

be immediately riveted by the account of the Human Leopard and Alligator Societies (first revealed to most Englishmen by the writings of the late Mary Kingsley), the late (1912) activity of which recently drove the local Government to action and provoked an interchange of questions in the Imperial Parliament.

Ethnography in the widest sense, linguistics (especially on the Bantu affinities of Ekoi and on its secret signary, "Nsibidi"), folklore, native art, even archæology, all these, with much valuable natural history, go to make up a fascinating volume full of direct and irresistible appeal. The achievement is worthy of one who, besides his administrative experience, can claim to have made

defiance of the protests of Dutch scholars, whose noble efforts, like those of Raffles (pp. 55, 76, 238), are freely acknowledged. The work clearly illustrates the real significance of "Boro Budoor" as a sculptured record of the history of Buddhism, the type being that of the Mahayanistic or northern Church (pp. 222, 235), not the Hinayanistic or southern type, as was claimed for his Church by the late royal visitor. W. W. SKEAT.

#### THE BRILLIANT FIREBALLS OF JUNE 14.

ON June 14 at 8h. 4m., when the sun was shining, and at 10h. om., in the bright moonlight, very large meteors made their appearance.

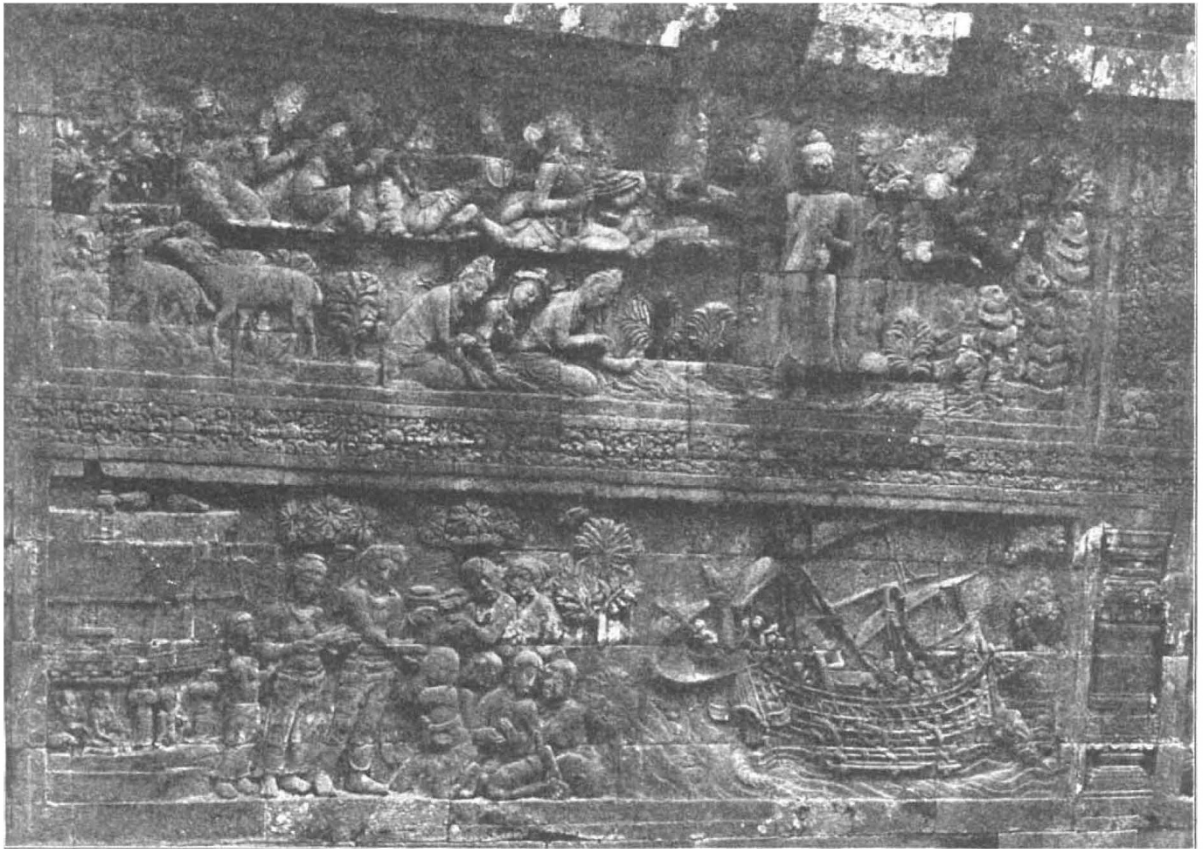


FIG. 2.—Reliefs of the Boro Budoor. From "Monumental Java."

history in companionship with the late Boyd Alexander.

(3) The record of official ineptitude and rapine pictured in Mr. Scheltema's erudite and enlightening "Monumental Java" is almost incredible. Thus (p. 240) Mr. Scheltema, with biting sarcasm: "We are told in legendary lore of statues which flew through the air . . . dissolving into space; the statues of the Boro Budoor developed that faculty in an astonishing degree!" The climax was reached in 1897, when the late King of Siam, on his visit, was invited and allowed to remove (p. 244) from that "superb temple, whose soul is the soul of Java," eight cartloads of irreplaceable statuary! Such vandalism was in

The former gave a startling flash, even in the daylight, and the latter was strikingly brighter than the moon, according to the testimony of several observers.

