

## EDITORIAL

All of us who are interested in the story of the world's many different civilizations must wonder at the ferment of ideas which created them. For those which have receded into the dim past it is not easy to recover a conception of the burgeoning ideas, theories, and motives that eventually flowered into distinct cultural entities—unique and time-limited civilizations. But for our own western civilization, born in a literate age, there remains in literature much of the excitement of new and original theories about the nature of man and his world which created the dominant civilization of today.

It is significant, I think, that people of the Renaissance possessed not only a forward-looking creativity but backward-looking curiosity. One of them wrote of the study of antiquity as "always accompanied with dignity," as having a certain "resemblance with eternity," and as "sweet food of the mind well befitting such as are of honest and noble disposition." They searched the ruins of cities for lovely Graeco-Roman sculptures—as dilettanti delighting in the arts, but also with fundamental curiosity about the forgotten past. And some rare individuals in that age of ferment even began to ask very awkward questions about ugly bones of extinct animals found in caves with crude stone objects which looked suspiciously like weapons still being made by those recently discovered and barbarous Americans. Could it be possible that men lived in Europe before the Flood and that the world was not created at nine o'clock in the morning on October 23, 4004 B.C., as determined by Archbishop Ussher and Dr. Lightfoot?

Few people today would have the temerity, and optimism, to draw a parallel between our own times and the Renaissance, but to me it is interesting that in an age of spectacular technological creativity there is also an extraordinary backward-looking curiosity, not the least among those physical scientists and engineers who are principally responsible for the current ferment of ideas in that field.

The University Museum is clearly riding the wave of this new enthusiasm for the study of the past. As the first American institution to excavate in "biblical lands" and one of the first to make systematic studies in ancient American civilizations, it has survived the dampening effect of two world wars, two undeclared wars, innumerable crises, the materialism of the 20th century, and continues to study, happily at an ever increasing scale, the records of those other civilizations as well as the remains of all those barbarous people who preceded, or survived, the literate—a study we hope pro-

ceeds "with dignity and honest disposition."

The exhibition describing the current field research of the University Museum is frankly motivated by pride in the significance and scale of the research now being undertaken, but there is also a certain nostalgia in referring back to the great discoveries made over the past eighty years and to those men and women who were responsible for the unique character of the institution. Perhaps we who manage the place today are a bit envious of those who were discovering three generations ago a whole new world of the past. There can't be many brilliant original civilizations like that of the Sumerians still to be unearthed, as at Ur with its Royal Tombs. And yet only in the past few years University Museum expeditions have rediscovered the Phrygians and the Menaeans, and have given us an entirely new idea of the origin and development of the Maya, of the Bronze Age in Palestine, of the history and nature of culture in Melanesia, and of early man in the Arctic. Moreover, the combination of technical creativity and backward-looking curiosity, characteristic of our times, is now giving us tools which our predecessors most certainly would envy us. Equipment for precise dating of prehistoric times, for analysis and interpretation of very puzzling materials, for search underground and undersea, all these make for a wave of the future and a more thorough understanding of just what happened in the distant past.

We hope this exhibition of current research will be a kind of casting-up, for members and friends of the Museum and for the staff. What are we doing now and where are we going? Most of this research is financed by private individuals and private foundations. In some measure the exhibition should demonstrate to the sponsors the results of their investment in a study of the past, and at the same time illustrate the point of view which lies behind that study.

The exhibition, opening this fall and running through the winter season, is made up of photographs and artifacts representing our various Ethnological and Archaeological expeditions of the past three years. This number of *Expedition* and the following Winter number are intended as guides to, and an explanation of, the exhibition. The amount of space devoted to each expedition is, of course, no measure of its significance but simply a matter of space needed for explanation—some can be easily summarized while others require more detailed display.

We hope that both the exhibitions and the special numbers of *Expedition* will dramatize the scope of the Museum's research.

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