

genetically, or to investigate its distribution geographically. The making of such collections, relating to every occupation or amusement in which mankind in any part of the world is engaged, is a kind of work which may be done by any consul, merchant, missionary, traveller, or soldier. The exhibition of any such collection at the next meeting of the American association, accompanied by a descriptive paper, making the whole subject plain enough for the wayfaring man, would call forth the high commendation which it would most assuredly deserve. O. T. MASON.

THE AMERICAN ORIENTAL ASSOCIATION.

THE American oriental association held its fall meeting in New Haven, on Wednesday, Oct. 27, in the library of the Yale divinity school. In the absence of Professor Whitney, who, to the deep regret of all, on account of ill health, was unable to be present, Vice-President Dr. W. Hayes Ward, editor of the *Independent*, occupied the chair. As will be seen from the following, the papers that were presented extended over almost the entire range of oriental studies, — a welcome proof of the growth of American scholarship in this direction, as well as an encouraging sign of the steadily increasing utility of this association. Professor Lanman of Harvard university began by reading two interesting letters. The first, from an attaché to the American legation at Peking, was accompanied by rubbings of a number of Sanscrit inscriptions found in Buddhistic convents. The second was from an Indian gentleman of high rank and scholarship, relating to the publication of some important Sanscrit texts. Prof. Isaac Hall of the Metropolitan museum thereupon spoke of some Syriac manuscripts. He exhibited one which had lately come into his possession, which proved to be an ecclesiastical calendar, rather curiously arranged, containing all the ecclesiastical feasts of the year. Another manuscript which he described gave an account of a journey undertaken to the occident in the middle ages by a Nestorian priest. The discovery of the manuscript created quite a sensation among the Nestorian Christians. It was published in the *Journal of the Missionary society*. Dr. Ward added a few remarks on the importance of the manuscript.

A letter from Mr. Jewett, a Harvard graduate now pursuing his studies at Beyrut, 'On modern Syriac and Arabic proverbs,' was then read by Professor Toy of Harvard university. To judge from the specimens of the proverbs which Mr. Jewett has already collected, and which were indicated in his letter, the entire collection promises to be exceedingly interesting; and, since there is

probably nothing more characteristic of a people than its proverbs, such a collection will also be of much value for the light it will throw on the traits and civilization in general of the modern inhabitants of some parts of the east. Mr. Jewett is enjoying particular advantages for his labors, living as he does in the Moslem quarter of Beyrut, and, indeed, almost like a Moslem. Professor Bloomfield of Johns Hopkins had a paper on some Vedic hymns, an abstract of which was read in his absence by Professor Lanman. Professor Hopkins of Bryn Mawr followed with what was perhaps the most interesting paper of all, on the position of woman in India according to the Mahabharata, which brought out the important fact that her standing, as well as her rights, were greater in the more ancient times than under the later rule of Buddhism. This result is particularly interesting in view of the recent work of the well-known W. Robertson Smith on 'Marriage and kinship in early Arabia,' which shows that exactly the same was the case among the Arabs, where Mohammedanism has tended, while elevating woman's position in some respects, on the whole towards a decrease of the rights and privileges which she enjoyed in the time of 'Ignorance,' as the heathen period is termed by the Mohammedans.

Mr. A. Jackson of Columbia college followed with a paper 'On the similes in the Avesta,' showing the wide range of natural objects and phenomena from which the metaphors were chosen. General Carrington of the U. S. army spoke briefly on the biblical genealogies, and Dr. Morris Jastrow, jun., of the University of Pennsylvania, closed the series with two papers bearing on Assyriology. The first offered an explanation for Assyrian proper names compounded with Budu, and the second embodied the preliminary results of a study of Samaritan in its bearings on Assyrian lexicography and phonology. A number of Assyrian stems which had hitherto been held to be peculiar to Assyrian, or at least so in certain significations, were shown to exist in Samaritan, and the light which the Samaritan throws on some characteristic traits of Assyrian phonology dwelt upon. The meeting thereupon adjourned until the second week in May, 1887. In the evening the members were tendered a reception at President Dwight's residence, at which a number of Yale college professors and their ladies were present.

