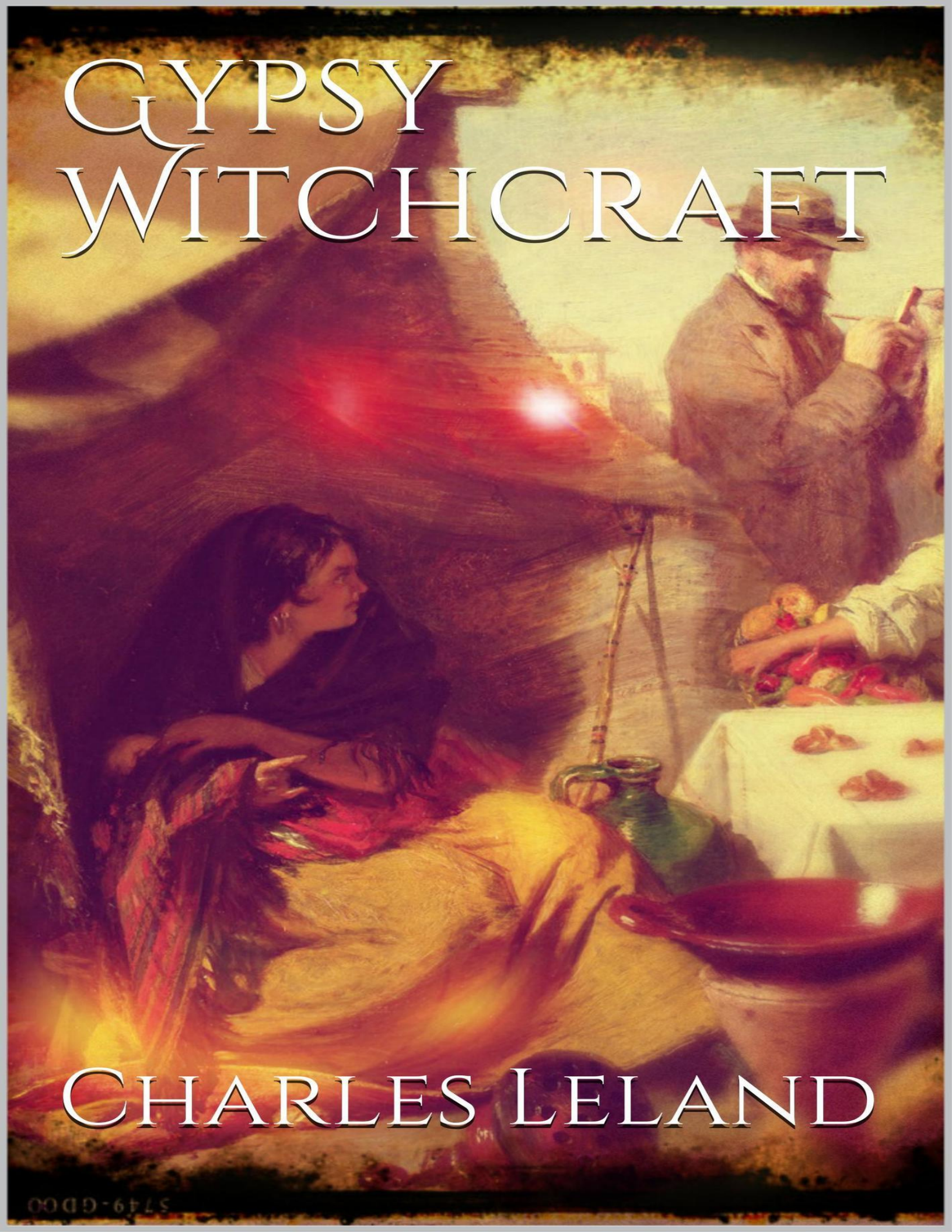


GYPSY WITCHCRAFT



CHARLES LELAND

Gypsy Witchcraft

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Gypsy Witchcraft

Charles Godfrey Leland

PREFACE

THIS work contains a collection of the customs, usages, and ceremonies current among gypsies, as regards fortune-telling, witch-doctoring, love-philtering, and other sorcery, illustrated by many anecdotes and instances, taken either from works as yet very little known to the English reader or from personal experiences. Within a very few years, since Ethnology and Archæology have received a great inspiration, and much enlarged their scope through Folklore, everything relating to such subjects is studied with far greater interest and to much greater profit than was the case when they were cultivated in a languid, half-believing, half-sceptical spirit which was in reality rather one of mere romance than reason. Now that we seek with resolution to find the whole truth, be it based on materialism, spiritualism, or their identity, we are amazed to find that the realm of marvel and mystery, of wonder and poetry, connected with what we vaguely call "magic," far from being explained away or exploded, enlarges before us as we proceed, and that not into a mere cloudland, gorgeous land, but into a country of reality in which men of science who would once have disdained the mere thought thereof are beginning to stray. Hypnotism has really revealed far greater wonders than were ever established by the fascinatores of old or by mesmerists of more modern times. Memory, the basis of thought according to PLATO, which was once held to be a determined quantity, has been proved, (the word is not too bold), by recent physiology, to be practically infinite, and its perfect development to be identical with that of intellect, so that we now see plainly before us the power to perform much which was once regarded as miraculous. Not less evident is it that men of science or practical inventors, such as DARWIN, WALLACE,

HUXLEY, TYNDALE, GALTON, JOULE, LOCKYER, and EDISON, have been or are all working in common with theosophists, spiritualists, Folk-lorists, and many more, not diversely but all towards a grand solution of the Unknown.

