

*Shaman, Saiva and Sufi: a Study of the Evolution of Malay Magic.* By Dr. R. O. Winstedt. Pp. vii + 191. (London, Bombay and Sydney: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1925.) 12s. net.

MALAYA has served as a melting-pot of many creeds as it has been the meeting place of many racial strains. Aboriginal tribes, Malays, themselves a composite people, Hindus, Buddhists, and Arabs have all contributed to the conglomerate which comes under the general term of Malay religion. For although in theory a strict Mohammedan, the Malay sees no incongruity in the inclusion of primitive charms among his invocations, and in the prominence, sometimes pre-eminence, of the magician in relation to the Moslem teacher. Although Skeat in his "Malay Magic" was well aware of the composite character of his material, any analysis, except incidentally or when essential to the exposition of his subject, lay outside the scope of his book. The beliefs of the Malays, however, invite, or rather demand, comparative treatment. How far, for example, is the remarkable prominence of the magician in Malay ritual to be regarded as characteristic of a stage of primitive belief? How far can it, as an accompaniment of a peculiar racial strain, be correlated with the highly-strung Malay temperament?

Dr. Winstedt's book is an invaluable, indeed, an indispensable, antecedent to comparative study. He has analysed the tangle into its component parts, describing first the development of the Malay from animist to Muslim, and then the beliefs and rites of each stage. His concluding chapter, which deals with the relation of the magician and all he stands for to the Sufi and Sufi pantheism, is perhaps the most valuable and its subject matter the least generally familiar in the book.

*The Spirit of the Wild.* By H. W. Sheppard-Walwyn. Pp. xx + 220 + 38 plates. (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, Ltd., 1924.) 12s. 6d. net.

THE author of this book possesses an unusual combination of qualities—a lively interest in and sympathy with animals, keen powers of observation, a facile pen, and a sense of humour. It is not surprising that they should have resulted in the most refreshing book on British mammals that we have read for some time. It is not that Mr. Sheppard-Walwyn has anything really new to tell, so much as the arresting and interesting way in which he puts on record his keen observations of living animals, imparting to the reader some of his own enthusiasm for and sympathy with them.

The author does, however, present a new view-point. His book contains twenty-two chapters, each dealing with one British mammal, and he has endeavoured to sum up in the titles to his chapters the outstanding trait in the character of the animal he is discussing, the driving force which directs its every action, which he calls its spirit. Thus the fox is directed by the Spirit of Craft; the mole, the Spirit of Energy; the vole, the Spirit of Vulgarly, and so on. It is an interesting point of view, and, whether one agrees with the author or not, one is bound to admit that he has managed to convey, both in the titles and in the subject matter of his chapters, a living picture of the animals described, and, on the whole, we should agree with his summing up of their characters.

The book is beautifully illustrated by a series of clear photographs, mainly by Mr. H. Mortimer Batten and Miss Francis Pitt, but including some by the author, Mr. R. Kearton and others. This is altogether a delightful book, and we hope it is not the last that the author will produce.

*Probleme der Astronomie.* Festschrift für Hugo v. Seeliger dem Forscher und Lehrer zum Fünfund-siebzigsten Geburtstage. Pp. iv + 475 + 3 Tafeln. (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1924.) 45 gold marks.

IT will be a source of satisfaction to all astronomers that this bouquet of writings gathered in homage to Seeliger was published before his lamented death in December last. The volume consists of thirty-six papers, embracing subjects from abstract dynamics on one hand to the latest astrophysical problems, both experimental and theoretical, on the other. The value of the contributions is sufficiently guaranteed by the list of authors, and though selection is invidious, the names of Jeans, Eddington, Schwarzschild (presumably a hitherto unpublished fragment), von Zeipel, Eberhard, Kohlschütter, Plaskett, Emden, Bergstrand, Schlesinger and Shapley will give an indication of the standard maintained. Some of the articles consist entirely of original research. Others give a general summary of recent work in some particular branch—summaries not easily found elsewhere. As particularly valuable ones may be mentioned Ludendorff's "On the relations between the different classes of variable stars," and Guthnick's "Twelve years of photoelectric photometry at the Berlin Observatory"; also Strömgren's (of which the title had better be left untranslated) "Zu Durchmusterung des Probleme restreint." A paper by van Rhijn contains evidence throwing doubt upon the supposed non-existence of M-stars intermediate between giants and dwarfs. Many of the papers are such as can be read with ease by those not specialists in the particular subjects concerned. E. A. M.

*The Statesman's Year Book: Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1925.* Edited by Sir John Scott Keltie and Dr. M. Epstein. Sixty-second Annual Publication; revised after Official Returns. Pp. xxxv + 1531. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1925.) 20s. net.

THE new edition of this indispensable work of reference appears with its unflinching regularity, and has, as usual, undergone complete revision in its voluminous statistics. As the world settles down there are fewer changes in territorial jurisdiction to record than in recent years, and the number of independent states has ceased to grow. The section on Arabia has been recast and contains a great deal of useful information of recent date. More Russian statistics are now given than was possible a few years ago. The bibliographies attached to each state are a valuable feature of the book, and they have shared the careful revision. Coloured maps show the new boundary between Britain and Italy in Jubaland, and the allied zones of occupation on the Rhine. The introductory tables give statistics of world production of coal, iron, and other commodities and facts concerning the League of Nations. In spite of its 1530 pages, the volume is not two inches thick, which adds to its convenience for reference.