

modern zoological museums are concerned, owing, amongst other reasons, to the fact that the public will not endow them sufficiently for such ends.

The museum at Harvard was built by Alexander Agassiz in memory of his father, Louis, these two of our greatest exponents of field work of the last century. It contains their collections, which are relatively small, although of enormous importance. Around them has been built what is essentially a teaching and research institution. The Louis Agassiz Museum is weak in Australian animals and doubtless would desire to complete its series, but it would obviously be more economical and efficient to order the specimens required from Australian dealers. This, however, in mammals, would not suit Glover Allen, who complains bitterly of his teaching handicap in never having himself seen the great marsupials in their own country.

The leader of the Harvard Expedition is W. M. Wheeler, one of the greatest of American zoologists, formerly director of the Bussy Institute, and now attached to the Agassiz Museum. His name is quite sufficient to guarantee the character of this expedition, for he is one of the makers of modern scientific entomology, the dominant theme of which is the living insect. Also attached to the museum is Dr. Jackson, who has travelled widely in his studies of the fossil and living echinoderms in respect to their mode of life. On this side the Agassiz Museum recently sent an expedition to North Australian waters under Dr. H. L. Clark, to study them and other marine bottom-living invertebrates in their natural environments; this is also a side-line of the present expedition. The director of the Museum is Tom Barbour, a real naturalist, his speciality being the reptiles of America, which he has sought in all their haunts. Fisheries and oceanic biology centre in the living animals and plants, and are represented by Henry B. Bigelow, director of the new Oceanographical Institute at Woods Hole. It is useless to extend a list where one and all the staff have that field experience that is so necessary to give life to great museums. All take their share in teaching in the Harvard School of Biology, in which Profs. Parker and Crozier are dominant personalities, eminent in their experimental studies of living matter.

J. STANLEY GARDINER.

Aug 8.

#### Training of Colonial Probationers in Anthropology.

IN 1930-31, the scheme arranged by the committee charged with the training of Colonial (African) probationers at Cambridge, provided forty hours lectures which were obligatory and twenty hours for optional consultation. My colleagues, Mr. R. U. Sayce and Mr. J. H. Driberg, have experience of African conditions and personal knowledge of administrative problems in Africa. For 1931-32, the Colonial Office has approved of an additional course of eight lectures on the principles of African customary law. Other subjects—languages, criminal law, Mohammedan history, evidence and procedure, common law, agriculture, phonetics, history, and geography—have to be provided for in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms, so that under present conditions the allotment to anthropology is as large as we can hope for. If the conditions change, we shall press for more, and even now are ready to provide more. There are other features in the scheme which I regard as needing modification, and hope that argument and persuasion will prevail in the long run.

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I must also record the fact that early in the year we were asked to receive two officers for study leave and readily agreed to do so, subject to our existing commitments. One of them came to Cambridge and the other preferred London, and I have no reason to suspect that pressure is brought to bear upon officers to choose Oxford or Cambridge in preference to London for study leave. In Cambridge we do the best we can for them. We welcome them gladly, and—speaking for myself—we learn much that is important and interesting from them.

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#### The External Meatal Notch as a Primitive Character.

THE majority of the many racial variations of the human tympanic bone result from the differing degrees of development of the lateral extensions of the annulus tympanicus. These lateral extensions typically de-

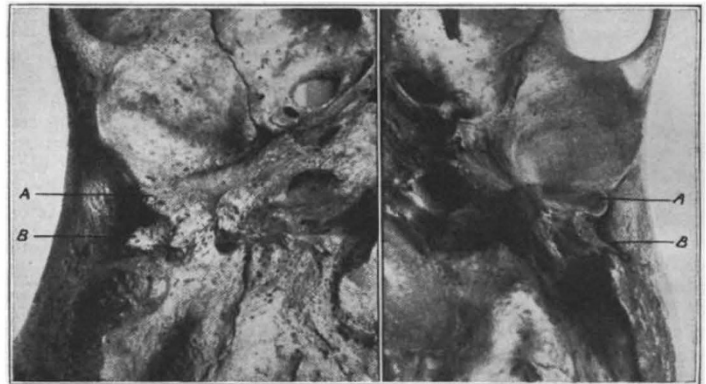


FIG. 1.—Tympanic region of two Australian skulls. *A* and *B* are the anterior and posterior tympanic moieties separated by the external meatal notch.

velop as anterior and posterior elements which, by uniting at their ventral margins, complete the floor of the meatus acusticus externus.

Failure of union of these two processes at the median end of the tympanic plate results in the persistence of the foramen of Huschke. Such failure of union in the adult may be as frequent as 32 per cent in some racial series. Failure of union at the outer extremity of the bony meatus, though producing a characteristic condition, appears to have had but little, if any, attention devoted to it. When this failure of union occurs, the auditory meatus itself consists of an anterior tympanic moiety and a posterior moiety, separated by the *external meatal notch*.

This external meatal notch is of very frequent occurrence in Australian skulls, and two examples are shown in Fig. 1.

Failure of ventral union of the anterior and posterior moieties of the tympanic plate may therefore result in (1) a persistent foramen of Huschke, so frequent in the skulls of Chamorros, (2) persistent external meatal notch, such as is frequently present in the Australian, or (3) a continuous deficiency, such as characterises the normal child at about its second year, and persists in the adolescent skull of *Sinanthropus*.

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July 3.