



Obituary.

CANON RUPERT H. MORRIS, D.D., F.S.A.

JUST as the printing of this volume was completed, news reached Chester that our old member and a former Editor of our *Journal*—Canon RUPERT HUGH MORRIS, D.D.—passed away on the 2nd January of this New Year 1918, at St. Gabriel's Vicarage, Warwick Square, London, S.W. We give as a frontispiece to this book a photograph of him taken by a Chester photographer when he was with us, together with his autograph. He was a Flintshire man—a native of Holywell, where he was born in 1844—being the son of William Morris, sometime editor of *Y Cymro*, a Welsh Church newspaper. Educated at Ruthin Grammar School, he proceeded from there with a scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford, gaining also a Powis Exhibition. He took his degree in 1865 and was ordained two years later. After serving as classical assistant master at Rossall School, he was appointed Principal of the Training College for South Wales and Monmouthshire, and for some years he held also the secretaryship of the St. David's Diocesan Board of Education. It was at this time he was appointed Prebendary of Mathry in St. David's Cathedral. In 1876 he went to London as curate of St. Mary's, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, and two years later he was appointed vicar. During the period he was at St. Mary's (which ended in 1882) and for two years beyond, he was headmaster of the Godolphin School, Hammersmith. In 1884 he became chaplain and librarian to His Grace the late Duke of

Westminster, K.G., and left London to settle down at Eccleston. On the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute being held at Chester, from the 10th to the 17th August, 1886, His Grace was President of the Meeting, and it was at this time that he opened the then newly erected Grosvenor Museum. Canon Morris took an active part in the arrangements of the various meetings and ceremonies. These were "great days" in the history of our Society; the present Duke of Northumberland, then Earl Percy, F.S.A., was President of the Institute, and a guest at Eaton. The Chairman of the Antiquarian Section was our then President, Bishop Stubbs, who had as his guest at the Palace Professor Freeman, who occupied the chair of the Historical Section. Precentor Venables, Professors E. C. Clark and T. McKenny Hughes, Dr. J. Collingwood Bruce, Mr. E. Peacock, Mr. R. S. Ferguson, Mr. A. Hartshorne, Mr. C. J. Newton, C.B., Mr. T. H. Baylis, Q.C., Sir J. A. Picton, Mr. J. Hilton, and many other well known archæologists were present and took part in the proceedings. Subsequent to this meeting Canon Morris continued to take an interest in the proceedings of our Society. He was elected a member in April 1888, and on the resignation of the late Mr. J. P. Earwaker, M.A., F.S.A., in 1893, became Honorary Editorial Secretary. At this time he not only took a keen interest in the affairs of the Society, but also in research in local history and archæology. It was through his influence that the late Duke gave to the Society the important Earwaker collection of MSS. and books now in our library. He was also busily engaged in collecting materials for his magnum opus—*Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*—which was published in 1894. His labours in acquiring information for this work from the numerous and valuable municipal and ecclesiastical records of Chester, at the Record Office, at the British Museum, in the

collection of *MSS.* at Eaton, and in the documents referred to from time to time in papers read before our Society, were very great. The readers of his book can hardly form the faintest idea of the labour which was involved in collecting the facts. The Canon perused and translated many thousand parchment documents, written in the mediæval characters of the monks which are called "Courthand," and that, too, in technical law Latin, most of the words being abbreviations with no system of contractions such as is, for instance, used in the present day in shorthand, requiring not only good classical knowledge, but also a thorough acquaintance with feudal and mediæval law. He no doubt spent considerable time over a single line of this very diminutive courthand writing, the manuscript of which, perhaps, was discoloured by damp or time, or required the aid of strong glasses to decipher and ascertain the real meaning. All this had then to be boiled down, as it were, in the book, and the labour of many hours, or even days, is perhaps contained in a single paragraph or line in the book. We particularly emphasize this because we think it should be known what a real research student has to do in order to write history from original documents, as all history ought to be written in these days, and how much Cestrians are indebted to Canon Morris for the beautiful and accurate original contribution he has made towards the history of their ancient city. This much can at least be said of the late Canon, that his name will be associated for all time with that of Chester, for no one can again write upon any subject relating to Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor period without referring to his admirable book. Canon Morris also completed the *History of the Church and Parish of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester*, which was left unfinished by the reason of the sudden death of its original author, the late Mr. J. P. Earwaker. He also wrote a short history of the Diocese of Chester for the Society

for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and a little but instructive guide to Eaton Hall and its treasures. He gave several papers before our Society, which are printed in our *Journals*. One read in 1902 is *Gleanings from the Muniment Room of the Town Hall, Chester (Stuart Period)*. For many years prior to his death Canon Morris worked hard gathering materials with a view to publishing a continuation of his Chester History, over the Stuart Period. We understand it is partly written, and we sincerely hope that his valuable work will not be lost to Chester. In 1890 the Cambrian Archæological Society held their Meeting at Holywell and, with their President, Lord Mostyn, visited Chester during the mayoralty of Mr. James Salmon, who entertained them at luncheon at the Town Hall. On this occasion Canon Morris took part in their reception and became a member of their Society. In 1909 they held their Meeting at Chester, Sir H. H. Howorth, K.C.I.E., F.R.S., F.S.A., being their President, when we find Canon Morris filling the office of Editorial Secretary of their *Archæologia Cambrensis*, a position he held at the time of his death. On this occasion he read before that Society a paper on *The Charters of the City of Chester*, which is printed, with illustrations, in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, Sixth Series, Vol. X., page 417. In the autumn of 1894 His Grace the late Duke of Westminster presented Canon Morris to the living of St. Gabriel and he soon after left Chester for London, much to the regret and loss of the members of our Society and of his numerous literary and personal friends here, who presented him, on his finally leaving the neighbourhood with his family in October, 1895, with a silver kettle and a purse of gold—the presentation was made at the Grosvenor Museum by the then mayor, Alderman W. H. Churton. During the time that he was at Eaton, Canon Morris gave considerable help to the neighbouring clergy, and Cestrians will

long remember his scholarly sermons and addresses. He took a great interest in the Choral Festivals that used to be held at Eaton by the highly trained Parish Church Choirs on the Duke's estate. Like most literary Welshmen he was a great hymnologist. In June, 1895, he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and took part for some years in the Congresses of Archæological Societies held at Burlington House.

St. Gabriel is a large and important West End Parish, with a population of over 17,000, and necessitated much hard work and responsibility from its vicar. Canon Morris, at the time of his death, had recently resigned the living. He married a daughter of Lieut.-General C. E. Gold, at one time Colonel of the 65th Regiment of Foot, who predeceased him in October, 1916. He leaves a family of three sons and five daughters to mourn the loss of a good and affectionate father.

H. T.

only Taylor

