

The worship of Priapus : an account of the Fête of St. Cosmo and Damiano, celebrated at Isernia in 1780, in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks / by Sir William Hamilton ; to which is added some account of the phallic worship, principally derived from a discourse on the worship of Priapus, by Richard Payne Knight ; edited by Hargrave Jennings.

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OF THE
WORSHIP OF PRIAPUS.

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THE WORSHIP OF PRIAPUS.

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

Fete of St. Cosmo and Damiano

CELEBRATED AT ISERNIA IN 1780.

IN A LETTER TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS, BART.

President of the Royal Society,

BY SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON,

Minister at the Court of Naples.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

Some Account of the Phallic Worship,

PRINCIPALLY DERIVED FROM

A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus,

BY

RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT.

EDITED BY HARGRAVE JENNINGS,

Author of "The Rosicrucians," etc. etc.

London

GEORGE REDWAY

12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

MDCCCLXXXIII.

Handwritten notes in red ink at the top of the page, including the word "Lecture" and other illegible scribbles.

THE WORSHIP OF PRINCEPS

An Account

OF THE

Life of Sir Cosmo and Lady Hamilton

BY SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON

IN A LETTER TO HIS LORDSHIP EARL MARSH

ZFEA



RICHARD PAYNE KENT

Edited by MARGARET JENNINGS

London
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE
15 YORK STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4
WINDMILL



PREFACE.

THE subject of this work is one of the most extraordinary and interesting that has ever occupied the attention of accomplished and resolute enquirers into the earliest myths. The range and purpose of these ancient philosophical persuasions, and the share which the profound thinking, and the exquisitely applied reason, of the old philosophers—exercised in the remote Pagan and Classic times—had in laying the foundations for Christianity, all this is very little reflected upon. Especially is this great truth, this philosophic disregard, observable in the present aggressive and conceited days. It is sufficient to say, that of such an important class is the matter of this book, that it will secure at once, as we confidently rely, the

attention of scholars, and of trained and independent thinkers.

We allude to the Phallic Worship; which, as Mr. Edward Sellon* has demonstrated, formed the ground-work of the religions of all the ancient nations. Unexpected as, in many quarters, may be the statement, Phallicism, in which is included the worship of the twin female emblem, was a stupendous—for that is the proper word to apply to it—system of mystic idolatry, choosing for Gods, the “Visible Forces of Nature.” By this we mean not the worship of the objects themselves (the false charge constantly adduced by the ignorant great, as well as the ignorant little, against nearly all idolaters) but the mystic mythic principles arising to apprehension out of them.

Those religious rites, and that sacred ceremonial which is most life-like, vivid, and appealing, must

* A very clever man—whose life—but particularly whose end—was very unfortunate. He was the modern introducer of this curious subject.

always be essentially distinct and personal; and must therefore be the most religiously successful. True religion is always that of feeling, very rarely that of the mere intellect. Christianity is found in the heart. Jehovah is the "Just" God. Christ is the "Merciful" God. Phallicism in its pure sense, is religion, inasmuch as it is the delight, and the wonderment and worship of the Philosophical (and yet the Natural), MIRACULOUS MEANS by which WE ARE.

This strange religion of the Phallus is closely interwoven, down to this very day, in all the relics of the oldest architecture, and in the abstrusest representation by form, christian as well as heathen. These disguised, sexual, Gnostic ideas are continually presented in the architecture, palatial, as well as templar, in all parts of the two peninsulas of India; as also all over the Mussulman countries. And what is still more remarkable, the farther back we go into the history of every country, the deeper we explore into all religions, ancient as

well as modern, we stumble the more frequently upon the incessantly intensifying distinct traces of this supposedly indecent, mystic worship. Ineradicable traces of this singular, and—as vulgarly apprehended—obscene, but in reality grand and profound religion, rise to recognition, and challenge acceptance philosophically, in the rites, and the ceremonial of all faiths, (more or less successfully disguised), and in the domestic, quaint usages, and superstitious practices of all peoples. Indeed all this visible, interdicted, left-handed method of reading the grand, natural, religious, sexual, universal story is more abounding and persistent (and of course beautiful) in those nations of the highest art-refinement, and of cultivation. Elegance, grandeur, beauty, majesty, go with all these ideas, in reality. That all these subjects, and especially the convictions to be derived out of them, have been rejected with almost alarmed suspicion, and ignored far and wide, cannot arouse any surprise (or evoke displeasure) when we consider the risk accompany-

ing them, and their temptations to the unprepared and unfortified. We must reflect that, in the first instance, they startle us as impossible of belief, and for the second reason to account for the ignoring and the popular putting-away of these Phallic ideas, we must consider that all the orthodox, (and we need not add that this England of ours is a most intensely orthodox country), are afraid.

Nevertheless we dare aver that this book will be found very strange and very interesting. It is committed to the appreciation of the learned and inquisitive, and to their patient consideration and power of receptivity of new and (it may prove at first), of disturbing, though of important and curiously beautiful and exciting ideas.

HARGRAVE JENNINGS,

(Author of "The Rosicrucians," &c.)

ST. JAMES' PALACE,

February, 1883.

regard and their position to the important
and central in the most recent that is the first
instance they stand as an example of belief and
of the second reason to account for the ignorance
and the popular feeling away of those people who
we must remember that all the orthodox, good, we
need not feel that this kind of error is a most
obvious, obvious, obvious, and avoid.

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entirely different and existing ideas.

