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THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE

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CHAPTER I

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SACRIFICE

I. *Sacrifice in China*

ACCORDING to the *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte,* Chinese religion has three foundations—the cult of nature deities, the cult of ancestors, and the cult of the heavenly bodies.[1] To the psycho-analyst, such gods, ghosts, and spirits are all reproductions on a grander scale of infantile parental Imagos. But the real parents still enjoyed an authority only second to that of the divinities that were created in their image. 'The father of the family was the absolute monarch in his family circle on their common land and at the same time their only priest. He offered to the ancestors whose tablets stood in a shrine on the south side of the house, and to the Earth-god, whose holy place was, in the earliest times, under an opening in the roof in the middle of the house where the sun could shine down on to the earth. Certain genii who protected the family home also enjoyed offerings; such were the spirit of the hearth, of the spring, of the house-door and of the door of the court. The ancestors belonged to the family; they were simply its invisible part, who lived elsewhere. But they took their part in the lives of their successors, they received their nourishment from the younger generation, and were informed of important events which happened in the family. They were considered to be present at its councils. The earth-god extended his dominion when sibs and families combined into larger groups; he had his place—perhaps because the housing improvements no longer permitted the opening in the roof—outside the house on the common land. It consisted of an altar made

[1] Franke, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte,* 4. Aufl. i. 195-6.

out of earth, a simple hillock, which might not be roofed over lest the union of the gods with the forces of the air should be hindered, and out of a tree planted on the hillock. . . . Probably the tree was a sign of fertility, of the living activity of the god.' [1]

On analogy with themselves, everything for these primitive people had a sex and a reproductive function. Everything was either masculine or feminine, yang or yin. In everything they saw a conjugal pair, in Sun and Moon, Heaven and Earth, Light and Darkness, Warm and Cold, Dry and Wet, High and Deep, Prince and Retainer, Summer and Winter.[2] And in these couples may perhaps be recognized the indefinite multiplication of the divine pair, the creators of the world, that appear in so many mythologies, and who are, to psycho-analysts, the projections of the child's own father and mother.

As among primitive peoples all over the world, there seem once to have been spring festivals in which the young men and women imitated the union of nature; but the later official morality disapproved of these customs and suppressed them, and removed their traces from the literature.[3] Analogy suggests that such rites would have been accompanied by sacrifice, a trace of which may still linger in the fire festivals described by Frazer. In these 'the essential feature of the ceremony seems to be the passage of the image of the deity across the fire'.[4] Perhaps originally the deity himself, or his human representative, was burnt.

Gradually as the state became more centralized, it monopolized the control of religion. The temple of the ancestor of the prince and the temple of the earth-god became the symbol of the state itself, the one as the masculine, or yang, principle, the other as the feminine, or yin, principle. The prince or emperor was the priest who officiated at the sacrifice. He was psycho-analytically a father symbol, and it was fitting that he should

[1] Franke, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 4. Aufl. i. 196-7.
[2] *Ib.* i. 197. [3] *Ib.* i. 198. [4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., xi. 5.

perform for the state what the father performed for the family. 'From now on the seat of the ancestors of all dynasties of the Chinese emperors is the sky, indeed the ruler of Heaven or Heaven itself is the original ancestor of the ruling family. The emperor is the 'Son of Heaven' (it is not certain if this expression was introduced in the text before the Tschou time), his power is of divine origin, his position demands divine honours'.[1] Such were the foundations of Chinese religion which survived and penetrated alike the metaphysical Taoism, the Confucian revival, and the Buddhist invasion.

Of the three elements—ancestor worship, nature worship, and the worship of the celestial bodies—that made up this religion, ancestor worship was the most important. After the death of a relation there was a fixed period of mourning which varied with the importance of the departed. The mourning for the Son of Heaven, like that for a father or mother of a family, was three years. During this time many of the ordinary sacrifices, which were times of rejoicing, were superseded. Immediately after death there was a rite to recall the ghost.[2] The tablet that bore the name of the deceased stood on the outer covering of the coffin. The sons of the dead, for the last time, invoked him to return. Then the spirit entered into the tablet; henceforth it was kept at the altar of the house, and the name of the deceased was spoken no more.[3] There was a careful preparation of the corpse; a peg was inserted between the teeth so that rice and precious stones could be placed in its mouth; the legs were tied, probably to keep the spirit quiet, and perhaps, as so often among primitive people, to keep it from molesting the living. Food was placed near the corpse and near the coffin and in the grave. On the return from the funeral the tablet was placed near the place where the coffin had lain, and the offering of 'rest' was laid here every day of the mourning. After the end of the mourning, or the time

[1] Franke, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, i. 200.
[2] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 146-7. [3] *Ib.* 171.

of 'perpetual tears', the offerings were changed, and henceforth the dead received the ordinary gifts of the 'manes' of the dead.[1]

Although this mourning was no doubt consciously sincere enough, there are perhaps still traces of the ambivalence of primitive man to his dead. We may be suspicious of the real purpose of the tieing of the legs and of the taboo of the name which may have been unconsciously intended respectively to prevent the voluntary return, and to avoid the magical evocation or recall, of the departed. Again, the expression 'perpetual tears' looks like an over-compensation for a deficiency of real sorrow. Such considerations strengthened by the analogy of similar rites among other peoples make us more ready to believe that the offerings too were not intended solely for the good of the dead.

Even in modern China there are feasts for the dead. At Emoui, on the fourth or fifth of April, after piling up various meats before the ancestral tablets, the family assemble at the family tomb carrying meat and vegetables and strips of white and coloured paper. These are placed on the funeral mound. Similar offerings are laid at the altar of the god of the country which stands on each tomb. Coloured paper is burnt before the tomb of the ancestor and the altar of the god, and crackers are pulled to drive away the hungry demons who might wish to participate in the ceremony. Finally, the offerings are collected and eaten by the family. 'It is believed that the dead return on the night before the beginning of the seventh month, and on this night and on the following nights for the whole month there are tables at the doors of the houses with plates of offerings, candles and sticks of lighted incense; paper raiment is also burned to clothe the spirits; a small part of the offerings are also burnt, but it is mainly consumed by the family.'[2] It is probable that, as in many places, such attention was originally enjoyed only by rulers and princes, and that it only later became universal.[3]

[1] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 146-7. [2] *Ib.* 173. [3] *Ib.* 171-2.

But mortuary sacrifice was not the only sacrifice known to China. In olden times, when there was a plague, many animals were sacrificed at the gates of the towns, and after the victims had been sacrificed they were dismembered and scattered.[1] In times of war, the tablets of the imperial ancestors were anointed with the blood of victims, and carried with the army on its campaigns.[2]

There are also traces of human sacrifice of well-known types, such as the sacrifice of a king, of a young girl to a river, and of first-born sons. 'We are told by the great historian Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien and by others that, as in the land of Egypt in the time of Joseph, seven years of drought prevailed in the Empire, leading to a terrible famine. To such extremities did matters come that it was suggested that a human victim should be offered as a sacrifice to appease Heaven and bring down the shower of much-needed rain. The emperor T'ang said: "If a man must be a victim, I will be he", and prepared himself for the sacrifice. Ere the prayer he offered was finished, the rain fell in heavy showers on the parched land for hundreds of miles.'[3] There is further an account of the sacrifice of a bride to a river and of the eating of first-born sons, which I will quote from Frazer. 'It is said that under the Tang dynasty the Chinese used to marry a young girl to the Yellow River once a year by drowning her in the water. For this purpose the witches chose the fairest damsel they could find, and themselves superintended the fatal marriage.'[4] In the state of Khai-muh, to the east of Yueh, it is recorded that 'it was customary to devour first-born sons, and further, that to the west of Kiao-chi or Tonquin, "there was a realm of man-eaters, where the first-born was, as a rule, chopped into pieces and eaten, and his younger brothers were nevertheless regarded to have fulfilled their fraternal duties towards him. And if he proved to be appetizing food, they sent

[1] *Ib.* 84. [2] *Ib.* 172.
[3] Dyer Ball, 'Human Sacrifice,' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi. 845. [4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., ii. 151-2.

some of his flesh to their chieftains, who, exhilarated, gave the father a reward"' (de Groot).[1]

The official ancestor cult was associated with that of nature spirits. The imperial ancestors enjoyed, for example, four big sacrifices a year, one for each season. There were six victims—a bull, a horse, a sheep, a dog, a pig, and a pheasant—and six sorts of grain which were brought by the ladies of the imperial harem. The Son of Heaven himself took the lead and brought in the principal victim, the bull. Such rites ensured good crops.[2] Certain spirits, the descendants of the nature spirits of the plebs, received state offerings and official recognition. Such were the four (or five) holy mountains, the four rivers, the four cardinal points, the Sun, the Moon and the five planets, the spirits of the wind, of the clouds, of the rain and of the fire, of the walls and of the hollows (Gräben).[3]

Offerings were also made to evil spirits. But afterwards they were driven away with great noise of guns and cannons, and overwhelmed with curses for their evil actions. A similar sacrifice was made for men condemned to death before the execution.[4] If this was to propitiate his ghost, the custom in some countries of allowing criminals their wishes on their last night may be partially dictated by a similar motive.

Sometimes sacrifice seems to have been received by proxy. Nature spirits were represented by men who took the offerings on their behalf; and dead ancestors seem also to have been represented by some surviving member of the family, if possible the grandson, who issued their commands, and received offerings.[5]

There were also sacrifices at solemn contracts. When the feudatory princes took their oaths to the Son of Heaven at the time of the Tcheou dynasty, an ox was killed and bled into a bowl ornamented with pearls. Each prince took of the blood and touched his lips.

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., iv. 180. [2] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 172-3.
[3] Franke, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, i. 201.
[4] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 310.
[5] *Ib.* 94.—Moore, *History of Religion*, i. 15-17.

The ox was then buried together with a copy of the contract. According to Loisy, the participants in this rite believed that they would suffer the same fate as the victim if they broke their oaths.[1]

Temples, and the utensils necessary to their cults, and the royal ornaments were consecrated with the blood of animal victims.[2] Finally, there was a special form of mortuary offering which occurred in ancient China, as in other places. Retainers were killed or killed themselves at the death of their lord to follow him into the next world; and even until recent times widows who committed suicide were especially honoured.[3]

2. *Sacrifice in Japan*

The Japanese are composed mainly of three elements—the Aino aborigines, the Korean or Mongolian emigrants, and the Malayan conquerors. Their religion is largely derived from a mixture of the earlier Korean or Mongolian and the later Malayan cultures.[4] Of their gods, most live on the earth, as gods of the mountains, rivers, and trees, some rule in the underworld of the dead, and others, such as the Sun-goddess and the Moon-god, though born on earth, live in heaven.[5]

There were sacrifices of various kinds. These seem sometimes to have been considered as a sort of exchange of commodities with the gods. Thus in the ceremonial recitation of the offerings the words occur: 'If you, great Gods, grant so and so then will the princes and the common people bring rich offerings'.[6] There are also purifications where the sins of the people are written down, transferred to a paper model of a man, and cast into the sea.[7] At the larger shrines offerings of clothing material, weapons, and live animals were made.[8] In every Shintoist house is a shelf, on which usually there stands a little shrine for the god that is specially

[1] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 302-3. [2] *Ib.* 372-3. [3] *Ib.* 486.
[4] Florenz, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 4. Aufl. i. 269.
[5] *Ib.* i. 274. [6] *Ib.* i. 329. [7] *Ib.* i. 330. [8] *Ib.* i. 330-1.

honoured in the house. Every morning, or at least three times a month, a lamp is lighted before it, and wine and flowers are offered.[1]

The official Shintoism does not recognize human sacrifice, but in earlier times men were offered to the gods of the rivers, of the waters, and of the trees. Men were buried under bridges and fortresses as offerings, according to Florenz, to the Earth-goddess. And at important funerals the necessary retinue for the next world were buried alive. Later images took the place of men, but voluntary suicide of retainers continued until recently.[2] Food, arms, ornaments, and earthen vases were also placed in the important tombs.[3]

The ancient Shinto did not, however, associate the cult of the dead with the cult of spirits as in China. Everything connected with the dead was impure for the service of the god.[4] Although offerings seem always to have been made to the dead in Japan, their regular cult is probably due to Chinese influence.[5]

There was an annual feast of first-fruits of the harvest; the offerings were chiefly of rice and rice-beer. The Mikado himself placed the rice before the cushion prepared for the god, as a 'divine nourishment'.[6]

Not all the offerings seem to have been designed to placate, or gain the favour of the gods. Some seem to have magically strengthened him and increased his divine force. Such may have been the intention of the offerings of mirrors to the Sun-goddess, and of the sacrifice of a black horse or dog to procure rain, or a white horse to bring fine weather, offerings which may have represented respectively a rain spirit and a fine weather god.[7]

There were also sacrifices of divination and of purification. For divination, the shoulder blade of a stag was taken and exposed to the fire. The cracks which were caused by the heat were then interpreted as if they were the writings of the gods.[8] For the purification of

[1] Florenz, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 4. Aufl. i. 332. [2] *Ib.* i. 331.
[3] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 148. [4] *Ib.* [5] *Ib.* 174. [6] *Ib.* 224. [7] *Ib.* 486. [8] *Ib.* 266

the Mikado clothes were made as if for him to wear. He then blew on them. After which they were cast into the water.[1] With them, presumably, perished all spiritual impurity.

Like the Emperor of China, the Emperor of Japan, the Mikado, is divine, but he is the incarnation of a female deity, the Sun-goddess, who is the ruler of the universe. 'Once a year all the gods wait upon him, and spend a month at his court. During that month, the name of which means "without gods", no one frequents the temples, for they are believed to be deserted.'[2] Human sacrifices were formerly offered at the graves of the Mikados, 'the personal attendants of the deceased being buried alive within the precincts of the tomb. But a humane emperor ordered that clay images should henceforth be substituted for live men and women.'[3]

Frazer has described the sacrifice of a black dog for rain in detail. 'Among the high mountains of Japan there is a district in which, if rain has not fallen for a long time, a party of villagers goes in procession to the bed of a mountain torrent, headed by a priest, who leads a black dog. At the chosen spot they tether the beast to a stone, and make it a target for their bullets and arrows. When its life-blood bespatters the rocks, the peasants throw down their weapons and lift up their voices in supplication to the dragon divinity of the stream, exhorting him to send down forthwith a shower to cleanse the spot from its defilement.'[4] In many similar rites in other parts of the world such a victim would be itself regarded as divine. And here, too, the black or white dog may have personated, or incarnated, the rain or the fine weather god. If so, this sacrifice would only present one more example of the slaughter of a divinity—a form of sacrifice from which all other sacrifices may have been derived.

In Japan deities were sometimes openly ill-treated if

[1] *Ib.* 312. [2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., i. 417.
[3] *Ib.* iv. 218. [4] *Ib.* i. 291-2.

they refused to provide rain. 'In a Japanese village, when the guardian divinity had long been deaf to the peasants' prayers for rain, they threw down his image and, with curses loud and long, hurled it head foremost into the stinking rice-field. "There", they said, "you may stay yourself for a while, to see how *you* will feel after a few days' scorching in this broiling sun that is burning the life from our cracking fields."'[1]

Again, in spite of all their piety to the souls of the departed, the Japanese sometimes treat these also in a manner lacking in respect. After the feast of all souls the people fear 'that some poor souls may have lagged behind, or even concealed themselves in a nook or corner, loth to part from the scenes of their former life and from those they love. Accordingly steps are taken to hunt out these laggards and send them packing after their fellow-ghosts. With this intention the people throw stones on the roofs of their houses in great profusion; and going through every room armed with sticks, they deal swashing blows all about them in the empty air to chase away the lingering souls. This they do, we are told, out of a regard for their own comfort quite as much as from the affection they bear to the dead; for they fear to be disturbed by unseasonable apparitions if they suffered the airy visitors to remain in the house.'[2] The whole process is more reminiscent of the common methods of driving away demons than of the otherwise pious treatment which the Japanese bestow upon their dead. But there is a very general tendency among all primitive peoples to promote their relations on their death to the rank of evil demons. Perhaps the Japanese, to some extent, share this tendency.

In the sacrifice of the bear by the Ainos, the aboriginal people of Japan, that combination of friendly gesture and hostile action which so often characterizes the attitude of savages to their supernatural friends is still clearly expressed. The bear among them has many

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 297. [2] *Ib.* ix. 152.

characteristics of a totem, for the Ainos worship it when dead, speak of it as a divinity when alive, and sometimes claim it as ancestor. But the bear is nevertheless freely hunted, and not spared as among true totemists. The bear which is to be sacrificed is caught young, brought up in the family, and often suckled by a woman. When it is grown up it is ritualistically killed amid lamentations and apologies. It is reminded, in a long oration, of all the kindness that has been showered upon it and entreated to give a favourable report of its murderers to the gods. Sometimes it is strangled to avoid bloodshed, and sometimes it is shot with an arrow. Before it is killed it is offered libations, and after it is dead its flesh is eaten and sometimes its blood is drunk, so that its worshippers may acquire its virtue. Its corpse may also be given part of its own flesh as its portion of the communal meal. As in all communal feasts, everyone is forced to participate, so that everyone may share the divine virtue and, perhaps, so that no one shall escape the guilt.[1]

In this sacrifice we may have an example, almost unaltered, of some of the most primitive religious practices of mankind. As so often in such ceremonies, the intention of the libations given to the victim is probably to appease its wrath at being slain. Where, in later cults, offerings are made to a god by worshippers who declare themselves to be miserable sinners, we may suspect that the crime for which they thus atone was once the murder of this same god. The god is no longer the victim, but he still receives the propitiatory offerings of a former deicide.

3. *Sacrifice in Egypt*

The Egyptian pantheon—a menagerie of sacred beasts and animal-headed gods—was formed by fusing and relating the various local gods whose districts

[1] Frazer gives a full account of the Ainos bear sacrifice. See *Ib.* viii. 180-90.

combined to form the Egypt of the Pharaohs. The Pharaoh was, even during his life, the divine son of heaven, and after his death he was assimilated to the god Osiris, whose resurrection was imitated at every funeral.

According to tradition, Osiris, the good and beloved king of Egypt who introduced the cultivation of the corn and of the vine, was lured to his destruction by his brother Set. Isis, his sister and wife, searched for the body, found it, hovered over it in the form of a hawk, and so conceived Horus the younger. A favourite design of the temple reliefs shows her thus hovering over the erect phallus of her fallen lord. After this the body was again found by Set, who rent it in fourteen pieces and scattered it abroad. But Isis sailed up and down the marshes looking for the pieces, and found them all but the genital member, which had been eaten by, the fishes. Finally, with the help of the gods she pieced the body together and mummified it, performing all the rites which the Egyptians perform over the bodies of their dead. Henceforth Osiris reigned in the Underworld, Lord of Eternity, Ruler of the Dead.[1]

The burial rites, first of the Pharaohs, and later of the chief officials, and finally of almost everyone, were modelled on the alleged burial of Osiris. The corpse was embalmed and immense care taken to preserve it from decay. Through these rites the deceased became Osiris. In early tombs his servants were buried with him, though soon these were replaced by models. So too his whole equipment was provided, furniture and utensils, food and drink. And here again reliefs and paintings supplemented, if they did not replace, the objects they represented.

Not only were offerings of food and drink made for the dead, but sacrifices to them to propitiate them seem to have occurred. 'Geese and gazelles were also sacrificed by being decapitated; they were supposed to represent the enemies of Osiris, who after the murder

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., vi. 3-23.

of the divine man had sought to evade the righteous punishment of their crime but had been detected and beheaded.'[1]

The gods, as well as men, were assimilated to the dead Osiris, and their cults were like those to the human departed.[2] In ancient times prisoners of war were sometimes slaughtered in the cult of the gods, or strangled and then burnt in the cult of the dead.

The Pharaoh himself presided at the cults of all the gods and all the dead. 'To this concentration of the religion in the person of the king corresponds the unification of ritual, which one can say is common for the dead and for the gods. The common ritual at the service of the gods and the deceased seems to have been first conceived to reanimate the remains of the dead king by virtue of sacrifice; applied to Osiris, it made of this dead god—originally doubtless a god of vegetation—a risen god; applied to all the gods, it resuscitated them each day to perform their cosmic tasks and to protect their worshippers; applied to all the dead, it set them on the road to immortality. Chief of this funerary service, a minister of general and perpetual resurrection, the Pharaoh, the god-king, plays the rôle of a supreme mediator between the divine and human worlds.'[3]

Thus the fundamental rites from which the Egyptian official religion was derived seems to have been the mummification and apotheosis of the dead king in the character of Osiris. But there is evidence that this apotheosis did not originally follow the natural death of the king, but that it was the last rite in his sacrifice. This earlier custom may be reconstructed from the myth of Osiris, from certain survivals in the cult, and from the comparison of these with the practices of other peoples.

A great festival called the Sed was celebrated every thirty years. This festival seems to have been designed to renew the divine life of the king, by identifying him

[1] *Ib.* vi. 15. [2] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 431, 487. [3] *Ib.* 487.

while yet alive with Osiris.[1] It is therefore reminiscent of the funeral rites. Its origin has been reconstructed by Petrie and quoted by Frazer as follows: 'In the savage age of prehistoric times, the Egyptians, like many other African and Indian peoples, killed their priest-king at stated intervals, in order that the ruler should, with unimpaired life and health, be enabled to maintain the kingdom in its highest condition. The royal daughters were present in order that they might be married to his successor. The jackal-god went before him to open the way to the unseen world; and the ostrich feather received and bore away the king's soul in the breeze that blew it out of sight. This was the celebration of the "end", the *sed* feast. The king thus became the dead king, patron of all of those who had died in his reign, who were his subjects here and hereafter. He was thus one with Osiris, the king of the dead. This fierce custom became changed, as in other lands, by appointing a deputy king to die in his stead, which idea survived in the Coptic Abu Nerūs, with his tall crown of Upper Egypt, false beard, and sceptre. After the death of the deputy, the real king renewed his life and reign. Henceforth this became the greatest of the royal festivals, the apotheosis of the king during his life, after which he became Osiris upon earth and the patron of the dead in the underworld.'[2]

Three other customs that suggest that Osiris was originally sacrificed may be mentioned. The ancient Egyptians used to burn red-haired men and scatter their ashes with winnowing fans, 'and it is highly significant that this barbarous sacrifice was offered by the kings at the grave of Osiris. We may conjecture that the victims represented Osiris himself, who was annually slain, dismembered, and buried in their persons that he might quicken the seed in the earth.'[3] The fact that in the myth of Osiris the god was divided and scattered over the ground lends further weight to

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vi. 153.
[2] Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, 185, quoted by Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vi. 154-5.
[3] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vi. 97-8.

this conclusion. In a 'sacrifice of a bull in the great rites of Isis all the worshippers beat their breasts and mourned',[1] which is reminiscent of the mourning for Osiris. Bulls also seem to have been sacrificed as scapegoats. Again, 'red oxen sacrificed by the Egyptians were said to be offered on the ground of their resemblance to Typhon (Set), though it is more likely that originally they were slain on the ground of their resemblance to the corn-spirit Osiris.'[2] Men too were sacrificed to Osiris with the head of an animal fastened to them.[3]

From these and similar customs, and from their comparison with similar customs among other peoples, we may conclude, with Frazer, that victims were once slain, dismembered, and scattered abroad in the character of Osiris; and that bulls and oxen, red-haired men, and the kings of Egypt themselves have all died in this rôle. But the motive given by Petrie and Frazer that such rites were intended to preserve the divine king from decay, and by Frazer that they were ultimately to increase the fertility of the soil, seem not wholly adequate to explain this ritual slaughter.

