

OBITUARY

ASSOCIATE-PROFESSOR J. A. TWEMLOW, B.A.

Jesse Alfred Twemlow was educated at the Liverpool Institute, Liverpool University College, and Christ Church, Oxford. At Oxford he had met among other scholars Reginald Lane Poole who was introducing mediaeval diplomatic studies, especially of the formal documents of the Papal and Imperial Chanceries, to the select few who were privileged to attend his seminars. After a brief period with the British Civil Service in Dublin, Twemlow went to study at the Ecole des Chartes in Paris where he acquired that exact and austere palaeographical technique which was evident in all his later work and which he relentlessly passed on to his own students.

This highly specialized training made Twemlow's appointment as editor of the *Calendar of Papal Letters* in the Vatican Archives a particularly fortunate one and his meticulous standards of editing have been well recognized by scholars, perhaps even more generally by continental than by British historians. Among those scholars working in the Papal Archives he made many friends and he was honoured by the friendship of the Papal Librarian, who later became Pope Pius XI.

In 1908 his former teacher at University College, Liverpool, Professor J. M. Mackay, succeeded in persuading the Senate and Council to establish in the new university a Lectureship in Palaeography and Diplomatic and Twemlow became the first holder. This meant a complete change of his mode of life and the translation of his wife and young family from their agreeable Roman environment to more prosaic surroundings in Liverpool. Established here he gathered around him a group of students who shared his admiration for Mackay and whom he inspired with his zeal for palaeographical studies. Leading local antiquaries and historians came to his informal local history seminars in connexion with the School of Local History and Records. This was closely associated with the much older Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire of which Twemlow was a very active member. He received much help and encouragement in these enterprises from Robert Gladstone, Henry Peet, R. Stewart-Brown and John Brownbill, to name only a few of this group. Some notable publications came from the School and the University Press: in particular his own magnificently edited volumes of the *Liverpool Town Books* of the Elizabethan age; and Peet's two volumes of *Liverpool Vestry Books*. After the first World War a new generation of Twemlow's students transcribed some of the volumes of the *Town Books* of the Stuart period but they still await an editor and publication. The steady growth of the department inside the University was recognized by Twemlow being given the title of associate professor which he held until his retirement. His wide and deep scholarship was appreciated by eminent historians both at home and abroad yet his memory will remain most bright with those of his old students and colleagues who were admitted to his intimate friendship and his home. There they could enjoy his Latin wit and sometimes mischievous humour which masked his essentially serious mind, uncompromising standards of human conduct and untiring pursuit of knowledge.

F. J. ROUTLEDGE