PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Society at Bishopsgate Institute, February 23rd, 1917,

BY

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Our sister society for Essex, with which we have always had such excellent relations, did itself honour in May last by electing as its President, in succession to the Bishop of Barking, Dr. J. Horace Round. He was prevented by illness from attending the meeting, but he sent to it an admirable address on the Sphere of an Archæological Society, which was read and has been printed in that Society's Transactions. I propose to refer to it at some little length, for two reasons: first, the respect I feel for anything that comes from Dr. Round's able pen; second, the circumstance that you cannot go far in discussing the archæology of Essex without coming across something relating to the archæology of London and Middlesex.

Dr. Round spoke of two of the misfortunes of our study: one its crack-jaw name, the other that it is still, in some departments, the happy hunting ground of the crank. He insisted upon it that archæology is a study not less serious than history.

He gave, as an illustration of what may be accomplished by specialised and concentrated study, the work of the Committee on Ancient Earthworks appointed by the Congress of Archæological Societies. "These earthworks are records of the past, are materials for national history."

He also observed that one of the most obvious means of enabling us to answer the question who were

our forefathers, the English people, is the study of our place names. His own efforts in that direction have borne some fruit, having inspired Canon Bannister to write an excellent little book on the place names of Herefordshire; and other counties have been systematically dealt with; but, as he says, nothing has yet been done for Essex. For ourselves, we have a better record, thanks to the patient study which Mr. Bonner has given to that subject, which has resulted in the two valuable and suggestive papers on the street names of the City of London that have appeared in the last two issues of our Transactions; papers fully documented by careful reference to original authorities, and showing clearly the successive mutations that the names have undergone. Dr. Round gives some frightful examples of the abuse of place names by uninstructed zeal.

He holds the opinion that Roman communities and Roman life did pass utterly away, leaving the Roman roads as their one great legacy. In comparing Colchester with London, he finds the keeps of both persistently called towers in records; and both possessing a distinctive feature in the chapel apse. He and Sir William St. John Hope agree that this points to their designs coming from the same hands.

Upon the ruins of the Roman administration of Colchester and other towns arose the system of open fields, termed "half-year" land, extending to the north to the existing London road, and showing that the old Roman road from the Balkerne gate had then been disused.

Dr. Round says further that in the dim and misty past there was a kingdom of the East Saxons, and when it passed away, its early boundaries remained, which till 1845 were those of the diocese of London, whose bishops were originally those of the East Saxon kingdom. That close connection between London and

Essex had been continuous from the 7th century, and the limits of that kingdom then are to be ascertained from those of the diocese of London 70 years ago. The stool of the bishop of the East Saxons was at London, the chief city of his diocese. The archdeaconries of the diocese were those of London, Essex, Middlesex and Colchester, and ranked in that order, according to the date of their creation. Dr. Round is surely justified in saying that archæology is no mere dry-as-dust study: it can clothe with flesh and blood the dry bones of a vanished past: and that the very multitude of subjects comprised within its sphere is a source of danger to it. The student of material objects, the record-searcher, the ecclesiologist, the digger of earthworks, the genealogist, the herald—each has his own pursuit, and is tempted to think lightly of all the others.

My apology for devoting so much space to the observations of another President instead of giving you my own for what they are worth is that Dr. Round's address is very near my ideal of what a President's address ought to be. I find further evidence that Dr. Round rightly takes a strong view of a President's functions in another communication he made to his own Society, indicating the importance of keeping up to as high a standard as possible the contents of its Transactions, by severe criticism of a paper read before it.

Dr. Round's declaration of faith in the passing away of Roman communities and Roman life when the Roman armies left us, carries back my memory to the early days of my association with this Society, near half-a-century ago. My intimate friends in it were Henry Charles Coote, John Edward Price, and Alfred White, and we four used to meet on Thursdays in a little room reserved for us at Giraud's good old restaurant in Castle Street, where the proprietor was his own chief cook, and good burgundy was to be had, and we there dined

together on our way to the evening meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, which was then at Somerset House. Not long after that I was honoured by the friendship of Charles Roach Smith—who much disliked being called a "veteran," but that was what he was. In his talks when he came to see me and when I went to see him, and in those discussions in Castle Street, much was said about Roman communities and Roman life, and we all of us believed in their survival.

