

*On prehistoric traditions and customs
in connection with sun and serpent ...*

John Samuel Phené, Victoria Institute (Great Britain)

In 2 books

ON

PREHISTORIC TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

IN CONNECTION WITH

SUN AND SERPENT WORSHIP.

BY

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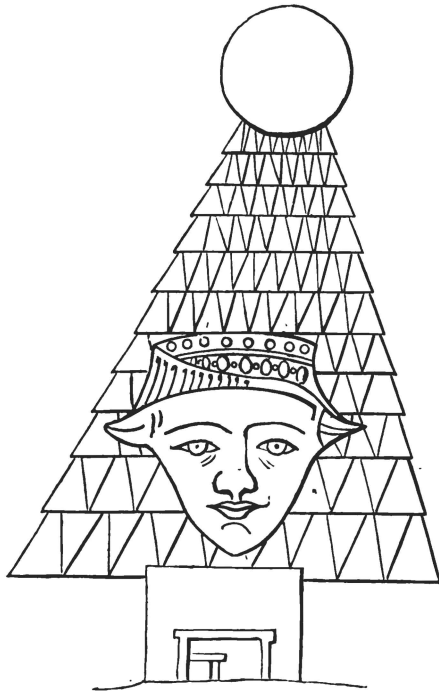
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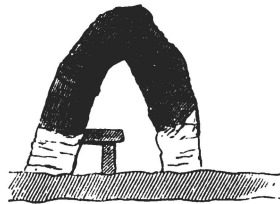
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The head of Osiris above the chest of Typhon, and beneath the sun, which is supported on a pyramid of emblems of fire and water. From the temple at Tentyris, Egypt.



The god Nilus, with the sources of the Nile flowing into the Ocean. Tentyris.



An early Occidental habitation similar to the chest which enclosed Osiris, *supra*.

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ON

PREHISTORIC TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

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IN approaching the subject indicated in the title of this paper, I propose to do so in the first instance by a slight sketch of natural and first impressions, for the purpose of weighing the influence they may have exercised on the peculiar worship under consideration.

2. Over the wide world are evidences of what, *primā facie*, seems so strange and repulsive a custom, that those who hear of it for the first time may be excused expressions of incredulity and disgust; yet, although there is a popular adage that "vice has only to be seen to be abhorred," experience proves to us that it depends very much upon the garb in which we see it, what amount of abhorrence, if any, will be accorded. So we have examples of those in whom disgust would most probably show itself prominently towards the features of that to which I allude, being drawn, either from ignorance of danger or by a species of fascination, to display towards its symbol at least, admiration rather than disgust, and fondness rather than repulsion. I refer to the almost universal prevalence of serpent-worship in ancient times, the extant remains of which are still to be found on probably all the continents of the earth.

3. The effect upon a person hearing for the first time of the worship of an idol—an actually fabricated god—is, as a rule, one of surprise and pity; but on hearing of the worship of a serpent, it is one of disgust and abhorrence. These feelings are very much the result of education, *i. e.* a knowledge of the dangerous properties of serpents, as it is shown from several recorded instances of children petting snakes they had disco-

vered,* and of the fondness and reverence exhibited by the priestesses of Pythons, to the good offices of which deities they assumed they were entitled, that, in the absence of a knowledge of danger, fear and repulsion are not necessarily felt. It becomes a question, then, at the outset, whether or not a great part of the worship devoted to serpents has arisen directly from fear of their destructive powers; and this is a feature we cannot altogether discard.

4. But this which might appear, *primâ facie*, as a sufficient cause, must be very much modified when we look a little more closely into the matter. Thus we find in Egypt a good and a bad serpent,—the goddess Ranno (fig. 35), the god Apophis (fig. 36),—the one considered worthy of adoration, the other styled “the great enemy of the human race,”† which was to be opposed or else propitiated. The latter is gravely reported to have been once captured and brought to Alexandria in triumph;‡ and the question naturally arises, How did the other serpent become invested with good attributes?

5. I can not only easily imagine, but it seems impossible to conclude otherwise, that man, simply as man, by which I do not mean a creature in a condition of development from the lower animals, but a wanderer from the home or original hive; a voluntary apostate, seeking forgetfulness of the past in new scenes and distant localities, and dreading his god, from whom, as well as his own race, he was fleeing in dismay; having, moreover, a passion implanted in his breast—that of worship—which neither time nor distance could obliterate; that man, as such, and in such condition, and having still before him the recollection of attributes recognized by others as those belonging to his late god, but which he refused to acknowledge, and which combined grandeur, beneficence, and creative power, must perforce have elected to worship the only representative he could find possessed of any such qualities; namely, Nature, through which, in short, these very powers of his offended god had so far been visibly manifested, and that the first direction of his new worship would be terrestrial; § the second, which he would willingly have shunned, but neither dared nor could dispense with, celestial. At such a period of his experience,—and I am assuming the earliest, the Ocean would have presented a dreary and unknown

* A curious illustration of fondness for serpents exists at Chelsea at the present time, which has led to alarm in the neighbourhood.

† Samuel Sharpe's *Hist. of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 58.

‡ Diodorus Siculus.

§ So strong was this feeling, that Berosus described Xisuthrus, *i.e.* Noah, on coming out of the ark after the Flood, as first paying his *adoration* to the *Earth*, and then sacrificing to the gods. (Dr. George Smith.)

waste, an eternity of waters, subject to as violent commotions from storm and tempest as his own troubled mind, and again relapsing into a state of calm and purity even more harrowing, by recollection, to the distracted and restless wanderer.

6. Into that Ocean however went, continuously, as it appeared, the only objects that would now seem to him of interest,—his new gods; the sun, followed by his constant satellites; and the refresher and revivifier of his other god,—the earth—indeed a feature of it—the river. This is strongly borne out by Egyptian representation. The frontispiece depicts a very remarkable hieroglyph in the portico at Tentyris; the sun supported on a pyramid composed of the symbols of fire and water, with the head of Osiris in front, placed over the cist or chest in which Typhon imprisoned him. The characteristics of Osiris are shown in his negro lips and in the horns of the bull Apis. From the details the meaning of the figure is apparent; all the symbols of fire are incomplete, the apices being absent Δ ; all those of water, on the contrary, are perfect ∇ ; the pyramid is not a true one, but elongates to the left; or west; the head of Osiris is placed studiously in the western elongation, *i.e.* towards the left or west; the rays slant; and on the left of the cist is an extra enclosure.* It is clear that this refers to the sun setting in the ocean, water being shown by the perfect symbol, and fire by the deficient one. Moreover, the whole is canopied by a vast female figure, whose garments covered with water-lines clearly represent the Ocean, not the Mediterranean towards the north, but the vast ocean supposed by the ancients to surround the world, as we are told by Herodotus; and which ideal surrounding is completed in the hieroglyph in question, by an equally vast oceanic figure opposite to the above, the hands and feet of both meeting each other. Osiris wearing the horns of Apis in this case strengthens the simile, as Apis, Hapi, or Hapi signifies in Egyptian to conceal.† Beneath the above I have placed a hieroglyph from the same temple, representing the god NILUS holding the sources of the NILE, which, issuing in *serpentine* forms from his hands, and being lost in the ocean, fulfil the remainder of the metaphor I have chosen.

7. The people we call Egyptians probably reached Egypt

* The interior of this chest, with its western chamber, corresponds so exactly with one of the old Irish dwellings that it almost seems to indicate the sun going towards the land of a people having like habitations and living westward. A drawing of one is placed at the foot of the chest under description.

† Bunsen, vol. i., Vocabulary, page 462.

from Asia Minor, and their first associations would in that case familiarize them with the idea of the sun setting in the Western Ocean. From their geographical position, the persons we call Orientals (by which I mean those dwelling at the eastern end of the Mediterranean), would observe the sun going into the waters at night, but not rising from them in the morning, as we islanders do. The sun-worshippers it would seem, as I have pointed out in a paper in the *British Archaeological Journal* for March, 1873, were in the habit of worshipping the sun *when he appeared on the tops of the mountains*. I do not think the people, as a rule, ascended, but only the priest, who was seen enveloped in his glory. Indeed, it is found that the inscription on the Moabite stone contains an expression קקע (daybreak)* not known in the Hebrew writings, the nearest approach to which is, "like morning spread upon the mountains," described by the same writer as a time of darkness; *i. e.* idolatry—their idolatry being sun-worship.† Hence such a person as I have assumed would see a similarity in this common act of the sun and the river, the two agents through whose means the earth was fertilized.

8. The river, then, would become in particular an object of veneration. Now, with regard to Egypt, where the sun and serpent were both worshipped, let us take an idea from the description of a late popular writer as to the appearance of the Nile (I prefer such an opinion to that of an antiquary or man of science, or any person having an idea to clothe). He describes the view from a lofty summit thus: "A vast level panorama, bounded by the chains of the Arabian and Libyan hills, lay spread before us, diversified with every shade of green, and watered by the Nile; *creeping, like a silvery SERPENT*, through the green savannahs."‡ That which meets the eye of the traveller now, so far as nature is concerned, met it then, and, in the eyes of the devotee, the river was a giant god, of which the serpent was but a symbol. Moreover, while it has been frequently suggested that the annual renewal of the serpent's skin would be construed by the observers of nature into a renewal of life, and by inference into the property of immortality, it has never, I think, been pointed out that this

* W. P. Walsh, quoting Professor Davidson.

† Joel ii. 2.

‡ Warburton, *The Crescent and the Cross*. It is remarkable that the Hebrew word for green vegetation, קקע (Cant. i. 15) is almost identical with the name of the goddess Ranno, goddess of harvest, &c.—See p. 2. (W. R. Cooper.)

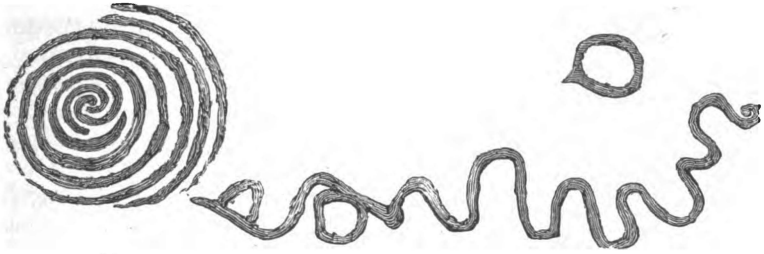


Fig. 1. Ornament in Dowth. (From a Rubbing. By J. S. Phené.)

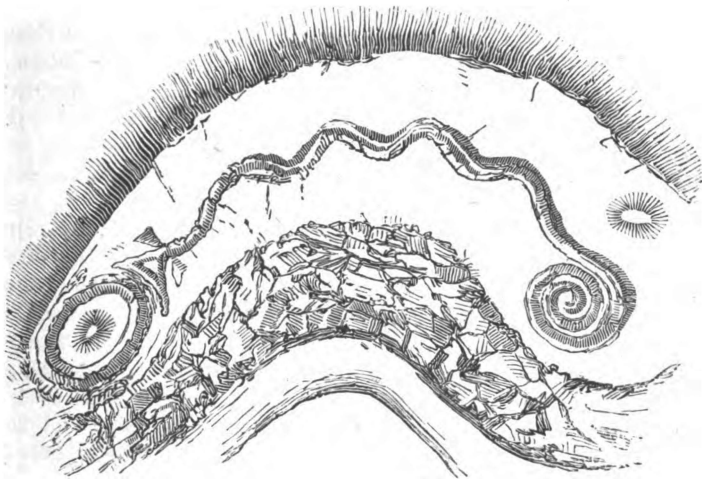


Fig. 2. Serpent and Mound, Ohio.

