

Shufeldt and Dr. Matthews have both studied this cradle carefully with reference to deformation.

The Sioux cradle represents those of all the tribes on the plains of the great west. It is a trellis or rack of four pieces, like a skid or a flower-frame, or a frame on which fur skins are stretched. Two upright pieces nearly contiguous at the foot are spread apart at the top. They are held in place by cross-slats above and below. A strip of buffalo-skin, fur side up, covers this frame. The child lies on this in a sort of hammock between the vertical slats. There is an ample pillow. The enclosing portion is shoe-shaped, made of leather, and strengthened around the face by stiff hide. The child is lashed in by the closing of these leather flaps, which are now for the most part gorgeously adorned with bead-work.

The Algonquin cradle is, like that of the Navajo, a board with stationary padded pillow, ample bed, and cover ornamented with porcupine-quills.

There are no cradles in the national museum from the southern Indians. The squaws that frequent southern cities at present carry their children in shawls or sacks on their backs.

No attempt is here made to touch the literature of the subject, which generally introduces more confusion than knowledge. O. T. MASON.

#### DR. BAIN ON ULTIMATE QUESTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY.

PROF. ALEXANDER BAIN of Aberdeen is universally regarded as the greatest exponent of the association school of psychology, and for this reason his scattered papers and addresses are carefully read by philosophical students. At the last meeting of the Aristotelian society, he read a paper on the 'Ultimate questions of philosophy,' which is reported as dealing with the philosophical differences of opinion that grow out of the attempts to give reasons for what has to be assumed as being ultimate. At the outset the author illustrated the position that a science may be very debatable in its foundations, and yet the superstructure raised upon these may be sound and unimpeachable. This is most apparent in the mathematical and physical sciences, in several of which the ultimate axioms are given in questionable forms, without impeding the development of truthful doctrines, both inductive and deductive. Less obvious is the application to logic and psychology, which, in the opinion of some, are in a state of total arrest until the fundamentals are thoroughly adjusted. Yet this extreme position may be overstated; for in these sciences many important results have been obtained, while con-

troversy still rages in regard to the primary truths of both. In following out the main design of the paper to deal with ultimate questions, the two foundation axioms of logic, namely, the axiom of self-consistency and the axiom of nature's uniformity, were first considered, the chief stress of the discussion being laid on the second. The absolutely ultimate character of the belief that the future will resemble the past was contrasted with the three other views of the axiom: namely, 1°, that it is an identical proposition (as maintained by Taine and Lewes); 2°, that it is an intuition; 3°, that it is a result of experience. As to the last view, which is the empirical doctrine, the author contended that experience could not assure us of what has not yet happened without making the assumption that the future will be as the past has been, that is, without begging the matter in dispute. The axiom is not properly described either by experience or by faith, and should be treated as unique, and should receive an unmeaning name, that compares it to nothing else. Considering that probably the earliest explicit statement of the axiom is that given in Newton's third rule of philosophizing, there would be no impropriety, but very much the reverse, in this bicentenary year of the 'Principia,' in baptizing it the 'Dictum of Newton.' The author then reviewed the several questions that might be regarded as ultimate in ethics, dwelling especially upon the proper view of disinterested action, which could not be obligatory without ceasing to be disinterested. Finally a search was made in psychology for the best examples of questions of the ultimate class.

#### ASYMMETRY.

DR. T. G. MORTON of Philadelphia has recently called attention, in the *Medical times* of that city, to the effects of unequal length of the lower limbs in producing lateral spinal curvature. Asymmetry of this kind has been known for some years, but it does not appear that it has been regarded as a cause of ailment in other parts of the body. Dr. Morton finds that it leads to backache of distressing severity, and also that it can be cured by adding to the shoe-heel of the short leg. The following is abstracted from his accounts of several cases: a young man, aged twenty-five, had been troubled for over a year with severe and continued backache, extending to the right side. When attempting to straighten up his back, he experienced a cramp-like feeling. It was found that his right leg was one and five-eighths inches shorter than the left, and that the right arm and leg were smaller than the left. The unsymmetrical form of the body was very apparent in a