

PRIMITIVE CULTURE IN GREECE

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PREFACE

THE following work is not meant for specialists either in anthropology or in Greek, but for those general readers who are interested in the history of mankind and wish to learn more of that race without which European civilization would not have been. Hence it lacks the elaborate apparatus of footnotes and other documentation which it would otherwise have, though I have tried to show where further information may be got ; hence also its shortness and, what necessarily goes with that, an appearance of dogmatism on many points which the author well knows to be obscure. I have tried, however, in the third chapter, to give briefly my reasons for holding the theories here put forward, and not those which certain other students hold or have held.

To any of my colleagues, British or foreign, who glance through the book, my indebtedness to many writers, ancient and modern, will be fully apparent. Nevertheless, I take all responsibility for the views expressed, not simply for those few details which are of my own excogitating, but for the many which are taken over, with or without modification, from others. As to the errors which doubtless are to be found, it is obvious that they are entirely my own.

ABERYSTWYTH
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PRIMITIVE CULTURE IN GREECE

CHAPTER I

TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS

FROM one point of view it might be said that the task before the author of such a work as this is like that of one who should sit down to compose a handy little manual on snakes in Iceland. In the first place, the wisest anthropologist would be in difficulties if he were obliged to say exactly what primitive man was. The most backward savages of whom we have any record have millennia of history behind them. They can make complicated things, canoes or boomerangs, infinitely above the capacity of the cleverest beast. They can remember complicated rules, such as the iniquity of even dreaming of marrying one's third cousin on the mother's side, twice removed, or the canonical arrangement of dots which typifies the ineffable mystery of the starfish clan's totem. They give their children courses of instruction extending over years; they know the proper seasons and the proper ceremonies for collecting witchetty-grubs or mussels. They have legends of an enormously remote past in which their great ancestors originated and taught the customs they now observe; and, even if not forced into a feverishly rapid develop-

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ment by the coming of the white, they have machinery for changing, however slowly, their habits and their ceremonial. What *homo sapiens* was like when first he began to be distinguishable from his brethren, the other primates, we may conjecture, but we shall in all probability never know.

But even taking the word 'primitive' in its ordinary loose sense,—the sense for example in which M. Lévy-Bruhl uses it when he talks of primitive mentality,—we have a long way to go before we can find that stratum in the remains of Greek culture. In our own civilization, we have an easier task if we seek to reconstruct our uncivilized forefathers. The English and Welsh countryside preserve, for those who have eyes to see them, very many customs and prejudices which presuppose savage mentality; our children are to a large extent savages in a more or less civilized environment; and as a large proportion of our fellow-citizens never grow up, at least never get mentally beyond the age of fourteen or fifteen, it may be said that we live every day amongst highly instructive specimens of savage man, who have been taught to wear clothes, instructed in a European language, and initiated into respectable, if rather dull, tribal mysteries known as schools and political parties. But for Greece the case is different. The Greek child and the Greek peasant were probably very like our own; but they wrote nothing and built little, so, short of calling up their ghosts by necromancy, we cannot interrogate or observe them. And even if we could, the chief difference between them and their modern fellows almost certainly would be, that the Greek specimens were much the less savage.

We are separated by a mere score of centuries from the somewhat uncouth if vigorous peoples whom Julius Caesar found and whose material remains have

taught us something of their culture. We have been over-run by a series of invasions which well-nigh ruined the civilization that Rome left behind here. Until some six hundred years ago we had, in England, to contend with the fact that the language of the people was English, the language of culture either French or Latin. Until Tudor times it can hardly be said that there was any English culture at all; before that, the English shared in what general European culture there was,—not always of the highest. Contrasted with this series of stoppings and beginnings over again, the history of Greek culture up to the time when it passed into Hellenistic culture (which is in essentials the basis of that of to-day) may almost be called a story of continuous and uninterrupted development. The invaders who, perhaps in the second millennium B.C., brought the Greek speech with them into Greece, Ionia, and the islands, were far from savages, though they may have been no more than barbarians¹; and they found, and were highly impressed by, a culture already at least a thousand years old, much of which they assimilated. Building on this good foundation, they had achieved by the date of their earliest surviving document, the Homeric poems,² a civilization politically rather like that of mediaeval Europe, but so far as we can judge, less brutal, less priest-ridden, less infected by cloudy mysticism, and much more capable of original thought and action; in a word, younger in outlook despite its greater age. From this again developed, not without struggles and set-backs, but with no eclipses of civilization such as those of the seventh century A.D. in Western Europe and the early twentieth in Russia, the marvellous classical culture, to which belongs nearly everything of value in the modern world, including the beginnings of that great forward move-

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ment of the sciences which, after long interruption, was resumed about the seventeenth century and still continues.

To find the savage element in Greece, therefore, we must go very far back indeed. Our task is like that of the excavator at Troy or Knossos, who has to dig down through stratum after stratum of palaces or castles before he comes to the relics of the Stone Age which was before them. We have however one advantage; the strata are somewhat disturbed, and some of the earliest lie near the surface. Traits of savagery which we look for in vain in Homer we can meet with if we come down to the early Christian centuries and study Pausanias or Plutarch.

The reason of this is not far to seek. The great invading races, Achæians, Dorians, and the rest, to whose fortunate crossing with the Helladic and Aægean peoples the miracle of the Hellenic culture is due, were northerners, and their stock died out to a great extent under the hot Greek sun. To-day it is the rarest thing in the world to find a native Greek to whom the Homeric epithet *xanthos* or fair-haired could be applied; and the same has probably been true for very many centuries.³ The shorter, darker peoples were the subjects of the invaders; not indeed their slaves, but distinctly their social inferiors, their vassals or serfs. Even in Homer one can here and there find a trace of their beliefs, which differ from those of their lords; the different attitude of the two classes towards fish, for example, is examined in Chapter VII. These lower classes, at first inarticulate, save for the isolated voice of Hesiod, who tells us something of them, grew more and more prominent as Greece became more democratic; that is, as the superior ruling class died out, and the inferior stocks took more and more share in government. The

Homeric Thersites with his queer-shaped head and his glib tongue is soundly beaten by Odysseus for talking too much ; but the descendants of Thersites, physically improved by a little intermarriage and as glib as ever, talked and wrote and ruled in later times with no baron's staff of office to smite them. Nearer the soil than the extinct barons, they still kept, mostly in the form of harmless survivals, many beliefs and customs which the barons had outgrown ; and building on the good foundations Achaian lords had laid, they left behind many written records of what they thought of themselves and their gods. Later still, when a new set of lords, this time from Italy, had reduced them to political impotence, they and their new masters alike found it amusing to collect facts and theories about these beliefs and customs, thereby sowing the seed of Comparative Religion and of Sociology.

At the same time it must not be imagined that the invaders consisted of supermen, superior to all irrationalities and compact of pure reason and practical good sense. Among the Achaians themselves it is not to be doubted that there were many degrees of intelligence and enlightenment. Intelligent barbarians that they were when they came, they had been savages once ; and if the baron showed a lordly indifference to the local superstitions, his bard knew of them and perhaps his men-at-arms were disposed to share them. Therefore among the ruling classes themselves, or at all events among their immediate followers and fellow-northerners, there must have been at least survivals of savage thought, belief, and even practice. To assume, as some writers have done, that all the higher cults and beliefs, those especially which are connected with the Olympian hierarchy, are importations from the north, and that all the lower ones, in particular

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those which form part of the worship of chthonian deities or heroes, are of Aegean, prehellenic origin, is to theorize not only without facts, but against facts, as will presently be shown.

There were then survivals of the savage or 'primitive' in classical and pre-classical Greece. In order to identify these, it is well briefly to state what we are looking for. The following features may fairly be called savage, early, or, in the loose sense already mentioned, primitive.

(a) In religion, the most characteristic early phenomenon is the concept of *mana*, *wakanda*, or *orenda*, as it is variously called by different non-European races. Perhaps the nearest English equivalents are *luck* and *potency*; the nearest Latin, *numen*. It is noteworthy that no classical Greek word comes anywhere near it in meaning.⁴ It is an early attempt to answer the question: Why does one man succeed and another fail? or: Why has one object of any sort something remarkable about it which another has not? It is not to be forgotten that the articulate answer comes from comparatively advanced peoples, Melanesians and Amerindians; but the practices of much more backward populations show them to possess it also, though in a vaguer form. There exists in the world,—so we may translate the barbarian terminology,—a power, not necessarily attached to any person or thing, not itself personal, which can give strength, success, eminence, to anyone or anything whereto it becomes attached. If one man is a chief and another a commoner, it is because the former has much *mana*, the second little or none. If one throwing-spear commonly hits and another misses, the former has the better *mana*; if a rock is oddly shaped, or a large meteorite makes its appearance, this is in itself evidence of the presence of *mana*; and in general

everything particularly useful, or in any way unusual, is felt to possess this power. Sometimes the repository of the *mana* is in no way remarkable to civilized eyes ; it may be a stock or a stone which to us looks much like any other, or it may be that some man, quiet and inoffensive in life, becomes filled with the power after death and uses it for evil purposes. The curious thing is that it comparatively seldom is lodged in what seemed to the theorists of an earlier day the certain and indubitable objects of primitive worship, the sun, moon, and stars.

From this it naturally follows that the objects of cult and veneration are often of the vaguest, if indeed they can be called objects of cult at all. When for example an Australian black rubs a certain stone against his belly, and declares that the process makes him feel 'strong' or 'good,' it is stretching terms unduly to say that he is worshipping the stone. His act may indeed be called an act of worship, but it may equally well be called a piece of magic ; the distinction between the two is of doubtful value, at any rate in the early stages of human society. As *mana* may be lodged in practically anything, and in any number of things, we must be prepared to find the savage entering into magico-religious relations with a great number of objects, some or all of which he may perhaps conceive as in some sense persons, and to some of which rather than to others he may look for particular favours (for instance, one of his gods or spirits may be especially efficacious when rain is wanted, another to make the children thrive), but all of whom remain vague, and whose number is seldom if ever fixed or their relations to one another clearly defined. Among these are generally included natural objects of various sorts, as particular trees or rocks ; natural phenomena, such as wind or lightning ; ghosts

of dead men (an important class, but by no means so all-important as has sometimes been supposed); not infrequently, living men, or beasts; and quite often manufactured objects. It also is very frequently the case that no god, spirit, or the like is invoked, and that the ceremonial is efficacious in itself.

This brings us to another important point, the relation supposed to exist between the deities, if any, and their worshippers. It may be said, by way of rough generalization, that here as elsewhere it is conceived in the likeness of the relation of one man (or rather, one group of men) to another man or group. It is by no means always the case that the deity appealed to is thought to be immensely stronger or more august than his adorers. Quite often indeed it is felt that he may be coerced in some way, as a man might be, whether actually by physical violence, or supposedly by the use of spells. Again as in the case of dealings with men, it is commonly thought that the power worshipped can be dealt with on a sort of commercial basis, by being given something that he needs, such as food in return for which he will send rain, success in hunting, or whatever is asked for. 'The god,' says a recent writer, 'gives mechanically; his increased *mana* begins to operate.' It is, to use modern equivalents, a sort of cross between buying in a shop and getting chocolate from a machine.

It follows that a savage religion has in it a large proportion of what Sir J. G. Frazer defines as magic; that is, more of the idea that the prayer, or spell, will be successful as a matter of course, and less of the attitude of a humble suppliant, making a request to a vastly superior power who may as he thinks best grant or deny the prayer. The distinction is convenient in theory; but in practice the two are commonly so intermingled that it is next to impossible to find an

absolutely pure example of either magic or religion in the Frazerian sense of the words. The difference between the higher and lower religious conceptions, from this point of view, is that the former has less, the latter more of the element of spell or of ritual efficacious purely *ex opere operato*.

It naturally follows also that the more primitive a religion is, the less it will contain of what we generally regard as ethical elements. Here again, to deny absolutely the presence of any moral values even in the very lowest forms of worship is to exaggerate somewhat grossly. There is probably no ceremonial, however savage, which it is not supposed that some sort of wrong-doing will interfere with ; at any rate, it can be spoilt by the selfishness of an officiant who is so indifferent to the welfare of his clan or tribe that he will not take the trouble to go through the ritual correctly. On the other hand, the highest religions, which insist most strongly on the need of ethical purity and the absolute freedom of the divine will, still have a feeling that that will is likeliest to manifest itself along certain known 'channels of grace.'

Another result of the concept of *mana* will perhaps be most clearly seen if we think of the force in question as a kind of spiritual electricity. The electrician knows that certain substances are conductors while others are not ; and he knows this, in the last resort, from having tried to make electricity pass through them and finding that it will go very easily along a fathom of copper wire and not at all along a yard of rubber tubing. For practical purposes it makes no difference whether he can explain this or not ; he proceeds to wire his telephone with copper and protect his hands with rubber gloves, and he probably would be none too patient with anyone who proved by some ingenious argument that the rubber should be the better con-

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ductor of the two. So with the savage. He knows, he has proved to his own satisfaction (or his fathers have proved before him) that this spell, this rock, this ghost, this tree-spirit, has much *mana*; it therefore makes not the least practical difference that no one can see,—or that no white man can see,—anything remarkable about the rock, tree, or tomb, or hear anything but gibberish in the spell. The trifling circumstance that the electrician is dealing with solid objective fact and the savage largely with subjective fancies make no difference. The mental attitude is in the end the same.⁶

Hence it is that the savage is especially prone to what is conveniently, though inaccurately, called fetish-worship. Properly speaking, a fetish is an object, sometimes a rude figure of a man or beast, into which certain magical substances have been put; but in the looser sense the word is often used of what the Greeks called a *baitylos*, that is to say, a sacred object, endowed with mysterious efficacy and often said to belong to or represent a god or spirit, which is not a cult-statue. Such are for example the *churinga* stones of the Australians; and such again was the very sacred black stone which in some mystic sense *was* the Mother of the Gods at Pessinûs. Less sensitive than an educated civilized man to contradictions, the savage has no difficulty in calling by the name of the deity he venerates some unpromising-looking bit of stick or stone, and treating it with deep and genuine reverence. He may say that it is the deity in question; a more sophisticated reasoner would probably say that it embodied or was animated by him. Parallels surviving in highly developed religions will occur to everyone.

In general one may say of the objects of savage worship, that they tend to be either little or vague;

that prayers or charms, if directed to anything definable at all, are apt to be addressed to a spirit of quite limited powers, or else to some deity who may, often does, possess the capability of becoming a 'high god' as the imagination and intelligence of his worshippers develop, but who for the present is rather in the background of their consciousness, often but little feared or revered, simply because he is too vaguely great to be felt as very real. Such is very commonly the nature of the creator-god who is perhaps especially prominent among the natives of Africa. He is said to have created everything; he has a name and perhaps a dwelling-place, in the sky or elsewhere; but generally speaking 'it is thought that after His work of creation He withdrew Himself, and, since then, He has taken little, if any further interest in the world and its inhabitants. He is spoken of among the natives as being strong, rich, and good. . . . He is very remote from them, unconcerned in their welfare, and harmless, therefore they consider that there is no need for them to trouble about Him.'* If they do not worship,—and they very frequently do not,—such a deity as this, we regularly find that the objects of their cult are, if not venerated stocks and stones such as have already been described, spirits of quite restricted function. Thus, to take examples from a people far removed from primitive conditions, the Hausa,⁷ we find them celebrating the cult of a number of *bori* (spirits or demons) who have such functions as making husband and wife quarrel, giving children croup, and so forth; and this despite the fact that the people are nominally Muslim.

We may therefore fairly say that if we can find evidence that the Greeks at any period performed rites addressed to no particular power; or if they showed a tendency to venerate anything which may be called

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a fetish ; or if the objects of their worship are found ever to have been very numerous and restricted in function, or, if of larger scope, very vague and for practical purposes little regarded ; these may be taken as relics of the days of their long-dead savagery.

I have left to the last an important part of savage religion, its relation to the cult and tendance of the dead. By tendance,—a convenient word, first brought to my notice by its use in Dr. L. R. Farnell's *Hero-Cults*,—is meant that part of the ritual of burial, soul-feasts, and so forth, which does not imply veneration of the departed or belief in his superhuman powers, but merely a recognition of his claim on the survivors to have his wants attended to. When for example a Greek prayed to Asklepios or Trophonios to heal or advise him, he was speaking to dead men (as he, rightly or wrongly, conceived them) who after death had attained to something like divine rank, and so could do for their worshippers what the gods did for theirs, though on a smaller scale ; this was cult. But when a Roman put on a potsherd a little salted grain and left it in the middle of the road for the ghosts, he was feeding the hungry. This is tendance. Now neither cult nor tendance is in any way peculiar to savagery ; therefore I can do no more than indicate certain features which are more prominent in savage than in civilized or even barbarous ritual.

The first point is one not always easy to observe. Generally speaking, civilized men either do not believe in a soul at all, or suppose that each individual has one soul, no more and no less. But among savages we commonly find that men are credited with several souls apiece ; as the shadow-soul, the body-soul, and so forth. It is not generally, perhaps never, assumed that the whole group of souls go after death to whatever after-world is believed in ; but very commonly differ-

ent functions are assigned to them in life, one being responsible for dreams, another identified with the shadow, another keeping the bodily functions going, or the like. Thus, to take a very simple case, the Bakongo differentiate between the body (*nito*), life (*moyo*) and spirit or soul (*mwanda*); the *mwanda* leaves the body during dreams, but the *moyo* stays behind; when a man, beast, or tree dies, it is said that the *moyo* is gone.* If then we find similar views about the human soul, or souls, in connection with the Greek cult or tendance of the dead, we may reasonably conclude that such ideas are a survival of savage days.

Another distinction, still harder to observe or realize, is that civilized man generally believes, either that the soul does not survive death at all, or that it lives for ever; doctrines like that of the Stoics, that the soul, or the souls of some individuals, continue to survive for a long time but ultimately perish, or at least cease to have a separate existence, are comparatively rare. But it may very reasonably be questioned whether any such concept as eternal or everlasting life has entered the head of any human being who can reasonably be thought to approach the primitive mentality. Certain savages do believe in a temporary survival; but probably the earliest form of the belief was much vaguer than this; the soul did not die when the body died, but the question whether it lasted for ever was not asked or thought of.

Another negative test of savagery in belief is the failure to distinguish between the material body and the immaterial soul, with its corollary, the tendency to regard the dead body as in some sense alive, and the soul as something not unlike the 'astral body' of modern spiritism, or the 'carrier' (*ὄχημα*) of some of the mystic doctrines of late antiquity. But this confusion is so far-reaching,—indeed, it seems almost

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universal among those who have not some tincture of philosophic training,—that it is of little value as a test. To find it in Greece merely shows that the Greeks were not all philosophers, or that their philosophers were not all Platos.

(b) A number of sociological phenomena may be taken as typically savage, either in themselves or in their most characteristic forms. Most prominent is the insignificance, one might almost say the non-existence, of the individual among savages. To us, a man or woman is a quite separate entity, having his own thoughts, interests, hopes and fears, rights and duties; and in law, his own possessions and his own responsibilities. Only if it can be proved that A was a mere passive instrument in the hands of B do we consider justice satisfied if B suffers for A's fault; if we say that A has identified himself with B, or with the cause of the B's, we are fully conscious that we are using a metaphor. But with the savage the state of things is quite different. The natives of Northern Nigeria are a long way from primitive man; yet, an administrator tells me, they have been much puzzled when white officials looking for a murderer or other bad character were not content with having his family handed over to them by the local authorities. The same district gives us an instance of blood-brotherhood, not between two individuals, but between two villages. It naturally follows, since the individual hardly exists at all, that individual property, especially in land, is a thing unknown. At most, some few articles so constantly in use that they are almost part of the person,—a hunter's bow or a woman's cooking-pots,—are considered personal property, and often buried with the owner at death or else broken on the grave. But such things as houses, domestic animals, land and the crops growing on it, may indeed

be in the possession (or rather under the trusteeship) of some one person, perhaps the head of a clan or group, but are not his to alienate or to leave to whom he pleases at death. There are not wanting examples of solidarity so complete that it is felt that the living members of a clan are not the sole owners of property, even collectively; the dead have their share in the possession of it also.⁹

In the matter of relationship again, the individual is of far less importance with the savage than with us. To our thinking, a man can have but one mother, the woman who gave him birth. But by the classificatory system of relationship, the word which we are apt to translate 'mother' is applied to a whole class of women, all those whom the individual's father might have married besides the one whom he did marry. Even this is not a complete statement of the case; the women of this mother-class do not stand in this relation to one person, but to a class of persons; broadly speaking, to all those of the generation below them who may not marry each other. To us, the relation of husband to wife is a purely personal affair; under the classificatory system, it is one existing between two whole groups, from the moment of birth, and more or less independent of the existence of any actual union between the members of one group and those of the other.¹⁰ Such a relationship—exogamous group-marriage—is typically savage, and exogamy—the rule of not marrying within the clan—lasts longer than group-relationship.

With this system may be associated the phenomenon known as totemism. Under this arrangement, now comparatively well known, thanks to the immense industry of Sir J. G. Frazer, groups of people are united by their common relationship to an animal, plant, or other natural object or species; less com-

monly to an artifact. The relation between the members, human and non-human, of this group is not that the wolf-clan, for instance, imagines itself to have an alliance of some sort with the wolf, or even that some legend states that an ancestor of theirs mated with a wolf, though such legends may and do exist; but simply that all the clansfolk are wolves. It is a kind of mystic identity, quite unaffected by the circumstance that the human wolves are two-legged and do not live solely upon meat nor depend entirely upon teeth and claws to kill their prey.

The groups, totemic or not, which show this solidarity naturally do not exemplify the relationship of king and subject; a king is an individual. Rather, such government as they have is in the hands of what may be described as a council of elders, who represent the collective traditional wisdom of the group, the unwritten knowledge of its tabus, its ritual, and its customs generally. But this simple and undifferentiated embryo of government has great possibilities of development. The all but universal custom of intermarriage between different groups (exogamy) early leads to the formation of what may be called a tribe; a union, that is, of the two or more clans which intermarry. This gives at once some differentiation of functions within the council; for is not the grass-seed magic the peculiar property of one clan, the ritual for making some species of animals multiply the specialty of another? Then, as the technique and organization of hunting and other necessary arts develop, and still more as the beginnings of what will one day be war appear, the need of a leader in these matters is felt; and sooner or later the war-chief comes into existence. What we know as ecclesiastical law is not yet, nor for a long time, differentiated from secular jurisdiction; yet it comes about that some

kinds of magic are so complicated or so important that they are left in the hands, or under the guidance, of experts specially trained or specially inspired. Hence the phenomenon of the divine king with whom Frazer has made us so familiar; a type of monarch who seems to begin early in the history of mankind and to continue late, who embodies a god or spirit of some sort, whose central function is to ensure, by the benign activity of his divine power, the continuance of the food-supply, and whose career is often marked, and to our notions somewhat marred, by the necessity of dying at fairly frequent intervals, lest the fleshly envelope of the god become inadequate. The relegation of this potentate to the position of a mere priest, and the absorption of his authority over his subjects and worshippers by the war-leader or other secular figure, is a much later stage. But that the Frazerian king always or necessarily has existed in the history of any given race is an unprovable and not over-likely assumption.

Be the ruler who he may, he administers something which may be described as law, albeit unwritten and uncoded. This law, or custom,—it is not without significance that the two words are the same in Greek *νόμος*,—is by no means one before which all men are equal, either in theory or in practice. Within the clan a number of differentiations of status exist, the earliest of which, so far as we know, is based upon age. A boy or girl, too young to be admitted to full membership in the clan or tribe, is regularly subject to certain restrictions, and as regularly free from others, a compared with the adults. Thus, there are common religious rites which are kept a profound secret from the children; on the other hand, there are generally certain regulations as to dress and ornament which the child avoids, especially in hot countries, by wearin

little or nothing. Puberty, marriage, parenthood, and old age bring about other changes in status, and the passage from one to another of these classes is usually marked by more or less elaborate ritual.¹¹

As to the foreigner, which may mean a person living within easy walking distance, he has no rights at all, and may be killed with impunity. But should he kill one of the clan, it is always permissible, generally a sacred duty, to avenge the death. Hence arises the blood-feud, perhaps the ancestor of war, certainly one of the factors which produce that unpleasant phenomenon.¹² From the blood-feud again develops, generally, the system of compounding for slaying by a payment of some sort, generally known by the Saxon term of *weregelt*. But to kill within the clan is another matter. It means that the clan is divided against itself, that its *mana* is dissipated, and unless very prompt measures are taken to remove the offending member by death or exile, the most horrible consequences will certainly ensue. As soon as the belief in ghosts arises, and that is very early indeed, the idea that the ghost of the murdered clansman seeks vengeance, and is uncomfortably near the object of his search, arouses still more zeal in the innocent survivors. On the other hand, simply to knock the slayer on the head is to repeat his offence; so there springs up quite early that seemingly cruel form of capital punishment which consists in leaving the culprit to die of his own accord, having previously buried or otherwise disabled him. To this day we kill our murderers without shedding their blood; in one form or another the Hebrew idea, that the blood is the life, is almost if not quite universal.

In all this primitive legislation, no clear distinction between ecclesiastical and civil polity exists; the embryo state is also the nascent church. It is also in

its way very objective ; for no account whatsoever is taken of motive, but only of the act. Thus no such distinctions as that between murder and justifiable homicide are possible. It is left for a later stage in development to consider that such a thing as *animus* exists.

(c) As church and state are very closely allied, or rather one and the same, in their origins, so material civilization is not at first felt to be different from the magico-religious activities of the community. Rain-making is no doubt magic ; but canoe-making is equally so. There are not wanting instances of such a useful art as this dying out because the family or clan which knew the proper charms had become extinct. To our ideas, someone else might perfectly well have tried his hand at felling a tree and hollowing the resulting log into a dugout ; but to the savage, such a thing would be impossible, as impossible as it would be for an ordinary man, not a specialist in magic, to ban a troublesome ghost. Such magic knowledge, and the technical skill (often considerable) which goes with it, are very commonly the property of a sort of gild, which may but does not always consist of a group of relations. Where agriculture exists, this also, indeed more than most occupations, is set about with numerous charms and ceremonies. In particular, its very common relegation to women is not a result of the laziness of the savage man, who indeed often helps his women-folk loyally in the heavy work of clearing jungle or forest which precedes the actual cultivation. It arises from the obvious consideration that as only women can give birth to children, they are the natural and only agents for making the earth do likewise.

As might be expected, trade among savages is a rudimentary thing. Exchange of products does take

place between different communities ; but it is hampered on the one hand by mutual distrust,—it is not easy to trade with a person who is restrained by no moral or magical scruples from killing you,—and partly by the reflection that the foreigner is always notoriously a sorcerer, and therefore his goods may be full of very dangerous magic. Hence it is that markets are regularly under supernatural protection ; the god does not like fighting in his holy place, and therefore will be on the side of those who keep the peace ; and his powerful *mana* will serve as an antidote for foreign magic.

Of the above characteristics of savagery, the first two are the most important for our purpose at present ; for religion is conservative, and the state, though it progresses somewhat faster, loves to cling to old forms, even when their practical value has passed away.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I

¹ Savage and barbarian differ as lower and higher. The former is nomadic, the latter usually settled ; the former is organized in small units, loosely governed, the latter in larger ones, often under a single powerful ruler ; the former is chiefly a hunter, the latter is herdsman or farmer ; the former is apt to be polydaimonistic, the latter to have fairly definite gods, or a god.

² I assume the unity of Homer. For proofs see the works cited in the General Bibliography.

³ Much interesting information will be found in F. v. Luschán, 'Early Inhabitants of Western Asia,' in *Jour. Roy. Anth. Inst.* xli (1911), p. 221 foll.

⁴ Not even, I think, *δαίμων*. See however M. P. Nilsson, 'Götter und Psychologie bei Homer,' *Arch. für Relig.* xxii (1924), especially p. 380 foll.

⁵ See further L. Lévy-Bruhl, *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* and *La mentalité primitive*, also the acute criticisms of his views in G. C. Webb, *Group Theories of Religion*.

⁶ Rev. J. H. Weeks, *The Primitive Bakongo*, p. 276.

⁷ Described by Maj. A. J. N. Tremearne, *The Ban of the Bori*.

⁸ Weeks, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

⁹ See, e.g., Lévy-Bruhl, *Ment. Prim.*, p. 77.

¹⁰ See Frazer, *Totemism*, index under 'Group-Marriage' for a number of examples.

¹¹ See A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage*, Paris, 1909.

CHAPTER II

THE GREEK PEOPLES

IT is unfortunate that we know far less about the ethnology of early Greece than the importance of the subject makes desirable. Some material has indeed been collected and commented on ; philology lends valuable assistance and something can be gathered from the history of neighbouring countries, notably Egypt ; while the researches of the last half-century have taught us much of the material civilizations which preceded the classical culture ; but the question as to what races of men were the earliest inhabitants of the Greek peninsula and the neighbouring islands is much less near being settled than it is for Italy or France. Much collecting and measuring of prehistoric human remains has still to be done ; and often, though by no means always, we are stopped at the outset in an investigation of this sort by the circumstance that the population we would study cremated their dead.

We can, however, be fairly certain that in quite early times there existed in mainland Greece a population containing a large broad-headed or Alpine element, while in the islands the smaller, darker, long-headed stock known as Mediterranean was more prominent. This population may or may not have been the people referred to by the Greeks of historical times as Pelasgians ; the exact meaning of the latter term is so

highly debatable that I shall avoid it altogether and speak of them by the less question-begging name of Helladic, or, for the island people, Aegean. A long series of excavations on various sites has taught us at least something of the Helladic culture. As early as the Neolithic period it was clearly recognizable and fairly advanced; without serious breaches of continuity, that is, without suffering any wholesale invasion from without, it passed into the copper age and so into that of bronze. With the Bronze Age comes its finest and most characteristic development (whether entirely native or not cannot be discussed here), the civilization called Minoan or Cretan, from the country in which it was discovered and the mythical king of the chief site, Minos, lord of Knossos.

If we ask of what race the Helladics or the Minoans were, an exact answer is not yet possible. For the latter, their own numerous artistic representations assure us that they were slender, tall rather than short, and of rather dark complexion; dark, that is, compared with an average present-day Englishman, being of a hue comparable to the southern Italians or the Spaniards of our own time. There was nothing in the least negroid about either their complexion or their physical type generally.

Of their civilization in general this is not the place to speak; it is enough to mention that it was a very high one, resembling in many ways that of Egypt, by which indeed it was influenced and with which it had trade relations. The material culture was in some ways strikingly modern. Architecture was well developed, sanitation far better understood than in many succeeding ages, the fine arts flourished to an extent surpassed only by the fully-developed Greek culture of later times, trade was apparently highly organized, and the standard of living, at any rate in the upper

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classes, was high, even luxurious. Of the lower classes, however, we know but little, not much having been discovered as yet of their comparatively slight and inconspicuous houses and utensils. But there is not the slightest reason to suppose that, however inferior they may have been socially and economically to their lords, they lived under anything like savage conditions. Even the more backward Helladic peoples, those of Thessaly for instance,¹ had obviously left savagery behind them; much more the subjects of the great lords of Knossos or Phaistos.

Their religion seems to have consisted above all else in the worship of a great goddess, with whom was associated a divine child, apparently conceived of as being born every year.² Of a god corresponding at all in importance to Zeus in classical Greece or Mars at Rome we find no trace, though it may be that some figure comparable to Attis or Adonis was to be found in the train of the goddess. Of minor deities we seem to find evidence in the numerous figures of monsters,—actual demons or priests in disguise,—who appear on many monuments and are often clearly engaged in acts of cult, such as the tending of a sacred tree. Sacred objects of the fetish or *baitylos* type are also to be found, though their importance has perhaps been somewhat exaggerated.

Of their language we can only say, at present, that it was not Greek. What it was remains an unsolved problem; but this much we do know, that the same or at least a similar tongue was anciently spoken in Greece, on the islands, and in Asia Minor. The evidence is scanty, consisting largely of proper names which show non-Greek origin; but it is conclusive. A number of towns, for example, whose names mean nothing in Greek, show the suffixes *-nth-* and *-na-*, as Kori-nth-os, Myke-na-i. The same suffixes appear in

the names of persons from the oldest stratum of religion and mythology, as Hyakinthos, Athena, Ariadne ; and farther east we find those suffixes again, the first of them in the form *-nd-*, as in Lindos, Smyrna. The population therefore of the eastern Mediterranean region before the coming of the Greeks was homogeneous to this extent at least, that it spoke the same language. Now language alone is notoriously bad evidence for race. While the fact that the same language, with dialectical differences, is spoken in England and in the New England States is due to the original settlement of the latter region from the former, we must on the other hand remember that the entire American Union employs English as its official language and to a very large extent in ordinary use, other speeches being limited to comparatively small areas and tending to pass out of use altogether ; yet a more miscellaneous collection of races than the population of the United States it would be hard to find. Still, there is a certain homogeneity of culture throughout ; every American, white or black, has been influenced by a number of institutions which owe their origin to the people of Great Britain, as well as by developments and modifications of those institutions produced locally. When therefore we find that the same or a similar speech prevailed over the eastern Mediterranean area, and when we find also that the worship of a great goddess, which as we have seen was characteristic of Crete, lasts in Asia Minor for many centuries ; when also we see not a little in the archaeology of the Aegean and that of Asia Minor which indicates common civilization, we may safely conclude that the population had much the same institutions everywhere, sometimes more, sometimes less advanced, before the coming of the various invading races to whom are due such civilizations as that of Phrygia, Armenia, and Greece.

Of the social institutions of these people (whom we may for convenience call Anatolian) we know next to nothing. The suggestion has been made that their worship of a goddess indicates a prominence of women in their society ; but it has been conclusively shown that no such deduction can be drawn.³ Cretan monuments tell us clearly that women took a prominent part in the religious rites, and that at least ladies of rank were splendidly dressed ; and some races of this area in later times certainly had the custom known as mother-right, by which descent and inheritance are in the female, not the male, line ; there is therefore nothing absurd in the supposition that the pre-Greek population of Greece was matrilineal. But if it was universally or widely so, we should expect to find traces of that custom in historical or legendary Greece, which is not the case. We cannot therefore even say with certainty that they traced their descent otherwise than as we do to-day. Their political organization appears, at least in the developed civilization of Crete, to have been monarchical. Perhaps the most curious feature of the whole culture is, that a temple or other place for a worship including the whole people is yet to find ; such shrines as we know are of small extent, and largely confined to the palaces themselves. It is however so incredible that the people at large worshipped nothing, that we are bound to suppose that their rites were of a kind which did not involve the use of large buildings, being perhaps celebrated under the open sky and consisting largely of the dances, processions, and the like which we find represented on the monuments, and which would of course leave no trace for the archaeologist to discover ; besides, what we occasionally do find traces of, worship in cave-sanctuaries.

Their economic organization was markedly im-

perfect in one way at least ; they do not appear to have had any coined money. On the other hand, they had abundance of the precious metals and other valuable objects of small bulk, so that at least a very advanced system of barter was no doubt in use. That they had no fear of foreign goods is very plain from the common occurrence on Cretan sites of objects clearly Egyptian in their origin.

Connected with this civilization is that commonly known, from the name of the site first excavated, as the Mycenaean, though some prefer to call it the Late Helladic. While there can be no doubt whatever that the two are closely akin, it is less certain what their exact relationship is. The theory usually held hitherto is, that the Cretans colonized part of the mainland, presumably conquering the inhabitants, who were in a more backward stage of their own civilization, and established themselves in fortified towns or castles dominating the main lines of communication and centres of trade—Mycenae, Argos, Tiryns, and other sites in the Peloponnesos, mostly in the north-east, but by no means confined to that district ; Orchomenos and Thebes, in Boiotia ; and other strategic centres elsewhere. This is consistent with the bulk of the facts discovered by the excavators, but it leaves unexplained the great fame of the Mycenaean sites in Homer, to say nothing of the later saga, and also two important archaeological data ; first, the comparative rarity of any sort of writing on the mainland, whereas written characters are very common, though as yet uninterpreted, in Crete ; second, the presence of a number of objects, notably great quantities of amber, which are not to be found in Crete at all, or at any rate very rarely, and strongly suggest northern origin. Of course no one contends that the Cretans, or any other southern people, might not have taken a fancy

to amber, as the Romans did later, and imported it by the ancient trade-route from the Baltic; but if they did, it is very strange that their supposed colonists in Greece should have kept it practically all for themselves and sent none of it on to the mother-land. For this and other reasons of the same kind, it has been thought likely ⁴ that the Mycenaean civilization represents the first infiltration of the northern races whose coming we have now to discuss. If we suppose a comparatively small number of adventurers making their way into Greece, we could easily imagine them adopting the great civilization of Crete, while retaining their own tastes and habits in many matters, and, by virtue of their superior fighting abilities, ousting the local chieftains, whoever they may have been, and setting up as barons or kings in their stead. That something of this sort did take place, is practically certain; the point at issue, which is not of importance for our purpose, is simply, whether this invasion from the north represents the formation of the Mycenaean culture or its extinction. But this much is not unlikely, that the speech of the Mycenaean was a kind of Greek.

Certain it is that a northern people did arrive sooner or later, and that by at least the tenth century B.C., probably by the thirteenth, they were, and clearly had been for some time, lords of Greece, many of the islands, including Crete, and some points on the mainland of Asia Minor, notably Troy. We may conveniently call them by their Homeric name of Achaei, though that is the appellation of part only of this people, even in Homer. The date of their arrival is somewhere in the second millennium B.C., perhaps about 1500 or earlier. Another invasion, whether simultaneous with this or not, is the migration of the Ionians who ultimately established themselves in a

considerable part of the Asiatic coast. The last chapter in this history of invasions is the arrival, perhaps in the twelfth century, of the Dorians, who represent a vigorous, but ruder and more backward culture, and whose coming brings to an end the Achaian civilization and begins, owing to intermixture with the earlier comers, the Hellenic or Greek culture proper.

Thanks to Homer, we can form a fairly clear and consistent picture of the Achaians, after their invasion of Greece had resulted in their establishment as unquestioned lords of the land, and while the Dorians were still too far off from his part of the Greek world to be a menace. Their religion was practically the classical religion of Greece, as represented by countless later works of both literature and art, and epitomised in our modern handbooks of the subject. They were polytheists, and their polytheism was definitely anthropomorphic. On the analogy of their own culture and social organization, they supposed the gods to be of different ranks, all under the supreme command of Zeus, the 'father,'—*i.e.*, the natural ruler, not the begetter,—of gods and men. Like an Achaian chieftain or baron, he had but one wife, Hera; like his human prototype again, he was not always faithful to her, any more than Agamemnon was to Klytaimnestra or Odysseus to the model wife Penelope. Very definitely, he, not she, is the ruler in this scheme of things; the days of the supremacy of the goddess, whatever the sociological implications of this may be, are wholly of the past. Hers is, however, the vast influence of a queen-consort, and generally she is treated with much respect, even by Zeus himself, when any matter of importance is under discussion in the divine council. The rest of the gods form for the most part a great patrilineal family, the children or brothers of Zeus.

There are exceptions, largely older deities, such as Kronos or Okeanos, who are thought of much as the aged Laertes is in the family of Odysseus; they are living in dignified retirement. Other and younger figures, such as Dionysos, are of little account, largely, though Homer does not seem fully aware of the fact, because they are foreigners. But the normal position is that of a god like Apollo. Son of Zeus, he is, as the son of an earthly king would be, influential and powerful, but subject like the rest to his great father. It is noteworthy that this membership in the family extends to gods not of Achaian or other Greek origin; Apollo is perhaps a foreigner, Athena and Artemis certainly are, yet they take their place like the rest in the divine household.

In many ways very human, the gods have in them, even in Homer,—indeed more in him than in some of the later evidence, for he seems to voice the ideas of an intelligent and by no means unenlightened aristocracy,—the germ of a loftier conception of divinity which was afterwards to find its fruition in the theological speculations of the great philosophers. They are for the most part lovers of justice and inclined towards mercy, responsible governors of the world though not its creators.

As to the position of men in the universe so ruled, Achaian attention was fixed mostly on the present life. A less 'other-worldly' people never existed. This perhaps was well for their sanity, for their ideas of death and the after-life were dismal enough. The breath-soul (*psyche*), on leaving the body, goes to the House of Hades, where it continues to live a shadow of its earthly existence. Once its body has been buried, it returns no more, and has normally no hope whatever of any amelioration of its lot. A few exceptional offenders against the gods are in positive

misery and torment, but the lot of the general run of mankind, of whatever rank, is simply colourless and negative, less desirable, because emptier, than that of the meanest thrall on earth. That this view of death, which there is no evidence of anyone actively disbelieving, did not produce wide-spread depression, is surely good proof that the average Achaian simply did not think much about it; at least, the average Achaian noble. So little did they think of it that in Homer we hear nothing of hero-cult, and but little, considering the amount of killing and burying which takes place in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, of tendance of the dead. A man dies, his body is duly burned, funeral games perhaps take place, and after that no one thinks much more of him, except to notice his barrow or to mourn the loss of his valour or wisdom. That he is now a powerful ghost, friendly or baneful, is never suggested.

