the emperor Maximilian at Innsbruck.@@1 Sometimes the serpent stands at the head of the human race as the mother of all.@@2 This, following an old and still well supported interpretation of the name Eve *(hawwah),* was apparently also the belief of one branch of the Hebrews.@@3

There are many instances of tribes or clans named after the serpent. These are not necessarily examples of nicknames, since a relationship between the two often shows itself in custom or belief. This feature sometimes applies, also, to cases where the clan does not bear the serpent name. In accordance with universal ideas of the reality of the “ name,” there are tribes who will refrain from mentioning the serpent.@@4 Also there are clans like the American Apaches and Navahos who will neither kill nor eat rattlesnakes for purely “ superstitious ’’ reasons. Where the reptile is venerated or feared it is usually inviolable, and among the Brassmen of the Niger the dangerous and destructive cobra was especi­ally protected by an article in the diplomatic treaty of 1856 for the Bight of Biafra (Maclennan, 524). The North American Indians fear lest their venerated rattlesnake should incite its kinsfolk to avenge any injury done to it, and when the Seminole Indians begged an English traveller to rid them of one of these troublesome intruders, they scratched him—as a matter of form— in order to appease the spirit of the dead snake.@@5 The snake-tribes of the Punjab clothe and bury a dead serpent, and elsewhere in India when one is killed in the village a copper coin is placed in its mouth and the body ceremonially burned to avert evil.@@6 These snake-tribes claim to be free from snake-bite, as also the ancient Psylli of Africa and the Ophiogenes (“ serpent born ”) of Cyprus who were supposed to be able to cure others. This power (cf. above § 3 seq.) was claimed likewise by the Marsians of ancient Italy, and is still possessed by the snake-clan of Senegambia.@@7 In Kashmir the serpent-tribes became famous for medical skill in general, and they attributed this to the health-giving serpent (Fergusson, 260). Moreover, the Psylli would test the legitimacy of their new-born by exposing them to serpents which would not harm those of pure birth, and a similar ordeal among the Ophiogenes of Asia Minor showed whether a man was really of their kin.@@8 This peculiar “ kinship ” between serpent-clans and serpents may be further illustrated from Senegambia, where a python is supposed to visit every child of the python-clan within eight days of birth, apparently as a sign of recognition. Also at Fernando Po there was an annual ceremony where children born within the year were made to touch the skin of a serpent suspended from a tree in the public square.@@9

We have next to notice the very general belief that the house­hold snake was an agreeable guest, if not a guardian spirit.. In Sweden, even in the 16th century, such snakes were virtually household gods and to hurt them was a deadly sin. Among the old Prussians they were invited to share an annual sacrificial

meal, and their refusal was a bad sign.@@10 Mahomet, it is said, declared that the house-dwelling snakes were a kind of *jinn,* and the heathen Arabs invariably regarded them as alike malevolent or benevolent demoniacal beings.@@11 Among the Romans every place had its *genius* equally in the form of a serpent—cf. the doubt of Aeneas (Verg. *Aen.* v. 84 sqq.)—and household snakes were lodged and fed in vast numbers. They were the guardian- spirits of men and families, and stories are told of the way in which human life depended upon the safety of the reptile.@@12 As a chthonic animal the serpent has often been regarded as an embodiment of the soul of the dead. Grimm’s story of king Gunthram tells how, while he slept, his soul in serpent-form visited a mountain full of gold (Paulus Diac. iii. 34), and Porphyry relates that a snake crawled from beneath the bed of Plotinus at the moment of the philosopher’s death (cf. the Indian story, Oldham, 79). In Bali near Java, where the Nāga-cult flourishes, a serpent is carried at the funeral ceremonies of the Kshatrîya caste and burned with the corpse. Among many African tribes the house-haunting serpents are the dead, who are therefore treated with respect and often fed with milk.@@13 But it does not appear that every venerated serpent was an incarnation or that every incarnation was reverenced or even tolerated. Among the Nāyars of Malabar, the family-serpent is capable of almost unlimited powers for good or evil; it is part of the household property, but does not seem to be connected with ancestral cults.@@14

In Greece, however, “ the dead man became a chthonic *daemon,* potent for good or evil; his natural symbol as such, often figured on tombs, was the snake.”@@15 “ The men of old time,’’ as Plutarch observed, “ associated the snake most of all beasts with heroes,” and in Photius the term “ speckled hero ’’ thus finds an explanation.

