

On the other hand, mythologists tell us nothing about the origin of prayer and sacrifice : they put us off with stories of particular gods, without explaining to us how those gods ever came to be worshipped. Now, mythology is a very interesting study in its own way : but to treat as religion a mass of stories and legends about gods or saints, with hardly a single living element of practice or sacrifice, seems to me simply to confuse two totally distinct branches of human enquiry. The Origin of Tales has nothing at all to do with the Origin of Worship.

When we come to read Mr. Macdonald's account of a native funeral, on the other hand, we are at once on a totally different tack ; we can understand, as by an electric flash, the genesis of the primitive acts of sacrifice and religion.

" Along with the deceased is buried a considerable part of his property. We have already seen that his bed is buried with him ; so also are all his clothes. If he possesses several tusks of ivory, one tusk or more is ground to a powder between two stones and put beside him. Beads are also ground down in the same way. These precautions are taken to prevent the witch (who is supposed to be answerable for his death) from making any use of the ivory or beads.

" If the deceased owned several slaves, an enormous hole is dug for a grave. The slaves are now brought forward. They may be either cast into the pit alive, or the undertakers may cut all their throats. The body of their master or their mistress is then laid down to rest above theirs, and the grave is covered in.

" After this the women come forward with the offerings of food, and place them at the head of the grave. The dishes in which the food was brought are left behind. The pot that held the drinking-water of the deceased and his drinking-cup are also left with him. These, too, might be coveted by the witch, but a hole is pierced in the pot, and the drinking calabash is broken.