

OPENING ADDRESS OF THE ANTIQUARIAN SECTION
AT CANTERBURY.¹

By PROFESSOR T. M'KENNY HUGHES, M.A., F.R.S., F.S.A.

When I learned that the honour of presiding over one of the sections of the Archæological Institute had been conferred upon me, and that the first duty which I had to discharge was to open the business of the section with an address, I cast about for a subject of which I might have some knowledge, and which should also, if possible, combine the advantage of having a special local interest. I dismissed the idea which of course occurred to me, as it does to every one in similar circumstances, of compiling a history of all the results of recent archæological research. I realised that the Institute has subdivided the subject of Archæology, so that it is treated under three heads, namely, Antiquarian, Historical, and Architectural, and that I had not to do with written evidence or inscriptions, which belong to the section presided over by that distinguished scholar, my colleague from Cambridge. Nor, again, was it within my province to speak of monuments in which distinctive features were arrived at from age to age, in the attempt to add beauty of form to utility and durability of structure. The discussion on these will be guided by the accomplished and energetic secretary of the Society of Antiquaries. Our duty in this section is to "eye the delver's toil," to note exactly where things were buried and what objects were found associated—in fact, to take special cognisance of the fossils of Archæology. This being the case, I felt that I might legitimately urge upon your notice a stricter observance of the methods of geological research in dealing with this class of evidence.

I thought, further, as we were to meet in a region where man had from the earliest period of which we have any record employed flint as the material of his instruments of every-day use, as well as, in all probability, for

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international relations, and, as we should be walking over flints together every day for a week, that I could not do better than lay before the section the results of a long and somewhat detailed study of flint and flints, of the mode of occurrence of flint; the vicissitudes through which flints pass after they have been washed out of the parent chalk; and the changes which nature works in the condition of the surface by fracture and chemical action.

But I learned that there would be no opportunity of exhibiting such a collection as would be necessary for the proper illustration of the subject, nor would the time at my disposal suffice for the purpose. So I found I must relinquish the larger scheme, and, instead of giving a conspectus of one branch of the subject, I have endeavoured to offer a generalisation from many different observations along various lines of enquiry—a plan which allows me to refer to the history of flints so far as possible without laying a large quantity of illustrative specimens before you in support of my statements, and will enable me to touch upon several other points of interest arising out of recent discoveries.

The heading under which I would link my remarks together is the continuity of domestic life in Britain from the earliest times, as shown by the objects of every-day life which have been disinterred.

Here at once I find I have to speak of flint.

The history of primæval man in Britain belongs exclusively to what you have separated off as the anti-quarian section of Archæology. It depends almost entirely, so far as accurate observation and legitimate inference may be held to have established satisfactory conclusions, upon the use of stone implements. The story of Palæolithic man may now be considered to be based upon sound evidence, but that is almost entirely derived from his use of flint. The anthropological evidence from the supposed primæval skulls or skeletons is so far too doubtful, both as regards the finding and the characters, to justify our attaching much importance to it. But the implements exhibit a uniformity of type which indicates a common origin. Moreover, they have been searched for where expected from analogy, and there found. Much false and foolish evidence was adduced in

the earlier stages of the enquiry, but that has now been sifted out and set aside.

Now we are looking for evidence of man's existence in the much more remote past, and the enquiry has been much prosecuted in Kent. But we must not again allow the research to be impeded, and results discredited, by the too hasty admission of unsatisfactory evidence. It may be true—and it has been supposed that it has been already proved—that man did inhabit Kent long before the time of the makers of the stone hatchets which we find in the gravel of Reculver or in the brickearths near Rainham. In this enquiry into the more remote history of man chief reliance is placed upon fragments of flint which are supposed to show traces, not indeed of having been fashioned, but of having been used by man. The term "palæotaliths" which has been applied to these earlier stones is unfortunate if only on account of the finality involved in the superlative.

Whatever may be the working hypothesis with which we proceed to follow up this line of research, the one most necessary bit of knowledge for its safe prosecution is the history of the vicissitudes through which the flints have passed which we are examining with a view to discovering traces of man.

None of these flints are in the position in which they were formed. All of them have been transported by natural agencies. They have run the risk of being trampled on, kicked, and scrunched against one another by animals. They have been exposed to irregular and rapid expansion and contraction with changes of temperature, and to various chemical actions which must affect the condition of the surface.

