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MAN IN THE
MAKING

AN INTRODUCTION TO
ANTHROPOLOGY

By R. R. MARETT

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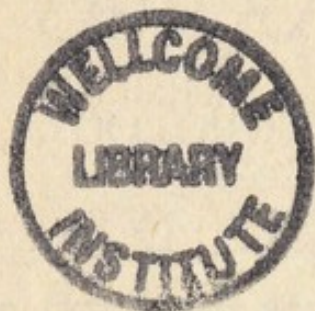
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MAN IN THE MAKING

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: HOW THE STUDY OF ANTHROPOLOGY ENLARGES THE MIND

Six talks delivered from London for the British Broadcasting Corporation form the heart of this little book. I have been advised to let these stand as they were given, since some of those who listened in may like to refresh their memories. On the other hand, though it has been possible to include some additional matter, there was not room for more than a partial and purely illustrative treatment of so vast a subject. Enough, then, if these remarks serve to point out the way to a field of intellectual adventure where not only risks but rewards in plenty await any inquirer who has the courage to seek for himself.

Now, in a sense, every human being is an anthropologist without knowing it. For everyone has views of a kind about human nature. Nay, having his individual experience to draw on, everyone is qualified to shed fresh light on human nature in some degree. At the same time, if one does a thing at all, one prefers to do it well; and well in this case means scientifically. Science is ordinary experience controlled by method. By proceeding in a workmanlike manner one can do wonders in the way of improving the quality of one's knowledge. This does not mean, however, that the science of man should be handed over once for all to the experts. To professionalize the subject would be to dehumanize it. Since it touches all, let all insist

on knowing as much about it as their opportunities will allow. Otherwise, the human interest is sure to be smothered in technicalities. I am convinced that to make anthropology popular will help to keep it sane.

At present, however, there are to be found among the wider public both friends and foes of anthropology whose respective reasons for their attitude would appear to be equally unsound. To consider the foes first, their contention is that the primitive is alien and offensive to them as civilized beings. To reply that possibly they are more savage than they suppose would hardly be conducive to amicable discussion, whether true or not. The more persuasive line to take is to assure them that anthropology is not concerned with the savage only. As the science of man, it studies the entire history of the human species in general. The method, however, is evolutionary, which simply means that man's past is assumed to contain the germ of his present and future. Thus anthropology takes savagery for its starting point, and tries to explain civilization as the outcome of humbler beginnings. It is odd that there should be people who think this an improper thing to do. It must be a bastard civilization that cannot afford to recognize its own parentage. Further, when the matter is looked into more closely, it turns out that there are a great many types both of savagery and of civilization, each having merits and defects peculiar to itself. How can it, then, be reasonable to assume off-hand that one's own type of culture is perfect, and as such destined to prevail everywhere and always? On the contrary, to pick out the tendencies making for the greatest good of the greatest number of the human race is a complicated task, which must nevertheless be faced. We need to survey man's very various experiments in the art of living with an open mind. Only by so doing can we hope to bring our

particular scheme of values into harmony with the universal laws of human life.

To turn now to those friends of anthropology who are on the right side for wrong reasons, exception must also be taken to the not uncommon view that savagery stands for the simple life at its best, and consequently that in adopting civilized ways man has turned his back on the golden age. But, surely, the golden age lies, if anywhere, in the unknown future. Our savage ancestors were excessively dirty, though they did not realize that they were dirty; excessively poor, though they made the most of such resources as they had; excessively liable to disaster, though they cheerfully took daily peril as a matter of course. To secure such animal well-being as went with this toughness of fibre, what community of civilized men would care to pay the price of readaptation, with all the loss of life incidental to the reversion of any domesticated stock to a wild condition? From an office stool it might seem that camping out savage-fashion must amount to a perpetual holiday; but the reality would prove about as trying to the average constitution as winter in the trenches. But it is not so much materially as spiritually that our forefathers were worse off as compared with ourselves. Though they felt just as strongly, they had not yet learned to think; and the result was that they were perpetually haunted by distressing fancies. Now, human enlightenment being at all times relative, no doubt there were always leaders of opinion—masters of magic, as would be the savage way of putting it—who after a fashion kept their heads, while the rest were but as nervous children in the dark. Yet even these leaders led gropingly, blindly. Their only stand-by was custom, their only maxim “carry on.” Though the mind of man was already engaged in its unending struggle to get the better of circumstance, that sense of intellectual freedom which comes only with steady

vision was as yet undeveloped. Fear herded them along—the fear of leaving the beaten track. Confidence, on the other hand, attends those only who follow a direction of their own seeking. Savagery, then, by no means involves a life of plain living and high thinking. Intellectual confusion combined with physical discomfort would sum it up more truly.

No, if the civilized man is to study anthropology, it must be in order to become more civilized. The place of the science of man is clearly among the liberal studies, the humanities; and its function is, first and foremost, to enlarge the mind. Europe has too long been inclined to regard its own culture as the only culture that counts. Europeanism, however, is becoming parochial. History has henceforth to be treated as human history, with every part of the containing time-world and space-world duly accounted for. Measured in years and miles, this human theatre is not so very vast after all, as set against the background of those cosmic infinities with which science has to reckon. To frame a composite picture of our whole race-history in broad outline becomes more feasible every day. Now even to contemplate mankind in this extensive way is highly educative. It affords a juster perspective, a better appreciation of what is vital for man in the long run and on the whole. Just as an aerial photograph taken from a great height brings out the structural features of a stretch of country, emphasizing the main lines to the exclusion of obscuring details, so a bird's-eye view of the career of the human species reveals an ordered process, a law, pervading the erratic movements that have accompanied the spread of mankind over the face of the planet. Despite tumultuous eddies among the shoals and rocks, there is as it were a steady tidal advance to be observed; and this, biologically speaking, amounts to an evolution or increase of dominance on the part of the human species. Even when

such a surface view is taken of man's rise to supremacy in the animal kingdom, the spectacle is impressive, and encourages us to be proud of our humanity.

There is, however, another way of regarding this evolutionary process, which may be termed intensive, since it looks past the extent of the series of events in time and space, and tries to perceive their intent or underlying meaning. Now we are in a unique position as regards the portion of the organic world represented by man because, in that we are ourselves men, and capable of reflection, we have direct insight into the inner workings of this so-called evolution or unfolding to which all life is subject. Thus we know for certain that in our own case it is the product of forces that are mental and moral rather than mechanical in their essential nature. Though it may be that part of our nature lies too deep for any self-consciousness to fathom, we can be sure that a will not only to live but to live well guides the course of our onward striving. Self-analysis, indeed, that is, the questioning of our motives with the object of discovering what we really want to be and to enjoy, must always begin at home—namely, within the personal experience of the thinker. But, by watching our fellow-beings and conversing with them, we can, by a sort of sympathetic projection of our personality, enter into their minds as well, so as to discover how far they are moved by similar sentiments and ideals. More especially can we thus explore the nature of that social consciousness, as it may be termed, which renders us more or less like-minded with our fellow-citizens; going on thence to compare and contrast the collective minds of the world's other peoples. Whether our object is to co-operate or merely to compete with them, it is well to have an adequate knowledge of their psychology. There can be no doubt, however, that such mutual understanding must make in the

end for more friendly relations. A kindly disposition to live and let live cannot but be fostered by intelligent acquaintance with the many-sided manifestations of individuality, both personal and communal, of which the human race is capable.

Now a purely external view of such differences seems chiefly to make them offensive to the average man. Their unfamiliarity breeds contempt. He is like a dog that cannot recognize the smell. But he has only to regard these same differences from within—from the other man's angle—to realize that they are reasonable enough, given a certain outlook on life. Sometimes, no doubt, we may deem it our duty to try to educate the other man out of his present frame of mind as being incompatible with the interests of the wider world and thus ultimately incompatible with his own interest. Even so, however, the process of education must start from a point determined by the previous mental condition of the pupil. The natural and traditional aptitudes must be given their chance. When, for instance, we seek to civilize the savage, we must be careful not to kill the plant by over-pruning. For the rest, with fuller experience of the rich content of human intelligence, we shall become more tolerant of diversity, more inclined to widen our own tastes, as in matters of fine art, than to curtail those of our neighbours. Anthropology is like travel. It shows one how much there is to admire of both old and new in this ancient, wide, human world of ours. The very variety of the creative efforts of man is wonderful; and, whatever may be the benefits to be derived from an applied anthropology—and I believe them to be vast—pure anthropology, like every other branch of pure science, is mentally enlarging because it begins and ends in wonder.

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION : HOW MAN'S HISTORY IS ONE OF GRADUAL ADVANCE

THE word "evolution" is one of which some people seem to be frightened. This must be because they are in the dark as to its meaning. If they viewed it in the light of science it would cease to be a bogey. Evolution simply means "unfolding," as the flower does when it develops out of the bud. The term was introduced by the philosopher, Herbert Spencer. He used it to describe what he supposed to be a tendency common to everything on this earth—namely, a tendency to grow more complex. Then Darwin borrowed the word, confining it however for his special purposes to that growth in complexity which living creatures have on the whole undergone, in the course of the many million years during which life has flourished on this planet. Now life, in growing complex, has pursued very divergent lines, so that the animal, the vegetable, and the insect worlds seem to-day largely independent of each other, even if the difference between them becomes less the further we go back in their history. Of the animal world, man is unquestionably the king. He is the type-animal for science. No other animal lives, or in the past has lived, so complex a life. For this man has to thank not so much his body as his mind. Moreover, human minds can be joined and their products shared, as happens among no other animals, however social in their habits.

Man alone has culture, which may be defined as communicable intelligence. The fruits of mind which we exchange among ourselves, having received much

of them from our forefathers, and hoping to pass on to our successors at least a little more than we inherited, are the weapons which render us, despite our frail bodies, invincible in the struggle for existence. Curiously enough, the only serious competitors of that highly evolved being, Man, are nowadays the low organisms known as disease germs; and even these seem to be giving way before the onslaught of science. In speaking, then, as I am going to do, about the making of man, I shall attend entirely to that side of the process which has to do with the development of culture. Thus viewed, the making of man is essentially a self-making. After all, culture only means cultivation. Every man is born a landed proprietor in the sense that in his mind he owns a field which will bear fruit in proportion to the tillage he puts into it. Hence, if anyone is unwilling to speak of the evolution of culture, either because he dislikes the term "evolution" altogether, or because he prefers to limit it to the process whereby we grow as contrasted with the process whereby we make or cultivate ourselves, let it be termed instead the "elaboration" of culture. Without labour there can be no culture, no advance in such intelligence as can be shared and perpetuated. Labour of the mind aided by labour of the hand—and man, of course, is the handy animal, who has learnt to know things largely by grasping them—has slowly but surely fashioned an ever-expanding social tradition, which is our charter of empire over the rest of creation.

At first, it was an oral tradition, a word-of-mouth affair, a folk-lore. Later, writing was invented, and it became a clerk-lore, a literary tradition; this being the decisive moment when culture developed out of barbarism into true civilization. These chapters, however, will be concerned only with the earlier stage, when communication was still by word of mouth, and progress was consequently slow. Yet the first

step costs most effort, and our remote forerunners deserve all the credit we can give them for having done the hard pioneer work in the cause of human self-education. A little attention on our part is their just due, because they tried and, often failing, tried again. A determination not to be beaten is the birth-right of our race. It is man's prerogative to make mistakes and yet benefit from the lesson. To go on reducing the margin of error is to succeed. So, since any fool is wise after the event, let us not dismiss with contempt the working principles of the founders of our culture as a tissue of exploded fallacies. These principles worked well enough for them, or we should not be here now. I have no patience with those who regard history as but a long testimony to human incompetence and folly. To break with the beast and bring out the man, the humane animal, is no small achievement; and it was accomplished at no small cost by humble, not to say brutish, folk, whose sheer pluck brought them through. We should not be far wrong in supposing that the leading characteristic of our species is a taste for adventure. Striving for its own sake comes easy to the imaginative, because they are always ahead of themselves and seem to grasp whatever they reach out to. I suspect that imagination was ever the queen of the human faculties, and cheered on that laborious quest which, in the old days more especially, involved certain risks and most uncertain profits. If the old-world notions appear to us fantastic, let us at least recognize their imaginative quality as all to the good. Something was there in the mind of the race to cry "Forward," though no man knew exactly whither.

