

OBITUARY.

DR. KENNEDY.

BENJAMIN HALL KENNEDY, eldest son of the Rev. Rann Kennedy, was born at Summer Hill, near Birmingham, November 6, 1804. His father was intimate at Cambridge (B.A. of St. John's, 1795, M.A. 1798) with S. T. Coleridge, and was appointed second master of King Edward's school, Birmingham, in 1807, an office which he resigned more than twenty years before his death (ob. 2 Jan., 1851, aet. 79). For twenty years he was curate, and afterwards incumbent, of St. Paul's church, Birmingham. The first edition of *Between Whiles* (1877) contains poems by Mr. Rann Kennedy, and an Appendix, giving a character of him by a friend, much of which would apply without alteration to his more famous son.

A leading trait in Mr. Kennedy's character was simplicity, . . . a perfect transparency of soul, combined with a childlike spontaneous freshness of feeling, subduing the power of his intellect and the extent of his acquirements, and investing his nature with the beauty of perpetual youth. . . . Enthusiasm was allied with this singleness of mind. By enthusiasm I mean an energy and warmth and earnestness, inducing activity and vigour in every pursuit which interested him. I believe he was incapable of entertaining the question whether he should devote much or little attention to his favourite objects. Earnestness was a law of his nature, and one which he found it pleasant to obey. . . .

Mr. Kennedy possessed a remarkable power of expression. In voice, in countenance, in action, when he was moved, every utterance and feature and gesture was eloquent. He was the finest reader and reciter of poetry that I ever heard. . . .

Though destitute of anything approaching to sickly sentimentality, his natural affections were deep and powerful. . . .

His exquisite taste was a constant source of pleasure to himself and his friends. . . .

Perhaps the most attractive trait in Mr. Kennedy's character was his largeness of heart, his world-wide charity and liberality. This feeling was beautifully exemplified towards those who differed from him in politics and religion, and this at a period when unhappily such charity was not deemed quite orthodox. From the same feeling, combined with enlightened views of social interests, sprang his consistent advocacy of education when the prejudices of society were too generally arrayed against the diffusion of knowledge. . . . It was no part of his creed to infringe the laws of Christian courtesy and kindness in vindicating Christian principles. . . .

In conversing on the distinguishing truths of Christianity, Mr. Kennedy used to speak of them with entire simplicity of belief as accomplished facts. . . .

A lady thus describes Mr. Kennedy's command of the English poets :

I think I see him now, tall, dark, impassioned, unconscious of the flight of time, while he poured forth passage after passage with kindling eyes, appearing to know all the poets and their creations as if they were members of his own family, and defending or explaining them with a fulness of enthusiasm which I never saw equalled.

Add to this that Welsh, Scotch, and French blood all ran in Dr. Kennedy's veins, and you will read in some measure the secret of his unfailing vivacity and quickness of thought and speech.

Benjamin for a time went to Birmingham school, but received, as his brothers after him, his chief training under Dr. Samuel Butler at Shrewsbury—an admirable master, whose life and correspondence, edited by his grandson, may be expected before long.

In the second edition (1882) of *Between Whiles* we have a graphic picture of this period. The late Master of Trinity, speaking of the chief composers of our time, once said to me: 'Kennedy is an original Latin poet.' And certainly he sought inspiration for his *lusus subdiales*, where Wordsworth did; the ease and grace of his versions is redolent of the country side rather than of midnight oil. Few composers could venture to intermit practice for many years together, as our hero did; many of us can only compose with a pen in our hand.

Even in my schoolboy life, it was only in desperate cases, when inspiration would not come, that I sat down to scribble a verse exercise. If I liked the subject given, I relied on the meditation of a solitary walk, and took paper afterwards only to transcribe what was already written at full in the tablets of the mind. I became a Praepostor of Shrewsbury School in my second term there, and thus I had the great advantage of classical composition under a wise Head Master and an emulative system during four years, before I went to Cambridge. Praepostors, in their week of office (once a month), had to present a Greek verse exercise, usually a self-chosen translation of extra length, in place of all other exercises. A subject was given out with 'hints,' every Tuesday, to the Sixth Form, on which two Latin verse exercises were required, one elegiac, the other lyric. But a Praepostor was allowed to substitute heroic for elegiac verse, and for the second exercise a Latin verse translation of a Greek Chorus, or a Greek verse translation from an English dramatist (usually Shakespeare). The choice of such Chorus or passage was left to ourselves, and there was an honourable understanding that the work was our own. This led me to form a little stock of choral lyrics and Greek iambic translations, as a convenient resource when an untoward subject or a lazy mood

