

THE COCK AS A SACRED BIRD IN ANCIENT IRAN.*

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Among the ancients, those animals and birds that were most useful to men were highly esteemed and held well nigh sacred. The cock was one of such birds. On account of its being greatly useful as the harbinger of morn, it was held sacred by many ancient nations. The ancient Greeks and other nations considered it to be a bird sacred to the Sun. Its relation to the Sun, as the harbinger of morn, is not lost sight of, even by writers of our times. His crowing is, as it were, according to Shakespeare, a salutation to the morn—

“ The early village cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn.”

(Ratcliff to King Richard—*Richard III.*, Act V., Sc. 3.)

I.

Cock in Iranian Literature.

Persia, or ancient Iran, was the home of the cock. It is said on the authority of Athæneus (XIV., c. 20) that cocks were taken to Europe from Persia.¹ It is owing to this fact that the Greek comedians, and among them Aristophanes (B. C. 448-380), called the cock the Persian bird or the Median bird.² It is said to have been taken to Egypt from Asia.³

* Journal, Vol. V., No. 6, pp. 345-62.

¹ Hyde's *Historia Religionis, Veterum Persarum*, 2nd Edition, p. 412.

Pictet, *Les Origines Indo-Europeennes*, 2nd Edition, Vol. I., p. 490.

Dabistân by Shea and Troyer, Vol. I., p. 324, n. 1.

Geiger, *Civilization of the Eastern Iranians*, Vol. I., p. 189. Translated by Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana.

² *The Athenæum*, 14th October 1899, No. 3755, p. 525, article by Sir G. Birdwood. Geiger, *Civilization of the Eastern Iranians*, Vol. I., p. 189.

³ “Cocks and hens, as well as horses, appear to have come originally from Asia.”—*A Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptians*, by Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, Vol. I., p. 234.

The cow, the dog, and the cock were the three animals that were most esteemed among the ancient Persians for their great usefulness to men. As Anquetil du Perron says: "Ces trois animaux (le bœuf, le chien et le coq) sont les plus nécessaires au Parse; ils fournissent même à tous ses besoins; le bœuf sert au labourage, aux charrois; on tire le lait de la vache; le chien garde le jour les troupeaux, la nuit la maison; . . . au hant du coq commencent les prières, les travaux de la campagne et les autres occupations des hommes."¹

The cock is spoken of in the Vendidad as *parô-darsh*, i. e., the fore-seer (from *𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬭 parô*, i. e., fore or beforehand and *dareç* *𐬔𐬀𐬭𐬀* *dareç* to see). It is so called because it foresees the rising of the sun, the coming of the morn.

The 18th Chapter of the Vendidad (XVIII. 14 to 16) explains why it was considered useful and sacred. Zoroaster asks: " Who is it that follows the dictates of Sraosha ? " Ahura Mazda replies that it is the cock, which, on the appearance of the dawn, crows as follows: " O men ! arise. Praise the best piety. Extirpate the demons. The long-handed Bushyânst (i. e., the demon of idleness who lulls men to sleep with unfolded hands) comes down upon you. He lulls to sleep again, the whole material world when it awakes at dawn. O men ! it does not behove you to sleep long."

This passage then shows, that the cock was esteemed by the ancient Persians, because it helped men to get up early in the morning and to go to their work. The Vendidad then proceeds to say that men, on rising at the dawn of day, at the crowing of the cock, should act according to the three precepts—good thoughts, good words, and good deeds,—and should shun three things—evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions. It then says, that next to the cock, it is the family

¹ Zend Avesta, Tome II, p. 602.

hearth, it is the fire of the house, that shouts to the inmates of the house, and asks them to change their night dress, to wash their hands and to kindle the fire. Thus, the voice of the cock and that of the fire of the house, ask the inmates of the house to get up early, to look sharp, to throw off unduly long sleep, to cast off the demon of idleness and to be busy with their work. It is then further said, that, of any two persons, the one who first hears the voice of the cock and gets up early and attends to the above dictates of following the path of truth, shall first go to paradise. All these statements show, that the cock was held sacred, because it enabled one to follow, as it were, the old adage—

“Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

The cock being so useful and sacred a bird, it is further said in the *Vendidâd*, that the gift of a cock and a hen to a pious man is worth the gift of a large palatial building, because it helps the pious man to be vigilant and sharp in his work of general usefulness and piety.¹ Again, the cock being so useful a bird, the work of domesticating a cock and feeding it well, is considered a good meritorious act.² The *Hadôkht Nashk*³ says, that there is, as it were, a constant fight between the cock on the one hand, and *Bushyânst*, the demon of idleness, on the other. The demon of idleness says to men: “O men! sleep on, sinful men! sleep on.” On the other hand, the cock, like the family fire, asks men to wake up and go to their work. In the *Beharâm Yasht*, *Beharâm* the angel presiding over victory, is represented as carrying his help in the form of a bird. That bird is supposed by some, and among them, by Anquetil, to be the cock. It means, then, that a man praying for victory and success in his work, must attend to the crowing of the cock, *i.e.*, get up at the early dawn and be diligent and hard-working. If he would do that, victory or success would follow.

¹ *Vend.*, XVIII., 28.

² *Ibid.*, 29.

³ *Yasht*, XXII, 41-42.

From the Avestâ we learn then, that the only demon that is said to be opposed and baffled by the cock, is Bushyânst, the demon of idleness. But as idleness leads to many other faults and evils, *e. g.*, uncleanness, penury, dishonesty, untruthfulness, flattery, theft, &c., the latter bocks widen the sphere in general terms, and say, that the presence of the cock in a house and its crowing lead to the expulsion and extirpation of many demons or vices.

The Bundeshesh¹ (Ch. XIX. 33) says, that the cock is created by God to oppose all the demons, and that the dog is a co-worker with the cock in helping the good work of Sraosha, whose duty as an angel is to protect the world, both at day and night, from all evil influences.

(2) מלך בן שבע שנים ויום אחד נולד לו בן
שמואל בן שבע שנים ויום אחד נולד לו בן
שמואל בן שבע שנים ויום אחד נולד לו בן

The Pahlavi Dinkard,⁵ in recapitulating the contents of the Vendidad, says, that to domesticate a cock and to feed it, is a meritorious action.

The Shâyast lâ Shâyast refers to a superstition of old Irân, where people, on hearing a hen make a noise like the crowing of a cock, killed it, thinking that it was an ill omen. The book says that the people must not consider it an ill omen, and must not kill the hen, which simply makes that noise to help the cock in its work of crowing, in order to make men vigilant against the overpowering effect of evil influences. Under such circumstances, it advises people to keep two cocks, so that when one does not crow, the other may crow and

¹ *S. B. E.*, Vol. V., West's *Pahl. Texts*, Part I, p. 73.

² Justi's *Bundehesh*, p. 48, ll. 14-17.

³ *S. B. E.*, Vol. XXXVII, West's *Pahl. Texts*, Part IV, p. 163.

that it must not be taken as a bad omen, but as an extraordinary warning to be vigilant and to look sharp against evil influences. It says that perhaps the cock, by its extraordinary power of seeing things, found some imminent calamity before them, and so, it saw the necessity of crowing at odd and extraordinary times also.¹

Mirkhond² refers to the old Iranian belief in the evil omens, predicted by the cock, crowing at an unusual hour. We will quote him at length, as he also refers to the esteem in which the bird was held.

“Kaiomars . . . set out, from the royal residence of Mount Damávend, towards the east. When he had advanced some way, his auspicious sight fell on a white cock followed by a hen: he also observed this cock engaged in combat with a serpent; so that whenever the latter attempted to seize the hen, the cock with the greatest intrepidity made a vigorous attack and put it to flight. Kaiomars was so pleased with the bearing of the cock and his mode of attack, that he slew the serpent, and threw some corn to the fowl; on which, applying his beak to the grain, he began to invite his mate, neither did he swallow a single grain until she had begun to eat. This generosity delighted Kaiomars, who said: ‘This bird unites liberality with bravery; his nature in that respect is conformable to man’s. I have set out to encounter my enemies, and in the very commencement of the expedition have slain a serpent, which is the enemy of the human race: this is, therefore, a most favourable omen.’ On this account, when he had terminated this enterprise, he commanded his sons to maintain and preserve the cock with all possible attention. It is said that no Demon can enter a house in which there is a cock; and, above all, should this bird come to the residence of a Demon, and move his tongue to chant the praises of the glorious and

¹ Chap. XXXII, S. B. E., Vol. XXIV, p. 293, West.

