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THE PRACTICE which has existed in the State of New York since 1864 of confining insane persons charged with crime at the Auburn State Asylum for Insane Criminals has seemed to many to be in need of revision. Senator Pierce has introduced into the Legislature a bill to discontinue the practice. In addition to this measure, others affecting the lunacy laws are before the Legislature for its consideration. One of these provides for the appointment of six commissioners to revise all the laws of the State relating to lunacy; another, if passed, will substitute a commission for the one existing commissioner; still another measure provides for the care of the dependent insane in State rather than, as is now the practice, in county institutions. This latter bill seems to us to be by far the most important of all those which have been introduced during the present year. Under this law the State will be divided into districts by a board, to be constituted of the president of the State Board of Charities, the State commissioner in lunacy, and the State comptroller. After this board shall have established the insane districts, they are to file with the secretary of state the boundaries of the same, and the number of pauper insane people within each. In each of these districts suitable buildings and accommodations are required to be erected, either on new sites or on the site of some asylum already in existence. To these asylums, indigent and pauper insane are required to be sent for maintenance, instead of

being retained in county asylums. There are sixty counties in the State, and as many insane-asylums. Under the proposed law, this number would be reduced to ten. It would be possible to establish a uniform system of treatment in institutions managed by a State board, which it would be next to impossible to effect under the county system. The proposed plan would put a stop to the abuses which are believed to exist in some of the present institutions, and is, for this and many other reasons, supported by the medical profession and laymen who are familiar with the disadvantages of the present system.

RECENTLY SOME NEW PROJECTS of polar explorations have been made. Since the failure of the British Government to support the scheme of the Australian colonies, little has been done regarding the proposed Antarctic expedition. At present, according to the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, a scheme is on foot for the furtherance of Antarctic exploration by private enterprise. A New Zealand colonist (a Norwegian) has gone to Europe for the purpose of taking out with him a number of Norwegians who have been accustomed to fishing. In one or two steamers, the gentleman referred to intends to send out these Norwegians, under proper command, accompanied by one or more scientific men, with suitable equipment, for the purpose of exploring the Antarctic region, with the ultimate object of establishing a whale-fishery on an extensive scale. If at all practicable, a party will be left during a whole year on Victoria Land, or other suitable place, in order that the conditions of the region may be thoroughly investigated.

On the other hand, various plans of continuing Arctic researches are on foot. It is stated that a movement has been started in Norway for the despatch, in the summer of 1890, of an expedition which will try to reach the north pole; and it is proposed to offer the leadership to Dr. Nansen, who will probably return from Greenland in a few weeks. The intention is that an attempt should be made to reach the pole by way of Franz-Josef Land, — a route which is advocated by some of the most competent authorities on Arctic explorations. *Ski*, which have played so prominent a part in the Nordenskiöld and Nansen Greenland expeditions, would no doubt again prove of service. The Geographical Society of Bremen is about to send out an exploring expedition to the Spitzbergen Sea, the main object being inquiries into the zoölogy of this region. The scientists of this expedition will be Dr. W. Kükenthal, the well-known zoölogist, and Dr. A. Walter. The party will start from northern Norway.

THE WOMEN'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA.¹

ON June 8, 1885, ten intellectual women of Washington met to form a scientific society. The idea was a novel one and hazardous, in that only one of the participants had ever done scientific work; to wit, Mrs. Tilly E. Stevenson. In her mind the plan of a woman's anthropological society was conceived; and to her energy, ability, and fostering care are due its birth and larger growth.

At the time of organization the objects of the society were stated to be, "first, to open to women new fields for systematic investigation; second, to invite their co-operation in the development of the science of anthropology." The present constitution declares that "the object of this society shall be to promote anthropology by encouraging its study and facilitating the interchange of thought among those interested in anthropologic research, and by arranging and preserving systematically all information relating to it, and also by holding regular meetings for its discussion."

It is often asked why there should be two anthropological societies in Washington. Speaking for ourselves, we have no desire to

¹ General report of the recording secretary, Mrs. Anita Newcomb McGee, read before the society at Washington, D.C., Feb. 25, 1889.

perpetuate a distinction of sex in science; and were we all professional scientists, or possessed of education fitting us to enter the race for intellectual attainment without handicap, we doubt whether a second society would ever have been formed. Under existing conditions, however, we are satisfied to work out our own problems in anticipation of the time when science shall regard only the work, not the worker.

The society has managed its business, held its regular meetings, and listened to the papers of its members, for nearly four years, and, in spite of prophecies to the contrary, has slowly but steadily grown, — all without a single unfriendly disagreement or any pre-
sage of dissolution.

