

**ANCIENT TALES FROM  
MANY  
LANDS: A COLLECTION  
OF FOLK STORIES**

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Ancient tales from many lands: a collection of folk stories by R. M. Fleming

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**R. M. FLEMING**

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FROM MANY LANDS



PLATE I

MAUI: THE POLYNESIAN CULTURE HERO  
Carved Wooden Image in the Museum, University College  
of Wales, Aberystwyth

# ANCIENT TALES FROM MANY LANDS

A COLLECTION OF FOLK STORIES

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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## PREFACE

BEFORE Miss Fleming became known for her work on behalf of the Geographical Association, she had attained a reputation among teachers for her wide reading of folk traditions, and her skill in using folk tales for teaching children social geography and history. By reading the tales in the original in several languages, and in literal translations by native writers in most others, Miss Fleming has tried to get at the spirit of the tales, and her scientific spirit is well shown in the choice of illustrations for this book. Teachers will welcome illustrations that are in the spirit of tradition, and the children who read the book will be even more pleased by them. Interpretations are suggested, and comments added, from the point of view of the researcher, and Miss Fleming's high standard has recently been brought out by her valued contributions to both the Geographical and the Anthropological Sections of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Edinburgh, 1921. There is thus behind the present book, in spite of its simplicity of form and directness of appeal, a long course of reading and thought, a weight of learning, and an almost unique successful teaching experience, a combination rare enough to give the book a special interest.

The progress of research has shown of late how much truth there is behind what were supposed to be fanciful Greek tales, and we are ever learning new meanings



## 6 ANCIENT TALES FROM MANY LANDS

behind the Hebrew traditions. It is almost certain that research will bring out, in similar fashion, points of value in British tradition, which have been too long neglected, largely because of a faulty view of history. It has been too lightly assumed that the "Anglo-Saxons" cleared out the earlier peoples of Britain, or chased them into Wales, and so traditions of pre-English Britain have been considered "alien" by English-speaking people. This view is being corrected by fuller knowledge, and so our older traditions claim fresh study, and it is important to try, as this book does, to spread a proper grasp of the interpretation of tradition.

The authoress is right in endeavouring to draw geography and history nearer to one another, and to encourage the teaching of both together, provided the teacher deals with social geography and social history on a world basis rather than a national one. By right use of folk tale, as suggested in this book, notions of chronology can be given a reality and a value difficult to attain otherwise, and the pupil can be led to appreciate on the one hand the common humanity of the world's peoples, and on the other the diversities of their long struggles with differing environments. We have here a channel of approach to the study of humanity freed from the blighting influence of the idea of the State as power; we are led to see men facing differing problems, and moulding themselves differently according to the solutions found or attempted. The spread of thought and teaching on such lines would not only influence greatly the breadth of education and the outlook of future citizens, it would also help not a little towards diminishing foolish and ignorant prejudices which now divide the world's peoples. To do this is to promote mutual understanding and appreciation based upon a rich foundation

of knowledge, and that is the central aim of the authoress' work in this and in allied fields.

The teacher will find the special chapters written for him of great value, as they come from a school teacher of long experience, and not from a professorial or an arm-chair critic of the schools, and indeed the mind of the teacher is strongly in evidence, alongside of that of the careful student, throughout this book, which should spread far and wide amongst the schools of the country, as well as among those who try to interpret tradition, and who will no doubt welcome it cordially.

H. J. FLEURE



*January 1922*

## FOREWORD

FOR the suggestion which led to the collection of these tales, and for anything in the book which is of any value, I am indebted to Dr H. J. Fleure, Professor of Geography and Anthropology, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and I am happy to have this opportunity of recording my gratitude to him. I should also like to thank Mr J. D. Williams, Librarian to the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, for much valuable help in the matter of getting the necessary books. Mr Harold J. E. Peake, Honorary Curator of the Museum, Newbury, and Dr A. C. Haddon, F.R.S., Reader in Ethnography, Cambridge, gave me much valuable help and criticism.

My very grateful thanks are due to Mr E. N. Fallaize, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Anthropological Institute, for help in choosing and collecting the above illustrations; and to the Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute for permission to reproduce Plate II. from the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, and Plate III. from *Man*; to the Director and Trustees of the British Museum for Plate VIII. from the *Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum*, and Plate VI. from *Excavations at Ephesus: The Archaic Artemisia*, as well as for permission to figure Plates VIII. and VII. from the collections of the Ethnographical and the Prints Departments respectively. In connection with the last named, I have to thank Mr T. Athol Joyce, of