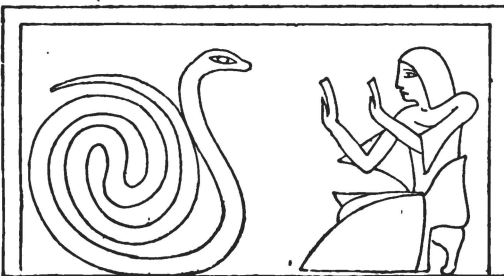


Fig. 3. Egyptian.



Fig. 3a. From New Grange.

peculiarity would cause the serpent to be tenfold more sacred in Egypt than elsewhere, as it would identify it with the renewal of the very life of Egypt itself in the annual revivification by the Nile, which, casting its heavy slough of mud, gave new earth and new water to its worshippers. It was the sacredness of the Nile that made sacred every animal and plant that lived in or emerged from it.

9. There is something very curious also in this symbol as used for the Nile. I admit the evidences are startlingly remote, but that makes it the more curious. In Scotland,* Ireland, and America is a serpent symbol, as shown on my diagrams (figs. 1, 2, compare these with fig. 21), which in each case has a triangular head or mouth, exactly corresponding to the delta of the Nile; and in the case of the great American serpent mound in Ohio, the effigy appears to be presiding over three mouths of rivers. This, however, I merely mention incidentally, though the details are so exact that it gives evidence of a common symbolism; the orb, a characteristic feature in the Egyptian representations, being also in each case found with this delta-mouthed serpent form. It is very remarkable that the honey cakes carried in golden baskets by noble virgins for the purpose of an offering to, and at the same time the food for, deified serpents, were ornamented with the sacred Omphalos; that is, a boss, on which was described a spiral line, which some think was itself a representation of a serpent (figs. 3, 3a). A glance at the diagrams from Dowth, and that marked with the letter I, will show at once that it would hardly have been possible to design the Omphalos and the serpent more clearly; and the ceremonies of the Omphalos can be distinctly traced to Egypt.

10. To return to the subject. We have traced the supposed wanderer to his distant retreat, and followed his institution of new gods, the sun and the serpent; for his first god—the earth—would soon sink into insignificance in comparison with the powers that made the earth fertile, and as his knowledge of them increased.

11. Man, new from intercourse with the Supreme, was not yet sunk to the level of being satisfied with a passive deity; such, and grossly sensual divinities, were reserved for still greater degradation, or atheistical distance. We have an example in the case of the Greeks, who, while the philosophers and higher classes worshipped the gods of government, war, speed, music, poetry, sculpture, love, and wisdom, appropriated to

* The first I assume from Dr. James Fergusson.

the degraded populace the vulgar Pan and the drunken Bacchus.

12. The grandest features of the earth, especially where connected with activity, still remained objects of reverence. In my inaugural address in 1870, on the opening for philosophical purposes, under the presidency of the Earl of Glasgow, of Sir Peter Coats's splendid gift to the town of Paisley, the Free Museum and Library, I pointed out that mountain-worship was evidently a feature in ancient religion, and one which had received too little attention. I cannot fail to recognize the ever-burning fires on the summits of the pyramidal temple in Mexico, and I have no doubt originally on the pyramids of Egypt, as being suggested to the worshippers by their contemplation of the terrible and sublime in the peaks of burning mountains; I further pointed out on that occasion my belief that the Egyptians had *erected the pyramids to supply the place of mountains* near their abodes, on the sandy plains of Memphis, as proper spots for worship. My address was extensively circulated at the time, and I now find the same remark in a work lately published by the Rev. Mr. Zincke, on Egypt,* and highly eulogized by the *Spectator's* reviewer, who quotes Mr. Zincke as follows: "We may be absolutely certain that had they (the Egyptians) lived in an alpine country, though they might have commanded the requisite materials on easier terms, they would never have built the pyramids, for then an Egyptian pyramid would have been a pigmy monument by the side of Nature's pyramids; *but, built as they were in Egypt, and seen from the neighbourhood of Memphis and Heliopolis, they were veritable mountains.*" I have not the least intention of questioning the perfect originality of Mr. Zincke's idea, but I must claim the first publication of it.

13. I look upon it as one of those coincidences arising from any science or study having arrived at a point which must produce new ideas and results, and which we find, as in the case of the electric telegraph, in that of the late invention of instruments to observe the solar photosphere, and also in the labours of Leverrier and Adams, led workers, having no previous communication, to very similar opinions and results.

14. But how are we to incorporate the idea of an evil serpent power with a symbol chosen to represent the beneficent river? Are we to suppose that there was simply a recognition of the actual serpent as an object of dread? Then why choose it at all as an emblem of good? There must be something more in this.

* *Egypt of the Pharaohs and of the Kédive*, by F. Barham Zincke. Smith, Elder, & Co.

15. Let us look a little closer at some of the attributes of these gods. The magi,* we read, authorized the use of fire and water as the *only* emblems of their gods. As the powers represented by the sun, and the serpent-river had to act in unison, if I may so express it, or cease to be efficient, we soon find the sun and serpent combined, and recognized by some worshippers as one and the same; the sun representing the head of the serpent which entwined the world, as symbolized by the circle in which the serpent holds his tail in his mouth (fig. 4). Here, then, we find an emblem which embodies also the idea of the Greek Phœbus, or the "far-shooting Apollo"—the sun—who shot to death the Python, or serpent, or, in other words, destroyed its identity by amalgamating it with his own. An emblem, moreover, seen in the Assyrian representation of Asshur (fig. 5), being a god with extended wings, *bow in hand*, in front of a circle, or wheel. If any ambiguity appears, as to the wheel representing the sun in the emblem of Asshur, I may point out that such emblems often concealed the exact intention, as on the reverse of a Gnostic gem, where, on the obverse, we have the sacred serpent with the solar halo (fig. 6), which would also be understood by the initiated under the sections of triple folds shown on the reverse (fig. 7), while the uninitiated could make nothing of it beyond three folds on a staff or bar. We see this enigma explained beyond question in the Phœnician serpent and tree (fig. 8). And we have in the emblem of Mercury, who was, of course, the messenger of both *good and evil*, the *two serpents*, and the staff or tree in the caduceus (fig. 9). In another Assyrian representation † of a deity, we find the winged orb, formed by a serpent circle, which also forms the body of the god, who, instead of the bow, holds a smaller serpent circle in his hand, probably a symbol of the moon (fig. 10). This deity is supported on a pedestal composed of several rings, three being together and one separate; all of which are covered with the mystic emblems of fire and water, viz. the upright and inverted triangles. ‡ In a Bhuddist emblem, we find a serpent intervening *between the points of these triangles* (fig. 11); while, on the Babylonish monuments, the serpent figures in chief with the sun, moon, and stars above him. American Indians as late as 1741 tattooed a serpent on the chest, and a star on the left breast, and had sun and serpent emblems (fig. 12). The object in the hand of the Indian (from an

* Diogenes Laertius; Clemens Alexandrinus. † Bryant.

‡ The immense urn exhumed by me on the Marquis of Lothian's estate in Roxburghshire, the result of a fragment found upon the surface, is unmistakably marked with these emblems, and is, I believe, an *unique* example. An illustration is in the *Graphic*, February 22nd, 1873.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5. Asshur.

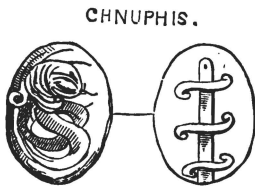


Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

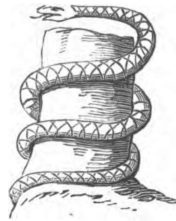


Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

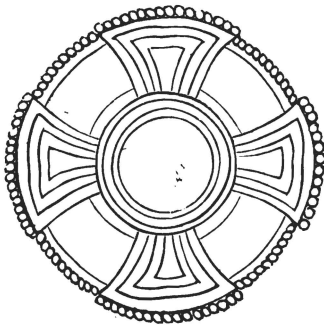


Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.

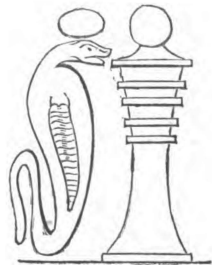


Fig. 15.

illustration by Deane) cannot but recall the remarkable passage in the Acts (ch. vii. v. 43): "Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the *star* of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them, and I will carry you away beyond Babylon." In other words, you shall be captives in the land whose idols you have chosen. It is remarkable that in the Arthurian order of the Garter the cross in the centre of the circle agrees with that of Asshur, and the rays assimilate in each case; while, if we go further east, the order of the Golden Fleece has the *exact* form of that in the wheel of Asshur (fig. 13, and *supra*, fig. 5), which latter the Assyrian sculptor has studiously sacrificed drawing to delineate, showing that the form had a meaning; and these early orders it must be borne in mind were all mystical, and even mythological. The examples will be seen in diagram Q.

16. Although the sun, the serpent, and the sun-serpent were all worshipped before the Greeks went to Egypt, it is not improbable, as the Greeks worshipped Apollo, and the Egyptians the serpent, that the fable of Apollo destroying the serpent may also have received fresh force from the ultimate supremacy of the Greeks over the Egyptians, though apart from nature-worship, it probably arose as symbolical of the Greek and Trojan warfare. Once established, from whatever origin, the idea would of course receive accretions.

17. But the far-darting Apollo, though presiding over the Muses, was apt to send darts which had a baneful influence; and here, also, we find opposite attributes; they could hardly both be innate, and therefore we must look for an explanation in his amalgamation with the serpent. But are we then to suppose the good and bad serpent powers were both embodied in him? If not, whence is the bad?

18. Let us look further. In the figures 14, 15, 16, the Egyptian serpent, known as the Uræus, is shown in positions with the orb, or sun, so often surmounting its head, to say nothing of its other positions, such as issuing out of the sun, &c. (fig. 16*a*), that the sun for the serpent's head is no longer a matter of conjecture; while in the representation in figure 17, we see the Phœnician serpent deity with its head surrounded with a nimbus, or halo, as of the sun itself, curiously enough reproduced as one of the supporters to the arms of the Highland clan Donnachie. But the arrows of the "far-shooting Apollo" brought him many a victim; and the Phœnicians sacrificed human victims to their deities: we find, then, a good and an evil influence represented here also, for that they considered their deities had good attributes we cannot doubt.



Fig 12.



Fig. 16.



Fig. 16a.



