language; and the difference was enough to make them mortal enemies. Men quarrel oftenest for words. It is for words they are readiest to slay and be slain. Consider the great revolutionaries. Is there one who has shown the slightest originality in point of morals? Robespierre's ideas on virtue were always those of the priests of Arras who had pronounced his excommunication.'

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY

IF, after considering the various forms of human activity in the infancy of civilisation, I try to determine the essential character of that civilisation as a whole, the conception of it which presents itself to my mind is that of a continual progress, facilitated by the perpetual transformation of voluntary and considered acts into secondary instincts. Thus, the modern man learns to write : to do so, he is bound to apply his will and reflective power to a useful end. But, once he knows how to write, he writes without effort, almost *without thinking ; the conscious act has been transformed into a mechanical act, and his energies find themselves free to proceed to a new conquest. At the end of this development what shall we find ? A multitude of secondary instincts, all conformable to man's high nature and social character ; in a word, the individual adapted to his environment, and, for that very reason, economising all efforts, intellectual or physical, which do not contribute to the perfection either of the individual or of society.

This economy of useless or injurious effort is one of the most obvious characteristics of civilisation. Man is not, and should not tend to become, a machine ; but the

work of his creative and inventive personality ought to rest on a certain substratum of regulated and rational activity, which, by eliminating superfluous fatigue, would make it all the easier for his intelligence to reach the proper goal by the quickest road.

Émile Augier has somewhere said : ' How many people could be made happy with the happiness that runs to waste ! ' Maxime du Camp called one of his erstwhile famous novels ' *Forces Perdues*. ' An uncivilised community expends not a whit less physical energy than a civilised community ; in fact, it expends more, but the expenditure is ill-regulated. The effort is there, but it is a capricious effort, void of definite purpose : there is production, employment, but, above everything, waste of energy. Unconsciousness of effort is at once the ideal and the hall-mark of organised society—a rule which is equally valid in the intellectual world. Herbert Spencer has remarked that the savage has as well-furnished a memory as the civilised man ; the difference being that he overstocks it with lumber—especially, with notions that are now fixed by writing and considered a needless charge on the recollection. The vexed problem of education might find a rational solution along the same lines. It is the general lament to-day that there are too many things to know—that it is becoming more and more difficult to form the youthful mind without disastrously overtaxing it. The reason is that educational systems are conservative to the very marrow, and look askance on any attempt to substitute the locomotive for the stage-coach. For instance, it is absurd to teach children the minutiae of geography, as though there were no maps to which they could turn for information : instead of a bewildering mass of names, they should be taught the use

of an atlas. Above all, every child, from the elementary schools upward, should have an idea of the proper books to consult upon any subject which interests him. Valckenaer, whose scholarship was beyond dispute, used to say : ‘ There are too many subjects nowadays for any man to know them all ; but every man may know where knowledge is to be found.’ It is a faithful saying, but it still waits for the acceptance of which it is worthy. I am firmly convinced that in a six or seven years’ course of study I could teach an intelligent child what it has taken me thirty years to learn ; and it is with bitter regret that I think of all the gropings in the dark—all the lost hours—to which I have been damned since childhood, simply because among my successive teachers—and some of them bore illustrious names—I failed to find that methodical and economical guidance of effort which should be the inspiring principle of modern education.

In the domain of religion, the tendency towards economy of effort is not less obvious. The savage is a being literally paralysed by superstition, and groaning under the tyranny of the countless spirits—all more or less malevolent—by which he believes himself surrounded. The first step in advance is the institution of a sacerdotal caste, to safeguard the religious traditions common to a group of men or tribes. The imaginary terrors on which the religious sentiment feeds are then reduced in number, because they are classified and labelled ; they are reduced in intensity, not only because they are now more clearly defined, but because the primitive priest invariably acts as a mediator between timorous humanity and irascible divinity. Among the Australians, with whom the priesthood exists barely or not at all, the greater part of the savage’s life is passed in the observance of

