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Presidential Address.

E. Sidney Hartland

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

ONLY one more of the responsibilities which you laid upon me when, two years ago, you did me the honour to elect me your President yet remains to be discharged; and for that I have to make during the next few minutes what I hope will not seem an undue claim upon your indulgence. The past year has been a sad one for many of us in our personal relations. As Members of this Society, and as students of folklore, it has been not less sad. We have had to mourn the loss of some who have rendered striking service to the cause of science, and of more than one to whom we and the world at large owe much of the pleasure and interest which give zest to life.

General Pitt-Rivers had been for eleven years a Vice-President of the Society. His chief work, though outside the immediate range of our studies, was of a kind which on the one hand illustrates those studies, and on the other hand receives from them illustration and confirmation. The continuity of tradition was the leading thought of his scientific life. The noble museum at Oxford which bears his name, and is due to his munificence, grew out of that thought; and the other museum, hardly less interesting, on his estate at Farnham is penetrated with the same. If genius be properly defined as the infinite capacity for taking pains, General Pitt-Rivers was endowed with it in ample measure. His motto in everything was Thorough; and it will be of evil augury for British archæology if the example he set shall ever be lost sight of. He has left to his country and to anthropological science in the two

museums and in his writings, not simply a monument to his own fame, but a gift the value of which must grow with the rolling years and our evolving civilisation.

There is another loss which touches us in some respects even more directly, that of Miss Kingsley. Among all the victims of the war against the Boer states there has been none whose life was so precious as that of Mary Kingsley. I need not repeat the phrases of admiration and affection with which her death has been mourned from one end of the country to the other. All phrases seem cold when we think of her. She suffered the crowning tragedy of so many gracious lives in dying with her work unaccomplished. Her insight into the mind of the West African native, and her bold and humorous advocacy of careful study of and rational treatment for him, had hardly begun to impress the powers that be in the political and religious worlds. A band of friends are seeking to fulfil that task. To do so will be to perpetuate in the worthiest way, the way she herself would most have wished, the memory and the aims of one of the noblest among women.

Unfortunately General Pitt-Rivers and Miss Kingsley do not end the sad list. Ulrich Jahn, the Pomeranian collector of folklore, was known to all students. Professor Max Müller, insecure and unsatisfactory as his mythological theories were, deserves a grateful recognition from us as the first to popularise by his charming and persuasive style the study of mythological problems. From him many of us drew our earliest interest in the subject. Nor may we forget the name of that distinguished student of savage peoples, Frank Hamilton Cushing. Throughout the length and breadth of North America his premature demise has called forth the most touching expressions of regret. His constant associates, themselves men of learning and judgement, speak of him as "a man of genius," "one of the most original minds among anthropologists"; and Major Powell, the head of the Bureau of Ethnology, adds: "From

the time that we first went together to Zuñi until the day of his death, he was my companion and friend, and I loved him as a father loves his son." My own acquaintance with him was of the slightest; but what I had the privilege of seeing assured me that in him anthropology possessed, not merely a capable and devoted, but a brilliant disciple. To English readers his works are not very accessible, being chiefly embodied in official reports. No one who studies them, however, can resist the impression that their writer was endowed with all the qualities and experience which go to make an ideal investigator of archaic civilisations.

We will not dwell on the losses of the immediate past. Deeply though we may feel them, their noblest use is to inspire the activities of the present. After all, the shadows of a closing age are but the reverse side of the hopes of that which is opening. As we linger on the threshold of the twentieth century we are tempted rather to look forward into the unknown, and to wonder what new fortunes, what events, what discoveries are to glorify or bedim, at any rate to signalise, the new era. Especially with regard to anthropological science, whereof folklore is so important a branch, we desire to forecast the future. We are perhaps getting a little tired of rhapsodies on the progress of science during the nineteenth century. We are willing to take it all for granted. Yet it is well we should remember how rapid has been the rise of folklore as a serious study. A hundred years ago Brand was apologising for his investigation of the causes of "vulgar rites and popular opinions." "If," he says, "they shall appear to any to be so frivolous as not to have deserved the pains of the search, the humble labourer [namely, himself] will at least have the satisfaction of avoiding censure by incurring contempt." And he thinks it necessary to appeal, against the pride which would so treat him, to the common origin of mankind, the lowest as well as the highest. "The People, of whom society is chiefly composed, is," he pleads, "a respectable subject to everyone who is the friend of man." Before these words

were published, a greater than Brand had issued the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and the brothers Grimm had collected and given to the world the first volume of their famous *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. With these two works and Brand and Ellis' *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, the foundations of the science of folklore were securely laid. Nearly two generations, however, were to pass away before Maine, MacLennan, Morgan, and Professor Tylor began to build upon them.

When we consider the remarkable results of the researches of the past forty years initiated by these distinguished men, we need little encouragement to anticipate an early solution of the great enigmas offered by human civilisation and the history of religion. They, however, who know the complexity of the problem will be the least sanguine. They will be more likely to sympathise with Brand's modest estimate of possibilities. "The prime origin of the superstitious notions and ceremonies of the people," he assures us, as Dr. Johnson had done before him, "is absolutely unattainable. We must despair of ever being able to reach the fountain-head of streams which have been running and increasing from the beginning of time." Then, with the true instinct of an explorer in this difficult region, he adds: "All that we can aspire to do, is only to trace their courses backward, as far as possible, on those charts that now remain of the distant countries whence they were first perceived to flow." For my own part, after the experience of what has already been discovered in this way, I am content to believe that in good time all the important issues will be determined, though that determination will have to be preceded by arduous enquiry, perhaps in directions hitherto unthought of.

