



110. Animal Superstitions and Totemism

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In order to appreciate these somewhat startling results correctly, one would like to give rather more critical consideration than is given by the author to the methods of collecting the results, the personalities of the teachers from whose opinions these statistics are derived, and other possible factors which may have influenced the inquiry.

The book also contains a valuable *résumé* of researches on children both from America and Europe, a useful account of apparatus which may be used in the experimental study of children, and a good bibliography of child study. Notwithstanding its deficiencies as a record of original work, the book should be extremely valuable to workers in this branch of anthropology.

W. H. R. R.

FOLKLORE.

Folklore: General.

Elworthy.

109 *Horns of Honour, and other Studies in the By-ways of Archaeology.* By Frederick Thomas Elworthy. London: Murray, 1900. 8vo. pp. 315, with plates. Presented by the Publisher.

Readers of Mr. Elworthy's earlier book, *The Evil Eye*, will know what to expect from this, the companion volume. He is a careful explorer of the by-ways of archaeology and folklore; he is a deep student of mediæval magic, and his knowledge of the contents of European museums is extensive. His main object has been to collect and sketch little-known charms and votive offerings, and it is one of the most valuable characteristics of his work that he has no preconceived theories, and prefers to leave his drawings to speak for themselves. This volume is principally occupied with the discussion of various horns and hands, but incidentally many forms of popular superstition are considered. His main purpose is to show that earlier forms of ornament are in the main prophylactic. The crescent, he thinks, was used as a protective amulet, and horns, "the outcome of the crescent, developed into a special mark of honour and dignity, which men adopted for their own destruction, as well as the symbol of the most potent protectors." He gives a number of remarkable illustrations of the hands decorated with various symbols which are scattered through the museums of Europe. He seems to be successful in proving that these are not generally *ex votos*; but rather magical amulets intended either as prophylactic or with an erotic significance.

Mr. Elworthy does not pretend to write a scientific treatise, and in some cases, as in that of his interpretation of Jacob's Ladder, his views have been already superseded by Dr. Smythe Palmer's monograph on "Jacob at Bethel." But he has done good service in collecting a mass of raw material for the use of folklore students, and to this extent his book with its excellent collection of illustrations may be safely recommended.

W. CROOKE.

Folklore: Animal Superstitions.

Thomas.

110 *Animal Superstitions and Totemism.* Communicated by N. W. Thomas to the Folklore Society, April 25th, 1900. Published in *Folklore*, xi, 3 (September, 1900), pp. 227-267. Presented by the Author.

Mr. Thomas intends to collect the animal superstitions of the whole of Europe, and prefaces his paper by an analysis of the beliefs and practices which we find or may expect to find. This is followed by an analysis of the points dealt with in the paper, which is mainly devoted to the sacro-sanctity of the animal and annual sacrifice at the present day in Europe. The explanation suggested is that these beliefs and customs are relics of a system of totemism. Opening with a recapitulation

(110)

of the Irish facts with which others have already dealt, Mr. Thomas points out in an appendix on quasi-totemic survivals that a large number of sagas and popular beliefs seem to be descended from totemism; among them the idea, frequently found on the continent, that the babies are brought by certain animals such as the stork, the crow, etc. This is followed by a list of sacrosanct animals and the localities in which they are taboo, especial stress being laid on the local character of the beliefs in question. The second half of the paper is devoted to the different forms of animal sacrifice still prevailing in Europe—the hunting of the wren, the “Hahenschlag,” the killing of the first animal of a species seen in spring, etc. It is then shown that many of these animals were ritually eaten, in most cases by the local group (*i.e.*, the villagers in most cases), but in other cases by the kin only. Mr. Thomas conjectures that the latter is the older form of the custom. The eating of cakes in animal form is also referred to as a custom of the same class. The paper concludes with a short discussion of the origin and meaning of the games of Blind Man’s Buff and Cock Warning. These Mr. Thomas explains as relics of primitive sacrifices, in which human beings were perhaps offered in later times; in their original form the victim was an animal and the mark of this animal, worn by the sacrificer or perhaps by all the participants, accounts for the fact that Blind Man’s Buff is known all over Europe by names of animals—Blinde Maus, Blinde Eule, Blinder Bock, etc. The author of this paper then points out that there are other customs which we can best explain by supposing them to be relics of these sacrifices; among others Santa Claus seems to have been originally a sacrificing priest who went round to capture a victim. Female priestesses were probably not uncommon, which may explain the predominance of the female element in witchcraft.

Eclipses.

Lasch.

Die Finsternisse in der Mythologie und im religiösen Brauch der Völker, von Dr. Richard Lasch, in Horn (Niederösterreich). (*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1900, 97–152.) 8vo. Presented by the Author. 111

Dr. Lasch has compiled an interesting record of beliefs and practices connected with eclipses in all parts of the world. He has paid special attention to the myths current among savage or half-civilised tribes, and it is to be hoped that the modern travellers, on whom he mainly relies, are competent witnesses on this point. In view of the importance of Egypt in the history of astronomical science, it is perhaps to be regretted that the paper does not contain a fuller account of the ancient Egyptian myths about eclipses, and it would appear that in dealing with the children of Israel the author has unduly strained some passages of Scripture. Thus the standing still of the Sun and Moon at the bidding of Joshua is regarded as an eclipse, and the celestial catastrophe which, according to Joel, is to precede “the great and terrible day of the Lord” receives the same, simple explanation. The evidence again for Greek myths about eclipses is both late and scanty, perhaps because the heavenly bodies always played a subordinate part in Greek mythology.

Much may be learned, however, from the facts which the author has collected about the beliefs of primitive peoples. Some of these seem strangely consistent with the true theory of eclipses. Thus the Central Australians are said to believe that solar eclipses are caused by the *periodically* recurring visits of an evil influence called Arungquiltha. This suggests the eighteen years cycle, but the Australian period is more likely to be an imaginary one. The natives of Central Celebes seem to have grasped a more important element in the theory. They regard the Sun as the husband of the Earth, and explain solar eclipses by his adultery with the Moon, who