

THE LATE REV. PREBENDARY HINGESTON RANDOLPH.

By EDMUND H. SEDDING.

IT is safe to say that but few of the clergy in the South and West of England heard of the death of the Rev. Prebendary Hingeston Randolph without a feeling of strong sympathy and a sense of loss. His genial nature, his conversational powers, and his wide and general knowledge, made him a strong and attractive personality. He died (as we say) in harness, in the little village of Ringmore, South Devon (about 10 miles from Ivybridge station), where he had just completed his fiftieth year as incumbent, after a short illness, at the ripe age of seventy-eight. It is not too much to say that this ardent churchman and distinguished scholar has left a gap which will not be easily filled.

During the early portion of his long career he voluntarily undertook the restoration of the churches of St. Columb Minor, Zennor, Manaccan, and the tower of St. Colan, which will always be regarded as types of conservative restoration. His antiquarian and architectural knowledge was considerable, and he was frequently appealed to for guidance in the diocese of Exeter, where he was so well known. His acquaintance with all kinds of materials in wood and stone made him a useful referee to many of the clergy and laity. In addition to the above-mentioned work of repair, he superintended more than one new church, and acted as architect for the enlargement of his own rectory, and gave his services as architectural assessor in three competitions.

During the initial stages of the building of Truro Cathedral the late John Pearson decided upon the entire removal of St. Mary's Church. It was mainly owing to Prebendary Hingeston Randolph who was ultimately supported by Archbishop Benson, at that time Bishop of Truro, that the south aisle was preserved in situ. The nation owes a debt of gratitude for his long struggle for its preservation. His long, appealing letters in

the Times did much to bring about the successful result, and it is only fair to offer a warm tribute to the architect of the cathedral for the masterly way in which he incorporated this delightful piece of late fifteenth-century architecture.

In spite of the enormous work of research in compiling the diocesan registers of Exeter, he invariably found time to answer his numerous correspondents. Those who had the privilege of being among the number will always remember his replies, which were models of precision and beautiful penmanship. My acquaintance with him extended over a period of twenty-two years, and I may say that I never met with a more reliable and unselfish correspondent.

Those who knew something of the difficulties of deciphering and translating the early registers of the Exeter diocese, which of course embraced Cornwall, must have been struck with his extraordinary patience and perseverance. The necessary mass of papers and documents which had to be dealt with were carefully put away and locked up before visitors were allowed into his study, which was a model of neatness. His well-regulated mind was gifted with an extraordinary memory which enabled him to discuss matters in which he was especially interested (such as old church architecture) with extraordinary accuracy. He undertook the repairing of the beforementioned churches after they had fallen into a sad state of neglect and decay, and at the time of his visits during the progress of the churches, in which he was keenly interested,

his one thought was to preserve all that was possible. Perhaps the most successful of his undertakings was the restoration of Manaccan. During the work at Zennor he discovered the lower portion of a thirteenth-century lancet window, which had been walled up, the eastern light being admitted by a clumsy modern window. As many of the old stones as could be found in the wall were re-used in re-forming this very unusual feature, viz., a single lancet in the east wall of the chancel.

The untiring energy which he devoted to his literary and architectural works brought him no remuneration—indeed, his life seems to have been concentrated upon the bestowal of his time and labour for the good of the Church and churchmen.