



ROBERT HOLMES EDLESTON,

XIV.—MEMOIRS.

1.—ROBERT HOLMES EDLESTON.

Robert Holmes Edleston, of Gainford, Darlington (plate XXI), died on November 30th, 1952, after a very short illness, a few days before his eighty-fourth birthday. He was the only surviving son of the Rev. Joseph Edleston, M.A., LL.D., vicar of Gainford, and was born in the village which remained his home throughout his life. His mother was Harriet Sophia, youngest daughter of the Rev. James Cumming, M.A., F.R.S. (1771-1861), professor of chemistry in Cambridge for forty-six years and rector of North Runcton, Norfolk. He was educated privately.

He was a man of wide and varied interests, and lived a life of ceaseless activity. He was at one time churchwarden of Gainford and was a lay reader licensed in the dioceses of Ely and Gibraltar; he was also patron of a Yorkshire living. In the early years of the present century he took a keen though academic interest in the attempts of "Archbishop Mathew" to establish the Old Catholic Church in England after his consecration in Holland. From childhood he was fond of horses and had followed many packs of hounds, including the Zetland, North Durham, South Durham, Hurworth, Bedale, Cambridgeshire and Fitzwilliam. He was out riding shortly before his death. He became interested in bloodstock breeding, and had horses in training with H. Barker of Redcar, and at Newmarket. He also enjoyed trout and salmon fishing.

For services rendered to the Serene Republic of San Marino, a state in which he had long been interested, he was granted in 1926 the title of Baron de Montalbo. This

style gave him peculiar pleasure because of its local connection, John Bowes of Streatlam, in the old parish of Gainford, having married a Countess de Montalbo. He was also appointed consul for San Marino at Newcastle upon Tyne, and at the time of his death was doyen of the consular corps there. His work during the war of 1914-18 brought him the gold medal of the Italian Red Cross in 1919; he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of Francis I of Sicily in 1922 and a Knight Grand Cross of the same Order in 1926.

He had many associations with Cambridge, where his father, who went up in 1834, had been a wrangler as well as a classic and subsequently senior fellow and bursar of Trinity. He had in Jesus Lane a house which had been connected with his mother's family since 1820, and he resided there for part of each year, taking the opportunity to visit Newmarket. In 1899 he married Maud, daughter of the Rev. C. L. Acland, vicar of All Saints, Cambridge. She died in 1915.

In 1919 he became joint owner with his sister of the Palace of Buckden, Huntingdonshire, formerly a residence of the bishops of Lincoln, and undertook considerable repairs and restoration of the fifteenth-century building, especially of the gatehouse. In 1921 he published *Buckden Palace and its Owners* in the Transactions of the Peterborough Natural History and Museum Society.

Continental politics also claimed his attention, his particular interest being in the Second Empire and the person of Napoleon III. In 1908 he published a large book, *Napoleon III and Italy*, and in 1931 a smaller one, *Napoleon III, Speeches and Letters, with a Brief Chronological Record of European Events*. He collected a great deal of material for a book dealing with the various sojourns of the Emperor in England. He published nothing on this subject himself, but Ivor Guest's *Napoleon III in England* (1952) bears the dedication, "To my friend Robert Holmes Edleston who first suggested that this book be written, and on whose notes it is in part based".

Mr. Edleston's activities extended in another and a different direction, for he was chairman of a family business at Sowerby Bridge and quondam owner of the now defunct Gainford Gas Company, which his father had bought up to prevent the cessation of the supply of gas to the village.

Archæological interests involved him in the membership of many societies. He was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1902 and a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1904. At the time of his death he was the senior member of the Architectural and Archæological Society of Durham and Northumberland, which he joined in 1890; he served for many years on its committee. He succeeded his father as a member of the Surtees Society in 1895, becoming a vice-president in 1908. He also belonged to the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Antiquarian Society (now merged with the Cambridge Antiquarian Society), the Peterborough Archæological Society (of which he was at one time president), the Teesdale Record Society and the Norfolk Record Society.

His chosen field of archæological work lay at first, and always chiefly, in brasses—a study which he had begun as a boy. From these he was led as a logical consequence to the study of incised slabs. His collection of rubbings and tracings was very large, being almost complete for English brasses and very rich in those of the continent of Europe. He was particularly fond of discussing the evolution of ecclesiastical costume as illustrated by monumental slabs, and possessed a great store of knowledge of the *minutiæ* of this theme. He was indefatigable in the pursuit of rubbings both at home and abroad, making many arduous journeys to France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Poland and Scandinavia. He published reproductions of fifty slabs as supplements to Creeny's *Illustrations of Incised Slabs on the Continent of Europe*, and a further supplement was ready for publication when he died. They were accompanied in many cases by detailed historical notes. He also published

notes of many slabs and brasses in *The Antiquary, Local Notes and Queries*, of the counties of Gloucester and Northampton, *Notes and Queries*, the Transactions of the Peterborough society and Northumberland and Durham society, and in *Archæologia Aeliana*, 4th series, Vol. XVI, a paper upon *The incised slabs in Northumberland and Durham*. His interest in manorial records led him to become lord of numerous manors, including Streatlam and Stainton, Cleatlam, Westwick and Winston in the county of Durham.

