

the President of the Costers' Union in Whitechapel. Here, as elsewhere, the extremes are compelled to meet. It is from the city and the stage that the peerage selects its recruits.

No task would be more fascinating than a similar analysis of American society. The absence of hereditary titles has led to curious results; and as early as 1750 De Chastellux noted that precedence in Philadelphia was strictly determined by wealth. The fact of birth had, at some stage, to enter in; and, broadly speaking, it seems true to say of America that its upper class consists of those who have been rich sufficiently long for most of us to forget the character of their ancestors. America differs from England in that religion is unimportant. Locality clearly counts. No one from Nevada could ever enter the sacred circles of Philadelphia or Boston save by the doubtful virtue of marriage; and if you come from Ohio it is clear that no excuse would be accepted. Education no longer is significant. Harvard has yielded to the Middle West; and the struggle of Yale and Princeton is clearly fruitless. Indeed, it is difficult to know how, save by the character of one's work, the American middle-class can be known. It might be all those who are not either sufficiently rich not to educate their daughters or sufficiently poor to join a trade-union. Professors are clearly middle-class. So are bank cashiers and commercial travellers. A graduate student who had been passed by an insurance company would have in this field a noble opportunity for the exercise of his talents.

H. J. L.

More Mythology

The Mythology of All Races, Vol. III: Celtic, by John Arnott Macculloch; Slavic, by Jan Máchal. Boston: Marshall Jones Co. \$6.00.

TONGUE-TWISTERS of the hackneyed "She sells seashells by the seashore" brand are hopelessly distanced, nay, even such monstrosities as the German "Konstantinopolitanischer Dudelsackpfeifenmachermeister" are put to shame by the villainous assemblages of sounds that meet the eye and defy the lip as one turns the pages of this latest publication in the mythological series. Human speech harbors many surprises for the uninitiate. Aborigines there are in Utah and Nevada who whisper part of a word and suggest the rest by closing the glottis. The Bushman clacks his tongue to say "Good morning" and fillips its tip from the roof of the palate to express the idea of transubstantiation.

Since the days of Przemysl even European languages have proved their latent possibilities. Accordingly we willingly swallow the names of Medb and Skrzatek and balk not even at Bodhmhall. These may be lacking in euphony, but they transcend not the powers of the human tongue. What, however, can be said on behalf of Cualnge or Gwrnach or Caledwylch? Never were these meant for mortal voice. Perhaps they were devised to be transmitted by telepathy or to be bandied about by the subtler organs of some fourth-dimensional order of beings. Or, most probable of all, they served as passwords at some esoteric witches' Sabbath of phoneticians ordained by the hero of George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion.

Of course, no living being is responsible for the vagaries of Celtic and Polish phonology, and if we are left floundering amidst the former some kind soul has at least thrown us a life preserver in the

form of a key for the Slavic symbols. But enough of phonetics!

Three scholars have contributed to this volume, for Dr. Louis H. Gray, who banishes his name from the title page by way of editorial modesty, was obliged to supply the last section himself on account of the uncertainties of trans-Atlantic communication with his Czech correspondent. Naturally there is some diversity in the mode of approach of the several authors, but this may be occasioned as much by the varying character of the accessible material as by the writers' individuality.

Of the data presented the Celtic mythology savors least of the soil. Dr. Macculloch is fully aware of it and enlarges on the encroachments of Christianity and pseudo-historical sophistication. Primitive remnants abound, nevertheless, here as everywhere, but there is a distinct trend toward Byzantine grandioseness. Lady Bebhionn wears finger-rings as thick as three ox-goads, while Fergus has the strength of seven hundred men and satisfies his hunger with seven hogs and kine for a single meal. On the whole, the atmosphere is redolent of the medieval court at that highly interesting transitional period when the older cults were clashing with the new faith. The juxtaposition of the two civilizations is not lacking in some grotesque features, as when King Loegaire repudiates Christianity unless Cúchulainn be summoned from hell. When St. Patrick has accomplished the miracle, the pagan hero implores the king to become a Christian and the saint to admit him to Paradise, which devoutly wished-for consummation is duly effected.

From a literary point of view, Dr. Macculloch's treatise leaves much to be desired. It is both scholarly and sane,

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but withal rather amorphous and at times dull. Somehow one cannot enjoy the stories as stories in the author's presentation, and his manner of bringing in variants encumbers the account with an excess of detail. In this respect the brief essay on Slavic mythology by Professor Máchal of the Czech University of Prague is greatly superior. It is admirably clear-cut and even in the translation reveals a remarkable lightness of touch. Only the two sections on Slavic gods appear somewhat pretentious. So little is known of these deities that the device of having a separate chapter devoted to each recalls the famous discussion of snakes in Iceland. A summary catalogue of the most important names with that almost infinitesimal bit of knowledge extant as to their cult would have served the purpose better.

