The Boskop Skull.

In criticising Pycraft's paper on the Boskop skull, my whole object was to get a fuller consideration of what I believe to be an extremely important early human skull. Opinions will differ so to the restoration of all imperfect human crania. We have seen how greatly anthropologists have differed in the restoration of the Piltdown man, and it is not surprising that there should be differences about the Boskop man.

Pycraft agrees with Haughton in giving the greatest length as 205 mm. Now the calvaria as preserved certainly measures 205 mm., but much of the lower part of the frontal is lost, and though there was certainly no large supra-orbital eminence, there must have been, from the curve of the anterior part of the frontal preserved, at least a small one, and even Pycraft in his restoration shows a small one. By no possibility can the antero-posterior measurement have been less than 208 mm.: it may have been 212 mm. Dart gives it as 210 mm., and this must be very near to the actual measurement.

Pycraft doubts whether any anthropologist would 'restore' the skull as I have done. Perhaps he is

FIG. 1.—Restoration of the Boskop skull, with outline of soft parts as they may have been before the teeth were lost.

right. His own restoration does not differ very greatly from mine. He puts the temporal fragment a little lower than I do, and he has failed to observe the small portion of parietal attached to the temporal. By lowering the temporal fragment he would make the brain still larger than I would. He objects strongly, however, to a brain of 1900 c.c. or more. Elliot Smith, Dart, and Drennen all agree to a brain of 1900 c.c., so that whatever errors I may have made in the restoration I am certainly in as good company as I could desire as to the result.

With regard to the jaw, concerning which Pycraft has nothing to say in his paper, he makes in his letter (NATURE, February 6, p. 196) the following remarkable statement: "All of us who examined this fragment while it was at the British Museum regarded it as of no importance at all!" When I examined the jaw ten years ago, and I have never seen it since, I came to the conclusion, after very careful consideration, that the enlarged socket had held the root of the canine and not the first premolar. I made many drawings of the jaw, which I still have, and even had it X-rayed. Part of the socket, but not all of it, has been eroded by an abscess, but whether this is the socket of the first premolar or of the canine the jaw is still a remarkable one, and it will certainly come as a very great shock to many that a large fragment of the jaw of an extremely ancient and completely fossilised human being—

possibly the oldest known 'Neanthropic' type—is regarded by all those who have examined it at the British Museum "as of no importance at all."

Fig. 1 is from a restoration I made ten years ago, and may convince those who are not anthropologists that the skull and even the jaw are of some interest.

R. BROOM.

Douglas, S. Africa.

The Stone Age in Ceylon.

IN *L'Anthropologie* (Nos. 1 and 2, vol. 36) Dr. Fritz Sarasin discusses in a valuable paper (pp. 75-115) the pros and cons of this question. He concludes that there existed a pre-Veddah population in Ceylon—to which the "Cambridge History of India" does not refer—whose culture was analogous to the Aurignacian of Europe.

Dr. Sarasin, however, makes the arresting statements that it is difficult to imagine how men, possessed of only small stone implements incapable of cutting down trees, could exist in forests so humid and full of leeches as those of the Ceylon mountains, and in which they could not find the necessary subsistence, unless, through climatic oscillations, there occurred steppe periods; and that it seems impossible, with the present climate, for these human stations (which he discusses) to have existed in the forests.

May I recall to Dr. Sarasin's memory the conditions under which the Koeboes of Sumatra exist? These people, perhaps the most primitive on the globe and supposedly the most ancient inhabitants of Sumatra, live in isolated communities in several regions of that island. Their abode from time immemorial has been in the vast, sunless, pathless, tiger- and leech-infested and moisture-laden virgin forests, out of which they rarely emerge of their own accord, but through which their sense of direction is 'uncanny.' They make no clearances, having no implements capable of the work, nor do they cultivate a single comestible. They subsist entirely on the inexhaustible products of the woods, especially on durians, jack-fruits, figs, tubers of sorts, wild honey, and even the putrid carcasses they may discover. From time to time, when successful in killing a rhinoceros or a tapir, they gorge themselves until only the bare bones of their feast remain, alongside which are left no signs of human activity. They live as do the beasts, ever in search of the wherewithal to appease their insatiable appetite. Until the intervention of the Dutch authorities, the Koeboes were hunted by Sumatran 'radjahs' and chiefs for enslavement as if they were really wild animals. The Malay so esteemed them when I made acquaintance with these nomads forty-five years ago. They have no true abiding place; they erect temporary wind-screens with palm leaves and branches, more primitive even than the Australian's humpy. Their weapons, all of wood, are pointed, fire-hardened bamboo spears and the deadly accurate blow-pipe. A few among them now possess knives obtained from the Malays by the curious method of silent exchange. Their dead are thrown into some dense thicket, which is oftentimes set on fire, but the body is generally left for any prowling carnivore. This custom accounts for the rarity of their osseous remains—as probably for that of the bones of the Chelleans and Acheuleans—except of those sedentary few groups, partly 'tamed' and half converted to Moslemism, who practise sepulture.

If these a-lithic nomads had discovered stone artifice, their handiwork would have strewn the forest floor and been found abundantly in the alluvium of the rivers, without any marked climatic oscillations. Their discarded belongings, which in a few months