

Messenger and Visitor

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How the Spade has Helped the Pen.

In an interesting article lately published in the Hartford Seminary Record, Prof. L. B. Paton sets forth the results of labors and studies in Archaeology during the nineteenth century. It is indeed only within the century just closed that the excavator has come effectively to the aid of the historian in the work of bringing to light the records of the past. "At the beginning of the nineteenth century," says Professor Paton, "our only knowledge of the history of the ancient Orient was derived from the Bible and from the narratives of Greek historians who lived centuries after the events that they recorded."

Back of 500 B. C. little was known about the ancient history of the world, and what was supposed to be known has, in the light of modern discovery, turned out to be in the main erroneous.

In the history of archaeology the year 1802 is ever memorable as that in which, by the deciphering of the proper names upon the Rosetta Stone, and also by the interpretation of certain old Persian inscriptions, keys were obtained for the reading of the Egyptian hieroglyphics and for the interpretation of the Sumerian, Babylonian, and other cuneiform writings. But the mastery of the hieroglyphic and cuneiform characters, so as to insure accurate interpretation of them occupied Orientalist scholars for many years, and in the mean time the work of excavation had yielded a vast quantity of inscriptions for decipherment. These came in part through the work of Rich, Botta and Layard at Babylon, Khorsabad and Nineveh. In 1854 there was unearthed the library of King Ashurbanipal (the Sardanapalus of the Greek historians,) containing thousands of clay tablets inscribed with records of all kinds,—histories, letters, poems, mythological and religious texts, etc.—all of great value as throwing light upon the customs and religions of the people of Babylonia and Assyria. Within the last two decades of the century much other valuable material has been brought to light by the explorations which have been carried on in ancient Babylonia by De Sarzec, Peters, Haynes, Hialprecht and others, and contemporaneously with these there have been discoveries of the highest importance in Egypt, where many royal mummies of the ancient dynasties—including the Pharaoh under whom the oppression of the children of Israel began, and also, as some believe, the Pharaoh of the exodus. In Syria and Palestine, the work of excavation has yielded results only less remarkable than those of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria.

Summing up the results of archaeological investigation during the century, Prof. Paton says:

"We possess a chronology of the history of the ancient Orient, which is exact to within a few years, so far back as the beginning of the first dynasty of Babylon 234 B. C. Before this we have a fairly complete history of Babylonia and of Egypt with the approximate dates as far back as 4000 B. C. Sufficient material is now extant to write the history of Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt from native sources. We are no longer dependent upon the stories of the credulous Herodotus, but can prove the falsity of much of his narrative by the witness of original documents. The ancient empires live again before our eyes. Their history, their customs, and their religions are as well known to us as are those of the peoples of modern Europe. Kingdoms such as those of Lagash, Ur, Agade, Mitanni, the Hittites, whose existence was formerly unknown, are now as familiar to us as are the kingdoms of mediæval Europe. Khammurabi (Amraphel), the contemporary of Abram, is better known than many of the personages of classical history, for we have not only his historical inscriptions, but also a long series of his letters, including one love-letter, and a host of public and private documents of his period. Of the state of Palestine two hundred years before the Hebrews entered it we have a more exact con-

ception than we have of it at any period of Old Testament history.

Through these discoveries the Old Testament has become a new book. The history of Israel no longer stands alone, but is seen as an integral part of the history of the world. Israel's migration is recognized as a part of a greater migration of the Aramean peoples, whose main stages we are able to trace. We see the course of events that made the exodus and the conquest of Canaan possible. We know the civilization of Canaan, and can see in what respect it molded the thought of the Hebrew immigrants. We see how it was possible in the interval between the decline of Babylonia and Egypt and the rise of Assyria for the Hebrew monarchy to be founded, and we can trace every step of its decline before the advancing power of Assyria. The prophets are no longer utterers of glorious generalities. We can date their oracles often in the exact year, and tell precisely what political situation in the Orient they had in view. Their words have thus become for us the living message of real men."

Editorial Notes.

—The work of the Baptist College at Woodstock, Ont., has been unfortunately interrupted by the presence of scarlet fever. A despatch says that on Friday there were fourteen cases of the disease among the students, and that it had been found necessary to close the institution for a time. The College will be thoroughly disinfected and will remain closed at least until April 10th.

—The Women's Barnyard Auxiliary Society of Texas, is an institution of the negro women of that State. The name may not be as suggestive of culture and refinement as those of some other societies. But it is quite possible that the 2,500 colored sisters who are united under the auspices of the W. B. A. S. for the promotion of pig and chicken raising and the making of butter and cheese are doing quite as much for the promotion of social and moral welfare as many of those who are operating under more æsthetic designations.

—President Trotter's letter in reference to the work of grace now in progress at Wolfville and in which the institutions are sharing so largely, will be read by many with great interest. A despatch from Dr. Trotter on Monday brings the very gratifying intelligence that on Sunday "Pastor Hatch baptized twenty young men from the college and Academy, the first fruits of the harvest." Many of our readers will gladly respond to President Trotter's request for prayer that the good work may go forward with increasing power. Such a beginning of the century is full of gracious promise.

—Alluding to an address recently delivered by President Hadley, of Yale University, at the Old South Church, Boston, the Watchman says that "it effectively contrasted the high standard of personal conduct that prevails in this country with the low standard of commercial and political morality. He held that the public conscience must be profoundly stirred, if we are to escape the evils inherent in trusts and in deteriorated politics. The public sentiment we need is not merely the opinion of any particular part of the whole people, but a readiness to accept in behalf of the community restrictions independent of the question whether you or I shall be personally harmed by the restrictions. He declared that we shall have an Emperor in Washington within twenty-five years, unless we can create a public sentiment, which, regardless of legislation, will regulate the trusts."