At the battle of Salamis the serpent which appeared among the ships was taken to be the hero Cychreus.@@l6 These heroes might become objects of cult and local divinities of healing; people would pass their tombs in awe, or resort thither for divination or for taking oaths.@@17 In Egypt not only are there serpents of the houses, but each quarter in Cairo had a serpent-guardian (Lane). This is said also of the villages and districts of Armenia, and Buddhist legends affirm it for India.@@18 The Satī (Suttee) wife immolated to accompany her deceased husband often became the guardian of the village, and on the Satï shrine a snake may be represented in the act of rising out of the masonry.@@19 Athene (“ the Athenian one ”) was primarily the guardian spirit of Athens, and at the Erechtheum her sacred serpent (apparently known to the 3rd century a.p.), was fed monthly with honey- cakes; when, during the Persian War, it left the food untouched it was taken as a sign that the protectors had forsaken the city.@@20 At Lebadeia in the shrine of Trophonios (to whom serpents were sacred) offerings of honey cakes were made to an oracular serpent. At Delphi a virgin superintended a similar oracle; and in the sacred grove of Apollo at Epirus a nude virgin-attendant brought

@@@1 Fergusson, 65; Crooke ii. 124; Oldham, 37, 85 sqq., 200 sqq.; Maclennan, p. 526 seq.

@@@2 Murison, p. 130 n. 43; Maclennan, 527.

@@@3 Possibly the Kenite and allied families; cf. the conjecture associating Moses and the Levites with a serpent-clan (E. Meyer and B. Luther, *Die Israeliten,* 116, 426 sqq.). It is curious that Ther- muthis, the traditional name of the princess who adopted Moses (Josephus, *Ant.* ii. 9. 5), is also the name of a serpent-deity (Aelian, *De anim.* x. 31 ; see Wiedemann on Herod. ii. 74 seq.).

@@@4 Examples in Frazer, *Golden Bough,* i. 456 sqq.; N. W. Thomas, *Encyc. of Rel. and Ethics,* i. 526, col. 1.

@@@5 Frazer, citing W. Bartram, *Travels through N. and S. Carolina* (London, 1792), 258 sqq.

@@@6 See Fergusson, 259; Winternitz, 257; Crooke ii. 151 seq.

@@@7 The Omar ibn 'Isa of the Hadhramaut had the same gift (so Makrīzī); cf. also Lane’s account of the “ Saadeeyeh ” sect who charm away serpents from houses *(Modern Egyptians).*

@@@8 Strabo xiii. 1. 14. Serpents which would only attack those who were not natives were to be found on the banks of the Euphrates and also at Tiryns *(Mir. Ausc.* 149 seq. ; Pliny viii. 59. 84). In Sicily also, where Pliny (xxxvii. 10. 54) records some mystery about harmless scorpions, old John Maundeville in his travels (chap. v.) found a belief in snakes which were harmful only to illegitimate children.

@@@9 Frazer, *Golden Bough,* ii. 370 seq.; *Τotemism and Exog.* i. 20. See also Crooke ii. 124, 142, 151 seq. (descent from a serpent involves immunity from its bite, and a serpent is supposed to identify the rightful heirs of a kingdom).

@@@10 See also B. Deane, *Serpent Worship,* 245 seq., Fergusson, 23; J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (1888), iv. 1490 sqq.; Tylor ii. 240.

@@@11 T. Nöldeke (on serpent-beliefs in Arabia), *Zeit.f. Völkerpsychol.* i. 412 sqq. (1860).

@@@12 So, in the stories of Tiberius and D. Laelius; Frazer, *Adonis,* 74 n. 2 (with references) ; cf. Fergusson, 19.

@@@13 Frazer, *Adonis,* 73 seq.; for India, see Winternitz, 258.

@@@14 F. Fawcett, *Madras Bulletin,* iii. 279 (1901).

*@@@15 Companion to Greek Studies,* ed. L. Whibley (1905), p. 502 and

fig. 97. The libations of milk which the Greeks poured upon graves were possibly for these embodiments of the dead.

@@@16 Pausanias, i. 36, 1 ; see Rohde, *Psyche,* 2nd ed., i. 196.

@@@17 See especially, on the Greek hero as a snake, Miss Jane E. Harrison, *Journ. of Hell. Studies,* xix. (1889), 204 sqq.; *Proleg. to Study of Greek Religion* (1903), 326 sqq.

@@@18Abeghian, *Armen.* *Volksglaube,* 74 sqq. ; Crooke ii. 127.

@@@19 Crooke i. 187 seq. To these local examples may be added the lord (or lady) of life, a serpent-deity of the Assyrian city Dēr (Winckler and Zimmern, *Keilinschrift. u. d. alte Test.* 505; for other evidence, see Index, *s.v.* “ Schlange ”).

@@@20 Herod. viii. 41. The serpent was probably regarded as the em­bodiment of the king Erechtheus; see Frazer, *Adonis* 75; A. Frickenhaus, *Athen. Mitt,* xxxiii. (1908), 171-176.