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77. The Supreme Being and Totems in Sarawak: A Note in Reply to Mr. McDougall.

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influenced by basketwork. The excavators have classified upwards of sixty different geometric motives which appear in innumerable combinations and permutations. Numerous "idols" were found; some of marble, in form surprisingly unlike those of the Cyclades—one, for instance, is shaped like a bolster with tied-in neck and adorned with meander-patterns in red; others skilfully modelled in clay, for the most part steatopygous female figures with an exaggerated abdominal fold; others acrolithic with a stone head affixed to a clay body. Implements of stone, including a fine oval mace-head pierced through its longer axis, flint and obsidian flakes, bone needles and gouges, stores of figs and grain, complete the picture of a vigorous local culture, the affinities of which are rather with the Thracian than with the Cycladic area.

The explorers have detected sites of the same character in other parts of Thessaly, and M. Tsountas has now resumed work there. Their account of the excavations, a quarto volume with fifty plates from photographs and from drawings by E. Gillieron, will be published by the Greek Archæological Society and is expected to appear in 1903.

R. C. BOSANQUET.

Religion.

Lang.

The Supreme Being and Totems in Sarawak: A Note in Reply to Mr. McDougall. *By Andrew Lang, M.A.* (Cf. MAN, 1902. 62-63.) **77**

Mr. McDougall invites me to express an opinion as to whether "the belief in a Supreme Being was either (a) independently acquired by one people only and transmitted to others by descent or by borrowing, or (b) was independently acquired by different peoples but by the same process of thought in every case." He supposes me to accept the second alternative for which he sees no grounds, thinking it "*à priori* probable that the conception of a Supreme Being has developed along different lines among the various peoples that entertain it."

A categorical answer cannot, I think, be given to this question. We know that in very many cases the conception of a Supreme Being has been borrowed from Christian or Islamite teaching, while we have little evidence as to any vestige of it which may have existed before, in each case, say, among the Pagan Irish. Again, I could not venture to deny that the conception may have been developed "along different lines," among different peoples, and even among different individuals. How can I know for certain how Moses and Mahomet evolved their idea of a Supreme Being, whether by returning to and reviving, with the force of genius, an archaic notion nearly obliterated, or by dint of speculation unaided, or by borrowing? Nobody of sense will give a dogmatic reply, in each case, where evidence is so scanty and obscure, though in each case a man may have an opinion.

All that I have said, I think, is that a current theory of the development of the conception of a Supreme Being as the last stage in "animistic" speculation, appears to me to be thwarted by the occurrence of the conception (if the evidence for it is admitted) among the very lowest races, who are not worshippers of ancestral ghosts and are not known to believe in departmental deities out of which one may be elected as supreme. In such cases (granting the evidence) we find the effect without the supposed causes, as in other races we find the supposed causes without the effect. That is all my contention. and in the instance of very low and isolated peoples, without the social and animistic conditions often regarded as causes of the conception, I conjecture that the spectacle of things suggested the inference that there was a Maker of things. This is only a conjecture in lack of a better. I cannot possibly pretend to say that the Greeks—Plato, for instance—or that Mahomet, or that the Masai reached their conception of a Supreme Being with the idea of a Maker of things as a starting point. My conclusions are rather negative than positive. However the Andamanese or the Australians got at their idea, it was not, I think, by adoring ghosts, promoting them to godhead, and selecting one

god out of the multitude as supreme. I shall be glad to consider any proofs that the Australians, for example, have declined from a higher culture, but at present I am not aware of the existence of any such proofs.

I think that the existence of *nyarong* ("individual totems") is so closely analogous to totemism (some even think it the germ of totemism) that the wide diffusion of totems is not at all more "wonderful" and, *à priori*, improbable than the wide diffusion of any other superstition. But the sense of wonder differs in different individuals. As to the Punans, since "our knowledge of them is most imperfect," I prefer to wait. My cousin, the late Mr. J. J. Atkinson, had long been familiar with the tribes of New Caledonia before an accident proved to him that they had, if not totems in the fullest measure, yet certainly kindred and protecting animals—lizard, pigeon, mouse, and so on—regarded as "fathers."

I would not assert that the Kenyahs have *not* acquired their belief in the way suggested by Mr. McDougall and Dr. Hose; I only point out that, taking their original paper as it stands, there seems no proof that the Kenyahs must have followed that path.

A. LANG.

REVIEWS.

Race-Contact.

Bryce.

The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind, being the Romanes Lecture, 1902. By the Rt. Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902. 8vo. pp. 46. **78**

Mr. Bryce has chosen for his Romanes Lecture a most opportune subject. Whether viewed from its social or its political side, the question of the relations of the advanced and the backward races of mankind never before loomed so large in the face of the civilised nations. To the nations directly addressed by the lecturer, Britain and the United States, it has become of special urgency, for they have recently taken upon themselves new and difficult tasks. Nor could anyone be found combining in so ample a measure scholarship and statesmanship and a wide personal acquaintance with other lands and other peoples than his own as Mr. Bryce, to direct their serious attention to the problems involved.

Of course it was impossible within the limits of a single lecture exhaustively to treat a theme so vast. All that could be done was to point out the crisis in the history of the world at which we have arrived, when the globe has been in effect portioned out among the advanced races, to enumerate in general terms the possible results on both the advanced and the backward races of this ubiquitous contact, and to indicate briefly the possible solutions of the difficulties which are certain to arise. To this task Mr. Bryce has accordingly addressed himself; and this he has succeeded in performing with extended knowledge and equally extended sympathies, in a manner calculated to appeal to the earnest consideration of all thoughtful men, to whatever school, creed, or nation they belong.

Scientific anthropologists will read the lecture with unusual interest. The backward races of mankind have occupied an overwhelming share of their attention. They are convinced that even of those of which we know most there is more yet to be learned than is already known. Though science is not political, they are satisfied that even for a political purpose racial questions are imperfectly understood, unless they are studied from the scientific side. They will find support for this opinion in Mr. Bryce's observations as the troubles likely to be caused wherever contact arises without fusion of races, and in the various suggestions for minimising the evils and reducing the friction. To take the particular instance of South Africa, all the troubles referred to are likely to be experienced in dealing with the Bantu nations. The Bantu are, perhaps, the most prolific race on the face of the earth. This characteristic is due quite as much to their institu-