So much for general principles. Now for their illustration. The rest of this chapter will briefly take stock of the progress achieved by the cave-man of prehistoric Europe. But even he went back to simpler beginnings. In fact, at a certain point in our back-

ward survey we reach the pre-human. Are the apes and monkeys our poor relations? I think myself that it would be sheer snobbery to deny it. We may console ourselves, however, if we like, with the reflection that the common ancestor as science guesses him to have been—for there is no direct evidence whatsoever—was no ape, but in a sense more manlike than apelike in the qualities that he possessed and prefigured. In other words, the presumption of science is that we represent the prevailing line of evolution more nearly than the apes; which have become specialized to forest life, whereas the common ancestor like ourselves was more of an all-round customer—ready, for instance, to eat anything, flesh or fruit, that he could lay his capable and sensitive hands upon. As I have said, however, this generalized ancestor remains a pure hypothesis or plausible guess. When, at the end of the Tertiary Period, fully formed man emerges into the field of vision of our scientific telescope, he is already possessed of the rudiments of culture.

The earliest known Englishman, for example, the so-called Piltdown man, has left enough of his remains in a gravel-bed in Sussex to make it clear that his skull contained a fair-sized brain, twice as big as an ape's; while what looks like a well-designed club of elephant bone, implying the use of a flint knife, was found close by. Even so, he fell short, as far as we can tell, of the level of the cave-man, such as his successor, Neanderthal man, undoubtedly became. Whenever it happened, this first occupation of a cave-dwelling, it was a decisive step forward, an emergence of the householder and his housewife. To themselves it may have seemed at the time a step backwards, forced on them by a change of climate for the worse. If so, one can only say that necessity, in the form of a struggle with adversity, is the mother of invention. Somehow man had learnt not only to keep

the home-fire burning, but, what is much harder, how to light it. By knocking two lumps of iron-pyrites together, perhaps, in the course of his flint-chipping operations, he produced a spark which, after further experiment, he nursed into a flame. However it was done, done at last it was; and puny man, the intrepid master of fire, could henceforth rout the giant, but relatively feeble-minded, cave-bear from his coveted lair. I have spent seven summers in helping to excavate such a converted lair of Neanderthal man in the Island of Jersey—then a hill standing up on the wide plain of the Channel River, where the mammoth, the woolly rhinoceros, and the reindeer wandered at large and provided excellent hunting. Nearly forty species of animals furnished the bones found by us in that cave-kitchen. There were the hearths round which the hunters feasted; and there in plenty were the flint knives with which they cut up the abundant meat, together with the scrapers that prepared the skins for use as coverlets or garments. Sealed and secured under some four thousand tons of rock-rubbish lay this evidence, which no fair-minded man can gainsay, of man's hoary antiquity. Argue if you like that these Neanderthal men were not our direct ancestors. That is indeed probable. But were they not men notwithstanding? Proofs are forthcoming from the French caves that they buried their dead with provision, in the way of food and weapons, for a future existence. Thus, ancestor or not, Neanderthal man has a chance of meeting us in heaven, I should venture to think.

To judge by his remains, however—which by no means reveal his whole apparatus of arts, since the wood, skin, sinew and so on have long ago perished—Neanderthal man was a long way behind the later cave-men as regards both the material and the spiritual aspects of his culture. Overshadowing all their other achievements are the fine-art products of these more

refined folk, who, by the way, are physically of our type, and may be of the very flesh and blood that, after much further mixing by the way, have come down to us. These cave-artists, as we may call them, have left us in France and Spain whole galleries of wall-paintings and engravings, as well as a plentiful store of carvings and modellings in stone, bone, ivory, and even clay that has miraculously escaped the destructive touch of time. Of all my personal experiences, I know of none more rich in wonder and genuine awe than a visit to one of these vast galleries, burrowing into the deep heart of a limestone mountain, and revealing, away back in a darkness hardly tempered or robbed of its mystery by one's feeble lamp, lifelike animal forms, mammoths, reindeer, bisons, even trout, boldly executed in black or red by ancient hunters, whose eyes had unerringly noted every detail of the natural outline and pose. Can one doubt, then, that there had been spiritual advance since the days of Neanderthal man, who seemingly had not cultivated in himself any such powers? It matters not if we suppose that the inspiration came not so much from a love of beauty as from a belief that power over the image gave one power over the thing; so that to get good hunting one must magically foreshadow and foredoom the beasts which one was about to chase. Let me reserve the subject of magic for the next chapter. This much, however, I would say now, that from spell to prayer—from foreshadowing gesture to foreseeing petition—is spiritually no great step, since both attitudes depend on faith. So I am prepared to argue that the cave-artist was a religious man in his way. Moreover, I think that he had refined on the religion previously practised by Neanderthal man in the shape of a care for the future of the dead. For by associating his sense of religion with his sense of beauty, he enlisted in the cause of man's spiritual evolution

a new force and one truly akin to the sense of the divine. The unfolding of our perception of the higher values is, after all, a single process. To evolve—that is, to grow more complex—is to cultivate at once and together all the tendencies that are worthy of the complete man.

CHAPTER III

MAGIC : HOW SUGGESTION WORKS SEEMING MIRACLES

IN the last chapter I said something about the figures of animals depicted on the walls of the French and Spanish caves. I then hinted that, beautiful as many of them are, they were more than works of art, their main purpose presumably being to bring about good hunting by means of what is usually known as imitative magic. The notion underlying practices of this kind, which form a wide class, is that, if we can make the likeness obey our will, the original must follow suit. In another class of magical acts, which have been termed homœopathic, it is not an image but an actual part or property of the thing—some of its hair, for instance, or some earth from its footprint—that provides the control. To illustrate from ordinary experience, when a lady is away, her photograph or a lock of her hair or even one of her gloves may afford some consolation, as being at least suggestive of her real presence. In either case, then, whether the magic is imitative or homœopathic, the mental principle involved is the same—namely, that the vivid suggestion of a desired event is a means to its realization. Now we all know to-day that this principle holds only within certain limits. It appears to be our own inner nature that is obedient to suggestion rather than the nature of outward things. As a matter of fact, however, modern science is none too certain where to draw the line between these two aspects of nature, the mental and the physical; as notably in the case of our body, which responds to the influence of the mind in ways by no means yet fully explored.

No wonder, then, that the primitive man, starting to experiment with this wonder-working power of suggestion, was a good deal vaguer than we are about the conditions limiting its use. With full faith, no doubt, in the efficacy of his magic, the prehistoric hunter doomed his food-animals, picturing their fate so plainly to the eye that, as I have myself seen in a cave in the French Pyrenees, the whole process of the chase is symbolized in detail—the weapons being shown to the right, in the middle what are presumably the tracks of the circle of beaters, and to the left the dying bison, with a bold red patch to represent its bleeding heart. The impression is so vivid that the thing seems as good as done. How can nature refuse to follow man's lead when man is so sure about the way and points it out so clearly? Man already declares in advance that he is the lord of creation. From the dark cave of his mind, as it were, issue directions that will eventually transform the whole face of that material world on which the sun shines.

Let us, further, observe how helpful it is to the evolution of human intelligence that men should make clear to themselves beforehand exactly what they want. The other animals are at man's mercy because they cannot look ahead, as he by dint of a long course of picturing and pantomime has taught himself to do. As for pantomime, another French cave presents the impressive figure of the medicine-man rigged out with the horns and hide of a reindeer, only the legs betraying the man beneath. Doubtless to himself and his fellows, as he postured and pranced, he seemed to have become one with the real reindeer, to be possessed by its very soul; so that, being thus in touch, it gave up its will power to him, and could deny him nothing. Having thus created a bond of magic sympathy, a band of dancers, led by the medicine-man, would call on the food-animals to increase

and multiply. In a second cave close by one may see the prints of many dancing feet, in front of a pair of bisons, male and female, wonderfully wrought in clay. In yet a third cave is a clay figure of a cave-bear—one of a row of such models—with the skull of the real bear for a head; and the body is punctured all over with spear-thrusts, so that one can almost overhear the accompanying incantation: "Thus and thus and thus, O Bear, mayest thou die!"

Now, if anyone thinks that these memorials of more than ten thousand years ago are in a language that we cannot hope to interpret truly at this late time of the day, one has only to turn to the modern aborigines of Australia, who practise a hunting magic which is entirely similar in its outward expression, and presumably therefore in its inner meaning as well. The very man, in fact, who was lucky enough when a youth to discover the clay bisons of which I have just spoken, has written a most convincing novel about the ancient cave-man by drawing freely on Australian parallels to help out the silent record of old-world Europe. The Australian attitude towards the animals and even the plants with and on which they live is summed up in the word "totemism." A totem is an animal or plant species with which a body of men claims to have a special relation, which may be briefly termed kinship; though it is a sort of kinship which, as man understands it, allows one to live on one's relations. To be sure, one is not supposed to eat one's own totem in a general way; or one cannot hope to persuade it by magic to multiply itself in order to increase the tribal food supply. On the other hand, by a sort of division of magical labour, each group, at the cost of abstaining from one kind of food, is assured, as far as magic can do it, of every other kind of food in plenty. The totemite can have his fill of everything in the tribal

bill of fare, *minus* the one dish that it is his business to provide by magic; and this magic involves sympathetic dealings which make abstinence a sentimental necessity. One does not kill and eat a kinsman and friend. Now we have no reason to doubt that this sentiment is genuine. When you admit your special animal into the family, so to speak, you mean henceforth to do your best for it, to make it grow and prosper by your magical patronage. You are not conscious of any treachery in making up to it in order that later on, while you stand by, others may slay it for food. Already at this stage you probably feel in your heart that man is owner and disposer of all creation—that animals are there for man's use. Thus at the back of all primitive magic is a claim, and one that by repeated experiment has been largely made good, to rule the world. By forcibly figuring out beforehand what a better world would be like, magic at least sharpens the will and appetite for power. Then, in the course of the search for power, trial proves some of the many means explored to be really effective, really productive of wonders; and, while the many failures are forgotten, the occasional successes, by unconscious or conscious selection, go to swell the social inheritance, the traditional culture, of the race.

Now someone might argue that trial could only prove that all magic is a complete failure. This is not so. In one department of magic, for instance—black magic, as it might be termed, since it is essentially a magic of black evil-minded hate—the successes achieved by suggestion are only too unhappily manifest. A savage convinced that he is bewitched by a powerful magician will assuredly die, and die in a few hours, unless someone is at hand who can persuade the victim that his counter-magic is even more powerful. Thus I have in my possession a magical pointing stick, procured among the natives of Central Australia. It is nothing very formidable to look at,

being the bone of an emu, incised with a few notches and decorated with feathers. When properly sung over, however, it is reputed to be able to kill a man at a distance by projecting into him evil influence. Sir Baldwin Spencer asked a native to pretend to point a similar weapon in order that he might photograph him in the act. While doing so the native became convinced that the weapon had, so to speak, "kicked," so that the evil influence had run backwards up his arm. Down he sank, and it really looked as if he might die. Luckily the Professor had a strong counter-magic at hand which brought the patient round. It consisted in a dose of Eno's Fruit Salts. Or, again, I could tell stories about our own countryside to show that enlightenment has by no means yet wholly abolished from our midst the fear of sorcery. For instance, I was told about a village near Oxford by one of its inhabitants that it was, in his own words, "fairly scandalized with witches." Incidentally I may mention that the same individual, an old gentleman of the most venerable appearance, described to me how one night he had been "pixieled," and failed to find his way home till morning for the spiritual reasons aforesaid. Or, once more, love magic, as practised both by savages and by us, may well prove effective so long as the other party knows that this special form of wooing is taking place. I could quote, also from Oxfordshire, the case of a wax image of the village policeman found in a girl's bedroom and with her hairpin—it was before the days of shingling—stuck through the heart. Could any male breast be hard enough to resist Cupid's dart in such a form—always supposing that it was common gossip that the maiden was desperate and likely to be up to such devices?