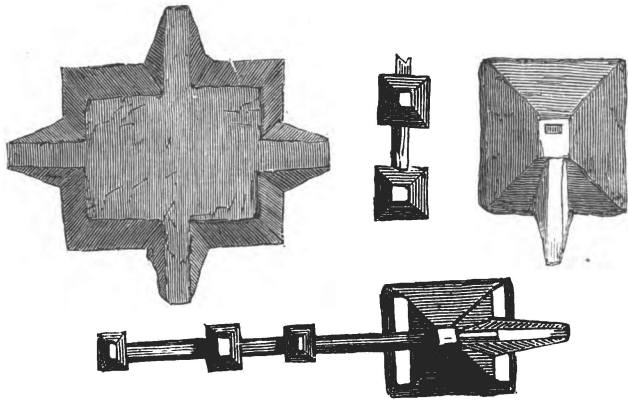
Fig. 17.

19. Let us go further afield. On the west coast of Africa is the kingdom of Whidah, where the serpent was, till recently, worshipped by two different people or tribes; but although violent antagonism existed as to the qualities of their deity, or the mode of worshipping him, they both agreed in this, that a *human sacrifice was the most acceptable offering to their serpent deity*; and we know, from the recent slaughtering by Dahomey, that the custom of man shedding man's blood was, may I say, naturalized in that district.* As they also attributed benign powers to their god, the mixture of good and evil is again apparent. The name of the deity here is Obion, and indicates the sun, "On," and the serpent, "Ob."† In Mexico we find, not only extensive evidences of serpent-worship, but emblems assimilating to the Egyptian; not only are there vast pyramids, shorn of their apices, as in Egypt (figs. 18, 18), but the ringed serpent is even more explanatory than that already mentioned. It is formed by two entwined serpents, the heads of which meet face to face. One is represented as old and bearded, the other as young and vigorous, clearly indicating the new day about to drive away the old night. These are represented in figure 19, and are in position for comparison with the simple ring formed by the serpent biting his own tail (fig. 4, *suprà*). The Mexican emblems are placed vertically, and in such a position that the new day, or new year it may be, represented by the more youthful serpent, is shown as being not yet quite risen, the head of the old serpent being uppermost. Fig. 19a is Egyptian, and shows the same idea of duality.

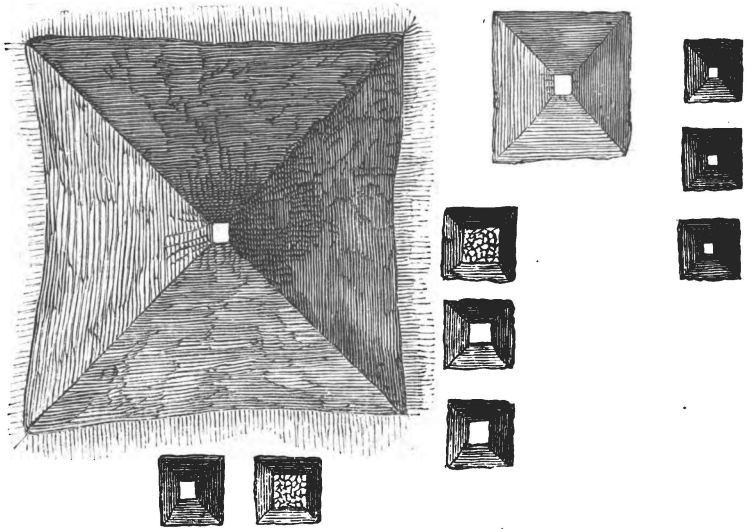
20. Again, amongst the animal-shaped mounds of America, we find one device, somewhat rarely, it is true, but which is very remarkable in form, indeed unmistakable; it is figured in the *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, and is a distinct representation of the winged sphere of Egypt, which is likewise almost identical with that of Asshur, previously mentioned, as found in the Assyrian sculptures, which are all shown in the diagrams (figs. 20 a, b, c); but beyond this is the fact of unmistakable enormous *serpent* similitudes found in America, several of which are in my illustrations. (Fig. 21; compare with figs. 1, 2, and 3, *suprà*.)

* In a communication just made (January, 1875) to the Geographical Society, the writer, at the supposed source of the Nile, states that each time he visited the king several persons were decapitated as a mark of respect to him, the visitor.

† See the author's paper read before the British Association, at Brighton, in 1872, and contained in the official report of the Association, viz., "On some Evidences of a Common Migration from the East."



Figs. 18. Pyramids, Mississippi, America.



Figs. 18. Pyramids of Ghize, Egypt. (Denon.)

21. The mound-builders, whoever they were, can be almost certainly traced from the city of Mexico to the Gulf, and thence northwards up the Mississippi; and the mounds, as well as the ancient ruins, exhibit the serpent prominently: hence their worship of the serpent appears conclusive; and we find, moreover, that they were sun-worshippers, or, rather, Sabian worshippers also, as disks, representing the sun and moon, have been excavated from the mounds, and even a figure representing an astronomical observer (fig. 22) from one of their ruins. Sun-worship in Canaan was symbolized in the same way,—the habit had been contracted by the Hebrews, who used in this worship “sun images,” which Asa is recorded to have taken away (2 Chron. xiv. 5).

22. Here then also we have identically the same worship, and with it we find the same addiction to human sacrifice; moreover, the god or gods must have been considered beneficent, as the victim, according to Prescott, went through a state of preparation to fit him for the glorious result of his voluntary act, and was decked with flowers and external emblems of felicity, showing a further confirmation of the good and evil attributes. The human sacrifices in Canaan are fully recorded.

23. In the Hindoo Pantheon we find a curious instance of the mythical properties of a serpent deity (fig. 23). Crishna, being in jeopardy on one occasion, caused an immense serpent to appear, into the mouth of which he, his followers, and his flocks, entered and took refuge. The fable is illustrated in one of the diagrams, and seems to me to imply voluntary immolation to the serpent god; or it may have reference to an erection constructed for defence, in the form of a serpent deity,—a sanctuary in short,—as we find in an ancient Mexican book* an account of a temple, *circular* in form, and the *entrance representing the mouth of a serpent*, opened in a frightful manner, and extremely terrifying to those who approached it for the first time. Here in the circular form we have again the ring, the emblem of perfection or eternity, combined with a visible representation of cruelty. Figs. 24 and 24a give examples of similar refuge. The one represents the god Nilus, surrounded by the protecting influence of the eternal serpent. The other a mother and child protected by Chnuphis. On the point of human sacrifice there is one object of it not perhaps so clearly proved to be universal as that of the sacrifice itself, yet sufficiently so, by its wide diffusion as a custom, to make its universality probable: namely, that it constitutes a feature entirely of the apostate class.

* Quoted in J. D. Baldwin's *Ancient America*, p. 28.



Fig. 19. Mexican.



Fig. 19a. Egyptian.



Fig. 20. Egyptian Sculpture.



Fig. 20a. Assyrian Sculpture.

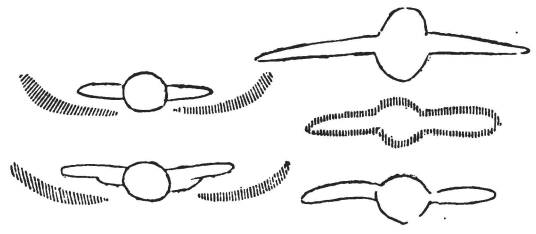


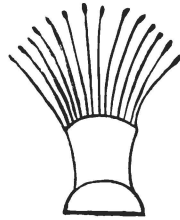
Fig. 20b. Egyptian Sculptures. Fig. 20c. American Mounds.

Fig. 21.



Curved Serpent Mound, America.

Fig. 22a. Egyptian.



Head-dress of the god Nilus. (Denon.)

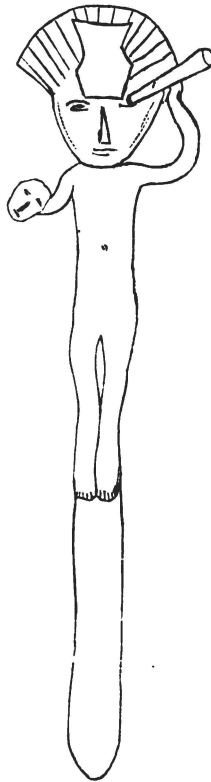


Fig. 22. Ancient American Astronomical Figure in silver, taken from a Chulpa in Bolivia. In one hand a telescope, in the other a mask, probably of the moon. (From *Bolivia and Peru*. By David Forbes, Esq., F.R.S.)

Compare the solar rays on head with head-dress of the god Nilus, from Denon. Fig. 22a.



Fig. 23. Avata of Krishne, Indian.



Fig. 24a. Egyptian.

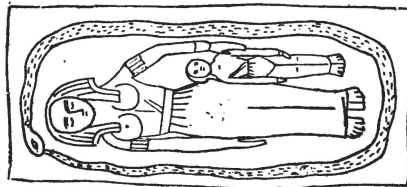


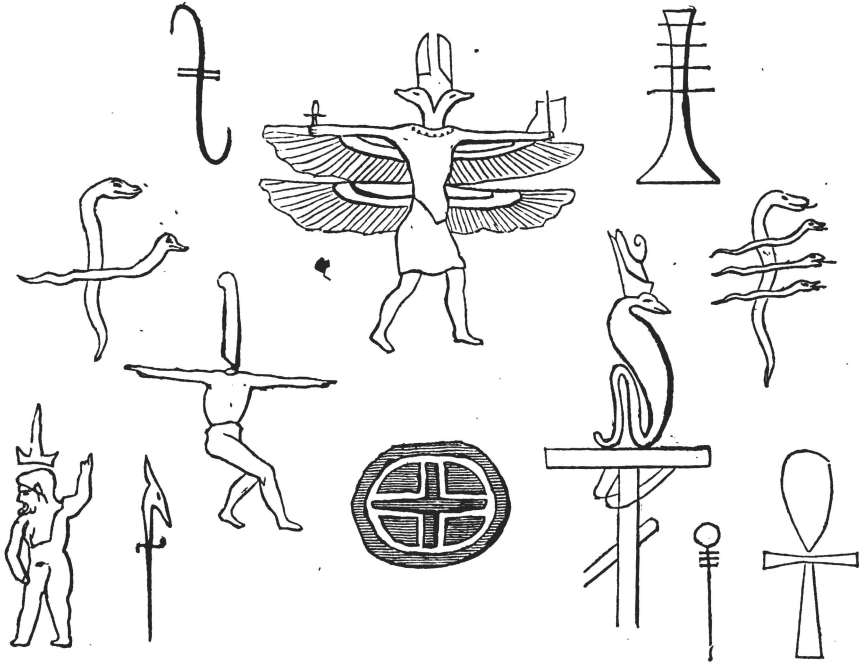
Fig. 24. Egyptian.

24. Divination by the death of a victim. This was practised in Assyria, the king of Babylon being represented by Ezekiel as divining *by looking into the liver*. Various authors attribute the same custom to the Druids of Britain, and something very similar was practised in Mexico, and by the Roman augurs, who, it is assumed, also practised this species of aruspicy. Here, at least, we have evidence of a widely-spread custom in different continents associated with death by sacrifice.

