Some Apparent Coincidences of Custom and Belief Among the Ancient Chaldeans and the Peoples of Western Europe.

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the larvæ of insects which had worked their way inside them. When the insect has escaped, the shoot acts the part of a musical instrument, the wind producing from it the sound of a flute. Pushing the principle still further we might imagine our ideas of government to have come from observing the social economy of ants and bees, or that the "Physalia" gave to man the art of construction of the canoe.

Mr. BRABROOK remarked that in the somewhat advanced stage of civilisation to which the invention of numerals belonged, he believed far more importance must be attached to considerations of utility than to the imitation of natural objects. No doubt for every operation that involves mere counting, the fingers of the hands present themselves as the most obvious instruments for the purpose, hence the almost universal adoption of a decimal system of numeration; but when division or weighing is required, then a duodecimal system becomes necessary, and is everywhere adopted. This led him to remark, incidentally, the extreme fallacy of the advocates of a decimal coinage and of the decimal system in weights and measures, who would endeavour to apply to matters in which every variety of division and subdivision has to be provided for a system that is incompetent to express the idea of division by three, otherwise than by an endless series of divisions into three-tenths plus three-tenths of tenths plus three-tenths of tenths of tenths, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Mr. Moggridge, Mr. Smee, and others, took part in the discussion, and Mr. Tylor replied.

The following paper was read by the author:—

SOME APPARENT COINCIDENCES *of CUSTOM and BELIEF among the ANCIENT CHALDEANS and the PEOPLES of WESTERN EUROPE.* By A. L. LEWIS, M.A.I.

PERHAPS there is no professedly Anthropological society which is doing more real anthropological work than the Society of Biblical Archæology. Whatever and wherever the origin of the human race may have been, it is to Chaldea and to Egypt that the origin of the civilisation of Western Europe must, for the present, at least, be traced, and it is to the records of those countries, so wonderfully concealed during ages of indifference, if not of barbarism, so wonderfully brought to light within the last few years, and so wonderfully translated for us by those scholars (amongst others) who take the leading part in the Society of Biblical Archæology, that the anthropologist must look for the elucidation of old problems, and it may be for the bases of new ones. There are but few who can translate a cuneiform inscription reliably and satisfactorily, but, when the inscriptions are translated, it becomes alike the privilege and the duty of students of other branches of science to study the

translations, and to assimilate such parts of them as bear upon the facts which they have already collected from other sources. It is in this manner, therefore, and not because of any original discoveries or even researches of my own, that I venture to bring before you the following notes and queries.

Some of the clay tablets which took the place of our paper and parchment deeds, and which stated the terms upon which land was sold, and the interest and conditions upon which loans were granted, bear the marks of finger-nails in place of seals. Is it possible that the custom which prevails amongst us at the present day of touching the seal of a deed with the finger on signing it is in any way a survival of the Assyrian custom of marking the moist clay tablet with the finger-nails of the contracting parties before baking it?

The Assyrian months were lunar months, and the days on which the quarters began were to a certain extent treated as sabbaths. The half-month was divided into three periods of five days each, called respectively after Anu, the god of heaven, Héa, the god of the sea, and Bel, the god of the earth, probably on account of the moon being at those times in the particular part of the heavens dedicated to the god named. This division of the heavens between the gods may be compared with the arrangement of the altars of the state religion at Pekin, where it is stated that an altar of heaven is situated on the south side of the city, an altar of the earth on the north side, an altar of the sun on the east side, and an altar of the moon on the west side; and this again brings to mind a monument on which Nechtharhebes, a king of Egypt of the 30th dynasty, is represented as offering a libation to the deities of the four cardinal points or quarters of his country, the names of those deities and the cities in which they were venerated being inscribed on the monument in hieroglyphics.

The Babylonian measures of length, and also the Jewish, seem to have been based upon the barleycorn. It is well known to most school children that three barleycorns make one English inch. Mr. Conder considers our measures to be compounded from the Babylonian and Roman.

The Babylonians had in their temples towers, on the summit of which were altars. Is it possible that the Irish round towers, the object of which has been so much disputed, were analogous to these?

Sun-worship and the burning of children were common to Babylonia, Palestine, and Phœnicia, and were borrowed from the Accadians, as were most other beliefs, practices, arts, and sciences of the period. Sun-worship and the passing of children through or over a fire were also in vogue among the Celts of

our own country, the latter custom in particular having survived to a very recent date, if not even to the present day.

