

The following Report by Dr Christison, Secretary, of events of interest to the Society which have occurred during the past Session, was read :—

REPORT ON EVENTS OF LAST SESSION, 1899.

The Council having considered that a statement of important recent occurrences connected with the Society and the Museum would introduce some variety into the merely formal business of our Annual Meeting, and could hardly fail to interest the Fellows, I was commissioned to draw up such a statement, and this has been done under the heads of Historical or Business and Archæological events.

Under the first head, one of unusual importance, has been our connection with a Parliamentary Committee appointed in October of last year mainly “to consider and suggest regulations for avoiding undue competition between museums supported out of public funds in Scotland and Ireland on the one hand, and the British Museum on the other, for the acquisition of objects of antiquarian or historic interest; and for ensuring that in the case of objects which from their origin or associations are of peculiar interest either to Scotland or Ireland, the museum in the country so interested should be afforded an opportunity of purchasing them before they are acquired by any other institutions supported out of public funds.”

This inquiry arose from the purchase by the British Museum of certain articles found in Ireland, which the Irish authorities demanded should be transferred to their National Museum. But we in Scotland had a grievance of our own, which necessarily came within the scope of the inquiry, viz., the purchase by the British Museum at a sale in London of the Glenlyon Brooch, in spite of an intimation to their authorities from Mr Carfrae, who has long acted for us in purchasing articles offered for sale in the Metropolis, that the Society desired to acquire this Scottish article for our National Museum, a claim which on all previous occasions had been courteously acknowledged as valid by these authorities.

This change of attitude on the part of the British Museum seriously menaced the prosperity of our National Museum, and a representation, warmly supported by Lord Lothian, our President, was made to the Trustees of the British Museum, pointing out the scandalous nature of such a competition between two Government institutions supported by public funds, and requesting that the Glenlyon Brooch should be transferred to the Scottish National Collection. Our representation was supported by the Board of Manufactures and the Secretary for Scotland, and privately by the Duke of Argyle, Lord Rosebery, and other Scottish patriots of influence. The Trustees replied, however, that they had no power to part with any article once acquired, but offered to have a replica of the brooch, as well as of another ancient Scottish brooch in the British Museum, made for deposit in our Scottish Museum. This offer, under the circumstances, was accepted by the Council, but they expressed to the Secretary for Scotland a hope that some means might be found of preventing such competition in future, and of establishing our superior claim to Scottish articles. The Parliamentary inquiry, therefore, came most opportunely for us, through the pertinacity of the Irish Members, who insisted in Parliament upon their national rights in a manner which is too rarely followed by the Scottish Members in similar questions affecting our own country.

The Committee consisted of Lord Rathmore, Chairman; Sir John Lubbock, and Sir John Evans, who might be considered as representing the British Museum; Mr Thomas H. Grattan Esmonde, and Sir Herbert Maxwell, as representing Irish and Scottish interests; lastly, Mr John Morley, who as an Englishman, a Scottish M.P., and an Irish sympathiser, stood in a somewhat different position from the others.

The Council were desirous that our evidence should be given either by Sir Arthur Mitchell or Dr Joseph Anderson, whose knowledge of the affairs of the Society and the Museum has been so long and so intimate, but as both of them were unable to go, the duty devolved on me, conjoined with Mr Carfrae, whose evidence regarding the Glenlyon Brooch was indispensable.

My examination ranged over :—

(1) The modes by which objects were obtained for the Scottish National Museum, particularly through the action of 'Treasure Trove.'

(2) The nature of the understanding by means of which competition with the British Museum had been avoided prior to the Glenlyon Brooch incident.

(3) The reason for its breaking down in that case.

(4) The expediency of relaxing the Rules forbidding the parting with objects.

(5) *The means of doing so.*

(6) The means of securing for each Museum the first choice of objects appertaining to its own area, and of avoiding the risk of the loss of objects through the delay that might thus be caused.

The examination of Mr Carfrae turned mainly upon the sale of the Glenlyon Brooch, and his previous experiences with the British Museum.

Our evidence is printed at full length in the Report now on the table.

The chief recommendations of the Committee are briefly as follows :—

That whenever it comes to the knowledge of the officers of any one of the National Museums that any object of peculiar interest to another National area has been offered or is likely to be offered for sale, information should be given to the authorities in that area, so that they should have the first opportunity of acquiring it, an understanding being arrived at as to what constitutes a reasonable price, and care being taken to prevent the risk of loss of the object through delay.

