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STUDENTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY.

History reposes on authenticated facts as proved by living witnesses or written records. To gather and digest such materials demands critical and painstaking investigation carried on with as much freedom from prejudice as possible, by men qualified to see and accept the facts of politics, society, and religious life just as they really are.

The inaugural address prepared by the president, Hon. John Jay, LL.D., of New York City, was read in his absence by Hon. Wm. Wirt Henry, of Richmond, Va. He claimed that the national importance of the work done by the society, and its improved methods of study, had been properly recognized by its incorporation with the Smithsonian Institution, and the generous privileges accorded as to collecting materials, making exchanges and distributing reports.

The papers immediately following President Jay's address were devoted to Canadian history. Dr. Bourinot, a member of the association, and clerk of the Canadian House of Commons, claimed that the Dominion of Canada is no longer a "province," as styled by Secretary Blaine, but is rapidly becoming an independent power, with a vast territory, an intelligent people, and a magnificent future of its own in a line of national development diverging more and more from that of this country.

The right moment Senator Hoar arose and poured much oil on the troubled waters, disclaiming any wish on our part to bring Canada into the sisterhood of States till she could come in willingly, denying any spirit of conquest, and asserting that the boundaries of the two countries that marched side by side for 4,000 miles must compel them to the closest relations of amity and commerce.

New material was adduced by Prof. Rand as to the New England settlements in Acadia. There had been two great migrations, one of 11,000 persons between 1760 and 1770, and another in 1784 of about 23,000 disbanded soldiers and loyalists.

An idea prevails that the "village community" is the germ of our body politic. This was controverted by Dr. C. M. Andrews of Bryn Mawr, who held that it was an imported notion gaining later recognition in the original State.

A lengthy and able account was given by Prof. Cohn of the formation of the French Constitution. The fate of Diedrich Flade, the most eminent victim of the witch persecution, who sacrificed himself to save others, was fully explained from records that had been lost for a century, but had now turned up and were in the possession of Cornell University.

In a paper on "Amendments to the United States Constitution," Mr. H. V. Ames, of the Harvard graduate school, stated that upward of 1,300 resolutions, containing over 1,700 propositions to amend the Constitution, had been offered down to the close of the Fiftieth Congress, in March, 1889.

The great land speculations in the Yazoo territory, now divided between Georgia and Alabama, were described by Dr. C. Haskins, of the University of Wisconsin, who showed that, among other results, the discussion of these frauds caused the first split in the Democratic party, and that the decision of the Supreme Court as to the claims arising from them originated the present interpretation of the law of public contracts.

Miss Mary Tremain enjoys the distinction of being the first woman to lay a paper before the Historical Association, which was an interesting sketch of slavery in the District of Columbia. She stated the fact that slavery played no part originally in the choice of the seat of government.

Numerous other papers were read, and there was a large attendance at every meeting; the remaining topics being mostly with regard to the best methods of teaching history, in its philosophical, economical, political and other aspects, the organization of historical material, the co-operation of the several State historical societies, the importance of geography and archæology to the student of history, and finally the extent of governmental expenditures in behalf of studies like those espoused by this association.

VITAL STATISTICS OF JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

A very interesting bulletin (No. 19), which is devoted to vital statistics of the Jews in the United States, has been issued by the superintendent of the late census. Circulars asking for census items were sent to a number of families, and returns were received from 10,618 families, representing 60,630 individuals.

Their excellent home sanitation is shown in the statistics of births and survival of children. Of children under five years the proportion is less among the Jews than among the other population of the country in the ratio of 9 to 13.

The social condition and comfortable position attained is shown by the fact that nearly two-thirds of the families keep one or more servants. Yet the poorer families show a slightly lower death rate than that of the richer ones, reversing the ordinary course of things. The occupations of 18,115 male members of these families reveal the selection of employments.

trades, while but half of one per cent were laborers, servants, etc.

