

the light of a higher culture, who invented the famous sacred calendar, so long the subject of astonishment to the learned, and who constructed edifices of brick and stone whose massive walls, strange ornamentation and remarkable architectural details, place them among the most impressive of any on the continent.

One of these was described, not for the first time, but with considerable care, by the engineer Aureliano Estrada, in the *Memorias de la Sociedad Científica Antonio Alzate*, of Mexico, last year. It is a mass of buildings crowning the summit of the Cerro de Quiengola, a mountain some 2,500 feet in height in the District of Tehuantepec. It presents thick walls of stone and burnt brick, circular and square towers, truncated pyramids and all the proofs of an extensive population.

It is sincerely to be hoped that these and numerous other remains in this state will be protected from destruction and thoroughly examined to the benefit of science.

The Basques and the Iberians.

An unusual number of papers and essays on questions relating to the ethnic position of the Basques and their possible relationship to the ancient Iberians, have appeared in France within the last year.

First, the linguists have had much to say. It is well known that Wilhelm von Humboldt in the first decade of the present century wrote an admirable analysis of the place-names throughout Spain, showing, he believed, by them, that the Basques at the time of the Roman conquest extended westward from the Pyrenees to the Atlantic coast. His conclusions have been alternately accepted and denied by special students of the tongue, and so they are to-day. Professor Julien Vinson, for example, a distinguished Basque scholar, says: "There is no historic proof, nor even scientific probability, that the Basque at any time occupied a much larger area than at present. The opinion that the Iberian peninsula or other parts of southwestern Europe were peopled by a race or races speaking a kindred dialect is based merely on etymologies, and must be considered a pure hypothesis."

Directly the contrary is maintained by M. J. F. Bladé, who observes: "Inasmuch as, in a large area surrounding the present territory of the Basques, altars are almost daily found inscribed to gods unknown among the Celts, and tombs bearing names certainly not Celtic, the conclusion appears justified that these names are ancient Basque, and that this tongue once spread over Aquitania and Iberia."

Meanwhile, the physical anthropologists have been at work. Dr. Lajard, in the *Bulletin of the Anthropological Society of Paris*, published the results of a comparison of ancient and modern skulls in the Canary Islands, with a large number from Portugal and Spain; reaching the result, that not only was the race of the Guanches of the Canaries identical with that of the old Iberians, but that both point to the still older race of Cro-Magnon, as their near relatives. This does not take in the Basques, but leaves them to one side; while, as we certainly know that the Guanches were blonde Hamites, closely akin to the Rifians at Morocco, it places the Iberians along with the North Africans.

As for the present Basque population, they are reported by M. De Cartailhac as losing their language and diminishing in number. Even in the most remote and secluded districts, the deaths are more numerous than the births, owing to the rarity of marriages; and French and Spanish are in a fair way to drive out this curious and venerable tongue from its last refuge in the fastnesses of the Pyrenees.

Man in South America.

There is no part of the world that offers a more curious subject of speculation as to its future than the continent of South America, as was well set forth in an address before the American Geographical Society, by its President, Mr. Gardiner G. Hubbard.

That the Amazon river system alone drains a basin of fertile land, basking under a climate of perpetual summer, greater in area than the whole of Europe, is an astounding fact in itself. This vast territory is practically uninhabited. Its aboriginal

population is disappearing, or has disappeared, and the whites who in sparse number take their place, scarcely pretend to come with the expectation of remaining. There are tracts as large as the whole of France, of which we know less than of any equal area on the globe. Tribes of men are living there who are yet absolutely in the Stone Age, and who, even by barter or distant rumor, never heard of the European race or the use of metals.

The question up to which Mr. Hubbard leads his reader is second in importance to none in anthropology—that of acclimation. Is it possible for the white race, when it shall be endowed with all the resources of art and science which it is soon to have in its grasp, successfully to fight against the terrible odds of a tropical climate? He quotes in his favor the words of the historian, Buckle, and the naturalist, Bates; he might have added others of weight; but it cannot be doubted that most of the medical observers who have devoted themselves to this vast inquiry, lean to the opinion that never will the white race flourish under tropical skies.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE fifth summer meeting of the Geological Society of America will be held Tuesday and Wednesday, August 15 and 16, in the Geological Lecture Room, Science Hall, University of Wisconsin. On account of the World's Congress of Geologists convening in Chicago, August 24, an invitation will be sent to geologists residing outside of North America to attend this meeting and present papers. A meeting of exceptional interest is anticipated. Fellows desiring to read papers should send titles and abstracts not later than July 15, in order to secure insertion in the preliminary list of papers. Matters for the programme, distributed at the first session, should be sent in by August 10. The meeting-room has facilities for lantern views, and members are invited to bring such illustrations. Matter sent by express or mail may be addressed in care of the Secretary, Room 32, Science Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis. Packages should be clearly marked with the sender's name and prepaid. The excursions offered to the Fellows of the Geological Society of America are as follows: To the Lake Superior Region, to Devil's Lake, to the Dells of the Wisconsin, and to the Driftless Area.

—The Pope Manufacturing Company, of Boston and Hartford, makers of the Columbia bicycles, have engaged of late in a novel enterprise. They offered some time ago to give one of their bicycles to the school teacher who should be most successful in detecting errors in the school books in use in this country, provided the errors were determined to be such either by the authors and publishers of the books or by an impartial board of examiners. Typographical mistakes and disputed points in history and opinion were not to be included, but only errors of fact or of statement which could be shown to be such. Responses came from all parts of the country and the company have already awarded several of their bicycles to the persons who complied with the conditions of the gift. The kind of errors detected may be learned from the pamphlet entitled "Errors in School Books," which the Pope Company have issued, and which has now appeared in a second edition. Some of the errors are hardly more than ambiguous statements; others are erroneous dates; while others still are misstatements of scientific fact, as, for instance, the statement in a geographical work that the earth moves around the sun in a circle. Most of the publishers took the criticisms good naturedly, and whenever they were shown to be well founded corrected the books accordingly. The Pope Company have now renewed their offer of a bicycle to each of the five persons who shall send them the greatest number of errors in school books before September 1, 1893, the present competition to be open to all persons and not to teachers alone. That errors in school books are specially mischievous is obvious, since the young people who use the books have not, as a rule, the means of detecting them, and though the class of errors to which the Pope Manufacturing Company have devoted themselves are not perhaps the worst, they are the most easily detected and proved, and we should be glad if this new enterprise might result in the exposure and correction of every one of them.