If, then, human beings can work the magic of suggestion on one another with considerable effect, was it unreasonable to try it on nature; more

especially when nature, being wilder then and less under human domination, seemed more arbitrary in its manifestations, and hence more human-like and alive? After all, the animals, towards which so much of early magic is directed, are alive, and, as the domestication of so many species of them shows, are actually amenable to human control, though not in the precise way contemplated by the magician. On the other hand, the weather is not alive, and to try to rule it by incantation was, in a narrow sense, sheer waste of time. In a wider sense, however, magic was the elder sister of astronomical and meteorological science. The ancient magician discovered that, if he made rain when the wind was in the wrong quarter, nothing happened; the powers were moved in vain. So in time he worked out a pretty sound theory, even if expressed in terms of the likes and dislikes of the weather-spirit, of the real conditions in which wet and dry, hot and cold, might be expected to influence the fortunes of mankind. Or, again, there can be little doubt that, since the sun-magic that answered best was that which most nearly conformed to the sun's actual behaviour, the professional purveyor of sunshine was likewise the author of the first calendar. I have heard recently of an island in the Pacific where the magicians have set up a stone which gives them what sailors call a bearing on a cleft in the hills, corresponding to the exact spot reached by the sun as it approaches the pole in midwinter. Thus, catching it as it were in a forked stick, they give it a twist that sends it back obediently on the return journey towards the Equator. The theory may be wrong, but they have got their facts right, and at least the people who depend on their ministrations are thereby enabled to plant their crops in spring—that is, at the truly wonder-working season of the year. Did space allow, I might go on to illustrate further that side of magic in which it anticipates and

approaches what we now call science. Medical science, for instance, can be shown to owe much to ancient magic, and has of late years taken full advantage of suggestion as a means of influencing the body through the mind. Indeed, Monsieur Coué might have borrowed his method directly from the cave-men of ancient France. But this relation to science forms only one aspect of the part played by magic in assisting the unfolding of our higher powers. There is another aspect no less important—namely, one that shows magic of a certain type to have provided a pathway to religion. This difficult and debatable subject, however, I must reserve for the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION: HOW THE CULT OF THE SACRED IS UNIVERSAL

IN the previous chapters, when alluding to prehistoric times, I spoke about the cave-man's care for his dead, and, again, about his ceremonies for increasing the food supply. Now are we going to recognize in such acts the beginnings of religion? It is, of course, to some extent, a question of words. Some of us may prefer to keep the word "religion" for an attitude of mind considerably beyond the reach of cave-men and other savages. Now if it were the practical question that was before us—namely, the question what religion is suitable for civilized people—we might have to give the word this more restricted sense. Our present concern, however, is not with practice, but with theory. Our subject is the scientific study of man's nature as revealed in the whole long course of his known history. Hence it will be convenient for us to have a very wide definition of religion, such as will identify it with some broad tendency common to mankind in general. It is the same with all the other definitions of the scientific student of man. When he says "marriage" or "morality" or "law" he does not mean *our* marriage, *our* morality, *our* law in particular, but has a universal tendency in view. He believes that there is enough in common between all men to justify him in acknowledging their claim to have some share, however humble, in these abiding interests, which form the very framework of human culture. Will anyone go so far as to deny the savage capacity for religion altogether? I think not. And, if so, will he not make a further concession, and

allow that this capacity, from the earliest times known to us, has been actively exercised to some extent? Doubtless, primitive man found the way to religion by what we may choose to call the light of nature. So long as some sort of natural religion is allowed to his credit, science is content. What we want, then, is a conception of religion at its widest—which is to say, at its least. Let me suggest that it will be enough for our present purpose to regard men as religious in so far as they practise sacred rites—a thing which they all do, and always have done.

Firstly, then, what do we mean by rites — by a ritual? In dealing with the savage, it is necessary to look in the first instance to what he does rather than to what he thinks and believes, because he himself is much more clear about what should be done than about why he should do it. Custom is all-supreme with the primitive man, and so is ritual, which is just religious custom. He is, indeed, far more scrupulous than the civilized man in fulfilling all the outward observances that his religion prescribes. On the other hand, his faith in the efficacy of his ceremonies is more or less blind. Civilized religion, however conservative it may be, is constantly engaged in re-examining its foundations. But primitive religion questions nothing, and, consciously at all events, changes nothing. This, by the way, is the reason why so much that is bad clings to the religious customs of savages. They dare not purge away the rotten wood, and so growth is hampered. So much, then, for the fact that the practice of rites is the outward and visible sign of primitive religion, and one that is everywhere displayed throughout the world.

It remains, in the second place, to ask what is meant by terming them *sacred* rites. What gives them this sacred character in the eyes of the people themselves? Now, as I have said, the early forms of religious faith are more or less blind, and, in order to make sense of

them, we must put into words of our own those thoughts which remain so much at the back of the mind of the savage that he can express them only very crudely, if at all. Let us, then, try to put the savage view of sacredness in our own words thus: sacred rites have to do with unseen wonder-working powers which, if dealt with in the right way, will work their wonders for the good of man. Some view of this sort, I believe, underlies the practice of sacred rites everywhere and always. When we try to go a little further, however, and cross-examine the savage as to whether these powers in which he believes are personal or impersonal agencies, we must expect to get very vague and confused answers. Sometimes, indeed, it is pretty clear that the rites have to do with personal beings. Take, for instance, that care for the dead which goes back to the earliest cave-men. We do not know, of course, for certain that at this stage there was any belief that the dead could influence the affairs of the living for better or worse; and that this was the reason why their future wants, in the way of food and weapons, were attended to. Sooner or later, however, funeral rites undoubtedly came to involve the propitiation of the dead as surviving personalities of dread potency who reward due respect and punish the want of it.

Here we have one of the roots — the tap-root, I suspect — of that great class of beliefs that may be summed up in the word “animism” or “spiritism.” On this theory, though a man’s body perishes, as all can see that it does, something that one cannot see, his personality, lives on, and, moreover, continues to take a lively interest in the affairs and the behaviour of those left behind in the world. How this belief grew up, one can only guess. Perhaps at first the corpse, terrifying in its altered appearance, was simply abandoned, together with the weapons and other belongings that, so to speak, reeked of the personality

of the dead man. Perhaps he was abandoned as he still lay dying, and the food was left there on the chance that he might recover. In any case, we may be sure that in such times of backward intelligence the practice ran ahead of the theory, and, in fact, gave it the very shape it was destined to take. Now, so far we have been considering a type of ritual practice—namely, the provision of food and other comforts—which would make for a conception of the nature of the dead that emphasizes their human and personal side. We all enjoy our creature comforts, and in this respect the dead are taken to be of like passions with ourselves. But other ceremonies relating to the dead sometimes seem to strike a rather different note. For instance, the Australian natives are fond of dressing up as their ancestors and solemnly enacting their legendary doings. One might call them historical plays if the whole point of such drama were not its efficacy as a piece of ritual—namely, as a means of getting into touch with the sacred dead. Other primitive folk, who do very similar things, have a theory of what is known as “possession” to account for the religious value of the performance. In other words, they say that the spirits enter into them and enable them to do wonders. There is no evidence, however, to show that this is the Australian view. They have discovered that they are the better for feeling like those grand old men of the grand old days, and they dance themselves up into feeling like them by the most elaborate pantomime. The method is not like that of conciliating a man by offering him food, but rather like that of working upon him by making use of his image. In short, this type of ritual practice has more to do with what most people would call magic. This comes out all the more clearly when we look into the Australian legends dealing with these same ancestors of theirs. It then turns out that the wonder-working men of the grand old days were very much the same

as the totems—in other words, were glorified animals. Now another leading branch of Australian ritual is one intended to cause the totem animals to increase and multiply. I spoke about it in my last chapter because it affords the nearest parallel to the proceedings of the cave artists of Europe, who painted the beasts on which they lived in order to control their fate. It is quite likely, then, that the tendency of Australian thought, such as it is, about the meaning of their dramatic rendering of the doings of their ancestors is to associate it with this control of the food supply, and to imagine it not as a matter of intercourse with a spirit, but rather as a matter of the transference of supernatural influence.

There are a great many words in the Australian and other savage languages that have this sense of supernatural influence; while good influence and bad influence of the kind are often distinguished by special terms. The Polynesian word "*mana*," for instance, has this meaning of mystic influence or wonder-working power; and, although the Polynesians are people of a relatively high grade of culture, there is no harm in borrowing their word to express the general idea, apart from any special associations it may have had for them. *Mana*, then, stands for the power brought into action by sacred rites so far as it takes on a more or less impersonal aspect. It resembles a sort of spiritual electricity, which the expert can generate and transmit, whether in order to help or to hurt, while the plain man regards it as altogether too dangerous to handle. Thus the savage remains somewhat uncertain whether God or Nature, a spirit of wisdom and love, or a system of non-intelligent and blind forces, is there to respond to his efforts to persuade or oblige it to help him. To judge from his practice, he experiments on both theories simultaneously. The most that can be said is that many of his rites imply a doctrine of divine personality and closely anticipate the course

which advanced religion has tended to take; though at least one of the higher religions, namely, Buddhism, inclines rather to the impersonal view of the divine. On the whole, however, theism is the prevailing note of developed religion, and theism, if hardly monotheism, goes back to savages as low in the scale of culture as the Australians. The God of their initiation rites, who is supposed to have instituted and to preside over the system of education by which the youths at puberty are taught to be men, is an essentially kindly being—hardly a spirit, perhaps, but more like a magnified, non-natural, tribal elder, whose interest in the well-being of man is unquestionable, even though he is apt to smite the wicked. Just to show, however, how different from ours a primitive religion may be in regard to its symbolism—that is, the system of outward and visible signs that it employs to express its beliefs about the unseen—let me add that the High God of the Australian mysteries has for his chief and most sacred symbol a thing that occurs in England to-day only as a child's toy, and goes by the name of the bull-roarer. Some of my readers who come from country districts may have met with it in their youth. If not, anyone can satisfy his curiosity on the subject by making one. Cut a flattish, elongated blade of wood with each end curving to a point, and bore a hole at one end so as to tie on a string about three or four feet long. Then whirl it round, having first twisted the string round on itself a little so as to cause the blade to rotate at the same time that it swings in a circle. The result is a weird noise, like the mutter of thunder, like a mighty rushing wind, like spirits in the air. Animals such as elephants, deer, cattle are driven into a panic by the sound, perhaps mistaking it for some trumpeting insect, and hence it is sometimes used by primitive hunters for rounding up the game. But its chief use is as a religious symbol. Probably because its booming note is suggestive of thunder

in the sky, it is associated with the God who lives in the sky, and whose voice is heard in the thunder when he is about to send rain upon the earth and make things grow for the benefit of man. It is a curious fact that the cave-man of Europe seems to have had the bull-roarer. No such wooden objects have survived, of course, but certain ivory pendants look like copies of wooden bull-roarers, and, if the latter already had a sacred significance, might well have been worn for luck; just as other religious symbols, the cross or the crescent, may lend their form to amulets. If, then, the bull-roarer goes back to these very ancient times as a symbol of religion, this might help to explain its very wide distribution over the savage world to-day, no continent being without it. Now it may seem childish to liken the noise made by this thing of wood and string to the voice of a God, but in passing judgment on the savage we must allow for the fact that the bull-roarer is probably always regarded as more or less of a symbol. Something quite humble and ordinary may, after all, serve well enough to suggest something else of supreme importance. In fact, as I have already said, we learn enough about Australian beliefs concerning their High God to know that they can, and do, think of him as the author and sustainer of all that makes life worth living. They even call him "Our Father," though the Australian's word for father has more the sense of "tribal elder." Here God, then, stands for the intelligence inspiring the social institutions of man. In subsequent chapters on marriage, government, and law, I shall try to show how much intelligence is involved in their development, and how much religion has had to do with bringing it out.

CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE: HOW FAMILY LIFE IS FUNDAMENTAL

I HAVE already said that religion has played a large part in assisting the development of interests so essential to human welfare as are marriage, government, and law. I must now try to make good this statement in regard to marriage, but must, at the same time, insist on the social meaning and value of a practice which of human institutions is, in a sense, the most fundamental of all. I say "in a sense" because it is in a very wide sense that marriage must be understood in order to warrant this description of it. In fact, every kind of socially recognized union between people of opposite sex that enables them by their joint efforts to produce and rear a family must count as marriage for the scientific student of mankind. In a way, man has been very free in his experiments in matrimony; so much so, indeed, that a cynic might question whether anything he had tried had quite come up to his expectations. Nevertheless, despite all these shifts in their mutual relations, the two sexes have somehow together managed to maintain the race all these many years; and that is something for which we may be profoundly grateful, if we are grateful for being alive at all. In short, marriage, as it must be understood for scientific purposes, amounts to nothing less than a biological necessity—to a manifestation of the life-force as it reaches its fullest expression in the human species. Our children cannot be left to themselves to grow up, as the young of some of the lower organisms can be left. The human infant must be fed and protected, and the

fostering process must be carried on during a protracted youth. In a word, childhood in the human species is inconceivable without parental care. Parentage, however, and marriage mean much the same thing for the science of man.

