

**KINDRED AND CLAN IN THE
MIDDLE AGES AND AFTER: A
STUDY IN THE SOCIOLOGY
OF THE TEUTONIC RACES**

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Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and After: A Study in the Sociology of the Teutonic Races
by Bertha Surtees Phillpotts

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KINDRED AND CLAN

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To
M. A. C. and M. C.
in whose house this book was planned and written.



PREFACE

THE aim of this book is to discover how long the solidarity of the kindred survived as a social factor of importance in the various Teutonic countries. The lack of accessible information on the subject was brought home to me by the difficulty I experienced in qualifying my own ignorance with regard to it,—an ignorance of which I only became aware through reading Dr Brunner's *Sippe und Wergeld nach alt-niederdeutschen Rechten*. I had just worked out the results embodied in the first chapter of this book, and the startling contrast between their negative character and the ample evidence set forth by Dr Brunner evoked a desire to know why the kindreds should have endured so long in North Germany, where they were assailed by so many adverse influences, while I had found but the faintest traces of their survival in Iceland. The present work is nothing more than an attempt at answering my own questions. In the course of a general survey of the field it became obvious that neglect of the evidence furnished by judicial records and charters had led scholars to attribute too long a lease of life to the system in some countries, and to under-estimate its duration in others; and that the causes usually adduced for its break-up only serve to complicate the problem still further. Finally there arose the suspicion that even in the later Middle Ages the institution played a part, obscure but not negligible, in the making of history. Thus I was lured on by successive problems, until the book was written, and I had never so much as asked myself whether my stock of legal and linguistic knowledge was equal to the demands made upon it.