

Oxford Architectural & Historical Society.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIES FOR 1903.

The members of the Society show a slight increase on those of last year and many new members have been elected and proposed for election during the past term.

During the year there have been ten excursions and seven evening meetings. In Oxford, St. John's College, New College, Lincoln, and Christ Church have been visited, also the churches of St. Mary the Virgin, and All Saints. A complete circuit of the city walls has been made, and the historic parts of the Castle have been visited. Outside Oxford, East Claydon and Lockinge Houses, with their valuable collections of pictures, have, by the kindness of their owners, been shown to members. The churches of East Claydon, Forest Hill, Stanton S. John, and Beckley have been visited. The excursions in Oxford have been well attended, the members being usually from 30 to 50. The attendance at those outside Oxford was smaller, owing probably to the inclement and uncertain weather. The evening Meetings have again formed a great feature of the Society's work. Thanks to the President, we have been able to keep in touch with recent works of Excavation. In the summer, Professor Flinders Petrie gave us an excellent paper on recent discoveries in Egypt; this term Mr. R. T. Gunther's paper on recent Excavations in the Bay of Naples, and Mr. D. J. Hogarth's on the Excavations at Naukratis proved most instructive. Professor Wooldridge gave us in the summer a paper on the Persistence of Classic Elements in the Early Art of Italy, which was very well attended, and the Rev. J. E. Odgers' paper on the Architecture and Mosaics of Ravenna was well received. The President exhibited at the same meeting some pre-historic and early historic pot fabrics of the Plateau of Asia Minor, and on a subsequent occasion showed some specimens of Greek and other Levantine embroideries. Special invitations to most of these meetings were issued and the attendance throughout has been good. A more informal meeting was also held, for the exhibition of objects belonging to Members. The institution of tea and coffee at evening meetings has added to the social side of the Society's functions.

In other departments the work of the Society has also gone forward. The rules have been revised and have now passed into law. The Library Committee has drawn up a Report advising certain changes in the constitution of the Library, and this Report is receiving the consideration of the Committee. The publication of the Society's transactions is at present confined to the terminal programmes. The Excavations Committee has watched the progress of excavations for the foundations of the Hertford New Buildings, which stand astride the line of the old city wall. No traces either of wall or ditch were found on the probable line of the wall joining New College Tower with the Chapel of our Lady. Some 34 feet north of this probable line was found a fragment of old wall, some 25 feet long and 3 feet wide, 19 feet below ground. No mud deposit was found anywhere. This fragment is, perhaps, the remains of a retaining wall on the north side of the City Ditch. During the year much building, re-building and restoration has been in progress. A great alteration has been carried out at Magdalen College, in the construction of a new roof to the Hall. Wyatt's plaster vault is now a thing of the past. On its removal two most interesting discoveries were made. The first was a fine three-light tracery window at the east end of the Hall, partly blocked by the old vault, walled up, and plastered over. The second was that of the marks, on the end walls, of the wood tracery which existed between the tie beams and the arches below them, of the original roof. These traces corresponded nearly with the roof shown in an old print of the chapel roof. The window has been opened up, restored, and glazed with heraldic glass. The design of the roof was slightly modified by Mr. Bodley, the architect, from his intended plan, in consequence of the discovery, and very nearly resembles that of the original. The pitch of the roof externally has been lowered, the old slate roof, visible from Magdalen Bridge, being removed, and the embrasures of the battlements lowered to the old design. University College has also been at work on its Hall, 20 feet having been added to the length thereof. It was known that a fine hammer-beam roof existed above the plaster ceiling, so the new addition has been roofed in accordance with the old design. The original roof, however, proved to be in too bad a state to open up, and at present the end of the Hall has its new roof at the full height, while the old plaster ceiling covers the remainder. The Hertford College new buildings are now complete, and were opened at the beginning of term. It is intended, eventually, to open up and restore the Chapel of our Lady, on the city

wall, and connect it with the new buildings, carefully preserving the beautiful little doorway, and as much of the old building as possible. A bridge over the road to unite the new and the old buildings is also proposed by the College. The balustrade crowning the old Ashmolean Museum has been renewed. The new Fellows' Houses, belonging to Merton College, opposite the Examination Schools, are complete ; re-facing and alterations have been done to the Warden's House at New College. At Queen's College most interesting discoveries have been made. It is hoped that the Society may be able to hear further and detailed accounts of these next term. Many other buildings, too numerous to mention, have sprung up. It is to be hoped that, while provision is made for the increasing wants of a growing town, all due respect will be shown for the works of past ages, and a careful record kept of any discoveries of artistic or historical value that are made during the progress of new work.

Children's Games.

By Mrs. C. M. A. Peake.

It has been pointed out by several writers on folk lore that Children's games, particularly those which have traditional songs and ritual attached to them, may in time serve to throw some light upon the social and religious observances of our ancestors in the remote past.

Most of these games can be classed under a few heads. Firstly come the Courting or Wedding games, next the Funeral ones. After these a large and somewhat vague class of Sporting or Pastoral games, among which perhaps we may put the various interesting Robber games, at any rate those in which the thieves confine their efforts to the acquisition of their neighbour's property rather than his sons or daughters. There is also a species of Story game, such as *The Milking Can* and a large number of games which would appear to be merely organized romps, some simple games of skill (*Hop Scotch*) and Lot Casting ceremonies such as *Bingo*.