

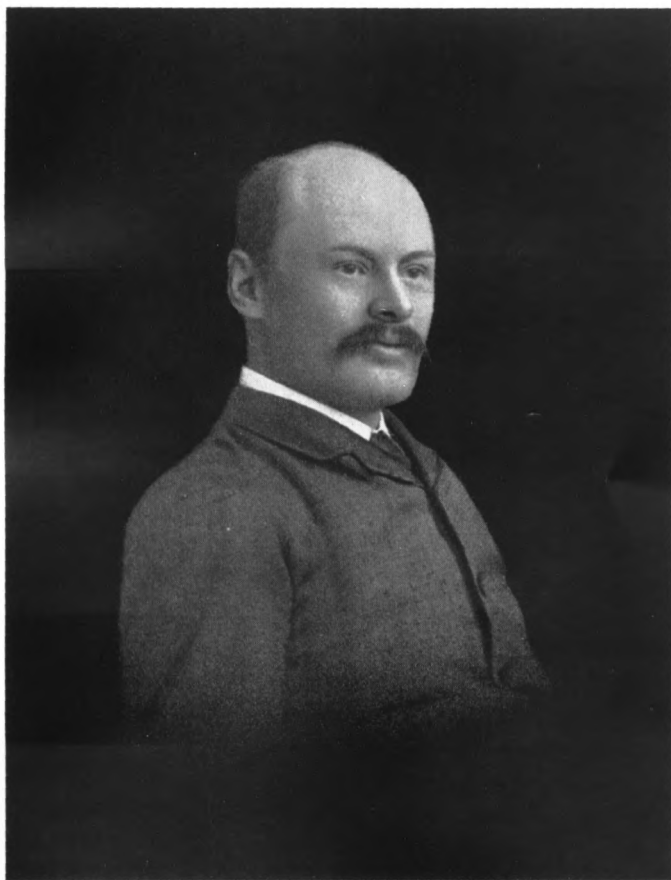
XII.—MEMOIR OF CHARLES CLEMENT HODGES.

BY JOHN OXBERRY, A SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY.

[Read on 30th March, 1932.]

To us of this generation the names of Bruce and the Roman Wall are indissolubly linked together. The one suggests the other. In the same way and for the same reason the name of Charles Clement Hodges will be associated for generations to come with the names of Hexham and its abbey. To him posterity must turn whenever it is seeking to perfect its knowledge of either one or the other. The council of our society recognized this in its own way when in the annual report for 1888, in recording the publication of what it calls Hodges' important monograph on the abbey of St. Andrew at Hexham, it speaks of it as "a work which will no doubt be the quarry out of which all future descriptions of that noble but cruelly injured fabric will derive their interest." This monograph he had been fifteen years in preparing, and that represents only a fraction of the time and thought he gave to the subject it deals with.

His activities, however, as an archæologist were not confined to Hexham. In going through the transactions of our society and other similar societies in the north of England, issued from about thirty-five to fifty years ago, few things of a personal kind are more noticeable than the almost sudden rise into prominence amongst antiquaries of the name of Hodges. He joined the Durham and Northumberland Architectural and Archæological Society



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in 1880, when he was a young man of twenty-eight, and in the following year he was elected a member of our society. Immediately we find his name figuring in the accounts of the outdoor meetings of both societies as guide and expositor at the various places visited. In this capacity his range extended from the Borders to the south of Yorkshire. One day he is with a party at Norham castle, a little later we find him at Jervaulx abbey. As time progressed he became recognized throughout the northern counties as one who spoke with the authority of an expert on the military and ecclesiastical architecture of the early and medieval periods of our history. On the Saxon church at Escombe he wrote an article in the *Reliquary and Illustrated Archæologist*, which, according to a quotation given in our *Proceedings* (3rd ser., I, p. 266), professor Baldwin Brown characterized as "quite the best written account of the church." At a joint meeting of north country societies, of which our own was one, he was chosen to describe Lindisfarne, an erection of a later period, and we are told in the report of the gathering that "he delivered to a very large audience a clear and graphic description of the monastic buildings." During the earlier years of his career as an archæologist his services were being continually requisitioned for this purpose, and those of us who are able to speak from later experiences of his qualifications for the work do not wonder that his help was so frequently sought. I refer to and wish to stress this early exhibition of a wide knowledge of the ancient structures—military and ecclesiastical—of northern England, and the recognition of it by the older antiquaries of his day, because it affords proof that his youth and the dawn of his manhood had not been spent in idleness. A poet, we are told, is born and not made. It is quite the opposite with an archæologist or an historian. He may have a natural bias towards his subject, as Mr. Hodges undoubtedly had, but the knowledge needed to establish a claim to the title can only be won by close and persistent effort. Study and personal investigation, accuracy as an

observer, the careful comparison of object with object, all this and much more must have gone to the making of this young archæologist who gained and kept the attention of other workers of established reputation in the same line of research.

