

## OBITUARY.

T. S. EVANS.

[b. 8 March 1816, B.A. 1839, Assistant-Master at Shrewsbury 1841, at Rugby, 1847, Professor of Greek at Durham, 1862, *d.* 15 May 1889.]

## AT RUGBY.

I WENT to Rugby at the age of fourteen, in August 1852: I entered in the fifth form, and was promoted at the quarter to the form called 'the Twenty'—a name which had ceased to have any numerical significance—over which 'Tom Evans' presided. By the rules of the school no boy could enter the sixth form, and be entrusted with monitorial power, under the age of sixteen. I had therefore a year and three quarters to stay in 'the Twenty,' without the stimulus of ordinary school ambition, and without the stronger sense of responsibility that the work of the sixth form naturally brought with it. Under these circumstances I recall all the more vividly and gratefully the higher kind of stimulus to eager and careful classical study which T. Evans' teaching supplied. If I can trust my recollection of a period of life so remote, I should say that when I entered 'the Twenty' I conceived of grammar as a dull aggregate of rules, that had to be learnt and applied exactly in order to avoid blunders in translation and composition, but had in itself no interest. When I left 'the Twenty,' I conceived it as an imperfect but indispensable attempt to delineate the features of a living thing of thought, profoundly interesting in the way that a great personality is interesting, a thing of which all the parts and elements had an inner coherence that could be felt when it could not be expressed, and the apprehension of which required a combination of subtle intellectual sympathy with precise and elaborate comparison of particulars. And I believed that by the guidance of a master I had been brought face to face with the essential features of the two entities of this class called Greek and Latin, and that whatever knowledge remained for me to learn I could acquire for myself. In this there was doubtless some illusion as to the completeness of my master's insight and considerably more as to the extent of my own acquisitions: but it was an illusion which testifies to the remarkable impressiveness of Evans' teaching. Though I had at Rugby, and since, classical teachers to whom I have owed much,—still when I think of subtle discussion on language I

always find the most natural embodiment of it in recalling 'the Twenty,' and 'Tom Evans' tall figure, grave face, with hair *then* raven-black, his slow deliberate emphatic statement, and the bright inspiring smile that used occasionally to break out, when he came to the really cogent argument, the really luminous distinction, the really close-fitting English equivalent.

I have spoken of grammar and linguistic subtleties: but though it is this element of his teaching that individualizes him most in my recollection, I do not think that it was the chief source of his impressiveness at the time. From this point of view I should be inclined to lay even more stress on his—as it seemed to us—unique gift of writing Latin and Greek verse, especially Greek, as if it was the natural mode of expressing his feelings; and on the fine literary sensibility shown in his translations of the work done in form, made more effective by his slow and loving delivery of the passages on which he had spent special care. There are several fine passages in the books we read with him, which I cannot sever in memory from his translations, because they made me appreciate the beauty of the original far more than I had done before—*e.g.* the last four stanzas of Horace III. 5, 'Fertur pudicæ conjugis osculum,' and the passage in *Aeneid*, Book VI. beginning 'Ibant obscuri'...

I do not think he was *ready* in translation: he could not easily satisfy himself: he often did not give us his translations until some days after the passages had been construed in form: but I always felt that they were worth waiting for. In other ways I should think he was not an effective teacher for boys who were unwilling to learn, or unwilling to make the least effort to understand the subtleties of his discussion. Before I came to the school he had been master of one of the lowest forms, and the tradition was that when his form came to be examined, they were found to have learnt absolutely nothing! Indeed some of us knew by heart the Greek anapaests in which he relieved his feelings after this discomfiture.

There were many stories current, which we found very amusing—they have faded

from my memory and were probably of doubtful authenticity—illustrating his simplicity and a certain quaint and formal elaborateness of phrase, sometimes excessive for the occasion, which was undoubtedly characteristic of him. But I do not think these in the least diminished the respect and admiration—and in my case and doubtless many other cases, affection—which he inspired. He had no defects of character, or at least none that we detected: his kindness was unfailing: and his simplicity was never undignified.

H. SIDGWICK.

AT DURHAM.

CANON EVANS' life at Durham has been sketched by an exceptionally well-qualified hand in the *Durham County Advertiser* of May 24th, and the *Durham University Journal* of May 25th. The following interesting description of his teaching may be extracted.

'Combined with long and careful practice (his rich gift of imagination) gave him a peculiar facility in detecting the common idea underlying the apparently diverse applications of the same word or expression. He picked up missing links and traced latent ligaments of connexion by intuition. His pupils will remember countless instances in which by presenting to them this common element he put into their hands a key which opened many locks.

'The same imaginative power enabled him at the first sight of a passage to discern more possible interpretations than ordinary scholars would ever have dreamed of. He would then, in order to fix the true one, strictly interrogate the context and take down its evidence. He would make besides as exhaustive induction as possible of all passages in any way parallel to the one under consideration, and by careful comparison would draw his inferences, importing such modifications as the special case to be decided made necessary. By that process he eliminated one interpretation after another, and set up the residuary as the only tenable one, adding the positive arguments in its favour. Such we believe to be a fair sketch of his general method. One thing which particularly distinguished him was his power of discerning where general rules break down, and what limitations are to be imposed upon them in their application to particular cases.'

