

About the latter he writes: "We cannot demonstrate the connection, but there is a striking parallelism between advancing civilization and the gradual increase of the skull in width." This is an interesting statement, and it is to be hoped that Professor Niederle will make it the subject of a special study in the future.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MAMS.

THE Mams lived in the northwestern part of Guatemala and enjoyed an advanced indigenous civilization. Their capital was Zakeleu, the White Land, meaning the place of culture; for in all the Maya dialects white is a metaphorical expression for civilized conditions. By some the Mams have been held to be the earliest of the Mayas to become sedentary and city builders. Their ancient native name was Zak-lohpakap, the White Cultivators.

A vocabulary of their tongue was printed by Father Reynoso, at Mexico, in 1644, but is now so scarce that it is inaccessible to students. The Comte de Charencey has, therefore, conferred a favor on Americanists by republishing it in the *Actes de la Société Philologique*, Tome XXV. It contains nearly three thousand words, and offers ample material for comparisons with the other dialects of the stock. It is closely akin to the Quiche, and is still spoken in a number of villages. The volume may be had from C. Klincksieck, 11, Rue de Lille, Paris.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

IN 1887 Professor Chroustchoff announced the discovery of a new element in the monazite sand of North Carolina, to which he gave the name 'russium.' This discovery has not been confirmed by any other chemist, but, induced by the supposed discovery of 'lucium,' Professor Chroustchoff has again gone over his work, pub-

lishing a short report in the *Journal* of the Russian Chemical Society. According to *Nature* he has from 25 kilos of rare earths extracted 35 grams of russium. It has an atomic weight of 70.5 and its spectrum is characterized by a group of green and violet lines. He also claims to have resolved cerium into five components, differing in physical properties, and having atomic weights respectively of 138, 140, 142, 146 and 156.5. He also finds, in addition to Auer's neodymium and praseodymium, a third new constituent of didymium to which he gives the name glaukodymium. A detailed account of his work is promised at an early date.

In the last *Berichte*, W. Hentschel gives an account of further investigations on the chloride of nitrogen, in which he finds the compound normally formed to have the formula NCl_3 , confirming the work of Gattermann and of Balard. He also finds that this compound can take up more chlorine until its composition seems to be NCl_5 , but this is really a solution of chlorine in the chloride of nitrogen. His method of forming this exceedingly explosive and dangerous compound is to bring together solutions of ammonium chloride and sodium hypochlorite, and dissolve the chloride of nitrogen formed, which partly separates out and partly remains in solution, in benzene.

In the *Pharm. J. Trans.*, C. H. J. Warden describes the method used in the Calcutta Medical Depot for the production of a pure silver nitrate from coin silver. The silver used contains copper and is dissolved in nitric acid and a portion of the silver nitrate crystallized out in the usual way. As soon as the mother liquor is so concentrated that the silver nitrate crystallizing out is contaminated with copper it is evaporated to dryness, finely powdered and placed in a glass funnel stopped by an asbestos plug. It is then washed with pure concentrated

nitric acid until perfectly white. The copper nitrate is very easily soluble in the nitric acid, while the silver nitrate is almost wholly insoluble. Any trace of silver dissolved by the nitric acid can be recovered by treating with salt. This is by far the simplest method proposed for obtaining pure silver salts from coin or plate, and deserves trial in our laboratories.

H. TRYLLER describes in the *Berichte* a new turbine for laboratory use, which lays claim to the advantages of steadiness, noiselessness and economy of water. To the axle is attached a circular piece of wire gauze, rotating in a thin cylindrical space. The jet of water strikes the edge of the gauze at a tangent and escapes by a pipe in the center opposite the end of the axle. A speed of four thousand revolutions is easily attained. The turbine is to be manufactured by M. Koehler and Martini, of Berlin.

J. L. H.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE meeting of the British Association at Toronto has proceeded in accordance with the program. The members in attendance, about 1,200 in all, have been received with great hospitality, and many important papers have been given before the sections. The meeting is still in progress as we go to press, and we shall defer an account of the proceedings until next week.

THE British Medical Association will meet in Edinburgh in 1898, under the presidency of Professor T. Grainger Stewart.

ACCORDING to the latest lists about 5,000 members had expressed their intention of attending the 12th International Medical Congress meeting this month in Moscow; about half of the number are Russians, 800 are from Germany, 600 from Austria, 500 from France, 250 from England and from Italy, and 100 from America.

THE sixty-ninth meeting of German Men of Science and Physicians will, as we have already noted, be held at Brunswick from the

20th to the 25th of September. The social arrangements begin on the preceding day with a reception, a banquet and an exhibition of sports. The first general meeting opens on the 20th with the reports of officers, followed by two addresses, one by Professor Richard Meyer, of Brunswick, on the relations between chemical research and technical chemistry; the other by Professor Waldeyer, of Berlin, on fertilization and inheritance. At the second general session Professor Orth, of Göttingen, will speak on medical instruction and the practice of medicine, and Dr. Hermann Meyer, of Leipzig, on central Brazil. Several joint meetings of the sections have been arranged, one of special interest being a discussion of scientific photography in its applications to the natural sciences and to medicine.

THE Scientific Society of Argentina, says *Nature*, is organizing a Congreso Científico Latino Americano, to be held at Buenos Ayres in April next, in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. The Congress will be under the patronage of the President of the Argentine Republic and the Ministers of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Public Instruction. There will be seven sections, dealing respectively with exact sciences (pure and applied mathematics, astronomy, geodesy and topography), engineering, physics and chemistry, natural science, medical sciences (including hygiene and climatology), anthropology and sociology.

WE noticed sometime since the appointment of a committee to investigate the condition of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. This committee has now presented a report which will not be made public. The *Washington Star*, however, states that it is practically decided that a successor to the present Director of the Survey will be appointed, and that the selection will be made without reference to political considerations and on the grounds of scientific standing.

PROFESSOR C. B. HOWES, writing Dr. Thurston to inform him of the condition of the work of the Huxley Memorial Committee, states that the statue is now in progress, in the hands of Mr. Ford, the sculptor, and promises to be most excellent. It is to be a seated figure in a gown,