Much of the credit for this success and harmony is due to Mrs. Stevenson, the founder, and for three years and a half the president, of the society. Her principal supporter at first was Miss Sarah A. Scull, then teacher of ancient history and mythology in Mrs. Somers's school for girls, and the society's corresponding secretary. The other officers selected at the preliminary June meeting were Mrs. Emma Louise Hitchcock for recording secretary, and Mrs. Mary Parke Foster for treasurer. A constitution was draughted and adopted at the same meeting, and the society then adjourned until Nov. 28, 1885. By-laws were proposed on Dec. 12 of the same year. At the first annual meeting, held Jan. 30, 1886, the constitution and by-laws were amended, and additions were made to the board of trustees in accordance with the code. These were the two vice-presidents, Mrs. Mary E. James and Mrs. Lida Nordhoff, and six trustees, — Miss Alice C. Fletcher, Mrs. Jean M. Lander, Mrs. Emma Hammond Ward, Mrs. Mary Olmsted Clarke, Dr. Clara Bliss Hinds, and Mrs. Cornelia E. McDonald.

Other names which appear later on the board are Mrs. Sybil Augusta Carter and Mrs. Eliza Blair, as vice-presidents; Mrs. Blair, having previously filled the office of corresponding secretary, succeeding Miss Scull when the latter departed this country for Greece, in May, 1886. At the same time the recording secretary, Mrs. Hitchcock, temporarily left the young society, and journeyed toward Japan, where she observed the ever-interesting Orient for our future benefit. An able and worthy successor to the secretaryship was found, however, in the person of Mrs. Mary Olmsted Clarke. Mrs. Melissa A. Bryan, Mrs. Miranda Tullock, and Miss Florence P. Spofford have more recently served as trustees of the society. At the close of 1886 it was found necessary to subject the original and temporary constitution and by-laws to a thorough revision, and this task was accomplished so well that no alterations have since been made.

The members of the Women's Anthropological Society of America are grouped in three classes, — honorary, corresponding, and active. The last includes a sub-class of absent members, who are temporarily inactive. As originally organized, the society contained one honorary member, — Miss Rose Elizabeth Cleveland, — and twenty-one active members, of whom five were not residents of Washington. The policy of the society has always been to maintain a high standard of membership, one result of which is a practical limitation in numbers. The formalities surrounding the admission of new members are such that about a month elapses before a proposed name can be finally enrolled. At the same time, any thinking, intelligent woman likely to take practical interest in the work is gladly welcomed to the society.

The membership to-day includes three honorary, eleven corresponding, and forty-six active members. Seven among the last are upon the absent roll.

Regular meetings are held on Saturday afternoons of each alternate week from November until May inclusive. The fiftieth of these will be held on Saturday of this week. The average attendance has varied in different years from eleven to fifteen. For over two years the society has been greatly indebted to the president and trustees of Columbian university for the use of the reception-rooms of the university building for our bi-weekly meetings. The regular meetings are devoted primarily to the presentation and discussion of original scientific communications; and all business, except elections, is transacted in detail at meetings of the board or in committee before being submitted to the general society.

In addition to the regular meetings, the by-laws provide for spe-

cial meetings, and an annual meeting in January for the election of officers and trustees and the reading of reports. An annual reception may also be given, at which the retiring president is expected to deliver an address. In 1887 this reception was omitted, owing to the illness of the president. This is the only occasion on which refreshments are permitted by the code.

The year 1889 has seen many changes in the board of trustees. As constituted at present, it is as follows: president, Mrs. Sybil Augusta Carter; vice-presidents, Mrs. Mary Parke Foster and Miss Alice C. Fletcher; recording secretary, Mrs. Anita Newcomb McGee; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Emma Hammond Ward; treasurer, Miss Florence P. Spofford; members at large, Mrs. Mary Olmsted Clarke, Mrs. Jean M. Lander, Mrs. Marianna P. Seaman, Miss Lydia M. Dame, and Mrs. Hannah L. Bartlett, with a vacancy to be filled at the next meeting.

One of the first movements of the new board has been toward the formation of a library. A number of important works have been presented to the society, and through the courtesy of Major J. W. Powell these are about to be placed in the library of the Bureau of Ethnology. Donations of anthropologic works will be gratefully received by the librarian, Mrs. Marianna P. Seaman.

Were we dependent upon what the society had published, our library could be easily read. With the caution and forethought characteristic of our founder and her associates, the youthful body has refrained from much printing. Four small pamphlets have, however, appeared. "The Organization and the Constitution of the Women's Anthropological Society" (1885) was superseded in 1887 by the revised "Constitution, By-Laws, and List of Members." The two other pamphlets were designed to direct the members in their work. "Child-Growth," by Dr. Clara Bliss Hinds (1886), was a plea for, and directions concerning, anthropometry. "What is Anthropology?" by Professor Otis T. Mason (1888), was printed by the society as the best available classification of anthropologic science, and at the same time as a guide to the branches of the subject requiring investigation.

