

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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Early Burial Customs in Egypt.

As the subject of early burials has been raised in NATURE with reference to the results of my excavations (pp. 461-2), I suppose some reply will be expected.

The whole question lies in a nutshell. Many thousand graves have been examined by one party of observers, and certain results repeatedly found. Many thousand graves have been examined by another party of observers, in other localities, and such customs are not found. Many people accept the results of both groups; Dr. Elliott Smith will only accept one group. To take an exactly parallel case: by one group of observers a dozen vases with figures of boats have been found among these graves, but by the other group (as I am informed) no examples have been found. The negative evidence of the latter cannot prove the uniformity of customs throughout the country.

To repeat here the statements of most careful observations already published would be a waste of space and attention. All the possible causes named on p. 462 for the accidental shifting of bones were fully before myself and other observers, as we together examined skeletons in un plundered graves; the cases were considered at length before shifting a single bone; and our most careful observations of facts cannot be disproved by differences of ancient custom in other places.

The custom of unflashing is well known in early Italy and Europe, and practised to this day (with ceremonial anthropophagy) in Africa. It is not surprising that it should also be present in Egypt. Indeed, the references to early anthropophagy in Egyptian ritual and myth would point to its being known, even apart from any physical evidence.

This year, again, we found two unquestionable examples showing the unflashing and wrapping of every bone separately in linen, without leaving any flesh or skin except a little on the skull. If the corpse had been buried entire—as Dr. Elliott Smith suggests—and subsequently plundered of valuables, no relatives would have then honoured it by breaking it entirely to pieces to rebury it. The unflashing must have been a primary burial ceremony; and these bodies were of the highest nobles of the third dynasty, and not merely of barbarous peoples. These were published, and the specimens subsequently exhibited for a month in London. I regret that Prof. Elliott Smith did not examine them, nor, indeed, honour our excavations by a single inspection during the years when he was in Egypt.

W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE.

Lord Morton's Quagga Hybrid and Origin of Dun Horses.

MAY I be allowed to return to the two suggestions made in NATURE of September 15, viz. (1) that Lord Morton's quagga hybrid was not a hybrid at all, and (2) that the dun colour in horses is not a reversion?

The first of these was based upon Prof. Cossar Ewart's statement in "The Penicuk Experiments" that "in their body colour none" of his zebra hybrids took after their zebra sire, and on the theory, now well proved, that chestnut is recessive to all other horse colours. It thus seemed impossible that Lord Morton's hybrid, which, according to its portrait, is undoubtedly a bay, could be the progeny of a quagga horse and a chestnut mare.

Some years ago I saw half a dozen of Prof. Ewart's zebra hybrids, and, although I did not observe them as closely then as I would now, they all impressed me as having the colour of their dams plus the striping they had got from their sire the zebra. A few days ago Prof. Ewart very kindly showed me over his stud again, and showed me also the skins of some zebra-horse hybrids, and these skins follow the dams in colour. A brown skin had a brown dam, a bay skin a bay dam, a chestnut skin a chestnut dam, and so on. The chestnut skin was highly

rufous, but it was still chestnut. There were also two brown-looking skins, yellowish below and about the flanks, belonging to the progeny of a zebra mare and a horse, which Prof. Ewart had not bred; but in this case, I understand, the colour of the horse is unknown.

In support of the first contention, I said it was very unlikely a quagga with whitish "points" and a chestnut mare should have a foal with dark points such as are seen in the portrait of Lord Morton's hybrid. Prof. Ewart points out that "crosses between zebras and ponies have, usually, dark patches at the fetlocks." That may be; but my point was that this would not occur if the dam were a chestnut. Every other colour but chestnut might be expected to give foals dark at the fetlocks.

The second suggestion, that dun is not a reversion, was based upon work of my own published last spring. At the time I had only few data with regard to dun, but it indicated dun to be dominant to chestnut, black, bay, and brown, and recessive to grey. Since then I have collected more than 200 matings concerning dun; and leaving out creams (which seem a variety of dun), dun roans, and cases in which the colours of the second parent were unknown, the following table shows the results of mating dun with itself and with the other five usual colours:—

Colours of Parents	Colours of Foals					
	Chestnut	Black	Bay	Brown	Dun	Grey
Dun × Chestnut...	3	—	4	—	9	—
Dun × Black ...	—	4	—	—	4	—
Dun × Bay ...	4	3	21	3	8	—
Dun × Brown ...	—	—	2	7	8	—
Dun × Dun ...	1	—	1	—	6	—
Dun × Grey ...	3	4	7	5	16	10

That dun is recessive to grey is shown by the fact that it gets no grey foals unless mated with grey, while its matings with the other colours, as well as with grey, show that it is dominant to, i.e. contains, them all. In addition, there are two matings of grey with grey producing duns, and two of grey with black producing duns.

It follows from the above that a dun foal can only be got when one parent is either dun, dun roan, or grey, and that dun can be a reversion, if it can be called such, to grey only. But it could not be expected that among 200 cases there would be no exceptions to the rule. However, I have found only four in which a dun foal had neither a dun nor a grey nor a dun roan parent. But these exceptions help to emphasise the rule, for in each of them one of the two parents was a bay—the second parent being brown in three cases and bay in one—and bay and dun are occasionally mistaken for each other. These cases may, therefore, be taken as misdescriptions.

The Przewalsky horse is a case in point. He has been called dun; but he is not such. He is a bay, a sandy bay, with a large bright nostril patch such as is found among light bay, sandy bay, and "yellow bay" Clydesdales.

I have just come upon the following in Darwin's "Animals and Plants under Domestication" which is *apropos* of the present discussion:—"I have endeavoured, but with poor success, to discover whether duns, which are so much oftener striped than other coloured horses, are ever produced from the crossing of two horses, neither of which are duns. Most persons to whom I have applied believe that one parent must be a dun."

JAMES WILSON.

Royal College of Science, Dublin, October 3.

THE colour of Lord Morton's hybrid may not suggest its mixed origin, but this is sufficiently indicated by the mane, tail, and conformation.

A white-legged Iceland pony produced a brown hybrid with dark "points" to a Burchell zebra (Matopo) white below the knees and hocks, and a chestnut Iceland mare produced a bay hybrid to a Przewalsky stallion. Why should not a chestnut mare produce a bay-dun or bay, hybrid to a white-legged quagga?

Lord Morton's quagga was more a bay than a dun, and there are good reasons for assuming that both the quagga and the Burchell zebras are descended from ancestors in colour like the wild horse still surviving in Mongolia. Of three zebra hybrids out of a chestnut mare, two are