

the new
Golden
Bough

Frazer / Gaster

the New Golden Bough

A New Abridgment of

Sir James George Frazer's Classic Work

Edited, and with Notes and Foreword by

Theodor H. Gaster



Phillips

Joseph Low

CONTENTS

<i>Editor's Foreword</i>	page	xv
<i>Synopsis</i>		xxi
<i>Author's Introduction</i>		xxv

PART I: THE MAGIC OF KINGS (1-142)

1-4 The King of the Wood	3
1 The strange rite at Nemi. 2-3 The king as priest. 4 The king as magician.	
5-40 The Roots of Magic	7
6-33 Homoeopathy	7
6-8 Malevolent uses. 9-13 Benevolent uses. 14-15 Food-gathering. 16-21 Taboos. 22-25 Plants. 26-27 The dead. 28 Animals. 29-30 Inanimate objects. 31 The tide. 32 Grave-clothes. 33 Mimetic acts.	
34-40 Contagion	31
34-36 Parts of the body. 37 Agents of wounds. 38 Garments. 39-40 Footprints.	
41-61 The Magical Control of the Weather	38
41-54 Rain	38
42 Twins as rain-makers. 43-45 Sympathetic rain-ceremonies. 46 Curses and maledictions. 47 Ploughing. 48 The dead.	

49 Animals. 50 Frogs and toads. 51 Insulting the god. 52-53 Stones and images. 54 Greece and Rome.	
55-58 Sun and Moon	48
55-57 Controlling the Sun's course. 58 Controlling the Moon.	
59-61 Wind	50
59-60 Controlling the Wind. 61 Banishing the Wind.	
62-76 Magicians as Kings	54
63 Australia and Oceania. 64-69 Africa. 70 Other cultures. 71- 72 America. 73 Malaya. 74 Sarawak. 75 Ancient Indo-Euro- pean cultures. 76 Modern European survivals.	
77-93 Kings as Incarnate Life-Spirits	61
77-93 Human Embodiments of the Life-Spirit	61
79-82 Temporary inspiration or incarnation. 83-89 Permanent inspiration or incarnation. 90 Transmission of the spirit. 91 Mexico and Peru. 92 China and Japan. 93 Ancient Near East.	
94-116 Departmental Kings of Nature	70
97-116 Trees as Embodiments of the Life-Spirit	72
97-98 Forests as sanctuaries. 99-102 Trees animated by spirits. 102-104 Trees inhabited by spirits. 105 Inviolable groves. 106-110 Powers wielded by tree-spirits. 111-116 Human rep- resentatives of tree-spirits.	
117-142 The Sacred Marriage	88
117 The Symbolic Marriage of Trees	88
118-125 Sex and Vegetation	88
118-121 Sexual rites to promote fertility. 122-125 Sexual offenses that impair fertility.	
126-142 The Divine Nuptials	92
126-130 Theogamy in ancient times. 131-135 Primitive theog- amy. 136-137 Egeria and Numa. 138-142 Roman kings.	
NOTES	101
ADDITIONAL NOTES	125

PART II: TABOO AND THE PERILS OF THE SOUL (143-188)

143-188 Safeguarding the Life-Spirit	145
143-146 Restrictions Imposed on Kings	145
147 Restrictions Imposed on Priests	149
148-159 Outward Forms of the Spirit	150
148-149 The shape of the spirit. 150-156 Departure and return of the spirit. 157 The spirit as shadow. 158 The spirit as reflection. 159 The spirit as portrait.	
160-163 Tabooed Acts	160
160 Intercourse with strangers. 161 Eating and drinking. 162 Showing the face. 163 Going outdoors.	
164-169 Tabooed Persons	165
164 Chiefs and kings. 165-166 Polluted persons. 167 Warriors. 168 Manslayers. 169 Hunters and fishers.	
170-180 Tabooed Things	174
171 Iron. 172 Sharp weapons. 173 Blood. 174 The head. 175-177 Hair and nails. 178 Spittle. 179 Foods. 180 Knots and rings.	
181-188 Tabooed Words	187
181 Personal names. 182 Names of relatives. 183-186 Names of the dead. 187 Names of kings and sacred persons. 188 Names of gods and spirits.	

NOTES	197
ADDITIONAL NOTES	214

PART III: DEATH AND RESURRECTION: THE RHYTHM OF NATURE (189-207)

189-207 The Succession of Kings and Seasons	223
189-191 Putting the King to Death	223
190 When his strength fails. 191 At the end of a fixed term.	
192-194 Limiting the King's Reign	233
192 Eight-year kingship. 193 Three-year kingship. 194 Annual kingship.	

x **Contents**

195	The Slaying of the King in Legend	237
196–197	Substitutes for the Slain King	240
	196 Temporary kings. 197 The king's son.	
198–200	Succession to the Kingship	246
201	The Mummers' Play	249
202	"Burying the Carnival"	251
203	"Carrying out Death"	257
204	"Sawing the Old Woman"	260
205	"Bringing in Summer"	262
206	The Battle of Summer and Winter	265
207	Mock Funerals	269
	NOTES	271
	ADDITIONAL NOTES	278
 PART IV : DYING AND REVIVING GODS (208–302) 		
208–302	Mythic Embodiments of Fertility	283
209	Tammuz	285
210–217	Adonis	286
	210 The myth of Adonis. 211 Adonis in Syria. 212 Adonis in Cyprus. 213 The worship of Adonis. 214–216 The gardens of Adonis. 217 Christian echoes of Adonis rituals.	
218–222	The Mother Goddess	298
223–229	Excursus: The Burned God	303
	223 The death of Adonis and Cinyras. 224–226 Melqarth. 227 Sardanapalus. 228 Croesus. 229 Suicide by fire.	
230–235	Attis	309
	230–232 The myth and worship of Attis. 233–234 Attis as a vegetation-god. 235 Human representatives of Attis.	
236–239	Excursus: The Hanged God	316
	236 Marsyas. 237 Sacrificial hanging. 238 The hanging of Artemis. 239 The ritual of flaying.	
240–241	Hyacinth	320

