

With the compliments of

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LOGY.

VATION.

BY OTIS T. MASON.

“The thing that hath been it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun.”

This axiom having commended itself to a wise man of antiquity, finds a new and wider verification in the court of modern science.

Could we glean from each or any savage tribe of earth its apparatus for administering to its every desire, and discard therefrom the perishable portions, we should have a technological exhibit not unlike our smaller cabinets of antiquities collected in a circumscribed area.

Reversing the process, if we add to our ancient stone implements all the wooden, textile, leather, bone, and horn accompaniments of such things, as they are now found in a savage camp, we shall not be far from a correct picture of the industries which that ancient people practiced, and we could easily guess the sort of life they led. We ought to proceed with the utmost caution in this matter, for the following reason: Human inventions, like natural objects, go in companies and affect one another by contact and mutual action according to a law of mutual modification. Just as the bees and the honey-producing orchids have become mutually modified, so have man's devices in each department of industry acted and reacted upon one another to produce change of form and structure. It is not enough, then, to compare an arrow-head of the past with an arrow-head of the present. The student should thoroughly exhaust the archæology of a mound, tomb, camp-site, etc. He should also thoroughly scrutinize the industries, sociology, beliefs, and ceremonies of each modern tribe, in order to arrive at a broad generalization of past human history.

The older archæologists and technologists did not foresee the drift of modern studies, and consequently did not attend to this matter with the minutia now demanded.

This fact is far from rendering all their treasures now in our possession worthless. It only enjoins upon their successors the necessity of supplementing their work, and adding fourfold value to their collections by a little cautious gleaning.