

THE LONDON AND MIDDLESEX ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SOCIETY AND PEPYS.

In view of the lamented death of Dr. H. B. Wheatley, it is of interest to recall that the Society is in a considerable measure responsible for the growing fame of Samuel Pepys, which has so steadily increased in recent years. In 1882 a meeting of the Society was held in the church of St. Olave, Hart Street, and a paper was read by Dr. Wheatley upon the Diarist and his surroundings. At the conclusion of this meeting, the question was asked, "Where is Pepys's monument?" To this no answer could be given, but, as an immediate result, a consultation took place between Dr. Wheatley, Reverend Dr. Povah (Rector of St. Olave's), and Sir Owen Roberts, then the Clerk of the Clothworkers' Company, and this led to a public meeting and to the formation of an influential committee, under whose auspices a subscription list was opened for the purpose of raising a suitable monument to Pepys in the church which he attended for so many years, and where his body is buried. As a result, the present monument was fixed in the south aisle, to the design of the late Sir Arthur Blomfield. It was formally unveiled on 18th March, 1884, Mr. Russell Lowell, the American Minister, giving an address in which the merits of the Diarist were dealt with in a very charming way. As Dr. Wheatley has said, the unveiling of this monument may be considered as showing a great advance in Pepys's fame. It was the first public expression of the general opinion upon his claim to a high position in the history and literature of England. The attendance at the ceremony was considerable, and the Press was unanimous in approval of the honour done to Pepys. It is probable that the popular enthusiasm thus evinced, in what may justly be claimed to be the outcome of the meeting of the Society mentioned above, induced Dr. Wheatley to undertake his fresh transcription of the manuscript of the Diary, which he commenced in 1893 and completed in 1896, for the first time giving the immortal work in a complete form.

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