

Science gives us accounts of old picture languages in general use, for example, in the first stages of the development of society. The signs used are frequently not very clear to us today, but they were clear when and where they were used. We are not able to take over the old signs as they are. Adjustments have to be made in relation to the forms of today and tomorrow before it is possible for them to come into general use. Giving a sign its fixed form for international use, possibly for a great number of years, is responsible work. The signs have to be like good letters. It will not do to take the taste of the present day as our only guide ; we have to

Automobiles of the Earth



Every sign 5 million automobiles

PICTURE 12

take into account the experience of history. The picture-writing of old Egypt and pictures of fights on old military maps (see Picture 37) are of much help in building up a system of signs. The ISOTYPE list of signs, put together in the last 10 years, is based equally on the experience of the past and on present forms. If we were not in a position to make use of past experience, it might be a very long time before our store of signs was complete.

The colours do not give as much trouble as the forms. The use of colours in pictures, not only to give natural effects, but as signs for special qualities or feelings, has been common from earliest times. In teaching-pictures the colours are a great help to the eye in keeping together different divisions in a common group. For example : metal industry : red ; clothing industry : blue ; wood industry : green ; and so : iron industry, machine industry : different signs in red. cloth industry, dress making : different signs in blue. cutting up wood, wood work : different signs in green.