



HERBERT LEWIS HONEYMAN.

[Memoir on page 252.]



XVI.—HERBERT LEWIS HONEYMAN.

Herbert Lewis Honeyman was born at 24 Newton Place, Glasgow, on the 12th November, 1885; he died at his home in Newcastle upon Tyne on the 23rd November, 1956, in his 72nd year. (Frontispiece.)

He was the youngest son of John Honeyman, LL.D., R.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., by his third wife Sarah Anne Horne of Soulbury, Buckinghamshire. John Honeyman was a distinguished architect, the designer of many notable churches and buildings both in England and Scotland, perhaps best remembered as the restorer of the ancient churches of Iona and Brechin. In late middle life Dr. Honeyman became blind and his youngest son was from his early youth his constant companion and guide; it was in that intimate companionship that his lifelong liking for historical architecture and archæology originated.

Whilst Honeyman was yet a child his parents removed to Bridge of Allan, where they lived in a pleasant country house standing in its own grounds named Minewood, a place he always remembered with affection. He began his education at a private preparatory school at Bridge of Allan, going thence to Glenalmond, a well-known public school in Perthshire. On leaving school he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and make architecture his profession, with ancient churches and historic buildings as his chief interest. He was therefore apprenticed about the year 1903 to the firm of John Burnet & Sons of Glasgow (afterwards Sir John Burnet & Partners).

Mr. James Shearer, F.R.I.B.A., of Dunfermline, a life-long friend, has written this account of Honeyman at this time:

"I cannot say with precision when his apprenticeship began but it must have been about 1903 or 1904. At that time the Burnet staff numbered more than twenty and included three or four apprentices. He was an exceedingly shy youth who rarely spoke to anyone unless he was spoken to, spending his days in an odd kind of isolation. The staff he had joined, including even its senior members, was a light-hearted, generous and most tolerant group of men of whom several in later life have attained positions of professional eminence. The general impression made by 'H.L.H.' on his associates—and it lasted for quite a long time—was one of a youth in every way unusual, sensitive, and somewhat old-fashioned for his years. He rarely looked away from his board, but the frequent body-shaking chuckles which he bestowed on it showed that he was very much alive to all that was going on around him, and, in his own way, taking part in it, and enjoying it. During his periods of idleness, he amused himself by embellishing the margins of his 'backing sheet' with little drawings of tombstones with Latin inscriptions. This strange form of entertainment derived directly from his travels with his father, an architect of note and an authority upon Ecclesiology. During these years 'H.L.H.' attended the appropriate classes at the Glasgow School of Architecture under Alexander McGibbon and Professor Bourdon."

His fellow students soon recognized his outstanding ability, confirmed when in 1911 he won the R.I.B.A. silver medal for an essay upon *The design and construction of Belfry stages and Spires in Stone and Brick*. He also became a regular contributor to *The Vista*, the Magazine of the Glasgow School of Architecture; of these contributions Mr. Shearer writes:

"Many of the contributions were in verse and all of them highly individual. He had an extensive knowledge of old ballads on which in the composition of his own verses he drew with grotesque effect, indulging to the full his acute sense of the incongruous."

He later became editor of this magazine, a post he held until the demands of his Newcastle practice and other work brought both the magazine and his association with it to

an end. In the year 1908 "H.L.H." won an architectural travelling scholarship and spent most of the years 1908-9 in travelling in France and England visiting cathedrals, churches and other ancient buildings.

His apprenticeship was completed in 1911 when he became an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, of which he never became a Fellow. He then practised, for a short time, in Glasgow, but this did not prosper, and in December 1913 he joined the well-known firm of Graham & Hill, architects of Newcastle upon Tyne. His father's death in 1914, after years of blindness, left his widow ill provided for. It was therefore necessary for her eventually to live with her son in Newcastle. She was of a somewhat possessive nature, demanding much attention as she much disliked being left alone. This attention was given by her son with patience and devotion until her death in 1936.

The Great War of 1914-18 interrupted Honeyman's professional life; in 1916 he enlisted in the army. Mr. Edward Garrod, a friend who was with him at this time and knew him well, has written this account of his army service.

"He was drafted to the Royal Engineers and, after the usual training, he was in 1917 transferred to the Survey Company R.E. at the Ordnance Survey Office in Southampton. Thence he was sent to the similar office at Phoenix Park, Dublin, where he received an extended course in topographical and military surveying. He was sent to France in July 1918 and appointed to the Field Survey battalion of the R.E. and detailed for work under the Inundation Section. He fell ill in October 1918 and, being invalided to England, was demobilized early in 1919."

He then returned to his architectural work and, upon Dennis Hill's death, became the sole proprietor of the firm, practising under the name of Hill & Honeyman until his death.

Our member Mr. R. N. McKellar, F.R.I.B.A., has written this account of Honeyman's work as a practising architect:

"Denis Hill, of whose firm Honeyman became a partner in 1913, was the architect for the Northumberland Territorial Auxiliary Forces and Honeyman worked with him upon the designs for drill halls at Blyth, Tynemouth, Seaton Delaval, Amble and at Barrack Road, Newcastle. After Hill's death Honeyman concentrated for the most part on ecclesiastical work.

