

part of the spectrum. We ascertained the point of extinction and the point of reappearance of light from all parts of the spectrum. F. W. EDRIAGE-GREEN.

London, December 25, 1912.

The late Mr. Leigh Smith and Novaya Zemlya.

MAY I be allowed to point out to you that there is an omission in the short notice your publication quoted from *The Times* on the death of Mr. Leigh Smith?

Your countryman was found and rescued on the west coast of Novaya Zemlya, near the mouth of Matotschkin Sharr, by Captain J. Dalen, Dutch R.N., who was in command of the Dutch exploration vessel, *Willem Barents*. Sir Allan Young, in the *Hope*, was near, but Leigh Smith and his men did not know it when they were found and directed to the English ship by the Dutchmen. This occurred on August 3, 1882.

Next year, when the *Willem Barents* again left for exploration work in northern waters, Sir Clements Markham and Mr. Leigh Smith came over to Amsterdam and presented two fine silver cups to the president of the Dutch Committee for Polar Research Work in kind remembrance of his being seen and brought to safety by Captain Dalen and his crew.

This act of courtesy by Mr. Leigh Smith was much appreciated by our countrymen.

W. H. R. v. MANEN.

Rotterdam, January 10.

COUNTRIES AND CUSTOMS.¹

(1) THE jealousy of the State Government renders Nepal perhaps the least-known country in the Empire among those with which we maintain friendly relations. To a student of art like the writer it is peculiarly interesting, because it forms a link between India and Tibet. Mr. Brown was allowed some liberty in visiting the sacred sites in the valley; but if he secured any new information on geography or politics he has not disclosed it. On the subject of Newar art he gives us some valuable facts and impressions. The Gorkhas, now the ruling caste, have contributed little to the art treasures of the country, and the art of the Newars represents a Tibetan substratum largely influenced from India. But it is the India of the Middle Ages, not that of the present day, when the people have come under foreign control, Mohammedan or British. The book is provided with many fine photographs, and a few sketches in colour to illustrate Newar architecture and work in metal, stone and wood. The author traces with skill the varied influences which have contributed to establish the Nepalese art school, and he gives some interesting facts, partly in corroboration, partly in extension, of those admirable essays on local religion and custom for which we are indebted to the late Dr. H. A. Oldfield. The pleasant, unaffected style in which these notes are recorded makes them more valu-

able than those which usually accompany books the claim of which to support lies in the illustrations alone.

(2) Our knowledge of Papua is rapidly increasing. Mr. R. Williamson's book on the Mafulu Mountain People, the work of an explorer and expert in ethnology and law, has been soon followed by the present work, which is of quite a different class. Mr. Murray admits his lack of scientific knowledge in ethnology, geology, botany, and indeed in any other branch of science; but he enjoys the advantage of long experience of the country, and Sir W. MacGregor assures us that "he has had opportunities of seeing into the heart of things in New Guinea in a way that no previous writer could ever lay claim to." This opinion is justified by the study of his book. He begins with a careful geographical account of the British province, followed by a history of the island from the age of the first explorers, an exhaustive account of the native tribes, of the methods under which the Australian officers administer justice, and of the progress in developing the resources of the country. The book is provided with a fairly adequate map and a good series of photographs.

In an interesting introduction, Sir W. MacGregor describes the task which lay before the new officials, the establishment of a land system, criminal and civil legislation. He concludes that "the two finest and best institutions I left in New Guinea were the constabulary and village police, and the missions." The book is almost purely ethnographical. The Papuo-Melanesians, he thinks, were the result of more than one immigration; but he declines to dogmatise on the origin and affinities of the Papuans. Students of cannibalism will find full details of the custom in a repulsive form. Most interesting, and full of instruction to other administrators whose lot lies among savage peoples, is the account of the methods by which the natives are being gradually civilised, and how a system of law, adopting all that is useful among the indigenous institutions, has been introduced. The book may be safely recommended as an instructive account of some of the wildest races in the Empire.