For the past five years 2,062 deaths were reported. This gives an annual death rate of only 7.11 per thousand, but little more than one half of the annual death rate of the United States in general. This astonishing figure is discussed in the bulletin, and the conclusion reached is that there is every ground for trusting its accuracy. If the deaths for the year 1889 only are taken, a death rate of about 10 per thousand is given, which is exceedingly low.

The life tables naturally show great powers of survival to old age. Thus out of 100,000 individuals there are of survivors at the age of 85 over 20,000 Jews, against an average of about 4,000 general population by English life tables and nearly 7,000 by the Massachusetts five years' life tables. The above figures for the Jews are based on the year 1889 only. For the five years 1885-1889 the record is still more favorable. The expectancy of life therefore is on the average much higher, ranging for some ages up to thirty per cent more than that given by the general English and American life tables.

In causes of death the mortality from tubercular and scrofulous complaints is less relatively than from diseases of the respiratory, digestive, circulatory, and nervous systems.

Of different occupations, the commercial pursuits show the smallest death rate.

The marriage rate and birth rate appear to be less for this class than for the average population. This coincides with the latest summary of rates in Europe. With prolonged residence in this country the death rate seems to tend to increase, and the birth rate to diminish.

As regards the defective classes, deaf and dumb, blind, idiotic, etc., the returns indicate so few among them that the figures are not trusted by the census experts.

The bulletin is only a preliminary one, but makes an exceedingly interesting presentation of the subject. The figures we have given can hardly rank even as a summary of the exhaustive tables contained in it. The compilation of the statistics was performed by Mr. A. S. King, chief of the Division of Vital Statistics. The discussion of the results is by Dr. John S. Billings, one of the leading authorities on these subjects.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION.

Among the national societies that recently held their anniversaries at Washington, D. C., was one organized in 1885 for the special study of social and economic problems. It has proved itself to be a popular and highly useful body, having drawn into its membership more than seven hundred individuals, representing every part of the country and every department of business. This does not include the numerous branch associations that have been started all the way from Maine to Texas. The chief aim of this society is to facilitate a free and unreserved interchange of opinions regarding the vitally important matters that naturally come before it for discussion. One of its peculiarities, in which it differs from most similar bodies, is its very liberal system of prizes and fellowships, whereby it is intended to stimulate the efforts of economists to perfect and elaborate their ideas on questions of the day. Among topics thus treated are: "The Evils of Unrestricted Emigration;" "The Housing of the Poor in Cities;" "State and Local Taxation;" "The Economic Aspects of Patents;" "The Silver Question;" "Factory Legislation," etc. These essays are to be published and widely distributed for the information of the general public.

Hon. Francis A. Walker is president of the association; Prof. R. T. Ely, secretary; and Mr. Frederick B. Hawley, treasurer. A council for the management of the society was also chosen, including the names of sixteen men.

Glancing over the reports of the discussions from day to day, we find that Hon. C. D. Wright, of the U. S. Department of Labor, led off in a series of practical and timely papers on American statistics, claiming for our statisticians that their work equaled that of any other country, as to quantity, although still falling below the standard as to quality, as compared with certain European efforts. But rapid progress is being made in the scientific character of what is done, and there has been a constant elevation in the value of the reports of the various bureaus and departments. Col. Wright also analyzed in detail the work done in taking the census of 1890, and suggested the co-operation of the States with the general government as a means of saving expense and as a course that might lead ultimately to the establishment of a permanent census bureau. After this introduction, special topics were treated: e. g., "Street Railway Statistics;" "Statistics as a Means of Correcting Corporational Abuses," etc.

