

Papua: Betel.

im Thurn.

Piper methysticum in Betel-Chewing. By Sir Everard im Thurn, **37**
K.C.M.G., F.R.S., C.B.

Mr. Chinery's note^a is interesting, but I think he is mistaken in identifying the "piagi," which is one of the ingredients used in betel-chewing by the natives of certain parts of Papua, as the "kava" (or, as it is called in Fiji, "yangona") plant, which is *Piper methysticum*. The true kava plant is an upright-growing shrub, with branches particularly brittle, in the sense that they easily snap at the swollen nodes; there is an excellent drawing of it at page 73 of Miss Gardner King's "Islands Far Away." Certainly a plant of this habit could not be described as "a creeping plant, which clings to trees in the gardens and villages"; nor could "the leaf, fruit, and portions of the stem and root" have been found "neatly coiled and tied together like a bolt of rope" in the native policeman's swags. Again, hospitable natives could not provide their guests "with a coil" of this plant; and—I have probably consumed more "yangona" than most Europeans—I have certainly not found "its flavour bitter and hot," as Mr. Chinery did that of the piagi.

It is possible that true kava (*Piper methysticum*) is occasionally used for chewing with the betel-nut; but my own experience makes me pretty sure that the piagi which Mr. Chinery saw used was a quite different peppercorn, which is distinctly of a climbing, or rather a clinging, habit. It may have been either the well-known Piper kolo, L., or the "an-gau" ("climbing yangona") of the Fijians. This last-named plant was described (in M.S.) by M. Casimir de Candolle as *Piper inaequalipes* (Seemann, "Flora Vitiensis," p. 302); this is botanically akin to the true kava or yangona, but entirely different in habit of growth. Perhaps the best idea of this difference in habit may be given by saying that true kava grows like an elder-bush that has been "hard cut back": whereas the "climbing kava" is like ivy which has grown up a tree and has then sent out a few loose-hanging branches.

EVERARD IM THURN.

Obituary.

Temple.

Mansel Longworth Dames. By Sir Richard C. Temple, M., C.B., **38**
C.I.E.

Mr. Dames, a Vice-President of this Institute and long a member of its Council, passed away somewhat suddenly on the 8th January, 1922, shortly before his 72nd birthday. He was of a singularly retiring disposition, but nevertheless always desirous of helping on scientific research wherever he could. Consequently he did not contribute much to the pages of the *Journal* of the Institute, although he wrote many reviews of books for *Man*. He was, however, an Oriental scholar of unusually wide knowledge, which his wonderful memory rendered extraordinarily accurate. His knowledge of things Indian was deep and wide, as is testified by his great work for the British Museum in arranging the collections representing the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religions in the new buildings. This was done with an assiduity, skill and knowledge that is almost unrivalled.

Dames was a great linguist in Indian and Oriental as well as in European languages, and a widely travelled man. His capacity for acquiring languages was exhibited in an admirable degree in his remarkable edition of the "Book of Duarte Barbosa" for the Hakluyt Society—a model of what such editions should be. *Jain* also showed his intimate acquaintance with Portuguese, in addition to a wonderful general Oriental knowledge. In this he was, however, helped by his wife, who was the daughter of the British Consul at the Azores.