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by W.H. Holmes.**

Contributors

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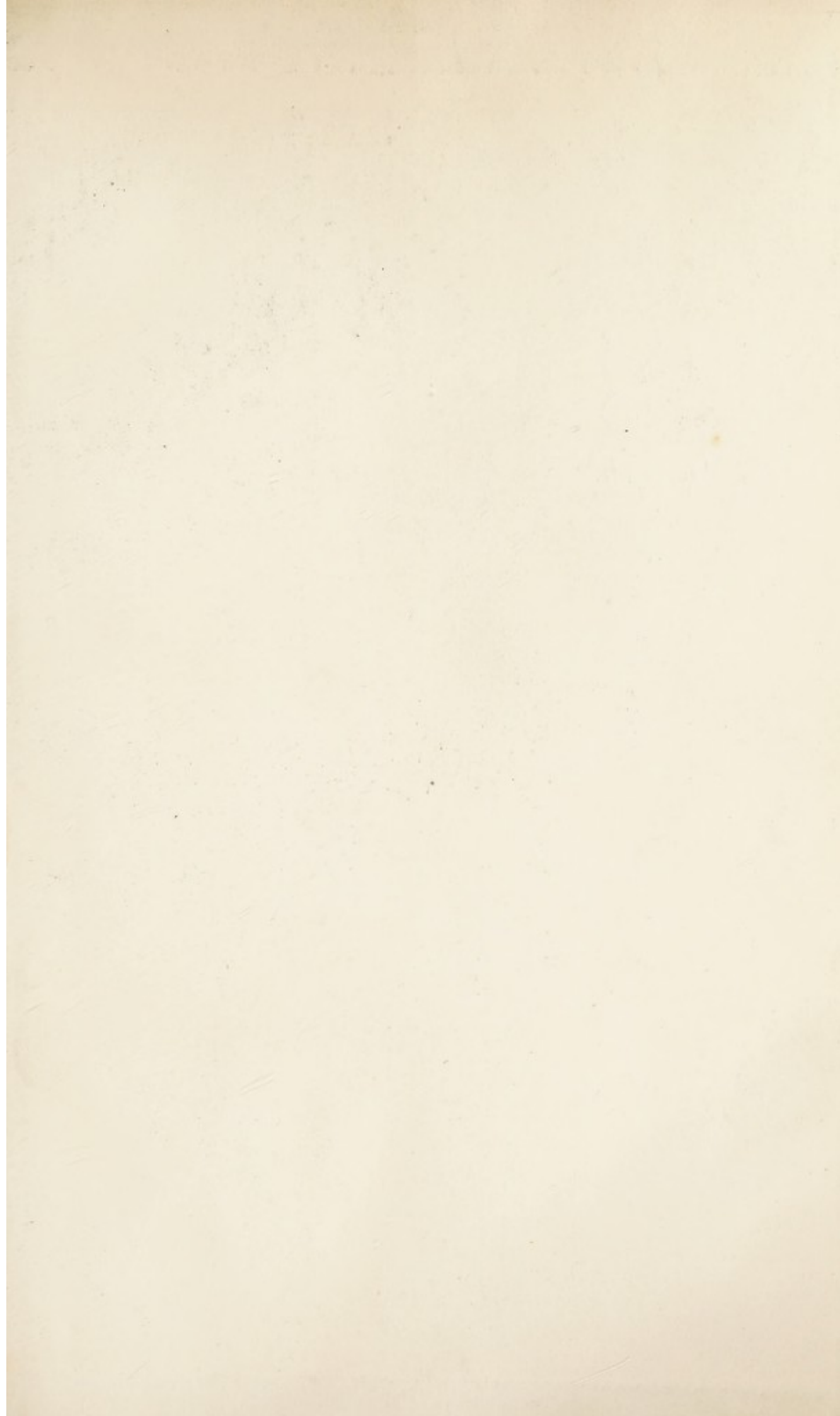
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ON THE
RACE HISTORY AND FACIAL CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE ABORIGINAL AMERICANS

