

THE MUSEUM AND THE SCHOOLS.

THE management desires to extend the educational influence of the Museum by a plan for systematic participation in the work of the schools of Philadelphia. The first step towards the realization of this plan is an invitation issued, in co-operation with the Board of Education, to the principals and teachers to bring their classes to the Museum in order that they may use the collections and the lectures that will be provided in connection therewith to illustrate those studies upon which they may be engaged relative to the history of man, and those that are concerned with the various peoples of the world. This invitation is extended in the firm belief that the observations which may be made by children while visiting the Museum under competent guidance and good instruction will give them a more faithful notion of the world's peoples than they can acquire from books alone, and will give greater zest to their reading. The impressions received from such observations are lasting and they serve the purpose of refreshing and stimulating the pupil to further observation and inquiry. The influences thus brought to bear on the young people are of the most humanizing character. The immediate result is to lighten the task of the schoolroom for teachers as well as for pupils and the ultimate result is to broaden the children's outlook upon the world and its inhabitants.

For the lower grades of the public schools the games and playthings of the American Indians and everything pertaining to the life of Indian children are used for purposes of illustration. The higher grades are shown how the different peoples of the world live and how the human race has lived in time past and at different stages of its development.

In case it may be the desire in individual instances to concentrate upon any given group of people or period of history each principal and teacher is asked to specify with regard to the particular phase of culture or the particular people about which the classes should be informed.

The toys, games, pastimes, arts, industries, the occupations in peace and war, the dress, ornaments and dwellings will be illustrated by the actual objects used in these several connections by the world's peoples, both ancient and living, and by lantern slides.

A special feature of the children's afternoons in the Museum will be the talk illustrated by means of the lantern, in the auditorium of the Museum. Lecturers specially trained and qualified to address children will be on hand on these occasions and will explain to the classes in the simplest and most direct language the subjects chosen for illustration.

BABYLONIAN SECTION.

A MAGICAL SKULL.

A UNIQUE object is contained in the Museum collections from Nippur—a human skull the surface of which is inscribed with a magical text. The skull is well preserved despite the fact that it has been broken into many pieces, happily well put together by the Museum's experts. Unfortunately the text is too much worn to allow more than a few words to be deciphered. Among these can be read "spirit," "lilith," "thou, spirit!"; so that we are justified in supposing that the inscription is of the same magical order as that which appears in the magical bowls from Nippur, some of which have been described in previous numbers of the JOURNAL. A few names appear; one of them is a Mordecai ben Saul, a good Jewish name. The other

two names are Persian; one Gaspar is of interest as related to the Gaspar (Caspar, Jaspas) of the legend of the Three Wise Kings.

The use of a skull opens up some interesting vistas in magical arts. The human head and like gruesome objects are part of the common apparatus of the necromancer down to our own time. It represents his connection with and power over the spirits of the dead; gives him as it were a material *point d'appui* for his art. But it is a sacramental link not only with the dead but as well, by an easy extension of idea, probably based on primitive animism, with the world of spirits, especially those which are noxious. Hence the natural use of dead men's bones in the witches' brew. It is more difficult to understand the use of such uncanny things in the practice of love-charms; yet in the Greek erotic incantations the same objects are used, as in Theocritus' second Idyll, while an Arabic charm prescribes among the components of a philtre a piece of a broom taken from a cemetery,—making a rather disgusting love-potion! But a love-charm involves the incantation of nefarious spirits, of Hecate and her company, and so makes use of these animistic links with the spirit-world.

One particular phase of skull-magic is the art of the "speaking head," a human skull, which, properly prepared and enchanted, could utter oracles by its mouth. The Talmud has a reference to this art of "asking" a skull.* And the Sabians, an esoteric heathenish sect which survived in northern Mesopotamia till late in the Christian era, had, according to the *Fihrist* and other Arabic authorities, elaborate rites for the evoking of these horrible oracles.† The modern

necromancer's skull may be a reminiscence of those obsolete rites. Skulls appear to have been used also in the Græco-Roman sorcery.*

It may be observed that the skull has been regarded, among various peoples, as especially the seat of life. Probably this belief was due to the observation of the extraordinary durability of the skull, which, as palæontology shows, may last intact for millenniums. For the same reason certain vertebræ have been regarded as the connecting link between the body and the departed soul. Among the ancient Arabs the word for skull is also used of the soul,† and Dr. Speck informs me that the North American Indians preserve the skulls of the animals of the chase with the object of their easy reincarnation.

