

OBITUARY NOTICES

PROFESSOR ERNST WINDISCH

It is somewhat strange that the only honorary members whose loss this Society had to deplore in 1918 both represented exactly the same subjects, Sanskrit and Comparative Philology, that both were natives of the same country, and that both died at very nearly the same age.

Ernst Windisch was a native of Saxony, having been born at Dresden on September 4, 1844. Entering the University of Leipzig in 1863, he studied Classical, Germanic, Sanskrit, and Comparative Philology there till 1867, when he took his degree of Ph.D. In the following year he accepted a classical mastership at St. Thomas's High School (*Thomas-Gymnasium*), Leipzig, where in 1869 he was admitted as *Privatdocent* for Sanskrit and Comparative Philology in the University. The next two years he spent in London, cataloguing Sanskrit MSS. in the India Office Library and at the same time devoting himself to the study of Celtic languages. In 1871 he returned to Leipzig on being promoted to the status of extraordinary professor in the University at the age of 27. He had been there only a year when he migrated, on being offered an ordinary professorship, first to Heidelberg for a year and then to Strassburg for two years. Finally, in 1877, he went back to his original University, where he spent the remaining forty-one years of his industrious life.

Windisch's activity as a scholar was more diversified than is usual among German professors. It was mainly distributed among four subjects: Comparative Philology, Sanskrit, Pāli, and Celtic.

He began his career, however, with a classical and a Germanic subject in succession, his inaugural dissertation

for his doctor's degree dealing with the longer Homeric hymns (*de hymnis homericis majoribus*, 1867), which was followed by a treatise on the sources of the Old Saxon Gospel Harmony, *Der Heliand und seine Quellen* (1868). But he soon turned to directly comparative studies concerned mostly with Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, and especially Celtic etymology. About a dozen articles of this character from his pen appeared between 1869 and 1877. The most important of these is perhaps that on the verbal forms in Sanskrit, Avestic, Italic, and Celtic containing *r* (1887). He also wrote reviews, to the number of about sixteen, of works concerned with Comparative Philology (including Etruscan) and published in the years 1868–77.

Though Windisch, like Eggeling at Edinburgh, was Professor of Sanskrit as well as of Comparative Philology—subjects which since those days have become separated in most Universities—he published no work of an independent and original character in book-form on Sanskrit. But he collaborated with Professor Eggeling in compiling a part of the India Office Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts, his share (1894) embracing the greater portion of the philosophical texts. He moreover brought out a selection of twelve Vedic hymns entitled *Zwölf Hymnen des Rigveda mit Sāyana's Commentar* (1883). This Reader was specially useful in introducing the German student to Sāyana's commentary, which was practically inaccessible to him, though Max Müller's first edition of the *Rgveda*, with Sāyana's commentary in six volumes, had been completed several years before. This manual also supplies, besides some other matter, a vocabulary to the extracts from Sāyana and an appendix containing a list of words in the interpretation of which European scholars and Sāyana differ. He further wrote about a dozen articles on Sanskrit subjects ranging over the period 1873–1909. Several of these are concerned

with the interpretation of Vedic passages, while others have a comparative character. That which has the most general interest is perhaps his paper, read at the Congress of Orientalists at Berlin in 1881, dealing with the question of Greek influence on the Indian drama.

Towards the end of the eighties Windisch began to extend his Indian studies to Pāli, to which his contributions are as substantial as those to Sanskrit itself. Thus he edited the text of the *Iti-Vuttaka* in 1889, while his *Māra und Buddha* (1895) and *Buddha's Geburt und die Lehre von der Seelenwanderung* (1908), are two substantial additions to the history of Buddhist religion based on Pāli texts. He also wrote some half-dozen articles concerning questions of Pāli philology. Among well over 150 reviews which he contributed to journals on books dealing with India, several were on Pāli and Buddhism, though the great majority handled Sanskrit subjects.

