ST. GEORGE AND THE PARILIA *.

by J. G. Frazer (Cambridge).

In the course of the preceding investigation we found reason to assume that the old Latin kings, like their brethren in many parts of the world, were charged with certain religious duties or magical functions, amongst which the maintenance of the fertility of the earth held a principal place. By this I do not mean that they had to see to it only that the rain fell, and that the corn grew and trees put forth their fruit in due season. In those early days it is probable that the Italians were quite as much a pastoral as an agricultural people, or, in other words, that they depended for their subsistence no less on their flocks and herds than on their fields and orchards. To provide their cattle with grass and water, to ensure their fecundity and the abundance of their milk, and to guard them from the depredations of wild beasts, would be objects of the first importance with the shepherds and herdsmen who, according to tradition, founded Rome ; [1] and the king, as the representative or embodiment of the deity, would be expected to do his part towards procuring these blessings for his people by the performance of sacred rites. The Greeks of the Homeric age thought that the reign of a good king not only made the land to bear wheat and barley, but also caused the flocks to multiply and the sea to yield fish.[2]

In this connection, accordingly, it can be no mere accident that Rome is said to have been founded and the pious king Numa to have been born on the twenty-first of April, the day of the great shepherds' festival of the Parilia.[3] It is very unlikely that the real day either of the foundation of the city or of Numa's birth should have been remembered, even if we suppose Numa to have been an historical personage rather than a mythical type ; it is far more probable that both events were arbitrarily assigned to this date by the speculative antiquaries of a later age

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[1] See Varro, *De re rustica*, ii. 1. 9 *sq.* « *Romanorum vero populum a pastoribus esse ortum quis non dicit ?* » etc. Amongst other arguments in favour of this view Varro refers to the Roman names derived from cattle, both large and small, such as *Porcius*, « pig-man », *Ovinius*, « sheep-man, » *Caprilius*, « goat-man, » *Equitius*, « horse-man, » *Taurius*, « bull-man, » and so forth. On the importance of cattle and milk among the ancient Aryans see O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der Indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, pp. 541 *sq.*, 689 *sqq.*, 913 *sqq.*

[2] Homer, *Od.*, XIX. 109-114.

[3] As to the foundation of Rome on this date see Varro, *De re rustica*, ii. 1. 9 ; Cicero, *De divinatione*, ii. 47. 98 ; Festus, *s. v.* « Parilibus, » p. 236, ed. C. O. Müller ; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 247 ; Propertius, v. 4. 73 *sq.* ; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 801-806 ; *id.*, *Metam.* xiv. 774 *sq.* ; Velleius Paterculus, i. 8. 4 ; Eutropius, i. 1 ; Solinus, i. 18 ; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xxi. 6 ; Probus on Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 1 ; Schol. Veronens. on Virgil. *l. c.* ; Dionysius Halicarnas. *Ant. Rom.* i. 88 ; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 12 ; Dio Cassius, xliii. 42 ; Zonaras, *Annals*, vii. 3 ; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, i. 14, iv. 50. As to the birth of Numa, see Plutarch, *Numa*, 3. The festival is variously called Parilia and Palilia by ancient writers, but the form Parilia seems to be the better attested of the two. See G. Wissowa, *s. v.* « Pales, » Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1278.

on the ground of some assumed fitness or propriety. In what did this fitness or propriety consist? The belief that the first Romans were shepherds and herdsmen would be reason enough for supposing that Rome was founded on the day of the shepherds' festival, or even that the festival was instituted to commemorate the event.[1] But why should Numa be thought to have been born on that day of all days? Perhaps it was because the old sacred kings, of whom he was the model, had to play an important part in the ceremonies of the day. The birthdays of the gods were celebrated by festivals; the kings were divine or semi-divine; it would be natural, therefore, that their birthdays should be identified with high feasts and holidays. Whether this was so or not, the festival of the Parilia presents so many points of resemblance to some of the popular customs discussed in these volumes that a brief examination of it may not be inappropriate in this place.[2]

The spring festival of the twenty-first of April, known as the birthday of Rome,[3] was deemed second in importance to none in the calendar.[4] It was held by shepherds and herdsmen for the welfare and increase of their flocks and herds.[5] The pastoral deity to whom they paid their devotions was Pales, as to whose sex the ancients themselves were not at one. In later times they commonly spoke of her as a goddess; but Varro regarded Pales as masculine,[6] and we may follow his high authority. The day was celebrated with similar rites both in the town and the country, but in its origin it must have been a strictly rural festival. Indeed, it could hardly be carried out in full except among the sheepfolds and cattle-pens. At some time of the day, probably in the morning, the people repaired to the temple of Vesta, where they received from the Vestal Virgins ashes, blood, and bean-straw to be used in fumigating themselves, and probably their beasts. The ashes were those of the unborn calves which had been torn from their mothers' wombs on the fifteenth of April; the blood was that which had dripped from the tail of a horse sacrificed in October.[7] Both were probably supposed to exercise a fertilising as well as a cleansing influence on the people and on the cattle; for apparently one effect of the ceremonies, in the popular opinion, was to quicken the wombs of women no less than of cows and ewes.[8] At break of day the shepherd purified his sheep, after sprinkling and sweeping the ground. The fold was

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[1] Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* i. 88) hesitates between these two views. With truer historical insight Plutarch (*Romulus*, 12) holds that the rustic festival was older than the foundation of Rome.

[2] For modern discussions of the Parilia, see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,[3] i. 413 *sqq.*; J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.[2] 207 *sq.*; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 309-317; W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 79-85; G. Wissowa, *s. v.* "Pales," Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, iii. coll. 1276-1280; *id.*, *Religion und Cultus der Römer*, p. 165 *sq.*

[3] Cicero, *De divinatione*, ii. 47. 98; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 806; Calendar of Philocalus, quoted by W. Warde Fowler, *op. cit.* p. 79; Probus on Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 1; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 12; Zonaras, *Annals*, vii. 3.

