

Obituary Notice

Mrs. Mortimer Wheeler. The loss to English Archaeology caused by the untimely death on 15th April of Tessa Verney Wheeler is a very real one, but only those who knew her work at close range can be aware how great that loss is. She was tireless and unendingly competent; no task was too laborious, and whatever emergency might arise she could find the energy to take her full part in meeting it. If it were not so, we should not be mourning for her to-day. She left herself no margin of strength, and an operation whose result might have been awaited with equanimity has in the event proved too great an ordeal.

Archaeology in this country has in the last few decades made very marked progress, and notably in the science of prehistory and the technique of field work which is an essential factor therein. Mrs. Wheeler's share in this progress was no small one. In the various excavations carried out under the superintendence of her husband her help was invaluable. Her gift for organization, her inexhaustible cheerfulness and good humour, and her personal charm ensured the smooth running of many an enterprise. All was done as part of the day's work, and it was not every one who realized that the one who undertook all these exacting labours was herself a fully qualified antiquary, whose whole time might profitably have been devoted to archaeological study to the exclusion of all else. When at the end of each season's work the directors of an excavation made their formal report at an evening meeting of the Society, and the room at Burlington House, always crowded beyond its normal capacity on such occasions, followed with close interest the record of discovery, no one was greeted with warmer applause than Mrs. Wheeler, when it was possible to get her to add a few modest words to what had been said by her colleagues.

Another side of her activity, and one which promised even more important results in the future, had to do with the training of the archaeologists of the future. Schools of Archaeology at our Universities, though no new thing, have grown greatly in importance in our own days, in spite of the tragic preoccupations of recent years. By reason of her husband's official duties as Keeper of the London Museum, it has been in London that her energies found their fullest scope, and from small beginnings the recognition of the need for a school of archaeological study in London has developed, and has taken shape in the project of an Institute of Archaeology in connexion with the University of London. From the outset Mrs. Wheeler had taken on herself the onerous duty of secretary to the Organizing Committee, and after many difficulties and hindrances which it is not necessary to record here, had seen the scheme brought to maturity. Head-quarters for the Institute had at last been secured, in an admirable position, and the work of adapting the buildings, at considerable cost, to their new purpose, had been thoroughly considered, and is now on the point of starting. The final orders to the

contractor were given on the day that Mrs. Wheeler entered the hospital for her operation. The Institute must go on without her; but it must ever be a memorial to her, an abiding record of a life cut short in the prime of its powers.

She was elected a Fellow in 1928, had served on the Council, and was a member of the Research Committee.

CHARLES PEERS.