

# CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . . Pp. v-xii

CHAPTER I.—BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH Pp. 1-21

- § 1. *Not to touch the Earth*, pp. 1-18.—The priest of Aricia and the Golden Bough, 1 *sq.*; sacred kings and priests forbidden to touch the ground with their feet, 2-4; certain persons on certain occasions forbidden to touch the ground with their feet, 4-6; sacred persons apparently thought to be charged with a mysterious virtue which will run to waste or explode by contact with the ground, 6 *sq.*; things as well as persons charged with the mysterious virtue of holiness or taboo and therefore kept from contact with the ground, 7; festival of the wild mango, which is not allowed to touch the earth, 7-11; other sacred objects kept from contact with the ground, 11 *sq.*; sacred food not allowed to touch the earth, 13 *sq.*; magical implements and remedies thought to lose their virtue by contact with the ground, 14 *sq.*; serpents' eggs or snake stones, 15 *sq.*; medicinal plants, water, etc., not allowed to touch the earth, 17 *sq.*
- § 2. *Not to see the Sun*, pp. 18-21.—Sacred persons not allowed to see the sun, 18-20; tabooed persons not allowed to see the sun, 20; certain persons forbidden to see fire, 20 *sq.*; the story of Prince Sunless, 21.

CHAPTER II.—THE SECLUSION OF GIRLS AT  
PUBERTY . . . . . Pp. 22-100

- § 1. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty in Africa*, pp. 22-32.—Girls at puberty forbidden to touch the ground and see the sun, 22; seclusion of girls at puberty among the Zulus and kindred tribes, 22; among the A-Kamba of British East Africa, 23; among the Baganda of Central Africa, 23 *sq.*; among the tribes of the Tanganyika plateau, 24 *sq.*; among the tribes of British Central Africa, 25 *sq.*; abstinence from salt associated with a rule of chastity in many tribes, 26-28; seclusion of girls at puberty among the tribes about Lake Nyassa and on the Zambesi, 28 *sq.*; among the Thonga of Delagoa Bay, 29 *sq.*; among the Caffre tribes of South Africa, 30 *sq.*; among the Bavili of the Lower Congo, 31 *sq.*

- § 2. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty in New Ireland, New Guinea, and Indonesia*, pp. 32-36.—Seclusion of girls at puberty in New Ireland, 32-34; in New Guinea, Borneo, Ceram, and the Caroline Islands, 35 sq.
- § 3. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty in the Torres Straits Islands and Northern Australia*, pp. 36-41.—Seclusion of girls at puberty in Mabuiag, Torres Straits, 36 sq.; in Northern Australia, 37-39; in the islands of Torres Straits, 39-41.
- § 4. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty among the Indians of North America*, pp. 41-55.—Seclusion of girls at puberty among the Indians of California, 41-43; among the Indians of Washington State, 43; among the Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island, 43 sq.; among the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands, 44 sq.; among the Tlingit Indians of Alaska, 45 sq.; among the Tsetsaut and Bella Coola Indians of British Columbia, 46 sq.; among the Tinnah Indians of British Columbia, 47 sq.; among the Tinnah Indians of Alaska, 48 sq.; among the Thompson Indians of British Columbia, 49-52; among the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia, 52 sq.; among the Shuswap Indians of British Columbia, 53 sq.; among the Delaware and Cheyenne Indians, 54 sq.; among the Esquimaux, 55 sq.
- § 5. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty among the Indians of South America*, pp. 56-68.—Seclusion of girls at puberty among the Guaranis, Chiriguano, and Lengua Indians, 56 sq.; among the Yuracares of Bolivia, 57 sq.; among the Indians of the Gran Chaco, 58 sq.; among the Indians of Brazil, 59 sq.; among the Indians of Guiana, 60 sq.; beating the girls and stinging them with ants, 61; stinging young men with ants and wasps as an initiatory rite, 61-63; stinging men and women with ants to improve their character or health or to render them invulnerable, 63 sq.; in such cases the beating or stinging was originally a purification, not a test of courage and endurance, 65 sq.; this explanation confirmed by the beating of girls among the Banivas of the Orinoco to rid them of a demon, 66-68; symptoms of puberty in a girl regarded as wounds inflicted on her by a demon, 68.
- § 6. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty in India and Cambodia*, pp. 68-70.—Seclusion of girls at puberty among the Hindoos, 68; in Southern India, 68-70; in Cambodia, 70.
- § 7. *Seclusion of Girls at Puberty in Folk-tales*, pp. 70-76.—Danish story of the girl who might not see the sun, 70-72; Tyrolese story of the girl who might not see the sun, 72; modern Greek stories of the maid who might not see the sun, 72 sq.; ancient Greek story of Danae and its parallel in a Kirghiz legend, 73 sq.; impregnation of women by the sun in legends, 74 sq.; traces in marriage customs of the belief that women can be impregnated by the sun, 75; belief in the impregnation of women by the moon, 75 sq.
- § 8. *Reasons for the Seclusion of Girls at Puberty*, pp. 76-100.—The reason for the seclusion of girls at puberty is the dread of menstruous blood, 76;