[4] Dionysius Halicarn. *Ant. Rom.* i. 88.

[5] Festus, *s. v.* "Pales," p. 222, ed. C. O. Müller; Dionysius Halic. *l. c.*

[6] Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 1. See also Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, iii. 40; Martianus Capella, i. 50.

[7] Ovid. *Fasti*, iv. 637-640, 731-734; Propertius, v. 1. 19 *sq.*

[8] Tibullus, ii. 5. 91 *sq.* —

"*Et fetus matrona dabit, natusque parenti*
Oscula comprensis auribus eripiet."

decked with leafy boughs, and a great wreath was hung on the door.[1] The purification of the flocks apparently consisted in driving them over burning heaps of grass, pine-wood, laurel, and branches of the male olive-tree.[2] Certainly at some time of the day the sheep were compelled to scamper over a fire.[3] Moreover, the bleating flocks were touched with burning sulphur and fumigated with its blue smoke.[4] Then the shepherd offered to Pales baskets of millet, cakes of millet, and pails of warm milk. Next he prayed to the god that he would guard the fold from the evil powers, including probably witchcraft;[5] that the flocks, the men, and the dogs might be hale and free from disease; that the sheep might not fall a prey to wolves; that grass and leaves might abound; that water might be plentiful; that the udders of the dams might be full of milk; that the rams might be lusty, and the ewes prolific; that many lambs might be born; and that there might be much wool at shearing.[6] This prayer the shepherd had to repeat four times, looking to the east; then he washed his hands in the morning dew. After that he drank a bowl of milk and wine, and, warmed with the liquor, leaped over burning heaps of crackling straw. This practice of jumping over a straw fire would seem to have been a principal part of the ceremonies: at least it struck the ancients themselves, for they often refer to it.[7]

The shepherd's prayer at the Parilia is instructive, because it gives us in short a view of the chief wants of the pastoral life. The supplication for grass and leaves and water reminds us that the herdsman no less than the husbandman depends ultimately on vegetation and rain; so that the same divine powers which cover the fields of the one with yellow corn may be conceived to carpet the meadows of the other with green grass, and to diversify them with pools and rivers for the refreshment of the thirsty cattle. And it is to be borne in mind that in countries where grass is less plentiful than under the soft skies of northern Europe, sheep, goats, and cattle still subsist in great measure on the leaves and juicy twigs of trees.[8] Hence in these lands the pious shepherd and goatherd cannot afford to ignore or to offend the tree-spirits, on whose favour and bounty his flocks are

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[1] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 735-738. In his account of the festival Ovid mentions only shepherds and sheep; but since Pales was a god of cattle as well as of sheep (Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, iii. 23), we may suppose that herds and herdsmen equally participated in it. Dionysius (*l. c.*) speaks of fourfooted beasts in general.

[2] So Mr. W. Warde Fowler understands Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 735-742.

[3] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 805 *sq.*

[4] Ovid. *Fasti*, iv. 739 *sq.*

[5] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 747 *sq.*—

> « *Consule, dic, pecori pariter pecorisque magistris :*
> *Effugiat stabulis noxa repulsa meis.* »

With this sense of *noxa* compare *id.* vi. 129 *sq.*, where it is said that buckthorn or hawthorn « *tristes pellere posset a foribus noxas.* »

[6] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 763-774. The prayer that the wolves may be kept far from the fold is mentioned also by Tibullus (ii. 5. 88).

[7] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 779-782; Tibullus, ii. 5. 89 *sq.*; Propertius, v. 1. 19, v. 4. 77 sq.; Persius, i. 72; Probus on Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 1.

[8] I owe this observation to F. A. Paley, on Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 754. He refers to Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 435. *Ecl.* x. 30; Theocritus, xi. 73 *sq.*; to which may be added Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 300 *sq.*, 320 *sq.*; Horace, *Epist.* 1. 14. 28; Columella, *De re rustica*, vii. 3. 21, xi. 2. 83 and 99-101; Cato, *De re rustica*, 30. From these passages of Cato and Columella we learn that the Italian farmer fed his cattle on the leaves of the elm, the ash, the poplar, the oak, the evergreen oak, the fig, and the laurel.

dependent for much of their fodder. Indeed, at the Parilia the shepherd made elaborate excuses to these divine beings for any trespass he might unwittingly have committed on their hallowed domain by entering a sacred grove, sitting in the shadow of a holy tree, or lopping leafy branches from it with which to feed a sickly sheep.[1] In like manner he craved pardon of the waternymphs, if the hoofs of his cattle had stirred up the mud in their clear pools ; and he implored Pales to intercede for him with the divinities of springs " and the gods dispersed through every woodland glade. "[2]

The Parilia was generally considered to be the best time for coupling the rams and the ewes ; [3] and it has been suggested that it was also the season when the flocks and herds, after being folded and stalled throughout the winter, were turned out for the first time to pasture in spring.[4] The occasion is an anxious one for the shepherd, especially in countries which are infested with wolves, as ancient Italy was.[5] Accordingly the Italian shepherd propitiated Pales with a slaughtered victim before he drove his flocks afield in spring ; [6] but it is doubtful whether this sacrifice formed part of the Parilia. None of the ancient authors who expressly describe the Parilia mention the slaughter of a victim ; and in Plutarch's day a tradition ran that of old no blood was shed at the festival.[7] But such a tradition seems to point to a contrary practice in after times. In the absence of decisive evidence the question must be left open ; but modern analogy, as we shall see, strongly supports the opinion that immediately at the close of the Parilia the flocks and herds were driven out to graze in the open pastures for the first time after their long winter confinement. On this view a special significance is seen to attach to some of the features of the festival, such as the prayer for protection against the wolf ; for the brute could hardly do the sheep and kine much harm so long as they were safely pent within the walls of the sheepcote and the cattle-stall.

