means of the Dhalgai ceremony is called a Dhalgai man, in contradistinction to those who have been initiated at the Keeparra, who are always spoken of as Keeparra men.

Explanation of Plate XXXII.

A brief explanation of the Figures shown on the Plate will now be given—the reader being referred to the text for further details.

Fig. 1 is the *Kackaroo*, 28 feet by 23 feet: *a* is a group of two boys; *b* a group of four boys; *c* and *d* groups of three boys each. Outside the embankment are the mothers of the boys, and the other women farther back *a'*, *b'*, *c'*, *d'*, *e* and *f* are the men swinging the bull-roarers—one of them having entered the oval. The other men are not shown as it would unnecessarily crowd the Plate.

Fig. 2 represents the *Goonambang* (Excrement Place), 31 feet by 26 feet, with the heap of earth, *e*, in the centre. The four groups of boys, *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, are represented sitting between the heap and the embankment, but it has not been thought necessary to show the positions of the men—this having been sufficiently explained in the descriptien of the keeparra ground. The track, *yuppang*, leading from the *goonambang* to the *kaćkaroo*, is shown by a dotted line in this as well as in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 represents the *Keelaybang* (Micturating Place), *a*, *b*, being the line of gunyahs or shelters, *c*, *c* the row of fires, and *d* the clear space where the men perform their plays and dances.

Fig. 4 is the *Kweealbang* (Fire Place), *g* is the fire in the centre, around which a heap of green bushes, *f*, are laid; *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, are the mothers of the novices, and the other women, lying down, covered over with rugs and bushes; *e*, *e*, *e*, *e*, is the circle of men and boys painted white, and having their hands joined together; *h* is the way the men and novices have come in from the bush.

Figs. 6 to 13 represent the *dharrook* carved upon trees growing around the *goonambang*, which are fully described in previous pages.

Fig. 5 represents the place where the novices are brought in, and are given a drink of water; *a*, *a*, are the mothers standing in a row at the fire, *f*,—the other women, *g*, being behind them. On the other side of the fire is a row of coolamins, *b*, *b*, containing water: *c*, *c*, is the row of novices, and *d*, *d*, are the guardians; *e*, *e*, are the other men present; and *h* is the direction from which they have just come.

LIFE HISTORY *of an* AGHORI FAKIR; *with Exhibition of the Human Skull used by him as a Drinking Vessel, and Notes on the similar use of Skulls by other Races.* By HENRY BALFOUR, M.A.

[WITH PLATES XXXIII–XXXIV.]

BEING anxious to obtain for the Pitt Rivers Museum a specimen of the human calvaria used as a drinking vessel by Aghori Fakirs in India, I wrote to Surgeon Captain H. E. Drake Brockman, I.M.S., asking him to try and obtain one for me. This he not only succeeded in doing, having obtained

the specimen which I am exhibiting, but he also very kindly obtained all the information which he could regarding the Aghori who owned and used this skull as his drinking bowl. As this information is of considerable interest, and as I am not aware that the individual history of an Aghori has before been published, I thought that it would be of interest to the members of the Institute if I were to bring these notes before them. The personal history of its former owner, lends interest to the skull bowl as a specimen, and any reliable information regarding the very peculiar sect of ascetics known as the Aghori must be of value, especially since it appears that their numbers are diminishing, and their unpleasantly peculiar customs seem likely to die out at no very remote period. The interests of culture demand the suppression of such aggressively ascetic doctrines, but the interests of anthropology demand that they should be thoroughly investigated and studied before it is too late.

On the general subject of the Aghori Fakir of India, Dr. Drake Brockman supplies the following notes:—

"The Aghori is a class of Hindu Fakir rarely seen now-a-days, and fast becoming extinct, who wander about the length and breadth of India, either singly or in pairs, and will often eat offal and filth of every description, including the flesh of dead animals, human and other excreta, and often human flesh when obtainable. As far as I can ascertain from inquiry from pundits and others at the sacred places, this class of Hindu Fakir takes its origin from the so-called Gorakpunt Fakirs, the originator of their sect being one Gorak Nath, at some remote date.

"The sect, as stated by the fakir Moti Nath, from whom the drinking vessel sent was obtained, appears to be sub-divided into three sections, viz.: 1, Oghar; 2, Sarbhunji; 3, Ghure. There appears to be little difference between these three sections, as they can eat together and intermarry, thereby violating the two most stringent conditions of caste etiquette. The members of this sect wear only ear-rings, no other adornment being allowed. They all appear to change their names when admitted into the sect, and take those allotted to them at the time of admission by the respective gurus, at whose hands they have been initiated into the sect.

"It is very difficult to obtain much reliable information concerning this sect of religious mendicants, partly from the fact that their numbers now are few, that they are scattered in twos and threes all over India, and that they are more or less looked down upon and despised by the people, who simply feed them at festivals as an ordinary act of charity.

"Their religious rites and beliefs are somewhat curious, in that, as regards admission to their fraternity, a member of any

religion or creed, be he Christian, Mussulman or Hindu, is eligible for admission to the sect, and the only thing necessary is that each must become a *chela* (disciple) of a *guru*, prior to their formal admission, for a period of six months at least.

"From inquiry of an intelligent pundit of Hurdwar, who, I have every reason to believe, is reliable, in that this place is one of the few resorts of this particular class of mendicants—it appears that the term Oghar is applied chiefly to those members of the sect who have previously been Mohammedans, but is not absolutely restricted. It also appears that the name of Oghar is derived from the founder of the section that goes by this name, a certain Oghar Nath. Members of this sect of Aghori Fakir do not appear to eat offal to the extent that the other two sects do, the Sarbhunji and Ghure; the habits of these latter are said to be of the filthiest possible description; they stick at nothing, and will eagerly devour human flesh, human or other excreta, and drink urine. One curious fact is that they can and will eat the flesh of any dead animal with one exception, that is the horse; the exact reason of this, which I have often tried to elicit from pundits, I have been unable to ascertain.[1]

"Phakkars do not eat human flesh, and are probably looked up to by the other members of this sect, as being a bit better than themselves, partly from this reason, but also from the fact that they are celibate, or at any rate are not supposed to marry.

"While at Hurdwar recently, I was able to procure a stick used and carried by this fakir; it is cut from a tree known by the name of 'Tejphul,' a fairly common one, whose bark is covered with thorns something like the ordinary rose tree bark, only more pronounced in the way of being covered with thorns. I was told that two of these fakirs lived on the opposite side of the Ganges, in some caves in the hills surrounding Hurdwar, and that occasionally they could be seen wandering along the banks at dusk in search of offal, etc., but that on being approached they at once bolted into the jungle and could not be tracked. I tried to get some information concerning them and to procure their drinking vessels, but, I regret to say, without avail."

