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978-0-521-17989-8 - Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits, Volume V

A. C. Haddon, W. H. R. Rivers, C. G. Seligmann and A. Wilkin

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CAMBRIDGE ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPEDITION  
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VOLUME V.  
SOCIOLOGY, MAGIC AND RELIGION OF THE  
WESTERN ISLANDERS.

CAMBRIDGE:  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

1904

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521179898](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521179898)

First published 1904

First paperback edition 2010

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-17989-8 Paperback

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

DURING the years 1888–89 I spent some eight months in Torres Straits investigating the marine zoology of that district, and having become interested in the natives I devoted my spare time to recording many of their present and past customs and beliefs. Some of the results of these studies have already been published. Later I proposed to publish a Memoir on the Ethnography of the Islands of Torres Straits, but on going over my material I found it was too deficient to make into a satisfactory monograph. I then determined to go once more to Torres Straits in order to collect more data, with a view to making, with the aid of colleagues, as complete a study of the people as was practicable.

I would like to take this opportunity to express on behalf of my colleagues and of myself our profound grief at the death of Mr Anthony Wilkin at Cairo in the spring of 1901. The reports in this Volume published under his name only imperfectly indicate the loss caused to Anthropology by his untimely death, and doubtless they would have gained considerably in value could they have been corrected by the author.

Perhaps a few words are necessary to explain why we visited a district apparently so insignificant as Torres Straits. As explained above, I had a good deal of unpublished material on the ethnography of the people and it would naturally take less time to gain a good insight into the life of a people about whom a fair amount was known than to begin afresh on a new people. From what I knew of my old friends and acquaintances I was sure that we could at once get to work instead of having to lose more or less time while entering into friendly relations with a people who, after all, might prove to be suspicious and refractory. Our experience fully justified the good impression I had formed of the willingness of the Torres Straits islanders to impart information and to render personal assistance.

For the special work we had to do it was necessary to visit a people who were amenable and with whom communication was easy; but, on the other hand, who were not far removed from their primitive past. This peculiar combination was found in these people.

This region has some ethnological importance as it is on the frontier between two large land areas inhabited respectively by Papuans and Australians, and it was a matter of some interest to determine whether any mixture had taken place there and also to endeavour to find out if any traces could be found in the islands or on the adjacent coast of New Guinea of a migration of the Australian stock from North to South. The islanders are as a matter of fact distinctly Papuan.

The present volume deals with the Sociology, Magic and Religion of the Western Islanders of Torres Straits, these terms being employed in their widest sense. The Western

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

## PREFACE.

Islanders are distributed over many islands which to a certain extent are arranged in groups, and owing also to the influence of New Guinea on the one hand and of Australia on the other some diversity is apparent in the social life of the natives of the different groups. As by far the greatest amount of our time was spent in Mabuiag the present volume will deal mainly with that island. On the whole this is advantageous, as the natives of Mabuiag may be regarded as very typical members of the Western group, who perhaps have been but little affected by the great land areas to the north and south. The data we collected in other islands usually follow the description of the Mabuiag customs. I spent the month of October in Mabuiag in 1888, and Dr Rivers, Messrs Ray, Seligmann, Wilkin and myself spent about five weeks there during September and October in 1898. For about thirty years the natives have been more or less under missionary influence, with the result that most of them are professed Christians. For a somewhat greater space of time this island has been one of the head-quarters of pearl-shellers, and consequently the natives have had considerable intercourse with Europeans. All the men, except the very oldest, are conversant with English, and there has been a rapid change in the social life of the people. We were but just in time to record the memory of the vanished past. The change that has come over the people together with the shortness of our stay in the various islands must be our excuse for the manifold imperfections of this volume.

The reports of the expedition will consist of six volumes, each of which will contain memoirs on related subjects. It is proposed to publish the various reports as they are completed.

The Series will consist of the following volumes:

- Vol. I. Physical Anthropology.
- Vol. II. Physiology and Psychology.
- Vol. III. Linguistics.
- Vol. IV. Technology.
- Vol. V. Sociology, Magic and Religion of the Western Islanders.
- Vol. VI. Sociology, Magic and Religion of the Eastern Islanders.