242-272 Osiris	322
<p>242 The life and death of Osiris. 243-246 The resurrection of Osiris. 247-253 Seasonal rites. 254-255 Official Osirian festivals. 256 Feasts of All Souls. 257-260 Festivals of the death and resurrection of Osiris. 261 Osiris as corn-god. 262-263 Human dismemberment as a vegetation sacrifice. 264 Osiris as tree-spirit. 265 Fertility symbolism. 266 Osiris as god of the dead. 267-272 The origin of Osiris.</p>	
273-282 Dionysus	350
<p>273-277 Myths and personifications of Dionysus. 278 Ritual of Dionysus. 279 Dionysus as bull. 280 Dionysus as goat. 281 Slaying the god in animal form.</p>	
283-302 Demeter and Persephone	356
<p>283-286 The myth and its meaning: Eleusis. 287-288 Demeter and Persephone as corn-goddesses. 289-293 Rites and festivals of the corn. 294-295 "The Two Goddesses." 296-302 Women's part in primitive agriculture.</p>	
NOTES	370
ADDITIONAL NOTES	390
<p>PART V: SPIRITS OF THE CORN AND WILD (303-431)</p>	
303-331 Corn-mother and Corn-maiden	401
303-318 Europe	401
<p>303-312 The Corn-mother. 313 The Corn-maiden. 314-315 The Corn-bride. 316 Old and young corn-spirits. 317-318 Harvest customs and ritual.</p>	
319-321 America	412
322 The Punjab	414
323 Berbers	414
324-331 East Indies, Burma, Sumatra, Malaya	415
332-336 The Corn-Spirit in Human Form	420
337-362 The Slaying of the Corn-Spirit	425
337-343 Lamentations at Harvest	425
<p>338 Maneros. 339 Linus. 340 Bormos. 341-343 Lityerses.</p>	
344-349 Human Sacrifice for the Crops Among Primitives	432

xii **Contents**

350-356 Human Representatives of the Corn-Spirit	434
357 The "Winnowing" of the Corn-Spirit	440
358-362 Survivals in European Customs	441
363-376 The Corn-Spirit in Animal Form	445
363-376 Theriomorphic Deities of Fertility	445
363-365 Animal corn-spirits. 366-368 Dionysus as goat and bull. 369-371 Demeter as pig. 372 Adonis and Attis as pigs. 373-376 Osiris as pig.	
377-432 Absorbing the Divine Essence	455
377-386 The Sacrament of First-Fruits	455
387-390 The Corn-Spirit Eaten in a Cake	460
391-396 Eating Flesh to Absorb Qualities	463
397-406 Killing the Divine Animal	466
398-399 Ram. 400 Serpent. 401-405 Bear.	
407-423 The Propitiation of Animals by Huntsmen	471
407-411 Fear of animal vengeance. 412-418 Appeasement. 419-423 Vermin	
424-426 Types of Animal Sacraments	479
427-431 Absorption by Osmosis	482
427 "Hunting of the wren." 428-429 Animal processions. 430-431 Plough rites.	
NOTES	487
ADDITIONAL NOTES	503

PART VI: THE RIDDANCE OF EVIL (432-470)

432-443 The Transference of Evil	509
433-435 Transference to an Inanimate Object	509
436-437 To Sticks and Stones	511
438 To Animals	514
439 To Human Beings	515
440-443 In European Folk-lore	517

	Contents	xiii
444–452 The Public Expulsion of Evil		519
444–445 Occasional Expulsion		519
446–452 Seasonal and Periodic Expulsion		521
446–448 Primitive expulsions. 449–450 Expulsions in Greece and Rome. 451 Walpurgis Night. 452 The Twelve Days.		
453–470 Scapegoats		529
453–454 Evil Expelled in a Material Vessel		529
455 Evil Expelled in Animals		532
456 Evil Expelled in Human Beings		532
457–462 Periodic and Divine Scapegoats		533
463–466 Human Scapegoats in Classical Antiquity		540
467–470 Beating with Squills, "Easter Smacks"		541
NOTES		546
ADDITIONAL NOTES		554
PART VII: BETWEEN OLD AND NEW (471–481)		
471–481 Periods of License		559
471–473 Saturnalia		559
474–480 The Feast of Fools		562
481 Saturnalia and Lent		569
NOTES		573
ADDITIONAL NOTES		575
PART VIII: THE GOLDEN BOUGH (482–585)		
482–492 'Twixt Heaven and Earth		579
482–487 Taboo on Touching the Earth		579
488 Taboo on Seeing the Sun		583
489–491 The Taboos Imposed on Girls at Puberty		584
492 The Taboos Imposed on Kings and Priests		587
493–522 The Mistletoe		589
493 The Myth of Balder		589

494–498	The Folk-lore of the Mistletoe	590
499	Balder and the Mistletoe	593
500–509	The Concept of the External Soul	595
510–513	The External Soul in Plants and Animals	599
514–519	The Golden Bough and the External Soul	604
520–522	The Golden Bough as Mistletoe	607
523–582	The Fire-Festivals of Europe	610
524–526	Lenten Fires	610
527	Easter Fires	616
528	Pagan Analogies to Easter Fires	616
529–532	Beltane Fires	618
533	May Fires	621
534–550	Midsummer Fires	622
551–554	Hallowe'en Fires	629
555–563	Midwinter Fires	632
564	Irregular Fire-Festivals	636
565–570	The Origin of Fire-Festivals	638
571–582	Ritual Burning of Men and Effigies	641
	572 Purificatory rites. 573–575 Human sacrifices. 576–580	
	Festival giants. 581–582 Celtic sacrifices.	
583–585	Farewell to Nemi	648
	NOTES	652
	ADDITIONAL NOTES	666
	<i>Index</i>	671



DEPARTMENTAL KINGS OF NATURE

94. *Neither his location nor his title allows us to suppose that the King of the Wood at Nemi had ever been a king in the common sense of the word. More likely he was a king of nature, and of a special side of nature, namely, the woods from which he took his title. Instances of such departmental kings are not wanting.*

95. On a hill at Bomma near the mouth of the Congo dwells Namvulu Vumu, King of the Rain and Storms.¹ Of some of the tribes on the Upper Nile we are told that they have no kings in the common sense; the only persons whom they acknowledge as such are the Kings of the Rain, *Mata Kodou*, who are credited with the power of giving rain at the proper time, that is in the rainy season. So, when the end of March draws on, each householder betakes himself to the King of the Rain and offers him a cow that he may make the blessed waters of heaven to drip on the brown and withered pastures. If no shower falls, the people assemble and demand that the king shall give them rain; and if the sky still continues cloudless, they rip up his belly, in which he is believed to keep the storms.²

Among tribes on the outskirts of Abyssinia a similar office exists and has been thus described by an observer: "The priesthood of the Alfai, as he is called by the Barea and Kunama, is a remarkable one; he is believed to be able to make rain. This office formerly existed among the Algeds and appears to be still common to the Nuba Negroes. The Alfai of the Barea, who is also consulted by the northern Kunama, lives near Tembadere on a mountain alone with his family. The people bring him tribute in the form of clothes and fruits, and cultivate for him a large field of his own. He is a kind of king, and his office passes by inheritance to his brother or sister's son. He is supposed to conjure down rain and to drive away the locusts. But if he disappoints the people's expectation and a great drought arises in the land, the Alfai is stoned to death, and his nearest relations are obliged to cast the first stone at him."³

96. In the backwoods of Cambodia live two mysterious sovereigns known as the King of the Fire and the King of the Water. Their royal functions are of a purely mystic or spiritual order; they have no political authority; they are simple peasants, living by the sweat of their brow and the offerings of the faithful. According to one account they live in absolute solitude, never meeting each other and never seeing a human face. They inhabit successively seven towers perched upon seven mountains, and every year they pass from one tower to another. People come furtively and cast within their reach what is needful for their subsistence. The kingship lasts seven years, the time necessary to inhabit all the towers successively; but many die before their time is out. The offices are hereditary in one or (according to others) two royal families, who enjoy high consideration, have revenues assigned to them, and are exempt from the necessity of tilling the ground. But naturally the dignity is not coveted, and when a vacancy occurs, all eligible men (they must be strong and have children) flee and hide themselves.

