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FEMALE KINSHIP AND MATERNAL FILIATION.

- 1.—*Das Mutterrecht, eine Untersuchung über die Gynäkokratie der alten Welt, nach ihrer religiösen und rechtlichen Natur.* By I. I. BACHOFEN. Stuttgart. 1861.
- 2.—*Studies in Ancient History, comprising a reprint of "Primitive Marriage." An inquiry into the origin of the form of capture in marriage ceremonies.* By G. T. M'LENNAN. London. 1876.

THE learned Mr. Bachofen had read, as we all have, the story of Orestes, who, having killed his mother Clytemnestra in order to revenge the murder of his father, was summoned to answer for his crime before the Areopagus of Athens. The Athenian women with one voice declared that Orestes had committed the most heinous deed of which a man, born of woman, may be guilty. But their husbands insisted that, by revenging his father's murder on the perfidious wife, Orestes had nobly performed his duty. The voice of each party was of equal weight, for we are told that in those days women sat on terms of equality with men in the courts of justice. Orestes was, however, finally acquitted by the casting vote of Minerva, who

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presided over the trial. The Erinnyes—terrible goddesses of remorse and revenge—protested indignantly against the verdict, but it was favorably received by the entire male population, and approved by the civilization of all the ancient world. The verdict was ratified by succeeding generations; and, finally, the illustrious Goethe devoted the greatest product of his dramatic genius—the "Iphigenia in Tauris"—to the endeavor to reconcile us fully with Orestes, and with Minerva's decree.

Mr. Bachofen, however, has dared to defy this voice of ages. After much profound meditation he has come to the conclusion that this trial is one of the most terrible in its issues which has ever been held. It marks, he declares, the limit between two ages, and between two radically different conceptions of the family. Previous to the decree of Minerva, a family was represented by the mother; maternal lineage was alone recognized. From that moment the rule was reversed, and undivided supremacy accorded to the father. According to Æschylus, the dissidence of opinions on this subject which existed between the men and women of Athens extended even to the gods. The younger sided with Orestes, the elder took part against him. It is from the profound depths to which were thus stirred all consciousness, human and divine, that was evolved that awful drama of antiquity, in which are concentrated all horrors and monstrosities of which the most sombre imagination can conceive.

While Mr. Bachofen was engaged in unravelling the meaning of the legend of Orestes, Mr. M'Lennan, a Scotch lawyer, was meditating upon the institution of marriage as it existed among the plebeians of ancient Rome. The essence of the ceremony consisted in carrying away the bride by sham violence,—in remembrance, we are told, of the famous rape of the Sabines. This ceremony is vividly described by Apuleius in his story of the "Captive Damsel." The heroine relates how her mother, having dressed her becomingly in nuptial apparel, was loading her with kisses, and already contemplating in imagination the long line of descendants which was to spring from the union, when suddenly a band of robbers, armed like gladiators, rushed in with glittering swords, made straight for the maiden's chamber, and tore her away, half dead with fear, from the bosom of her trembling mother.

The reasons alleged by the Romans for this strange custom were even stranger than the custom itself. The maidens were expected to prove their modesty by violent resistance to their captors, and youths the fierceness of their love by the violence with which they possessed themselves of the objects of their desire.

But M'Lennan is not satisfied with this reason. He inquires pertinently: How could the Roman legislators tolerate and even consecrate a custom, worthy of a nation of outlaws? Why such brutality in a marriage ceremonial? How came an immoral form to constitute the sanction to a moral act? To be sure, only by means of some idea deeply rooted in the mind perpetuating itself indefinitely, long after the thing to which it belonged had ceased to exist. Symbols, too often lightly regarded, are nearly always the remnants of extinct customs. Legal fictions, the poetical side of jurisprudence, constitute the more or less fortunate adaptation of existing conditions to others long since dead, or continuing to survive by a sort of artificial respiration. Customs become embalmed in symbols, like Egyptian mummies in their wraps. And symbols enable us to reconstruct the dead reality of the past, of which they are the only remaining indications. Thus, from the plebeian marriage at Rome, we learn that men were once really obliged to secure their wives by force, and thought fit to appear to do so after the necessity no longer existed. Our feelings and instincts are shaped by habit, and morality and public conscience are more often the effect than the cause of public customs. (*Mores, moralitas.*)

Traces of the violence inherent in primitive marriages are found in classical antiquity. The so-called "heroical marriage," the Marriage of Rakchasas or Gandharvas, was defined by the laws of Manu as "the seizure of a maiden by force, while she weeps and wails for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been killed in battle, or wounded, and their houses broken open." Plutarch and Herodotus corroborate the narratives of legendary history. The former tells us that in Sparta the bridegroom always feigned to carry off the bride by violence, and, according to Herodotus, the same practice prevailed in Corinth and Crete.

