

HEAT AND SKULLS.

It is Now Supposed That the Sun Will Harden the Human Cranium.

One of the most interesting things mentioned by Prof. Virchow in his little book just published, entitled "Medical Remembrances of an Egyptian Journey," in which he describes an excursion up the Nile as far as the first cataract, is that the broken skulls on the first great sepulchral fields, dating from Roman times, are as thick and hard as Herodotus says those of the slain Egyptians were in comparison with the brittle ones of the Persians.

The Greek historian explains this by attributing it to the early exposure of children to the heat of the sun; and in many parts of Upper Egypt the German travelers actually found young children thus exposed during their parents' absence in the fields in immense clay bowls, resembling in shape a champagne glass without a stem, into which they were put without shelter. This discovery by Prof. Virchow is interesting, says the American Ancestry, because it at once suggests the question whether the proverbial thickness of the skull of the negro has not been caused by exposure to the sun, and whether it is a peculiarity of savages of tropical countries that their skulls are thicker and harder than those of the inhabitants of temperate and colder countries.

Students of craniology have never made any investigation to ascertain whether the skulls of different races vary in degrees of hardness. It would be almost impossible to make such an inquiry. As is well known, the human skull increases in hardness from childhood to maturity and age. A miscellaneous collection of skulls of any given people would therefore be of no value in such an investigation. To obtain a collection of skulls of a number of nationalities, that should be taken from subjects all of the same age, to have them all similarly prepared and in sufficient numbers to make it possible to draw any general conclusions from their comparison with each other, would be manifestly impossible. More attention has been given to the relative thickness of different skulls, or rather to their weight, from which their thickness may be inferred. Of the large collection of crania in the Army Medical Museum at Washington the thickest are those of negroes and Alaskan Indians. The skulls of other Indians, both of North and South America, in tropical or temperate climates, and of the Eskimo, do not appear to be particularly thick. Among the ancient Peruvian skulls recently received by the museum, and the ancient crania collected in Arizona, there are frequent individual variations in thickness, but no tendency to unusual thickness.

The conclusion from these facts is that exposure to the sun probably does not cause thickness of the human skull. In connection with this subject, it is interesting to note that among the Australians the *sternum frontalis* is generally found to be solid in the males, instead of being hollow, as in the skulls of other races. This bone in the male Australians generally extends straight across the head, the lower side overhanging the eyes so that they seem to look out from under it, while in the North American Indians a modification of shape deprives them of that heavy look about the forehead. The heavy *sternum frontalis* of the Australians, of course, increases the weight of the skull.

WHEN IT'S TOO LATE. What We Do for the Dead We Had Better Do for the Living. It is an odd thing, muses Harper's Weekly, that no sooner has death claimed our friends for his own than we begin to say and do a multitude of things of little use at all then in comparison to that which they might have been had they come in advance of death. Then out of hand we flock to the house with offers of assistance and proffers of friendship; we rob our gardens and our hot-houses and send out flowers in profusion, and funeral wreaths and crosses and pillows and anchors and stars to encumberance, and do all we can, though late, to hide and disguise and sweeten fate. But if we had flocked to the house while the dead could have been aware of it, how much pleasure and excitement and relief from monotonous or lonesome hours our sick friends might have enjoyed when all was a tiresome round of day and night and medicine and solitude, when a bunch of flowers brought in would have brought a light to the dull eyes of joy both over the gift and the giver, joy which no broken columns of tubercles and ivies, costing small fortunes, can bring to the eyes of the dead!

Even could we not have been admitted to the sick room itself, we could have brought there the murmur of the outside world by the mere knowledge given to the patient that we were within the gates, some break, some cheer, some good. Then, too, how profuse we are with our good words after the ears are stopped with dust. We do not hesitate then to say all that is true, or even more than is true in praise of the departed. It is as if we had suddenly discovered in the sand a jewel fit for Kings to wear; we make an outcry and hold it up to the light and turn it this way and that and exclaim and marvel and admire and call on others to do likewise. There is nothing too much to say about this person now that the place once filled is vacant. But if we had said a tenth of it all when it might have been heard by the living person, of how much more worth it had been! What joy and satisfaction it might have given! The subject of it all might have felt as if not living in vain, as if satisfied to leave life with such appreciation. But it was not spoken, and life went out without it; and now we regret it, and do the same thing over with the next friend.

MRS. BURNETT'S VICE. The Author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" Said to Be a Cigarette Fiend. It is always a severe shock to come upon one of our idols that has been dethroned, or one which has done something that makes it unworthy of our mental apotheosis, observes the Indianapolis News. Some lady friends who have been in Boston at various times for prolonged visits were telling a night or two ago of some Mrs. Frances Burnett's idiosyncrasies. They lived in the same house with Mrs. Burnett for several months, and came to know the author of Little Lord Fauntleroy quite well. Women down in "the Tennessee mountains" may smoke and do all the disreputable things they please, but a lady who stands at the head (as one may say in truth) of America's literary women, may not do them. Now, Mrs. Burnett does not smoke a pipe, and did not when the visitors from Indianapolis became acquainted with her. But she did smoke cigarettes, and possibly continues the practice, for the list of those who abandon the habit after it is once formed, is not a long one. It was not the ordinary cigarette to be had at the drug store or tobacconist's that the literary lady indulged in, but a brand specially imported from Spain. She had in addition costumes from the same land, in which she arrayed herself when enjoying the weed. The dark-eyed senoritas of Spain can afford to do this unwomanly thing, perhaps, but can an American woman! Possibly the thing a man last excuses in a woman is unwomanliness—that is, where the grade of her ill-doing is above the mere evidence of her ill-breeding or vulgarity. A cigarette-smoking woman is not a particularly edifying spectacle.

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