

DR. SELAH MERRILL'S COLLECTION
OF
BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES.

WHILE United States consul at Jerusalem, the Rev. Dr. Selah Merrill of Andover collected a great quantity of objects illustrating ancient and modern life in Palestine. A committee of the alumni of the Harvard Divinity School have been soliciting money with which to purchase the collection, the intention being to incorporate it with the Semitic collections already in hand, and thus make it accessible to the students of Harvard, Radcliffe, and the Theological Schools in Cambridge, and to all other persons. The sum required is \$2500, of which \$1400 have been subscribed. Five persons have given \$100 each, and the others smaller sums, ranging from \$50 down. X

The recent appointment of Dr. Merrill as consul for a third time at Jerusalem makes it important that we should secure promptly the rest of the money. As to the desirability of Harvard's owning this great collection no words can be necessary. For the student of the Bible and Biblical history such a collection has the same kind of value that those in the Old State House and the Old South Meeting House in Boston have for the students of American history. It illustrates the Biblical narrative, and deepens the interest in the Book, by making the record more real and intelligible.

The following **summary of contents** will show how rich and comprehensive the Merrill collection is:—

Birds. Of Palestinian birds there are 218 classified specimens and some 20 not yet classified. Some of these may be the remote offspring of those which so often helped the Great Teacher to point a lesson. Here are the thrush, robin, nightingale, wren, oriole, martin, sparrow, linnet,

X You may if you please send to
me for the last Twenty five dollars

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Rev. J. A. Wilson
277 Harvard St.
Cambridge Mass

jay, raven, lark, cuckoo, owl, vulture, eagle, hawk, kite, heron, pelican, stork, ibis, pigeon, dove, partridge, quail, plover, sandpiper, ostrich, and others enough to delight even an ornithologist's heart.

Animals. There are some 30 specimens of animals, including the badger, wild boar, wild cat, hunting leopard, coney, fox, gazelle, hyena, ibex, jackal, lynx, wolf and mouse.

There are samples of wood from many kinds of trees that now grow in Palestine, and of large shrubs, as well as nearly 40 samples of seeds in bottles (such as wheat, tare, mint, anise). Of insects and reptiles (locusts, scorpions, serpents) there is a very large number.

Minerals. The fossil fish, the teeth of sharks, polished stones, rock salt from a mountain of salt near the Dead Sea, iron, sulphur, copper, bitumen, etc., tell something of the geological history of that land.

Coins. The coins, from Maccabees, Herodians, Roman governors and emperors, form a very rare collection, and elucidate Palestinian history during several of its most eventful centuries. There are represented some 35 of the towns which the Romans allowed to coin money. There are also many coins of the Syrian Kings, specimens of glass money of the Cufic period, and Greek silver coins (Athens, Alexander the Great).

Glass. Of objects in iridescent glass, some of them fragmentary, are 40 to 50 specimens. These come from the tombs about Jerusalem and from the soil elsewhere in Palestine, are of interesting shapes and exquisite coloring, and illustrate the ancient beliefs and social practices of the people.

Other Objects. Of other objects are tiles from the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem; rings, seals, beads, copper implements, and many unnamed articles, all from old tombs; an early Christian sarcophagus; tiles from the

Tenth Legion stationed at Jerusalem in 70 A. D., with the stamp LEG X FR; very old Jewish terra cotta jars; early Christian lamps; a curious fragment with an inscription from the time of the Crusades; shells from which Tyrian purple was extracted; flint hatchet, knife, and other implements; and an old and valuable bronze battle axe dug up near Jerusalem. There are likewise many plaster casts and models, including the model of an Eastern house, and casts of the principal fruits of Palestine.

Miscellaneous. Of objects marked as "miscellaneous" are many weapons used by the Bedawin (spear, pistol, dagger, shield, bullet pouch, gun, war club, knife, sling); charms for horses, made of boar's tusks; phylacteries; ram's horn used by the Jews on their New Year; writing utensils; articles of attire and adornment now worn in Palestine; jars, buckets and skin bottles; musical instruments; papyrus, canes from the Jordan, and cedar from Lebanon (wood, bark, branches and cones).

