

this department of science, he would have a large building erected, and liberal appropriations made. We doubt the entire feasibility of such a scheme. In the first place, to restrict the president in the choice of members of his cabinet to any given body of men, no matter how eminent that body may be, is simply out of the question; nor would this restriction be desirable. Members of the National academy are such because they are eminent specialists, and a specialist should be the last to control a department of this kind. Dr. Shufeldt also proposes, that commissioned army and navy officers who show scientific abilities should be encouraged and provided for by the government: this, too, has certain objections. Why the United States should hold out inducements to its commissioned officers to abandon the duties for which they were appointed, one cannot see. A surgeon or lieutenant of artillery has certain specific duties for which he enjoys a salary and future competency. By all means, he should be encouraged to excel in those duties, and he should not be discouraged in any other commendable work that he may undertake without detriment to them; but should government hold out direct reasons for him to become an archeologist, a philologist, a naturalist, or a physicist? Are army officers government wards, or government servants? and why should they have greater inducements to become Sanscrit scholars, chemists, and comparative anatomists, than the general public?

THE GREAT COST of elaborate printed catalogues, in which many of our wealthier libraries are now indulging, suggests the desirability of a scheme of co-operative cataloguing, which is stated at some length in this week's number of *The nation*, by Mr. Fletcher, the librarian at Amherst. He calls attention to the fact that nearly all our considerable libraries are making, or keeping up, elaborate catalogues, which are, to a large extent, repetitions of one another. As the suggestion of an experienced librarian, we incline to attach considerable significance to his saying that a very large share of the present cataloguing expense borne by these libraries is "wasted in the reduplication of that which ought to be done once for all. . . . Already this system of elaborate cataloguing, repeating itself in scores, even hundreds, of libraries, is breaking down of its own weight." Mr. Fletcher regards co-operation as furnishing the only

solution of this important question, — a solution, too, "capable of meeting the needs of the twentieth century, when our libraries will be numbered by thousands, and the volumes in scores of them by millions. . . . The time must soon come when the libraries will no longer undertake to provide subject catalogues of their own. The author catalogues will necessarily be kept up, as each library must have a list of its books. But in place of the subject catalogues we shall have printed bibliographies of subjects, issued, for the most part, periodically, and serving equally for one library or another." These bibliographies may often indicate which libraries contain the rarer publications, on the plan admirably executed in Dr. Bolton's list of scientific periodicals, lately issued by the Smithsonian institution. Such a scheme of bibliographies and subject-indexes is unquestionably feasible, and Mr. Fletcher thinks it furnishes the only possible solution of the problem. It is to be hoped that the directors of our public and college libraries will show themselves ready to co-operate in whatever manner the co-operation committee of the American library association, of which Mr. Fletcher is the chairman, may decide upon. The committee invite any suggestions which may assist in forwarding the proposed reform.

THE LEADING SPIRITS of the theosophical society are evidently undismayed by the testimony against their honesty and candor, as adduced in the investigation carried on under the auspices of the English society for psychical research. A protest is now commenced against the conclusions of that investigation, prepared by A. P. Sinnett and Madame Blavatsky. The report of the psychical research society was noticed in *Science* (vol. vii. p. 81); and any effectual protest against conclusions so clear and decided as those of that report must be accompanied by the strongest evidence possible.

#### PROGRESS IN INDIA.

THE possibility of any national movement among the natives of India, looking toward state organization and self-government, has scarcely ever been accepted by her rulers and other civilized nations. Recent developments, however, seem to indicate that the Indian capacity has been underrated. A correspondent of the *London Times* states that the Bombay leaders have lately

given proof of their organizing power. They brought together a national congress composed of delegates from every political society of any importance throughout the country. Seventy-one members met together; twenty-nine great districts sent spokesmen. The whole of India was represented, from Madras to Lahore, from Bombay to Calcutta.

For the first time, perhaps, since the world began, India as a nation met together. Its congeries of races, its diversity of castes, all seemed to find common ground in their political aspirations. Only one great race was conspicuous by its absence; the Mohammedans of India were not there. They remained steadfast in their habitual separation. They certainly do not yield to either Hindoo or Parsee in their capacity for development, but they persistently refuse to act in common with the rest of the Indian subjects. Not only in their religion, but in their schools, and almost all their colleges, and all their daily life, they maintain an almost haughty reserve. The reason is not hard to find. They cannot forget that less than two centuries ago they were the dominant race, while their present rivals in progress only counted as so many millions of tax-paying units who contributed each his mite to swell the glory of Islam.

But in spite of the absence of the followers of the prophet, this was a great representative meeting. The delegates were mostly lawyers, schoolmasters, and newspaper editors, but there were some notable exceptions. Even supposing these three professions alone provided the delegates, the meeting would fairly represent the education and intellectual power of India. Not a word was said of social reform; all they discussed, and all they demanded, was political power and political changes; a tone of most absolute loyalty pervaded all the proceedings. Education and material prosperity, order, security, and good government, were all incidentally mentioned as causes of gratitude towards the present rulers. But such allusions were only by the way. Every desire was concentrated on political advancement and an immense increase of the share at present given to the natives of India in the government of their own country. The question of their ability to govern themselves was never even touched upon by the wisest of the speakers. Though there was much crude talk, much of that haste which only makes delay, and that ignorance which demands premature concessions, and too implicit reliance upon legislative powers, there was also much of most noble aspiration, and a sense of patriotism and national unity, which is a new departure in the races of the east.

#### PREJEVALSKY'S EXPLORATIONS IN MONGOLIA.

THE renowned traveller and explorer, Colonel Prejevalsky, to whom a reference is made in our St. Petersburg letter, arrived there on his return journey from Mongolia, the earlier part of the present month. A correspondent of the *London Times* says that this expedition of Colonel Prejevalsky, lasting two years, and costing over 43,000 roubles of government money, has been the most remarkable one ever undertaken in the wilds of Mongolia and Tibet. The intrepid explorer, as his published letters have already shown, literally fought his way into these inhospitable regions, at the head of a well-armed party of thirteen Cossacks, four grenadiers, and a host of other attendants; and, as he stated at Moscow, more than one hundred natives, who at different times waylaid the explorers, were made to feel the deadly effects of the Berdan rifle-fire. The exact numbers of the killed and wounded were stated in the extremely interesting letters addressed to the Grand Duke, at various stages of the journey. This is scientific exploration with a vengeance, and goes beyond any thing that Mr. Stanley did with his 'six-shooter' among the negroes of Africa.

In the last of the above-mentioned series of letters, the colonel also expressed the ardent wish of the Mongolian natives to be taken under Russian protection, and shielded from Chinese oppression. The same idea he has again impressed upon his friends, in answer to their many inquiries, as they greeted the tall, sun-burnt traveller. The *Viedomosti*, referring to this, says, "Among the natives visited by Colonel Prejevalsky there exists a deep conviction that sooner or later the 'great white czar' will enter their country and take them under his domination. At one place the explorer showed a portrait of the emperor to one of the natives, who went into raptures over it, and soon large crowds of inhabitants, with women and children from the neighboring districts, gathered round the colonel and implored him to show them the likeness of the 'white czar.'"

The regions visited by Colonel Prejevalsky are generally supposed to be, nominally at least, within the dominions of the emperor of China. No wonder, therefore, that rumors of a protest have come from Peking. The grenadiers who accompanied the expedition have been promoted, and, besides receiving pecuniary gratifications, have had their portraits distributed throughout the regiment. Colonel Prejevalsky has given a number of Russian names to newly-discovered places, such as the 'Moscow-Chain,' the 'Kremlin