

L1464

British Association for the Advancement of Science,

BURLINGTON HOUSE,

LONDON, W.

19 December 1895 -

Dear Gen. Pitt-Rivers,

I enclose a memorandum which Prof. Flinders Petrie has submitted to a Committee of the Council of the British Association lately appointed to consider his proposal to establish a kind of storehouse, especially for Anthropological objects which would be supplementary to existing museums.

If you are disposed to make any remarks on the proposed scheme, the Committee will be very glad to receive them -  
Yours very truly  
G. Pitt-Rivers

Gen. Pitt-Rivers, D.C.L., F.R.S.

Rushmore,  
Salisbury.

Dec. 21st, 1895.

Dear Mr. Griffith,

In reply to your letter of the 19th inst., about an Anthropological Store, I think that, like all that comes from Mr. Petrie, the proposal is characterized by ability and public spirit; but I can hardly take in the scope and possibilities of his present suggestion. I fear it would be visited neither from London nor the country. Busy London would not go out of Town to see a miscellaneous Anthropological Store. I can see in it a gigantic machine for frustrating the development of Local Museums, which under proper encouragement and arrangement, might be made the means of educating many thousands of persons, who never see, and have scarcely ever heard of the British Museum. Once appoint a keeper with sufficient space, and he will be the grasper of every object of interest that is to be found in the country. Large Museums of every thing bewilder the visitor, and if arranged in rows, as most are, teach him nothing. One tenth the number of objects of antiquity in separate small cases, with models of the localities shewing their "gisement", are both interesting and instructive, which I have found by experience.

The great want of our day appears to me to be increased facilities for casts and reproductions, like that most excellent establishment at Mayence. Casts and reproductions can be made without damaging the originals. If the patina is occasionally a little damaged - patina blesses nobody - it is a mere collector's fancy, and ought not to be set against the spread of knowledge.

I am in favour of decentralization, - encouragement to Local Museums to arrange themselves in branches, and put their collections in developmental order, aided by casts and reproductions supplied by Government.

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