

Book Reviews

Robie, W. F. RATIONAL SEX ETHICS. A Physiological and Psychological Study of the Sex Lives of Normal Men and Women, with Suggestions for a Rational Sex Hygiene. Boston, Richard G. Badger; Toronto, The Copp Clark Company.

This book presents a good deal of data in regard to the importance and form of manifestation of the sex life in every man and woman because the material is drawn largely from the testimony of healthy men and women as well as from those in whom neurotic disturbance has arisen. The author's plea is for a more rational and plastic attitude toward the sex problems, particularly the definite ones of marriage. This he bases upon the adaptability of so important a portion of the individual life as the sexual to varying conditions and demands.

His endeavor is to view and present the matter in the broader light, which refuses to be bound by petty limiting formulas and conventions of the attitude toward the details of sex activity and feeling. Considering these matters in their wider relationships he looks for the greatest ultimate good, particularly in the establishment and maintenance of lasting happy marriage. This but strengthens his emphasis upon those greater conventions, such as marriage itself, which have come into existence because of their social and individual usefulness in the sex life, and which make for a constructive permanency. His attitude is one which values the genetic development of sex life as of social life and therefore finds room for this adaptability of elements in the greater whole. Thus his discussion of auto-erotic practices, as he prefers to designate masturbation, thoroughly discountenances that traditional dogmatic condemnation of masturbation, which has been the source of much psychic disturbance. While there seems a tendency in some of his case discussions to lay too much stress upon this side of sexuality in certain secondary processes, yet he is clear in characterizing it as a feature of what has no place in perfect sexuality. It is at best a makeshift, a choice of lesser evils sometimes, in the varying and imperfect sex life of the race.

He has embodied the views of many writers on the subject of the sex life, some to prove their falsity, others to arrive at the fullest consideration of the subject. His partial divergence from Freud's conclusions is due to the full lack of appreciation of the place which the sex life holds in the entire psychical makeup. He fails at least to ex-

press the interdependence of this part with the whole, and also therefore of the many varieties of manifestation of sex interest or of the disturbances arising in relation to it. In discussing the factors which lie in point of time behind sexual manifestation, whether this is normal or disordered, or of the neuroses connected with it, he does not give room enough to the full content of the unconscious with its impulses. The viewpoint of the book however is that which will direct to human needs and its ultimate purpose is sound and wholesome.

L. BRINK.

Scott, James George, Müller, W. Max. THE MYTHOLOGY OF ALL RACES. In Thirteen Volumes. Louis Herbert Gray, Editor; George Foot Moore, Consulting Editor. Volume XII, Egyptian and Indo-Chinese. K. C. I. E. Boston, Marshall Jones Company.

The author of the first portion of this volume has succeeded admirably in presenting in a brief and popular but no less scholarly treatise such a difficult and extensive subject as Egyptian mythology. This he explains is impossible of concentration under one theory or system of understanding and interpretation. In its very history and essence it is as diverse and rambling as was actually the religious life of the anicent Egyptians, which maintained itself popularly through many centuries of history in many forms expressive of the thought and feeling of that long period with its many non-unified impulses. These created deities and myths which gradually arose and continued to exist side by side rather than in a gradual absorption of one by another, or of them all into a monotheistic or a pantheistic conception.

Such was peculiarly the character of the history of Egyptian religion and this the author has well portrayed in the plan of his discussion. He emphasizes in so doing these very peculiarities which mark Egyptian mythology and overthrows those forced interpretations which, from ancient classical times even to the present day, have attempted to discover a hidden spiritualism and sublimity under the guise of the crudities and materialism of their art and the customs and beliefs which are represented through it. Müller comes much closer to the actual source of the variety of beliefs and their crystallizations, when he makes them the expression of an equal variety and diversity of thought and experience arising out of successive periods of national life and modified through differing geographical and political divisions of the empire. He views this religion at no one particular crystallized epoch nor as the product of foreign influences nor as exerting as a whole system any marked influence upon other nations. It is rather to him indicative of a gradual and diversified growth of a great, a very ancient and a scattered people, who manifested a special capacity to hold tenaciously to old traditions and forms of belief more or less directly, and to graft upon these new conceptions without sublimating or submerging the old.