The Slavic material itself stands out in striking contrast to that of the Celtic sources. No scenes of Oriental magnificence are unfolded before our view, but the simple conceptions and ways of the humble folk, as revealed both in the earliest written documents by German, Arabic and Greek observers and in the traditional usages of the modern peasantry. The ancient Slavs were typical animists, as is shown among other things by their funeral customs—the slaying of servants, the cremation of wives and property, the laceration of mourners' faces. But, what is still more striking, is the extraordinary way in which antediluvian practices have persisted to the present day. It has been pointed out before that the social life of the Southern Slavs with its patrilineal sibs and bloody vendettas presented until the most recent period a tissue of primitive usages. We now learn how large a place is still occupied in the religious consciousness by rites of pagan lineage. To mention only one group of observances, the ancestors are propitiated with offerings and there is a firm belief in a tutelary household deity.

It is the Baltic Slavs that form the subject of Dr. Gray's chapter, or, to be more precise, the Letts and Lithuanians, since the old and quite extinct Prussians have left no trace of their mythology. Here the main source of information lies in folk-songs, which reveal a very marked interest in celestial phenomena, with the sun as the main protagonist. It may not be out of place to explain that different peoples vary widely in the aspects of nature that are deemed worthy of mythological interest, as Waterman has shown in an interesting statistical study. While one tribe features the heavens, another may neglect them to a marked degree and indulge in an indefinite series of explanations of the biological peculiarities of different species of animals. Again, while one people is concerned with the sun, another concentrates on the stars. In the Baltic area the moon plays a very subordinate role, and in a note the author delivers a well-merited thrust at the lunar enthusiasts who interpret every conceivable mythic episode as a symbolic representation of the moon's changes. Perkúnas, the Thunder deity, is not so prominent as the Sun in the folk-songs, but his striking and suggestive analogies with the Iranian Indra furnish Dr. Gray with food for reflections, most of which he tantalizingly keeps to himself, though he promises a fuller discussion of the Baltic peoples and their religion in an independent publication.

One-half of this impressive series has now been issued, and as its publication progresses it is impossible to suppress an ardent wish for some ultimate synthetic essay, apparently not contemplated in the initial prospectus, that shall sum up and bring to a head the vast product of Dr. Gray's erudite collaborators. To be sure, some general conceptions are bound to emerge from every attentive reader, but they require definite formulation by some master hand. How

should one explain those haunting analogies that grow and multiply as we turn from Oceania to Africa and from Africa to America? When half the people of the globe thwart ogres by the very same devices, is it because the tales have gradually travelled from tribe to tribe or because of some intangible but universal trait of human psychology that again and again leads to the same method of rescue? Tylor and Lang and Joseph Jacobs wrestled with this question and the generation of epigonoi are still puzzling their heads in trying to find a completely satisfactory series of solutions for comparable problems.

Then there is the relation of myth to social usage. When some folk-tale outrages our sense of decency by casting aside all notions of primogeniture and insolently assigns to the youngest brother the main part in the story, is this to be interpreted as a survival of "junior right," the usage still current in some communities of bequeathing to the youngest son the lion's share of the legacy? Or, to put the case in more general terms, to what extent can we reconstruct from mythic tales the social conditions of their creators and transmitters?

Still another problem concerns the ultimate significance of myths. Do they at bottom mirror the processes of nature, the wanderings of the sun, the phases of the moon, or atmospheric changes? Or are they rooted in human experience, essentially folk-tales glossed over with a celestial veneer? Finally, though the number of possible queries is legion, what rôle does mythology play in the life of primitive and sophisticated civilizations? In what measure do myths reflect the religious consciousness, man's total reaction to the universe, how far merely the gambols of poetic fancy or the urge of the cause-seeking instinct? A whole volume might well be devoted to the philosophy of myth in its broader aspects; surely it is not immodest to ask for a fairly-sized valedictory essay on the subject.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

Caradoc Evans

My People, By Caradoc Evans. New York: Duffield & Company. \$1.50.

Capel Sion, by Caradoc Evans. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$1.50.

THERE is little to choose between *My People* and *Capel Sion*. In each the Respected Josiah Bern-Davydd, black-gloved and elastic-gaitered, cunning, full of invective, on familiar terms with the Big Man, presides over the congregation of Welsh peasant religionists, who are the subject of the tales. These see visions and chant their more inspired utterances, and in one book as in the other they are covetous, cruel, sly, wanton, dirty, inbred. Gain is with them a motive which becomes an obsession, and obsession sometimes moves quickly into madness. For gain or ease in Sion there is no evil which they do not commit. They covet even the dead whom in life they have dishonored that their graveyard may be the fullest in the land and rise to their credit on the Judgment Day; the burning anticipation of all but the few half-wits and outcasts is to wear the White Shirt and go to live in the Great Palace after death. The stories are bitter in flavor and most often gross; they centre upon the efforts of one or another to rid himself of a parent or daughter or maidservant who weighs upon his fortunes, to make a deceitful marriage, to wrest an inheritance, to gain pride of place. Pathos there is when some dull, inarticulate soul grasps for happiness