

Background of Randolph Francis Charles Hingston (1833-1910)

Randolph, Francis Charles Hingston- (1833–1910), antiquary, born Francis Charles Hingston at Truro on 31 March 1833, was the son of Francis Hingston (1796–1841), controller of customs at Truro, who belonged to a family long established in St Ives. His father had literary tastes and wrote poems which the son edited and published in 1857. Hingston's mother was Jane Matilda, daughter of Captain William Kirkness of Kernick. From Truro grammar school Hingston entered Exeter College, Oxford, in November 1851 as Elliott exhibitor. He graduated BA in 1855 with an honorary fourth class in the final pass school, and proceeded MA in 1858. Ordained deacon in 1856, he served as curate of Holywell, Oxford, until 1858, when he moved to Hampton Gay, in the same county; he succeeded to the incumbency of the parish next year and was ordained priest in 1859.

From an early age Hingston had developed antiquarian interests: when only seventeen years old he published *Specimens of Ancient Cornish Crosses and Fonts* (1850). During the late 1850s he became an editor for the *Rolls Series*; his involvement probably arose from his position as the accepted suitor of the eldest daughter of Joseph Stevenson, who—with Sir John Romilly and Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy—initiated the project to publish sources for early British history. He edited two works by the fifteenth-century historian and theologian John Capgrave, *The Chronicle of England* (1858) and the *Liber de illustribus Henricis* (1858), neither of which met with a favourable reception from reviewers. He was nevertheless commissioned to edit a two-volume collection of royal and historical letters of the reign of Henry IV. The first volume, published in 1860, failed to cover more than the first five years and contained such a voluminous amount of material that the master of the rolls calculated that the publication would run to thirty volumes for the whole reign if continued on this scale. In addition, the inaccuracies which had been apparent in Capgrave's volumes were also here present: Hingston had taken no care to produce a correct text, either of Latin, French, or English.

Hingston's connection with the *Rolls Series* was further weakened in the same year when he jilted Stevenson's daughter to marry, on 26 July, Martha Jane (*d.* 1904), only daughter of Herbert Randolph, minister of Melrose, Roxburghshire: Stevenson, outraged by Hingston's 'base, treacherous and untruthful' conduct, commented that he 'could not congratulate the Lady did I know her' (Knowles, 113, n. 3). At the wish of his father-in-law, Hingston added the name Randolph to his and also adopted Hingston, an older spelling of his family name. This circumstance—coupled with the fact that he also became vicar of Ringmore, near Kingsbridge, Devon, in the same year, the patronage of which living afterwards became invested in his family—suggests that the young clergyman might have discarded Stevenson's daughter in favour of an heiress. Certainly, on the expectation of plenty, he pledged some £200 in 1863 to a local builder and for the purchase of an organ. When in 1864 the second volume of *Royal and Historical Letters during the Reign of Henry IV* was in type form, Romilly arranged for the manuscripts to be recollated and the translation checked: it was found necessary to cancel and reprint sixty-two pages of text and add sixteen pages of errata. Romilly decided to suppress the volume; eight copies only were preserved and the rest of the edition was pulped. In 1965, however, Kraus Reprint published the second volume, together with the critics' amendments.

In 1885 Frederick Temple, then bishop of Exeter, made Hingston-Randolph a prebendary of Exeter Cathedral; at the bishop's suggestion he began editing the *Episcopal Registers of the diocese*. Between 1886 and 1909 he completed those of eight late medieval bishops. He restricted himself largely to indexing the contents of the registers, a method which limited the historical value of his scheme. Hingston-Randolph was also interested in church architecture, and was often consulted about the restoration of west country churches. He wrote on *The Architectural History of St. Germans Church, Cornwall* (1903), and contributed

architecture, and was often consulted about the restoration of west country churches. He wrote on *The Architectural History of St. Germans Church, Cornwall* (1903), and contributed many architectural articles to *Building News* and *The Ecclesiologist*. He was also a contributor to *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, *Notes and Gleanings*, the *Western Antiquary*, and the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*. For ten years (1879–90) he was rural dean of Woodleigh, and brought the work of the district to a high state of efficiency. In his articles 'Up and down the deanery', which he contributed to the *Salcombe Parish Magazine*, he included a historical account of every parish under his charge. He died at the rectory, Ringmore, on 27 August 1910, and was buried in the churchyard there. He left four sons and six daughters.