

Richard Bentley

tation by Bentley, in which he brought all his learning and critical powers to bear in proof of the spuriousness of the epistles.

In 1700 Bentley was chosen master of Trinity college, Cambridge. His tenure of the office was marked by friction and litigation. He inaugurated reforms in usages and disciplines, made improvements in the buildings and encouraged learning both in the college and in the university. But his domineering temper and his contempt for the feelings and rights of the fellows drove them in 1710, after ineffectual resistance within the college, to appeal to the general visitor of the college, the bishop of Ely. Only the bishop's death in 1714 prevented Bentley's ejection from the mastership. In the course of the long-drawn-out quarrel Bentley was deprived of his degrees by the university in 1718, but these were restored to him in 1724. In 1733 he was again brought to trial before the bishop of Ely and was sentenced to deprivation of the mastership, but the college statutes required the sentence to be executed by the vice-master, who refused to act. From a feud which lasted about 30 years Bentley emerged victorious. In addition to his mastership he held the regius professorship of divinity from 1717.

At Trinity college he continued his classical studies. He published a critical appendix to John Davies's edition of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (1709) and contributed notes on two plays of Aristophanes to Ludolf Klüster's edition of 1710; in the same year appeared his emendations of the fragments of Menander and Philemon. His edition of Horace, written in haste at a critical period of the quarrel at Trinity and published in 1711, shows his ingenuity and argumentative powers, but few of the many emendations proposed in it became accepted. In his edition of Terence, published in 1726, together with the fables of Aesop and the *Sententiae* of Publilius Syrus, he threw new light on Terentian metre. In old age (1739) he published an edition of Manilius in which, along with characteristic faults, he displayed his brilliant gifts in emending and interpreting a difficult author. He left notes on other classical authors, such as Nicander, Plautus, Lucretius and Lucan, which were published after his death. Though in his later years he concerned himself mainly with Latin authors, he planned an edition of Homer which, though never brought to fruition, had an important result in that he discovered the significance for the text of the lost letter *digamma*.

Another project which was never carried out was an edition of the New Testament, *Proposals* for which were issued in 1720. In these he explained his intention of publishing a text based on the oldest Greek and Latin manuscripts, and restoring "the true exemplar of Origen, which was the standard to the most learned of the Fathers, at the time of the Council of Nice and two centuries after." He had previously (1713), in his *Remarks* on Anthony Collins's *Discourse of Free Thinking*, defended the critical study of the Bible and denied that the existence of textual variants weakened its authority. Some of Bentley's New Testament material was published by A. A. Ellis in *Bentley Critica Sacra* (1863).

In 1732 he made an unfortunate excursion into English criticism in his edition of *Paradise Lost*. In this he put forward numerous unjustified emendations, assuming that Milton employed both an amanuensis and an editor, who were responsible for the clerical errors, alterations and interpolations which Bentley professed to detect.

He had married in 1701 Joanna, daughter of Sir John Bernard. She died in 1740, leaving a son and two daughters. Bentley himself died at Cambridge on July 28, 1742.

As one of the great figures of classical scholarship Bentley combined wide learning with critical acuteness. Gifted with a powerful and logical mind, he was able to do much to restore the ancient texts and to point the way to new developments in scholarship. At the same time his masterful temperament, his self-confidence and his impatience led him to misuse his gifts. He was at his best when dealing with a badly corrupted text, less happy with an author like Horace whose text is well preserved. In textual criticism his work was followed up by the English Greek scholars of the 18th and early 19th centuries; in his dissertation on Phalaris he pointed the way to the historical and literary criticism of the 19th century.

The Works of Richard Bentley were edited by A. Dyce in 2 vols. (1836-38, incomplete) and *The Correspondence* was edited by C. Wordsworth in 2 vols. (1842).

BENTON. — J. H. Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, 2 vols. (1830); R. C. Jebb, *Bentley* (1882); A. T. Bartholomew, *Richard Bentley, A Bibliography* (1908); J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. II (1908); J. W. Mackall, *Bentley's Milton* (Warton Lectures on English Poetry, xv, 1924); A. Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley* (1924). (M. L. Ca.)

BENTON, THOMAS HART (1782-1858), U.S. political leader and writer, was born March 14, 1782, near Hillsborough, N.C. His father, a successful lawyer, planter, slaveholder and land speculator, died when Thomas was eight. Thomas was deeply affected by his mother's grief and by her charge that he, the eldest son, must assume his father's place. In Jan. 1799, Benton entered the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Finding himself poor compared to his tidewater patrician roommates, he stole money from them, and was publicly disgraced and expelled. These early traumatic events, together with Roman ideals of achievement prompted by early reading in his father's library produced in Benton strong drives of ambition. At the age of 18 he proclaimed his determination of "doing something worthy of being written," or "writing something worthy of being done." Despite his strong ambition, he also developed inward gentleness and personal charm.

After 1801, when his family moved to a near-wilderness tract south of Nashville, Tenn., Benton was subject to western influences. Admitted to the bar in 1806, he learned the problems of western farmers from circuit riding and land-title cases. Absorbing the Jeffersonian political premises of the region, he entered public controversy in 1808 with vigorous newspaper articles demanding state court reform in the interest of "farming men," and pressed his plan with substantial success in the state senate the next year. An ardent patriot in the War of 1812, he was a colonel of volunteers under Andrew Jackson, but never realized his dreams of military glory. In 1815 he resumed law practice in the frontier village of St. Louis, where his vast energy and strong intellect quickly brought him eminence.

Tall, handsome, with a massive head thrust forward on muscular shoulders as if to express his resolute drives, edgy sense of honor, and courage, Benton engaged in typical western quarrels. One was a disorderly shooting affray at Nashville (1813) in which he and his brother Jesse nearly killed Andrew Jackson, the original aggressor; another, a pair of formal duels at St. Louis (1817) with a fellow lawyer, Charles Lucas, the challenger, who died in a return engagement Benton demanded. But Benton also made warm friends, and the chastening effect of Lucas's death moderated his pugnacity. In 1821 Benton married Elizabeth McDowell of Cherry Grove, near Lexington, Va., who also brought out his gentle, sympathetic side, as did their four daughters, one of whom (Jessie Ann) married the explorer John Charles Frémont. Two sons died in their youth.

As editor of the *St. Louis Enquirer* in 1818-1820, Benton struck a keynote for his ensuing career. He wrote slashing, well-formed, comprehensive articles in the style that later marked his political speeches. "It is time," he proclaimed, "that western men had some share in the destinies of this Republic." He attacked the national administration for "surrendering" American rights in Texas and the Pacific northwest, which he envisioned as a farming community and as a base for "Asiatic commerce." He proposed western development through federal roads and canals and protection to the fur trade; urged a "gold and silver" currency to replace unsound bank note issues; and demanded statehood for the Missouri territory without restriction on slavery. Such a mixture of agrarian, commercial and slaveholding appeals brought Benton to the national senate in 1821. In Washington he was influenced by the purist-Jeffersonians John Taylor, Nathaniel Macon and John Randolph. He moved from paying political debts to Missouri's fur-trading, mining, and commercial groups, and from early support of Henry Clay's "American System" of protective tariffs and federal roads and canals to capitalist development, to agrarian, popular-democratic aims. Building a new power base in Missouri among small-farmers and