

On motion of Dr. Coates, a special committee was appointed on the preparation of a medal for the Magellanic Premium, lately awarded, consisting of Dr. Coates, Dr. Wilcocks, and Mr. Peale.

On motion of Dr. Barnes, the thanks of the Society were ordered to be presented to Mr. John Biddle, for his valuable donation of Oriental books presented this evening.

Whereupon the Society was adjourned.

Stated Meeting, January 20, 1865.

Present, seventeen members.

Dr. WOOD, President, in the Chair.

A letter was received from President Wayland, dated Providence, R. I., January 15, 1865, enclosing his photograph, and a donation of \$5, towards the expenses of forwarding the Proceedings by mail.

The following letter was received from M. Troyon, dated Lausanne, November 10, 1864, communicating certain facts connected with a reopened Cemetery of the Merovingian era :

M. THE SEC. OF THE AM. PHIL. SOC., PHILADA.

SIR: I have the advantage of informing you of the reception of the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Nos. 69, 70, which have just arrived, and for which I return my thanks.

Having the honor to be a member of your learned Society, you will permit me to say a few words respecting some excavations which I have made during the last few weeks, at my country seat of Bel-Air, near Lausanne, where I have already previously opened more than three hundred tombs of the Merovingian age. The tombs of this vast cemetery, which I discovered in 1838, are arranged in three stories (sout étagées en trois couches) or layers, beneath the surface of the soil. The most ancient is at a depth of five or six feet, while the highest layer is covered with only two feet of earth.

The superposition of the graves is not at all perfect, and it is easy for one to convince one's self that, after having filled once the consecrated space, they continued to inbume in the same cemetery, but at a little less depth, so as not to disturb the graves of the inferior layer, and finally recommenced for the third time the same operation. Some of the graves of the superior layer have also been reopened to place some new corpse, on which occasion the bones of the preoccupant have been swept *pêle mêle* into a corner, or into a pocket made to receive them.

The dead, stretched on their backs, were placed so as to have their eyes directed to the rising sun. A certain oscillation in the direction of the graves arose, without doubt, from the season at which the inhumation took place.

The construction is various enough. Sometimes the dead was simply deposited in a coffin of wood. Forty tombs have been cut in a bank of rock. The rest were constructed of rubble wall or with great rough flag-stones.

The ornaments gathered in this cemetery, and classified separately, according to the layer to which they belong, witness a sensible development of civilization from the fifth to the eighth centuries of our era, a period during which these inhumations have taken place on the hill of Bel-Air.

The warrior was accompanied by his arms, lance, arrow, and large cutlass, of iron. Great clasps (agrafs) and plates of iron, incrustated with silver, adorned the sword-belt. Sometimes a vase of glass or clay occupies the foot of the tomb. The child imports its playthings, and the woman her ornaments, necklaces of glassware or of enamel, knitting-needles (brochés), rings, and pins. The artisan preserves, also, the instruments of his profession. Many graves, however, contained nothing but a skeleton. The whole presents characters of present society, the rich and the poor; and it is to be remarked that the grave of the old man, accompanied by less regrets, is also furnished with fewer ornaments.

The Helveto-Burgundian population, whose tombs I discovered, professed Christianity, and left many signs symbolic of their faith; as, for instance, on the plates of bronze, the image of Christ blessing, of the prophet Daniel in the den of lions, or of a personage adoring the Cross, and turning the back on a fantastic figure, symbolizing the conversion of the heathen. On the other hand, the traces of the superstitions of the ancient worship are numerous enough. It is not rare to find fragments of glassware and pottery, which have

been deposited intentionally in the coffin. For a long time I could not comprehend their signification, but I have learned that identical deposits are sometimes still practised in certain Alpine valleys, with the feeling that it is a means of protecting the defunct from the attempts of the demon. Most of the tombs contain scattered embers taken from hearths, the traces of which subsist at under one or two feet of earth, around the circumference of the cemetery. As I have quite recently made the observation to M. le Baron de Duben, Professor of Anatomy at Stockholm, he has informed me that in our own day the inhabitants of Dalicaria and Wermland still spread over the coffin of the departed burning coals, which they hide under their clothes in a little case (cassolette), but he is not able to inform me what signification they attach to it. I find, also, from time to time, flints, with steels (briquets), in allusion to the spark of life which should one day reanimate the remains; but other flints are lamellæ and arrow-heads, to which they evidently attributed the value of amulets, as the peasantry of many European countries do to-day, when they discover some of these fragments (pisées), which they carry under their clothes to keep off or cure certain maladies. I even possess in my collection an arrow-head of flint set in a heart of gold, bought a few years ago from a Scotch peasant.

