

SIR EDWARD BRABROOK, C.B.

SIR EDWARD BRABROOK, who died on 21 March, 1930, was our distinguished President and a very keen antiquarian, but was also famous as an expert on thrift and social insurance. He was born on 10 April, 1839, in Cornhill, and was proud of being a genuine cockney. He was educated at a school kept by Mr. William Pinches, in Bell Alley, Lombard Street, and among his fellows was John Henry Brodribb, better known as Henry Irving. Sir Edward earned his well-deserved honours for his work in connection with Friendly Societies, of which he was appointed Assistant Registrar at the age of 30. He became Chief Registrar in 1891 and retired in 1904. In that year he was elected President of the Economic Section of the British Association, and in his address on "Thrift" referred to the "small corner of the great field of economics in which I have been a day labourer so long." He gave a review of the history of Friendly Societies, which was of great importance, in view of the trend of public opinion towards Old Age Pensions. He deprecated the idea that "some day and somehow the State would provide pensions for everybody," and when the Act was passed in 1908, he read a paper before the Royal Statistical Society, with Sir Charles Dilke in the chair. In it he supported the idea that pensions in the future should be *contributory*, holding that it would be "an assertion and enforcement of the doctrine that the right way to provide for old age is by thrift, self-denial and forethought in youth." In a series of five papers, he chronicled the progress of Friendly Societies for the five decades before 1914, and these papers were of great value at a time of transition.

His interests were not confined to insurance, but in archaeology and kindred subjects he was an adept. His

genius for friendship was remarkable and he was proud of his long membership of social and dining clubs. For 40 years he was a member of the Athenaeum Club and wrote about some of his club experiences in *Notes and Queries*.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1860, and in 1865 joined our Society, of which he was so long the honoured President. Anthropology and Folklore were among his interests, and he was an authority on several legal matters, having been called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1866.

But it is by his devoted service to our Society over an unequalled period of 65 years, that we shall chiefly remember him, for his interest in the Society never flagged, and only a few weeks before his death, he sent a cordial message for our meetings. He had lived for years at Wallington in Surrey, where the funeral service took place.

The service was held at Christ Church (Presbyterian Church of England), and was conducted by the minister, the Rev. Hastings Eastwood. An address eulogising the life and work of Sir Edward was delivered by Dr. C. H. Irwin.

A large congregation of relations and friends attended the church, Mr. John Douglas, Mr. Arthur Bonner and the Hon. Secretary representing the London and Middlesex Archæological Society.

Among the numerous floral tributes that had been sent, there were wreaths from the Chief Registrar and staff of the Chief Registry of Friendly Societies, from the Balham Antiquarian Society and the Beddington, Wallington and Carshalton Archaeological Society (of which in each case Sir Edward was founder and president) as well as a wreath from "The Council, officers and members of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society."

The interment took place at Norwood Cemetery.