

sacredness of the circle in those early ages is seen from the Chaldæan name (Genesis xxxi. 47), "the circle of witness"—a name given to a solemn compact of friendship witnessed by that celestial orb which looks down on and observes all the deeds of men. In Persia, to this day, in the southern parts of it, which were originally inhabited by a Hamite race of an almost purely negroid type, there are to be seen on the roadsides large circles of stones which the tradition of the country regards as set there by the *Caous*, a race of giants, that is, of aboriginals. Their name closely resembles the name *Kush*, as does also *Cutch* at the north of the *Indus*, and other geographical names along the Arabian seas. Then in the classic nations, both in Greece and Italy, some of the most famous temples were circular in form, especially the Pantheon at Athens; and, at Rome, the temple of *Vesta*, the goddess of the sun-given, eternal fire. At Rome also, for 100 years from the foundation of the city, the worship of the gods was celebrated in the open air (*cf.* the *Bora*), often in sacred groves; and there also the temple of *Janus*, the oldest and most venerated of the Roman gods, was merely a sacred enclosure upon which no building stood till the time of the First Punic War. The *pomærium*, or circuit of the walls of Rome, was a sacred ring, and the *Circus* was consecrated to the sun, and was open to the sky. In Britain, too, the fire worship of the Druids led them to construct ring temples in various places, and especially at *Stonehenge*, where there are two rings as in the *Bora*, but concentric. Even the rude *Laplanders*, who are sprung from the same *Turanian* race which was one of the earliest elements in the population of *Babylonia*, make two circles when they sacrifice to the sun, and surround them with willows; they also draw a white thread through the ear of the animal to be sacrificed, and white, as we shall presently see, is the sun's livery.

(B.) In the *Bora*, the two rings, both of them sacred, communicate with each other by means of a narrow passage, in which are earthen representations of certain objects of worship; the inner contains the images or symbols of the gods carved on trees, and the novice is so placed in the outer ring that he faces the passage and the shrine of the gods; he is turned to the east (see note, the eighth page of this paper).

(b.) The inner shrine is an arrangement common to all religions. At *Babylon* in the temple of *Belus*, which was built in stages, the worshipper had to pass through these seven stages of *Sabæism* before he reached the shrine; this was the topmost of all, and contained a golden image of the god; each of these stages was devoted to the worship of one

of the Babylonian gods. So also, in the Bora, the worshipper advances by stages along the passage leading from the one circle to the other, and pays his devotions to each of the images in succession. In Greece and in Rome the roofed temples were commonly arranged in two parts, an inner and an outer, and the statue of the god was so placed that a worshipper, entering by the external door, saw it right before him. At the very ancient temple of Dodonæan Zeus, in Greece, the god was supposed to reside in an oak tree, and it is quite possible that the *Xoanon*, or wooden image of the god, was here, as in other grove worship, merely a carved piece of oak as in the Bora. In this sense Festus gives *Fustis decorticatus* as an equivalent for *delubrum*. The student of Biblical archæology will also remember the Asherah of the Israelite idolaters, the consort of the sun-god Baal; this was a wooden pillar or statue of the goddess which could be cut down and burned. Such a pillar our black fellows also have been known to erect; for on one occasion several men of a tribe which is well known to me were seen to cut down a soft cedar tree; they dressed it with their hatchets, and cut the end of it into the rude figure of a head and face; they then carried it some distance down the river to a sandy spot, and, setting it up there like a pillar, they danced in a circle around it. This was certainly an act of worship, the same as many other acts of worship in the heathen world. Was it merely a happy thought on the part of these black fellows, or undesigned coincidence, which led them to do so; or was it a portion of an ancestral form of worship brought from other lands?

(C.) In the Bora, the novice in the outer circle has his body all painted over with red, but at the close of his novitiate he washes in a pool, is thereby cleansed, and then paints himself all white. The other members of the tribe paint themselves red and white for the ceremony; they, too, at the close, wash in the pool and retire white like the "boombat." This transformation is to them a source of much rejoicing.

