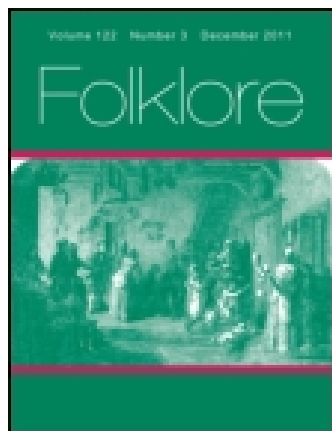


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## Book Reviews

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## REVIEWS.

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SIR WALTER SCOTT'S MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.  
Edited by T. F. HENDERSON. 4 vols., 8vo. Wm. Black-  
wood and Sons, 1902. Price £2 2s. net.

THESE four handsome volumes are a worthy presentation of a work which has long since become a classic without losing a whit of its freshness or charm. In size and type they pleasantly recall the familiar originals, while they are enriched with a number of useful and business-like notes and with a very pleasing photographure from the portrait of Sir Walter by Sir William Allan. All criticisms notwithstanding, this is an edition which any book-lover may be proud to possess.

Mr. Henderson is evidently a thoroughly competent local antiquary, and has completed, elucidated, and occasionally corrected, Scott's historical notes with the most conscientious care and pains, and in a very satisfactory manner. He has also examined all the still-existing MS. and other copies of the ballads from which Scott worked, and he gives the *variorum* readings in footnotes, showing clearly which portions of the published ballads are due to Scott himself, and which to his authorities. (Scott's method was to collate the several variants, choosing the best lines and stanzas of each, but not scrupling to add lines and even stanzas when his authorities did not satisfy him.)

All this part of Mr. Henderson's work is excellent. We say this the more emphatically, as we have some serious criticisms to make in other respects. He approaches the ballads themselves rather from the standpoint of the local historian or the biographer than from that of the lover of poetry, of romance, or of folklore. "The most valuable and original part of Scott's undertaking," he says, "was the preservation and annotation of ballads specially connected with the Border"; and his own interest in the work lies chiefly in tracing the part played by these legendary and antiquarian studies in giving its special distinction to the genius of

"the Author of *Waverley*"; a point on which he makes some very good observations (pp. xiv., xv.). But the effect of this standpoint is that his treatment of the "Romantic Ballads" is far from satisfactory. He is haunted by chronic doubts of their genuineness, and by continual anxiety to prove their modernity, or, at least, their literary origin. So nervously suspicious is he that he omits the music (given in Lockhart's edition) altogether, "as there is no little dubiety as to the genuine antiquity of ballad *airs*" (p. xxxix.), ignorant apparently that a scientific musician can date and describe a tune as accurately as a palæographer dates a manuscript. If a ballad is ill-rhymed, prosaic, or vulgar, he decides that it is the composition of the peasant-reciter himself; if it shows poetic feeling, it is due to the collector—Leyden, Sharpe, Hogg, or Laidlaw—who recorded it; regardless of the difference in style between the ballads in question and the original works of these versifiers of Scott's day. Poetic fire, apparently, is for him a gift bestowed only on the literary and the cultured. No peasant-bred poet, no "mute inglorious Milton," enters into his calculations: a strange exclusiveness in the fellow-countryman of the Ayrshire Ploughman, or even the Ettrick Shepherd. To those who believe that folk-song springs from the folk he attributes the idea, long ago ridiculed by Mr. Joseph Jacobs, that "the collective folk assembled in folk-moot, simultaneously shouted" songs and proverbs by a common inspiration (*Folk-Lore*, iv., 234); and we fear it would be vain to try and convince him that he is fighting against windmills.

If forgery cannot be suspected, the poor ballad (if it have no historical basis), is belittled in some other way. *Brown Adam* is "not of much account." *The Wife of Usher's Well* has "nothing remarkable in the story." *Clerk Saunders* is "a mere (!) variation of the seven hostile brethren tale"; the commentator not perceiving that, apart from the poetic merit of the ballad, that is just where the interest of the story lies. In fact, he seems unable to perceive either the conditions of the "problem of diffusion" or the issues involved in it. He says "the late Professor Child's list of foreign ballads is in many respects invaluable, but it is possible to overrate or misunderstand its significance"; and credits Mr. Lang with the amazing opinion that many of our ballads must have existed "millions of years before the existence of any human records!" He then cites Professor Child against the very early

