

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.—XXV.

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

Points in Chinese Ethnology.

DR. GUSTAVE SCHLEGEL, who is Professor of Chinese Literature in the University of Leyden, has undertaken to resolve a series of problems relating to the identification of various mysterious peoples mentioned by the early Chinese historians. They have more than special interest, because they bear on the question of the peopling of America from Asiatic sources.

As early as 500 A.D., there is a description of a tattooed people, *Wen-chin*, living 7000 *li* northeast of Japan. Dr. Schlegel identifies them with the inhabitants of Ouroup, one of the Kurile islands; but adds that, in historic times, every tribe from the island of Yezo to Greenland had the habit of tattooing, except the Ghiliaks and Itulmens of Kamschatka. He would also place the "Land of Women," *Niu-kouo*, said to be 1,000 *li* east of Fusan, somewhere in the southern portion of the Kurile Archipelago. In an article on "The Land of Little Men," he maintains the important thesis that the Tungusic stock at one time occupied the whole of the Japanese archipelago. Professor Schlegel's essays may be had of E. J. Brill, publisher, Leyden.

An interesting study of Chinese gilds recently appeared in the *Yale Review*, from the pen of the accomplished sinologue, Mr. Frederick Wells Williams. Within a few pages he exemplifies the great extent and completeness of the gild system among the Chinese, and illustrates the singular similarity of their laws to those of mediæval and modern trades unions in Europe and America.

Progress in American Archæology.

The science of American archæology and ethnology owes a large and increasing debt to Professor F. W. Putnam, who represents those branches in the faculty of Harvard University, and who is also Curator of the Peabody Museum, and Chief of the Department of Ethnology and Archæology of the World's Columbian Exposition. All these posts he fills admirably, as any one will see who will read his Report of the Peabody Museum for 1892, just issued. One fact will be sufficient: that within the last two years he has engaged, trained, and sent into the field — and the field means the whole American continent, from Greenland to Tierra del Fuego — about one hundred assistants and students, actively interested in collecting archæological and ethnological material. He says with pardonable pride and entire justice: "Never before has such an extensive field of anthropological research been covered in two years' time." A brief reference to the results obtained is included in the report. Naturally, the exploration of the wonderful ruins of Copan, Honduras, is most prominently alluded to. In connection therewith Professor Putnam cannot refrain from a mild indulgence in his favorite *manie*, hinting at the discovery of "several facts pointing to Asiatic arts and customs as the origin of those of the early peoples of Central America." (Shade of Brasseur de Bourbourg!)

With like enthusiasm, though on a less scale, the Department of Archæology of the University of Pennsylvania sent several explorers to the field in 1892, and has added largely to its collections by their efforts; while the National Museum, the Bureau of Ethnology, and the Smithsonian Institution will show in time by their reports that the year was also singularly fruitful for them.

The Study of Hair.

A note which I inserted in *Science*, Nov. 4, on this subject led Mr. Mott, F.R.G.S., to send me a reprint of an article which he read some time ago before the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society. The position he maintains has at any rate the merit of novelty. Arguing (not quite correctly) that the highest races of man are the hairiest, he maintains that this is the result of natural selection; that, therefore, these hairiest types will increase, while the more naked forms will be eliminated; "until in a few centuries men and women will be clothed with natural garments of fine soft fur"; and the occupation will be gone of both Parisian milliners and the "old clo' man!"

More practical are the observations, in the last number of the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, on the prevalence of moustaches in

women, by Dr. S. Weissenberg. He was struck with their frequency in Constantinople, and on several occasions counted the number of visibly hirsute upper lips on the women between eighteen and fifty years of age whom he met in the streets. He found it to be about ten per cent of the total number, which he justly claims is a high rate. On reading his article, I made similar observations in the streets and stores of Philadelphia, and found the moustached women between the ages mentioned to be less than three per cent; but I attribute little value to this statement; for I happen to know that the depilatory "Rusma" has an active sale in the drug stores, and that more than one physician makes a profitable little specialty of destroying unsightly hairs by electro-puncture. These considerations interfere with ethnographic observations. I have noticed more moustached women in Madrid than in any other city. Dr. Weissenberg believes the Armenian women present this peculiarity most frequently. The Madridlenas will surely push them close. In negroes and mulattoes it seems quite absent.

Recent Craniological Studies.

Professor Sergi, of the University of Rome, has lately published two applications of his "taxinomic" method in craniology; the one to a collection of 400 skulls from Melanesia, the second to a smaller assortment from Sardinia. In the former, he begins by speaking of the "chaos" in the descriptions of the "Crania Ethnica" of De Quatrefages and Hamy, averring that nothing less than the thread of Ariadne could guide one in such a labyrinth. He then describes his own "method," and very prudently gives a vocabulary of the astonishing Greek descriptive terms which he has coined, a few of which were mentioned in *Science*, Feb. 24, 1893. The result of his study he claims to be the annihilation of the Papuas as a race, and he demands that the name be stricken from the ethnographic lexicon, as the alleged Papuas are a compound of many varieties, not confined to Melanesia, as the term is generally understood, but extending over Australia, many islands of Polynesia and Micronesia, and even to the Andaman Islands. A few only of these varieties are localized, as, for instance, the *hypsisthenoclitobrachymetopus stenocrotaphicus neocaledonensis*!!

Applying his method to skulls from Sicily and Sardinia, from a moderate number Professor Sergi defines thirteen varieties in the former isle, and eight in the latter, and intimates that this does not at all exhaust the types. He believes that by noting such types, "we can follow the migrations and diffusion of the varieties which have peopled Italy, and resolve many problems in anthropology and ethnology hitherto obscure." He regards the long narrow cranium as that most ancient in the two islands, and it is a form still common among the inhabitants.

However much we may admire Professor Sergi's enthusiasm and the nicety of his observations, it must appear evident to the unbiased observer that his results are open to serious questionings. I find that in any collection of skulls, whether from Melanesia, Sicily, or Sardinia, he discovers by his "method" a new type in at least every twenty; he adduces no evidence to show that these "types" correspond to any ethnic distinction, whether physical or psychical; he makes no effort to show negatively that these various types are not from children of the same parents and same lineage; nor that the same types may not be found in perfection among races the most distant and of no ethnic relationship. I am sure that some of the types he describes are as truly American as they are Sicilian or Melanesian. The conclusions arrived at by such reasoning are, I submit, like those of other authorities which he himself stigmatizes as "not merely incorrect but misleading."

An interesting point in the anatomy of the skull is discussed in a late number (July, 1892) of the Proceedings of the Berlin Anthropological Society. It is in reference to the frequency of that enlargement of the palate known as the "torus palatinus." It is present in three-fourths of the Slavic Poles, in about one-half of the Sibiric tribes, in about one-fourth of the American Indians and Europeans of Aryan race; while it is quite absent among Jews and Gypsies. What its ethnic significance is, if it has any, remains for future investigators to determine.