

doubt that nearly every nation belonging to the ancient civilised world has connected trees with its objects of veneration; and many folk have openly admitted that they regarded them as holy things, and that, in consequence, they have performed sacred rites and ceremonies beneath and near them. Many interesting details of the subject have been collected by such indefatigable investigators as Prof. E. B. Tylor, Mr. Frazer, and the late Prof. Robertson Smith; but, as far as we remember, no one before Mrs. Philpot has taken the pains to reduce the commoner facts to a simple straightforward narrative such as she gives in the volume before us. Here we have in nine chapters a brief sketch of tree worship, which begins in times almost prehistoric, when the suppliant knelt in terror before the solitary tree or in the forest, and ends with the Christmas-tree round which children and adults gather joyfully.

To illustrate her points Mrs. Philpot introduces several well-chosen drawings, and a somewhat meagre index ends the book. It is evident that Mrs. Philpot's work is intended for all such as have not made a special study of tree-lore, and to them her little treatise will be of the greatest value; for, apart from the general accuracy of her facts, her story is told with a directness which, to say the least of it, is time-saving. Her references are, however, either too many or too few; personally we should have liked them to be increased in number, for when a reader likes a book, and is told in it where to go for further information, he sometimes goes, and thus knowledge is spread, and more people are induced to take an interest in that particular subject. On certain points, too, Mrs. Philpot might have given us more information with little increased labour. Thus, in speaking of tree worship in Babylonia (p. 7), we might with advantage have been told that Rim-Sin, a king of Babylonia about B.C. 2300, calls himself "magician of the holy tree of Eridu," and also that a cuneiform inscription actually describes this tree "with its root of crystal which stretcheth to the abyss." On p. 10, the "sacred tree of Heliopolis," of which Mrs. Philpot speaks, is, of course, the famous Persea tree near which the Cat (*i.e.* the Sun) slew the serpent of darkness; both Cat and Tree are depicted in the vignette which accompanies the seventeenth chapter of the "Book of the Dead." In the same city, too, flourished the famous olive tree which is mentioned in the text of the pyramid of Unâs (line 70), inscribed about B.C. 3500. The Tamarisk tree (*Aser*), which is mentioned in the forty-second chapter, and the Cedar tree, which plays such an important part in the "Tale of the Two Brothers," should also have been noticed. In some cases a little more information might well have been given to the reader. Thus, the Arabs believed that the Tûbâ tree (see p. 132) was specially created by God along with the Throne, and the Garden of Eden, and Adam; this statement is important, for it shows that the Muhammedans could not imagine Paradise without a tree.

The account of Alexander's visit to the trees of the Sun and Moon in India, not Persia, should have been taken from Alexander's letter to Aristotle as given in Pseudo-Callisthenes (ed. Müller, Book iii.), for the Persian translation, or rather version, modifies a great deal of it, and omits many important points. On the great trees of India and Africa the histories of Masûdî

(ii. 81-83) and Ibn-Batuta (iv. 391 f.)—both available in good French translations—might have been consulted, and Mrs. Philpot would have derived scores of valuable hints about trees and their worship from Yule's edition of "Ser Marco Polo," vol. i. (2nd ed.). The four cross-bars of the Tet-pillar (p. 117) are in reality four pillars, of which only the tops are seen, and these represent the four cardinal points; the late Mr. O'Neill's "Night of the Gods" contains many facts relating to the universe-tree or pillar. The pillar which joins the two paradises (p. 132) is not called "strength of the Hill of Sion," but "foundation (*mêkhôn*) of the Hill of Sion." Among proofs of the beliefs in the existence of a "tree of life" at a very early period may be mentioned one which occurs in the text of the pyramid of Pepi I., where we read that the deceased goes to the great lake round which the gods sit, and that they give him to eat of the tree of life upon which they themselves do live; now these words were inscribed about B.C. 3500, and it is more than probable that they were first written many, many centuries before that date.

We do not call attention to these facts from any wish to find fault, but only to indicate the sources whence Mrs. Philpot may derive additional information when a second edition of her book is called for. We believe that her book will be read with pleasure by many, but it would greatly help the general reader to give him definite facts and figures which he could remember and think upon after he has closed the book.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Relics of Primeval Life. By Sir J. William Dawson, K.C.M.G., F.R.S. Pp. xiv + 336. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897.)

FOR more than thirty-five years *Eozoon Canadense* has been before geologists, and the evidence brought forward in support of its organic nature, and against it, has been sufficient to enable people competent to judge the question to arrive at a firm conclusion one way or the other. The case for *Eozoon* as a Laurentian fossil is stated by Sir William Dawson in this volume, and the observation of similar characteristics in decidedly mineral structures is either ingeniously explained, or the resemblance is declared to be illusory. The work represents the substance of a course of lectures on Pre-Cambrian fossils, delivered in the Lowell Institute, Boston, and will be read as much for the account it contains of early animal life, as for the debatable matters with which it deals.

The True Grasses. By Eduard Hackel. Translated from "Die Natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien" by F. Lamson-Scribner and Effie A. Southworth. Pp. 228. 8vo, with 110 illustrations in the text. (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1896.)

THIS appears to be a very good translation of a work which does not materially differ from Bentham and Hooker's "Genera Plantarum," except that the diagnoses are much briefer, though, on the other hand, they are supplemented by some figures which, by the way, are printed much too black. What part Effie Southworth took in the translation is not apparent, for the preface is signed by F. Lamson-Scribner, dating from the University of Tennessee, without any mention of the former. In fact, the book was first published in America. It is important to state that some botanical knowledge is necessary to enable a person to use the book, and also that, with the exception of the cereals and a few others only the genera