

## VII.

### OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION "FROM THE STONE AGE TO THE '45" IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM. ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD NORMAND, P.C., K.C., 21ST MARCH 1945.

My Lord Provost, Ladies and Gentlemen, I must disclaim any qualification for occupying a pulpit, and especially a pulpit associated, however conjecturally and uncertainly, with John Knox. You need be under no apprehension that I shall, on this occasion, be infected by his gift for copious invective. When the war began, almost all the unique and most of the important treasures of this Museum were put out of the way of the Hun's fury. But some, such as the Celtic Symbol Stones, which could not be safely or conveniently removed, remained here. Now, as the Lord Provost has said, men serving in Dominion or Allied forces

<sup>1</sup> *Lyon Reg.*, vol. xxxi. p. 20.

are knocking at the doors and asking to see the collection which the care of the members of the Society of Antiquaries has amassed. It is indeed a great collection, second in Europe only to the collection at Copenhagen, and we may be proud to show what we can of it to these visitors from the Empire and from allied countries. And surely we may hope that before long great numbers of our own countrymen will be passing through Edinburgh on their way home from Germany, and will be glad of the opportunity of examining some of the antiquities of their native land. It was, then, on the initiative of Professor Gordon Childe that this exhibition, which I am to have the honour of declaring open, was arranged, in order that the fighting men should be able to see something of our national treasures. But it may be hoped that others too will come, for it is too little known even in Edinburgh what wealth of treasure we possess.

Since so many of the exhibits were elsewhere, those that still remain have been supplemented by casts and by many generous loans, of which I shall give you details presently. Great care has been taken to arrange the exhibition, so that it shall be readily understood. You will find that plans and photographs have been prepared and placed beside the cases so that the historical setting and context of the various items are made plain. Explanatory labels too will help the visitor to appreciate the meaning of individual exhibits.

The Lord Provost has described the general lay-out, and I may supplement what he has said by reminding you that the collection housed here in peace-time has long outgrown this building. But advantage has been taken of the removal of so many items to space out the cases more widely, so that the contents can be more comfortably examined. The arrangement is simple and provides the visitor with a clue to the whole, if only he has intelligence enough to walk round in the right direction. In the South Aisle you have the Early period, from the Late Stone Age to the Vikings, with special emphasis on the tools that men then used, and it is most interesting to see in primitive form the tools that men still use to-day, and to feel the continuity of human labour. The Lord Provost has mentioned the exhibits which have come down to us from the period of the Roman occupation, and he has referred to the small influence that the occupation had on the life of the natives of Scotland. To people like myself whose knowledge of history is mainly derived from literary histories, the real evidence, as the lawyers say, as opposed to the tradition and written record, is a valuable corrective. So much has been written by scholars and historians about the Roman occupation, and their work has been so well done, that we are apt to get a wrong perspective and to have a mistaken idea of the effects of the impact of Rome on the social and domestic life of our primitive and remote ancestors. There, however, is the real evidence, which we can all see displayed in the cases and intelligibly arranged for us.

In the North Aisle, on the other hand, you will find the cases devoted to the Christian Church, from the Early Celtic Church and the Mediæval Church right down to the Reformation, with fine examples of stone, metal, and woodwork; and here you will find evidence of the profound influence that the Christian religion has had on the inhabitants of Scotland, on their daily lives, and on their art. If the Roman occupation was superficial, the Christian Church has been of fundamental importance. The exhibition does not stop short at the Reformation. It carries us on into the eighteenth century and there are many most attractive items reminding us of the '45.

