

the ideal anticipated by Professor Ryder. As to the duty on scientific instruments and books, probably the scientific men of the country object unanimously. One of them said to me once, "When I express myself mildly, I call it a disgrace to the country and an outrage on science." *Science* might accomplish a valuable service by collecting and publishing expressions of opinion on this part of the tariff from some of the leading scientific men of the country. Would not a petition to Congress to abolish the duty on scientific instruments and books in foreign languages find many and distinguished signers?

CHARLES SEDGWICK MINOT.

Boston, Dec. 23.

#### Arkansaw and Kansaw.

WHERE can one find a copy of the law fixing the pronunciation of 'Arkansas'?

As I remember the phraseology, it runs thus: "Each *a* shall be sounded as *a* in 'father,'" or, "Each *a* shall have the Italian sound of *a*, as in 'far,' 'father,' etc." This would require us to pronounce the name 'Ar'-karn-sar' (not dwelling on the *r*) or 'Ah'-kahn-sah.' Mr. Hill pleads for consistency in pronunciation (!): is *he* consistent? How can he be when he gives three distinct values for the *a*'s in 'Arkansas'? If the last *a* should be sounded as *aw* in 'law,' consistency would require us to say 'Aw'-kawn-saw.' The final '-saw' hardly represents the common pronunciation of early writers, as there was a great diversity. We find, 'Acansea,' 'Acansias,' 'Accances,' 'A Kancea,' 'A Kansaes,' 'A Kanse' (Marquette's 'A Kansea,' Jefferys' 'A Kansis'), etc. All of these will appear hereafter in 'Indian Synonymy,' when published by the Bureau of Ethnology.

Though not a New Englander, I propose to adhere to 'Ar-kan-sas' when speaking the English name, and 'A'-kan-sa' when I use the Indian one, though I run the risk of being thought inconsistent.

As to 'Kansas,' how can Mr. Hill say that 'Kansaw' was the early Anglo-American pronunciation, when he gives Long's 'Konza' (i.e., 'Kon'-zay' or 'Con'-zay') as an approximation of the true pronunciation? 'Kan'-ze' (*n* a vanishing nasal, *a* as in 'father,' *e* as in 'they') is the name of the Kansa, Kansas, or Kaw tribe, as given to me by the Indians themselves. This agrees with what I have gained from cognate tribes, the Omahas, Ponkas, and Osages. The early French forms of the name are 'Canzé' (1722), 'Cansez' (1701?), 'Canses' (1702), 'Canzez' (1758), 'Canzas' (1774), 'Kancas' (1753), 'Kansé' (1722), 'Kanses' (1702). Early Anglo-American forms are 'Cansa' (1705), 'Kansæ' (1741), 'Kanzas' (1695), 'Kansez' (1761), 'Kanses' (Pike), and 'Kar'-sa' (LEWIS and CLARKE, *Discov.* 1806, p. 13).

The Quapaws or Kwapa say that they were originally part of the Kansas, and the former are the same as the Akansa. Query: was 'A Kansa' or 'A Kanze' ('A-Kan-sæ,' Coxé, 1741) derived from 'Kanze'?

There has been a tendency on the part of some Americans to change the Indian *a* as in 'father,' and *e* as in 'they,' to *aw* as in 'law.' Thus: 'U-ga'-Khpa' ('Oo-gôkh'-pah') is now 'Quaw'-parw,' or 'Quapaw,' 'Wa-zha-zhe' ('War-zhar'-zhay'), or 'Osage,' is given as 'Was-ba-shaw,' 'Pan'-ka' ('Pahn'-kah'), as 'Pün-carw,' and 'U-ma'-ha' ('Oo-mah'-hah') as 'O-marw-haw.' So 'Arkansaw' and 'Kansaw.' I protest against such cacophonies, which are neither English nor Indian. When the regular Indian pronunciation of a word cannot be retained, let us use one that is euphonic English.

J. OWEN DORSEY.

Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, D.C., Jan. 3.

