

King of The Wood

Lectures on The Early History of The Kingship

By

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To Edmund Gosse in Gratitude and Friendship

PREFACE

The following lectures were delivered at Trinity Collie, Cambridge, in the Lent term of this year, under the title of “The Sacred Character and Magical Functions of Kings in Early Society.” The general theory here sketched of the evolution of the Kingship formed the subject of two lectures given in London at the Royal Institution last May. In preparing the manuscript for the press I have made a few unimportant changes, mostly verbal, and added references to my authorities. Otherwise the lectures are printed as they were spoken. Substantially they consist of a series of extracts from the forthcoming third edition of my book *The Golden Bough* which will contain fuller information on many points.

Such prefatory remarks as I may have to make are reserved for that work, but I cannot allow this volume to go forth without an acknowledgment of the debt I owe to my friend Mr. A. B. Cook, Fellow and Lecturer of Queens’ Colege, Cambridge. If I have been able to present my theory of the Arician kingship in a more probable, or at least a more precise, form than before, I owe the improvement chiefly to the stimulating influence of his criticisms, which obliged me to reconsider the whole problem. Moreover, in working out my revised theory I have profited greatly by his learning and acumen, which he has generously placed at my disposal

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Trinity College, Cambridge,
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I

The history of institutions—Methods of the study—Reasons for preferring the inductive method—King of the Wood at Nemi—Characteristics of Diana at Nemi—Conversion of the festival of Diana into a feast of the Virgin Mary—Egeria—Virbius the mate of Diana—Summary of conclusions.

The subject of these lectures is “The Sacred Character and Magical Functions of Kings in Early Society.” But I must warn you at the outset that you will hear much less about kings than from the title of the lectures you might reasonably expect and perhaps wish to hear. The sacred character and magical functions of kings in early society cannot be understood without some knowledge of those general forms of superstition of which this aspect of the kingship is a particular expression ; above all, we must acquaint ourselves with the elements of primitive magic, since the ancient

king was often little more than the chief magician of his tribe. Several lectures will therefore be devoted to explaining and illustrating the elements of magic, and during their discussion the king will apparently be lost sight of entirely. I mention this at the beginning in order to prevent disappointment. For the same reason, I wish to say that the greater part, though not the whole, of the lectures will consist merely of fresh examples or illustrations of principles which I have already stated and exemplified elsewhere ; [1] and, lastly, that, apart from a few introductory remarks, the substance of all that I shall say will be published before long in the new edition of my book, which is now in the press.

Before addressing myself to the special subject of the lectures, I desire to make a few general observations on the method I have followed in them.

Anthropology, or the study of man, claims a place for itself among the sciences. Of that study or science the history of institutions, with which we are here concerned, forms an important branch. It aims at tracing the growth, development, and decay of all human institutions from the earliest to the latest times, not merely recording the facts in chronological order, but referring them to their general causes in the physical and mental constitution of man and the influence of external nature. Now, if we are to pursue this study in a scientific spirit, we must endeavour to investigate the beliefs and customs of mankind with the same rigorous impartiality with which, for example, the zoologist investigates the habits of bees and ants. To attain that impartiality is indeed much harder for the anthropologist than for the zoologist, for the customs and superstitions even of the lowest savages touch us far more nearly than the habits even of the highest animals. The continuity of human development has been such that most, if not all, of the great institutions which still form the framework of civilised society have their roots in savagery, and have been handed down to us in these later days through countless generations, assuming new outward forms in the process of transmission, but remaining in their inmost core substantially unchanged. Such, for example, to take a few conspicuous instances, are the institution of private property, the institution of marriage, the institution of war, and the worship of a god. Differences of opinion may exist, and have existed, as to the precise value of the inheritance ; as to the fact of it there can be none. Thus in treating even of the rudest savages it is not easy, if I may say so, to keep our eyes fixed inflexibly on the object immediately before us. For we seem to be standing at the sources of human history, and it is difficult to exclude from our mind the thought of the momentous consequences which in other ages and other lands have flowed from these simple beginnings, often from these apparently harmless absurdities. And the further we descend the stream of history, and the nearer we approach to our own age and country, the harder it becomes to maintain an impartial attitude in the investigation of institutions which have been fraught with so much happiness and so much misery for mankind. Yet, if we are to succeed in the inquiry, we must endeavour to approach it without prejudice and to pursue it without passion, bearing in mind that our aim is simply the ascertainment of truth, not the apportionment of praise or blame ; that we are not judges, still less advocates, but merely inquirers ; that it is for us, in the language of Spinoza, *humanas actiones non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere*. [2]

A science which rests on observation, as all the historical sciences necessarily do, may be taught in one of two ways. Either we may begin with a statement of general principles and then proceed to illustrate it by individual cases ; or, on the contrary, we may begin with the individual cases and from a comparison of them with each other

may endeavour to elicit those general laws which, in common parlance, are said to govern the particulars. The former is the deductive method, the latter is the inductive.

