

CORRESPONDENCE.

I. THE KALASA, OR WATER-POT, IN CONNECTION WITH BURIAL RITES.

SIR,—O'Donovan, about the time of his risky visit to Merve, describes, in one of his letters, the Turkoman tombs about Tchikislar, on the south-east of the Caspian: "The soldier's tomb consists of a pole of some twenty feet in length planted vertically in the sand, its base surrounded by a circle of small stones, within which are accumulated a selection of water-jars and earthen tea-pots, tributes to the memory of the deceased." This short quotation bears on what has formerly appeared in the *Journal* in relation to the vase or water-pot, and burial rites. Central Asia is near enough to India for a possible connection of customs between the two regions. It may also be of interest to know that this primitive use of the water-pot, as a sepulchral symbol, is not confined to the old world. In a work called *The Myths of the New World*, by Dan. G. Brinton, there is an account of a vision related by Coacooche, a Seminole chieftain, in which he says he visited "the happy hunting grounds and saw my sister, long since gone. She offered me a cup of pure water, which she said came from the spring of the Great Spirit, and if I should drink of it, I should return and live with men for ever. Some such mystical respect for the element, rather than as a mere outfit for his spirit home, probably induced the earlier tribes of the same territory to place the conch-shell, which the deceased had used for a cup, conspicuously on his grave, and the Mexicans and Peruvians to inter a vase filled with water with the corpse, or to sprinkle it with liquid, baptizing it, as

it were, into its new associations. It was an emblem of hope that should cheer the dwellings of the dead, a symbol of the resurrection which is in store for those who go down to the grave. The vase or the gourd as a symbol of water, the source and preserver of life, is a conspicuous figure in the myths of Ancient America. As Akbal or Huecomitl, the great or original vase, in Aztec and Maya legends, it plays important parts in the drama of creation," pp. 135-6.

I offer these references, which may be worth adding to the collection of data on this subject.

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The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2. THE KALASA, OR WATER-POT, IN INDIAN ARCHITECTURE.

Collector's Camp, Panwell,

Kolaba Districts,

April 21st, 1889.

. I have been looking over the plates in Fergusson's *Indian Architecture*, to see what could be made out of them about the Āmalaka ornament on temple spires.

There is a pretty good sequence in respect of *pillars*.

In the early caves an inverted bell-shaped water-pot is a common capital (Fergusson's "Persepolitan" capital), and one of very similar shape is still used in the cave region to cap the "Kams" (Stambha) erected near many villages for festival purposes—"Maypoles" one might call them.

Where anything has to be superimposed on a round bot-tomed inverted pot, the annular pad is as necessary between them as it is under the pot when right side up.

Accordingly at Bedsé, Karlé, etc., you find this capital connected with the abacus by such a pad, and the whole construction strengthened and secured by a square frame of very modern design.

This capital dies out as we get to the later caves, and is replaced by a pot right side up. Under this there is always a circular member, which appears to me to be the same pad