² The History of the Early Kings of Persia, translated from Mirkhond, by David Shea, pp. 55-57.

exalted Creator, that instant the evil spirit takes to flight : The reason why persons draw an evil omen from the unseasonable crowing of the cock, and at the same time put him to death, is this : that when Kaiomars was seized with a fatal illness, at the time of the evening service, this bird crowed aloud ; and immediately after, this orthodox monarch passed away to the world of eternity.¹ ”

The Dabistân also refers to the Sad-dar and repeats a part of its contents to the above effect.

From all these references to the cock in the ancient Irânian literature, what we gather is this : that being a useful bird that helped men to be vigilant and industrious, it was held to be, as it were, sacred. As Dr. Geiger says, “ Watchfulness and early rising are reputed a great virtue by the Mazda-worshippers. In it they were aided by the cock, which, at early dawn, awakens sleepers by his crowing. For this reason, he is so highly praised and even held sacred in the Avesta.² ”

Having treated of the references to the cock, as an important and sacred bird, in the Avesta and Pahlavi literature, we would now speak of some of the Persian customs and notions connected with the idea of holding the cock to be a sacred bird.

II.

Cock in Iranian Custom.

According to Thomas, the side altar on some of the Parthian coins “ is surmounted by a Cock ”.³ This illustrates, what we said

¹ Compare what Mirkhond says of Kaiomars's view about the bravery, &c., of the cock, with Thomson's words—

“ The careful hen

Calls all her chirping family around,

Fed and defended by the fearless cock ;

Whose breast with ardor flames, as on he walks

Graceful, and crows defiance.”—

Thomson's Seasons. Spring, ll. 772-776.

² Civilization of the Eastern Irânians, translated by Dastur Darab P. Sanjana, Vol. I, p. 189.

³ Early Sasanian Inscriptions seals and coins, by Edward Thomas, p. 131.

above, that in the Vendidad, it is both the family hearth and the house-cock that call upon the inmates of the house to awake and fall to their work.

According to Prof. Vâmbéry (Sketches of Central Asia), in Bokhara, even now, a cock is offered on the Noruz by the fire-worshippers. "Siaush is stated to have been the founder of the fortress, where he was slain in a public square, before the Gate Guriun, by his own father-in-law. This place was constantly held in honour by the fire-worshippers, and every one took care to offer a cock there on Noruz (New Year's Day) before the set of sun. This commemorative festival was celebrated everywhere. Troubadours have long sung of it in their lays, though the story relates to facts that happened three thousand years ago."¹

The orthodox Zoroastrians, even now, do not eat a cock. They may eat a very young one that may not have commenced crowing, but once it has commenced crowing, they do not kill or eat it. They say, that the Zoroastrians of Persia, when asked to eat a cock by the doctors, who at times prescribe it, plant several fruit-bearing plants known as *sanjan* as an act of atonement. When a cock dies, they bury it in a clean place near a *sanjan* tree. Some of the Parsees of India, even now, bury a cock with a sacred shirt put round it.

They say that the early Persians, when they went to war, carried a cock with them as a palladium.²

They say that it was king Tehmuras who first taught a cock to crow. Tehmuras (the Takhma-urupa of the Avesta) was known as "Dev-band," i.e., the captivator of the Devas, or evil persons and influences. So one can understand, why the

¹ Sketches of Central Asia, by Arminius Vâmbéry, p. 259, ch. XV, "on the Ancient History of Bokhârâ."

² "Wherever the ancient Persians marched, the red-plumed cock marched on before as their proud palladium."—*The Athenæum* of 14th October 1899, No. 3755, p. 525.

name of such a king, who was known to have overpowered evil persons and influences, should have been connected with the cock, which is reported by the Irânian literature to be one of the means of overpowering evil influences.