As Barth ("Religions of India," p. 214, 1892) says, "From the outset, and more than any other Hindu religion, Çivaism has pandered to ascetic fanaticism." The Aghori form perhaps the lowest grade of the Śivaite sects. From Watson and Kaye and others,[2] we learn that while formerly numerous, this sect of devotees has now dwindled down to a very few members, and

[1] Is this connected with the idea, prevalent in India, that the horse is a luck-bringing animal, and that it is unlucky to eat its flesh? Crooke (Introduction to "Popular Religion and Folklore of N. India," p. 318) says, "Eating horse flesh is supposed to bring on cramp, and when a sepoy at rifle practice misses the target, his comrades taunt him with having eaten the unlucky meat."—H. B.

[2] Watson and Kaye, "Peoples of India," II, pl. 94; E. Balfour, "Cyclopedia

that as an organised institution it is well-nigh extinct. Although there are doubtless many sincere devotees, the cult would seem largely to be maintained as a form of imposture, savouring of hypocritical charlatanism, "the object being to excite the wonder of the beholders, and make them believe in the utter indifference of the Aghora to worldly enjoyments. . . . They go about nude, with a fresh human skull in their hands, of which they had previously eaten the putrid flesh, and afterwards scraped out the brain and eyes with their fingers, into which is poured whatsoever is given them to drink, and to this they pretend to be indifferent whether it be ardent spirits or water. . . . The Aghora is an object of terror and disgust. Hindus, however, look on these wretches with veneration, and none dare to drive them from their doors" (E. Balfour, quoting Watson and Kaye). Wilkins says that "the original Aghori-worship seems to have been devoted to the female powers, or Devi, in one of her many forms, and to have demanded human victims."[1]

The accounts of this sect which I have seen are very meagre,[2] and, in the scarcity of details concerning its votaries, the account of an individual Aghori, the owner of the skull-bowl exhibited, should prove of interest. I give the account as sent to me by Dr. Drake Brockman, who had it from the man's own lips. He says:

"The accompanying drinking vessel (Fig. 1), which on inspection will be seen to consist of the complete vault of a human skull, comprising the frontal, two parietal, and occipital bones, was obtained by me directly from one of these fakirs, after many months of search, and, in order to lend additional interest to it as an ethnological curiosity, I had the man's history taken down at the time, together with a few interesting points regarding this kind of ascetic, which were elicited from him by questioning. I will now proceed to give it in detail. He stated: 'My name was Kallu Singh, father's name Fateh Singh, caste Lohar (a

of India"; Wilkins, "Modern Hinduism," 1887, p. 89; M. A. Sherring, "Hindu Tribes and Castes," 1872, p. 269.

[1] E. W. Hopkins, "Religions of India," 1896, p. 490, says: "Aghorī and all female monsters naturally associate with Çiva, who is their intellectual and moral counterpart. The older Aghoris exacted human sacrifice in honour of Devī, Parvatī, the wife of Çiva," and in a note on p. 533: "It is from this tribe [the Bhils] that the worship of Aghorī, the Vindhya fiend, accepted as a form of Kali, was introduced into Çivaite worship."

The versatile consort of Śiva is known under a great variety of names and characters, Devi, Parvati, Durga, Kali, Uma, etc.

[2] The best account which I have seen is that by Mr. H. W. Barrow, "On Aghoris and Aghoripanthis," published in the "Journ. Anthrop. Soc. of Bombay," vol. iii, 1893, pp. 197–251, to which I was referred by Prof. Tylor. This account is exceedingly interesting, and gives numerous references to other literature. The description relating to initiation ceremonies is important. It appears from this paper that the Aghorapanthis should be regarded as modern degenerate representatives of the earlier Aghoris. The paper was compiled from MS Notes on the "Aghoris and Cannibalism in India," by the late Mr. Edward Tyrrell Leith.

worker in iron), by calling a *saigulgar* (meaning a polisher or burnisher), a resident in Patiala city (capital of a large native state in the Punjab), and my age is thirty years."

On being asked when and how he came into the sect in which he was, he replied, "My mother died when I was six months old, my father brought me up. When I was twelve years of age my father died. I had no next-of-kin, and then stayed in the city of Patiala for some time, and maintained myself by begging, but, when the people of my caste began to jeer at me, I left the place and came begging to Mauza (meaning a village) Shajjadpur Majra, which is in British territory, between Patiala and Umballa, and about 20 kos[1] from Patiala to the north. There my relations lived, but they would not keep me; then I departed from there, and came to a village, the name of which I have forgotten, about three kos from Mauza Shajjadpur Majra. In this village there were ten or twelve houses occupied by Oghar and Sarbhunji people.

"In this place one Oghar made me his *chela* (disciple), but first of all they inquired into my affairs, and I told them that I had no *waris* (next-of-kin), and I asked them to make me one of their sect; they then kept me with them. For six months I stayed with them in that place, and begged along with them, and supported myself. They had other disciples, and when six months had passed, the other disciples spoke on my behalf, and the other Oghars then made me one of their sect, it having been represented that I had been with them six months. The *Guru* (spiritual guide) then granted me *mantra* (spell or charm).

"After admission to their sect, I stayed with them for six years, after which, with their permission, I started on a pilgrimage to Badri Narain (this is a sacred shrine up in the hills above Hurdwar, at a considerable elevation, to which pious Hindus resort), *en route* to which I met many of my brotherhood, *i.e.*, Oghar and Sarbhunji mendicants, and in their company, after a month and a half arrived at the Badri Narain mountain. For some years I lived by begging at the foot of the mountain.[2]

"There were no houses of my *biradari* (fraternity) there, and I met no one whom I knew. Thence I started off for Nepal, and in due time arrived in Nepal Kas city (meaning Khatmandu), where I stayed for six months. While there I received *sada barat*[3] from the Rajah's palace. A good number of Oghars live

[1] The kos is a measure of distance varying considerably in different parts of the country, but usually measuring about two English miles.—(H. E. D. B.)

[2] This point is infested with fakirs and mendicants of all kinds, who wait to catch pious Hindus and charitably disposed persons going up, for money.—(H. E. D. B.)