The following is the system of spelling which has been adopted in these memoirs:

<i>a</i> as in "father" <i>ā</i> as in "at" <i>e</i> as <i>a</i> in "date" <i>ě</i> as in "debt" <i>i</i> as <i>ee</i> in "feet" <i>ī</i> as in "it" <i>o</i> as in "own"		<i>ō</i> as in "on" <i>ò</i> as <i>aw</i> in "law" <i>u</i> as <i>oo</i> in "soon" <i>ŭ</i> as in "up" <i>ai</i> as in "aisle" <i>au</i> as <i>ow</i> in "cow"
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The consonants are sounded as in English:

<i>ng</i> as in "sing"		<i>ngg</i> as in "finger"
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A. C. HADDON.

MARCH, 1904.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CONTENTS OF VOLUME V.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	1
I. FOLK-TALES. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	9
GENEALOGICAL TABLES. BY W. H. R. RIVERS.	
II. GENEALOGIES. BY W. H. R. RIVERS . . . . .	122
III. KINSHIP. BY W. H. R. RIVERS . . . . .	129
IV. TOTEMISM. BY A. C. HADDON AND W. H. R. RIVERS . . . . .	153
V. BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD CUSTOMS. BY C. G. SELIGMANN . . . . .	194
VI. WOMEN'S PUBERTY CUSTOMS. BY C. G. SELIGMANN . . . . .	201
VII. INITIATION. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	208
VIII. COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	222
IX. THE REGULATION OF MARRIAGE. BY W. H. R. RIVERS . . . . .	233
X. FUNERAL CEREMONIES. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	248
XI. REGULATION OF PUBLIC LIFE. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	263
XII. MORALS. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	272
XIII. PERSONAL NAMES. BY W. H. R. RIVERS . . . . .	280
XIV. LAND TENURE AND INHERITANCE. BY A. WILKIN . . . . .	284
XV. TRADE. BY A. C. HADDON . . . . .	293
XVI. WARFARE. BY A. C. HADDON AND A. WILKIN . . . . .	298
XVII. TALES OF THE WAR-PATH. BY A. WILKIN . . . . .	308
XVIII. MAGIC AND RELIGION. BY A. C. HADDON, C. G. SELIGMANN, AND A. WILKIN . . . . .	320

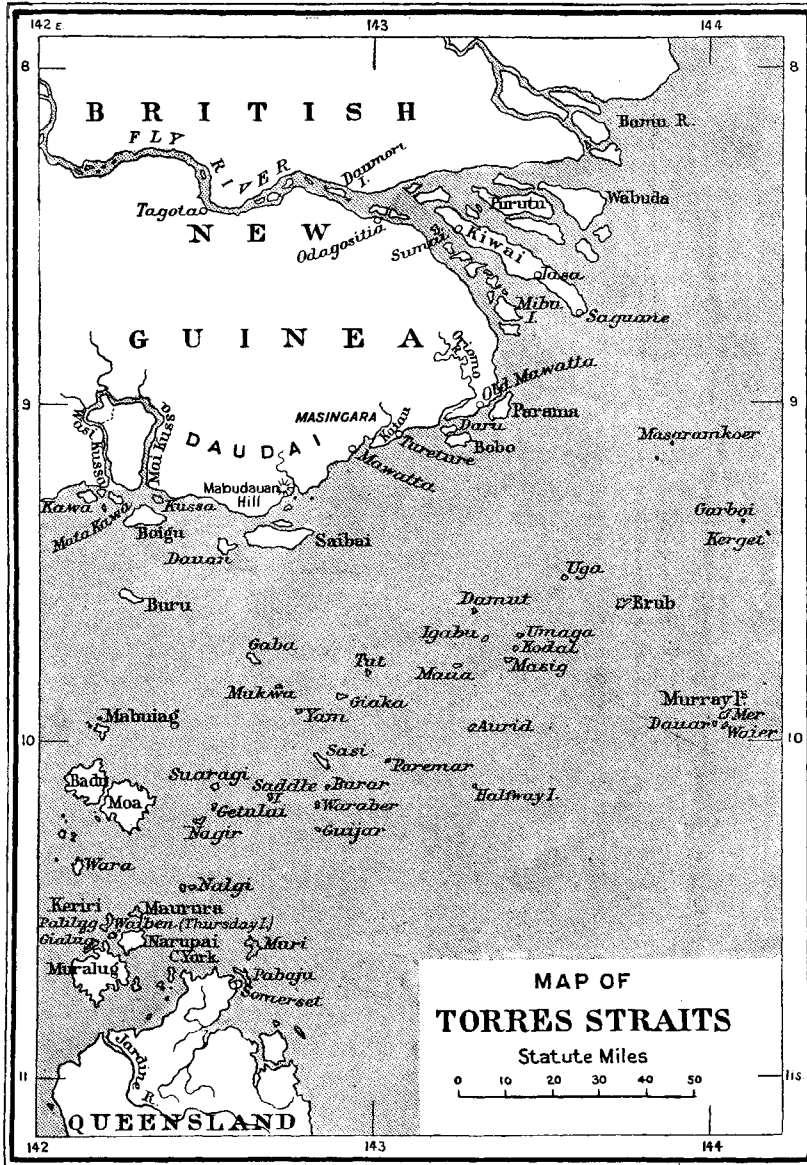
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



