

## August Dillmann, Orientalist and Bible Critic.

ON the 25th of April, 1923, the centenary of the birth of Christian Friedrich August Dillmann was celebrated at Berlin, when a bust of this great German scholar and writer was unveiled, the work of his eldest daughter, a distinguished artist. A sum of money was also presented with the view of founding scholarships for keeping needy and deserving students of theology at the Berlin University.

August Dillmann—as he is usually called—was born at Illingen, a village of Württemberg, where his father was schoolmaster. His early education was received first of all under his father, to whose piety and careful training in the home and in the school he never wearied of expressing his indebtedness. He then passed on to the gymnasium or Grammar School at Stuttgart, the capital of his native province. From 1840 to 1845 he was a matriculated student of the Tübingen University, where his principal teacher in New Testament subjects was the celebrated F. C. Baur. He studied Semitic Philology, Sanscrit, and Old Testament literature under the still more celebrated scholar, Heinrich Ewald. Baur and Ewald were in the very first rank as teachers in the Germany of Dillmann's student days. From Württemberg, famous for its religious fervour and for its attachment to the Old Theology, and from his paternal home, young Dillmann brought with him to the university a devoutness of spirit and decisiveness of conviction that were hardly touched by the intellectualism and radical criticism of Baur. But by the positive teaching and powerful personality of Ewald, Dillmann's whole being was roused, and to the end of his days he never ceased to be, to a large extent, dominated in his spirit, and even in his opinions by this great master mind. Perhaps no teacher in modern times had a larger number of pupils who became famous than Ewald. William Medley and James Sulley left Regent's Park College in 1866 to continue under Ewald those Hebrew studies begun with such promise under Dr. Benjamin Davies. Like Henry Sidgwick of Cambridge, their fellow-student in Ewald's classes, they transferred their allegiance in later years from Semitics to Philosophy. Ewald's world-wide fame as scholar and preceptor drew pupils from every part of the globe.

At the gymnasium and also at the university Dillmann won all the prizes that were obtainable. At the end of his fourth university year (1844) he passed his first theological examination with distinction, and his ordinary university career was closed. But before leaving he was awarded a valuable scholarship, given by the city of Tübingen to the best theological student of the year. This enabled him to spend another session at the university, when a very deep personal attachment between him and Ewald sprang up and grew until the death of the latter in 1875. At the close of his fifth year at Tübingen, Dillmann won the prize offered for the best essay on *The Formation of the Canon of the Old Testament*. During most of 1846-7 he acted as assistant pastor to a Lutheran clergyman near his native home. The two years 1847-8 were almost wholly devoted to the study of Ethiopic, begun under Ewald, and continued by visits to the great libraries of London, Oxford, and Paris. At the close of 1848 he was chosen *Repetent*, in 1851 *Privat Docent*, and in 1853 *Professor Extraordinary* in his native university. In these positions he taught not only the language and literature of the Old Testament, but also Arabic, Ethiopic, and Sanscrit. From 1854 to 1864 he functioned as Professor of Oriental languages in the Philosophical Faculty at Kiel, and for the next five years he was Professor of Old Testament theology at the university of Giessen, where in later years he was succeeded by a distinguished pupil—Bernhard Stade.

His longest and most important period of service was spent at Berlin, where he succeeded Hengstenberg, the leading German defender of traditional views on the Old Testament, a man with an iron will who dominated the theological faculty in the Prussian capital, and through his monthly organ to a large extent the theological faculties of other German universities. Dillmann's position in Old Testament criticism was virtually that of his master, Ewald—moderate; but to many of Hengstenberg's disciples, as to most British theologians of that day, both Ewald and Dillmann were considered extreme and even dangerous guides. Dillmann remained the occupant of this chair of Old Testament theology until his rather sudden death at the age of seventy-one. His last lecture was delivered on Saturday morning, June 23, 1894. For two hours he discussed in Seminar the first six verses of the last chapter of Malachi, laying special stress on the words, "The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple." His final words—the very last uttered by him from that chair—words familiar to many an old pupil—were, "*Das Weiteres nächste Mal.*" But in this case the "next time" never came, for on returning home he was ordered by his doctor to bed, an attack of pneumonia supervened, and he passed peacefully away on the

4th July, deeply mourned by his pupils, past and present, and by all who knew him personally or through his writings.

Dillmann was an outstanding teacher and writer. He and Harnack, the Church historian, had the largest classes of all the professors of theology. His lectures were always carefully read except in the Saturday morning seminar, when he let himself go and denounced pupils who revealed culpable ignorance in terms not likely to be forgotten. His sarcasm was in such cases biting, and occasionally there would be flashes of humour. On one of these occasions I once saw Dillmann smile, and an older (German) pupil told me I should think myself a lucky man to have witnessed a smile on this professor's face. Though Dillmann kept so closely to his manuscript, he read in a clear, distinct voice that was pleasant though not powerful. He read quickly, without hesitation, and it was often quite impossible for the quickest penman to write down all the references he gave us. It was his custom in expounding the Old Testament first to read the original Hebrew, then to give his own German translation of the text as amended by himself, and finally his comments, just as they appear in his matchless commentaries—the best example in the nineteenth century of the *Commentarius Continuus*, according to Karl Budde. He rarely corrected the text, and I once heard him say that the men who indulged too freely in that practice used this device as a substitute for a thorough knowledge of Hebrew. He was always in his place in the class by the time for beginning, i.e. after the expiration of the *Akademische Viertel Stunde* prevalent in the Fatherland. If a pupil came in a moment late Dillmann had a habit of raising his spectacles and following the delinquent till he was seated, the other students hissing and stamping during this interval. No one could listen to Dillmann without feeling that he believed in the divinity of the words he expounded, that he knew he was not handling the words of men, but the Word of the living God. The majestic face, all aglow with fire and force, and the penetrating tones in which he read—all gave the impression of sincerity and intense conviction. During the forty-eight years of his teaching career, Dillmann had the best of health, and was never once known to be absent from class until his last illness. He was like his greatest master, an unflagging worker, and was busy with his pen and otherwise to the last.

