Book Reviews

John Abercromby , W. Crooke , Alfred Nutt , A. C. Haddon , Margaret Eyre & F. York Powell

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REVIEWS.

- THE EVIL EYE IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS. By R. C. MACLAGAN, M.D. pp. 232. London: David Nutt. 1902.
- WITCHCRAFT AND SECOND SIGHT IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND. By the late JOHN GREGORSON CAMPBELL. pp. 314. Glasgow: James MacLehose. 1902.
- OUTER ISLES. By A. GOODRICH-FREER. pp. 448. Westminster: A. Constable and Co. 1902.

IN the eddies and backwaters of civilisation, such as still exist in the Western Isles, we may well suppose that much folklore material was still current at the end of the nineteenth century. That this is so is amply borne out by these three volumes. The Folk-Lore Society may well take credit for this good work, for sufficient interest in the subject would hardly have been excited unless the way had been paved during the last twenty years by the Society's work.

Taking the Evil Eye as his text, Dr. MacLagan, who is already known to the Society by an excellent book on *The Games and Diversions of Argyleshire*, examines it carefully in all its aspects. As a belief it is very widely spread in Scotland, and quotations are given from Middle Irish stories to show that its deadly effects were fully recognised by the Goidel in ancient times. As in the south of Europe, persons endowed with the fatal gift can use it unintentionally. Children have sometimes to be protected against the glance of a parent, and a faithful farm-servant will occasionally have to shield the cows or horses under his charge from the malign influence of his master's eye by keeping them out of his sight. The people generally credited with the Evil Eye are old women and those with eyes of different colours. Such persons, and indeed all others suspected of possessing it, are avoided. But it would seem that persons are accused of this faculty on the very

faintest grounds, without a particle of real evidence. If a stranger happens to be near when a horse or cow is suddenly taken ill, he is certain to be charged with having caused the injury by "over-looking" the animal. In fact, the Western Islanders act as if they believed that a creature would never die or fall sick unless the untoward event were caused by witchcraft or the Evil Eye.

Not unnaturally it is the prettiest child and the best animal that is most likely to suffer from the envious glance of the Evil Eye. To avert this from a child, some article of dress must be at fault, such as a stocking or a coat turned inside out; or some bright article of clothing must be worn to divert the first glance of the Evil Eye. Although stones with natural holes in them are sometimes strung up over the door of a house to avert evil influences, it does not seem that the habit of wearing amulets to counteract the Evil Eye has penetrated into the Western Isles. The nearest approach to it is to wear round the neck a thread of variously coloured yarn over which an incantation has been said.

In Dr. Maclagan's opinion, belief in the power of the Evil Eye is an original tendency of the human mind and not a special development of any division of the human race. No doubt there is truth in this. But I think there is reason to believe that much of what is now attributed in Argyleshire to the effects of the Evil Eye was formerly attributed to magic operations and to witchcraft. In the south of Europe, where the belief is so prevalent, everyone that entertains it protects himself by wearing an amulet, and his horses by something gaudy on the harness. In the Western Highlands amulets seem to be unknown, and grown-up persons do not appear to protect themselves against the evil influence. Cows are sometimes protected by tying a sprig of rowan to the tail, by smearing the ears or horns with tar, by hanging a bit of rag above their heads, or by sprinkling them with urine. But none of these precautions seem specially adapted or invented to counteract the Evil Eye. They would be equally valid against any injurious influence. As Dr. Maclagan himself observes, all the remedies to remove the bad effects of the Evil Eye belong to witchcraft. For example, if a red woollen thread is tied round the tail of an "overlooked" cow it will recover. This operation is generally performed by or under the direction of a person with a knowledge of spells (*eoilas*), and we may believe that formerly some spell or magic song was always repeated during the opera-

tion of tying. For these and other reasons it seems probable that more is attributed to the action of the Evil Eye than was formerly the case when druids, witches, and sorcerers flourished in the land.

The second contribution is of a more general nature, and here again the author, who, unfortunately, is no longer in the land of the living, is already favourably known by his *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*.