Further, it is not yet clear what part in the ceremony was played by Isis, the divine sister and wife of the slain Osiris. We are told that she wept for him, pieced him together, and bore his son Horus to avenge him. But certain features in the rites suggest that she was once a more formidable goddess. Behind the gods and goddesses of antiquity we seem always to see the dim and terrible figure of a Great Mother who herself devoured her lovers and her children. The Sed festival was connected with Sirius, the star of Isis.[4] She was often represented by a cow, and the bulls, who, as we have seen, may have stood for Osiris, were sacrificed to her. Her priest seems to have worn a jackal's mask.[5] Was she associated with the jackal-god who led Osiris to the underworld? She stole the name of the sun-god Ra,

[1] *Ib.* vi. 117. [2] *Ib.* viii. 34. [3] *Ib.* vii. 260-1.
[4] *Ib.* vi. 153. [5] *Ib.* vi. 85, n.

and for this purpose she made a serpent of his spittle, which bit him so that he told her his name that she might cure him.[1] Does this myth also record a cult? In one story she is said to have been decapitated by her son Horus.[2] Perhaps behind this story is a myth like that of Perseus and the Gorgon, and behind that a cult in which Isis too was slain.

But although the rôle of Isis remains a mystery it seems certain that Osiris was the name of a god-victim who was slain, dismembered, scattered, mourned, propitiated, and pieced together. The historic burial rites are at once the repetition and the denial of the earlier cult. The mourning, the propitiation, and the piecing together is retained, but the slaughtering, dismembering, and scattering is repudiated in the whole purpose of the later cult. Immense care was taken to preserve the corpse from destruction. And indeed the fear lest the body should be injured after death seems to have been the main preoccupation of the Egyptians. King Kufu (Cheops), the builder of the Great Pyramid of Giza, employed 100,000 men for twenty years to preserve his mummy from destruction. And the changes in the construction of the pyramids, and the later rock tombs, has been described as a series of stages of defence and attack. The corpse was embalmed with the greatest skill and it was concealed either in the depths of the earth, as in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, or under mountains of stone, like the pyramids of Giza. In these defences may perhaps be seen the reaction against the older custom of the ritual destruction of the divine victim in the person of the king—a danger that remained from the ravages of tomb-robbers, who mutilated as well as robbed. But the rites still contained traces of the earlier ceremony in the mourning and propitiation, and perhaps also in the strange custom by which the 'man whose duty it was to slit open the corpse for the purpose of embalming it fled as soon as he had done his part, pursued by all the persons present, who pelted him

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iii. 387. [2] *Ib.* vi. 88, n.

with stones and cursed him '.[1] Such ritual flights, of which we shall find other examples, are very characteristic of those sacrifices in which a divine victim was slain.

Thus the myth of Osiris probably preserves a record of the earliest form of the cult, which it was supposed to account for, but from which it was in reality derived. The first kings who were mummified may have been themselves the victims of a sacrifice in which they died in the character of Osiris as the Mexicans died in the characters of their gods. They may have been the priest-consorts of queen-goddesses, the embodiments of Isis, who were periodically dismembered, scattered abroad, re-collected, pieced together, and mummified to rise in the persons of their successors.[2] But there are many elements in the records that do not fit into so simple a scheme. Why, for instance, did the earlier kings boast on their pyramids that they feasted on gods ?[3] For this boast looks as if the kings were once the priests and sole participants of a sacrifice in which the divine animal was eaten ; not that they were themselves the victims. Perhaps they performed both rôles ; one at their inauguration, one at their apotheosis.

There were also other types of sacrifice that seem to have had little relation to the state Osirian cult. Before or at the time of the cutting of the dam at Cairo to irrigate the fields, a young virgin decked in gay apparel was thrown into the river as a sacrifice and as a bride for the river spirit. We have already come across a similar custom in China. The Wajagga of German East Africa threw an uncircumcized child of unblemished body into the river before irrigating their fields. ' They imagine ', says Frazer, ' that the spirits of their forefathers dwell in the rocky basins of these rushing streams, and that they would resent the withdrawal of the water to irrigate the fields if compensation were not offered them.'[4] Some similar idea perhaps underlay the Chinese and Egyptian customs.

[1] *Ib.* ii. 309, n. [2] *Ib.* vi. 18, 201-18 ; Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 175.
[3] Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, 127–9.
[4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vi. 38.

The offering of hair is a common form of sacrifice, a variant of which occurred in Egypt. After boys or girls recovered from sickness, 'their parents used to shave the children's heads, weigh the hair against gold or silver, and give the precious metal to the keepers of the sacred beasts, who bought food with it for the animals according to their tastes'.[1]

Lastly, I will quote from Frazer the account of the ceremony to help the Sun-god. 'Every night when the sun-god Ra sank down to his home in the glowing west he was assailed by hosts of demons under the leadership of the arch-fiend Apepi. All night long he fought them, and sometimes by day the powers of darkness sent up clouds even into the blue Egyptian sky to obscure his light and weaken his power. To aid the sun-god in his daily struggle, a ceremony was daily performed in his temple at Thebes. A figure of his foe Apepi, represented as a crocodile with a hideous face or a serpent with many coils, was made of wax, and on it the demon's name was written in green ink. Wrapt in a papyrus case, on which another likeness of Apepi had been drawn in green ink, the figure was then tied up with black hair, spat upon, hacked with a stone knife, and cast on the ground. There the priest trod on it with his left foot again and again, and then burned it in a fire made of a certain plant or grass. When Apepi himself had thus been effectually disposed of, waxen effigies of each of his principal demons, and of their fathers, mothers, and children, were made and burnt in the same way. The service, accompanied by the recitation of certain prescribed spells, was repeated not merely morning, noon, and night, but whenever a storm was raging, or heavy rain had set in, or black clouds were stealing across the sky to hide the sun's bright disc. The fiends of darkness, clouds, and rain felt the injuries inflicted on their images as if they had been done to themselves; they passed away at least for a time, and the beneficent Sun-god shone out triumphant once more.'[2]

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 29. [2] *Ib.* i. 67-8.

Demons are often degraded gods or the gods of other peoples.[1] It is therefore not impossible that the bad Apepi may have been once a beneficent god—a view which the name of the early Pharaoh Pepi helps to support. If so the rite of destroying the image of Apepi may be a degenerate form of an earlier sacrifice of him. In the later rite the hate of Apepi was clearly admitted. In the earlier form it would have been denied, and the god would have perished amid protestations of piety and regret. But the ceremony of the destruction of Apepi is paralleled by similar customs all the world over, and it is hard to believe that they are all degenerate sacrifices. It is, however, not unlikely that the magical destruction of demons and the religious destruction of gods have related origins. A psycho-analyst would see in both the same motives, though in the religious rite the motive would be unconscious.

4. *Sacrifice among the Semites*

A baffling variety of sacrificial rites characterizes the religion of the Semites. But perhaps the most important were those concerned with the cults of the Great Mother and her slain Son, who, under such names as Astarte and Adonis, or Cybele and Attis, are a constantly recurring theme reminiscent of the Egyptian Isis and Osiris. And there can be little doubt that even the Virgin Mary and her crucified Son Jesus were accepted, at least by some of their contemporaries, as a new edition of these old divinities.[2] In the legends the slain god was sometimes the son, sometimes the lover of the great goddess. Often he was both at once. He was slain by an enemy or died as the result of a self-inflicted castration, and rose again from the dead.

[1] Reik, *Der eigene und der fremde Gott*, 136.

[2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., ix. 412-23.—Reik, *Der eigene und der fremde Gott*, 17. 'Noch in der Apokalypse Johannis heisst die Himmelskönigin die Mutter des Siegers (12, 1) und dessen Braut (21, 9).'

From these myths, and from the records of the cults, Frazer in the fifth volume of his *Golden Bough* (3rd ed.) has reconstructed the original rites with great plausibility. As I understand him, his theory is as follows: The early Sumerian and Semitic dynasties, like the dynasties of Egypt, descended theoretically in the female line, that is, in the only line in which originally descent could be surely traced. But male descent was in practice secured by royal incest. The king and queen personated the god and goddess whose union was believed magically to secure the fertility of the soil. And the king, the human god, was sacrificed periodically to rise from the dead in the person of his successor. He thus acted the drama of the dying and returning vegetation. But, in process of time, the kings, loth so soon to terminate their rule, succeeded in delegating their fatal office to their sons. Thus the main scheme, which varied within limits, included a divine queen, her brother, the priestly or divine king, and her son, the divine victim.

The goddess seems to have been personated not only by the queen, but also by temple prostitutes,[1] of which there were a great many, and a son of any one of these would probably suffice to play the part of the slain or emasculated god. In later times the part of the victim was taken by an image; though in the ritual of Attis the novices still castrated themselves, and the priests who were already eunuchs gashed their arms, in imitation of their saviour.[2]

Two other types of sacrifice may perhaps be in part derived from Frazer's fundamental scheme of the dread goddess and the dying god. These are the sacrifice of children, especially of first-born children, and the

[1] These were perhaps the historical ancestresses of the nuns of the Christian Church.

[2] Frazer suggests that this mutilation was designed to assist the resurrection of Attis (*Golden Bough*, v. 268). It has also been suggested that the purpose of such self-mutilation was to identify the self with the goddess. Hercules is supposed to have worn female attire for a similar purpose. It seems most likely, however, that the rite was the repetition of the death of Attis, and that the novices identified themselves with him.

sacrifice of chastity, or of hair, by women at the temple of the goddess.

It the sacrifice of the king's son was substituted for the sacrifice of the king himself, it seems likely that the sons of common people might have come to be substituted for the royal children. And once the quality of the victims had been debased it is natural that the balance should have been redressed by increasing their quantity. Thus might arise the custom of sacrificing the first-born sons of all the people, as was done probably in the earliest form of the Passover,[1] or of the nobles in time of stress, as in the sacrifice to Moloch in the siege of Carthage.[2] Thus the king would evolve from the hapless victim to the ferocious god who never tired of demanding the blood of others. In his first form he appears as Attis or Adonis, in his last as Moloch.[3]

[1] Frazer believes that originally at the Passover the first-born children of the Israelites were slain; 'that in fact the slaughter of the first-born children was formerly what the slaughter of the first-born cattle always continued to be, not an isolated butchery, but a regular custom, which with the growth of more humane sentiments was afterwards softened into the vicarious sacrifice of a lamb and the payment of a ransom for each child' (*Golden Bough*, iv. 176-7).

[2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 167-8. 'When the Carthaginians were defeated and besieged by Agathocles, they ascribed their disasters to the wrath of Baal; for whereas in former times they had been wont to sacrifice to him their own offspring, they had latterly fallen into the habit of buying children to be reared as victims. So, to appease the angry god, two hundred children of the noblest families were picked out for sacrifice, and the tale of the victims was swelled by not less than three hundred more who volunteered to die for the fatherland. They were sacrificed by being placed, one by one, on the sloping hands of the brazen image, from which they rolled into a pit of fire. . . . But all the place in front of the image was filled with a tumultuous music of pipes and drums to drown the shrieks of the victims.' Similar rites were practised by the Israelites in the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem (*ib.* 169). Here again it seems to have been the first-born that thus suffered in the flames. 'The Prophet represents God as saying, "I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments wherein they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate"' (*Ib.* 172).

[3] The Massacre of the Innocents by Herod at the time of the birth of Jesus and by Pharaoh at the time of the birth of Moses is perhaps a story that attributes to these rulers traditional actions of the gods they represented. It is conceivable that the order of development that we have suggested must be reversed and that the sacrifice of first-born children preceded the sacrifice of god-kings. It may have been simply considered unlucky to keep the first-born child. And this custom may have lived on longer in the royal house than among common people. If the period to which the king's first-born son was allowed to live was gradually increased, the sacrifice of heirs would develop into the sacrifice of old rulers.

But if the fiction had to be preserved that the victim was the son of the goddess, the mothers, first of the king's less important sons, and then of all the people from whom victims were drawn, might be required to serve at the temple of the goddess and thus identify themselves with her. In this way the fiction that the king's whole harem were incarnations of the goddess, the custom of prostituting the inmates, and finally the custom of requiring every woman to prostitute herself to a stranger once in her life at the temple, may have arisen. And it is not impossible that the sacrifice of hair which was sometimes accepted in lieu of chastity was a vicarious sacrifice for the child which would have resulted from the divine union..

Thus the conception of the Great Mother and her slain Son, and of the modifications of her cult, which is due to Frazer, can perhaps be extended to explain some features in a variety of sacrificial rites. But there remain other practices that do not so easily fit into this scheme.

It seems that the personification of the great queen-goddess could also on occasion be sacrificed. But nothing in our reconstruction of the original religion suggests an explanation for this custom. Was it an essential element in the earliest form of the cult? Or was it only a late development? Both Dido and Semiramis, about whom doubtless accumulated the legends of the goddesses they incarnated, are said to have perished upon a pyre. 'At Carthage, the greatest of the Tyrian colonies, a reminiscence of the custom of burning a deity in effigy seems to linger in the story that Dido or Elissa, the foundress and queen of the city, stabbed herself to death upon a pyre, or leaped from her palace into the blazing pile, to escape the fond importunities of one lover or in despair at the cruel desertion of another. We are told that Dido was worshipped as a goddess. . . . The two apparently contradictory views of her character as a queen and a goddess may be reconciled if we suppose that she was both the one

and the other; that in fact the queen of Carthage in early days, like the queen of Egypt down to historic times, was regarded as divine, and had, like human deities elsewhere, to die a violent death either at the end of a fixed period or whenever her bodily and mental powers began to fail. In later ages the stern old custom might be softened down into a pretence by substituting an effigy for the queen or by allowing her to pass through the fire unscathed.[1] With Dido Frazer compares Semiramis, who destroyed her lovers, and who for this and other reasons he identifies with the Babylonian goddess Istar or Astarte.[2] 'Semiramis herself, the legendary queen of Assyria, is said to have burnt herself on a pyre out of grief at the death of a favourite horse. Since there are strong grounds for regarding the queen in her mythical aspect as a form of Istar or Astarte, the legend that Semiramis died for love in the flames furnishes a remarkable parallel to the traditionary death of the love-lorn Dido, who herself appears to be simply an avatar of the same great Asiatic goddess. When we compare these stories of the burning of Semiramis and Dido with each other and with the historical cases of the burning of Oriental monarchs, we may perhaps conclude that there was a time when queens as well as kings were expected under certain circumstances, perhaps on the death of their consort, to perish in the fire. The conclusion can hardly be deemed extravagant when we remember that the practice of burning widows to death survived in India under English rule down to a time within living memory.'[3]

Thus Frazer offers two explanations for the burning of a queen-goddess. One that she, like her consort, died in the flame when her bodily and mental vigour declined; and one that she was expected to die at his death and was not permitted to outlive him. Both explanations may be true of different epochs.

But the origin and history of the Great Mother is wrapt in mystery. She must have arisen at a time

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, v. 113-4. [2] *Ib.* ix. 371-2. [3] *Ib.* v. 76-7.

when the dynastic descent passed only in the female line, so that the man who married her human incarnation acquired a kingdom for her dowry. Through her alone could pass the sceptre of royal power. She married, as a rule, her own brother, and sometimes her son, so that the new king in practice inherited his father's might, not directly as in patriarchal systems, but only through his union with his sister or his mother. Partly for this reason the queen may have come to usurp many of the attributes of male rulers, and to have transmitted them to the goddess who was built in her image and whose human incarnation she was believed to be. The most common emblem of the goddess was the conical stone which has been interpreted by many anthropologists, and by all psycho-analysts, as a phallic symbol.[1] Was this originally the symbol of her slain or castrated lover? Or was she herself thought of as equipped with the male organ? Freud, in his paper on 'Fetishism', has argued that a fetish is the symbol of the mother's penis which the fetishist unconsciously believes that she possesses.[2] Psycho-analyses have often shown that a great reverence and awe of women may be due to a similar belief. It is not improbable that the Great Mother Goddess of fertility owed her power to the same cause. But why she was sometimes required to die, and why her lovers perished regularly, remains a problem. Though it is easier to understand that as they grew in power they and the gods they represented should have first delegated their fatal office and have finally appeared as angry deities who demanded victims on the least provocation.

[1] Another favourite symbol of the goddess was the snake. This is perhaps the most universal phallic symbol of all. The snake-goddess spread from the East into the classical West. 'M. S. Reinach has rightly seen that the tradition of such a snake-goddess survives alike in the Furies of Aeschylean Tragedy with the snakes "that hiss in their hair", and in the Artemis of the Arcadian Lycosura, who was represented as carrying a torch in one hand and two serpents in another. In classical Crete itself the symbolism of the old religion is probably to be seen in the Medusa-like heads found at Praesos and Palaikastro, where snakes are held in either hand, or spring from head or shoulders' (Burrows, *Discoveries in Crete*, 138).

[2] Freud, 'Fetishism,' *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, ix. part 2.

Besides the rites concerned in the cults of the great mother or earth goddess and her son, various other types of sacrifice were known to the Semitic peoples. The ancient Sumerians or Semites of Mesopotamia buried or burnt their dead. Food and clothing were placed with their remains.[1] When Ashurbanipal took Babylon and suppressed the revolt of his brother he executed a certain number of rebels as an offering to his grandfather Sennacherib. Such a sacrifice may have been intended to provide servitors. But two other explanations are possible: the intention may have been to propitiate the dead or to resuscitate him.[2]

The Babylonians practised divinatory sacrifices in which they read the oracle from the liver of sheep.[3] Purification and expiation, that is, the elimination of an impurity or a malady, were widely practised. The victim was either killed or driven away. Loisy thinks that the victim was not offered as a vicarious sacrifice but that it was there to entice away the animistically conceived malady.[4]

5. *Sacrifice in India*

In India there were many sacrifices performed with an exact and complicated ritual. The householder on small occasions, the king on great ones, presided at the rite. He and his wife underwent a lengthy dedication which included bathing, fasting, and sexual continence. This dedication was supposed to represent a new birth. The gods enjoyed their portion at the banquet to which they were invited. Originally it seems to have been laid on the grass, but later it was burnt.[5]

But there were also practices that are reminiscent of the rites of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. 'The Gonds of India, a Dravidian race' (*i.e.* Pre-Aryan) 'kidnapped Brahman boys, and kept them as victims to be sacrificed on various occasions. At sowing and reaping, after

[1] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 148-9. [2] See *ib.* 149. [3] *Ib.* 267-8.
[4] *Ib.* 325. [5] Konow, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, ii. 47-9.

a triumphal procession, one of the lads was slain by being punctured with a poisoned arrow. His blood was then sprinkled over the ploughed field or the ripe corn, and his flesh was devoured. The Oraons or Uraons of Chota Nagpur worship a goddess called Anna Kurari, who can give good crops and make a man rich; but to induce her to do so it is necessary to offer human sacrifices. In spite of the vigilance of the British Government these sacrifices are said to be still secretly perpetrated.'[1] Perhaps these victims, like Osiris, Adonis, and Attis, provided the blood which the goddess of fertility required before she could properly perform her functions.

A still closer resemblance to the Semitic and Egyptian deities is shown by the Meriahs of the Khonds of Bengal, another Dravidian race. The Meriah was the victim offered to the earth goddess Tari Pennu or Bera Pennu. He seems to have been originally a god. Like Osiris he was dismembered and scattered over the fields.[2] But Westermarck, disagreeing with Frazer, seems to regard the Meriah as a substituted victim, not as a corn-spirit.[3] If, however, as in Semitic sacrifice, the king's son was first substituted for the king, and then the sons of ordinary mortals for the king's son, the two views can perhaps be reconciled. The earlier form of the sacrifice seems to have survived in the practice of killing the king after a certain period of years. Thus in some parts of India the king ruled twelve years; and at the end of this time he cut his own throat at a public ceremony especially instituted for the purpose.[4] Sometimes, however, a retainer seems to have sacrificed himself in the place of his master.[5] The custom which was common in the India of the Middle Ages for men voluntarily to cut off their own heads as a sacrifice to their gods may have been likewise due to the substitution of a common for a royal or divine victim.[6]

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vii. 244.
[2] *Ib.* vii. 245-51.
[3] Westermarck, *Origin of Moral Ideas*, i. 445 *sq.*
[4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 46-51.
[5] *Ib.* iv. 52-4.
[6] See *ib.* iv. 54-5.

The goddess Kali seems to have been another variant of the Dread Mother of Asia. 'Sacrifices to Kālī or Chandikā were formerly common. They were freely offered in the days of Mārāthā rule; and in Western India there are many temples at which such sacrifices were common only a century ago. The victim was taken to the temple in the evening and shut up; and in the morning he was found dead, the Dread Goddess having "shown her power by coming in the night and sucking his blood".'[1] In the great Saiva temple at Tanjou there is a shrine of Kali where a male child, purchased for the purpose, 'was sacrificed every Friday evening, until the advent of British rule led to the substitution of a sheep'.[2] The implication that the victim was originally the divine consort of the goddess is strengthened by the special privileges allowed the victims. 'It appears from the *Haft Iqlīm* that in Koch Bihār persons, called *bhogīs*, sometimes offered themselves as victims. From the time when they announced that the goddess had called them, they were treated as privileged persons. They were allowed to do whatever they liked, and every woman was at their command until the annual festival came round, when they were sacrificed to the goddess.'[3] It is further recorded that 'In the Jaintia *parganas*, human sacrifices to Kālī were offered annually. As in Koch Bihār, persons frequently volunteered themselves as victims. . . . On the *Navami* day of the *Durgā Pujā*, the victim, after bathing and purifying himself, was dressed in new attire, daubed with red sandal wood and vermilion, and bedecked with garlands. Thus arrayed he sat on a raised dais in front of the goddess, and spent some time in meditation and the repetition of *mantras*. He then made a sign with his finger, whereupon the executioner, after uttering the prescribed sacrificial *mantras*, cut off his head, which was placed before the goddess on a golden plate. The lungs were cooked and eaten by

[1] Gait, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi. 850.
[2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.*

such *Kandrā Yogīs* as were present, and the royal family partook of a small quantity of rice cooked in the blood.'[1] Similar customs were practised by the Chuliyāa in the service of the goddess Kesāi Khāti (eater of raw human flesh), who is now identified with Kali.

It is interesting to note that, in this last rite, the victim was anointed with the same ointment as at his birth.[2] Thus, though the sacrifice to Kali is similar, on the one hand, to the sacrifice of divine kings or of their divine sons in the rites of the great Asiatic mother-goddess of fertility, it is also reminiscent, on the other hand, of the puberty rites and ordeals of savage peoples. These puberty rites submitted the youths to a painful ordeal that symbolized their death and rebirth, and it is not unthinkable that the sacrifices to mother-goddesses may have been derived from them. The two types of rite have much in common. They are probably related in origin. But it is difficult to decide which came first.[3]

An interpretation of the religion of Kali has been given from the psycho-analytical standpoint by Daly.[4] He mentions that she is said to have killed her husband Siva, and that she is often depicted dancing on his prostrate form, holding the head of a decapitated giant in one hand, brandishing a sword in another, adorned with the heads and forearms of her victims, and sticking out her tongue at the terrified observer of her picture. He points out that she is almost completely decked with phallic symbols,[5] so that there can be little doubt

[1] Gait, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi. 850. [2] *Ib.* vi. 851.

[3] In the sacrifices of the cult of the Great Mother three elements stand out: the killing of the victim, his dismemberment or emasculation, and his rebirth. In the puberty rites of primitive peoples these same three elements are symbolically expressed. A pretence is made of killing the novice, he is circumcised or a tooth is knocked out, and he is symbolically reborn. Obviously there is a psychological connection between these two sorts of rite. Probably there is a historical one as well. For a psycho-analytical interpretation of puberty rites see Reik, 'Die Pubertätestiten der Wilden', in *Probleme der Religionspsychologie.*

[4] Daly, 'Hindu-Mythologie und Kastrationskomplex', *Imago*, xiii.

