

Mr. Ingalls can show a life as well as a life as creditable of the talents and money with and for which he talks and writes, he would do well to pick out a more vulnerable antagonist.

ABORIGINES OF AMERICA.

The question of how America obtained her first inhabitants will be the object of scientific investigation in the near future. The plan is to send an expedition from New York headed by Mr. Morris K. Jesup. It will travel along the northwestern coast of America, visit British Columbia and Alaska and then cross over to Asia and proceed along the Asiatic coast, Siberia and China, and from there pass on through the Indian ocean to Egypt. Professor F. W. Putnam, director of the anthropological division of the World's fair, and Dr. Boas, another student of anthropology, will accompany Mr. Jesup.

The plan is to make extended expeditions into the countries to be visited and everywhere gather material that may illustrate the question of the first appearance of man in this hemisphere. All peculiarities of the Asiatic tribes will be compared to what is known about our Indians. It is also supposed that the ancient countries of Africa will give valuable aid toward the solution of the great question.

The plan is, according to the exchange from which the above is gleaned, to erect a museum in New York where the material gathered by the expedition can be placed on exhibition for further examination.

WENT AT IT WRONG.

This week Dr. Lyman Abbott closed his series of lectures on "The Bible as Literature." His last effort was to show that there was no hell; yet he asserted that there was no doubt of future punishment for unrepentant sinners. As the application of that punishment must of necessity convince the guilty sufferer that he is in something of a hades-like condition, there is not so much consistency between the two positions as such an eminent scholar as Dr. Abbott might be reasonably expected to exhibit. It is chilly comfort to tell a man there is no place of punishment, yet assure him there is no doubt of his getting there; the very nothingness of his destination is appalling. Dr. Abbott stated, in explanation of his work, that his object had been to give many a better understanding of the Bible; he had "only tried to open the Book." Judged by the fruits of his recent labor generally, the eminent divine has a rather peculiar idea of what opening means, for the direct tendency of the more notable part of his efforts was to close the book to many by reason of the doubts he endeavored to throw on its veracity as a sacred record. His experience in the course he mapped out is a very forcible illustration of the truth expressed by the Apostle Paul: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God

knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." It is quite evident that Rev. Dr. Abbott has endeavored to measure and comprehend the things of God by the spirit of man, and, being without the higher inspiration, he has failed.

SECTARIANISM IN SCHOOLS.

We have received a statement, giving specific information as to persons, time, place and subject, in which it is said that some teacher to one of the State schools has been imparting instruction of a sectarian character there. We do not intend expressing an opinion as to this case on the ex parte statement received, but cite the fact of complaint merely with a view to calling attention to the subject generally. A short time since, the NEWS had occasion to refer to sectarian instruction given in one of the public schools in this county; and the complaints of this kind that come in should indicate to instructors the great care necessary in touching upon any question, historical or otherwise, that has a doctrinal bearing to the field of religion.

We believe it is the earnest wish of most of the instructors engaged in the public schools, and of all the managements thereof, to avoid giving sectarian instruction; certainly they should possess that desire, in view of the positive prohibition in the law against anything that savors of sectarianism. We also know that some of the teachers have very pronounced views on doctrinal matters, and are so zealous in their religious aims that it is difficult to restrain themselves when an opportunity comes to inject their ideas, "here a little and there a little;" there are others, too, whose irreligion presents itself in the most offensive form of an acrid or scoffing manner in referring to things which others hold sacred, and which a repetition of the bare worded would not give evidence of; and sometimes, among hearers, there is a captiousness which makes an offense of words that had no such intention in their utterance but might be construed with effect. Having all these conditions to cope with, it is a difficult task for school managements to steer clear of every breaker. But the Constitution and laws of the State have been framed with a view to the peculiar conditions here, and have forbidden sectarian control of, or instruction in, the public schools throughout the State. This being the case, no teacher who willfully disregards the legal inhibition should be retained; no worthy citizen would exhibit such disregard.

It ought not to be hard for a well-balanced instructor to avoid real cause of complaint. He can depict the events of history, as history records them, and if he has doubts of their reliability as a religious matter he can leave them alone. But he has no right to give to his pupils his own opinion, or the opinion of others who may criticize, as to whether certain books in the Bible are mythical or are not; he has no right to explain to pupils the meaning of Bible prophecies or expressions when there is a difference of opinion among religionists as to the interpretation that should be given; he has

no right to present to his class in school his conception as to whether prominent lights in religious circles in ancient or modern times were true or false prophets; and he has no right specially to impress children by his manner of treating lightly sacred things with the fact of his assumed or real disbelief in God. He has no right to do these things, because the law which directs his action in the public schools has forbidden them. It is not a matter of discussion as to whether the absence of religious instruction in schools is or is not an injury to the children. The lawmakers have passed judgment upon that, and the duty of the teacher in public schools is to obey the legal mandate which forbids either atheistic or sectarian doctrines as part of a school training.

There is a further suggestion which the NEWS feels to make on this subject, and that is, that while a willful or reckless disregard of the law on this matter should be checked summarily, there should be a disposition to avoid accusation wherever a reasonable and generous view of the action noticed renders it possible.

OBSERVANCE OF FESTIVALS.

In a recent number of Public Opinion appears an article condensed from Bibliotheca Sacra, in which the author discusses the question whether Christian denominations ought not more generally observe the annually recurring festivals dedicated to the memory of the important events in the life of our Savior. The article contends for the reinstatement of the so-called church year on the ground that it emphasizes the essential idea of a church as an institution separated from the world, with a life, a history and ordinances of its own. It also points out that the Christian festivals present religious truth in a complete form—the incarnation, the humiliation, the sufferings and death, the resurrection, ascension and risen life of Jesus of Nazareth, and gives the observer new inspiration, new power by placing the present in touch with the past.

There can be no doubt that the custom of observing the great annual festivals originated in deep affection for the crucified and resurrected Saviour, and that very early, probably in the first Apostolic age, at least to some extent. The precedent was given in the Mosaic dispensation, where the creation, the exodus of Egypt, the day of atonement and, later, other important events, were remembered annually by the people. But as the older dispensation ceased, its festivals were discontinued among the Christians and gave room for those of the new covenant. As early as the first three centuries after Christ the cycle of festivals was fairly well completed.

It cannot be denied that during the later corruption of both faith and practices the fundamental idea was lost sight of and the festivals were made to partake more and more of idolatry and paganism. The reformers recognized this fact and endeavored to purge the church from this foreign element. Some of their followers discarded the observance altogether, but lately the question has again risen, why should