No document tells us directly what the lower classes of Achaian society thought on this score; but apart from hints in Homer, who seems to have been in touch with some at least of the beliefs of the vassals of the nobles he sung to, we have the later, but still fairly early, evidence of Hesiod. In his day Achaian feudalism was degenerate, at least in his native Boiotia, and the *Works and Days* voices the grievances and sets forth the beliefs and practices of the farmer class, especially of the cottar, whose family consists of himself, his wife, a child or two, and an ox to drag the plough. Hesiod knows of a great number of people who have attained to something higher than mortal rank after death, notably the men of the Golden Age: "by the councils of great Zeus they are *daimones*" —the word is here used for the first time to mean a divine being inferior to a god,— "kindly, earth-dwelling, guardians of mortal men." Even in Homer one now

and then hears of a favoured mortal who has escaped death and been snatched away, body and soul, to the Islands of the Blessed, which he calls by the old pre-Greek name of *Ēlysiôn*.

In close correspondence with this different view of the after-life is the appearance of hero-cult after Homer. That it began then is totally incredible. It is connected with very ancient ideas, and in particular with ideas which seem to be ancient in the Eastern Mediterranean. Not only do Mycenaean tombs show us a richness of sepulchral offerings and an elaboration of design quite incompatible with the notion that the dead are no longer of much account, but the famous sarcophagus of Haghia Triadha in Crete shows us a scene in which offerings are brought to a tomb-like structure at the entrance of which stands a curious stiff figure, reasonably interpreted as the occupant of the tomb in his death-clothes. It is to be supposed therefore that the post-Homeric Greeks did not invent this cult, but brought it back from the comparative obscurity into which it had sunk under the rule of the Achaian nobility, who apparently were something which by contrast could almost be called free-thinkers. Its significance will be discussed in a later chapter ; for the present, it is enough briefly to describe it.

A hero, in the technical sense which the word has in Greek for all writers from about the eighth to about the third century B.C., is not a living man of extraordinary valour, but a dead man who by death has attained to something like deity. He differs from the Olympians in that he is chthonian, a dweller in the ground (Hesiod's *daimones* are dwellers *on* the earth, *ἐνυχθόνιοι*, not *in* it), and from the chthonian gods, Demeter and the rest, in the restricted range of his activities. This last characteristic is hard to define exactly, and indeed the boundary between powerful

ghost and chthonian god is fluctuating, so that it is often very hard to say to which class a particular figure belongs. Thus, the question whether Asklepios was a chthonian deity or a dead man, more or less historical, is hardly yet settled, though the latter view is the likelier; while several vague figures, known to the ancients as heroes, are certainly not so in their origin, nor their tombs real places of burial. For instance, no one except a neolithic baby was ever interred in the famous 'barrow of Pelops' at Olympia, and the hero Hyakinthos of Amyklai is a pre-Greek god.

Later yet, about the seventh century, Greece was once again affected by a northern culture, at least in so far as its religion went. The great movement of which the Achaian, Ionian, and Dorian migrations formed part had extended also into Asia Minor and into the regions east and west of the Vardar valley, the presumable route of the Achaians and their successors into Greece. A people who, like Homer's Achaioi, were tall and fair, and who, like them, spoke a Wiro or Indo-Germanic language, who also, again like them, were valiant if somewhat undisciplined fighters, and great lovers of horses, had conquered the district known in classical times as Thrace. They brought with them, or found waiting for them, or produced by combination of local and imported elements, a religion very different from that of Greece in Homer's day, which perhaps at two points, certainly at one, affected Greece to a considerable extent.

The cult of the war-god, Arēs, has been thought with considerable plausibility to be Thracian. He is an unpopular deity in Greece, and never develops those higher ethical traits which are characteristic of Zeus, Hēra, Apollo, and other typical gods, but remains a divine swashbuckler. It is therefore by no means unlikely that he represents a borrowing from a ruder culture.

More important than this, and not wholly Thracian, for the related Phrygian population seem to have had their share in this development, was the worship of Dionysos. It is surely no longer necessary to point out that this deity was not simply the god of wine or of drunkenness. The vine was indeed his gift, for he was the spirit of vegetation and apparently of fertility in general; but his religion, while containing many wild and savage elements, was full of a kind of rude spirituality. His worshippers sought, by ecstatic dances, intoxication, and other methods, to lose their own personalities and become merged in the deity they worshipped. Hence their adoption of one of his own names; they are commonly called, according to sex, Bakchoi or Bakchai, from the god's epithet Bakchos. One of their most characteristic rites, the so-called Omophagia, or eating of raw flesh, was to devour an animal in which the god was thought to be incarnate; a proceeding which, as Robertson Smith long ago pointed out,⁵ is early and wide-spread. Here then, in this deity who is eaten by his worshippers and who commonly, though by no means always, appears in bestial shape, we have the introduction into Greece of a more backward, more nearly primitive, form of cult than we normally find there.

It was not, however, purely the introduction of a new cult, for it was, at least in part, the revival of an old one. Dionysos, whose name in all probability means 'son of God,' has obvious analogies to the divine child, the Zeus Kouros or however the Greeks might represent his native name, of Crete. Hence it is that we find his cult very active, and assuming a rather primitive form, in Crete. Not dissimilar is the fact that the ancient worship of Artemis and of the goddesses who had sprung into being from her local cults or titles may be thought to have prepared the

ground for the reception, in still later times (about the fifth century and later) for the worship of the Great Mother, Kybelē, when it was introduced from Asia Minor. Of this last innovation, however, as of some which followed it, I do not intend to speak, as this book deals with Greek and not with Asiatic culture.

It is perhaps more apparent after this short review why, as was stated in the last chapter, it is absurd to derive all the higher elements of Greek culture from any one stock. On the one hand, the population of Greece before the Achaian migration was in many ways more civilized than the invaders, whose coming led among other things to a decided degeneration in trade and in the arts, while in religion, the Eleusinian Mysteries, which in later days at least were a potent spiritual force and for that reason long held their ground even against Christianity, were pre-Greek in origin. Another religion capable of lofty developments, that of Dionysos, was not Greek at all. On the other hand, the invaders were the more capable of civilization, as is seen by the results of their coming; in religion, they brought with them the great and sublime figure of Zeus, who later becomes practically the One God of a monotheistic faith, and re-moulded the primitive Artemis into the wonderful embodiment of purity which we find in Euripides. Nor again is it possible to say that the invaders brought only sky-gods with them, and that the chthonians are of local origin; the Greek name of the chief goddess of the Mysteries, Dēmētēr, is alone enough to disprove such an assertion. In material culture, the native populations on the one hand were great traders, while the invaders had hardly got beyond piracy; but it was Greek, not Cretan colonies, that civilized much of the Mediterranean world. In art, the first efforts of the Dorian vase painters are laughably bad, especially as

compared with the developed Cretan technique ; but there is nothing laughable in Peloponnesian art of the classical period.

We see therefore that in estimating such evidence of primitive features as comes to light in the mixed civilization known as Greek or Hellenic, we need not be too curious in the search for ethnological data. Both the invaders and the invaded had of course been savages sometime in the past ; neither were savages when their cultures met and blended. Any institution therefore, Helladic, Cretan, Achaian, or Dorian, to say nothing of the somewhat mixed culture of Ionia, which we may meet with, may contain savage or primitive elements ; but no institution which we can learn of from the sources, literary and monumental, at our disposal is any longer savage when we find it. Much ink has been spilt in a vain endeavour to recognize traces of a supposed time of ' Pelasgian ' savagery (it has been picturesquely called *Urdummheit*) supposedly not much anterior to the Achaian migration ; while it would be easy to name ingenious works of would-be historical research which are based on the empty supposition that the recent ancestors of Homer's Achaioi were at least as far from civilization as the pre-Columbian Indians of North America, and less well organized for peace and war than the more advanced Amerindian stocks, such as the Five Nations. In the next chapter a few of these attempts will be dealt with, by way of illustration only, for it is obviously not the business of a work of this kind to enumerate and refute them all.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

¹ See Wace and Thompson, *Prehistoric Thessaly*. In general, compare for the matter of this chapter the relevant sections of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vols. I and II. For the

language, see J. Huber, *De lingua antiquissimorum Graeciae incolarum* (Vienna 1921); Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der gr. Sprache* (Göttingen 1896).

² See, pending the publication of M. P. Nilsson's work on Cretan religion, my abstract of his views, *Year's Work*, 1923, p. 45, and his *Hist. of Gk. Rel.*, Chap. I.

³ By L. R. Farnell in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, VII (1904) p. 71 sqq. Cf. Chapter III.

⁴ Notably by Nilsson.

⁵ *Religion of the Semites*, Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER III

SURVIVALS FALSELY SO CALLED

WHEN, part way through the nineteenth century, it at last became evident to all scientists that the beliefs and practices of pagan races were neither the result of the devil's wiles to lead them away from the truth, nor yet remnants of a primitive wisdom misinterpreted by later generations; when also, after much ingenuity had been wasted by the followers of Max Müller in the attempt to deduce everything in mythology and much in ritual from a supposed habit of talking metaphorically about the weather, and, thanks to such investigators as Mannhardt in Germany, Andrew Lang and Frazer in Great Britain, it was seen that the ways of contemporary savages would help us to understand the older civilizations; it was inevitable that the new doctrine should have its fanatics, and that a tendency, hardly yet outlived, should arise, to explain everything in history by reference to the 'primitive,' or more often, to that interpretation of the 'primitive' which commended itself to the investigator for the time being. It was pointed out, with perfect truth, that the savage often sees a spirit where civilized man clearly perceives the working of an inanimate cause, such as wind or heat; hence it was hastily deduced that all magic and religion began with the invocation of spirits, or attempts to influence them. It was rightly observed

that the cult of the dead and the fear of ghosts were wide-spread among savages ; the result was to deduce all worship from this fear, all ritual from this cult. It was pointed out that the institution known as totemism was very widely distributed, being found not only in North America, the home of the word 'totem' itself, but in many other parts of the world as well. Hence the idea, still flourishing vigorously, especially upon the Continent, that any practice having to do with beasts or birds was proof of a lost totemic society. Finally, when folklore ceased to become solely a harmless amusement for amateurs and rose to its proper place as a branch of anthropology and a valuable adjunct of Comparative Religion, the gain brought with it this much loss, that some too hastily made the equation between peasant and savage, and again between savage and primitive man, and were and are far too apt, if by any plausible hypothesis of development a connection could be traced between an ancient custom and some country-side superstition or traditional game of modern Europe, to conclude that they had found cause and effect. It was not to be expected that workers in a field so much studied as the religion and sociology of ancient Greece should escape from the prevailing contagion ; indeed, being for the most part specialists in that field, and not in anthropology, Hellenists have been rather apt to take up with the latest theory but one, and clothe themselves like Fastidious Brisk in Ben Jonson's play, in the garments which someone else wore last act ; while not very many anthropologists have been competent Hellenists, and their books in turn are frequently full of ingenious theories built upon ill-digested and incomplete Greek facts. This can hardly fail to bewilder the student, who finds himself invited to consider *Déméter*, for instance, now as a ghost, now as the

totem of a horse-clan, and again as a kind of sublimated Jack-in-the-Green. Thanks however to that spirit of sanity and moderation which always makes itself felt sooner or later in all true sciences, it is possible for the investigator of to-day to make himself acquainted with undistorted facts and carefully weighed theories, and so to correct the very natural errors of his predecessors. As some, however, have not yet taken the trouble to use the abundant materials which lie ready to their hand, this chapter will be devoted to a brief refutation of a few unwarranted explanations that still find expression in manuals of the subject and even in original works, small and great, dealing with Comparative Religion or Sociology, or in particular with Greece.

The first consideration which enables us to see the fundamental falsity of these hypotheses is one already mentioned in the earlier chapters of this book, namely, the great antiquity of civilization in Greece. We are dealing for the most part with practices in vogue between about 1000 B.C. and A.D. 400. The earlier of these dates is in the middle of the feudal period of Greece, and has already a long history of the rise and fall of civilizations behind it. To suppose that a savage custom lasted without serious modification throughout the millennium or so intervening between the rise of Crete and the writing of the Homeric poems, or that the people who in the sixth century B.C. were capable of such acts of advanced culture as the building of the older Athenian temples, the founding of the numerous colonies dating from that period, and the composition of the extensive literature whose fragments excite our admiration to-day, were five hundred years or so earlier capable of totemism or any other distinctively 'primitive' custom, is to assume a rapidity of independent development not

only unevidenced by the facts at our disposal, but contrary to all that we know of the slowness with which savage institutions change. The Thessalians, for instance, whom archaeological finds prove to have been little better than savages during the Mycenaean period in the regions south of them, were at the time of the full development of Greek culture still barbarians, and as such, of little political importance. In the case of the Greeks as a whole, Herodotos notes with some complacency that they had rid themselves of savage simplicity,—*euethiê*,—and were distinguishable from the barbarians largely by this circumstance; and herein he is supported by the evidence at our command. The Achaian civilization, indeed, was by no means universal, and has no doubt been idealized by Homer; but the Ionians, for instance, were very far from barbarous at the time (ninth century and onwards) when the so-called Cyclic epics were composed, as the fragments of these works still remaining abundantly prove.¹

Hence, in all cases where the origin of a Greek custom or belief is sought in a practice similar to those of modern savagery, we must prove clearly, either that such a custom can resist, at least as a survival, the growth of civilization, or else that its descendants, in the form of increasingly civilized customs, are capable of going on into a higher culture; or finally, that it has its roots in something fundamental in human nature, and thus lasting unchanged in itself, although the expression of it and its relation to the other elements of culture may change. To take a single instance; we teach our children to present the right hand to a stranger, and usually tell them that to present the left hand in greeting would be rude. Here we have firstly a survival; for it can generally be shown that what is now considered polite was once thought

magically good, and vice versa ; and the idea that the right is lucky, the left unlucky, which is so widely prevalent, is traceable ultimately to a physiological fact. Most people have better control over the muscles of the right arm than over those of the left ; in other words, the left lobe of most human brains is a trifle the better developed. For the resistance of an old custom to the growth of civilization, we may compare the practice of naming a child ' after ' someone admired or loved, and the corresponding avoidance of names suggestive of something undesirable. Like the last custom mentioned, this ultimately goes back to association of ideas, which is part of everyone's mental make-up ; but its more immediate source is the belief in the reality of names, as part of the personality. It would be hard to find anyone now seriously believing that to call a boy Judas would tend to make him a traitor, or that to name him Paul would give him a share in the virtues of the Apostle to the Gentiles ; but, since from any rational point of view the matter is absolutely indifferent, the scale is turned by old custom, originally based on a magico-religious belief.

If then we are asked to believe that any Greek custom has a definitely savage origin, we must ask whether the long survival of the idea postulated is likely or possible. If it is not, we are bound to reject the suggestion as at least improbable, and to try to find, instead, an origin for it in conceptions likely to find favour with one who has reached civilization, or at least barbarism.

One whole class of customs and rites alleged to be ancient is susceptible of historical criticism of a fairly decisive character. It has been repeatedly alleged, mostly by modern Greek writers, but to a considerable extent outside Greece also,² that ancient customs of

the simpler sort, such as would be in vogue among the classical peasantry, have in large measure survived ; with the corollary, that a modern custom is likely to be an ancient peasant-custom, even if ancient literature never mentions it. This in itself is plausible enough ; indeed the survival of some customs is no theory but a demonstrated fact. Thus, the ancient worship of the Moirai, who were birth- and fate-spirits, has left the clearest traces on modern ritual and in modern folk-tales ; the Nereids of ancient mythology reappear as the modern Neraïdes, although now they are not exclusively spirits of the sea. But we must test every alleged survival separately, for two reasons. The first is, that Greece has been many times over invaded since the classical period, by a succession of races, including Slavs, who were in a much more backward state when they arrived than we can imagine the lowest strata of the ancient Greek population to have been. The second is that the survivors of the Greeks themselves, whose existence in modern Greece, as an element in the population, no one need doubt, had been so harried by war, oppression, malaria, and the emigration of the better classes, that we may well conceive them as retrogressing to a very great extent and becoming much more savage than their ancestors of the days of Homer or Hesiod. If we imagine for instance the condition of an inhabitant of the Greek countryside after the invasion of Attila (A.D. 395-7), we see that he had but little to remind him of Greek, or any, culture. The town which had been the centre of his district was probably in ruins, certainly stripped of practically every object of artistic worth, either for the adornment of Constantinople, or, in the case of metal statues, to be melted down to make some barbarous tool or ornament. The characteristic buildings of antiquity, if temples, had either been turned

into churches, thus quite losing their ancient associations, or fallen victims, as did that of *Dēmêtēr* at Eleusis, to the theological zeal of some plunderer or official. If secular edifices, such as gymnasia or baths, they were crumbling for lack of anyone to keep them in repair. Locally, many of his most characteristic customs, if he had the heart to keep them up, were frowned upon as heathen, and to be carried on only by stealth or in a disguised form. The local population was sparse, communications with the outside world precarious and difficult, contact with fresh hordes of barbarians an ever-recurring likelihood. What is there to be wondered at if the Greek peasant under such appalling conditions became dead to national feeling and lost the characteristic manners of his race? The marvel is, that to some extent he managed here and there to preserve them in a general way; but how completely the old local associations vanished is clear from the crop of demonstrably new legends which are to be found in the Greek countryside to-day, and from the fact that of all the ancient dialects, only one, Lakonian, has left any discoverable trace in modern speech.

Let us now examine one or two modern beliefs which have been alleged to be ancient in their origin. The modern peasant, and his mediaeval ancestor, as is proved by various documents, believes in vampires, for whom, besides the Slavonic name *vrykolokes*, properly signifying a were-wolf in the Slavonic tongues, and not a vampire at all, he has, or had, several names whose Greek origin is either demonstrable or likely. Mr. Lawson has little difficulty in proving that before contact with the Slavs was likely or possible, the Greeks had ideas concerning the possibility of a dead man reappearing in more or less bodily form; one or two instances will be given in Chapter V. He con-

cludes therefore that the idea, or the greater part of it, while it undoubtedly does exist among the Slavs, was also ancient Greek, and that the borrowing is confined to the name and some few details.

The characteristics of the belief in vampires are the following. Under certain circumstances, it is thought, a dead man is not really dead, but lives with a singularly horrible half-life. This enables him to re-animate his body, which is not subject to decay. He leaves his grave and goes among the living, attacking them, and especially sucking their blood. He can be 'laid' by mutilating the body in certain ways, notably by cutting off the head and driving a stake through the trunk, or by burning it to ashes.

Now it is quite true that in ancient Greece we find occasionally a dead man reappearing in bodily form ; also that blood is desired by the dead, who regain some measure of life thereby ; and that the dead, when they thus appear, are on occasion sufficiently like living men to wrestle, engage in battle, or beget children ; some of which actions are also attributed to vampires. But when we look at the details, the contrast is sharp and unmistakable. Almost without exception, it is the blessed dead,—the heroes,—who behave in this manner. Never is it intimated, by any unforced interpretation of a classical passage, that such reappear-ance is a sign of great wickedness in life, or of a curse ; or that the body, if not cremated, will not decay in the ground ; or that the spectre is particularly likely to harm those whom the living man loved ; or that the children of such a hero are defective in any way. On the contrary ; such heroic phantoms regularly help their friends or fellow-countrymen, and if they do harm, do so in revenge, as a living man might. They do not suck blood ; they are not particularly dreadful, apart from the general dread of the super-

natural ; their offspring are notably powerful, successful, or gifted. We may say, therefore, that the belief as we find it to-day is not Greek, but Slav ; and that if any Greek elements remain, they are to be sought for in those tales in which the vampire is not altogether horrible and harmful, in other words, in which he displays some few characteristics of a hero.

The modern countryside is haunted, especially between Christmas and Epiphany, by certain hideous and extremely filthy bogies known, to take one form only of their Protean name, as Kallikantzaroi. The word is of very doubtful derivation ; but leaving that out of the question, let us look for a moment at the suggestion that they are the descendants of the ancient spirits of the wild, Centaurs, Satyrs, Seilēnoi, and the like. Now it is true that we have here on the one side and on the other the conception of more or less monstrous creatures, apt to play pranks of a nature sometimes passing a mere practical joke on human beings, and at the same time not gifted with great intelligence. The Kallikantzaros can be outwitted and kept at bay by quite simple stratagems ; the Centaurs were represented as brutal, uncouth, and stupidly ferocious ; the Satyrs were as cowardly as lustful, at least in such documents as Euripides' *Cyclops*, and by no means remarkable for cleverness. All alike were haunters of wild places. But the Greek monsters lack the essential, and, to my mind at least, essentially Slavonic, elements in the make-up of the Kallikantzaroi ; they are not grotesquely deformed in every part of them ; they are not invariably foolish (one thinks of the philosophizing Seilēnos who discoursed to King Midas on the vanity of human life, and the wisdom and goodness of the Centaur Cheiron), and they are not filthy in their habits ; nor are their visits particularly to be expected in the dead of winter.

Here again therefore I should certainly postulate the introduction of a non-Greek belief, with possibly one or two native elements added.

It appears, then, that if we find in modern Greece a belief easily traceable to ideas more or less primitive, we must not, without further investigation, assume its presence in ancient Greece also, nor deduce the survival in that stage of civilization of a savage notion. It is, alas, no news that much that is savage survives among Slavonic races to this day.

A great deal of use has been made, by students of Greek culture, of the facts of totemism, and it is still common to describe certain phenomena occurring in Greece as totemic. It is therefore worth while briefly to remind oneself what totemism is, and to ask whether any traces of it are really to be found in Greece.

Sir J. G. Frazer, who has a better right than anyone else to speak with authority on the matter, is of opinion that

'we may perhaps say that totemism is an intimate relation which is supposed to exist between a group of kindred people on the one side and a species of natural or artificial objects on the other side, which objects are called the totems of the human group.'

He adds that the relationship is, as one might expect in a savage conception, vague and incapable of very exact definition; that it involves a feeling of close friendship, kindred, even identification, between a man and his totem; that it does not involve worship, but simply the respect which would be shown to any member of the same society; and that an outward sign of this respect is generally, though not always, that the totemist will not hurt, kill or eat his totem, if it be anything edible. It is well known of course that the totem is often eaten on ceremonial occasions, perhaps with a sort of sacramental intention; it is

less well known that instances of the totem developing, or appearing to develop, into a god, are very rare.

If now we turn to the writings of M. Salamon Reinach, to mention no other authorities, we find in the first place that the totemic animals (he treats chiefly of this, the commonest, kind of totem, to which for brevity's sake I will confine myself here) are tacitly assumed to be gods or in a fair way to become gods: '*les animeaux totems*' he tells us, '*annoncent l'avenir à leurs fideles et leur servent de guides.*' Secondly, he classes as survivals of totemism very many customs which do not involve relationship with animals, such as a tabu on eating some creature, as the pig or a particular species of crab; finally, and this is of considerable importance for our present subject,—he discovers very numerous traces of this ancient system in Greece.

As an instance of his use of the totemic explanation may be cited his treatment of the myth of Aktaion. According to the usual form of the legend, Aktaion accidentally saw Artemis bathing; enraged at this insult, the goddess turned him into a stag, and he was torn in pieces by his own hounds. Reinach supposes that in Boiotia, the home of the legend, there was a clan whose women had the hind for their totem, and used annually to tear a stag in pieces; that their totem-hind was in time modified into the anthropomorphic goddess Artemis, with her attendant deer; that the ritual dismemberment of the totem-animal thus became a sacrifice to the goddess; that in the legend, as the goddess, was now thought of in too civilized a way to represent her devouring a stag, real or produced by a magic transformation, the hounds were introduced as the actual slayers; and finally, a reason for the killing was provided in the shape of the insult offered to the goddess by Aktaion.

It is easy to pick flaws in this particular exposition

of a particular legend, and to do so would throw little light on the problem in general, for anyone might enunciate a correct theory and yet misapply it in particular instances. I only point out that such an explanation is quite unnecessary, for to see a deity against his or her will is usually held to be a fatal thing, and transformation into bestial shape is one of the commonest forms of magical revenge, witness for example the many tales of this kind in the *Thousand and One Nights*. More damaging are the following considerations.

If the survivals of totemism are really numerous in Greece, the natural conclusion is that totemism subsisted in that country fairly late. Now only savages, generally quite low savages, have the system in anything like its full form, and there is no proof that every people has of necessity passed through it. If then it existed comparatively recently in Greece, we must conclude that the Greeks, or some of them, were still savages not very long before the period of their earliest monuments. But traces of a high civilization go back to the second millennium for Greece proper, to the third for Crete, and outside the radius of that civilization we still find evidence of a quite advanced barbarism. Moreover, to go outside the radius of Minoan-Mycenaean civilization is, as Dr. Nilsson has well pointed out, to quit the region of the chief cycles of myth. Is it not therefore very odd that in the very regions where these traces of low savagery are to be found most abundantly,—for a great part of the evidence is from myths,—we also find the clearest evidence that there was no savagery, but civilization, from a time long anterior to that of our authors? How came this survival to take place, in a matter not primarily religious or magical, but social?

But apart from this, and assuming if we like that

this fragment of savagery did survive in some attenuated form, we must note that any critical examination brings in a verdict, at least, of 'not proven' as regards totemism. This has been well pointed out by the latest investigator of the subject whose work I have seen, Dr. Carl Meuer. Starting from Clemen's three canons for the existence of totemism, viz., supposed relationship to the totem, unwillingness to harm it, and bearing of a name denoting or connected with it, he applies them to every theory of Greek totemism that has been put forward, and finds that tested by them, these theories do not stand. To give one or two instances; Lykaon is said to have been the child of Kallistô, who was turned into a bear. Meeting his mother in her bestial form, he would have killed her, had not Zeus in pity interposed and turned them both into constellations, Vrsa Maior and Arctophylax. Here indeed we have relationship to a beast which might conceivably be a totem; but Lykaon's name has nothing to do with bears, and the point of the story is that he does *not* hesitate to kill them. So with many other myths; the totemic explanation has frequently to assume that a magical or divine animal is a totem, and on that basis to wrench the other details into signifying totemism.

If we pass to ritual, the lack of evidence is still noteworthy, if we will but examine carefully. At Mt. Parthenion in Arkadia, according to Pausanias, the people would neither kill tortoises themselves nor let anyone else do so. This at first sight looks totemistic enough; but when we consider that the people and the mountain alike have no name that even hints at that of the tortoise; that totemists by no means always object to other people killing their totem; and that the reason given was that these tortoises were sacred to Pan, the goat-footed god, who certainly is not a tor-

toise, it is obvious that the totemistic interpretation is of the shakiest. A whole class of practices, again, are clearly not totemistic, but examples of theriolatry, or the worship, either of a god who takes the form of a beast, or of a beast supposed to be in itself supernatural or superior to man in its powers; but to assume that theriolatry is necessarily, or even commonly, the result of totemism, is to beg the question. Moreover, in Greece, although there are examples of gods connected with beasts who may be older forms of themselves (Asklepios, for example, and other chthonian deities, with the snake), the most definitely theriomorphic god of all is Dionysos, who is known to be a relatively late importation, and one of the most regular associations is that between Hermes, who is a very old deity, and the cock, which was not introduced into Greece until fully historical times, and is still occasionally spoken of as a foreign bird in the fifth century.

One most curious case is that which will be discussed in Chapter IV, of a clan living on a mountain whose name may be somehow connected with the word for 'wolf,' who claimed that their first king had been called Lykaon (possibly 'she-wolf-man'), and who were supposed to have the power of turning into wolves. But here again we want evidence that they regarded ordinary wolves as their brethren, or that they spared them or were spared by them. So even in this instance, which is perhaps the strongest of all, we cannot claim anything like satisfactory proof of Greek totemism.³

Another sociological survival of which an attempt has been made to find traces in historical Greece is the institution known as mother-right, or less correctly as matriarchy. By this, instead of tracing descent through and inheriting from the father, the mother is the source of inheritance, the children being called,

—to adopt modern English equivalents,—John or Jane Susanson, not Johnson. In the full form of this custom, observable to-day among the Khasis and elsewhere, only women can hold or transmit property, their position being in this and many other respects that held by men in Roman law. The head of the family, where such a system occurs, is however not usually the mother, but the senior male on the distaff side, generally the mother's eldest brother; the father being accounted no relation to his children.

The theory is really two-fold; first, that mother-right has always, or normally, preceded father-right in the development of human society; secondly, that certain Greek customs indicate that mother-right was in use there till a comparatively late period.

Neither of these claims can, however, be made out. There is indeed evidence that matrilineal descent tends strongly to give way to patrilineal; but the converse, that patrilineal systems have developed out of matrilineal, cannot be maintained. Either system can be directly derived from a state of universal promiscuity, if we imagine that to have been the original condition of mankind, or from some such rudimentary family as that of the gorilla, if, with Westermarck, we suppose man to have started from there. The common argument, that the most backward savages know nothing of the part of the male in reproduction, is not in point; for the relation of the father to his offspring is frequently rather that of owner to chattel than one of blood-kinship, and in some existing societies the only thing necessary for A to be accounted the son of B is that his mother should be the latter's property, even if it is certainly known that C is the physical father. As to Greece, I have elsewhere shown that not one of the phenomena supposed to indicate mother-right in the historic period points that way at

all, while for the pre-historic, all I can find is the statement, often enough repeated in genealogies, that a prince inherited the kingdom of his mother's father (which, under strict mother-right, he could not do, for it would pass to the child of his mother's aunt on her father's side), and, once or twice, that a child's maternal uncle was his guardian or otherwise took an interest in him; both of which are very easily explicable if we remember that the Greeks seem from quite early times to have recognized kinship on both sides, and that in their surviving codes of law, the maternal kin have, in default of heirs on the spear side, a certain right of inheritance.⁴ To explain this, we need suppose no more than what is abundantly clear from other sources; that the Greeks, from very early in their history, had a certain ability to recognize plain facts, such as the tie of blood existing between a child and his mother, and hence with her blood-relations. That some traces, however, of an organization probably older than the patrilineal family as we know it to-day do exist in ancient Greece will be shown in a later chapter.

In studying the resemblances between Greek and savage cult, more than one investigator has seemed to find materials for a hypothesis of a quite close connection between the two; proofs, that is, that certain Greek rites had developed in a comparatively short space of time from savage practices of a decidedly backward type. Of the many instances of this, I will discuss briefly that which occupies a large part of Miss Harrison's ingenious book, *Themis*.

It is a plausible theory of Durkheim, one of the most eminent of French sociologists, that in the earliest stage of religion nothing like a god, or even a spirit, was conceived. Man is a gregarious animal, and loves to assemble in packs or hordes. Now in a crowd the

individual (especially if he be a savage) often feels a remarkable exaltation of his powers; he is more daring, more excited, and feels himself stronger, than if he were alone or had but two or three of his kind with him. Early reflection led men to ascribe this to the presence of strong *mana*, and hence to cultivate that *mana* by ceremonial meetings, comparable to the Australian *intichiuma* rites. In time there was evolved from the *mana*-filled crowd a deity or spirit which was really none other than a kind of personification or 'projection' of the crowd itself; the society was the god of the society.

Now in Crete we have, on the one hand, a legend of how certain beings called Kourêtes (the name appears to mean no more than 'young men') attended the sky-god Zeus in his infancy; and supporting this legend, we find in quite late times, the third century B.C., a ritual inscription containing a most interesting hymn. The worshippers are themselves *kouroi*, or youths, and they invoke Zeus as the 'greatest *kouros*' to join them in certain rites of fertility, the somewhat obscure details of which we need not enter upon now. Here, at first sight, we seem to have something not very far removed from the Australian *intichiuma*; a community worshipping a 'projection' of itself, in quite primitive style; or, if we prefer to state it so, performing magical rites to keep up its *mana*.

But a little reflection shows us that such a conclusion is premature. The rite takes place in Crete, and a host of legends lead us to believe that in very ancient times a deity was worshipped in that island who was conceived as a child-god, apparently born every year and dying every year. This god, for some reason which we can no longer see, possibly for no other than that he was the chief god, the Greeks identified with their own Zeus, though the legend of his death troubled

some. 'Cretans are ever liars,' says Kallimachos, 'for the Cretans have even counterfeited thy tomb, O Lord; but thou hast not died, but livest for ever.' The Cretan Zeus, also, was obviously connected with vegetation and fertility generally. It is then this Zeus whom the *kouroi* evoke as *kouros*. The rite is a survival in Greek times of a Cretan practice. But the Cretans of Minoan times were no savages but highly civilized, as we have seen. Their civilization, however, was of an Oriental type, and we know how slow the East is to cast aside what is old. India to-day has a long history of civilization behind it; yet in modern Hinduism there are not a few practices which are easily traced back to savagery, so far as their origin goes. They have come down through many centuries, probably modifying their significance profoundly for their votaries, yet retaining in outward form much that is primitive. Now the history of Minoan Crete covers something like a millennium and a half; therefore the savage-sounding legends of Crete, and the ritual which we can here and there prove to have existed and which is in conformity with those legends, must have lasted on through this long period of civilization, for the tellers of the legends and the practitioners of the ritual, so far as we know them, are Greeks, living after the fall of the older culture. The Greeks then did not inherit the rite of the *kouroi*, to return to our original example, from their own savage past, but from a civilization which had retained it as a survival, and they probably had not the least idea what it originally meant, but knew only that it was somehow pleasing to the local gods, whose worship they had neither the power nor the wish to abolish. The savagery from which the rite in question may plausibly enough be supposed to have sprung was already far in the past when the first Greek *kouros*

practised it for the first time. It is likely enough that if we knew all the facts, we could see that some characteristics of the British Parliament of to-day are what they are by reason of some long-forgotten custom of the pre-Keltic inhabitants of these islands ; but he would be a bold theorist who should go about to explain present-day procedure wholly or chiefly on the basis of Neolithic British assemblies.

Another connection which it has been sought to establish is that between the mysteries of Greece and those of savage peoples. To put it briefly, the case is this. At Eleusis, and in many other places of historical Greece, there existed certain rites which normally were held secret from the general public, but to which those who fulfilled certain conditions could obtain admission. The candidates for initiation into these ceremonies were elaborately purified and then given, partly by sharing in various sacrifices, processions, and dances, partly by being present at what appears to have been a sacred drama or miracle-play of some kind, a close association with the gods who presided over the whole ceremony ; at Eleusis, Dēmêtēr the corn-goddess and her daughter Korē. They now belonged to a mystic brotherhood, enjoyed the special favour of the deities to whom they had been thus introduced, and might hope for great benefits at their hands not only in this world but in the next. We have further a curious statement in Diodorus Siculus, a historian of Roman Imperial times who draws his information from authors considerably earlier than himself, that in Crete there was nothing secret about the local mysteries, which anyone might see.

Now if we look at savages, we find that an important part of their social system is generally the initiation of their young people, especially their young men, into the religious fellowship of the tribe. Very commonly

the youths are separated from their old associates, and particularly from their own families; they are put through a course of probation which sometimes lasts for years; they undergo all manner of tests of their courage, etc., and are given elaborate instructions. Finally, they are supposed to die, and to come to life again as new beings, with new names, and having to learn all that a baby must learn, even to eating and drinking and the use of the commonest objects. In a later stage of development, these initiations are not into the tribe, but into secret societies, which frequently are very powerful and important, and often claim that their members will be much better off in the next world than ordinary mortals.

When now we consider that the Greek mysteries were sometimes secret, sometimes not; that their ritual included purifications, tests, and instruction of some kind which was never to be revealed to outsiders; when further we find that initiation is often spoken of as a kind of death (the pun on *teleutê*, death, and *teleiê*, mystery, is common, and to a Greek a pun was more of an omen than a joke), are we not justified in assuming that we have here a survival of both stages of the savage custom?

The answer is, that the ultimate origin may possibly be of this kind, but that the lapse of time, in that case, from the beginning of the rites to their occurrence in historical times is one to be measured rather in thousands than in scores or even hundreds of years. The Eleusinian rite is pretty certainly Cretan in origin, or at any rate, belonging to a pre-Greek culture allied to that of Crete. Many others were supposed to be derived from Eleusis itself; others, again, are connected with gods manifestly not Greek in name or origin, such as the Kabeiroi of Samothrace; many occur, as we have seen, in Crete itself. Mysteries

are not characteristic of the most typically Hellenic gods, such as Apollo, Hēra, or the non-Cretan Zeus. Rather do they gather about the deities of the corn or of the other world, such as Dēmētēr, who seem to have the origin of their worship very far back in the past, or about comparatively late importations from other peoples, such as the Thraco-Pharygian Dionysos. As before, we may say that when the Greeks took them over from the Minoans, they cannot have taken them over as savage practices, for the Minoans were not savages, and if they borrowed them from races more backward than their own, as from the barbarous Thracians, the interpretation which they put upon them was far from savage, as their literature abundantly proves. Here again, therefore, we are not justified in seeing a survival of any but a very remote savage past, so remote that all traces of it had disappeared save in the outward form of a few ceremonies. Further in the case of the mysteries, we find that their connection with any such thing as an age-class is very remote, if it exists at all. It was a common saying at Athens that one became a *mystēs*, or initiate of the lower grade, in childhood, and an *epoptēs*, or full initiate, in manhood; but this is, no more than our own practice of baptizing and confirming early, a proof of any connection with a tribal mystery. As the mystic is better off in the next world, and one may die at any age, it is natural and reasonable to perform the necessary rites in good time; and that not all initiants were children we have superabundant proof. Moreover, both sexes were initiated together, thus forming a sharp contrast with tribal mysteries, and also with secret societies.

Finally, it is well to glance at a theory urged with great eloquence and learning by Sir J. G. Fraser, and adopted from him by several others. He has proved

with a superabundance of evidence that among many savage peoples, and frequently among barbarians also, for the custom does not soon die out, but lasts, in Japan at least, even into civilization, the king is an incarnate god. As such he can control the operations of nature, the weather for example often being conceived as depending on his good pleasure, while fertility, human and vegetable, is commonly in his keeping. As this divine activity needs a thoroughly strong and healthy body to sustain it, and men in time grow old and weak, the king generally is periodically killed, and seldom if ever allowed to die of old age or sickness. The death of the individual king of course does no harm to the divine power incarnate in him, which is straightway lodged in another such receptacle.

The question now is, whether such divine kings are to be found in Greece. In looking for them we may reasonably take three criteria; the superhuman power of the king, his identification with a god, whose name he commonly bears, and his violent death. If these three be found together, we may with some confidence conclude that Frazerian kingship, so to call it, existed in Greece; and if even one or two of them are there, some case has been made out for the supposition, and it is therefore worth looking into.

In passing, we may point out that such a custom pretty certainly existed in Thrace. Not only are Thracian kings often called by divine names (thus Kotys, a by-form of the name of the goddess Kottyto, is the name of several of them in fully historical times), but Orpheus, the famous musician-wizard, who met death at the hands of the votaries of his god Dionysos, is said to have been the son of a king and a goddess. The only point wanting to establish the case fully is, that Orpheus is never actually called Dionysos.

If now we turn to Greece, we find a magician-king, and one whose magic directed itself towards affecting the weather, in a very well-known tale. Salmôneus, king of Elis, wished to be thought a god, and therefore drove in his chariot imitating thunder and lightning. For this impiety he was smitten with real thunderbolts by Zeus. The tellers of this tale, including Vergil, who tells it best of all, find in his conduct nothing but impious madness: *demens, qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen aere et cornipedum pulsu simularet equorum*, is the poet's comment; 'madman, to mock the storm-clouds and the inimitable thunderbolt with rattling bronze and the tramp of horny-hooved steeds.' But a modern may well be excused for noting that Salmôneus' conduct may have been more reasonable, from his point of view, than it seemed; for to make a loud noise to resemble thunder, and to fling torches about, as he is said to have done, to mimic lightning, is good weather-magic, and the story represents real lightning and thunder as coming in answer to the king's spells. Moreover, weather-magic, as we shall see in a later chapter, was not strange to Greece, even in relatively very late times.