But were the earliest parents individual man and wife, or was the parentage a more or less communal affair? This is a point on which controversy rages, and my advice is that everyone should study the facts and try to form an opinion of his own. Personally, I favour the view that the nucleus of human society has always been papa, mamma, and baby. In other words, I do not believe in a stage of society addicted to communal marriage and to a communal nursery. I doubt if any of us would be here if our ancestors had done their child-rearing by committee. No doubt a sort of communism prevails in the chicken-run. The human child, however, requires far more attention than the chick, and for a much longer time; and it is not easy to see how any but those who paired for the child-rearing period—that is, in effect for life—could normally prove equal to a responsibility so weighty. On the other hand, I freely admit that the social group as a whole takes a great interest in the children, and often removes them at a fairly early age from the parents' hands in order to initiate them in their tribal duties. Children are, in fact, the chief pride of the group and their most treasured possession; for they are the recruits to whom one day the veterans must turn for succour. Human society, however, is never so whole-heartedly co-operative as to be without the competitive element altogether. It happens, moreover, that among men, as throughout nature at large, the rivalries due to sex unloose the fiercest passions. Jealousy is not to be charmed out of existence by any social convention. The will to have and to hold for oneself seems implicit in the process of sexual selection. Thus there is plenty of evidence that savage folk fall in

love, even as we do. I could even point to an Australian tribe where it is not the mere male who alone has a chance of exercising freedom of choice in the matter of a mate. On the contrary, the woman usually exercises the right of proposing. She says to the young man whom she favours: "What do you eat?" And if he answers: "Kangaroo steak, slightly underdone," or whatever his special fancy may be, that settles the question.

Let me add that among this same Australian tribe, the Kurnai of Gippsland, it sometimes happens that the unmarried girls in a body have reason to think that the young men are not so attentive to them as they ought to be. Thereupon they resort to a rather peculiar way of bringing the shy and backward youths to book. Each sex in this tribe has a totem of its own—namely, a special kind of bird which is its "friend," as they say. So the girls go out in a body and kill the boys' bird-friend, and the boys, being naturally indignant, retort by killing the girls' bird. The result is a free fight, in which the lusty young females use their digging-sticks on the pates of the youths for all they are worth, while the youths in their turn make playful digs with their spears at the girls' legs. The net result, we are told, is that all shyness wears away between them, and engagements become the order of the day. Let me add, however, that all the initiative does not lie on the side of the ladies. For in this very same tribe there is a kind of magician who specializes in elopements. A young man has only to go to him, and by his occult art he will cause the lady's heart to melt more and more until one day, whatever her parents may have decided about her future, she bolts off into the bush with her wily lover.

Here, then, are some reasons, and I could multiply them indefinitely, why, personally, I incline to regard human marriage as essentially an individual rather than a communal affair. I must now go on, however,

to point out that primitive marriage, and perhaps, to some extent, all marriage serves a social purpose which is in so far inconsistent with the interests of the individuals who marry that one of them, the man or the woman, is bound to play second fiddle. It all turns on the question which kinship group is to get the benefit of the children. Are they to belong to the husband's people or to the wife's people? Which of the two family names shall they bear? Whichever way it is decided, it is bound to be a one-sided arrangement, leaving the parent whose function it is to contribute to the numbers of an alien group a little out in the cold. But someone may ask: Why should not both parents belong to the same social group? This question brings us face to face with one of the greatest puzzles of the science of man—namely, the origin of what is known as the law of exogamy or marrying-out. A primitive society is normally split into two halves, while often each half is in turn subdivided into a number of clans with distinguishing names of their own. These divisions rigidly govern marriage, and it is not only a legal crime, but an offence against religion—in short, an abominable sin—to marry within one's own group. Thus husband and wife are always, in some sense, strangers to each other, and one or other must stand by while strangers impose on the children their own special family tradition—their totem, for instance, with all the religious duties implied in such a relation to a particular animal- or plant-friend. As for the way in which exogamy may have arisen, the matter is too complicated to discuss at length, and I can only indicate my personal opinion that we are born with a natural tendency to fall in love outside the circle of those with whom we have been brought up very closely from childhood. If so, this tendency, making as it does for a salutary mixing of blood, would gradually become embodied in the social organization of the human stocks that have

proved most successful in the struggle for existence. Such a custom of marrying-out, moreover, would not only have the effect of strengthening the breed. It would likewise knit society into larger and ever larger groups by promoting political alliances such as must inevitably extend the limits of kinly—that is, kindly—feeling.

But let me return to my former point—namely, that exogamy, by assigning the children to a group which is that of one parent only, causes the other parent to have the worst of the bargain. Now in our world it is the wife, if anyone, who might complain that her family counts for less in determining the social position and prospects of the children. Though modern society has done much to equalize relations between husband and wife, even so it would be true to say that a sort of father-right, as it is termed, normally prevails among us. Not that the opposite condition—namely, mother-right—is impossible under our law. If I choose to marry a rich wife who stipulates that we shall dwell in her palatial mansion, and that the children shall bear the historic name of her family, that would be mother-right to all intents and purposes. In such a case, moreover, it is pretty obvious that the lady and her people would have more to say than I should about the children's future. Now mother-right is fairly common among savages, though it does not often take the extreme form in which the wife remains at home with her people and the husband is hardly more than a tolerated visitor. I therefore do not see much ground for supposing, as some do, that this very one-sided system, in which the husband hardly counts at all, was the original type of marriage throughout the world. At any rate, both systems can exist side by side at the present day. In some of those more developed societies of primitive pattern, in which people have come to differ considerably in wealth, we sometimes find the poor man obliged to live with

the wife's folk, at least for a time, while the rich man takes his wife home with him at once. The former method is, in fact, a way of acquiring the right to marry by service instead of by goods paid down. One usually hears the term "wife-purchase" applied to such arrangements, but that is not the savage idea at all. What is bought or earned is the right to own the children. Sometimes, for instance, the children born while the man is, so to speak, serving in the house of Laban belong to the family of Laban—that is to say, to the wife's house. As soon, however, as the man has worked off his debt by seven years' labour, or whatever the customary term may be, the children are his, and the wife, too, is more fully his, since henceforth she must follow his fortunes. Indeed, often under extreme father-right she becomes in marriage so entirely part and parcel of the husband's group that, if he dies, a brother or other member of his kin takes over the widow; the children of the later union being, however, sometimes treated as if they were the dead man's offspring.

Let me, in conclusion, say that from the earliest times marriage has been regarded as a sacrament. Primitive religion is quite capable of conceiving matrimony as a holy state. The birth of children, in which lies the hope of the future, is for the whole community a solemn mystery; and every stage of parentage, from betrothal to the baptism or initiation of the child, is marked by sacred rites, the object of which is to secure a blessing, or, what amounts to the same thing, to ward off evil influences. Half the ceremonial of a modern wedding, from joining with a ring or wearing a veil, to throwing rice or an old shoe, consists of survivals of ancient practices, all of which once were full of serious meaning, as, indeed, the use of the ring still is. No longer, however, do we go the length of causing bride and bridegroom to exchange clothes as primitive folk sometimes do, perhaps to

symbolize their union, but more probably to serve as a disguise against the powers of evil. Indeed, one has only to read such a book as Dr. Westermarck's *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco* to see what a host of peculiar customs are called into existence by the need of averting evils or securing blessings in connection with a wedding. Not only must both bride and bridegroom be protected from evil influences as being in a spiritually delicate condition; it is equally necessary to secure by special ceremonies that the union shall be lasting, that there shall be children in plenty, that there shall be domestic peace, even that the wife shall not be a spendthrift, or, again, that her mother shall not interfere too much in the affairs of the young couple. There are likewise minor rites intended to bring about that the wedding shall be attended by many guests, or, again, that the unmarried portion of the said guests shall themselves be married soon, since a wedding is always regarded as the potential source of other weddings—as, indeed, in my experience it is. Many other things could I relate about marriage customs—how, for instance, the unfortunate bridegroom in Morocco has to submit to a ceremonial shower of stones—I presume because he engaged in a sort of symbolic capture of the bride. He gets a little of his own back presently, however, because when the couple reach home, he is expected to give his bride a symbolic beating, or even to kick her gently, by way of giving expression to a notion equivalent to that of the word “obey” in our marriage service.

But my space is limited, and I can only hope that on a vast subject I have said enough to show the fundamental importance for mankind of those age-long institutions, marriage and the family.

CHAPTER VI

GOVERNMENT: HOW AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP ARE ESSENTIAL

IN my last chapter, which dealt with marriage, I tried to show how there was a religious as well as a social side to its development. Exactly the same is true about my present subject, the evolution of government. Now, one is apt to think of the savage as an ungovernable person, and perhaps in a sense he is. Some savages, indeed, are of a very mild disposition, but others are as fierce as wolves; our own ancestors, I may add, almost certainly belonging to the latter class. Unbridled passion, then, may seem to be a primitive characteristic so long as we consider solely the fighting savage in his relation to the enemy. But in relation to his own folk even the most ferocious of them is another person. Indeed, the fighting man probably appreciates better than anyone else the need of discipline. The principle that union is strength holds even for the wolf-pack, as Kipling brings out so well in *The Jungle Book*. I would therefore go so far as to say that a primitive community has to be uncommonly well governed to exist at all, and that actually the average savage is thoroughly loyal in his devotion to duty as he understands it. Our difficulty, however, is to discover how this can happen, seeing that in many cases the machinery of government is hardly in evidence at all.

If one takes a surface view of primitive life, it looks as if the people did what was right of their own accord without the aid of pastors and masters spiritual or lay. In that way one might easily slip into the fallacy of supposing that savagery is the survival of a

golden age of innocence which it costs its happy inheritors no trouble whatsoever to maintain. If, however, the believer in this charming state of things could suddenly be put into the midst of an Australian tribe, and compelled to undergo the training whereby each fresh generation is initiated in its duties towards the community, he might wish himself well out of his imagined golden age of spontaneous virtue. Such virtue as the rising generation acquires costs it no end of privation and positive pain. One might almost say that it is bullied by its elders into a state of passive obedience. I do not say that the bullying is done consciously. In fact, in all cases something painful happens to the boys because their elders think it will be for their ultimate good. "After all," they argue, "exactly the same things were done to us in our youth, and see what respectable folk we have become!" So in Australia they toss each boy high into the air with the help of an opossum rug (just as boys at school toss each other in a blanket). This is done to make the boys grow tall, on the magical principle that like produces like. Or again, in aboriginal Australia a bushy beard is much admired; so an older man whose crop of hair was plentiful goes round and repeatedly and severely bites each boy's chin and scalp to pass on to him this hair-producing virtue. I need not go into all the other painful things inflicted on the unfortunate novices for their good—the knocking out of a tooth, the scarification of the skin, and so on. These various practices doubtless have their special significance, mostly of a magical kind, but the net result is to make the boys feel the heavy hand of society, and hence the need of conforming to public opinion. Even with us a boy entering a new school has usually to submit to some initiation rite not wholly pleasant as a way of gaining his footing, by acknowledging the authority of the group over the individual. So, too, then, everywhere in the primitive

world where puberty ceremonies are held—in Africa and America, for instance, no less than in Australia—those who preside over the training of youth have powers of life and death, which they do not hesitate to use. Moreover, the whole process of instruction is accompanied by sacred rites which awaken an emotion even deeper than fear—namely, awe. Thus in one Australian tribe the image of the god who founded these mysteries used to be set up, and the boys were told that he could go everywhere and see everything; so that woe to him who broke his commandments. Hence, if an Australian youth was turned in the long run into a well-disciplined and loyal tribesman, it was not without a severe course of drill supplemented by an appeal to all that the tribal conscience deemed most holy. Nay, the best proof that all this licking into shape is necessary is that, whenever contact with the white man causes such initiation ceremonies to be abandoned, the nerve of the tribal morality is apt to be cut; so that the final result is degradation or utter extinction.

