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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. Note on the People and Languages of New Ireland and Admiralty Islands. By SIDNEY H. RAY	8
II. Religion and Family among the Haidas (Queen Charlotte Islands). By the Rev. CHARLES HARRISON	14
III. Retrospect of Work done at my Anthropometric Laboratory at South Kensington. By FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.	32
IV. The Anthropometric Laboratory of Ireland. By Prof. D. J. CUNNINGHAM, M.D., and Prof. A. C. HADDON, M.A., F.Z.S.	35
V. The Skull and some of the other Bones of the Skeleton of Cornelius Magrath, the Irish Giant. By Prof. D. J. CUNNINGHAM, M.D., F.R.S.	40
VI. Notes on the Natives of Fakaofu (Bowditch Island), Union Group. By J. J. LISTER	43
VII. Upon the Types of the Early Inhabitants of Mesopotamia. By T. G. PINCHES	86
VIII. An Account of a Collection of Ethnographical Specimens formed during Vancouver's Voyage in the Pacific Ocean, 1790-1795. By CHARLES H. READ, F.S.A.	99
IX. The Natives of Borneo. Edited from the Papers of the late H. BROOKE LOW, Esq. By H. LING ROTH	110
X. On the Origin and Sacred Character of certain Ornaments of the S.E. Pacific. By CHARLES H. READ, F.S.A.	139
XI. Curious Words and Customs connected with Chieftainship and Royalty among the Malagasy. By the Rev. JAMES SIBREE, F.R.G.S.	215
XII. Decorative Carving on Wood, especially on their Burial Memorials, by the Betsileo Malagasy. By the Rev. JAMES SIBREE, F.R.G.S.	230
XIII. On the Primitive Characters of the Flint Implements of the Chalk Plateau of Kent, with reference to the Question of their Glacial or Pre-Glacial Age. By JOSEPH PRESTWICH, D.C.L., F.R.S., F.G.S., &c.....	246

	PAGE
XIV. On Certain Rude Implements from the North Downs. By B. HARRISON	263
XV. Notes on Implements from the Chalk Plateau of Kent. By DE BARRE CRAWSHAY	267
XVI. Photograph of Human Figure found in Sarawak. Ex- hibited by Lady BROOKE (H.H. the Rance of Sarawak)	282
XVII. Imprints of the Hand. By Dr. FORGEOT, of the La- boratoire d'Anthropologie Criminale, Lyon. Exhibited by FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.	282
XVIII. On the Limits of Savage Religion. By EDWARD B. TYLOR, D.C.L., F.R.S., President	283
XIX. The Perforated Stones of South Africa. By H. MITFORD BARBER	302
XX. Account of the Similkameen Indians of British Columbia. By Mrs. S. S. ALLISON	305
XXI. Burial Customs of New Britain. By the Rev. B. DANKS	348
XXII. Customs among the Natives of East Africa, from Teita to Kijimegalia, with special reference to their Women and Children. By Mrs. FRENCH-SHELDON	358
Annual General Meeting	391
Anniversary Address. By EDWARD B. TYLOR, D.C.L., F.R.S., Presi- dent	396

ANTHROPOLOGICAL MISCELLANEA.

New Books	64
Extracts from Government Reports	65
Periodicals	77
Notes on a part of the Somali Country. By Captain G. D. CARLETON, Leicestershire Regiment	160
Address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association at the Meeting held at Cardiff in August, 1891. By Professor F. MAX MÜLLER, President of the Section	172
Works of Professor Wilken	192
New Books and Periodicals	195
U.S. Bureau of Ethnology	211
On Crude Jadeite in Switzerland. By A. B. MEYER (Dresden)	319
The World's Columbian Exposition, 1893	320
The use of Sledges, Boats, and Horses at Burials in Russia. Sum- marized from a Memoir by Professor ANUCHIN, of Moscow. By J. OLIVER WARDROP, Esq.	321
History of Opium, Opium Eating, and Smoking	329
New Books and Periodicals	332

CONTENTS.

V

	PAGE
Language as a test of mental capacity. By HORATIO HALE, M.A., F.R.S.C.	413
Slavonic Folk-tales about the Sacrifice of one's own Children. By MIKHAIL DRAGOMANOV. Translated by OLIVER WARDEOP	456
Family Life of the Haidas, Queen Charlotte Islands. By the Rev. C. HARRISON	470
Ipoh Poison of the Malay Peninsula	476
Extracts from Government Reports	481
New Books and Periodicals	487

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PLATES.

I. Map of Fakaofu	<i>Frontispiece</i>
II.-VIII. Natives of Fakaofu	68
IX. Fish-hooks used by the Natives of Fakaofu	68
X. Objects from Hawaii and Tahiti	104
XI. Objects from Pacific Coast of America	106
XII. S.E. Pacific. Sacred Objects	154
XIII. " "	156
XIV. " "	158
XV. Map of part of the Somali Country	166
XVI. } Types of Carved Ornamentation employed by the Bétailéo	
XVII. } Malagasy	230
XVIII. Map of part of the Chalk Plateau of Kent	246
XIX.-XXI. Types of Plateau Implements	262
XXII. South African Bellows	304

WOODCUTS, &c.