Therefore there is nothing whatever in the past relating to the influences which have swayed man, however strange, eccentric, superstitious, or even repulsive they may seem, which is not of great and constantly increasing value. And if we of the present time begin already to see this, how much more important will these facts be to the men of the future, who, by virtue of more widely extended knowledge and comparison, will be better able than we are to draw wise conclusions undreamed of now. But the chief conclusion for us is to collect as much as we can, while it is yet extant, of all the strange lore of the olden time, instead of wasting time in forming idle theories about it.

In a paper read before the Congrès des Traditions populaires in Paris, 1889, on the relations of gypsies to Folk-lore, I set forth my belief that these people have always been the humble priests of what is really the practical religion of all peasants and poor people; that is their magical ceremonies and medicine. Very few have any conception of the degree to which gypsies have been the colporteurs of what in Italy is called "the old faith," or witchcraft.

As regards the illustrative matter given, I am much indebted to DR. WLISLOCKI, who has probably had far more intimate personal experience of gypsies than any other learned man who ever lived, through our mutual friend, Dr. ANTHON HERRMANN, editor of the

Ethnologische Mittheilungen, Budapest, who is also himself an accomplished Romany scholar and collector, and who has kindly taken a warm interest in this book, and greatly aided it. To these I may add Dr. FRIEDRICH S. KRAUSS, of Vienna, whose various works on the superstitions and Folk-lore of the South Slavonians—kindly presented by him to me—contain a vast mine of material, nearly all that of which he treats being common property between peasants and the Romany, as other sources abundantly indicate. With this there is also much which I collected personally among gypsies and fortune-tellers, and similar characters, it being true as regards this work and its main object, that there is much cognate or allied information which is quite as valuable as gypsy-lore itself, as all such subjects mutually explain one of the others.

Gypsies, as I have said, have done more than any race or class on the face of the earth to disseminate among the multitude a belief in fortune-telling, magical or sympathetic cures, amulets and such small sorceries as now find a place in Folk-lore. Their women have all pretended to possess occult power since prehistoric times. By the exercise of their wits they have actually acquired a certain art of reading character or even thought, which, however it be allied to deceit, is in a way true in itself, and well worth careful examination. MATTHEW ARNOLD has dwelt on it with rare skill in his poem of "The Gypsy Scholar." Even deceit and imposture never held its own as a system for ages without some ground-work of truth, and that which upheld the structure of gypsy sorcery has never been very carefully examined. I trust that I have done this in a rational and philosophic spirit, and have also illustrated my remarks in a manner which will prove attractive to the general reader.

There are many good reasons for believing that the greatest portion of gypsy magic was brought by the Romany from the East or India. This is specially true as regards those now dwelling in Eastern Europe.

And it is certainly interesting to observe that among these people there is still extant, on a very extended scale indeed, a Shamanism which seems to have come from the same Tartar-Altaic source which was found of yore among the Accadian-Babylonians, Etruscan races, and Indian hill-tribes. This, the religion of the drum and the demon as a disease-or devil doctoring-will be found fully illustrated in many curious ways in these pages. I believe that in describing it I have also shown how many fragments of this primitive religion, or cult, still exist, under very different names, in the most enlightened centres of civilization. And I respectfully submit to my reader, or critic, that I have in no instance, either in this or any other case, wandered from my real subject, and that the entire work forms a carefully considered and consistent whole. To perfect my title, I should perhaps have added a line or two to the effect that I have illustrated many of the gypsy sorceries by instances of Folk-lore drawn from other sources; but I believe that it is nowhere inappropriate, considering the subject as a whole. For those who would lay stress on omissions in my book, I would say that I have never intended or pretended to exhaust gypsy superstitions. I have not even given all that may be found in the works Of WLISLOCKI alone. I have, according to the limits of the book, cited so much as to fully illustrate the main subject already described, and this will be of more interest to the student of history than the details of gypsy chiromancy or more spells and charms than are necessary to explain the leading ideas.

What is wanted in the present state of Folk-lore, I here repeat, is collection from original sources, and material, that is from people and not merely from books. The critics we have—like the poor—always with us, and a century hence we shall doubtless have far better ones than those in whom we now rejoice—or sorrow. But material abides no time, and an immense quantity of it which is world-old perishes every day. For with general culture and intelligence we are killing all kinds of old faiths, with wonderful celerity. The time is near at hand when it will all be incredibly valuable, and then men will wish sorrowfully enough that there had been more collectors to accumulate and fewer critics to detract from their labours and to discourage them. For the collector must form his theory, or system great or small, good or bad, such as it is, in order to gather his facts; and then the theory is shattered by the critic and the collection made to appear ridiculous. And so collection ends.

