

to different ones, although many learned writers claim that all bear reference to the Noadian Flood.

But interpret myth and tradition as we may their existence brings us face to face with the fact that man everywhere has attempted to account for himself and his environment, and in so doing has exemplified similar phases of thought. It was admitted a little while ago that sometimes untruths have found their way into folk-lore purposely, but the value of a story is no wise lessened on this account, because falsehood being merely one phase of thought is limited by the same conditions and governed by the same laws. It is utterly impossible for a man to formulate a lie beyond the bounds of his knowledge, and the grossest untruth that one can put into words for such a purpose is of great value in showing us the limits of imagination in a given direction, as based on the individual's own belief or experience.

The greatest myth-makers, and the greatest encouragers of myth have been the shamans, medicine-men, priests (or whatever they may have been called) of the various cults. To people of this class, we are prone to attribute mercenary or other selfish motives, without taking into account in the first place that they themselves fully believed what their ancestors believed, and in the second place, that old views were not seldom confirmed, and new ones originated in their minds by virtue of the fasts, flagellations and other austerities they practised.

A most interesting and instructive department of Folk-lore that has scarcely been more than mentioned up to this point, and one which would require many papers to itself, is that which relates to national proverbs, combining as they do much that is superstitious, with a large embodiment of common-sense, and constituting on the whole the very best means of arriving at the *heart* of a people.

But perhaps enough has been said in a crude way to emphasize the thought that there *is* a philosophy connected with Folk-lore, and that the department of human knowledge so-called is not a mass of mere babblements fitted only for our lighter moments.

The Folk-lore of Canada, especially of Ontario and the other western provinces, is mainly a heritage from the Mother countries; still we are not wholly without material of the traditionary kind, wholly distinct from our rich aboriginal field, and it should be the duty of some one or more persons to set about collecting these waifs and strays.

There is ample material in this country for a valuable book embodying local superstitions regarding weather, crops, diseases, lucky and unlucky days, charms, and even ghosts, nearly all perhaps possessed of European coloring, but in many instances sufficiently modified by transplantation to give them a peculiar value.