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DR. LEON LEGRAIN, Curator of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, while assembling the more important of the unpublished and unidentified historical documents among the many thousand tablets excavated at Nippur, has brought to light two remarkable documents.

The first of these is a complete document with one of the earliest portraits in existence. The other is a chronological list of kings. In the case of the first a great deal of interest attaches to the fact that the portrait upon it can be identified by means of the inscription and it derives additional interest from the fact that the piece of clay upon which this portrait is impressed was used for sealing a package and upon it is written the name of the consignee, a man with the title of banker. The age of this interesting document is about one hundred years before the time of Abraham, and the King whose portrait we see upon it reigned at Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's City.

Dr. Legrain is engaged in translating a number of historical documents in the Babylonian collection with a view to forming a volume of texts which will comprise much new material for the reconstruction of the ancient history of Babylonia. Though many of these texts are mere fragments, the way in which these fragments fill up gaps and supplement or confirm each other is often very striking.

Dr. William Curtis Farabee, Curator of the American Section, describes the cradles of the American Indians, together with what is probably the most remarkable piece of basketry in existence. This has been called a cradle or baby carrier, but its use is absolutely unknown. In addition to its unique character it is one of the most ancient, if not absolutely the most ancient piece of basketry in America, representing the oldest surviving manifestation of that art on this Continent. It was made by people now extinct or whose particular culture and method of life belong certainly to a period long before the arrival of Europeans, a people or culture of which there were no surviving representatives at the time of the Discovery. This piece of ancient craftsmanship, so miraculously preserved from an unknown antiquity, was first seen at the St. Louis World's Fair

in 1904 by the Director of the Museum, who followed it up till 1908 when it was bought for the University Museum. The two colored plates XVIII and XIX show very faithfully this remarkable object in its natural colours.

Many of the photographs used to illustrate Dr. Farabee's article are taken by permission from the great work on the North American Indian by Edward S. Curtis. Although our reproductions are clear enough and serve admirably the purpose we have in view, it is necessary to have access to the original work in which the plates are made by the photogravure process on heavy Japan paper, to realize the beauty of these pictures. Curtis' NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN is by far the most monumental work of its kind that has ever been attempted. It represents the entire life work of its author whose continued labours in the field promise the fulfilment of his ambitious plan of making a complete record, photographic and descriptive, of all the living tribes of Indians within the United States. The first volume which appeared in 1907 with a Foreword by President Roosevelt set a standard that has been sustained in all of the ten volumes that have since appeared. The Library of the University Museum is fortunate enough to possess a copy of this invaluable work through the generosity of the late President, Mr. Eckley B. Coxe, Junior. It is a work that one would have a right to expect to find in any Public Library or Museum.

For another set of illustrations we are indebted to Mr. Rodman Wanamaker for permission to use photographs made by Dr. Joseph K. Dixon, Director of the Rodman Wanamaker Expedition, which did so much to establish for the Indian a proper relation to the modern conditions and institutions of the country and to make the Indian communities in the West better understood in both official and unofficial quarters in the United States. Dr. Dixon's photographs are among the best pictures of Indian life that has been produced by the camera.

The opening of an exhibition of American Indian basketry in January will give the people of this City an opportunity of seeing one of the largest, most varied and distinctive collections of the art of basketry that is to be found anywhere. This exhibition will represent the characteristic productions of all of the tribes north of

Mexico. The richness and variety of decorative effect that unfolds itself in this exhibition will be a revelation to many who are unaware of what a charming and graceful artistry was developed in connection with this useful industry of basket making.

Mr. H. U. Hall, Assistant Curator of the Section of General Ethnology, continues his studies of primitive art with an article on the wood carvings and face carvings of the Maoris.

It was when Captain Cook came upon New Zealand in 1779 that Europeans had their first contact with the natives of these southern islands and in COOK'S VOYAGES we read the first description of that remarkable people the Maoris. Some of the objects obtained from them by Captain Cook are in the Museum's collection together with other specimens of the same handiwork obtained by subsequent navigators. What struck the discoverers and early explorers most in the appearance of the Maoris was their extraordinary carved faces in which symmetrical lines, cut deep into the skin and filled in with colouring matter, accentuated their features and added great vigour to their natural facial expression. The navigators recorded also their admiration for the wood carvings of the Maoris, of which museums today strive to possess a few examples, for they are among the rarest art objects in the world. In COOK'S VOYAGES we read also of the surprise of the visitors at the cannibal habits of the Maoris. The tribes made war on each other as an economic measure. The men were trained in the art of war and in the use of the long wooden sword and the club. Warfare was a recognized institution which determined to a large extent the relations of the tribes with each other. Its purpose was to supply meat and it had the further effect of preventing the evils of overpopulation. It had also an element of sport, for all sides took equal chances according to the rules of the game and each warrior had the satisfaction of knowing that if he fell in battle he would furnish provision for a family or for a whole tribe. The custom was a not unnatural development of organized society in an island like New Zealand that has neither game animals nor domestic animals. That a vigorous artistic impulse, accompanied by active cultivation of the arts, should have asserted itself amid these economic conditions is nothing peculiar, though it is a recognized fact that the art of the Maoris is of an exceptional nature. Tribal history was recited in public. Epic poetry had taken its place in the intellectual accomplishments

of tribal poets. Weaving from native flax was in a high state of development. The working of jade was a native industry and most distinctive of all, wood carving was elevated into an honored profession. The artist occupied a conspicuous place among his tribesmen and it is interesting that although his profession obtained recognition similar to that of a cult, tribal sentiment compelled him to follow traditional themes and to adhere to approved methods of treatment. It is clear that ancient song and legend, celebrating heroic ancestral exploits, a deep reverence for the past and a pride in the prowess of ancient heroes and in the performance of older days, inspired the artist in his work and assured him of the general applause. Mr. Hall's article throws a lot of light on the qualities of Maori art and on the impulses that lay back of it. It is an art that is extinct to-day. Meantime many of the Maoris have adopted European civilization in its entirety and are among the most intelligent and respected of New Zealand's present population, enjoying full rights and priveleges under the Dominion government.

The new exhibition of the primitive arts of Africa and the South Pacific that will be opened at the Museum in January and which will contain some of the rarest examples known, will be at once a tribute to the unheralded artists of those two regions who wrought so masterfully for the love of their work, and a source of inspiration for our modern artists and designers.

Dr. Stephen B. Luce Assistant Curator of the Mediterranean Section calls attention to a potter's wheel, the earliest form known, in the Cretan collection of the Museum. In the Mediterranean Section may be seen this potter's wheel together with many examples of the pottery that was made with the aid of this form of apparatus in ancient Crete about 1500 before Christ.