THE SANCTITY OF TABU.

SACRIFICIAL animals were always deemed holy, for they belonged to the deity, and so it happened that among many people they were not eaten except when the worshipers appeared as guests of the god. In other words, holy animals, as a rule, became tabu.

There is a close connection between things holy and tabu. Professor W. Robertson Smith, of Cambridge, England, one of the most learned and at the same time conservative theologians, has collected the data of *The Religion of the Semites* under this title into a highly instructive volume. He says:

"Holy and unclean things have this in common, that in both cases certain restrictions lie on men's use of and contact with them, and that the breach of these restrictions involves supernatural dangers. The difference between the two appears, not in their relation to man's ordinary life, but in their relation to the gods. Holy things are not free to man, because they pertain to the gods; uncleanness is shunned, according to the view taken in the higher Semitic religions, because it is hateful to the god, and therefore not to be tolerated in his sanctuary, his worshipers, or his land. But that this explanation is not primitive can hardly be doubted, when we consider that the acts that cause uncleanness are exactly the same which among savage nations place a man under tabu, and that these acts are often involuntary, and often innocent, or even necessary to society. The savage, accordingly, imposes a tabu on a woman in childbed, or during her courses, and on the man who touches a corpse, not out of regard for the gods, but simply because birth and everything connected with the propagation of the species on the one hand, and disease and death on the other, seem to him to involve the action of superhuman agencies of a dangerous kind. If he attempts to explain, he does so by supposing that on these occasions spirits of deadly power are present; at all events the persons involved seem to him to be sources of mysterious danger, which has all the characters of an infection, and may extend to other people unless due precautions are observed."

Anthropologists have discussed the question as to the origin of tabu and the theory has been advanced that the tabu is placed
upon the totem of a tribe. This is true enough in frequent instances, but there are cases in which the tabu is simply due to the fear of the supernatural power of the object tabued, and it happens frequently that with a change of religion an originally holy animal comes to be looked upon as unclean.

Habits are more enduring than beliefs. If a belief changes, the habits engendered by it continue. This truth appears most clearly when a primitive faith yields to a new, perhaps a higher, religious conception. The tabu of holy animals remains even when the reason why they were deemed holy has disappeared.

The most flagrant instance of this rule is the tabu placed by the northern Semites on swine. They did not eat the swine, presumably because it was sacred to Adonis, their most popular god, who annually died and came to life again. The Israelites deemed the swine impure; it was under tabu; but there is no trace left in their scriptures why it was so greatly detested. The Jews showed their abhorrence to such a degree that they would rather die than eat pork, and the Jewish nationality remained so associated with the tabued animal that the Romans placed a swine on the coin intended to celebrate their conquest of "Judea devicta."

Callistratus (Plutarchum Symp., IV, 5) expresses a suspicion that the Jews abstain from pork because they hold the hog in honor, as also do the Egyptians who revere the hog because it is supposed to have first taught man the use of plowing and of the plowshare when digging the ground with its snout.

Since Herod was so ready to have the members of his own family executed, Augustus said, "I would rather be the pig of Herod than his son."

There is another remarkable instance of a change from holy

* "Melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filius."
to tabu as unclean. The European race has now a great abhorrence for horseflesh, but the reason has never been pointed out. It is because the horse was sacred to Wodan and the pagan Saxons ate

its flesh as a sacrament. Hanover, the state which has developed from the old Saxon dukedom, even to-day bears a horse on its coat of arms,* and the Saxons who conquered Britain were led by the

mythical Hengist and Horsa, both names meaning "horse." In pagan times the horse was holy, but when Christianity came the eating of horse flesh was branded as an abomination. Even the

* Hence the German slang *berappen*, which means "to pay," referring to the horse (*Rappe*) on the coins.
present generation without knowing why shrinks from partaking of this food which is no less wholesome and palatable than beef, as much as the Jews abhor the swine.

It is not impossible that all civilized people detest cannibalism because man was the main and the highest sacrifice in the days of savagery, and so human flesh has become the tabu of tabus.

