

SCIENCE

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AN EXHIBIT OF RELIGIONS.

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In the month of September there is to take place in Chicago an event which promises to be epoch-making in the history of religions, and perhaps, by its ultimate consequences, in the general history of mankind. I refer to the World's Parliament of Religions, at which the representatives of the Catholic, Oriental and Protestant forms of Christianity, with their various sub-divisions, will meet on equal terms with those of the different sects of Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Parseeism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and other non-Christian systems.

These religious bodies will present to the Parliament, through their accredited representatives, a statement of their teachings, practices and claims, and many of them will also have special congresses of their own, in which their doctrines, histories and practical methods will be still more fully exhibited.

It is believed by many of the friends and participants of the parliament that it cannot fail to give rise to a mutual understanding and appreciation between the world's religions, altogether unprecedented in the past, and that it will result in a vast increase in the spirit of human brotherhood, the lack of which has been the cause of many of the darkest chapters of history, and has constituted the greatest of all obstacles to the progress of the race.

But it is to its scientific, rather than to its religious or social value, that I wish to call attention. Although many of the foremost European and American specialists in comparative religion have prepared papers for the congress, or promised their personal attendance, the attention of the scientific world at large has not yet been sufficiently drawn to the extraordinary opportunities which it will present to serious and disinterested students.

It is true that it is in no sense a scientific congress, although several of its sessions will be devoted to the scientific view of religions, and these will be participated in by men of world-wide fame as the very foremost representatives of hierological science—men like Müller, Tiele, d'Alviella, Harding and the Révilles. It is true that the religious bodies participating have at heart, in most cases, the interests of their own propaganda; they hope to make so favorable a representation of their own special systems as to break down any prejudices of which they may be the objects, and to attract at least the respectful interest, if not the adhesion, of many of those who hear them.

But these facts, so far from decreasing the scientific value of the parliament, are really its essential conditions. It is a truism to say that the collection of materials is the most important part of any inductive science, since the science can be genuine and its results definitive only so far as its basis of observed facts is broad and adequate. Now there is no existing science in which more still remains to be done in the collection of materials than in comparative religion.

Many hurried inductions have been made on the basis of a few ill-observed and ill-assorted facts recorded by missionaries and travellers, whose opportunities, training, or habits of mind, have not fitted them for collecting thor-

oughly authentic data. Only a small proportion of the sacred books of the world have thus far been translated by European scholars and placed within the reach of the student; and these books can have but a partial and preliminary value so long as the complicated systems which have produced them, or grown out of them, have not been studied in the details of their historical development, subdivision, reproduction, inter-action and fusion.

What does European scholarship know, for example, about the religious development of India, in spite of the vast amount of good work which has been done in that field by Vedic scholars, general philologists, and other classes of students? There exists to this day but one professedly original résumé (and that very imperfect, and based to a large extent upon a native work) of the *existing sects of Hinduism*, and from this all other descriptions have been, for the most part, copied or abstracted.

Who is there, even among professional Indianists, who is thoroughly acquainted with the various ramifications of either Vaishnava, 'Saiva or 'Sakti Hinduism, the dates and circumstances of origin of the sects into which they are divided, the minutiae and sources of their doctrinal and practical differences, and their relative dependence upon ancient Vedic or non-Vedic Aryan religion, the pre-Aryan cults of Bactria and India, Mohammedan and Christian influences, the old and new philosophical schools, and internal processes of corruption and decay or of constructive or agglutinative development?

Again, every competent student of religions knows how difficult it is to catch the exact flavor or spirit of Oriental, or even of savage thought, and how, almost inevitably, it receives a certain foreign coloring whenever it is transmitted through a cultivated Occidental brain. Thus far very few descriptions of the non-Christian religious sects of the East, written by native adherents of those religions, have been obtainable.

It is to be further noted that those students of hierology who approach the subject from the philological standpoint, are apt to pay too much attention to the terminology of religions and to their archaic literary monuments (which sometimes represent ideal systems that have never been actually carried out to any great extent) rather than to the successive transformations of their popular and pragmatic forms, the study of which is really as much more important as it is more difficult.

On the other hand, those whose primary interest is ethnological, are equally prone to consider, even in the more advanced religions, the *paraphernalia* of the cult and the *media* of doctrine, to the detriment of the theories and *Weltanschauungen* themselves, which form, in every case, the soul of the system.

The science of religions can never rise above the level of an empty empiricism, and no definitive results can be attained in it, until every class of religious facts shall be recorded with absolute impartiality, and religions studied as a whole—their doctrines, philosophies, spiritual and moral disciplines, biblical and liturgical constructions, sacramental and ceremonial systems, organization and functional specialization, methods of instruction and propaganda, and fortuitous non-religious ingredients, with due distinctions between the official and popular elements, and, whenever they have an ascertainable history, in an exact chronological order. A dogma is as acceptable a datum for the science of religions as a myth,

or an altar-stone, or a ceremonial mask, and the religions that are nearest us are no less in importance than those that are remotest. Every one who is cognizant of the universality of law must recognize that all the changes in the recent religious life of Christendom, for example, are subject to the same laws of religious evolution and dissolution that have governed the whole religious history of the globe.

If these allegations are correct, a collection in which all the principal religions of the Christian and non-Christian world are presented in the way in which they are understood and practised by their own followers, must be of incalculable value, bringing together an enormous body of materials, such as could not have been collected by individual enterprise, even at the cost of years of labor and observation.