In the present day the custom of capture exists among several

tribes of Australia and New Zealand, and in many islands of the Pacific, as well as in parts of South America,—from Cape Horn to the Caribbean Sea. On the coast of New Guinea and the Torres Straits, it is customary for the bridegroom to abduct the bride and run away with her. The Fuegian youth first obtains the consent of the bride's relatives; then watches for an opportunity, and carries off his bride. Among the Bedouin Arabs it is necessary for the bridegroom to force the bride to enter his tent. Among many negro tribes the girl is carried away bodily on the back of her lover. The form of capture is said still to prevail to a great extent in India. Among the aborigines of the Dekkan and of Afghanistan it is prescribed as a marriage ceremony to the Hindus in the Sutrâs. It prevails among the Khonds on the hills of Orissa, and among their neighbors and kinsmen, the Gonds and the Koles. Among the Tunguzes and Kamtchadales a matrimonial engagement is not considered to be definitely concluded until the suitor has overcome his beloved by force, and torn her clothes, the maiden in the meanwhile professing to defend her liberty to the utmost. This form of marriage is likewise observed by the noble classes among the Kalmucks.

Among the Circassians the ceremony much resembles that of ancient Rome. The wedding is celebrated with noisy feasting and revelry, in the midst of which the bridegroom rushes in, and, by the help of a few daring men, carries off the maiden by force. Then only may she be considered his lawful wife.

In Europe evident traces of this custom may be discovered in the ancient Grand Duchy of Moscow; in former Poland; in Samogitia, Livonia, Lithuania, Prussia, and Scandinavia; and fainter indications in Friesland, in some French provinces, in Wales, and in the north-east of Scotland. As Mr. M'Lennan remarks: "Nothing in Nature exists by itself. Every individual example of this custom leads us to contemplate a great area over which it once prevailed, as the discovery of single fossil fish in a hill enables us to imagine the whole surrounding country as at one time under water."

What is the origin of so universal a custom? Simply the fact that men once provided themselves with wives exclusively by means of war upon neighboring tribes. War was then the normal state of society. "Peace and friendship were unknown be-

tween any two separate tribes, except when they united against a third,"—as a cynical wit remarked many ages later, that friendship between two coquettes was impossible, except when they were combining in a conspiracy against a dear relative! In these early and lawless periods, woman shared the fate of all other species of property, in regard to which it was universally held that "he should take who had the power, and he should keep who could." The women were at once the principal cause of war and most desirable spoils of victory, and were tossed from one hand to another with magnanimous liberality. The fate of the women thus disputed over was far from enviable, if we may judge from that of the Australian females who have acquired any reputation for beauty. George Grey, a truthful and intelligent observer, tells us that in Australia a beautiful woman is really far worse off than her less-favored companions: "Conspiracies are constantly being formed for her abduction, and, in the scuffling which results, she is almost always injured; for each of the combatants orders her to follow him, and, if she refuses, throws a spear at her. The early life of an Australian belle is passed in a series of captivities under different masters, of ghastly wounds, of wanderings in strange families, of rapid flights, of bad treatment from other females amongst whom she is brought a stranger by her captor. Rarely do you see a form of unusual grace and elegance but it is marked and scarred by the furrows of old wounds. Many a female thus wanders several miles from the home of her infancy, being carried off successively to distant and more distant points." "The male captives," says M'Lennan, "furnished by their labor additional means of subsistence, but the women were prized as wives and luxuries. In the Feejee and other islands of the Pacific the male captives were eaten, while the women were generally saved alive, except in a few districts where prevailed a special relish for the flesh of females."

The scarcity of females naturally added to their value. This scarcity was artificially maintained by putting to death girl babies in great numbers as soon as they were born. This practice was inspired on the one hand by motives of economy, and, on the other, of gourmandism, for they were eaten up like young Guinea pigs. This primitive peoples had discovered long before

the Right Reverend Malthus began to speculate that population increases in a geometrical, and food only in an arithmetical, proportion. They killed the babies to avoid the expense of rearing them, and then ate them to avoid the trouble of procuring other food. The boys were spared to be educated as hunters and warriors, but the girls were at best only objects of luxury, and hence necessarily sacrificed by a prudent community whenever times were hard. It was deemed simpler and more economical to capture full-grown women for wives than to incur the expense of rearing female babes to maturity. In one village of the Phwcelongmai, East India, Colonel M'Culloch found in 1849 that there existed not a single female child.

