

## DEATH OF DEAN LIDDELL.

The Very Reverend Henry George Liddell, late Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, died on the 19th January, in his 87th year. He graduated at Christ Church in 1833, and became Dean in 1855, which position he resigned in 1891.

It is difficult for those whose memory extends back into the sixties and the seventies to realize that Dean Liddell is no more; elderly men can scarcely recognize, except upon a few moment's thought, that there ever was any other Dean or any other Vice-Chancellor. The case stood with him as it did with the equally celebrated Dean Stanley of Westminster. It is the gift of such men to dwarf their predecessors and throw their successors into the shade, seeming to combine in their single personality the sole right to hold the position which they so much adorn. The "Dean" always meant the Dean of Christ Church, and the only occupant of the post in popular memory was the famous past author of the Greek Lexicon. A tall stately figure, with a handsome face, and a manner of haughty reserve, Dean Liddell bore about him that indefinable power of personality which we sometimes call a "good presence." He seemed to belong to the old stones and hoary walls of Oxford, as though a fit emblem of their coldness and antique grandeur. Indeed, the old Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, who was wont to allow himself a certain latitude in his criticisms of brother officials, is said to have once remarked of Dean Liddell: "The man is a stone, but a polished one."

Of course, all kinds of stories were current in Oxford about his scholarship and the famous Lexicon. Doubtless some of them are apocryphal, invented at a later date; but it is a fact that though Dr. Scott, at that time master of Baliol, and Dr. Liddell, at that time head-master of Westminster, had collaborated in producing the Greek dictionary, which run through so many editions, and is familiar as household words on the lips of every school-boy, neither of the two authors was ever very tolerant of the scholarly attainments of the other. In Baliol any mistakes in the Lexicon were invariably attributed to Liddell; in Christ Church they were as invariably attributed to Scott.

One story goes that a freshman came before the Dean, and was asked how much he knew of Aeschylus: "Oh! I know all Aeschylus" was the jaunty reply, whereupon Dean Liddell set the

young man to construe a passage from the chorus in the Agamemnon, and speedily had occasion to find fault with the rendering. "Where did you get that from?" asked the Dean. "I got it from your Lexicon" was the answer. "Really," the Dean was heard to mutter, half to himself, "I did not know that Scott was such a fool." There is also a set of verses, purporting to come from a Westminster boy, when asked to write an English epigram. They ran somewhat as follows:

Two men wrote a Lexicon,  
Liddell and Scott,  
One half was clever,  
And one half was not,  
Give me the answer,  
Quick, of this riddle,  
Which was by Scott,  
And which by Liddell.

These lines were probably a later invention.

There is also another English epigram, which serves to illustrate the impression which the Dean made upon Oxford. At one time a number of smart little lines, dealing with prominent academic dignitaries, were produced by two or three young members of Baliol. The well-known epigram on Jowett ran thus:—

"I stand first, my name is Jowett,  
Whatever is to be known, I know it.  
I am the Master of this College,  
And what I don't know, isn't knowledge."

Another dealt with a Baliol tutor named Forbes, who had been of great assistance to Jowett in compiling his edition of the History of Thucydides:—

"Oh! I say, my name is Forbes,  
Now the Master me absorbs,  
Me and several other *μυ*'s  
In his edition of Thucydides.

The lines on the Dean which serve as an excuse for introducing these ribald allusions bore reference to the external appearance of Dr. and Mrs. Liddell. The Dean was very tall, his wife was comparatively short. The couplet ran as follows:—

"She is the Broad, I am the High;  
We are the University."

It ought, perhaps, to be explained that High Street and Broad Street are two of the principal thoroughfares of Oxford.

*Quevedo Redivivus.*