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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BIRD CULT OF EASTER ISLAND.

WITH regard to Mrs. Routledge's article on the "Bird Cult of Easter Island" and to the symbol Ao, it may be of interest to mention that the Maoris when they reached New Zealand brought with them a stone bird which they regarded with extraordinary veneration. It was known, I think, as "Little crying dove," and when lost some years ago caused a great state of agitation; eventually it was found, and the image is now, I believe, in safe custody in one of the strong-rooms of a New Zealand bank. I acquired this information from *The Maoris of New Zealand* by J. Cowan.

With regard to the emblem Ao, one might connote this with the Maori Io, to which Mr. Cowan refers as follows:

"Beneath all the personifications of natural things, of the Sun and Moon and Stars, the Winds and the Ocean, there are faint traces of some still more ancient faith, the belief in a Great First Cause. This supreme Being or Power is Io, a name occasionally to be heard in ancient chants and genealogies. The resemblance of the name to Devus, Deo, Zeus, Iouis, and other forms of the Old World names for the Supreme God, has frequently been remarked upon, but probably the likeness is merely verbal; Io is no doubt a form of *iho*, the core or animating force of all things, the primal energising principle."

The Chaldean "God of *Life*" was sometimes entitled Aa, and it is perhaps worthy to remark that among the Mayas of Central America—the nearest continent to Easter Island and far nearer than New Zealand—Io is said to have been a sacrosanct term

implying "all that which lives and moves," the "Spirit of the Universe."

It seems to have been an almost invariable rule among the ancients to designate the priests of a cult by the name of the fetich or symbol to which they paid their devotions. Thus one finds "The Hounds," "The Bees," "The Doves," etc., etc. To this list may one add the Ao's of Easter Island?

ARNOLD BURLEY.

OBITUARY.

MR. CLEMENT ARTHUR MILES.

MR. MILES, who died on 2nd February, 1918, was a member of the Folk-Lore Society. He had been for many years on Mr. T. Fisher Unwin's literary staff, and had recently been working for the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee. He was author of an important work: *Christmas: in Ritual and Tradition*. He possessed a wide knowledge of European languages, translated Sabatier's *Modernism* and other works from the French, and was co-translator from the Italian of Gayda's *Modern Austria: Her Racial and Social Problems*. His early death at the age of 37 frustrates the promise of a distinguished career.