Head from De Sarzec's "Découvertes en Chaldée"	87
Restoration, by T. G. PINCHES	88
Burial of Fallen Warriors, from De Sarzec's "Découvertes"	89
Head from De Sarzec's "Découvertes en Chaldée"	90
Restoration, by T. G. PINCHES	91
Gilgames and Ea-bant overcoming a bull and a lion, from a cylinder (date about 2500 B.C.)	91
Divine figure and winged bulls, from an Assyrian cylinder in the British Museum (date about 650 B.C.)....	92
Istar and the Eunuch Priest, from an Assyrian cylinder in the British Museum (date about 650 B.C.)....	93

Slavonic Folk-tales about the Sacrifice of one's own Children.

By MIKHAIL DRAGOMANOV.¹ Translated by OLIVER WARDROP.

THE "Journal of the Bulgarian Ministry of Public Instruction" is a periodical of which any country might well be proud. Students in every branch of science will find in these handsome volumes a rich storehouse of new materials, collected and arranged by able hands; but it is to those who are interested in popular literature, superstitions and the like, that they especially appeal. Unfortunately, the language forms a serious difficulty; the best dictionary in existence, that of Bogorov,² is detestable, and we look forward with the greatest impatience to the completion of another by Mr. I. P. Slaveikov (late of Robert College), who is sure to produce something of lasting value. In spite of this lack of a good lexicon, we have succeeded in interpreting the text before us with the help of various glossaries,³ and we begin by offering to our readers the substance of an article by Professor Dragomanov, whose name is sufficiently respected among folk-lorists to gain for us their attention. Our aim is merely to give in English a summary of the learned gentleman's monograph.

In "a few introductory remarks" we have a masterly sketch of the early history and true character of popular (or rather oral) literature, beginning with Macpherson, Percy, Herder, the Brothers Grimm, and an explanation of the manner in which this literature is at once international and yet thoroughly national. Lack of space alone prevents us from translating in full these three pages. We, therefore, proceed at once to the particular question which forms the subject of the essay.

The numerous Slavonic stories which relate to the sacrifice of children by their parents may be arranged in the following groups:—

I. The Little Russian legend about King Paparim; the Great Russian ballad of "The Merciful Woman," with its heretical variants.

II. The legend from Ukraine about "The Brothers who were made rich by God in the guise of a traveller"; analogous Bulgarian legends; the Serbian ballad about "The merciful deacon and his wife"; (the Breton legends of St. Touina and the shepherdess who was made rich).

¹ "Slavyanskite skazaniya za pozhertvuvanie sobstvenno diete," et Mikh. Dragomanov. Published in "Sbornik za narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhina." Kniga i, Sofiya, 1889, pp. 65-96.

² Bogorov: "Blgarsko-Frenski Riechnik." Vienna, 1871.

³ Especially that which is appended to M. Dozon's "Chansons Bulgares." Paris, 1875.

III. The ecclesiastical Slavonic story of "The Christ-loving merchant"; (the Georgian tale of "The kind merchant"; an episode from the French poem of *Amis et Amyles*).

I. KING PAPARIM.¹

"When Jesus Christ was born, King Herod, desiring to slay him, sought the Virgin Mary. One day, the Mother of God, pursued by Herod, ran into a house where there was a woman who had lying in the cradle a child of the same age as Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary seized the child, threw it into the burning stove, and put her own Son in its place, telling the woman to have no fear for her son, because he would live again; if Herod asked whose baby that was in the cradle, she must say it was her own; the Virgin then hid herself. Herod came in and asked the housewife whether she had not seen a woman with a suckling. The good woman replied that she had seen nobody, and when interrogated about the child in the cradle answered as she had been ordered. When Herod had gone away, the Blessed Virgin took the woman's baby out of the stove; it was alive, and not burnt in the least. When it grew up it was called King Paparim. King Paparim is still alive at the present day; he lives on Mount Zion, and when the moon is new he is young, when the moon grows old he too becomes old, his hair is white as milk. King Paparim finds out from God the price of corn and cattle, and informs mankind. As long as men were righteous he used to find out this every three days, but nowadays people are wicked, so he only finds it out every six days."

Paparim is evidently the Pope of Rome, about whom we have many other Little Russian traditions.² We are told that he never dies, and that he has existed from the beginning of the world. Books fall down from heaven for him, formerly one every day, but now only one in the year. This version comes from the right bank of the Dniepr, where the Orthodox natives of the borderland have had much intercourse with Catholics. It is possible that in an earlier and fuller form of the legend the child who had taken Christ's place was asserted to have afterwards become Pope; while the reference to the moon, in the Kupyansk story, seem to point to some pagan legend which had become fused with a Christian tradition.