HAROLD AVE. BIRMINGHAM,
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On the Worship of Priapus,
A LETTER TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS, BART.

Naples, Dec. 30, 1781.

SIR,

HAVING last year made a curious discovery, that in a Province of this Kingdom, and not fifty miles from its Capital, a sort of devotion is still paid to PRIAPUS, the obscene Divinity of the Ancients (though under another denomination), I thought it a circumstance worth recording; particularly, as it offers a fresh proof of the similitude of the Popish and Pagan Religion, so well observed by Doctor MIDDLETON, in his celebrated letter from Rome: and therefore I mean to deposit the authentic proofs* of this assertion in the BRITISH MUSEUM, when a proper opportunity shall offer. In the meantime I send you the following account, which, I flatter myself, will amuse you for the present, and may in future serve to illustrate these proofs.

I had long ago discovered, that the women and children of the lower class, at NAPLES, and in its

* A specimen of each of the *Ex-voti* of wax, with the original letter from Isernia, which may be seen in the British Museum.

neighbourhood, frequently wore, as an ornament of dress, sort of Amulets, (which they imagine to be a preservative from the *mal occhii*, evil eyes, or enchantment) exactly similar to those which were worn by the ancient inhabitants of this country for the very same purpose, as likewise for their supposed invigorating influence; and all of which have evidently a relation to the Cult of PRIAPUS. Struck with this conformity in modern and ancient superstition, I made a collection of both the ancient and modern Amulets of this sort, and placed them together in the BRITISH MUSEUM, where they remain. The modern Amulet most in vogue, represents a hand clenched, with the point of the thumb thrust betwixt the index and middle finger,* the next is a shell; and the third is a half-moon. These Amulets (except the shell, which is usually worn in its natural state) are most commonly made of silver, but sometimes of ivory, coral, amber, crystal, or some curious gem or pebble. We have a proof of the hand above described having a connexion with PRIAPUS, in a most elegant small idol of bronze of that Divinity, now in the ROYAL MUSEUM of PORTICI, and which was found in the ruins of

* See tailpiece.

HERCULANEUM: it has an enormous Phallus, and, with an arch look and gesture, stretches out its right hand in the form above mentioned; and which probably was an emblem of consummation: and as a further proof of it, the Amulet which occurs most frequently amongst those of the Ancients (next to that which represents the simple Priapus), is such a hand united with the Phallus; of which you may see several specimens in my collection in the BRITISH MUSEUM. One in particular, I recollect, has also the half-moon joined to the hand and Phallus; which* half-moon is supposed to have an allusion to the female *Menses*. The shell, or *Concha veneris*, is evidently an emblem of the female part of generation. It is very natural then to suppose, that the Amulets representing the Phallus alone, so visibly indecent, may have been long out of use in this civilized capital; but I have been assured, that

* This is perfectly true, by implication. All these subjects—however little suspected the conclusion is in the philosophical views of the moderns, who draw so strict an antiquarian line between their ideas of the classic and of the romantic, or “middle-age” times—as between Paganism and Christianity—are closely connected with the mythic and mystical foundations of the Holy Grail, and the Round Table, and far subsequently, our own “Most Noble Order of The Garter”—a reproduction and re-arrangement of the mystical “Round Table.”—Ed.

it is but very lately that the Priests have put an end to the wearing of such Amulets in CALABRIA, and other distant Provinces of this Kingdom.

A new road having been made last year from this Capital to the Province of ABRUZZO, passing through the City of ISERNIA (anciently belonging to the SAMNITES, and very populous), a person of a liberal education, employed in that work, chanced to be at ISERNIA just at the time of the celebration of the Feast of the modern PRIAPUS, ST. COSMO; and having been struck with the singularity of the ceremony, so very similar to that which attended the ancient Cult of the GOD of the GARDENS, and knowing my taste for antiquities, told me of it. From this gentleman's report, and from what I learnt on the spot from the Govenor of ISERNIA himself, having gone to that city on purpose in the month of February last, I have drawn up the following account, which I have reason to believe is strictly true. I did intend to have been present at the Feast of ST. COSMO this year, but the indecency of this ceremony having probably transpired, from the country's having been more frequented since the new road was made, orders have been given,

that the *Great Toe** of the Saint should no longer be exposed.

The following is the account of the Fête of ST. COSMO and DAMIANO, as it actually was celebrated at ISERNIA, on the confines of ABRUZZO, in the kingdom of Naples, so late as in the year of our Lord 1780.

On the 27th of September, at ISERNIA, one of the most ancient cities of the kingdom of Naples, situated in the Province called the CONTADO DI MOLISE, and adjoining to ABRUZZO, an annual Fair is held, which lasts three days. The situation of this Fair is on a rising ground, between two rivers, about half a mile from the town of ISERNIA; on the most elevated part of which there is an ancient Church, with a vestibule. The architecture is of the style of the lower ages; and it is said to have been a Church and Convent belonging to the Benedictine Monks in the time of their poverty. This Church is dedicated to St. COSMUS and DAMIANUS. One of the days of the Fair, the relicks of the Saints are exposed, and afterwards carried in procession from the Cathedral of the City to this Church, attended by a prodigious concourse of

* The modern Priapi were so called at Isernia.

