

effective result of the action of the magnetic field is a redistribution of the energy as between the mechanical and internal types.

In the last paper, not previously published, and now edited by Prof. Havelock, McLaren discusses the propagation of a disturbance in a dispersive medium by the Fourier method. Here he proves that the mathematical difficulties, which at first appear to be inherently involved in the method, do not in fact present themselves, and that results are obtained which are fully consistent, so far as it is possible to follow them, with the physical ideas of propagation by waves and wave groups.

This short review will perhaps give some idea of the scope of McLaren's work, which was all accomplished in the short space of three or four years. The book into which it is now all collected will serve as a worthy memorial—it is produced by the Cambridge Press in their usual excellent style—to a fallen colleague, and it can be recommended to every one interested in the subjects with which it deals. They will find in it an interesting and still to great extent novel discussion of matters in which alternative points of view are still more than welcome.

G. H. L.

Our Bookshelf.

Pygmies and Bushmen of the Kalahari: an Account of the Hunting Tribes inhabiting the great arid Plateau of the Kalahari Desert, their precarious Manner of Living, their Habits, Customs and Beliefs, with some reference to Bushmen Art, both early and of recent date, and to the neighbouring African Tribes. By S. S. Dornan. Pp. 318+16 plates. (London: Seeley, Service and Co., Ltd., 1925.) 21s. net.

THE lower the savages, the more difficult it is to make observations among them—to endure the adverse climate or conditions of their habitat, to follow their shifting, unsettled mode of life, to overcome their diffidence. Our literature about the pygmy race and the so-called primitive food-gatherers is as scarce as it is important for anthropology. The recent additions by trained scientific field-workers—the books of Prof. and Mrs. Seligman on the Veddahs, of Dr. Radcliffe-Brown on the Andamanese, of the Rev. W. Koppers on the Firelanders—have aroused great interest and already influenced anthropological argument. About the Bushmen we know, in spite of some good older accounts, only too little, and the present volume is welcome, written as it is carefully, in a clear attractive style, and by one who can claim that “for the opinions expressed in the book the author alone is responsible.” It represents mainly the writer's own experiences with the Bushmen and Bechuanas.

The bulk of the volume and its most valuable part consists of Chaps. v.-xxii., on the Bushmen of the Kalahari. The descriptive pages are good, especially when they refer to tangible objects—clothing, household goods, implements, weapons and such like; or the typical pursuits—the chase, warfare, trekking and

fishing, which, surprising as it sounds, exists in the arid desert of the Kalahari. The sociology of these nomadic savages is given but in a cursory manner, as is natural from an amateur ethnographer. Even in a chapter with the promising title, “Organisation of Family and Clan,” there are, for six descriptive pages on physical appearance, only one page and a half on sociology—and this very slightly treated. Some interesting information about the tests in hunting skill and endurance necessary for marriage are given in Chap. xiii. (“Family life—Marriage, Children, etc.”), but the remarks about sexual relations, family life and kinship ties do not go beyond generalities and will be of little use for the comparative sociologist.

The most interesting passages of the book are detailed statements of personal experiences of the writer, as they throw some light on the mentality of the natives and on their conduct in ordinary life. What Mr. Dornan has to say about “Food and Feeding” (Chap. xii.), about personal relations, about their beliefs and folklore (Chaps. xv.-xix.) is often quite good. The chapter on “Knowledge of the Veld and its Lore” shows us the native as a good observer, capable of empirical conclusions and logical argument. It should be helpful in dispelling the myth of “savage prelogical mentality.”

B. M.

In Southern Seas: Wanderings of a Naturalist. By Dr. W. Ramsay Smith. Pp. xviii+297+16 plates. (London: John Murray, 1924.) 16s. net.

IN this attractive little book a naturalist at ease and in his holiday mood gives us his impressions and personal opinions on several subjects, which he has treated at other times professionally and of which he takes now a bird's-eye view during a recreation trip through New Caledonia, the New Hebrides and Northern Australia. The flippancy of style, which seems to be considered a matter of duty in such books, does not interfere substantially with the serious purpose of the book, directed mainly to the study of native races. The traveller in the South Seas is naturally led to melancholy musings about the appalling extent of depopulation, the decay of native culture and custom—and he is made to reflect upon the cause of it all. “The total effect of all well-intentioned or ill-meaning interference with long-established customs and observances, which were evolved with the race itself and were necessary for its existence and well-being, has too often been to break up the social fabric and destroy physical vigour; it has meant degeneracy or death or both.” Dr. Ramsay Smith asks the question which must have occurred time and again to every anthropological field-worker and to any thinking and sympathetic white man in contact with natives: “Why should it be considered essential to interfere with such customs?” Above all, it might be added, why should we try to destroy all which the natives hold sacred and important, their beliefs, rites, morals, and that while our own religion, which we try to force on them, becomes but its own travesty once it has been grafted upon stone-age mentality. “There is no guarantee that the oil or even the Lord's anointed will not turn rancid in some of these places,” says the author, and indeed some reflection might have warned us that they are bound to; experience teaches always the same lesson—that they turn