A number of writers have shown us that the true origin of many so-called Christian emblems, vestments, rites, practices, and even doctrines, for which no foundation can be found in the New Testament, may be traced to the various systems of paganism, and particularly to that of Assyria, and it would not be surprising if among these were found some things that have gathered round the simple memorial of bread and wine instituted in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. The Assyrians had a mysterious object called in the Semitic tablets "mamit," and in the Accadian "nambaru" and "sakba," the exact nature of which is at present unknown, although some of its characteristics may be gathered from various allusions to it in the inscriptions. Thus the following lines show that the "mamit" was regarded as having a heavenly origin, if not as being itself a deity:—

"Salvation, from the midst of the heavenly abyss descended,
Mamitu, from the midst of heaven descended."

And again,

"Mamit, Mamit, treasure which passeth not away,
Treasure of the Gods which departeth not,
Treasure of heaven and earth which shall not be removed,
The one god who never fails,
God and man are unable to explain it."

While another hymn is devoted to impressing upon the worshippers the duty of saving the "mamit" before all other things in case of a temple taking fire.

From the following lines we gather that the "mamit" was a small object, and was taken to the dying with the view of purging them from their sins:—"Take a white cloth, in it place the mamit in the sick man's right hand, and take a black cloth, wrap it round his left hand, then all the evil spirits (naming them), and the sins which he has committed, shall quit their hold of him, and shall never return."

Again, we hear that Cara-Indas, King of Carduniyas and Assur-bil-nisi-su, King of Assyria, made a covenant and a "mamitu," which is translated pledge, thus reminding us of the derivation of our own word sacrament, from *sacramentum*, an oath, and of the frequency with which the sacrament was used to swear by in the middle ages.

The Assyrians believed in the immortality of the soul. The souls of the righteous rose, as they imagined, like a bird to the skies, and the sun, "greatest of the gods," received them into happiness. The following line—"May the sun, greatest of the Gods, receive the saved soul into his holy hands"—sounds very

like an utterance from an orthodox Protestant pulpit of the present day. The great name of the sun in Assyrian theology was "Dian-nisi," which means "the judge of men," and is identified by Mr. Talbot with the Dionysus of the Greeks.

While, however, the souls of the righteous ascended to the sun, the souls of the unrighteous descended, according to the Assyrians, to "Bit Edie," "the house of eternity;" "Bit sha eribu's," "the house of darkness;" from which terms, "edie" and "erib," Mr. Talbot derives the Greek "hades," and "erebus." "Erib" strictly means to enter, but gets a secondary meaning of darkness from the sun entering or setting in the western sea. This derivation reminds us of the statement of the Rev. E. Davies, in his "*Celtic Researches*," that "Annwn," the country of the dead was, according to the Kymry, situated in a lower region, in the going down of the sun in the west, and that Hercules and others are said to have gone to the west to consult the manes of the dead; while the Celtic word "Annwn," reminds us again of the "Annunaki" of the Assyrians, the offspring of Anu, the sky, or the God of heaven; these "Annunaki" had their seat in the lower world, and may be compared with the "Cwm Annwn," or children of Annwn, a kind of spirit believed in by the old Kymry of Britain.

Amongst the gods named in the Assyrian tablets, is one called Ha, of whom Mr. Talbot says his name might, perhaps, better be translated, Hu or Ho; he was the god of the sea, and of all clever inventions and mysteries, and it has occurred to me that he may be substantially the same as the Hu Gadarn, or Hugh the Mighty, of the Kymry, who, according to their triads, led them from the shores of the Euxine to Britain; it may be that, as they followed the sea-coast for the most part, they considered Ha, as god of the sea, their leader. Mr. Croggan, who by the aid of the Celtic languages has produced the first satisfactory translation of the Lycian inscriptions, identifies the Lycian deity, "the great Hu," "the high ruler of the heavens," with the aforesaid Hu Gadarn, and thus supports my view.