people. In the City, and at the Fair, *Ex-voti* of wax, representing the male parts of generation, of various dimensions, some even of the length of a palm, are publickly offered for sale. There are also waxen vows, that represent other parts of the body mixed with them; but of those there are few in comparison with the number of the Priapi. The devout distributors of these vows carry a basket full of them in one hand, and hold a plate in the other to receive the money, crying aloud, "ST. COSMO and DAMIANO!" If you ask the price of one, the answer is, *più ci metti, più meriti*: "The more you give, the more's the merit." In the Vestibule are two tables, at each of which one of the Canons of the Church presides, this crying out, *Qui si ricevono le Misse, e Litanie*: "Here Masses and Litanies are received," and the other, *Qui si ricevono li Voti*: "Here the Vows are received." The price of a Mass is fifteen Neapolitan grains, and of a Litany five grains. On each table is a large bason for the reception of the different offerings. The vows are chiefly presented by the female sex; and they are seldom such as represent legs, arms, &c.; but most commonly the male parts of generation. The person who was at this Fête in

the year 1780, and who gave me this account (the authenticity of every article of which has since been fully confirmed to me by the Governor of ISERNIA) told me also, that he heard a woman say at the time she presented a vow, like that which is represented, [*in a figure of the male organ of generation in that state of tension and rigidity which it assumes when about to discharge its functions*]. *Santo Cosimo benedetto, così lo voglio*: "Blessed ST. COSMO, let it be like this;" another, *St. Cosimo, a te mi raccomendo*: "ST. COSMO, I recommend myself to you;" and a third, *St. Cosimo ti ringrazio*: "ST. COSMO, I thank you." The vow is never presented without being accompanied by a piece of money, and is always kissed by the devotee at the moment of presentation.

At the great Altar in the Church, another of its Canons attends to give the holy unction, with the oil of ST. COSMO,* which is prepared by the same receipt as that of the Roman Ritual, with the addition only of the prayer of the Holy Martyrs, ST. COSMUS and DAMIANUS. Those who have

* The cure of diseases by oil is likewise of ancient date; for Terullian tells us that a Christian, called Proculus, cured the Emperor Severus of a certain distemper by the use of oil, for which service the Emperor kept Proculus, as long as he lived, in his palace.

an infirmity in any of their members, present themselves at the great Altar, and uncover the member affected (not even excepting that which is most frequently represented by the *Ex-voti*); and the reverend Canon anoints it, saying, *Per intercessionem beati Cosmi, liberet te ab omni malo. Amen.*

The ceremony finishes by the Canons of the Church dividing the spoils, both money and wax, which must be to a very considerable amount, as the concourse at this Fête is said to be prodigiously numerous.

The oil of ST. COSMO is in high repute for its invigorating quality, when the loins, and parts adjacent, are anointed with it. No less than 1400 flasks of that oil were either expended at the Altar in unctions, or charitably distributed during this Fête in the year 1780; and as it is usual for every one, who either makes use of the oil at the Altar, or carries off a flask of it, to leave an alms for ST. COSMO, the ceremony of the Oil becomes likewise a very lucrative one to the Canons of the Church.

I am, SIR, with great truth and regard,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

WILLIAM HAMILTON.

General Account
OF THE
PHALLIC WORSHIP.

OF all the profane rites which belonged to the ancient Polytheism, none were more furiously inveighed against by the zealous propagators of the Christian faith, than the obscene ceremonies performed in the worship of PRIAPUS; which appeared not only contrary to the gravity and sanctity of religion, but subversive of the first principles of decency and good order in society. Even the form itself, under which the God was represented, appeared to them a mockery of all piety and devotion, and more fit to be placed in a brothel than a temple. But the forms and ceremonial of a religion are not always to be understood in their direct and obvious sense; but are to be considered as symbolical representations of some hidden meaning, which may be extremely wise and just, though the symbols themselves, to those who know not their true signification, may appear in the

highest degree absurd and extravagant. It has often happened that avarice and superstition have continued these symbolical representations for ages after their original meaning has been lost and forgotten ; when they must of course appear nonsensical and ridiculous, if not impious and extravagant.

Whatever the Greeks and Egyptians meant by the symbol in question, it was certainly nothing ludicrous or licentious ; of which we need no other proof, than its having been carried in solemn procession at the celebration of those mysteries in which the first principles of their religion, the knowledge of the God of Nature, the First, the Supreme, the Intellectual, were preserved free from the vulgar superstitions, and communicated, under the strictest oaths of secrecy, to the initiated ; who were obliged to purify themselves, prior to their initiation, by abstaining from venery, and all impure food.

The ancient Theologists, finding that they could conceive no idea of infinity, were content to revere the Infinite Being in the most general and efficient exertion of his power, *attraction* ; whose agency is perceptible through all matter, and to which all motion may, perhaps, be ultimately traced. This power, being personified, became the "Secondary

Deity," to whom all adoration and worship were directed, and who is therefore frequently considered as the sole and Supreme Cause of all things.

His great characteristic attribute was represented by the Organ of Generation in that state of tension and rigidity which is necessary to the due performance of its functions.*

We may therefore be assured, that no impure meaning could be conveyed by this symbol; but that it represented some fundamental principal of their faith. What this was, it is difficult to say, on account of the secrecy under which this part of their religion was guarded. PLUTARCH tells us that the Egyptians represented OSIRIS with the organ of generation erect, to show his generative and prolific power: he also tells us that OSIRIS was the same Deity as the BACCHUS of the Greek mythology; who was also the same as the first-begotten Love (*Ερως πρωτογονος*) of ORPHEUS and

* Many small images of this kind have been found among the ruins of HERCULANÆUM and POMPEII, attached to the bracelets, which the chaste and pious matrons of antiquity wore round their necks and arms. In these, the organ of generation appears alone, or only accompanied with the Wings of Incubation, in order to show that the devout wearer devoted herself wholly and solely to procreation, the great end for which she was ordained.

