

**THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY FOR
COLLECTING AND PRINTING RELICS
OF POPULAR ANTIQUITIES, & C.
ESTABLISHED IN THE YEAR 1877. THE
HANDBOOK OF FOLKLORE**

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The Folk-Lore Society for Collecting and Printing Relics of Popular Antiquities, & C. Established in the Year 1877. The Handbook of Folklore by Charlotte Sophia Burne

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CHARLOTTE SOPHIA BURNE

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THE HANDBOOK OF FOLKLORE

PREFACE.

THIS book is not written for the use of members of Anthropological Expeditions, whose work demands far more thorough acquaintance with the subject than could possibly be conveyed in a single volume. It is addressed to officers of the public services, to missionaries, travellers, settlers, and others whose lot is cast among uncivilized or half-civilized populations abroad; to residents in country places at home; to medical men, philanthropic workers, and all educated persons whose lives and duties bring them into touch with the uneducated. Such persons have it in their power to contribute very greatly to the advance of an important study, the value of which is as yet hardly fully appreciated; and it is believed that they will be willing to do so, if only the way is pointed out to them. To do this is the aim of the *Handbook of Folklore*.

The genesis of the book is somewhat complicated. The scheme of classification devised by Sir Laurence Gomme for the original edition of 1890 has been retained, with only such modifications of detail as experience and extended knowledge have shown to be desirable. That its retention should have been found possible, in spite of the great development of the study during the last quarter of a century, is no small testimony to the prescience of its author. Beyond this, a few passages here and there, and the list of Types of Indo-European Folk-tales, represent all that has been preserved from the first edition. The earlier chapters are founded on a manuscript which Mr. E. Sidney Hartland began some years ago with a view to a new edition, but which for various reasons was never completed. This he generously placed at

the disposal of the Folklore Society, and the whole work has had the benefit of his wide range of reading, and of his suggestions and advice. The debt it owes to his unwearied kindness can hardly be over-estimated.

The account of Chinese Ancestor-worship in chapter vi, (p. 87), is by Mr. A. R. Wright, F.S.A.; that of the religious system of the North American tribes in chapter vii, (p. 115), by Miss Freire-Marreco; that of the English Village Community in chapter xi, (p. 188), by Mr. F. M. Stenton, M.A. Oxon., Professor of History at University College, Reading. Chapter xv, (Games), is by Miss Moutray Read; and chapter xii, (Rites of Individual Life), is based on a draft by Mr. Stanley Casson, formerly Secretary of the Oxford Anthropological Society. Dr. W. H. R. Rivers has kindly supplied the material for the accounts of the Classificatory System of Relationship and the Genealogical Method of Enquiry, (pp. 166-170)—subjects peculiarly his own. For the rest I am myself responsible.

Dr. A. C. Haddon, Dr. R. R. Marett, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, Dr. C. G. Seligmann, and Mr. W. Crooke have kindly read various portions of the work in MS., and have contributed valuable hints and criticisms. The whole Council of the Folklore Society have had the opportunity of reading it in proof. MS. notes received from these sources are in many cases indicated by initials. But the final responsibility of selection or rejection has rested on my own shoulders, and for whatever flaws or weaknesses may be found in the work, the blame must lie at my door, for I have throughout retained the woman's privilege of the last word.

Omissions there doubtless are, but I would ask readers to take the *Questionary* into consideration before making sure of this in any particular instance. Only the main points of each topic are touched on in the text: the *Questionary* is designed to supplement it, and to suggest further details in each case.

Repetitions are unavoidable, however carefully one's matter may be arranged. Life is not lived in water-tight compart-

ments, and the folklore which is its outcome and expression cannot be fitted into insulated pigeon-holes. One thing in folklore always involves another. The most ordinary story of an apparition involves questions of the nature of the phantom itself, of the kind of place where it appeared, the person to whom it was visible, and the "witching hour" at which it was seen.

When a gardener, in accordance with the traditional lore of his craft, swears at his lettuce or radish-seed and thrashes his young walnut-trees, or sows his peas in the wane of the moon and his potatoes on Good Friday, and utterly declines to root up the parsley-bed, he is putting in practice time-honoured beliefs, not only about trees and plants, but about life and death and the influence of sacred days and of the heavenly bodies. When the mourners at the funeral feast tell the bees of their bereavement, they are acting on ancient imaginings as to the nature of a future life and on their own actual beliefs as to the sagacity of the lower animals, as well as carrying out a traditional part of the funeral rites. A whole philosophy of Nature was bound up in the constitution of ancient Ireland when the Stone of Tara proclaimed the destined successor to the throne of Leinster. The more we look into the matter, the more the truth is borne in upon us that Folklore is an essential unity; or, in other words, that Social Anthropology—"new Presbyter is but old Priest writ large"—is not an arbitrary selection of unrelated topics, but a homogeneous science which will some day come to its own.