(c.) Among the black races the colour red was the symbol of evil; and so Plutarch tells us that the Egyptians sacrificed only red bullocks to Typhon, and that the animal was reckoned unfit for this sacrifice if a single white or black hair could be found on it; in certain of their festivals the Egyptians assailed with insults and revilings any among them who happened to have red hair, and the people of Coptos had a custom of throwing an ass down a precipice because of its red colour. The god Typhon was to the Egyptians the embodied cause of everything evil, malignant, destructive, man-hating in the economy of nature, just as Osiris, the bright

and beneficent sun, was an emblem of all that was good. In the Levitical economy, the red heifer was a sin-offering for the Israelites, probably with some reference to the Egyptian ideas about this colour. In India, Ganesa, the lord of all mischievous and malignant spirits, is symbolised by red stones, and the Cingalese, when they are sick, offer a red cock to the evil spirit that has caused the sickness. The blacks of Congo wash and anoint a corpse and then paint it red, and their black brethren of Madagascar, when they are celebrating the rite of circumcision, never wear anything red about them lest the child should bleed to death. The negroes of Upper Guinea, far enough removed from Australian Bora to prevent even a suspicion of borrowing, make a similar use of the colours red and white; for in Benin, when a woman is first initiated into the rites which the Babylonians sanctioned in honour of their goddess Mulitta, she seats herself on a mat in a public place, and covers her head, shoulders, and arms with the blood of a fowl; she then retires for her devotions, and, these being finished, she washes herself, returns, and is rubbed all over with white chalk where the blood had been. The young ladies of Congo, also a black country, have a similar custom, but they besmear their faces and necks with red paint.

In Australia, those who pass through the Bora paint themselves white at its close. Everywhere in Australia there is the belief that the black man when he is dead and buried still lives, but he is then white; the aborigines say "black fellow jumps up a white fellow;" hence their name for white man is "wunda," a word which originally described only the black man in his spirit state after death. The father of a friend of mine was the first white man to enter, some fifty years ago, the territory of a black tribe near to where I lived; it so happened that the tribe had just lost their chief by death, and, as the white man whom they saw coming over the crest of the hill towards their camp bore some physical resemblance to the deceased, they soon got to hail him as their chief in the "wunda" state, and to this hour they claim that white man's son as one of themselves, a brother!

Now, in the ancient rituals, white was the colour sacred to the sun, the benign god, before whom darkness flies away. In India, white agates represent Siva, the eternal cause of all blessings; in Persia, white horses were sacred to the sun; in Celtic Britain, some of the Welsh people even now whiten their houses to keep away devils; and so with many other examples.

In these senses the "boombat" enters the Bora with the

brand of Typhon upon him, exposed to all evil influences, to disease and death from animals, men, and spirits; but after he has made the acquaintance of his fathers' gods, and has learned the sacred songs and dances of his tribe, he comes forth another man; he washes away the badge of darkness and evil, and assumes the livery of the children of light. The other men, whose mottled colour is a confession of mingled good and evil in their lives, also emerge new men once more, purified and devoted anew to the service of the good, and freed from the power of the evil.

This felt subjection to unseen evil and aspiration for deliverance from it in the minds of our native races, is not only natural to man everywhere, but was a marked feature in the whole system of Akkadian magic; for these old Chaldæans believed that innumerable spirits, each with a personality, were distributed throughout nature, sometimes in union with animate objects, sometimes separately. Existing everywhere, they had each both an evil and a good aspect, at one time favourable, at another unfavourable, controlling both life and death, regulating all the phenomena, beneficial or destructive, of air, earth, fire, or water. A dual spirit, bad and good, was attached to each of the celestial bodies, and each living being; a constant warfare existed and was keenly maintained between the bad and the good, and, according as the one principle or the other held sway, so did blessings or disasters descend upon nature and upon man. Hence the value of religious rites, such as the Bora; for the due observance of these, repeated from time to time, gave for a while, at least, the victory to the good spirits, and brought blessings to the faithful. Thus, then, I explain the red colour of the novice at the Bora; the red and white of the celebrants, and the white colour of the whole when the service was completed.