Like many other sacred kings, of whom we shall read in the sequel, the Kings of Fire and Water are not allowed to die a natural death, for that would lower their reputation. Accordingly when one of them is seriously ill, the elders hold a consultation and if they think he cannot recover they stab him to death. His body is burned and the ashes are piously collected and publicly honoured for five years. Part of them is given to the widow, and she keeps them in an urn, which she must carry on her back when she goes to weep on her husband's grave.

A reason for confining the royal dignity to the same family is that this family is in possession of certain famous talismans which would lose their virtue or disappear if they passed out of the family. These talismans are three: the fruit of a creeper called *Cui*, gathered ages ago at the time of the last deluge, but still fresh and green; a rattan, also very old but bearing flowers that never fade; and lastly, a sword containing a *Yan* or spirit, who guards it constantly and works miracles with it. The spirit is said to be that of a slave, whose blood chanced to fall upon the blade while it was being forged, and who died a voluntary death to expiate his involuntary offence. By means of the two former talismans the Water King can raise a flood that would drown the whole earth. If the Fire King draws the magic sword a few inches from its sheath, the sun is hidden and men and beasts fall into a profound sleep; were he to draw it quite out of the scabbard, the world would come to an end. To this wondrous brand sacrifices of buffaloes, pigs, fowls, and ducks are offered for rain. It is kept swathed in cotton and silk; and amongst the annual presents sent by the King of Cambodia were rich stuffs to wrap the sacred sword.¹

These, then, are examples of what I have called departmental kings of nature. But it is a far cry to Italy from the forests of Cambodia and the sources of the Nile. And though Kings of Rain, Water, and Fire have been

found, we have still to discover a King of the Wood to match the Arician priest who bore that title. Perhaps we shall find him, or at least survivals of him, nearer home—to wit, in such figures of European popular custom as the May King, Jack o' the Green, and the like. To understand such figures, however, we must first address ourselves to the wider question of the embodiment of the spirit of fertility in trees and foliage.

TREES AS EMBODIMENTS OF THE LIFE-SPIRIT

97. From the earliest times the worship of trees has played an important part in the religious life of European peoples. And, indeed, nothing could be more natural. For at the dawn of history Europe was covered with immense *primaeval* forests, in which the scattered clearings must have appeared like islets in an ocean of green. Down to the first century before our era the Hercynian forest stretched eastward from the Rhine for a distance at once vast and unknown; Germans whom Caesar questioned had travelled for two months through it without reaching the end.¹ In England, the *wealds* of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex are remnants of the great forest of *Anderida*, which once clothed the whole of the south-eastern portion of the island. Westward it seems to have stretched till it joined another forest that extended from Hampshire to Devon. In the forest of Arden it was said that down to modern times a squirrel might leap from tree to tree for nearly the whole length of Warwickshire.² The excavation of ancient pile-villages in the valley of the Po has shewn that long before the rise and probably the foundation of Rome the north of Italy was covered with dense woods of elms, chestnuts, and especially of oaks.³ Archaeology is here confirmed by history; for classical writers contain many references to Italian forests which have now disappeared.⁴ As late as the fourth century before our era Rome was divided from central Etruria by the dreaded *Ciminian* forest, which Livy compares to the woods of Germany. No merchant, if we may trust the Roman historian, had ever penetrated its pathless solitudes.⁵ In Greece beautiful woods of pine, oak, and other trees still linger on the slopes of the high Arcadian mountains, still adorn with their verdure the deep gorge through which the Ladon hurries to join the sacred *Alpheus*; and were still, down to a few years ago, mirrored in the dark blue waters of the lonely lake of *Pheneus*; but they are mere fragments of the forests which clothed great tracts in antiquity, and which at a more remote epoch may have spanned the Greek peninsula from sea to sea.⁶

98. From an examination of the Teutonic words for "temple" Grimm has made it probable that amongst the Germans the oldest sanctuaries were natural woods.¹ However this may be, tree-worship is well attested for all the great European families of the Aryan stock. Amongst the Celts the oak-worship of the Druids is familiar to every one.² Sacred groves were common

among the ancient Germans, and tree-worship is hardly extinct amongst their descendants at the present day.³ How serious that worship was in former times may be gathered from the ferocious penalty appointed by the old German laws for such as dared to peel the bark of a standing tree. The culprit's navel was to be cut out and nailed to the part of the tree which he had peeled, and he was to be driven round and round the tree till all his guts were wound about its trunk.⁴ The intention of the punishment clearly was to replace the dead bark by a living substitute taken from the culprit; it was a life for a life, the life of a man for the life of a tree. At Upsala, the old religious capital of Sweden, there was a sacred grove in which every tree was regarded as divine.⁵ The heathen Slavs worshipped trees and groves. The Lithuanians were not converted to Christianity till towards the close of the fourteenth century, and amongst them at the date of their conversion the worship of trees was prominent. Some of them revered remarkable oaks and other great shady trees, from which they received oracular responses. Some maintained holy groves about their villages or houses, where even to break a twig would have been a sin. They thought that he who cut a bough in such a grove either died suddenly or was crippled in one of his limbs.⁶ Proofs of the prevalence of tree-worship in ancient Greece and Italy are abundant.⁷ In the sanctuary of Aesculapius at Cos, for example, it was forbidden to cut down the cypress-trees under a penalty of a thousand drachms.⁸ But nowhere, perhaps, in the ancient world was this antique form of religion better preserved than in the heart of the great metropolis itself. In the Forum, the busy centre of Roman life, the sacred fig-tree of Romulus was worshipped down to the days of the empire, and the withering of its trunk was enough to spread consternation through the city.⁹ Again, on the slope of the Palatine Hill grew a cornel-tree which was esteemed one of the most sacred objects in Rome. Whenever the tree appeared to a passer-by to be drooping, he set up a hue and cry which was echoed by the people in the street, and soon a crowd might be seen running helter-skelter from all sides with buckets of water, as if (says Plutarch) they were hastening to put out a fire.¹⁰

Among the tribes of the Finnish-Ugrian stock in Europe the heathen worship was performed for the most part in sacred groves, which were always enclosed with a fence. Such a grove often consisted merely of a glade or clearing with a few trees dotted about, upon which in former times the skins of the sacrificial victims were hung. The central point of the grove, at least among the tribes of the Volga, was the sacred tree, beside which everything else sank into insignificance. Before it the worshippers assembled and the priest offered his prayers, at its roots the victim was sacrificed, and its boughs sometimes served as a pulpit. No wood might be hewn and no branch broken in the grove, and women were generally forbidden to enter it. The Ostyaks and Woguls, two peoples of the Finnish-Ugrian stock in Siberia, had also sacred groves in which nothing might be touched, and where the skins of

the sacrificed animals were suspended; but these groves were not enclosed with fences.¹¹