HESIOD. This Deity is celebrated by the ancient poets as the Creator of all things, the Father of gods and men ; and it appears that the organ of generation was the symbol of his great characteristic attribute.

Indeed, in an age when no prejudices of artificial decency existed, what more just and natural image would men find, by which to express their idea of the beneficent power of the great Creator, than that organ which endowed them with the power of procreation, and made them partakers not only of the felicity of the Deity, but of his peculiar attribute, that of multiplying his own image?

The female organs of generation were revered as symbols of the generative powers of Nature or Matter, as the male were of the generative powers of God. They are usually represented emblematically, by the Shell, or *Concha Veneris*, which was therefore worn by devout persons of antiquity, as it still continues to be by pilgrims, and many of the common women of ITALY. The union of both was expressed by the hand* mentioned in SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON'S Letter; which, being a less explicit

* See tailpiece, from one in the British Museum, in which both symbols are united.

symbol, has escaped the attention of the Reformers, and is still worn, as well as the shell, by the women of ITALY, though without being understood. It represented the act of generation, which was considered as *a solemn sacrament in honour of the Creator*. The male organs of generation are sometimes found represented by signs of the same sort, which might properly be called the symbol of symbols. One of the most remarkable of these is a cross in the form of the letter T, which thus served as the emblem of creation and generation, before the Church adopted it as the sign of Salvation; a lucky coincidence of ideas, which, without doubt, facilitated the reception of it, among the faithful.

The real meaning of all the animal worship of the Egyptians about which so much has been written, and so little discovered, is, that those animals or plants in which any particular attribute of the Deity seemed to predominate, became the symbols of that attribute, and were accordingly worshipped as the images of Divine Providence, acting in that particular direction.

The celebrated bronze in the Vatican has the male organs of generation placed upon the head

of a Cock, the emblem of the Sun, supported by the neck and shoulders of a man. In this composition they represented the generative power of the Ερως, the Osiris, Mithras, or Bacchus, whose centre is the Sun, incarnate with man. By the inscription on the pedestal, the attribute, thus personified, is styled *the Saviour of the World*, (Σωτηρ κοσμου).

The Egyptians showed this incarnation of the Deity by a less permanent, though equally expressive symbol. At Mendes a living Goat was kept as the image of the generative power, to whom the Women presented themselves naked, and had the honour of being publicly enjoyed by him. Herodotus saw the act openly performed, and calls it a prodigy: but the Egyptians had no such horror of it; for it was to them a representation of the incarnation of the Deity, and the communication of his creative spirit to man. Indeed, the Greeks do not seem to have felt much horror or disgust at the imitative representation of it; several specimens of their sculpture in this way have escaped the fury of the Reformers, and remained for the instruction of later times. One of these, found among the ruins of HERCULANÆUM,

and kept concealed in the Royal Museum at Portici, is well known.

Though it has been remarked that in these monuments the Goat is *passive* instead of *active*; and that the *human symbol* is represented as incarnate with the *divine*, instead of the *divine* with the *human*; this is in fact no difference; for the Creator, being of both sexes, is represented indifferently of either. Both the Bull and the Cow are worshipped by the Hindoos, as symbols of the male and female, or generative and nutritive powers of the Deity. The Cow is in almost all their Pagodas; but the Bull is revered with superior solemnity and devotion.

Among the Egyptians, the Cow was the symbol of Venus, the Goddess of Love, and passive generative power of Nature. On the capitals of one of the temples of Philæ, we still find the heads of this Goddess represented of a mixed form; the horns and ears of the Cow being joined to the beautiful features of a Woman in the prime of life; such as the Greeks attributed to that Venus, whom they worshipped as the mother of the prolific God of Love; Cupid who was the personification of animal desire or concupiscence, as the Orphic

Love, the Father of gods and men, was of universal attraction. The Greeks who represented the Mother under the form of a beautiful Woman naturally represented the Son under the form of a beautiful boy, but a people who represented the Mother under the form of a Cow would as naturally represent the Son under the form of a Calf. This seems to be the case with the Hindoos as well as with the Egyptians.

By following this analogy we may come to the true meaning of a much-celebrated object of devotion recorded by an ancient writer. When the Israelites grew clamorous on account of the absence of Moses, and called upon Aaron to make them a God to go before them, he set up a golden Calf,* to which the people sacrificed and feasted,

* "I am confirmed in the opinion that the golden לָנֶזֶךְ ('egel) made by Aaron for the Israelites to worship at Mount Sinai was a *cone*, as representing *the flame of fire* in which alone the Almighty had been manifested to them, and not a *calf*." "They fell into the error of regarding as a golden *calf* the לָנֶזֶךְ ('egel) or conical representation of the *flame of fire*, which their forefathers, and after them the Ten Tribes, had worshipped as the similitude of the Eternal, but of which they themselves, as Jews, had lost the signification." The Idol in Horeb. Evidence that the Golden Image at Mount Sinai was a cone and not a calf. With Three Appendices. By Charles T. Beke, Ph. D., F.R.G.S., London, 1871.—Ed.

and then rose up (as the translator says) *to play*; but in the original the term is more specific, and means, in its plain direct sense, *that particular sort of play* which requires the concurrence of both sexes, and which was therefore a very proper conclusion of a sacrifice to Cupid, though highly displeasing to the God who had brought them out of Egypt. The Egyptian mythologists who appear to have invented this secondary Deity of Love, were probably the inventors likewise of a secondary Priapus, who was the personification of that particular generative faculty which springs from animal desire, as the primary Priapus was of the great generative principle of the Universe. Hence, in the allegories of the poets, this Deity is said to be a son of Bacchus and Venus, that is, the result of the active and passive generative powers of Nature.

