

XIV.—MEMOIRS.

1.—SIR CHARLES PEERS.

By the death of Sir Charles Peers, which occurred in December 1952, the country has lost a practical archæologist, unrivalled in his day for knowledge of English monastic buildings, and one who rendered the greatest service in their preservation. In the chosen field of his studies, he ranked in the line of succession to Sir William St. John Hope. It was natural that our Society should pay him the compliment of electing him as an honorary member in 1927, in which year he contributed to its publications an important paper on the buildings of Finchale Priory (*AA*⁴ iv, 193-220).

Peers was born in 1868 and received an architectural training in the office of Sir Thomas Graham Jackson. In Jackson he had a master who was not merely a widely employed architect, but a learned authority upon Gothic style. Peers's tastes inclined him to the study of the past. His opportunity came when he was appointed, in 1903, to be architectural editor of the *Victoria County Histories*, a task which occupied him for the next seven years. Before he relinquished it, he had been elected secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of London and he continued to serve as an officer of that society for twenty-six years on end; first as secretary (1908-21), then as director (1921-9), and finally as president (1929-34).

He left the *Victoria County Histories* to become Inspector of Ancient Monuments under the Office of Works. Only three years later he was made Chief Inspector and retained that post for twenty years (1913-33). So he found his life's work. The Ancient Monuments Act, passed in the

year in which he became Chief Inspector, was inspired by him, and he had equal responsibility for the amending act which a threat to the existence of the Roman Wall caused to be passed in 1931. He was well fitted for carrying out the provisions of the act. To a natural charm and agreeable approach, he united great organizing powers. So he was able to win the confidence of land-owners and get many an important ruin entrusted to his Department. Over half the sites that now rank as Ancient Monuments were taken over while he was Chief Inspector. In our own county of Northumberland the sites include the ruins of Lindisfarne (1913), Warkworth Castle and Hermitage (1922-3), Norham Castle (1923), part of Berwick Castle walls (1923), Dunstanburgh (1929), and the Roman station at Corbridge (1933). Peers laid down the lines on which such sites should be treated for their better preservation. He cleared ancient buildings of the trees and creepers that were destroying them; he trained up a school of masons to repair decaying stonework, building it up only so far as was necessary for security; he revealed ground-plans through excavation, levelled the surrounds and substituted attractive grass lawns for untidy heaps of turf-covered ruin. His work added enormously to the interest, and even to the picturesqueness, of the sites he treated, and was always a model of discretion.

He set a value upon co-ordination in field-work and upon the publications of results. He saw to the compilation of accurate guides to his Monuments, and himself published monographs on some of them. So his excavations in Lindisfarne Priory led to the paper he contributed to *Archæologia* (LXXIV, 255-70) on the inscribed and sculptured stones of Lindisfarne. Early Anglo-Saxon building and art-forms had a special interest for him, as can be seen from the elaborate paper on the Saxon monastery of Whitby, which he and Mr. Raleigh Radford published in *Archæologia* (LXXXIX, 27-88), and from the account he wrote, in 1930, of recent discoveries in York Minster (*Antiquaries Journal*, XI, 113-22). Mention has already been made of his article on Finchale, with

its account of his discovery of St. Godric's original church of St. John Baptist, and of the temporary buildings of the first monastic settlement.

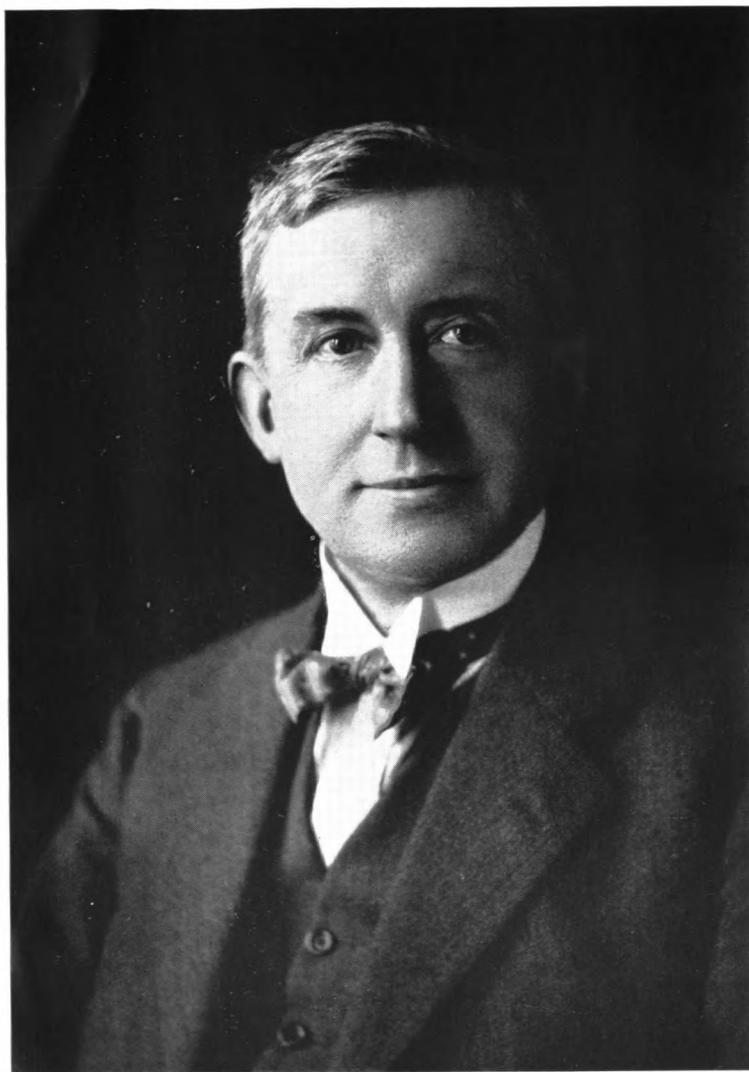
Nor let his work as a practical architect be forgotten. He was architect in charge of the Durham Castle restoration scheme from 1933 till its completion and so saved the Castle from falling in ruin down the steep hillside. He was consulting architect both to Durham Cathedral and to York Minster. Here we have spoken only of his activities in the northern counties. They extended equally over the whole country. He remained surveyor of Westminster Abbey almost to the end of his life.