As the Parilia is said to have been celebrated by Romulus, who sacrificed to the gods and caused the people to purify themselves by leaping over flames,[8] some scholars have inferred that it was customary for the king, and afterwards for his successor, the chief pontiff, or the King of the Sacred Rites, to offer sacrifices for the people at the Parilia.[9] The inference is reasonable and receives some confirmation, as we shall see presently, from the analogy of modern custom. Further, the tradition that Numa was born on the day of the Parilia may be thought to point in the same way, since it is most naturally explicable on the hypothesis that the king had to discharge some important function at the festival. Still, it must be confessed that the positive evidence for connecting the Roman kings with the celebration of the twenty-first of April is slight and dubious.

On the whole the festival of the Parilia, which probably fell at or near the

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[1] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 749-754.
[2] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 757-760.
[3] Columella, *De re rustica*, vii. 3-11.
[4] The suggestion was made by C. G. Heyne in his commentary on Tibullus, ii. 5. 88.
[5] O. Keller, *Thiere des classischen Alterthums* (Innsbrück, 1887), pp. 158 *sqq.*
[6] Calpurnius, *Bucol.* v. 16-28.
[7] Plutarch, *Romulus*, 12.
[8] Dionysius Halicarn. *Ant. Rom.* i. 88.
[9] This is the view of J. Marquardt (*Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.[2] 207), and Mr. W. Warde Fowler (*Roman Festivals*, p. 83, note 1).

time of turning out the cattle to pasture in spring, was designed to ensure their welfare and increase, and to guard them from the insidious machinations or the open attacks of their various enemies, among whom witches and wolves were perhaps the most dreaded.

Now it can hardly be a mere coincidence that down to modern times a great popular festival of this sort has been celebrated only two days later by the herdsmen and shepherds of eastern Europe, who still cherish a profound belief in witchcraft, and still fear, with far better reason, the raids of wolves on their flocks and herds. The festival falls on the twenty-third of April and is dedicated to St. George, the patron saint of cattle, horses, and wolves. The Esthonians say that on St. George's morning the wolf gets a ring round his snout and a halter about his neck, whereby he is rendered less dangerous till Michaelmas. But if the day should chance to be a Friday at full moon, or if before the day came round any person should have been so rash as to thump the dirty linen in the wash-tub with two beetles, the cattle will run a serious risk of being devoured by wolves. Many are the precautions taken by the anxious Esthonians on this day to guard their herds from the ravening beasts. Thus some people gather wolf's dung on the preceding night, burn it, and fumigate the cattle with it in the morning. Or they collect bones from the pastures and burn them at a cross-road, which serves as a charm against sickness, sorcery, and demons quite as well as against wolves. Others smoke the cattle with *asa foetida* or sulphur to protect them against witchcraft and noxious exhalations. They think, too, that if you sew stitches on St. George's morning the cubs of the wolves will be blind, no doubt because their eyes are sewed up by the needle and thread. In order to forecast the fate of their herds they lay eggs or a sharp weapon, such as an axe or a scythe, before the doors of the stalls, and the animal which crushes an egg or wounds itself will surely be rent by a wolf or will perish in some other fashion before the year is out. So certain is its fate that many a man prefers to slaughter the doomed beast out of hand for the sake of saving at least the beef.

As a rule the Esthonians drive their cattle out to pasture for the first time on St. George's Day, and the herdsman's duties begin from then. If, however, the herds should have been sent out to graze before that day, the boys who look after them must eat neither flesh nor butter while they are on duty ; else the wolves will destroy many sheep, and the cream will not turn to butter in the churn. Further, the boys may not kindle a fire in the wood, or the wolf's tooth would be fiery and he would bite viciously. By St. George's Day, the twenty-third of April, there is commonly fresh grass in the meadows. But even if the spring should be late and the cattle should have to return to their stalls hungrier than they went forth, many Esthonian farmers insist on turning out the poor beasts on St. George's Day in order that the saint may guard them against his creatures the wolves. On this morning the farmer treats the herdsman to a dram of brandy, and gives him two copper kopecks as " tail-money " for every cow in the herd. This money the giver first passes thrice round his head and then lays it on the dunghill ; for if the herdsman took it from his hand, it would in some way injure the herd. Were this ceremony omitted, the wolves would prove very destructive, because they had not been appeased on St. George's Day. After receiving the " tail-money " some herdsmen are wont to collect the herd on the village common. Here they set up their crook in the ground, place their hat on it, and walk thrice round the cattle, muttering spells or the Lord's Prayer as they do so. The pastoral crook should

be cut from the rowan or mountain-ash and consecrated by a wise man, who carves mystic signs on it. Sometimes the upper end of the crook is hollowed out and filled with quicksilver and *asa foetida*, the aperture being stopped up with resin. Some Esthonians cut a cross with a scythe under the door through which the herd is to be driven, and fill the furrows of the cross with salt to prevent certain evil beings from harming the cattle. Further, it is an almost universal custom in Esthonia not to hang bells on the necks of the kine till St. George's Day ; the few who can give a reason for the rule say that the chiming of the bells before that season would attract the wild beasts.[1]

In the island of Dago down to the early part of the nineteenth century there were certain holy trees from which no one dared to break a bough ; in spite of the lack of wood in the island the fallen branches were allowed to rot in heaps on the ground. Under such trees the Esthonians used to offer sacrifices on St. George's Day for the safety and welfare of their horses. The offerings, which consisted of an egg, a piece of money, and a bunch of horse-hair tied up with a red thread, were buried in the earth.[2] The custom is interesting because it exhibits St. George in the two-fold character of a patron of horses and of trees. In the latter capacity he has already met us more than once under the name of Green George.[3]

