

OBITUARY NOTICE.

BARON FERDINAND DE ROTHSCHILD.

THE late Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild was elected a Vice-President of the Society in 1894, in the August of which year he entertained the Society with great hospitality at Waddesdon Manor, and on the occasion his choice collection of pictures and rare works of art were open to view. So much was written about him and his munificent gift to the nation at the time of his unexpected and lamented death on the 17th of December of last year, that in this obituary notice few words will now be necessary.

Although Baron Rothschild did not make archæology his special study, his literary leisure was very much drawn to history, particularly to French history, and the memoirs of celebrated French characters. Waddesdon Manor itself, built in the style of the châteaux of Chambord and Blois, is an evidence of the bent of his mind and of his studies. If he had exceptional opportunities for indulging his tastes, his tastes were of a refined order. If he purchased pictures it was not to form an extensive gallery, but to secure the choicest specimen of the school of painters he admired, and so of his Dutch pictures, he possessed himself of the most coveted works by Cuyp, Terburg, and Gerard Dou. Of English art there are portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, which fitly adorn the walls of Waddesdon Manor. But the bequest to the nation will perhaps give the most convincing evidence of Baron Rothschild's devotion to art by the studied care of his selections, made with an eye to beauty of design, and to the historic value of the precious things secured. Plate, jewelry, enamels, carvings, Italian majolica and glass, with some choice armour, these are the objects which captivated his taste, and in the pleasure of which he desired others

should have the opportunity of sharing. They were aptly recently described by a writer, whilst explaining the Rothschild bequest and its place in the British Museum, as both exquisite and delicate objects "upon which the most cunning artificers of the sixteenth century in Italy, Germany and France, have lavished all their art and fancy." And for an example of the peculiar value of the bequest, the writer continues, "Amongst the plate will be found lovely book covers of silver with representations of the Virgin, the infant Christ, angels and cherubs." But there is no need to say more on this bequest. What has been said was simply to remind the reader of Baron Rothschild's cultivated tastes, which must have been fostered by great diligence and quiet enthusiasm, and to reiterate the indebtedness of the many who share in his love of art for this generous gift to the nation.—ED.