Salmôneus, then, makes thunder and lightning (successfully, on this interpretation of the myth), and dies a violent death. If now we turn to Crete, we have the curious statement of Homer that Minôs 'ruled for a period of eight years, being gossip of great Zeus.' While the exact meaning of the term *enneôros*, here translated 'for a period of eight years' is far from certain, it seems beyond reasonable doubt that it signifies some sort of periodicity in the kingship, and one welcomes, if only because it is a ray of light in the darkness of the text, the explanation suggested by Frazer, that Minôs went every eight years to Zeus and there received fresh kingly power from the divine

converse ; which quite possibly meant that he was sent out of the world at the end of an eight-year term, and another king appointed.

Thirdly, we have what looks like a clear case of identifying a king with a god, in the Spartan cult of Zeus Agamemnon.

Taking all this into consideration, it is not surprising that enthusiastic followers of Frazer, such for example as Prof. Gilbert Murray, received the new learning with joy, and even tended to derive all Greek gods from magician-kings, explaining very plausibly the myths of quarrels between divine son and divine father, leading to the overthrow of the latter, by supposing them to reflect a very ancient practice of slaying the old magician-king to set up another in his stead. But now that the theory has been before the world for some years, and much reflection has been expended on the relation between ancient Greek and more modern savage custom, it is well to look critically into the evidence.

In the first place, while it is true that we have in various places the three proposed criteria of divine, or Frazerian, kingship, it is noteworthy that we find them scattered. Salmôneus is a magician ; Minos perhaps is put to death after a fixed term of years ; Agamemnon is called Zeus. Here are legends and a scrap of ritual from three very widely separated parts of Greece, Elis, Sparta, and Crete, and it is rash to assume that if we knew all we should find the three characteristics combining in one individual.

Nor is it at all necessary, save perhaps in the very puzzling case of Minos, to assume that the Frazerian explanation is the true one, in order to make any kind of sense out of the traditions as they stand. Salmôneus was a weather-magician ; granted. But was he this because he was a king ? Nay, can we be

certain that he was originally a king at all? There is a quaint snobbishness about Greek tradition after Homer (and it so happens that the authorities who tell us of Salmōneus are very much later than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), which tends to make every prominent figure royal, even Thersites, the low-bred demagogue of the *Iliad*, becoming in later tradition a member of a royal house. Also, there is a great difference between a divine king who (1) controls the weather by his magic, (2) is put to death by his people or his successor, lest his bodily strength minish, and a wizard who is killed by his own charms,—torn to pieces, so to say, by the devils he has evoked. As to Zeus Agamemnon, and several other people who are certainly not sky-gods but are called Zeus in various parts of Greece, we may suppose either that the great cult of Zeus tended to absorb local cults and make their gods into titles of the great one, or, what I personally think likelier, that his name was popularly used to mean no more than 'divine,' 'superhuman,' so that Zeus Agamemnon is, one might almost say, St. Agamemnon, parallel rather to St. Louis of France than to the divine kings of savagery.

We therefore may reasonably conclude that, at most, some faint recollection of the time when a king was a god survived in Crete, and so passed to the Greeks in the form of a legend. If ever they had had such kings themselves (as opposed to kings who had some priestly functions, a very different matter), no identifiable survival of this existed among them; much less, therefore, any discoverable influence on their thought or behaviour.

I would once more remind the reader that this chapter, like all the rest, makes no pretence of dealing exhaustively with the subject, which could easily fill a dozen books as large as this one. Many other sup-

posed survivals of savagery in Greece have been pointed out by various investigators, and the evidence found unsatisfactory by others; and many more probably would have been put forward had they not been strangled at birth by the reflection that the long past of civilization in ancient Greece makes more than doubtful any theory which assumes a recent condition of savagery.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III

¹ Herodotos I, 60, 4. 'For the Greek race has from of old been differentiated from the barbarians by its sharper wits and its greater freedom from silly simplicity.' For the most attractive account in English of Homeric and Ionian civilization, see A. Lang, *The World of Homer* (Longmans Green & Co., 1910).

² For Mr. Lawson's views, see especially Chapter II, par. 13, and Chapter IV of his *Modern Greek Folklore*. The best Greek representative of these ideas, and also the best source for the modern facts, is the late Prof. N. P. Politis, whose chief work, *Traditions of the Greek People*, is unfortunately accessible only to those who can read the original Greek (*Παραδόσεις τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ*, Athens, 2 vols., 1904; the expected posthumous third volume has not yet appeared), and well deserves to be competently translated into English or French.

³ The first important work to apply the facts of totemism to the elucidation of ancient religion was the late Prof. Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*. For Frazer's views, see *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. IV, pp. 1 sqq.; for those of Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, Tome I, p. 9 sqq., III, p. 51 sqq., and elsewhere. Dr. Nilsson's discovery of the relation between Minoan-Mycenaean culture and Greek mythology was first published in *Festschrift für Wackernagel*, Göttingen, 1923. C. Meier's dissertation, *Der Totemismus bei den Griechen und Römern*, was published at Bonn in 1919. Clemen's three canons are to be found in his work, *Die Reste der primitiven Religionen*, 1916.

⁴ See 'The Alleged Evidence for Mother-Right in Greece,' *Folk-Lore*, September, 1911; Ploss-Renz, *Das Kind*, II, p. 626 ff.; 'Side-Lights on the Early History of Marriage,'

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in *Queen's Quarterly* (Kingston, Ontario), 1921, p. 155 *sqq.* The arguments on the other side mostly go back to Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht*, Basel, 1861 (reprinted 1897). For fuller references, with excellent criticism, see Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*², Vol. I, p. 96 *sqq.* Add H. E. A. Peake, *The Bronze Age and the Celtic World*, p. 173 *sqq.*

CHAPTER IV

SURVIVALS OF THE PRIMITIVE

I. THE GODS

EVERY handbook of Greek history or antiquities tells its readers that, owing partly to the conformation of the country, partly to the Greek passion for self-government, the whole area from the border of Macedonia to the dangerous rocks of Cape Malea was split into a number of petty states, between which no effective political unity was ever achieved. As Greece was never a political whole until it ceased to be a factor in politics at all and became a single province of the Roman Empire, so it was never a cultural whole, save perhaps when it became merged in the Hellenistic civilization which, after Alexander, gradually overspread the greater part of the Near East. It is therefore not at all surprising that we find, within a few score miles of each other, states of the most progressive and modern tendencies, boldly advancing from one political experiment to another, and states which altered only with slow unwillingness the venerable institutions which their forefathers had set up.

It is natural then to look for survivals of primitive conditions in the most backward states of which we have full, or comparatively full, knowledge. One of the most promising regions for our purpose is Arkadia, the hilly central district of the Peloponnesos, whose rustic simplicity was and is proverbial. The 'well-

girt man ' of whom we hear so much in ancient writers when they give us rough computations of distances along roads, might start from Athens and, without setting out to break records, find himself in Arkadia in three days. He would have left behind him a people whose like, for high average of culture and intelligence, the world had never seen before and has not seen since; he would come to a people among whom one of the chief gods was the grotesque and half-bestial Pan ('the Feeder' or 'Pasturer'); who worshipped scores of local deities, such as Theisoa, the chief object of cult in the region which bore her name, but not to be heard of elsewhere; among whom there occurred at every nook in the hills some strange fertility-cult which later ages declared to be derived from the Eleusinian Mysteries; whose gods were commonly represented, not by the beautiful cult-statues of developed Greek art, but by a mere square pillar, carved at the top into some semblance of a human head and shoulders; and of whose shrines weird tales were told, full of a horror rather material than spiritual.

The people of this region proudly declared that they had lived there since before the moon was created, and had sprung from their native soil. It is certain that they talked a very old-fashioned and rather uncouth dialect of Greek, and it is highly likely that they had a much larger proportion of the pre-Hellenic stock than most of the populations of the peninsula. One has only to look at a map of Great Britain to see how constantly the invaders capture the plains, while the invaded take refuge in the mountains; what is true of the district of Plynlymmon is true also of Mainalos and Kyllênê.

Of course the Arkadians, like all mountaineers, had romantic stories told of them, and were idealized into

tuneful shepherds, devoted lovers, and so forth, by the city-dwelling Alexandrian poets, the echoes of whose work still linger ; but we are fortunate in having a sober guide-book of this and several other districts of the Greek mainland, written in the second century A.D. by Pausanias,¹ an Asiatic Greek of considerable learning and industry, who saw the country for himself at a time when the ancient cults still survived, kept alive in part, very likely, because they formed an excellent attraction for tourists, and the ancient manners were not quite extinct. We have also a number of references in other authors, which enable us to see something of the underlying stratum of ancient, and therefore in some cases savage, custom and ritual, which were less deeply buried by Greek civilization here than in more urban districts.

If we look at the cult of Pan himself we see much that is characteristically primitive. Of the many manifestations of *mana* which attract the attention of early religious thought, fertility is one of the most prominent ; and it finds its expression, not always, but early and often, in the sacral importance of some fertile creature. Now of all the beasts which man has domesticated, the most truculently male are the bull and the he-goat ; and the latter was, and is, by far the commoner in this hilly region of thin soil. It is not astonishing therefore that we find the Arkadians worshipping a god who was half goat. Pan is by no means the only deity with whom the goat is associated ; one of the titles of Aphroditê, for example, is Epitragia, the Goat-rider, and goats were commonly sacrificed to Artemis, to say nothing of their close connection with Dionysos, which gives its name to the 'goat-song', or Tragedy ; but in Pan we have the goat, as bringer of fertility, particularly prominent. He is represented with the horns, ears, and legs of a goat.

His titles for the most part refer simply to the flocks, their tending and increase ; he is Leader, Piper, or the like. No moral developments attach themselves to his cult, as they do to that of Zeus, for example, or Athena. Pausanias does indeed express the pious opinion that the Pan of Lykosura was as able as the mightiest of the gods to answer prayer and to punish the wicked ; Sokrates, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, addresses to him, as the appropriate deity for the rustic setting of the dialogue, a prayer of lofty and spiritual content ; and in late times some misplaced ingenuity was spent on him, from a wholly mistaken notion that his name meant ' All.' But Pan himself, in his Arkadian home, remained little more than the divine he-goat, associated with other powers of fertility. It says much for the essential decency of practically all Greeks that we hear of no gross immoralities in connection with his worship.

Uncouth, however, certain of his rites undoubtedly were. We learn from a casual mention in Theokritos ¹ that when meat was scarce, the boys used to beat the statue of Pan with squills. Here we have a rite which savours of the primitive at every point. For in the first place, the deity to whom it is addressed is conceived as locally present in the statue, which is therefore no mere symbol or aid to devotion, still less a votive offering to the god, but a true fetish. Next, the most energetic physical means are taken to arouse his powers. In a very similar manner, the spirit of a sacred tree is called upon (in Japan, for instance, where amid a high culture much that is very old still lingers), by knocking a nail into the wood. Thirdly, the action of beating is itself a magical rite, as has scores of times been pointed out. To strike anyone or anything is to knock into him, or it, the occult virtues of the rod used. For this reason, in the southern counties

of England, a child must not be punished, nor cattle driven, with a willow switch, for willow rots from the heart, and no one wants the child or the cattle to decay and die. On the other hand, if the rod is magically good, its effects are excellent; hence no doubt the ancient educational repute of the birch, one of the straightest and most handsome of trees. Now squills have in magic a purifying and a quickening virtue; the boys therefore sought to give Pan more power, since it was obvious that he needed more, or he would not have let them go hungry. Lastly, it would seem that the goat-god was supposed, in this rite at least, to confine his attention to one branch of fertility; it was 'when they had but little flesh-meat,' says the poet, that Pan was beaten. Given more vigour, he could make the goats, and perhaps other edible beasts, breed quicker, and so there would soon be plentiful supplies. We are not very far removed here from the ideas of those peoples, the Ainu or the Blackfeet for example, who, if they want bear-meat, take measures to propitiate the bear-spirit, or the buffalo-manitou if they would have success in the buffalo-hunt. Such particularism is less advanced than, for instance, the cult of the Great Mother, who apparently can make anyone or anything fertile.

So far, the Arkadian ritual is harmless enough, and so for the most part it seems to have been; but, as so often happens in early cult, we find a darker side, with aspects of horror and cruelty far from common in the generally sunny and wholesome Greek world. On Mt. Lykaion, Pan had associated with him a still greater deity, Zeus Lykaios; a very different figure from the Zeus of Homer or of Pheidias. We seem here to pass out of the brightness of Olympian religion into a nightmare region of werewolves, cannibalism, and wizardry.

According to our authors, who certainly may be taken as reporting current belief and almost certainly ritual which was or had been current, the central rite of the festival of Lykaian Zeus included a human sacrifice. The entrails of the victim were put with those of beasts sacrificed to the god, and the whole was presented to the worshippers, in the ordinary Greek manner, to be ceremonially tasted. He who was so unlucky as to taste the human entrails was at once turned into a wolf. So much Plato ³ tells us, without vouching for the truth of it, but only as a well-known story; later writers, with a more capacious maw for swallowing the marvellous, go on to state that the man thus transformed remained a wolf for nine years, and might then, if he abstained from such unnatural diet in the meanwhile, become a man once more. We gather also from Pliny ⁴ that the werewolves were regularly members of a particular clan. The net result seems to be, that there existed in Arkadia an organization unpleasantly like the Lion and Leopard Societies of Africa, which had perhaps at some time been cannibal in habit, at least on ceremonial occasions, and even had the same method of making a new cannibal, by giving him human flesh without his knowing it. It is noteworthy that mythology has several stories in which the same ghastly theme recurs; namely those which represent King Tantalos as testing the omniscience of the gods by feasting them on the flesh of his own son, Pelops; Atreus as tricking his brother Thyestes in an even worse manner; and Prokné and Philoméla as serving up Itys to his father Tereus. Herodotos moreover assures us (Book I, chap. 119) that Astyages king of the Medes practised the like cruelty on Harpagos, one of his courtiers. Seeing therefore that the tale is told of the Asiatic dynasties of Media and Sipylos (Tantalos' original home), of the

Thessalian Tereus, and of the Arkadians, whose mythical king Lykaon is said to have tried to befool Zeus in the same manner as Tantalos, it may be that some Anatolian practice is reflected here, which, in shadow or in substance, survived the successive conquests outlined in Chapter II.

The assertion that the eater of the human entrails, or, in another form of the story, a member of a certain local clan who had been chosen for the purpose, and had stripped and swum across a certain pool, became a wolf, recalls, not only the mediaeval European stories of werewolves, but also the quite well authenticated cases, mostly from Asia and Indonesia, of people who are supposed, by themselves as well as their neighbours, to turn into savage beasts, tigers, leopards, or the like. Primitive in any proper sense of the word this delusion is not ; at least, I cannot recall any instances of it from the lowest known human societies, such as the Australian blacks ; but it certainly belongs to a not very advanced state of civilization, and may therefore be taken, along with the hideous rite said to have been practised on the holy mountain, as indicating a survival of decidedly backward ideas in this rustic corner of historical Greece.

But we have not done with Zeus Lykaïos yet ; for in his precinct occurred a strange marvel which could be imagined only among a people who still held very undeveloped notions of the nature of the soul. It is well known that soul, or ghost, and shadow are constantly confused ; indeed the same word (*shia*) is used for both in Greek, and from a wide area we have beliefs and practices which tend to identify the two. Thus, it is often the case that a malevolent wizard can injure a person through his shadow, by cutting it or the like, as if it were a real thing ; and in modern Greece we have the custom, apparently not derived

from the ancient population, of using the measuring line with which the length of someone's shadow has been taken as a surrogate for a human sacrifice. Now the precinct of Zeus Lykaios had two peculiarities, which Frazer rightly connects; first, that no living thing which entered it cast a shadow; second, that those who entered died within a year. The terrible *mana* of the god had absorbed and taken away the intruder's soul, or one of his souls; for, as we shall see later, the early inhabitants of Hellas were not content with one soul apiece. As a natural consequence, the man or beast died.

But it is not only in Arkadia that we find evidence of a primitive attitude towards the objects of worship surviving in Greece. I have already mentioned the imperfectly carved figures of the gods, technically known as herms, from the fact that Hermes in particular was often so represented; they generally consisted of a square column, the top of which was carved into the shape of a human head, while part way down the sexual organs were represented. This form of image, of which rude examples can be found in various parts of Europe as far back as neolithic times, to say nothing of instances elsewhere, would seem to be the first step from the veneration of the rough and unhewn stock or stone itself. Of this last a considerable number of cases can be found in Greece and Asia Minor, not only in ancient times but in modern as well; for the somewhat primitive state of mind which leads to the adoration of such things is by no means dead, and clearly dateable examples of new cults can be found within a century.⁵ Pausanias is full of instances, some of which belong to cults obviously very old, while others cannot be dated, though their antiquity is likely enough. A full list will be found in de Visser; a few of the most curious are the stones of Frowardness

and of Shamelessness on which the accuser and accused stood before the ancient court of the Areiopagos, at Athens; the Stone,—it had no distinguishing name,—on which oaths were taken, again at Athens, by magistrates and others; the stone, presumably a meteorite, which was called Zeus Kappōtas (the Descender, *i.e.*, Thunderbolt) at Gythion, and on which Orestes sat and straightway was healed of his madness; the long row of squared stones which the people of Pharai in Achaia revered, calling each by the name of a deity; the shapeless block which was adored as Heraklēs at Hyettos in Boiotia, and the equally uncouth Erōs of Thespiāi. Elsewhere we find, still vouched for by Pausanias, certain objects of which one can hardly say whether they are idols, relics, or undifferentiated containers of *mana*. At Delphi for instance there was an unhewn stone of no great size, on which oil was daily poured, and raw wool laid upon it on feast days. The local explanation was that this was the veritable stone which Kronos swallowed, thinking it was his new-born son Zeus, and afterwards cast up again when he disgorged his elder children. But at Chaironeia the people worshipped above all other gods an ancient staff which they declared to be none other than Agamemnon's sceptre, described by Homer.

Even among statues of recognizably human form, some were important for the holiness of their material. Thus the Corinthians had two ancient wooden images of Dionysos, with gilt faces, which they said were made by command of the Delphic oracle from the tree on Mt. Kithairon upon which Pentheus climbed to spy on the Bacchantes. This conversion of holy tree into holy image reminds one of the fashion in which, according to Frey Ramon, the Indians of Hispaniola made their wooden idols. 'When one

goes on a journey, he sees, so he says, a tree which moves its roots; whereupon the fellow stops, in great fear, and asks of it what it is.' The tree refers him to the *bihuitihu* or sorcerer. The traveller then goes to consult the medicine-man, who comes and sits by the tree, and prepares *cogioba*, a sort of intoxicating snuff, much used in their ritual. He then asks the tree 'if thou wilt come with me, and how thou wilt have me carry thee, that I may make thee a house with an estate. Whereupon that tree . . . answers him, telling him the shape in which he would have him make it.' The sorcerer then obeys the tree's instructions, carries it off, and provides it with a temple and precinct.*

Hispaniola, then, and Greece, to say nothing of numerous other places which will be found in Frazer's notes on the passages in Pausanias referred to, have something in common in regard to their style of cult-statues. As to the manner in which the statues, rude stones or otherwise, were treated, we can find parallels once more between Greece and savagery. I have already mentioned the whipping of the statue of Pan and the oiling of the stone of Kronos; these rites indicate some animistic belief, in all probability,—the conception of a spirit somehow connected with the object thus treated,—and belong to a very large category, too familiar to need illustration. But we have something a little more noteworthy in the treatment of certain venerated idols exactly as if they were human beings.

I do not refer to what is frequent in Greece as elsewhere, the daubing of the statues with a red pigment. This is in all probability descended ultimately from the practice of rubbing blood on a holy or magically powerful object, whether in order to give it food or, more generally, to increase its supply of

mana by bringing it into contact with something magically potent ; but to the minds of any Greeks we know of, this daubing was but another way of decorating the image, and on a par with gilding it, a custom which was quite common. It was pleasing to the deity, no doubt, but simply because it made one of the statues of his shrine look smarter. More in point is the dressing up of statues in real clothes or removable imitations thereof in gold or other permanent material. The most famous example of this, and perhaps the one most elaborated away from the original idea of keeping the god from feeling cold, is the famous *peplos* of Athena at Athens, a huge and elaborately embroidered robe which was periodically carried in pomp and state up to the Akropolis to put on her ancient statue ; not the more beautiful but less holy masterpiece of Pheidias which stood in the Parthenon, but the old idol in the Erechtheion. But if we turn to smaller states we shall find the ancient custom in full vigour. At Titanê near Sikyon stood a shrine of Asklepîos ; here only the face, fingers and toes of the cult-statue were to be seen, for the rest was covered with a complete suit of clothes of Greek fashion. Hera of Samos had a whole wardrobe, and at Olympia a new robe was woven for her every four years ; Apollo of Amyklai, not far from Sparta, had similar attentions shown him, and Diônê of Dôdôna was well supplied with clothes,—on one occasion at least by special command of her husband and cult-partner Zeus.

Certain statues again were regularly bathed. The fifth hymn of Kallimachos celebrates such a custom at Argos, where the image of Athena was taken down to the Inachos, along with an ancient shield, said to be that of Diomêdês, and there washed. The frequent anointing also of cult-statues may be thought to be a

rite of the same kind, since oil formed so important a part of the Greek toilet. But the quaintest performance of all was the medical attention, or what seems to have been meant for such, which Athena received at Teuthis in Arkadia. There, a statue of the goddess was shown with the mark of a wound in her thigh,—a local legend explained how she came by it,—and a bandage of purple cloth over the wound. How long the goddess took to recover is a moot point ; for whereas Pausanias says that he saw the bandage in place, Kallimachos, some four hundred years earlier, speaks of the cure as accomplished.

To the same order of ideas belongs the manner in which the Hermes of the Market-place (*Agoraios*) was addressed at Pharai. He had a reputation as a giver of oracles, and the method of consultation was as follows. The enquirer came into the shrine in the evening, burned incense, filled and lighted the lamps which were fixed near the statue, and then laid down a bronze coin of local mintage on an altar at the god's right hand. He then whispered his question into the ear of the statue. The answer was contained in the first words he happened to overhear when he had left the market-place, which he did with his ears stopped, so as not to hear any irrelevant sounds before he had gone far enough away. Save for the incense and the lights, he would have behaved in much the same way had he consulted a human diviner who told fortunes for a small fee, if the diviner employed what was technically known as *kledonomaney*.

Not at all dissimilar is the occasional fettering or binding of a cult-image, as those of *Enyalios* the war-god and of *Aphrodite Morphô*, at Sparta. In the latter case presumably the intention was to keep so desirable a goddess from running away. The Indians of Hispaniola tried the same device with a deity called

Opigielguoviran, who had a weakness for running away into the woods ; but without success, for he persisted in his bad habits, and finally, when the Spaniards came, ran away for good and never returned.⁷

It was stated in Chapter I that a characteristic of savage cult was the apparent insignificance of many of its objects of worship and the vagueness of others. Of the former we have had examples already, since we have seen a very minor deity like Pan associated with Zeus ; an obscure goddess (Theisoa) in one place and a deified stick in another venerated above all gods besides. Of vagueness we have plenty of examples. The Unknown God or Unknown Gods familiar from the Acts of the Apostles and mentioned often enough, and not in Athens only, by Pausanias and other writers, are not a case in point. It is one thing to confess that one does not know the name of the particular power one is dealing with on some special occasion,—as a chemist might announce that he had reason to believe he had met with a new element, but could not as yet determine its combining weight or other properties,—and quite another to have, apparently, no name to give to a power regularly and commonly worshipped. At various points in Greece Pausanias came upon deities who had apparently no names at all ; the Very Great Gods of Triteia in Achaia, who had, despite their title, nothing better than clay statues, and an annual ceremony ' exactly like the rites the Greeks perform to Dionysos ' ; the Very Great God of Bulis in Phôkis ; the Pure Gods of Pallantion in Arkadia, and the Good God who had a shrine near Megalopolis. If, as Pausanias conjectures in one of these cases, some or all of these deities really had names, but their adorers would not let them be known, this indicates the presence of another characteristic of the lower cultures ; the vast magical importance of the name, a

matter to which we shall return later in discussing magic.

One point certainly on which great vagueness existed was the question as to whether the gods were material or not. This in itself is hardly primitive; the lowest stages of thought which we can reconstruct seem not to recognize any such distinction, and the history of philosophy, using the word in its widest sense, is in large measure the story of how men learned to conceive abstract ideas as such. Language for example bears many traces of the early inability to distinguish clearly between life in the abstract and the concrete breath, heart, or blood. Here and there in Greece we find an abstraction just struggling to be free of the concrete, and are able to see something of the process. To a man like Aristotle, for instance, 'health' was as fully abstract a noun as it is to a modern physician, and when Ariphron wrote an ode to health, it was as purely an ode to an abstraction as Wordsworth's Ode to Duty, and an even more frigid composition than that over-rated piece. But to the worshippers at the shrines of Asklepîos, Health (Hygieia) had nothing abstract about her; she was one of the god's daughters, who with her sisters Akesō (Healing) and Panakeia (Cure-all) helped her father in his beneficent tasks. It was not a statue of an abstraction that, at Titanê, was covered so thickly with ribbons and other votive offerings that one could not well see what it was made of, as Pausanias tells us was the case. As to the origin of the name and cult, we have some difficulty in determining, here and in other cases, whether an abstraction was deified originally, and made concrete again by the imagination of worshippers whose intellects were less developed, or whether the deity came first and the abstraction afterwards.

A creature whose name sounds abstract enough, but

who certainly was not so conceived, was the Poinê of Megara. The name signifies punishment or penalty, or in the concrete, weregelt or blood-fine. But in the story she is a very tangible fiend, a child-stealing demon who was sent to take vengeance on the people of Megara for a wrong done to a child of Apollo. She was finally met by the hero Koroibos, overcome and killed. Indeed, Death himself is thought of as tangible, in Greek stories as in many folktales of other lands; Hēraklēs on one occasion,—the tale is familiar enough from its frequency in art and literature, both ancient and modern,—got the better of him in wrestling, and made him give back Alkēstis.

It is such evidence of confusion, that is, of survival of more primitive into an environment of less primitive thought, that enables us to understand the innumerable contradictions which present themselves in ancient authors when they deal, otherwise than in an advanced and philosophical way, with the nature of the gods. One need go no further than Homer for examples, indeed the different manners in which he conceives of them is one of the many arguments which have been used to prove the multiple authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It is as fallacious as the rest of its kind, for such confusion is simply Greek. But confusion there is, for the very deities who in one passage will act directly upon the mind of a mortal, putting thoughts into it without the use of any medium such as speech, will in another be vulnerable by an ordinary spear, and in a third, cause such a spear to hit or to miss its mark by a supernatural intervention.

So far we have been examining the cult of deities who have at least Greek names. If we look now at one or two who are certainly prehellenic, we shall find yet other survivals of savagery. Of these, one of the most certain and most important is Artemis, in whom,

despite her virginity, we must recognize the great goddess-mother who was worshipped all over the Levant, and continued under various names to be worshipped. Looking again at a backward state, Sparta, we find her bearing the cult-title of Orthia, whatever exactly that may mean, and placated by the notorious rite of the scourging at her altar of the Spartan youths. While this was going on, her priestess held in her arms the ancient wooden statue of the goddess, which was small and light. But if the scourgers put too little vigour into their task, the image at once became intolerably heavy. Frazer in his note on the passage in which Pausanias describes the ritual (III, 16, 11) adduces plenty of examples of similar happenings; but Gregory of Tours gives us a better one yet. He assures us, in all good faith,⁸ that an altar-cloth put on the altar of a great saint will be found to be very heavy; the virtue of the saint has soaked into it, so to speak. In the case of the image of Artemis, I take it, the weight was caused by the anger of the slighted deity; Greek speaks of heavy anger, βαρὺς χόλος, exactly as Latin does of *gravis ira* and we of grievous, that is, weighty, wrath. The primitive feature is the material way in which the holiness of the saint and the anger of Artemis are conceived. A holy or an angry person would weigh more than usual, because the holiness or the anger would add their weight to his, exactly as a porter's load, or the water in drenched clothing would do.

But for savagery in the ritual of Artemis we need not look only to Sparta, or to the various other rather backward Peloponnesian states in which she received homage under forms often strange and sometimes cruel. Attica itself worshipped her under a form clearly very ancient and easily paralleled from the lower cultures; although, as might be expected there,

the savagery had been attenuated and made quite inoffensive. At the little coast town of Brauron, one of two or three places which claimed to possess the authentic image which Orestes had brought back from the land of the Tauroi, Athenian girls used to dance before the goddess in saffron-dyed costumes. That these were meant to imitate the tawny hide of a bear is highly probable, for the girlswere called 'bears' themselves, and Artemis sometimes (in the person of her avatar Kallistō) took that form. Here then we have the cult of a theriomorphic deity, in itself a likely indication of antiquity in the rite, though not necessarily so, and in addition, the obvious attempt of the worshippers to make themselves one with the deity they adore.

This at first hearing may sound rather advanced than primitive. To become, by some mystical union, one with God is the aim of some of the highest developments the religious consciousness has ever known; one need mention only Plótinós and the Sufi mystics. But here, as so often, mysticism seems to repeat, on an incomparably higher plane, what sounds like the language of savagery. The mystic strives after union with his deity because his lofty conception of the human soul leads him to aim at its identification with, or absorption in, the highest form of spiritual being which his imagination can conceive or his metaphysics teach him. But no such high aspirations appear to animate primitive man. When he conceives of gods at all,—we have already seen that he does not always, and possibly never did at first,—he thinks of them neither as purely spiritual nor as morally perfect. There is no great gulf between them and common humanity, believed as that is to be drenched with mystical or magic properties of all sorts. The god is quite within reach, often incarnate in the form of an

edible beast or plant ; and by various means, including the eating of the god in such a form, efforts are made to incorporate his being in that of the worshippers. Another form of union is to share what is thought of as a real, almost a corporeal, part of the god's personality, his name. This has its counterpart ; the god may take the name of the worshipper, or more usually, an epithet appropriate to him. Of the former method we have had an example, not in a Greek cult proper, but in that of Dionysos ; his mystics were called *Bakchoi*, after the well-known name, or title, of their god. Of this kind also is the appellation of the children who danced before Artemis by the name appropriate to their goddess. As has already been pointed out, such phenomena are not totemism, although totemism gives rise to a similar phenomenon, by which the clan and the totem creature are called by the same name ; but it does involve theriolatry, which generally speaking is foreign to the most typically Greek cults. To normal Greek conceptions, Artemis was not a bear, whatever she may have been once in the past.

Of the complementary practice we have some very curious examples. Most titles given to Greek gods describe either their supposed functions or the locality of one of their shrines. Athena for example is the Worker (*Erganê*) and the Champion (*Promachos*), among other titles, at Athens, being goddess of war and of the arts ; Aphroditê is Paphian and Kythereian, from the locality of two of her most famous cults ; Zeus is Rainer and Thunderer, Apollo, Pythian (from the old name of Delphi) and Averter of Evil ; and so on. But there are certain little groups of titles which cannot be so explained. Of these perhaps the most curious relate to Hera, and are found in her cults at *Stymphalos* in Arkadia, where she had once three

shrines, dedicated to her as Maid, Wife, and Widow respectively. The local interpreters of cult were hard put to it for an explanation, and the one they gave was excessively clumsy; she had been reared there by King Têmenos in ancient days, and he had recognized her godhead, hence the first shrine; the second commemorated her marriage with Zeus, the third a quarrel which parted her from him. But it is an axiom that cult does not arise from mythology, but rather mythology to a large extent from cult. The explanation moreover should be one which fits analogous cases. If we turn from Hera to Zeus, we find him bearing the extraordinary title of Suppliant. It is of course in no way surprising to find him called the god of suppliants (Hikesios); it is no more than we might have expected of so powerful a deity, interested as he is in the moral order of the universe and in human ethics, and mighty to avenge the wrongs of the helpless. But Suppliant (Hiketes) can refer to no characteristic of the god himself, but must be the result of the petitioner's desire to identify the most powerful of the deities with his own wants. More extraordinary still is the title Prostropaïos, which almost means unpardoned criminal. From how bitter need such a title might arise, we may judge from a singularly poignant passage in Aeschylus, in which Orestes addresses Zeus as Amphithalês.⁹ Now this is a technical ritual word, and signifies a child both of whose parents are alive, *puer patrimus et matrimus*, in Roman phraseology. When Orestes speaks, his father is long dead, and his mother become his bitterest enemy. Zeus therefore is invoked to give the aid which he might have given long ago, when it was not too late to avert the horrors through which the family has passed.

So far, we have found examples of savage survivals mostly, though not wholly, in the worship of backward

communities, such as those of Arkadia. More can be found in a conservative occupation, namely agriculture. This of course does not go back to the beginnings of human activity, for man hunted before he tilled the ground ; but unfortunately, though we know something of the methods of the Greek sportsman, we have little acquaintance with his religious beliefs, save that he prayed on occasion to Artemis of the Wilds (*Agrotera*) and other rustic deities. Hunting, in Greece as in other civilized countries, had ceased to be an occupation of first-rate importance long before the date of our earliest evidence. But agriculture, though Athens lived chiefly on imported foodstuffs, was important throughout the historical period, and in Athens accordingly we find some very primitive ritual connected with its presiding deities, alongside of what seems to have been a very elevated and spiritual worship of *Démêtêr* and *Korê* at the Mysteries.

One of the earliest notions connected with agriculture is that it is the business of women, not of men. Men may, indeed often do, help in the preliminary work, such as clearing the ground ; but in the most characteristic forms of early tillage (as practised over a great part of Africa, for instance) the actual breaking of the soil and planting is done by women. The reason for this is probably a magical one ; women know how to bear children, and men do not ; hence it is for women to help the earth to bring forth.

Athens of course had long since left this idea behind, so far as the actual field-work was concerned, and the farmer was commonly, indeed always, so far as we know, a man, though no doubt there as in most countries the wife and daughters of the small-holder had something to do with the tending of the ground. But the field-magic remained a woman's business, so much so that the very men who tilled the fields were

severely excluded from much of the magic connected with them.

One of the most entertaining of Aristophanes' plays is that entitled *Thesmophoriazousai*, that is to say, the celebrants of the rites of Dêmêtêr Thesmophoros. The chief point of it is the shifts employed by a friend of Euripides,—falsely accused, then and in later times, of being a woman-hater,—to spy on the women and find out what they mean to do to their traducer. It is clear, not only that men were not admitted, but that the state took every precaution to ensure that they should not be, providing police protection for the votaresses of the goddess; for the unfortunate spy is arrested by a Scythian constable, who abuses him in very mangled Greek.

The ritual was secret in its details, but we know in a general sort of way what was done. The festival lasted three days, which were called the Nêsteia, or Fast, the Anodos, or Ascent (probably the return of Korê from the lower world to earth) and the Kalligeneia, or Fair Birth. We know that the celebrants fasted, and that afterwards rites of a more joyful nature ensued, which included dancing; also, that at this and other agricultural rites, including the Eleusinian Mysteries, obscene language was used. The fact that the most respectable ladies in Athens took part in these venerable mummeries makes it impossible to suppose that this last feature was due to mere wantonness; obscenity in words and deeds is a very old and very widespread form of fertility-magic. The fasting and the dancing are alike pantomimic in intention; the women behave like the earth, and then show the earth how it ought to behave,—viz., to become active and consequently productive.

A collective performance consisting of quite simple and direct mimicry,—attended it is true, as we know

from Aristophanes, by prayers,—and supposed apparently to result in the 'ascent' of the fertility-power from the ground and the 'fair birth' of the earth's fruits; this surely is distinctly reminiscent of such primitive things as Australian *intichiuma* ceremonies. Other rites, notably those in honour of Dionysos which have given us tragedy and comedy, contain indeed traces of a similar origin; but in the Thesmophoria, as celebrated in Attica and elsewhere, we have a clearer survival of actual savage ideas, or at least of their embodiment in practice; for that the Greeks themselves were very doubtful as to how such rites were to be supposed to become efficacious is obvious from the many aetiological myths connected with them,—explanations, that is, which suppose the actions of the worshippers to commemorate something which happened to the deity in old times.

As to the various ritual obscenities in this and in many other agricultural ceremonies, it may be well to say a few words here, as much nonsense has been talked about them, by those who sought to show that the 'heathen' world was desperately wicked, by theorists of the last century who discovered 'phallic' cults everywhere, and by certain psycho-analysts of the present day. So far as pure Greek ritual was concerned,—the really immoral cults of Aphrodité at Corinth and at Mount Eryx in Sicily were foreign,—this, to us, unpleasant feature seems to have gone no farther than words and gestures. Now obscenity appears to have been considered, in all races and from very early times, a most potent charm, particularly to avoid ill-luck and to secure fertility, but not solely for those purposes. This much truth underlies the 'phallic' and the wilder psycho-analytic theories, that those bodily organs and functions which form the subject-matter of 'smutty' jests early force themselves

upon the attention of the individual and the race alike, and seem early to connect themselves with the prevalent concept of *mana*. Since all these things are clearly magical, it follows that all connected with them, their names especially, must be so; therefore it would be a manifest flying in the face of all good magical principles not to use actions and language of the kind which we now call obscene, with the excellent intention of getting the *mana*, thus made available, on one's side.

I have given a few instances of the occurrence of primitive features in the Greek conceptions of the gods they worshipped; anyone who knows the subject could easily supply a few dozen more examples. I therefore conclude by pointing out that such beliefs and practices are the exception in Greek theology; that one has to seek for them in backward localities, in the conservative life of the agriculturalist, in cults obviously very ancient, such as that of Artemis, who was in Greece long before the Greeks. The normal cults of Hellas are characterized by features of a wholly different character, not primitive in any sense.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

¹ To save a multitude of references, I have taken the materials for this chapter chiefly from Pausanias. The edition of Spiro and Frazer's great commentary (see General Bibliography) are so well indexed that anyone desiring more information has only to look up the place-names mentioned in the instances which I cite to find where in the *Description of Greece* they occur.

■ Theokr., *Idyll.* VII, 106 foll.

■ Plato, *Republic*, VIII, 565 D.

■ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* VIII, 81.

■ See for examples F. W. Hasluk, 'Stone Cults and Venerated Stones in the Græco-Turkish Area,' in *Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. XXI.

* From Frey Ramon's account of the native beliefs of Hispaniola in *Vita di Cristoforo Colombo, descritta da Ferdinando, suo figlio, e tradotta da Alfonso Ulloa* (Nuova edizione, Londra, 1867), p. 200. (The Spanish original of this curious work seems to have disappeared.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 204, capitolo xxii.

* *In gloria martyrum*, 27; *de uirtutibus S. Martini*, I, 11. See for some very good comment, Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges* (Strasbourg and Paris, 1924), p. 76.

† Aeschylus, *Choephoroe*, 394.

CHAPTER V
SURVIVALS OF THE PRIMITIVE
II. HEROES AND GHOSTS

BELOW the Olympian gods and the great chthonians, such as Dêmêtêr, yet occupying a position far superior to ordinary human beings, dead or alive, were those inhabitants of the invisible world to whom the Greeks, from about the time of Hesiod on, referred as Heroes. Used in Homer, and again in late Greek, to signify a living man of outstanding valour, a 'good knight,' and made so cheap and common in late epitaphs that it meant no more than 'the dear departed,' the word *hêrôs* for several centuries had a quite definite, and technical meaning; it signified a dead man (the feminine, *hêroînê*, is much less common) who after death had acquired something like divine rank, and therefore was become the object of a cult similar in kind to but less important than that which was dedicated to the gods of the lower world, Hades and the rest. To examine this cult and to disclose the remnants of primitive ideas it contains, it will be necessary to say something of Greek popular conceptions of death in general.