Both methods have, like most other things, their respective advantages and disadvantages. The deductive method is, in appearance at least, the more scientific. There is an air of completeness, symmetry, and precision about it which is very taking. It gives us a bird's-eye view of a subject which is easily grasped by the mind and retained by the memory. It is thus admirably adapted for exposition on the side of the teacher, and for learning on the side of the pupil. In other words, it is the best mode of imparting and acquiring information, whether for the sake of examinations or for higher ends. For such purposes the inductive method is nearly useless. It plunges us at once into such a sea of particulars that it is difficult at first to find our bearings, that is, to perceive the general principles which are to reduce this seeming chaos to order. To adopt a common and expressive phrase, it is hard to see the wood for the trees. Yet the serious disadvantage under which the inductive method thus labours is perhaps more than compensated in another direction by one solid advantage—it is the method of discovery. In all sciences which rest on observation, discovery must ultimately proceed from the particular to the general, from the isolated observed instances to the abstract conception which binds them together. Apparent exceptions there are, but on examination they will always, I believe, be found to conform to the rule. Thus if the inductive method is unsuited to the acquisition, it is well suited to the extension, of knowledge ; if it does not train a student for examinations, it trains him for research.

Apart from this general advantage possessed by the inductive method, there is a special reason why anthropology should adhere to it at the present time. In order to make a sound induction large collections of facts are necessary ; hence in the inductive sciences it is essential that a period of collection should precede a period of generalisation. Not until great masses of observations have been accumulated and classified do the general laws which pervade them begin to appear on the surface. Now anthropology in general and the history of institutions in particular are still in the collecting stage. The prime want of the study is not so much theories as facts. This is especially true of that branch of the study which treats of origins ; for, as I have said, most great institutions may be traced back to savagery, and consequently for the early history of mankind the savage is our most precious document. It is only of late years that the document has received the attention it deserves ; and unfortunately it is perishing under our eyes. Contact with civilisation is rapidly effacing the old beliefs and customs of the savage, and is thereby obliterating records of priceless value for the history of our race. The most urgent need of anthropology at present is to procure accurate accounts of the existing customs and ideas of savages before they have disappeared. When these have been obtained, when the records existing in our libraries have been fully scrutinised, and when the whole body of information has been classified and digested, the philosophic historian will be able to formulate, with a fair degree of probability, those general laws which have shaped the intellectual, social, and moral evolution of mankind.

That will not be done in our day. The great thinkers, the Newtons and Darwins of anthropology, will come after us. It is our business to prepare for them by collecting, sifting, and arranging the records in order that when, in the fulness of time, the master-mind shall arise and survey them, he may be able to detect at once that unity in multiplicity, that universal in the particulars, which has escaped us. The duty at present incumbent on the investigator is therefore to rake together the facts, whether,

like some of my friends, he goes for them at the peril of his life to savage lands, or merely unearths them at his ease from the dust of libraries. The time has gone by when dreamers like Rousseau could reconstruct the history of society out of their own minds, and their dreams could be accepted as visions of a golden age to come, their voices listened to like angel trumpets heralding the advent of a new heaven and a new earth. It is not for the anthropologist of to-day to blow these high notes, to build these gay castles in the clouds. His task is the soberer, duller one of laying, in the patient accumulation of facts, the foundations of a structure more solid and enduring than the glittering fantasies of Rousseau's dream. Yet he too may prove in the end to be a pioneer of revolution, a revolution all the surer and more lasting because it will be slow and peaceful.

Thus the method of anthropology is induction, and at present its students are engaged in compiling and arranging their materials rather than in evolving general theories out of them. Yet a certain amount of preliminary generalisation is legitimate and indeed necessary. The work even of observation can hardly be accomplished without some intermixture of theory to direct the observer's attention to points which he might otherwise overlook or regard as too insignificant to be worthy of record. But these provisional hypotheses should be held very loosely ; we must always be ready to modify or discard them when they are found to conflict with fresh evidence. The advance of knowledge in this, as in every other field, consists in a progressive readjustment of theory to fact, of conception to perception, of thought to experience ; and as that readjustment, though more and more exact, can never be perfect, the advance is infinite.

These considerations may serve to justify or at least excuse two features of anthropological books of the present day which are apt to repel students who might otherwise be attached to the subject. One of these features is the apparently disproportionate space occupied by the bare description and cataloguing of facts, which soon pall on the reader by their number and monotony. The other is the unstable, shifting, discordant nature of the theories put forward to explain the facts. Both features are to be regretted, but they can hardly be avoided at the present stage of inquiry

The bearing of these remarks lies, as Captain Cuttle profoundly observed, in their application. In my book I have followed the inductive method, and I intend to adhere to it in my lectures. I started without any general theory of the nature and evolution of the kingship in early society. The rule of one particular Italian kingship had long puzzled me till I happened to meet with a similar rule in southern India which seemed to throw light on the Italian custom. As soon as I began to formulate my explanation of the two, many kindred, but hitherto apparently disconnected, facts came crowding in upon me, offering, as I thought, the materials for a fairly probable induction as to certain aspects of the kingly office in early society. Thus what I at first intended to be merely an explanation of one particular kingship gradually developed into something like a treatise on the sanctity of the old kings in general. For my purpose it was therefore essential to enumerate and describe in detail the facts on which I based my induction, since for the most part, so far as I am aware, they had not been put together before. I shall follow the same method for the same reasons in my lectures. The principles which I shall discuss will generally be old, and may be trite to some of you. But the evidence by which I shall illustrate them will for the most part be new, by which I only mean that it has not been published before in my book. If you should

find the facts which I shall inflict on you even more tedious than my theories, you will have the consolation of remembering that they are incomparably more valuable.