Dismissing speculation, let us turn to one or two of the questions awaiting solution. Our thoughts have been during the past year directed so continuously to South Africa that I shall offer no apology for considering such

questions in the light of the folklore of the South African tribes. Among the subjects that have at various times occupied the minds of the foremost thinkers throughout the world is that of the beginnings of religion. Its attraction is perennial. But not until our own time has it been possible so much as to enter on the enquiry in a scientific manner. And still, like the visionary Fountain of Youth for which the Spaniards sought so pertinaciously in the New World, the further we penetrate the wilds of savage thought and savage custom, the further off seems the object of our search. Has the search then been in vain? By no means. Only in the sweat of his brow shall man eat the bread of scientific truth. It does not drop like manna from heaven. Its clear waters will not well forth from *any* rock in the wilderness, chance-smitten by *any* rod. He who essays to reveal it must not shrink from long and painful preparation, from patient and heedful observation. It must be won by exhaustive research, by the careful framing and conscientious testing of hypotheses, and by their rejection or modification as the facts, and the facts alone, demand. This is a process of which we have already been witnesses and partakers. Hypothesis after hypothesis has been formulated, each probably embodying some aspect of the truth. Their destruction by criticism has been as inevitable and as essential as their formation. It should not dishearten us; nor should it obscure the portions of truth they have severally contained.

One of the latest contributions to the discussion was furnished a year or two ago by Mr. Andrew Lang in his book on *The Making of Religion*. The phenomena of hypnotism and the High Gods of low races were there examined; and a vigorous polemic was instituted against Huxley, Dr. Tylor, Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. im Thurn, and others who denied anything like a Supreme Being to savages on a low plane of culture. Hypnotism is beyond my ken. But I ventured, as you will remember, to urge in

the pages of *Folk-Lore* some objections against Mr. Lang's presentation of the Australian evidence for a relatively supreme and moral Being. I still think those objections valid, though I have been unable to convince him. I do not intend now to return to the charge. Rather I would say: Be Mr. Lang's conclusions right or wrong, he has rendered a service to anthropology in drawing attention to evidence which has been too much overlooked.

Since *The Making of Religion* was published, another interpretation of much of the evidence concerning savage religion has been attempted by Mr. Marett in a paper printed in the last volume of *Folk-Lore*. He does not claim to have "a brand-new theory to propound." The phenomena to which he points have been observed by previous writers, and have long been admittedly an element not to be passed over in the solution of the problem. His merit is to have explained those phenomena anew, and to have recognised that they have a greater value than had been assigned to them. If his view be just, they must henceforth occupy not a subordinate, but a principal—not necessarily an exclusive—place in our explanations.

Like Mr. Lang, Mr. Marett seeks to go behind animism, and to resolve into its elements the compound of emotion and belief which we call religion. He is struck by the attitude of the savage mind in relation to the unfamiliar. That attitude he identifies, if I rightly understand him, with the attitude of the primitive savage towards the world and its phenomena. Missionaries and scientific men who have endeavoured to sound the depths of savage belief have been baffled by its vagueness. Accustomed themselves to the sharply defined affirmations of the Christian creeds, they have been perplexed by the contradictions and the want of clear and self-consistent ideas with which the savage on the theory of his religion, as on all subjects not immediately practical, is content. Therein I think they have shown a want of knowledge of human nature. If

they had recollected what many of them must have been familiar with—the mental condition of their own peasantry at home—nay, if they had looked into their own minds and asked themselves what was their own attitude with regard to everything outside a certain radius of subjects with which they were occupied from day to day, or which they were thoroughly taught in earlier life, they would have found the very same condition, the very same attitude. These contradictions, this want of clear and self-consistent ideas, is simply ignorance. Inasmuch, however, as the unknown all around the savage presses upon him uninterruptedly, it is regarded with a feeling best described as awe, a feeling in which fear sometimes predominates, and sometimes wonder. Portions of the unknown are from time to time conquered, or at all events parcelled out among various powers, whom the savage explains in the terms of his own consciousness, and names as beings in actual relation with himself. This explanation is called Animism, and the beings it summons into existence are spirits, ghosts, witches, gods. But they do not exhaust the unknown. Beyond and behind them the Awful, as Mr. Marett calls it, is still there, infinite as night and filled with possibilities as dreadful as death.

