Specimens of Modern Mascots and Ancient Amulets of the British Isles

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COLLECTANEA.

SPECIMENS OF MODERN MASCOTS AND ANCIENT AMULETS OF THE BRITISH ISLES.

WITH PLATES V. AND VI.

(*Exhibited at the Society's Meeting, June 17, 1908.*)

THERE appears to have been a great revival in this country, during the last few years, of the belief in luck and protective amulets. Such amulets have, of course, continued to be used by the illiterate from prehistoric times. Amongst the educated classes, while protection from the evil eye and from witchcraft is now rarely sought, "pocket pieces" have persisted for 'luck' and for the prevention and cure of rheumatism and certain other ailments, and these classes have also been the principal field for the huge sale of rheumatism rings, 'electropathic' belts, and other objects which appeal to the charm instinct while professing to have a scientific reason for their success. The revival and survival of amulets have been, however, mainly amongst bridge-players, actors, sportsmen, motorists, gamblers, burglars, and others engaged in risky occupations.

"For in these days when Wisdom's light
On everything is shining,
Our certainty of Reason's right
Is by degrees declining;
And in a year or two the man
Who seeks unworked-for riches
Will ask on Macbeth's noted plan
The help of witches!"

(A. W. B. in *The Tribune*.)

This belief in 'luck,' and in obtaining it by things said or done or worn, is relied on by numerous advertisers in various journals

and periodicals, but most of all in those making a special appeal to women, where can be found such advertisements as "Do you want to know what are your Lucky Days; Numbers; Months; Colours; the Christian Name of the person you should marry? Address, etc." While the servant girl still studies her "Dream Book," her mistress has "Planets of the Month," "Consult the Oracle," and many other books telling her what to do and what to avoid for 'luck.' Even tea-leaf fortune-telling has been revived, and Spiers and Pond's, Hamley's, and other large Stores have sold "The 'Nelros' Cup of Fortune" for that purpose. Astrologers, clairvoyants, palmists, writing experts, and all manner of sooth-sayers and cunning men advertise so expensively that they must have many customers, and sandwichmen promenade London streets to invite all and sundry to visit Madam This or Madam That and be 'psychometrised.' The fashion of sham occultism,—sham, because most of its devotees seem signally ignorant of the history and philosophy of occult studies,—has no doubt been a principal cause of the recent diffusion of both real and sham amulets, but other forces have probably helped. Perhaps the most important minor cause has been commercial exploitation, which has led to the advertisement and pushing of amulets almost as if they were quack remedies for 'that tired feeling.' Another minor cause may be the adoption of the word *mascot* in place of the more superstitious-seeming word *amulet*. The word *mascot*, which covers luck-bringing persons as well as objects, appears to have been derived from a Provençal word *mascotte* popularised by Audran's comic opera "La Mascotte," which was first performed at the end of 1880.

"Un jour, le diable, ivre d'orgueil,
Choisit dans sa grande chaudière
Des démons qu'avaient l'mauvais œil
Et les envoya sur la terre !
Mais le bon Dieu, not' protecteur,
Quand il l'apprit, créant de suite
Des anges qui portaient bonheur,
Chez nous les envoya bien vite !
Ces envoyés du paradis
Sont des mascottes, mes amis,
Heureux celui que le ciel dote
D'une mascotte ! . . .

T

Est-ce un malade? il est guéri!
 Un pauv'? de suite il fait fortune!
 Si c'est un malheureux mari,
 Il perd la femm' qui l'importune! . . .

The word *mascotte* originally meant a gambler's 'fetish,' and was used in the patois of Marseilles, where Audran was born.

It is not necessary to refer more than briefly to the greatly increased frequency with which mascots and amulets are now mentioned in newspapers and which suggests a growth of public interest in such objects. Every folklorist who keeps a scrapbook must have pasted into it many such extracts as the following, from the report in the *Morning Leader* of July 11, 1908, of the hearing of a summons against an East Ham schoolmaster for caning a thirteen-year-old truant:

"When the schoolmaster told you he was going to cane you, did you not take a piece of coal out of your pocket and threaten to throw it at him?—Yes.

