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1903.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.*

GENERAL HALLIDAY IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following elections were announced :—

ASSOCIATES :—Rev. G. Juhlin, Arvika, Sweden ; Herr S. Sundholm, B.A., Sentula, Finland ; Rev. Charles C. Petch, Gorakhpur, India.

The following papers were read :—

No. I. Report on the Congress of Orientalists held at Hamburg in September, 1902.

No. II. The Laws of the Babylonians, as recorded in the Code of Hammurabi.

No. I.

*REPORT ON THE CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS
HELD AT HAMBURG IN SEPTEMBER, 1902.*
By THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES, Esq., LL.D., M.R.A.S.

IT was promised us, when the invitation reached Rome in 1899, that we should have a right good welcome in the great commercial city of Hamburg, and that everything would be done in a superior manner. And as a matter of fact, our welcome was of the most cordial nature, such as the German nation knows well how to extend. A committee, appointed for the purpose, found for us lodgings at prices in accordance with the indications given, and they performed their work well, for there are not many Orientalists who know Hamburg, and though most of the visitors would have preferred to choose their lodgings themselves, the kind offices of the committee were a great saving of time and trouble.

The first reception of the Congressists was on the eve of the day when the assembly was to begin work. This took place in

* Monday, May 4th, 1903.

the Concert-house, where a band enlivened the monotony of the conversation. In accordance with what is apparently the German custom, each person paid for what he required, but as the refreshments available were not always to the taste of the nationalities represented, the trade done by the waiters of the institution was small. The assembly was welcomed by Professor Windisch, of Leipzig, president of the Congress and also of the German Oriental Society. He was followed by the Chairman of the Senate, Dr. D. Behrmann, whose speech of welcome was a specially gratifying one to the Assyriologists present, and showed what an important place their study had taken in the circle of researches dealing with the East, and this has been emphasized, as many of my audience are aware, by the interest which the German Emperor has taken and probably still takes in it, as is shown by his having attended Professor Fried. Delitzsch's lectures, concerning which I shall have something to say later on. Dr. Behrmann, in the course of his remarks, pointed out that a hundred years before, on the 4th September, 1802, Grotefend laid before the Society of Sciences at Göttingen his paper upon the decipherment of the Persian Cuneiform Inscriptions, in which he had reasoned out at least eight letters of that system of writing. In a manner never hoped for (he continued) light had been thrown upon the gloom of antiquity, for the boundary of knowable things had been shifted back a fourth part of ten millenniums. It was difficult to say whether the century which had just begun would be as fruitful in discoveries as that which had so lately come to a close, but there was no doubt that the members of the Congress would work full of strenuous earnestness into the future, then on the evening of the present century; a thankful posterity would say, in the words of the Arabic proverb, *Al-fahra lil-mubtedi, wa in ahsanu 'l-muqtedi*, "Honour to the beginner, even though his successor has done better."

We found that the sections of the Congress would meet in the Concert-house, where the first reception had been held, with the exception of the Egyptian and the Indian sections, which met at the State laboratory. This was naturally in the highest degree inconvenient for those who took an interest in these subjects and in the doings of the other sections, the two buildings being rather far apart. Moreover, the sundered sections did not come very often into contact, and, therefore, did not have an opportunity of exchanging ideas and notes.

In all probability one of the most tedious things in connection

with a congress is listening to all the speeches of salutation or greeting which are given, at the first plenary meeting, by the representatives of the various governments. There were at the Hamburg Congress fifteen of them, and what they had to say, with the addresses of the president and vice-president (Herr Senior D. Behrmann and Burgomaster Dr. Mönkeberg), who, with the other vice-presidents, were then elected, brought up the total of the speeches to about twenty. The listener cannot escape from the feeling that such time might be better spent. Nevertheless, one feels naturally a certain amount of interest on such occasions when someone gets up to speak in the English language (which happened fairly often), or when the speaker made his remarks in a language seldom heard, as did the Egyptian delegate, Ahmed Zeki Bey, who uttered his words of salutation in Arabic, to the great gratification of all those who know anything of that language. As to the speech of the Chinese delegate, that was naturally for the extreme few, but it was made comprehensible to most of the audience by rendering into very excellent German by his Chinese interpreter. It was noted that some of the United States delegates, even those with English names, sometimes preferred to speak German. In the afternoon sectional meetings took place, so that there was no loss of time in getting to work.*