The subject of "Crooked Taxation" elicited great interest, being opened by Mr. T. J. Shearman, who claimed that this phrase was far more nearly correct than the popular one of "indirect taxation," meaning exactly the same thing. In nearly all nations a system

prevails according to which taxes are paid by persons who are expected and even authorized to recover the amount from some one else, with interest and profits up to a certain limit. But no one can tell, under a system of this sort, what any one person contributes to the support of the government, nor what proportion of what is paid goes into the public treasury and what to some private purse; only that it is surmised that nine-tenths of the final tax is perverted; in other words, that private property is forcibly taken for private uses, which every court in the civilized world regards as robbery. And yet this same robbery has been so legalized that men who regard themselves as honest go into it intentionally and deliberately, meaning to manage matters so that the whole burden of maintaining the government shall be thrown upon the consumer, while property is practically exempt. In other words, the system makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, and in addition its methods of operation are such as to promote bribery and corruption, and force into existence a class of men who live by legalized robbery.

Prof. Seligman, of New York, showed that so far as the real estate tax was concerned, it properly had two branches, the land tax and the city tax. In taxing city property there were four systems, (1) taxing the land owner—the single tax idea; (2) taxing the house owner—the continental idea; (3) taxing the ground owner, who is at the same time the land owner—the American system; and (4) taxing the occupier—the English system. He explained the working of these systems, claiming that, under existing conditions, the main burden is actually shifted on those least able to pay; whereas the tendency of the "land tax" is to make the burden rest on one who is able to carry it, namely, the land owner, instead of on the tenant, who is presumably poorer than the owner. Of course, all this looked toward free trade and the single tax theories of Henry George. There were not wanting those that stood ready to oppose such ideas; and in short, we do not see that this distinguished association has yet quite succeeded in "squaring the taxation circle."

Prof. Folwell, of the University of Minnesota, read a paper on "A Syllabus of Political Economy," being mainly an argument for the recognition of public economy as a distinct, though related, science, running parallel with private and social economics. He explained his communication by a set of nine charts, devised by him and submitted to the judgment of the association. Prof. S. N. Patten, of the University of Pennsylvania, spoke on the "Educational Value of Political Economy." Other topics discussed were on the "Municipal Ownership of Gas Works;" "Land Transfer Reform;" "The Growth and Economic Value of Building and Loan Associations;" and on "The Extension of the University System." Among those participating in the discussions were Professors Newcombe, Bemis, Dewey, McAlister, Moulton, of England, and others more or less widely known.

Healthful Homes.

The following, from a source unknown to us, contains so much sound advice we are sure some reader will be benefited by its publication in these columns. The editor regrets that he does not know to what paper to give the usual credit.

A cemented floor under the whole area of a house is a sanitary necessity, because the "air in soils" is more or less impure at best. There is no excuse for building underground apartments in the country. They are never wholesome anywhere, and if families are compelled by stringent reasons to live in the city, where basement dining rooms and underground kitchens are the rule, they should endeavor to have an upper sitting room and live in it as much as possible. The very placing of a house on any ground and living in it under ordinary circumstances causes suction into its interior of impure soil air, because the air of the house is warmer than the air beneath it, and this induces a rush of the cold air to the warmer house atmosphere. The concreted floor will, in a great measure, do away with this difficulty, but not altogether. Ventilation of cellars must, therefore, be attended to, no matter how clean and perfectly built they may be, in town or country. Annual lime whitewashing, an old custom, is decidedly a wholesome precaution, and every cellar should thus be treated, especially in the autumn, as the cellar will be kept closed more than in spring and summer.

Very important are the floors, woodwork, walls, and ceilings of a house. Their condition influences in a greater degree than might be imagined the health of the family. There cannot be a doubt that papered walls are not wholesome, that is, if the paper is of the ordinary kind in use, which is highly absorbent. There is a paper made, I think, in England, called "sanitary paper," which has a finely glazed surface, which may be scrubbed without injury to its texture or colors. This paper is probably as free from the objection named as any texture could be. This paper is much wider than the ordinary wall paper, and as it is very strong and durable, does not cost more in the long run than ordinary wall paper, even if the first outlay is more than that expended for the less expensive grades

