

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.—XIX.

[Edited by D. G. Brinton, M.D., LL.D.]

[Dr. Brinton has been appointed, by the President, a commissioner to represent the United States at the Columbian Historical Exhibition in Madrid, and will be absent from the country about two months. One more instalment of these notes will appear before his return.—ED.]

The Congress of Criminal Anthropology.

THE third International Congress of Criminal Anthropology was held in Brussels Aug. 7-13, and resulted in a decided advance in this extremely valuable branch of science. Although Professor Lombroso of Turin, who is looked upon almost as the father of the subject, was absent, and indeed the whole of the Italian contingent—disgruntled, for some reason, it was alleged—stopped away, yet there were very active discussions and a very marked change of base in regard to the physiology of the criminal classes.

Those who have followed the French and Italian writers are aware that they have taken great pains to define the "criminal type." It has been alleged that habitual criminals have a lower average cerebral capacity than others; that their foreheads are retreating, and their brain developed posteriorly; that their lower jaws are strongly pronounced and their ears frequently deformed; their hair thick and coarse, but their beard scanty; and so on. Such was the "criminel né" of the French, the "uomo delinquente" of the Italians. But the Brussels Congress may be said to have upset all this interesting theory. Dr. Tarnowski of St. Petersburg and Dr. Naেকে, from a very wide collation of observations, denied any special physical peculiarity in criminals, either male or female.

The tendency of all the leading speakers was to look upon crime as the result of psychical and social rather than physical peculiarities. It is true that physical abnormalities are more frequent in the criminal class, but there is no constant relation between any one of them and crime. Very many criminals have an inherited tendency to some form of mental alienation; many others owe their character to purely personal and social influences of a deleterious character. Society is far more to blame for their existence than has hitherto been acknowledged; and if the tide of crime is to be stayed, we must have recourse to sounder moral instruction, more judicious systems of legal procedure, and an improved doctrine of punishment. This is the important practical lesson taught by the Brussels Congress.

The next Congress was fixed for 1896, in Geneva.

Shape of Slavic Skulls.

In connection with the article on this subject contributed to *Science*, Oct. 28, by Dr. John Beddoe, I may refer to the measurements of Czech skulls, from villages of pure blood in Bohemia, by Dr. L. Niederle, published in the June issue of the *Mittheil. der Anthropol. Gesell. in Wien*. He found them decidedly brachycephalic, averaging about 85, the skulls of women being more so than those of the males. They were also leptoprosopic, mesorhinc, and hypsicephalic. These peculiarities correspond closely to those noticed in the living population of Bohemia, especially where of pure Slavic blood. Most of the school-children are broad-headed, more markedly so than the adults. They lose in a measure this trait on growing to adult years. The dolichoid form is distinctly more frequent and pronounced in living men than in women, even in the same village and of the same family.

Linguistic Affinities of the Ancient Coptic.

In a memoir prepared for the tenth session of the International Congress of Orientalists, Dr. Carl Abel presents a summary of the evidence which he has been industriously collecting for years to prove the etymological relationship of the language of ancient Egypt with the Indo-European stock. It is an extremely intricate subject, and to many his methods will appear strange, and at first sight repellant. He claims, for instance, that a primitive radical often has two meanings which are the precise opposites of

each other, as "good" and "bad," or "white" and "black." Again, that such a radical was frequently reversed in its sounds, for example, that *rak* and *kar* are the same word, the one being read and originally pronounced backwards, but both are to be construed as the same root. He also presents a series of substitutions in sounds, one organ occasionally taking the place of another in utterance, according to definable laws.

These novelties to old-fashioned students of Aryan and Semitic tongues have not aided to make his views popular; but they have been accepted by such distinguished scholars as Professor Maspero of Paris, Professor Harlez of Brussels, and Professor Sayce of Oxford, as throwing a new and valuable light on the phonetic laws of ancient Coptic. If European scholars would study more diligently the aboriginal tongues of America, they would learn that all these, and various other linguistic processes of which they seem to have very faint comprehension, are part and parcel of the natural development of human speech.

Pre-Columbian Migrations in America.

In the October number of the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, Judge E. F. Im Thurn has an instructive article on British Guiana, giving much fresh information about the economical conditions and gold-diggings there. At its close, he speaks of the native population, and indulges in some speculations as to the origin of the Caribs and Arawacks, who at the time of the discovery inhabited the West Indian archipelago and the northern shores of South America. He maintains that both these nations migrated from the northern continent, following the chain of islands till they reached the southern mainland, where the Caribs located to the east of the mouth of the Orinoco and the Arawacks to the west. The Warraus he believes to have been the antecedent occupants of the region.

As Mr. Im Thurn has written much and well on the Indians of Guiana, I feel called upon to state that there are no facts which justify the theory here advanced, and that every evidence points unequivocally in the opposite direction. Both Caribs and Arawacks unquestionably came from the interior of the South American continent and moved northward, the Arawacks reaching as far as the Bahamas, where Columbus found them, while the Caribs had no permanent villages north of Jamaica. The researches of von den Steinen, Adam, Ehrenreich, and others have settled this beyond reasonable doubt. All the inhabitants of Cuba were Arawacks, but had come from the south. Not a trace of either Carib or Arawack dialects occurs in North America, but they can be found southward to the Rio de la Plata.

Civilization as Influenced by Race.

The perspicuous writer, M. Gustave Le Bon, has an interesting article in the *Revue Scientifique* for October, on the evolution of civilization and the arts as influenced by race. His thesis is that what we call civilization is the expression of certain modes of thought and feeling peculiar to each race; that one race can never thoroughly assimilate the civilization of another; and that the evolution of culture never follows parallel lines in the different races, one developing one element, another diverse elements. This is especially true of arts and religions, these bearing in their evolution little proportion to the remaining momenta of culture. A lower race, he maintains, cannot derive much of real utility to itself from another of considerably higher civilization; and, in general, whatever a race thus borrows, it transforms to suit its own individuality and racial psychology, so that little of the original is left.

These opinions he supports by an examination of the traits of the world religions in different races. Islam in India is no longer monotheistic, but as polytheistic as Brahmanism; so is Christianity among Indo-Germanic peoples; marabouts, saints, virgins, and incarnations of deity are worshipped, not at all the one God of the original Semitic cult. In a similar manner government, institutions, and arts are sure to be transformed by the racial mind, acting unconsciously, and adapted to its peculiarities. He concludes that the effort to force European civilization upon the lower races, unless in a much modified form, is vain and hopeless.