From this disproportion between the sexes arose the correlative institutions, polyandry and exogamy. Mr. M'Lennan insists upon a distinction, which he claims to have been the first to point out,—a distinction between exogamy, or *inter-tribal* marriage, and endogamy, or *intra-tribal* marriage. Amongst the exogamous tribes none but strangers were permitted as wives; union between persons belonging to the same tribe was regarded as incestuous, and only to be atoned for by death.

"The practice of female infanticide, which rendered women so scarce, led at once to polyandry within the tribe and to the capture of women from without. This practice has existed from time immemorial among the same races as possess the symbol of capture in the marriage ceremonial. With some of the exogamous races it seems to be a rule to kill all the female children, except such as happen to be the first born. Colonel Macpherson tells us that among the Khonds of Orissa, of whom we have already spoken, marriage between persons of the same tribe, however large or scattered, is considered incestuous and punished by death. Not even with strangers adopted into or domesticated with a tribe is it permissible to marry."

Circassians were until recently strictly exogamous, and so married until their nationality had been destroyed by Russia. Mr. Bell writes as follows in 1840:—

"These cousins german, or members of the same fraternity, are not only themselves interdicted from intermarrying, but the prohibition extends to their serfs, who must wed only with serfs of another fraternity. The fraternity contains perhaps several thousand members. Formerly, such a marriage would have been looked upon as incest, and punished by drowning. Now, a fine of two hundred oxen and the restitution of the wife to her parents only are exacted."

Notoriously exogamous are the Kalmucks, the Yurak Samo-

yeds, the Kirghiz and the Nogais, the Kafirs, the Sodhas of Northern India, the Beduanda Kallung (Singapore), the Warali (India), and many others. We find the principle in Australia, in North and South America, in Africa, in Europe. "We shall suspect and infer it in many places where the actual evidence of its existence is incomplete," says Latham in his "Descriptive Ethnology."

The women, captured and recaptured, passed from one tribe to another as the property of an unlimited number of husbands, and were necessarily unable to identify the fathers of their children. At the present time the Code Napoleon forbids the *Recherche de la Paternité*, whereby a bastard child might discover his parentage. If, as the French law and the English proverb both assume to be true, "only a wise son can know his own father," much greater must have been the facility for error when several tribes might have claimed the paternity of a single child! It is not even sure that the motherhood was plainly demonstrable. Children easily lost sight of the mother who had nursed them, and probably belonged less to her than to a group of nurses. The impersonal tribe stood in the place of both parents to its children. The community was like a herd of cattle, where all ties between parents and offspring are severed, so soon as suckling ceases.

An immense stride in progress was made when, under the influence of more peaceful habits, maternity became an institution, and children, hitherto known by the name of their tribe, could adopt the name of their mother.

The fact that maternal filiation preceded paternal filiation has, until recently, been ignored. Mr. Bachofen searched for the illustrations which might be found in ancient authors. Every text he examined; no scholiast did he leave unconsulted. With the deepest erudition coupled with a criticism delicate and sagacious, he arrived at the same results as Mr. McLennan, whose argument is mainly grounded on contemporary facts. Says he:—

"The Kasias, the Nairs, the Saporogian Cossacks, have the system of kinship through females only. We find that system in Tulawa, in the neighborhood of the Nairs. Among the Buntar—the highest rank of Sudras in Tulawa—a man's children, says Buchanan, are not his heirs. During his lifetime he may give them money, but all of which he dies possessed is given to his sisters and to their children.

Among the Rajputs, we have traces of the system of female kinship. The Kooch have kinship and succession through females only; and so have the Bodo. Farther, we find that system among the Banyai, in Ashanti, Aguapim, and Congo, and are assured that traces of it are to be found all over Africa. We have reason to believe that it anciently prevailed among the Celts. We find traces of the like system in India, among the Sutrás of Gautama. In short, though the original tradition has obviously been tampered with, enough of it remains to oblige us to acknowledge it as a genuine tradition of a stage of Aryan civilization."

