

The Twice-Born

A Study of a Community of High-Caste Hindus. By Dr. G. Morris Carstairs. Pp. 343. (London: The Hogarth Press, Ltd., 1957.) 30s. net.

THE title of this book suggests that it is a study of the Brahmins of India and of their relations with the other superior castes. But this is not so. It is the study of a single social unit, the village of Deoli, and it is formulated from a psychological point of view, and not as a factual description. The author begins by stating his belief that it is in "the legacy of realistic imaginative writing to which the long association with Britain gave rise" that projections of Indian life as it may best be found. Imagination is not, perhaps, to be demanded of official publications, but it should not be forgotten, in India or elsewhere, that since the issue of the first District Gazetteers in the 1860's, the Indian Government strove to publish the facts on which its actions were based. This mass of record and comment has still much to teach the serious student.

Dr. Margaret Mead in her preface describes this book as "a study of the differences in character which characterize three different castes in a remote and only recently modernized community". But caste is a Portuguese, not an Indian, word, and remote is a doubtful qualification in a sub-continent the people of which are such inveterate travellers and where accurate information frequently beats the post and Press. India has been modernized many times. Roman trade did it in the first century A.D. and the Aryans, indeed, did it before that. India has never been out of the world. Deoli had no wireless, but a decade of broadcasting, two decades of travelling cinemas, and the existence of a flourishing colloquial Press for more than a century, forbid naivety.

The introductory chapters are curiously discursive. A party of Bhils intrudes into Chapter 8, unfortunately only to display the author's lack of preparation. For Bhils abound in these parts and the literature is adequate. The bulk of the book consists of recorded conversations with three chief informants, some of their written statements, and psychological tests.

On p. 307 it is stated that, in the word association test, Purnamal Mehta gave a delayed response to "Vagina", "Anger", "Girl", "Faces", "Penis", and "In-laws". So should I. Oh, Seligman! Oh, Haddon! Oh, Balfour! K. DE B. CODRINGTON

Araucanian Child Life and Its Cultural Background

By Sister M. Inez Hilger. (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 133, Whole Volume.) Pp. xx+439+80 plates. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1957.) n.p.

THE Araucanians of Chile and Argentina have retained their language and a good deal of their original culture after more than 400 years of contact with Europeans; much has been written about them, but little of this literature has been specifically concerned with the children. Sister Inez Hilger had much previous experience of child studies among North American Indian tribes, so she was well prepared to undertake this extensive and sympathetic account. The book contains much information about the people in general, since this is necessary to an understanding of the children. Its scope is best described by a quotation from the first sentence of the preface, "The purpose of this study is to record the ethnography . . . of the Araucanians . . . particularly their customs, beliefs and traditions in relation to the development

and training of the child", and a psychological approach is expressly disclaimed, though certain psychological aspects emerged and others are implicit.

The book is clearly written and well illustrated; it maintains the high standards of the Smithsonian Institution. G. H. S. BUSHNELL

Gas Dynamics

By Klaus Oswatitsch. English version by Prof. Gustav Kuerti. (Applied Mathematics and Mechanics, Vol. 1.) Pp. xv+610. (New York: Academic Press, Inc.; London: Academic Books, Ltd., 1956.) 12 dollars.

FIRST published in German in 1952, and now translated with only minor amendments, this excellent book on compressible fluid dynamics stands little diminished in value by the continued rapid development of its subject. Its distinction rests in the high degree of success with which Dr. Oswatitsch has related methods of analysis to physical understanding.

The first part of the book deals with both steady and time-dependent 'one-dimensional' gas flows; a wide range of topics is covered, including, for example, problems of combustion and detonation. The method of characteristics is introduced for unsteady flow. A lucid exposition of the equations of motion for flow in three dimensions follows, with more emphasis than usual on their integral forms. Attention is then narrowed to steady adiabatic inviscid flow, and the fundamentals and analytical methods of high-speed aerodynamics are surveyed in a section which occupies about half the book. Basic similarities and differences between various types of flow, and parallels with unsteady flow, are carefully brought out. The last two chapters are rather too-abbreviated sketches of the influence of viscosity and experimental methods.

This can be highly recommended as an illuminating and authoritative account, perhaps most useful to the reader who already has some acquaintance with the subject. E. P. SUTTON

Common Medicinal Plants of Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalayas

By Dr. K. Biswas. Pp. vi+157+50 plates. (Alipore: West Bengal Government Press, 1956.) Rs. 7; 11s. 3d.

THIS book, which has the benediction and recommendation of Sir Ram Nath Chopra, well known for his scientific work on drugs, opens with a chapter on "Herbal Charms" and does not seem to recover from this mixture of sorcery, magic and folklore. After the startling success of the alkaloids of *Rauwolfia serpentina* in the treatment of high blood pressure, it would be unwise to dismiss miraculous claims for some plants as baseless, but what is one to make of the following extracts? "*Drymaria cordata*: used as a medicine for dog-bites, and is also very useful as a throat paint in hay-fever, hay-asthma, diphtheria and pneumonia". "*Rhus succedanea*: juice of the leaves is said to blister the skin, used in curing indigestion and vomiting in children." Bald-pates may take hope, for *Nardostachys* "has the property of increasing growth of hairs on the head". Those who sigh for their lost youth need not despair for "*Curculigo orchioidea* . . . taken with honey and cow's milk prevents weakness due to old age and bring (sic) in young strength and spirit in old men and women producing freshness in face and body". The book abounds in misprints and the half-tone plates are miserable. The line drawings are reasonably presentable. N. L. BOR