men waved great red snakes over their beads as they marched in procession. One may even recall the cult of Dahomey. More- over, we find at Madagascar the procession of the god of fertility and healing, the patron of serpents who are the ministers of his vengeance (Frazer, *Paus.* v. 66 seq.). In a Bengal festival the men march entwined with serpents, while the chief man has a rock-boa or python round his neck and is carried or rides on a buffalo (Fergusson, 259). Again, among the Moquis of America, where the snake-clan claim descent from a woman who gave birth to snakes, the reptiles are freely handled at the “ snake dances ” which are performed partly to secure the fertility **of** the soil.@@1

These last examples are important because they illustrate the immense difficulty of determining the true significance of any isolated piece of evidence. It cannot be assumed that isolated features which find a parallel in more completely known cults presuppose such cults; yet it may be inferred that they point to earlier, more perfect structures, to rites which perhaps linger only as a memory, and to conceptions and beliefs which have been elevated or modified by other religions. Hence also the impossibility of treating the present subject schematic­ally. Apart from the more obvious characteristics of the serpent likely to impress all observant minds (§ 1), its essentially *chthonic* character shows itself markedly when it is associated with the treasures and healing herbs of the earth, the produce of the soil, the source of springs—and thence of all water—and the dust unto which all men return.@@2 Although much evidence connects the serpent with *the dead,* especially as a guardian-spirit over the living, any discussion of this aspect of the subject is bound up with the varying beliefs regarding ancestors and death. Among the Arunta of Central Australia, the ghosts of the dead haunt certain localities, and, entering the bodies of passing women, are constantly rein- carnated; the Black-snake clan of the Warramunga tribe embodies the spirits which the original ancestor had deposited by a certain creek.@@3 On the other hand, the “ rattlesnake ” men of the Moqui are merely transformations and expect to return at death to their original reptile form (Maclennan, 357). It is another stage when only the more conspicuous mortals assume serpent guise, and the deification of heroes involves yet another course of ideas. Here it is evident that some of the attributes of prominent serpent-gods will be purely secondary. Moreover, it is a human weakness to mani­pulate one’s ancestry, and the common claim to be descended from the local godling is not to be confused with the Arunta type of

reincarnation.@@4

Again, in the part taken by *women* in serpent-lore other problems of primitive society and religion intermingle. For example, when one considers how often milk is used in the tending and propitiation of venerated snakes, it is noteworthy that in Roman cult the truly rustic deities are offered milk (Fowler), and it is no less singular that many of the old goddesses of Greece have serpent attributes (Harrison).@@5 Now anthropological research has vividly shown that woman, naturally fitted (as it seemed) to understand the mysteries of increase, was assigned a prominent part in rites for the furtherance of *growth and fertility.* And the same thread of ideas seems to recur in the “ wives ” of the python Dañh-gbi (§ 12), the Shakti cere­monies in India for the increase of the divine energy of nature (Fergusson, 258 seq.), and, to a certain extent, in the providing of

deities or demons of serpent-type with consorts.@@6 There is every­where a danger of misunderstanding isolated evidence, of wrongly classifying different motives, and of overlooking necessary links in the chain of argument. There is an obvious development from the serpent *qua* reptile to the deity or the devil, and that the original theriomorphic form is not at once forgotten can be seen in Zeus Meilichios, Aesculapius Amynos, in the Cretan snake-goddesses, or in the Buddhist topes illustrated by Fergusson. But naturally there are other developments to be noticed when originally distinct attributes are combined, when, for example, Greek goddesses take the forms of birds as well as of snakes (Harrison, 322), or when the Aztec snake-deity Huitzilcpochtli, like the Votan of the Mayas, has feathers (Maclennan, 384).@@7

Thus it will be perceived that the subject of this article involves at every turn problems of the history of thought (cf. the similar difficulties in the discussion of Tree-worship). There is ample material for purely comparative purposes and for an estimate both of the general fundamental ideas and of the artificially-developed secondary speculations; but for any scientific research it is necessary to observe the social, religious and historical conditions of the provenance and period of the evidence, and for this the material is often insufficient. The references in this article furnish fuller information and are usually made to works suitable for pursuing the subject more thoroughly. One may also consult the English and foreign journals devoted to folklore, comparative religion or anthropology (especially the volumes of *Folklore,* Index, *s.v.* “ Snakes ”), and the articles in this *Encyclopaedia* on the various departments of primitive religion. In general, works which endea­vour to reduce the evidence for this fascinating subject to clear- cut systems are more useful for the data they provide than for their conclusions, and it is not unnecessary to warn readers against the unscientific studies of “ ophiolatry ” and especially against “ that portentous nonsense called the 'arkite symbolism’ (see E. B. Tylor’s remarks, *Primitive Culture,* 4th ed., ii. 239).

