

Professor Earle.

THE Rev. John Earle, M.A., LL.D., rector of Swainswick, Prebendary of Wells, Rawlinsonian Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford, died on January 31st, 1903, aged 78.

Professor Earle was a man of wide culture, and his contributions to literature ranged over a considerable field. He loved Shakespeare and Dante, and wrote most interesting articles for the purpose of elucidating moot points relating thereto. He was fond of flowers, and could deal lovingly and learnedly with "English Plant Names from the Tenth to the Fifteenth Century." An earnest and zealous churchman, he found real delight in the study of theological literature, and scholars owe him a debt of gratitude for his charming reproduction of "The Psalter of the Great Bible of 1539." But it was in his many and varied studies of Anglo-Saxon literature that he was seen at his best. His great gifts in this direction secured him the Oxford Professorship around which a good part of his life work centred, with such evident pleasure to himself and benefit to others. These were often brought to bear upon local history, as, for example, in his "Handbook to the Land Charters and other Saxon Documents," and in "The Alfred Jewel." Apart altogether from his more popular works of national importance such as "The Philology of the English Tongue," which has reached its fifth edition, and "A Book for the Beginner in Anglo-Saxon," now running a third edition, he was the translator and

editor of "The Deeds of Beowulf," and editor of "Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel."

Professor Earle did much towards the unfolding of certain chapters of the history of the county of Somerset, in which he spent so many happy years as rector of Swainswick, a Prebendary of Wells, and Rural Dean. His work of this class extended over a long period, commencing with "A Guide to the Knowledge of Bath, Ancient and Modern," which was issued in 1864. Amongst his numerous contributions to local literature, we may mention a "Lecture on Traces of the Early History of Bath and its Neighbourhood;" "Notes on the Roman Sculpture of the Sun," found at Bath; "On a Document of Henry II relative to the Priory of Bath;" "On an Ancient Saxon Poem of a City in Ruins, supposed to be Bath;" "The Peace of Wedmore, and how it touches the History of the English Language;" and "Traces of the Saxon Period in Bath and the Neighbourhood."

Professor Earle was elected an honorary member of our Society in 1887, but he had attended several of our meetings before then; indeed, his election was a slight recognition of the services he had rendered on such occasions. At Wells, in 1873, when Dr. Beddoe, of Clifton, read an able paper "On the Ethnology of Somerset," he contributed considerably to the interest of the discussion thereon. In 1876, he was good enough to make a translation of an early charter relating to "The Sale of Combe" (St. Nicholas) in 1072, which Mr. F. H. Dickinson had discovered in looking through the large *Liber Albus*, and which formed the subject of a paper contributed to our *Proceedings* by that gentleman. Those who attended the meetings of the Society when Professor Earle was most regular in his attendance, will have delightful recollections of him. His manner was so pleasant, he had such a large fund of information on philological subjects, and he was always so ready, and even delighted, to assist in the discussion of any matters that came within his own special

province. His treatment of such topics was not only absolutely free from pedantry, but was fresh and pleasant to listen to. He always made the most he could of thoughts or theories advanced by others, while he was perfectly clear about his own facts, and stated them in the most simple and unostentatious manner.

C. T.

John Phillis.

JOHN Phillis, the founder of the interesting little museum at Shepton Mallet, died on August 26th, 1903, aged 84 years. He had spent his long life in the neighbourhood of the Mendip hills, and had added greatly to his happiness and usefulness by studying the Natural History and Archæology of the beautiful and interesting district in which he lived. His studies and researches brought him into communication with many eminent men, several of whom held him in high esteem, and he numbered men like Charles Moore among his personal friends. He was a real lover of nature, and had won for himself an unique position amongst his neighbours by his delightfully simple and unassuming manner of imparting knowledge, and by his great anxiety to encourage all who sought his help. Mr. Phillis had formed a considerable collection of geological specimens, interesting objects connected with the town and neighbourhood, etc., and was ever ready to give freely from his stores, either to public institutions or to private collectors. But the main part of his treasures he presented to his native town, and they occupy a room adjoining the public offices at Shepton Mallet, thus forming a fitting memorial of his intelligence, zeal and energy ; while it will also, it may be hoped, encourage others to follow his example. Mr. Phillis was for some years a member of our Society. He was also a Vice-President of the Shepton Mallet Natural History Society, and had published a pamphlet on the Geology of the Mendips: a little work which showed his grasp of the subject, and his ability to make it interesting to the uninitiated.

C. T.