

most part of only tolerable interest and appositeness; the drawings which supplement the photographs are exceedingly bad: one wonders that the publishers could have inserted such. Amongst the more interesting illustrations is that of a Sara-Kabba woman, with her lips expanded artificially into something like a duck's beak. This method of deforming the lips seems to be a very old one amongst the negro race, and to have existed in ancient times in the westernmost parts of Nigeria. From the very heart of Africa, where Dr. Kumm came across it, it extends sporadically to the region between the Albert Nyanza and the Upper Congo; then, after another long gap in distance, reappears in parts of German East Africa, and attains a notable development (described by Living-

THE NAGAS OF MANIPUR.¹

THE monograph before us, descriptive of the Nāgas (included in the Tibeto-Burman group of races), is issued by the Government, Eastern Bengal, as one of the series which already includes volumes on the Khasis, Meitheis, Mikirs, and Garos. Mr. Hodson's survey extends only to the branch of the tribe settled in Manipur, numbering about 100,000 out of a total population of 162,000 in British India.

As regards social organisation, the clan, an aggregation of households, forms the permanent political unit. The tribe being only a group of clans with little or no solidarity. The only tribal bond appears in the enforcement of common taboos of food and seclusion, and in the rule that a man must not marry a woman



Photo.

Maon Nagas. From "The Naga Tribes of Manipur."

E. J. Mitchell.

stone) in the regions between Lake Nyasa and the coast.

Dr. Kumm gives a chapter on the anthropology of the Sudan tribes, which contains some new information, and especially some interesting illustrations of the many different methods of skin mutilation on the face (cicatrisation). He writes, however, much too freely about "Bantu," ascribing to the Bantu group of African people many tribes which have absolutely nothing to do with that language family. Although the conventional "Bantu" physical type is associated mostly with peoples of the Upper Congo of the lake regions and of South Africa who happen to speak Bantu languages, it is also to be met with elsewhere in West and Central Africa amongst tribes quite outside the Bantu language field. It short, it is better to drop the use of the term for any other but linguistic classifications.

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whose speech differs from his own. This is due to the inhospitable character of the land and to the ferocity of its inhabitants, facts which also affect the linguistics. As Dr. Grierson has shown, this type of monosyllabic language, possessing no literature, with a floating pronunciation, and a number of loosely used prefixes and suffixes, being necessarily subject to rapid change, emigrants settled at a comparatively short distance develop a dialect unintelligible to members of the parent village. This absence of tribal organisation adds greatly to the difficulty of bringing these wild highlanders under control.

The Nāgas combine with a fairly advanced material culture many barbaric practices. While part of their farming is on the Jhum system, that is to say, the periodical burning of patches of jungle and sowing the seed in the ashes, they also possess terraced fields

¹ "The Nāga Tribes of Manipur." By T. C. Hodson. Pp. xiii+212. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd. 1911.) Price 8s. 6d. net.

irrigated with water brought from considerable distances along skilfully aligned channels. They demarcate their village boundaries and recognise rights of property in land. They are skilled in weaving, make fairly good pottery, extract salt from brine wells, work up imported iron into weapons and implements, and are adepts in mat and basket weaving. Still, in spite of these advances towards civilisation, they practised up to quite recent times the brutal custom of head-hunting. As connected with their funereal rites this may be piacular, propitiatory, or both. It seems reasonable to suppose that, like the Wa of Burma, they procure heads in the hope that the soul of the victim will accompany his skull, and that when hung up in the house of its possessor this will act as a guardian against the powers of evil, the skull of a stranger being preferred, because the ghost does not know its way about, and is less likely to wander. Mr. Hodson has done good service in pointing out how the custom is connected with the blood feud, with funerary rites and eschatological beliefs, and that it has a social side as a proof of fitness for initiation into the tribe. Hence it is often encouraged by women, who laugh at young men appearing at the village festivals without the decoration which marks the successful warrior.

Mr. Hodson's careful review of the tribal and village customs, particularly the institution of taboos and the use of the communal house for males, superstitions, and religious beliefs, a survey largely based on personal intercourse with the tribe, forms an important contribution to the ethnology of India.

THE PENNY: A SUGGESTION.