*The Merciful Woman.*³—There are numerous variants of this Great Russian story. In three of them the Virgin carries Christ in her arms to save him from the Jews; she appeals to the Merciful Woman to throw her own child into the fire, and nurse Christ instead. In all the other versions the baby Christ runs

¹ Published in "Kharkovskii sbornik," 1888. The story was obtained from the district of Kupransk.

² M. Dragomanov: "Malorusskiya narodnyya predaniya," p. 146.

³ Bezonov: "Kalyeki perekhozhie," iv, pp. 117-42.

alone to the Merciful Woman, and promises a reward for her obedience to his commands.

Kind-hearted woman, merciful woman!
 Throw thy son into the flaming stove,
 Take up Christ in thine arms,
 And thou shalt inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Merciful Woman does as she is told, and when the Jews arrive, she shows them her child in the fire, and tells them that it is Christ. The Jews go away rejoicing, after having closed the stove. Then Christ orders the woman to open the stove.

Grass had grown up in the stove,
 Flowers bloomed among the grass,
 The baby plays among the flowers,
 His head girt with a halo shining in the sunlight,
 He reads the Gospel-book,
 Extols the power of Heaven,
 And, with angels and cherubs
 And all the host of heaven,
 Prays to God for his father and mother
 And for all the Orthodox world.

The child does not come to life, but goes straight to Paradise.

In many versions of this ballad the heroine is called the *Hallelujah woman* (Allilueva zhena), and some heretical sects (self-burners, &c.) have added a passage in which Christ is represented as authorising their detestable practices.

Oh! thou Merciful Hallelujah Woman,
 Make known my will to all my folk,
 To all right believing Christians,
 Let them throw themselves into the fire for my sake.
 Let them throw in sinless babes,
 And all suffer for the name of Christ,
 Nor yield to the wiles of the ravening wolf,
 The ravening wolf, wicked Antichrist.
 For Antichrist has gained great power,
 He is destroying the Christian faith throughout the world,
 He is establishing his wicked church.
 He orders all to shave their beards,
 And to use three fingers in crossing themselves,
 He wishes to root out my Christian faith.¹

II. THE THREE BROTHERS AND GOD.²

Once upon a time there were three brothers who had neither father nor mother. The three set out together to seek work, and, as they walked, they wished that God would send them a good

¹ Varentsov: "Sbornik Russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov," p. 176. Cases of self-destruction (sometimes of whole villages) are by no means rare at the present day. In 1870, in the government of Perm, Anna Kiyukina being charged with burning her son to death, in the manner recommended above, quoted this ballad in court to justify her action.

² Chubinskii: "Trudy ekspeditaii v Y.-Z. krai," t. ii, pp. 255-357. The story comes from the government of Kiev, district of Kanev.

master. An old man met them and said, "Whither are you going, my sons?" They answered, "We are going to look for work." "Stop then," said he, "and I will be a father to you. When you grow up I shall find wives for you, and you shall have houses and lands, but you must not forget God."

The brothers agreed. They all went on and on together till they came to a beautiful house, out of which there came a pretty girl, as fair as a flower. The eldest brother said, "I should like to have that girl for my wife, and to have oxen and cows." "Very well," said the old man, "let us go and seek her; and you shall have oxen and cows, but do not forget God as long as you live."

They entered the house, asked the hand of the maiden, and had a wedding feast; after this the two remaining brothers and the old man went on again. They travelled and travelled till they saw a house, and out of the house came a maiden as lovely as a dewdrop. The second brother said, "I should like to marry that maiden, and to have a mill and a fish pond, to grind corn and have bread for ever." The old man satisfied all his wishes, and told him not to forget God. The youngest brother was then wedded and settled, and promised the old man that he would not forget God, but would succour the needy.

Now the old man was the Lord. After wandering about the world for a long time, he thought he would go back and see how the young men were fulfilling their promises. He went first to the eldest, and begged an alms. "Now see here," said the youth, "you are not so very old yet. You are still able to earn your bread. I have not had time to get on my feet yet." But he was very wealthy, and had great ricks, barns, cattle, and chests full of clothes. The old man had gone but a gunshot from the house when he looked back, and saw all the man's property being burnt. He then went on to the second brother, who had the fish pond and mill near his house, and, entering the mill, said, "For the love of Christ, good man, give me a handful of flour." "I will not," was the reply, "I have not ground enough for my children yet." The Lord went on, and on looking back saw the mill in flames. He then visited the youngest son, at whose house he arrived in a miserable plight; vermin swarmed upon him like ants. "Give me," said he, "for Christ's sake, some of the store that God has bestowed upon you." "Go into the house, old man, and there you shall have your needs satisfied." The good wife, who was indoors, no sooner saw the woeful state he was in, than she opened a trunk and took out a shirt and trousers for him. He put them on, but insects still covered him like swarms of ants. "What can I do," said the woman, "to free you from this filthy pest?" "How can I be made whole? If you take that boy who is sitting on the bench and throw him into the stove, and cook him, and let me smear myself with the balm from his body, it will drive away the vermin, otherwise I shall die in two days, for they will eat me up." "Wait, grandfather, till I go and ask my husband's advice." The

husband, who was at work, on being consulted by his wife, replied that the life of a grown man was of more value than that of a little child. Accordingly she returned to the house, put her child in the stove, and heaped up fire-brands on the top, so that he should not get out. When she looked in, the child was sitting amid the flames *playing with gold coins* (lit., *yellow things*). The old man said, "The Lord has given you this, my children, because you do not forget the needy; but your brothers have been burnt up with all their wealth and their cattle." The old man disappeared before the wife had time to call her husband.

