

EDITORIAL

WE have never had an Editorial in this Journal before. This one is therefore an experiment, bold, perhaps rash, since we have survived for twenty-two years and reached our eighteenth volume without one, but for some time we have had this intention in our minds, and there is a reason now for loosening that learned straitjacket which so often prevents us from mixing freely with our readers.

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This year the School is celebrating its Silver Jubilee, and that surely calls for some special comment. We quote from a letter which the late Sir Edgar Bonham-Carter wrote to our Honorary Secretary on 24th November, 1955. "At the last Annual General Meeting of the School Mr. Amery asked me when the 25th year since the School was founded would occur. He suggested that some celebration should be held . . . The School was founded on 14th January, 1932 by a meeting of the subscribers to the Appeal Fund. Therefore according to my reckoning the 25th year of the School's existence will run from 14th January, 1956, to 14th January, 1957. I suggest therefore that the celebration of the 25th year should be held at the annual general meeting in 1956".

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It is tragic that both these distinguished members of the School died before they could see their wishes fulfilled, but in this year and on this occasion they will be much in our minds. The annual general meeting will be held at the Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, on 6th November, at 5 p.m., by kind permission of the Council, who have placed their large lecture-hall at our disposal. The chair will be taken by our President, the Rt. Hon. Lord Salter, P.C., G.B.E., K.C.B., and Professor Mallowan will speak and show lantern slides on "Twenty-five years of Mesopotamian Discovery".

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The School will also commemorate its Jubilee by holding a special Exhibition in the Assyrian Basement of the British Museum, Great Russell Street, W.C.1, by kind permission of the Trustees, from 14th November, 1956, to 14th January, 1957. The Exhibition will be declared open by Sir Leonard Woolley. It will consist of a choice selection of objects discovered in the course of various archaeological Expeditions sent out by the School to Mesopotamia, and will be illustrated by photographs and drawings. Many different Institutions have kindly consented to lend exhibits.

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The Jubilee Exhibition will be commemorated by an illustrated booklet written by Professor Mallowan. It is hoped that this will serve both as a guide to the exhibition and as a summary of archaeological discovery in Mesopotamia during the last quarter of a century. The School's activities have been concerned with periods of time which range from the early Neolithic (that is before 5000 B.C.) down to the Hellenistic epoch, about 300 B.C. Here there is something to interest every kind of specialist no less than all those to whom the past accomplishments of man mean something. In our view only a moron could fail to be roused. The booklet will draw attention to the problems left for solution in the future as well as to past discoveries.

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Those who visit the Exhibition will not fail to notice how appropriate is its background, for the room known as the Assyrian Basement has its walls lined with sculptured reliefs discovered by Layard a little over one hundred years ago at Nineveh and at Nimrud, to which the School has sent seven Expeditions. The Keeper of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, Mr. R. D. Barnett, has kindly suggested that we should show a few letters and drawings concerned with Nimrud, by Layard, Rawlinson and Prentice. Here we have an unbroken line of discovery from 1845 to 1956 of which we in this country may well be proud. In the latter stages of this research we will not easily forget how much we owe to our Iraqi friends and colleagues who themselves have contributed so much to archaeological development in recent years.

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In this number of *Iraq* the first place is given to an obituary of Sir Edgar Bonham-Carter, whose memory is held dear by all of us. He might be called a liberal in the widest sense of the term. Old friends in Iraq and in the Sudan remember him perhaps most poignantly for his natural courtesy and a certain quality of mind that we have heard them define as belonging to the true English gentleman. He was intimately associated with the School from its foundation and as first Chairman of the Executive Committee guided it during the formative years, and had the satisfaction of bringing it to a vigorous maturity. He will be greatly missed both as a personal friend and as a wise counsellor.

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We have already mentioned the loss of the Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, C.H., whose death was recorded in our annual report for 1955. He succeeded the late Sir Percy Cox as President of the School in 1937 and from then onwards took the chair at the annual general meetings. His special interest in Iraq dated from 1925 when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies and paid a visit to the country in order to study its problems at first hand; the "Amery Gardens" in

Mosul were thus named at that time in his honour. He returned home with an abiding interest in Iraq and that, for him, meant a knowledge of the past as well as of the present. Those who heard him at our Meetings will recall his natural fluency and felicity of speech, for words came easily to him. His early love of the classics then appeared; he had enjoyed a most distinguished scholastic career at Oxford, and the broad range of his historical vision was brought to bear on whatever topic had been chosen for discussion. Brilliant, forthright and lovable; so he seemed to those who had the privilege of knowing him.

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Readers of *Iraq* will hardly fail to recall the names of Sir Robert Brooke-Popham and Sir Edward Keeling whose obituaries have also appeared in the Journal. Thus four distinguished officers who took a prominent part in the development of our Society are mourned and honoured by us on this occasion. Deeply as these losses have been felt we approach the future with confidence in the continued vitality of the School. Certain it is, that so long as the same sense of public spirit is transmitted through the coming generation, societies such as ours will not be lacking in patrons and in supporters.

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Now we return to the suggestion made in the first paragraph of this Editorial, that this may be the beginning of a series to come. Many of the articles which appear in this Journal are bound to be technical in character, not always easy to read. But it has always been our aim to make clear to the general reader what the technical article may signify to him. With this in mind, and without any detriment to the scholarly character of the Journal we will from time to time explain briefly what are the topics of the moment and why they are being discussed.

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Much knowledge of the past is now being reburied in Journals as fast as it is being dug up. In future numbers, therefore, we hope to have brief discussions, notes and news about what is being done in the field, particularly in Mesopotamia, and the relevance of discoveries in other countries. Comments and questions from our readers will be most welcome. In the expectation that this policy is likely to attract many who are working in Iraq, as well as those who realise how important is a knowledge of the ancient Near East if they are to understand and appreciate the developments that are taking place to-day, we have decided to increase the circulation of this Journal. We trust therefore that our readers will urge others to look at the inside leaflet of *Iraq* and join the School. They will thus be supporting a long established tradition of scholarship and developing an Anglo-Iraqi community of interests that transcends all political differences.