In Greece there was no tabu on swine, though the pig was deemed a most efficient expiatory sacrifice in the mysteries of Eleusis and elsewhere. Many vase pictures and bas reliefs representing initiations and atonement offerings bear witness to this belief. There

are also Eleusinian coins which commemorate the significance of the mystic pig. In the one here reproduced the pig is seen standing on a torch thus indicating that the ceremony took place in the underworld. The reverse shows Demeter on her chariot accompanied by a huge snake.

A vase painting of the end of the fifth century represents the ceremony of the purification of Orestes. Apollo, recognizable by the laurel, holds the sacrificial pig over the head of Orestes, and Diana with bow and quiver stands just behind. The spirit of the murdered Clytemnestra calls up from Hades the Erinyes, who represent
the sinner’s conscience. One is fully awake, another is still drowsy and the third is just emerging from the realm of shades.

A cinerary urn found in a grave on the Esquiline is decorated with scenes from the initiatory rites of Eleusis. On one side we see a pig being sacrificed. The hierophant pours out a libation and carries a dish containing three poppies symbolic of the underworld. To the left of this scene Demeter is holding a basket over the veiled head of the initiate.

The Thesmophoria was an autumn festival in which only women took part. It celebrated the κάθοδος, descent into, and the ἀνοδός, the return or ascent from, the underworld. The third day was devoted to καλλιγένεω, “the mother of the fair babe.”¹ A vase painting on one of the lekythoi of the National Museum at Athens represents a woman sacrificing a pig, which probably illustrates one of the rites of the first day of the Thesmophoria. The three torches indicate the chthonian character of the ceremony. They prove that the sacrifice refers to Orcus, the underworld. The basket carried in the left hand contains the “ineffable things” (ἄρρητα).

The sanctity of the swine was not limited to the Semites and

¹ It is difficult to translate the Greek word in the same terse way. Literally it means “bearer of the beautiful one.” This was the epithet by which the goddess Demeter was invoked in the Thesmophoria.
the Greeks, for we must also remember that the boar was sacred to Fro, the Adonis of the Germans. Both names, Fro and Adonis, mean "Lord." In Walhalla, the Teutonic heaven, the heroes feasted on a boar whose flesh grew again as soon as it was cut off.

Prof. W. Robertson Smith in his *Religion of the Semites* mentions the swine repeatedly. He says (pp. 290-291):

"According to Al-Nadim the heathen Harranians sacrificed the swine and ate swine's flesh once a year. This ceremony is ancient, for it appears in Cyprus in connection with the worship of the Semitic Aphrodite and Adonis. In the ordinary worship of Aphrodite swine were not admitted, but in Cyprus wild boars were sacrificed once a year on April 2. The same sacrifice is alluded to in the Book of Isaiah as a heathen abomination, with which the prophet associates the sacrifice of two other unclean animals, the dog and the mouse. We know from Lucian (*Dea Syria*, ch. 54) that the swine was esteemed sacrosanct by the Syrians, and that it was specially sacred to Aphrodite or Astarte is affirmed by Antiphanes, *op. Athen.* iii. 49. In a modern Syrian superstition we find that a demoniac swine haunts houses where there is a marriageable maiden. (*ZDPG.* VII, 107.)"

The ass is another animal of pagan significance which has be-

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The name *Fro* was transferred to Christ and is preserved in the German word *Frohleichnam*, which is still in common use and means the "body of the Lord" or *Corpus Christi*. 
come connected with the Jews. It was sacred to the Semites that invaded Egypt and also to the inhabitants of Harran. Professor Smith says (p. 468):