—Some of our Canadian members of Parliament have, by the length of their speeches established a record which, if not enviable, is at least hard to beat. And yet in the talking race the American Congressman appears to be ahead of the Canadian M. P. by many laps. Senator Carter of Montana lately made a speech in Congress which, by its length, if not otherwise, suggests the fall of Lucifer,—only the Montana Senator, instead of spraking "from morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve," spoke from midnight until noon of the next day. Even this performance was wholly eclipsed by Senator Morgan, who occupied three days in a discussion of the Nicaraguan Canal question, in course of which he predicted the utter downfall and destruction of the British Empire if Lord Salisbury does not mind his p's and q's. Evidently when it comes to talk, the United States Senators can "beat the Universe," and our Canadian talkers are nowhere in comparison.

—Since our reference, a few weeks ago, to the Hon. Dr. Parker's retirement from public life, the subject has come formally before the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia and has called forth remarks of a highly—and doubtless a most sincerely—appreciative character from a number of honorable gentlemen who have esteemed it an honor to be associated with Dr. Parker for a longer or shorter period in the Legislature of the Province. Our correspondent "Reporter," quotes from the speech of Hon. Mr. Armstrong, delivered on the occasion. Remarks of an equally eulogistic character were made by Hon. Messrs. Owen, Goudge, Pipes and Mack. We

know well that the reward which Dr. Parker has sought is not that of public eulogy. His motives for service have ever been deeper and more Christian than the desire for praise. At the same time it cannot be pleasing to him to know that his efforts to serve the public weal are so generously recognized by the men who have wrought with him, and still more so to know that the sentiments which these honorable gentlemen have eloquently expressed find a hearty affirmative response in the hearts of men of both political parties all over the Province.

—The vigorous efforts which the temperance people of New Glasgow are putting forth for the suppression of the illegal liquor traffic in their town (of which Pastor Rutabrooks gives some account in another column), is one for which the readers of this paper generally will feel much sympathy. With a strong, constant and active public sentiment in favor of the enforcement of the law, the Scott Act is capable of reducing the liquor business in a community to very small dimensions. The great trouble has been in most of our towns that the public feeling in favor of the enforcement of the law has not been maintained at that degree of activity and positiveness which is necessary to success. And so it has come to pass that in this town and in that where, as a result of the revival in temperance sentiment, the bars had been closed, one hears it reported a little later on that the liquor sellers are having it all their own way again. What is wanted is some power to keep the temperance sentiment of a community keyed to such a pitch that it will be easier for the officers to enforce the law against the evil traffic than to refrain from doing so. The temperance people of New Glasgow have in the past, we believe, made a good fight for the enforcement of the law, and we hope that they will now be able to give a valuable object lesson to other towns by showing what can be done under the Scott Act, with an inspector who is fully determined to do his duty and a people who are equally determined to stand by him.

—The question of how best to deal with the evils of the liquor traffic is at present quite strongly engaging the attention of the people of Halifax. The City Council is proposing certain amendments to the present license law. One of the amendments provides that the granting of licenses shall be in the hands of a commission instead of the City Council. Just what other changes are contemplated we have not seen stated. It seems to be pretty generally the opinion of the Temperance people of Halifax that the present law would be satisfactory as a repressive measure if it were enforced. That it is not enforced appears also to be admitted on all hands. Some call for its amendment on the ground that the law is not enforceable because there is no effective public sentiment in favor of it, while others hold that, with officials who were determined to do their duty, the law would not be the dead letter that it is now acknowledged to be. The Presbyterian Witness says: "It seems a great pity that the proposed emendations had not been mentioned in time for consideration and discussion in the city and throughout the country. It will not do to make sudden leaps in the dark. The interests of the country as well as the city are at stake. It is now frankly conceded that no serious attempt has been made to enforce the existing law. Now suppose we give the law a fair trial before condemning it?"

—One of our pastors has called our attention to the following account of the baptism of the man who is now President of the United States. It appeared in a recent issue of "The Ram's Horn" and we presume that it is true; "Rev. A. D. Morton, a venerable looking and retired minister now living in Canton, O., was the one who baptized the president and received him into the church of which he is now a member. Speaking of those early experiences to an interviewer, he said: 'Yes, I received William McKinley into the church and baptized him. That was at Poland, Mahoning county, in 1856, when McKinley was a boy 14 years of age. McKinley's father had moved to that place, I think, to get the benefit of the school there. . . . At one of the meetings held during the second year I was at Poland William McKinley arose in his place and declared his determination to be a Christian, stating that there would be no going back as long as God spared his life. He professed conversion at that time. McKinley had never been baptized and when the question of his baptism came up, before he was taken into full membership with the church, it was discovered that he had imbibed the idea that the only true mode of baptism was by immersion. His mother, being a Methodist, favored sprinkling, and she tried to persuade her son to give up the idea of immersion. But arguments were of no avail, so one Sunday in the following summer, in company with a number of others, McKinley repaired to the borders of the stream near Poland and I immersed him.' Mr. Morton was an active minister in the Erie conference of the Methodist church for thirty years, but, owing to ill health, superannuated in 1881. During the war of the rebellion he was chaplain of 105th Ohio regiment volunteer infantry."