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It cannot be claimed, on the whole, that these latest expositions of Comparative Religion have proved as helpful as was generally anticipated. At the same time, the grudging praise they have received in some quarters is almost as surprising as the unappreciative dismissal in others. They are books of genuine worth, full of sound learning, and abounding in useful material. Many reviewers have ludicrously failed to detect their significance, and so have appraised them summarily in a single line or in a paltry paragraph. Because both belong to a series of manuals which are issued in sets of ten volumes at a time, there has been a disposition—much too frequently yielded to—to review each set in bulk. It is in large measure for this reason that the present sketch has been written, lest it should seem that the labour of two eminent specialists had been undertaken in vain.

Some have felt inclined to blame the authors of these books because much relevant information has unfortunately been omitted. But authorities adjudge the same situation differently: and, inasmuch as a very great deal of matter had perforce to be excluded, readers ought to have expected that the writers would be compelled to forgo the discussion of various topics to which, under other conditions, they would certainly have adverted. Whilst, however, some books of the *primer* species repel because they present only the bare bleached bones of a subject, these volumes disappoint because they are needlessly discursive. There is too much detail, and some of it is scarcely to the point. One misses getting at 'close grips' with the matter in hand. A primer, just because of its necessary compression, should confine itself very closely to the subject which it professes to expound; and there ought to have been no ground for the charge that Comparative Religion is here confounded at times with Anthropology, at other times with the History of Religions, and at yet others with Comparative Theology. It would have been an improvement, also, if references to citations could have been included, and if a few glaring evidences of haste had been detected and eliminated.

The chief criticism, applicable to these books, is that they are too exclusively introductory; they end before one arrives at a genuine exposition of the theme which they have embodied in their common title. A primer, to be sure, is 'introductory' in its aim: it should not be technical, either in its form or contents. On the other hand, especially in a series of brief handbooks of an unusually high standard, one would certainly not look for a treatment of the subject which was too elementary in character. What thoughtful people to-day are really anxious to know is: In what, precisely, does the study