

PROGRESS IN EXHIBITION

In 1929 the Buffalo Museum of Science finished its new building in Humboldt Park and opened it with exhibits giving embodiment fully to the idea—familiar but not much put into practice—that a museum should exhibit subjects, not objects. In rooms surrounding a central hall, chapters of natural history are expounded in the following succession: Physics, astronomy, geology, biology, botany, invertebrate zoology, vertebrate zoology, evolution, heredity, geography, and anthropology. It is the aim of exhibits to explain the principal concepts of each science. Both the plan and its execution are very different from the traditional mode of exhibition which might call for a room label reading "Plants" but would never justify one reading "Botany: the Science of Plants."

A few months earlier, the Pennsylvania Museum of Art had opened the first section of its new building on the Parkway, Philadelphia. Here is the best realization of the idea that art exhibits should be divided throughout into two parts—one for the public, with exhibits giving a survey of the arts, and the other for the student, consisting of a systematic file of art objects for reference. In the public galleries there are pictures, sculpture, furniture, and other objects of the same time and place shown together; authentic period rooms supplement each exhibit. In the reference rooms—not yet open—there will be extensive case accommodations for objects arranged after a classification by material and process, and installed compactly and in readiness to be removed for close inspection. The plan is not entirely new, but the full embodiment of it is unique, and the example, like that at Buffalo, will surely be effective in shaping other museums.

Several large industrial museums—pioneers in this country following European precedents—are due to open their doors within the next few years at Dearborn, Chicago, and Philadelphia in turn. It was an omen, therefore, that the first of such institutions, the New York Museum of Science and Industry, opened in temporary quarters during 1930.

MUSEUM INSTRUCTION

The number of museums doing good educational work a decade ago was not more than a few dozen; now it is in the hundreds. The past two years have witnessed more than their share of this growth.

During the biennium there have been notable efforts to determine upon best methods for work with school classes visiting museums—an activity that is already carried on with system and careful techniques. The most important researches have been those conducted in several cities under the direction of Edward S. Robinson, Professor of Psychology at Yale. Several museums have experimented independently