Now it occurs to me that here may be found the solution of the puzzle Mr. Lang has pointed out. I do not wish to dogmatise; nor do I claim credit for the suggestion, which is explicitly or implicitly Mr. Marett's. Mr. Lang's critics have missed his meaning so often that I tremble to reproduce his theory. Apparently, however, it is claimed that the belief in a Supreme Being came, in some way only to be guessed at, first in order of evolution, and was subsequently obscured and overlaid by belief in ghosts and in a pantheon of lesser divinities. Animism first, and then polytheism, supplanted theism. I think I should find myself within measurable distance of reconciliation, if for theism I might substitute that attitude of mind for which Mr. Marett

has invented the term Teratism. Defining Teratism as the sense of awe (of which "Fear, Admiration, Wonder, and the like" are, as Mr. Marett puts it, "the component moments"), I could not of course assent to the statement that it was actually supplanted by animism, polytheism and so forth. Rather, it was the soil out of which they grew. It was the dim vast background on which they were manifested. The soil was ever fertile of new growths. The sense of the Mysterious, of the Awful, might concentrate itself on a tree, or a boulder, on an amulet, or a dead man; but this would not exhaust it. Other shapes, not yet fully realised, would loom forth now and again from the background, some to become defined, to receive specific acts of homage and thus enter into relations with humanity, some to fade away once more into the gloom: At one time this process would be long, at another time it would be short. A striking exhibition of power, especially from some visible object, might cause an immediate concentration of awe and its precipitation in acts of worship. The multitude at the gates of Lystra only differed from many another multitude in identifying the new Powers revealed to them with the old ones. On the other hand, a power only exhibited occasionally, not proceeding from any visible object, and not traceable in savage reasoning to any known centre of Awe, might hover for generations or for ages in the borderland where the recognised and the unrecognised, the personal and the impersonal, meet.

South Africa does not bulk very largely in Mr. Lang's argument, probably because of the extreme difficulty in extracting from the conflicting testimony any sane or self-consistent interpretation. The largest body of evidence in regard to any one of the South African peoples is that collected by Dr. Callaway in *The Religious System of the Amazulu*. As Mr. Lang says, it is "honest but confused." Confused! precisely. But it is more than confused; it is contradictory. I invite your attention to this confused,

this contradictory character of the evidence. It may perhaps be said that tradition often is confused and contradictory. So it is; but the evidence as to the traditional religious beliefs of the South African races is, whatever be the cause, more than usually confused and contradictory. One of Bishop Callaway's informants told him: "The primitive faith of our fathers was this, they said, 'There is Unkulunkulu, who is a man, who is of the earth.' And they used to say, 'There is a lord in heaven.'" Another flatly contradicted him: "The ancients did not say there is a lord in heaven (*inkosi pezulu*). As for Unkulunkulu, we do not know that he left any word for man. We worship the Amatongo [the spirits of the dead]."¹ On one thing, however, all were agreed. If there was any lord in heaven, he was not the Creator. In fact, so far as can be gathered, the very idea of creation was foreign to their minds. Unkulunkulu, or whatever was the name of the great father who gave being to man, was regarded as a man. The way he gave being to man is told differently by different informants. He begat them, he dug them up, he split them out of a stone, he made them out of a reed. Anyhow, "the earth was in existence first, before Unkulunkulu as yet existed."²

If we turn to the Bechuana, we find Moffat, after twenty-three years' service as a missionary, chiefly among them, emphatic as to their want of belief in a god. "No fragments remain," he tells us, "of former days, as mementoes to the present generation, that their ancestors ever loved, served, or revered a being greater than man. A profound silence reigns on this awful subject."³

Unfortunately no missionaries to any of the numerous Bechuana tribes have ever thought it worth while to collect their religious traditions as Callaway did from the Zulus.

¹ Callaway, *Rel. Syst.*, pp. 56, 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³ Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (1842), p. 243.

We have, therefore, to draw our conclusions from incidental notices. There is, however, one word, common in some form to most of the Bechuana dialects, which has been much discussed: the word *Morimo*, plural *Barimo*. In the singular it has been adopted by the missionaries to translate *God*. Yet Moffat tells us expressly that it did not convey to the minds of those who heard it the idea of God, though *Morimo* is never called man. *Morimo*, as well as man and all the different species of animals, came out of a cave or hole in the Bakone country, where their footmarks are still to be seen. He appears as a malignant being—something cunning or spiteful—able to injure men and cattle, and to cause death. When hail damaged the crops, or rain fell unseasonably, *Morimo* would be cursed in the vilest language. "Would that I could catch it [*i.e.*, *Morimo*], I would transfix it with my spear!" exclaimed a chief, whose judgement on other subjects, we are told, would command attention. However, for good or ill the missionaries had adopted the word to translate their conception of God; and one day Moffat was addressing a chief, when the latter called some of his men: "There is Ra-Mary" [Mary's Father, the name by which Moffat was known], said he, "who tells me that the heavens were made, the earth also, by a beginner, whom he calls *Morimo*. Have you ever heard anything to be compared with this?" And he added other expressions which rendered it evident that neither he nor they had ever before heard of *Morimo*, or if they had, it was certainly not in the capacity of Creator or Preserver of the world. His words were received with a burst of deafening laughter, and he begged Moffat to say no more on such trifles, lest the people should think him mad.¹

Morimo is an uncanny word. It is said to be derived from *gorimo*, above, with the singular personal prefix *mo*.

¹ Moffat, chap. 16.