It is pleasant to note, in connection with this meeting, the greater interest which has during the past decade sprung up in this country for what might be called the more abstract departments of knowledge. Much has been done to dispel that

one-sided view of scholarship and learning which attaches a value only to such knowledge as bears more or less directly upon practical life. Until a comparatively short time ago, the higher study of philology (with the exception of Latin and Greek), archeology, and the like, received but little encouragement in this country; and it is due to this fact alone, that while, in the fields of medicine and the natural sciences, American scholarship has made such rapid strides as to be quite on a par with European nations, in other fields we are still in a state of dependence upon Germany, France, England, etc., and do not hold that rank which is our due. But there are clear indications that a change will soon make itself felt. Such facts as the introduction of Sanscrit in all those higher institutions of learning which aim to stand in the first rank; the creation of new chairs for Semitic languages, Zend, Persian, and archeology;¹ the contemplated fitting-out of expeditions to Egypt, Italy, and Assyria,—are important symptoms, which must not be overlooked. They indicate that a broader conception of scholarship is beginning to prevail, which recognizes the equal importance of all higher studies as such. Whether the field be one which is limited to a few specialists, or one which attracts a large number, is of no consequence whatever from this point of view. To return, therefore, to the point whence we set out, it is a matter of congratulation for the American oriental association to find that oriental pursuits are beginning to receive that recognition which they merit; for there can be no doubt that it is due in some if not in a great measure to the silent influence which that society exerts, that studies bearing on the ancient and modern civilization of the orient, in the widest sense of that word, are rising into greater prominence. And we have no doubt that this influence would be even stronger and more directly felt in the future, if some means were adopted by which the intelligent public could obtain at least a general view, from time to time, of the progress which is being made in these fields of research, so that it may judge for itself of their importance. It might be well for the president of the association to assign to several members the task of presenting at each meeting a summary of what has been done in the various departments of oriental pursuits, the important publications which have appeared, the important discoveries made, and the important projects contemplated. The carrying-out of such a plan would not only make the meetings even more interesting and profitable to the members than they already

are, but would bring the society into that greater prominence which it deserves, and, we may add, *needs*; for it must not be forgotten that an association of this nature exists not only for the purpose of forming a union among those whose sympathies and interests naturally bring them into contact, but that it has a distinct mission to perform,—the advancement of those pursuits which come within its scope. Every step, therefore, taken with this end in view, is not only perfectly legitimate, but will, no doubt, redound to the credit of the society.

With its ranks increased by the younger men who have chosen to devote themselves to oriental studies, the American oriental association can look forward to a still more auspicious future.

M. J., Jun.

NOTES AND NEWS.

As announced in the Johns Hopkins university circulars for July, 1886, it is proposed to give a special course in Assyriology during the month of January, 1887. The regular Shemitic courses in Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, Ethiopic, Syriac, etc., will be interrupted, and all the time exclusively devoted to Assyriology, now universally recognized as being of primary importance for the scientific study of scripture. Paul Haupt, Ph.D., university of Leipzig, professor of the Shemitic languages in Johns Hopkins university and professor of Assyriology in the University of Goettingen, Germany, will teach Assyrian daily from 3 to 4 P.M. In addition to Professor Haupt's classes, individual instruction will be given three or four hours daily by the fellows in Shemitic languages, Messrs. Cyrus Adler and E. P. Allen, assisted by other advanced students in Assyriology. The hall of the Oriental seminary will be open as a reading-room for those who follow the course. There they will find all the books necessary for the study of Assyrian and the cognate languages, and some advanced students will usually be present to facilitate the access to the exceptionally well equipped Shemitic library, and to furnish any other aid that may be desired. The Oriental seminary possesses duplicates of the most important Assyriological works. Additional copies, as well as the rare publications of Botta, Place, Layard, and others, on Assyrian antiquities, are accessible in the reading-room of the Peabody institute, five minutes' walk from the building of the Oriental seminary. No tuition-fee will be charged. Professors and students of other institutions, as well as clergymen, are invited to attend, and arrangements will be made by which they may easily obtain temporary lodgings, pro-

¹ Yale, Columbia, Princeton, and the Universities of Pennsylvania and Michigan are moving in this direction, and others will no doubt soon follow.