

ANIMISM  
OR  
THOUGHT CURRENTS OF  
PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

BY  
GEORGE WILLIAM GILMORE



BOSTON  
MARSHALL JONES COMPANY  
MDCCCCXIX

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Animism Or, Thought Currents of Primitive Peoples by George William Gilmore.

This edition was created and published by Global Grey 2015.

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From the standpoint of pedagogics not yet has sufficient allowance been made for this heritage of fear. Parents, nurses, and companions, mistakenly and often innocently, sow and cultivate these weeds in a soil all too well prepared by heritage. And the result is that instead of a beautiful garden spot of trust and confidence and belief in the good, a jungle or morass of noxious fears and dreads mars for many the beauty of life.

Other residua less worthy, for the most part now happily matters of history, at least in the civilized world, have been hinted at in the preceding pages. Most of these may be classed under the head of superstitions, though we are to bear in mind that these too have, at least some of them, contributed to the advance of mankind.<sup>1</sup> They include the development and practice of totemism and taboo, of magic and divination with their nobler brother prophecy, of mythology and witchcraft, and of sacrifice in the ritual sense. When we have shown the nature of animism, we have laid at least one firm platform for the treatment of these, so far at least as their objective side is concerned. Then, too, the relative order or the contemporaneity of magic and religion--that vexed question--may receive illumination in pursuit of the consequences of the fads here exhibited. But to trace these developments is another task. Whether such phenomena as those of fetishism are primary or secondary may also be possible of solution in the light we have gained; and the varieties of sacrifice fall easily into order as we start from its foundation in animism as shown in the facts here passed in review.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*; and *NSH.*, article "Superstition."