EDMUND CRASTER.

2.—ALEXANDER HAMILTON THOMPSON.

Professor Hamilton Thompson (plate xxvii), an honorary member of this Society since 1923, died at Exmouth on the 4th September, 1952, in his seventy-ninth year. He was the eldest son of the Rev. John Thompson, vicar of St. Gabriel's, Bristol, and was educated at Clifton College and St. John's College, Cambridge. It was as a lecturer for the Cambridge University Extension Syndicate that he began, in 1902, an association with Newcastle upon Tyne which was to last for full fifty years. His first course of lectures, upon *Nineteenth-Century Novelists*,¹ reflected his great interest in English literature; but three years later he began in 1905 the long series of lectures upon mediæval ecclesiastical and military architecture and history which remained his abiding interest and in which he became the most distinguished scholar of his time. These continued, except during the first World War, until 1922, and filled the lecture theatre of the Literary and Philosophical Society; for they then represented the only means by which study upon university lines could be undertaken by non-university students.

¹ See *Bibliography* of his writings. Privately printed, Oxford, 1948.



ALEXANDER HAMILTON THOMPSON.

His lecturing style, clear, incisive, scholarly and enlivened by a dry academic humour aroused an interest in these subjects which is still a force in the city.

He was appointed lecturer in English at Armstrong College (now King's) in 1919 and came with his wife and daughters to live in Newcastle. In 1921 he became Reader in Mediæval History and Archæology at the same college; but in the following year left Newcastle for a similar post at Leeds University, where two years later he became Professor of Mediæval History and was head of the History department from 1927 until he retired in 1939.

He joined our Society in October 1919, becoming a member of its Council in 1921, resigning upon leaving Newcastle in 1922. He took a very full part in all its activities and contributed papers to the third series of *Archæologia Aeliana* upon the *Parish Churches of Northumberland*,² *The Books of the Company of Skinners and Glovers of Newcastle*, and *The Mercers and Goldsmiths of Durham*.³ He had also joined the Surtees Society in December 1919, and was its honorary secretary from 1920 until 1950. In those thirty years he gave it new life, and new reputation—when it might well be said its secretary was the society—by the numerous volumes which he edited or wrote.

The list is too long to give in detail, but one may name, as of special local interest, a new edition of the *Durham Liber Vitæ*, a scholarly edition of *The Statutes of the Cathedral Church of Durham*, and, not least, *The History of the Surtees Society*, written for its centenary in 1935, which contains a list of the Society's publications with notes upon their contents and sources, also a roll of the Society's members and officials from 1815 to 1938.

He also joined, in 1919, the Durham and Northumberland Architectural and Archæological Society, becoming its president from 1921 until 1936. Even after he had left the north he would always attend the annual meeting, and year

² *AA*³, xviii, pp. 19-42 and *ibid.*, pp. 121-202.

³ *Ibid.*, xix, pp. 210-50.

by year gave his presidential address upon some subject of local archæology or history.

He was also a valued member of the Newcastle upon Tyne Records Committee, from its beginning in 1919 until 1924, and edited its volume for 1922 on *Northumberland Plea Rolls, 1198-1272*, one of its most useful and important publications.

The departure of himself and his family from Newcastle in 1923 was a loss deeply felt by his colleagues and friends. Both our Society and the Literary and Philosophical shewed their appreciation of his work and influence upon the study of local archæology, history and architecture by electing him an honorary member.

During the few years that they were citizens of Newcastle he and his wife Amy, the daughter of Alfred Gosling, whom he had married in 1903 and who died in 1945, had taken a leading part in the religious, academic and social life of the town. An outstanding example of this was *A Pageant of Northumbrian History*, which they organized and produced jointly in 1923, in eleven scenes, each given by a different local parish and each devised, rehearsed and dressed by Mrs. Hamilton Thompson. His share was the *Book of the Pageant*, providing an historical introduction to each scene, with prologue and epilogue in verse.