BY

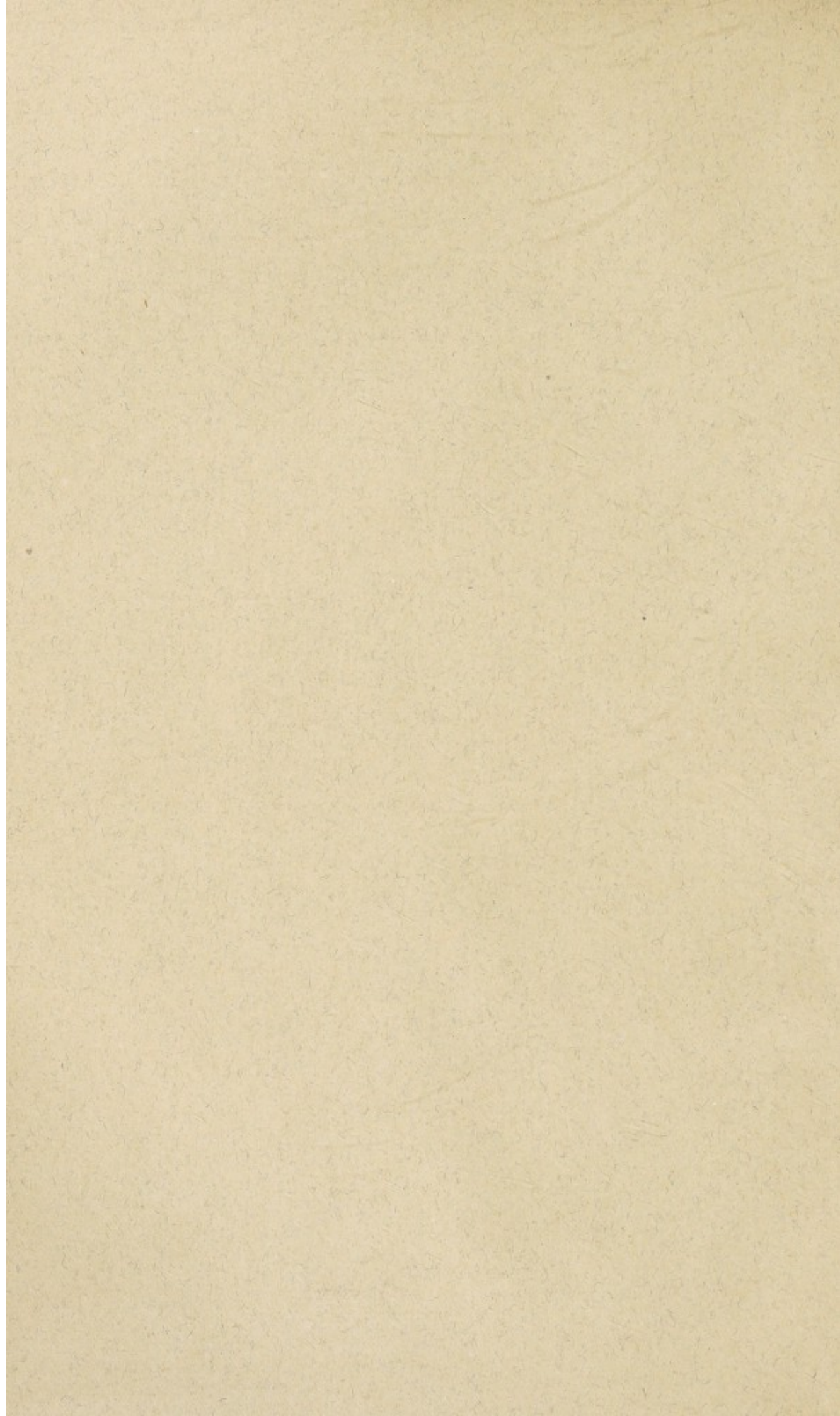
W. H. HOLMES

FROM THE SMITHSONIAN REPORT FOR 1919, PAGES 427-432
(WITH 14 PLATES)



(PUBLICATION 2610)

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1921



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TICS OF THE ABORIGINAL AMERICANS.**

By **W. H. HOLMES.**

[With 14 plates.]

BIRTH OF THE RACE.

Among the many marvels that modern science has brought to light none is more wonderful and none less welcome than that which defines the place of man in the scheme of nature—his origin and his kinship, physical and intellectual, with the whole vast range of living things. It is made clear that the several races of man to-day represent the culminating stages of a branching series which connects back through simpler and still more simple ancestral forms to the primary manifestations of life in the remote past.