To many, however, their most vivid recollections of R. H. Edleston will not be of his learning, his versatility, his churchmanship, his outspoken Conservatism or his business activities—they will be a grateful remembrance of his unfailing charm and courtesy, the youthful enthusiasm which never deserted him, his kindness to less experienced workers and the mutual devotion which marked the relationship between himself and his sister, who shared so many of his interests and who survives him.

The Society was represented at the funeral service at Gainford parish church by the Rev. T. Romans. The burial took place in the family vault at Sowerby Bridge.

C. W. GIBBY.

2.—ROBERT JOHN SCOTT BERTRAM.

On November 19th, 1953, in his eighty-second year, Robert John Scott Bertram, M.A., died in the home of his retirement, 17 Guisborough Road, Whitby, Yorkshire. A member of our Society since 1921, he served for many years on the Council and was a vice-president from 1941 to 1949 (plate XXII).

He was born in Newcastle upon Tyne, son of Robert Bertram, ship chandler, of Bigg Market, and his long and active professional life was spent in his native city and the surrounding countryside. At a very early age he displayed



ROBERT JOHN SCOTT BERTRAM.

natural powers of draughtsmanship and an artistic inclination which he was not slow to foster and develop, but his hopes of a professional career to exploit these talents were discouraged parentally in favour of coal exporting. It is probably due to his early association with Quayside and the older part of the city that his artistic studies led to the delineation of the ancient, picturesque buildings and streets and to a knowledge of their historical background.

Whilst still pursuing, without enthusiasm, the commercial career to which he seemed committed, he was awarded a scholarship tenable at the School of Art, in the Durham College of Science, Newcastle, and after some years of study and at the age of twenty-five he became part-time assistant at the school. His permanent career was definitely decided in 1902 on his appointment as full-time assistant and so began his long association with the teaching of art in what is now King's College. In 1920 he was appointed Master of Design, a post which he held until his retirement in 1937, at the age of sixty-five.

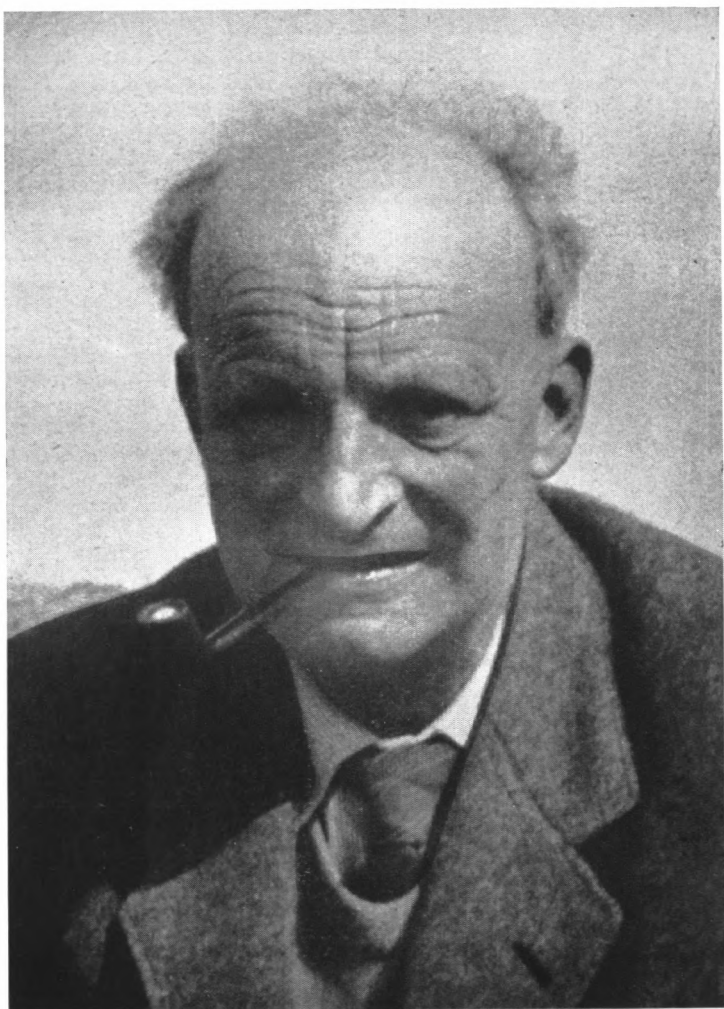
Robert Bertram possessed amazing vitality and energy which he expended generously in the interests of his work. In the formative years of his career, and in common with many of his colleagues, he was influenced by the work of William Morris in the field of design and by J. M. W. Turner in landscape composition, but in the course of years his individual style emerged. He never spared himself in his enthusiasm for art, whether in the field or in the studio. Travelling usually by bicycle, in rain or sunshine, he traversed the northern counties, drawing and recording the historic buildings and scenes of his native countryside. As might be expected, he became an acute observer and accumulated a vast knowledge of many subjects, gleaned by his enquiring and acquisitive mind. He possessed a facility for expression in most of the media used by artists, but by far the greater part of his output was with pen and ink, pencil and water-colour. In his earlier years he produced with pen and ink many delightful drawings of period furni-