That the Regulation prohibiting the Museums from parting with objects should be relaxed, but that the conditions would need to be carefully considered, and should probably be confined to such articles as the Trustees are willing to transfer by exchange or otherwise.

As to the incident of the Glenlyon Brooch, the opinion is expressed that it was mainly due to a misunderstanding between Mr Read of the British Museum and Mr Carfrae, and that had the Regulations allowed it the Brooch would probably have been handed over to the Scottish National Museum after its purchase by the British Museum.

The Report of the Committee may be considered as favourable on the whole to our interests. It is true that it merely makes recommendations and that these have no legislative force, but it is not likely that in future any action will be taken in defiance of these recommendations ; and should any such attempt be made we can take our stand on them.

An event of no less importance in our history has been the application to the Treasury for a renewal of the five-years annual grant of £200 for the purchase of articles for the Museum, of books for the Library, and for binding. This grant has proved of the utmost service, as without it (the Coin Cabinet fund from which we had previously made our purchases being exhausted) we should have been reduced for these purposes to an annual sum of about £20, derived from the admission money on the two days a week when a charge is made at the door. An allowance of £200 a year for the above-mentioned purposes cannot be called extravagant, and in fact it has not hitherto proved sufficient, but this may have been the result of unusual expenditure on the Library, which from want of means we had been obliged to starve for some years before the grant was obtained.

We have also been authorised to approach the Treasury for a special grant for the purchase of objects or collections of objects of great historical or antiquarian interest to Scotland, the cost of which could not well be defrayed out of the annual grant of £200 ; but there are some practical difficulties in the working of this privilege, and we have only once been able to avail ourselves of it. This was in the purchase of the Penicuik 'Late Celtic' Bronzes in 1894, when the Treasury sanctioned a special grant of £45.

Passing to events of archaeological importance, the excavation undertaken by the Society at Camelon deserves the first notice. This, as you are no doubt aware, is in succession to similar work already carried out at Birrens, Birrenswark, and Ardoch. All these undertakings form part of a general scheme, adopted by the Council, for investigating the Roman remains in Scotland, as far as our funds will admit. It is

contemplated to deal first with the strongly fortified 'Stations,' where it is to be presumed that the occupation by the Romans was of greater duration than in the 'Camps' with a comparatively weak fortification. Our choice of Camelon was decided by information from Mr MacLuckie, a Fellow of the Society, that one-half of the Station had been feued for the erection of new foundries, and that the work had already been begun on the ground. This was in last spring, and we immediately applied to Mr Forbes of Callendar, the proprietor, and to the farm tenant for leave to excavate, which was readily granted by both. The work, now drawing to a close, has been steadily carried on for about six months under the general superintendence of Mr Thomas Ross, and we have been singularly fortunate in having the regular and voluntary services of Mr M. Buchanan, Falkirk, a trained draughtsman and surveyor, who has planned everything week by week as the work progressed. We have also been much indebted to Mr MacLuckie for general advice in conducting our negotiations and operations. We were fortunate also in securing the services of Mr Alexander Mackie as Clerk of Works, who had already had considerable experience in conducting excavations for us at Abernethy Fort and at Birrenswark.

The Station at Camelon resembles Birrens in consisting of two rectangles in apposition, and we were only able to excavate a portion of the southern one, as the construction of the new foundries went on rapidly during our work, but the northern one, which has not yet been feued for building, has been sufficiently excavated to yield as perfect a plan of the Station as we got either at Birrens or at Ardoch. The finds, also, were fully as interesting as those found in our former excavations, except that we found no inscriptions to throw light on the date of the place, as we did at Birrens. I will not anticipate further the full description of the excavations, which in the course of the session will be communicated to the Society.

Although this was the only work of the kind undertaken by the Society last year, the results of several other important excavations were laid before it during the session.

One of these, on the farm of Hyndford near Lanark, was undertaken by Mr Andrew Smith, who has since become a Fellow of our Society. The site is in a marshy hollow, which becomes quite a lake in a rainy season, and the remains could only be dealt with successfully in summer, when dry weather prevailed. As was expected, the place proved to be a crannog, and a large number of very interesting relics were discovered, which were exhibited when the paper by Dr Munro describing the excavations was read. The occurrence of a considerable number of articles, which are characteristic of Roman sites, was specially remarkable, and was a warning to antiquarian excavators not to found too hastily upon finds alone as proof of the origin of ancient remains.