As outlined by the researches of the naturalist, the story of the becoming of the race is simply told. It is observed that the forms taken by the evolving life series were necessarily due largely to the environmental conditions under which they developed—that a world of waters molded forms fitted to live and move in the water, that a world of land developed distinct types accommodated to the conditions of the land, and that an environment comprising both land and water brought into existence types adjusted to both land and water. On the land there were further adaptations to special conditions of the particular environment. The inhabitants of the plains differed essentially from the inhabitants of the forests, for while the one employed the four members of the body in locomotion, the other used the feet to walk and the hands to climb and to do; and here is found the point of departure in the shaping up of the special being called man. Fitness for higher things was determined by the forest, for life among the branches and the vines developed the grasping hand, and the hand made man a possibility. The hands alone, however, were not responsible for the full result, since had the race continued to dwell in the forest man would to-day be merely a simple, undeveloped denizen of the woodland. The feet made the conquest of the earth possible. It is assumed that by reason of some undetermined contingency, such as great increase in population, the depletion of the forest food supply, or other gradually developing

cause, the children of the woodland cradle were compelled to seek their fortunes in the open, and the real struggle of existence began, the struggle that perfected the man. The grasping hands, freed from the forest and free to act independently of locomotion, led to the use of improvised implements in meeting foes, in preparing food, in constructing defenses and shelters, and finally to the shaping of tools, the initial step in the evolution of art, while the feet enabled their possessor to move with freedom in the pursuit of varied callings. Thus the hands, with the aid of the feet, directed by the rapidly developing brain, conquered the world.

SPECIALIZATION OF THE RACES.

Prolonged study of the available traces of man's origin and early movements as recorded in the book of books—the geologic strata—has led to the view that the natal place of the race must be sought somewhere in southern Asia or on the great islands of the southern seas. As conceived to-day, the outward movements of the human pioneer from the primeval home were at first and for a long time hesitating and slow. New conditions had to be met and diversified obstacles overcome, the exigencies of existence tending to develop the capacities of both brain and hand, and new environments to modify and emphasize the physical type of the isolated groups. We may think, for example, of certain groups of pioneers as they ventured into the open turning their faces to the west, occupying the valleys, skirting the shores of the inland seas, and climbing the intervening ranges until, in the fullness of time, the shores of the Atlantic were reached. Centers of population would develop at many points, and in western Europe traces of occupation recently uncovered date back to remote periods. From these centers expansion would take place in many directions. Not finding a passage to the western world beyond the shores of Britain, the populations would from necessity spread to the east, where they would encounter other currents spreading to the north from the primeval home over the vast expanse of central Asia, these latter representing the great Mongol race which to-day comprises, with its many blends, the majority of the human kind. Other currents from the southern home would pass to the east, occupying the shores of the chain of seas bordering the Pacific, peopling the countless islands that dot the waters, reaching in due course the far northeast, where further progress would be arrested by the broad expanse of open sea now known as Bering Strait. The differentiations of types gradually produced by early isolations would, as populations increased, be lessened by constant blending along the borders, and to-day the process of obliteration of race distinctions is progressing in ever-increasing ratio.

THE AMERICAN RACE.

In turning our attention to the American race, we study their facial characters in search of clues to their origin—their relationship with and their derivation from the complex of known peoples of the Old World. It is generally conceded that the red race is a new race as compared with the great races of the Old World. There have been found in America, after prolonged research, no certain traces of occupation extending back beyond a few thousand years; whereas, in the Old World there are abundant traces of human occupation whose age must be reckoned not in thousands, but in tens of thousands of years. The earliest skeletal remains in the New World are of men representing the perfected stage of physical development, the crania corresponding closely with those of civilized man; whereas, in the Old World the earliest finds are of forms hardly differentiated from the status of the higher apes.

It is not assumed that the pioneers of the Old World, who in following the tendency to wander reached the shores of Bering Sea, arrived in large numbers—that there was anything that could be called a migration, but that stragglers from Asiatic centers of population found their way across the intervening waters to the shores of America; and the process, continuing from century to century, involved not a single people nor a few more or less fully differentiated groups, but representatives of many of the brown-skinned peoples of the Asiatic shore land and of the islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. That some such process was involved is assumed from the fact that the American race to-day does not, as a whole, distinctly duplicate any known type of the Oriental groups, its homogenous character being due doubtless to a long period of race isolation, the diversified elements thus becoming blended into a new and distinctive people. It is probable that this condition was brought about or greatly accelerated by the eastern progress of the northern Asiatics, who for an indefinite period have occupied the shores of Bering Strait and Sea, blocking the way to the more southern groups.

FACIAL CHARACTERS AS A KEY TO ORIGIN.