But it is through another category that we can best explain our skull and its magical inscription. It falls into that class of magic which is preventive of the evil eye, a large category which includes malicious spirits as well as human beings. Against this terror, one of the chief prophylactic agencies was the use of things horrible or obscene—as though the possessor of the evil eye had more sensibility than the user. The same idea underlies the grotesque and repellent funeral rites of primitive man, at least according to one school of anthropologists. Or is the practice a kind of homeopathy?

James of Edessa tells how the heathen Syrians used the dried human head as a prophylactic,‡ and the ancient Taurians, according to Herodotus, and some Caucasian tribes, employed the skulls of their

* Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius*, 141.

† Wellhausen, *Reste des arabischen Heidenthumes*, 161, 164.

‡ Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites* 362.

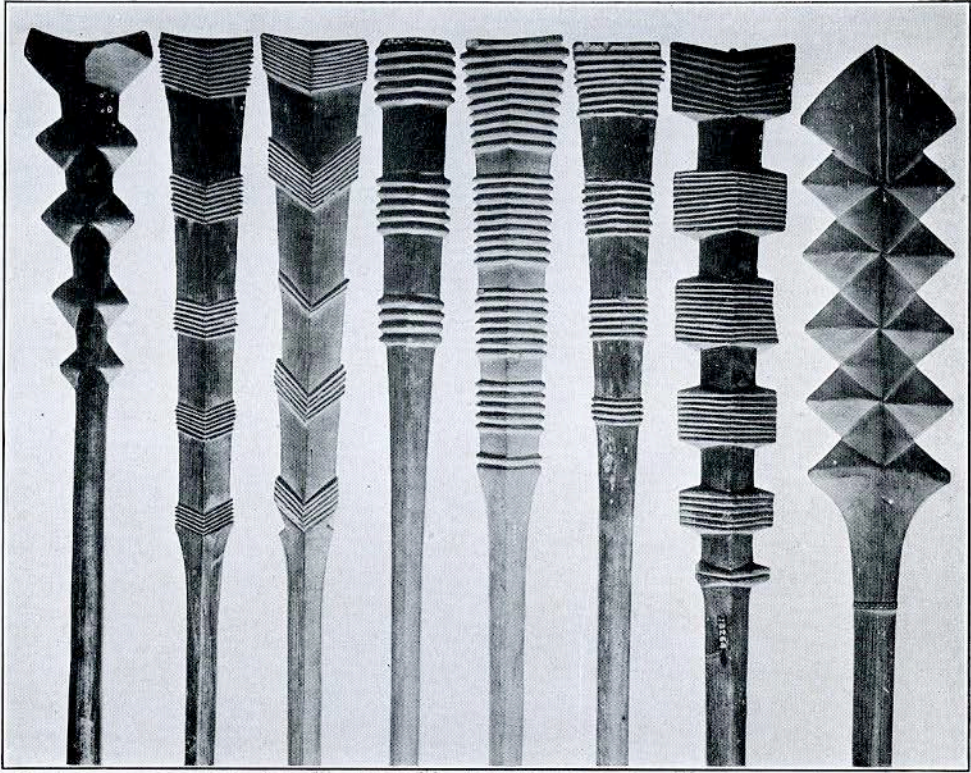
* *Sanhedrin*, 65 b.

† See Chwolson, *Die Sabier und der Sabianismus*, ii, 150.

enemies in the same way.* In Italy a tiny skull-talisman is worn as an atropaic against the Jettatura or evil eye, † just as a skeleton-talisman is also regarded as

efficacious. ‡ In the same way our skull with its inscription, both sign and charm, was regarded as a potent deterrent to the evil eyes of man and spirit.

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Fig. 46.—Samoa State Clubs.

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SECTION OF GENERAL ETHNOLOGY.

THE E. W. CLARK COLLECTION.

POLYNESIA.

AMONG the objects belonging to the same group and to the same collection as those from New Zealand, which were described and illustrated in the June number of this journal, are also some weapons and implements from Samoa, Hervey Islands, Austral Islands, Tonga, and one most

interesting club from the Marquesas, which will here be brought to your attention.

The islets mentioned above all belong, together with New Zealand and others, to the Polynesian group of the South Pacific, and to be able to duly appreciate the beautifully shaped and carved war-clubs, paddles, and adzes, which are here illustrated, it will be necessary to bear in mind some few facts about the people to whom they once belonged.

* Seligmann, *Der böse Blick*, ii, 141. † *L. c.*

‡ Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, 340.