

To the opening exercises were invited relatives and friends of the donor of the building, all contributors to the Museum collections, the Overseers and the Corporation of the University, the members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences with their wives, the Divinity School Faculty, Semitic instructors in the leading American universities, and a few other friends of learning. About two hundred and fifty persons were present. The meeting began at three o'clock, and was held in the large lecture room of the Museum. It was followed by an inspection of the collections and by refreshments, which were served in the Palestinian room.

The Semitic Museum is on Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, and is open daily, Sundays excepted, from 9 A.M. till 5 P.M.

ADDRESSES

I

PROFESSOR D. G. LYON

MR. PRESIDENT, HONORED FOUNDER AND BENEFACTORS, ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FRIENDS
ALL:—

We have come together to celebrate the opening of a building, the completion of which is a fulfilment and a prophecy. A Semitic Museum is something new. In many of the great museums of the world are to be found large collections coming from Semitic lands, but this Museum is the first which is intended to bring together only such objects and such others as are intimately related to Semitic history. In other words, our Museum is the first that recognizes the fundamental importance of this material. And well it may, for the Semitic peoples have played no small part in the history of culture.

In their somewhat restricted home in Southwest Asia, some of them ran through the varied stages of civilized life before the art of writing in Europe had become known. Among them flourished great rulers, mighty builders, wise law-givers. In later times these peoples

doubtless received ideas from abroad, but they cannot have received so much as they gave. To mention a few facts familiar to all: The Alphabet was given to the world by Phoenicia, and Monotheism by Palestine, two of the grandest achievements of man. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,—three of the world's greatest religions,—the Bible and the Koran, two of its most influential books, arose among the Semites.

And the ideas which these peoples set afloat in the past have sailed beneficently through the ages. Without the Alphabet, and Monotheism, and the inspiring literature of the Bible, and the contagious example of Hebrew bards and seers, and the Church, there might have been a powerful Western civilization, but it could never have been the civilization which we know.

It would seem, then, most fit that we should have buildings devoted exclusively to teaching the known and to recovering the unknown about peoples so influential in shaping the ideas and the institutions under which we live.

And there is need of such collections, "lest we forget"; lest in the storm and stress of to-day we forget the rock whence we were hewn. So vast and so absorbing is the new knowledge ever crowding upon us that many of us are in danger of forgetting that highest literary, moral, and religious knowledge, which is ever old, yet ever new. This building, with its open doors and free invitation, will stand as a reminder.

To the scholar our collections will furnish the means of research, whereby the borders of the known will be still further advanced.

To the student of Semitic languages and history at this University, they will serve to give a vividness and a most helpful sense of reality to what is learned in books and lecture-rooms.

And there is scarcely a department of the University which may not find here material illustrative of its instruction, preëminently the departments of History and the Fine Arts; but also Music, Mathematics, Engineering, Biology, Geology, and Anthropology. Likewise the Law School and the Divinity School. So true is this of the latter that there would be no incongruity in calling this a Biblical Museum. The only real objection to such designation is that Semitic is a more comprehensive term.

To this community, to schools and classes of art, to Sunday Schools, to the Churches, of all shades of belief, to the readers of the Bible and of History, this Museum will be a resort and an aid whose educational value only time can supply the means to estimate. And probably no feature of the enterprise has given to its promoters more pleasure than its anticipated value to the community and to the public at large.

An incidental result of this education of the community will be a decrease of that prejudice, cruel and unjust, born of ignorance, which in the minds of some still

attaches to the name Semitic. How appropriate that an institution of such benign possibilities should have its home at this University, which to its two mottoes, "Veritas," "Christo et Ecclesiae," might fairly add a third, "Freedom." Freedom to inquire, to learn, to believe, to teach; freedom from fear, from prejudice; freedom for all; freedom in the truth; freedom in devotion to the noblest manhood, and in service to the highest interests of man.

And now a word about the building and its contents. The structure is solid and substantial, like the ideas for which it stands. On the ground floor are the departmental library, and three lecture rooms, with seats for twenty, fifty, and one hundred and sixty-five persons respectively. On the floor above this is the Curator's room and an exhibition room about eighty by fifty feet. The third floor has two rooms of about the same size as those on the second.

The most noticeable feature of the exhibition room on the second floor is the large number of plaster casts from Assyrian bas-reliefs, and this may therefore be called the Assyrian Room. It includes also numerous casts from Babylonia and from the land of the Hittites, and many hundreds of original objects from Babylonia and Assyria, notably inscribed cuneiform tablets and cylinder seals.

The large room on the third floor may be called the Palestinian Room, because the objects from Palestine

are most numerous and of the greatest interest. There are, however, certain cases or portions of cases devoted to material, originals or casts, from Egypt, Persia, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Syria.

The time since the completion of the building has not been sufficient for placing all of our collections on exhibition. This is especially the case with some seven hundred coins relating to Palestine, and about as many clay tablets from Babylonia.

