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Balochi Tales. XIX. A Legend of Nadir Shah

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MISCELLANEA.

BALOCHI TALES.

Concluded from Vol. iv., p. 528.)

XIX.

A Legend of Nādir Shah.

[Nādir Shah invaded Northern India and overthrew the Emperor Muhammad Shah in A.D. 1739. On his return journey to his own country by way of the Bolān Pass he came in contact with the Sarai or Kalhora ruler of Sindh. Khudāyār Khan was at that time the Kalhora chief. His son Ghulām Shah was on a subsequent occasion attacked by Ahmad Shah Durrānī, who succeeded to Nādir Shah's power in Afghanistan and the Indus Valley. The two invasions are mixed up in this narrative.]

There was a King of Dehli named Muhammad Shah Chughatta, and in his father's time Sa'adullah had been Wazīr. He was also Wazīr at first under Muhammad Shah, but afterwards Muhammad Shah appointed a new Wazīr. One day Muhammad Shah was sitting on his throne and the new Wazīr was sitting below him when Sa'adullah came in to pay his respects. The custom of the Wazīrs was to come in and join their hands and salaam, and then turn round and go and sit in their appointed places. Sa'adullah after making his salaam turned round and went to his place. The King and the new Wazīr laughed at him and said: "He turned round just like a monkey." Sa'adullah caught what they were saying, and he said: "I was Wazīr in your father's time, and now you say I am like a monkey. I swear to God I will make monkeys dance for you on the battlements of Dehli." He then wrote to Nādir Shah: "Dehli is deserted; come, strike, and take it. Only one man will resist you, Muhammad Shah's Wazīr, who will ride on an elephant's howdah, and draw his sword on you." Nādir Shah thereupon started, and came to Hindustan and attacked Dehli; and it was only then that Muhammad Shah heard that Nādir Shah had come to Dehli. A

battle followed ; and the new Wazir mounted his elephant and attacked Nādir Shah with the sword, but was killed in the fight. Nādir Shah stormed and took Dehli and made Muhammad Shah his prisoner.

Now Nādir Shah heard that Muhammad Shah had an extremely beautiful wife, so he said to Muhammad Shah : "Come and see my wife, and then let me see your wife." He took Muhammad Shah and showed him his wife ; and then he came and saw Muhammad Shah's wife. She turned her back on Muhammad Shah and turned her face to Nādir Shah. On this Nādir Shah asked her why she turned her back on her husband and turned her face to him. She replied : "King ! he is my husband, and you are my father. How should I turn my back on my father ?" Then Nādir Shah said : "Now, as you have made so good an answer, you shall be my daughter indeed ; and I make you a present of Dehli as your dowry."

Afterwards Nādir Shah said to Muhammad Shah : "I have given you Dehli, and now I want four things from you ; the first is your cook, and then two handmaidens to brush my teeth for me, and one concubine." Muhammad Shah gave them as he wished.

Nādir Shah told the cook to boil his pot for him. The cook said : "First give me a thousand rupees, and then I will boil it for you." Nādir Shah gave him a thousand rupees. The cook then boiled some masūr dāl (lentils) in the pot and brought it to the King ; and at the same time he brought back with him the thousand rupees the King had given him. The King said : "You have burnt this dāl, I will not eat it. Give me back the thousand rupees I gave you." The cook gave back the thousand rupees which he had brought with him, and took up the pot and went out. A dry log was lying there, and on this log he poured out the contents of the pot and went his way. Next morning when Nādir Shah arose he saw that this dry log was covered with green leaves wherever the dāl had fallen on it. Then he was very sorry in his heart for what he had done, thinking : "This was good food, it had been well had I eaten it."

After this he summoned the handmaidens and said : "Come and brush my teeth." They came, one of them bringing water and the other the twigs to rub his teeth with. Nādir Shah rubbed his teeth, and took some water and rinsed his mouth and gargled.

