INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF SIR HERBERT E. MAXWELL, BART., M.P., TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE, HELD AT EDINBURGH.[1]

The closing years of a century naturally suggest the process of stock-taking, and as we have arrived at the last decade of a century which claims to have witnessed material progress accelerated beyond all precedent, and the accumulation of scientific knowledge without parallel, it is not unnatural that we should direct inquiry into the standing attained by that particular branch of science—archæology—in which we are all concerned.

In comparing the position which archæology occupies at the present time with that which it did, say, a century ago, the comparison is made somewhat more easy by a landmark placed very nearly half-way between the two periods —viz., the last meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute in this city in the year 1856. And I submit, in making the comparison, we have no reason to blush. It was in the year 1816 that the third of the Waverley novels was published—"The Antiquary"—and in that romance Sir Walter Scott delineated with a subtle and sympathetic hand the foibles of the antiquary of that day —not unkindly, you may be sure, because the Great Unknown ever dipped his pen in ink in which gall was very sparingly infused. No one ever shared more keenly the ardour of collection and investigation than Sir Walter Scott did. He shed the light of his genius upon what was then a darkling pursuit with no just claim to be ranked as science; and you have only to dip into that most delightful of all biographies, Lockhart's "Life of Scott"—the difficulty is to be content with a dip—to

[1] Delivered August 11th 1891.

share the glee with which he added each object to the great store at Abbotsford.

It is not uninteresting to compare the motives of two men who, though vastly dis-similar in many points of their character, yet coincided in others. Horace Walpole left the scene just as Walter Scott was entering upon it. Each has left the fullest details of his life—each was an author and each was an ardent collector. Each undertook and carried forward with increasing eagerness the construction of a Gothic palace at a time when the public were indifferent to Gothic architecture, and architects themselves were almost wholly uninstructed in it. This is neither the time nor the place to dwell upon the contrast between these two men; but the point to which I will draw your attention is the difference in the motive which each had in collecting. Walpole collected antiques because of their beauty. Whole pages of his letters are taken up with rhapsody over the modelling of a torso or the chasing of a vase. In his eyes, art gave the primary, and association only the secondary merit. Scott, on the other hand, prized each object chiefly on account of its origin and the associations connected with it. A battered morion from a Border moss was dearer in his eyes than a goblet chased by Benvenuto Cellini. The wasted tracery of Dryburgh or Melrose touched him more nearly than Giotto's Campanile, or the towers of Abbeville. It was perhaps the Santa Maria Novella, or the Palazzo Vecchio, that fired Walpole's imitative ambition in Strawberry Hill, but Scott reared Abbotsford because he had such a deep love for those feudal ages in which he loved to instruct us. Each was pre-eminent in his day—Walpole as a dilettante, and Scott as an antiquary; and it is our privilege in this day, without discarding Walpole's love of beauty or disdaining Scott's spirit of romance, to follow a higher aim than either—namely, the attainment of truth. Without that object the whole science and scheme of archæology is an aimless fabric.

The Scottish Antiquaries have collected within this building a whole host of silent witnesses to the past, each bearing testimony to the origin of our race, and the development of our civilisation. It is neither for the

gratification of taste, nor of romantic sentiment, that this great collection has been brought together, and for which we value it. It is our desire to know and to understand the past history of our race, without which, I submit, it is impossible either to understand or to control the present, or to forecast and direct the future.

Now, far be it from me in anything I have said to depreciate the work done by the Great Columbus of Scotland, Sir Walter Scott. I yield to no one in love for the man and admiration for his work. It would be impossible to calculate how many minds he has drawn into the field of archæology after him. I myself gratefully admit that it was he who first directed my thoughts to that subject, and I have no doubt there are many here present who will make the same confession. But the impetus which he gave to archæology would have been but transient had it not been submitted to the method and system which is found indispensable to all science. I read a sentence lately in a newspaper which seemed to me to contain the essence of the truth of the matter—"In the present day it is necessary that every subject should be considered, not only in itself, but in relation to every other subject"—and the indispensable method—the method which I have alluded to as indispensable—of all science is the comparative method, that which distinguishes modern science from mediæval study, and secures their reward to the labours of research.