Were it an exclusively scientific assemblage, it would not be the vast repository of data which it is to be, and it could do nothing else than to further the breeding in and in, as it were, of scientific thought and speculation on a line where a vastly enlarged field for induction is the chief desideratum.

The proceedings of the parliament will form an invaluable addition to the materials for the study of religions, but as many as possible of those who take a scientific interest in the subject, should attend the parliament in person, so that they may in face-to-face intercourse with the picked representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Moslem and pagan sects and sub-sects, if not by their action in the great congress itself, bring out and note for their own use, and the future uses of science, the many facts which will otherwise fail to be collected.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE following are the officers of the American Association for the Advancement of Science elected for the ensuing year: President, Daniel G. Brinton, Media, Pa.; Vice-Presidents—Section of Mathematics and Astronomy, George C. Comstock, Madison; physics, Wm. A. Rogers, Waterville, Me.; chemistry, T. H. Norton, Cincinnati, O.; mechanical science and engineering, Mansfield Merriman, South Bethlehem, Pa.; geology and geography, Samuel Calvin, Iowa City, Ia.; zoölogy, Samuel H. Scudder, Cambridge, Mass.; botany, L. M. Underwood, Greencastle, Ind.; anthropology, Franz Boas, Worcester, Mass.; economic science and statistics, Harry Farquhar, Washington, D. C.; Permanent Secretary, F. W. Putnam, Cambridge, Mass. (re-elected); General Secretary, H. L. Fairchild, Rochester, N. Y.; Secretary of the Council, James L. Howe, Louisville, Ky. Secretaries of the Sections—Mathematics and astronomy, W. W. Beeman, Ann Arbor, Mich.; physics, B. W. Snow, Madison; chemistry, S. M. Babcock, Madison; mechanical science and engineering, J. H. Kinealy, St. Louis, Mo.; geology and geography, Wm. H. Davis, Cambridge, Mass.; zoölogy, Wm. Libbey, Princeton, N. J.; botany, C. R. Barnes, Madison; anthropology, A. F. Chamberlin, Worcester, Mass.; economic science and statistics, Manly Miles, Lansing, Mich. Treasurer—Wm. Lily, Mauch Chunk, Pa. (re-elected.) Considerable discussion has taken place in relation to the place of meeting for 1894, but it is still undecided. Boston and Worcester, Mass., Providence, R. I., and Brooklyn, N. Y., have all been referred to, but the matter is left in the hands of the President and the Permanent Secretary for decision. San Francisco is spoken of as the place for meeting in 1895, and an invitation has been received from Nashville, for 1896.

—The U. S. Bureau of Education has issued a large paper-covered volume on "Benjamin Franklin and the

University of Pennsylvania." It is edited by Francis N. Thorpe, professor of American constitutional history in the university, and the part directly relating to Franklin and his views upon education is written by Mr. Thorpe. He begins with an account of Franklin's own self-education, the Autobiography being mainly drawn upon as authority, and Mr. Thorpe expresses the opinion that "the influence of Franklin on American education has been even greater through his Autobiography than through the institutions which he founded, or which were founded by his followers." The movements that led to the establishment, in 1749, of the Public Academy of Philadelphia, the patent of the present university, are carefully recorded, and several important documents relating to its history are presented, including the circular by Franklin, in which he proposed its establishment and also the constitution of the academy itself. A chapter is then given to setting forth Franklin's ideas on education, followed by a comparison of his views with those of his eminent contemporaries, Adams and Jefferson. Franklin's theory of education was utilitarian, though not in the narrow, materialistic sense, and the University of Pennsylvania still shows, in its organization and its general spirit, the influence of his ideas. Rather more than half the present volume is devoted to a sketch of the university itself, the different departments of the subject being treated by different writers, a mode of treatment which makes the sketch rather scrappy, but gives, nevertheless, a fairly intelligible account of the institution. At the present time the number of students in the various medical and physiological departments outnumber all the rest, but there has been a movement at work for some years to broaden the scope of the university, and this movement, which has already led to the establishment of several new departments, gives promise of still better results in the future.

—The subjects to be brought before the International Congress of Anthropology, to be held at Chicago during the week beginning August 28, will be taken in the following order: Monday, Presidential Address, Physical Anthropology; Tuesday, Archæology; Wednesday, Ethnology; Thursday, Folk-Lore; Friday, Religions; Saturday, Linguistics. The morning proceedings will take place at the Memorial Art Palace, Michigan avenue and Adams street, and will commence each day at 9 A. M. At noon the meeting will adjourn for an afternoon session to be held at Jackson Park, at 2 P. M. At the afternoon meetings the papers to be read will have special reference to the anthropological exhibits at the Columbian Exposition, particularly those in the Anthropological Building, the U. S. Government Building, the foreign government buildings and the Midway Plaisance. It is proposed to visit the exhibits, after the reading of the papers, for inspection of the objects referred to. The following is the afternoon programme: Monday, Anthropological Laboratories; Tuesday, Folk-Lore; Wednesday, U. S. Government and Smithsonian Exhibits, Government Building; Thursday, American Archæology; Friday, Ethnology; Saturday, Ethnological Exhibits of Foreign Governments. The Midway Plaisance. The proceedings of the congress will be published in due course, and will consist of such papers, in full or in abstract, as shall have been formally presented to the congress, and be recommended for publication by a committee appointed for that purpose. A subscription of five dollars (\$5.00) will entitle the subscriber to a copy of the volume to be published. Address all communications: Mr. C. Staniland Wake, Local Secretary, Department of Ethnology, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago.