

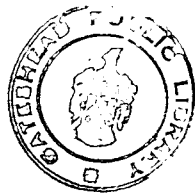


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Frontispiece



ROBERT CARR BOSANQUET.



I.—ROBERT CARR BOSANQUET.

By R. H. HODGKIN.

[Read on 30th January, 1936.]

Robert Carr Bosanquet, a vice-president of our society from 1927-33, and President for the years 1933-5, was descended from a Huguenot family which, in the sixteenth century, lived at the Mas de Bosanquet, a fortified house in the little mountain village of Cognac in the Cevennes. In the seventeenth century a cadet line of the family moved to Montpellier and Lunel. The progenitor of the English Bosanquets was Pierre Bosanquet, *Greffier en la cour royal de Lunel*, whose eldest son, a captain in the regiment of Anjou, recorded his arms as: *D'or a un chesne de sinoyle et un chef de gueules chargé de deux etoiles et d'un crois-sant—le tout d'argent*. A younger son, David Bosanquet, migrated to England on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and set up as a merchant. His descendants prospered. One of them, a gréat-grandson, Charles Bosanquet, in 1804 acquired through marriage with a Miss Holford the township of Rock, an estate of 2,000 acres; he restored Rock Hall in 1816, and lived there till his death in 1850. He established a tradition of careful farming, close friendly relations between Hall and village, devotion to the Anglican church, family discipline, and good scholarship. The results were well seen in the careers of his grandsons. The eldest of these (father of R.C.B.) was Charles B. P. Bosanquet, barrister of Lincoln's Inn; and among his younger brothers was a governor of South Australia and a distinguished philosopher.

Bosanquet, in outward appearance fair, tall, and muscular, probably took after his Northumbrian mother, Eliza, daughter of Ralph Carr Ellison of Hedgeley. But his southern ancestry, remote as it was, may explain other traits of his—his sociability, his alertness of mind, and his wit.

His career at Eton and Cambridge was unusually varied and brilliant. He was Captain of the School, Newcastle Scholar, editor of the *Eton College Chronicle*, and he played in College Wall. A book entitled *Seven Summers*, which he in collaboration with others published while at Eton, is one of the most amusing accounts of school life; too amusing for the Eton authorities, and at their request it was withdrawn. At Eton, Bosanquet acquired the nickname "Carr B," which followed him to Cambridge and was generally adopted afterwards, except in the Bosanquet family, where he ever remained "Rob."

During his four years at Trinity College, Cambridge (1890-4) he took firsts in both parts of the Classical Tripos, won a Blue for putting the weight, and held a place among his contemporaries which is best described by Mr. Maurice Baring in his *Puppet Show of Memory*. "At Cambridge he wrote as wittily as he talked. He had a dry kind sense of humour, a salt-like sense, and an Attic wit which pervaded all his talk, his speeches, his finished and scholarly verse. We thought his was certainly a bright star in English literature, a successor to Praed and Calverley and perhaps to Charles Lamb."

What was it that turned Bosanquet from the career marked out for him by his friends? To begin with, it was his choice of archæology as a subject for the second part of his Tripos. He had become satiated with the Classics; but when during his first visit to Greece in 1892-3 he began to study the actual life of the Greeks and Romans, the ancient world and its literature appealed to him with a new force. A Craven travelling studentship (1895-7) gave him an expert's knowledge by enabling him to visit German,

Russian, and other European museums, and to spend three consecutive winters in Athens. Then followed a short period of hesitation in his life, when he failed to win a Trinity fellowship owing to exceptionally strong competition. Six months reading for the Bar did not give him a taste for the legal profession; and he was won back to archæology by his appointment as Assistant Director of the British School at Athens, where he was in contact with the modern exponents of the study, British and foreign.

In April 1898 he was invited to become a member of the Northumberland Excavation Committee, and so began his relations with our society. In June he was placed in charge of the excavations at Housesteads (*Borcovicium*). His report on the excavation was an outstanding contribution to the scientific study of Roman castramentation and military architecture.

In 1900 Bosanquet was appointed Director of the British School at Athens. During the six years in which he held this post he, with the help of students attached to the school, undertook fruitful excavations at Praesos and at Palaikastro in Crete, and finally at Sparta. A student who worked under him says of Bosanquet at this time that "he had an aptitude for dealing with every kind of human being and none of the sense of superiority with which we Britons are sometimes credited. To see him rousing enthusiasm in a band of Greek workmen at a 'dig' was a lesson in persuasive leadership."

Bosanquet had married, in 1902, Ellen, youngest daughter of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, and in her book entitled *Days in Attica* she gives a charming picture of their happy years at the British School.

Bosanquet returned to England in 1906 as Professor of Classical Archæology in the University of Liverpool. Since it was a new professorship, pioneer work in organization was needed. He proved himself to be a born teacher and enkindled interest in various ways, for example by

forming an excellent collection of casts, and helping to organize Greek plays. It is typical of his enthusiasm for realistic and accurate detail that in one of these he had the chorus dressed in real Cretan goatskins. Two at least of his other activities at Liverpool should be mentioned. One was the part which he took in a long struggle for academic freedom and scholarship, a struggle in which his temper and balance never failed. He made no enemies himself and sometimes prevented others from making them. The second activity was the organization of a Liverpool committee for excavation and research in Wales and the Marches. He acted as treasurer; he supervised digging, especially at Caersws; and though the final reports on some of these have not appeared, the sections which he contributed to the volumes of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for Wales have added greatly to our knowledge of that country in the Roman period.

During the war, Bosanquet was, in 1916 and 1917, attached to a unit of the Society of Friends for relief work in Albania and Corfu; then as a member of the Serbian Relief Fund he worked there and in Macedonia until driven home by his old enemy malaria, which had already nearly cost his life in his student days. In recognition of his services he was given the Serbian Order of Santa Saba, and the Greek Order of the Redeemer.

When the war ended Bosanquet wished to resign his professorship in order to make room for some younger man: but at the request of the university authorities the resignation did not take effect till 1920. There were, of course, other reasons which made him glad to settle down at Rock. Since his father's death in 1905 Rock Hall had been let, and Bosanquet had lived during his vacations at Rock Moor, a farmhouse on the estate. He and his wife with their six children joyfully made this their permanent home; and he never regretted his early retirement from his profession. Maintaining all the Rock traditions, he farmed most of his land himself, with the help of a

manager. Farming interested him more than sport, and he took up the study of agriculture, and still more of forestry, in the spirit of scientific thoroughness which he had shown in archæology. He loved Rock and Northumberland. His love of them, and his exacting sense of duty, are written large in the following summary of his activities during the last fifteen years of his life. At Rock, he was churchwarden, and treasurer of the parochial Church Council and school manager. In Alnwick, he sat as a J.P. for Northumberland; he was a member of the Alnwick and of the Rural District Council; a governor of the Duke's School, and of the Duchess's School; and president of the Alnwick and District Boy Scouts. Further afield, he was on the Council of Armstrong College and on its committee on Agriculture and Art; he was a co-opted member of the boards of the faculties of Arts and Letters of the University of Durham, a member of the Board of Finance for the diocese of Newcastle upon Tyne, and the Diocesan church fabric advisory committee; and he was for some years chairman of the executive committee for the county of the Northumberland and Newcastle Society for the Preservation of Beauty and Amenities. His support of the Northumberland County History was especially valuable. The task of reading its proofs which fell to him as a member of the committee was performed with meticulous care, and his varied knowledge proved to be most helpful.

His farming interests were seen in his membership of the executive committee of the National Farmers' Union of Newcastle and of other agricultural bodies. An occasion which he always keenly enjoyed was the annual supper of the farmers and shepherds of the Alnwick district.

In politics, he was for some years a leading member of the Berwick on Tweed Liberal Association, and had to bear most of the weight of the elections of 1922 and 1923. It fell to him to present the petition which unseated Mr. Hilton Philipson, and he was on that account burnt in

effigy by the villagers of Bamburgh—one of the few distinctions of which he was ever known to boast.

Through all these fifteen busy and happy years spent at Rock Moor after his retirement, archæology, or at any rate the study of the past, remained his chief interest. If his allegiance to Greek archæology weakened, his interest in Roman Britain was stimulated. He became once more an active member of our society and of the North of England Excavation Committee. In frequent visits to excavations along the whole of the Roman Wall he was able to help younger archæologists by general advice and by assistance in interpreting both structures and small objects. In the words of Mr. Eric Birley, "he was the greatest authority in the country on Roman metal work, and in particular the economic aspect of its distribution. His knowledge of the comparative material in continental collections was peculiarly extensive, and he was always ready to place it at the disposal of other workers in the same field. As chairman and secretary of the local committee of the National Trust for Housesteads he was largely responsible for the developments there which culminated in the erection of a museum." He was also a trustee of the Clayton Memorial Museum at Chesters, and of the Corstopitum Excavation Fund.

The fact that he was an active member of other societies is sufficiently indicated by his occupying the presidential chair of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, and being a vice-president of the London Society of Antiquaries, vice-president of the Roman Society, member of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales and the Marches, and member of Advisory Boards on Historical Monuments in England and Wales.

The part which Bosanquet has played in the life of our society need not be described in detail. I will only mention two memories which remain in my own mind. One recalls the sight of him digging near Rock into a tumulus which no one before him had recognized as such, and his

delight in finding almost at once an urn of the Bronze Age. My other memory is that of Bosanquet on the top of the basaltic crag above the quarry near Howick. He had succeeded in interesting the foreman and his workmen, and they were preserving for him the small scraps of iron and the few beads which from time to time turned up on the crag, and which are probably the best evidence we have for a settlement of Bernician Angles in the heathen period.

In the last five or six years of his life his thoughts centred more and more on the Northumberland of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rather than on Roman Britain. Through studying the history of the Strothers, the early owners of Rock, his attention was directed to the Covenanters who fled from Scotland, and also to their sympathizers among the Northumbrian gentry. One clue led to another. He searched in manuscript sources, private as well as public. Gleanings from these researches were put before our society in two articles. In the first, on the Crookham Affray,¹ he wove round the story of two Scottish Covenanters a vivid sketch of Northumbrian society in the time of Charles II. In the second article, on *John Horsley and his Times*,² he gave an intimate description of the county as it was before and after the rebellion of 1715.

Anyone who reads these articles, and especially the last, will gain some idea of what an experience it was to accompany Bosanquet through our countryside. He loved it and its past much in the same way as Sir Walter Scott had loved and studied the Scottish Borders. He had acquired something like the range of Sir Walter. Like him he knew the family histories, and was specially interested in Covenanting times and the age of the rebellions. Like him, too, he had mastered the history of everyday features such as cottages, woods and walled gardens, as

¹ *Arch. Ael.*⁴ ix, pp. 1-49.

² *Arch. Ael.*⁴ x, pp. 58-81.

well as of antiquities in the more technical sense. The admirable articles on the Crookham Affray and on Horsley are samples of the study of Northumberland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for which Bosanquet had collected materials. Whether this History would have been written if he had lived may be questioned, since his sense of duty would probably not have allowed him to give up the activities enumerated above, and his kindness would have continued to make him an easy prey for anyone who wrote and put a question or a difficulty before him.

His death on Easter Day, 1935, at the comparatively early age of sixty-three, was quite unexpected.

There is no need to enlarge on the loss which his death has brought. Where in the world can a type of man be found to compare with the scholar-landowners who have flourished in this country, and especially in Northumberland? It is as remarkable as it is lamentable that among those who owned estates near Alnwick there should have died within five years four such outstanding personalities as the eighth Duke of Northumberland, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Sir Walter Buchanan Riddell, and Robert Carr Bosanquet. Viscount Grey's books may already be regarded as classics. Each of the other three might, if he had chosen, have made a name for himself in English letters. If they have not done so, it was because they gave their time unstintingly to the service of their generation.