## LIST OF FIGURES IN THE TEXT.

FIG.	PAGE
1. Pictograph of three <i>müri</i> dancing, Pulu . . . . .	5
2. Pictograph of two <i>müri</i> dancing, Pulu . . . . .	5
3. Pictograph of a waterspout, Pulu . . . . .	5
4. Dögai Metakorab and Bu . . . . .	12
5. Dögai I. . . . .	15
6. Waiat in his house . . . . .	52
7. Sketches of masks . . . . .	54
8. Sketch map of coral reefs between Mabuiag and Buru . . . . .	60
9. <i>Giribu</i> and <i>kutibu</i> , the Kwoiam <i>augud</i> . . . . .	70
10. Sketch of Dauan . . . . .	73
11. Drawings of totems by Kiwai natives . . . . .	156
12. Sketch map of Mabuiag with distribution of totem clans . . . . .	163
13. Drum ( <i>warup</i> ) from Saibai . . . . .	163
14. Crocodile scutes worn as a totem badge, Saibai . . . . .	165
15. Cicatrice representing the scutes of a crocodile, Boigu . . . . .	165
16. Engraving of a crocodile on a pipe, Saibai . . . . .	165
17. Engraving of a crocodile and human face on a pipe . . . . .	166
18. Three drums ( <i>buruburu</i> ) . . . . .	167
19. Arm scarifications on Boigu women . . . . .	168
20. Engraving of snakes on a pipe . . . . .	168
21. Belt of decorated pearl-shells . . . . .	169
22. Comb decorated with a sting-ray, Yam . . . . .	169
23. Diagram of the houses at Iasa, Kiwai . . . . .	190
24. <i>Bid</i> , Saibai . . . . .	194
25. Pregnant woman wearing <i>bid</i> , Saibai . . . . .	195
26. Pregnant woman divining the sex of her child, Saibai . . . . .	195
27. <i>Gapu</i> , embryo of the mangrove . . . . .	195
28. Wax images for magic . . . . .	198
29. Mabuiag girl during her seclusion at puberty . . . . .	203
30. Agricultural charms from Iasa, Kiwai . . . . .	218
31. Bull-roarer of the Yaraikanna Tribe, Cape York . . . . .	221
32. <i>Sara</i> or funeral platform, Mabuiag . . . . .	249
33. Skull-basket . . . . .	251
34. <i>Zarar markai</i> , death dance, Mabuiag . . . . .	253
35. <i>Gud</i> , mouth crescent for death dance . . . . .	254
36. <i>Markai</i> , death dancer, Mabuiag . . . . .	255
37. <i>Ipikamarkai</i> , death dancer, Mabuiag . . . . .	255
38. <i>Danilkau</i> , death dancer, Mabuiag . . . . .	256
39. Present of food to <i>markai</i> , Mabuiag . . . . .	256
40. <i>Markai</i> and <i>ipikamarkai</i> , Tutu . . . . .	257
41. <i>Turkiam markai</i> , Tutu . . . . .	258
42. Grave in Muralug . . . . .	260