"As diocesan surveyor for the diocese of Newcastle he had about 130 vicarages under his care. He designed new vicarages at Ponteland, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Widdrington and for St. Paul's and All Saints' in Newcastle. He also designed the church halls at Monkseaton and, for a change, the pleasant Little Theatre at Gateshead. His services were called for in the restoration and repairs of St. Ann's and All Saints' churches, Newcastle, and for the Old Hall at Washington, Durham. At the time of his death he had prepared a detailed report for the extensive repairs needed for St. Andrew's, Newcastle.

"He also designed furniture and screenery for various churches, where his knowledge of medieval detail ensured their fitness to their surroundings. This type of practice was 'Honeyman'; apart from its being his livelihood it was near to his heart. The profession is the poorer for his loss."

As said above, Honeyman was for many years surveyor to the Dilapidations Board of Newcastle Diocese. Col. A. D. S. Rogers, secretary to that Board, has written this appreciation of his work for it:

"Mr. Honeyman was a devoted servant and friend of the Board over a long period of years and his work and helpful advice will long be remembered by the Board. His knowledge of architecture of all periods enabled him to take a very personal interest in the many problems which arise in the maintenance of churches, vicarages and other parochial buildings, and he never failed to support the advice he gave by explanations and alternative suggestions, which often involved him in work far beyond the bounds of what was legally required of him. His imperturbable good humour and humane outlook were great assets in his relationships with the clergy and others."

Honeyman did not allow his work as an architect to fill his life entirely. He interested himself much in social work, intended to help the less fortunate.

He became a member of the Tyneside Social Service

Society and served for a while upon its Council, he did much good work as Hon. Architect to the Newcastle Housing Trust and as a Trustee of the Montagu Colliery Disaster Fund. His services were also given freely as local correspondent of the Town and Country Planning Authority and of the Ministry of Works. He was a devout member of the Church of England, for a while vicar's churchwarden of St. Andrew's church as well as, for some years, a manager of its day school. He watched over the fabric of his church with loving care, repaired and restored its failing tower and at the time of his death was working upon a detailed survey of its condition showing the urgent need for a large measure of repairs.

Honeyman was elected a member of this Society on the 25th January, 1922. He soon became one of its most active members, prominent in all its activities and the authority for the historical architecture of the North of England.

He was appointed joint secretary with Oswin Charlton and John Oxberry in January 1933, editing of *Proceedings* being his special work.

Charlton resigned in 1935 and Oxberry died in 1940, thenceforward Honeyman remained sole secretary until his death.

In January 1934 Paul Brown was appointed editor of *Proceedings*, a post he held until 1941 when he was succeeded by Honeyman who held the two posts of secretary and editor of *Proceedings* thenceforth until his death.

He enjoyed the work of both these offices, giving freely to both the scanty leisure of a busy professional life. As secretary he watched over the interests of the Society with zealous care. The volumes of *Proceedings* issued between 1941 and 1956 witness to his careful editing and bear the marks of his strong individuality.

In addition to all this work he gave freely and willingly of his store of historical knowledge by acting as guide to this Society upon many of its visits to historic buildings.

On 4th May, 1950, he was elected a Fellow of the Society

of Antiquaries of London, an honour to which he had titles manifold. A year or so later he was given the rare and unusual honour of an honorary membership of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, as a mark of appreciation of the debt owed to him for the services he had given to the Club for many years, by acting as guide in their visits to historic places in the North.

His friend, our member Dr. W. Douglas Simpson of Aberdeen University, has written this appreciation of Honeyman's work during these years:

"It was upon the architecture of the Middle Ages that Herbert Honeyman was in Northern England the unchallenged authority. His practical knowledge as a professional architect was reinforced by a sound grasp of medieval history and an understanding of the social, economic and mental climate of the Middle Ages. All this was sharpened by a keen critical faculty. He would take nothing for granted and insisted on every possible alternative being considered before a working hypothesis should be adopted. His knowledge of the details of medieval masonry, especially in Northern England, was unrivalled. His retentive memory provided him with a remarkable apparatus of parallels which he could invoke when confronted with unusual or puzzling features. He had provided himself with a sound working knowledge of the worship, ritual and ceremonial of the medieval church so that in dealing with any ancient building he possessed a grasp of the basic truth that the first requisite in approaching its study is a knowledge of the documentary evidence. The record of his published work (see Bibliography) is a large one and includes a long series of papers in *Archæologia Aeliana*, of which the most notable is his *History of St. Nicholas Cathedral*.

"The series of descriptions and analyses of castles and churches, admirably illustrated by his own clear, measured drawings he contributed to the later volumes of *A County History of Northumberland* must strike everyone by their clear competence. It was upon castles that he felt himself most at home. His descriptions of Norham, Dunstanburgh and Warkworth in the Official Guides are models of their kind. His capacity to make a rapid survey of the architectural antiquities of a large area is revealed in the contributions he made to the volume on the *Three Northern Counties*. Perhaps his greatest achievement was his *History of Northumberland* in the English County Series. Here scholarship and breadth of outlook are

infused with a love of his adopted country, which glows warmly in every page. His writings remain his monument; quite apart from their bulk, they possess that quality of scholarship which ensures that, as long as interest in the architectural antiquities of Northern England lasts, they will never be out of date."

Honeyman married in September 1951 Edith only daughter of the late T. H. Sarsfield of Newcastle upon Tyne. It was a happy marriage. His wife entered fully into his interests, encouraging and assisting him by her active sympathy and practical help. These five years at the end were perhaps the happiest of his life.¹

C.H.H.B.

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¹ Mrs. E. Honeyman has given great help in the writing of this memoir.

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E.H.