99. But it is necessary to examine in some detail the notions on which the worship of trees and plants is based. To the savage the world in general is animate, and trees and plants are no exception to the rule. He thinks that they have souls like his own, and he treats them accordingly. "They say," writes the ancient vegetarian Porphyry, "that primitive men led an unhappy life, for their superstition did not stop at animals but extended even to plants. For why should the slaughter of an ox or a sheep be a greater wrong than the felling of a fir or an oak, seeing that a soul is implanted in these trees also?"¹ Similarly, the Hidatsa Indians of North America believe that every natural object has its spirit, or to speak more properly, its shade. To these shades some consideration or respect is due, but not equally to all. For example, the shade of the cottonwood, the greatest tree in the valley of the Upper Missouri, is supposed to possess an intelligence which, if properly approached, may help the Indians in certain undertakings; but the shades of shrubs and grasses are of little account.² In the Yasawu islands of Fiji a man will never eat a coco-nut without first asking its leave—"May I eat you, my chief?"³ The Dyaks ascribe souls to trees, and do not dare to cut down an old tree. In some places, when an old tree has been blown down, they set it up, smear it with blood, and deck it with flags "to appease the soul of the tree."⁴ According to Chinese belief, the spirits of plants are never shaped like plants but have commonly the form either of human beings or of animals, for example bulls and serpents. Occasionally at the felling of a tree the tree-spirit has been seen to rush out in the shape of a blue bull.⁵

100. If trees are animate, they are necessarily sensitive. When an oak is being felled "it gives a kind of shriekes or groanes, that may be heard a mile off, as if it were the genius of the oake lamenting."¹ The Ojibways "very seldom cut down green or living trees, from the idea that it puts them to pain, and some of their medicine-men profess to have heard the wailing of the trees under the axe."² Trees that bleed and utter cries of pain or indignation when they are hacked or burned occur very often in Chinese books, even in Standard Histories.³ Old peasants in some parts of Austria still believe that forest-trees are animate, and will not allow an incision to be made in the bark without special cause; they have heard from their fathers that the tree feels the cut not less than a wounded man his hurt. In felling a tree they beg its pardon.⁴ It is said that in the Upper Palatinate also old woodmen still secretly ask a fine, sound tree to forgive them before they cut it down.⁵ So in Jarkino the woodman craves pardon of the tree he fells.⁶ Among the Tigre-speaking tribes in the north of Abyssinia people are afraid to fell a green and fruit-bearing tree lest they incur the curse of God, which is heard in the groaning of the tree as it sinks to the ground. But if a man is bold enough to cut down such a tree, he will say to it, "Thy curse abide in thee,"

or he will allege that it was not he but an elephant or a rhinoceros that knocked it down.⁷ Before a Karo Batak cuts down a tree, he will offer it betel and apologies; and if in passing the place afterwards he should see the tree weeping or, as we should say, exuding sap, he hastens to console it by sprinkling the blood of a fowl on the stump.⁸

With regard to the Kiwai of British New Guinea we are told that "even nowadays, when provided with iron axes, they show great reluctance in felling certain large trees, particularly if the tree stands by itself or is conspicuous in some other way. Such a tree is thought to be inhabited by one of the *etengena*, a group of sylvan beings. If it is necessary to cut down some tree in which an *etengena* may dwell, the being must be asked to remove to some other tree suggested to it. After a few days the man returns and prepares to begin the cutting, but if his arms feel very heavy so that he can hardly lift them, this is a sign that the *etengena* has not yet moved from the tree and has passed into his arms to prevent the felling of the tree."^{8a}

101. The conception of trees and plants as animated beings naturally results in treating them as male and female, who can be married to each other in a real, and not merely a figurative or poetical sense of the word. For example, if a Hindu has planted a grove of mangos, neither he nor his wife may taste of the fruit until he has formally married one of the trees, as a bridegroom, to a tree of a different sort, commonly a tamarind-tree, which grows near it in the grove. If there is no tamarind to act as bride, a jasmine will serve the turn.¹ On Christmas Eve German peasants used to tie fruit-trees together with straw ropes to make them bear fruit, saying that the trees were thus married.² In the Moluccas, when the clove-trees are in blossom, they are treated like pregnant women. No noise may be made near them; no light or fire may be carried past them at night; no one may approach them with his hat on, lest the tree be alarmed and bear no fruit, or drop its fruit too soon, like the untimely delivery of a woman who has been frightened in her pregnancy.³ In some districts of Western Borneo there must be no talk of corpses or demons in the fields, else the spirit of the growing rice would be frightened and flee away to Java.⁴ The Toboongkoo of Central Celebes will not fire a gun in a rice-field, lest the rice should be frightened away.⁵ The Chams of Binh-Thuan, in Cochin-China, do not dare to touch the rice in the granary at mid-day, because the rice is then asleep, and it would be both rude and dangerous to disturb its noonday slumber.⁶

102. Sometimes it is the souls of the dead that are believed to animate trees. The Dieri tribe of South Australia regard as very sacred certain trees which are supposed to be their fathers transformed; hence they speak with reverence of those trees and take care not to cut them down or burn them.¹ The natives of Bontoc, a province in the north of Luzon, cut down the woods near their villages, but leave a few fine trees standing as the abode of the spirits of their ancestors (*anitos*); and they honour the spirits by depositing food

under the trees.² The Dyaks believe that when a man dies by accident, as by drowning, it is a sign that the gods mean to exclude him from the realms of bliss. Accordingly his body is not buried, but carried into the forest and there laid down. The souls of such unfortunates pass into trees or animals or fish, and are much dreaded by the Dyaks, who abstain from using kinds of wood, or eating certain sorts of fish, because they are supposed to contain the souls of the dead.³

In Korea the souls of people who die of the plague or by the roadside, and of women who expire in childbed, invariably take up their abode in trees.⁴ Among the Miao-Kia, an aboriginal race of southern and western China, a sacred tree stands at the entrance of every village, and the inhabitants believe that it is tenanted by the soul of their first ancestor and that it rules their destiny.⁵ Among the Maraves of Southern Africa the burial-ground is always regarded as a holy place where neither a tree may be felled nor a beast killed, because everything is supposed to be tenanted by the souls of ancestors.⁶ The Lkuñgen Indians of British Columbia fancy that trees are transformed men, and that the creaking of the branches in the wind is their voice.⁷ A tree that grows on a grave is regarded by the South Slavonian peasant as a sort of fetish. Whoever breaks a twig from it hurts the soul of the dead, but gains thereby a magic wand, since the soul embodied in the twig will be at his service.⁸ This reminds us of the story of Polydorus in Virgil,⁹ and of the bleeding pomegranate that grew on the grave of the fratricides Eteocles and Polyneices at Thebes.¹⁰