ture, a subject demanding great skill and rigid control of the medium. He mastered the medium and under his hand black and white became invested with colour and texture. His services were in constant demand by many societies, architects, publishers and commercial undertakings, for he was at the height of his powers at a time when drawings were extensively used for reproduction and illustration. Robert Bertram made the fullest use of these opportunities and he developed a style admirably suited for the purpose.

In 1893, his drawings were used in the first volume of the *Northumberland County History* and the subsequent volumes contain eloquent testimony of his untiring energy in recording the traditional buildings of the county and their details with delightful sketches. Historically his main interest seemed to be Newcastle of the eighteenth century and this subject he studied assiduously, producing at various times several masterly water-colour pictures of the town as it probably appeared at that period. It was almost inevitable that his choice of subject for the lunette which he painted for the Laing Art Gallery should be the bridge across the Tyne during the flood of 1771. His own published works include a portfolio of lithographs of old Newcastle and sketch books of Newcastle and Durham.

In addition to the teaching of art and his output of work as a practising artist he managed to find time for many other activities, amongst which the preservation of ancient buildings and the creation of civic amenities take a high place. For many years he was secretary of the Bishop's Advisory Committee for the care of churches and gave unsparingly of his time and labour to this difficult and arduous task. He was one of the early members of the Newcastle Society, later to become the Northumberland and Newcastle Society, and for some years held the office of secretary. From his hand came many drawings shewing schemes of improvement and amenity for the city.

Shortly after his retirement Robert Bertram left Tyne-side and settled in Whitby, but he continued to be interested



SIR WALTER DE LANCEY AITCHISON, BT.

in many of the activities with which he was formerly more closely associated in Newcastle. More particularly he retained his position as examiner in Art for the University Schools' Examination Board, relinquishing the appointment only within the last year or so. With characteristic energy he soon became immersed in the artistic life of Whitby, which gradually claimed his interest and affection.

In 1902, he married Helen Maude Cowan of Newcastle, a lady whose artistic and cultural tastes were similar to his own. She died in 1949. They are survived by two sons and a daughter, all of whom are following an artistic vocation.

F. AUSTIN CHILD.

3.—SIR WALTER DE LANCEY AITCHISON, BT.

Walter de Lancey Aitchison, son of Sir Stephen Aitchison of Lemmington, Northumberland, to whose title he succeeded, was born on 14 May, 1892 (plate XXIII), and educated at Repton and University College, Oxford, where he read Modern History. Apart from service in the South Staffordshire regiment in 1914-18, his principal task in life, to which he brought great skill and boundless energy, was to conduct and develop the family business of wholesale and retail grocery, which has become one of the largest in the North and the last surviving large family concern of its kind. His devotion to this occupation was vigilant and unflagging, whether in the office or on tour: no detail was too small to escape his attention, no matter too wide for his broad-minded vision, and he knew well that success depended upon people rather than things. It was this firm hold upon the realities of life which made him a deeply affectionate husband and father and which attached him with indissoluble links to his homes at Lemmington, Killingworth and Coupland. There were few family diversions which he did not enjoy; shooting

or fishing, wildfowling, sailing and landyachting, tennis and cricket were all sampled with zest and skill. Later, the attitude changed: for example, to watch and to photograph the wild game became the newer objective, sought with the same keen enjoyment in decoying as of old. Pleasures which demanded intelligent planning or craftsmanship were much after his heart, and were modified only by a deepening tenderness towards beauty and wild things and an instinct for capturing their fleeting manifestations in solitude.