25. Impressed in my youth with the remarkable emblems on the Indian temples, I had for many years pursued the study of the symbols of different religions by travel and personal inspection in various countries, and finally devoted several consecutive years to searching the Hebrides, and those remote and secluded districts in the West Highlands of Scotland, in which I felt convinced there ought still to be some remains, beyond mere stone circles and sepulchral tumuli; and I consider, although I have prosecuted the search at a great expenditure of time and cost, I have yet been amply rewarded. The figures numbered 25 illustrate several of the remarkable monuments I have discovered, with what appear to me unparalleled results, giving, I think, a further corroboration to the evidence we have in favour of the construction, for religious purposes, of serpent forms and emblems. These diagrams should be compared with figures numbered 28, on which are representations of the American mounds.* My investigations in the East, and in Greece, Italy, and Spain, were made purely for the satisfaction of my own private desire to know more concerning what appeared to me an interesting subject, but I never deemed the matter one likely to become of public interest in these days, till the valuable work on Serpent Worship by Dr. James Fergusson showed that I was not a solitary student of such forms of religion.

26. There are, moreover, certain other emblems of a very peculiar character, *some of which are markedly identified with the religions to which I have referred*. The cross was evidently one of the very oldest emblems among pre-historic men. I have heard it urged that there is nothing surprising in this, as it is the simplest form of a sign that might be made alike by children and the most uncultivated savages, to indicate any purpose. But it is in the highest positions of veneration, and not in accidental or inferior positions, that it appears. It is

* As illustrations of all the examples on the diagrams cannot be given, the reader is referred to *Good Words* and the *Illustrated London News* for figures of these mounds, of the respective dates of March, 1872, and 26th October, 1872; the first being by Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming. Also to a work by the author, *Results of a Recent Investigation into Ancient Monuments and Relics*.



Figs. 25. Egyptian Crosses.



Fig. 26.



Fig. 27.

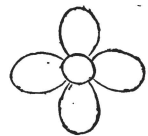


Fig. 29.

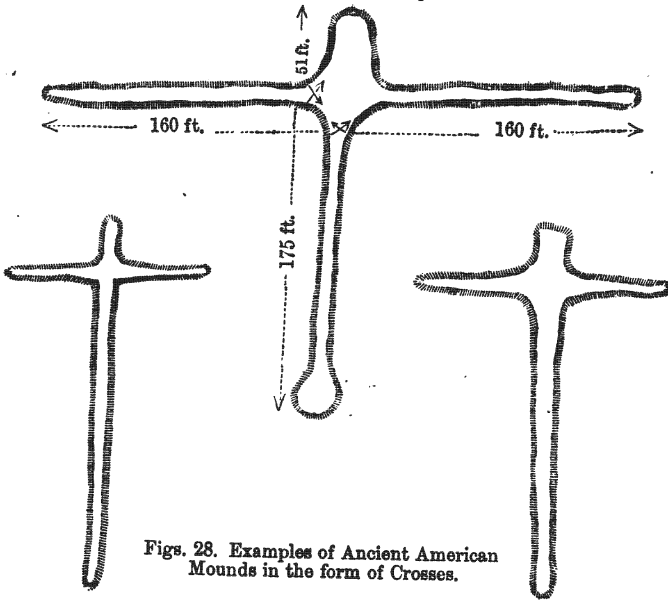
one of the most frequent emblems in the temple and tomb sculptures of Egypt (figs. 25, twelve examples); it is found in India (fig. 26); is represented on coins of Phocis, encircled in a laurel crown (fig. 27), with, on the obverse, a trinity of bulls' heads united at the mouths; is one of the most frequent as well as of the most carefully constructed designs of the American mound-builders (figs. 28, 28, 28); is beautifully and elaborately carved in the building, named from this fact "La Cruz," in the ruined city of Palenque, in Mexico, which bears evidence of antiquity long prior to the Aztec supremacy; is known under the form of the letter *tau* (T) as a mark or brand supposed to have been used in pastoral ages to distinguish different flocks; is under that form, *i. e.* a three-membered cross, the actual *mark* directed in Ezekiel to be placed on the *foreheads of those who are to be exempted from slaughter*;* has been used as a mark placed on those accused of crime but *acquitted*; † was a celebrated emblem of the Phœnicians, and is found on their coins; is also seen in the Assyrian sculptures round the necks of *kings* (fig. 29); and was the peculiar feature in the Tyrian worship, to degrade which Alexander ordered a multitudinous execution by *crucifixion*; while probably the most vast lithic representation of this emblem is to be found in the British isles, as pointed out by me in a paper already referred to as forming part of the inaugural lecture in Sir Peter Coats's Museum at Paisley; namely, the great cross at Callernish (figs. 30, 30a, 30b), in Lews, formed of stones arranged in that shape. We have, then, this emblem also as a marked religious symbol in the four great continents. The *red hand*, moreover, is a most curious emblem of wide-spread existence, and is still to be found alike in Central America, Mexico, and Ireland. ‡

27. In the case of the assumed wanderer, who will be easily recognized, there are two things which would be his distinct accompaniments, *viz.*, a mark upon the *forehead to exempt him from slaughter*, and the recognition of the *red hand*; and we find these two features, *not as marks of disgrace*, but as *most honoured* emblems, in all countries where the sun and the serpent have been worshipped, the *tau*, the *mark*, and the *cross*

* Vulgate.

† It appears to me also that the habit of marking the caste of a person on the forehead, as in India, is a remnant of this custom; as the person so marked is at once recognized as being entitled to certain privileges, but beyond them he is not entitled. In my youth, in the Madras Presidency, I could identify the status of the natives by this mark of caste.

‡ The red hand is familiarized in our own country by Scott in *Alice Brand*, and by Shakespeare in *Lady Macbeth*, the idea being that the hand of the murderer could not be cleansed from blood.



Figs. 28. Examples of Ancient American Mounds in the form of Crosses.

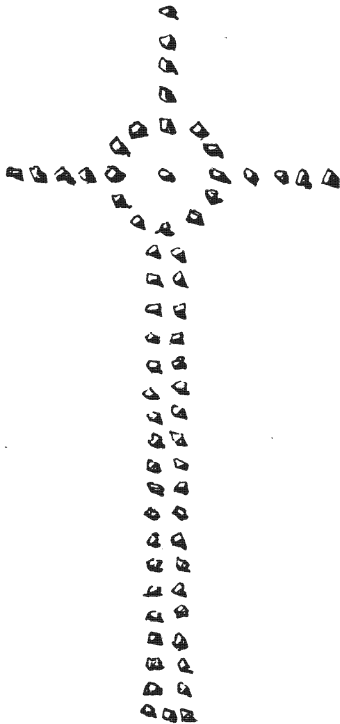


Fig. 30a. Early Celtic.
Isle of Man and
Ireland.



Fig. 30b. Early
Celtic, Brittany.

Fig. 30.—Callernish, Hebrides (380 feet in length).

being synonymous, and the red hand exemplified in religious fratricide, and often also in pictorial illustration.* But there is yet another distinctive feature in the subject. In early times the great divisions of man were into pastoral and nomad, as distinguished from urban and manufacturing races, and the former were *an abomination* † to the latter. The artificers in brass and iron, and the makers and users of musical instruments, are of very early mention; and though of the same race there are some described as those who dwelled in tents and had cattle, yet there is a special mention of one still earlier, who had flocks.‡ There appears reason for supposing that when this became the distinctive feature of *exclusive occupation*, it was identified as such with the patriarchs, and was looked on with contempt by the rest of mankind, and described as *an abomination*. Now all the nations to which I have alluded as being sun and serpent worshippers, were also the most noted artificers, metallurgists, and miners, the latter either directly or by instigation as purchasers of ores: Egyptians, Phœnicians, Indians, Peruvians, Mexicans. The gold of Peru was so great in quantity that ordinary utensils were made of it; and artificial gardens, the soil of which was granulated gold, and the plants and flowers of which were made of gold, were used as pleasure-grounds § by the Peruvian sovereigns. The Tyrians, Peruvians, and other nations I have referred to, excelled also in the arts of dyeing colours. The Mexicans and mound-builders were miners on so vast a scale, that their richest mines near Lake Superior are, with all the wants and resources of the moderns, only very partially worked now, although abounding in wealth. The Tyrians traded, as Cæsar and others tell us, with the Cassiterides for tin, that is, some of the islands now known as British; while the Indian mines of gold and precious stones, to say nothing of the evidences of immense iron workings, are of note.

28. In conjunction with this is a remarkable statement in the

* Indeed, the Phœnicians, according to some authorities, actually had their name from this cause, *φαιρός*, blood-red, connected with *φόνος*, murder; hence, *φόνικες* is read by some as equivalent to murderers. Strabo refers to this derivation, though he gives another, but Elsley gives a strong argument in its favour, showing that it would be vainly sought in the Syriac, as it is from *φόνικαι*, ancient Greek for *αιμάξαι*, to slay or murder, and that these people were, in common with the Carians, anciently called by the Greeks *φόνικες*, from their destroying the inhabitants of the coasts in their depredations.

† Gen. xlv. 34.

‡ Gen. iv. 4.

§ Baldwin's *Ancient America*, p. 250.

first part of the first German edition of Ritter's Geography,* which gives an Eastern tradition in the form of an inverted history of the enmity between the first two brothers of mankind, setting forth all the circumstances in a party spirit favourable to Cain. The tradition is current amongst the Ishudes, a race occupying a mountain district rich in minerals, and is to the following effect:—That the elder brother acquired wealth by gold and silver mines, but that the younger becoming envious, drove him away, and forced him to take refuge in the East. Moreover, wherever serpent-worship was known, a serpent was in almost every case a guardian of treasure.

29. In the case of the wanderer and fugitive I have assumed, I have taken only purely rational grounds to account for a feature at one time almost universal, even among the most widely dispersed races of the earth. But such grounds will not carry us through the question.

30. However applicable to Egypt's river may be the symbolical serpent, it would not be so to many places where serpent-worship was prevalent. Nor, on the other hand, could that worship have originated in the simple dread of the deadly power of the serpent in countries where serpents are not known to exist, as in Ireland. If the old legend of St. Patrick driving away serpents from Ireland is to be brought in argument against me, it would but strengthen my case, for not only do we find this same tradition attributing to St. Columba the precise counterpart of that miracle in the island of Iona, but in each case it is clear that men addicted to serpent-worship, and not serpents themselves, were the fugitives. I may say that archæological evidence exists to prove the case, as when the serpents, otherwise called devils, were said to have been driven away, they took refuge in Glen Columnkil, on the west coast of Donegal, from which, however, they were finally forced. This implies an interval; and that this desolate and remote region was occupied by a strong body of the holders of the ancient Celtic faith is clear from an accumulation of very remarkable dolmens which are there found. The absence of such reptiles in Ireland is remarkable, but their *absence* could certainly not have originated serpent-worship through *terror*, while everything artistic or religious in old Irish designs, from the wonderful illuminations in the Book of Kells to the old Celtic gold ornaments, represents the serpent, and indicates therefore some very strong religious idea being always uppermost in connection with it.

