

with tuberculosis, the tubercles in the liver containing the characteristic bacilli of the disease. Upon inquiry, it was found that the expectoration of the consumptive person had been eaten by the fowl. From the history given of the other fowls, it is probable that they died from the same affection. It has for some time been recognized that the milk of tubercular animals could convey this disease to man; and, if the explanation just given is a true one, a new source of danger, hitherto unsuspected, exists. That such a method of communication is probable cannot be denied, and should direct the attention of both physicians and patients to the absolute necessity of the disinfection of the sputa of consumptives.

THE RECENT DEATH of a lady in a Brooklyn dentist's chair has already been reported in *Science*. The coroner's jury, after an investigation, exonerated the dentist and his assistants. The lady, it appears, had called to have a tooth extracted, and the anaesthetic employed was the bromide of ethyl. The patient became conscious after the anaesthetization, but suddenly became unconscious, and in half an hour was dead. The dentist testified that he had employed the bromide at least once a day for nine months without previous injurious result. The jury recommended that in all doubtful cases patients should be thoroughly examined by a competent medical man before the administration of an anaesthetic for dental operation. Even this precaution will not always prevent disastrous results, for numerous cases of death after anaesthesia are recorded where a physical examination revealed no organic disease. It would perhaps be the best advice to give, that, when so trifling a pain is to be borne as is caused by the extraction of a tooth, persons should bear it without an anaesthetic rather than run any risk, no matter how trivial it may seem to be.

#### ALLEGED EARLY CHINESE VOYAGES TO AMERICA.

MUCH interest was excited in the Société de géographie at Paris by a paper by Dr. Hamy on 'The interpretation of one of the monuments at Copan, Honduras.' This is a stone in the form of a deep convex pie, with a round hollow or cup in the centre of the dome, from each side of which a curved line extends to the margin, which is surrounded by a border much like that put on pies by pastry-cooks. The two curved lines form a

sort of S-shaped figure. The whole stone is about a yard and a half in diameter, and its depth about a yard. The two curves are interpreted by Hamy as the sign Taë-Kai of the Chinese, which is venerated by them as symbolic of the essence of all things. Intercourse with China was inferred by Hamy from this sign, corroborated for him by the old story of Fu-sang, first broached by De Guignes in the last century, and by the papers of the late Charles Walcott Brooks on 'Japanese wrecks on the north Pacific coast of America.'

The paper was discussed by Quatrefages, de Charencey, Villemereuil, and others, the general tendency being to accept the idea of intercourse between China, Japan, and America at an early date, especially as Brooks stated that wrecked Japanese were able to communicate with the Aleutian Islanders without an interpreter.

We believe that the very wide hypothesis thus broached, and which in one form or another has had a certain currency for more than a century, rests upon a totally insufficient foundation. That wrecked Japanese, and possibly Chinese, from time to time were cast on the shores of America, is beyond question. The matter has been well discussed by Horace Davis, and to his paper Brooks is indebted for many of his facts. Davidson and others have also drawn attention to the subject. But there is every reason to believe that the wrecked people were, 1°, nearly always males, and incapable of colonizing; 2°, were either killed or enslaved by the Americans in accordance with a general usage; and, 3°, that neither in arts nor language have they left any appreciable trace on American anthropology. The statement of Brooks, that the Japanese and Aleuts could communicate without an interpreter, is true to this extent. I was present when the aforesaid Japanese, three males, were brought to the port of Unalashka, and took pains to inquire into the assertion which was made to me at the time. I found that the communications were wholly by signs, and not by spoken language, as the Aleuts could not understand a word of Japanese without its accompanying signs. Second, Brooks, who was long consul in Japan, informed me that he had particularly searched into the matter of the voyage to Fu-sang, and that he had conclusive evidence that the voyage which actually took place was to the well-known and still existing province of Fu-sang in Korea (see Griffis' work), and had no connection whatever with America. Last, the mere presence of two simple curved lines on a circular stone, taken by itself, proves nothing as to their meaning, and still less that they had any connection with the Chinese symbol.

The temptations of such unbridled hypotheses are the curse of anthropology, and it is extraordinary that such a veteran as Hamy should become entangled in their meshes.

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#### AN ARCHEOLOGICAL FRAUD.

AN interesting vase, purporting to be ancient Mexican in origin, was offered for sale some months ago to the American museum of natural history by a collector, and was reserved for possible purchase, and exhibited in the cabinet of that institution. Its grotesque features and the symmetrical and effective combination and arrangement of its ornamentation make it a very noticeable object; but a closer examination destroys the

the highly modern character of the handle in design is flagrantly recent. The artist was unfortunate, also, in selecting a crocodile for this conspicuous 'coigne of vantage,' as that great reptile does not frequent the *tierra templada* of Mexico, and would be only used in art decoration of the aborigines of the hot and lagoon intersected lowlands. The numerous and equidistant circles seen in the photograph on the surface of the cover are fraudulent. The rim of the vase immediately below the cover, upon which the cover rests, is probably a separate piece from the body of the vase, and is too rectangular in its setting on the neck of the same, though very nearly this is seen in genuine examples. Its circular ornamentation is not Aztec. The body of the vase is very meretricious, if the author of this unique object



first pleasurable impressions by raising serious doubts as to its virtual antiquity. It may be serviceable to collectors generally to call attention to this striking instance of very probable fraudulent work, as it is a most elaborate effort of the potter, and to indicate its points of divergence from the veritable specimens of Aztecian aboriginal workmanship. The piece purported to be pre-Columbian.

Beginning at the top of the vase, the cover almost instantly excites suspicion. It is too symmetrically convex and too cap-shaped, while

meant it to resemble true Mexican art. The neck is unnaturally constricted, and the cavity of the vase too globose, in the style of modern ceramic objects of this description. The Aztec moulded the expanded portion or receptacle, in vases of this character, more gradually upwards into the neck, producing a long slant, not a sudden break. The extraordinary collar of masks, which is almost a *chef d'oeuvre* in its way, is a copy immensely improved upon, of similar conceits in genuine antiques, one of which can be seen by New York students in the Metropolitan art