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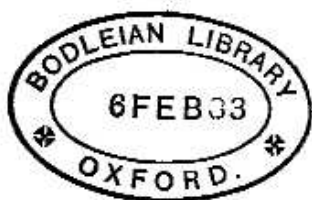
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THE
FOREIGN CHURCH CHRONICLE
AND REVIEW

FOR THE YEAR 1881



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IN MEMORIAM—SIR WILLIAM MARTIN, D.C.L.

ON November 18th, 1880, at his residence, Torquay, Sir William Martin, D.C.L., the first Chief Justice of New Zealand, passed peacefully to his rest. The fact that he was the friend of Bishop Selwyn and of Bishop Patteson, and that his whole heart was given to the furthering of Church and Mission work abroad and at home, makes it not unsuitable that a short sketch of his life should be given in these pages.

He was born at Birmingham, in 1806, left an orphan at an early age, and brought up by his mother's brother, a lawyer in large practice, with his own children. The boy had a happy childhood and youth in a country home, and never forgot the Worcestershire commons, gay with gorse, over which he roamed and played. Yet even in his old age he used to remember with pain his longing for a mother's love, and his envy of other boys who had one to run to in their troubles. Like many other Churchmen of his generation, he had few of those helps to devotion now so freely offered to the young, but this home was a God-fearing one, and his uncle, on Sunday evenings, was a patient student of books, such as Butler's *Analogy*, John Locke, and the like, and encouraged his nephew by example and occasional advice to habits of thoughtful reading. He was a day-boy at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and went up to Cambridge in 1826. He took his degree in 1829, was second Gold Medallist of his year, and twenty-sixth Wrangler, and was made a

Fellow of St. John's the next year. His contemporary and life-long friend, who took a high degree in the same year, writes of him, —

"He was gentle and kindly to all, considerate, and averse from harsh judgments and strong statements of opinion. He manifested a quick and clear apprehension, unravelling easily what was complicated, seizing firmly the most important points of any subject and their remote bearings. His judgments seemed to me perfect common sense, elevated by a sort of genius. I have known few men with natural powers of mind so great, and none in whom they were so wholesomely combined. To all this was added a memory most retentive of what he chose to commit to it. From the first he bore the same loving, sincere, simple, and earnest character. Entirely without ostentation himself, he esteemed highly all good, honest, loving, unpretending people. I well remember his telling me, in his B.A. days, of his having met Blunt, afterwards Divinity Professor, and being struck by his gentleness and humility; and he added, 'To become a Christian of that sort is indeed worth aiming at.'

"It was clear at that time that his ideal of life was devotion to duty for the love of God. He gave much attention to divinity from the first, studying Hebrew, and reading the early Christian writings. Especially did he devote his Sunday evenings to these subjects. To me he seemed more learned in divinity than any student of it that I knew; and this was equally the case when he studied and practised law in London."

He remained at Cambridge till 1833, when he was one of the examiners for the Classical Tripos. He took private pupils, who all retained a warm affection for him. One of these, Provost of a College in Canada, writes:—

"I cannot say how much I owed him as my tutor. I have a very grateful recollection that he allowed me to know him not only as a tutor but as a friend, and shall never forget the impression which his gentleness and kindly interest in my well-being made upon me. It was a great happiness to renew that early friendship in 1874. I found him, after a lapse of nearly forty years, the same to me as ever, the same kindly look and tone, the same quiet wisdom in his discourse. It was an unspeakable pleasure to me to listen to his thoughtful observations on the questions now so much debated, and on the passages of Holy Scripture which bear upon them. I felt how greatly my son would have esteemed such a friend and counsellor, and often wished that Sir William could be seated with him and his young colleagues, and give them the benefit of his calm and devout searchings after truth."

