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FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1895.

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THE AIMS OF ANTHROPOLOGY.*

A MODERN philosopher has advanced the maxim that what is first in thought is last in expression; illustrating it by the rules of grammar, which are present even in un-

* Address by the retiring President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at the Springfield meeting, August 29, 1895.

written languages, whose speakers have no idea of syntax or parts of speech.*

It may be that this is the reason why man, who has ever been the most important creature to himself in existence, has never seriously and to the best of his abilities made a study of his own nature, its wants and its weaknesses, and how best he could satisfy the one and amend the other.

The branch of human learning which undertakes to do this is one of the newest of the sciences; in fact, it has scarcely yet gained admission as a science at all, and is rather looked upon as a dilettante occupation, suited to persons of elegant leisure and retired old gentlemen, and without any very direct or visible practical applications of concern with the daily affairs of life.

It is with the intention of correcting this prevalent impression that I address you to-day. My endeavor will be to point out both the immediate and remote aims of the science of anthropology, and to illustrate by some examples the bearings they have, or surely soon will have, on the thoughts and acts of civilized communities and intelligent individuals.

It is well at the outset to say that I use the term anthropology in the sense in which it has been adopted by this Association, that is, to include the study of the whole

* Professor James Ferrier, in his *Institutes of Metaphysic*.