At first sight it may seem rather a long step from the Assyrians to the Kymry, but the line of connection is not so difficult to trace as might be supposed, even if we ignore the possible connection, supported by Mr. Croggan, between the Lycians, the Trojans, and the Kymry. Mr. Smith, in his "*Chaldean Account of the Deluge*," says, "the oldest traditions of the early Babylonians seem to centre round the Persian Gulf," and, says Mr. Sayce, "it seems more and more clear that the original home of the Semites lay in the Arabian Desert, stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea," but this is precisely the quarter from which, according to Herodotus and other writers,

the Phœnicians originally came; moreover, the difference between the Assyrian, Phœnician, and Hebrew languages, seems to have been, if anything, less than that between German, Dutch, and English, while a multiplicity of ties of custom and religion connected those peoples together,* and there seems every reason to believe that the Phœnicians, and through them the Europeans, derived more from Chaldea, and it may be less from Egypt, than is generally supposed. From the Phœnicians to the Kymry is not a very wide leap; that the Phœnicians or Carthaginians had, at a very early date, commercial relations with, and considerable influence upon, the inhabitants of these islands can hardly be doubted; and, whether by their means or otherwise, it is certain that many identical superstitions, beliefs, and practices, have spread along a line extending from these islands to the Mediterranean, Southern Asia, and Hindostan.

Perhaps, however, one of the most remarkable facts that have been discovered in connection with ancient Babylonia and Assyria, is the fact that nearly all their civilisation originated with a Turanian race, and was only borrowed and diffused abroad by the less cultivated Semites, who overran their territory, intermingled with them, and succeeded them in empire, just as the civilisation of the barbarous Teutons of Europe has been derived from the Latin and Celtic nations, whom they in some measure supplanted, but who inherited, preserved, and improved the civilisation of the East. Can it be that our science has a great surprise in store for us, and that we shall ultimately find out that all civilisation originated with the somewhat despised Turanian peoples?

DISCUSSION.

MR. MONCURE CONWAY said that the questions suggested by the paper were of a vast character. The great problem in the region of Assyrian mythology seemed to be the right distribution of the ideas and myths found there to right ethnical sources. The races, and consequently the religions, of antiquity seemed to have been rolled together then to such an extent that we often find things that puzzle us as to whether they are Chaldean or Persian or Indian. The survival, for instance, in Europe of a belief in some evil influence of moonlight nights carries us back to Hur (the Moon), third person of the Assyrian trinity, but the association of destructiveness with it must be traced to Siva, as, indeed, must the awfulness usually ascribed to such third persons, and the fatality of sins against them.

* One of these customs, cited by Mr. Talbot, will be familiar to all. The practice of cutting the flesh, used by the prophets of Baal in their contest with Elijah, is specially commended in one of the tablets, if used in honour of Ishtar, the Ashtaroth of the Philistines.

Mr. PARK HARRISON said: Whilst fully admitting the very great progress that had been made in deciphering cuneiform writing, he was merely repeating an objection that had been more than once made by eminent Assyriologists, when he said that it was too much the practice of translators to *guess* at the meaning of words. When theological terms were used, supposed equivalents were often adopted from the religious phraseology of the day.

After some remarks from Mr. TYLOR,

Mr. LEWIS said, in reply to Mr. Park Harrison, that he did not think that he had in his paper treated any doubtful terms as being established. He was glad to find himself supported in general by Mr. Moncure Conway.

The President announced that Lieut. Cameron, C.B., R.N., would, on a future occasion, read a paper on the Anthropology of Central Africa; and the meeting separated.]

MAY 9TH, 1876.

Colonel A. LANE FOX, *President, in the Chair.*

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The following presents were announced, and the thanks of the meeting were voted for the same, viz. :—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

From Prof. F. V. HAYDEN.—Bulletin of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of Territories. Vol. II. No. 2.
From the EDITOR.—Materiaux pour l'Histoire de l'Homme. April, 1876.

From the INSTITUTION.—Journal of the Royal United Service Institution. Vol. XX. No. 85.

From the AUTHOR.—The Works and Problems of the Victoria Cave Explorations. By R. H. Tiddeman, M.A.

From the EDITOR.—Revue Scientifique. Nos. 44 & 45, 1876.

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Royal Society. Vol. XXIV. No. 168.

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania, 1874.

From the AUTHOR.—The Mystery of the Serpent. By Rev. Henry Stretton, M.A.

From the INSTITUTE.—The Canadian Journal. Vol. XV. No. 1.

From the ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, Krakowie.—Rozprawy Wydziału Przyrod Niezego. Tom II. Kolberg Lud, No. 9

From the EDITOR.—Nature (to date).