

recorded, is one called *Langszi*,\* a small tribe of aborigines in the department of Wei-ning, in Kweichau, but close to the border of Yun-nan: "Their manners and customs are very extraordinary. For example, when the wife has given birth to a child, the husband remains in the house and holds it in his arms for a whole month, not once going out of doors. The wife in the mean time does all the work in doors and out, and provides and serves up both food and drink for the husband, she only giving suck to the child." I am informed also that, among the Miris on the Upper Assam border, the husband on such occasions confines himself strictly to the house for forty days after the event.

The custom of the Couvade has especially and widely prevailed in South America, not only among the Carib races of Guiana, of the Spanish Main, and (where still surviving) of the West Indies, but among many tribes of Brazil and its borders from the Amazons to the Plate, and among the Abipones of Paraguay; it also exists or has existed among the aborigines of California, in West Africa, in Bouro, one of the Moluccas, and among a wandering tribe of the Telugu-speaking districts of Southern India. According to Diodorus it prevailed in ancient Corsica, according to Strabo among the Iberians of Northern Spain (where we have seen it has lingered to recent times), according to Apollonius Rhodius among the Tibareni of Pontus. Modified traces of a like practice, not carried to the same extent of oddity, are also found in a variety of countries besides those that have been named, as in Borneo, in Kamtchatka, and in Greenland. In nearly all cases some particular diet, or abstinence from certain kinds of food and drink, and from exertion, is prescribed to the father; in some, more positive and trying penances are inflicted.

Butler had no doubt our Traveller's story in his head when he made the widow in *Hudibras* allude in a ribald speech to the supposed fact that

———"Chineses go to bed  
And lie in, in their ladies' stead."

The custom is humorously introduced, as Pauthier has noticed, in the Mediæval Fabliau of *Aucasin and Nicolette*. Aucasin arriving at the castle of Torelore asks for the king and is told he is in child-bed. Where then is his wife? She is gone to the wars and has taken all the people with her. Aucasin, greatly astonished, enters the palace, and wanders through it till he comes to the chamber where the king lay:—

"En le canbre entre Aucasins  
Li cortois et li gentis ;  
Il est venus dusqu'au lit  
Alec ú li Rois se gist.  
Pardevant lui s'arestit  
Si parla, Oès que dist ;  
Diva fau, que fais-tu ci ?  
Dist le Rois, Je gis d'un fil,  
Quant mes mois sera complis,  
Et ge serai bien garis,  
Dont irai le messe oïr  
Si comme mes ancessor fist," etc.

Aucasin pulls all the clothes off him, and cudgels him soundly, making him promise that never a man shall lie in again in his country.

This strange custom, if it were unique, would look like a coarse practical joke, but appearing as it does among so many different races and in every quarter of the world, it must have its root somewhere deep in the psychology of the uncivilised man. I must refer to Mr. Tylor's interesting remarks on the rationale of the custom, for

\* [Mr. E. H. Parker (*China Review*, XIV. p. 359) says that Colonel Yule's *Langszi* are evidently the *Szilang*, one of the six *Chao*, but turned upside down.—H. C.]