There is another very curious reflection which has been ever present to my mind while writing this work, and which the reader will do well carefully to think out for himself. It is that the very first efforts of the human mind towards the supernatural were gloomy, strange, and wild; they were of witchcraft and sorcery, dead bodies, defilement, deviltry, and dirt. Men soon came to believe in the virtue of the repetition of certain rhymes or spells in connection with dead men's bones, hands, and other horrors or "relics." To this day this old religion exists exactly as it did of yore, wherever men are ignorant, stupid, criminal, or corresponding to their prehistoric ancestors. I myself have seen a dead man's hand for sale in Venice. According to DR. BLOCK, says a writer in The St. James's Gazette, January 16, 1889, the corpse-candle superstition is still

firmly enshrined among the tenets of thieves all over Europe. In reality, according to The Standard, we know little about the strange thoughts which agitate the minds of the criminal classes. Their creeds are legends. Most of them are the children and grandchildren of thieves who have been brought up from their youth in the densest ignorance, and who, constantly at war with society, seek the aid of those powers of darkness in the dread efficacy of which they have an unshaken confidence.

"Fetishism of the rudest type, or what the mythologists have learned to call 'animism' is part and parcel of the robber's creed. A 'habit and repute' thief has always in his pocket, or somewhere about his person, a bit of coal, or chalk, or a 'lucky stone,' or an amulet of some sort on which he relies for safety in his hour of peril. Omens he firmly trusts in. Divination is regularly practised by him, as the occasional quarrels over the Bible and key, and the sieve and shears, testify. The supposed power of witches and wizards make many of them live in terror, and pay blackmail, and although they will lie almost without a motive, the ingenuity with which the most depraved criminal will try to evade 'kissing the book,' performing this rite with his thumb instead, is a curious instance of what may be termed perverted religious instincts. As for the fear of the evil eye, it is affirmed that most of the foreign thieves of London dread more being brought before a particular magistrate who has the reputation of being endowed with that fatal gift than of being summarily sentenced by any other whose judicial glare is less severe."

This is all true, but it tells only a small part of the truth. Not only is Fetish or Shamanism the real religion of criminals, but of vast numbers who are not suspected of it.

There is not a town in England or in Europe in which witchcraft (its beginning) is not extensively practised, although this is done with a secrecy the success of which is of itself almost a miracle. We may erect churches and print books, but wherever the prehistoric man exists—and he is still to be found everywhere by millions—he will cling to the old witchcraft of his remote ancestors. Until you change his very nature, the only form in which he can realize supernaturalism will be by means of superstition, and the grossest superstition at that. Research and reflection have taught me that this sorcery is far more widely and deeply extended than any cultivated person dreams—instead of yielding to the progress of culture it seems to actually advance with it. Count ANGELO DE GUBERNATIS once remarked to one of the most distinguished English statesmen that there was in the country in Tuscany ten times as much heathenism as Christianity. The same remark was made to me by a fortune-teller in Florence. She explained what she meant. It was the *vecchia religione*—"the old religion"—not Christianity, but the dark and strange sorceries of the *streghe*, or witch, the compounding of magical medicine over which spells are muttered, the making love-philters, the cursing enemies, the removing the influence of other witches, and the manufacture of amulets in a manner prohibited by the Church.

It would seem as if, by some strange process, while advanced scientists are occupied in eliminating magic from religion, the coarser mind is actually busy in reducing it to religion alone. It has been educated sufficiently to perceive an analogy between dead man's hands and "relics" as working miracles, and as sorcery is more entertaining than religion, and has, moreover, the charm of secrecy, the prehistoric man, who is still with us, prefers the former.

Because certain forms of this sorcery are no longer found among the educated classes we think that superstition no longer exists; but though we no longer burn witches or believe in fairies, it is a fact that of a kind and fashion proportionate to our advanced culture, it is, with a very few exceptions, as prevalent as ever. Very few persons indeed have ever given this subject the attention which it merits, for it is simply idle to speculate on the possibility of cultivating or sympathizing with the lowest orders without really understanding it in all its higher forms. And I venture to say that, as regards a literal and truthful knowledge of its forms and practices, this work will prove to be a contribution to the subject not without value.

I have, in fact, done my best to set forth in it a very singular truth which is of great importance to every one who takes any real interest in social science, or the advance of intelligence. It is that while almost everybody who contributes to general literature, be it books of travel or articles in journals, has ever and anon something clever to say about superstition among the lower orders at home or abroad, be it in remote country places or in the mountains of Italy, with the usual cry of "Would it be believed—in the nineteenth century?" &c.; it still remains true that the amount of belief in magic—call it by what name we will—in the world is just as great as ever it was. And here I would quote with approbation a passage from "The Conditions for the Survival of Archaic Customs," by G. L. Gomme, in *The Archæological Review* of January, 1890:

"If Folk-lore has done nothing else up to this date it has demonstrated that civilization, under many of its phases, while elevating the governing class of a nation, and thereby

no doubt elevating the nation, does not always reach the lowest or even the lower strata of the population. As Sir Arthur Mitchell puts it, 'There is always a going up of some and a going down of others,' and it is more than probable that just as the going up of the few is in one certain direction, along certain well-ascertained lines of improvement or development, so the going down of the many is in an equally well-ascertained line of degradation or backwardness. The upward march is always towards political improvement, carrying with it social development; the downward march is always towards social degradation, carrying with it political backwardness. It seems difficult indeed to believe that monarchs like Alfred, Eadward, William, and Edward, could have had within their Christianized kingdom groups of people whose status was still that of savagery; it seems difficult to believe that Raleigh and Spenser actually beheld specimens of the Irish savage; it seems impossible to read Kemble and Green and Freeman and yet to understand that they are speaking only of the advanced guard of the English nation, not of the backward races within the boundary of its island home. The student of archaic custom has, however, to meet these difficulties, and it seems necessary, therefore, to try and arrive at some idea as to what the period of savagery in these islands really means."

Which is a question that very few can answer. There is to be found in almost every cheap book, or "penny dreadful" and newspaper shop in Great Britain and America, for sale at a very low price a Book of Fate—or something equivalent to it, for the name of these works is legion—and one publisher advertises that he has nearly thirty of them, or at least such books with different titles. In my copy there are twenty-five pages of incantations, charms, and spells, every one of them every whit as "superstitious" as any of the

gypsy ceremonies set forth in this volume. I am convinced, from much inquiry, that next to the Bible and the Almanac there is no one book which is so much disseminated among the million as the fortune-teller, in some form or other. 1 That is to say, there are, numerically, many millions more of believers in such small sorcery now in Great Britain than there were centuries ago, for, be it remembered, the superstitions of the masses were always petty ones, like those of the fate-books; it was only the aristocracy who consulted Cornelius Agrippa, and could afford la haute magic. We may call it by other names, but fry, boil, roast, powder or perfume it as we will, the old faith in the supernatural and in occult means of getting at it still exists in one form or another—the parable or moral of most frequent occurrence in it being that of the Mote and the Beam, of the real and full meaning of which I can only reply in the ever-recurring refrain of the Edda: Understand ye this—or what?

Footnotes

xii:1 I was once myself made to contribute, involuntarily, to this kind of literature. Forty years ago I published a Folklore book entitled "The Poetry and Mystery of Dreams," in which the explanations of dreams, as given by ASTRAMPSYCHIUS, ARTEMIDORUS, and other ancient oneirologists, were illustrated by passages from many poets and popular ballads, showing how widely the ancient symbolism had extended. A few years ago I found that some ingenious literary hack had taken my work (without credit), and, omitting what would not be understood by servant girls, had made of it a common sixpenny dream-book.

Second Preface

The history of western magic started about 4000 years ago. And since then it has been adding something to western magic. Originally, the Latin word magus nominated the followers of the spiritualist-priest class, and later originated to elect 'clairvoyant, sorcerer' and in a judgmental sense also 'magician, trickster'. Thus, the initial meaning of the word 'magic' was the wisdoms of the Magi, that is the abilities of attaining supernatural powers and energy, while later it became practical critically to deceitful wizardry. The etymological descriptions specify three significant features in the expansion of the notion 'magic': 1) Magic as a discipline of celestial natural forces and in the course of formation 2) Magic as the exercise of such facts in divinations, visions and illusion 3) Fraudulent witchery. The latter belief played a significant part in the Christian demonization process. The growth of the western notion 'magic' directed to extensive assumptions in the demonological and astrophysical argument of the Neoplatonists. Their tactic was grounded on the philosophy of a hierarchically ordered outer space, where conferring to Plotinus (C205-C270 AD) a noetic ingredient was shaped as the outcome of eternal and countless radiation built on the ultimate opinion; this in its chance contributed to the rise of psychic constituent, which formed the basis of the factual world. Furthermore, these diverse phases of release came to be measured as convinced forces, which underneath the impact of innocent and evil views during late ancient times were embodied as humans. The hierarchical cosmos of Iamblichus simply demonstrates the legitimacy of this process. In his work, the Neoplatonic cosmology has initiated a channel through the syncretism distinctive of the late antiquity and in the essence of Greco-

Oriental dualism. Superior productions are taken closer to inferior ones by various midway creatures. The higher the site of the mediators, the further they bear a resemblance to gods and whizzes; the minor they are, the nearer they stand to the psychic-spiritual part. The aforementioned group of intermediaries has been settled in order of series on the origin of cosmic gravity. Proclus (c410–485 AD) has described the system of magic origin conversed above in better aspect: in the hierarchical shackles of cosmic rudiments the power and nature of a firm star god disturbs everything mediocre, and with growing distance the impact slowly becomes weaker. The Humanists approached the Platonic notions from the outlook of the bequest of late antiquity, and were thus first familiarized to the Neoplatonic form of the doctrine. And since Ficino's work has been inscribed in the spirit of emanation theory, and the author has been persuaded of the existence of the higher and lower spheres of magic and powers defined in Picatrix, he claims that planets and cosmic movements have much to do with power and magic spirit. Today's occult marketplace also offers, in addition to books, multifarious paraphernalia for practicing magic: amulets, talismans, pendulums and magic rods. Though added with modern essentials and pseudoscientific advices to give some weight to the fundamentals, they are nothing but the leftovers of the western ethnicities of magic.