As he did this, so foul a smell struck the two handmaidens that both of them fell to the ground. One of them gasped and gasped and died, and the other gasped and gasped and recovered. The King asked her what had happened, and she replied : "When you gargled, such a dreadful smell came out of your mouth that she has died, and I am in the state you see me in." The King said : "You have my permission to depart ; be off."

Then Nādir Shah started, and took the concubine with him for three marches. Then he presented her with a lakh of rupees and dismissed her, but she began to weep. Nādir Shah asked her what she was weeping for, as he had given her a lakh of rupees and let her go. She said : "You are pleased with me and have given me a lakh of rupees ; but one day Muhammad Shah was angry with me and threw his shoe at me. I picked up the shoe and kept it, and I got two lakhs of rupees for that shoe alone, so thickly it was studded with diamonds and precious stones. But you have only given me one lakh when you are pleased with me !"

Then Nādir Shah marched to Umarkot, in Sindh, where Miān Ghulām Shah Sarai was ruler. The Miān came out to salaam to Nādir Shah with his two hands tied together with a kerchief. With him was his Wazir, Murād Ganja, and his hands were also tied together. Both of them stood before Nādir Shah, and he said to Ghulām Shah : "Who are you who call yourself Shah (King) ?" Ghulām Shah replied : "I am not a King, but the King's slave ; not Ghulām Shah, but Ghulām-i Shah (slave of the King)." Then Nādir Shah ordered his troopers to untie Ghulām Shah's hands. He touched the kerchief with his hand, and they untied it. Then he told them to loose Murad's hands also. They attempted to do so ; but Murad said : "Let him who tied up my hands untie them himself." Then the King touched the kerchief, and they untied it. The King let Ghulām Shah go after exacting a fine from him, and then returned to his own country by way of the Bolān Pass.

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Dostān and Shīrēn.

[This is a poetical legend which has a wide circulation among the Rind Baloches of the Sulaimān Mountains. The story has a historical foundation in the wars which took place between the

wild Baloch tribes, who were swarming down in the commencement of the sixteenth century from the uplands of what is now called Balochistan (here spoken of as Khorāsān) into the valley of the Indus, and the Mughal Emperors Bābar and Hamāyūn and their following from Central Asia, who were founding the Mughal Empire of India at the same period. They are popularly and correctly spoken of as Turks. Another body of Mughals, or Turks, the Arghūn family, who founded a short-lived dynasty in Kandahar and Northern Sindh, also came into collision with the Baloches at the same period. Harrand is an ancient fort which at that time was held by a Mughal garrison to keep the Hill Baloches in check. It commands the entrance to the Chāchar Pass, one of the easiest routes from the Indus valley into the hill country near the point where the Indus is joined by the united five rivers of the Punjab. Here the story is localised, and the names mentioned in the narrative of the flight through the pass are still borne by various spots in the Chāchar Gorge.]

There was once a Rind named Dostēn, and he was betrothed to Shirēn, a daughter of Lāl Khan. The two learned to read and write the Persian language together. But it happened that one day the Turks made a raid on the Rind village and slew several men and seized Dostēn and carried him away with another boy as prisoners, and brought them to Harrand, where they passed many years in captivity. After this Shirēn's father and mother betrothed her to another Rind, and he too was called Dostēn.

Then Shirēn made a poem and wrote it on paper, and sent it to Dostēn ; a faqir brought it and delivered it to him.

Now as time went on, the Turk who ruled at Harrand as representative of Humāū (Humāyūn) made Dostēn a groom to look after his horses ; and as he worked well, the head-groom became friendly to him, and entrusted him with two fillies, saying : "Train these, train them very carefully." When the mares were four years old they saddled them, and Dostēn and the other Rind, his companion, used to ride them about to train them. But before taking off their fetters the Turk made them give their word not to escape secretly ; and Dostēn said : "I will not go off secretly ; I will not go till I have your leave." And so they rode and trained the mares until the day of the 'Id' arrived, when the Turk had horse-races : and he said to Dostēn : "You two have leave to take out the mares and race them." And Dostēn said : "Have we your leave

