Remarks on the Natives of British North America.

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The same thing will be found in the New Zealand Department.

This is an illustration, among many, of the common descent of all these objects from one system of symbology.

It is found in characters, and can be recognised even now in those of China.

Three is found to be treated as equivalent to the plural.

On Khita (Hittite) sculpture, three hairs represent the mane of the lion, and the same in the emblematic writings brought by Capt. Gill from the Moso district in S.W. China.

In Plate XIII of the Report on Queen Charlotte's Island, 1878, by Dr. Geo. M. Dawson (Geological Survey of Canada) the hand is represented with three fingers, as in the cases cited in New Zealand and Central America. These may be regarded as related to the Pacific regions.

REMARKS *on the* NATIVES *of* BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

By Dr. JOHN RAE.

Dr. JOHN RAE being called upon to make a few remarks on the subject of the aborigines of British North America, said that it was too large and important a subject to be dealt with satisfactorily in the very short space of time allowed.

Dr. Rae agreed with the Chairman that it was a pity there was no special exhibit of Indian work sent to the Colonial Exhibition, although there may be seen at one part of the Canadian Court a very considerable quantity of native work for sale. A very interesting collection of the weapons, tools, pipes, bedding, clothing, &c., used and worn by the different tribes, might have been brought together. The Indians with whom Dr. Rae is best acquainted are those of the wooded country, of whom the Maskegon, or "swampy," Crees form a very large portion, to the south and south-east of the Hudson Bay Territory, whilst the Chipewyans, Dog Ribs or slaves, Slave Indians, Louchoux, &c., occupy the more distant lands to the north-west, in the Athabasca and McKenzie River districts. All of these tribes are more or less docile and friendly, having been treated with much kindness, firmness, and judgment for a number of generations by the Hudson's Bay Company, who have for many years excluded alcoholic drinks from a country more than half the size of Europe, and the officers of the Company have also willingly given up their small yearly allowance, a few dozens of wine and brandy, that the Indians could not have it to say that they took to themselves what they refused to the natives. These Indians make very good voyageurs, either in summer in boats and canoes, or in winter on snow-shoe *journées*. They are found to be trustworthy and obedient. In summer it is desirable to employ them, as they are thus prevented killing fur-bearing animals when

out of season. They get well paid and well fed whilst so engaged, and thus earn some means to purchase supplies for winter. Many of these northern Indians have an unfortunate habit of destroying all their property on the death of any near relative, and thus they are kept very poor. I saw several cases of this during the few years I was on the McKenzie. It is rather hard on the Hudson's Bay Company (who have so far unsuccessfully endeavoured to stop the practice) as all the property destroyed may not have been paid for. These northern Indians might tame the reindeer as the "Laps" do, but they think that to do so would bring upon them all kinds of misfortunes. It is difficult to say why the Louchoux living next to, and the hereditary (?) enemies of, the Eskimos, should be so unlike other red men in appearance, manner, dress, and habits. Both men and women are very fine looking; their wealth is in beads, of which the men wear a profusion, tastefully ornamenting their leather garments. They usually carry a *dress suit* to put on in the evening, or on arrival at a trading station. They (*the men*) have their feet compressed when young, but not to such an extent as to prevent them from walking comfortably, and wear immense pigtails, a custom which the Hudson's Bay Company's people are gradually getting them to give up, as by a great addition of fat, feathers, &c., these tails become offensive and very heavy. The children are carried in cradles differing from those of any other native tribes.

Some persons seem to think that the Eskimos live outside British America; this is so little the case that about 4,500 miles of the northern boundary of the Dominion of Canada are frequented by these interesting people, who in Dr. Rae's opinion, bear evidence of a previous state of civilisation, especially in their kind treatment of their wives. Dr. Rae also thinks that the Eskimos came from across Behring Strait from Asia. Their traditions and many other things point in that direction, and they are in no way related to the ancient cave men of Europe.

Professor FLOWER said that his investigation into the physical characteristics of the Eskimos led him to agree entirely with Dr. Rae's conclusions derived from other sources. He looked upon the Eskimos as a branch of the North Asiatic Mongols (of which the Japanese may be taken as a familiar example), who in their wanderings across the American continent in the eastward direction, isolated almost as perfectly as an island population would be, hemmed in on one side by the eternal polar ice, and on the other by hostile tribes of American Indians, with whom they rarely, if ever, mingled, have gradually developed special modifications of the Mongolian type, which increase in intensity from west to east, and are seen in their greatest perfection in the inhabitants of Greenland, at all events in those in which no intercrossing with the Danes has taken place. The typical Eskimo is one of the most specialized of the human race, as far as cranial and facial characters are concerned, and such scanty remains as have yet been discovered

of the prehistoric inhabitants of Europe present no structural affinities with him. Similar external conditions may have led to the adoption of similar modes of life, but this is a very unsafe test of race affinity. There is therefore little or no evidence to justify the assumption that the present inhabitants of the northernmost parts of America are the descendants of the men whose rude flint tools found in our drifts and caves excite so much interest and speculation.

JUNE 22ND, 1886.

CONFERENCE ON THE NATIVE RACES OF
AUSTRALIA.

FRANCIS GALTON, Esq., F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

Mr. J. BONWICK read a paper on the Native Races of Australia, upon which Dr. AHEARNE made some remarks.

The PRESIDENT described and exhibited some objects from the New Guinea Court, and a large number of objects from Australia were described by Mr. BONWICK.

The AUSTRALIAN NATIVES.

By JAMES BONWICK, Esq., F.R.G.S.

The short time allowed for this paper compels me to give only a brief and popular description of these aborigines.

Their *physique* demands the first enquiry.

In colour they are dark, but not quite black; Europeans, as it is well known, may contract pigmentary stains in certain pathological states. An odour, somewhat resembling that emitted by a goat, has been detected. If not stoutly built, there is no deficiency in height. The shoulders are rather narrow, and the strength is reputed below that of the English. The breast of the female is pendulous in early motherhood.

The base of the trunk differs from that of Europeans. The greatest distance of the iliac crests is relatively less. In narrowness of the basin, the native's pelvis is more like the negro's, and in its extreme narrowness suggests a relation to the ape family. The arms are longer than in any other race. In 50 Australians the forearm varied from 17 to 19 $\frac{3}{4}$; in 50 English, 17 to 18 $\frac{3}{4}$. The leg measurements, 17 to 20 in the whites, gave 17 to 22 for the others. In the woman, the leg is longer in proportion than with her native husband.