THE GOLDEN BOUGH

Third edition

CONTENTS AND PREFACES

The first part of this document comprises a cumulative analytical table of contents for the whole of the third edition of *The Golden Bough*. This material is extracted almost verbatim from the individual volumes, the only significant change being that volume numbers have been added to the page references for chapters, and that for the "note" at the end of Part VI[1] a synopsis, absent in the table of contents, was prepared based on the marginal sidebars printed with the text. Volumes numbers are given in Roman numerals, thus:

I: The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings (vol. i)
II: The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings (vol. ii)
III: Taboo and the Perils of the Soul
IV: The Dying God.
V: Adonis Attis Osiris (vol. i)
VI: Adonis Attis Osiris (vol. ii)
VII: Spirts of the Corn and of the Wild (vol. i)
VIII: Spirts of the Corn and of the Wild (vol. ii)
IX: The Scapegoat
X: Balder the Beautiful (vol. i)
XI: Balder the Beautiful (vol. ii)
XII: Bibliography and general index

Even for those who do not have access to the complete work, these may give some idea of its scope, and by comparison with the 1922 abridgement may furnish an idea of just what was left out (*why*, is another matter entirely…).

Where appendices and notes appear at the end of the first volume of a two-volume part, references to them have been moved to the end of the contents list for the part as a whole.

Following the table of contents are the prefaces to the seven parts into which the third edition was originally divided (that from the index volume is omitted). That for Part I is a general preface to the entire work, and as such is preceded by the prefaces to the first and second editions of *The Golden Bough*. Similarly, the prefaces to all three editions of Part IV, *Adonis Attis Osiris* are included.

[1] This "note" was part of the main text in the second edition, where it was the last thing before the general conclusion of the third section, "Killing the God" (which became parts III-VI in the third edition). — T.S.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF *THE GOLDEN BOUGH*.

FOR some time I have been preparing a general work on primitive superstition and religion. Among the problems which had attracted my attention was the hitherto unexplained rule of the Arician priesthood; and last spring it happened that in the course of my reading I cam across some facts which, combined with others I had noted before, suggested an explanation of the rule in question. As the explanation, if correct, promised to throw light on some obscure features of primitive religion, I resolved to develop it fully, and, detatching it from my general work, to issue it as a separate study. This book is the result.

Now that the theory, which necessarily presented itself to me at first in outline, has been worked out in detail, I cannot but feel that in some places I may have pushed it too far. If this should prove to be the case, I will readily acknowledge and retract my error as soon as it is brought home to me. Meantime my essay may serve its purpose as a first attempt to solve a difficult problem, and to bring a variety of scattered facts into some sort of order and system.

A justification is perhaps needed of the length at which I have dwelt upon the popular festivals of European peasants in spring, at midsummer, and at harvest. It can hardly be too often repeated, since it is not yet generally recognised, that in spite of their fragmentary character the popular superstitions and customs of the peasantry are by far the fullest and most trustworthy evidence we possess as to the primitive religion of the Aryans. Indeed the primitve Aryan, in all that regards his mental fibre and texture, is not extinct. He is amongst us to this day. The great intellectual and moral forces which have revolutionised the educated world have scarcely affected the peasant. In his inmost beliefs he is what his forefathers were in the days when forest trees still grew and squirrels played on the ground where Rome and London now stand.

Hence every enquiry into the primitive religion of the Aryans should either start from the superstitious beliefs and observances of the peasantry, or should at least be constantly checked and controlled by reference to them. Compared with the evidence afforded by living tradition, the testimony of ancient books on the subject of early religion is worth very little. For literature accelerates the advance of thought at a rate which leaves the slow progress of opinion by word of mouth at an immeasurable distance behind. Two or three generations of literature may do more to change thought than two or three thousand years of traditional life. But the mass of the people who do not read books remain unaffected by the mental revolution wrought by literature; and so it has come about that in Europe at the present day the superstitious beliefs and practices

which have been handed down by word of mouth are generally of a far more archaic type than the religion depicted in the most ancient literature of the Aryan race.

It is on these grounds that, in discussing the meaning and origin of an ancient Italian priesthood, I have devoted so much attention to the popular customs and superstitions of modern Europe. In this part of my subject I have made great use of the works of the late W. Mannhardt, without which, indeed, my book could scarcely have been written. Fully recognising the truth of the principles which I have imperfectly stated, Mannhardt set himself systematically to collect, compare, and explain the living superstitions of the peasantry. Of this wide field the special department which he marked out for himself was the religion of the woodman and the farmer, in other words, the superstitious beliefs and rites connected with trees and cultivated plants. By oral enquiry, and by printed questions scattered broadcast over Europe, as well as by ransacking the literature of folk-lore, he collected a mass of evidence, part of which he published in a series of admirable works. But his health, always feeble, broke down before he could complete the comprehensive and really vast scheme which he had planned, and at his too early death much of his precious materials remained unpublished. His manuscripts are now deposited in the University Library at Berlin, and in the interest of the study to which he devoted his life it is greatly to be desired that they should be examined, and that such portions of them as he has not utilised in his books should be given to the world.

Of his published works the most important are, first, two tracts, *Roggenwolf und Roggenhund*, Danzig, 1865 (second edition, Danzig, 1866), and *Die Korndämonen*, Berlin, 1868. These little works were put forward by him tentatively, in the hope of exciting interest in his enquiries and thereby securing the help of others in pursuing them. But, except from a few learned societies, they met with very little attention. Undeterred by the cold reception accorded to his efforts he worked steadily on, and in 1875 published his chief work, *Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme*. This was followed in 1877 by *Antike Wald- und Feldkutle*. His *Mythologische Forschungen*, a posthumous work, appeared in 1884.

Much as I owe to Mannhardt, I owe still more to my friend Professor W. Robertson Smith. My interest in the early history of society was first excited by the works of Dr. E. B. Tylor, which opened up a mental vista undreamed of before me. But it is a long step from a lively interest in a subject to a systematic study of it; and that I took this step is due to the influence of my friend W. Roberston Smith. The debt which I owe to the vast stores of his knowledge, the abundance and fertility of his ideas, and his unwearied kindness, can scarcely be overestimated. Those who know his writings may form some, though a very inadequate, conception of the extent to which I have been influenced by him. The views of sacrifice set forth in his article "Sacrifice" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and further developed in his recent work, *The Religion of the*

Semites, mark a new departure in the historical study of religion, and ample traces of them will be found in this book. Indeed the central idea of my essay—the conception of the slain god—is derived directly, I believe, from my friend. But it is due to him to add that he is in no way responsible for the general explanation which I have offered of the custom of slaying the god. He has read the greater part of the proofs in circumstances which enhanced the kindness, and has made many valuable suggestions which I have usually adopted; but except where he is cited by name, or where the views expressed coincide with those of his published works, he is not to be regarded as necessarily assenting to any of the theories propounded in this book.

The works of Professor G. A. Wilken of Leyden have been of great service in directing me to the best original authorities on the Dutch East Indies, a very important field to the ethnologist. To the courtesy of the Rev. Walter Gregor, M.A., of Pitsligo, I am indebted for some interesting communications which will be found acknowledged in their proper places. Mr. Francis Darwin has kindly allowed be to consult him on some botanical quesitons. The manuscript authorities to which I occasionally refer are answers to a list of ethnological questions which I am circulating. Most of them will, I hope, be published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*.