The particular case of a sacred kingship which served as the starting-point of my investigation was the priesthood of Diana at Nemi, which combined the regal with the sacred character ; for the priest bore the title of *Rex Nemorensis* or King of the Wood, and his office was called a kingdom. As my general inquiry into the early kingship thus centres round Nemi, I shall invite your attention to it for a few minutes before we pass to the survey of a wider field. I shall not detain you long on what to some may be familiar ground, and I shall avoid as far as possible all repetition of what I have already published.

The Alban hills are a fine bold group of volcanic mountains which rise abruptly from the Campagna in full view of Rome, forming the last spur sent out by the Apennines towards the sea. Two of the extinct craters are now filled by two beautiful waters, the Alban lake and its lesser sister the lake of Nemi. Both lie far below the monastery-crowned top of Monte Cavo, the summit of the range, but yet so high above the plain that standing on the rim of the larger crater, at Castel Gandolfo, where the popes had their summer palace, you look down on the one hand into the Alban lake, and on the other away across the Campagna to where, on the western horizon, the sea flashes like a broad sheet of burnished gold in the sun.

The lake of Nemi is still, as of old, embowered in woods, where the wild flowers blow in spring as freshly as no doubt they did two thousand springs ago. It lies so deep down in the old crater that the calm surface of its clear water is seldom ruffled by the wind. On all sides but one the banks, thickly mantled with vegetation, descend steeply to the water's edge. Only on the north a stretch of flat ground intervenes between the lake and the foot of the hills. Here, under the abrupt declivity now crested by the village of Nemi, the sylvan goddess Diana had an old and famous sanctuary, the resort of pilgrims from all parts of Latium. It was known as the sacred grove of Diana Nemorensis, that is, Diana of the Wood, or perhaps more exactly, Diana of the Woodland Glade. Sometimes the lake and grove were called, after the nearest town, the lake and grove of Aricia. A spacious terrace or platform, some seven hundred feet long, contained the sanctuary. On the north and east it was bounded by great retaining walls which cut into the hillsides and served to support them. Semi-circular niches sunk in the walls and faced with columns formed a series of chapels, which in modern times have yielded a rich harvest of votive offerings. Compared with the extent of the sacred precinct, the temple itself was not large ; but its ruins prove it to have been neatly and solidly built of peperino and adorned with Doric columns. Elaborate cornices of marble and friezes of terra-cotta contributed to the outward splendour of the edifice, which appears to have been further enhanced by tiles of gilt bronze. [3]

The great wealth and popularity of the sanctuary in antiquity are attested by ancient writers as well as by the remains which have come to light in modern times. In the civil war its sacred treasures went to replenish the empty coffers of Octavian. [4] But we are not told that he treated Diana as civilly as his uncle Julius Caesar once treated Capitoline Jupiter, borrowing three thousand pounds weight of solid gold from the god and scrupulously paying him back in the same weight of gilt copper. [5] However, the sanctuary at Nemi recovered from the drain on its resources, for two centuries later it was still reputed one of the richest in Italy. [6] Ovid has described the walls hung with fillets and commemorative tablets ; [7] and the abundance of cheap

votive offerings and copper coins, which the site has yielded in our time, speaks volumes for the piety and numbers, if not for the opulence and liberality, of the worshippers. Swarms of beggars used to stream forth daily from the slums of Aricia and take their stand on the long slope up which the labouring horses dragged well-to-do pilgrims to the shrine ; and according to the response which their whines and importunities met with they blew kisses or hissed curses after the carriages as they swept rapidly down hill again. [8] Even peoples and potentates of the East did homage to the lady of the lake by setting up monuments in her sanctuary ; and within the precinct stood shrines of the Egyptian goddesses Isis and Bubastis, with a store of gorgeous jewellery. [9]

