

## ALEXANDER STUART MURRAY

ALEXANDER STUART MURRAY, the eldest son of George Murray, of Arbroath in Forfarshire, was born on the 8th January, 1841. He was educated at the Edinburgh High School and at Glasgow University; and he subsequently spent some time as a student at the University of Berlin. With this equipment he entered the service of the Trustees of the British Museum at the close of his twenty-sixth year, being appointed, on the 14th February, 1867, an Assistant in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, of which Charles (afterwards Sir Charles) Thomas Newton was then the Keeper. There Murray was destined to pass the rest of his life.

It was only a few years before his appointment that the old Department of Antiquities of the British Museum had been subdivided into the three Departments of Oriental Antiquities, Greek and Roman Antiquities, and Coins and Medals. Thus, during his official career, Murray witnessed the growth of his Department almost from its beginnings to its later full development in which he personally took so large a part. The departmental staff was at first a small one; but this was not a disadvantage to its members; and, not being confined to any one branch of antiquities, Murray had rare opportunities for making himself accurately acquainted with the whole of the Greek and Roman collections of the Museum. Aided by a correct eye and a retentive memory, he was able to store up during his early years of service an abundance of archaeological knowledge which he afterwards turned to such good account, both for the Trustees and for the public, when he came to administer the Department.

Murray succeeded Newton in the Keepership on the 13th February, 1886, having served an apprenticeship of just nineteen years. And now with his learning matured and with his acquaintance with the collections intimate, he was ready to undertake a scheme of a more scientific re-arrangement of the Greek and Roman Antiquities, and with the aid of an increasing staff to prepare and issue catalogues which it had been impossible to do while the Department had been insufficiently manned.

It is chiefly with the re-arrangement of the collections that

Murray's name will be identified in the public memory. The excellent taste displayed in his grouping of the vases and in the accessories employed in their mounting is manifest to all who visit the galleries. The bronzes, the engraved gems, the gold ornaments,—in a word, all the smaller objects of the collections were set out in a scientific and attractive order that had not been hitherto attempted. But above all Murray devoted himself to the better arrangement of the great groups of Greek sculpture which are among the chief glories of the British Museum. Under his hands the *disjecta membra* of the Mausoleum gathered shape; the great chariot group again rose into being; and an appreciation of the proportions of the architectural 'order' was made possible by a restoration and piecing together of original fragments. Improvements followed in the setting of the Elgin marbles, of the Nereid tomb, and of the Phigaleian collection. But Murray's archaeological skill was perhaps most effectively displayed in the arrangement and restoration of the sculptures and architectural remains from the Hellenistic temple of Artemis at Ephesus, and from the archaic temple on the same site. To him is due the recognition of the relations between the several members of the columns of the later temple, and hence the key to the architectural elevation. Moreover, his ingenuity was keenly exercised in finding the clue to the restoration of the columns and details of the earlier building from the veriest fragments; never was there a better illustration of the proverbial 'ex pede Herculem.' It is to be regretted that his life was not spared to deal with the fragments which are being recovered from the excavations now in actual progress, and which might have given further scope for the exercise of his archaeological sagacity. It has almost become the traditional ambition of the Department, since the days of Newton's discovery of the Mausoleum, to take in hand from time to time the exploration of some ancient Greek site. Wood's excavations at Ephesus were left incomplete; and it was not till last year that the prospects for re-opening the ground could be considered favourable. It was one of Murray's last services to make the preliminary arrangements for the resumption of the Ephesian excavations which have been actually undertaken since his death. Still he had an opportunity afforded to him for exploration in Cyprus by the munificent bequest of Miss E. T. Turner to the British Museum; and excavations were carried on during three years, 1894-6, at Amathus, Curium, and Enkomi, in the last of which he personally took part. The results were given, under his editorship, in one of the departmental publications.

With all his official duties, Murray still found time to carry on his private studies. Almost yearly he devoted some portion of his vacation to travel in Italy or Greece or other countries, always with archaeological research in view. He published, among other works, a *History of Sculpture*, which went through two editions in 1880 and 1883, a *Handbook of Greek Archaeology* in 1892, and, lastly, a book on the *Sculptures of the Parthenon* in 1903, which was based upon a course of lectures delivered to the students of the Royal Academy.

As an archaeologist Murray must be regarded as belonging to the conservative school. His strength lay in his mastery of detail and in the possession of that sagacity in following clues which seems to amount almost to an instinct in the scientific mind. These qualities and his caution fitted him most excellently for the official position he held. Among modern archaeologists he was almost alone in withholding assent to the early date generally assigned to Greek antiquities of the Mycenaean period.

Small in stature, with a strongly-marked Scottish personality both in voice and feature, Murray was a favourite among his friends, a good public servant, and a loyal colleague. Yet he had the courage of his own convictions; and his outspokenness sometimes gave offence. But, if he did so, there could never be any question of his honesty of purpose. To see him at his best, was to get him to describe some favourite object of antiquity, when the subtle details were dwelt upon, the story warmed as it went on, the enthusiasm glowed, and the Scottish tone and accent, not unpleasing to a southern ear, became more and more marked till the end was reached. 'And how well he told it!' has been the remark of more than one listener made to the present writer. Of a healthy constitution and never afflicted with sickness, he did not appreciate the seriousness of the chill that was to prove fatal. After a few days' illness he died on the 5th of March, 1904.

Murray was an honorary LL.D. of Edinburgh; a Corresponding Member of the Royal Prussian Academy and of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres of the French Institute; a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; and a Vice-President of the Hellenic Society. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, on the 1st of March, 1904.

[actually elected 25 March 1903]

E. MAUNDE THOMPSON.