



Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality (Classic Reprint)

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What perhaps might be described as the first edition of this work appeared in 1911 in the University Studies of the University of Nebraska. The title of the original monograph has been retained for the present volume, in which the same line of argument is followed and the same conclusions are reached. After a lapse of nearly five years I have not felt the necessity of modifying, to any essential degree, the results of the earlier investigation. The book, then, differs from its predecessor chiefly in providing a more extensive collection of the relevant data. Although much has been written on the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, and on the assumed Babylonian prototype of these institutions, little inquiry has hitherto been made into the rest days so commonly observed outside the Semitic area in antiquity and later ages. The principal reason for this neglect of the comparative aspects of the subject must doubtless be found in the still imperfect appreciation of the fact that the great institutions of modern civilization have their roots in the beliefs and customs, and often in the superstitions, of savage and barbarian society. It will be the task of social anthropology, by an impressive accumulation of evidence, to make this truth a commonplace of popular knowledge. Among the friends and correspondents who have aided me by criticisms and suggestions I wish particularly to mention Dr. Crawford H. Toy, now Professor Emeritus in Harvard University, and Dr. Louis H. Gray, now Assistant Editor of Hastings's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Mr. G. D. Swezey, Professor of Astronomy in the University of Nebraska, was good enough to help me in some troublesome details relating to the calendar. (Typographical errors above are due to OCR software and don't occur in the book.)

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