



Book Reviews

E. Sidney Hartland , C. S. Burne & W. H. D. Rouse

To cite this article: E. Sidney Hartland , C. S. Burne & W. H. D. Rouse (1915) Book Reviews, Folklore, 26:1, 101-108, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1915.9719714](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1915.9719714)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1915.9719714>



Published online: 06 Feb 2012.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 2



View related articles [↗](#)

REVIEWS.

DE NUGIS CURIALIUM. By WALTER MAP. Edited by MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES, Litt.D., F.B.A., F.S.A. *Anecdota Oxoniensia, Mediaeval and Modern series.* Part xiv. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1914.

It is a matter of hearty congratulation, alike to students of folklore and of mediaeval history and literature, that we at length have a worthy edition of the text of this famous and interesting book. It should have been undertaken long ago, and by an Oxford scholar,¹ seeing that the unique manuscript is one of the treasures of the Bodleian Library. This is not to undervalue the work of Thomas Wright, who prepared for the Camden Society the only previously printed edition. That edition has been useful to students. But Wright, if he ever saw the manuscript, neither copied it himself nor collated his copy with the original, and he certainly exaggerates the difficulty of the handwriting. As we should expect, therefore, his printed text swarms with errors, and no one who has had occasion to consult it has felt that he could rely on it. The exactness of scholarship, however, has made progress since 1850, when Wright's edition was issued; probably mediaeval palaeography has progressed too. To produce the present edition a "rotograph" has been prepared. But Dr. James has not been satisfied with this; he has personally consulted the manuscript. His wide learning has enabled him to make emendations in the text where they were fairly certain (duly recording the original in the notes), and to suggest others, to trace a large number, at all

¹A transcript had in fact been prepared at great pains by a young Oxford scholar for the purpose when this edition was announced.

events, of Map's numerous quotations to their sources, to point out many of his historical and literary blunders, and to identify many of the persons referred to. He has thus laid students under a debt of gratitude. His preface is very interesting. It contains a description of the manuscript, the details of which are contributed by Mr. R. L. Poole, a discussion of the previous ownership, and of the references to it by other writers. Here also the date of the work is discussed, and a short analysis is given, together with a somewhat more extended account of the Epistle of Valerius to Ruffinus against marriage (which is an earlier work of Map incorporated in the *De Nugis*) and of the mediaeval commentaries upon it. The references to the plan of the book do not seem quite consistent. On one page Dr. James says quite truly: "Nothing can be clearer than that there is no plan, and that the work was jotted down at various times, as the fancy struck the author." Three pages further on he says: "The plan, as I have said, is to seek." If we interpret this literally it means that the writer has not given up the hope that there is a discoverable plan. The fact is that the book is a desultory work of intermittent leisure or intermittent application. The items, doubtless written separately, have been shuffled and put together in a haphazard way, and no care taken to find any logical ground for the "distinctiones," to render the dates consistent, or to prevent repetitions or contradictions.

Dr. James' notes, valuable as they are, are very far short of what is needed for a full appreciation of the work. Indeed, he expressly says that he has "from the first renounced all efforts to compile a full commentary upon the text." Such a commentary would require the collaboration of more than one scholar. It should be preceded by a translation into English, which can now be undertaken with some confidence on the basis of Dr. James' text. No translation, of course, can reproduce Map's affected style, though perhaps a short specimen or two might be given where the antitheses, the assonance, and the alliteration are capable of being presented. The substance is of more importance for those to whom mediaeval history, tradition, and romance appeal; and they are an increasing number in these days. Cannot the Folk-Lore Society, or perchance the Cymmrodorion Society, be

induced to become responsible for the publication, and enlist the requisite band of experts in the labour?

The quantity of folklore contained is considerable. The famous tales of Herla, of Wild Edric, of Henno With-the-teeth, of Wastin of Wastiniog, and many another would have been lost to us if Map had not recorded them. Ghost-stories, portents, historical traditions, incidental allusions to manners and customs, especially of the English and Welsh, are scattered freely throughout the pages. We breathe the mental and moral atmosphere in which our fathers of that day lived. Map himself, as a man of the world and a courtier, was above the average, not merely of the laity but also of the clergy, in his intellectual grasp. Yet his credulity was very great, though not quite boundless. His prejudices, his hatreds were vigorous, not to say bitter. He takes a spiteful pleasure in hints and statements to the disadvantage of the Cistercians. His anecdotes of the Welsh are frequently inspired by malice. If not a full-blooded Welshman himself, he was probably born on the Herefordshire border. He displays some acquaintance with the Welsh language, and many of his best tales relate to Wales and the border. But if the new transcription be correct, as it probably is, it is curious that he should have explained the kingdom of Deheubarth as North Wales, and in the puzzling passage on the next page *Reynos* cannot be the correct form of an old Welsh name for either Brecon or Herefordshire. Another interesting result of the new transcription is that the scene of Wild Edric's adventure is definitely removed from the Forest of Dean. The single word, read by Wright as *Denis*, on which its localization rested, is now read as *devia*, and the locality is left undetermined: it must be sought for in Shropshire or Herefordshire. Map had probably heard the tale somewhere in the Marches, for which a man so curious had abundant opportunity either in his youth or his official life.