Although there has been more or less blending of the Eskimo and the Indian along the line of contact from Alaska to Greenland, the two races in their totality stand well apart. The very pronounced gulf between them is well shown by comparison of the typical Indian of the northern interior (pl. 1, fig. 1, and pl. 2, fig. 1) with the typical Eskimo (pl. 1, fig. 2, and pl. 2, fig. 2), the latter type being characterized by the broad face and tilted eyes of the Mongol. The Indian, whose bold features stamp him as one of the ablest of the races,

occupies to-day the entire continent from the Eskimo boundary to Patagonia. We find no closely allied types in the adjacent Provinces of Asia, but there are approximations among the dark-skinned peoples of southern Asia, and probable kinship is suggested by plate 3, figures 1 and 2, the first a typical American Indian of New Mexico and the other a native of the island of Formosa. That the latter may be thought of as representing one of the groups which gave rise to the American race is reasonable, and relationships are further suggested by plates 4, 5, and 6. Here on the one hand we have a pair of young Apache Indians of Arizona and on the other two southern Asiatics, the one from the island of Sumatra and the other from the Philippines. That the facial evidence does not point to an exclusive island origin is suggested by a comparison of the face of the Navajo woman (pl. 7, fig. 1) with that of the Mongolian man shown in plate 7, figure 2. It is to be expected that with the incoming currents of Asiatic peoples there would be a considerable Mongol element, and this, though submerged, would tend to reappear. It should be noted, however, that Eskimo influence may have, in cases, extended as far south as the Navajo country.

The contrasting facial characters of the American Indian with the typical Asiatic Mongol is suggested by plate 8, figures 1 and 2, the first an Indian woman of the Great Plains and the second a Kalmuck of central Asia; and this contrast is still further emphasized by comparing the bold profile of a Cheyenne Indian (pl. 9, fig. 1) with that of a typical Mongolian (pl. 9, fig. 2).

In South America there appears no definite trace of the Mongol, the facial type being characteristically Indian. Plate 10, figure 1, and plate 11, figure 1, show typical Indian faces of to-day, and corresponding closely are certain skillfully modeled faces employed in embellishing earthen water bottles by the ancient Peruvians (pl. 10, fig. 2, and pl. 11, fig. 2). These striking physiognomies differ somewhat in form and expression from the incisive faces of the northern Indians, but show no definite traces of exotic admixture.

EXCEPTIONAL AMERICAN TYPES.

Notwithstanding the homogeneity in type of the Indian tribes from the Eskimo boundary on the north to Patagonia on the south, there are in the sculptured and modeled faces of ancient Mexico and Central America suggestions of facial conformation so distinctive and unusual that they have become the subject of much speculation, the problems involved being among the most interesting that have arisen regarding the history of man and culture in America. The problem to be solved is whether or not these exceptional features which appear in Toltec and Maya art are due to the intrusion of

Asiatic elements in comparatively recent centuries. The accompanying illustrations will sufficiently present the supposed evidence of foreign intrusion. Plate 1, figure 1, and plate 11, figure 1, illustrate physiognomies of normal Indian type. These are to be compared with plate 12, figure 1, which reproduces an ancient earthenware face of a type found in the State of Vera Cruz and believed to be of Aztec or Toltec origin. They were probably employed in the embellishment of earthen vessels or as architectural details. The well-modeled, smiling faces are broad and flat, with weak chins, and high cheek bones and distinctly narrow tilted eyes. Still more unusual are the faces shown in plate 12, figure 2, and plate 13, figure 1, sculptured heads of a type quite common as architectural embellishments in the ancient temples of Guatemala. In general contour the face contrasts strongly with that of the average Indian, the features lacking all the boldness and virility of the tribes of to-day. At the same time there is in the smooth, roundish, placid face, the small mouth, and in the tilted eyes a decided suggestion of the features of the Orient, and especially of the placid countenance so characteristic of sculptured images of Buddha (pl. 13, fig. 2). The suggestion of Asiatic influence is strengthened by a study of other ancient sculptural and architectural remains found in great plenty in Mexico and the Central American States. An example is shown in plate 14.

