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On: 18 April 2015, At: 07:03

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Folklore

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfol20>

Book Reviews

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Published online: 01 Feb 2012.

To cite this article: W. Crooke (1919) Book Reviews, *Folklore*, 30:3, 242-247, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1919.9719106](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1919.9719106)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1919.9719106>

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REVIEWS.

BOOKS ON INDIA AND THE EAST.

1. THE BOOK OF DUARTE BARBOSA: An account of the Countries bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants, written by Duarte Barbosa, and completed about the year 1518 A.D. ; edited by MANSEL LONGWORTH DAMES: vol. i., Hakluyt Society, 1918.
2. THE GEOGRAPHICAL PART OF THE NUZHAT-AL-QULŪB, composed by HAMD-ALLAH MUSTAWFI OF QAZWIN in A.H. 740, A.D. 1340. Translated by G. LE STRANGE, and printed for the Trustees of the E. W. Gibb Memorial. London, Luzac & Co. 1919.
3. THE OXFORD HISTORY OF INDIA, FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE END OF 1911. By VINCENT A. SMITH, C.I.E. Oxford, The Clarendon Press. 1919.
4. MADRAS DISTRICT GAZETTEER. Salem, by F. J. RICHARDS, I.C.S., vol. i. parts i. ii. Madras, 1918.
5. A HISTORY OF THE SIKHS, FROM THE ORIGIN OF THE NATION TO THE BATTLES OF THE SUTLEJ. By JOSEPH DAVEY CUNNINGHAM, edited by H. L. O. GARRETT. Oxford University Press, 1918.

DUARTE BARBOSA, unlike other writers of his time in India, was not a casual visitor to the country who compiled the account of his travels from ill-digested, casual information. He made an extensive voyage through the Eastern seas, and lived in the cities of Southern India between 1506 and 1516. He had thus ample opportunities for learning the native languages and studying the manners and customs of the people. He was a

well-educated, competent observer, and later investigations have proved the accuracy of his enquiries. He visited India at a most interesting crisis in its history, when Indian culture for the first time came definitely into contact with that of the Western world. Hitherto students have depended upon the edition by Lord Stanley, issued by the Hakluyt Society in 1865. This was made from a Spanish version of the original, and in the way of annotation it left much to be desired. Mr. Longworth Dames, who is well acquainted with India, and is an excellent Portuguese, Arabic, and Persian scholar, has retranslated the work from the standard Portuguese edition published in 1813. It well deserves the elaborate commentary which the editor has provided. During the four centuries which have passed since Barbosa wrote, much has changed in India. Many of the old geographical names have disappeared, and the western coast of the peninsula has been much altered by the silt deposited by the great rivers. The editor has spared no pains in working out the many geographical problems. The book abounds in curious facts interesting to students of folk-lore; the covering of his face by the king of Abyssinia; the rule of women in Sokotra; the king brought up on poison. As Butler wrote:

"The Prince of Cambay's daily food
Is asp and basilisk and toad."

We find women going to war; cases of suttee; naked Jogis; the strange duels at Baticala, with much information at first hand of the ethnography and customs of the people. The second volume will be more interesting when Barbosa comes to deal with the Nayars and their strange marriage customs. The book well deserves study in this excellent edition.

HAMD-ALLAH, the compiler of this work, was Mustawfī, or State Accountant of Sultan Abu Sa'id, the last of the Mongol Ilkhānī kings of Persia, and grandson of Hūlāqū, the conqueror of Baghdad. It is in the form of a Gazetteer of Persia, Mesopotamia and the adjoining countries. Besides the value of the work as a geographical record, it possesses considerable folk-lore interest. Writing of the city of Nasibin, he tells us that the

scorpions are deadly and the gnats numerous. "It is stated that, in times past, by means of an incantation, both gnats and locusts were bound, so that neither could ever come into the city. Now in the days of Saladin, when they were building walls round the town, they came on some jars with their mouths sealed up; wherefore they imagined this was a treasure, and taking them up they opened them, but found only gnats and locusts within. Upon this these were restored to their former state, but their efficacy was destroyed." At Istakhr, or Persepolis, there are two squared pillars: "now powder scraped from these stones and laid on wounds will staunch the flow of blood." At Jājarm grow two plane trees, "and it is asserted that if anyone on the morning of a Wednesday take between his teeth some of the bark of these trees he will never suffer again from toothache." The author notices many magic springs. At Dāmghān there is a spring which "gives but little water, and what there is, is rather yellow in colour. But if any dirt shall be thrown into it, a wind forthwith arises in Dāmghān that blows down all the trees. Then some respectable folk go and cleanse the spring, and thereupon the wind falls." At Mount Mārjān, "there is a cavern, and from its roof water falls in drops, and whether one person enters, or whether it be one hundred persons who go in there, all are equally drenched by the water, which falls either more or less according to their number. It is said that this is caused by a talisman." At Harmaz Mountain there is a cavern where there is running water. "Now when anyone goes there and gives a shout the water stops, but when another comes and gives a shout the water begins to flow again; so after this fashion a shout makes it flow and a shout stops it." In India, he tells us, "there is a spring called 'Ayn-al-'Uqāb,' 'the Eagle's spring,' and for this reason that when an eagle becomes old and weak, he dips himself in this spring, and moulting his old feathers, gets new ones in their place, also renewing again the power of his youth." In Egypt, "whenever the Nile would not rise it was customary to throw into its waters a maiden, of great beauty, arrayed in her finest clothes, and with her jewels. Now in the days of the Caliph 'Omar, this lack of the inundation having occurred,