"It is difficult to conceive how the laws, habits, manners, and customs of a people resulting from centuries of education are to be subverted by a mere change *in government. It would seem that the Roman element* has never been lost: every opportunity that arises for investigation affords evidence of this, and no illustration can be given where this is more clearly shown than those found in studying the history of our own city." So said John Price to our Society on 12 April, 1875, in a paper on discoveries made in Newgate Street in the autumn of 1874. (Tr. v. 403, 424.) Coote, who was one of our Vice-Presidents, had previously discussed the question in a little book on "a neglected fact in English history," published in 1864. It was designed to dispute the assumption that the advent of Germanic immigrants in the fifth and sixth centuries had exterminated the provincial Britons and made a tabula risa of Roman Britain, and to show that Roman elements largely survived that immigration.

In 1878 Coote published a recension of his book at greater length under the title "The Romans of Britain." Time and space will not allow of my specifying, even briefly, all the incidents in Roman life of which he found survivals after the Roman soldiers had gone, and which led him to the conclusion that the legionaries left behind them Romans, but Romans of Britain. Among the conclusions at which he arrived were that the Anglo-Saxon

distinction between the privileged master class and the unprivileged subject class, the latter consisting of a surviving native nationality, was steeped in Roman institutions and observances:—that the rules under which the master class held the land and the servant class occupied and tilled it were based on the law of the Empire; that the civilisation and art of the country were high in degree and Roman in character, and that Roman words derived from the operations of commerce and other avocations of daily life sprang to the lips of the Anglo-Saxon.

There are other things in this book which I would like to note. The reference to London, which, as Fitzstephen says, is like Rome distributed into regions, and has laws and institutions common to it with Rome; and Alfred White's ingenious suggestion that St. Martin Pomeroy marks the site of the pomarium, or unbuilt space outside the walls of the ancient city; Coote's interesting observations on the Christianity of Roman Britain, which have since been confirmed by the discovery of a small Christian church in the comparatively poor industrial settlement of Silchester, in which the working population must have formed a noteworthy element; and his allusion to the claim of St. Patrick to be a Roman noble—a claim the significance of which is well brought out by Prudentius in his Περὶ στεφάνων, where he describes the martyrdom of St. Romanus in terms which I have ventured to render into English as follows:—

> The furious President "The torture" calls.
> The very Court's apparitors, aghast,
> Cry, "He is noble, of an ancient stock,
> Fit to be foremost of our city folk."
> "Or be he vile or noble, know not I,
> And shall not seek to know: the torture—quick!"

The martyr, 'mid the hail of leaden blows,
Sings loud a hymn of praise to Christ, and shouts:
"Not from my parent's blood, or the Court's laws,
Draw I my title to nobility:
The laws of Christ alone ennoble man;
Those only who serve Him are truly great."

I must add a word with regard to Coote's observations on the colleges, established in every art, trade, profession, and business at Rome, for the purpose of mutual insurance. The religious element in them commended them alike to Pagans and to Christians. Each college had its festivals, its contributions, its fines, and its chest to hold the money. The members called each other brethren. Like our own friendly societies, the colleges were "societies of good fellowship." They were in general associations of persons of like mind, holding each other in respect, and ready to testify that respect on proper occasions: having a clerk and beadle and all necessary provisions for keeping order. Such a college of the smiths was instituted in Britain at a very early date. Later on, one was established at London for gentlemen and yeomen, divided into tythings and hundreds, for purposes of mutual insurance, with all the necessary provisions for protection of the funds against undue claims and in case of contributory negligence.

Such are some of the evidences of continuity which Coote collected, and I have been unable to find, either in the exhaustive researches of our former President, General Pitt Rivers, into Romano-British civilisation, or in the more recent studies of my friend Sir Henry Howorth in early Church history, anything which is not consistent with that continuity.

Roach Smith, indeed, strongly dissented from Coote's views as to the centurial stones, bearing a centurial mark, like a reversed >, and a name or figure or both, which are found in large numbers along the line of

the Wall and elsewhere in England. He considered them to be records of mural construction and that the names were those of the centurions in charge, and the numerals the measurement of the work completed. Coote, in a paper on the Centuriation of Roman Britain, read in 1867, had based upon a thorough study of the agrimensorial writers a theory that these stones represented limitations of territory, and he did not recant it when he published his book in 1878. I am inclined to think that both may be right: that Roach Smith's explanation fits in better with those on the Wall, and Coote's with those elsewhere. Roach Smith does justice to Coote as a "man of undoubted learning and of agreeable manners." I have observed in some of the younger antiquaries of this generation an inclination to speak of the older ones who have passed away with patronising approval as good observers, but—their methods were not scientific. I wonder, if I were to ask my colleagues on the Council of the British Association for the Advancement of Science what are scientific methods, whether they would not say: The inductive method in the collection of facts, and the comparative method in the interpretation of them. If so, I cannot imagine a much better example of the successful application of both of those methods than in the writings of my lamented friend, Henry Charles Coote.