Men have ever shown themselves ardent in research. There is implanted in the human breast that craving for knowledge which, showing itself in the savage by a restless curiosity, swells under civilisation and culture into divine hunger for the truth and divine hatred of error. We have only in recent times learned how best to direct research, by comparing observation, and so we have been enabled to unravel much mystery and dispel much illusion which obscures the early history of our race. I very well recollect how a friend of mine, a distinguished scholar, and one thoroughly in sympathy with all intellectual movement, attempted to discourage me from devoting any time to the study of archæology. "It will disappoint you," he said, "you may go on collecting arrow-heads, and flint implements, and all sorts of old curiosities,

till you have no room to contain them : but archæology, believe me," he said, " is a finite science ; you will come up to a dead wall, beyond which you will not be able to pass, and you will then regret the time that you might have devoted to physical science, which is infinite."

Well, I was not discouraged. I ventured to assert then, as I hold now, that archæology is the handmaid of history, and not only that, but that it is an important branch of not the least important section of physical science—namely, anthropology, the study of mankind. More than anything else, I think, it convinces us of the unity of the human race. Primitive implements, primitive dwellings, burial-places, utensils in all parts of the world bear a striking similarity to one another. We find among the Australasian tribes implements of a type almost identical with those exhumed from the mosses of Denmark, and from our own hillsides. Everywhere there is evidence that man in primitive condition, subject to similar circumstances, and having to contend with similar difficulties, has adopted similar means of overcoming them. We can afford to despise Voltaire's jibe, " Il ne faut point d'esprit pour s' occuper des vieux évènements." It is not only to tickle our vanity that we compare the war canoe found, perhaps, in a Highland lake, hollowed out of a single oak trunk, with the modern ironclad, electric-lighted, steam-propelled, armed with 100-ton guns loaded and aimed by hydraulic machinery. It tends rather to our humility when we reflect that between these two master-pieces of naval engineering there is perhaps interposed a space of less than twenty centuries. If mankind be a fitting object for our study, surely herein is something which adds to our knowledge of its history—leads us so far on the road to a knowledge of its destiny.

Now, I suppose that every individual attracted to the study of archæology passes through the phase of being a collector. Collectors are of many sorts. There are good collectors and bad collectors. The bad collectors, for convenience of reference, may be classified as " bottlers." They are those people who, from excellent motives, and with a laudable aim, get hold of objects of antiquity and keep them to themselves. But the bottler, under favourable circumstances and auspices, develops into

the true collector, whose object is the advancement of science.

Although I speak in the presence of those who are much better qualified to discuss these subjects than myself, perhaps I may allude here to one little circumstance which I observe is too often neglected, and brings with it lamentable consequences, apparently out of proportion to the amount of neglect involved at the outset. I mean the duty of every person into whose hands the object of antiquity comes, be he a bottler or a genuine collector, of labelling at once every object with the name of the place where it is found. Every one must be aware of how seldom that little duty is observed. In almost every country house there may be seen lying about two or three objects of antiquity recovered from the ground in the neighbourhood. It is the rarest possible thing to find any record upon them of how, when, or where they were found. I have already referred to the similarity of type between implements from distant parts of the earth. It is often impossible, if the object is not marked, to say whether it came from the South Sea Islands or from the British Isles, and if that be the case, the value of the object to science is absolutely *nil*. Therefore I think too much importance can hardly be placed upon the simple duty of making a record of how, when, and where such thing was found.

In most cases the ardour of mere collection passes away. The collection becomes too bulky, and outgrows the cases which it was originally intended to fill, and the result is something like what it is described by Sir Walter Scott in Mr. Oldbuck's parlour. It is not every one who has the gift of order in such a degree as my friend Mr. John Evans. No one who has had the privilege of inspecting the vast collection which he has brought together at Nash Mills but must have been divided between admiration for the indefatigable zeal of the collector and for the admirable method of the arranging of the collection. Unhappily, the labours of private collectors do not often contribute so efficiently to the advancement of science as his have done.

