



Miscegenation

Source: *The Anthropological Review*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (May, 1864), pp. 116-121

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3025106>

Accessed: 21-11-2024 15:18 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Anthropological Review*

any idol or prejudice of theirs—have accepted, as a fact scientifically proved, the Antiquity of Man.

It is ever thus; the true thought of the solitary thinker in his closet is stronger than priests and princes; is omnipotent even against the banded conspiracies of the whole world's prejudice and interest. After twenty-five years of devotion to study, during which he was "for a long time railed at, or what is worse, treated with contempt, M. Boucher de Perthes had to struggle against universal prejudices, but by his perseverance and courage received first some tardy support, until at length this depressed truth broke forth in science."*

PHILALETHES.

MISCEGENATION.†

DURING the last two months there have come reports to Europe of the remarkable form of insanity which is just now affecting the people of Federal America. We should not have thought it worth while to take any notice of the publication of the pamphlet under review, if it did not give us some insight into the extraordinary mental aberration now going on in Yankeedom. It is useless, however, longer to close our eyes to the phenomenon now appearing in the New World. Before we saw this pamphlet, we expected that it was merely a hoax, which some political wag had concocted for the benefit of his party. But an examination of the works dispels that illusion, and shows that the author attempts to found his theory on scientific facts!

There is, indeed, just enough of the current scientific opinion of the day, and also enough of literary merit, to enable readers of this work to get very much confused as to the real nature of the opinions and theory therein propounded. The anonymous author starts with some general assertions, and if these be admitted, the theory is not so utterly absurd as it otherwise appears. Monogenists will, indeed, be astonished at the use made of their doctrine; but it is from the

* See Vogt, *Vorlesungen über des Menschen*, § 18. [A translation of this work is announced to be in the press, and will soon be published as one of the series of works brought out by the Anthropological Society. EDITOR.] *Anthropological Rev.*, i, 80; Dr. Knox, *ib.*, ii, 261.

† *Miscegenation, or the Theory of the Blending of Races, applied to the American White Man and Negro.* Trübner and Co., 1864.

opinions they have advanced, that the author deduces his theory. Many subjects are touched upon in this pamphlet; but we shall merely have space to examine into the truth of a few of the general propositions on which this theory is based. The manner in which the conclusions of science are misrepresented, and in which gratuitous assertions are made, calls for an early exposure.

In the preface we read, "Science has demonstrated that the inter-marriage of divers races is indispensable to a progressive humanity." This is totally false, and such an hypothesis as the superiority of mixed races rests on no scientific data, and is contradicted by many well-known facts. The public are warned against reading the work by the author, if they desire "what is vulgarly known as amalgamation." It is because the word "amalgamation" is justly so dreaded, that the author coins another word. "Miscegenation" will not find a place in future scientific literature, but it will be most useful as indicating the state of knowledge respecting Anthropology in America in the year 1864.

The author is more modest than some of his countrymen; for he says, "He appeals from the *imperfect* American of to-day, to a more perfect race that is yet to appear on this continent." We had generally supposed that the Yankee was the highest possible development of humanity—at least, in his own opinion.

The first chapter opens with these words: "The teachings of physiology, as well as the inspirations of Christianity, settle the question, that all the tribes which inhabit the earth were originally derived from one type. Whether or not the story of Adam and Eve is accepted by all as absolutely true, the fact which is represented has been demonstrated by history, and by the latest discoveries bearing on the origin of the human family."

This extract is the key-note of the whole book. The author is not content in appealing to science, but invokes revelation to help him. It is quite out of our province to follow the writer in his arguments as to whether the "inspirations of Christianity settle the question:" but we protest against the assertion, that physiology lends its support to such a proposition. As to the unity of man's origin being demonstrated by history, such a statement is hopelessly absurd—such a question not coming at all within the reach of history to solve. And as to the "latest discoveries," we must profess ourselves entirely ignorant of any such discovery which lends a shadow of evidence to such an assumption.

The author declares he has examined all recent "physiological"

works, and he has found "that the most profound investigation has proved conclusively not merely the unity of the race, but the equality of the black with the white under the same advantages of education and condition." If this were true, it would indeed show what a sad state the science of man must be in, and there is just enough semblance of truth in the statement to make us regret that so little has yet been done to diffuse the conclusions to which science has arrived—or, at least, to which it inclines.