rites, ceremonies, initiations, and purifications, which demand a vast expenditure of attention, memory, and muscular force—in other words, so much useless effort. With the Greek and Roman, the Assyrian and Egyptian, this activity was diverted into set channels ; that is to say, there were days and hours reserved for communion with the gods, while for the rest of his time man was free and could devote his energies to more practical purposes. For Europe, the great religious emancipation dates from the triumph of Christianity. Unquestionably, the Roman Empire, and even the barbarous nations on its European frontier, contained a little knot of men whose free-thinking had liberated them from the crushing yoke of religious observance ; but the immense majority of the population was still under the heel of a superstition, not only degrading but all-absorbing. Ninety-nine per cent. of the subjects of the Roman Empire—devotees of Eastern deities or of the old pagan Pantheon—frittered away in feast, prayer, sacrifice, and the thousand frivolities of ritual, an appreciable part of what energy and intelligence they possessed. St. Paul came and broke with ritualism. True, a new ritualism replaced the old : the dread of the undiscovered country beyond the grave, the vague idea of evil spirits abroad in the earth, still lay heavy on the minds of men. But how much freer in all his doings was the Christian of the Middle Ages than the pagan of ten centuries earlier ! The bloody sacrifices were gone ; religious festivals no longer entailed the absolute suspension of civic life ; the teaching was now that God desired to be worshipped in spirit and in truth ; superstition and all her works were—theoretically, at least—condemned ; and, finally, the cruelly oppressive alimentary prohibitions of Oriental cults had vanished

forever. Beyond and above all this, the idea of priesthood, an application of the great law of the division of labour, made new progress under the influence of Christianity. In classical antiquity the citizen was priest: a professional hierarchy scarcely existed, for life-priestesses of the Vestal type were an exception to the rule. On the other hand, in Christianity, the priestly functions were severely restricted to a specially trained class, which alone bore the burden of man's relations to God. Everything was the province of the clergy—even religious speculation, which, after all, is sterile as far as the good of the community is concerned. The medieval Christian had no necessity to form an opinion on things divine: he was supposed neither to understand them nor to discuss them—the priest taught him both what he should believe and what he should do. Initiative in religious matters, so far from being encouraged, was actually penalised. The heretic, says Bossuet, is he who has an opinion—and the Church does not desire individual opinions. At this distance of time, the whole system seems a tyranny. Undoubtedly, in imposing this discipline of faith, the great pontiffs of the medieval Church conceived they were working for the salvation of souls, not for the progress of humanity by the economy of useless efforts. But it is a characteristic of the great events of civilisation, that the actors in them are hardly ever conscious of the part they play and the services they render. While the Church was thinking for the faithful—sounding on their behalf the unfathomable problems of theology—humanity, working in the shadow of the Church, was ensuing its material emancipation and organising itself for a less unequal struggle with the undisciplined forces of nature. The tyrannical domination

of souls prepared the way for the freedom of souls : for by it alone was the progress of science and industry rendered possible.

That progress was most active from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, at a period when secular society was strictly distinct—or supposed to be strictly distinct—from religious society. Nor is there any reason to think the case will be otherwise in the future. Those who accept the revealed religions will continue passively to accept their teaching ; superstition will tend more and more to become a study for the specialist, instead of an incubus stifling human activity ; but, side by side with those who listen to the doctrines of the world to come, there will be an increasing number of others, who, without hope of recompense or fear of punishment, will give themselves to the welfare of their native earth, to the betterment of the relations between man and man, and to the sparing of needless suffering and misspent effort.

To the evolutionist it is equally interesting to study the genesis of moral ideas in their connection with religious phenomena. Let philosophy preach as she will that morality is the creation of reason, the human heart believes by instinct that it is nearer of kin to religion. That kinship has always existed, nor can it be said that time has loosened the tie : still, the intimacy has been modified, and here, as elsewhere, specialisation has come into play.