Numerous authors have found in these and other features of Maya sculpture convincing proof of the early introduction of Asiatic influence in Mexico and Central America, while other writers, with equal confidence, express the view that the features in question are without particular significance, being nothing more than normal variants of native types. The Maya peoples were exceedingly versatile and in their treatment of the human physiognomy were much given to the grotesque and humorous. This tendency was emphasized by the practice of introducing images of grotesque animistic deities into every phase of their sculptural and plastic art. The calm, well-modeled Buddhalike faces appear out of keeping with their vigorously modeled neighbors, and, if not portraits of individuals, they would seem at least to represent a well-marked and familiar facial type, whether native or otherwise. Mention may be made of other suggestive features of Maya culture which tend to support the theory of foreign influence. To one at all conversant with the architecture of the East Indies these Central American ruins have a familiar look not readily explained save on the theory of relationship in origin. This impression is not readily overcome, and it is further observed that the suggestion does not end with general effects, for the architectural details and especially the sculptural embellishments and the manner

of their application to the buildings confirm the impression. In the pose of figures the parallelism is truly remarkable, and that this parallelism could arise in two centers of culture (and two only) among totally isolated peoples occupying opposite sides of the globe challenges belief. It is further observed that in these ambitious structures there are suggestions of underlying crudeness as if the ideals of an advanced culture had been abruptly imposed upon the crude beginnings of a comparatively primitive people.

It is objected that in Maya art there are found no sculptured animal forms absolutely identical with those of the Old World. The elephant, for example, so important a sculptural subject in India, does not appear in these ruins, although there are snout-like features that suggest the trunk. On this point it should be noted that even if visits of Buddhistic priests are allowed, full identity in the sculptured forms of animals could hardly be expected, since the priests, devoted to the preaching of their doctrine, would hardly be architects, sculptors, or draftsmen, and the concepts introduced by them by word of mouth would from necessity be worked out by native sculptors, using life forms with which they were familiar or monsters drawn from their Pantheon of deities.

With respect to the manner in which elements of Asiatic culture could reach middle America in the early Christian centuries—the period of Buddhistic propagandism—it may be said that the sea-going capacity of the ships of that period was very considerable, and it is thus not impossible that by design or by accident Buddhistic devotees should have landed on the shores of America. Neither is it impossible that these devotees of a creed, determined to carry their doctrines to the ends of the earth, should have coasted eastern Asia, reaching the continent of North America by way of the Aleutian Islands. The journey from Alaska to middle America would be a long one, but not beyond the range of possible achievement for the fanatical devotees of Buddhism. The suggestion that the hypothetical sunken continent of the Pacific may have served as a bridge is deserving of but slight attention.

The writer of this sketch of a fascinating subject wishes to say in conclusion that he appreciates its shortcomings, for it is intended to be suggestive merely rather than final; but he finds gratification in the thought engendered by the study that whereas but a few generations ago our world outlook was exceedingly limited and our positive knowledge but a hint of the whole truth, the time is fast approaching as a result of the ever-widening scope of scientific research when we shall comprehend at a glance the world and its inhabitants, present and past, with the ease with which we now contemplate our local environment or with which we view a story thrown upon the screen.



1. AN AMERICAN INDIAN MAN. COMPARE WITH
FIGURE 2.



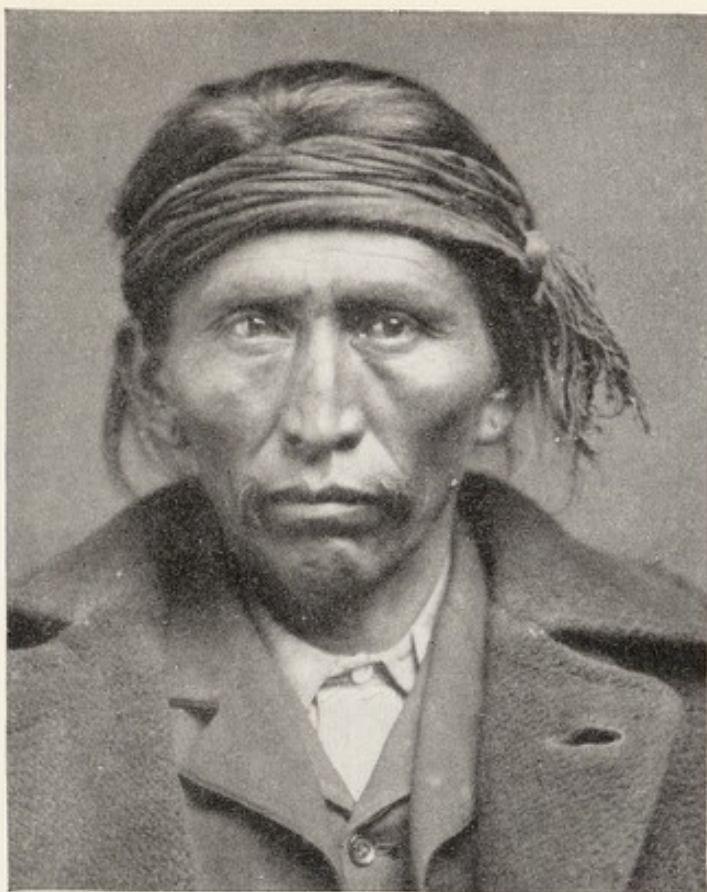
2. AN ESKIMO MAN OF ALASKA.



