The following Speech (printed by Order of the Society) was delivered by the Reverend Dr. Milles, Dean of Exeter, Jan. 12, 1769, on his succeeding the late Bishop of Carlisle, as President of the Society of Antiquaries.

Gentlemen,

My earliest thanks are due to this respectable Society in general, and to the Members of the Council in particular, for the honour conferred on me in electing me your President.

Conscious that I am indebted solely to the partiality of my friends for this honourable mark of distinction; and at the same time truly sensible of the disadvantages under which I succeed to an office so ably filled by my late most worthy predecessor; I must entreat your candour, Gentlemen, and desire your indulgent acceptance of my services, which shall be exerted in a constant attendance on your public meetings, and in a diligent application to the business and interests of the Society.

I cannot repeat the name of our most respected and much lamented President, without paying that grateful tribute to his memory, which his services to the Society whilst he lived, and his generosity perpetuated to them at his death, do most justly demand of us; and I am persuaded, that every absent as well as present Member will join in this acknowledgment with a most willing and grateful voice.

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It is not in my power to draw such a portrait of his Lordship, as can in any respect do justice to the original. His merits and good qualities are so universally acknowledged, and so deeply impressed on the minds of those who hear me, that their own ideas will paint them in more just and lively colours than my words can express: I may be indulged however in recalling to your minds such parts of his character as particularly endeared him to the Society, and therefore make his loss more sensibly felt by us.

The study of Antiquity, especially that part of it which relates to the History and Constitution of these kingdoms, was one of his earliest and most favourite pursuits; and he acquired great knowledge in it by constant study and application, to which he was led, not only by his natural disposition, but also by his state and situation in life. He took frequent opportunities of improving and enriching this knowledge, by judicious observations, in the course of several journeys which he made through every county in England, and through many parts of Scotland and Wales. The Society has reaped the fruits of these observations in the many valuable papers which his Lordship from time to time has communicated to us; which are more in number, and not inferior either in merit or importance, to those conveyed to us by other hands.

Blest with a retentive memory, and happy both in the disposition and facility of communicating his knowledge, he was enabled also to act the part of a judicious commentator and candid critic, explaining, illustrating, and correcting, from his own observations, many of the papers which have been read at this Society.

His station and connections in the world, which necessarily engaged a very considerable part of his time, did not lessen his attention to the business and interests of the Society. His doors were always open to his friends, amongst whom none were more welcome to him than the friends of Literature, which he endeavoured to promote
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mote in all its various branches, especially in those which are the more immediate objects of our attention. Even this circumstance proved beneficial to the Society; for, if I may be allowed the expression, he was the centre in which the various informations on points of Antiquity from the different parts of the kingdom united, and the medium through which they were conveyed to us.

His literary merit with the Society received an additional lustre, from the affability of his temper, the gentleness of his manners, and the benevolence of his heart; which united every Member of the Society in esteem to their Head, and in harmony and friendship with each other. A principle so essentially necessary to the prosperity, and even to the existence of all communities, especially those which have Arts and Literature for their object, that its beneficial effects are visibly to be discerned in the present flourishing state of our Society, which I flatter myself will be long continued under the influence of the same agreeable principles.

I shall conclude this imperfect sketch of a most worthy character, by observing, that the warmth of his affection to the Society continued to his latest breath; and he has given a signal proof of it in the last great act which a wise man does with respect to his worldly affairs; for, amongst the many charitable and generous donations contained in his will, he has made a very useful and valuable bequest of manuscripts and printed books to the Society, as a token of his affection for them, and of his earnest desire to promote those laudable purposes for which they were instituted.

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