The retirement of the spot and the beauty of the landscape naturally tempted some of the luxurious Roman nobles to fix their summer residences by the lake. Here Lucius Caesar had a house to which, on a day in early summer, only two months after the murder of his illustrious namesake, he invited Cicero to meet the assassin Brutus. [10] The emperors themselves appear to have been partial to a retreat where they could find repose from the cares of state and the bustle of the great city in the fresh air of the lake and the stillness of the woods. Here Julius Cæsar built himself a costly villa, but pulled it down again because it was not to his mind. [11] Here Caligula caused two magnificent barges, or rather floating palaces, to be launched for him on the lake ; [12] and it was while dallying in the woods of Nemi that the sluggard Vitellius received those tidings of revolt which woke him from his dream of pleasure and called him to arms. [13] Vespasian had a monument dedicated to his honour in the grove by the senate and people of Aricia : Trajan condescended to fill the chief magistracy of the town ; and Hadrian indulged in his taste for architecture by restoring a structure which had been erected in the precinct by a prince of the royal house of Parthia. [14]

Such, then, was the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi, a fitting home for the “ mistress of mountains and forests green and lonely glades and sounding rivers,” as Catullus calls her. [15]

Multitudes of her statuettes, appropriately clad in the short tunic and high buskins of a huntress, with the quiver slung over her shoulder, have been found on the spot. Some of them represent her with her bow in her hand or her hound at her side. Bronze and iron spears, and images of stags and hinds, discovered within the precinct, may have been the offerings of huntsmen to the huntress goddess for success in the chase. Similarly the bronze tridents, which have come to light at Nemi, were perhaps presented by fishermen who had speared fish in the lake, or maybe by hunters who had stabbed boars in the forest. For the wild boar was still hunted in Italy down to the end of the first century of our era. The younger Pliny tells us how, with his usual pretty affectation, he sat meditating and reading by the nets, while three fine boars fell into them. [16] Indeed, some fourteen hundred years later boar-hunting was a favourite pastime of Pope Leo the Tenth. [17] A few rude images of cows, oxen, horses, and pigs dug up on the site may perhaps indicate that Diana was here worshipped as the patroness of domestic animals as well as of the wild creatures of the wood. In like manner her Greek counterpart, Artemis, was a goddess not only of game but of herds. Thus her sanctuary in the highlands of north-western Arcadia, between Clitor and Cynæthæ, owned sacred cattle which were driven off by Aetolian freebooters on one of their forays. [18] When Xenophon returned from the wars and settled on his estate among the wooded hills and green meadows of the rich valley through which the Alpheus flows past Olympia, he dedicated to Artemis a little temple on the model of her great temple at Ephesus, surrounded it with a grove of all kinds of fruit-trees, and endowed it not only with a chase but also with a sacred pasture. The chase abounded

in fish and game of all sorts, and the pasture sufficed to rear swine, goats, oxen, and horses ; and at her yearly festival the pious soldier sacrificed to the goddess a tithe both of the cattle from the sacred pasture and of the game from the sacred chase. [19] Again, the people of Hyampolis in Phocis worshipped Artemis and thought that no cattle thrive like those which they dedicated to her.[20] Perhaps, then, the images of cattle found in Diana's precinct at Nemi were offered to her by herdsmen to ensure her blessing on their herds.

So to the last, in spite of a few villas peeping out here and there among the trees, Nemi seems to have remained in some sense an image of what Italy had been in the far-off days when the land was still sparsely peopled with tribes of savage hunters or wandering herds-men, when the beechwoods and oak-woods, with their deciduous foliage, reddening in autumn and bare in winter, had not yet begun, under the hand of man, to yield to the evergreens of the south, the laurel, the olive, the cypress, and the oleander, still less to those intruders of a later age, which nowadays we are apt to think of as characteristically Italian, the lemon and the orange. [21]

*Kennst du das Land, wo die Citronen blühen,
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühen,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmelweht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht ?
Kennst du es wohl ?*

But that is modern rather than ancient Italy.

However, it was not merely in its natural surroundings that this ancient shrine of the sylvan goddess continued to be a type or miniature of the past. Down to the decline of Rome a custom was observed here which seems to transport us at once from civilisation to savagery. The priest of the goddess bore the title of king, and his office was called a kingdom, but his tenure of the throne was a singular one. He was a runaway slave, who succeeded to office by slaying his predecessor, and he held it only so long as he could make good his title in single combat against all assailants. Any fugitive slave who contrived to break a branch from a certain tree in the grove had the right to fight the priest, and if he killed him he reigned in his stead. Naturally, therefore, the priest kept watch and ward over that tree. The Greek geographer Strabo, who appears to have seen him, describes him as always sword in hand, always on the alert. [22] His eyes probably acquired that restless, watchful look which, among the Esquimaux of Bering Strait, is said to betray infallibly the shedder of blood ; for with that people revenge is a sacred duty, and the manslayer carries his life in his hand. [23]

Of the worship of Diana at Nemi there are two features of special importance which I would ask you to bear in mind. In the first place, the votive offerings found on the spot prove that the goddess was believed to bless men and women with offspring and to grant expectant mothers an easy delivery. [24] In the second place, fire seems to have played a foremost part in her ritual. At her annual festival of the thirteenth of August her grove was illuminated, and women whose prayers had been heard by her came crowned with wreaths and bearing lighted torches to the sanctuary in fulfilment of their vows. [25] Some one unknown dedicated a perpetually burning lamp in a little shrine at Nemi for the safety of the Emperor Claudius and his family. [26] The terra-cotta lamps which have been discovered in the grove [27] may perhaps have served a like purpose for humbler persons. If so, the analogy of the custom to the Catholic practice of dedicating holy candles in churches would be obvious.

