zens, why draw the line at the color red? Secular education, and not mere Sunday-schooling, will teach them to use this independence aright.

ANTHROPOLOGY OF FRENCH POLYNESIA.

WE scarcely ever hear about the French possessions in Polynesia. The tri-color in fact floats over a number of coral islets and pocket archipelagoes in the benign climes of the Pacific sea. The most important spots are Tahiti and the Marquesas group. The anthropology of these islands is discussed by Dr. Gros, of the French navy, in the Bulletins of the Anthropological Society, Paris, of this year.

After giving a number of measurements he discusses several questions of general interest. Is the native population decreasing, and why? It is decreasing, not very rapidly, and owing mainly to mortality from epidemics, which this brown race has little power to resist. They are, moreover, great drunkards, and this predisposes them to disease.

Are they capable of culture development? Decidedly so, thinks Dr. Gros. Before the arrival of the whites they had made steady and considerable progress, and when given an opportunity readily acquire and use modern education. The teacher is the person needed in Polynesia. Divorces are frequent and social morality low. Much of this is owing to the example and influence of Europeans. The race is rapidly becoming of mixed blood from crossing with foreigners of different nationalities who visit the islands.

THE LATE DR. A. H. POST.

IT would be difficult to name any writer in this generation whose conception of the science of Ethnology was so profound and noble as that of the late Dr. A. H. Post, of Bremen. He understood that science in its broadest connotation, and clearly recognized in it that branch of learning which in the not distant future will modify all others, changing their direction and altering their contents. He saw that ethnology is bound completely to subvert the present popular *Weltanschauung*, and substitute for it another with scarcely any points of contact.

Post's especial field was that branch of Ethnology which deals with the ideas of rights and equities, the treaties and duties of man to man, in other words, jurisprudence in its largest meaning. On this he wrote a number of articles and treatises, the most important being his 'Grundriss der ethnologischen Jurisprudenz,' published but a few months before his death. This is a work which combines extraordinary minuteness of detail with equally extraordinary grasp of principles, and sets forth the elements of Ethnology as a (one might almost say, *the*) universal science through one of its branches.

Dr. Post's friend and admirer, Dr. Th. Achelis, has just published an appreciative tribute to the departed thinker. It sets forth briefly the aim and spirit of his work and should be taken to heart by all who have learned to know this great, new growth of man's intelligence (A. H. Post und die vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft. Hamburg, 1896). D. G. BRINTON.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

A PAPER was recently read before the Royal Society of New South Wales by Prof. Liversidge, of the University of Sydney, on the amount of gold and silver in sea water. Heretofore it has been considered that the amount of gold present is about four grains per ton. The experiments of Prof. Liversidge show that for Australian waters this figure is too large, the amount being from one-half to one grain of gold per ton of sea water. Even this would be in round numbers about 200 tons of gold per cubic mile,

and if the volume of the ocean be considered 300,000,000 cubic miles, a total amount of gold in sea water of sixty billion tons. Yet this amount is probably insignificant in comparison with the amount of gold disseminated in crystalline and sedimentary rocks apart from gold in veins and other deposits. Experiments seem to indicate that sea water contains about the same amount of silver and gold.

Prof. F. P. Venable's work on 'The Development of the Periodic Law' has just appeared from the press of the Chemical Publishing Company. It is a book of over three hundred pages, dealing exhaustively with subjects from the days of Dalton and Prout down to the present year, and covering a phase of chemical history hitherto vacant.

On October 1st appeared the initial number of a new periodical in chemical technology, the *Chemische Rundschau: Zeitschrift für die gesammte chemische Industrie.* It is a quarto of twenty-four pages, to appear semimonthly, at sixteen Marks per year. Its editor is Dr. Franz Peters, assistant at the Technische Hochschule at Charlottenburg, and it is published in Berlin. The first number contains several pages of original matter, a rather larger number devoted to abstracts, and quite full trade notes, together with book reviews, society proceedings and patent lists.

The idea suggested by Prof. Ramsay in connection with his work on Helium, that it is possible that all atoms of the same chemical element do not possess exactly the same weight, and which was also suggested by Prof. Crookes in connection with his work upon the rare earths, is by no means new. Before Stas entered upon his great work on atomic weights he raised the question as to whether these weights were unchangeable, but after experiment decided it in the affirmative (Stas: Untersuchung über die Gesetze der chemischen Proportionen, etc. Deutsch von L. Aronstein, Leipzig, 1867, p. 3). Again in 1883, working on the analysis of Caucasian petroleum, Schützenberger was unable to explain certain quantitative anomalies in the amount of carbon dioxid obtained, and Butlerow proposed as a most probable cause a variation in weight of the carbon atom (Bull. Soc. Chim., 39: 258, 263). This question has also been discussed on theoretical grounds by Marignac, Kremers and Cooke. Prof. Ramsay's promised experiments on the fractional diffusion of oxygen and nitrogen through clay septa will be awaited with interest as a valuable contribution to the subject. J. L. H.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

A BUILDING FOR THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES OF NEW YORK.

Mr. Charles F. Cox, Treasurer of the New York Academy of Sciences, has addressed a letter to the editor of the *Evening Post* appealing to a man of wealth or a group of men to provide a suitable building for the societies composing the Scientific Alliance of New York.

The counsel of the Alliance was last year incorporated under a charter which gives it power to receive gifts and bequests and to hold real estate for the benefit of the organizations which it represents. The combined membership of these societies is now over 1,000. Nearly all of them issue valuable publications; several of them own important libraries and growing collections of specimens, and all are actively engaged in original research as well as the popular presentation of scientific topics.

The societies suffer from lack of a suitable building similar to that of Burlington House, London, but in New York this can only be provided by the enlightened liberality of private citizens. The proposed building should be located in the center of the city, and should be large enough to contain: a lecture-hall having a seating capacity of not less than 1,200, in which free popular lectures could be given frequently; a library with shelf-room for not less 100,000