The law of Menu points out the family name as the test whether persons are of the same stock or not. The Southern Indians consider it to be highly criminal for a man to marry a woman whose totem is the same as his own, and they relate instances where young men, for a violation of this rule, have been put to death by their own relatives. Among the Iroquois, husband and wife were, by the ancient law, always of different tribes. The children belonged to the tribe of the mother. When maternal descent prevailed, there was, so to speak, a perpetual disinheritance of the male line.

The Australian family names and divisions are perpetuated and spread throughout the country by the application of two laws: the first, that the children of either sex always take the name of the mother; the second, that a man cannot marry a woman of his own family name.

Here are fresh instances which we take the liberty of adding to those already quoted by Mr. McLennan:—

"The Kanoris (Central Africa) give always the mother's name, and, at the present day, particularly to their kings. The chronicles always mention the mothers' names as a circumstance of the highest importance. The celebrated king Dunama ben Iselma at Borman, is generally called Dibbalami, from his mother's name Dibbala. His royal name, in full length, is Dibbalami Dunama Iselmani; the mother's name being prefixed to the father's as the nobler and more important of the two. Even in the driest chronicles it is impossible not to remark the great influence which the Queen mothers Validi—the Magira, as they are here called—have exercised upon the affairs of the country. Here is an example in the Queen Gounssou Fa-sa-mi, who kept her own son Biri a whole year in prison, even after he had ascended the throne; and another in the Queen Aaischa, mother of Edriss, who, for a long period, took such part in the government that she is mentioned positively as amongst the rulers of the kingdom."—*Berthé*, II, 297.

Travellers have noted the same institution in many islands of the Pacific Ocean. Among Hawaiians the political functions

were hereditary, but the rank was given by the mother. Such is, assuredly, the reason why the male members of the royal family married among the nearest of their kin, and espoused even their own sisters.

In the Gilbert and Marshall Isles the mothers give their own rank to their children. The sons of a chief never belong to the clan of their father, because the chief must always marry outside his own clan.

In the Carolina Islands certain functions are hereditary, and pass, at the functionary's demise, to his next brothers, and to his son only after the death of all the brothers. It is otherwise with the social rank, which is not given by the father, but by the mother; and many brothers, who are the sons of the same father, may thus belong to distinct classes of people.

The case of the Australian tribes deserves closer examination. They have departed already from the rudest and most barbarous type. Polyandry having given place to a moderate polygyny, a man may have, by various wives, different children, who will belong respectively to the tribes of their mothers. If war breaks out, all these boys will take up arms against each other, and most likely, first of all, against their own father. Carried to its extreme consequences, the Australian theory comes to this conclusion: that a father is no relation to his son; exactly the reverse of what we may be permitted to call Orestes' formula: the son is no relation to his mother. Both maxims now grate on our ears, and are felt to be as revolting as they are absurd; and one is inclined to ask: Those feelings which are said to be innate in every human being, where then did they hide themselves; where then was the voice of blood; where then was the cry of Nature?

This Australian family makes us well aware of the evils of a system which knew nothing of the father. The filiation by the mother was only one-half of the truth. The conflict of maternity and paternity could not fail to occasion desperate situations, finally intolerable. And, as the human mind is constantly vacillating from one extreme to another, the reformers of the family, as it was shaped then, jumped to the conclusion that a complete revolution, and a substitution of paternal for maternal filiation, was absolutely necessary. Because the father had not been

made of enough consequence, the mother was now to be made next to nothing. The human mind was then too narrow for the simultaneous admittance of the double parental feelings, which none of us find any difficulty in understanding.

In the society of Australia the excess of evil was destined to bring about its own remedy. Exogamy tended to develop into endogamy, and maternal filiation into paternal. When the offspring of a single father might belong to several different tribes, the youth of a single tribe comprised a variety of individuals, who fairly represented all surrounding communities. A sufficient number of young girls, who were supposed to be foreigners, grew up in each tribe, and offered material for wives at a cheaper price than perilous expeditions. Thence, possibly, the origin of marriage by coemption. When, therefore, a tribe found itself populous, powerful, and sufficiently provided with young females, it is probable that the men gradually abandoned their raids for wives, and the community glided into endogamy. Here we see the history of the development of the tribe into a nation. We may trace the origin of clans and families to captured women representing different original stocks. This hypothesis is indeed less agreeable than the doctrine current in legends and ordinary history, and adopted by our Peerage books, that the ancestor of a race begat several sons whose scions formed older and younger branches of the family; and that, from intermarriage betwixt these branches, clans, tribes, and finally a whole nation arose.

