

a state of comparative peace must have prevailed to permit this uninterrupted growth.

The numerous illustrations in the text and the admirable album of fifty-full page plates present in the most satisfactory manner the results of these important and suggestive excavations.

D. G. BRINTON.

Current Superstitions Collected From the Oral Tradition of English-Speaking Folk. Edited by FANNY D. BERGEN, with Notes and an Introduction by WILLIAM WELLS NEWELL. Pp. 161. Price, \$3.50. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

The strange persistency of ancient superstitions in conditions of modern civilization is well illustrated in this volume. Its peculiar value consists in its presentation of beliefs and practices widely prevalent in our own day and country, most of them having been obtained by private correspondence with persons in various parts of the United States.

They are arranged under nineteen headings, such as love, marriage, dreams, luck, money, weather, warts, moon, sun, death omens, and 'projects.' The last mentioned is the term applied among girls in the United States to the ceremonies of divination by which they learn about the man they are to marry. The editor, Mr. Newell, says he cannot offer any explanation of this signification attached to the word. Is it not a direct descendant of the Latin *pro-jicere sortes*, divination by casting on the ground the divining sticks? This seems borne out by the fact that the most widely extended of these 'projects' is to throw a whole apple paring on the floor, where it forms your true love's initial letter.

The introduction and notes, prepared by Mr. Newell with his customary thoroughness and precision, add much to the value of Mrs. Bergen's collection by bringing out the analogies of the customs mentioned with the folk-lore and mythologies of other times and nations.

Among other noteworthy facts thus elicited is the vitality and number of formulas and beliefs still current in reference to the moon. So extended are these that Mr. Newell says they must be regarded as 'Nothing else than a continued worship of the orb, still connected with

material blessings expected from its bounty.' The sun is decidedly less important in popular belief.

Folk medicine is represented by the wearing of amulets and charms, the magical cure of warts, hiccough, toothache, nose bleed and other common ailments. Attention is called by the editor to the fact that in some of these the ancient 'doctrine of signatures' still survives.

Of the incidents of life, the two around which is associated the largest body of living superstition are marriage and death. Mr. Newell explains the latter by the suggestion that "The disinclination to exercise independent thought on a subject so serious leaves the field open for the continuance of ancestral notions," which seems an appropriate solution. He adds some pointed observations on the value of folk-lore to history, comparative mythology and archæology.

The volume is a member of the series issued under the auspices of the American Folk-lore Society. It is to be regretted that it is not furnished with an index, an omission scarcely excusable in a work of the kind.

D. G. BRINTON.

SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES.

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA, MAY 19, 1896.

THE collections made by Dr. A. Donaldson Smith in Western Somali Land and the Galla Country, northeastern Africa, in 1894, were presented to the Academy, their value and extent being commented on by Mr. Arthur Erwin Brown on behalf of the curators.

Dr. Donaldson Smith spoke of the physical features of the regions from which the specimens had been collected and gave briefly some facts regarding the habits of the animals observed by him. Somali Land is very arid and barren, yet a greater variety of specimens and more new forms had been secured there and from the 200 miles beyond than from all the rest of the 4,000 miles traversed by him. In illustration it was stated that twenty-three new species of birds had been obtained from the district specially referred to, while but one had been secured elsewhere. Scattered over the