



ETRUSCAN MAGIC

& Occult Remedies

Charles Godfrey Leland

Etruscan Magic & Occult Remedies

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Turan, or Venus

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PART ONE

Gods and Goblins

INTRODUCTION



Turms, or Mercury

THERE IS IN Northern Italy a mountain district known as La Romagna Toscana, the inhabitants of which speak a rude form of the Bolognese dialect. These Romagnoli are manifestly a very ancient race, and appear to have preserved traditions and observances little changed from an incredibly early time. It has been a question of late years whether the Bolognese are of Etrurian origin, and it seems to have been generally decided that they are not. With this I have nothing whatever to do. They were probably there before the Etruscans. But the latter at one time held all Italy, and it is very likely that they left in remote districts those traces of their culture to which this book refers. The name Romagna is applied to their district because it once formed part of the Papal or Roman dominion, and it is not to be confounded with La Romagna proper. Roughly speaking, the region to which I refer may be described as lying between Forli and

Ravenna. Among these people, *stregeria*, or witchcraft—or, as I have heard it called, “la vecchia religione” (or “the old religion”)—exists to a degree which would even astonish many Italians. This *stregeria*, or old religion, is something more than a sorcery, and something less than a faith. It consists in remains of a mythology of spirits, the principal of whom preserve the names and attributes of the old Etruscan gods, such as *Tinia*, or Jupiter, *Faflon*, or Bacchus, and *Teramo* (in Etruscan *Turms*), or Mercury. With these there still exist, in a few memories, the most ancient Roman rural deities, such as Silvanus, Palus, Pan, and the Fauns. To all of these invocations or prayers in rude metrical form are still addressed, or are at least preserved, and there are many stories current regarding them. All of these names, with their attributes, descriptions of spirits or gods, invocations and legends, will be found in this work.

Closely allied to the belief in these old deities, is a vast mass of curious tradition, such as that there is a spirit of every element or thing created, as for instance of every plant and mineral, and a guardian or leading spirit of all animals; or, as in the case of silkworms, two—one good and one evil. Also that sorcerers and witches are sometimes born again in their descendants; that all kinds of goblins, brownies, red-caps and three-inch mannikins, haunt forests, rocks, ruined towers, firesides and kitchens, or cellars, where they alternately madden or delight the maids—in short, all of that quaint company of familiar spirits which are boldly claimed as being of Northern birth by German archæologists, but which investigation indicates to have been thoroughly at home in Italy while Rome was as yet young, or,

it may be, unbuilt. Whether this “lore” be Teutonic or Italian, or due to a common Aryan or Asian origin, or whether, as the new school teaches, it “grewed” of itself, like Topsy, spontaneously and sporadically everywhere, I will not pretend to determine; suffice to say that I shall be satisfied should my collection prove to be of any value to those who take it on themselves to settle the higher question.

Connected in turn with these beliefs in *folletti*, or minor spirits, and their attendant observances and traditions, are vast numbers of magical cures with appropriate incantations, spells, and ceremonies, to attract love, to remove all evil influences or bring certain things to pass; to win in gaming, to evoke spirits, to insure good crops or a traveller’s happy return, and to effect divination or deviltry in many curious ways—all being ancient, as shown by allusions in classical writers to whom these spells were known. And I believe that in some cases what I have gathered and given will possibly be found to supply much that is missing in earlier authors—*sit verbo venia*.

Many peasants in the Romagna Toscana are familiar with scores of these spells, but the skilled repetition and execution of them is in the hands of certain cryptic witches, and a few obscure wizards who belong to mystic families, in which the occult art is preserved from generation to generation, under jealous fear of priests, cultured people, and all powers that be, just as gypsies and tramps deeply distrust everything that is not “on the road,” or all “honest folk,” so that it is no exaggeration to declare that “travellers” have no confidence or faith in the truth of any man, until they have caught him telling a few lies. As it indeed befell me myself once in Bath, where it was declared in a

The gods, spirits and sorcery of Italian witches

Etruscan Magic & Occult Remedies by Charles Godfrey Leland was first published as *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*, in 1892. Part One of the book offers a complete and detailed insight in the Etruscan and Roman rooted pantheon of the Tuscan Streghe (witches). Part Two describes many of their spells, incantations, sorcery and several lost divination methods.

Leland found himself at the crossroads of the academic and the romantic and it is precisely this, which makes the reading of his work so enjoyable. His primary aim was to preserve this ancient traditional knowledge, as he feared, it would soon be wiped out by modernism. Much information in this book, Leland received first hand from the Tuscan witches Maddalena and Marietta. His second work on Stregheria: *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches* was published seven years later in 1899. One could state he reached his goal, as his books are still of invaluable importance to both the Italian folklore and the modern practitioner of witchcraft. One of Leland's readers was the late Gerald Gardner, which makes one wonder who was the true godfather of modern witchcraft...

Special revised edition with an index of ancient Etruscan gods and spirits.