103. In most, if not all, of these cases the spirit is viewed as incorporate in the tree; it animates the tree and must suffer and die with it. But, according to another and probably later opinion, the tree is not the body, but merely the abode of the tree-spirit, which can quit it and return to it at pleasure. The inhabitants of Siao, an island of the Sanga group in the East Indies, believe in certain sylvan spirits who dwell in forests or in great solitary trees. At full moon the spirit comes forth from his lurking-place and roams about. He has a big head, very long arms and legs, and a ponderous body. In order to propitiate the wood-spirits people bring offerings of food, fowls, goats, and so forth to the places which they are supposed to haunt.¹ On the Tanga coast of East Africa mischievous sprites reside in great trees, especially in the fantastically shaped baobabs. Sometimes they appear in the shape of ugly black beings, but as a rule they enter unseen into people's bodies, from which, after causing much sickness and misery, they have to be cast out by the sorcerer.² The Warramunga tribe of Central Australia believe that certain trees are the abode of disembodied human spirits waiting to be born again. No woman will strike one of these trees with an axe, lest the blow might disturb one of the spirits, who might come forth from the tree and enter her body.³ In the Galla region of East Africa, where the vegetation is magnificent, there are

many sacred trees, the haunts of jinn. In many Galla tribes women may not tread on the shadow of sacred trees or even approach the trees.⁴

104. Not a few ceremonies observed at cutting down haunted trees are based on the belief that the spirits have it in their power to quit the trees at pleasure or in case of need. Thus when the Pelew Islanders are felling a tree, they conjure the spirit of the tree to leave it and settle on another.¹ The wily Negro of the Slave Coast, who wishes to fell an *ashorin* tree, but knows that he cannot do it so long as the spirit remains in the tree, places a little palm-oil on the ground as a bait, and then, when the unsuspecting spirit has quitted the tree to partake of this dainty, hastens to cut down its late abode.² When the Toboongkooos of Central Celebes are about to clear a piece of forest in order to plant rice, they build a tiny house and furnish it with tiny clothes and some food and gold. Then they call together all the spirits of the wood, offer them the little house with its contents, and beseech them to quit the spot. After that they may safely cut down the wood without fearing to wound themselves in so doing.³

The Sundanese of the Eastern Archipelago drive golden or silver nails into the trunk of a sacred tree for the sake of expelling the tree-spirit before they hew down his abode.⁴ They seem to think that, though the nails will hurt him, his vanity will be soothed by the reflection that they are of gold or silver. In Rotti, an island to the south of Timor, when they fell a tree to make a coffin, they sacrifice a dog as compensation to the tree-spirit whose property they are thus making free with.⁵ Before the Gayos of Northern Sumatra clear a piece of forest for the purpose of planting tobacco or sugarcane, they offer a quid of betel to the spirit whom they call the Lord of the Wood, and beg his leave to quarter themselves on his domain.⁶ When the Tagales of the Philippines are about to fell a tree which they believe to be inhabited by a spirit, they excuse themselves to the spirit, saying: "The priest has ordered us to do it; the fault is not ours, nor the will either."⁷

Before they cut down a great tree, the Indians in the neighborhood of Santiago Tepehuacan hold a festival in order to appease it.⁸ So too when the Dyaks fell the jungle on the hills, they often leave a few trees standing on the hilltops as a refuge for the dispossessed tree-spirits.⁹

105. Even where no mention is made of wood-spirits, we may generally assume that when trees or groves are sacred and inviolable, it is because they are believed to be either inhabited or animated by sylvan deities. In Central India the *bar* tree (*Ficus Indica*) and the *pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*) are sacred, and every child learns the saying that "it is better to die a leper than pluck a leaf of a *pipal*, and he who can wound a *bar* will kick his little sister."¹ In Livonia there is a sacred grove in which, if any man fells a tree or breaks a branch, he will die within the year.² The Wotyaks have sacred groves. A Russian who ventured to hew a tree in one of them fell sick and died next day.³ The heathen Cheremiss of South-Eastern Russia have sacred groves,

and woe to him who dares to fell one of the holy trees. If the author of the sacrilege is unknown, they take a cock or a goose, torture it to death and then throw it on the fire, while they pray to the gods to punish the sinner and cause him to perish like the bird.⁴ So in the island of Skye some two hundred and fifty years ago there was a holy lake, "surrounded by a fair wood, which none presumes to cut"; and those who ventured to infringe its sanctity by breaking even a twig either sickened on the spot or were visited afterwards by "some signal inconvenience."⁵

106. In classical art the sylvan deities are depicted in human shape, their woodland character being denoted by a branch or some equally obvious symbol.¹ But this change of shape does not affect the essential character of the tree-spirit. The powers which he exercised as a tree-soul incorporate in a tree, he still continues to wield as a god of trees. Trees considered as animate beings are credited with the power of making the rain to fall, the sun to shine, flocks and herds to multiply, and women to bring forth easily; and, the very same powers are attributed to tree-gods conceived as anthropomorphic beings or as actually incarnate in living men. When the missionary Jerome of Prague was persuading the heathen Lithuanians to fell their sacred groves, a multitude of women besought the Prince of Lithuania to stop him, saying that with the woods he was destroying the house of god from which they had been wont to get rain and sunshine.² The Mundaris in Assam think that if a tree in the sacred grove is felled the sylvan gods evince their displeasure by withholding rain.³ In Cambodia each village or province has its sacred tree, the abode of a spirit. If the rains are late the people sacrifice to the tree.⁴ In time of drought the elders of the Wakamba in East Africa assemble and take a calabash of cider and a goat to a baobab-tree, where they kill the goat but do not eat it.⁵ When Ovambo women go out to sow corn they take with them in the basket of seed two green branches of a particular kind of tree (*Peltophorum africanum* Sond.), one of which they plant in the field along with the first seed sown. The branch is believed to have the power of attracting rain; hence in one of the native dialects the tree goes by the name of the "rain-bush."⁶ Among the Mundaris every village has its sacred grove, and "the grove deities are held responsible for the crops, and are especially honoured at all the great agricultural festivals."⁷ The Negroes of the Gold Coast are in the habit of sacrificing at the foot of certain tall trees, and they think that if one of these were felled all the fruits of the earth would perish.⁸

The same idea comes out in the German and French custom of the Harvest-May. This is a large branch or a whole tree, which is decked with ears of corn, brought home on the last waggon from the harvest-field, and fastened on the roof of the farmhouse or of the barn, where it remains for a year. Mannhardt has proved that this branch or tree embodies the tree-spirit conceived as the spirit of vegetation in general, whose vivifying and fructify-

ing influence is thus brought to bear upon the corn in particular.⁹ The Harvest-May of Germany has its counterpart in the *eiresione* of ancient Greece.¹⁰ The *eiresione* was a branch of olive or laurel, bound about with ribbons and hung with a variety of fruits. This branch was carried in procession at a harvest festival and was fastened over the door of the house, where it remained for a year. The object of preserving the Harvest-May or the *eiresione* for a year is that the life-giving virtue of the bough may foster the growth of the crops throughout the year. By the end of the year the virtue of the bough is supposed to be exhausted and it is replaced by a new one. In Northern India the *Emolica officialis* is a sacred tree. On the eleventh of the month Phalgun (February) libations are poured at the foot of the tree, a red or yellow string is bound about the trunk, and prayers are offered to it for the fruitfulness of women, animals, and crops. Again, in Northern India the coco-nut is esteemed one of the most sacred fruits, and is called Sripkala, or the fruit of Sri, the goddess of prosperity.¹¹ In the town of Qua, near Old Calabar, there used to grow a palm-tree which ensured conception to any barren woman who ate a nut from its branches.¹² In Europe the May-tree or May-pole is apparently supposed to possess similar powers over both women and cattle. Thus in some parts of Germany on the first of May the peasants set up May-trees or May-bushes at the doors of stables and byres, one for each horse and cow; this is thought to make the cows yield much milk.¹³ Of the Irish we are told that "they fancy a green bough of a tree, fastened on May-day against the house, will produce plenty of milk that summer."¹⁴