The Greeks, as they advanced in the cultivation of the imitative arts, gradually changed the animal for the human form, preserving still the original character. Besides the Fauns, Satyrs, and Nymphs—who represent the emanations of the Creator, incarnate with man, acting as his angels and ministers in the work of universal generation, we often find in the ancient sculptures certain Andro-

gynous beings possessed of the characteristic organs of both sexes, which represent organized matter in its first stage; that is, immediately after it was released from chaos, and before it was animated by a participation of the ethereal essence of the Creator.

In a beautiful gem described by Mr. R. Payne Knight, one of these Androgynous figures is represented sleeping, with the Organs of Generation covered, and the Egg of Chaos broken under it. On the other side is BACCHUS the Creator, bearing a torch, the emblem of ethereal fire, and extending it towards the sleeping figure; whilst one of his agents seems only to wait his permission to begin the execution of that office, which, according to every outward and visible sign, he appears able to discharge with energy and effect. The Creator himself leans upon one of those figures commonly called *Sileni*; but which, from their heavy unwieldy forms, were probably intended as personifications of brute inert matter, from which all things are formed, but which, being incapable of producing anything of itself, is properly represented as the support of the Creative Power, though not actively instrumental in his work. The total baldness of

this figure represents the exhausted unproductive state of matter, when the generative powers were separated from it; for it was an opinion of the Ancients that every act of coition produced a transient chill in the brain, by which some of the roots of the hair were loosened, so that baldness was a mark of sterility acquired by excessive exertion. The figures of PAN have nearly the same forms with that which I have here supposed to represent inert matter; only that they are confounded with those of the Goat, the symbol of the Creative Power, by which matter was fructified and regulated. To this is sometimes added the Organ of Generation, of an enormous magnitude, to signify the application of this power to its noblest end, the procreation of sensitive and rational beings.

This composition forms the common PRIAPUS of the Roman Poets, who was worshipped among the other personages of the Heathen Mythology, but understood by few of his ancient votaries any better than by the good women of Isernia. His characteristic organ is sometimes represented by the artists in that state of tension and rigidity which it assumes when about to discharge its functions, and at other times in that state of tumid languor which

immediately succeeds the performance. In the latter case he appears loaded with the productions of Nature, the result of those prolific efforts, which in the former case he appeared so well qualified to exert.

The Fauns and Satyrs which accompany the Androgynous figures in the ancient sculptures are usually represented as ministering to the Creator by exerting their characteristic attributes upon them, as well as upon the Nymphs, the passive agents of procreation; but what has* puzzled the learned in these monuments, and seems a contradiction to the general system of ancient religion, is that many of these groups are in attitudes which are rather adapted to the gratification of disordered and unnatural appetites, than to extend procreation. But a learned author, who has thrown infinite light upon these subjects, has effectually cleared them from this suspicion by showing that they only took the most convenient way to get at the female organs of generation, in those mixed beings who possessed both. This is confirmed by LUCRETIUS, who asserts that this attitude is better adapted to the purposes of generation than any other.

* Truly :—a most important doubt.—Ed.

Those who wish to know how generally "the symbol of symbols," and the religion which it represented, once prevailed, will consult the great and elaborate work of D'Hancarville, who, with infinite learning and ingenuity, has traced its progress over the whole earth.

The most extraordinary mystic relics of the heretical orders of Gnostics in the first centuries of Christianity, are the tokens, talismans, or amulets called Gnostic Gems, which are considered as of the first importance in religious archæology. They are very rare, and are exceedingly suggestive, though mysterious. There are some in the Egyptian rooms, British Museum, and also a group in the South Kensington Museum.

On a Medal of DEMETRIUS (the Second King of SYRIA), the Goddess of HIERAPOLIS, by some called Venus, appears with the male organs of generation sticking out of her robe, and holding the Thyrsus of BACCHUS, the emblem of Fire, in one hand, and the terrestrial Globe, representing the subordinate elements, in the other. She probably represented here in the form under which she was worshipped in the neighbourhood of CYZICUS, where she was called *Αρτεμις Πριαπίνη*,

the *Priapic Diana*. In the Temple at Hierapolis the active powers imparted to her by the Creator were represented* by immense images of the male organs of generation placed on each side of the door. The measures of these must necessarily be corrupt in the present text of Lucian; but that they were of an enormous size we may conclude from what is related of a man's going to the top of one of them every year, and residing there seven days, in order to have a more intimate communication with the Deity, while praying for the prosperity of SYRIA. Athenæus relates that PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS had one of 120 cubits long carried in procession at Alexandria. This was the real meaning of the enormous figures of HIERAPOLIS—they were the Generative Organs of the Creator personified, with which he was supposed to have impregnated the Heavens, the Earth, and the

* These were Obelisks—which are everywhere Phallic. They were placed, in pairs, in front of every Temple in Egypt. They were always regarded as votive objects, and sacred. Their beauty of form and majesty still astonish. The survival of the original mystical ideas in regard of them, and their devotion to religion is exhibited, in their absorption into Christian architectural forms, in the double Towers (sometimes the left-hand tower differs for a peculiar reason), standing before the west front of every Cathedral.

