

auspices of the Society. In comment, it may be said if Great Britain to-day supplies the most active explorers and holds the greatest colonial possessions in the world in spite of the lack of instruction in geography so generally complained of, what will she become when this branch of instruction is duly organized!

THE PAMIRS.

AN entertaining narrative of exploration by Curzon over the Pamirs to the source of the Oxus (London Geogr. Jour. July, Aug.) discusses the meaning of Pamir, discarding the 'roof of the world' as fantastic, and concluding, with much appearance of truth, that a Pamir is an elevated valley (12,000-14,000 ft.), floored with broad slopes of waste from the adjoining lofty mountains (20,000 ft.+), drained by a medial stream, which runs noisily over a stony bed, meanders through a peaty tract or spreads in a lake; buried in snow for seven winter months, but affording abundance of summer pasturage, although devoid of trees and cultivation. The further statements that the Pamir is 'a mountain valley of glacial formation,' and that the inability of the medial stream to scour for itself a deeper channel is due to the 'width of the valleys and the consequent absence of glaciers on any scale' seem to be open to question. Eight different Pamirs are described and mapped.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METOPIC SUTURE.

A WELL studied memoir on this subject is that of Dr. G. Papillault, published by the Anthropological Society of Paris (*La Suture Métrope, et ses Rapports avec la Morphologie Crânienne*, pp. 122. Paris, 1896). His results are derived from a comparison of a long series of skulls of different ages, sexes and races. They clearly indicate that the presence and persistence of the

metopic suture is an evidence of superior mental (cerebral) activity and superiority, because this persistence unquestionably finds its point of departure in the brain itself. It is seen most frequently in women and children, and is not uncommon in the Negritos. These facts, however, do not impair the author's position. The superiority he refers to is relative to weight and height, and in that sense he claims that the brain of the female and the child does rank above that of the adult man.

He does not affirm the intellectual superiority of metopics in an absolute sense, but that the capacity and functional energy of their brains are greater in proportion to the whole body than in others. Moreover, he very pertinently adds that nothing is more difficult than to pronounce positively on the intelligence of a race or an individual. Civilization and success are not sure criteria, as every one must admit. The demonstration of his position is ably argued.

THE SVASTIKA AND THE TRISKELES.

It is singular to how many possible origins these famous symbols lend themselves. The latest is proposed by the well-known explorer, Karl von den Steinen, in a paper contributed to the Bastian Memorial Volume. He believes that the svastika was developed from the conventional outline of the stork, and the triskeles from that of the domestic fowl! He brings forward considerable learning and ingenuity to demonstrate his thesis, and succeeds in rendering it as plausible as a dozen other hypotheses which have been advanced. How the svastika came to be in America, where we have no storks, he fails to explain; in fact, does not refer to the American examples of these figures, which for an Americanist, *ex professo*, is an unexpected oversight. At the close he makes some observations on the Runic alphabets, which he believes are something more than modifications of Latin letters.

The Bastian Memorial Volume contains several articles of interest to students of American ethnography; as Dr. Boas, on secret societies among the Kwakiutl Indians; Seler, on the ruins of Quiengola; Dieseldorf, on the Toltecs; Ehrenreich, on the Botocudo language, etc. D. G. BRINTON.

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SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

IN the issue of this JOURNAL for June 19th, will be found full details regarding the present meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Buffalo. It will be remembered that the first meeting of the Council will be at noon on Saturday, August 22d, and the first general meeting will be on Monday, August 24th. The work of the sessions has been made continuous, not being interrupted by Sunday or by a day for excursions. The affiliated societies, however, meet on the 21st and the 22d, and all who are able should be present at Buffalo on those days.

PROF. HUBERT A. NEWTON, of Yale University, died in New Haven on the night of August 12th. We hope to give in a future number some details regarding Prof. Newton's life and his important contributions to astronomy and mathematics. Yale University and American science have recently suffered most severe losses in the deaths of Professors Whitney, Dana, Eaton and Newton.

ADVICES by cablegram regarding the eclipse expeditions state that Prof. Schaeberle and Prof. Todd in northern Japan were unsuccessful or only partially successful in their observations, but that the weather was clear and fine in Norway.

CABLEGRAMS to the daily papers report that Dr. Nansen has arrived at Vardo Island, Norway, on board the steamer *Windward*, which recently went to Franz Josef Land in order to bring back the Jackson-Harmsworth expedition. It is stated that with Lieutenant Hansen he left the steamer *Fram*, in which he had hoped to be carried to the pole, in March, 1895, in Lat. 84, Long. 10.27, to explore north of the

Franz Josef route. The party journeyed through an unknown polar sea, and explored north of Franz Josef Land to Lat. 86.14. No land was seen to the north of Lat. 82; only ice. They wintered on Franz Josef Land, living on whale meat and bear meat. The *Fram* was reported to be a good ice ship, and will arrive later this year. There was no sickness on board. Although the expedition failed to reach the object of its search, it got four degrees farther north than did any previous expedition.

THE second International Congress of Applied Chemistry was opened at the Sorbonne, Paris, on July 27th, about 1,600 delegates being present. The admirable address of the President, M. Berthelot, is published in the *Revue Scientifique* of August 1.

THE sixty-fourth annual meeting of the British Medical Association was opened at Carlisle on Tuesday, July 28th, under the Presidency of Dr. Henry Barnes, physician to the Cumberland Infirmary. As compared with the meeting in London last year the attendance was not large, about 700 members being present, but the addresses by the Presidents of the sections and the proceedings of the sections contain much that is of interest, not only to the medical profession, but also to those engaged in advancing medicine as a science. Following the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Medical Association will meet next year in Canada, having accepted the invitation of the Montreal branch. Prof. T. G. Roderick, professor of surgery in McGill University, will be President. The Association will probably meet in Edinburgh in 1898.

THE sixty-eighth meeting of the German naturalists and physicians will be held at Frankfort from the 21st to the 26th of September under the Presidency of Prof. H. von Ziemssen. Lectures before the general sessions will be given by Drs. Hans Buchner, Richard Lepsius, Max Verworn, Ernst Below and Karl Weigert. Before the medical sections there will be a discussion of the results of recent investigations of the brain led by Professors Paul Flechsig, Ludwig Edinger and E. von Bergmann. American men of science will be welcomed at the meeting. Membership cards can be ob-