* Schlegel's *Philosophy of History*, p. 95.

31. As then neither the rationalistic view of nature-worship, nor the simple dread of the destructive powers of the serpent do more than help us to a very partial explanation of a feature which, as we have seen, hardly ever differed in expression, though at the remotest distances, we must look for some other and more powerful influence as the originating cause. To arrive at this it will be necessary to recapitulate the points of agreement at the greatest geographical distances; viz., a common worship of the sun and serpent, either as distinct deities or a compound one, together with the principal symbols attending them,—fire and the cross, the association of fratricide or human sacrifice with this worship, and that too for propitiation, and the widely distinct customs of the two first sections of the human family by the desire to acquire wealth, through the production and traffic in metals, and the opposite of exclusively pastoral life. Now in the earliest times, when there was little or nothing to distract man's attention, and when his ideas must necessarily have been few, it appears to me there is only one way to account for a common custom at the remotest geographical positions, which is, by a common tradition. Facts that had occurred would be known and handed down, and if not palatable to any, there might be evidences of perversion; but in those times there could never have been a total forgetfulness, nor, on the other hand, a wholly original and pure invention, for there was no experience on which to frame it.*

32. Moreover, if we should find in one and the same tradition at least the three prominent and universal features referred to,—fire in connection with worship, human sacrifice of blood kindred, and the admitted need of reconciliation with an estranged and powerful deity; still further, if these are found in conjunction with like symbols and occupation, and even a corroboration, by the presence of other traditions having affinity with that one, though at wide-spread distances, we should certainly have strong reasons for attributing the customs to the tradition, by considering *that* tradition was once universal, and that, however remotely found, it had there been carried.

33. If in addition we should find that this tradition was retained by the descendants of those who had, as it appears, not even moved from their central geographical position, but who retained

* The Indian traditions, as mentioned further on, are so puerile that they not only betray a most contemptible endeavour at invention, but also show that they were of a much later date, when at least the utility of the sugar-cane was understood, and wine and clarified butter in use. If nothing better could be thought of then, by way of invention, it shows a difficulty that would increase the further we go back.

in common with it all the primitive features of the race to whom the tradition first applies, we have, I think, a still stronger ground to go upon.

34. Before coming finally to this, let us see if there are any evidences of other traditions, or customs indicative of traditions which, if this were the cause, must have gone hand in hand with it.

35. Tree-worship, on which I cannot enlarge, appears to have been a widespread custom, which, it must be admitted, is strongly corroborative.

36. Some of the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual have so peculiar a tendency, that a few questioners have, on superficial examination, mistaken them as indicating a species of solar or Sabian worship. The emphatic denunciations against such worship show that this could not have been so, and yet the question arises, why did they assimilate?

37. It must be borne in mind that the Israelites had all the tendencies and failings of mankind in general, and that they saw everywhere around them the worship of visible gods or their symbols. The historical account shows how great the difficulty was which Moses had to encounter in their case, and how soon the pure worship, restored through his agency, again became adulterated. It would have been simply impossible to have confined these people to the worship of a pure and invisible deity, such as their forefathers the patriarchs worshipped, with their antecedent knowledge of Egypt's gods, and with the acquaintance they were yet to make with the Baal-worship of Canaan; for which reason it is not improbable that to satisfy the remarkable tendency of human nature for something tangible in worship, rites externally somewhat similar were adopted, and even in some cases likeness-symbols,* as instanced by the brazen serpent, when obedience, even to promote their own cure, could be wrung from them in no other way, while the only really miraculous emblem in the hands of man that could be associated with tree-worship was to be found in Aaron's rod, which budded. Amongst the rites we find some that might *per se* be taken for evidence of solar worship, as by the undiscerning nations of Canaan the brazen serpent probably was, of serpent-worship, and to which adoration was finally paid by the Israelites themselves, no doubt in conformity with surrounding customs.†

* Thus, Acts vii. 44, the tabernacle is called the tabernacle of witness, and is evidently referred to as in opposition to the tabernacle of Moloch in the 43rd verse.

† A small tribe in India, claiming descent from some shipwrecked refugees of the tribe of Reuben, cast on the coast of Bombay, and called Beni-Israel, have, it is asserted, to this day, "each in his secret chamber, a

38. Indeed, fire seems to have been inseparable from the worship of Jehovah, an appearance He himself assumed in his first communication with Moses. The first acceptable sacrifice was a burnt-offering brought with all devotion, not, I think, as an experiment but with a knowledge (by communication)* of its acceptability; and neither from the minds of pure worshippers, or the opposite side, could this fact have been eradicated, as it was indelibly impressed on all future people by its accompaniment; viz., the FIRST human sacrifice to that god in man's breast—self-esteem, whose attributes are jealousy and revenge. It is probable then that fire was the *first* agent used in the external rites instituted by Jehovah himself; hence the readiness with which the secessionists would have adopted its actual worship in lieu of the Deity, with a false clinging to the persuasion that their rites were still acceptable to Him through this means; nay, in the first instance might have been sincerely and sorrowfully adopted from the expression, "My punishment is greater than I can bear;" "From Thy face shall I be hid," an acknowledgment that the Deity who was being deserted was benign and kind, and that that Deity could not have been the sun, from whose light no escape was possible, and which could by no stretch of imagination have been represented as pleading and striving with individuals by separate acts. How indelibly the events of the first operation of sacrifice by the sons of men was impressed on the minds of subsequent generations all over the globe, is seen from the amalgamation in their rites of ALL THE EVENTS that formed that *first* great drama, by their substituting their *nearest relatives*, instead of a lamb, for the burnt-offering, for the purpose of *appeasing an offended deity*.

39. Moreover, the two ceremonies of human and brute sacrifice carry conviction with them of their institutors; thus not only was a mere animal a simple offering, as a creature the life of which was reasonably taken, but we find that it was under certain circumstances not even wasted, as in the peace-offerings, but after a sufficient ceremonial, to prove its dedication, was to be used as food by the giver and the officiator; whereas, apart from the homicide, the destruction of the nobler creature, especially of the purest and most innocent, as of children, was one of unmeaning cruelty and objectless annihilation. I purposely abstain in a paper of this description from introducing the more

silver serpent, to which they burn incense twice a day, and throw a little flower (?) before it, and sing, accompanied with a small tom-tom." (J. Wilson.)

* One object of which, it appears to me, may have been to impress on man a custom, which, in the matter of food, was to divide him from the brutes; viz., that to eat raw flesh was an act of unsanctity.

solemn and mystical sacrifices, and the meaning involved in them, but it is impossible to close one's eyes to the great fact that even the deification of such an ancestor as I have portrayed, and *the holding his acts as sacred and worthy of imitation*, could only have led to the authorization of human sacrifice when the victim was an enemy or rival, real or *supposed*; and that the institution of the propitiatory sacrifice by parents of their own children * is almost absolute proof of a tradition, from the very first, of the amelioration of the condition of the human race, and the reconciliation with an offended deity by some such process. May we suggest on their parts a voluntary offer of submission to the author of that flaming sword—which, whatever may be the meaning of the expression, would after a time be taken literally—which was said to intervene between them and immortal life. Hence those so devoted to the gods were deemed supremely blest, as having passed that barrier. This idea was forcibly portrayed by the Egyptians, who represented Paradise as surrounded by streams of fire, issuing from the mouths of sacred uræi (*i.e. seraphs*, fiery serpents), one of which guarded each corner; the fire so breathed out being intended, as Mr. W. R. Cooper informs us, to destroy any invading or unjustified soul.

40. The fundamental question of reconciliation is not within the scope of this paper, though it materially aids the conclusion. I will therefore confine myself to less important but still very interesting customs practised in common by the Hebrews and idolatrous and pagan nations.

41. Fire was an emblem of the Deity with both; the seven Spirits of God were also so represented, and the branched candlestick was an emblem. We are told likewise of the fire that was to be kept burning the whole night, † *i. e. during* the time the sun was invisible, a specification quite distinct from that for its perpetual burning. On the pagan side we find in all countries, including Britain, that not only was fire to be kept perpetually burning, but that in some it was to be each year miraculously renewed: the hearth-fires were extinguished in Britain on one particular night, only to be rekindled ‡ with the sacred fire given out by the priests, a custom still kept up in Jerusalem by means of lighting tapers, and still observed amongst the Guebres of India and Persia. §

* The seed of the woman. We lose an immense deal of force by the introduction of the word *διδ* in the Septuagint, and its equivalents in the Vulgate, and the English translations of Eve's expression on the birth of Cain. Here we must go back to the Hebrew קנית איש את-יהוה (*i.e.*) I have gained a man the Jehovah; proving that so deeply impressed upon the mind of Eve was the promised reconciliation, that she concluded, immediately on the birth of a son, that the agent of reconciliation had arrived.

† Lev. vi. 9.

‡ Godfrey Higgins, p. 158.

§ Dr. Hyde and others.

42. But in my investigations in Scotland I have lately discovered, in Ayrshire, a monument which appears to combine the most important customs I have touched on in one. Diagrams Δ , ∇ represent the form of a mound with a large circular head,* and a serpentine ridge 400 feet long (figs. 32 and 33). It appears, though in a different attitude to the serpent mound in Argyllshire,† still to bear the characteristics of a serpent emblem. Attracted by the outline, I excavated the mound, and discovered a paved platform of great interest. The hill is 100 feet high on its western side, is most uniformly shaped, and on the north and south sides measures 60 feet high; to the east it is only 40 feet, and here its true circular form is lost, and a distinct elongation, terminated in broken ground, occurs just over a roadway formed at no very remote date. On the other side of this roadway similar broken ground appears, where a beautifully curved serpentine embankment, 300 feet long commences. It is evident that the embankment once joined the circular mound or head, and was severed when the road was made. The embankment forms a ridge about five feet across on the top, and was once nearly 400 feet long; it tapers as it recedes from the head, and also slopes downwards towards the end or tail, terminating almost vertically, the earth having been retained in position by a facing of uncemented stonework, the remains of which still preserve the shape. The ridge, which runs sinuously from the east side of the mound northwards, has been formed on the crest of a lofty bank, and is at an elevation of 130 feet above a stream still further north. The serpentine ridge did not contain any relics, but on cutting through it, its artificial formation was plainly shown, the materials having been brought from the adjacent sea-shore, and being quite distinct from the original summit, which was clearly defined. Trenches were cut in the head or circular hill at the four cardinal points, from the summit to the base, without any result; but on continuing these over the plateau, so as to form a cross, a divergence had to be made to avoid some trees, when the soil, hitherto of light colour, suddenly changed to black. This discoloration being followed, a paved platform was found about two feet, in some places, under a rich vegetable soil, which covered the whole hill uniformly (except where it had been severed from the embankment), and which it must have taken ages to deposit; the trees that have been for many years on the hillock assisting little, as they are

*The ridge and head are now severed by a modern roadway.

† For further particulars of these mounds see the author's papers in Reports of the British Association for 1870-71-72-73, and Proceedings of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 19th May, 1873.

