leading from primitive gratification of the senses to man's relation to the unseen.

One of the outstanding problems which a museum curator has to face is that of the lighting of his building, and a paper given by Mr. Hurst Seeger on "The Lighting of Museums and Art Galleries" was particularly instructive on this point. He dealt especially with the question of reflection in the glass of pictures and museum-cases, and pointed out those principles of construction whereby such reflections could be avoided.

Mr. Lowe explained the Public Libraries Act of 1919, stating that, in his opinion, it gave their charter to the museums and art galleries of this country.

A discussion as to the desirability of a diploma for museum curators was opened by Dr. Hoyle, who was of opinion that without some recognised diploma the status of curators could not be assured. In the course of the discussion Mr. Bailey outlined a scheme suggested by Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith for the training of museum curators at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

A paper on the museum and art gallery of Baroda, dealing particularly with the difficulty of preserving pictures in hot climates, was read by Mr. Dibden.

Mr. M. J. Rendall, Headmaster of Winchester College, gave a paper, illustrated by lantern-slides, on the teaching of art in local museums, emphasising the part played in such teaching by good lantern-slides. He demonstrated the vast difference made by the quality of the slides used, and explained how and where the best slides could be obtained.

Dr. A. Loir gave an account of the formation of an Association of Curators of French Museums, and suggested a joint committee of English and French curators for international co-operation. Papers were read on "The Winchester City and Westgate Museum," by Mr. Hooley; "The Winchester College Museum," by the Rev. S. A. McDowall; "Selection of Pictures for Municipal Art Galleries," by Mr. Howarth; "Biography of the Comte de Lacépède," by Prof. Louis Roule; "The Child and the Mummy," by Mr. T. Peart; and "Suggestions for a Bureau of Exchange through the Medium of the *Museums Journal*," by Mr. Allchin.

A full account of all papers and discussions will be published in the September issue of the *Museums Journal*.

The University of Edinburgh.

NEW SCIENCE BUILDINGS.

THE foundation-stone of the new chemical laboratories of the University of Edinburgh, the first of what will be known in future as the "King's Buildings" of the University, was laid on July 6 by the King, who was accompanied by the Queen and Princess Mary. These buildings are to be erected as separate blocks on a site of 115 acres acquired by the University in November, 1919, mainly for the use of the scientific departments. They are situated on the southern outskirts of the city, near the Royal Observatory on Blackford Hill, and are about two miles distant from the Old College. Thousands of spectators assembled, notwithstanding the drenching rain which fell before and throughout the ceremony.

The general lay-out of the chemical laboratories was planned by Prof. James Walker, who has worked in collaboration with Mr. A. F. Balfour Paul, the architect of the building. The building is rectangular in plan, having a frontage of 220 ft. and a depth of 320 ft. Three corridors, one central and one on each side, run backwards through the whole length, and are connected by a cross-corridor in the front portion. This arrangement permits of indefinite extension by increasing the depth of the building. Between the central corridor and the side corridors are situated the main laboratories with their stores- and service-rooms, as well as the lecture department. Each main laboratory (of which there are five) measures 70 ft. by 45 ft., and receives north light from a saw-tooth roof. Smaller rooms used in conjunction with the main laboratories are situated across the outer corridors, and are lit from the side. The whole building is of one story, except the frontage block and the front part of the east and west wings, which are two stories in height. In these will be housed administration, library, special laboratories, and research-rooms. When complete the department will provide places for about four hundred students working simultaneously. It is estimated that the total cost of the chemical laboratories with fittings and equipment will be approximately 250,000*l*.

His Majesty, in replying to the address of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Alfred Ewing, expressed the hope that generous donors would be found able and willing to complete the plan of extension which had been sketched with so bold a hand. At the conclusion of the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone the degree of LL.D. was conferred on the Queen.

Lessons from the Smithsonian.

THE report of the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for the year ending June 30, 1919, is, as always, full of interest, and it differs from similar reports issued in this country in that the points of interest are clearly brought out and not left to be deduced by the reader from masses of undigested detail. The institution controls the work of the National Museum, the Bureau of American Ethnology, the International Exchange Service, the National Zoological Park, the Astrophysical Observatory, and the United States contributions to the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature. The Astrophysical Observatory seems a little out of the picture, but the association of the other bodies tends to co-operation and the prevention of overlap.

The National Museum itself embraces every form of museum activity and combines subjects which in London are distributed among the two sections of the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum, the Museum of Practical Geology, the National Galleries of Art, and several other collections. The Washington people are as well satisfied with their system as we (to judge from perennial complaint) are dissatisfied with ours. The single administration, it is claimed, "not only ensures greater economy in management, but permits of a more logical classification and arrangement, the elimination of duplication, and a consequent reduction in the relative amount of space required."

Those in this country who are advocating the co-ordination of our museums and allied establishments under a single board would be well advised to study the conditions in Washington. The most obvious danger of such a system is too great rigidity and unnecessary red-tape. It is, however, clear that such an objection does not apply to the Smithsonian Institution. The constitution of the various bodies permits of far more flexibility and enterprise than we are accustomed to in some, at any rate, of the similar bodies in this country. This, it seems to us, is because the Smithsonian is not a Department of State run by politicians or clerks without experience of the varied