origin of ballad plots, without perceiving that the Professor's real point in the passage quoted is that the occurrence of the same ballad story in (say) Spain and Sweden does not necessarily prove that it was inherited by both from a common ancestor, as it might easily have been carried from one to another during the Middle Ages. Mr. Henderson himself accounts for the likeness of plots, (which he minimises), by coincidence and by conscious copying, and says that folklorists "appear to be quite unaware of the fact that there are romance stories common to nearly all the nations of Europe." This is the very point that the labours of the folklorists have established, and that not with regard to romances alone. Where, we may ask, did the romances get this common stock of stories from? Mr. Henderson makes no attempt to discuss the relations of the folktale to the romance and the ballad.

This want of grasp of the whole question of ballad-origins is the more surprising as Mr. Henderson refers freely to the writings of Mr. Frazer, Mr. Hartland, Principal Rhys, and other folklorists. Even a harmless ballad-ghost calls forth a note (vol. iii., p. 320), "For more definite superstitions regarding the return of ghosts see Fraser's [*sic*] *Golden Bough*, iii., 85-87."

Mr. Henderson's own view of the origin of ballads is that "the question is really one of poetic form." This, and the sort of irritation he shows in speaking of variants, lead us to suspect that, after all, the "origin" he desires to arrive at is simply the full-blown English (or Scottish) ballad as its now-forgotten author originally composed it. This we are afraid is a hopeless quest, for none can aver that even the earliest blackletter broadside (though necessarily unaltered by reciter or collector since publication) is the "original" ballad; the most corrupted "traditional" version of it may be inherited from an older form still. Meantime we turn with pleasure from Mr. Henderson's "Prefatory Note" to Scott's own "Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry." Little as Sir Walter knew of folktales and the problems of their origin and diffusion, his mingled common sense and poetic insight enabled him to give a lucid exposition of the probable genesis of folk-song which we, with our infinitely wider knowledge, may largely supplement, but in which we shall find but little to correct.

CHARLOTTE S. BURNE.

THE HOME-LIFE OF BORNEO HEAD HUNTERS, ITS FESTIVALS  
AND FOLK-LORE. By WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS, 3<sup>d</sup>., M.D.,  
F.R.G.S. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1902.

THIS beautifully printed and profusely illustrated volume forms an important contribution to our knowledge of the natives of Sarawak. Dr. Furness is not content with superficial impressions, but takes pains to make himself, and his readers, acquainted with the trains of thought underlying the practices he describes. The chapters on Sarawak in Dr. Haddon's *Head-Hunters, Black, White, and Brown* (reviewed *supra*, p. 101), and the volume now before us, supplement one another, and should be read together.

It is natural to turn first to the descriptions of head-hunting and the traditions of its origin. The practice having been abolished, or at least restrained by the Rajah, the author had no opportunity of witnessing an actual head-hunt. He accompanied a war expedition; but the enemy had retired beyond reach. Inasmuch as it was impossible to think of returning without at least one head, a second-hand head had to be obtained by borrowing. The ceremonies (carefully described) which followed were, therefore, to some extent a make-believe. Yet there is no reason to think they did not accurately represent the originals. Dr. Furness made efforts to ascertain the meaning of the practice of head-hunting, and to follow the train of thought by which, as one of the chiefs told him, "those who were once our enemies become our guardians, our friends, our benefactors." The result does not carry us very far. It is certain that, once a head has been brought home and the appropriate ceremonies have been performed, it is regarded as a sacred object, the habitation or embodiment of some super-human spirit or spiritual power. A custom still fraught with peril to saintly personages in the East, as once in the West also, is that of securing a divinity by slaying some powerful or holy man. His spirit, abiding with or near the muddy vesture of decay which it has thus put off, becomes the guardian of the place. But Dr. Furness does not make it clear that this is the belief of the Sibops and other head-hunting tribes of Borneo. On the contrary, one of their chiefs told him: "If my head were cut off, my second self would go to Bulun Matai [the fields of the dead] where beyond a doubt I should be happy; the Dayongs [shamans, priests] tell us, and surely they know,

that those who have been brave and have taken heads, as I have, will be respected in that other world and will have plenty of riches. When I die my friends will beat the gongs loud and shout out my name, so that those who are already in Balun Matai will know that I am coming, and meet me when I cross over the stream on Bintang Sikópa [the great log]. I shall be glad enough to see them. But I don't want to go to-day, nor to-morrow." Hence it would appear that the spirits who become the guardians of the owners of the heads are not those of the original owners when the heads were those of living men. We must not be too sure of this, because the minds of savages are built, like other minds, in water-tight compartments, and frequently hold inconsistent opinions. Moreover, it would seem that the practice of head-hunting comes from without and is of recent introduction among many of the tribes.

