

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1901.

THE MIND OF PRIMITIVE MAN.*

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ONE of the chief aims of anthropology is the study of the mind of man under the varying conditions of race and of environ- ment. The activities of the mind mani- fest themselves in thoughts and actions, and exhibit an infinite variety of form among the peoples of the world. In order to understand these clearly, the student must endeavor to divest himself entirely of opinions and emotions based upon the peculiar social environment into which he is born. He must adapt his own mind, so far as feasible, to that of the people whom he is studying. The more successful he is in freeing himself from the bias based on the group of ideas that constitute the civil- ization in which he lives, the more suc- cessful he will be in interpreting the beliefs and actions of man. He must follow lines of thought that are new to him. He must participate in new emotions, and under- stand how, under unwonted conditions, both lead to actions. Beliefs, customs, and the response of the individual to the events of daily life, give us ample oppor- tunity to observe the manifestations of the mind of man under varying conditions.

The thoughts and actions of civilized man and those found in more primitive forms of society prove that, in various

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* Address of the retiring president before the American Folk-Lore Society, Baltimore, Dec. 27th.

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