

# NATURE

## SUPPLEMENT

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### SHORT REVIEWS

#### Anthropology

##### Singing for Power

The Song Magic of the Papago Indians of Southern Arizona. By Ruth Murray Underhill. Pp. vii+159. (Berkeley, Cal. : University of California Press ; London : Cambridge University Press, 1938.) 9s. net.

MISS UNDERHILL here collects some of the songs which are a characteristic feature in the life of the Papago Indians of southern Arizona. The collection is part of a more elaborate study of Papago ceremonial, for which the material was collected in two expeditions undertaken under the ægis of the Humanistic Council of Columbia University, and occupying fourteen months in 1931 and 1933.

The songs are an essential part of the ceremonial ritual which is concerned with every department of daily tribal life, of rain making, and in the preparation and first drinking of cactus spirit, 'singing up' the corn, war and scalping ceremonial, puberty and the like. It is interesting to note that the man who has taken a scalp, thereby acquiring magical power, is a danger to others. He has to learn a code of behaviour, whereby he may avoid harmful direction of his powers against fellow members of his group.

In addition to a translation, each group of songs has explanatory notes making clear its position and function in life and belief.

##### The Native Tribes of Central Australia

By Prof. Sir Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen. New edition. Pp. xxiv+671+9 plates. (London : Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1938.) 25s. net.

A REPRINT of "The Native Tribes of Central Australia" by the late Sir Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen is more than welcome. The original edition appeared in 1899 and has long been out of print. It is now reproduced without change, but with an introduction by Sir James Frazer, to whose inspiration, counsel and friendship Spencer's work as an anthropologist was so deeply indebted.

"The Native Tribes of Central Australia" may without exaggeration be described as the most important ethnographical treatise on a primitive people ever written. Dealing mainly with the Arunta, it included material relating to other tribes

of Central Australia, which Spencer did not incorporate in his later books.

Among the author's discoveries, the record of the classificatory system of relationship current among the Arunta, which effectually prevented inter-marriage within the 'forbidden degrees', fully confirmed the earlier work of Fison and Howitt in other parts of Australia ; but the outstanding achievement of the investigators lay in eliciting that the Arunta were ignorant of the facts of paternity and of the nature of the process of procreation, and in establishing that the totemic ritual was a magical ceremonial for the increase of the totem—plant or animal. Hereby Spencer and Gillen opened up new vistas in the exploration of the primitive mind in its social and religious orientation, and initiated a new conception of the totemic problem, which for so long had exercised the ingenuity of the anthropologist in speculation.

"The Native Tribes of Central Australia" indeed proved to be in a very real sense an epoch-making book.

#### Biology

##### Salmacis (The Indian Sea-Urchin)

(Indian Zoological Memoirs on Indian Animal Types, edited by Dr. K. N. Bahl, 7). By Prof. R. Gopala Aiyar. Pp. ix+69+1 plate. (Lucknow : Lucknow Publishing House, 1938.) 2 rupees.

THIS memoir gives an account of a common Indian sea-urchin which is a fairly typical example of the class Echinoidea. The introductory chapter deals with systematics and so with the position of the genus *Salmacis* among the Echinoderms. The definitions of the various orders of the Echinoidea are given, and with each order a list of the commoner Indian forms. The example belongs to the family Temnopleuridæ, and a key is provided for the separation of the genera of this family. The next nine chapters provide a systematic account of *Salmacis* under a succession of headings ; external characters, skeleton, alimentary canal, cœlom, connective tissues, respiratory and excretory organs, nervous system, receptor organs and reproductive system. The next three chapters treat of the development of the Echinoidea (some of it based on the classical account by Prof.