

### *Book Review*

*Folk-lore of Tayside.* By Colin Gibson. A Dundee Museum and Art Gallery Publication. 1959(?). 3s. 6d.

This is an attractively produced book with a good number of black and white illustrations, mainly of local scenes, photographs of rooms in the Angus Folk Museum on the covers, and line drawings of bygone or obsolescent articles from the same place on the first and last leaves. The reading matter takes the form of a miscellany of short notes on local folk-lore or rather folk-life, ranging at random over legends and superstitions, proverbs and weather-lore, place-names, aspects of social life and material culture, and touching also, rather superficially, on archæology.

Though a popular work, in a "readers' digest" style, it nevertheless provides a quantity of useful information of various kinds. It is of interest, for example, to learn that stone cheese presses, normally associated with the North-East of Scotland, come as far south as Glen Clova. If anyone wants to see or study clay-built houses with thatched roofs, or beehives, or holy wells, this book tells him where to find them.

Unfortunately the information is not always accurate. On page 37, for example, the appliance on which the writer says "rosity-sticks" are burned seems really to be a bannock-brander, used for baking, which he may be confusing with the so-called "kelchan", a barred contrivance for drying slivers of "rosity" wood in the smoke of the fire, or the "peer-man", a stand with a spike or cleft to hold the lighted stick. A student of place-names might not always agree with the writer's etymologies, though the interest shown in them, and particularly in the collection of field-names, is of value for arousing the enthusiasm of others. There is, however, as much need for accuracy in books of this popular nature as in any other.

The Folk-lore of Tayside is a readable guide which stimulates the reader's interest in the area, and refers him also to the Museums and books dealing with folk-lore and folk-life which, along with the countryside itself and its traditions, have been the sources of the writer's inspiration.

ALEXANDER FENTON