Mr. Campbell starts with illustrations of black magic or the work of witches. A common form of it is the abstraction of the milk of a neighbour's cow. Frequently a cow is said to have been sucked by a witch in the form of a hare, and this the author found so odd that he could not understand it. It may be that the modern belief is a somewhat rationalised form of a wholly magic practice, such as one found in the south of Sweden. There the troll-woman takes sticks of firewood that are burnt at each end, and sends them out as "milk-hares" to suck the milk of other people's cows. Originally, then, the "hare" was only a magic agent, now the hare is the witch herself. Counter-charms are a ball of hair placed in the milk-pail, a cow-shackle of rowan, tar smeared on the cow's ears, &c. Another involves sympathetic magic. Some of the bewitched cow's urine is corked up in a bottle, and then the witch cannot make water till she allows the milk to come back. Witches have the power of drawing fish toward their own shores, and after muttering a few words can fill a creel with herrings. A boatman that was wooing a witch's daughter—she must have been a syren in another form—received from her a string with three knots on it, on untying which three different strengths of wind would be produced. When the last knot was undone, the wind was so strong that her lover's boat was dashed to pieces on the rocks. Shipwreck was usually caused by sympathetic magic. A small dish was floated on water, and when it upset the ship went down. Witches can cross the sea in sieves and eggshells, and can assume the form of diverse animals and birds. But in the Western Isles witches never ride on broomsticks, nor hold midnight revels with the Devil, as is the case in the Lowlands. A witch's house can always be known, as the smoke goes against the wind.

Under the heading of White Magic are given a number of interesting charms to cure sickness, caused by the Evil Eye or other-

wise, to procure love, against danger in war, in lawsuits, and so forth. In meaning, wording, and structure they often remind one of the later Finnish magic songs, made or recast under the influence of Christianity. In addition to the invocation of native saints like Columba and Bridget, reference is sometimes made to heroes of the pre-Christian period, such as Manaman mac Leth (Manannan mac Lir), Finn mac Cumhaill, Caiste, and the Fianna.

The Gaelic expression for "second sight" means "the two sights," and the author regards it as synonymous with "spectre-haunted." It is not looked upon in any case as an enviable or desirable gift. In some of the stories given in illustration, men are merely haunted or visited once by the spectre of a living person. Sometimes the phantom gives the man a good threshing, but otherwise nothing untoward happens. Apparitions of the dead frighten the seer, but are not necessarily followed by any evil consequence. Thought-transference, even to a great distance, is believed to occur when a wish is very strongly felt, and to show this several anecdotes are related. Those gifted with second sight can sometimes tell the appearance of a man's future wife, and before a death can see the forms of living people coming for the coffin. Among the examples given to illustrate second sight are some that hardly belong to the subject. They are rather presages of death, and consist in hearing a hammering of nails, trampling of horses, rattling of glasses, a wailing human cry, or the howling of dogs. If a person is about to meet with a violent death his wraith is apt to be seen, sometimes long before the event occurs.

By Hobgoblins (*baucans*) we have to understand a general name for terrifying objects seen at night. Generally the apparition of a *baucan* is considered the precursor of a violent death. It may take the shape of a headless man, a one-legged man, a long grey paw, and so forth. Before a man has a tussle with a *baucan* his dirk must be partly drawn from the sheath or he will be unable to draw it. In speaking of it to the unearthly enemy he must call it "my father's sister." This prevents enchantments being laid upon it to render it useless.

The last chapter on the "Celtic Year" contains many interesting items of folklore, though many of the derivations of Gaelic words must be rejected as erroneous. Though there are several misprints, only one need be mentioned. It occurs in a charm at p 63; for "drop of wine" read "drop of urine (*muin*)."

Miss Goodrich-Freer's volume, unlike the other two, is not specially devoted to folklore. In it she gives her experiences in the Inner and Outer Hebrides, where she spent various summers and made friends with the native inhabitants. The eleventh chapter, which is entirely concerned with the beliefs and customs of the islanders, is almost a word-for-word reproduction of her paper, "The Powers of Evil in the Outer Hebrides," printed in *Folk-Lore*, x., 259-282. A few other items will be found in her paper, "More Folklore from the Hebrides," in *Folk-Lore*, xiii., 29-62.