The drawing of the Golden Bough which adorns the cover is from the pencil of my friend Professor J. H. Middleton. The constant interest and sympathy which he has shewn in the progress of the book have been a great help and encouragement to me in writing it.

The Index has been compiled by Mr. A. Rogers, of the University Library, Cambridge.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
8th March, 1890.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF *THE GOLDEN BOUGH*.

THE kind reception afforded by critics and the public to the first edition of *The Golden Bough* has encouraged me to spare no pains to render the new one more worthy of their approbation. While th eoriginal book remains almost entire, it has been greatly expanded by the insertion of much fresh illustrative matter, drawn chiefly from further reading, but in part also from previous collections which I had made, and still hope to use, for another work. Friends and correspondents, some of them personally unknown to me, have kindly aided me in various ways, especially be indicating facts or sources which I had overlooked and by correcting mistakes into which I had fallen. I thank them all for their help, ofwhich I have often availed myself. Their contributions will be found acknowledged in their proper places. But I owe a special acknowledgement to my friends the Rev. Lomrimer Fison and the Rev. John Roscoe, who have sent me valuble notes on the Fijian and Waganda customs respectively. Most of Mr. Fison's notes, I believe, are incorportated in my book. Of Mr. Roscoe's only a small selection has been given; the whole series, embracing a general account of the customs and beliefs of the Waganda, will be published, I hope, in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*. Further, I ought to add that Miss Mary E. B. Howitt has kindly allowed me to make some extracts from a work by her on Australian folklore and legends which I was privileged to read in manuscript.

I see no reason to withdraw the explanation of the priesthood of Aricia which forms the central theme of my book. On the contrary, the probability of that explanation appears to me to be greatly strengthened by some important evidence which has come to light since my theory was put forward. Readers of the first edition may remember that I explained the priest as Aricia—the King of the Wood—as an embodiment of a tree-spirit, and inferred from a variety of considerations that at an earlier period one of these priests had probably been slain every year in his character of an incarnate deity. But for an undoubted parallel to such a custom of killing a human god annually I had to go as far as ancient Mexico. Now from the *Martyrdom of St. Dasius*, unearthed and published a few years ago by Professor Franz Cumont of Ghent (*Analecta Bollandiana*, xvi. 1897), it is practically certain that in ancient Italy a human representative of Saturn—the old god of the seed—was put to death every year at the festival of the Saturnalia, and that though in Rome itself the custom had probably fallen into disuse before the classical era, it still lingered on in remote places down at least to the fourth century after Christ. I cannot but regard this discovery as a confirmation, as welcome as it was unlooked for, of the theory of the Arician priesthood which I had been led independently to propound.

Further, the general interpretation which, following W. Mannhardt, I had given of the ceremonies observed by our European peasanry in spring, at midsummer, and at harvest, has also been corroborated by fresh and striking analogies. If we are right, these ceremonies were originally magical rites designed to cause plants to grow, cattle to thrive, rain to fall, and the sun to shine. Now the remarkable researches of Professor Baldwin Spencer and Mr. F. J. Gillen among the native tribes of Central Australia have proved that these savages regularly perform magical ceremonies for the express purpose of bringing down rain and multiplying the plants and animals on which they subsist, and further that these ceremonies are most commonly observed at the approach of the rainy season, which in Central Australia answers to our spring. Here then, at the other side of the world, we find an exact counterpart of those spring and midsummer rites which our rude forefathers in Europe probably performed with a full consciousness of their meaing, and which many of their descendants still keep up, though the original intention of the rites has been to a great extent, but by no means altogether, forgotten. The harvest customs of our European peasantry have naturally no close analogy among the practices of the Australian aborigines, since these savages do not till the ground. But what we should look for in vain among the Australians we find to hand among the Malays. For recent enquiries, notably those of Mr. J. L. van der Toorn in Sumatra and of Mr. W. W. Skeat in the Malay Peninsula, have supplied us with close parallels to the harvest customs of Europe, as these latter were interpreted by the genius of Mannhardt. Occupying a lower plane of culture than ourselves, the Malay have retained a keen sense of the significance of rites which in Europe have sunk to the level of more or less meaningless survivals.

Thus on the whole I cannot but think that the course of subsequent investigation has tended to confirm the general principles followed and the particular conclusions reached in this book. At the same time I am as sensible as ever of the hypothetical nature of much that is advanced in it. It has been my wish and intention to draw as sharply as possible the line of demarcation between my facts and the hypotheses by which I have attempted to colligate them. Hypotheses are necessary but often temporary bridges built to connect isolated facts. If my light bridges should sooner or later breaked down or be superseded by more solid structures, I hope that my book may still have its utility and its interst as a repertory of facts.

But while my views, tentative and provisional as they probably are, thus remain much what they were, there is one subject on which they have undergone a certain amount of change, unless indeed it might be more exact to say that I seem to see clearly now what before was hazy. When I first wrote this book I failed, perhaps inexcusably, to define even to myself my notion of religion, and hence was disposed to class magic loosely under it as one of its lower forms. I have now sort to remedy this defect by framing as clear a definition of religion as the difficult nature of the subject and my apprehension

of it allowed. Hence I have come to agree with Sir A. C. Lyall and Mr. F. B. Jevons in recognising a fundamental distinction and even opposition of principle between magic and religion. More than that, I believe that in the evolution of thought, magic, as representing a lower intellectual stratum, has probably everywhere preceded religion. I do not claim any originality for the latter view. It has been already plainly suggested, if not definitely formulated, by Professor H. Oldenberg in his able book *Die Religion des Veda*, and for aught I know it may have been explicitly stated by many others before and since him. I have not collected the opinions of the learned on the subject, but have striven to form my own directly from the facts. And the facts which bespeak the priority of magic over religion are many and weighty. Some of them the reader will find stated in the following pages; but the full force of the evidence can only be appreciated by those who have made a long and patient study of primitive superstition. I venture to think that those who submit to this drudgery will come more and more to the opinion I have indicated. That all my readers should agree either with my definition of religion, or with the inferences I have drawn from it is not to be expected. But I would ask those who dissent from my conclusions to make sure that they mean the same thing by religion that I do; for otherwise the difference between us may be more apparent than real.

As the scope and purpose of my book have bene seriously misconceived by some courteous critics, I desire to repeat in more explicit language, what I vainly thought I had made quite clear in my original preface, that this is not a general treatise on primitive superstitions, but merely the investigation of one particular and narrowly limited problem, to wit, the rule of the Arician priesthood, and that accordingly only such general principles are explained and illustrated in the course of it as seemed to me to throw light on that special problem. If I have said little or nothing of other principles of equal or even greater importance, it is assuredly not because I undervalue them in comparison with those which I have expounded at some length, but simply because it appeared to me that they did not directly bear on the question I had set myself to answer. No one can well be more sensible than I am of the immense variety and complexity of the forces which have gone towards the building up of religion; no one can recognise more frankly the futility and inherent absurdity of any attempt to explain the whole vast organism as the product of any one simple factor. If I have hitherto touched, as I am quite aware, only the fringe of a great subject—fingered only a few of the countless threads that compose the mighty web—it is merely because neither my time nor my knowledge has hitherto allowed me to do more. Should I live to complete the works for which I have collected and am collecting materials, I dare to think that they will clear me of treating the early history of religion from a single narrow point of view. But the future is necessarily uncertain, and at the best many years must elapse before I can execute in full the plan which I have traced out for myself. Meanwhile I am unwilling by keeping silence to leave some of my readers under the impression

that my outlook on so large a subject does not reach beyond the bounds of the present enquiry. This is my reason for noticing the misconceptions to which I have referred.[2] I take leave to add that some part of my larger plan would probably have been completed before now, were it not that out of the ten years which have passed since this book was first published nearly eight have been spent by me in work of a different kind.