(D.) Ridley says that the Bora is Baiamai's ground. He adds: "Baiamai sees all; he knows all, if not directly, yet through Turramulan, a subordinate deity. Turramulan is mediator for all the operations of Baiamai to man, and from man to Baiamai." "Women must not see Turramulan on pain of death. And even when mention is made of Turramulan, or of the Bora at which he presides, the women slink away, knowing that it is unlawful for them so much as to hear anything about such matters."

(d.) We have seen that in some places an image of Daramulun is set up at the Bora. In another place, the bull-roaring instrument, whose voice begins the ceremony of the Bora and warns the women not to look, is called *tirricoty*, and is sometimes made in the shape of a fish; the magic

wand that Ridley mentions is called *dhūrumbulun*; and the great ancestral Bora ground of the Kamilaroi tribe in New South Wales is at *Tirri-hai-hai*. In Victoria this same roaring instrument is called *turndun*, which I think should be written *dhurrun-dun*. All these names are identical, and only modifications of *dara-mūlun*; thus, with a slight alteration of the spelling, we have *turra-mul-un durru-m-dun*, *durru-mbulun*, *tirri-coty*, *tirri-hai-hai*. The root of all these forms I take to be *dara*, *dar*, Sanskrit *dri*, meaning to protect, a root found in all the great branches of human speech, and furnishing derivatives which mean "a prince," "a governor," "a lord," "a supreme ruler." I therefore take *Daramulun* to mean something like "Lord of the mysteries," for it is evident that he presides at the Bora, and is the source of the blessings therein communicated. The use of a fish-shaped roarer to indicate his presence leads me to compare him with the Chaldæan god, Hoā, Hea, half man, half fish, who, in the Chaldæo-Babylonian religion, was revered as the revealer of all religious and social knowledge. His abode was the sea, the Persian Gulf, where he passed the night, but by day he remained among men to instruct them; thus he became a legislator and protector. Hea, as a god, "seesthat all is in order," and, being acquainted with all sciences, he can baffle the powers of evil by his magic arts. With this I compare the "magic" shown by the Koradjie in the Bora in the presence of *Daramulun*'s image. The Akkadians, and from them the Babylonians, invoked the aid of Hea, when spells and enchantments were found unavailing against the power of demons. So in the Bora passage, when *Daramulun* had been duly honoured and magic influence conjured up for the driving away of all adverse spirits, the lad is taken into the inner circle and sees the gods of his fathers, and learns to know them and their attributes, just as in the greater Eleusinia of Greece the duly qualified were, after a course of previous preparation, led into the inner sanctuary in the darkness of night, and there, by a dim light, allowed to see and know the holy things.

(E.) The next step in the process of initiation is interesting: (1) a sacred wand is shown to the "boombat:" (2) he gets a new name; and (3) certain white stones are given to him.

(e.) (1) The wand. In this there is the notion of consecration and sacredness; for, on the Egyptian monuments, the deities are constantly represented as holding in one hand a long rod or wand, with a crook on the upper end of it. The king also, and some of the higher officers of state, carry this

