

Lt.-Colonel the Hon. Aubrey Herbert, M.P.

IN the death of the Hon. Aubrey Herbert the Society has lost its President, the County one of the noblest of its squires, and the Nation a man worthy to rank with the makers of England in the days of Queen Elizabeth. He was, indeed, in character and in action, a modern Elizabethan, with all the characteristics of the West-country paladins of that time probably inherited from his ancestors. He was careless of his own ease, without fear and without reproach, a hater of tyranny, ever eager to side with the oppressed against the oppressor, a lover of dangerous enterprises, a traveller, a diplomatist and a soldier. He was also a poet of no mean order, a master of many languages, mostly eastern, and the author of various articles and of books of great merit, most of them published under a 'nom de plume.' With the qualities that made him successful in these directions he combined the simplicity of a child and a sympathy with his fellows regardless of class or nation, that endeared him to all, and gave him the surprising influence that he had both at home and abroad.

Col. Aubrey Herbert, the second son of the fourth Earl of Carnarvon, was born in 1880. As a boy he travelled much over the Continent, and thus developed the wander-lust that dominated his whole life. He passed from Eton to Oxford and thence into the diplomatic service, being appointed at the age of 22 honorary secretary to the Embassy of Tokyo. Two years later he was transferred to Constantinople, where he learnt Turkish, Arabic and Greek so well that when he went with the Turkish Envoy to Berlin after the armistice he was taken by the German Foreign Office to be a Turk belonging to the Mission. He acquired later some other tongues such as Albanian, so that in his wanderings he could freely talk with the people. In 1908 he was at the Embassy when the Sultan was deposed, and Talaat Pasha and other leaders of the revolution were among his intimate friends.

In 1910 he married the Hon. Mary de Vesci, the only child of Viscount de Vesci, but this very happy marriage did not prevent him from joining in the fighting between the Turks and Albanians.

He was taken prisoner by the latter, and so completely gained their confidence that in the great war he was offered the command of an Albanian regiment of 2,000 men raised in America.

It was of course impossible for such a man to remain at home in the great war. After being rejected for imperfect sight he joined as interpreter and later was transferred to the Irish Guards as second-lieutenant. He was wounded at Mons, and on his recovery joined the general staff and went to the east, to Gallipoli, Salonica and Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia, where his knowledge of the people was of the greatest value to the British Army.

He also took his share in the business of his own county by entering the House of Commons as member for Yeovil in 1911, and he kept his seat till the end, gaining by his magnetic personality the warm regard both of the House and of the Borough.

In these activities he had but little time to give to our Society, but what he had he freely gave. He is the only President who has died in office. We also felt his extraordinary charm, and share his loss with his family and friends. He died at 43, but if life be measured by deeds and not by years, he lived long.

W. BOYD DAWKINS.

George Francis Sydenham, D.R.C.S., J.P.

THE Society sustained another loss just as the printing of this volume was being completed. Dr. Sydenham, who died unexpectedly on March 18th, was an energetic and able member, and was always keenly interested in the Society's work. He joined the Society in 1900, and from that time was Local Secretary for Dulverton. At our recent excursions he spoke at Sydenham Manor House, Bridgwater (1920); Brympton, Yeovil (1921); and Combe, Dulverton (1923). His intimacy with dialect and folk-lore, and his local knowledge, made him a welcome member at the meetings of the Society.

George Francis Sydenham came of one of the oldest Somerset families. His father, the Rev. C. St. Barbe Sydenham, was Rector of Brushford; but the family was chiefly associated with Dulverton, their residence having been Combe (Dulverton) since the middle of the XVI Century. He was born at Combe on January 17th, 1861.

PLATE XII.



LT.-COLONEL THE HON. AUBREY HERBERT, M.P., D.L., J.P.

He studied medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and became L.S.A. in 1884, and M.R.C.S. in 1885 ; since which he had practised in Dulverton. He was Medical Officer of Health for South Molton, and held several other public appointments. He was a Churchwarden of Dulverton for 28 years up to the time of his death, and became a J.P. in 1918.

Dr. Sydenham's wife and two daughters survive him, but his only son, Humphrey, a lieutenant in the Devonshire Regiment, died in Mesopotamia, 8th October, 1916.

The doctor's chief recreations latterly were trout-fishing and cricket ; and at the former he was an expert.

He devoted much time and research to a history of his family which, unfortunately, did not mature for publication during his life. He took an active part in administrative work in Dulverton, and was in his later years president of the local Conservative Association. Keen interest was taken in the lectures on local history and similar subjects which he was in the habit of giving from time to time (pp. xxvii-xxix). Among his papers was one on "The Vulgar Errors and Superstitions of West Somerset in relation to Medicine," published in the *British Medical Journal*.

Sydenham was a man of many and varied interests ; strong, staunch, and independent. He was a shrewd judge of character, but always gave full weight to the merits of others. He was a leveller of class distinctions ; and the great throng of all ranks at his funeral was the finest tribute that could be paid to his memory. He lies close to the family vault in Dulverton.

W. DU G. GRAY.