to go?" The governor replied: "Yes, you have my leave to go." So they let their mares go, and left all the others behind, and came galloping past the post where the governor was sitting; and Dostèn called out: "Governor! we have your leave to go, and we are going;" and with that they started off. The governor called to his army to follow them. "Do not let them go! Catch them! Kill them!" he shouted; and off went all the troop at their heels. They made for the Chāchar Pass. When they had got a little beyond Toba (a spring) a grey mare (among the pursuers) fell and died, and ever since then the place has been called Nili-Lakri (the Grey-Mare's-Plateau). And further on that day a dun horse came down and died, and the place is still called Bhūrā-Pusht (Dun-Horse-Ridge). And at Nilā-Khund (Grey-Horse-Vale), below the Phailāwagh Plain, a grey horse stumbled and fell and died. All these names have been fixed to these spots ever since. And at Phailāwagh the troop gave up the pursuit and returned to Harrand.

Dostèn and his companion made their way to Narmukh, for there his home was. When they arrived there in the evening they saw a boy grazing a flock of lambs, and they noticed that he was weeping. Dostèn asked him what he was weeping for, and the boy said: "My brother was carried away into captivity a long time ago, and left his bride behind him; and now they have given her to another, and to-day they are marrying her. That is why I am weeping."

Then Dostèn said: "What was your brother's name?" and the boy said: "He was called Dostèn." Then Dostèn said: "Do not weep, for God will bring your brother back again." Then he asked the boy to show him where the wedding was to take place. He pointed out the place and they rode on, and coming to the village saw all the preparations for a wedding going on, and alighted by the wedding scaffold. The Rinds said: "Who are you?" and Dostèn said: "We are Doms" (the minstrel tribe). Then the people asked if they knew any songs, and Dostèn said: "Certainly we do; are we not Doms? Bring out a dambiro,¹ and I'll sing you ballads enough." They brought him a dambiro, and he sat down and sang that song which Shlrèn had written on paper and sent to him, and this is the song he sang:

¹ An instrument resembling a guitar.

"I¹ swear to you by your beard, by the soft down on your face, that my mare who runs down the wild ass is pining away; she cannot drink the water of the river or eat the coarse grass of the Indus plains; she longs for her own mountain pastures, for the herds of wild asses which roam the upland slopes, for the female wild asses of the Phitokh Pass, for the pools filled with sparkling water. The mosquitos and sand-flies irritate her, the vermin allow her no sleep, the hard barley of the grain-sellers hurts her tender mouth.

"A man came down from Khorāsān, his clothes were stained with travelling. Bales of madder he brought with him, saddle-bags full of the finest bhang, loads of sweet scents from Kandahar; and with him he brought a message from the Rinds, a true love's greeting from Shirèn.

"The storm-clouds² have rained upon Konār, on the plains and slopes of Mungachar, on the pleasant uplands of Sani; all the pools are full to overflowing, the surface of the water trembles like the leaves of the wild pistachio, the wavelets bend like the jointed sugar-cane.

"The graziers are preparing for the march, the owners of sheep and goats, Sahāk and Yārān. The women have tied up their baggage, the camel-men have laden their beasts; they go by Nigāhū, and over the pass of Bhāwanar; the yellow camels hurt their knees on the rocks, the males in long strings, the tender-footed females.

"Shirèn has pitched her little hut in the wild land of Narmukh. She calls her beloved handmaiden and takes an earthen cup; she goes to a pool of freshly fallen water and washes and combs her locks; then she comes back to her hut, and shuts it down on every side, and spreads out a palm-leaf mat and lies down upon it. She puts her hand into her bag and pulls out a silver mirror, rests it on her knee, and looks upon her own beauty. The tears come to her tender eyes and drop upon her bodice. In come her friends and sisters, fair companions forty and four! They come and sit down by her, and ask after her heart and her condition. 'Why,' they say, 'are your jewels neglected, your red and blue clothes thrown aside, your hair unkempt and dusty, your

¹ The first part of this poem is spoken by Dostèn in his own person.