I have alluded to the importance of comparison in the study of archæology, and perhaps I may introduce an

instance of the importance of such comparison, which, early in life, came under my own observation. A certain sheet of water, which has since become famed in archæological annals—Dowalton Loch, in Wigtownshire—which covered about 400 acres of ground, was drained in 1862. My late father took down a party of friends to inspect the operations; and on one occasion when the waters were running off the loch it so happened that the noble Duke, the father of Lord Percy, the president of this Institute, then Lord Lovaine, was one of the party. He had lately returned from examining the Swiss lake dwellings. You will recollect that in the previous summer the waters of the Swiss lakes, owing to drought, had receded so far as to permit the inspection of certain lacustrine dwellings, which were then new, or almost new, to science. Well, at the time of Lord Lovaine's visit, certain islets were appearing above the surface of the receding waters. A boat was obtained, and the party rowed out to one of these islands. As the boat touched the shore, Lord Lovaine exclaimed, "Why, here is one of the very things that I have been examining in the Swiss lakes!" Had it not been for his Lordship's presence on that occasion I think it is very likely that the important discoveries then made might have passed, if not unnoticed, at least uncared for, and a large number of objects which were recovered and are at present housed in this museum might have been scattered unlabelled through various country houses in the neighbourhood.

I need hardly remind you of the great advance made in our acquaintance with Scottish lake dwellings since that day. The study has been carried on very steadily ever since, and we are able to enjoy the fruits of it in those noble volumes with which we are familiar, the work of my friend Dr. Robert Munro who has won for himself the position of the leading authority in this country upon crannogs or lake dwellings.

One other incident connected with the same discovery may perhaps be not unworthy of notice. It is well known that local tradition is a most unsafe and treacherous guide. Reliance upon it has to be surrounded by every imaginable precaution, or one is sure to go astray. Still tradition is but history in its primitive form, and there

was a tradition connected with Dowalton Loch—namely, that there was a village buried below the waters, which seemed to receive striking confirmation when the loch was dry, and this group of islets, with their traces of busy life, and the causeways connecting them with the shore, were laid bare.

But I propose giving a still more striking instance of the confirmation of tradition, showing how a tale may survive, as it were, as a landmark, through the constant social and religious change of the past centuries. Within a very few miles of the said Dowalton Loch, on the shore of Luce Bay, near Whithorn, the *Candida Casa* of St. Ninian, there is a cave differing in no respect from scores of others on the same rocky coast. Local tradition had assigned to this particular cleft in the rocks the name of St. Ninian—St. Ninian's cave. There was no evidence other than traditional of religious occupation, but some local antiquaries of 1883 determined to clear out this cave, and verify or confute the tradition if possible; and after much labour, and removal of several hundred tons of earth and fallen rock, they did find ample confirmation of the legends. No fewer than eighteen crosses, some of Romanesque, others of an early Celtic type, carved either upon the walls of the cave or on detached rocks, a pavement, apparently that of a religious cell, and various other objects of great interest were found, showing that the tradition had had sufficient vitality to survive the fourteen and half centuries which had intervened since its occupation by St. Ninian. I mention this to show that although we should not put too much reliance upon tradition, it is part of the office of the antiquary to inquire into tradition, to confirm it or to confute it. It would go far to free antiquaries as a class from the suspicion of ridicule and good-natured contempt which business people sometimes exhibit towards them if they inquired fearlessly into those legends and traditions, discrediting what was false and establishing what was true. There is an Indian tradition that the strength of every enemy slain by a warrior passes into the body of his conqueror, and remains there. So it is with science. Every error exposed, every falsehood put to death, every unsound method put an end to, raises the standard of science, and increases its power to bring us nearer the truth.

