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102. The Famous Baptism of the Tropic

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16 good and 27 inferior side-scraper (*racloirs*) of Le Moustier type, some forming rough "points."

1 rough segmental tool ("tea-cosy" type), with broad, flat base and zig-zag cutting-edge.

2 struck "tortoise-cores," inferior quality.

5 flake-implements of Northfleet (Levallois) type, the best and largest one with lateral bulb; two consist of the butt-end only.

5 flakes with facettled butts, but not obviously struck from "tortoise-cores."

1 Aurignac point with lateral notch (*encoche*), perhaps from the surface.

Collectors assert that ovate implements were found among the shells, and it certainly looks as if many of the earlier types, which might be considered nearer in date to the shells, are derived, the specimens obviously *in situ* being of St. Acheul and Le Moustier character. This evidence from the Stopes collection is supported by specimens in the cabinets of Mr. W. M. Newton and Mr. A. E. Relph (to name only those), and there is room for some ingenious theory to reconcile the flints and the fauna discovered at this extraordinary spot on the 100-ft. terrace of the Thames.

This sequence was, to some extent, foreshadowed by Mr. W. M. Newton in MAN, 1901, 66, and the following notices of the shell-bed are given in chronological order: *Journ. Roy. Anthr. Inst.*, XXIX (N.S. II), 302 (first account, in 1900); *Proc. Geol. Assoc.*, XVII, 238; *Report Brit. Assoc.*, Southport meeting, 1903, 803; *Proc. Geol. Assoc.*, XXI, 492; *Archæologia*, LXV, 190; and *Proc. Prehist. Soc. East Anglia*, II, 253.

REGINALD A. SMITH.

Crossing the Line.

The Famous Baptism of the Tropic. By Lt.-Col. H. A. Rose.

Rose.

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Frémenville (Chevalier de, 1787-1848), a capitaine des frégates du Roi,* thus describes this *carnaval*, as he calls it:—

On the afternoon of the day preceding the ship's entry into the tropic a hail of dry peas and cartridge-cases fell from the tops on to the forecastle. These announced the *courrier* of the "Bonhomme" or "King of the Tropic." This *courrier*, cracking his whip, descended from the main-top. He was a top-man, very handsomely dressed as a postilion, with a striped waistcoat, badge, buckskins, boots and spurs according to regulation, not forgetting his big queue or *catogan*, which symbolises the headgear of the true *braves enfants de la Poste*. Advancing towards the commandant, he handed him a letter from his sovereign, which demanded the customary tribute from those who entered his realms for the first time.

On the next day (or next but one) the ship entered the Tropic of Cancer. From morning preparations for the *fête* had been made. A tent had been pitched at the foot of the main-mast; underneath it was an altar surmounted by a cross, and all the attributes of navigation—maps, compass, etc.; to its right the throne of Father Tropic; to its left a tall vat, filled with water, across which was placed a plank. A clap of thunder and a shower like that of the day before announced the king's arrival.

He descended from the main-top. He had a white beard of tow, and though covered with furs, pretended to shiver, in spite of the heat. After him came down his court, consisting of half the crew. The disguises were quite ingenious. A beardless youth represented Amphitrite, wife of the "Old Tropic." Cabin-boys, as Tritons, furnished her train. Behind this group came Neptune, drawn on a gun-carriage, trident in hand. Then came slaves of the Tropic smeared with various colours. Here a group of warriors dressed as Orientals, thanks to the loan of all the

* Bibliothèque de la Révolution et de l'Empire, VII., *Mémoires du Chevalier de Frémenville*: Paris, 1913, E. Champion, pp. 30-33. What follows is a condensed translation.

flags on board ; there the *gendarmes* and almoner of Father Tropic—Breton peasants with a dancing-bear ; and, to close the train, the devil with his horns and fork. Having defiled on the deck and round the tent, the Bonhomme went inside it, and his train ranged itself round him. His secretary called all those who were to receive the baptism. Two ladies were first baptised—with some drops of water on their fair hands. Then came the men, who were made to swear to respect, in all circumstances, the wives of good sailors. Each was then placed on the fateful plank, and a page of Father Tropic presented him with a basin. If he dropped an offering into it he got a few drops of water on his sleeve ; if not, he was brusquely seized by the waistband of his trousers and cast into the vat, to the intense joy of the onlookers. The soldiers, too numerous for individual baptism, were drenched by the hose *en masse*. The rite concluded with songs and dances on the fore-deck, rank and age being soon overlooked on the poop. People threw water at one another and played a thousand tricks. The Tropic's health was finally drunk in punch.

De Fréminville ascribes the origin of this ancient rite to the Portuguese and Spanish navigators who ventured at the end of the fifteenth century upon the boundless Atlantic. He also says it was allowed on State ships in order to maintain cheerfulness, one of the elements of health.

This account differs a good deal from that given in the Book of Days, in which no mention is made of the "Old Tropic." As practised by English sailors, shaving the novice was a principal feature, and by far the roughest part of the ordeal. The Book of Days says the custom, in some form or other, is believed to be very ancient, and to have been originally instituted on the occasion of ships passing out of the Mediterranean into the Atlantic, beyond the "Pillars of Hercules." Could anyone give references to classical Portuguese or Spanish authorities on the origin and history of the rite ?

H. A. ROSE.

Europe : Witchcraft.

Murray.

Witches' Transformations into Animals. By M. A. Murray.

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The belief that human beings can change themselves, or be changed, into animals carries with it the corollary that wounds received by a person when in the semblance of an animal will remain on the body after the return to the human shape. This belief seems to be connected with the worship of animal-gods or sacred animals, the worshipper being changed into an animal by being invested with the skin of the creature, by the utterance of magical words, the making of magical gestures, the wearing of a magical object, or the performance of magical ceremonies. The witches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appear to have carried on the tradition of the pre-Christian cults, and the stories of their transformations, when viewed in the light of the ancient examples, are capable of the same explanation. Much confusion, however, has been caused by the religious and so-called scientific explanations of the contemporary commentators as well as by the unfortunate belief of modern writers in the capacity of women for hysteria. At both periods pseudo-science has prevented the unbiassed examination of the material.

There are no records extant of the animals held sacred by the early inhabitants of Great Britain, but it is remarkable that the range of the witches' transformations was very limited ; cats and hares were the usual animals, occasionally, but rarely, dogs, mice, crows, rooks, and bees. In France, where the solemn sacrifice of a goat at the Sabbath points to that animal being sacred, it is not surprising to find both men and women witches appearing as goats and sheep. Unless there were some definite meaning underlying the change of shape, there would be no reason to prevent the witches from transforming themselves into animals of any species. It