

WILLIAM MARTIN, M.A., LL.D., F.S.A.  
TWO APPRECIATIONS.

I.

BY

CHAS. W. F. GOSS.

THE loss to the Society and to archæology by the death, on the 25th May, 1929, of Dr. Martin, so flexible and versatile in capacity, is no slight one, while to his colleagues and friends it is a heavy personal sorrow.

Shortly after his return from a brief holiday in Italy, Dr. Martin's health showed signs of the strain, to which he had habitually subjected it by his unceasing devotion to his archæological activities, and it was painfully evident to his colleagues that the many calls upon his time had told on a not too vigorous constitution. He ignored advice to seek rest from the continuous round of engagements, and persisted in his hobby of acting as lecturer and guide to parties and friends, with the result that when he did cease his labours it was too late, for he did not survive more than a few months.

Born in Brighton, a younger son of Alderman Henry Martin, he began his education in that town, earning the Whitworth College Scholarship. Coming to London, he matriculated at London University, where he gained his B.A. degree. About ten years later he became an undergraduate of Downing College, Cambridge, and successively took his LL.B., M.A. and LL.M. degrees, and finally the Doctorate of Laws.

As a young man, Martin had displayed remarkable ability, studying at intervals law and the antiquities of the County of Middlesex; but no one suspected that his natural taste inclined him to history and archæology. He kept his terms at Lincoln's Inn, where he was called

to the Bar in July, 1889, and although he was keenly interested in the study of law, and believed he had fair prospects, he was side-tracked into the study of history and antiquities, in which he indulged during his leisure hours, and in which his research and acuteness were remarkable.

He had, in an eminent degree, many qualities which would have brought him success in several walks of life; but he forsook his early love and entered the Patent Office, where for many years, until his retirement in 1923, he was supervising examiner, an occupation which was sufficient to engage most of his official hours, and while never neglecting his duties in that capacity he found time to pursue, with surpassing enthusiasm, his historical and archæological interests after hours of work, often under perplexing circumstances. He was capable of long application and concentrated attention, and possessed ample reserve of strength for his researches in London topography, spending many hours selecting and arranging material for lectures, so that at a moment's call he could always be relied upon to give a succinct account of any phase of London's topography, whether a public building or a neighbourhood.

He regularly attended the meetings of the Society of Antiquaries, at Burlington House, of which he was elected a Fellow in 1908, and he always referred with some pride to his membership of the Athenæum Club. Besides our own Society, of which he was elected Chairman of Council in 1923, he was a member of several learned bodies, and he was one of the founders of the Gilbert White Fellowship, of which he became the first President in 1918.

Since he became our editor a little more than six years ago, his first and last thought was always for the welfare of the *TRANSACTIONS*, to which his rare power of application, his rapid and comprehensive judgment and his capacious stores of knowledge, were devoted without stint, with no thought of his ease and comfort and

certainly with little regard for his health, and no one would venture to dispute that Dr. Martin did honour to that office.

Not only did breadth of scholarship, considerable literary ability and sanity of judgment peculiarly fit him to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Arthur Bonner; but whenever it was necessary to supply material for the *TRANSACTIONS* he, like his predecessor, was ever ready to enrich its pages with an article from his pen. The merits of his contributions are familiar to all. They contain first-hand information and bear on every page their certificate of origin in a mind stored with unedited knowledge.

His first contribution to the *TRANSACTIONS* was one entitled "Early maps of London," upon which subject he was an acknowledged master. The subject was continued in two succeeding issues, and when bound together, they make a pleasing monograph. To volume IV he contributed "Earliest views of London," and in volume V appeared his article on the "Sheldon Tapestry," while the last issue of the *TRANSACTIONS* contains his "Notes upon the history and topography of the Temple."

Dr. Martin displayed an infinite capacity for presiding at our meetings, and was most helpful with his well-informed observations on matters under discussion, for he took great pains to keep himself abreast of the discoveries made in London and Middlesex, or to watch any excavations which were in progress in the county, and his opinions on Roman London were solid and strong, something on which one could lean with confidence.

But it was not only for the conduct of our meetings and as editor of the *TRANSACTIONS*, that Dr. Martin will be permanently remembered by the members and others. They will think of him also for his great capacity, his soundness of judgment, his gentleness, his modest demeanour, his charm of manner, and as a man



The late WILLIAM MARTIN, M.A., LL.D., F.S.A.  
Chairman of Council and Hon. Editor.

who devoted himself with unstinted energy to the service of archæology; one who was ever ready to impart his knowledge to others without reserve and with an enthusiasm that inevitably infected his listeners.

