

Obituary.

SIR WILLIAM ST. JOHN HOPE, Litt.D., D.C.L.

In any retrospect of the progress of archaeological research in England during the last half-century, no single figure occupies a higher or more honourable place than that of William Henry St. John Hope. Forty years have passed since, in 1879, he first gave proof of his powers in the excavation of the remains of Dale Abbey. Since that time, he has contributed some important addition year by year to our knowledge of English historical monuments. From the date of his appointment as assistant secretary of the Society of Antiquaries in 1885, he was able to devote his time to the studies which were nearest his heart; and in their pursuit he employed his natural gifts as a teacher and inspirer of others to the fullest advantage. Although his chief interest lay in medieval antiquities, a sound knowledge of the principles of scientific archaeology and a zeal which rejected no department of the subject as unimportant gave his opinion unusual weight upon matters outside those which he had made peculiarly his own. His memory, as accurate as it was phenomenal, stored without effort everything with which it came in contact: he carried his knowledge about with him and could impart it at a moment's notice with a fullness and a generosity which grateful friends in all parts of England will long remember.

His association with the Institute began at Lewes in 1883, when he described the remains of the priory, on the excavation of which he was then engaged, to the members. In the following year he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and became editor of the *Archaeological Journal*. Although his appointment at Burlington House involved the resignation of the editorship, he continued to take a prominent part in the meetings of the Institute, which for a long series of years owed much of their success to his active help. The records of all that he did on these

occasions will be found in past volumes of the *Journal*, together with a large number of valuable papers read by him at the annual and ordinary meetings. To enumerate these last is unnecessary, as a full bibliography of his work has been prepared and, it is hoped, will shortly be made public. As a member of our Council and as a Vice-President, his advice and help were indispensable. In 1910 the office of Director, which he held until 1915, was revived in his favour. The last annual meeting which he attended was at Derby in 1914; and here, in his native town and county, and on the sites at Dale and Repton, where some of his earliest investigations of monastic remains had been made, he spoke with an experience which had been enriched in the interval by unceasing work in all parts of the country.

It was probably at such meetings, by word of mouth, that his influence was felt most widely. His descriptions of ancient monuments upon the spot arrested the attention and awakened the interest of his hearers. With a clear and incisive delivery and in simple and colloquial language which all could understand, he explained the development of a building and pointed out its existing features without tiring or making excessive demands upon his audience. His guidance of the Institute at Windsor in 1913 was a sustained effort which showed this quality at its best. Here and elsewhere his material, methodically stored in his brain and vividly present to his mind's eye, was presented fully and concisely without waste of words. In contributions to discussion, he was always ready with information which threw new light upon a subject, or placed it in its true relation to the category to which it belonged. To take one instance out of many, no one who was present at the Northampton meeting in 1912 will forget how, at St. Sepulchre's, he summed up in a few minutes the essential points in the history of round churches in England, setting them in relief without hesitation or effort. The educative influence of such addresses was obvious, and many owe to them a clearer perception of the principles of architectural history than they could have obtained without such aid. They were naturally followed by many personal inquiries; and, while he was not disposed to spend time in discussing

questions which were merely pointless, his instinct readily distinguished between the pretender to knowledge and the genuine learner. For real enthusiasm, however uninstructed, he had endless sympathy and patience.

As a writer, he was unusually prompt in publishing the results of his work. In addition to his books, of which the most important is the monumental *Windsor Castle*, published in 1913, he contributed nearly 250 papers to the periodicals of various societies. These vary in length from considerable monographs to short articles which are little more than careful notes upon objects of interest which from time to time came under his observation. All, however, are marked by uniform thoroughness and scholarly accuracy. Their width of range is remarkable. The monastic studies on which he first established his reputation are represented by a large body of work, the chief items of which are the elaborate accounts of Fountains and Furness Abbeys, and the cathedral church and monastery of Rochester, written for the Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmorland, and Kent Archaeological Societies respectively. These, however, are only three out of many which include descriptions, founded on excavations or on close examination of existing remains, of religious houses of every important order, five alone dealing with Premonstratensian abbeys. His most detailed account of a castle, apart from Windsor, is that of Ludlow, one of the numerous papers printed in *Archaeologia*. In matters of heraldry, ecclesiastical and secular plate, and in several branches of medieval decorative art, he was an unrivalled authority. His two admirable manuals of heraldry belong to his later years and represent in brief form his accumulation of knowledge upon the principles and technique of an art whose beauty he well exhibited in his large volume on the stall-plates of the Knights of the Garter. His minute acquaintance with the plate of English corporations is shown by the two volumes in which he completed the work begun by Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt; while the article written for the *Archaeological Journal*, in collaboration with the late T. M. Fallow, upon medieval chalices and patens, provided a method of classification which has been generally adopted. Among the various papers with which he furnished our journal, that on the

alabaster work of Nottingham craftsmen has an equal importance. Towards the end of his life he produced, with the aid of Mr. Cuthbert Atchley, a book upon *English Liturgical Colours* which, setting forth in detail a vast amount of evidence from medieval documents, is typical of the energy with which he devoted himself to exploring and exhausting the subjects he took in hand. *Archaeologia* and the *Proceedings* of the Society of Antiquaries are full of papers, long and short, on more subjects than can be noted here; and while these comprise invaluable additions to the artistic history of Westminster abbey, St. George's chapel, and the cathedral churches of Canterbury, Wells and Salisbury, they also contain the result of the excavations which he conducted for many years, with the late G. E. Fox, on the Romano-British site at Silchester.

In this short summary of the leading subjects on which he wrote, much is necessarily left out. In writing he aimed at perfect precision and clearness and avoided picturesque digression: his method of description was plain and business-like, and his articles, when read in conjunction with the plans and illustrations which accompany them, are models of lucidity. It is matter for regret that only a few of them were printed separately in limited editions. Most of them have to be sought out in periodicals which are not always easy of access, and comparatively few students are thus able to benefit by his work as a whole. There could be no more fitting monument to his memory than a collection of his principal papers in a form which would give them a wider circulation than in their present state they can obtain.

Those who knew Hope best will all bear testimony to his personal qualities, his kindness, his devotion to his friends, and the thoroughly human attitude to life which made him the best of companions. Though he had made himself master of many subjects, he never ceased to learn. For the learning which, having achieved something, is content to inform the world that it has done so, he had little admiration: it was his justifiable boast that he was a plodder, and in him fellow plodders found a ready friend. His death is an irrecoverable loss to English archaeology. Working continually at a chosen task, which

was at once his profession and his diversion, he allotted his time systematically so that his pleasures never interfered with his duties. The extent of his accomplishment was exceptional; its quality was invariably high. His researches, fortified by a full knowledge of the value of documentary evidence and manuscript sources, of which he availed himself copiously and made transcripts with the accuracy of a practised palaeographer, were an addition not only to archaeology, but to history. No better example could be found of the antiquary who uses his materials to illuminate and vivify the history of the age with which he deals; and his work and influence have been prominent factors in displaying to the present-day historian the resources of archaeology and inciting him to obtain a fuller acquaintance with the interests and methods of its votaries.

A. H. T.