To refer, however, even to a small selection of the numerous and interesting points that arise upon the work would occupy far more space than the most accommodating and sympathetic editor can afford here.

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND.

RÉLIGIONS MŒURS ET LÉGENDES : ESSAIS D'ETHNOGRAPHIE
ET DE LINGUISTIQUE. 5^e série. ARNOLD VAN GENNEP.
Paris : Mercure de France, 1914.

THIS fifth series of M. van Gennep's Essays is dedicated to M. Henri Junod ; but it deals hardly at all with specially African matters. It is divided into two parts. The first begins with a consideration of the *lacunæ* in the ethnography of the present day, and is a timely protest against the insufficiency of its recognition in university *curricula* and as a subject of practical value on the one hand, and the want of proper manuals for its teaching on the other. The author points to Buschan's *Völker Kunde* as the nearest approximation hitherto published to the type of manual which is desirable. Miss Burne's new edition of the *Handbook of Folklore* has been issued since. M. van Gennep insists that ethnography is not an historical science, nor ought it to be primarily occupied with the collection and study of material fabrics. This is too much the case, especially in Germany, where it has given rise to the theories and the works of Foy and Graebner, who altogether mistake the objects and method of study.

The author then proceeds to the consideration of *The Golden Bough* and of some recent publications on Totemism. He launches some acute criticisms both on *The Golden Bough* and on Sir James Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy* ; but he does not spare the other students who have taken part in discussions during the last three or four years on the problem of Totemism. He does not himself pretend to have a solution of the problem, and his critical observations are fair and by no means unfriendly.

The essay following is an account of Mr. Walter Leaf's *Troy, a Study in Homeric Geography*, for which he expresses considerable admiration.

The second part of the volume is a very interesting study of the beginnings of ethnographic science, which M. van Gennep claims to have taken its rise in France in the eighteenth century. The great names in the history of this movement are naturally Lafitau and De Brosses. The Jesuit Lafitau was a man of culture before he became a missionary. Brought into contact with the Hurons and Iroquois of North America, he was struck by the resemblance of their ideas and civilization to those of the Ancient Greeks and

Romans and even of the Hebrews, and of the barbarous and other nations of antiquity so far as they are known to us. Returning to Europe, he wrote his book on the *Mœurs des Sauvages Américains*, in which he insists on these resemblances and shows the light thrown by the customs of modern savages on those described or referred to by ancient authors. Of course, his work was imperfect. It was hampered by his ecclesiastical training, and by the want of detailed ethnographical knowledge of other parts of the world. These were his misfortune and that of his time, not his fault. He was a pioneer. His great merit was to have seen these resemblances, to have been put upon enquiry and to have evolved a methodical comparison. But the times were unfavourable. The great literary quarrel as to the superiority of the ancients or the moderns preoccupied the minds of the learned. No decisive arguments for the one or the other could be drawn from Lafitau's armoury. The doctrine of the Social Contract and Rousseau's contention as to the original nobility of the savage derived no countenance from it. Lafitau's work was neglected and forgotten. De Brosses, indeed, made some use of it in his book on Fetishism. He employed the same method in a fine critical spirit, though in a more limited sphere. The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres refused to print it, when presented to it in the shape of a *mémoire*, because of the boldness of the author's ideas. He published it himself, but it remained without effect on his contemporaries. Other men—Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Goguet, Boulanger—had glimpses more or less rudimentary of the ethnographic method, and applied it partially and often to support preconceived opinions and objects quite different from those of science. The Revolution came, and scientific enquiry was suspended. Dupuis and Dulaure, who wrote in the midst of the commotion, were faddists who did not understand true scientific method, and their writings had little influence. Not until towards the middle of the nineteenth century did the science of Man begin to be really studied in France; and then it was not due to the impulse of the great forerunners prior to the Revolution. They preached in the wilderness; but the story of their labours, though they failed, was well worth writing.

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND.

BYGONE HASLEMERE. A Short History of the Ancient Borough and its immediate Neighbourhood from the Earliest Times. By E. W. SWANTON and P. WOODS. West, Newman & Co. Pp. xvi, 394. 3 Maps, 40 plates. Price 7s. 6d. and 21s.