The Circassians regard the pear-tree as the protector of cattle. So they cut down a young pear-tree in the forest, branch it, and carry it home, where it is adored as a divinity. Almost every house has one such pear-tree. In autumn, on the day of the festival, the tree is carried into the house with great ceremony to the sound of music and amid the joyous cries of all the inmates, who compliment it on its fortunate arrival. It is covered with candles, and a cheese is fastened to its top. Round about it they eat, drink, and sing. Then they bid the tree good-bye and take it back to the courtyard, where it remains for the rest of the year, set up against the wall, without receiving any mark of respect.¹⁵

107. In the Tuhoe tribe of Maoris "the power of making women fruitful is ascribed to trees. These trees are associated with the navel-strings of definite mythical ancestors, as indeed the navel-strings of all children used to be hung upon them down to quite recent times. A barren woman had to embrace such a tree with her arms, and she received a male or a female child according as she embraced the east or the west side."¹ The common European custom of placing a green bush on May Day before or on the house of a beloved maiden probably originated in the belief of the fertilising power of the tree-spirit.² In some parts of Bavaria such bushes are set up also at the houses

of newly-married pairs, and the practice is only omitted if the wife is near her confinement; for in that case they say that the husband has "set up a May-bush for himself."³ Among the South Slavonians a barren woman, who desires to have a child, places a new chemise upon a fruitful tree on the eve of St. George's Day. Next morning before sunrise she examines the garment, and if she finds that some living creature has crept on it, she hopes that her wish will be fulfilled within the year. Then she puts on the chemise, confident that she will be as fruitful as the tree on which the garment has passed the night.⁴ Among the Kara-Kirghiz barren women roll themselves on the ground under a solitary apple-tree, in order to obtain offspring.⁵ Lastly, the power of granting to women an easy delivery at child-birth is ascribed to trees both in Sweden and Africa. In some districts of Sweden there was formerly a *bårdräd* or guardian-tree (lime, ash, or elm) in the neighbourhood of every farm. No one would pluck a single leaf of the sacred tree, any injury to which was punished by ill-luck or sickness. Pregnant women used to clasp the tree in their arms in order to ensure an easy delivery.⁶ The story that Leto clasped a palm-tree and an olive-tree or two laurel-trees, when she was about to give birth to the divine twins Apollo and Artemis, perhaps points to a similar Greek belief in the efficacy of certain trees to facilitate delivery.⁷

108. The primitive worship of trees survives on a wide scale in European popular usage. In spring or early summer or even on Midsummer Day, it was and still is in many parts of Europe the custom to go out to the woods, cut down a tree and bring it into the village, where it is set up amid general rejoicings; or the people cut branches in the woods, and fasten them on every house. The intention of these customs is to bring home to the village, and to each house, the blessings which the tree-spirit has in its power to bestow. Hence the custom in some places of planting a May-tree before every house, or of carrying the village May-tree from door to door, that every household may receive its share of the blessing.

In the north of England it was formerly the custom for young people to rise a little after midnight on the morning of the first of May, and go out with music and the blowing of horns into the woods, where they broke branches and adorned them with nosegays and crowns of flowers. This done, they returned about sunrise and fastened the flower-decked branches over the doors and windows of their houses.¹ At Abingdon in Berkshire young people formerly went about in groups on May morning, singing a carol of which the following are two of the verses:—

"We've been rambling all the night,
And sometime of this day;
And now returning back again,
We bring a garland gay.

A garland gay we bring you here;
 And at your door we stand;
 It is a sprout well budded out,
 The work of our Lord's hand."²

At the towns of Saffron Walden and Debden in Essex on the first of May little girls go about in parties from door to door singing a song almost identical with the above and carrying garlands; a doll dressed in white is usually placed in the middle of each garland.³ Similar customs have been and indeed are still observed in various parts of England.

In some villages of the Vosges Mountains on the first Sunday of May young girls go in bands from house to house, singing a song in praise of May, in which mention is made of the "bread and meal that come in May." If money is given them, they fasten a green bough to the door; if it is refused, they wish the family many children and no bread to feed them.⁴ In the French department of Mayenne, boys who bore the name of *Maillotins* used to go about from farm to farm on the first of May singing carols, for which they received money or a drink; they planted a small tree or a branch of a tree.⁵ In Corfu the children go about singing May songs on the first of May. The boys carry small cypresses adorned with ribbons, flowers, and the fruits of the season. They receive a glass of wine at each house. The girls carry nosegays. One of them is dressed up like an angel, with gilt wings, and scatters flowers.⁶

On the Thursday before Whitsunday the Russian villagers "go out into the woods, sing songs, weave garlands, and cut down a young birch-tree, which they dress up in woman's clothes, or adorn with many-coloured shreds and ribbons. After that comes a feast, at the end of which they take the dressed-up birch-tree, carry it home to their village with joyful dance and song, and set it up in one of the houses, where it remains as an honoured guest till Whitsunday. On the two intervening days they pay visits to the house where their 'guest' is; but on the third day, Whitsunday, they take her to a stream and fling her into its water," throwing their garlands after her.⁷ In this Russian custom the dressing of the birch in woman's clothes shews how clearly the tree is personified.

109. In some parts of Sweden on the eve of May Day lads go about carrying each a bunch of fresh-gathered birch twigs, wholly or partially in leaf. With the village fiddler at their head, they make the round of the houses singing May songs; the burden of their songs is a prayer for fine weather, a plentiful harvest, and worldly and spiritual blessings. One of them carries a basket in which he collects gifts of eggs and the like. If they are well received they stick a leafy twig in the roof over the cottage door.¹

But in Sweden midsummer is the season when these ceremonies are chiefly observed. On the Eve of St. John (the twenty-third of June) the houses are thoroughly cleansed and garnished with green boughs and flowers. Young

fir-trees are raised at the doorway and elsewhere about the homestead; and very often small umbrageous arbours are constructed in the garden. In Stockholm the chief event of the day is setting up the May-pole. This consists of a straight and tall spruce-pine tree, stripped of its branches. "At times hoops and at others pieces of wood, placed crosswise, are attached to it at intervals; whilst at others it is provided with bows, representing, so to say, a man with his arms akimbo. From top to bottom not only the 'Maj Stång' (May-pole) itself, but the hoops, bows, etc., are ornamented with leaves, flowers, slips of various cloth, gilt eggshells, etc.; and on the top of it is a large vane, or it may be a flag."² Midsummer customs of the same sort used to be observed in some parts of Germany. Thus in the towns of the Upper Harz Mountains tall fir-trees, with the bark peeled off their lower trunks, were set up in open places and decked with flowers and eggs, which were painted yellow and red. Round these trees the young folk danced by day and the old folk in the evening.³ In some parts of Bohemia also a May-pole or midsummer-tree is erected on St. John's Eve. The lads fetch a tall fir or pine from the wood and set it up on a height, where the girls deck it with nosegays, garlands, and red ribbons. It is afterwards burned.⁴