There is a misunderstanding of another sort which I feel constrained to set right. But I do so with great reluctance, because it compels me to express a measure of dissent from the revered friend and master to whom I am under the deepest obligations, and who has passed beyond the reach of controversy. In an elaborate and learned essay on sacrifice (*L'Année Sociologique*, Deuxième Année, 1897-1898), Messr. H. Humbert and M. Mauss have represented my theory of the slain god as intended to supplement and complete Robertson Smith's theory of the derivation of animal sacrifice in general from a totem sacrament. On this I have to say that the two theories are quite independent of each other. I never assented to my friend's theory, and so far as I can remember he never gave a hint that he assented to mine. My reason for suspending my judgement in regard to his theory was a simple one. At the time when the theory was propounded, and for many years afterwards, I knew of no single indubitable case of a totem sacrament, that is, of a custom of killing and eating the totem animal as a solemn rite. It is true that in my *Totemism*, and again in the present work, I noted a few cases (four in all) of solemnly killing a sacred animal, which, following Robertson Smith, I regarded as probably a totem. But none even of those four cases included the eating of the sacred animal by the worshippers, which was an essential part of my friend's theory, and in regard to all of them it was not positively known that the slain animal was a totem. Hence as time went on and still no certain case of a tomem sacrament was

[2] Compare the following remarks in the preface to the 1922 abridgement: "…in committing the book in its new form to the judgment of the public I desire to guard against a misapprehension of its scope which appears to be still rife, though I have sought to correct it before now. If in the present work I have dwelt at some length on the worship of trees, it is not, I trust, because I exaggerate its importance in the history of religion, still less because I would deduce from it a whole system of mythology; it is simply because I could not ignore the subject in attempting to explain the significance of a priest who bore the title of King of the Wood, and one of whose titles to office was the plucking of a bough—the Golden Bough—from a tree in the sacred grove. But I am so far from regarding the reverence for trees as of supreme importance for the evolution of religion that I consider it to have been altogether subordinate to other factors, and in particular to the fear of the human dead, which, on the whole, I believe to have been probably the most powerful force in the making of primitive religion. I hope that after this explicit disclaimer I shall no longer be taxed with embracing a system of mythology which I look upon not merely as false but as preposterous and absurd. But I am too familiar with the hydra of error to expect that by lopping off one of the monster's heads I can prevent another, or even the same, from sprouting again. I can only trust to the candour and intelligence of my readers to rectify this serious misconception of my views by a comparison with my own express declaration." — T.S.

reported, I became more and more doubtful of the existence of such a practice at all, and my doubts had almost hardened into incredulity when the long-looked-for rite was discovered by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen in full force among the aborigines of Central Australia, whom I for one must consider to be the most primitive totem tribes as yet known to us. This discovery I welcomed as a very striking proof of the sagacity of my briliant friend, whose rapid genius had outstripped our slower methods and anticipated what it was reserved for subsequent research positively to ascertain. Thus from being little more than an ingeneous hypothesis the totem sacrament has become, at least in my opinion, a well-authenticated fact. But from the practice of the rite by a single set of tribes it is still a long step to the universal practice of it by all totem tribes, and from that again it is a still longer stride to the deduction therefrom of animal sacrifice in general. These two steps I am not yet prepared to take. No one will welcome further evidence of the wide prevalence of a totem sacrament more warmly than I shall, but until it is forthcoming I shall continue to agree with Professor E. B. Tylor that it is unsafe to make the custom the base of far-reaching speculations.

To conclude this subject, I will add that the doctrine of the universality of totemism, which Messrs. Hubert and Mauss have implicitly attributed to me, is one which I have never enunciated or assumed, and that, so far as my knowledge and opinion go, the worship of trees and cereals, which occupies so large a space in these volumes, is neither identical with totemism nor derived from a system of totemism. It is possible that further enquiry may lead me to regard as probably the universality of totemism and the derivation from it of sacrifice and of the whole worship both of plants and animals. I hold myself ready to follow the evidence wherever it may lead; but in the present state of our knowledge I consider that to accept these conclusions would be, not to follow the evidence, but very seriously to outrun it. In thinking so I am happy to be at one with Messrs. Hubert and Mauss.

When I am on this theme I may as well say that I am by no means prepared to stand by everything in my little apprentice work, *Totemism*. That book was a rough piece of pioneering in a field that, till then, had been but little explored,and some inferences in it were almost certainly too hasty. In particular there was a tendency, perhaps not unnatural in the circumstances, to treat as totems, or as connected with totemism, things which probably were neither the one nor the other. If I ever republished the volumes, as I hope one day to do, I shall have to retrench it in some directions as well as to enlarge it in others.

Such as it is, with all its limitations, which I have tried to indicate clearly, and with all its defects, which I leave to the critics to discover, I offer my book in its new form as a contribution to that still youthful science which seeks to trace the growth of human thought and institutions in those dark ages which lie beyond the range of history. The progress of that science must needs be slow and painful, for the evidence, though clear and abundant on some sides, is lamentably obscure and scanty on others, so that the cautious enquirer is every

now and then brought up sharp on the edge of some yawning chasm across which he may be quite unable to find a way. All he can do in such a case is to mark the pitfull plainly on his chart and hope that others in time may be able to fill it up or bridge it over. Yet the very difficulty and novelty of the investigations, coupled with the extent of the intellectual prospect which suddenly opens up before us whenever the mist rises and unfolds the far horizon, constitute no small part of its charm. The position of the anthropologist of to-day resembles in some sort the position of classical scholars at the revivial of learning. To these men the rediscovery of ancient literature came like a revalation, disclosing to their wondering eyes a splendid vision of the antique world, such as the cloistered student of the Middle Ages never dreamed of under the gloomy shadow of the minster and within the sound of its solemn bells. To us moderns a still wider vista is vouchsafed, a greater panorama is unrolled by the study which aims at bringing home to us the faith and the practice, the hopes and the ideals, not of two highly gifted races only, but of all mankind, and thus at enabling us to follow the long march, the slow and toilsome ascent, of humanity from savagery to civilisation. And as the scholar of the Renaissance found not merely fresh food for thought but a new field of labour in the dusty and faded manuscripts of Greece and Rome, so in the mass of materials that is steadily pouring in from many sides—from buried cities of remotest antiquity as well as from the rudest savages of the desert and jungle—we of to-day must recognise a new province of knowledge which will task the energies of generations of students to master. The study is still in its rudiments, and what we do now will have to be done over again and done better, with fuller knowledge and deeper insight, by those who come after us. To recur to a metaphor which I have already made us of, we of this age are only pioneers hewing lanes and clearings in the forest where others will hereafter sow and reap.