The cool manner in which the author makes assertions is to be commended to those who formulate their views from the depths of their own consciousness, and not from scientific data. For instance, he writes: "The inhabitant of a northern clime is always white; of an extreme southern clime always black." We can forgive men in England making such a statement, but for an American, who surely must know that the colour of the American Indians is in no way influenced by climate, such a statement reads like wilful misrepresentation.

The author affirms that Dr. Draper has asserted, that "the slight peculiarities of structure which distinguish the white from the black," are due to the action of the liver! The position of the foramen magnum is asserted to be the same as that of the European—the author entirely ignoring the fact, that Prichard has long since been shown to be entirely in error on this point.

The author quotes largely from Professor Draper; and the following is given as an extract from his writings, and we have answered a few of the questions he has asked:—

"Are not all of us liable to the same diseases? [No.] Have not all a tendency to exist the same length of time? Is it the temperature of our body, the beat of our pulse, the respiration that we observe—are they not everywhere alike? [No.] Or, turning to the manifestations of the mind, is there not among all the tribes of our race a belief in the existence and goodness of God? [certainly not] in unseen agents intermediate between Him and ourselves? and in a future life? [No.] Do we not all put a reliance in the efficacy of prayers, and all, in our youth, have a dread of ghosts? [No.] How many of us, in all parts of the world, attach a value to pilgrimages, sacrificial offerings, fastings, and unlucky days, and in our worldly proceedings are guided by codes of law and ideas of the nature of property! Have we not all the same fears, the same delights, the same aversions [no], and do we not resort to the use of fire, domestic animals, and weapons? Do we not all expect that the differences which surround us here will be balanced hereafter, and that there are rewards and punishments? [Certainly not.] Is there not a common interpretation of all the varied forms of funeral ceremonies? [no]—a common sentiment of the sacredness of the tomb? [No.] Have we not

always, and do we not everywhere, set apart a sacerdotal order who may mediate for us?" [No.]

The author says that only a copper-coloured race can exist permanently in America :—

"The white people of America are dying for want of flesh and blood. They have bone and sinew, but they are dry and shriveled for lack of the healthy juices of life. The author has often sadly marked the contrast to be observed in social or intellectual gatherings of the negro and the white American. In the latter are seen unmistakably, the indications of physical decay. The cheeks are shrunken, the lips are thin and bloodless, the under jaw narrow and retreating, the teeth decayed and painful, the nose sharp and cold, the eyes small and watery, the complexion of a blue and yellow hue, the head and shoulders bent forward, the hair dry and straggling upon the men, the waists of the women thin and pinched, telling of sterility and consumption, the general appearance gaunt and cadaverous from head to foot. You will see bald heads upon young men. You will see eye-glasses and spectacles, false teeth, artificial colour in the face, artificial plumpness to the form. The intercourse will be formal, ascetic, unemotional. You will see these characteristics so universal that they become rather the rule than the exception. Where the cheeks on one grown person will be rounded and tinted with the healthy blood, ten persons will have them pale and hollow. Turn now to an assemblage of negroes. Every cheek is plump; the teeth are whiter than ivory; there are no bald heads, the eyes are large and bright, the head and shoulders are always up and back, every face wears a smile, every form is stalwart. The white man is going to seed; the black man is adding vigour and freshness to the trunk. The white child is born with full cheeks, but as he approaches manhood they fall away and are lank and thin. Nature did not intend that men's cheeks should be hollow. The dentists' signs in every locality only tell feebly of the sickness and racking pain that accompanies this weak and diseased condition of the jaws. Our professional men show more than any the lack of healthful association with their opposites of the other sex. They become thin, and gaunt, and old, when they should be strong and vigorous. They are told they need exercise; they take long walks in the morning air, and come back more cold and shriveled than ever. They need contact with healthy, loving, warm-blooded natures to fill up the lean interstices of their anatomy."

Certainly this work gives us some new ideas, for we have been taught that the dark races have originated nothing, but this author says, "The white race has originated nothing"! The cause of the recent disturbances in New York, we suppose, was jealousy of the Irishman to the Negro, for we here read: "The white Irishwoman loves the black man, and in the old country it has been stated, that

the Negro is sure of the handsomest amongst the poor white females" !

