

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.—XXXVII.

(Edited by D. G. Brinton, M. D., LL.D., D.Sc.)

ART IN ANTHROPOLOGY.

THE student of anthropology must be delighted to see how it is enriching learning in all directions by supplying the material from which can be derived the laws for the development and acquisition of knowledge—that which the Germans call *Erkenntnislehre*.

In few directions has there been greater need of this than in the domain of art. We have had abundance of histories of art, and some efforts toward systems of the philosophy of art; but a science of art, something which would show us the laws which prevail in, and govern, the apparently so irresponsible and capricious development of art,—this has been wanting.

An admirable effort to supply this deficiency has recently been published in Leipzig under the title, "The Beginnings of Art" (*Die Anfänge der Kunst*), by Dr. Ernst Grosse. It is a manageable volume of 300 pages, in an attractive style, enriched by a sufficient number of illustrations. The author understands art in its broad sense, including music, poetry, painting, sculpture, ornamental design, dancing and cosmetics. In all these directions he examines the conditions and influence of primitive art, and its social and individual significance. The conclusion which he reaches is one most significant and pregnant with suggestion, to wit, that certain definite and absolute relations exist between given forms of general culture and the growth of the arts which accompany them; though the hidden psychical forces which underlie the laws of these relations may and generally do remain obscure or unseen, the fact of the relation cannot be denied.

The volume is worth a careful study.

THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF THE HIMYARITES.

In the early Greek and Roman geographers southern Arabia is referred to as "Arabia Felix" and described as "a fortunate land, odorous with spices, and abounding in gold and ivory and all manner of precious stones." When its majestic Queen visited King Solomon "no such spices as the Queen of Sheba brought had been known in Jerusalem."

How does it happen that that land is now, and for a thousand years has been, a barren waste? That its ancient palaces are choked with sand? Its gardens and spice groves given way to the arid desert? Some fatal change in climatic conditions, a destructive increase in exsiccation, may be the cause. Only in the last few years, owing to the researches of Glaser, and later of J. T. Bent, are we in some measure able to restore the faint outlines of that wondrous kingdom, which for nearly a thousand years was the medium through which the gold of south Africa, the frankincense of Abyssinia, the diamonds and spices of India, passed to the wealthy nobles of Egypt, the dealers of Tyre and Sidon, and the peoples of the Mediterranean.

The great Zimbabwe ruins in Mashona land, the venerable temples near Aksum in Abyssinia show by their plans, and the latter by inscriptions as early as 800 B. C., that they were colonies of the Himyarites.

What a mighty influence this trade exerted on the ethnography of east Africa and India and all the intermediate regions, we can readily imagine. It is enough to explain the strange discovery of M. Dieulafoy, at Susiana, that that ancient realm had a large population of African negroes. We need no other theory for their presence than this trade of the early Arab merchants, who brought then, as they do to-day, their dhows loaded with human freight from the teeming shores of the dark continent, to dispose of them among the whites of the Asiatic main.

HUMAN RELICS IN THE SAN ISIDRO GRAVELS.

In the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania is a chipped stone implement which about a year ago was

found in place, and extracted with the most scientific precautions, by Mr. H. C. Mercer, one of the curators of the Museum, from the gravel bed of the River Manzanares, at San Isidro, near Madrid, Spain. It is peculiarly valuable because these gravels are held to belong to the Palæolithic or oldest stone age. It was exhibited and described by Mr. Mercer before the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Madison, last August, and it is a well-marked type of a most ancient implement.

The same locality has been made the subject of an excellent paper by the Baron de Baye, in a late number of the *Bulletins of the Anthropological Society of Paris*. He refers quite fully to the literature of the subject, and imparts a considerable amount of new information from M. Siret, the Belgian engineer, well known for his admirable researches into the archaeology of Spain. The objects belong to the "Chelleen" and "Mousterien" types of the French archaeologists, which would put them back to the very beginning of human industry.

Unfortunately, the bones which have been taken from these gravels have not received careful examination, so from them we cannot define the age of the horizon. It is quite certain that these beds were not deposited by the Manzanares, but by a much larger stream running in a different direction. The physical geography of the district has undergone profound alterations since they were stratified. The station is one of the first in importance and merits a thorough investigation.

THE MOCOVÍ LANGUAGE.

STUDENTS of American languages, especially of those of South America, will welcome with much satisfaction the appearance of the collection on the Mocoquí, edited for the Museo de la Plata, by S. A. Lafone-Quevedo.

It is largely based on the MSS. of Father Tavolini, an Italian missionary, but is by no means confined to these. The editor begins with a learned essay on the comparative linguistics of the Chaco languages, and in his notes brings forward much other information from the writings, in part manuscript, of Barcena, Dobrizhoffer, Pelleschi, and others. From these varied sources the diligent student will find in the volume, which altogether makes up more than five hundred large quarto pages, abundant material from which to acquaint himself satisfactorily with this little-known tongue.

In this connection, it is pleasant to note that the attention to American languages is slowly on the increase. Among the "Conferences" published in 1893 by the Athenæum of Madrid, was one of 112 pages on American linguistics by Don Francisco de Fernandez y Gonzalez, which is marked by a creditable acquaintance with the literature of the subject; and in the *Anales de la Universidad, of Santiago, Chili*, there is a well-prepared article on "La Linguística Americana, su Historia y su Estado Actual," by Diego Barros Arana and Rodolfo Lenz. Several works have also been announced in Germany and France, which show that the scholars in those countries are awakening to the large scientific interest which these languages have.

SECRET LANGUAGE OF CHILDREN.

BY OSCAR CHRISMAN, CLARK UNIVERSITY, WORCESTER, MASS.

Two parties having seen the article in *Science* of Dec. 1 have sent me the secret languages of their childhood.

William M. Gregg, M. D., No. 143 West Twenty-first street, New York, sends the following:

"Olafoscarlafar Crilafistelafamalafan:

"Halafavilafing olafobserlafirved alafan artafartilafecalafal ilafin Silafilafance olafon 'Selafecalafrete Lanafangalafage olafove Chilafreldelafrend,' ilafi ilafinclafafose thilafis notafote tulafu alafask ilafif oolafue halafave elafeverlafer selafene elefennelafeny lilafike ilafit."