110. In all these cases, apparently, the custom is or was to bring in a new May-tree each year. However, in England the village May-pole seems as a rule, at least in later times, to have been permanent, not renewed annually.¹ Villages of Upper Bavaria renew their May-pole once every three, four, or five years. It is a fir-tree fetched from the forest, and amid all the wreaths, flags, and inscriptions with which it is bedecked, an essential part is the bunch of dark green foliage left at the top "as a memento that in it we have to do, not with a dead pole, but with a living tree from the greenwood."² We can hardly doubt that originally the practice everywhere was to set up a new May-tree every year. As the object of the custom was to bring in the fructifying spirit of vegetation, newly awakened in spring, the end would have been defeated if, instead of a living tree, green and sappy, an old withered one had been erected year after year or allowed to stand permanently. When, however, the meaning of the custom had been forgotten, and the May-tree was regarded simply as a centre for holiday merry-making, people saw no reason for felling a fresh tree every year, and preferred to let the same tree stand permanently, only decking it with fresh flowers on May Day. But even when the May-pole had thus become a fixture, the need of giving it the appearance of being a green tree, not a dead pole, was sometimes felt. Thus at Weverham in Cheshire "are two May-poles, which are decorated on this day (May Day) with all due attention to the ancient solemnity; the sides are hung with garlands, and the top terminated by a birch or other tall slender tree with its leaves on; the bark being peeled, and the stem spliced to the pole, so as to give the appearance of one tree from the summit."³ Thus the renewal of the May-tree is like the renewal of the

Harvest-May; each is intended to secure a fresh portion of the fertilising spirit of vegetation, and to preserve it throughout the year. But whereas the efficacy of the Harvest-May is restricted to promoting the growth of the crops, that of the May-tree or May-branch extends also, as we have seen, to women and cattle. Lastly, it is worth noting that the old May-tree is sometimes burned at the end of the year. Thus in the district of Prague young people break pieces of the public May-tree and place them behind the holy pictures in their rooms, where they remain till next May Day, and are then burned on the hearth.⁴ In Würtemberg the bushes which are set up on the houses on Palm Sunday are sometimes left there for a year and then burnt.⁵ The *eiresione* (the Harvest-May of Greece) was perhaps burned at the end of the year.⁶

111. Now, there is an instructive class of cases in which the tree-spirit is represented simultaneously in vegetable form and in human form, which are set side by side as if for the express purpose of explaining each other. In these cases the human representative of the tree-spirit is sometimes a doll or puppet, sometimes a living person; but whether a puppet or a person, it is placed beside a tree or bough; so that together the person or puppet, and the tree or bough, form a sort of bilingual inscription, the one being, so to speak, a translation of the other. Thus in Bohemia, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, young people throw a puppet called Death into the water; then the girls go into the wood, cut down a young tree, and fasten to it a puppet dressed in white clothes to look like a woman; with this tree and puppet they go from house to house collecting gratuities and singing songs with the refrain:—

“We carry Death out of the village,
We bring Summer into the village.”¹

In some parts of our own country children go about asking for pence with some small imitations of May-poles, and with a finely-dressed doll which they call the Lady of the May.²

At Thann, in Alsace, a girl called the Little May Rose, dressed in white, carries a small May-tree, which is gay with garlands and ribbons. Her companions collect gifts from door to door, singing a song:—

“Little May Rose turn round three times,
Let us look at you round and round!
Rose of the May, come to the greenwood away,
We will be merry all.
So we go from the May to the roses.”

In the course of the song a wish is expressed that those who give nothing may lose their fowls by the marten, that their vine may bear no clusters, their tree no nuts, their field no corn; the produce of the year is supposed to depend on

the gifts offered to these May singers.³ In Brie (Isle de France) a May-tree is set up in the midst of the village; its top is crowned with flowers; lower down it is twined with leaves and twigs, still lower with huge green branches. The girls dance round it, and at the same time a lad wrapt in leaves and called Father May is led about.⁴ In the small towns of the Franken Wald mountains in Northern Bavaria, on the second of May, a *Walber* tree is erected before a tavern, and a man dances round it, enveloped in straw from head to foot in such a way that the ears of corn unite above his head to form a crown. He is called the *Walber*, and used to be led in procession through the streets, which were adorned with sprigs of birch.⁵

Among the gypsies of Transylvania and Roumania the festival of Green George is the chief celebration of spring. Some of them keep it on Easter Monday, others on St. George's Day (the twenty-third of April). On the eve of the festival a young willow tree is cut down, adorned with garlands and leaves, and set up in the ground. Women with child place one of their garments under the tree, and leave it there over night; if next morning they find a leaf of the tree lying on the garment, they know that their delivery will be easy. Sick and old people go to the tree in the evening, spit on it thrice, and say, "You will soon die, but let us live." Next morning the gypsies gather about the willow. The chief figure of the festival is Green George, a lad who is concealed from top to toe in green leaves and blossoms. He throws a few handfuls of grass to the beasts of the tribe, in order that they may have no lack of fodder throughout the year. Then he takes three iron nails, which have lain for three days and nights in water, and knocks them into the willow; after which he pulls them out and flings them into a running stream to propitiate the water-spirits. Finally, a pretence is made of throwing Green George into the water, but in fact it is only a puppet made of branches and leaves which is ducked in the stream.⁶

112. Sometimes the representation of the tree- or vegetation-spirit by a tree, bough, or flower is sometimes entirely dropped, while the representation of him by a living person remains. In this case the representative character of the person is generally marked by dressing him or her in leaves or flowers; sometimes too it is indicated by the name he or she bears.

In Ruhla (Thüringen) as soon as the trees begin to grow green in spring, the children assemble on a Sunday and go out into the woods, where they choose one of their playmates to be the Little Leaf Man. They break branches from the trees and twine them about the child till only his shoes peep out from the leafy mantle. Holes are made in it for him to see through, and two of the children lead the Little Leaf Man that he may not stumble or fall. Singing and dancing they take him from house to house, asking for gifts of food such as eggs, cream, sausages, and cakes. Lastly, they sprinkle the Leaf Man with water and feast on the food they have collected.¹ At Röllshausen on the Sch-walm, in Hesse, when afternoon service is over on Whitsunday, the school-

boys and schoolgirls go out into the wood and there clothe a boy from head to foot in leaves so that nobody would know him. He is called the Little Whitsuntide Man. A procession is then formed. Two boys lead their leaf-clad play-fellow; two others precede him with a basket; and two girls with another basket bring up the rear. Thus they go from house to house singing hymns or popular songs and collecting eggs and cakes in the baskets. When they have feasted on these, they strip their comrade of his verdant envelope on an open place in front of the village.² In some parts of Rhenish Bavaria at Whitsuntide a boy or lad is swathed in the yellow blossom of the broom, the dark green twigs of the firs, and other foliage. Thus attired he is known as the Quack and goes from door to door, whirling about in the dance, while an appropriate song is chanted and his companions levy contributions.³ In the Fricktal, Switzerland, at Whitsuntide boys go out into a wood and swathe one of their number in leafy boughs. He is called the Whitsuntide-lout (*Pfingstlümme*), and being mounted on horseback with a green branch in his hand he is led back into the village. At the village-well a halt is called and the leaf-clad lout is dismounted and ducked in the trough. Thereby he acquires the right of sprinkling water on everybody, and he exercises the right specially on girls and street urchins. The urchins march before him in bands begging him to give them a Whitsuntide wetting.⁴

