

# MYSTERY OF MAN. STORIES IN SKULLS.

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EGYPT AND AUSTRALIA.

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PROFESSOR ELLIOT SMITH  
AMAZED.

"My investigations in Sydney have resulted in some interesting discoveries, confirming certain theories I have long held," said Professor Grafton Elliot Smith, the gifted Australian, who is to-day Professor of Anatomy at the Manchester University, to a "Herald" reporter on Saturday. "The wealth of the material lying to the hand of the anthropologist in Australia has amazed me," he added.

Professor Elliot Smith will take up a skull and tell you the history of the man to whom it once belonged—what manner of man he was, and what influence went to the making of him. Just as we can distinguish an Englishman from a Hindu, or a Frenchman from a Chinaman in the flesh, so he can detect racial differences in the skull.

"There is an embarrassing amount of material waiting to be worked up here," he said. "Officially, nothing has been done for anthropology at the University. What has been done here has been done in their spare time by those who are teaching other subjects. At a good many universities at home there are people whose business it is to do anthropological research work, and in course of time that will, presumably, have to be done here. The question is not only one of studying the material which has already been collected in the museums, but also of studying the aboriginals themselves and the various island people. A good deal has been done in Melbourne by Professor Baldwin Spencer, but there is much more to be done. As some of these races are dying out, it is work that has to be done at once, if at all.

"In Australia there are a great number of people who have come into close contact with the blacks, and have a great deal of information about them, the full value of which they do not realise. That information is waiting to be collected. This question of the study of native races is of very great practical importance. It is of importance politically, and that is one of the matters that is going to be discussed by the anthropological section of the British Association Congress—the need for studying ethnology, because of its vital political importance. A great many of the native wars which the British Empire has been involved in during the last century—such as the Indian mutiny—have been largely due to the misunderstanding of native customs, the European officer quite unwittingly offending against some ideas which to the natives are of vital importance.

## AUSTRALIA'S OBLIGATIONS.

"Now that Australia has taken over the administration of Papua, and is also in close contact with the other Pacific islands, it will

administration of Papua, and is also in close contact with the other Pacific islands, it will become more and more important for Australia to take up this anthropological work, so that the officers who go to responsible positions among these native races may have some accurate knowledge of their customs and beliefs. This is a matter which is being very seriously considered in England at the present time, and strong pressure is being brought to bear upon the Government to insist that all officers who go out in the colonial service shall have some training in anthropology to fit them for their positions. It is hoped that as an outcome of the discussion something will be done to stimulate the study of anthropology in the universities—that someone will be appointed in each university who will be responsible for the anthropological work, and be competent to instruct students or advise people who desire to go out to such places as I refer to. The difficulty is that this subject does not come into the curriculum, but some means should be found to carry on research work. It is quite likely that during the next couple of years someone will be appointed in connection with each university to be the head of the anthropological department. This is largely due to the influence and recommendation of last year's British Association meeting at Birmingham. It has been difficult to make the politicians realise the importance of the matter, but I think that before long the universities will be turning out trained men for the Indian and colonial service. Some elementary training, at all events, will be required of those who go out to this work—more especially in the Crown colonies.

"Of course we cannot expect to train a man to be familiar with the customs of all the people of the world, but we can stimulate an interest in those things and bring people to see that these native races do not think in the same way that Europeans do. One frequently meets Civil servants who have returned from abroad expressing regret that before they went out they did not acquire some knowledge of this kind. It is the business of the universities to see that such knowledge can be supplied if there is a demand for it.

## EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN AUSTRALIA.

"Since I have come here I have found an immense quantity of material available for study. I have been especially interested in the fact that the Australian aboriginals and the neighbouring people, especially those of Torres Straits, have customs of mummification which are very similar to the ancient Egyptian method. There is no doubt at all that these customs have been derived by some devious means from the Egyptians. I did not know until now that the evidence was so definite and positive as it is—especially in the Torres Straits region. I have been looking at mummies from Darnley Island, in the Macleay Museum at the University, and the specimens in the Australian Museum. It is remarkable how curiously they have retained a lot of the old Egyptian customs.

"I have also been examining a series of Australian aboriginal skulls, chiefly for the purpose of finding out if there were any trace of admixture with alien people, for the charac-

purpose of finding out if there were any trace of admixture with alien people, for the characters of the skull are as distinctive of race as the characters of the face of the living man. There, again, I have been surprised at the distinctness of the alien traces which are to be found in the collections of Australian skulls which were supposed to be those of pure aboriginals. There is very positive evidence of admixture with several other races; and this is particularly interesting at the present moment, because it fits in with a statement which Dr. Rivers is going to make at the meeting of the British Association in Melbourne in reference to the culture of the Australian aboriginal. According to him, their customs and practices show very definite evidence of this racial admixture. Hitherto most people who have studied the skulls have maintained that the race was comparatively pure, but there is sufficient evidence of admixture with other people to justify Dr. Rivers's inference from the study of the culture.

#### EGYPT AND CIVILISATION.

"I had hoped to be able to devote more time to this interesting study," added Professor Elliot Smith, "but my plans have been somewhat upset, because I have committed myself to a course of lectures at the University, under the auspices of the Extension Board. I had prepared slides for individual lectures, but to make them into a connected course has meant a considerable rearrangement of my material. Although my lectures will deal with Egypt, I shall deal with it, not so much for the intrinsic interest of Egypt itself, but because of the light it sheds upon civilisation in general, not only because Egypt has preserved more ancient records than other countries, which throw this light on civilisation, but because I believe Egypt has also contributed much more largely than most people are willing to believe to the development of the earliest civilisation. That is the case I hope to make out in the course of lectures I begin at the University on Tuesday night."