Charles Clement Hodges was born on May 10th, 1852, at Wentworth in Yorkshire. He was one of the eight children of the rev. William Hodges, who was then curate in charge of Wentworth and private chaplain to earl Fitzwilliam, but who during the last ten years of his life was rector of Trusley, in Derbyshire. Hodges went first to a school at Oxford and afterwards to one at Manchester. He came north to take up a situation at Consett ironworks when he was about seventeen years of age. William Jenkins, a distant relative and friend of the family, was appointed manager of the works in 1869, and served the cause of archæology in the north of England much better than he knew when he gave his youthful relative a place on the drawing office staff at Consett. Hodges was seven years at Consett. The term of his service coincided with the period of the firm's greatest prosperity. The output of the works was increasing by leaps and bounds in the early seventies, and a substantial share of the profits resulting was being spent in reconstruction and expansion. Those employed in the drawing office would find abundant occupation in preparing plans for new blast-furnaces and new dwellings for workmen. But it may be readily conceived from subsequent developments in his career, that this was not a class of work that appealed to Hodges. To the study of antiquities he had already begun to make some approach, and a visit to the old town Hexham and its ancient abbey church decided him when the opportunity came to sever his connection with Consett and settle there. It was a momentous choice. For the greater part of the remainder of his life, and for almost the whole of his active career as architect and archæologist, he became identified with Hexham and its numerous relics of antiquarian interest.

He was a keen cyclist and has the credit of being one of the founders of the Cyclists' Touring Club. Fond of nature study, with botany as a chief attraction, and keen on extending his knowledge of architecture, especially on its archæological side, he, from Hexham as a centre, explored the countryside on his bicycle in pursuit of his studies for many miles round. Adding photography to his hobbies he became an expert in the use of the camera and accumulated a store of negatives, now in the possession of our member, Mr. John Gibson, showing views of places and objects of historical or antiquarian interest whose value as records of things as they were must increase as time passes.

He was already a member of the Durham and Northumberland Architectural and Archæological Society when an incident occurred which brought him into touch with our own. This was his discovery of the well-known Roman standard-bearer monument which now occupies a prominent place near the foot of the north stair in the south transept of the abbey church. It was brought to the notice of Bruce, who read a paper on the slab at a meeting of our society held on October 26th, 1881. The stone, Bruce said (*Arch. Ael.*, 2nd ser., IX, 164), had been discovered on the 19th September by Charles Clement Hodges when searching for a crypt that was said to exist under the chamber adjoining the south transept of the Priory church. It was at this meeting and with this introduction that Hodges joined our society. By this time he had become favourably known to William Greenwell and other antiquaries and soon began to take an active share in the work of the society and, in February 1890, was elected a member of the council. His membership lapsed for a period of ten years, but he rejoined and by a rather melancholy coincidence the last contribution he was destined to lay before our society was read by him at a meeting held when the fiftieth anniversary of the date of his first election as a member had just passed. The memory of his last appearance amongst us, with the

infirmities of age bearing heavily upon him, is still fresh and nothing need be said here to revive it.

A list of his chief contributions to our publications will be printed with this memoir, and it is not necessary to make any allusion to them now except to say, what in gratitude ought to be said, that Hodges has enriched our transactions and the transactions of other societies akin to our own alike by pen and pencil, and by services extending over a long series of years has rendered invaluable aid to the study of the archæology of northern England.

He was the author of several books. The first he published, when he was twenty-eight years old, was a short monograph accompanied by twelve plates under the title *Illustrations of the Priory Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Blyth, Nottinghamshire. The preface to this is dated Hexham, March 1881, six months before he joined our society.

In 1884 he commenced the issue in parts of *The Sepulchral Slabs, Grave Covers*, etc., of the Middle Ages in the county of Durham. He, however, did not receive the support for the venture that he had anticipated, and after the issue of forty plates in two parts the work was discontinued, never, unfortunately, to be resumed.

