

chased by the joint villagers and pelted with snow-balls till he retires from the village and drops his mask, after which he joins in a dance with the *gāmi* and *mēzmi* mask-bearers."

Most of the devil dances of Indian Tibet are held during the time of the winter solstice, and in my opinion originally symbolised the struggle between the benevolent gods of spring or summer, and the demons of winter. Lamaism later on converted these performances into a struggle between the elevating elements of Buddhism and its fierce enemies representative of the pre-Buddhist religion.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest enemy of Lamaism, Langdarma, had to take the part originally played by the winter, and it is his tragic end and his torments in hell which are now-a-days celebrated in the mask dances. Side by side with the Lamaist mask dances the ancient ceremonies of chasing out the evil spirits of the winter were continued, and a manuscript describing the festival of the winter solstice at Khalatse and a photo of the interesting Dosmoche performance, at Leh, is among our collections. At the monastery of Nako, we even acquired a very ancient wooden mask which had once done service in the mask dances. This mask was found in a godown and sold to us for one rupee. At Leh we had an opportunity to buy implements and a trumpet made of a human thighbone, used on the occasion of devil dances. (Plate XXIX, b).

As I had the intention of spending Sunday the 20th at Kōṭgur, on my return from Nirmaṇḍ, Mr. Beutel advised me to leave Kōṭgur on the same day and to cross the rope bridge to Nirmaṇḍ early next morning. The caravan under Pindi Lal was to follow later on. I arrived on the Satluj late at night on the 16th and spent the night in Mr. Beutel's garden house. Early on the 17th I marched with my Khansaman to Nirth and beyond this village to the rope bridge. In the vicinity of Nirth, we searched for the cave inscriptions discovered by Dr. Marshall in 1908, but could not find them. The rope bridge did not look at all inviting, but I thought that I ought to try it, in particular, because we should have to cross several more of them in the course of our journey. So we shouted for the people in the next village who work it. They brought a wooden saddle to which were attached several ropes and led us down the *khud* to the starting place, a rock not much over a yard square, 30 or 40 feet above the river. Before and behind, the rock was perpendicular. From this pedestal one was expected to seize the saddle which dangled above one, and to put his legs through two slings of rope which were attached thereto. While seizing the saddle I jumped up in the direction of the slings, but unfortunately knocked off my hat against the wall of rock behind me. It disappeared at once in the river and was not seen again. I knew that it would not be advisable to continue my journey under a tropical sun without a hat. Therefore, I renounced all further gymnastics on that day and went back to Nirth to write to Mr. Beutel that I had not succeeded in reaching Nirmaṇḍ on the fixed day and had to alter my programme. Early next morning a messenger from Mr. Beutel made his appearance with the latter's *sola topi* and a letter urging me to try again. I must

<sup>1</sup> Luther, in a similar manner, changed the song: Nun treiben wir den Winter aus! into a song celebrating the turning out of the Pope: Nun treiben wir den Pabst hinaus