DEAR old penny! You have been with me all my life. You were the first present I ever had, and when I was young your potentiality was great. You would buy everything a boy required—peg-tops, jam tarts, kites, marbles, or a bun. As I grew older I recognised that your purchasing power did not keep pace with my desires. Still, you do something—you give me a paper, a box of matches, or carry me long distances on trams or buses. With two or three pennies in my pocket I feel armed against emergencies. You will dry an urchin's tears or give comfort to a beggar. You have been and still remain a friend to young and old.

But with all your virtues you have still some drawbacks. I think you are susceptible of great improvement.

The ordinary person likes you in twos or threes, but in quantity he calls you "coppers." When in this form, the young lady in the shop frequently apologises—not for you so much, as for her inability to represent you by some other coin.

Forty-eight coppers, so says the law, weigh one pound; but nobody, whatever his vocation may be, cares to carry a pound, whether it be represented by forty-eight pennies or a lump of brass in his pocket. Not only would they weigh him down, but possibly they might spoil his figure. From the legal definition you should weigh one-third of an ounce, or 145.8333 grains. The latter number frightens me; it is indefinite and without end. It means nothing for common use. To carry about a weight which cannot be used to weigh anything in particular, not even a letter, is not practical. It is silly. If our penny could be made to weigh a little bit less but remain commensurable with an ounce, even if a hole was bored through its centre to reduce its weight, which would tell you what it was by its feel, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would, by the saving in metal, certainly be possessed of wealth equal to the fees of

many Baronetcies. The public would have less load to carry, and rich and poor would have in their pockets a useful standard of weight.

As I am now finding fault, let me next ask whether you measure anything in particular. In your modern form, so far as I know, there is as little respectability in your dimensions as in your weight.

A penny is one out of a number of little discs that can be economically stamped out of a sheet of bronze. We are told that a bit of metal goes through rolls, which are so wonderfully adjusted that the resultant strips or "fillets" do not vary more than 1/10,000 part of an inch in their thickness. This suggests that the authors of the penny wished it to possess an accuracy bordering on the supernatural. But the subsequent punching, pressing, and milling has apparently done much to destroy their good intentions.

When you, little penny, entered the world, you were bright and shiny, with all the lustre, and colour of burnished gold; but your guinea-like look never lasted more than a few short weeks. You quickly became the microbic-covered old brown copper. You look round, you are supposed to be round, but are you really round?

Many times per day somebody or other wishes to draw a circle, puts you on a piece of paper, and scratches a pencil round your edge. Now and then the housewife puts you on a piece of linen to mark out buttonholes or points for decoration. The results look excellent, and satisfy many purposes, but a pair of callipers show that you have more than one diameter. The least diameter of our world runs from the north pole to the south, but if the north pole of a penny is Britannia's head and the fringes of her skirts the south, this is your longest diameter. Poor old penny, your dimensions have been made opposite to those of the world in which you circulate. The world is world-shaped, and you are penny-shaped. You only possess an average diameter, which is not an inch or an inch and a quarter, neither does it appear to be related to any everyday unit of linear measure. Your dimensions, like your weight, suggest an oversight on the part of your creators. You are lopsided and measure nothing in particular.

As you exist at the present day you measure a tiny little bit more than one inch and one-fifth. Why "the tiny little bit" exists, I and my friends connected with minting cannot tell. Knock it off, and the Exchequer would increase its capital without extra taxation, and five pennies would measure exactly six inches.

But reformation should go still farther, and the diameter of a penny, if possible, be made to measure something more definite by itself. If the halfpenny, which does measure one inch, stands in the way, do not disgrace it, but reduce it to another standard.

Our poor dumb friend, not only because it neither possesses a useful weight or measure, has been compelled to take a back place in numismatic competitions, but it has had to put up with a bit of extra weight in the form of an inscription. On one side of our penny we see a statement in abbreviated Latin which tells us that the Ruling Monarch is a defender of the faith. With this the penny gives us something to think about both day and night, and to many the statement may be regarded as in keeping with its weight and measure. On the reverse, we see a brave-looking, long-limbed lady sitting on a chariot, one wheel of which appears to be elliptical. I have been quite curious about this personage, and with the help of a magnifying glass have compared her face as shown on pennies and halfpennies. As a result of my examination I conclude there are at least two types of Britannia. The aristocratic, with a Grecian nose, and the democratic, with a *nez retroussé*. Possibly