

REVIEWS.

The Golden Bough. By J. G. FRAZER. Part I: *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings* (two volumes). Part II: *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*. Part III: *The Dying God*. Part IV: *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*. Part V: *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild* (two volumes). London, Macmillan and Company, 1907-12.—Seven volumes: xxxii, 426; xi, 417; xv, 446; xii, 305; xix, 452; xvii, 319; xii, 371 pp.

The London *Times*, commenting upon the importance of Dr. Frazer's work, says: "The verdict of posterity will probably be that *The Golden Bough* has influenced the attitude of the human mind towards supernatural belief and symbolical rituals more profoundly than any other books published in the nineteenth century except those of Darwin and Herbert Spencer." If along with *The Golden Bough* the reviewer had grouped Tylor's *Primitive Culture* and Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*—the three fitting into one common setting—the justice of this appraisal could not be disputed. The study of comparative religion has done as definite service in breaking down the barriers of old dogma and taboo among us as the discoveries of science. Between the first and third editions of *The Golden Bough* twenty-two years have elapsed, and in that time the outlook of religious thought has changed fundamentally. The readers of the third edition are not startled theologians, such as filled the pages of church periodicals with bitter protest against Dr. Frazer's earlier works, but men of more scientific temper, familiar with the main conclusions of the comparative method. Dogma has by no means yielded, but it has been obliged to learn the facts adduced by investigation in order to make them its own. Hence there is no longer a sense of sacrilege in the discovery, in all sorts of religions, of traces of the dying god and of sacrament and sacrifice in forms analogous to the Christian. Dogma is giving place to criticism, and the only question which the anthropologist need fear now is whether his method is sound and his results reliable.

This changed attitude is so largely due to Dr. Frazer's own work that it seems ungracious for the science to which he has so splendidly contributed to turn upon him in critical dissent, or turn away altogether and ignore him, just when the achievement of a life-time is appearing

in these volumes. Yet that is what is happening. In spite of his prodigious scholarship, his unrivaled power of presentation, his penetrating analysis of data, former disciples are now leaving him and fellow-workers reject his main conclusions. There is admiration on every side for his productivity. In the last two years four huge volumes on *Totemism and Exogamy* have been followed by seven more of this third edition of *The Golden Bough*. The manual labor alone of handling these thousands of pages, each with its rich offering of references and its careful analysis, would seem in itself a sufficient task for so relatively short a time. But the work is still going on, and the author has already more volumes well on the way to the public. In one of his prefaces—which he uses so aptly for confidences with the reader—Dr. Frazer speaks of the “western sun” warning him to finish his task; but this strenuous activity gives little hint of anything but vitality at the full. Yet admiration for a great achievement must not check frank criticism of its ultimate validity.

The criticism of Frazer's work is, unfortunately, not a question of details. It is a challenge of fundamentals, mainly directed on the one hand against the method of analysis and on the other against the synthetic plan. As for the method of assemblage of data, it is practically the same as that of Spencer and Tylor—what has sometimes, though none too justly, been termed “the English method.” It is the comparative method in its extreme form, the massing of facts that bear on their face similarities or contrasts, with little regard for their environment, which however may reveal an entirely different significance. Frazer is no such sinner in this regard as was Spencer; but still he too inserts his references to primitive customs with somewhat the same ease with which one moves a card in an index catalogue. Such a method offers constant invitation to strain a point and to construe the data so as to fit the scheme; and, in spite of Dr. Frazer's vast erudition, he has already been accused of accepting the invitation. One meets already the delicate chiding by Dr. Fowler, for misappropriation of funds for Roman cults, and the divergence in treatment by Miss Harrison, Professor Farnell and others, while anthropologists enter a still franker protest concerning the handling of primitive material.

The plan of the book is therefore an element in the method itself. Indeed it is practically the whole thing, the method being so readily adaptable to any scheme. As a matter of fact, the data have been grouped around a single theme—the problem of the killing of the priest of the sacred wood of Diana in the old Arician cult, which turns out to be the problem of the dying god in nearly all societies. This theme is almost lost sight of in the long voyage of discovery, as Frazer terms

it, which attempts to show the common characteristics of the cults and beliefs of mankind at various stages of culture, but still it remains the basis of the survey. Involved in this plan is a further problem of classification. Indeed, this is the fundamental problem of the whole work; for, in spite of the vast array of material for induction, the main categories have served rather as *a priori* laws from which to proceed than as provisional hypotheses toward which the data seems to lead. The treatment of magic shows this very clearly. Frazer separates magic from religion absolutely: magic is a crude, mistaken, primitive science; religion is the product of its futility and belongs to a second stage of culture. The one is based upon a conception of laws, the other upon the dominance of mysterious powers. Now practically every anthropologist of any standing has rejected this distinction. Hubert and Mauss pointed out its fallacies some ten years ago. Magic involves this mysterious potentiality in things, words or actions as does "religion." Dr. Frazer's "laws of thought" are merely a statement of ritual act or attitude—of how magic works, not of what it is. But if you break down this distinction, the whole Frazerian scheme of religious evolution totters. The author continues to ignore criticism upon this point. This is either dogmatism or a failure in psychological analysis. His primitives arrive at conclusions like full-grown Europeans. Undoubtedly so they do in many fields, but not here. The emotions shown in religion are no new birth of the human spirit, a second stage following a rationalist and experimental attitude. The thrill of the mysterious is there from the first, and rite and myth pass on from the earliest reactions into the higher forms.

However, it is only the outsider, the interested dilettante, who is likely to be led astray by Frazer now. The initiated witness this publication of *The Golden Bough* with a saddened admiration, realizing how magnificent might have been the achievement had the work been done on other lines.

J. T. SHOTWELL.

A Philosophy of Social Progress. By E. J. URWICK. London, Methuen and Company, 1912.—xii, 300 pp.

Mr. Urwick has two aims, of which the first is "to introduce students and general readers to a point of view which may increase their interest in the study of social life" (page v). The second and perhaps predominant aim is "to attack the usual conception of social science" (page v). In company with many earnest men he does not "believe that sociology is or can be a science" (page vii). Sociology is not