Morality is the discipline of custom. The word discipline implies restraint—an influence exerted upon man with a view to curbing, in a given interest, his liberty of action towards his neighbour and himself. A restric-

tion of this type falls into the category of the taboos, of which prohibitions with a permanent moral validity are only a particular case. Now it is a characteristic feature of ancient religious codes, the Mosaic Law included, that no clear distinction is drawn between moral vetoes and others of a superstitious or ritualistic cast. For proof it is only necessary to open Leviticus or Deuteronomy. The following is one example (Deut. xxii. 1-2) : *Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them : thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee and if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee, until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.*

Here is a fine precept—all charity and honesty. But what follows ? *The woman shalt not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment : for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.*

This prohibition was cited and commented upon before the infamous tribunal of Rouen which condemned Joan of Arc to the stake. Undoubtedly, there was good reason for the clause in the fifteenth century, as there is in the twentieth ; and it is easy to see why it should hold its ground in contemporary society as a police regulation : if it did not, the possibilities of scandal are evident. But do not imagine that this purely modern idea was present to the mind of the biblical legislator : his prohibition of self-disguisement corresponds to a superstitious scruple, which might be called the taboo of confusion or mixing. The point will be clear, if we finish the chapter of Deuteronomy :—

Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with diverse seeds lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled—that is to say, lest it should be declared taboo, unusable.

Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.

Thou shalt not wear a garment of diverse sorts, as of woollen and linen together.

Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

Notice that all these proscriptions and prescriptions are couched in the same imperative terms. It is not a question of strict duty or lax duty: all are equally necessary to the purity of him who would observe the Law. Thus commandments of charity and honesty toward one's neighbour are placed exactly on the same level as counsels relative to a man's dress and the tillage of his field.

Here we see plainly the origin of those moral codes which still govern mankind. Organised sacerdotal religion—the first emancipatress of man—began by codifying the interdicts and injunctions which an endless variety of superstitions had brought into vogue: the Mosaic lawgiver is to be regarded as an editor, who doubtless eliminated many of the old taboos composing his material, confirmed many, but invented none. And as the Mosaic law is, so are the laws ascribed to Pythagoras: on the one hand, commands and prohibitions in force to this day; on the other, warnings against emptying a cup to the last drop, or omitting to kiss the gate of the town one leaves!

All these codifications, then, sprang out of a perfect chaos, in which the loftiest moral ordinances were entangled with a host of capricious precepts straight from

the mint of superstition. Now, where we have a welter of heterogeneous notions, united by no common bond of rationality, classification and selection are bound to follow. And here it is that the idea of social utility comes in—an idea on which a foolish attempt had been made to establish *a priori* the whole of morality ; as though man were a logician from his mother's womb, and at one effort had reared *en bloc* the complex structure of law and custom which regulates his conduct. The part played by the utilitarian principle is reducible to this. Man starts with a mass of prescriptions and proscriptions, the disregard of which is accounted crime. Acting on the Stoic paradox—which is only a survival from the primitive ages—he admits no gradation of crime : every offence is equally heinous. Experience, however, quickly shows that some of his prohibitions do good service to the order and security essential to every organism and—for that reason—to all human society. Conversely, others are seen to wear that stamp of social inutility which characterises the purely religious taboo. The day soon comes (it had come to the Hebrews by the time of the Prophets) when the social taboo is distinguished from the superstitious taboo—when observance of the one is enforced, and observance of the other is left optional. Thus it was that the way was paved, among the Jews, for that great movement of opinion which was destined to culminate in the doctrine of St. Paul : *Owe no man anything, but to love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet ; and if there be any other commandment it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love*

*worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*¹

And what is the Pauline love of our neighbour but the instinct of solidarity, which was familiar to ancient ethics, and constitutes the eternal basis of all morality ? For morality is either social, or the shadow of a dream : there can be no question of a discipline of custom, save for the man who lives in a society. It is, therefore, the fact of social life, not the arbitrary behest of godhead, that is the well-spring of moral obligations. All those obligations St. Paul sums up in *solidarity* ; and, in the few lines we have quoted, he rises for the moment to the height of the greatest thinkers of all ages.