*A similar story from Bulgaria.*¹—Once in the olden time when the Lord used to go about the world, there were three brothers. One day they were travelling sorrowfully to a strange land when they saw by the roadside a spring of water, and stopped to quench their thirst. "Ah!" said the eldest brother, "if the Lord would only make that spring run wine instead of water, I would build a tavern there, and give wine free of charge to every wayfarer who asked for it."

Now the Lord was there and heard him, and the spring was at once turned into wine. So the eldest brother stayed there, built a tavern, and for some time gave wine to all who asked. But after a while he grew stingy, and would not give a drop of wine to anybody unless they paid. The other two brothers went on and looked for work. One day they saw a mountain, and upon it a plain where flocks of ravens and crows had settled. The second brother said, "Ah! if the Lord would only turn these birds into sheep, I would build a sheepfold, and give milk to all who asked for it." No sooner had he spoken than his wish was fulfilled, and for a time he did as he had promised; but he, too, soon became stingy, and would not give a spoonful away without payment.

The youngest brother continued his journey alone, and at last reached a town where he took service with an innkeeper, and stayed with him a long time. When his master saw his goodness and obedience, he gave him his daughter to wife, and the couple lived happily together, for both were kind and good-hearted. Now the Lord, wishing to try the faith of the three brothers, disguised himself as an old man, and went first to him who had the fountain of wine. He took a dry crust of bread, and said, "Son, give me a cup of wine to moisten this dry bread, for I am old, and have no teeth to chew it." "Get you gone," was the reply, "if I were to give to every passer-by, I should have nothing left." "But, my son, if you give to no other man, give to me, for I have no teeth to chew my dry bread; and, besides, you did not buy that wine, the Lord gave it to you." "I cannot give you any, old man; begone!"

The Lord went on, but as soon as he had gone a little way the spring was turned into water again. The same thing happened to the second brother.

¹ K. A. Shapkarev: "Sbornik ot narodni starini," t. iii, Plovdiv, 1885, pp. 18-22.

Last of all the Lord went to the youngest, disguised as an old man covered with wounds and sores on his hands and legs and face, exceedingly offensive to the sight. It was evening, and, when he knocked, the wife came to the door. "What do you want, grandfather?" said she. "May I stay here for the night with you? It is dark; I have no house to go to, and I am ill; let me lie behind your door." The woman took pity on the miserable old man, and made him go upstairs and warm himself. Her husband having come home, they asked the old man how he had got into such a condition, and whether there was no remedy. He answered that a leech had told him of one thing of which if he ate a little he would be cured; but it could not be bought for money. After much pressing, he informed them that he could be healed by eating of the flesh of a little boy, the only child of his parents. The husband and wife decided to kill their child, "We are young, and the Lord will give us other children." In spite of the old man's entreaties they kill their son, put him in a pot, and cook him in the oven. The wife sends her husband to see if the child is properly cooked. While bringing the pot back to the house from the kitchen, the man takes off the lid, and sees the boy's eyes turned upon him, but he thinks he is dead. The dish is set before the old man, who eats a little of it and becomes perfectly healthy. The child comes to life after being blessed by the old man, who then disappears, and they know that he is the Lord. The Lord left his blessing in that house, and the family from generation to generation have seen no evil thing, and have obtained the Kingdom of Heaven.

A second Bulgarian version, entitled, "Bulgarian Hospitality,"¹ the Lord is going about trying people's faith, and, in the guise of an old man, has come to the door of a poor Bulgarian, who invites him to come in and share "all that God has given." The old man will not partake of their supper, but when the hostess goes to attend to a child who begins to cry in another room, he thus addresses her husband,

"Listen to this, good man. You wish to entertain me; but I cannot eat anything excepting human flesh. Kill your little boy; wash him well and cook him in the stove, taking care not to let your wife see you, for she would be grieved."

"Is that all you want, old man? Why did you not tell me sooner, for I would not have a hungry guest in my house? Did you not say that all God has given us is yours? You shall see directly what I would do for you; wait a little till I prepare what you want."

The child was accordingly put in the stove, which seems to have been in an out-house. When the father opened the stove to see if the child was cooked, he was dazzled by a flood of light. The victim, and the copper basin in which he had been placed, were golden, and shone like the sun. The child sat in the basin,

¹ Erben: "Sto Slavyanskikh narodnykh skazok." Praha, 1865, pp. 207-209, and Shapkarov: *op. cit.*, 22-24.

healthy and merry; on his head was a crown of pearls and priceless jewels, at his girdle was a sword, in his right hand he held a book with golden letters, in his left hand was a wheat-sheaf with full ears, and all shone with a fiery brightness like gold.

