

Obituary Notices

Prof. Giuseppe Sergi

BY the death on October 17, 1936, of Giuseppe Sergi, professor emeritus of anthropology in the University of Rome, at the advanced age of ninety-five years, the science of man has lost not only its senior exponent, but also a student whose interests in that many-sided field of knowledge were both broadly distributed and profoundly rooted.

Giuseppe Sergi was born at Messina, Sicily, on March 20, 1841. He was educated at Bologna; and at the age of nineteen years, he took part in Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily. After that adventure, he devoted himself to scientific studies and in 1880 was appointed to a chair in the University of Bologna. Four years later he became a professor in the University of Rome, where he founded the Institute of Anthropology, of which he remained the head, occupying the chair of anthropology in the University until 1916, when he retired, receiving the title of professor emeritus. In retirement, however, he was far from inactive; and during the remaining twenty years of his life many publications, some of considerable importance, came from his pen. At the time of his death, he had made more than four hundred contributions to the printed literature of science, and in addition had written frequently on social and political subjects.

Sergi's early published work, of which the first recorded item appeared in 1868, was concerned with the history of certain concepts in philosophy; but it was not long before he manifested his interest in ethics and psychology. Like many of his countrymen, he had come under the influence of Herbert Spencer. Not only did he contribute an introduction to an Italian version of Spencer's system of ethics; but also he himself wrote a history of moral philosophy, and contributed to the discussion of Spencer's conception of the State as an organism. Psychology, however, proved a more lasting, or at least a more prominent, interest in his mental development, to which he returned time and again. He was one of the first to give attention to experimental methods in this science. Nor did he neglect psychic manifestations, upon which he produced a book in 1880; but here his point of view had special reference to the biological aspect, an aspect which is prominent in all his not inconsiderable work on abnormal and criminal psychology. His "Principi di Psicologia sulla Base della Scienza sperimentale", first published in 1873, appeared in several revised editions, and he was the author of a number of works on this subject of an authoritative character. He also wrote with understanding on the methods of pedagogy and discussed the merits of the Froebellian system.

During the years, formative as they may be regarded, between the late 'seventies and the early 'nineties, Sergi's attention had been turning more and more towards what was his main life-work. In

1876 he had been joint editor of the Bulletin of the Academy of Medicine at Rome, and not long after, as his publications show, he began to take a serious interest in anthropology. In 1882 he published a paper on an improved method of measuring the facial angle. It was, however, in the following year that a decisive interest determined his future bent. In the introduction to a little volume published towards the close of his life, "Alba Longa" (1934), he tells us how in 1883, when he was spending a holiday in the valley of the Po with his friend Eduardo Brizio, the archaeologist, he was attracted by the problem of the ancient inhabitants of that region, and it was, he says, in three papers dealing with the Ligurians, the Celts and the necropolis of Villanova, which he wrote and published in that year, that he began the long series of studies which led up to and culminated in his determination of the physical characters and ethnic history of the Mediterranean race.

From this time onward, Sergi was busily engaged in preparation for his great work. Every skull to which he could obtain access, ancient and modern, not only from Italy and the Mediterranean, but also from every quarter of the globe, was carefully examined. The list of his papers published at this time bears eloquent testimony to his activity. Nor did he neglect collateral lines of inquiry. So far back as 1872, in a work entitled "History and Philology", a book of Indo-European studies, he had shown his interest in the derivation and history of the early peoples of Italy. He now gave renewed attention to the archaeology of the Mediterranean area, as appears in a book on the method of racial history, "Antropologia e Scienze Antropologiche" (1889), which is remarkable for its insight into the nature of the problem and its breadth of view, especially when the date of its publication is taken into account.

A second product of these years of preparation was an innovation in the method of craniology, which Sergi himself undoubtedly considered his most important contribution to the method of anthropological science. Anthropological method, he maintained, should not differ from zoological method; and, therefore, he argued, more attention should be given to the morphology of the skull: the anthropologist should be able to determine race by inspection, just as the zoologist is able to determine species, whatever it may be, and whatever region it may come from. In reaction both from the extravagant comparisons of the day, in which similarities and identities were discerned in widely distributed types solely on the basis of similarities of craniological measurement, and from fallacies of interpretation, Sergi proposed to substitute for measurement the observational examination of the skull, more especially when viewed *in norma verticali*. He therefore classified skulls into groups, according to the outline, which he distinguished by various terms such as

'beloid', 'ovoid', 'pentagonoid' and the like. These revolutionary views were first put forward at the International Anthropological Congress at Moscow in 1893. Commenting some years later on the results of his researches on the Mediterranean race, Sergi said that he had followed the various peoples of the Mediterranean with their racial names in ancient and modern history, and had examined the ancient and modern skulls of the peoples of Iberia, Liguria, Central and Southern Italy, Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt, and among them all, from Spain to Hissarlik, he had found about a dozen forms of skull, and these were common to all, while the ancient cranial form invariably resembled the modern, whatever foreign influence might have intruded. Further, he maintained that these forms did not occur at all among other peoples of Europe, such as Celtic, Germanic and Finnic—a statement, be it said, which has been regarded by his critics as at least subject to qualification.