Moreover, the title of Vesta borne by Diana at Nemi [28] points clearly to the maintenance of a perpetual holy fire in her sanctuary. A large circular basement at the north-east corner of the temple, raised on three steps and bearing traces of a mosaic pavement, probably supported a round temple of Diana in her character of Vesta, like the round temple of Vesta in the Roman forum. [29] The true character of this circular basement was first perceived and pointed out by my acute and learned friend Mr. A. B. Cook. [30] Previous writers had taken it for an altar or pedestal. The sacred fire at Nemi would seem to have been tended by Vestal Virgins, for the head of a Vestal in terra-cotta was found on the spot, [31] and the worship of a perpetual fire, cared for by holy maidens, appears to have been common in Latium from the earliest to the latest times. [32] For example, we know that among the ruins of Alba Longa the Vestal fire was kept burning by Vestal Virgins to the end of the fourth century of our era. [33]

At the annual festival of Diana, which was held all over Italy on the thirteenth of August, hunting dogs were crowned and wild beasts were not molested ; wine was brought forth, and the feast consisted of a kid, cakes, and apples still hanging in clusters on the boughs. [34] The Christian Church appears to have sanctified this great festival of the virgin goddess by adroitly converting it into the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin on the fifteenth of August. [35] The discrepancy of two days between the dates of the festivals is not a fatal argument against their identity ; for a similar displacement of two days occurs in the case of St. George's festival on the twenty-third of April, which is most probably identical with the ancient Roman festival of the Parilia on April twenty-first. [36] As to the reasons which prompted this conversion of the festival of the Virgin Diana into the festival of the Virgin Mary some light is thrown by the records of the Eastern Church. Thus in the Syriac text of the treatise called *The Departure of my Lady Mary from this World* an account is given of the reasons which led to the institution of the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August. In the English version of the treatise the passage runs thus : “ And the apostles ordered also that there should be a commemoration of the blessed one on the thirteenth of Ab [that is, August : observe that the thirteenth of August is Diana's own day ; another manuscript or manuscripts read on the fifteenth of Ab], on account of the vines bearing bunches (of grapes), and on account of the trees bearing fruit, that clouds of hail, bearing stones of wrath, might not come, and the trees be broken, and their fruits, and the vines with their dusters.” [37] Here you will observe that the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin is definitely said to have been fixed on the thirteenth or fifteenth of August for the sake of protecting the ripening grapes and other fruits. This interesting passage was pointed out to me by my learned friend Mr. Rendel Harris. Since then I find that an inference of the same sort has been drawn independently from this passage by the late Professor Lucius of Strasburg in a book published at the end of last year, where he reinforces the argument by other evidence. [38] Thus he points out that in the calendars of the Syrian Church the fifteenth of August is repeatedly designated as the Festival of the Mother of God *for the vines*, and that in the Arabic text of the apocryphal work *On the passing of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, attributed to the Apostle John, there occurs the following passage : “ Also a festival in her honour was instituted on the fifteenth day of the month Ab [that is, August], which is the day of her passing from this world, the day on which the miracles were performed, and the time when the fruits of trees are ripening.” [39] Now we hear of vineyards and plantations dedicated to Artemis, fruits offered to her, and her temple standing in an orchard. [40] Hence we may conjecture that her Italian sister Diana was also revered as a patroness of vines and fruit-trees, and that on the thirteenth of August the owners of vineyards and orchards paid their respects to her at Nemi in order to ensure the safety of the ripening fruit. We have just

seen that wine and apples still hanging on the boughs were part of the festal cheer on that day. We know, too, that Diana believed to fill the husbandman's barns with a bounteous harvest, [41] and in a series of gems, she is represented with a branch of fruit in one hand, and a cup, which is sometimes full of fruit, in the other. [42] Even in Scandinavia a relic of the worship of Diana survived in the custom of blessing the fruits of the earth of every sort, which in Catholic times was annually observed at the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin on the fifteenth of August. [43]

There is, I need hardly say, no intrinsic improbability in the view that for the sake of edification the Church may have converted a real heathen festival into a nominal Christian one. My learned friend Mr. F. C. Conybeare of Oxford has furnished me with an undoubted instance of such a transformation. He tells me that in the Armenian Church, "according to the express evidence of the Armenian fathers of the year 700 and later, the day of the Virgin was placed on September the fifteenth, because that was the day of Anahite, the magnificence of whose feast the Christian doctors hoped thereby to transfer to Mary." This Anahite or Anaitis, as the Greeks called her, the Armenian predecessor of the Virgin Mary, was a great Oriental goddess whose worship was exceedingly popular not only in Armenia but in the adjoining countries. The character of her rites is plainly indicated by Strabo, [44] himself a native of these regions.

