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in the absence of specimens, but the shape of the urns is what we should describe, were they found in England, as of the British period; the author, however, distinctly stated that the paste, with one exception, was fine, and coated with plumbago, which is unlike British or Celtic pottery. His descriptions suggested a resemblance to the smother-kiln pottery of Upchurch, which is black, and has a metallic appearance. Then, again, in one of the urns, an iron nail was found; when excavating in the Romano-British cemetery at Seaford, Sussex, several nails were met with—in fact, in every interment; so taking this with the description of the pottery, and the fact of a coin of Antoninus being found, the speaker would infer that these circles, or at any rate the pottery, was of the Gallo-Romano date, corresponding with our Romano-British period, of probably the third century. One of the urns had a decided Etruscan appearance, and was much like those from Cyprus, both as to the shape and ornamentation.

The following paper was taken as read:—

The NATURE and ORIGIN of GROUP-MARRIAGE.

By C. STANILAND WAKE, Esq.

THE existence among the Australian aborigines of a remarkable system of marriage, approaching very nearly to the “communal” marriage which is supposed by some writers to have been at one time universal among the Polynesian Islanders, has now been fully established.¹

In accordance with that system an Australian “has the rights of a brother, and he acknowledges the duties of a brother towards every man of his own group, and he can no more marry a woman of a group which is ‘sister’ to his own than we can marry our own sister.”

The reality of group-marriage being admitted, I propose to show its origin. According to Mr. Fison, the “simplest, and probably the earliest, form of the class division among the Australian aborigines is the separation of a community into two intermarrying classes, each having a distinctive title, which is taken by every one of its members.” The original classes are now generally subdivided into four, but the law of exogamy is still strictly enforced, and the rules of descent remain the same. Descent was originally, and usually is still, traced through female ancestors throughout both the classes and their subdivisions. All the members of the same class, therefore, trace their descent

¹ “Kamilaroi and Kurnai,” by Lorimer Fison, M.A., and A. W. Howitt, F.G.S., 1880.

to a common female ancestor. It is evident that, theoretically at least, such persons form a group of kinsmen, and this group answers to a gens as defined by Mr. Morgan. This writer says a gens is "a body of consanguinei descended from the same common ancestor, distinguished by a Gentile name, and bound together by affinities of blood." He adds that the gens originated in three principal conceptions: "the bond of kin, a pure lineage through descent in the female line, and non-intermarriage in the gens." These three conceptions are embodied in the Australian class, and, as embodied in the rules of descent and marriage, they prevent the intermarriage of near relations, that is, of persons belonging to the same class, or totemic subdivision.

We can thus judge of the social condition of the community from which the present tribes have been derived. As in accordance with the laws of marriage, the kinsmen of which each of the two original classes was composed could not intermarry, marriage of all the males of one class with all the females of the same generation in the other class must have been the rule. By the operation of this rule, combined with group relationship, the members of any particular grade of one class would, as consanguinei, be brothers and sisters to each other, but husbands and wives to all the members of the same grade in the other class. The practical result would be that all the men of each class would have their wives in common, and all the women of each class their husbands in common. Whether the number of persons in the several groups was great or small the result would be the same. When the system had been in operation through many generations, each class or group would embrace many families; but at an earlier date it would consist merely of the immediate descendants of the common female ancestor. In this case all the sons of each family group would be the husbands of all the daughters of the other family. Assuming that the sons of each group retained their own original habitation, their sisters would take up their abode in the family of their husbands, the females thus exchanging places; but if both families resided in a common habitation there would be merely an exchange of *sides*. Such was probably the original practice; as it would seem to be at the present day in the New Hebrides. According to the Rev. Mr. Codrington, as quoted by Mr. Fison, among the Melanesians any islander can easily learn which is his "side of the house" (*i.e.*, class), among the people of any island other than his own.

