It has been thought by many that there was a race of men inhabiting, not only Yezo but also Japan Proper, before the Ainu came; and that just as the Japanese have displaced the Ainu, so the Ainu drove out and succeeded the race who preceded themselves. This was a theory I myself formerly accepted, but wholly upon trust like so many others. Latterly, however, I have paid special attention to this subject, the result being the brochure spoken of below and of which this article is a revision.

In the "Memoirs of the Literature College, Imperial University of Japan, No. 1," which treat of the "language, mythology, and geographical nomenclature of Japan viewed in the light of Ainu studies,"† including also "An Ainu Grammar" by myself, Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain wrote on page 57, at the close of his list of place-names, as follows:—

"The above catalogue may teach several things. First, we learn from it the method followed by the Ainus in their geographical nomenclature, which is simple enough. They describe the river, village, or cape, as the case may be, by some striking feature. Secondly, there is a large number of names not to be explained in the present state of our knowledge. Some of them have, perhaps, been corrupted beyond recognition. Some are possibly pure but antiquated Ainu, no longer understood in the absence of any literary tradition. Why should not some have descended from the aborigines who preceded the Ainu, the latter adopting them as the Japanese have adopted Ainu names?" [The italics are mine.]

Early in March, 1904, I had the pleasure of escorting Prof. Frederick Starr, of the Chicago University, to some of the Ainu villages, and

* The first article on this subject appeared in the form of a little brochure in 1904, and was published at the Japan Mail Office in Yokohama.
† Professor Chamberlain always wrote Ainu and Ainune, but the real native name is Ainu for both the singular and numbers. All official Japanese documents now write Ainu, and the appendix of the Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that Ainu is right while Aime is said to be wrong.
while on the journey I found him to be particularly interested in place names and was, on more than one occasion, much struck by the many questions he put with regard to them, but when he began to speak of the supposed connection of some of them with the race of men spoken of in the sentence I have italicised above as the "aborigines who preceded the Ainus," I at once saw the drift of his questions. It was after one of our conversations on these matters that he pointed out to me Professor Chamberlain's words—words which I had not previously taken into any serious account. The result is the present brochure.

Now, I must remark at the outset that I am one of those who have quite abandoned the idea of a race of men existing in Yezo anterior to the Ainu. I frankly admit that I formerly acquiesced in the ordinary belief in the existence of such a people in the ages gone by. The assertions of those who were here many years before me; the assurances given me by the Japanese; the so-called tradition of the Ainu respecting them, and the remains of pits in which they are said to have lived, together with the exhibition of certain remnants of old pottery and suchlike things were too sure and certain proofs to be laid quietly aside by a newcomer; and then, lastly, there were certain difficult place names whose meaning could not at that time be ascertained. In fact, like the famous missing link, your aborigine could almost be seen and touched. But none of these foundations of orthodox belief will bear the light, and I have, therefore, as in duty bound, abandoned them.

But to examine the matter briefly, yet as thoroughly as space will allow. And first as regards the pits. They are here in Yezo in great numbers, so that one is constantly coming across them. The Ainu call them koropok-unguru koro chisei kot, i.e., "sites belonging to people who dwelt below ground," and this equals "pit-dwellers." Another name they call them by is toi chisei kotchra utara kot chisei kot, i.e., "house sites of people who had earth houses." Thus then we have the "pit-dwellers" for certain. But who were they who dwelt in the pits? To come down to living present-day examples of them, we have them on the island of Shikotan. These people have two kinds of houses, one built on the Japanese model and the other on the pit model. The pits are only for winter use, while the Japanese houses are used during the summer. These Ainu were brought down from an island in the Kurile group, called Shimushir, in the year 1883, by the Japanese Government, and they declare that their forefathers originally came from Saghalien. They were Greek Church Christians. There are also Ainu to-day inhabiting Saghalien who live in the same kind of pits during the cold weather. Hence we find that the Ainu are, some of them at least, actual "pit-dwellers" to-day.
Another very interesting thing connected with these pit-dwellers is the fact that the Ainu have three native names for “roof,” two of which seem to imply by derivation that they rested on the ground over holes. The ordinary word for “roof” is chisei kitai and this just means “top of the house.” But the other two worlds are arikari chisei and chirikari chisei, both of which mean “the shell overhead,” or “the shell set on high.”

Referring again to the Ainu of the Kurile groupe, I was very much struck a short time since by reading what Mr. Romyn Hitchcock has said in his Paper entitled “The Ainos of Yezo, Japan,” which will be found in the Report of the National Museum for 1890—Smithsonian Institution, pages 429-502. On page 432 will be found this most astonishing remark: “The so-called Kurile Ainus are wrongly-named. This name is given to the pit-dwellers of Shikotan, who are quite distinct from the Ainus.” Well, I have myself spoken with Shikotan Ainu but the language was Ainu and Japanese and nothing else, unless it were, perhaps, a word or two of Russian thrown in. Moreover, I have this day (March 28th, 1904) been into the Government offices at Sapporo and reinvestigated the whole matter. The results are: first, a reaffirmation of the fact that the Kurile islands were ceded to Japan by Russia in exchange for Sakhalien in the eighth year of Meiji; second, that in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of Meiji, the pit-dwellers of Shikotan were brought by the Japanese authorities from the island of Shimushir in the Kurile groupe and settled there; third, that these pit-dwellers were Ainu and spoke the Ainu language; and fourth, that those who are left of them still have dwelling-pits for winter use. Mr. Hitchcock’s remark must therefore be dismissed as misleading because inexact.

