

Série. Tome IX. No. 44. Mai, 1847. 8vo.—*From the Asiatic Society of Paris.*

The American Journal of Science and Arts. Conducted by Prof. Silliman and B. Silliman, Jr. and J. D. Dana. Vol. IV. No. 11. Sept. 1847. 8vo.—*From the Editors.*

Jahrbücher der Literatur. Hundert dreizehnter Band. January to December, 1846. Nos. 113 to 116, inclusive. Wien. 8vo.—*From Baron Von Hammer Purgstall.*

An Essay, Literary and Practical, on Inversio Uteri. By John Green Crosse, M.D., F.R.S. Part the Second. London, 1847. 8vo.—*From the Author.*

Chemistry applied to the Manufacture of Soap and Candles. By Campbell Morfit. Philadelphia, 1847. 8vo.—*From the Author.*

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY BY PURCHASE.

The London, Edinburgh, and Dublin Philosophical Magazine, and Journal of Science. Third Series. Vol. XXXI. No. 207. Sept. 1847. 8vo.

Annales de Chimie et de Physique. Troisième Série. Tome XX. Juillet et Août, 1847. 8vo.

Comptes Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences; par MM. les Secrétaires perpétuels. Tome XXIV. No. 26. 28 Juin, 1847. Tome XXV. Nos. 1 à 4. 5 Juillet au 26 Juillet, 1847. 4to. Tables, deuxième Semestre. 1846. Tome XXIII.

Mr. Haldeman exhibited specimens of engravings of shells on steel, intended for the publication of the results of the Geological Survey of New York. He stated that the expense was only two-fifths of similar plates on stone a few years ago.

Pending nominations, from Nos. 197 to 201 inclusive, and new nomination, 202, were read.

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*Stated Meeting, October 15.*

Present, nineteen members.

Dr. CHAPMAN, President, in the Chair.

A letter was received and read:—

From Dr. Nürnberger, dated Nürnberg, 1st May, 1847, accompanying a donation to the Library.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

- Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Jan. 27th to May 25th, 1847. Boston. 8vo.—*From the Academy.*
- The African Repository and Colonial Journal. Vol. XXIII. Oct. 1847. No. 10. 8vo.—*From the American Colonization Society.*
- The American Journal of the Medical Sciences. Edited by Isaac Hays, M.D. New Series. Vol. XIV. No. 28. October, 1847. 8vo.—*From the Editor.*
- The Medical News and Library. Vol. V. October, 1847. No. 58. 8vo.—*From Messrs. Lea & Blanchard.*
- North American Herpetology; or, A Description of the Reptiles inhabiting the United States. By John Edwards Holbrook, M.D. Philadelphia, 1842. 5 Vols. 4to.—*From the Author.*
- Memoir on the Fossil Genus *Basilosaurus*; with a notice of Specimens from the Eocene Green-sand of South Carolina. By Robt. M. Gibbes, M.D. Philadelphia, 1847. 4to.—*From the Author.*
- Grundzüge der neueren Astronomischen Beobachtungs-Kunst. Entworfen von Dr. C. T. Anger. Danzig, 1847. 4to.—*From the Author.*
- Populäres Astronomisches Hand-Wörterbuch. Von Dr. Joseph Emil Nürnberger. Zwölftes und dreizehntes Heft, L.—M. Kempten, 1846. 8vo.—*From the Author.*

On motion of Dr. Boyé, Dr. Boyé, Mr. Peale, and Dr. Bethune, were appointed a Committee to examine into the phenomena presented by the singing mouse, which was recently brought before the Society.

Dr. Bethune made some remarks on ethnology, a term he preferred to ethnography.

It has generally been assumed that civilization was the result of a people's emergence by their own force and gradually from a barbarous state. This view is taken by various writers, especially the French, on the *contrat social*, and has become the popular notion. Dr. Bethune affirmed that all history taught the contrary. We have no established instance of a nation emerging from barbarism by its own force, but always where such a change has occurred in the condition of a people, it received the *graft* of civilization from another; and there never has been a time when civilization did not exist some-

where, though often changing its place. He considered this as a proof that civilization is the natural state of man, and must have been his original state, or the state which he derived from God.

Dr. Bethune also considered that nations were distinctly characterised by their moral peculiarities, and especially by the superstitions prevalent among them. Every form of superstition is of very remote origin, and the several classes can be traced backward through successive periods to a common source; the form prevalent among any nation marking the period when it broke off from the main stem. Thus the northern Indians of America (if their faith be properly ascertained), are the only savage people known to us who worship a pure Spirit as God; and hence they must be the oldest, having left the main family before idolatry became prevalent. *Fire* being originally the sign of the divine Presence, the worship of fire as a representative of Deity was the *earliest* form of idolatry, and marks a people among whom it prevails as very ancient in their separation. Angels in the visible shape of supernatural man, being employed by the invisible God as his messengers, gave rise to the *second* form of idolatry, that of *images* resembling man, though variously exaggerated, according to the taste of the people. The *third* form was the result of more philosophical refinement, being the worship of emblems, representing the various providence of the Divine Being; as the ox in agriculture; the trident or fish-spear for maritime affairs, &c. Next to the emblematic came the *symbolical*; as the egg, the serpent-circle, &c. This was carried to the highest pitch in the *Bacchic* mysteries, where, under forms revolting to modern refinement, the most subtle doctrines were concealed. It is remarkable that wherever history (other than sacred) leads us, we find traces of the Bacchic or Phallic superstition, from India to ultima Thule; from the date of the Shastres down to the present time.

Dr. Bethune inferred from this that the superstitions and *traditionary* moral notions of a people, should be studied as much as the form of their heads or the radical of their language, to discover their origin. The bale (or Baal) fires still lighted in Ireland, and the image of the sun on the ruined temples of the Mexicans, mark an original consanguinity of the long separated nations. So, distinct traces of the Phallic worship (as late as the middle of the last century), prove the source from which Marseilles was colonized, *after* that mysticism had been invented by the Egyptian hierophants.

All these considerations, leading us backward to a unity or common origin of the race, as well as to a state of high morals and civi-

lization, Dr. Bethune thought, went to confirm the Mosaic history. He also referred to the reasoning in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, to show that his view was that taken by the apostle Paul. He also hoped to investigate the subject farther and communicate the result in form.

Pending nominations, from No. 197 to 202, were read.

The requisite number of qualified voters not being present, the balloting for members was postponed.

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*Stated Meeting, November 5.*

Present, twenty-two members.

Dr. CHAPMAN, President, in the Chair.

Letters were received and read:—

From the President of the Corporation of the University in Cambridge, Mass., dated Harvard College, Cambridge, 28th July, 1847, acknowledging the receipt of the Proceedings of this Society:—and,

From His Excellency George Bancroft, dated U. S. Legation, London, 4th October, 1847, announcing a donation to the Society.

The following donations were announced:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Vol. XVI. Part III. Edinburgh, 1847. 4to.—*From the Society.*

Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Vol. XVII. Part II. Containing the Makerstoun Magnetical and Meteorological Observations for 1843. Edinburgh, 1847. 4to.—*From the same.*

Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Vol. II. Nos. 29 and 30. 1846–47. 8vo.—*From the same.*

Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society of London. Vol. VII. June 11, 1847. No. 16. 8vo.—*From the Society.*

The Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London. Edited by the Assistant Secretary. No. 11. August 1st, 1847. 8vo.—*From the Society.*