

Crosby Lockwood and Son.—Lockwood's Builder's Price Book for 1918, edited by R. S. Ayling, illustrated. *Scott, Greenwood, and Son.*—A new edition of Grammar of Textile Design, H. Nisbet.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd.—Scientific Synthesis, Dr. E. Rignano, translated by W. J. Greenstreet. *Cambridge University Press.*—The Collected Papers of Sir Benjamin Browne, containing, among others, the following contributions:—Education from the Employers' Point of View, Labour Problems, Co-partnership, Insurance, and the Scientific Training of Young Workmen. *Constable and Co., Ltd.*—Man's Redemption of Man, Sir W. Osler, Bart.; Science and Immortality, Sir W. Osler, Bart.; A Way of Life, Sir W. Osler, Bart. *John Murray.*—The Herring: its Effect on the History of Britain, A. M. Samuel, illustrated.

PRIMITIVE CULTS.

MISS M. A. MURRAY contributes to *Folk-Lore* (vol. xxviii., No. 3) a paper on the "Organisations of Witches in Great Britain." The author brings forward certain facts which appear to show a connection between witches and fairies—not the little beings which the fancies of poets have evolved; the fairies of the witch trials are the fairies of Scotch and Irish legend. The ritual of the witches is like the ritual of the fairies: both sacrificed children to their god, whom Christians stigmatised as the devil; both stole up-baptised children for the sacrifice; both sacrificed their god or devil every year, apparently on May Day; both had ritual dances of the same type. "If, as many authorities contend, the fairies are really the aboriginal inhabitants of these islands, there is nothing surprising in their ritual and beliefs being adopted by the invading race. And in that case I am right in my conjecture that the rites of the witches are the remains of the ancient and primitive cult of Great Britain."

Mr. T. J. Westropp, who is doing excellent work in investigating on scientific lines the early remains in Ireland, has republished from the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (vol. xxxiv., Section C, No. 3) a paper entitled "The Ancient Sanctuaries of Knockainey and Clogher, Co. Limerick." Here a cairn commemorates the cult of the goddess Aine, of the god-race of the Tuatha de Danann. She was a water spirit, and has been seen, half-raised out of the water, combing her hair. "She was a beautiful and gracious divinity, 'the best-natured of women.'" and is crowned with meadowsweet (*Spiræa*), to which she gave its perfume. She is a powerful tutelary spirit; protector of the sick, and connected with the moon, her hill being sickle-shaped, and men, before performing the rites at her shrine, used to look for the moon—whether risen or not—lest they should be unable to find their way back. They used to visit her shrine on St. John's Eve, carrying wisps of lighted straw, in order to bring good luck to crops and herds. One day some girls saw her, and she showed them through a ring that her hill was crowded with fairies. Her son, the magic Earl of Desmond, is still seen riding over the ripples of Loch Gur until his horse's golden shoes are worn out. This is a valuable instance of the survival in an attenuated form of the primitive figures of Irish mythology.

The beginnings of religion are discussed in an interesting paper by Dr. E. S. Hartland in the *R.P.A. Annual*, published by the Rationalist Press Association, on religion among the Indian tribes of Guiana, based on the researches of Mr. Walter E. Roth, Protector of Indians in the Pomeroon district, British Guiana. "This attitude towards their external and material en-

vironment is reflected in their religion—if we may call it religion, which is merely distrust and dislike of the spirits that are believed to surround them, for the spiritual environment can be less steadily and distinctly contemplated than the material, and therefore is even more the subject of surmise and distrust. The unknown is magnified; the strange, the unusual, the unfamiliar, is regarded with uneasiness, with anxiety, evolving into hostility, with wonder and awe, leading not to inquiry and deliberate scrutiny, but to aversion and terror. Such is the mood, and such are the experiences, to which modern psychology is inclined to trace the beginnings of religion."

SULPHUR IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE Smithsonian Institution issues for publication in the Press interesting descriptive articles upon subjects dealt with in many of the bulletins distributed by it. These articles keep the people of the United States in close touch with the activities of the National Museum and other scientific departments and enable them to appreciate the interest and value of the work being carried on. We print below, in a slightly abridged form, an article upon the subject of Bulletin 102, part 3, of the U.S. National Museum, as it deals with a subject of particular importance at the present time, and refers to the ingenious method by which two sulphur deposits near the Gulf Coast in Louisiana and Texas are worked. The success of the process is such that the Gulf deposits are supplying practically all the crude sulphur in the United States, and its development has shifted the world's largest sulphur industry from Sicily to that country.

Few people realise the extent to which sulphur enters into the manufacture of the materials of everyday life that surround them. Yet it is not primarily because sulphur is necessary to convert the sap of a tropical plant into resilient and versatile rubber or wood-pulp into miles of news-print paper that this substance claims our attention at this time; rather because it is numbered among those substances of prime importance, absolutely essential to the carrying on of war, as entering into the very fabrication of explosives themselves. Hence it is not only a matter of curiosity, but also one of urgent interest, to inquire into the sources of this war mineral.

In this connection the appearance is timely of a publication of the U.S. National Museum under the title "Sulphur: An Example of Industrial Independence." This is by Mr. Joseph E. Pogue, of the Division of Mineral Technology, and presents in a few pages, in a simple and non-technical manner, the striking aspects of one of the most interesting mineral industries in the United States to-day. At the outbreak of the war in 1914 the United States was producing each year about 350,000 tons of sulphur, valued at a little more than 6,000,000 dollars. This quantity not only was sufficient to supply the needs of the country, but also contributed about 100,000 tons to European markets. With the development of war activities, however, the production has increased to meet the growing needs of munition-makers, while the exports have decreased as a result of disturbed trade conditions and the need for building up reserves of this essential material at home.

It is a singular fact that the chief raw materials of explosive manufacture are localised in a remarkable manner, and sulphur is no exception to this rule. In the United States practically the entire supply comes from a number of deposits in Louisiana and Texas, near the Gulf Coast. These deposits are similar in