Waters. Within the Temple were many small statues of men with these organs disproportionably large. These were the angels or attendants of the Goddess, who acted as her Ministers of Creation in peopling and fructifying the Earth.

The practice of the artists in representing the various attributes of the Creator under human forms of various character and expression was, however, one of the great means of corrupting the ancient Theology, and establishing the Poetical Mythology. Figures, being distinguished by the titles of the Diety which they were meant to represent, became in time to be considered as distinct personages, and worshipped as separate subordinate Deities. Hence the many-shaped God, the Πολυμορφος and Μυριονμορφος of the ancient Theologists, became divided into many Gods and Goddesses, often described by the poets as at variance with each other, and wrangling about the little intrigues and passions of men. Hence, too, as the symbols were multiplied, particular ones lost their dignity; and that venerable one which is the subject of the present notice became degraded from the representative of the God of Nature to a subordinate rural Deity, a supposed son of the

Asiatic Conqueror BACCHUS, standing among the Nymphs by a Fountain, and expressing the fertility of a Garden, instead of the general Creative Power of the great Active Principle of the Universe. His degradation did not stop even here; for we find him, in times still more profane and corrupt, made a subject of raillery and insult, as answering no better purpose than holding up his rubicund snout to frighten the birds and thieves. His talents were also perverted from their natural ends, and employed in base and abortive efforts in conformity to the taste of the times; for men naturally attribute their own passions and inclinations to the objects of their adoration; and as God made Man in His own Image, so Man returns the favour, and makes God in his. Hence we find the highest attribute of the all-pervading Spirit and first-begotten Love foully prostituted to promiscuous vice, and calling out, *Hæc cunnum, caput hic, præbeat ille nates.*

He continued, however, still to have his Temple, Priests and Sacred Geese, and offerings of the most exquisite kind were made to him.

Crissabitque tibi excussis pulcherrima lumbis
Hoc anno primum experta puella virum.

Sometimes, however, they were not so scrupulous in the selection of their victims, but suffered frugality to restrain their devotion.

Cum sacrum fieret Deo salaci
Conducta est pretio puella parvo.

The Bride was usually placed upon him immediately before marriage ; not, as LACTANTIUS says, *ut ejus pudicitiam prior Deus prælibasse videatur*, but that she might be rendered fruitful by her communion with the Divine Nature, and capable of fulfilling the duties of her station. In an ancient poem we find a Lady of the name of LALAGE presenting the pictures of the *Elephantis* to him, and gravely requesting that she might enjoy the pleasures over which he particularly presided, in *all the attitudes** described in that celebrated Treatise.

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* "*Ses Postures inventées par Cyrène, Philonis, Assianasse, Elephantis, and Arétin.*" N. VENETTE. "TABLEAU DE L'AMOUR." 1689.—These positions—supposed to be surpassingly effective in the extortion of the most exquisite pleasure out of the exercise of the "Act," were caused to be painted by some of the finest artists of the Rome of the Cæsars, in life size, and wholly in the nude, upon the sumptuous walls of his Imperial Banqueting Hall, in the famous "Golden Palace" of the Emperor Nero. By some unknown accident these famous designs—the triumph of ancient art—came down to posterity, and were reproduced (ages after), through designs in

When a Lady had served as the victim in a sacrifice to this God she expressed her gratitude for the benefits received by offering upon his altar certain small images, representing his characteristic attribute ; the number of which was equal to the number of men who had acted as priests upon the

miniature, by Giulio Romano ; for the purpose of realising models for the display of perfect artistic human proportion and beauty.—

“ La nudité d’une femme ne feroit pas plus d’impression sur son ame, que l’esprit des peuples, lorsque les filles, dansant toutes nues dans un Carrefour, elles estoient seulement convertes de l’honnes tête publique.”

“ Cui hic Ludus noster non placebit, ne legerit ; aut si legerit, obliviscatur. Et velit nolit, aliter hæc sacra non constant.”

The following is given by Pliny as to the origin of the Obelisks in Egypt. The Obelisks, as it may be remarked, are all “PHALLI.” The translations of the inscriptions in the hieroglyphics, made, and so confidently put forward as true and reliable by the “Egyptologists” and the modern learned societies and Professors, are, in reality, open to the gravest doubt ; as being only a very elaborate and ingeniously varied *mistake and delusion* ; produced out of an over-eagerness for learned explanation.

“ DES SIGNES DE LA VIRGINITE ABSENTE. Oracle que Pheron Roy des Egyptiens, interrogea sur son aveuglement, luy répondit, que pour être quéry, il devoit se laver les yeux avec de l’urine d’une vierge ou d’une femme qui se contentait des caresses de son mary. Ce remède ne se trouva pas chez luy, et si la fille d’un jardinier ne le luy est donné, je croy quil eust attendu long-temps avant que de recouvrer la veüe, la virginite, et la chasteté estant alors quelque chose de fort rare.” VENETTE, p. 71.

We believe, as we say above, that the real meaning of the hiero-

occasion. On an antique gem, in a famous collection, is one of these fair victims, who appears just returned from a sacrifice of this kind, and devoutly returning her thanks, by offering upon an altar some of these images; from the number of which one may observe that she has not been neglected.*

glyphics has never yet been deciphered, and that it will be never discovered; simply because it must remain undiscoverable, there being, in ultimate fact, neither guide, nor keys: certainly not to be found in contemporaneous penetration or means of access.