CHAPTER I THE ORIGIN OF WITCHCRAFT, SHAMANISM, AND SORCERY—VINDICTIVE AND MISCHIEVOUS MAGIC

AS their peculiar perfume is the chief association with spices, so sorcery is allied in every memory to gypsies. And as it has not escaped many poets that there is something more strangely sweet and mysterious in the scent of cloves than in that of flowers, so the attribute of inherited magic power adds to the romance of these picturesque wanderers. Both the spices and the Romany come from the far East—the fatherland of divination and enchantment. The latter have been traced with tolerable accuracy, If we admit their affinity with the Indian Dom and Domar, back to the threshold of history, or well-nigh into prehistoric times, and in all ages they, or their women, have been engaged, as if by elvish instinct, in selling enchant. merits, peddling prophecies and palmistry, and dealing with the devil generally ill a small retail way. As it was of old so it is to-day—

Ki shan i Romani—
Adoi san' i chov'hani.

Wherever gypsies go,
There the witches are, we know.

It is no great problem ill ethnology or anthropology as to

how gypsies became fortune-tellers. We may find a very curious illustration of it in the wren. This is apparently as humble, modest, prosaic little fowl as exists, and as far from mystery and wickedness as an old hen. But the ornithologists of the olden time, and the myth-makers, and the gypsies who lurked and lived in the forest, knew better. They saw how this bright-eyed, strange little creature in her elvish way slipped in and out of hollow trees and wood shade into sunlight, and anon was gone, no man knew whither, and so they knew that it was an uncanny creature, and told wonderful tales of its deeds in human form, and to-day it is called by gypsies in Germany, as in England, the witch-bird, or more briefly, chori-hani, "the witch." Just so the gypsies themselves, with their glittering Indian eyes, slipping like the wren in and out of the shadow of the Unknown, and anon away and invisible, won for themselves the name which now they wear. Wherever Shamanism, or the sorcery which is based on exorcising or commanding spirits, exists, its professors from leading strange lives, or from solitude or wandering, become strange and wild-looking. When men have this appearance people associate with it mysterious power. This is the case in Tartary, Africa, among the Eskimo, Lapps, or Red Indians, with all of whom the sorcerer, voodoo or medaolin, has the eye of the "fascinator," glittering and cold as that of a serpent. So the gypsies, from the mere fact of being wanderers and out-of-doors livers in wild places, became wild-looking, and when asked if they did not associate with the devils who dwell in the desert places, admitted the soft impeachment, and being further questioned as to whether their friends the devils, fairies, elves, and goblins had not taught them how to tell the future, they pleaded guilty, and finding that it paid well, went to work in their small way to improve their "science," and particularly their pecuniary resources. It was an easy calling; it required no property or properties, neither capital nor capitol, shiners nor shrines, wherein to

work the oracle. And as I believe that a company of children left entirely to themselves would form and grow up with a language which in a very few years would be spoken fluently, ¹ so I am certain that the shades of night, and fear, pain, and lightning and mystery would produce in the same time conceptions of dreaded beings, resulting first in demonology and then in the fancied art of driving devils away. For out of my own childish experiences and memories I retain with absolute accuracy material enough to declare that without any aid from other people the youthful mind forms for itself strange and seemingly supernatural phenomena. A tree or bush waving in the night breeze by moonlight is perhaps mistaken for a great man, the mere repetition of the sight or of its memory make it a personal reality. Once when I was a child powerful doses of quinine caused a peculiar throb in my ear which I for some time believed was the sound of somebody continually walking upstairs. Very young children sometimes imagine invisible playmates or companions talk with them, and actually believe that the unseen talk to them in return. I myself knew a small boy who had, as he sincerely believed, such a companion, whom he called Bill, and when he could not understand his lessons he consulted the mysterious William, who explained them to him. There are children who, by the voluntary or involuntary exercise of visual perception or volitional eye-memory, ² reproduce or create images which they imagine to be real, and this faculty is much commoner than is supposed. In fact I believe that where it exists in most remarkable degrees the adults to whom the children describe their visions dismiss them as "fancies" or falsehoods. Even in the very extraordinary cases recorded by Professor HALE, in which little children formed for themselves spontaneously a language in which they conversed fluently, neither their parents nor anybody else appears to have taken the least interest in the matter. However, the fact being that babes

can form for themselves supernatural conceptions and embryo mythologies, and as they always do attribute to strange or terrible-looking persons power which the latter do not possess, it is easy, without going further, to understand why a wild Indian gypsy, with eyes like a demon when excited, and unearthly-looking at his calmest, should have been supposed to be a sorcerer by credulous child-like villagers. All of this I believe might have taken place, or really did take place, in the very dawn of man's existence as a rational creature—that as soon as "the frontal convolution of the brain which monkeys do not possess," had begun with the "genial tubercule," essential to language, to develop itself, then also certain other convolutions and tubercles, not as yet discovered, but which ad interim I will call "the ghost-making," began to act. "Genial," they certainly were not—little joy and much sorrow has man got out of his spectro-facient apparatus—perhaps if it and talk are correlative he might as well, many a time, have been better off if he were dumb.

