

allowed to give away his only son, his own death would leave no representative of the family to perform the private family-rites. The consequence would be that he would be left to languish in *put* or hell. This might seem a personal matter, as to which the father ought to be allowed to choose for himself. If he chose *put* with his eyes open, why should anyone interfere? But unfortunately, he would not be the only one to suffer. The cessation of the family-rites would prevent the flow of promotion among previous generations of the dead. If a man duly performs the rites his dead father is freed from *put*, his grandfather becomes immortal, and his great-grand father is carried up to the solar system. If the rites are not performed the foundations of this posthumous happiness are dashed away, and the legitimate expectations of deserving ancestors are rudely disappointed. All this, except perhaps the rise to the solar system, would have sounded quite reasonable and natural to a Roman in the early days of the city. All the Aryan peoples, and many non-Aryan peoples, too, start with attaching profound importance to perpetuating the family. Ancestor-worship is the most universal of early religions. It appeals to human nature, for the benefits are not all on one side. The man who treats his ancestors well will not be overlooked by them, and many a stroke of apparent luck may be due to their pious care.² We find this form of faith among peoples extremely remote from each other in space and time; among modern Hindus, ancient Greeks and Romans, Chinese, Japanese and Arabs,³ without attempting to enumerate them all. So deeply rooted are

² See article by Sir W. C. Petheram in L.Q.R., 1898, at p. 397.

³ Post, Grundriss der Ethnologischen Jurisprudenz, v. I., p. 130.