

Mr. F. E. Sawyer, in his "Sussex Folk-Lore and Superstitions," mentions a Sussex girl admitted to one of Dr. Barnardo's Village Homes who ("Night and Day," 1881) says she had no knowledge of God; "the only thing she had any reverence for was the moon." She said: "You mustn't point at the moon like that, and you mustn't talk about it." A clergyman of Shrewsbury says he was instructed in childhood that it is wicked to point the finger at the moon! In Germany it is held wicked to point at the stars, "because they are angels' eyes." Mrs. Latham says that in West Sussex they bow or curtsy to the new or lady moon, as she is styled, to deprecate bad luck. The Rev. Mr. Parish says little girls curtsy three times to the new moon, and adds that it would be useless to remonstrate with his churchwarden for trying to catch sight of the new moon over his left shoulder, "especially as he might detect me in turning over my money three times at the same moment." Here I must pause and explain. In old symbology the left side is feminine, the right masculine. To look over the left shoulder has a totally different significance from looking over the right, being the proper way to regard a lady. Turning money in the pocket comes simply from the idea that the increase of the moon causes other things to increase, for which spitting on them is also efficacious.

At the first appearance of the first new moon of the year Sussex girls go out, and, looking on the moon, repeat these lines:—

All hail to thee, Moon, all hail to thee!
I pray thee, good Moon, reveal to me
This night who my lover or husband will be.

In many parts there is a practice of divination by counting the reflections of the moon in the water. This is to tell when the lover, husband or baby will come. Somerset folk, I believe, are called "moon-rakers" from this practice. In days gone by, it was a common practice among peasants to say, at full moon, "It is a fine moon, God help her."

An astronomer showed some Sussex laborers the moon through his telescope. One, being asked his opinion, replied: "Well, sir, it be a gashly sight. Tester, he said so, when he see it; and he wur quite right; for you know, sir, that he haint never been to say well since."^{*}

HEAVEN AND HELL.

I SENT my soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell;
And by-and-by my soul returned to me,
And answered: "I myself am heaven and hell.

"Heaven, but the vision of fulfilled desire,
And hell, the shadow of a soul on fire,
Cast on the darkness, into which ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon retire."

— Omar Khayyam.

^{*} Reprinted from London FREETHINKER.