So out of the earliest time, in the very two o'clock of a misty morning in history, man came forth believing in non-existent terrors and evils as soon as he could talk, and talking about them as fast as he formed them. Long before the conception of anything good or beneficent, or of a Heavenly Father or benevolent angels came to him, he was scared with nightmares and spirits of death and darkness, hell, hunger, torture, and terror. We all know how difficult it is for many people when some one dies out of a household to get over the involuntary feeling that we shall unexpectedly meet the departed in the usual haunts. In almost every family there is a record how some one has "heard a voice they cannot hear," or the dead speaking in the familiar tones. Hence the belief in ghosts, as soon as men began to care for death at all, or to miss those who

had gone. So first of all came terrors and spectres, or revenants, and from setting out food for the latter. which was the most obvious and childlike manner to please them, grew sacrifices to evil spirits, and finally the whole system of sacrifice in all its elaboration.

It may therefore be concluded that as soon as man began to think and speak and fear the mysterious, he also began to appease ghosts and bugbears by sacrifices. Then there sprung up at once—quite as early—the magus, or the cleverer man, who had the wit to do the sacrificing and eat the meats sacrificed, and explain that he had arranged it all privately with the dead and the devils. He knew all about them, and he could drive them away. This was the Shaman. He seems to have had a Tartar-Mongol-mongrel-Turanian origin, somewhere in Central Asia, and to have spread with his magic drum, and songs, and stinking smoke, exorcising his fiends all over the face of the earth, even as his descendant, General Booth, with his "devil-drivers" is doing at the present day. But the earliest authentic records of Shamanism are to be found in the Accadian, proto-Chaldæan and Babylon records. According to it all diseases whatever, as well as all disasters, were directly the work of evil spirits, which were to be driven away by songs of exorcism, burning of perfumes or evil-smelling drugs, and performing ceremonies, many of which, with scraps of the exorcisms are found in familiar use here and there at the present day. Most important of all in it was the extraordinary influence of the Shaman himself on his patient, for he made the one acted on sleep or wake, freed him from many apparently dire disorders in a minute, among others of epilepsies which were believed to be caused by devils dwelling in man—the nearest and latest explanation of which magic power is given in that very remarkable book, "Psycho-Therapeutics, or Treatment by

Sleep and Suggestion," by C. LLOYD TUCKEY, M.D. (London: Bailliere and Co., 1889), which I commend to all persons interested in ethnology as casting light on some of the most interesting and perplexing problems of humanity, and especially of "magic."

It would seem, at least among the Laplanders, Finns, Eskimo, and Red Indians, that the first stage of Shamanism was a very horrible witchcraft, practised chiefly by women, in which attempts were made to conciliate the evil spirits; the means employed embracing everything which could revolt and startle barbarous men. Thus fragments of dead bodies and poison, and unheard-of terrors and crimes formed its basis. I think it very probable that this was the primitive religion among savages everywhere. An immense amount of it in its vilest conceivable forms still exists among negroes as Voodoo.

After a time this primitive witchcraft or voodooism had its reformers—probably brave and shrewd men, who conjectured that the powers of evil might be "exploited" to advantage. There is great confusion and little knowledge as yet as regards primitive man, but till we know better we may roughly assume that witch-voodooism was the religion of the people of the paleolithic period, if they could talk at all, since language is denied to the men of the Neanderthal, Canstadt, Egnisheim, and Podhava type. All that we can declare with some certainty is that we find the advanced Shamanism the religion of the early Turanian races, among whose descendants, and other people allied to them, it exists to this day. The grandest incident in the history of humanity is the appearance of the Man of Cromagnon. He it was who founded what M. DE QUATREFAGES calls "a magnificent race," probably one which speedily developed

a high civilization, and a refined religion. But the old Shamanism with its amulets, exorcisms, and smoke, its noises, more or less musical, of drums and enchanted bells, and its main belief that all the ills of life came from the action of evil spirits, was deeply based among the inferior races and the inferior scions of the Cromagnon stock clung to it in forms more or less modified. just as the earlier witchcraft, or the worship and conciliation of evil, overlapped in many places the newer Shamanism, so the latter overlapped the beautiful Nature-worship of the early Aryans, the stately monotheism of the Shemites, and the other more advanced or ingenious developments of the idea of a creative cause. There are, in fact, even among us now, minds to whom Shamanism or even witchcraft is deeply or innately adapted by nature, and there are hundred of millions who, while professing a higher and purer doctrine, cling to its forms or essentials, believing that because the apparatus is called by a different name it is in no respect whatever the same thing. Finally there are men who, with no logical belief whatever in any kind of supernaturalism, study it, and love it, and are moved by it, owing to its endless associations, with poetry, art, and all the legends of infancy or youth. HEINE was not in his reasoning moments anything more or less than a strict Deist or Monotheist, but all the dreams and spectres, fairies and goblins, whether of the Middle Ages or the Talmud, were inexpressibly dear to him, and they move like myriad motes through the sunshine of his poetry and prose, often causing long rays when there were bars at the window—like that on which the saint hung his cloak. It is probable or certain that Shamanism (or that into which it has very naturally developed) will influence all mankind, until science, by absorbing man's love of the marvellous in stupendous discoveries shall so put to shame the old thaumaturgy, or wonder-working, that the latter will seem poor and childish. In all the "Arabian Nights" there is nothing more marvellous than the new idea that voices and

