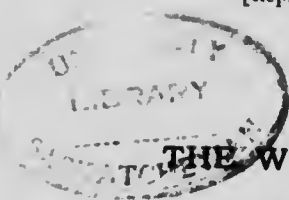


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THE WORK OF MUSEUMS IN WAR TIME

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INTRODUCTION

THE work of museums in war time, instead of being stopped or curtailed to effect economy, should be speeded up and directed from the usual paths into those that will help most to win battles, to provide and save food, and to teach us to fight with other than physical weapons. Only a comparatively few suggestive examples of the many war-time museum activities can be here given.

Part of the work of many museums, especially overseas, was suspended sooner or later after the outbreak of the war. Economy was practiced in museum explorations and publications. It is true that there was little interference with the care and preservation of specimens and such routine and scientific work as could be carried on by the remaining permanent staff with reduced funds, but many museums were closed to the public. As the war progressed, however, the extreme short-sightedness of this policy of supposed economy was realized. Experience in military and economic matters, especially in the providing of munitions, the preservation and salvage of the lives of the soldiers, and the securing of sufficient food for the soldiers and civilians of the world, has shown how vital the work of museums can be in war time.

The organization of the educational interests was found to be one of the most important factors in the defense of a country. In war time, museums, instead of being closed, should be open for longer hours. Museum work, instead of being reduced to effect economy, should not only be increased but directed into the most useful channels. If not already represented, a historic section might well be added in war time. Another section illustrating the broader features of progress in transportation and engineering should furnish inventive minds with a stimulus for productive work. The great value of a medical and surgical department is obvious. The most important phase of all in war time, perhaps, would be exhibits