His profound knowledge of London topography added to the unhesitating confidence in himself, and his readiness to help, soon marked him out as an ideal guide—capable and enthusiastic—for which duty the extraordinary strength and retentiveness of his memory served him well. His addresses were models of orderly arrangement, perspicuous and simple in illustration, and he would give us a history of a building with a facility that impressed one.

Of Dr. Martin's private life—lonely as it appeared to the writer—we know so little, as to make us regret the imperfection and brevity of this note, offered as a small tribute of respect to the memory of the man we esteemed and honoured; but it behoves us to remember that though little before the world in his personal capacity, he was an important help as an antiquary, who in his last years gave his strength in the service of the Society, and that he leaves a record of work which will not be easily forgotten.

## II.

BY

G. J. B. FOX.

My acquaintance with Dr. Martin commenced on 8th February, 1913, at the British Museum in a private room, where he was giving a "Demonstration on Old London Maps" to the members of the Battersea Field Club; well posted in his subject, yet he was eager to acquire new facts; in showing an engraving of an equestrian statue of Charles I, he pointed out a group of buildings appearing in the distance between the horse's legs, and asked if anyone could throw light on its locale or history.

He joined the St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society in 1888. In 1916, I was giving the Society the first of a series of four lantern lectures on "Lincoln Minster," perhaps I was unduly eulogical on the carved stonework of the interior, as when he was called upon to say something, he mentioned that my remarks appeared to be on the "high side," and added, with a touch of sly humour, that he felt inclined to go round the building with a steel brush and sweep away many of the details which had been shown on the screen in such profusion.

Later, on the resignation of the Rev. H. J. Clayton, he replaced that gentleman as editor of the Society's TRANSACTIONS, which post he held till his death. He acted also as a Vice-Chairman, and many of the meetings of the Council were held in his chambers in Elm Court, Temple.

In 1918, the Gilbert White Fellowship was founded, and he held the responsible office of President for the term of three years; he was energetic in his efforts to place the Fellowship on a sure foundation, and tireless in the work of expanding its range and influence; many of the Council meetings were held in a room in Garden Court, which he shared with a legal friend. In many ways and in many quarters he made his influence felt, and in later years his interest was still sustained, indoors and out of doors. On one occasion, the Fellowship proposed to visit Selborne, the birthplace and home of Gilbert White; he and I paid an advance visit to prepare details, and no trouble was too great, and no energy was spared to ensure accuracy and easy work. However, fate selected other leaders.

He acted as General Secretary to the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies, and also as editor of its organ, the *South-Eastern Naturalist*; he was a regular attendant, not only at Council meetings, but on other occasions.

He was meticulous in his desire for accuracy, even to the extent of scrapping material already prepared.

He was writing a paper on "Blackfriars Monastery," and had introduced into it an imaginary meeting between two historical and royal personages; I pointed out a fact which would have made such a meeting impossible—his pen went through that paragraph immediately.

He was intimately acquainted with the history of Lincoln's Inn and of the Temple. He conducted a party composed of members of two or three Societies round the former; so attractive in his hands was the subject, that his audience comprised nearly 100 individuals, so great was the desire to benefit by his knowledge. On the other hand, he could accommodate himself to less highbrow circumstances; he was once taking a party of school children round the Temple, and I was told that he spared no pains to bring out in very simple language various facts which he desired to impress upon their memories, and he held their attention to a remarkable degree.

As a man, he was somewhat of a retiring nature in the face of opposition; rather than cause friction or give offence by putting on a bold front to secure his point, he would gracefully give way to preserve *bon accord*.

One of his pleasurable pursuits was the exploration, either alone or with a companion, of the lesser known streets and their lanes or alleys or courts. Two of such excursions I well remember, off Shaftesbury Avenue and Golden Square, and along Bankside. The Homeland Association has published his account of a ramble round the latter locality in a charming booklet in their *Lunch-Time Rambles in Old London*, under the title of "Along the Bankside."

Latterly when the internal complaint from which he suffered was manifesting itself, he became less energetic; "I have to kick myself to make me do anything"; his relaxation from more serious matters was attendance at theatres or picture palaces. From these diversions he passed to a hospital, where, alas, the final scene was not long delayed.