In Russia the saint is known as Yegory or Yury, and here, as in Esthonia, he is a patron of wolves as well as of flocks and herds. Many legends speak of the connection which exists between St. George and the wolf. In Little Russia the beast is known as « St. George's Dog, » and the carcasses of sheep which wolves have killed are not eaten, it being held that they have been made over by divine command to the beasts of the field.[4] The festival of St. George on the twenty-third of April has a national as well as an ecclesiastical character in Russia, and the mythical features of the songs which are devoted to the day prove that the saint has supplanted some old Slavonian deity who used to be honoured at this season in heathen times. It is not as a slayer of dragons and a champion of forlorn damsels that St. George figures in these songs, but as a patron of farmers and herdsmen who preserves cattle from harm, and on whose day accordingly the flocks and herds are driven out to browse the fresh pastures for the first time after their confinement through the long Russian winter. « What the wolf holds in its teeth, that Yegory has given, » is a proverb which shows how completely he is thought to rule over the fold and the stall. Here is one of the songs :—

We have gone around the field
We have called Yegory . . .
« O thou, our brave Yegory,
Save our cattle,
In the field, and beyond the field,
In the forest, and beyond the forest,
Under the bright moon,

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[1] Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehsten abergläubische Gebrauche, Weisen und Gewohnheiten*, pp. 82-84, 116-118 ; F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äusseren Leben der Ehsten*, pp. 332, 356-361 ; Holzmayer, « Osiliana, » *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. (1872), p. 61.

[2] F. J. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

[3] *The Golden Bough*, 2 d. ed., I. 209 sqq.

[4] W. R. S. Ralston, *Russian Folktales*, pp. 344, 345.

Under the red sun,
From the rapacious wolf,
From the cruel bear,
From the cunning beast. "

A White-Russian song represents St. George as opening with golden keys, probably the sunbeams, the soil which has been frost-bound all the winter :—

Holy Jury, the divine envoy,
Has gone to God,
And having taken the golden keys,
Has unlocked the moist earth,
Having scattered the clinging dew
Over White-Russia and all the world.

In Moravia they " meet the Spring " with a song in which they ask Green Thursday, that is, the day before Good Friday, what he has done with the keys, and he answers : " I gave them to St. George. St. George arose and unlocked the earth, so that the grass grew—the green grass. " In White-Russia it is customary on St. George's Day to drive the cattle afield through the morning dew, and in Little-Russia and Bulgaria young folk go out early and roll themselves in it.[1] In the Smolensk Government, when the herds are being sent out to graze on St. George's Day, the following spell is uttered :—

" *Deaf man, deaf man, dost thou hear us ?* "
" *I hear not.* "
" *God grant that the wolf may not hear our cattle !* "
" *Cripple, cripple, canst thou catch us ?* "
" *I cannot catch.* "
" *God grant that the wolf may not catch our cattle !* "
" *Blind man, blind man, dost thou see us ?* "
" *I see not.* "
" *God grant that the wolf may not see our cattle !* "[2]

But in the opinion of the Russian peasant wolves are not the only foes of cattle at this season. On the eve of St. George's Day, as well as on the night before Whitsunday and on Midsummer Eve, witches go out naked in the dark and cut chips from the doors and gates of farmyards. These they boil in a milk-pail, and thus charm away the milk from the farms. Hence careful housewives examine their doors and smear mud in any fresh gashes they may find in them, which frustrates the knavish tricks of the milk-stealing witch. Not to be baffled, however, the witches climb the wooden crosses by the wayside and chip splinters from them, or lay their hands on stray wooden wedges. These they stick into a post in the cattle-shed and squeeze them with their hands till milk flows from them as freely as from the dugs of a cow. At this time also wicked people turn themselves by magic art into dogs and black cats, and in that disguise they suck the milk of cows, mares, and ewes, while they slaughter the bulls, horses, and rams.[3]

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[1] W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 229-231.

[2] W. R. S. Ralston, *op. cit.*, p. 389. French peasants of the Vosges Mountains believe that St. George shuts the mouths of wild beasts and prevents them from attacking the flocks which are placed under his protection (L. F. Sauvé, *Le folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 127).

[3] W. R. S. Ralston, *op. cit.*, p. 319 *sq.*

The Ruthenians of Bukowina and Galicia believe that at midnight before St. George's Day (the twenty-third of April) the witches come in bands of twelve to the hills at the boundaries of the villages and dance there and play with fire. Moreover, they cull on the mountains the herbs they need for their infernal enchantments. Like the Esthonians and the Russians, the Ruthenians drive their cattle out to pasture for the first time on St. George's Day ; hence during the preceding night the witches are very busy casting their spells on the cows ; and the farmer is at great pains to defeat their fell purpose. With this intent many people catch a snake, skin it, and fumigate the cows with the skin on the eve of the saint's day. To rub the udders and horns of the cows with serpent's fat is equally effective. Others strew meal about the animals, saying, « Not till thou hast gathered up this meal, shalt thou take the milk from my cow So-and-so. » Further, sods of turf, with thorn-branches stuck in them, are laid on the gate-posts ; and crosses are painted with tar on the doors. These precautions keep the witches from the cows. If, however, a beast should after all be bewitched, the farmer's wife drags a rope about in the dew on the morning of St. George's Day. Then she chops it up small, mixes salt with it, and scatters the bits among the cow's fodder. No sooner has the afflicted animal partaken of this compound than the spell is broken.[1]

The Huzuls of the Carpathian Mountains believe that when a cow gives milk tinged with blood, or no milk at all, a witch is at the bottom of it. Those maleficent beings play their pranks especially on the eve of St. George's Day and on Midsummer Eve, but they are most dangerous at the former season, for on that night they and the foul fiends hold their greatest gathering or sabbath. To steal the cows' milk they resort to various devices. Sometimes they run about in the shape of dogs and smell the cows' udders. Sometimes they rub the udders of their own cows with milk taken from a neighbour's kine ; then their own cows yield abundant milk, but the udders of the neighbour's cows shrivel up or give only blood. Others again make a wooden cow on the spot where the real cows are generally milked, taking care to stick into the ground the knife they used in carving the image. Then the wooden cow yields the witch all the milk of the cattle which are commonly milked there, while the owner of the beasts gets nothing but blood from them.

