

SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY
OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

A REGULAR meeting of the Section was held on January 28th. A paper on 'Certain Racial Characteristics of the Base of the Skull' was presented by Dr. A. Hrdlicka. The paper dealt with the middle lacerated foramen, the petrous portions of the temporal bones and the styloid. The author demonstrated the different stages of development of these parts in primates and at different stages of life in the whites, and the differences of those parts, fully developed, in the negroes, Indians and whites. In the adult whites the average middle lacerated foramen is large, the petrous portions appear considerably sunken (bulging of surrounding parts), the styloid is well developed. In the Indian the foramen is but a moderate size, in negro small, in apes absent; the petrous portions are less sunken in the Indian than in the white, on, or almost on, the level with the surrounding parts in the negro, bulging more or less beyond these in the primates; the styloid is in the majority of cases small in the negro and small to rudimentary in most of the Indians. Where the styloid is rudimentary, the vaginal process often plays a compensatory part. In whites all the mentioned stages of the parts described may be observed at different periods of life. Brain development accounts for the differences in the size of the middle lacerated foramen and the relative position of the petrous portions.

The second paper was on 'The Alsea Indians of Oregon' and was read by Dr. Livingston Farrand. The paper reported observations made by the author on the language customs and traditions of this tribe.

CHARLES H. JUDD,
Secretary.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

FREE SPEECH IN UNIVERSITIES

RECENT events in certain American universities have again raised the old question as to the right of the professor to freedom of speech. Sensational reports in the newspapers have loosened floods of sympathy for the alleged victims of tyranny, and the popular belief is

that great wrong has been done. Whether this belief is correct or not, few men are in a position to know, for the complete evidence has not been made public, and in default of that no reasonable criticism is possible. But a discussion of the principles involved in such cases is in order, and, indeed, it seems to be most necessary.

That a university professor should be free to teach his honest convictions would seem at first sight to be a most reasonable proposition. But the rights of the teacher are not absolute; they are limited by the rights of the pupils and the rights of the institution in which he is employed. The institution must protect its own dignity and reputation; the student is entitled to protection against obvious error and against the wastage of his time; and to these rights the rights of the professor are subordinate.

Suppose for example that a professor of mechanics should spend his time in teaching his class the possibility of perpetual motion. Or that the professor of mathematics should try to demonstrate in the class-room the squaring of the circle. Or that the professor of astronomy should denounce the heliocentric theory of the solar system and adopt the mediæval teachings of Cosmas Indicopleustes. His right to freedom of teaching would avail him little, and he would be promptly invited to resign his position. The right of the professor to teach is conditioned by the right of the pupil to learn, and the latter right is entitled to first consideration. The teacher has no right to teach nonsense nor to waste the time of his students over his own personal vagaries. Irresponsible freedom of speech or of teaching is plainly inadmissible; a point which certain sentimentalists have failed to see.

The present controversy, however, has not dealt with obvious questions of truth or error, but with subjects which are still under discussion and unsettled. In sociology and economics we find the chief difficulties, and here the rights of the professor are not quite so clear. Still, the responsibility on his part remains, and it cannot be honestly evaded. If a professor of sociology, speaking in his class-room, should denounce the present institution of marriage

and advocate either polygamy or free love, his honesty of purpose, his right to teach his views, would not protect him from dismissal. This is an extreme case, a case not likely to arise, but it serves to illustrate the principles at issue. All the rights of the professor are governed by reasonable limitations.

Unfortunately, at the present time, the leading economic and social questions are partly political in their nature. Their public discussion is almost wholly partisan, rarely scientific, and violent passions are easily aroused. The tariff, the coinage, the question of the so-called trusts are all alive in the public mind, and the professor of economics therefore stands on very precarious ground. What are his rights and his duties now? They are still limited, and his responsibilities are greater than ever.

Whatever a teacher may be in his private life, his personal bias is to be put under strict control the moment he enters his lecture room. There the partisan is out of place, and the interests of science rule. The professor now should cease to be an advocate, seeking to win converts, and become the equivalent of a judge who sums up the case before a jury. He must be fair, judicial, tactful and dignified; and failure in any one of these particulars is a serious limit to his usefulness. He may believe in free trade, but he should give the evidence and arguments upon both sides of the question. If he neglects to do this he defrauds the students of their rights and is a failure as a scientific teacher. He need not efface himself, he need not suppress his preferences, but he must be fair and thorough. The pupil can not understand an economic controversy without hearing both sides, and his rights in this respect are entitled to consideration. The class-room is no place for political tirades, nor for partisan denunciation, either of institutions or of individuals; it should be sacred to honest scientific discussion, regardless of parties or persons. A want of tact upon the part of the teacher, a lack of dignity in his treatment of a doubtful question, may easily become a source of trouble and justly lead to his dismissal.

That some teachers may have been unfairly treated I will not deny, for in the conflict of

rights it is sometimes difficult to strike an even balance. What I have said applies to general principles, not to any special, concrete cases. Each case stands upon its individual merits, which are rarely known except to the parties who are immediately affected. The principles, however, are clear, and should be borne in mind whenever the management of a university is criticized. The latter may be in the right, despite appearances; and it is quite conceivable that a teacher may be in the wrong.

F. W. CLARKE.

SHORTER ARTICLES.

THE RELATION OF SEEDINESS TO QUALITY IN MELONS.

IN the *Memoirs of the Torrey Botanical Club*, Vol. 1, No. 4, issued May 30, 1890, the late Dr. E. Lewis Sturtevant contributed an article on 'Seedless Fruits' in which he presented a large amount of data compiled from various sources relative to seedless fruits as correlated with quality. Some of his statements I quote as follows: "There seems to exist in fruits a correlation between seedlessness and quality, especially when that quality is expressed by the term tenderness of tissue." "The better varieties of the apple usually contain some abortive seeds, and are sometimes individually to be found seedless. As a rule, where there is a tendency to abortive seeds, the larger and finer the apple the greater the number of abortive seeds." "Melons of the highest quality contain fewer seed than do varieties of medium or inferior quality, as I have often observed. This even seems to hold true as between individual fruits of the same variety to a marked extent."

In the autumn of 1893, my assistant, Mr. Craneheld, made a study of thirty-five muskmelons to ascertain to what extent Dr. Sturtevant's conclusions would be verified. The data have been preserved, but the results have not before been published.

These melons were the result of a cross between the Algiers cantaloupe and several American varieties. The fruits were picked when the stem readily detached, and weighed on a torsion balance that is sensitive to the