The cock was held as a symbol of resurrection. They say it is so held by the Freemasons, among whom the cock is a jewel of the Order known as the Knight Templars. The cock is connected with the idea of resurrection among the Mahomedans also.¹ The following lines of Firdousi² show, that, even at his time, the cock was held as a symbol of resurrection :—

“ Suddenly flew o’er my head the cock of the celestial sphere,
Even as Azrâil, Soul-seizer, hovers o’er the sick man’s brow ;
In mine ears the thousand echoes rang of his forboding cry,
As i’ the Reckoning Day when spring to life again the dead below.”

The cock in the Irânian story of the three-headed Zohâk and Feridun also, is a symbol of resurrection. According to that story, every time the cock crows, the chain, by which Zohak is tied and which he thins by constantly licking it, is restored to its former condition. His three heads correspond to the three heads of Satan in Dante’s *Inferno*, where “They have been taken as a symbol of a Trinity of Evil—the antithesis of the divine attributes of Power, Wisdom and Charity (as in Canto III 4-6)—and, therefore, of impotence, ignorance and hatred, or pride, envy and impiety.”

We have spoken at some length about the cock in Irânian literature and in Irânian customs. We see from these, that the cock was esteemed as a useful bird among the Parsees from a very early date. So, the following statement of Ovington, in his *Book of Travels*, that the Parsees began to esteem the cock from the time of their coming to India is not correct. “The tradition is that coming from Persia in a tempest, at the time that Mahomet and his followers gave laws to the Persians

¹ Anquetil du Perron. *Zend Avestâ*, Tome II, p. 602, n. 1.

² *National Review*, Vol. XIV, 1889-90, p. 807. Article on Firdousi’s *Lyrical Poetry* by C. J. Pickering.

(which they were unwilling to submit to) they were driven to that distress that they almost despaired of life, till hearing a cock crow and espying fire at hand, they recovered their hopes of safety and gained a speedy arrival. The cock, therefore, is as much esteemed by them as the crow is by the Bannians, of the lives of both of which they are the zealous patrons and protectors."¹

III.

Cock as a sacred bird among different nations.

We will now say a few words about the views held by other nations on the sacredness of the bird as a harbinger of the morn.

Among the Greeks also the cock was held to be a sacred bird. According to Pausanias, "the cock is sacred to the sun and heralds his rising."² The Greek word for cock was *Alector*. Its derivation is supposed to be *a* (privative) and *electron* a bed. Hence it was supposed to mean 'a sleepless guardian.' But some³ derive this word 'alectryon', as well as the word *Haleyon*,⁴ the Greek name of the bird known as the King-fisher, from *𐎧𐎠𐎫𐎡𐎹* *halká*, a Pahlavi word for the cock.⁵ Others derive it from *Alec* (*Helos*) the sun. The last two derivations lead to show that the cock was held in Greece, in the same esteem as that in which it was held in ancient Persia, and that it was a bird sacred to the sun.

According to Bryant,⁶ "the ancients divided the night into different watches; the last of which was called cockcrow: and in consequence of this they kept a cock in their *Tirat*, or

¹ A Voyage to Surta in the Year 1689, by J. Ovington.

² Pausanias's Description of Greece, translated by Frazer, Vol. I, p. 277, Bk. V., ch. XXV, 5, "Achaean Offerings."

³ *Athenæum* of 14th October 1899.

⁴ The bird, from which comes the derivation of our word *Haleyon* (days). Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Bk. XI, Fable VII, Riley's Translation, pp. 399 to 411.

⁵ Bundelesh, S. B. E., Vol. V, West Pahl. Texts, chap. XIX, 33.

⁶ A New System; or, An Analysis of Ancient Mythology, by Jacob Bryant, 3rd Edition, Vol. II., pp. 113-114.

Towers, to give notice of the dawn. Hence this bird was sacred to the sun, and named Alector, which seems to be a compound out of the titles of that deity and of the tower set apart for his service: for all these towers were temples. Those styled Tritonian were oracular."

