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94. The Incest Tabu.

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Hungarian Physiognomy. (MAN)	-	-	-	1905
Notes on Crania from Carmelite Friary. (Appendix by J. B.) (<i>Bristol Arch. Notes for 1904</i> , by J. E. Pritchard)	-	-	-	1905
Series of Skulls, Carmelite, from Bristol. (<i>Journ. Anthr. Inst.</i>)	-	-	-	1905
Estimation of Skull Capacity by a Peripheral Method. (<i>Zeitschrift für Ethnologie</i>)	-	-	-	1907
Evaluation et Signif. de la Capacité Cranium. (<i>L'Anthropologie</i>)	-	-	-	-
Ancient Skull from Cave of Lombrive, Pyrenees. (<i>Bristol Nat. Soc. Proc.</i>)	-	-	-	1907-8
Human Bones from Harlyn Bay, Cornwall. (<i>Trans. Roy. Inst. of Cornwall</i>)	-	-	-	-
Last Contribution to Scottish Ethnology. (<i>Journ. Anthr. Inst.</i>)	-	-	-	1908
Memoirs of Eighty Years. (<i>Bristol and London</i>)	-	-	-	1910

J. GRAY.

Africa, West.

Dayrell.

The Incest Tabu. By E. Dayrell, F.R.G.S.

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With reference to the article by Mr. N. W. Thomas, M.A. (MAN, 1910, 72) on the above subject, I would state that in my experience, which extends over nine years in the Ikom district, Eastern Province, Southern Nigeria, incest is extremely rare. It is entirely against native custom, and in the olden days would have been punished by death.

In this part of the country the fact of brothers and sisters living together would seem to destroy the pairing instinct as between themselves. There is no avoidance practised as between a man and the girl for whom he is paying bride price, neither does the girl "go for bush," if she should happen to meet her intended husband. On the contrary, from the time the girl is quite small the intended husband gives her presents at intervals, and, as soon as she is old enough, he may have connection with her, but until the girl is properly married there is no restriction placed upon her promiscuous sexual intercourse with other men, any children born before marriage by a free-born girl belonging to the father. As an example of the native attitude towards incest I have obtained from a trustworthy source the following two incidents which show that in Calabar incest was treated as a very serious offence:—

(1) Many years ago, at Calabar, a woman who was envious of the amount of money which her son gave to different girls for their favours, induced him to sleep with her instead and made him give her the money. This went on for some time until it was noticed that the boy was frequently seen coming out of his mother's room in the early morning. He was therefore called to the Egbo house and questioned, the mother also being made to appear.

The boy then stated that his mother had induced him to sleep with her instead of going with other women, and that she always took money from him. The boy was found guilty by the people, and as incest was strongly against their native custom, he was tied up to a post in the Egbo house and killed.

(2) Some years after the above-mentioned event, there was a rich chief in Calabar who was in the habit of sleeping regularly with his daughter. Eventually the chief put her in the family way, and when she was questioned the girl told the people that her father had been sleeping with her for some time and that she had conceived by him. She also complained that her father would not allow her to marry anyone. The chief admitted having had connection with his daughter, and the people wished to punish him in accordance with their custom, but were not allowed to do so; he was therefore disgraced in the following manner:—The man was placed in a canoe with a large bell tied round his waist. There was a string attached to the clapper of the bell which was held by his daughter, and she rang the bell all the time. The chief was also rubbed all over with charcoal, and feathers were stuck in his hair as if he were a thief; he was then paddled in a canoe to all the seven towns and was paraded round each town.

In every town he went to he had to tell the people that he had had connection with his daughter, and had to beg them not to kill him. This was done in order to shame him before everyone.

The girl died shortly afterwards in childbirth, and the man never joined his company again or attended any play. He died two years later in disgrace.

The dates and the names of the parties concerned were given to me, and the degradation of the chief mentioned in Incident 2 was actually witnessed by my informant.

E. DAYRELL.

PROCEEDINGS OF SOCIETIES.

Anthropology.

British Association.

The annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was held at Portsmouth, from August 30th to September 6th, 1911. **95**
Section H (Anthropology) met under the presidency of Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, F.R.S., who in his presidential address, after reference to the differences existing between various schools of the science, dealt with the importance of ethnological analysis as a precedent of evolutionary speculation in the study of culture. The address will be found in full in *Nature*, Vol. 87, p. 356, and in the Report of the British Association.

The following is a brief summary of the papers communicated to the sections. The place in which papers are to be published in full, so far as known at present, is given in square brackets.

PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

The late J. R. MORTIMER.—*Notes on the Stature, &c., of our Ancestors in East Yorkshire.*—During the author's excavations of over 300 burial-mounds and cemeteries in East Yorkshire, remains of 893 bodies were obtained of the Neolithic and Bronze periods, but as 322 of these had been cremated, 571 only are available for detailed measurements. Of these, 35 were long-headed and had an average stature of 66 inches, 29 had short skulls and averaged 64·3 inches in height, and 40 had skulls of an intermediate form and averaged 64·4 inches in height. The greatest stature in this series measures 72·8 inches, and the lowest 56·4 inches.

During the early Iron Age the inhabitants possessed more uniformly long skulls, but were physically much inferior to their predecessors. Of 59 skeletons, 42 had long heads and an average stature of 62·5 inches, 2 had short heads with a computed height of 61·9 inches, while 14 were intermediate in type and averaged 63·2 inches. The skeletons of the Romano-British period were not so plentiful, but much resembled those of the early Iron Age, from which they probably descended.

Of the 61 Anglo-Saxon skeletons measured, 31 had long heads, with an average stature of 65·7 inches; 7 had short heads, with an average stature of 64 inches, and 23 had skulls of an intermediate type, and had an average stature of 63·6 inches. [*The Naturalist.*]

PROFESSOR C. J. PATTEN, Sc.D.—*The Interpretation of Division of the Parietal Bone as observed in the Crania of certain Primates.*—Unless we can get further evidence from the condition of the contained brain we are much handicapped in attempting to put forward an interpretation as to the causes of parietal division. This is especially so where in the dry skull pathological conditions (perhaps at an earlier stage of development more apparent) are only faintly discernible, and where they may be said to have passed almost without a line of demarcation into what one might conveniently term a condition of disturbed *morphogenesis*. However, as many specimens of dry skulls, *minus* their brains, recently examined afford fairly positive evidence of an abnormal process of development, the trend of opinion is that the supposed morphological significance assigned to the segments of divided parietals, together with the supposed atavistic value attached to the same segments, are hypotheses which are losing ground.