#### Cheyenne.

MR. WILSON says (*Science*, Nov. 11, 1887, p. 239) that *Shah-ee-aié loo-hah*, said by the Dakotas to the first Cheyennes met by them, means 'you have painted yourselves red.' Its real meaning is, 'you have or possess (*loo-hah*) a Cheyenne (*Shah-ee-ay-lah*).'  
*Lu-ha* (*loo-hah*), 'you have' or 'possess,' is from *yu-ha* (*yoo-hah*), which cannot be used as an auxiliary in forming the perfect tense (for which there is no exact Dakota equivalent). 'You have painted yourselves red' must be expressed by *shah-nee'-ch'ee-yah'-pee*, in which *shah* is 'red'; *nee-ch'ee*, reflexive pronoun, second person; *yah*, causative; and *pee*, the plural ending. J. OWEN DORSEY.

Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, D.C., Jan. 3.

#### The Eskimo Ring-Finger.

WE found the habit of wearing finger-rings quite general among the Eskimo of Point Barrow during the two years we spent among them (1881-83). These rings are generally made of brass, rarely of silver, and it was quite natural to suppose that they learned the fashion from American whalers. The ring, however, is always worn on the middle finger, and indeed received its name (*katúqqlé-rúñ*) from *katúqqláñ* ('middle finger'), corresponding to the Greenlandic *kiterdlek* (literally 'the middle'). This circumstance was supposed to be merely accidental, especially as the word used in modern Greenlandic for ring does not indicate any particular finger, meaning simply 'the thing which belongs on a finger' (*agssangmio*).

The use of rings is not mentioned, as far as I can tell, by any writers who have described the Eskimo (though *agssangmio* occurs in Kleinschmidt's Dictionary), and every thing favored the belief that the fashion was merely local at Point Barrow and in Greenland (and possibly elsewhere), and had been learned after they had come in contact with civilized people.

'I was not a little surprised, therefore, when I had an opportunity of consulting the earliest Eskimo dictionary (that of Paul Egede, published in 1750), to find given as a derivative of the word *kiterdlek* (which, by the way, appears in the form *katertlek*, decidedly nearer the Point Barrow pronunciation), *katertleraut* ('a ring: "annulus, quia Groenlandi annulum in medio digito gestare").

Whatever may be the fashion nowadays in Greenland, it is quite plain that in Egede's time the Greenlanders, like their more unsophisticated cousins at Point Barrow, not only wore the ring on the middle finger, but named it from that finger.

Moreover, the word for 'ring' in the Mackenzie River dialect (*kpítep-klopon*) indicates a similar fashion in that region. Such a coincidence in widely separated branches of the same race could hardly be the result of accident. Nor is it easy to see how any circumstances of environment could have affected such a trifling matter as which finger a ring should be worn on.

Evidently, therefore, before the Eskimo had separated into their present branches, they ornamented their hands with rings, which they wore on the middle finger, and not on what the white race have for ages considered as the ring-finger.

The question of the position of the ring-finger may appear, as I have called it, a trifling matter; but I think I have shown it to be a link in the chain of evidence connecting the different branches of the Eskimo race, and, as such, worthy of consideration.

JOHN MURDOCH.

Smithsonian Institution, Jan. 4.

#### Queries.

22. WASP-STINGS. — I have often, from childhood to the present time, heard the assertion that while one holds his breath it is impossible for him to be stung by a wasp. I have till recently always dismissed the assertion with the same smile that I have the statement that swallows hibernate in the mud, or that Friday is an unlucky day. My only reason now for asking place in the columns of *Science* for a question concerning it is the persistent assertion, made by a gentleman of the highest intelligence, whose opinions and judgment are of recognized value in scientific as well as other departments of thought, that the statement is true. Unfortunately, my own experiments have only been with wasps that were rendered somewhat torpid by cold weather, and count for nothing either way. I cannot learn that similar claims are made in regard to bees or hornets; nor can I learn, from those who make them in regard to wasps, whether it is claimed that the act of holding the breath renders one's skin impervious to the wasp's sting, or whether it in some way changes the nature of the virus or of the sensitiveness of the flesh to it. The assertion simply is, that any one may, while holding the breath, handle the liveliest and most able-bodied wasps with perfect safety, and also without after-pain or ill effect from any efforts of the wasp made while respiration was suspended. Can any readers of *Science* prove or disprove these assertions, and, in case they are sustained, give any theory whatever in explanation?

C. H. AMES.

Boston, Dec. 28.