[5] *Ib.* xiii. 173-4. That the heads that form the pearls of the necklace of Kali are the heads of her sons is disclosed in Bengal poetry quoted by Daly (*ib.* xiii. 190-1).

that her worshippers, like Freud's fetishists, believed, unconsciously at least, that she possessed the male organ. But Daly extends his interpretation beyond the current analytic theory and supposes that the form of Kali resulted from what he calls the 'menstruation complex'. Of this, at least, we can be fairly confident, that Kali was a phallic goddess and that she castrated and destroyed her consort. No psycho-analysts could question this interpretation, and the parallel with the Semitic goddess and her castrated and slain son Adonis [1] should make it probable to anthropologists of other schools.

As in many cults the original custom of sacrificing the king seems to have developed into the vicarious sacrifice of other victims. But though in some forms of these cults the god, who was originally the victim, became the being to whom sacrifice was offered, so that he eclipsed his consort, Kali seems to have retained her dominant position as the recipient of sacrifices. At a still later epoch piacular offerings in times of crisis seem to become votive offerings after deliverance. Thus we learn 'That when a husband or a son is dangerously ill, a vow is made that, on the recovery of the patient, the goddess will be propitiated with human blood. The vow is fulfilled either at the next *Durgā Pujā*, or at once in some temple of Kālī. The wife or mother, after performing certain ceremonies, draws a few drops of blood from her breast with a nail cutter, and offers them to the goddess.' [2]

Among other forms of Indian sacrifice the following miscellaneous collection may be mentioned. To purify a village of cholera the Mallan and the Kurmi tie a yellow sack full of grain, cloves, and minium to a black she-goat or cow and drive it to the next village: the disease is believed to be transferred with the scapegoat.[3] At the foundation of buildings children, especially first-born children, were sometimes buried under the walls.[4]

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, v. 264.
[2] Gait, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi. 853.
[3] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 314. [4] *Ib.* 367.

If a Brahman novice fails in continence, an ass, which is supposed to be an especially licentious animal, is sacrificed to repair the fault. The novice's portion in the sacrificial meal is cut from the genital organ.[1] Reminiscent of the sacrifice of virility at the altar of Cybele was the practice in India to dedicate men who were born eunuchs to the goddess Huligamma.[2]

6. *Sacrifice in Persia*

The ancient religion of the Persians was similar to the Vedic religion. 'According to Herodotus, the Persians when they sacrificed to their supreme God, to the sun, to the moon, to the earth or the fire, to the water, the winds or to Anakita, take the victim to a hallowed spot; for they have no altars. They pray for the prosperity of the Persians, and of the king, since the sacrificer has no right to demand celestial favours for himself alone. The flesh of the victim, after it is boiled, is deposited in small pieces on a bed of fine herbs as a meal for the god, as in the Vedic sacrifice. . . . After waiting some time the sacrificer takes up the meats and uses them as he chooses.'[3] But sacrifices were also made to Ahriman, Prince of Darkness. The juice of an haoma plant was mixed with the blood of a wolf, an animal sacred to Ahriman, and cast into a place where the sun never shone.[4] Sometimes human sacrifices were offered to this power of evil.[5]

As an example of purificatory sacrifice Loisy mentions the execution by Xerxes of the son of Pythios.

[1] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 40. [2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, v. 271, n.
[3] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 494. [4] *Ib.*
[5] *Ib.*—Reinach interpreting the legend of Mithra discovers a former condition of totemism and totem sacrifice. *Orpheus*, translated by Florence Symons, 68-9. 'Mithra sprang from a rock; he causes a spring to gush from it by striking it with an arrow, concludes an alliance with the Sun and engages in combat with a bull, which he overcomes and sacrifices. . . . The sacrifice of the bull seems to indicate that the worship of Mithra under the most ancient form was that of a sacred bull, assimilated to the sun, which was immolated as a god, its flesh and blood being consumed in a communal meal. Mithra, the slayer of the bull, was the result of a duplication common to all the religions which have passed from totemism to anthropomorphism.'

When the great king was about to leave Sardis to pass into Europe, the Lydian Pythios asked him to leave the eldest of his five sons behind. Xerxes instead took the son of Pythios, cut him in two, and put one half on each side of the road through which the army had to pass.[1] Such a sacrifice is reminiscent of rites in which an individual to be purified is made to pass through the carcase of a victim, perhaps to symbolize rebirth.

Persian burial customs are interesting and unusual among civilized peoples. The magian priests exposed their dead to the dogs and the birds till the bones were picked clean, and they enforced this custom generally.[2] At their festival of ' All Souls ' food and drink was left about for the spirits of the departed.[3]

Frazer has also detected traces of the sacrifice of divine kings as in so many other places. There was a rite called the ' Ride of the Beardless One ' which took place both in Persia and Babylonia at the beginning of spring. ' On the first day of the first month, which in the most ancient Persian calendar corresponded to March, . . . a beardless and, if possible, one-eyed buffoon was set naked on an ass, a horse, or a mule, and conducted in a sort of mock triumph through the streets of the city. . . . If a shopkeeper hesitated a moment to respond to his demands, the importunate beggar had the right to confiscate all the goods in the shop ; so the tradesman who saw him bearing down on them, not unnaturally hastened to anticipate his wants by contributing of their substance before he could board them. Everything that he thus collected, from break of day to the time of morning prayers, belonged to the king or governor of the city ; but everything that he laid hands on between the first and the second hour of prayer he kept for himself. After the second prayer he disappeared, and if the people caught him later in the day they might beat him to their heart's content.'[4] Frazer argues that the Beardless One was originally a

[1] *Ib.* 334. [2] *Ib.* 152. [3] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vi. 68.
[4] *Ib.* ix. 402-3.

king who died in the character of the dead vegetation of the old year and revived and rose in the character of the new vegetation of the new year. In Haman and Vashti he sees an example of the dying god and his consort, and in Mordecai and Esther, whom he equates with the Babylonian deities Marduk and Istar, an example of the same god and goddess at their birth. Originally, he thinks, the human god ruled for a whole year, and that the later 'curtailment of his reign on earth was probably introduced at the time when the old hereditary divinities or deified kings contrived to shift the most painful part of their duties to a substitute, whether that substitute was a son or a slave or a malefactor. Having to die as a king, it was necessary that the substitute should also live as a king for a season; but the real monarch would naturally restrict within the narrowest limits both of time and of power a reign which, so long as it lasted, necessarily encroached upon and indeed superseded his own.' [1]

There is little evidence to show what happened to the divine consort of the slain god. But the legend of Semiramis, who burned herself on a pyre in Babylon at the loss of a favourite horse, suggests that the goddess Istar, like her consort, was expected to die by violence. For Semiramis almost certainly incarnated Istar, one of whose lovers was also a horse.[2]

In a long note at the end of the ninth volume of the *Golden Bough* Frazer further suggests, very plausibly, that the rapid spread of Christianity may have been due to the fact that Christ may have been put to death in the character of Haman.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Beardless One was, if possible, one-eyed. Since the loss of an eye is known often to symbolize castration, and since the slain god was sometimes also the castrated god, it is perhaps not overbold to assume that the Beardless One was once emasculated as well as slain.

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ix. 407. [2] *Ib.* ix. 407, n.

7. *Sacrifice in Greece*

In ancient Greece religion was never organized into a single state cult as in Egypt or China. Centralized political authority and centralized religion usually accompanied each other, and to the absence of both in the Grecian world was due at once its political insecurity and its intellectual wealth.[1] Progress in the past has resulted from the alternation of social stability and freedom of thought. It is perhaps the main unsolved problem of practical sociology to combine the two.

To the anthropologist the variety of Grecian cults and the absence of a single Greek religion renders his work at once more difficult and more promising. More difficult because he hardly knows where to begin ; more promising because he is likely to find more traces of primeval rites than in the great empire religions which discarded what they could not distort into a single system.

To the same absence of system is due an immense amount of borrowing from neighbours which complicates the task of the historian bent on tracing cults to their sources. But this difficulty does not embarrass the psychologist who is concerned in discovering why certain practices are satisfying rather than whence they came.

Since it is difficult to give any account of Greek religion as a whole, we will consider some of the deities in turn, and try to reconstruct their cults from their myths and legends.

Cronus.—Like many ancient deities Cronus is said to have castrated his father and to have been in turn castrated by his son. He also married his sister Rhea,

[1] This combination of independence and lack of unity is attributed by Gomperz to Geography. ' So viele Bergkantone, so viele mögliche Stätten eigenartiger Bildung, so viele Sitze eines stark ausgeprägten Sonderlebens, welches für die reiche, vielgestaltige Gesittung Griechenlands so erspriesslich wie für die staatliche Zusammenfassung seiner Kräfte verhängnisvoll werden sollte ' (*Griechische Denker*, 4. Aufl. i. 3-4).

and swallowed his own children. Zeus only escaped and grew up to castrate his father and to rule in his stead.

If we translate this myth into the cult that is probably behind it we arrive at the same sort of condition of affairs that Frazer has supposed for the Semitic divine kings. But probably the story combines a record of two epochs. In one Cronus was the title of a king who sacrificed or ate his sons. In another he was a king who succeeded his father by marrying his sister,[1] and who was in due time sacrificed or castrated by his son. And perhaps between these epochs the sons were driven out, as in so many legends, to marry the daughter and to win the throne of some other monarch.[2]

That at some stage the king's sons were sacrificed, and that this practice is recorded in the story that Cronus ate his children, as well as in the legends that identify him with Moloch, seems probable.[3] But did this ritual filicide historically succeed the sacrifice of the king himself? Was the sacrifice of the son the substitute of the sacrifice of the father as Frazer suggests of the Semitic kings? Or must we invert the order? That both kinds of sacrifice occurred seems certain. But the evidence is insufficient to determine their temporal relation to each other.

The theory that regicidal sacrifices were the older and that they later gave place to the vicarious sacrifice of the king's son has already been considered. It is supported by all the learning of the author of the *Golden Bough*. But it may be as well to consider the alternative. There are many legends in which kings are warned of danger from their sons, and in consequence kill them or drive them out. It seems likely that the ancient ruler had just cause to fear his sons, for they were above all others envious of him, and frequently succeeded in deposing him and taking his place. For this reason he may have killed them all,

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 194.—For arguments against the supposition of matrilineal descent in ancient Greece, see Rose, 'Prehistoric Greece and Mother-Right', *Folk-lore*, xxxvii. [2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 278-9.
[3] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, i. 27-8.

or the eldest, or submitted them to some ordeal to break their wills, or have driven them out. This practice might explain the passage of the kingdom in the female line; for if the king drove out, or killed, all his own sons, there would be no one left to succeed him. He who won the hand of the queen would, in such cases, be most likely to procure at the same time the kingdom.

In primitive societies the initiation rites, which Reik has interpreted as including, as one of their main functions, the symbolic castration and killing of the young to teach them a due respect for the old,[1] we may see a variant of the custom of kings to drive out or kill their sons, or submit them to some ordeal to check their revolutionary ardour. Such practices of primitive peoples are often combined with a matrilineal system that has as its effect, if not as its 'final cause', the abolition of most sources of conflict between sons and father.[2]

The killing of the royal princes that was ultimately intended to remove possible rivals for the kingdom may have come to be regarded as a magical rite to prolong the life of the king, and so have developed into a ritual sacrifice. If so, such a custom is an instructive example of the development of magic. Conscious only is the fact that the sacrifice secures the life of the king. The reason for this—namely, that otherwise the son might usurp the place of his father—is repressed. What was formerly the rational means to a desired end is now thought of as the supernatural means. It may even be performed only symbolically. It is therefore no longer rational, but magical. Later, as the meaning of the rite came to be still more completely forgotten, vicarious sacrifices, instead of the killing of the princes, may have been considered sufficient magically to prolong the life of the king. But we must suppose that the

[1] Reik, *Probleme der Religionspsychologie*, 'Pubertätesriten der Wilden'.

[2] Ernest Jones, in his article 'Mother-Right and Sexual Ignorance of Savages' (*International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vi.), points out that the conflict with the father is only displaced on to the maternal uncle who symbolizes him.

renunciation of the princes of all aspirations to their father's throne was at first a condition of their survival, and that inheritance remained matrilineal. A relic of the first period may be found in the legend of the Swedish king who sacrificed his sons in turn to prolong his life,[1] and of the second in the myths of king's sons who were banished because it was prophesied that their fathers should die at their hands. Finally, the matriarchal inheritance, which may have been originally but the consequence of the banishment or slaughter of the princes, may have come to be regarded as an end in itself, and rationalized as the only sure method of tracing descent. By this time we must suppose that the relations between sons and fathers had improved and that the king could look with greater equanimity at the prospect of his son's succession. And this was then secured by the marriage of the prince with his sister. In Egypt, where kings frequently associated their sons with their rule even before their death, the original hostility must have reached its lowest level.

But where in this scheme are we to place the sacrifices of king-consorts that undoubtedly occurred? Such kingly victims ruled not in their own right, but as consorts of their divine mothers or sisters. They were essentially the products of a matriarchal age. If, therefore, matriarchy was originally the consequence of the slaughter or banishment of the princes, the slaying of the king-consort must have succeeded, rather than preceded, the slaying of the sons. It can only have occurred after the sons had been allowed to live long enough to marry their sisters and to succeed. Possibly the original practice of killing the royal princes may have been first mitigated by lengthening their span of life until they died after, rather than before, their fathers. If so, the practice of killing them, which was originally intended to prevent them from threatening the state with all the evils of civil war, would have completely lost its first purpose and would have been

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 57 *sq.*

continued only as a magical rite to preserve the state from famine. Remembered only would be the fact that killing the princes prevented famine. Forgotten would be the reason that famine is the result of civil war, and civil war the result of allowing the princes to live. The killing would be continued, but at a time when it lost its original purpose. Superstitions connecting the king with vegetation, which probably had an independent origin, would be quoted as the real purpose of the rite.

No doubt other equally coherent theories of the order of the development of sacrifices of kings and princes could be given. I shall be quite ready to discard this one as soon as something more plausible is suggested. If it is true, the earlier members of the dynasty who identified themselves with Cronus destroyed their children, and the later members were themselves destroyed. The story that Cronus ate his children would correspond to the period in which the princes were slain, and the story that he married his sister and was emasculated by his son to the period at which princes succeeded by marrying their sisters but were still expected to die for a reason that had been long forgotten. A similar interpretation could probably be given to the similar myths that we have considered. From the frequency with which emasculation accompanied, or was substituted for, the killing of a god in myths we may infer that castration was also a common feature of the sacrifice.

There appears further to have been a Semitic Cronus who sacrificed his sons ; for according to the statement of Philo of Byblus that ' Cronus, whom the Poenicians call Israel, being king of the land and having an only-begotten son called Jeoud (for in the Phoenician tongue Jeoud signifies ' only-begotten '), dressed him in royal robes and sacrificed him upon an altar in a time of war, when the country was in great danger from the enemy '.[1]

Zeus.—In the historic period Zeus was the king of Heaven. He is said to have been the son of Cronus by

[1] *Ib.* iv. 166.

Rhea and to have castrated his father and usurped his place. It is possible that this connection with Cronus was due to an attempt to relate all the gods, whatever their origin, to one Pantheon, and that in earlier times Zeus was an independent deity. Kings seem to have borne the title of Zeus,[1] and it is likely that this deity was once incarnate in the head of many a royal house. In later times local gods frequently enjoyed his name.

On Mount Lycaeun human sacrifice to Zeus Lycaeus continued to the time of Pausanias. And there are legends of King Lycaeon which seem to record such sacrifices in earlier times. It is said that this king offered a human child at the altar, that he set human flesh before Zeus when feasting him unawares at his table, and that he was changed into a wolf, or that someone present at the sacrifice always turned into a wolf, but could recover his human form if he abstained from human flesh for nine years.[2] These myths seem therefore to record a rite in which a king sacrificed, and ate, a child, which was possibly his son.

The part of the myth that relates the king's metamorphosis into a wolf is reminiscent of totemism. In totemic sacrifice a member of the totem species, which represents the totemic ancestor of the clan, is sometimes killed and eaten by the whole community. Most of the deities that we have considered have animal attributes; they had the heads of animals or animals were sacred to them, and it is very possible that they may all have been originally totems. If so, there is a hiatus between the sacrifice of totems and the sacrifice of divine kings or of divine princes that is hard to fill. Perhaps the simplest hypothesis is that the sacrifice of divine kings, or of their sons, had two independent origins, one in totemic sacrifice, the other in the precautionary exposure of children. It is as well to keep before us many possibilities, and to test them in the

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 177, 361.
[2] Farnell, *Cults*, i. 41; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ix. 353-4.

light of the new material. We shall then be less likely to overlook facts which are significant.

Still more reminiscent of totemic sacrifice was the ceremony of Zeus Polieus at Athens, called the *Bouphonia*, or ox murder. 'It took place about the end of June or beginning of July, that is, about the time when the threshing is nearly over in Attica. According to tradition the sacrifice was instituted to procure a cessation of drought and dearth which had afflicted the land. The ritual was as follows. Barley mixed with wheat, or cakes made of them, were laid upon the bronze altar of Zeus Polieus on the Acropolis. Oxen were driven round the altar, and the ox which went up to the altar and ate the offering on it was sacrificed. The axe and knife with which the beast was slain had been previously wetted with water brought by maidens called "water-carriers". The weapons were then sharpened and handed to the butchers, one of whom felled the ox with the axe and another cut its throat with the knife. As soon as he had felled the ox, the former threw the axe from him and fled; and the man who cut the beast's throat apparently imitated his example. Meantime the ox was skinned and all present partook of its flesh. Then the hide was stuffed with straw and sewed up; next the stuffed animal was set on its feet and yoked to a plough as if it were ploughing. A trial then took place in an ancient law-court presided over by the King (as he was called) to determine who had murdered the ox. The maidens who had brought the water accused the men who had sharpened the axe and knife; the men who had sharpened the axe and knife blamed the men who had handed these implements to the butchers; the men who had handed these implements to the butchers blamed the butchers; and the butchers laid the blame on the axe and knife, which were accordingly found guilty, and condemned and cast into the sea.'[1] The guilt that the participants in this sacrifice displayed and the name of the rite seems to prove, as Frazer

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, viii. 4-5.

suggests, that the ox incarnated the god. The sacrificers at once shared, disowned, and avoided the guilt. They 'all tasted the flesh of the dead and refrained not',[1] that is, they were all forced to share the guilt as well as the benefit of the sacrifice. But at the same time they disowned guilt and brought the axe to judgement. Finally they avoided guilt and stuffed the ox and pretended that it was still alive, ready to perform its useful and magical functions perhaps, as Frazer thinks, as a corn-spirit.

But what are we to think of the origin of such a rite? Did the king, or his son, once play the part of the ox-god? Or is the rite preserved in its original form? The flight of the man who struck the blow reminds us of the scapegoats that were driven out to bear away the sins of the community. He may once have escaped less lightly. If so, in his fate we may find the origin at once of the scapegoat and of the piaculum.

Frazer cites evidence to prove 'that in Thessaly and probably in Boeotia there reigned of old a dynasty of which kings were liable to be sacrificed for the good of the country to the god called Laphystian Zeus, but that they contrived to shift the fatal responsibility to their offspring, of whom the eldest son was regularly destined for the altar'.[2] It appears that later a ram was substituted for the princes as in the story of Abraham and Isaac. But this later development may have been a return to the original form of totemic sacrifice.

Hera.—Hera was the sister of Zeus and his bride. Her cult at Corinth was perhaps not of pure Greek origin. She was associated with Medea, and the sacrifice of children seems to have been part of her primitive sacrifice. Sometimes the people, sometimes the goddess, were believed to be responsible for the slaughter. There was a ritual of mourning and sorrow, of shaven head and dark robe which is reminiscent of the worship of the oriental Aphrodite.[3] There is little evidence that

[1] Farnell, *Cults*, i. 57. [2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 164-5.
[3] Farnell, *Cults*, i. 203.

the pure Greek Hera was ever a very terrible person; she was known only as the wife of Zeus, and as the goddess who encouraged marriage and aided childbirth.[1] But in spite of her later benevolence it is possible that she was once another example of the dread mother.

Artemis.—Artemis had affinities both with the Asiatic goddesses and with totems. She seems, like the Dread Mother elsewhere, to have been associated with a lover who came to a bad end.[2] Like Astarte and Cybele she was served at Ephesus with eunuch priests.[3] She was also especially a goddess of wild animals. 'The hare, the wolf, the hind, the wild boar, and the bear are consecrated to her by sacrifice or legend.'[4] Her rites seem to have included 'a great holocaust of stags and fawns, wolves and bears, and birds which were all thrown or driven into the flames of a great fire'.[5] She was supposed to partake of the flesh of a wild boar offered to her.[6] 'At Agrae in Attica . . . five hundred she-goats were offered annually by the polemarch to Artemis *Agrotera* as a thanksgiving for the victory of Marathon. . . .'[7]

The older religion seems to have seen in her more the protectress of animals, especially those with young, than as the huntress and destroyer of later times.[8] But she also participated in rites that were very similar to the sacrifice of totems.

It seems to have been once 'the custom for young maidens, clothed in a saffron robe, to dance in the Brauronian ceremonies of Artemis, and that in this dance they, as well as the priestess, were called "bears"; the saffron robe was possibly worn in order to imitate the tawny skin of the bear, and probably in the earliest times of the rite an actual bearskin was worn by the dancers'.[9] It is therefore likely that the goddess was originally a bear totem and that 'the maidens dressed up as bears assist at the sacrifice to the

[1] *Ib.* i. 195. [2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 39. [3] *Ib.* v. 269.
[4] Farnell, *Cults*, ii. 431. [5] *Ib.* ii. 431-2. [6] *Ib.* ii. 432.
[7] *Ib.* ii. 434. [8] *Ib.* ii. 434. [9] *Ib.* ii. 436.

bear-goddess of an animal akin to her and to themselves, and thus, if the sacrificial meal followed upon the act of oblation they would be recruiting their physical life and reviving the communion between themselves and their divinity. At the same time the feeling of kinship with the bear would easily lead to the belief at a later time that the goddess was angry because her animal was killed.'[1] Or perhaps, as in the suggested derivation of at least one form of the sacrifice of Zeus, the sacrifice was originally the totem feast of the therianthropic goddess which the sense of guilt that increases with civilization turned into a piaculum.

There are traces of this piaculum in the holocaust of the animals and, less surely, in certain other rites. At Athens two *katharmata,* ' probably criminals, were sacrificed in a sort of religious execution ; but though Artemis, from her connection with Apollo, came to obtain a place in that festal worship, yet it does not appear that the *katharmata* were devoted to her '.[2] There was further a flagellation of Spartan ephebi before the altar of Artemis which has been regarded as a modification of an earlier act of religious oblation. But Farnell, following Robertson Smith, thinks that this is more naturally explained ' as a ceremony of initiation, in which the youth is admitted into the full status of tribesman, and in which the altar or sacred idol must be touched with blood in order that the physical bond between him and his divinity may be

[1] Farnell, *Cults,* ii. 437.—Reinach is a strong believer in the totemic origin of the Greek gods. ' The primitive sacrifice of the god, generally accompanied by eating his flesh (communion), was perpetuated in ritual, and becoming incomprehensible, gave rise to numerous legends. To understand their genesis it is essential to bear in mind two essential elements of the totemic rites ; *masquerade* and *adoption of a name.* As the object of the sacrifice of the totem was to deify the faithful who took part in it, and to assimilate them to the god as closely as possible, the faithful sought to embrace this resemblance by taking the name of the god and covering themselves with the skins of animals of the same kind. Thus the Athenian maidens who celebrated the worship of the Bear-Artemis, dressed as, and called themselves, she-bears. The Maenads, who sacrificed the faun Pentheus, dressed themselves in the skins of fauns. Even in later forms of worship, we found the devotees of Bakkhos taking the name of Bakkhoi ' (Reinach, *Orpheus,* translated by Florence Simmonds, 83).

