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CORRESPONDENCE.

FERTILISATION OF BIRDS.

(Vol. viii. p. 375 ; ix. p. 82).

THE notes on the belief in visual intercourse given in the current number of *Folk-Lore* under the heading "Fertilisation of Birds" have recalled to my memory the following allied belief. Though the superstition is not general, there are people in Lincolnshire who believe that a man having possession of a flask containing a strong perfume can use it to obtain power over a girl—hypnotic power apparently. Hence, a young woman ought not to permit the near approach of one of the other sex with a bottle of eau de Cologne or of other scent lest she should inhale the vapour. I have heard of a domestic servant who was much disturbed when her employer's son held out a bottle of scent towards her. Seeing, however, that he was ignorant of the construction which might be put upon his behaviour, she explained the cause of her agitation. It is not quite clear whether the perfume is merely a powerful love-philtre in vaporous form, which paralyses the will of the person breathing it, or whether it acts as does the hot breath following the fixed gaze of the foreigner mentioned by Mrs. Gomme. But when once the girl is under its influence she is helpless.

M. P.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDOL-WORSHIP.

(Vol. viii. p. 325.)

Mr. Crooke's paper on "The Binding of a God" is remarkably interesting as showing the evolution of anthropomorphic idols from the earlier or neolithic form of stone-worship. He states

that in the early ritual of India the altar for the reception of the Soma was to be constructed in the form of a woman (the mother of all living?).

The feminine element has also been perpetuated in the pre-historic stones and sculptured idols of Europe. Two very rude such figures have been found in the island of Guernsey; one of these was discovered a few years ago beneath the flooring of the Ctel Church when it was being relaid.

Near St. Renan, in North Brittany, is a monolith about 40 feet in height, which is unmistakably intended to represent a female figure. Certain mysterious rites are known to be performed around it by women at the present day. In another part of Brittany is the so-called Venus de Quinipilly, an undraped female statue of good proportions, and belonging to an advanced style of art. Scattered over the steppes of Southern Russia are a large number of stone statues, all of the female sex, and draped to a certain extent. These are known to have been worshipped in former times; they now serve as landmarks for those who have to traverse that region. It is a problem yet to be solved whence came the stone of which they are made, since there is no stone in the whole district; consequently there are no metalled roads. Who were the artificers of these statues is unknown also. This subject will be treated more at length in my forthcoming book, *The Symbolism of the East and West*.

The following legend is an illustration of the power of volition sometimes attributed to an Indian god. Belonging to Sultanpur, the capital of the Kulu state, is a tiny brass image, Raghunth by name, which is said to have been stolen from Oudh more than two hundred years ago. The tale runs thus: The ruler of this small Himalayan state sent to demand money from a wealthy Brahman, who refused to comply with the demand, and on a second messenger being sent to him, the Brahman set fire to his house, whereby he and all his family were burnt to death. On this, the Raja suddenly found himself attacked with leprosy, but was informed in a dream that if he could only procure the idol Raghunth he would be cured. He at once dispatched some trusty servants to Oudh, with the intention of carrying it off by fair means or foul; they stole the god, were pursued and overtaken, but Raghunth showed such a decided wish to go to Kulu, that in the end they were allowed to take the god away, and as

soon as he appeared in the valley the Raja became cured of his terrible disease.

A fair, which lasts a week, is held annually in Sultanpur early in October. Each village in Kulu has its own particular godling; on this occasion all these are bound to go to the capital to pay their respects to Raghunâth, certain lands having been granted rent free to each temple on this condition; these funds serve to support its attendants and supply food to the people of the respective villages who have accompanied their idol thither. The scene is a very gay one. All, both men and women, are dressed in their best, and wear necklaces of fresh-gathered marigold flowers, a plant extensively cultivated near their temples—orange-yellow being a sacred colour with the Hindus.

H. G. M. MURRAY-AYNSLEY.