dread and seclusion of menstruous women among the aborigines of Australia, 76-78; in Torres Straits Islands, New Guinea, Galela, and Sumatra, 78 *sq.*; among the tribes of South Africa, 79 *sq.*; among the tribes of Central and East Africa, 80-82; among the tribes of West Africa, 82; powerful influence ascribed to menstruous blood in Arab legend, 82 *sq.*; dread and seclusion of menstruous women among the Jews and in Syria, 83 *sq.*; in India, 84 *sq.*; in Annam, 85; among the Indians of Central and South America, 85 *sq.*; among the Indians of North America, 87-94; among the Creek, Choctaw, Omaha and Cheyenne Indians, 88 *sq.*; among the Indians of British Columbia, 89 *sq.*; among the Chippeway Indians, 90 *sq.*; among the Tinneh or Déné Indians, 91; among the Carrier Indians, 91-94; similar rules of seclusion enjoined on menstruous women in ancient Hindoo, Persian, and Hebrew codes, 94-96; superstitions as to menstruous women in ancient and modern Europe, 96 *sq.*; the intention of secluding menstruous women is to neutralize the dangerous influences which are thought to emanate from them in that condition, 97; suspension between heaven and earth, 97; the same explanation applies to the similar rules of seclusion observed by divine kings and priests, 97-99; stories of immortality attained by suspension between heaven and earth, 99 *sq.*

### CHAPTER III.—THE MYTH OF BALDER . Pp. 101-105

How Balder, the good and beautiful god, was done to death by a stroke of mistletoe, 101 *sq.*; story of Balder in the older *Edda*, 102 *sq.*; story of Balder as told by Saxo Grammaticus, 103; Balder worshipped in Norway, 104; legendary death of Balder resembles the legendary death of Isfendiyar in the epic of Firdusi, 104 *sq.*; the myth of Balder perhaps acted as a magical ceremony; the two main incidents of the myth, namely the pulling of the mistletoe and the burning of the god, have perhaps their counterpart in popular ritual, 105.

### CHAPTER IV.—THE FIRE FESTIVALS OF

EUROPE . . . . . Pp. 106-327

- § 1. *The Lenten Fires*, pp. 106-120.—European custom of kindling bonfires on certain days of the year, dancing round them, leaping over them, and burning effigies in the flames, 106; seasons of the year at which the bonfires are lit, 106 *sq.*; bonfires on the first Sunday in Lent in the Belgian Ardennes, 107 *sq.*; in the French department of the Ardennes, 109 *sq.*; in Franche-Comté, 110 *sq.*; in Auvergne, 111-113; French custom of carrying lighted torches (*brandons*) about the orchards and fields to fertilize them on the first Sunday of Lent, 113-115; bonfires on the first Sunday of Lent in Germany and Austria, 115 *sq.*; "burning the witch," 116; burning discs thrown into the air, 116 *sq.*; burning wheels rolled down hill, 117 *sq.*; bonfires on the first Sunday in Lent in Switzerland, 118 *sq.*; burning discs thrown into the air, 119; connexion of these fires with the custom of "carrying out Death," 119 *sq.*

