

Now, it is quite natural, in view of what has been said relating to the origin of myth and the development of tradition that the question should crop up, 'Of what use is it then, to pay any serious attention to folk-lore, seeing that in one case it is nothing but a series of vague guesses, and in the other, a tangled tissue consisting of some truth, some exaggeration, and much that is wholly fictitious? And, quite as naturally the reply at first thought might be made—it is of no use at all. Indeed this *was* the way in which, until our own day, the subject was regarded, but it is a very superficial way to look upon the matter.

Delving a little deeper, we come upon paying ore.

Men everywhere is much alike, making due allowance for his surroundings—physically, we are all prepared to admit this, but the statement holds good also, if for "man" we substitute, "human nature." We all *think*, and we all think along similar lines so far as these lines extend. The lower a human being is in point of development the shorter is his line of thought, but short as it is it corresponds with the primitive lines of those who have attained to higher planes in the scale of civilization. To one and another branch of our race it has been given to make greater or lesser advances in mentality.

As Britons we may claim with pardonable pride to belong to those who before all others accept the belief in universal brotherhood—that "all men are born free and equal," yet we must admit that all races of men do not possess, or do not exhibit the same capacity for advancement. Some are to-day as they were a thousand years ago—in little more than intellectual infancy—some in boyhood, and not a few in stunted manhood, and yet when we compare the folk-lore of these with each other, or with our own we are surprised to find so many resemblances, because we are all human, and because it is impossible for any human being to get away from himself. A man's loftiest conceptions are limited by his power of imagination, his power of imagination is limited by his knowledge, and his knowledge is limited by his capacity to improve.

In primitive conditions of life we think primitively, that is to say, with insufficient grounds on which to arrive at true results—hence, *myth* as already pointed out, and in more highly organized conditions, of what, in its best sense, we call *society*, tradition is formulated.

Now, to compare myths and traditions—to trace them to their various sources—to follow their development, and to ascertain their application, is to study the philosophy of Folk-lore. By strict methods now well understood we may connect the local legend of some obscure parish in England with a story in Persia, or in Hindostan, while, on the other hand, similarities in recital may be assigned to totally different origins. In many parts of the world, for example, we find traditions relating to a great deluge, and while some of these probably point to one such great cataclysm, it is likely that others refer