A mythical personage of some interest and importance at Nemi was the water-nymph Egeria. The purling of her stream as it flowed over the pebbles is mentioned by Ovid, who tells us that he had often drunk of its water. [45] Women with child used to sacrifice to Egeria, because she was believed, like Diana, to be able to grant them an easy delivery. [46] Tradition ran that the nymph had been the wife or mistress of the wise king Numa, that he had consorted with her in the secrecy of the sacred grove, and that the laws which he gave the Romans had been inspired by commune with her divinity. [47] Plutarch compares the legend with other tales of the loves of goddesses for mortal men, such as the loves of Cybele and the Moon for the fair youths Attis and Endymion. According to some, the trysting-place of the lovers Numa and Egeria was not in the woods of Nemi, but at Rome, in a grove outside the dripping Porta Capena, where another sacred spring of Egeria gushed from a dark cavern. [48] Every day the Roman Vestals fetched water from this spring to wash the temple of Vesta, carrying it in earthenware pitchers on their heads. [49] In Juvenal's time the natural rock had been encased in marble, and the hallowed spot was profaned by gangs of poor Jews, who were suffered to squat, like gypsies, in the grove. We may suppose that the spring which fell into the lake of Nemi was the true original Egeria, and that when the first settlers moved down from the Alban hills to the banks of the Tiber they brought the nymph with them and found a new home for her in a grove outside the gates.

The remains of baths which have been discovered within the sacred precinct, [50] together with many terracotta models of various parts of the human body, suggest that the waters of Egeria were perhaps used to heal the sick, who may have declared their hopes or testified their gratitude by dedicating likenesses of the diseased members to the goddess, in accordance with a practice which still prevails in many parts of Europe. To this day it would seem that the spring of Egeria retains medicinal virtues. [51]

Here I may mention a fine double bust in marble of two water-gods which has been found in the precinct at Nemi. Their heads are turned back to back. One of them is that of a bearded man, the other that of a beardless youth. Their matted hair is tossed wildly about and seems clogged with moisture ; fins spring from their brows

and from the mouth of the younger ; water-plants cling to their breasts, and similar plants or fish-scales to their cheeks. Both have that wild and troubled look which the ancient artists, with their exquisite taste, loved to give to divinities of the fickle and restless element. The busts are probably the work of a skilful artist of the first century of our era. Inscriptions seem to prove that they were dedicated to Diana. [52]

The last of the mythical beings at Nemi to whom I have to ask your attention is Virbius. Legend had it that Virbius was no other than the young Greek hero Hippolytus whose story is familiar to you all. Two points in it must be borne in mind ; first, he was the favourite of Artemis, the Greek equivalent of Diana, and second, he was killed by his horses, which dragged him at their hoofs to death. But his divine mistress, so runs the tale, had Hippolytus brought to life again, and transported him to the woods of Nemi, where she entrusted him to the nymph Egeria. There he reigned as a king under the name of Virbius, and there he dedicated a sacred precinct to his patroness Diana. [53] As to the real character of this mythical Virbius the ancients appear to have been doubtful. Some thought that he was the sun. “ But the truth is,” says Servius, “ that he is a deity associated with Diana, as Attis is associated with the Mother of the Gods, and Erichthonius with Minerva, and Adonis with Venus.” [54] This statement of the old commentator on Virgil I believe to be of the utmost importance for the understanding both of the Arician worship in general and of the extraordinary rule of succession to the priesthood in particular. I greatly regret that in former editions of my book I missed its significance entirely. The view which it implies of the character of Virbius will form the pivot on which a good deal of our subsequent researches will revolve. Here I will only remark that in his long and chequered career this mythical personage—Hippolytus or Virbius—has displayed a remarkable tenacity of life. For we can hardly doubt that the Saint Hippolytus of the Roman calendar, who was dragged by horses to death on the thirteenth of August, Diana’s own day, is no other than the Greek hero of the same name, who, after dying twice over as a heathen sinner, has been happily resuscitated as a Christian saint. [55] The merit of tracing the saint’s pedigree belongs to Mr. Rendel Harris, who has distinguished himself by other kindred researches in this department of sacred history. [56]

We can now perhaps understand why the ancients identified Hippolytus, the companion of Artemis, with Virbius, who, according to Servius, stood to Diana as Adonis to Venus, or Attis to Cybele. For Diana, like Artemis, appears to have been originally a goddess of fertility in general and of childbirth in particular.[57] As such she, like her Greek counterpart, needed a male partner. That partner, if Servius is right, was Virbius. In his character of the founder of the sacred grove and first king of Nemi, Virbius is clearly the mythical predecessor or archetype of the line of priests who served Diana under the title of Kings of the Wood, and who came, one after the other, to a violent end. [58] It is natural, therefore, to conjecture that these priestly kings stood to the goddess of the grove in the same relation in which Virbius stood to her ; in short, that the mortal King of the Wood had for his queen the woodland Diana herself. [59]

