

THE GOLDEN BOUGH.

The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion. By Prof. J. G. Frazer, D.C.L. Third edition. Part v.: "Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild." In 2 vols. Vol. i., pp. xvii+319. Vol. ii., pp. xii+371. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1912.) Price, 2 vols., 20s. net.

AT the conclusion of his elaborate study of "Spirits of the Corn," Prof. Frazer observes that "while the fine flower of the religious consciousness in myth, ritual, and art is fleeting and evanescent, its simpler forms are comparatively stable and permanent, being rooted deep in those principles of common minds which bid fair to outlive all the splendid but transient creations of genius. It may be that . . . simple folk will still cherish the simple faiths of their nameless and dateless forefathers. . . ." In his feeling for the system he has studied so long and so minutely, the Darwin of religion resembles Ernest Renan, who came to regard affectionately the Christian and Pauline subjects of his analysis.

But a more interesting point is the suggestion that superstition "springs eternal in the human breast." If there is anything in the suggestion, it is that what we know as superstitious tendencies, crystallising into religious forms, are part of the mechanical workings of the human brain. For undoubtedly these multiple variations of a few simple ideas persist, just as they first developed, in subconscious or unconscious thought. It is only the primitive explanations of belief and ritual that show conscious exercise of the brain. From a similar point of view, Adolf Bastian has remarked the deplorable sameness and the small number of the conceptions of the human mind.

Such views and such prognostications seem to forget that mental action is relative to its object, that it varies in form as its knowledge of the object, and, consequently, that science can alter, and has altered, the "principles of common minds." And, after all, this rich crop of myth, ritual, and religion, so carefully harvested in "The Golden Bough," is but the chaff of man's imagination, however persuaded he may be that it is golden grain. For the true seeds of the mind are scientific; during countless ages they were garnered in absolute unconsciousness, fancy playing meanwhile with the flying chaff.

The mistake of regarding these recurrent and multitudinous expressions of man's mental "play" as the foundation of his individual and social achievements will not be made by the synthetic sociologist of the future. He will take the logical mechanism of the mind in its relation with increasing knowledge as the foundation, and

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relegate the iridescent play of religion and superstition to the sphere of the imagination, as a part of æsthetics. But this "play," simultaneous with, or preceding, or following, mental adaptation to reality will be of value in determining the nature and quality of that adaptation. And the social psychologist needs no further material than that supplied in "The Golden Bough" and in "Totemism and Exogamy" for understanding the tendencies of the mind when free from scientific relations.

The discussion of "Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild" is the main stem of "The Golden Bough." Mannhardt's studies, which inspired it originally, have found a multiplex reincarnation. Besides the general extension of material there are interesting and valuable episodes, such as the connection of the Pleiades with agriculture, woman's part in agriculture, games in agriculture. A delightful essay on Empedocles as a pioneer of evolution and in comparison with Herbert Spencer shows the author's style at its best.

A. E. CRAWLEY.

SOME PHYSIOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS.

- (1) *Schutzfermente des tierischen Organismus.* By Emil Abderhalden. Pp. xii+110. (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1912.) Price 3.20 marks.
- (2) *Les Parathyroïdes.* By L. Morel. Pp. iii+344. (Paris: A. Hermann et Fils, 1912.) Price 10 francs. (Questions Biologiques Actuelles.)
- (3) *Le Goût et l'Odorat.* By J. Larguier des Bancelles. Pp. x+94. Paris: A. Hermann et Fils, 1912.) Price 3.50 francs. (Questions Biologiques Actuelles.)
- (4) *The Physiology of Protein Metabolism.* By Dr. E. P. Cathcart. Pp. viii+142. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912.) Price 4s. 6d. net. (Monographs on Biochemistry.)

(1) **P**ROF. EMIL ABDERHALDEN is probably about the busiest physiological investigator at the present day; he is certainly the most prolific writer. Not only do original papers flow in a steady stream from his laboratory, but he has also the time and energy to edit and write books. The work mentioned above is one of the most recent of these, and in it he collates the results of his own work and that of others on one of the most interesting developments of recent biochemical study. It deals with the protective mechanisms of the body, and especially with the part played by enzymes in resisting the effects of introducing foreign material into it. This is only part of the large subject included under the general heading of Immunity, but it is an important part. It is, for instance, well known that if "peptone"