108

La Cruz in America: Arqueología Argentina. by Adan Quiroga

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REVIEWS.

America : Archæology.**Quiroga.**

La Cruz in America : Arqueología Argentina. By Dr. Adan Quiroga. With a preface by Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo, M.A. Buenos Ayres. 1901. 24 × 16 cm. **108**
Pp. xxiv + 280, with ninety-seven figures in the text.

The services which Dr. Quiroga has rendered to South American archæology are perhaps little known, outside a limited circle of specialists in the history of American man ; and he is the more to be congratulated, therefore, that the form in which he has chosen to embody this instalment of the results of his investigations is one which will bring them under the notice of a wider range of students, and attract attention to the very valuable work which is being carried on by the archæologists and ethnographers of the Argentine.

Dr. Quiroga's argument, in outline, is as follows :—the Roman numerals referring to the chapters of his book. (i.) The use of the cross as a religious symbol in pre-Columbian South America is well attested, by the descriptions left by the first Spanish invaders and by the earlier missionaries ; by the survival of many cruciform or cross-marked monuments which are known to have been objects of worship among the unconverted natives ; and by a number of mythological motives, which are widespread and deeply rooted in native American belief. This point is further illustrated, with numerous quotations-in-full, by Professor Lafone Quevedo, in his prefatory note to the volume. (ii.) The cross, where it originates independently, as in the American instance it may fairly be held to have originated, must be considered in the light of its abstract geometrical character, which refers it (at all events in its "Greek" or equilateral form, which is fundamental in the American series) to the attempt to connect in one symbolic group four equivalent points. The cross, when used as a substantive motive in art or ritual, may accordingly be presumed, in default of other evidence, to be symbolic of some group-of-four. The wide distribution of such symbolic crosses in American art is well known, and is copiously illustrated by Dr. Quiroga, particularly from Chile and Tucuman ; and most of all from the district of Calchaquí, the symbolic art of which he has made the object of special study, based on regular excavation and ample collections of his own. (iii.) The Peruvian evidence, which is the clearest on this point, connects the cross-symbol definitely with certain "groups-of-four" in the shape of constellations and other aerial powers, which are the objects of known native cults. (iv.) The Mexican evidence points to the same conclusion ; and similar ideas may be traced in American mythology and folklore as far north as the Haidas. The groups-of-four, in these instances, are likewise aerial or meteoric powers, such as the "four winds" or "four quarters," or "four supporters" of the heaven ; and it is notorious that such quatrains are not peculiar to the New World. (v.) The marked prevalence of symbolic "fours" among the American peoples coincides so closely with the prevalence of weather-cults, and particularly rain-cults—to which the climatology of the continent gives such inevitable prominence—as to support the theory that there is some real connection between the two. We may accordingly adopt as a working hypothesis the view that the cross may symbolise either the Rain Power, or even simply the rain. (vi.) Now the symbolic art of Calchequí culminates in a great series of most elaborate attempts to depict atmospheric phenomena, and particularly the characteristic *tormenta* or cyclonic storms, in symbolic scenes, sometimes largely zoomorphic or even anthropomorphic in design : the principal motives of these—omitting abstract elements such as zigzags, meanders, spirals, and groups of dots—being serpents, *suri*-birds (the "South American ostrich") and frogs. Now, all these motives are found intimately associated with crosses, either appended to them or actually inscribed upon them. Moreover, these zoomorphs themselves are shown, by the evidence of cult and folklore, to have some connection in popular belief with the weather powers ; this is best shown by the popular treatment of snakes in

the country districts of South America, and by the common repute of the *suri*-bird as a sure weather-prophet. (vii.) The use of the cross as an attribute of anthropomorphic figures, and on charms and amulets, falls at once into line with this interpretation, on the hypothesis that these objects also are in some sense weather-charms; and the same applies (viii.) to the numerous inscribed stones and rock-carvings, to which Dr. Quiroga has devoted especial attention. (ix.) The frog-symbol (*sapo*) in Calchequí art presents preliminary difficulties: but the frog also has close connection in popular belief with the weather, and particularly with the rain; and the use of the frog-symbol in the Calchequí vase-paintings finds a close analogue in the Brazilian tale—*El Urubú y el Sapo*—which recounts how the frog went up to Heaven and came down in the rain; a widespread belief which has its parallel in the Old World, too. (x.) The conclusion of the whole matter is, therefore, that the cross-symbol obtained its vogue in America as a rain-symbol; that so simple a device for indicating a “group-of-four” may have originated independently at more than one point; but that its wide extension may, on the other hand, be due, in part at least, to the well-established migrations of peoples from north to south, which have taken place within the American Continent; and that it is matter for consideration whether it was not also as a symbol of rain, or weather, that the cross attained its vogue in other parts of the world also. “En una palabra, la lluvia es el motivo fundamental de la religion, y la Cruz su simbolo.”

The phrase just quoted suggests a caution which must be borne in mind in more than one passage of Dr. Quiroga's book. It is only too easy in dealing with subject-matter of this kind, scattered over a wide area, very imperfectly explored, and liable to wide lacunæ, to commingle proof of a likely hypothesis, with deductions from it which would be quite in place when the proof is completed. For the most part, however, Dr. Quiroga's wide knowledge of the material evidence, his long experience of South American art, technology, and folklore, and his close acquaintance, as his copious foot-notes show, with the literature of the subject, have kept his argument under control; and his book will be valued as a substantial contribution to our knowledge of this curious field of enquiry.

J. L. M.

Physical Deterioration.

Watt-Smyth.

Physical Deterioration; its Causes and the Cure. By A. Watt-Smyth.
London: John Murray, 1904. 21 × 14 cm. Pp. xv + 318. Price 6s. net.

109

Mrs. Watt-Smyth is to be congratulated on having brought out a very admirable popular summary of a subject of great interest at the present time. Being apparently intended as a *resumé* for the man in the street more than the scientific investigator, the author has been content to accept, rather than to criticise at any length, the evidence as to the existence of deterioration among our population, and has wisely devoted her greatest attention to the causes and means of removal of the phenomena observed. The book opens with a brief but succinct chapter on the history of the arousal of popular interest in the question and then passes on to the evidences of physical deterioration, laying stress on the pressing necessity of enquiry into the exact state of affairs and the difficulty of determining our exact position in the absence of sufficient statistical evidence.

The main argument on which she relies to show the existence of progressive degeneration is that as urban conditions are obviously deleterious and the rural populace more and more pouring into the towns, where ill-health and especially a high rate of infant mortality are ripe, our physical standard must be on the down grade. That if in 1869 as many as four-fifths of the boys applying as recruits to the army were rejected as below the standard in stature and chest girth, and that now, with a lowered army standard, three out of every five recruits are found unfit for service within two years, it