Hence the Huzuls take steps to guard their cows from the machinations of witches at this season. For this purpose they kindle a great fire before the house on the eve of St. George's Day, using as fuel the dung which has accumulated during the winter. Also they place on the gate-posts clods in which are stuck the branches consecrated on Palm Sunday or boughs of the silver poplar, the wood of which is deemed especially efficacious in banning fiends. Moreover, they make crosses on the doors, sprinkle the cows with mud, and fumigate them with incense or the skin of a snake. To tie red woollen threads round the necks or tails of the animals is also a safeguard against witchcraft. And in June, when the snow has melted and the cattle are led to the high mountain pastures, the herds have no sooner reached their summer quarters than the herdsman makes « living fire » by the friction of wood and drives the animals over the ashes in order to protect them against witches and other powers of evil. The fire thus kindled is kept constantly

[1] R. F. Kaindl, « Zauberglaube bei den Rutenen in der Bukowina und Galizien, » *Globus*, lxi. (1892), p. 280.

burning in the herdsman's hut till with the chilly days of autumn the time comes to drive the herds down the mountains again. If the fire went out in the interval it would be an ill omen for the owner of the pastures.[1]

In some parts of Silesia the might of the witches is believed to be at the highest pitch on St. George's Day. The people deem the saint very powerful in the matter of cattle-breeding and especially of horse-breeding. At the Polish village of Ostroppa, not far from Gleiwitz, a sacrifice for horses used to be offered at the little village church. It has been described by an eye-witness. Peasants on horseback streamed to the spot from all the neighbouring villages, not with the staid and solemn pace of pilgrims, but with the noise and clatter of merrymakers hastening to a revel. The sorry image of the saint, carved in wood and about an ell high, stood in the churchyard on a table covered with a white cloth. It represented him seated on horseback and spearing the dragon. Beside it were two vessels to receive offerings of money and eggs respectively. As each farmer galloped up, he dismounted, led his horse by the bridle, knelt before the image of the saint, and prayed. After that he made his offering of money or eggs, according to his means, in the name of his horse. Then he led the beast round the church and churchyard, tethered it, and went into the church to hear mass and a sermon. Having thus paid his devotions to the saint, every man leaped into the saddle and made for the nearest public-house as fast as his horse could lay legs to the ground.[2]

The Saxons of Transylvania think that on the eve of St. George's Day the witches ride on the backs of the cows into the farmyard, if branches of wild rose-bushes or other thorny shrubs are not stuck over the gate of the yard to keep them out.[3] Beliefs and practices of this sort are shared by the Roumanians of Transylvania. They hold that on St. George's Day the witches keep their sabbath in sequestered spots, such as woodland glades, deserted farmsteadings, and the like. In Walachia green sods are laid on the window-sills and on the lintels of the doors to avert the uncanny crew. But in Transylvania the Roumanians, not content with setting a thorn-bush in the doorway of the house, keep watch and ward all night beside the cattle or elsewhere, to catch the witches who are at work stealing the milk from the cows. Here, as elsewhere, the day is above all the herdsman's festival. It marks the beginning of spring ; the shepherds are preparing to start for the distant pastures, and they listen with all their ears to some wiseacre who tells them how, if the milk should fail in the udders of the sheep, they have only to thrash the shepherd's pouch, and every stroke will fall on the witch who is pumping the lost milk into her pails.[4]

The Walachians look on St. George's Day as very holy ; for they are mainly a pastoral folk, and St. George is the patron of herds and herdsmen. On that day also, as well as on the day before and the day after, the Walachian numbers his herd, beginning at one and counting continuously up to the total. This he never

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[1] R. F. Kaindl, *Die Huzulen*, (Vienna, 1894), pp. 62 *sq.*, 78, 88 *sq.* ; *id.*, « Zauberglaube bei den Huzulen, » *Globus*, lxxvi. (1899), p. 233.

[2] P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien*, i. 106 *sq.* The authority quoted for the sacrifice is Tiede, *Merkwürdigkeiten Schlesiens* (1804), p. 123 *sq.* It is not expressly said, but we may assume, that the sacrifice was offered on St. George's Day.

[3] J. Haltrich, *Zur Volkskunde der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Vienna, 1885), p. 281.

[4] W. Schmidt, *Das Jahr und seine Tage in Meinung und Brauch der Romänen Siebenbürgens* (Hermannstadt, 1866), pp. 9, 11. It does not appear whether the shepherd's pouch (« *Hirtentaschen* ») in question is the real pouch or the plant of that name.

does at any other time of the year. On this day, too, he milks his sheep for the first time into vessels which have been carefully scoured and are wreathed with flowers. Then too a cake of white meal is baked in the shape of a ring, and is rolled on the ground in sight of the herd; and from the length of its course omens are drawn as to the good or bad luck of the cattle in their summer pastures. If the herd is owned by several men, they afterwards lay hold of the ring, and break it among them, and the one who gets the largest piece will have the best luck. The milk is made into a cheese which is divided; and the pieces of the cake are given to the shepherds. In like manner the wreaths of flowers which crowned the pails are thrown into the water, and from the way in which they float down-stream the shepherds presage good or evil fortune.[1]