The father returned to the house to tell the old man about the miracle which had taken place, but the guest had departed, leaving a blessing upon his hosts and their descendants.

*The Two Orphan Brothers and the Lord*¹ is a third Bulgarian version of the story. It begins in a similar manner to the story about the three brothers; but at the marriage of the second a miracle takes place. The old man and his companion are spending the night at a house where there is a beautiful maiden, and the former says to the hostess, "If the vine which is in the courtyard bears grapes in the morning, will you give your daughter to my friend?"

*Serbian Versions.*²—These differ from the Little Russian and Bulgarian, and, probably owing to Bogomilian influence, lay great stress on the value of morality as opposed to ceremonial religion. In one of them *Deacon Stefan* is engaged in sowing corn in the early dawn of Sunday, before the mass, and is reproached for impiety by two old men who pass along the road. He replies that he has in his house nine blind men and nine dumb, whom he is supporting by his labours, and that God will pardon him for this trifling sin.

The wayfarers go on to the house and find the Deacon's wife at work, and a similar conversation takes place. They then tell her that if she kills her child and sprinkles its blood in the courtyard, the dumb will speak, the blind will see. She follows their advice; the miracle takes place, and when she looks at her child she finds it alive and playing in the cradle with a *golden apple*, and it tells her that the old men are angels.

*Similar Stories in Brittany.*³—"Ste. Touina," "L'ermite et la bergère," "Le roi Dalmar." These stories have one curious feature in common, to which M. Dragomanov does not refer: in each case, the child, after the sacrifice, is playing with *oranges*. In some of the stories given above we have drawn attention to this feature: *the yellow gold pieces, the golden apple, the orange*, all, evidently, have a common origin. We do not think it necessary to give any account of these stories, as they are easily obtainable in French, while "Faithful John," in the collection of the Brothers Grimm, is familiar to all our readers.

¹ Shapkarov: *op. cit.*, p. 123-4.

² V. Karajich: "Srpske narodne pisame," ii, 3. Cf. *ibid.*, "iz Khertsegovine," 316-318.

³ Luzel: "Légendes chrétiennes de la Basse Bretagne," t. ii, pp. 11-17, 64-81.

III. THE RUSSIAN STORY OF THE CHRIST-LOVING MERCHANT.¹

A certain merchant by a munificent alms had made the fortune of a beggar, but some time afterwards he himself was afflicted, like Job, with sores, and spent all his money in seeking a cure.

He was recognised by the prosperous man, whose benefactor he had been, and when the latter heard that the blood of a firstborn child could alone bring health to the diseased merchant, he made the sacrifice in the absence of his wife, and when she returned she found her son alive.

The belief that the blood of a child, especially of a firstborn son, will cure leprosy is, says Kostomarov, very widespread. Among the Jews there is an apocryphal story to the effect that this is why Pharaoh wanted to slay the Israelitish children; and in a Jewish book of the Passover ritual, printed in the sixteenth century, there is a picture representing the Egyptian King, covered with sores, standing in a bath, while his nobles open the veins of children whose blood spurts on his body; in the background are women weeping. Kostomarov says, however, that the superstition is a relic of pagan times, which has been borrowed by the Jews. It will be noted, in the story of the Christ-loving merchant, that though the child is restored to life the healing power of its blood is not denied.

*Georgian Story of the Grateful Merchant.*²—A merchant was travelling over the mountains with a caravan, when, at Bonlisi,³ he arrived one night at an inn, the landlord of which took no payment from his guests. Before morning a heavy snowfall had closed the road, and the traveller had to stay imprisoned in the hostelry till spring. The host had a son who was leprous, and a perfect monster of ugliness, but, being unwilling to show such a disgusting object to his guest, denied that he had any children. When the snow had melted, the merchant left, after protesting his gratitude for the kind entertainment he had received. He had not proceeded far when he was overtaken by the boy, who had escaped from his father, and insisted upon accompanying the merchant. The latter on reaching home consulted a doctor, who said that the blood of a two-year old child would cure the leper. The merchant, anxious to prove his gratitude to his benefactor, sent his wife out of the way, and proceeded to kill his child, who was of the requisite age. The cure was effected; but immediately afterwards the mother came running in, saying that she had "pains in the breasts and the belly," and therefore she was sure something had happened to her offspring. She took the baby out of the cradle; it was quite

¹ Kostomarov: "Pamyatniki starinnoi russkoi literatury," i, 117-8.

² Tsagareli (translator): "Kniga mudrosti i lzhi," N. 125. The collection was written in the seventeenth century by Prince Sulkhan Orbeliani, a friend of La Fontaine.