1. AN AMERICAN INDIAN WOMAN. COMPARE WITH
FIGURE 2.



2. AN ESKIMO WOMAN OF ALASKA.



1. AN AMERICAN INDIAN MAN. COMPARE WITH
FIGURE 2.



2. A NATIVE OF FORMOSA.



YOUNG APACHE INDIANS, FOR COMPARISON WITH NATIVES OF SUMATRA AND THE PHILIPPINES, PLATES 5 AND 6.



A NATIVE OF THE PROVINCE OF ISABEL, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, WHOSE FEATURES SUGGEST THE AMERICAN INDIAN TYPE.



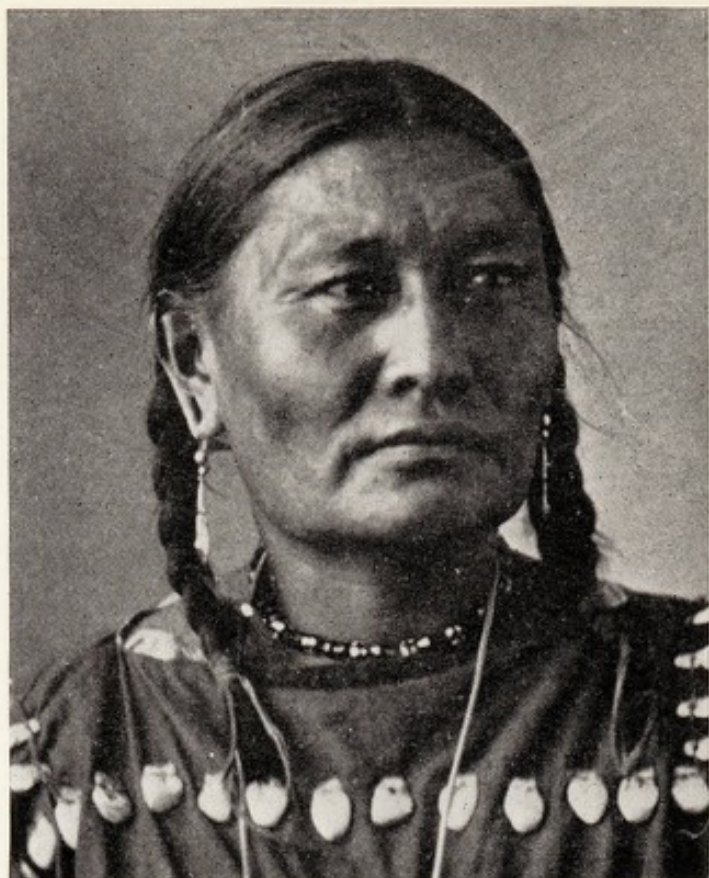
A NATIVE OF PAGI ISLAND, SUMATRA, STRONGLY
SUGGESTING THE AMERICAN INDIAN TYPE.



1. A NAVAJO INDIAN WOMAN.



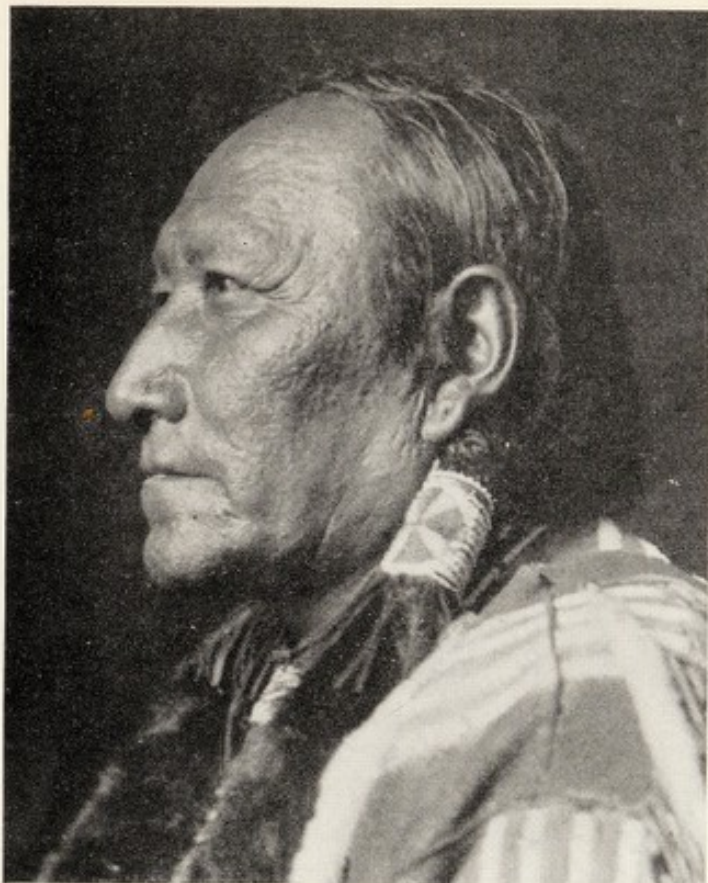
2. AN ASIATIC MONGOL.