It may be, therefore, that the practice is imperfectly assimilated by the peoples of Sarawak, that they do not understand its original purpose and have not thought out its logical relation with their indigenous religion, which it partly overrides; or it may be that there is something more to be learnt than Dr. Furness and Dr. Haddon have been able to ascertain concerning the religious beliefs of the Kenyahs and similar tribes of Borneo. Either hypothesis is consistent with the researches of Mr. Kruyt, a Dutch enquirer in Celebes and among the Dyaks and Battaks. The Toradja of Celebes, at all events, appear from his account to recognise a three-fold soul in every living being. That which is attached to the skull and is acquired by the head-hunter is only one soul of the three. The breath (the first of the three souls) expires at death, the personal soul departs to the place of souls, but the third is a part of the universal soul or vital ether. It is of this that the head-hunter becomes possessed. He deposits the skull in the shrine of his ancestral *manes*, and thereby augments their portion of the universal soul. It would be well if enquiries were made in the island of Borneo with a view to ascertain whether such ideas have any currency there.

Dr. Furness, I gather, never had the luck to be present at a birth or a marriage. Neither of these is among the incidents of the book. But the ceremonies attending the naming of a chief's son are detailed with minuteness. The name is given to a child about a year after birth. Until then the babe is under certain

restrictions, or taboos. One of these reminds us of our own superstition that a child must be carried upstairs before it is carried down. The Kenyah houses are built on piles and reached by a rude ladder; and a child must not be carried down the ladder to the ground until it has received a name. The naming is the formal admission of a babe to the kindred. If it die before the rite, there is no mourning for it. The rite is one of baptism; performed by a Dayong, who pours water over the baby's head, and says: "Be thy name so-and-so!" It is preceded by a number of sacrifices and other formalities, one of the most curious of which is that of procuring new fire by means of the sacred fire-saw.

The subject of taboo has a chapter to itself, and is besides copiously illustrated in treating of other matters. Personal adornments are discussed in a very interesting chapter, the value of which is much enhanced by the beautiful plates. The ear is distorted by piercing and prolonging the lobe, and among men by puncturing the shell to admit of the insertion of a tiger-cat's tooth. The eyebrows and eyelashes are pulled out. The teeth are blackened and pierced for the insertion of brass pins. Tattooing is practised. The patterns are elaborate and often of great beauty, but the suffering and risk incurred in producing them must be equally great. Yet ladies who had undergone the operation with fortitude looked in horror and amazement on pictures of European belles deformed with wasp-waists. They wondered, not merely at the ugliness but the pain at the cost of which the deformity must have been obtained.

Such are a few of the subjects with which Dr. Furness is concerned in this delightful book. It is written in a lively and humorous style, with much literary power, and is calculated to appeal to a wide circle of readers beyond professed anthropologists. The photographic illustrations are of great beauty, and also of permanent value as representations of scenes and objects which in a few years' time will either have perished or have been profoundly modified by the influence of British rule.

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND.



ANTIQUE WORKS OF ART FROM BENIN. By General AUGUSTUS PITT-RIVERS. 1900. 12s. 6d. Privately printed. To be obtained from B. T. Batsford, 94, High Holborn.

