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Ploix's *La Nature Des Dieux La Nature des Dieux*. Par Charles Ploix. 1888. 10 fr.

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his handling of *Senatusconsulta* and official letters borrowed by him from the collections of others. But there is no ground for doubting the substantial accuracy of the documents themselves, which were mostly borrowed from Nicolaus Damascenus, though little trust is to be placed in their headings and the titles assigned to the Roman officials in

them; these are due to the unscrupulous pen of Josephus.

The essay is made the more useful by some good indices. I have noted only one glaring misprint; p. 7, line 11: *templum Veneris Ephesiae*, for *Dianae*.

E. L. HICKS.

PLOIX'S LA NATURE DES DIEUX.

La Nature des Dieux. Par CHARLES PLOIX.
1888. 10 fr.

ONE opens this book, which consists of only 470 pages, with a pleasurable expectation, first because it is written by a Frenchman, and therefore it is not likely to be dull or obscure, and secondly because of the title. The student of the classical religions might hope that he will here find—not one more theory added to the endless number concerning the origins of those religions—but a work which we in England especially need on the actual religious ideas of Greece and Rome in the historic periods. But the whole book is a theory of origins, and its title is an illusion; it is also an astonishing, perhaps an expiring, effort of the familiar school, in which we have all been trained, of philologico-physical mythology. In his preface M. Ploix disclaims style and aspires merely to science. But the book has of course the usual French excellences of style, piquancy of expression and lucidity, while as regards science it reminds us of Mr. Lang's treatise on 'the Gladstone Myth': only M. Ploix means his book to be taken very seriously. It is in fact nothing less than a key to all the polytheistic religions; for what he discovers of the Greeks and the Romans he maintains must be true of the whole human race. Thus at the outset we are startled with the enormous assumption—with the proof of which he does not trouble himself—that 'la marche de l'intelligence humaine a du être partout la même.'

Plurality of causes is excluded at a single stroke. Ancestor-worship, the sense of the Infinite, personification of moral ideas, and other possible explanations, cannot be applied to any religion of any branch of the human race if they are found not to apply to the religion of Greece and Rome. If one could believe this, one would at least save oneself trouble. With this advantage to start with

M. Ploix works out the great single idea with which his book is inspired, namely, that all the Greek and Latin divinities except Zeus are personifications of the twilight. He has at least maintained his originality, for the twilight is the one department of nature that has not been over-run by his fellow-mythologists. We have become very familiar with the apparitions of the sun, the moon, the wind and the lightning, etc., in the forms of Apollo, Dionysos, Hera, Athene, and many others, but Apollo, Demeter, Proserpine, Eros and Ares as dawn-divinities of twilight are novel characters. M. Ploix is very contemptuous of solar theories, and holds some very peculiar views about the sun. He thinks that primitive man paid very little attention to it, and did not regard it as the cause of light, and supposed it was a very slow thing, and that therefore he could not have personified it as a fast-running hero such as Apollo or Hermes. 'Le soleil ne paraît avoir été anthropomorphisé chez les Grecs et les Latins.' This is a strange statement in the face of the worship of Helios at Rhodes and elsewhere, and his very human activity in many Greek legends.

However, though he disregards all solar, lunar or astral explanations, he maintains as an indisputable view that the divinities were personifications of celestial phenomena: in the first place, because Devas and Divi and Zeus contain a root meaning bright: therefore they must be sky-divinities or deities of light. We are familiar with this argument through Professor Max Müller's writings; but modern philologists by no means accept this conclusion. For the same root may be used for the expression of two independent though cognate ideas: of two derivatives from the same root the one may denote a 'bright being,' the other the 'bright sky,' and yet the bright being need not be a personification of the sky. And after all the Greeks did not speak of Divi but θεοί, and

what else this word means besides 'gods' no one yet knows, though M. Ploix thinks he does.

A second argument that M. Ploix urges is the way in which he supposes polytheism arose from fetichism—for he admits promiscuous fetichism as a prior stage. There is some truth and ingenuity in his argument that terrestrial fetiches, because they mostly could not move about, were sooner detected and deposed, and became mere material things; while the celestial fetiches were very active and could maintain the illusion better: more myths were therefore told about them and remained long after the fetich-belief was exploded; thus when no other active and intelligent agency was admitted except that which was human or like human, these persistent myths which seemed to speak of active agency in the heavens gave rise to the belief in personal agents existing there, the deities of the Greek Pantheon.

This exposition is the sanest part of the book but, as it implies that the personal divinities were not likely to be evolved from terrestrial 'fetiches,' there are obvious objections to it: the chief one is the very primitive belief in the earth-goddess and in divinities that clustered round her or emanated from her. Gaia—whom M. Ploix scarcely notices—was a real person with oracular gifts, who certainly was evolved from that largest of all terrestrial fetiches, the earth. And in spite of M. Ploix, divinities such as Cybele, Demeter, Dionysos, had far more affinity with Gaia than they had with twilight.

Another proof he urges in favour of the exclusive supremacy of the celestial personages is that mankind always worship the cheerful and benevolent, not the dark and malign power. Does M. Ploix consider lightning and snakes as cheerful and benevolent, or has he failed to notice that some old Greeks worshipped Python before Apollo killed him, and that the Arcadians worshipped unpersonified thunder and lightning; that Briareus-Aegaeon in Euboea and Tityos, whom Apollo had to slay for his wickedness, are not known to have been benevolent powers, and are yet known to have received worship? He will not admit the existence at any time of animal-worship in Greece; but if the primitive Greeks never worshipped animals, they yet exposed themselves to the gravest suspicions of having done so. Maintaining then that it is only the celestial phenomena that could give birth to divinities, he finds that the only department of nature

in which he can conveniently plant his divinities is the twilight. And certainly the twilight answers the purpose of explaining all the Greek deities and heroes quite as well as the sun; or rather, all the departments of nature, each in its turn, serve almost equally well the purpose of physical allegory.