³ Probably Bolnisi, a village among the hills south of the river Kura.

well and began to suck, but there was a mark on its face *like a golden ring*.

*Amis et Amyles.*¹—In this story of the Damon and Pythias of the *Chansons de Geste* we have an episode of a similar character, worked out with more attempt at art than in any of the popular stories given above, but it will be noticed that the *oranges* still form a prominent feature in the scene which follows the sacrifice.

THE ORIGINAL SOURCES OF THE ABOVE LEGEND.

The three groups of stories have a sufficient number of points in common to admit of their having the same origin, and the nature of the moral teaching which they inculcate is comparatively modern in tone. It is to Asia that we must look for the primitive form of the legend.

*Mussulman stories about the preservation of Moses.*²—As soon as Moses was born the idols fell down in the temples of Egypt, and Pharaoh heard a voice commanding him to worship the one God, and threatening him with death if he disobeyed. In the morning Pharaoh's astrologer told him of the birth of a child, among the Hebrews, who would be fatal to him. Haman went into the house of Jochabed, the mother of Moses, who had hidden her child in the stove, and put wood over him, and then gone out. When Haman had searched the house he ordered the wood in the stove to be lighted, and went away. Jochabed came in, saw the fire and was alarmed; but Moses said to her from the stove, "Be of good cheer, mother; God will not give the fire power over me."

*The Arabic gospels.*³—In another version of the same story, it is the sister of Jochabed who lights the fire, not knowing that her nephew is there. This gives us a point of transition to the apocryphal stories of Christ's childhood which are found in the Arabic gospels.⁴

*Caleb the son of Mary.*⁵—There were in the same city two wives of one man, who had each a son sick. One of them was called Mary and her son's name was Caleb. She arose, and taking her son, went to the lady St. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and offered her a very handsome carpet, saying, "O my Lady Mary, accept this carpet of me, and instead of it give me a small swaddling cloth." To this Mary agreed, and when the mother of Caleb was gone, she made a coat for her son with the swaddling cloth, put it on him, and his disease was cured; but the son of the other wife died. Hereupon there arose between them a difference in

¹ Ed., Konrad Hoffmann, v, 2935-3241. Cf. L. Gautier: "Épopées françaises," t. i, p. 310. The earliest MS. is of the eleventh century.

² G. Weil: "Biblische Legenden d. Mussulmänner," 134-5.

³ Thilo: "Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti," 1832, 140-8.

⁴ Thilo: *op. cit.*, xxvii-xxx. Tischendorf: "Evangelia apocrypha," 1876, xlviii-li. Brunet: "Les évangiles apocryphes," 1848-58. Migne: "Dictionnaire des apocryphes," i, 972-982.

⁵ I quote Hone's translation, i, "Infancy," chap. x, v, 1-7.

doing the business of the family by turns, each her week. And when the turn of Mary the mother of Caleb came, and she was heating the oven to bake bread, and went away to fetch the meal, she left her son Caleb by the oven, whom, the other wife, her rival, seeing to be by himself, took and cast him into the oven, which was very hot, and then went away. Mary, on her return, saw her son Caleb lying in the middle of the oven laughing, and the oven quite as cold as though it had not been before heated, and knew that her rival, the other wife, had thrown him into the fire.

We know that the Apocryphal Gospels are very ancient, at least as old as the time of Origen, and the Mussulman stories are of course, much later, yet the latter are more old world in their style, especially the first of the two, and it is interesting to note that the Russian ballad of the Merciful Woman has points in common with both, viz., the persecution of a new-born child, and the introduction of two women and two infants. It is possible that the Armenian and Persian versions of the Apocryphal Gospels might show the connection more clearly, but in any case, it is sufficiently curious that of all the Christian stories on this theme the Great Russian is the most primitive. Professor Dragomanov suggests that the word *Allilueva* may be derived from *Kalyujo* (Caleb).

The motive given for the sacrifice in the Bulgarian legend and its (?) derivatives (i.e., the Little Russian, Breton and Serbian), is different altogether from that alleged in the first group—it is the cure of human ills. Here again we find something analogous in the Gospel of the Infancy.

*Healing of the leprous son of a Prince's wife.*¹—When Joseph and Mary were bringing Jesus back from Egypt, in company with a girl whom they had cured of leprosy, they stayed one night at an inn (reminding us of the inns in the Bulgarian, ecclesiastical Slavonic, and Georgian tales). When the girl was alone with Mary she told the Virgin that she had been speaking with a princess, and had learnt from her the following secret: That after being barren for a long time, she had borne a son, but he was leprous from his birth, and the prince had ordered her either to kill the child or to leave him. She had therefore gone away to live with her afflicted son. The girl had been cured of leprosy by being sprinkled in the water in which Jesus was washed. The princess had her son made whole in a similar manner, and then married him to the girl who had been the means of his recovery.

Of course this is not by any means the same thing as the Bulgarian story, but if we take fragments from other parts of the same Gospel and piece them together, we shall arrive at something like it, and it is well known that oral literature shows many examples of such combinations. A link between the Bulgarian

¹ Hone. i, "Infancy," chap. vi, v, 19-37.