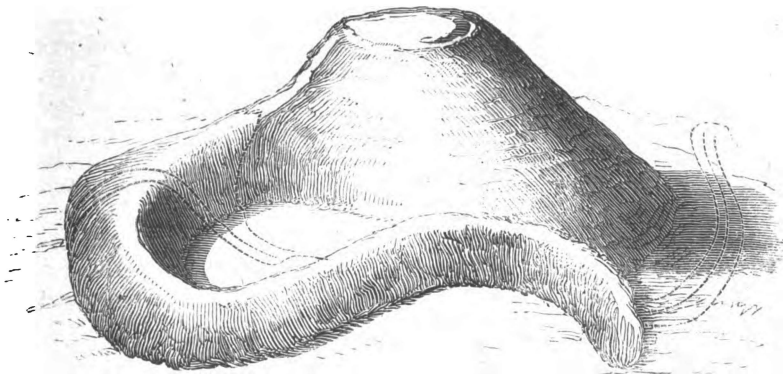


Fig. 32. Elevation of Mound. On the Clyde.

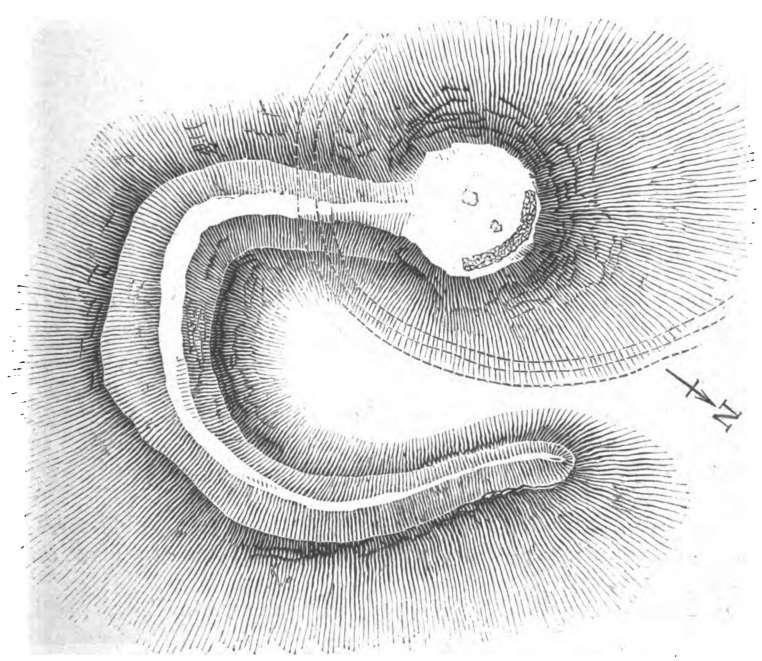


Fig. 33. Plan of Mound.

coniferæ. This discovery took place at the north-east, and was on the verge, just where the plateau joined the declivity. Cuttings were then made at intervals of a few feet all round the edge, in the same position, without success, till, on arriving at the north-west, the same appearance was exhibited. In result it was found that the platform was 80 feet long and 5 feet wide, paved with smooth flattened stones from the shore in a true curve, forming a segment of a circle, and covering a space between and including the north-east and north-west points of the compass (fig. 34). The platform itself, and the earth beneath it to a considerable depth, were highly charred, large masses of charcoal filled the interstices between the stones, and on washing the earth obtained from the same position, it was found to be full of portions of bone, so reduced in size as to show that the cremation must have been most complete. Taking the latitude of the mound, and the points of the compass where the sun would rise and set on the longest day, this segment-shaped platform, devoted apparently to sacrifice by fire, is found to fill up the remaining interval, and thereby complete the fiery circle of the sun's course, which would be deficient by that space. Near the centre of this hillock was found under the surface a much larger stone than any on the hill, and which may have formed part of the foundation of an altar. Independently of the time of year indicated by this fire agreeing with that of the midsummer fires of the Druids, we have here not only apparently an evidence of solar and serpent worship, but also of sacrifice. In Scotland also fire in connection with the cross was the signal for blood-shedding.*

43. Observe then,—with the Hebrews was the custom of keeping fire burning nocturnally, *from sunset to sunrise*, and this in connection with sacrifice; in the monument before us appears the same custom on a magnificent scale, viz., for a particular occasion the burning seems to have been so arranged as even to fill up the arc of the sun's disappearance from *the point of his setting to his rising again*, completing, as it were, the circle of his light and heat.

44. But let us look for one moment at another wide-spread class of traditions;—time will only permit me to give one illustration.

We find amongst the books of the ancient Americans one in

* The symbol which summoned to arms.—Scott. Since reading this paper I have, through a suggestion by Mr. Wm. Simpson, discovered west of Bute a vast lithic temple (hitherto unrecorded) arranged in a serpentine form, with a cross transept, and having along its course evidences of interment; and on the Mendip Hills beautifully *serpentine* arrangements of barrows, evidently connected with the great religious places of the Celts.

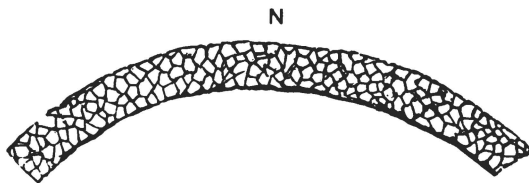


Fig. 34. Plan of Platform, 80 feet by 5 feet.



Fig. 35.

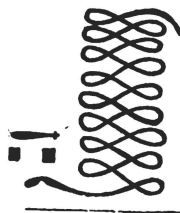


Fig. 36.

D

the Quiché language, called the "Popol-Vuh," and in it a tradition of the Creation, as corroborative to my mind of its descent from the original history of the world, which we read of in our Bible, as corroborative, I repeat, in short, as the Assyrian account of the Deluge is of there being a current international tradition of that event, and not simply a Hebrew one. Mr. Baldwin gives the particulars of the Creation from the "Popol-Vuh," as follows:—

"According to the 'Popol-Vuh,' the world had a beginning. There was a time when it did not exist. Only 'Heaven' existed, below which all space was empty, silent, unchanging solitude. Nothing existed there, neither man, nor animal, nor earth, nor tree. Then appeared a *vast expanse of water, on which divine beings moved in brightness*. THEY SAID 'Earth,' and instantly mountains rose above the waters like (hard* fish), and were made. Thus was the earth created by the *Heart of Heaven*." Next came the creation of animals; but the gods were disappointed, because the animals could neither tell their names, nor worship the Heart of Heaven.

45. Therefore it was resolved that man should be created. First man was made of earth; but his flesh had no cohesion; he was inert, could not turn his head, and had no mind, although he could speak; therefore he was consumed in the water. Next men were made of wood, and these multiplied; but they had neither heart nor intellect, and could not worship, and so they withered up and disappeared in the waters. A third attempt followed: man was made of a tree called tzité, and woman of the pith of a reed; but these failed to think, speak, or worship, and were destroyed, all save a remnant, which still exists as a race of small monkeys in forests.†

46. A fourth attempt to create the human race was successful, but the circumstances attending this creation *are veiled in mystery*. It took place before the beginning of dawn, when neither sun nor moon had risen, and was a wonder-work of the *Heart of Heaven*. Four men were created; and they could reason, speak, and see in such a manner, *as to know all things at once*. They worshipped the Creator with thanks for existence; but the gods, dismayed and scared, breathed clouds on their eyes to limit their vision, and cause them to be men, and

* I have used the expression "hard fish" here, as that which is nearest to the meaning; the *simile* is clearly an invention. In the original they are described as "like lobsters"; but just as *κῆρος* means large fish as well as whale, and as the Romans used "Bos" for any large undescribed animal, it is plain the lobster is in this case merely selected from its hard crust.

† Here becomes evident the invention of the restorer; it is open to immediate detection, being as childish as that which distinguishes the Puranas.

*not gods.** Afterwards, while the four *men were asleep*, the gods made for them beautiful wives, and from these came all the tribes and families of the earth.

47. Here we have the same tradition as ours, with the evident loss by time of some of the consecutive events. It is not a created fable, or it would abound in the marvellous, as we find is the case in Oriental cosmogonies, while the excessive paucity of material, as in the several oceans of salt water, sugar-cane juice, wines, clarified butter, curds, milk, &c., described in the Puranas, shows how difficult it was in early times to *invent* a tradition. Nor could two such similar accounts originate in those primitive days spontaneously when theses were unknown; whereas it contains all the panels of the picture—if I may so express it—but some of the portraits so faded, that the restorer, not knowing how to replace them, simply kept repeating the principal event in the blank spaces, and at each step of distance showed a stage of less perfection than the complete one.† But we have our *six* panels intact; we have the exact description of events before the present condition of the earth, a precise counterpart of that in Genesis, consonant with the plural Elohim, and the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters, and which, together with the brevity and power of the expression “they said,” is emphatic. Our third and sixth pictures, of the appearance of the earth, and the creation of man, are perfect. As to the four men created, this is clearly confusion between the creation of man and the four men reputed to have peopled the earth after the Deluge, thereby giving us a combination, and so far a corroboration of the universality of *more than one* tradition still retained amongst *us*.

48. In fine, then, I can but attribute these universal customs to a like universality of such traditions, as you will already have recognized; and see, in the worship of the sun, a transmission of the very oldest traditions found in our own, *i. e.* the Hebrew records.‡ Thus fire, the symbol of sun-worship, is represented

* “Man is become as one of us.”

† To this may be added that the Persian tradition of the creation, in their oldest language, gives also six periods or stages of creation, and that man is represented as the being created on the sixth day.

‡ While it is clear that the Hebrews were the descendants of those who held the earliest, as well as the purest traditions and customs which they solemnly revered and practised, it is manifest that these were transmitted orally, and not reduced to a written formula till the time of Moses. Still, an author of deep research asserts that Bin Washih had collected a great variety of alphabets, and even some which he supposed to be “antediluvian.” We know not what was lost by the destruction of the Alexandrian library, but it is remarkable that the cuneiform and other inscriptions, which we have now access to, deal largely with the subject of the Flood, and this style

as the *first* sign of the offended Deity in the *flaming* sword, as acceptable with the first offering,—that is, the first recorded sacrifice,—and afterwards falsely substituted for the offering itself. Human sacrifice, specially by fire, and by the nearest relatives, as commemorating the first *homicide and fratricide through a quarrel, the subject of which was an offering by fire*; and also, in its *propitiatory* form, as appeasing the anger indicated by the fiery sword, and illustrative of an endeavour to realize an event which, through such means—the suffering of the seed of the woman—should produce a reconciliation, as evidently promised.