We must have made ourselves familiar with all the operations of nature which affect the form and condition of a flint, and must have satisfied ourselves that none of these can have produced the result we observe, before we can safely pronounce that any given specimen certainly shows traces of human handiwork, however likely it may seem that the fragment might have been turned to account by primæval man. The majority of the fragments which have been referred to this pre-palæolithic age are not of the form into which flint was commonly

shaped by palæolithic man, nor are the fractures, which are supposed to indicate use, of the same, or approximately the same, date. We shall probably have further opportunities of discussing this question in the course of the week.

All the commoner types of stone implement are suggested by natural forms. In illustration of this point I once made a large collection of flints, which is now in the Jermyn Street Museum. There must often be considerable doubt respecting specimens on which there are not a great many chips. They may be specimens rudely fashioned by man, or they may be natural forms accidentally chipped along their weaker or more exposed edges by the various operations to which I have referred above.

But there is no great step from using a flint with a naturally formed cutting edge and trimming another so as to adapt it for similar use. The continuity in the objects of every-day life shows itself thus early in the fact that rough flints were picked up and used, then shaped a little where the natural form was not quite what was required.

Nor do the proofs of continuity end with the more ancient types known as palæolithic, for, among the wasters and flakes of almost any neolithic implement manufactory, implements are found hardly distinguishable from palæolithic leaf-shaped and oval forms. These are the natural flints which have been rough dressed and prepared for the more careful work by which the newer or neolithic implements were elaborated. In fact, the embryology of the more highly-finished forms shows that they have, in the course of their development, passed through the stages at which the implements of the palæolithic type were arrested.

Even among the ground and polished implements made out of the basic rocks, which are commonly known as greenstones and basalts, natural forms seem to have lent themselves readily to the requirements of primæval man, as I first suspected among the weathered rough-surfaced celts so common in West Yorkshire and recently saw the proofs of so clearly on the coast of Brittany. The rock naturally breaks into fragments, which are

rolled on the beach into long tapering pebbles such as require only to be ground at the broad end into a cutting chisel edge to furnish just such an implement as was commonly used by neolithic man. Very likely the change from unground to ground was the result of importation or even of invasion, but it is too small and unimportant a thing, though very conspicuous in archaeology, to lead us to infer from it any considerable break in the continuity of the habits and appliances of everyday life.

Vast difference of circumstances and great lapse of time between palæolithic and neolithic man are inferred from the geographical changes which are known to have taken place, and from the local extinction of whole races of animals.

But lapse of time does not imply any abrupt interruption of continuity, and the local extinction of species does not involve any sudden destruction. The animals that lived in the palæolithic age did not disappear all at once. Indeed, the French antiquaries have classified the remains of primæval man by reference to the groups of animals that successively prevailed with him.

Many of the forms of life which were common in Southern Britain at the commencement of the neolithic age are wholly or locally extinct, such as the Elk, the Red and Roedeer, the Bear and the Beaver. Many have become extinct in quite recent times, such as the Marten, the Kite, and the large Copper Butterfly; some are now so scarce that we may expect them to disappear in a few years, such as the Badger or the Swallow-tail Butterfly. Earth movements and other geographical changes of considerable extent have taken place since the commencement of neolithic times, and when, as we look back through the ages, the perspective of the receding past has reduced this varied history to a thin line, changes will be found to have taken place at the time indicated by it of the same kind as those which we now refer to the close of the palæolithic age.

As we follow down the history of domestic appliances we by-and-bye find the use of stone superseded by that of metal. Here we meet with a new difficulty, which makes negative evidence of less value than in the case

of stone. The metal is perishable; the surface of the bronze is often so corroded that an ordinary workman would notice nothing peculiar in a valuable relic, and would throw it away. The iron often leaves but a rusty streak.

There is plenty of evidence of the overlap of stone and metal, of bronze and iron, showing continuity of domestic life with the gradual incoming of new inventions.

But enough evidence has been collected to suggest that some of the earlier bronze implements were imitations, as far as the form was concerned, of the common flat stone celt. Metal was scarce, and came in slowly. Stone was still used by the poor folk down to the Roman occupation of Gaul and probably of Britain. Roman ware was found by Miln, with stone implements, in the rubbish round a Roman villa in Brittany. The obvious explanation of this was that the Romans employed native servants, who brought their own instruments with them. There might be cases in which the natives had looted a Roman villa, but the buildings and other remains did not admit of that explanation in the case of the excavations in the Bosseno.

The change from the ancient British mode of life was not *abruptly* interrupted by that greatest of all episodes in our history—the conquest of Britain by the Romans; and yet nothing has ever happened which has produced so great a revolution in all the appliances and habits of life. The imprint of Roman civilisation was never obliterated. Once the better class of Roman pottery had come into use it held its own.