² Shirèn's message begins here.

eyes but bowls of tears?' She weeps, and pushes them from her. 'Away! women, you are not good; away! I say, sit apart from me. Let my jewels be neglected; let my red and blue garments be thrown aside, and my hair be unkempt and dusty. I have no need of friends like you; for he who was the friend of my heart has been taken captive by the cursed Turks. The Mughal Turks have taken him, and shut him up in a dreary prison in the wealthy town of Harrand!

"When the daughters of the Rinds form a band,¹ and come wandering over the mountain slopes invoking blessings as they go, they break the red flowers from their stalks, and some put them in their bodices and some hang them in their earrings, and some keep them as a pledge of love. One I pick with a prayer for my heart's desire. I pluck it and keep it tight closed in my hand, that he may be saved from his bitter enemies. His sister and love says, stretching out her hands to heaven: 'May God bring back Malik Dostèn to his true love again, this Dostèn and not the other!

"O chestnut mare, away down below in the plains, come swiftly, by long stages, bring my lord and chief. Let him see his father and mother, and the loving assembly of his brethren. Let Malik Dostèn come and appear to me again."

Shirèn heard the song and knew him, and cried out: "It is Dostèn who is singing that song." Then they all asked him who he was, and he said: "I am Dostèn." Then the other Dostèn who was to be married to her came forward and said: "Now that you have come and are present yourself, Shirèn is your bride; take her and marry her, for she said she would marry no other but Dostèn, and now the real Dostèn has come." He also gave Dostèn all that he had spent on the wedding; and Dostèn and Shirèn were married, and all else is well.

NOTE.—A translation of the poem given above was published by me with the other Balochi Poems in "A Sketch of the Northern Balochi Language" (extra No. of the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* for 1881). It is given here with some corrections in order to complete the story.

M. LONGWORTH DAMES.

¹ It is the custom of the women among the Hill Baloches to wander about the mountains in bands unaccompanied by any men.

THE PART PLAYED BY WATER IN MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

It does not seem to be easy to explain the part played by water in the marriage customs of different peoples; but there can hardly be any doubt as to the fact. The Bible mentions three cases where wives are found at wells: Gen. xxiv., 11; xxix., 2; and Exod. ii., 15. In the last instance Raschi, the classical commentator of the Bible and Babylonian Talmud, adds: "he learned it (*i.e.* to seek a wife at a well) from Jacob, who found for himself a wife at a pool." The other commentators (Ramban, Raschbam, Ibn-Ezra, Abi-Ezra) do not give any explanation of this passage. This practice was not confined to the Hebrews. Nestor, in his Chronicle, speaking of the early Slavonic tribes, says: "but the Drevlyans were living like beasts, like wild beasts; they killed one another, ate every impure thing, had no marriage, but used to steal girls at the water." Nestor goes on to say, that when the other Slavonic tribes had no regular marriage ceremonies (some of them had), they used to steal girls at dances. It is possible that the Drevlyans, owing to the inaccessibility of their sites, and to the rough way of living, preserved old customs better than the other tribes. In the time of Nestor, indeed, they were not yet for the most part converted to Christianity. In a Little Russian song, a mother tells her daughter not to go to a well and not to look on young men. I think, in this instance, there is no need of explanation, for it is clear that the well may easily become a meeting-place of young people, as it is admirably described in *La fortune de Rougons* of Émile Zola. Every one can see that it is so in the villages of Little Russia, Roumania, Asia Minor, and Palestine, where it was noticed in the fifth century A.D. This custom is further exemplified in the Indian story of The Two Friends, given by Miss S. M. Taylor in *Folk-Lore*, vol. vi., p. 399, and my parallels from *Alif Leilah we Leilah* in *Folk-Lore*, vol. vii., p. 199. Some points in the story of The Three Damsels of Baghdad (*Alif Leilah we Leilah*, vol. i., p. 24, edition of 1305 A.H.) could be compared, but unfortunately the scene is too gross to be quoted here. The same is the case with the frame-story. All the customs quoted above are comparatively transparent. They are the primitive customs. But besides these we have some developments of the customs, where the primitive