Group-marriage, whether it is associated with descent through females or through males, is subject to certain regulations which have the result of preventing the intermarriage of persons nearly related by blood. It would seem, therefore, that two principles

underlie that system—principles which, indeed, are embodied in the practice of all uncultured peoples in relation to marriage. They are, *first*, sexual conduct is natural, and therefore permissible, to all—implying a sexual *right* in every individual who attains the proper age; and, *secondly*, sexual unions between persons within certain degrees of consanguinity are criminal, and therefore not to be allowed. The operation of these two principles would, under the conditions of Australian social life, necessarily result in some such system as that described. It would not be sufficient to declare that every man should have a wife, and every woman a husband; for if the man or the woman were away from home they would cease, practically, to be husband and wife, and, according to the first principle stated, they would be entitled to find others to temporarily fill those offices. Moreover, owing to warfare, infanticide, or other causes, the number of men and women might become unequal, or an individual might be unable for a time to perform his or her part of the marital engagement, in which case strict compliance with the sexual right would require that some men should have more than one wife, or some women more than one husband. If all those causes operated, under the restrictions directed against consanguineous marriages, among a race of a low degree of culture, who fully recognised the absence of impropriety in sexual conduct with the attendant sexual rights of individuals, and under the social conditions of a migratory or nomadic people, the development of a system of group-marriage would be certain.

That which we have supposed to have been the practice in the primitive intermarrying groups was, until recently, and perhaps is still, to be met with in a modified form as an actual custom among the Polynesian Islanders. Mr. Morgan states that when the American aborigines were discovered the family among them was in *syndyasmian* form, which is founded upon marriage between single pairs, but without exclusive cohabitation. He affirms, however, that the syndyasmian family had arisen from the punaluan family, and he adds, when replying to Mr. McLennan's criticisms, that in the Turanian and American (*Ganowánian*) systems we find two forms of *punalua*—one founded on the brotherhood of the husbands, and the other on the sisterhood of the wives. In each group the men were polygynous, and the women polyandrous. The punaluan system is thus practically the same as group-marriage. The group formed in either case is, however, very different. The Australian is much the larger, as it embraces all the members of a class, while the Polynesian affects only the persons immediately concerned. Each punaluan group appears to be formed independently, and without conferring any special marital right

on the children belonging to it. This is totally unlike the Australian system, which recognises individuals only as members of certain groups which are perpetuated by descent through its female members. The latter may, therefore, be described as hereditary punalua; the terms *brother* and *sister*, according to it, comprising all the members of a particular grade of the same generation, and therefore having a tribal, rather than an individual, significance.

By what steps the Australian system has reached its present form is doubtful. The two original intermarrying classes would be perpetuated by descent through females, combined with prohibition against the intermarriage of those who, by the possession of the same class name, are known to be descendants of a common ancestor. The introduction of four classes instead of two did not affect the laws of marriage and descent; but it was attended by the curious result that a woman and her children belong to different classes. For example, the daughter of Ipatha is Butha, and not Ipatha, as it would be if children took their mother's name. Mr. Fison sees in this fact an exchange of children between the classes, as to the reason for which he appears to be undecided. He thinks it may be that exchange "became a fixed idea in the native mind when the two classes were subdivided, whence it seemed to be an absolute necessity that the sub-classes also should exchange their children." He suggests, however, that instead of such a subdivision there was an amalgamation of two distinct tribes, each consisting of two exogamous intermarrying classes, and that the amalgamating classes exchanged wives but retained their own children. This very ingenious explanation is consistent with the position assigned by the Australians to their women, who are valued as creatures of passion and child-bearers, rather than as wives; but it is not satisfactory, seeing that it is inconsistent with the laws which govern descent. The real solution of the difficulty would appear to be as follows. In accordance with the principle which recognised the sexual rights of every member of the two intermarrying classes, all the individuals in each class who had attained the age of puberty formed a single group, the members of which were considered the husbands or wives of all the members of a similar group in the other class. By the operation of the rule against consanguineous marriages, however, those sexual alliances were restricted, among tribes having descent in the female line, to the children of a man and his sisters, or of a woman and her brothers. In other words, a man could be the husband only of the daughters of his father's sisters or of his mother's brothers; because they did not belong to his own class. The persons with whom a man or woman can marry