Now, how do the old men obtain all this authority over their juniors? For, of course, if the younger warriors chose to oppose the will of their elders with their weapons in their hands, they could undoubtedly make it awkward for the grey beards who constitute the tribal council. But among savages such a revolt of youth never occurs. The rising generation bows down before the superior experience of those who have lived longer. "Respect the old," says the African proverb, "because they have looked into the eye of the morning"—because they were up earlier, so to speak. The elders are the books of the tribe; they are the only link with all that has gone before; they speak with the authority of the law and the prophets. In the chapter on religion I spoke of the primitive notion of *mana*, or mystic influence. Well, it is in terms of *mana*, or some equivalent conception, that

the savage usually construes the authority of the tribal elder. He views it as essentially a spiritual authority, a power to control the tribal luck, to ward off evil influences, to bring blessings on him that is faithful to the law, and a curse on him that defies it. In his own eyes, too, the primitive ruler, whether elder or nearer to a paramount chief and what we might call a king, administers a sacred office. He stands between the rest of the community and the unseen powers as a mediator whose success in promoting the common good will be in proportion to the strictness with which he regulates his own life. In virtue of his holy function, he himself is holy, and must preserve his holiness fresh and intact for the sake of the public welfare, at the price of austerities and abstinences which cannot but be personally inconvenient. Had I more space at my disposal I could mention a thousand different kinds of taboo, or spiritual precaution, to which the primitive king is subject. For instance, he must never cut his hair or his nails, and, indeed, any washing or cleansing process whatever is possible only under the most limited conditions. As regards food, drink, and creature comforts in general, he has, of course, to be most careful. In the matter of locomotion, again, his freedom is restricted in all sorts of ways. He may be prohibited altogether from leaving his palace. Or, even if this is allowed, he may nevertheless be prevented from touching the ground with his foot, may not cross a river except he be blindfold, must have a large umbrella held over him to shield him from the sun, or possibly to shield the sun from him, must never pass under a tree or anything that casts a shadow, and so on and so forth. The point is that anything that happens to him will likewise affect the whole community of which he is the representative. When he is on his throne, for instance, the less he moves the better, since his immovability brings about a corresponding tranquillity in his kingdom. No

wonder, then, that, humanly speaking, it was not an amusing job to be king, and we hear of primitive communities—for example, Sierra Leone, in West Africa—where likely candidates for the throne were apt to bolt into the bush in order to escape election. Or again, sometimes—as, for instance, at Tahiti in the Eastern Pacific—the king was wont to resign office the moment an heir to the throne was born, finding that as regent he had a much freer hand; while his infant son was probably more ready to put up with the taboo of lying in his cradle—though I dare say he, too, felt it irksome at times and protested accordingly. The popular notion of the savage ruler as a cannibal version of old King Cole, with unlimited lusts that he satiates at the expense of his subjects, is quite absurd. Of course, men are men, and all of us fail at times to live up to our station and its duties. I believe, however, that custom is too strong with primitive folk for any of them, least of all the leading men, to show open disregard for the obligations that it imposes. Their code may be a queer one in our eyes, and we might deem the holy man anything but righteous according to our standards; but to that code of his he sticks pretty closely, and would soon lose his authority if he did not. Indeed, anyone who is acquainted with that wonderful book *The Golden Bough*, by Sir James Frazer, will bear me out when I say that the divine right of kings in its primitive form is a right to serve and to suffer for the good of the people.

Those “strange stories of the death of kings” which Sir James Frazer unfolds for us would, in fact, be unbelievable if they did not happen to be true. In many parts of Africa, for instance, the king is or was a symbol of the public health and strength, which symbol must never for a moment display a failing of its own health and strength lest the weakness be passed on to the thing symbolized. If the king grew

weak, the crops would wither, whereas the face of nature would smile so long as his did. In short, if his constitution broke down, the constitution of the realm was endangered. With stern logic, therefore, his subjects argued that, before enfeeblement set in, he should be put away and his sacred power transferred intact to a successor. Strange as it may appear to us, there seems, on the whole, to have been little trouble in filling the vacancy. With his eyes open to his inevitable fate, the new king bowed to custom and allowed himself to be invested with the regalia that dedicated him at once to social service and to the sacrifice of his life. Thus when we hear likewise from Africa of humbler mortals seemingly done to death at the whim of their lord—as when one potentate kept his ancestors abreast of the latest news by messengers whose heads were cut off in order to send them on their ghostly way—we must not forget that royalty itself was not exempt from the happy despatch. Proudly the messenger stood stock still to receive the blow that would assuredly send him into the presence of the mighty dead. Even more proudly, then, would the leader of men suffer translation, to be henceforth free of his weak body that betrayed him and to rank among the guardian spirits of his nation.

To pass on to another topic, it will have been noticed that hitherto I have alluded indifferently to Australian elders and African kings as if there were no great difference in the type of government that they represent. Let me go on to explain, therefore, that, although they are alike in one respect—namely, in deriving much of their authority from religion and being, so to speak, heads of Church and State in one—they are far from being alike in respect to the kind of society over which they rule. Thus the Australian elder has to do with a clan system and the African king with a class system; and the character of the government varies accordingly. A clan system is, so to

speak, democratic in its way of managing its affairs. In Australia, for instance, each petty group carries on under its own elders without much regard to what the other groups may think or do, and, in fact, is often at loggerheads with its neighbours. Nevertheless, tribal gatherings occur from time to time, mostly in connection with religion, as when initiation ceremonies are held; and on such occasions the heads of groups assemble in a sort of informal Parliament, which exercises a good deal of authority and can even bring about important modifications of tribal custom. Or, again, in North America, where we find a clan system of a more evolved type, a regular rising scale of regulative assemblies has been instituted. Starting from family councils and clan councils, it goes on to tribal and even federal councils, as in the cases of the famous League of the Five Nations, which united the representatives of five Iroquois tribes in a sort of international board.

On the other hand, a class system, which always implies an uneven distribution of wealth, and is often due to conquest and the predominance of one racial element over another, tends to favour aristocracy, with some form of monarchy as its natural outgrowth. Thus in Polynesia nobles and commoners differed greatly in status, and the *mana*, or mystic power, inherent in the noble and all that belonged to him gave him an immense ascendancy over his social inferiors. If one of them, for instance, violated the property of a noble or even ate a bit of his food by mistake, a curse automatically fell on him, and, as like as not, thanks to suggestion, he lay down and died. Or, again, if a noble entered your house and used your furniture, you, if a commoner, had to make him a present of your belongings, as you could never use them again. As for monarchy, which had come into being only in Eastern Polynesia, it was of what one may term the feudal type. The king had nominal

authority over his nobles, but he must go easy with the greater lords lest they should conspire to dethrone him. In Central Africa, however, we find monarchs whose power is almost absolute, were custom not so much more powerful still. Here slaves in large numbers constitute the lowest class, their lot, however, being not very hard except in so far as their lives are at the mercy of their masters. Of the freemen the government officials form a dominant section, but the official must satisfy the king, or he will be quickly degraded. Under such a system as used to prevail, and, indeed, in most respects still prevails, in Uganda, government could be very efficient, and it may be doubted whether many medieval states of Europe were, on the whole, better off in the way of law and order. Of law, however, in its relation to government, I must keep what I have to say for the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

LAW: HOW SOCIAL ORDER DEPENDS ON ENFORCEABLE RULES

WHEREAS the leading men in a savage tribe undoubtedly have powers of life and death over the rest—as, for example, the youths who behave badly in an initiation, or women who pry into the mysteries, have reason to know—yet the real source of their authority is the sacredness of custom. To defy them is to defy the unseen powers with which they are in touch—powers that will not suffer the tribe to depart from its well-tried ancient ways. State and Church are one, and to be a criminal is to be likewise a sinner—one who both is himself accursed and is liable to bring down a similar curse on all who have to do with him. Thus every primitive code of laws is so far like the Laws of Moses that the religious and the lay sides of the social life are regulated together. Or to put it in another way, the legal sanction—the compelling authority behind the law—is at once human and divine. Here, men say, are a set of rules which cannot be violated except at the peril of body and soul alike. The leaders of society must get rid of the law-breaker, not only on the common-sense ground that the public does not want a dangerous character in its midst who may at any time break out again, but also for the deeper reason that the community must keep itself spiritually clean. The primitive view of sin is that it is catching like a disease. And, of course, insubordination really is catching, more especially in a society that lives by imitation and unwritten tradition. In short, men feel that if sin be committed there is a plague abroad, which must be wiped out by wiping out the sinner. No

*The infectiousness of sin was a very common
idea in my time*

wonder, then, that the savage is so remarkably law-abiding. Behind his customs is an authority resting on the firm belief that nothing will go well, here or hereafter, if men abide not by the ways of their forefathers, but throw off discipline and do severally what is most pleasing in their own eyes.

So much for the binding force, half constraint, half consent, that renders the law operative. Let us next consider the procedure by which its operation is directed. Sometimes this procedure is fairly straightforward, even in loosely organized tribes such as we get in aboriginal Australia. If the crime is of a kind held to bring pollution on the whole society—the abominable sin of witchcraft, for instance, or breach of the sacred law that bids a man marry outside his kin—then the elders of the tribal council form the court that sits upon the case; and at their command a band of younger men goes forth, spear in hand, to carry out the decision. Or sometimes the whole community punishes the guilty in what has been called “a wild spasm of wild justice.” Here is a case from the usually mild and peaceful Eskimo. A man has married a girl whom it is unlawful to wed because she is a near relation. The guilty pair are inside their snow-hut. Suddenly the rest of the settlement collect and stamp in the roof, and that is the end of them. Sometimes, however, the crime is reckoned to be the concern, not of the tribe as a whole, but rather of a particular section of it. A case in point is when a member of one clan has been slain in a quarrel with a member of another. The tribal council takes no cognizance of such inter-clan affairs, but the two parties must hammer out the matter between themselves as best they can. Now these groups, semi-independent as they are, have much in common, being interrelated by marriage and having the same customs. Between them, then, there can never be downright war, but conflict will take a legal form,

inasmuch as it will be governed by rules tending to keep it within bounds.

Thus when the clans agree to meet and have it out together it may end in a duel between the accused and a representative of the injured group. The worst of a duel as a way of settling such a dispute, however, is that the wrongdoer may well add a second death to the first, thus actually increasing the grievance of the other side. This, for instance, was the weak point of the so-called "judgment of God"—namely, the wager of battle, by which disputes were often settled in this country in the Middle Ages. From the standpoint of justice, then, there seems more to be said for that one-sided kind of duel usually known as atonement by self-exposure. Thus often in Australia the accused, armed with nothing but a light shield, stands up to receive as many spears as the prosecuting side, letting fly one by one and after due warning, feel inclined to throw at him. If he succeeds in dodging their shots, as usually he does, he is quit of further trouble. The avenging clan, having worked off their angry feelings, make it a point of honour to let the matter drop. An even odder way of working off one's wrath is for accuser and accused to confront one another, each with a stout wooden club in his hand. In sporting fashion the accuser puts his head down first, and receives a terrific thump. Luckily their skulls are thicker than ours. Then it is his turn, and he does his best to go one better on the head of the other party. And so they proceed till both are tired, when, as they put it, their hearts become cool, so that friendly relations are completely restored between them. I rather think that in my day a very similar philosophy prevailed among schoolboys—namely, that, when tempers had mounted high, the best thing to do was to "have it out and be friends."

In this respect, however, Australia would seem to be morally in advance of many peoples whose cul-

ture is otherwise much higher. Blood-revenge, or, as they call it in Corsica, the vendetta, is a custom that dies hard, and was well known to our own ancestors so long as any sort of clan system survived among them. Yet among them the principle of "blood for blood" was rendered less harsh by conventions that contain the germs of law and justice. Woe, indeed, to the alien murderer of a kinsman if one caught him red-handed, or if the deed was foully done. On the other hand, at this stage of society when wealth was beginning to accumulate, the payment of a blood-fine would in normal circumstances be accepted as a quittance. The price was for the times a heavy one, and must be collected from the members of the guilty clan so as to be shared by the kinsmen of the victim. Hence the laws of the early Saxons, Scots, Irish, and Welsh are largely taken up with regulating this complicated business of blood-fines or were-geld. Now for obvious reasons it is a nuisance to third parties, and in general a hindrance to the stability and welfare of society, that the country should be torn with endless feuds. Whenever, then, the central government has acquired sufficient strength, as happens more especially when a clan system of the loose and, so to speak, democratic type gives way to a class system with a supreme chief or monarch at its head, the tendency is to intervene more or less forcibly between the families or other groups that are at feud. This process by which public justice is substituted for private justice—as the latter is termed, though perhaps it hardly deserves so respectable a name—is of course gradual. Often the chief or king is no more than an arbitrator, who proposes the terms of a settlement, but takes no steps to see that they are carried out. In proportion, however, as the central authority is strong, it becomes dangerous to neglect his advice. Further, apart from his interest in maintaining the king's peace for the benefit of his

subjects, the monarch is personally not insensible to the value of court fees. So by degrees the theory that the shedder of blood is a felon, whose property, as well as his life, is forfeit to the State, gains ground at headquarters, to the utter discouragement of the feud as a popular pastime.