IN this handsome volume we are presented with a very comprehensive account of Haslemere and its surroundings, ranging from prehistoric times down to the extension of the local museum in 1913. Original documents—wills, registers, and monumental inscriptions—are freely quoted, but there is, as is too often the case in local histories, no reference to the churchwardens' accounts. Together with much care and accuracy of detail, there is a certain lack of lucidity in the presentation of the matter. The writers presuppose more local knowledge on the part of the reader than he can reasonably be expected to possess, and they treat important and unimportant features too much on the same level. The maps and illustrations are of unusual interest; so also is the account of the early ironworks in the neighbourhood. None of them, however, seem to have stood actually within the parish boundaries (p. 152). A chapter on the local folklore (pp. 284-292), records a church-building legend, traditions of a local witch and a "wizard or wise man," as he is with great accuracy styled; one or two items of folk-medicine (a "cramp-ball," viz. the excrescence of an oak-tree—known to have been actually carried as an antidote to cramp—is preserved in the local museum); the customs of saluting wife-beaters with "rough music," of "was-sailing" the apple-trees at the New Year, and of carrying about a "Jack-a-Lent" on Easter Monday. This is by no means a common practice, and it is curious to find it flourishing together with the observance of Guy Fawkes' Day, which is so great a feature of the folklore of the south-eastern counties, and is observed at Haslemere with much vigour. There is, finally, an interesting account of the folk-songs collected in the neighbourhood, which seems to have been rich in singers.

C. S. BURNE.

ESSAYS AND STUDIES PRESENTED TO WILLIAM RIDGEWAY ON HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY, 6th August, 1913. Edited by E. C. QUIGGIN. Cambridge University Press. 1913. 25s. net.

THE number and variety of these essays contained in this volume testify to the wide range of Prof. Ridgeway's intellectual activity, which indeed surveys mankind from China to Peru. Classical archaeology and textual criticism, Quetzalcoatl or the thorough-bred horse, Byzantine inscriptions or the Mandible of Man, nothing comes amiss. The reviewer of such a volume feels himself to be a fraud; he can only look with awe and take a taste here and there according to his poor capacity. Our readers will have to be contented with a few notes on the topics that specially concern us.

There is a note of uncertainty in Miss Harrison and Mr. Gow which is unlike the usual professorial attitude. Miss Harrison gives us a number of suggestions as to *δία λίθον versus δια λίθον* and then declares that she cannot decide: Mr. Gow finds two jars in the story of Pandora, but leaves us without our *ἐλπίς* that we have got to the bottom of either. Indeed, he tells us that when we have *ἐλπίς* safely shut up in the jar, this means that we have not got her at all. Mr. Bosanquet on "Two Axes and a Spear" has something to say to the ethnologist; so have Mr. Balfour on "Kite-fishing," Mr. Myers on the "Beginning of Music," Mr. Haddon on "Outrigger Canoes," Mr. Duckworth on the "Gallery Hill Skeleton," Mr. Thurston on the "Number Seven." I wish some one would investigate the number Three and its connexion with singular, dual, and plural. Sir J. G. Frazer has a charming paper on the "Serpent and the Tree of Life," in which he reconstructs an alternative story for that of the book of Genesis. Mr. S. A. Cook deals briefly with an important question in his "Evolution of Primitive Thought," which, like the last paper, touches on the Old Testament. Another difficult and important subject is Mr. Rivers's "Contact of Peoples": he indicates that the source of influence by people on people is a superiority of material culture. Mr. Godley, in his witty verses that open the book, says "While Ridgeway lives, research can

ne'er be dull": and the same sort of praise may be given to this book, which has something good for every taste.

W. H. D. ROUSE.

SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

The Ban of the Bori: Demons and Demon-Dancing in West and North Africa. By Major A. J. N. TREMEARNE. Demy 8vo, pp. 497. Heath, Cranton & Ouseley, Ltd., London, 1914. Price 21s. net.

THIS is perhaps the most interesting and valuable of the long series of books in which Major Tremearne has described the beliefs, folklore, and sociology of the Hausa people. The title "Ban of the Bori" means the cult of spirits, ghosts, and bogies of various kinds and functions, collectively known as Bori, while "Ban" follows Robertson Smith's use of the word to imply "a form of devotion to the deity." The book represents four months' work among the Hausas resident in Tunis and Tripoli, where most of them are slaves. The elaborate account of demon-possession is valuable and interesting, and may be usefully compared with Mrs. Seligmann's description of the Egyptian Zār (*Folk-Lore*, vol. xxv. p. 300 *sqq.*). This demon cult appears to be a blend of three different elements: the indigenous Hausa beliefs; superstitions picked up from travellers and neighbouring tribes; from the Islam of the Arabic overlords. The chapters dealing with "Totemism and King-killing" are valuable in connection with Sir J. Frazer's discussion of the subject in *The Golden Bough*. Major Tremearne has adopted the sound method of recording the statements of his authorities in their own words. Though it may be difficult at times to reconcile vague and sometimes contradictory information, the value of the book is largely increased, and the writer has clearly done his best to enter into the thoughts of the Hausas, and "to think black." Major Tremearne promises us in the near future another book dealing with the question: "Is there anything in common between the