

Obituary Notice

Sir Charles Hercules Read (Secretary, 1892–1908; President, 1908–1914, 1919–1924). Dates are of more than ordinary significance in the career of Sir Hercules Read, who passed away at Rapallo on 11 February 1929 after being an invalid for five long years. Compelled to winter abroad, he was seldom seen by his friends in the Society after retiring from the chair in 1924; but Seymour Lucas's drawing of 1912 represents him at his best, and a copy is placed in the Society's collection. Born in July 1857, he became the head of his Department in the British Museum at the exceptionally early age of thirty-nine, after sixteen years' apprenticeship under Sir Wollaston Franks, whose example he followed in maintaining a close connexion between Burlington House and the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities. His official career came to an end in 1921, when the Department which he and Franks had largely created, was divided into two, the Ceramics and Ethnography being somewhat incongruously combined under an additional Keeper.

As an official of this Society his record can hardly be surpassed. For sixteen years as Secretary and altogether eleven years as President, Read was to a large extent responsible for the policy, activities, and standing of the Antiquaries; and his familiarity with antiquities, combined with a visual memory that was truly remarkable, made his extempore comments of more than usual interest. Many of the Fellows will recall the ease and dignity with which he presided at our meetings. Indeed, he displayed an infinite capacity for taking the chair, and thoroughly enjoyed his share in controlling this Society as well as the British and Soane Museums, the Burlington Fine Arts Club, and the Anthropological Institute. As a member of the Society of Dilettanti he found ample scope for his undoubted artistic perceptions and social inclinations; and as a lively and agreeable companion, he was cordially welcome in the houses of wealthy collectors. These social connexions were utilized for the benefit of the Museum to such effect that on his retirement a presentation volume recapitulated the most noteworthy of the acquisitions during his Keepership, and an imposing volume it is, redounding to the credit of the Museum and its benefactors and a lasting memorial of twenty-five years' responsibility. Nor must it be forgotten that in getting together a group of generous connoisseurs known as the Friends of the British Museum, he blazed the trail for the National Art Collections Fund, of which at the time of his death he was Vice-Chairman.

His friends knew of more than one bitter disappointment, but honours came to Read in profusion, and the degree of LL.D. from St. Andrews (1908) made him Dr. Read, till in 1912 he became Sir Hercules, the knighthood being, as he always held, bestowed in compliment to the Society, not in recognition of his services at the Museum. In 1913 he was admitted to the British Academy, not for literary achievements (though he had a ready and effective pen), but in recognition of his wide

and deep acquaintance with archaeology. A good linguist but never a profound scholar, he had the gift of utilizing all he knew; and though his professional output was relatively scanty, it does not fall to many to produce ten presidential addresses which exactly fitted the occasion.

If one could only forget the unexpected collapse of that tall athletic frame and the pathetic helplessness of his declining years, his friends would be justified in remembering him as Fortune's favourite and the embodiment of Success.

Reviews

Les Joyaux de l'Enluminure à la Bibliothèque Nationale. PAR HENRY MARTIN, Administrateur honoraire de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 10 $\frac{1}{2}$. Pp. xii + 136. Two plates in colours and 100 in heliotype. Paris and Brussels: Van Oest, 1928. 480 francs.

This handsome volume, originally planned by the publishers to put in permanent form a record of the noteworthy exhibition of medieval illuminations arranged at the Bibliothèque Nationale in February 1926, serves also, alas! for a memorial of its distinguished author, who died on 1 October 1927. An appreciative notice of Henry Martin, by Comte A. de Laborde, is prefixed, together with a bibliography of his works. These include—to mention but a few of the most outstanding—his admirable *Catalogue* of the MSS. in the Arsenal Library; a history of that library (which he was well qualified to write, having been for forty-eight years 'l'âme de cette maison, comme bibliothécaire, conservateur et finalement administrateur'); *Les Miniaturistes français*, an important book, in which he first drew attention to the marginal sketches sometimes found in conjunction with miniatures, and presumably drawn by the *chef d'atelier* as a rough guide for his assistants; *Les Peintres de Manuscrits et la Miniature en France*, a most excellent and useful survey, though of modest dimensions; besides a number of monographs on particular MSS. and articles in specialist periodicals; altogether a substantial and impressive contribution to knowledge, especially with regard to illuminated manuscripts.

The text, in seven chapters, is in the main a running commentary on the plates; but the latter have been so well chosen, from the rich stores of the Bibliothèque Nationale, that the former naturally supplies what is in effect an outline history of Byzantine illumination (ch. i, illustrated by plates 1–8), more than a mere outline for the work of Carolingian illuminators and their immediate successors (ch. ii. and the first part of ch. iii, pl. 9–19), and a compendious survey of French illumination from its remarkable emergence in the thirteenth century down to its decline in the sixteenth, and even its flickering attempts at survival in the seventeenth century (ch. iii–vii, pl. 20–100 and the two coloured plates). Ch. vi also discusses in some detail (pp. 70–74, pl. 74–79) Loyset Lyédet and other Flemish miniaturists patronized by