I believe it was this enjoyment of the imaginative pleasure attained through planned exercise of intellect which attracted Sir Walter to archæology and in particular to that of the north of Roman Britain. It marched with his understanding and appreciation of organizing ability. Roman military power had systematically enmeshed the country which he knew and loved with a system of control by roads, forts, frontier-walls and watch-posts, and these had left indelible marks. Not only could the story be read, but its recovery demanded just that element of planned action allied to chance which had appealed to him all life through. In addition, so much of it was set in those scenes of wild and solitary beauty which rested and refreshed his roving spirit. He threw himself into field-survey with enthusiasm and great ability. His maps of the Cheviot area, explored from his home at Coupland in his well-known Land Rover and based upon air photographs, represent an immense advance in topographical knowledge of the district, which was put at the disposal of the Ordnance Survey. The Land Rover went everywhere, from High Street to Cheviot and the Black Hill of Earlston, boldly surmounting all heights and intrepidly crossing the wildest country. He generously supported others. The Christianbury Trust, which he founded and named, how characteristically, paid for wholly or in part work at the following sites: Newstead, Cappuck, Oakwood, Inchtuthil, the Vallum at Mosskennels, milecastle 79, Wreay Hall, Carriden, West Plean, Glenlochar, Dalswinton, Barburgh Mill, Raeburnfoot, Brownhart Law, Woden Law,

Loudon Hill, and Catterick. It also helped to finance Dr. St. Joseph's air photography of Northern Britain and his dependent field-surveys. Sir Walter was never deflected from this absorbing interest, even when recurrent thrombosis and angina were narrowing his activities and draining, though somehow never quite exhausting, his reserves of patience and cheerfulness.

But his interests could never take a single track. His toolshop, his greenhouse, his garden and his dogs wove a varied pattern of sensitive feeling, and many people will best remember him in the lovely walled garden of flowering shrubs, heaths and rare blooms, which were his particular joy. He was a quiet and modest man, well read, endowed with a highly original diversity of mind, an able judge of events and men, yet shy and aloof, prone to communicate as much by silence as by speech and readier to share the unspoken appreciation than to hazard its expression: a vivid correspondent, however, writing keenly and abundantly in a firm and incisive hand: an individualist to the core, very impatient of all trammels upon initiative and intolerant of humbug in any form. It is perhaps not surprising that he lived and enjoyed to the full an inner life of his own in an age, as he saw it, of mass attractions, when sentiment usurped the place of sense and pose the place of sensibility. But he had a wise philosophy, the shy man deeply Christian, the more open a Stoic. In the last year of his life he carved upon a stone garden basin—this carving was one of his hobbies—a quaint eighteenth-century verse which he had seen at Melrose.

“The Earth goeth on the Earth glistening like gold.
The Earth goeth to the Earth sooner than he wold.
The Earth builds on the Earth castles and towers.
The Earth says to the Earth, ‘All shall be ours’.”

A mystic note, but attuned to wisdom.

I. A. R.

4.—EDWARD HEDLEY

By the death of Edward Hedley on the third day of May, 1953, the Society has lost one of its most valued officers (plate XXIV).

Librarian for a period of six years (1947-53), he carried out the onerous duties of this position with a quiet and unsparing efficiency which earned the admiration and gratitude of colleagues and members of our society. To these qualities were added a kindliness and courtesy which have given him a secure place in our affectionate remembrance. He was born amid the moors and hills of Northumberland at Elsdon on the eighteenth day of April 1886 and came to reside in Newcastle after the death of his father, when he was 12 years old. He commenced his business career with the Cowpen Coal Company at their Quayside office, and in 1905 he entered the old established Bank of Lambton and Company which in 1908 was merged in Lloyds Bank. He served in the Royal Navy during the 1914-1918 World War, and after its conclusion he was appointed to Lloyds and National Provincial Bank at Cologne. While abroad, illness and a serious operation intervened leaving a weakness which was to remain with him for the remainder of his life. He bore this with an unflinching and uncomplaining courage, but it was a sad handicap. He rejoined Lloyds Bank, Grey Street, in 1922, and eventually reached the important post of accountant, a position he held until his retirement in 1946.

He joined the Society in 1936 and for many years gave invaluable assistance to the treasurer, until his appointment as librarian in 1947. To this office he brought to bear the experience of years of banking and a rare devotion to his duties, which necessitated almost daily attendance at the library. The unavoidable wartime congestion was gradually overcome and the library restored to the order we see to-day. We can hardly realize how much work this entailed. The orderly arrangement of books, completion of a new cata-



EDWARD HEDLEY.

logue, attention to exchanges, gifts, deeds and documents, all called for careful thought and much work. His annual reports were like himself quiet and unassuming, but a record of progress and consolidation. We had hoped to see him long with us, but serious illness once more intervened and from a second operation, to our sorrow, he did not recover. Edward Hedley left a widow, a son and a daughter. We are glad that Mrs. Hedley will continue membership of our Society. He leaves to us a restored library whose orderly shelves bear a silent but eloquent testimony of his sterling worth.

“Yet leaving here a name, I trust
That will not perish in the dust.”

E. P. SHIELD.