"What did you have the coal for?—Luck.

"What!—To get luck with."

Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa is advertised in this way. "Never Despair! A silver sixpence may be your mascot and make you a survival of the fittest. . . . Just straightway invest it in a packet," etc. Posters issued by Pickfords, the carriers, display a gigantic horse-shoe, having seven nails and inscribed "good luck." At the time of the Townshend enquiry in 1906, the Marchioness of Townshend was photographed for the press carrying a stray black cat in her arms to the Court as a mascot for luck, and in the same year portraits were printed of little Jimmie Wray, son of the trainer of the visiting Harvard crew, as "the champion mascot" of that crew. Even in Parliamentary bye-elections the mascot now seems to play its part. For instance, at Leeds in 1907, the Conservative candidate was given by an enthusiastic woman a heavy parcel, saying, "Si tha! Tak that, and it'll bring tha luck." It was a lump of coal. "Put it i' tha pocket, and tha'll be Member o' Parliament to-night." But he was not! At Hereford the Liberal candidate had as mascot a beautiful Skye terrier, which turned up at the Committee rooms on the day the campaign

was started and from that time never left the candidate. Yet the Liberal was not returned!

The revived 'craze' for mascots and amulets may make it interesting to illustrate some points in their choice and use by the following specimens, which, however, are not by any means exhaustive even of the writers' collections:—

A. Books. Two books published here in 1907, and reviewed in this number of *Folk-Lore*,—Dr. W. T. Fernie's "Precious Stones: for curative wear; and other remedial uses: likewise the Nobler Metals," and Bratley's "The Power of Gems and Charms,"—quite seriously justify the use of amulets. Bratley, for instance, writes (pp. vi-vii):

"Is the belief in the power of charms all imagination? To this the writer would emphatically say, No; and it has been his endeavour to show in the following pages the reason and logic of the power claimed for these things. . . . A few years ago wireless telegraphy, aerial navigation, human radiations, and many other achievements of modern science would have been laughed at as the vain imaginings of a superstitious dreamer. To-day these things are labelled science; therefore the writer ventures to suggest that the efficiency of charms and precious stones may be recognised and placed on a scientific basis before many years are past."

Dr. Fernie writes (p. 4):

"A main purpose of the volume now undertaken is to vindicate on sound, and even scientific, grounds, the confidence reposed by our forefathers in Precious Stones for remedial uses, whether by outward wear, or by such other means as were inspired by nature and gleaned by simple experience."

Side by side with these books is put the pamphlet, "A modest defence of the caveat given the wearers of impoisoned Amulets, as *Preservatives from the Plague*: . . . by Fr. Hering," London, 1604. (The term amulet, according to Dr. Murray's dictionary, did not come into regular use until after 1600, when it was adapted from *amulētum*, a word of unknown origin.) The pamphlet examines the reasons alleged for the wearing as "plague cakes" of bags of arsenic over the heart and next the skin,—such as "that Arsenicke doth by a certaine secret Antipathy or contrariety oppugne, vanquish and expell the poison of the Plague," urging, very sensibly, "Let then some man tell me how he can be sure, that the poison of the Plague shall not draw to it the venom of the outward medecine; and why the poison thereof

may not be stronger and greater than the other," and complaining that on account of his views, "I haue beene of late discourteously and hardly intreated, reiected and shut out from conference." Another pamphlet,—“The late Dreadful Plague at Marseilles Compared with that terrible Plague In London, in the year 1665. . . . *By the Author of the Practical Scheme.* This Book is (for the Publick Good) Given *Gratis*, only Up one Pair of Stairs at the Sign of the Celebrated Anodyne Necklace . . . 1721,” —advertises Dr. Tanner’s famous Anodyne Necklace, saying :

