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some of the people having woolly and the others straight hair, clearly showing that there had been an admixture of Papuan with the Australian types.

NOTES on SKULLS and WORKS of ART from a BURIAL GROUND near TIFLIS. By Commander TELFER, R.N. [With Plate iv.]

IN the spring of 1871, when the new road from Tiflis to Vladikavkaz, through the David Pass, was being constructed, it was necessary to make a cutting through a slightly elevated piece of land, being a ploughed field, and at the distance of about one mile from the village of Mtzhetha (Mzchete, Medzkhitha) and off the right bank of the Aragoa, a tributary of the river Kour. In clearing away the soil where the cutting had been traced, several graves were disturbed, and their construction and contents having attracted notice, Mr. Beyer was employed by the Russian Government to prosecute researches, and during the summers of 1871-72 that gentleman laid open about two hundred graves. The objects he found have been sent to St. Petersburg, and consisted of ornaments in gold, bronze and iron, coral, ivory, and mother-of-pearl. One small silver vase, having the triumphs of Hercules in relief, excited universal admiration, and must have belonged, from its design and ornamentations, to an epoch of high Grecian art. It was in poor condition. Being desirous of examining these graves, from an archæological point of view, I obtained permission from the authorities, during my late visit to the Caucasus, whence I have just returned, to open some tombs. Having proceeded to Mtzhetha, I opened six, on the 9th and 10th January, 1873, with the following results:—

First Grave.—Depth of soil, 2 feet 4 inches. Came to two small stone slabs. Upon their removal was disclosed a child's grave formed of six sepulchral bricks, two being upon each side, and one at either end. This little grave—length 3 feet 6 inches, width 14 inches—was filled with earth, and lay east and west. At the east end was a portion of cranium. Body had been laid full length. Near the cranium were composition beads for a necklace; small bronze ring also found. Unable to bring away bones, owing to condition. In employing the term sepulchral brick, I do so advisedly; such bricks have been found only in these graves, and appear to have been largely employed for the purpose.

Second Grave.—Depth of soil, 3 feet. Came to three large sandstone slabs, close and well-fitting. Grave full of earth and stones, some of the latter being large fragments. At east end had been undoubtedly interred a body in a seated posture. Portions of cranium, well to the front, and nearer end of slab; upon

Norma lateralis.

Norma occipitalis

C.F. Kell Lith. Castle St. London. E.C.

MACROCEPHALOUS SKULL. TIFLIS.

carefully removing the earth, came to vertebræ of the neck, then to portions of ribs, then to sternum, and finally, the femurs, which were lying close up to a corner. At west end, remains of four full-grown bodies, of a youth's, and of a child's. (Sent to the Institute; see Plate iv.) I have been guided here chiefly by the crania. These bodies must have been huddled in, and buried at one time. No relics; found several small pieces of obsidian, shaped like the sharp flint tools, as also pieces of mixed matter—which had passed through fire—a conglomeration of calcined bones, wood, stone, &c. Length of grave 5 feet 3 inches, width 2 feet 4 inches, depth 2 feet 4 inches.

Third Grave.—Head slab showing very slightly above the surface. Covering slabs had been probably taken away at some remote period; excavate soil, 14 inches. Came to six sepulchral bricks, laid flat and loosely; beneath, upon carefully removing the earth, at east end, a seated figure, remains of a child, small bronze ring, and portions of iron ornaments, also fragments of glass bottles. At west end, remains, recumbent. Length of grave, 5 feet 10 inches, width 3 feet, depth 4 feet 8 inches.

Fourth Grave.—Immediately beneath the surface, remains, recumbent. Head, east. Immediately beneath, three huge slabs, irregularly shaped. One skull at east, one skull at west end. Not able to guess positions. Portion of bronze pin, head of pin in gold, fragments of glass. Length of grave, 5 feet 10 inches, width 3 feet 6 inches, depth 7 feet.

Fifth Grave.—Depth of soil, 3 feet. Came to two large, evenly fitting slabs—one slab split. At east end, remains in recumbent position; two bronze hair-pins (similar hair-pins, in silver, are worn at the present day in Georgia), portions of iron ornaments, and fragments of glass bottles. At west end, seated remains; both femurs close up to a corner, as in No. 2 grave; found a small circular flat dish of the coarsest design and make, and sun-dried. Length of grave, width, and depth, as No. 2.

Sixth Grave.—Close to the surface, and had been disturbed at some remote period.

With the exception of No. 1 grave, these tombs were all alike, being formed of four large slabs of sandstone for the sides and ends, and covered with two or three smaller slabs—the bottoms being the natural soil. The largest grave opened by Mr. Beyer was double—one grave being above the other; each measuring, length 8 feet 2 inches, width 3 feet 6 inches, depth 4 feet 8 inches. The burial-ground extends over a surface of about four to five acres, at the foot of a hill range.