"La matrice d'une femme est du nombre des choses insatiables dont parle L'Ecriture; et je ne say sil y a quelque chose au monde à quoy on puisse comparer son avidité; car ny l'enfer, ny le feu, ny la terre ne sont pas si devorants que sont les parties naturelles d'une femme lascive."—N. VENETTE.

"TABLEAU D'AMOUR,

a Parme; chez Franc d'Amour.—1689."

The number of these "classic attitudes" to which reference has been made in previous parts of this book, are variously estimated as twelve (the number of signs of the zodiac, in implication with the subject of "mystic anatomy," in the philosophy of which the occult philosopher, HENRY CORNELIUS AGRIPPA, was so celebrated an adept); and also as twenty-four. The classic courtezans of Greece and Rome—especially of the debased period of old Rome, descending to exceedingly strange things in the time of the Cæsars—these dangerously fascinating women were singularly ingenious in their vocation. They were noted for their wit and talents, in addition to their beauty. "The *Elephantis* was written by one Philænis, and seems to have been of the same kind with the *Puttana errante* of Aretin."—R. P. KNIGHT.

* See tailpiece.

This offering of thanks had also its mystic and allegorical meaning ; for FIRE being the energetic principle and essential force of the Creator, and the symbol above mentioned the visible image of his characteristic attribute, the uniting them was uniting the Material with the Essential Cause, from whose joint operation all things were supposed to proceed.

These sacrifices, as well as all those to the Deities presiding over Generation, were performed by night ; hence Hippolytus, in EURIPIDES, says to express his love of chastity, that he likes none of the Gods revered by night. These acts of devotion were indeed attended with such rites as must naturally shock the prejudices of a chaste and temperate mind not liable to be warmed by that* *ecstatic enthusiasm* which is peculiar to devout persons when their attention is absorbed in the contemplation of the beneficent Powers of the Creator, and all their faculties directed to imitate Him in the exertion of His great characteristic Attribute. To heighten this enthusiasm, the Male and Female Saints of antiquity used to lie pro-

* More likely to be excited, in great minds, by this peculiar exercise, than by any other ; when the powers are equal to it.

miscuously together in the temples, and honour God by a liberal display and general communication of his bounties. HERODOTUS, indeed, excepts the Greeks and Egyptians, and DIONYSIUS of HALICARNASSUS the Romans, from this general custom of other nations; but to the testimony of the former we may oppose the thousand sacred Prostitutes kept at each of the Temples of Corinth and Eryx; and to that of the latter, the express words of JUVENAL, who though he lived an age later, lived when the same religion, and nearly the same manners prevailed. DIODORUS SICULUS also tells us, that when the Roman Prætors visited Eryx, they laid aside their magisterial serenity, and honoured the Goddess by mixing with her votaries, and indulging themselves in the pleasures over which she presided.

It appears, too, that the Act of Generation was a sort of Sacrament in the Island of LESBOS; for the device on its medals (which in the Greek Republics had always some relation to religion) is as explicit as forms can make it. The figures appear indeed to be mystic and allegorical, the Male having evidently a mixture of the Goat in his beard and features, and therefore probably repre-

sents Pan, the Generative Power of the Universe, incorporated in Universal matter. The Female has all that breadth and fulness which characterize the personification of the passive Power, known by the titles of RHEA, JUNO, CERES, &c.

When there were such seminaries for female education as those of ERYX and CORINTH, we need not wonder that the ladies of antiquity should be extremely well instructed in all the practical duties of their religion. The stories told of JULIA and MESSALINA show us that the Roman ladies were no ways deficient; and yet they were as remarkable for their gravity and decency as the Corinthians were for their skill and dexterity in adapting themselves to all the modes and attitudes which the luxuriant imaginations of experienced votaries have contrived for performing the rites of their tutelar Goddess.

The reason why these rites were always performed by night was the peculiar sanctity attributed to it by the Ancients, because dreams were then supposed to descend from heaven to instruct and forewarn men; and not only the sacrifices to the Generative Deities, but, in general, all the religious rites of the Greeks (and almost all the nations of

antiquity, except the Egyptians, and their reformed imitators, the Jews) were of the festive kind. To imitate the Gods was in their opinion to feast and rejoice, and to cultivate the useful and elegant arts, by which we are made partakers of their felicity.

The Early Christians, indeed, on particular occasions, such as the feasts of the Eucharist, gave way to festivity and mirth ; and though these meetings of joy and gratulation were supposed to be all of the spiritual kind, the particular manner in which ST. AUGUSTINE commands the Ladies who attended them to wear clean linen, seems to infer that personal as well as spiritual matters were thought worthy of attention. Certain it is, that upon these occasions they worked themselves up to a pitch of rapture and enthusiasm which often concealed, under the garb of devotion, ecstasies of a very different kind ; whence the greatest irregularities ensued, and it became necessary for the reputation of the Church that the feasts of Gratulation and Love, the *αγαπαι* and nocturnal vigils, should be suppressed, as they afterwards were by the decrees of several Councils.