It would thus signify Him who is above. The plural *Barimo*, seems to mean the spirits of the dead. The phrase "Going to Barimo," means dying. "If a person were talking foolishly, or wandering in his intellect, were delirious, or in a fit," Moffat tells us he would be called Barimo, which we may best render by "Possessed."¹ Mackenzie, also a missionary of considerable experience, gives another plural, *Merimo*, having the sense of "gods."² This is puzzling, because, properly speaking, the Bechuana have no gods. They invoke their ancestors, or the ancestors of their chiefs, if not too remote, and when they offer sacrifice it is to the spirits of the dead. Light is perhaps thrown upon the matter by Casalis, who, speaking of the Basuto, says that, "every being, to whom the natives render adoration, is called *Molimo*," a dialectic variation of Morimo. When a Mosuto falls sick, the first thing the medicine-man does is to divine "under the influence of what *Molimo* the patient is supposed to be. Is it an ancestor on the father's side or the mother's? According as fate decides, the paternal or maternal uncle will offer the purifying sacrifice." Here the word *Molimo* is obviously used to designate a ghost, or disembodied spirit, and nothing else. In fact, Casalis tells us plainly, and includes other Bechuana tribes in the remark: "Each family is supposed to be under the direct influence and protection of its ancestors; but the tribe, taken as a whole, acknowledges for its national gods the ancestors of the reigning sovereign."³ Mackenzie declares *Barimo* to be a plural without a singular. And Moffat admits that, though in form it is the plural of Morimo, it is never so used; but apparently he knows nothing of the other plural, *Merimo*.

What are we to make of all this confusion and uncertainty? I am inclined to regard Morimo not as a once

¹ Moffat, pp. 260, 261.

² Mackenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River* (1871), p. 394.

³ Casalis, *The Basutos* (1861), pp. 248, 249.

supreme divinity fading away, but as a god in process of becoming. It is I think more in harmony with all that we know of savage thought and of human evolution to suppose that out of the vague background of the unknown there was being slowly shaped the figure of a powerful being, or god, than to attribute the ambiguities and difficulties to forgetfulness. It is true that Mackenzie represents the Bechuana as saying: "Our forefathers, no doubt, knew more about Morimo than we do; but they did not persevere in speaking of him to their children." The very form, however, of this assertion shows that the speakers were merely guessing. They were trying to explain to the missionary why they knew so little about Morimo. A quick-witted race, they accounted for their ignorance as they thought the missionary thought it ought to be accounted for. And they were successful.

The same interpretation must be put on the Zulu evidence. Bishop Callaway gave it piecemeal as he received it; and it perplexed Mr. Lang, as it evidently had perplexed the bishop himself. The latest enquirer is M. Junod, whose book on the Baronga is well worth a careful study. The Baronga are a Zulu tribe. The very word *Zulu* means heaven. In the dialect of the Baronga it is *Tilo*; and concerning *Tilo* M. Junod has much to say. It is a place. It is, moreover, a power which manifests itself in various ways. As such, it is sometimes called *hosi*, the same word as *inkosi*, translated by Bishop Callaway as lord or chief. But it is a power, says M. Junod, "envisaged for the most part as essentially impersonal." Rain, tempest, strange diseases, infantile convulsions, are attributed to it; above all, the mysterious visitation of twins. I must refer you to the book itself for the details of the Ronga ideas concerning *Tilo*, and for the curious rites with which those ideas are connected.¹ I can only say that the ideas

¹ Junod, *Les Baronga* (Neuchâtel, 1898), pp. 408, *sqq.*

are as confused, as vague, as contradictory as those of the Zulus. In fact, a careful comparison shows that they are substantially identical. Bishop Callaway himself in the end sums up to the same effect as M. Junod. "It appears, therefore," he says, "that in the native mind there is scarcely any notion of Deity, if any at all, wrapt up in their sayings about a heavenly chief. When it [*i.e.*, the name *inkosi pezulu*, heavenly chief or lord in heaven] is applied to God, it is simply the result of teaching. Among themselves he is not regarded as the Creator, nor the Preserver of Men; but as a power." And he adds by way of a conjecture: "it may be nothing more than an earthly chief, still celebrated by name,—a relic of the king-worship of the Egyptians; another form merely of ancestor-worship."¹ Accepting the Bishop's judgement, we may discard the conjecture as no more than an *obiter dictum*. *Tilo*, or *inkosi pezulu*, thus, like the *Ngai* of the Masai, like the Malagasy *Andria-manitra*, like the Siouan *Wakanda*, is found to be theoplasm, god-stuff, not a god fully formed and finally evolved. It is a god, or gods, in the making, not a god with one foot in the grave.

The Zulus and the Bechuana then appear to confirm the suggestion with which we started. The evidence gathered from other South African peoples is more fragmentary still than that from the Bechuana. So far as I can interpret it, the effect is the same. But the discussion would be tedious, and I want to come back to Bishop Callaway's *obiter dictum*. It is a guess founded on the deeply-rooted cult of the dead which forms the very core of Zulu religion. The worship of the dead, as it prevails among the Zulus, cannot be deemed in any sense of the word a primitive institution. The Zulus themselves are not a primitive people. One of the most advanced offshoots of the Bantu stock, they have long since, like all their congeners, taken that step, which, according to Mr. Payne's canon, divides savagery from

¹ Callaway, p. 124.

barbarism. Their social state no longer rests on a natural basis of subsistence. The Bushmen, living upon the proceeds of hunting and upon such roots and other edible vegetables as they may chance to find, are savages. Agriculture and cattle, on the other hand, afford the mainstay of Zulu economy. In other words, the Amazulu are no longer savages. They live a comparatively settled life in kraals under chiefs, and have developed a highly organised government. The development of their religion corresponds with that of their social economy; and traces of an earlier stage are few and indistinct, so far as our information extends. Yet they must have passed through the savage phases of religion usually accompanying the uncertain and wandering lives of hunters and root-diggers.