Neither of the fireballs passed over any part of England, though witnessed by many persons from the eastern and south-western counties respectively. The earlier fireball at 8h. 4m. appeared over the sea off the eastern coast near Harwich and Aldborough, and it had numerous spectators in Kent, Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. The other passed above the sea far west of Land's End, and had a long and horizontal flight of 490 miles directed from south-east to north-west from over L'Orient, about sixty miles south-east of Brest

in France, to eighty miles west of Dunmore Head in the south-west of Ireland.

The following are the resulting heights, velocities, &c., of the two fireballs, which have been computed from a considerable number of descriptions forwarded to me from many parts of the country:—

1913, June 14.		
G.M.T. ... ..	8h. 4m.	... 10h. 0m.
Magnitude	= much brighter than	brighter than
Height at first	= 77 miles	54 miles
" end	= 29 "	54 "
Luminous course	= 58 "	490 "
Velocity per second	= 22 "	26 "
Radiant point	= 263° + 64°	282° - 23°
Name of meteor	= ζ Draconid	ψ Sagittarid

Long as the flight of 490 miles undoubtedly is for the second fireball, it is probably much less than the actual course. When the object was last seen from Ireland it was really rising in the air, and was still burning strongly when low apparent altitude carried it behind either trees or buildings, as viewed by several observers. I suppose it is possible for a meteor to escape out of the atmosphere when its flight is horizontal and its material capable of withstanding absolute disintegration. We want more observations from the west of Ireland.

The daylight fireball at 8h. 4m. left a streak for about three minutes, and several of the observers state that a noise like thunder followed its disruption in two or three minutes. One person at Watford avers that he is certain the meteor was not more than twenty yards distant from where he stood, for he witnessed the object descend in front of some trees.

W. F. DENNING.

#### THE STATE AND MEDICAL RESEARCH.

A COMMITTEE with executive functions, to be known as the Medical Research Committee, has been appointed for the purpose of dealing with the money made available for research under the Insurance Act. The Committee is constituted as follows:—

The Right Hon. Lord Moulton of Bank, F.R.S. (chairman).

Dr. C. Addison, M.P.

Mr. Waldorf Astor, M.P.

Sir T. Clifford Allbutt, K.C.B., F.R.S., Regius professor of physic, University of Cambridge.

Mr. C. J. Bond, senior honorary surgeon, Leicester Infirmary.

Dr. W. Bulloch, F.R.S., bacteriologist to the London Hospital, and professor of bacteriology in the University of London.

Prof. M. Hay, professor of forensic medicine and public health, Aberdeen University.

Dr. F. Gowland Hopkins, F.R.S., reader in chemical physiology in the University of Cambridge.

Sir W. B. Leishman, F.R.S., professor of pathology, Royal Army Medical College.

The appointment of the Committee is the outcome of the final report of the Departmental Committee on Tuberculosis, which was summarised in an article in NATURE on April 24 (vol. xci, p. 191). In this report the Committee

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recommended the appointment of an Advisory Council and an Executive Committee, and both have now been constituted. The Advisory Council is to make suggestions, and to submit the Executive Committee's budget to the Government, and to advise the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is to frame a budget to be considered with the Advisory Council before being submitted to the Government; to determine the scheme of research work; to make periodic reports, and generally to organise and supervise research work.

The Departmental Committee suggested that the work of research could be carried out advantageously on the following, among other, lines:—

(a) A central bureau should be established and should be the headquarters of the Advisory Council and Executive Committee. The central bureau should have a statistical and sociological department, in the work of which should be included the coordination and correlation of results. With regard to statistical investigations, every effort should be made to utilise, where possible, and cooperate with the statistical departments of the different Government departments. Statistics should be so collected and framed as to be comparable with the existing statistics of mortality.

There should also be a library and publishing department. The central bureau should be under the immediate control of the Executive Committee.

(b) Clinical, pathological, bacteriological, chemical, and other scientific researches should be carried out by competent investigators employed by the Executive Committee in institutions approved by it.

(c) When the Government, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and after consulting the Advisory Council, deems such arrangements desirable, researches of the same nature as those referred to in the preceding paragraph should be carried out in an institution or institutions (including laboratories and hospital wards) which should be under the immediate control of the Executive Committee to the extent and for the purpose in question.

(d) Money should be available in order that special inquiries—e.g. of a statistical and sociological nature—should be carried out by the Executive Committee if necessary, independently of any particular institution.

(e) The question whether a sum of money, not exceeding 1000*l.* per annum, should be available as a prize or prizes for the best original research work done should be considered. The money should only be awarded if the discovery is of sufficient importance and utility.

As regards research workers the Departmental Committee recommended that some workers of proved and exceptional ability should be enabled to devote their whole time to research work, and should be given a definite and adequate salary, and be entitled to a pension. The Committee also considered that efforts should be made to retain for research work young and talented investigators who would otherwise tend to drift into other lines.

The Departmental Committee computed that the income for the purposes of research under the Insurance Act will amount to about 57,000*l.* a year, and the Medical Research Committee will be called upon to draw up a general plan of research to be entered upon at once, and to be carried out year by year. But before the Minister respon-