The Bulgarians seem to share the belief that cattle are especially exposed to the designs of witches at this season, for it is a rule with them not to give away milk, butter, or cheese on the eve of St. George's Day; to do so, they say, would be to give away the profit of the milch kine.[2] They rise very early on the morning of this day, and wash themselves in the dew, that they may be healthy.[3] It is said, too, that a regular sacrifice is still offered on St. George's Day in Bulgaria. An old man kills a ram, while girls spread grass on which the blood is poured forth.[4] The intention of the sacrifice may be to make the herbage grow abundantly in the pastures. Amongts the South Slavs the twenty-third of April, St. George's Day, is the chief festival of the spring. The herdsman thinks that if his cattle are well on that day they will thrive throughout the year. He crowns the horns of his cows with garlands of flowers to guard them against witchcraft, and in the evening the garlands are hung on the doors of the stalls, where they remain until the next St. George's Day. Early in the morning of that day, when the herdsman drives the cows from the byres, the housewife takes salt in one hand and a potsherd with glowing coals in the other. She offers the salt to the cow, and the beast must step over the smouldering coals, on which various kinds of roses are smoking. This deprives the witches of all power to harm the cow. On the eve or the morning of the day old women cut thistles and fasten them to the doors and gates of the farm; and they make crosses with cow's dung on the doors of the byres to ward off the witches. Many knock great nails into the doors, which is thought to be a surer preventive even than thistles. In certain districts the people cut thistles before sunrise and put some on each other's heads, some on the fences, the windows, the doors, and some in the shape of wreaths round the necks of the cows, in order that the witches may be powerless to harm man and beast, house and homestead, throughout the year. If, nevertheless, a witch should contrive to steal through the garden fence and into the byre, it is all over with the cows. A good housewife will also go round her house and cattle-stalls early in the morning of the fateful day and sprinkle them with holy water. Another approved means of driving the witches away is furnished by the froth which is shot from the spokes of a revolving mill-wheel; for common-sense tells us that just as the froth flies from the wheel, so the witches will fly from our house, if only we apply the remedy in the right way. And the right way is this. On the eve of St. George's Day you

[1] A. and A. Schott, *Walachische Maerchen*, p. 299 *sq.*
[2] A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren*, p. 287.
[3] A. Strausz, *op. cit.*, p. 337.
[4] W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 230.

must send a child to fetch froth from the mill, three stones from three cross-roads, three twigs of a blackberry bush, three sprigs of beech, and three shoots of a wild vine. Then you insert the plants in a buttered roll, put the stones in the fire, boil the froth, toast the buttered roll over the glowing stones, and speak these words : « The blackberry twigs gather together, the beeches pull together, but the foam from the wheel shakes all evil away. » Do this, and no witch will then be able to charm away the milk from your cows.[1]

Thus on the whole the festival of St. George at the present day, like the Parilia of ancient Italy, is a ceremony intended to guard the cattle against their real and their imaginary foes, the wolves and the witches, at the critical season when the flocks and herds are driven out to pasture for the first time in spring. Precautions of the same sort are naturally taken by the superstitious herdsman whenever, the winter being over, he turns his herds out into the open for the first time, whether it be on St. George's Day or not. Thus in Prussia and Lithuania, when the momentous morning broke, the herd-boy ran from house to house in the village, knocked at the windows, and cried : « Put out the fire, spin not, reel not, but drive the cattle out ! » Meantime the herdsman had fetched sand from the church, which he strewed on the road by which the beasts must go from the farm-yard. At the same time he laid a woodcutter's axe in every doorway, with the sharp edge outwards, over which the cows had to step. Then he walked in front of them, speaking never a word, and paying no heed to the herd, which was kept together by the herd-boys alone. His thoughts were occupied by higher things, for he was busy making crosses, blessing the cattle, and murmuring prayers, till the pastures were reached. The axe in the doorway signified that the wolf should flee from the herd as from the sharp edge of the axe ; the sand from the church betokened that the cattle should not disperse and wander in the meadows, but should keep as close together as people in church.[2]

The first day in spring on which the cattle are turned out into the forest to graze, for during the long and dreary northern winter they are confined almost wholly to their stalls, has been from time immemorial a great popular festival in Sweden. The time of its celebration depends more or less on the mildness or severity of the season. For the most part it takes place about the middle of May. On the preceding evening bonfires are kindled everywhere in the forest, because so far as their flickering light extends the cattle will be safe from the attacks of wild beasts throughout the summer. For the same reason people go about the woods that night firing guns, blowing horns, and making all kinds of discordant noises. The mode of celebrating the festival, which in some places is called the feast of flowers, varies somewhat in different provinces. In Dalsland the cattle are driven home that day from pasture at noon instead of at evening. Early in the morning the herd-boy repairs with the herd to the forest, where he decks their horns with wreaths of flowers and provides himself with a wand of the rowan or mountain-ash. During his absence the girls pluck flowers, weave them into a garland, and hang it on the gate through which the cattle must pass on their return from the forest. When they come back, the herd-boy takes the garland

[1] F. S. Krauss, *Volksglaube und religioser Brauch der Südslaven*, pp. 125-127 ; *id.*, *Kroatien und Slavonien* (Vienna, 1889), p. 105 *sq.*

[2] Tettau und Temme, *Die Volkssagen Ostpreussens, Litthauens und Westpreussens*, p. 263.

from the gate, fastens it to the top of his wand, and marches with it at the head of his beasts to the hamlet. Afterwards the wand with the garland on it is set up on the muck-heap, where it remains all the summer. The intention of these ceremonies is not reported, but on the analogy of the preceding customs we may conjecture that both the flowers and the rowan-wand are supposed to guard the cattle against witchcraft. A little later in the season, when the grass is well grown in the forest, most of the cattle are sent away to the *säter*, or summer pastures, of which every hamlet commonly has one or more. These are clearings in the woods, and may be many miles distant from the village. In Dalecarlia the departure usually takes place in the first week of June. It is a great event for the pastoral folk. An instinctive longing seems to awaken both in the people and the beasts. The preparations of the women are accompanied by the bleating of the sheep and goats and the bellowing of the cattle, which make incessant efforts to break through the pens near the house where they are shut up. Two or more girls, according to the size of the herd, attend the cattle on their migration and stay with them all the summer. Every animal as it goes forth, whether cow, sheep, or goat, is marked on the brow with a cross by means of a tar-brush in order to protect it against evil spirits. But more dangerous foes lie in wait for the cattle in the distant pastures, where bears and wolves not uncommonly rush forth on them from the woods. On such occasions the herd-girls often display the utmost gallantry, belabouring the ferocious beasts with sticks, and risking their own lives in defence of the herds.[1]