As it will be impossible for me to refer in detail to all the papers which were read, I propose to speak of such of them as may be regarded as of general interest to the members of this Institute, though my own predilection will naturally be manifest, especially as those which I heard were, to some extent, papers dealing with my own subject, whilst the remainder were related thereto more or less. Unlike other congresses of Orientalists which have been held, no short abstracts of the papers have been issued, so that the general public and the members of the Congress who were unable to attend all the meetings find themselves in almost absolute ignorance of the value of the papers which they were unable to hear. The London Orientalist Congress held ten years ago was, in this respect, far away in advance of that of Hamburg, which cannot claim, therefore, to be a place where such things are managed better.

As, after the election of Professor Buhl as President of the

* It is worthy of notice, that this was the first Orientalist Congress at which the Government of Ceylon has been represented, the delegate being Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe.

fifth (General Semitic) Section, I was the first of those asked who had his manuscript with him, my paper upon "A Small Collection of Babylonian Tablets from the Birs Nimroud," being an account of a portion of the collection belonging to Lord Amherst of Hackney, was the first read. The Birs Nimroud, as probably most of my audience know, is the ruin of the great temple - tower at Borsippa (of this word Birs is probably a corruption), which was a religious centre of considerable importance at the time Babylonia existed as a nation, and is regarded by many as the place where the Tower of Babel stood. The documents described were mainly contract-tablets, and covered a period dating from some interregnum, when Assyrian influence was supreme, to the time of Artaxerxes. This earliest tablet, of the time when there was no king of the native line in Babylon, is dated in the reign of an eponym, a kind of mayor in the city of Babylon, named Ubar. It is the only instance of dating by eponyms in Babylonian history known to me, and is of considerable importance on that account. The names of the witnesses imply that the document belongs to the reign of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon, who, as we know from the Old Testament and the inscriptions, sometimes held his court at Babylon.

As is well known, after the reign of Nabonidus, when Belshazzar, his son, seems to have held a position equal to that of king, the Babylonians never regained their political liberty. This, however, does not mean that they never tried, as the tablet dated in the reign of Šamaš-iriba, which was studied many years ago by Professor Oppert, sufficiently shows. Further confirmation of this I was able to bring forward, by quoting two of Lord Amherst's collection, one dated in the reign of a Babylonian named Bêl-šimanni, and the other in that of a Persian which I read doubtfully as Šikušti. It will therefore be seen that the Babylonians of the Persian period were not particular as to the quarter whence the change which they desired came—they would have preferred a Babylonian ruler, in all probability, but failing that, they were willing to acknowledge another foreigner. Doubtless their opinion was, that under the new ruler things might be much better, and could not very well be worse.

An interesting paper read at the same sitting of the General Semitic Section was that of Professor Paul Haupt, of Baltimore, U.S.A., upon the name of Tarshish, which he regarded as simply a place for crushing ore, and therefore applicable to any district where there was a foundry, or smelting-furnaces.

The root is generally compared, it will be remembered, with the Syriac *rashsh*, "to hammer." This would be in many ways an acceptable theory, but how Tarshish comes to be the name of a precious stone, translated in the Authorized Version "beryl," but according to the Septuagint and Josephus the chrysolite, requires explanation. That the word occurs as the name of a Persian prince probably yields but little help.

A noteworthy paper was that of Professor Merx, of Heidelberg, upon "The Influence of the Old Testament upon the Development and Formation of Universal History," which was read at the first plenary meeting. He said that without the exchange of ideas which had taken place between Orient and Occident, in its broader sense, our civilization would have been quite different from what it is at present. Referring to the uncritical way in which Herodotus approached the East, Professor Merx said that, with the genial simplicity of a true artist of story-telling of the first rank, Herodotus presented to us the account of all the known nationalities, mingling together history and legend, always interesting, and approaching the legends by no means uncritically; but he only presents what is of importance on account of its relation to Greece. Of a consecutive history of mankind, directed towards a definite end, he knows nothing; the race which resulted from the stones of Deucalion and Phyrria have for him no united history. Diodorus Siculus, on the other hand, had the idea of general history as something continuous and fixed, and in his time the task of the historian was conceived as one in which he had to arrange in order the subject of which he treated in such a way as to show the association of races who, however, are divided from each other by time and space. But the historian at this period found himself in a great difficulty, for how was he to gain a uniform series of historical events, with their contemporaneous reciprocal influences, when a united chronology was entirely wanting? Inquiring then how Old Testament history arose, and how it was systemized, Professor Merx said, that if there had ever been a nation which regarded itself as the centre of the world, that nation was the Jews. The various component parts of which Old Testament history is made up cover already, in the ninth century, when the Jehovist found his material, every kind of historical document. In this history his glance is as it were a universal one, as is proved by the ethnical table, which he incorporated into his work, and which is wrongly ascribed to another source. If we look closer at his work, we see that he has the unity of the human