- § 2. *The Easter Fires*, 120-146.—Custom in Catholic countries of kindling a holy new fire on Easter Saturday, marvellous properties ascribed to the embers of the fire, 121; effigy of Judas burnt in the fire, 121; Easter fires in Bavaria and the Abruzzi, 122; water as well as fire consecrated at Easter in Italy, Bohemia, and Germany, 122-124; new fire at Easter in Carinthia, 124; Thomas Kirchmeyer's account of the consecration of fire and water by the Catholic Church at Easter, 124 *sq.*; the new fire on Easter Saturday at Florence, 126 *sq.*; the new fire and the burning of Judas on Easter Saturday in Mexico and South America, 127 *sq.*; the new fire on Easter Saturday in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, 128-130; the new fire and the burning of Judas on Easter Saturday in Greece, 130 *sq.*; the new fire at Candlemas in Armenia, 131; the new fire and the burning of Judas at Easter are probably relics of paganism, 131 *sq.*; new fire at the summer solstice among the Incas of Peru, 132; new fire among the Indians of Mexico and New Mexico, the Iroquois, and the Esquimaux, 132-134; new fire in Wadai, among the Swahili, and in other parts of Africa, 134-136; new fires among the Todas and Nagas of India, 136; new fire in China and Japan, 137 *sq.*; new fire in ancient Greece and Rome, 138; new fire at Hallowe'en among the old Celts of Ireland, 139; new fire on the first of September among the Russian peasants, 139; the rite of the new fire probably common to many peoples of the Mediterranean area before the rise of Christianity, 139 *sq.*; the pagan character of the Easter fire manifest from the superstitions associated with it, such as the belief that the fire fertilizes the fields and protects houses from conflagration and sickness, 140 *sq.*; the Easter fires in Münsterland, Oldenburg, the Harz Mountains, and the Altmark, 141-143; Easter fires and the burning of Judas or the Easter Man in Bavaria, 143 *sq.*; Easter fires and "thunder poles" in Baden, 145; Easter fires in Holland and Sweden, 145 *sq.*; the burning of Judas in Bohemia, 146.
- § 3. *The Beltane Fires*, pp. 146-160.—The Beltane fires on the first of May in the Highlands of Scotland, 146-154; John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, his description of the Beltane fires and cakes and the Beltane carline, 146-149; Beltane fires and cakes in Perthshire, 150-153; Beltane fires in the north-east of Scotland to burn the witches, 153 *sq.*; Beltane fires and cakes in the Hebrides, 154; Beltane fires and cakes in Wales, 155-157; in the Isle of Man to burn the witches, 157; in Nottinghamshire, 157; in Ireland, 157-159; fires on the Eve of May Day in Sweden, 159; in Austria and Saxony to burn the witches, 159 *sq.*
- § 4. *The Midsummer Fires*, pp. 160-219.—The great season for fire-festivals in Europe is Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day, which the church has dedicated to St. John the Baptist, 160 *sq.*; the bonfires, the torches, and the burning wheels of the festival, 161; Thomas Kirchmeyer's description of the Midsummer festival, 162 *sq.*; the Midsummer fires in Germany, 163-171; burning wheel rolled down hill at Konz on the Moselle, 163 *sq.*; Midsummer fires in Bavaria, 164-166; in Swabia, 166 *sq.*; in Baden, 167-169; in Alsace, Lorraine, the Eifel, the Harz district, and

