Book Reviews

Frazer, James George. FOLKLORE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION, LEGEND AND LAW. In three volumes. London, Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1919.

Physical medicine first, mental medicine more recently has been led to a sure conviction. This is that disease and readjustment of the physiological or psychic personality, which is the return to health, depends in greater or less degree upon knowledge and recognition of underlying fossils or "relics of ruder times." This is particularly true of mental disease and the understanding of mental life though here these relics are not fixed fossils, except in their outer systematized forms, but remain active unconsciously modifying and often interfering with actions and reactions more suitable to modern life. A study of such a residue of former ways of thought, like this of Frazer recognizes the genetic growth of these mental factors and their modification up through human history in accepted religions, social customs, marriage and other laws dependent upon these active dynamic factors and their continued activity. Such a study therefore becomes indispensable for the complete understanding of human life and of the difficulties into which it falls. The successful psychopathologist cannot neglect this more complete study of man and his mental development. For he finds by analysis that just as Frazer discovers these similar elements and methods of thought and affectivity at work in all parts of the race in one form or another at all times, so these things are still active in influencing the successful adjustment of the individual to society, which results in health and efficiency, or in disturbing this adjustment and making him ill. These things still pertain, as Frazer has shown us, in the social unconscious also, even in its consciousness which laggingly obeys affective superstition rather than reason and so confuses the individual's attempts at adjustment and health.

In these new volumes Frazer offers much of the vast lore of peoples of every time and place, when and wherever the primitive affective type of thinking still prevails. He illustrates freely the fundamental basis of affective and instinctive reaction which laid the foundation of primitive thinking and belief and determined largely the character of human behavior. This influence on behavior is still more prevalent than man would think and prevailed largely underneath the gradual growth of a more rational attitude toward man's own nature and his environment, which has only gradually and partially superseded the older form of belief and thought. These books reveal to us, however, beside this

added weight of testimony to the affective side of human history, the growth out of this and through this of a more intellectual attitude, which has haltingly and imperfectly won control and established a more and more workable form of religion and of regulating law, as for example, in the evolution of marriage customs which have served to break through the older closer association within the family group.

Frazer has followed the course of particular phases of this development by choosing certain larger topics comprised in the Hebrew scriptures. Around them he has gathered his comparative material by which he shows the place of underlying trends in Hebrew history in the community of human thought everywhere, at the same time that he reveals the particular development and rationalization these received as they took their place in the growth of the Hebrew religion. He points out first the twofold narrative contained in the scriptures, the one representing the naïve and picturesque material, even the form of folklore and tradition, the other the intellectualized form into which this earlier material was compressed by the later priestly instructors of the people.

The story of the creation finds its many parallels in the lore of all peoples, a form of archaic primitive myth which reappears in the dream material of psychoanalysis as well as in the conscious mudpie activity of childhood. The entrance of death into the human paradise has its counterparts all over the world, as does also the participation of some fabled animal, in the Bible the well known serpent. The chapter on the mark upon Cain affords interesting material in regard to the first status of the murderer in human society. Here as in so many of Frazer's investigations we are brought to that sense of positive values underlying our since altered conscious conceptions of things in which we often see only the negative side. In order truly to understand the human factors active in society today, which consciously often produce only opposition and self-defence, it is necessary to realize that a certain positive character associated with individual need and a social need of a different time established certain reactions, like the murder impulse, which for changing social reasons is no longer useful and now must be differently controlled. This same principle is somewhat similarly illustrated in the discussion of ultimogeniture as a previous social institution to primogeniture, in which discussion Frazer puts the story of Jacob and his apparently tricky circumvention of his elder brother into a quite new light.

Significant illumination is thrown upon the complicated problems lying within the unconscious complex reactions of the individual to his family group by the elaborated presentation of the gradual opening out of the family group and its original close relationships through the growth and extension of the taboo relating to cousin marriages. Marriage of a wife's sisters, as again illustrated in Jacob's story, and the marriage of a deceased brother's wife form also part of this investiga-

tion and have similar bearing. Only brief reference can be made to the chapters which take up many significant and symbolic activities and ceremonials, all of which Frazer subjects to the method of wide comparison, bringing out in each case much of the inner psychological significance of the particular form of custom or belief. This gives it reference to individual groping after the expression of fundamental need and the curious twistings and rationalizations to which this is subjected in the individual mind as in the racial groups.

Attention should be called to the high literary value of these books. This is due in the first place to the well-known quality of all Frazer's writings, to his sense of balance of evidence and of caution in regard to dogmatic conclusion and to his scientifically hospitable openmindedness and ability to see more than one side of a question. All these are in greater evidence in none of Frazer's past works than in these volumes. There is also an unusual sense of appreciation of the high moral and cultural worth of the Hebrew scriptures and of the particular form of rationalization which they have taken. There is at the same time no lack of a genuinely humorous appreciation of the absurdity of naïve and infantile forms of belief and its expression and the lengths to which this can go. A special literary and scientific value attaches to the extended chapter on the story of the Great Flood. This is a wide comparative study showing the qualities of the author's scholarship, the breadth and geniality of his attitude toward critics, opponents of his views or otherwise, and a peculiar excellence of literary grace and finish.

L. BRINK.

Rüdin, Ernest. STUDIEN UEBER VERERBUNG UND ENTSTEHUNG GEISTIGER STÖRUNGEN. [Zur Vererbung und Neuentstehung der Dementia Præcox.] Julius Springer, Berlin.

This is No. 12 of the Monograph Series founded by Alzheimer and Lewandowsky, and is the first of a series in studies in heredity of mental diseases concerning which the author presented some important preliminary considerations in 1911.

It deals with the problem of the hereditary factors in dementia præcox, and coming from the Munich Klinik, that disorder group is defined strictly in accordance with Kraepelin's conceptions. The material subjected to statistical analysis is derived chiefly from the Klinik and from the Bavarian asylums, most of which has been investigated clinically from the Kraepelian standpoint.

The opening chapter deals with a critical examination of methods. Rüdin maintains that the methods heretofore utilized are unavailing. The psychiatrist must break with the older traditions and not build up his conceptions regarding heredity upon the study of certain markedly affected families. Such studies lead to totally false conclusions. Well members as well as the deaths in a family tree must be considered and he maintains that the methods which have been elaborated by Weinberg are of all these heretofore described the most valuable and reliable.