dissuaded me from attempting original Alcaics. And I have no doubt this practice, whatever its primary motive, was favourable to my general improvement in scholarship. And thus the licence allowed by Dr. Butler was shown to be a very wise one.

When I went to College in 1823, being freed from the necessity of verse-writing—a yoke beneficial, but sometimes galling, to a schoolboy studying Classics—I wrote no verse as an undergraduate, except for a few prizes, or in examinations.

He would often, in later years, spur his pupils to emulation, by telling us what he had read before he went to college, and it sounded like the record of a Scaliger. His unexampled career of success as an undergraduate was achieved in great part with the stores accumulated at Shrewsbury. If the list did not include the Bell scholarship, it was only because Dr. Butler forbade him to compete, holding that the Pitt Scholar could not extend his fame by winning a prize in a limited field. At college, as always, Kennedy intensely enjoyed the society of kindred spirits, *Socraticos sermones*, and the Cambridge of his time was rich in such spirits; he took a leading part in the debates at the Union, and in 1824, as a freshman, was one of the original members of the Athenaeum club; he revelled over a wide range of modern literature, especially poetry and history, which was always a favorite topic. Few members of the united services could have vied with him in familiarity with naval and military annals. In Wellington's despatches he was as much at home as in Thucydides. So it came to pass that he by no means lived the life of a book-worm; probably in the whole year there was no one whose degree cost less of special effort than his who was—in every sense—*facile princeps*. Biographers will find in the correspondence of the time, e.g. in Dr. Parr's works, what a harvest the weatherwise prognosticated from that bright spring.

After taking his degree Kennedy for a time resided in Cambridge. Among his pupils were the Senior and second wranglers of 1829, the present Bishop of Worcester and the Chancellor of Cambridge and two other Universities. In 1827 the first joint reading-party went for the long vacation to Devonshire, and certainly two more distinguished teachers never entered into

partnership, Hopkins and Kennedy. One day one of them (A) called on the other (B) to suggest that one of their pupils should confine himself to A.'s subjects, as he would probably be Senior in the tripos. B. retorted 'I was just coming to you, to suggest that he should give up *your* subjects.' It is to be presumed that Mathematics prevailed in the friendly altercation; for the disputed pupil, Henry Philpott, led the van of the Mathematical, but brought up the rear of the first class in the Classical tripos. For one year Kennedy went as an assistant master to Shrewsbury school. In 1830 he accepted a mastership at Harrow under Dr. Longley, afterwards first Bishop of Ripon, then successively Bishop of Durham, and Archbishop of York and Canterbury.

In March, 1831, Mr. Kennedy married, and every one who knew Mrs. Kennedy will testify that her gentle influence contributed powerfully, not only to the happiness of his home—and never was a happier home—but to the success of his public life. Mrs. Kennedy died in 1874, and lies in the Mill Road cemetery, Cambridge, where her husband was laid by her side on the 12th of April, 1889. Four daughters survive; the only son died before his father, leaving a widow with one son and three daughters. Only those who have seen Dr. Kennedy with children can appreciate his playfulness and native simplicity. In this, and in other respects, he resembled another honorary fellow of his college, Churchill Babington, who died a few weeks before him; it would be hard to say which of the two took greater interest in the ancient classics, though from different points of view: the older man from that of the poet and orator, the younger from that of the antiquary. Beauty was the mistress of the one, Knowledge of the other.

In 1836 Kennedy succeeded his old master, Dr. Butler, as head master of Shrewsbury. In that year he became D.D. by royal mandate, being, perhaps, the youngest Doctor of Divinity in his university; when he died, fifty-three years later, he was the senior of his faculty.

JOHN E. B. MAYOR.

(To be continued.)