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EDITORIAL

MUMBO JUMBO has always been a means by which the priests of secret cults have sought to mystify and impress their followers. If the initiates can build up a language of secret words of which only they know the meaning, then they are bound together and at once set apart from lesser men by their secret mysteries.

One can hardly blame the casual reader in search of information if he seems to feel that archaeologists are forming a secret society, with a special jargon known only to its initiates. There's no particular sense in listing some of the words that sail before our eyes; their authors are still probably proud enough of their inventions to remember them and to realize that others are still wondering just what particular shade of meaning, unknown to ordinary English, was intended by some of these hybrids.

But consider the large number of people who are earnestly interested in the study of archaeology and on whom even the most sheltered of workers in endowed institutions must ultimately depend. How do they enter into this colossal game of Guess-what-I-mean?

One member, and he speaks for many of his fellows, professional and non-professional, writes as follows:

" . . . If I were to receive only one of the publications I think I would prefer the Notebook to AMERICAN ANTIQUITY. . . . Some articles in AMERICAN ANTIQUITY are written in plain everyday layman's language whereas other articles are written in a very technical 'archaeological language.' In some cases, one might almost think that the object of this latter 'language' is to confuse the reader. Now it may be that these very competent authors do not wish to write for the layman, but surely the majority of the membership is composed of amateurs and not professionals. The technical wording used in some articles is as abstruse and confusing as that of a lawyer trying to conceal facts."

Perhaps it is not too much to ask ourselves whether what we have written could not have been said more simply? Or shall we follow the lead of one of our scintillating contemporaries and start a WADDAYAMEAN DEPARTMENT?