

The continuance of the Society's work is unusually difficult at the present time, but it is anticipated that a volume for 1940 will be issued by the end of the year.

The economic outlook is probably the reason for many resignations which it is hoped may be temporary. Seven subscribers have withdrawn their support, and four have died. The Council is glad however to welcome five new subscribers including the Bishop of the Diocese.

### The Presidential Address

The PRESIDENT, the Rt. Rev. Abbot E. HORNE, F.S.A., delivered his Presidential Address, entitled 'Is an Archæological Society of any use?':

'When I was thinking over various subjects that might do for this address, I was frequently faced with the difficulty that many of them seemed so removed from the somewhat unhappy circumstances under which we are now living, that the contrast was too pronounced, and the matter would not fit into our present position at all. So I sought for a colourless subject that would not seem too much out of place with our surroundings, hence I ask the simple question whether a Society, such as ours, is of any use? I have tried to answer my question in a way that more or less falls in with life as we find it to-day.

'In our English practical way we are apt to limit the word *use* and to forget that it may have a very wide range. When something new for instance, is brought to our notice, one of the first questions we often ask about it is "Is it any use, or what is it used for?" and our estimate of the new arrival, is in proportion to the use to which it can be put. How often, when engaged in an excavation, will some well-meaning person, after looking on in silence for a short time, at last venture on a question. "May I ask, Sir, what you are looking for?" and when I answer with the one word "information" the old gentleman is obviously disappointed and puzzled. If I had said "ancient crockery or coins" he would have brightened up at once, and would have enquired further as to what "luck" I had had so far. But to dig a great trench, several feet in length and perhaps three or four in depth, merely to get at

such an intangible thing as "information", surely must be a waste of time and no use at all. I do not say that that trench is not going to yield up some objects, perhaps of interest, but that was not the primary purpose for digging it. Those pieces of pottery and other things were left there by a race of people in a bygone age, and from the workmanship displayed we can tell how far they had travelled along the road to civilisation. By the depth down at which the pieces were found, and from the overlying layers, we may learn that if they were the first inhabitants there, at least they were not the last, for buried above, are the relics later races left behind them. The digging then, is full of information, and the objects found are only a means to an end, and so the work may be considered of some use. Now you may say here that I have mixed up the purely practical with the intellectual, but this is only what one must do, as they cannot in this life be really separated. We are composed of a body and a mind, or if I may—of the material and the immaterial. While with the body we grasp, so to speak, the material things around us, and look upon them from the point of view of their *use*, with the mind we deal with something of a much higher order, and we are out of the sphere of the purely practical at once. The appeal of music to the spiritual part of our nature, or of poetry, or of art is very real, as we know from experience, and yet you could not measure it, nor describe it with any detail, as you could a material thing, because in itself it is so spiritual. But because it is so mysterious, are we to say that this appeal to the spiritual part of our nature, is of no use? Can you imagine life, if all that we call beautiful was taken out of it, and we had nothing left but the purely useful. What would our lives be like if all music ceased, if we never heard the grand tones of an organ again, or beautiful voices singing, and in nature if all the birds were silent or if the murmur of running water or the gentle rustle of the leaves of trees, in fact if all the music of God's earth suddenly ceased? I think we should be crushed with the horrible reality of everything in the midst of which we lived. It is music and poetry and art, whether we take them as artificial or whether we find them equally in nature, for they are there as truly, that feed and keep the life in our spiritual being, and so they are of very real use.

‘ Of music in nature, as I was just saying, there can be no doubt, nor can we be blind to the wonderful art that meets us on all hands, say in the beauty and shape of flowers, or the gorgeous colours or graceful forms of birds, or the very mystery of insect life which is so entrancing. And we may find the poetry of nature in mountain, plain or sea, or in one of those overwhelming grand sunsets which seem to lift our thoughts above the earth altogether. So what I am calling the intellectual as opposed to the purely practical, exists in the world of nature, and hence this appeal to our mind must have some use. And the use is not difficult to see. Just as our body requires food, and just as it would languish and die without it, so too does our mind require feeding, and it is ever hungry. It is these intellectual things we have been talking about that form its food, and hence, although we cannot see of what practical use certain things may be, yet they may have a very valuable office in ministering to the mind.

‘ I think we may say that mental appetites differ very much as bodily appetites do. One person may like oysters or onions, and another may detest both. One mind may be made supremely happy with music, while another scarcely feels its appeal. Some minds can get their necessary food from natural science of one kind or another, or some from purely artificial sciences as chemistry or mathematics, but all feel the need for something for the mind to feed on.

‘ One of the items that forms employment for the minds of certain classes of individuals is the appeal to the past. There are many reasons why we may be interested in the past. The past is mysterious—it is not open and plain like the present—and the mysterious is always attractive. The mysterious is always attractive because we may feel it can so easily hold surprises, and something entirely new may turn up and come into our common-place lives, and this is surely worth having. This holds good particularly with that part of archæology which deals with excavation, for who knows what secrets the earth may give up next ?

‘ And then again persons are attracted towards archæology because it tells them something about the country in which they live, and all thinking persons are anxious to know about

their surroundings. This has the further effect of making us love our country, and having those patriotic feelings that can only really rest on a knowledge of our past. This science can tell us about the growth of our country from its simple first beginnings, through its childhood and manhood, and how it came to be what it is now. Those who have no archæological knowledge of our past, are like persons who take all the things round about them for granted, and never ask any questions as to where they come from or what they are doing. If they ask about a person they see, among others, they are told "Oh that is Mr. X, he comes from such a place" and then he mixes with the crowd, and he is of no further interest. If they had been told that that person was in the late government, and had held a very responsible position or had been Governor-General of one of our foreign possessions, they would have been interested at once, and would probably ask further about him. We are obviously not interested in, nor do we care for, things about which we know nothing. So I feel we deepen our regard for our country by archæological pursuits and studies, and this surely is of very great use.

