

The Right Hon. James Parker Smith, P.C., M.A.

ON the morning of the 30th April 1929 Mr Parker Smith, who had spent the preceding day in travelling from Scotland to London, was found dead in bed at Brooks's Club, having apparently died peacefully in his sleep.

His family descended from the Smiths of Craighend, Stirlingshire, once armourers or smiths to the Dukes of Montrose, and he was born on the 30th August 1854, eldest son of Archibald Smith, F.R.S., of Riverbank, Putney, and Jordanhill, Glasgow, and grandson of James Smith, F.R.S., of Jordanhill. His father, who was Senior Wrangler at Cambridge in 1836, afterwards combined with a large practice as a lawyer at Lincoln's Inn much scientific research, particularly in connection with the deviations of the compass. His grandfather James Smith was eminent as a geologist and man of letters, and through his enthusiasm for yachting was led to write his *Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*. His other grandfather was Vice-Chancellor Sir James Parker.

In 1867 he won a Scholarship at Winchester College, where Dr Ridding, afterwards first Bishop of Southwell, had just become headmaster. Among his contemporaries in the College were Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, Mr G. E. Buckle, Lord Parmoor, and Sir W. P. Herringham. Under the fostering care of the Rev. George Richardson (Third Wrangler in 1860) he soon showed that he had inherited one of his father's gifts: his mathematics won him the Duncan Prize at Winchester in 1871, and a Scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1873. He came out Fourth Wrangler and bracketed Second Smith's Prizeman in 1877, and was elected Fellow of Trinity.

In 1880 he was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn, and joined the Oxford Circuit. But law eventually proved to be not so attractive to him as politics. After an unsuccessful contest at Paisley in 1886, he was returned M.P. for the Partick Division of Lanarkshire in 1890, and kept this seat as a Liberal Unionist until 1906. From 1900 to 1903 he was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Joseph Chamberlain, and was made a Privy Councillor in 1904. Losing his seat at the General Election of 1906, he failed to win Greenock in 1910, and did not again enter the House of Commons.

Parker Smith had a considerable business career, for he became a director of several important companies; but the keenest work of his life

and its keenest pleasures centred round his old school at Winchester. In 1895, on the resignation of Dr Edwin Freshfield, F.S.A., he was co-opted as a Fellow of the College, and thenceforward until his death, thirty-four years later, he took a very active part in the multifarious business with which the governing body of a great public school is called upon to deal: his financial abilities and his zeal in working out the details of any scheme that was being carried through were of immense help to his colleagues. In 1903, on the death of the Rev. G. B. Lee, who, as Warden for life, had been head of the College for forty-two years, a constitutional change was made, and the Wardenship became tenable for a period of five years by whichever of the Fellows his colleagues selected for appointment to it. So it came about that Parker Smith was Warden from 1915 to 1920, and he discharged his duties as head of the College with great efficiency. Many unusual difficulties arose at that period by reason of the War, and he showed much skill in circumventing them. His relations with the Headmaster, Dr M. J. Rendall, were of a very happy character, and he gave from the outset a strong support to Dr Rendall's scheme for the War Cloister that has added a wonderful beauty to the west side of the College precincts. One of his own sons is amongst the Wykehamists that this cloister commemorates.

Some few years ago Parker Smith shifted his home from Jordanhill to Ryvra, North Berwick. In 1882 he married his cousin, Miss Louisa Hamilton, who survives him. He is also survived by one son, Captain A. C. H. Parker Smith, and a married daughter.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1921.

H. C.