

In 1892 Parker paid a visit to Europe, returning in good health the following year. Family bereavement in the death of his wife then overtook him and laid the foundations of an illness from which he never recovered. Complicated by repeated attacks of influenza, this resulted in death, and during his long period of suffering and anxiety the like of which has killed many a man, he worked on undaunted, leaving unfinished an elementary book to have been entitled 'Biology of Beginners,' and some observations upon a series of 'Emen Chicks,' including those collected by Professor R. Semon during his recent sojourn in the Australian bush, which he was investigating in conjunction with Mr. J. P. Hill, the renowned discoverer of the allantoic placenta of *Perameles*. With these and other plans for future work well matured he has been cruelly torn from us, but while his memory will be a lasting heritage to those who knew and loved him, to the scientific world at large there has just been issued his final completed work, viz.: a general Text-Book of Elementary Zoölogy of some 4,000 pages in two volumes, upon which during the last 5 years he was engaged, together with his staunch friend and colleague, Professor W. A. Haswell, F.R.S. of the Sydney University. In this book, rich in original anatomical drawings, his influence will endure; and he will always be remembered as an earnest, loving man who performed his duties with a skillful hand, intent only on good work, the advancement of knowledge and the consequent betterment of the human race, an anatomist for whose life the world may be said to have been the richer and his fellow creatures the happier.

Parker was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a D.Sc. of London. He was also an Associate of the Linnæan Society of London and member of other scientific societies at home, in the Colonies and on the

Continent of Europe. He took a pioneer's part in the literary undertakings of the Royal Microscopical Society, and in his public life by his miscellaneous addresses and speeches he aroused to admiration and friendship all with whom he came in contact.

G. B. H.

A COMMISSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH.*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there shall be established a commission of public health, to be under the supervision of a commissioner of public health, who shall have the aid of an advisory council consisting of a representative from each State and Territorial board of health, from the Department of Justice, and from the Medical Corps of the United States Army and Navy, the duties of which shall be to collect and diffuse information upon matters affecting the public health, including statistics of sickness and mortality in the several States and Territories; the investigation by experimental and other methods of the causes and means of prevention of disease; the collection of information with regard to the prevention of disease; the collection of information with regard to the prevalence of infectious, contagious and epidemic diseases, both in this and other countries; also the causative and curative influences of climate upon the same; the publication of the information thus obtained in a weekly bulletin; the preparation of rules and regulations for securing the best sanitary condition of vessels from foreign ports, and for prevention of the introduction of infectious or contagious diseases into the United States, and their spread from one State into another; which rules, when approved by the President of

* Abstract of a bill introduced in the House of Representatives, February 17, 1898, by Mr. Otjen, Representative from Milwaukee, Wis.

the United States, in so far as they are consistent with the existing laws, shall be adopted and enforced as quarantine regulations at the various ports of entry in the United States, and so far as applicable to interstate commerce, to prevent the spread of disease from one State or Territory or the District of Columbia into another State or Territory or the District of Columbia, shall be and become additional regulations thereof; the advising and informing the several departments of government on such questions as may be submitted by them to it, or whenever, in the opinion of the commission, such advice and information may tend to the preservation and improvement of the public health.

SEC. 2. That the commission of public health shall be under the control and management of a commissioner of public health. Said commissioner of public health shall be appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and his term of office shall be six years; he shall be a regularly educated physician holding a diploma legally conferred upon him by a legally incorporated medical college in the United States; he shall have had at least ten years' experience in the practice of his profession, and shall be learned in sanitary science, and shall hold a membership in one or more reputable sanitary or medical societies or associations in the United States.

SEC. 3. That the commissioner of public health may appoint an assistant commissioner of public health, who shall be a physician of good standing in the medical profession and skilled in sanitary science.

SEC. 4. That the commissioner of public health shall annually, on the second Tuesday of January of each and every year, and at such other times as he may designate, call to meet in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, an advisory council, to be composed of the commissioner of

public health, the assistant commissioner, an officer learned in the law, detailed by the Attorney-General of the United States from the Department of Justice; officers from the Medical Corps of the United States Army and Navy, each to be detailed by the respective Surgeons-General thereof, and a representative from each State and Territorial board of health.

