

And first we find, in the subject of art and science, the earliest examples amongst the Babylonians. Here first sprang into existence the sciences of astrology, weights, measures and such like. Here too are found mathematics and phonetics, in their incipient stages. These of course were vastly improved upon by the Phœnecians and others and spread by them, but their origin is distinctly Semitic. Here too in the valley of the Euphrates forty-five hundred years before Christ we find human forms, grotesque it is true as first attempts are necessarily, chiselled in the rock. Here sculpture and architecture first sprang into being, afterwards to grow to the stature of perfection under the master hands of Greek and Roman geniuses.

Turning to our own Era we find that in the literary world we are again in the debt of our Semitic brethren.

During the middle ages when scholastic philosophy held sway, Aristotle was once more introduced by means of a Latin translation of an Arabic translation of his works. Stored up by the Arabs through several centuries once more his works sprang anew into life, and have since held their place and influence throughout modern Europe.

In regard of sculpture and architecture I need but mention the sojourn of the Moors in Spain. We have but to read the description of the Alhambra, to picture to ourselves all its oriental gorgeousness, in order fully to appreciate the influence the Moors must have exercised in that line.

There is, in closing, but one people to whom I wish to call attention—the Phœnecians, and in no better way can I give an idea of the influence they must have necessarily exercised on the Aryan races, chiefly through the medium of the Greeks, than by giving a short sketch of their characteristics. They were the foremost miners, metal-workers and glass blowers of their day. They were the boldest mariners of the ancient world; the first to leave the coast and to steer by the polar star. They opened up, before any others, the darkest parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. They were the first systematic colonists and traders, and set an example such that it has born abundant fruit even to our own day.

While the rest of the world was sunk in despotism they could boast of a form of government almost constitutional, and gave proof to the nations, that as much could be gained by the peaceful means of art, trade and commerce as by war, bloodshed and rapine. Such an example must needs have had its weight. Greece acknowledged its influence and this influence extends even to our present day. However much we are advanced we must never forget that we owe much to the past and of the nations of the past preëminently to the Semites.

D. MCGEE.

#### THE CLASSICAL SOCIETY.

The first literary meeting of the Classical Society was held on Tuesday afternoon, Prof. Hutton in the chair. After an essay from W. P. Reeve on Greek and Roman civilizations, Prof. Hutton gave an interesting address. Messrs. Stoddart and Wains were elected councillors, and R. A. Shore treasurer.

An electric swing for the World's Fair will carry twenty-four people and swing a distance of 900 feet.

#### MODERN LANGUAGE CLUB.

The attention of the new students is drawn to the Modern Language Club, which is to hold its first meeting at four o'clock on Monday, October 26, in the Hall of the Y. M. C. A. The subject of the first meeting will be "American Humorists," and the programme will consist of papers and readings, the full announcement of which will be posted on the bulletin board early this week.

The meetings are held weekly, and are devoted to profitable and interesting subjects in English, French and German. At the close of each meeting time will be allowed for open discussion on the topic of the afternoon, and for conversation in French and German, when these languages are under consideration. A special effort will be made this year to make the conversation of profit and interest to the members of the lower years. It is scarcely necessary to point out the advantages to be derived from connection with such an institution.

All students are invited to the first meeting, and those who desire to become members will hand in their names to any old member of the Club.

#### To the Editor of THE VARSITY:—

There is one department of Natural Sciences in Toronto University that is not properly equipped with apparatus, nor has it sufficient accommodation with regard to space, considering the number of students taking the work. I refer to the department of Mineralogy and Geology. With an able Professor and a competent Fellow, with six students of the Fourth Year, taking this special course, exclusively, with twelve Third Year students and between twenty and thirty Second Year students, all required, according to a formidable curriculum, to spend a specified number of hours in practical work in this department, we find at the beginning of this academic year actually no laboratory available, nothing but a bare room down below in the Biological building.

The old laboratory in the School of Practical Science was required for other purposes, and on this account had to be given up. Sufficient provision was not made for Science students of the University, but it was suggested that they perform their practical work under the supervision of the Professor of the School of Science—a plan neither satisfactory nor practicable. We have our special work according to the curriculum. We have a professor and a Fellow to direct this work, and they are the only ones who know what is required, and are willing to give the students the necessary instruction.

It would appear that this department is not considered an important one. In reply let the following quotation from the "Report of the Royal Commission on the Mineral Resources of Ontario," page 415, under the heading "Technical Instruction," suffice: "The witnesses examined by the Commission are almost unanimous in the opinion that there is great need of technical instruction in all operations relating to mining and metallurgical industries of the Province. . . . Time and means are often wasted in searching for the precious and economic minerals through districts where there are none, and where nature never designed that any should be. Some knowledge of the geology of the country, and of rocks and minerals and their relation to each other, is of obvious advantage to the prospector; and if he is also able to use the blow-pipe or make the ordinary tests for metals, his quest cannot fail to be infinitely more satisfactory than it could be without such knowledge, and he may be saved from much disappointment and loss."

Surely prompt action should be taken in this matter in order that science students may receive the proper instruction in this department; while apart from their needs, Professor Chapman, as one of the oldest and best known of the Faculty, deserves better treatment than he has received.

GEOLOGIST.