Dillmann's books belong to two periods almost equally divided, dealing with Ethiopic and with the Old Testament. He had learned Ethiopic from Ewald, and finding that very little was known of the language or literature, he resolved to supply the need for reliable works. He published a catalogue of Ethiopic MSS, which he had examined in Germany, England, and France,

a grammar and lexicon, and he also edited texts, both Apocryphal and Canonical. His grammar (second edition, revised by the late Professor Bezold, of Heidelberg) and lexicon are far and away the fullest and best in existence. The word that best characterises whatever he attempted is "thorough."

When at the age of forty-six he settled at Berlin, he had not published any work on the Old Testament, the subject with which practically all his future works were to deal. But the broad and deep foundation of philological science which he had laid were fitting preparation for the splendid superstructure that he reared upon it. His Commentary on Job was published in 1869, the year of his settlement at Berlin. Then appeared his expositions on other books. His views on the question of Hexateuch criticism are given in an appendix to his Commentary on Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. His principal point of departure from the prevalent critical school, that of Reuss—Graf—Wellhausen, was in his dating the original priestly code at a period earlier than that of J., E., or D. Ewald took the same view, calling this source *The Book of Origins*. Dillmann also makes E older than J, contrary to the teaching of the prevalent critical school. As regards the Priestly Code, however, Dillmann admitted that there are in it post-exilic elements. Neither Ewald nor his pupil Dillmann denied that the Hexateuch depends upon older sources, much of the latter however going back to Moses himself. He was a strong believer—so was Ewald—in the supernatural origin of the religion and legislation of "Moses," and of the teaching of the Old Testament prophets and psalmists. In his own house he once deplored to me in pathetic tones the fact that many of the younger scholars of Germany were denying that even the decalogue was of God and not of man. He had confidence, however, that they would see their mistake and return to what he considered the truth. He had a very high opinion of Driver, a careful and competent critic like himself, though lacking Dillmann's fire and religious enthusiasm. Of the Bampton Lectures on *The Origin of the Psalter*, by Cheyne, his opinion was expressed once in my hearing in one German word—*Unsinn* (nonsense). He considered Gesenius's *Thesaurus* as the best Hebrew Lexicon, far more reliable than the later editions in German or English. The first part of the Oxford Hebrew Lexicon had just reached him when in 1892 we were speaking of Hebrew Lexicons. He did not like it on account of its fanciful etymologies and doubtful definitions. He gave high praise to Böttcher's Hebrew Grammar (accidence only, but the very fullest and most useful), and also the elaborate grammar of Eduard König. He had scant praise for the latter edition of Gesenius's Grammar. But Ewald's Grammar he declared to be the best of

all. He thought time spent on Rabbinical Hebrew as good as lost; but he attached immense importance to a study of the languages cognate to Hebrew. The present writer heard Dillmann lecture on the *Psalms* (he denied the existence of Maccabean Psalms), on the Book of Lamentations, and also on Biblical Archaeology and Old Testament Theology. Of these, the lectures on *Old Testament Theology* have alone been published, edited by Rudolf Kittel, 1895. Had he lived long enough he would probably have published the other lectures too. His lectures on the Psalms were remarkable for their learning and sane as well as devout criticism. In a letter to an American Baptist pupil Dillmann wrote (I translate): "It stirs in me feelings of deep gratitude that you have learnt to appreciate my earnest endeavour to maintain together fulness of faith and strict scientific method." That states in the briefest form the great merit of Dillmann's teaching in the classroom and in his books.

J. WITTON DAVIES.

## New Light on Dr. Carey.

THE Editors have asked me to indicate something of what fresh representation of Carey may be expected in my Biography of him, which in September will be published by Hodder & Stoughton. Though it is dressing my own window, I yield.

I have been out for all the human touches. In the days when Eustace wrote his uncle's *Life*, Christian biographers stressed their heroes' pieties and slurred their humanities. The modern method is almost the reverse. We take the pieties more for granted: our *interest* is in the humanities. My steadfast aim has been to recover and display *the man*,—to make *him* intimate.

Spurgeon thanked Smith for having rescued Carey from the lumber, which had so long overlain him,—for making him more knowable than Eustace had left him. But even Smith frequently lost the man in the movement. His pages disclosed the movement's magnitude and might, and the force of Carey's contribution, yet the man himself kept disappearing. This was in great part due to Smith's unfortunate abandonment of chronological order in more than half his story, so that we found ourselves thrust to and fro, back and forth,