Other tribes belonging to the same stock retain traces of that earlier condition. The Bantu are an intrusive race. They occupied South Africa in successive immigrations. Wherever the original habitat whence they started for their conquests may have been, it was a country where they had already domesticated the ox and learned the rudiments of agriculture. They have now been living for ages in an intermediate state between a nomadic and a definitely settled life. The climate and meteorological conditions of South Africa have retarded the evolution of true civilisation. Tribes are compelled to remove by disappearance of wood, by want of water and pasture, exhaustion of soil and other causes. Hence, a powerful incentive to peaceful changes of settlement within a limited area, but also to wars of conquest and wholesale movements of armed populations. In the face of recent criticism, I hesitate to assert that mother-right (or kinship traced only through women) and totemism are invariable notes of savagery. There can, however, be no question that these institutions tend to disappear with the higher organisation of agricultural and pastoral life. The accumulation of property, in the shape of cattle and other food stores, the preservation intact of

the cultivated land, and its increase in proportion to the increase of the population, involve continuous and elaborate preparations for defence and for attack. The inevitable result is to unite the whole community round a permanent leader or chief, and to efface mother-right (where it subsists), and usually to change it into Agnation, or the reckoning of kinship through the father only.

Accordingly, we find the Bantu everywhere under a patriarchal rule, sometimes more, sometimes less, despotic in its character. The position of women is proportionately depressed. Though not slaves, they are held in perpetual tutelage, like the women of old Rome, where in prehistoric times a similar condition of society and civilisation gave birth to the race that conquered the world. Women, among the Bechuana, are degraded to field- and household-drudges, whose purpose in life is to rear children and till the fields.

But remains of a different state of things, in which mother-right prevailed, are not wanting. The influence of the maternal uncle is usually regarded as an index of mother-right. Among the Basuto this is well marked. The eldest maternal uncle enjoys special rights over the sister's children. His duties towards them commence with their birth, and it is he who presides at their funeral ceremonies. He is entitled in return to a share of the spoil taken by his nephews in war, as well as of the game they kill. The price of a bride is usually paid in cattle. A portion of this cattle goes to the eldest maternal uncle; and he is expected to take care of the bride and her children, and to supply her with anything she may require.¹ The Ovaherero of Damara-land, now German territory, more backward in general culture than their eastern brethren, are distinguished for the consideration paid to their women. Descent is reckoned, for most purposes, through the mother. The

¹ Casalis, *Les Bassoutos*, p. 190 (Eng. ed. p. 180). *Cape of Good Hope. Rep. of the Government Comm. on Native Laws and Customs* (1883), App. p. 22.

children belong to her *eanda*, or gens, and derive their right to property through her.¹ A man's sister's children, therefore, not his own, inherit from him. So, among the Bayeye of Lake Ngami, who like the Ovahereró have an infusion of Hottentot blood, no chief is succeeded by his son, but by his sister's son.² The Hottentots proper appear to represent the vanguard of the Bantu invasion. Both in their physical traits and in their language Bushman influence is apparent. They were, as might be expected, on a lower step of culture than the Bantu peoples strictly so called. Contact with civilisation, however, has greatly changed them, and our information as to their primitive condition is very fragmentary. As far as we can trace, their women have hardly entered upon that long martyrdom in the cause of civilisation which has been so sad a necessity of progress. In every Hottentot's house the wife is supreme. Her husband, poor fellow! though he may wield wide power and influence out of doors, at home dare not even take a mouthful of sour milk out of the household vat without her leave. Nor is a woman's realm limited to her husband. There seems a special relationship between brother and sister. The highest oath a man can take is to swear by his eldest sister; and if he abuse this name he forfeits to her his finest cows and sheep.³ Women having this position, we might anticipate other remains of mother-right in Hottentot custom. There are indeed traces of it, both in their jurisprudence and language; but, whether from our imperfect knowledge, or from any other cause, those traces are too few and uncertain to lead to any definite result.

Turning now to the question of totemism, let me first observe that, whether or not it be an invariable note of

¹ *South African Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. i., p. 40. *Cape Comm. Rep.*, App. p. 401.

² *South African Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. ii., p. 37.