Of the Achaian views concerning the future life, if so vivid a term can be used of that shadowy existence, I have already spoken in the first chapter. Yet even among the Achaians, as represented by Homer, there

are traces of another conception, more redolent of savagery, but at the same time more capable of development into a lofty and much less gloomy eschatology. In the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*,¹ Odysseus goes down to Hades to talk with the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias, 'to whom Persephonê granted, and to him alone, to have his mind and good wits; but the rest flit like shadows.' In Hades he sees another figure, so strange that its presence has been used, perhaps rightly, as an argument for the non-Homeric authorship of that particular passage; the ghost (*eidolon*) of Herakles, 'but he himself among the deathless gods hath his delight in banquets and Hêbê of the fair ankles is his bride.' Now the *eidolon* is, as we know from Achilles' lament in another passage, the same as the *psychê*; the latter is the most usual word for 'soul,' and seems properly to mean breath-soul. Most people seem after death to lose all but this breath-soul or phantom; it has, Achilles declares, 'no midriff at all,' one of several expressions which imply that the principle, or a principle, of vitality is situated somewhere in the entrails. Elsewhere again it is the *thymos*, properly the hot or reeking thing,—in all probability the blood-soul, for it is not only among the ancient Hebrews that 'the blood is the life'—whose departure means death. If then an exceptional man can do without his breath-soul altogether after death and live on as a god; if another (Teiresias) is superior to the rest of the dead because he has left not only breath-soul but also his 'midriff' and 'mind'; and if we remember that one who lost his shadow in the precinct of Lykaian Zeus died shortly, thus indicating that the shadow is a soul; it is fairly clear that to the earlier Greeks at any rate a man had more souls than one. Indeed, it would seem that such a conception survived, in a sophisticated form it is true, into philo-

sophical speculations ; for a very good case has lately been made out for supposing that the earlier Pythagoreans postulated two souls, one mortal, a mere arrangement of the elements of the body, comparable to that arrangement of the component parts of a musical instrument which causes it to be in tune, and the other immortal, independent of the body which is its temporary prison.*

If then the Greeks believed in early days that a man had a plurality of souls, their ideas were quite in keeping with those of many savages. Nothing is more familiar in accounts of contemporary savage tribes than to find that they believe, for instance, in a body-soul, which departs perhaps only at death ; a shadow-soul, susceptible to the influence of magic without touching the body ; and other souls also, some capable of leaving their owner temporarily, as in sleep, others not capable of doing so. Over and above all these we may find that a person is the possessor of more or less *mana*, which in some cases is quite separable from him and may even be inherited.

Just this *mana* is what, in Greek belief, some people seem to have had. Hesiod says that the men of the Golden Age became *daimones*,—divine creatures. We may define a *daimōn*, perhaps, as one who has much *mana* ; so much, that when he dies all of him does not perish, nor even all except the *psychē*, which by itself is a poor feeble thing, a mere breath, as the name seems to imply. An occasional Teiresias or Herakles does more than that ; and the gods do more still, for they manage to keep their bodies, and all their souls, permanently together. 'Immortal' indeed, to the unphilosophic Greek, means this and nothing else ; for disembodied immortality he seems to have had no thought and no yearning.

These *mana*-ful persons, then, are the heroes, and

it remains to ask how the Greeks supposed themselves to know when a man had enough *mana* to achieve this quasi-divine feat of not dying to so large an extent as his less fortunate fellows. We shall find two answers, the one civilized and the other savage.

The majority of the heroes were known or supposed to be men who in life had shown qualities out of the common. The greatest of them all, Herakles, probably was originally a real chieftain of Mycenaean days, a valiant lord of Tiryns, with which city the oldest traditions seem to associate him, although Thebes, another Mycenaean site, laid claim to him fairly early. Exactly what he did and why he was admired we shall never know; but tradition ascribed to him, besides much clumsy jollity and some bursts of fierce and unchivalrous cruelty, a number of exploits reminiscent of those of the heroes of mediaeval romance; he had killed monsters and overthrown robbers and tyrants by the score. Very like him was the Athenian national hero, Theseus; and many less known local sagas told of similar exploits, the doers of which were worshipped after their death. The great figures of epic poetry, Achilles, Aias the Salaminian, and the rest, were similarly venerated. And if we come down to historical times, we find for example, in the fifth century, Brasidas, the ablest and at the same time the most amiable of the Spartan captains, receiving heroic honours at Amphipolis, which he had delivered from the Athenians; while every colony the Greeks ever founded rendered like worship to its founder, if his name was known, or invented a founder to worship if need was. Timoleon in the fourth century was worshipped after his death for overthrowing Dionysios the Younger, tyrant of Syracuse. In all these cases, and in hundreds more, there were good reasons, or at least a belief in the existence of such reasons, for

treating the hero as something more than a common man. Nor was it statesmen and warriors only who were so honoured ; Sophoklès the poet was worshipped after his death, but not for his poetry ; he was called in ritual Dexion, the Receiver or host of Asklepios, whose cult was imported into Athens in his time.

This brings us to the savage reason for heroizing a dead man. It has often been noted that among primitive peoples the character of the deceased has very little to do with the way in which his memory, or rather his continued presence as a ghost, is regarded. A man, it may be, of most gentle and harmless life dies, genuinely lamented ; shortly afterwards some accident befalls, perhaps an outbreak of infectious disease in the community ; straightway he is in all sincerity feared as a malignant ghost, and consequently honoured, to coax him into good humour or induce him to go away. Now it is not to be forgotten that a considerable part of the Greek ritual of the dead consisted of ceremonies of aversion, or as they are technically called, apotropaic rites. *Mana* is not a moral force ; it may show itself in the vilest persons, as well as in the good ; and the primary intention of hero-worship was not to show respect for the good qualities of the dead, but to handle their *mana* aright, either getting the benefit of it or avoiding harm from it, once it was seen that the particular dead in question possessed any.

One or two stories will make it clear to what extent the savage conceptions of death and its consequences were to be found in classical Greece. In the first decade of the fifth century, when the cult of heroes was in full vigour, a certain athlete, Kleomédès of Astypalaia, was disqualified in a boxing match at Olympia for killing his adversary. Going mad with rage and grief, he committed a wholesale murder on his return home, tearing down the pillar on which the roof of a

school rested and thus killing the children within. The people naturally hunted him with stones through the streets; he took refuge in a great chest in the temple of Athena, and—so said the tale—had vanished when the chest was forced open. A frightened appeal to the oracle of Delphi brought the response: 'Kleomédēs of Astypalaia is the last of the heroes; honour him with burnt-offerings, for he is no longer a mortal.'

Here we have a tale which, apart from the miraculous disappearance, is credible enough, for its date puts it in a fully historical time, the names of the athlete and of his opponent alike are given in full by our authority, Pausanias, and the events are such as might well enough take place, supposing a man of unusual strength to have become a raving lunatic. The noteworthy thing is the total detachment of the whole business from any moral concepts. Kleomédēs' one claim to divinity was apparently the fact that he had gone mad, coupled, if we suppose the incident of the chest not to be wholly fictitious, with the disappearance of his body. Now madness, being an abnormal condition, is widely supposed to be a sign of inspiration, *i.e.*, according to the degree of definiteness with which supernatural power is conceived, an evidence of the possession of an unusual amount of *mana* or of the indwelling presence of a spirit or god. Another interesting feature of the case is the impression which it seems to have made on the orthodox, but by no means unenlightened or ignorant, priesthood of Delphi, which quite approved of the deification of a homicidal lunatic as such.

Kleomédēs was at least a dangerously powerful man in his lifetime, and one can see a sort of reason for fearing, and therefore honouring, his ghost; but the ghost of a murdered child is to a modern rather a pathetic little phantom, and in no way terrible. Yet in Corinth there was a legend that the children of Medeia

had been murdered, not by their mother, as in the familiar Euripidean version of the story, but by the citizens of Corinth; 'and because,' says Pausanias, 'their death was violent and unjust, the infant children of the Corinthians were destroyed by them, until by command of the oracle they instituted yearly sacrifices to them and the image of Fear was set up, which is still left in our own day, and is a statue of a woman of most terrible aspect.'

This is of course pure legend from beginning to end, but the conceptions underlying it are none the less interesting. The dead children, perfectly inoffensive in their lives, except as the innocent agents of their mother's schemes, become terrible after death; and they would seem to be identified in some way with a personified Fear. Here again we have an instance of a process commonly to be observed in the non-civilized world; the transformation of a ghost into something else, a supernatural being having but little connection with the personality of the dead.

It is therefore not surprising that we have some evidence in Greece for a phenomenon now and then observable among savages or barbarians; namely, the transformation of a dead man into a full-fledged god. This is the case, for instance, in Polynesia. The word *atua*, according to the latest researches on the subject, appears to mean originally 'ancestor,' then 'ghost.' But it has acquired such meanings as 'portent,' 'natural phenomenon,' 'deified ancestor,' and is here and there very near meaning 'deity' in general; so much so that missionaries, though not without grave misgivings amongst those of them who know the native languages best, use it for want of a better word to translate 'God' in their renderings of the Bible.³

In Greek we have one or two instances of a similar fluctuation in the meaning of a word; Macrobius⁴

tells us that certain people's souls were called *zanes* by the Greeks ; this is understandable only as the plural of the divine name Zeus. In keeping with this is the occasional use of the same name prefixed to that of a hero, as Zeus Agamemnon. Here the change has operated in the reverse direction from that which has taken place in the Polynesian word, but the range is about the same. With this confusion of words goes, rather more commonly, confusion in things. Many cults of 'heroes' in Greece turn out on investigation to be nothing of the kind. At Amyklai in Lakonia, for instance, there was an old and curious cult of Apollo, with whom was associated the 'hero' Hyakinthos. The common story was, that Hyakinthos had been a boy-favourite of the god, accidentally killed by him. But a little investigation of his name and ritual shows us that he was a pre-Greek deity of some sort, connected with the fertility of the earth. A more puzzling case is that of Trophōnios of Lebadeia. Here we have apparently a clear case of an earth-spirit of some sort ; Pausanias describes in curious detail the elaborate and awe-inspiring procedure which was gone through by those who wished to descend into his mysterious cave and receive oracles from him. Yet of this same Trophōnios stories are told utterly unlike the stiff hieratic legend of Hyakinthos. So far from existing merely to be killed and consecrated, he appears as the jolly and unscrupulous hero of a well-known folktale ; the story of the clever rascal who builds the king's treasury, contrives to leave a secret means of entrance for himself, gets in by it and steals a great part of the treasure, and is at once engaged in a series of plots and counter-plots, the king laying traps for him and he avoiding them by all manner of devices.⁴ A personality so lively and popular as to become identified with the Master Thief of this tale might have been a real man

once, but does not seem likely to have existed from the beginning merely as an oracular earth-daimon. Herakles, the most famous of all the heroes, was often worshipped as a god ; yet his name tells us very plainly that he must have been a man, for it signifies ' glorious gift of Hera ' (the Germanic equivalent would be Frobert) and no Greek deity ever has a name derived from that of another god.

It is abundantly clear from the above facts, to which many more could be added, that when later Greek philosophy suggested on the one hand that the traditional gods were one and all deified men, and on the other that the soul of a good man could by a series of advances finally become a god, it did not depart as widely as philosophy sometimes does from popular ideas. If we look a little further into Greek views concerning the state of the departed, we shall find evidence of two other ideas, both current in quite low strata of human culture ; one, that dead men were reincarnated ; the other, that chiefs and kings were differently treated from the bulk of mankind in the next world. As might perhaps be expected, the former idea is non-Achaian, so far as we can judge ; the latter occurs in an Achaian poem and concerns an Achaian hero, and therefore may be regarded as belonging to the invaders, but names a non-Greek heaven, and so may be a belief of those whom they invaded.

That the souls of men were reincarnated was of course a tenet of Pythagorean philosophy, and developed, whether by Pythagoras himself or by later elaborators of his doctrine, into an integral part of a grandiose theory concerning the universe and human destiny. It is also a commonplace of the cult, traditionally derived from Thrace, known as Orphism ; but we are not here concerned with these ideas, of which the former is certainly not popular, the other imported

within historical times. Religions and philosophies of a very advanced kind have repeatedly suggested that man might be re-born, as man or as beast, and the doctrine has sometimes been hastily assumed to be Oriental in its origin. But a little investigation tells us that neither Pythagoras nor the Eastern priests and prophets originated such a belief, for it is very widespread among savages. The Australian aborigines for instance believe firmly in it; it is common in North America; ancient notices of the religions of those European races who were the last to be influenced by classical civilization prove its existence among many of them; it occurs commonly in Africa. If now we turn to Attica, where despite a high civilization we find in such contexts as the conservative ritual of funerals traces of old and backward ideas, we discover a practice which, as was some time ago pointed out by Dr. Jevons, connotes a belief in reincarnation.

At an Athenian funeral, a law of Solon laid down that no woman under sixty might come near the corpse unless she were of the dead man's blood kin, a sister, cousin, or other fairly close female relative. No meaning whatsoever can be attached to this unless we assume that the soul of the dead was waiting to be re-born, and that it was desired to ensure his re-birth from a woman of his own family. The great scarcity of instances to parallel this one is, however, proof presumptive that we are dealing with a faded belief, in no way characteristic of Greece in general.⁶

More important, for the wide spread cult of heroes is of the same order of ideas, is the preferential treatment accorded certain great men. The *locus classicus* for this is to be found, like so much else, in the *Odyssey*. There, the sea-god Proteus says to Menelâos, brother of Agamemnon and husband of Helen,

' Menelaos, scion of Zeus, it is not decreed for thee

to die and meet thy doom in horse-pasturing Argos ; but the Deathless Ones shall send thee to the plain of Elysion, at the ends of the earth, where Rhadamanthys Fair-hair dwelleth, the land where life is most toilless for mortals ; no snow falleth, neither is there any great storm-wind nor rain, but ever Ocean sendeth up the clear-blowing airs of the West to refresh men : for thou hast Helen to wife and they (the gods) know thee for the son-in-law of Zeus.'

Neither the place to which Menelaos is to go nor the ruler of it, as Rhadamanthys appears to be, is Greek, and the name of the latter has the suffix *-nth-* which we have already found to be characteristic of the prehellenic speech. But the most interesting details are, firstly, that Menelaos is not to die at all but to be translated. This is most typically Greek and not specially primitive ; to live is, for a normal Greek imagination, and indeed more or less explicitly for the imagination of all mankind, to keep soul and body somehow together. More curious is the reason for Menelaos' good fortune. He is not the most prominent of the Achaian heroes by any means ; as a king, he is much less important than his brother ; as a warrior, he is far inferior to such paladins as Achilles or the greater Aias ; yet all three of these go to the ordinary Hades and are seen there by Odysseus. *Mana* is a capricious thing and has little to do with secular standards of value ; Menelaos has acquired much *mana* from actual physical contact with the most famous of Zeus' many daughters, Helen ; therefore, much like a Polynesian chieftain, he is exempt from the dreary lot of the dead, in fact is apparently never to die at all.

A very instructive contrast to this passage is provided by another promise of immortality, again non-philosophical, but much later than that in Homer. It is

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found in the famous *skolion* or festival song in honour of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, the Athenian tyrannicides.

'Dear Harmodios, I wot thou art not dead! Nay, men deem that thou art in the Islands of the Blessed, where swift-foot Achilles dwells, and Tydeus' son Diomédês, they say.'

The lovely land of the ancient belief has now a pure Greek name, and among its inhabitants are now two of the greatest Homeric heroes, and a third hero of later date, the tyrannicide. *Mana* has been replaced by a secular claim to high reward, valour and patriotism. The old idea, then, which Homer learned, it may be, from some vassal of the barons he sang before, or some burgher of the cities they had conquered, was a survival, and in time ceased to be a living part of popular thought. Parallel with this is the older idea, expressed in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, that only those who have directly offended the gods themselves are punished in the other world (elsewhere perjurers are mentioned as punished by the underworld powers, but not necessarily after death), as contrasted with the later notion that wrong-doers in general had something to fear from those in Hades.

Of perhaps the most characteristic of all savage notions concerning death, that it is never due to what we call natural causes, hardly a trace is to be found in Greece. It was, of course, supposed by magicians that they could hurt or kill by their charms; but even this idea is by no means prominent, and is to be found chiefly in documents relating to the complicated Graeco-Oriental magic of late times, from which it is a far cry to the familiar savage custom, especially prominent in Africa, of holding inquiries to determine what witch has caused the decease of some one who has died of old age, accident, or disease. One trace

however does survive, in the function ascribed to Artemis and Apollo, of slaying respectively women and men with their arrows; for the phrase 'Artemis slew her' or the like means in modern language 'she died a sudden but natural death.'

Yet another trace of a savage idea survives. It is well known,—plentiful examples will be found for instance in Ploss-Bartels' classical work, *Das Weib*,—that among many races of mankind a widow may not marry again, and that she is often put to death. The reason no doubt is normally, that she is still considered as married, and the danger of awaking the jealousy of the husband, which is all the more to be feared because he is invisible and magically more potent than a living man, is too great to be risked. She must therefore go and join his ghost, or at least be visited by the ghost only. That such ideas survive into higher cultures is a fact familiar from Indian and to a less extent from Chinese customs. In classical Greece widows might re-marry if they chose; but Pausanias preserves a tradition, how old we have no means of knowing, that the first woman to do so was Gorgophoné the daughter of Perseus, and that before her time no widow ever remarried. There is even a trace of the practice of *sati* in the story that when Kapaneus was killed before Thebes, his wife Euadné burned herself alive on his funeral pyre. Beyond these occasional traces, however, scarcely more of the old idea survives in Greece than in our own customs of to-day.

Among the features which distinguish savage eschatology, if it may be so called, from the speculations of civilized philosophers and theologians, none is more conspicuous than the bewildering inconsistency which pervades it. Two ideas are prominent; the first, that the dead man is still there and in some sense alive, for his body is still in existence. This is in no wise incon-

sistent with such practices as cremation, though the lowest savages do not cremate, for to burn a body on an open wood fire leaves a considerable amount undestroyed, and the presence of a number of calcined bones may serve to keep the memory of the dead very clearly before the survivors. The other is, that the man is no longer there, for his breath and motion are gone. The net result often is, that it seems to be held by the same people and at the same time (individuals no doubt stress one element or the other according to temperament) that the ghost has departed to a spirit-world and that it is with the body, in whatever receptacle that may have been consigned to, or with the bones or other remnants that have been preserved. Thus a savage widow not infrequently carries about with her the skull of her late husband, and in Torres Straits, for example, skulls of ancestors are much venerated and consulted as oracles; yet scarcely any people is without ideas of a place somewhere on or off the earth to which the ghosts go and in which they live. This confusion of ideas is extraordinarily long-lived; for we constantly see in our own civilization, after more than a millennium of Christianity in Northern Europe, and longer still in the South, plentiful examples of people who firmly believe that their dead relatives have gone to another world, yet who put flowers and other decorations on their graves, as if to give pleasure to the occupants. It is therefore in no way surprising that, for instance, the Greek language never quite decided whether the usual word for a dead person, *νεκρός*, signified a corpse or a ghost, or that members of such sects as the Orphics and Pythagoreans, who held quite definite notions of the fate of the soul after death, still were at pains piously to inter the body with certain peculiar rites. But it is rather more noteworthy that we here and there find arrangements for

the regular feeding of a buried corpse. Traces of such a thing have been found among the remains of Mycenaean civilization ; but we need not go so far back, for Pausanias found it still in use in one place. At a spot called Trônís, near Daulis in Phokis, he saw a barrow and hero-shrine, the name of whose occupant was not certainly known. Running down into the mound was a tube ; and through this the blood of the victims sacrificed to the hero used regularly to be poured. Here, in a rather rustic and backward corner of Greece, we are certainly very near in ritual if not in thought to those primitive peoples who are careful, when they bury a body, to put a tube of some sort into the mouth, through which they may pour their libations.

When such things were now and then to be found, even in the days of the enlightened Hadrian, it is not to be wondered at that in earlier times strange things were commonly done with the bodies of the dead. Perhaps the most naïve action was that of Kleisthenes, tyrant of Sikyon, as recorded by Herodotos in the sixty-seventh chapter of his fifth book. This curious person, whose reign falls within the sixth century B.C., and about whom more than one quaint story is told, was violently prejudiced against everything Argive, even to the extent of prohibiting public recitals of Homer, because the people of Argos (*Argeioi*,—the word is commonly used to mean no more than ' Greek ' in epic) were so highly praised in his works. Now in Sikyon was a hero-shrine of Adrastós, the legendary king of Argos, to whom great honours were paid. Repulsed, with more emphasis than courtesy, by the Delphic oracle, when he asked if he might not remove the bones of the hero, he conceived the notion of inducing him to depart of his own accord. He therefore imported from Thebes the remains of Melanippos, who according to the saga had killed the brother and also

the son-in-law of Adrastos, and gave him all the honours which Adrastos had formerly enjoyed.

Another consequence of the early identification of the dead man's soul with his lifeless body is the belief, which is very widespread among savages and dies hard even among the more civilized races, that in the other world his condition will be that of his body at or shortly after death. It is not so very long ago that we left off burying suicides with a stake thrust through their bodies to prevent them 'walking'; an equally efficacious method is so to mutilate the corpse as to render it quite helpless. This is precisely what the murderers of Agamemnon in legend are represented as having done to their victim, and what actual murderers seem to have done fairly often, for there is a technical term for the process employed, *maschalismos*; the method being to cut off the hands and feet and fasten them under the armpits (*maschalai*) of the corpse.

Ghosts, to a civilized imagination, are commonly impalpable things, and so indeed they generally were in Greek thought. But we have already seen that the conception of an immaterial thing is not one which the human mind very early learns to form; hence it need not surprise us to discover, in a remote corner of the Greek world, a tale of a ghost, or bogey of some sort so solid that he could be met in fair combat by a mortal athlete. At Temesa in Southern Italy a comrade of Odysseus had once landed, so the inhabitants said, and violated a woman, for which he was stoned to death by the citizens. This action roused no resentment on the part of Odysseus himself, who was a reasonable man enough; but the ghost of the dead did not acquiesce so easily, and was quieted only by periodical sacrifices to him of a virgin, who was left in his shrine. This went on until Euthýmos, a quite historical person, who was

a contestant in the Olympic games in the early fifth century, appeared on the scene, and, taking a fancy to the destined victim when he saw her at the shrine where she awaited the coming of the ghost, constituted himself her champion and so belaboured the phantom when it came that it made off into the sea and returned no more. The truth of all this was vouched for by a picture still extant in the days of Pausanias. What facts underlie this extraordinary tale we cannot now say, though the ingenuity of more than one scholar has been exercised over it; what interests us is the solidity of the ghost and the material nature of the arguments used against him.

Few would nowadays be found to support the too ingenious theory of Herbert Spencer that religion began with the veneration of the dead, because of the fertility of the soil above a grave to which offerings of food and drink were commonly brought, thus acting as manure; but it does contain two fragments of truth. Firstly, it is really the case that to tend the dead, by giving them food for example, is not worship in itself; secondly, fertility is a boon often looked for from the dead.

For the distinction between worship and tendance, as it is technically called, we need look no farther than Central and Eastern Europe. Neither German nor Slavonic peasants can be said to worship ghosts, nor, so far as our records go, did they generally do so in pre-Christian times. Yet all manner of soul-feasts have been recorded from the Baltic to the Crimea, and it is a common German saying that bits of food which fall on the floor should be left for *die armen Seelen*,—the poor ghosts. Exactly the same thing was done in Greece, where 'the heroes' were said, as a fragment of Aristophanes tells us, to be the recipients of these scraps; perhaps a complimentary term for the ghosts, perhaps a note of actual worship.

Fertility is the gift of the underworld powers everywhere, though of course deities of rain and sunshine may contribute their quota, to say nothing of phallic gods and daimones like Priâpos, or Pan. It is by no means always the case that these underworld spirits are ghosts; Dêmêtêr for instance is not, nor are the earth-deities mentioned by Cardinall as worshipped everywhere in the northern territories of the Gold Coast; but ghosts frequently appear in this connection. They are in the ground; hence it is natural to associate them with the growing things whose roots are in the earth. This is at the bottom of the very wide-spread confusion between corn- or other vegetation-deities and powers of the ghost-world. For example, the Yabim of ex-German New Guinea

'in their agricultural labours believe themselves to be largely dependent on the spirits of their dead. . . . Before they plant the first taro in a newly cleared field they invoke the souls of the dead to make the plants grow and prosper. . . . Later in the season they whirl bull-roarers in the fields and call out the names of the dead, believing that this makes the crops to thrive.'

It is therefore not surprising that in Greece as well, not regularly or universally but quite often, the dead, or at any rate the distinguished dead, the heroes, were thought to be able to help the crops. Not far from Thebes was a small mound, supposed to be the tomb of the city's legendary founders, Zêthos and Amphion. The earth of this had magically fertilizing properties, and was the object of a curious rivalry between the Thebans and their neighbours of Tithorea in Phokis. If the latter could steal some of the earth at the right season of the year, and add it to their own heroic monument, the grave of Antiope, mother of the Theban heroes, their crops would thrive and those of the Thebans be poor. Besides this curious instance, which

has other quaint magical ideas connected with it, we have numerous examples of the belief that the bones of a hero could bring protection, success and good luck of all sorts to the land which was provident enough to give them hospitality, and this notwithstanding the fact that their owner might have been a stranger or an enemy in life. So, among the long list of ghostly protectors of the soil of Attica were reckoned, not only the great national hero Theseus, but the foreign (Theban) king Oedipus and the hostile lord of Argos, Eurystheus, who according to tradition had been defeated and afterwards put to death in an invasion of the country.

The above examples, to which more could be added with little trouble, indicate that in that very conservative class of ideas which relates to the souls of the dead, the Greeks still retained not a few traces of primitive thought.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V

¹ The passages of Homer referred to are as follows: Teiresias, *Odyssey*, X, 492-494; Herakles, *Od.* XI, 601-603; *psyche* and *eidolon*, *Iliad* XXIII, 103 foll.; see also any Homeric dictionary under the words *ψυχή*, *θυμὸς*, *φῆμα*, *φύξις*. Menelaos and Elysion, *Od.* IV, 561 foll.

² See A. Rostagni, *Il Verbo di Pitagora*, Turin, 1924, especially Chapter VI.

³ See Rev. W. G. Ivens in *Man*, Vol. XXIV (1924), Nos. 86, 101, 111.

⁴ *Saturnalia*, III, 7, 6.

⁵ Agamédēs, lord of Stymphalos in Arkadia, married Epikastē, who had a bastard son, Trophônios. These . . . made a treasury for Augeias at Elis, in which they left a joint in the stone work, and thereby got in at night and pilfered the treasures, aided by Kerkyon, who was the legitimate son of Agamédēs and Epikastē. So Augeias, being at his wits' end, begged Daidalos . . . to track the thief. Daidalos laid snares, into which Agamédēs fell and perished. But Trophônios, cutting off his head so that the body should not

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be recognized, escaped to Boiotia with Kerkyon.' (Quoted from Charax, a writer of Roman Imperial date, by the scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 508.) Cf. Herodotos, II, 121, for an Egyptian version; there are scores of non-classical parallels.

⁶ See Jevons in *Class. Rev.*, 1895, p. 247.

⁷ Frazer, *GB*², VII, p. 104, citing H. Zahn.

CHAPTER VI

BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH

IN enquiring whether the Greeks, in regard to the great crises of individual life, cherished any characteristically primitive ideas, we are faced by a real difficulty. The Greek literature is for the most part a learned one; even such a writer as Pausanias, for instance, from whom we have learned so much about the survival of uncivilized notions in cult, fails us here, for we are no longer dealing with such high and holy matters as the wisdom of the ancients or the mysterious service of the gods. What we should like to know, and do not for the most part hear of, is the ideas of the old women, in so far as they lasted on uncontradicted by the culture around them. For instance, we can tell in considerable detail what is done to a Hopi or a Zulu mother and her child, at the time of birth; in regard to a Greek mother, we have but a scanty idea as to what ceremonies, if any, were generally performed. What, for example, apart from more or less skilful medical procedure, took place in cases of difficult labour? A casual mention in Aristophanes assures us that medicines of some sort were to be had which were supposed to hasten delivery; Plato says the midwives used spells. The child once born, what magical precautions were taken against the evil eye? What was done with the navel-cord and after-birth? What persons were specially deputed

to handle, bathe, or clothe the baby? On these and a score of similar points we have sometimes no information at all, sometimes but scanty hints; and, our documents being so imperfect, it is clear that we cannot argue from their silence on any matter of this kind that no superstitious practice existed, and that therefore the Greeks were in that respect as completely free from 'silly nonsense' as Herodotos says they were in general. As regards marriage, we are rather better informed; but here again there are countless points on which we would desire more information. Finally, while we know a great deal concerning Greek views of the afterlife,—since these interested philosophers,—we have much yet to discover concerning what they actually did at funerals. Worst of all is the fact that even when we know that a particular custom existed, and can find a close savage parallel to it, we have little to tell us what it meant to the Greeks who used it. We have to-day in our churches the custom of closing the eyes during prayer. This in its origin is sheer savagery, due to the fear of seeing the god, supposed to be present in visible form in his own house; but where, even in the most uninstructed member of any Christian denomination, can we find a survival of the original meaning of the rite? We commonly say 'Bless you!' when anyone sneezes; how completely we have forgotten the old fear that he may sneeze out his soul is obvious from the absurd explanations frequently offered. These things are mere fossils, matters of etiquette and not of magic; they are survivals in the true sense of the word, having no longer any organic connection with our thought or life. To what extent was this true of the Greek practices which we are now to discuss?

As regards birth, several general ideas which we know to have been prevalent throw but little light on

the matter, for they are more or less prevalent everywhere, resisting for a long time the progress of civilized reflection. That birth was a cause of ceremonial impurity, for instance, proves merely that the Greeks were human, and that the gulf between them and the savage was not immeasurable. The idea exists all over the world, more or less strongly; that a new living thing should appear where a short time ago he was not, is a happening which not unreasonably impressed the early thought of man as very remarkable; and he may well be excused for concluding that a great piece of magic had been wrought, and that therefore it was wise to take precautions. The amount of ceremonial which this notion has imposed upon the highest religions of the world is well known; is it then any wonder that in the holy island of Delos, and in other sacred places, such as the precinct of Asklepios at Epidaurus, and temples generally, no birth might take place? Again, the belief that an evil disposed person might delay a birth by the simple expedient of sitting cross-legged somewhere near the expectant mother, while it is further removed from modern ideas (though not from those of modern peasants in many parts of Europe) is nevertheless so long-lived that we cannot fairly call it a primitive belief when we find it in a Greek tale.

With regard to a few ideas known to be savage, we have negative evidence of a trustworthy kind, namely, the expression of surprise at the existence of such a custom, when it is heard of among foreign peoples. There is a large group of practices known collectively as *couvade*, in which the father is subject to the same, or similar, tabus to those imposed upon the mother before and after the birth. The most noticeable practice, though not an essential one, is the simulation by the father of labour. Now this custom was known to the Greeks, and is always spoken of as

a curious and noteworthy practice of certain barbarians. We may therefore assume that it was not a Greek custom, and that if it ever had been, all remembrance of it had completely died out. Similarly in the case of marriage and death, we find customs definitely noted as foreign; for instance, certain unsavoury African ways of treating the bride, and a custom found here and there in the ancient world of killing old men. Since the Greeks mention these and others like them with horror, amusement, or curiosity, we may be sure that they themselves did nothing of the sort.

With this much by way of preface, let us turn to what we know of Greek birth-customs, and see if we can find in them anything definitely savage. The task is made easier by the industry of Samter, who has been at much pains to collect everything a wide reading of modern works on savage custom could produce by way of parallels to Greek custom, so far as that is known. A great deal of what I have to say is due to him.

A very wide-spread notion among many backward peoples is that a baby is a dead person re-born. In Africa especially, but also in other parts of the world, we find, sometimes in stories, sometimes in actual practice, that a child recognizes, or is thought by his relatives to recognize, some piece of property which belonged to him in a former life. I have already pointed out that the Greeks show some remnants of a belief in re-incarnation, apart from their philosophical speculations. A curious development is the ritual connected with those falsely reported dead. On their return home, such persons were not at once readmitted to the family circle; they had been considered dead, and ritually made so by the performance of funeral rites for them; therefore, they were dead. The only way to regularize the position of these *hysteropotmoi*,

as they were styled, was to treat them for a while as babies, suckling and swaddling them. Here, then, we have an instance of the equation of baby and ghost, surviving, no one knows from how many centuries back, late enough for Plutarch¹ to hear of it, although, to him and everyone else, reincarnation is a new doctrine of Pythagoras, or a belief held by Indian sages or Gaulish Druids.

But the actual time of birth is full of danger, not only in reality, but still more in the fancies of savages and to a large extent of peoples far advanced in civilization. Nor is this to be wondered at. According to the testimony both of our own anthropologists and of observers belonging to the ancient civilized peoples, a savage woman, if normal and healthy, suffers far less, and is left much less exhausted, than her civilized sister at this critical period. But if some anatomical defect or the like be present, the lack of proper attention inevitably brings about great pain and often death. Either, therefore, all goes well, or all goes very ill indeed; and it is but natural that the explanation should be sought in the presence or absence of evil magic, the influence of a human enchanter or a malignant spirit. The corollary is obvious; the savage tries to anticipate this magic by good counter-magic, or carries the war into the spirits' or enchanters' own country, by doing things which will hurt or frighten them, and so drive them and their sorceries away. Now in Greece, evil spirits for some reason were afraid of pitch, possibly lest they should stick in it, like flies. The doors, therefore, perhaps other parts of the house, were daubed with this valuable bogey-scarer when a birth was shortly to take place. But, in Greece as among savage peoples, not all spirits were hostile. Artemis herself was active in helping women at such times; Eileithyia was regularly called upon, and besides these

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two great figures there were many more, whose very names are often lost to us, invoked in various parts of the country. Moreover Hera, as the goddess of women, and particularly married women, in general, was of course interested in her worshippers then. But this is hardly a primitive conception, or if so, it has survived so widely and almost universally that the extraordinary thing would be to find a people who had not a birth-goddess of some kind. A glance at Ploss-Bartels' thirty-eighth chapter will show this to be true.

Once the child was born it had, in Greece as in so many other countries, to be received into society as a human being. Until this was formally done it had no rights at all. Hence perhaps it was that no legal bar existed to the practice of exposure, by which a family which did not wish to undergo the expense and trouble of bringing a child up simply threw it away, laying it upon the ground somewhere out of doors, sometimes enclosing it in a pottery vessel. How common this practice was, has recently been hotly debated ; but that it existed at all is the interesting point. A Greek father had not, like the Roman *paterfamilias*, the power of life and death over his children ; if then he might expose them when newborn, it follows that they were scarcely felt to be human. For it was only exceptionally, as in the strongly communistic and military Spartan community, that exposure was limited to deformed or unhealthy children ; in practice it was generally girls who were exposed, because a daughter meant future expense in the form of her dowry, but a son might when he grew up earn a good living for himself. But, son or daughter, the child thus exposed was treated in a casual way that contrasts strongly with the punctilious avoidance of taking human life, especially the life of a kinsman, in

the Greek world generally. We need go no farther than Plato for our proofs. One dialogue, the *Euthyphron*, shows us a man accused of homicide because, without meaning to cause death, he had nevertheless so maltreated a slave that the latter died; no one seems surprised at his being indicted, the only unfavourable comment is caused by the fact that his own son conceives it his duty to be the prosecutor. Another, the *Theaetetus*, speaks of the exposure of a child as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and implies that if it be not the first-born it would be rather unreasonable for the mother to object. Such ideas, among so humane a people, can be explained only on the supposition that the belief in the non-human character of a child just born was deeply, though no doubt more or less unconsciously, rooted in them.³

That this is a savage idea, probably very old, is easy to show. A few minutes spent in reading such a work as Tylor's *Primitive Culture* will furnish anyone with a string of rites corresponding more or less to baptism, in that they involve a ceremony intended to purify the new-born child by washing, exposure to heat, and the like. Many peoples also shave the baby's head when he is a few days old; again a rite of purification. The infant is often provided with a temporary name, which will be replaced by another when he grows up. It is especially noteworthy that until some such ceremony has taken place, the child, like its mother, is often impure or *tabu*, and may not be touched, or is handled only by some carefully selected person. Nor has the ceremonial cleansing by any means always much, or indeed anything, to do with the washing of the infant, which generally even the dirtiest savages consider necessary. More than once we are definitely told that the child has not yet a soul until some time has been allowed to elapse and some number of cere-

monies gone through. Most instructive of all perhaps is the Dyak name for the process, 'to launch the child into the world' (like a canoe on the water), while the Wayao of East Africa speak of 'introducing' him into the world.³ Birth alone, then, does not suffice to make a human being; for the individual is nothing, he must be received into a group of some sort before he can properly be said to exist. Of this old and savage idea we find still a trace, not in the custom of exposure itself so much,—for that could be explained as due to necessity, selfishness, or other non-religious causes,—but in the attitude assumed towards it by men so enlightened as Plato.

When once it was decided that the child should be nurtured and not exposed, the Greeks accordingly performed a ceremony of purification; in Attica at least it was purification by fire and air, for at the rite known as the *amphidromia* or running around, the infant, now a few days old, was carried at full speed around the hearth. The object was no doubt to subject it to the good influence of fire, and also, as in numerous rites of swinging, jumping, and the like, some of them Greek, to blow off any uncanniness that might still cling to it. The baby was then named, presents made to it (usually cuttle-fish and squids, for some reason which we cannot now fathom), and its life as a human being began. Later on came its initiation into life as a citizen, or member of the father's tribe; of this we shall have more to say in a later chapter.

But what happened if there were twins? The superstitions connected with twin births have been the subject of some of the most appalling nonsense ever written in the name of science; but this must not blind us to the fact that they exist among many savages, and are important. Generally speaking, if twins are born, the savage believes (1) that this unusual

phenomenon is unlucky and uncanny, and that both (and perhaps the mother also) must be got rid of, or (2) that they are a sign of good luck, signifying that both mother and father are highly blessed by the gods or spirits, or (3) that one, generally the elder twin, is not the child of his putative father, but of some god or spirit who has honoured the mother with his attentions; and therefore, that he, or perhaps both twins, is or are very potent magically, being able for instance to control the weather, make game or fish come, and the like.

Had the Greeks any such beliefs? So far as I know, they had not, in historical times; but their legends indicate that formerly they had had them, in the third of the forms just mentioned. In the well-known tale, Alkmēna bears two children, Herakles and Iphiklēs. Of these, the younger and weaker, Iphiklēs, is the son of her husband, Amphitryon; but the elder has been begotten by Zeus, who had visited her disguised as Amphitryon. It may be objected that Herakles was not a magician, but a very straightforward hero, who for the most part achieved his ends by muscle rather than wit. But it should also be remembered that he was a very popular hero, and that the Greeks in general had (unlike the Finns, for instance) little love for wizards, preferring soldiers and statesmen as the central figures of their tales. So a story which originally told of the magical prowess of the elder twin may very well have been worked over so as to make it applicable to a champion. There was one pair of twins, Amphion and Zēthos, whereof the former was something very like a wizard, namely a musician of such powers that the very stones would dance to his playing; an accomplishment which served him in good stead when he and his less gifted brother came to build the walls of Thebes.

Thus we see that there is a faint trace among the earliest Greeks of whose ideas we know anything (for the legend of Herakles is very old, and this detail, though perhaps no part of the original tale, still has a very respectable antiquity) of a belief which is still held among the Indians of the Pacific coast of North America.

Since neither children nor adults can hope to pass through life wholly free from disease, it is well to ask in passing whether the fellow-countrymen of Hippokrates, that genius under whose guidance medicine made strides such as it never took again until modern times, had much of the savage left in them as regards their conception of illness. If we look at the earliest documents, the Homeric poems, we find that in their treatment of wounds, at any rate, the Greeks of that age were on the whole very reasonable; the blood was squeezed or sucked out and 'drugs' (*pharmaka*,—probably herbal simples of some kind) rubbed on; elsewhere, the wound was 'skilfully bound up' and a charm repeated over it. Until antiseptic dressings were discovered, it is difficult to see what more could have been done; such magic as was employed was harmless enough, at any rate. Nowhere do we hear of medicine-men dancing about the patient and finally extracting a stone or other object supposed to cause pain or disease; the wrath of a god is not infrequently the cause of a plague, and in one instance at least Apollo makes the Greeks fall ill by shooting arrows at them, an explanation very like that which is prevalent in parts of South America, where malignant spirits shoot invisible arrows into their victims and so cause them to sicken and die; but it is nowhere said or implied that this was thought to be the only origin of illness. However, the belief that diseases might be supernaturally caused lasted long, as we see from

the interesting Hippokratic treatise on epilepsy (*de morbo sacro*). Here, the author (who is not the Father of Medicine himself, but a later physician of learning and good sense) begins by asserting his own belief that neither this nor any other disease has anything particularly supernatural about it; if people think that, because it is strange, it must come from the gods, then they had better term many diseases 'divine,' and not this one only. He then, fortunately for us, goes on to explain how ignorant magician-quacks in his own day treated epileptics; and it would not be hard to parallel the description, point by point, from the prescriptions of savage practitioners. They apply, he tells us, exorcisms and incantations; they forbid the patient to bathe,—warm baths, something like our 'Turkish' baths, are probably meant,—they tell him to abstain from various foods (a long list is given, including several sorts of fish, the flesh of goats, deer, swine, and dogs, the last hardly a normal Greek food in any case, some sorts of fowl, and two or three vegetables), not to wear black clothes, for that is the colour of death, not to use a cloak or blanket of goat-skin, and not to sit or stand in certain attitudes. So far, most of this might be the result of a sort of scientific medicine, however mistaken in its premises. But, as the author goes on to show us, the quacks whom he assails parceled out the symptoms amongst the various gods. 'If the patient bleats like a goat, or roars, or has convulsive movements on the right side, the Mother of the Gods is the cause of it, say they. If he utters shrill, clear sounds, they say he neighs like a horse, and Poseidon, Lord of Steeds, is at the bottom of it all.' Other symptoms are due to the influence of Hekaté and Apollo, the former being especially responsible, along with the 'heroes,' for night terrors. 'If the patient foams and kicks, then Ares is to blame.'