(S. A. C.)

**SERPUKHOV, a** town of Russia, in the government of Moscow, 62 m. by rail S. of the city of Moscow. The population in 1884 was 22,420, and 24,456 in 1897. Built on high cliffs on both banks of the river Nara, 3 m. above its confluence with the Oka, Serpukhov is an important manufacturing and commercial town. Its manufactories produce cotton and woollen stuffs, paper, leather, chemicals and candles. Petty trades are much developed in the neighbourhood—textile fabrics, furniture, and earthenware and porcelain. The manufactured goods of Serpukhov are sent— mostly by rail—to the fairs of Nizhniy-Novgorod and the Ukraine, while large amounts of grain, hemp and timber, brought from the east down the Oka, are discharged at Serpukhov and sent on to Moscow and St Petersburg. The cathedral (1380) was rebuilt in the 18th century; the old fortress has almost entirely disappeared.

Serpukhov is one of the oldest towns of the principality of Moscow; in 1328 it was a nearly independent principality under the protectorate of Moscow. Its fortress protected Moscow on the south and was often attacked by the Tatars; the Mongol prince Toktamish plundered it in 1382, and the Lithuanians in 1410. In 1556 the town was strongly fortified, so that fifteen years later it was able to resist the Mongols. Its commercial importance dates from the 18th century.

**SERRANO Y DOMINGUEZ, FRANCISCO,** Duke de la Torre and Count of Sλn Antonio (1810-1885), Spanish marshal and statesman, was born in the island of Leon at Cadiz on the 17th of December 1810. His father was a general officer and a Liberal. Serrano began his studies at Vergara in the Basque provinces, became a cadet in 1822, cornet in 1833 in the lancers of Sagunto, passed into the carabineers in 1829, and when the Carlist agitation began in 1833 he exchanged into the cuirassiers. He formed part of the escort which accompanied Don Carlos, the first pretender and brother of Ferdinand VII., to the frontier of Portugal. As

@@@1 J. G. Bourke, *Snake-Dance of the Moquis* (1884), p. 180 seq.; see Frazer, *Totem, and Exog.* iii. 229 sqq.

@@@2 Here one will note the prevalence of the ideas of “ mother earth,” and also the association in higher religions of chthonic powers with the serpent, so, *e.g.* the winds (viz. Boreas in Greece, cf. Harrison, *Prol.* 68, 181), subterranean gods (for Assyria, cf. *Zeit.f. Assyr.* [1894] p. 116, and for the Finns, Fergusson, p. 25 seq.). For the serpent (sometimes with anthropomorphic hints) in the *Tabellae devotionis,* see R. Wünsch, *Sethianische Verfiuchungstafeln* (Leipzig, 1898), 100 sqq., and for a Carthaginian triad of the under world (cf. the threefold Hecate) including *h-w-t* (cf. *bawwah,* Eve, “ serpent ”), see G. A. Cooke, *N. Semit. Inscr.* (1903), p. 135.

@@@3 Spencer and Gillen, *N. Tribes of Central Australia,* 162, 330 seq. (Frazer, *Adonis,* p. 80); A. Lang, *Origins of Religion* (1890), p. 124.

@@@4 There appears to be a fundamental inclination towards ideas of rebirth and reincarnation (see F. B. Jevons, *Introd. to Study of Comp. Religion,* 1908, pp. 50 sqq., 59 sqq.) ; it would seem to be wrapped up in the feeling of the essential "one-ness ” of the group (including its deity), and involves the belief that such corporate bodies never die (cf. even the Roman conception of the family, Maine, *op. cit.* 197 sqq.).

@@@5 W. W. Fowler, *Roman Festivals,* 103-105; Harrison, *Journ. Hell. Stud.* xix. 221. For the use of milk, cf. Frazer, *Adonis,* 74 (with the suggestion that it is because milk is the food of babes), Crooke ii. 130, and F. Fawcett, *Madras Gov. Bull.* (1900), iii. 1, 58 (a South-Indian festival on the fifth of Srävana, when the serpent- deity is *bathed* in milk).

@@@6 Here the transition from mother-right to paternity should probably be taken into consideration. For the view that the serpent as a *genius* or *daemon* may be replaced by the human (and female) victim, who thus becomes in time the guardian (cf. § 10), see J. C. Lawson, *op. cit.* pp. 271 sqq.

@@@7 One may note the Indian local saint Gûga, who punishes by snake-bite and can cure his worshippers (similarly the Egyptian Mert-seger, the serpent-patroness of the Theban necropolis and the serpent, the saviour-god of the Phrygian Hierapolis); he is repre­sented on horseback descending to the infernal regions; over him two snakes meet, one being coiled round the long staff which he holds in his hands (Crooke i. 212 seq.). But how many different factors may not have influenced the representation!