(second version) and the Russian, is furnished by the gold-lettered book (of the Gospels) which the child in both cases holds in its hands in the flames. We have every reason for believing that the first group of the stories which form the subject of the present essay, may be derived from the Apocryphal Gospels. The second (Bulgarian, &c.) group, in spite of numerous differences, evidently originated in the first. But the third series of stories (the Christ-loving merchant, &c.), in spite of the mention of the inn, cannot thus be accounted for; they are more modern in tone, and we must seek an explanation of them elsewhere. The Georgian is evidently the oldest of the three, the Russian comes next, and the French is the most modern. The idea, too, of a God who wanders about the world is contradictory to the religious systems of Western Asia; it is not to be reconciled with the monotheism of Jews, Christians, and Mussulmans. In the literature of Buddhism, we find not only divine persons travelling on earth, but the ethical doctrine of sacrifice carried to such an extreme as to permit of the offering up of children. Some have asserted that the story of Abraham and Isaac belongs to this religious system, but there is more reason to attribute it to the most ancient period of Hebrew history, when human sacrifices were supposed to be pleasing to God. This has nothing in common with the teaching of Sakya-Muni, who commands his followers to sacrifice themselves, their wives and children, even for the sake of the most worthless man.

Buddhist stories.—The story of the throwing of a child into the stove, for the sake of a guest, and the restoration of this child to life again, occurs as an episode in a story in the Indian collection entitled *Vetâlapançavinçati*, which in the opinion of Benfey, is probably of Buddhist origin.¹

Story of Vessantara.—The giving up of a man's children by him to any beggar who may ask alms, is the most characteristic feature of the story of Prince Vessantara, a story which is known to the Buddhist world from the Pacific Ocean to the steppes of European Russia. Vessantara is the last incarnation of Buddha in the form of a Bodisatva; on account of his self-renunciation, he at length becomes worthy of incarnation as the King's son Sakya-Muni, who was the most perfect Buddha. Vessantara begins by giving to the natives of a neighbouring kingdom, who were suffering from drought, a white horse which had the power of bringing rain. "Why do they not demand my eyes, or my flesh?" said the Merciful Prince. His fellow-countrymen and his father, displeased at his generosity, exile him, and he goes away to the woods with his wife and two children. To beggars he gradually gives away all that he has, and finally bestows his children upon a Brahmin who cruelly ill-treats them. "I shall be Buddha!" is Vessantara's continual cry. Last of all the god

¹ Benfey: "*Pantchatantra*," i, § 5. The version current among the Kalmucks is found in Jülg: "*Kalmückische Märchen*," Leipzig, 1866, and "*Mongolische Märchen*." Innsbruck, 1869.

Sakra (Indra) takes the form of an old Brahmin, and demands Vessantara's wife, and when the holy man has renounced her too, the god takes his divine form and informs him that after one more incarnation he will gain the rank of Buddha.¹

Story of faithful Viravara.—The complete story of Vessantara is found only among the Buddhist peoples, but there is another Indian tale which has penetrated into almost every part of Europe, that is the one which tells about the faithful Viravara, the best version of which is found in the *Hitopadesa*.² Viravara is in the service of a king who gives him a munificent salary, but it is all spent in the service of the gods and for the good of mankind. One night the king hears a woman weeping, and asks Viravara to go and find out the reason. The servant finds in a graveyard the weeping female, and learns from her that she is the king's destiny, and is weeping because the goddess Druga has resolved that the king must die within three days, unless Viravara will slay his son as a sacrifice to the goddess. The faithful Viravara makes the sacrifice with the consent of the child and its mother. His daughter, out of love for her brother, yields up her life also; his wife dies of grief; Viravara kills himself. The king had followed Viravara at a distance and heard the words of his destiny. When he knew what had taken place, he did not wish to survive his loyal servitor, and was on the point of committing suicide, when the goddess restored the four victims to life by means of an elixir.³

It would be an interesting study in international psychology to compare all the numerous existing versions of the stories referred to above. Let it suffice to say that in those which are real folk-tales, we notice an invariable dislike of the idea of an aimless sacrifice, or a murderous one; they all seek some motive to excuse the crime, it is generally accepted as a lesser evil furnishing means of escape from a greater. In the Great Russian story the motive is love of God and of the faith, in the Bulgarian love of the poor, in the Georgian gratitude for past kindness.⁴

¹ Hardy: "A Manual of Buddhism," 116-124. Uphan: "History and Doctrine of Buddhism," 36-38. Koeppen: "Die Religion des Buddha," i, 324-326.

² Cf. Hardy: *op. cit.*, 114. Benfey: *op. cit.*, i, § 168.