“crook.” In India we find that Yama, the regent of the South, has a name from a sacred staff or rod, and some religious impostors wear as badges of sanctity a “staff” and a deer’s skin. The Magi of Persia carried the *Bareçma* or *barson*, a divining wand as one of the badges of their ministry and the magicians of Egypt similarly had rods in their hands when they stood in the presence of Pharaoh. The traditions of Peru speak of a sacred golden wand borne by the son and daughter of the Sun. These are analogies; but the nearest approach to the use of the wand in the Bora is, I think, to be found in the Finnish Kalevala, where there is a reference to a “celebrated wand” (evidently as in Peru a sun wand) which protects its possessor from all spells and enchantments; even the gods are glad to use it against the powers of evil. (2) A new name. Having now acquired a knowledge of sacred things, the initiated is henceforth a new man, he is “twice born,” and like his kinsman in Upper Guinea, already described, he will come out to the world in a new character, renouncing his former state. In India, a youth becomes one of the “twice born,” by investiture with the sacred cord, receiving thus a spiritual birth; thereafter, like our “boombat,” he passes into the hands of religious preceptors, who teach him the sacred prayers, mystic words, and devotional ceremonies. In more modern times, when a monastic house or a nunnery receives, from the world without, one more recluse, a new name is given by which he or she may thenceforward be known in religion. The underlying idea in all these instances is that a religious profession gives one a new character and a new relation to the rest of the world. And who will deny that this is true, whether the professor be black or white? (3) The white stones. I am inclined to think that the “boombat” receives only one of these at a time, and that the number of them increases according to the number of Boras he attends until he becomes a full and accepted master of the craft. In any case they are used as talismans, and are carried in the belt during the whole of the man’s life. They are merely small pieces of quartz crystals, but are so sacred that they must not be shown to the women.* The negroes of Guinea use small stones as fetishes, which they carry about their necks or under their armpits. These the priests sell after a formal consecration. The white colour is a sun colour. It is beneficent

* *Moorl* is the name for the white crystals. A Koradjie, in the presence of a friend of mine, swallowed three or four small ones, saying, “That fellow stick there.” He believed that the crystals would give him more power as a medicine-man.

and preservative against evil, as already shown; hence the Hindoos dedicate white stones to Siva, the eternally blessed one.

Under this head I venture to refer to the promise given to the Church in Pergamos (Revelation ii. 17) in these words: "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." On this passage commentators have given the most diverse opinions in explanation of the white stone and the new name. The very diversity of their opinions leads me to think that in this passage there is a reference to some heathen and idolatrous rites well known to the Pergamenes, part, it may be, of the religion of their ancestors, as in the Bora ceremonies; for in the Bora there is the white stone and the new name which must not be divulged. I cannot stay to examine this curious analogy, but I think that some light might be got to illustrate the passage if one were to explore the source of the early population of Pergamos and its forms of worship. It will probably be found that both were in some way Chaldæan, and that the worship was very sensual and degrading, such as was the worship of Mulitta in Babylon. This would explain how it is that in the message to the Church in Pergamos the expression occurs, "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is"; and again, "Among you where Satan dwelleth," the city being thus twice in one short message described as a stronghold of Satan; it would also explain the reference to "fornication," and "things sacrificed to idols," and "the teaching of Balaam." If I were for a moment to assume the garb of a commentator, I would paraphrase the promise to the Pergamene Church somewhat in this manner:—"To him that overcometh, that is, to him that rises above the abounding evil and remains faithful in his new profession, will I give . . . a white stone, a pledge of purity and a safeguard against the wicked practices so common among you where Satan dwelleth, and a new name to show that he has put off his former state of slavery to sin, and has become a new man in the service of a new master, who is pure, and holy, and undefiled."

(F.) The initiated lad is next led to a camp at a distance; he is kept there for eight or ten days receiving instruction, specially in songs and dances; he also eats here, and his confidence in divine protection is tested by hideous noises during the darkness of the night.

(f.) It is rather singular, as a coincidence, that Festus speaks of Roman ceremonies as lasting ten days, and that the Dionysia and the greater Eleusinia of Greece also lasted

nine or ten days, and that part of them was a solemn meal and a solemn bathing, or purification by water; thereafter instruction was given. So, also, a young Brahman must reside with his preceptor for some time, until he has gained a thorough knowledge of the holy books; he must pass through certain purificatory rites, which remove the taint of former sin; one of these is the cutting off of the hair, and with this seems to correspond the knocking out of a front tooth practised by some of our tribes in Australia.* The singing and the dancing are everywhere essential parts of the heathen worship, and the dance is in its origin religious.

