

OBITUARY.

LEONARD CHEESMAN.

In general, the *Journal of Roman Studies* does not include obituaries. But the death of a young historian of the highest promise, a contributor to the *Journal* and sometime a member of our Council, might anyhow call for notice, and when he has died for his country, a few words of record and regret may be desirable.

The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford in his October address chose out for mention three Oxford men as noteworthy among the many who have died in the war with all, or nearly all, their promise unachieved. One of these had seemed about to do good work in labour problems, one in politics; the third was G. L. Cheesman. And, indeed, the study of history has seldom lost so real an 'inheritor of unfulfilled renown.'

The tale of his life is short. He was a scholar of Winchester and of New College. After taking his degree (1907), he taught for three terms at Christ Church, and then returned to New College as Fellow (June, 1908). With the help of the College, he gave a year to travel in the provinces of the Roman Empire. In 1910 he began regular teaching and lecturing at New College, and moved forward at the same time with his own work on Roman history, and in particular on Roman military history. In 1911 he gained the Arnold Prize with an essay on the Roman auxilia; he wrote for this *Journal*, for the *Year's Work*, and for the *Classical Review*; he took active part in Roman excavations in England, particularly at Corbridge and at Ribchester; he travelled, to deepen further his knowledge of the Empire; in July, 1914, he passed the final proofs of his volume on the Roman auxilia, which had grown out of the earlier essay.¹ Then war broke out; at once he sought a commission (he had been a volunteer in old days), and was gazetted to the 10th Hampshires. Many of us were hoping that his peculiar qualities and knowledge of languages (Serbian among them) might be used for appropriate service, but the War Office had no use for special attainments. On 10th August he fell near Suvla Bay. His age was thirty.

His powers had ripened slowly, but well. They were such as school education does not always reach; at Oxford they became very clear. I well remember the first time that I saw him; he came at the end of a lecture to put a query which none but a real historian could have framed. Within a few years, all who knew him felt that he was first-rate, that, if he lived, he was singularly sure to do really great work. He united many powers—he read fast, remembered accurately all that he read, kept his wide knowledge at command and controlled it lightly and easily. He was practical, too; when he studied the Roman army, he compared it with other armies, and sought advice from modern men and systems. Above all, he wielded a sound and clear historical judgment; he could avoid guesswork and strike out original views of real and obvious value. His one volume, on the Roman auxilia, shows his merits plainly; it will long be the leading book on its subject.

He was much more than a student. His devotion to learning was coupled with a strong personal character, with unflinching unselfishness, extraordinary width of interest, great brightness of manner. Of his personal friendships I do not here speak; far outside them, he was able to charm and inspire with his own keenness and life all of his pupils who were capable of intellectual development; he never failed to add to the gaiety and the good sense of all around him.

¹ *J.R.S.* iv, p. 230.

Let me add one sentence from a letter written by his friend and colleague, A. G. Heath, also Fellow of New College, also a soldier at his country's call, and also (two-months later) killed in that service. 'A scholar's life, in his way of living it, was one of the most full-blooded things imaginable: the extension of knowledge, and the power that knowledge brings, a real adventure instead of a deadening and drying up of the spirit.'

We in Oxford have lost many men whose places can never be filled; no one will wish to compare them—*οὐς μὲν γὰρ τις ἔπεμψεν, οἶδεν*. But the loss of G. L. Cheesman is in every way heavy—to his college, to our educational work, to our Society, to historical study.

F. HAVERFIELD.