[2] Farnell, *Cults,* ii. 439.

strengthened'.[1] Be this as it may the flagellation surely has some connection with expiation. The blood bond may be established as it is in the totem feast, or as in initiation ceremonies, but it is established in a manner that is more painful to the youths than to the goddess. Perhaps initiation ceremonies always contained ordeals which were, in some sense, expiatory.

The piacular element in the sacrifice of Artemis is again suggested by the legend of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the priestess of Artemis, and in the condition of Orestes' life 'that in the yearly sacrifice there (at Halae) the sword should be held to a man's throat and some blood drawn, "for the sake of righteousness and that the goddess might have honour"'.[2] Further, at Phocaea a human victim seems to have been burnt alive to Artemis.[3]

The legend of Iphigenia is particularly interesting, as it seems to represent the substitution of the priestess for the goddess; for it is more likely 'that Iphigenia was a substitute for a doe than that the doe was a substitute for Iphigenia'.[4] There may have been first the communal sacrifice of the totem-goddess, by which the divine power and virtue was transferred to the worshippers. Then the goddess may have been separated from that animal which is no longer herself, but which is sacred to her and sacrificed in her rites. And finally, the increasing fear of the sacrilege committed by the slaughter of an animal that is still felt, in some mysterious way, to incarnate the goddess must be reduced by the piacular sacrifice of the priestess. But the priestess is at the same time the goddess, so that the new element is added to, rather than substituted for, the old. This hypothesis, however, gives no account of the divine or human lover of the goddess that we have seen reason to suppose she once possessed. Possibly

[1] *Ib.* ii. 439.—In his article 'Sacrifice' in the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Robertson Smith classes the flagellation of the Spartan boys as a piaculum. Possibly the rite is derived from the same source as the blood-letting of the priests at the altar of Rhea-Cybele.

[2] Farnell, *Cults*, ii. 440. [3] *Ib.* ii. 441. [4] *Ib.*

he was originally himself the slain animal before it became identified with the goddess.

Although Artemis seems to have had a lover she was originally unmarried. As in the oriental cults, 'orgiastic and lascivious dances and the use of phallic emblems'[1] occurred in her rites. But already in Homer's time, although she remained the goddess of childbirth[2] she had become a virgin[3] proverbial for her chastity.

Aphrodite.—It is probable that Aphrodite was originally an Oriental deity.[4] She was at least identified with Istar as the lover of Adonis. Among the curious features of her cult that may be mentioned a youth at one of her festivals lay down and imitated the cries of a woman in travail.[5] In another the women and the men changed dresses.[6] Aphrodite was best known as the goddess of love—sometimes of profane love. 'In Hierapolis, Armenia, and probably Lydia, she was supposed to demand the sacrifice of virginity before marriage; and in the legends of Istar and Semiramis the goddess herself was represented as wanton and murderous.'[7] But the distinction between the goddess of free love and the goddess of honourable marriage existed only in later times. She was apparently originally a goddess of fecundity whom the Greeks converted into a goddess of beauty and love.

At Salamis in Cyprus a man was annually sacrificed to Aphrodite, but later an ox was substituted.[8] Her earliest symbol was the conical stone,[9] but later the dove became her most common emblem.[10] She seems to have been yet another form of the great oriental goddess whose lover was ritually slain.

Ge.—Ge seems to have been the great earth goddess,[11] the goddess of that which grows on the land, of agriculture and of the dead. It is a legitimate inference that human victims were once offered to her, and perhaps

[1] Farnell, *Cults*, ii. 445. [2] *Ib.* ii. 448. [3] *Ib.* ii. 446.
[4] *Ib.* ii. 619. [5] *Ib.* ii. 634. [6] *Ib.* ii. 635. [7] *Ib.* ii. 657.
[8] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 166, n. [9] Farnell, *Cults*, ii. 671.
[10] *Ib.* ii. 674. [11] *Ib.* iii. 19.

their flesh or ashes scattered over the land to make it fertile.[1] In Cyprus in the ritual of Aglauros, who seems to have been another form of Ge, a human victim was made to run thrice round the altar, after which he was speared by the priest.[2] Ge was worshipped 'at Athens, Mykonos, and probably once at Delphi in association with the dead and the ghostly realm'.[3] At Mykonos seven black lambs were offered to Zeus Chthonios and Ge Chthonia. The worshippers seem to have partaken of the sacrificial meal. There is an interesting legend that the Athenian Aglauros cast herself from the Acropolis to save her country in time of peril.[4] Is this a further example of a priestess who was sacrificed for, or to, her goddess?

Demeter and Kore-Persephone.—There is a good deal of similarity between the legend of Demeter and Persephone and that of Astarte or Aphrodite and Adonis. But whereas Adonis is the son of Astarte, Persephone is the daughter of Demeter. And whereas Adonis was killed by Ares in the form of a wild boar, Persephone was carried off to the under world by Pluto to be his bride. Like Attis, Adonis, and Osiris, Persephone was mourned. Like Osiris she ruled in the under world, but as queen not as king. But, since Demeter refused to allow the crops to grow until Persephone had been returned, Zeus ordered that she should spend two-thirds of every year in the upper world with her mother and the gods and only one-third of the year with her husband. This myth, according to Frazer, represents the decay and return of vegetation, which was dramatized and magically controlled. The drama of Demeter and Persephone seems to have formed the chief feature of the Eleusinian mysteries and of the festival of the Thesmophoria. These rites are excessively confusing, and it is impossible to reconstruct them accurately. We hear of living pigs thrown into underground sanctuaries,[5] of serpents that are

[1] See *ib.* iii. 19-20. [2] *Ib.* iii. 19. [3] *Ib.* iii. 23.
[4] *Ib.* iii. 21. [5] *Ib.* iii. 89.

in the vault,[1] of an earth goddess whose local form was a snake,[2] of the sacrifice of a priestess, of a combat after the sacrifice,[3] of prisoners who were released,[4] of the absence of men during one night of the festival, of sexual abstinence mingled with intentional obscenity, and of some kind of flagellation,[5] of a passion play,[6] of representations of the abduction and rape of Kore, the double and daughter of Demeter,[7] and perhaps of the birth of a sacred child.[8]

Rhea-Cybele.—Rhea-Cybele was probably of Cretan or Phrygian extraction, and some opposition was given to her introduction into Greece.[9] Her worship was associated with that of her sacred son. She was a goddess of fertility and of death. She was the Great Mother, the Mother of the Gods. Snakes and lions, trees and pillars, were among her emblems. Her priests were eunuchs who mutilated themselves in religious frenzy. She may have been thought of as a virgin mother. But her cult is obscure and difficult to reconstruct with certainty.[10]

The ritual of the goddess seems to have commemorated the death and resurrection of Attis, her lover and perhaps her son.[11] Frazer describes the spring festival of Cybele and Attis in Rome as follows: 'On the twenty-second day of March, a pine-tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a great divinity. . . . The trunk was swathed like the corpse with woollen bands and decked with wreaths . . . and the effigy of a young man, doubtless Attis himself, was tied to the middle of the stem. On the second day of the festival, the twenty-third of March, the chief ceremony seems to have been a blowing of trumpets. The third day, the twenty-fourth of March, was known as the Day of Blood: the Archigallus or high-priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering. Nor was he

[1] Farnell, *Cults*, iii. 89. [2] *Ib.* iii. 52-3. [3] *Ib.* iii. 93-4. [4] *Ib.* iii. 97.
[5] *Ib.* iii. 103-4. [6] *Ib.* iii. 173. [7] *Ib.* iii. 134, 176, 181.
[8] *Ib.* iii. 177. [9] *Ib.* iii. 303. [10] See *ib.* iii. ch. vi.
[11] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, v. 264.

alone in making this bloody sacrifice. Stirred by the wild barbaric music of clashing cymbals, rumbling drums, droning horns and screaming flutes, the inferior clergy whirled about in the dance with waggling heads and streaming hair, until, rapt into a frenzy of excitement and insensible to pain, they gashed their bodies with potsherds or slashed them with knives in order to bespatter the altar with their flowing blood. . . . Further, we may conjecture, though we are not expressly told, that it was on the same Day of Blood . . . that the novices sacrificed their virility. Wrought up to the highest pitch of religious excitement they dashed the severed portions of themselves against the image of the cruel goddess. These broken instruments of fertility were afterwards reverently wrapt up and buried in the earth or in subterranean chambers sacred to Cybele, where, like the offering of blood, they may have been deemed instrumental in recalling Attis to life and hastening the general resurrection of nature, which was then bursting into leaf and blossom in the vernal sunshine. Some confirmation of this conjecture is furnished by the savage story that the mother of Attis conceived by putting in her bosom a pomegranate sprung from the severed genitals of a man-monster named Agdestis, a sort of double of Attis.' [1]

There were also secret or mystic ceremonies. ' In the baptism the devotee, crowned with gold and wreathed with fillets, descended into a pit, the mouth of which was covered with a wooden grating. A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead glittering with gold leaf, was driven on to the grating and there stabbed to death with a consecrated spear. It's hot reeking blood poured in torrents through the apertures, and was received with devout eagerness by the worshipper on every part of his person and garments, till he emerged from the pit, drenched, dripping, and scarlet from head to foot, to receive the homage, nay, the adoration of his fellows as one who had been born

[1] *Ib.* v. 267-9.

again to eternal life and had washed away his sins in the blood of the bull.' [1]

Poseidon.—Among the sacrifices to Poseidon may be mentioned the offering of the first fruits of the season at Troezen,[2] of a white ram to Poseidon *Temenites* and a white lamb to Poseidon *Pukios* at Mykonos,[3] of a horse by throwing it into the sea,[4] of bulls, of the legendary sacrifice of a maiden,[5] and of a thanksgiving offering to Poseidon Soter after the storm that scattered the Persian fleet.[6] In historic times Poseidon was a sea god, but he was also the god of fertilizing streams and so of vegetation, and was regarded as the cause of earthquakes.[7] He was further considered to be in some sense an ancestor,[8] and his cult seems to have been fused with that of Erechtheus, a hero who was buried but who was believed to continue to live underground, and who in the *Iliad* was honoured with sacrifice.[9] It is not unlikely that this deity was originally a horse, and that a human representation of him was thrown into the sea in sacrifice.[10]

Apollo.—Apollo was perhaps originally a wolf god,[11] the supposed ancestor of certain Ionic gentes who made their way into the Athenian state,[12] but other animals, and especially the goat, seem to have been sacred to him.[13] He was also a pastoral god,[14] a god of trees and vegetation,[15] and of agriculture.[16]

According to a scholiast 'a man who killed a wolf in Attica used "to make a collection" for its burial, that is to say, buried it with costly and propitiatory offerings',[17] and this custom suggests the originally divine or totemic nature of the wolf, which may once have been eaten sacramentally. There is further some evidence of the sacramental eating of the god in the form of a goat.[18]

Human sacrifices seem to have been offered to

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, v. 274-5. [2] Farnell, *Cults*, iv. 6.
[3] *Ib.* iv. 7. [4] *Ib.* iv. 15. [5] *Ib.* iv. 26. [6] *Ib.* iv. 13.
[7] *Ib.* iv. 5-7. [8] *Ib.* iv. 36-7. [9] *Ib.* iv. 47-51. [10] *Ib.* iv. 15-26.
[11] *Ib.* iv. 113. [12] *Ib.* iv. 160. [13] *Ib.* iv. 254-5. [14] *Ib.* iv. 123-4.
[15] *Ib.* iv. 124. [16] *Ib.* iv. 130. [17] *Ib.* iv. 115-16. [18] *Ib.* iv. 258.

Apollo, and the god himself may have been slain in the person of his priest.[1] Of a festival, probably the Thargelia, a festival of Apollo, Tzetzes says: 'In time of plague, famine, or other disaster, the ugliest man in the city was led to sacrifice, as a purification and an expiation of the city; bringing him to a suitable place they put cheese into his hand, and cakes, and figs, and having smitten him seven times on his genital organs with squills, wild figs, and other wild growths, they at last burnt him with wood of wild (fruit) trees and scattered his ashes to the winds into the sea'.[2] Originally the victim may have been treated with great honour and identified with the god so that he might communicate his virtue to the crops.[3] At Leukos human sacrifice was mitigated first by choosing criminals who were destined to die anyhow, and later by fastening parachutes of feathers to those who were thrown from the high place so that they were not killed but rescued and banished.[4] In the Thargelia the victim still seems to have retained some of the attributes of the god, to be in fact a sort of mock god. But the ugliest instead of the most beautiful human representative was chosen; either because he is less valuable, or because his very ugliness, an attribute which is often characteristic of phallic symbols, made the victim peculiarly appropriate in a rite designed to stimulate the fertility of the crops.

According to a Megarian story cited by Farnell, the king 'Alkathous was sacrificing at the altar of Apollo, when his own son rushed up and with innocent intent threw the burning wood off the altar, whereupon the father instantly slew him with the sacred faggots. The legend', continues Farnell, 'gives us strong testimony that at Megara, in ancient times, human victims were offered to Apollo, and that the victim might even be the king's own son.'[5]

But there is little certain evidence of a sacramental

[1] *Ib.* iv. 263. [2] *Ib.* iv. 271. [3] See *ib.* iv. 279-81.
[4] *Ib.* iv. 274-5. [5] *Ib.* iv. 274.

eating of the god. There are 'only two examples of a nightly and mystic service, namely, the special purification of the Argive priestess and the Kharian prophet; and here the officiating individuals enter into communication with the deity through sacrament. Otherwise the sacrifices are mainly of the usual Hellenic form, being occasionally bloodless oblations, but far more frequently animal-offerings, among which we must reckon with the survival of human sacrifice.'[1]

Apollo was also intimately associated with divination. The diviner was always a woman. She seems to have been originally a virgin, but later the only obligation was that she should dress as one. She chewed laurel to establish communication with the deity, a practice which may have been equivalent to the sacramental eating of the god. Then, possessed with the spirit of the god, she prophesied in his name.

In the earliest monuments Apollo seems to have been represented by a conical pillar, and later the bow is his most constant attribute. Both these emblems are common phallic symbols, and it seems probable that at least the pillar was consciously intended to be such.

Dionysus.—The myth of Dionysus is described by Frazer as follows: 'Zeus in the form of a serpent visited Persephone, and she bore him Zagreus, that is, Dionysus, a horned infant. Scarcely was he born, when the babe mounted the throne of his father Zeus and mimicked the great god by brandishing the lightning in his tiny hand. But he did not occupy the throne long, for the treacherous Titans, their faces whitened with chalk, attacked him with knives while he was looking at himself in a mirror. For a time he evaded their assaults by turning himself into various shapes, assuming the likeness successively of Zeus and Cronus, of a young man, of a lion, a horse, and a serpent. Finally, in the form of a bull, he was cut to pieces by

[1] Farnell, *Cults*, iv. 253.

the murderous knives of his enemies.'[1] In the Cretan version his destruction is brought about by Juno, the wife of Jupiter.[2] After his death he rose again and his limbs were pieced together, either at the command of his father or through the efforts of his mother, or because his father Zeus swallowed his heart and begat him again by Semele.[3]

The ritual of Dionysus appears to have been a sort of mystery play, in which his life, death, and resurrection were acted; but it is probable that here as elsewhere the myth was invented to explain the cult. The main act in the drama seems to have been the tearing to pieces of Dionysus in the form of an animal by the Maenads, or wild women, who devoured his raw flesh in frantic haste, and who presumably imagined that they thus absorbed his divine virtue.[4] The festival was by night, in the forest and on the mountain and often in the depth of winter.[5] 'The tragedy of Euripides is eloquent concerning the joy "of the banquet of raw flesh", and the Christian fathers and the scholiasts attest the long survival of this practice in the orgiastic ritual.[6] . . . The wild excitement going with the fear lest the spirit should escape, allowed no time for the formal mode of sacrifice and the slower processes of cookery.'[7] And, according to Firmicus Maternus, 'even in the latter days of paganism, the Cretans solemnize a divine funeral festival, and organize a sacred year with trieteric rites, performing everything that the boy god did or suffered. They rend a living bull with their teeth, and they simulate madness of soul as they shriek through the secret places of the forest with discordant clamours.'[8]

Dionysus was usually consumed in the form of a bull, but the goat and fawn were also his embodiments.[9] and snakes, too, were dismembered in his ritual.[10] Human victims seem to have been not uncommon. A

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vii. 12-13. [2] *Ib.* vii. 13. [3] *Ib.* vii. 14.
[4] Farnell, *Cults*, v. 164-6. [5] *Ib.* v. 153. [6] *Ib.* v. 164.
[7] *Ib.* v. 166. [8] *Ib.* v. 157. [9] *Ib.* v. 97. [10] *Ib.* v. 165-6.

child who personated Dionysus seems to have been dismembered and eaten by Minyan and Argive women,[1] and Pentheus, the priest who incarnated the god, was led through the city in female attire, which the deity himself occasionally affected, hung on a tree and pelted at ; ' then follows the dismemberment, and then —we may suspect—either in reality or simulation, " the sacrificial banquet of men's flesh " '.[2]

Not only the deity and his human representatives, but also his female votaries seem to have come in for rough usage. In the festival of the *Agrionia* these women ' were pursued by the priest of Dionysus with a drawn sword, and anyone that he could catch was slain ; . . . And we have a right to suspect that the Maenad was originally slain sacramentally '.[3]

The Maenads seem to have been not only sometimes killed but often scourged, as is suggested by the legend of Lykurgos, who, armed with an ox-goad, drove the ox-god into the sea and pursued the Maenads. ' It is well known ', writes Farnell, ' that whipping is a commonly used practice in vegetation rites, whether to increase the fructifying power of the patients, in cases where the rods were cut from a tree or plant of a specially quickening potency, or more usually perhaps to drive out from the body impure influences or spirits, so that it may become the purer vehicle of divine force. Therefore Lykurgos pursued and struck the Maenads with ox-thongs ; the women of Alea in Arcadia were scourged in the festival of Dionysus ; and there is reason to think that the modern Bacchanalian mummers at Bizyi were at one time accustomed to be whipped in the course of the miracle-play.' [4]

Among other characteristics of the rites of Dionysus may be mentioned a general intoxication, for Dionysus was also a god of wine and with wine his divine essence could be sacramentally absorbed,[5] a mock marriage with the queen-archon,[6] and the use of a model

[1] Farnell, *Cults*, v. 167. [2] *Ib.* v. 168. [3] *Ib.* v. 169-70.
[4] *Ib.* v. 163. [5] *Ib.* v. 122. [6] *Ib.* v. 159-60.

phallus which seems to have been paraded at the festivals.[1]

From such legends and survivals it is a little difficult to discover whether Dionysus was originally sacrificed in the form of an animal or of a king or of a prince; whether he was sacrificed by his priests or by his Maenads; or whether his priests or his Maenads were sacrificed to him. Or even whether he was male or female himself. The accepted purpose of his rites seems to have been to stimulate fertility.

Reviewing these examples of Greek sacrifice we find in the rites of Cronus, Zeus, and Apollo cases of the sacrifice *of* a god, either in the form of an animal or of a king-priest, followed at a later stage by the sacrifice of a victim *to* the god; and in the rites of Artemis the sacrifice *of* a theriomorphic goddess, of her priestess, and of animals who may have represented the goddess herself and have been at the same time substitutes for her priestess. That is, we find examples of sacrifices both *of* and *to* both gods and goddesses. We find that chastity was an article of value that could be sacrificed to Aphrodite, and that virility was offered as a sacrifice to Rhea-Cybele, and that blood was given to Attis to renew his life. Finally, we find that Dionysus was torn in pieces and devoured by women. It is possible that the purpose here was not only to become the god as in the usual sacramental meal, but to become his mother.[2] Attis was reborn by his mother who consumed the pomegranate that sprang from the severed genitals of his double Agdestis, and the eating of the severed members of Dionysus, the mock marriage, the use of the phallic emblems, and the whipping of the women with ox-thongs cut from the sacred ox may have been intended to produce a similar effect. The crops may have been renewed by reincarnating the new god of vegetation in the wombs of the women who ate the old.

There is no clear trace of an original connection of

[1] *Ib.* v. 107-8, 125. [2] Roheim, *Australian Totemism*, 391.

burial rites with sacrifice as in Egypt, where the rites for the dead seem to have been derived from the sacrifice of Osiris. It is, however, likely that the great games that formed so striking a feature of Greek civilization were once funeral rites. But as in the cult of Osiris many elements in the funeral may have originally preceded the death. Frazer suggests that the divine king was perhaps the victor in the race, and that his vanquished predecessor may have been ritually slain. Each king, he supposes, may have reigned for eight, or four years, the interval between the races, and have been required at the end of this period to risk his crown and life to the hazard of a new contest.[1] Perhaps he lengthened his reign by requiring his sons to compete on his behalf. Such a development might account for the myths of the substitution of sons for fathers as sacrificial victims. But we cannot yet be sure whether sons were substituted for fathers or fathers for sons, or whether both kinds of substitution occurred.

8. *Sacrifice in Rome*

The Romans 'were more interested in the cult of their deities, that is, in the ritual and routine by which they could be rightly and successfully propitiated, than in the character and personality of the deities themselves'.[2] For this reason it is easier to describe the festivals than to trace the history of the gods.

The Roman month contained three fixed points, the Kalends, the Nones, and the Ides, which originally corresponded to the phases of the moon, and intervening dates were described in terms of the number of days

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 104. It is possible that the races may have been originally combats. Rose in his paper 'Suggested Explanation of Ritual Combat' (*Folk-lore*, xxxvi.) suggests that ritual combats purified by stimulating excitement and mana. This seems rather vague, but if games started as ritual combats at tombs they may have been related to the blood feud. All the members of a bereaved family are sometimes expected to fight together after the funeral. And by this means, especially if one of them is killed, they are purified of their guilt.

[2] Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 333.

which separated them from the day after the next fixed point. Thus if the Kalends were the day after to-morrow a Roman would describe to-day as the *third* day before the Kalends. Each festival had its fixed day, and it was celebrated with great precision and elaborate detail. Here, as it is not possible to describe them all, I have made an arbitary selection which is based on Fowler's *Roman Festivals*.

In spite of the work of the systematizers the Roman calendar still contains 'in a fossilized condition the remains of three different strata of religious or social development'.[1] There are, first, survivals of 'the most primitive condition of human life in ancient Latium; that of men dwelling on forest-clad hill-tops, surrounded by a world of spirits, some of which have taken habitation in, or are in some sort represented by, objects such as trees, animals, or stones'.[2] Next there is the remnant of 'a period in which the ordered processes of agriculture, and the settled life of the farm-house, are the distinctive features. We have the beginnings of a calendar in the observation of the quarters of the moon and their connection with the deities of light.'[3] And finally, there is the systematization of the religious life in the city, and even of the Latin federation.[4]

The old Roman year began in March, and on the Ides of this month, or on the day before the Ides, 'a man clad in skins was led in procession through the streets of Rome, beaten with long white rods, and driven out of the city. He was called Mamurius Veturius . . . .'[5] According to a late myth the rite was in commemoration of the expulsion of Mamurius the Smith, because misfortune had fallen on the Romans when they used his shields instead of those that had fallen from heaven. But Frazer holds that the victim represented the Mars of the old year who was driven out at the beginning of the new, and that this god 'was originally not a god of

[1] *Ib.* 331. [2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.* [4] *Ib.* 335.
[5] *Ib.* 48. Quoted from Frazer, *Golden Bough*.

war, but of vegetation '.[1] The rite is interesting, since it seems to suggest the former combination in one act of the sacrifice of a god and the expulsion of a scapegoat.

