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The Study of British Archæology.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL studies, like many other things, have changed greatly since the War. They have now passed definitely and finally from the province of the antiquarian and the dilettante. In Great Britain, science, at least in certain of its branches, has always been the playground of the amateur; and archæology perhaps more than any other of these studies, except perhaps astronomy, owes much to his efforts. But long before the War it had been made evident that archæological exploration demanded more than merely the opportunity and the means—for digging is an expensive business—to open up a burial mound or a prehistoric settlement. It needs but a glance through the pages of an archæological publication with a long run, such as *Archæologia*, for the last thirty or forty years, to appreciate the vast amount of excellent work that has been done in Great Britain on thoroughly sound lines by men who were scientific in method if in status they were amateur.

Excellent as this work was, too often its outlook was restricted and its interest confined to one aspect or to one type of problem. To-day, it may seem scarcely credible that in the last decade of the nineteenth century the British Association appointed a committee to ensure the record and preservation of objects not of Roman or Romano-British origin found in the excavation of Romano-British sites in Britain. In spite of the interest that has been taken in Roman antiquities in Britain—an interest which has been alive literally for centuries—we still know little of the relation of British settlement and Roman site—less indeed than of almost any other question in British archæology; and it is only now that investigations at St. Albans, Colchester, Llanmelin, and one or two other sites are gradually accumulating the needed evidence. In some phases of prehistoric archæology the available material along certain lines is plentiful; along others, certainly of no less importance, it may be scanty, or even entirely lacking.

It is not without significance that archæologists are now prone to speak of 'prehistory', perhaps even more than they use the term 'prehistoric archæology'. The change may be one of orientation only; but it is a change which carries with it many implications. The view has become broader. It is no longer adequate to study a site *per se*, to assign it to its period, or even to seek analogies of detail elsewhere. The prehistorian must look to its geographical and cultural relations, and his aim is rather to assign it to its proper place as an

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index of cultural development and movement. His method is synthetic rather than analytic.

This change in point of view in the study of British archaeology to-day was foreshadowed before the War. So long ago as the beginning of the present century, Lord (then the Hon. John) Abercromby in his studies of bronze age pottery combined a detailed examination of form and ornament with a broad view of distribution and the inferences to be drawn therefrom as to cultural and racial movement, a piece of work which for many years had a marked effect on the work of British archaeologists and of which the full force is not yet spent.

At the same time, in the study of archæology, or rather prehistory, on the Continent, beginning with the Mediterranean area, much attention had been devoted to questions of distribution, inter-relationship, and cultural and racial movement. In these studies, British archæologists had no small share; but when they turned to their own country, in working out their problems, they found lamentable gaps in the evidence: questions of distribution had scarcely been attacked, and there had been but few attempts to co-ordinate information. A recent writer has directed attention to how little, relatively, is really known of the Iron Age in Britain.

Fundamentally the problem, to a great extent, is one of distribution. A great advance was made immediately after the War by the appointment of an archæological officer to the staff of the Ordnance Survey Department. This has assured greater attention and care in the recording of certain classes of antiquities; but the real need is for a whole series of maps recording the location of all classes of antiquities. This covers only what is already known. How much may yet remain to be discovered is incalculable; but the aeroplane has revealed possibilities. To it we owe Woodhenge. Here the aeroplane brought to the knowledge of the archæological world a new and unsuspected type of prehistoric monument; and this is one only of the discoveries for which we are indebted to the Royal Air Force. Within the last few days, aerial photographs taken in the course of military exercises have revealed four previously unknown temporary camps along the line of Hadrian's Wall between Wallsend and Gilsland, and indications at Housesteads and Chesters point to civilian settlement of a size and plan not previously suspected. More important in the present connexion is it that these photographs suggest the lines of future research. Is it too much to suggest that training for the Royal Air Force in air photography, which

can be carried out anywhere, might be combined with a systematic archæological survey of the country?

It requires no more than a superficial view of the present situation of archæological studies in Great Britain to see that the need of the moment is synthesis and organised research—investigation along lines on which information is least adequate. This involves a mobilisation of information and co-operation between the various archæological interests throughout the country. In Northern Ireland, as noted elsewhere in this issue, a movement has been initiated to record all ancient monuments within a certain area, with all obtainable information concerning them. Similar records for England, Scotland, and Wales are eminently desirable. They would form an admirable basis for the fuller archæological survey which we feel a necessity for any real advance in archæological studies. In the meantime, the Congress of Archæological Societies has published the first report of its Research Committee, which was appointed in 1929. We commend this most valuable document to all who are interested in archæological studies; for the Committee, in advocating a policy of co-operation and organised research, has enumerated for each period of prehistory the problems which it will be the task of research to solve.

The New Survey of London.

The New Survey of London Life and Labour. Vol. I: *Forty Years of Change.* Pp. xv + 438. (London: P. S. King and Son, Ltd., 1930.) 17s. 6d.

THIS continuation of Charles Booth's Survey of London, of forty years ago, has everything to commend it. The new editor-in-chief, Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith, quotes very aptly from Charles Booth on his title page: "Comparisons with the past are absolutely necessary to the comprehension of all that exists to-day; without them we cannot penetrate to the heart of things". The original Survey, which began to appear in 1889, was the work of one rich, enlightened, and benevolent man. It has now been taken up again by a combination of public bodies, centring in the London School of Economics, and under the direction of the sometime Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade. The change is significant of the vast advance in organisation and socialisation which has taken place in the interval. This introductory volume testifies to many other changes in the life of the people of London; and the pleasantest thought, after reading it, is that, on the whole and in almost every