Mtzhetha is reputed by the Georgians to be the oldest town in the world. It is very prettily situated on the left bank of the Kour, and just above one of its tributaries, the "Aragua." It

is surrounded by high hills, some being picturesquely capped by ruins. The present village consists of a goodly number of small habitations and "Doukans" (provision and wine-shops) scattered about, in the midst of which rises a high battlemented-wall which encloses the Cathedral and some insignificant buildings for the accommodation of the clergy. The first cathedral at Mtzhetha was erected in the tenth century; it was destroyed by Tamerlane, and was built, as it now stands, by the Czar Alexander, in 1414-24.

In the "History of Georgia," by the Tzacantha Wakhoneht, it is stated that Mtzhethos, son of Kharelos, son of Tharzamors, son of Tharces, son of Avunan, son of Japhet, who was the son of Noah (this scarcely agrees with the tenth chapter of Genesis), built a town named Mtzhetha, at the angle of the junction of the Mont Corea* and Aragoa. It appears that the rule of Georgia commenced under the dynasty of Khartlos, then came the Nebratides, then the Arsaces, the Thosroydes. The Dagrattides came to the throne A.D. 575, which they have occupied uninterruptedly (notwithstanding the Byzantine, Persian, and Turkish invasions) until the occupation of Georgia in 1810 by Russia. But to their possession of the throne must be added the continued line of monarchs up to the sixth century, and then we find the sovereignty to have lasted during a period of 2245 years! The kings were crowned and buried in the cathedral at Mtzhetha during many centuries.

It is believed in Georgia that Alexander in person conquered the country (B.C. 336 ?). After the battle of Achilles, "Erbice," B.C. 331, Alexander followed up his victories over the valley of the Araxes, and entered Medea; but he despatched a force into Georgia. At that time the Georgians were proved to be the most abandoned of people. Debauchery of every kind, including incest, was common among them; they sacrificed human beings and ate the bodies. In his work on "Transcaucasia," Haxthausen states—"Little is known of the paganism and mythology of the ancient Georgians. Sacrifices were made on the mountains; and on sacred heights, human sacrifices. St. Nina threw down the altars of paganism, and on the same heights were erected Christian churches and crosses. Christian holidays superseded the pagan ones, but the dancing and pastimes remained." Also—"St. Nina, who introduced Christianity into Georgia, A.D. 423, found remains of human victims; and her history relates, that after several vain efforts to dissuade the Georgians from sacrifices of all kinds, she succeeded in inducing them to discontinue the immolation of human victims."

Thus it has been asserted that the Georgians made human sacrifices during a period extending over seven centuries! The

* 'The Kour.

burial in a seated posture was practised by the Jews, but the fragments of glass and relics found point to Greek influence.

I am inclined to think that the burials at Mtzhetha are of the very earliest period of Christianity, and belonging to a pagan people. An Archæological Society is in course of formation at Tiflis, the capital of the Caucasus, and we may early expect to receive interesting reports upon further explorations at Mtzhetha, and at other places in Transcaucasia.

DISCUSSION.

The PRESIDENT observed that amongst the skulls procured by Commander Telfer was a well marked example of the so-called "macrocephalous" crania of Georgia and the countries round the shores of the Euxine. These skulls, whose deformation precisely resembles that of the so-called Titicaca skulls from Peru, have formed the subject of an excellent monograph by Professor V. Baer, and they are of particular interest as affording an instance of the persistence of the same custom of deformation from before the time of Hippocrates to very near, if not quite to, the present day; whilst at the same time it has been common to Western Asia and Western South America, a circumstance that perhaps might be regarded to some extent as favouring the views of those who advocate the hypothesis that America was at any rate partly peopled from the older continent.

The SERPENT in CONNECTION with PRIMITIVE METALLURGY.
By MISS A. W. BUCKLAND.

(ABSTRACT.)

THE writer maintains that a curious connection may be traced between the early worship of the serpent and a knowledge of metals; and, believing that such connection has hitherto escaped notice, she attempts in the present paper to investigate its origin and nature. A large number of the old serpent-myths represent this reptile as associated in some way with precious metals and precious stones; the serpent constantly appears as the guardian of hidden treasure and the revealer of secret knowledge; whilst the deities, kings, and heroes who are either symbolised by the serpent, or supposed to partake of its nature, are commonly described as the pioneers of civilisation and the instructors of mankind in the arts of agriculture and mining. The ancient Indian Indra, the Chaldean Hoâ, the Egyptian Kneph and Osiris, and the Mexican Quetzacoatl are examples of such divinities. In seeking to explain the origin of this widespread veneration for so deadly a reptile as the serpent, the writer remarks that the animals which were anciently objects