race, the unity of God, who made and rules heaven and earth, and along with that the unity of the universe when he had no name for it. He had got as far as the Greeks, at a time when the pseudo-Aristotelian book upon the world was written, in which the cosmos is a system consisting of heaven and earth together with the beings contained therein, and among the many divine names only one God is accepted. (We may here note, that the Babylonians had already reached this point at a period yet to be determined, but which cannot be later than 500 B.C., and may be as early as 2500 B.C.) It would be impossible, however, to go over all the ground covered by this interesting lecture, which ought to be read in full to get an idea of its importance and suggestiveness.

A paper of more general interest was that of Ahmed Zeki Bey, of Cairo, which was entitled, "The invention of gunpowder and cannon attributed to German genius in the fourteenth century, according to Arab authors." He began by referring to the dispute between scholars, as to whether gunpowder had been invented by the Chinese or the Spaniards. Though an Egyptian himself, he had come to another conclusion. In the libraries of Vienna, Constantinople, and Algiers was a manuscript, bearing the title, "The honour and the advantage which accrue to those who carry on war with the help of cannon." This work was written by a Moor of Spain in Spanish (he having forgotten the language of his forefathers) in the year 1635, and translated by a former interpreter to the Sultan of Morocco. The author, like the translator, was a pious Moslem, and took to heart the expulsion of his compatriots, who were at the same time his co-religionists, from Spain, and this book was written as a means of advising them how to regain the lost provinces. It is divided into fifty chapters, and in the course of the work he speaks of the invention of gunpowder, which he attributes to a monk 265 years before his time—that is, in 1370. He praises especially the Germans, who, he says, were the cleverest masters in this engine of warfare. Clearly the claims of Roger Bacon were, in his time, unrecognized on the Continent.

Papers upon Semitic pet-names, the superscription of the book of Jeremiah, and the present primitive Semitic sacrificial sites, the last by Professor Curtiss, of Chicago, were among those next read. In my own speciality, Professor Oppert read a paper upon the translation, which he had recently made, of the great cylinder-inscription of Gudea, that containing his celebrated dream, which I hope to touch upon at greater length

at some future time. Papers upon the pronunciation of Hebrew were not wanting, as that of Professor Guidi, of Rome, and Dr. Ginsburg, of London, on the pasesks, showed. Perennial with Professor Halévy is the question of the Semitic character of the Babylonian syllabary, which, strange to say, notwithstanding that, at the Congress of Paris, many "anti-Akkadists" or "anti-Sumerists" declared themselves, was listened to in chilling silence, though several of those erstwhile "anti-Sumerists" were present at the meeting.

Of considerable interest was the account of the excavations by the German Palestine Fund at Ta'annek, by the explorer, Professor Sellin, of Vienna. It was described as an important Canaanitish city, which was destroyed by the Assyrians, and is not again mentioned until the fourteenth century. The ruins excavated are three hundred mètres long, and they lie near a village bearing the old name, Ta'anach, consisting of a mosque and about twenty huts. The pottery of the site has the usual black concentric lines, and bronze implements and figures of Astarte were found. Of special interest was a black cylinder-seal with the Babylonian name Atanah-ili, servant of the god Nergal, similar to the numerous examples belonging to the period of the dynasty of Hammurabi. Among the graves excavated were some regarded as being those of sacrificed children, and altars, thought to have been used in connection with the rites attending these sacrifices, were found. In the south portion a destroyed room, with amulets and human remains, were likewise discovered. An ornamented altar among the ruins was described as being exactly like the Mosaic altar of incense.