49. In the worship of the serpent I recognize an acknowledgment of his power, and of the tradition of the obedience rendered him by the *first* parents of mankind. In human sacrifices to him, there is a recognition of the great traditional sacrifice of felicity, in the intercourse with Deity, made by the human race through *first* following his counsels, and also of the introduction of the death of man; as well as a desire to propitiate him for any anger he might entertain, arising from a worship of the visible symbol of the Deity; and in the joint worship of the sun and the serpent I observe another record of that drama in the final act of which the spiritual powers of good and evil were both represented as visibly present. In the worship of a good and bad serpent-power I recognize the confusion arising from the amalgamation of the sun and serpent as a combined deity, the benign influence of the sun, and the malific power of the serpent; but more particularly—and this brings us to the primal origin—from the knowledge promised by the serpent, as the result of obeying his counsels, the *knowledge of good and evil*, a title also given to the tree eaten of; hence the prevalence of *tree* and *serpent* worship, and the proof of the wide-spread tradition of the *Fall*. It is a very remarkable fact, that whereas tree and serpent worship are generally described together, in Nineveh it is the sun emblem, which I have before described as Asshur, that is, the sacred symbol raised above *the tree* (fig. 31c); thus giving us the combined emblems of good and evil with tree-worship also. See diagram, which contains also a serpent altar and a tree altar

of writing dates back to a very remote period; and there is no reason why it should not have been used even before the Noachian Deluge. The recent extraordinary revelations upon the Creation and the Fall, from the clay tablets of Kouyunjik, as read by Dr. George Smith, may lead to a conclusion on this subject; and while it is reasonable to suppose that Moses was the first compiler for the Hebrews, may prove beyond question that the traditions so sacred to us were not new to him, but internationally acknowledged as the true accounts of those great events, even long before his time.



Fig. 31.

Trajan burning incense to Diana. Both the Goddess and one of her emblems, the boar's head, appearing in the sacred tree above the altar.

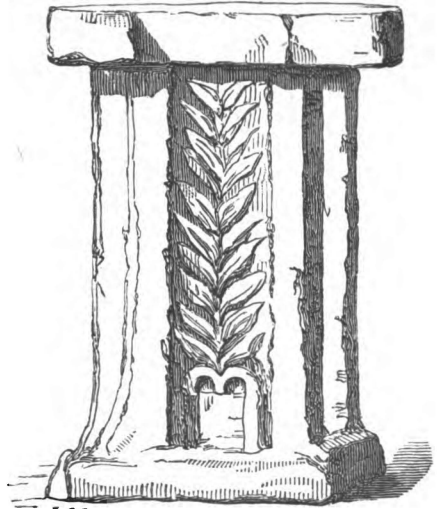


Fig. 31a. Tree Altar from Malta.

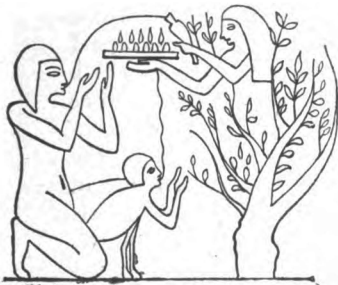


Fig. 31b.

Tree-worship, Egypt. The Goddess Nu, in the sacred Sycamore-tree.



Fig. 31c.

Tree-worship, Assyria. Presence of Asshur.



Fig. 31d.

Tree-worship, India.



Fig. 31e. Serpent Altar from Malta.

from Malta, *ibid.*, and two serpents worshipping fruit (Pompeian), which fruit agrees exactly with the offering to the Assyrian Asshur, and with the fruit of the sacred tree embroidered on the dresses of the kings of Nineveh. Figs. 31 to 31e.

50. The tradition of the Fall is evidently portrayed in the Mexican narrative through the records of its principal event, described as the *gods*, in fear of man's power, breathing a cloud upon the eyes of men; evidently the tradition of the obstacle put to the power of attaining to the Tree of Life. The words are almost identical with the Hebrew original: "Man is become as one of *us* to know good and evil"; but even here bearing evidence of a remarkable perversion, like the inverted story of Cain and Abel already mentioned; for here it is man that was *good*, and "worshipped the Creator with thanks for existence," and the gods who, *without provocation*, breathed clouds on his eyes to limit his vision.

51. It will be readily seen by those acquainted with the subject, that I could have introduced many points which seem even more nearly to approach to an explanation of some of the questions I have endeavoured to answer, such as Indian, Grecian, Persian, and American traditions of a superior being wounding the serpent's head, and the serpent either wounding or biting off his foot, as in the account of Crishna (*e. g.*); or of the cry of "eve" or "eva" by the celebrants of the mysteries, while they held living serpents in their hands, and others; but, in the limits of a single paper, I have deemed it better to break new ground, and to confine myself to the simplest evidences that the case admits in connection with nature-worship.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure the meeting must be perfectly unanimous in voting its thanks to Dr. Phéné for his interesting paper. The Honorary Secretary has to read two communications, after which it will be open for any present to offer remarks thereon.

The HON. SECRETARY.—Two letters upon the subject before us have been received—one from Professor C. Piazzi Smyth, who, having read a proof copy of Dr. Phéné's paper, "takes exception to the way in which Mr. Phéné introduces his subject, and also to the statement that fires ever burned at the top of the pyramids," adding that "the sides of the Great Pyramid were originally steep, sloping planes, and its top, a sharp-pointed apex." The other is from the Rev. Canon Titcomb, "taking exception to the statement that the pyramids were built to supply the place of mountains."—I may say that General Crawford, who has lately returned from Egypt, states that the hills in the neighbourhood are about 800 feet high.—Canon Titcomb adds, "With regard to serpent-worship being one of the dangers to which the Israelites were exposed when first coming in contact with the Phœnician or Canaanitish race, surely there is other evidence of it than that adduced in referring to the brazen serpent (the circumstances in regard

to which are explained on other grounds). The Phœnicians certainly worshipped the serpent under the name of Ob or Aub, and it is interesting to note the express allusion in Lev. xx. 27. 'A man also or woman that hath Ob (or Aub) shall surely be put to death.'

Mr. J. F. WADMORE.—I hope I may be permitted to say a few words upon the subject before us this evening, as I am a student in the same direction as Dr. Phené. I think we all owe our thanks to Dr. Phené for his indefatigable labours. Nobody can be better aware than I am of the great expense, both of time and money, which is required to find out the many facts that are necessary to build up such a theory as his. We certainly read of an altar of stone in Scripture, and that no tool was to be used upon it (Exod. xx. 25), and in Stonehenge we find large masses of stone upon which no tool appears to have been used. There are several places that might have been brought in and cited as examples. I think that, looking at Avery, it was to some extent a temple, not in the mound form, it is true, yet, not without a mound within a distance of barely one mile, and from the rugged masses which compose the Druidical circle, one is disposed to believe that it was a hypethral temple, much anterior to that of Stonehenge; it stands in an enclosure fortified with a mound and fosse, and formed, no doubt, one of those sacred oppida alluded to by Tacitus, where the Druidical mysteries were taught and handed down to kindred worshippers of the sun and serpent; for, stretching away from the oppida both in a S.E. and S.W. direction, are still to be seen the remains of a row of stones, traditionally an avenue, leading to the banks of the West Kennet, on the one side, and the village of Beckhampton on the other, between which lies the colossal mound of Silbury, covering an area of not less than five acres and a half of land. Sir Richard Colt-Hoare calls it The Hill of Assembly; whatever it was, we find it here connected with a traditional Druidical temple and its serpentine avenue of stone. I have been led to this idea by looking at the general conformation of such places, with their camps and mounds and hill forts, all over the neighbourhood. There is another similarity in the hill fort at Cisbury, where you get a vandyke running up to it in a peculiar sinuous, snake-like form. In the same way, at Marden, we get a peculiar form of works and mounds, we get three forms of the latter, one of which they used for tumuli, and some of these are very large indeed. But Dr. Phené has illustrated all the three classes. Then there are others, equally large, important, and interesting, and they have evidently been used as prehistoric citadels: of course, they have lost something of their original character, but they still retain sufficient of their form to show what they were. There are many examples in existing castles and citadels which bear out the idea, as at Windsor, Warwick, and Arundel, and other places. In many of these mounds there have been found coins, flints, pottery, and all sorts of things, which bear out the theory that the mounds and earthworks date far back into our history; and Mr. John Evans has recently published a work which shows that the early civilization of Britain was by no means inconsiderable; it appears from him, that there was a

gold coinage in Britain at least 300 years before the Romans landed ; and if they could produce gold coins, they could possibly construct other and better forts and citadels than many of these rude mounds. That in Ayrshire is very finished, but we have others which are much more rude. Some of the oppida were turned into Roman camps, as was the case at Silchester and Verulam, which were originally British citadels, afterwards occupied by the Romans. After the time of Boadicea, when instructions were given by Claudius that all the British forts should be occupied by Roman detachments, we find British and Roman remains lying in juxtaposition. The whole subject is too large to be treated too exclusively from one point of view, but it is extremely interesting.

Rev. G. W. WELDON.—I have great pleasure in adding my testimony to the value of Dr. Phené's paper (containing, as it does, the results of considerable investigation, for which we ought all to feel much obliged to him). I have often found myself following him in his travels ; wherever I went Dr. Phené had been there before me ; I even found his name entered in the visitors' book in Wisconsin, at Milwaukee, in America. There are many things mentioned by Dr. Phené which in themselves are mere nothings, but when taken together, there can be no doubt as to their connection with each other, and as to the proof they afford of sun and serpent worship as a universal fact throughout the world. I agree with Dr. Phené, in the second paragraph of his paper, as to the feeling in the human heart. There is no doubt whatever that there are three facts with regard to man which are of universal application : first, that man is a religious being ; secondly, that he will and must worship something ; and thirdly, that he becomes associated more or less with the objects of his worship. In this way you may account for the difference which existed between the worship of the Greeks and the worship of the Arabs. The Arabs led a wild, nomadic life ; they saw neither rivers, groves, nor mountains, but they did see the sun, moon, and stars, and would naturally worship them. In Greece they had groves, rivers, and mountains, and they would naturally worship these things as objects around them,—having no revelation, they would fall back upon nature. The Greeks not only worshipped the groves, but the trees in the groves, every tree having its dryad or hamadryad, whose life was coincident with that of the tree. As to the serpent, we know it occupies a conspicuous place in the pages of the Old Testament history, and the tradition has been scattered far and wide throughout the world. There is one thing of which I am certain, that there is a universal feeling of dread with regard to anything that creeps in a serpent-like manner. Dr. Phené must himself have been cognizant of this fact, that in the north-west of Scotland, during the time of the famine, none of the people could be induced to eat an eel. They were plentiful enough, and I remember asking a man to take one home, but the reply was "Not for me." (Laughter.) The simple fact is, that there is a superstition attaching to these creeping things. With regard to the brazen serpent, we should recollect that in the human mind there has

always been a feeling that there was some sympathy between the weapon and the wound. Sir Kenelm Digby, one of the most distinguished surgeons of his time, and who was far in advance of his own day, used to bandage, not the wounded limb, but the weapon that had inflicted the wound; and the superstition of the wounded man's mind associated his cure with the unwinding of the bandages from the weapon. In the same way, with the brazen serpent. What inflicted the wound? Fiery serpents. What cured it? The brazen serpent. There you have the sympathy between the weapon and the wound. I do not quite agree with Dr. Phené's reference to the flaming sword. I think that fire-worship is a lingering of a lost tradition of the symbol of Jehovah's presence in the various parts of the history of the Old Testament, as when Moses came down from the rock, when his face shone, and, above all, when the fiery tongues appeared upon the day of Pentecost. With regard to the question raised in the case of the Africans and South Africans, serpent-worship and devil-worship go together. The Krooman says: "I do not want to propitiate the Good Being, for He is always good. But the 'bad being' is always bad, and I want to give him gifts to make him good." That is an argument which has been more or less adopted in various parts of the world. The serpent spoken of in the Scripture is that old serpent the devil, and you have that most remarkable illustration, to which Dr. Phené referred in the case of Krishna, which bears out the third chapter of Genesis in a most wonderful manner. In that representation of Krishna, you have a superior being whose heel is being literally and truly wounded by a serpent, and the being herself is inflicting a mortal wound on the reptile. The whole subject is most interesting; and it is important to gather together these disjointed fragments of lost traditions, and to bring back to our minds this great fact—that God sent man forth not without the truth, but man himself broke up that truth into a variety of fragments, each nation using them as it thought fit. I trust that Dr. Phené will enter more fully into the subject upon another occasion.