'Amr, who was the governor of Egypt appointed by him, wrote and laid the facts before 'Omar. The answer came back that they should write on a potsherd as follows: "'From the servant of God 'Omar son of Al-Khattāb, to the Nile of Egypt: and after this, verily if thou dost run thy course by thine own will, then refrain from running; but if it be so that God Almighty, and He only, caused thee to flow, then hereby we do pray to God that He, the Almighty, will cause thee again to run thy course.' This script therefore they threw into the Nile, which forthwith began to rise in inundation and never again failed." He tells of many wonders in the Eastern seas. In one island "every ant is the size of a dog, and every gnat like a sparrow, and they sting, hurting abominably; so that in this island no other living thing exists." "There are several isles where there are many tribes of the Dog-headed men, who wage war continuously with the men of the other islands." At Bustām, near the tomb of the Saint, stands a withered tree. "Now when any one of the descendants of the Shaykh comes to be on the point of death, a branch of this tree breaks off. In certain documents it is stated that this tree was originally the Staff of our Prophet—upon whom be peace!"

In Persia "there is a mill which the water continually turns, and there is never any need to stop it for repairs. Whenever a charge has to be put into the mill, or the same removed, he who does this has but to say: 'By the truth of Jonah the Prophet, stop!' and it will immediately cease to turn, and the water runs off till the charging is effected. Then that person says: 'By the truth of Jonah: Back to thy former state!' and forthwith the mill resumes its work."

A NEW, complete history of India, from the earliest times to the present day, was badly needed. The older works of Marshman, Meadows Taylor, and others were necessarily useless for the Hindu period, which was, for the first time, treated consecutively and critically, in the author's *Early History of India*. Excellent as it was, for the time in which it was written, Elphinstone's work is now out of date, in view of the large collection of materials which is the result of modern research. Dr. Vincent

Smith, in a single volume of moderate size, well illustrated, and provided with maps and bibliographies, has provided a well-written account of the history of the peninsula. Besides a full account of the political history, he has written admirable summaries of social life and of the three main religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The volume will be indispensable to the student of history and is well suited to the wants of the general reader. It will long remain the standard history of the Indian Empire.

THE account of the Salem District in the Madras Presidency, by Mr. F. J. Richards, is a book of another, and not less valuable and interesting, class. He gives us a complete survey of an important district, describing in detail the geography, history, ethnology, religions of the people, with notices of the most important places and architecture. If anyone desires to know how the people of Southern India live, their beliefs and ritual, and how they are governed, he will find these things described in a scholarly way and in the fullest detail. Southern Indian religions and ethnology are a field practically unworked, and the book is a mine of curious information on religion and folklore.

THE original edition of Cunningham's valuable work appeared in 1849. It has been now edited in excellent style by Mr. Garrett, Professor of History, Government College, Lahore. Captain Cunningham, from his long service in the Panjab, acquired much information about the Sikhs. Like Mr. M. Macauliffe's important work, also published by the Clarendon Press, *The Sikh Religion, its Gurus, Sacred Writings, and Authors*, it is written largely from the Sikh point of view; but it has a special value because Cunningham was a writer of singular independence, and his criticisms on the policy of the Government were so distasteful to his superiors that, as a punishment, he was removed from his political appointment and sent back to regimental duty. His second brother, Alexander, lived to become Archaeological Surveyor of India, and produced a valuable series of reports and monographs on

Indian history and antiquities, while his youngest brother, Peter, gained a reputation as an editor of Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Massinger, Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, Goldsmith's works, and he compiled an excellent handbook of London.

W. CROOKE.

SHORT NOTICES.

CZECH FOLK-TALES.

CZECH FOLK-TALES, selected and translated by Dr. JOSEF BAUDIS. London, George Allen & Unwin. 1917.

IN this little volume Dr. Baudis provides an interesting collection of Czech tales, from sources unfamiliar to English readers. He remarks that "it is often supposed that Protestantism is very unfavourable to the development and preservation of folk-tales; but those of Bohemia are certainly an exception to the rule. The Czech nation was the first to adopt the Protestant faith, and even to-day is still Protestant at heart, though the Hapsburgs forced it back into the Catholic fold." The leading characteristics of the stories are their strong ethical tendency and the natural tendency to satire which appears among the Czechs.

KI-SWAHILI FOLK-LORE.

AIDS TO THE STUDY OF KI-SWAHILI. Four Studies, compiled and annotated by M. W. H. WEECH. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., London. N.D.

THE interest of this book is mainly philological; but it contains some matter of folk-lore interest: the tale of the Banawasi, the man who has always an answer ready and excels in repartee; and "Don't cast your pearls before swine." These are followed by a collection of Enigmas and Aphorisms with explanations as given by the Wa-swahili, and a Study on Magic in Pemba. This last includes papers on the Spirit Dance (by a sceptic); the Witches' Sabbath; Four Charms whereby to cause evil to an enemy; a charm to obtain a wish from a rich man, a