Now, though his office brings him certain perquisites, the supreme chief in his capacity of judge is, on the whole, impartial, having no more to do with the one than with the other side of the average dispute arising between his subjects. According to his lights, then, he may be expected to provide those who come before his tribunal with a fair trial. I say "according to his lights," because the primitive judge is apt to transfer the responsibility of a just sentence to supernatural means in which we may no longer believe. Thus the ordeal is a typical method of justice whereby the detection of guilt is invested with a mystic guarantee. Sometimes both plaintiff and defendant have to undergo the same nerve-shaking test, to plunge the hand in boiling water, to touch red-hot iron, to drink a more or less poisonous potion, or whatever it may be. Possibly a conviction of being in the right confers immunity from damage in some cases, but, be that as it may, it seems to me that the double ordeal must act as a powerful check on superfluous litigation. Ordinarily, however, only one party—namely, the accused—is required to face the miraculous verdict, and sometimes it would seem the conditions are so arranged that trial and inevitable punishment merge in one. Our own ancestors, for instance, were wont to duck the suspected witch in water, and, if she swam, it was evident that the pure element refused to receive her; so that, instead of being drowned, she was burnt. As for the oath, which is still a feature of the modern court, it has something in common with the ordeal inasmuch as it is a conditional way of calling down the vengeance

of heaven on the perjurer. When a Chinaman in a London police-court breaks a plate instead of kissing the Bible, he is virtually saying: "If I lie, may I be likewise destroyed." So, too, our ancestors would swear on "cold iron"—as the North American Indians still do—thus invoking a violent death on themselves if guilty of perjury.

So much, then, for the subject of procedure, or, as the great jurist Bentham called it, "adjective law." I must say something in conclusion about the primitive forms of what he called "substantive law"—namely, the mass of social rules that either define such relations as are deemed just between the members of a community, or else take means to prevent the violation of these relations. In other words, both a civil law and a criminal law are needed to establish and preserve each and all in their civic rights; and of both these types of substantive law the germs are to be found in the simpler societies. Thus, as regards civil law, which is essentially a law of persons and property, determining how each stands to the rest in respect of the station that he occupies and the goods that he owns, one might almost say that the savage has too much of it, so rigidly must his social life conform to the condition into which he happens to be born. King, noble, commoner, slave, husband, wife, child, have each a fixed status, with corresponding rights and duties no less unchangeably regulated. In particular, the obligations of kinship and the marriage-system keep a savage busy from morning to night. He must never forget to address his second cousin on the father's side by his proper title, or to pretend not to see his mother-in-law when she happens to pass.

For the most part, too, kinship and marriage determine ownership, and the disposition of property. Land, in particular, is nearly always a family possession in which the individual has no more than a

life interest. That, by the way, is the reason why even in modern law the conveyance of real property is hedged round with precautions—namely, that there shall be full publicity, so that no one interested may have his rights overlooked. Quite recently in England conveyance had many picturesque accompaniments, such as handing over the turf in the case of an estate, or the wooden latch in the case of a house. Indeed, freedom of bequest hardly applies even to earnings, since a man's kin can usually claim a share, and, where mother-right prevails, may sometimes take the lot; the wife and children, who belong to another kin, getting nothing. Let me add that the civil law of savages finds no problem harder to solve than the adjustment of the relations between the husband's and the wife's people in all that concerns property. Divorce proceedings furnish a typical case. A man, under father-right, pays ten cows, let us say, for the privilege of marrying a wife who will bear children to him and his kin. She fails to do so, and he sends her home, asking to have his cows back. The girl's kin are sure to make difficulties, and the matter comes before the chief. Probably he satisfies all parties by deciding that the late wife's younger sister shall be sent to take her place.

As for the other branch of substantive law which has to do with the prevention of crime, I have already touched on the subject incidentally when dealing with procedure. The main point to grasp is that certain offences against the state or against religion, treason for instance and witchcraft, always involve punishment by the society as a whole acting through its leaders; whereas another class of offences, such as theft and for the most part homicide as well, are for a long time left to be redressed by private vengeance, and are only by degrees brought within the jurisdiction of the central authority. In some parts of Europe private justice, in the shape of the duel, is by no means even now extinct.

CHAPTER VIII

COMMUNICATIONS: HOW CULTURE DEPENDS ON INTERCOURSE

CULTURE, as I have already said, is communicable intelligence. It consists in thoughts, feelings, and activities that can be shared. So far as it can be credited with a separate nature of its own, it may be said to exist between minds rather than in them. Now, in the strict biological sense, only the individual mind is subject to evolution as determined by heredity and natural selection. Culture considered apart from the minds that participate in it develops differently—namely, by a process of expansion. Its function being simply to promote mental interaction, its value can be expressed in terms of its communicability. In its material no less than in its oral forms culture is, then, as it were, the language of social life, the sole medium for expressing the consciousness of our common humanity. It follows that the best clue to the history of culture is the study of its various manifestations as they severally and together depend on improved communications of various kinds. These kinds can, in the next place, be reduced to two, if we broadly distinguish internal from external communications—those that occur between the members of a given society from those that take place between them and the rest of the world. The distinction is all the more needful to draw because the trouble with primitive folk—the fact that keeps them backward—is not so much that they fail in mutual understanding of each other as that they remain shut up within their own narrow circle and cannot get into spiritual touch with their neighbours.

Attending, then, first to the subject of internal communications, we must be prepared to recognize the beginnings of culture even in those very inarticulate relations that prevailed in the cave-man's den. Living cheek by jowl as its inhabitants did, silent imitation would suffice to propagate useful habits among them. Technical processes, such as lighting a fire or trimming a flint, would be faithfully copied. Again, emotional states would be intensified by contagion, and in full concert must the group have screamed defiance at the cave-bear or howled over the body of a slain kinsman. Nay, since there is evidence that they buried their dead with ceremony, their culture presumably included some nascent sense of communion with the generations that were gone. If on the other hand we turn to such savages as exist to-day, we find them one and all to be fairly well equipped in the art of effective speech, and by this means able to extend considerably their system of social relations. Though it is a mistake to suppose that all primitive folk are organized in tribes, yet at the stage of society when food is wholly or mostly got by hunting the tribe is normal, being essentially a union of inter-marrying groups using a common language. The political cohesion may indeed be otherwise slight, but there is always the power of talking things over together to serve as a consolidating force. Of course, much must depend on the nature of the tribal territory. In an area where food is plentiful the associated bands will tend to remain in close touch; whereas, scattered about in a desert or along a strip of barren coast, they are bound to see less of each other. Sometimes, too, concentration will vary with the season. When the arid wastes of Central Australia enjoy the infrequent rains that clothe them with sudden verdure as if by magic, the wandering bands can assemble to hold high holiday; and this festivity is accompanied by solemn mysteries that,

whatever else they may be intended to accomplish in a wonder-working way, certainly serve to renew the social tie, translated as it thereby is into terms of spiritual brotherhood. Or, again, an Eskimo winter, so long at all events as the stored provisions last, is a sort of prolonged Christmastide, when there is time to spare for those ceremonies and shows that form the most potent ingredient in the culture or social tissue that makes the community organic.

Internal communications, however, always have a focus somewhere within the wider limit of the tribe, where the sentiment of fellowship is maintained at its fullest warmth by daily and hourly contact. One might call it the fire-circle, the primitive equivalent of our "home." As a matter of fact, however, it is not always easy for the observer to tell offhand in what direction such homelike conditions are to be sought, so different is savage life from ours. Thus often the two sexes for most social purposes keep apart, so that from the moment the small boy leaves the women's camp he is largely committed to male companionship for the rest of his existence. His particular mates, of course, will be those of his own age, and they may be actually regimented by custom into classes with duties and privileges applying to one and all. Clanship, again, makes for a quasi-domestic relationship, at all events between clansmen who belong to the same local group and need not be summoned from a distance before they can consult and act together. Moreover, the clan is usually possessed of sacred rites of its own, which, as also in the case of the secret society, adds a mystic sanction to the obligations of brotherhood. Various, however, as are these forms of intimate association within the primitive society, we may take it that there is always some supremely formative influence at work consisting in an intercourse inviting constant and immediate intercommunication of habits. Since there is little or no

privacy, a mobbish type of mental life prevails, corresponding to the condition of physical contiguity in which a man and his mates spend their days and even their nights. They hardly need to talk among themselves, so well can they catch each other's words and intentions.

This means, however, that culture consists in common gestures, as it were, rather than in common thoughts expressible in clear language. Thus the moral horizon is determined by the range of the eye. Almost literally, out of sight is out of mind. Actual meeting is the only means of maintaining a none too enthusiastic friendliness between the various sections of the tribe. Very necessary in the interests of social solidarity are, for example, those visits of ceremony which local groups in Australia are wont to exchange. Incidentally, these afford one a good idea of the mixed state of their mutual feelings. The parties approach each other as cautiously as a couple of strange dogs. It is, in fact, etiquette to begin by growling at one another, so as the sooner to get it over and allow good will to supervene. The correct thing, therefore, is to open proceedings by firing off a volley of insulting questions. Who behaved disrespectfully at his mother-in-law's funeral? Who on that occasion cut his head with so little conviction as hardly to draw blood? . . . And so on. Naturally, such remarks are resented, weapons are brandished, and it looks as if it must come to a fight. Convention, however, decrees that such preliminary quarrelling should not go too far. Having worked off their repressions in symbolic fashion, the visitors and their entertainers may settle down with clear consciences to enjoy a pleasant evening. Seen close at hand, their speech-fellows from a distance turn out to be not so different from themselves; marriage connections and ties of clanship are reinforced by bodily proximity. In short, a spirit of neighbourliness invades their hearts, which

may stand them in good stead later on if it happens that real enemies, men of a wholly alien culture, threaten to sweep them out of the land, and nothing but common action will avail against the common danger.

To pass on to the other kind of communications classed as external, enough has already been said to indicate that such externality is always a matter of degree. In a loosely organized society of mere hunters, whose way of life entails considerable dispersal, there is little cohesion; and, apart from the occasional gatherings already mentioned to which custom imparts a peaceful character, constant bickerings occur which tend to reduce normal intercourse to a state of regulated, and hence mitigated, warfare. The Australian natives have, for instance, an incapacity for recognizing the fact of natural death, which causes them to attribute every loss within their own group to the evil magic of the next group living somewhere away in a direction which the diviner has no difficulty in pointing out. Off goes the avenging party, and the only mitigating rule as between members of the same tribe is that, in place of a general scrimmage, some kind of quasi-legal form of combat is apt to ensue—a duel, or, perhaps, an act of expiatory self-exposure on the principle of standing up to be shot at and dodging if one can. From such regulation of conflict within the tribe to the beginnings of an international law such as governs the relations of alien enemies is but a step. True, there may be war to the knife, as when a body of invaders, with famine or fear pressing on them from behind, sweeps down like a swarm of locusts with destruction in its train. When, however, a certain equilibrium exists between separate societies, warfare often takes on the character of an almost friendly rivalry, a competition in knightly daring and skill, and many courtesies arise to soften its rigours. Stout warrior as he was,

the Maori chief was preoccupied with the ceremonial of war, and neither bloodshed nor loot interested him so much as the niceties of chivalrous behaviour. For the rest, war breeds mutual respect whenever there is any sort of equivalence between the forces matched, and thus, paradoxical as it sounds, is often the harbinger of a stable peace. Peacemaking has its own most binding conventions, and the law that the person of the ambassador is sacred goes back to very primitive times. To stop fighting would seem to be a natural function of woman, who in Australia not only interposes in the quarrels of her own men-folk, often be it said to her own detriment, but acts as official envoy when strangers have to be approached.

Self-centred, however, as the early society is apt to be, it ceases to be self-sufficient as soon as its wants exceed in any way the bare resources of its own narrow habitat. Man, moreover, at every human stage of his career, has exhibited a taste for the superfluous. One might almost say about him that, given the luxuries, he is prepared to dispense with the necessities of existence. He can live uncomplainingly day after day on the same food, the seeds and roots which his wife collects eked out with the meat which he secures on his lucky days; but he must have the red paint that only the foreigner can supply, even if it means bartering a good part of his supper in order to get it. At this point the need of effective communications with the rest of the world makes itself acutely felt. The silent trade, as it is termed, is not a very convenient way of conducting business, since what you lay out on the barter-stone may not be what the other man lurking in the bush is after; and, even if it is, he may deposit in exchange something totally inadequate whether in kind or in amount. Further, when the aboriginal mind sets to work in Australia to get over this difficulty, its logic is from our point of view so crazy that the remedy proposed seems

almost worse than the disease. A woman go-between exchanges the navel-cord of her son with that of the son of a woman of the other tribe. Then the two sons are sacred to each other, and they meet without mutual risk so as to hand over their wares directly. Unfortunately, to be thus sacred to each other carries with it the obligation not to talk to each other; so that the trade, though handled with greater despatch, remains just as silent as before.

