

OBITUARY

MR. ERIC PARKER

THE death of FREDERIC MOORE SEARLE (ERIC) PARKER on February 13, 1955, in his 85th year, has deprived the Society of one of its most distinguished members. No one loved Surrey with greater ardour and certainly no one else could so happily convey to others his sense of enjoyment of our countryside and its associations. As a King's Scholar at Eton and Postmaster at Merton he acquired a sound training in the classics that was reflected in the scholarly and sensitive literary style of all that he wrote. In 1900 he became assistant editor of *St. James's Gazette* but soon afterwards devoted himself more particularly to English country life as editor of the *Country Gentleman* and *Land and Water*, of the *Lonsdale Library of Sport* and of *The Field*, from which he resigned in 1937 in order to be able to give more time to broadcasting and literary work. His output was truly prodigious, averaging one considerable work for each year of his life, in addition to many regular features and articles, and this was continued until within a few weeks of his death. Great learning was carried very lightly and he wrote with charming freshness on such diverse matters as Eton (for which he retained a strong filial piety throughout his life), cricket, shooting, fishing, gardening, nature study and dogs. His deep religious convictions were revealed in such works as the *Sinner and the Problem*, an *Anthology of the Bible* and a *Book of Comfort* written during the second World War, in which he lost two sons. Among the best known of his books on Surrey are *Highways and Byways in Surrey*, a *West Surrey Sketch Book*, *Surrey* in the County Book series, *A Surrey Anthology* and *Surrey Gardens*. Bird-lovers will remember gratefully his passionate protests, in broadcasts and writings, against the cruelties of trapping and caging which led to the passing of the Wild Birds Protection Act in 1933.

In 1910 he came to live in the beautiful home he had built at Feathercombe, near Godalming, of which the architect was his friend Mr. Ernest Newton. The site, with its extensive views to the Hog's Back and the South Downs, must be reckoned one of the finest in Surrey: the gardens planned by him with consummate skill and taste, based on a deep appreciation of the natural beauty of their setting, gave rare enjoyment to the visitors he loved to entertain there, and provided a sanctuary for bird life. He took a very active part in all local affairs as Rector's Warden of Hambledon Parish Church, as president of the Hambledon Cricket Club, and as chairman of the Hydon Ball committee of the National Trust; he was also president of the West Surrey Society. His was a full life, the more so because he shared so much with others: few men can have won so much affection from so many.