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[THE TWO CHILDREN OF THE EARTHMEN TRIBE, FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA.]

THE EARTHMEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

MAN has always been exceedingly curious about himself. Tell him of a monster, and he will rush anywhere to see it. But of all the sciences, that concerning himself has been the least pursued, and the most needed. Priests have anathematised it; and among every race and nation that ever existed, its study has been shunned with horror. Whence this universal fear—this wholesale timidity on a subject fraught with almost Divine interest? Is it instinctive? Is it natural? We think so: because among barbarous tribes the idiot is said to be inspired, and the afflicted tormented by demons. Epilepsy has given birth to the most monstrous superstitions. Even the early Christians, in their ignorance, attributed many things to the Evil One, which were the results of disease and malformation. And in the present day, enlightened as it is, deformity is viewed with abhorrence. The hunchback, as in the days of Shakespeare, is still the hobgoblin of the young, and the dislike of the aged. Indeed, anything concerning the human race unlike the mass, or presenting features that call into question the dogmas of churches, is sure to be made the subject of mystery and fear. Man dreads himself—and that is the whole truth of it. And the more intelligent he is, the more sensitive does he become as regards the origin, honour, and future of his common species. He will ridicule those who philosophise on the matter, as he did the eccentric but clever Mombodo; yet he will at the same time devour the most extraordinary stories—gobble up what he considers the fictions of Mandeville—and almost break his neck to have a peep at a "What is it?" Tales of men with their heads beneath their shoulders, and others with dorsal extremities, like monkeys, and of pigmies, have been rife in every age; and no doubt gave rise to much of the belief in witchcraft and the supernatural, which, even in this day, pervades the higher as well as the lower circles of human intelligence.

But, unhappily for romance, travellers now bring with them living evidence of the truth of their discoveries; and physiologists can elaborate, out of the heterogeneous mass of materials placed before them, the most convincing theories. They can tell us that, under certain impoverished conditions, man will dwindle away, and finally disappear from the earth; and that, had it not been for wars, revolutions, and natural convulsions, this world would long ago have been unpeopled. The Jews owe their existence to their dispersion. Their intermixture with the

blood and institutions of the Gentiles gave them another lease of life; for most assuredly, had they lived together, and intermarried so closely as they did, and could not avoid, they would have been swept away, and become a tradition, just as much as the Asiatic races that existed before the deluge are become merely traditions. We have before us numerous melancholy examples of the truth of this law of population. First, the morals of a people become corrupted; then their intelligence decays; afterwards, as a natural consequence, their physique is enervated. Wars and pestilence then mow them down, and, sinking gradually into blind ignorance and helpless indolence, they become albinos, dwarfs, idiots, beasts; and finally are extinguished. In fact, the in-breeding has bred them out. The tribes of pigmies recently discovered in Central America—those which are existing in Ethiopia, in Burmah, in Siam, on the borders of China, among the Himalayas, and at the Cape of Good Hope (at least, in Southern Africa)—constitute ample evidence of this punishing and avenging law of nature. All these extraordinary links in the chain of humanity of late years have attracted much attention; and from the circumstances we are about to mention, will no doubt attract much more.

Our illustration gives the portraits of two pigmies which have been brought to this country from the Orange River, in Southern Africa—one of the boundaries, as our readers will doubtless remember, of the territory in which some of the arduous operations incidental to the war in Kaffirland were conducted. They are a male and female, and belong to a variety of the human family which has received the general designation of Earthmen. Their origin is supposed to be analogous to that of the Bushmen and Hottentots, but their habits are totally distinct. The Bushmen build huts and live in little villages, but the Earthmen live in excavations—and hence their name. They scratch hollows in the ground, to shield them from the wind. These hollows they line with a little straw, and then cover themselves with a light grass mat, out of which project their feet towards a fire which burns in the centre of the hollows. A mat is hung to windward, by the aid of two rods, placed perpendicularly, and another mat, fastened to a third rod, is spread horizontally over the hollow. This is all the protection the Earthmen possess against the heavy dews and atmospheric changes of night. In the morning they roll up their mats, and, as they have neither cattle nor cultivated grounds, and make no use whatever of culinary utensils, the traveller may pass within a quarter of a mile of their rude and wretched

