

THE SEMITIC MUSEUM.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY:—

SIR, — It is a great satisfaction to be able to state that the Semitic Museum has now been completed. The structure is spacious and convenient, and combines in a pleasing way solidity with sobriety. The cost of the building, including furniture and cases, has been about \$80,000. This represents gifts amounting to \$76,000 from our generous patron, Jacob H. Schiff, Esq., and accrued interest of about \$4,000. The building is strictly fire-proof. May it stand for many generations, a beautiful memorial to the wisdom and philanthropy of its founder!

The ground floor of the Museum contains three lecture rooms and the library. The lecture rooms, seating 12, 50, and 165 persons respectively, are unusually comfortable. They furnish ample accommodation for all the Semitic courses of instruction, and will no doubt by degrees prove attractive to instructors in other departments. In the summer of 1902 the large lecture room was used by the Summer School of Theology, and gave general satisfaction.

The second floor contains the Curator's room, and an exhibition room about 80 × 50 feet. The latter is the Assyrian room, and in it will be exhibited the casts of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hittite bas-reliefs and monuments, also the seals and other original objects of Babylonian-Assyrian origin. There are four wall cases, each about 33 feet long, and six other cases 20 feet long, the latter divided lengthwise by partitions, thus making two of each. The casts, which almost fill these cases, represent many of the most interesting monuments in the Museums of London, Paris, Berlin, and Constantinople.

In the Assyrian room are also four table cases, about 10½ × 5 feet, with cupboards underneath. In these cases will be exhibited the small Assyrian-Babylonian objects, mainly originals, in clay and stone, especially the inscribed tablets and the cylinder seals. In this room will also be placed the separate cases containing individual objects in the round. Two of these pieces are so large that it may be necessary to place them on the top floor or in one of the halls.

On the third floor is a small room which for the present will be used as a working room, but which may hereafter be used for

exhibits. Here is also the Palestinian room, of the same dimensions as the Assyrian room below. To accommodate tall objects and for better lighting, the middle portion of the ceiling has been made higher than the rest, and provided with a sky-light. The general arrangement of cases is the same as in the Assyrian room, though the double cases are not so long. There are about enough for immediate needs and space for more when the need arises.

This room will contain the objects from Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, and Persia. From Arabia we have manuscripts, inscribed stones, and Bedouin objects; from Phoenicia, inscriptions and glass vases; from Syria, geological specimens, glass vases, and Bedouin objects; from Persia, casts of bas-reliefs and inscriptions. Of Egyptian objects we have a considerable number acquired by gift and by purchase, and there is a collection of about one hundred numbers deposited with us by Rev. Dr. E. E. Hale. We have also on deposit some fine scarabs and beads which are part of a large collection. The owner offers the collection for sale, and we should be fortunate if some friend would buy it for the Museum.

The chief interest of this room will be the objects from Palestine. In addition to the several collections acquired by purchase at various times, we have the considerable collection bought in 1898 from Dr. Selah Merrill by Alumni and friends of the Divinity School.

The objects illustrate both ancient and modern Palestine. Ancient Palestine is represented by pottery, glassware, and coins; modern Palestine by manuscripts, pottery, costumes, utensils, jewelry, musical instruments, and specimens of the fauna, flora, and geology of the land.

It is hoped that the work of arranging the collections may be completed early in the year 1903, after which the Museum will be open to the public. All the material illustrates the instruction given in the department, some of it may be made the basis of original study, and much of it will be of interest to the general visitor.

Of the gifts received during the year the following may be mentioned: From Mr. A. M. Lythgoe, '92, a collection of Egyptian antiques; from Simaika Bey, of Cairo, a manuscript of the Coptic New Testament; from Theodore M. Davis, Esq., of Newport, from whom a gift was announced in my last report, two Egyptian mummy-cases, also a canopic jar and other objects from his excavations in the Valley of the "Tombs of the Kings"; from Gray Hill, Esq., of Jerusalem, a small stone sarcophagus, a clay lamp, and portions of a stone bust; from J. Paulus, Esq., of Jerusalem, entomological specimens; from Dr. Selah Merrill, U. S. Consul at Jerusalem, a

collection of modern pottery, some thirty models in stone, and several dozen antique lamps in clay; from the Syrian Protestant College, Beirut, through Professor A. E. Day, a case of the rocks and fossils of Lebanon. Our thanks are due to all these benefactors, and also to Baron von Bissing, J. E. Quibell, Esq., and Simaika Bey, for valuable aid in connection with purchases made in Cairo. It is also a pleasure to state that Dr. Reisner intends, with Mrs. Hearst's approval, to send us a collection of pottery from his excavations in Upper Egypt.

