

# SCIENCE:

## A WEEKLY RECORD OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.

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THE advantages of having a good public library in a large city are so obvious that it appears incomprehensible that the most important city in the United States is practically without such an institution.

The city of New York appears to have been fortunate in being made the recipient of munificent testamentary gifts for the purpose of founding a great public library suited to the needs of such a community, but also unexceptionally unfortunate in the disposition of the funds so bequeathed.

The Astor Library contains a collection of books which have been most judiciously selected to form the nucleus of a good public library, and one peculiarly suited to the needs of those residing in such a city as New York. Unfortunately, the trustees of the library permit its use only between the hours of 10 A.M. and 4 P. M., thus practically shutting out the majority of those who desire to consult the literary treasures it contains.

Of the Lennox Library, recently bequeathed to the citizens of New York, it may be premature to speak; possibly in time its doors may be open to the public; but under what conditions and restrictions can only be conjectured from the eccentric formalities of the past.

Thus with the Astor Library open for a few fashionable hours during the day, and the Lennox Library closed altogether, the public of New York finds itself after four o'clock, P. M., daily, and during the whole of Sunday, without a free public library. Such a state of things is not creditable to the largest and most important city in this Republic, and should not continue a day longer.

The good policy of establishing a public library for New York city, which shall be under the full control of the city authorities, is daily becoming more appar-

ent, and we trust the time is not distant when the wishes of the people in this respect may be fully realized.

A letter will be found in another page of this issue relating to our notice of Dr. Beard's lecture on "Mesmeric Trance." The writer is not correct in stating that we threw a doubt on the genuineness of the "phenomena, as a whole," as on the contrary our remarks questioned the integrity of the "subjects" produced by Dr. Beard. These men and boys, since the lecture in question, have been nightly performing the same tricks in a room on Sixth avenue, the advertisement for which is headed "Marvels and Fun of Mesmerism." The propriety of bringing such "subjects" before the New York Academy of Sciences, may well be questioned, and so far from accepting their performances as genuine exhibitions of the phenomena of Hypnotism, we apprehend the closest scrutiny should be made to test the genuineness of their acts.

Professor Hitchcock admits that he and others observed what appeared to us as evidence of collusion between Dr. Beard and his subjects, but objects to our having pointed out these facts, without having first permitted Dr. Beard to give his explanation of them. This amounts to a request to suppress all criticism, except that controlled by the person criticised, which appears to us one of the least inviting methods of arriving at the truth.

The subject is one of undoubted interest, and as we do not wish to prejudice the question, we defer any detailed reply to Professor Hitchcock's letter until others have had an opportunity of expressing their views. Our columns will be open to any correspondent who can add to our knowledge of this subject, or who can give a rational explanation of the phenomenon of Hypnotism.

### SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES IN WASHINGTON.

#### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED AND A CHANGE OF LOCATION  
AGREED UPON.

The Anthropological Society met at the Smithsonian Institution on the evening of January 18th, Major J. W. Powell, the president, in the chair. The following new members were elected: Dr. A. F. A. King, Dr. William Lee, and Mr. Ivan Petroff for active membership, and Mr. J. C. Tache and B. B. Redding for corresponding membership. It being the evening of the annual election, no papers were read. A motion to remove from the present location to the lecture-hall of the National Medical College of the Columbian University was introduced by a committee of the council, and adopted by the society.

The election of officers to serve during the ensuing year resulted as follows: President, Major J. W. Powell; vice-presidents, Colonel Garrick Mallery, Dr. George A. Otis, Professor O. T. Mason, Dr. H. C. Yarrow; corres-