The cock predicted the coming of the morn. So the ancient Greeks took their predictions from the cock. The art of taking these predictions was known among them as Alectryomancy from 'alector' the Greek name of the cock. "The letters of the alphabet were traced on the ground, and a grain of corn laid on each; a cock was then permitted to pick up the grains, and the letters under the grains selected, being formed into words, were supposed to foretell the event desired."¹ It is for this fact, *viz.*, that of the Greeks taking their prediction from the cock, that Pliny says of these birds that "they rule over great rulers," and that they "command those great commanders of all nations." Not only that, but he calls them astronomers. The same fact, *viz.*, their extreme usefulness to men, which, according to the *Vendidad*, endeared these birds to the ancient Iranians, endeared them, according to Pliny, to the ancient Greeks. Pliny says:²

"These birds about our house, which are our sentinels by night, and whom Nature has created to break men of their sleep, to awaken and call them up to their work, have also a sense and understanding of glory. They love to be praised and are proud in their kind. Moreover, they are astronomers, and know the course of the stars. Unto these birds (for their worth and dignity) the purple robe at Rome and all magistrates of State disdain not to give honour. . . . These rule our great rulers every day; and there is not a mighty lord of Rome that dare open or shut the door of his house before he knoweth the good pleasure of these fowls; and that

¹ Webster's Dictionary. The word, "Alectryomancy."

² Pliny, Bk. X, chap. 21. The Natural History of Pliny, translated by Dr. Philamon Holland, Vol. I, p. 279.

which more is, the sovereign magistrate in his majesty of the Roman Empire, with the regal ensigns of rods and axes carried before him, neither setteth forward, nor recoileth back, without direction from these birds : they give order to whole armies to advance forth to battle : they again command them to stay and keep within the camp. These were they that gave the signal, and foretold the issue of all those famous foughten fields, whereby we have achieved all our victories throughout the whole world : and in one word, these birds command those great commanders of all nations upon the earth ; as acceptable to the gods in sacrifice, with their small fibres and filaments, of their inwards, as the greatest and fattest oxen that are killed for sacrifice. Over and besides, their crowing out of order, too soon before their hour, or too late, and namely in the evening, portendeth also and presageth somewhat by itself.”¹

As an illustration of what Pliny says, *viz.*, that the cock was the commander of all commanders, we find the case of Themistocles. It is said, that just as he was going to fight with the Persians, he heard a cock crowing. He took that as a good omen foretelling victory. Thus emboldened, he went to war and won. Some attribute the fondness of the ancient Greeks for cock-fighting to a religious meaning attached to all actions of the cock. “The Greek carried this national sport with him, apparently, and many reasons have been given to endeavour to account for his adoption of it other than the natural taste of man for combative displays. Some have said that, like most of their recreations, it had a religious meaning, connected with Apollo, Mars, Mercury, or Æsculapius ; others a national reference to the good omen Themistocles drew from their crowing as he marched to his victory over Persia.”²

Again, as an illustration of the fondness of the Greeks for cock-fighting, and their attempt to utilize it for good purpose,

¹ We have noted above, a similar belief among the ancient Iranians (*vide* pp. 106-7) about the crowing of a cock at unseasonable hours.

² “The Nineteenth Century” of May 1893, Vol. XXXIII, p. 822.

we may state another story about Themistocles. They say, that before the battle of Salamis, in which the Persians were defeated by the Greeks, he produced two fighting-cocks before the Greek soldiers and exhorted them to be as bold as those birds, and fight as bravely as they did.

In the above quotation about the cock-fighting, we find an illusion made to the fact that cock-fighting had a religious meaning connected with Æsculapius. Among the ancient Greeks, the cock was connected with the name of Æsculapius and the medical profession which he represented. Æsculapius was to the Greeks, what Thritha was to the ancient Irânians. Thritha is spoken of in the Vendidad as the first physician. This Thritha is the same as the Thraëtaona of the other texts of the Avesta, and the same as Feridun of the later Pahlavi books and of Firdousi's Shâh-nâmeh.

