

Address

To honor the Memory
of the late

Fred. J. Martell

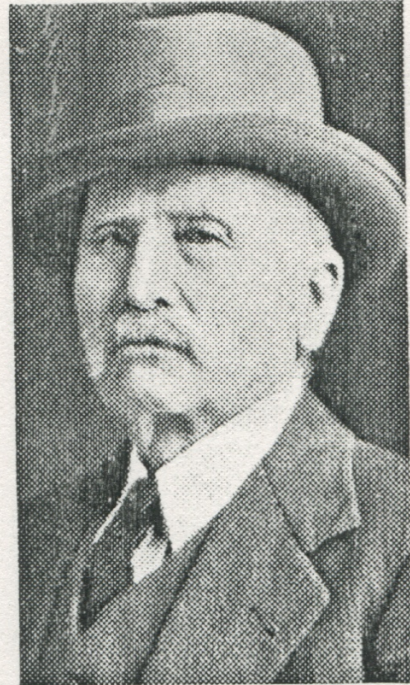


Delivered by

Mr. A. E. C. Kerr

President

Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Cottage
Committee, Ballarat



The Late
Fred J. Martell



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MR. A. E. C. KERR

President of the Adam Lindsay Gordon
Memorial Cottage Committee

on

Sunday, 3rd April
1938

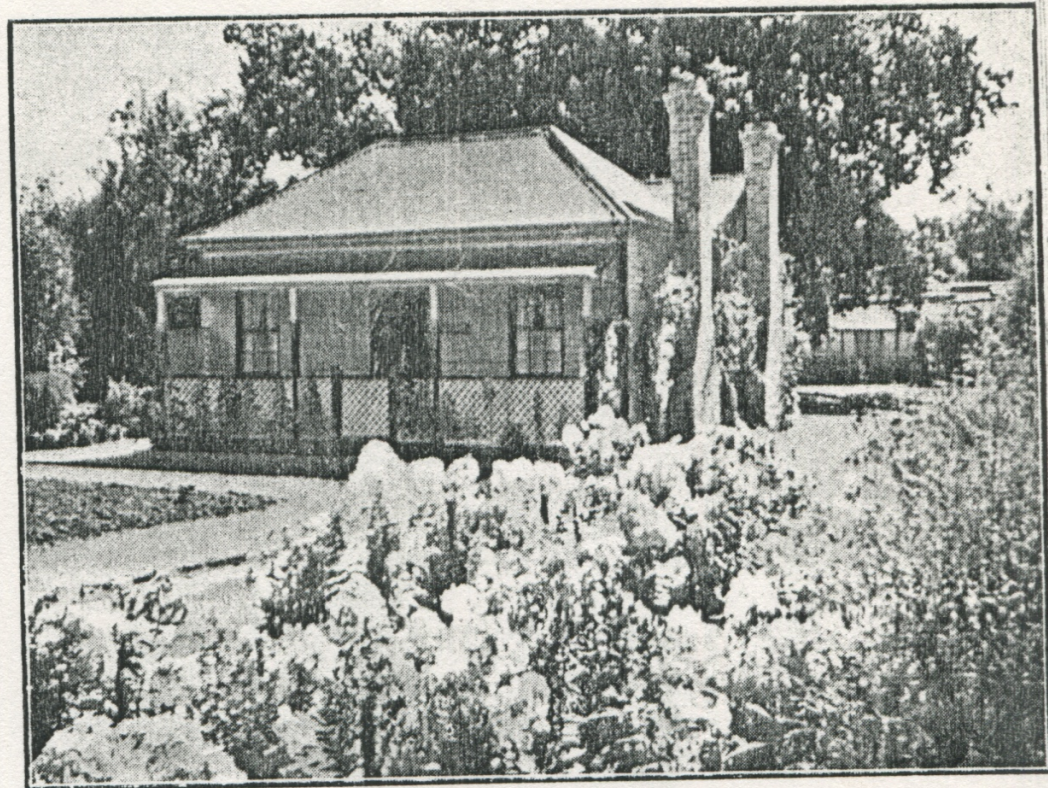
at the

Memorial Cottage, Botanical Gardens,
Ballarat

The occasion being the
assembling of Gordonians
to honor the memory of
their late President

MR. FRED. J. MARTELL

whose remains were cre-
mated and the ashes
scattered around
the Cottage



Adam Lindsay Gordon
Memorial Cottage
Botanical Gardens
Ballarat, Vic.
Australia

Ladies and Gentlemen,—

BALLARAT is a historic City, famous for its Art and Culture, as well as its richness in the production of gold and wealth of flower gardens. It is appropriately named Ballarat the Beautiful, the Garden City of Australia, and is noted for its public-spirited and generous citizens, for its Pioneers with civic pride and the fact that the present generation is carrying on the traditions and the fine heritage bequeathed by their forefathers.