In 1888, what I think we are warranted in calling his masterpiece appeared—an imperial folio on the *Abbey of St. Andrew Hexham*, with sixty-four full page plates, one of which is an heraldic title illuminated in gold, silver and colours. Reference has already been made to this volume which at a meeting at Hexham at the time of its publication William Greenwell declared to be “the grandest and most exhaustive illustration of an ecclesiastical establishment which had been published in England.” In the following year Hodges wrote and Franklin, the Newcastle bookseller, published, *An Historical Guide to Hexham and its Abbey*, a capital little book which the knowledge and abilities of its author lifted rather higher than the ordinary guide-book standard. The preface is particularly

characteristic of the trenchant style Hodges was capable of employing with pen or tongue when the occasion demanded it. In 1907, he wrote in conjunction with the rector of Hexham, canon E. S. Savage, M.A., a *Record of All Works connected with Hexham Abbey* since January, 1899, and now in progress. The restoration of the abbey in which he played a leading part from the beginning was undoubtedly the crowning architectural achievement of Mr. Hodges' life. In the summary of the work accomplished, written by canon Savage as an introduction to the *Record*, he says: "We have satisfaction in knowing that with Mr. Temple Moore and Mr. Charles Clement Hodges as professional associates we are in safe hands. They are architects in the forefront for archæological knowledge, and they will deal tenderly with the venerable and priceless relics which the piety and munificence of past ages have bequeathed to us to-day. Mr. C. C. Hodges is the highest authority on Hexham abbey, and we and those who follow us will always owe a great debt to him." In 1913 Hodges wrote and Gibson & Son published, and illustrated with some fine photographic productions, *A Guide to the Priory Church of St. Andrew Hexham with an Account of the Town of Hexham*. This secured a steady sale, and a second edition of it, revised by Mr. John Gibson, was issued in 1921. One other publication he set his hand to, when in 1919, with Mr. John Gibson as his partner in its authorship, *Hexham and its Abbey*, a profusely illustrated guide, was published.

What have thus far been mentioned as his contributions to historical and archæological literature by no means exhaust the productions of his pen, and no account has been taken of the important work he did in the design of memorial crosses. For this class of work he was peculiarly well fitted by the close attention he had given from an early portion of his archæological career to Anglian and Anglo-Saxon art. He acquired a wide reputation for the design of this type of memorial, as examples of his skill

erected at Whitby, Durham, Roker, Hexham, Rothbury and elsewhere sufficiently testify.

Hodges married on December 14th, 1886, Emma, only daughter of William Carnley, of East Torrington, Lincolnshire. His wife pre-deceased him, but three daughters and a son who is abroad in the service of the Malayan government, survive him.

He died at Low Fell on Monday, the 18th of January, 1932, and was buried at Saltwell Cemetery, Gateshead, on the 21st of January.

This sketch of his career is short and admittedly imperfect. He had outlived most of the friends of his early days, and his relatives reside at a distance. That its imperfections are not more numerous is due to the help afforded by Hodges' sister, Mrs. Slingsby, and his daughter, Miss Frida Hodges. Mr. W. H. Knowles, who was associated with him in the later eighties and nineties of last century, has supplied useful items of information, and Mr. John Gibson, who was intimately acquainted from boyhood upwards with his work at Hexham, has provided valuable help. Mr. W. Soden-Bird has been of assistance, and Mr. and Mrs. Harris with whom he passed the last years of his life have also been ready to lend whatever aid they could. To all of these thanks are due.

The separate publications issued by Hodges have been mentioned in the text of this account of his career. In a tribute to the industry he displayed in furthering the work of the society, our president, Dr. Dendy, said at the last annual meeting, that "From the time of his first election in 1881, more than fifty years ago, down to November of last year he had furnished in formal papers and shorter statements more than fifty contributions to the society's records." The greater number of these were addresses or descriptions given at outdoor meetings, and are to be found in *Proceedings*. To *Archæologia Aeliana* he contributed the papers specified below.

Two medieval grave covers from St. Nicholas, Newcastle. 2nd ser., XII, 130.

A bronze grave chalice from Hexham. 2nd ser., XV, 193.

The Conyers falchion. 2nd ser., XV, 214.

Some medieval carved chests. 2nd ser., XV, 295.

Sedgefeld church. 2nd ser., XVI, 379.

Priory church at Tynemouth. 3rd ser., XIX, 105.

Conventual buildings at Hexham. 3rd ser., XXI, 214.

The Ancient Cross, Rothbury. 4th ser., I, 159.

Simonburn church. 4th ser., I, 179.

Mitford church. 4th ser., V, 75.

Whittingham church. 4th ser., V, 81.

For the transactions of other societies and for archæological periodicals he wrote numerous papers. Of these outside contributions a series of half a dozen articles on *The pre-Conquest churches of Northumbria*, which appeared in vols. VII and VIII of *The Reliquary* may be mentioned, and three illustrated papers of his in *The Builder* ought not to be omitted. These were on Durham Cathedral (3rd June, 1893, vol. LXIV, p. 427), on Holy Island (1st June, 1895, vol. LXVIII, p. 414) and on Hexham Abbey (1st April, 1899, vol. LXXVI, p. 322).