of ordinary wall paper. Painted walls are the best for all living rooms, that is, sitting rooms and bed chambers. They are also best for dining rooms, where there are always so many odors of food to absorb. Stained and varnished woodwork or else painted woodwork should rule, as neither is absorbent. The floors, especially, should never be left in the natural state, and I should advise all builders of houses to have their floors painted before living over them, where they are to be carpeted or otherwise covered, and stained and varnished where the intention is to show a portion or all the surface. These measures, renewed as wear necessitates, will prevent your house attaining that peculiar smell which is associated with old boards almost invariably, no matter how often or how vigorously they have been scrubbed by the neatest housewife. Part of this smell, indeed all, is due to the decay of absorbed matters, which in some cases include disease germs. Paper may be varnished, however, and thus rendered non-absorbent.

As it is not the privilege of every one to move into a perfectly new house and do just as they please, one must say a word to those who, unhappily, are obliged to live in houses of other people's building and ownership. To insure healthy conditions in an old house, go to work and do all possible cleaning with soap and soda and water. Strip down all old papers from the walls. Sometimes there will be found as many as six different layers of dilapidated paper of different colors and designs. To remove old paper, wet it all over with a damp cloth from time to time, so that the water will soak through, and in an hour or two it will be so loosened that one may peel off the layers with comparative ease. The walls should all be washed down with soda and water, and it will be well to add a little carbolic acid to insure the better purification of the apartment. The ceilings, too, are very important, and should, if possible, be painted, or at any rate thoroughly cleaned and given a fine coat of tinted lime wash.

Loosely laid floors become a source of evil smells, and a hiding place for vermin and disease germs. Hence, it is well worth the expense to have new floors tongued and grooved and blind-nailed, and old floors taken up, planed, and relaid, blind-nailed, then painted with two coats of paint. Old floors, having finished their shrinking, will not again give any trouble by reason of open seams to collect dirt and noxious substances.

Opening of Northeastern Siberia to Commerce.

A correspondent of the London Times says that two ships and a tug for river work, dispatched from London last August, in 39 days reached Karaoul, 160 miles up the Yenissei, without accident. They remained there 19 days, and took 26 days to return. They were thus only 2 months and 23 days away from the London docks. At Karaoul they met the river expedition, which "returned safe to Yenisseisk a few days ago, and is now landing and warehousing there the valuable cargo sent out from England." The same correspondent points out that the real *crux* of the expedition lay in the 160 miles of estuary between Golcheka, at the mouth of the Yenissei, and Karaoul, at the head of the estuary, which the Russian government had assigned as the port of discharge.

It is unfortunate, says *Nature*, that Captain Wiggins was accidentally prevented from completing the work with which his name has been so intimately associated, but it was he who showed the way, and to him, more than to any one, belongs the honor of having provided this new outlet for British commerce. That it may become an outlet of the highest importance is the conviction of no less an authority than Baron Nordenskiold. In a letter congratulating the promoters of the undertaking, he says: "I am persuaded that its success will once be regarded as an event rivaling in importance the return to Portugal of the first fleet loaded with merchandise from India. Siberia surpasses the North American continent as to the extent of cultivable soil. The Siberian forests are the largest in the world. Its mineral resources are immense, its climate, excepting the *tundra*, or swamps, and the northernmost forest region, healthy, and as favorable for culture of cereals as any part of Europe." He goes so far as to say that the future of Siberia may be "comparable to the stupendous development which we at present see in the New World."

The Oroville, California, Orange Groves.

In a recent SUPPLEMENT (No. 777) we published an account of the "Fruit Gardens of California." In the Northern Citrus belt, 170 miles from the ocean, over 3,000 acres are now planted with orange and lemon trees. Originally famous for its mineral gold, the favorable climate and early ripening of fruit grown there is bringing this region more prominently than ever to the front. It is considered that fruit ripens in this belt, protected by the foot hills of the Sierras, six weeks earlier than elsewhere in Southern California. Oroville, whose name is suggestive of gold, lies in this favored region, and has already produced navel and seedling oranges of unsurpassed qualities.