Their suppression may be considered as the final subversion of that part of the ancient religion which

is treated of herein ; for so long as those nocturnal meetings were preserved, it certainly existed, though under other names and in a more solemn dress, as our authority avers. The small remains of it preserved at ISERNIA, of which an account has here been given, can scarcely be deemed an exception ; for its meaning was unknown to those who celebrated it ; and the obscurity of the place, added to the venerable names of ST. COSMO and DAMIANO, was all that prevented it from being suppressed long ago, as it has been lately (1786) to the great dismay of the chaste matrons and pious Monks of ISERNIA.

Abundant traces and memorials of it seem, however, to have been preserved in many parts of Christendom long after the actual celebration of its rites ceased. Hence the obscene figures to be observed upon many of our Gothic Cathedrals, and particularly upon the ancient brass doors of St. PETER'S at ROME, where there are some groups which rival the devices on the Lesbian medals.

In addition, it may be remarked that all the most curious and beautiful sculpture and the graceful, integral and architectural forms (the work of the errant "Master-Masons" who spread, at one

time, all over Europe) observable in our ancient ecclesiastical architecture, as well as all the quaint, ingeniously varied carving and chiselling which fills our Cathedrals and Old Churches—that all the architecture of the Middle Ages abounds with sly suggestions of the Phallic character, even in the sacred structures, soaring up to the pulpit and invading the altar. Our modern Churches, in all unconsciousness, have adopted, and perpetrate many of these forms: obnoxious as they may seem to the ignorant, and puzzling as they must appear to the orthodox.

In fact, the whole round of architecture both in the old time and the new; both in the Pagan and Classic Periods and the Romantic, and even—curious and puzzling to most people as must be the fact—*down to the modern day* in the Christian Churches—all, wherever the architecture is true, and noble, and worthy, attest the scope and the grasp of these Phallic proclivities—suspected, therefore mistaken as they are.

“From a passage of HECATÆUS, preserved by DIODORUS SICULUS, I think it is evident that STONEHENGE, and all other monuments of the same kind found in the North, belonged to the same

religion, which appears, at some remote period, to have prevailed over the whole Northern Hemisphere. According to that ancient Historian, the Hyperboreans inhabited an Island beyond Gaul, as large as Sicily, in which Apollo was worshipped in a Circular Temple, considerable for its size and richness."—R. P. KNIGHT, ED. 1786, p. 113.

The following suggests a most important truth, particularly noble and elevating when rightly looked at. But this truth, because ordinary people are afraid of it, is very little taken account of. Indeed, it is scarcely known to the majority of modern antiquaries, who are full of indoctrinated prepossessions, from which it seems very difficult for them to free themselves. Ordinary antiquarian explorers are led like sheep. However—the more acute members of the Learned Societies, who are gradually falling in, through the irresistible character of the evidence, into complete, if reluctant and only dimly-sighted acquiescence—these people, in the greater or the lesser degree, are familiarised (mainly through reiteration) with these curious, bewildering particulars, seeming so unaccountable and peremptory; and these apparently perversely abstruse, contradictory religious abstractions. The "why and the wherefore"

of all this Phallicism must always be—as it has ever been—SECRET. The most skilful in these recondite studies sedulously avert from participation. From these reasons, antiquaries, and the members of the Learned Societies, do not now, nor ever have, and certainly are never, in the future, likely to be brought to believe the Phallic Doctrine in any degree, or at all events, in its full and real extent. The justifiable cause of all this apparent disregard, incredulity and indignation are not far to seek. The “influence of authority in matters of opinion” is observable everywhere. As such enquiries as this, into the authenticity of Phallicism, are only fit for the judicious few; and as such beliefs can in no measure or sense be trusted to the vulgar many, the world of examiners at large are afraid of risking collision, and therefore imminent damage to themselves. Submission to orthodox opinions and prevailing opinions must always be the safest. The authoratative *dicta* of the Church draw the circle very narrowly. The Church—except that which proceeds from its own centre—ignores all which, in reality, forms the basis of religion—indeed that (strangely to say) is the foundation of all truth—namely, *mysticism*.

The observations which follow are from the Historical Work of J. P. KNIGHT, ED. 1786, p. 117.

"From the ancient Solar Obelices came the Spires and Pinnacles with which our Churches are decorated, so many years after their mystic meaning has been forgotten. Happily for the beauty of these edifices, it was forgotten; otherwise the Reformers of the last century would have destroyed them, as they did the Crosses and Images, for they might, with equal propriety, have been pronounced heathenish and profane." The undoubted marks of the idolatry of the Phallus, as generally abounding in England as in the heart of India, is frequent and familiar in our own country. In fact, these proofs of the idolatry of the Phallus, as equally as that of its twin emblem ("Male and Female"), are to be found all over the world; and—very singularly to say—*there*, most notably and persistently, though treated with the highest efforts of art, in those countries of the most refined, and completest civilization—civilization of a height and excellence of which we (comparative Barbarians in the Arts, conceited as we are) have no notion.

As the Obelisc was the symbol of "Light," so was the Pyramid of "Fire," deemed to be essenti-

ally the same. The Egyptians, among whom these forms are the most frequent, held that there were two opposite powers in the world, perpetually acting contrarily to each other; the one creating, and the other destroying; the former they called Orisis, and the other Typhon."—J. P. KNIGHT, ED. 1786, p. 117.

THE PYRAMIDS.—"The Egyptians placed the bodies of their illustrious dead in pyramidal monuments—notoriously those of the vastest size, called Pyramids—which were the symbols of FIRE. Πυρ is the Greek term for '*fire*'—thence Pyramid."—

R. P. KNIGHT.

THE END.



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