

Indeed, except in beauty of appearance and conversational brilliance, there is little connection between the real and the fictional portraits. Clotilde is superficial, tortuous, self-centred, and almost self-righteous. Helene is vital, arrogantly frank, and passionately fond of "experience." It is clear from the first there are plenty of rocks ahead of her, her life is to be fairly bestrewn with wreckages, but the waters she sails in are not shallow—they are anything, everything, but that. This is the point Meredith has misunderstood, but it is one of which the appearance of the autobiography makes further misunderstanding impossible. Many of the reactions against convention recorded in the book are attributable to the hideously corrupt society in which Helene von Dönniges was born (she herself was betrothed by her parents, at fourteen, to a debauched lover of her mother's) and, at worst, her emotional episodes were love affairs and not liaisons. Certainly these episodes abound in a degree confusing to conventional readers. But these, in her Preface, the Princess has warned away from her book. "Let me warn," she says, "those who are easily shocked not to read. To the free and courageous I say 'Read,' but read with the desire to understand the true nature of the author, as she follows the path traced for her by fate, from heights to depths, even to the verge of the mire. The road leads eventually to the Light, and remains therein." That devious paths have led in her case to a singularly vibrant and sunny old age is the last word about Helene von Racowitza. She has had appalling experiences, but to say they have none of them soured her is to grievously understate facts. The buoyancy Lassalle gloried in has not only swept her above barriers; it has carried her far. The only tests she can be judged by, the only ones she would accept, are the growth of her passionate reverence for life and all it has brought her, and her widening self-knowledge and love for her fellows. She is after all of the race that Meredith lived by.

M. STURGE HENDERSON.

THE CHILDHOOD OF MAN.*

Professor Frazer has a monumental way of handling his subjects, and in "Totemism and Exogamy" he has built a vast structure of facts and theories that might well stand for the life-work even of an exceptional man. No more important book on primitive custom and belief has been published for many years. Professor Frazer gives us here a survey of all the known facts of totemism and exogamy wherever these institutions are found existing together. He is less concerned with establishing any particular theory than with presenting and arranging the facts. At the same time, he does not leave his facts an innumerable maze without a plan, but offers some exceedingly persuasive theories in explanation of them.

His final theory of the origin of totemism seems doubly reasonable now that he accepts the idea that pure totemism is not a religion, but merely a system of relationship between men and animals or lifeless things. Discussing totemism more than twenty years ago, Professor Frazer described it as a religion, and he reprints his misleading thesis in the first of these volumes. He only reprints it to refute it, however—on this point, at least. "In pure totemism, such as we find it among the Australian aborigines," he now tells us, "the totem is never a god and is never worshipped." The relationship between a man and his totem is clearly illustrated by the case of the Central Australian native, who, on being shown his photograph by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, said: "That one is just the same as me; so is a kangaroo (his totem)." Taking this sentence as a summing up of the whole matter, Professor Frazer points