³ Hahn, *Tsunil-goam*, pp. 19, 21.

savagery, totemism is a purely savage institution. Accordingly, we must not expect to find it in full force among the Bantu. All we can expect to discover are better or worse preserved survivals. The well-known passage in Livingstone's first book tells us that "the different Bechuana tribes are named after certain animals, The term Bakatla means 'they of the monkey;' Bakuena, 'they of the alligator;' Batlapi, 'they of the fish;' each tribe having a superstitious dread of the animal after which it is called. They also use the word 'bina,' to dance, in reference to the custom of thus naming themselves, so that, when you wish to ascertain what tribe they belong to, you say, 'What do you dance?' It would seem as if that had been part of the worship of old. A tribe never eats the animal which is its namesake, using the term 'ila,' hate or dread, in reference to killing it. We find traces of many ancient tribes in the country in individual members of those now extinct, as the Batau, 'they of the lion;' the Banoga, 'they of the serpent;' though no such tribes now exist."¹ But the evidence does not stop here. Casalis, after giving additional designations—Banare, they of the buffalo; Batlou, they of the elephant; Banuku, they of the porcupine; Bamorara, they of the wild vine—adds by way of illustration: "The Bakuena call the crocodile their father; they celebrate it in their festivals, they swear by it, and make an incision resembling the mouth of this animal in the ears of their cattle, by which they distinguish them from others. The head of the family, which ranks first in the tribe, receives the title of Great Man of the Crocodile. No one dares eat the flesh or clothe himself with the skin of the animal, the name of which he bears. If this animal is hurtful, as the lion for instance, it may not be killed without great apologies being made to it, and its pardon being asked. Purification is necessary after the commission of

¹ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 13.

such a sacrilege."¹ Additional particulars are given by Arbousset and Daumas. The Baperi are commonly called Banoku, they of the porcupine. "Their great oath is that of *ka noku*, by the porcupine, because the majority of them *sing*, to use the consecrated phrase, intimating that they feast, worship, or revere that animal. . . . When they see anyone maltreat that animal, they afflict themselves, grieve, collect with religious care the quills, if it has been killed, spit upon them, and rub their eyebrows with them, saying, 'They have slain our brother, our master, one of ours, him whom we sing.' They fear that they will die if they eat the flesh of one."²

In this passage I daresay you will have noticed that not all the Baperi, but only the majority of them, are Banoku. This throws light on the loose phraseology of the missionaries to whom we are indebted for our information. The last-quoted authors on a later page explicitly define their use of the word *tribe* to mean *family*, illustrating it by reference to these totemistic superstitions.³ Accordingly, the Baperi did not all belong to the gens or clan, as we should say, of the porcupine; it only predominated in their organisation and territory. I have not noticed in the authorities I have hitherto quoted any reference to marriage-prohibitions. Mr. Lionel Decle, however, in describing the totemism of a more northerly people of the Bantu stock, the Waganda, says expressly that "no man can marry in his own clan."⁴ Among all these peoples the clan would appear to descend from father to son. The

¹ Casalis, *The Basutos* (Eng. edit.), p. 211. I cannot at this moment refer to the original French, but possibly we should read: "*Even if this animal is hurtful,*" &c.

² Arbousset and Daumas, *Narrative of an Exploratory Tour to the North-east of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope*, translated by Brown (Cape Town, 1846), p. 176. Other particulars follow, which I have not thought necessary to quote.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 213. Cf. p. 169.

⁴ Decle, *Three Years in Savage South Africa*, p. 443.

less cultured Ovahereró, as we have seen, trace descent of the *eanda* through the mother. It remains to be added that, so far as can be gathered from the very meagre reports we possess, the *eanda* is exogamic and bears the name of a totem, each *eanda* having "its peculiar rites and superstitions."¹

In fact, the only branches of the Bantu race among which no certain traces of totemism and but few of mother-right are found, are the Amazulu and their allied tribes; and they are precisely the most advanced of all the Bantu peoples. The Bechuana yield very substantial remnants of totemism, and side by side, though not organically connected, with them traces of mother-right. While in the less advanced branches of the race mother-right is still strong and unsubdued by the patriarchal economy, and it is organically connected with totemism. Thus the Bantu present a graduated series of social stages. On the lowest of them, though the totem-sacrifice has not been reported; totemism is yet flourishing, and patriarchal and pastoral institutions are struggling with it. On the highest it has disappeared with almost all its characteristic accompaniments. There can therefore be little doubt that the Bantu race has emerged from a nomadic savagery organised on the basis of totemism and mother-right. The question is, How, if so, has ancestor-worship developed and supplanted totemism?

I answer that it is entirely dependent upon the growth of the patriarchal system. The more highly the patriarchal system is organised—the more absolute becomes the power of the head of the nation, and under him of the subordinate chiefs and the heads of families—the more the original totemistic superstitions tend to disappear, until they are altogether lost and forgotten. The Bushmen appear to believe in the continued existence of the dead, though even

¹ Anderson, *Lake Ngami*, p. 221. Cf. *South African Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. i., pp. 40, 48.

