



SIDNEY STORY CARR, F.S.A.

VIII.—A MEMOIR OF SIDNEY STORY CARR.

BY JOHN OXBERRY, ONE OF THE SECRETARIES.

[Read on 29th May, 1929.]

Sidney Story Carr became a member of the society in July, 1892, thirty-seven years ago, when he was little more than a youth. Seven years later, when Richard Oliver Heslop accepted Dr. Hodgkin's place as the society's joint secretary with Robert Blair, Mr. Carr was chosen to succeed him on the council. His membership of the council he retained until he took over the secretaryship and editorship of *Proceedings* at the annual meeting in 1924. This dual office he held for three years. Failing health compelled him to ask to be relieved of the work, and on his resignation in January, 1927, he was re-appointed to the place on the council he had vacated three years previously. For the short remnant of life that was left him he continued to be a member of the council and at the time of his death was its senior member.

Such, in brief outline, is the history of Mr. Carr's connexion with the society. But it is inadequate as a statement of his services to it, it indicates his long association with but does not reveal his services to it. It would be untrue to claim for Mr. Carr that he achieved eminence as an antiquary. He was endowed with the tastes and many of the qualifications needed, and, as we have seen, was attracted to the society at an age when thoughts, as a rule, are more concerned with the enjoyment of the present than with problems of the past. In the early years of his membership he was enthusiastic and eager

to add his quota to our store of archæological knowledge, as the records of the society abundantly prove.

But in the study of antiquities physical fitness counts for much. There is outside exploration to be done as well as inside reading, and when Mr. Carr's health became so seriously impaired, as, unfortunately, it did become through an attack of rheumatic fever while he was still a young member, his career as an antiquary was shorn of the usefulness that might have marked it under more favourable circumstances.

A little over three years after Mr. Carr joined the society he began to contribute to its proceedings. His initial contribution was a short paper read in connexion with his donation of a pre-Conquest cross shaft found at Tynemouth (*Proc.*, 2nd ser., VIII, 163). Other notes from his pen followed dealing with the demolition of two buildings in Tynemouth castle yard—the old lighthouse and the governor's residence—both seventeenth century structures and both known to have been largely built from the ruins of the priory. He was able, through regular attendance and watchfulness during the operations, to rescue from the hands of the workmen a number of stones that had originally belonged to the priory, and in the society's annual report for 1898 his vigilance in this matter was noted and commended. One of the fruits of his attention to this class of archæological investigation was a paper he read to the society on the 26th August, 1903, on *The early monumental remains of Tynemouth* (*Arch. Ael.*, 2nd ser., XXV, 118).

In the early years of his membership Mr. Carr devoted a good deal of his leisure to the study of heraldry and its kindred pursuit, genealogy. At the October meeting in 1898, he gave an account of some old heraldic glass in Earsdon church (*Proc.*, 2nd ser., VIII, 254), and a year after read a note on *A heraldic visit to Seaton Delaval in the late nineteenth century* (*Proc.*, 2nd ser., IX, 179). A paper on *The Lacys of Tynemouth, Newcastle and Eden Lacy*, followed in March, 1900 (*Proc.*, 2nd ser.,

IX, 219), and eight years later he dealt with *The Ryton brasses with some account of archdeacon Bunney and his family*, exhibiting at the same time coloured drawings by himself of the coats of arms on the brasses (*Arch. Ael.*, 3rd ser., V, 146). Except for a short memoir of his friend Maberly Philips (*Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser., I, 316), this was Mr. Carr's last contribution to our transactions, though, as many of our members will recall, at our out-door meetings he was always ready to serve as guide and interpreter when a visit was made to a place he knew.

Mr. Carr, like his father before him, was a native of Tynemouth. He was born there on the 10th February, 1870. His father, Robert C. Carr, and his grandfather, John Carr, were earthenware manufacturers, and for the greater part of last century—the manufactory was established in 1814 by the grandfather—Carr's Pottery at the Low Lights was a familiar landmark to North Shields people. It was here that Mr. Sidney Story Carr began his business career. After attending a preparatory school at Tynemouth, he was educated at Giggleswick school, and entered his father's office on the conclusion of his school life. He remained there until the final closing down of the works, joining afterwards with his father—who died only four and a half years ago at the advanced age of eighty-seven—in carrying on the business of a coal merchant.

Mr. Carr took no part in what is usually spoken of as public life. His disposition led him to seek an outlet for his abilities in other directions. He was an occasional contributor of articles dealing with antiquarian subjects to the newspaper press of the district, and in addition to his connexion with our society he was a vice-president of the Tynemouth Society of Antiquaries. He never married. Of his personal characteristics it need only be said here that he was liked for his geniality and kindness by everyone who knew him. He was a good companion and possessed, what was not generally realized by those who saw him only at our meetings, a fund of dry humour,

mixed at times with a touch of inoffensive irony, that enabled him, not unseldom, to colour his talk with a flash of brightness and good-tempered raillery. Despite the physical disability under which he laboured he contrived to accomplish a fair share of useful work, and the courage he exhibited in battling against recurring periods of ill-health won him the sympathy and respect of all his acquaintances.

It was a source of gratification to him and the members of our society that his work as an antiquary gained for him two years ago the honour of being elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. This was a consolation to him in his sickness, but the greater consolation—the hope he entertained to the last of being able to resume his seat at the council table of our society—was denied him. “Since I broke down,” he said in one of his latest letters, “I have missed the monthly meetings more than anything else I have been deprived of.” In each letter he was hoping to attend the next meeting, but the effort was generally beyond him. He was seldom well enough to come amongst us during the last two years of his life. On the 11th of April, 1929, he passed away, and the society was deprived by his death of a loyal friend who was ever ready to serve it.