

II.—OSWIN JOHN CHARLTON.

By C. J. P. CAVE.

[Read on 27th August 1941.]

Oswin John Charlton (pl. II), who died on 10th May 1941, was the son of Edward Charlton, M.D., D.C.L., who was the younger son of William John Charlton of Hesy-side. The Charltons are one of the oldest families in Northumberland, some of whom were settled in north Tyn-dale as early as the twelfth century. Dr. Edward Charlton was a well-known Newcastle physician; he was president of the British Medical Association in 1870, and was secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne from 1846 to 1870; he was widely known as a scholar, a scientist, and an antiquary.

Oswin Charlton was his third son by his second wife, Margaret Jane, eldest daughter of Edward Bellasis, Ser-jeant-at-Law. He was born on 20th August 1871, and was educated at the Oratory School, Edgbaston, and at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He went to Cambridge early in 1890 before he actually joined the university, in order to read for the college entrance examination and the "Little Go"; such students, who were rather uncommon, used in those days to be nicknamed "beasts." He matriculated and joined his college in October 1890. He had originally intended to adopt his father's profession, and read medicine in his first year; but in his second year he decided to read for the Law Tripos, in which he took a second class in part I in 1893, and a first class in part II in



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1894. He took his B.A. and LL.B. degrees in 1894, and his M.A. and LL.M. in 1925.

Before he came to Cambridge he had been interested in antiquities, and before he actually joined the university he began bicycling in Cambridgeshire and parts of the adjoining counties to visit old churches. When he finally went down he had visited every ancient church in the county and obtained an unrivalled knowledge of their architecture and monuments. I often accompanied him on these expeditions, the first of which, as he reminded me in a letter written as lately as May 2nd of this year, took place on 20th May 1890. I owe him a great debt of gratitude, for it was from these expeditions that I was first introduced to mediæval antiquities, which has proved an absorbing interest to me ever since. His lameness, caused by the carelessness of a nurse when he was a very small boy, was no hindrance to his cycling, which he kept up till about a year before his death. One of his great interests was in monumental brasses, and in 1890 he joined the Monumental Brass Society, then the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors. In 1891 he was secretary and treasurer of the society, and in 1893 he was vice-president, at that time the only one, and he remained a vice-president till his death. He did not publish much in the *Transactions* of the society; I can find only three notes, in 1895, 1904, and 1934, all three referring to Newcastle upon Tyne. But besides these notes his initials appear many times to indicate that he was responsible for various sections of the list of Cambridgeshire brasses which the society published. Moreover, many of the illustrations both in the society's *Transactions* and in its *Portfolio* are reproductions of his rubbings. He was the most careful and painstaking brass rubber, and his enthusiasm is shown by his having taken a rubbing of the Flemish brass at Newark, which measures 9 feet 4 inches by 5 feet 8 inches, and which is fixed to the wall so that a good part of the rubbing had to be done on a ladder.

After leaving Cambridge Charlton was articled to Messrs. Dees and Thompson, solicitors of Newcastle upon Tyne, and after serving his articles was admitted solicitor. He then served for a time in the office of the City Remembrancer in London, after which he practised as a solicitor on his own account in Newcastle. His reputation in his profession was that of a careful, accurate, and painstaking solicitor, his work being chiefly on the conveyancing side.

His antiquarian tastes found full scope in his native county, almost all of which he had explored on his bicycle, including the very wild part bordering on Scotland. He was elected to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne on 24th February 1892, and after serving on the council he was one of the honorary secretaries from 1925 to 1934, and a vice-president from 1935 to the time of his death. He took a leading part in the work of the society, which owes much to him. He did not publish much, and there is only one paper by him in *Archæologia Aeliana*; this was upon the Athol brass in St. Andrew's church. He did, however, contribute short papers and notes in the society's *Proceedings*, particularly upon local deeds and museum objects; he also occasionally exhibited various objects of historic and archæological interest. He was elected to the Society of Antiquaries of London on 14th January 1926.

He was a prominent member of the Law Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, its honorary librarian from 1910 to his death, vice-president 1924-25, and president 1931-32. He was also a member of council of Armstrong (now King's) College, Newcastle upon Tyne.

He married on 27th October 1919 Mary Ellen, only child of Matthias Thomas O'Keeffe of Glengariff, County Cork. He leaves his widow, two sons and a daughter.