

opposite. Indeed, it is to Babylonia that we must look for the origins of civilization.' Arguments on the other side, published in *L'Anthropologie*, xxxii, 93-128, were noticed in this *Journal*, ii, 412.

Alabaster Tables.—Mr. C. L. Kingsford, F.S.A., sends the following note: A definite reference to the export of alabaster tables from England in the fifteenth century seems sufficiently noteworthy to be put on record. In the London Port-Book for 1450-51 (*Customs 73/25*) there appears under date 17th September 1451: 'De Johanne Brome pro ij tabulis cum imaginibus labastr., et v p[eces] alabastr., xxs., xijd.' The figures represent the supposed valuation and the subsidy (one shilling in the pound) payable. The master of the ship was Cornel Johnson, possibly a Fleming.

Archaeology in China.—Dr. J. G. Andersson is responsible for two recent works that might easily escape notice in England: *The Cave-deposit at Sha Kuo Tun in Fengtien (Palaeontologia Sinica, series D, vol. i, fasc. i)*, and *An early Chinese culture* (Geological Survey of China, *Bulletin* no. 5), both published in 1923 at Peking. They are written both in English and Chinese and are well illustrated, one coloured plate being included in the former. Excavation shows certain similarities of culture in spite of the distance which separates the sites, for Sha Kuo is in Manchuria not very far from the sea, and the other is at Yang Shao in Honan. Not only are the two cultures closely connected but they also show, as Dr. Andersson has pointed out, a clear relationship with the Anau culture, and therefore very much increase the known range of polychrome pottery which so many peoples were making in the Near and Middle East between 4000 and 1500 B.C.; and the latter date would apparently agree with Dr. Andersson's dating in China. In any case the culture is pre-Chinese and may throw valuable light on the history of that country when it becomes better known. The work has been undertaken by the Geological Survey of China, who have also made an extensive collection of stone implements from these and other sites. In spite of the numbers collected, up to the present no palaeolithic implements have been found and, it would appear, no true neolithic culture. At present we are confined to a study of the Chalcolithic period, and Dr. Andersson and the Directors of the Survey are to be congratulated both on their work and the method of publication. It would have been an advantage for bibliographical purposes to indicate more clearly on the title of the monograph that the cave-deposit also concerned archaeologists.

Obituary Notice

Leland Duncan.—Leland Lewis Duncan died at Lewisham on the 26th December 1923, aged 61. He had for some time been in poor health, but so sudden an end was quite unexpected and came as a great shock to his friends.

Born at Lewisham on the 24th August 1862, Duncan was educated at the local Grammar School, and later on, in the year 1910, he published

a history of that school under the title *History of Colfe's Grammar School, with a life of its founder*. On leaving the school he entered in 1882 the Civil Service, being appointed a clerk in the War Office, and there he remained till his retirement in 1922. He steadily improved his position in the office, his services being recognized by an M.V.O. in 1902 and an O.B.E. later.

From his earliest years Duncan took much interest in matters archaeological, and coming under the influence of Challenor Smith was led to see how much matter of great human interest could be extracted from wills. In the 'eighties Challenor Smith was engaged in the teeth of much opposition in arranging and preparing a proper index of some of the wills and probates under his charge at Somerset House, and in 1893 his index from the earliest date to 1558 was published by the British Record Society in their Index Library, of which Duncan was one of the general editors. It was soon seen that that index was a model of its kind, neither too jejune nor too copious, and it had an immediate and great success. Duncan's interest in wills, once aroused, never waned, and to the month of his death he was constantly copying or making précis of them, hoping eventually by the help of them to provide much material for future historians of Kent. He often in his later years regaled his friends with anecdotes of how he used from his earliest days there to slip out of the War Office at luncheon time and make his way to Somerset House and copy a will or two, and his accounts of the various adventures he had at Somerset House in that connexion were very diverting.

He was elected a fellow of this Society in 1890 and was a most regular attendant at our ordinary meetings, though he does not seem ever to have read a paper or made any communication to our Society. He mainly confined his attention to matters relating to Kent and, having been elected a member of the Kent Archaeological Society in 1887, his communications were for the most part made to that Society and *Archaeologia Cantiana* is enriched by many articles from his pen. That Society had a high estimation of his special gifts and took the unusual course of issuing in 1906 an extra volume called *Testamenta Cantiana*, consisting of extracts from various fifteenth- and sixteenth-century wills, giving details of great interest concerning Kentish churches, all those relating to West Kent being contributed by Duncan. Mr. Hussey collaborated with him for East Kent. This admirable volume has not as yet been flattered by any imitation on the part of archaeologists of other counties.

It is not perhaps the place here to speak of his personal qualities, but it may be sufficient to recall his modest demeanour so striking in an antiquary of such attainments, of his ever ready help to any who might apply to him for assistance in their antiquarian pursuits, and of that lovable disposition which makes his loss so hard to bear by those who were privileged to know him intimately. RALPH GRIFFIN.