It was not my good fortune ever to hear a lecture by Canon Evans, but during the

seven years that I was at Durham (1876—1883) I had many walks and talks with him, which are among my most delightful recollections of that period. He was fond of talking about scholarship, and I was only too glad when he would do so, as that was a field which he had made specially his own, and on which he revealed to me depths which I had but dimly suspected. As a scholar I suppose that he would be rightly described as treading in the steps of G. Hermann, of whom I have heard him speak with marked respect. His scholarship belonged to the days before the invasion of comparative philology. It was an application to language of severe logical analysis based upon the usage primarily of the best writers, checked also by close observation of the laws of common speech. As practised by Canon Evans, the method of this analysis was (within its limits) rigorously scientific. In most of the characteristics of his mind he stood unique amongst men, and I have certainly never known any one who possessed his power of ruminating over a word or phrase or point of grammar. He would take it into his mind and let it lie there for weeks or months or years till the desired solution was found, or the tentative hypothesis fully verified. He would bring to bear upon it every example which came in his way. 'I thought of that,' he would say, 'twenty, twenty-five, thirty years ago' (it was about that range of time to which he used most frequently to refer, and every point seemed to carry a date with it), 'and I have tried it ever since; I think it is right.' He had a graduated scale of expressions corresponding to the degree of his confidence in his conclusions, but seldom rising beyond the phrase I have just used. What he did was done by sheer thinking. At the time when I knew him he seemed to read little, almost nothing that was new. Conscious of his own mastery, yet without the slightest air of assumption, he would express himself somewhat magisterially about his contemporaries. 'They know the rules, but they don't know when the rules are right and when they're wrong,' was a favourite way of describing some popular and meritorious but (as he thought) not first-rate work. 'Erudition but not intuition' was another characteristic phrase. Shilleto and H. A. J. Munro were scholars for whom he had especial esteem.

The time at which I knew Canon Evans was probably his period of greatest production so far as published results go. Writing was always an effort, and an irksome one to him. The real work at his *Commentary on*

1 *Corinthians* was, I believe, compressed into some two or two and a half years which preceded its issue in 1881, the last few chapters being rather hastily finished under strong editorial pressure. The appearance of the Revised Version also gave a stimulus to his critical energies, and led to the production of several very characteristic articles in the *Expositor*. Thus I believe that most of the points about which he used to talk to me will have found their way into print. Among the subjects on which his views seemed most original would be: the force of the termination  $\mu\alpha$  (see note on 1 Cor. v. 6), the force of the middle voice as *never* directly reflexive (1 Cor. vi. 11, cf. x. 2), the uses of  $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$  (1 Cor. vii. 29–31; cf. *Expositor*, 2nd ser., vol. iii., 1882, p. 455ff.),  $\acute{\omega}\sigma\tau\epsilon$  with infin. (*ibid.* p. 3ff.), participial tenses (*ibid.* p. 161ff.),  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\gamma\epsilon$  (*ibid.* 176f.); but all the uses of the particles he seemed to have thoroughly fathomed.

At the present time it is not necessary to say much about the *Commentary*. The judicious reader will not go to it for that which he will not find; but he will find (especially in the first ten chapters) the most searching grammatical exegesis, inspired by profound knowledge of Greek, and expressed in language singularly plastic to shades of meaning, and rising through all its apparent quaintness to passages of striking lucidity and force. It was a fresh and independent *Commentary*, a product of pure English thought and training, if ever there was one.

About the same time (in 1882) was published a Latin poem, *The Nihilist in the Hayfield*, the contents of which corresponded to the curious juxtaposition in the title. It was an extraordinary *tour de force*. The metrifaction was marvellous, and rivalled Virgil himself in the elaborately studied variation and surprises of cadence and rhythm. It had sometimes even more than Virgilian strength, but rather less than the Virgilian delicacy of touch, and a certain broad humour which could not be called Virgilian. I should prefer to quote as a specimen of the author's powers a translation of Tennyson's epitaph to Sir John Franklin, written, I believe, in response to an invitation addressed to a number of our

leading scholars but, if I am not mistaken, too late to be printed along with the rest. I quote the lines from memory.

Non habet hoc marmor tua, navita nobilis, ossa;  
 Albens Arctos habet, perpetuaequae nives.  
 Non mare sed caelum nunc tranas umbra, polumque  
 Sidereum cursu prosperiore petis.

Whatever justice description may do to the works, it cannot do justice to the man—to that transparent simplicity of character along with the flashes of insight to which such simplicity is often allied; to the old-fashioned politeness beautiful to see because it sprang from genuine kindness of heart; to his equally old-fashioned and unaffected piety; and to all those lovable oddities of habit and manner which must have sorely tried the patience of those who were responsible for the due and exact performance of his public duties, but which only helped to endear him to all whom he met in any other relation, and which made him the hero of so many delightful stories. Just one such story I must allow myself to tell. It concerns one who is associated with me in these remarks. All the world knew what a stumbling-block mathematics had been to the young scholar in his University career. He took his revenge by a peculiar fondness for mathematical diction and for little feats of mathematical gymnastics. He was discoursing to me once on the value which he attached to the signs of real originality, and he exemplified this by a paper on the Epistle to the Philippians which he had set at Rugby. It was generally well done. 'I gave A. four hundred and twenty, and B. four hundred and fifty marks out of five hundred. And what do you think I gave S.? I gave him seven hundred marks out of five!' We were walking in the cloisters at Durham, and I can remember as if it were only yesterday the way in which he suddenly wheeled round in front of me, beaming all over at his own joke, and broke into a peal of laughter which must have startled the worshippers (if there were any, as very possibly there were) inside.

W. SANDAY.

[We are glad to learn that a selection from Canon Evans' compositions in Greek, Latin, and English will shortly be published.—Ed.]

#### JOHN HENRY ONIONS, M.A.

Mr. J. H. ONIONS was born in 1852, educated at Shrewsbury, and in 1871 came up to Christ Church, Oxford, as a Junior

Student. His University distinctions, first class in the Honour School of Moderations 1873, Ireland Scholarship 1875, second class