

SCIENCE.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1887.

COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION for the advancement of science has decided to hold its thirty-sixth meeting in New York City during the week beginning Aug. 10, 1887. It therefore becomes the duty and privilege of the scientific and educational institutions of the city and vicinity to provide for the meeting in a manner which shall be creditable alike to themselves and to the metropolis. The Academy of sciences, having been asked to take the initiative in the matter, has appointed a committee of conference to secure concert of action among the several institutions. A meeting will be held at the Hotel Brunswick, at 8 o'clock, on the evening of Friday, April 29. The special work before this conference will be the consideration of ways and means, and the formation of permanent committees, which, united, shall constitute a local committee for the meeting of the association. This great national gathering of scientists will be an important event in the history of our city, and should mark an epoch in the development of scientific interest in the community. It is highly desirable, therefore, that the association should find a cordial welcome, and should receive a kind and degree of interest and hospitality worthy of the great metropolis.

THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY which Columbia celebrated last week, following so closely Harvard's two hundred and fiftieth birthday, is significant of the fact that our larger institutions of learning are growing old. They are evidences of the wisdom of their founders, who, amid all the turmoil and care of opening up a new country to civilization and of developing fitting forms of government, found time to lay the foundations for what have since become the leading colleges and universities of the country. Columbia's centennial was more or less fictitious, since the original charter to King's college bore the date 1754; and the annual commencement in June next is the one hundred and thirty-third. The celebration was really, as the official bulletin announced, of the hundredth anniversary of the

"revival and confirmation of the original charter by the legislature of the state of New York." There is much in Columbia's history and in its personal associations to make it peculiarly the college of the city of New York. As Mr. Coudert pointed out in his admirable oration, Columbia has grown with the city's growth, and flourished with the city's prosperity. The prominent men of New York, from Alexander Hamilton and John Jay and DeWitt Clinton to Hewitt and Dix and Agnew and Woodford, are numbered among its alumni. Its influence, though ultra-conservative, has been, on the whole, for good. Under the enlightened presidency of Dr. Barnard, the policy of the college has become more liberal and aggressive, and to-day it is doing far more for the community than it has ever done before.

Having come so far and done so much, the question is naturally raised as to its future development. The public press is urging that the college, with its associated schools of applied science, of medicine, of law, and of political science, should organize itself into a genuine university, and offer those opportunities for advanced instruction and research which its faculties and its situation are so well fitted to provide. The very obvious answer to this is that such a scheme requires large amounts of money; and Columbia has in the past been the recipient of almost nothing, while Harvard, Cornell, and Princeton have had gifts in abundance showered upon them. Columbia is struggling under a heavy debt, and, until that is removed, entrance upon a university career is impossible. Furthermore, its equipment is far from complete. It needs a physical and a biological laboratory, a department of comparative philology, additional provision for historical science, an enlargement of the ludicrously small philosophical department, and, more than all, a library fund which will provide for the book purchases that ought to be made. All these are things not known, perhaps, to those who are clamoring for a university, that serve as an effectual barrier to university development. They are details well known to Columbia's management and alumni, but only made public by the discussions consequent upon the recent

centennial celebration. The friends of the college are in hopes, that, now that these obstacles to rapid development are made known, they may be speedily removed.

A MOVEMENT HAS BEEN STARTED to found a laboratory on the New England coast, where students, teachers, and investigators may find facilities for the pursuit of biology. It is now some years since the brief episode of the Penikese laboratory, which was founded by Mr. Anderson and intrusted to Professor Agassiz. During the interval, summer schools of science have multiplied, and a few of them have successfully maintained their modest usefulness. Of these, one of the most prosperous as well as most needed was the seaside laboratory established at Annisquam, near Cape Ann, six years ago, by the Woman's education association, with the co-operation of the Boston society of natural history. It has given instruction to no less than 102 students, men and women from many states, who were for the most part teachers. The instruction has been almost wholly gratuitous, and the equipment of the laboratory meagre; but the opportunities offered have been sought and prized. As the association does not give permanent support to any of its enterprises, and as its committee in charge of the laboratory was convinced of its utility, they sent a circular letter to teachers of science in different parts of the country, giving an account of the work done, and asking for opinions as to the need of such an institution. The letters received were full and explicit, showing a deep interest in the project of founding a seaside laboratory of broader scope. The committee then called a meeting, at which there was a large attendance of naturalists, the majority being officers of New England colleges. At this meeting the discussion showed a unanimous approval of the work begun at Annisquam and an emphatic resolution to extend and perfect it. To execute this resolution, a committee was appointed with full powers to establish a laboratory on an improved and permanent foundation. This committee, which consists of Prof. Alpheus Hyatt, (chairman), Prof. S. F. Clarke, Mr. John Cummings, Dr. W. G. Farlow, Prof. E. L. Mark, Miss S. Minns, Dr. C. S. Minot, Prof. W. T. Sedgwick, Mrs. C. C. Smith, Mr. B. H. Van Vleck, Mr. Samuel Wells, and Miss A. D. Phillips (secretary), is endeavoring to raise fifteen thousand dollars, half the sum to be used for the land, building, and equipment, the other half to be applied as a guar-

anty fund for the expenses during five years. It is to be hoped that all those will respond liberally to this appeal, who are interested in improving the methods of education and in contributing to the advancement of science. Subscriptions may be sent to any member of the committee, or to the treasurer, Mr. Samuel Wells, 31 Pemberton Square, Boston, Mass.

