

OBITUARY NOTICES.

CECIL BENDALL.

WHEN I was asked to write for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* some account of the life of Professor Bendall, my first teacher in Sanskrit and my friend for twenty-five years, I felt that, well as I knew him during that period, I could not unaided deal with the other twenty-five years of his life—his boyhood and his brilliant career as a student at school and at the University. Through the kindness of Mrs. Bendall, of his sister, Mrs. de Sélincourt, and of his school and college friends, W. Marsh, M. F. Webster, and F. J. Allen, the required aid has been supplied. To all of them I desire to express my best thanks for the help without which this notice must have been very imperfect.

Cecil Bendall was born in London on July 1st, 1856. His father, who died when he was 7 years old, was a man of very wide reading; and his mother, who lived to rejoice in her son's success, was a woman of rare intellectual gifts and a strong, vigorous personality. From her especially he inherited the musical tastes which were so essentially a part of his nature. He was the youngest of six brothers, all of whom were more than usually gifted. His sister describes him as a singularly clever child, who could read fluently at an age when most children can hardly speak plainly.

He entered the City of London School in 1869, when H. H. Asquith, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, was captain of the school. He was in the Sixth Form from 1870 to 1875, and gained the Carpenter Scholarship in 1871. At the City of London School it is customary on Speech

Day for the first five boys to pronounce 'declamations' in praise of the Founder (John Carpenter) in the various languages taught in the school; and the programmes show that Bendall was chosen to declaim on no less than five occasions and in all the five languages—French in 1871, German in 1872, Greek in 1873, English in 1874, and Latin in 1875. My college tutor, Dr. J. E. Sandys, who examined the school in 1873, told me many years ago that he remembers that Bendall in his Greek declamation referred to the Sanskrit studies which were even then his chief love, in a passage beginning with the words "Συγγνώμη μοι ἔστω σανσκριτίζοντι," and that the Lord Mayor, who presided, evidently regarding Sanskrit as a living tongue, expressed the hope that the promising young student might find it useful when he went out to India.

At school Bendall owed much to the teaching and to the influence of Dr. E. A. Abbott, who was headmaster during his time, and for whom he retained through life the warmest affection and admiration. To Dr. Abbott, no doubt, may be traced his early appreciation of English literature, which went far beyond the limits within which a schoolboy's English studies are generally confined; and Mrs. de Sélincourt speaks of the pride with which he told her that Dr. Abbott had first confided to him the secret, until that time carefully kept, that he was the author of *Philochristus*.

As a schoolboy, Bendall showed a singularly ripe, perhaps precocious, intellect. His school friend, W. Marsh, says of him that "at fifteen he talked like a man of forty. His interest in ecclesiastical architecture, and in archæology generally, was in those days as keen, and his knowledge almost as great, as in later times. But music was his *Lieblings-studium*. His taste was mature and catholic, except that he could not away with anything 'banal.'" Handel and Bach, and the old English and foreign church composers, were his chief delight; and we hear of him, in those early days, haunting St. Anne's, Soho, to listen to Bach's Passion Music, or attending a performance of the Mass in *B* minor at St. James's Hall.

This devotion to what he called "the music of the best period" (from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century) was the characteristic by which he was best known to his intimate friends all through his life. Of late years, so long as he remained a member of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society and was able to come to London for the meetings, he and I used regularly to go together in the evening to a motet party, which was arranged for the same day, the second Tuesday in the month, at the city offices of his brother Robert. In the extent of his knowledge of the church music of the sixteenth century, the music of Palestrina, Croce, and Vittoria, which was chiefly performed at these meetings, he was probably unrivalled. It was noticed among his fellow-members in this little society, as a melancholy coincidence, that the day of his death was the anniversary of his last attendance.

The manner of Bendall's first introduction to the study of Sanskrit, in which he was to win the highest distinction, may best be related in the words of his school and college friend, M. F. Webster, who says: "In September, 1872, Mr. (afterwards Professor) Nicholl came to Dr. Abbott and offered to teach Sanskrit to a few boys to be picked out by him as promising pupils. He chose five, all near the top of the form in classics, Farnell,¹ Bendall, Stevenson,² and two others; and later on I joined the class. From the first, Bendall took the lead, the difficulties of the language seeming to spur him on. With his love of fitting in things, so as not to waste a moment's time, he used to copy long paradigms of verbs and rules of *Sandhi*, whilst his indulgent aunt read Dickens to him. He was easily first in the school Sanskrit examinations in 1873-5. He won the Broderers Company's scholarship in 1875, and went up to Cambridge in October, 1875, winning soon afterwards a Sanskrit exhibition at Trinity College."

It is therefore, in the first instance, to the zeal of the late Professor Nicholl, Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic at

¹ Now tutor and dean of Exeter College, Oxford.

² Now an Irish Land Commissioner.

Oxford, that the world owed this distinguished Sanskrit scholar. The tradition of teaching Sanskrit, thus started by Professor Nicholl, was maintained in the City of London School by Mr. Rushbrooke; and it cannot but be regarded as a grave misfortune to the cause of learning that it is now abandoned. We have recently had some discussion in the Royal Asiatic Society as to the best means of encouraging the study of Sanskrit in this country. Surely, no better beginning could be made than by restoring the teaching of Sanskrit in the City of London School, where it has been so fruitful of results in the past.¹

In 1877 Bendall migrated to Caius College, where he was elected to a classical scholarship, and afterwards, in 1879, to a fellowship, having taken his degree as fifth in the First Class of the Classical Tripos. In 1879 also he spent the summer months with his friends Marsh and Webster at Göttingen, where Webster and he attended the lectures of Professor Benfey on the Veda and on Zend. Two years later he gained a First Class in the Indian Languages Tripos.