The results of the other excavation, at *Dumbuck*, on the bank of the Clyde near Dumbarton, were partially communicated by Mr John Bruce, who in conjunction with another Fellow of the Society, the late Mr Adam Millar, and Mr Donnelly, the discoverer of the remains, undertook the excavation on behalf of the Helensburgh Antiquarian Society. The work was mainly done by their own hands, notwithstanding its arduous nature, owing to the site being only exposed for a few hours at low tide. As it was not quite completed, however, and as the boxes containing the finds had been miscarried by the railway on the evening when Mr Bruce read his paper, he has kindly consented to recast it for the present session, when it will be read and the whole of the finds exhibited. Some of these, as you are probably aware, are of a peculiar kind, and have given rise to controversy, their genuineness having been strenuously denied. But whatever may be thought of them, they will be brought before the Society by Mr Bruce in a manner, I believe, to which no exception can be taken.

Excellent work has also been done by the Marquis of Bute, formerly Vice-President of our Society, in excavating the foundations or repairing the fabric of mediæval buildings in various parts of Scotland, and in excavating the site of the ancient ecclesiastical settlement at St Blane's, Bute.

Useful excavations have also been carried out by Sir Francis Tress

Barry, an Honorary Fellow of the Society, at Keiss, Caithness. The results have been witnessed from year to year by Dr Joseph Anderson, who will communicate them to the Society in the present session.

It is not often that the Society can be congratulated on the receipt of a legacy. Last year, however, at the annual meeting, the Council had the satisfaction of announcing that a former much-esteemed Fellow of the Society, the Hon. Mr Bouverie Primrose, had bequeathed to us unconditionally the sum of £150. This sum the Council have disposed of by adding it to the Rhind Legacy Fund for Excavation, having been induced to do so by the increasing importance attached to this mode of promoting the study of archæology in our own country. It has been resolved to use the interest only of the Rhind-Primrose Fund in defraying the expense of excavations, and as this amounts to little more than £13, it can suffice for but very limited undertakings. It is to be hoped, however, that the Fund may prove the nucleus to which additions may be made by legacies or gifts from other patriotic archæologists.

The Council, in carrying out their scheme for the excavation of Roman sites in Scotland, have been obliged to draw considerably upon the Capital Fund of the Society. But expenditure from this source cannot be prudently carried much further, and unless the Excavation Fund can be considerably supplemented, large undertakings of this kind must be given up. This would be a misfortune, not only from the archæological point of view, but for the interests of our Society. In these days, when scientific or quasi-scientific societies are so numerous, and the competition for members is so great, we can only continue to maintain interest in our work by reason of its high character, and one of the most effectual means of doing this is by the systematic prosecution of excavation, a kind of research which lies so peculiarly in the domain of archæology, and which it is not advisable that private persons who are not experts should undertake.

We have reason to believe, indeed, that our excavations have led to considerable additions to our Fellowship, and thus the expenditure has

not been unproductive from the financial point of view. I need hardly remind you of another gain, in the addition to the National Museum of many articles, some of them of great money value.

The Rhind Lectureship, for the endowment of which the Society is indebted to a former Fellow, Mr A. H. Rhind of Sibster, has supplied an annual series of lectures, open to the public as well as to the Fellows, for twenty-two years. During that time many different aspects of archaeology and ethnology (chiefly in their relations to Scotland) have been presented, and perhaps there has been none more interesting or more likely to be generally appreciated than the course for the current year to be delivered by Mr Thomas Ross on Architecture in Scotland. I need hardly remind you of the admirable course on Heraldry of last year by the Lyon King-of-Arms.

We owe to the generosity of a distinguished Fellow, still living, another Fund, the Gunning Fellowship, which has proved of great service in promoting the study of Archaeology. For some years the interest accruing, amounting formerly to £40, and of late to about £30, has been paid to Mr Romilly Allen, for the purpose of obtaining drawings and photographs for the great work on the *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, which he and Dr Joseph Anderson were appointed to edit in 1893, and which, I am glad to be able to say, is now approaching completion.

Last year the Gunning Fellowship was conferred on Mr Coles, with the view of his investigating and planning the remarkable group of Stone Circles near Banchory. His Report will be presented in the course of this session, and I shall only say of his investigation that in one case, by a slight excavation, he discovered that a circle which has hitherto been supposed to be single, is in reality double. This is an apt illustration of the advantage of combining excavation with the external examination of field remains. How many vain theories have been started as to the origin and purpose of stone circles from a mere surface examination, which might never have been started, or at least would have been held in check, by a revelation of what was below the surface!