But the twilight has especial advantages for M. Ploix' argument: it is beautiful, and all the deities are beautiful, except Hephaestus, whom M. Ploix considers to be a twilight 'manqué': it is combative, that is, the morning twilight prevails over the powers of darkness, and the gods also are combative, using spears on occasion, which are the shafts of the morning light. But the subtlest proof of all is the proof derived from the fact that the twilight is the 'commencement' of the day, and M. Ploix finds that nearly all the Greek and Latin deities were deities of 'commencement.' One might doubt whether one is allowed to style a god thus, because the worshippers happened to invoke him when they were beginning something serious. But M. Ploix can plead this much in favour of his theory, that most of the deities and heroes did something and invented something, and therefore must have 'commenced' doing and inventing it.

His observations of nature are innocent, though irrelevant; but his playing with the meaning of names is more serious. 'Ἀθάνατος as a predicate of a god does not mean 'immortal,' but 'not dead,' as a primitive Greek might remark of his dawn-deity when he saw a fresh twilight in the sky. With quite as much right the Greek might have called himself Ἀθάνατος when he got up in the morning. Scarcely any epithets of divinities will he allow to be moral epithets originally: *bonus optimus* he would translate by physical terms (perhaps *bonus* = *duonus* = double = twilight, the twilight being double and most deities having a double aspect, one good and one bad: *optimus* = brilliant, root 'op').

He does not see that to suppose of the distinct Greek and Latin nations that they could not spontaneously predicate moral terms of their deities is to suppose them to be in a state of extraordinary intellectual savagery.

Then he is abnormally prone to the usual error of his school of imputing to the ordinary terms of Greek and Latin writers prehistoric and allusive senses: for instance, Eros is twilight because among other reasons Sophocles in his *Antigone* in the famous ode calls him ἀνίκατος, and M. Ploix does not

seem to recognise that Sophocles is writing of the invincible power not of twilight but of love. He maintains that Ἰμερος, whom Hesiod places in Aphrodite's company, does not mean 'desire,' but 'day' = ἡμέρα: for he does not seem to know that the personification of abstract ideas is earlier than Hesiod, and that a capital letter does not radically change the meaning of a Greek word. (We might as well regard the Ἰμερος ἀφροδῖς and πάρφασις in the girdle of Aphrodite as twilight-powers.)

Again, he has the audacity to suggest that Ἀντρέως meant the 'counter-twilight,' although this is a word and figure that was invented very late—some thousands of years after the word Ἔπος could have possibly meant the twilight. His indifference to chronology is also shown in his indiscriminate use of texts, Orphic literature being quoted as a proof of primeval ideas, and Albricius' treatise *De deorum imaginibus* being referred to as a classical authority. Of archaeology he appears to be absolutely ignorant, and his few references to archaeological evidence are worthless. But his

worst offence is his philology, which is perhaps more unscientific than that in which any modern writer of his school has ever indulged. 'Pallas' and 'pallidus' are connected 'because Greek and Latin are kindred languages'; Ἔπος is a derivative from the root *ar* = 'brilliant,' a theory which appears to be possible only if one disregards the stern laws of vowel-change, or if one makes no distinction between a long and a short *a*.

The mythologic theory and the philology of M. Ploix are antiquated: and the method of argument on which the whole book depends—the deduction of all the derivative qualities of the divinity from one single original idea—is wholly unconvincing. He ignores the fact that a nation as it progresses may predicate new functions and powers of its divinities independently of the original idea; or may adopt from some alien religion divine personages fully-formed and endowed with a complex moral nature which, for those who adopt them, has no connection at all with any physical phenomena.

L. R. FARNELL.

SOPHOCLES'S GREEK LEXICON.

Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100, by EVANGELINUS APOSTOLIDES SOPHOCLES. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887. £2 2s.

A FULL notice of the above work must include some account of the life and character of its author. Professor Sophocles was born at Changaranda, near Mount Pelion in Thessaly, in 1807. He entered the monastery of Mount Sinai as a student and was connected with it several years during the Greek revolution (1821-28), living chiefly in the mother-convent at Cairo. He evidently cherished pleasant recollections of these early years, and maintained relations with the Sinaitic convent to the close of his life. He came to the United States under the patronage of a Foreign Missionary Society (A.B.C.F.M) in 1829, and after studying at the Academy at Monson, Mass., entered Amherst College, but did not stay through the regular course. He taught in Hartford and was assistant in the Yale College library at New Haven. In 1842 he became tutor in Greek in Harvard College and served in that

position until 1845, and from 1847 to 1859. In 1859 he was appointed adjunct professor of Greek, but in the next year he was transferred to the University Professorship of Ancient, Byzantine, and Modern Greek, in which chair he remained until his death in December 1883. He began early to publish text-books for students of Greek. Most known among these are his *Greek Grammar*, *Romæ Grammar*, *Catalogue of Anomalous Verbs* and *History of the Greek Alphabet*. His life at Cambridge was singular and striking to eccentricity. He never married, and lived a secluded life, using two rooms for all purposes, and often acting as his own cook and house-keeper. He partook of his simple meals on the very table which served him as a desk for the writing of this monumental *Lexicon*. His behaviour towards strangers, especially his own countrymen, was not always attractive and he came to have the reputation among them of being crabbed and cynical, but those who had the privilege of a more intimate acquaintance with him found him cordial and tender-hearted. His characteristic as a scholar was penetration. He seemed to see at a glance