

THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF SALT RIVER VALLEY, ARIZONA.

A PUBLICATION highly interesting to the ethnic anatomist is a memoir recently published in Washington, entitled, "Human Bones of the Hemenway Collection in the United States Army Medical Museum," by Dr. Washington Matthews and Dr. J. L. Worman.

The valley of the Rio Salado, or Salt River, was explored by this expedition under the direction of Mr. Frank H. Cushing. It proved to be the seat of a pre-Columbian civilization of rather high type, which, according to the opinions of most, must have disappeared at least a thousand years ago. The human bones obtained from the old graves present a curious series of aberrations. Considered as a single series, they are far from presenting a uniform type. If that fact goes for anything, they must have been a tribe of very mixed blood. Generally they were brachycephalic (probably from cradling), and not tall. Their teeth decayed early in life, and were often misplaced and irregular. The Inca and Worman bones were abundant, almost beyond example. As for flattened tibias and perforated olecranons, they break the record for frequency. No other series yet measured equals them in these defects. The hyoid bones offer singular deficiencies in ossification. The cubical capacity of the skull is very low, about 1313.

The impression the anatomist receives from reading the memoir is, that he sees presented a people in a low and sinking stage of physical vigor, drifting toward rapid decadence and extinction. Just such a condition prevailed in Peru at the period of the conquest of Pizarro; and from this analogy in condition, social and physical, not from geographic or ethnic relations, should be explained, I think, the various resemblances in structure and social development which the authors of this memoir note and dwell upon (rather too forcibly) between these widely-sundered nations.

THE VEDDAS OF CEYLON.

The Veddas are a strange and ancient people, who live in the hottest and most pestilential swamps and forests of Ceylon, leading a thoroughly savage life, nearly naked, in temporary shelters, cultivating nothing, and avoiding as much as they can any intercourse with the other natives of the territory. Out of a total population on the island of two and three-quarters millions, they number only about 2500; but in ethnic interest they are the most noteworthy of all; for in them, it is believed, we have preserved the sole representatives of the original inhabitants of the island.

Excellent studies of them have been recently published by Drs. P. and F. Sarasin, in their large volume on the scientific exploration of Ceylon, and by Dr. Emil Schmidt, in the first number of *Globus*, for the present year. From these sources we learn that the Vedda belongs to the smaller races, the average height being about 1.45 meters; his color is medium brown, his hair slightly curly, his eyes black, his head narrow and small, with an average capacity of about 1200 c. c. His face is not prognathic, and, from the photogravures of Schmidt, he often has pleasing features and an agreeable expression. Except on the head, the hair is scanty, and in the details of his anatomy he betrays a general lack of development, which by some anatomists would be called a "pithecoïd" or ape-like tendency.

The Veddas have few institutions and faint religious observances; but the latter are not absent, as Herbert Spencer has asserted. The language is Singhalese, at least in great part; but it is probable that a certain stratum of it is connected with some of the Dravidian dialects of Southern India. The Veddas, indeed, apparently should be classed with that primitive stock which at some remote time divided into the various members of the Australo-Dravidian family.

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