

Lest the above remarks give the wrong impression it is imperative to note here that The Art of Ragtime is a good book that is a pleasure to read because, for once, people who are primarily ragtime enthusiasts, rather than jazz experts, are writing about ragtime. In many ways their volume represents an advance over previous scholarships and it also raises many important issues and questions. However, certain weaknesses, some of which have been discussed here, prevent it from being the great work it might have been. Perhaps, though, flaws and omissions are essential since they provide a reason for, and sometimes an impetus to, other scholars to do further research. If this volume motivates such additional investigation then Schafer and Riedel will have accomplished more with one publication than most authors achieve in a lifetime.

The Folklore of Sussex. By Jacqueline Simpson. Pp. 187, bibliography, tale-type index, motif index, general index, map. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1973. \$8.50 cloth.

Reviewed by Catherine A. Shoupe.

The appearance of Jacqueline Simpson's The Folklore of Sussex marks the inauguration of a new series on "The Folklore of the British Isles" under the general editorship of Venetia Newall. In keeping with the definition of the scope of folklore as set forth in G.L. Gomme's 1890 Handbook of Folk-Lore, i.e., customs, beliefs and practices, and stories, songs and sayings, the categories of Sussex folklore discussed by Simpson are local legends, traditional beliefs and magical practices, seasonal observances and stock rhymes, sayings and anecdotes. Although not published under the auspices of London's Folklore Society, this work adheres to the pattern of the Society's county folklore collections. No attempt is made to integrate folklore with folklife to present a comprehensive view of the totality of folk culture despite considerable impetus for studies of this kind provided by the Institute for Dialect and Folklife Research at Leeds University and the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading University. Folklore and folklife studies, regrettably, are going their separate ways as far as Society folklorists are concerned.

Folklore is employed in this book in the narrow sense of the word, as survivals of oral tradition and customs. The picture given refers primarily to the 19th century, and the first few years of the 20th century before World War I, and the revolution in modern agriculture and transportation. The author states: "The aim of the present book, therefore, is to give a coherent picture of the

considerable amount of Sussex folklore which has been recorded over the last hundred years or more, and some of which is very much alive today" (p. 12). Materials have been gathered from widely scattered published sources to which has been added some data not previously in print. Nineteenth century sources predominate, making the work essentially a rewritten antiquarian collection from printed sources. The author's style is extremely readable, but fluent prose is no substitute for field-collected texts and social context which scholars expect from modern collections.

The "Introduction" describes categories of tradition included in the volume but fails to grapple with any theoretical or even methodological concerns. Some concepts which might be discussed in a volume of county folklore include regionalism, types of tradition bearers, social context and function, modern folklore, etc., but none of these topics is mentioned. Some issues are touched upon in passing: the problem of the historical validity of oral tradition is briefly noted in connection with legends; the fact that popular feelings are reflected in folklore is stated; and the fact that regional differences in folklore do exist is noted. This is as far as the analytical thinking goes. Likewise, the discussion of the categories of tradition presented in the book is descriptive rather than definitional, e.g., local legends are "stories attached to some particular place. . . or else some particular person" (p. 12); traditional beliefs are those concerned with the human life cycle or with the Devil, fairies or witches; seasonal observances are "festivals, ceremonies, customs, games, rituals, beliefs and sayings which are linked to particular dates" (p. 13). Although the work claims to be written for the general reader and the scholar, it will appeal primarily to the former as a readable account of curious customs, beliefs and narratives of a former era in Sussex.

This "first contribution to what is hoped will be built into a comprehensive series on the folklore of the British Isles" (foreword) which presumably sets the tone and the standards for subsequent volumes, can only be termed disappointing for the serious student of British folklore, and reflects the present state of folklore studies in England, which despite the editor's denials, has never regained the intellectual respect it commanded prior to the first World War. The emphasis on library research rather than fieldwork tends to prolong the antiquarian outlook rather than alter it. The standard indexes of tale-types and motifs and the brief bibliography seem to be almost an afterthought, and are not incorporated in any way into the text or the notes. The system of notation itself is unique to the point of being useless. Quotations in the body of the text are neither footnoted nor numbered for backnotes; rather, topics are listed in the notes by chapter, classified according to subject matter, so the reader

in many cases is uncertain which bibliographic citation applies to what information presented in the text. These technical flaws seriously mar the book's value to the folklorist, and it is hoped that future volumes of the series will correct these faults. A series on British folklore is a desirable goal and would be welcomed, but high standards must be upheld for the work to be of real value to the serious study and academic viability of folklore in the British Isles.

Witch Stories. By E. Lynn Linton. Detroit: Grand River Books, 1971. Reprint of 1861 Chapman & Hall edition. \$12.50 cloth.

Review note by Margaret Bulger Kohn.

The current popularity of occultism has fostered the wholesale exploitation of material which deals in any way with that ever intriguing field of supernatural phenomena and ancient magico-religious practices. Witch Stories by E. Lynn Linton is a prime example. Originally published in 1861 as a loose collection of recorded accounts found in the British Museum and the public libraries of England, it remains unchanged in its republished form. The publishers have fittingly retained the antiquated original typeface and, as a period piece of research, the book is an interesting account, as much a novelty today as the historical court cases it documents.

In the peculiar prose style of the nineteenth century, Linton describes the case histories of witches tried in England and Scotland during the "witch panic" that swept Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. The accounts contain a wealth of traditional beliefs that have survived through the centuries. Magical properties such as that of the color green, the number seven and folk medical knowledge have all been repeatedly linked to witchcraft. At times there is confusion between supernatural beings (elves, "gyants and "faeries") and the practitioners of the early pagan religion of Europe. Qualities and actions that would normally be attributed to elfin beings are transferred unceremoniously to the "witches" creating an interesting blend of folk belief and court testimony.

The main objection I have to the book is its lack of a bibliography, index and suitable notes. Although the author acknowledges that his work is based on numerous valuable sources, his notes are exasperatingly perfunctory. A typical note reads: Pitcairn's "Scottish Criminal Trials." Without the aid of a back-up bibliography, future researchers will find this work to be extremely frustrating.