are now distinguished by the title of *cousins* from the other members of the grade, who are called brothers and sisters. It is uncertain whether the title of cousin was introduced before or at the same time as the formation of the four classes. If the latter were the case, the result, while there were only two classes, would be that if all the males of one class were the husbands of all the females of the other class, a man would stand in that relation not only to his mother-in-law and his father's sisters, but also to his own daughters, both lineal and collateral. As Mr. Fison points out, that fact well explains the mutual avoidance or ceremonial politeness practised between mothers-in-law and sons-in-law among the Australians and other uncultured peoples. Mr. Fison remarks that amongst the Fijians the same mutual avoidance is seen between brother and sister, whether they be children of the same parents or not. The Fijian shuns his sister, and the Australian his mother-in-law, because the woman is *specially* forbidden to him, and her touch would be pollution. There does not appear to be the same absence of familiarity between parents and children, but among the Australians marital intercourse between a father and his daughter would, while there were only two intermarrying classes, be specially forbidden. After the introduction of two fresh classes such an alliance would be rendered impossible by the fact that a man's daughters (actual or tribal) would belong to a class different from that of his wife. Two fresh classes may, therefore, have been introduced for the purpose of *expressly* rendering unlawful, in all cases, the marriage between a parent and a child, whether actual or tribal. The real origin, however, of the four class division is probably to be sought in the division of the original marrying group into two grades, a parent and a child grade. If such a division took place, the members of the child grade would have to take class names which, like those of the parent grade, would denote the relationships in which they stood to each other, but differing from those of the parent grade. For instance, if the latter has the names Ipai and Kubi, the child grade would receive the names Kumbu and Muri, which must, like the individuals belonging to them, stand in the same relation to each other as did the original classes. Ipai and Kubi being cousins are intermarrying classes, and such must also be the case with Kumbu and Muri. Moreover, Kumbu and Muri, as Ipai and Kubi, are cousins, because they are respectively the children of a brother and of a sister, and not of two brothers or of two sisters, who, as belonging to the same class, would not be cousins. The following table, framed on the assumption that Ipai-Kumbu represents one of the original intermarrying classes, and Kubi-Muri the other, will show the operation of the laws of marriage and descent.

M 2

TABLE A.
PARENT GRADE.

Ego.	Marries.	Children.	Nephew and Niece.	Cousins.
Ipai.	Kubitha.	{ Muri. Matha.	Kumbu. Butha.	Kubi. Kubitha.
Kubi.	Ipatha.	{ Kumbu. Butha.	Muri. Matha.	Ipai. Ipatha.

CHILD GRADE.

Ego.	Marries.	Children.	Nephew and Niece.	Cousins.
Kumbu.	Matha.	{ Kubi. Kubitha.	Ipai. Ipatha.	Muri. Matha.
Muri.	Butha.	{ Ipai. Ipatha.	Kubi. Kubitha.	Kumbu. Butha.

With descent in the female line, the result will be the same whether *ego* be male or female. Mr. Fison remarks that "Ipai does not intermarry with Kumbu, nor does Muri intermarry with Kubi; but the Ipai-Kumbu pair intermarries with the Muri-Kubi pair. These pairs represent the original classes." This statement is not quite correct. Ipai would not intermarry with Kumbu, because this is his nephew class; and for the same reason Muri would not intermarry with Kubi. Ipai and Kubi intermarry, however, because they are cousin classes; and so also do Kumbu and Muri, who stand in the same relation to each other. The pairs which represent the original classes are, therefore, Ipai-Kumbu and Kubi-Muri. The difference between this arrangement and that given by Mr. Fison appears to be very slight, but it is nevertheless of great importance, as not only are the classes related to each other in pairs, but each class is specially related to each of the other classes. The correctness

of the arrangement proposed by me is shown by the following table:—

TABLE B.

α	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Ipai and Kumbu} \\ \text{Kubi and Muri} \end{array} \right\}$	are Uncle and Nephew classes.
b	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Ipai and Muri} \\ \text{Kubi and Kumbu} \end{array} \right\}$	are Parent and Child classes.
c	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Ipai and Kubi} \\ \text{Kumbu and Muri} \end{array} \right\}$	are Cousin classes.

If Muri and Kubi were to change places in α and b , they would have to do the same in c , in which case Muri would be the cousin class with Ipai, and Kubi the cousin class with Kumbu. This, however, is contrary to the fact, and, therefore, we must suppose that Kubi-Muri is the true arrangement of these two classes.

As cousins, Ipai and Kubi, and also Kumbu and Muri, are intermarrying classes, and each pair of cousin classes stand to the other in the relation of parent and child. Whether either pair preceded the other is very doubtful, however, as there is nothing to show that either of them specially represents the original and class division. When, therefore, it is said that Ipai-Kubi is the parent grade, and Kumbu-Muri the child grade, the statement must not be taken absolutely. The intermarriage of the Ipai and Kubi classes gives Kumbu and Muri in the next generation; but the intermarriage of Kumbu and Muri gives an analogous result. In fact, the two series of classes alternate from one generation to another, as shown by the following diagram:—

If descent were traced in the male line, the class relationships would be the same as that exhibited in the Table A given above, except that sons and daughters (actual or tribal) would change places with nephews and nieces. With descent in the female line, the latter are treated as more nearly related to a man than his own children. This is not on account of any uncertainty as to paternity, but simply because with descent through females a man's children (actual or tribal) belong to a class allied to that of his wife, while his nephews and nieces are members of a class, allied to that to which he himself belongs. That the question of paternity does not affect the result is evident from the fact

that although, according to the earlier system, "as regards descent, the father is utterly ignored," kinship through him is as fully recognised as though descent were traced in the male line.