C. S. B.

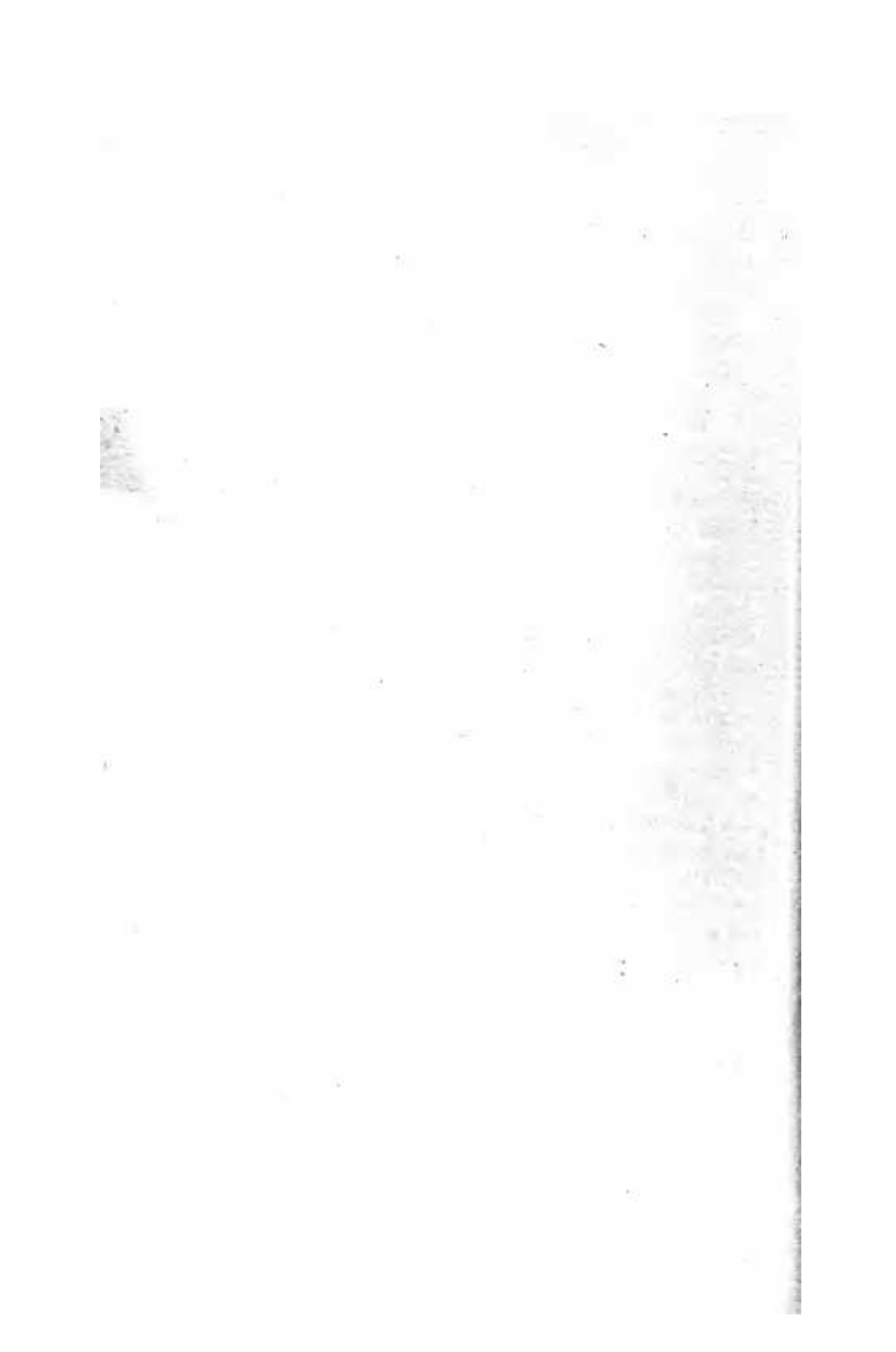


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