FROM Mr. B. T. Batsford we have received a copy of the privately printed *Antique Works of Art from Benin*, prepared with all the minute care, accuracy, and completeness that characterise the late General Pitt-Rivers' work. The interest of the volume lies in the plates, for the introduction is a brief historical note on the various expeditions to Benin, and the explanatory letterpress attached to the illustrations is a catalogue, not a criticism. Discovered by the Portuguese, probably in the early fifteenth century, Benin had been visited by the Dutch and by the Swedes before an English expedition arrived on the coast in 1553. It would seem at that time to have been a large town, and trade was encouraged by the king. Both the artistic works, with which this book is concerned, and the human sacrifices, for which the place was afterwards so notorious, were remarked on by a Dutchman—Nyendaee!—in 1702. Benin was visited by Sir Richard Burton and by Captain H. L. Galloway. The latter in 1892 described the city as a mere shadow of its former greatness, having decayed with the abolition of the slave trade. The unfortunate armed expedition into Benin in 1896, from which only two men escaped out of some two hundred and fifty, is within everyone's recollection. The casts, &c., illustrated in this book were found in the royal compound by the punitive expedition of 1897, together with many others, a fine collection of which is in the British Museum. Concerning their origin nothing could be learnt from the natives, although some were obviously used amongst the apparatus of the Ju-ju sacrifices. They were found buried, and covered with blood.

The forty-nine pages of excellent illustrations are well worthy of study, not merely by the folklorist, but by the ethnographer also, as showing, amongst other things, the native appreciation of varying human types. The differences between the realistic negro heads of Nos. 26, 82, 94-99, and 132 are as well marked as those between the Europeans of Nos. 129, 247, 298, and Plate 47. That the type shown in Plate 16 is that of the ruling class is apparent from the close correspondence between this and the conventionalised royal and noble figures on the ritual objects. General Pitt-Rivers

collection contains examples of every sort of work obtained at Benin. Of pottery there was hardly any—one small Negro's head being specially noted as exceptional; bronze was the usual material for bas-reliefs and weapons alike. Many specimens of carved ivory were also found, varying from armlets to trumpets carved out of a whole elephant's tusk. One leopard's mask (No. 153) is especially old. These masks, usually cast in bronze, are a great feature of Benin art. They are too small to have been worn on the face, and animal masks are as common as human. Many of the figures are represented as wearing heads slung round the waist, kiltwise, as an ornament. Necklaces, varying from beautifully finished casts of shells to a solid curved necklet representing vultures pecking at skeletons; elaborate four-sided bells, hanging lamps, stools, bowls, coffers and jugs, flasks (large and small), cast in bronze or carved out of coconut shells; the list is as interesting as it is long and varied.

Specially noteworthy are the dancing swords or wands of the virgins (Plate 29, No. 330), the sceptre decorated (amongst other things) with agricultural implements; and the elaborate royal mace—No. 66-72, where the enthroned king is holding a stone axe. The sacrificial blocks, Nos. 259-60, and 333-5, and the method of sacrificing an animal shown in the bas-relief on Plate 47 are also interesting, as are the few examples of attempted realism. After the human figure it was in birds that the Benin artists were most successful; their animals show want of observation. That Portuguese influence produced this special phase of West African art seems pretty certain. General Pitt-Rivers both held so himself, and quotes the similar opinion of Nyendaël in the eighteenth century. That the men represented are intended for Portuguese is clear from Nos. 84, 289, to take no other instances. Of the earliest Portuguese expedition there would seem to be little trace, as all the European figures that have survived are in sixteenth century costume, and the greatest artistic activity should probably be ascribed to that period. Nyendaël speaks of the actual production of casts as going on whilst he was in Benin, but later writers do not mention the art, which must therefore have died out during the eighteenth century. Space prevents us from giving a more detailed account, but General Pitt-Rivers' name is in itself a sufficient guarantee for the value and interest of the volume.

MARGARET EYRE.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE MYTH-MAKING AGE. By  
J. F. HEWITT, Late Commissioner of Chotia Nagpur.  
With Map, Plates, and Diagrams. James Parker & Co.  
1901.

EVER since the beginnings of the study of myths, enquirers have been inclined, like Mr. Casaubon, to search for some one "key to all the mythologies." Often, as in the case of Max Müller and the nature school, they have hit on a true principle, and run it to death; so the latest exponent of this school, O. Gilbert, who derives everything from the clouds, has been led to propound the most fantastic theories in order to include everything. The day of totems too, seems to be waning; and of late years the tendency has been to exaggerate the importance of astronomy. This is exemplified in the works of Mr. Robert Brown, Jr., and Mr. St. Clair. The book now before us is a third instance of the same mistake.