Mr. M'Lennan's hypothesis lends itself to the origin of castes as well as of families:—

"Nearly all the Indian castes, from the highest to the lowest, are divided into *gotrams*, or families. Marriage is prohibited between persons of the same gotram, who, according to the rule of Menu, are shown by their common name to be of the same original stock. We hold that this at once shows the caste to have been composed of members of different original stocks, and the stocks themselves to have been originally exogamous. There can be little doubt that all castes of this description were formed by these processes. The Kamilaroi among the Australians appear to be such a caste. And, were the natives of Australia to be left to themselves, their system of kinship remaining what it is, we might expect hereafter to find among them numerous caste tribes of this description."

We believe that the transition from maternal to paternal epon-

my can be traced to the period which immediately precedes that of authentic history. Abraham himself, the great ancestor of the Beni-Israel, whom we have been accustomed to consider as the typical Patriarch, was entirely indifferent to paternal filiation, as is shown by the fact that he married his own sister, the daughter of his father. We find the story in Genesis worded with truly antique simplicity:—

“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife; Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. Therefore, it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.”

This was Abraham's answer, when reproached with his deceit:

“Yet indeed she is my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.”

Mr. McLennan has been so lucky as to discover a text proving that Abraham's marriage would have been considered legal in Attica, where a man was allowed to marry his half-sister when born of his father, but forbidden to marry her when born of the same mother. This law depended on the idea already referred to,—that no relationship existed between the father and his children, the sole parent being the mother.

According to “Primitive Marriage” the most logical progression, and probably the most frequent, which, beginning by exogamous polyandry, ended in the Greco-Roman family, took place in the following manner:—

1. The mother lived apart from all her husbands, in her own house, where also her brothers dwelt, and where she reared her children. Example: A Nair woman could have no more than twelve husbands, and had to select them under certain restrictions as to rank and caste. . . . A Nair may belong to several combinations of husbands; that is, he may have many wives. The twelve husbands therefore formed a partnership, each shareholder being entitled to enter, if he chose, eleven other firms; ingenious system of polygamous polyandry, which allowed twelve wives to each husband and twelve husbands to each wife.

2. The sister separated herself from her brothers to live with her husbands. The children belonged to the mother, and not to the husbands, each of whom took as his heir, not the children of the common wife, but the children of his sister, or the relatives of his mother. That system is, like the former, practised still by the Nairs; both easily coexist in the same country.

3. The conjugal abode becomes the property of the associated husbands, who bring into it their common wife, and forbid her to leave it whenever they entertain any doubts as to her fidelity. Mr. McLennan believes that sequestration was the means of leading to important progress. Under this *régime* the children belonged to the establishment rather than to their mother.

4. The common wife no longer belonged to a group of unrelated men, but to a “brotherhood,” or group of brothers. The adherents of masculine superiority may now feel satisfied; for at this stage it is easy to see that the race will be modeled by the man, and no longer by the woman. At first the offspring of this fraternal group will possess no personal father, but all the fathers will belong to the same blood, and thus a vague idea of paternity springs up. Mr. Bachofen had already shown that the story of Bacchus *Dimorphos*, or *Metropator*, who was son both of Jupiter and Semele, symbolized this stage of progress. No equality existed between the consorts; Semele was a mortal, Jove King of the Immortals. Hence the son, arrived at maturity, does not hesitate to abandon his mother, and choose the paternal side as the most profitable.

This polyadelphic monogyny, as Linnæus would call it, persists in great purity in Thibet, and especially in Ladack.

“In Ladack,” says Moorcroft, “when an eldest son marries, the family estate descends to him, and he is charged with the maintenance of his parents. A younger son is generally made a Lama. Should there be more than two brothers, and they agree to the arrangement, they become a species of inferior husbands for the wife. All the children, however, are considered as belonging to the head of the family. The younger brothers are compelled to wait upon him as his servants, and can be turned out of doors at his pleasure, without it being incumbent upon him to provide for them. On the death of the eldest brother, his property, authority, and widow devolve upon the next eldest. This one enjoys the right of succession to his brother's property and to his widow, and he cannot take the one without taking the other.

“The Thibetan system is the prevailing species of polyandry in nearly the whole of the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan regions,—Kashmyr, Ladak, Kinaver, Kishawar, and Sirmor. It is the general form in Ceylon. It is the form which Humboldt found

among the red men. Among the Avaroes and the Magpures, brothers have often but one wife. It is the form which Cæsar found among the Britons. We must hold that polyandry in the Tibetan form prevailed at one time throughout India; among the race from which the Hebrews were descended, and among the Moabites and ancient Persians; among the Druses and all Arab tribes in Syria; the Mongols, Khirgiz, Turks, and tribes of the Caucasus; among the Makololo; and, we may believe, many other peoples in Africa."