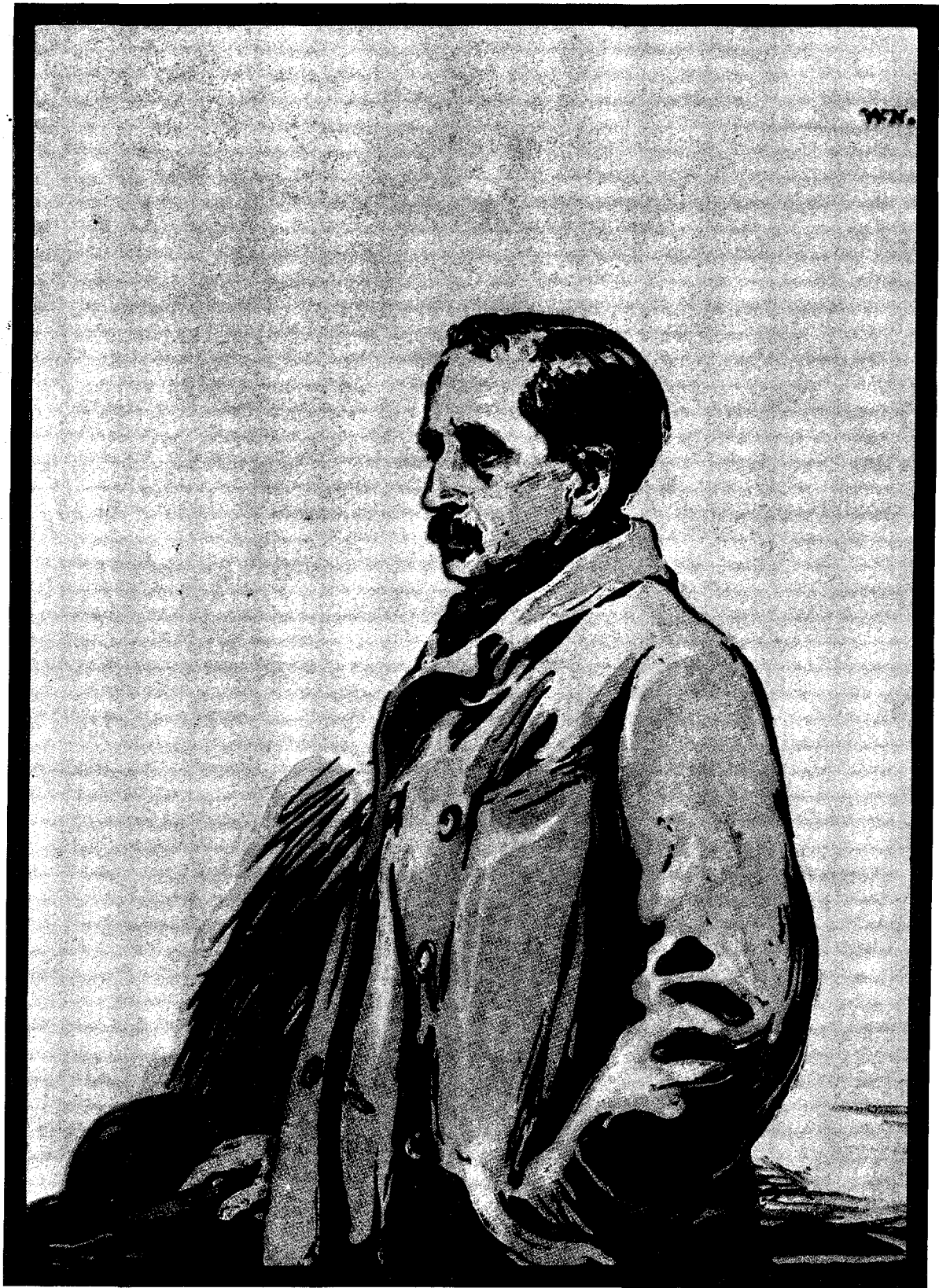
out that totemism, far from implying any veneration of animals, plants, and what not, is merely an identification of a man with his totem, whatever the latter may be. Primitive man's ideas are hazy and without definite outlines, and he is able to imagine men and animals and lifeless things merging and changing into each other with marvellous readiness.

How, then, did man ever persuade himself that he had, as double or *alter ego*, a kangaroo, a bird, a tree, or a lifeless stone? Professor Frazer used to think that an explanation might be found in the theory of the external soul—"that is, in the belief that living people may deposit their souls for safe keeping outside of themselves in some secure place, where the precious deposit will be less exposed to the risks and vicissitudes of life than while it remained in the body of its owner." He suggested, as a second possible theory, that totemism might have had its origin in certain magic rites for increasing the supply of different sorts of food, and so forth. Thus certain groups of men would imitate bees in sound and appearance in order to increase the store of honey by their magical mummeries, and they would gradually get identified with whatever they imitated. Professor Frazer now discards both these theories, the former because there is no proof of the general association of the totemic system with the doctrine of the external soul, and the second because it implies the existence of a more highly organised society than that in which totemism must have had its origin.