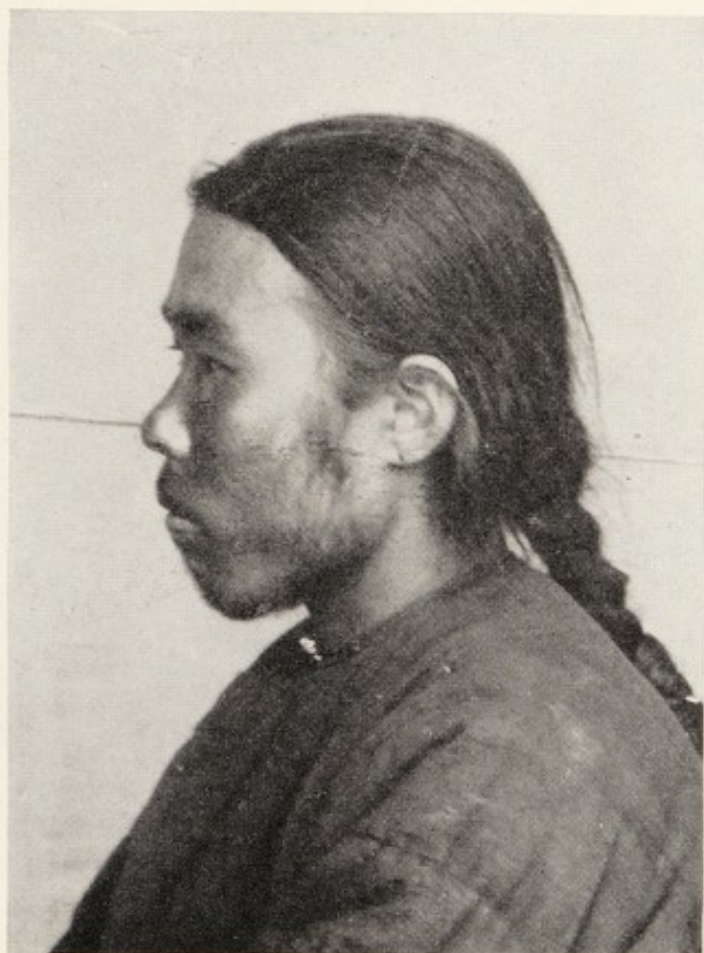
1. A CHEYENNE INDIAN WOMAN. COMPARE WITH
FIGURE 2.



