

## Obituary.

CHARLES COTTON, Esq., O.B.E., F.R.C.P.E.

By Dr. Cotton's death at his house in the Precincts, Canterbury on September 28th, 1939, the Society has to lament the loss of one of its oldest and most devoted members. He was a member of the Society for 56 years, and a member of its Council for 34 years. Until in more recent years he was from time to time prevented by ill health, he was a most regular and hardworking member of the Council and a constant contributor to its proceedings in *Archæologia Cantiana*, and his cheery presence and readiness to help in any work connected with the county of Kent and the city of Canterbury will be greatly missed by his fellow members of Council.

He was born at Twickenham on February 7th, 1856, and was the youngest son of the late Mr. H. P. Cotton of the Treasury. He was educated first at Western Grammar School, London, and then at King's College School, London, and received his medical training at St. George's Hospital and in Edinburgh. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (England) and a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons (England). He spent most of his professional life at Ramsgate, where he was successively Physician to St. Barnabas Convalescent Home, Senior Physician at Ramsgate General Hospital and Seaman's Infirmary. He was also Surgeon to the Royal Naval Sick Quarters at Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and Kingsgate, in addition to carrying on the work of a large general medical practice. In 1910 he became County Director of the V.A.D. Territorial Force, and in 1911 was Commissioner commanding No. 8 District (Kent, Surrey and Sussex) St. John Ambulance Brigade, and in the last war served with 13 auxiliary hospitals. Just before the war he retired from practice and came to live in Canterbury. Both he and his wife took the greatest interest in the work of the Order of

St. John of Jerusalem, of which he was made a Knight of Grace, and she a Lady of Grace in recognition of their good work for the Order. He was appointed an Officer of the British Empire on December 18th, 1920, for his services in connection with the Great War, in directing and recruiting for the work of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in the counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

When he came to Canterbury he was able to devote himself entirely to that which had always been his greatest interest, the study of Archæology. While at Ramsgate he had in 1895 produced a most exhaustive work on the history of the church and parish of S. Laurence, the mother church of Ramsgate. It is well documented and is a mine of information. He also published in 1907 "The Bardon Papers, Being a History of the Bardon Papers Relating to Mary Queen of Scots 1586". He transcribed and edited for *Archæologia Cantiana* various Churchwardens' Accounts. In 1922 he edited Notes on the documents in the Cathedral Library at Canterbury relating to the Grey Friars, in *Collectanea Franciscana II*, and two years later "The Grey Friars of Canterbury", a complete record of the coming of the Grey Friars. He had become Honorary Librarian of the Cathedral Library and was to be found in it almost daily, ready to help all who came to see its treasures and work there. In 1929 he published "The Saxon Cathedral of Canterbury and the Saxon Saints Buried Therein". While everyone would not agree with all his conclusions it was a most useful collection of information from various sources about the early Cathedral, and was well illustrated and supplied with plans. He also edited a translation of Gervase's Treatise "On the Burning and Repair of the Church of Canterbury in 1174" which had been made long ago by Professor Willis. In 1930 he published "A Kentish Cartulary of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem", being a survey of the properties held by the Order in Kent from the XII Century to its final dissolution in 1538. In 1935 he wrote to *The Times*, describing his discovery of a MS. in the Cathedral Library which helped to identify the six Kings on the front of the pulpitum or choir screen in the Cathedral.

And within a few weeks of his death he was busy correcting proofs of a transcription of some Treasurer's Accounts of St. Augustine's Abbey which were to go into volume LI. of *Archæologia Cantiana*.

His industry was untiring. He never spared himself but was always at work. He belonged to that class of antiquaries, now alas passing away, whose work was not sensational, but constant, who dug out of the records of the past most valuable information and were always ready to help others in the most unselfish way. His four great loves were the Church of St. Laurence in Thanet, the Order of St. John, the Grey Friars, and the Cathedral Church of Canterbury and he was true to them to the end. For some months before he passed away he suffered much pain but he bore it with the faith and cheery hopefulness which was characteristic of him. He was buried in St. Martin's Churchyard, Canterbury, on October 2nd in the 83rd year of his age.

R.U.P.