

### The Prickly Pear in Western China.

MR. F. KINGDON WARD, in a very interesting paper in *Annals of Botany*, October, 1912, describes the occurrence of the prickly pear in the arid regions of western China. He states that it grows on granite rocks, and he has traced it from Kansu through Ssü-chuan to south-eastern Tibet and southern Yunnan. He is not able to determine precisely how it got there, but "two suggestions present themselves—the first that it was brought across the Pacific by the Chinese themselves, the second that it was introduced from Europe after it had been brought into the Mediterranean region from across the Atlantic; a third alternative, that it was quite recently introduced by the Jesuit missionaries who came from America to China about the time of the fall of the Spanish Empire, is hardly tenable in view of its present wide distribution in

southern California. Would this or *O. ficus-indica* grow in western China and Tibet? Perhaps some more northern plant is represented. In any event, the precise determination of this Chinese cactus would be of much interest.

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### ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA AND MALTA.<sup>1</sup>

(1) THIS is one of the excellent monographs on the wilder tribes of eastern India which were started by the Government of Eastern Bengal. It may be hoped that the recent changes in the provincial jurisdiction will not interfere with the completion of this project. The present volume is written by an officer who possesses the



[Photo]

FIG. 1.—A rest by the way—on the way to the Jhums.

Lushais and Pois. From "The Lushai Kuki Clans." [Lt.-Colonel H. G. M. Cole, I.A.]

western China." He adds: "There can be little doubt that the Chinese visited California long before Columbus or possibly even the Norsemen discovered America."

Mr. Ward states that the species is *Opuntia vulgaris*, but it seems doubtful whether he critically examined it. If specimens were preserved, the determination of the species would help to decide the question of its origin. The original *Opuntia vulgaris* is the common plant of the eastern United States, which is not likely to have reached China by any of the means suggested. Probably *Opuntia ficus-indica*, sometimes called *O. vulgaris*, is the plant intended. This is the tropical American species, naturalised in the countries bordering the Mediterranean. A plant brought from California would be different, perhaps *O. littoralis*, which is so abundant along the coast of

indispensable qualification of an intimate knowledge of the people. He gracefully dedicates it to Lieut. Col. T. H. Lewin, whose valuable works have been the standard authority on the people of this district. There is some difficulty about the nomenclature of these tribes, because the terms Kuki, Naga, Chin, Shendu, and many others are not recognised by the people to whom we apply them. Kuki, however, has come to possess a

<sup>1</sup> (1) "The Lushai Kuki Clans." By Lieut.-Col. J. Shakespear. Pp. xxiii+250. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1912.) Price 10s. net.  
 (2) "From the Black Mountain to Waziristan." By Col. H. C. Wylly, C.B. With an Introduction by Lieut.-General Sir H. L. Smith Dorrien, K.C.B., D.S.O. Pp. xx+505+viii maps. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1912.) Price 10s. 6d. net.  
 (3) "Malta and the Mediterranean Race." By R. N. Bradley. Pp. 335. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.) Price 8s. 6d. net.