But the comparative study of the beliefs and institutions of manking is fitted to be much more than a means of satisfying an enlightened curiosity and of furnishing materials for the researches of the learned. Well handled, it may become a powerful instrument to expedite progress if it lays bare certain weak spots in the foundations on which modern society is built—if it shews that much which we are wont to regard as solid rests on the sands of superstition rather than on the rock of nature. It is indeed a melancholy and in some respects thankless task to strike at the foundations of beliefs in which, as a strong tower, the hopes and aspirations of humanity through long ages have sought a refuge from the storm and stress of life. Yet sooner or later it is inevitable that the battery of the comparative method should breach these venerable walls, mantled over with the ivy and mosses and wild flowers of a thousand tender and sacred associations. At present we are only dragging the guns into position: they have hardly yet begun to speak. The task of building up into fairer and more enduring forms the old structures so rudely shattered is reserved for other hands,

perhaps for other and happier ages. We cannot foresee, we can hardly even guess, the new forms into which thought and society will run in the future. Yet this uncertainty ought not to induce us, from any consideration of expediency or regard for antiquity, to spare the ancient moulds, however beautiful, when these are proved to be out-worn. Whatever comes of it, wherever it leads us, we must follow truth alone. It is our only guiding star: *hoc signo vinces*.

To a passage in my book it has been objected by a distinguished scholar that the church-bells of rome cannot be heard, even in the stillest weather, on the shores of the Lake of Nemi. In acknowledging my blunder and leaving it uncorrected, may I plead in extenuation of my obduraacy the example of an illustrious writer? In *Old Mortality* we read how a hunted Covenanter, fleeing before Claverhouse's dragoons, hears the sullen boom of the pursuing cavalry borne to him on the night wind. When Scott was taken to task for this description, because the drums are not beaten by cavalry at night, he replied to the effect that he liked to hear the drums sounding there, and that he would let them sound on so long as his book might last. In the same spirit I make bold to say that by the Lake of Nemi I love to hear, if it be only in imagination, the distant chiming of the bells of Rome, and I would fain believe that their airy music may ring in the early of my readers after it has ceased to vibrate in my own.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE,
18*th Septber*, 1900.

[GENERAL PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION]

WHEN I originally conceived the idea of the work, of which the first part is now laid before the public in a third and enlarged edition, my intention merely was to explain the strange rule of succession of the the priesthood or sacred kingship of Nemi and with it the legend of the Golden Bough, immortalised by Virgil, which the voice of antiquity associated with the priesthood. The explanation was suggested to me by some similar rules formerly imposed on kings in Southern India, and at first I thought that it might be adequately set forth within the compass of a small volume. But I soon found that in attempting to settle one question I had raised many more: wider and wide prospects opened out before me; and thus step by step I was lured on into far-spreading fields of primitive thought which had been but little explored by my predecessors. Thus the book grew on my hands, and soon the projected essay became in fact a ponderous treatise, or rather a series of separate disserations loosely linked together by a slender threat of connexion with my original subject. With each successive edition these dissertations have grown in number and swollen in bulk by the accretion of fresh materials, till the thread on which they are strung at last threatened to snap under their weight. Accordingly, following the hint of a friendly critic, I decided to resolve my overgrown book into its elements, and to publish separately the various disquisitions of which it is composed. The present volumes, forming the first part of the whole, contain a preliminary enquiry into the principles of Maigc and the evolution of the Sacred Kingship in general. They will be followed shortly by a volume which discusses the principles of Taboo in their special application to sacred or priestly kings. The remainder of the work will be mainly devoted to the myth and ritual of the Dying God, and as the subject is large and fruitful, my discussion of this will, for the sake of convenience, be divided into several parts, of which one, dealing with some dying gods of antiquity in Egypt and Western Asia, has already been published under the title of *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*.

But while I have thus sought to dispose my book in its proper form as a collection of essays on a variety of distinct, though related, topics, I have at the same time preserved the unity, as far as possible, by retaining the original title for the whole series of volumes, and by pointing out from time to time the bearing of my general conclusions on the particular problem which furnished the starting-point of the enquiry. It seemed to me that this mode of presenting the subject offered some advantages which outweighed certain obvious drawbacks. By discarding the austere form, without, I hope, sacrificing the solid substance, of a scientific treatise, I thought to cast my materials into a more artistic mould and so perhaps to attract readers, who might have been repelled by a more strictly logical and systematic arrangement of the facts.

Thus I put the mysterious priest of Nemi, so to say, in the forefront of the picture, grouping the other sombre figures of the same sort behind him in the background, not certainly because I deemed themof less moment, but because the picturesque natural surroundings of the priest of Nemi among the wooded hills of Italy, the very mystery which enshrouds him, and not least the haunting magic of Virgil's verse, all combine to shed a glamour on the tragic figure with the Golden Bough, which fits him to stand as the centre of a gloomy canvas. But I trust that the high relief into which he has thus been thrown in my pages will not lead my readers to overrate his historical importance by comparison with that of some other figures which stand behind him in the shadow, or to attribute to my theory of the part he played a greater degree of probability than it deserves. Even if it should appear that this ancient Italian priest must after all be struck out from the long roll of men who have masqueraded as gods, the single omission would not sensibly invalidate the demonstration, which I believe I have given, that human pretenders to divinity have been far common and their credulous worshippers far more numerous than had been hitherto suspected. Similarly, should be whole theory of this particular priesthood collapse—and I fully acknowledge the slenderness of the foundations on which it rests—its fall would hardly shake my general conclusions as to the evolution of primitve religion and society, which are founded on large collections of entirely independent and well-authenticated facts.

Friends versed in German philosophy have pointed out to me that my views of magic and religion and their relations to each other in history agree to some extent with those of Hegel. The agreement is quite independent and to me unexpected, for I have never studied the philosopher's writings nor attended to his speculations. As, however, we have arrived at similar results by very different roads, the partial coincidence of our conclusions may perhaps be taken to furnish a certain presumption in favour of their truth. To enable my readers to jduge of the extent of the coincidence, I have given in an appendix some extracts from Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of religion. The curious may compare them with my chapter on Magic and Religion, which was written in ignorance of the views of my illustrious predecessor.

With regard to the history of the sacred kingship which I have outlined in these volumes, I desire to repeat a warning which I have given in the text. While I have shewn reason to think that in many communities sacred kings have been developed out of magicians, I am far from supposing that this has been universally true. The causes which have determined the establishment of monarchy have no doubt varied greatly in different countries and at different times: I make no pretence to discuss or even enumerate them all: I have merely selected one particular cause because it bore directly on my special enquiry; and I have laid emphasis on it because it seems to have been overlooked by writers on the origin of political institutions, who, themselves sober and rational according to modern standards, have not reckoned with the enormous influence

which superstition has exerted in shaping the human past. But I have no wish to exaggerate the importance of this particular cause at the expense of others which may have been equally or even more influential. No one can be more sensible than I am of the risk of stretching an hypothesis too far, of crowding a multitude of incongruous particulars under one narrow formula, of renouncing the vast, nay inconceivable complexity of nature and history to a delusive appearance of theoretical simplicity. It may well be that I have erred in this direction again and again; but at least I have been well aware of the danger of error and have striven to guard myself and my readers against it. How far I have succeeded in that and the other objects I have set before me in writing this work, I must leave to the candour of the public to determine.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE,
5th December, 1910.

