The Forests of Upper India and Their Inhabitants by Thomas W. Webber
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Although the natives recognize several gods, they do not pay much attention to them personally, but they constantly take heed of the omen birds and animals the gods send as messengers to warn or encourage mortals. Scarcely anything that is of the least importance can be attempted until favourable omens have been obtained, and how this is accomplished is duly set forth in the book.

Like many "nature-folk," the natives of Borneo are a very artistic people, and various illustrations are given of their skill in wood-carving; but one has to visit their houses and handle their everyday utensils and implements to realize how deep-seated is their feeling for beauty. The methods they adopt to embellish the person are fully described by Dr. Furness. No special objection, even from an European point of view, can be made to the tattooing; but certainly, to our eyes, the artificial dilation of the lobe of the ears, especially great in the women, is decidedly displeasing. One soon gets accustomed to black teeth, and they do not look amiss even when decorated with brass studs.

Replete as the book is with facts for students of mankind, there is little in it for the pure geographer. There are occasional allusions to scenery, and there is one excellent plate representing the moss-covered jungle on the summit of Mount Dulit (5000 feet), which has already been alluded to by Dr. C. Hose (*Geographical Journal*, vol. i. p. 193).

It is not rash to predict that this book will always be regarded as a standard work on the family life of an unspoiled, honest, simple people, who, despite head-hunting proclivities, are essentially a kind-hearted folk.

A. C. HADDON.

INDIA.

'The Forests of Upper India and their Inhabitants.' By Thomas W. Webber.
With Maps. London: Arnold. 1902.

Readers who take up this book with the expectation of finding in it a systematic treatise on the forests of India will be disappointed—agreeably or the reverse according to their own particular standpoint. The book is in reality a record of the writer's personal experiences when engaged in work in the Indian forests during the early days of the Forest Administration some forty years ago; and as he was evidently an intelligent and careful observer, and, in addition to his professional duties, devoted himself assiduously to the study, under its natural conditions, of the varied life—both of men and animals—with which he was brought in contact, he has much to tell that is thoroughly worth reading. The life of a forest officer in those days was particularly favourable for studies of this kind, and the fact that the means of locomotion were then more primitive than at present, gave him far more opportunities for gaining a thorough knowledge of the country than are possessed by those who use the modern facilities for rapid transit.

Mr. Webber's story has to do with two different regions, the first including the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan forests of Kumaon and the Nepalese borders; the second embracing parts of Bandelkhand and the Central Provinces, with the Nerbada valley between. The first naturally presents the greater attraction on the score of variety, for Mr. Webber's picturesque descriptions take us from the hot and reeking jungles at the foot of the range, through the regions of the *Pinus longifolia* ("chir") and *excelsa*, of silver fir and spruce, to the great snowy peaks and the Tibetan district of Hundes, to which he made his way across the snowy passes. This alpine region was then naturally much less known than it is now, and Colonel Smyth, with whom Mr. Webber made his trip into Tibet, had only recently selected, from the Bhotia schools under his inspectorship, the first of the native explorers who were soon to add so much to our knowledge. Mr. Webber

draws many fascinating pictures of the life and scenery of these regions, especially vivid being his descriptions of the tiger-haunted jungles at the foot of the hills, with their teeming bird-life; of the great "chir" forest, with its heat and wearisome monotony; and of the wide Tibetan plains, with their crude colouring, thin air, and remarkable sunsets. The section dealing with the Central Indian forests on the Pachmari and Seoni plateaus is hardly inferior in interest, and a particularly graphic description is given of a hunt by wild dogs of which the author was witness. Much interesting information is given throughout on the primitive forest tribes with which the author was brought in contact. Occasionally, perhaps, we are tempted to think that some slight liberties have been taken with the grouping of the pictures, as when the scarlet blossoms of the leafless cotton trees are introduced among the features of a *June* landscape. We may regret, also, that more attention is not paid to the life-conditions of vegetation in the different regions, for it is only occasionally, as at p. 232, where the various contrivances which secure the trees against overthrow by the Indian storms are described, that this subject is touched upon. A series of pictures illustrating the different types of forest would have been a valuable addition to the book. The botanical nomenclature is not always quite up to date; thus the generic name *Picea* is still applied to the silver fir, while Roxburgh's names for the cotton tree and the "saj" are retained.

Taken as a whole, however, the book is a welcome addition to the literature on India, for whereas systematic treatises on the geography, statistics, and natural history of the country are numerous, the art of picturesque description of its natural features has, as is so often the case, been practised by but few. A word of praise must be given to Mr. Webber's sensible remarks on the subject of sport, for while a keen sportsman himself in the best sense of the term, he has nothing but reprobation for the indiscriminate butchery practised by so many, which he likens, with some justice, to the slaughter of pigs—at so many the hour—at a Chicago bacon factory. His observations on the neglect of forestry in other parts of the British Empire are also very much to the point.

CHINA.

'Through Hidden Shensi.' By Francis H. Nichols. London: Newnes. 1902.

The interest of this book lies principally in the striking picture it presents of the life and character of the dwellers on the great plain of Shensi—the oldest element, apparently, in the population of modern China. The author is an American who went to China to report on the Shansi famine, on behalf of those philanthropic persons in the United States who had raised a fund for the relief of the starving population. He describes his book as "an attempt at a picture of Oldest China and its people as I saw them in their land—sowing, reaping, toiling, thinking, and misjudging the world beyond their mountains as persistently as that world misjudges them." He describes how he approached his task with all the prejudices of the foreigner, and how, when compelled to meet the people on their own level, his interest in them was aroused so that he came in time to see things from their point of view. It is this power of adapting himself to the standpoint of the people of whom he writes which gives the book its value, and which, though it may perhaps occasionally carry the author too far in his favourable judgment of Chinese as opposed to European civilization, should do much to modify too hastily formed views with a contrary tendency. Mr. Nichols considers that much good might result from giving the Chinese "the benefit of the doubt" more often than is done; and the account given of the way in which, during the late troubles, the Shensi people gave their moral support to their mandarin, Tuan Fang, in his

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