

VI.—OBITUARY NOTICES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.

1. The late SHERITON HOLMES, a vice-president, and for many years the treasurer of the society.

By F. W. DENDY.

[Read on the 30th of May, 1900.]

On the 2nd of May, 1900, the members of the society lost by death one of their most valued and esteemed colleagues, the late Mr. Sheriton Holmes, who became a member in 1877, was elected on the council in 1883, served the society as its honorary treasurer from 1890 to 1900, and was appointed a vice-president in the year preceding his death. Sheriton Holmes was born at 35, Wellington Street, South Shields, on the 17th of March, 1829. He was the son of Ralph Holmes of that place and of Elizabeth, his wife, formerly Elizabeth Sheriton of Dinnington, whose sister, Anne Sheriton, married William Swan of Walker, and was the mother of a numerous family, including our member, Mr. Henry F. Swan of North Jesmond, and his sister, the late Mrs. Charles Mitchell of Jesmond Towers.

Mr. Holmes was educated at a private school in Wharfedale, whither he travelled by coach, the railway, at that time, having been only completed as far north as Darlington.

He was articled in 1845 to Mr. John Bourne, formerly of Newcastle and afterwards of Leeds, civil engineer and land agent, a connection of his mother's family. The growth of the railway system was at that time extending throughout the north of England and in the south of Scotland, and, during his articles, he was employed in surveying portions of the Newcastle and Berwick railway, the Caledonian line, the branch railway to Langholm, and the line from Northallerton to Stockton. After serving his time he became connected with many railway and engineering enterprises in Yorkshire, and in the north of England, and he then went to London for a time and assisted Sir George Bruce in various undertakings in different parts of England, including railways in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. In 1863 he laid down buoys off Whitley to mark the measured knot. He was resident engineer for a portion of the Border Counties line (now the Waverley route of the North British



Yours faithfully
Sheriton Holmes

THE LATE MR. SHERITON HOLMES, A VICE-PRESIDENT, AND FOR MANY YEARS TREASURER,
OF THE SOCIETY.



railway) and subsequently for the line from Scotsgap to Rothbury, which, though not designed by him, was completed under his superintendence. This line, as originally projected, was to extend from Newcastle to the north of Northumberland under the title of the Northumberland Central Railway, and was designed to be independent both of the North Eastern and the North British railways, but only the short section from Scotsgap to Rothbury was ever constructed, and this was from the first worked by the North British company and has for many years formed a part of their system. Subsequently he designed and carried out the slipway of the Wallsend Slipway Company, and waterworks at Guisborough, Exmouth and other places.

In 1883, he designed the Elswick shipyard of Sir W. G. Armstrong, Mitchell & Co., Limited, including the berths from which H.M.S. Victoria and many other warships have since been launched. In 1892 he designed and carried out the large graving dock of the Wallsend Slipway Company, and after that was finished in 1894, although still consulted about works on which he had formerly been engaged, he practically retired from the active exercise of his profession.

He was always keenly interested in art matters, was a critic whose opinions were valued, and was himself a sketcher of no mean ability in water-colours and in black and white. He was one of the founders of the Arts Association, which had several notable exhibitions in the Westgate Road Assembly Rooms about 20 years ago, and was a member of the arts committee of the jubilee exhibition of 1887.

He was, however, best known in later years from his connection with our society. He took a great interest in its proceedings, and many articles and sketches by him appear in the pages of its transactions. The following is a list of his contributions to the *Archaeologia Aeliana* :—

- 1882.—An account of recent investigations at the ruined chapel of North Gosforth, *Arch. Ael.* vol. ix. p. 205.
- 1886.—On a building at Cilurnum supposed to be Roman, *Ibid.* vol. xii. p. 124.
- 1891.—Memoranda relating to the King's Meadows, *Ibid.* vol. xv. p. 208.
- 1894.—The Roman Bridges across the North Tyne River near Chollerford, *Ibid.* vol. xvi. p. 328.
- 1895.—The Walls of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, *Ibid.* vol. xviii. p. 1.
- 1897.—An obituary notice of the late John Crosse Brooks, *Ibid.* vol. xix. p. 143.

All these articles, except the last one, he illustrated by careful and complete plans and sketches, which considerably enhanced their value and interest. The last of his many sketches for the *Proceedings* is one of Belsay castle, which will be found at p. 191 of the current volume.

At the request of the history committee, Mr. Holmes revised and extended his article on the Roman bridge at Chollerford for the fourth volume of the new Northumberland county history, and the excellent partly coloured plans and the illustrations of the details of the bridge, which appear opposite p. 166 of that volume, are his work. He had read a paper on the same subject at a meeting of this society as early as 1873, and that was his first introduction to the antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The Roman Wall excavation committee, of which he was a member, is indebted to him for plans and surveys of the transverse cutting of the *vallum* at Heddon-on-the-Wall and of the work done at Down Hill. He also made plans of the ruins laid bare at *Aesica* in 1894 and 1895, and assisted in the supervision of the excavations there, and in the drawing up of the report upon the subject, which has not yet been presented to the members. His engineering knowledge made him an expert at excavations, and his experience as a constructor and his long acquaintance with the Wall enabled him to appreciate the skill of its ancient builders, and to recognise more clearly than others the ends which they had in view.

In 1899 he wrote, in conjunction with Mr. Heslop, a short, popular illustrated guide to the Castle and the Black Gate, for the use of visitors to those buildings.

Throughout the ten years during which he acted as treasurer of the society he exercised a most careful supervision over its finances: he systematized the books used for the accounts; and he constructed with much labour and research, and handed over to his successor for future use, an interesting diagram to scale, recording for each year from 1856 the total income and expenditure of the society, the number of its members, and the income and expenditure of the Castle and the Black Gate, adding notes which give the reasons for excessive results in certain years.

Owing to failing health, he resigned his post as treasurer at the

end of 1899. The heart disease of which he died four months later had already impaired his physical powers, but it happily left his mind unclouded to the end. Many of the members of the society joined in paying him the last token of their respect when his body was committed to the earth at St. Andrew's cemetery on the 5th of May, 1900.

Mr. Holmes was married on the 6th of July, 1859. His wife died before him on the 19th of January, 1899, and at his death he left surviving him two children—a son, Mr. Ralph Sheriton Holmes, who is a member of this society, and a daughter, who is unmarried.

The memory of those who knew him the best, and therefore loved and respected him the most, turns, not so much to the work he did, as to the man he was—kindly, upright, generous, fearless, and companionable, with a keen sense of humour, a strong love of nature, and an appreciation both of what was beautiful and fair in the life around him and of what was memorable and sacred in the days of old.

One by one the members of our society depart this life. The place which once knew them so well knows them no more for ever. For a time their memory lingers in the hearts and minds of their contemporaries, and then nothing is left but the more shadowy, although more lasting, written record of their labours. May the task which thus falls to the survivors, of holding up the light which glimmers on by-gone times, find in the future as able and as willing hands as those now laid to their eternal rest.

2. The late R. S. FERGUSON, LL.D., F.S.A., and chancellor of Carlisle.

By T. HODGKIN, D.C.L., F.S.A.

[Read on the 28th March, 1900.]

The cause of archaeological science in the North of England has sustained a heavy loss by the death of Richard Saul Ferguson, chancellor of the diocese of Carlisle, and a member of our own and many other antiquarian societies.

Mr. Ferguson, who was descended from a family which has for several generations held a high position as manufacturers in Carlisle, was born in that city on the 28th of July, 1837. After spending his schoolboy days at the Grammar Schools of Carlisle and Shrewsbury,