encampment without discovering them. The Earthmen shun the face of a white man, and as they usually cower down behind some inequality in the ground when they see one approach, they are seldom seen by Europeans. They assign as a reason for their living in hollows, that, were they to build huts, as the Bushmen do, their enemies would know where to find them, and might come in the night, burn their villages, and destroy them. They further allege, that to build huts would attach them too much to one place, and they could not then follow the game on its migrations. Game is their chief food, when it abounds; but there are periods in the year when it recedes beyond their reach: they then live on locusts, which the women of the tribe gather during the season. They also eat the larvae of ants and a root resembling garlic. They are sometimes so straitened for food as to be compelled to gnaw the skins of the animals they have previously killed. The tribe thus destitute of every vestige of civilisation is found along the whole extent of the Orange River; but they so cautiously avoid the settlements, that many colonists who have resided in Port Natal and other districts of South Africa for years, have never seen them. This Lilliputian race of beings have, however, the character of great docility, and are said to be faithful to those to whom they attach themselves.

The pair—a boy and girl—which have been brought to this country, are now being exhibited. Both are very diminutive, but well formed. They have the appearance of being about nine years of age; yet the boy is confidently stated to be fourteen years of age, and the girl sixteen. How small they are for their age will be seen when it is stated that they are not more than three feet four inches in height. However, there is nothing misshapen or dwarfish in their appearance. Their slenderness and shortness of stature is a peculiarity of the native race to which they belong, the males of which are seldom more than from four feet to four feet four inches in stature, and the women a little less.

The boy's name is "Martinis"—the girl's "Flora." Their complexion and skin are of a warm brown of a pleasing hue. Their physiognomy is intelligent and engaging. Their lustrous black eyes have a soft and affectionate expression, indicative of the perfect docility and mildness of disposition which characterise them. The nose is the worst feature in the face. Between the eyes there is scarcely any projection; and the nose is so spread as to be almost confounded with the cheeks, until the nostrils appear. They are wide, but very little raised. The lips are rather thick, and the mouth wide; the teeth white as those of a sheep; the forehead high and narrow, and the cheek-bones broad. The hair is of remarkable colour and texture. It resembles the wool of a black sheep—strong, short, and coarse. It grows in stiff spiral lines, so that the scalp is everywhere seen. Both children are naked to the middle, and bare-legged, but do not appear to feel the cold. They answer questions intelligently, and have evidently good natural faculties. The little girl has a slight impediment or stutter in her speech, but this may probably be overcome, as it is not observable when she sings. Both children have an excellent ear for music, and sing the "Buffalo Gals," "I'm going to Alabama," "Poor Uncle Ned," "Britons never shall be Slaves," and "Cheer Boys, Cheer," with evident enjoyment. They also dance together, and Flora, when dancing a schottische, moves about with the easy and natural grace peculiar to her sex. Martinis is a fine little savage, beautifully formed, and with well-developed muscles. Flora is also a nicely-made child, of more slender and delicate frame, but perfectly healthy.

The dress worn by the boy Martinis is said to be that usually worn by the males of his tribe. He wears a tuft of small feathers on his forehead; beads hang from his temple and around his neck, and from a coloured girdle of beads round his loins are suspended strips of skin and the tails of animals. The girl wears a head-dress and lapet of coloured beads, a leopard-spotted piece of wool around her waist, and strips of hair cover her legs. Her demeanour is modest and feminine. Both children display so much aptitude for learning and for imitation, that in a few years it is probable their acquirements and habits will in no respect differ from those of the English children with whom they may be brought up.

As a connecting link in the human family, they must excite the liveliest interest. When they were first brought to England—which was about a year ago—if taken into an apartment, they would climb chairs and examine the looking-glasses and other objects with intense curiosity; but if suddenly spoken to they would crouch down upon the floor like half-tamed animals who dreaded the keeper's lash. Their language consisted of a few hoarse, guttural sounds, but now they have been so far reclaimed from savage life as to be able to speak English correctly, and differ little, except in form and colour, from the habits of children of a similar age.