Reviewing the evidence as a whole, we may conclude that the worship of Diana in her sacred grove at Nemi was of great importance and immemorial antiquity ; that she was revered as the goddess of woodlands and of wild creatures, probably also of domestic cattle and of the fruits of the earth ; that she was believed to bless men and women with offspring and to aid mothers in childbed ; that her holy fire, tended by chaste virgins, burned perpetually in a round temple within the precinct ; that associated with her was a water- nymph Egeria, who discharged one of Diana’s own

functions by succouring women in travail, and who was popularly supposed to have mated with an old Roman king in the sacred grove ; further, that Diana of the Wood herself had a male companion, Virbius by name, who was to her what Adonis was to Venus, or Attis to Cybele ; and, lastly, that this mythical Virbius was represented in historical times by a line of priests known as the Kings of the Wood, who regularly perished by the swords of their successors, and whose lives were in a manner bound up with a certain tree in the grove, because, so long as that tree was uninjured, they were safe from attack.

This ends what I have to say on Nemi for the present.

- [1] *The Golden Bough a Study in Magic and Religion*, 2nd edition, London, 1900.
- [2] Spinoza, *Tractatus Politicus*, i. 4 : “ *Cum igitur animum ad Politicam applicuimus, nihil quod novum vel inauditum est, sed tantum ea, quae cum praxi optime conveniunt, certa et indubitata ratione demonstrare, out ex ipsa humanae naturae conditione deducere intendi ; et ut solemus, inquirere, sedulo curavi, humanas actiones non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere.* ”
- [3] On the excavations at Nemi see *Notizie degli Scavi* for 1885, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1895 ; *Bulletino dell' Instituto di Corrispondama Archéologica*, 1885, pp. 149-157, 225-242 ; O. Rosshach, in *Verhandlungen der vierzigsten Versammlung Deutscher Philologen* (Leipsic, 1890), pp. 147-164 ; G. H. Wallis, *Illustrated Catalogue of Classical antiquities from the Site of the Temple of Diana, Nemi, Italy* (preface dated 1893).
- [4] Appian, *Bellum Civile*, v.24.
- [5] Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 54.
- [6] Appian, *loc. cit.*
- [7] Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 267 sq.
- [8] Juvenal, *Sat*, iv. 117 sq. ; Persius, *Sat*, vi. 56 with the scholiast's note ; Martial, *Epigr.* ii. 19. 3, xii. 32. 10.
- [9] W. Henzen, in *Hermes*, vi. (1872), pp. 6-12 ; *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, xiv. 2215, 2216, 2218.
- [10] Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, xv. 4. 5.
- [11] Saetonius, *Divus Julius*, 46.
- [12] *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1895, pp. 361-396, 461-474 ; R. Lanciani, *New Tales of Old Rome* (London, 1901), pp. 205-214.
- [13] Tacitus, , iii. 36.
- [14] *C.I.L.* xiv. 2213, 2216, 4191.
- [15] Catullus, xxxiv. 9 sqq.
- [16] Pliny, *Epist.* i. 6.
- [17] W. Roscoe, *Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, 3 iv. 376.
- [18] Polybius, *Hist*, iv. 18 and 19.
- [19] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, v. 3. 4-13.
- [20] Pausanias, x. 35. 7.
- [21] v. Hehn, *Kellturflanzenn und Hausthiere* 3 (Berlin, 1902), pp. 520 sq.
- [22] Strabo, v. 3. 12 ; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 271 sq. ; id, *Ars Am*, i. 259 sq. ; Statius, *Sylv.* iii. I. 55 sq. Suetonius, *Caligula* 35 ; Solinut, ii II ; Pausanias, ii 27. 4 ; Servius, on Virgil, *Aen*, vi. 136.
- [23] E. W. Nelson, “ The Eskimo about Bering Strait,” Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I. (Washington, 1899), P. 293.
- [24] Graevius, *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum*, xii. col 808 ; *Bulletino dell Inst. di Corrisp, Arch*, 1885, pp. 183 sq, *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1885, pp. 160, 254 ; *id.* 1895, p. 424 ; O. Rossbach, *op. cit.* p. 160 ; G. H. Wallis, *op. cit.* pp. 4, 15, 17.