If we imagine, for instance, the Mintira of the Malay Peninsula developing their *hantus* or spirits, who cause disease, into high gods of the type of Apollo or Ares, this is much the way in which their specialists might talk. Clearly, since this is not an isolated example of the witch-doctor in antiquity, the savage conception was there, though checked and kept in the background by the growth of scientific medicine; just as to-day, the white witch and the conjuror still have a certain following, and by no means always among the most ignorant of our population. Once Greek science collapsed, as it did towards the close of ancient civilization, the magician came decidedly to the fore, and such late authors as Marcellus, who favoured the world with his views on the theory and practice of medicine in the declining years of the Roman empire, pave the way for the phantasmagoria of mediæval physic.

The popularity of miracle-working shrines, notably those of Asklepios, is in a different category. Whatever one may think of its objective truth, there is nothing primitive or particularly irrational in the belief that a supernatural power benignly disposed towards mankind may heal their ailments, either directly or by revealing the right treatment in a dream or vision, as was the usual method at these shrines. Certainly the cures of which we have record were in many cases brought about by a treatment rational enough in itself, however dictated; and the pure air and cheerful surroundings of such a place as the great Asklepieion of Epidauros cannot have failed to have a good effect on the minds and bodies of many who resorted thither. A few traces of savagery there were, however, as the next chapter will show.

Of the second crisis in the life of a savage, initiation into tribal mysteries, we have but little trace in Greece. Mysteries indeed there were, those of Eleusis being

the most famous ; but they were either State cults, in some cases at least open to all and sundry, or else private affairs, conventicles, having nothing to do with any political unit, as were the Orphic mysteries. That such rites had once had something to do with membership in a tribe or clan is indeed a hypothesis which has been put forward, but how insecure its foundations are has already been pointed out, in Chapter III. What is certainly known about the method by which a Greek boy was made a member of his father's clan or phratry will be discussed when we come to speak of Greek political organization. For the present, there need be mentioned only one feature of their life which seems to contain a faint reflection of primitive conditions.

The distinction which we make between minors and adults is the result of a long process of simplification, especially when we remember the total absence of ceremony legally necessary to effect the transition. A boy's twenty-first birthday, a girl's 'coming-out' party, are purely family affairs, and their importance is social only. Far more complicated is the life of the savage in this respect. On leaving childhood behind, he or she passes through more or less elaborate puberty-rites ; often a second set of rites announces the passage from the status of young warrior, or the like, to that of marriageable man ; a new lot of ceremonies accompanies the marriage itself, and often more ritual yet is necessary at the passage into old age. Corresponding to these rites is the elaborate division of society into age-classes. Of this, Greece retains traces, chiefly as regards the military activities of a citizen. An Athenian youth when fully adolescent passed into the class of *ephēboi*. While in this class he underwent a somewhat rigid discipline, including much physical exercise, supervised by the State, and

had definite military duties, including the patrolling of the frontiers. His corps had, like most Greek associations, a common worship, that of Hermes in particular, since he was the patron of athletics. Traditional etiquette prescribed for him a particularly modest demeanour and a studied restraint in gesture and speech. In all this there is a suggestion that the *ephēboi* may once have been a class with a peculiar magic of their own. Sparta, always tenacious of old ways, especially when they were associated with military efficiency, was somewhat more elaborate in this respect, organizing its youths into corps at an earlier age, and training them much more assiduously. In particular, both there and in Crete we find the practice of common meals, and at least in the former state, that the participants sleep in a common dormitory, and so are to some extent at least excluded from normal domestic life; all of which the Greeks of historical times attributed to the wisdom of the ancient legislators, who thus sought to foster public spirit, and suppress as far as possible the difference between rich and poor. In reality, it seems to be the survival of an institution corresponding to that typical feature of many Pacific peoples, the bachelors' house; or to the separate camps of young unmarried Masai warriors, to take an African instance. But though the origin of the custom is probably to be sought very far back in the history of the Greek race, or races, for we do not know whether it started with one stratum of the population or with several, its survival was largely, if not wholly, due to considerations which would appeal to a civilized man. Given that military duty was incumbent upon every male citizen, it was of obvious practical advantage to ensure that in early manhood he should receive a good physical training, and that this should consist in part of necessary police-work

or frontier patrol-service, which had to be done by someone, and might as well be done by those to whom it had an instructional value. Of the not uncommon corresponding phenomenon, the collection of the young women into a club-house of their own, some trace may be thought to have been retained by Spartan conservatism, and also in one or two other places in the Peloponnesos, such as Elis, where certain exercises and athletic contests were prescribed for girls. However, such organizations, even in their full form, are hardly primitive, but rather typical of the relatively high culture of barbarian peoples.

When the Greek, now of full age, came to marry, that act was, with them as to a large extent with us, at once of legal and of religious importance. In the present chapter I deal only with the latter, in so far, that is, as it can be separated from the former. In one respect the Greek view of the matter differed fundamentally from that current among modern civilized peoples, at least in northern Europe; it was entirely devoid of romance,—the idea that there could be anything romantic about the relationship of the sexes is comparatively late in Greece,—and attention was concentrated on it as the only means of providing a continuance of the family, clan, or State. The full phrase in use to denote entry into the married state was, in Athens at all events, 'to take a woman for the procreation of legitimate children,' and this woman must be, not only of free birth, but of the same State as her intended husband. With a foreigner, no marriage could be contracted at all, at any rate in strict legal theory; the rule seems at times to have been evaded, but never done away with. Such a rule is itself evidence of the long way the Greeks had come from savagery; the typical savage rule is that the wife must *not* be of the same clan or sub-clan as the

husband, or, if clan-structure has broken down, that she should stand in some particular relation to him, as for instance, that of cross-cousin, *i.e.*, the child of his father's sister or mother's brother. But an Athenian might normally marry any Athenian woman who was not his full sister, half-sister by the same mother, or otherwise related to him in the first degree.

Nevertheless, in the ceremonial of marriage we find a few features which point to a time when exogamy, or the taking of a wife from outside one's own group, was the rule; for part of the process consists of rites which seem to imply that the woman is a stranger to her husband's clan or family. Thus in Boiotia, she was brought to the bridegroom's house in a waggon, the axle of which was ceremonially burned, indicating that she was cut off from her old home and might not return. At Athens, she was pelted on arrival at the house with nuts and dried fruits, which were also flung over the bridegroom. The curious feature about this is, that the same performance was gone through on the arrival into the house of a new-bought slave. Whatever it may mean, and Samter has spent a good deal of learning and ingenuity in an attempt to explain it, without, as I think, arriving at a convincing solution, there is no doubt that it is a rite of admission of some kind. Moreover, at Athens, the bridegroom went away to visit the bride's parents a few days after the wedding, on which occasion the bride sent him a garment known technically as the 'cloak of separation' (*χλῶνις ἀπαιλιστεία*). As presents often accompany the taking off of a tabu, it is by no means impossible that this is a relic of days when the bride's parents were, as the Zulus say, *hlonipa* to him; that is, he might not see or speak to them, nor they to him.

But this tabu is to be referred not so much to exogamy

as to the immemorial mutual avoidance of the two sexes. It is well known that in some savage communities, husband and wife are supposed never to see each other, meeting only in the dark; and that very frequently they may not use each other's names; a custom of which perhaps a relic survives to our own days. It is not usual for a wife to refer to her husband, save in speaking to intimate friends or relations, as 'John,' but as 'Mr. Smith'; not so many generations ago, perhaps here and there still, she commonly addressed him in the same way, in some circles at least. In Greece, it may be recorded for what it is worth that the married pair seem regularly to have addressed each other simply as 'husband' and 'wife,' or more literally, 'man' and 'woman' (*ἄνερ, ὃ γύναι*); but more to the point is a Spartan custom which Plutarch, who records it, of course attributes to the desire of Lycurgus, its reputed author, to check over-indulgence and prevent satiety between married people. At a Spartan wedding, the bride was placed by an attendant in a dark room, and there visited for a short time by the bridegroom, who spent the rest of the night in his usual quarters, the Spartan equivalent of the 'bachelors' house' already referred to. For some time their meetings continued to be by stealth; 'and this,' says Plutarch, 'they continued to do not for a short time only, but so long that sometimes children were born to a man before he had ever seen his wife in daylight.'

Of group marriage, as of group relationship generally, there is hardly a trace in Greece, where the popular ideas with regard to monogamy hardly differed at all from those commonly in vogue to-day, even to the exaction of a much stricter standard of chastity from the wife than from the husband, and from both than from an unmarried man. But here again, Sparta

furnishes us with what may reasonably be regarded as a survival of very ancient custom. It is quite commonly found, in Africa especially, that a married woman has a certain licence in the matter of taking lovers, and that this is not always (though it is in some tribes) a thing to be concealed from the husband. We are told, both by the author of the essay *On the Lakedaïmonian Constitution*, who described the contemporary Spartan customs, and by Plutarch, whose *Life of Lycurgus* gives us an idealizing picture of the ancient habits of that State, that a Spartan wife, even if she had already borne children to her husband, might entertain a lover; that this was done with the husband's knowledge and consent; and that any children there might be by this irregular union were so far legitimate that they were full members of the family, although they might not inherit the estate. That this goes back, ultimately, to group marriage is a reasonable supposition; it is to be distinguished, as it seems to me, from the case of a man unable to become a father who appoints a deputy to beget him a child; a practice which, however repugnant to our views of family honour, is sanctioned by the Laws of Manu, and finds its justification in the firm belief that to die childless was to ruin one's own and one's ancestors' chances of comfort in the next world. To this latter idea is due also, in Greece as in India and Rome, the equivalence of an adopted to an actual child.

One or two shreds of evidence are left to us that the ancestors of the Greeks had once regarded old people of either sex as on a different magico-religious footing from those in their prime. In the first place, we have occasionally a priestess (the Delphic prophetess or Pythia, as she was technically called, is the best-known instance) who must be no longer capable of child-

bearing ; thus, Demeter at Hermion in the Peloponnesos was served by an old woman. Outside the priesthood, Plato tells us that a midwife must be one who had been a mother but could no longer become one. At Elis also, Pausanias tells us, there was once a sort of council of old women of good family, to whom was entrusted the delicate business of arranging a treaty between Elis and the neighbouring Pisa ; and this council still existed in his day for certain ritual purposes. So much for the magico-religious importance of old age, a view quite commonly held among savage and barbarous peoples ; one need mention only the Australian elders, in whose hands are such government and law as the people possesses, and the wide-spread notion that old women are likely to be witches ; with which is coupled the corresponding idea that a barren woman is or may be a witch.⁴ Old age and barrenness have magically much in common. But we also quite commonly find that the savage despises and disregards, or even kills, the aged. Of this notion little trace is left in Greece, for the historical Greeks revered the old and treated them as a rule with the utmost courtesy ; but a trace there perhaps is. In the fifth book of the *Iliad* the two sons of an old man, the sole direct heirs to his wealth, are killed by Diomedes, who thus, says the poet (line 156) 'left lamentation and bitter woes for their father, for that he received them not home again alive out of the battle ; and the *chêrôstai* divided his livelihood among them.' These *chêrôstai* were clansmen to whom the estate would go if the old man died without heirs ; they appear to have entered upon their inheritance at once, without waiting for his death. If this interpretation of the passage is correct,—and it finds support elsewhere in the Homeric poems, where the aged Laërtes, father of Odysseus, is not regarded as king, or as in any way important,—

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it would seem that among some Greeks in early times, old age was equivalent to death.

But such traces of savage ideas about old age are quite rare and are capable of explanation without having recourse to anything more recondite than the consideration that, on the one hand, the old are likely to have acquired wisdom and sobriety by experience, and on the other, that the very aged are apt to be too infirm in body and in mind to manage their estates or perform any public business; notions which are characteristic of no special period of human culture, for the reason that they are simply true.

With regard to death, Greek ideas, like those of most nations, were, as the last chapter has shown, none too consistent, and showed traces of many influences. Having already discussed their main beliefs concerning the soul, I have now to speak of their funeral arrangements, in so far, that is, as they throw light on the problem of the survival among them of primitive ideas.

One survival at least had quite vanished in classical times, and was barely remembered as having once been a custom. An unknown author, whose curious little work entitled *Minos* has come down to us owing to the fact that some supposed Plato had written it, states that in the old days people used to be buried in the house; and there is some, though not very much, archaeological evidence to support this statement. Now house-burial, where it exists as a living custom, is peculiar to the lower strata of human culture, whether the house continues to be used by the living or is abandoned to the dead. It often implies a belief in reincarnation, of which, as we have seen, some scanty traces survive in Greece apart from religious and philosophical doctrines of demonstrably later date. If and when it does not imply this, it indicates what is perhaps the simplest of the conceptions of survival,

that the dead man is not exactly dead, but goes on existing somehow where his body is. Fairly early in all peoples moving up towards civilization the literal house is replaced by a soul-house of some kind, whether a house-shaped tomb, a little hut for the ghost to take shelter in, or a hut-urn to contain the ashes. Then it fades into a mere metaphor; the place, whatever its shape and style, where the remains of the dead are bestowed, is spoken of as the house or dwelling-place of the departed, as for instance in the Grave-digger's riddle in *Hamlet*. Those early Greeks therefore who here and there continued to bury in the house late enough for a rumour of it to come down to us had retained a custom definitely savage, and resembling that of which we find evidence in some cave-settlements of Palaeolithic times, where the same cavern seems to have been used to bury the dead and to house the living.

Apart from this, there really was very little peculiar to or distinctive of Greek funeral customs which suggested the savage. The body was washed, dressed in white, which was also worn in Argos as a mourning colour, and crowned with flowers or leaves; it then was laid out on a bed, and there mourned by friends (*prothesis*), and after no very long delay, carried forth (*ekphora*) to the place of burial. Here there is nothing which differs very widely from our own customs, save that the body was carried, as it still is in Greece, bare-faced, and that representations in art show it borne head-foremost, not, as with us and with the Romans, feet-foremost. This is not very easy to explain; was it supposed that the ghost, thus made as it were to walk backwards, would be puzzled and not know which way to go when it tried to haunt the survivors, or was it intended that the dead should *not* miss the way to his own family, whither he was to be invited for the

annual Feast of Souls and in which perhaps he was one day to appear as a new-born child ?

The history of funeral ritual seems to show a decided trend in the direction of simplicity and avoidance of wild demonstrations of grief and of waste of property. In Homer and in all early documents, we find the Greeks already past the stage in which all that a man has is buried or burnt with him, as is the custom, for instance, in Patagonia ; nor have we any archaeological evidence of an age in which he carried out of this world more than a decent competence ; in the case of a Mycenaean king, a considerable store of wealth, but nothing like what we may suppose the sum total of his treasures to have been. At most, we find all a warrior's armour and a selection of his best horses, etc., sent with him, or, as in the offerings made by Periander of Corinth to his dead wife, in Herodotos, a vast store of clothing burned for the use of a greatly beloved woman, who, in this instance, seems to have been greatly feared after her death as well. At funeral games, also, as Homer describes them, we find that every competitor receives a prize, which was in some cases at least given from the dead man's property ; a device possibly to put the ghost into the position of a generous entertainer, and smooth over his separation from his worldly wealth. The passage of the *Minos* already referred to tells of the elaborate sacrifices which used to be made before a funeral started, and of a sort of experts known as *enchytristiai*, whose functions are a matter of considerable doubt, who used to be employed. But when we come to the end of the fifth century, we find that no more was necessary than clothing for the body and the temporary use of a bed and its furniture, and of a room or house of some kind to lay the body out in, besides of course the materials needed for the funeral pyre,

and the actual tomb or grave itself in which the ashes were laid away. In more than one passage of the Laws of Solon, also, we find enactments against anything beyond a quite moderate display of mourning, no more elaborate than that of a Victorian funeral with its mutes, if indeed it was as complicated as that. Now we know how common relatively huge offerings of property, often amounting to all that the deceased had in his lifetime, and wild displays of grief, often lasting for many days, are in savage funerals; we can therefore see that the Greeks, despite the conservativeness of funerary rites, modified very greatly any tendencies of this kind which they had inherited from the past. At the same time, the impression is conveyed that in the earliest times the savage extravagance was not immeasurably removed.⁸

In connection with the tendance of the dead, already mentioned incidentally in the last chapter, the soul-feasts must not be forgotten. On certain stated days after the death (the third and ninth) offerings were made at the tomb; thereafter, besides an annual commemoration of the death, there was a Feast of All Souls, of which the best-known example was the Athenian Anthestêria, in spring. At this festival, the ghosts seem to have been recalled in some way to their old homes, care being taken, by the usual smearing of the doors with pitch, and other such means, to keep unfriendly spirits out. At the end of the third day the householder dismissed his phantom guests with the words 'Go forth, ye ghosts, the Anthestêria is over.' Thus it was thought that the ghosts were not far away, but could be easily brought back to their old homes. But also it was thought that they had a journey of some sort to go, else why should the bodies be buried, or the graves oriented, in a particular direction, as they often, though by no means always, were? Finally,

we have already seen that they were on occasion thought of as living on in the graves. Here we have one of the most characteristically savage things in Greek cult ; the quite contradictory views expressed in the treatment of the same dead by the same people. And to this we must add yet another inconsistency. In their other-world state, the dead apparently remain permanently. Yet (apart from the theological conception of a 'second death,' which is to be found in pagan as well as Christian writings, and does not in either case belong to the classical period), we find the grim figure of a devourer of the dead,—Eurynomos, Kerberos, or whatever name local fancy might give him,—a personification perhaps of the process of decomposition, or so interpreted at least by some Greeks of later times ; yet decidedly reminiscent of similar monsters in savage eschatologies who seem to annihilate those of the dead who are unfortunate enough to be caught by them, and in any case inconsistent with the widespread practice of cremation, which of course prevented the body from decaying at all.

The dead then are in their graves, yet in an underground Hades, yet at the same time in a place which can be reached by journeying in a given direction long enough, and also on occasion in their homes, where they come for the *Anthestêria*, or may be found prowling about on the floor picking up crumbs from the table. They go on existing indefinitely (one can hardly say eternally ; such a conception is too metaphysical for any popular idea), yet they are in danger from devouring monsters. The confusion is wild enough, and very reminiscent of such results as those reached by Landtmann, for instance, in his studies of the beliefs of the *Kiwai* Papuans ; yet traces of such a jumble of beliefs are to be found in our own day and country, despite the long influence of a religion which has for

centuries taught a quite definite eschatology, and has again and again sought to repress, by arguments or otherwise, the popular notions. Hence, while recognizing this survival of the 'primitive' in Greece, we must not exaggerate its importance, since it is of a sort which has not yet disappeared.⁶

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

¹ Aristophanes (p. 109), *Thesmoph.* 504; Plato (*ibid.*), *Theaet.* 149c. Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 5. See, for translation and comment, the author's *Roman Questions of Plutarch* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 121, 171.

² See Plato, *Euthyphro*, 4a *sqq.*; *Theaetetus*, 160c-161a.

³ See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, p. 430 *sqq.*; van Gennep, *Rites de Passage*, p. 71; Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, pp. 45-6; Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood*, p. 32.

⁴ See, for example, D. A. Talbot, *Women's Mysteries of a Primitive People*, pp. 162, 168.

⁵ For Periander, see Herodotos, V, 92, 28 *sqq.* The funeral games are discussed in my article 'The Greek Agones,' in *Aberystwyth Studies*, Vol. III, p. 1 *sqq.* The passage in the *Minos* is 31c; for a discussion, see Bolkenstein in *Classical Philology* (Chicago), xvii, p. 222 *sqq.*, which may also be consulted on the question of exposure. For the laws of Solon in question, see Plut., *Life of Solon*, 21. End of the fifth century, see Lysias, *In Eratosthenem*, 18. The other funeral customs referred to will be found in any manual or encyclopaedia of antiquities. For orientation, see also *Class. Rev.* 1920, p. 141 *sqq.*; *Journ. Roy. Anth. Inst.*, LII, pp. 127-140.

⁶ Landtmann's discussion will be found in *Festschrift tillegnad A. Westermarch* (Helsingfors 1912; the article in question is written in English). For an excellent example of the clash between Christian and popular eschatology, see Sir Walter Scott, *Demonology and Witchcraft*, Letter V, the conversation between the Rev. Matthew Reid and the weaver.

CHAPTER VII

MAGIC AND MYTHOLOGY

SO far we have been considering cult or tendance addressed to a more or less definite object, whether god, hero, or ghost, and such magic as centres around the great crises of individual life. It now remains to ask whether, in the general characteristics of Greek magical practices (in which may be included some of their ritual and most of their divination) much of the primitive lurks ; and whether among the many tales that they told of gods, men, and the world at large there is to be found any clear trace of the savage mind still fully alive and working in a characteristic manner.

It has been held, notably by Frazer,¹ that magic is the first stage of religion and science alike. By magic is meant, according to Frazer's definition, an effort to work directly upon one's environment in accordance with supposed laws ; a first attempt, based on absurdly inadequate knowledge, to do what the modern applied sciences do successfully. Only when it was found that the means employed were inadequate did men turn to asking a supposed superior being to do that for him which he could not do for himself, thus producing religion proper. While the theory, as thus stated, is not accepted by the majority of students of the subject, and especially by those most competent to judge of savage mentality, it is not without value as

drawing attention to the real difference between the two attitudes towards the supernatural, or towards nature generally, which man has as a matter of historical fact adopted. The one is, that what he wants can be got at by direct action, as direct as that by which, when we want heat, we get it by lighting a fire: the other that his desires can be satisfied best, or can be granted only, by the agency of a being or beings superior to himself, whom he cannot control as the fire-maker controls the kindling apparatus and the fuel, but who may, through sheer good nature and kindness, or in consideration of bribes or flattery, or in return for obedience to certain commands of theirs, be induced to influence events and things for their worshipper. Convenient as it may be on occasion to distinguish these attitudes in theory, in practice we find them generally inextricably mixed. Nor is it true to say that magic is a lower, religion (in Frazer's sense) a higher attitude, or one more advanced. The magician may at worst be a compound of malignity and absurdity, striving by means of a ridiculous hocus-pocus to work the harm which he has the spite, but not the power or the courage to inflict; or he may claim kin with some prince of science, commanding Nature by obeying her. The worshipper may be a great saint, whose zeal and purity are equalled only by his enlightenment; or he may be a despicable creature, coaxing the phantasm of his own contemptible mind to do what he would not dare ask of any decent human being.

The existence of a belief in magic, in the sense in which our dictionaries define it ('the art of influencing events by occult control of nature or spirits') is in itself no proof that a nation is or is not civilized. So long as natural laws are imperfectly known there are likely to be two attitudes towards them; that of the

experimentalist, who patiently searches to find, one after another, the causes of certain observed effects, and that of the less critical, more fanciful man who is led by some process of analogy, unchecked by sufficient observation, to assume a cause, and to act upon his assumption. Anyone who, misled by the disappearance to-day of much of the traditional vocabulary of magic, is tempted to assume that the belief in it is dead, may with profit reflect on the prodigious powers which are commonly ascribed to such forces as electricity, magnetism, hypnotic control, and other things either imperfectly known or of too abstruse a nature to be comprehended by the average layman. We must not therefore content ourselves with asking 'Did the Greeks believe in magic?' and concluding that, if they did, they were to that extent savages, but rather consider what manner of magic it was, how they believed in it, and to what extent the other and more critical type of mind was present among them. The answer is obvious and well known; so far from resting content with occult learning, primitive or otherwise, they were the pioneers of all the modern sciences, and much more than the pioneers of most. But their science, less perfected than ours, and far less well provided with those means of experiment which our superior mechanical knowledge has given us, was proportionately less successful in proving the magician wrong; and of course, the farther back we go, the less science and the more magic we find, and later, when the collapse comes, the scientist, with much else that was good in classical culture, disappears for centuries, to be replaced by the magician as of old.

It is unfortunate that most of the magic that has survived to us from antiquity, in the form of books of spells and conjurations, tablets containing curses and

other charms, and recipes for the cure of disease by irrational means, is demonstrably not pure Greek at all, but largely oriental, as is shown by the multitude of Hebrew, Egyptian, and other foreign names and terms employed in it, to take no other evidence. Of the magic of the earliest times we know much less than we should like to know; no doubt it survived more or less, but it was largely driven underground in the classical period. However, we have one or two good sources of information, not the least being the Hesiodic poems.

That curious book, the *Works and Days*, is in its intention a manual of practical farming and good morality, composed in large part by Hesiod² of Askra in Boiotia, in the ninth or eighth century B.C., but with later additions. It is in verse because it is older, at least in its oldest stratum, than the discovery that it was possible to write prose; a discovery which, obvious as it seems to us, has had to be made by one people after another some time after its literature had started. Much of it is as practical in execution as in intention; it describes a method of agriculture not yet fully developed indeed, but a long way from the beginning; it bids the farmer get him a plough and a plough-ox, sow and reap at the proper times of the year, practise economy, be a good neighbour, and so forth. So far, the most practically minded modern could point out only that better forms of plough and more accurate methods of knowing when and what to plant have since been discovered. The book, he might say, is now out of date, but doubtless in its own times it was as good a manual as was to be had. It is when we look at certain other precepts, urged with as much vigour and as much certainty of their usefulness as the instruction to get a good house-dog as a protection against thieves, or the prohibition against reviling

one's neighbour for being poor, that we seem to step into a less familiar world ; though to one who knows the countryside intimately it is perhaps not so unfamiliar, even to-day. I give a few of them.

' And cut not, on the merry feast-day of the gods, dry from green off the five-branched thing, with bright iron.'

This sounds oracular, and with good reason, for it has an oracle's trick of talking in riddles. Reduced to more common speech it means, ' Do not pare your nails on a holy day.'

' Also, when men drink, lay thou never the wine-scoop above the mixing-bowl ; for thereto is attached an evil doom.'

' And let not any man wash his flesh in a woman's bath ; for thereby likewise cometh a dire doom in time.'

Whether Hesiod himself wrote these lines, or another later poet added them, matters little. The poem is so old that even its interpolations are venerable and hoary. Moreover, magic is a conservative and long-lived institution. Very like these precepts are the famous Pythagorean ' symbols,' in plain Polynesian, tabus, concerning which, although the authors who preserve them are for the most part quite late, we are assured that the symbols themselves are early, and their content corroborates this assertion. I quote a few from the complete collection of Dr. Boehm.¹

' Always keep your bedding rolled together.' ' On rising, roll up your bedding and smooth away the mark of your body on it.'

' They that are holy should not touch fish.'

' Do not stir the fire with a knife.'

The complete History of Ancient Magic is yet to write ; but the few precepts I have mentioned are easily enough explained ; Boehm comments very well

on some, and the rest are fairly clear to the folklorist. Nail-parings are common magical material ; get those of an enemy, and you may by the use of proper charms work all kinds of evil on him. Hence it was that at Rome the parings of the Flamen Dialis' extremely holy nails had to be put away carefully, not only out of sight, but under a lucky, that is a fruitful, tree. But why should the nails not be cut on a festival ? Partly, perhaps, because iron would be used ; the iron knife, for toilet or table use, is as old as Homer, in Greece ; Achilles in the *Iliad* has one, and his friends are afraid he will cut his own throat with it in his despair and grief after the death of Patroklos. Now the gods are mostly of the Bronze or even the Stone Age, and have no great love for the new-fangled metal. But the use of a bronze knife (such as the flamen employed) would avoid this. The real reason probably lies deeper. A festival is a time when much magic or *mana* is about ; now *mana* is as dangerous as dynamite, and only experts know how to control its explosions. Hence it is foolish deliberately to leave parts of one's person, viz., nail-parings, lying about in its way ; better wait till there is not so much of it. Of a like order of ideas are the Pythagorean precepts about bedding. The mark of one's foot in the sand is enough to work magic with ; often lameness can be caused by sticking a spike through it. How much more, then, can harm be done to any one who has been so careless as to leave the impress of his whole body lying about !

The prohibition about the wine-scoop seems to belong to the great genus of sympathetic or imitative magic. A Greek did not drink wine neat, as a rule, for his vintages seem to have been very thick, strong and heady, but mixed it with water, much as we do spirits. Hence the great mixing-bowl and the vessel out of

which the wine was poured into the cups occupied about the same position in his feasts as the punch-bowl and ladle in those of Charles Dickens' time. Naturally, the former was full or part full during the drinking-bout, the latter empty when not actually in use. To lay it above the mixing-bowl was therefore to put empty above full. Now to be underneath anything is, in magic, to be in its power (hence the wide-spread barbarian objection to stepping over the legs of a person sitting on the ground, and especially, to a woman stepping over a man or anything which belongs to him); this is in all probability the source of our own dislike to walking under a ladder; why put oneself into the power of the casual stranger who is on it, painting a house or cleaning a window? To put full in the power of empty was a parlous proceeding, likely to bring thirst on the negligent banqueters who did so.

Nothing could more clearly illustrate the progress made by our knowledge of primitive thought in the last three-quarters of a century than the contrast between the view of the next precept, that against a man using a woman's bath, in the forties of the last century, and that which any tolerable scholar would take to-day. In his commentary on Hesiod (a very good one, still perhaps the best) that excellent scholar Karl Goettling wrote in 1843, 'We must not suppose that this precept refers to a bath-house which a woman has used'—so far he is probably right, for the elaborate buildings for what we call Turkish baths are of a later age than Hesiod's—'by "women's baths" are meant hot baths, which deprive the body of manly strength.' He then goes on to quote authorities, of the period of the best Attic literature, three or four centuries after Hesiod, to prove that some Greeks believed zealously in the cold tub. That Homer's heroes and that pattern of Greek manhood, the hero Herakles, had no

such feeling, does not disturb him. Of course the significance of the tabu is quite unconnected with any physiological ideas, right or wrong, about the bracing effects of cold water. To bathe where a woman has bathed is to expose oneself to the magic influence of womanhood, and hence to risk losing virility and strength. For exactly the same reason, the savage warrior or hunter will not let any woman touch his weapons, lest she render them unfit for use; and in the case of the bath in particular, we need not look far for a parallel. Any qualities of a bather may be transferred magically to the water he bathes in; there is no prettier tale in Christian mythology than that of the Virgin healing the leprous baby by washing him in the water that had touched the pure body of the Christ-child.

But why should they that are holy (magically pure) not touch (the word implies that they should not eat, rather than not handle) fish, or, in a group of associated Pythagorean tabus, certain kinds of fish? Here we are dealing with very old ideas. On the one hand, it has long been known that the original speakers of the Indo-Germanic, Indo-European, or Wiro tongue, whoever they may have been, seem not to have had a word for fish in general or for any particular kind of fish; from which, together with other indications, it has been very plausibly concluded that they lived away from the sea in a region having no lakes or rivers of any great size. Certainly, the Achæioi in Homer, who seem to have brought the Greek speech to Greece,—*i.e.*, the Wiro-speaking immigrants,—are represented as eating fish only in the extremity of hunger. On the other hand, Homer knows a good deal of the technique of fishing, which suggests that somebody, presumably the pre-Greek population, caught and ate fish; and his stock epithet for them is *hieroi*, 'holy' or 'tabu.'

Yet he never represents any magical ill as befalling those who eat them. There meet then, in these tabus, two streams; the belief of the native population that fish, or some of them, were magically uncanny, and the feeling of the invaders that they were nasty; an idea which would make them the readier to accept the superstitions of their subjects later on. Quite likely they thought fish, or some kinds of them, to be a sort of snake (there is probably an etymological connection between *encheleus*, an eel, and *echis*, a serpent); certainly they connected, not fish in general, but one or two species of fish, with the underworld gods.

So far, we have found evidence of a belief in the possibility of harmful magic wrought upon fragments of a man's body, or the mere mark of it on a soft surface, damaging the whole of his person; in sympathetic or imitative magic; in the possibility of transferring the characteristics of one sex to another, by indirect contact; in the magical effects of some kinds of food. All these ideas are old in date, as is proved for most of them by the age of the documents which preserve them, and old in character, as is shown by their occurrence amongst savage beliefs. Moreover, the notion that such things as emptiness or femininity could be transferred shows once more, what we have had occasion to mention in Chapter V, the primitive confusion between material and immaterial. Of this we have another rather striking instance. Old Phoinix, in the *Iliad*, declares that he would not leave Achilles 'though a god were himself to promise to scrape off my age and make me young and lusty.' This becomes clearer if we remember that the word for 'old age' (*gêras*) is not uncommonly used to signify the slough of a snake. It was therefore, to Greek ideas, something which could be stripped off, like a

worn-out garment, if not by natural means, at least by magic.

But what of the last precept I have quoted, that fire should not be stirred with a knife (or sword ; the word, *machava*, has both meanings) ? Whichever view we take of this tabu, we must, I think, assume a very old and simple idea. It may be the reluctance to put two magical things together which one so often finds in magic and cult, and which, from its common occurrence, seems to go back very far in the history of human thought. Or, and here we have evidence that we are dealing with a Greek idea, it may arise from a reluctance to hurt the fire-spirit, or the fire itself, considered as a living thing. 'Fire,' says Plutarch, 'is like a living thing ; for it moves of itself, and if put out utters a sound like the cry of a slain animal.' If to an enlightened, albeit somewhat pietistic mind, of the time of the Good Emperors, fire *resembled* an animal, it is likely enough that to older and simpler thinkers it *was* one. But this insensitiveness to the difference between animate and inanimate is the very basis of animism, certainly an early form of magico-religious thought if not, as has been supposed, actually the earliest.

Before ending this very brief glimpse into native Greek magic we have to mention another curious thing, namely, the survival, not only of tabus, but of tabu speech. It is well known that under certain circumstances savages will not use the ordinary names for sundry people and things ; as, the name of a dead chief, or the ordinary appellation of some beast or plant which they are looking for. The name in the one case would if used evoke the too powerful ghost, in the other, give warning to the intended prey. Also, the name of a weapon is frequently not used, apparently for fear that an important part of the weapon

should thus be left lying about unprotected and exposed to foreign or other hostile magic. I have already cited from Hesiod one instance of this sort of thing; he gives a precept about nail-paring without mentioning nails, hands, or fingers. Elsewhere he speaks, not of the snail, but of the 'housebearer,' and conceals the ant under the complimentary title of 'knowing one.' This sort of metaphor is rather alien to his style in general; indeed, one of the difficulties of the *Works and Days* for the modern student is that it abounds in the then familiar names of farming implements, plants and so forth. But granted that they are meant for metaphors only, having no more recondite significance than the ornament proper to verse; a metaphor often has a long ancestry, generally with a tinge of magic about it. So, in this context, we perhaps catch an echo of a very distant past in which tabu speech existed in Greece. As to the various objects of which Homer asserts that the gods called them by one name and men by another, I prefer to say nothing, for the whole matter is extremely obscure. Still, it may be suggested that here again some forgotten tabu speech may be at the bottom of it all.

One piece of very old magic the Greeks certainly retained, and that is the notion that a name, if not exactly part of the personality, has a great significance. This lies behind all such etymological speculations, often very quaint and to our ideas curiously wild and unscientific, as those in Plato's *Cratylus*. An astonishing number of personal names seems to have been deliberately given for the sake of the good omen they contain. Thus Nikias, 'victorious,' Periklês, 'exceeding famous,' Archelâos, 'ruler of the people,' Menedêmos, 'withstander of a host,' Kleinias, 'renowned,' Elpinikê, 'she who hopes for victory,'

confront us if we go but a little way into Greek history and fiction. And when a name had no discoverable meaning, as is the case with several characters of saga, attempts were often made, apparently in all seriousness, to discover one for it, appropriate to the life-history of the person in question. Thus Homer asserts that Odysseus' name was appropriate, because his grandfather was hated (*ὀδυσσάμενος*) by many; Aeschylus makes the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* wonder at the superhuman wisdom of him who named Helen, the *heleptolis* or destroyer of a city, and in the same play Cassandra bitterly puns on the name of Apollo, connecting it with *ἀπολλύναι*, to ruin. With regard to puns, the Greeks were on the border-line between our view and that which we may suppose man to have adopted very soon after he became conscious that such things existed. A glance at Aristophanes will show that the pun is continually used simply as a joke; but it was not a joke but a serious encouragement that Alexander the Great is said to have received in a dream. He had lain down in great discouragement at his failure to take Tyre, and in his dream he saw a satyr. The diviners bade him be of good cheer; for the word *σάτυρος* could be interpreted *σὰ Τύρος*, 'Tyre (is) thine.' The story is very possibly fiction; but that such fictions could be invented shows the attitude of mind of many Greeks, that a pun might be serious and 'mean something.'

Magic has left its traces clearly upon the ritual with which the Greeks approached their gods. Here again we must ask to what extent the ritual, in historical times, was consciously magical. In our own ritual, as already mentioned, there are clear traces of magic; but to the average worshipper these magic actions are simple matters of etiquette, while even to the officiant at such a ceremony as High Mass, they are symbolic

actions, setting forth some point of doctrine, and not the gestures of a conjuror, full of efficacy in themselves. So to the Greeks of historical times, to judge by what they occasionally say about them, their ritual acts had become either symbols of some truth which it was fancied the originator of the rite had desired to set forth, or merely parts of the etiquette for approaching the gods, traditional ways of drawing near them which experience was supposed to have shown that they preferred. They laid, however, more stress than we do on the exact performance of the proper rites as necessary to the winning of divine blessings or the avoidance of supernatural harms, and there are many tales of how a skilful priest or diviner preserved individuals or states from some disaster such as a plague, by showing them a new and more efficacious ceremony. The magical view, then, of a performance efficacious simply *ex opere operato*, was nearer the surface than in our days.

If now we look at the details of a few ceremonies, we shall find abundance of magic in them. At Methana in the territory of Trozén the inhabitants were much troubled by a violent wind from the Saronic Gulf which interfered with the growth of their vines, and Pausanias noted with curiosity their way of getting rid of this pest. It consisted simply in cutting a white cock in two, and giving half to each of two men who ran around the vines in opposite directions until they met at the starting-point, whereupon they buried the cock. The idea seems to be that the whiteness of the bird absorbed the blackness of the storm-wind (winds are often spoken of as black, from the dark clouds that accompany them), and having done so was buried along with all the harm which the wind might have done. He adds, after commenting on this and other local weather-beliefs, that he had seen hail averted

before, by sacrifices and charms. Elsewhere again we hear of a tempest being propitiated by sacrificing a black lamb to it, a dark victim to the dark deity, on the usual Greek rule of white victims for sky-gods, black to infernal powers. So to Greek ideas weather could be counteracted by magic, or bribed to go away, or handled by a combination of both methods. It is noteworthy that the ritual for averting the wind cannot be earlier than the seventh century B.C., the date of the introduction of fowls into Greece. Such rites are not of any one age, but continue to spring up as long as belief in magic survives. Our own day has seen the birth of at least one new form of divination, namely, counting the white dots on the black letters of the title of a popular newspaper in order to find out which horse will win a race.

But in the regular ritual of normal sacrifices in Greece, ritual which would be used in addressing practically any god, we find many details which connect with magical practices. A Greek sacrificer ceremonially washed his hands, and often put on fresh clean clothing; he sprinkled grains, usually of barley, and offered incense, either foreign gums such as frankincense or cassia, or more rarely native plants such as cedar which give out a distinct smell when burned. He killed a victim (the kind, colour, and sex varied more or less according to the deity addressed), cut it up and put certain portions in the fire which burned on an altar. He touched the altar and uttered a prayer, usually aloud.

Now water and fire are very commonly used for magical purposes in the Frazerian sense; that is, they can be employed when no god is addressed, with a view to producing other than their normal physical effects. It is a very common performance of savages, for example, to wash themselves and their clothing after

coming into contact with death, whether by attending a funeral or by killing an enemy in battle. That witches cannot cross running water we all know, if only from *Tam O'Shanter*; and running water, or water from a spring supposed to be particularly pure, was what a Greek officiant used for preference. The sacrificer washed off any unholiness that might cling to him before coming into contact with holy things, the altar and the dedicated victim. Nor was this ceremonial washing the only way in which he showed, at least in some cases, his recognition of the very ancient feeling that a clear boundary exists between sacred and profane, and that the two must not be allowed to mingle. It is reported as a saying of the Pythagoreans that one should enter a holy place on the right and leave it on the left. The right is to a Greek, as to most races, the lucky side, partly no doubt because, as they generally faced north to reckon the points of the compass, the right was to the east, the quarter whence dawn comes. The worshipper therefore would enter with the light. With the light also he would go out, at the same time emphasizing his departure from a holy place by making for the unholy quarter.

