

NOTES AND QUERIES.

The American University of Beirut.—Mr. Asad Rustum, M.A., Instructor in History at the University, writes from Beirut, December 29, 1920, a letter which will interest our readers. He says:—"As far as we know, 'civilization arose in the Near East, and Europe obtained it here.' The study of the history of Syria-Palestine and the rest of the countries that come under the term Near East is therefore of use not only to Orientals but to Westerners as well. Much has been done on Egypt, Mesopotamia and Palestine, to say nothing about Greece, but very little on Syria, not because there is little to be known, but because this country has not been as fortunate as those others. In spite of our financial difficulties we have been able to spare trifling sums here and there to preserve as many of the antiquities of this land as we could. We have recently been able to engage Mr. Woolley, of the British Museum, to rearrange our collection and thus help us in serving science and civilization. Mr. Woolley left London some months ago hoping to resume his excavations on the site of the ancient Hittite capital, but was unable to reach his destination. We made use of the opportunity as it presented itself, in spite of the big deficit on our budget. Among the many earthenware vases in the collection, Mr. Woolley recognized a bowl of local fabric of the late neolithic period—some 5000 years old. The vase is of special importance because only three of its kind exist: one was found in Palestine and is now probably in the Government Museum of Constantinople, the other is in the possession of Mr. Von Heidenstamm, on the coast, not far from Beirut.

"Students of history may be interested to know that Mr. Woolley has found in our collection a part of a clay stopper from a jar, stamped with an Egyptian seal bearing the name of Amenhotep of Egypt; a basalt statue, badly mutilated, probably belongs to the same period. As far as we know these two objects form almost all that has been found in Phoenician soil from this early conquest of the country; we know of very few others besides a little obelisk discovered in the island of Arvad, and preserved by His Excellency the Head of the Lebanon State.

“Egyptian domination, intermittent as it was, lasted until the twelfth century, B.C., when the big wave of European barbarians overran this country and thus helped to overthrow the Egyptian Empire. Aegeans lived with Orientals and Orientals came in contact with Aegeans; both helped to build up the Mediterranean civilization we are so proud of. A tomb group from Gharifa, not far from this city, containing imported Mycenaean vases, is preserved in our collection. The tomb is the first of its kind discovered in Phoenicia, and is of importance as giving evidence for the Aegean invasion in question. Pottery, mostly from the Bekā'a, and now in the Museum of this University, shows also strong Cypriote connections and traditions.

“How we wish we had more money to spend on such things, and thus help in saving the antiquities of this country! As a native of this land I recognise the wonderful service your association has rendered to the world in general and to us in particular. Syrians are thankful for what they have had and only wish they could have more of it.

“Most respectfully yours,

“A. J. RUSTUM.”