During these years, in addition to his varied work for learned societies, he was writing such books as *The Cambridge Colleges* (1898 and 1910), *English Literature* (1901), *Shakespeare's Plays* (1904-6), *The Plans, History and Architecture of the Parish Churches of England* (1911), and his standard work upon *Military Architecture in England during the Middle Ages* (1912), illustrated by delightful sketches and drawings by his wife. By 1914 he had edited the first volume of his *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln*, a series which "ran like a thread" through all his other work until its six large volumes were completed some thirty years later.

It is not, however, our purpose to follow Hamilton

Thompson's distinguished career after he left the north, this will receive wider publicity elsewhere.

There may be added here only the royal and academic honours bestowed upon him. He was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his work upon three Royal Commissions, upon *Ancient Monuments*, *Historical Monuments* and *Cathedral Statutes*. He was an honorary Doctor of Letters in the universities of Oxford and Durham and Doctor of Laws in that of Leeds, a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and, in the last-named, vice-president in 1933-37 and councillor in 1940-41. His own college of St. John, Cambridge, made him an Honorary Fellow in 1939, and—an honour he greatly valued—he was for many years an Honorary Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

C.H.H.B.

3.—CHARLES EDWIN WHITING.

On March 24th, 1953, at the age of 81, Charles Edwin Whiting, M.A., D.D., D.C.L., D.Litt, F.S.A., Emeritus Professor of History in the University of Durham and an honorary Canon of Durham Cathedral, died at Hickleton Vicarage, Yorkshire (plate XXVIII).

For over thirty years a member of our Society, he served for many years on the council, was a vice-president from 1938 to 1942, and president from 1944 to 1946. A devoted member of the Society, month by month—in spite of ill-health and the difficulties of twentieth-century travel—he made the long journey from South Yorkshire to Newcastle to preside over our meetings and to guide us with his counsel. The death of one so wise in counsel, so full of patience, so charitable to the weak and so unsparing in encouragement and advice to the student, has left a gap in our ranks difficult indeed to fill.

Though his main interest lay in the history of the

Restoration Period, yet his original work was by no means confined to that period. Selecting only from our publications, a study of a Samian bowl from Binchester, an account of the Saxon Bishops of Hexham, a description of Durham Castle and a centenary appreciation of Robert Surtees, bear ample testimony to his wide range of learning. But it was rather in the tasks of editorship, always laborious, not infrequently dull and tedious, that Whiting excelled. For the Surtees Society he edited two volumes of the *Autobiographies and Letters of Dean Comber* and a volume of the *Durham Civic Records*. For the Yorkshire Archæological Society, of which he became president in 1948, he edited several volumes of parish registers, churchwardens' accounts, and eighteenth-century diaries, as well as making numerous contributions to their Journal.

To the University of Durham, Whiting for forty years devoted all his energy and talents. He had been elected to a theological scholarship at Hatfield College in 1898, and, excepting seven years when he was assistant curate in the parish of St. James's, Gateshead, he spent the remainder of his long life, until compelled by age to vacate his professorship, in the service of St. Chad's College and the University. In 1906 he had become Vice-Principal at St. Chad's Hostel for preparatory training of candidates for ordination at Hooton Pagnell and, when the hostel was closed in 1916, he came to Durham as Vice-Principal of St. Chad's College, an office which he held until retirement in 1939. During that period, in addition to his responsibilities as Vice-Principal and Senior Fellow of the College he took a full share in the teaching activities of the University, holding the offices of Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History from 1918 to 1922, Reader in Modern History from 1922 to 1931, becoming the first Professor of Modern History in the Durham Colleges in that year. In spite of the handicap of ill-health and the manifold duties which his membership of the Council of the Durham Colleges and of the Senate involved, he carried out a series of important researches into the



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history of seventeenth-century Puritanism, the records of the city guilds and the history of the foundation and progress of the University of Durham. This period of intense activity resulted in the publication of what was perhaps his greatest achievement, an important volume entitled *Studies in English Puritanism, 1660-1668*. When, in 1932, the University celebrated the centenary of its foundation, it naturally fell to Whiting's lot to record the first hundred years of its story. For some years he edited *The Durham University Journal* and contributed numerous articles to its pages. To the *Transactions of the Durham and Northumberland Architectural and Archæological Society*, to the presidency of which he succeeded on the retirement of Hamilton Thompson, he also contributed many articles. His retirement in 1939 left an unfilled gap in the University and in St. Chad's College, and divorced him from life-long interests. But he never lost the deep affection of his innumerable friends and pupils, among whom his kindness and charity of deed and spirit will long be remembered. These qualities enabled him to build at Hickleton a new, if lonelier, existence, no less full of social and spiritual value. But his heart remained in Durham, for whose fame he had been so zealous, and he always loved to revisit Tyneside antiquities and antiquaries. His death removes one who fostered and maintained good learning in our midst and deserved well indeed of a Society whose interests he had much at heart.

T. ROMANS.