[3] This is a term applied to the custon of giving food daily as charity to the poor, which is largely done by wealthy Hindus, especially in large cities, *e.g.*, Muttra, where I have often witnessed this custom with my own eyes, and anyone

in Nepal territory, and I used to associate with them there. Thence I started on a pilgrimage to Juggarnathji (the sacred place of pilgrimage in Orissa), where I stayed for about eight or ten years. I met only a few Oghars there. Thence I started on a pilgrimage to Mathura, after which I came on to Bhurtpore" (a native state in Rajputana, where I got hold of the man. H. E. D. B.), "where I have been staying the last fifteen days.

"My *guru's* name is Hira Nath, and when I was admitted into this sect, he granted me the name of Moti Nath, by which name I am always known, and now I am an Oghar. I now receive food from every caste and tribe, and have no caste prejudices, I can eat from everyone's hand. I do not myself eat human flesh, but some of my sect have the power to eat human flesh and then make it alive again; some have success with charms, and they eat the flesh of the human body, but I have not this power as I was not successful with the charms. This much I do, I eat and drink out of a human skull. I also eat the flesh of every dead animal, with the exception of the horse, which we are forbidden to devour; all my brotherhood eat the bodies of all dead animals but the horse; this sect also eats the food of every caste or tribe, and has no caste prejudices whatever.

"There are three branches of my sect, 1, Oghar; 2, Sarbhunji; 3, Ghure. These all eat together and can marry with each other; those of our sect have families, but some of them are *Phakkars* (bachelors). *Phakkars* do not marry at all. We three sects can eat with *mehtars* (sweeper caste), but never intermarry with them. The three sects mentioned intermarry with each other, but not outside. We respect *Phakkars*, and put great faith in them. *Phakkars* are allowed to celebrate marriages.

"For the marriage rites,—first, the day of the wedding is fixed, and then on the appointed day the *Guru*, assisted by a *Phakkar* (if available), reads some charms and incantations before the bride and bridegroom, and then the marriage becomes complete; no other ceremonies are performed. Then the father or guardian of the bride gives the bridegroom some cloth, a dead human skull, and a rod." (This is a piece of rough stick, taken from a tree fairly common out here, called "tejphul," the bark of which is covered with blunt thorns. I have obtained a specimen of it, one that has been the property of one of these ascetics. H. E. D. B.) "We can have admitted to our sect anyone from any caste or religion, whether Mohammedan, Hindu or Christian, high or low. When he, or she, joins our sect, and wishes to marry, he can do so into either of the three sects of our fraternity. In our sect family men can also make disciples. We believe in God and our *Guru*, but in no other deities; we

can see at the door of a rich Rais' house food being distributed to the poor, irrespective of caste and creed.—(H. E. D. B.)

all believe alike. My *guru* has not the power of making a dead human body alive after he has eaten it up, but my *guru's guru* had that power, he could do many other miracles. I personally never saw him, but have only heard of him."

That then is the account which this Aghori gave of himself and his sect, a description having many points of interest. In the case of such an outcast, one may say out-caste, people it is a matter of great difficulty to hold communication with any of them, with the view of learning about their habits and history, as they studiously avoid contact with those not of their own persuasion, except for the purpose of soliciting alms from the charitably disposed, or of extorting them by threats of horrible practices. A belief in the strict fundamental equality of all things, which is the basis of their creed, leads to a life of utter self-abasement and great austerity, with the view of winning the favour of Śiva. No doubt, as in the case of Kallu Singh, many, perhaps most, are brought into contact with this casteless sect, and become enrolled as members, by force of circumstances, as a *dernier resort* rather, than from any original desire to place themselves in the lowest ranks of society, and the sect may be regarded, to a great extent, as a refuge for the destitute and the unsuccessful in life; but in the days when its numbers were large and its doctrines more wide-spread, there may have been many who preferred, upon strictly religious grounds, to lead the life of rigid asceticism, imposed by this mendicant sect, with the prospect of a rich reward in the hereafter. The present fanatical ascetics have probably been evolved by a process of gradual degradation from the earlier and more philosophical worshippers of Śiva.

The drinking vessel of human skull, which with the staff constitutes their whole property, seems to be universally carried and used by the Aghori, even by those who do not persist in the practice of eating human flesh, which is permitted by their tenets. F. B. Solvyns,[1] who restricts the term "*Agoury*" to an outcast class of women ("proscrite") says, "J'en ai même connu une qui vivait avec un riche Européen, et qui avait adopté les usages et les manières du pays de celui-ci; mais elle ne buvait que dans une coupe faite d'un crâne humain, garnie en or, et montée sur un pied artistement travaillé." This was presumably an exceptional instance, and the gold mounting of the skull bowl of this reclaimed Aghori woman reminds one of the elaborately decorated skull vessels of the Mongolian Buddhists, rather than of the rough uncleansed skulls used by the ordinary Aghori wanderers. The skull bowl belonging to Moti Nath, which I exhibit, is characteristic in not being embellished in

[1] "Les Hindoûs," 1810, ii, Pl. IV.

any way, the mere vault of a human skull, not even trimmed and smoothed at the edges for convenience in use. (Fig. 1.)

Notes on the Use of Human Skulls as Drinking and Libation Vessels by Various Races.

In connection with the use made by Aghoris of human skulls for their drinking bowls, it is of interest to note, by way of comparison, instances of a similar custom amongst other races, and to give the reasons which dictate the custom, which is very widely spread.

In the case of the Aghori, the use of a skull for drinking from, originally referable to Devi-worship, is a part of their practice of self-abasement, and is associated with the cannibalistic habits permitted and encouraged by this sect of ascetics. *Any* human skull will answer the purpose, and it is in no way material that the former owner and wearer of the skull should have been when living in any way connected with the Aghori who appropriates it from the dead body. In this respect the Aghori and Aghorapanthi differ from other peoples who make use of skulls for these purposes, and form a class by themselves.[1] In all other instances (or nearly all) the position of the individual whose skull it was when living, to the user of the skull as a vessel, is a matter of importance, and in most cases actually dictates the custom.

The custom of making drinking cups of the skulls of slain enemies is a widespread one among the more primitive warlike races. It is associated, primarily at least, with the widely prevalent belief in the transference of the powers of the deceased to the living victor, who is, according to this doctrine, enabled to add the skill, prowess and courage of his dead enemy to his own. It would seem probable that most forms of cannibalism owe their origin to a basis of this doctrine, which finds expression in numerous methods of treating and using the bodies, or portions of them, of deceased foes, which need not be enumerated here. The doctrine itself is natural enough when regarded in the light of primitive philosophy.