on the most liberal construction of the word *worship* they can hardly be said to worship them. This belief, arising in savagery, gains in strength with favouring circumstances. It does not literally involve the immortality of the soul, for the dead are gradually forgotten. Campbell, who early in the last century took pains to obtain from the memories of the people lists of chiefs of various Bechuana tribes, succeeded in one case only in getting the names of as many as ten deceased chiefs; and these would probably not extend to more than five or six generations.¹ It is a common experience of enquirers that peoples in the lower culture when questioned on the fate of their forgotten dead, affirm that their existence has been finally terminated. But in fact very few trouble themselves about the fate of their forgotten dead; and the vagueness characteristic of their other opinions on the subject of the supernatural attaches to this also. The recently dead is alone remembered vividly and worshipped earnestly. "Black people," said one of Callaway's Zulu friends, "do not worship all Amatongo indifferently, that is, all the dead of their tribe. Speaking generally, the head of each house is worshipped by the children of that house; for they do not know the ancients who are dead, nor their laud-giving names, nor [any of] their names. But their father whom they knew is the head by whom they begin and end in their prayer, . . . So it is then; although they worship the many Amatongo of their tribe, [thus] making a great fence around them-[selves] for their protection; yet their father is far before all others when they worship the Amatongo."² Behind their father stand the figures of a few others whom they remember; behind them, all is chaos. They would not think of worshipping a father in his lifetime. Then they

¹ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 3rd edit., 1815, p. 206. Ibid., *Second Journey*, 1822, vol. i., pp. 179, 242.

² Callaway, *op. cit.*, p. 144. The words in brackets are my interpretation, not Bishop Callaway's.

can hear him, see him, they know his ways, they can take his commands from his own lips, and whether he be pleased or displeased the mood is manifested directly. But when death has conferred mystery upon him, the reverence for a father rises into worship. The chief of a tribe is but a father on a larger scale. He gives his name to the tribe, and the tribesmen are in a sense his children. Hence, when a chief takes-on the mystery of death, the whole tribe which has lately quailed before his rage or rejoiced in his pleasure and his might, believing that his anger and his power are not less than before but all the greater, because manifested by methods terrifying in that they come not under observation and their results—drought, sickness, defeat in battle, and the like—are only to be interpreted by the witch-doctor, render to him the heightened service of worship. He becomes part of the tribal religion, for the moment, perhaps, the most prominent part, until another dead chief, or some more striking personage, real or imaginary, supplants him.

Patriarchy, or government by the father or the eldest male of the family, is not identical with father-right, or the recognition of blood on the father's side only. But the two institutions tend to coincide. Patriarchal government loosens the ties of mother-right, and eventually succeeds in effacing them. It does not always succeed in substituting father-right, though the paternal blood always becomes the more potent bond. This process, as I pointed out last year, tends to collect the kin and consolidate it with the local group. When we have a totemic clan thus consolidated with the local group and under patriarchal rule, we have the conditions for the evolution of totemism into ancestor-worship. It only remains to ask by what avenue the passage from one to the other may be accomplished.

A belief in transformation and impermanence of form is one of the elements of totemism; and it is found in strong force among the Bantu. They commonly hold that men—

some men at all events—can change their shapes at will. It is their universal belief that the dead come back in brute-form, and in that form their departed friends receive reverence and offerings.

The head of the clan bears the clan name in an emphatic shape. The Bataung, as you will remember, are the Lion-clan. Accordingly their chief is the Lion-man (Motaung, he of the lion).¹ He represents, as it were, the lion. The Bakwena are the Crocodile-clan. Their chief is the Great Man of the Crocodile. We are expressly told that the crocodile is called by the Bakwena "one of them, their master, their Father;"² and that the Baperi speak of the porcupine in similar terms. The same is doubtless true of the totem-animal of the Bataung and other tribes. This is precisely the way in which the chief would be regarded. He too is "one of them, their master, their father." After death the chief appears in the form of some powerful animal. For example, among the Barotse he takes the form of a hippopotamus.³ I have not indeed met with the statement that a chief comes back in the form of the totem-animal. Perhaps the dissolution of Bantu society and religion has now proceeded too far for us to recover any such belief, if it ever existed. It was the belief of some at all events of the North American tribes that a clansman after death assumed the form of the totem-animal.⁴ And although we may not be able to put our fingers on any similar evidence in respect to the Bantu, I venture to suggest that this was the link, now snapped asunder, between totemism and ancestor-worship in South Africa. Once totemism began to fall into the background, the posthumous assumption of totem-form would tend to be confined first of all to the chief.

¹ Arbousset, p. 213. The Lion-clan existed as a political unit in the time of Arbousset and Daumas, though it had disappeared by Livingstone's day.

² Arbousset, *loc. cit.*

³ Declé, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 74.

⁴ Frazer, *Totemism*, p. 36, citing several authorities.

In other words, he who was in his lifetime emphatically the Lion-man, the Crocodile-man, the Porcupine-man, the Elephant-man, the Hippopotamus-man, would longest preserve the totem-form after death, especially in the cases where the totem was a beast to be dreaded for its size, physical powers, and propensities to mischief. Ultimately this appropriation would be dropped, and a dead man, be he chief or another, would reappear in any suitable form as conceived by the survivors.

This of course is a mere hypothesis. But it has seemed worth while, in view of recent discussions, to try to show how totemism might conceivably, by the change from mother-right to father-right, or at least to patriarchy, and the consequent identification of the local organisation with the clan, pass into something like a tribal cult, and ultimately into ancestor-worship. I took up so much of your time last year in discussing questions relating to totemism that I did not intend to bore you with the subject to-night. I hope you will not think that it is like King Charles's head, and cannot be kept out of my lucubrations. In any case I offer the most humble apologies. Happily, by the constitutional practice of the Society, you will not run the risk of being troubled with it again.