³ Lancereau: "Hitopadesa," iii, No. 9. Luber: "Vetālsapančavin-ṣaṭi," 35, &c. Oesterley: "Baital Pachisi," No. 3 and notes. Cf. Persian and Turkish versions—Pertsch: "Über Nachschabi's Papagaienbuch," in "Zeitschrift d. Deutschen Morgenländ. Ges.," xxi, 1867, 516, 517. Rosen: "Tuti Nameh," i, 42-60. Cf. also "Lal Behari Day," Folk-tales of Bengal, No. 2, and Miss Frere: "Old Deccan Days," No. 5. European versions are numerous and well known to our readers.

⁴ The editor of the *Sbornik* has appended to Prof. Dragomanov's essay two additional Bulgarian versions of the story of the brothers who travelled with God.

The following notes have been subsequently received :—

Regarding the Mussulman and Christian stories, is it fantastic to suppose that they are meant to show the superiority of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, &c., to the worship of fire? In chapter iii of Hone's translation of "*Infancy*," i, Zoradascht (Zoroaster) is mentioned, and in verses 6, 7, 8, there is an account of a miracle in which a swaddling cloth was fire-proof.

Another Serbian version.

"*Volksmärchen der Serben. Gesammelt und herausgegeben von Vuk Stephanowitsch Karadschitsch.*" Ins Deutsche übersetzt von dessen Tochter Wilhelmine. Mit einer Vorrede von Jacob Grimm. (Berlin, 1854.)

No. 14, pp. 118–123, is entitled: "To him that asks little much shall be given." I summarise it as follows, underlining the passages of most importance.

There were once *three brothers* who owned nothing in the world, excepting a pear-tree which they attended to by turns. God sent an angel to see how the brothers were getting on, with orders to provide them with a better livelihood if necessary. *The angel transformed himself into a beggar* and begged a pear from the brother whose turn it was to watch the tree. It was given to him, and on the next two days the other two brothers also gave him a pear, each from his own stock of fruit.

On the fourth day the angel, disguised as a monk, came very early and found all the brothers at home. He said to them, "Come with me and I will give you a better means of livelihood." They came to a brook, and the angel asked the eldest, "What do you wish to have?" "*That this water should turn into wine and belong to me.*" The angel made the sign of the cross over the water with his stick, and the miracle took place. The eldest brother became rich.

The angel went on with the other two, till they came to a *field covered with doves*. These were turned into *sheep* at the request of the second brother, and he too was rich.

The youngest asked that God would give him a true Christian wife. The angel replied that this was a very difficult prayer to grant. "In the whole wide world there are only three, two of them are married already, and the third has two wooers." They reached a city where they found a king's daughter of truly Christian spirit, but two emperors had already "laid their apples on the table." (Custom even at the present day in Serbia for wooers to place on the table of their ladylove an apple with coins inside it.) The young man put his apple with the others.

The maiden's father objected that the last suitor was but a beggar compared with the other two. The angel proposed that the princess should plant three vines, one for each suitor, and the one on whose vine grapes had grown by next morning would be accepted.

Of course the poor man's vine was the only one to bear fruit, and he won the bride.

After the marriage the angel *took the pair away into the woods*, and left them there for a year. At the end of this time, God sent the angel to see how his *protégés* were getting on. The result was the same as in the Little Russian story, as far as the two eldest brothers were concerned—they were both sent back to their pear tree penniless. The third brother was found in the wood living in poverty with his wife. They gladly took in the beggar-angel, but they had no flour to make bread for him; they were in the habit of grinding the bark of trees for meal. The wife made a loaf from meal thus prepared, and put it on the fire to cook. When she went to look if it was baked, she found a fine wheaten loaf, so large that it had lifted up the lid of the dish in which it had been placed. She and her husband thanked heaven that they were able to give their guest suitable entertainment. They put the loaf before the angel with a jar of water, but as soon as they began to drink it had turned to wine. The angel made the sign of the cross over the hut, and it turned into a royal palace full of wealth. They lived happily afterwards.

There are so many analogies with the stories in Dragomanov that this must be connected with them. The change of the child into a loaf is perhaps due to some fastidious narrator in modern times.

In the "Narod" (a Galician review) Ivan Franko has given an account of the Old German poem, "Der arme Heinrich." Heinrich, lord of a village, becomes infected with *leprosy*, and a leech in Salerno tells him that he can only be cured by the blood of an innocent maiden. A village girl offers herself, but at the decisive moment Heinrich refuses to allow the sacrifice. He is cured, nevertheless, and marries the maiden. The poem is attributed to Hartmann von Aue (XII-XIII century).

The story of the sacrifice of a child for the sake of one's friend is found in the "Seven Sages," whence it was probably taken by the author of "Amis and Amiles."

Supplementary note to the summary of Anuchin's monograph on The Use of Sledges, &c., at Burials.

The Greek Church in Bulgaria will not allow anyone to marry a fourth wife, and in case of such a union does not recognise its validity. Upon the death of a man who has transgressed in this way his friends and acquaintances do not go to the dead man's house and accompany his body to the grave; *his corpse is removed from the house through one of the windows.* (Communicated by Mr. J. P. Slaveikov, of Sofia.)