2. A KALMUCK WOMAN.



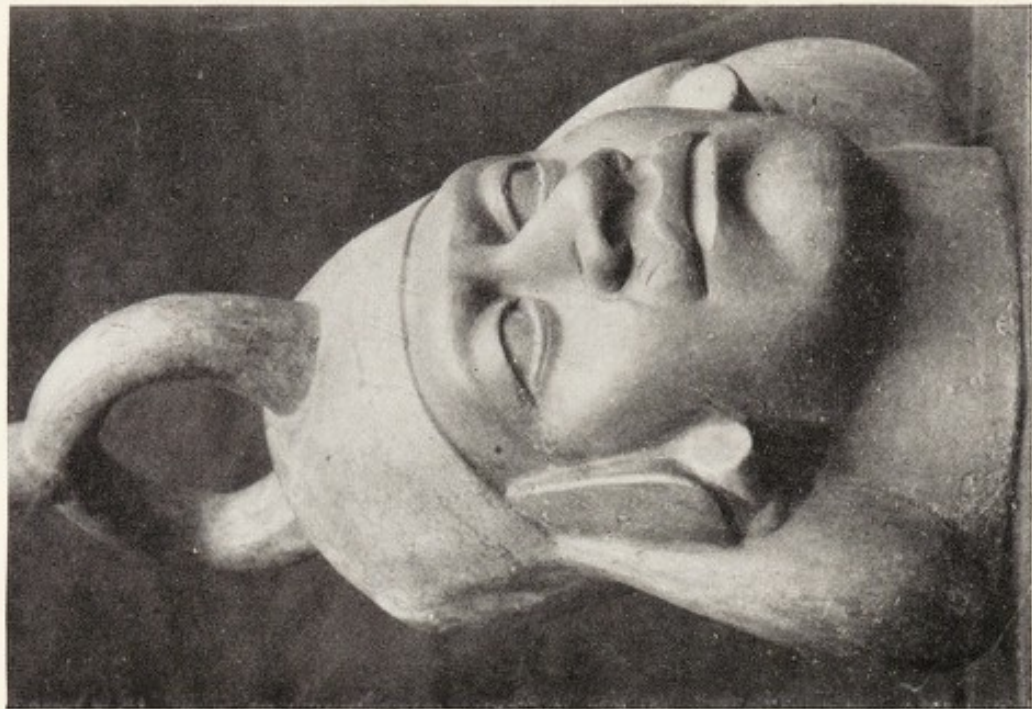
1. AN AMERICAN INDIAN PROFILE, FOR COMPARISON WITH FIGURE 2.



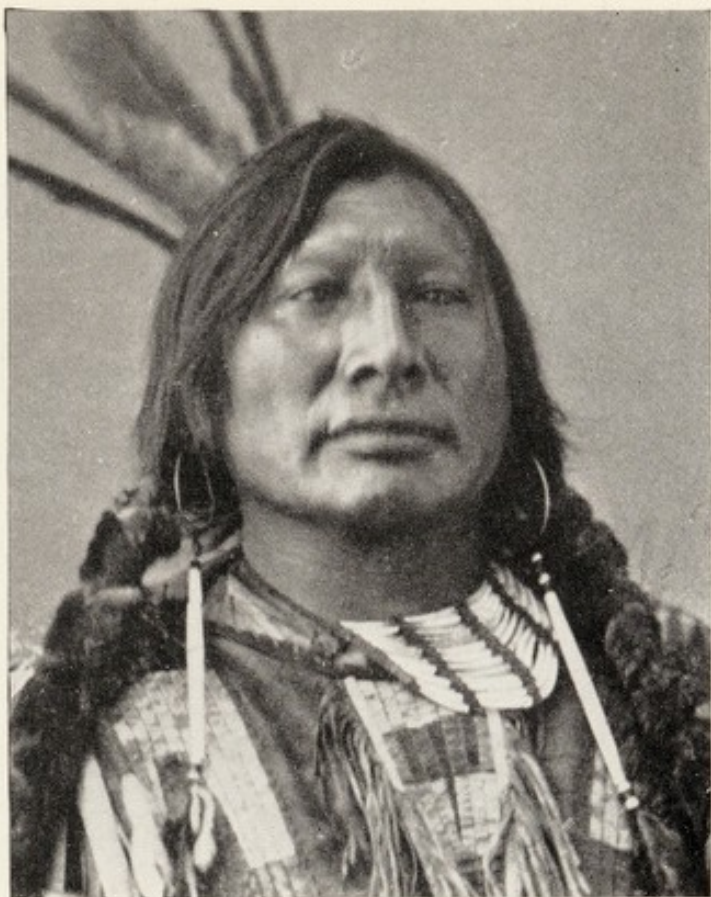
2. AN ASIATIC MONGOL PROFILE.



1. AN AMERICAN INDIAN OF TO-DAY.



2. A PREHISTORIC PERUVIAN INDIAN, STRONGLY
MODELED IN CLAY.



1. A TYPICAL AMERICAN INDIAN, FOR COMPARISON
WITH FIGURE 2.



2. A PREHISTORIC PERUVIAN INDIAN, MODELED IN
CLAY.



1. A PREHISTORIC AZTEC FACE MODELED IN CLAY, FOR COMPARISON WITH TYPICAL INDIAN FACES.



2. A SCULPTURED HEAD OF THE ANCIENT MAYA INDIANS OF GUATEMALA.



1. A REMARKABLE SCULPTURED FACE OF THE ANCIENT MAYA INDIANS, GUATEMALA, FOR COMPARISON WITH FIGURE 2.



2. THE SCULPTURED FACE OF AN EAST INDIAN BUDDHA.



STUCCO MASTERPIECE, TEMPLE OF THE BEAU RELIEF, PALENQUE, YUCATAN.

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