Of the Nukahivans of the Marquisas it is said that "As soon as an adversary had bitten the dust, the lucky warrior cut off the head of the slain, opened the skull at the sutures, drank the blood and a part of the brain on the spot." (Featherman, "Oceano-Melanesians," p. 91.) Krusenstern ("Voy. Round World," 1803–6, p. 180), in describing the Nukahivans, tells

[1] We must associate with them the Śaivaite sect, or subdivision, of Kāpālikas (or Pāśupata) of Southern India, said to have been founded by Saṅkarācārya, the "establisher of six forms of doctrine," who derive their name from their use of a human skull as a drinking vessel. Monier Williams, "Brahmanism and Hinduism," 1887, p. 94; Barth, "Religions of India," 1882, p. 214.

of "barbarous scenes that are enacted, particularly in times of war; the desperate rage with which they fall upon their victims; immediately tear off their head, and sip their blood out of the skull with the most disgusting greediness," and he adds in a note, "All the skulls which we purchased of them had a hole perforated through one end of them for this purpose." In this case the skulls do not appear to be kept for use as drinking vessels, which latter custom may be a later and improved derivative of the more rough and ready Marquisan method of treating enemies' skulls. Williams ("Fiji," p. 51), speaking of the manner in which the Fijians were wont to boast of their prospective deeds of valour on the eve of battle, says, "Under the excitement of the time, indiscreet men have been known to utter special threats against the leader of the enemy. Shouting his name, they declare their intention to cut out his tongue, eat his brains, and make a cup of his skull." That this latter threat was not always an empty one we may gather from the account given by John Jackson of a Fijian cannibalistic feasting ground, which he visited in 1840, and where he saw all the ceremonial observed by these natives in eating their enemies. In his description of the spot, where there stood a *bure kalou* (or temple of a god), he says, "On the table lay two skulls used for drinking angona, several more lying about on the floor.[1]

A similar use of skulls in the Kingsmill Islands is mentioned by Angas.[2] He says, "Toddy is procured from the spathe of the cocoanut tree, and used as an intoxicant beverage at their feasts, where it is served in large wooden bowls, from which it is handed round in small cups formed of cocoanut shells, or in human skulls." Mr. Graham Balfour in a letter to myself mentioned having seen in Dec. 1894, at the Maniapa of Teriri at Apemama, Gilbert Islands, a number of skulls of executed criminals, suspended from a hanging platform in the centre of the house, one of them being decorated with chains of shell money, and mounted like one of the cocoanut shells used for drawing water from wells.

The use of an enemy's skull as a drinking vessel was in vogue amongst the Iroquois as evidenced in the addresses of Iroquois women to the shades of departed relatives, whose death they would avenge, which contained the most fiendish threats to the prisoners of war, who awaited torture and death. "Him will I burn, and put into the cauldron: Burning hatchets will soon be applied to his flesh . . . they will drink out of his skull."[3] Molina ("Hist. de Chile," Madrid, 1795, ii, p.

[1] Erskine, "Islands of Western Pacific," 1853, p. 426.
[2] "Polynesia," 1866, p. 398.
[3] Thos. Jefferys, "Hist. of French dominions in N. and S. America," 1759, p. 63.

80)[1] speaks of a similar custom among the Araucanians, who, after torturing their captives to death, made war flutes out of their bones, and used the skulls for drinking vessels.

In Western Africa the custom of preserving the skulls and lower jaws of slain enemies, or in many instances of inoffensive people murdered for the sake of their heads—is well known, and in some instances the skulls are turned into drinking vessels. Specimens of the latter are, however, rare in museums, though both the British and the Berlin Museums possess examples. The two examples in the British Museum (Figs. 2 and 3) are two simple calvariæ, the lower portions of the skulls having been roughly broken away, leaving the edges uneven and practically untrimmed; they come from Ashanti, but have no details of information as regards their exact *provenance*, nor as regards their use. Probably they were used as vessels for containing drink offerings presented to the fetish figures. Dr. v. Luschan,[2] describing a specimen of skull drinking bowl from Upper Guinea, Togo country, says that the skull was first boiled in water to soften the flesh, which was then removed from the bones with a knife, and a well cleaned and neatly finished drinking cup formed from it. In Nkonya, in the Tschi-speaking country, offerings are made at Wurupong to the principal fetish Yia, to whom must be offered every year a new drinking bowl made from a human skull, for he does not care to drink from an ordinary calabash bowl. The bringer of such a bowl is highly thought of and respected. In this West African custom the skull is used purely for propitiation of the god, and not, as in the other cases mentioned, used for transferring the powers of a dead foe to the living victor.

In ancient times, as we learn from Herodotus, this treatment of the heads taken in war prevailed amongst the Scythians, who always drank off the blood of the first enemy killed, and who preserved the heads of their most hated enemies in the following manner. The skull was sawn off below the eyebrows and the calvaria was cleaned, and if the owner of the trophy was a poor man he covered it with leather on the outside, if he was a wealthy man he in addition to this lined it inside with gold; the bowl thus formed was then used as a drinking vessel. Not only were the heads of enemies so treated, but if a Scythian pleader won a suit against even a relative in the presence of the king, his right it was to kill him and make a drinking cup of his skull, so that similar rules applied to victory in the law court as in war.[3] Strabo,[4] c. B.C. 54–A.D. 24, also mentions the

[1] Quoted by J. G. Bourke, "9th Rep. Bureau of Ethnology," p. 489.
[2] "Verhandlungen d. Berliner Anthrop. Gesellschaft," May 27, 1893, p. 271.
[3] Herodotus, "Hist.," iv. 65.
[4] Lib. VII, cap. iii, ed. Müller and Dübner, 1853, p. 249.

ferocity of the Scythians towards strangers, whom they slew and eat, and whose skulls they made into drinking cups, on which account, he says, the Black Sea (Pontus) was called Axenus (the "Inhospitable"). Colonel Tod and others have sought to prove that the Rajputs, who came as a conquering race into India, were of Scythian origin, citing, in proof of this view, several customs common to both Rajputs and Scythians, amongst others, that of drinking blood out of an enemy's skull.[1]

Livy,[2] in describing a successful expedition made by the Boii against the Romans, says, "A small number of the great force, who, making for the bridge over the river, were cut off, were captured, the bridge having been previously occupied by the enemy. There Postumius fell fighting with all his might against capture. The spoils of his body and the leader's head, which had been cut off, were carried by the Boii amid rejoicings to their most sacred temple. Then having cleansed the head, after their custom, they covered[3] the bare skull (calvam) with gold. And this became a sacred vessel to them, from which they could offer libations on holy days, and this same became a drinking vessel for the priest and chief people of the temple." The Boii were a Celtic (Gaulish) people, who at an early date crossed the Alps and settled between the River Po and the Apennines, and who greatly harassed the Romans during the third century B.C. Another ancient people, said also to be of Celtic or as some say Teutonic origin, are credited by Ammianus Marcellinus with drinking blood from their enemies' skulls. These are the Scordisci, ancient inhabitants of Pannonia, of whom it is said, "Hostiis captivorum Bellonae litant et Marti, humanumque sanguinem in ossibus capitum cavis bibunt avidius."