From this institution arises, in several parts of India and America, the custom of children addressing their uncles as "father." Mr. Morgan of Rochester was the first to point it out. If there are no brothers, the nephews succeed to the inheritance, which, according to the most ancient custom, falls to the nephews, sons of the sisters; and, according to the more modern one, falls to the nephews, sons of the brothers; as happens still in the Sultan's family in Constantinople.

According to the institutions of Manu, the widow was transmitted to the heir-brother without more ado. Who would not recognize in these regulations the Levirate known to all readers of the Old and New Testament?—the law which compelled the nearest relative to marry the widow of the heir of the family who should have died without issue, in order to perpetuate the name of the deceased.

The Levirate could only be observed so long as polygamy existed, and was doomed to disappear with it. No force could have compelled always the younger brother to separate from his own wife and bind himself to an old sister-in-law. Moreover, brothers and near relatives had little impulse to deprive themselves of an inheritance which, in default of a direct heir, would have fallen to them. The Levirate was a remnant of the system of "brotherhoods," which began to go to pieces so soon as it ceased to be associated with collective proprietorship of the woman or women. When each brother possessed his own wife, his own household, his own children, his interests soon began to diverge from those of the others. As the ancient family ceased to exist, the modern one constituted itself on the principle of transmission of blood from father to son, and of the transmission of the inheritance from eldest son to eldest son. The principle of agnation had triumphed, and under its influence society was renovated. At the death of the father the eldest son became

the head of the family, and inherited the whole, or at least the larger part, of the inheritance; as is still the custom in Great Britain among the nobility and the gentry. But this privilege, which has been abolished in most civilized countries, will soon be so in all, and disappear amidst few regrets. The influence of this system was at its maximum some little time ago, but has already begun to decline. Nothing is stable or permanently lasting in this world. The future family will probably be as different from the present one, as is the present from that of antiquity. Our family, essentially Greco-Roman,—like our whole civilization,—is exclusively based on paternity; but this basis did not always exist, and, therefore, can scarcely be expected to last for ever. Already has it been modified, and soon slighted motherhood will resume its rights. The mother will not always remain subject to the father's authority; she will recover her fair share in the management of the common property and in the education of the children. It is the sentiment of maternity which raised mankind from the mire of universal promiscuity. The mother was the first to create the family, and from this fact we may infer that through her will be shaped its final expression. Both naturalists and moralists declare that no instinct, human or simply animal, can vie in intensity with maternal love. Whereas all other passions spring from selfishness, the essence of maternity is self-abnegation. It is the most intelligent and far-sighted of impulses, and we never tire of listening to narratives of the marvellous achievements it inspires among most animals. We have every reason to believe that it is to maternal instinct we owe the first moralization of our race. Before this instinct stirred within us, we were among the lowest in the brute creation, more cruel than the tiger, more treacherous than the serpent, more gluttonous than the crocodile. From a mother, smiling on her infant, came the first ray of light which illuminated the human countenance. Bret Harte tells us, in his "Luck of Roaring Camp," how a little child, left orphaned at his wretched mother's death amidst a horde of California miners, tamed them unconsciously into civilization. This charming story may be said to typify the history of humanity. All our political and social institutions may be traced, link by link, to a mother nursing her babe. Each modification in ante-patriarchal polyandry corresponded to some

