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Editorial Notes

IT is sometimes difficult to decide what to say in these Notes ; and, always, to know how to say it. One must select a matter of general interest and importance, and one must express one's opinions without giving offence. The accepted rules eliminate certain easy targets of criticism, and if one does not criticize at all one is open to the accusation of log-rolling. We do not wish these Notes to fall to the level of some current literary journalism. But what is one to do if all avenues are closed, as at this time they usually are ? The digging season is over, and has been full of interesting results ; but one must not exploit other people's work before they may have been able to exploit it themselves. That is a pastime reserved for Fleet Street. The voice of the tempter whispers ' Why not a few words about ANTIQUITY ? It is December and they will be considering whether to continue their subscriptions '. But will this, after all, produce the desired effect ? Who can say ?



It is our usual custom at this time of year to draw attention to the completion of one more volume, and consequently that the subscription for the next becomes due. At the risk of reiteration we therefore remind our subscribers that the four numbers which are in contemplation for 1933 bring responsibilities, and that the usual cheques and

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notes will be welcomed. It does save much trouble (and even expense) if these payments are made early in the year—we do not, for various reasons, like having to send out ‘reminders’.



Last December our Notes dwelt on the economic situation which was then, and still is to some extent, affecting everyone. None the less we feel that in certain ways the effect can be allowed to carry one too far. We expected the withdrawal of subscriptions, and have received notices to that end, but in spite of this we congratulate ourselves that we have been able to produce ANTIQUITY for another year, and without curtailing its form or the number of illustrations. Further, we intend to do so in 1933. The diffusion of knowledge must go on in spite of depressions.



Some of our subscribers have, we know, been influenced by what we have said in former Notes, and have continued their support at some personal sacrifice because they felt this was not the time to withhold it. Others, to judge by results, have not been influenced—or perhaps (horrid thought) may have been influenced the other way!

It will be best to leave it at this, and trust to the goodwill and the same support of those who during the past six years have not failed us. The knowledge that we have them to rely on is one of the things which keeps us going.



There are times when we feel in need of some such ‘uplift’. Editing an illustrated book of over 500 closely-packed pages each year—and that is what it comes to—is not so easy a task as some may imagine. It would be less arduous if contributors sent articles and illustrations ready to go to press without further preparation. But this does not happen often. Some articles have to be translated into good English (and not all of these are of foreign origin), while for others illustrations have to be provided. Occasionally one for which we have asked comes prepared so carefully that little or no editing is needed, but in the majority of cases this is not our experience. It would be so easy, by taking a little thought, to lighten editorial work and with that in view we offer a few practical hints.

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First, in the matter of photographic illustrations. Those in ANTIQUITY are printed from copper 'half-tone' blocks. Now what (for short) may be described as the 'grain' of the block is infinitely coarser than the 'definition' of the coarsest photographic contact-print. Consequently most of that fineness of detail is lost if a block is made from a contact-print—that is, a print of the same size as the original negative. Nowadays almost any negative will make a doubly enlarged print without any real loss of sharpness, and with a great gain of size and legibility. From this enlarged print a slightly reduced half-tone block can be made; the result is a picture that is still bigger than the original negative, but infinitely superior to the (smaller) one that would have been made from a contact-print.



The first rule, then, is always to supply enlarged, rather than contact, prints. It does not matter how large of course. A half-tone block 7 by 5 inches can be made from a print 34 by 28 inches, which itself may have been printed from a negative of 5 by 4 inches. It *does* matter, however, what sort of print is made. Here photographic skill comes in. Only a good photographer can make a good print; and only he, sometimes, after several failures: for every negative varies in density and requires therefore a different length of exposure. The ordinary commercial photographer is too often content with his first (unsuccessful) effort—usually a pale, half-baked affair, and the ordinary archaeologist is too often content to accept it. A good photographer can get wonderful results by enlarging from a poor negative, but no blockmaker in the world can make a good block from a thin or bad print.

If this simple matter were properly understood, there would be fewer eyesores in scientific publications.



The word 'eyesores' reminds us of certain illustrations—we will not specify them further. You may have reached the stage of getting the perfect enlarged print or the impeccable drawing or map, and still your labour and skill may be rendered useless, when published, by undue reduction. Illustrations are meant to be *seen*, and they are mere waste of money if they are illegible. Excessive reduction defeats the whole purpose of illustration, which is to throw light upon the subject, not to darken it. If it is a question of cost then surely one

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large picture is better than two small ones, if smallness carries with it a blurring of detail. These criticisms apply with particular force to the sketch-maps illustrating archaeological books and articles, to drawings of flints and to air-photographs. They can be avoided if the author is firm and the editor reasonable.



The second rule comes logically before the first, but it lies beyond the control of the editor. It is—to take good photographs! How often have we suffered from photographs of some sunny eastern landscape reduced to desolation by the camera. Many a one suggests that, when it was taken, the elements had conspired together to produce simultaneously a dust-storm, rays of blinding white light from the ground, heavy rain, and a tilted horizon. Nowadays good photographs are quite easy to obtain with a very cheap camera. Films are easy to develop everywhere (at night if no dark room can be used). During a recent holiday we obtained over 400 negatives, nearly all good enough for reproduction *anywhere*, for a total cost, including the camera (but not of course the prints), of well under five pounds. Some are published in this number of ANTIQUITY.



We write these Notes not merely for selfish reasons, but because there certainly exist many misconceptions on the subject, and because photography, and the publication of illustrations, is now admitted to be an essential part of the archaeologist's equipment. Every experienced excavator of course knows this: but the Notes are not written for him. There are many who do good archaeological work as a hobby, and it will often be vastly improved by attention to such details as these.

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We have placed in this number the usual form and envelope for the payment of subscriptions, to which we have referred in our second paragraph. We hope they will receive attention.