Prof. Milne tells us* that in the year 1878 he visited some of these Ainu on this very island of Shimushir, the total number of whom was then only twenty-two. “The men,” he says, “were short in stature, had roundish heads, and short, thick beards. None of those I saw had the long beard which characterizes many of the Ainus on Southern Yezo, nor were their features well defined. They call themselves Kurilsky Ainu, spoke a language of their own, and also Russian.” The professor did not know Ainu, so that when he speaks of these Ainu as having a language of their own I am sure, from what I have heard them speak and from what I have gathered

from others, that their language was a dialect of Ainu. Indeed, as the professor himself remarks, "they call themselves Kurilisky Ainu"!

Captain Snow, a gentleman of large experience among these islands and their inhabitants, told Prof. Milne that during the winter of 1879-1880 some of this tribe were living in Matua. Later they were in Rashua and Ushishiri. He also informed him that the oldest man among them said that he came from Saghalien. This is just what they told me: viz., that they originally came from Saghalien. And, what is very much to the point here, Prof. Milne adds, "they construct houses by making shallow excavations in the ground, which are then roofed over with turf, and that these excavations have a striking resemblance to the pits which we find farther south. This custom of making a dwelling-place out of an excavation in the ground belongs, I believe, to certain of the inhabitants of Kamschatka and Saghalien."

The existence of such pits or excavations in Yezo was first brought to the notice of Europe by Captain T. Blakiston in an account of a Journey round Yezo, given by him to the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain (July 27, 1872).

Secondly, there is the question of the ancient Japanese name *tsuchi gumo*, "earth-spiders," and *ko-bito*, "little people," applied to these pit-dwellers; and besides, the Ainu themselves sometimes talk about the "little men." But nothing of value can be made out of the appellation "earth-spiders," for it implies no more than what is meant by "pit-dwellers." *Ko-bito* really means "little people," "dwarfs"; but the Ainu, when speaking of these so-called "dwarfs," use the word *ko-bito*, which is pure Japanese. I have never heard a real native Ainu name applied to them. In fact, I am of opinion that they have none. Were it not for the Japanese words *tsuchi gumo* and *ko-bito* I have no grounds for supposing that the Ainu would speak of a race of dwarfs at all. But foregone conclusions are always hard to kill, so that it will be asked again, "But were there not the *koropok-guru* here and does not that mean 'the people of the petasites* plants?'" Well; no, it does not. *Koropok* cannot mean petasites; it can only be translated by "under," "beneath," "below." The full name is *koropok-un-guru*, "persons dwelling below," the *un* being a locative particle. And this it will be seen does not carry the idea of "dwarfs" in it at all. But, allowing for the sake of argument that *koropok-guru* did mean "people under the petasites," even

---

*Petasites japonicus*, Miq.
that would not dwarf them in the least. I myself stand nearly 5-ft. 8-in. and have scores of times not only walked but also ridden on pony back among the leaf-stalks of the petasites without touching the blades. I wonder how big the ancient Japanese and Ainu must have been! For, if because the ancient pit-dwellers could move among the stalks of the petasites without touching their over-shadowing tops they were call “dwarfs,” those who for this reason first applied this name to them must have been very Goliaths in stature.

Nor can anything be said for the third argument, viz., that resting on old kitchen middens and flint implements. For (a) when one meets with children—Ainu children—playing at making pottery out of soft clay and ornamenting their handiwork with patterns found on the samples dug up from the earth instead of with ordinary Japanese figures (which ornamentation was done by means of grass and sticks); and (b) when one is emphatically told by the Ainu that their ancestors used to make pottery and use flint implements; and when (c) we moreover hear in old Ainu songs and traditions of Ainu stone armour and stone-headed spears and arrows, all faith in these things as proofs of a race here anterior to the Ainu finds no place in the mind.

Again, it was shown above that the Shikotan pit-dwellers are Ainu. There can be no doubt on this matter. Now, I have in my hands an officially-printed “Report on Northern Chishima,” i.e., on the Kuriles. In this report there are a number of photos of the people, their pits with the roofs on and the entrances plainly visible, and of their implements—of implements still used by them when their photographs were taken. A list of the implements is also given and the division is as follows. (1) Stone implements—axes, hoes, knives, and stone staves. For some reason the arrow-heads seem to be left out although a photo of them and example is given. (2) Bone instruments (whalebone)—spears, hooks, needles, combs, mortars. (3) Earthenware—saucepans, basins, cups. The photos were taken in the 33rd year of Meiji (1900), and the report was made up the following year.