May I say a few words relative to one of the problems which is pressing upon antiquaries in several parts of the country at the present time, and to which I think we may invite the collaboration of the Royal Archæological Institute—I mean those mysterious rock sculptures which from time to time are found in increasing numbers all over Scotland? I may say, in passing, that this is not without its melancholy association to me, because that kindly gentleman and diligent antiquary, Mr. Hamilton, of Ardendee, whose recent death we have to deplore, had devoted himself for some years to the study of these objects, and I know of no one ready to take up the work which he was carrying on. That they are of high antiquity there can be no doubt. I myself have seen the hard dry turf, to the depth of six inches, removed from the glaciated rock surface, which was cut into by these concentric circles and cup-marks. They bear a striking resemblance to similar rock sculptures found not only in Scandinavia and Central Europe, but in such remote parts of the earth as Asia, North, Central, and South America. We can hazard no guess, even at the race by whom they were made, still less at the object for which they were made. All that we can do, and we should do it, is to record the discovery of them, with careful drawings, and descriptive notes, and wait till perhaps light will flash upon them from the habits of some uncivilised tribe, or from a passage in some hitherto unnoticed writer.

I am afraid I have prolonged my remarks to the very verge of your patience, but I do not like to conclude them without some reference to the building in which we are able to receive the Royal Archæological Institute. The Scottish Antiquaries, as you are aware, are possessors of a collection, national in the fullest sense of the word, but for many years they have been absolutely without the means of exhibiting that collection, or even of storing it. No one, I think, who has practical experience in the work of arranging and managing such a collection can do justice to the skill and patience with which our secretary, Dr. Joseph Anderson, has discharged his part. But even he could not put a quart of ale into a pint pot. Visitors to the old building upon the Mound could not, so to speak,

see the wood on account of the trees. There is some mystery about what took place, as an outcome of which we are enabled to receive our friends so worthily as we do in this building. I feel some hesitation in lending credence to the report that Dr. Anderson in his difficulty had recourse to the black arts, but I believe that the circumstances have been explained with, at all events, an approximate degree of truth. The following circumstantial account of what took place has reached me :—Dr. Anderson was sitting one night in that Mound library with which we are as much accustomed to connect his individuality as we are to connect the Pope with the Vatican, or the spider with its web. He was in a state of great despondency, for the cases were bulging and groaning under the weight of the collection, and even his ingenuity could find no means of storing the objects which were pouring in upon him. His fingers were thrust through his hair, and his eyes gleamed with the light of despair. In his perplexity he muttered certain sentences which I am not at liberty to repeat. But as he spoke the door of the library opened, and a dark-cloaked figure, with a slouch hat, advanced towards him. "Heaven protect me," cried Dr. Anderson, "here is a man with more things! Take them away, sir, I have not room for another article." Still the stranger advanced towards the table, deposited upon it a small parcel and withdrew. Dr. Anderson opened the parcel, and was at once arrested by the appearance of the contents. There was in it, I am informed, a black crystal. He took it up, handled it carefully, and took out his pocket-handkerchief to remove certain specks of dust upon it. Then, as he gently rubbed the crystal, the door again opened, and another figure appeared, advanced to the table, and said—"What does the master want with the slave of the amulet?" We all know what Dr. Anderson wanted. It was what every Fellow of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries wanted—viz, a new museum. And nobly, I think you will agree with me, has the slave of the amulet performed his task. The people of Edinburgh have watched this building rise, and they knew not to whom to attribute the power which gave it birth, because one condition was attached by the

Genie to the performance of his task—that his name should not be revealed. I am happy to say that that condition has now been removed, and I am only sorry to say that the genie of the amulet—Mr. John R. Findlay—is not present to allow me, speaking in the name of the Scottish Antiquaries—may I not say in the name of the Scottish nation—to offer him our grateful thanks.

There only remains for me to commend to you the work that lies before you. We have with us collaborateurs from many parts of Europe, and from, I think, every part of the United Kingdom. We have many interesting objects to visit—many interesting matters to discuss. I think the names of the presidents of the various sections are a sufficient guarantee that the task before us will be adequately performed; and I trust that we, who are natives, will exert ourselves so that the Royal Archæological Institute will have no reason to regret that they have again selected the Scottish capital for their annual meeting.