

THE MUSEUM AND THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

THE wide interest felt in the Museum's activities is apparent in many different places, expressed in many different ways and among people in many walks of life. The daily and weekly press of the United States and Canada and still more largely in England and the Continent, repeatedly calls attention to these activities, with emphasis on the work of the expeditions in Mesopotamia and Palestine, the results of which are announced at length, not only in journals devoted to scientific interests but in the news columns of the daily press and on their editorial pages.

Another evidence of this widespread interest consists in the numerous letters received at the Museum about particular phases of its work. Men and women in business life, in professional occupations and people of leisure in different countries write asking for particulars regarding acquisitions, expeditions or discoveries reported in the press.

Of even greater significance as an indication of this intelligent and inquiring interest is the occasional reference to the Museum's work in various journals published by important financial institutions or business enterprises. The field of research in Archaeology is naturally closed to all except a relatively small number of scholars, but it is evident that their labours come more and more within the knowledge and active interest of men who, in their daily cares, are concerned with the living minute rather than with dead antiquity. We have noticed in particular an address by Mr. William A. Law, President of the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, at the Forty-third Annual Meeting of the Penn Mutual Agency Association at White Sulphur Springs on May 25, 1926. After paying a tribute to the Museum and to the work of its President, Mr. Charles C. Harrison and his friends who are so generously providing the means for conducting its activities, Mr. Law concluded with the following reference to the Joint Expedition of the University Museum and the British Museum at Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia.

"During the last four years the work has centered upon two temples, one dedicated to the Moon God in the city of Ur, and the other to the Goddess of Creation or Production, about four miles away. Alongside the temple of the Moon God was the Ziggurat, a great tower-like structure approximately 300 feet high with a square base, each story set back just as the types of new buildings in New York are required to be constructed by the zoning laws. These successive stories were built of brick, often of different color and size, many of them exactly twelve inches square and three inches thick. Each brick bears a stamp showing that it met the Royal requirements, somewhat like but more elaborate than the hall-mark on a piece of silverware.

"The oldest walls were built before 4300 B. C., or more than 6300 years ago. There was no stone building material available to Ur, but there are many inscriptions on carved stone door sockets, on clay cones and on brick tablets, showing the dates of construction, the religious zeal of the reigning monarch and the habits and activities of the people. The Sumerians were a highly civilized people; they cultivated the fields, they had flocks and herds, ships and tools. They wove woolen goods, they worked in metals, even using copper wire and gold, they veneered doors, altars, sculpture, and columns with precious metals. They made jewelry of gold and of gems, and wrought weapons and utensils of metal. They created exquisite designs of mosaic, and of clay, and they knew enough of astronomy and mathematics to build the Ziggurat, on which the high altar was placed, with the corners of the Ziggurat base pointing exactly to the four cardinal points of the compass, and its grand stairways had each exactly 100 steps.

"Many old cities are located at the important junction of two rivers, such as New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. Ur was at the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris near the Persian Gulf, trading largely with Egypt. Its citizens cultivated the fertile alluvial valleys of those rivers, and as the forests were filled the soil finally washed down, and, as in the lower reaches of the Mississippi River, silt filled the harbor and destroyed its commercial value. The Babylonians and the Elamites attacked and destroyed Ur more than once, pillaging its wealth and wrecking its temple, taking away its golden and jeweled gods. Hundreds of years later it was rebuilt, only to sink finally into oblivion for centuries and to be covered by the shifting sands of the desert.

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"As Kipling says—

Cities and thrones and powers
Stand in Time's eye
No longer than the flowers
Which daily die.
And as fresh buds put forth
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered earth
The cities rise again.

"Centuries slowly elapsed and those staunchly built walls of brick stood fast, unaffected by change of weather or by the passing of a great city.

"Finally they were unearthed, and there they stand today erect and as strong as 6300 years ago, a monument to the patience, skill and intelligence of an almost forgotten race."

At about the same time that this address was printed in the *News Letter* issued monthly by the above mentioned Company, the leading article in *The Girard Letter*, the monthly bulletin issued by the Girard Trust Company, was devoted to the archaeological researches conducted by the Museum.

Such an interest as that manifested in the two instances above referred to, shows that modern archaeology appeals not to scholars only, but also to the members of societies and institutions whose main interests lie in totally different fields of endeavor. It is odd but gratifying to know that archaeology finds a place in the bulletins of banking and insurance corporations as well as in the journals of learned societies. We may assume that it is not without good reason that thoughtful people, occupied with the affairs of today, should be deeply impressed by the lessons of a remote past. It illustrates at least the essential continuity of things human.