"The wild ass was eaten by the Arabs, and must have been eaten with a religious intention, since its flesh was forbidden to his converts by Simeon the Stylite. Conversely, among the Harranians the ass was forbidden food, like the swine and the dog; but there is no evidence that, like these animals, it was sacrificed or eaten in exceptional mysteries. Yet when we find one section of Semites forbidden to eat the ass, while another section eats it in a way which to Christians appears idolatrous, the presumption that the animal was ancienly sacred becomes very strong. An actual ass-sacrifice appears in Egypt in the worship of Typhon (Set or Sutech), who was the chief god of the Semites in Egypt, though Egyptologists doubt whether he was originally a Semitic god. The ass was a Typhonic animal, and in certain religious ceremonies the people of Coptus sacrificed asses by casting them down a precipice, while those of Lycopolis, in two of their annual feasts, stamped the figure of a bound ass on their sacrificial cakes (Plut., Is. et Os. § 30)....The old clan-name Hamor ('he-ass') among the Canaanites in Shechem, seems to confirm the view that the ass was sacred with some of the Semites; and the fables of ass-worship among the Jews (on which compare Bochart, Hierozoicon, Pars. I, Lib. II, cap. 18) probably took their rise, like so many other false statements of a similar kind, in a confusion between the Jews and their heathen neighbors."

The bear is not met with in the Orient, and there is no trace of its sanctity among the Semites, but it is a favorite totem among the Indians, as well as of the Ainuses who live in the northern archipelago of Japan. Mr. Albert P. Niblack, while still an ensign in the U. S. Navy, tells us of his visit to the Alaskan Indians, and how he witnessed the funeral ceremony of Chief Shakes of Fort Wrangel in a village belonging to the Tlingit tribe. An important duty of the Alaskan chiefs, as Portlock, Dunn and other travelers tell us, consists in the performance of theatricals and cultus dances. And among the most important of the latter are those performed in connection with funerals. We see in the pictures which Mr. Niblack published in his report how the body of Chief Shakes, while lying in state, is surrounded by totems, especially the bear with whom the Tlingit Indians centuries ago concluded an alliance. After the chief's death the ceremony is performed by the chief's adviser. Mr. Niblack says:

"It was formerly and is now somewhat the custom in the more out of the way villages for each chief to have a helper or principal man, who enjoys the

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8 See the article "Anubis, Seth and Christ," in The Open Court, XV, 65. Compare also the author's Story of Samson, pp. 103-107.

confidence of the chief, has considerable authority, gives advice and instruction to the chief's successor, and has the care and keeping of certain secrets and properties belonging to the chief. These last duties pertain largely to assistance rendered in the production of the theatrical representations of the traditions and legends relating to the chief's totem. On such occasions, the guests being assembled, the chief presides, while the principal man directs the entertainment.

"The figure of the bear is a mannikin of a grizzly with a man inside of it. The skin was obtained up the Stikine River, in the mountains of the interior, and has been an heirloom in Shakes's family for several generations. The eyes, lips, ear lining, and paws are of copper, and the jaws are capable of being worked. A curtain screen in one corner being dropped, the singing of a chorus suddenly ceased, and the principal man dressed as shown with baton in his hand, narrated in a set speech the story of how an ancestor of Shakes's rescued the bear from drowning in the great flood of years ago, and how ever since there had been an alliance between Shakes's descendants and the bear. This narration, lasting some ten minutes, was interrupted by frequent nods of approval by the bear when appealed to, and by the murmur and applause of the audience.

"In these various representations all sorts of tricks are practised to impose on the credulous and to lend solemnity and reality to the narration of the totemic legends."

Among the Ainus the bear represents an incarnation of the godhead. Their ritual of eating the bear sacramentally is very inter-
esting and evidences great antiquity. A similar case is mentioned by Professor Smith (p. 295):

"The proof of this [the sacramental eating of the totem] has to be put together out of the fragmentary evidence which is generally all that we possess on such matters. As regards America the most conclusive evidence comes from Mexico, where the gods, though certainly of totem origin, had become anthropomorphistic, and the victim, who was regarded as the representative of the god, was human. At other times paste idols of the god were eaten sacramentally. But that the ruder Americans attached a sacramental virtue to the eating of the totem appears from what is related of the Bear clan of the Oua-

taouaks (Lettres édif. et cur., VI, 171), who when they kill a bear make him a feast of his own flesh, and tell him not to resent being killed: "Tu as de l'esprit, tu vois que nos enfants souffrent la faim, ils t'aiment, ils veulent te faire entrer dans leur corps, n'est il pas glorieux d'être mangé par des enfants de Captaine?"