change in the position of the mother. The highest expression of her importance was given in the institution of maternal eponymy. Filiation by the father was substituted for it when tribes extended into nations, and when polyandry gave place to polygamy in the governing classes, and to monogamy in the lower classes. The rights of fathers were at first asserted humbly; then more boldly; and at last despotically. Masculine pride could not have failed to revolt against maternal filiation; it wound itself around the difficulty, neutralized it, and finally conquered it. An absolute system was transformed into a mitigated one; the mitigated one into a third, totally different from the first; but this third system will not be the last one, because it is exaggerated, artificial, too conventional, and has put its social codes above Nature's laws. Far more than man, woman clings to Nature, which man strives to obliterate and trample down. Nature was held to be identical with lust and corruption, and woman, as more akin to Nature, was made the very personification of sin; and some people have been deemed holy for never having looked at her, for never having talked to or even answered their own mothers. This nonsense, in which reveled deep theologians and high-flown mystics, is not quite an affair of the past, as many believe too readily. But it will become so promptly. If granite wears out, so does absurdity; error dissipates itself even a little quicker than do rocks and mountains. We conclude that our modern family itself will continue to undergo secular changes, as the old has undergone them. It is probable—nay, it is certain—that the mother will henceforth count for more than she does now, and that the child will obtain many rights of which he is now deprived. But it is not our business to guess at changes looming in the distant horizon. We are too ignorant of the family as it was to be able to foretell its future. We ignore yet its true laws of evolution; we make but surmises as to its origin, which was certainly even humbler than we can conceive. For the present the researches are to be pushed on with a patient zeal; and happy the investigators who may light upon such lucid theories as that of maternal filiation, which, supported by such arguments as those which Mr. M'Lennan has brought forward, may be hailed as a great discovery. Let us now consider why the theory of maternal filiation was readily accepted when presented by Mr. M'Lennan, whereas

it was pushed aside when advanced by Mr. Bachofen. This is a delicate point, upon which we shall express our opinion in all frankness.

Both writers are agreed on the main principle, but their method is wholly different. Mr. Bachofen's arguments are borrowed from deep erudition and from subtle interpretations of an obscure symbolism, which, to be understood, demand much learning and patient inquiry, and even a special cast of mind. When he first gave to the world his far-fetched conclusions, which then were received as shocking paradoxes and unheard-of heresies, it was easy to shrug the shoulders, and answer with the disdain of ignorance, in the words of the celebrated Festus, "Thou art beside thyself, Paul; much learning doth make thee mad." This disdain was all the more natural, as superficial minds instinctively dislike whatever is opposed to existing doctrines and conventional formulas. Learned folks of the vulgar sort, who know only what others knew already, are as pedantic as timorous. They keep aloof from new ideas, because, unable to sift them thoroughly, they deem it safer to cling fast to old tenets. Their shaky second-hand or tenth-hand scientific furniture would not bear the brunt of battle. Pedantry, which, after all, is but porous ignorance, looks with deadly hate upon all new ideas, because they are living things, and not dry, withered flowers in a herbarium, or dusty and labelled butterflies pinned down on cork. To the common-place scientist ideas that move and wriggle about are as hateful and appalling as might be to a stuffer of hides for a Museum of Natural History the sudden coiling up of a hissing rattlesnake. Orthodox science is so averse to the discoveries that have not yet obtained official diplomas, that many precious ideas would be lost to the world were it not for the lucky interference of simple-minded and even ignorant people, who, attracted by the novelty of the things, advocate them, often very unwisely, and attach themselves to them, often by the wrong side.

So it happened that for some years Mr. Bachofen's discovery was systematically ignored and nearly forgotten. At last the conspiracy of silence was broken up by a young professor, the only one among the host of learned men in Europe who came forward as the champion of the slighted theory. Mr. Gi-

raud Teulon expounded some of Mr. Bachofen's views in a short pamphlet entitled, "The Mother in Certain Peoples of Antiquity," followed by a most interesting work on the same subject, "The Origin of the Family." However, the scientists above mentioned are not wholly to blame. Mr. Bachofen, impregnated as he is with deep ancient lore, initiated, we may say, in the abstrusest mysteries of Pythagorean philosophy, chose to draw from his unexpected formula the most extreme consequences. He carried his subject into chthonic religions, and he carried chthonic religions into his subject. From maternal filiation, a positive fact, he jumped at the Matriarchat, and at antique gynocracies, —a doubtful enough affair. Animated by a praiseworthy desire for completeness and accuracy, he heaped together every kind of information more or less connected with his theory, and set forth minor considerations with as much detail as essentials. His hypothetic arguments too often destroyed the effect of his solid reasoning. Mr. Bachofen gave too much, and, as a natural consequence, received in return nothing, or next to nothing. His merits have been equaled but by our ingratitude, or rather by our indifference.