“Hence by the by, may be inferred, the Reasonableness of Childrens wearing an Anodyne Necklace, which may be assisting to them in the Easy Breeding and Cutting of their Teeth, as a Dried Toad is of Service in the Plague. . . . And as for Children in particular, ’tis A Fit Remedy for them, who never are very willing to take much Physick inwardly. *Si enim* as Dodonæus (Professor of Physick at *Leyden*), I. 1. c. 6. says *Infantes nolint, aut non possint medicamenta interna sumere, Amuleta applicare expedit : infantuli enim non Medicamentis internis, adeo quam Amuletis Curari volunt.*”

B. Motor mascots. These can now be obtained at Gamage’s and elsewhere, but so far are used much more generally and more seriously on motor cars in the United States and France than here. Dunhill’s ‘Motorities’ advertisements comprise rag-doll and metal mascots for fixing to the cap of the radiator. The one usually illustrated is a policeman holding out his hand to stop traffic and headed “Propitiate the fates!!” A similar French mascot is a blindfolded gendarme. Advertisements of cars show them fitted on the radiator with metal dog and cat mascots, but these figures and the ‘Teddy bears,’ Caran d’Ache and other toys, and wooden models of motor cars which are to be seen on cars in the streets, are carried ‘for fun’ rather than as genuine amulets. The chauffeur, however, often carries as a real charm a nail which has caused a puncture, or a holed stone, and there has been also an interesting revival of mediæval travellers’ amulets in the form of representations of the travellers’ patron, St. Christopher. Two such mascots were shown, one of which appears in Fig. 2. It will be seen that this engraved disc, which is screwed to the front of the radiator, while beautifully worked would not be conspicuous at a distance or specially ornamental, and might easily be mistaken for a trade mark. Some French St. Christophers for motors are said to be inscribed, “He that looks upon the image of St.

Christopher this day shall neither fall nor faint." Other genuine amulets may also occasionally be seen in use. One day this, summer a magnificent (Italian?) car at Brooklands had hung from its radiator cap a metal plate on which was pasted a coloured figure of a stork, a well-known amulet. Fig. 3 shows another motor mascot, a horse-shoe in red and gilt, with seven nail heads, to be fastened to the front of the radiator and containing in its cup on a red ground three four-leaved clovers. One would expect a horse-shoe to be rather injurious than protective to the horse's motor rival, but a horse-shoe was also carried by Edge in his twenty-four hours' ride in 1907. Relics of the Hand Cross motor omnibus disaster were eagerly sought by some motorists as mascots against similar accidents. Miniature copies of the policeman, Caran d'Ache toys, etc., are advertised by Elkington & Co. as "novelties in jewellery. Elkington motor mascots."

C. Commercial amulets, or modern made-up amulets brought into vogue generally by skilful advertising and by the circulation of stories of their power. The most notable of these commercial amulets are the objects made of New Zealand paunamu, greenstone, or "lucky jade," and a tiny 'Hei tiki,' or Maori god, and war club were shown. The wearing of a greenstone necklace by the Queen, and the stories that greenstone objects were carried by every member of the victorious All Blacks football team, by Lord Rosebery when Cicero won the Derby, by Lord Rothschild when St. Amant won his race, etc., no doubt are responsible for the boom in "lucky jade." Hei tikis, dwarf figures, and lucky sixpences are the favourite bridge mascots. Two Caran d'Ache toys, advertised as "new bridge mascots," were also shown. Fig. 4 shows one of twelve scent sachets exhibited, coloured and marked with the appropriate astrological symbol for each month and stamped, absurdly, on the side not shown, "The 'Char-mides' Sachet. Regd." Other objects exhibited were three small discs for suspension, of different colours and with coloured stars in them, and inscribed, "This be your lucky star"; silver lucky pig; mother-of-pearl horse-shoe brooch; bunch of silver cross, anchor, and heart (faith, hope, and love); "lucky farthing" with imitation gem inserted, and possibly suggested by the famous "Lee penny"; 'zodiac' gold ring, engraved with the signs of the