Sergi's great work, "Origine e Diffusione della Stirpe mediterranea", which must be regarded as the crown of his labours, appeared in 1895. A German translation was published in 1897, and an English version appeared in 1901. This last contained so much additional matter as to constitute what was virtually a new work. It is of interest, and of indubitable importance in assessing Sergi's position, to bring "The Mediterranean Race" into relation with the anthropological thought of the time of its publication. Without in any way impugning Sergi's impartiality in viewing the facts, it may be said that he was inspired by a reaction against 'Germanism', the view then held in certain quarters that the early civilization of Europe, that is, the civilization of the Mediterranean, was due to the impact on the peoples of that area of a tall, long-headed, fair race, identified with the Aryans, who were held to have originated in Northern Europe, and further, were said to be represented in the modern population by the Germans and their racial affinities. In reply to this last contention, Sergi argued that the Germans were not to be distinguished from Celts and Slavs with whom they had always been associated, and with whom they were often confused; while the long-headed fair peoples of northern Europe, the Reihengraber and Viking types, were of Mediterranean origin.

Sergi, in fact, maintained that the neolithic population of Europe and the Mediterranean area, the Mediterranean race, the North African peoples, and the long-headed population of Northern Europe were three offshoots, or varieties of one original Mediterranean, or Eur-African race, which had sprung from Africa, and of which the Mediterranean was the centre of dispersal. The Mediterranean culture, which had ultimately blossomed into the civilization of Greece and Rome, was entirely a product of this Mediterranean race, developing a seed which had been brought from Asia Minor. So far was this development from being the work of the Aryan speaking peoples, that it was they, the peoples of Asiatic, and not European, origin who, he maintained, had been the destroyers of that culture. It will be remembered that at the time this was written, Sergi had before

him only the evidence of the so-called Mycenaean age, and the Minoan civilization of Crete, which would have added strength to his argument, was as yet almost unknown.

Any attempt to estimate the value of Sergi's work and methods in the subsequent development of anthropological studies must take into account at least two factors. Of these, one was the development at about the same time of the application of biometric methods to the study of man, which to a certain extent and with limitations rehabilitated anthropometric measurement as a means of observation; and the second was the publication of Deniker's classification of the races of Europe (1897 and 1904) and Ripley's work "The Races of Europe" (1901), which following more nearly traditional methods of study, appeared to afford greater precision in working than Sergi's scheme. Sergi himself, though continuing to employ his method of inspection and classification of form throughout his life, later abandoned his extreme attitude towards craniometry; but his arguments, though not adopted in full by his fellow anthropologists, have secured in an increasing degree that reliance should be placed on observational study of the skull to bring out differences which are obscured by or escape measurement.

Of Sergi's later work, considerable though it is in volume, little need be said here. It never attained the international importance of his Mediterranean studies. In 1908 he published the results of an application of his theories to study of the relation of the Mediterranean race to the peoples of Europe generally, and later extended his published work to cover the field of the races of man as a whole, and the question of the origin and descent of man, where he turned to consider the geological and palaeontological evidence bearing on anthropological studies. In this field his most important work is "L'Uomo", which appeared in 1911. That he maintained fully his mental vigour and flexibility to the end is demonstrated in a remarkable book "La più antica Umanità vivente" (1930), in which he skilfully interpreted the evidence of Rhodesian man in tracing a line of descent from Neanderthal man to representative types in modern races.

E. N. F.

Dr. A. Daniell

By the death of Dr. Alfred Daniell in Edinburgh on January 12, there passed one who had made a distinct mark in the world of science. Born at Llanely eighty-three years ago, he early showed a bent towards educational attainment. In consequence, while still a boy, he was sent north to pursue his studies in the University of Edinburgh. He had a distinguished course in arts, medicine and science, obtaining many successes and distinctions, particularly in science. For a time he was lecturer in the Medical School. He also worked under Prof. (afterwards Lord) Lister in the old Royal Infirmary, where he had charge of the Out-patient Department. He was the author of the well-known "Text Book of the Principles of Physics" published by Messrs. Macmillan and Co. so long ago as 1884, and "Physics for