

occasion receiving in Calcutta a post-card from him bearing only the words "Wir haben die Indo-Scythen!" What lay behind those words all the learned world knows to-day. With Albert von Le Coq such a light was extinguished as is rarely lit in the world.

E. DENISON ROSS.

F. W. K. Müller

1863-1930

Few readers of *The Times* or even of the German newspapers will have guessed what the death of F. W. K. Müller will mean to Science. Müller's greatness was only equalled by his modesty. He did not belong to those Orientalists whose name is world-wide. He seldom made a public appearance, either in lectures or in writing. In books of reference we shall find only that he was Director of the Berlin Museum for Ethnology, and a member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences; and yet, in historical researches connected with the Far East and Central Asia, he had no rival.

Like von Le Coq, he was a pupil of the *Französisches Gymnasium*. In 1883 he entered the University of Berlin and studied Theology and Orientalia. His Doctorate thesis dealt with the Chronology of the Syrian Simeon Sanqlawaya. On his appointment to the newly-founded Museum für Völkerkunde (1887), he at once turned to good account his combined knowledge of Languages and Religions, and was able to put into practice his principle that linguistic knowledge should go hand in hand with cultural training (*keine Sprachkenntnis ohne Sachkenntnis, keine Sachkenntnis ohne Sprachkenntnis*). In 1901 he was sent by the Prussian Ministry of Culture on a mission to China, Japan, and Korea, in order to collect objects for this Museum. His linguistic equipment covered an astonishingly wide range—Semitic, Indo-Germanian, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, and Malay—but it was Chinese and Japanese which in later times engrossed his main attention: and his profound knowledge of the Chinese

Mahāyāna Canon was invaluable for the identification of the Buddhist documents in half-a-dozen, till then unknown, languages which formed so important an element of the Turfan finds.

“F. W. K.,” as he was always spoken of among his colleagues, was by nature a recluse, and access to his sanctum was by no means easily gained. But once received, the fortunate visitor encountered nothing but kindly attention, and however short the interview, would come away a wiser and certainly a more modest man.

“F. W. K.” was the only man I have ever met whose knowledge was really encyclopædic. Nothing was more astonishing than the way in which he would consult his books of reference in no matter what language they were written, and find the authority he required with the same ease with which the average man consults a dictionary. I had on one occasion just come home from India and brought to him a Uighur Buddhist text on which I had been working. I had made a rough transcript in which many words were purely tentative. I shall never forget the way in which he dealt with these difficulties—not indeed solving them all, but showing in doubtful cases the various possibilities: but he was never satisfied till he had called in aid all his wisdom and his books.

Müller was an universalist, and one German paper has described him as a second Humboldt—a truly great man such as appears once in a century in the realm of research. His gifts were not those of a genius who arrives by inspiration at the solution of problems; but rather those of a clear spirit which embraced everything in its view and a portentous memory which enabled him to arrive at faultless conclusions whenever he was prepared to pronounce a judgment.

In short, he was a scholar of almost unique gifts. Fortunate were those who were brought in contact with him, for all that he said was inspiring. No problem was too trivial, and if any question one put to him was worthy of consideration, he would forthwith enter into the minutest details, and often one had to wait long for his reply, for he

was never satisfied until he had utilized all his resources in wisdom and books.

In 1905 he was made Member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences: and this was followed by the conferment of many distinctions on him by foreign societies.

The great opportunity of his life arrived when the manuscripts began to reach his Museum from the Turfan Expeditions. As Professor Paul Krüger of Vienna has happily said: "It was as if these important testimonies to a religious culture which had lain buried for more than a thousand years under the sands of Central Asian oases had been disturbed from their sleep at this juncture in order to be made to speak by F. W. K. M." For in this exceptional man all the equipment necessary for the decipherment of these documents seem to have been united: the knowledge of the Semitic, the Iranian, the Turkish, and the Indo-Chinese languages, theological training, more especially in the history of religions, philological grounding, historical criticism, perseverance, and unimpeachable scientific honesty.

In the tiny brochure entitled "Handschriftenreste in Estrangeloschrift aus Turfan" he discovered the key which unlocked the Manichaean literature in Soghdian and in Uighur; thereby rescuing a literature long regarded as for ever lost, and recovering an Iranian literary language of which no example had hitherto been found. It was he who proved from a single passage in a Uighur fragment that one of the languages which had been deciphered and read by Sieg and Siegling was Tokharian. The familiar yellow-covered Proceedings of the Berlin Academy containing the succinct results of his arduous labours form a priceless collection of secrets revealed to students of such various subjects as the Buddhism, Christianity, Manichacism, and the Cultural History of Central Asia. His intimate acquaintance with the Buddhist and Christian Scriptures enabled him to run to earth the original source of a scrap of text on a torn sheet, whether Chinese, Sanskrit, or Greek.

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