No other theory of the origin of totemism seems half so reasonable as that finally adopted by Professor Frazer. Totemism he now regards as a primitive explanation of the conception and birth of children. Primitive man, he points out, is incapable of the chain of reasoning which relates a child to its father. Maternity is an obvious fact, but paternity is a difficult inference. The undeveloped savage, casting about for an explanation of the presence of the child within the womb, looks for some immediate cause. He does not know that the child had any existence there before the first moment at which the mother feels it stirring, and his explanation will naturally have reference to something which happens just before this critical moment. On the Banks Islands, for instance, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers discovered that the inhabitants refer their abstention from certain animals and fruits to the fact that "their mothers were impregnated by the entrance into their womb of spirit animals or spirit fruits, and that they themselves are nothing but the particular animal or plant which effected a lodgment in their mother and in due time was born into the world with a superficial and deceptive resemblance to a human being." With this in mind, we can easily understand the Central Australian's cryptic utterance about the photograph and the kangaroo. His mother, or some female ancestor, first felt the child quickening in her womb immediately after she had seen a kangaroo hopping by, and she connected the passing of the kangaroo with the presence of the child as cause and effect. Thus, according to this theory, totemism had its origin in ignorance of paternity, though it survives as an institution in many places where the facts of paternity have long been realised.

As for exogamy, Professor Frazer holds that it had a different origin from totemism and that its relations with totemism are accidental. In his present survey he is concerned with these two institutions only where they exist side by side, but his object all through is to show that "the totemic clan is a totally different social organism from the exogamous class," even though the totemic clans are nearly invariably themselves exogamous where totemism and exogamy are found among the same people. After examining various theories, Professor Frazer comes to the conclusion that the origin of exogamy is to be discovered in the growing aversion of primitive man for incestuous connections between brothers and sisters, parents and children, and afterwards even cousins. There is no space

* "Totemism and Exogamy." By J. G. Frazer, D.C.L. In 4 Vols. 50s. net. (Macmillan.)



J. M. BARRIE

From a drawing by William Nicholson (1905)

to follow him step by step in his reasonings ; we can merely mention some of his main conclusions. His new work is a fascinating study of primitive man, at once cautious and masterly in its logic, and admirably written. It is a storehouse of anthropological facts which the student will find indispensable and the best sort of general reader an intellectual delight.

ROBERT LYND.

MAARTEN MAARTENS' NEW NOVEL.*

"Harmen Pols, Peasant," is the title of this new book by Maarten Maartens. It tells the story of a brief crisis in the life of a young Dutch peasant, whose name has been taken to title the novel. The man in question, after an uneventful and comparatively peaceful boyhood, suddenly finds his whole future imperilled by a legitimate claim upon his father's farm.

"The wedding was over. The foolish, noisy wedding that had made so much stir, in a three weeks' burst of country gossip. Aunt Carlina, the middle-aged spinster, was the spouse of Roelant Slink."

That was the origin of the trouble which came suddenly into the life of young Harmen Pols. Aunt Carlina (his aunt) had married Roelant Slink, the farm-hand, and with Aunt Carlina's hand went the half of the farm and all its stock and appliances. This, however, Harmen had not known when he suggested to Slink that Aunt Carlina might marry, if she were asked lustily. He had said this to Slink partly in fun, and partly because he would have been thankful to get Aunt Carlina out of the house ; for she was a scold, and made his mother's life something of a misery. Slink took the hint—had probably meant to marry her in any case, for he had learned that Carlina had a half-share in the farm, and the marriage would raise him in one day from the poverty of a common farm-hand to a sufficiency to enable him to buy a certain public-house, which was his ambition. Therefore he married Aunt Carlina, who was twenty-three years older than himself, and gaunt and ugly.

The book goes forward from this point to tell, with that peculiar note of neatness which Maarten Maartens has made his own, the result of this sudden catastrophe upon Harmen, his father, Steven Pols, and the Vrouw, his mother. The character of the father is an extraordinary mixture of chronic pessimism and violent religious belief, to which is added a passionate temper. When Harmen tells him that he, Harmen, was the cause of Slink proposing, the father turns on him in a fury. "His wrath blazed forth, in the horrible way they all knew and dreaded. He told his son never to speak to him again, unless he could save the farm : 'I tell you, that you're no son of mine till you've made good the harm that you've done !'"