custom was lost. To such belongs the following custom, given by the Sheh-Zade in the Story of *The Forty Viziers*, p. 16 (Constantinople edition, 1303 A.H.): "If you are a stranger, go and sit down at the door of the bath-house and ask every woman who comes out of the bath-house, 'Have you a husband?' And whatsoever woman says, 'I have no husband,' must, according to the custom of this city, become your wife." It may be noticed, however, that this passage can be brought to bear upon the famous passage in Herodotus, speaking of the immorality of Babylonian women, and, perhaps, upon Quintus Curtius, v., 1; but the fact that this custom was connected with the bath-house still remains.

To the same category of rudimentary customs belongs probably the divination by the bridge. Not having here the book where it is described, I can give no reference to it, and therefore I am obliged to describe it fully, according to what I have read and seen. Christmas night is thought in Russia to be one of the best times for divination. Among many forms of it, divination by the bridge is largely used. Small bits of wood are bound so as to form a rough imitation of a bridge, and put under the pillow. Before going to bed the girl (this divination is never used by men) says: "Soosheny-ryasheny, pridi ko mnye, proviedyi myenya," *i.e.*, My betrothed, appointed for me, come to me, and lead me over the bridge. In the divination by the mirror, two mirrors are placed one against the other, with two candles and two glasses of water between. The two glasses of water, however, hardly belong to the same class of facts; for divination by the mirror cannot be very old, and the glasses may form a part, or appear instead, of a complete dinner, which is sometimes served for the girl and her mysterious visitor. Divination by harkening at the windows of an old, for the most part dilapidated, bath-house, comes nearer to the point, and is, perhaps, connected with the above-quoted Turkish story. I could not find this case of divination amongst the Tartars in the South of Russia; but I was told in Asia Minor that this custom exists there as well, although the Mohammedan aversion to all superstitious customs did not allow me and my interlocutors to enter into any details as to the time and mode of this divination.

I cannot as yet venture to give any explanation of the above-mentioned customs, for the materials are hardly large enough. I may, however, point to the Swan-maiden type of folktales, and

all its variants, except the Russian tale of Wassilissa-Tzaryevna, who, being transformed into a frog, could hardly be found far away from water. A man who saw a girl naked must marry her in order to rehabilitate her honour. I have a fine tale in the Anatolian Turkish dialect, but it is too gross, as indeed most of the Oriental tales are, to be given here. I hope, however, to edit the Anatolian text of it ere long. In this tale a strong support for the above expressed opinion is found. In the well-known Greek legend, a hunter who saw Diana naked was killed, for by the fact of his seeing her thus he offended her. In the East, no one but a near relative or husband can see a woman's face, although this custom is not strictly adhered to in small villages with purely Moslem population. There is, however, no greater offence to a woman than to tear away her veil in a public place. Can the Slavonic custom have originated from the indecency of seeing a woman unclothed without being her husband, or simply from the ease of stealing a girl at the water (river, lake, or sea) without leaving any traces?

L. GOLDMERSTEIN.

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MARKS ON ANCIENT MONUMENTS.

About fifteen years ago I was in Egypt, and one day when on the Nile, an officer of the Khedive's household named *Sadmi Bey*, pointed out to me a group of peasant women kneeling as if in silent prayer at the base of the wall of an old temple.

"You can have no idea of what they are doing," he remarked. "Well, they are in a certain way worshipping the deities of ancient Egypt, or rather *Isis*. Observe that all are scratching the stone with knives or pebbles. When a woman wishes to become a mother, she goes to some ancient building or monument, wall or pillar, and scratches on it a deep groove. Then, as she believes, her desire will be granted."

I examined the marks thus made, and subsequently found them by thousands on many ancient ruins. Many appeared to be coeval with the buildings themselves. They were peculiar or un-

mistakeable, being all from ten to fourteen inches in length, and from half an inch to an inch in width. There was a certain indication of intention and of a purpose in them by which they could easily be distinguished from the idle scratching often made by boys.