Not possessing the special knowledge necessary for the purpose, I have not touched upon Windisch's work on Celtic philology, which was very considerable, the bibliography of his contributions to this subject containing about fifty items. I leave the task of describing and appraising his achievements in this field to the competent hands of the writer of the article appended to this notice. Altogether Professor Windisch's writings, counting articles and reviews as well as books, amount to nearly 300 in number. But his literary activity went beyond this. Thus he contributed as collaborator to Delbrück's work on the use of the subjunctive and optative in Sanskrit and Greek (1871), and his name appears on the title-page of the first three volumes of the same scholar's *Syntaktische Forschungen*. He further edited the two volumes of the lesser writings of Georg Curtius (1886). He was also editor of twenty-three volumes (xxxiv to lvi) of the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, and in association with the other officers of that Society published a survey

of its activities during half a century under the title of *Die Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1845-1895*.

Professor Windisch's work was not characteristically brilliant, but it was sound and careful, contributing much to the advancement of knowledge. It accordingly earned wide recognition among scholars and learned societies. He was an honorary member not only of this but of the American Oriental Society, and a corresponding member of the Institute of France, of the British Academy, of the Irish Academy, Dublin, and of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences.

Finally, on the occasion of his 70th birthday, September 4, 1914, he was presented as a token of esteem with a *Festschrift*, a substantial volume which contains a collection of essays by 34 pupils and friends, and to which is prefixed a list of more than 100 names of scholars who by their signatures expressed their high appreciation of the value of his contributions to learning. This gift, I feel sure, caused him much pleasure; but war having broken out before it came into his hands, he was prevented from communicating with the British contributors. I am unable to say what he may have published since the beginning of August, 1914; but as I understand he was in failing health before that time, I doubt whether he was able to produce much in the last four years of his life.

Taking his share in academic administrative work he was Rector of Leipzig University for the year 1895 to 1896.

He was married to the daughter of an eminent political economist. Wilhelm Roscher. One of his sons, Hans Windisch, has already distinguished himself as a Professor in the Faculty of Theology at Leiden.

I first made his acquaintance at Berlin in 1881 and met him at other congresses, but I came most into personal contact with him at Leipzig when I took my degree

there and he was my chief examiner, and twenty-five years later when as a delegate I attended in 1909 the quincenary of the University. On these occasions I saw a good deal of him and was several times at his house in the *Universitätsstrasse*. He was always very kind and considerate, taking much more trouble both in personal relations and in correspondence than one had any right to expect. He struck me as a man of much mental refinement. It was doubtless on this account that he expressed a great admiration for the English "gentleman", a type which he did not seem to regard as much developed in Germany. It was especially his humanity, I think, that must have attracted him to the study of Buddhism. Owing to the same quality he cannot have felt any sympathy with so ghastly an atrocity as the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

A. A. MACDONELL.

The death of Ernst Windisch, on October 30, 1918, took away the last representative of the older generation of Celtic scholars. Like his contemporaries, Stokes and Atkinson, he approached Irish from the point of view of Comparative Philology. And it was therefore natural that his interest should be drawn exclusively to the older stages of the language. It was on the texts of the heroic sagas that his chief work was done. During his stay in London in 1870-1 he made extensive transcripts from manuscripts. His intention was to make some contribution to the solution of the Ossianic question, which from the days of Herder and Goethe had exercised an irresistible fascination over the minds of German scholars. But it was with a right instinct that he went back to the older epic cycle, and set himself to print texts and compile vocabularies in illustration of that cycle. The first results of his work appeared in vol. i of the series *Irische Texte*, 1880. This

