

NOTES OF THE QUARTER

Archæological Discoveries at Nineveh

At the Royal Asiatic Society on Thursday, 1st October (Sir Edward Maclagan in the chair), Dr. R. Campbell Thompson read a paper on the 1930-1 season's excavations at Nineveh on behalf of the British Museum, when he was accompanied by Mr. R. W. Hamilton, Mrs. Thompson and Miss Hallett. The expedition, financed by Sir Charles Hyde, had as its objective the clearance of the Temple of Ishtar, which had been discovered the previous season. The new season's work has shown that the Temple, originally founded in the third millennium B.C., had been built, or more probably restored, subsequently on a solid foundation of unburnt brick. It was destroyed at the Fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., and further gutted some hundreds of years later by Parthians, who found the brick foundations a mine of clay for their own buildings, and the stone inscriptions good material for their walls.

Definite proof that it was the Temple of Ishtar, called E-Mashmash, was found in a sculpture which bore an inscription of Ashurnasirpal, and in a pavement of bricks of the same king, who had restored it in the ninth century. An earlier building of solid unburnt brick walls about 10 feet high was found close by, and this latter building may have been that founded by the Babylonian king Manishtishu, c. 2500 B.C., whose presence at Nineveh has now been made certain for the first time by a reference in a fine stone cylinder of Shamshi-Adad, c. 1840 B.C. Near this building was found a magnificent life-size human head of copper, and a spear head inscribed "Temple of Nin (?)-lil", dating to the third millenium B.C. Much black-painted pottery of the kind hitherto found frequently at Susa and in Babylonia came to light, the designs being ibexes, birds, or fish.

Numerous pieces of cuneiform tablets were also found, the best being a large piece of a syllabary, and another large piece of the interesting historical epic found three seasons ago. But some of the most important points are to be seen in a large limestone inscription of Ashurbanipal, now in about 120 pieces. This contains an account of his buildings and campaigns including an amplified account of Dugdammê, hitherto known as a king of the Northern hordes, and how the gods destroyed his camp by fire from heaven. There is also mention of several new foreign princes, and among these last is "Kurash, king of Parsumash", "Cyrus, king of Persia", described as dwelling "on the far side of Elam". This can be no other than the grandfather of Cyrus the Great, who took Babylon, and who is thus mentioned for the first time in a contemporary text, which can hardly be later than 630 B.C.

"The Impressions of an Englishwoman in Lhasa"

In the course of a lecture delivered before the Royal Asiatic Society and the Royal Central Asian Society in the Lecture Theatre of the Royal Geographical Society, by the kind permission of the President and Council of the Royal Geographical Society, on 8th October, 1931, on the Impressions of the first Englishwoman in Lhasa, Mrs. Leslie Weir spoke of the high degree of culture displayed by the upper classes in Lhasa; of their taste in house decoration and in dress, a taste entirely unaffected by Western influence. Chinese influence undoubtedly there is, and all silks, porcelain, jade, etc., are imported from China. Intrinsic value in Tibet is a much more real and true factor than in Europe. Art and workmanship are, to them, cheap factors; therefore intrinsic value is more real. They were astonished when told that a piece of thin silk chiffon wrought into the shape of a European dress cost as much as a Tibetan dress made of solid satin brocade. The expenses of art and workmanship have certainly,