At the Tubilustrium, on the 23rd of March (x. Kal. Apr.), the day before the meeting of the comita, the tubae were purified by the sacrifice of a lamb. These were long, straight brass tubes with bell mouths, used in military and religious ceremonies.[2] Such purificatory rites are often called cathartic, because by means of them an excessive purity or impurity can be removed from any object, that is, through cathartic sacrifice an object may be consecrated to the service of the gods or deconsecrated for the service of men.

At the Fordicidia on April 15 (xvii. Kal. Mai.), 'one of the oldest sacrificial rites in the Roman religion', pregnant cows were slaughtered, 'one in the Capitol and one in each of the thirty *curiae*. . . . The cows were offered . . . to Tellus, who . . . may be an indigitation of the same earth power represented by Ceres, Bona Dea, Dea Dia, and other female deities. The unborn calves were torn by attendants of the virgo vestalis maxima from the womb of the mother and burnt, and their ashes were kept by the Vestals for use at the Parilia a few days later. This was the first ceremony in the year in which the Vestals took part, and it was the first of a series of acts, all of which are connected with the fruits of the earth, their growth, ripening, and harvesting. The object of the burning of the unborn calves seems to have been to procure the fertility of the corn now growing in the womb of mother earth, to whom the sacrifice was offered.'[3] It is not clear how much of the rite was magical, how much propitiatory. Perhaps by anticipating the birth of the calves, the birth of vegetation was magically stimulated, and by burning them the earth compensated for what was to be taken from her.

At the Cerialia on April 19 (xiii. Kal. Mai.), burning brands seem to have been fastened to the tails of foxes.

[1] Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 48. Quoted from Frazer, *Golden Bough*.
[2] Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 63-4. [3] *Ib.* 71.

This was, according to Ovid, in commemoration of the act of a boy who caught a fox that had done damage to the farm, tied it up in straw and hay and set fire to it, but who allowed it to escape, so that it burnt the crops. Modern research, however, gives the rite a more distant origin. Preller thinks that the ceremony had something to do with the *robigo*, or red fox, a red mildew that attacks cereals, and Gubernatis that the tail of the fox was a phallic symbol, and that the ceremony was a piece of imitative magic to promote the growth of the crops.[1]

At the Parilia on April 21 (xi. Kal. Mai.) 'The sheepfold was decked with green boughs and a great wreath was hung on the gate. . . . At the earliest glimmer of daybreak the shepherd purified the sheep . . . by sprinkling and sweeping the fold; then a fire was made of heaps of straw, olive-branches, laurel, to give good omen by the crackling, and through this apparently the shepherds leapt, and the flocks were driven. . . . After this the shepherd brought offerings to Pales, of whom there may perhaps have been in the farmyard a rude image made of wood; among these were baskets of millet and cakes of the same, pails of milk, and other food of appropriate kinds. The meal which followed the shepherd himself appears to have shared with Pales. Then he prays to the deity to avert all evil from himself and his flocks; whether he or they have unwittingly trespassed on sacred ground and caused the nymphs or fauni to fly from human eyes; or have disturbed the sacred fountains, and used branches of a sacred tree for secular ends'.[2] Lastly, a bowl was brought out of which milk and heated wine were drunk until the shepherd was sufficiently inspired to leap over the burning heaps.[3] It is interesting to note that the ancients were themselves uncertain whether Pales was a male or female deity.[4]

At the Robigalia on April 25 (vii. Kal. Mai.) reddish

[1] *Ib.* 77-8. [2] *Ib.* 80-1. [3] *Ib.* 82.
[4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 326.

suckling whelps seem to have been sacrificed to Robigus, the spirit who works in the mildew. He was probably invoked to avert the evil that he caused.[1] The reddish whelps may have been originally the incarnations of Robigus himself. If so, such a ritual slaughter of the demon of the mildew seems more rational than those sacrifices in which a beneficent god is the victim. We begin to wonder whether those slain gods, of which we have found so many examples, were really not demons at some stage of their existence, or in some strata of the minds of those who killed them.

The Feriae Latinae, the great festival that united in a common kinship all the Latin race, was not fixed in the calendar. It took place in April, and its precise date was determined by the consuls on their entrance upon office on the Ides of March. After the magistrates (or their deputies) from all the Latin cities had collected in the temple, ' the Roman consul offered a libation of milk, while the deputies from the other cities brought sheep, cheeses, or other such offerings '.[2] The consul sacrificed a pure white heifer, the flesh of which was afterwards consumed by the deputies. This rite is typical of ceremonies to make or renew contracts. The participants cement their fellowship in a common meal.

May 1 (Kal. Mai.) was the traditional day of the dedication of a temple to the Bona Dea. This goddess seems to have been an Earth-Mother ; neither men nor wine nor myrtle were allowed in her temple. The latter two restrictions were due, according to a legend, to the fact that the goddess had been beaten by her father with a myrtle rod ' because she would not yield to his incestuous love or drink the wine he pressed on her '.[3]

Fowler thinks that the myth may have grown out of a cult in which a victim or the image of a deity was beaten—a cult which would have many parallels, and which may have been intended to drive away evil and promote fertility.[4] A pig seems to have been sacri-

[1] Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 88-91. [2] *Ib.* 96. [3] *Ib.* 103.
[4] *Ib.* 104.

ficed to this deity. Perhaps she was herself originally a pig.

May 9, 10, and 13 seem to have been devoted to the expulsion or pacification of the hostile dead, that is, those who had died by violence and who had not received orderly burial. The father of the family rises at midnight, and with 'bare feet and washed hands, making a peculiar sign with his fingers and thumbs to keep off the ghosts, he walks through the house. He has black beans in his mouth, and these he spits out as he walks, looking the other way and saying, "With these I redeem me and mine"'.[1] From the fact that those who have not received due burial are believed to be hostile and active we may infer that funeral rites originally included rites to lay the ghost as well as to propitiate him.

On May 15 (Id. Mai.) a number of bundles of rushes, which seem to have resembled men bound hand and foot, 'were taken down to the *pons sublicius* by the Pontifices and magistrates, and cast into the river by the Vestal Virgins. The Flaminica Dialis, the priestess of Jupiter, was present at the ceremony in mourning'.[2] This looks like the survival of yet another example of a mourning goddess and her slain sons.

On May 29 (iv. Kal. Iun.), at the Ambarvalia, there was 'a procession of victims—bull, sheep, and pig—all round the fields, driven by a garlanded crowd, carrying olive branches and chanting'.[3]

At the Poplifugia on July 5 (iii. Non. Quinct.), a festival of which little is known, it seems probable that after the sacrifice the priest and the people fled from the spot. This may have been either to escape the blood-guilt as in the Athenian Bouphonia, or, as Fowler suggests with less probability, to avoid a scapegoat who had become infected with the excessive purity or impurity that had been imparted to it.[4] A late myth states that the festival was in commemoration of the

[1] *Ib.* 109. [2] *Ib.* 112. [3] *Ib.* 126.
[4] *Ib.* 176.

flight of the people after the disappearance of Romulus in the darkness of an eclipse or sudden tempest.[1] It seems likely that this myth contains a germ of truth. The flight is reminiscent of the panic that follows the death of a leader. This leader may have been at once a god and a victim. If he was slain in sacrifice by his own worshippers their flight would be justified at once as an escape from blood-guilt and as the result of the panic that automatically followed his death. Perhaps there is an element of guilt in every panic after the death of a leader. Analysts tell us that leaders are father substitutes and that the attitude towards them is ambivalent. If so, their death may be unconsciously attributed to unconscious hostile wishes, and the vengeance of their ghosts feared.

At the Volcanalia on August 24 (x. Kal. Sept.) small fishes were thrown into the fire by the heads of Roman families.[2]

On the Ides of October (15 Oct.) there was a two-horse chariot race in the Campus Martius. The near horse of the winning pair seems to have been sacrificed to Mars, and killed with the spear that is sacred to this deity. 'The tail of the horse was cut off and carried with all speed to Regiá so that the warm blood might drip upon the focus or sacred hearth there. The head was also cut off and decked with cakes; and at one time there was a fight for its possession between the men of the two neighbouring quarters of the Via Sacra and the Surburba.'[3] Mannhardt believed that the head was 'an object possessed of power to procure fertility'.[4]

The Faunalia rustica on December 15 (Non. Dec.) is described by Fowler after Horace as follows: 'There is an ancient altar—not a temple—to a supernatural being who is not yet fully a god, who can play pranks like the "Brownies" and do harm, but who is capable of doing good if duly propitiated. On the Nones of December, possibly of other months too, he is coaxed

[1] Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 175. [2] *Ib.* 209. [3] *Ib.* 242.
[4] *Ib.* 244.

with tender kid, libations of wine, and incense; the little rural community of farmers (pagus), with their labourers, take part in the rite, and bring their cattle into the common pasture, plough-oxen and all. Then after the sacrifice, they dance in triple measure, like the Salii in March.' [1]

The Saturnalia began on December 17 (xvi. Kal. Ian.) and lasted seven days. The festival began with sacrifice at the temple of Saturn, followed by a public feast. The Senators and Equites wore the toga during the sacrifice, but laid it aside for the convivium. During the festival the slaves were waited on by them.[2]

But the Saturnalia seems originally to have been a grimmer ceremony than the festival of later times. Frazer has collected strong evidence that at one time a representative of the god Saturn was elected as king of the festivals, that during them he was allowed every licence, and that he was sacrificed at their termination. And this custom seems to have survived in the provinces into the third century of our era. Frazer further argues that the human representative of the god was probably married to a divine consort and that their union was supposed to be of great assistance to agriculture. There is some evidence that the old Latin kingships were inherited through the female line, and it seems not improbable that the Saturn of the year was originally mated with the queen. If so, in the Saturnalia, which still survives in the Carnival, may linger traces of a festival in which the new king was conceived and the old king required to die.[3]

From February 13 (Id. Feb.) to February 22 were the *dies parentales*, in which the family ghosts, or manes, were propitiated and cared for. During this festival, or on the anniversary of the death of some relation, the members of the family 'would go in procession to the grave, not only to see that all was well with him who abode there, but to present him with offerings of water,

[1] *Ib.* 257. [2] *Ib.* 268-73.
[3] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 310 *sq.*, ix. 306 *sq.*

wine, milk, honey, oil, and the blood of black victims: to deck the tomb with flowers, to utter once more the solemn greeting and farewell (Salve, sancte parens), to partake of a meal with the dead, and to petition them for good fortune and all things needful'.[1] This festival seems to have been a kind of 'love feast of the family'. The Lares shared in the sacred meal.

At the Lupercalia on February 15 (xv. Kal. Mart.) goats and a dog were sacrificed at a cave called the Lupercal. 'Next, two youths of high rank . . . had their foreheads smeared with the knife bloody from the slaughter of the victims, and then wiped with wool dipped in milk. As soon as this was done they were obliged to laugh. Then they girt themselves with the skins of the slaughtered goats, and feasted luxuriously; after which they ran round the base of the Palatine Hill, or at least a large part of this circuit, apparently in two companies, one led by each of the two youths. As they ran they struck at all the women who came near them or offered themselves to their blows, with strips of skin cut from the hides of the same victims. . . .'[2] The whipping of the women, as usual in such rites, was intended to produce fertility.[3] The skins were donned presumably to establish an identity between the youths and the divine victims,[4] and the blood may have been wiped off to purify them from the blood-guilt.[5] Thus the youths seem to have represented both the sacrificer and the victim which was itself both god and offering.

The Terminalia on February 23 (vii. Kal. Mart.) seems to have been a rite designed to guarantee the boundaries between neighbouring estates. 'The two landowners garlanded each his side of the boundary-stone, and all offerings were double. An altar is made; and fire is carried from the hearth by the farmer's wife, while the old man cuts up sticks and builds them in a framework of stout stacks. Then with dry bark the fire is kindled; from the basket, held ready by a boy,

[1] Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 308. [2] *Ib.* 311. [3] *Ib.* 320.
[4] *Ib.* 318. [5] *Ib.* 315.

the little daughter of the family thrice shakes the fruits of the earth into the fire, and offers cakes of honey. Others stand by with wine; and the neighbours (or dependents) look on in silence and clothed in white. A lamb is slain, and a suckling pig, and the boundary-stone sprinkled with their blood; and the ceremony ends with a feast and songs in praise of holy Terminus.' [1] The original ceremony by which the boundary was first fixed is 'described by the gromatic writer Siculus Flaccus. Fruits of the earth, and the bones, ashes and blood of a victim which had been offered were put into a hole by the two (or three) owners whose land converged at the point, and the stone was rammed down on the top and carefully fixed.' [2]

The Regifugium on February 24 (vi. Kal. Mart.) may have been the flight of the crowd as from the guilt of murder after a sacrifice of a divine victim. Ovid, however, believed that it was in commemoration of the expulsion of Tarquin,[3] and Frazer that it may have been a survival of a race in which the king had to gain and retain his crown.[4]

Reviewing these examples we see that Roman festivals seem to include all varieties of sacrifice. There are elements of communal sacrifice, in which the god is consumed, especially in the Ferae Latinae, of deificatory sacrifice, in which a tutelary deity is supposed to be created, in the Terminalia, and of at least one form of mortuary sacrifice in the Parentalia. An example of the piaculum is perhaps to be found in the ceremony of pacification of the hostile dead and in the Robigalia. The Tubilustrium is clearly cathartic, that is, designed to remove impurity, and certain elements in the Parentalia must have been wholly honorific.

9. *Sacrifice among the Slavs*

As typical of ancient Slav sacrifices may be mentioned their harvest thanksgiving ceremony and their

[1] *Ib.* 325. [2] *Ib.* 325. [3] *Ib.* 327-8. [4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 308-9.

burial rites. At the harvest thanksgiving, when the people had gathered together, the priest entered alone into the sanctuary of the god Svantovit. There he examined the tankard that was in the right hand of the idol, which contained the remains of the liquid offering of the year before. Whether the coming harvest would be good or not depended on whether the liquid reached or failed to reach a certain mark on the tankard. After the priest had prophesied the future of the crops, he poured out the old wine as a libation, and twice refilled the tankard, once for himself and once for the god in whose right hand he placed the cup. Meanwhile he prayed for the happiness and prosperity of himself and the people. Next the priest took an offering of honey cake almost as big as a man, and standing behind it asked if he could still be seen. If the people answered yes, the priest said that he hoped that they would not see him at the same festival the next year. Finally, after a warning to honour the gods and the old morals, began the feast. Besides animal sacrifices there were sometimes human victims determined by lot. Especially relished by the god was the blood of Christians. In order to become more sensitive to the gift of prophecy the priest drank of the blood of the victims.[1]

The fact that the offering of the honey cake was supposed to be as large as the priest suggests that it was a substitute for a man, perhaps for the priest himself. And the belief that drinking the blood of the victims inspired the priest to prophesy is evidence that here again the victims were originally divine. Possibly the priest once died in the character of the god.

The Slavonic funeral was as follows: Over the body there were night watchmen to prevent the soul of the departed from interfering with those who were asleep. Then there were complaints and reproaches that the dead had left his own; but these ended in feasting,

[1] Brückner, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 4. Aufl. ii. 513-4; Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 265.

drinking, and games. The corpse was burned on the funeral pyre ; after which the ashes were collected in an urn and buried under a tumulus. A wife of the dead man, his horse and weapons, or models of these, were also burnt. Finally there were games with prizes that were paid for out of the property of the deceased. And in order to propitiate him for this misuse of his goods there was celebrated an Easter feast for the dead after that for the living, even in Christian times.[1]

There is an interesting myth that purports to account for the origin of cremation. Sovij, the God of the Dead, was once a man who hunted a wild boar and took nine pieces of spleen out of it and gave them to his children to cook. But the children ate them themselves. On discovering this the father was very angry and tried to go to the underworld. At eight doors he failed ; but at the ninth, with the help of his youngest son, he succeeded. Then were the other brothers angry with the youngest, so that he too, with their permission, went to the underworld, to seek his father. After their evening meal the son made for his father a bed in the earth. But the next morning as the son asked his father how he slept the father complained that he had been disturbed by snakes and worms. The next night the son made the bed in a wooden coffin, but this time the father was disturbed by bees and gnats. On the third night the son made the bed in the fire and here the father slept as sweetly as a babe in a cradle.[2]

We know that primitive people often believe that the spirits of the departed enter into snakes and worms. We have only to invert certain elements of the story to recover its original meaning. It was not the father whose sleep was disturbed, but the sons. They were troubled by the ghost of their father in the form of snakes, worms, bees, or gnats. Belief in ghosts seems to be due to an unconscious refusal to accept the death of loved persons. A great part of the ceremony of

[1] Brückner, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 4. Aufl. ii. 517-8. [2] *Ib.* 526-7.

funeral rites is designed to free the participants from the fear of ghosts. This purpose is achieved by bringing conviction of the fact of death right into the unconscious layers of the mind. And cremation, which utterly destroys the body whatever other purpose it may fulfil, does help to bring this conviction.

Behind the other portions of the myth we may perhaps dimly discern a story in which the youngest son kills his father and is in turn killed by his brothers. And, behind this story again, an account of the killing and eating of the totem father by the tribesmen. We shall return to this myth, for, if it is treated analytically, it seems to contain the whole history of sacrifice from the totemic communion, through the later piaculum, to the pious mortuary rites of later times. But I am anticipating the argument of later sections.

There is slight evidence that the Slav kings, like those of many other peoples, may have been once periodically killed and succeeded by their assassins. 'When the captives Gunn and Jarmerik contrived to slay the king and queen of the Slavs and made their escape, they were pursued by the barbarians, who shouted after them that if they would only come back they would reign instead of the murdered monarch, since by a public statute of the ancients the succession to the throne fell to the king's assassin.'[1] Perhaps the assassin was thought to incarnate his victim. If he had been a cannibal as well as a murderer he would have incarnated his victim in the literal sense. To absorb the virtues of others is known to be one of the motives of cannibalism. Possibly the successor to the throne once ate the late monarch, though I know of no direct evidence of such a custom.

We know that gods were eaten and that kings personated gods, so that there is nothing intrinsically improbable in the suggestion that the new king secured his title to the throne by literally incarnating his predecessor. The custom of the slayer eating a portion

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 52.

of the man he has slain, and of the eating of aged relatives is not unknown.[1] Such rites may have had at least two purposes, to absorb the virtue of the deceased, and to prevent his ghost from doing harm, for it is thought that the ghost will recognize his own flesh in the murderer and will not injure it.

10. *Sacrifice among the Germans*

The dead chiefs of the Germans, like those of the Slavs, were burnt together with their arms and perhaps their horses; afterwards their ashes were buried under a tumulus.[2] There was also a feast for the dead. 'On the third, sixth, ninth and fortieth days after the funeral the old Prussians and Lithuanians used to prepare a meal, to which, standing at the door, they invited the soul of the deceased. At these meals they sat silent round the table and used no knives, and the women who served up the food were also without knives.'[3] There was further a custom for anyone who passed a place where someone had died by violence to add to the pile of sticks or stones that covered the spot.[4] This may have been to prevent the ghost from rising.[5]

To determine the future of an important expedition the Germans procured a man from the people of the enemy, and made him fight with one of their own men. On the issue of this fight would depend the issue of the greater battle that was to come.[6]

There is also evidence of propitiatory sacrifices to nature spirits. 'In some parts of Austria and Germany, when a storm is raging, the people open a window and throw out a handful of meal, saying to the wind, "There, that's for you, stop."'[7] But sometimes they throw knives at a whirlwind.[8]

[1] *Ib.* iii. 174; iv. 14.
[2] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 153.
[3] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iii. 238.
[4] *Ib.* ix. 15.
[5] Roheim, *Australian Totemism*, 361 *sq.*
[6] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 264.
[7] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 329, n.
[8] *Ib.* i. 329.

Traces of totemism may have survived well into our era. 'At the beginning of the eighth century, Popes Gregory III and Zacharas enjoined Boniface, the apostle of the Germans, to see that his converts abstained from the flesh of horses. To eat the horse is a filthy and execrable crime, adds Gregory. It is evident that the Popes were concerned, not for the hygiene of the Germans, but for their religion. The meats they proscribe are those of sacred animals, which were eaten ritually.'[1]

Descent among the Germans was probably once through the female line, and the maternal uncle, rather than the father, was the ruler of the family.[2] Great reverence was shown for women, and queens were sometimes defied.[3] Perhaps there were once queen-priestess-goddesses and rituals of slain son gods as among so many other peoples.

II. *Sacrifice among the Celts*

After victories the Celts sometimes sacrificed their prisoners, and such sacrifices were cannibalistic, possibly among the Celts of Britain, and almost certainly among those of Ireland.[4] These people also appear to have kept the heads of those they slew and to have used the skulls as cups for libations.[5]

If an important Celt was ill he sacrificed someone else thinking that the gods would accept the substitute.[6] The Celts also divined from the entrails of a victim, or from the way he fell.[7]

Every four or five years several victims were burnt by the Druids in great man-like cages of basket work.[8] Frazer in early editions of the *Golden Bough* adopted a theory from Mannhardt that the men and animals who were burnt in these wicker cages personated the corn-

[1] Reinach, *Orpheus*, translated by Florence Simmonds, 134.
[2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 285. [3] *Ib.* i. 391.
[4] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 111. [5] *Ib.* 111. [6] *Ib.* 497.
[7] *Ib.* 277-8. [8] *Ib.* 497; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, xi. 32-3.

spirit. But in the third edition he holds that these victims were witches and wizards who might otherwise blight the crops.[1] It is strange that the attitude of primitive peoples to their good and evil spirits was sometimes so similar that it is difficult to determine in a given sacrifice whether the victim was a god or a devil.

Anwyl finds 'some traces in the folklore of such a practice as the dispatch of an aged parent by his able-bodied son' and seems to conclude that the real motive for this, and for human sacrifices that were later offered as an expiation and atonement, 'was probably, in the main, real or supposed economic pressure'.[2] We may suspect that such a motive, if it existed, was a rationalization. We remember that the sons of the Celts were not allowed to go into the presence of their fathers armed, and that generally they were brought up in strange families. This suggests that these fathers had real grounds to fear their sons and took precautions accordingly. The reasons for the fear were probably repressed and it would be simply regarded as unlucky for a son to approach his father armed. The unconscious hatred of the father may have found an ultimate satisfaction in the pious duty of dispatching him when he was too old to be of any further use, if such a custom existed.

12. *Sacrifice in Mexico*

Frazer has collected from Mexican rites many examples of sacrifice in which the victim died in the character of a god. A short account of some of these I have taken from his *Golden Bough.*

A general description of such rites he quotes from a sixteenth-century Spanish authority. 'They took a captive', says the Jesuit Acosta, 'such as they thought good; and afore they did sacrifice him unto their idols, they gave him the name of the idol, to whom he should

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, xi. 43-4.
[2] Anwyl, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, xi. 11.

be sacrificed, and apparelled him with the same ornaments like their idol, saying, that he did represent the same idol. And during the time that this representation lasted, which was for a year in some feasts, in others six months, and in others less, they reverenced and worshipped him in the same manner as the proper idol; and in the meantime he did eat, drink, and was merry. When he went through the streets, the people came forth to worship him, and every one brought him an alms, with children and sick folks, that he might cure them, and bless them, suffering him to do all things at his pleasure, only he was accompanied with ten or twelve men lest he should fly. And he (to the end he might be reverenced as he passed) sometimes sounded upon a small flute, that the people might prepare to worship him. The feast being come, and he grown fat, they killed him, opened him, and ate him, making a solemn sacrifice of him.'[1]

Such a victim was a man or a woman according to whether he, or she, died in the character of a god or a goddess. The method of execution was nearly always the same—the victim was held on his back on the sacrificial stone while the priest cut open his chest and tore out his heart. Sometimes after his execution his head was cut off and stuck on a pike, and sometimes he was flayed and his skin worn by one of the priests. We read also that parts of the victim were eaten,[2] and that communicants partook of paste idols[3] that were no doubt believed to contain by a miracle the physical presence of the god.