(G.) Then come the washing and the purification which I have just spoken of, but after that they join hands all round, dance round the fire, and then jump into it and through it.

(g.) Analogies to this purification and protection by fire are abundant. In Bretagne, at this hour, the farmers protect their horses from evil influences by the service of fire. They kindle fires at nightfall; then, at dawn of day, the horses are led thrice round the fires, and a particular prayer, known only to a few, is said before the dying flame; as the last words are pronounced, they all leap on the embers with their feet joined. The ancient British Kelts, to which stock the modern Bretons belong, did much the same thing. On May Day the Druids used to light large fires on the summits of the highest hills, into which they drove their four-footed beasts, using certain ceremonies to expiate the sins of the people. Until very lately, in different parts of Ireland, it was the common practice to kindle fires in milking yards on the first day of May, and then many women and children leaped through them, and the cattle were driven through in order to avert evil influences. In ancient Rome, on the feast of Pales, in April, the same forms of purification and dedication were observed. The Hottentots of the present day retain the old customs, for they make their cattle pass through the fire as a preservative against the attacks of wild dogs. In India, the youth, when about to be invested with the sacred thread, stands opposite the sun and walks thrice round the fire, and in the marriage ceremony the bride is led thrice round the sacred fire. An incantation used by the oldest Chaldæan sourcerers has these words: "May the god Fire, the hero, dispel their enchantments or spells for the injury of others." An Australian *gin*, going to the river to fetch water after nightfall, carries for protection a burning stick; and the men

* In some parts of Australia the hair is cut off or singed off in the Bora.

in the camp, when they think an evil spirit is near, throw firebrands at him to drive him away. We may not wonder, then, that our Australian black fellows, if, as I believe, their ancestors came from Babylonian lands, have not forgotten the fire observances, and still trust in the protection of the fire-god.

So far the Bora and its analogies. I have thus considered at some length the institution of the Bora, both because it is the most important of all the social regulations of our aboriginal tribes, and because its universal distribution among them, although with slight local differences in the manner of its celebration, seems to me a strong proof that our black tribes are all brethren of the same race, and that they are of the same common origin as the rest of mankind, their nearest kin being the blacks of Africa. Is it possible that so many tribes, differing in language and confined by their laws and habits each to its own hunting ground, should have evolved from their own consciousness ceremonies so similar, and which, when examined, correspond in so many points with the religiousness of the ancient world? How is it that the blacks of Australia and the blacks of Guinea have similar ceremonies of initiation? Is it not because they have come from the same ethnic source and have a common ancestry and common traditions?

And now to complete the task which I proposed to myself, I would add a few words of aboriginal mythology, as another point in the argument for the unity of the human family.

Our native races are attentive observers of the stars; as they sit or lie around the camp fire after nightfall, their gaze naturally turns to the starry vault above, and there they see the likenesses of many things with which they are conversant in their daily life; young men dancing a corroboree (Orion) and a group of damsels looking at them (the Pleiades) making music to their dance; the opossum, the emu, the crow, and so on. But the old men say that the regions "above the sky" are the home of the spirits of the dead, and that there are fig-trees there, and many other pleasant things, and that the head of them is a great man *Mিন্ণ*; he is not visible, but they all agree that he is in the sky. A greater than he is the great Garabooung, who, while in earth, was always attended by a small man, but now the two shine as comrades in the sky—the "Heavenly Twins." Both Garabooung and *Mিন্ণ* are "skeletons." In his mortal state, Garabooung was a man of great rank and power; he was so tall that his feet could touch the bottom of the deepest rivers; his only food was snakes and eels. One day, not being hungry, he buried

a snake and an eel ; when he came back to eat them he saw fire issuing from the ground where they were ; he was warned by his companion, the little man, not to approach, but he declared he did not fear, and boldly came near ; then a whirlwind seized them and carried them up "above the sky," where he and his companion still are, and "can be seen any starlit night."

