Note on Heathen Ceremonies Still Practised in Livonia, Russia

Author(s): John Lubbock

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this was lined and roofed with stone, and then that the sand was piled over the stone roof to the level of the surrounding ground for warmth and concealment. I think it is evident that the place was inhabited, from the traces of food and fire found therein.

The bones were splintered, probably to get at the marrow, and all the shells are of edible kinds. The quern would indicate some knowledge of agriculture, but animal food and shell fish seem to have been chiefly used. The absence of implements would indicate a low state of civilisation, and the natural dryness of the bones remote time. I have no opinion to advance regarding the probable age or builders of the structure which I have thus endeavoured to describe.

Mr. Campbell of Islay informed me that the Laplanders who bring their deer to the sea shore in the north of Norway, construct their dwellings thus:—Into the face of a sand bank, with a green sward above, and near the sea, a passage is cut. At the head of this passage a round pit is dug, about four feet deep and twelve wide. From the edge of this shallow circular sand pit, a conical frame-work of sticks and branches is raised. Over this frame-work, turf is laid, and sand is piled over the turf. Grass soon grows over the roof, and the house becomes a green mound, with a smoke-hole through the top, which in Gaelic is called *fair-leus*, sometimes corrupted *farlos*. The fire is made on the middle of the floor, and the inmates of the house sleep upon deer skins with their heads to the sand wall and their feet towards the fire. They live upon animal food. They break the bones, suck the marrow, and then throw the bones to their dogs, by which they are gnawed. A stone lining, added to this Lapp dwelling, would make something like the subterranean structure previously described. And thus it is that the present habits of a far-away country may serve to illustrate those of the far away times of our own. According to Sir John Lubbock's "*Prehistoric Times*," the Australian manufactures flint flakes, the counterpart of which I found four weeks ago among disintegrated gneiss, fallen from the roof of a partly artificial recess in an immense subterranean natural cave in Pabbey, one of the southern isles of Barra.

NOTE on HEATHEN CEREMONIES *still* PRACTISED in LIVONIA, RUSSIA. Communicated by the Baron de BOGUSCHEFSKY through Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Bart., F.R.S.

I PROCEEDED, according to your order, to the holy oak on the rivulet Micksy, which forms the division between the Govern-

ments of Pskov and Livonia. There I found a great assemblage of people, mostly the so-called Poluvertzi (*i. e.*, Tchudi or Esthonians, who were formerly Lutherans, but were afterwards re-baptised into the Orthodox Church), with their families, in gala dress: the men in kaftans (overcoats) of grey home-spun cloth, ornamented with designs stitched on the collar and at the girdle in woollen thread of various colours; the women in their long white cloth mantles with round and bell-shaped brass buttons sewn all along the seams in front, wearing on their heads ties of white linen with red edges, the long ends ornamented with fringes tied behind and hanging half way down the back. They were either seated on the grass or standing around the oak (which is a half dried, scorched, miserable specimen of the oak). Many of them had brought wax candles (or tapers) with them, and were fixing them all around the tree and on its branches.

After waiting some time, his reverence the Priest of Taylovo arrived, assumed the sacred robes, and proceeded to sing a "*moleben*" (a kind of canticle or hymn of prayers which is sung in the Orthodox Church in honour of various saints), saying instead of the usual "Holy Saint, pray the Lord for us," "Holy Oak Hallelujah pray for us," etc. After this, incensing the oak tree all round, reading the Bible, viz., as is done in the ordinary "*molebens*" to Saints; and then the priest gave the cross to be kissed by the people. During mass the tapers were lighted on the oak tree, the people throwing themselves on the ground and adoring the Holy Oak, the priest partook of some of the fare offered to him by the congregation, collected some money and still more cakes of rye flour baked with and without potato, and then proceeded homewards.

The people remained till late at night, drinking wine (vodka spirits), eating cakes, lighting new tapers on the oak tree, dancing, and otherwise amusing themselves, until at last everybody got tipsy, and a regular "orgie" continued, until all thought it best to retire home.

There is in this spot also a holy stone somewhere which is worshiped at the same time, but I could not see it, and did not venture to appear a stranger to the ceremony by asking questions as to where it was.

(Signed) JAMES PIGGUL, Steward of the Estate Panikovitz.