sounds may be laid aside like real books, and made to speak and sing again years afterwards. And in all of that vast repertory of occult lore, "Isis Unveiled," there is nothing so wonderful as the simple truth that every child may be educated to possess an infinitely developed memory of words, sights, sounds, and ideas, allied to incredible quickness of perception and practice of the constructive faculties. These, with the vast fields of adjusting improved social relations and reforms—all of which in a certain way opens dazzling vistas of a certain kind of enchantment or brilliant hope—will go fast and far to change the old romance to a radically different state of feeling and association.

It is coming—let it come! Doubtless there was an awful romance of darkness about the old witchcraft which caused its worshippers to declare that the new lights of Shamanism could never dissipate it. just so many millions of educated people at present cannot be brought to understand that all things to which they are used are not based on immutable laws of nature, and must needs be eternal. They will find it hard to comprehend that there can ever be any kind of poetry, art, or sentiment, utterly different from that to which they and their ancestors have been accustomed. Yet it is clear and plain before them, this New Era, looking them directly in the face, about to usher in a reformation compared to which all the reformations and revolutions and new religions which the world has ever seen were as nothing; and the children are born who will see more than the beginning of it.

In the next chapter I will examine the Shamanic spells and charms still used among certain gypsies. For, be it observed, all the gypsy magic and sorcery here described is

purely Shamanic—that is to say, of the most primitive Tartar type—and it is the more interesting as having preserved—from prehistoric times many of the most marked characteristics of the world's first magic or religion. It treats every disease, disorder, trouble, or affliction as the work of an evil spirit; it attempts to banish these influences by the aid of ceremonies, many of which, by the disgusting and singular nature of the ingredients employed, show the lingering influences of the black witchcraft which preceded Shamanism; and it invokes favourable supernatural agencies, such as the spirits of the air and Mashmurdalo', the giant of the forests. In addition to this there will be found to be clearly and unmistakably associated with all their usages, symbols and things nearly connected with much which is to be found in Greek, Roman, and Indian mythology or symbolism. Now whether this was drawn from "classic" sources, or whether all came from some ancient and obscure origin, cannot now be accurately determined. But it certainly cannot be denied that Folk-lore of this kind casts a great deal of light on the early history of mankind, and the gradual unfolding or evolution of religion and of mind, and that, if intelligently studied, this of the gypsies is as important as any chapter in the grand work.

The gypsies came, historically speaking, very recently from India.

It has not been so carefully observed as it might that all Indians are not of the religion of Brahma, much less of Buddha or of Mahommed, and that among the lower castes, the primæval Altaic Shamanism, with even earlier witchcraft, still holds its own. Witchcraft, or Voodoo, or Obi, relies greatly on poisoning for its magic, and the first

gypsies were said to poison unscrupulously. Even to this day there is but one word with them as with many Hindoos for both medicine and poison—*id est* drab. How exactly this form of witchcraft and Shamanism exists today in India appears from the following extract from The St. James's Gazette, September 8, 1888:—

THE HINDOO PRIEST

In India, the jadoo-wallah, or exorcist, thrives apace; and no wonder, for is not the lower-caste Hindoo community bhut, or demon-ridden? Every village, graveyard, burning-ghat, has its special bhut or bhuts; and the jadoo-wallah is the earthly mediator between their bhutships and the common folk. The exorcist is usually the spiritual adviser to the population of a low-caste village, and is known as a gooroo, or priest: that is to say, he professes to hold commune with the spirits of defunct Hindoos which have qualified for their unique position in the other world—by their iniquity in this one, perhaps. Every Hindoo has a guardian bhut that requires propitiating, and the gooroo is the medium.

Amongst the Jaiswars and other low-caste Hindoos, caste is regulated by carnal pice, and a man is distinguished amongst them by a regulated monetary scale. One person may be a 14-anna caste man while another may only be a 12-anna caste man. Does the 12-anna caste man wish to supersede the 14-anna caste man, then he consults the gooroo, who will, in consideration of a certain contribution, promote him to a higher-caste grade. A moneyed man having qualms about his future state should join the Jaiswars, where at least he would have an opportunity of

utilizing his spare cash for the good of his soul. The average gooroo will be only too glad to procure him everlasting glory for a matter of a few rupees.

