

EDITORIALS

PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR INTERESTS . . . The essential purpose of archaeology is that of augmenting our knowledge of man, his arts and institutions, and his history. This purpose may and often does have its origin in an interest which finds initial expression in the collecting of artifacts. As a matter of fact, the science of archaeology has developed from just such a beginning, and is repeatedly reborn in the minds of collectors who sincerely seek the answers to questions which even a casual examination of artifacts in the average collection will suggest. Thus, an interest in artifacts, prompting a search for information regarding their fabrication and use, leads to a desire to know more of the men who made and used them; and this desire, opportunity permitting, may lead the collector to become a student of archaeology and, broadening out, of the general subject of anthropology.

The specialist who may be inclined to doubt the contributive value of properly motivated student artifact collectors invites the accusation of both a deficiency in experience from adequate and correct contacts with collectors, and a sad short-sightedness relative to the past history and future development of his science. Historically, a majority of the founders of an early contributors to the study of archaeology, the world over, were amateur collectors; a fact paralleled in the history of all other sciences in which specimens comprise an important element of data. The future welfare of American archaeology depends largely upon encouraging in every way a full coöperation between the relatively few professional specialists and a constantly growing element of both collecting and non-collecting amateur students.

To cite a single example of the importance amateurs can assume in the development of a science, geology, a subject in which a most profitable coöperation between professionals and amateurs has long existed, lists among those who were originally amateur collectors the names of such outstanding contributors to the science as C. D. Walcott, E. W. Berry, E. O. Ulrich, Frank Springer, and many others who have attained to exalted places in the professional ranks. An imposing list

of such men could be gathered from the names of those responsible for the development of European archaeology.

The informed student-collector may be the means of saving for study materials and data that, save for the fortunate intervention of the collector, might become separated and forever lost to all students. The value of his collection depends upon the established accuracy of facts as to sources and associations known for his specimens. Therefore, he should be as much the exponent of careful, technically accurate field and laboratory research as is the non-collecting student. The extent of his usefulness to archaeology will depend upon the development of his interests and the guiding light of information made available to him through the coöperation of other students. As regards ultimate purpose and a jealous desire to preserve all available information, and to protect informational sources from careless excavation at the hands of untrained men, or wanton destruction by those motivated by casual curiosity or commercial interest, there can be no logical difference in attitude between one class of sincere students and another.

This society is founded on the faith that there is in this country a rapidly increasing number of non-professional students of archaeology who, given the friendly assistance of the trained specialist, are in a position to promote the welfare of the subject in various important ways: through correctly collecting and recording materials and data which otherwise would be dissociated and lost; by bringing to the attention of specialists local discoveries; by contributing to archaeological surveys of surface features; by assimilating and disseminating the gospel of true problems and correct methods; and by building up a strong popular foundation in support of scientifically correct archaeological investigations.

I, for one, am satisfied that this faith is not misplaced. If my appraisal of the average amateur is correct, it behooves the trained professional, in consideration of his own best interests, to get down off the driver's seat and pull with his brother students toward the common goal, exerting his corrective influence through logical demonstration rather than through any fancied authority vested in him because of his academic training or professional status.

I believe that I express the opinion and the policy of a majority of the professional group in the statement that both professionals and amateurs have much to gain and nothing to lose from friendly, sympathetic coöperation.

W. C. M.

UNDESIRABLE PROFICIENCY . . . A communication recently received by the Milwaukee Public Museum from a dealer in "genuine prehistoric Indian relics" contains the boast that he is one of the few, if not the only dealer who digs mounds and camp sites on a large scale to produce his stock in trade, and that, therefore, he offers to his clients a money-back guarantee of the authenticity of his wares. A newspaper account accompanying the letter conclusively establishes the inferior technique and unscientific viewpoint characterizing these excavations.

It is your editor's earnest hope that this gentleman *is* the only and the *last* dealer to obtain prehistoric American Indian "relics" in this manner—although I know better. Not that I have any desire to deprive the collector of a guarantee of authenticity, whatever that may be worth to a specimen without the addition of carefully collected associated data, but because, as a sincere student of American archaeology, it must be my purpose, and that of all similarly sincere students, to foster the careful collecting of archaeological materials and associated facts at the hands of trained specialists, and the protection of archaeological sites from the careless digging of untrained men whose interests are primarily commercial and whose methods are wholly unscientific.

The collector should, in self protection, always bear in mind that the scientific value of his materials is wholly dependent upon the quantity and accuracy of information pertinent to and collected with the specimens.

W. C. M.