1893, by the issuance on October 3d of centuries I. and II. Of this distribution sixty copies have been made of each century, and the centuries have now reached XII. This brings the total number of specimens handled in the two series up to about two hundred and seventy thousand.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

ALLEN ON HAWAIIAN SKULLS.

A CRANIOLOGICAL contribution of the first order of merit has just appeared in the Transactions of the Wagner Free Institute of Philadelphia, January, 1898. It is entitled 'A Study of Hawaiian Skulls, by Harrison Allen, M. D.' In this last labor of his busy and useful life Dr. Allen presented a model of patience, accuracy and clearness of statement which it would be difficult to parallel elsewhere. The characteristics of the skulls were exhibited comparatively, by a novel plan, that which he called the 'terrace method,' and which is a great improvement over the older graphic representatians.

With his customary, far-reaching insight into the problems of racial anatomy, Dr. Allen took occasion, in the description of these Polynesian specimens, selected from ancient cemeteries, drawn, therefore, from a single stock of undoubted purity, to point out the changes brought about in skull form by social contrasts, by mental superiority and by differences of nutrition. Comparing them with later crania from the stock, he discovered the singular alterations produced in the skull by exanthematous diseases; and many suggestions stimulating to future students are scattered through his pages.

PRIMITIVE COSMOGONIES.

IN the *Correspondenzblatt* of the German Anthropological Society, December, 1897, is a careful study by the Baron von Andrian on the cosmological and cosmogonical notions of primitive peoples. A wide collection of such myths and a critical analysis of their contents show in far separated centers many strange similarities. These, he argues, must be considered 'autochthonous,' *i. e.*, of independent origin, under the laws of thought and imagination. Later in time, when tribes commingled and the bards and priests sought to impart fixed forms to myths, borrowing arose over areas of varying size. It is the chief duty of the student of to-day to separate the 'common, psychological basic strata' from those which were added later by intercommunication. Quite late elements of mythology, such as the notion of the river Styx, or the tale of Orpheus and Euridice in Greek lore, belong to the primitive thought of the Hellenic stock and were not of alien origin. The article is replete with both erudition and suggestiveness.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

IT has long been known that that the composition of the 'green iodid' of mercury is far from constant, and is not that which would be theoretically required for mercurous iodid, HgI. Varet has considered that the mercurous iodid exists in two modifications, a green and a yellow, which can be changed the one into the other. The matter has been studied by Maurice François, who gives his results in the *Journ. pharm. chim.* The mercurous iodid is of a pure yellow color, and is readily obtained in this condition by the action of potassium iodid upon an excess of mercurous nitrate in the presence of dilute nitric acid. The green color of the salt as usually obtained is due to the presence of free mercury, which may run up to a very large proportion. It might not be without interest to

investigate how far this presence of free mercury affects the therapeutic value of a salt so largely used for medicinal purposes.

In the *Comptes Rendus*, P. Ivon describes the use of calcium carbid as a test for absolute alcohol. If any water is present in the alcohol it decomposes the carbid with the evolution of acetylene. Calcium carbid may also be used for the dehydration of alcohol, one part being used to four parts of 90–95 % alcohol. Any acetylene dissolved in the alcohol is removed by anhydrous copper sulfate, and in one, or at least two, distillations the alcohol is rendered absolute.

The atomic weight of boron is the subject of a paper recently read before the Chemical Society (London) by F. P. Armitage. The method used was the determination of the water of crystallization in borax. Great care was used, both in drying the crystals, so that there should be no efflorescence, and in dehydrating the crystals. The result obtained, 10.959 (O = 16), differs but 0.006 from that obtained by Ramsay and Aston by distilling sodium biborate with hydrochloric acid and methyl alcohol. In the discussion which followed the paper there was considerable criticism of depending upon water of crystallization in atomic-weight determinations.

At the same meeting a paper was presented by E. Sonstadt on the dissociation of potassium chloroplatinate in dilute solutions and the production of platinum monochlorid. When the chloroplatinate is heated in a solution of 10,000 parts water the solution becomes turbid, and after some days' heating a precipitate is formed, yellow and non-crystalline, and consisting, according to the author, of hydrated platinum monochlorid, PtCl, while hydrogen peroxid is left in the solution. The monochlorid dissolves in solution of sodium carbonate and acids, but is deposited apparently unchanged by subsequent dilution. Much interest will attach to further study of this salt, not only from its being the only representative of univalent platinum compounds, but also from its method of formation by direct dissociation. J. L. H.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

The United States Fish Commissioner, Mr. George M. Bowers, has appointed Professor H. C. Bumpus, Brown University, Scientific Director of the Wood's Holl Station. Professor Bumpus is Secretary of the Trustees of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Wood's Holl, and in the past has been very closely associated with the work done there. His recognized scientific attainments and executive ability, as well as his local knowledge of Wood's Holl and the vicinity, make this a most admirable appointment, full of promise for the prosecution of the scientific and economic work of the Fish Commission under the present administration.

The daily papers have contained columns and pages on the alleged discovery, by Professor Samuel Schenk, of the University of Vienna, of a method of regulating the sex of children, and on the alleged discovery, by Dr. George Waltemath, of Hamburg, of a second moon for the earth. It may consequently be desirable to state that Professor Schenk has made no publication bearing on the production of sex, and that no scientific evidence has been offered for the existence of a second moon.

Professor W. A. Rogers, died at Waterville, Me., on March 1st, aged sixty-one years. He was assistant professor of astronomy in the Observatory of Harvard University from 1875 until 1886, when he accepted a call to the professorship of physics and astronomy at Colby University. He had expected to enter on a professorship at Alfred University, N. Y., on April 1st. Professor Rogers was a member of the National Academy, and a past Vice-President for the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He made important contributions to astronomy and physics, especially to the technique of measurement, of which we hope to give some account in a future number of this Journal.