Not only animals were sacred to the gods; so also were (and still are in pagan Asia) the four elements, earth, water, air and fire, later on called five elements when ether was added to their number.

For details see Prof. Frederick Starr's book on The Ainu, and also an article published in The Open Court, Vol. XIX, p. 163.

See the author's Chinese Thought, pp. 41 ff.
Of the elements water was most sacred to the Semites who, coming from Arabia, had learned in their desert to look upon water as the sustainer of life. Together with the water the fish was regarded as a symbol of the life-begetting deity.

Professor Smith says:

"The myths attached to holy sources and streams, and put forth to worshipers as accounting for their sanctity, were of various types; but the practical beliefs and ritual usages connected with sacred waters were much the same everywhere. The one general principle which runs through all the varieties of the legends, and which also lies at the basis of the ritual, is that the sacred waters are instinct with divine life and energy. The legends explain this in diverse ways, and bring the divine quality of the waters into connection with various deities or supernatural powers, but they all agree in this, that their main object is to show how the fountain or stream comes to be impregnated, so to speak, with the vital energy of the deity to which it is sacred.

"Among the ancients blood is generally conceived as the principle or vehicle of life, and so the account often given of sacred waters is that the blood of the deity flows in them. Thus Milton writes:

"'Smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Tammuz yearly wounded.'"7

"The ruddy color which the swollen river derived from the soil at a certain season8 was ascribed to the blood of the god who received his death-wound in Lebanon at that time of the year, and lay buried beside the sacred source.9

"Similarly a tawny fountain near Joppa was thought to derive its color from the blood of the sea-monster slain by Perseus, and Philo Byblius says that the fountains and rivers sacred to the heaven-god (Baalshamaim) were those which received his blood when he was mutilated by his son.10

"In another class of legends, specially connected with the worship of Atargatis, the divine life of the waters resides in the sacred fish that inhabit them. Atargatis and her son, according to a legend common to Hierapolis and Ascalon, plunged into the waters—in the first case the Euphrates, in the second the sacred pool at the temple near the town—and were changed into fishes.11 This is only another form of the idea expressed in the first class of

7 Paradise Lost, I, 450, following Lucian, Dea Syria, VIII.
8 The reddening of the Adonis was observed by Maundrell on March 17/27, 1666/7, and by Renan early in February.
9 Melito in Cureton, Spic. Syr., p. 25, l. 7. That the grave of Adonis was also shown at the mouth of the river has been inferred from Dea Syria VI, VII. The river Belus also had its Memnonion or Adonis tomb (Josephus, B. J. II, 10, 2). In modern Syria cisterns are always found beside the graves of saints, and are believed to be inhabited by a sort of fairy. A pining child is thought to be a fairy changeling, and must be lowered into the cistern. The fairy will then take it back, and the true child is drawn up in its room. This is in the region of Sidon (ZDPV. VII, p. 84; cf. ibid., p. 106).
11 Hyginus, Astr., II, 30; Manilius, IV, 580 ff.; Xanthus in Athenaeus, VIII, 37. For details see English Hist. Review, April 1887.
legend, where the god dies, that is ceases to exist in human form, but his life passes into the waters where he is buried; and this again is merely a theory to bring the divine water or the divine fish into harmony with anthropomorphic ideas.\(^{12}\)

"The same thing was sometimes effected in another way by saying that the anthropomorphic deity was born from the water, as. Aphrodite sprang from the sea-foam, or as, Atargatis, in another form of the Euphrates legend, given by the scholiast on Germanicus’s Aratus, was born of an egg which the sacred fishes found in the Euphrates and pushed ashore. Here, we see, it was left to the choice of the worshipers whether they would think of the deity as arising from or disappearing in the water, and in the ritual of the Syrian goddess at Hierapolis both ideas were combined at the solemn feasts, when her image was carried down to the river and back again to the temple.