In one or two instances there are slight discrepancies between the two versions. In *Folk-Lore*, xiii., 39, is given "a rhyme said about the time of St. Patrick's feast day, which is sometimes quoted as a charm against serpents." It contains the line "Ivar's daughter will come out of the hole." As there are no snakes on the islands Miss Freer is inclined to accept an explanation of Father Allan, that "Ivar's daughter" is very probably the common nettle. In the new volume all hesitation is thrown aside, and we are categorically informed that "Ivar's daughter" "is the nettle-plant, which about St. Patrick's Day puts her head out of holes in the walls of the houses loosely built without lime." In this Miss Freer is, I believe, mistaken. "Ivar's daughter" is a euphuism for a "snake," not for a "nettle." The late Mr. Campbell of Tیره in his *Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*, p. 225, mentions that in a popular rhyme in Argyleshire and Perthshire the serpent is called the "daughter of Edward," but in Skye simply "the damsel," *an ribhinn*. As the words "Ivar" and "Edward" have probably a common origin it can hardly be doubted but that "Ivar's daughter" refers to a "snake." In a Norse charm to neutralise snake-poison the snake is called *Aablik*, var. *Aabert*, var. *Oblich*.

Sometimes an obscure point in one of the volumes before us is explained in another volume. Miss Freer mentions a belief that perhaps partly explains a fact given by Dr. Maclagan, which he does not quite understand. The latter at p. 143 states that in using the "string charm" the skilled woman wound the three-ply yarn round the points of her thumb, middle, and ring finger, holding the thread between the thumb and middle finger of the right hand. And at p. 145 "the forefinger must not be allowed to touch the yarn throughout the performance." Miss Freer

(p. 250) tells us that when a woollen thread, over which a charm has been repeated, is brought home, it must be carried in the palm of the hand and not between the finger (forefinger?) and thumb, because with them Eve plucked the apple, and so they are not blessed. This explanation, though it cannot be very ancient, seems to cover part of Dr. Maclagan's fact. His own idea (p. 171) appears to be that the forefinger is not used because it is one of the fingers protruded in forming the *mano cornuta*, and this of course would also include the equally excluded little finger. But as, on the other hand, of the fingers employed one is the *digitus infamis* or *impudicus*, while the thumb is conspicuously used in the *mano fica*, this suggestion may not be the right one, and the real reason is yet to be discovered. Again in a story, related by Miss Freer to illustrate the belief that eating an eel drives a man mad, the man kills a horse and eats the raw flesh. No reason is given for killing the horse. But in another story given by Mr. Campbell (*op. cit.*, p. 222), which perhaps refers to the same event, the madman is found fighting a horse, and the reason alleged for his doing so is, because the eels he had eaten had grown from horse-hairs.

JOHN ABERCROMBY.

POPULAR RELIGION IN THE PANJAB. Report of the Census of the Panjab and North-West Frontier Province of 1901. By H. A. ROSE. Simla. 1902.

IN his valuable report of the results of the recent Census in the Panjab Mr. Rose has wisely decided not to follow the line of investigation regarding the popular religion of the people which was so ably conducted by his predecessors, Messrs. Ibbetson and Maclagan, in their reports of the two preceding enumerations. But under the modest title of *A Few Discursive Notes on Popular Religion* he has discussed a well-worn subject in a fresh and suggestive way.

He begins by noting the suggestive fact that in India popular religion "has rather less to do with morality than with anything

else." Yet it would be wrong to say that the ordinary rustic has no standard of right and wrong, because "altruism is concentrated on the caste, the tribe, and the family, in a way that it is hardly possible for us to understand." Again, while the peasant in matters connected with litigation is unscrupulous and not averse to perjury when his material interests are at stake, the fact that so much of the business of daily life is carried on without any documentary record is proof that the parties to a contract must usually act in good faith and trust each other. What is most curious in the Panjab, as in other parts of India, is the lack of ethical perspective. One of the rules of the Bishnoi sect runs: "Bathe in the morning; commit not adultery": and the two rules seem to stand on an equal footing.