Here, then, is another wide field of inquiry, by means of pick and spade, hitherto almost untouched.

But what shall we say of the still vaster field of the Prehistoric Forts, in the excavation of which scarce a beginning has been made, although in no other way can we arrive at a knowledge of their structure and of their place in Scottish history? I could almost regret that the Society have undertaken the excavation of Roman 'Camps' in preference to our own Native Forts. The secrets that lie beneath the ruins of the *Catherthuns*, *Dunsinnan*, and hundreds of other native fortresses, are not less worthy of being brought to light than the relics left behind by the Romans, and I trust, although it may not be in my day, that the Society will yet be enabled to undertake this eminently patriotic and almost unlimited field of inquiry.

Thus far I have spoken only of prehistoric remains, but what of the numerous mediæval ruins of castles, churches, and abbeys or their sites that are so thickly scattered over our country? Would not our knowledge of them be greatly promoted by excavation? What can be done in this way has been shown by the Marquis of Bute, and nearer home by our President, who, by a careful excavation, has ascertained the exact ground plan of the Abbey Church at Newbattle. This kind of work, apparently, might be left to the landed proprietors on whose property the remains are found, but few of them have followed the example of the two noblemen I have named; and it may be that the task can only be accomplished, with the goodwill of the proprietors, by aid of our Society.

All this cannot be done without funds, and how these could be raised I know not; but I may point out that even if we could dispose of such a sum as £200 a year, the field of Roman camps and stations, prehistoric forts, brochs, crannogs, stone circles, and mediæval ruins awaiting excavation is so vast that it could not be overtaken in two or three generations, and that is looking far enough forward for anyone who may be inclined to add to our Rhind-Primrose Excavation Fund, or establish a new Fund with a like object.

The most recent addition of importance to the Library is a large and valuable collection of Bibles and Testaments, numbering no less than 124, bequeathed to it by the late Mr John Haxton, Markinch, to whom we are all the more indebted, as he was in no way connected with our Society.

As far as our slender means allow, we endeavour to keep pace in the Library with the advance of Archæological Research, but even restricting our purchases as we do to works relating directly or indirectly to Scottish Archæology, we have been obliged to pass over many that should have found a place on our shelves, and the Library is far from being so well supplied as the only Archæological Library in Scotland ought to be. Many of our Dictionaries and Books of Reference, too, are out of date, and it is not too much to say that £1000 could be well spent in gradually supplying our more pressing wants, but the immediate expenditure of even a fourth of that sum would enable us to fill many blanks, the existence of which is an actual hindrance to work at the present moment. Is it too much to hope that in these days, when the wealthy in Scotland are not only more numerous than of old, but are more animated with the patriotic desire not to allow their country to lag behind others in the field of science, some one will be found willing to assist a Society which makes known not its own wants so much as those of the important National Institution that has been placed under its charge?

The Treasurer submitted a statement of the Society's Funds, which was ordered to be printed and circulated among the Fellows.

The Secretary read the Annual Report to the Board of Trustees, as follows :—

ANNUAL REPORT to the Honourable the Board of Trustees for Manufactures in Scotland by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, with reference to the National Museum of Antiquities under their charge, for the year ending 30th September 1899 :—

During the past year the Museum has been open to the public as

formerly, and has been visited by 20,485 persons, of whom 19,110 were visitors on free days, and 1375 on pay days.

The number of objects of antiquity added to the Museum has been 589 by donation and 1105 by purchase. The number of books and pamphlets added to the Library has been 144 by donation and 131 by purchase, and the binding of about 70 volumes has been proceeded with.

Among the more important additions to the Museum are:—a Collection of Flint Implements, etc., from Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirk shires, presented by Mr Thomas Scott, A.R.S.A.; three Collections by the late Mr William Galloway, Corr. Mem. S.A. Scot., amounting to upwards of 800 specimens of Implements of Stone, Bone, and Deer-horn, from three shell mounds in Oronsay; a Bronze Sword and other objects found with other swords already in the Museum in digging the foundations of a house in Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh, in 1869; a Collection of objects obtained during the recent excavation of a Hill Fort on Castle Law, Abernethy; and another Collection obtained during the excavation by the Society of the camps and earthworks on Birrenswark Hill, Dumfriesshire.

D. CHRISTISON, *Secretary*.