'Then again the past can give certain kinds of information which are really useful in the present, for history is ever repeating itself and the failures and the successes of the past are often a help in the present. This is a mechanical age, hence we cannot learn much from the past—so at least the modern mind thinks—because in the past there were no mechanical devices that could suggest new ideas. And yet it is doubtful, if in all the newest mechanical inventions an entirely new principle has been evolved and set to work. Laws which were known only from experience enabled early man to set up such great monuments as Stonehenge, to move the required stones immense distances across the country, to dig great ditches round them for their protection, and these are the same laws which we employ to-day, only we set them to work in a different manner. Who can look at that stupendous work, the defences of Cadbury Camp, in this county, without feeling that the men of that age have something to teach us to-day, that they, without any assistance such as blasting affords, probably without metal tools, could yet carve out that gigantic fortress

from the mountain side and leave a defensive work that we should be proud of if we had done it ourselves. Archæology has a great deal to teach us from the past. I have been amused to see quite recently how we have copied primitive man in forming defences against the enemy. As you know, hill camps that are so common, consist of great banks of earth thrown up encircling a space, and having, as a rule only one entrance. This entrance is protected by a "baffle"—sometimes quite simple in construction, sometimes complicated. It consists of a bank or banks placed across the entrance, at a short distance away so that the enemy cannot rush the place, but has to wind in and out which gives the defenders a good chance to stop him. I see baffles on this principle being set up in some of our main roads, so that passengers have to pull up and make an S bend to get round them, and hence we are only copying a defence against the enemy that was in use two or three thousand years ago. I sometimes like to let my imagination run riot and try to see the relation of some of the most modern things to the ways of early man. Is there any relation, for instance, between the old battering ram, that huge machine that was pushed up against the castle gates and walls with the object of beating them in, and the modern explosive bomb, which is used for exactly the same purpose? The end in view was to break through the resistance offered by the defenders, and it makes but little difference if the walls are beaten down by the blows of the swinging battering ram or by the force of an exploding bomb or shell. Surely too there is a relation between the so-called stink-ball, that was used in the early Middle Ages and was thrown among the enemy, and the poison gas that used to be given us by the Germans. I don't think that the old form was as cruel as the newer one, but obviously the idea was the same. Once more—down in the Lake Village excavations are found the clay balls that were made red-hot, and shot on points of arrows into the thatch of the lake dwellers' houses and so the places were set on fire. These were surely the forerunners of the incendiary bomb, and were earlier than the Greek fire which did so much damage to shipping in its day, much as the bombing of ships seems to do now. And this shows me again why archæological pursuits can give useful information, even in times like these.

‘ It is quite easy to say “ Oh I have something much more serious to think about in these dreadful war days than the things a Society like this can suggest ”, but this is my very point. These dealings with the past help to get our minds into a truer perspective. If you know about the past and if your knowledge is so intimate that the past seems very real to you, you will be able to measure all these present disturbances against those that history has recorded as taking place before. A recent writer (Philip Lindsay) has written vividly about the Plague and Fire of London, and he says “ Can I at such a vital moment as this, sit at a table and toy with fantasies of the past ? are my antiquarian spectacles so dim that I can ask people who are watching the sky for enemy ’planes, to lower their eyes to a book telling of hundreds of years ago ? ” and he answers “ yes ” with no uncertain voice, and gives reasons why his craft should not be judged useless in a crisis like the present. One reason is the one I have just given myself—that it may help to furnish us with a true perspective. Times have been as bad before, and this is a most important fact to keep at the back of our minds. “ Could incendiary bombs ” asks the writer “ be more destructive to London than the Great Fire ? could they do relatively a hundreth of the damage ? are high explosives and poison-gas more terrifying and fatal than that terrible Plague of London from which thousands upon thousands perished ? ” London suffered in 1665-6 far more terribly than we are likely to suffer to-day, and yet she survived and became glorious once more.

‘ We can see then that this reference to the past does help us to put the difficulties of the present into their right perspective. They no longer stand out as terrors that have never occurred before, as a visitation that we have never been asked to face since England has had any history, but there have been worse in the past and we have survived them, and we shall survive these. So from this point of view, archaeology is a comforter.

‘ And finally it has a higher office even than this. Suppose our enemies do succeed in destroying a great deal, not only of the beauty and riches of our country, but even part of our history by levelling with the ground ancient buildings or land-

marks. It may somewhat cripple, but it cannot destroy the work of a Society such as this. We shall be saving the past in such an intangible way that no enemy bombs can destroy it—the spirit of such a Society is beyond the reach of explosives and tanks. Other Societies also will keep the arts and music alive and the sacred fire of civilisation will be kept burning long after the present tyranny has come to an end.

‘It is good for a nation that some kind of civil life should go on behind the firing line, and it is good for the moral of the nation that that life should be as dignified and as unperturbed as possible and when we are upholding a Society like this, and doing our best for it, even in war time, we are preparing for to-morrow in fortifying to-day.’

The Rt. Rev. F. UNDERHILL, Bishop of Bath and Wells, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the President for his address, and this was seconded by Mrs. D. P. DOBSON, F.S.A., and carried.

This concluded the Annual General Meeting.