

College for the experimental illustration of papers read. The Society was thus relieved of all charges for rent of its meeting room and was consequently able to carry on its work without charging a larger subscription than one pound a year, or a single payment of ten pounds as a life composition for annual payments, with an entrance fee of one pound.

On this slender financial basis a very large amount of good work was done. Not merely were Proceedings issued containing the papers which had been presented to and accepted by the Society, but the works of Joule and of Wheatstone were printed in extenso and distributed to the members. Similarly were published in English Helmholtz's Memoir 'On the Chemical Relation of Electrical Currents,' Hittorf's Memoirs 'On the Conduction of Electricity in Gases,' Pulfj's Memoir on 'Radiant Electrode Matter' and Van der Waal's Memoir 'On the Continuity of the Liquid and Gaseous States of Matter;' a useful work of reference by Mr. Lehfeldt entitled 'A List of the Chief Memoirs on Physics of Matter' and a table of 'Hyperbolic Sines and Cosines' by T. H. Blakesley.

The founders of the Society purposely avoided setting up a new journal, being of the opinion that the unnecessary multiplication of the sources to be consulted in search of scientific facts was a thing to be avoided. By an agreement with the proprietors of the *Philosophical Magazine* it was arranged that such of the papers read before the Society as the Council might decide to publish should, in the first instance, be printed in that magazine, and afterwards collected and issued to the members of the Society in the form of Proceedings. A large circulation was thus at once secured and the creation of an additional physical journal avoided.

As the Society grew it became desirable that it should have a local habitation not

far from the other leading scientific societies of London, and the Council were fortunately able to make arrangements with the Chemical Society, whereby since 1894 the meetings have been held in the rooms of the latter Society in Burlington House.

In 1895 the Proceedings of the Physical Society, which had hitherto appeared at irregular intervals, began to be published in monthly parts, and at the same time the Society began the publication of Systematic Abstracts of papers in Physics printed in foreign journals. It is hoped that these Abstracts will be of great use in facilitating a knowledge by English-speaking physicists of the work which is being done by their colleagues in other countries. The increased activity of the Society has involved an increase of expenditure, and to meet this it has been necessary to raise the subscription payable by members. At the present time the annual subscription is £2 and 2s.

The number of members is over 400 and the list includes nearly all the leading physicists of the United Kingdom.

The Regulations of the Society provide for the election of a limited number of foreigners as honorary members, and in this way some of the most distinguished physicists in many countries are connected with the Society.

#### CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

##### THE NATIVES OF THE PHILIPPINES.

It is well known that the Philippine Islands had when first discovered by Europeans two quite different classes of population. On the coast was a light colored race similar to the Malayo-Polynesians and speaking an allied dialect. In the interior was a small-sized, black race, called by the navigators 'Negritos.' In the Proceedings of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, 1897, No. XVI., Professor Virchow figures and describes a large deformed skull from a cave in the Archipelago, which, in its antiquity

and similarity to some others exhumed on other islands, suggests the probability that it comes from a prehistoric race, older than either of those mentioned, and perhaps not belonging among the Malayan stock.

With regard to the Negritos, Professor Virchow expresses the opinion that they are a 'primitive' type; at the same time he throws out various speculations on the rapidity and uncertain limits of variation in man, how much it arises from environment, etc, so that the reader almost expects him to say that originally the two types of the Philippines might have been one.

It should always be remembered that the so-called 'Law of Variation' in organic forms is a purely negative expression, formulating merely non-identity, and can have no other limits than those temporarily established by observation.

#### WAMPUM AND STONE MASKS.

PROFESSOR E. T. HAMY, well known for his numerous American studies, and now President of the Society of Americanists of Paris, has lately published two articles in the journal of the Society of considerable interest.

One is a description of a wampum belt believed to be of Huron manufacture, transferred, it is suggested, at the treaty made by Frontenac in 1673. A full examination of the beads and the method of boring would be desirable, in order to ascertain its antiquity.

The second paper is on a stone mask brought by M. Pinart from the Northwest coast. Its traits are allied to those of the wooden mask, but as an example in stone from that locality it is believed to be unique.

Another subject, to which Professor Hamy has devoted a short article in the *Compte Rendu de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, is a series of six ancient portraits of the Incas of

Peru, of unknown provenance, discovered in an old house at Rochefort. They are especially interesting as showing the sumptuous official costume worn by the ancient monarchs of the Quichuas.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN ART-MOTIVES.

DR. H. STOLPE, of the Stockholm museum, Sweden, who probably stands at the head of European students of aboriginal art, has lately published an elaborately illustrated folio entitled 'Studies in American Ornamentation,' of which there is an extended notice in *Globus*.

He examines with patient care the art-motives of a number of tribes of North and South America. His investigations show that in nearly all examples the oldest decoration was anthropomorphic or zoomorphic. Emblems of the wind, the water, etc., also occur. A certain number are figured of which the interpretation is obscure.

Dr. Stolpe is severe on Hamy, Schurz and other modern writers who, in the face of well-known principles of scientific investigation, spend their time in seeking out analogies with the Old World in ancient American art. He has not found a trace of such cultural connection, and declares that wherever the material has been abundant all native American art-development can be proved to have been indigenous.

It is to be hoped that this work, which is in Swedish, will soon be translated into English.

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#### NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

As briefly noted in SCIENCE, fluorin has been at last liquefied. Professor Moissan, of Paris, brought all his apparatus for the production of fluorin to the Royal Institution, where he could avail himself of the