Animism, the bed-rock of the popular faith, naturally leads, as Mr. Rose points out, to the confusion of the idea of life and spirit. Hence, anything that lives, or rather displays supernatural or abnormal vitality, like trees of many kinds, comes to be worshipped.

This confusion of life and spirit leads, again, to the inference that as life is transferred from one generation to another, so the soul, and with it all the attributes and powers of the progenitor, is transferred also. Hence is explained the curious belief in the transmission of the hereditary powers of curing disease or of causing evil. Thus, several Biloch subdivisions have the power of stopping bleeding by incantations; the Pathals of Jhelum cure boils on children's heads gratis, by first filling the mouth with salt and then spitting on the sore; the head of a Gūjar sept cures disease of the skin which results in baldness by pulling out a single hair. This reminds us of the royal power of touching for "King's" Evil; and in Ireland the blood of a person of the Keogh sept is, or was, used for the cure of toothache.¹

Naturally clans gifted in this way tend to assume what is almost a priestly character, and the suggestion may be hazarded that the origin of some of the sacred tribes, the Levite and the Brāhman, may have been in some cases based on these supposed hereditary powers of healing disease, of which the Panjab supplies so many and so curious instances.

Mr. Rose then goes on to show that Magic and Religion, start-

¹ Black, *Folk Medicine*, p. 140.

ing from the same point, diverged into two distinct paths—the magician claiming to be able to manipulate the vital essence ; the priest maintaining “that the devolution of the soul could be modified or controlled by the pious or just man who observed the precepts of religion.” Hence the business of the magician is principally concerned with the control or transference of life. Thus, in the magical rites performed to obviate barrenness, on a Sunday or a Tuesday night the woman takes her seat on a stool and is lowered into a well. When she reaches the water she strips, bathes, dresses, and is finally hauled up again ; or to effect the same object, she cuts a lock of hair from the head of a child, who must be a *first-born*, and takes it to the wizard. Here the idea obviously is that in the one case she extracts the principle of life from the living water, in the other from the first-born child.

“Religion, on the other hand, deprecated any such impious interference with the laws of nature. It maintained that, while, in the ordinary course of things, life was transmitted from one generation to another, superior sanctity could secure promotion on re-birth into a higher caste ; while impiety was punished by re-birth in a lower form of life. Religion also adopted the view that life and spirit were one and the same thing ; that that principle was inherent in every living thing, and from this basis appears to have been evolved the metaphysical doctrine of the world-soul, which pervades everything in the universe, of which the individual soul is but a detached fragment, and into which it will be re-absorbed.”

Most interesting is the glimpse which is all our present knowledge gives us, of the secret religions. They were instituted either to protect an unpopular creed, like that of the Persian Bābis, from persecution, or to enhance their value in the estimation of the outside public by confining the revelation to a limited body of initiates. All the ascetic orders, like the Jogis and Sannyāsīs, have secret initiatory rites or special pass-words to protect the mystery of the faith. The secret, such as it is, once revealed often turns out to be the most silly rubbish. But, as Mr. Rose suggests, some of these beliefs may be “the débris of old allegories.” Once, in short, such things had a meaning which is now lost. Otherwise, “it is not easy to see how men could worship a whistle, or a personified whistle, or a whistling god, but it is not so difficult to understand that they could begin by making a whistle the

emblem of an attribute, and end by converting the attribute into a god which whistles."

Tabu Mr. Rose speaks of as "an institution" which plays an important part in the life of the people"; but his treatment of it is comprised in only a few lines. One sept of Jats, he tells us, will not build an upper storey to their houses. This he does not attempt to explain. Possibly the tabu is based on the principle, so fully analyzed by Dr. Frazer,¹ that a dread of personal impurity is at the root of the matter. No greater service to the investigation of folk beliefs could be done than a thorough exploration of the rules of tabu in India, where the popular code of rural belief says quite as often "thou shalt not" as "thou shalt." In many cases these precepts are due to the confusion between what is sacred and what is accursed, this confusion of thought leading the rustics to abstain from anything which, in their belief, has been exposed to supernatural influence. But this does not exhaust all the origins of Indian tabu. Some must be due to traditions dating from a time when the tribe led a nomadic life, as, for instance, the case of some people in Oudh, who regard a tiled roof to their houses as tabu, probably because in some not remote period they lived like the vagrant gypsy races under a rude shelter of reeds.

