

ANTHROPOLOGY

Priest-Scientist to Seek Earliest Human Ancestors

MANKIND'S earliest cradle will be sought in Central Asia by the noted French student of human pre-history, Pére P. Teilhard de Chardin, who will take the field this fall.

This announcement was made by Sir Arthur Smith Woodward of the British Museum, in the course of his address as president of the section on anthropology, British Association for the Advancement of Science.

The project was originated by the late Dr. Davidson Black, who first gave to the world the scientific details of the ancient skeletons now known as Peking Man. He planned to make a careful study of the pre-glacial Tertiary deposits in south Central Asia, and in 1932 actually travelled overland from China to Syria, passing through the region under consideration. Unfortunately, he died before he could carry out his project, and Pére Teilhard, who was closely associated with him in the last few years of his scientific work, has undertaken to see it through.

The central Asiatic uplands are indi-

cated as a promising place to explore for the remains of earliest man for more than one reason. Sir Arthur called attention to a supporting basic principle in the study of evolution laid down by an American scientist, the late Dr. W. D. Matthew of the University of California. Dr. Matthew pointed out that it would be reasonable to expect the highest evolved forms of a given line of development to be in or near the place of original development, and that lower forms would be found at the outer fringes of its total area of distribution.

The relatively few remains of very early man that have been found form a rough circle around Central Asia: they include Piltdown Man in England, Heidelberg Man in Germany, Peking Man in China and Trinil Man in Java.

Central Asia is a "good bet" for manward evolution from a possible apelike ancestral stock, on grounds of geologic history, Sir Arthur continued, citing in support other earlier researchers. He said:

"The east-to-west ridge of the Hima-

layan Mountains was gradually raised up at the time when northern India was covered with a great forest which swarmed with apes of many kinds. The formation of the ridge separated off a northern portion of the forest which became subject to comparatively inclement conditions.

"The apes stranded in this northern portion would be disturbed by the extensive destruction of the trees, and the survivors would be driven to be ground-apes and change their habits of feeding. They would thus be modified in the direction of man.

"Regarded from the zoological point of view, of course, man is an arboreal mammal which has left the forest. His remote ancestors, by continuing to live in the forest, preserved their jaws, teeth, and limbs nearly on the primitive mammalian plan while the brain alone made progress."

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Palestinian Man Quite as Old As Low-Browed Neandertal

PALESTINE'S earliest known cave men, though they had skulls much more "modern" than those of their fellow-members of the Neandertal race, were nevertheless earlier than many of their low-browed kindred, and at least as early as any of them.

This verdict was delivered before the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Norwich, in two reports submitted by three of England's most noted students of early man, Miss Dorothy A. E. Garrod, Theodore D. McCown and Sir Arthur Keith.

Palestine man is represented by three practically complete skeletons and the more or less fragmentary remains of a number of others, all found in two cave locations in the Mount Carmel region. They were found several years ago, but the bones were so rigidly imbedded in the stone-hardened earth of the old cave floors that many months of most careful chiseling have been necessary to free them for scientific examination.

The skulls, though undoubtedly of the Neandertal type, have relatively little of the heavy, beetling, almost gorilline eyebrows that characterize the European Neandertalers. There are also a number of other "modern" features about them.

Yet when Miss Garrod examined the stone implements and the broken animal bones found with them in their caves, these proved to be of very early age. The bones were those of animals belonging to



PALESTINE'S "MODERNISTIC" NEANDERTALER

Face and jawbone undoubtedly Neandertaloid, Palestine Man's eyebrow ridges are less prominent than those of his European cousin, and his braincase has a higher arch.