In view of the interest attaching to Professor Friederich Delitzsch's two lectures entitled *Babel und Bibel*, and the German Emperor's decision thereon, a short paper upon the name of Yahwah (Jehovah) by Professor Bezold, will probably be regarded as of greater interest than most of the other communications, though it cannot be said that it settled the point in question, namely, whether the name occurs or not either one way or the other. All the possible ways of reading the supposed original form of Jehovah were quoted, and the question aroused a certain amount of discussion. The names in which this divine appellation occurs are contained in inscriptions copied by me for the Trustees of the British Museum, and published by them in the series of inscriptions they are now issuing, entitled, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, parts iv and viii. The transcription of one of these names does

not admit of doubt, and was referred to by me in my paper upon "The Religion of the Babylonians 2000 years B.C.," read at the Paris Congress for the History of Religion in 1900. It is the Babylonian equivalent of Joel, *Yau^m-ilu*, meaning "Jah is God," and cannot, at least with our present knowledge, prove the existence of the name Yahwah (Jehovah) at that early date.

The other two forms Delitzsch reads *Ia-a'-ve-ilu* and *Ia-ve-ilu* respectively, and it must be admitted that they are both possible readings, especially if we change the *v* into *w*. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that if Professor Delitzsch's transcription of the character before *ilu*, whether written with *v* or with *w*, be correct, its identification with the original reading of the name Jehovah is exceedingly improbable. As was pointed out in the discussion which ensued, the form is a later one than that found 1500 years later, namely, *Yaawa* or *Yâwa*, which occurs in several names quoted in the paper upon "The Religious Ideas of the Babylonians," read before this Institute in 1895. It is to be noted, however, that the reading necessitated by the early date of these names is also possible, namely, *Ya'wa-ilu* and *Yawa-ilu*, in which case Professor Delitzsch would be right, and the names in question would mean "Yahwah (Jehovah) is God," though his transcription would be slightly incorrect.

The readings *Ya'pi-ilu* and *Yapi-ilu* are possible, and this fact has to be taken into consideration. Professor Delitzsch's theory, however, with the modification in the transcription which I have proposed, will always have to be regarded as one of the more probable ones, and may be accepted, with reserve, until material comes to light to prove the reading one way or the other.

Before closing, there is one point which may be referred to, and that is the question of the publication of the transactions. In consequence of the motion of Professor Naville, the suggestion that abstracts only of the papers read should be printed was adopted. The reason of this is that the volumes of papers do not, as a rule, appear for several years after the Congress has been held—it is only a short time since the second and third volumes of the Transactions of the Congress, held at Rome in 1899, were announced as ready for delivery to the members, and this is, undoubtedly, an undesirable state of things. The issue of abstracts, it was supposed, would fully meet this difficulty, and it was provided in the resolution that the abstracts sent in for publication should not exceed two

pages, and the volume containing them should be issued within six months. The writers of papers were to have the right of printing them in full in any publication which seemed good to them.

It was at once seen by many, however, that this might be the death-blow to Congresses. A number of people subscribe to them without having any intention whatever of being present, their only desire being to receive the publication which it is the custom to issue. It is needless to say that their money is a very welcome addition to the funds of the Congress, and the people who stop away ought to be encouraged to add to the number of subscriptions received. There is also the possibility to be taken into consideration, that many of the people who are accustomed to attend Congresses may decide to refrain in consequence of the absence of transactions. To all appearance, however, it was only the small minority which realized these disadvantages, and this being the case, the proposed more than doubtful reform was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Under this new rule, the abstracts of the papers ought by now to be in our hands, but when they will appear, no one knows. This, indeed, was foreseen at the outset, and one speaker upon the subject went so far as to say, that it was very doubtful whether the promised abstracts of papers would appear at all. With a view to clear up this question, I wrote to the Secretary of the Hamburg Congress, Dr. Sieveking, and received in reply the assurance that the volume would not only appear, but was actually in the hands of the printer. This was reassuring news, but it will be very much behindhand, I fear. Some of the contributors of papers may have received their proofs, but nothing of that nature has as yet reached my hands, and to all appearance two months more must elapse ere the volume reaches the members. The Congress of Rome surpassed that of Hamburg greatly in this respect, for full reports were issued to the members every day, enabling its progress to be easily followed, and how full they were may be judged from the fact, that in their reissued form, the daily bulletins total 273 pages of closely-printed matter. One hardly wants anything more than this, and if the Hamburg Congress had issued something even half as extensive, one could have put up with the delay in issuing the volume of abstracts, and might even reconcile one's self to the abandonment of the issue of Transactions.