The advantages of the prospective laboratory are manifold. The demand for natural-history teaching has rapidly increased in America. Colleges and schools are seeking teachers competent to give instruction in botany and zoölogy; but teachers have difficulty in fitting themselves in these sciences, because they lack opportunity to obtain suitable training. An additional obstacle to the thorough and practical study is, that many of the most important types of plants and animals are exclusively marine, having no inland representatives. It is impossible to give good biological instruction without immediate familiarity with the principal types of living organisms. The new laboratory is intended to offer practical training in biology with special reference to marine forms. It is hoped that its work in this field will render it a valuable factor in education. The laboratory will also supply collections and materials for class-work to schools and colleges. Advanced workers and specialists will have facilities such as have not existed in this country hitherto, although they have been available in the different biological laboratories sustained by Germany, France, Austria, Italy, England, Scotland, Holland, Sweden, and Russia. The inestimable benefits which have ensued from the discoveries of biologists, and the profound influence of their science upon modern thought, fully justify the attempt to found a laboratory for biological investigation. The experience of the marine stations in Europe, of the summer school at Annisquam, Mass., referred to above, and of the more southern laboratory of the Johns Hopkins university, have established beyond dispute the great value to education and to science of such institutions. The proposed plan of the laboratory, which will be opened this summer if the necessary means are obtained, may be briefly described so far as settled. The management will be intrusted to the following board of trustees: Prof. W. G. Farlow, Miss Florence M. Cushing, Prof. Alpheus Hyatt, Dr. Charles S. Minot, Miss Susanna Minns, Prof. William T. Sedgwick, Samuel Wells, Esq. It is

intended to secure a location at a point on the New England coast where the fauna and flora are abundant and varied, and the cost of living moderate; to build a laboratory with two stories, the lower story having accommodations for teaching twenty-five persons, the upper story having work-places for investigators; to furnish aquaria, microscopes, microtomes, glassware, etc., and a constant supply of water for aquaria; also to have a convenient landing, boats, collecting-apparatus, etc. Of course, to insure the permanency and full usefulness of the laboratory, a considerable endowment fund must be ultimately obtained, but so much can perhaps not be hoped at the start.

PASTEUR, who is now sixty-four years old, was last winter sent by his physician to Italy for his health, and is only just returning to Paris. Under date of April 1, in a letter to his friend Mr. Jules Marcou of Cambridge, which the latter kindly permits us to use, he writes from Arbois in the Jura that he hopes to live to welcome the earliest publications of the Institut Pasteur, and adds, "We have just purchased eleven thousand square

meters of land, and the subscription has reached the sum of nearly two million francs; it is, however, very insufficient, for, if we spend twelve hundred thousand on land and buildings, the income from the remainder will be much too small. Oh! if only some American millionaire were inspired with an enthusiasm for this work! I hope that when we are incorporated, and this will be soon, we shall be better endowed. We shall then be able to receive legacies. To proceed suitably and with full independence, we should have, according to my estimates, three and a half million francs. I am confident. The future is ours. The prophylactic treatment of rabies continues to do well. Very, very rarely are there failures, and all in cases where exceptional circumstances appear. There has been but one failure since the first of January and more than five or six hundred cases treated, a multitude having been most severely bitten. If we could only attack diphtheria, phthisis, etc., with success. We are going to attempt it. It is at least a step toward discovery to have confidence, and to hope in the result of obstinate labor."

POETRY AND MUSIC OF SOME NORTH AMERICAN TRIBES.

ETHNOLOGISTS are well acquainted with the fact that there is no people and no tribe that has not some kind of poetry and music, but the study of this branch of aboriginal literature has hardly been begun. We will give here a few examples of aboriginal poetry which will show that the mind of the native enjoys as well the beauties of

nature as we do; that he expresses his grief in mournful songs, and appreciates humorous conceptions. No people is more fond of music than the Eskimos, the inhabitants of the extreme north. Though most explorers affirm that their music is nothing but a monotonous humming, the following tunes and texts, which were collected by me in Baffin Land, will show that this is not true. Here is a song describing the beauties of summer:—

A - ya, A - ya - ya a - dle - nai - pa, a - dle - nai - ta - ri - va si -

lek - ju - a u - na au - ya - ra - ta - ra - men, A - ya - ya, A - ya, - ya, A - ya.

Only the first line is given in the Eskimo language. The translation is, —

"Aya!

Ayaya, it is beautiful, beautiful it is out-doors when the summer comes at last.

Ayaya, ayaya, aya!

Ayaya, it is beautiful, beautiful it is out-doors when the reindeer begin to come,

Ayaya, ayaya, aya!

Ayaya, when the roaring river rushes from the hills in summer.

Ayaya, ayaya, aya!

Ayaya, there is no reason for me to be mournful when the gulls cease crying.

Ayaya, ayaya, aya!

Ayaya, plenty of meat I shall have and plenty codfish.

Ayaya, ayaya, aya!

Ayaya, it is beautiful, beautiful it is out-doors when the summer comes at last.

Ayaya, ayaya, aya!"