

will address to me, M. le Recteur, as soon as possible, your presentation lists."

Champollion was not tempted by this offer; and afterwards, in 1811, when he became subject to the conscription, he found himself exempted from military service by a special decree of the Emperor made in the interest of the Oriental languages.

The letters given by M. de la Brière introduce to us the most minute details of life in a *lycée* under the First Empire. They show us the most singular mixture of military and monastic discipline; the school has corporals, and all the Latin expressions formerly used in the establishments kept by priests are carefully preserved—"præmium doctrinæ; accessit," etc. The old classic programmes were maintained; Champollion added to them the study of Hebrew, of Arabic, of local and provincial idioms. He astonished his masters more than his comrades, and attracted the attention even of the Administration. The *Journal de l'Isère* writes as follows after a visit from the Prefect to the Lyceum:

"Several pupils, in their hours of leisure, have given themselves up to studies which are no part of the teaching of the Lyceum. It is thus that we have in a public examination young J. F. Champollion, national pupil (*élève national*), explaining part of a chapter of Genesis in a Hebrew text, after having answered some questions on the Oriental languages in general. The Prefect, who crowned the best pupils, expressed his great satisfaction."

Champollion was a devourer of books; he studied everything.

"Send me the *Gradus* [the '*Gradus ad Parnassum*' was still used a few years ago, before the fashion of writing Latin verses had been abandoned], *Livy*, *Dioscorides*. . . . Send me *Anacreon* in the Languedoc idiom. . . . I am reading *Laharpe*. . . . I send you back *Condillac*. . . . If you can, send me Duchoul '*Sur la Religion des Romains*'. . . . Send me, I beg you, the '*Mythologie des Peuples du Nord*'. . . . Send me the '*Synonymes français*'. . . . I thank you for *Mably*; I have read the '*Entretiens de Phocion*'. It seems to me that what the Abbé *Mably* says in his preface—that he has extracted and translated this work from a certain Greek manuscript in the library of the Convent of Mont-Cassin—ought to be judged like his preface to the '*Voyage d'Anténor en Grèce*'. What do you think of it? Do you believe that it is a real translation from the Greek, that it is really antique, that it is a work of *Phocion's*? *Plutarch* does not speak of it in his life of the great man. I have great doubts. . . . Send me a book. I don't know what to do after I have performed my Latin exercises and studied Hebrew, Syriac, and Chaldean."

It was evidently at the instigation of his elder brother that Champollion tried to make himself a linguist, and learned the Oriental languages; but what is really astonishing is that he learned them without a master. He had a real passion for the East. "If I write a Latin exercise, it is only to avoid the penalty; I have long lost my taste for it. The Oriental languages are my favorite passion. . . . Greek, Hebrew and its dialects, Arabic—these are what I burn to learn well." His brother held out to him a hope of getting him a place in the special school of the Oriental languages in Paris. He gave him, at a distance, some elements of philology. The Jansenists of Port-Royal made what they called the '*Garden of Greek Roots*' and the '*Garden of Latin Roots*'. These books were valuable; they were written in verse, the better to help young minds to enter into the analysis of languages. Young Champollion very early took pleasure in this analysis. He writes, for instance, to his brother:

"I have read in the '*Mécanisme des Lan-*

gues' the controversy of *MM. Falconet and Frenel* on the signification of the word *Dunum*. The former maintains that *Dunum* signifies a high place, which seems rather suitable for *Uxellodunum*, the present *Capdenac*, for you know that it is on a high hill. *M. Frenel* says that it means an inhabited place. To clear up the point, I have searched among the Hebrew roots, and found that *Dome* means city. Compare *Medina*, an Arab city, and *Dinas* in *Bas-Breton* means city. In Greek, I find that *Diné* means a hollow."

Egypt early appealed to his imagination.

"I wish to make a profound and continuous study of this ancient nation. The enthusiasm which the description of its enormous monuments has excited in me, the admiration which I have felt for its power and its knowledge, will increase with the new notions I am going to acquire. Of all the peoples I prefer, I confess that none can balance the Egyptians in my heart."