Mr. Rose ends his short survey of popular belief by the welcome announcement that "the old personal sects and old fanaticism are losing ground." This is probably true of the Panjab, but hardly of other parts of India. It is only a few years since the authorities in the Gangetic Valley were startled by a sudden revival of religious fanaticism, as shown by the curious daubing of tree stumps and the rioting connected with the anti-cow-killing agitation. India, in fact, is rather a continent than a country, and nothing is so dangerous as to apply to the whole Peninsula facts based on the experience of a single province.

The study of this fresh series of Census reports is to some extent dispiriting. They show how little we really know, or in the present condition of things can know, of the myriad currents of thought which force their way in all directions beneath the seemingly placid surface of native life. Everywhere the beliefs of the people are hedged round by a reticence which even the best informed and

¹ *Golden Bough*, 2nd edition, i., 360, *seqq.*

most sympathetic Englishman finds it almost hopeless to overcome. We may be able to watch and grasp the significance of some of the external observances, but behind these in the most secret corner of his mind every Hindu hides away a mass of beliefs which he refuses to communicate not only to the white-faced stranger, but even to his very brethren of the true faith.

W. CROOKE.

LA VIE FUTURE D'APRÈS LE MAZDÉISME À LA LUMIÈRE DES CROYANCES PARALLÈLES DANS LES AUTRES RELIGIONS. ÉTUDE D'ARCHÉOLOGIE COMPARÉE. Par NATHAN SÖDERBLOM. Paris: Leroux. 1901.

ALTHOUGH this work is primarily intended for the student of the history of religion it contains much to interest the folklorist. The author begins by discussing, in a sane and scholarly spirit, primitive beliefs concerning a prolongation or renewal of life after death as the necessary basis of all eschatological systems. It is, however, his view of the relation between the fundamental myths of Zoroastrian eschatology and similar myths of other peoples, Indo-Germanic or Semitic, as also between the completed Avestic system and that of Judaism, which chiefly concerns us. He is for the most part an opponent of the borrowing theory; he is notably adverse to admitting that Judaism owes the conception of a future life, a judgment, and a heaven to the followers of Zoroaster; he holds that these conceptions are the natural outcome of religious development among the Jews. At the same time he combats the hypothesis of Jewish or Judæo-Hellenic influence on the Avestic literature. I am perfectly content to accept his conclusion, but am all the more surprised to note that when it is a question of comparing Avestic and Eddaic myths M. Söderblom is by no means so convinced an anti-borrower. His language is vague and obscure, but if I understand him right he ascribes the similarity (first pointed out with such convincing mastery of exposition by Rydberg) between the Eddaic myths of the great winter, the destruction of mankind, and the preservation of a couple from whom a new humanity is to spring, and the Avestic myth of the *vara* of Zima, to direct borrowing on the

part of the Eddaic writers, and notably of Snorre. Why? It is surely simpler to argue, what is indeed evident on other grounds, that Germans and Iranians, both members of the Aryan unity, were in such close contact before the Iranians set forth to occupy the regions to the south-west or south of the Caspian as to bring about exceptionally close kinship of the mythic germs which each race was to develop independently. Avesta and Edda are, as regards certain myths, closer to each other than even Avesta and Veda, or than either of the three to Hellenic mythology. This fact enables us to postulate prehistoric contacts between Germans and Iranians of which we should otherwise be ignorant. To explain it by literary influence within the historic period (*i.e.* from 500 B.C. to 900 A.D.) seems to me a complete ignoring of the plainest facts of history. For probably two-thirds of this space of time the Germans were almost as much cut off from the Aryans of Iran as from the Aryans of Northern India. If Eddaic mythology is to be treated as a loan (a point on which readers of *Folk-Lore* know my opinion) let it be a loan from those Aryan peoples with whom the Germans were in historic contact, Celts, Greeks, Romans.