We are gathered here to-day to honor the memory of the late Fred. J. Martell, President of the Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Cottage, and really its founder. Mr. Martell lived a long and useful life to the age of 84 years; his remains were cremated, and the ashes are to be scattered to-day around the Gordon Memorial Cottage which he loved so well. The earthly man has gone, but his spirit remains with us and will for ever be associated with it.

Mr. Martell was born at Geelong, but lived in Ballarat practically the whole of his active life, and he was mentally alert to the very end. Ballarat was a city in which he was able to foster his natural bent for Science and Art, principally Art. He was a forceful personality, packed with ideas that were entirely his own, with plenty of fire and force. He was a thinker, a worker, and an artist. He rejoiced in beauty and was a good craftsman, and no changes can rob this Cottage of its memories and of Mr. Martell's intimate association with it.

In passing, I might mention that Mr. Martell was one of the founders of the Ballarat Art Gallery, and was Registrar of the School of Mines for a period of 20 years, doing pioneer work of first rate importance for Ballarat. He had a great liking for contact with human affairs and never knew a dull hour. He recognised that the honor of being useful far transcends all riches, for as one passes through life nobody finds it a bed of roses all the way, and perhaps that is just as well, but the knowledge that you have the confidence and esteem of your friends has a marked and tonic effect. His work in connection with the Gordon Cottage was one of love and devotion. Here he always found refreshment and exhilaration and an ardent affection for all its treasures, laboriously got together over a number of years; in fact he searched the Empire for them, thus the Memorial becomes a National possession. One of the most prolific contributors was Mr. Douglas Sladen, the well-known author and novelist, of London, who became a personal friend of mine. Mr. Sladen told me he had a mass of correspondence with Mr. Martell, but had never met him, but considered him a wonderful man and one of the most enthusiastic Gordonians. He was delighted when I informed him that his opinion of Mr. Martell was quite correct. Douglas Sladen was responsible for having the bust of Gordon placed in one of the most prominent positions in the Poets Corner of Westminster Abbey, in the midst of the Empire's great and honored. Mr. Sladen is 82 years of age, full of life and vigor, despite his years; it was a rare pleasure to converse with him. His photograph is in this Cottage together with his priceless gifts.

Doubtless most of you know this humble cottage was the first home of Adam Lindsay Gordon, in Ballarat, and formed part of the original Craig's Stables, in Bath Lane, when Gordon took over the lease at the latter end of 1866 and relinquished it in October, 1868, having been in occupation for nearly two years. It was afterwards shifted and incorporated in the outbuildings of Craig's Royal Hotel, and was used for travellers' samples. Later, it was recognised and brought to light through the medium of the "Ballarat Courier." Mr. Martell, with his usual vigor and enthusiasm, interested himself in having the Cottage restored and placed in a proper setting. Our first effort was a celebration at the Cottage, as it stood in Craig's Hotel back-yard, on Gordon's Centenary, 19th October, 1933, a photograph of which may be seen at the entrance to the Cottage, and that was the start of this Memorial. No one knows the amount of energy and time Mr. Martell devoted to this work more than Mr. Edmond Doepel and myself; we worked together from the beginning. My parents were personal friends of Gordon when he lived with his family near Wendouree Parade. Seventy years ago Adam Lindsay Gordon used to visit our house and nurse the new baby—the first boy—and that baby was myself. Mr. Martell spent practically his spare time and talents in gathering relics of Gordon, the splendid result of which may be inspected in the Cottage before which you are standing to-day. He little knew that it would also be a monument to himself. Our committee are truly grateful and thankful to the generosity of Colonel R. A. Crouch who met the whole of the expense incurred in the removal and re-erection of the Cottage, which was carried out under the supervision

of one of the members of the committee, Mr. W. C. Morrow, of the firm of Clegg and Morrow, architects. Mr. J. J. Brokenshire, another member of the committee, also lent us great assistance in getting Colonel Crouch interested in the movement.