If I may be excused for quoting myself, I would add in the words of my presidential address to Section H of that Association at Bristol in 1898:—

"The principle that underlies it all seems to be this: man can destroy nothing, man can create nothing, man cannot of his own mere volition even permanently modify anything. A higher power restrains his operations, and often reverses his work. You think you have exterminated a race: you have put to the sword every male you can find, and you have starved and poisoned all the

survivors of the community. In the meanwhile, their blood has been mingled with yours, and for generations to come your bones and those of your descendants will preserve a record of that lost race. You think you have exterminated a religion: you have burned to death all of its teachers you can find, and converted forcibly or by persuasion the rest of the community. But you cannot control men's thoughts, and the old beliefs and habits will spring up again and again, and insensibly modify *your own religion, pure as you may suppose it to be.*"

Dr. Round, indeed, supports his teaching by analogy. " Roman communities, Roman life, did pass utterly away, much as our own would pass away if we withdrew from India. . . . The hypocaust we find *beneath the Roman villa is as eloquent of an exiled race,* sighing for its sun-bathed south, as is the punkah, in the stifling Indian heat, of our craving for the winds of England. The one great legacy of Rome was that of her mighty roads, even as to-day the railroads of India would remain the greatest material relics of English alien rule." The greatest, perhaps, but surely not the only ones. The analogy is defective, for our stay in India has been brief compared with the length of time during which the Romans occupied England; and because it assumes, what cannot be proved, that if that stay came to an end to-morrow all that we have done for the millions of India, morally and materially, would pass away as if it had never been.

I now pass to more domestic matters. I am glad to hear that Mr. Goss has consented to be our Honorary Secretary. I was a member of the Board of Library Commissioners which first induced him to come to London, and I can therefore speak with knowledge of his whole London career from the beginning; but that is unnecessary, for the great assistance that he has

rendered our Society and the sympathy he has shown for it since we came to the Bishopsgate Institute speak for themselves. We thank Mr. Knight for undertaking the work when his predecessor had left for service in the Navy and for his services up to the present.

The Report of the Council which has been laid before you, and the Treasurer's accounts, show that the Society's activities have been well maintained and its finances wisely administered by our Chairman, Colonel Pearson, C.B., and our Treasurer, Mr. Deputy Pitman, J.P. The part of our Transactions which has been issued sustains our literary reputation, under the editorial care of Mr. Bonner—whom, early in the year, we congratulated on his election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

To maintain the continued existence of an Archæological Society under the present conditions is much; to be able to record progress is a great deal more. What is it that the archæologist seeks for and finds? Evidence from every kind of ancient object—ornaments, utensils, documents, records, buildings, monuments—that there has been a continuous progress towards civilisation, a continuous exercise of the human mind and faculties towards a higher standard of living and a greater intellectual advance. What is it that the events of the present day are telling us? Is it not the terrible fact that now, in this twentieth century from the birth of Christ, as in every previous century since the world began, brute force is once again paramount, fine monuments of art are being wantonly destroyed, and from a large portion of the surface of the globe cries of human pain are rising to a heaven that seems to be deaf to them?

This feeling is finely expressed in lines by Sully-Prudhomme, contained in his philosophical poem "Le Bonheur," which was published in 1888. I venture to close my address with an attempt at an English render-

ing of them, which I have endeavoured to make as nearly literal as possible, though I cannot reproduce their French delicacy.

Thou risest but in vain, O living Tide,
  With all earth yields of cries of human pain!
Against the prideful suns, O wanderer wide,
  Thy shrillest wavelets spray themselves in vain!
Not one of those receives thee on thy ways;
  Long to the infinite may be thy flight:
Each star that in its turn thy wave essays
  Scarce feels it glide away and die in night.
When thou for one dost fly, far-dwindling, faint,
  Already for another thou dost grow;
But always thy sad concert of complaint
  Finds every star deaf to its rising woe!
Remain yet faithful to the wandering quest·
  There may exist, in heaven's high canopy,
A sphere less deaf, less strange to thee, and blest
  With comprehension and with sympathy.