The old man's eyes are failing him, and there follows a scene in which he is forced to appeal to his wife to open a combination-lock, because he can no longer see to set the letters. The lock secures a safe which holds sufficient to pay out Aunt Carlina, without having to sell the farm to realise her share, which means ruin to the family. Yet Steven will not use the money for this purpose unless his wife will give her oath that she is innocent of wrong-doing with one Mynheer Blass, he having seen her kissed by Blass in the orchard before the birth of Harmen, whom in his heart he believes to be the son of Blass. The Vrouw will not give her oath, so he cannot use the money to save the farm, as he has vowed to the Lord that he will not if she cannot swear to her innocence.

The book is one that must be dealt with in the most sympathetic spirit, if its qualities are to be realised and brought forward. There are some extraordinary scenes both psychic and physical. The way in which the author

* "Harmen Pols." By Maarten Maartens. 6s. (Methuen.)

shows young Harmen's gradual loss of faith in his father, his mother, and his God is extremely interesting, and conceivably approximates to a picture of the mind of a young and undeveloped man possessed of such a character as young Harmen's. The faith of the father in his God, even after he believes all to be lost, and after his eyesight is gone utterly, is very fine ; but the character of the mother is less decided and more difficult to understand. There is, however, something very lovable about her, as also about young Harmen, so far as one can see his character with clearness. It is a book to be read, and the reader will find that in addition to all I have indicated, he will be rewarded by a charming love-story which threads through the tale.

W. HOPE HODGSON.

A CRITIC OF MODERN LIFE.*

Books of essays gathered from the periodicals are traditionally supposed to be the least marketable of literary wares. Publishers, booksellers, and librarians, who agree in nothing else, agree in this, that the public doesn't want these occasional pieces, that nobody borrows them and nobody buys them. Yet, surely, the occasional piece that is good, is good for many, if not for all, occasions ; and the essay that is readable in a weekly or monthly paper doesn't become unreadable by mere transference to a volume. If it isn't good enough for a book, then it wasn't good enough for a magazine. Personally, I confess to immense enjoyment of such literature. Give me a choice between the average work of fiction and the average book of essays, and I take the latter without hesitation ; for while in the one there may be nothing to please me, in the other there is bound to be something—a pleasant whim, a happy idea, an unsuspected fact, or a felicitous turn of phrase.

Messrs. Herbert & Daniel, the latest recruits to the noble army of publishers, would seem to be above this tradition of their comrades, for, to the excellent efforts that signalled their first appearance in the field, they have added this new deed of daring—a book of reprinted pieces. The particular choice was good. Mr. J. A. Hobson is one of those fortunate men whose names at once suggest a quality. As inevitably as Aristides was just, so Mr. Hobson is sincere. His view of things may be bold, or strange, or unpalatable : it is certain to be honest and individual. "Nothing," says Emerson, "is so rare in a man as an act of his own." Nothing, we agree—except, perhaps, an opinion of his own. So rare, indeed, are opinions, that certain clever gentlemen have made vast fortunes by supplying them, for a halfpenny a day, to those who lack them and feel it respectable to have them. Now these opinions, being naturally such as are agreeable to the gentlemen of fortune and their friends, are not always agreeable with decency and veracity ; and so a writer like Mr. Hobson, who is at pains to find the truth and speak it fearlessly, creates the profoundest alarm among the gentlemen of fortune and friends aforesaid. Accordingly, they make a powerful diversion, and call upon the mob (under the name of "patriots") for universal execration of Mr. Hobson and his kind as slanderers of the nation, enemies of the people.

The qualities that make Mr. Hobson's views obnoxious to the multitude make his essays valuable to discriminating readers. And they are not only valuable, but interesting. Some honest writers are dull, some sincere writers are tiresome. "Do not sermons exist," asks Bagehot, "and are they not a warning to mankind ?" Mr. Hobson does not preach (in the bad sense), and I can testify to his volume's being capital holiday reading. In one respect

* "A Modern Outlook." By J. A. Hobson. 5s. net. (Herbert & Daniel.)