

worship in America ; that the 'Toltecs' spooked around Central America ; that the fables of the Aztec story-tellers can be assigned local existence, and the like, is hard to understand; and why a scientific society spends its money in publishing such stuff would be more inexplicable did we not all appreciate the importance of not offending the genial members of such reunions.

Fully half this volume is taken up with such padding and with second-hand material. Rather than occupy the reader's time with a discussion of it, it will be more profitable to mention some of the really valuable contributions to American studies, which are between the covers of the nearly six hundred pages.

Naturally we look for special attention to the Nahuatl language. Nor are we disappointed. The Rev. Hunt Y. Cortes, distinguished by his previous studies in this tongue, offers a number of specimens of the classical idiom, with excellent analyses and grammatic observations ; Don José Maria Vigil called attention to the ancient Mexican songs still extant, and Don Mariano Sanchez Santos, an accomplished Nahuatl scholar, gave translations of several of them. Lauro Castanedo sent copies of a few old religious manuscripts in a dialect, evidently corrupt, of the ancient tongue. Other linguistic memoirs are presented, one from Dr. Pimentel, on the present classification of the Mexican languages ; a catalogue of periodicals published in North American native tongues, by Sr. Cesare Poma ; a valuable grammatical sketch of the Guaraouno tongue, by M. L. Adam ; two by M. Raoul de la Grasserie, on the Auca and the Yunga ; a comparison of the Huasteca and Nahuatl, by Alvarez y Guerrero, and several rather wild flings at the derivations of some native names.

The only contribution of moment offered to the study of the hieroglyphic writing was a paper by Dr. Nicolas Leon on the employment of a script of the kind, of course devised by their European teachers, among the Otomis, in a period long after the Conquest. We learn from this memoir that the spiritual fathers did all they could to keep the Indians in ignorance of white civilization, and thrashed them if they tried to learn Spanish !

The papers on the ancient monuments are

moderately full. Señor Rodriguez describes the pyramid of Tepozteco at length, and Mr. H. S. Jacobs, in a somewhat flowery style, runs over the cliff-dwellers and the 'dead empires, the wonderful evidence of prehistoric life, to be found in Mexico !'

Some minute questions in Mexican history are elucidated, and Mr. Thomas Wilson advances various reasons showing the great antiquity of man in America. Professor Mariano Barcena submits again the evidence for the prehistoric man of the valley of Mexico, our old friend, the 'Hombre del Peñon,' about whom our departed colleague, Professor Cope, became skeptical in his latter days.

There are some other articles in the volume, good in the way of compilations ; one on the media of exchange of ancient Mexico, by Mr. J. W. Bastow ; one on the ancient commerce of Yucatan, by the late Bishop Carrillo Ancona ; on the medical knowledge of the Aztecs, by Alatrisme de Lope ; and others of minor importance.

Although the scientific value of the volume may be disappointing, the foreign associates were unanimous in their sincere recognition of the generous hospitality they received from the Mexican government and citizens ; and it is very creditable to the Committee of Publication that the volume has appeared thus promptly, while the report of the Congress in Stockholm, in 1894, to employ a Gallicism, still 'lets itself be waited for.'

D. G. BRINTON.

Totem Tales. W. S. PHILLIPS. Chicago, Star Publishing Co. 1896. Pp. 326.

The present book pretends to be a collection of myths from the coast of the North Pacific Ocean. The author says : "The stories contained in this little volume under the title of 'Totem Tales' are the result of careful study and research among various tribes of Indians of the Northwestern Pacific Coast. The Indian peculiarity of narration is kept, as nearly as possible, consistent with an understandable translation from the native tongue into English." If it were not for these claims the book might pass unnoticed, but since the author's expressions might be taken seriously it may be well to

sound a note of warning. Nothing can be less Indian than the words in which the tales are couched, nothing more misleading than the illustrations which represent the Indians of the coast as living in tepees and dressed in the style of Indians of the plains. The few sketches of Indian masks and paintings are given fanciful interpretations. Most of the stories are highly modified versions of stories from the region between Columbia River and Alaska, but the author has also introduced the Sedna legend of the Eskimo of Baffin Land (see Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Ethnology, p. 583 ff.) under the title 'Cawk, the Beaver's Daughter.' The figures representing the thunderbird (pp. 286 ff.) have been taken from the Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology (p. 483) and belong to a variety of tribes. As a representation of Indian life and thought the book is entirely misleading.

FRANZ BOAS.

SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES.

THE NEW YORK SECTION OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY.

THE regular November meeting of the New York Section of the American Chemical Society was held on the 5th, at the College of the City of New York. A paper on 'Corrected Assays' was read by E. H. Miller, and on the 'Chemistry of Formaldehyde in Disinfection with Exhibits' by Dr. E. J. Lederle.

Apparatus was exhibited for the production of formaldehyde in house disinfection, and an active discussion followed on its chemical properties, methods of estimating strength of solutions, effects of impurities, etc. It was stated that none of the so-called 40% solutions contain more than 33 to 36% of formaldehyde, and on account of the numerous impurities the specific gravity is no guide to the strength of the solutions. Its combination with glue was said to be perfectly stable, and if once thoroughly dried, perfectly insoluble.

A paper on the 'Chemistry of Substance used in Perfumery' was announced for the next meeting, and an interesting exhibit of natural and synthetic products is anticipated.

DURAND WOODMAN,
Secretary.

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES—SECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY.

THE Section meets bi-monthly at the Mott Memorial Library. The first meeting of the fall was held Monday evening, October 25th. Professor Cattell presented a report from the pen of Professor A. C. Haddon, of England, on Anthropology at the Toronto meeting of the British Association, and Dr. A. Hrdlicka reviewed the work in Anthropology and Psychology at the American Association.

Dr. Franz Boas and Dr. Livingston Farrand made a preliminary report of their work during the summer on the Jesup expedition sent out by the Museum of Natural History.

Their work was mainly among two of three tribes in the western part of British Columbia. Many interesting details were brought out with reference to tribal organization, language, customs and traditions. Attention was called to the rapid changes going on as a result of their location upon government reservations.

The general plan of the work undertaken by the Museum was outlined by Dr. Boas. It will extend over a period of years and will include an exhaustive study of the tribes on the northeastern coast of Asia as well as all the remaining tribes on the northwestern coast of America.

The next meeting of this section of the Academy will be held on the last Monday in January.

C. P. BLISS,
Secretary.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS.

American Chemical Journal, November.—'The Action of Carbon Dioxide upon Sodium Aluminate and the Formation of Basic Aluminium Carbonate,' W. C. DAY: Evidence in favor of the existence of a carbonate of aluminium. 'Aliphatic Sulphonic Acids,' E. P. KOHLER: General methods of preparation of the unsaturated aliphatic sulphonic acids. 'The Dissociation of Electrotypes as Measured by the Boiling-Point Method,' H. C. JONES and S. H. KING. 'On Diacyl Anilides,' H. L. WHEELER, T. E. SMITH and C. H. WARREN: Crystallographic study. 'Synthesis of Hexamethylene