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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

X

## LIST OF FIGURES IN THE TEXT.

FIG.	PAGE
43. <i>Saker</i> , sign of taboo, Mabuia	269
44. Totem-decoration on a skull, Mabuia	305
45. Head-house, Mabuia	306
46. <i>Kwod</i> -house in Mabuia	307
47. Two <i>gugu</i> -birds on dead trees	311
48. Wooden <i>wauri</i> , human effigies for magic, Mabuia	324
49. <i>Kuman</i> , sticks used for magical practices	326
50. <i>Agu</i> , turtle-platform	331
51. Turtle-ceremony at a canoe	331
52. Bull-roarers from Mabuia	332
53. Quartz turtle-charm, N. Queensland	333
54. Carved boards used in turtle-ceremony, Pulu	334
55. <i>Wiwai</i> , turtle-shrine, Mabuia	335
56. Turtle-ceremony, Mabuia	336
57. Dugong-charm, Mawata	337
58. Turtle- and dugong-charms, Saibai	337
59. Carved stick from stern of canoe	338
60. Death of Maiak by strangulation	339
61. Man dressed up for <i>Mudu</i> dance, Mabuia	340
62. Human-face masks, Mabuia	340
63. Dugong-ceremony, Mabuia	341
64. Man wearing Iabur mask, Mabuia	344
65. Fish dance-masks	344
66. <i>Madub</i> , human image for agricultural magic, Mabuia	345
67. Tobacco charm, Mabuia	345
68. Garden shrine, Mabuia	345
69. Garden charm, Yam	347
70. <i>Ubarau zogo</i> , fruit shrine, Yam	348
71. <i>Mawa</i> dancer for fruit-ceremony, Yam	348
72. <i>Kanga</i> " " Paremar	349
73. <i>Marwa</i> " " Mabuia	349
74. Bow of canoe, Mabuia	353
75. Waterspouts and spirits, <i>mari</i>	357
76. Spirit-canoes, Keriri	357
77. Pictographs of spirits, <i>müri</i> , Pulu	360
78. Waterspouts and <i>müri</i>	360
79. <i>Waus</i> , funereal screen, Parama	367
80. Skull-basket containing the Kwoiam <i>augud</i> , Mabuia	369
81. Magical head-dress in its case, Mabuia	371
82. Drawing of Kwoiam	371
83. Crescentic <i>augud</i> and its case, Muralug	373
84. Totem shrines in Yam	374

## MAPS.

Sketch map of Torres Straits	viii
Sketch map of Mabuia	7
Sketch map of Badu and Moa	8

## LIST OF PLATES.

- PLATE I. Fig. 1. Part of the *kwod* at Pulu. Photographed by A. Wilkin (p. 4).  
Fig. 2. Diagrammatic sketch of the *kwod* at Pulu (pp. 4, 5).
- PLATE II. Fig. 1. The Stone that fell, Pulu. Photo. A. Wilkin (pp. 4, 22).  
Fig. 2. *Sugu* at Pulu, showing the post on which heads were hung. Photo. A. Wilkin (pp. 4, 84, 305, 313).
- PLATE III. Fig. 1. Mumugubut bay at Pulu, with Kwoiam's throwing-stick. Photo. A. Wilkin (p. 3).  
Fig. 2. Stones in Pulu representing men beheaded by Kwoiam. Photo. A. Wilkin (pp. 3, 76).  
Fig. 3. Kwoiam's water-hole, Mabuia. Photo. A. Wilkin (p. 82).
- PLATE IV. Fig. 1. Leaves spotted with Kwoiam's blood, Mabuia (p. 83).  
Fig. 2. Man in the attitude of the dying Kwoiam. Photo. A. Wilkin.  
Fig. 3. Kwoiam's cairn, Mabuia. Photo. A. Wilkin.
- PLATE V. Representations of totem animals by natives (pp. 154, 155): 1. Dog; 2, 3. Dugong; 4. Flying-fox; 5. Frigate-bird; 6. Cassowary; 7. Lizard; 8. Crocodile; 9, 10. Turtle.
- PLATE VI. Representations of totem animals by natives (pp. 154, 155): 1. Snake; 2. Sea-snake; 3. Turtle and Shark; 4. Turtle; 5. Ray; 6. Stone; 7. *Saker* fish; 8. Hammer-headed shark; 9, 10. Shovel-nosed skate; 11, 12. Sucker-fish; 13. *Wad* fish; 14, 15, 16. Stone-fish.
- PLATE VII. Engravings on wood of totem animals by natives (pp. 154, 155): Fig. 1. Turtle; Fig. 2. Fish-eagle; Fig. 3. Hammer-headed Shark and Ray; Fig. 4. Crocodile.
- PLATE VIII. Engravings on wood of totem animals by natives: Fig. 1. *Daibau* (p. 156); Fig. 2. *Daibau* and Cassowary; Fig. 3. Cassowary (p. 167).
- PLATE IX. Scarifications on the backs of women (p. 158): Fig. 1. Meke of Tutu; Fig. 2. Patagam of Mabuia (Snake totem); Fig. 3. Ado of Badu (Dugong totem); Fig. 4. Wagud of Mabuia (Dugong totem).
- PLATE X. Scarifications on women (p. 158): Fig. 1. Native of Iasa, Kiwai Island (Coconut totem); Fig. 2. Kaubi of Sui, New Guinea (Shell-fish totem); Fig. 3. Bonel of Saibai (Pelican scars); Fig. 4. Abaka of Boigu (Crocodile totem).
- PLATE XI. Carvings of totems: Fig. 1. Pearl-shell with dugong, Mabuia (p. 164); Fig. 2. Flying-fox in turtle-shell, Paroa delta, B. N. G.; Fig. 3. Shovel-nosed skate in wood, Fly River (pp. 164, 219); Figs. 4, 5. Ray in wood; Fig. 6. *Tapimul* Ray in wood, Tutu (pp. 155, 169); Fig. 7. Ray, turtle-shell, Mer.
- PLATE XII. Otati girl, North Queensland, decorated to show her appearance on her return from seclusion at puberty (p. 206).
- PLATE XIII. Fig. 1. *Ubarau zogo*, Yam. Photographed by A. C. Haddon (p. 349).  
Fig. 2. Restoration of the *kwod* at Tutu at Initiation (p. 208).
- PLATE XIV. Figs. 1, 2. Men dressed up as *markai* for the Death-dance, Mabuia. Photographed by A. Wilkin (p. 253).
- PLATE XV. Fig. 1. Decorated skull of Magau, Nagir (pp. 258, 362).  
Fig. 2. *Augudau kupai*, Yam (p. 377). Photographed by A. C. Haddon.  
Fig. 3. *Sara* and cemetery, Moa (pp. 248, 260, 262). Photographed by A. C. Haddon, 1888.