As another case in point we have the well known story of Alboin, who became King of the Lombards in 561 A.D. He was married to Rosmunda (as second wife), daughter of Cunimund, King of the Gepidæ. He slew his father-in-law with his own hand in a battle which nearly exterminated the Gepidæ, and in a fit of drunkenness sent to his wife a cup made from her father's skull, brutally inviting her to drink from it. This savage act led to his assassination on June 8, 573, by an agent of his wife, Rosmunda. The Scandinavian gods

[1] Blavatsky, "Caves and Jungles of Hindostan," 1892, p. 211. Tod, "Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han" (Rajputana), i, p. 68. "The Rajput delights in blood, his offerings to the god of battle are sanguinary, blood and wine. The cup (cupra) of libation is the human skull. He loves them because they are emblematic of the god he worships; and he is taught to believe that Har loves them, who in war is represented with a skull to drink the foeman's blood."

[2] "Hist.," xxiii, 24 fin

[3] The text gives "*cælvere*," but better sense is made by reading "celavere," and I have ventured to adopt this reading in my translation.

have been by some credited with drinking out of human skulls at their mythical banquets in Valhalla, but this is, I am informed by Prof. York Powell, due to a mistranslation, as no such statement is made in the original Saga.

Even nearer home and in our own day the practice of using a skull as a drinking bowl is barely extinct. Mitchell[1] mentions the belief still surviving in Britain, "that epilepsy may be cured by drinking water out of the skull of a suicide, or by tasting the blood of a murderer." He adds, "I have known epileptics so treated."[2] This notion is associated with a widespread belief in the efficacy of dead men's skulls and bones for cure of epilepsy and other disorders. Powder made from human skulls was much valued, and even moss found growing upon a skull was found to be most efficacious in stopping hæmorrhages.[3]

The practice of preserving the bones of deceased relatives, and carrying them about for a longer or shorter time, is probably associated with a kind of primitive philosophy nearly akin to that which dictates the similar practice applied to the bones of enemies. In the case of this treatment of enemies, revenge seems to be only a minor incentive to the practice, the primary motive being the desire to acquire a part of the acknowledged powers of the deceased foe, through the direct medium of portions of his person. It is as a rule only the most powerful and dreaded enemies who are considered worthy of such post-mortem treatment, which is therefore rather complimentary to the deceased than otherwise, as being an acknowledgment of the prowess and courage which were his characteristics during life. In the case of the preservation of portions of the bodies of deceased relatives, there is, no doubt, some notion of piety in the act, and also a desire to propitiate the spirits of the departed, which might otherwise become troublesome. But, associated with these ideas there probably is the doctrine of the transmission of the characteristics of the deceased to the surviving relatives, who by this means may inherit his good qualities and virtues.

Although the preservation of the skull, bones, and other portions of the body of lately deceased relatives, is a very widely diffused practice (*e.g.*, in the Andaman Islands, Society Islands, Siam and many other regions[4])—the practice of making drinking vessels of their skulls is of very limited distribution.

[1] "The Past in the Present," 1880, p. 154.

[2] See also Roger's "Social Life in Scotland," iii, p. 225, where the custom of drinking from a suicide's skull is described from Caithness and the neighbourhood.

[3] W. G. Black, "Folk Medicine," 1883, p. 96. Also Gomme, "Ethnology in Folklore."

[4] v. Giglioli, "Ossa Umare portate come ricordo o per ornamento e usate come Utensile od Armi." "Arch. per l'Antrop. e la Etnol.," xviii, 1888.

The custom is, however, well-known in South Australia. Angas,[1] in describing the burial customs of the natives of the Lower Murray River district, says: "The body is never buried with the head on, the skulls of the dead being taken away and used as drinking vessels by the relations of the deceased. Mooloo, the native whom I met near the junction of the lake, parted with his mother's skull for a small piece of tobacco!" He adds later, "If the body . . . should happen to belong to a warrior slain in fight . . . after the body has remained for several weeks on the platform, it is taken down and buried; the skull becoming the drinking cup of the nearest relative." The same author in another work[2] figures a skull drinking vessel used by natives about Lake Albert and along the Coorung river. He says, "They generally prefer the skulls of deceased parents or other near relations, to those of strangers" In reference to Plate XXXVI of the same work, which illustrates natives of the Coorung, he says, "The girl carried a human skull in her hand, it was her mother's skull, and from it she drank her daily draught of water." E. J. Eyre,[3] quoting Mr. Meyer, says of the burial customs observed by natives of Encounter Bay, South Australia, "The corpse being placed in the tree, a fire is made underneath. . . . In this situation the body remains, unless removed by some hostile tribe, until the flesh is completely wasted away, after which the skull is taken by the nearest relative for a drinking cup."

All the South Australian skull drinking bowls of which I have seen figures, or specimens, have been, with one exception, made by cutting away the facial portion of the cranium, leaving the entire skull vault practically intact. The single exception to this rule is a specimen in the possession of Professor E. Giglioli, of Florence, which consists of the hinder portion of the calvaria, cut off vertically from bregma to occiput. The skull-cups are often furnished with cords for carrying them about, and where they are fractured or the sutures gape, the apertures are stopped with gum or "black boy," to which are sometimes affixed flat pieces of shell.[4] This is seen in the specimens exhibited (Figs. 4 and 5.) It was also usual to place a wisp of grass inside the cavity of the skull to prevent the water from being spilled in carrying (Fig. 5). I have not seen it stated that the Australians use the skulls of enemies for a similar purpose.