These two legends are interesting. Minny is to them the father and king of the black races, whom he now rules and will rule in spirit-land ; he was once a mortal, but now he is a "skeleton"—a spiritualised being without flesh and blood ; and so our black fellows retain the simple primitive beliefs of mankind ; they have heard nothing of annihilation or absorption into the infinite. I observe also that the name of their great father is the same as that given on the hieroglyphic inscriptions to the first king of Egypt, Menee—by Herodotus called Menes—the head of the First Dynasty of mortals. He was a public benefactor, for he executed several important works, and taught his people the worship of Phtah, the great artificer-god of Egypt. He must have some mythical relation to the human race, for in Greece he is Minos, king of Crete, "Minoia regna," author of many useful laws, and afterwards a judge of the shades of the dead ; in another part of Greece he is Minyas, the founder of a race of heroes ; in India he is Menu, and in Old Germany Mannus ; for I take all these to be the same name.

The story of Garabooung seems to correspond with that of the Dioscouroi—Castor and Pollux—who were also mighty heroes and benefactors of mankind. The ancient Germans worshipped them in a sacred grove, and called them Alcis.

How have our black fellows got hold of the name Minny, and such a myth about him ? Were the name and the myth invented by them ? Are they not rather a survival—derived from a common origin—of traditions which belong to the once undivided human family ?

In conclusion, let any one ask me how it is that our aborigines, if they are of such an origin as I assign to them, have sunk so low in the scale of humanity as to be regarded among the most degraded of the races of men. I deny that this estimate of them is well founded ; on the contrary, I assert that it was formed long ago by those who imperfectly understood the habits and social organisation of our native tribes, and has been ignorantly passed from mouth to mouth ever since ; that, when they are thoroughly understood, our black fellows are not the despicable savages that they are too often represented to be. They have, or had, virtues which

we might profitably imitate; for they are faithful and affectionate to those who treat them kindly; they have rules of family morality which are enforced by severe penalties; they show the greatest respect to age; they carefully tend and never desert the sick and infirm; their boys are compelled to content themselves with meagre fare, and to bring the best of the food which they have found and present it to the aged members of the tribe and to those who have large families. I am assured by one who has had much intercourse with them for thirty years that he never knew them to tell a lie, and that his property was always safe in their hands; another who has been familiar with them since he was a child says:—
 “Naturally they are an affectionate, peaceful people, and, considering that they have never been taught to know right from wrong, their behaviour is wonderful; I leave my house open, the camp close by, and feel the greatest confidence in them.”

Then, again, although the material civilisation of the world was commenced by the race of Ham, yet the task soon fell from their hands, for morally they were unfit for it; for the conservation and first dissemination of a pure and ennobling religion we are indebted to the race of Shem; while the sons of Japheth have gone forth to rule the earth and the sea—“*audax Iapeti genus*”—and to spread abroad the blessings of good government and the arts and inventions of an enlightened age to the remotest lands. The Hamites, on the other hand, have continued to sink in the social scale, have been persecuted and oppressed by the other races and thus debased; and whenever, as in Australia, the sky above and the earth beneath have conspired to render the means of life to them meagre and precarious, there the process of decay has been accelerated, and physically their condition has been very low; but still, among their social institutions, we have this evening, I trust, seen traces of their having once enjoyed a better state of things. Would that we had a full record of what they really are before they pass entirely away from among us!

THE CHAIRMAN (D. Howard, Esq., F.C.S., &c.).—I am sure that all present would have been glad if the author of the paper could have been here to receive our thanks for the very interesting and valuable information he has been the means of placing before us on