Mr. Howitt thinks that indirect evidence of the former existence of the undivided commune among the Australians may be found in the Dieri legend given by Mr. Gason. This legend is related to account for the existence of the *Mürdu* custom, which forbids marriage between persons bearing the same family name, and it states that the tribe was divided into branches and distinguished by different names, and the members of each branch forbidden to intermarry, in order to prevent the evil effects which had become manifest through the promiscuous intermarriage between brothers, sisters, and others of the closest kin which had before been customary. It may be observed, as to this legend—assuming it to be *bonâ fide*, and not manufactured by Mr. Gason's native informant—that, as it has not been met with among any other tribe than the Dieri, it may have originated to explain a state of things peculiar to themselves. The Dieri may, owing to peculiar circumstances, have sprung from the union between a brother and sister, such as, according to Hebrew legend, must have been the case with the descendants of Cain or of Seth. But the legend, whether it applies only to the Dieri or to the whole Australian race, proves nothing as to their early social condition. At the utmost it shows only how the ingenious native mind explains the origin of the division of the tribes into branches having different family names—a division which, if it had an immediate relation to the question of marriage, may have been, and probably was, intended to prevent consanguineous marriages, by furnishing an easy test of kinship when the tribe had become so numerous or widespread that kinship could not otherwise be well determined. Mr Fison evidently believes the Dieri legend to be genuine, and he says that "divisions similar to those which it mentions are found throughout the length and breadth of the Australian continent, as well as in many other parts of the world, and that from these divisions, with their inter-sexual arrangements, flows the entire system of kinship called the Turanian by Mr. Morgan." This fact in itself throws doubt on the truth of the legend; seeing that it is very improbable the Dieri tribe, among all the peoples having the Turanian system of kinship, should have alone preserved a remembrance of the cause of the division into classes and gentes. Moreover, according to the hypothesis, that division must have taken place some thousands of years ago, and considering how inconsistent intermarriage between persons regarded as of near kin¹ is with the feelings of the Australians,

¹ The Malagasy allow marriages between brothers' children, and also between the children of a sister and of a brother, on the performance of a prescribed

and all other peoples of a low degree of culture,¹ promiscuity is very unlikely to have been a recognised custom at any time within which the Dieri legend could have originated and been transmitted. For these reasons we shall be justified in supposing the legend to have been of comparatively recent origin, and to have been invented to explain habits which were inconsistent with the ordinary rules of marriage.

Nevertheless, Mr. Fison refers to certain customs which he thinks furnishes strong evidence that communal marriage formerly prevailed among the ancestors of the Kurnai. Among other practices, he mentions "expiation for marriage," which, he says, supplies "precisely those conditions which Mr. McLennan justly requires, as necessary to make such evidence of value. The privileged persons should be of the bridegroom's group only, and the cases should be capable of no simpler explanation." Mr. Fison speaks also of "the remarkable significance of the fact recorded by Mr. Howitt, that, when a woman elopes from her husband, she becomes, for the time being, the common property of her pursuers, if they can catch her. By her own act she has severed the tie which, binding her to her husband, guarded her against the old communal right, and forthwith that right asserts itself." Now I would observe, on this latter subject, that the exercise of the so-called communal right is, in reality, part of the punishment of the woman for her elopement. It is referred to by Mr. Howitt as one of the penalties by which a woman's fidelity to her husband is enforced; and Mr. Fison himself, in mentioning a similar practice among the Fijians, speaks of it as a punishment which is inflicted openly in the public square of the town. Probably the idea of a reward to the captors was added, but the predominant idea would have relation to the woman and her offence. Even if we have, in the case mentioned, the assertion of a right, it is not communal, in the strict sense of this term. The men who exercise the right must belong to the husband's group, and therefore they stand in the same social relation to her as her husband himself. Mr. Howitt does not say as much. Indeed, he states that "all the neighbouring men might turn out, and

ceremony supposed to remove any impediment from consanguinity; but marriage between the children of sisters having the same mother is regarded with horror as incest.—"The Great African Island," by the Rev. J. Sibree, jun., p. 248.