Mr. M'Lennan set to work very differently. The name given to his treatise, "Primitive Marriage," was simple, and attracted many who would have been frightened away by Mr. Bachofen's ponderous science. He adhered closely to logic and good sense, and to facts chiefly borrowed from contemporary history. His conclusions were presented in clear and precise language; his argument was both sober and vigorous. Wherever he aimed he hit the mark. He established his facts, and troubled himself little about their consequences or the inferences which might be drawn from them. In a word, Mr. M'Lennan addressed a large and unrestricted public, while Mr. Bachofen only wrote for a chosen few. The success of the former and the apparent failure of the latter afford new proof that, for the appreciation of new ideas, a general public is a better judge than a public under the restraint of scientific technicalities. The moment inventions and discoveries, in order to be comprehended, necessitate a true disinterestedness, a real freedom, a certain breadth of intellect, they no longer belong to the domain of cultivated coteries and academic cliques. Mr. M'Lennan, in his thesis on maternal

affiliation, has won the day. His argument leaves a most favorable impression,—perhaps, indeed, a little too favorable for the reason above stated, since he concerns himself solely with that which is in favor of his hypothesis to the exclusion of all else. The basis upon which he builds his system—infanticide resulting in an extreme scarcity of women—seems to us a rather narrow foundation for the large superstructure. We do not by any means contest the fact; but is its importance as great as that assigned to it, and is that the only point to be taken into account? The hypothesis of our author seems to be supported by the most convincing proofs; but may we not inquire whether all human societies owe their development to this one cause that he has pointed out? He takes cognizance of polyandry alone, and scarcely mentions the words polygyny and polygamy. He speaks of endogamy as being the result of exogamy; but he also admits that from promiscuity, or primitive indifference, endogamy may have been evolved, quite as well as exogamy. If by chance, however, endogamy has been first developed, our author would then have his entire argument to reconstruct. Therefore, the reasoning of Mr. M'Lennan is less decisive, it must be acknowledged, than would be supposed at first view. He has given us a solution, but not *the* solution. The solution of facts by which he establishes maternal kinship is certainly a very plausible one, but it may not be the real one. He has proved that a certain fact has existed at a given moment, and this is no insignificant discovery; but still must we seek the why and the wherefore. Ethnology is still in its period of infancy; every day, from numberless sources opened on every side, new materials are brought forward, and for the present it will be simple wisdom to distrust premature syntheses and exclusive systems.

These remarks, however, are not made in a spirit of criticism; nor, indeed, are they intended to detract from the merit of Mr. M'Lennan's argument, but only to state it with more precision. And we must insist upon the fact that it is not alone for this ethnological discovery of the maternal kinship for which we are under obligations to our author. The priority of the tribe to clans and families—which he establishes as a secondary consideration only—may be, perhaps, not less fruitful in results

than the fact of maternal filiation, and may be able to renovate in a large measure the history and science of jurisprudence. Let us say, in conclusion, that the studies of the Scotch and the Swiss *savants* mutually complete each other. It might be supposed that the researches of Mr. Bachofen held true, at the most, for certain nations of classical antiquity. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone and Sir Henry Maine were willing to accept the conclusions of Mr. McLennan in all that relates to contemporaneous savage tribes and isolated populations, but were decidedly opposed to applying them to our Aryan ancestors, whom it is the fashion to consider a chosen people, a holy nation, an exceptional race. But these two eminent authors unconsciously have completed each other's arguments,—Mr. Bachofen replying to the objections raised against Mr. McLennan, and Mr. McLennan to those brought forward against Mr. Bachofen.

ELIE RECLUS.

WALT WHITMAN.

I.

THIRTY years ago, when Emerson published his essay upon "The Poet," America had no great national bard. The essayist confessed that he looked in vain for the poet whom he described. "We do not," wrote he, "address ourselves to life, nor dare we chant our own times and social circumstance. . . . We have yet had no genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable materials, and saw, in the barbarism and materialism of the times, another carnival of the same gods whose picture he so much admires in Homer; then in the middle age, then in Calvinism. . . . Our log-rolling, our stumps and their politics, our fisheries, our Negroes and Indians, our boats, and our repudiations, the wrath of rogues, and the pusillanimity of honest men, the northern trade, the southern planting, the western clearing, Oregon, and Texas, are yet unsung. Yet America is a poem . . . ; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres."

When Emerson wrote these words, he had himself composed a volume of poems, some of which were of remarkable beauty and of great depth of thought and spirit; but his verses came far wide of answering the demand he himself made upon the poetic nature. In so far as he was representative, he was the poet of the later Puritanism; and, like Pope, he touched his lyre, and sang, mainly for the ears of gentlemen and scholars. He was another Hafiz or Herbert, come into New England to chant in chosen syllables some meanings of her hills and Indian streams, and some of the old and everlasting rules of ethics and of immortal life; but he was not the minstrel of America. The