If Bendall had been asked what he considered to be the determining factor in his career at Cambridge, he would have answered, as every Cambridge Sanskritist of his time would answer, that it was undoubtedly the teaching and example of Professor Cowell, with whom he read continuously during the seven years of his first period of residence at the University, and under whose guidance he completed his first important work, the *Catalogue of Buddhist Sanskrit MSS. in the University Library of Cambridge*, which was published in 1883.

In the October term of 1881 he instituted at Caius College a course of lectures in elementary Sanskrit for classical students who were taking Section E (Comparative Philology) in the Tripos, and for selected candidates for the Indian Civil Service. Of this class I was a member, and I feel that I cannot too gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to his

¹ We need only here refer to a few names of well-known scholars who have profited by the Sanskrit teaching in the school—Mr. Webster, Mr. Chalmers, Professor T. W. Arnold, and Professor Conway.

help and encouragement, which led me to persevere in a study which too many young students abandon on account of its initial difficulties.

In 1882 he succeeded Dr. Haas in the care of the Oriental printed books in the British Museum. His supplementary *Catalogue of Sanskrit and Pali Books in the British Museum* appeared in 1893, and his *Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in the British Museum* in 1902, after his retirement, in 1898, on account of ill-health caused by the deep-seated disease which eventually proved fatal.

In 1885 he was elected to the Professorship of Sanskrit at University College, London, a post which he held till 1903, when he succeeded Professor Cowell at Cambridge, having held the subordinate post of University Lecturer in Sanskrit since the death of Mr. R. A. Neil in 1900.

On two occasions he made "cold weather" tours in Nepal and other parts of India, chiefly in the interests of the University Library, Cambridge. The first of these, in 1884-5, resulted in the acquisition of about 500 Sanskrit MSS. Of this tour he published an extended report in his *Journey of Literary and Archæological Research in Nepal and Northern India* (1886). One of the nine Sanskrit inscriptions which he discovered on this occasion was of special importance, since it supplied the clue to the early chronology of Nepal and to the determination of the Gupta era.¹

From his second journey, in 1898-9, he brought back to Cambridge some 90 MSS. An account of some of the other results then obtained—his discovery of MSS. in very early characters and of inscriptions—is given in his report to the Vice-Chancellor, which was published in the Cambridge University Reporter for 23rd November, 1899, and reprinted in our Journal for 1900, p. 162.

In 1902 appeared the last fasciculus which completed his edition with critical notes of the Sanskrit text of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, published in the Bibliotheca Buddhica under the auspices of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at

¹ Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Gupta Dynasty*, p. 184 (cf. pp. 96, 177).

St. Petersburg. He was engaged in collaboration with Dr. Rouse on a translation of this important compendium of Buddhist doctrine at the time of his death. In 1903 he published an annotated text of the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*, and in 1905, in association with his friend Louis de la Vallée Poussin, he submitted to the Oriental Congress at Algiers the first part of a summary of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, a text-book of the Yogācāra school. The three works last mentioned represent the branch of study—the Sanskrit Buddhist literature of the Mahāyāna—which he had specially made his own, and for which such abundant materials, collected in no small degree by himself, exist in the University Library at Cambridge.

Married in 1898 to a lady who was able to take an interest in his studies and to share the intellectual pleasures which appealed most strongly to his nature, and succeeding at a comparatively early age to the Professorship at Cambridge and to an Honorary Fellowship at his college, he might have looked forward to a life of happiness and useful scholarly work; but these hopes were destined to be realised only for a brief period. During a great part of the three years for which he held the Professorship, he had to struggle with ill-health and often to carry on his work while racked with pain. When at last it was decided by his medical advisers that an operation of the gravest character was necessary, he accepted the terrible ordeal with a quiet fortitude which, I think, cannot be better illustrated than by the last communication which I received from him—a postcard dated 29th November, 1905: “To-morrow I am off to the surgeon in Liverpool, I fear for many weeks—if not for good. But it is no use ‘*θρηνεῖν ἐπὶ φάρακας πρὸς τομῶντι πῆματι.*’—Ever yours, C. B.”

For three and a half months he lay at Liverpool, tended with unceasing care by Mrs. Bendall; but no means could stay the increasing weakness, and he passed away on Wednesday, 14th March, 1906.

Bendall's chief characteristics as a scholar were the catholicity of his tastes, the wide extent of his knowledge,

and his sympathy with students of every kind who were trying to do good conscientious work. It may be that, until towards the end of his life, his many interests prevented him in some degree from concentrating his great powers on any one special subject ; but it is certain that, at all times, they made his advice especially valuable, for they enabled him to see things in their true perspective, and to consider the various branches of learning in their relation to the great field of human knowledge. Many indeed are the students both in this country and abroad who stand indebted to his sympathy and good counsel. His unaffected modesty, and the affectionate esteem in which he was held among his friends, are well shown in a sentence of a letter from Mrs. Ealand, who knew him from his boyhood, to her brother, Mr. W. Marsh. Referring to a visit which he paid to Bath, she says : "It was so delightful to have him here last year, and to find how absolutely unaltered he was—the same faithful friend, interested and interesting in so many ways, and so singularly retiring about his own position and his own knowledge. I do indeed owe him a debt of gratitude, and I only wish it was possible for my children to find such a comrade."

E. J. RAPSON.