zodiac in West Africa and made chiefly for the London market ; gilt four-leaved clover marked on its leaves respectively with a three-leaved clover, horse-shoe, pig, and the words "Good-luck"; and bunch of hunchback, harlequin, policeman, pantaloons, and columbine. The most interesting of these exhibits was a card of "Your lucky birth-month brooch" (C. A. & Co's. Copyright). These were cheap brooches set with glass coloured in imitation of the gems allotted to the different months for 'luck,' and the jeweller from whom they were bought said that he had sold a large number. Other similar mascots, seen but not exhibited, are "the lucky princess wedding ring," inscribed in old English style with any one chosen of a set of posies, and golden "lucky horse-shoes," which had seven nail heads and were engraved, "I keep your luck in," the card holding them announcing, "Lucky horse-shoes. These keep your luck in."

D. Imported "lucky charms" which are not amulets in their country of origin. A common Kaffir bangle, of copper and iron wire and beads, was shown, bought from a jeweller's shop near a girls' training college, and described on a window card as "Kaffir Bangles. Native work. Anti-rheumatic and lucky." Native bangles appear to have gained a reputation, quite recently, as lucky, and Miss Phyllis Dare, in *London Opinion* (June 29, 1907), tells the following story, quoted here as an example of the kind of tale which establishes such objects as amulets :

"A particularly curious experience happened not very long ago to a friend of mine when she was playing in pantomime at Glasgow. About a fortnight before the piece came to an end she received, anonymously, one morning a Zulu bangle. Writing to me the same day she referred to this anonymous present and added, 'I am quite sure that I shall now have some good stroke of luck, for Zulu bangles are very lucky indeed.' And, sure enough, she did have a stroke of luck, for she received a letter the same evening from some solicitors in New York informing her that an uncle, of whose very existence she had almost forgotten, had died suddenly, leaving her in his will the useful sum of £1500. It seems superfluous to add that those members of the profession who happened to hear of this curious incident have ever since looked upon a Zulu bangle as a lucky mascot."

When an actress eloped in August from her company in Dublin, to marry a rich American, it was recorded that she had been in the habit of wearing no jewellery "except two Zulu bangles for luck."

PLATE V.

Mascots and Amulets of the British Isles.

Leonardson & Co.

Other objects exhibited were two plaster figures sold as "Japanese mascots" (Fig. 5), and five small Japanese pendants of various designs containing tiny dice. The latter objects were sold here as "lucky charms," probably on account of the dice, but in Japan may be only a means of secret gambling.

E. Imported foreign amulets and imitations of foreign amulets.

A considerable number of Italian mother-of-pearl amulets appear to be imported and sold as 'lucky charms,' and as specimens were shown a cat, dog, heart, skull, and hunchback. The hunchback, or gobbo, seems to have become established as a mascot here. Miss Dare, in the article cited above, says that, "although he has been on the stage for years, a well-known Shakespearian actor even to-day always hires a hunchback to sit in his dressing-room on a first night." Gold charms, bought in London, and exhibited, included the Japanese 'tomoye,' the Chinese Ku-ei or character signifying "good luck," the sign of the zodiac for a birth month, and the fylfot, "most ancient symbol of good fortune." Other charms commonly sold, especially for luck at bridge, are the Egyptian ankh cross, the nefer or symbol for good fortune, and sistrum. Other amulets exhibited were black wood and shell lucky pigs; silver crescent inscribed "good luck" and with a silver pig suspended from the upper horn; metal slipper; metal boot; bottle of Jordan water; and a red fungus with white spots (a German luck charm). Fig. 6 shows a silver-mounted tiger's claw, sold by an old Jewess as lucky.

F. Amulets of British origin. A number of groups of charms, intended to illustrate the principal types of British amulets, were shown and explained.