Since this paragraph was written a very interesting work by Mr. R. Torii (in Japanese) on the Chishima Ainu has been placed in my hands. This book was published in July, 1903, and fully bears out what I have written. Both it and the official report above referred to, independently and fully overthrow Mr. Romyn Hitchcock’s bold assertion quoted above.

On reading through Mr. Torii’s little book I find that he has given some interesting comparative lists of Kurile and Yezo Ainu words and phrases. But this author does not appear to shine much as a philologist. Thus, for example, Mr. Torii gives Kurile kosuku, Yezo chabe for “cat”; and also
and until for "horse" respectively! But neither of these are traceable to any known Ainu word. What are they then? On the very face of them they are Russian! Thus, koshka "cat" and loshad "a horse." Works like these must therefore be taken cum grano salis.

Mr. Tsuboi is also a strong advocate for the existence of the distinct race of koropok-guru, but one is at a loss to make out on what specific grounds. With regard to this, Prof. Frederic Starr, in his little book entitled "The Ainu Group at the St. Louis Exposition," says on pages 86 and 87— "Now, of course, we never believed in any such koropok-guru. But we had been impressed by the arguments and we had been greatly interested, at Yokohama, in a chart or diagram, which a friend had shown us, in which a reconstruction of the life of this "early race of Japan" was attempted. We were especially astonished at the detailed information regarding the dress of the koropok-guru, which the chart seemed to show. Later, in Tokyo, at the University, Professor Tsuboi showed us some ancient clay figures of human beings and it was clear that the author of the chart had gained his ideas of dress from these. And in the presence of this instructive chart and the evidence shown me by this learned professor, my first doubts regarding their theory arose. Surely the shell heaps, the crude pottery, the stone tools, and the old pit-houses were never made by people, who dressed as those represented in these figures. To-day, we feel somewhat sceptical with reference to the whole theory of a pre-Ainu race."

A question has often presented itself to my mind with regard to the kitchen middens as proof of antiquity. It is this. These pots, jars and cups are made of sun-dried clay, not burnt. I cannot think that sun-dried vessels could last under ground in a damp climate such as this of Yezo for many hundreds of years. Surely the frost and dampness would tend towards their rapid resolution into the soil.

In the Journal of the Anthropological Society for May, 1881, Prof. Milne published a Paper, read by himself in 1879 before the British Association, in which he gave it as his opinion that "the kitchen middens and other spoor of the early inhabitants of Japan were in all probability the traces of the Ainu, who at one time, as is indicated by written history, populated a large portion of this country." Later, in another paper published in vol. 8, part 1, of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, entitled "Notes on Stone Implements from Otaru and Hakodate, with a Few General Remarks on the Prehistoric Remains of Japan," he also shows that these remains extended through Yezo and the Kurile Islands. Professor Milne may, therefore, well be taken as another independent witness supporting what has been said in the above paragraphs.
But then, fourthly, there are the place-names. Yet even these must be given up. In the memoirs mentioned above Prof. Chamberlain catalogues 210 real native names out of which the meanings for 99 only could then be supplied. Well then might the Professor ask—"Why should not some have descended from the aborigines who preceded the Ainus, the latter adopting them as the Japanese have adopted Ainu names?" But this was in the year 1887, when our knowledge of the Ainu tongue was only just beginning. At that time I could have asked the very same question; indeed, if I remember rightly, Prof. Chamberlain and I did talk the matter over together at Horobetsu just before the memoirs were published. Since then some progress has been made in these studies, and I can no longer ask such a question. I have studied Mr. Chamberlain's list very carefully on the spot with the Ainu, the result being that not only can the root meaning of the whole 210 be seen, but I know of no place in Yezo which cannot be traced to either Ainu or Japanese.

But, lastly, one would imagine that if a race distinct from the Ainu once dwelt here some human remains would be forthcoming. I have made careful inquiries on this point and find that no signs of any have yet been discovered. Old pits and graves have been dug into but the results have always been the same; that is to say, the skulls and bones exhumed have invariably proved to be either Ainu or Japanese. The skeletons of no dwarfs have yet been found.

Should these graves yield any remains other than Ainu the fact would be at once apparent, for in the "Russische Revue," 10 Heft, 111. Jahrgang, Materiaien zur Anthropologie Ostasiens; Anutschin, it is written:—"With reference to the anatomy (of the Ainu) it is remarkable that the humerus as well as the tibia have a very striking form; they are marked by an extraordinary flattening (außerordentliche abplattung) such as, up to the present, has never been noticed of these bones in any people at present in existence. On the other hand, this peculiarity of form has been observed in the bones of extinct people found in caves." Such, then, were the people who gave names to many hundreds of places throughout Japan, Yezo, Kamschatka and other parts of Siberia; and they were Ainu.