I cannot but think M. Söderblom has paid too little attention to the non-eschatological Elysium (as it may be called) found in Greece, in Celtdom, and in Scandinavia. Certain Avestic myths find their natural explanation in a similar conception. And I may be permitted some surprise at his referring for Irish examples not to the *Voyage of Bran*, where the whole subject is discussed, but to a chance allusion in an article by M. Beauvois on Central American mythology.

This book, translated from the Swedish, is, perhaps through the translator's fault, hard reading, but it is well worth the attention of English readers. In spite of the fact that England possesses in Dr. Mills and Mr. West two of the most eminent of living "Zoroastrianists," in spite of the fact that the official heads of the oldest existing organised religion, save Judaism, are British subjects, the civilisation and religion of the Iranian Aryans are too little known in this country. And yet for the solution of many problems connected with the development of Aryan religion and culture, more assistance is perhaps to be derived from the Avestic than from the Vedic literature.

ALFRED NUTT.

THE ORIGIN OF CIVILISATION AND THE PRIMITIVE CONDITION OF MAN. By the RIGHT HON. LORD AVEBURY, P.C., F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D. Sixth edition, with numerous additions. Longmans, Green, & Co. 1902. 8vo. Price 18s.

A NEW book by Lord Avebury is eagerly welcomed by the intelligent public, and folklorists hoped, when they saw the announcement of a sixth edition with numerous additions of the well-known work on *The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man*, that Lord Avebury would present his fellow students with his ripened conclusions and generalisations on these important subjects; but the reader will be disappointed if he expects to find any difference of presentment or of interpretation from those afforded in the first edition of 1870. Probably every member of the Society has read one of the five earlier editions of the book, and consequently it is only necessary to glance through this edition in order to notice the later accretions, or it may be of bibliographical interest to some to note the omissions. On the whole the former do not alter the character of the book in any way, and it would have been advisable to have verified them before going to press. To take three examples: footnote 6, p. 273, is a wrong reference; on p. 99 "Henry group" is a misprint for Hervey group; "E. F. von Thurm" (p. 228), should be E. F. im Thurn. But after all, who among us dare throw stones?

There are very numerous instances where additions or qualifications might very well have been made so as to bring the book more into line with our present knowledge. We might have expected, for example, some notice to have been taken of the finds during recent years in French caves, which modify some of the conclusions in chapter ii. The magical object of personal mutilation and adornment is insufficiently noted, although a considerable amount of evidence of this sort has come to light. It is rather a pity to describe (p. 103) Bachofen, McLennan, and Morgan as "the most recent authors who have studied this subject," *i.e.* communal marriage. It is useless to give further instances, and we all know that Lord Avebury is a very busy man. As Lord Avebury's views have been so long before the public, and as they have been frequently discussed, there is nothing more that can be said with profit on the subject. The publishers evidently regard

the work as a "classic" that should be kept before each generation of readers, and we are pleased that there are sufficient purchasers of this class of book to encourage the publishers in supplying the demand.

A. C. HADDON.

THE MABINOGION. Translated by Lady C. GUEST, and Edited by A. NUTT. D. NUTT. 2s. 1 vol.

THE name of Mr. Nutt on the title page of a book dealing with Celtic literature is in itself a sufficient guarantee of excellence. And, though the present edition professes to be merely a reprint in popular form of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the Mabinogion, it yet contains enough of Mr. Nutt's sound scholarship to make the volume, if not a text-book for the student, at least a "remembrancer" in small compass of many pleasant things.

Lady Charlotte Guest's original three-volume edition, excellent though it is as literature, has, as far as the critical notes are concerned, of necessity been somewhat superseded by the results of modern Celtic researches. Besides which, the imposing tomes are rather alarming to the casual reader, to whom also Mons. Loth's French version, good though it be, does not appeal. But Mr. Nutt's delightful little volume, whilst rightly keeping to Lady Charlotte's inimitable translation, has a compact charm which should entice the veriest idler. It is convenient and reasonable both in form and price, and has just that suspicion of age in type and paper required by the text, without descending to the affectation of quaintness. Other and more important advantages are the rearrangement of the tales, and the all-too-brief notes with which Mr. Nutt has illuminated the text. His method of grouping the stories according to subject and character makes for clearness and for an easier appreciation of the various strata of culture and imagination illustrated by the Mabinogion. And his notes, short though they be, form a sufficient commentary for those who do not wish to go deeply into the subject, and afford a trustworthy clue to those who are disposed to pursue it further.

