

ancient Peruvians. The source of supply was doubtless from the squid or octopus, which are still found in abundance along the coast.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.—XXII.

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The Canstatt and Neanderthal Skulls.

EVEN in some very late treatises on archæology and ethnology I observe that there is still talk of the "race of Canstatt" and the "race of Neanderthal," these imaginary races of ancient Europe being supposed to be represented by the skulls found in those respective localities. The late M. de Quatrefages was, I believe, responsible for the erection of these skulls into "types," and for the theories of prehistoric ethnography based upon them.

It should be recognized, once for all, that there is no sort of foundation for these scientific dreams. In neither instance did the locality in which these skulls were found guarantee them any high antiquity. The Canstatt skull was unearthed along with Roman pottery, and in all probability belonged to the fourth or fifth century, A. D. The Neanderthal skull, on which still greater stress has been laid, and casts of which are to be seen in most archæological museums, was not dug up at all, but was picked up in a gully which had been washed in the mountain side, and came from dear knows where. Probably there had been an old graveyard further up the hill, but by no means one in quaternary times. The fragment, moreover, is so fragmentary, and presents such evident signs of pathologic processes, that it is more than daring to assume it as the typical cranium of any race.

These and many allied facts in the same direction were admirably brought out in a discussion last August at the meeting of the German Anthropological Association by such speakers as Von Holder, Virchow, Kollmann, and Fraas. Their arguments leave no room to doubt the unimportance of these remains.

Time-Reckoning of the Mayas.

A short but carefully studied article in a recent number of the *Globus* (Bd. 63, No. 2), by Dr. Förstemann, presents some striking facts showing the accuracy attained by the ancient Mayas of Yucatan in the calculation of time. His sources are the Dresden and other ancient codices, to the interpretation of which he has devoted fruitfully much study. The contents of the Dresden Codex is largely astronomical or astrological, several of its pages being comparisons of the relative times and positions of the heavenly bodies. It is clear that these sky-readers had ascertained that the mean synodical revolution of Venus is 584 days, which is correct to a very small fraction. They had fixed the revolution of Mercury at 115 days, and it is probable but not quite certain that they had rightly estimated the revolution of Mars at 780 days. Jupiter and Saturn they did not study, or, at least, take into these calculations.

Not less surprising was the accuracy they reached in measuring the lunar month. They had by their observations reduced it to 29.526 days. This is about five minutes in the month too short, as the true synodical revolution is 29.53 days. For this difference, intercalary days would be required at certain epochs.

It is probable from this that the Mayas were ahead of any other American stock in the measurement of time, exceeding even the Mexicans; though these also appear to have discovered the length of the year of Venus. Dr. Förstemann's discussion of the subject amounts to a demonstration, and merits the close attention of students of Maya civilization.

The Co-Existence of the Mammoth and Man.

Not long since, the distinguished and venerable archæologist, J. Steenstrup, of Copenhagen, published a paper examining the discoveries in Europe which are supposed to prove the contemporaneity of man with the mammoth; and reached the conclusion that not only is the evidence inadequate, but for climatic and geologic reasons no such co-existence was possible.

At the last meeting of the German Anthropological Association Professor Virchow quoted Steenstrup's conclusion and endorsed it, as did also others present. The "reindeer period" was the remotest to which they were willing to assign the appearance of man in Europe on existing evidence. The artefacts of mammoth teeth and bones found in the caves were asserted to be from fossil remains picked up by the cave men. Where such artefacts are found in gravels along with mammoth bones, they would say that these gravels are themselves posterior to the reindeer period, and hence contain objects of various preceding periods.

There remains for consideration the delineation of a mammoth on a bone from the Lena cave in the south of France. This was but discussed, being probably considered of questionable origin. In the United States two such delineations have been brought forward. They are both strikingly similar to this French original, which has long been made familiar to American readers through various publications. Both proceed from the valley of the Delaware River. One is on shell and one on stone. I have examined both originals very carefully, and apart from the vagueness which surrounds the finding of both, for purely technical reasons I believe both to be recent. There still lacks conclusive evidence that man and the mammoth were contemporaneous in the area of the United States.

Proposition for an Ethnographic Study of the White Race in the United States.

In preparing some lectures last winter on the ethnography of the United States, I was struck with the deficiency of trustworthy material on this subject. The Indians and the Negroes have received far more attention at the hands of ethnologists than the whites. It is high time that a systematic study be made of the latter, with a view to discover what influences the New World and its conditions have exerted on this race wholly foreign to its soil.

I would propose that a plan be adopted similar to that which has recently been outlined in Great Britain for an ethnographic survey of that kingdom. A joint committee has been appointed by the leading anthropological, antiquarian, and folk-lore societies to raise means and carry out details. A list of certain typical villages will be made in which there are at least a hundred adults whose ancestors are believed to have lived a number of generations in the district, and to have been subjected to a minimum outside influence. From this list the committee will select the most promising places, and will send a properly equipped student to record the following points:—

1. Physical type of the inhabitants by measurements, photographs, etc.
2. Peculiarities in dialect, local pronunciations, expressions, etc.
3. Local traditions and superstitions.
4. Old buildings, relics, and other antiquities.
5. Historical evidence and genealogies showing purity of race.

Such a plan could be most advantageously carried out in the United States. Suppose thirty students were selected, trained, and sent to pass their summer vacation in as many secluded villages in New England, the Middle States, and the oldest settled portions of the South, all pursuing their investigations on the same lines. We should receive a mass of the most valuable information by which to solve many most interesting and instructive ethnographic problems. One pleasant feature would be the very moderate expense for which this could be accomplished; for these secluded villages are precisely where one can live the cheapest in the whole country.

We could then compare the descendants of the middle class English who settled New England with those of the Scotch-Irish and Palatine Germans of Pennsylvania, with the French of South Carolina and Louisiana, the settlers of the mountains of Virginia and East Tennessee, the "crackers" of Georgia, and so on. Will not the active societies in the United States interested in these lines of research unite their efforts to realize some such project?