- PLATE XVI. Fig. 1. Dugong charm, Moa (p. 338).  
 Figs. 2, 3. Dugong charm, Mabuiag (p. 338).  
 Fig. 4. Sucker-fish charm (p. 336).  
 Fig. 5. Turtle charm, Tutu (p. 333).  
 Fig. 6. Turtle charm (p. 333).  
 Fig. 7. Wind charm (p. 353).
- PLATE XVII. Figs. 1, 2. Wooden *mawa* mask, Saibai. British Museum (p. 349).
- PLATE XVIII. Fig. 1. Wooden *kemuz* mask, Saibai. British Museum (p. 349).  
 Fig. 2. Performer at the Saw-fish Dance, Waiben. Photographed by A. C. Haddon, 1888 (p. 342).
- PLATE XIX. Fig. 1. Saw-fish Dance, Waiben. Photographed by A. C. Haddon, 1888 (p. 342).  
 Fig. 2. *Waus* at Nagir in 1849 from a drawing by T. H. Huxley (p. 366).
- PLATE XX. Fig. 1. Turtle-shell mask surrounded with skulls, Aurid (from Brockett) (p. 378).  
 Fig. 2. Bull-roarer (*bigu*), Mabuiag (p. 331).  
 Fig. 3. Bull-roarer (*wanes*), Muralug (p. 217).  
 Fig. 4. Wooden model of a *madub*, Mabuiag (p. 346).  
 Fig. 5. Figure-head (*dōgai*) of a canoe, Saibai (p. 353).
- PLATE XXI. Fig. 1. Augudalkula, Pulu. Photographed by A. Wilkin (pp. 5, 368).  
 Fig. 2. *Wiwai* at Gumu, Mabuiag. Photographed by A. C. Haddon (p. 334).
- PLATE XXII. Fig. 1. Bamboo tobacco-pipe with *Kursi* (Sigai) *augud* (footnote, p. 373).  
 Fig. 2. Restoration of the *augud* shrines in the *kwod* at Yam (p. 373).

## ERRATA.

- p. 24. Line 12 from bottom, for 'her' read 'his.'
- p. 25. „ 19 „ top „ „ „ „ (cf. pp. 108, 114).
- p. 49. Folk-tale 27, add 'Kuda was the first person to make an earth-oven, *amai*, and she taught everybody how to make it.'
- p. 106. First line of footnote 2, after 'mangrove' add (fig. 27, p. 195).
- p. 115. Last line but one, for *gapa* read *gapu*.
- p. 173. Line 9 from bottom, for 'but' read 'and.'
- „ 8 „ „ „ 'south' read 'north.'
- „ „ 5 reverse 'southern' and 'northern.'
- p. 196. Last line, add 'Many kinds of fish are forbidden to women in Muralug, the hawkbill turtle and its eggs are forbidden to women suckling, and no female, until beyond child-bearing, is permitted to eat of Torres Straits pigeon. Macgillivray, II. p. 10, and *Journ. Anth. Inst.* XIX. p. 309.'
- p. 206. Line 10 from bottom, for 'all some' read 'all same.'
- p. 217. Line 12, insert (Pl. xx. fig. 3).
- p. 229. Line 14. This statement is not quite correct; for other occasions of continence see pp. 270, 271.
- Table 3. Web should be Wet.
- „ „ Pedigul „ „ PIDAGU.
- Table 3A. MANUA „ „ MANAU.
- „ „ Pogadua „ „ Pogodua.
- „ 5. Paibis „ „ Paibid.
- „ 8. Talalu „ „ Tatalu.
- „ 9A. KEPEAI „ „ KEPENAI.
- „ 10. YAMAKUNI and Gawai had the following children after Rusui:—Morarid who married SAMAKA (2); Irad, who married Charlie, a Fiji man, and had no children; Kudsub and ADADA, both of whom died in infancy.
- „ 13. SAMARA should be SAMARI.
- „ „ The totems of Kotoai should be *Kaigas*, *Surtal*, *Umai*.

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[More information](#)

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This Report is the first complete volume as yet published; the companion Report, Vol. VI., is being compiled and may be published this year. Volume III. (Linguistics) is well forward. Of Vol. II. (Physiology and Psychology) two parts have been published, containing the following subjects: Part 1. Introduction and Vision, by W. H. R. Rivers; Appendix, by C. G. Seligmann. Part 2. Hearing, Smell and Taste, by C. S. Myers; Cutaneous Sensations, Muscular Sense and Variations of Blood-pressure, by W. McDougall; Reaction-times, by C. S. Myers.

A full Index will be published on the completion of the whole series.