

HESPERIAN STUDENT

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.

Vol. XIII.

LINCOLN, NEB., NOVEMBER 1, 1884.

No. III.

Professor Philip Schaff D. D., in a recent article in the New York Independent, gives many interesting facts concerning Sweden. These were gathered during a day spent in Upsala, the historical and intellectual center of that country. It is the seat of the first University in Sweden and is, next to Stockholm, the most interesting city in that northern kingdom. The University was founded in 1477 and was richly endowed by Gustavas Adolphus. It numbers about fifty professors as many lecturers and tutors and over 1,500 students. The teachers are divided as in Germany into ordinary and extraordinary professors and private lecturers. The students are grouped into "thirteen nations" corresponding to the different provinces of Sweden. The student must join one of these divisions but is at liberty to choose. In connection with this venerable institution are rich collections, a botanical garden and a chemical laboratory. In the botanical lecture room is a marble statue of the famous Linnæus is only one of a number of great men Sweden has given to the world. In chemistry we are indebted to her for Berzelius, in history for Gyer, in poetry for Tegner and Bellman, in music for Jenny Lind and Nilsson.

The library of the University contains over 200,000 volumes and 2,000 M. S. S. Its greatest treasure however is the "Codex Argenteus" so-called from its rich silver binding. It contains the Moeso Gothic version of the four gospels. It is written on 188 leaves of reddish parchment in gold and silver letters. It was captured by the Swedes with many other treasures at Prague in the "thirty years war." Among other places of interest to the visitor is the cathedral which was begun in 1249 and finished in 1435. It contains the tomb of Gustavas Vasa who liberated Sweden from the political yoke of Denmark and from the ecclesiastical yoke of popery. "Old Upsala" which is about three miles from Upsala proper, is noted from the fact that here are the three Kungshogar or hills of the Kings. These are named after the Scandinvian gods, Thor, Odin and Freyja which have left their impress on the names of three days of the week, Thursday, Wednesday and Friday.

The three northern countries, Norway, Sweden and Finland says Dr. Schaff are thoroughly protestant and reflect great credit on the influence of the Reformation. Among the many distinguished names which appear on the pages of Swedish history none shine forth with a brighter luster than those of Gustavas Vasa who introduced the Reformation and Gustavas Adolphus the hero of the Thirty Years War and protector of Protestantism.

From a lecture recently delivered in this city by Miss Agnes Carey, a returned missionary, we gather some glimpses of life in Persia as she saw it.

The government of Persia is an absolute monarchy. The king has the complete control of the life and property of his subjects. Different offices are not bestowed by

the king on those best fitted for them, but are given to the highest bidder. Thus the king accumulates wealth and likewise the inferior officers. The city governor is the man who pays him the largest sum of money. He in turn takes large sums from those who seek inferior offices. Taxes are levied according to the whims of those in power. These are not used for improvements, or for establishing schools. The only roads are the camel and donkey paths, except one for the king and his retinue which extends some twenty miles from the capitol. When Missionary work was started in that country there were no schools, asylum prisons or poor houses. With a population of 10,000,000, the poor were all in the streets. Criminals are put in deep pits and punished by flogging and pouring water on the head. The only food they have is furnished by their friends and if there is not enough for the keeper and prisoner, the latter must go without. There are three sects in Persia, Mohammedan, Nestarians and Armenians. The last two are nominal christians. The recognized religion is Mohammedan. It is the religion of the Court. There are Mormons in Persia as we have them here. The father is absolute lord of the household as long as he lives. The sons as they marry take their wives home. When the father dies the oldest son assumes the lordship. The house consists of one room built of mud with a hole in the center of the floor for a fire and a hole in the roof for the escape of smoke. Their food is placed in one large bowl and all take from it with their hands—first the father and sons and then the mother and daughters. No tables or chairs are to be seen there; of these they are wholly ignorant. The lecturer said they had made no advance on the style in which Abraham lived and knew much more of the customs than we do. They live as they did in Old Testament times. The first schools were established by the Missionaries. Mohammedan children are not allowed to enter them. Only Nestarian and Armenian can be brought in. They seem destitute of all practical as well as all book knowledge. Their incredible ignorance of disease was shown by an incident in Miss Carey's experience. As she entered the school-room, she noticed a woman with a sick child in her arm and on laying down her shawl it was taken by the mother to wrap around the child. When questioned as to the nature of the disease her reply was, "Oh! It is nothing but the small pox." The people there are greatly afflicted with sore eyes and a common remedy used for this trouble is a combination of the heads of matches with brick dust and tallow. The poverty of the people in the lower classes was vividly portrayed and one cause assigned was the burdens imposed on the officers. In going from place to place they are often attended by a large retinue of servants numbering sometimes one hundred or more and they are supported by the people for weeks together—the best they have being claimed by these officers. These with many other descriptions of heathen life show the degradation of a people without christian civilization.