I owe you these apologies all the more because I do not pretend to have solved any of the problems I have touched. That is a task far beyond what I set myself to do, probably far beyond our present knowledge, and in any case demanding the collation of evidence from all parts of the world. What I have tried to do is to suggest some ways in which the folklore of South Africa may contribute to their solution. Most of my illustrations have been taken from tribes in British territory. The vast extent of our African possessions embraces peoples in almost every stage of culture. On that continent alone, the opening of the twentieth century thus finds us in a position which is unique in its opportunities for the advancement of anthro-

pological science. As you will have read in the Council's Annual Report, the Anthropological Institute and the Folk-Lore Society have joined to urge upon the Government the importance of seizing those opportunities in the countries we have lately added to the empire. We must not think that already we know enough about the coloured peoples of South Africa. On the contrary, our information is of a very fragmentary and often uncertain character. The great blanks must be filled; it must be systematised and rendered intelligible. For such purposes a careful and comprehensive enquiry is needed. The first consideration we have put forward in the memorial we have presented to the Colonial Secretary is the proper government and well-being of the native tribes beneath our sway. This is the prime consideration to a statesman; and we believe that by no means as effectual as the methodical study of the people and their customs and beliefs can their proper government be secured. No ruler who does not understand his subjects can govern them for the best advantage, either theirs or his. Surely the time has come to abandon our old ignorant, unsympathetic, though often well-meaning, fashion of muddling along. It has led in the past to innumerable difficulties, to endless waste of blood and treasure. With the new century let us turn over a new leaf in the history of our dealings with savage and half-civilised nations, and write on an unstained page our resolution to seek a more excellent way.

But we have ventured to urge another consideration—the interests of anthropological science, interests only to be subordinated to those of actual government. For when in all directions the speculative science of to-day becomes the practical and applied science of to-morrow, who shall venture to deny such a possibility to anthropology? I read in the newspapers that the German government, clearer in perception and more prompt in execution than ours, spent in the year 1898 upon anthropological explorations no less

a sum than £25,000. The Bureau of Ethnology at Washington costs 40,000 dollars a year; and that is by no means all that the government of the United States is spending upon the anthropology of a single race. The government of India, under the guidance of Mr. H. H. Risley, and thanks to the statesmanlike grasp and energy of Lord Curzon, is taking measures for an Ethnographical Survey of that teeming empire. Among our self-ruling colonies, Cape Colony and Queensland have been foremost in recognising the political necessity of an accurate register of the customs and institutions, ay, the prejudices and superstitions, of the coloured peoples beneath their sway. And there are signs that the latter and more than one of her sister-states of the Australian Commonwealth are prepared to go further, and to assist in gathering such information for purely scientific purposes. The mother-country in her turn will surely show a just appreciation of the duties of a civilised nation. We are helping vigorously to macadamise the world for the benefit of modern commerce. The material prosperity of ourselves and others—peradventure, higher benefits too—will follow in the wake of the steam-roller. It will certainly destroy much that can never be replaced, much that is picturesque, much that is capable, rightly construed, of yielding instruction as to the past of humanity. In the "dark backward and abysm of time" before the dawn of history, the destiny of the nations was being shaped by forces which it is the endeavour of anthropology to understand and account for. The determination and the measurement of those forces can hardly fail to bring forth practical results. However this may be, I am greatly mistaken unless the intelligent curiosity of mankind will, as the ages roll onward, be more and more drawn to questions concerning it so vitally as the story of its own early struggles with nature and its first futile guesses at the unsearchable riddle of things. To have missed an opportunity like the present of accumulating a

large body of evidence within and beyond (for if the movement be once started I trust it will not stop within the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony) our new possessions, will then be seen to have incurred a responsibility and a reproach which we are seeking to spare our country and our government.

Considerations like these, moreover, touch in appropriate degree everyone of us. The unparalleled changes wrought by the nineteenth century have swept away for ever much that remained to us of the ideas and the practices of our remote forefathers. Whatever the twentieth century may do over the rest of the world, it will in Britain at least complete the work of the nineteenth. The muse of folklore is inexorable as the sibyl. Of no other science are the materials disappearing so rapidly. That for which we will not pay the price to-day will become fuel for the devouring fire of civilisation, and to-morrow we shall repent in vain our refusal or neglect. Of the two tasks before us at the opening of the twentieth century, there can be no question that the work of collection is the more pressing. For the framing of hypotheses we can wait the leisure of a later day. We cannot wait for the observation of phenomena which are rapidly passing out of existence. A single new fact carefully observed and rigorously reported is just now more than ever worth a hundred of the most brilliant hypotheses. In this Society we rightly insist upon the study of the phenomena. But I hope we shall yet more strenuously urge the prior duty of ascertaining and recording them, whether in this country or elsewhere, and the paramount necessity of literal exactness in so doing. Thus the Folk-Lore Society will fulfil the purpose of its being with more abundant success, and establish a lasting claim upon the gratitude of all serious students of the origin and growth of human institutions and culture.

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND, *President 1900.*