Thuringia, 169; Midsummer fires kindled by the friction of wood, 169 *sq.*; driving away the witches and demons, 170; Midsummer fires in Silesia, scaring away the witches, 170 *sq.*; Midsummer fires in Denmark and Norway, keeping off the witches, 171; Midsummer fires in Sweden, 172; Midsummer fires in Switzerland and Austria, 172 *sq.*; in Bohemia, 173-175; in Moravia, Austrian Silesia, and the district of Cracow, 175; among the Slavs of Russia, 176; in Prussia and Lithuania as a protection against witchcraft, thunder, hail, and cattle disease, 176 *sq.*; in Masuren the fire is kindled by the revolution of a wheel, 177; Midsummer fires among the Letts of Russia, 177 *sq.*; among the South Slavs, 178; among the Magyars, 178 *sq.*; among the Esthonians, 179 *sq.*; among the Finns and Cheremiss of Russia, 180 *sq.*; in France, 181-194; Bossuet on the Midsummer festival, 182; the Midsummer fires in Brittany, 183-185; in Normandy, the Brotherhood of the Green Wolf at Jumièges, 185 *sq.*; Midsummer fires in Picardy, 187 *sq.*; in Beauce and Perche, 188; the fires a protection against witchcraft, 188; the Midsummer fires in the Ardennes, the Vosges, and the Jura, 188 *sq.*; in Franche-Comté, 189; in Berry and other parts of Central France, 189 *sq.*; in Poitou, 190 *sq.*; in the departments of Vienne and Deux-Sèvres and in the provinces of Saintonge and Aunis, 191 *sq.*; in Southern France, 192 *sq.*; Midsummer festival of fire and water in Provence, 193 *sq.*; Midsummer fires in Belgium, 194-196; in England, 196-200; Stow's description of the Midsummer fires in London, 196 *sq.*; John Aubrey on the Midsummer fires, 197; Midsummer fires in Cumberland, Northumberland, and Yorkshire, 197 *sq.*; in Herefordshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, 199 *sq.*; in Wales and the Isle of Man, 200 *sq.*; in Ireland, 201-205; holy wells resorted to on Midsummer Eve in Ireland, 205 *sq.*; Midsummer fires in Scotland, 206 *sq.*; Midsummer fires and divination in Spain and the Azores, 208 *sq.*; Midsummer fires in Corsica and Sardinia, 209; in the Abruzzi, 209 *sq.*; in Sicily, 210; in Malta, 210 *sq.*; in Greece and the Greek islands, 211 *sq.*; in Macedonia and Albania, 212; in South America, 212 *sq.*; among the Mohammedans of Morocco and Algeria, 213-216; the Midsummer festival in North Africa comprises rites of water as well as fire, 216; similar festival of fire and water at New Year in North Africa, 217 *sq.*; the duplication of the festival probably due to a conflict between the solar calendar of the Romans and the lunar calendar of the Arabs, 218 *sq.*; the Midsummer festival in Morocco apparently of Berber origin, 219.

§ 5. *The Autumn Fires*, pp. 220-222.—Festivals of fire in August, 220; "living fire" made by the friction of wood, 220; feast of the Nativity of the Virgin on the eighth of September at Capri and Naples, 220-222.

§ 6. *The Hallowe'en Fires*, pp. 222-246.—While the Midsummer festival implies observation of the solstices, the Celts appear to have divided their year, without regard to the solstices, by the times when they drove their cattle to and from the summer pasture on the first of May and the last of October (Hallowe'en), 222-224; the two great Celtic festivals of Beltane (May Day) and Hallowe'en (the last of October), 224; Hallowe'en seems