"In all their various forms the point of the legends is that the sacred source is either inhabited by a demoniac being or imbued with demoniac life. The same notion appears with great distinctness in the ritual of sacred waters. Though such waters are often associated with temples, altars and the usual apparatus of a cultus addressed to heavenly deities, the service paid to the holy well retained a form which implies that the divine power addressed was in the water. We have seen that at Mecc, and at the Stygian waters in the Syrian desert, gifts were cast into the holy source. But even at Aphaca, where, in the times to which our accounts refer, the goddess of the spot was held to be the Urania or celestial Astarte, the pilgrims cast into the pool jewels of gold and silver, webs of linen and byssus and other precious stuffs, and the obvious contradiction between the celestial character of the goddess and the earthward destination of the gifts was explained by the fiction that at the season of the feast she descended into the pool in the form of a fiery star. Similarly, at the annual fair and feast of the Terebinth, or tree and well of Abraham at Mamre, the heathen visitors, who reverenced the spot as a haunt of "angels,"\(^{13}\) not only offered sacrifices beside the tree, but illuminated the well with lamps, and cast into it libations of wine, cakes, coins, myrrh, and incense.

"On the other hand, at the sacred waters of Karwa and Sāwid in S. Arabia, described by Hamdānī in the Ikil (Müller, Burgen, p. 69), offerings of bread, fruit or other food were deposited beside the fountain. In the former case they were believed to be eaten by the serpent denizen of the water, in the latter they were consumed by beasts and birds. At Gaza bread is still thrown into the sea by way of offering.

"In ancient religion offerings are the proper vehicle of prayer and supplication, and the worshipper when he presents his gift looks for a visible indication whether his prayer is accepted. At Aphaca and at the Stygian fountain the accepted gift sank into the depths, the unacceptable offering was

\(^{12}\) The idea that the godhead consecrates waters by descending into them appears at Aphaca in a peculiar form associated with the astral character which, at least in later times, was ascribed to the goddess Astarte. It was believed that the goddess on a certain day of the year descended into the river in the form of a fiery star from the top of Lebanon. So Sozomen, H. E., II, 4, §. Zosimus, I, 58, says only that fireballs appeared at the temple and the places about it, on the occasion of solemn feasts, and does not connect the apparition with the sacred waters. There is nothing improbable in the frequent occurrence of striking electrical phenomena in a mountain sanctuary.

\(^{13}\) i.e., demons. Sozomen says "angels," and not "devils," because the sanctity of the place was acknowledged by Christians also.
cast forth by the eddies. It was taken as an omen of the impending fall of Palmyra that the gifts sent from that city at an annual festival were cast up again in the following year. In this example we see that the holy well, by declaring the favorable or unfavorable disposition of the divine power, becomes a place of oracle and divination. In Greece, also, holy wells are connected with oracles, but mainly in the form of a belief that the water gives prophetic inspiration to those who drink of it. At the Semitic oracle of Aphaea the method is more primitive, for the answer is given directly by the water itself, but its range is limited to what can be inferred from the acceptance or rejection of the worshipper and his petition.

"An oracle that speaks by receiving or rejecting the worshipper and his homage may very readily pass into an ordeal, where the person who is accused of a crime, or is suspected of having perjured himself in a suit, is presented at the sanctuary, to be accepted or rejected by the deity, in accordance with the principle that no impious person can come before God with impunity. A rude form of this ordeal seems to survive even in modern times in the widespread form of trial of witches by water. In Hadramaut, according to Macrizi, when a man was injured by enchantment, he brought all the witches suspect to the sea or to a deep pool, tied stones to their backs and threw them into the water. She who did not sink was the guilty person, the meaning evidently being that the sacred element rejects the criminal. The story about Mojammi' and Al-Ahwas (Agh. IV, 48), cited by Wellhausen (Heid., p. 152) refers to this kind of ordeal, not to a form of magic. A very curious story of the water test for witches in India is told by Ibn Battuta. IV, 37.

