

## SCIENTIFIC SERIALS

*Bulletins de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris, 1871-72.*—We find from these reports that the French palæontologists have been unusually active during the last eighteen months in continuing the exploration of the numerous bone-caverns of their country and in testing the accuracy of the older classifications of their remains. M. Barabeau has been examining with great care the Dordogne district, which has become classic ground through the labours of Christie and Dartet. M. Saudon believes that the molars and maxilla recently found at Laugerie-Haute cannot be referred to the true horse—although they may provisionally, like similar remains found by M. Rivière in Italy—be accepted as belonging to some form of *equus*, for he does not think that the horse existed in Europe in pre-historic times. M. Mortillet, in obedience to the suggestions of M. Bertrand, Conservateur du Musée de S. Germain, has drawn up a chart of the palæolithic age in Gaul, the only work of the kind extant: in it are recorded 5 localities in which occur supposed traces of man in the tertiary; 43 alluvial deposits in the quaternary yielding human bones and industrial remains; and 278 caverns containing quaternary fauna with traces of pre-historic man. M. Mortillet thinks that we are no longer justified in assuming with E. Dartet that there was ever a special age of the bear or reindeer, all extinct animals having apparently lived through the whole palæolithic period. Amongst the numerous communications of M. Hamy, we may instance papers on the "Fossil Human Remains of d'Engihoul, near Liège;" "The Anthropology of Cambodia;" "The Quaternary Deposits of cut Silex recently discovered in the Pas de Calais;" "The Existence of Brachycephalic Negroes on the Western Coasts of Africa;" and "The Proportions of the Arm and Fore-arm to the different periods of Life." M. Doullsh, from observations made at the close of 1871, in a bone cavern at Corgnac (Dordogne), believes that he has found incontrovertible proofs that man in the reindeer age had attained the art of *polishing* no less than of cutting stone.—M. Lagardelle communicates through M. Hamy, one of the Secretaries of the Society, some curious information in regard to the habitations of the degraded people known under the names of *Colliberts, hutliers, &c.*, who for many ages occupied the marshy lands of Poitou, near the mouths of the Sèvre, and whose descendants were known till recently as *niolers*. This district was occupied by Gauls before the Norman Conquest, and after that event it became, from its inaccessible character, a place of refuge for fugitives. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Colliberts, whose special occupation was fishing, were dependent, as *homines conditionales*, on several religious houses, but were nevertheless left in a state of heathen, almost savage ignorance. Their huts were made of interlaced willow twigs, and their only means of locomotion before the formation of the network of canals, which have proved the chief agents in rescuing them from their isolation, were their long ash stilts and the so-called *niolés*, or light boats from which they took their name. The race is now merged in that of the contiguous *terra firma*.—M. Alph. Milne-Edwards has prosecuted an extensive series of observations on "The Embryology of the Lemurians and the zoological affinities of those animals;" and he finds that the placental system differs so widely from that of the Simiæ, with which they have been supposed to present very close relationships, that he is of opinion the Lemurs should take an intermediate, but wholly distinct, place between monkeys and carnivores.—M. Thorel's medical notes of his observations while serving in the exploring expedition to Meckong, in 1870, afford curious information in regard to the immunity to certain miasmatic affections presented by the people of Cochin China and other parts of Indo-China.—M. Sanson has laid before the Society his views on the Characterisation of Species, which are diametrically opposed to the Darwinian theory of evolution. The earlier numbers of the *Bulletins* for 1872, contain an unusually large proportion of papers on purely anatomical, psychological, medico-legal and similar subjects.—M. Broca considers, in a special monograph, the importance of nasal configuration as a true ethnological character.—M. A. Roujou traces the analogies of the human type with that of the more ancient mammals, and proceeding to the length of concise definition, he fixes the probable appearance of the first lemurians at an epoch very remote from the secondary, and of monkeys—properly so called—before the tertiary, at the beginning of which period he thinks it not improbable that they engendered man.—The second and third numbers of vol. vii. of the *Bulletins* contain the exhaustive Treatise of M. Topinard on the indigenous races of

Australia, with the valuable contributions and discussions in regard to the same subject by MM. Broca, Hamy, and Rochet. These numbers give us a general exposition of the progress and actual position of the science of Anthropology, and of the social advancement of our civilisation and its effect in obliterating ethnological characters and in elevating the lower type.

