

corroboration, although the author only claims to have "got it up" since the idea came to him. The revolution in thought, if the theory is substantiated, may be expected to resemble the change in astronomical ideas at the time of Copernicus. It is to be hoped that an English edition will soon appear.

The Earliest Forms of Society.

- (1) *Primitive Society: The Beginnings of the Family and the Reckoning of Descent.* By Dr. E. S. Hartland. Pp. v+180. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1921.) 6s. net.
- (2) *Primitive Society.* By Dr. R. H. Lowie. Pp. viii+453. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1921.) 21s. net.

IT is interesting to place these two books side by side in order to contrast the methods of attacking the problems involved in the study of primitive society which have been adopted by the respective schools to which the authors belong. (1) Dr. Hartland is one of the leading exponents of the view that there is a reasonable presumption that in the evolution of society wherever the patriarchal system now exists it has been preceded by the matriarchate. In the volume under notice he restates this view and summarises the evidence on which it is based in popular form. (2) Dr. Lowie, however, maintains that this theory is based upon an *a priori* assumption, and that Morgan and his followers, in their desire to formulate a logical scheme of social evolution, have distorted the facts by confining their attention to a single group of data. Pouring scorn on the heads of "the older school of anthropologists," he insists upon the empirical character of the evidence, and would have each case taken on its merits, subjected to intensive study, and treated as a whole.

After a review of the evidence on these lines, Dr. Lowie concludes that the theory of unilinear development is entirely fallacious and unwarranted. So far from the group organisation of the *sib* or clan being the foundation of primitive society, it is only one, and that frequently not the most important, of a number of forms of organisation to which the individual may belong. While he is prepared to allow that duplication of conditions may produce duplication of a sequence, as in the relation of polyandry and female infanticide, he formally abjures independent reproduction of the same series of "stages." He goes so far as to say that he is "not convinced of the reality of the totemic phenomenon," and for him the

problem of totemism resolves itself into a "series of specific problems not related to one another." If, however, he believes in independent development only in the very limited degree indicated, neither is he a whole-hearted supporter of diffusion; while attaching full weight to diffusion, particularly in continuous areas, he recognises that it does not necessarily preclude independent invention within a limited scope.

It must be acknowledged that if Dr. Lowie's argument in favour of empiricism fails to carry conviction, he has done good service in emphasising the necessity for intensive study of all the facts of a given area as a whole. By concentration on the group organisation of the kin, the supporters of the evolutionary theory have sometimes been led astray. The existence of the family as a social unit at an early stage has been obscured by the view that the family emerged from the group. Dr. Hartland, indeed, speaks of "sexual promiscuity—relieved perhaps by temporary unions in the nature of monogamy." At the same time, owing to his preoccupation with kin organisation, he is unable "to bring Andamanese society within any category at present known." This fact does not, however, suggest to Dr. Hartland a modification of his conclusions, as might perhaps be expected; he prefers to await further evidence.

Our Bookshelf.

The Calendar: Its History, Structure, and Improvement. By Alexander Philip. Pp. xii+104. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1921.) 7s. 6d. net.

THIS is not the kind of work that we expect from the Cambridge University Press. It contains numerous historical errors, and is not free from astronomical errors also. The author has endeavoured to guard against criticism of the latter by stating in his preface that his astronomical facts have been derived from the commonly available sources, and that he has disregarded "qualifying refinements known to modern astronomy but irrelevant to a calendrical purpose." This ambition has not prevented him, however, from stating the length of the tropical year to hundredths of a second, or the length of 4000 tropical years to an exact number of minutes. The introduction of these refinements, "irrelevant to a calendrical purpose," might have been pardoned, if they were accurate, which, unfortunately, they are not. But it is in the history of the calendar that the defects of the book are particularly displayed. The author ignores the two most valuable treatises on the subject, Ideler's "*Handbuch der Mathematischen und Technischen Chronologie*," and Ginzel's work which bears the same title. He writes in an easy way of Egyptian, Chaldean, and Chinese calendars;