Mr. Hewitt divides his work into books dealing successively with the Age of Polar Star Worship, the Age of Lunar-Solar Worship, and the Age of Solar Worship. He connects the religious beliefs which he sees, with the worship of trees and animals, with the various migrations of mankind, and with their arrangement of the calendar; and uses his principles to interpret certain legends of the saints and others. But these connections are not made clear. Probably they are clear to the writer, but to the reader they are not so. Nor is proof offered, other than coincidence, of the connection of astronomy with religion. The theories are, for the most part, propounded *ex cathedra*, and left to commend themselves by their inherent appropriateness. Symbolism and metaphor too often do duty for argument. Thus Mr. Hewitt says:

Achilles was the sun-god of the race of the Myrmidons or ants, the sons of the red earth, the Adamite race who succeeded the sons of the southern mother-tree, and who believed that man was formed from the dust of the earth moulded by the Divine Potter, the Pole-star god, who turned the potter's wheel of the revolving earth.

This is all pure imagination. Symbolism is also used to explain certain primitive signs, amongst them the sign for the female, which is clearly pictorial (p. 72). The Bæotian eel, in place of being a fisher's firstling, is also moralised (p. 128); so is the bed of

Odysseus (p. 144), where the potter's wheel reappears. There is no historical examination, as there should be, of the principles and limitations of symbolism, which, in western lands at least, plays a much smaller part than is usually assumed.

Mr. Hewitt also ventures on the dangerous ground of etymology. Eurytus, he says, comes from *ἐρύω*, Achæan from *ἔχης*; *a*, *t*, and *z* are "interchangeable letters"; *ἄμφιγυῖς* is the "one-legged fire-drill"; and so forth. Again: the oldest Cyclopean walls are said here to be accurately fitted polygonal; and there are many other signs that Mr. Hewitt's general knowledge is insufficient for the building up of a universal theory such as this.

But when we come to Indian questions, the case is altered. Mr. Hewitt can tell us by first-hand knowledge of the village system, sacred groves and common halls, of priestly ritual revealed to him as a special favour (p. 159), and the customs of Chotia Nagpur. We cannot help wishing he had confined himself to these topics, and give us in detail what he hints at or sketches in tantalising fashion. There is much of value to be learned from the book by a discriminating reader; but the general impression is one of confused statement and rash inference.

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THE EARLY HISTORY OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE. By L. B. PATON.  
THE THEOLOGY AND ETHICS OF THE HEBREWS. By A. DUFF.  
The Semitic Series. Vols. iii. and iv. London: Nimmo.  
1902. 6s. each.

DR. PATON has written a model book. He has packed into a short compass the greater part of the new knowledge which modern discovery has given us of the pre-Israelitish history of Palestine. And his exposition of it is so orderly and lucid as to afford no excuse for misunderstandings on the part of the most uninstructed reader. Maps, which give evidence of having been compiled with great care, have been added to the text, and a valuable feature of the volume is the very full, if not exhaustive, list of books and articles bearing upon the subject of it. The book, in short, is the best account that has yet appeared of the early history of Syria.

Naturally, it is confined to results rather than to the collection of materials. It is, moreover, a compilation; Dr. Paton does not

profess to be an original authority, but trusts to others for his facts. Generally he shows himself a cautious and well-trained critic whose judgment may be depended on. Now and then, however, the inevitable weakness of second-hand information betrays itself, and statements are made which a first-hand acquaintance with the facts would have modified or prevented. Like most of his countrymen, Dr. Paton is a little too ready to accept the latest theory or pronouncement, especially if it comes from a German. What he says about the Khabiri is an illustration of this; whoever else they may have been they could not have been identical with the *khabbati* or "plunderers." The compound ideograph SA-GAZ, *khabbatu* in Assyrian, is a well-known ideograph; *khabiru* is a totally different word.

There are other questions about which more than one view is possible, and where therefore scholars are likely to differ as to which they prefer. Dr. Paton's chronology, for instance, seems to me far too short. Borchardt's date for the twelfth Egyptian dynasty is incompatible with what we already know of the number of the Egyptian kings, and rests on an application of astronomy to chronology which the want of scientific precision in the monumental record makes merely illusory. As Wiedemann and Oppert have pointed out, the date is just as likely on the same grounds to be between one and two thousand years earlier. The same is the case as regards Babylonian chronology. Our only authority for it is the native annals, and until we recover the materials that lay before the native annalists we have neither reason nor right to question their categorical statements. We may on purely *à priori* grounds think that Nabonidos exaggerated when he asserted that Naram-Din lived 3,200 years before his own time, but as long as the historical materials which Nabonidos possessed are not in our hands we have no better date to substitute for it.