The Ballarat Gordon Memorial Cottage is now one of Australia's National Shrines. Henry Kendall wrote that "Gordon was the first poet who sang the first great songs these lands can claim to be their own." Here you see the Cottage reposing in an ideal sylvan setting, making an added attraction to the Botanical Gardens, surrounded by beautiful flowers, lawns, wide spreading shade trees, and some of the finest marble statuary in the Southern Hemisphere.

Gordon wrote:

"Here we have the elm, in the place of the wattle,
And in lieu of the gum, the oak.
Years back I believed a little,
And as I believed I spoke."

And that is the setting of this Cottage, in the poet's own words.

The Cottage is a humble, yet a noble place, full of relics precious to all Gordon lovers, which Mr. Martell collected, treasured and guarded with a loving care and diligence. There is a constant pilgrimage of Gordonians to this Memorial. Sundays and holidays found Mr. Martell as a guide-lecturer, showing all the intimate relics of Gordon with pride and earnestness when they were examined and discussed with great interest and enthusiasm.

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Ballarat is proud in having the finest Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial in existence. Everything the Cottage contains has been a gift of a Gordon lover, and it will not be complete until we obtain his statue or a bust of the poet similar to that in Westminster Abbey. Some day we hope this may eventuate. Every new exhibit was a rare treasure to Mr. Martell; here he was able to indulge his taste for the rare and antique. He had a fine taste for Art and delighted to welcome Gordonians, or anyone interested, in his treasure house. How fitting it is that his ashes should surround this humble cottage on which he has devoted wholeheartedly the last years of his life—a genuine labor of love for a poet, and the joy of giving pleasure and instruction to others.

We, as members of his committee, take a natural pride in being associated with our late President in his unselfish devotion to this fine memorial in which his name is indissolubly associated. Gordon's poems are read and loved by many thousands, for his was a nature that appeals not only to Australians, but to all sportsmen and lovers of nature. Gordon was a man of many parts—a mounted policeman, a sheep farmer, a horse-breaker, Member of Parliament, and a famous jockey. Gordon wrote:

"For the great things of earth are small things,
The longest life is a span."

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"Whose glory is dust and ashes,
Whose spirit is but a spark."

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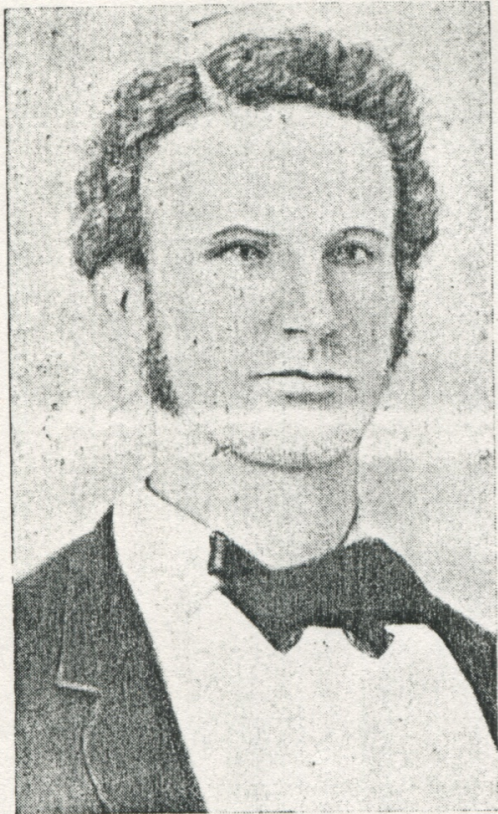
"We know not whether they slumber,
Who wake on earth no more."

No, my friends, Fred. J. Martell will waken on earth no more. You will see his ashes scattered around this Cottage, therefore he will live with us in spirit, and we will endeavor to carry on his good work. As for our late President, we can only say,

"WELL DONE,
THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT"



Tulloch & King, Printers, Ballarat.



Adam Lindsay Gordon