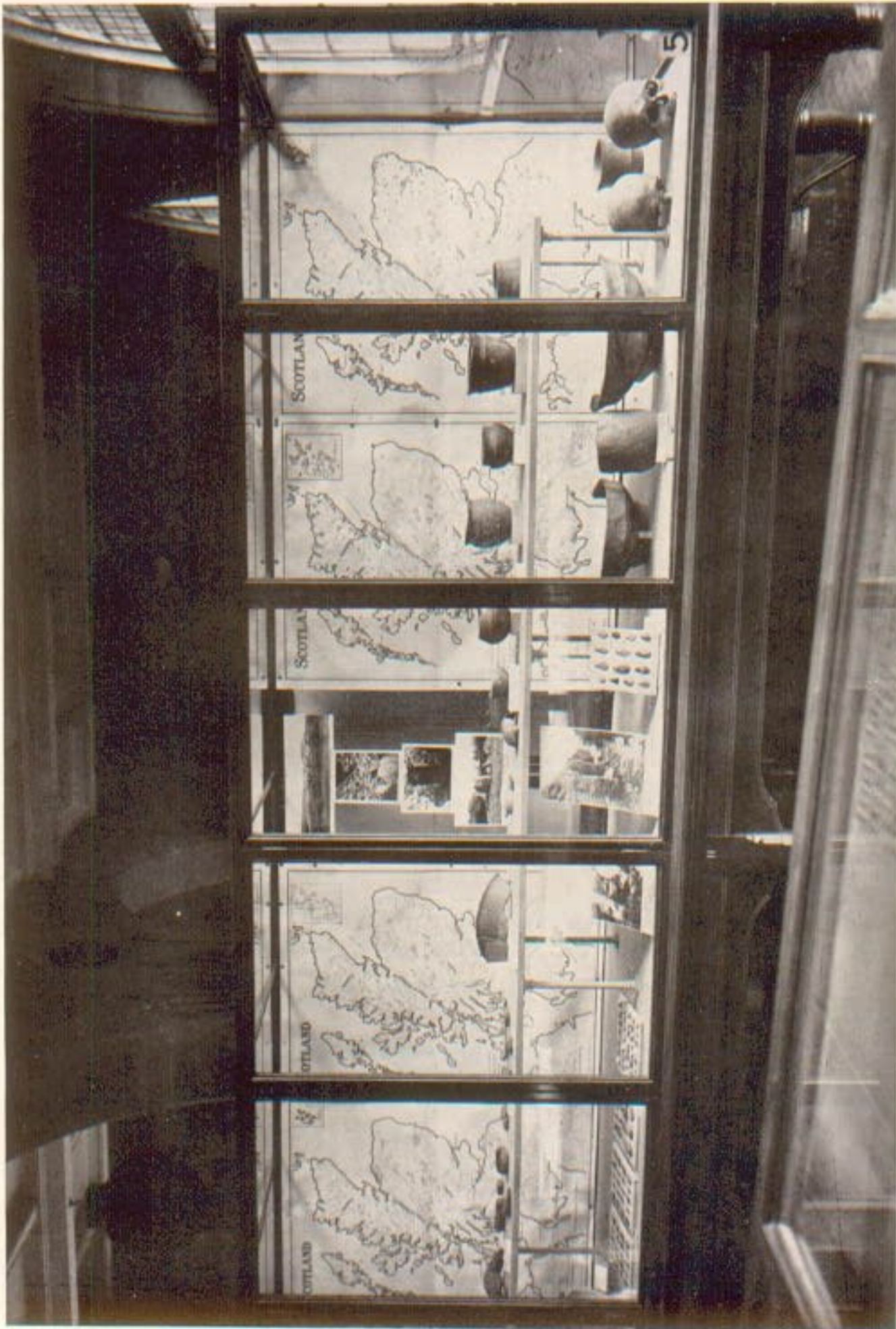
I am the merest amateur, and I know that among you there are many who are real experts, and I therefore have much diffidence in speaking to you of these things. But to me, and I suppose to many like me, it is affecting to see the concrete evidence that mankind in so many ages has changed so little. Always the woman has been busied with her household, from the time that households were, with cooking the family meal and looking after the children, and always she has shown a lively interest in personal adornment. So too the man has always had to bring in something to fill the pot and to support the family. And these things they were trying to do always better and with greater art. Then too there is the perpetual interest in the tomb and its furnishings. That is something which among simple people links past generations with the present, and with the children, the whole family which has been or is to be and which all comes ultimately to the grave. And we see simple people still in this era spending more on funeral pomps than is thought prudent or good for them. So that even in the much discussed scheme of Sir William Beveridge, it seems a place may have to be found for a generous expenditure on the funeral. I confess that I find in a troubled uncomfortable age like this something encouraging in these proofs of the persistence of mankind in man's ancient ways.

It is proper that we should gratefully acknowledge the loans which have been made to the Exhibition. His Majesty The King has lent the carved figure of a Highlander, showing dress and accoutrements; the Royal College of Physicians, the Medicine Chest of Prince Charles Edward; Mr Donald Steuart Fotheringham of Murthly, the Toddy Ladle and Snuff Box belonging to Prince Charles Edward; the Clan Donnachaidh Society, Part of the Robertson Tartan Plaid worn by Prince Charles, three Silver Forks said to have been used at a banquet to Prince Charles in Lude House, and a Crystal Ball reputedly attached to the Robertson Clan Standard at the Battle of Bannockburn. Mr Donald Noel Paton has lent the Mirror used by Prince Charles on the Culloden Campaign and a Commission signed by the Prince. Mr D. P. Maclagan has lent a Highland Targe of Deer's Hide and a Culloden Musket; Miss Maria Steuart, the portrait of Prince Charles Edward. The Ministry of Works has lent Stained Glass from Glasgow

Cathedral and relics from Aikerness and Jarlshof. Mrs J. Storer Clouston has lent the Silver Brooch from the Skail Hoard; the Anatomy Department, the University of Edinburgh, the cast of an Antler Axe found with stranded whale above Stirling; Messrs Brook & Son, replicas of Traprain Silver, while Mr James S. Richardson has lent a very large number of articles illustrating early and late mediæval art and craftsmanship.

We must also express our indebtedness to those who have worked to make the exhibition a success. Besides Professor Gordon Childe, Mr J. S. Richardson, one of the Curators appointed by the Society of Antiquaries, has devoted his spare time to the arrangement of the North Aisle with the approval of Mr D. L. Macintyre, V.C., while Mr W. Kirkness has very effectively arranged the textile appliances. The whole work of cleaning, mounting, and labelling the specimens exhibited has fallen on the shoulders of Mr Darroch, the Museum's Technical Assistant. Mr Young, working single handed till 5th March, has removed to storage many heavy objects that obstructed the Gallery, and prepared it for the public. But without the cordial co-operation of H.M. Office of Works, the re-arrangement of the cases, symbol stones, and carved panels that so greatly enhances the attractiveness of the display would have been impossible.

In declaring the Exhibition open, I dare to express the hope that many Scotsmen will come to appreciate the great value of this National Collection, and that they may resolve that it shall be displayed in a building more suitable than this building ever was, and commodious enough to contain what we now have and the accessories which time will bring.



“From the Stone Age to the '45.” One of the cases illustrating the New Stone Age.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD NORMAND.

[To face p. 106.



“From the Stone Age to the '45.” Case of Jacobite Relics.

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