

News and Views

Chronology of Early Man and Cultural Associations

IN his recent presidential address to the British Speleological Association (see NATURE of August 1, p. 194) Sir Arthur Keith, when arguing for a parallel evolution in the development of modern races from primitive ancestral forms in their respective continental areas, demonstrated the connexion between the Australian and *Pithecanthropus* of Java, with the aid of mid-Pleistocene Solo man as the connecting link between the early Pleistocene *Pithecanthropus* and the late Pleistocene form of that region, Wadjak man. There would now appear to be a possibility that the chronological position of the undoubtedly archaic form discovered in the gravels of the Solo river at Ngandong, Java, in 1932, may be called in question. In another column of this issue of NATURE (see p. 293) reference is made to a communication from Dr. P. van Stein Callenfels, the distinguished Dutch authority on the archæology of Indonesia, appearing in the current issue of *L'Anthropologie*, in which he points out that the cultural associations of Solo man, harpoons and axes of stag horn, are such as in a European context would denote an antiquity of not more than nine or ten thousand years. While the early dating of Solo man has been generally accepted hitherto, if, as is stated, these artefacts are apparently beyond question contemporary with the human relics, this would appear to demand re-examination of the geological data. If further consideration supports Dr. Callenfels' argument, like the evidence of the Swanscombe skull in relation to the position of Piltdown man (see NATURE, August 1, p. 200), it would suggest that the current phylogenetic scheme, while valid as a logical classification, is an uncertain guide to chronology, and that the evolution and descent of man has been a far more complex process than has been demonstrated hitherto.

Spiritual Healing

At the Methodist Conference held at Newcastle in July, the report of a Committee on Spiritual Healing was read by the Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead (*Methodist Recorder*, July 23). He declared it to be an interim report only, and expressed the hope that the Committee would be reappointed. The report is cautious in tone, recognizing that the subject is full of difficulties. The trouble from the scientific point of view is that what appear to be like causes do not necessarily produce like effects. "We pray for one man and he gets better; we pray for another and he does not—and we don't know why in either case." Of course, in healing, the individual factor is the important one, and this makes scientific generalizations almost impossible. The only thing to do, presumably, is to record a large number of cases as accurately as possible, and to extract from them whatever may seem to establish some sort of a regular law of behaviour. Or, as the report puts

it: "the work which lies before students of this subject must include research into those conditions under which those energies which sweep through personality may be set free to do their work." The report wisely says: "We felt all along that a method is not less a manifestation of the Divine because it is understood." As for "orthodox" medical science, "We believe no method [of spiritual healing] is to be welcomed which brushes aside as irrelevant the amazing findings of modern medicine and surgery." It is indeed all to the good that religious bodies such as the Methodist Church should interest themselves in the systematic study of the psychological causes of physical health and sickness, and the report of this Committee is for that reason important.

J. C. Loudon and the Waterloo Beeches

REFERRING to the note in NATURE of August 8 (p. 237) in which this excellent story was mentioned, a correspondent points out that there are many variants of it extant. Sir William Fraser's version, which is by far the most detailed, bears all the signs of study of the original sources. It would spoil the story to condense it; let the worthy baronet tell it in his own inimitable, if stilted, fashion.

"The Duke of Wellington . . . received a letter . . . from the eminent landscape designer and great authority on botanical matters, J. C. Loudon. It was . . . to this effect:

"My lord Duke: It would gratify me extremely if you would permit me to visit Strathfieldsaye, at any time convenient to your Grace, and to inspect the Waterloo beeches. Your Grace's faithful servant, J. C. Loudon."

"The Waterloo beeches were trees that had been planted immediately after the battle of Waterloo; as a memorial of the great fight. The Duke read the letter twice, the writing of which was not very clear; and, with his usual promptness and politeness replied as follows; having read the signature as 'C. J. London' instead of 'J. C. Loudon':

"My dear Bishop of London, It will always give me great pleasure to see you at Strathfieldsaye. Pray come there whenever it suits your convenience, whether I am at home or not. My servant will receive orders to show you so many pairs of breeches of mine as you wish; but why you should wish to inspect those that I wore at the battle of Waterloo is quite beyond the comprehension of Yours most truly, Wellington."

"This letter was received, as may be supposed, with great surprise by the Bishop of London. He showed it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to other discreet persons: they came to the melancholy conclusion that the great Duke of Wellington had evidently lost his senses. The Bishop of London (Blomfield) declared that he had