

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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The Bury St. Edmunds Human Skull Fragment.

IN 1884 the late Mr. Henry Prigg, of Bury, exhibited before the Anthropological Institute a portion of a human skull supposed to be of Palæolithic age. The paper was printed, with an

Mr. Prigg in his paper gives the briefest possible description of the skull fragment, which consists of a considerable part of a frontal bone with five inches of the coronal and a little over two inches of the sagittal sutures, and an anterior third of the left parietal bone, and a small anterior portion of the right. At the time when Mr. Prigg's paper was read, the Spy crania had not been discovered.

When the Bury fragment was in my possession in 1884, for illustration, I carefully drew not only the plate published, but the left side and inferior surface. These two illustrations have remained in my possession, and are now photographically reproduced for the first time to one-half the natural size.

The coronal suture is very clearly seen in the left side view (Fig. 1, A A). The upper A shows the point of junction of the coronal with the sagittal. This point is also well marked in the Spy skull No. 2, as well as the line of descent to the lower A. If the point of junction of the two sutures is taken as a fixed position, the close agreement of the line of descent of the sutures and the contour of the two skulls is remarkable. The Bury contour and suture is shown by solid lines, and the contour and suture of the Spy skull by dotted lines. The point B shows the inner plate of the frontal sinus, and indicates the near position of the ophryon and supraorbital prominences on the outer plate.



{FIG. 1.—View of left side of the Bury skull fragment placed over the contour of Spy skull No. 2. Half natural size.

illustration from my pencil, in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. xiv. p. 51. The relic was found in 1882, in the parish of Westley, in brick earth at a depth of 7½ feet. Mr. Prigg was in the pit on the morning after the discovery, and could see

A comparison of the inner surface of the Bury fragment is equally confirmatory of its affinity with the Spy form. In Fig. 2, the junction of the coronal with the sagittal suture is again used as a fixed point, and the line of the coronal at C C is determined by the line of the sagittal at D. It will be seen by the illustration that the course of the coronal towards the right and left temporal bones is identical in the two examples. Part of the glabella showing the two plates of bone and air chamber is shown at E.

The mere identity of the course of the sutures is not of much importance; but the interesting point is, that when the sutures are taken as fixed guides for putting the Bury fragment in a natural position, the Spy contour results.

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The Coronal Rays of Passion-flowers.

THE filaments, or rays, forming the corona of Passion-flowers are structures of much interest. In 1790, Sowerby described them in *Passiflora carulea* as a "double row of horizontal, thread-like, radiated nectaries." His subsequent remarks, however, do not assure us that he regarded them as glandular, or as nectaries as we now define them. In Dr. Masters' "Contributions to the Natural History of the Passifloraceæ" (*Trans. Linn. Soc.* xvii.) no mention is made of distinct glandular structure, but Morren's opinion is quoted that "the corona is the seat of the perfume of the flower in *Passiflora quadrangularis*—a fact which he considers proved by the anatomical structure of the coronal threads, as also by the circumstance that if the processes in question be early removed the flowers remain scentless. In repeating this experiment, however," continues Dr. Masters, "I have not been able to satisfy myself of the absolute correctness of this statement. . . . Prof. Morren attributes to the conical pimple-like cells of the epidermis of the coronal filaments the formation of the odoriferous principle. These peculiar cells are found on the surface of the petals, and in the nectariferous portion of the tube of the flower. . . . We must await further evidence before we assume that in the Passion-flowers these cells really secrete the odorant principle." In Vines' "Students' Text-book," recently published, an emphatic statement is made that the coronal rays "are not glandular."

I have not yet had opportunity of studying *P. quadrangularis*, but a strongly and rather pleasantly scented hybrid, named *P. Buonaparteæ*, the parentage of which is stated to be *P. alata* × *P. quadrangularis*, has been under careful observation. In it the rays bear an apical tuft of glands, visible to the naked eye as a whitish knob. When magnified the glands are multicellular, relatively large, and in form remind one of those found in *Rubiaceæ*. The rays of the common *P. carulea* are devoid of

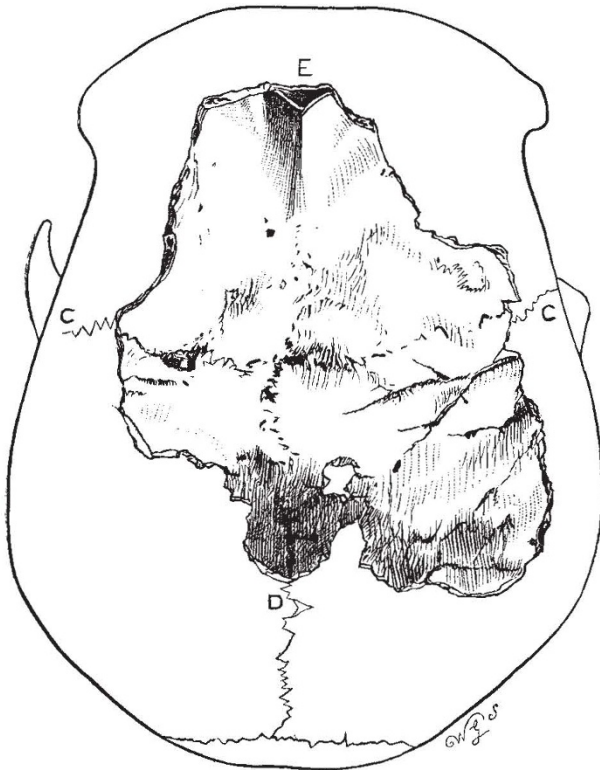


FIG. 2.—Inferior surface of Bury skull fragment placed over the sutures of Spy skull No. 2. Half natural size.

no traces of a grave, or old disturbance. A few yards from the pit mentioned, a workman reported the discovery of an entire human skeleton in the brick-earth, at a depth of 8 feet, some thirty years previously.