The foregoing customs, practised down to modern times by shepherds and herdsmen with a full sense of their meaning, throw light on some features of the Parilia which might otherwise remain obscure. They seem to show that when the Italian shepherd hung green boughs on his folds, and garlands on his doors, he did so in order to keep the witches from the ewes ; and that in fumigating his flocks with sulphur and driving them over a fire of straw he intended to interpose a fiery barrier between them and the powers of evil, whether these were conceived as witches or mischievous spirits.

But St. George is more than a patron of cattle. The mummer who dresses up in green bough on the saint's day and goes by the name of Green George[2] clearly personifies the saint himself, and such a disguise is appropriate only to a spirit of trees or of vegetation in general. As if to make this quite clear, the Slavs of Carinthia carry a tree decked with flowers in the procession in which Green George figures; and the ceremonies in which the leaf-clad masker takes a part plainly indicate that he is thought to stand in intimate connection with rain as well as with cattle. This counterpart of our Jack in the Green is known in some parts of Russia, and the Slovenes call him Green George. Dressed in leaves and flowers, he appears in public on St. George's Day carrying a lighted torch in one hand and a pie in the other. Thus arrayed he goes out to the cornfields, followed by girls, who sing appropriate songs. A circle of brushwood is then lighted, and the pie is set down in the middle of it. All who share in the ceremony sit down around the fire, and the pie is divided among them. The observance has perhaps a bearing on the cattle as well as on the cornfields, for in some parts

[1] L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, pp. 246-251; A. Kuhn, *Herabkunft des Feuers*, p. 163 *sq.*

[2] See *The Golden Bough*[2], I. 209 *sqq.*

of Russia when the herds go out to graze for the first time in spring a pie baked in the form of a sheep is cut up by the chief herdsman, and the bits are kept as a cure for the ills to which sheep are subject.[1]

Even when we have said that St. George of Eastern Europe represents an old heathen deity of sheep, cattle, horses, wolves, vegetation, and rain, we have not exhausted all the provinces over which he is supposed to bear sway. According to an opinion which appears to be widely spread, he has the power of blessing barren women with offspring. This belief is clearly at the root of the South Slavonian custom, whereby a childless woman hopes to become a mother by wearing a shirt which has hung all night on a fruitful tree on St. George's Eve.[2] Similarly, a Bulgarian wife who desires to have a child will strike off a serpent's head on St. George's Day, put a bean in its mouth, and lay the head in a hollow tree or bury it in the earth at a spot so far from the village that the crowing of the cocks cannot be heard there. If the bean buds, her wishes will be granted.[3]

It is natural to suppose that a saint who can bestow offspring can also bring fond lovers together. Hence among the Slavs, with whom St. George is so popular, his day is one of the seasons at which youths and maidens resort to charms and divination in order to win or discover the affections of the other sex. Thus, to take examples, a Bohemian way of gaining a girl's love is as follows. You catch a frog on St. George's Day, wrap it in a white cloth, and put it in an ant-hill after sunset or about midnight. The creature quacks terribly while the ants are gnawing the flesh from his bones. When silence reigns again, you will find nothing left of the frog but one little bone in the shape of a hook and another little bone in the shape of a shovel. Take the hook-shaped bone, go to the girl of your choice, and hook her dress with the bone, and she will fall over head and ears in love with you. If you afterwards tire of her, you have only to touch her with the shovel-shaped bone, and her affection will vanish as quickly as it came.[4] Again, at Ceklinj, in Crnagora, maidens go at break of day on St. George's morning to a well to draw water, and look down into its dark depth till tears fill their eyes and they fancy they see in the water the image of their future husband.[5] At Krajina, in Servia, girls who would pry into the book of fate gather flowers in the meadows on the eve of St. George, make them up into nosegays, and give to the nosegays the names of the various lads whose hearts they would win. Late at night they place the flowers by stealth under the open sky, on the roof or elsewhere, and leave them there till daybreak. The lad on whose nosegay most dew has fallen will love the girl most truly throughout the year. Sometimes mischievous young men secretly watch these doings, and steal the bunches of flowers, which makes sore

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[1] W. R. S. Ralston, *Russian Folktales*, p. 345.

[2] F. S. Krauss, *Volksglaube und religioser Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 35.

[3] A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren*, pp. 337, 385 *sq.* There seems to be a special connection between St. George and serpents. In Bohemia and Moravia it is thought that up to the twenty-third of April serpents are innocuous, and only get their poison on the saint's day. See J. V. Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren*, §§ 326, 580, pp. 51, 81; W. Müller, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Deutschen in Mähren*, p. 323. Various other charms are effected by means of serpents on this day. Thus if you tear out the tongue of a live snake on St. George's Day, put it in a ball of wax, and lay the ball under your tongue, you will be able to talk down anybody. See J. V. Grohmann, *op. cit.*, §§ 576, 1169, pp. 81, 166.

[4] J. V. Grohmann, *op. cit.*, § 1463, p. 210.

