OBITUARY

CANON POTTS

BY the death of Canon Robert Ullock Potts on January 7th, 1949, the Council of the Kent Archæological Society parted with one of its keenest members and most loyal supporters. His long life—he was born in 1866—covered a very wide range of interests at home and abroad. As a young man he went from Oriel College, Oxford, to Southern India, as Tutor under the Court of Wards (1890-93) and again, as Superintending Missionary S.P.G., to Madras (1903-12). In this place one may most appropriately recall his archæological activities in our own county. His connection with Kent began in 1912, when he became Sub-Warden and Bursar of St. Augustine's; he was closely associated with the college till 1933. During those years he carried out, largely by his own strenuous exertions, the excavations in the Abbey ruins aimed at discovering what might remain " of the first home of St. Augustine and his companions, the first Benedictine Abbey in England, the successive churches built on the site, the tombs of the sainted Archbishops and the first Christian kings and queens of Kent." The wonderful outcome of those endeavours is fully recorded in *Archæologia Cantiana*; the concourse of pilgrims constantly visiting that " holy ground " testifies to the fulfilment of his hope to make it " a source of inspiration to English-speaking peoples for all time."

Canon Potts took a leading part in establishing a daughter society, the Canterbury Archæological; he was present at the inaugural meeting in January, 1920, and served continuously on the committee, becoming its chairman after Dr. Cotton's death, and a vice-president in his closing years. Very shortly before his death he attended a meeting to urge the preservation and restoration of St. George's church tower—to his thinking the most suitable memorial to the Second World War and Canterbury's part therein. Those who sat with him in committee can testify to his constant watchfulness over the city's treasures, to his enthusiasm, his scholarship. To the Society's winter programmes he would contribute talks, profusely illustrated, on his travels in France or Spain.

In pre-war days he was an inspiring member of the Architectural Advisory Committee of the City Council, under Mr. Wright Hunt's chairmanship, which kept watch over modern development, particularly new shop-fronts in Canterbury's ancient streets. His advice was no less sought after in connection with the care of churches in the diocese, of which he had intimate knowledge. He was among the

foremost to inaugurate the excavation of Roman Canterbury and gained the support of distinguished fellow members of the Society of Antiquaries.

When in view of inevitable air attacks it was decided to form a permanent photographic record of all buildings of interest in the city, Canon Potts walked our lanes heedless of " Tugboat Annie's " repeated warnings, making careful notes and prolonged observations, but followed by his companions with less equanimity. This complete indifference to danger was characteristic ; he was a man of immense courage ; almost to the close of his long life undeterred by partial loss of sight and much ill-health from pursuing whatever might concern the Church's, the City's interests.

We have spoken chiefly of his archæological bent ; not that it was his sole preoccupation. When he retired from Kingston Rectory to St. Martin's House, and inherited from garden-lovers his predecessors a hillside plot rich in unusual shrubs and flowers, he delighted to invite his friends to a show of daffodils, or the blossoming of some special treasure in his rockery.

For eleven years (1935-1946) he was a Governor of the Simon Langton Schools, and not a few of the elder scholars became his friends. His zest for life—one may believe his rejoicing in it—never failed ; his memory can but long remain in the city and the county he so generously served.

D.G.