Professor Duff's *Theology and Ethics of the Hebrews*, which forms the fourth volume of the Semitic Series, is a very different sort of work from Dr. Paton's. The crudeness and unsubstantiated character of its statements are equalled only by the confidence with which they are put forward. The Professor knows far more about the Hebrews and their history than the Old Testament writers, though the sources of his knowledge, archæological or otherwise, would be difficult to find. The nature of the book may be sufficiently gathered from the language its author uses of

the return from the Exile. "Men are asking," he tells us, "was there ever a return? The answer is becoming possible, and so far it is clearly in the negative." It is strange that Professor Duff and the school to which he belongs cannot see that those outside it require more solid evidence for the reversal of our traditional history than the "inner consciousness" or dogmatic pronouncement of the modern critic. We cannot draw historical conclusions from philology, whose province lies elsewhere, and "critical tact" is convincing only to the critic himself.

The series of which Professor Duff's volume forms part was introduced by a volume by myself, and I embrace the present opportunity to warn readers against putting their trust in the text of it. It was published without my having seen a single proof, the result being that it teems with misprints. Some of them are so obvious that every reader can correct them for himself; others unfortunately are such as need a knowledge of Assyriology for their detection. Even the one note contributed by the editor contains a printer's error.

A. H. SAYCE.

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SOHRAB AND RUSTEM: the Epic Theme of a Combat between Father and Son. A Study of its Genesis and Use in Literature and Popular Tradition. By MURRAY ANTHONY POTTER, A.M. London: David Nutt. 1902.

IN this scholarly book, which in its original form was a doctorate thesis accepted by the authorities of Harvard University, Mr. Potter discusses a group of folktales of which one form is familiar to English readers in the delightful verses of Matthew Arnold. The skeleton of the tale describes how "a man departs from home, in war service, in search of adventure or for purposes of trade, leaving behind him a wife and son, perhaps unborn, or already quite a lad. He is absent for years. The boy grows up, and for some reason or other seeks his father, or the latter may finally return. In either case the two meet and, through lack of recognition, fight. The outcome may be either tragic or happy. In the former case the relationship is not discovered till one of the two combatants is mortally wounded. In the latter the contest is brought to a close by explanations." This, the Father

and Son Combat proper, appears in its oldest forms in the *Mahābhārata*, the Greek tale of Ulysses and Telegonus, the Irish Cuchullainn Saga, the Persian *Shāh Nāme*, the German *Hildebrandslied*, the Russian *Ilya* ballads, and elsewhere.

There are various forms of the narrative. In one class the father meets the mother away from home and the union is more or less ephemeral; in the other the marriage is contracted at home and the union is regarded as permanent. In most of the forms of the story, the variants of which are carefully reviewed by Mr. Potter, the most important points are: the uncertainty as to paternity, intimately connected with the man's marriage away from home; the prominent rôle played by the woman, either in wooing or in other ways; the callous abandonment by the father of mother and child; and, finally, the son's search for the father.

Mr. Potter mentions, and wisely rejects, various suggestions advanced to account for the Father and Son Combat incident, such as Miss Weston's theory that it represents a struggle between old and new divinities of vegetation, a theme illustrated in Dr. Frazer's treatment of the Arician rite; and Liebrecht's explanation that it arises from a custom, such as that found in Raratonga, where the son, as he grew up, fought with his father for the possession of the paternal property.

Mr. Potter's explanation is on quite other lines. He suggests that the marriage or connection of the woman with a stranger implies exogamy, and that the prominence of the rôle played by the woman is based on a condition of matriarchy, under which the woman has the fullest liberty of choosing her lover, while, as in marriages of the Beena form, the man lives permanently or only temporarily in the family of the relations of his bride, who retain the right to admit into their own clan the offspring of the union. In the course of the discussion of this theory Mr. Potter reviews at considerable length several questions connected with the early law of marriage, such as Exogamy, the Matriarchate, Polyandry and Polygamy, Divorce, Sexual Hospitality, Wooing and Lack of Chastity in women, and the Swayamvara, or Choosing of Husbands. These are all well-worn questions of anthropology; most of his instances are taken from familiar sources, and I am inclined to think that little fresh evidence, beyond that already to be found in books like those of Dr. Westermarck, is produced which is likely to advance the solution of the question.