The cock, the serpent and the owl were the sacred animals connected with the names of Æsculapius and his medical profession. They were the symbols of vigilance, sagacity and wisdom, respectively, the virtues which a good doctor was supposed to possess for his successful practice. Of these three, the first two were connected with the name of Feridun, the Irânian Æsculapius, though in a different way. We have already seen ⁽¹⁾ how the cock was connected with the story of Feridun and Zohâk. The serpent also was connected with the name of Feridun. Zohâk, whom he defeated and subdued, was called Azidahâka, *i. e.*, the stinging serpent.

It was because the cock was sacred to Æsculapius, the god of health and of recovery from illness, that Socrates, when sentenced to be killed, said to one of his friends, "Creton, we owe a cock to Æsculapius."

Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom among the Greeks, also had the cock for her favourite bird.

On some of the Cretan coins have been found a picture of a cock on one side and that of a dog on the other. This reminds us of the statement in the Bundeshesh, above referred

(1) *Vide* p. 112,

to, that among the Irànians, both the dog and the cock were held sacred, as assisting the good work of protection carried on by Sraosh, the angel protecting men, specially at night.

In the Greek epithalamiums, or marriage songs, the cock was generally mentioned as arousing the married couple from their rest of the first night. The following is such an epithalamium in honour of Helen's marriage, wherein we find such an allusion to the cock :—

“ Sleep on, and love and longing
 Breathe in each other's breast ;
 But fail not, when the morn returns,
 To rouse you from your rest :
 With dawn shall we be stirring,
 When lifting high his fair
 And feathered neck, the earliest bird
 To clarion to the dawn is heard.
 O God of brides and bridals,
 Sing ‘ Happy, happy pair ! ’ ”¹

Latterly the cock, or rather some part of his body, began to be used as an amulet. We learn from Pliny, that Mylo of Crotona, the great gymnast, carried over his body “ gemma Alectoria ” (a crystalloid stone, sometimes found in a fowl's crop) as a protection against evils.

Pliny says² : “ In the gesiers of cocks, there are found certain stones, called thereupon Aleatonæ, which, in show, resemble crystal and are as big as beans. Milo, that great wrestler of Crotone, used to carry this stone about him, whereby he was invincible in all the feats of strength or activity that he tried.”

The cock was also used as an amulet for driving away evils or evil influences from fields. Pausanias says of the people of Methana in Greece, “ When the vines are budding, and a southwester sweeps down on them from the Saronic Gulf, it

¹ *The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks*, by Blümner, translated by Alice Zimmern, pp. 141-42.

² Bk. XXXVII, ch. X, Holland's Translation, p. 624.

blights the tender shoots. So, while the squall is still coming, two men take a cock, every feather of which must be white, rend it in two, and run round the vines in opposite directions, each carrying a half of the cock, and when they come back to the place from which they started they bury the pieces there. This is their device for counteracting a south-wester."¹

Frazer describes a similar custom among the Malays. He says: "The reason why the people of Methana selected a white cock specially to keep off the south-wester is perhaps explained by the following custom: When the sky is overcast the skipper of a Malay prao takes the white or yellow feathers of a cock, fastens them to a leaf of a special sort, and sets them in the forecastle, praying that the spirits will cause the black clouds to pass by. Then the cock is killed. The skipper whitens his hand with chalk, points thrice with his whitened finger at the black clouds, and throws the bird into the sea. The idea of both the Malay and the Greek custom seems to be that the white bird will chase away the black clouds."²

Coming to other nations besides the Greeks, among whom the cock was a sacred bird, we find that it was held sacred by the Japanese and the Chinese. Among the latter, they took a solemn oath by emphasising what they said in three ways—(1) by breaking a porcelain cup; (2) by burning a piece of paper; and (3) by cutting the throat of a white cock which had not a single feather other than white.

According to Dalton³, the cock played a prominent part in the burial customs of some tribes. He says of the Mishmis: "There was also a preliminary sacrifice of a red cock and hen, the blood of which was received in a vessel containing some other fluid, and the mixture carefully examined, as it is

¹ Pausanias's *Description of Greece*, Translated with a Commentary, by J. G. Frazer, Vol., I, p. 124. Book II., C. XXXIV, 2.

² Pausanias's *Description of Greece*, translated by J. G. Frazer, Vol. III, p. 289.

³ *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, by Edward Tuite Dalton, p. 16.

supposed to indicate if the result will be fortunate or otherwise."