Fire is a purifying agent in magic, and also valuable for its power to sublimate. Quite early in the history of human thought comes an attempt to conceive, not exactly of the abstract or the unembodied, but of something more tenuous than the bodies we know; of spirits or gods who weigh very little and are more or less cloud-like in their structure. This survives in the conventional ghost, who is visible, but intangible as the air or a mist is intangible; and we have seen that Greek ghosts, or some of them, were like breath or shadows. With this goes the notion, perhaps more logically worked out in Chinese religion than elsewhere, that the food and other necessities of these beings is of

a ghostly, tenuous nature, like smoke in fact. Hence the odorous smoke either of incense or of burning flesh is a natural offering, particularly to a sky-god, because the smoke can be seen mounting upwards till it loses itself in the air, but not only for him.

Just this half-material idea of the nature of the gods we find in Homer. Like Yahweh in the Old Testament, they smell the sweet savour of the offerings and are pleased by it. The connection, however, is worn very thin if not lost entirely, for though they are commonly said to accept the food-offerings, they are nowhere, so far as I can recollect, definitely and seriously represented as depending on the smoke or steam for their food. Yet their food is of a special kind, different from and apparently less grossly material than that of mortals. 'They eat no corn' says Homer, 'neither drink they ruddy wine; therefore they have no blood, and are called the Deathless Ones.'

Passing over the incense and the barley-corns, though both are used commonly enough in magical incantations, we come to one or two less regular forms of sacrifice. A quite common offering to the gods, especially on attaining puberty or on marrying, is hair from the worshipper's own head. Hair is also, in Greece and out of it, one of the commonest of offerings to the dead. Why has so worthless a thing been so widely used, seeing that most offerings are of more or less real value? The reason is, I think, to be sought in pure magic of a primitive and wide-spread kind. The cutting of the hair is an essential part of various threshold-rites or ceremonies of transition from one stage to another (virgin to married woman, child to man, etc.). That part of the personality which belongs to the discarded state is put away; but where is it to

be put? For choice, surely, in the place where the magical influences are best; and the holy spot like the temple of a god is an ideal repository. In the same way the tools of an artizan retiring from his trade, the clothes appropriate to a position no longer occupied, and the like, are very frequently dedicated; for examples we need only consult the sixth book of the Greek Anthology, which contains the dedicatory epigrams. In such practices we have no real sacrifice, in the sense of making a valuable gift to a god, or even of pretending to do so; but we have an act of communion with him, and if we like to call it that, a compliment to him, in the shape of an assurance that his influence is strong and will be used only for the benefit of his suppliants.

Finally, one curious and ancient piece of ritual has to be mentioned. The Greeks often sought to get rid of the accumulated ill-luck or wickedness of a city by using a scape-goat. Thus yearly, at Athens,⁴ an ugly man and woman were chosen, treated in various ceremonial ways to increase their magical potency, and driven out of the city, where, it would seem, a pretence was made of burning them alive (that it was no more than a pretence, at least in historical times, seems clear from the facts that none of the numerous enemies of Athens accuses the Athenians of human sacrifice, and that the ceremony took place at the Thargelia, a festival of Apollo, during which no one might be put to death). At Massilia (Marseilles), where many old customs survived, a criminal was maintained at the public expense for a year and then actually killed. How wide-spread and early this custom is will be evident to anyone who looks through that volume of the *Golden Bough* which deals with it.

Greek official divination has little in it that is

characteristically primitive, save for one feature which recalls the backward tribes of Siberia with their shamans, and the practices of many African peoples whose priests or medicine-men are possessed by powerful ghosts or other spirits and, when in that state, prophesy. The oracles of Apollo regularly were given through the mouths of persons possessed by the god, it being the official method of Delphi, for instance, to appoint a priestess (the Pythia) as the medium, to use modern terminology, of the divine power. We have already seen, in discussing popular ideas concerning disease, that it was supposed that illness could be caused by possession. Here, then, we have another and a still more widely recognized form of a similar belief.

But there is one form of divination common to all lands and all ages, which flourishes whether officially recognized or officially frowned upon, namely the dream. To say that the Greeks tried to foretell the future from their dreams is simply to say that they were human. It is not dream-divination in itself, or even the use of magic to excite veridical dreams, that is in any way primitive; it is rather the way in which the dream is interpreted that marks the state of culture reached. Speaking very broadly, and with numerous reservations in detail, it may be said that a dream, if supposed to have any value in divination, may be interpreted in three ways, of which the first is the most savage, and presumably the method employed by primitive man, if he had any thoughts on the subject at all, the second and third represent further stages of progress. These three ways are, first, to take the dream-vision as objective fact, exactly as one takes the perceptions of waking life. The second is to suppose it true, but not quite an ordinary experience, being something seen by the soul, or one

of the souls, while temporarily out of the body, a happening whose scene is in the spirit-world, or the like. The third is, to interpret it by a more or less complicated symbolism. Comparatively few people, in ancient or modern times, get clear of this last stage and arrive at the idea that dreams have no divinatory value at all, however much light they may throw on the mentality of the dreamer.

Some very amusing examples of the first method are given by that excellent missionary-explorer the Rev. Barbroke Grubb, in his curious work on the Indians of the Paraguayan Chaco.⁵ One of the natives dreamed that a beetle had flown into his knee. On awaking, he felt a pain there, and had no doubt as to the cause ; it was the beetle, which clearly was perfectly real. Another, on the evidence of a dream, accused Mr. Grubb of stealing from his garden. Being confronted with the fact that the missionary had not been near the place for some time, he quite acknowledged this, but maintained that his dream must be true, at least so far that the theft was intended and would be carried out sooner or later. He was on the border-line of the second type of interpretation.

The odes of Pindar are surely the last place in the world where one would look for a parallel to these quaint tales ; yet the following passage of the Thirteenth Olympian Ode, under its gorgeous richness of language, furnishes one, which I give in Sandys' prose version. The poet is speaking of Bellerophon, ' who verily suffered sorely when he was eager to bind beside the spring Pegasus, the son of the snake-girt Gorgon, until at last the virgin Pallas brought a bridle with a golden band, and the dream became a vision of broad daylight, and she said : — " Sleepest thou, son of Aeolus ? Come ! take this to charm thy steed, and sacrificing a white bull, bring it into the presence of thy grandsire

the tamer of horses " (*i.e.*, Poseidon). Such were the words which the queen of the dark aegis seemed to say to him as he slumbered in the darkness ; and at once he leapt to his feet, and seizing the wondrous thing that lay beside him, he gladly went,' etc. His dream then is real enough to leave a solid and material bridle in his hand, wherewith he proceeds to achieve the capture of the famous winged horse. Nor, as an examination of the commentators on this passage will show, is it a tale wholly without parallels elsewhere in Greek. The symbolic dream we of course find everywhere, in this as in other literatures ; but it is noteworthy how often a sleeper is warned of what is to happen in quite plain language by a special messenger, god or emissary of a god. In particular, the patients in the temples of Asklepios seem to have had as a rule no doubt that the god in person veritably spoke to them in their sleep, telling them what remedies to adopt, or in some cases himself treated them ; surviving records, consisting partly of actual inscriptions set up by way of testimonials from grateful patients, give most quaint examples ; perhaps the oddest is that of a woman whose head the god cut off in a dream, in order to remove ' a worm ' from her body, and who was seen in her headless condition, before the operation was complete and she safely joined into one piece again, by one of the priests. The results of this drastic, if divine, surgery were most gratifying, for she recovered completely. The miracle was duly recorded on stone, for the confounding of the incredulous, and may be read in Collitz-Bechtel's *Dialektinschriften*, No. 3340, l. 10 foll.

If now we turn to Greek mythology,* the first thing to remember is that the mere possession of stories, however fantastic, about supernatural beings and the like, is no sign of primitiveness of thought. Such tales

no doubt originate early in the development of mankind, and reflect often very primitive ideas; but once invented, they pass from nation to nation and from culture to culture, simply as entertaining stories, often believed by none except children and those adults who are below the average level of intelligence and education. The real test is the attitude of the people in general towards mythological stories. And here we find the Greek attitude fairly uniform; they held that the ancient sagas, such as the story of the House of Atreus, contained a good deal of historical truth, with fanciful embroideries, but regarding fairy-stories (*Märchen*) pure and simple, and also myths in the proper sense,—pre-scientific explanations of natural phenomena,—they regularly denied their truth altogether, or sought to rationalize them, or to explain them as allegories. This, however, is the view of the more educated classes; the frequency with which such stories are mentioned in authors like Pausanias, and the regularity with which they are used as plots by poets and dramatists, indicate that one would not have to go so far down in classical Greek as in modern European society to find people who were quite ready to believe any traditional tale, such as the legend of the local temple, without troubling themselves about its possibility. Even in the handling of the myths by philosophers, with the exception of those who, like the Epicureans, flatly denied the possibility of anything which was contrary to such natural laws as they knew or postulated, we find a greater readiness to admit such things as the appearance of a supernatural being or the direct interposition of a god than characterizes any modern thinkers since the eighteenth century. The critics mostly vary from the gross, if learned, credulity of such men as Porphyry to the temperate scepticism of Pindar, who stoutly denies this or that particular

story because it attributes unworthy conduct to a god, but has apparently no difficulty in crediting, or at least thinking possible, tales of wonder in general. Herodotus, who is a very typical Greek, has more than once a phrase thoroughly characteristic of the general attitude, 'They tell a story which I cannot believe, but here it is.'

The relation of these tales to religious belief and practice has been somewhat misunderstood. Mythology never formed a pagan creed; no man was ever persecuted, or likely to be persecuted, because he did not hold that Athena sprung fully armed from the head of Zeus, or denied that Dêmêtêr, in bodily form, dwelt for a while in the house of Kêleus, king of Eleusis. But there were limits beyond which it was not safe to go, at least publicly, in criticism. To deny the miraculous birth of Athena on the ground that no such person as Athena ever existed would certainly lead to a prosecution for impiety, as it would involve, if the sceptic were logical, refusal to take part in the state cult of the goddess. Many philosophers, and in later times all Christians, were accused of atheism. This, in its ordinary use, did not signify that the persons in question worshipped no god at all, for not the most ignorant persecutor can have imagined that of the Christians, at any rate, but that they denied the existence of the gods of popular and official cult. In this sense the charge was true, for the attitude of some philosophers towards the myths was, that they were sheer invention or else misunderstanding of ambiguous or metaphorical language; to which the Christians added that some at least might be tales of real events, but of events brought about by the wiles of demons.

If there were things in mythology which it was not safe to deny, there were also things which it was

impious to assert. Certain myths seem to have attached themselves closely to particular mysteries, and we frequently find pious writers, like Herodotos, stopping short in the relation of some tale of the gods and adding that they know the rest but had rather not tell it, or that anyone who has been initiated in such-and-such mysteries will see the allusion.

On the whole, however, the myths had no close connection with cult and everyone was free to believe, modify, or reject as he chose. Let us now look at their content, to see if they show any traces of really primitive thought in their originators.

We may omit the various sagas, which for the most part prove only what we knew already, namely that the Greeks, like most people, long retained a traditional memory of notable men and events, and for some centuries made little use of writing (though its very early occurrence in the Aegean makes it incredible that it should have been wholly unknown). That these events should have become embroidered with interventions of friendly or hostile gods, incredible feats of single-handed valour, and the like, to say nothing of wizardries, is merely what one might expect. Granted, what we ourselves have only just ceased to believe, that wizards exist and supernatural beings now and then appear in human affairs, such incidents are a natural result of telling a good story, like that of Herakles, many times over. It is the myths proper and the *märchen* which must give us our material for judging of the mental capacities of those early Greeks among whom they originated.

It must be said at once that our existing documents do not take us anywhere near the beginnings of Greek mythology. Hesiod's *Generation of the Gods* (*Theogonia*) is our oldest work on the subject; yet when it was written, the latest invaders, the Dorians, were

already in Greece, or nearing it. Nor has Hesiod, though often very quaint and simple, anything really primitive in his handling of the stories; rather does he systematize, allegorize, and probably select and prune largely. Several tales preserved in much later authors have a more savage smack than has his work; they lived on, doubtless, among people who remained simpler and more backward than the relatively enlightened poet, who appears to have been something of a systematic theologian in his religion and more than a little of a radical in his politics. But Hesiod recounts stories whose truth he does not unreservedly vouch for (the Muses, in the curious prologue to the poem, inform him that they have skill 'to tell many lesings full like to sooth, and also, when it likes us, to utter verity'), but which were obviously current in his day. And now, after starting with an account of the origin of the universe in a way very reminiscent of some of the earlier philosophical doctrines, he proceeds to tell a tale which might have been freely translated from Maori, had any such people as the Maoris then existed. Of the divine pair, Heaven and Earth, were born the Titans, the nature-powers, whom their father thrust away inside their mother's cavernous body, until she could no longer endure the strain. She therefore plotted with her children to mutilate her formidable husband; this being done, he visited her no more, and thus made room for the gigantic brood she had borne. The resemblance to the Polynesian story of how Rangi (Earth) and Papa (Heaven) were separated by their children, led by Maui, as the Titans were by Kronos, is striking. What connection, if any, there is, cannot with our present knowledge be made clear; if the two stories are not of independent origin, we may perhaps suppose that the myth originated in very ancient times somewhere in Asia and

spread in both directions. In any case, it needs no elaborate argument to show that here we have, on Greek soil and with Greek names for most of the characters, a tale as 'primitive' in character as could be desired.

Not only in their account of the origin of the universe, however, but in more than one mythical explanation of a particular phenomenon, the Greeks show a savage imagination. The picturesque tale of Phaëthon was a favourite with poets in ancient, and indeed in modern times. The son of Hélios, the Sun-god, by a mortal woman, he set out to find his father, and at last succeeding in reaching his dwelling in the extreme east, obtained the boon of driving his father's chariot for one day. But his strength and skill were unequal to managing the immortal horses of the Sun, and they ran away with him, nearly setting heaven and earth on fire, until Zeus intervened and struck down Phaëthon with a thunderbolt, Hélios taking his place and mastering the team again. The track of Phaëthon's course is still to be seen; it is the Milky Way. If now we turn to British Columbia, we find that the Sun had a grandchild, the son of his daughter the Crow. This youth, like his Greek parallel, undertook to drive the Sun's chariot, but mismanaged the affair sadly and grazed the earth, setting fire to Mt. Baker (a local volcano), which to this day smokes occasionally.' The Greek tale is of course the more picturesque and the less grotesque; no race ever told stories better than the people of Hellas; but the primitive, savage idea is the same in both.

Another characteristic Greek fables share with those of savage peoples. As many generations of hostile critics, from Ionian philosophers down to Christian apologists, pointed out, they are for the most part non-moral, or, as the critics said, immoral. In one

tale after another, the central character, often a god, behaves without any ethical scruples, lying and stealing gaily to gain his own ends. Thus, Hermes, in the Homeric hymn made familiar to English readers by Shelley's translation, begins his career by stealing Apollo's cattle, conceals the theft by the ruse of tying brushwood to their feet to confuse their tracks, and when at last discovered by Apollo lies most brazenly. His human grandson, Sisyphos, tries his hand at outwitting Death himself. Giving orders that his body shall be flung out unburied, he begs permission from the gods of the lower world to return to earth until he has inflicted exemplary punishment for such impiety. He is allowed to return, and of course is careful to inflict no punishment at all. In the end he does die, and is punished in Hades, but not for his many sins, but because he gave information to the river Asôpos of Zeus' intrigue with his, Asôpos', daughter. Erysichthon is punished with insatiable hunger by Dêmêtêr, for disobeying and insulting her. His daughter Metaneira comes to his rescue and provides him with supplies by transforming herself into the shape of various beasts, a mare, a cow, and so forth, in which forms she is repeatedly sold and every time resumes her own form and escapes home.

Anyone familiar with modern European tales, those of Grimm's collection for instance, will recognize old friends. Hermes is the Master Thief in one of his many guises; Metaneira reappears as the wizard's apprentice, who outdoes his master in witchcraft, and in some forms of the story is bought by him and prevented from assuming his own shape, but finally gets the better of him in a magic combat. The clever man who makes an ambiguous compact with Death or the Devil and outwits the other party to the bargain

is familiar. Whether or not the Greeks and the modern peasants are drawing upon a common source, Eastern or otherwise, is too complicated a question to be discussed here ; it is enough for our purpose that both have the same themes, and that the clever but immoral hero of the story is often, in the Greek tales, a god or the immediate descendant of a god. So in the European stories, the most sacred figures of Christian doctrine appear playing none too dignified parts ; in some cases obviously ousting heathen deities, and inheriting their moral imperfections. The feature which is perhaps hardest to understand, for the modern mind, is that such frivolous handling is in no way inconsistent with profound reverence. The originators of the legend preserved in the English carol, *The Bitter Withy*, in which the child Christ appears as an inordinately naughty boy, deservedly punished, were probably fervent and implicit believers in Christianity ; and it is much to be doubted whether those who laughed most heartily at Hermes' adventures in his famous cattle-raid were any less sincere in their adorations at his shrine, or had any lack of belief in the general justice of him or of any other god. One reason of the introduction into these curious *märchen* (which probably had originally nameless characters) of such exalted persons is apparently a tendency of the primitive mind which some investigators are prone to overlook. It is true that the savage fears and reverences the gods or spirits whom he worships ; yet at the same time he is capable of loving and trusting them, and therefore treating them, on occasion, as familiar friends who will not mind a harmless jest or two at their expense. At the same time, the low moral standard attributed to them in such tales is evidence of an undeveloped moral consciousness in the original tellers, to whom it had apparently not occurred as

a possibility that there might be acts which were wrong irrespective of consequences,—the characteristic assumption of all advanced ethical codes.

Greek mythology, then, like Greek magic, shows us that behind the high civilization there are to be found clear traces of a savagery which once existed and some remnants of which lingered among the less advanced Greeks down to quite late times. The remarkable thing about them, however, is that they were capable of criticizing these tales and disproving or outgrowing this magic, in a way unexampled in any other race until modern times.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VII

¹ See *GB*¹, I, 220 foll.

² English translations of Hesiod are to be had in the Bohn series and the Loeb Library. The standard Greek text is that of Rzsch, in the Teubner series of classical texts. A good commentary on the many points of anthropological and mythological interest in this curious author is still a desideratum. In the meanwhile, see E. E. Sikes in *Classical Review*, VII, pp. 389 *sqq.*, 452; and A. Lang, *ibid.*, p. 453. For his date, and the composite authorship of the poems attributed to him, see any large history of Greek literature, and also T. W. Allen, *Homer: the Origins and the Transmission* (Oxford, 1924), Chapter IV.

³ *De symbolis Pythagoreis. Dissertatio inauguralis. Scripsit Fridericus Boehm.* Berlin 1905. Unfortunately this work is quite inaccessible to the non-classical reader. It would be a good deed to translate it, enlarging the already sound and learned commentary.

⁴ See Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 95 *sqq.*

⁵ *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land* (London, 1911), pp. 132, 130.

⁶ There is no really good short handbook of Greek mythology. The great work of Preller, *Griechische Mythologie* (new edition, revised by Robert and much enlarged) and the huge *Ausführliches Lexikon* of Roscher and his collaborators are hardly books for the non-specialist. Much, however, may

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be learned from Frazer's *Pausanias*, and from his edition (with translation) of Apollodoros, in the Loeb Library, especially if studied along with the works of the late Andrew Lang and such books as MacCulloch's *Childhood of Fiction*.

¹ See Frazer, *Pausanias*, II, p. 60.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STATE, THE CLAN AND THE FAMILY

ACCORDING to Aristotle, on the general lines of whose theory modern research has made but little improvement, human society begins with that combination of ruler and ruled exemplified by man and wife, in other words, with the family; it then spreads to the village, that is to say the original family and its offshoots, and so to larger and larger units, culminating in the city-state. Its basis is the desire for safety, its growth a natural process, and its continuance assured by the realization that communal life, while perhaps no longer the necessary condition of existence, is the one source of what he calls 'good life,' or the proper development and culture of the human powers. The chief modifications which we nowadays tend to make in this sketch of man's organization apply to the two ends of the scale. We know of larger organized units than those which Aristotle still regarded as the climax of the process of social evolution; and we are not so sure that the patrilineal family, as he knew it and we know it to-day,—the association of husband, wife, and children, with or without servants, whereof the head is the husband,—was the beginning of things for human society, and not a comparatively advanced stage. Indeed Aristotle himself is of opinion that such an organization is possible only for Greeks, who are capable of

ruling and therefore of civilization ; for when a barbarian marries, he being by nature a slave, the marriage is an association of slave with slave ; there is no ruler, and so little prospect of development into the fully civilized community.

We are not now concerned with the proof given by history subsequent to Aristotle's time that man can live in civilized communities far larger than the largest which he deemed possible ; our business is with the earlier history of Greece, and our immediate task to enquire whether, in any stage of their development that we can now trace, the Greeks showed clear survivals of the savage communities out of which their own high civilization must have grown. That the state is very far from being the beginning of things is patent ; that it consists, as we know it, of a number of individuals, grouped for the most part in families, is equally obvious ; that the family once counted for even more than it does now, and the individual as such for very little, is a lesson which a quite short and elementary study of history and sociology will teach us. The chief question is, What is the history of the family ?

So far as primitive man is concerned, it must be admitted that we know very little. On the one hand, it has been emphatically pointed out by Westermarck that the history of the family (meaning thereby the group of father, mother, and offspring, remaining together for purposes of mutual assistance) is older than man, for the family exists among the gorillas ; on the other, we must remember that the latest researches into our own pedigree make us doubt seriously whether we are immediately descended from anything so high as an ape, and suggest rather that the genus *homo*, of which our own species, *homo sapiens*, is the present representative, branched off

from the main stock of mammalian life a good deal lower down, so that we cannot infer from the habits of apes what were those of our ancient kinsfolk. Further, an examination of the systems in vogue among present-day savages reveals to us the existence of the group-system of relationship, sketched in the first chapter. Bearing in mind the gregarious instincts of our species we may conjecture with some plausibility that the hordes of man's forbears, like the wolf-pack, were held together by some other tie than that of blood-kin, which could not then be known to exist between father and child, a physiological datum of which some few savages are still credibly reported to be ignorant. From this pack, we may suppose, developed the clan, a group of relations indeed, but bound together by other ties than relationship as we understand it, viewing each other not as brothers, sisters, cousins and so forth in our sense, but as members of one or another of the age-classes into which the clan naturally divides, and calling each other by names expressive of membership in one of those classes; a group, moreover, which did not marry within its own bounds.

To begin at the beginning, does Greek folklore show any trace of a time when the Greeks were as ignorant as the Aruntas of the part of the male in procreation? for if ever they were ignorant that physical fatherhood existed, they may have once had an organization in which it played no part, in which, that is, a father was either unrelated to his child, or related to him only as belonging to the same clan but an older grade of that clan, or as owning him and his mother. The answer is, I think, that legend and language alike show a few faint traces of such a time, but so few and so faint that we must date them very far back indeed.

Dr. Sidney Hartland has pointed out in his work on

Primitive Paternity that the fact of every child necessarily having a father took a long time to be recognized. For a great while after it was known that such a thing as fatherhood existed, people continued to believe, more or less definitely, that it was not invariably so ; that conception could take place by other than the means which we know to be the only ones possible ; that a virgin mother, though perhaps a rare phenomenon and savouring of magic, was not utterly unknown, incredible, or miraculous. Hence the very many rites of all sorts by which barren women in many lands seek to secure children, and the many tales in which a woman produces a child without the aid of any man.

If now we turn to Greek mythology we find one or two stories of this kind. Hera, says Hesiod, conceived Hēphaistos without father, for she was jealous and at strife with her spouse.¹ Here indeed we have the act of a goddess, stirred to emulation by the miraculous birth of Athēna from the head of her father Zeus, without mother ; but if we descend from Olympos we find similar tales told here and there of mortal women. Danaë was visited by Zeus, but not in human form ; he appeared to her as a shower of gold, and she bore the wonder-child Perseus. Danaë was a legendary princess ; but something nearly as wonderful was expected by the democratic women of historical Athens, and for that matter, the women of Athens to-day. There is a spring near the source of the river Ilissos which was called in antiquity, for some reason unknown to us, the Cripple's Wallet ; the virtue of its waters was, that it could make the barren pregnant. Nor was the theory that conception is caused by the entry of a spirit into the womb quite unknown in Greece, or at least in the Greek world. 'Come unto me, Lord Hermes, as the babes enter the wombs of women,

says a late charm; but the papyrus on which this was written having been found in Egypt, there is some doubt as to whether we are here dealing with a genuine Greek idea.

We find then just a trace of this primitive ignorance of physiological fact subsisting, not in the living beliefs of classical Greece, but in the survivals of far more ancient ideas in their myths and perhaps in their magic. But quite apart from this, we may find (for it exists among people who know the elementary facts concerning fatherhood perfectly well) some trace of a classificatory system; and this is perhaps furnished by the language.

Given a classificatory system, there will be a word, roughly corresponding to 'brother,' but signifying not 'male child of the same parents as oneself,' but 'clansman of the same age-class.' It is also likely that there will be separate words for 'elder (clan)-brother' and 'younger (clan)-brother.' At any rate, such words are actually found among savages having the classificatory system, or survivals of it. Now Greek possesses an exact etymological equivalent of Latin *frater*, English *brother*, in the word *phratēr*; it is therefore noteworthy that it never means anything but 'fellow-clansman,' and that the cognate words *phratria*, *phrêtrê*, *phrâtrâ*, all signify 'clan.' For 'brother' in our sense of the word, Greek employs *adelphos* (literally 'womb-fellow'), *kusis*, and *hasignêtos*, the last of which seems once or twice to signify also a first cousin. There is, moreover, a Homeric word *êtheios*, which we find always in the mouth of a younger blood-brother addressing an elder, save once, where a trusted slave uses it as a term of respectful affection towards his master. It looks as if we had here a few remnants of what was once a classificatory system of relationship-terms. If we proceed to ask what the

phratría was, we find first of all, that it was a corporation which could hold property and pass bye-laws; next, that every legitimate Athenian citizen belonged to one, and that the method of entry was as follows. Once in every year a festival, the Apaturia, was held, lasting three days. On the evening of the first day the clansmen held a communal feast; on the second, they sacrificed to Zeus Phratrios and to Athena; on the third, those children of the clansmen who were accepted as legitimate were enrolled. If we look outside Athens, we still find clans all over Greece, though, as the other states wrote far less about themselves, we know much less than we would like to about their internal arrangements. Thus at Lokris we have inscriptional evidence that there existed in Hellenistic times a clan named after the lesser Aias, which at that comparatively late date was still burdened with responsibility for the sin committed by their ancestor at the sack of Troy. This naming after a supposed heroic ancestor is apparently the rule; thus in Attica there was a *phratría* called the Dêmotionidai, i.e. descendants of a prehistoric worthy named Dêmotion.

But obviously the clan is a very worn-down institution in Greece. Unlike the Romans, the Greeks did not as a rule bear a clan-name; thus, whereas a Roman was always called (for instance) Appius Claudius Appi filius, i.e., Appius, son of Appius, of the clan of Claudus, and had not necessarily a third name denoting his family, as Pulcher (Fairman), the ordinary Greek name was of the form 'Miltiades, son of Kimon', commonly followed by an indication of the district in which he and his parents lived. Even in Homer the clan is an old-fashioned thing; it is Nestor, who is full of reminiscences of old days, who advises Agamemnon to marshal his men by clans and tribes, and there

is no evidence that Agamemnon does so. The clan survived, it would seem, mostly as a religious organization without political significance, and was retained here and there by the state as a convenient body to which might be delegated what amounts practically to the registration of births, a matter for which local knowledge is clearly essential, or at least useful.

The tribe, however, had a longer life as an active and real factor in society. Wherever we turn, we find the members of every Greek state whose organization we know divided into tribes (*phylai*), usually having a name of patronymic form, *i.e.*, signifying descent from a tribal hero (as Aiantis, Hippothoôntis, from Aias and Hippothoôn); and if we confine our attention to the oldest organizations, we find that the Ionians were anciently divided into four tribes, the Dorians into three. Here, however, we have no longer tribes with patronymic titles; indeed it is a question not yet satisfactorily answered what some of the Ionian and Dorian tribe-names do mean. Of many later tribes, such as the ten into which democratic Athens was divided after the reforms of Kleisthenês in 508 B.C., we often know and can still oftener guess that they were artificial institutions; and it is a reasonable suggestion that their patronymic titles result from an analogy with the phratries which to some extent they superseded. But the interesting point is, that a tribe was felt to be a more or less independent organization, — a relic of the days before the city-state existed, as Greek writers on their own constitutional history realized. Thus it was that, while a particular set of tribes might be done away with and new ones created (for the state was supreme over its constituent parts) it was always recognized that there must be tribes of some kind; and at Athens, after all her republican revolutions and counter revolutions, there still existed

officials called *phylobasilēs*, i.e., tribal kings, in the days of Aristotle and later.

Besides the tribe, and the clans or phratries (it is convenient to use the latter name) into which, in some cases at least, the tribes were divided, there existed another institution, which may also be called a clan, or sept, namely the *genos* (plural *genē*). This word, etymologically connected with Latin *gens*, signifies a number of persons claiming kinship in the form of descent, generally, from a not impossibly distant common ancestor (Hekataios of Milētos had a pedigree of sixteen generations, ending in a god; the hereditary heralds of Sparta, the Talthybiadai, claimed as the founder of their clan Talthybios, Agamemnon's herald; the Iamidai of Elis traced descent from the seer Iamos, of mythical times; and these were longer genealogies than most people could show). It was an organization not prominent enough, usually, to influence nomenclature; as already mentioned, a Greek did not usually add a clan-name to his personal name, as the Romans did; but it was real enough to have a common cult, and the importance of this was such that it formed the basis of one of the two valid excuses for an Athenian youth absenting himself from garrison-duty. Finally, within the *genos*, there existed a narrower organization, the *oikos* or household.

Ancient authors do not tell us very much about the *genos*, but inscriptions are less reticent. We know from only one passage in literature that there was a *genos* called the Amynandridai at Athens, and that certain priests were chosen from it. Here is a record of its membership, set up in quite late times at Athens, as the style of the lettering shows, to say nothing of other indications of date given by one or two of the names:—

' May good luck befall. In the archonship of Areios

the son of Dōrion, of the deme (roughly = parish) of Paiania, the said Areios, son of Dōrion, being chief of the *genos* of the Amynandridai, set up the following list of the members of his *genos*, paying the charges out of his private means.

Chief of the *genos* : Areios, son of Dōrion, of Paiania.

Priest of Kekrops : Ariston son of Sōstratos, of Athmonia.

Treasurer of the *genos* : Heliodōros, son of Heliodōros, of Batē.'

Then follows a list of private members. The noteworthy thing is, firstly, that this ancient institution was alive enough to have officials and common funds of its own, secondly, that it was in no way local, for its members belong to all manner of different tribes and demes. It was older than any of them, and their organization cut across it. To judge by what is left of the inscription, there were about a hundred members in all.

We have thus possible remnants of an organization older than what we call the family, namely the phratry ; also another organization based on the family as we know it, and comprising an inner and an outer circle, the *oikos* (which consisted apparently of all relations as far as second cousins), and the *genos*, which extended as far as relationship could be traced or imagined. It remains to be seen what survivals, not exactly of primitive, but of early conditions are to be found here. In this connection we shall have occasion to talk, now of the *genos*, now of the *oikos*, for the words are not infrequently confused, as might be expected when the whole clan-institution was falling into disuse. A similar phenomenon is to be noted among ourselves in the meaning we attach to the word ' family.' Strictly, the Brown family are all who can trace descent from an ancestral Brown ; yet in practice, as the descendants

of that ancestor have often been scattered, the phrase means, nine times out of ten, a particular Brown who has married and settled in a particular locality, and his household. In Greece the process of devolution had not gone quite so far, but they were on the way to the stage of individualism which we have reached, as appears from the fact that *oikos* often means simply 'family' in the narrower sense.

In the first place, the *genos* was united by a common cult. It seems natural to assume that this is the result of ancestor-worship, and this assumption is indeed made in such excellent works as that of Fustel de Coulanges' *La cité antique*. The original founder of the *genos*, the Eumolpos for instance from whom the Eumolpidai claim descent, has by reason of long tendance of his grave become a hero, if he were not one to begin with; and the *raison d'être* of the family or clan is in large measure the continuance of his worship, though of course also the tendance of the dead of each succeeding generation. But the circumstance that several *genè* are recorded as worshipping gods, such as Apollo or Zeus, who can by no reasonable theory of their origin be explained as developed out of dead men, shows that this is too narrow a view. The cult of dead ancestors, or at least their tendance, was indeed of great importance, but it does not exhaust the list of the sacred rites of the *genos*.

How important the continuance of these rites was is shown by several considerations, but especially by the care taken in the classical period to prevent the *genos* or the *oikos* from dying out. Over and over again it is stated that the reason for wanting a son is two-fold, namely maintenance in old age and tendance after death. If no son after the flesh existed, there were two courses open. If there was a daughter, she was of necessity married to her nearest male kinsman,

if he were not the son of her own mother. If he or she was married already, this made no difference; the marriage was dissolved and a new one entered upon. Thus a successor, as nearly as possible a son of the girl's father, was procured, namely her son, who was also through his father related to his maternal grandmother. For want of a better, a son by a stranger would do. Thus by the ancient laws of Gortyn in Crete² the first duty of the guardians of a girl in this position was to find her a husband of her own immediate kin,—what Attic law would call her *anchisteus*, but the Gortynians the *epiballôn*. If none was to be found, the tribe was canvassed to find a husband. If none could be found within this circle (apparently there was no compulsion on any of them to marry her, and she could to some extent at least make her own choice among suitors), then, and only then, she might marry from without. In Attic law we have the direct testimony of Isaios, all whose surviving speeches relate to cases of inheritance, and who may reasonably be supposed to know the local law on the subject, that instances of the dissolution of an existing marriage in order to unite a woman who was the last of her *oikos* to her nearest male kinsman were very common, and that the law overrode even the wishes of the woman's deceased father (her own were never of much account) in this matter, while the inclinations of her destined husband were treated with equally scant consideration. To the ancients, as already indicated, a marriage was above all a mechanism for securing the right kind of children; in this case, children,—male of course,—as nearly related as was possible in the male line, though the female line was also of some account, to the last generation of the family in question. And it is to be noted that of the two codes we are considering, that of Gortyn shows many very advanced ideas, more

advanced than those of Roman law under the early Empire, for instance, in many respects, while Athens was the most radically progressive state in Greece.

If there was no daughter, nothing remained but to adopt a son, and this was very often done, it would appear. He had in all respects the status of a real son; he became a member not only of the immediate family of his adoptive father, but of every other organization, local or hereditary, civil or religious, which claimed him as a member.

With the succession to the name and rites went naturally succession to property. Here we have a curious mixture of old and new in classical Greece. Stated briefly, the difference between the old and the new idea about the most important form of property, land, is this; to a modern (a European, for example, or a Muslim), the individual owns the land, perhaps under certain restrictions; but for the most part it is his, to keep, sell, give away, or dispose of by will as he sees fit. Not a little of our modern legislation consists of removing the surviving differences between the ways in which the property-owner owns his land, the house standing on that land, and the chairs and tables in the house. But the ancient view, exemplified for instance by the customary law of many non-Muslim Africans, is that the land owns the man, or rather the group of men, who dwell on it. They can no more dispose of it than a horse can sell his owner; at most, they may say which of them shall till it, or allow outsiders to rent it. Or more accurately still, the land and the dwellers on it are one. This method, which the late F. Seebohm, in his excellent studies of it among the Welsh and the Saxons, somewhat inaccurately called the tribal system, is well exemplified by the Welsh and the Cretan words used in connection with it. In Welsh, according to the least inadequate

dictionary now available, the word *gwely* (literally 'blood'; it has nothing to do with its homophone which signifies 'bed') means 'family, clan, land of tribe, heritage.' In the law of Gortyn, the ultimate inheritor of property is the *kláros*, which means indifferently the landed estate or the people, including the serfs, who farm it. Similarly in Attic, *oikos* can mean either the family or the family property.

In developed Greek law,—and we know but little of any other kind, for Homer and Hesiod do not profess to give us much information on legal matters, and between them and the fifth century our records are of the scantiest,—private, individual property existed, and a man could in very large measure do as he liked with his own. Thus it was quite possible for an owner of land and houses, the head of an *oikos*, to be reduced to beggary by ill-luck or ill-guidance. But two of the most obvious ways of transferring property, by will and by expenditure on a daughter's wedding portion, were more or less closed. An Athenian woman certainly brought a dowry with her; but one of the most outstanding features of the marriage contract was the obligation of the husband to give surety for the return of the same when death or divorce put an end to the marriage. That is, the wife really brought with her no more than the usufruct of the dowry, not the capital. Of a like kind are the laws which seem at first glance to be an anticipation of the Married Women's Property Act, in that they guarantee to the wife the possession of a part at least of all that she earns by her own activities. But here it must be remembered that the profit would really go, not to the woman herself (in Greek as in Roman law a woman is always a minor), but to her legal guardians, that is to the male members of her own family. The old feeling of solidarity is very much in evidence; the clan property is still so far one

and indivisible, and to such an extent identified with the members of the clan or family, that even a member who goes out into another clan by way of marriage can carry but little with her, and if she returns, must bring back the principal and some at least of the interest, namely the profit gained by her own labour.

As to wills, Athenian tradition stated that Solon introduced them (Plutarch, *Life of Solon*, 21). Even for much later times, one has only to look at the first speech of Isaïos to see how precarious a position they occupied. One Kleonymos had died, leaving his property to certain relations, possibly second cousins, certainly not much nearer than that in blood. Straightway his nephews proceeded to contest the will. That it was a forgery they did not for a moment attempt to prove, nor could they detect the smallest legal flaw in its drafting or the circumstances under which it had been made. Their claim, which no Roman or English court would have listened to, but which was thought good enough to put before an Athenian jury, rested firstly on a very feeble story to the effect that Kleonymos had wanted to do something regarding the will the day before he died, and therefore perhaps to alter it, but chiefly on the comparatively close relationship between the deceased and the plaintiffs. At the bottom of this and of several other pleas of which we have records, lies, as it seems to me, simply the deep-rooted and ancient feeling that property ought not to be left by will at all, but divided according to the traditional rules of inheritance, which gave uncontested possession to the son, if there was one, and failing him, to other near kinsfolk on their proving relationship.

Apart from wills and dowries, we find a certain reluctance to treat the property of the clan as other than a unit. Thus, we find the ruler (*archon*) of a *genos* (the

Klytidai), presumably its senior male member or one of its elders at any rate, acting as administrator for all the property of the *genos*. In Crete, the undivided family is clearly contemplated as a possibility. Says the Code of Gortyn, 'While they (the parents) are alive, it shall not be necessary to divide the property (between the children). But if one of them (the sons) be cast in a suit at law, his share shall be apportioned to him.' Here we have a curious mixture of old and new. On the one hand, the son is a legal personality, able to sue and be sued, and financially responsible; in a word, the state regards him as it now regards any one of full legal age, whether his father be alive or dead. But on the other hand, the condition of things with which Maine's *Ancient Law* has made everyone familiar is likely to exist; the members of the family, senior and junior, may continue to live together, whether actually in the same house or not, apparently under the presidency of the common ancestor. Every son presumably knows what his share in the estate is (is, not *will be*; the death of the father does no more than make actual a division which already existed potentially), but they are so likely to continue to form a joint-stock company that the law, obviously from many passages the result of a progressive reform, merely takes measures to prevent the black sheep of the family from sponging on the rest. A not very dissimilar state of things existed in ancient India.*

What happened if a *genos* or *oikos* died out? Curiously enough, we have no precise information here; it seems to have happened much less often than one would expect, considering what we know of the decline of the Greek population in historical times. In Crete, after the failure of a long series of natural heirs, minutely defined by law, the inheritor of the estate was the estate (*hláros*) itself, meaning apparently

the serfs belonging to, or attached to the land of, the extinct family. In many cases however, despite the attempts of legislators to prevent it, the land, and therefore *a fortiori* the other property, was alienable; this was so in Boiotia in the time of Hesiod, for instance. So probably in many cases the last representative of a family died poor and landless; for if he had means he would most likely marry and so have, if not children, at least relatives of some sort to whom the estate might pass, whether by natural inheritance or by will. Deliberate avoidance of offspring was common only in later times, when the city state and its component parts alike were becoming anachronisms with but little compelling power left in them.

