

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

EUROPEAN ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUMS.

A VERY useful report on the ethnological museums of central Europe has been published by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior, from the studies of Dr. J. D. E. Schmeltz (*Ethnographische Musea in Midden-Europa*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 4to. pp. 109).

It contains the observations made during his personal visits to all the great collections of Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Paris, London, etc., in the summer of 1895. Many of the more interesting objects are described and figured, and both the contents of the Museums, their arrangements for display and their architectural plans are discussed. Dr. Schmeltz is thoroughly conversant with the literature of modern ethnography, and his numerous references to monographs and special articles are a fruitful lesson in themselves. There is an excellent index, in which I note that 'America' includes objects in twenty of the collections visited.

ETHNOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE fourth report of the committee of the British Association which has this survey in charge has been published. It is of exceptionable interest, its leading feature being an article by Mr. G. Lawrence Gomme, on the method of determining the value of folk-lore as ethnological data. In this he explains the principles of the classification and analysis of the facts gleaned by folk-lore researches, and illustrates the scientific method of handling them by a discussion of the fire rites and ceremonies retained among the rural population of the United Kingdom. The conclusions he reaches are valuable, both in themselves and as a fine exemplification of the correct plan of utilizing such material to enlighten us as to early considerations of social life, concerning which history tells little or nothing.

The general report is drawn up by the Chairman, Mr. E. W. Brabrook, and is accompanied by notes from the Secretary, Mr. E. Sidney Hartland.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

M. BERTHELOT has recently published in the *Comptes Rendus* analyses of weapons, tools, etc., from Tello, in Chaldea. Their date is put from 4000 to 3000 B. C. A large lance and a hatchet were found to be approximately pure copper, and another hatchet was of copper with traces of arsenic and phosphorus, by which it seems to have been hardened. No trace of tin was present in any case. Thus in Chaldea an 'age of copper' seems to have preceded the 'age of bronze.' An egg-shaped object from the same locality, weighing 121 grains, was of iron; an ingot of white metal was 95 per cent. silver; a leaf of yellow gold was found to contain considerable quantities of silver.

THE following order appears in the English scientific journals: "In consequence of the growing importance of carbide of calcium, and the fact that the mere contact of moisture with this material causes a dangerous evolution of the highly inflammable gas known as acetylene, the Home Secretary has caused inquiries to be made into the subject, with the result that an Order in Council has to-day been made under the 14th section of the 'Petroleum Act, 1871,' bringing carbide of calcium within the operation of that Act. Accordingly, from the date on which such order comes into force, viz., 1st April, 1897, it will be unlawful to keep carbide of calcium, except in virtue of a license to be obtained from the local authority under the Petroleum Act."

THE Council of the Chemical Society (London) have awarded the Longstaff medal to Professor William Ramsay, F. R. S.,