

Obituary Notice.

Robert de Lasteyrie.—M. le Comte Robert de Lasteyrie, Membre de l'Institut, and one of our Honorary Fellows, who died on 29th January last, was a commanding figure among the archaeologists of France. He was born in Paris on 15th November 1849. His great-grandmother was a sister of Mirabeau. His father, Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, who served in his young days as aide-de-camp of his relative, General La Fayette, was elected Membre de l'Institut in 1860, and was the author of the *Histoire de la peinture sur verre* (1837–56), and of the *Histoire de l'orfèvrerie* (1875). Robert de Lasteyrie was studying law and archaeology when the war of 1870 broke out; he served with distinction in the army of the Loire, was wounded at Le Mans, and received the cross of the Légion d'honneur. Resuming his studies after the war, he took his degree of 'bachelier en droit' in 1871. In the following year he gave up the study of the law for archaeology, and became 'archiviste-paléographe' in 1873. His thesis for the École des Chartes, on the *Comtes et Vicomtes de Limoges*, earned him a medal in 1875. He had already so distinguished himself as to become the favourite pupil of Quicherat, the director of the École des Chartes, who in 1875 entrusted him with a course of lectures on military architecture. Two years later, when Quicherat fell ill, Lasteyrie took his place, first as 'suppléant', and then as professor of medieval archaeology at the École des Chartes, a position which he held for thirty years, from 1880 to 1910. He was an admirable professor, and his teaching had a powerful influence on the study of medieval archaeology throughout France. His influence on his pupils was expressively indicated by their veneration for 'le maître'. From 1883, as secretary of the archaeological section of the Comité des Travaux historiques, he directed the *Bulletin archéologique* for some thirty years. In 1890 he was elected a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, of which he became President in 1901. An account of his works, which are too numerous to be set out here, will be found in the 'discours' delivered by the President of the Académie after his death (4th February 1921), from which many of the particulars in this notice have been taken. Among his more notable contributions may be mentioned his study of *L'église Saint-Martin-de-Tours* (1891); *La déviation de l'axe des églises, est-elle symbolique?* (1905); and *L'église de Saint-Philibert-de-Grandlieu* (1909). In 1902 he published his admirable *Études sur la sculpture française au Moyen-âge* (Fondation Piot). His great work, *L'architecture religieuse en France à l'époque romane* (1912), the result of his life's research and teaching, may safely be pronounced to be the best work which has yet been written on its subject, and its literary style is as excellent as its matter. Before his death he had practically completed a companion book on Gothic architecture, which it is to be hoped may be published. His interests were by no means confined to archaeology. In 1893 he was elected deputy for the Corrèze, the department in which he had

his country home, and he was for many years a director of the Chemin-de-Fer de l'Ouest. His fine character commanded the admiration of all who knew him, as was proved by the striking demonstration of respect at his funeral. Those who were privileged to enjoy his friendship will endorse the appreciation of him by M. André Michel—'l'homme, le gentilhomme complétait en lui l'érudit et le savant'.

J. B.

Reviews

The Arts in Early England. By G. BALDWIN BROWN, M.A., Professor of Fine Art, University of Edinburgh. Vol. v. The Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses, &c. $8\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{7}{8}$. Pp. 420. London: Murray. 1921.

This is an excellent new volume of an important series, sound and yet enthusiastic—a really patriotic piece of workmanship. The conclusion as to the recently disputed date of the two great Northumbrian crosses, that they are indeed works of the seventh century, is reached after a careful sifting of the evidence and in revision of Professor Baldwin Brown's own earlier view. A valuable examination of the runic inscriptions is included. Accepting gratefully all that is so generously given and clearly set out I pass to the discussion of a few details.

The traces of a coiled snake on the lower part of the old south side of the stem of the Ruthwell cross are passed over (p. 143). I have recently again examined these traces on the cast at South Kensington in a good light, and were it not that Professor Brown does not see them, I would say that no one can doubt their existence when once pointed out. There are serpentine coils, and also a well-defined head. This head is in a frontal position and comes close to the top of this lower section of the side of the cross, directly under the root of the 'tree' of scrolling foliage which fills the rest of this side of the shaft. The close juxtaposition of the head of the serpent to the root of the 'tree' is so marked that I cannot doubt the relation was intended and should be taken into account in the explanation of the cross. When this is done the question of the archer and the eagle at which he shoots may be reconsidered.

It is doubted whether the traces of an important subject at the bottom of the west front can be interpreted as the Nativity (p. 135). Again, and after re-examination, I cannot doubt. I see, at the top of the panel, two quadrupeds with their heads facing one another, then below them a large form filling the space from side to side more or less like a couch, then below again a central symmetrical shape between two others—the Infant in a basin with the attendant women. Now the treatment of the two beasts is confirmed by, and explains, two similar animals, directly below the Crucifixion on the Sandbach Cross; the rest is lost but there, too, as the comparison shows, the Nativity was represented in a similar way.