The acquisitions of the year by purchase include Arabic manuscripts from London and Cairo; Assyrian casts from the British Museum; photographs from Rome and Luxor; musical instruments in Egypt and Palestine; inscribed stones, bronze statuettes, a funeral boat, and ritual utensils in Egypt; and in Palestine, Beirut, and Damascus a great variety of objects in glass, pottery, clay, wood, copper, silver, and woven stuffs, illustrating both ancient and modern life. I brought home also some five hundred photographs taken during my stay of five months in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria.

The cost of the objects bought was about \$5,500. Payments were made from the moneys contributed in 1899. Some \$13,000 of that contribution still remains for further purchases. Negotiations now in progress may reduce this sum by about \$2,000.

My recent visit to European museums and to the Orient has deepened the conviction that our future growth by methods hitherto pursued must be slow. As to casts, we have nearly reached the limit. Most of the Semitic antiques offered for sale are bought up by tourists, private collectors, and the museums of Europe, while the widespread interest in the subject has greatly increased the market price. Furthermore, the difficulty of getting information as to *provenance* and circumstances of discovery is a serious drawback in regard to antiques acquired by purchase. The only satisfactory way to obtain such objects is to dig them out of the ground.

I should like, therefore, to urge again, as I did a year ago, that we ought to enter the field of exploration, and I refer once more to what others are doing. The Germans are displaying extraordinary activity under imperial and parliamentary patronage, and no less active in our own country are the Universities of Pennsylvania and California. The excavations carried on in Babylonia by the University of Pennsylvania, resulting in so much renown to that institution and in great additions to our knowledge of antiquity, have been supported chiefly

by a few friends of the University in Philadelphia, while the successful work in upper Egypt, conducted by two sons of Harvard, G. A. Reisner and A. M. Lythgoe, for the University of California, is paid for by Mrs. Phoebe Hearst. The latter undertaking, now in its fourth year, has cost some \$10,000 annually, and is so satisfactory that Mrs. Hearst is planning to continue it on a larger scale.

In Palestine the English and the Austrians have been digging this year, and the Germans are preparing to do the same. The English work at Gezer, begun last June, gives promise of results of unusual value. The Germans have also done important excavation in the Temple of the Sun at Baalbek, and are now engaged in exploring the palaces and Temples of Babylon.

The times are ripe, and we may now accomplish what in a few more years will be impossible. Professor Maspero, director of the Cairo Museum, estimates that in twenty-five years, at the present rate, the work of discovery in Egypt will be over. The promising sites in Palestine are not numerous and are gradually growing fewer. Even in Babylonia the store of tablets and antiques is not inexhaustible.

These three fields, Egypt, Palestine, and Babylonia, offer great attractions. The advantage of Egypt is that the explorer enjoys every facility, and that valuable discoveries are inevitable. A distinct and important branch of the work here is the recovery of Greek papyri from the Fayoum. These papyri, chiefly from the Ptolemaic era, are of consequence to classic and Semitic students no less than to Egyptologists. Many hundreds of them have been obtained by the Egypt Exploration Fund and by the Hearst Expedition. The discovery this year by the German "Orient Gesellschaft" of a copy, written in the 4th century B.C., of a work by the lost Greek poet, Timotheos, encourages the hope of finding in Egypt very ancient copies of the Scriptures. Work in the Delta is much to be desired, as it would surely give new light on the times when multitudes of Jews were settled there two thousand years ago.

In the number and variety of objects awaiting discovery we cannot expect Palestine to be as fruitful as Egypt, but everything found in the Holy Land will have a special value for all who are interested in Hebrew history and in the Bible.

One of the greatest mines for Semitic antiques is, of course, Babylonia, and the few hundred thousand dollars spent in the exploration of this land seem insignificant in view of the magnitude of the results achieved.

Is it too much to hope that our friends will provide the Museum with the means of bearing a part in this great work of oriental research? The most satisfactory provision would be an endowment, the income of which, in whole or in part, should be used for this purpose. But until we have such endowment much can be accomplished by special contributions. If we could have ten thousand dollars a year for a three or a five years' campaign, there is no reason to doubt that the result would justify the wisdom of the expenditure.

D. G. LYON, *Curator.*