

peal are, when perceived, endowed by primitive men, as well as by animals, with subjective life, and the power of acting with deliberate purpose. This, which he considers the first form of myth, is suggested only by phenomena actually present. The next form of myth, which is the first stage of fetish, and confined to man, is, when those objects retain their influence over the mind even when they are absent, as beings that inspire hope or fear and to which worship may be paid. It is, in fact, "the universal and primitive sense of myth in nature which man alone is capable of applying permanently to some given phenomenon, such as wind, rain and the like, or lakes, volcanoes and rocks, and these remain fixed in the mind, as powers of good or evil." The second stage of fetichism, which is the third form in which myth develops itself is, according to the same author, "the veneration of objects, animals, plants and the like, in which an extrinsic power is supposed to be incarnated." Signor Vignoli maintains that "many ages elapsed before man attained to the second stage of fetichism, since it was necessarily preceded by a further and reflex elaboration of myth, namely, the genesis of a belief in spirits." Next comes the polytheistic form, to which two classes of people attain—those who classify and ultimately reduce fetiches into a more general conception, and those whose conception takes an anthropomorphic form. When the latter stage has been reached, a new field is opened, through which there is a gradual transition to the monotheistic idea. The methodical process by which that goal is attained—a process characteristic of human thought—is sometimes discerned in an inchoate and imperfect form among the wilder tribes of mankind, such as the Indians of North and Central America and several Asiatic nations. In such cases, the old and debased myths still maintained their ground, and there are examples of such persistence even in Europe itself; "for, while in one direction a capacity for classification leads to a purer monotheistic conception, and even to rational science, the great majority of the common people, and even of those of higher culture, still hold many ideas which are polytheistic and anthropomorphic, and some which really belong to the debased stage of fetichism and vulgar superstition." Finally, "science is the *de-personification* of myth, arriving at a rational idea of that which was originally a fantastic type, by divesting it of its wrappings and symbols." But in this case, too, the process is gradual, science also having its myth; for when natural force and phenomena are transformed from anthropomorphic beings into laws or general principles, these latter virtually become "entities endowed with eternal and independent existence." But though "science still nourishes myths within its pale," it is "unconsciously, and in their most rational form."

I have dwelt thus long on Signor Vignoli's theory because it has, by implication, an obvious bearing on the origin of poetry among rude tribes of men as well as on its cultivation by more advanced races. The subject is, indeed, treated by him at some length when he deals with special myths, such as that of Prometheus, and with a hymn in the Rig-Veda, which he quotes, as having a tendency at once mythical and scientific. In the chapter on "Dreams and Illusions," he especially discusses the disposition among barbarous races to make dance and pantomime and song their aids in the expression of intense feeling. "The arts also," he writes, "like other human products, follow the general evolution of myth in their historic course. . . . The arts of singing and of instrumental

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<sup>1</sup> Myth and Science, ch. vii.