In this manner young men were annually sacrificed in the character of Tezcatlipoca, 'the god of gods'[4] of Vitzilopochtli or Huitzilopochtli,[5] and of Quetzalcoatl.[6] Frazer describes the end of the human representative of Tezcatlipoca as follows: 'Twenty days before he was to die, his costume was changed, and four

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ix. 275-6.
[2] Westermarck, *Origin of Moral Ideas*, ii. 563.
[3] Andrew Lang, *Ency. Brit.*, 9th ed., xvii. 150.
[4] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ix. 276-9. [5] *Ib.* ix. 280. [6] *Ib.* ix. 281-3.

damsels, delicately nurtured and bearing the names of four goddesses—the Goddess of Flowers, the Goddess of Young Maize, the Goddess "Our Mother among the Water", and the Goddess Salt—were given him to be his brides, and with these he consorted. During the last five days divine honours were showered on the destined victim. The king remained in his palace while the whole court went after the human god. Solemn banquets and dances followed each other in regular succession and at appointed places. On the last day the young man, attended by his wives and pages, embarked in a canoe covered with a royal canopy and ferried across the lake to a spot where a little hill rose from the edge of the water. It was called the Mountain of Parting, because here his wives bade him a last farewell. Then, accompanied only by his pages, he repaired to a small and lonely temple by the wayside. Like the Mexican temples in general, it was built in the form of a pyramid; and as the young man ascended the stairs he broke at every step one of the flutes on which he had played in the days of his glory. On reaching the summit he was seized and held down by the priests on his back upon a block of stone, while one of them cut open his breast, thrust his hand into the wound, and wrenching out his heart held it up in sacrifice to the sun. The body of the dead god was not, like the bodies of common victims, sent rolling down the steps of the temple, but was carried down to the foot, where the head was cut off and spitted on a pike. Such was the regular end of the man who personated the greatest god of the Mexican pantheon.'[1]

Similarly women were sacrificed in the characters of the goddesses of Salt and of the Young Maize, of the goddess 'Our Mother' and of the Mother of the Gods.[2]

Sometimes the victim was flayed after being killed, and the skin used in certain rites. Thus in the sacrifices of the human embodiment of the Mother of the Gods, 'The body, still warm, was skinned, and a tall, robust

[1] *Ib.* ix. 278-9. [2] *Ib.* ix. 283-8.

young man clothed himself in the bleeding skin, and so became in turn a living image of the goddess. One of the woman's thighs was flayed separately, and the skin carried to another temple, where a young man put it over his face as a mask and so personated the maize-goddess Cinteotl, daughter of the Mother of the Gods. Meantime the other, clad in the rest of the woman's skin, hurried down the steps of the temple. The nobles and warriors fled before him, carrying blood-stained besoms of couchgrass, but turned to look back at him from time to time and smote upon their shields as if to bid him come on. He followed hard after them, and all who saw that flight and pursuit quaked with fear. On arriving at the foot of the temple of Huitzilopochtli, the man who wore the skin of the dead woman and personated the Mother of the Gods, lifted up his arms and stood like a cross before the image of the god; this action he repeated four times. Then he joined the man who personated the maize-goddess Cinteotl, and together they went slowly to the temple of the Mother of the Gods, where the woman had been sacrificed. All this time it was night. Next morning at break of day the man who personated the Mother of the Gods took up his post on the highest point of the temple; there they decked him in all the gorgeous trappings of the goddess and set a splendid crown on his head. Then the captives were set in a row before him, and arrayed in all his finery, he slaughtered four of them with his own hand; the rest he left to be butchered by the priests. A variety of ceremonies and dances followed. Amongst others, the blood of the human victims was collected in a bowl and set before the man who personated the Mother of the Gods. He dipped his finger into the blood and then sucked his bloody finger; and when he had sucked it he bowed his head and uttered a dolorous groan, whereat the Indians believed the earth itself shook and trembled, as did all who heard it. Finally the skin of the slain woman and the skin of her thigh were carried away and deposited separately at two

towers, one of which stood on the border of the enemy's country.' [1]

The human incarnation of the Maize Goddess, a young slave girl of twelve or thirteen years, was also flayed. At the end of a long ceremony the priests 'threw her on her back on the heap of corn and seeds (collected in the temple), cut off her head, caught the gushing blood on the wooden image of the goddess, the walls of the chamber, and offerings of corn, peppers, pumpkins, seeds, and vegetables which cumbered the floor. After that they flayed the headless trunk, and one of the priests made shift to squeeze himself into the bloody skin. Having done so, they clad him in all the robes which the girl had worn; they put the mitre on his head, the necklace of golden maize-cobs about his neck, the maize-cobs of feathers and gold in his hands; and thus arrayed they led him forth in public, all of them dancing to the tuck of drum, while he acted as fugelman, skipping and posturing at the head of the procession as briskly as he could be expected to do, incommoded as he was by the tight and clammy skin of the girl and by her clothes, which must have been much too small for a grown man.' [2]

This sacrifice of the Maize Goddess 'was preceded by a fast of seven days, during which old and young, sick and whole, ate nothing but broken victuals and dry bread and drank nothing but water, and did penance by drawing blood from their ears'.[3] On the eve of the sacrifice the people brought this blood that they had taken from their ears, in saucers, and one by one they came before the girl who personated the goddess and cast it before her.[4] This looks like an offering to appease the goddess for her approaching sacrifice.

Victims to the fire-god were also regarded as the incarnations of the deity, at whose festival they died. But in this ceremony there were many divine victims, of both sexes, and their deaths were more elaborate than usual. 'In the eighteenth and last month of their

[1] *Ib.* ix. 290-1. [2] *Ib.* ix. 294-5. [3] *Ib.* ix. 291-2. [4] *Ib.* ix. 294.

year, which fell in January, the Mexicans held a festival in honour of the god of fire. Every fourth year the festival was celebrated on a grand scale by the sacrifice of a great many men and women, husbands and wives, who were dressed in the trappings of the fire-god and regarded as his living images. Bound hand and foot, they were thrown alive into a great furnace, and after roasting in it for a little were raked out of the fire before they were dead in order to allow the priest to cut the hearts out of their scorched, blistered, and still writhing bodies in the usual way.'[1] The intention of this sacrifice was, according to Frazer, probably 'to maintain the Fire-god in full vigour, lest he should grow decrepit or even die of old age, and mankind should be deprived of his valuable services. This important object was attained by feeding the fire with live men and women, who thus as it were poured a fresh stock of vital energy into the veins of the Fire-god and perhaps of his wife also. But they had to be raked out of the flames before they were dead; for clearly it would never do to let them die in the fire, else the Fire-god whom they personated would die also. For the same reason their hearts had to be torn from their bodies while they were still palpitating; what use could the Fire-god make of human hearts that were burnt to cinders?'[2]

By these and similar rites the Mexicans slaughtered many thousands of victims every year. Probably those who were selected, in so far as they were not enemy captives, were buoyed up with pride in their divinity and in the sense of high service that they rendered to their fellow-men; and that they would no more have thought of escape than would a soldier seek to avoid a post of honour or the decoration that it brought him.

13. *Sacrifice among Primitive Peoples*

So far we have classified sacrifices by the races that have practised them rather than by any characteristics

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ix. 300-1. [2] *Ib.* ix. 301.

of the rites themselves; that is, we have classified geographically not anthropologically, by contiguity not by similarity. Such a method helps to prevent the neglect of rites that do not fit into theories, but it is hardly appropriate to the present section. Primitive peoples do not form a bounded area either in geography or history. To divide them up and to describe the rites of each tribe in turn would take too much space in anything but an encyclopaedia of the subject. There is, therefore, no alternative but to introduce some classification according to inherent similarities between the rites themselves.

In most sacrificial rites there is a god, a spirit, or a ghost, in short, a supernatural being who is either the victim, the recipient, or the beneficiary of some offering. Thus we may commence by classifying sacrifices according to the rôle of this being. There are, however, other rites in which a revered being appears to play no rôle. Such practices should perhaps strictly be classed not as sacrifices, but under the wider head of rites of destruction for magical purposes. But, lest I should be guilty of trimming my definitions to suit my theories, I will include examples of these rites in the discussion. I shall, therefore, arrange sacrifices among primitive peoples under the four heads of sacrifices *of*, *to*, and *for* supernatural beings, and miscellaneous rites of destruction.

1. *Sacrifices of Supernatural Beings.*—Supernatural beings have been widely destroyed in sacrificial rites in the form of animals, plants, or men, or in the form of substitutes for any of these.

The custom of sacrificing a divine or at least a revered animal is common. Usually the flesh is consumed as a sacrament. Frazer distinguishes two types of such sacrifice. In one, the Aino type, the species from which the victim is drawn is not specially protected. In the other, the Egyptian type, it is taboo for profane purposes.[1] It is uncertain whether these

[1] *Ib.* viii. 310 *sqq.*

practices have developed independently, or, if not, which is derived from which. In remote times the Australian tribes, who now only destroy their totems for sacred purposes, killed them apparently for food.[1] But we do not know whether they passed through an intermediate stage in which they killed their totems for both profane and sacred purposes; or whether, with the development of that contempt of the divine that is so often a correlate of advancing civilization, this is a state to which they will some day attain. In other words we do not know, in general, whether the idea of the sacredness of an individual victim succeeded or preceded the idea of the sacredness of the species, nor even whether the two ideas are historically related.

Perhaps the most primitive sacrament, if indeed the rite deserves this name, occurs in the Australian *intichiuma*. The general purpose of these rites is, according to Frazer, the multiplication of the totem for food.[2] But since the totem is usually taboo to its people this purpose would seem to require a more altruistic regard for the appetites of other groups than might be expected from such primitive savages. The rites are complex and are perhaps performed without a clear conscious purpose. They include, for instance in the witchery grub totem, a pantomime representation of the fully developed insect emerging from the chrysalis, or, in the emu totem, the pouring of the blood from the arms of the totemists upon the ground until it forms a hard surface on which to paint the design of an emu. But there is also often a definite sacrament. For instance, the men of the kangaroo totem not only eat a little kangaroo but also anoint their bodies with kangaroo fat.[3]

A famous example of an animal sacrament which has been assumed by Robertson Smith, and after him by Freud, to have been typical of a form of sacrifice from which most other types have been evolved, is the sacrifice of a camel by the desert Beduins witnessed

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 107. [2] *Ib.* i. 85 *sqq.* [3] *Ib.* viii. 165.

and described by Nilus in the fourth century. The camel, a member of the sacred and protected species, was fastened on a rough altar, hacked to pieces, and totally consumed in frantic haste by the clan. Many similar rites have been recorded, but the assumption that all peoples have practised them is an inference which has not remained unquestioned.

Sometimes the sacred animal is destroyed only in effigy. Thus in Australia the men of the Wollunqua totem make an image out of sand of the mythical water-snake Wollunqua, and after various ceremonies they attack it with their weapons and hack it to pieces. After this the ceremony of subincision is practised on the youths.[1] But I know of no evidence that a mimic sacrament is also performed.

Perhaps a relic of the transition from hunting to agriculture is to be found in the common practice of killing the corn-spirit in animal form of which Frazer has collected many examples. 'These customs', he writes, 'bring out clearly the sacramental character of the harvest-supper. The corn-spirit is conceived as embodied in an animal; this divine animal is slain, and its flesh and blood are partaken of by the harvesters. Thus, the cock, the goose, the hare, the cat, the goat, and the ox are eaten sacramentally by the ploughmen in spring. Again, as a substitute for the real flesh of the divine being, bread or dumplings are made in his image and eaten sacramentally; thus pig-shaped dumplings are eaten by the harvesters, and loaves made in boar-shape (the Yule Boar) are eaten in spring by the ploughman and his cattle.'[2] Frazer thinks that the finding of such animals in the corn when it is cut is a sufficient explanation for their identification with its spirit. But, while it is not absolutely necessary to assume that these animals were once totems, it seems likely that a people passing into the

[1] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 110-11. Wollunqua is a single animal and not a species like other Australian totems.
[2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vii. 303.

agricultural stage might well have selected as the embodiments of the spirits of their crops those beasts which, in their hunting stage, they had already learned to revere and to sacrifice.

Not only animals but also vegetables have been revered and eaten sacramentally. At a Fijian initiation ceremony, after a drama of death and resurrection, there was a sacramental meal of yams. 'Four old men of the highest order of initiates now entered the Holy of Holies. The first bore a cooked yam carefully wrapt up in leaves so that no part of it should touch the hands of the bearer; the second carried a piece of baked pork similarly enveloped; the third held a drinking-cup full of water and wrapt round with native cloth; and the fourth bore a napkin of the same stuff. The first elder passed along the row of novices putting the end of the yam into each of their mouths, and as he did so each of them nibbled a morsel of the sacred food; the second elder did the same with the hallowed pork; the third elder followed with the holy water, with which each novice merely wetted his lips; and the fourth elder wiped all their mouths with his napkin. Then the high priest or one of the elders addressed the young men, warning them solemnly against the sacrilege of betraying to the profane vulgar any of the high mysteries which they had witnessed, and threatening all such traitors with the vengeance of the gods. The general intention of the initiatory rites seems to have been to introduce the young men to the worshipful spirits of the dead at their temple, and to cement the bond between them by a sacramental meal.'[1] I do not know whether the yam and pork was supposed to be eaten in common by ghosts and men, or whether these commodities were once believed to incarnate the ancestral spirits.

The latter conclusion is supported by the avowed intention of the ceremonies that accompany the eating of the firstfruits among many peoples. Certain

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, xi. 245-6.

North-West American Indian tribes, for instance, believe that the plant they are about to eat 'is animated by a conscious and more or less powerful spirit, who must be propitiated before the people can safely partake of the fruits or roots which are supposed to be part of his body. If', continues Frazer, 'this is true of wild fruits and roots, we may infer with some probability that it is also true of cultivated fruits and roots, such as yams, and in particular that it holds good of the cereals, such as wheat, barley, oats, rice, and maize. In all cases it seems reasonable to infer that the scruples which savages manifest at eating the firstfruits of any crop, and the ceremonies which they observe before they overcome their scruples, are due at least in large measure to a notion that the plant or tree is animated by a spirit or even a deity, whose leave must be obtained or whose favour must be sought before it is possible to partake with safety of the new crop. This indeed is plainly affirmed of the Aino: they call the millet "the divine cereal", "the cereal deity", and they pray to and worship him before they will eat of the cakes made from the new millet. And even where the indwelling divinity of the firstfruits is not expressly affirmed, it appears to be implied both by the solemn preparations made for eating them and by the danger supposed to be incurred by persons who venture to partake of them without observing the prescribed ritual. In all such cases, accordingly, we may not improperly describe the eating of the new fruits as a sacrament or communion with a deity, or at all events with a powerful spirit.'[1]

If, then, the firstfruits that are eaten sacramentally incarnate a deity it is not unlikely that the yams which are consumed sacramentally in the Fijian initiation rites may also incarnate a supernatural being, such as an ancestral ghost. If so, this sacrament, like the sacrament of firstfruits, may be compared to what Frazer calls the Aino type of animal sacrament. For, only a

[1] *Ib.* viii. 82-3.

sample of the yams, or of the cereal, is eaten sacramentally; the rest is used for profane purposes.

The idea that the firstfruit is shared with the deity, instead of being an incarnation of him, is probably later than the true sacrament. But it may be present in savage as well as in developed religions. Thus a house-father among the Ewe negroes of West Africa 'takes a raw yam and goes with it under the house-door and prays: "O my guardian-spirit (*aklama*) and all ye gods who pay heed to this house, come and eat yams! When I also eat of them, may I remain healthy and nowhere feel pain! May my housemates also remain healthy!"'[1] Here the dominant idea is that the fruits are shared with a diety, but the old belief that the yam itself incarnates a spirit seems to lurk behind the householder's obvious uneasiness lest through eating he should fall ill.[2]

Sometimes, especially among peoples of a higher culture, the sacred cereal is fashioned in the form of a god before it is eaten. Thus the Mexicans prepared an image of their god Huitzilopochtli out of seeds of various sorts, kneaded into a dough with the blood of children; and this image they pretended to kill and then ate.[3] Here the seeds, which were probably once supposed to be in themselves endowed with consciousness and power, seem later to have acquired an independent soul, or spirit, in human form.

Live men, too, have been killed, and sometimes eaten, in the character of a god. The kings of the Shilluk tribe, who were supposed to incarnate the founder of their dynasty Niakang, had to defend their lives and thrones against any of their sons who chose to challenge them. But the king, even if he survived these duels, was put to death as soon as he began to fail to satisfy the sexual passions of his numerous wives. When this symptom of incompetence appeared the king was walled

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, viii. 60.

[2] At a still later stage the idea that the firstfruit is given to the god rather than shared with him would probably emerge.

[3] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, viii. 90-1.

up in a hut with his head resting on the lap of a nubile virgin until both died of thirst and hunger. But in more recent times a speedier death was substituted for this prolonged suffering. When the king was dead and buried a shrine was built over his grave where services and sacrifices were offered. Frazer argues that the processes of all nature were supposed to depend on the king's virility and that for this reason it was desirable to transfer his sacred spirit, the spirit of Niakang, to a healthy successor at the first sign of advancing impotence.[1] The peculiar mode of his death may have symbolized a return to the womb as a preliminary to his rebirth or reincarnation.

In like manner the pontiffs of the people of Congo were not allowed to die a natural death. When they fell ill and seemed about to die their successors-elect entered their houses and strangled or clubbed them to death.[2] And again: 'The Ethiopian kings of Meroe were worshipped as gods; but whenever the priests chose, they sent a messenger to the king, ordering him to die and alleging an oracle of the gods as their authority for the command. This command the king always obeyed down to the reign of Ergamenes, a contemporary of Ptolemy II., king of Egypt. Having received a Greek education which emancipated him from the superstitions of his countrymen, Ergamenes ventured to disregard the command of the priests, and, entering the Golden Temple with a body of soldiers, put the priests to the sword.'[3]

In these examples a divine or semi-divine king was slain, but not eaten. There are, however, other examples of gods in human form who were eaten as well as killed. The young man who died in the character of the Mexican Tezcatlipoca was chopped up small and distributed among the priests and nobles as a blessed food.[4] And, although there are not many records of such rites, stories like that of Lycurgus, who was rent in pieces by those notorious cannibals the Bacchanals,

[1] *Ib.* iv. 17-26. [2] *Ib.* iv. 14. [3] *Ib.* iv. 15. [4] *Ib.* viii. 92.

and the general analogy of eating the god in animal or vegetable form, suggest that a sacramental meal off the the body of a human embodiment of a god may once have been common.

2. *Sacrifices to Supernatural Beings.*—By sacrifices offered to supernatural beings I understand gifts made in order to induce the favour or avert the anger of the recipient. Thus I do not include offerings made only to benefit him who receives them, since such offering may be classed as sacrifices *for* a supernatural being.

The recipient of sacrificial gifts may be a ghost, a spirit, or a god; the gifts may be either to induce his favour or to avert his anger, and they may be either bloody or bloodless. Thus there are at least twelve types of sacrifices to supernatural beings as follows: bloody sacrifices to induce the favour of a ghost, bloodless offerings for the same purpose, bloody and bloodless sacrifices to avert the anger of a ghost, as well as four similar types offered to spirits and to gods. Numerous examples of each of these kinds of offering are to be found in the practices of primitive peoples all over the world. But, since it is not always easy to distinguish between a ghost, a spirit, and a god, or between an offering made to induce favour from an offering to avert anger, and because I do not regard these distinctions as of major importance, I shall give only a few examples of bloody and bloodless sacrifices, without regard to the theological status of the recipient or the conscious motives of the giver.

Blood Sacrifices.—The Yabim of New Guinea have a curious initiation ceremony in which the lads are supposed to be swallowed by a monster, whose name 'Balum' is also applied to the bull-roarer which imitates his voice and to any ancestral ghost. But if the monster is given pigs he is supposed to allow the youths to return from his stomach to the light of day, with no further injury than that of circumcision. Thus it seems that both the circumcision and the pigs are accepted as vicarious sacrifices instead of the youths.[1] The cere-

[1] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, i. 250 *sqq.*

mony has also been interpreted as a drama of death and rebirth. But perhaps the two interpretations are not incompatible, for, here as in Christian symbolism, the idea of rebirth seems to be associated with the idea of escape by means of a vicarious offering from an otherwise inevitable doom. Reminiscent of this New Guinea initiation rite is the Maori myth that life would have been immortal if their national hero Maui had only succeeded in climbing in and out of the mouth of his ancestress Hine-nui-te-po, the Great Woman of Night, the Goddess of Death. Unfortunately, however, Maui did not get off so easily as the Yabim initiates, for he was bitten in half by the monster.[1] Perhaps the underlying idea in both the myth and the rite is that the problem of immortality is the same as the problem of birth and that neither can be solved without sacrifice. In the Yabim rite the sacrifice includes circumcision. Perhaps the emasculation of the priests of Cybele, whose severed genitals were deposited in underground vaults, was a variant of the same motive.

Circumcision has not only been practised to redeem the self but also to save the lives of others. In certain districts of Viti Levu, the largest of the Fijian Islands, sacrifices and prayers were offered to the ancestral spirits in a sort of open-air temple. Here the firstfruits of the yams were presented. But 'of these offerings perhaps the most curious was that of the foreskins of young men, who were circumcised as a sort of vicarious sacrifice or atonement for the recovery of a sick relative, it might be either their father or one of their father's brothers. The bloody foreskins, stuck in the cleft of a split reed, were presented to the ancestral gods in the temple by the chief priest, who prayed for the sick man's recovery.'[2]

The commonest bloody sacrifices to win favour or avert anger are animal offerings. And these may be made to gods, spirits, or ghosts. They were, for instance, offered to trees, or tree-spirits, to propitiate them for

[1] *Ib.* ii. 16-19. [2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, xi. 243-4.

being felled. Thus among the Tradjas of Central Celebes, when a tree was felled, a goat, a pig, or a buffalo was killed and the wood smeared with the blood.[1]

But human victims were also often offered in sacrifice, and there is perhaps no people whose history is free from such rites. Thus the Mairs, a Hindoo tribe, used to sacrifice a first-born son to the smallpox goddess Mata, and the sacrifice of first-born children to the Ganges was common till the beginning of the nineteenth century.[2] Young girls, too, have been drowned in rivers as brides to the crocodile spirit. 'It is said that once, when the inhabitants of Cayeli in Buru (an East Indian Island) were threatened with destruction by a swarm of crocodiles, they ascribed the misfortune to a passion which the prince of the crocodiles had conceived for a certain girl. Accordingly, they compelled the damsel's father to dress her in bridal array and deliver her over to the clutches of her crocodile lover.'[3]

Perhaps the desire to propitiate an angry ghost was also the motive of the mourners who mutilated themselves at funerals. In central Australia certain male relations of the deceased will sometimes cut right through the muscles of their thighs, while the women cut open their scalps with yam-sticks and sear the scalp wounds with red-hot fire-sticks. Similarly, at the death of the Tongan kings, the mourners cut and wound their heads and bodies with clubs, stones, knives, or sharp shells. Their behaviour at the death of King Finow has been graphically described by Mariner, who is quoted by Frazer. 'As one ran out into the middle of the ground he would cry, "Finow! I know well your mind; you have departed to Bolotoo (the land of the dead), and left your people under suspicion that I, or some of those about you, were unfaithful; but where is the proof of infidelity? where is a single instance of disrespect?" Then, inflicting violent blows and deep cuts on his head with a club, stone, or knife, he would again

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 39. [2] *Ib.* iv. 180-1. [3] *Ib.* ii. 152.

exclaim at intervals, "Is this not a proof of my fidelity? does this not evince loyalty and attachment to the memory of the departed warrior?"'[1] Such exaggerated manifestations of sorrow are probably dictated by the belief that the ghost of the dead might take vengeance on the living if they did not thus show their genuine sorrow at their loss and thereby prove that they had no complicity in his unnatural death. For primitive people generally hold that death is due to sorcery. Perhaps also the piacular idea, that guilt is expiated in suffering, or at least the idea that a self-inflicted injury will be accepted in lieu of a deserved punishment, is present in such rites. For however innocent of evil actions the mourners may be, their consciences are not clear; indeed, if a medicine man accuses one of them he is sometimes ready to admit his crime, even against the evidence of his own senses.