113. In England the best-known example of these leaf-clad mummers is the Jack-in-the-Green, a chimney-sweeper who walks encased in a pyramidal framework of wickerwork, which is covered with holly and ivy, and surmounted by a crown of flowers and ribbons. Thus arrayed he dances on May Day at the head of a troop of chimney-sweepers, who collect pence.¹ In the neighbourhood of Ertingen (Württemberg) a masker of the same sort, known as the Lazy Man (*Latzmann*), goes about the village on Midsummer Day; he is hidden under a great pyramidal or conical frame of wickerwork, ten or twelve feet high, which is completely covered with sprigs of fir. He has a bell which he rings as he goes, and he is attended by a suite of persons dressed up in character—a footman, a colonel, a butcher, an angel, the devil, the doctor, and so on. They march in Indian file and halt before every house, where each of them speaks in character, except the Lazy Man, who says nothing. With what they get by begging from door to door they hold a feast.²

114. Often the leaf-clad person who represents the spirit of vegetation is known as the king or queen, e.g., the May King, Whitsuntide King, Queen of the May.

At the village of Ellgoth in Silesia a ceremony called the King's Race is observed at Whitsuntide. A pole with a cloth tied to it is set up in a meadow, and the young men ride past it on horseback, each trying to snatch away the cloth as he gallops by. The one who succeeds in carrying it off and dipping it in the neighbouring River Oder is proclaimed king.¹ At Wahrstedt in Brunswick the boys at Whitsuntide choose by lot a king and a high-steward (*füstje*-

meier). The latter is completely concealed in a May-bush, wears a wooden crown wreathed with flowers, and carries a wooden sword. The king, on the other hand, is only distinguished by a nosegay in his cap, and a reed, with a red ribbon tied to it, in his hand. They beg for eggs from house to house, threatening that, where none are given, none will be laid by the hens throughout the year. In this custom the high-steward appears, for some reason, to have usurped the insignia of the king.² At Hildesheim, in Hanover, five or six young fellows go about on the afternoon of Whit-Monday cracking long whips in measured time and collecting eggs from the houses. The chief person of the band is the Leaf King, a lad swathed so completely in birchen twigs that nothing of him can be seen but his feet. A huge headdress of birchen twigs adds to his apparent stature. In his hand he carries a long crook, with which he tries to catch stray dogs and children.³ At Grossvargula, near Langensalza, in the eighteenth century a Grass King used to be led about in procession at Whitsuntide. He was encased in a pyramid of poplar branches, the top of which was adorned with a royal crown of branches and flowers. He rode on horseback with the leafy pyramid over him, so that its lower end touched the ground, and an opening was left in it only for his face. Surrounded by a cavalcade of young fellows, he rode in procession to the town hall, the parsonage, and so on, where they all got a drink of beer. Then under the seven lindens of the neighbouring Sommerberg, the Grass King was stripped of his green casing; the crown was handed to the Mayor, and the branches were stuck in the flax fields in order to make the flax grow tall.⁴

115. Often the spirit of vegetation in spring is represented by a queen instead of a king. In the neighbourhood of Libchowic (Bohemia), on the fourth Sunday in Lent, girls dressed in white and wearing the first spring flowers, as violets and daisies, in their hair, lead about the village a girl who is called the Queen and is crowned with flowers. During the procession, which is conducted with great solemnity, none of the girls may stand still, but must keep whirling round continually and singing. In every house the Queen announces the arrival of spring and wishes the inmates good luck and blessings, for which she receives presents.¹ In German Hungary the girls choose the prettiest girl to be their Whitsuntide Queen, fasten a towering wreath on her brow, and carry her singing through the streets. At every house they stop, sing old ballads, and receive presents.² In the south-east of Ireland on May Day the prettiest girl used to be chosen Queen of the district for twelve months. She was crowned with wild flowers; feasting, dancing, and rustic sports followed, and were closed by a grand procession in the evening. During her year of office she presided over rural gatherings of young people at dances and merry-makings. If she married before next May Day, her authority was at an end, but her successor was not elected till that day came round.³ The May Queen is common in France⁴ and familiar in England.

116. Again the spirit of vegetation is sometimes represented by a king and queen, a lord and lady, or a bridegroom and bride. At Halford in south Warwickshire the children go from house to house on May Day, walking two and two in procession and headed by a King and Queen.¹ In a Bohemian village near Königgrätz on Whit-Monday the children play the king's game, at which a king and queen march about under a canopy, the queen wearing a garland, and the youngest girl carrying two wreaths on a plate behind them. They are attended by boys and girls called groomsmen and bridesmaids, and they go from house to house collecting gifts.² A regular feature in the popular celebration of Whitsuntide in Silesia used to be, and to some extent still is, the contest for the kingship. This contest took various forms, but the mark or goal was generally the May-tree or May-pole. Sometimes the youth who succeeded in climbing the smooth pole and bringing down the prize was proclaimed the Whitsuntide King and his sweetheart the Whitsuntide Bride.³ Near Grenoble, in France, a king and queen are chosen on the first of May and are set on a throne for all to see.⁴ At Fleuriers in Switzerland on the seventh of May 1843 a May-bridegroom (*Epoux de Mai*) and his bride were escorted in a procession of over two hundred children, some of whom carried green branches of beech. A number of May Fools were entrusted with the delicate duty of going round with the hat. The proceeds of their tact and industry furnished a banquet in the evening, and the day ended with a children's ball.⁵ In some Saxon villages at Whitsuntide a lad and a lass used to disguise themselves and hide in the bushes or high grass outside the village. Then the whole village went out with music "to seek the bridal pair." When they found the couple they all gathered round them, the music struck up, and the bridal pair was led merrily to the village.⁶ In a parish of Denmark it used to be the custom at Whitsuntide to dress up a little girl as the Whitsun-bride (*pinse-bruden*) and a little boy as her groom.⁷

In Sweden the ceremonies associated elsewhere with May Day or Whitsuntide commonly take place at Midsummer. Accordingly we find that in some parts of the Swedish province of Blekinge they still choose a Midsummer's Bride, to whom the "church coronet" is occasionally lent. The girl selects for herself a Bridegroom, and a collection is made for the pair, who for the time being are looked on as man and wife. The other youths also choose each his bride.⁸ In Sardinia the Midsummer couples are known as the Sweethearts of St. John, and their association with the growth of plants is clearly brought out by the pots of sprouting grain which form a principal part of the ceremony.