Herodotus[5] in his description of the Issĕdŏnes gives a passage which may possibly have reference to the custom of

[1] "Savage Life," 1847, i, pp 94, 95.
[2] "South Australia," Plate XXVII, Fig. 25.
[3] "Discoveries in Central Australia," p. 345.
[4] *Vide* Angas, "S. Australia," Plate XXVII, Fig. 25; Eyre, *l.c.*, Plate IV, Fig. 20; J. G. Wood, "Nat. Hist. Man," ii, p. 83.
[5] "Hist.," iv, 26.

using the skulls of dead relatives as vessels. After describing how, when a man's father dies, all his relatives are summoned to a banquet at which the flesh of the dead man is solemnly eaten, he goes on to say, "*τὴν δὲ κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ψιλώσαντες καὶ ἐκκαθήραντες, καταχρυσοῦσι· καὶ ἔπειτα ἅτε ἀγάλματι χρέωνται, θυσίας μεγάλας ἐπετείους ἐπιτελέοντες.*' *i.e.*, "Having laid bare and cleansed the head, they overlay it with gold; and then they use it as a *sacred image*, performing grand yearly sacrifices (to it)." There has been some question as to the meaning of the word *ἄγαλμα*. Baehr translates it "sacred image," Schweighæuser "sacred ornament," while Larcher renders it "precious vessel." Although this latter rendering must be regarded as a somewhat free one, it has, nevertheless, the support of analogy. If we may, with Larcher, regard the Issēdŏnes as making a vessel or bowl of the skull of a relative, and lining it with gold, this is exactly what, as we have seen, the Scythians practised with the skulls of their enemies. From the geographical position, too, of the Issēdŏnes, in Central Asia, we might expect to find customs akin to those of modern central Asian Mongoloid peoples, and this use of skulls both of friends and enemies as drinking and libation bowls, often richly overlaid with gold, is one which is very familiar to all students of the practices of Mongolian Buddhism. I do not wish to press this reading of the passage, but merely to show that a comparative study of customs at any rate lends support to it.

I have reserved to the last for consideration the drinking and libation vessels made from human skulls used in Mongolian Buddhist ceremonial, because in several respects they present special features.

It is now some twenty-six years since the late Professor George Busk exhibited before the Ethnological Society an interesting calvaria from China,[1] one which was said to have been looted from the Summer Palace by one of Fane's cavalry. In a very interesting paper the skull was described, but its use was at that time a matter for conjecture, as nothing was certainly known. This calvaria, which I again exhibit (Fig 6), was formerly mounted in gold and set with jewels in a most elaborate and costly manner, and formed one of the most interesting exhibits in the Great Exhibition of 1862. I exhibit also a sketch of this calvaria as it appeared in its glory;[2] it then belonged to Mr. Tait. Somehow it came into the hands of a Jewish goldsmith in Houndsditch, who stripped it of its valuable gold mountings, leaving the

[1] "Journ. Ethn. Soc.," N.S., ii, 73–83, and Plate; also *ib.*, p. 156 (where it is suggested that the specimen may have been obtained from the Lama temple of Hih Sze).

[2] Waring, "Masterpieces of Industrial Art," iii, Plate 291.

bare skull-vault alone. It was obtained from him by a Dr. Millar, who gave it to Mr. Mummery. It later found its way to the Oxford University Museum, where it now belongs. I give this piece of history as I have been asked where this skull was now to be found, and I hope it has found a permanent home at last. The curious and interesting designs raised upon its surface have been described by Dr. Busk, and I need not dwell upon them. With this specimen I exhibit another also from Peking, which was sent to Professor Philipps for the Oxford Museum by General Gibbes Rigaud (Fig. 6). It was taken from a temple within the precincts of a great Lama Monastery at Peking. General Rigaud adds in a letter: "These cups out of which the priests of Buddha drink confusion to their enemies (this one was half full of samshoo, and probably a toast had shortly before been given to the 'fat-faced barbarian, the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine'), are made as far as I could learn either out of the skulls of rebels of the highest order, *or* those of priests of such holy character as to obtain after death the title of 'Living Saints.' Whether this be the skull of a saint or a sinner, I must ask Dr. Rolleston to determine, to whose care I suppose it may go." This skull-cup is also inscribed with a mystic Tibetan inscription, which has not been quite satisfactorily deciphered, but it appears to read gra-thad, with a possible play upon the word gra, which can mean an open dish and a foe (Col. Lewin). Such a punning inscription would apply admirably to many of the skull bowls which I have mentioned. This skull is mounted in very much the same manner as the other formerly was, but in a less costly manner, in gilt copper, surmounted on the cover with a dorjé or thunderbolt. Such skull vessels are now very familiar in museums, and their use in Lamaistic ceremonies has been described by several people; notably by Mr. Rockhill, who devotes a paper to the subject.[1] Several early writers on Tibet mention the making of drinking cups from the skulls of cherished relatives. William de Rubruquis (sent by Louis IX. of France to travel in the East in A.D. 1253) describes the Tibetans, "who had formerly a custom to eat the bodies of their deceased parents, that they might make no other sepulchre for them than their own bowels. But of late they have left off this custom, because thereby they became odious to all other nations; notwithstanding which, at this day, they make fine cups of the skulls of their parents, to this end, that when they drink out of them, they may in the midst of all their jollities and delights, call their dead parents to remembrance: this was told me by one that

[1] "Proc. Amer. Oriental Soc." Oct. 31, 1888, pp. xxiv–xxxi.

saw it."[1] This description reminds one of the Issēdŏnes. Rockhill also quotes Friar Odoric, and Georgi ("Alphabetum Tibetanum") to a similar purpose in regard to the Tibetans. He adds, however, that "careful inquiry has failed to elicit any proof that Tibetans of the present day use the skulls of revered relatives as drinking vessels. A few ascetics, however, do make use of skulls as their eating bowls . . ." "At the present time, human skulls are used for two purposes: 1st, as an offering to Tsepamed (*Amitābha*), who is represented holding in his hands a skull filled with ambrosia, so as to call down on the giver the divine blessing in the form of worldly prosperity: and 2nd, as a receptable for the wine or other liquid offered to the gods." Rockhill gives a translation of an exceedingly interesting, if quaint and amusing, MS. Manual in the possession of a Lama priest, on the "Method for distinguishing good and bad skulls, and how, by offering a kapāla (Skr. skull), to obtain worldly prosperity and create a wish-granting source." From it we may gather incidentally that the skull bowl (Fig. 6) described by Professor G. Busk was one of the very best kind, insomuch as it has upon it the letter *a*, and other symbols.

Colonel Yule,[2] remarking on the great use made by certain classes of Lamas of human skulls for magical cups, and of human thigh bones for flutes and whistles, says that to supply them with these "the bodies of executed criminals were stored up at the disposal of the Lamas." Rockhill[3] tells how at Bat'ang, after an uprising instigated by the Lamas in 1887, "The Lamas took from the grave the bones of Father Brieux, killed in 1881, filled their place with ordure, and made a drinking cup of his skull." The missionaries were of course regarded as *enemies* of society.

