

## Obituary Notice

ORMONDE MADDOCK DALTON, 1866–1945

THE death of Ormonde Dalton at Holford, Somerset, has removed a figure familiar to our older Fellows, and a once active and distinguished contributor to our proceedings and studies.

Dalton was born in 1866, and educated at Harrow, and New College, Oxford, taking a First in Classical Mods. and Lit. Hum.

His entry into the service of the British Museum in 1895 was preceded by some years of travel both on the Continent and in the Far East and America. He began his Museum career as Assistant, under Sir Wollaston Franks, in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography.

His earlier years were devoted to Ethnography, and he was joint-author of the official monograph on the Benin antiquities and collaborated in the Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections. In 1896 and 1897 he was Honorary Secretary of the Anthropological Institute, and served on its Council for many years.

Later he turned to the studies with which he made his name, East Christian archaeology, and he took charge also of the medieval and later collections. He was author of the *Catalogue* (1901) and also the *Guide to the Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities*, the *Catalogues of Ivories*, 1909, *Finger Rings*, 1912, and *Engraved Gems*, 1915, the *Guide* to the medieval and later collections, and a monograph on the Royal Gold Cup. He also wrote the two editions of the *Catalogue of the Oxus Treasure*, 1905 and 1926 respectively. For the Fitzwilliam Museum he wrote the *Catalogue of the Maclean Bequest*, 1912.

His two major contributions to Byzantine studies were *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, 1911, where all branches of the subject except architecture are exhaustively treated and profusely illustrated, and *East Christian Art*, 1925, in which he includes architecture, taking account of recent theories, especially those of Strzygowski, which he accepts with reserve.

To the study of the early Church in the West he contributed translations of the *Letters of Sidonius Apollinaris* and the *History of the Franks* by Gregory of Tours, accompanied by scholarly introductions and commentaries, throwing much light on conditions in fifth-century Gaul. On his retirement in 1927 he gave up active archaeological work.

His numerous separate papers, many contributed to our Society, can only be mentioned generally. All were of some importance and some were of great importance. His style was lucid and dignified, but owing to a characteristic stiffness and constraint it did not altogether make for easy reading.

For part of the first World War he was engaged in Government work. On the retirement from the Museum of Sir Hercules Read in 1921, he became Keeper of the new Department of British and Medieval Antiquities.

He was elected a Fellow of our Society in 1899, and served on the Council four times between 1904 and 1922. He was ever ready to give valuable service to the Society, for which he had a profound respect and affection, but his unconquerable diffidence and, as he called it, agoraphobia, made him fight shy of high office.

In 1922 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, to which he contributed a paper on the Brescia astrolabe and a memoir of Sir Hercules Read.

In character Dalton was modest and reserved to a degree, with a shyness which,

as his friends knew, was a source of unhappiness to himself, and which even made him seem formidable to some. But his colleagues and more intimate friends knew that behind any barriers there lay a geniality, accompanied by a lively sense of humour and a keen appreciation of the ludicrous, and a kindliness of disposition not less marked than his elevation and distinction of mind. A. B. T.