"The usual Semitic method seems to have been by drinking the water. Evidently, if it is dangerous for the impious person to come into contact with the holy element, the danger must be intensified if he ventures to take it into his system, and it was believed that in such a case the draught produced disease and death. At the Asbamæan lake and springs near Tyana the water was sweet and kindly to those that swore truly, but the perjured man was at once smitten in his eyes, feet and hands, seized with dropsy and wasting."

In like manner he who swore falsely by the Stygian waters in the Syrian desert died of dropsy within a year. In the latter case it would seem that the oath by the waters sufficed; but primarily, as we see in the other case, the essential thing is the draught of water at the holy place, the oath simply taking the place of the petition which ordinarily accompanies a ritual act.

"Among the Hebrews this ordeal by drinking holy water is preserved even in the pentateuchal legislation in the case of a woman suspected of infidelity to her husband (Num. v. 11 ff.) Here also the belief was that the holy water, which was mingled with the dust of the sanctuary, and administered with an oath, produced dropsy and wasting; and the antiquity of the ceremony is evident not only from its whole character, but because the expression "holy water" (ver. 17) is unique in the language of the Hebrew ritual, and must be taken as an isolated survival of an obsolete expression. Unique though the expression be, it is not difficult to assign its original meaning; the analogies already before us indicate that we must think of water from a holy spring, and this conclusion is certainly correct.

"Wellhausen has shown that the oldest Hebrew tradition refers the origin

14 Mir. Ausc. § 152; Philostr., Vit. Apollonii, I, 6. That the sanctuary was Semitic I infer from its name, which means "seven waters" (Syr. Shab'a maya) as Beer sheba means "seven springs."
of the Torah to the divine sentences taught by Moses at the sanctuary of Kadesh or Meribah, beside the holy fountain which in Gen. xiv. 7 is also called 'the fountain of judgment.' The principle underlying the administration of justice at the sanctuary is that cases too hard for man are referred to the decision of God. Among the Hebrews in Canaan this was ordinarily done by an appeal to the sacred lot, but the survival of even one case of ordeal by holy water leaves no doubt as to the sense of the 'fountain of judgment' (En-Mishpat) or 'waters of controversy' (Meribah)."

Professor Smith might have added that these customs explain the meaning of the significance of an oath sworn "by the waters of Styx" which was kept inviolate even by the Olympian gods, Zeus himself included.

Concerning the fish Professor Smith says:

"Where the legend is so elastic we can hardly doubt that the sacred waters and sacred fish were worshiped for their own sake before the anthropomorphic
goddess came into the religion, and in fact the sacred fish at the source of the Chaboras are connected with an altogether different myth.

"Fish were tabu, and sacred fish were found in rivers or in pools at sanctuaries all over Syria." This superstition has proved one of the most durable parts of ancient heathenism; sacred fish are still kept in pools at the mosques of Tripolis and Edessa. At the latter place it is believed that death or other evil consequences would befall the man who dared to eat them."

"Fish, or at least certain species of fish, were sacred to Atargatis and forbidden food to all the Syrians, her worshipers, who believed—as totem peoples do—that if they ate the sacred flesh they would be visited by ulcers. Yet Mnaseas (ap. Athen. viii. 37) tells us that fish were daily cooked and presented on the table of the goddess, being afterwards consumed by the priests; and Assyrian cylinders display the fish laid on the altar or presented

A FISH SACRAMENT.
On an Assyrian clay cylinder.

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15 Xenophon, Anab., I, 4, 9, who found such fish in the Chalus near Aleppo, expressly says that they were regarded as gods. Lucian, Dea Syria, XLV, relates that at the lake of Atargatis at Hierapolis the sacred fish wore gold ornaments, as did also the eels at the sanctuary of the war-god Zeus, amidst the sacred plane-trees (Herod. V, 119) at Labraunda in Caria (Pliny, H. N., XXXII, 16, 17; Ælian, N. A., XII, 30). Caria was thoroughly permeated by Phœnician influence.