MARGARET EYRE.

THE LITERATURE OF THE CELTS, ITS HISTORY AND ROMANCE.
By MAGNUS MACLEAN, M.A., D.Sc. 8vo. Blackie and Son.
London. 1902.

DR. MACLEAN does not pretend to do more than give a popular sketch of what is known as to the materials and muniments of Celtic literature. About half his book or more covers much the same ground as Dr. Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland*, but there are several chapters on Welsh and Gaelic literature and its texts that did not come within the Irish scholar's scope. There is nothing new in the book, nor is the author writing from the standpoint of the student. He is a "populariser" trying to convey to the ordinary reading public his view of things that have impressed and delighted him, things they will do well to know something of.

A few slips in the Gaelic, occasional misunderstandings and omissions, are scarce worth noting here. It seems useless to cite Moore's well-worn "Tara" and "After the Battle" as characteristically Celtic, and the "heroic Walter Scott" was, after all, a border Northumbrian, mainly of Teutonic descent, rather than a "Gael" or "Pict"; there is a little too much idle talk of "glamour" and "Celtic spirit" and the rest of those enigmatic and question-begging terms that have really done duty long enough.

One of the best bits of the book is the analysis of the Scottish Gaelic press. It is really pitiful to see the number of prints and reprints of theologic rubbish and cant and the absence of vernacular or translated classics. What a heavy and leaden pressure must have been put upon men and women who naturally delight in beautiful verse and prose when they were constrained to buy and, I suppose, read such worthless stupid stuff as makes up by far the great part of the early bibliography of Scottish Gaelic printed books. Mackenzie and Campbell of Islay, Sinclair and Carmichael, have done their best to turn the scale; but it is sad to think of the lovely poems and tales lost and the fine talents misused owing to the bigotry and false policy of those who ought to have led their people to higher things than fruitless theological brabbles and dreary sermonisings and weary absurdities. Happily in Ireland to-day the clergy are taking a wiser line, and not only working themselves at Celtic literature and linguistic,

but helping and encouraging the preservation of what remains of the Celtic heritage of the past.

M. de Villemarqué's work is scarcely acknowledged (save in a note) for what it is, namely, a brilliant forgery by a man of talent who amused himself by his artificial and romantic "reconstruction" of an epoch he never knew. Breton literature indeed deserved a little more detailed treatment than is accorded it here, especially as information affecting the tongue and literary output of *La Bretagne bretonnante* is not accessible to most Englishmen. There is a more serious lacuna still in the absence of any account of modern Welsh literature. The mighty David, beloved of Borrow, is apparently unknown to Dr. Maclean; and the remarkable history of Welsh verse and Welsh prose, of Welsh versions (such as the renowned "Blind Bard") and Welsh paraphrases, and all the amazing amount of vernacular printing (and some reprinting) in Wales is wholly unmentioned. A history of Celtic literature that omits so much is obviously imperfect and inadequate. Dr. Maclean should seek further Welsh collaboration, cut down and excise much that he has written, limit himself to essentials, put his work into more methodic form, cut away all his own hypotheses and conjectures, and so get somewhat nearer his aim of writing a popular survey of Celtic literature than the present unbalanced and sadly imperfect but well-meant volume can ever come. Let Dr. Maclean read and mark such manuals as those of Dr. Mackail, Mr. Murray, or Mr. Brooke, or any good French manual of literature, and he will find models he will do well to follow as best he can in his next edition.

F. YORK POWELL.

SHORT NOTICES.

Les Influences Celtiques avant et après Columban ; Essai historique et archéologique par Ch. Ræssler. Illustrations. 8vo. Paris. 1902.

IN this little essay M. Ræssler tries to show his countrymen the interest of the study of Celtic antiquities. He is not himself by any means an advanced student, but he is full of enthusiasm and has read a good deal, though not always wisely. His book may