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## THE RISE OF MAN<sup>1</sup>

By Professor JAMES H. BREASTED

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, ILL.

WE are gathered here this morning to give some thought to the purpose and meaning of a new building associated with a great university. If this were a new building intended for the study and teaching of some branch of natural science, such as geology or chemistry or physics, we would seem to be engaged in a routine familiar to us all, for such laboratories have long been known to us at other large universities. It is an interesting fact, however, that we would find no parallel to this building in any other university, either in America or abroad. Far from mentioning this fact by way of gratifying our own vanity, I call your attention to it because it is a fact of which I am constantly conscious as laying upon us a great and unique responsibility. It is a fact which obviously raises the question "Why." When other universities have not recognized such a need, why this new building here and why the researches to be housed in it?

I have lived for more than forty years in daily realization of the need of such a building, and to me the

<sup>1</sup> Address given on the occasion of the dedication of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

natural question seems rather to be: "Why should science, which builds its laboratories to investigate the history of every other creature from the frog to the horse, never have created a laboratory for the investigation of early man, the most important of all creatures?" The investigations centering in this building make it a laboratory devoted to man, to his origins and the evolution of the civilization which we have inherited. The life going on in this building invites you to a new vision of the place of man in a universe out of which he has issued with new and sovereign powers to understand something of that universe and his own place in it.

### MAN'S PLACE IN NATURE

For ages man has seen himself against a background of nature. Gradually his own achievements have profoundly modified his ideas of his own position in the visible world about him. When Stone Age man shifted from hunting to agriculture and for the first time felt his dependence on the fruitfulness of the earth, it led him to deify the fertility of the green

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