Professor Huxley has recently declared that the "slave-holding interest" indulges in far greater absurdities than the abolitionists; but we confess we have never read any statement respecting the physical characters of the races of man which for absurdity equals the following :—

"The fusion, whenever it takes place, will be of infinite service to the Irish. They are a more brutal race and lower in civilisation than the negro. The latter is mild, spiritual, fond of melody and song, warm in his attachments, fervid in his passions, but inoffensive and kind, and only apparently brutal when his warmest emotions are brought into play in his love for the white woman. The Irish are coarse-grained, revengeful, unintellectual, with very few of the finer instincts of humanity. Of course we speak of the labouring Irish as they appear in this country. The Milesian is a child of the sun. He was originally of a coloured race, and has all the fervid emotional power which belongs to a people born in or near the tropics. His long habitation north, however, and the ignorance in which he has been kept by misgovernment, have sunk the Irishman below the level of the most degraded negro. Take an equal number of negroes and Irish from among the lowest communities of the city of New York, and the former will be found far superior to the latter in cleanliness, education, moral feelings, beauty of form and feature, and natural sense. One of the evidences of degeneracy which have been pointed out in certain of the negro races has been the prognathous skull, the projecting mouth, the flat and open nostril. Yet this is a characteristic as true of certain portions of the people of Ireland as of the Guinea African. The inhabitants of Sligo and Mayo, portions of Ireland under peculiarly bad government, have developed these precise types of features. The people have become thin-legged, pot-bellied, with mouth projected, head sloped, nostril distended; in short, they exhibit all the characteristics by which we have marked the lowest type of the negro. The blending of the Irish in this country with the negro will be a positive gain to the former. With education and an intermingling with the superior black, the Irish may be lifted up to something like the dignity of their ancestors, the Milesians. The poets who sang of the ancient Irish, of the wisdom of their rulers, of their bards and warriors, forgot, perhaps, that this noble old race was of a very dark complexion, and native of the far south. The red hair and beard so common in Ireland is a sure indication of the southern origin of its people. When a very dark people move to a northern climate the physiological change effected by the temperature is to convert the black into red hair."

A chapter, entitled, "Heart-Histories of the White Daughters of the South," is too indecent for us to quote from; we believe that only a Mulatto or a Mulatress could have strung together such licen-

tious absurdities. We think we have said enough to show the quality of this work. It is painful to read, and more painful to reflect, on the injury it may do to a people who are influenced by its teachings.

That this question has also its comical aspect, may be seen in the subjoined extract, which we beg our readers to compare with Mr. Blake's edition of Broca's *Human Hybridity*, p. 28, and reconcile as best they can :—

“MISCEGENATION.—The *New Hampshire Patriot* gives facts to show that the female abolitionists who went as teachers of the Negroes at Port Royal, have been very successful in at least one branch of juvenile development. It says : ‘Private advices from Port Royal say that many of the female abolitionists who went to Port Royal to teach the little niggers how to read and pray, have been obliged, within the past few months, to abandon their black charges and open nurseries on their own private account. An officer informed us recently that no less than sixty-four spinsters had contributed to the population in and about the neighbourhood of Port Royal harbour. The climate seems to favour population even more than the production of Sea Island cotton by paid Negro labour. The information furnished us by the officer concerning the sixty-four little Mulattoes has been confirmed by the testimony of the Rev. Liberty Billings, Lieutenant-Colonel of the First South Carolina regiment, who is here in consequence of ill health. He says it is a sad truth.’”

ANTHROPOLOGY IN ITS CONNECTION WITH CHEMISTRY.*

To Dr. William Herapath belongs the honour of suggesting to the public mind a difficulty in connection with the Hebrew account of man's origin, which had, we believe, not been noticed before. We can hardly realise the fact, that it was necessary to address a body of educated medical men in such terms, and we are still more astonished to think that such language could have brought on the speaker marks of disapprobation. We shall leave chemists and medical men to settle this matter as best they can, we simply chronicle the following objectionable passage delivered to the medical faculty assembled in congress at Bristol in the year 1863.

“From our days of boyhood it has been most assiduously taught

* Address on Chemistry in its relations to Medicine and its Collateral Sciences, by W. Bird Herapath, M.D. Bristol, 1863.