The group of bone amulets comprised a hammer-shaped bone from a sheep's head, carried at Whitby by fishermen as a preservative from drowning, and a similar bone carried by labourers in London as a charm against rheumatism (Fig. 1). This bone, or 'Thor's hammer,' is also worn in the Isle of Man. The *os sacrum*, or last bone of the back of a rabbit, when deprived of two horn-like projections, closely resembles a fox's head. One specimen exhibited was obtained from a maidservant from Oxfordshire, who said that it was commonly worn for luck, and that, from its appearance, "it must mean something." (The same girl, with

her brothers and sisters, was, as a child, made by her mother to eat, as a cure for whooping cough, bread which had been buried for three days in a pot in the ground.) Fig. 7 shows a second specimen, mounted as a gold scarf pin and fitted with onyx eyes; this was worn by a recently deceased solicitor. A "cramp bone" exhibited had been preserved for the cure of cramp in one family for over 100 years, and apparently consists of a sawn-off portion of a horse's frog. A rabbit's foot is a well-known amulet in this country, being mounted, for example, on bonnets adorned with the unlucky peacock's feathers. Fig. 8 shows a rabbit's foot bought here, but apparently, from the accompanying bill, prepared in the United States. The bill contains illustrations of six forms in which the foot can be obtained, and runs as follows:

"NEW MASCOT IN STERLING SILVER.

"In many parts of the country it is considered a great sign of good luck to carry somewhere on the person a rabbit's foot, either as a watch charm or in some other way. It is said, indeed, that one of our Presidential candidates carries one constantly in his pocket.

"The articles illustrated above are made of rabbits' feet cleverly mounted in sterling silver. The manufacturers claim that each is the left hind foot of a rabbit killed in a country graveyard at midnight, during the dark of the moon, on Friday, the thirteenth of the month, by a cross-eyed, left-handed, red-headed, bow-legged negro riding a white horse. This we do not guarantee.

"We are prepared to fill mail orders, with privilege of return if not satisfactory."

From the word "month" the manufacturers seem to have made an addition of their own to a genuine negro superstition. There was a curious legal action in New York, in 1905, to recover a rabbit's foot mascot from Nan Patterson, the Florodora chorus girl who was acquitted of the charge of murdering an English bookmaker. It seems that this rabbit's foot had been borne as an amulet at the trials of a number of alleged murderers, and that Nan Patterson was offered by a certain Elkhart all her legal charges if she refused to return it. The recovered foot was offered to Harry Thaw for his trial, but refused by him.

Several horse-shoe charms were shown, one of which had been hung up for several years for luck in a London house, and another (Fig. 9) was a miniature one specially made for a woman who suspended it for 19 years, as a luck charm, from her gas bracket.

One of the writers, when buying several Roman Catholic medals for children, also exhibited, from a London street stall, noticed on it a horse-shoe which had once been gilded and was supported, easel fashion, by a twisted wire. On asking the price, he was told it could not be sold. "The fact is, it belongs to a neighbour. We've had very bad luck since we started this stall, and he's lent it to us to see if it'll turn our luck. But I don't see that we've done much better." It will be remembered that, while Mr. Sievier was awaiting the jury's verdict in a recent Old Bailey trial, a horse-shoe in a bag was handed up to him "for luck." When "Ken's Kabin" was opened by the revolting waitresses last April, the newspapers noted that

"immediately after the opening hour yesterday a 'bus horse cast a shoe opposite the 'Kabin' door. The quick-eyed attendant outside espied this omen of good fortune, and darted after it. Returning with his prize, he presented it to 'Ken,' who passed it on to Mrs. Holland, who, in turn, made an interesting discovery. There were five nails in the discarded shoe. 'And there are five more years of the lease of this shop to run: a nail for each year,' exclaimed Mrs. Holland joyfully."

A few days later "Ken's Kabin" was closed.

The ring charms shown comprised a silver "longevity ring" of two interlaced snakes; evil-eye ring of silver set with a red chalcedony; astrological ring made under the sign of Libra; gold toadstone ring for the cure of king's evil; ring with onyx cut to form eye for warding off evil eye; and rheumatism ring containing a strip of squirrel's skin. In connection with the last object, it may be interesting to note that a Sioux Indian amulet against rheumatism is the lower jaw of a squirrel.

