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EDITOR'S TABLE.

Whatever fair differences of opinion may exist as to the general protective policy of our government, there can be among intelligent people no two opinions as to the provisions in the new Dingley tariff bill, taxing books, apparatus and antiquities imported into the country. A more extraordinary anachronism than these provisions, can scarcely be conceived. With few exceptions since 1789, books, philosophical apparatus, etc., imported for the use of colleges, libraries, and other incorporated institutions, have been admitted free of duty; and within a few years, through representations of various scientific bodies, scientific books in other than the English language imported for the use of private students were also placed on the free list. It was insisted that if institutions should have their books free, private students were still more intitled to such consideration.

The proposed legislation reverses all this, and puts us in the position as to enlightenment, which we occupied prior to 1789, and below that of any existing nation civilized or uncivilized. It shows that the supposed interest in public education professed by such legislators is a sham, and that they are willing to see their fellow countrymen fall below the generally too prevalent level of mediocrity to something still less noble. Probably they do not conceive of the possibility of such a degeneracy, but the opinion held by a people that they are the greatest and wisest on earth, is generally inversely as the truth of the assumption. The more ignorant a man or a nation, the surer it or he is of its or his superiority. We cannot afford in this country to shut ourselves out from the sources of culture as developed in other countries. The supposition that we benefit even in a financial way by such exclusion is fallacious. Is it necessary to say in this country to men sent to legislate for us, that a piece of scientific or artistic work, or an object of antiquity, having been once produced, cannot be produced again? It is necessary to say to men of sense, that the industries fostered by science and art, as those of the printer, engraver, etc. are developed and not suppressed by the abundant introduction of the works of other countries? In the scientific field the work done here is greatly stimulated by the knowledge of the work done abroad, and our ability to do our own work is largely dependent on it.

In fact all the materials of study and research whether imported by institutions or by individuals should be placed on the free list, and that

whether they be printed in the English language or not, if we are to maintain a place among civilized nations. It is true that we have legislators who object to laws providing bodies for the study of anatomy in our medical schools; and perhaps such as these desire to see the education of our citizens taxed and suppressed in other ways; but it is scarcely possible that a sufficient number of members of our national legislature can be found to support the provisions of the Dingley bill, which will restrict the development of intelligence in this country to the rich, and cut it off from the poor.

Since the above was written protests from many institutions of learning have reached Washington, and it is said have produced some impression. We hope that this may be true, and that education may be fostered by the Dingley bill as well as it has been done under the Wilson bill.

THE present regulations of the Universal Postal Union admit specimens of Natural History to the mails thereof only at letter rates, five cents per half ounce or fraction thereof.

At the International Congress of Zoology, held at Leyden, Holland, in September, 1895, Dr. Chas. Wardell Stiles, official delegate of the U. S. Government, offered resolutions, which were subsequently adopted, that the Swiss Government be requested, through its delegate to the Congress of Zoology, to propose to the next International Postal Congress an amendment to the regulations thereof whereby specimens of Natural History shall be carried in the mails of the Universal Postal Union at the rates for samples of merchandise; that an appeal should be addressed to all the delegates and members of the Congress of Zoology to bring this amendment to the notice of their respective governments, so that those governments should instruct their delegates to the Postal Congress to act favorably upon the same; that copies of these resolutions be sent by the Secretary of the Congress of Zoology to all governments forming part of the Universal Postal Union and which were not represented at the Congress of Zoology.

In accordance with these resolutions, Dr. Stiles suggested to the committee of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in charge of the matter of postage on Natural History specimens, that, although it is probable that the U. S. Government will vote in favor of this proposed amendment, seeing that it is the same proposition which the United States had presented at the last International Postal Congress of Vienna, the cause would be helped by the Academy adopting resolutions in favor of this proposed amendment and requesting the

Postmaster-General at Washington to instruct our American delegates to vote in favor of it.

This the Academy has done, but other American scientific bodies should join in the work, adopt similar resolutions and send them to our Postmaster-General that he may know that the students of natural history in the United States eagerly desire such a reduction in postage rates. The next International Postal Congress meets at Washington on the fifth of May next. We hope that all those who are acquainted with the facts will use such means and influence as may be at their command to help in the accomplishment of this end.

For the guidance of those who will aid in the manner suggested, a translation of the original French text of the amendment referred to is as follows :

“Amendment to Article XIX (samples) 4, of the Regulations of Details and Order.

“5. Objects of natural history, dried or preserved animals and plants, geological specimens, etc., of which the transmission has no commercial interest, and the packing of which conforms to the general conditions concerning packages of samples of merchandise.”

If this amendment be adopted by the Postal Congress, specimens of Natural History can be sent to countries of the Universal Postal Union at the rate of one cent for every four ounces.

The directorship of the U. S. National Museum has been acceptably filled by the appointment of Dr. C. D. Walcott director of the U. S. Geologic Survey, but the appointment is said to be a temporary one. Mr. Richard Rathbun has been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Mr. Rathbun has especial qualifications for the directorship of the U. S. Fish Commission and it is to be hoped that President McKinley will make him his appointee.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Sudworth's Nomenclature of the Arborescent Flora of the United States.¹—If it were necessary to prove the increase in

¹ Nomenclature of the Arborescent Flora of the United States, by George B. Sudworth, Dendrologist of the Division of Forestry. Prepared under the direction of B. E. Fernow, Chief of the Division of Forestry. [Bulletin No. 14, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry]. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897. Issued January 21, 1897, 8vo, pp. VIII+319.