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La Vie Feminine au Mzab. by A.-M. Goichon

Review by: T. J. A. Y.

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America, South: Prehistoric. Gardner.

Rock-Paintings of North-West Córdoba. **147**
By G. A. Gardner, with the collaboration
of S. E. Gardner. Oxford: at the Clarendon
Press. 84s.

The above is a monograph on the paintings found upon the walls of rock-shelters in the Argentine province of Córdoba. It is the result of six years of investigation and study. About 150 pages of text, with numerous text-figures, are followed by 43 plates illustrating the sites and the various paintings found. Finally, there is a map. The only fault that can be found with the production of this important work is the almost prohibitive price charged for it.

After a short introduction giving a general account of the country where the paintings occur and of what is known of its early Indian inhabitants, comes the detailed description of the sites. Although such descriptions can never make "arm-chair" literature, the illustrations so help that the whole is very readable. An attempt at the classification of the paintings follows, a threefold division into representations of natural objects, geometric signs, and incomprehensible figures being adopted. The first of these is subdivided into human beings (both Indian and European), mammals, birds, reptiles and insects, the proportions at each site being noted. Questions of style and technique are next discussed, and in conclusion, there is a chapter on the meaning, age and authorship of the paintings. As regards their significance the author does not consider that "the idling away of chance "half-hours" can be accepted as a satisfactory explanation; nor, indeed, will "decoration of "the home" alone suffice. In view of the frequency of representations of the sun and of serpents, the probability of a religious meaning can, in some cases, be considered; in other cases—especially where Europeans are figured—the paintings may be the records of important events. The age of the paintings varies considerably. Representations of horse-men can hardly be older than the latter half of the sixteenth century. But these do not occur except at a few localities, and as there is reason to think that the Comechingons had been painting long before the arrival of the Spaniards, much of the art may be of very considerable antiquity. Naturally, any detailed comparison with European or African rock-shelter art groups could hardly lead to any useful conclusions.

Altogether a fine piece of scientific investigation, very well produced. Congratulations to the author and to Mrs. Gardner to whom, with other work, fell the lot of making the numerous tracings. M. C. BURKITT.

Africa, North. Goichon.

La Vie Feminine au Mzab. By A.-M. **148**
Goichon. Pp. xv, 348, with 19 plates.
Paris: Librairie Orientaliste. Paul Geuthner,
1927.

In "La Vie Feminine au Mzab," Mlle. Goichon has given us an extremely interesting and valuable book, and one which helps to fill a serious gap in anthropological knowledge. The life of the woman and the part she plays in primitive and semi-civilized society has been

badly neglected in ethnographic literature. Matriarchal theories there have been in plenty, but actual information is scanty.

Mlle. Goichon has much important material to communicate, and she presents it in a way one cannot help but admire. After reading her brief and lucid survey of the history of the Ibadite sect and the foundation and development of the five Mzabite cities, we can enter with her into the houses and follow the life of the women from birth to death without any feeling of bewilderment such as seizes us only too often when we are, so to speak, suddenly dumped by ethnographic writers into the midst of a savage community. Nor have we any temptation to skip her first chapter as dry or unimportant; its extreme relevance to her subject is clear from the beginning.

The customs and observances that occur throughout a woman's life are given very fully, and their relationship to the religion and to the peculiar geographic and economic situation of the Mzabite cities is succinctly brought out. The important part played by women in religion, so unusual among Mohammedan peoples; by religion in the life of the women; and the way this inter-action has contributed to the vitality of Mzabite culture, in fact to the very existence of the five cities, is apparent throughout the book and is fully treated in the chapter on religion. There is also an excellent chapter on magic, in which the author does much more than merely detail magical practices and formulæ, though naturally these are not omitted. Mlle. Goichon shows us the part that magic plays in feminine society, and the effect of the strict doctrines of the Ibadites upon the practice of magic and the social consequences thereof; that is, she shows us something of the psychological and sociological basis of magic and the way that magic is moulded by the form of the society in which it is found.

The book, which has as a sub-title "Etude "de Sociologie Musulmane,"" worthily bears out this claim to be a sociological study, and raises the hope that we may before long have further studies of the same kind from its author's pen. T. J. A. Y.

England.**Batten.**

English Windmills. Vol. I. Con- **149**
taining a history of their origin and
development, with records of mills in Kent,
Surrey and Sussex. By M. I. Batten, on
behalf of the Society for the Protection of
Ancient Buildings. London: The Archi-
tectural Press. 1930. Pp. xviii + 128.
7¼" × 4¾". 5s. 6d. net.

Windmills and watermills have acquired a value which is antiquarian as well as picturesque. The rarer they become, the higher are they esteemed, and the more do they appeal for protection. But it is not only their uselessness and helplessness—most of those in this country are out of commission—that gives them a claim on us. They represent early steps in the transition of man's mechanisms from dependence on muscular energy, human or animal, to the use of extraneous forces. Moving air and falling water gave him opportunities of employing atmospheric