There are numerous other articles illustrating town, Arab, and peasant life, farmer's life, clothing and dress, horses' trappings, etc., etc.

In a word, the collection is one which represents on the part of the collector a vast amount of time, patience, enthusiasm and intelligence. Not to secure such a prize when it seems within easy reach would be ground for profound regret. Will not the friends of Harvard and of Bible study help promptly and liberally?

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 1, 1898.

Contributions may be sent to

PROFESSOR D. G. LYON,
15 Lowell St.,
Cambridge.

FROM PROFESSORS IN THE HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL.

As a whole, I have reason to believe such a collection could be gathered only after years of effort in Palestine, and at a pecuniary outlay exceeding many times over the sum for which Dr. Merrill is ready to part with it to Cambridge. *Indeed, it is more than doubtful whether any such collection, even if duplicated, would be allowed by the Turkish government to be taken from the country,* Dr. Merrill's official position having given him exceptional advantages in transportation as well as accumulation. — *J. Henry Thayer.*

This collection is the work of a lifetime, is of great interest for Biblical study, and is not likely to be duplicated. The opportunity offered us is peculiarly favorable, since, if we buy the collection, Dr. Merrill will give his time and skill to the labor of arrangement in the museum. These objects would themselves form a Biblical Museum of no small importance. — *Crawford H. Toy.*

Teachers of the Old and the New Testaments know how valuable such material is in quickening and deepening the interest of students in Biblical study. For the non-professional visitor likewise such collections are a source of constant interest and instruction.

The central feature of the Harvard Semitic Museum should be the Palestinian and Biblical section. At present this section is not so well developed as the Assyrian and the Arabic sections. Dr. Merrill's collection would at once supply the lack, and would be of great and permanent value to the cause of learning. — *D. G. Lyon.*

LETTER FROM BISHOP LAWRENCE.

I trust that the collection of Biblical antiquities of Doctor Selah Merrill can be obtained for the Harvard Divinity School. It would add much to the Semitic Museum and to the opportunities of the students at the Theological Schools in Cambridge, as well as of the University.

(Signed) *William Lawrence.*

FROM THE DEANS OF THE CAMBRIDGE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS.

Teachers and students in our Theological Schools, teachers and pupils in our Sunday Schools,—in a word all persons in the vicinity who are interested in the study of the Bible may be helped by the presence of the Merrill Collection in the Semitic Museum;—while some not before interested in this study may be attracted to it. The appeal in its behalf should therefore meet a wide and generous response. — *C. C. Everett.*

The value of the Merrill collection is plain, and its usefulness to theological students especially is evident. It would be a help to all the men who are studying the Bible in this community to have such an opportunity to illustrate their studies. — *George Hodges.*

On account of Dr. Merrill's great ability as a naturalist and an archaeologist, and of his privilege as consul, the collection which he made by daily effort during some years is unique and is likely to remain so. Its acquisition is all-important to the completeness and usefulness of the Semitic Museum. — *T. F. Wright.*

FROM SEVERAL CAMBRIDGE MINISTERS.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Jan. 28, 1898.

After hearing a partial list of the objects in the Merrill collection read, we take pleasure in saying that the collection is one of extraordinary interest to Sunday School teachers and scholars and to Bible readers in general. Its acquisition for Harvard will place it at the service not only of students but of all the churches; while to those churches near the College its usefulness may be made almost as great as if they had such a collection in their respective church buildings. To secure the collection \$1100 are still needed, and more will be required to provide for suitable exhibition. We commend the object most heartily, and we hope that the efforts to complete the subscription may meet with a prompt and generous response.

E. E. ATKINSON.

S. M. CROTHERS.

J. VANOR GARTON.

ALEXANDER MCKENZIE.

CHARLES F. RICE.