



BURIED TREASURE

Books deposited in libraries will guide archaeologists to this spot—latitude 40 degrees, 44 minutes, 34.089 seconds north; longitude 73 degrees, 50 minutes, 43.842 seconds west—where lies buried a glimpse of 1938 civilization.

GENERAL SCIENCE

Condemns "Despotism" In "Time Capsule" Message

FUTURE citizens of the world, 5,000 years from now, even though they may not know despots of the twentieth century variety in the flesh, will have at least a denunciation of them from the lips of one famous American, Dr. Robert Andrews Millikan, Nobel prize-winning physicist of the California Institute of Technology.

"If the reactionary principles of despotism triumph now and in the future, the future history of mankind will repeat the sad story of war and oppression as in the past," Dr. Millikan declared in a message prepared for inclusion in the "time capsule" the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company buried (Sept. 23) beneath its exhibit site at the New York World Fair.

Accompanied by messages written by Prof. Albert Einstein and Dr. Thomas Mann, widely-known German novelist now in exile in the United States from his native Germany, Dr. Millikan's message was included in the "time capsule" with objects and photographs depicting life today. Books scattered in libraries throughout the world will in-

struct archaeologists to dig it up in the year 6939.

"At this moment, August 22, 1938, the principles of representative ballot government . . . are in deadly conflict with

the principles of despotism," Dr. Millikan wrote.

Hope for a more cheerful future was expressed by Prof. Einstein and Dr. Mann.

Science News Letter, October 1, 1938

ARCHAEOLOGY

Foresees Our Civilization Rated Barbaric by Future

Archaeologist Believes Clay Records of Babylonians Will Give Later Scientists More Favorable Picture

MODERN civilization has been trembling on the brink of world-shattering war, but we scarcely think of ourselves as wiped out of history, while the story of Babylonia goes on forever.

Yet, this possibility is foreseen in a book just published, "They Wrote on Clay," which Prof. Edward Chiera, University of Chicago Assyriologist, left unfinished at death and which has been completed by his associate, George G. Cameron.

Scholars of the future will probably decide, the book concludes, "that the 'golden age' of mankind was in the second and third milleniums B.C., after which barbarians took command and messed things up so thoroughly with their machines and mechanical inventions that they finally brought civilization to crash on their own heads."

The Babylonians will outlast us in history, the book foresees, because they wrote everything on durable clay, whereas our literature, history and vaunted progress are entrusted mostly to flimsy paper.

Archaeologists believe 99 per cent. of Babylonian writings are still buried in the Near East. But thousands of documents have been found and read, revealing a civilization which has been forgotten, but not lost.

Assyrians and Babylonians were never defeated, to hear them tell it on clay—exactly like modern dictators who can twist defeats to sound like victories. History writing has not changed in thousands of years, says Prof. Chiera.

Babylonian law in 2000 B.C. required every business deal put in writing, signed and witnessed. It is only in recent centuries that we have required certain contracts to be in writing to prevent fraud.

Babylonians and even Sumerians before them anticipated Darwin's theory of evolution. They had no scientific way of investigating man's past, but in a

myth they traced life back to a time when man ate grass, wore no clothes and apparently walked on all fours.

Babylonians could not "raise checks" or forge changes in documents. Their clay "papers" were enclosed in clay envelopes, on which the data were copied, and the cleverest crook could not open the envelope without breaking it. Modern archaeologists have tried opening those envelopes.

Babylonians had office files, and even had office girls, but the latter were not much of a success.

Babylonian literature is making the Bible understandable. Prof. Chiera's book says that the Bible tells too little about life and customs of its time to give us a complete picture. Many of our interpretations of obscure passages are handed to us by theologians of the Middle Ages, who knew nothing about oriental ideas and little about the languages. Prof. Chiera says closer study of cuneiform literature will play havoc with some of these interpretations, and the Bible will again give the message its writers intended to convey.

Science News Letter, October 1, 1938

MEDICINE

Four-At-Time Iron Lung Saves Expense; Now in Use

See Front Cover

MASS production hasn't come to the healing profession, but doctors have found that a single pressure and breathing rate will do for a wide range of persons. So they fixed up a four-at-a-time respirator, now in use at the Children's Hospital in Boston. Naturally, it costs less per patient than the expensive single iron lung and the patients also have company.

This multiple treating device is shown on the front cover.

Science News Letter, October 1, 1938