The shell charms comprised a cowrie attached to a seal, and a cowrie set with a tiny compass and sold as 'lucky' by a London coster.

The stone amulets comprise the two most original forms of amulet still to be found in the British Isles, the naturally-perforated stone and the many objects known as "thunderbolts." As to the primitive mind any object of abnormal shape suggested "magic," holed stones, nodules of iron pyrites, belemnites, flint arrow heads, and the like were believed to possess powers of protection from lightning and from many of the ills which assail the body. Such beliefs appear to have existed in prehistoric times, for many such

objects have been found associated with deposits of Neolithic age. Several perforated discs of stone were shown to illustrate this, as well as a fossil echinoderm embedded in a perforated flint and found on the breast of the skeleton in a Saxon interment on the South Downs. A fossil shown from the Cretaceous formation, known as *Porosphora globularis*, is a rounded body having a natural perforation, and it was suggested that this may have been the natural type from which globular beads were derived, tubular beads originating from the stems of encrinurites, known in Yorkshire as St. Cuthbert's beads. Both these fossils have been found associated with prehistoric burials. A large water-worn stone, perforated for suspension, was a hag-stone from Lancashire, in use about ninety years ago as a protection from hags or witches. Upon it a cross had been engraved, a Christian symbol being thus grafted upon a pre-Christian amulet. A polished Neolithic celt (Fig. 11), found deposited upon the open roof beam of a cottage near Portrush, Ireland, had been regarded as a thunderbolt,¹ and a belemnite (Fig 12) was so regarded in Surrey, as also were nodules of iron pyrites from the Cretaceous formation near Croydon collected by Mr. Lovett about forty years ago. The story of a beautifully polished green-stone celt shown illustrates the difficulty of obtaining such objects from their possessors. About twenty-five years ago, during a visit to Jersey, Mr. Lovett found this celt in a labourer's cottage, and much wished to add it to his collection of stone implements. The owner, however, would not part with it, saying that it was a thunderbolt and would save his family from sickness and harm. He was offered five shillings, and a few days later ten shillings, but would not listen to the offers. The following year Mr. Lovett again called upon the owner of the thunderbolt, and offered him fifteen shillings for it, with no result. The bid was raised to twenty shillings, but without success. About eight months later a

¹ Such celts are thought in Ireland to protect cottages from lightning, and the same protection is ascribed in England to the house leek, *sempervivum tectorum*, and may have led to its growth on roofs. In Germany *sempervivum soboliferum* is called the "thunder flower," as well as "Jupiter's beard," and is referred to in an edict by Charlemagne, "Et habeat quisque supra domum suam Jovis barbam." In Japan the "sunrise grass" or *hinode*, if growing on a house-roof, is expected to protect it against fire.

PLATE VI.

Leonardson & Co.

Mascots and Amulets of the British Isles.

friend in the island wrote that the man who had the curious stone was "hard up," and had asked whether the gentleman from London would still be willing to buy it, so that only after two years did the stone change hands. Fig. 13 shows a water-worn flint with natural perforation, from Antrim, used to tie to the horns of cows to prevent the fairies from stealing the milk. A similar specimen from Suffolk was regarded as a luck amulet, while a third specimen, from Somersetshire, was hung at the entrance to a garden to protect the fruit from witches (Fig. 10). Flint arrowheads of Neolithic age, used in Antrim to cure cows of "grup," were also exhibited. The arrow-heads were boiled in water, which was given to the cows to drink, the wizard who performed the charm repeating an incantation, while he himself drank some whisky as a most important part of the function! A perforated crinoid stem from Hayling Island, worn by a woman as a protective amulet, was also shown.