Sir W. Martin's kind friend, Bishop Allen (the then Bishop of Ely) greatly desired that he should take holy orders, but he decided to go to the Chancery Bar, and was in Mr. Hodgkin's chambers first, and then was a favourite pupil of Sir George, afterwards Lord Justice, Turner. His friends at the bar believed that a splendid career awaited him, but his health began to suffer after a few years' work in London, and his eyesight to fail, and he turned his thoughts towards some new field of work. He was offered the Greek Pro-

fessorship in Glasgow, but declined it mainly on the ground that he would have been compelled to assent to the doctrinal statements of the Scotch National Church. A judgeship was offered him in the West Indies, which he declined through fear of the climate. In 1840, when the Chief Justiceship of New Zealand was offered to him by Lord John Russell, he at once accepted the post, and his ardour was doubly kindled when he found that his college friend, G. A. Selwyn, also Fellow of St. John's, was to be appointed bishop. The Chief Justice was married in April, 1841, and sailed soon after, accompanied by his friend at the bar, Mr. Swainson, as Attorney-General, and landed in Wellington, N.Z., in August of the same year. An old settler writes,—

“One of my very early recollections of dear old New Zealand was Sir William Martin's arriving to commence his public duties. His appearance, manner, and conversation were so engaging, that one felt taken by storm at once. I could not help asking what could have induced him to come to our outlandish colony. His reply was, ‘Is it not sufficient inducement to come out with such a man as Bishop Selwyn?’”

The judge, amid all his new studies pressing upon him, at once put himself into friendly relations with the native people. He had studied all that was printed of the language on board ship, and was soon able to converse freely in Maori. In May, 1842, the Bishop arrived in the country, and the two friends at once took counsel together, and in November of that year walked back through the country together, visiting every native village and mission station on the way, both enjoying to the full the beauty of the goodly heritage whither God's providence had brought them.

The next few years of his life were very busy ones. He had been among the number of those younger men at the bar who desired law reform, and his successor, Sir G. Arney, bears noble testimony to his efforts in New Zealand.

“From the first, he bestowed on this colony an improved system of conveyancing, and ultimately gave this colony a system of procedure, by which the suitors in the Supreme Court, whether appealing to its civil, or criminal, or testamentary jurisdiction, were enabled to obtain the remedies which in England could only be collected through the multifarious channels of different courts, and through different complex codes of procedure. The scheme itself was humbly regarded by Sir W. Martin as an imperfect and tentative commencement, to be tested by the experience and supplemented by the wisdom of others; but it records its testimony to his perspicacity and sound judgment.”

He was ably aided in this work by his brother judge, Mr. Chapman, and by the Attorney-General.

But he found time for hearty co-operation in Church matters with the Bishop, and for pressing on the cause of education among the native race just emerged from barbarism. Though nominally Christians, the young were quite untaught.

"I feel it no common privilege," he writes home in 1844, "to work as far as I can with the great and noble-hearted men on whom the management of the interests of this colony at present devolves, especially in respect of the plans for the education of the native people. They are of the highest practical importance for the prospects and future welfare of the colony."

The cottage home (about a mile from the town) where the judge and his wife lived for thirty-two years, overlooked a sheltered bay, and close by he had built a little hostelry, where the sick could be nursed and wayfarers be sheltered. Every Sunday evening he had a class of Maori lads to teach, and was ready at other times to give up his leisure hours to the many subjects on which the native people came to ask his advice. In the Bishop's absence on island voyages, he would walk over to St. John's College in the evening, when his work was done, to give Greek lectures to the students. His great refreshment, once a year, if he could spare time, was to go off for a bush journey, accompanied, sometimes by his wife, always by a party of Maoris who were devoted to him.

"I wish it were possible to convey to your mind," he writes home, "an impression of the freshness and relief to the spirits of a man, which comes on one of these overland marches, after serious and responsible labour. Care is left behind you a little season, and the natural beauty of a wild, half-reclaimed land soothes and relieves one beyond measure."

In 1852, he went as Government Inspector of Schools in the Waikato district, and was full of thankfulness to see the movement for native education begun by the Bishop spreading throughout the country.

An accident at the end of 1854, apparently a slight one, brought on a long and severe illness. In 1856, the medical men advised a sea voyage, and the judge returned to England on sick leave. He partially recovered his health, but was obliged to resign his office in 1858. He was not idle while in England. The draft of the proposed New Zealand Church Constitution, the result of years of patient consideration with Bishop Selwyn, was gone over by him most carefully with Sir John Patteson and Sir John Coleridge, and received their hearty approval. The Bishop had written long before to Sir John Patteson,—

"There is no man to whom so many of us look with more confidence