

Calls for Domestic Animals.

IN reply to Mr. H. Carrington Bolton's query in relation to terms used in addressing domesticated animals, I beg leave to give information regarding the terms used by the Eskimo of Cumberland Sound and Davis Strait in addressing dogs. To start dogs, a whistling sound made in the throat, and strongly aspirated, something like *h! h!* is used. For urging the dogs, a great variety of terms are used, the most common of which are the following, expressed in the phonetic alphabet of the Bureau of Ethnology: *ak* (the *k* being very guttural); *yatit*; *uī* (the *i* pronounced in a very high key, and lasting from about five to ten seconds); *a* (pronounced in a similar way); *yauksa kōksa*; the same sound as the one used in starting the dogs. For stopping the dogs, a deep *ō*, drawn very long, is used; for making them lie down, a similar *ō* spoken in a low voice, and at the same time the whip is gently thrown over their heads. In order to turn to the right, the driver sings out, *au'a au'a ya au'a*, throwing the whip to the left; to turn to the left, the term *qoi'a qoi'a ya qoi'a* is used. For driving dogs from some food or other things they may attack, the term *ha!* preceded by the name of the dog, is used. DR. F. BOAS.

New York, Feb. 20.

Vermin-Eaters.

CERTAIN aborigines of South America are addicted to a peculiarly disgusting habit, as the following extract from A. Simson's 'Travels in the Wilds of Ecuador' attests: "Lice of different species are the most abundant, and it is among the commonest sights to see the inhabitants engaged in their chase, keenly pursuing them in each other's heads, and cracking them, when captured, between their teeth" (p. 9). It is interesting to compare this with the evidence of a traveller in another part of the globe. Octavius G. Stone, in 'A Few Months in New Guinea' (Franklin Square Library edition), says, "A very favorite pastime, particularly of the women, is hunting in each other's heads for vermin. Two, three, or four in a row, sitting one behind the other, might be constantly seen in front of my tent, pursuing their favorite amusement. It is a common one among most colored races, and a wholesome practice to boot. But *eating* the lice is another affair. I could hardly believe my own eyes when I first saw them engaged in this disgusting employment; yet they not only eat every one caught, but appear to do it with considerable zest and relish. Whether they believe it nourishing, or take it simply as a *bonne bouche*, is not quite certain, but opinion inclines toward the latter theory" (p. 11). Whether this be the correct explanation or not, remains to be seen. Certainly it is not for lack of food that the practice is kept up. Is the practice known to exist elsewhere in America? The tribes visited by Mr. Simson were the Piojes and Jivaros; those seen by Mr. Stone belonged to the Motu district of New Guinea. Perhaps when all instances of the occurrence of this strange habit have been collated and examined, a clear and satisfactory explanation of it may be given. In the mean time, I simply call attention to this interesting point in the anthropology of the Naturvölker.

A. F. CHAMBERLAIN.

Toronto, Feb. 15.

IN addition to Mr. Chamberlain's quotations, I would say that the custom of eating vermin is a wide-spread one, although most travellers do not mention it in their reports. Parry and Lyon, as well as Hall, found it practised by the Eskimo of Hudson Bay and Frobisher Strait. I found the same habit among the Eskimo of Cumberland Sound and Davis Strait, and I well remember a father carrying his three-year-old child, and feeding it with the lice he picked from its head. F. BOAS.

New York, Feb. 25.

The Snow-Snake and the r-Sound.

DR. BEAUCHAMP will, I am sure, agree with me that the presence of the snow-snake game among the Southern Iroquoian tribes can be more firmly established by the evidence to be obtained directly from the traditions of those Tuscaroras who early in the present century came directly from the South to their present habitation in Niagara County, N.Y., and by the evidence of language, than in any other way.

In these traditions the *Tci-ru-hā-kā* (the Nottowayans), among others, are mentioned as contestants with the *Skā-ru-rēn* (Tuscaroras) in this game of snow-snake.

The name of the so-called 'snow-snake' in the language of the Tuscaroras is *u-trā-hwēn-tē* (misprinted in my former article); and of the game, *nā-yā-trā-hwēn-tā-yēns* (literally, 'they two bet snow-snake'). *U-trā-hwēn-tē* is a pure noun, having the power of composition either with verbs or adjectives, and also having a declension to express the nominative and oblique cases, — circumstances that in the nature of the language assign to the noun an age far antedating the wars of 1711-13. The game was played in winter, and a slight modification of it in the summer.

The southern limit of snow at sea-level is, in the United States, the 30th parallel of northern latitude; and, as the territory of the Southern Iroquoian tribes lay between the 35th and 39th parallels, it is quite likely that they often had winters 'appropriate' for the use of the snow-snake.

With the assistance of some very intelligent Onondagas, some of whom spoke Tuscarora and Oneida in addition to their own tongue, I collected, in 1880 and 1884, with other linguistic matter, a vocabulary of more than fifteen hundred words and over five hundred and fifty phrases and sentences, and I also made translations of two quite lengthy aboriginal compositions. In the prosecution of these linguistic studies, great care was taken in verifying the work at every stage of it. No Onondagan word was found in which the *r*-sound was used.

Mr. Albert Cusick, a man of intelligence and education, was one of my assistants in these investigations.

The Onondagan, like the Senecan, tongue of to-day has either transmuted the *r*-sound into an aspirate, or has simply suppressed it.

Mr. Horatio Hale, the eminent linguist and ethnologist, says (*Book of Rites*, p. 46), "In former times, as we know from Jesuit vocabularies, the sound of the letter *r* existed in the Onondagan dialect. Since their day the sound has disappeared from it entirely."

Dr. Daniel Wilson, in his lecture on the Huron-Iroquois of Canada (*Trans. Roy. Soc. of Canada*, 1884, Sec. 11. p. 105), states that the *r*-sound is "no longer heard" in the Onondagan tongue.

No one denies that the *r*-sound once existed in the speech of the Onondagas, as it is still common to nearly all of the cognate dialects.

The orthographies and translations of both Schoolcraft and Zeisberger are so inaccurate and untrustworthy that it seems strange to see them quoted as authority on a point of phonetics requiring precision and accuracy of observation, and record of language, for its proper determination.

Dr. Beauchamp says that in a version of the Lord's Prayer sent to him by a native Onondaga in that tongue, "the letter in question frequently occurred, but the sound was obscure. I went over the version with him syllable by syllable, to get the exact sound, and retained the letter four times as clearly enunciated."

Faulty articulation quite probably accounts for these four *r*'s retained by the doctor.

In the summer of 1884, I obtained from living Onondagas, and not from 'lifeless books,' a version of the Lord's Prayer in which the *r*-sound does not once occur.

One difficulty experienced in my work was to obtain the Onondagan orthoepy of a word. The intercommingling with the Onondagas, of persons speaking cognate languages in which some form of the *r*-sound occurs, is in many instances the cause of the unconscious mispronunciation of a word.

To the student of Iroquoian tongues faulty articulation, worse orthography, and *otosis* (defective hearing) are fruitful sources of error.

Every Indian is not competent to furnish satisfactory linguistic data. Equally deficient are many collectors of vocabularies and linguistic material.

Recognizing these difficulties, the Rev. Ashur Wright, who knew well what Iroquoian orthoepy and orthography require, says, on the sixth page of his valuable Senecan spelling-book, printed in 1842, "It is sometimes, also, very difficult to decide on the correct usage,