The string charms exhibited comprised a necklace recently worn in London successfully to stop nose-bleeding, and consisting of nine strands of red purse silk tied in eight knots, and then round the neck by a ninth knot, by persons of the opposite sex; and a charm, alleged to have prevented the return of severe old-standing lumbago, consisting of two interlaced skeins of white silk to be tied round the waist. The use of white, instead of red, silk in a charm seemed very unusual. In English as well as in foreign amulets red is important, and red flannel is always looked on as superior to white flannel for chest protectors, probably from the same preference. A London shop girl recently said to a sympathising customer that she could never have endured the long hours of standing if she had not worn *red* stockings. When the white silk charm for lumbago was mentioned to an Essex lady, 86 years old, she at once remarked that she knew the charm, but it ought to be *red* silk. The lady who wore the charm learnt its use from another lady who, like herself, had lived for many years away from this country, so that the white colour may be the result of forgetfulness.

The vegetable charms shown comprised a potato carried for rheumatism, given by an old lady who possessed two, and was at the time wearing strings of jute round her neck for asthma; the

seed of a West Indian plant, *Entada scandens*, sometimes washed up by the Gulf Stream on the western shores of Ireland and Scotland, and as a 'Virgin Mary bean' thought to assist women at the time of childbirth; a glass locket enclosing white heather;¹ and a series of very curious rush crosses, somewhat resembling the svastika, from Antrim. The latter are locally known as "St. Bridget's crosses," and are hung as amulets near the sleeping beds, probably as a charm against witches in the form of nightmares.

Other miscellaneous British amulets shown were a hawk's foot brooch, the silver cover of an ancient amulet case, and two lucky doubly bent sixpences, and a lucky doubly bent shilling.

G. Ornaments which were once amulets. Brass horse charms, of which some are shown in Figs. 14, 15, and 16, and which seem now to be passing out of use, appear, like certain British phallic charms, to be traceable to Roman times, the lunar type (Fig. 17) having persisted, practically unchanged, ever since. These were essentially evil-eye charms for the protection of the horse. (See *The Reliquary*, April and October, 1906.) Fig. 18 shows a shell necklace from Southport. When at the last British Association Meeting there, Mr. Lovett noticed in several fancy dealers' shops bundles of shell necklaces of identical pattern. When he came presently to another shop of the same kind in which there was an old woman, he went in and asked, "What are these necklaces?" "Three pence." "I mean, what are they for?" "For visitors." "I will buy some. But why are they all made exactly the same way?" "Because they are made by the fishermen." "Why do they make them in that particular way?" "Because they have always been made in that way. I made them that way when I was a girl, and my mother used to make them that way." "But you can't have made them for visitors when you were a girl. There were no visitors. What did you make them for then?" "Oh, just for fun." "No, you didn't make them for fun,—you made them for luck." "Who told you that? They said so, but that was silly." Another old woman then came into the

¹White heather (from the Surrey hills?) has been sold by gutter merchants along Cheapside, London, this autumn from little trays bearing cards, "Real Scotch lucky white heather."

shop, and was presently asked by the shopkeeper to show the 'spider shell' in her pocket. This proved to be a pelican's foot shell, which she would not part with. It had been carried by her husband for thirty years, and was now carried by herself 'for luck.' Mr. Lovett would be glad to know of any other shell necklaces of special design made by fisher folk.

H. Amulets in disguise, or objects practically serving as amulets though not professedly so, were illustrated by a rheumatism ring with advertisements quoting Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, the Countess of Dudley, W. S. Gilbert, J. L. Toole, etc., as believers, and tracing the descent of rheumatism rings from the story of the Westminster Abbey ring of Edward the Confessor. An unopened "seal" of Joanna Southcott, ensuring salvation to one of her followers over 90 years ago, was exhibited as a specimen of the "amulets" distributed by several religious fanatics.