It is now hoped that a volume of proceedings may be published at no distant day, though the material for it is considerably diminished by the publication elsewhere of several valuable contributions. As a general rule, a single paper, nominally thirty minutes in length, is read and discussed at each meeting. Forty-three communications have thus far been contributed by members, a number of which were presented orally, and two presidential addresses have been delivered. In addition, two lectures were delivered at special meetings in 1887, — the first on Feb. 12, by Mr. A. R. Wallace, on "The Great Problems of Anthropology;" and the second on April 23, by Mr. J. H. Smyth, on "The African in his Home and in America."

In reviewing the work of the society, it is noticeable that the majority of the papers represent the results of personal observation on the part of their authors. They are real contributions to knowledge, generally much condensed from abundant material collected on some given subject.

It results from this custom that no discussion has ever been given to the origin, antiquity, or primitive condition of man, and no studies have been made in race-classification or in philology.

A large number of papers are ethnographic in character, as were the two presidential addresses of Mrs. Stevenson, — "The Religious Life of the Zuñi Child," delivered in 1886, and published in the "Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology;" and "The Thirteen Medicine Orders of the Zuñi," delivered in 1888, and printed in abstract in *Science*. Four other papers presented by Mrs. Stevenson either have appeared or are to appear among the publications of the Bureau of Ethnology. Their subjects are, 1st, "The Moki Indian Snake-Dance;" 2d, "Mission Indians," in which are described the cosmogony, the ceremony of purification upon arriving at puberty, and the baptismal ceremony of the San Luisano Indians of southern California; 3d, "The Sand-Paintings of the Navajos;" and, 4th, "Zuñi and the Zuñians." Some of these papers were illustrated by original drawings. Of similar character are the four papers from Miss Alice C. Fletcher, an original member of the society, who needs no introduction to the students of anthropology here or abroad. The first of these, "Omaha Child-Life," appeared in part in the *Journal of American Folk-*

Lore. The second, entitled "The Supernatural among the Omaha Tribe of Indians," was afterwards published in Vol. I. No. 3, of the "Proceedings of the American Society of Psychical Research." The third paper was on "Winter Life among the Winnebago Indians;" and the fourth, on "The Heathuska Society of the Omaha and Ponka Indians and Indian Music." The last is now in press as a publication of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology. Commendation of the original and important work of Mrs. Stevenson and Miss Fletcher would be quite superfluous.

"Legends and Historical Sketches of the Iroquois Indians" (Washington, 1887) is the title of a privately printed pamphlet by Mrs. Laura M. Scofield, containing material previously presented to the society in two papers. Two valuable communications have been given orally by corresponding members: viz., "Reminiscences of Life among the Iroquois Indians in the Province of Quebec," by the late Mrs. Erminnie A. Smith; and "The Sioux Indians," by Miss Mary C. Collins of Dakota.

A number of members at one time found a most interesting field for study in the Basque races, and their results were presented in a series of brief papers. Mrs. Seaman discussed the home life of the Basques; Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Tullock, their literature; Mrs. McDonald described their marriage customs; and Miss Spofford, their music. Miss Cathcart also condensed the results of prolonged study into an account of the spread of the Turanian races into Europe.

These papers on the Basques are all compilations, but personal observation is again represented in such communications as the following: Mrs. Carter, our esteemed president, has given an admirable account of the Hawaiians, while Mrs. Jean M. Lander ably described some customs and manners of Scotch Highlanders. Mrs. Melissa A. Bryan offered some notes upon the Japanese; Mrs. Louise F. Hunt talked about Russia; and Miss Elisa R. Scidmore has quite recently presented a chapter from her forthcoming work on Korea.

The division of technology is represented by several papers, three of them being especially noteworthy and interesting. Under the title "Habitations of Man," Mrs. Hannah L. Bartlett summarized her researches concerning the dwellings of a large number of civilized people. An account of house-building in Alaska came from Mrs. Ella F. Thomas, as one result of a two-years' stay in that land. To these Mrs. Carter added some facts concerning the habitations of the Hawaiians. Mrs. Matilda G. Bancroft of San Francisco acknowledged her membership in our society by sending a paper on "Ceramic Art of the Pacific Coast;" and Mrs. Mary E. Brown of New York, a corresponding member, read what has since appeared as the chapter on "Chinese Music," in her book entitled "Musical Instruments and their Homes" (New York, 1888). Another interesting and important contribution, from Mrs. Scofield, is on "Petroleum and Natural Gas and their Relations to Man."