16 Sachau, Reise, p. 197.
before it, while, in one example, a figure which stands by in an attitude of adoration is clothed, or rather disguised, in a gigantic fish skin. The meaning of such a disguise is well known from many savage rituals; it implies that the worshiper presents himself as a fish, i.e., as a being kindred to his sacrifice, and doubtless also to the deity to which it is consecrated."

Both the fish and water were sacred to Istar (the Babylonian and Assyrian Venus) and also to all the gods of life and the reproduction of life. Among the Greeks, especially the Ionians, the

great mother-goddess of nature, Artemis or Diana (best known in this her more archaic character as Diana of Ephesus) takes the place of Istar, and Istar, not unlike the Virgin Mary in Christianity, is at once both maid and mother. On an ancient amphora found in Bocotia she is pictured with winglike arms. She is surrounded by lions and two birds fly above her; a fish appears in her own body, the lower part of which is made up of streams of water.

37 Artemis or Diana, the personification of the moon, the chaste virgin goddess and a lover of the chase, as we know her from the later traditions of Greek mythology, is a very specialized differentiation of this old awesome figure of the great nature goddess, the virgin mother of life.
There are many reasons why the fish has become sacred in so many different countries. We have seen that among some of the Indo-Germanic races the fish symbolizes the power capable of passing through the gulf between life and death, and emerging from it with unimpaired vitality. Among the Semites the fish was held in awe because as an inhabitant of the water, the life-giving element, he was the spirit of the water and the symbol of life. Yea more than that. Since the Semites distinguished between the waters on earth and the waters above the firmament, the fish came to represent the sun traversing the heavenly ocean. In either case, whether the fish was conceived as crossing the Stygian flood or as the spirit of the waters of life, he became sacred to Astarte, to Venus or Aphrodite, also to Artemis or Diana, to Eros or Amor, to Dionysos or Bacchus, to Hermes Psychopompos or Mercury the dispatcher of souls. All these deities possess in addition to their joyous character of bringing light, life, love and wealth, a close connection with the underworld because they were invoked against the terrors of Hades and were believed to lead man through the shadows of the valley of death back to life, in which capacity they were called the Chthonian Venus, the Chthonian Eros, the Chthonian Dionysos and the Chthonian Mercury. It is obvious that the relation of the fish to these several deities must be sought in these their chthonian charac-

18 Derived from ἅθων, earth, then underworld, and pronounced in English "Thöbian."
A FUNERARY FISH.
Found in an Egyptian grave.

LOVE CONQUERING DEATH.

THE CHTHONIAN DIONYSUS.
(After a vase painting.)
ters, and so the fish comes to stand generally for the conquest of death by life. A fish carved out of wood has been found in an Egyptian tomb, which proves that the most important symbol of the Christian Roma Sotteranea was not unknown on the Nile. The same idea, dear to all, is pictured in a neat cameo of a later date, here reproduced. Eros chases death in the shape of a skeleton, round a vase and knocks him down.

As an interesting instance of the joyful spirit in which Greek artists represent the chthonian gods, we select a picture from a large and beautiful vase published by Gerhard in *Apulische Vasenbilder*, Pl. XV. Heracles after his death is received in Olympos and married to Hebe, the goddess of youth. He appears beardless as in his prime. Between him and the girlish bride hovers Eros. Zeus and Hera are
on the left; Aphrodite, accompanied by Himeros (Desire) and two maids, is placed on the right. The scene below Olympus is Hades, as indicated by the torches. The Chthonian Dionysus, guided by

A RATTLE USED IN CEREMONIAL DANCES.

Euphemia the personification of glory, arrives from the right drawn in his chariot by panthers. At the left the Chthonian Artemis and Apollo, the former with two torches, meet Eunomia the patroness of law, superintending the propriety of religious ritual. The vase picture proves that chthonian gods are not necessarily gloomy but lead through the realm of death to the bliss of a life with the celestials in Olympus.

