of certain funguses that may be applied to economic uses for which some of the true fibers are employed.

In the portion of the paper which followed, the different forms of fibers were defined in detail and examples given from the list of well-known commercial and native or aboriginal species. It is the consideration of these useful native fibers that makes it possible to enumerate a list of a thousand species of fibrous plants, while the world's commercial fibers would hardly reach a total of fifty species. The native or aboriginal forms are interesting; our museums are filled with manufactures from them, and any scheme of systematic classification which omits them is faulty and imperfect.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

PIGMENTATION OF THE SKIN.

M. Breul, in an inaugural thesis reviewed in *L'Anthropologie*, reports some new observations on the pigmentation of the human skin.

The colors of the different races depend upon this pigment in the epidermis, especially in its deeper strata. Breul finds the coloring matter in the interior of the epithelial cells, while even in the negro the intercellular spaces are white. The pigment itself may be quite black, or of any shade up to a light yellow. It may be confined to the nucleolus, or extend over the cell. A close examination shows that it is distributed in patches over the skin, between them the tissue being colorless. This is true even of the black races, although in them the patches are close together and may not be discernible unless the skin be stretched.

This distribution of the coloring matter is the same in all races, and its actual amount is probably the same, the difference in hue resulting from the darker or lighter character of the pigmentary grains.

HOLMES' RESEARCHES IN MEXICO.

The second part of the 'Archæological Studies' of Professor William H. Holmes (for a notice of the first part, see Science, February 21, 1896) is devoted to the 'Monuments of Chiapas, Oaxaca and the the Valley of Mexico.' It is a most attractive monograph, based on original personal studies, and containing nearly forty full-page plates, panoramic views and numerous text illustrations. The ruins described are those of Palenque, Monte Alban (in Oaxaca), Mitla and San Juan Teotihuacan. The volume closes with a series of 'Studies of Ancient Mexican Sculpture,' referring to tablets, yokes, figures and carved shells.

The text is full of new suggestions and comparisons, as well as of facts. The architectural elements of the various sites are analyzed and compared, and the sources from which the materials were obtained were carefully sought out. Nowhere was any evidence found of the use of metals, or a condition of the arts above that known to have existed at the discovery, although the stately monuments of Oaxaca and Teotihuacan testify to an astonishing concentration of effort for prolonged periods. The remains in Mexico are more magnificent in dimensions, but on the whole less artistic than those of Yucatan or Chiapas.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

In the last *Comptes Rendus* a new atomic weight determination of cerium is described by Wyrouboff and Verneuil. The element was obtained in a state of great purity, and the determinations made by converting the sulfate into the oxid by heat. The atomic weight is given at 92.7, but this is on the supposition that the oxid obtained is Ce_3O_4. It is ordinarily considered that the formula of this oxid is CeO_2, which would