

Obituary Notice

William Page.—William Page died on 4 February at his home in Sussex, aged 72. Having been elected a Fellow of the Society in 1887, he served on the Council on several occasions and was a Vice-President from 1916 to 1920. He contributed several important papers to *Archaeologia*, and for a number of years served on the Editorial Committee, where his special knowledge was invaluable. Brought up as a Civil Engineer, his natural bent for archaeology soon asserted itself, and at the age of 24 he joined his brother-in-law W. J. Hardy and became a professional record searcher and legal antiquary. Experience thus acquired stood him in good stead when he undertook, in 1902, to share the general Editorship of the Victoria County History with H. A. Doubleday. Becoming sole general Editor in 1904, he entered upon what was to prove the most important work of his life, and one by which he will long be remembered. The position was one which demanded not only wide learning and experience, but great powers of organization and, above all, tact and suavity. His patience and resource, backed by a serene sense of humour, carried him successfully through a long and difficult task, and the troubles and hindrances which the great undertaking experienced were in no sense due to any action of his. On the other hand, it is not too much to say that its successes were almost entirely due to him. On coming to the History, which had been founded in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, he found an organization which for the most part existed on paper only. It was his task to create something which could produce the historical material essential for the proper equipment of the county volumes. There was little or nothing ready to his hand and he set to work to collect and train a staff. In three or four years he had in his control a competent and flourishing body of assistants, but a sudden and disastrous failure of funds threatened to bring everything to a standstill, and part of his staff had to be dismissed, at least for the time. After a few years a new source of revenue presented itself and the work went on again, but then came the War and all such work was at a full stop. When it started again it was on a more restricted scale, the work being almost entirely in Page's hands, and carried on at his house at Middleton in Sussex, whither all the materials for the History were removed. Even so the familiar red volumes continued to appear, though at a far slower rate, and the final phase was reached when, to ensure the continuance of the work, Page made over the whole apparatus of the History to the University of London in 1931. His connexion continued, however, in full force, and at the time of his death he was the Chairman of the Committee which the University had formed to organize its affairs.

Though constrained by the circumstances of his life to be a man of affairs, Page was essentially a scholar and historian: nothing would have been more congenial to him than a learned leisure. The kindest of men, he was never better pleased than when putting the resources of his great learning at the disposal of his friends, and many there are who are deep in his debt. It is difficult to see how his place can be filled.

C. P.