SEC. 5. That the commission of public health hereby created shall be provided by the proper governmental authorities with proper offices in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, said offices to be supplied with proper fixtures, laboratories and all needful apparatus and property; that the service known as the 'Marine-Hospital Service' shall be transferred to the said commission of public health hereby created, and shall be known as the 'Bureau of the Marine-Hospital Service;' and all laws governing the appointment to official positions in said Marine-Hospital Service, and to promotions in said service, shall continue in full effect, it being the intent and purpose of this Act to continue the Marine-Hospital Service in the performance of the duties for which it was lawfully created, and for such other duties as may be legally prescribed.

SEC. 6. The consular officers of the United States, at such ports and places as shall be designated by the commissioner of public health, shall make weekly reports to the commission of the sanitary condition of the ports and places at which they are respectively stationed; and the commissioner of public health shall also obtain, through all sources accessible, including State and Territorial sanitary authorities throughout the United States, weekly reports of the sanitary condition of ports and places within the United States, and shall prepare, publish and transmit to collectors of customs, and to State and Territorial boards of health, and through them to municipal

health officers and other sanitarians, weekly abstracts of the consular sanitary reports and other pertinent information received by him, and shall also, as far as he may be able, by means of voluntary coöperation of State and Territorial health authorities, and through them, municipal health authorities, public associations, and private persons, procure information relating to the climatic and other conditions affecting the public health.

SEC. 7. That a special report of the said commission of public health, relative to such action as will most effectually protect and promote the health of the people of the United States, may at any time be required by the President of the United States.

SEC. 8. That the commission shall co-operate with State, municipal, and local boards of health in establishing and maintaining an efficient and accurate system of notification of the existence and progress of contagious or infectious diseases, and of vital statistics in the United States.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

CAN SEX BE DISTINGUISHED IN SKULLS?

ENTHUSIASTIC osteologists frequently assert that they can distinguish the sex by an examination of the skull. It is possible, when one is familiar with many skulls, from the same stock and geographically limited to narrow bounds, that this can often be accomplished. But in general it is not possible. There is no sex-criterion in the skull.

In an inaugural dissertation, published in Berlin last year, and noticed in the *Centralblatt für Anthropologie*, January, 1898, Dr. Paul Bartels submitted the question to a new and searching examination, founded on 1,090 skulls—685 male and 405 female. He could discover no positive characteristic of sex. The fossa-typanico-stylo-mastoidea, of which much has been made, he shows to be inconclusive; and the same is true of every

other trait which has been advanced as a determination of sex.

THE EARLIEST ITALIANS.

ONE of the numbers of the 'Piccola Biblioteca delle Scienze Moderne,' published by the Brothers Bocca, at Turin, is a treatise by Professor Sergi on the earliest inhabitants of Italy (*Arii e Italici*, pp. 229, illustrated).

The author's theory may be briefly stated. The oldest tribes on the peninsula, the Pelasgians and Ligurians, belonged to the 'Mediterranean' stock, which at a remote date moved northward from equatorial Africa. The Aryans entered much later, coming from the north, and originally from Asia, bringing with them the Umbrian, Oscan and other Indo-European dialects. The Etruscans, of unknown affinities, but members of the 'Mediterranean' stock, entered by sea, on the west coast, about 800 B. C., arriving from the eastern Mediterranean shores.

The author bases most of his argument on cranial forms, but also discusses with some detail the archæologic evidence, and slightly that derived from language. It is unnecessary to point out how many obstacles present themselves to such a solution of this intricate question.

D. G. BRINTON.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

THE *Chemical News* published two papers by Professor William Ramsay and Dr. Morris W. Travers before the Royal Society on January 20th. The first is on the homogeneity of helium. In a previous paper recently noticed in this column an account was given of an attempt to separate argon and helium into two portions of different densities, by diffusion through pipe clay. These experiments showed that while it did