Only two papers may be classed as archæologic. The departure of Miss Sarah A. Scull for Greece in the spring of 1886 has already been mentioned. Her destination was Athens, where for over two years she was connected with the American School of Classical Studies, and pursued original researches among the ruins of Hellas. Her work and that of her associates was the theme of a most interesting discourse with which the society was lately favored.

An account has been given of studies in a similar direction, though not so detailed in character. The communication of Mrs. Mary Parke Foster on "The Ancient Ruins of Mexico" was based on material collected during a seven-years' residence in our neighboring republic. During this time some expeditions into almost unknown territory were made, and certain ruins explored for the first time by a foreign lady.

In the division of sociology appears a recent account of the evolution of a community. In this Mrs. McGee followed the development of a religious body from its origin in Germany through various stages to its present state as the most successful communistic organization in America. Two years ago the study of folk-lore was commended by Miss Ellen Wier Cathcart, and Mrs. Mary Olmsted Clarke gave some negro song games which had not been discovered by either Mr. W. H. Babcock or Professor H. C. Bolton.

Last, but not least, must be mentioned the papers in somatology, some of which have also touched on psychology. Mrs. Clara Bliss Hinds, M.D., has long made a special study of anthropometry, and has urged upon our members the value of proper measurements and records in her paper already noted on "Child-Growth" and in "How to Study Children." Mrs. Mary E. James presented an able *résumé* of studies made in the asylums of Brooklyn, N.Y., in her communication on "Food in its Relations to Child-Growth." Under the title "Comparative Human Growth," Mrs. Emma Hammond Ward set forth some important but little known physiologic laws and their mental and moral bearing upon the race. Here, too, must be included Mrs. Scofield's paper upon "Life." Finally, the president of the Washington branch in the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, Mrs. Anna Howes Barus, has treated us to "The Physical History of College Women," an article based on statistics collected under the direction of its author, and already published elsewhere.

Such are the principal themes thus far discussed by our society. In these brief notes it has been impossible to convey more than the vaguest idea of their scope or character, or to indicate their value as original contributions to knowledge. The purpose of this report will have been served if some conception has been given to this new work undertaken by women, and of the progress already made upon it. Mistakes have been made in the management and work of the society. We do not claim perfection in any particular, but we do believe our organization to be the minute seed from which a great forest will spring.

There are hundreds of societies in which knowledge is cultivated and fostered for its own sake, and in which many grand and useful conceptions find birth; there are in the United States several scientific societies devoted wholly to anthropology; but among all of these the first to be organized and maintained by women alone is the Women's Anthropological Society of America.

THE "EXCELSIOR CLASSES" IN AUSTRALIA.¹

ABOUT five or six years ago, Mr. William Groom, a young workman in a silk-hat factory in Melbourne, used to observe with great distress the large number of boys who were drinking in the saloons of the city, especially on Saturday nights. The sight at last troubled him so much, that he resolved to attempt some method of diminishing the evil: so one evening he accosted a group of boys in a saloon, and asked them whether they really found any enjoyment in that mode of spending time. They answered that perhaps, after all, there was not much fun in it. Mr. Groom then invited them to come next Saturday evening to his lodgings, and said that he would try to furnish them with better amusement. Some of the boys came; and Mr. Groom, though feeling awkward and embarrassed, did his best to entertain them with games, reading, and a little personal talk. By degrees his unique power of influencing boys became manifest; numbers began to gather round him; and his work became known to few persons of wealth and position, who, recognizing Mr. Groom's peculiar gifts, agreed to guarantee a sufficient sum annually to enable him to devote his whole time to the work among the boys.

It may be mentioned, in passing, that Mr. Groom's most enthusiastic supporter is a young artist, belonging to a family of high standing and influence in Victoria, who is himself carrying on an interesting and valuable work in the Melbourne Hospital. Owing to impaired vision, he is able to work at his profession only during the morning hours: he therefore devotes three afternoons in the week to visiting the patients in the surgical wards of the hospital, — those in the medical wards having comparatively little superfluous energy, — reading and talking to them, keeping them supplied with books, and teaching them netting, macramé-work, and the construction of picture-frames and a variety of other artistic and useful objects. The various materials required he brings at each visit. In this way the wearisome hours of the patients are lightened, some useful minor industries are learned, and the sale of the products gives the patients in many cases a substantial sum of money to make a fresh start when they are discharged from the hospital.

¹ Notes of a talk by William Grey, Esq., of the Denison Club, London, to a few students of social science in the Johns Hopkins University, Jan. 12, 1889.