But he rises at the cost of an inaccuracy, which was doubtless voluntary. St. Paul alludes to the Decalogue, and quotes from it several precepts, the moral bearing of which is undeniable. The following he does not quote (Exodus xx.) : *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

All these commandments are part of the Decalogue, yet have absolutely nothing in common with the love of one's neighbour. The apostle, therefore, was not justified in holding that all the other commandments were 'comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Evidently the author of the Epistle considered the remaining commandments either superfluous

¹ Romans xiii. 8-10. I leave on one side the question of authenticity. It is certain that the passage was written before A.D. 140.

or obsolete, and it is to be regretted that he did not explicitly say so. Mankind, however, was not ripe for so exalted a philosophy; not suddenly, nor without a compromise, could morality quit the clogs of ritual. Moreover, St. Paul's words had to wait centuries before they were understood. Medieval Christianity, with its cast-iron creed and compulsory ceremonial, believed in all good faith that it was inspired by the very apostle who had written that the whole Law was contained in mutual love—in the idea of solidarity.

Now, since this mixture of gold and quartz, moral ideas and unadulterated superstition, was drawn by religious legislation from the great seam of popular custom and prejudice and given to the world without more ado as the expression of the divine will, the result has been an alliance between religion and morality which will not soon be broken: for morality, being the issue of religion, cannot lightly deny her antecedents. It is, therefore, an error to speak of independent morality—an historical error, and something worse: for it fosters the vulgar misapprehension which assumes the existence of an absolute, immovable morality, whose canons have been fixed once and for ever. That misapprehension is common to the religious and the non-religious mind: for the one looks upon the Sermon on the Mount as an eternal code of morals, and the other attributes a like authority to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. And yet it is clear to the evolutionist that, while each of these admirable documents embodies the moral ideal of its own age, the first mystic, the second practical and bourgeois, it is over-late in the day for civilisation to acquiesce either in Essenian mysticism or in the rather narrow principles beloved of the eighteenth-century *Tiers État*. It is all

very well to have the Declaration of the Rights of Man taught and expounded in schools, but only on condition that it shall not be represented as the alpha and omega of political and social wisdom. Unhappily, so natural are theological prejudices to man, and so unfamiliar the idea of evolution, that, before he is well emancipated from one theology, he is forging and riveting the fetters of another—passing incessantly from orthodoxy to heresy, and rejoicing that the heresy of yesterday has become the orthodoxy of to-day. Worst of all, he is not content to preach his new doctrine; it must reign alone—and recalcitrancy and unbelief undergo once more the sharp correction of fire and steel. It is a tearful spectacle, but, to the evolutionist, a lesson and a joy: for he reads in it the tenacity of human instinct and the warping of human judgment by centuries of mistaken practice. Only gradually, and by a long-drawn process, will men reared in the atmosphere of dogmatism be changed into evolutionists, and realise that, after shuffling off one obsolete orthodoxy, there is something better to be done than to replace it by another, impressed with the same old stamp of human frailty.

It is easy enough to call oneself an evolutionist—it is only a word. The difficulty lies in judging the past and the present—the facts of history, political, religious, and intellectual—from the standpoint of the evolutionist, and not from that of the dogmatist. For my own part, if it would hasten the progress of dogmatism towards evolution, I could wish to see evolution taught in the elementary schools. I should feel no pang, if the time generally given to the commentary on the Declaration of the Rights of Man were devoted to the ideas of Lamarck, Darwin, and Spencer. But, if it is always difficult—

perhaps dangerous—to introduce the notion of evolution and the relativity of things and ideas to children, accustomed as they are at home to the unreasoning obedience which is best for the child and the savage, the case is different when they are ripened into manhood. Evolution governs the spiritual and the material world alike. No idea is better calculated to teach a man tolerance, and to make him look with indulgent eyes on the errors and crimes of the past and the crimes and errors of the present. Nor is there any idea more fruitful in consolation: for it is the translation into the language of twentieth-century philosophy of those Messianic promises which have so long soothed with their illusions human suffering and human heartache. A word in conclusion on ethnology and archæology. No work on either subject can be taken seriously, unless the past—whether revealed on paper or on stone—is studied in its genesis. The first thing needful is to throw into relief the elements from which evolution constituted that past; the second is to trace the workings of the evolution itself. *Evolution is the law of the study of humanity, because it is the law of humanity itself.*

THE END

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