- [25] Statius, *Sylv.*, iii. i. 52-60 ; Gratius Faliscus, *Cynegeticon*, i. 484 sq. ; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 269 sq. ; Propertius, iii. 24 (30), 9., ed. Paley. As to the 13th of August as Diana's day, see Festus, p. 343, ed. C. O. Müller ; Martial, xii. 67. 2 ; Ausonius, *De feriis Romanis*, 5 sq. ; *C.I.L.* xiv. 2 112; W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals of the period of the Republic*, p. 198.
- [26] *Nostimis degii Scavi*, 1888, pp. 193 sq. ; O. Rossbach, *op. cit.* p. 164.
- [27] G. H. Wallis, *op. cit.* pp. 24-26.
- [28] *C.I.L.* xiv. 2213.
- [29] *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1885, p. 478 ; O. Rossbach, *op. cit.* p. 158 ; G. H. Wallis, *op. cit.* pp. 9 sq.
- [30] *Classical Review*, October 1902, p. 376.
- [31] G. H. Wallis, *op. cit.* p. 30.
- [32] J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii. 2 336.
- [33] Juvenal, iv. 60 sq. Asconius, *In Milonianem*, p. 35, ed. Kiesseling and Schoell ; Symmachus, *Epist.*, ix. 128 and 129 ; *C.I.L.* vi. 2172, xiv. 4120.
- [34] Statius, *Sylvae*, iii. i. 55 sqq. ; Gratius Faliscus, *Cynegeticon*, i. 483-492.
- [35] J. Rendel Harris, *The Annotators of the Codex Bezae* (London, 1901), pp. 93-102.
- [36] The evidence for this identification will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.
- [37] *The Journal of Sacred Literature*, New Series, vii. (1865), p. 153.
- [38] E. Locius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche* (Tübingen, 1904), pp. 488 sq. 521. The writer appears to have overlooked the occurrence of Diana's day on the 13th of August.
- [39] *Johanni Apostoli de transitu Beatae Mariae Virginis Liber* : ex recensione et cum interpretatione Maximiliani Engeri (Elberfeldae, 1854), pp. 101, 103.
- [40] Pauly - Wissowa, *Real - Encyclopädie der classischen Wissenschaften*, ii. 1342; Pausanias, vii. 18. 12 ; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, v. 3. 12.
- [41] Catullus, xxxiv. 17 sqq.
- [42] Furtwängler, *Die antiken Gemmen*, iii. 231, with plates xx. 66, xxii. 18, 26, 30, 32, all cited by Mr. A. B. Cook, *Classical Review*, October 1902, p. 378, note 4.
- [43] Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentium Septentrionalium variis conditionibus*, xvi. 9.
- [44] Strabo, xi. 8. 12, xi. 14. 16, xii. 3. 37.
- [45] Virgil, *Aen.*, vii. 762 sqq. ; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 273 sqq. ; *id. Metam.*, xv. 482 sqq. ; Strabo, v. 3. 12.
- [46] Festus, p. 77, ed. C. O. Müller.
- [47] Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 273 sqq. ; *id.*, *Metam.* xv. 482 sqq. ; Cicero, *De legibus*, i. I. 4 ; Livy, i. 19. 5, i. 21. 3 ; Plutarch, *Numa*, 4, 8, 13, 15 ; Dionysius Halicarn. *Antiquit. Roman.*, ii. 60 sq. i Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 12 ; Lactantius, *Divin. Inst.* i. 22 ; Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.*, vii. 763.
- [48] Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 10 sqq. ; Livy, i. 21. 3. As to the position of this grove and spring see O. Gilbert, *Geschichte und Topographie der Stadt Rom im Altertum*, i. 109 sqq., ii. 152 iff.; O. Richter, *Topographie der Stadt Rom* (Munich, 1902), pp. 342
- [49] Plutarch, *Numa*, 13 ; compare Propertius, v. 4. 15 sq. ; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 11-14.
- [50] O. Rossbach, *op. cit.* p. 151 ; compare *C.I.L.* xiv. 4190.
- [51] R. Lanciani, in *Atkenæum*, October 10, 1885, p. 477.
- [52] W. Helbig, in *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1885, p. 227 ; O. Rossbach, *op. cit.* p. 159 ; G. H. Wallis, *op. cit.* pp. 32 sq.
- [53] Virgil, *Aen.*, vii. 761 sqq. with the commentary of Servius ; Ovid, *Festi*, iii. 263 sqq. vi. 735 sqq. ; *i.d.*, *Metam.* xv. 497sqq. ; Scholiast on Persius, *Sat.* vi. 56, pp. 347 sq., ed. O. Jahn ; Pausanias, ii. 27. 4 ; Apollodorus, iii. 10. 3 ; Scholiast on Pindar, *Pyth.*, iii. 96.
- [54] Servius on Virgil. *Aen.* vii. 761.

- [55] P. Ribadeneira, *Flos Sanctorum* (Venice, 1763), ii. 93 sq.; *Acta Sanctorum*, August 13, pp. 4 sqq. (Paris and Rome, 1867). Prudentius has drawn a picture of the imaginary martyrdom which might melt the stoniest heart (*Peristeph*, xi. pp. 282, ed. Th. Obbarius).
- [56] J. Rendel Harris, *Annotators of Codex Bezae* (London, 1901), pp. 101 sq.
- [57] See, for example, Catullus's fine poem on her (No. xxxiv.)
- [58] This was pointed out long ago by P. Buttmann (*Mythologus*, ii. 151).
- [59] Seneca speaks of Diana as "regina nemorum" or "Queen of the Woods" (*Hippolytus*, 406), perhaps with a reminiscence of the Rex Nemorensis as Mr. A. B. Cook has suggested (*Classical Review*, October 1902, p. 373, n. 3).

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