After my return to Europe I often found similar markings on stones, and they were invariably on buildings, market crosses, and similar monuments which had been erected previous to the fifteenth century. I found them in England, Germany, and Normandy. I regret that I cannot give with accuracy the names of the places where I saw them, but there are few among those who will hear or read this communication who can not verify for themselves the existence of such marks. What is of equal importance will be to ascertain whether there exists in written or oral records any proof of such a custom or belief in Europe, and what details or circumstances are connected with it.

It is specially to be observed that these marks all have a generic character or family likeness, that they generally occur in groups, and, thirdly, that they are only found on ancient buildings. Those which were made by idlers on modern buildings are collectively of an entirely different character.

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND.

Florence, June 1st, 1896.

THE STRAW GOBLIN.

I have often seen in windows in Florence, and three times purchased for three *soldi* or *sous* each, a small toy known as a *Pagliaccio*, or Man of Straw. It represents a little fellow, holding in either hand a cymbal, having on his head a red cap, like the ancient Phrygian bonnet, and no garment except a short red shirt. It is exactly the figure of the goblins which are often seen depicted in old Roman and Etruscan art, and corresponds to the description of the Brownie all over Europe. The name *Pagliaccio* in no wise corresponds to the appearance of this goblin or toy. But there is in the old popular plays of Italy a kind of Punch, who is known as *Pagliaccio*, a comic character, who carries the tradition back for a long time.

Suddenly it occurred to me that in the year 1870 I had pur-

chased in Verona for ten soldi three small Etruscan images of burned terra-cotta, which were quite the same with the *Pagliaccio*, wearing the short shirt and antique cap. One day, by accident, one of these was broken in two, and I found passing at full length through it an unburnt straw. This inclosing a straw in a burning substance which does not scorch it is a well-known trick to us, but it was a great wonder in the olden time. The cutlers of London four hundred years ago sorely puzzled the men of Sheffield by sending them a knife in which, when broken, a straw was found unconsumed. A straw is in Italian *paglia*, whence *Pagliaccio*, a straw-man.

Such a toy would very naturally be called a Straw-Man, whatever the equivalent for that may have been in Etruscan; and as the appearance of the ancient and modern figures is identical it seems that we have here—truly “strung on straw”—the proofs of a very ancient and curious tradition.

CHARLES GODFREY IELAND.

CHARMS FROM SIAM.

The two charms exhibited come from Siam. One is a charm of invulnerability, the other a witchcraft-charm offensive and defensive. They were recently taken from two notorious Malay brothers, named respectively Ah-Mat and Mut, well known as the perpetrators of many murders and robberies committed upon Siamese and others in and around the neighbourhood of Bangkok. The brothers were repeatedly shot at, stabbed and cut at with swords, chased and surrounded by parties of men sent out time after time to take them, but to no purpose; bullets and swords had no effect, nothing could harm them, because—as the Siamese declared—they wore powerful charms. It is this belief of the Siamese that has enabled me to show the present specimens; for when, a few weeks ago, the Malay desperadoes were at last captured, the Siamese were so terror-stricken by the presence of those two dangerous engines that the authorities found it necessary to have the charms at once removed from the prisoners. Fortunately they were not destroyed, but shortly after sent to England with other objects of interest.

PLATE I.

RATTAN INSCRIBED WITH CHARM OF INVULNERABILITY.

AMULET OF BONE, HORN, AND METAL.

SIAMESE AMULETS.

To face Page 89.