He learns everything that concerns Egypt:

"I have no buttons for my pantaloons. Send me '*Ludolphi Ethiopica Grammatica*'." He does not yet know the language of the Pharaohs, and is only making approaches; he feels instinctively that he has something to learn from all the invaders of Egypt—from the Greeks, the Arabs, the Hebrews, who were at one time enemies, at another allies. He delights in the Bible in the original Hebrew, in the rudiments of Arabic, in the Koran. His Hebrew Bible has been preserved; the volume is much worn, the pages covered with additions and corrections, with manuscript notes.

The correspondence of which I have given a brief account ends in 1807; in that year young Champollion left Grenoble for Paris. There he worked in the great public libraries, pursuing his philological studies, mixing with the men who had accompanied Napoleon to Egypt. The intercourse with his brother becomes also more complete. Young Champollion was now preparing himself with more advantages for the discovery of that marvellous key which he afterwards gave to science, and which revealed to the world the hidden sense of the hieroglyphs, the secret of the obelisks, the temples, the pyramids, and the tombs of the valley of the Nile.

The archives of *Vif*, in the Department of the *Isère*, preserve, besides the letters written by Champollion at school, those which he wrote during his life as a student in Paris. *M. de la Brière* gives us only short extracts from these highly interesting letters. At the age of nineteen, Champollion was appointed professor of history at Grenoble; he went back to Paris at the age of thirty; he was only thirty-two years old when he read, on the 17th of September, 1822, before the Academy of Inscriptions, the account of his discovery of the key to the hieroglyphs, a discovery which will make his name for ever famous.

Correspondence.

PROPOSED SYLVESTER MEMORIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I be permitted to appeal through your columns to all friends and admirers of the late Professor J. J. Sylvester to assist in founding a suitable memorial in honor of his name and, for the encouragement of mathematical science? A movement was inaugurated on this side of the Atlantic soon after his death, and it was resolved by the

promoters that a fund should be raised for the purpose of establishing a Sylvester Medal, to be awarded at certain intervals for mathematical research to any worker irrespective of nationality. For the purpose of carrying out the scheme, a strongly representative international committee has been formed, and I should like to take advantage of this opportunity of expressing the great satisfaction which it has given to the promoters to be enabled to include in this committee so many great and distinguished names from the American universities. In every case our invitation to join the committee has been most cordially responded to, and the consent has in many instances been accompanied by expressions of the greatest sympathy and encouragement. The list, as it stands, practically includes the leading mathematicians of the whole world.

It has been estimated that a capital sum of \$5,000 will be sufficient for the proposed endowment, and of this about one-half has already been subscribed here. In appealing to the American public to enable us to complete the desired sum, I am in the first place prompted by the consideration that Sylvester's association with the Johns Hopkins University, and the leading part which he took in advancing mathematical science in America, render his claim to estimation on the part of the citizens of your country quite a special one. It is but a modest endowment that we are asking for, and I am sure that all those who were personally acquainted with him, and who realize the great influence which he exerted in raising the intellectual level of every institution with which he was associated, will be glad of this opportunity of cooperating in the movement.

It is proposed that the fund, when complete, shall be transferred to the Council of the Royal Society of London, that body having undertaken to accept the trust and to award the medal triennially to mathematicians of all countries.

I can hardly venture to trespass upon your courtesy to the extent of asking you to print the complete list of our committee, but for your own information I beg to send a copy herewith. It will be sufficient to state that it comprises the names of President Gilman of Johns Hopkins University, of Professor Simon Newcomb of Washington, of Professor Willard Gibbs of Yale, of Professor Peirce of Harvard, and many other well-known American men of science. Subscriptions may be sent to and will be acknowledged by Dr. Cyrus Adler, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, or by Dr. George Bruce Halsted, President of the Academy of Science, No. 2407 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas.—I am, sir,

Yours obediently,

RAPHAEL MELDOLA,

Professor in the Finsbury Technical College, London, England, Hon. Organizing Secretary to the Sylvester Memorial.
DECEMBER, 1897.

SOUTH CAROLINA PRECEDENTS FOR NEW JERSEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In your issue of December 16 you notice the complication which will arise in New Jersey in regard to the seat of the President of the Senate, who will succeed to the office of Governor upon the resignation of Mr. Griggs to accept the position of Attor-