[5] F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 175.

hearts among the girls.[1] Once more, in wooded districts of Bohemia a Czech maiden will sometimes go out on St. George's Eve into an oak or beech forest and catch a young wild pigeon. It may be a ring-dove or a wood-pigeon, but it must always be a male. She takes the bird home with her, and covers it with a sieve or shuts it up in a box that nobody may know what she is about. Having kept and fed it till it can fly, she rises very early in the morning, while the household is still asleep, and goes with the dove to the hearth. Here she presses the bird thrice to her bare breast, above her heart, and then lets it fly away up the chimney, while she says :—

" *Out of the chimney, dove,*
Fly, fly from here.
Take me, dear Hans, my love,
None, none so dear.
Fly to your rocks, fair dove,
Fly to your lea.
So may I get, my love,
None, none but thee. "[2]

In the East, also, St. George is reputed to be a giver of offspring to barren women, and in this character he is revered by Moslems as well as Christians. His shrines may be found in all parts of Syria ; more places are associated with him than with any other saint in the calendar. The most famous of his sanctuaries is at Kalat el Hosn, in Northern Syria. Childless women of all sects resort to it in order that the saint may remove their reproach. Some people shrug their shoulders when the shrine is mentioned in this connection. Yet many Mohammedan women who desired offspring used to repair to it with the full consent of their husbands. Nowadays the true character of the place is beginning to be perceived, and many Moslems have forbidden their wives to visit it.[3] Such beliefs and practices lend some colour to the theory that in the East the saint has taken the place of Tammuz or Adonis.[4]

But we cannot suppose that the worship of Tammuz has been transplanted to Europe and struck its roots deep among the Slavs and other peoples in the eastern part of our continent. Rather amongst them we must look for a native Aryan deity who now masquerades in the costume of the Cappadocian saint and martyr. Perhaps we may find him in the Pergrubius of the Lithuanians, a people who retained their heathen religion later than any other branch of the Aryan stock in Europe. This Pergrubius is described as " the god of the spring, " as " he who makes leaves and grass to grow, " or more fully as " the god of flowers, plants, and all buds. " On St. George's Day, the twenty-third of April, the heathen Prussians and Lithuanians offered a sacrifice to him. A priest, who bore the title

[1] F. S. Krauss, *op. cit.*, p. 175 *sq.*

[2] Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-Kalender aus Böhmen*, p. 194, *sq.* ; J. V. Grohmann, *op. cit.*, § 554, p. 77.

[3] S. J. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, p. 83 *sq.*, 118 *sq.*

[4] S. Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, pp. 278 *sqq.* The authority for this identification is the nominal translator, but real author, of the work called *The Agriculture of the Nabataeans*. See D. A. Chwolson, *Ueber Tammuz und die Menschenverehrung bei den alten Babyloniern* (St. Petersburg, 1860), p. 56 *sq.* Although *The Agriculture of the Nabataeans* appears to be a forgery, the identification of the oriental St. George with Tammuz may nevertheless be correct.

of *Wurschait*, held in his hand a mug of beer, while he thus addressed the deity : « Thou drivest away the winter ; thou bringest back the pleasant spring. By thee the fields and gardens are green, by thee the groves and the woods put forth leaves. » According to another version, the prayer ran as follows : « Thou drivest the winter away, and givest in all lands leaves and grass. We pray thee that thou wouldst make our corn to grow and wouldst put down all weeds. » After praying thus, the priest drank the beer, holding the mug with his teeth, but not touching it with his hands. Then without handling it he threw the mug backward over his head. Afterwards it was picked up and filled again, and all present drank out of it. They also sang a hymn in praise of Pergrubius, and then spent the whole day in feasting and dancing.[1] Thus it appears that Pergrubius was a Lithuanian god of the spring, who caused the grass and the corn to grow and the trees to burst into leaf. In this he resembles Green George, the embodiment of the fresh vegetation of spring, whose leaf-clad representative still plays his pranks on the very same day in some parts of Eastern Europe. Nothing, indeed, is said of the relation of Pergrubius to cattle, and so far the analogy between him and St. George breaks down. But our accounts of the old Lithuanian mythology are few and scanty ; if we knew more about Pergrubius we might find that as a god or personification of spring he, like St. George, was believed to exert all the quickening powers of that genial season — in other words, that his beneficent activity was not confined to clothing the bare earth with verdure, but extended to the care of the teeming flocks and herds, as well as to the propagation of mankind. Certainly it is not easy to draw a sharp line of division between the god who attends to cattle and the god who provides the food on which they subsist.

Thus Pergrubius may perhaps have been the northern equivalent of the pastoral god Pales, who was worshipped by the Romans only two days earlier at the spring festival of the Parilia. It will be remembered that the shepherds prayed to Pales for grass and leaves, the very things which it was the part of Pergrubius to supply. Is it too bold to conjecture that in rural districts of Italy Pales may have been personated by a leaf-clad man, and that in the early age of Rome the duty of thus representing the god may have been one of the sacred functions of the king ? The conjecture at least suggests an excellent reason for the tradition that Numa, the typical priestly king of Rome, was born on the day of the Parilia.

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[1] J. Maeletius (Menecius), « De sacrificiis et idolatria veterum Borussorum Livonum aliarumque vicinarum gentium, » *Mitteilungen der Litterarischen Gesellschaft Masovia*, Heft 8 (Lötzen, 1902), pp. 185, 187, 200 *sq.* ; *id.*, in *Scriptores rerum Livonicarum*, ii. (Riga and Leipsic. 1848), pp. 389, 390 ; J. Lasicius, « De diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum, » ed. W. Mannhardt, in *Magazin herausgegeben von der Lettisch-literärischen Gesellschaft*, xiv. (1868), p. 95 *sq.* The first form of the prayer to Pergrubius is from the Latin, the second from the German, version of Maeletius's (Jan Malecki's) work. The description of Pergrubius as « he who makes leaves and grass to grow » (« *der lest wachssen laub unnd gras* ») is also from the German. According to M. Praetorius, Pergrubius was a god of husbandry (*Deliciae Prussicae*, p. 25).