

(*kivuri*, the "little shadow") that the vital principle resides. The cult of the dead, universal among Bantu peoples, is by the Wasu combined with a species of sun-worship, found also among the Wairamba and some other tribes, and the Barotse of the Zambezi. Many interesting bits of folk-lore are recorded by Herr Dannholz, and we would call particular attention to the story of the Talking Skull (p. 27), which was recorded by the late Mr. Madan as a Wisa tale, and was met with by M. Junod elsewhere in South Africa.

A. WERNER.

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AN ELEMENTARY PALAUNG GRAMMAR. By MRS. LESLIE MILNE, F.R.A.I., M.R.A.S. With an Introduction by C. O. BLAGDEN, M.A. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921. Price 8s. 6d.

Palaung is a language spoken by about 150,000 people in the Shan States of Burma. With Wa it forms a somewhat independent group of the Mōn-Khmer family of speech, and may be looked upon as forming a linguistic bridge between the Mōn of Pegu and the Khāsī spoken in Assam. Like other languages of the family, it is monosyllabic in its basis, derivative words being formed with the aid of prefixes and infixes. So, also, it does not possess tones, as do its Tibeto-Chinese neighbours, and, except when disturbing elements are present, sense-relation is indicated by a fixed order of words. Possession is shown by placing the word indicating the possessor after the word indicating the thing possessed, so that an elephant's trunk appears as "trunk elephant". Other case relations are either expressed with the aid of prepositions or are left to be inferred from the context or from the order of the words. It is only in the pronouns, which possess dual forms and a genitive, that we can recognize any traces of what we in Europe should call declension. The adjective follows the noun qualified, and the subject precedes, while the object follows, the verb. Tense-relations are indicated by particles, some of which, as in most Indo-Chinese languages, are really independent verbs. The verb does not change for number or person, these being left to be inferred from the context.

Mrs. Leslie Milne has put all those whose work takes them into the Shan States, as well as students of Indo-Chinese languages, under a heavy obligation by the preparation of a grammar of this interesting language. She has reduced this apparent chaos of root-words and prefixes to order, and her rules are clearly put and are illustrated

by a copious supply of excellent examples. Such examples, indeed, logically grouped as here, form the only possible grammar of a language which, from the European point of view, is destitute alike of declension and of conjugation, and in which every expression of thought is indicated by something like what we should call idiom, and not by change of form in any particular word or words. Not only is the information, so far as one who has never been in the Palaung country can ascertain, very complete, but it is also exhibited in scholarly wise. The pronunciation is carefully described, and a system of spelling in the Roman character has been devised and rigidly adhered to throughout. The grammar proper occupies about 130 pages, and the work concludes with over forty pages of a curious Palaung folk-tale explained by means of both an interlinear and a free translation.

The value of the work is still further enhanced by Mr. Blagden's Introduction, in which, from the point of view of philology, he discusses the relationship between Palaung and the other languages of the Mōn-Khmēr family. Mrs. Milne hopes to publish a vocabulary of the language when opportunity occurs, and I can cordially re-echo Mr. Blagden's hope that its publication will not be long delayed.

GEORGE A. GRIERSON.

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