Mr. S. D. WADDY, Q.C., M.P.—I think our thanks are due to Dr. Phené for his patient accumulation of facts, which is a far more valuable contribution to our knowledge than merely setting up a theory. We have all felt that we wanted more facts upon this subject. I do not quite agree with all that Dr. Phené has said, but I go with him very far. For instance, with regard to the serpent and sun worship; so far from thinking them identical or related, I think they come from two entirely different quarters, and represent entirely antagonistic ideas and principles. When man began to abandon the worship of the true God, he began also by degrees to worship two distinct beings—a good one and a bad one. The spirit of instinctive adoration in him led him still to worship the good Jehovah, the Supreme Being; but, inasmuch as mere terror in the human mind influenced it, sometimes more powerfully even than the feeling of adoration and reverence, so, by degrees, man got to worship that which was to him the source of all evil and sorrow. But in either case, whether he worshipped the good or the evil spirit, he wished to worship by the help of some symbol. The more striking the

symbol, the more easy faith became. Therefore, when a man wanted to worship God, he looked up for that which was most like God according to his notions. That which gave him the best and clearest idea of beneficence and majesty was the sun, and this, therefore, he accordingly worshipped as the representative of God, not with the idea of its being taken as God, but solely as a symbol of His majesty, power, and beneficence. By degrees—and this is the history of all idolatry—the symbol displaced in the mind of the worshipper that which it was intended to symbolize, and became itself the object of worship. The first reference we have in the Scripture to idolatry of any kind is that passage in Job : “ If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for I should have denied the God that is above.” (Job xxxi. 26, *et seq.*) Accepting the chronology of the best authorities with regard to the antiquity of the Book of Job, this is the earliest reference to idolatry of any sort, and there is no reason to believe that, at the time that passage was written, any form of idolatry existed, other than the worship of the heavenly bodies. And this form of idolatry, which has been generally known as Sabianism, was in its symbolic form, as I believe was the idolatry of the Hebrew ; for I do not believe their idolatry ever became so gross and sensuous a thing as that of the heathen now is. Down to the latest time it was, in fact, the professed adoration of the symbol of Jehovah : we have a strong instance of this in the setting up of the images in Dan ; for Micah, who had put them up, congratulated himself that he had got a Levite for his priest, for he said : “ Now know I that the Lord (*Jehovah*) will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.” (Judges xvii. 13.) You have here clear idolatry, and yet, at the same time, there is in that idolatry clear and distinct reference to Jehovah, and to His worship alone. But having once introduced into worship the powers of nature, by degrees they themselves came to be worshipped as evil and good, until we come at length to that pagan worship of the Greeks of which Mr. Weldon spoke, when a naiad dwelt in every stream and a dryad swung on almost every bough. With regard to devil-worship, perhaps the best illustration is that of some of the African tribes, who worship the serpent alone. That is devil-worship, and from the earliest times serpent-worship has been simply and purely the worship of the Evil One. When men had worshipped God from pure motives, as one who was wise, beneficent, and divine, then, by way of placating the other deities or powers, they tried to find an emblem of that which was evil. And no greater triumph over our lost race could have been desired by the devil himself than that they should have knelt down and selected for their worship that very serpent which, in the earliest history of our race, was connected with its fall from innocence and purity. A symbol was wanted,—what should they get ? We can well understand the selection of the sun as an emblem of good, but is it possible to find anything as a proper symbol of the devil, unless you connect the serpent with that one single instance in which the devil is known by Divine history,

and was remembered by vague traditions in all nations, to have been brought into visible and actual connection with man? I thank Dr. Phené very much for the collection of interesting facts which he has put before us.

DR. PHENÉ.—I am greatly obliged for the kindly way in which you have received my paper. I have not read many works that have been written upon my subject, for had I done so I feel I should never have discovered what I have. I have taken my own course altogether; and if we are to do any good, and to bring facts to light which are to be of use, I believe it can only be done by a man working from his own original ideas. As to what has been written by Professor Piazzi Smyth, upon the way in which I introduce my subject, I can only say that I cannot agree with him. In one place in my paper I have appeared to put forward a rationalistic idea; such ideas are put forward very prominently sometimes, but my object in putting forward the one I allude to was to show that the rationalistic idea would not stand for a moment. I entirely agree with Mr. Weldon and others in the idea that serpent-worship was devil-worship, and that view is strongly maintained in the very last page of my paper; the term "devil-worship" was, of course, applied to it by Christians. The necessary limits of such a paper have confined me a great deal, I have as far as possible endeavoured to break new ground, besides leaving room for the expression of opinions into which I had not space to enter. I desired to view the subject as an inherent worldling might be supposed to view it, apart from the antecedents which any such person would no doubt reject, but which I, of course, am bound to assume, and having shown that that view would not hold water, I then went forward to view it as you do; but it was not my purpose to make the subject a purely scriptural one. With regard to my appearing not to speak of certain things which belong to the subject, it must not be supposed that because I do not put them into my paper, I do not agree with them. With regard to what was stated by the Hon. Secretary, I did not say that there were no mountains in the neighbourhood of the pyramids, but that the people wanted mountains nearer at hand; and in another of my writings I have pointed out that it was an Eastern custom to have the place of worship close at hand: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." (1 Kings xii. 28.) It was the custom of the Egyptians to carry their dead westward, and in that direction the pyramids supply the place of mountains. I do not know that I have any other points of criticism to answer, except that Prof. Piazzi Smyth has referred to only one of the forms of Egyptian pyramids; and that, while I agree with Mr. Waddy as to the effect of abandonment or disuse of the true worship, I have based my argument *subsequently* to a catastrophe resulting from indifference or abandonment, and not on anything during a progress towards abandonment. I have to acknowledge valuable information from the Rev. Canon Stephenson, and on this and cognate subjects from the Rev. Richard Wilson, D.D., and on Scottish matters from my old friend of college-days, "Cuthbert Bede."

The Meeting was then adjourned.

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PUBLICATIONS.

Since the Inauguration of the Society, on the 24th of May, 1866, the following Papers have been read:—The Quarterly Parts are indicated by the numbers.

In 1866-7.

1. A Sketch of the Existing Relations between Scripture and Science. By the late GEORGE WARINGTON, Esq., F.C.S.
2. On the Difference in Scope between Scripture and Science. By the late C. MOUNTFORD BURNETT, Esq., M.D., Vice-President V.I.
On Comparative Philology. By the Rev. ROBINSON THORNTON, D.D., Vice-President V.I.
On the Various Theories of Man's Past and Present Condition. By the late JAMES REDDIE, Esq., Hon. Sec. V.I.
3. On the Language of Gesticulation and Origin of Speech. By Professor J. R. YOUNG.
On Miracles: their Compatibility with Philosophical Principles. By the Rev. W. W. ENGLISH, M.A.
Thoughts on Miracles. By the late E. B. PENNY, Esq.
On the General Character of Geological Formations. By the late E. HOPKINS, Esq., C.E.
4. On the Past and Present Relations of Geological Science to the Sacred Scriptures. By the Rev. Professor JOHN KIRK.
On the Lessons taught us by Geology in relation to God. Rev. J. BRODIE, M.A.
On the Mutual Helpfulness of Theology and Natural Science. By Dr. GLADSTONE, F.R.S.
On Falling Stars and Meteorites. By the late Rev. W. MITCHELL, M.A., Vice-President V.I.

(The above Papers, with the Discussions thereon, and with "Scientia Scientiarum; being some Account of the Origin and Objects of the Victoria Institute," with the Reports of the Provisional Proceedings, and the Inaugural Address by the late Rev. Walter Mitchell, M.A., Vice-President, form Volume I. of the "Journal of Transactions," price One Guinea.)

5. On the Terrestrial Changes and Probable Ages of the Continents, founded upon Astronomical Data and Geological Facts. By the late EVAN HOPKINS, Esq., C.E., F.G.S.
On the Credibility of Darwinism. By the late GEORGE WARINGTON, Esq., F.C.S.
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6. On Utilitarianism. By the late JAMES REDDIE, Esq., Hon. Sec. V.I.
On the Logic of Scepticism. By the Rev. ROBINSON THORNTON, D.D., V.P.
Annual Address (On the Institute's Work). By the late JAMES REDDIE, Esq., Hon. Sec. V.I.
7. On the Relations of Metaphysical and Physical Science to the Christian Doctrine of Prayer. By the Rev. Professor JOHN KIRK.
On Geological Chronology, and the Cogency of the Arguments by which some Scientific Doctrines are supported. (In reply to Professor Huxley's Address delivered at Sion College on 21st Nov., 1867.) By the late J. REDDIE, Esq., Hon. Sec. V.I. (1867-68).
8. On the Geometrical Isomorphism of Crystals, and the Derivation of all other Forms from those of the Cubical System. (6 Plates). By the late Rev. W. MITCHELL, M.A., V.P.

(Forming Volume II., price One Guinea.)

In 1867-8.

9. On the Antiquity of Civilization. By the Rev. Canon TITCOMB, M.A.
On Life, with some Observations on its Origin. By J. H. WHEATLEY, Esq., Ph.D.
On the Unphilosophical Character of some Objections to the Divine Inspiration of Scripture. By the late Rev. WALTER MITCHELL, M.A., Vice-President V.I.
On Comparative Psychology. By E. J. MORSHEAD, Esq., Hon. For. Sec. V.I.
10. On Theology as a Science. By the Rev. A. DE LA MARE, M.A.
On the Immediate Derivator of Science from the Great First Cause. By R. LAMING, Esq.
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In 1868-69.

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* * Papers by Principal DAWSON, LL.D., F.R.S.; Professors CHALLIS, F.R.S., BIRKS, and E. H. PALMER, of Cambridge; Dr. C. B. RADCLIFFE, and others, will be announced in the next list.

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Professor Huber's reply to Dr. Strauss's "Old and New Faith." has been translated from the German, under the auspices of the Victoria Institute, and is now nearly ready.

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