(3) The fine volume which describes this attempt to explore North China is, to some extent, the record of a failure. In the expedition organised and financed by Mr. R. S. Clark, of New York, it was proposed to start from T'ai-yuan Fu, in Shansi, and after traversing Shên-Kan, *i.e.*, the provinces of Shansi and Kansu, to skirt the Tibetan border to Ching-tu Fu, in Schuch'uan; then to descend the Min River to Sui-fu or Hsueh-chou Fu, and return to Shanghai *via* the Yang-tzu. Its primary objects were—a careful plane-table survey of the whole route followed, astronomical observations for latitude and longitude at all important towns, to observe the meteorological conditions, to collect specimens, and to use photography in various ways. The work of the survey was placed in charge of a Punjabi surveyor, Hazrat Ali; Captain Douglas, V.C., D.S.O., of the Royal Army Medical Staff, was allowed by the

¹ (1) "Picturesque Nepal." By Percy Brown. Pp. xvi+205. (London: A and C. Black, 1912.) Price 7s. 6d. net.

(2) "Papua or British New Guinea." By J. H. P. Murray. With an Introduction by Sir William MacGregor, G.C.M.G., C.B. Pp. 388+plates+map. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.) Price 15s. net.

(3) "Through Shên-Kan. The Account of the Clark Expedition in North China, 1908-9." By Robert Sterling Clark and Arthur de C. Sowerby. Edited by Major C. H. Chepmell. Pp. viii+247+64 plates+2 maps. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.) Price 25s. net.

War Office to take charge of medical affairs, and Dr. A. de C. Sowerby was zoologist, our countrymen being thus largely represented on the scientific staff. The expedition crossed the Yellow River, went into winter quarters at Yen-an Fu, and thence the route lay roughly westward. But at Lan-chou, Hazrat Ali, while engaged in surveying, was murdered in circumstances which were never fully ascertained, and the popular excitement thus aroused necessitated the return of the party. It is much to be regretted that, in spite of every kind of pressure on the Chinese Foreign Office, no reparation has been made for this atrocious murder of a British subject.

A NEW INTERNATIONAL PHYSICAL INSTITUTE.

IN the year 1911 an account was given in this journal (vol. lxxxviii, p. 82) of a conference of scientific men in Brussels to discuss the general theories of radiation. This meeting, which was of unusual interest and importance, was due to the initiative of Mr. Ernest Solvay, of Brussels. At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Solvay offered to donate a sum of money to assist scientific research in the domain of physics and chemistry. After consultation with Prof. Lorentz, of Leyden, the president of the meeting, Mr. Solvay agreed



Colossal Buddha, at Ta-fu-ssü, Shensi. From "Through Shên-Kan."

In addition to the account of the journey which was thus tragically interrupted, a careful itinerary and a good map are provided. Mr. Clark and Dr. Sowerby contribute reports on the results. Most of the collections, except the insects which Captain Douglas has presented to the British Museum, have gone to the United States National Museum. Some interesting mammals, including a new three-toed jerboa (*Dipus sowerbyi*) and a polecat (*Vormela negans*), were found; but the record in other departments is rather disappointing. On the whole, considering the disaster which brought the expedition to a close, much useful work was done, and the splendid series of photographs makes the work of permanent value to science.

to found an International Physical Institute for a limited period of thirty years, to have its headquarters at Brussels. The resources of the institute were provided by the generous donation of a capital sum of one million francs. Part of the proceeds is to be devoted to the foundation of scholarships for the promotion of scientific research in Belgium, part to defray the expenses of international meetings to discuss scientific problems of interest, and the residue to be awarded in the form of grants to scientific investigators to assist them in their researches.

For the first year, which terminates on May 1, 1913, a sum of about 17,500 francs is available for the latter purpose. It is the intention of the committee each year to give grants for special lines