A. R. WRIGHT.

E. LOVETT.

In the discussion which followed the exhibition, Mr. Tabor said he wished to bear testimony to the great amount of energy and research Messrs. Lovett and Wright had displayed in collecting the articles exhibited, and the beliefs in connection therewith, but he was bound to say he was not altogether in accordance with them as to the popular beliefs in the efficacy of some of the mascots exhibited; he thought that vogue rather than superstition was accountable for the use of many of these amulets by people who knew full well that there was no inherent talismanic virtue in them. At a recent Whist Drive, where many of the guests were people of notoriety in the world of letters, he noticed several of the unlucky players get up and turn their chairs (not always in the same direction), and, from the way in which this was done, he came to the conclusion that they did not anticipate any good to result, but merely did it *pour rire*. Mr. Tabor admitted that there might be one person in a thousand who would fix some well-known old charm to their motor cars in full belief that it would help them to avoid accidents, but thought that the majority of the clients

of the firms who advertised mascots bought them for fun and to be like their neighbours. A motor car is a costly article, and not generally owned by an illiterate person, and the speaker could not bring himself to believe that the well-educated man or woman really believed in the efficacy of charms of this sort; the lady who wears a lucky pig on a bangle surely does so for no other reason than that of fashion, although she may be illustrating the last link in the survival of an old belief. It is different with physical curative charms; in this case a process of faith-healing may have proved the efficacy of a fixed belief in the power of a certain amulet, and the consequent effect of mind upon body is often undoubtedly attributed to talismanic charms, but where the results attained, or desired, are objective and not subjective, he could not agree with the readers of the paper as to the prevalence of a popular belief. Mr. Tabor thought the preference for red over white flannel for chest protectors was due to the fact that red is both physically and artistically a warmer colour, and conserves the heat of the body, and that possibly the belief in the superior efficacy of red over white when worn as a charm in the form of a skein may have arisen from comparison of results obtained with the two colours when used for clothing; these results in less enlightened days may have been attributed to magic influence. The London shop-girl did not appear even parenthetically to hint that there was magic in the colour of her red stockings; she probably only meant that they kept her legs and feet warm, although they were exposed to the draughts of a shop-counter.

In conclusion, Mr. Tabor animadverted rather severely on Mr. Lovett's method of collecting information by asking leading questions; he said no judge would allow evidence to be obtained in this manner; the old lady with the necklaces herself combated the theory the joint authors of the paper were trying to prove (viz., a present popular belief in amulets), when she remarked: "They said so, but that was silly." Mr. Lovett's own witness would not fall into the ideas to which his questions were leading—a clear case of Balaam and Balak. Mr. Tabor hoped folk-lore collecting would always be done without suggestion, as

the temptation to please a prospective client or a present benefactor might often be too great for the narrator.

Mr. Gomme pointed out that the two collections exhibited dovetailed into one another, and that the genuine folklore character of the modern mascot was confirmed by its resemblance in idea and nature to the ancient amulet.

Mr. Calderon suggested that the tendency to revert to amulets was probably due in great part to literary promulgation. The attention given to such objects by the halfpenny press led to their diffusion amongst readers.

Mr. Hildburgh drew attention to a penny weekly, *The Mystic*, and the advertisements therein of "The Mystic Millinery, Luck Millinery and Astrological Fashions Co., Ltd.,"¹ and explained that the "Japanese mascots" shown were figures of puppies given by relatives to a baby boy as symbols of health and vigour, after its first visit to a temple.

The President said that from his experience the modern belief in amulets as aids to luck was genuine and widely spread.

FOLK-TALES OF THE ABORIGINES OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

(Continued from p. 227.)

IV. ORIGIN OF THE BAR IN THE MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER AT BALRANALD. (*Wathi-wathi Tribe.*)

About two miles below the town of Balranald, there is a low rocky bar across the bed of the Murrumbidgee river, which is only visible in dry weather when the stream is low. The aboriginal name of this bar is Bangonjee-butthu. Its formation is accounted for by the following native legend. A large tribe of blacks were camped on the edge of a sandhill in the locality, and one hot summer afternoon a number of little boys went into the river for a bathe, and all of them got drowned. The

¹ The same weekly also advertises £400 per annum for "Scholarships for children founded on their Horoscopes," for which "A number of well-known and skilled astrologers will be engaged to cast the horoscopes according to the data supplied, and their decision must in every case be considered final."