to have marked the beginning of the Celtic year, 224 *sq.*; it was a season of divination and a festival of the dead, 225 *sq.*; fairies and hobgoblins let loose at Hallowe'en, 226-228; divination in Celtic countries at Hallowe'en, 228 *sq.*; Hallowe'en bonfires in the Highlands of Scotland, 229-232; Hallowe'en fires in Buchan to burn the witches, 232 *sq.*; processions with torches at Hallowe'en in the Braemar Highlands, 233 *sq.*; divination at Hallowe'en in the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, 234-239; Hallowe'en fires in Wales, omens drawn from stones cast into the fires, 239 *sq.*; divination at Hallowe'en in Wales, 240 *sq.*; divination at Hallowe'en in Ireland, 241-243; Hallowe'en fires and divination in the Isle of Man, 243 *sq.*; Hallowe'en fires and divination in Lancashire, 244 *sq.*; marching with lighted candles to keep off the witches, 245; divination at Hallowe'en in Northumberland, 245; Hallowe'en fires in France, 245 *sq.*

- § 7. *The Midwinter Fires*, pp. 246-269.—Christmas the continuation of an old heathen festival of the sun, 246; the Yule log the Midwinter counterpart of the Midsummer bonfire, 247; the Yule log in Germany, 247-249; in Switzerland, 249; in Belgium, 249; in France, 249-255; French superstitions as to the Yule log, 250; the Yule log at Marseilles and in Perigord, 250 *sq.*; in Berry, 251 *sq.*; in Normandy and Brittany, 252 *sq.*; in the Ardennes, 253 *sq.*; in the Vosges, 254; in Franche-Comté, 254 *sq.*; the Yule log and Yule candle in England, 255-258; the Yule log in the north of England and Yorkshire, 256 *sq.*; in Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, 257 *sq.*; in Wales, 258; in Servia, 258-262; among the Servians of Slavonia, 262 *sq.*; among the Servians of Dalmatia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro, 263 *sq.*; in Albania, 264; belief that the Yule log protects against fire and lightning, 264 *sq.*; public fire-festivals at Midwinter, 265-269; Christmas bonfire at Schweina in Thuringia, 265 *sq.*; Christmas bonfires in Normandy, 266; bonfires on St. Thomas's Day in the Isle of Man, 266; the "Burning of the Clavie" at Burghead on the last day of December, 266-268; Christmas procession with burning tar-barrels at Lerwick, 268 *sq.*
- § 8. *The Need-fire*, pp. 269-300.—Need-fire kindled not at fixed periods but on occasions of distress and calamity, 269; the need-fire in the Middle Ages and down to the end of the sixteenth century, 270 *sq.*; mode of kindling the need-fire by the friction of wood, 271 *sq.*; the need-fire in Central Germany, particularly about Hildesheim, 272 *sq.*; the need-fire in the Mark, 273; in Mecklenburg, 274 *sq.*; in Hanover, 275 *sq.*; in the Harz Mountains, 276 *sq.*; in Brunswick, 277 *sq.*; in Silesia and Bohemia, 278 *sq.*; in Switzerland, 279 *sq.*; in Sweden and Norway, 280; among the Slavonic peoples, 281-286; in Russia and Poland, 281 *sq.*; in Slavonia, 282; in Servia, 282-284; in Bulgaria, 284-286; in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 286; in England, 286-289; in Yorkshire, 286-288; in Northumberland, 288 *sq.*; in Scotland, 289-297; Martin's account of it in the Highlands, 289; the need-fire in Mull, 289 *sq.*; in Caithness, 290-292; W. Grant Stewart's account of the need-fire, 292 *sq.*; Alexander

Carmichael's account, 293-295 ; the need-fire in Aberdeenshire, 296 ; in Perthshire, 296 *sq.* ; in Ireland, 297 ; the use of need-fire a relic of the time when all fires were similarly kindled by the friction of wood, 297 *sq.* ; the belief that need-fire cannot kindle if any other fire remains alight in the neighbourhood, 298 *sq.* ; the need-fire among the Iroquois of North America, 299 *sq.*