It would have been more to Mr. Potter's purpose if he had directed his inquiry more particularly to the discussion of Temporary Marriages, on which his theory mainly depends. Thus he appears not to be aware that an early authority on Musulmān rites lays down that among Shiah Mahomedans the child begotten by a *Mut'ah* or temporary marriage is considered preferable to all others (*The Dabistān*, quoting the *Korān*, *Sūrah*, iv., 28), and that the historian Badāonī (*Āin-i-Akbarī*, ed. Blochmann, i., 174) describes the curious discussion on the subject before the Emperor Akbar, where "the 'Ulamas, having collected every tradition on the subject, decreed, firstly, that by *Mut'ah* a man might marry any number of wives he pleased; and, secondly, that *Mut'ah* marriages were allowed by the Imām Mālik. The Shiahs, as was well known, loved children born in *Mut'ah* wedlock more than those born by *Nikāh* wives (*i.e.* those married by the regular ritual), contrary to the Sunnis and the Ahl-i-Jamā'at." Again, he does not appear to have investigated with sufficient care the widespread custom of taking wives on trial, or leasing them to a person other than the original husband. He quotes with hesitation the assertion of Bunsen that there are even at the present day in Yorkshire cases where the people live on probation, and marriage takes place only if a child is likely to born, or born. The custom, of course, is common in rural England and Scotland. Thus Smeaton, in his *Account of the Building of Eddystone Lighthouse* (second edition, 1793, p. 65), states that this has been the custom on that island from time immemorial. A writer in the *Contemporary Review* (May, 1899, pp. 720 *seqq.*) asserts that in rural Prussia a large proportion of marriages occur only after the consequences of an irregular connection become obvious. This and the custom of "handfasting" were or are common in Scotland (Dalyell, *Darker Superstitions*, p. 283). Readers of Sir Walter Scott will remember the rebuke given by the reformed preacher, Henry Warden, to the Baron of Avenel, in the *Monastery*, for the latter's opinions on the practice. Even at the present time, in Central England, cases of leasing wives may be met with. At Stone, in Staffordshire, a few years ago, a woman was asked in a police court if she was married or single, and replied, "No, I'm not married, I'm on a lease"; adding, "I suppose it's all the same."

The obvious objection to Mr. Potter's conclusions, and one which he himself fully recognises, is that in none of the stories



which he quotes do we see the Matriarchate family appearing with all its distinctive features. While some of the instances which he gives go a certain way to remove this difficulty, it can hardly be admitted that he has quite succeeded in supplying the missing link. This can only be reached by an investigation *de novo* from original sources of the incidents of these forms of marriage connection.

At any rate, Mr. Potter has broken new ground, and has given us a very interesting and suggestive book, which will form an excellent basis for more detailed treatment of an important cycle of popular tradition.

W. CROOKE.

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#### SHORT NOTICES.

*Sir Cleges. Sir Libeaus Desconus.* Two Old English Metrical Romances rendered into prose by JESSIE L. WESTON. With designs by CAROLINE M. WATTS. [Arthurian Romances unrepresented in Malory, No. V.] David Nutt. 1902.

Of the two stories here modernised by Miss Weston, the first is a short semi-humorous piece, apparently by a cleric, containing the well-known fabliau motive of the man who, having to promise half his reward for some act to another person, begs for so many blows as his guerdon. The idea is, of course, found in a number of variants, and appears *inter alia* in Sacchetti's *Novelle* and a fifteenth-century collection of Latin stories; it is also said to be familiar among the Berbers of Africa. The other story, that of Sir Libeaus Desconus or Le Bel Inconnus, contains a variety of motives which constantly reappear in different combinations in Arthurian literature. First we have the boy brought up by his mother alone in the forest in ignorance of knightly deeds going to Arthur's court; next the damsel who arrives at the court in search of succour and flouts the young warrior allotted her as champion; and so forth. On all these points succinct information is given in the notes. Other traits seem to be survivals from earlier forms of the story, and have lost their significance. Thus Miss Weston notes that Sir Griffroun was probably originally a magician, while