[PREFACE TO PART II]

THE term Taboo is one of the very few words which the English language has borrowed from the speech of savages. In the Polynesian tongue, from which we have adopted it, the word denotes a remarkable system which has deeply influenced the religious, social, and political life of the Oceanic islanders, both Polynesians and Melanesians, particularly by inculating a superstitious veneration for the persons of nobles and the rights of private property. When about the year 1886 my ever-lamented friend William Robertson Smith asked by to write an article on Taboo for the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannia*, I shared what I believe to have been at the time the current view of anthropologists, that the institution in question was confined to the brown and black races of the Pacific. But an attentive study of the accounts given of Taboo by observers who wrote while it still flourished in Polynesia soon led me to question that view. The analogies which the system presents to the superstitions, not only of savages everywhere, but of the civilised races of antiquity, were too numerous and too striking to be overlooked; and I came to the conclusion that Taboo is only one of a number of similar systems of superstition which among many, perhaps among all races of men have contributed in large measure, under many different names and with many variations of detail, to build up the complex fabric of society in all the various sides or elements of it which we describe as religious, social, political, moral and economic. This conclusion I briefly indicated in my article. My general views on the subject were accepted by my friend Robertson Smith and applied by him in his celebrated *Lectures* to the elucidation of some aspects of Semitic religion. Since then the importance of Taboo and of systems like it in the evolution of religion and morality, of government and property, has been generally recognised and has indeed become a commonplace of anthropology.

The present volume is merely an expansion of the corresponding chapter in the first edition of *The Golden Bough*. It treats of the principles of taboo in their special application to sacred personages, such as kings and priests, who are the proper theme of the book. It does not profess to handle the subject as a whole, to pursue it into all its ramifications, to trace the manifold influences which systems of this sort have exerted in moulding the multitudinous forms of human society. A treatise which should adequately discuss these topics would far exceed the limits which I have prescribed for myself in *The Golden Bough*. For example, I have barely touched in passing on the part which these superstitions have played in shaping the moral ideas and directing the moral practices of mankind, a profound subject fraught perhaps with momentous issues for the time when men shall seriously set themselves to revise their ethical code in the light of its origin. For that the ethical like the legal code of a people stands in

need of constant revision will hardly be disputed by any attentive and dispassionate observer. The old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable. The moral world is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change, of perpetual flux. Contemplate the diversities, the inconsistencies, the contradictions of the ethical ideas and the ethical practice, not merely of different peoples in different countries, but of the same people in the same country in different ages, then say whether the foundations of morality are eternally fixed and unchanging. If they seem so to us, as they have probably seemed to men in all ages who did not extend their views beyond the narrow limits of their time and country, it is in all likelihood merely because the rate of change is commonly so slow that it is imperceptible at any moment and can only be detected by a comparison of accurate observations extending over long periods of time. Such a comparison, could be make it, would probably convince us that if we speak of the moral law as immutable and eternal, it can only be in the relative or figurative sense in which we apply the same words to the outlines of the great mountains, by comparison with the short-lived generations of men. The mountains, too, are passing away, though we do not see it; nothing is stable and abiding under the sun. We can as little arrest the process of moral evolution as we can stay the sweep of the tides or the courses of the stars.

Therefore, whether we like it or not, the moral code by which we regulate our conduct is being constantly revised and altered: old rules are being silently expunged and new rules silently inscribed in the palimpset by the busy, the unresting hand of an invisible scribe. For unlike the public and formal revision of a legal code, the revision of the moral code is always private, tacit, and informal. The legislators who make and the judges who administer it are not clad in ermine and scarlet, their edicts are not proclaimed with the blare of trumpets and the pomp of heraldry. We ourselves are the lawgivers and the judges: it is the whole people who make and alter the ethical standard and judge every case by reference to it. We sit in the highest court of appeal, judging offenders daily, and we cannot if we would rid ourselves of the responsibility. All that we can do is to take as clear and comprehensive a view as possible of the evidence, lest from too narrow and partial a view we should do injustice, perhaps gross and irreparable injustice, to the prisoners at the bar. Few things, perhaps, can better guard us from narrowness and illiberality in our moral judgements than a survey of the amazing diversities of ethical theory and practice which have been recoreded among the various races of mankind in different ages; and accordingly the Comparative Method applied to the study of moral phenomena may be expected to do for morality what the same method applied to religious phenomena is now doing for religion, by enlarging our mental horizon, extending the boundaries of knowledge, throwing light on the origin of current beliefs and practices, and thereby directly assisting us to replace what is effect by what is vigorous, and what is false by what is true.

The facts which I have put together in this volume as well as in some of my other writings may perhaps serve as materials for a future science of Comparative Ethics. They are rough stones which await the master-builder, rude sketches which more cunning hands than mine may hereafter work up into a finished picture.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE,
1*st February*, 1911.

[PREFACE TO PART III]

WITH this third part of *The Golden Bough* we take up the question, Why had the King of the Wood at Nemi regularly to perish by the hand of his successor? In the first part of the work I gave some reasons for thinking that the priest of Diana, who bore the title of King of the Wood beside the still lake among the Alban Hills, personated the great god Jupiter or his duplicate Dianus, the deity of the oak, the thunder, and the sky. On this theory, accordingly, we are at once confronted with the wider and deeper quesiton, Why put a man-god or human representative of deity to a violent death? Why extinguish the divine light in its earthly vessel instead of husbanding it to its natural close? My general answer to that question is contained in the present volume. If I am right, the motive for slaying a man-god is a fear lest with the enfeeblement of his body in sickness or old age his sacred spirit should suffer a corresponding decay, which might imperil the general course of nature and with it the existence of his worshippers, who believe the cosmic energies to by mysteriously knit up with those of their human divinity. Hence, if there is any measure of truth in this theory, the practice of putting divine men and particularly divine kings to death, which seems to have been common at a particular stage in the evolution of society and religion, was a crude but pathetic attempt to disengage an immortal spirit from its mortal envelope, to arrest the forces of decomposition in its nature be retrenching with ruthless hand the first ominous symptoms of decay. We may smile if we please at the vanity of these and the like efforts to stay the inevitable decline, to bring the relentless revolution of the great wheel to a stand, to keep youth's fleeting roses for ever fresh and fair; but perhaps in spite of every disillusionment, when we contemplate the seemingly endless vistas of knowledge which have been opened up even within our own generation, many of us cherish in our hearts a fancy, if not a hope, that some loophole of escape may after all be discovered from the iron walls of the prison-house which threatens to close on and crush us; that, groping about in the darkness, mankind may yet chance to lay hands on "that golden key that opes the palace of eternity," and so to pass from this world of shadows and sorrow to a world of untroubles light and joy. If this is a dream, it is surely a happy and innocent one, and to those who would wake us from it we may murmer with Michael Angelo,

"*Però non mi destar, deh! parla basso.*"

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE,
11*th June,* 1911.

[PREFACES TO PART IV]
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THESE studies are an expansion of the corresponding sections in my book *The Golden Bough*, and they will form part of the third edition of that work, on the preparation of which I have been engaged for some time. By far the greater proportion of them is new, and they make by themselves a fairly complete and, I hope, intelligible whole. I shall be glad if criticism passed on the essays in their present shape should enable me to correct and improve them when I come to incorporate them in my larger work.