But, though the mutilations of mourners were probably in part vicarious offerings, the blood that was sometimes allowed to drip upon the corpse may have had the purely altruistic purpose of strengthening the dead.[2]

Besides rites which are more or less consciously designed to propitiate ghosts, spirits, or gods, offerings to win the favour of the recipient are very common. There is a general tendency for gods, like men, to become more kindly as they grow older, so that rites which were once intended to avert the anger of a jealous demon are later employed to win the favour of a paternal god. And, finally, when the god has outgrown his bribability, the offering is supposed merely to honour him. But in the Unconscious the motives may have remained the same.

Bloodless Sacrifices.—Bloodless sacrifices to avert anger or to win favour seem to be derived from many sources, among which are bloody sacrifices of propitiation, vegetable sacraments, and offerings to benefit, or revivify, the dead.

[1] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, ii. 135. [2] *Ib.* i. 156-9.

'In Tibet, when a man is very ill and all other remedies have failed, his friends will somtimes, as a last resort, offer an image of him with some clothes to the Lord of Death, beseeching that august personage to accept the image and spare the man.'[1] Perhaps, originally, a real man or child was offered in exchange for a sick chief. With the softening of manners and the spread of aristocratic customs to classes that could not afford them the live substitute may well have given place to the dummy.

Offerings of firstfruits are very common. Thus the Ovambo of South-West Africa assemble at the end of harvest. The head of the family takes some porridge made of the corn, 'dips it in melted fat, and throws it to the east, saying, "Take it, ye spirits of the East!" Then he does the same towards the west, saying, "Take it, ye spirits of the West!" This', continues Frazer, 'is regarded as a thank-offering presented to the spirits of the dead for not visiting the people with sickness while they were cultivating the fields, and especially for sending rain.'[2] But these people no doubt believe that, if the ceremony were omitted, famine and drought would result, so that the sacrifice is propitiatory as well as honorific. At an earlier stage it may also have been expiatory; for the corn was probably once regarded as the special possession of a spirit who was injured when it was cut. And still earlier, when the corn was itself thought to be animate, the rite may have been a sacrament in which the body of the new corn-spirit was consumed in common by the people, so that they might imbibe its virtue, and perhaps so that they should all share the guilt of cutting it.

Food has often been offered to the dead, and here the purpose may have been disinterested love as well as fear. But ghosts have been feared all over the world, and one purpose of mortuary offerings was certainly propitiatory, and even expiatory. The primitive savage does not recognize natural death, which he attributes

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, viii. 103. [2] *Ib.* viii. 110.

to the sorcery of a wizard or an evil spirit. And, however clear his conscience ought to be, he always seems to believe that the dead may accuse him of complicity in the crime. For this reason he displays exaggerated grief,[1] and we may suppose that this is also one reason for the offerings that he brings.

That the mourner is in some way believed to be guilty of the death for which he mourns is further suggested by the rites of purification which he, like the manslayer, is often required to undergo before he is readmitted to the society of his fellows. These rites have all been attributed solely to the taboo of the infection of death. But the infection of death itself requires an explanation. Perhaps it is nothing but the ghost which pursues anyone who has been guilty of complicity either in his death, or in what to the savage is perhaps the same thing, in the disposal of his remains.

Often the property of the dead is destroyed at the funeral, and one purpose of such rites is certainly to transfer the spirits of this furniture to the other world for the use of the deceased. But a forgotten, or unconscious, purpose may also have been the taboo of the dead man's property to which his ghost might be expected to cling. Perhaps even the destruction of his weapons, which may have been the earliest mortuary sacrifice, was once intended to prevent him using them to wreak his vengeance upon those to whom he attributed, however erroneously, his death. Where, however, the dead man's property is not destroyed, but laid with him in the grave, we may suppose that the conscious purpose, at least, is to transfer them to his use.

In the Boulia district of Queensland the things that belonged to the dead man are sometimes burnt, sometimes buried with him, and sometimes distributed among his tribal brothers.[2] The Dieri place food on the grave for many days, and light a fire when it is cold.[3] Such customs are world-wide, and the multiplication of examples would be profitless.

[1] Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, 134 *sqq*. [2] *Ib*. i. 147. [3] *Ib*. i. 144.

3. *Sacrifices for Supernatural Beings.*—Many of the customs which are intended to propitiate a supernatural being, or to expiate a sin, are also intended to benefit the recipient. There are, however, sacrifices which seem solely to serve this latter purpose. But even where these are not intended to win the favour or avert the anger of a supernatural being, but solely to benefit him, their purpose is not always directly altruistic. Thus sacrifices of horses were made to the sun, not to win his favour, but to enable him better to perform his daily task of riding or driving across the sky. They were made to benefit him not in his own interest but in that of his worshippers. Though this purpose may not have been the original, or the unconscious, intention of the rite.

Again, men of the Dieri tribe wound themselves and pour their blood on a sand hill in which a mythical ancestor is supposed to be buried. And this rite is believed to multiply carpet-snakes and iguanas, which are important articles of diet. It seems to be magical, not religious, for it operates automatically, not through divine intervention.

Sometimes, however, altruism seems to be the sole motive for sacrifice. Among the tribes of the River Darling after a death 'several men used to stand by the open grave and cut each other's heads with a boomerang, and then hold their bleeding heads over the grave so that the blood dripped on the corpse at the bottom. . . . Further, it is a common practice with the Central Australians to give human blood to the sick and aged for the purpose of strengthening them; and in order that the blood may have this effect it need not always be drunk by the infirm person, it is enough to sprinkle it on his body. For example, a young man will often open a vein in his arm and let the blood trickle over the body of an older man in order to strengthen his aged friend; and sometimes the old man will drink a little of the blood.'[1] It may be unusual, but it is not unique,

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 90.

to care for others more than for oneself, and there is no doubt that sacrifices have been made solely, as far as conscious motives are concerned, to benefit the ghost, or spirit, or god, who receives them.

4. *Miscellaneous Rites of Destruction.*—Some rites of destruction, which are regularly classed as sacrificial, do not fall into any of the above categories. In them a supernatural being is not slain, nor is anything given to him or destroyed for his benefit. There are also other rites which, though not usually described as sacrificial, resemble sacrifices. In this section examples of a few such rites will be recorded under the title of miscellaneous rites of destruction.

Circumcision, subincision, the extraction of teeth, and other mutilations are commonly practised at primitive initiation ceremonies, and we have seen examples in which such mutilations seem to be regarded as vicarious sacrifices of a part for the whole, or of a vital part of one man for the life of another. But sometimes the purpose is less clear. Often the severed foreskin, or the extracted tooth, is hidden in the tree or rock which harbours the external soul of the initiate. And in such cases the rite, as Frazer suggests, may have been 'originally intended to ensure the rebirth at some future time of the circumcised man by disposing of the severed portions of his body in such a way as to provide him with a stock of energy on which his disembodied spirit could draw when the critical moment of reincarnation came round. This conjecture is confirmed', continues Frazer, 'by the observation that among the Akinkuyu of British East Africa the ceremony of circumcision used to be regularly combined with a graphic pretence of rebirth enacted by the novice.'[1] We may perhaps anticipate the argument of a later section by pointing out that, for the psycho-analyst, death commonly symbolizes castration, and that circumcision or the extraction of teeth is a substitute for castration. Hence circumcision might well help to

[1] *Ib.* i. 96-7.

relieve the neurotic fear of death. And, if this interpretation is correct, such mutilations, even when they are consciously intended to remove the fear of death and thereby to secure the hope of rebirth, are vicarious sacrifices. They are accepted by the super-ego in place of the self-castration that it would otherwise demand. Further, since a relation of identity often seems to subsist between the external soul and the soul of the ancestor, the foreskin that is hidden in the tree may, from one point of view, be regarded as made over to the ancestral spirit, which is itself nothing more than the projection of the super-ego. Such a sacrifice might well be combined with a pantomime of rebirth, or with what is perhaps more important, a pantomime return to the womb.

Akin to rites of expiation on the one hand and to ceremonies of rebirth on the other are rites of purification. 'Among the Bechuanas a man who has killed another, whether in war or in single combat, is not allowed to enter the village until he has been purified. The ceremony takes place in the evening. An ox is slaughtered, and a hole having been made through the middle of the carcase with a spear, the manslayer has to force himself through the animal, while two men hold its stomach open. Sometimes instead of being obliged to squeeze through the carcase of an ox the manslayer is merely smeared with the contents of its stomach.'[1] Sometimes, also, the manslayer is obliged to eat a piece of the ox or even a piece of the skin of the murdered man. Again, he may be required to allow the medicine-man to make a gash in his thigh for every man he has killed.[2] Until these, or similar, rites have been performed the manslayer is more or less taboo and secluded. Some of these rites are probably intended to appease the ghost of the slain. But others must also be intended to control or to avert it. If part of the slain man, or something representing him, is eaten he is perhaps converted from a dangerous enemy

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iii. 172-3. [2] *Ib.* iii. 174.

into a powerful part of the self, and this is certainly one motive of cannibalism. On the other hand, the ablutions, that so often form a part of purificatory rites, may have been intended to produce the opposite effect, namely, to wash off the ghost that clings like a leech to his murderer. Thus the spirit of the slain may either be propitiated, absorbed as a valuable part of the personality, or removed.

The idea that the ghost of the slain adheres, like a leech, to the slayer is perhaps akin to the idea of a sin that sticks to the sinner, but which may be transferred to a scapegoat and driven away. If the same goat, or another, is slain, a magical rite to transfer sin is combined with a vicarious sacrifice. Ultimately the sin, like the ghost of the slain, is perhaps the spirit of the man, or god, who has been sinned against. If so, sin is another name for conscience. It is an anthropomorphic demon that haunts the sinner and which he will seek to propitiate or to transfer to someone else.

But purificatory rites, like initiation ceremonies, often seem to symbolize a rebirth. The crawling through the body of the slain ox, for instance, would seem to have this meaning.

It was once a common practice to bury men below the foundations of new buildings, or beneath the gate posts. And it was believed that the ghosts of these victims would become guardian angels.[1] The inconsistency of this belief with the dread that primitive man usually feels for the souls of those he has slain has led Westermarck to argue that such rites were originally intended to propitiate a deity rather than to obtain a new guardian. In many cases this view is probably a sufficient explanation of the foundation sacrifice, but the many examples of the killing by primitive and ancient peoples of the beings that they worship should warn us that the idea of manufacturing a god by killing a man is not unthinkable.

As among the Semites many peoples have had the

[1] *Ib.* iii. 90 *sq.*

custom of sacrificing their children, generally the first-born. But the victim does not always appear to have been offered to a supernatural being. 'In some tribes of New South Wales the first-born child of every woman was eaten by the tribe as part of a religious ceremony.'[1] Again, in Uganda, 'if the first-born child of a chief or any important person is a son, the midwife strangles it and reports that the infant was still-born. "This is done to ensure the life of the father; if he has a son first he will soon die, and the child inherit all he has (Roscoe)."'[2] Here the child does not appear to be sacrificed to any supernatural being, but to be killed because he might usurp his father's place. But this motive seems to be repressed and rationalized by the theory that the first-born son incarnates his father, that, in fact, he has stolen his father's soul.

Sometimes, however, the son is killed because he incarnates his grandfather. 'At Whydah, on the slave coast of West Africa, where the doctrine of reincarnation is firmly held, it has happened that a child has been put to death because the fetish doctors declared it to be the king's father come to life again. The king naturally could not submit to be pushed from the throne by his predecessor in this fashion; so he compelled his supposed parent to return to the world of the dead from which he had very inopportunely effected his escape.'[3]

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 179-80. [2] *Ib.* iv. 182. [3] *Ib.* iv. 188.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORIES OF SACRIFICE

In the last chapter examples were given of rites which are usually described as sacrificial, among some of the main peoples of the world. In this we will consider some of the theories that have been put forward to explain them.

1. *Tylor's Theory*

Tylor's theory of sacrifice is, in the main, the consequence of his theory of animism. He showed that primitive people not only thought of men, animals, and things as possessed of souls, or living principles within them, but also that they generalized this concept and came to personify all causes as spirits, even when these possessed no material abode. Thus, in Tylor's terminology, a spirit is to an immaterial cause what a soul is to a material object.[1]

In funeral sacrifice Tylor finds an example of the consequences of the belief in souls, and at the same time of the general theory of sacrifice that he develops later. 'When a man of rank dies and his soul departs to its own place, wherever and whatever that place may be, it is a rational inference of early philosophy that the souls of attendants, slaves, and wives, put to death at his funeral, will make the same journey and continue their services in the next life, and the argument is frequently stretched further, to include the souls of new victims sacrificed in order that they may enter upon the same ghostly servitude. It will appear from the ethnography of this rite that it is not strongly marked in the very lowest levels of culture, but that, arising in the lowest barbaric stage, it develops itself

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., i. 417 *sq.*; ii. 108-10.

in the higher, and thenceforth continues or dwindles in survival.'[1]

Further, 'the sacrifice of property for the dead is one of the greatest religious rites of the world'[2] and this Tylor derives from the belief in souls of objects; though he admits that such beliefs may not always have been explicit.[3] Similarly, I suppose that he would derive offerings to nature deities from the belief in personified causes or spirits.

But Tylor is always careful not to exclude the possibility that other motives may be operative. 'Efficient motives' for mortuary sacrifice 'may be affectionate fancy or symbolism, a horror of the association of death leading the survivors to get rid of anything that suggests the dreadful thought,' or 'desire to abandon the dead man's property'—motives that do not necessarily presuppose a belief either in the soul of the dead or in the soul of the objects destroyed at his funeral. Or 'the hovering ghost may take pleasure in or make use of the gifts left him' even if, as Tylor must have meant, these objects had no souls.[4]

Once the false beliefs that have determined sacrificial rites have been disclosed it is easy for Tylor to discover rational motives for these rites. 'Sacrifice has its apparent origin in the same early period of culture and its place in the same animistic scheme as prayer, with which through so long a range of history it has been carried on in the closest connection. A prayer is a request made to a deity as if he were a man, so sacrifice is a gift made to a deity as if he were a man. The suppliant who bows before his chief, laying a gift at his feet and making his humble petition, displays the anthropomorphic model and origin at once of sacrifice and prayer. But', continues Tylor, 'sacrifice, though in its early stages as intelligible as prayer is in early and late stages alike, has passed in the course of religious history into transformed conditions, not

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., i. 458.
[2] *Ib.* i. 483.
[3] *Ib.* i. 484-5.
[4] *Ib.* i. 483-4.

only of the rite itself but of the intention with which the worshipper performs it.'[1] Thus the ruder conception that the deity takes and values the offering for itself gives place, on the one hand, to the idea of mere homage expressed by a gift, and, on the other, to the negative view that the virtue lies in the worshipper depriving himself of something prized. These ideas may be broadly distinguished as the gift theory, the homage theory, and the abnegation theory.'[2]

This development from gift to homage and from homage to abnegation Tylor describes in detail. The 'idea of the practical acceptableness of the food or valuables presented to the deity begins early to shade into the sentiment of divine gratification or propitiation by a reverent offering, though in itself of not much account to so mighty a personage'.[3] And besides this development from gift to homage, 'there arises also a doctrine that the gist of sacrifice is rather in the worshipper giving something precious to himself, than in the deity receiving benefit.' This may be called the abnegation theory. . . .'[4]

This account, I think, sums up Tylor's main views on sacrifice. They are illustrated with great detail in his *Primitive Culture*. His theories seem indubitably correct as far as they go; they give an adequate account of the conscious motives in certain kinds of rite. But there are kinds of sacrifice, apparently the most primitive kinds from which many of the others seems to have been derived, of which Tylor gives no account and no explanation. How, for instance, can we explain, on Tylor's theory, the motive of the communicant who eats his god? Yet this form of sacrifice is found in every cult from the Australian Intichiuma to the Christian Eucharist.

Nevertheless Tylor's method is instructive. In discussing, for instance, the cause of the development of the abnegation theory of sacrifice he says, 'Taking our own feelings again as a guide, we know how it

[1] *Ib.* ii. 375. [2] *Ib.* ii. 375-6. [3] *Ib.* ii. 394. [4] *Ib.* ii. 396.

satisfies us to have done our part in giving, even if the gift be ineffectual'.[1] Tylor always takes his own feelings as a guide. When, therefore, he comes across a strange custom he asks himself, What should I have to believe in order to do that? And in this way he reconstructs many of the false beliefs of primitive peoples. But he cannot imagine desires very different from those he consciously possesses. And for this reason he is prevented from discovering the most fundamental motives in primitive customs. Later anthropologists, finding that the thought of primitive peoples is not as theirs, have not hesitated to impute to them any motive, however strange, that seemed to account for their rites. But to do this is to discard psychology as useless in folk-lore. The best method would seem to be that of Tylor supplemented by the greater knowledge of oneself that psycho-analysis can give.

2. *Robertson Smith's Theory*

For Tylor sacrifice was originally a gift; for Robertson Smith it was a communion, a method of establishing or re-establishing the solidarity between the group and its god. Yet the two theories complete rather than contradict each other. Tylor gives an account of the evolution of honorific and abnegatory sacrifice from the gift sacrifice; while Robertson Smith reconstructs some of the earliest motives of sacrifice before such rites had been rationalized as gifts.

Robertson Smith starts from the totemic communion in which the clan ritually kill and eat an animal belonging to a species which they believe to be akin to themselves. This animal is not thought of so much as an individual but as the 'Platonic Idea' of the class composed of its species and the tribe, together with the ancestors of both. It is at once their father, their brother, and their god.

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., ii. 396.

The community ' is conceived as a circle of brethren, united with one another and with their god by participation in one life or life-blood. The same blood is supposed to flow also in the veins of the victim, so that its death is at once a shedding of the tribal blood and a violation of the sanctity of the divine life that is transfused through every member, human or irrational, of the sacred circle. Nevertheless the slaughter of such a victim is permitted or required on solemn occasions, and all the tribesmen partake of its flesh, that they may thereby cement and seal their mystic unity with one another and with their god.' [1]

The idea of the piaculum Robertson Smith finds already in the primitive communion from which he believed it to be evolved. If the physical oneness of the deity and his community is impaired or attenuated, the help of the god can no longer be confidently looked for. And conversely, when famine, plague, or other disaster shows that the god is no longer active on behalf of his own, it is natural to infer that the bond of kinship with him has been broken or relaxed, and that it is necessary to retie it by a solemn ceremony, in which the sacred life is again distributed to every member of the community. From this point of view the sacramental rite is also an atoning rite, which brings the community again into harmony with its alienated god, and the idea of sacrificial communion includes within it the rudimentary conception of a piacular ceremony. In all the older forms of Semitic ritual the notions of communion and atonement are bound up together, atonement being simply an act of communion designed to wipe out all memory of previous estrangement.[2]

From the same primitive rite Robertson Smith also derives the idea of purification. In the most primitive form of the sacrificial idea the blood of the sacrifice is not employed to wash away an impurity, but to convey to the worshipper a particle of holy life. The con-

[1] Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1889, 294-5.
[2] *Ib.* 302.

ception of piacular media as purificatory, however, involves the notion that the holy medium not only adds something to the worshipper's life, and refreshes its sanctity, but expels from him something that is impure." The two views are obviously not inconsistent, if we conceive impurity as the wrong kind of life, which is dispossessed by inoculation with the right kind.'[1]

We may doubt if the conception of vicarious atonement can be so easily disposed of. But to Robertson Smith the idea that guilt may be wiped out in suffering, especially in the suffering of others, necessarily seems so irrational that he has to explain it away. Thus he writes: 'The one point that comes out clear and strong is that the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion, and that all atoning rites are ultimately to be regarded as owing their efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshippers, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their god.'[2]

Robertson Smith not only derives the piaculum and the purificatory sacrifice from the primitive communion; he also derives the gift-offering from this source. 'Originally all sacrifices were eaten up by the worshippers. By and by certain portions of ordinary sacrifices, and the whole flesh of extraordinary sacrifices, ceased to be eaten. What was not eaten was burned, and in process of time it came to be burned on the altar and regarded as made over to the god. Exactly the same change took place with the sacrificial blood, except that here there is no use of fire. In the oldest sacrifice the blood was drunk by the worshippers, and after it ceased to be drunk it was all poured out at the altar. The tendency evidently was to convey directly to the godhead every portion of the sacrifice that was not consumed by the worshipper; but how did this tendency arise? . . . A holy thing is taboo, *i.e.* man's contact with it and use of it are subject to certain restrictions,

[1] Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1889, 406-7.
[2] *Ib.* 418.

but this idea does not in early society rest on the belief that it is the property of the gods. . . . In later heathenism the conception of holy kinds and the old ideas of taboo generally had become obsolete and the ritual observances founded upon them were no longer understood. And, on the other hand, the comparatively modern idea of property had taken shape, and began to play a leading part both in religion and in social life. The victim was no longer a naturally sacred thing, over which man had very limited rights, and which he was required to treat as a useful friend rather than a chattel, but was drawn from the absolute property of the worshipper, of which he had a right to dispose as he pleased. Before its presentation the victim was a common thing, and it was only by being selected for sacrifice that it became holy. If, therefore, by presenting his sheep or ox at the altar, the owner lost the right to eat or sell its flesh, the explanation could no longer be sought in any other way than by the assumption that he had surrendered his right of property to another party, viz. the god. Consecration was interpreted to mean a gift of man's property to the god, and everything that was withdrawn by consecration from the free use of man was conceived to have changed its owner.'[1]

In this way Robertson Smith evolves the gift-theory and the piacular-theory of sacrifice from the original mystic communal meal that united the tribe with its god incarnate in the victim. His work is one of the foundations of modern anthropology. But his explanation of sacrifice seems incomplete; for it does not take into consideration the magical purposes of such rites that have been pointed out especially by Frazer, nor fully recognize or explain the guilt that has always characterized man's relation to his god. The motive of expiation through direct or vicarious suffering, which he has so ingeniously explained away, is probably fundamental and can be detected alike in the primitive

[1] *Ib.* 370-2.

communion and in the gift. The religious satisfaction which is derived from direct or vicarious suffering is surely, in part, masochistic or sadistic ; and, since such impulses were probably operative at the origin of sacrifice, those rites which satisfy them cannot be dismissed as due solely to the conservative observance of purer customs which have lost their original significance.

3. *Frazer's Theory*

It is difficult to give a precise account of Frazer's theory of sacrifice. His works abound with illustrations of sacrificial rites ; but his interpretations of their ends and his explanations of their means is almost as varied. Nevertheless I will try to give his main conclusions, and as far as possible in his own words.

The fundamental idea of Frazer's work seems to be his theory of magic. For him religion in general and sacrifice in particular is a development of magic. 'Led astray by his ignorance of the true causes of things, primitive man believed that in order to produce the great phenomena of nature on which his life depended he had only to imitate them, and that immediately by a secret sympathy or mystic influence the little drama which he acted in forest glade or mountain dell, on desert plain or wind-swept shore, would be taken up and repeated by mightier actors on a vaster stage.'[1] In short man imitates nature and believes that nature will be magically compelled to follow his example. Thus, for instance, the primitive farmer will stimulate the growth of his crops by copulating in his fields.