A WOODEN CEREMONIAL SPOON.
Having the Orca totem for a handle.
It is natural that people who live mainly by fishing should select fishes as their totems. This is apparent among the Alaskans and South Sea islanders. Their very deities assume the shape of fishes and the ocean spirit of the Melanesians is a manlike figure compounded of the denizens of the deep.

Our illustration of the ocean spirit of the Melanesians is instructive because it shows the transition from the older period of nature worship to an anthropomorphic conception. Originally the water itself, the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, etc., the fish, the dove, or other animals were divine, then the several deities were personi-

A CEREMONIAL FISH.

Carried in procession among the Jervis Islanders. (Preserved in the British Museum).

fied, and when this process had been completed the sacred objects became mere symbols.

The psychology of this progress is based upon the fact that primitive man looks up with awe and admiration to those things by which he is somehow benefited: to mountains, trees, springs, rivers, etc., and also to the animals who in one way or another are his superiors. The bear is stronger, the birds can fly, the fish can swim.

The more man becomes conscious of his superiority the more he loses this admiration for animals and finally it becomes impossible for him to worship them. The Egyptian gods show an arrested development in a similar period of transition. Most of them are
human in body but preserve their animal heads while the symbol of the soul retains the body of the hawk and gradually assumes a human head. A last trace of this reverence for the divinity of sacred animals appears in the strange declaration of Tertullian when he says that if Christ were not a fish he could not be our saviour.

We will conclude with a few references to the Alaskans.

Judge Swan, one of the best authorities on the habits and religion of the Haida Indians, the inhabitants of certain islands along the Alaskan coast, praises their art in wood-carving. They ornament, he says, almost everything in use with symbols of the totems of their tribe, and also tattoo their bodies in the same way. We reproduce here illustrations of wood-carvings representing the totem of one of their tribes which is the orca or whale-killer, a fish armed with a weapon on its back. One of our illustrations is a rattle used in ceremonial dances; another represents a ceremonial spoon, the handle of which is an orca that holds the bowl in his mouth. In the ritual when a Haida youth attains his majority, the youth has
to swallow about two quarts of fish oil from this Haida spoon as a kind of sacrament.

Another tribe of Alaskan Indians uses the halibut as a totem and our picture shows a halibut design bearing a totem pole. The outlines of the figure are edged with bead and button trimming. It is worked in red on a blue garment and is worn during the ceremony of the dance.

A HALIBUT TOTEM.
Worked on a Ceremonial Vestment.

CHIEF KLUÉ.
With fish totems tattooed on his body.

The Haida believe that the orca is inhabited by a demon called *scana*, who can change his shape at will and is accordingly a kind of maritime werewolf. ¹⁹

Chief Klue has been portrayed by Mr. Niblack, decorated with the totems of the Haida village which he governs. The figure of a codfish is tattooed on his breast and a salmon on each lower arm.

Among the innumerable totems and symbols those survive which have a religious significance based upon the religious needs of man; and it is strange that though the argument why it is significant or

¹⁹ We shall become acquainted with the *scana* in a future article on Jonah, the man in the fish.
even efficient may change, the underlying idea remains. Such is the case with the cross and also with the fish.

There is a persistence in human thought which is surprising. Man's religion, his world-conception and the commonly accepted philosophy have changed again and again in the progress of the millenniums which have passed by since our civilization originated in the valley of the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris, called by the Greeks Mesopotamia. But the foundation which our ancestors laid remains, as for instance the arrangement of the week, together with other astronomical, mathematical and even religious institutions. In Lent Friday still possesses its Chthonian character, we still cherish a day of rest, and Sunday is still the festival of resurrection. Many revolutionary movements have taken place in all the departments of human existence—perhaps most of all in religion—but we have never been able to rid ourselves of our past. The fabric of Christianity contains among its most important fibers threads of ancient paganism, and even to-day the bygone ages vibrate through the heartbeats of the present generation.

Our inheritance from the past, especially our social habits, sports etc., show frequent reminiscences of savagery, but other heirlooms of past ages indicate that pre-Christian religions, ancient institutions and aspirations, contained seeds of much that was true and good and beautiful.