In studying afresh there three Oriental worships, akin to each other in character, I have paid more attention than formerly to the natural features of the countries in which they arose, because I am more than ever persuaded that religion, like all other institutions, has been profoundly influenced by physical environment, and cannot be understood without some appreciation of those aspects of external nature which stamp themselves indelibly on the thoughts, the habits, the whole life of a people. It is a matter of great regret that I have never visited the East, and so cannot describe from personal knowledge the native lands of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. But I have sought to rememdy the defect by comparing the descriptions of eye-witnesses, and painting from them what may be called composite pictures of some of the scenes on which I have been led to touch in the course of this volume. I shall not have wholly failed if I have caught from my authorities, and conveyed to my readers some notion, however dim, of the scenery, the atmosphere, the gorgeous colouring of the East.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
22nd July, 1906.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this second edition some minor corrections have been made and some fresh matter added. Where my views appear to have been misunderstood, I have endeavoured to state them more clearly; where they have been disputed, I have carefully reconsidered the evidence and given my reasons for adhering to my former opinions. Most of the additions thus made to the volume are comprised in a new chapter ("Sacred Men and Woman"), a new section ("Influence of Mother-kin on Religion"), and three new appendicies ("Moloch the King," "The Widowed Flamen," and "Some Customs of the Pelew Islanders"). Among the friends and correspondents who have kindly helped me with information and criticisms of various sorts I wish to thank particularly Mr. W. Crooke, Professor

W. M. Flinders Petries, Mr. G. F. Hill of the British Museum, the Reverend J. Roscoe of the Church Missionary Society, and Mr W. Wyse. Above all, I owe much to my teacher the Reverend Professor R. H. Kennet, who, besides initiatiing me into the charms of the Hebrew language and giving me a clearer insight into the course of Hebrew history, has contributed several valuable suggestions to the book and enhanced the kindness by reading and criticizing some of the proofs.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
22nd September, 1907.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IN revising the book for the third edition I have made use of serval important works which have appeared since the last edition was published. Among these I would name particularly the learned treatise of Count Baudissin on Adonis, of Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge on Osiris, and of my colleague Professor J. Garstang on the civilisation of the Hittites, that still mysterious people, who begin to loom a little more distinctly from the mists of the past. Following the example of Dr. Wallis Budge, I have indicated certain analogies which may be traced between the worship of Osiris and the worship of the dead, especially of dead kings, among the modern tribes of Africa. The conclusion to which these analogies appear to point is that under the mythical pall of the glorified Osiris, the god who died and rose again from the dead, there once lay the body of a dead man. Whether that was so or not, I will not venture to say. The longer I occupy myself with questions of ancient mythology the more diffident I become of success in dealing with them, and I am apt to think that we who spend our years in searching for the solutions of these insoluble problems are like Sisyphus perpetually rolling his stone up hill only see it revolve again into the valley, or like the daughters of Danaus doomed for ever to pour water into broken jars that can hold no water. If we are taxed with wasting life in seeking to know what can never be known, and what, if it could be discovered, would not be worth knowing, what can we plead in our defence? I fear, very little. Such pursuits can hardly be defending on the ground of pure reason. We can only say that something, we know not what, drives us to attack the great enemy Ignorance wherever we see him, and that if we fail, as we probably shall, in our attack on his entrenchments, it may be useless but it is not inglorious to fall in leading a Forlorn Hope.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE,
16*th Janurary*, 1914.

[PREFACE TO PART V]

IN the last part of this work we examined the figure of the Dying and Reviving God as it appears in the Oriental religions of classical antiquity. With the present instalment of *The Golden Bough* we pursue the same theme in other religions and among other races. Passing from the East to Europe we begin with the religion of ancient Greece, which embodies the now familiar conception in two typical examples, the vine-god Dionysus and the corn-goddess Persephone, with her mother and duplicate Demeter. Both of these Greek divnities are personifications of cultivated plants, and a consideration of them naturally leads us on to investigate similar personifications elsewhere. Now of all the plants which men have artificially reared for the sake of food the cereals are on the whole the most important; therefore it is natural that the religion of primitive agricultural communities should be deeply coloured by the principal occupation of their lives, the care of the corn. Hence the frequency with which the figures of the Corn-mother and Corn-maiden, answering to the Demeter and Persephone of ancient Greece, meet us in other parts of the world, and not least of all on the harvest-fields of modern Europe. But edible roots as well as cereals have been cultivated by many races, especially in the tropical regions, as a subsidiary or even as a principal means of subsistence; and accordingly they too enter largely into the religious ideas of the peoples who live by them. Yet in the case of the roots, such as yams, taro, and potatoes, the conception of the Dying and Reviving God appears to figure less prominently than in the case of the cereals, perhaps for the simple reason that while the growth and decay of the one sort of fruit go on above ground for all to see, the similar processes of the other are hidden under ground and therefore strike the popular imagination less forcibly.

Having surveyed the variations of our main them among the agricultural races of mankind, we prosecute the enquiry among savages who remain more or less completely in the hunting, fishing, and pastoral stages of society. The same motive which leads the primitive husbandman to adore the corn or the roots, induces the primitive hunter, fowler, fisher, or herdsman to adore the beasts, birds, or fishes which furnish him with the means of subsistence. To him the conception of the death of these worshipful beings is naturally presented with singular force and distinctness; since it is no figurative or allegorical death, no poetical embroidery thrown over the skeleton, but the real death, the naked skeleton, that constantly thrusts its attention on his imagination. And strange as it may seem to us civilised men, the notion of the immortality and even of the resurrection of the lower animals appears to be almost as familiar to the savage and to be accepted by him with nearly as unwavering a faith as the obvious fact of their death and destruction. For the most part he assumes as a matter of

course that the souls of dead animals survive their decease; hence much of the thought of the savage hunter is devoted to the problem of how he can best appease the naturally incensed ghosts of his victims so as to prevent them from doing him a mischief. This refusal of the savage to recognise in death a final cessation of the vital process, this unquestioning faith in the unbroken continuity of all life, is a fact that has not yet received the attention which it seems to merit from enquirers into the constitution of the human mind as well as into the history of religion. In the following pages I have collected examples of this curious faith; I must leave it to other others to appraise them.

Thus on the whole we are concerned in these volumes with the reverence or worship paid by men to the natural resources from which they draw their nutriment, both vegetable and animal. That they should invest these resources with an atmosphere of wonder and awe, often indeed with a halo of divinity, is no matter for surprise. The circle of human knowledge, illuminated by the pale cold light of reason, is so infintesimally small, the dark regions of human ignorance which lie beyond that luminous ring are so immeasurably vast, that imagination is fain to step up to the border line and send the warm, richly coloured beams of her fairy lantern streaming out into the darkness; and so, peering into the gloom, she is apt to mistake the shadowy reflections of her own figure for real beings moving in the abyss. In short, few men are sensible of the sharp line that divides the known from the unknown; to most men it is a hazy borderland where perception and conception melt indissolubly into one. Hence to the savage the ghosts of dead animals and men, with which his imagination peoples the void, are hardly less real than the solid shapes which the living animals and men present to his senses; and his thoughts and activities are nearly as much absorbed by the one as by the other. Of him it may be said with perhaps even greater truth than that of his civilised brother, “What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!”