- § 9. *The Sacrifice of an Animal to stay a Cattle-plague*, pp. 300-327.—The burnt sacrifice of a calf in England and Wales, 300 *sq.* ; burnt sacrifices of animals in Scotland, 301 *sq.* ; calf burnt in order to break a spell which has been cast on the herd, 302 *sq.* ; mode in which the burning of a bewitched animal is supposed to break the spell, 303-305 ; in burning the bewitched animal you burn the witch herself, 305 ; practice of burning cattle and sheep as sacrifices in the Isle of Man, 305-307 ; by burning a bewitched animal you compel the witch to appear, 307 ; magic sympathy between the witch and the bewitched animal, 308 ; similar sympathy between a were-wolf and his or her human shape, wounds inflicted on the animal are felt by the man or woman, 308 ; were-wolves in Europe, 308-310 ; in China, 310 *sq.* ; among the Toradjas of Central Celebes, 311-313 ; in the Egyptian Sudan, 313 ; the were-wolf story in Petronius, 313 *sq.* ; witches like were-wolves can temporarily transform themselves into animals, and wounds inflicted on the transformed animals appear on the persons of the witches, 315 *sq.* ; instances of such transformations and wounds in Scotland, England, Ireland, France, and Germany, 316-321 ; hence the reason for burning bewitched animals is either to burn the witch herself or at all events to compel her to appear, 321 *sq.* ; the like reason for burning bewitched things, 322 *sq.* ; similarly by burning alive a person whose likeness a witch has assumed you compel the witch to disclose herself, 323 ; woman burnt alive as a witch in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century, 323 *sq.* ; bewitched animals sometimes buried alive instead of being burned, 324-326 ; calves killed and buried to save the rest of the herd, 326 *sq.*

## CHAPTER V.—THE INTERPRETATION OF THE

### FIRE-FESTIVALS . . . . . Pp. 328-346

- § 1. *On the Fire-festivals in general*, pp. 328-331.—General resemblance of the fire-festivals to each other, 328 *sq.* ; two explanations of the festivals suggested, one by W. Mannhardt that they are sun-charms, the other by Dr. E. Westermarck that they are purificatory, 329 *sq.* ; the two explanations perhaps not mutually exclusive, 330 *sq.*
- § 2. *The Solar Theory of the Fire-festivals*, pp. 331-341.—Theory that the fire-festivals are charms to ensure a supply of sunshine, 331 ; coincidence of two of the festivals with the solstices, 331 *sq.* ; attempt of the Bushmen to warm up the fire of Sirius in midwinter by kindling sticks, 332 *sq.* ; the burning wheels and discs of the fire-festivals may be direct imitations of the sun, 334 ; the wheel which is sometimes used to kindle the fire by

friction may also be an imitation of the sun, 334-336 ; the influence which the bonfires are supposed to exert on the weather and vegetation may be thought to be due to an increase of solar heat produced by the fires, 336-338 ; the effect which the bonfires are supposed to have in fertilizing cattle and women may also be attributed to an increase of solar heat produced by the fires, 338 *sq.* ; the carrying of lighted torches about the country at the festivals may be explained as an attempt to diffuse the sun's heat, 339-341.

- § 3. *The Purificatory Theory of the Fire-festivals*, pp. 341-346.—Theory that the fires at the festivals are purificatory, being intended to burn up all harmful things, 341 ; the purificatory or destructive effect of the fires is often alleged by the people who light them, and there is no reason to reject this explanation, 341 *sq.* ; the great evil against which the fire at the festivals appears to be directed is witchcraft, 342 ; among the evils for which the fire-festivals are deemed remedies the foremost is cattle-disease, and cattle-disease is often supposed to be an effect of witchcraft, 343 *sq.* ; again, the bonfires are thought to avert hail, thunder, lightning, and various maladies, all of which are attributed to the maleficent arts of witches, 344 *sq.* ; the burning wheels rolled down hill and the burning discs thrown into the air may be intended to burn the invisible witches, 345 *sq.* ; on this view the fertility supposed to follow the use of fire results indirectly from breaking the spells of witches, 346 ; on the whole the theory of the purificatory or destructive intention of the fire-festivals seems the more probable, 346.