

## ARTHUR CAYLEY.

BORN AUGUST 16TH, 1821. DIED JANUARY 26TH, 1895.

*"My subject is the life of a great artist."*

WHILE it is fitting that the BULLETIN of the American Mathematical Society should make mention of the passing away of professed mathematicians, the death of one so great as Arthur Cayley demands more than a slight notice. My willingness to undertake the task is due, not to any sense of fitness on my part, but to my intense admiration for his work and for his personality, and to the fact that for the last fourteen years I have been privileged to know him and experience his kindness.

The facts of his uneventful life are given by his friend, Dr. Salmon, in *Nature* for September, 1883. He was the second son of an Englishman, a merchant in Russia, and was born in England during a visit his parents paid to their home. In 1829 they returned to England to live, so Professor Cayley was English by education as well as by nationality. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1838, and in 1842 was Senior Wrangler and first Smith's Prizeman. He entered the legal profession, and practised until 1863, when he returned to Cambridge to hold the Sadlerian Professorship of Pure Mathematics; this he held until his death. He has published about 800 papers, of which the first appeared in 1841; the last may easily turn out to be the one contained in the January number of the BULLETIN, for this was written December 18th, 1894. It would have been a cause of special regret to all interested in the American Mathematical Society had the pages of the BULLETIN contained no contribution from our most distinguished member.

At the time when Cayley entered Cambridge the mathematical curriculum was very different from the present one. Text-books were few and soon exhausted; but in this there was the advantage that so much the sooner was the student thrown into direct contact with the works of the great mathematicians. As regards the majority of students, it may have been that they had nothing to draw with, and the well was deep; but for one like Cayley, to whom the most abstract language of mathematical analysis was as his mother-tongue, the well was as a spring bubbling up. Nor was he alone in this direct communication with the fountain-head; his contemporaries in Cambridge were such men as Leslie