

Ross's memoir, which is instinct with the intimate touch of a friendship of long standing, is a faithful picture of a personality full of charm, if not without its peculiarities, and a life of disinterested devotion to the advancement of learning. The thanks of the reading public are due to the Cambridge University Press for their re-issue of a notable and enduring work in a form which is as handsome as it deserves.

(1) *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. By Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski. (Psyche Miniatures: General Series, No. 6.) Pp. 128. 2s. 6d. net. (2) *Fee, Foe, Fum: or, The Giants in England*. By H. J. Massingham. (Psyche Miniatures: General Series, No. 5.) Pp. 175+4 plates. 2s. 6d. net. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1926.)

Of these two volumes in this attractively got up little series, Dr. Malinowski's contribution is written on lines with which what may be called his 'occasional' writings have made us familiar. It is his method to take some aspect of primitive culture—magic, jurisprudence, or, as on this occasion, myth—and, instead of dealing with it *in vacuo*, putting it in its context as a live element in the everyday life of primitive man as he himself has known him. In this case he shows what the legend, tradition, or story means to the native of the Trobriands by telling us not only of the matter with which it deals, but also of the manner it is told, the occasion, and by whom. It is, as he says, a reality lived, a hard-worked active force, a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom.

Mr. Massingham, on the other hand, belongs to another school and deals with matter that is no longer alive except as the stuff from which theory is made. His giants and dragons carved in the English hill-sides with their traditions and the stories of Arthur, the heroes of the Mabinogion and of Merlin, are the relics of a forgotten age which has to be painfully pieced together in a process of reconstruction. The author being a whole-hearted 'diffusionist,' this reconstruction is based on an interpretation of the material in terms of the 'megalithic culture' and the 'children of the sun' and their derivation from Egypt.

*Naturalist's Guide to the Americas*. Prepared by the Committee on the Preservation of Natural Conditions of the Ecological Society of America, with assistance from numerous Organisations and Individuals. Assembled and edited by the Chairman, Victor E. Shelford. Pp. xv+761+16 plates. (Baltimore, Md.: Williams and Wilkins Co.; London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1926.) 45s. net.

THIS important volume, which indicates the strength of the movement towards the ecological study of the problems of biology in America, will be an invaluable tool in the establishing of Nature reserves from the Amazon to the Arctic Circle. As a result of many years' labour, an enthusiastic band of scientific workers has catalogued all preserved and preservable areas in North America in which natural conditions persist, the ultimate

object being the reservation of all such areas in order that there, so far as possible, the primitive balance of Nature may be maintained. This preliminary study indicates, for each of the United States and Canadian provinces, the leading physical features, meteorological conditions, biological zones, summarises the associated flora and fauna, and mentions the areas suitable for Nature reserves. An introductory section discusses from many points of view the uses, values, and management of natural areas, and an effort is made to trace the original biota of North America. Ecological study demands a much more intensive investigation than could be compassed in this extensive monograph, but it sets the framework within which the future worker must build in detail.

J. R.

*Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilisation*. By Clément Huart. Translated by M. R. Dobie. (The History of Civilisation Series.) Pp. xix+249+4 plates. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.) 12s. 6d. net.

MR. HUART'S book on ancient Persia contains a very good account of the cultural history of old Iran. A vivid picture of the country, and an account of the scripts in which Persian texts have been written, is followed by the history of the three great dynasties, the Achæmenids, Arsacids, and the Sassanids. The real value of the book consists in the excellent analyses of the cultural data referring to each epoch; the social organisation, the religious cults and beliefs, and the artistic productions. The powerful character sketches of the various monarchs and heroes, starting with the legendary Cyrus, receive new life from the cultural background in which they are set. The author makes us feel the scenery, through his descriptions drawn from personal experience and by the many pictures which enliven the book. The chronological table and bibliography add to the value of the book, while the excellent index facilitates its use for reference.

*Prehistoric Man*. Written and Illustrated by Keith Henderson. (The Simple Guide Series.) Pp. xv+276. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927.) 7s. 6d. net.

As a stimulating introduction to prehistoric man, his haunts, habits, and arts of life, this volume in "The Simple Guide Series" will prove very useful. It is written vividly and without any surface pedantry though it condenses a good deal of information into a small space. It will succeed in sweeping from the picture of our stone age ancestors some of the dry dust with which the learning of specialists, as well as the centuries, have covered it. It leads us from lemurs, monkeys, and apes up to the man of the bronze age. Needless to say, no specialist in prehistory will completely agree with any other author's conclusions, whether these be put in popular or learned language, but, on the whole, Mr. Henderson succeeds in giving a fair and well-balanced summary of the sound and established results of modern prehistoric science.