¹ Mr. Mann affirms, as to the Andamanese, that "in all the relations of life the question of propinquity is, in their eyes, of paramount importance, and marriage is only permissible between those who are known to be not even distantly connected, except by wedlock, with each other."—"Journ. Anthropol. Inst." vol. xii (1882), p. 126.) "Although great freedom is allowed between the sexes before marriage, it is strictly confined to those not related by blood" (p. 135).

seek for" the eloping woman; but we may judge by analogy that it would be so. When treating of an analogous subject, Mr. Howitt refers to facts which prove that, among the Australians, a "marriage by capture was only permitted when the captor and the captive were of some classes which might legally intermarry." Among one tribe it is said that "the female war captive was at first common to the men present at her capture, and then only became the property of her captor if she were of a class from which he might take a wife." Whether or not the captor, under these circumstances, participated in the common right is not stated; but if so, it would be under the peculiar conditions of the capture, and would be in the nature of a reward, and not of the exercise of a communal right.

The so-called expiation for marriage is a simpler question, for here undoubtedly the men who assert the marital right belong to the husband's family group. Mr. Fison says expressly, "the group of men who can claim expiation for 'special marriage' is no longer the whole tribe, but the group of tribal brothers who have a common right to the group of females to which the woman belongs." The suggestion here made, that the whole tribe could at one time claim expiation, is not supported by evidence; but if the practice of promiscuity, as a propitiatory measure, is sometimes allowed, this fact cannot be taken as evidence of the former existence of the undivided commune. By analogy with the present custom, we must suppose it was only under a special condition of things that the marriage restrictions were suspended, not that they did not exist. We have probably an analogous case in the curious custom which, for a limited period, allows, under certain circumstances, full licence to the exercise of unlawful actions. Thus, formerly, among the Hawaiians, on the death of a chief "the whole neighbourhood," says Ellis, "exhibited a scene of confusion, wickedness, and cruelty, seldom witnessed even in the most barbarous society. The people ran to and fro without their clothes, appearing and acting more like demons than human beings; every vice was practised, and almost every species of crime perpetrated. Houses were burnt, property plundered, even murder sometimes committed, and the gratification of every base and savage feeling sought without restraint."¹ The death of a chief appeared to be regarded as loosening the bonds of society, or rather, as allowing each individual to give full play to his passions. There may be in such conduct something of an expiation or of an offering to the dead, but probably the chief idea in operation was freedom from restraint. Thus, among the Hovas of Madagascar, on the birth of a child in the royal family, complete sexual license was

¹ "Polynesian Researches," 2nd ed., vol. iv, p. 177.

allowed. On one occasion, according to the Rev. Mr. Ellis, "the town, by reason of the scenes which the streets and lanes almost everywhere exhibited, appeared like one vast brothel." Such a period was described by a term which denoted that death could not be then inflicted for any offence.¹ Among the hill tribes of India, similar licentious conduct takes place at religious or funeral festivals, and the same thing would seem to have been usual among some of the ancient Peruvian peoples. The removal of the restraints of authority is thus expressed, in like manner as, during the Areoi festivities of the Tahitians, the restrictions of the Tabu were removed from females;² the result, in either case, being no doubt much the same as the licentiousness witnessed among the Australians on the occasions referred to by Mr. Fison.

The absolute promiscuity of the Australians may be explained, therefore, in the same way as the conduct of the Polynesian and other peoples during their religious and other festivals, rather than as a case of expiation. Mr. Fison speaks of "expiation for marriage" as a compounding for the breach of a communal right on the part of the woman, but there does not appear to be any room for such an explanation where there is absolute promiscuity. If for "communal" the word "group" is substituted, we see some force in Mr. Fison's explanation; for it is the group-right which is interfered with, and which therefore requires expiation. In fact, that writer elsewhere admits that his conclusion as to the nature of the Australian system of marriage and relationship does not go beyond the statement that it is "based upon communal marriage between permitted groups." The communism is not general, but is restricted to certain groups, the members of each of which *have the right* to form sexual relations with the members of another group, but not among themselves.

¹ Ellis, "History of Madagascar," vol. i, p. 120.

² Ellis, "Polynesian Researches," vol. i, p. 247.