The same plea of shortness of time must be our excuse for any deficiency in regard to the descriptive labels. The doctrine, attributed to various administrators of museums, among others to Professor Louis Agassiz, that the ideal museum is a good collection of labels illustrated by specimens, is orthodox, and it is hoped that in due time ours will not fall short in this particular. To supply in part the lack for to-day, we have the assistance of students from the Department and from the Divinity School, who will aid the guests in examining the contents of the various cabinets.

The arrangement, likewise, is in many instances not final, and in the same case will be found objects which do not naturally belong together. This results from the impossibility of knowing just what cases would be required before the specimens were unpacked and brought together.

Nor must it be supposed that all our specimens are antiques, or meant for such. Modern life in Semitic lands

is also entitled to representation in a Semitic Museum, and there are consequently many modern objects, especially from Palestine. For instance, photographs and models of the mosque which now occupies the site of Solomon's Temple are an aid to the study of the site itself.

As to the quality of objects to be found in a Semitic Museum, masterpieces of art must not be expected. It is in literature chiefly that the Semites have been great artists. None the less is every object, ancient or modern, precious which helps us to understand their history, thought, and institutions. Even coarse and grotesque objects may speak eloquently to him who has ears to hear.

The growth of our collections is known to many of you. What the University owned of Semitic material beside books prior to 1889 was some half-dozen plaster casts of Assyrian objects acquired by purchase, a small lot of Babylonian tablets presented by a friend (Miss Ellen Mason, of Boston), and a larger collection given by another friend (Hon. Stephen Salisbury, of Worcester). In 1889, the present Chairman of the Semitic Committee gave \$10,000 for the purchase of material of Semitic origin, and this gift is the beginning of the Semitic Museum. For the considerable number of objects bought with this money the Curator of the Peabody Museum (Professor F. W. Putnam) and his colleagues gave us a temporary home in a gallery of their building,

some sixty feet square. This room was opened to the public on May 13, 1891, and there the original collections, with many subsequent additions, remained until their transfer to this building a few weeks ago. For their long-continued and generous hospitality, the Semitic Museum must ever remain under obligation to Professor Putnam and his associates.

The Museum has continued to grow by additional gifts from the original source and from many other friends, and only a few years had elapsed when our chief benefactor provided us with a departmental library, for a long time housed in one of the lecture rooms of Sever Hall, — now happily at home in this building.

Meanwhile, the Museum had outgrown the room which it occupied, and the need of a building, early perceived, became urgent, a building in which to concentrate the instruction, the library, and the collections.

For such building it appeared that \$50,000 would suffice, of which our Chairman offered to provide one half. This offer was originally made early in the last decade, but the times were unfavorable for soliciting money. It was last made four years ago, January, 1899, with the condition that the other half should be secured by July 1st of that year. When July approached, the work was not complete, and our friend was asked if he were willing to extend the time. To this he replied negatively, but promised to give the entire sum of \$50,000 if the other donors would allow their contri-

butions, nearly \$20,000, to be used for the purchase of additional material. All consented cheerfully, and thus we were far better equipped than we had hoped to be. Many of the cabinets on the top floor give evidence how a part of this money has been expended, and most of it remains for future purchases.

When the plans were drawn it became apparent that \$50,000 was not sufficient for a suitable building, to say nothing about cases and furniture. This has been all happily provided by our good friend, and we have a small surplus for additional cases.

It is not boasting nor exaggeration to say that the Semitic Department is now, with its building, its collections, and its library, one of the best equipped in the University. For this achievement our benefactors, one and all, are entitled to profound gratitude.

We have thus far considered achievement. But achievement is not all. This auspicious day is not only fulfilment, it is also a prophecy.

We are happy to-day. We feel like felicitating ourselves without restraint. But while we rejoice at the progress made, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that much remains to be done. Our building is not an end, but a means. Its completion marks but a milestone in a long journey. Do what we may to make happy the passage to the next milestone, we shall still leave much to be done by those who follow us.

To mention the most obvious task that lies before us: We should not longer delay, in emulation of the universities of Berlin, California, and Pennsylvania, to enter the field of exploration. This is no new idea to some of us, but in my own mind it has been greatly strengthened by my recent Oriental travels in the interest of the Museum. It is exploration in Semitic lands which gives new material for research into the Semitic past. Never were the times more auspicious, never the revelations of discovery more wonderful, than at present. Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, all are beckoning us to exploration. What we need is an endowment or a series of endowments devoted to specified fields of excavation. In other directions, too, there are evident needs, but this matter of exploration is the first to which our attention should be given. That these needs will be met by our friends, I cannot doubt.

My prophecy, then, is this: That soon we shall be sending our sons to dig for our Museum, as they are doing to-day for other museums; that in the future, not remote, enlargement will be necessary to accommodate additions to our collections; that the building itself, the library, and exploration will be properly endowed; and that thus the Museum in an ever-increasing degree will prove to be one of the most interesting and useful ever established.