Legend ascribes the origin of the use of a human skull as a drinking vessel to the goddess Lhamo, who is a Tibetan form of Devi, the consort of Śiva. Waddell[4] says that "Primitive Lāmaism may be defined as a priestly mixture of Sivaite mysticism, magic, and the Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, overlaid by a thin varnish of Mahāyāna Buddhism. And to the present day Lāmaism still retains this character." "Tantrism, which began about the seventh century A.D. to tinge Buddhism, is based on the worship of the Active Producing Principle (*Prakriti*), as manifested in the goddess Kali or Durga . . . from the tenth century Tantrism has formed a most essential part of Lāmaism" (p. 129).

The legend of Lhamo, as culled from the book "Paldan

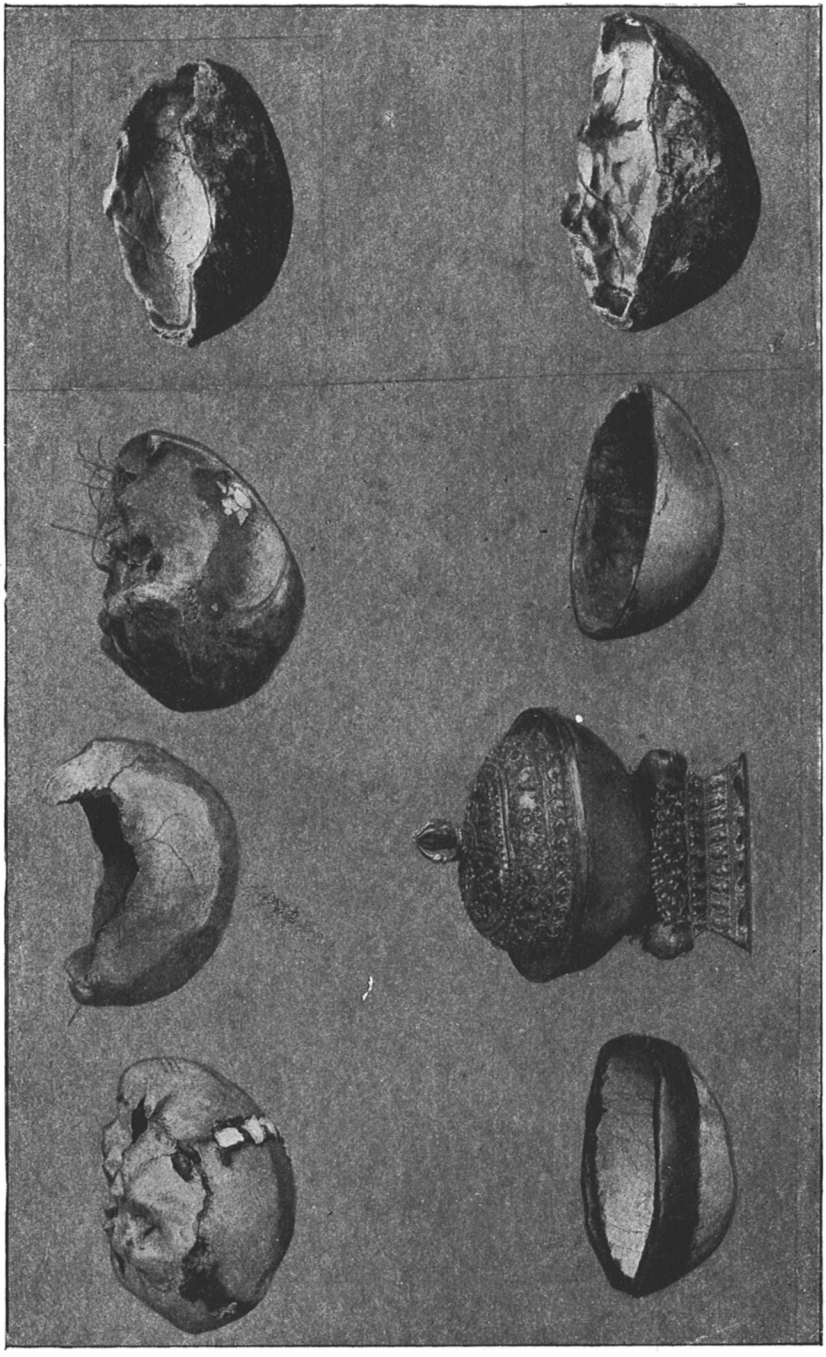
[1] "Pinkerton's Voyages," vii, p. 54.
[2] "Marco Polo," i, p. 275 note.
[3] "Land of the Lamas," 1891, p. 273.
[4] "Buddhism in Tibet," p. 30.

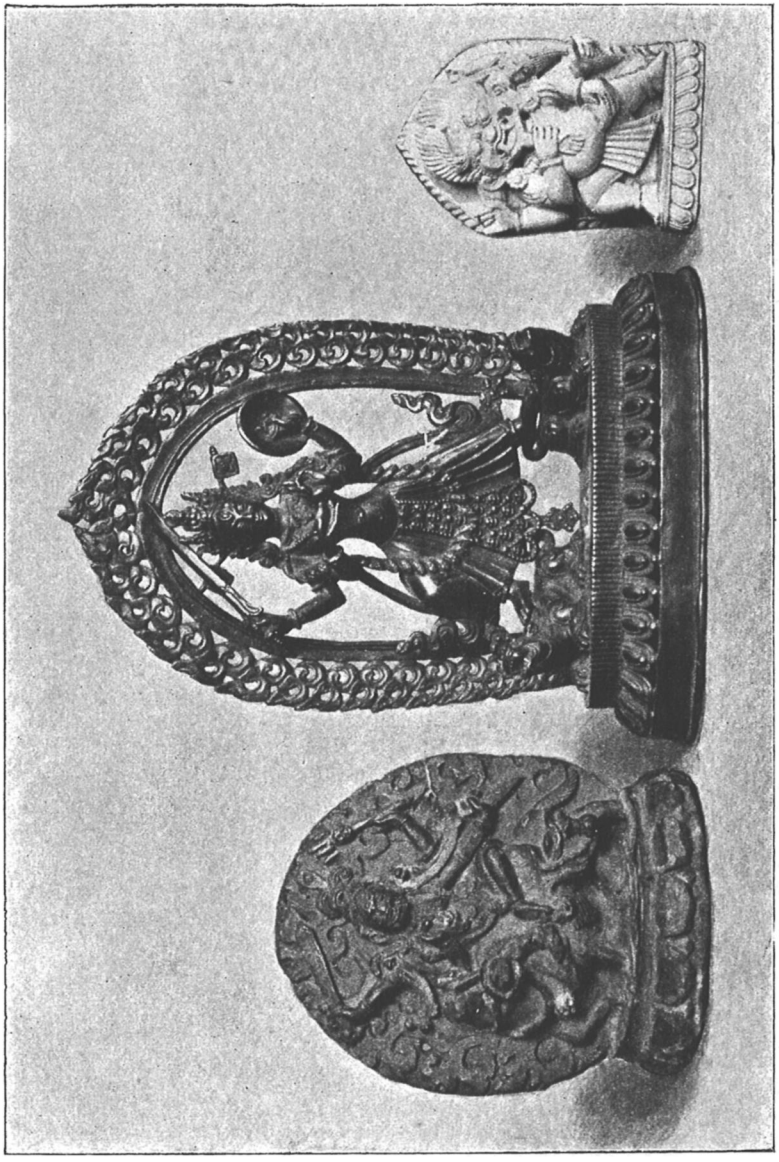
Lhamoi Kang Shag," "to perform confession before the venerated Lhamo," a copy of which in Tibetan and Mongolian is in the library of St. Petersburg University, and as given by Emil Schlagintweit[1] runs thus:

"The goddess Lhamo was married to Shinje (the judge of the dead), the King of the Dudpos, who at the time of the marriage had assumed the form of the King of Ceylon. The goddess had made a vow, either to soften her husband's notoriously wild and wicked manners, and make him favourably disposed towards the religion of Buddhas, or, failing in her praise-worthy endeavours, to extirpate a royal race so hostile to his creed by killing the children that might issue from the marriage. Unfortunately it was beyond her power to effect an improvement in the evil ways of the king, and, accordingly, she determined to kill their son, who was greatly beloved by his father because in him he had hoped to put a complete end to Buddhism in Ceylon. During a temporary absence of the king, the goddess put her design in execution; she flayed her son alive, drank the blood from out his skull, and even ate his flesh. She then left the palace, and set out for her northern home, using her son's skin as a saddle for the king's best horse." This estimable champion of Buddhism is represented in Mongolian Buddhist art holding in one hand her son's skull from which she drank, and may be seen in the small images which I exhibit (Figs. 9, 10, and 11), and skull drinking-bowls with libations or food offerings are offered at the shrines of this goddess who upheld the religion. It is interesting to find in this legend an association of the use of skulls as drinking-bowls with the goddess Devi, when we recall the fact that the similar use of skulls by the degraded Śaivaite Aghoris is referred for its origin to a primitive Devi worship.

The Dragsheds, or gods who protect man against evil spirits, are represented in Tibet as holding a Kapāla or skull drinking cup in one hand, an emblem of that from which Lhamo drank her son's blood (Schlagintweit, p. 215). I exhibit also a skull-cup, roughly mounted with a brass rim, from Darjîling, brought home by Major R. C. Temple for the Oxford Museum (Fig. 8). Major Rennell states that he "has seen, brought from Bootan, skulls that were taken out of temples or places of worship; but it is not known whether the motive to their preservation was friendship or enmity. It might very probably be the former. They were formed into drinking bowls in the manner described by Herodotus, by cutting them off below the eyebrows; and they were neatly varnished all over.

[1] "Buddhism in Tibet," 1863, p. 112.





Description of the Figures.

Fig. 1.—Drinking vessel made from a human calvaria, used by Moti Nath, an Aghori Fakir of the Oghar sect. Obtained by Surgeon Captain H. E. Drake Brockman, I.M.S., in Rajputana, and presented by him to the Oxford University Museum.

Figs. 2 and 3.—Two drinking or libation vessels made from human calvariæ, from Ashanti; British Museum.

Fig. 4.—Drinking vessel made from the calvaria of a deceased relative; the sutures stopped with black gum and pieces of shell; South Australia; Pitt Rivers Collection.

Fig. 5.—Similar skull drinking vessel with wisp of grass inside to prevent the water carried in it from being spilled; South Australia; Christ Church Collection, Oxford University Museum.

Fig. 6.—Drinking or libation vessel made from a carefully polished human calvaria, with designs raised upon its outer surface, formerly mounted in gold and jewels. Described and figured by Dr. George Busk ("Journ. Ethn. Soc.," N.S., ii, p. 73 and pl.); Oxford University Museum.

Fig. 7.—Similar vessel, the calvaria lined with copper, and mounted upon a copper-gilt triangular stand, repoussé and chased, with cover of similar work surmounted by a dorjé or thunderbolt. From a temple within the precincts of the great Lama Monastery at Peking; presented to the Oxford University Museum by General Gibbes Rigaud, 1862.

Fig. 8.—Lepcha priest's drinking cup made from a human calvaria rudely mounted with a brass rim set with a black pitch-like substance, Darjîling; presented to the Oxford University Museum by Major R. C. Temple, 1892.

Fig. 9.—Baked-clay and painted figure of the goddess Lhamo, illustrating the legend of her escape from Ceylon. She is represented riding on her husband's horse, seated on the flayed skin of her son. In her right, lower hand, she holds his skull, from which she drank his blood; possibly Tibetan; Pitt Rivers Collection.

Fig. 10.—Bronze figure of Kali, with necklace and apron of human skulls, holding in right, lower hand, a drinking cup made from a human calvaria; India; Pitt Rivers Collection.

Fig. 11.—Carved ivory figure of Kali, holding in the left, lower hand, a drinking cup made from a human calvaria; Indian or Cingalese work; Pitt Rivers Collection.

ETHNOGRAPHICAL NOTES *in* NEW GEORGIA, SOLOMON ISLANDS.

By Lieutenant BOYLE T. SOMERVILLE, Royal Navy.

[WITH PLATES XXXV–XXXVII.]

DURING the latter halves of the years 1893–94, the officers of H.M. Surveying Ship "Penguin" were employed in making a survey of the hitherto little known island, or, more properly, group of islands, named New Georgia, in the Solomon Islands, South Pacific; and the following casual notes, made while camping in various parts in this locality during the progress of the work, may prove of interest. Wherever information is at second-hand it is expressly so stated; the remainder is all original personal observation. The various heads of information are taken in the order given in "Notes and Queries on Anthropology."