But having said so much in this book of the misty glory which the human imagination sheds round the hard material realities of the food supply, I am unwilling to leave my readers under the impression, natural but erroneous, that man has created most of his gods out of his belly. That is not so, at least that is not my reading of the history of religion. Among the visible, tangible, perceptible elements by which he is surrounded—and it is only of these that I presume to speak—there are others than the merely nutritious which have exerted a powerful influence in touching his imagination and stimulating his energies, and so have contributed to build up the complex fabric of religion. To the preservation of the species, the reproductive faculties are no less essential than the nutritive; and with them we enter on a very different sphere of thought and feeling, to wit, the relation of the sexes to each other, with all the depths of tenderness and all the intricate problems which that mysterious relation involves. The study of the various forms, some gross and palpable, some subtle and elusive, in which the sexual instinct has moulded the religious consciousness

of our race, is one of the most interesting, as it is one of the most difficult and delicate tasks, which await the future historian of religion.[3]

But the influence which the sexes exert on each other, intimate and profound as it has been and must always be, is far indeed from exhausting the forces of attraction by which mankind are bound together in society. The need of mutual protection, the economic advantages of co-operation, the contagion of exmaple, the communication of knowledge, the great ideas that radiate from great minds, like shafts of light from high towers,—these and many other things combine to draw men into communities, to drill them into regiments, and to set them marching on the road of progress with a concentrated force to which the loose skirmishers of mere anarchy and individualism can never hope to oppose a permanenet resistence. Hence when we consider how intimately humanity depends on society for many of the boons which it prizes most highly, we shall probably admit that of all the forces open to our observation which have shaped human destiny the influence of man on man is by far the greatest. If that is so, it seems to follow that among the beings, real or imaginary, which the religious imagination has clothed with the attributes of divinity, human spirits are likely to play a more important part than the spirits of plants, animals, or inanimate objects. I believe that a careful examination of the evidence, which has still to be undertaken, will confirm this conclusion; and that if we could strictly interrogate the phantoms which the human mind has conjured up out of the depths of its bottomless ignorance and enshrined as deities in the dim light of temple, we should find that the majority of them have been nothing but the ghosts of dead men. However, to say this is necessarily to anticipate the result of future research; and if in saying it I have ventured to make a prediction, which like all predictions is liable to be falsified by the event, I have done so only from a fear lest, without some such warning, the numerous facts recorded in these volumes might lend themselves to an exaggerated estimate of their own importance and hence to a misinterpretation and distortion of history.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE, *4th May*, 1912.

[3] Presumably Frazer regarded the many studies of this aspect of the history of religion which had been published prior to this point (*Discourse on the Worship of Priapus*, *On the Worship of the Generative Powers*, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, *Rivers of Life*, *Phallicism Celestial and Terrestrial*, *The God Idea of the Ancients*, etc. etc. etc.) as so far beneath his notice as to not even be worth criticising since they were not written by specialist academics. — T.S.

[PREFACE TO PART VI]

WITH *The Scapegoat* our general discussion of the theory and practice of the Dying God is brought to a conclusion. The aspect of the subject with which we are here chiefly concerned is the use of the Dying God as a scapegoat to free his worshippers from the troubles of all sort with which life on earth is beset. I have sought to trace this curious usage to its origin, to decompose the idea of the Divine Scapegoat into the elements out of which it appears to be compounded. If I am right, the idea resolves itself into a simple confusion between the material and the immaterial, between the real possibility of transferring a physical load to other shoulders and the supposed possibility of transferring our bodily and mental ailments to another who will bear them for us. When we survey the history of this pathetic fallcy from its crude inception in savagery to its full development in the speculative theology of civilised nations, we cannot but wonder at the singular power which the human mind possesses of transmuting the leaden dross of superstition into a glittering semblance of gold. Certainly in nothing is this alchemy of thought more conspicuous than in the process which has refined the base and foolish custom of the scapegoat into the sublime conception of a God who dies to take away the sins of the world.

Along with the discussion of the Scapegoat I have included in this volume an account of the remarkable religious ritual of the Aztecs, in which the theory of the Dying God found its most systematic and most tragic expression. There is nothing, so far as I am aware, to shew that the men and women, who in Mexico died cruel deaths in the character of gods and goddesses, were regarded as scapegoats by their worshippers and executioners; the intention of slaying them seems rather to have been to reinforce by a river of human blood the tide of life which might also grow stagnant and stale in the veins of the deities. Hence the Aztec ritual, which prescribed the slaughter, the roasting alive, and the flaying of men and women in order that the gods might remain for ever young and strong, conforms to the general theory of deicide which I have offered in this work. On that theory death is a portal through which gods and men alike must pass to escape the decrepitude of age and to attain the vigour of eternal youth. The conception may be said to culminate in the Brahmanical doctrine that in the daily sacrifice the body of the Creator is broken anew for the salvation of the world.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE,
21st June, 1913.

[PREFACE TO PART VII]

IN this concluding part of *The Golden Bough* I have discussed the problem which gives its title to the whole work. If I am right, the Golden Bough over which the King of the Wood, Diana's priest at Aricia, kept watch and ward was none other than a branch of mistletoe growing on an oak within the sacred grove; and as the plucking of the bough was a necessary prelude to the slaughter of the priest, I have been led to institute a parallel between the King of the Wood at Nemi and the Norse god Balder, who was worshipped in a sacred grove beside the beautiful Sogne fiord of Norway and was said to have perished by a stroke of mistletoe, which alone of all things on earth or in heaven could wound him. On the theory here suggested both Balder and the King of the Wood personified in a sense the sacred oak of our Aryan forefathers, and both had deposited their lives or souls for safety in the parasite which sometimes, though rarely, is found growing on an oak and by the very rarity of its appearance excites the wonder and stimulates the devotion of ignorant men. Though I am now less than ever disposed to lay weight on the analogy between the Italian priest and the Norse god, I have allowed it to stand because it furnishes me with a pretext for discussing not only the general question of the external soul in popular superstition, but also the fire-festivals of Europe, since fire played a part both in the myth of Balder and in the ritual of the Arician grove. Thus Balder the Beautiful in my hands is little more than a stalking-horse to carry two heavy pack-loads of facts. And what is true of Balder applies equally to the priest of Nemi himself, the nominal hero of the long tragedy of human folly and suffering which has unrolled itself before the readers of these volumes, and on which the curtain is now about to fall. He, too, for all the quaint garb he wears, and the gravity with which he stalks across the stage, is merely a puppet, and it is time to unmask him before laying him up in the box.

To drop metaphor, while nominally investigating a particular problem of ancient mythology, I have really been discussin questions of more general interest which concern the gradual evolution of human thought from savagery to civilization. The enquiry is beset with difficulties of many kinds, for the record of man's mental development is even more imperfect than the record of his phyiscal development, and it is harder to read, not only by reason of the incomparably more subtle and complex nature of the subject, but because the reader's eyes are dimmed by think mists of passion and prejudice, which cloud in a far less degree the fields of comparative anatomy and geology. My contribution to the history of the human mind consists in little more than a rough and purely provisional classification of facts gathered almost entirely from printed sources. If there is one general conclusion which seems to emerge from the mass of particulars, I venture to think that it is the essential similarity

in the working of the less developed human mind among all races, which corresponds to the essential similarity in their bodily frame revealed by comparative anatomy. But while this general mental similarity may, I believe, be taken as established, we must always be on our guard against tracing to it a multitude of particular resemblances which may be and often are due to simple diffusion, since nothing is more certain than that the various races of men have borrowed from each other many of their arts and crafts, their ideas, customs, and institutions. To sift out the elements of culture which a race has independently evolved and to distinguish them accurately from those which it has derived from other races is a task of extreme difficulty and delicacy, which promises to occupy students of man for a long time to come; indeed so complex are the facts and so imperfect in most cases is the historical record that it may be doubted whether in regard to many of the lower races we shall ever arrive at more than probable conjectures.

Since the last edition of *The Golden Bough* was published some thirteen years ago, I have seen reason to change my views on several matters discussed in this concluding part of the work, and though I have called attention to these changes in the text, it may be well for the sake of clearness to recapitulate them here.