Tombs of the kind of those at Bel-Air are found at numerous points in Western Switzerland, and it is to be remarked that we have just there the true ancestors of the present population. It is not, therefore, without interest, to determine that the general form of the crania of the Merovingian era was sensibly different from that which obtains now. The typical form then was generally elongated, with a decided posterior development, while the heads of our day are rounder, and have a greater frontal development. We see, then, the Christian civilization reacting on the development of the encephalon in one and the same people, the road upwards being always slower to travel than that of degradation.

Be pleased, M., to accept the expression of my most distinguished sentiments.

Your devoted

FRED. TROYON.

LAUSANNE, November 10, 1864.

Donations for the Library were received from the Royal Astronomical and Geological Societies in London; the Essex, Albany, and Franklin Institutes; the American Antiquarian Society; the American Journal of Science and Arts;

Blanchard & Lea, and Dr. Slack, of Philadelphia; and the Architect of the Capitol at Washington. Allibone's Dictionary, Vol. I., and the Philadelphia Directory, for 1865, were purchased for the Library.

The death of Edward Everett, a member of the Society, at Boston, January 15, aged 70 years, 9 months, was announced by Mr. Fraley. It had already been announced to the Nation by the President of the United States.

A letter addressed to the President of the American Philosophical Society, and accompanied by a sealed envelope, was read, and referred to the Board of Officers and members of Council.

The committee to whom was referred Mr. T. P. James's paper, entitled "On new Mosses of the United States," reported in favor of its publication in the Transactions, which was so ordered.

Ten plates of MS. drawings of Tertiary leaves from the Tertiary beds of the *State of Mississippi*, by Mr. Lesqueux, of Columbus, Ohio, was offered by Mr. James for publication in the Transactions, together with an estimate of the cost of drawing and printing made by Mr. Sinclair. On motion of Mr. James, the subject was referred to a committee, consisting of Messrs. James, Durand, Leidy, Carson, and Coates.

The committee to which was referred the subject of the Magellanic Premium and Medal, reported progress by its chairman, Dr. Coates.

On motion of Mr. Fraley, Mr. Lesley was appointed Librarian for the ensuing year.

The Standing Committees for the year were then appointed, viz.:

Committee on Finance.—Mr. Fraley, Mr. J. F. James, Mr. S. Powell.

Committee on Publication.—Dr. Bridges, Mr. T. P. James, Dr. Carson, Mr. Marsh, Dr. Wister.

Committee on Hall.—Mr. Peale, Prof. Coppée, Judge King.

Committee on Library.—Dr. Bell, Dr. Coates, Mr. Price, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Briggs.

The list of surviving members was read and corrected.

Pending nominations, Nos. 529 to 533, and new nomination, No. 534, were read.

Balloting for members then proceeded, and the following were announced by the President, duly elected members.

L'Abbé Ovide Brunet, Professor of Botany, Laval University, Quebec.

Prof. Goldwin Smith, University of Oxford, England.

Prof. A. Winchell, Geologist of the State of Michigan, Detroit.

Mr. Wm. E. Whitman, Attorney-at-law, Philadelphia.

Prof. Geo. J. Brush, Yale College, New Haven.

And the Society was adjourned.

Stated Meeting, February 3, 1865.

Present, fourteen members.

Dr. WOOD, President, in the Chair.

Letters accepting membership were received from George J. Brush, dated New Haven, January 24, 1865, and from Ovide Brunet, dated Quebec, January 28, 1865; the latter giving the date of the death of Mr. Ross Cuthbert as September, 1861, and the former enclosing a photograph of the writer.

A letter declining the appointment to prepare an obituary notice of Mr. Dallas, was received from Mr. Ingersoll, dated January 23, 1865. On motion, Mr. Ingersoll was excused.

Donations for the Library were received from the Royal Saxon Society, Prof. Zantedeschi, the Royal Astronomical Society, Mr. E. Tucker, Editor of the Literary Gazette, and Dr. Marcet, of London; the Essex Institute, New Jersey Historical Society, Admiral Wilkes, and Mr. Snowdon, of Philadelphia.