When at length, with the development of navigation and other means of transport, a more intelligent and extensive commerce comes into being, a system of signs whereby transactions can be accurately recorded becomes the key to success. Magical reasons may have originally suggested that the material thing could be dealt with by means of the pictured symbol. Be this as it may, the communication of meaning as such by pictographs, syllabary, or alphabet was the outcome of long experiment, such as was by no means confined to the world of trade, though in no sphere of practical interest did it prove more useful. War and commerce in conjunction are doubtless responsible for the breaking down of most of the barriers that kept men apart so long as everything beyond the light of their own fire-circle seemed unhomely, unsafe, full of bogeys that boded ill. Partly yielding to pressure, as the world became more crowded, and partly because their tastes enlarged with their opportunities, they were gradually led to compound experiences and establish a common culture on which each could draw for what appealed to him most. If one tries to lay a finger on the point at which savagery evolves into civilization, it must be wherever a literary is substituted for an oral method of communicating ideas. Word of mouth wisdom has indeed proved of infinite service in its day. By sheer folk-memory man can preserve a sense of the past that lifts him above the rest of animal creation as a maker of history. But

thanks to the arts of writing and reading the human intelligence is lifted to a new plane of timelessness, where the living and the dead can meet to converse together far more rationally than any Witch of Endor could profess to bring about. A book may contain more culture than a city, if culture be the process of bringing minds together.

The anthropologist, then, is justified in devoting much of his attention to the development of external communications, those currents of cultural diffusion which, starting from some centre of intensive life, sweep over the world, so as to carry to its utmost corners the seeds of fresh institutions. There must, however, be fruitful soil in which such seeds can germinate. In other words, culture can spread only so far as it is assimilated. There must be selective interest on the part of the learner. Hence the subject of internal communications, in other words, the question of the degree of common mental life to which a given society has attained by its own efforts, must not be neglected by the anthropologist, lest he miss the all-important point that communicating is always a give-and-take affair. No educative process is so one-sided that the pupil does not react upon the teacher. A corollary is that the backward peoples of the world need to be allowed a certain freedom of choice in adjusting their ideas to those of the dominant civilization. Culture is no mechanism, no steam-roller. It is the live product of the interaction of mind with mind, stimulating each to fuller self-expansion through participation in interests common to both.

CHAPTER IX

PROPERTY: HOW IT IS THE INSTRUMENT OF PERSONALITY

WHEN the philosopher contemplates human affairs, he selects for notice such institutions as he deems to be typical, and tries to assign to each an ideal function. The anthropologist, on the other hand, uses an historical method—that is, takes life as it comes. He describes the wild plant, naturalist fashion, whereas the philosopher is seeking how to train it so that it may adorn the garden of reason. Now, of all human institutions none is more typical than property. The verb “to have” comes next in importance after the verb “to be.” A man who has nothing amounts to nobody. Even to be “just a body,” as the Scots say, one must have air, food, standing-room, and so on. Starting, therefore, from this conception of property as the means of keeping the body alive and in working order, the philosopher treats it as a sort of extension of the body, and hence of the self which owns the body. For the body, in its turn, might be regarded as the property of the soul or self. Physically it is of one substance with surrounding bodies, but it is nevertheless a part of the environment that has been enlisted on the side of the will, so as to help it to control the rest. Similarly, then, all the material aids that we class as property may be treated, for philosophic purposes, as the limbs of a greater body, through which each self makes organic connection with the world of things, in order that it may thereby attain a richer experience and fuller consciousness. Thereupon the philosopher goes on to assume that the ideal function

of property, conceived as an enlargement of the bodily mechanism, is that of enlarging the soul—developing the personality; and he would regard a rich man whose spiritual range falls short of the extent of his wealth as a giant with the soul of a dwarf—as like one of those small-brained dinosaurs whose huge bulk, uninspired as it was by intelligence, could not save it from ultimate extinction.

It remains to be seen, however, whether history can justify this view of property. For if property exists simply in order to further individual self-realization, two consequences would seem to follow. Firstly, property could not be held in common. One's personality is one's very own, and this is also true of one's body. If, then, collective ownership is anything more than a legal fiction, the analogy between the body and property as a physical extension of it would break down. That it may be only a legal fiction, however, is rendered probable by the fact that in psychology constant use is made of the notion of a collective self or soul as a convenient peg on which to hang the facts relating to intercourse with all its peculiar mental effects; but few thinkers are prepared literally to attribute a soul to a city corporation, still less to the casual crowd that gathers to watch a dog-fight. Secondly, if property is but a medium for self-expression on the part of the owner, it would follow that it must be in constant use. Such a theory might appear to deprive the prudent parent of his cherished right to put by in order to hand on. For either a collective interest in the family possessions must be a fiction, a shorthand way of stating the facts about a number of persons, each with a self of his own; or else the connection between property and an extended activity as the condition of personal self-development cannot any longer be maintained. What light, then, does the study of savage life throw on these difficulties? Now, man was in existence long before there

were philosophers to tell him how he ought to live, and so we may expect his practice to be more mixed than any theory can afford to be. At the same time, economic evolution and moral evolution have followed certain main lines that can be compared together. The argument which brings property and personality together as means and end must conform to the historical process in at least a general way, if there is to be any value in it at all.

To test, then, in turn the two consequences flowing from the doctrine that the true function of property is to minister to personality, what, firstly, is the verdict of history on the point that no property can be held in common? Surely, it will be said, the example of the savage is all to the contrary, since he is more or less completely a communist. Now, this is very true in a superficial way, but the so-called communism, on closer inspection, turns out to be combined with a good deal of nascent individualism. Thus, in the first place, the primitive communist adopts a thoroughly individualistic attitude towards outsiders. Trespassers are duly prosecuted. Mankind as such has no common right to the use of the earth's surface. Each hunting tribe patrols the boundaries of its beat in a spirit of the most aggressive landlordism. Within the community, again, subordinate groups are apt to set up a more or less exclusive claim to their own haunts; and, though fellow-tribesmen may pay visits so long as they are otherwise on friendly terms, the welcome involves all sorts of formalities. Indeed, although it is necessary to be able to range about somewhat freely for hunting and collecting purposes, as well as for those of the purely pastoral life, favoured spots are objects of competitive appropriation on the part of sections of the population, even single families. Thus in nomad Australia, if this island in the swamp is where the wild swans lay their eggs, or that hill is where red ochre can be dug for, the neighbouring

camp is sure to constitute itself prime guardian and exploiter of the treasure.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that, while the collectivism of the hunting peoples is confined in practice to the narrow circle of those who are in daily contact with each other, it is, at any rate, thoroughgoing as regards the all-important matter of the sharing of food. It might be supposed that the individual hunter would feel that he had a right to such game as he had killed, since truly, in Locke's phrase, he has "mixed his labour with it." Yet we find that his only meed is honour, or at most a titbit for his portion, the custom being that every member of the fire circle takes pot-luck, or whatever may be the equivalent in the days when pots have not yet come into being. No doubt the explanation consists partly in the fact that most of the hunting is done in parties, so that all who have assisted in the drive have almost as much to do with the result as the thrower of the lucky spear. But the true reason lies, surely, deeper. To let a companion starve when one is in command of plenty would contradict the very idea of companionship; whereas, conversely, eating together is, in the eyes of the savage, a sacrament, a reinforcement of the sacred bond that makes the community seem, as they put it, to be "all one flesh." Not that this impulse to recognize each other's right to the means of existence is wholly spontaneous, or there would be no need to reinforce it sacramentally or otherwise. Among Australians the first article of the moral code is, "Thou shalt not be greedy," and there are special magical devices designed to impart generosity as regards food-sharing. In fact, the most severe social pressure is needed to keep individual self-assertion in check when it takes a form that is plainly of a dissociative tendency.

Self-assertion, however, need not have a dissociative effect, since a society will be strong in proportion as

its members are individually capable of looking after themselves and making the most of their peculiar gifts. To go back to the hunter who makes the successful kill, he is likely to be the man whose spear is of exactly the right balance—that is, suited to the particular arm which, as it were, it lengthens. Right back in the Palæolithic we come on signs engraved on weapons that look like owners' marks. Certain it is that the modern savage is no communist as regards his personal equipment, whatever may be the case in regard to appliances involving team-work, such as a canoe. The very luck that attends his hunting efforts is treated as a quality of the weapon rather than of the man, yet as a quality which the man's private and secret magic is alone able to impart to it. Now, such privately owned magic is nothing but primitive personality viewed from without. Every man of parts lays claim to magical power in proportion as he believes in himself. For the same reason, a man's decorations are his private property—namely, because their prime function is to enhance his magic. Æsthetically, no doubt, they afford pleasure; but the chief pleasure derived from them is a gain in dignity. The "superiority complex," as one might call it, of the magician, the miracle-worker, the man of luck and genius, is fostered by the sense of cutting an impressive figure. His personality shines forth in his adornments, since by their means he faces the world—nay, outfaces most of it, since feebler folk "lose face" in his presence. They may form a mere collectivity, a crowd, but every crowd must have its leader, and his are the badges of personal authority manifest to all. The best proof that his personality—his "smell," as the Australians say—has entered into the things that make up his magical outfit is that they are normally buried with him; for they are so much a part of him that his spirit is bound to permeate them still. If they are used by others at all, it is with a full sense

Personal
magic

of the original owner's claim to haunt them as a ghost, and in order to have the benefit of the co-operation of such an ally.

At this point one may pass to consider the question how far property, if it is to express personality, must be used. For the inheritance of property might seem a stumbling-block. If one man earns in order that another may spend, can the first man be said to have used the property to magnify and extend his own personality? Looking at the matter first from the point of view, say, of a father who stores up possessions for the use of his son, it is not hard to see how he may well regard his son as being part of himself, so that he himself seems to live on in the career that he plans for his successor. His own personality, in other words, takes credit in advance for its posthumous enlargement. From the son's side, it is obvious that, as the son of a great man, he starts with an advantage, which, however, he must not lose by a subsequent display of personal inferiority. A case in point may be cited from Melanesia, where, as so often in the primitive world, the richest part of a fortune which a man can hand on consists in his private stock of incantations. We hear that a man who has the special charm for making yams grow will bequeath the recipe to his son. The latter, however, must make good by promptly producing an uncommonly fine crop of yams on his own account. Otherwise the people decide that the old man's magic died with him. Nothing could better illustrate the German poet's saying that to possess what you inherit you must earn it. The heir to a library must be able to read the books. The heir to a spell must be able to make it work.

Another difficulty in regard to the principle that property involves personal use relates to the accumulation of wealth beyond the spending power of the possessor. The distinction between productive and

unproductive wealth hardly helps us here, for to employ wealth productively in the economic sense—that is, simply to produce more wealth—does not, if the capital belongs to an individual, save him from the necessity of spending, since there will be more to spend in the long run. Spending, however, implies an active use of wealth for purposes of enjoyment. Yet there may also be a passive way of using and enjoying wealth consisting in the contemplation of it as a potential source of gratifying activity. Indeed, personality is like property in this respect, that it is a potentiality realizable, not all at once, but as desire or opportunity may variously determine. Thus the saying that wealth is power implies that it affords a larger choice among experiences such as are, perhaps, quite incompatible with each other, and in any case may be spread through a lifetime. Among savages, for example, as soon as property takes forms which render accumulation possible, the rich man is apt, so to speak, to sit on his possessions—to content himself with the feeling that they are there. This is manifestly so where wealth of the unproductive type is concerned, as in the case already mentioned of objects of magical value, such as the regalia with which the primitive king's reputed power over destiny and the course of nature is bound up. Virtue emanates from them, and there is nothing to do but to stand by and receive it. To enjoy is simply to have and to hold; and holding is, after all, no purely passive process, since woe to the king who lets a rival wrest from him the symbol of the majesty that goes with his sacred office. Productive wealth, however, is also known to the savage, as notably when it assumes the shape of flocks and herds that in open grassland will multiply indefinitely. Such increase by compound interest delights the primitive owner; yet not because he contemplates a bigger trade in meat and hides, but rather because he is thereby made to feel a bigger man. With

reluctance he kills even for his own table, and that usually when such feasting is incidental to a sacrifice. His beasts are mostly allowed, after breeding to their full powers, to die on his hands. No doubt it is vaguely felt that in this mass of stock there is capital to draw on if the times become hard and the people are starving. But a desire for the greatness accruing to the man of great possessions stands out as the most conscious motive of this policy of using without using up. His heart feels strong within him, he ventures more, and he actually performs more, because there is visible evidence of his power to have his will with the world.