In the first place, the arguments of Dr. Edward Westermarck have satisfied me that the solar theory of the European fire-festivals, which I accepted from W. Mannhardt, is very slightly, if at all, supported by the evidence, and is probably erroneous. The true explanation of the festivals I now believe to be the one advocated by Dr. Westermarck himself, namely that they are purificatory in intention, the fire being designed not, as I formerly held, to reinforce the sun's light and heat by sympathetic magic, but merely to burn or repel the noxious things, whether conceived as material or spiritual, which threaten the life of man, of animals, and of plants. This aspect of the fire-festivals had not wholly escaped me in former editions; I pointed it out explicitly, but, biassed perhaps by the great authority of Mannhardt, I treated it as secondary instead of primary and dominant. Out of deference to Mannhardt, for whose work I entertain the highest respect, and because the evidence for the purificatory theory of the fires is perhaps not quite conclusive, I have in this edition repeated and even reinforced the arguments for the solar theory of the festivals, so that the reader may see for himself what can be said on both sides of the quesiton and may draw his own conclusion; but for my part I cannot but think that the arguments for the purificatory theory far outweigh the arguments for the solar theory. Dr. Westermarck based his criticisms largely on his own observation of the Mohammedan fire-festivals of Morocco, which present a remarkable resemblance to those of Christian Europe, though there seems no reason to asusme that herein Africa has borrowed from Europe or Europe from Africa. So far as Europe is concerned, the evidence tends strongly to shew that the grand evil which the festival aimed at combating was witchcraft, and that they

were conceived to attain their end by actually burning the witches, whether visible or invisible, in the flames. If that was so, the wide prevalance and the immense popularity of the fire-festivals provides us with a measure for estimating the extent of the hold which the belief in witchcraft had on the European mind before the rise of Christianity or rather of rationalism; for Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, accepted the old belief and enforced it in the old way by the faggot and the stake. It was not until human reason at last awoke after the long slumber of the Middle Ages that this dreadful obsession gradually passed away like a dark cloud from the intellectual horizon of Europe.

Yet we should deceive ourselves if we imagine that the belief in witchcraft is even now dead in the mass of the people; on the contrary there is ample evidence to shew that it only hibernates under the chilling influence of rationalism, and that it would start into active life if that influence were ever seriously relaxed. The truth seems to be that to this day the peasant remains a pagan and savage at heart; his civilization is merely a thin veneer which the hard knocks of life soon abrade, exposing the solid core of paganism and savagery below. The danger created by a bottomless layer of ignorance and superstition under the crust of civilized society is lessened, not only be the natural torpidity and inertia of the bucolic mind, but also by the progressive decrease of the rural as compared with the urban population in modern states; for I believe it will be found that the artisans who congregate in towns are far less retentive of primitive modes of thought than their rustic brethren. In every age cities have been the centres and as it were the lighthouses from which ideas radiate into the surrounding darkness, kindled by the friction of mind with mind in the crowded haunts of men; and it is natural that at these beacons of intellectual light all should partake in some measure of general illumination. No doubt the mental ferment and unrest of great cities have their dark as well as their bright side; but among the evils to be apprehended from them the chances of a pagan revival need hardly be reckoned.

Another point on which I have changed my mind is the nature of the great Aryan god whom the Romans called Jupiter and the Greeks Zeus. Whereas I formely argued that he was primarily a personification of the oak and only in the second place a personification of the thundering sky, I now invert the order of his divine functions and believe that he was a sky-god before he came to be associated with the oak. In fact, I revert to the traditional view of Jupiter, recant my heresy, and am gathered like a lost sheep into the fold of mythological orthodoxy. The good shepherd who has brought me back is my friend Mr. W. Warde Folwer. He have removed the stone over which I stumbled in the wilderness by explaining in a simple and natural way how a god of the thundering sky might easily come to be afterwards associated with the oak. The explanation turns on the great frequency with which, as statistics prove, the oak is struck by lightning beyond any other tree of the wood in Europe. To our rude forefathers, who dwelt in the gloomy depths of the primæval forest, it might

well seem that the riven and blackened oaks must indeed be favourites of the sky-god, who so often descended on them from the murky cloud in a flash of lightning and a crash of thunder.

This change of view as to the great Aryan god necessarily affects my interpretation of the King of the Wood, the priest of Diana at Aricia, if I may take that discarded puppet out of the box again for a moment. On my theory the priest represented Jupiter in the flesh, and accordingly, if Jupiter was primarily a sky-god, his priest cannot have been a mere incarnation of the sacred oak, but must, like the deity whose commision he bore, have been invested in the imagination of his worshippers with the power of overcasting the heaven with clouds and eliciting storms of thunder and rain from the celestial vault. The attribution of weather-making powers to kindgs and priests is very common in primitive society, and is indeed one of the principal levers by which such personages raise themselves to a position of superiority above their fellows. There is therefore no improbabilitiy in the supposition that as a representative of Jupiter the priest of Diana enjoyed this reputation, though positive evidence of it appears to be lacking.

Lastly, in the present edition I have shewn some grounds for thinking that the Golden Bough itself, or in common parlance the mistletoe on the oak, was supposed to have dropped from the sky upon the tree in a flash of lightning and therefore to contain within itself the seed of celestial fire, a sort of smouldering thunderbolt. This view of the priest and of the bough which he guarded at the peril of his life has the advantage of accounting for the importance which the sanctuary at Nemi acquired and the treasure which it amassed through the offerings of the faithful; for the shrine would seem to have been to ancient what Loreto has been to modern Italty, a place of pilgrimage, where princes and nobles as well as commoners poured wealth into the coffers of Diana in her green recess among the Alban hills, just as in modern times kings and queens vied with each other in enriching the black Virgin who from her Holy House on the hillside at Loreto looks out on the blue Adriatic and the purple Apennines. Such pious prodigality becomes more intelligible if the greatest of the gods was indeed believed to dwell in humans shape with his wife among the woods of Nemi.

These are the principal points on which I have altered my opinion since the last edition of my book was published. The mere admission of such changes may suffice to indicate the doubt and uncertainty which attend enquiries of this nature. The whole fabric of ancient mythology is so foreign to our modern ways of thought, and the evidence concerning it is for the most part so fragmentary, obscure, and conflicting that in our attempts to piece together and interpret it we can hardly hope to reach conclusions that will completely satisfy either ourselves or others. In this as in other branches of study it is the fate of theories to be washed away like children’s castles of sand by the rising tide of knowledge, and I am not so presumptuous as to expect or desire for mine an

exemption from the common lot. I hold them all very lightly and have used them chiefly as convenient pegs on which to hang my collections of facts. For I believe that, while theories are transitory, a record of facts has a permanent value, and that as a chronicle of ancient customs and beliefs my book may retain its utility when my theories are as obsolute as the customs and beliefs themselves deserve to be.

I cannot dismiss without some natural regret a task which has occupied and amused me at intervals for many years. But the regret is tempered by thankfulness and hope. I am thankful that I have been able to conclude at least one chapter of the work I projected a long time ago. I am hopeful that I may not now be taking a final leave of my indulgent readers, but that, as I am sensible of little abatement in my bodily strength and of none in my ardour for study, they will bear with me yet a while if I should attempt to entertain them with fresh subjects of laughter and tears drawn from the comedy and the tragedy of man's endless quest after happiness and truth.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE, 13*th October*, 1913.

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