was a miscellaneous collection which, though mainly devoted to texts of the older heroic cycle of Cuchulainn and Conchobar, contained also such poetical texts as the hymns from the Book of Hymns, the poems from the St. Paul MS., and a late Ossianic poem, as well as so excellent an example of the vision literature based on New Testament apocrypha as the Vision of Adamnan. The lexicon which accompanied these texts (wisely left untranslated) was the first attempt to deal on a large scale with the lexicographical material available for the study of Middle Irish texts. It still remains (with the addition of the glossary to the Táin by the same editor) the fullest collection for the study of the language of the heroic cycle, and as a general contribution to Irish lexicography it has by no means lost its value. Some of its defects were pointed out soon after its appearance by Heinrich Zimmer—with the omniscient air, acrid personal tone, and not infrequent blundering of that indubitably brilliant scholar—in his *Keltische Studien*. The passage of time and the more intensive study of Irish have revealed many more. But the very great service rendered by this book and the other publications of its author to these studies is beyond question. It is still the indispensable companion of every student of this subject, and, if it has to be used with caution, that is the necessary result of the advance of scholarship during the past generation.

The service rendered by this first volume of *Irische Texte* was continued by the issue—in collaboration with Whitley Stokes—of four other volumes (in five parts) between 1884 and 1909. Windisch's contributions to the series were almost entirely devoted to the heroic cycle, and this side of his work was crowned in 1904 by the issue of the Book of Leinster version of the Táin Bó Cualgne, the central epic of the cycle, in a stately extra volume. This text with its introduction, translation,

commentary, and glossary is Windisch's chief contribution to the elucidation of the epic cycle on which he had been at work for more than thirty years. The volume is mainly valuable as an exhaustive collection of material. Windisch refrained from any attempt to solve the difficult literary and historical questions of the origin and growth of the saga, though many incidental remarks here and there contribute suggestions towards the solution of these problems. It is, indeed, as a sober and cautious collector of material that Windisch will be remembered in Celtic studies. He was not one of those brilliant innovators who leave the impress of their personality upon the studies of their predilection. The great discoveries—such as that of the law of the Irish accent, for instance—were not his. And he had not the fine literary tact of his collaborator, Whitley Stokes, or the acute and cool judgment of Rudolph Thurneysen. But his texts and collections of lexicographical and other illustrative material rendered an indispensable service to Irish studies, and there is no scholar of the present generation who is not under a deep obligation to him.

His Irish Grammar was rather a useful companion to early Middle Irish texts than a critical account of the language, and, as such, was valuable in its day. Of his other work his book *Das Keltische Britannien*, 1912, is a valuable survey of the material available for, and the current theories bearing upon, the study of the population, religion, and literature of the inhabitants of Britain until the coming of the Anglo-Saxons and the exploits of Arthur. Here, too, he does not so much break new ground as collect material towards the solution of the difficult problems that cluster round the antiquities of the Celtic peoples of the British Isles.

With Windisch passes a whole generation of Irish scholars. They were men like Stokes and Atkinson whose work was to make accessible for students

the mass of material in manuscript. In this respect they carried on the work of O'Curry and O'Donovan, though the publication of Zeuss's *Grammatica Celtica* enabled them to apply a more precise knowledge of the older forms of the language to the interpretation of their texts. It is from the collections of these men that modern scholarship, working with a more rigorous method, starts. And in doing honour to Ernst Windisch at his passing, Irish scholars of to-day do honour to the whole generation whose self-sacrificing and laborious work they have the duty of carrying on to a further stage of knowledge.

ROBIN FLOWER.

DR. OTTO SCHRADER

WE have to record with regret the death, on March 24, of Dr. Otto Schrader, Professor of Indo-Germanic Philology, at the University of Breslau, at the age of 64.

He was born at Weimar, and before his appointment at Breslau in succession to Hoffmann he had held the position of Extraordinary Professor of Indo-Germanic Philology at Jena University. His extensive travels in Russia between 1902 and 1908 were undertaken chiefly in pursuit of his studies in the Slav languages and civilization.

Though Dr. Schrader's attempt to determine the original home of the primitive Indo-Germans by the help of comparative philology and etymology has been severely challenged, his *magnum opus*, the *Realexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, contains an immense amount of learning in a compact form. His *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte* has been introduced to English readers of Dr. Jevons's translation under the title of *The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*.