THE *Lens* for April commences with an analysis of the species of the genus *Amphora*, by Prof. H. L. Smith, in continuation of his *Conspectus of the Diatomaceæ*, accompanied by three excellent plates, and containing the description of nearly 100 species.—Dr. Danforth, of Chicago, describing "The Cell," develops Dr. Beale's theory respecting the nature of the nucleus, and discusses the action of carmine upon it.—Mr. H. Babcock, "On the Flora of Chicago and its Vicinity," catalogues the graminæ and filices of that place very shortly.—There are also papers by Mr. J. H. Martin, "On the Similarity of various forms of Crystallisation to minute Organic Structures;" and by Mr. E. Colbert, "On the Figure of the Earth, and its Effect on Observations made in the Meridian."—The editor criticises the test employed by a committee of the Royal Microscopical Society of London in their decision respecting the angular aperture of Mr. Tolles's  $\frac{1}{10}$ th objective, thinking it unfair.

## SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES

## LONDON

Royal Geographical Society, May 12.—Major-General Sir H. C. Rawlinson, K.C.B., president, in the chair.—The paper read was "Journey through Western Mongolia," by Mr. Ney Elias. The distance travelled over was 2,000 miles, accomplished between July 1872 and January 1873. The route from Kalgan (the starting-point in crossing the desert of Gobi by the usual route *viâ* Urga to Kiachta) was westerly to the Chinese frontier town of Kwei-hua, thence north-westerly to the river Onghin, and afterwards again westerly, along the foot of the Khangai Range, to the city of Uliassutai, which his observations showed to be 5,700 ft. above the sea-level. His further journey was impeded by the bands of Mahomedan Mongol rebels, the so-called Dugans, who, although badly armed, struck terror into the Chinese garrisons of the towns, and carried fire and slaughter wherever they went. He narrowly escaped the band, which a few days before his arrival destroyed the city of Kobdo, west of Uliassutai; arriving there, he saw the charred remains of the outer town and the unburied bodies of slaughtered people scattered over the streets. The Chinese garrison still occupied the fort, and received him and his party with kindness. All his endeavours, however, to obtain assistance for his further journey southward and westward to Kuldja were met by steady opposition, and he finally had to cross the frontier to the Russian town of Bisk. The president informed the meeting that Mr. Elias had not only accomplished a wonderful journey over a tract of Central Asia never visited by a European since the times of Marco Polo, but had executed, unaided, a survey of the whole route travelled. His very numerous observations for longitude and latitude had been computed by Mr. Ellis, of the Greenwich Observatory, and those for heights above the sea-level by Mr. Strachan, of the Meteorological Office. For this great service rendered to geographical science, the Council of the Society has just awarded him the Founder's Gold Medal for 1873.

Meteorological Society, May 21.—Dr. J. W. Tripe, president, in the chair. The discussion was resumed on the following questions, which had been submitted to the consideration of the Meteorological Conference at Leipzig in August last:—No. 18: Can uniform times of observation be introduced for the normal observations? Remarks were made by the president, Dr. Mann, Messrs. Glaisher, Symons, Sopwith, Scott, Bicknell, Salmon, and Strachan, as to whether local or Greenwich time should be used, and whether the hours of 9 A.M. and 9 P.M., or 9 A.M., 3 P.M., and 9 P.M. should be recommended to observers. The meeting was of opinion that the hours of observation should be 9 A.M. and 9 P.M., and that local time should be adopted. The next question considered was No. 20: Division of the year for the calculation of mean results. After some discussion Mr. Sopwith suggested that a committee should be appointed to draw up a series of questions on all matters connected with this subject, and that the same be sent to the Fellows of the Society requesting their reply on all or any of the questions; this suggestion was approved of and adopted by the meeting.—A