There does not seem to be much meaning in the term Romano-British. The Romans who came here did not modify their appliances so as to make them approach the British type, nor did the British modify their objects of every-day life; but by degrees, without much interruption of continuity, the Britons adopted the Roman methods and instruments.

Other important modifications mark the making of the old English people. It was not by the first inroad of Angle, Saxon, Frank, Jute, or Dane, that the great change was brought about. These rough people do not appear to have introduced any appliances that had such utility

or beauty as to supercede at once those left among the Romanised British. Moreover, as time went on, each new body of invaders found more and more of their own kith and kin established in the country.

Here I will try to accentuate the point of my remarks and the inference I would have drawn with regard to the methods of observation from which alone any trustworthy deductions can be obtained for the construction of such a sketch as I have been endeavouring to lay before you.

In studying the fossils of archæology and their teaching the methods of geology must be followed. It is not enough to say that under such-and-such a house or street, at such-and-such a depth, such-and-such an object was found. It will not do to record the information of an obliging workman, who soon finds out what lends an interest to the find. You will easily obtain evidence, if you seek for it by interrogation, that a quite recent jug was obtained forty feet down, and may elicit from your informant by cross-examination that he found it when digging potatoes. The story of Dr. Buckland's *Paramoudra* is another example.

You must carefully observe each section for yourself and note what objects are confined to one layer, and which of them, ranging through a longer period, recur at several horizons.

It was by observing in this way in the top layers objects of the last two centuries, in the next below mediæval objects, and in the lower layers Roman remains, that I made out that a certain corner now built over in the midst of the colleges of Cambridge had been a laystall or place where rubbish might be shot for fifteen centuries at least.

It was from noting the perpetual association of a certain class of pottery of Roman type with undoubted mediæval fragments that I inferred that the Roman type of commoner ware did prevail all through the six centuries from the withdrawal of the Romans to the Norman Conquest. It was only by this method I could show that this was not merely an accidental mixture of ancient and modern refuse.

To return to our enquiry.

The Norman Conquest, like the Roman occupation, brought in a mixed crowd. As the Romans grafted on

to British life Huns and Asturians and Gauls, some with more, some with less facility of assimilation to the native British, but all disciplined to Roman civilization, so the Normans brought in an army drawn from various races, each with their own well-marked idiosyncracies. There were, of course, many quick-witted but volatile French among them ; but it is a great mistake to talk of it, as is commonly done on the other side of the channel, as if it were a conquest of England by the French. The backbone of the army was Norse, which readily coalesced with the Scandinavian element on this side the channel, while the Celts from Brittany may perhaps explain some of the colonies of the Celtic type so commonly found in East Britain. Their leader, William, is shown by an early painting, preserved in Caen, which was copied from a still earlier fresco, to have been a reddish haired man ; and though Matilda, to distinguish the combatants on her embroidery, gave prominence to the dark haired French type among the Normans, William Rufus' hair and complexion support the inference, drawn from the Caen painting, that his father was a red Norseman and no Frenchman.

Now, excavations among the scarce remains of the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries tell us of no break in the ordinary domestic appliances throughout all that transition period. And to appeal in confirmation to another of our sections the early Norman castle was the same as the Old English burh—a fort upon a mound. If we examine a collection of the remains of ordinary household appliances of the nineteenth century in the refuse of any house or town we shall see a vast difference between them and the corresponding remains of the fifteenth century ; yet the change has been gradual and the continuity kept up. So in the more remote past the whole result after centuries may be great, but the change was not abrupt or violent.

In these enquiries language goes for very little : the physical features of the people are worth more ; but the most trustworthy evidence is that derived from the spade. In the deep trench we can see for ourselves layer after layer, each holding the waste and refuse and broken vessels of every-day life. This is the record which has

been so neglected by Archæology. We ought to be able to study this in our museums. Drawers of arranged fragments should enable us to infer the incoming or the overlap of each type. But where is there a museum which displays, or even preserves in an accessible form, all the objects which have been found together at distinguishable stages? Where can we take a basketful of objects and by comparison assign, if not a date, at any rate a relative place to them? It is from the neglect of this kind of evidence that a wrong impression of the amount of interruption of ordinary life and of the relation of the conquered to the conquerors has been so generally prevalent and the great fact of the continuity of our domestic history throughout invasions and conquests and civil wars has been so often lost sight of.

In this ancient city relics which form as much part of its history as a leaf or a chapter of its most valued historical document are now and again exposed. Surely I need hardly appeal to the citizens of Canterbury, or to the archæologists now gathered here and inspired by its stirring memories of 2,000 years, to support every effort to accept and preserve the priceless records which are from time to time presented to them in the progress of necessary renovation and expansion.