In the ancient catacombs of Rome, the picture of a cock is found by the side of St. Peter. There, it was the symbol of repentance and resurrection.

Among the Jews in Turkey, the cock is used as a symbol in their "ceremony of atonement," which is observed on the "Day of Atonement." On that day a, "cock is provided for each man or boy, and a hen for each woman or girl; and the head of the house, first for himself, and afterwards for each member of the family, swings the bird, which he holds by the legs, round over his head, saying, "This is my substitute; this is my commutation; this cock goeth to the death in order that I may be gathered, and enter into a long and happy life and into peace."¹

We have already alluded to the fact, that in freemasonry, the cock is held as a symbol of resurrection and, as such, it forms the Jewel of the Order of Knight Templars.

In Tonquin, when a child goes to school for the first time, the teacher is presented with a cock.² The ceremony is called Yolong.

Among the people in the Khasia Hills, they kill a cock when a man dies in some other place, out of his village, with the object, they say, that the cock may arouse his soul early in the morning every day to enable it to come home.³

The crowing of the cocks was taken advantage of by two cantons of Switzerland in fixing their boundaries. "To settle this question of boundary, it was arranged by the elders of either canton that on the day of the equinox a man should start at cockcrow from either side and run towards the Klausen Pass, and that the point of their meeting should be the boundary. The runners were chosen, and both cantons

¹ *The Academy* of 3rd October 1891, No. 1013, p. 282, col. 3.

² *Revue des Traditions.*

³ *Lyal's Natural Religion in India.*

endeavoured to ensure that the bird to give warning should be an early one. The men of Uri starved their bird, while the men of Glarus stuffed theirs. When the appointed day came, the cock of Uri crowed when the dawn was scarcely visible in the heavens, and the runner started. But at Linththal the rosy light had filled the sky, the stars had paled, and still the cock slept. Half the parish, with sad faces, surrounded him, but it was a point of honour not to wake him. At last he spread his wings and crowed, and the man of Glarus started very much behind his time. When he rushed the top of the steep ascent, above the fall of the Fatschbach, he perceived the Uri runner descending from the Pass and they soon met. 'Here,' shouted the man of Uri, 'is the boundary.'¹

The Ghatties of Bombay say, that when the chariot of Rām (the Sun) starts for its usual journey, the cock, which is lying with its head on the ground, comes to know his movement by the vibrations of the ground. He then crows and gives the information to all. They say that the shout of the cock is to the effect કાસવા ગેા કાસવા ગેા, the word કાસલા (Kasva) meaning a (કાસલા) tortoise. People formerly used to sacrifice a tortoise, when they reaped their crop and separated the husk from the corn. One day, they caught hold of a tortoise for this purpose and kept it under a basket to be used for the sacrifice on the next day. When they looked for it next morning, they found that the tortoise was not in its place, but had somehow run away. So they sacrificed, for the time being, a cock, which was near at hand. Afterwards the custom of sacrificing a cock became gradually prevalent. The cock then began to call out the name of the tortoise, saying કાસવાગેા કાસવાગેા, *i. e.*, he called out the name of the tortoise to say that it was sacrificed in place of the tortoise.

We saw that the ancients believed the cock to be a sacred bird, because, as a harbinger of morn, it made man vigilant,

¹ *Academy* of 9th July 1892, p. 27, No. 1053, quoted from "The Forest Cantons of Switzerland," by J. Sowerby,

and opposed as the Vendidâd said, the evil influences of Bushyânst, the demon of sloth, or idleness. So, it was considered to be opposed to all evil influences resulting from sloth. Latterly, the idea grew, that it opposed all possible evil influences. Then the spirits or ghosts of men, especially the wicked spirits of evil men, that dared not appear during the light of the day, but wandered over the earth during the night, were supposed to be driven away by the crowing of the cock. The cock-crow is even now believed to be a signal for the ghosts to disappear. We find Shakespeare alluding to it in his play of Hamlet, Act I, Sc. I. We read the following words there.

Horatio—

“ I have heard,

The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.”

Marcellus—“It faded on the crowing of the cock.”

Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes,
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm.
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.”