As long as the *genos* and the *oikos* existed they had, besides their collective property or what had once been so, collective responsibility. The whole clan of the Alkmeónidai were long under a curse, at Athens, for an offence committed by one of them; the hard lot of the clan of Aias at Lokris has already been mentioned. The other side of the picture is the right, or rather duty, of blood-feud, which lay solely on the *anchistès*, at least in Attica. Of course in the law of Athens as we know it, after the reforms of the half-legendary Drakon, actual killing of the homicide by the clan of the slain was not to be tolerated; but it remained for the relatives of the dead (not further than second cousins, according to Drakon's law) to set in motion the machinery of the state which, in the shape of trials for homicide, had superseded the ancient avenger of blood. To the blood-feud we shall return in the next chapter.

If, as we have seen, the tendency of the family- or clan group was to keep its property to some extent indivisible, it need not surprise us that the larger group, the state, did much the same in early days. If

we look at the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* we find the land tenure to have been somewhat as follows. The people, under their king or baron, lived in a *polis*, a word which later meant 'city,' but in Homer is often a quite small place. Small or large, it was essentially a group of houses, generally surrounded by a wall, if not always, and normally in a position naturally strong. All around it lay fields and meadows, cultivated by the citizens or used for the pasture of their beasts. But if we look for the owners of these fields, we find that generally they have no individual owner. A case in point is the interview between Meleagros and the Kalydonian elders in the ninth book of the *Iliad*. According to old Phoinix, who tells the story, the elders, wanting his help very badly, offered him 'his choice of a beautiful estate of fifty *gyai* (a *gyes* was apparently about half an acre ⁴) where the plain of lovely Kalydon is fattest, half of it vineyard, and half of it cleared flat arable land.' This Phoinix calls a 'great gift,' and clearly no small one would meet the case. It is likewise called a *temenos*, the same word which is used of the sacred land of a god. Such a *temenos* never seems to belong to anyone but a king (Meleagros is a king's son), and may reasonably be supposed to be part of the 'honour like a god's' with which the Homeric king is treated. Elsewhere we have a description of a *temenos* of this sort being harvested by the king's thralls; elsewhere again, a picture of the *aroura* or ploughland being turned by many ploughmen, who are urged to further efforts by a man who provides a drink of wine as they reach the headland and turn their teams. This time there is no king concerned; it is obviously common land, and the whole community has turned out to plough it or to help the ploughmen in one way or another. Yet the beginnings of private ownership are there; the *kléros*

which we found in Crete is already known to Homer, who describes a very poor man as 'one who has no *klēros*.' As the word means properly 'lot' (in the sense of casting lots), it would seem that some system existed by which strips of the land were assigned to various members of the community, not, apparently, as their property, but for them to plough and reap, and presumably enjoy the fruits of, until a re-division took place. This re-division took a long while to pass out of Greek consciousness, for one of the regular proposals of the more radical type of politician in later days was a re-division of the land. That the *klērēi* were not permanent in Homer's day is indicated by his picture of two men with measuring ropes in their hands quarrelling vigorously as to where one ends and another begins. Permanent estates have fixed boundaries and do not need all this re-measuring. Still, the individual ownership of land was beginning, for a rich family is described as 'men who had many *klēroi*.' But,—and here we strike a note typical of the past of our own Northern peoples,—the normal material of wealth was not land, but cattle of all sorts and metals, also slaves. 'A man may reive cattle and stout sheep,' says Achilles, 'and tripods and bay horses he may get; but the life-breath of a man none can reive nor take again, when it has passed the bound of his teeth.' A retainer of Odysseus enumerates his wealth, which was greater than that of any twenty men put together; it was in all twelve herds of cattle, twelve flocks of sheep, eleven of goats, twelve droves of swine, and the necessary keepers for these. All this reminds one forcibly of the conditions existing in early days in Wales, for example, where the property of a tribesman consisted, not of land, but of a greater or smaller number of cattle, and certain rights over the common pasture.

We find therefore that the Greeks had in their early days a system of land-tenure resembling that which mediaeval Europe knew when the cloud of barbarism was beginning to lift a little. The natural conclusion is that they were not immeasurably distant from a savage condition ; for the typical savage system (that, for instance, of the Australian aborigines) is the division of the available territory into areas quite sharply defined, each of which forms the hunting-ground of a tribe, while these areas are subdivided into the hunting-grounds of the clans into which the tribe is split up. From this presumably the common pastures of pastoral peoples and the common ploughland of agricultural communities in time develop. But recollections of the old days of hunting areas were very dim, hardly amounting to more than the tradition that the great men of antiquity, Heraklès for instance, were mighty hunters. The real Heraklès was probably a comparatively civilized baron of Tiryns, and the Greeks who adopted him and his story introduced many details to suit their own taste. That they had hunting-areas in Greece itself is in the last degree unlikely. Even Hesiod's peasant-traditions of a Golden Age do not remember such a time ; there was always corn, but in the good days of old it grew wild or nearly so ; it grew nevertheless on ploughland, *aroura*, which suggests that even then there was some sort of agriculture needed ; indeed, the whole picture suggests that it is an idealization of the poet's own day, minus the baron and his exactions. ' They had all things very good ; the corn-bearing earth yielded her fruit of her own accord, abundant and without grudging ; and they amid their many good things quietly and willingly dwelt upon the tilth.'

This time we can form a fairly good notion as to which of the Greeks had the more nearly savage tradi-

tions. This system of land tenure certainly does not suggest the monarchies of Crete. It is for one thing much too democratic, for apparently almost every free man has some share in it, and certainly the majority of natives of any place possess the rights of freemen; the thralls are prisoners of war or slaves bought from pirates or traders (the line of demarcation is vague between these two classes). The king is by no means the owner of the land; on the contrary, the people own it and give him some for himself as one of the gifts of honour to which he has a more or less definite right. It is not an unheard-of thing that they should reclaim their gift, to judge from one or two passages. All these details suggest the Achaian invader with his Nordic ways, not the older inhabitants,—Cretans, Anatolians, Pelasgians, or whatever they should be called,—whom he found when he came. Now in many ways the invaders were the less civilized portion of the resulting community; when therefore we see that even here the oldest system actually in use is not savage, but the result of a long development from savagery (for no Greek community seems to have been purely pastoral), we may once more assert that the genuinely primitive lies a great distance back of Hellenic culture.

Having completed their invasion of Greece and absorbed or been absorbed by the earlier populations, as might be, so as to form one people living in a typical ancient city-state, did the Greeks, in the organization of that state itself, show any traces of savage ideas? To answer this we must consider a very curious and little understood phenomenon, presumably once widespread, for the best known examples come, one from Australia, the other from the Pueblo Indians of North America.

The Wotjupaluk of the former continent and the

Zuñi of the latter, like many other peoples elsewhere, pay great attention to what may be loosely styled orientation; that is, they consider it important in certain magical ceremonies to face the right way. But whereas most peoples face outwards, starting from their own territory and looking east, for instance, or towards a holy mountain or the like, these two and a few others face inwards, and the important thing is that they should look *from*, not *to* the right quarter. Thus when a Wotjubaluk comes to be buried, if he is of one particular clan he must be laid so as to face inwards from the south; if of another, from the east, and so on; and a similar arrangement is observed by the Zuñi as regards the positions their totemic clans must occupy in ceremonies, for one of them will belong to, and therefore must face the common centre from, the north, another from the east, etc. This arrangement, which has been well called sociocentric, necessarily involves the importance of the central point; the holy thing towards which people look is not sunrise or sunset, or Mecca or Jerusalem, but the camp or other settlement of the people itself. The idea of the importance of the centre may therefore imply the presence, actual or former, of this apparently very old and not very common idea.

If we look at Greek tradition we find this very phenomenon. The country simply bristled with central points, many of them absurdly misplaced; thus Pausanias found a place called Omphalos (the Naval) in Achaia, and was assured that it was the very centre of the Peloponnesos; which is somewhat as if one were to say that Durham was precisely in the middle of England. But the most famous *omphalos*, the centre, according to the orthodox account, of the whole world, was a very holy stone at Delphi, whereof we possess a sort of model, if not the thing itself, found at Delphi

by the French excavators. It was no doubt sacred in its own right, for its shape, a sort of small pyramid, is that of many very ancient cult-objects; but its holiness seems to have been much increased by its position where it stood, in the middle, supposedly, of the world. Many more examples have been collected by Dr. Roscher in his German monograph, *Omphalos*, which proves sufficiently how holy and important the central point was. Here therefore we find, whatever stratum of the Greeks it was who produced the idea, a custom which may be of the same order as the Australian and American ones just cited, and which certainly agrees with popular ideas elsewhere, which impel people to fix upon and point out the central tree, town, or what not, of their country, in more than one part of Europe. But once more the connection with anything savage or really primitive is vague and far fetched.

When first we hear of the Greek city state, its governor is a king (*basileus*,—the word apparently is not Greek, and its etymology and primary significance are unknown). In concluding this chapter it is well to consider whether the holder of this venerable office had anything about his functions which recalls the primitive.

I have already given, in Chapter III, my reasons for thinking it unlikely that 'Frazerian' kings existed in Greece; but this does not settle the question. A king may not be of the sort described in the *Golden Bough*, and yet have much that is reminiscent of savage, and unlike modern, ideas of government. We have seen (Chapter I) how closely connected Church and State are in their infancy; it is therefore interesting to note that the sacral functions of the Greek king were on the whole the longest lived. At Athens, so long after the abolition of kingship that the names and exploits

of their monarchs had faded into legends, and even the events succeeding the fall of the last dynasty were far from being clearly remembered, there was still an important functionary who bore the royal title, the *ἀρχων βασιλεύς*, or King Archon. Unlike the Roman *rex sacrorum*, he was not excluded from secular functions, or what we should consider such; certain cases, for instance, were tried in a court over which he presided; but it is evident that his name was due largely,—for he was not the senior magistrate,—to the fact that he represented the long-vanished kingship in some of its priestly functions. One of these is distinctly curious. The wife of the King Archon, who was herself called Queen, every year performed a rite in which she was supposed to be joined in a sacred marriage with the god Dionysos. Precisely how the rite was conducted we do not know, for the details were kept secret as a particularly holy mystery; only women might take part in the ceremonial, and these must be Athenian citizens who had passed a rigid test of ceremonial and moral purity. But the fact that a union was supposed to take place between a god and a woman nominally a queen (and therefore no doubt in the old days, before monarchy was abolished, between Dionysos or some earlier god and a real queen) at once reminds us of the many legends, from Homer onwards, in which the wife or daughter of a king is the paramour of a god or hero, and bears a divine child. We must also consider that in Homer, on the one hand, the king is above all else a secular magistrate and a war-leader; on the other, that the tales of the family of Minos in Crete contain many references to close association between the king himself or members of his family (notably his daughter Ariadné) and the gods; thus Minos is 'the gossip of Zeus' as mentioned in Chapter III; Pasiphaë his queen becomes the consort

of a bull who is no ordinary beast but sent by Poseidōn ; Ariadnē becomes the bride of Dionysos. Lastly, it is not to be forgotten that another Athenian archon bore the title of polemarch, or war-leader, suggesting that the king did not lead in war, or did not always do so. It seems therefore, if we remember that Athens was a Mycenaean site, not at all unlikely that here and in other places also there was in old days, probably before the coming of the Achaioi, whenever exactly that was, a conception of royalty largely sacerdotal ; one, that is, which saw in the king not indeed a god, but a person particularly fitted to commune with the gods and perform the community's share in the good magic which ensured divine blessing. The impression that we have to do with something pre-Greek is deepened if we consider the very curious ritual of the house of Athamas, in Thessaly, preserved for us by Herodotos. This ancient family claimed Minyan origin ; of the Minyans we know much less than we should like to know, but the legends tell us that they were a very early race (the Argonauts, whose exploit is represented as having been before the siege of Troy, are said to have been Minyans), and connected with more than one site, such as Orchomenos in Boiotia, of prehellenic importance. Herodotos' account gives us a glimpse into a very grim ritual indeed, nothing less than periodical, or at least occasional, human sacrifices of persons of royal blood. In the Thessalian district known as Achaia, the eldest member of the family claiming descent from Kytissōros the son of Phrixos the son of Athamas,—the last two names figure prominently in the Argonautic saga,—might not enter the local *prytaneion*, or as it was there called, *λήτρον*, a building roughly corresponding to what we term a town hall. If he did so, he was sacrificed to Zeus Laphystios. Herodotos' story implies that the danger of being

sacrificed was rather often incurred, though the tabu was surely no difficult one to remember and keep; it looks therefore as if there was some tradition, doubtless connected with very old religious ideas, that to furnish victims in this way was in some manner an obligation on the family, not a mere penalty. Precisely what it all means, it is hard to say; but there are not lacking instances in many countries of royal human sacrifices, whether they are really to be connected with Frazerian kingship or not.⁵

Thus, through the civilized Greek city-state and the civilization of the Cretan and Helladic peoples which preceded it, we get glimpses of customs, preserved here and there in backward regions such as Thessaly, or piously embalmed in harmless acts of archaic ritual in more advanced places like Athens, or reduced to curious legends destined to form material for the imaginative literature of later days, which belong to a much more barbarous, even a savage condition.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII

¹ Hes., *Theogonia* 927. According to the local tradition, this poem is not by the author of the *Works and Days*; but whether this is so or not, it is of very respectable antiquity, perhaps the eighth century B.C., or not much later.

The works of Aristotle quoted in this chapter are, for the opening paragraphs, the first chapters of the *Politics*; elsewhere, the *Constitution of the Athenians* (*Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία*). Good English translations of both these works are to be had. On the *genos* there is an excellent article in Daremberg-Saglio, *Dict. des antiquités*, s.v. GENOS.

² Preserved in a long inscription in the local dialect, most accessible in Collitz-Bechtel, *Dialektinschriften*, No. 4991. So far as I know, an English translation with commentary remains for some British or American Hellenist with competent legal knowledge and a good grasp of comparative sociology to produce. For commentaries, etc., in other languages, see the notes in Collitz-Bechtel. The date of this highly interesting document is perhaps about 450 B.C.

188 PRIMITIVE CULTURE IN GREECE

The difficult speeches of Isaïos have been furnished with an excellent commentary by Mr. W. Wyse (Cambridge, 1904), whose very full notes and analyses make the book profitable even to a Greekless reader. The inscription concerning the Arynandridai is in Ross, *Die Demeu von Attika*, p. 24.

³ See the extracts from the Laws of Manu in H. E. Seebohm, *Greek Tribal Society*, p. 97 *sqq.*

⁴ Four *γῶαι* could be ploughed in a long day by two first-rate men with good teams and not too hard soil, see *Odyssey* XVIII, 371 *sqq.*; an acre is to-day considered a very good day's work for one man under favourable conditions.

⁵ For orientation in general, see *J.R.A.I.* Vol. LII (1922), pp. 127-140, especially p. 139. For the sacred marriage of the Queen, see Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 537 *sqq.*; Farnell, *CGS*, Vol. V, p. 217, who gives full references, p. 284. For the sacrifice of the descendants of Athamas, see especially Herodotos, VII, 197; a good account, with some ingenious attempts at explanation and further references, in Miss J. R. Bacon, *The Voyage of the Argonauts* (Methuen 1925), p. 54 *sqq.* For royal human sacrifices, see Frazer, *GB*¹, IV, especially Chapter VI.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JURISPRUDENCE

LAW, as understood and practised in a modern state, is in a condition of steady development from certain fundamental maxims, which short of a revolution cannot be altered in form, though in substance they may be, by the action of a series of legal fictions. Every year every legislative body such as the British Parliament or the American Congress produces a formidable list of amendments, repeals, and new enactments, all of which are capable of being traced to some real or supposed piece of legislation in the past. Thus continual change of the details of our statutes is combined with continuity of principle. Anyone therefore who fully understands the law of any given country is in possession, if he can interpret his knowledge, of a valuable key to its history, political and social, and, what is perhaps still more precious, to the workings of the minds of its citizens on whose will or acquiescence the laws must ultimately depend.

If we apply this principle to the laws of ancient Greece, or such of them as we know (for it is by no means every state which, like Athens, produced a host of writers who discuss legal matters, or, like Gortyn, has left us a code), we shall find not a little that throws light on a very remote past; and our task is made easier by the fact that the combined evidence of epic and myth take us several centuries back of the Athenian

orators or the Cretan legislators. I propose in this chapter to seek among Greek law and custom for evidence of those features which we saw at the outset to be characteristic of savage law, apart from the unessential fact that the latter is unwritten.

First and foremost we may look for the comparative absence of recognition of the individual and of individual responsibility. The development of the recognition of individual rights and duties is in all nations perhaps the surest sign of the advance of the people in question towards civilization. For an example we have but to look at the legal history of the Jewish nation. Among their early traditions we find the well-known story of Achan, who for his interference with the booty of Jericho, devoted in advance and therefore removed from common use, was put to death with 'his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had.' If however we pass to the latest form of their code, the Book of Deuteronomy, we find such collective execution emphatically forbidden: 'The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.' So far had the nation advanced between the days of Joshua and those of Ezra, or whoever was the final redactor of Deuteronomy. That in classical Greece the last stage had long been reached in the days of which we have full information goes without saying, even in sacral affairs, for the most part. Sokrates was the victim of the nearest classical approach to a heresy-hunt, but no one seems for a moment to have dreamed that his death should entail that of his wife and children. The view which we may, with reservations, describe as secular had triumphed; if A has committed an offence, A and no other shall be

punished for it, and even his nearest relations, if they have not been his aiders and abettors, may go in peace.

Yet even in Athens, to say nothing of other states, we find clear traces in comparatively late times of another and older view. It is not a question of responsibility for an offence, whether against god or man. The action of the criminal is dangerous exactly as, to our ideas, it is dangerous to have small-pox; the man is spreading infection of a most perilous kind, and must be put out of the way, lest the rest of the state be smitten. And as he is of one blood with his clan-fellows, or at least with the members of his family, it is not an individual that must be so treated, but a group. The group, then, must be put out of the way, and there are but two means of doing this, namely death and banishment; which punishments consequently continue to form a pair of alternatives throughout classical law, not only Greek but Roman. If we commute a death-sentence we substitute imprisonment; in antiquity banishment or relegation took its place.

We may therefore begin with an instance of collective banishment, the story of which is well known. Early in the history of Athens, one Kylon conspired to make himself tyrant. Being defeated, he sought refuge before the statue of Athena on the Akropolis, from which sanctuary he was persuaded to rise, with those of his confederates who had also sought refuge with him, on condition that the lives of all concerned should be spared. This condition was not fulfilled, and the responsibility for the deaths rested on a member, or members, of the clan of the Alkmeonidai. Now no one, then or now, would question the right of any state to put to death a dangerous revolutionary, such as Kylon seems to have been; nor did Greek sentiment feel much outraged by the breaking of a promise,

at any rate *pour le bon motif*. The guilt of the Alkmeōnidai lay in this, that they had killed suppliants, and thus incurred the wrath of the goddess with whom the latter had taken refuge. So strong was the feeling that it long provided excellent political ammunition to the opponents of that powerful and enterprising clan; thus the Alkmeōnid reformer Kleisthenes, upwards of a century later, was banished by reason of it, though it was not imagined that he personally had had anything to do with the matter, and although the clan had once already been banished and restored again, on no less authority, apparently, than that of a decree of Solon.¹

Here then we have a whole clan at least seriously threatened with perpetual banishment for the crime of a single member, or at most of a few members. If now we turn to inscriptional evidence, we find that in Lokris the clan of Aias was in quite late historical times (literary evidence continues the story down to the first century A.D., but the inscription is much earlier than that) suffering for the guilt of its almost legendary founder, who was said to have violated Kassandra in the temple of Athena during the sack of Troy. In this case the collective responsibility extended beyond the clan to the whole community. The Lokrian state had every year to send two of its noblest virgins to Troy, there to act as temple-servants to Athena, if they escaped being killed by the townspeople before arriving at the sacred precincts. Naturally, the clan was affected with certain disabilities, such as exclusion from various common rights, sacred and secular, enjoyed by other citizens of Lokris; it seems to have got rid of these by undertaking to provide the maidens from its own ranks.² Nor were these disabilities, or the tribute paid by the State, a matter of a few years only. Traditionally, they lasted

a thousand years in all (the number is of importance in Greek religion) and the penance did not end until some little time after the beginning of the Christian era.

The gods then showed themselves believers in the old-fashioned ways of executing justice ; it is therefore not remarkable that we find instances of collective punishment in the myths. The most remarkable in some ways, on account of its extensive use in literature, is the lamentable tale of the House of Pelops, the ancient (and, it would appear, to some extent historical) dynasty of Argos and Mycenae, to which Agamemnon and other heroes of epic and tragedy belonged. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Tantalos, the Asiatic founder of the dynasty, began its career of crime by a direct offence against the gods ; some said, by trying to cheat them into eating human flesh, that of his own son Pelops. Pelops having been miraculously restored to life, offended in his turn. He won his famous chariot-race against Oimomaos, king of Pisa, by the connivance of the latter's charioteer, Myrtilos, and then got rid of his confederate, whom he had promised to reward, by flinging him into the sea. The curse descended to his sons, Atreus and Thyestes, in the form of what the Greeks called *atē* ; a strong if not actually irresistible impulse to crime. Thyestes corrupted his brother's wife and thereby managed to steal the 'luck' of the family, the famous golden-fleeced ram. Atreus in turn secured his brother's banishment, and recalling him under pretext of a reconciliation, feasted him on the flesh of his own children. The curse was now inherited by Atreus' son, Agamemnon, who offended Artemis by killing a sacred stag, sacrificed his own daughter, Iphigeneia, to appease the goddess and obtain a safe passage to Troy for his fleet, and was in his turn murdered by his faithless wife Klytaimēstra and her paramour Aigis-

thos, a surviving son of Thyestes. Orestes, Agamemnon's son, in turn avenged his father by killing his mother and Aigisthos. Here, by the intervention of Apollo, who justified the action of Orestes, the curse was stayed, at least in the form of the legend followed by Aeschylus.

In this horrible tale we have a modified form of the primitive idea of collective responsibility. The Pelopidai are under a hereditary curse, but at least they are individually not innocent victims, for the tellers of the legend nowhere imply that they were utterly bound by *atē* and forced mechanically to commit their long series of appalling crimes. To revert to our simile of an infectious disease, they were in the position of children of lepers or consumptives, who are not indeed born with their parents' ailment, but are likely to be weak in body, and have every opportunity of contracting it in childhood. A similar case is that of the royal house of Troy. Laomedon cheated Apollo and Poseidon of the reward he had promised them for building the walls of the city. Therefore his family never prospered; for not only was the city taken in his reign by Herakles, but his son Priam, whom Herakles spared and made king, lived to see it taken once more by Agamemnon's expedition. Here again, although Priam is consistently represented as a man of just and upright life, at least his son Paris is guilty, for it was his kidnapping of Helen that began the second and final war. But we have not to confine ourselves wholly to mythology to find an example of a completely innocent man suffering for an ancestral fault. The character of Kroisos, the proverbially rich king of Lydia, is painted in favourable colours by the Greeks, his piety being especially insisted upon. But his life, as described by Herodotos, was a series of misfortunes, culminating in the conquest of his country by Cyrus and his own

captivity. By permission of his merciful conqueror, he sent to ask Apollo why these ills had overtaken him, and received the answer that it was the punishment for the sin of the founder of his dynasty, who had attained the throne by treason and murder. Apollo added that he had tried to divert the vengeance from Kroisos himself, but could do no more than delay the final overthrow for three years. As this account is given by Herodotos, though he, being a man of critical mind despite his love of a good story, will not vouch for it, we may take it that it was widely believed in his day. It was therefore thought perfectly reasonable by many Greeks in the middle of the fifth century B.C. that divine vengeance should fall, not simply on the third and fourth, but in this case on the fifth generation.

As therefore responsibility for certain crimes at least was collective, or rather was not what secular law regards as responsibility at all, but rather a danger of contagion, it was the obvious resource of the community to get rid of the source of the evil, for its own sake. If, as Hesiod declares, a whole city often suffers for the guilt of one man, it is expedient that that one man should be put away; we still think so when we isolate a case of small-pox, quite regardless of the patient's own preferences in the matter. Moreover, as we disinfect the surroundings from which the sick man has been moved, so did the Greeks practise spiritual disinfection. It is clear therefore, since homicide was the most dangerous and polluting action of this sort, that their law of homicide was originally (as indeed is generally the case) no machinery for saving the bodies of the surviving citizens from the dangerous activities of a manslayer, or for providing a salutary warning to others of like inclinations, but a magico-religious ritual, quite unconnected with secular jurisprudence.

But we must consider yet another characteristic of the savage view of law before we can understand what homicide, at least culpable (or rather, polluting) homicide means to comparatively primitive man. The killing of a stranger, one who is an outsider to the clan or the tribe, goes for little or nothing. Supposing the Highlanders to be living now under barbarous conditions; then, if a Macdonald killed a Macdonald, the deed would be murder, and would bring pollution with it; but if he killed a Macgregor, no pollution would attach to him or his fellows; the action might be laudable or otherwise, according to the relations existing at the time between the clans. It needs little knowledge of Gaelic history and sociology to be aware that this was the state of affairs not many centuries ago.

But the Macgregors would not be likely to take the violent death of one of their clan easily, and would seek for revenge, to soothe (according to the stage of feeling in the matter which they had reached) their own wounded feelings or the wrath of the ghost, or both. Hence a blood-feud would arise, in which, considering the collective responsibility of a clan, any Macdonald might be set upon by the Macgregors, and not the slayer only. The blood-feud we will consider after dealing with the treatment of what was recognized as murder, or, since that has a somewhat technical meaning not exactly corresponding to any one Greek word, *phonos*,—blood-shed.

Granted that the blood of a clansman has been shed by a clansman, it is obvious that his fellows are in a position of considerable difficulty. The guilt of their clan-brother is their own guilt; at the same time, the ghost must be appeased, or he will take vengeance upon them. If they slay the slayer, they appease the ghost, no doubt, but they incur fresh guilt. What

then are they to do? The ideal solution is, to get rid of the slayer without actually killing him, and to resort to counter-magic to take off the pollution (*miasma*,—it is not without significance that the word has been borrowed into English and other modern languages to express a medical idea). Of course, if the murderer kills himself, no one else is to blame; and if he goes away and never returns, he takes his pollution with him.

It is obvious that we cannot, in this connection, speak with any correctness of punishment, or execution, still less of any distinction between voluntary and involuntary homicide. It is the act, and the consequences of the act, that alone matter. The idea of mitigating circumstances does not occur to anyone, at this stage of the evolution of the law of homicide.

Of this we have a most interesting example in the writings of the orator Antiphon. This man was a prominent politician in Athens during the Peloponnesian War, and is one of the first Attic orators whose works have come down to us. Among them is an interesting series of rhetorical exercises, the earliest by far in Greek, known as the Tetralogies, from their being arranged in groups of four, two for the prosecution and two for the defence, according to the usual Athenian procedure, in imaginary cases. As they are the work of no cloistered recluse, but of one whose life was spent in the thick of practical politics and real litigation, we may feel sure that they indicate the sort of arguments which would then appeal to a jury. One of the cases is as follows. A boy was legitimately and properly practising javelin-throwing on an exercise-ground, when one of his companions carelessly got into the line of fire and was killed. It is not alleged either that there was enmity between the two lads or their families, or that reasonable precautions had not been

taken by the thrower. Yet the prosecutor, the father of the dead boy, urges the exaction of the death-penalty, while the defence uses the language of a modern; there was no intent to kill, nor any criminal recklessness; the death was purely the fault of the other boy, who foolishly tried to run across the ground at the wrong moment. To any one nowadays, that argument, not being in any way disproved, settles the matter; the episode was regrettable, but the court can do nothing, unless it be to recommend a revision in the regulations concerning javelin-practice. To the ancients, however, it did not absolutely settle the case; for quite apart from Antiphon's plea for the bereaved father, we have the sober practice of Athenian law-courts. These, in the first place, had special forms of trial for all cases of *phonos*, a procedure followed in no other offence, and those forms were of obviously high antiquity, notably that before the ancient court of the Areiopagos (the 'Mars' Hill' of the English version of *Acts*). In the second place, even if the defendant were found, as we should say, not guilty of either murder or manslaughter, his troubles were not yet at an end. He had to go away by a certain fixed route, and remain outside Attica until he had come to terms with the kin of the dead; after which he might return, go through certain purificatory ceremonies, and resume his normal life once more. Thus it was at least theoretically possible for an Athenian of classical times to be banished for life, the full penalty of old days, for an accident, such as that which befell the young javelin-thrower in Antiphon's speech. Still, even in this rather primitive procedure we find a more modern element, for each of the courts trying homicide sat for a different class of cases; the Areiopagos tried murderers in our sense of the word, the court of the Pallantion those who pleaded accident, that of the Delphinion those who

alleged just cause or excuse for the slaying (as, that it took place by mischance when on active service, or that the dead man was taken in adultery), the Phreattys, on theseashore, those who being already banished might not set foot on Attic soil, and, oddest of all to our notions, the Prytaneion (roughly equivalent to our city hall) settled those cases in which the defendant was not a living person, but an inanimate thing which had killed someone by falling on him, or the like. Even at the early time, therefore, from which we must suppose this procedure to date, there was beginning to be felt an idea that not all kinds of *phonos* were quite alike.³

But how little the whole business had to do originally with any thought of legal responsibility or the like, is very obvious from two considerations. By no stretch of the most ingenious lawyer's imagination could it be alleged that a person was in any way guilty of homicide merely because he himself was not dead, and because it had been falsely reported that he was. Yet, if we may believe the well-informed Plutarch, who took delight in raking up curious things from the antiquities of Greece, the position of the *hysteropotmoi*, already referred to on p. 112, was curiously like that of a man-slayer. 'The Greeks,' he tells us, 'used not to consider those men ceremonially pure who had had a funeral procession and a grave on the supposition that they were dead; nor would they have anything to do with them nor let them near the temples.' Then, he explains, the ritual of pretending that they were new-born babes was excogitated by the Delphic oracle, the great authority on all such matters. Now to be excluded from ordinary converse with one's fellow-men and from the temples was exactly what happened to a man-slayer before he was either purified or put to death. Thus it was recorded in Athenian legend that while Orestes, as yet unpurified, sojourned

among them, they found means to spare his feelings and at the same time keep themselves pure by arranging that at meals everyone should have his food and drink served to him quite separately, thus avoiding the polluting communion of the matricide and yet not seeming to treat him differently from the rest; and quite apart from legend, we find that in sober Attic law the manslayer was most strictly forbidden to enter either holy ground or the public market-place or *agora*. Orestes and the *hysteropotmoi* had this in common, that both had come into contact with death, and thus were not fit to mingle with the living. This characteristic they also shared with the stone which had fallen accidentally on a man's head and beat out his brains, on the knife on which he had by mischance fallen and killed himself. The human beings involved were purified, or done away with, after the approved methods; the inanimate objects were flung into the sea, or the like. Do we not, in like manner, quarantine all who have been actually or supposedly exposed to serious infection, and burn clothes or bedding known to have been in dangerous contact?

But there is one question which must be settled in this context, namely, whether all these and similar rites are really very old in Greece, and therefore to be regarded as survivals from ancient days of savagery, or whether they are really comparatively modern, despite their venerable appearance. It has often been concluded that they were later inventions or importations,—even so respectable a writer as Glotz seems to think so,—because purification for murder is nowhere mentioned in Homer, and the earliest author who speaks of it is the eighth-century Arktinos of Milêtos, in the lost epic called *Aithiops*, where he told how Achilles was purified after slaying Thersites. To my mind it is impossible to suppose otherwise than that the ideas

concerning *phonos* are much older than Homer, and I would explain the apparent anomaly thus.

In the first place, though it is quite true that Homer knew nothing of the elaborate purification of homicides, yet blood-shed does to some extent constitute a pollution, even in him. Hektor in the *Iliad* will not pour libation when he has just come from battle; Odysseus, after the slaughter of the Wooers, not only has his hall well washed (the Achaioi were a cleanly people), but burns sulphur in it, a well-known material of magical purification, which Achilles also uses to make his cup pure for pouring libation to Zeus. Moreover, on what occasion in Homer would purification for the slaying of a kinsman be required? There is plenty of killing, but it is of enemies in battle or private feud; the exceptions are such cases as those of Tlepolemos in the *Iliad*, who kills his mother's brother (not, therefore, his own kinsman in the male line) and is banished for it by his relations, or Theoklymenos in the *Odyssey*, who has killed a man of his own tribe and been driven out by the immediate kin of the deceased. He and his victim are no kin of Telemachos, who receives him, nor is Tlepolemos of the Rhodians among whom he settles. As already suggested, the bonds of kinship do not seem to have extended very far in Achaian ideas; it seems reasonable to suppose that in the course of their invasion of, or infiltration into Greece, any clans they may have had were to a great extent broken up, and new wide relationships had not had time to form among them. They had a recognized procedure in cases of man-slaying; the slayer was (a) killed in turn by the kin of the slain, as was dangerously near happening to Odysseus after the slaughter of the Wooers, and did happen to Aigisthos after the murder of Agamemnon, or (b) he went into exile, like Tlepolemos, or (c) he remained at home and paid weregelt. If a curious passage

in the ninth *Iliad* is really by Homer,—its genuineness was doubted by some ancient critics, and their doubts are echoed by many moderns,—when slayer and slain were near akin, there was really nothing effective to be done, for the avenger of blood was the same as the slayer. Phoinix in his youth had had a violent quarrel with his father; the debatable lines (458 foll.) make him say, 'Then was I minded to slay him with the sharp bronze; but some one of the Immortals checked my wrath, who put into my mind the talk of the people and the many reproaches of men, that I might not be called parricide among the Achaioi'. If his undutiful purpose had been carried out, there would have been no one, apparently, to execute justice on him, and he would have been left to settle things for himself with the gods of the lower world, the Erinyes and the divine pair, 'Zeus infernal and reverend Persephone,' who heard his father's curse on him for a much less serious offence than this, and fulfilled it.

But it must be confessed that this side of the matter is never much in evidence in Homer. It is not his Achaioi, but later people, Ionians and others, who are greatly concerned about the spiritual dangers of *phonos*. Public opinion in Athens would have gone very much further than simply calling a parricide evil names, and a fifth- or sixth-century Telemachos would hardly have taken Theoklymenos aboard his ship without a preliminary purification. The fact seems to be that Homer wrote or sang for a relatively enlightened audience, an upper class in whom emigration, warfare, contact with various races, and a habit of clear and bold thinking had killed or weakened many savage ideas. In Homer we find, as already mentioned, little feeling for the solidarity of the clan, no worship of the dead, no otherworldliness, and in one or two cases (notably that of Hektor, who is represented as a very

model of what a great chieftain should be, almost as good a champion as Achilles himself) frank contempt even for such universally venerated institutions as divination. Be the reason what it may, the Achaians seem to have been the first secularists in the history of European thought ; when their great age passed away, there succeeded what might be called by comparison an age of faith, bringing with it on the one hand the germ of deeper and nobler religious feeling than theirs, on the other a recrudescence of much savagery which they had outgrown in themselves and were inclined contemptuously to ignore in others. We must therefore hold that in their days the feeling of horror at manslaying was temporarily suppressed to a great extent.

The great effect produced on them by a killing seems to have been, not horror, but desire for revenge. It is true that historically the two are closely associated. One form which the horror of blood takes, though not, I think, its earliest, is fear of what the ghost of the slain may do if not appeased. Naturally this fear is acute only amongst his immediate kin, or clansmen, who live near his grave. The obvious way to appease him is to slay the slayer ; in some forms of the custom, to kill him at the grave, that his blood may drip upon the tomb and be drunk by the ghost. But with this is certainly mingled the natural instinct to revenge an injury in kind, and exact a life for the life which the clan, family or tribe has lost. It soon becomes a point of honour to do so, a feeling which in some barbarous societies of long standing (notably in Corsica and Albania) develops to such monstrous proportions that wholesale slaughters of one clan by another result, and the entire district may be almost depopulated, unless some agreement can be arrived at by which both parties will abide. For of course if the original killer be himself killed, his clan in turn becomes the aggrieved party, and

a third death is the natural result. But more moderate men take the view that after all, the loss is one which may be made good. Everything has its value, including human life. Hence arises a system of wergelt, often involving a most elaborate scale of prices for people of all grades of social standing, expressed in terms of the local currency, whether slaves, oxen, or weights of gold or other valued substances.

Now the Achaïans, though touchy on a point of honour, had the conception of honour as a thing which, if injured, could be made good by payment ; this is very clearly seen in the details of the quarrel and reconciliation between Achilles and Agamemnon. Hence to them it was no dishonour to let the death even of a near kinsman go unavenged, provided it were well paid for. According to Aias, son of Telamon, ' A man will accept wergelt of the slayer of his son or of his brother ; the slayer remains in the land, having paid a great price, and the other's heart and haughty spirit are curbed.' Payment was a regular legal business, and the community could be called to decide whether it had been made or not ; the question which, in the picture of the city at peace on the shield of Achilles, is being tried, is whether or not a blood-fine has been paid in full, ' the one proclaimed he had paid it all, and made declaration thereof to the folk, and the other denied, swearing that he had received naught.'

That this was no merely Achaïan practice we may feel tolerably certain, for legends from all over Greece, to say nothing of actual historical events (one of Xenophon's comrades on the famous expedition of the Ten Thousand was a Spartan homicide who had gone into exile) testify to the blood-feud, and attribute it, as a perfectly natural practice, to foreigners also, sometimes no doubt quite rightly. But it was inevitable that the state, as soon as it was powerful enough, should intervene to stop

this mutual slaughter of its citizens. The process of abolition seems to have taken two chief forms. In the first place, the narrow or comparatively narrow circle of the family or clan was to some extent at least replaced by that of the State; the fellow-citizen acquired something of the sanctity of the clan-brother. Already in the Homeric *dēmos* or settlement this was to some extent the case; he who loves civil strife (*πολέμου ἐπιδημῶ*) is denounced by Nestor, not only as lawless but as hearthless and phratryless; he is, that is to say, in somewhat the same position as one at feud with his own clansmen. Much later than Nestor, the reluctance to shed kindred blood had been partly extended to fellow-citizens, even the most obviously guilty. Athens punished certain crimes with death; but the form of death had an appearance of being voluntary; the culprit was not beheaded or hanged, but compelled to drink hemlock, and so in a way died by his own hand. Other states had similar fashions of execution, possibly referable to the practice of ordeal, to be discussed presently. The other means of checking blood-feud was to recognize the right and duty of the kin to avenge the murder, but compel them to pursue their vengeance by means of a state tribunal. Drakon of Athens is said to have been the author of the law by which the prosecutor for murder must be at least a cousin of the deceased; it would appear that if the dead man had no relations, the murderer could not be brought to trial, although he was by no means in an enviable position, being excluded from all public and sacred places. If there were any kinsmen left, there was no need, as a rule, to compel them to take up the prosecution; the tone of self-approval with which Lysias, in his impeachment of Eratosthenes, declares that he comes forward as in duty bound to revenge the death of his brother, shows very clearly how strong the old feeling

still was, even among highly educated men of character by no means truculent.

The very ancient blood-feud, then, had left its traces even in highly civilized Greek law. Another ancient custom is also traceable, although in a modified form ; that is ordeal, or judgment of God, as our ancestors called it. The notion, so obvious to us, that a court exists to collect evidence of fact, sift it, and on the basis of it determine what laws, if any, apply to the conduct of the persons brought before it, is by no means so obvious to primitive man, for to collect and sift evidence is a complicated process, involving very high powers of reasoning and also long-accumulated experience in the use of it along certain lines ; and neither of these is acquired in a generation, or in a score of generations. Hence it is not to be wondered at if the savage, and men who have risen far above savagery properly so called, are often at a loss to know what the facts are, and thus readily turn to a higher and, if not omniscient, at least much wiser power than themselves. Moreover, our courts are in no desperate hurry to decide the normal case. Supposing even that a murder has been committed ; if it be not peculiarly atrocious, the average citizen is fairly well content to know that in all probability the murderer will be caught and punished, and that in any case the hue and cry is so hot after him that he will remain in hiding and have very little opportunity of murdering anyone else ; while in civil cases, if my neighbour is in possession of property which rightfully belongs to me, that is no doubt annoying and a source of loss to me, but if I can prove my case, he must give it back, make good any damage he has done, and at least to some extent repay me for any expense I have been put to in regaining it. So if justice be sure, it is tolerable if it be slow. But if everyone seriously believed that the unchanged or unbanished murderer was

every moment shedding around him a horrible pollution, from which the entire community must suffer ; or if I supposed that the detainer of my property was in a fair way to render it quite useless to me by infecting it with his clan-magic, alien and unfriendly to mine ; delay would appear much less tolerable, and any method which promised a quick solution of the difficulty would be eagerly sought after. Thus it is that the Africans, for instance, although born lawyers and fond of all kinds of debates, resort to magic for ' smelling out ' witches, who may do infinite harm if not stopped, wherever the white man's law does not check them, and in really serious suits readily offer and accept the poison-ordeal.

