

than the absolute owner, a point on which there has been frequent misunderstanding in relation to tribal lands. The distinctive feature of this society is the delegation of control through a succession of subdivisions—section, ward and so forth down to the individual family—in each of which the headman controls the divisions and individuals below him in the social hierarchy. In the matter of the law, the chief is the interpreter and exponent, who applies traditional procedure to cases, rather than the law-giver, though that function may be assumed on occasion, as when Kgama came under the influence of the missionaries and promulgated laws on various matters of tribal practice. In view of the fact that until recently there was no written record of judgments, the distinction between law, even case law, and custom is not a matter of hard and fast rule, nor, perhaps, a matter of great significance.

The aim of the administration has been to preserve the position and power of the chief, subject to certain reservations in matters in which freedom of action is considered incompatible with British control. These reservations, however, even though made with due deliberation, such as, for example, in the restriction on inflicting the death

penalty, are bound to affect the prestige of the chief. Missionary influence, even though well-intentioned or well-informed, also plays its part in modifying the relation of chief and tribe; but the most serious among disturbing factors is the change in economic conditions. One example mentioned by Prof. Schapera is the evasion of the duty of performing work for communal benefit at the call of the chief, incumbent upon the regiments into which members of Tswana society, both male and female, are organized. The rule of the *corvée* is broken by individuals, who thereby flout the authority of the chief, because they will not be paid, as they are when they work in the mines, or for Europeans.

Prof. Schapera is careful to point out that his handbook is not a code. That this should be clearly understood is essential. The future of native Africa depends upon the recognition of the fact that its law and custom are not static and stereotyped; but that the principles upon which African society is based can and must be adapted to meet changing conditions, provided that the adaptive process is not allowed to become disruptive and that harmony with the soul of Africa is maintained.

A Falconer in Iceland

In Search of the Gyr-Falcon: an Account of a Trip to North-West Iceland. By Ernest Lewis. With a Memoir of the Author. Pp. xxiii+235+24 plates. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1938.) 12s. 6d. net.

IT is delightful to turn to this book by Ernest Lewis. It refreshes the reader after a spate of books, some of them second-rate and decadent, which are flooding the market at the present time. Let it be said that Ernest Lewis's book is produced in excellent taste, from the jacket to the last page. The print is good, the photographs are well reproduced, the design of the jacket is unusually pleasing.

This book describes a journey recently made by "Ernest Lewis" (the pen-name which Ernest Vesey took to hide his identity). The author has unhappily not survived to see the success of his book and it is therefore fitting that, in a feeling foreword, his father should have disclosed to us the author's real name.

Ernest Vesey travelled to Iceland to bring home young Iceland falcons to be trained in falconry. He arrived alone in that northern country, knowing well the difficulty of his task. By sea he travelled from Reykjavik up to the north-west

peninsula of Iceland, to a district that is little known even at the present day. He had been led to believe that the Iceland falcon even here was a rare bird, but by perseverance, handicapped as he was by the loss of an eye and an arm, he explored, sometimes on horseback but usually on foot, desolate glens and valleys, forded on foot rivers so swift and deep that once he was swept away in the icy current, braved perilous seas in small boats, scaled cliffs considered inaccessible, and at the end of all his journeyings found that the Iceland falcon was less rare than was supposed, and succeeded in bringing back a brood to Scotland.

The book is simply and graphically written, and an intense love of all living creatures stands out from its pages. Whether the author is watching the king eider in all the beauty of his plumage, or the sea eagle sailing majestically past him, or the noble Iceland falcon rushing in to do battle with the eagle, Ernest Vesey shows himself to be not only a bird observer, true and faithful, but also a bird lover.

The hardships of Icelandic life, and the cold beauty of that country, are also brought vividly before the reader in this fine book.

SETON GORDON.