The gooroo, then, serves as regulator of the lower-caste Hindoo, system. But it is our intention to exhibit him in his peculiar position of exorcist-general to the people. This will perhaps be best explained by an account of the case of one Kaloo. Kaloo was a grass-cutter, and had been offended by Kasi, a brother grass-cutter. Kasi, it appears, had stolen Kaloo's quilt one night during his temporary absence at a neighbouring liquor-shop. Kaloo, on his return, finding his quilt gone, raised the hue-and-cry; and Mooloo, the village policeman, traced the robbery to Kasi's hut. Yet, in spite of this damning proof, the village panchayet, or bench of magistrates, decided that, as Kaloo could not swear to the exact colour of his lost quilt—Kaloo was colour-blind—it could not possibly be his. Anyhow, Kaloo kept Kasi in view and hit upon a plan to do him a grievous bodily injury. Scraping together a few rupees, he went to the village gooroo and promised that worthy a reward if he would only exorcise the bhuts and get them to "make Kasi's liver bad." The gooroo, in consideration of five rupees cash, promised compliance. So that night we find the gooroo busy with sandal-wood and pig's blood propitiating the neighbouring bhuts. Needless to say that Kasi had in a very short space of time all the symptoms of liver complaint. Whether the bhuts gave Kasi a bad liver or the gooroo gave him a few doses of poison is a question. Anyhow, Kasi soon died. Another case in point is that of Akuti. Akuti was a retired courtesan who had long plied a profitable trade in the city. We find her, however, at her native village of Ramghur, the wife of one Balu. Balu soon got tired of his Akuti, and longed for the contents of her strong box wherein she kept her rupees, bracelets, nose-rings, and other valuables. This

was a rather awkward matter for Balu, for Akuti was still in the prime of life. Balu accordingly visits the gooroo and wants Akuti's liver made bad. "Nothing easier," says the gooroo: "five rupees." Balu has reckoned without his host, however: for the gooroo, as general spiritual adviser to the Ramghur community, visits Akuti and tells her of Balu's little scheme. Naturally Balu's liver is soon in a decline, for Akuti's ten rupees were put in the opposite side of the gooroo's scales.

Knives of the gooroo genus flourish in India, and when their disposition is vicious the damage they can do is appalling. That these priests exist and do such things as I have illustrated is beyond question. Ask any native of India his views on the bhut question, and he will tell you that there are such things, and, further, that the gooroo is the only one able to lay them, so to speak. According to the low-caste Hindoo, the bhut is a spiteful creature which requires constant supplies of liquor and pork; otherwise it will wreak its vengeance on the forgetful votary who neglects the supply. A strange idea, too, is this of pork being pleasing to the bhuts; but when it is remembered that the Jaiswars, Chamars, and other low-caste Hindoos are inordinately fond of that meat themselves, they are right in supposing pig to be the favourite dish of the bhuts, who, after all, are but the departed spirits of their own people. Naturally bhai (brother) Kaloo, or bahin (sister, English gypsy pen) Muti, the quondam grass-cutter and courtesan of Ramghur village, who in this life liked nothing better than a piece of bacon and a dram of spirits, will, in their state of bhuthood hanker after those things still. Acting on these notions of the people, the gooroo lives and thrives exceedingly.

Yet of all this there is nothing "Hindoo," nothing of the Vedas. It is all pre-Aryan, devil-worshipping, poisoning, and Turanian; and it is exactly like voodooing in Philadelphia or any other city in America. It is the old faith which came before all, which existed through and under Brahminism, Buddhism, and Mahommedanism, and which, as is well known, has cropped out again and flourishes vigorously under British toleration. And this is the faith which forms the basis of European gypsy sorcery, as it did of yore that of the Chaldæan and Etrurian, which still survive in the witchcraft of the Tuscan Romagna. Every gypsy who came to Europe a few centuries ago set up as a gooroo, and did his sorceries after the same antique fashion. Even to-day it is much the same, but with far less crime. But the bhut or malignant spirit is, under other names, still believed, in, still doctored by gypsies with herbs and smoke, and "be rhymed like an Irish rat," and conjured into holes bored in trees, and wafted away into running streams, and naively implored to "go where he is wanted," to where he was nursed, and to no longer bother honest folk who are tired of him. And for all this the confiding villager must pay the gypsy wise-woman "so much monies"—as it was in the beginning and is now in good faith among millions in Europe who are in a much better class of society. And from this point of view I venture to say that there is not a charm or spell set down in this work or extant which will not be deeply interesting to every sincere student of the history of culture. Let me, however, say in this beginning once for all that I have only given specimens sufficient to illustrate my views, for my prescribed limits quite forbid the introduction of all the gypsy cures, spells, &c., which I have collected.

Footnotes

3:1 Vide an extremely interesting paper on "The Origin of Languages and the Antiquity of Speaking Man," by Horatio Hale. ["Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science," vol. xxv.] As I had, owing to studies for many years of baby-talk and jargons, long ago arrived at Mr. Hale's conclusions, I was astonished to learn that they have been so recently formed by anybody.

3:2 Vide "Practical Education," by C. G. Leland (London: Whittaker and Co., 1888), in which this faculty is fully discussed, pp. 184-213.