The piece of inscribed rattan was worn round the waist, and has, scraped upon it, a charm of invulnerability in Cambodian characters. The writing has been carefully transcribed on cardboard by my nephew, to enable the lettering to be more plainly seen. Photographs of it are on the table for anyone who takes an interest in the subject, and also with a hope that through them I may obtain a translation of the words. I ought, perhaps, to mention one difficulty that might occur in translating. The Malays, who greatly trust to written spells and charms in carrying on their struggle for existence, naturally do not care that all who run may read what gives them such an advantage over their neighbours, by blessing them with invulnerability. On the contrary, after a manner frequently adopted by Orientals when dealing with written charms, as Mr. Ellis of the British Museum pointed out to me, Ah-Mat, or whoever was the astrologer, priest, monk, or sorcerer who wrote the charm for him, may possibly have employed the Cambodian character merely as a blind, while the words written may be in another language. This, however, is only a possible difficulty to be prepared for. In W. G. Maxwell's *Folklore of the Malays* (*Journ. Straits Branch R. Asiatic Soc.*, No. vii., 1881, p. 24), he tells us that the Malays of the Peninsula in their own country frequently employ spells and charms written in Siamese language and character, and accordingly easily translated. The Cambodian legend, therefore, may probably be unburdened by any troublesome complication, and may, perhaps, meet with some kind orientalist member or friend of the Society who will translate it.

The charm, consisting of bony parts of animals and a piece of metal, threaded on a string and worn round the neck, was looked upon by the Siamese with the greatest amount of fear, as a "holy thing" and a "dangerous weapon." *Chula*, or horn and horn-like parts of animals, and magical bones, become in combination a powerful protection to their owner, while also potent for the infliction of calamities, sickness, and even death upon those he pleases to turn them against. Among Siamese, Malays, Cambodians and other races of the same origin, it is held that into or about the bones of certain animals—among them human beings—the spirits once animating them can, and often do, come to endow them with extraordinary power. With respect to the bones now before us, Mr. Oldfield Thomas, Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, and Mr. G. A. Boulenger, of the Natural History Branch of the

British Museum, in their several departments, have most kindly identified them for me. I give them in the order in which they appear on the string:—four vertebræ of the *Python reticulatus* (this is the famous *uhwar sawa* of the Malays), a piece of metal, portions of a tiger's tooth, a deer's horn and a human bone, four portions of hornbill bones, too much cut and worn to name any particular species, of which there are several, and nine vertebræ of *Dendrophis*, one of the tree-snakes. With the exception of the last (which, so far, I have been unable to identify with any of the native names of omen or medicinal snakes), all the animals are among those taking a prominent position in Siamese, Malayan, &c., folklore. Myths and folklore of man, tiger, deer, and snakes are constantly presented to us in one form or another; but I do not recollect that the hornbill has as yet been before the Society. A familiar bird over its own region of South-eastern India, including Burma, Siam, the Malay Peninsula, and the great islands of the archipelago, where it is revered as one of the most important omen-birds; to kill it brings down certain vengeance on the sacrilegious murderer. It plays an imposing part as Malayan war-god—a position it disputes with a large white and brown hawk. Numbers of miniature effigies of the hornbill are met as spirit-collectors at harvest-feasts; and at harvest and head-hunting festivals a large wooden effigy of the bird is worshipped under the name of *Tenyalang* with food-offerings and invocations. This effigy is said on occasions to be worshipped as Singalang Burong, the great bird-ancestor of some of the wild tribes of Borneo. The folklore of the hornbill is represented by several specimens in the British Museum, and in the Indian Art Museum at South Kensington. I am sorry I cannot assign what particular functions are given it to perform in the bone charm.

SHEARS AND MANGALA STAND.

Out of some sixty utensils and symbolic ornaments used in the Siamese tonsorial rite commonly known as the Kon Chuk or Topknot-cutting, I am only able to show two—the shears and mangala stand. These are closely connected with the actual removal of the hair, at which astrologers, Buddhist monks, and Brahmin priests take part. A full description of the rite is given in G. E. Gerini's *Chulakantamangala, or Tonsure Ceremony as per-*

formed in Siam, published in 1895. The two examples I show come from Bangkok, and are the same in form as those on Plate II. of Gerini's book ; but the shears, in place of being inlaid with gold, as was the example given by Gerini, are inlaid with silver.

M. C. FFENNELL.

MORE STAFFORDSHIRE SUPERSTITIONS.