If now we look at Greek law, where the results are seen of a most penetrating intellectual power combined with love of litigation, we nevertheless find at several points less regard paid to evidence than modern courts would think desirable, and also supplementing of evidence by ordeal and compurgation. In the first place, actual ordeal is mentioned in one or two passages, not as current procedure but as a thing remembered. Kreon, in the *Antigonè* of Sophokles,⁴ sets guards to prevent anyone burying the body of Polyneikes. Suddenly they discover that formal burial has been given it by some unknown person. In great fear, they send word to the king and declare their readiness ' to grasp masses of hot iron in their hands, and to walk through fire, and to call the gods to witness ' that they are neither guilty of this disobedience nor abettors of the unknown criminal. Here we have ordeal of the kind familiar to the Middle Ages ; the accused, if innocent, will be supernaturally protected against being burned, and the oath will do them no harm. For it is to be remembered that the Greek form of oath involved a conditional curse ; its terms were regularly, ' I swear by such-and-such deities to tell the truth (or to perform

certain obligations, or the like) ; and if I keep my oath, may good fortune befall me ; but if not, may ill fortune (often more or less minutely specified) come upon me and mine.' It was therefore in itself a kind of ordeal, for the curse could be avoided only by keeping strictly to one's promise, and no doubt the danger from it was originally felt to be quite as real as that from any material fire or other harmful thing.

Execution by poison has already been mentioned as a possible form of ordeal ; it is to be remembered also that execution by hurling from a height was not unknown, in Greece as in Italy ; and there is reason to believe that in some cases at least, this was a test of innocence and not capital punishment. If the person thrown is not guilty, the gods will make him fall lightly. Nor is ordeal confined to the procedure of courts. At a place near the River Kráthis in Achaia, Pausanias saw a very old shrine of Broadbosomed Earth (the epithet is, so far as we know, younger than Homer but as old as the Hesiodic school). The priestess of the venerable sanctuary must be a woman who had married but once and was now separated from her husband for the due performance of her functions. By way of testing her chastity, she was made to drink bull's blood, which the Greeks popularly supposed to be poisonous. Here again, therefore, we have an ordeal by poison, this time certainly such, for there has been no trial and no accusation, and therefore no question of execution. Indeed, the drinking of bull's blood as a poison (Themistokles is said to have committed suicide this way, and Aristophanes makes one of his comic characters propose it as a creditable way to die) is to be connected with the idea which underlies ordeal, namely that all things connected with the gods are heavily charged with *mana*. It seldom if ever happened that a bull was killed in Greece except as a sacrifice ; so to

drink its blood was to put the drinker in contact with the deity, a perilous position for anyone not duly authorized and prepared.

The guards in Sophokles were prepared further to confirm their innocence by an oath. Corresponding to this we find, in the procedure of some Greek courts, great stress laid upon an oath in itself. For us, an oath in court is merely a solemn promise on the part of a witness or a juror to do his duty; that formality over, the testimony of the witness is examined by purely rational means, analysis and comparison with other evidence. The fact that three persons swear that A's motor knocked B down, while only two swear that it did not, will decide nothing in itself. But it would appear that in courts of Gortyn such evidence would have decided the case in favour of B. A person accused of certain offences was obliged to bring what our ancestors would have called compurgators before the court,—the higher his rank, the more he had to produce,—who took the same oath as himself that the facts as he stated them were correct; and it would appear that to produce more of these co-jurors (having regard, presumably, to the differences of rank just mentioned) would in itself decide the matter. 'It was not,' says Glotz, 'a matter of weighing evidence, but of counting deponents.'¹

A slave, generally speaking, might not swear, and for obvious reasons. The gods by whom the oath was taken were gods of the State; but the slave was not a citizen, and why should they pay any attention to the words of one who was not of their society? In like manner, an oath between two communities was ratified, not by both swearing by the same gods, but by each invoking its own. But a slave, being a citizen of no place, had no official gods at all. How then was his testimony to be made acceptable? Here recourse was had once more to ordeal; a slave was examined under

torture. Now when we consider, on the one hand, the humanity of the Greeks and the absence of vindictive cruelty in their punishments, as compared for instance with those of China or of mediaeval Europe, on the other the fact that evidence taken under torture is often spoken of as particularly good and reliable, it is fairly evident that the idea was not simply to force a stubborn man to speak, or a hardened liar to tell the truth. Rather, the underlying notion was that if the witness told the truth he would feel no pain, and thus what he said would be vouched for in the best way possible. We have, unfortunately, no details of how and with what ceremony the torture was administered, so the above theory, already put forward by more than one scholar, must for the present remain a theory only; but we can quote in support of it several bits of evidence, one or two proving that in some cases and in some states free witnesses might be tortured, while another is the curious statement of Plutarch that an oath is a free-man's torture, *i.e.*, that both are sanctions, applicable to different grades of society. There is even some evidence that a Greek court was at liberty to choose whether it would give more weight to the sacral side of evidence, oaths of free men and witness of slaves under torture, or to the secular side, written or oral testimony not necessarily made upon oath at all.*

We have seen that the individual was somewhat less regarded in Greek than in modern law, and that in judiciary procedure there lingered more than one trace of irrational ideas, such as we know to be characteristic of savage ways. It goes almost without saying that the maxim of our days, that all men are equal before the law, was but imperfectly recognized in Greece, indeed not fully in use even among Athenian citizens.

In the first place, we find clear traces of a time when the foreigner had no rights at all. Agamemnon, say^a

Achilles, 'hath done vilely against me, as though I were a foreigner without honour.' The phrase as above quoted is from the ninth book of the *Iliad*, verse 648; the fact that it recurs in the sixteenth book seems to indicate that it was a part of the poetic stock-in-trade, like many other formulae in the epics, and thus older still than Homer himself. We may say then that in early days a foreigner was proverbially without rights. And this is supported by the narrative of the poems. When Odysseus, for instance, comes to the land of the Phaiákēs, he makes no direct claim to assistance or protection, or even to the right to live, but seats himself upon the king's hearth (thus establishing contact with a thing so holy that he acquires a strong claim to consideration), and adopts the tone of a suppliant. Yet even in Homer the germs of international law (of which, as of arbitration, the Greeks are the originators, at least in very large measure) are to be found; when Odysseus enquires concerning the inhabitants of an unknown country, the alternatives he states are 'whether they are insolent men, savage and unrighteous, or lovers of strangers and of a god-fearing mind.' Righteousness and respect for the stranger went together, then; but still the stranger, the wanderer, and the beggar were apt to be classed together. It is in rebuke of unkindness towards a beggar that one of the Wooers, in the *Odyssey*, says to another, 'The gods, in likeness of strangers from a far country, taking all manner of forms, wander about the cities, beholding the frowardness of men and their lawful deeds'. It is a long way from this to legal rights for the stranger, just as it is a long way from treating a slave humanely to abolishing slavery. So we find that in Athens, which was more liberal to foreigners than any other State, a resident alien could appear in court only through an Athenian representative, while in Gortyn a wrong done him could

be atoned for by a much smaller fine than if a citizen had been the victim.

But even within the citizen body, inequalities existed. In the first place, of course, women were throughout Greece in an inferior position ; this calls for no remark, as it was universally so until the last few years. But, in addition, several States recognized different statuses among full citizens of the male sex. As regards the active functions of the citizen, this shows itself as the basal principle in the so-called oligarchies, where out of a larger class of undoubtedly freeborn burghers only a smaller number might hold magistracies, or otherwise take a really effective part in the management of public affairs. On the passive side, we find that the sanctions protecting the rights of the different classes were different. To take yet another example from Gortyn ; rape was punishable by a fine, which varied according to the social condition of the offender and his victim. The amounts payable varied from a quite trifling sum in case of indecent assault by a master on his own slave-woman who was not a virgin (it is noteworthy that this was an offence at all ; Gortyn gives us side by side remarkably advanced and comparatively primitive legislation) to a penalty 2,400 times as great in the case of the violation of a free woman by a slave. Nor is the distinction one between bond and free only ; if the person offended was of the class known as *ἀσέτατοι* (whether this means resident aliens or an inferior class of Gortynian citizens) the penalty is only one-tenth of what would be exacted for violence done to one of the full citizen class.⁷

So much, then, for the survivals of savage law in civilized Greece. If we wish to know what their characteristic laws were like, we cannot do better than to turn our attention for a moment to three passages.

one from an inscription, one from an oracle, and one from a writer of dramatic sketches.

About 600 B.C. or so there was set up an inscription, which we still possess, at Olympia, beginning as follows : ' This is the decree for the people of Elis. Let the clan (of the accused) and his *genos* and all that is his be of good cheer.' So early, then, if Glotz's interpretation of the obscure text be correct, was collective responsibility for an individual's offence denounced in this ancient seat of Hellenic worship.

Religion is conservative, even the enlightened religion of Delphi, and slow to admit that the old ways are wrong. The following tale, therefore, is instructive as showing how completely civilization had triumphed in the Greek conscience. Three pilgrims were on their way to Delphi when they were attacked by brigands. One ran away, the others stood their ground and beat off the robbers, but in the scuffle one mortally wounded the other. On his asking the oracle whether he could find any means of purification, he was told, ' Thou didst slay thy companion in striving to defend him ; this blood pollutes thee not, but thou art purer than thou wert aforetime.' But the third man when in turn he approached was bidden begone for a cowardly murderer of his friend.

A valuable juristic idea must have been in force for a great while before it becomes so commonplace that people make jokes about it. Herodas is a writer of the Alexandrian age ; in one of his most amusing pieces he introduces a parody of Athenian legal pleadings. The plaintiff is a disreputable old rascal following the most degrading of occupations ; but he bids the jury remember that though the defendant is a wealthy trader and dresses in the finest clothes when home from his voyages, while he, the plaintiff, is a poor landsman who goes about in rags, still ' if this Thalês is to come into

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my house and take away any inmate by force, without my leave, good-bye to your comfort and glory, gentlemen of the jury ; 'Thalès will make you no free city.' To such an extent had equality before the law and the very existence of a sovran state become identified.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IX

¹ See Herodotos, V, 70 *sqq.*, and for the whole affair of the Alkmeonidai, Glotz, *Solidarité*, p. 480.

² Cf. Farnell, *Hero-Cults*, p. 294 ; cf. the inscription, in *Jahreshefte des oesterreich. arch. Instituts*, XIV (1911), pp. 168-9.

³ See Pausanias, I, 28, with Frazer's notes ; Greenidge, p. 143 *sqq.* The question of *phonos* and blood-revenge is discussed by Glotz, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 47 *sqq.*

⁴ Soph. *Antig.*, 264-5. For the whole question of ordeal see Glotz, *L'Ordealie*, and more briefly *Études*, p. 69 *sqq.*

⁵ Glotz, *ibid.*, p. 164.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 99 *sqq.* ; *Solidarité*, Chapter V. The quotation from Plutarch is *quaest. Rom.* 44.

⁷ Inscription of Gortyn, col. II, 2-15 ; cf. Glotz, *Solid.*, p. 385.

CHAPTER X

ARTS AND CRAFTS, TRADE. CONCLUSION

IT may reasonably be assumed that primitive man, in the strict sense of the word, had no arts or crafts at all, but scrambled for his sustenance as best he might, like his fellows of other species, with such implements as nature had given him. Quite early, however, in the history of the race comes the valuable discovery that the hands can be used, not only for holding and climbing, but for shaping things into handier forms, and thus through a long series of tentative breakings of sticks and chippings of stones we finally get the more necessary arts established. A race which cannot make something has yet to be heard of among mankind, and in the case of most savages a high degree of skill has been reached, obviously by long practice, in some few processes at least, such as the by no means obvious ones of making fire by friction, converting hair or fibre into string, if not into cloth, and giving stubborn but useful materials, such as flint or obsidian, the forms desired by the hunter or workman.

Since the equality of man is a thing existing only in the imaginations of a few theorists, it is clear that from the start some men were handier than others, producing more finished hand-axes, for instance, and fewer spoiled flints. And the explanation of this superiority would be ready to hand; the flint-chipper in question had more *mana* than the rest of the community, so far at

least as flint-chipping was concerned ; his hunting-*mana* might be of a very inferior order. Hence comes division of labour, which is classification of *mana* ; whence in turn follows that every occupation has its own special charms, or protecting spirits, or patron god or saint, or almost any combination of these supernatural aids to efficiency. When we find therefore that in Greece Hephaistos was the patron of smiths, Apollo of doctors, Athena Erganê of handicraftsmen, and especially, it would seem, of weavers, we can easily see that we have the descendants of quite early and savage conditions. But such things as these are hardly worth recording, for there is scarcely a civilization so high, until we reach post-Reformation times in northern Europe, that it does not seriously attribute the success of a craftsman, at least in some degree, to his supernatural patron or patrons. If we wish to look for something nearer the beginnings of industrial history, we must enquire whether anything more akin to actual savage magic can be found. It must be admitted that the results of such an enquiry are scanty ; but enough remains to show that Greece had not quite forgotten the old ways.

The *mana* of the craftsman is apt to be hereditary in his clan or family. One curious result of this is clearly to be seen in parts of the Pacific. Torres Straits, with its immigrant population, does not possess the canoe, nor any substitute for it that will carry passengers farther than to the next island of that closely-placed group ; the Banks Islands, the larger group of which Torres Straits form a part, are in little better case ; Mangareva, which used to have large and tolerably seaworthy rafts, applied to them a name properly meaning the outrigger of a canoe. And this degeneracy is quite readily accounted for ; the canoe makers have died out ; now as no one else knows the correct magic, it follows

that no one else can make canoes. Only in a few populations like that of Lakon, in the island of Sta. Maria, who are apparently daring free-thinkers, has the lost art been recovered, possibly even there by the immigration of some native missionary who initiated them into the precious gospel of canoe-making once more.¹

Nowhere in Greece do we find things going so far as this; if certain features of Minoan-Mycenaean art perished, it was probably because the invaders had no taste for such things, and the local chieftains or kings who had furnished the demand for what the artists could supply were dead or ruined. But we do find a modified version of the savage conditions, nevertheless; the tradition was that a craft belonged to a family or clan. Not only do we hear of Asklēpiadai (descendants or clansmen of Asklēpios), who possess the art of medicine, Homēridai who specialize in reciting the poems of Homer and the other epic poets, and actual clans such as the Iamidai, who like their ancestor Iamos, son of Apollo, were professional seers, but the phrase 'children of painters' or the like is used, much like 'sons of the prophets' in Hebrew, to signify simply 'painters.' It is highly likely, of course, that craftsmen did commonly teach their children the art whereby they themselves got their living; indeed, we have not a few mentions of their doing so; but it is reasonable to assume, and it is not a mere assumption, that the great qualification which such children possessed was the hereditary ability to master the requisite magic; in other words, the possession, along with the family blood, of the family *mana*. For we have already seen that the supernatural qualities of the family could be inherited; thus all the Pelopidai inherited the *daimon*, the hereditary ill fate, of their ancestors, as narrated in Chapter IX; and if ill luck could be thus handed down from generation to generation, why not good luck also?

Again, the gods are always conservative upholders of the good old ways ; and we know that certain priesthoods, such as those connected with the Eleusinian mysteries, had always to be filled from certain clans. It is therefore likely that the practice of handing down a trade from father to son was largely dictated in the first place, not by simple motives of convenience, but by a more or less firm conviction that only the children of a craftsman could become craftsmen of his kind at all.

But if a craftsman was thus to some extent dependent upon *mana*, and consequently upon magic, we ought to find magic playing its part in the exercise of his craft. This is in fact precisely what we do find here and there, in Greek professional and industrial life. That charms were used in medicine we have already seen ; the belief that the very complex human body and its often inexplicable behaviour in disease have much of magic about them, is one that dies very hard and is by no means extinct to-day. But dealers in less mysterious things than health and disease have the reputation of magicians in legend at least, if they are skillful. Thus, the legendary sculptor Daidalos is credited with the power to make statues which would move of themselves ; a naive belief which the more sophisticated Greeks of later days tried to account for by saying that he knew how to make figures with their legs in the striding attitude characteristic of archaic sculpture, and that these were therefore called walking figures ; a typical bit of rationalism. But the smith's forge also is a place of magic. Among the many mythical or half-mythical beings of whom it is uncertain whether they are deities of some kind or men seen through a haze of tradition are the Cretan Telchines, who are mentioned by a poet or two, and concerning whom ancient commentators and lexicographers are at variance whether

they were skilful smiths, who made weapons and implements for the very gods themselves, or (this is Suidas' version of it) 'either wicked spirits, or villainous men who had the evil eye.' The Kyklôpes also, who are Hephaistos' workmen in his divine smithy, are ugly brutes enough and have at least the name in common with Homer's man-eating giant. Here then, through poetical colouring and the confused lore of late compilers, we can catch a glimpse of a far-off time when a Greek smith, or at least the smith among some of the races who afterwards blended to form the Greek peoples, was an uncanny person, more than suspected of using arts which if not actually unlawful,—for certainly he was a useful fellow,—were at least dangerous, and best left alone by laymen. The smith early became a specialist. In Homer there are five professions which have become differentiated, those of the seer, the physician, the carpenter, the bard, and the smith. The last-named is of the Bronze Age, and never lost the name (*chalkeus*, bronze-worker) which tells us what his original material was. When the Iron Age came, the glamour did not depart, and an atmosphere of legend surrounds the district of the Chalybes, on the Asiatic shore of the Black Sea, from whose name comes the ordinary Greek word *chalyps*, for steel.

The smith however is not alone in possessing a magic tradition; for the humble necessary potter has also his dealings with the supernatural. Among the curious lives of Homer which have come down to us, as full of legends as the biography of any saint, is one falsely ascribed to Herodotos, which tells the following anecdote. When Homer was in Samos, certain potters who were lighting their furnace called him to them and asked for a song; the context seems to indicate that what they wanted was a charm. At all events, they promised to pay him for it, and Homer obliged with the

following lines, which I give in Miss Harrison's neat translation :²

' If you but pay me my hire, potters, I sing to command,
Hither, come hither, Athene, bless with a fostering hand
Furnace and potters and pots, let the making and baking go
well ;
Fair shall they stand in the streets and the market, and quick
shall they sell,
Great be the gain. But if at your peril you cheat me my price,
Tricksters by birth, then straight to the furnace I call in a
trice
Mischievous imps one and all, Crusher and Crasher by name,
Smasher and Half-bake and Him-who-burns-with-unquench-
able-flame,
They shall scorch up the house and the furnace, ruin it, bring
it to nought.'

He continued in this strain, it would seem, for several lines more, invoking Kirkê with her evil magic, Cheiron and all the Centaurs, dead or alive, who are to come and kick furnace and pots to pieces, while any potter who peeps in to see how things are going on is to have his face grievously scorched, ' that all may learn to deal fairly.'

Who really composed the charm, or when, we do not know ; the style and metre of the verses suggest that they are respectably old. They are a very good charm, from the poet's point of view, for they secure his fee as well as helping the potters. That pottery really was connected with magic, to the extent at least of putting magical figures on the furnace, is clear from archaeological and other evidence, quite apart from this tale of the doings of Homer.

It is noteworthy that Homer is here represented as dealing in charms. He was therefore, to the mind of whoever wrote the ' Herodotean ' life, a wizard as well as the greatest of poets. Or rather, being a great poet, he was necessarily a wizard. In Homer himself, where

no such claim is made for bards, they are nevertheless given to keeping company with beings more than mortal. 'Surely,' says Odysseus to the bard Dêmodokos, 'either a Muse, Zeus' daughter, or else Apollo has been thy teacher, so wondrous rightly hast thou sung the fate of the Achæioi'; and a less fortunate bard, Thamyras, the Thracian, was deprived of his powers by the Muses, whom he had blasphemously presumed to rival; 'wherefore in their wrath they maimed him, and took away his marvellous song, and made him to forget his lyre-playing.' But even here, they execute their vengeance in person, and the place where they met him, Dôrion in the western Peloponnêsos, was known to Homer. Outside the pure epic tradition, which has little or nothing to do with magic, save as a pretty tale to make an episode in such a poem as the *Odyssey*, poem and charm are closely related. About the persons of all the great classical poets, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophokles and the rest, is a halo of pious fiction, how this one was vouchsafed visions of deities, that one rebuked and later pardoned by glorified spirits of the heroic age, while the verses of others had wonderful power to soften the hearts of cruel conquerors or prosaic Athenian jurists. More than one was worshipped after his death, and of well-nigh all of them almost any marvel could be believed. The distance between the classical poet and the savage spell-maker and bard is not immeasurable. Much the same is true of the great artists, such as Pheidias; while, omitting the diviner and the physician as so obviously connected with magic that no more need be said of them, we should remember that the carpenter could claim to be a fellow-craftsman of Argos, the first ship-wright, who was taught how to build the Argo by Athena in person. Of agricultural magic I have already spoken in a former chapter.

A common characteristic of most forms of simple work

is their rhythm. This is perhaps especially observable in a blacksmith's forge, but hardly less so in milking, scrubbing, and various other common employments. It is a feature which early attracted the notice of man, and, as it is much easier to move rhythmically than arrhythmically, he early hit on the notion of accompanying his labours by some rhythmical noise, generally though not always song. Under modern conditions this has almost disappeared, the sailors' shanties,* now fast vanishing with the sailing-vessel, being a last remnant. It is therefore interesting to know that songs did accompany some kinds of work in Greece. We have for instance a reapers' song, and, more elaborate and noteworthy, whether for anthropologist or metrician, the mill-song of the Lesbian women, preserved by Plutarch and to be found, apart from his works, in the appendix of popular songs in Bergk's *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*. It runs thus:

ἄλει, | μύλα, ἄ | λει,
καὶ | γὰρ | Πίτ | τᾶκος ἄ | λει
τᾶς | μύλῃ | λας Μίτυ | λῶ | νας | βασιλεύ | ον.

That is: 'Grind, quern, grind, for Pittakos grinds, that is lord of great Mitylenæ.' The upright strokes in the Greek text do not indicate division into feet, for it is in no recognized metre, but turns of the mill. If anyone cares to try it on a coffee mill (as Wilamowitz-Möllendorf has done) or a rotary churn (as I have many times done), holding the long syllables to two, or if necessary three, times the length of the short ones, he will find that it fits perfectly.^a

Something of the simplicity of the savage craftsman, therefore, still lingered in Greece; it should also be re-

* So the word is properly spelled and pronounced; 'chanty' is a mere piece of pedantry, intended to show the obvious fact that it is derived from *chanter*.

membered that his fresh joy in the work of his hands and his tendency to make it not only useful but as beautiful as his limited means and rudimentary taste will allow, remained and developed. A little more of the primitive in this respect would greatly improve the utensils resulting from our system of mass production, which was as unknown in Greece as it was in the Middle Ages.

One of the greatest points of contrast between the savage and the civilized man, or even the more advanced type of barbarian, is that the first is no trader, while in the other stages economic factors are not only of importance (for of course they always exist) but are recognizedly so. The practical consequence of this is, that the savage trades very little, if at all; while barbarians and civilized men look upon the trader sometimes with contempt, sometimes with respect, but always as a person whose existence is to be recognized and who is entitled to some measure at least of protection in return for the services he renders; while as civilization advances, a sharp distinction is drawn, not only between the trader and the thief, but between the trader and the pirate, if not for any reasons of morality, then because the latter, though he rob only foreigners, is in the end more plague than profit, since he prevents the more dependable suppliers of foreign goods, merchants, from coming freely into the country, and also is likely to provoke reprisals which may be highly inconvenient. Hence we find, for instance, the Carthaginians and their allies the Etruscans appearing as little better than pirates in the early days of their confederacy, though they traded also; but later on Carthage drops piracy and trades more or less honestly with the western Mediterranean.

If we carefully examine Greek custom and belief, we shall find more than one trace of a time before trade had been very clearly differentiated from less honourable

ways of getting profit. In Homer, for instance, 'pirate' is not a term of reproach; courteous old Nestor suggests it as a possible explanation for the arrival of the guests he is entertaining. 'Strangers, who are ye? whence sail ye over the watery ways? is it on some business, or do ye wander at random, as pirates do, over the salt sea; for they wander with their lives at stake, bringing bane to foreigners?' Têlemachos, whom he addresses, is in no way offended, and indeed would cut none too good a figure if he were; for his father's tale of his own adventures after the siege of Troy opens with the words, 'From Ilion the wind brought me to the land of the Kikones, to Ismaros; and there I sacked their city and slew the men; and from the city we took and divided their wives and much goods, that none of my men should go without his share.' This was pure piracy, or, if we like, a Viking raid; Agamemnon's vassals were at war with the Kikones only in the sense that a contingent of the latter had fought on the Trojan side in the war just ended, and this raid is Odysseus' own private affair, not part of the campaign.

It is quite in accordance with this that the earliest Greek documents do not show us a people of traders, that activity being in the hands of the Phœnicians, who appear to have been the jackals of the Minoans and to have picked up the scraps which their vanished sea-power had left behind. They serve as a means of exchange between various points, coming and going irregularly, 'sharp traffickers, bringing gew-gaws without number in a black ship,' as Eumaios says in the *Odyssey*, and doing a little kidnapping as a side-line; the legendary Phaiákēs, whose ships go everywhere, knowing their own way and the desired course and so needing no pilots, are perhaps a reminiscence of ancient days when Minos kept the seas safe; but when the

Homeric Greeks exchange commodities with one another, as they often do, it is not usually by way of trade at all, but through the custom of guest-gifts (*xeinia*). A visits B and is given presents which he carries away ; B in turn visits A and is himself given a present ; but there is no such thing, it would seem, as a recognized standard of relative value between these gifts ; the business is not so highly organized or so near to a commercial exchange as the potlatches of the Canadian Pacific coast, at which the value of gifts given and received is accurately noted. Another source, apart from war and piracy, is the valuable prizes which are to be won at funeral and other games, which may represent a considerable amount. Agamemnon declares that the prizes which a particularly fine stud of his horses have won would in themselves make a pretty fortune.

It is therefore in no way surprising that when first we meet the Greeks they have no coined money, and that to the end the names of their coins often preserve memories of the days of barter. Agamemnon's army buys wine from Lesbos by barter, exchanging prisoners, cattle, and other spoils of war for it. By some circuitous route a Babylonian unit of weight had reached them, the talent ; but their native unit of value is the ox. This is shown in the lucky names given to women in the heroic age, as Polyboia, Stheneboia ('many oxen' and 'strength of oxen'), implying that they will fetch a large bride-price when they marry ; but still more clearly by the many passages in which the value of something is reckoned, as the armour which Glaukos and Diomédês exchanged, at their famous meeting in battle. One had a plain, serviceable bronze suit, worth nine oxen ; the other a splendid golden panoply, valued at a hundred. The talent seems to have been roughly adjusted to this scale, being worth perhaps one-

third or one-half of an ox ; the exact relation is doubtful, depending on a combination of several disparate bits of evidence, and it may of course have varied.

Later on, the ox disappears as a monetary unit, and the handier talent takes its place, for reckoning large sums ; but for smaller amounts something which did not necessitate scales was wanted. The gap was filled in the simplest possible way. As to-day in many parts of Africa the monetary unit is a brass rod of standard size, so the Greeks appear to have used little rods, or as they called them spits (*obeloi*, *oboloi*) of iron. Six of these made a good handful ; and thus it comes about that the name of the unit-coin of Athens and other cities is 'handful,' *drachmè*, which was divided into six obols. Sparta the conservative still used iron money in historical times ; but the Athenian drachma was a piece of silver, roughly equivalent in face value to a pre-war French silver franc. Thus behind the keen tradesmen of Attica and the Peloponnesos, whose rivalries had so much to do with the long Peloponnesian War that was the death-knell of Greek political importance, lay a faint recollection of people who did not use money at all, and traded very little, and whose units were cattle, or handfuls of more or less rare metals, or on occasion gold, reckoned by a foreign weight.⁴

It must be remembered, however, that all this is but one side of the picture. In Homer we have the viewpoint of the invaders, and the same is true of the official Spartan traditions. These same invaders seem to have disrupted a much higher organization than their own, and anything so sensitive as economic organization would disappear without leaving a trace (how sensitive it is the events of the last few years have shown us with inconvenient lucidity), and most if not all the work would be to do again. Thus in this instance what looks like fairly near affinity to primitive conditions on the

part of the Greeks in general, in early times, is really the somewhat backward condition of one section of that complex people, occasioning a retrogression for the others. It is in the last degree unlikely that the builders of the great palace of Knossos visited foreign lands only as pirates or raiders, or that their imported Egyptian goods were paid for in nothing more convenient than whole oxen or metal reckoned by the handful ; while their exquisite workmanship in various crafts indicates a far higher specialization of industry than that shown by the half-dozen trades mentioned in Homer. And their subsequent history indicates that the bulk of the invaders,—their nobles kept up old prejudices for a while, as other aristocracies have done,—when once things had so far settled down that the Viking was likelier to get hard knocks than rich booty, were quick enough to see the advantages of more or less peaceful and honest trade.

Given that such things as traders exist, however, there are three ways of dealing with them. The first is the extraordinary system, as it seems to us, of ' silent ' trade. By this, the parties to the bargain never meet. The sellers go to some well-known place and there leave their goods ; after a while, the buyers come and lay down what they consider a fair price ; if this satisfies the sellers on their return, they take it and leave the goods they brought ; if not, they leave both, and presently another bid is made, and so on till both are satisfied. Thus the dreaded contact with the foreigner is avoided ; but how parlous a business it all is, is clear from the fact that apparently no one steals either goods or price ; such a proceeding would be too reminiscent of the ways of unregenerate, ordinary life. The manner of trading familiar to us is of course for buyer and seller, if their nations are not actually at war, to visit one another's country, personally or through agents, and

there trade under the protection of a more or less clearly realized international law or agreement. This method was also very familiar to the ancients, and we have the text of plenty of treaties which definitely lay down the rules which shall govern such trade. But there is an intermediate way of managing the matter, and of that the Greeks had clear traces. Buyer and seller may meet in some place presided over by a god, and under his protection, have nothing to fear from each other's personal violence or foreign magic.

This at once explains why the *agora* of a Greek city, which though not solely a market-place was largely devoted to trade, invariably contained temples, and why *agoraios*, 'he of the *agora*,' is a not uncommon title of gods, notably of Hermes, god of traders. Indeed Greek international law starts quite definitely with the gods. From Homer downwards, Zeus is *Xenios*, the protector of strangers, and generally, a wrong to a stranger or a suppliant is a direct crime against the gods. Hence it is also that at the greatest Greek assemblies, the Great Games at Olympia and elsewhere, a Truce of God (*ekecheiria*, literally 'staying of hands') was proclaimed, which protected all taking part in the festival, or on their way there. Here again, therefore, we catch a glimpse in civilized Greece of imperfectly civilized, if not actually primitive ways.

Enough has, I think, been said to make it clear that the survivals of the primitive in Greek culture, while fairly numerous and of considerable interest to the anthropologist, or indeed to any student of human nature, were almost without exception survivals in the true sense of the word; they were, that is, mere fossil remnants of what had once been a living part of the mentality of the races which we call Greek, and of that portion of their environment which was their own

creation. The essential feature of the Greek genius, the one which above all others makes it of lasting value, was the triumph of their penetrating intelligence over the bonds of savagery and of irrational convention, the legacy of savagery, which is seen in every field. In their religion, they inherited undeveloped and unmoral gods; they developed, not simply the picturesque figures of the poetical Olympus, but the grand and almost monotheistic conception of deity which was embodied in the Zeus of Pheidias and still lives for us, apart altogether from the more metaphysical speculations of the great philosophers, in such literary monuments as the Odes of Pindar, with their scornful repudiation of any myth which would attribute unworthy conduct to the just rulers of the universe. In ritual, they had handed down to them much that was savage, if harmless, magic, and not a little that was anything but harmless, such as human sacrifice. They evolved a system of worship large elements of which are still embedded in Christian liturgies, and in which, while it still flourished untouched by the coming of the new faith, the concession to the savage past had been reduced to a few gestures and an occasional grotesque formula. By the side of this, they produced a system of ethics which, with very few modifications, is that of the best-living men and women of our highest civilization. Magic they had from their remote forefathers; and for magic they substituted, while their strength lasted, science such as it has been left for the last two hundred years at length to surpass. We can faintly trace among them signs of a time when the family life, as we understand it, did not yet exist; and it is to them that we owe some of the highest ideals of family life, combining reasonable order and discipline with individual freedom, that have yet been evolved. Their law, as we have seen, has its roots in a period less far removed from the

savage world of tabus and traditions of the elders than from our courts of to-day ; yet it was the principles of jurisprudence evolved by Greeks which enabled Rome to form her great but amorphous heritage of statutes into that majestic Code which has directly or indirectly affected every European and American state. On the material side, they began, sometime in the dim past, with savage fetishes and savage ignorance of all commerce and industry ; they developed the most glorious and independent art the world has ever seen, and at the same time they taught half the world to trade.

But it may be asked ; if the savage element in Greece was so small and weak at any period which we can discover and reconstruct sufficiently to study it, why trouble to gather these few fossil remains at all, and in particular, why should non-specialists trouble themselves with them ? The justification for such studies as the present one, apart from the general consideration that he who would understand Man must study Man's whole record, and not merely the fifty or sixty centuries which commonly pass under the name of history, is, I think, the following. No one who considers the facts for a moment can fail to realize the importance of the Greek contribution to the intellectual and material development of humanity. An element so important in the composition of our world of to-day should clearly be examined as closely as possible, for both academic and practical reasons. Academically, because no reasoned account of civilization can be complete without it ; practically, because it is of immense importance to everyone who would, in however small a degree, ameliorate the condition of himself and his fellows, to comprehend exactly the nature of previous attempts in that direction, and especially to see and understand, not only wherein those attempts fell short of the ideal, but to what extent the failure was caused by elements

inherent in the methods pursued, and where it was due to circumstances over which the reformers had no control, to accidents of birth and tradition, inheritances from the past of their race, which they could not alter. For we are all influenced, far more than most of us realize, by just such inheritances. To take a trivial example; even among people who are not in general superstitious, many are vaguely troubled if they happen to break a mirror, by no means the most valuable or essential article in any decently furnished house. The ultimate reason is to be found in a belief which probably no European has held for centuries, namely, that his reflection is his soul, or one of his souls, and therefore to damage it by disturbing or breaking whatever it is reflected in may be fraught with very serious consequences to himself. To pass to a less commonplace matter, it is likely enough that the panic fear of infectious disease, often shown by people otherwise brave, is the aftermath of the ancient explanation of such things as the work of malignant demons. That something of the magic conception of disease survives, no practising physician needs to be told, for he is daily helped or hindered by the lurking notion that he is a medicine-man, from whom miracles may reasonably be expected, without the aid of such prosaic things as the patient observing a particular diet or following elementary rules of sanitation. Generally, among those who have any tincture of education, such things remain below the threshold of consciousness; but they are there nevertheless, and await only some disturbance, such as the universal uneasiness produced by a great war, to manifest themselves. The very many soldiers of our citizen armies who held that if their names were not 'written on' the enemy's bullets they were quite safe, reasoned exactly like savages, and yet were not by any means at the bottom of the scale of intelligence. Nor

are such things to be seen only in war time, for the rather pathetic acclamations with which every new government is in turn received by large sections of the community indicate that the belief in divine kings, or its equivalent, dies very hard and certainly has not yielded to the ballot-box or other exorcisms of democracy.

If this is true in general, it is certainly true of the Greeks of classical times. Primitive 'silly nonsense,' *Urdummheit*, they had indeed left far behind them; but we can detect here and there fragments of the ancient toils which their fathers had painfully broken still clinging around them. It is a long way from savage magic to the greatest of philosophers; but careful investigation shows traces of a crude magical conception in Plato himself. It has been pointed out that in magic a word is often a thing, and so, for instance, to know the true name of any being, human or divine, is to have part of his personality in one's possession. Now much of Plato's argument has underlying it a tacit assumption which is surely nothing but a more civilized form of this ancient fallacy; namely, that a word must not only mean something in the sense of corresponding to an idea, but also in the sense of corresponding to an objective reality of some kind. Thus, in the *Phaedo*, the final argument for the immortality of the soul may be summarized thus. It is the property of soul to have and give life, and it is that of fire to have and give heat. Therefore that which is dead cannot be soul, any more than that which is cold can be fire. Therefore the soul cannot die. That it apparently did not occur to so penetrating an intellect as his to consider whether the word 'soul' and the idea it expresses corresponded to an objective reality at all, is surely clear proof of the stubbornness of the old unconscious conceptions. If we turn to an inferior philosopher, but one in whom we

certainly should not expect to find much influence of primitive beliefs, Epicurus, we discover a yet more remarkable instance of the same thing. He and his followers were at great pains to explain how, since it was clearly inconsistent with the known laws of physiology that such creatures as centaurs should ever have existed, the belief in them had ever originated. The explanations that seem so obvious to our minds, that they were either the free invention of some one or else an exaggerated or deliberately distorted version of something real, were not given, but instead, a most curious and elaborate theory was broached, that, ideas being in themselves material things, the idea of a man and the idea of a horse had somehow got combined, and the result was the idea of a centaur. It was, as it seems to one who is no philosopher, largely due to such tacit and unconscious assumptions as these that Greek philosophy in time degenerated either into dogmatism or into word-baiting, after the glorious promise of its earlier development. Of course, when such an assumption was no longer tacit, when it could be squarely faced and analysed, it was soon got rid of; but it continued dangerous because it was for the most part subconscious and unrealized.

But in fairness it must also be observed that this same dim preconception of a word as an objective, almost a material thing, probably had no small share in creating philosophy itself, and much else as well. Because they had lurking in their minds this old and unfounded remnant of a magician's creed, the Greeks at all times took much interest in words. One may forgive much to a tendency which resulted, or at least had a part, in the formation of the most perfect form of human expression, the developed Greek speech; in the creation of the art of rhetoric and its sister, the science of logic; and in that vast group of intellectual and

aesthetic interests which we call by the Greek names of philology and criticism.

One primitive belief of which we have found remnants seems to have had much to do with the persistence of the worst feature, from the moral, social, and economic points of view alike, of Greek civilization, namely, slavery. Behind this, not of course as its only cause, but consciously or unconsciously forming part of its support, lies the belief in the magic of the foreigner, his immaterial atmosphere generally, as something inimical. From this it follows that a man not in the atmosphere of his own group is only half a man, if that ; and consequently that he is not entitled to be treated quite as a human being. It has also been noted that a similar idea, that of the incomplete humanity of the child not yet formally received into the community, had much to do with the hideous practice of exposure. It cannot be said that apart from the practice of judicial torture, for which also a magic basis can readily be found, the Greeks were cruel to their slaves ; the miscellaneous Thracians, Phrygians, and so forth, who waited upon the citizens of the classical states, had no such nightmare horrors to fear as those which, in more recent times, thousands of unhappy Africans suffered. But the evil institution was there, and not the most philanthropic Greek seriously imagined that it could be got rid of, any more than the most vigorous champion of humanity to the lower animals imagines that they can be made into men. It became a philosophical dictum, though not of all philosophers, that slavery would not exist were man living in a perfectly natural state, and it was eloquently stated and re-stated that a slave was a man, differing from a freeman only by chance ; yet to the average decent Greek the Homeric reflexion ^a remained as true as when the *Odyssey* was written, ' For half of his worth doth Zeus the far-

seeing take from a man, when the day of slavery catcheth him.'

These are not meant to be more than the merest hints of what perhaps some really philosophic historian of antiquity might take for his theme and develop into a work which should be as fascinating as it would be instructive. If I have suggested fruitful lines of thought on problems touching the very heart of civilization I have not written this book in vain.

NOTES ON CHAPTER X

¹ See Rivers in *Festschrift tillegnad E. Westermarck*, p. 109 foll.

² *Prolegomena*, p. 190.

³ See Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 5th ed., Leipzig 1919, p. 64.

⁴ *Od.* III, 71-74; IX, 39-42; XV, 416; *Iliad*, VII, 467 foll. For early Greek monetary units in general, see especially Ridgeway, *Origin of Currency and Weight Standards*, Cambridge, 1892; cf. F. Seebohm, *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law*, Chapter I.

⁵ *Od.* XVII, 322.

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