Frazer adopts the conception of the slain god, which is due to Robertson Smith, but generalizes it and explains it differently.[2] For Robertson Smith the main purpose of sacrifice is to cement the kinship between a totemic god and his people through a sacramental meal off the flesh of the slain animal divinity. For Frazer

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iv. 266-7. [2] *Ib.* i. Preface to first edition.

the slain god may be a man or an animal who incarnates a nature spirit. And this nature spirit is, I suppose, what Tylor would call a personified cause. It is killed ritually, and its death is believed to have a good effect on agriculture. Frazer has collected, and drawn attention to, innumerable examples of such rites, and has shown that they existed almost universally.

It is difficult to see how primitive man could have ever come to the idea that the killing of the spirit of the crops could stimulate their growth. To explain this belief Frazer writes: "The motive for slaying a man-god is a fear lest with the enfeeblement of his body in sickness or old age his sacred spirit should suffer a corresponding decay, which might imperil the general course of nature and with it the existence of his worshippers, who believe the cosmic energies to be mysteriously knit with those of their divinity."[1] "Thus Frazer believes that one motive for killing a god is to preserve him from senility, and therefore to preserve the crops from imitating his old age. But he also points out that the slaying of the god is combined with the rebirth, or reincarnation, of his spirit in the person of his successor. "For the killing of the tree-spirit in spring is associated always (we must suppose) implicitly, and sometimes explicitly also, with a revival or resurrection of him in a more youthful and vigorous form."[2]

We may agree that the idea of rebirth is fundamentally associated with the idea of sacrifice. But the view that the motive of deicide was the belief that killing the god was the necessary condition for his rebirth or rejuvenation seems hardly adequate to explain these rites. Possibly the ceremony of rebirth and rejuvenation was the conscious reaction to the unconsciously motivated deicidal act. If an unconscious hatred of a consciously loved god found an expression in his murder, it is natural that his worshippers should both rationalize and seek to undo their act. Such an explanation would be immediately intelligible if a motive for unconscious hate

[1] *Ib.* iv. Preface. [2] *Ib.* iv. 212.

could be discovered. It would account at once for the murder, the inadequate reasons given for the murder, and for the attempts to revive the victim.

Though we cannot accept Frazer's view that the desire to rejuvenate a god is an adequate reason for killing him, we may agree that the sacrifice of victims *for* a god may have had this purpose.[1] The ancient Mexicans called the sun Ipalnemohuani, 'He by whom men live'. 'But', writes Frazer, 'if he bestowed life on the world he needed also to receive life from it. And as the heart is the seat and symbol of life, bleeding hearts of men and animals were presented to the sun to maintain him in vigour and enable him to run his course across the sky. Thus the Mexican sacrifice to the sun was magical rather than religious, being designed not so much to please and propitiate him, as physically to renew his energies of heat, light, and motion.'[1] Such a rite is a rejuvenating sacrifice; but it is *for* rather than *of* a god. In it, as in the communal sacrifice, the spiritual virtue of a victim is absorbed; but by the god rather than the worshipper.

It is, however, difficult to separate sacrifices of a victim *for* a god, to rejuvenate him, from sacrifices *to* a god, to propitiate him, and still more difficult to separate either of these types of offering from the sacrifice *of* a god. In Mexico the victim was identified with the god, and although the sacrifice may have been intended both to benefit and to propitiate him, it also destroyed him.

The deity can be assisted indirectly as well as directly. His devotees can attack his rival. Primitive man not only fancied 'that by masquerading in leaves and flowers he helped the bare earth to clothe herself with verdure', but also 'that by playing the death and burial of winter he drove that gloomy season away, and made smooth the path for the footsteps of returning spring'.[2]

Thus Frazer recognizes at least three ways of assisting through sacrifice the gods on whom depend the lives

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 314-15. [2] *Ib.* iv. 267.

of men. By killing them in order that they may escape death and decay; by feeding them on victims in order that they may acquire fresh life; and by destroying their enemies so that they may be unimpeded in their resurrection.

But Frazer admits that the rejuvenation of the god is not the only aim of sacrifice, and his works are rich in examples of sacramental, piacular, and cathartic rites. 'We have seen', he says, 'that the spirit of the corn, or of other cultivated plants, is commonly represented either in human or in animal form, and that in some places a custom has prevailed of killing annually either the human or the animal representative of the god. . . . We may suppose that the intention was to guard him or her (for the corn-spirit is often feminine) from the enfeeblement of old age by transferring the spirit, while still hale and hearty, to the person of a youthful and vigorous successor. Apart from the desirability of renewing his divine energies, the death of the corn-spirit may have been deemed inevitable under the sickle or the knives of the reapers, and his worshippers may have felt bound to acquiesce in the sad necessity. But, further, we have found a widespread custom of eating the god sacramentally, either in the shape of the man or animal who represents the god, or in the shape of bread made in human or animal form. The reasons for thus partaking of the body of the god are, from the primitive standpoint, simple enough. The savage commonly believes that by eating the flesh of an animal or man he acquires not only the physical, but even the moral and intellectual, qualities which were characteristic of that animal or man; so when the creature is deemed divine, our simple savage naturally expects to absorb a portion of its divinity along with its material substance.'[1] Here, then, is a clear recognition of the communal sacrifice. May we not assume further that one of the purposes of this procedure was, through absorbing, to master the corn-spirit and thus

[1] *Ib.* viii. 138-9.

to guard against retaliation? The corn, like the animal, possessed an immortal soul that might be more dangerous in death than in life. How could this soul be dealt with better than by absorbing it as the cannibal absorbs the virtues of his slain foes? And, further, is not the pretence that the corn-spirit is killed for its own good analogous to the pretence in many sacrifices that the sacrificer has no evil intentions against his victim? May not the motive be the same—namely, to add a precaution, in case the attempt to master the soul of the dead fails, and to lessen the likelihood of revenge? [1]

As the confidence of man to dominate his gods still further fails we should expect such pretences to be more pronounced and to be supplemented by piacular rites. Frazer admits the propitiatory element in sacrifice and has collected innumerable examples to illustrate it in all its forms. 'The same motive, which leads the primitive husbandman to adore the corn or the roots, induces the primitive hunter, fowler, fisher, or herdsman to adore the beasts, birds, or fishes which furnish him with the means of subsistence. . . . For the most part he assumes as a matter of course that the souls of dead animals survive their decease; hence much of the thought of the savage hunter is devoted to the problem of how he can best appease the naturally incensed ghosts of his victims so as to prevent them from doing him a mischief.' [2]

Thus, piacular sacrifice is offered to vegetation spirits and to sacred animals. 'Among the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast the indwelling god of this giant of the forest (silk-cotton tree) goes by the name of Huntin. Trees in which he specially dwells—for it is not every silk-cotton tree that he thus honours—are surrounded by a girdle of palm-leaves; and sacrifices of fowls, and occasionally of human beings, are fastened to the trunk or laid against the foot of the tree. A tree distinguished by a girdle of palm-leaves

[1] See Westermarck, *Origin of Moral Ideas*, ii. 559.
[2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vii. Preface, vi.

may not be cut down or injured in any way ; and even silk-cotton trees which are not supposed to be animated by Huntin may not be felled unless the woodman first offers a sacrifice of fowls and palm oil to purge himself of the proposed sacrilege. To omit the sacrifice is an offence which may be punished with death.' [1]

Frazer further distinguishes two types of animal sacrament, the second of which involves a piaculum. 'On the one hand, when the revered animal is habitually spared, it is nevertheless killed—and sometimes eaten—on rare occasions. . . . On the other hand, when the revered animal is habitually killed, the slaughter of any one of the species involves the killing of the god, and is atoned for on the spot by apologies and sacrifices, especially when the animal is a powerful and dangerous one ; and, in addition to this ordinary and everyday atonement, there is a special annual atonement, at which a select individual of the species is slain with extraordinary marks of respect and devotion.' [2]

Sacrifice, according to Frazer, as to Tylor and to Robertson Smith, can sometimes be a mere homage free from ulterior motives. He seems to derive this form of sacrifice, like Robertson Smith, from the communal form, but interposes one of his three rejuvenating sacrifices, that in which the god is benefited by nourishment. Primitive peoples, he says, 'often partake of the new corn and the new fruits sacramentally, because they suppose them to be instinct with a divine spirit or life. At a later age, when the fruits of the earth are conceived as created rather than as animated by a divinity, the new fruits are no longer partaken of sacramentally as the body and blood of a god ; but a portion of them is offered to the divine beings who are believed to have produced them. Originally, perhaps, offerings of first-fruits were supposed to be necessary for the subsistence of the divinities, who without them must have died of hunger ; but in after times they came to be looked on rather in the light of a tribute or mark of homage

[1] *Ib.* ii. 15. [2] *Ib.* viii. 312.

rendered by man to the gods for the good gifts they have bestowed on him.' [1]

Finally Frazer devotes a volume to the scapegoat which seems to form yet another separate category of sacrifice. Speaking of the scapegoat he says: 'If I am right, the idea resolves itself into a simple confusion between the material and the immaterial, between the real possibility of transferring a physical load to other shoulders and the supposed possibility of transferring our bodily and mental ailments to another who will bear them for us'.[2] Thus for Frazer the destruction of a scapegoat is not primarily an offering to propitiate an outraged deity, but a piece of magic to transfer an evil from one thing or person to another. It may therefore justly be described as cathartic sacrifice.'

To sum up this account of Frazer's views we may say that he distinguishes at least three types of rejuvenating sacrifice, the killing of a god to save him from decay and facilitate his rebirth, the killing of a victim to feed and strengthen him, and the killing of his rival. He also distinguishes a communal sacrament, a piaculum, a homage, and a cathartic rite. All these are illustrated many times within his pages. His main contribution to the theory of sacrifice is, however, his view that gods were destroyed to save them from decay. But he is modest about his theories and is of the opinion that his 'contribution to the history of the human mind consists of little more than a rough and purely provisional classification of facts gathered almost entirely from printed sources'.[3] Even if his work consisted of nothing more than this its value would still remain immense.

4. *Hubert and Mauss' Theory*

For Hubert and Mauss a sacrifice is 'a religious act which, by the consecration of a victim, modifies the moral state of the sacrificer or of certain objects in

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, viii. 109. [2] *Ib.* ix. Preface.
[3] *Ib.* x. Preface, vi.

which he is interested.[1] This definition, as the authors remark, not only limits the object of their research, but it assumes the genetic unity of sacrifice.[2] But this unity they find more in a unity of method (*procédé*) than in a unity of origin. Thus they criticize Robertson Smith's view that all sacrifices are derived from the totemic communion. But they believe that every sacrificial rite is 'a procedure to establish a communication between the world sacred and the world profane through the intermediary of a victim, that is to say, of a thing destroyed in the course of the ceremony.'[3]

The main idea underlying this theory, as far as I understand it, is that primitive man, on the one hand, desires to establish communication with the supernatural world (*monde sacré*), and, on the other hand, hesitates to do so directly for fear of getting something analogous to an electric shock. He therefore requires an intermediary who is there to succumb to these dangerous influences.[4] Thus while Tylor starts out from the idea of a gift, Robertson Smith from that of the totemic communion, and Frazer from magic, Hubert and Mauss find in mana, or something like it, the primitive concept from which everything can be explained. 'If', they write, 'religious forces are the very principle of vital forces, if they are in fact these vital forces, they are of such a nature that contact with them is dangerous to the vulgar. Especially when they reach a certain degree of intensity they cannot be concentrated in a profane object without destroying it. Hence the sacrificer, however much he may need them, cannot absorb them without the greatest prudence. For this reason he inserts intermediaries between him and them; and of these the principal is the victim. If he penetrated to the end into the rite he would find death instead of life. The victim replaces him. It alone penetrates into the dangerous sphere of the sacrifice, it succumbs to it, and it is there to succumb to it.'[5]

[1] Hubert and Mauss, 'Essay sur le sacrifice', *L'Année Sociologique*, ii. 41.
[2] *Ib.* 41. [3] *Ib.* 132-3. [4] *Ib.* 134. [5] *Ib.* 134.

Now there is no doubt that to the primitive mind certain things are invested with dangerous and mysterious properties so that they cannot be approached without extreme caution, and often only through intermediaries. But there seems very little evidence that the victim of a sacrifice is such an intermediary. On the contrary it seems that the victim is itself the holy thing that cannot be lightly touched, and which often can be approached only by an intermediary or priest. In sacrifices where the victim is itself the god it is difficult to see what else more holy there can be which the victim relates to man.

5. *Westermarck's Theory*

Most writers on sacrifice, as we have seen, refuse to accept the idea of vicarious atonement as ultimate. They seek to explain it away as a degenerate form of a more primitive rite such as the communion or the gift. For Westermarck, however, the main element in sacrifice is expiation. He does not deny the existence of other types, but he considers that expiation is often the original purpose of sacrifices that have later developed a second meaning, such as the transference of sin or the rejuvenation of a dying corn god. He admits that sin may be transferred to a scapegoat who is driven away and not sacrificed, but points out that such transference of evil may be combined with the vicarious sacrifice of the scapegoat.[1] Expiation, however, he takes to be the original purpose of the sacrifices to secure the future of the crops. Thus, he writes: 'For people subsisting on agriculture failure of crops means starvation and death, and is, consequently, attributed to the murderous designs of a superhuman being, such as the earth-spirit, the morning star, the sun, or the rain-god. By sacrificing to that being, a man, they hope to appease its thirst for human blood; and

[1] Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. 61-2.

whilst some resort to such a sacrifice only in case of actual famine, others try to prevent famine by making the offering in advance. This I take to be the true explanation of the custom of securing good crops by means of human sacrifice, of which many instances have been produced by Dr. Frazer. . . . So far as I can see, Dr. Frazer has adduced no satisfactory evidence in support of his hypothesis; whereas a detailed examination of the various cases mentioned by him indicates that they are closely related to human sacrifices offered on other occasions, and explicable from the same principle, that of substitution.'[1] But the second type of rejuvenating sacrifice recognized by Frazer, namely, that in which the recipient is fed and strengthened by a victim, is accepted by Westermarck, at least in the case of funeral rites, when he alludes to sacrifices to dead men 'to vivify their spirits'.[2]

Westermarck believes that foundation sacrifices may also have been originally piacular. These sacrifices are often supposed to be designed to provide a guardian deity for a building. 'But,' writes Westermarck, 'whatever be the present notions of certain peoples concerning the object of building sacrifice, I do not believe that its primary object could have been to procure a spirit-guardian. According to early ideas, the ghost of a murdered man is not a friendly being and least of all is he kindly disposed towards those who killed him.'[3]

Finally, of special interest is Westermarck's comparison between sacrifice and the blood-feud. 'The duty of blood-revenge is, in the first place, regarded as a duty to the dead, not merely because he has been deprived of his highest good, his life, but because his spirit is believed to find no rest after death until the injury has been avenged. The disembodied soul carries into its new existence an eager longing for revenge; and, till the crime has been duly expiated, hovers about the earth, molesting the manslayer or trying to compel its

[1] *Ib.* i. 443-4. [2] *Ib.* i. 472. [3] *Ib.* i. 464.

own relatives to take vengeance on him. . . . From one point of view, blood-revenge is thus a form of human sacrifice.' [1]

Westermarck has stressed the elements of vicarious suffering, guilt, and expiation, which have been neglected by other writers. But, as far as I know, he has given no explanation of the killing of a god.

6. *Loisy's Theory*

Loisy prefaces his own theory of sacrifice with a survey of those of his predecessors. He admits that the gift, the communion, and the agricultural rite all play their part, but denies that all sacrifices are derived solely from any of these forms.[2] And this is a conclusion which Frazer, at least, would readily accept; for he has written that he is 'unwilling to leave' his readers 'under the impression, natural but erroneous, that man has created most of his gods out of his belly'.[3]

But with the theories of Hubert and Mauss, Loisy is more severe. He denies that sacrifice is a process for establishing communication between the world sacred and the world profane. 'One would say, after this definition, that the two worlds are radically distinct and even separate, almost in opposition with each other, whereas in reality the two are in perpetual contact, and man employs the "process" of sacrifice often to disengage himself from the influences of what is called the "world sacred". Sacrifice, in this case, is not used to "establish a communication" positive and direct, but much more to sever a communication which is grievous in its results.' [4]

Sacrifice, for Loisy, is not derived from a single source, but from two, the magical act and the ritual gift; and neither of these, he thinks, in its earliest

[1] Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. 481-2.
[2] Loisy, *Essay historique sur le sacrifice*, 6-7.
[3] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vii. Preface, vii. Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 7-8.

form, constitutes a sacrifice.[1] Thus his main explanatory principles combine Frazer's views on sympathetic and homeopathic magic and Tylor's theory of the gift. He applies them systematically to the explanation of a number of distinct rites. I will try to summarize his account.

Funeral Rites.—In the cult of the dead Loisy finds the purest example of the gift of nourishment.[2] Such offerings, like those offered to the gods, were designed not only to assuage their anger but to utilize their power.[3]

Seasonal Rites.—At the root of all ancient religions there are rites to control and regulate the processes of nature, the growth of vegetation, and the course of the seasons. And such rites are not the mere symbolic accompaniment of the phenomena they represent, but their magical cause. By them the corn is made to die or to revive.[4] But since such necessities are believed to be semi-personal powers, they are not merely magically controlled but also propitiated 'to induce these beings to accept, and even to assist, their exploitation by man for his profit.'[5]

Divinatory Rites.—'It was inevitable that men should search for signs of the future or of secret things in the same beings that were supposed to contain a mystic virtue useful for the government of the affairs of the world. Thus were born the sacrifices of divination, which, in themselves, were not concerned in the cult of any god.'[6]

Contractual Rites.—A victim is often killed by the parties to a contract. Loisy thinks that they believe that this rite will ensure that the same fate will overtake him who breaks his word. If so it is an example of a magical act (*action sacrée, figuration rituelle*) 'which is in itself neither an offering, nor a communion, nor an homage to any god, but a rite effective in itself, conditionally effective, for it operates solely against the perjurer, if there is a perjurer'.[7]

[1] *Ib.* 10-11. [2] *Ib.* 11-12. [3] *Ib.* 162-3. [4] *Ib.* 12-13.
[5] *Ib.* 202. [6] *Ib.* 13. [7] *Ib.* 14.

Purificatory and Expiatory Rites.—'Primitive man has, one may say, a physical conception of sin and a moral conception of illness; or rather he does not know how to distinguish clearly between a physical and a moral evil, and he uses the same process to eliminate both. . . . The sacrifices said to be for purification or expiation tend essentially to rid men from the evil influences under which they have fallen. . . . The fundamental idea has been to transfer the evil from man to another being, through the destruction of which the evil is supposed to be itself destroyed or driven away. Then the gods were supposed to have prescribed this remedy for these evils which men finally attributed to the gods themselves as a punishment for their sins. And thus developed the idea, absurd in itself, that sin could be expiated with blood, an idea that has found its highest expression in the Christian myth of the redemption of the world by the death of Christ.'[1] Thus Loisy, like Tylor and Robertson Smith, is unable to accept the idea of expiation through suffering as primitive. But whereas for Tylor the idea of abnegatory sacrifice is derived from the gift and for Robertson Smith the piaculum is a retieing of the blood bond, for Loisy, as for Frazer, the expiatory rite has its origin in the magical transferrence of evil.

Consecratory Rites.—Loisy thinks that rites of consecration of things, or of initiation of persons, are the converse of rites of expiation. In them a virtue is conveyed from the victim to the thing or person consecrated. He believes that the foundation sacrifices, which are often supposed to procure a guardian spirit, are examples of this kind of consecration.[2]

Sacrifice in the Religion of Personal Gods.—In the formed religions or the religions of personal gods Loisy finds the idea of sacrifice fully developed for the first time. In it he distinguishes two elements, the magical or mystic act and the ritual gift. The magical act he again subdivides into the positive act of pro-

[1] Loisy, *Le Sacrifice*, 14-15. [2] *Ib.* 15-16.

duction and the negative act of destruction, that is, I suppose, into the act which transfers a virtue from the victim to the worshipper and the act that transfers an evil from the worshipper to the victim. 'The combination of the ritual gift, or its idea, with the magical rite of positive effect makes the communal sacrifice in the divine service; the combination of the ritual gift, or its idea, with the magical rite of negative effect forms the so-called expiatory sacrifice, which from the time that it included an offering, also enters, to some extent, into the service of the gods. But neither the magical rite of destruction nor the ritual gift are in themselves sacrifices, if by sacrifice one understands a method of communicating with invisible beings, and not simply acting on them.'[1]

Loisy's account of sacrifice is thus both systematic and comprehensive; everything seems to be explained and to find its place in a tidy structure on two neat foundations. But, like the authors that precede him, he does not seem to have given a convincing explanation of the custom of killing a divine being, nor of the guilt which seems to be so intimately involved in sacrifice.

7. *Freud's Theory*

In Freud's theory of sacrifice entirely new factors are introduced. Before him anthropology ignored the unconscious and considered conscious impulses alone, so that it missed some of the most vital forces that conditioned the seemingly irrational behaviour it studied. But Freud's researches into the minds of his patients had convinced him that they were influenced by unconscious motives, so that when he found parallels between their beliefs and actions and those of primitive peoples he naturally supposed that the unconscious motives for these beliefs and actions were present also in the unconscious of the primitive peoples who behaved

[1] *Ib.* 521.

so like them. Unfortunately his interpretations cannot be adequately judged by those who have not mastered the psycho-analytic technique that he invented to obtain them. And this technique is difficult to learn.

Briefly, Freud's view is that sacrifice was originally one of the results of the Oedipus complex of primitive man. Darwin, long ago, supposed that our first ancestors lived in small families dominated by one old man, the father, who killed or drove out his adolescent sons as soon as they threatened his sole enjoyment of his wives.[1] This condition is now nowhere to be observed. The most primitive society still found consists of bands of men who are gerontocratic and exogamous, and who call themselves after some species of animal (their totem) which they hold sacred, but sacrifice periodically with every expression of apology and regret.

Freud adopts Darwin's view of the life of primeval man and sets himself the problem of reconstructing the development from this state to the totemic system. His investigation of neurotics had revealed a common but unconscious wish on the part of men to possess those women with whom they first were brought in contact, namely, their mothers, and consequently to eliminate their fathers: and further, that the unconscious fear of the father which results from such unconscious wishes frequently expresses itself symbolically as a phobia of and respect for certain animals. Freud next assumed that the same impulses existed in the unconscious of primitive peoples, and suggested that their exogamy is perhaps nothing but an exaggerated reaction against the incest wish, and that their reverence for that sacred animal, from which they believe themselves descended, is a reaction to a parricide which may actually have taken place and which is symbolically repeated at the sacrifice of the animal. His theory may perhaps best be summarized by a single quotation from his *Totem und Tabu*. 'One day the exiled brothers 'who had been driven out of the horde by its jealous

[1] Darwin, *Descent of Man*, ii. 395.

leader) came together and killed and ate their father, and so made an end to the Father-horde. . . . The totem meal, perhaps the first festival of man, was the repetition and the commemoration of this memorable and criminal act, with which so much began, social organization, moral limitations, and religion.' [1]

This description has been called 'a just-so story'; but Freud has himself anticipated his critics in a note. 'The vagueness, the temporal compression, and the compression of the content, of the above account may be regarded, in view of the nature of the object of the investigation, as a desirable restraint. It would be as senseless, in this subject, to seek exactitude, as it would be useless to require certainty.' [2] In spite of this warning the temptation to attempt a stage further along the road that Freud has opened is too strong to be resisted.

[1] Freud, *Totem und Tabu*, 2. Aufl. 190. [2] *Ib.* 191.

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