An attached and favourite servant was married from my house at Cheltenham in November, 1896. Her old father, replying for himself and his wife to my invitation to the wedding, wrote to me : "We both hope you will please try to arrange for single people to go with them to [be] Married," on the ground, it was explained to me, that it is very unlucky for a married man or woman to make part of a wedding-party. The father and his eldest (married) daughter eventually made the journey from near Walsall (Staffordshire) to Cheltenham for the occasion, going and returning the same day ; but though they had taken all this trouble they entirely refused to go to the church. They brought a present to me from the mother, in acknowledgment of the favour I was showing to their daughter. It consisted of a myrtle-plant in a flower-pot, intended as a talisman to protect the house from lightning. The old woman had always kept a myrtle in her own house for this purpose, and had "reared" a cutting from it for me as a special mark of attention. Another difficulty in the wedding arrangements was started by the bride herself. "It's so unlucky to try a wedding ring on"; but this having been overcome by trying another ring and matching the size, the pair were safely married and set out for their future home, the bride being cautioned by her sister to be sure to carry a Bible about her when she went into her new house (no reason stated).

I never met with this remarkable extension of the taboo on parents at weddings before ; and it is the more curious because at Edgmond (Salop), close to the western border of Staffordshire, it was thought *lucky* for one of the wedding party to be a married man or woman (see instances in my *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 292). I cannot locate the contrary belief with perfect certainty, as, while

the old man above mentioned is a native of South Staffordshire, his wife, who equally adheres to it, comes from the north of the county, where I must say I never heard of it. They are agricultural not industrial people; but I am inclined to think the idea about the Bible comes from the industrial population, among whom the daughter who advised it has married; for the rest of the family did not seem to be anxious on the point. The bride's Cheltenham acquaintance urged her to take a child with her to church for luck; and as she did not take the advice, I observed that two women took their own little daughters to see the ceremony, evidently to put matters straight!

CHARLOTTE S. BURNE.

CHARM FOR THE EVIL EYE.

An old woman living at Killiechonan on Loch Rannoch gave me the following particulars as to the cure of human beings or cattle "overlooked" by the Evil Eye. Draw water between sunset and sunrise from a stream crossing a public road which has been passed over by the living and the dead. Put a piece of silver in the water and pour it over the person or animal you desire to cure in the name of the Trinity. If the sickness has been caused by the Evil Eye the silver will stick to the bottom of the vessel. My informant said she had frequently used the charm herself, and that in her younger days some people possessed magic stones which were employed instead of the silver piece.

MARY H. DEBENHAM.

Cheshunt Park, Herts.

MARRIAGE SUPERSTITIONS.

The wife of a Scottish clergyman in Berwickshire, writing on the 26th December, 1895, says: "To-morrow my husband will have to drive into the country four miles to marry a couple at 7.30 p.m. The last Friday of the year is a favourite day with the common people."

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND.

THE SWISS FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

In May last, the new Swiss Folk-Lore Society was formally constituted ; and already the first number of its journal, the *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, has been issued, containing its manifesto and programme. The German term *Volkskunde* comprises somewhat more than our Folklore. Accordingly, not merely traditions, in the wide sense in which we use the word, are included within the programme of the new Society, but also the material arts, dwellings, tools, dress, food, and fabrics of the people ; and to these the Society proposes to add physical observations. It will thus be seen to cover an area corresponding very nearly to that of the Ethnographical Survey of this country. And the varied contents of the *Archiv* correspond to this wide purview. Judging from the list of members (who have reached a total number, during the first six months of the Society's existence, of no fewer than 298), it has excited a wide and general interest, at least throughout the French and German-speaking cantons. It cannot but be gratifying to the Folk-Lore Society to find herself thus becoming "the august mother of" a numerous progeny of societies similar in aim and method. We bid the new Society very heartily Godspeed.

The head-quarters of the Society are at Zurich. The President is Dr. E. Hoffmann-Krayer, who edits the *Archiv*. The subscription to the *Archiv*, which is to appear quarterly, is eight francs, beside the cost of postage.