Powerful, however, as may be the leader of the crowd, the crowd itself is ever the more powerful, and at all stages of society has ways of reminding the great man that service is expected of him. Thus unbounded hospitality is the mark of a chief. If he may save up between times, there are festive occasions when he must be lavish in his spending. Of the two extremes, the vice of the miser is judged far worse than that of the spendthrift. A certain abandon in giving is admired. Thus the head of a leading house among the salmon-fishing Indians of North-West America heaps together all the property that he himself possesses and that his relatives willingly subscribe in order to hold a *potlatch*, or distribution feast, at which he and the family strip themselves to the skin. The guests go off with the goods, and the family is left with nothing but the credit. Their turn will, however, come presently, because the guests cannot afford to show themselves mean-spirited, but must return the presents with abundant interest. There may be a certain crudeness of gesture in this reckless flinging away of goods, but the underlying sentiment is sound enough—namely, the feeling that honour comes before wealth, that the material means but subserve a spiritual end. Thus anthropology can offer

some support to philosophy when it is sought to establish an ideal connection between property and personality. The savage tends to view himself outwardly, and so is all the more inclined to identify the extent of his personality with the extent of his visible means of expressing it and making it effective. Further, in proportion as a man proves his power to help the rest, will the rest of a primitive society be ready to allow him to be master of the needful resources.

CHAPTER X

MORALITY: HOW NATURE AND CULTURE MEET IN IT

MAN is the only animal with culture and the only animal with morality. In so far, however, as he is an animal, he starts with a nature on which the culture must be superimposed if the morality is to be produced. Or it may be put in another way by saying that, since morality implies education, there must be something to educate, a raw material on which to work. Using "nature" in this sense of man's original as opposed to his developed state—for, of course, in another sense, one's nature is retained throughout the process of education, and is simply changed for the better—we can identify this natural element with that group of preformed dispositions known as the instincts. It used to be thought that instinct in man amounted to very little; since an instinctive tendency was held to be a self-acting mechanism that must always function in precisely the same way, whereas man is no automaton. Further study of the instincts of animals, however, has shown them to be by no means invariable, but, on the contrary, capable of modification as circumstances require; so that a bee, for instance, can adapt its building to all sorts of odd situations, a tin kettle or an old top-hat, despite the almost mathematical arrangement of the normal comb. Hence, though man displays great modifiability as regards all his impulsive reactions, he is now credited with instincts in plenty. He seems, indeed, to be endowed with a whole armoury of specialized weapons for coping with the world, which, one and all, however, need sharpening on the whetstone of experience

before they are fit to use. In fact, he is probably the animal with most instincts. Yet for this very reason all the more adjustment is necessary, if so very complex an apparatus is to be employed with effect.

Now the savage is often called the child of nature; but he is really a very artificial person. Prehistoric man, when he first comes into view, has long ages of culture behind him. His actual ways of life, though predetermined and, as it were, predestined by an innate bias, are likewise modified by experience, not simply as it comes to the individual, but as it is communicated by one generation to the next. In thus becoming traditional, experience gains enormously in its power of putting a keen edge on instinct, so that much finer work results. Every other animal with little more than nature to rely on is confined to a narrow routine. But man, thanks to culture, spreads his experimental stations all over the earth; at every one of which something different is being tried, with results that are duly noted and passed on. Now this making of man by the accumulation and communication of experience, this artificiality due to self-cultivation, is the glory of our race. No one but a degenerate would wish to go back on that. But there may be reason for holding that certain elements or types of culture are artificial in a bad sense. There may be some justification for the cry, "Back to Nature," if culture outrages nature—if it does not allow sufficient play for hereditary forces that, if pent up, are likely to cause strain and stress, or even utterly to shatter the organism by sudden discharge. So much has of late been written both about the danger of "repression" and about the value of "sublimation" as a safety-valve, that there is no need to go into details here. It is enough to note that culture must somehow hit it off with nature. No mere compromise will do. There must be a happy marriage. In like measure will a sound morality come into being. There must be con-

trol of nature, because the whole function of experience is to bring about a nicer management of the hereditary machinery; but there must not be any starving of nature, lest hunger drive the brute in us to desperation. Thus it may fairly be said that the study of history has for its ultimate aim the establishment of the moral life on stable foundations. By reviewing man's cultural experiments, we ought to be able to tell which of them have most successfully done justice to our original nature, while at the same time helping to convert it into a developed nature enriched by the fullest experience of which we are capable.

Now the human instincts can be classified for different purposes in different ways, but in their relation to the moral life they are most conveniently divided into two main types. Whereas all alike serve the interests of the race, since it is as a species that we compete with the other species for survival, yet one set only has directly to do with inter-individual relations, while the other set is concerned with the individual link in the chain of lives. Thus, on the one hand, sex, parentage, and herd-feeling, which serve the interests of others, have their roots in the nature which each of us brings with him into the world. On the other hand, protection, acquisition, and nutrition serve our own interests, yet result from promptings which are no less a part of our hereditary being. Since life contrives harmony where logic is apt to perceive only contradiction, there is always some balance that can be struck between the apparently opposite pull of these tendencies which make severally for the good of others and for the good of self. Thus all animals reconcile them somehow; but they do so, for the most part, in clumsy fashion, to judge by the wastage caused either by laying down life or by taking it on wholesale principles. Fortunately for the other animals conscious experience counts for so much less in their scheme of existence that they are not aware of its

disabilities, as men would be who look before and after. Aided by reflection, man insists on devising the means through culture of teaching nature to be more gentle—less rough-and-ready in its ways. Self-sacrifice and self-assertion are alike mitigated by bringing them under a rational control which prevents extravagance in either direction. A reasonable morality must so blend duty to others with duty to self that the agent scarcely knows or cares where the one begins and the other ends.

By what system of control, then, is a reasonable morality to be established? Using the term "sanction" to express any controlling influence that has a moral end in view, let us distinguish two kinds of sanction, one of which may be described as external, and the other as internal. Just as the instincts fall into two classes, so correspondingly must the sanctions of the moral life. For they are but the outcome of experience as it seeks to bring inter-individual relations and the individual life in turn under more harmonious regulation than unassisted nature could manage. Thus the external sanction may be identified with custom, the internal sanction with conscience. The former originates in our joint efforts to keep in touch with one another, and, though, of course, each of us has some share in making and maintaining it, the share of the rest is so much greater that it feels to any one man as if it were imposed from without. On the other hand, the individual tends to deem his private conscience his own, even though its dictates are permeated with borrowed wisdom. Now, for the perfect citizen of the perfect state, we might suppose that the distinction between an external and an internal rule of right would vanish. Nay, it is perhaps only in civilized life where vast numbers of people of very various grades of culture are being very slowly made to realize their common interests, that a marked discrepancy is felt to exist between the law of the community and the law

of conscience. The typical savage is hardly aware of the difference. This is not, however, because he and his state are perfect. On the contrary, many of his habits, whether private or public, are stupid and bad, because the critical faculty remains undeveloped—because he has not yet learned how, by conscious selection between alternatives, to draw profit, as a thinking man can do, from his very mistakes. Doubtless he has got a long way past the immobility and stiffness of animal instinct. By largely unconscious methods he manages to change his ways; or else unwillingly undergoes the painful process of having them changed for him by some none too benevolent taskmaster. But the stage of customary morality is at best a halfway house on the road to a rational morality. Following the crowd will not produce the type of good man who is capable of being a law unto himself.

Perhaps the best proof of the advance on instinct achieved even by the savages who are most blindly addicted to custom is to be found in the trouble taken by them to keep up the social system. As civilized folk soon find out when they interfere injudiciously, nothing is easier than to upset the moral life of a primitive community altogether by tampering with its law, its religion, and its traditional mode of educating the young. These three powerful influences, all involving much organized effort, converge on every member of the tribe from childhood onwards so as to exercise him in a kind of social drill. Of the three forms of the external sanction, law operates most completely from without—namely, by means of the infliction of punishments, which, however, are rarely required. Religion, in one aspect, can scarcely be distinguished from law as a threat external to the individual, being, as it were, hung from above over his head; for not only hereafter, but here as well, under rulers whose reputed powers put them on a level with the gods, are dire penalties in store for the violator of

custom. In another aspect, however, religion even in its more rudimentary forms makes some appeal to the inner man, as notably when various abstinences are prescribed as the price of the holiness, which is at once the outward badge and the inward inspiration of a leader of society. Finally, education, even if its function be to persuade rather than to coerce, is imposed on the young by their elders from without and often, so to speak, from behind as well. The school-boy of to-day may think himself lucky that his moral principles are not hammered into him quite so literally as may happen at any savage initiation. No doubt endurance tests are prescribed partly for their own sake, as when the future North American brave must hang from hooks passed through the muscles of his back to see how long he can stand it. But there can be little doubt that all such painful accompaniments of moral training are chiefly meant to produce a fitting sense of that unlimited power over life and limb whereby society enforces submission to its decrees on all its members. It should be added, however, that primitive education has likewise kindlier methods at its disposal, as when the child drinks in wonder tales from his mother, or the father regales him with stories of heroes, or of his own deeds of prowess. Indeed, the savage parent tends to be more slack than severe in the matter of discipline. In marked contrast, when the youth has at initiation to graduate as an adult member of the society, his person is made aware of the full weight of the communal hand.

Now as the external sanction arises directly out of the fact of being together, so the internal sanction no less directly originates in the fact of being oneself. Among existing savages none is so lost in the crowd as not to have a personal name. Indeed, everyone takes his name so seriously that he is apt to identify it with his very self, and hence to do his best to hide it lest magicians work evil upon it, and through it on

him. Of course, he may have various other names which, like his family name, stand for a social designation. His proper name, however, implies that, socially related though he may be, he is likewise unique—not a mere human item, but an individual with a being of his own. In giving him such a name society in the capacity of godfather dedicates him, as it were, to the special duty of developing a personality. Thus it meets halfway the instincts which, anyhow, would lead him to assert his right to exist. Mere self-assertion, however, would lead to a very one-sided interpretation of the moral formula, which, fully stated, is: "Live and let live." At the customary stage of morality, however, crowd-consciousness makes the external sanction so strong that there is no fear of the individual breaking loose; while, on the contrary, there is great need of the man who will think for himself. Thus, to revert to the personal name, one might almost say that the savage sees himself so consistently through the eyes of the rest that he thinks of himself as "So-and-so" rather than as "I." It is with him as if one were to identify oneself with the face one sees in the glass. "I must look my best" is about as near to an internal sanction as the savage gets. His is like that spurious kind of self-consciousness which disturbs one if one's tie is crooked. Self-consciousness, in the sense of self-criticism based on an analysis of motive, is quite beyond his reach. As long as he cuts a brave figure, he is content; while, on the other hand, he cannot stand up to ridicule for a moment. The North American Indian, tortured at the stake by his enemies, has the courage to maintain an undaunted front, lest they see him quail and he be publicly shamed. But the courage shown by the Christian martyr in similar circumstances is of a different and higher quality, because he dies for a principle.

There is no need to repeat what was said, in connection with the subject of property, about the pride of

possession characteristic of the primitive type of great man. It is the case of the looking-glass over again. He must make his own virtue visible to himself by external means before he can know if it be there. So with his *mana*, his personal magnetism. He can conceive it better as proceeding from the amulets that he wears than from his own strong will. So, too, then, his standards of morality are imperfectly internalized. They are canons of respectability, not rules of reason. The reality of the good life—namely, a consciousness of right doing—is confused with the appearance, a reputation for right doing. Even so, however, this undeveloped type of conscience is an important factor in the making of man. The “noble” savage, of whom the poet sang, exists. His sense of personal dignity saves him from much meanness, if, on the other hand, self-display takes the less estimable form of bragging, terrorizing, and so on. According to his lights he is a man of honour; though herein lies the key to his moral limitations no less than to his moral worth.

If a rational morality is the end of the making of man, let it be said, in conclusion, that this end is barely in sight. Nature and culture must be joined in true wedlock before they can bear this divine child. At present they are at most betrothed. The promise of the eventual union of instinct and reason may be said to be attested by the study of human evolution, since there is evidence of progressive harmony in their relations, as with the growth of knowledge savagery is slowly transformed into civilization. Man, however, though in the making, is by no means made. The brute is but partly humanized—that is, tamed. Yet there is hope in the fact that man is his own tamer, and has only to go about the business with sufficient science to be sure of ultimate success.



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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